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# Brand Narratives, Sustainability, and Gender: A Socio-semiotic Approach

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## Abstract

This research, based on the French macro-context, explains sustainable discourses in advertising from 2007 to 2012, during which time the concept of sustainability developed significantly and became institutionalized at a national level. This article defines sustainability broadly and explains the issue of inequality, particularly gender inequality, as originating in various forms of ascendancy over nature. Next, using a socio-semiotic reading, it identifies and deciphers five types of brand narratives on sustainability – Prometheus, Gaia, the Labyrinth, an automated world, and a sublimated nature – and their corresponding gender ideologies. Finally, the article discusses how feminist thought helps interpret major issues within sustainable communication, which reproduces both the dominant sustainable paradigm and conservative gender representations despite the national institutionalization of sustainability and a rich tradition of French feminist thought.

## Keywords

brand narratives, sustainability, gender ideology, feminism, semiotics, advertising, macromarketing

## Introduction

Through the diversity and intensity of its economic, political, social, cultural, and environmental applications, sustainability appears today as "a significant shift in environmental, economic and social conditions that will play out over the coming decades" (Hajkowicz, Cook, and Littleboy 2012, p. 2). A number of environmental and societal issues cast doubt on the pursuit of an economic model based on a "living to consume" mentality (Gabriel and Lang 1995; Woodruffe 1997) that may "not only endanger environmental welfare but also might lower quality of life" (Prothero and Fitchett 2000, p. 50). One important issue is the inequality between men and women and the environmental impact of this inequality (Women's Environmental Network 2010). In view of this, sustainability is becoming a prism through which ideas of inequality and injustice can be analyzed and fought. This is because the notion of sustainability implies not only preservation of the planet, but also the social improvement of human beings in terms of poverty, racism, and gender inequality.

Although Sustainable Developement (SD) is founded on the all-embracing principles of well-being, the protection of future generations, and the three pillars of environmental, social, and economic sustainability, a narrow view of SD (known as weak sustainability) has gradually become predominant at the political and economic levels (Dobson 1996; Lafferty and Meadowcroft 2000; Neumayer 2003). This has led to a vision of "green business or green economy" (UN Conference on Sustainable Development 2013). At the same time, international institutions promote sustainable consumption (United Nations Rio 1992; United Nations Environment Programme Marrakech 2009), wherein consumers become aware that, through their consumption habits, they share responsibility for the deterioration of the environment (Prothero et al. 2011). However, while many actors in civil society insist on the need to "consume less," the fourth chapter of Agenda 21 promotes schemes that emphasize "consuming more efficiently" (Cohen 2007; Spaargaren 2000).

In the field of marketing, researchers recognize that sustainable consumption is a "fuzzy concept" (Prothero and Fitchett 2000, p. 51) because of its vague definition, similar to other environmental concepts such as SD and sustainable marketing (McDonagh and Prothero 1997). Micro-economic studies also show how difficult it is for consumers to understand the challenges of SD. They record a frequent "attitude- behavior gap" (Boulstridge and Carrigan 2000; Chang 2011; De Pelsmacker et al. 2005; Grail Research 2009; Sheehan and Atkinson 2012).

Although increasing information about SD is available to all (Clark 2006; Thøgersen 2005; Pape et al. 2011; Prothero et al. 2011), "consumers are not climbing on the 'green'

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consumption bandwagon" (Kilbourne, Beckmann, and Thelen 2002, p. 195). Thus, sustainable consumption behaviors remain marginal (Markkula and Moisander 2012; Prothero et al. 2011; Thøgersen and Crompton 2009), while unsustainable practices are increasing (Assadourian 2010). Even if firms have developed more efficient ranges of green-oriented products (Fuller 1999; Peattie 2001; Van Dam and Apeldoorn 1996), consumers lack an overall understanding of the issues (D'Souza and Taghian 2005; Gordon, Carrigan, and Hastings 2011; Lane and Potter 2007; Thøgersen 2005). Furthermore, the inappropriate use of sustainable themes in marketing is criticized for its tendency to "sell" attractive signs rather than to contribute in the long term to core sustainable issues, to make consumers feel guilty (Dickens 2004; Prothero and Fitchett 2000), or to make them skeptical towards advertising messages (Kilbourne 1995, 2004; Scammon and Mayer 1995; Zinkhan and Carlson 1995).

Within this literature, sustainable communication has not been investigated as much as green advertising, which has been tackled from both micro and macro perspectives since the 1960s. The development of green advertising is linked to the discovery by brand managers of new consumer segments sensitive to environmental concerns. The desire for competitive advantage based on the environment led to the development of a green image (Biloslavo and Trnavcevic 2009; Iyer and Banerjee 1993; Kilbourne 2004; Menon et al. 1999). Sustainable communication helps society move from hyperconsumption to sustainable consumption (McDonagh 1998; Prothero, Peattie, and McDonagh 1997). Driven by ecocentrism, it believes that society needs to be restructured to make the environment culturally significant (Kilbourne 2004). Sustainable communication is thus a holistic approach to brand communication that includes green advertising (Kilbourne 2004; McDonagh 1998). This article builds on the above definitions of sustainable communication as a long term ideal which embraces honesty as a core aspect of the communication between an organization and its publics "whose objective is to increase the level of environmental consciousness in society through green, eco or environmental marketing communications." (Prothero, Peattie, and McDonagh 1997, p. 75).

Given the paucity of conceptualizations of sustainable communication, this article builds on the broad definitions of sustainability and sustainable communication proposed by McDonagh (1998) and Kilbourne (1995, 2004). More specifically, it aims to investigate how gender ideologies interact with SD issues by analyzing how brand narratives use and manipulate gender elements and feed sustainable discourse. This study focuses on gender issues from a macro perspective. It also brings feminist thought as a useful intersection with sustainable issues (Dobscha and Prothero 2012). More specifically, it applies a socio-semiotic approach to investigate the system of gender representation used by brands in their sustainable communication. It explains how sustainable brand discourses and practices that promote sustainable ideals are infused with gender ideologies. To do so, the French macro-social context is relevant for two reasons: 1) Given a renewal of interest in sustainability in France and its institutional

promotion since 2007, which has resulted in a significant increase in sustainable brand communication, it is appropriate to examine the variations and nuances in brand communications that are often deemed relatively ineffective. 2) Given the specific gender context, the strong egalitarian vision inherited from the ideology of the Enlightenment and a society still markedly patriarchal (Badinter 1992; Bourdieu 1998; Héritier 1986), it is relevant to examining the gender ideology promoted in sustainable communication understood as necessarily egalitarian.

Although the theoretical debate on the effectiveness of sustainable marketing and its communication is a recurring one, this research questions the compatibility of conservative norms of gender with sustainable communication, which, by definition, defends a more or less clean break with the dominant model of productivism. The discussion will focus on the benefits of feminist viewpoints towards sustainable issues and their marketplace production and representations. This will illustrate how sustainability is becoming an inescapable trend.

## Conceptual Framework

### The Macro-social Context of Sustainability and Gender in France

This section investigates sustainability and gender in the French context. Figure 1 presents a summary of the key elements linked to sustainable development in the French socio-cultural context and relates them to the international agenda. It shows the evolution of the concepts and the involvement of the main actors.

The first element of the study framework concerns the institutionalization of environmental problems in France since 2007 via a multipartite process known as the "*Grenelle de l'environnement*" (The Grenelle Environment Forum). This process stemmed from the government's desire to put environmental issues at the heart of public concerns. The term *Grenelle* is historically linked to the great social negotiations led by the French state after the events of May 1968 (a general insurrection across France). This research is therefore situated in a context where the environment was becoming a basic framework for public action, bringing together all the stakeholders. It analyzes the effects of this apparently favorable framework on brand discourses from 2007 to 2012. As Leonidou et al. (2011) note, the amount of international green advertising fluctuates, reflecting various worldwide or specific events related to environmental issues and political contexts (Hartmann and Apaolaza-Ibáñez 2009).

The high profile given to the *Grenelle de l'environnement* in the media, together with the resulting profusion of legislation creating new regulations for companies, undoubtedly had an impact on brand communication. The use of the environment as a theme in advertising—directly or indirectly, centrally or marginally—grew steadily from 2006 to 2010 (Agence de l'Environnement et de la Maîtrise de l'Energie-Agence de Régulation Professionnelle de la Publicité 2009). Moreover, the preeminent position of SD in French public policy is not new, as shown by the establishment of a national SD strategy
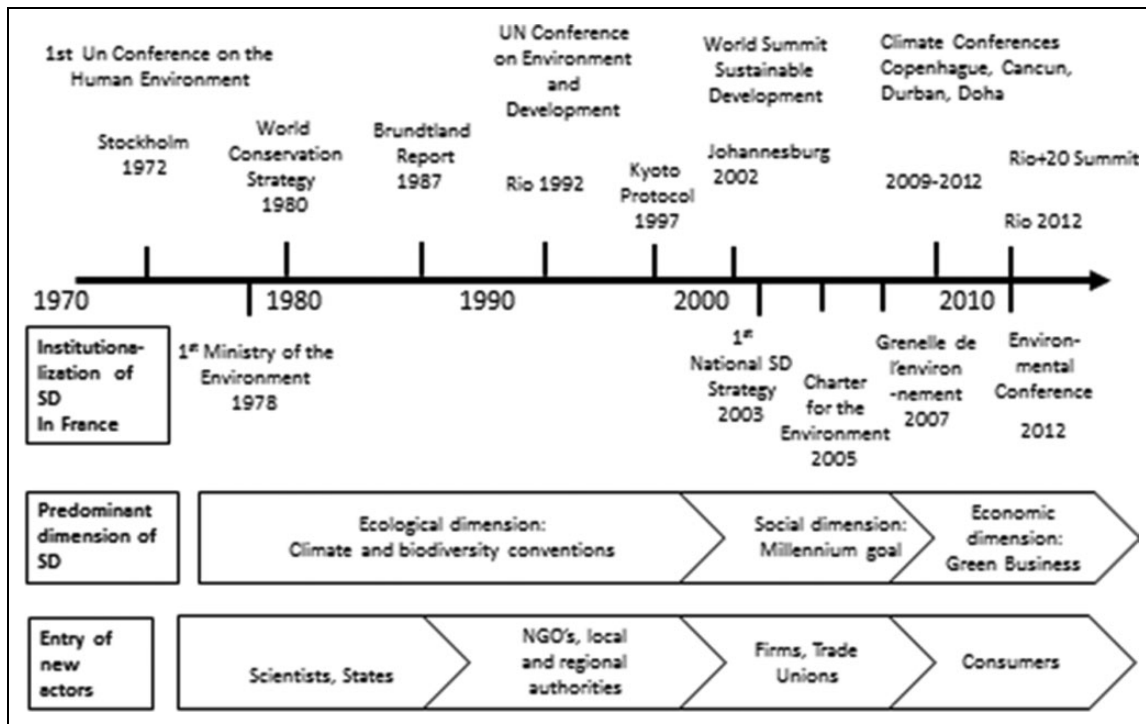
**Figure 1.** Global and French institutionalization of sustainable development (SD).

as early as 1995. Its institutionalization was accelerated under the aegis of the three last presidents of the republic. During the period of the Grenelle, the minister of ecology and sustainable development was, for the first time in the history, awarded the status of minister of state (the most senior minister in the government after the prime minister).

The second contextual element affecting this research is part of the French historical legacy of the gender issue. Table 1 traces the social history of gender problems in France, particularly women's movements. During the monarchy, men and women in court society followed the same model in terms of appearance and behavior (Elias 2008). However, after the French Revolution, republican values created a real separation between the masculine and feminine universes (Vigarello 2004). This abrupt change in masculine codes led Bourdieu (1998) to remark that it was the nineteenth century that established the cult of the virile man and the feminine woman. This explains the numerous attempts to structure feminist movements since the French Revolution with radical or reforming positions that are strictly feminist or founded on class ideologies.

Despite the reputation abroad of figures such as Simone de Beauvoir or Françoise d'Eaubonne and the popular international image of the liberated Frenchwoman, feminist movements have never had the influence that they have in English-speaking countries. Even French theory and post-structuralist feminist figures were labeled as such in North America while none of these French feminists align themselves with the feminist movement as it appeared in the Anglophone world (Delphy 1995; Wright 2000). Gender studies have remained fragmented; women are still poorly represented in

the inner circles of power compared with other European countries. Yet the struggle for sustainability is often fought at the highest level by women. Since 1971, when the Ministry of the Environment was created, 9 of the 15 ministers have been women—a much higher rate than that of other ministries. These ministers have been of very different political persuasions. Thus, in France, the struggle for sustainability, within national governments, is largely carried out by women, much more so than for other causes. This unfamiliar presence of women at the highest level of government raises questions about gender representations in brand communications, which are assumed to mirror the state of changing societal values in a given culture (McCracken 1986). Nonetheless, during the period of the Grenelle, the minister for ecology and development was a man.

## Gender, Sustainability, and Advertising

Gender is defined as an ensemble of characteristics and behaviors that a given society associates with and expects of men and women (Bourdieu 1998; Héritier 1986). These conventions are widespread in advertising that serves as brand positioning (McCracken 1986). The dominant ideology in marketing remains masculine (Bettany et al. 2010; Zuckerman and Carsky 1992) in the ways that strategies are implemented (Bristor and Fischer 1993; Peñaloza 1994) or in the values that are assumed (Hirschman 1993). Advertising has often maintained a highly debatable vision: that of the rational, logical, efficient man and the woman who is guided by her emotions and desires (Dilevko and Harris 1997; Venkatesh 1994; Whissel and McCall 1997).

**Table 1.** French Women's Movements across History.

| Major Periods | | Origins | Birth of collective feminist claims | Reforming spirit | Radical feminism |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Key dates | 1789 | 1793-1881 | 1881-1914 | 1920-1950 | 1960-1970 |
| Political Movements | French Revolution | Utopian and Proudhonian Movements | Socialist feminism and Bourgeois feminism | Maternalist and reformist feminism | Women's Liberation Movement (Women's Lib) |
| Important Events | Women are declared citizens, but have no rights | -The first feminists do not obtain the right to vote (1848 republic and universal suffrage for men) <br> -Women are invited to be militant: the class struggle takes precedence over sexual inequalities | - Recognition of feminist associations <br> - reestablishment of the right of divorce 1884, right for women to take part in legal proceedings against the wishes of their husband in 1905. <br> - Frenchwomen are represented at the International Council of Women. | -Feminists claim new rights as mothers and assume their traditional social role. <br> - The Pétain government makes the woman's position as housewife a sacred principle - Post 1945 policy encourages the birth rate is an obstacle to women's emancipation. <br> - Right to vote given to reward women's efforts during the war. | - May 1968 attacks puritan moralism, hierarchical family structures. <br> - The Women's Liberation Movement sets itself up as a reaction to the male-chauvinism of leftist organizations, denounces patriarchy as "the major enemy." <br> - Progressive institutionalization of feminism in the intellectual world giving new public visibility to women. |
| Key Individuals | Olympe de Gouges claims the right to sell but is put to death in 1793 | -The originator of the word feminism is said to be Ch. Fourier <br> -Jeanne Deroin and Pauline Roland denounce their "secular servitude" | | The Second Sex (1949) by Simone de Beauvoir breaks with maternalist, reformist discourses. | Antoinette Fouque, Christine Delphy, Anne Tristan, & Monique Wittig are the major figures of French feminism. Françoise D'Eaubonne proposes the term "ecofeminism" for the first time in her book Le féminisme (1972). |

Extensive research has investigated how advertising constructs and gives sense to these stereotypes (for a review, see Stevens and Ostberg 2012), their potential changes over the years (Eisend 2010; Ourahmoune and Nyeck 2007; Schroeder and Zwick 2004), and their overall effects on society (Bettany 2006; Cunningham and Macrae 2011; Dahl, Sengupta, and Vohs 2009; Martin and Gentry 1997).

The main criticism leveled at gender representations in advertising is of the role given to women in these narratives: private vs. public, vulnerable vs. independent, object vs. subject, body vs. mind, subservient vs. dominant, or the woman as a predator or an amazon, using her charms to succeed or to emulate masculine values. Meanwhile, masculine representations, independent of age differences or the type of product promoted, reflect superiority in both power and professional life. Still, the commodification of the female body is complex and paradoxical. Bristor and Fontennelle (1993) observed that, even when advertising adopts pro-feminist codes, it still uses the same stereotypes in terms of physical appearance—presenting a techno-cosmeticized kind of beauty in line with the laws laid down by consumer society (Baudrillard 1974). The consumer society, through these commonplace images, uses and abuses feminine values and characters and gives femininity materialistic and futile connotations considered to have significant negative environmental consequences for the society as a whole (Kilbourne 1995; Kilbourne and Pickett 2008). The persistence of these stereotypes raises ethical and social questions, as well-balanced construction of self-image, self respect, identity and their relationship with psychological diseases in contradiction with the SD ideals (Kilbourne 2004; Prothero and Fitchett 2000).

Some research has tackled the intersection between gender and sustainability. Most of the work adopted an eco-feminist viewpoint (Bettany et al. 2010; Dobscha 1993; Dobscha and Prothero 2012; Littlefield 2010; Rogers 2008; Stevens, Kearney, and Maclaran 2013). Dobscha (1993) and McDonagh and Prothero (1997) highlighted the role of marketing in reinforcing the patriarchy and defending the holders of power, and as a vector for the consolidation of existing social relations and structures, presenting women as "wood nymphs" or "earth mothers." Working on representations of cows, Stevens, Kearney, and Maclaran (2013) also demonstrated how "the use of anthropomorphism … exposes the many hidden patriarchal assumptions built into seemingly innocuous and playful messages" (p. 171). Investigating meat-eating practices in advertising, Rogers (2008) showed how hegemonic masculinity is invigorated through unsustainable, "wild," and "uncivilized" food practices.

As mentioned above, this study aims to investigate how gender ideologies interact with SD issues by analyzing how brand narratives use and manipulate gender elements and feed sustainable discourse. The methods adopted are futher explored below.

## Methodological Framework

This article uses an inductive approach to investigate the system of gender representation used by brands in their sustainable communication. It explains how sustainable brand discourses and practices that promote sustainable ideals are infused with gender ideologies. Cultural anthropology and semiotics are particularly useful in consumer research to interpret the deeper meaning of a brand's discourse (Floch 1995; Heilbrunn and Hetzel 2003; Landowski 2004; Mick et al. 2004; Mick and Oswald 2007; Semprini 2007). Here, we refer to socio-semiotics using the "semiotic square" in line with renewed interest in this tool from poststructuralists and postmodernist semioticians. They use the semiotic square not in its canonic or Greimasian form (Greimas (1984), but as a heuristic to organize the set of meanings and values produced by a specific marketplace area. Semiotic square procedures allow for a critical analysis based on the context, in contrast to Greimas' (1984), statement "*Hors du texte, point de salut*" ("The text is all that matters"). Here, the semiotic square helps deconstruct the different discourses at the meeting point between sustainability and gender as produced and consumed in consumer society. In line with Semprini (2007), far from masking filiation to the square, this research asserts it, since it allows one to refine the semantic range of a brand context

### Data

As shown in Table 2, the data utilized in this study came from 84 brands in diverse sectors (e.g. food, energy, large retail, automotive, cosmetics, textiles and shoes, household electrical goods, banking and insurance, IT and telecommunications, construction, chemistry, transport). The brands were chosen based on the frequency of their visibility in the mass media (newspapers, magazines, and primetime TV ads) from 2007 to 2012 as well as the French consumers' level of awareness of these brands. This was to allow an analysis of dominant brand discourses on sustainability in the mass media. A total of 278 ads were analyzed. However, it is not the quantity of ads but the recurrence of stories in brand communications that gives insight into how gender logics inform the variety of sustainable discourses.

### Data Analysis

The criteria for analysis consisted of signifiers (verbal and nonverbal signs) in the communications. Examples include colors, forms, postures, movements, sounds, design, furniture, slogan, and verbal information. Each author separately described every ad according to these criteria and commented freely on the corpus under analysis in a journal. In addition, a wide range of data on each of the brands was collected in the form of visuals and text (e.g. press articles, company websites, and visuals from former and recent sustainable advertising campaigns). This secondary data helped provide an in-depth understanding of the connection between sustainable messages and the brand's gender ideology. Each of the three authors described these different features systematically in a detailed, analytical manner.

The authors analyzed each brand and then compared it with others in the same sector and across sectors to identify recurring

**Table 2.** Data: Brands and Ads Under Study.

| Industry sector | Brands studied | Number of ads studied | Industry sector | Brands studied | Number of ads studied |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Food | Lu | 3 | Cosmetics | Timotei | 2 |
| | Tetra Pak | 3 | | Yves Rocher | 3 |
| | McDonalds | 4 | | Clarins | 3 |
| | Daunat | 2 | | Sisley | 2 |
| | Lesieur | 3 | | Nivea | 3 |
| | Vittel | 3 | | Phyto | 3 |
| | Jardin bio | 4 | | Furterer | 3 |
| | Danone | 3 | | Garnier | 2 |
| | Nespresso | 4 | | Lea nature | 4 |
| | Herta | 2 | | Mixa | 3 |
| | | | | Dove | 4 |
| Energy | Electricité de France (EDF) | 19 | Banking and Insurance | HSBC Crédit Agricole | 3 |
| | Gaz de France | 7 | | Maif | 4 |
| | Atlantic | 2 | | Crédit | 6 |
| | Areva | 3 | | coopératif | |
| | Total | 6 | | | |
| | Daikin | 2 | | | |
| Textiles and Shoes | Timberland | 3 | Transport | SNCF | 3 |
| | Patagonia | 2 | | Air France | 3 |
| | Moncler | 2 | | Aéroport Beauvais | 2 |
| | Carré blanc | 2 | | | |
| | Rica Levis | 3 | | | |
| | Diesel | 4 | | | |
| Household electrical | Whirlpool | 3 | IT and Tele-communications | Samsung | 3 |
| | Teissa | 2 | | IBM | 2 |
| | Panasonic | 3 | | Apple | 2 |
| | LG | 2 | | | |
| Large Retail | Carrefour | 3 | Others | K2r | 2 |
| | Ikea | 3 | | Ripolin | 3 |
| | Auchan | 5 | | Veolia | 3 |
| | Leclerc | 3 | | Arjowiggins | 2 |
| | Leroy Merlin | 3 | | Bosch | 3 |
| | Monoprix | 2 | | Konica | 3 |
| | Biocoop | 3 | | | |
| Chemistry | BASF | 5 | Construction | Bouygues | 4 |
| | Bayer | 3 | | | |
| Automotive | Citroen | 3 | Automotive (contd.) | Toyota | 6 |
| | Honda | 4 | | Opel | 2 |
| | Volvo | 2 | | Alfa Romeo | 2 |
| | Peugeot | 6 | | Fiat | 3 |
| | Land Rover | 4 | | Volvo | 2 |
| | Jeep | 2 | | Suzuki | 3 |
| | Audi | 3 | | Nissan | 2 |
| | Saab | 2 | | Volkswagen | 6 |
| | Renault | 7 | | Mercedes | 2 |
| | BMW | 3 | | Smart | 3 |
| | | | | Kia | 2 |

themes and narratives. The three authors had a high level of consensus in terms of coding and interpretation. The results represent their negotiated understanding of the data.

Drawing from a deep reading of cultural texts on sustainability and gender and their socio-historical sedimentation in the French context, together with observations and analyses of the ads, the authors constructed a semiotic square (Floch 1995; Greimas 1986; Holt and Thompson 2004; Ourahmoune and Ozçaglar-Toulouse 2012). This method reaches the deepest level of brand discourse, which can establish a structural correspondence between brand expectations and their underlying system. The analysis thus reveals similarities and differences

**Figure 2.** Control—The Promethean myth.
Source: *Télérama*, 3124 (November 28, 2011).

in brand discourses and the signifiers in the visuals. It contrasts two types of discourses, reflecting the dialectics of control (Prometheus) versus cooperation (Gaia):

The first discourse involves brands that emphasize a techno-scientific discourse about mastering nature and the ability of a product/service to solve the environmental problem. Individualism and rationality are markers of the modern ideology of human progress. In other words, the Promethean myth is perpetuated in brand discourse. Prometheus symbolizes the conquering force of man. General ecology as an exact science assumes that we contemplate the earth and look forward to scientific progress to save humanity from the ecological crisis that is expected in a few decades. This discourse promotes the unique ability possessed by the human species to domesticate the planet and to develop and transform its territories (Figure 2).

The second discourse involves brands that convey the narratives of Mother Nature—beautiful, caring, safe, and well intentioned—with a sense of proportion and a horizontal relationship between mankind and nature. Cooperation is emphasized as the key element in environment-mankind relationships. Gaia, personifying the beauty of creation, is conveyed by brand discourses that emphasize values traditionally depicted as feminine, leading to protection, nurture, equality, and a sense of justice (figure 3).

## Findings

### Sustainable Brand Positions and Their Gender Embodiment

This section details the five positions that emerged from the analysis of the data (see Figure 4). It shows that sustainable communication relies on the traditional Cartesian view of man as the "master and possessor of Nature" and on the modern myth of progress. This reinforces the dominant sustainable development paradigm in the French context, which is an echo of "masculine domination" (Bourdieu 1998) in terms of gender ideals. Other positions are emphasized by brands to account for different representations of sustainability and gender roles.

### Control: The Promethean Myth

The Promethean myth is often cited as the myth that best suits the rise of techno-scientific modernity together with Enlightenment ideology. The origins of the myth explain its relevance to these results. Prometheus opposed his brother Epimetheus, the future husband of Pandora. The name Epimetheus means hindsight. Epimetheus divided nature's resources between all the animals, but had nothing left when it came to man. Prometheus, whose name means "foresight," came to the aid of mankind. He stole fire from the "wheel of the sun," hid it in a fennel stalk, and delivered it to man. Henceforth, fire burned in every home. But more importantly, Man, who now controlled energy, invented language, developed technology, and farmed the earth to feed himself. Prometheus is said to have instigated the first human civilization. He gave mankind his own power and launched the myth of man's civilizing capacity. But he also failed in his endeavors, and made mistakes, despite being the wisest member of his race. After managing to lock all the world's evils in a box (old age, work, sickness, madness, vice and passion), he was not able to prevent Pandora from opening
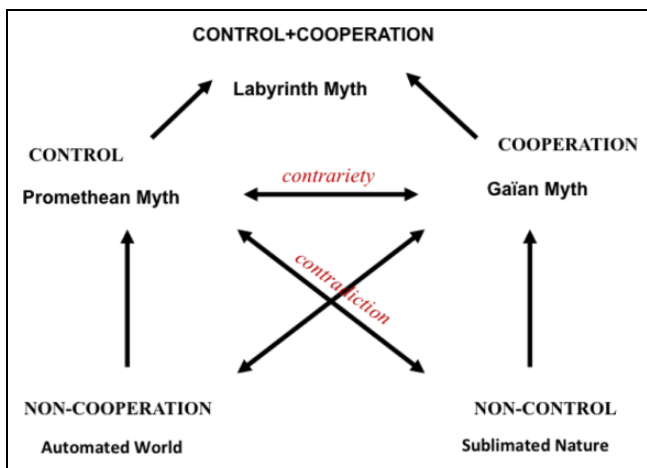
**Figure 3.** Cooperation- the Gaian myth.



**Figure 4.** Semiotic square of sustainable communications and their gender embodiment.

it and from ruining his attempt. He was sentenced by Zeus to be chained naked to a column in the mountains of the Caucasus, where a voracious vulture devoured his liver all day long.

This discourse of Man's control over Nature is typical of the vast majority of brand visuals in the study sample. Brands display messages glorifying the genius of techno-science in resolving sustainable issues. Persuasive signs borrowed from scientific and technical lexicography are widely used across

all sectors. The use of charts, figures, and long, complex sentences represent the innovative solutions proposed by brands (e.g. Clarins' ''the expertise of biodiversity,'' ''IBM for more intelligent water management''). In short, most of the ads are informative and rationality-driven. Text often makes up half of the visual. Advertising in this case uses the logic of costs and benefits to persuade consumers of the value of sustainable messages. The issue of price is evident. For instance, ''Daikin acts in favor of your energy savings'' shows mankind as a priority over nature, but also speaks to the individualistic ''smart shopper'' rather than to one with an altruistic (collective) view of environmental issues. Other depictions show the product or the producer or user of the product as a hero (e.g. Volkswagen's ''For today's heroes''), able to fight and overcome environmental hazards. The domination of man over nature is particularly explicit (e.g. Cherokee's ''Man has always dreamt of domesticating nature''). Man, with his supernatural power, holds the earth in his hands (Bouygues), encapsulates the ocean in a bottle (''In the future, the sea will be our thirst quencher … HSBC supports innovative solutions''), stands in front of an imposing waterfall and challenges nature (Land Rover's ''Find a way even when it is impossible''), and sits in a tree holding an umbrella to shelter playful squirrels, saving them from the hot climate (Tetra Pack). This widespread theme of the heroic domination of nature by man echoes traditional depictions of masculinity and their interpretations in consumer research. Hegemonic masculinity in marketplace images is largely about depicting men's strength, rationality, power, and achievement in public settings (Belk and Costa 1998; Holt and Thompson 2004; Schroeder and Zwick 2004).

This position is the most prevalent in brand communications, or at least in the present sample. It illustrates the dominant marketplace sustainability discourse based on the belief in progress, the ideology of technology and science, the anthropocentric vision of sustainability, and the perpetuation of traditional masculine ideals and roles in consumer society, which will be discussed later.

### Cooperation: The Myth of Gaia

The second position that emerged from the data is the opposing myth of Gaia, which accounts for the proposal of cooperation as a narrative to structure sustainable development. As with the Promethean myth, we first revisit the roots of the Gaian myth to understand how brand communications are infused with many of its aspects.

Pherecydes, a mythographer of the seventh century B.C., stated that heaven wed the earth (bare earth, or Chton) and gave it the name of Gaia, covering her with a veil embroidered with all the colors of the earth and its oceans. This anthropomorphic representation of Gaia or Ge as the personification of the living earth gave rise to Hesiod's metaphor ''wide-bosomed Mother Earth'' and the words ''gaiety'' and ''geography.'' Gaia, in the sense of the inhabited earth, is also depicted by Homer on the shield of Achilles.

The narratives in our data celebrate nature as the environment of our society, which we must protect. To convey this

idea, extravagant images of nature are displayed to describe the magical beauty of the earth in emotional terms. This image stands alone with the name of the brand (e.g. Suez, Volvo) to convey emotionality vs. rationality. Feminine representations are evident in contrast to extremely techno-scientific discourses where women are scarcely seen. The role of women is often associated in these ads with nature's values of beauty and preciousness (e.g. Air France). This naturalization of women in advertising comes with a greater emphasis on the home and domestic tasks. The home is represented as a refuge where women protect their loved ones. Some ads display conservative roles with numerous pictures showing women cooking in their kitchen (e.g. IUPP, GDF, Auchan).

The theme of beauty, with the use of bright colors, rounded typography, and childish drawings, also aims to direct the discourse towards women in a joking manner (e.g. Toyota's "Bonus for beauty" featuring a small car with cucumber slices on its headlights, "Fair Trade Jeans ... we don't just care about our bottoms" showing a woman wearing flattering jeans). Women are known to promote eco-issues and teach children to take care of the earth and recycle (Zelezny, Chua, and Aldrich 2000; Vinz 2009). These aspects are often shown in this type of ad (e.g. EDF, Electricité de France). Children are presented as the most in need of protection, thus supporting this emotional discourse around nature protection (e.g. Ripolin, Leroy Merlin). Preservation for the sake of future generations is a common theme. This set of ads emphasizes the idea of cooperation; interaction with nature is necessary in preservation. It promotes a more horizontal view of the relationship between mankind and nature. This discourse is emotion-driven in contrast with the promethean techno-scientific discourse. The implications of this Gaian vision of sustainability will be discussed later.

The semiotic square enriches this binary opposition by allowing a deconstruction of the available discourses in French sustainable advertising. We emphasize three other signifieds that account for the nuances in our data: no cooperation, no control, and control + cooperation.

## No Cooperation: A Freezing, Automated World

The no-cooperation position is intrinsically unconcerned with sustainable issues and sees the earth as a playground for humans. Sustainable issues are considered a nuisance for mankind. This position is particularly underused by brands in our sample, as it does not promote sustainability per se. Nevertheless, this position can be related to images where the metropolitan city is celebrated as the city of the future in an extreme manner, with skyscrapers, cold materials, and lighting, but without open spaces or social relationships. More explicitly, some ads distance themselves from sustainability issues and even use humor to make fun of typical sustainability topics such as global warming. Diesel, the Italian clothing manufacturer, developed a provocative advertising campaign called "Global Warming Ready." It shows models posing in Diesel clothing in a world affected by rising water levels and

temperatures. The campaign aesthetically portrays how this new world might look. The shocking effects of global warming are subtly revealed through details depicting ordinary scenes in a surreal, post-global warming world. The advertisements feature St. Mark's Square in Venice filled with tropical birds rather than pigeons and the Eiffel Tower in Paris surrounded by a jungle. "Global Warming Ready" at first glance appears to be just another fashion advertisement. At second glance, the campaign appears to be an arrogant swipe at environmentalists' concerns. Wealthy people will continue to buy fashionable clothing even in a world affected by climatic disaster. The campaign won a Silver Lion for Print at the Cannes International Advertising Festival 2007. However, not everyone was impressed; some consumers called for a boycott of Diesel's clothing line (figure 5).

## No Control: Sublimated Nature, the Beautiful Jungle

The no-control position is nature as it should or could be, a virtual, sublimated nature. Surprisingly, sustainable communication in the French context does not often convey the beauty of nature as central within the picture. Images of beautiful nature are in the background, while the product is usually at the fore. Nature is also greatly reworked with bright colors and supernatural features, so that animals may be anthropomorphized to the extent that a frog, for instance, will look "cosmeticized" like a woman (see Figure 6). The brand's claim, "It is permissible to be green and beautiful," creates a link between nature and feminine values. In addition, this primacy given to nature implies that mankind is totally immersed within nature, at the same level as animals (figure 6).

## Control + Cooperation: The Myth of the Labyrinth

The fifth position that accounts for the fragmentation of discourses around sustainability in advertising, especially a swing between the major signifieds in our semiotic square, is control vs. cooperation. In this position, control and cooperation are both used by brands to speak of sustainability. This echoes what we call the myth of the labyrinth.

King Minos of Crete had a labyrinth built by Daedalus at Knossos to capture and devour anyone who tried to enter his palace. His daughter used a thread to save Theseus from certain death. Men build all kinds of labyrinths – heavyweight structures that society locks itself into, making it difficult to escape. However, man has taken the place of nature and paradoxically finds himself as a predator of Gaia, in his attempt to go beyond the limits imposed by his status as a Promethean creature. In the face of the planet's limited resources, man has to choose between qualitative, cooperative progress and unlimited growth, which will lead him to his own eviction from the Gaian system. The reality of the balance of power and its devastating effect on the earth's resources, life on earth, and individuals, explains the paradox by which societies confront each other in their search for profit. Instead of prioritizing progress, competition perverts progress by only aiming at growth. The labyrinthine

**Figure 5.** An automated world.

Source: Vogue (Janvier 2007). Campaign also widely displayed and commented online.

situation in which man locks himself up is the result of his ignorance of the great earthly laws (Gaia), his lack of respect for these laws, and his overestimation of the capacities of the species (Prometheus).

The corpus we examined reveals that, even if this discourse remains limited, it is represented in brand communications that attempt to reconcile Prometheus and Gaia, control and cooperation, or anthropocentrism and a horizontal relationship between man and nature (while avoiding biocentrism). It also conveys androgynous figures as possible identity positions that account for changing gender roles in society. Brands experiment with new voices in discourses that remain predominantly green even though they introduce more social dimensions. The Crédit Coopératif bank (see Figure 7) invites consumers to think and act collectively and to question the established order. Their advertising uses a questioning style that is deliberately provocative, halfway between satirical cartoons and political leaflets. It encourages viewers to commit by either making a donation or imagining a new kind of bank or "a better world." More than being just "green," their ethical standpoint is one of social conviction, like that of the Biocoop farmers who define themselves as "farmers by vocation, biocoop by conviction." These narratives move the focus of the ad away from being simply environmental to the search for a new ethic that combines scientific and human progress. Men and women are no longer portrayed as dominant or "one with nature," but acting in a humanitarian way to improve collective well-being. Their bodies are upright to show determined, calm men and women gazing at the camera. They are clearly rational people, in control but motivated by higher values that stress "living together" (Figure 7).

From the point of view of gender, attempts at new representations are used in brand communication. These consist of inverting gender stereotypes or representing the androgynous myth in the realm of complex, changing gender roles in society. For example, Gaz de France (see Figure 8) shows a busy man in the kitchen while his wife, stretched out on the sofa, is reading. Another of its ads shows a playful, relaxed, barefoot father playing with his daughter on the floor. This reflects the recent growth of male participation in family and private life (Ourahmoune 2012) rather than authoritarian fathers. Such advertising prefers to represent "new fathers" focusing on relationships (Coskuner-Balli and Thompson 2013). Meanwhile, EDF chooses to represent professional women, stressing their skills and their position as engineers in the same ways as male representations often do. Nonetheless, this egalitarianism is combined with an aesthetic representation that capitalizes on faces with stronger features or wider jaws, showing ambition by using traditionally male features. This results in increasingly complex, although often exaggerated, gender ideologies emerging in sustainable advertising.

Timberland has long emphasized sustainability issues. Their campaign features two male characters outdoors, one of them carrying a big dog on his shoulder. The ad transmits to the viewer an intimate atmosphere of very close relationships between the two men and between the men and the dog. This disrupts habitual narratives by placing the dog physically

**Figure 6.** Non-cooperation: Sublimated nature, the beautiful Jungle. Source: *Terraeco* N° 21 (January 2011), p. 2.

at the level of the conversation between the two men, while the men's relationship is ambiguous. Yet the Promethean lens is still present with a headline celebrating "heroes." This juxtaposition of closeness and heroism, and of figurative elements as subversive and scriptural elements as conformist, helps build a bricolage of gender identity (hybrid, fluid, and hermaphrodite) as an emerging gender discourse within sustainable communication (Figure 9).

## Discussion

Informing sustainable marketing practices with alternative representations and plural brand positioning might help improve the performance of sustainable branding by using underinvested and less caricatured discourses about sustainability. Following this objective, this study offers researchers and managers an opportunity to rethink the intersection of sustainable branding and gender. In particular, a macro-social perspective allows a deepening of sustainable narratives proposed by brands that are discovering social dimensions useful for connecting consumers with brand discourses to advance a sustainable agenda. We therefore propose to place our findings in the French



**Figure 7.** Cooperation + control: the myth of the labyrinth. Source: *Télérama* N° 3250 (April 2012), p. 29.

feminist macro-context (e.g., "*context of context*" in Askegaard and Linnet 2011) by focusing on the gaps identified by our analysis and reflecting on the obstacles that impede the emergence of efficient sustainable branding. After summing up the general theoretical implications of sustainability, gender, and advertising, we discuss three aspects of French feminist thought that have an impact on the results – Ecofeminism, French Feminism, and Multicultural/Ethnic feminism – in which we invite academics and practitioners to engage in promoting the sustainable agenda further.

### Sustainability, Gender, and Advertising

This macro-oriented study confirms that brand communication focuses almost exclusively on environmental problems and that social questions have been abandoned. This is in line with the green business vision (Lafferty and Meadowcroft 2000; Villalba 2010). Recent research points out the progress made since the mid-2000s (McDonagh, Dobscha, and Prothero 2012) of more responsible forms of communication and a stronger attachment to Elkington's (1998) "triple bottom line." However, this investigation of a large set of ads in France between 2007 and 2012 shows that anthropocentrism and environmentalism persists as the dominant paradigm. This is reflected in the overinvestment of the Prometheus discourse vs. other potential sustainable brand narratives.

**Figure 8.** Control + cooperation: the myth of the labyrinth (gender roles inversion).
Source: *Télérama* N° 3217 – September 2011, p. 12.

The dominant sustainable paradigm (Kilbourne 2004) remains the rule when brands communicate about sustainability. This study shows that the predominant Promethean discourse, established as "green business," has become a managerial norm or an advertising "code" that reproduces the ideology of economic progress based on increased consumption or global economic liberalism. This is poles apart from a reform in consumer habits and follows a dominant and inappropriate "techno-fix" discourse (Burgess 2003; Ehrenfeld 1978; Kilbourne 1995; Sanne 2005). Paradoxically, in France, institutionalizing sustainability at the highest state echelon ultimately promotes even more consumption (Cohen 2007; Kolandai-Matchett 2009; Mont and Plepys 2008). Thus, the challenge remains of finding ways to raise awareness of the misuse of the concept of sustainability, its ambiguous relationship with consumer logic, and its appropriation by major brands (Kilbourne 2004; Kilbourne and Pickett 2008; McDonagh 1998). Moreover, this promethean myth of Man as a "civilizer" reminds us of other facets of the myth. Indeed, Prometheus is also the representation of the conflicting relationship between Man and Nature. By stressing control all the time, advertising refers back to the desire for domination and power that can generate the contradictory reactions from consumers, especially in a context that is critical for environmental discourses. If the advertisements lose their credibility, then these discourses might have an unconscious, anxiety-provoking facet: that of Promethean man undergoing

ultimate punishment of eternal torture. This research points out these contradictions, but proposes that marketers use diverse ways of representing and promoting sustainable brand narratives, especially in terms of gender.

This research demonstrates an explicit connection between masculine values and a predominant approach to problems of sustainability, which is rarely mentioned by the SD literature in the consumer research field. Sustainable advertising based on control (or its corollary, domination) or on power, heroism, rationality, utilitarianism, or scientific Cartesianism reproduces en masse conservative masculine values as they are generally analyzed in the Western context (Holt and Thompson 2004; Ourahmoune and Nyeck 2007; Schroeder and Zwick 2004; Tuncay and Otnes 2008). Moreover, in the French context, social scientists agree that bourgeois values can be identified with virility (Badinter 1992; Bourdieu 1998), particularly in their desire to break with aristocratic principles (Laqueur 1992; Vigarello 2004). In view of this, the aesthetic codes used in advertising personifying control as the means to develop sustainability show men's upright torsos, their firm, muscular, and masculine bodies, and their faces showing unequivocal strength. When men are portrayed in more vulnerable positions – as ageing or adolescent – they no longer represent the Promethean myth. Their position shifts inexorably to the opposite position in the square entitled "cooperation," whose archetypal discourse is that of the myth of Gaia.

In this case, women are widely used to represent the dialectic of conservation and the image of nature as welcoming and safe (Kilbourne 2004). Thus, a clear analogy is made between the feminine figure and the beauty of nature. Conservative feminine roles are evident, since women are associated with their domestic or cosmetic roles. Overall, sustainable advertising uses the dominant images of advertising discourse in general. It fails to take into account the public role of women, notably in politics and associations, and in the advances made by sustainable values within society. Women are primarily represented in domestic, homemaking tasks. This corroborates research which shows that sustainable actions are passed on by the mother, but deprives them of a broader role in society (Norgaard 2005; Stevens 2010). SD advertising lacks much of women's ability to be "self-in-relation-to-nature" (Dobscha and Ozanne 2001), or their sense of agency allowing an impact on the communities they belong to (e.g. family, schools, workplace) and on society.

From a theoretical viewpoint, this polarization between masculinity and femininity, between control and cooperation, and between science and nature revives a question posed by feminist theory, which we will discuss next. This brings us back to the call of Dobscha and Prothero (2012), who suggest that feminist thought is a fertile area for finding solutions to sustainability problems.

## Ecofeminism

Exposing the connection between environmental and patriarchal strategies of exploitation and oppression is the pivotal

**Figure 9.** Control + cooperation: closeness and heroisms, the ambiguous narratives.
Source: *Le Magazine du Monde*, (November 17, 2012), pp. 24-25.

concern of ecofeminism. As Mies and Shiva (1993) pointed out, "Wherever women acted against ecological destruction or/and the threat of atomic annihilation, they immediately became aware of the connection between patriarchal violence against women, other people and nature" (p. 14). The ecofeminist perspective first exposed by French thinker Françoise D'Eaubonne (1974) stems largely from Lovelock's (2007) Gaia principle, which states that the earth is a physical, living being. It also stems from Allen (1986) and Christ (1990), who articulated this notion in mythological terms by invoking ancient images of Mother Earth as an all-embracing goddess. In promoting these ideas and symbols, many ecofeminists seek to alter patriarchal structures of power. In this respect, ecofeminism is both a form of protest against the often irreparable damage inflicted upon the planet and a means of mobilizing women as a community whose distinctive identity results from its cooperation with the earth's living energies. However, many feminist critics acknowledge technology's inevitability and even encourage women to promote it. Braidotti (1996) argued that both technophobia and technophilia evince narrow-minded mentalities.

The exploration of issues regarding the relationship between feminism and technology is a much more prominent aspect of Anglo-American feminism than of French feminism. It is a distinctive feature of feminist theory in the Anglophone world. The French paradox is that ecofeminism is a French invention that turned into an "Anglophone exception," as it has never had success in France among theorists and activists. This explains the extent to which the dialectics of sustainability, nature, technology, and gender remain free of critical dimensions within mass-market (sustainable) advertising and make room for dissonant discourses defending the ideas of sustainability and gender inequality at the same time. Feminism in France is known abroad under the label of French theory or French feminism, which we will discuss in the context of this research.

## French Feminism

This research recognizes that the ecofeminist lens encapsulates the terms of the sustainable debate in communication by questioning the duality of Cartesian thought. However, it also notes that new ideas are emerging in the links between sustainability and gender in advertising. The myth of the labyrinth reminds us that contradictory and fragmented discourses are present in sustainable advertising. The authors find an emerging discourse that makes gender relationships more complex by presenting men in more feminine roles and vice versa, especially in relation to the debates about technology and gender as well as technology and nature. This marginal brand positioning is made possible by deconstructing socio-semiotically the plural sustainable values produced and mediated by the marketplace.

Haraway (1991) developed a constructionist view that nature is a cultural fabrication and proposed that feminism should promote a world where men and women can learn to accept and cultivate their "permanently partial identities and contradictory standpoints" (p. 154). This would lead to a radical debunking of the binary oppositions on which Western

culture has tenaciously relied to assert the superiority of the self over the other and to enforce "practices of domination of women, people of colour, nature, workers, animals – in short, domination of all constituted as others" (p. 178).

In the country of deconstruction à la Derrida (1967) and in the strand of research that has been called French theory or French feminism, which emanates from post-May 1968 post-structuralist views, it is depressing to note the extent to which binary oppositions remain the drivers for French sustainable advertising. In broad terms, structuralism, poststructuralism, and psychoanalysis have attracted the interest of several French feminist theorists who have provided perspectives from which feminist objectives may be enhanced. They have emphasized the need to scrutinize patriarchal formations in two directions, not only by using a theory capable of describing particular types of sociopolitical organization, but also by using theories capable of relating a society's structures to the operations of language and ideology at both the personal and the communal levels. They established a critique of the codes and conventions that sustain patriarchal language, on the one hand, and an exploration of the possibility of devising alternative forms of expression, on the other. These underpin the constitution and functioning of personal relationships at the micro level of societal organization, and of the collective structures of power at the macro level. They also serve as a useful grid of analysis for the sustainable agenda.

French theory and French feminism were vehemently criticized as imperialist Anglo-Saxon constructions of feminism in France, which do not match French feminists' reality (Delphy 1995; Wright 2000). However, a widespread tendency to focus on "psychoanalytic and deconstructive literary analyses, especially those by the French writers Luce Irigaray, Julia Kristeva and Hélène Cixous" (Adkins and Leonard 1996, p. 3), comes at the expense of "French radical materialist feminism" (p. 2). Thus, French feminist theory, compared to Anglophone feminism, is distinguished by an approach that is more philosophical and literary. Its writings tend to be effusive and metaphorical, being less concerned with political doctrine (Moi 1987). Using rampant symbolism and elitism, French theory also embodied a form of depoliticizing, or even a weakening, of its discourse in the "society of signs," the consumer society (Baudrillard 1974) that makes feminist discourse obsolete or uses it as a fashion accessory by marketers. The latter will use any means of subversion to serve its mercantile interests using the usual advertising discourses. The caricatural inversion of gender roles in sustainable advertising exemplifies this idea. This echoes Catterall, Maclaran, and Stevens' (2005) observations regarding postfeminism, which dilutes the feminist action within the postmodern consumer society as a product-image, a lifestyle that can be achieved through consumption and therefore explaining the decline of activism.

Alongside this postfeminist discourse there has been a shift away from activist feminist movements that seek to bring about political change (and adopt an implicitly anti-capitalist, anti-market stance) to a "market feminism" (Scott 2000), which sees industrialisation and the market system as making a large contribution to the growth of feminism (Catterall, Maclaran, and Stevens 2005, p. 490)

Sustainable ideals must succeed to secure coherent positioning of their paradigmatic assumptions on consumption in postmodern societies (see the first section of this discussion), but activism must not be abandoned for the sake of theorization only. The experience and controversies brought about by feminist thought deserve a close examination. Several reports have mentioned the decline of syndicalism and especially women's participation in unions and associations (Contrepois 2006), which means that, from both a radical and a postfeminist perspective, activism in France has significantly decreased. It has left room for insufficiently contested dominant market norms regarding sustainability and social action, which are generally inequality issues. This has led to the institutionalization of sustainability and the women's cause as diluted concerns within dominant marketplace ideologies. Yet, a few activist feminist movements have emerged recently expressing new concerns in a multiethnic France, and the results of our study again show a gap between feminist social values and their embodiment in sustainable communication.

## Multiculturalism and Ethnicity Issues

The findings of this study show that social and cooperative questions are beginning to appear in some forms of advertising, although they maintain an anthropomorphic stance. Contemporary French feminist thought has started to address the confluence of sexist ideologies geared towards the commodification of the gendered subject with definitions of racial and ethnic alterity and colonial agendas. This work is crucial to the sustainable agenda understood as a megatrend. It investigates the psychological connotations of foreignness as an internal condition producing differences not just between but also within subjects. The three main areas within which French feminists of diverse provenance and orientation have approached these issues are as follows: the sociological exploration of parallels in the genesis and practice of racism and sexism, the theorization of the affective dimension of cultural displacement, and the elaboration of feminist perspectives on race and postcolonialism in non-metropolitan France.

In the militant scene, a new kind of feminism has emerged since 2002 through the organization *Ni Putes Ni Soumises* (Neither Whores nor Doormats), protesting equally against racism and obscurantism and concerned about foreigners or immigrants. Another organization, the more radical *Féministes Indigènes* (Indigenous Feminists), also denounced racism and North-South oppression, following the example of black feminism in the United States. These ethnic discourses are a new trend in the media and revitalize French feminist discourse. The hundreds of sustainable advertisements analyzed for this research did not mention these concerns, whether explicitly, symbolically, or even figuratively through representations of diversity or the collusion of sustainable discourse with the ethnic or North-South issues that are crucial to a sustainable world. This gap shows a disconnect between the macro-social forces that

shape progressive ideas in France and their inclusion by managers in brand discourses. This state of affairs might explain why consumers judge sustainable communications as just another marketing trick, with so many brands using a narrative linked to ecology while other social concerns are still ignored. Our research shows that managerial discourse related to sustainability as seen in brand discourse uses a very poor reference to progressive feminist concerns as deep social markers of French socio-history. This distortion might generate skepticism or indifference among consumers, leading to a negative image of sustainable communication as an efficient tool. This negative image may result from a lack of connection with wider sustainable concerns that create inconsistencies in brand narratives that promote sustainability with conservative gender representations.

## Conclusion

Two conclusions can be drawn from this research. First, we propose that sustainable advertising should impose itself as a fundamental and radical shift in the position of advertising as a response to the challenge of sustainability (Kilbourne 2004), where a change in production and consumption paradigms to ensure respect for the natural, economic, and social environment. Advertising messages must personify this vision, which all the stakeholders (with the triple bottom line) agree with, by promoting the products and highlighting the link with environmental and social concerns (Leonidou et al. 2011; Prothero and Fitchett 2000; Zinkhan and Carlson 1995). Thus, the discourse of sustainable brands is by nature macro-social, to enable individuals to position themselves as part of the human community in relation to the biotic community (Kilbourne 1995). Although the theoretical debate on the effectiveness of sustainable marketing and its communication is a recurring one, our research questions the compatibility of conservative norms of gender with sustainable communication, which, by definition, defends a more or less clean break with the dominant model of productivism.

Second, research on sustainability in consumer research initially concentrated on the core of the subject, but at this stage, the agenda for research on sustainability needs to widen to include notions of gender, class, and ethnicity to generate new knowledge. This research, by offering a deconstruction of available brand narratives about sustainability, has opened up an exploration of the intersection with gender representations and their implications for feminist thought. The paradoxical French context, which emanates from both ecofeminism and French feminism, shows the macro and socio-historically constructed tensions that impede an evolution towards more sustainable ideals. This can inform how the divorce between theory and practice can alter the agenda for sustainability as a megatrend.

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