

“The world belongs to Charlie”:
Representation of women in Revlon’s advertising

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Tiivistelmä – Abstract <p>Representaatiot mediassa vaikuttavat ajatuksiimme, arvoihimme ja käyttäytymiseemme. Kielenkäytön kautta media rakentaa ymmärrystämme esimerkiksi siitä, mitä on olla nainen tai mies. Mainokset ovat osa jokapäiväistä elämäämme ja sen takia tärkeä tutkimuskohde. Erityisesti meikkimainokset, jotka sisältävät usein kuvia naisista ja joiden oletettu kohdeyleisö ovat naiset, ovat tärkeää aineistoa naiskuvaan sekä naiseuden representaatiota tutkittaessa.</p> <p>Tämä kandidaatintutkielma käsittelee naiseuden representaatiota Revlonin meikkimainoksissa vuosikymmenten 1960 ja 2010 välillä. Hyödyntäen kriittisen diskurssintutkimuksen teoriaa, tutkielma tarkastelee, millaisissa rooleissa naiset nähdään mainoksissa ja kuinka tämä on muuttunut vuosikymmenten aikana. Kielenkäytön lisäksi tutkielma erittelee myös multimodaalisia representaation keinoja Revlonin mainoksissa.</p> <p>Tutkielma osoittaa, että Revlonin mainoskampanjoiden naiskuva on seurannut yhteiskunnan muutoksia, erityisesti feminismien noususta suosioon 1970-luvulla. Naiset kuitenkin nähdään mainoksissa useimmiten yhä joko passiivisena koristeena ja ihailun kohteena tai ystävän roolissa antamassa kuluttajalle vinkkejä, kuinka saavuttaa haluttu tulos.</p> <p>Yhteen brändiin kohdistuva tutkielma ei kuitenkaan kata täysin kauneustuotteiden mainonnan muutoksia, joten lisätutkimus aiheesta on tarpeen. Representaatioita voisi jatkossa tutkia vertailemalla eri tuotemerkkien mainosten naiskuvia keskenään.</p>	
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1 INTRODUCTION

Media has the ability to construct our reality through language and images. We are surrounded by advertising everywhere we go and whether we acknowledge it or not, these advertisements act as socializing agents that influence our values, beliefs and behaviors. Through this, advertisements shape our ideas of what it means to be a man or a woman. The fact that advertisements are such an intrinsic part of our everyday lives is what makes them an important area of research.

In simple terms, representation can be described as the image of a person or a phenomenon that language use constructs. Naturally, the concept is rarely as simple and language use is not the only tool used to construct representations. The ways we see people similar to ourselves represented in texts and images around us, changes the ways we construct and perform our identities. In fact, Blommaert (2005: 205) emphasizes that people do not have a static identity but rather that identities are constructed through different practices and are constantly changing. Media representations have a strong influence on how we perceive other people but also how we perceive ourselves. As beauty product advertisements are mainly aimed at women and portray women in them, they play an important role in the representation of women in mass media. Thus, beauty advertisements contribute significantly to the ideas of what it is to be a woman.

Previous research on advertising and the representation of gender has largely focused on the stereotypical representation of women as housewives, sexual objects or passive, almost decorative commodities (e.g. Wolf 1991, Mager et al. 2011, Gill 2008). Additionally, especially when researching the representation of women in advertising, the general focus has been on the unattainable weight and beauty standards they create and how detrimental these ideals can be to young women (Kilbourne 1999, Del Rosso 2017).

In this thesis, the focus is on Revlon, a brand that has been in the beauty business for over 80 years and therefore offers a sizable selection of advertisement campaigns to analyze. I have chosen advertisement campaigns from the decades between 1960s and 2010s. With the help of critical discourse analysis (CDA), I examine how women are represented in the advertisements and what roles they are portrayed in. The purpose of the analysis is to extend the research of representation of

women in beauty advertising and find out whether there have been changes in advertising and representation of women from 1960s to current day.

This study is divided into three main parts. First, I will introduce the theoretical background relevant to my research. Second, I present the aim and research questions of the study. In this section, I will also introduce the data that consists of 16 advertisements and establish my methods of analysis. Third, I will present the results of my analysis. After these three main sections, I will discuss the implications of the study and possibilities for future research in the conclusion section.

2 BACKGROUND

In this section, I will introduce the theoretical background of the present study. First, I will discuss feminist media studies, a field that is strongly connected to analyzing beauty advertising. Second, I will introduce the key concepts of critical discourse analysis and visual grammar and how they can be used to analyze the representation of women in advertising. Last, I will offer a brief overview of previous research done on women and femininity in advertising.

2.1 Feminist media studies

Feminist media studies examines how gender, sexuality, class and other forms of identity are represented in contemporary media texts. In addition, feminist media studies explores how these identities are produced by contemporary media because, as Gill (2007: 12) states, media not only reflects reality but actively constructs it. Scholars in the field are interested in how these cultural constructions are connected to patterns of inequality and oppression. According to Gallagher (2003: 19), the two central axes of feminist media studies are the “analysis of structures of power in which women are systematically subordinated and a focus on politics of representation and the production of knowledge in which women are objects rather than subjects”. Both of these themes are relevant when analyzing representation in advertising and thus, relevant to this thesis.

As feminist media studies has a focus on how gender is represented in mass media, research often concentrates on media consumed by women, meaning women’s magazines and the advertisements in them are often a focal point of study. My thesis focuses on beauty advertisements, thus feminist media studies is the natural background for it. More pertinently, feminist media studies shares many of its ideologies, such as seeing language as something that constructs the world, with critical

discourse analysis, and thus CDA is often the preferred method for conducting feminist media studies (Gill 2007: 58).

2.2 Critical discourse analysis

Language is never a neutral tool; it is used to mirror the world around us but also to construct it. Discourse is a concept that has been described in many different ways. According to Blommaert (2005: 3), discourse comprises of all purposeful semiotic human activity, seen in connection with social, cultural and historical patterns of use. Discourses offer us ways of representing people and phenomena and therefore also shape our perceptions of reality. As van Dijk (2008: 9) describes, those who control discourse, control the minds of people. People's actions are controlled by their minds, thus, those who control discourse can also directly affect the actions of people.

Critical discourse analysis is an approach to discourse analysis that emerged in the early 1990s and has an interest on the relations between discourse and power (Wodak 2001: 2). CDA is used to better understand social issues by studying language, the ways it is used and the ideologies behind it. In other words, CDA is interested in uncovering the ways social inequalities are conveyed, constituted and legitimized by language use. Despite having a focus on language, CDA is not exclusively a linguistic theory; while it does offer a way to closely analyze discourse, CDA also includes the various social factors that surround it. Both Meyer (2001: 16) and van Dijk (2008: 87) note that the field of CDA is vast and interdisciplinarity is a defining characteristic of it, and therefore it lacks a certain unitary theoretical framework.

Lastly, as Blommaert (2005: 25) states, discourse is an instrument of power and one of the aims of CDA is to make the ways this power is used more visible. According to van Dijk (2001: 96), CDA, in a way, is always biased as it takes the side of the oppressed. In addition to uncovering power relations, CDA should make proposals for change in the discourses it analyses. Thus, when analyzing a subject such as beauty advertising, that often has been linked with having a negative impact on women's self-image, CDA should be used to not only uncover the negative discourses, but to also propose ways to change them.

2.3 Representation through visual means

Representation of people and phenomena can be done not only through texts, but also through visual means. Advertisements rely heavily on visual means of communication and thus it is important to take note of the visual ways advertisements represent our social reality.

A common tool for analyzing visual representation in advertisements is Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) theory of visual grammar. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) discuss how visual communication has resources for constituting the interaction between not only the people portrayed in the images, but also between the people in the image and the viewer of the image. In their theory, Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) identify different levels of meaning that together create the visual grammar. These levels of meaning can be divided into representational meaning, interactional meaning and composition of the image.

In the present study I pay special attention to the level of interactional meaning, as analyzing interaction is important when determining the roles people are portrayed in. Direction of the gaze in any image is perhaps the most important feature in establishing a connection between the person in the image and the viewer of the image. According to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006: 116), this is because the expression of social meanings in images derives from face-to-face interactions. The viewer of the image is placed in a certain position, for example a friend or a customer, through different visual means, such as eye contact or a friendly smile. As Kress and van Leeuwen state (2006: 116), the way the viewer responds to the position can depend on several factors, such as the viewer's attitude towards the producer of the image.

The angle of the image and the size of the frame are other aspects that contribute to the interactional meaning of the image. The angle of the image decides the perspective from which the viewer sees the image subject and thus manipulates the viewer's attitude towards the subject. For example, a photo taken from a low angle can be used to make the viewer look up to the subject and possibly produce feelings of inferiority. A straight angle where "the point of view is one of equality and there is no power difference involved" (Kress and van Leeuwen 2006: 140) is a common choice in advertising when the desired effect of the framing is to create feelings of closeness or intimacy. Size of the frame relates to the choice between close-up, medium shot or long shot. According to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006: 124) close-up images imply an intimate relation between the viewer and the image subject, thus representing the image subject on a more familiar and personal level, compared to a more impersonal medium or long shot.

2.4 Women and femininity in advertising

Advertising is a subject that has interested researchers for decades and there is a clear reason for it: we are constantly surrounded by advertisements every day of our lives. Naturally, that level of

exposure will influence our thoughts and actions. Advertising reflects the values of society, but it also builds on them through its portrayal of different people. Identities are shaped by advertisements and other portrayals in the media, and according to Wolf (1991: 58-76), the tendency to look for role models in media depictions is especially strong in women.

Some research on the role of femininity and how women are represented in advertising has been done. On past research, a lot of attention has been paid on the tendency to portray women as incompetent house wives, on portrayals of women's dependency upon men and on the lack of presentation of working women (Zotos & Tsihla 2014: 446). In congruence with other research on the subject, Lazar (2009: 371) describes how traditionally media has represented women in confined and stereotypical manner, mostly as passive and often as sexual objects. However, according to Lazar (2009: 371), media has partly caught up with the times and has started to represent women as more autonomous, but still "embracing feminine practices", such as gossiping, loving the color pink and expressing the desire to 'doll up'.

Wolf (1991: 69) describes how in the 1970s, in a post-women's movement world, women's magazines needed to revamp their formula and started to favor a more individualistic, can-do tone, while still eliciting a need for beauty tips, products and services. Wolf (1991: 70) states that magazines aimed to make women dream of waking up with their bathrooms "full of exactly the right skin-care products, with step-by-step instructions, and palettes of exactly the required makeup". It is not far-fetched to assume that beauty advertisements adopted similar tactics and tones. Wolf (1991: 71-75) goes as far as asserting that a sizable portion of the editorial content of modern women's magazines is decidedly not trivial or degrading to women, but that the huge amount of advertisements in them is what reinforces the rigid and possibly detrimental ideals of how women should look and act.

Research on the effect that advertisements have on women's body image and self-confidence has also been done. According to Del Rosso (2017: 187), buzzwords describing bodies in particular ways, with words such as "firmed, toned, smooth, and tight", can lead to women creating unrealistic and even unhealthy beauty and body-type goals. Kilbourne (1999: 136) states that magazines and the advertisements in them deliberately encourage anxiety about one's weight and looks because it is profitable. Kilbourne (1999) goes on to note that most advertisements seem to suggest that the only way to be suitably and properly feminine is to consume more. Ringrow (2016: 6) agrees,

stating that most cosmetics advertising “presupposes a ‘need’ for products to improve the female appearance”.

Past research on the subject of femininity and the stereotypical roles for women in beauty advertising has often relied on textual analysis (e.g. Del Rosso 2016, Ringrow 2016). However, it is clear that studying text alone is not sufficient for scholars with a critical agenda, thus a more comprehensive look at beauty advertising is needed. In the present study, I focus on not only the text in beauty advertising, but on the visual means of discourse as well.

3 THE PRESENT STUDY

3.1 Research aim and questions

In the present study, I examine the representation of women in the cosmetic brand Revlon’s print advertisements. The study builds on the existing research on the portrayal of women in advertising and seeks to find out how Revlon represents the target audience, or rather the ideal the target audience is encouraged to pursue with the help of Revlon products, in the brand’s advertisements. In the study, I aim to examine the roles women are seen in the advertisements and analyze the changes in representation of women in Revlon’s advertising in the past 60 years.

Thus, my research questions are:

- 1) What roles do women occupy in beauty advertisements?
- 2) Has the representation of the ‘ideal woman’ in beauty advertising changed in the past 60 years and if so, how?

3.2 Data

The data consists of 16 of Revlon’s advertisements from the decades between 1960 and 2010. I have specifically chosen adverts that encompass the general language and spirit of the decade’s beauty advertising and thus work as suitable examples of how language and other means of influencing are used. As such, the adverts provide a representative collection of Revlon’s beauty advertising.

All the advertisements chosen include a woman or multiple women and a passage or paragraph of text. The amount of text varies between each advertisement and decade, as trends in advertising change over time. The products advertised include lipsticks, hair dyes, mascaras and other beauty

products. In earlier advertisements the copy would at times only feature a part of a woman: the lower half of a face when advertising a new lipstick shade, for example, but later adverts consistently feature a model or an actress who serves as the face of the campaign.

The analytic focus is on print advertising because it enables me to look back to a time before advertising on the television and the internet. Focusing on beauty adverts felt like a natural choice as the main target audience for beauty products is women and beauty brands generally include women in their adverts. I chose Revlon as the brand to focus on because it has been in the beauty business for over 80 years and therefore has an abundance of relevant adverts to study. Revlon has always been known for its affordable but excellent products, which means that its target audience is broad and includes women from several age and social groups. Additionally, Revlon's advertising campaigns have in the past caused wide discussion and some criticism for borrowing feminist rhetoric to encourage consumerism with their campaign for the perfume Charlie (Zeisler 2016: 7), I am thus interested in seeing whether similar themes can be seen in the brand's advertising today.

3.3 Method

This study is based on qualitative research and examines the potentially stereotypical representations of women in advertising, thus my chosen method of analysis is critical discourse analysis. Advertisements rely more and more on visual means of communication (Cook 2001: 55), which is why it is important to include them in the analysis when doing research on the subject. To include the visual means of influencing, I also analyzed the images in the advertisements chosen for this study.

During analysis, I paid attention to recurring means of influencing in the advertisements, such as eye contact and the usage of second-person personal pronoun. I analyzed linguistic means of influencing, such as word choices, and how they changed over time. In addition, I took note of which means of influencing continued steadily through the decades and which were only present for a certain decade or even for a certain product. I also looked at how the audience is addressed and through this, what roles the women in the advertisements are given.

4 ANALYSIS

In this section, I will present and discuss the findings of my study. The first chapter covers my findings on the environment in which the women in the advertisements are portrayed in. For the second chapter, I focused on which parts of the model in the advertisement are visible, as there has

been a trend of depicting female models more as partial, “dismembered bodies” than as full bodies (for example, Mager et al. 2011: 241, Del Rosso 2017: 187). In the third chapter, I present my findings on whether the women in the advertisements are shown in any discernible professions and in the fourth, I analyze the way sexuality is represented in the advertisements. Lastly, I will briefly discuss the changes in representation of women in Revlon’s beauty advertising between the 1960s and the 2010s.

A common theme in all advertisements analyzed was that they all feature almost exclusively women with two exceptions and even in the exceptions the men featured have somewhat insignificant roles: a very young child and a businessman whose face is not visible. This is not unusual, as according to Kacen (2000: 348), women are traditionally portrayed alone in advertisements where they are seen taking care of themselves, their beauty or the home.

4.1 The girl on the move

Most beauty adverts tend to be very closely cropped, which means that the environment in them can be hard to decipher and analyze. Portraying a model alone with an abstract or empty background means that there is no socio-economic or cultural context, which makes the advertisement more universal and appealing to a large audience. However, I feel that it is important to take note of the environment whenever possible when analyzing advertising. An advertisement from 1962 for The Ultima Collection by Revlon, depicts a woman and her two children in formal attire, sitting in which appears to be a living room. The slogan for the campaign is “dedicated to the woman who spends a lifetime living up to her potential”. The Ultima Collection was sold in high-end department stores as a prestige brand which explains why the advertisements seem to target upper class women (Bennett 2017). From the advertisements analyzed for this thesis, The Ultima Collection advertisement is notably the only one that clearly portrays the model as a mother figure.

In a 1978 advertisement for Charlie perfume, the model is seen walking in an airport carrying a briefcase, with an airplane taking off in the background. The model is in an active role, seemingly in the middle of walking in long strides, which is typical for a Charlie perfume ad, as the fragrance was targeting the new, liberated woman of the 1970s. The fragrance even has a tomboyish name compared to the more feminine names of other fragrances on the market at the time and was, in fact, named after a man, Charles Revson (Revlon 2018). Another advertisement for the same fragrance from 1980 has a model wearing a sporty outfit carrying skis outdoors. The model is again portrayed in the middle of a movement and the text in the advertisement states that “the world belongs to

Charlie”. The active role the models in Charlie fragrance advertisements are presented in is in sharp contrast to the passive portrayals in other advertisements analyzed.

4.2 The girl with half a face

In earlier decades, the trend in Revlon advertisements seemed to be to show the specific part of the body the product is used for, for example half of the models face when marketing a lipstick. In a 1965 ad for Moon Drops lipstick, the advertisement features a closely cropped image of a woman’s lips with a slogan “Revlon invents wet lipstick”. By 1973, an advertisement for the same lipstick line again features a cropped image of lips but now has a full body image of a woman wearing a sparkly jumpsuit next to it. This progress could be because Revlon wanted to give a recognizable face to the brand or simply because having a beautiful, thin and stylishly dressed woman more efficiently presents the idealized effect of the product advertised. However, this variation in the portrayal of the model is rather short-lived and by 2010s all advertisements analyzed feature a close up of the model’s face instead of, for example, a full body image that shows off the model’s outfit.

Eye contact is a common feature in beauty advertisements and is very prevalent in Revlon’s advertising as well. Eye contact creates a sense of personal connection and is very engaging. According to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006: 118), eye contact creates a “visual form of direct address”, it invites the viewer to establish a sort of imaginary relationship with the person in the image. This relationship can be one of many types, for example a hostile one if the person in the image looks at the viewer with resentment, or a friendly one if the invite is a smile. In Revlon’s beauty advertising, eye contact is one of the most salient means of visual influencing. As the models in the advertisements usually smile, pout or otherwise look beckoning, it is safe to say that the relationship established in them is positive. In a way, the woman in many of Revlon’s advertisements is fulfilling the role of a friend who is recommending a lipstick or other product to the audience. For example, in a 2012 advertisement for Just Bitten Kissable Balm Stain, the model looks straight at the camera and the text in the ad states that “you’ll fall in love with this moisturizing formula”, giving the impression of talking straight to the viewer of the advertisement.

The slogan “you’ll fall in love with this moisturizing formula” strengthens the feeling of intimacy and is in many ways a very typical slogan for a beauty advertisement. It uses a second-person personal pronoun which, according to Cook (2001: 157), is one of the most distinctive features of advertising. The pronoun makes it seem that the advertisement is directly addressing the reader, making the advertisement feel more personal. The use of second-person personal pronoun is

common in Revlon's advertising and persists through decades. It can be seen in, for example, the 1962 advertisement for Color Up tinting rise, which states that "if you're too young to go grey... then don't!" and 55 years later in 2017, in a Revlon Colorstay Eye Collection advertisement that promises to give a "lasting look you'll love".

4.3 The working girl

Zotos et al. (2014: 450) concluded that generally in print advertising women are portrayed in professional settings less than men. This is true in Revlon's advertising as well, as the women in the advertisements are never explicitly seen in any professional setting.

Revlon's Charlie is a fragrance for the active go-getter girl and in a 1988 advert for the fragrance, the model is seen wearing business attire and carrying a briefcase, possibly implying that she is a business professional. Money is only mentioned once in the advert campaigns analyzed for this study: in a 1983 advertisement for Revlon Color lipstick that has a slogan "Lookin' Like a Million" and states that "you don't have to be rich to look rich". Some of the shade names listed in the advertisement are also connected to money, for example Billionaire Blue and Million Dollar Wine. Otherwise, references to professional life or money are absent from the advertisements analyzed.

None of the advertisements analyzed feature an expert in the field of beauty or makeup in them. Revlon advertisements from earlier decades feature mainly models but newer adverts feature almost exclusively actresses as themselves. Advertisements featuring famous actresses often also state the name of the actress (for example, Halle Berry in ColorStay Lipcolor ad from 2006, Emma Stone in Just Bitten Kissable Balm Stain campaign from 2012, and Olivia Wilde in Revlon Nail Enamel ad from 2013) usually with a sentence that also distinguishes the specific shade they are wearing in the photo. However, this seems to be a practice that only applies to actresses. Models and other spokespersons, even when they are featured in several campaigns, rarely if ever get their names stated in the advertisement.

It could be argued that Revlon relies on the fact that the target customer recognizes the actress or model in the advertisement as an expert on the field of beauty. In Revlon New Complexion Compact advertisement from 1996, the famous spokespersons are only identified by their first name, implying that Revlon expects the audience to recognize them by that alone. This is not a far-fetched expectation as the models in the advertisement are Daisy Fuentes, Halle Berry and Claudia Schiffer, all very famous models or actresses at the time.

4.4 The girl with lashes to lust after

The women in Revlon advertisements are usually wearing stylish outfits and are rarely scantily-clothed. A notable exception to this is an advertisement for Outrageous Lipstick from 1993, in which the model, Claudia Schiffer, is seen only wearing a black bra, jeans and a tiny vest. All mentions to the romantic or sexual relationships of the women in Revlon's advertising are also absent, except for a passing mention in 1997 ad for ColorStay Lipcolor that states that the lipstick will stay on for hours and "won't kiss off on him!".

Women in the advertisements are often in passive roles and presented as something to look at but are rarely overly sexualized. On the contrary, in a Charlie fragrance advertisement from 1988 that features a woman and a man both dressed in business attire, the woman is seen as the sexual aggressor, grabbing the man's backside. This follows the general theme of Charlie advertisement campaigns being more daring than other Revlon advertisements and having the woman in the advertisement in an active role rather than as a passive object.

However, the language that describes Revlon products or the women using them, at times has clear sexual undertones. For example, the shades for ColorStay Soft & Smooth are described as "sexy" in an advert from 2006 and Lash Fantasy mascara is promised to give the customer the "lashes you lust after". Going further back, Moon Drops lipstick is described as distractingly sensuous in 1965 and later, in 1973 as "shiny, sexy, juiced with color", thus it seems that linking lipstick with sensuality and sex is a persisting trend in Revlon's advertising.

Lazar (2009: 397) states that beauty advertising is known to promote the ideal of youthful appearance and this is true in Revlon's advertising as well. A 1962 advertisement for Color Up tinting rise tells the viewer that "if you're too young to go grey... then don't!" and in 1973 Moon Drops promises that "instead of looking old or cold" the lipsticks looks "yummy and young".

In addition to youthfulness, child-likeness seems to be favored, especially in the earlier advertisement campaigns. Advertisement for The Worldly Young Innocents collection from 1965 features a grown woman holding a teddy bear next to the slogan "Young. Fragile. Faintly frosted". In feminist media studies, the use of juvenile reference terms for women has been criticized as it has been deemed patronizing to present adult women as immature and powerless (Lazar 2009, Kilbourne, 1999). The combination of girlishness and sexual undertones in beauty advertising has

also been seen as alarming by feminist media studies as it sexualizes young girls in the media (Lazar 2009: 393).

Youthfulness and girliness can also be represented in text through informal adjectives and “playful, clever coinages” (Lazar 2009: 391). This can be seen in Revlon’s advertising, for example in Revlon Color advertisement from 1983 that describes the shades of the lipstick with the phrase “roseywineyplummyberry shades”. This so-called girl-talk is also present in Sunnyside Up colorant advertisement from 1967, that states that the colorant “doesn’t do drastic things (just fantastic things!)”. Notably the use of excessively feminine and child-like vocabulary lessens during the decades and by the 2010s more specialized keywords like “high-definition” and “oil-free” seem to be favored over terms such as glossy and yummy.

4.5 Changes in representation between the 1960s and 2010s

The aim of this study was to find out what roles women occupy in beauty advertising and how that has changed in the past decades. It is safe to say that Revlon’s advertising has followed the general trends of the field of beauty and cosmetics marketing.

The housewife stereotype has seemingly disappeared altogether after 1962 from Revlon’s advertising. According to Faludi (1991: 215), the introduction of Charlie perfume was a calculated move to target the liberated and feminist twentysomethings of the time. Revlon successfully embraced its audience’s new feminist values, which lead to Charlie becoming the bestselling perfume in the world (Revlon 2018). However, after the Charlie campaigns, Revlon appears to have returned to portraying women in mostly passive and decorative roles.

Other changes in the advertisements is that they tend to feature more celebrities than models. The amount of text in advertisements has also decreased. These changes could be because Revlon is focusing on achieving brand recognition through the image the brand portrays instead of through the intrinsic quality of their products. In addition, having the focus on images rather than text is a common trend in advertising in general (Cook 2001: 54).

In newer advertisement campaigns there is also less variation in the physical portrayal of the model. All advertisements analyzed from 2010s feature a closely cropped photo of the model’s face with a sizable Revlon logo, compared to the full-body images or images featuring several models from earlier decades.

5 CONCLUSION

Beauty advertising has often been criticized by feminist media studies for stereotypical representations or objectification of the female body. Especially in the 1970s the scholars of feminist media studies deemed that the women in mass media were seen as housewives or sex symbols (e.g. Lazar 2009, Zotos & Tsihla 2014). The aim of this study was to look at the representation of women in Revlon's advertising through the years, examine the roles women are portrayed in and determine whether the stereotypical representations mentioned earlier are present. I aimed to build onto the existing research on the topic and offer a more detailed look into the subject by focusing on a particular brand's advertising campaigns.

The findings show that while Revlon still carries some stereotypical representations of women in their advertising campaigns, they also have more diversity in their representation than one might assume at first. For example, the stereotypical housewife role is nonexistent in Revlon's advertising. I have also pinpointed the Charlie fragrance campaigns as advertisements that represented women as active and assertive, a portrayal that was uncommon in the beauty industry at the time.

The changes in representation were especially apparent in 1970s, perhaps due to social changes in the world and feminism becoming more mainstream. However, while the progress has continued in the real world with women becoming more and more independent and taking more traditionally masculine roles in society, beauty advertising seems to have come to a standstill in which most adverts only have a closely cropped image of a model's face with no real indications to her identity or role in society around her. It seems that while Revlon was quick to adopt feminist portrayals in its advertising in the 1970s, it has no interest in following the more recent trends.

One of the limits of my study was that the advertisements were selected at random rather than systematically and looked at separate from their original context. Additionally, since the length of the thesis is limited I was only able to analyze a small number of adverts. This meant that I was not able to make a comprehensive analysis of Revlon's complete advertisement history and had to choose certain decades. However, I believe that even a shorter timeline and smaller number of adverts is worthy of research.

Further studies on the subject could be done by analyzing the advertisement histories from several beauty brands and comparing the representation of women in them. A more in-depth analysis of the subject in general is needed, as analyzing one brand does not give a reliable depiction of the field of beauty advertisements as a whole. Additionally, it would be interesting to look at beauty advertising from the point of view of queer studies, as sexuality is an ever-present theme in advertising.

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