

# Gender and Language Identity of the Advertisements

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Odjel za anglistiku

Preddiplomski sveučilišni studij engleskog jezika i književnosti (dvopredmetni)

**Natalija Zubak**

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## Gender and Language Identity of the Advertisements

Završni rad

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Zadar, 2016.



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## **Rod i jezični identitet reklama**

### 1. Sažetak

Rad analizira način na koji su žene i muškarci prikazani u izabranim američkim reklamama kroz nekoliko desetljeća. Analiza ukazuje na činjenicu da unatoč uspješnosti feminističkog pokreta prikaz žena se u reklama nije znatno promijenio s obzirom na prošlost. I žene i muškarci su i dalje prikazivani stereotipno, što u moderno doba doseže svoje ekstreme prikazujući žene kao hiperseksualna, a muškarce kao dominantna bića koja objektiviziraju žene. Pošto skoro svaka reklama sadrži barem mali vidljivi dio prošlosti, može se zaključiti da je rod zaista konstrukcija koja se uči kroz socijalne norme ili kroz bivanje u određenoj kulturi.

Ključne riječi: rod, reklama, popularna kultura, stereotipi

## **Gender and Language Identity of Advertisements**

### 2. Summary

This work analyzes the way in which women and men are presented in the certain American ads throughout the past few decades. The analysis shows although the feminist movement was successful the display of women in the ads had not been changed a lot considering the past. Women and the men are presented stereotypically, what reaches its peak in the modern times while presenting women as hyper-sexualized

and men as dominant beings, who objectify women. Since almost every ad possess a little bit of past, it can be concluded that the gender is really construction, which is learnt through social norms or being in one culture.

Key words: gender, advertisement, popular culture, stereotypes

### 3. Introduction

Advertisements are everywhere around us. One can find them in media such as television, radio, the Internet, but also in the newspapers, books and magazines or on billboards. They became a part of our lives. A. Trier-Bieniek states that advertisements are intertwined with culture, as well as with gender (55). Advertising functions in many ways depending on the product, which is offered to the potential buyers. Since the aim of advertisements is to persuade people to purchase the product, they tell stories about culture, ordinary or luxurious life, often by using stereotypes. Feminist media critic Jean Kilbourne states that the majority of people say that advertisements do not have an influence on them, but if this claim is true, why would companies spend so much money on advertising if it does not work? (Trier:54) The advertisement for De Beers Diamonds named “A Diamond is Forever” proved the previously mentioned point, because the sale of diamonds and engagement rings dramatically increased due to releasing this slogan in the media. The costumers were convinced that the diamonds were “precious symbols of romantic love” (Trier:54). From this example one can conclude that the advertisements are powerful tool, since they shape people’s opinion.

But since advertisements can be interpreted in many ways, advertisers can never be sure how the people will understand the message behind it or how successful the advertisement will be. What I am interested in this work is the interpretation of advertisements and the representation of the gender in them. I would like to focus on the analysis of some American advertisements and also on the problems, which occur in presenting women and men in them.

For this goal to be achieved, the paper is organized into four main sections. What will be presented in the first section are general statements about gender and sex, the difference between them and two approaches to gender identity and gender roles; West



and Zimmerman's concept of doing gender and Judith Butler's concept of gender performativity. The second section will introduce the general statements about popular culture and advertisements, while the third section will give the analysis of chosen advertisements throughout the history. The third section is therefore divided into smaller parts in order to better present the issues such as ideal women and men in the advertisements or representation of femininity and masculinity. This work will end with fourth section in which the main points will be stated and the conclusion will be given.

#### 4. Gender and sex

Before last decades of twentieth century gender and sex were considered synonymous and were used interchangeably. (Rose:9) It was presupposed that the distinction between man and woman was based on their nature. Scholars started to analyze these differences and although their approaches differ, they agreed that society and conditions change over time. Due to that the discipline “Gender history” was developed. This discipline deals with the issues, which will be presented throughout this work and connected with advertisements, such as understanding of masculinity and femininity, the features of women’s and men’s identity or differences between men and women throughout the history and how they had changed until this period of time. (Rose:11) Further, the term “gender” was first used in the middle of 20<sup>th</sup> century by feminist scholars in order to mark differences between male and female, which are socially constructed. In other words they used this term to denote “cultural construction of sex difference”, in contrast to sex, which meant natural difference (Rose:2). The definition of these terms stayed the same even today and the Oxford dictionary offers similar definitions and usage of these terms: “Although the words gender and sex both have the sense ‘the state of being male or female’, they are typically used in slightly different ways: sex tends to refer to biological differences, while gender refers to cultural or social ones” (dictionary.cambridge.org). As it is already said, many scholars deal with mentioned issues and they use different approaches to describe these terms. One of the most important scholars were West and Zimmerman and Judith Butler, who contributed to the development of gender theories. The concept of doing gender, developed by West and Zimmerman and the concept of gender performativity, developed by Butler are considered to be of great importance to the many scholars back then and also today. These concepts will be presented in details in the section “How do we learn gender?”

#### 4.1. Difference between 'gender' and 'sex'

In order to better analyze the advertisements, one should know what differ gender from the sex. As it is already said, sex refers to person's biological status; the person is born with it, and gender refers to social construction; the feelings, attitudes and behavior that the society connects with person's sex. It follows that if person's sex is female, she is expected to perform femininity as it is defined by the society in which she lives.

Judith Lorber states "Talking about gender for most people is the equivalent of fish talking about water". (141) She made this comparison in order to show how most people do not even think about their performing of gender, for them the gender is something that belongs to them since birth, like they are born that way. Lorber gives so many examples in her book "Paradoxes of gender", which prove the claim that the gender is social construction. One of the examples which she describes is the moment when she was in the subway and saw one man with a child in the stroller and the day before she also saw one man, but with a child in a carrier on his chest. This is a perfect example of performing gender roles or just doing gender. The men were performing the role of father, while taking care of the child, but people around them were staring at them. If there was a woman with the child instead of man, nobody even noticed that, because taking care of child is more woman's job, which is determined by society. Lorber also noticed something interesting in that moment. One of the babies was wearing white clothes, so she could not tell if it was a boy or girl and the other baby was wearing dark blue T-shirt, dark pants and while leaving the train the father put the baseball cap on child's head, so Lorber concluded it was a boy. But on their way out, she noticed the earrings in child's ears, flowered shoes and lace-trimmed socks, so it was actually a girl. From this example one can see that the gender construction starts from birth, when child's genitalia determines its sex category. Parents dress their child in the way which

represents its sex category and then the sex category begins to be gender indicator. Once the people notice the child's gender they start to treat those in feminine gender differently from those in the other. When the child begins to talk it refers itself as member of its gender. From the previous example one can conclude, that the parenting is also gender, since there are different expectations for mothers and fathers. It can be connected with division of work between women and men, because there are certain jobs which only women do and vice versa. All that shapes their life experience, which creates the spectrum of feelings, relationships, skills and the most important the state of being feminine or masculine, which is part of social construction of gender. Lorber claims that western society thinks that the gender is only connected with reproductive organs, which means that sex and gender are the same, but actually the gender depends on the construction of social status, which is developed through teaching, learning and enforcement. Social constructions can sometimes become oversimplified, as Trier-Bieniek states (4). In that moment the ideas about female and male become stereotyped, and then certain characteristics appear, which are only attributed to women and the other to men. These characteristics are often presented on the advertisements as we will see later.

#### 4.2.How do we learn gender?

As mentioned earlier the gender is socially constructed and in order to learn gender one should know the norms and the ways in which the society functions. The colors pink and blue can be used as an example of gender construction, since pink is considered to be female color and the blue male color. There is nothing special about these colors, except the meaning assigned by the society. Before starting with Zimmerman's and Butler's gender concepts, one should be familiar with distinction between gender identity and roles. Trier-Bieniek states that the gender identity is the way in which

person sees himself or herself considering masculinity and femininity and how is this connected with enactment of the gender roles. In addition to that, Trier-Bieniek says “Gender roles dictate what is considered acceptable for men and women in terms of behavior, career, parenting, style of dress...” (5) Taking all this into account we can start with Zimmerman’s and Butler’s points of view considering gender.

West and Zimmerman are the first who started to look on gender as the product of daily social practice and not as something that already belong to us since birth. By starting with that assumption, they created the concept of doing gender. They realized that the relationship between sex and gender is more complex than people think. The society views women and men as naturally defined beings with typical psychological and behavioral tendencies that can be predicted on the basis of their reproductive functions, so it follows that distinction of feminine and masculine attitudes and behavior became prominent features of structural arrangement of society. Further, social doing of the gender is more than just a reaction of meaning of gender through human actions, it is also created through interaction. On the example with Agnes, that I’m going to mention later, will be shown how gender can be portrayed through interaction and be perceived as natural, while being produced as a socially organized achievement. When people are in interaction with each other, they assume that each person have an essential nature, which is connected with femininity and masculinity. In other words, West and Zimmerman stated that ‘our human nature gives us an ability to learn, to produce and recognize masculine and feminine gender display’ (130) Let’s continue with the Agnes, transsexual raised as a boy, who is great example how gender is constructed through interaction, since he adopted a female identity at the age of 17 and after few years underwent a sex operation. He or better to say she needed to represent herself as a woman and at the same time learn how to be a woman. She needed to consciously create

what women do without thinking. One can say that she was acting or faking, but she was not doing that, since she was really a woman deep inside herself when she was born, but she did not learn from the very beginning how to behave like one. So she was forced to analyze and to figure out how to behave within socially structured circumstances and conceptions of femininity. Agnes's example is showing us that the gender must be accomplished in order to be perceived as 'real'.

Butler developed Simone de Beauvoir's thought 'One is not born, but, rather, becomes a woman' (519) in her theory, while using his statement that body is historical situation (520), which in her words means that the gender which person does or performs is an act that existed before this person was born. Although there are individual ways of performing gender, one performs it while respecting the proscriptions or sanctions, so it follows that it is not fully individual. She states that the gender is identity created in time and through 'stylized repetition of acts' (519). It means that even if we think that we are behaving as ourselves completely independently, the units of behavior that we possess, are not really invented by us. All behavior is composed of recombining small pieces of previously behaved behaviors. So the gender is performed, because one is taking a role; one is acting in some way and that role playing is crucial to the gender that the person is and the gender that he or she presents to the world. One, for example, talks or dresses in such way that it determines his gender; woman or man. Society can approve or deny us, what is based on our good or bad performing. Butler perfectly describes previously mentioned situation as 'gender is real only to the extent that it is performed'. Butler states 'the act that one does, the act that one performs is, in a sense, an act that's been going on before one arrived on the scene' (526), so it follows that we act or behave in certain way as woman or man, like it is a fact about us, but in fact this is something that is produced and reproduced all the time, so to say that gender is

performative is to say that nobody is a gender from the very beginning, that is, nobody is born with the gender, but rather becomes one. She also adds that performativity is a 'ritualistic reproduction', since it includes doing and producing, as well as constantly repeating. For example, if we see a girl in dress, it will be nothing uncommon, because it is some kind of rule for girls and it happens all the time, it is like a ritual. Butler gives us another example; when doctors say 'It's a girl' at the birth of the baby, with that utterance they produce a gendered subject of girl and the parents then reinforce that gender, while repeating it through dressing or showing doing such as showing how to sit in appropriate way. So what Butler wanted to do with this example is to show, that there are limitations in performativity, because we are all limited by roles and norms. In other words, even if we think that we are behaving in our own way, it is not the case, because the society, our culture or religion imposed specific kind of behavior to us.

## 5. What is popular culture?

Before defining popular culture, one should be familiar with the meaning of the “culture”, which is considered to be one of the most difficult words to define. According to John Storey’s book “Cultural theory and popular culture” there are three definitions of it. Firstly, the culture refers to “a general process of intellectual, spiritual and aesthetic development” (2). In other words, when one speaks about cultural development of one country and refers only to these factors, it means that one talks about important persons such as great scientists, artists or poets. Second definition of culture refers to ‘a particular way of life, whether of a people, a period or a group’, which means that not only the previously mentioned factors are included, but also literacy, the big events such as religious festivals or sport events, holidays etc. Lastly, the third definition refers to ‘the works and practices of intellectual and especially artistic activity’ (Storey: 2008:2). In other words, third definition refers to literary works, fine art or ballet. Popular culture could be therefore described as mixture of the second and third definition of culture, since popular culture refers to “lived” culture and the examples of it could be the celebration of Christmas or pop music.

Trier-Bieniek described popular culture in more abstract way as “the images, narratives, and ideas that circulate within mainstream culture”, which means that these are popular, since the society is exposed to them and then this society becomes familiar with the same influential aspects of the culture (12). People choose to spend their free time by consuming these aspects of the popular culture and they see it as fun, but what they don’t see is how these aspects affect them. Popular culture is everywhere around us and it dominates the cultural space. One can see advertisements on the buses, billboards, newspapers etc. Tier-Bieniek says that the creators of the pop culture can be called “cultural architects”, since they are “building” the environments, such as real



architects, who project the houses or public spaces (14). The question then arises, “Who are these people, who produce popular culture?” Statistics show, that these people are men. There are just a few women included in production of media culture, what explains the stereotyped representation of women and men. Thus it follows that the male domination in the production of the popular culture gives rise to the sexist representation within popular culture. Generally speaking, the producers of the popular culture have an impact on who is represented and in what way. What is also important to say is that these representations of gender are harmful for people, since they are constructed in narrow way. That is why many people get the wrong picture about the gender they are or want to be. Although the narrow pictures of gender are being produced, there are also some examples of opposite representations, which offer alternative. For example the campaign “Real Beauty” by Dove, which presents regular women instead of models in order to help these women to feel confident in their bodies, since only 2% of them consider themselves beautiful. Finally, one’s gender identity have an impact on what aspects of the popular culture one is going to choose. Since there are many ways in which the messages of popular culture can be interpreted, every person could have his or her own way of doing that and every person should be aware of the effects, to which we all are exposed.

### 5.1. Advertisements

According to Cambridge Dictionary the advertisement is “a picture, short film, song, etc. that tries to persuade people to buy a product or service” ([dictionary.cambridge.org](https://dictionary.cambridge.org)) and it works in many ways depending on the product being offered. It can give straightforward facts about the product in order to convince the buyer in its quality, such as describing how well certain cleaning product cleans the house. Secondly, it can also

create and control brand identity such as Pepsi's campaigns which connect their drinks with teen culture. Because of that campaign the young consumers will hopefully switch from Coca Cola to Pepsi in order to be "cool" (Trier:54). Thirdly, it can stimulate desire in the potential buyers while convincing them that they will miss something in their life if they don't buy the product.

As I have already mentioned the popular culture has an impact on people and the same is with the advertisements. For instance, a campaign "A Diamond is Forever", which is mentioned in the introduction, is one of the many advertisements which were successful, since the sale of the products have been increased. Here, I am not interested in sale issues, but metaphors or meanings which are behind some products. Williamson argues in her book *Decoding advertisements* by using metaphor: "an advertisement is simply a transparent vehicle for a message behind it". (17) In other words message is the most important part of the advertisement and many messages relay on representation of gender roles.

For example, the advertisements of the website Go Daddy.com displayed during Super Bowl XLVII. Two sides were presented, a sexy, blond girl and overweight, curly-haired geek with the laptop. The woman, who introduce them to the audience says that they are perfect together and they are starting to kiss. The slogan 'When sexy meets smart, your small business scores' then appears on the screen (Trier:53). One of the most important themes is shown here: beautiful, white woman who must sit and be flawless and man who needs to work and whose beauty is not so important. In order to be successful this advertisement uses sexism, stereotypes and sex appeal. The message behind it is obvious, if you want your business to be successful just get the website for it at godaddy.com and it is all done. The professionals will build the website for you, which is going to be as attractive as the girl presented in the advertisement.

There are a lot of advertisements similar to the previously mentioned, where women are presented as sexual objects or where limited social roles are shown. The following section will present the advertisement throughout the history while focusing on representation of men and women. It will also provide a critical introduction to the study of gender and advertising.

## 6. Gender, Advertising, and Popular Culture

Nowadays the advertising is much more than persuasion. According to Raymond Williams it is a magic, since advertising gives meanings and values to ordinary things (Trier:55). For example a car becomes a sign of masculinity and the white dress transforms woman into the “princess”. (Trier:55) All that presents unreal world and the advertisements are part of it, since they often present things, which make people forget their real problems. Trier-Bieniek states that the advertisements are “deeply intertwined with culture, of which gender is a core component” (55), because of the meanings, which they are giving to the things or people.

For example one pair of expensive glasses or jeans can transform the school nerd into popular kid. It is also said that the advertising became “an object of consumption itself” (Trier:56), since many people for example watch football’s Super Bowl in order to see advertisements rather than the game. Moreover, the advertisements with certain messages are becoming part of the shows, because they are embedded in their content. MTV is the best example, since it has a whole channel devoted to the advertising of music with videos while promoting albums and concerts.

Further, advertisements are important part of social communication, since they are full of stories about our culture and these stories are full of prejudices towards women and men. In the advertisements women are often presented as sexually available as one could see in the advertisement for GoDaddy.com. They also prescribe whether the product is for men or women. For instance, cosmetics were marked only to women. The advertising has also a big role in the construction of men’s and women’s images, which become dominant in the culture. For example, when the consumer sees the advertisement with the ideal image of man, who is physically strong and has muscles, he can immediately reach for protein supplements being offered in order to be like this

man. On this example one can see how the advertisements can influence people's lives and not in a good way, what will be discussed later.

### 6.1. Historical context

In their guidebook *Advertising basics* Vilanilam and Varghese “asked themselves “How old is advertising? When did human beings start advertising?” and they said that it is difficult to answer these questions, since the meaning of “to advertise” had changed. (1) Firstly it meant “to mark” and in 18<sup>th</sup> century the meaning was changed to “to persuade” and that was the period when modern advertising was born. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century the advertisers began to advertise through mass media and these advertisements will be analyzed later. Since the advertising has started thousands years ago a lot of things had changed, the way of advertising as well as its look. In the next chapters the focus will be put on the advertising from 1970 until today in the North America and the representation of the gender in their advertisements. For this goal to be achieved, the next section will be divided into three chapters, in which the main issues with the examples will be discussed.

#### 4.1.3. Representations of femininity and masculinity in the ads

In order to understand how our visual culture deals with issues of gender, Erving Goffman provided a detailed analysis of advertisements in his book *Gender Advertisement*, published in 1979. Since the second wave of feminism was 1960s-1970s, someone would think that after that period there would be no more subjugation of women and that gender equality would be achieved, but Goffman demonstrated that despite the progress of Feminist movement, the inequality was still represented in the advertising.

What is interesting to notice is that Goffman, Butler, West and Zimmerman had similar statements about gender identity. They all agreed that the gender isn't something that is imprinted in our genes and that we are not born with it, but we learn to "adopt" certain attributes, which seem to be natural in our culture. These attributes are often presented in the advertisements, and Goffman therefore states that the ideal and socially accepted presentation of masculinity and femininity doesn't create the real, but fictional world, where men and women differ more than in the real world (Lawton:4). As Goffman analysed the advertisements, he wanted to make visible what was invisible on the first sign; the meaning of gestures, facial expressions, movement of hand, eyes and knees of women and men in the advertisements. In order to present it better he categorized the advertisements into following categories: feminine touch, function ranking, ritualization of subordination, relative size and licensed withdrawal (Lawton:4)

"Feminine touch" means that the women in the advertisements hold, touch objects or themselves, but not in assertive or controlling way as men do (Jhally:6). Masculine touch is firm and it is presented as male person manipulates the environment, while feminine touch is light and purposeless, what can be seen on the following examples from Goffman's book:



On the pictures below the modern ads are presented in order to show how older ads are not as glamorous as the modern ads and to show how they present feminine touch. The woman on this picture is objectified since the focus is put more on her than on the

perfume. She poses sexually while holding her head with one hand and the perfume with the other. The perfume is placed over woman's chests in order to provide a sense of sensuality, what will actually sell the product. The feminine touch reached its maximum here. In contrast to that man on the other ad is presented as someone who is actually there because of the product and his body isn't presented in a sexual way, but it implies that he is sportiest and that he does things. He is also holding the shampoo firmly in order to show the dominance.



Further, Goffman noticed that the women are presented as subordinate to men when it comes to workforce, family or in general within society. For instance, in the ads where man and woman work together, man is the one who performs the executive role and not the women, or in the representation of everyday situations man is the one who instructs or shows something to woman as it is shown in the further ads:



This category is called “function ranking”. “The ritualization of subordination” means that the women are presented as submissive and powerless while lying down, sitting with their legs crossed or posing while holding feet or heels (Jhally:8). The women in these positions are defenseless and vulnerable and because of that they are becoming sexualized. It is important to mention that the women’s body is used to show common social idea that “what the culture defines as feminine has a subordinate relationship to what the culture defines as masculine” (Jhally:8). Goffman connects it with portrait poses of couples in the past, where the main focus was put on the man and the woman was just backup support (Goffman:40).

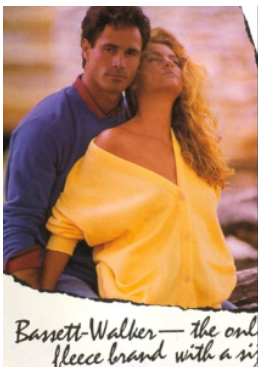


The picture of woman being submissive is being repeated constantly, what confirms Butlers statement that “the act that one does, the act that one performs is, in a sense, an act that’s been going on before one arrived on the scene” (526). Although the ads below are very similar, since both women are lying down, they come from different periods of time; early 90’s and year 2010. One can see that the subordination is more emphasized in the modern ad, where the woman is lying at the feet of a standing man, what shows woman’s vulnerability. While being in this position the women also express their sexual availability.





Further, Goffman noticed that the women in advertisements are presented as not being interested in the world around them and he called this category “Licensed withdrawal”. They are disoriented or psychologically isolated from the society as well as defenseless while hiding their face with the hand or putting the finger in the mouth, what again emphasizes their subordination. In contrast to that, men are presented as active beings, who are always in control while being conscious of the situation around them. The difference can be seen on the following example:



The question then arises: why is the presentation of women and men so different? West and Zimmerman reply in this way “Things are the way they are by virtue of the fact that men are men and women are women-division perceived to be natural and rooted in biology, producing in turn profound psychological, behavioral and social consequences.” (128) The last category “Relative size” is similar to the previous one, since it also demonstrates women’s subordination while presenting them as smaller than men or as the ones who take up less space in the advertisements. It follows that the male’s dominance over women is expressed in their height and girth. The height is

connected with control and influence only because of the culture; the culture is the creator of the meaning as it was mentioned at the beginning of the paper, where the blue and pink colors were connected with one being boy or girl. The culture imposed these meanings on us and the patterns are being constantly repeated. That is why we somehow consider all of Goffman's categories as being natural, since our body, according to Butler, is a historical situation as well as everything around us and if all of that existed before us no wonder the patterns are being repeated all over again (520).

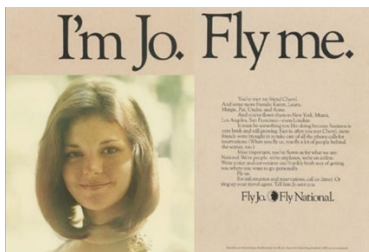
#### 6.1.1. Ideal man and women during the history and today

The advertisements almost always present good-looking man or woman and lot of people enjoy looking at them and although advertisements are not reflecting the real life, the society sees these men and women as ideal, and people are starting to believe that by purchasing the offered product they would come a step closer to achieving the imposed "perfection". In other words, the advertisements portray the advertiser's perception of what is ideal in the society and when it comes to portraying women little has changed there. This section will, therefore, offer the overview of the most common women's portrayals from 70's until today and a short analysis of them as well.

In advertising of 19<sup>th</sup> century the ideal woman in United States was white, middle-class women. If black women were shown in these advertisement they were presented as servants in order to emphasize their subordination. According to Trier, "in the process of constructing the ideal consumer as White middle-class woman, modern advertisers also went one step further by promoting a particular type of White middle-class woman as the ideal women; she was and is White, often blond, large breasted and generally thin" (60). In contrast to that, the women in the ads today are taller, more

toned and often have athletic bodies, what was unimaginable back then, because it would emasculate men, who were always presented as dominant.

In the advertisement of 70's the women were portrayed through negative and limited stereotypes such as "A woman's place is in the home" or "Men regard women primarily as sexual objects" (Bonham:14), which means that the advertising did not react to the women's movement and that the men were still in the dominant position over women. In the picture below one can see the ad of national airline, where woman is objectified, while saying these words and just being pretty while doing not so serious job.



In the 80's the portrayal of woman started to change and the woman is not presented as the housewife anymore, but as employed. She is having the real job such as business executive or manager. In the 70's the female roles were limited to a housewife or being employed as entertainer or stewardess and now the women are being displayed as employed twice as much as before, and as a consequence they appeared to be portrayed as equal to men. Despite previously mentioned facts, the ads in 80's are starting to present the woman's body as decoration more than ever before, and such presentation of women's body will reach a climax in 21<sup>st</sup> century. On the picture below one can see a woman in a seductive pose while looking straight at the camera. Not only that the pose and her eyes represent the confidence but also the feminist motto "Who says you can't have it all?"



In the 1990s advertisers began to present the hyper-sexualized woman in their ads or to put it differently, the ads from that period contained more sexually provocative content than the ads before. In this period men are started to be objectified for the first time, but it was different since in their ads there was no phrases “You know you want it” as on the picture below. Although men were objectified, there were no consequences as a result of it. When a woman is objectified, there is always a threat of sexual violence, what tells us that although gender equality is achieved, in some aspects of life men and women will never be the same.



When one looks at the modern ads of 21<sup>st</sup> century, one can see that the display of woman is worse than ever, whereas the display of man has not changed a lot. The ideal woman of 21<sup>st</sup> century is photo-shopped woman, whose beauty is unreachable to human beings, since these women are flawless. It is interesting to notice that the women are photo-shopped in order to be thinner, younger and lighter (if they have black skin) and men only in order to be bigger, what again confirms the fact that the ideal of beauty has been being changed a lot, although today it reaches its extremes, since some of the images

are artificial and impossible. The society determines the ideals and since we are exposed to them, we also start to believe in them and to consider them as such. But why is it so, that the man can be shown as older man (for example around 50 years old) with flaws and it is considered normal and even sexy, but if woman was put in his position that would be bad advertisement. These pictures of ideal woman and man circulate so much in the society that people are used to it and they consider them as normal, although most of them are everything except normal; for example ads in which violence over women is presented. All of that has its roots in the past and that is how the gender is constructed, as Butler and Goffman said that everything is learnt, since the patterns are always repeated.

#### 6.1.2. Advertising responds to its critics

Throughout the last sections one could notice that the advertising presented the idea of beautiful woman for decades and this portrayal of woman was fake, because it was modified. The brand “Dove” decided to respond to the critics, who said that the advertising was creating unrealistic beauty norms and provoked a sense of insecurity in women, while launching the Dove Campaign for Real Beauty. Their aim was to make women comfortable in their own skin, because according to the survey only 2% of them consider themselves as beautiful (Trier:72). Dove launched a few campaign videos, but the most successful was “Real beauty sketches”, where a police sketch artist drew women without seeing them. He always drew two portraits of the same woman; one was women’s self-description and the second was other women’s description of the same woman. When the participants saw these portraits of themselves, they were shocked because the second portrait was closer to their real look and also more attractive. These women concluded that they should be less self-critical and more confident. The ad ended

with phrase “You are more beautiful than you think”, and there was no product offered (Trier: 73). This campaign was considered revolutionary, because the different images of women were presented, but some critics ask themselves, if this campaign emphasizes the notion of women as image? (Trier: 75) The question will stay unanswered, since there are always few points of view, but the important thing is that this campaign is inspirational, and it can be served as a good example of offering a product without using stereotypes, photo-shopped models or naked bodies; real beauty and truth also sells.

## 7. Conclusion

The goal of this paper was to analyze how the gender is presented during one period of American history. Since the gender is constructed and learnt through socially accepted patterns of behavior, dressing etc., in this way the advertisers constructed their own ideal picture of man and woman, which has not been changed for the past few decades. Although the feminist movement was successful and women thought that the gender equality will be achieved, the women today are still struggling for it. The ads were since always the mirror of society, so they reflect what society considers acceptable for that time. For example, in 60's and 70's the ideal woman was housewife and the 90% of ads were presented woman as such, while man was the one, who earned money. During the 80's, except being housewife the woman could be employed, therefore, she was presented as equal to man, although the woman was started to be presented as an object more than ever before. During the 90's until today the most ads present woman as a sexual object and, therefore, the ideal picture of woman became worse than ever. Since the society expects the perfection from women, they are under lot of pressure today. From all of this one can say that the gender is something that existed before us, since the patterns are being repeated, what confirms Butler's theory of gender being act. Also the pictures of men and women in the ads confirm the West and Zimmerman's theory of gender being accomplishment, which means that in order to be presented as real it must be in accordance to society's norms. In my opinion the ads have negative impact on gender construction, because they emphasize the typical differences between woman and man, while for example presenting traditional gender roles, or the stereotypes or they present the "fake" reality, where men and women inhabit two different worlds. The ads also use generalization in order to mold us and in this way not to let our individuality to come to the surface, but as Butler said there are individual ways of performing gender,

one performs it while respecting the proscriptions or sanctions, so it follows that it is not fully individual, gender is identity created in time and through 'stylized repetition of acts'. It means that even if we think that we are behaving as ourselves completely independently, the units of behavior that we possess, are not really invented by us. All behavior is composed of recombining small pieces of previously behaved behaviors. The ads are also constructed in this way, since every ad has a little bit of past in itself, whether it was display of woman as submissive or as object. In contrast to that, there are ads which present the converted situations; where men are presented as submissive or as sexual objects, but since this is considered to be unnatural, there are just a few of such ads. Finally, there is a hope that the display of woman and man in the ads can be changed, but the society must become aware how much such display harms people. The society, therefore, needs to be critical to all of this and transfer that critic and knowledge to the future generations in order to stop the ads to turn us into slaves of advertising.



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