

**ΠΑΝΕΠΙΣΤΗΜΙΟ ΔΥΤΙΚΗΣ ΜΑΚΕΔΟΝΙΑΣ**  
**ΠΑΙΔΑΓΩΓΙΚΗ ΣΧΟΛΗ**  
**ΤΜΗΜΑ ΝΗΠΙΑΓΩΓΩΝ**

**ΜΕΤΑΠΤΥΧΙΑΚΟ ΠΡΟΓΡΑΜΜΑ ΣΠΟΥΔΩΝ**  
**ΠΟΛΙΤΙΣΜΙΚΕΣ ΣΠΟΥΔΕΣ**  
**ΣΗΜΕΙΩΤΙΚΗ & ΕΠΙΚΟΙΝΩΝΙΑ**

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**«Φεμινισμός και Διαφήμιση:**

Διερευνώντας τα έμφυλα στερεότυπα στην καμπάνια #whipit (LABELS AGAINST WOMEN: Don't let labels hold you back) της Pantene»

**“Fem-vertising:**

Gender Stereotypes in Pantene's Campaign #whipit (LABELS AGAINST WOMEN: Don't let labels hold you back)”



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## **ΠΝΕΥΜΑΤΙΚΑ ΔΙΚΑΙΩΜΑΤΑ**

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Διερευνώντας τα έμφυλα στερεότυπα στην καμπάνια #whipit (LABELS AGAINST WOMEN: Don't let labels hold you back) της Pantene»

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Δηλώνω υπεύθυνα ότι η παρούσα εργασία δεν αποτελεί προϊόν λογοκλοπής, είναι προϊόν αυστηρά προσωπικής εργασίας, η βιβλιογραφία και οι πηγές που έχω χρησιμοποιήσει, έχουν δηλωθεί κατάλληλα με παραπομπές και αναφορές. Τα σημεία όπου έχω χρησιμοποιήσει ιδέες, κείμενο ή / και πηγές άλλων συγγραφέων, αναφέρονται ευδιάκριτα στο κείμενο με την κατάλληλη παραπομπή και η σχετική αναφορά περιλαμβάνεται στο τμήμα των βιβλιογραφικών αναφορών με πλήρη περιγραφή. Επισημαίνεται πως η συγκεκριμένη επιλογή βοηθά στον περιορισμό της λογοκλοπής διασφαλίζοντας έτσι τον/τη συγγραφέα.

**Ημερομηνία: 14/11/2017**

**Η δηλούσα Β. Ε. Πασχάλη**

## Abstract

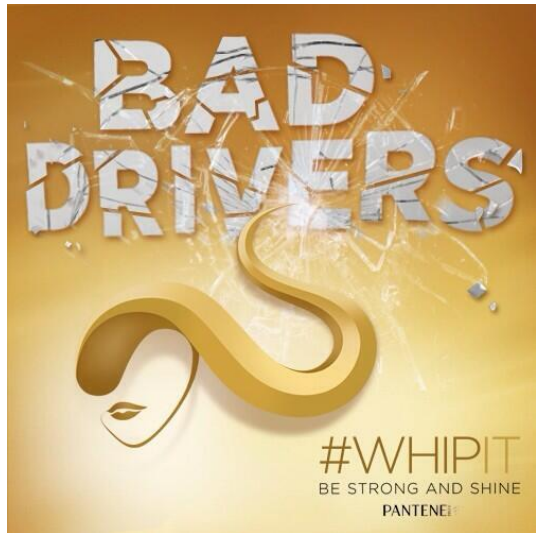
In this paper we made the best of the perspectives of semiology to analyze how social movements like feminism and scientific methodologies can be of any use in the advertising business. More specifically, we took Pantene's commercial 'Don't let labels hold you back' from #WHIPIT campaign and discussed first its profound messages: femininity as social construction, women's suffocation, gender bias and the feminist awakening. And the not so profound ones: distortion of meaning, delusional representation, deception of the senses. The commercial is a characteristic sample of the representational reality around us where nothing is what it seems and where, oddly but frequently, the meta- message can conflict the message itself. Using John Berger's Way of Seeing as semiotic compass and inspiration, taking also under consideration the cultural context of the Philippines, we dove into the visual text. After forming it into units of significance, we took a transdisciplinary view where history, filmography and art theory meet; only to put it in the end into an advertising context. Part of the analysis, also, concerned the musical system and how it interacts with the visual and the linguistic. In the end, we discussed how the social signs were advertising signs in disguise and how social theory and sales are two different things.

## Περίληψη

*Σε αυτή την εργασία θα ασχοληθούμε με το πώς κοινωνικά κινήματα και επιστημονικά μεθοδολογικά σχήματα, όπως ο φεμινισμός αξιοποιούνται από τη διαφήμιση. Πιο συγκεκριμένα ασχοληθήκαμε με τη διαφήμιση της Pantene 'Don't let labels hold you back' από την καμπάνια #WHIPIT. Αρχικά αναλύσαμε τα προφανή μηνύματα του διαφημιστικού σποτ που είναι: το γυναικείο φύλο ως κοινωνική κατασκευή, η καταπίεση των γυναικών και η φεμινιστική αφύπνιση. Στη συνέχεια προχωρήσαμε στα όχι και τόσο προφανή: στη διαστρέβλωση του νοήματος, στην παραισθησιακή αναπαράσταση σημείων και στη σύγχυση των αισθήσεων. Το διαφημιστικό είναι ένα χαρακτηριστικό παράδειγμα της αναπαραστατικής πραγματικότητας γύρω μας, όπου τίποτα δεν είναι αυτό που φαίνεται και ότι πολλές φορές το μετα- μήνυμα μπορεί να υποσκάπτει ή και να το ακυρώνει το μήνυμα καθεαυτό. Έτσι ώστε να οδηγούμαστε συχνά σε παραχάραξη της αντίληψής μας. Με έμπνευση και οδηγό τα κείμενα του John Berger στο περίφημο Ways of Seeing και λαμβάνοντας υπόψη το Φιλιπινέζικο πολιτισμικό υπόβαθρο, εμβαθύνσαμε μεμονωμένα στο οπτικό κείμενο της διαφήμισης. Διακρίνοντας σε σημασιολογικές μονάδες το οπτικό υλικό, επιχειρήσαμε αρχικά μια διαεπιστημονική προσέγγιση από το χώρο της Ιστορίας της Τέχνης, του Κινηματογράφου και της Αισθητικής. Μόνο και μόνο για να το εντάξουμε εντέλει στο πραγματικό του συμφραζόμενο, στο χώρο των πωλήσεων. Μας απασχόλησε, επίσης, το μουσικό σύστημα και ο τρόπος με τον οποίο παίρνει θέση αναδεικνύοντας το οπτικό περιεχόμενο. Στη συνέχεια, σχολιάσαμε πώς το κοινωνικό μήνυμα ήταν στην πραγματικότητα διαφημιστικό και πώς η κοινωνική θεωρία και πωλήσεις είναι και θα παραμείνουν δυο διαφορετικά πράγματα.*

70%  
OF MEN  
THINK THAT  
*women*  
NEED TO  
DOWNPLAY THEIR  
PERSONALITY  
TO BE ACCEPTED.

#WHIPIT  
PANTENE



Sheryl Sandberg shared a link.  
December 7

This is one of the most powerful videos I have ever seen illustrating how when women and men do the same things, they are seen in completely different ways. Really worth watching. Lean In prize of the day for sure!

Congratulations to Marc Pritchard and the Pantene team and Andrew Robertson and the BBDO team.



Pantene Philippines | #Whiplt | Labels Against Women

It's time we put an end to labels against women. Pantene believes that when you stand strong, you shine.

Like · Share

2,277

4,736 people like this.





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## REFERENCES

## I. INTRODUCTION

Could it be that our society is still a gender biased one? Do women face double standards in the workplace, in relationships, in everyday life? Pantene Philippines, the well-known brand, launched a local campaign in 2013, hashtag whipit, about gender inequality. The campaign would have been of minor importance, if its commercial hadn't gone viral on online platforms and social media in few weeks. In short period of time, #whipit caught international attention and suddenly the vulnerable issue of gender bias bounced back in fashion.

On November 9<sup>th</sup> 2013 Pantene Philippines uploaded their latest commercial ad, "Don't let labels hold you back", on their Utube channel. The central message was about prompting women to reach their potential turning their backs at society's expectations of them. The commercial reminded them of how unhappy they are as they live in a world dominated by men and how often they are being cruelly discriminated in their everyday life.

One day later the same ad aired on local TV. The #whipit campaign also organized an online forum featuring successful and influential women who discussing the ways "they beat the odds", encouraged other women to do the same. The discussion took place few days later on November 26<sup>th</sup> on social network Rappler, an online partner of Pantene Philippines. The virtual chat pushed #whipit commercial to number 1 place in the Philippines and to number 3 globally on Twitter. The campaign also exploded after Sheryl Sandberg, Facebook COO and influencer, picked the commercial and posted it on her facebook wall on December 7<sup>th</sup>. Ten days later, the video reached 8 million views on Utube. Because of the massive appeal of the ad, P&G launched an international media campaign while renaming it from #whipit to #shinestrong indicating at the same time a change in strategy.

In this essay, we analyze the initial commercial of the campaign. First we go through briefly Philippines' history and feminist movements. Then we approach the commercial through the lens of the history of gaze and of the theories of gender as social construction and we discuss the findings.



In the end, we discuss the connection between sales and feminism and in what ways the advertising business can derive from them and take advantage. This approach is basically qualitative and demonstrates that a semiotic analysis of visuals can be tested to identify patterns of construction of meaning.

Research Questions that we had to answer:

- What kind of signs are they formed in every scene? How do they echo the feminist theory?
- How do signs relate to each other? What kind of meanings are they formed?
- How do the cinematic features form signs? How do they relate to the visual images? Do they confirm the visuals?
- How do the music system amplify the meaning of the visual signs?
- What are the dominant visual images? How are they described and what do they symbolize?
- How do the various message elements function in terms of semiotic meaning: iconic, symbolic, indexical?

## **II. HISTORICAL CONTEXT**

### **THE PHILIPPINES: HISTORY AND RELIGION**

The Philippines is an archipelago inhabited by 100 million people (Aug 2015). It was named after Prince Philip of Spain (later King Philip II) by the Spanish explorer Ruy Lopez de Villalobos during 1542- 1546. Manila, the capital of the Philippines, is located in Luzon, the largest island group. It is a metropolis of 13 million people. The official spoken languages are Filipino and English, but there are also 19 other recognized languages.

The Philippines is the only country in Southeast Asia that was subjected to Western colonization, long before it had the opportunity to develop either a centralized government or a dominant culture (Rood, 2016).

The inhabitants of the Philippines in ancient times were a diverse agglomeration of peoples who arrived in various waves from the Asian mainland and maintained little contact with their origins. It was only through trade that some cultural influence came from South Asia and Indonesia, such as the Sanskrit- based writing system, but the influence was little compared to Chinese and Indonesian cultures. The Philippines never adapted the religious system of Southeast Asia: Hinduism or Buddhism. First they were Muslims, until the arrival of the Spanish. Then they became Catholics. When the Spanish dominated the Philippines the 16<sup>th</sup> century, they imposed a strong wave of proselytism that has lasted until nowadays. Today more than 86% of the population declares Roman Catholic. After the Spanish- American war in 1898 the control of the Philippines was handed over to the United States, until 1935 when the U.S. gave its approval for the Philippines to establish a Commonwealth. It was only until the 4th July in 1946 that the Philippines gained a full independence and set its own Republic.

### **THE PHILIPPINES AND FEMINISM**

In Philippine history, we see that women were treated differently in different periods. Their position in society has not been irrelevant with the western imperialism and with the religious

systems that were brought at it. The indigenous society of ancient times, before the coming of Spaniards, was not patriarchal and women had a respected social role. Women were considered the guardians of the secrets of life and nature (Qindoza- Santiago, 1996). Also, gender roles were not clear-cut, both men and women were free to participate in every aspect of everyday life without restrictions. All of that changed when the ancient indigenous order and culture were infiltrated by Christianity and/or Islam (Qindoza- Santiago, 1996).

When the Spaniards conquered (mid 16<sup>th</sup> century), the Western doctrine which was centered on the Roman Catholic religion was imposed by Spanish priests and missionaries. That was the beginning of the patriarchy. Catholicism praised motherhood, virginity and humility among women, so missionaries with their teachings gradually bottomed women to the lowest of the hierarchy. Women had to serve: first God, second the priest, God's representative, third the alferaz or the gobernadorcillo, fourth the landlord and his wife and fifth their father or husband (Qindoza- Santiago, 1996).

It took over two centuries for women to organize proper resistance and to form feminist organizations in order to stand up for their rights. In the first decade of 20<sup>th</sup> century two associations were formed, the Asociacion Feminista Filipina (1905) and the Asociacion Feminista Llonga (1906) which promote the idea of equal political rights with men. The women's right to vote was finally won in 1937 after a referendum by women voters that "YES" votes overcame the 400,000, a number quite above from the 300,000 quota stipulated by the 1935 Constitution (Rood, 2016).

The women's suffrage was an actual accomplishment that was fought hard at that time. In lawyer's, Perfecto Laguios, book *Our Modern Woman: A National Problem* (1932), which was a letter addressed to Filipina women who were about to take part in the referendum, we can see what was the dominant view of women:

*Looking around him (Filipino man), he can see the difference between Filipina women and women of other lands. Her splendor immediately comes to mind: her dewy eyes, her*

*raven hair, her demure smile, her soft hands, her attractive figure- he looks up to these and worship them from afar.*

*But with the widespread occurrence of women's right to vote, all of these will change. The leader of the women in this movement aims to be on an equal footing with men, to have the same rights and responsibilities. If these are obtained the Filipina woman will no longer experience the same high regard with Filipino men have for her.*

Obviously, Filipina woman was objectified and, therefore, considered a second- class citizen. The goal of her life was to maintain the goodwill of a man who, on the other side, felt quite threatened by her desire to become equal.

The difficulty to overcome these social stereotypes was shown the next decades when women were vaguely visible in mainstream politics or other professions. Between 1940 and 1971 more and more women had been educated, but only 26 were elected in the public office (Ramos-Shahani, 2012). Things slightly improved in the 70s. Particularly, in 1973 the Philippines had their first female Supreme Court justice (Cecilia Munoz Palma), even before the United States had one (Sandra Day O'Connor in 1981). Since 1970, the country has made some significant progress regarding gender disparities. Firstly, two female presidents had been elected: Corazon Aquino (1986-1992) and Gloria Macapagal- Arroyo (2001-2010). Secondly, in the late 80s, the family code had somewhat become more liberal. Divorces are allowed in cases of psychological incapacity, physical violence or pressure to change religion or political beliefs and are also recognized even in case they are obtained abroad. Although, on the surface, that was a step forward for equal partnership within the marriage; in substance Filipinas were more ran over by this, as former divorce laws actually protected them from abandonment and loss of support by wayward husbands. Furthermore, in the early 1990s women were found to be more than men in many professions, such as in domestic services (91 percent), professional and technical positions (59.4 percent), or in sales (57.9 percent) (see in <http://www.nationsonline.org/oneworld/History/Philippines-history.htm>)

At the same time, women's political fights haven't stopped either. In 1982 women staged the first broad-based female march with representatives from a broad political spectrum. The committee that put together the event later paved the way for the formation of General Assembly Binding Women for Reforms, Integrity, Equality, Leadership and Action (GABRIELA) in March 1984 which helped among other things to maintain the feminist movement alive and present.

## **FILIPPINES TODAY**

One would think that the Philippines has succeeded in gender equality with all the feminist activities and actions, that the example of a female president can become a source of inspiration for the everyday woman and give her a taste of how much she can achieve. However, this is far from the truth. Things have changed only on paper. The quality of the lives of the women in the country still remains poor and their position oppressed.

Statistics show that there are double standards at work; women receive 40 centavos compared to one peso received by men for equal work (Qindoza- Santiago, 1996). Furthermore, household is abandoned on women who, the employed ones, carry double burden. Often relatives or servants, such as helpers or child caretakers, share this burden but this is considered to be the same as exploiting some women only to free others. It is beyond doubt that the society still remains deeply patriarchal and change moves too slowly.

Finally, what it needs to be shifted in order to succeed a real change of attitude are the cultural fantasies about women; the cultural conception of the Filipina's role and image. In advertising industry, magazines, television or other media women are shown vulnerable, moral, sexy and sweet, with porcelain skins. The roles of the mother and the wife are still idealized. These unreal stereotypes are brainwashing and forming generations of Filipinos. This is why the Philippines are still in need of feminism and the feminist movement.



### III. THEORETICAL FRAMES

#### FEMININITY AND SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION

It is widely known that gender is a much more complicated concept than a biological result, as Gayle Rubin (1975) has put it: “Sex/ gender system [is] a set of arrangements by which a society transforms biological sexuality into products of human activity, and in which their transformed sexual needs are met.” In other words, it is one thing to be born male/ female and another to be man/ woman. Man/ woman are impersonated social roles that have been formed through time. In order to understand woman’s role in western cultures, we have to pour light on the patriarchy in these societies. It’s undoubtable truth that femininity has been formed under the weight of male expectations, tastes and appetite. She has been always defined by a man. Even the way she looks at herself is from a male perspective. In Lee Bartky’s (1990) words: “In patriarchal culture, a panoptical male connoisseur resides within the consciousness of most women: They stand perpetually before his gaze and under his judgment. Woman lives her body as seen by another, an anonymous patriarchal other.”

Also the attitude towards life is a matter of gender as well. Socially men are the active ones, determined to project their own fantasies onto women, whereas women are passive, restricted and addressed to as sexual objects. In the social narration of life, man’s role is to advance the story, to make things happen, while women are directed or watch (Henley & Freeman, 1995). He is the representative of power which coincides with the active power of the erotic look (Mulvey, 1999). Women are just a display whose role is to magnetize male gaze and animalist power.

Being a woman means to follow certain codes of appearance and behavior; her body figure is measured and her bodily gestures, postures, movements are confined and standardized. So far the female body in fashion industry has been shown emaciated with small breasts and narrow hips; a silhouette that seemed more appropriate to an adolescent boy or girl (Bartky, 1990). In order to maintain her slim figure, she is having her appetite monitored

and in repression. She is more willing to become her own enemy than to respond to her own physical needs. Also, a feminine body posture is supposed to be restrained and not to occupy a lot of space, whereas the masculine posture is usually expanded and stretched. Gestures, also, differ in the sexes. Men adopt gestures of power, dominance and imperialism, while the gestures of the females tend to be those of subordination and submission (Henley & Freeman, 1995), otherwise they would be considered unladylike.

Apart from advertising, the dominant ideology about women was clear in cinematography as well. In traditional cinema of Hollywood, women's roles were created for the spectator which was identified as male. Laura Mulvey argued in her essay "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" that the gaze that Hollywood cinema catered for was a male gaze. She argued that mainstream cinema generally places a male character at the centre of the narrative which the audience is assumed to relate to whilst women are positioned for visual impact and erotic pleasure. Furthermore she argued that female characters who did not adhere to the female stereotype were punished as a threat to both the characters on screen and the male spectator. Once more, it is shown how femininity was directed by show business and the media.

## **FEMININITY AND GENDER**

Feminism is said to be the movement to end women's oppression. One possible way to understand 'woman' in this claim is to take it as a sex term: 'woman' picks out human females and being a human female depends on various biological and anatomical features (like genitalia). Historically many feminists have understood 'woman' differently: not as a sex term, but as a gender term that depends on social and cultural factors (like social position). In so doing, they distinguished sex (being female or male) from gender (being a woman or a man), although most ordinary language users appear to treat the two interchangeably. More recently this distinction has come under sustained attack and many



view it nowadays with (at least some) suspicion. This entry outlines and discusses distinctly feminist debates on sex and gender.

One way to interpret Beauvoir's claim that one is not born but rather becomes a woman is to take it as a claim about gender socialization: females become women through a process whereby they acquire feminine traits and learn feminine behaviour. Masculinity and femininity are thought to be products of nurture or how individuals are brought up. They are causally constructed (Haslanger, 1995: 98): social forces either have a causal role in bringing gendered individuals into existence or (to some substantial sense) shape the way we are qua women and men. And the mechanism of construction is social learning. For instance, Kate Millett takes gender differences to have “essentially cultural, rather than biological bases” that result from differential treatment (1971, 28–9). For her, gender is “the sum total of the parents', the peers', and the culture's notions of what is appropriate to each gender by way of temperament, character, interests, status, worth, gesture, and expression” (Millett 1971, 31).

Feminine and masculine gender-norms, however, are problematic in that gendered behaviour conveniently fits with and reinforces women's subordination so that women are socialised into subordinate social roles: they learn to be passive, ignorant, docile, emotional helpmeets for men (Millett 1971, 26). However, since these roles are simply learned, we can create more equal societies by ‘unlearning’ social roles. That is, feminists should aim to diminish the influence of socialisation.

Judith Butler critiques the sex/gender distinction on two grounds. She critiques gender realism with her normativity argument (Buttler, 1990) and also holds that the sex/gender distinction is unintelligible. Butler's normativity argument is not straightforwardly directed at the metaphysical perspective of gender realism, but rather at its political counterpart: identity politics. This is a form of political mobilization based on membership in some group (e.g. racial, ethnic, cultural, gender) and group membership is thought to be delimited by some common experiences, conditions or features that define the group (Heyes & others 2000, 58;).

Feminist identity politics, then, presupposes gender realism in that feminist politics is said to be mobilized around women as a group (or category) where membership in this group is fixed by some condition, experience or feature that women supposedly share and that define their gender.

Butler also argues that sex assignment is in some sense oppressive. Again, this appears to be because of Butler's general suspicion of classification: sex classification can never be merely descriptive but always has a normative element reflecting evaluative claims of those who are powerful. Conducting a feminist genealogy of the body (or examining why sexed bodies are thought to come naturally as female and male), then, should ground feminist practice (Butler 1993, 28–9).

Feminists should examine and uncover ways in which social construction and certain acts that constitute sex shape our understandings of sexed bodies, what kinds of meanings bodies acquire and which practices and illocutionary speech acts ‘make’ our bodies into sexes. Doing so enables feminists to identify how sexed bodies are socially constructed in order to resist such construction.

However, given what was said above, it is far from obvious what we should make of Butler's claim that sex “was always already gender” (1999, 11).

Stone (2007) takes this to mean that sex is gender but goes on to question it arguing that the social construction of both sex and gender does not make sex identical to gender. According to Stone, it would be more accurate for Butler to say that claims about sex imply gender norms. That is, many claims about sex traits (like ‘females are physically weaker than males’) actually carry implications about how women and men are expected to behave. To some extent the claim describes certain facts. But, it also implies that females are not expected to do much heavy lifting and that they would probably not be good at it. So, claims about sex are not identical to claims about gender; rather, they imply claims about gender norms (Stone 2007, 70).

We do accept: a) the feminist arguments against biological determinism and the claim that gender is socially constructed, b) the feminist critiques of prevalent understandings of gender and sex, and the distinction itself, c) the unified women's category could be articulated for feminist political purposes and illustrated (at least) two things. *First, that gender — or what it is to be a woman or a man — is still very much a live issue. Second, that feminists have not entirely given up the view that gender is about social factors and that it is (in some sense) distinct from biological sex. The jury is still out on what the best, the most useful or (even) the correct definition of gender is. And some contemporary feminists still find there to be value in the original 1960s sex/gender distinction<sup>1</sup>.*

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<sup>1</sup> Mikkola, Mari, (2017 Fall) "Feminist Perspectives on Sex and Gender", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/feminism-gender/> (1/8/2017).

## **JOHN BERGER AND HIS WAY OF SEEING<sup>2</sup>**

John Berger in 1972 on behalf of BBC's Channel 4, broadcasted four episodes about the philosophy of human sight. At the same time these episodes were published in a book that bore the same title as the TV episodes, *Ways of Seeing*. The second episode is about the way women experience and carry around their identity. Berger examines the idea of femininity through the history of art, fashion and advertising in western culture and comes down to the conclusion that femininity, as we know it today, is nothing more than a suppressive social construct, that has been formed through centuries.

According to Berger, women are taught to observe themselves. They become the receivers of other people's glances in order to obtain some kind of feedback. For them, every gaze is a comment on their appearance. Every glance carries the burden and the significance of a judgment. This is basically the reason why they form such a close and intimate relationship with their mirrors from an early age. Because holding a mirror means watch yourself being watched at. Hence for women, a mirror is much more than a symbol of narcissism; it is another judgment of themselves. Good feedback connotes good potential, good chance to belong to a man, which in turn determines how successful she is.

How women were looked at, also thought of and behaved as, we can see in European oil painting of 19<sup>th</sup> century. European oil painting is the foundation of 20<sup>th</sup> century advertising industry. It is obvious that above all, women were considered a sight. In a special category of paintings, nude paintings, women are naked not as they are but as we see them. In these paintings they don't seem peculiarly depicted and, yet, women don't wear any clothes. These paintings often belonged to a private collection of a man and the aim was to offer him excitement and pleasure. As pleasure and excitement would have been considered an immoral motive for ordering such paintings, painters had to disguise the real motive by making the women look the sinister ones. This is basically the reason why the naked women of the

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<sup>2</sup> The whole paragraph refers to John Berger's second TV episode of the series *Ways of Seeing* (1972) and to his book *Ways of Seeing*. London: BBC/Harmondsworth: Penguin (1972).

paintings were holding or staring themselves in mirrors, laying passively or looking seductively outside the frame; so that they can give the impressions of vanity, weakness/laziness and ownership.

The only thing that mattered in these paintings was the physical beauty of their naked figure and the devotion to the owner of the painting, their owner. Physical beauty was a privilege for women, as it made them appeal to more men. Therefore it was often given a competitive character. The most beautiful was awarded the attention of a man. Furthermore, the lack of energy and human identity, revealed their ownership. They were laying naked waiting for their man to take initiative. They didn't have any will of their own. They only looked seductively outside the frame, sending off the message of pure abandonment and availability.

The notion that women belong to men is a religious tradition that was passed on through generations; after Eve ate herself and shared with Adam the forbidden fruit, they realized their nakedness. As a result, she was punished to be subservient to her husband. According to religion female nudity is a sin because it sexually provokes men. Oddly, the sinners are never thought to be men, but women. Although this conclusion is naïve and unfair, generations of men and women were brought up to it and formed their roles and psyche.

## **TRADITIONAL GENDER STEREOTYPES IN ADVERTISING**

As Cordelia Fine states (Fine, 2010) in one combined analysis of more than 60 studies, researchers looked for reliable patterns of gender portrayals over many, many advertisements. Overall, they found reliable evidence the women are portrayed differently than men in ways that conform to traditional gender roles and stereotypes. *Women were 4 times more likely than men to not have a speaking role. Women were 3 times more likely than men to be presented as a product user rather than an authority. Women were 3.5 times more likely than*

*men to be presented at home or in a domestic environment (vs. at work). Women were 2 times more likely than men to be associated with domestic products like body care and home goods.*

Overall, it seems like there's clear evidence that portrayals of men and women in advertising are not equal but instead conform to common beliefs about appropriate gender roles and gender stereotypes. When it comes to gender stereotypes in popular media, psychologists have looked at the "masculinity" or "femininity" of the cultures themselves. According to classic measurements, "masculine" cultures are those that emphasize achievement, assertiveness, and material rewards; "feminine" cultures are instead those that emphasize cooperation, modesty, and caring for the weak. Within Europe, one of the most feminine cultures is the Netherlands whereas one of the most masculine cultures is Italy. In a recently published study, psychologists tested whether these two countries would differ in their reinforcement of traditional gender roles in advertising.

The researchers collected more than a thousand advertisements in total, some from the Netherlands and some from Italy, and they looked to see how men and women were depicted. In general, women were more likely to be sexualized than men; they were more likely to wear seductive clothing, they were often more attractive than the men in the ads, and they were more likely to be objectified. As the researchers expected, though, these gender differences were significantly larger in Italian ads. Throughout the scholarly history of examining stereotypes portrayed in popular media, scientists have wondered what the relationship is between media and society. On the one hand, some people think that the media mirrors culture. In 1987, Morris Holbrook wrote about the "mirror that advertising holds up to social mores, norms, and values." Using this metaphor, scholars have reflected on the ways roles are portrayed in advertisement, seeing it as a mere representation of what's already standard in society. By contrast, there are other scholars who maintain that media has the power to mold culture. That is, people learn appropriate roles and beliefs by observing how

people are portrayed in advertisements. Indeed, some studies have shown that stereotypes presented in advertising have the power to cause negative outcomes.

It's also interesting that the cultural differences emerged in sexualization and not in role presentation. Could these be separate issues altogether? Further research is needed to better understand the role culture plays in these advertising trends. Previous research has shown that Dutch advertising is relatively gender-neutral. For example, one study showed that ads in the Netherlands portrayed women in less sexist ways than in the UK. That is, women were less likely to be portrayed as sex objects and more likely to be portrayed in a working role.

The intent of advertising is to associate desire with commodities and services, and to cement feelings of positive affect to brands. To achieve this, advertisers must construct texts that are recognizable to viewers as ads; moreover, they must produce texts that are sufficiently compelling that viewers are motivated to decipher them. Still, the ads cannot mean anything on their own. Ads require viewers to complete their meaning, to make the necessary turns of meaning that premise giving value to a brand or a logo. No matter how much they strive to make the decoding process an identical, but inverse, replica of the encoding process, advertisers can never achieve an absolute equivalence between the encoding and the decoding processes. Nevertheless, the encoding side of the coin does establish the interpretive parameters and guidelines for making sense of the ad. Both advertisers and the viewers apply a social grammar -- a shared set of propositions about how commercials are structured and how the narrative of a commercial will unfold. Since most Americans have been watching commercials since they were 2 years old, recognizing and making sense of ad messages usually takes place at a non-reflexive level. The grammar of the ad remains unspoken -- though not necessarily out of mind, it is out of sight.

## **SEMIOTICS AND ADVERTISING**

Advertising agencies raid referent systems for visual and musical signifiers and then compress and sequence them together in a recognizable structure. Referent systems designate widely shared systems of knowledge and clusters of meaning. For the ad to work the viewer must validate the sign -- attaching a signified to the signifier. Supported by narration, music, the relationship of each image to others in the commercial, and the viewer's own knowledge of the referent system from which the signifier is drawn, the viewer is guided through this validation process.

Certain clusters of signifiers recur again and again. Often drawn from image banks and rooted in stereotypical ways of seeing they serve as markers to facilitate making sense of the commercial text. There are commercials in our database that are composed of over one hundred disparate shorts that flow at a staccato pace. In spite of this, viewers are able to easily decipher and interpret the intent of such commercials and associate both affect and a signified to a brand. Viewers well-versed in the necessary social grammar can effortlessly interpret the visual shorthand. Whether they accept the ad's intended conclusion is another matter. Jaded viewers frequently become resistant to deciphering ads because they variously perceive that ads are stupid, manipulative, consumerist, fill in your blank. The continuous tug of war between advertisers and audiences plays itself out this way, back and forth between them.

The following sections look at the agenda of commercials (the branding process); at the shorthand of visual signification (reoccurring signify clusters); and at the underlying grammar of commercials (narrative structures) used in this genre of corporate advertising.

## **VISUAL SEMIOTICS AND THE PRODUCTION OF MEANING IN ADVERTISING**

How is meaning produced and conveyed in messages that are primarily visual? This question is particularly relevant when the message is one that relies almost exclusively on visual communication cues. The production of meaning from visual messages in such visually intensive areas as advertising has been largely uninvestigated even though the question is of



tremendous importance to designers of advertising messages. The reason is because of the difficulty of capturing visual meaning and the lack of structured research approaches to code and categorize such information.

Visual Semiotics - Studies of meaning evolve from semiotics, a philosophical approach that seeks to interpret messages in terms of their signs and patterns of symbolism. The study of semiotics, or semiology in France, originated in a literary or linguistic context and has been expanding in a number of directions since the early turn-of-the century work of C.S. Peirce in the U.S. and Levi Strauss and Ferdinand Saussure in France. A sign can be a word, a sound, or a visual image. Saussure divides a sign into two components--the signifier (the sound, image, or word) and the signified, which is the concept the signifier represents, or the meaning. As Berger points out, the problem of meaning arises from the fact that the relation between the signifier and the signified is arbitrary and conventional. In other words, signs can mean anything we agree that they mean, and they can mean different things to different people.

Given commercial, it might be expected that the complex sign system in the commercial might produce a variety of meanings. Peirce categorized the patterns of meaning in signs as iconic, symbolic and indexical. An iconic sign looks like what it represents--a picture of a dog, for example. The meaning of a symbol, like the flag or the Statue of Liberty, is determined by convention--in other words, its meaning is arbitrary; it is based upon agreement and learned through experience. Language uses words as symbols that have to be learned; in Western languages there is no iconic or representational link between a word and its signified concept or meaning. An indexical sign is a clue that links or connects things in nature. Smoke, for example, is a sign of fire; icicles mean cold. Visual communication,--including video forms--uses all three types signs.

Semiotics now considers a variety of texts, using Eco's terms, to investigate such diverse areas as movies, art, advertisements, and fashion, as well as visuals. In other words, as

Berger explains, "the essential breakthrough of semiology is to take linguistics as a model and apply linguistic concepts to other phenomena--texts--and not just to language itself." Anthropologists like Grant McCracken and marketing experts like Sydney Levy have even used semiotic interpretations to analyze the rich cultural meanings of products and consumer consumption behaviors as texts.

Visual texts are an important area of analysis for semioticians and particularly for scholars working with visually intensive forms such as advertising and television because images are such a central part of our mass communication sign system.

Linda Scott has deconstructed the images in perfume advertising as well as in Apple's "1984" commercial using close readings of the various messages which can be interpreted from the ads.

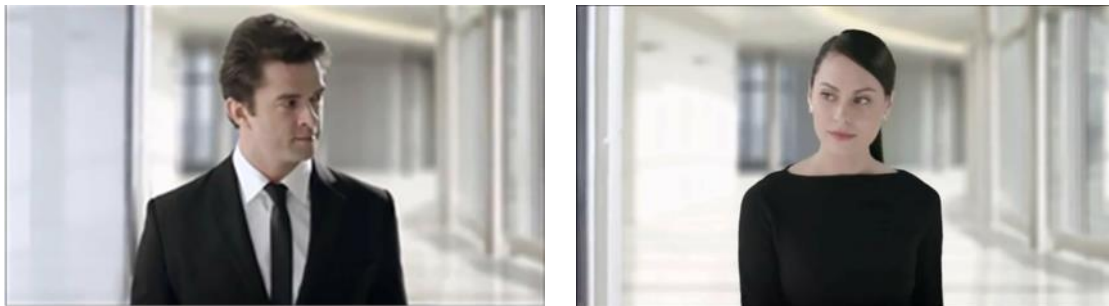
Shay Sayre has also looked at perfume advertising images and the visual rhetoric in Hungary's first free election television advertisements using semiotic analysis. Also using semiotics, Arthur Asa Berger has deconstructed the meaning of the "1984" commercial as well as programs such as Cheers and films such as Murder on the Orient Express.

Systems of meaning, Culler and Berger tell us, is analyzed by looking at cultural and communication products and events as signs and then by looking at the relationship among these signs. The categories of signs and the relationships between them create a system. Barthes, for example, has analyzed the "fashion system," and classified the system of communication through fashion into two categories: image clothing and descriptive clothing. Likewise, an advertisement has its own system of meaning. We expect an appeal to purchase, either directly or implied, to be made and a product to be shown, for example, as part of the advertising system.

## ANALYSIS

### At Workplace

The first sequence of the commercial is The Workplace. The camera focuses with Close Ups to the walking high heels of the working woman. Then a medium Close Up focuses on her face. She is walking in a narrow corridor. As her eyes turn to her right, we see a man walking by her side. The man returns her stare as he enters his office. The second part of the first sequence evolves inside their offices. There, we witness them both while working. They are walking up and down in stress, dictating duties to their colleague, looking really worried. During this scene labels that betray gender bias are hanging outside their window offices; for *him* the label is positive, *he* is the BOSS; for *her* negative, *she* is just BOSSY.



The sequence starts with a woman and a man walking side by side. They are dressed in a same, exact manner. They are exchanging glances and at some point they split to different offices. The woman and man probably know each other, work at the same firm and hold equal working positions. Because of the fact that they end up to different offices, we may assume that they are infighters too. While they are working, they choose to stand up whereas their colleague is sat down. From this difference in status, we are driven to the conclusion that the sat employee is their personal assistant. How their assistants feel about them is shown outside the window office. *Her* assistant feels that she is being bossy, whereas *his* assistant feels he is being the boss.



The whole photography of the commercial is based on the black- white contrast and on different tones of grey. It reminds us of retro cinema, of an old- fashion way of seeing. The black- white colours prepare the viewer that he is going to watch something from the past that, sadly, can relate to nowadays. The black- white contrast of the first sequence indicates extreme dissimilarity, incompatibility, absence of flexibility and strictness. The workplace for the two genders is a stiff field of hard, ongoing battle; *him* vs *her* with *her* having a priori the odds against.

The two actors are dressed conservatively; the actress is wearing an elegant, black dress that covers her up to her neck and her male counterpart is wearing a strict, black suit. Moreover the female performer is wearing small, golden earrings and other golden accessories. Her hair is tied in a long ponytail and she is wearing intense make up. They both have the body size and the looks of models. Their body postures, also, are directed. They keep their arms close to torso as they walk and use their hands to express power and leadership. They are not so much acting 'it' as they are modeling 'it'.

The whole sequence is based on the bipolar male vs female. Not by chance, the scene starts with the woman's high heels. Afterwards, with a quick pass over the woman's face, the camera focuses on her male counterpart and his black tie.



High- heels, always fashionable, bring out femininity and elegance. Their lustrous texture betrays wealth and sexuality. High-heels are often seen as objects of fetishism that can fire male sexual phantasy. Even at work, women, in order to be feminine and well-dressed, are sexualized. They are not dressed the way they please but as *he* would be pleased. They are dressed as if a panoptical male connoisseur resides within their consciousness (Bartky, 1990) and stand before his judgmental gaze. In Bartky's (1997) words: "The self –surveillance is a form of obedience to patriarchy. It is also the reflection in woman's consciousness of the fact that she is under surveillance in ways that *he* is not, that whatever else she may become, she is importantly a body designed to please or to excite. There has been induced in many women, then, in Foucault's words, "a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power." As she is walking in her high- heels, her pace is slower and her steps smaller compared to that of the man's beside her. As she is keeping up with him, she takes the risk to lose balance.

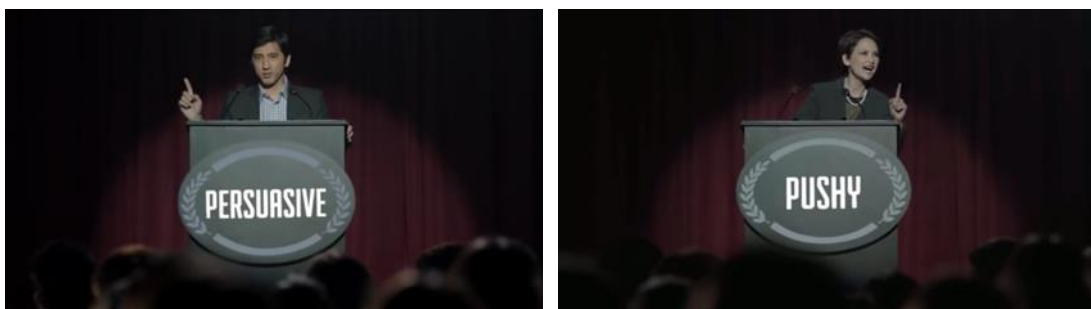
The man's tie is a male accessory. It is usually worn in formal occasions and is associated with wealth, power and masculinity. In the old days, the ones who could afford them were distinguished as men who mattered and belonged to the elite. Nowadays, ties are also fashion statements. The shape of the tie brings us to mind the symbol of phallus. Hanging from the neck downwards, it points to the lower part of the male body, which traditionally is connected with the animalistic instincts of dominance. The man who is wearing a tie is not sexualized, but is indicated as the protagonist of all social contexts. He dominates with

animalistic brutality the social jungle. His power to control events coincides with the active power of the erotic look (Mulvey, 1974). At the same time, woman, as non- male, needs to find her role in this jungle. Often, she becomes the motive to arouse *his* sexual instincts; an image to provoke his animalistic urges for dominance. She is sexualized in order to make him even more powerful.

During the first sequence, the woman is struggling in her office. She has to establish herself in order to be taken seriously. However, the lack of brutality and her sexualized appearance leave her weak and unarmed before her male assistant's stare. She tries to avoid his eyes in order to avoid reading his thoughts. When one challenges the stereotype, severe social consequences follow. Her punishment is the absolute absence of her colleagues' respect. To them she is just bossy. The *real* boss is in the next room.

## **In Politics**

During the second sequence, we watch a woman and a man giving a public speech. First we watch him. Then with a travelling around the woman's back, we see her. From the direction they turn their heads; it seems that they are addressing part of their speech to each other. In other words, they seem that they are in a middle of a public debate. How the audience feels about them is seen from their stand. *He* is thought to be persuasive, whereas *she* is thought to be pushy.



The man looks younger. He is wearing a light grey, checked shirt and a blazer. The woman looks older. She is wearing pearls, a dark blouse and a blazer too. He is casually dressed, whereas she is formally dressed. The man is calm and doesn't look at the audience. The woman has leaned forward. Her mouth is stretched open and probably the tone of her voice has been raised as well. She is looking right at them. The male candidate looks gentle and assertive, while the female candidate looks aggressive and worried. He is orating; she is attacking.

From what we can see, the male candidate is relaxed, mild and intellectual. His dress code makes him look accessible to his voters and, also, open to new ideas. His female counterpart's public appearance, on the other hand, carries more conservative characteristics. She looks tough, older and narrow minded. It is well known that men rule in politics. Women traditionally faced hard, straight-forward gender bias. Voters in general tend to be more reluctant to trust a female candidate, mainly because of the centuries of oppression. Women earned the right to vote in the mid of the previous century and started participating in elections as candidates way later. Even nowadays they are underrepresented. For all these reasons, female candidates have to cover double distance to earn their voter's trust. Hence, when a woman is put side by side with her male counterpart, has to raise her voice. She has to restrain her femininity and look more conservative, since voting for a woman is, on its own, a liberal action.

From the way they appear in public, the woman adopts more animalistic characteristics. She is threatening, strict, aggressive. She has "masculinized" herself and downplayed her soft compassionate qualities. The man, on the other hand, has adopted traits typically associated with femininity; kindness, accessibility, calmness. According to Huddy & Terkildsen (1993) this is because candidates are trapped in their own stereotypical, gender characteristics, which is something they try to alter by increasing campaign strategies:

“Female candidates who have run recently for highly visible state or national elected office have waged increasingly combative campaigns in which they have stressed their toughness and aggressiveness, typically masculine qualities. At the same time, their male counterparts have clamored to appear sympathetic, kind and accessible, typically feminine traits. Apparently, both male and female political candidates feel compelled to adopt at least some positions or traits thought typically of the other gender.”

This happens because women, stereotypically linked with compassion and sympathy, are thought naturally better at dealing with the aged, the poor and other social issues, whereas men, stereotypically thought of as brutal and tough, are thought better at dealing with military and defense. If we were to take it a step further, women are stigmatized politically as liberal and men as conservative by nature. In order to change that candidates feel compelled to adopt at least some positions or traits thought typically of the other gender (Huddy&Terkildsen, 1993).

The outcome for men is positive. They emphasize their compassionate and nurturing characteristics, in addition to their assertiveness and self-confidence (Huddy&Terkildsen, 1993). In other words, they pass for mature and wise. However, for women, emphasizing their masculine characteristics doesn't work as effectively as the way femininity works for men. Their image burdens with all male characteristics which are publicly intimidating. They look harsh, non-negotiable and defensive. Maleness ruins their public image because it passes for insecurity. In the hard political arena, *he* passes for persuasive, whereas *she* passes for pushy.

## **Parenthood- Marriage**

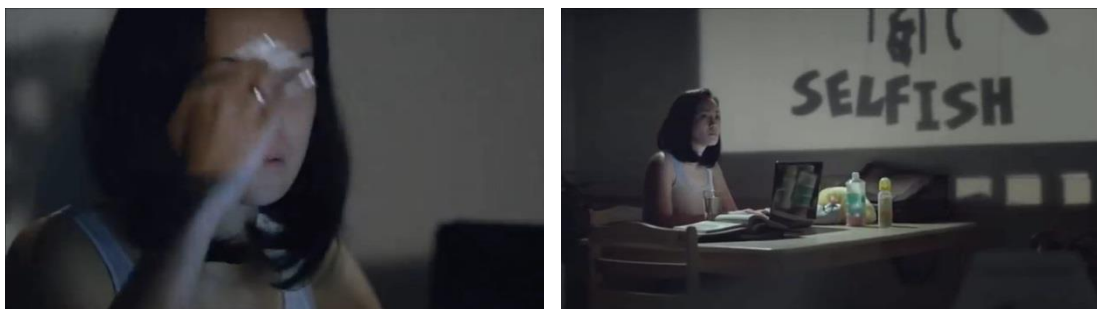
The sequence starts showing the man first. The camera doesn't confront him. He is being filmed from a distance and in angle. The man is sitting on a table. He is absorbed in his computer. From the couch and the lamp, we can assume that it is the living room. On the table, there is a mess of things. Besides his computer, there are books, a cup and a bag, a



teddy bear and baby bottles. The lamp is off and the room is pretty dark. The only light in the room seems to come from afar. As the camera moves with a short travelling along the length of the table, we can see shapes of shadows on the wall. The shadows come from a baby cradle and its accessories. They form a message about *him*; they write *Dedicated*.



The next moment we proceed to the next scene. The camera with a close up focuses on the woman. The ring on her right finger, as she passes her fingers through her hair, betrays her marital status. She is married. She is sitting in the very same table as the man before and she is drinking water. She seems distracted. Her attention is caught by something from a distance. As the scene proceeds, the shadows behind her compose a message on the wall; they call her *Selfish*.



In the first scene, the camera stands from a distance. The man is sitting on the table. We can't see his facial expression, but we can assume from the way he rubs his face, that he is tired. From the semidarkness, we can tell that it is late at night. The table is full of things; some of them belong to him and some to an infant. His things are his books, a mug of coffee, the laptop and his bag. The baby toys and the baby bottles belong to the infant of the cradle in

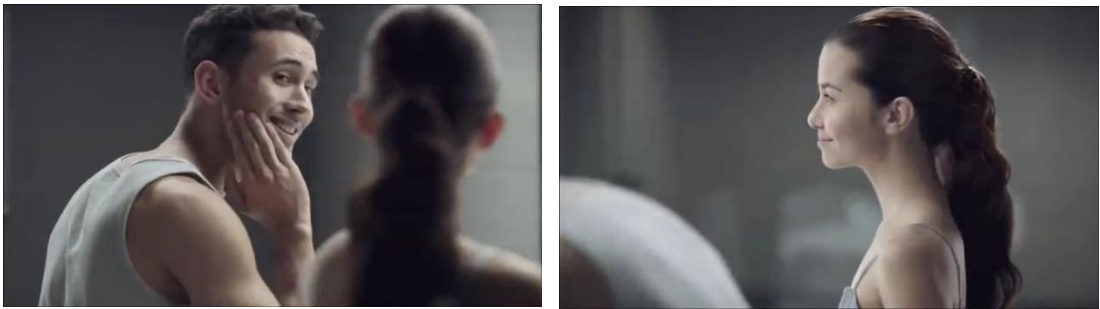
front. His books are heavy and open next to the laptop. Probably he is studying hard and long hours. However, somewhere in the room or the next room there is a baby that he doesn't even lift his head up to look at. His main focus remains on himself and his studies. The shadows on the wall whisper the way he feels about himself; he feels dedicated.

Right after him, we see *her*. The camera films her from so close that her facial grimaces are obvious. She looks really worried. From the way she repeatedly passes her fingers through her hair, we sense intense stress. On her right finger the wedding ring shines. She is married which practically means that her priorities have altered. Her self should be the least of her worries. The wedding ring was established with patriarchy. In pro-feminist era it used to symbolize domination and sexual jealousy. The woman belonged to the man like a possession. The woman, also, was obliged to wear the ring to discourage potential lovers. Nowadays things aren't that changed. The ring itself symbolizes devotion to a lifetime partner. However, still women are expected to wear them in a way that echoes restraint of freedom and non-sexual availability. The married woman is not a person but a role with specific responsibilities and characteristics. The woman who dares to question the stereotype pays the cost of guilt. It is not by chance, that during the commercial we are not at all concerned about the man's marital status, but knowing that the woman is married changes our expectations of her.

In the same place with her books and laptop, baby toys and bottles are thrown here and there. She cannot pay full attention to her work, because she has her eyes set on her baby across the room. Although she is married and her husband is sleeping in the next room, the child is considered her responsibility only. Although she has to work hard all night, she has no support from her significant other. Compared to the man before, she doesn't need coffee to keep her awake; her dual role is keeping her alert. The shadows on the wall reveal that her inner voice is accusing her of neglect; she feels she is being selfish. Her exhaustion is much more psychological than physical.

## **In relationship (with the mirror)**

The scene begins in the bathroom. First we see the man; he is standing in front of the mirror and he is touching his face. He is probably getting ready for shaving. He is in his underwear. When the woman, also in her underwear, is entering the bathroom, he turns for an instant his head, he smiles to her and then dives into the sink. She is standing next to him. She smiles back. As she stares her reflection in the mirror, the smile wears off. This persistent stare creates a small unjustified delay before the woman washes her face. As the woman bends forward in the sink, two labels are formed on their mirrors; the label for him is *Neat*, but for her is *Vain*.



The man is standing in front of the mirror. From his body posture and the quickness of his movement, he gives away confidence. The purpose of him being in the bathroom is to wash his face. The mirror for him is a practical tool. He uses it a limited amount of time only to make sure he has washed off the foam or soap correctly. As soon as he hears her footsteps from behind, he turns around. He gives her an active look and a smile instead of talk. Then he returns to his wash.

The woman is being seen only under his glance. The moment he looks at her, she can be seen in the scene. She is standing first in front of him and then in front the mirror. For quite a while, her position is passive. She is not doing anything specific. She just stands. She returns his smile with her own and turns to her own image in the mirror. It seems like she is reflecting herself into two mirrors, first his eyes and then, her own. The small delay brings to mind John Berger's (1972) words: "Men look at women. Women watch themselves being

looked at.” Her smile wears off when he doesn’t look any more. It looks like she is not looking at herself but she is thinking about herself. Her image triggers subconscious thoughts that erase the smile. Her small delay in front of the mirror is a confrontation of her inner fears and even self- doubt. When undressed and without any make- up on, could she still be beautiful for him?

In any culture women have been brainwashed about their appearance. The artificial appearance has taken the place of the natura, real and attractive one (Gurkan & Ozan, 2015) and classic cinema is responsible to a great extent. Women have to present a flawless self in order to be considered beautiful. In Barkty’s (1997) words: “The “art” of make-up is the art of disguise, but this presupposes that a woman’s face, unpainted, is defective. Soap and water, a shave and routine attention to hygiene may be enough for *him*; for *her* they are not. The strategy of much beauty-related advertising is to suggest to women that their bodies are deficient but even without such more or less explicit teaching, the media images of perfect female beauty which bombard us daily leave no doubt in the minds of most women that they fail to measure up.”

So when women look at the mirror their confidence is often challenged. They have to be beautiful to matter. So it seems that each time they look themselves in there is like quietly negotiating at what degree they have managed to accomplish that. The confirmation doesn’t always come. So the act of looking in the mirror is hardly superficial and light-hearted. On the contrary, it bears a significant and emotional impact on their psyche. And yet, society fails to understand. Instead women are often blamed for vanity. For him; the mirror sets *him* neat, for *her*; vain.

## **At public space**



The scene takes place in public. We see a man walking on a zebra crossing. He is stepping on the word SMOOTH. As soon as he reaches the other side of the road, he hides behind a big mirror which represents a building front. From the same mirror, a woman comes out. When she reaches the beginning of the zebra crossing, she takes off her jacket and crosses through the road holding it low close to her. On the zebra crossing the word SHOW-OFF is written. As she is making her way through, her jacket is sweeping it off.

The scene begins with the man. First the camera's angle is the one of the bird's eye view. We see him from above as he is crossing the street. His outfit strikes us as very smart. He is wearing blue suit, brown trousers and leather shoes. His hair is dark and greasy. He is young, probably wealthy. As he walks, he has the word SMOOTH in front of him. When he steps on it, the camera focuses on his face. He is looking around him. He is smiling. Our original assumptions were true; his physical appearance is very smart. His hair is stylish. He is well shaved but not entirely. He is wearing a checkered shirt and a yellow tie, which make him look very fashionable. He walks in confidence. A second later, the woman comes along. She is wearing a yellow dress which she covers with a blue jacket and high heels. Her hair is loose and dark. As she is crossing the street the label SHOW OFF is on the floor but she can't see it as it is written upside down for her. She could have read it if there was a mirror in front. At some point she takes off her jacket, it is the moment when the camera takes the bird-eye view angle again. We can see her whole figure. She is smart looking as well. She is walking with confidence. Just before she reaches the pavement on the other side, we get to see her face in a camera close up. She is young. She is wearing earrings. She has make-up on and her hair

is shiny and really well-cut. She has confidence. She is looking up. As she crosses the street, her jacket is sweeping off the label.



Both sexes are walking on the same street. We can see clearly their move in public. *He* is expressive. His arms, as he fixes his jacket and as he moves, break away from torso expanding his personal space. He is looking straight to other people's eyes. He is himself and that is called *Smooth*. *She*, on the other hand, is restraint. Her conservative jacket hides half her figure. As she takes it off, her arms remain close to torso. Her pace is steady and still slower than the man's. The act of taking off her jacket is considered show-off.

It is well known that there are significant gender differences in gesture, posture, movement and general bodily comportment: women are far more restricted than men in their manner of movement and in their spatiality (Barkty, 1997). In proportion to total body size, a man's step is longer than a woman's. The man has more spring and rhythm to his step; he holds his arms at a greater distance from his body and swings them farther; he tends to point the whole hand in the direction he is moving. The woman, on the other hand, keeps her arms closer to her body, palms against her sides; her walk is defensive. If she has subjected herself to the additional constraint of high-heeled shoes, her body is thrown forward and off-balance: The struggle to keep walking is hard and the pace becomes slower as she tries to watch her step as well (Barkty, 1997).

The exhibitionists, however, are thought to be women, although from their body posture and stride we get the impression that they are more hiding from human attention than seeking it. Traditionally, though, being a woman means that you are treated or even worse

treat yourself as a display whose appearance is expected to code visual and erotic impact (Mulvey, 1999). Treating yourself as an exhibition all the time can have strange implications in psyche as John Berger (1972) observed: “A woman must continually watch herself. She is almost continually accompanied by her own image of herself. Whilst she is walking across a room or whilst she is weeping at the death of her father, she can scarcely avoid envisaging herself walking or weeping. From earliest childhood she has been taught and persuaded to survey herself continually.” And yet the cost of this upbringing which is forced by society is paid by women again who are blamed as Show-offs.

The 6<sup>th</sup> scene is the last scene where we see the man and the woman simultaneously in their roles. The man is still wearing suit and a tie, the woman is still wearing dress and high heels like in the beginning. However, the colors are totally different. Their outfits now are much more colorful and far from conventional. They maintain their phallogocentric characteristics, only now they don't seem to carry the old significance. They are worn more as fashion statements than symbols that symbolize masculinity and femininity. The man's tie is smaller and light yellow and the woman's heels are thicker and steadier. As the woman passes over the road, she doesn't need to look down at her label or around to seek in others her confirmation. She looks up and gaze the sky. Her confidence can sweep off not only the current label but all labels against her. She can break free as long as she wants to.

## **Final scene**

In the final scene first we see the first written message concerns the story of the commercial: *DON'T LET LABELS HOLD YOU BACK*. . Then we see shortly the woman. She makes a little circle around herself, looks high up at the sky and then smiles so widely that her teeth are shown. The commercial ends with the main message of the campaign: *BE STRONG AND SHINE*. which echoes the efficiency of the shampoo. On the very last frame of the

commercial, we see the title of the campaign #WHIPIT and the brand name of the product PANTENE PRO V.



In the last scene of the commercial we only see the woman. The day is sunny and the sun seems so bright that it is blinding. As the commercial proceeds to its end, the lighting becomes more and more intense. The woman looks happy. The structure of the photography in this last scene is based on straight lines that all are about to meet at a vanishing point. That tells us that the perspective of the scenery behind the woman's figure gives the illusion of a straightforward path. Her pathway in front is now open, lit, wide and directed forward. The only thing she has to do is to walk on it. The woman, just before she begins to walk, she turns back for a second, smiling and looking high. The lack of labels, which she had just swept off, in her path, makes her glow in confidence. It is that confidence that will make her move on.

In this last scene we have two written messages in capital letters; the first is: DON'T LET LABELS HOLD YOU BACK and is placed in the middle of the frame. The lighting of the scene is intense and creates a big oval circle around the phrase. The oval circle reminds us vaguely of the light balms on a mirror frame. Only here they glow so much that it is impossible to see a reflection. Instead of a reflection, we see a message from Pantene to all women. It is a message of breaking free: Don't let labels hold you back (full stop). The message is in capitals which probably implies loudness in volume and the full stop in the end may mean that it doesn't take any postponement or argument. It has to be done right now.

The second and last message is: BE STRONG AND SHINE. It is written on the sunny sky. Only she can read it as she looks up. All the labels before were written on floors, mirrors



or walls. They were formed by shadows, paint or steam. This one is written on the sky and is formed by sunbeams. The message is in capitals which makes it important and loud again. The letters are round, with a bit of a space between. The phrase ends with a full stop. The message is clear and absolute. It sounds almost like an order. Strong and shine is the only things you should allow yourself to be. Don't listen to them, move on.



## Music

During the whole spot there is music that accompanies it. We won't get into the musical system very deeply and whether it competes or not the visual one as it is a whole different essay altogether. We will just point out a few bits and pieces as it is essential part of the commercial. The song that it is playing with the narrative is the well-known: *Mad world*. The song is performed by a female singer and is featured by the famous band Tears for Fears. From the lyrics we hear only the first part of the song and a small sample of the refrain: *All around me are familiar faces/ Worn out places, worn out faces* (first sequence)/ *Bright and early for their daily races* (second sequence)/ *Going nowhere, going nowhere/ Their tears are filling up their glasses* (third sequence)/ *No expression, no expression* (fourth sequence)/ *Mad world, mad world* (fifth sequence)/ *orchestral music* (Final sequence).

It is apparent that the song enhances the emotional impact of the message. First of all, it is sung by a woman. She is accompanied only by a piano and her tone of voice is really soft, almost as if shy or discouraged. She also sounds young which may mean that the message of the commercial still concerns the future of all generations of all women. The whole synthesis

gives out a melancholic feeling. She is singing only through the scenes of comparison, men vs women. That probably implies that she is the inner voice of all the women on the commercial.

All the associations that we can make are basically the profound ones. The song describes the injustice world women are living in. The name of the band and the verses of the song imply directly that women are experiencing painful loneliness and although they seem beautiful and energetic, they cry a lot when in private. They can't manage to find the strength to move on because this strange world has intimidated them so much that have restraint themselves. However, in the last scene the song stops and there is a change in tonality. The melody becomes higher and a sudden positive feeling overwhelms us. The confident woman of the last scene is our hope. She can break her chains.

From what we can see, the verses of the song change accordingly with the scenes. The pace is relatively slow. The voice of the female performer is low and the words are heard clearly. There is no unexpected turn of modality or tonality. This simplicity may imply that what we are watching is a real. There is also a perfect compliance between the visual and the audio. This probably means that the musical system takes the woman's side. When the first written message appears (BE STRONG AND SHINE), the song stops and the music becomes orchestral, more absurd. This lack of conformity to a music convention may describe in another way the woman's action of breaking free. It is apparent that the music is feminist and describes their hard reality in a tender way.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Prompting for social change and Sales**

The commercial echoes the Pantene's typography and the package's design. First of all, the photography of the commercial is based on the contrast of black-white with golden details which are the brand's colors as well: Black letters on white background with golden wavy lines on top. Also, the commercial's photography evolves as the narrative proceeds; it starts from black- white, soon turns grey and finally ends up with more yellow coloring.

Black and white is a fundamental contrast which implies: beginning and end, darkness and light, good and bad. It also implies unbridgable differences, stereotypical patterns and strictness. In fashion's perspective, black and white has always given away elegance as it is a combination of colours that had never fallen out of fashion. Elegance and duration is two of the brand's main commercial goals and also can be thought as hair results. The grey colouring of the following scenes echoes the black and white contrast again. It probably implies the symbiosis of the male and female quality and the emotional state of the woman. In the last scene, the main signs' colors (man's tie, woman's dress and high heels) that signify masculinity and femininity are yellow. Also, the film becomes more colorful altogether. Yellow brings to mind the sun's brightness and warmth. Where there is sun, life blossoms. It signifies new beginnings and thriveness. Yellow also is linked with golden and therefore with the product again. So these yellow details of the last scene may imply that masculinity and femininity can take another turn with Pantene's influence.

The typography of the labels which is used differs. In the first scene, the letters (BOSS- BOSSY) resemble Pantene's typography and their color is golden. So the colors of the first scene altogether are black-white-golden, which automatically bring the brand's colors to mind. That is probably because they want to make it visible that this commercial is a brand's creation; that Pantene is the one that is initiating a very significant social topic that concerns the female viewers who happen to be also their target group. All the other labels that

come after that (PERSUASIVE- PUSHY, DEDICATED- SELFISH, NEAT- VAIN, SMOOTH- SHOW-OFF) don't belong to a specific font. They are written with thick, dark, big letters which are far from being considered as calligraphic. Things change when the two social messages appear on the screen (DON'T LET LABELS HOLD YOU BACK, BE STRONG AND SHINE). Both have the same size. The letters are relatively small, placed in the center of the frame and a little spread. Their shape is round and thin. They are elegant. They seem like the same font Pantene uses for its brand's name. Again the matters of aesthetics come up which at the same time is the result of a beauty product. Pantene prompts with elegance and flair women whose hair looks strong and shiny to ignore what other people think of them.

The costumes of the commercial look shiny as the lighting falls on them. They also look smart. Women wear dresses and lingerie and men wear costumes and underwear. The clothes point out their body figures. They look good on them. From their textures we can assume that they are expensive. Women also wear golden jewelry and high heels. They also have make-up on and their hair even in their private moments looks as if they had been to the hair-dresser's. The actors are young at age, very slim and pose more than act. They look and walk impersonally, like models do on catwalk. This probably represents what the brand stands for: profit, physical appearances and fashion. The brand's aims are beauty and money.



Only in the last scene we see a woman with loose hair. In all the other scenes women have their hair tied in ponytails. Also all of them have long hair, probably because it is the only way to show the bounce and the waviness of it. The color of the hair is mainly dark so that the average Philippina could identify. The moment the woman gets rid of her blue jacket there is a big close up to the hair. It is a moment of dramatic importance and a clear focus to the true purpose of the commercial. The woman is getting rid of the jacket like a burden from her shoulders. Here the focus on the hair takes our attention from the social point the commercial is trying to make. The relish of the burden is associated with the lightness and the brightness of the hair. It is another implication of what Pantene can make you look.

In the last sequence, the woman looks up retaining a big smile on her face. Her movement is rhythmic. She is good-looking; her clothes flatter her figure, her jewelry looks good as well, she is young. The message DON'T LET LABELS HOLD YOU BACK interrupts her little walk. Just afterwards, we see her again making a big turn around herself, shaking her black, shiny hair. Seconds after, the second message appears on the screen BE STRONG AND SHINE. Once more the social message obtains a more tangible meaning. Confidence is associated with shiny hair. If your hair looks shiny and strong, then your confidence will rise. The first message with the social meaning is shadowed at the presence of the second message, which as last is more important and significant. Also, the word Label reminds us of the commercial's mirrors which represent what other people think of *her*. Women should turn their back on mirrors with confidence. Pantene can provide you with a product that can make you look so good that you won't feel insecure.

## REMARKS

Pantene has used all sorts of social media to promote its campaign. Twitter, rappler, facebook were bombarded by #whipit images, discussions on gender bias, evidence from social research and commercials on how society labels women when they drive, when they complain, when they become single mothers, when they age etc. And they have succeeded in gaining a lot of attention by viewers who participate either by signing “like” or retweeting a statement or by leaving their comment.

The commercial went viral and the campaign expanded in other markets as well. The #whipit campaign changed to #shinestring. Another set of commercials was directed for a wider range of markets such as North America’s and channeled again in all sorts of social media; again got international attention. The issue of a society of discriminations seemed to sore individuals who identified with the social message. However, going through the findings of the analysis again, we can’t help wondering; can we change a stereotype by using the stereotype itself? Can we challenge a stereotype by confirming it? Can we change mindsets by putting a brand name in front? As it turned out, the answer is no as the only that came out of this was more sales for Pantene PRO V.

Pantene used wisely a topic that catches the attention of their target group and presented it in such a superficial way to convince them that a brand can care for them. After advertising the hair product in every indirect way possible (visually and in written), they channeled it to local TV and to the social media where absolutely everybody can have access. And they hit the jackpot.

In other words, they advertised their product by pretending to support women’s rights but by only implying how successful their hair product is. They also use a social issue that concerned their target group, apart from the attention: they managed to gain trust and devotion long term. So by building a solid relationship with them, their sales will be maintained in a certain level and they are not going to drop easily in the future.

Thus we understand the reason that “Most companies tend not to invest in feminist programs, they just tend to use feminist rhetoric to try to get us to spend our money,” says Jennifer Pozner, a media literacy educator and founder of Women in Media and News, a media analysis, education and advocacy group. Dior, the European luxury goods house, sold a \$710 T-shirt with the slogan “We should all be feminist” emblazoned on it, referencing an essay in 2014 by Nigerian writer Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. Although a portion of proceeds were given to the Clara Lionel Foundation, pop singer Rihanna's non-profit organization that benefits impoverished communities across the globe with health care and education, many were critical of the fashion house. When companies with a bottom line become part of the mix, even the ones that seem to embody the most feminist values may have issues that fly in the face of the movement's ideals. People who want to make socially conscious buying decisions need to become more aware of what companies they support are doing, feminism advocates say. Empowering rhetoric might not always come from a place of genuine progress to gender equality.

“It’s very difficult to make perfect decisions as a consumer. Are you supporting a company with family leave policies? Do they use sweatshop labor, exploiting workers overseas?” Pozner says. “If it’s a company using feminist rhetoric to sell their product, are they doing anything that’s feminist? Overall, we can’t help agreeing with Ziesler and Pozner.

With feminism becoming more popular in daily rhetoric, the media, and pop culture, women’s empowerment is at an all time high. Girls, especially young girls are highly influenced by the media and what they see on the internet and television.

Sometimes, learning about female empowerment while watching ads for deodorant on Youtube makes feminist rhetoric more accessible to more people. While we don’t appreciate how some companies are using the feminist movement to their advantage, we don’t think we should do away with marketplace feminism altogether either.

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