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The best a brand can be? P&G's femvertising meeting hegemonic masculinity

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Abstract

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This thesis uses Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis and Multimodal Discourse Analysis to study how a house of brands, like Procter & Gamble (P&G), handles femvertising, that it is produced by its own brands. The paper analyses the phenomenon using examples from commercials that belong to P&G's #WeSeeEqual campaign and the controversial commercial video from Gillette The best men can be.

One research questions served as a guideline for this project: What characterizes the femvertising pieces targeting women and/or men, produced by the house of brands P&G for their brands Gillette, Fairy, Ariel and Always?

In order to be able to study this phenomenon, the empirical materials that will be analysed are: 1) #ShareTheLoad by Ariel, 2) #MakeItFair by Fairy, 3) #LikeAGirl by Always, and 4) The best men can be by Gillette.

As theoretical framework this paper uses Foucault's theory of power and the theory of hegemonic masculinity by Connell & Messerschmidt.

What was identified after analysing the data was that the different commercials always include hegemonic masculinity somehow in their content, in some it is attacked directly, in others in a subtle and implicit way and in others just excused or justified.

Keyword: Femvertising, Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis, Hegemonic masculinity, Multimodal Discourse Analysis, P&G, Power, Foucault.

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Table of contents

- Introduction..... 5**
 - Purpose, aim and research question 6
 - Demarcations 6
 - Relevance in Strategic Communication..... 6
 - Structure 7
- Literature Review 8**
 - Brands and society 8
 - Femvertising 11
 - Femvertising and gender equality 14
 - Femvertising and masculinities 15
 - Conclusion 16
- Theory 17**
 - Subject and Power 17
 - Hegemonic masculinity 20
 - Conclusion 24
- Methodology 25**
 - Ontology and epistemology 25
 - Data collection 26
 - Commercials belonging to We See Equal 28
 - Gillette 29
 - Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis as method 30
 - Themes in FCDA 31
 - Multimodal Discourse Analysis as method 31
 - Themes in MDA 33
 - Reflections and limitations 34
- Analysis 35**
 - Description of the commercials 35
 - Ariel: #ShareTheLoad 35
 - Fairy: #MakeItFair 36
 - Stereotypical binary gender roles 41
 - Ariel: #ShareTheLoad 41
 - Fairy: #MakeItFair 42

Always: #LikeAGirl	43
Gillette: The best a man can be.....	43
Discrimination against women	44
Ariel: #ShareTheLoad	44
Fairy: #MakeItFair	45
Always: #LikeAGirl	45
Gillette: The best a man can be.....	45
Iconography	47
Ariel: #ShareTheLoad	47
Fairy: #MakeItFair	48
Always: #LikeAGirl	49
Gillette: The best a man can be.....	49
Color	47
Ariel: #ShareTheLoad	50
Fairy: #MakeItFair	50
Always: #LikeAGirl	52
Gillette: The best a man can be.....	53
Meaning of typography	54
Ariel: #ShareTheLoad	54
Fairy: #MakeItFair	54
Always: #LikeAGirl	55
Gillette: The best a man can be.....	55
Conclusion and discussion.....	55
Discussion	54
Conclusion	55
Further research	57
References.....	57

Introduction

The term femvertising has grown and gained popularity in the last years, companies have reported how the use of femvertising has increased their sales (Åkestam et al, 2017; Hsu, 2017; Nan & Heo, 2007).

For some scholars (Hsu, 2017; Castillo, 2014) femvertising is just another way for companies to make more money, others (Rodrigues, 2016; Tsai, 201; Mendes, 201) show how some women make use of femvertising to do some online activism or to use them as good example of activism.

Femvertising aims to help society to achieve gender equality (Hsui, 2017) and therefore, accomplish social change. It needs to consider power relations in order to make this happen, that is why on this paper I introduce the theory of power by Foucault. The theory of power of Foucault is used to understand how power relations work in this specific case and how it can be applied in order to comprehend the characteristics present in femvertising.

Foucault (1982) established that when wanting to generate a change in the power relation a good option could be to understand the problematic from the opposite site. Since femvertising has been dealing in its majority with targeting women and introducing women problematics in their content, from women perspective, I also introduce the theory of hegemonic masculinity by Connell. Connell and hegemonic masculinity would help to understand why masculinities might have a potential role within femvertising.

This paper intends to study the possible role that the use of masculinity might have within femvertising, considering that femvertising aims to help on the fight against gender inequality (Hsu, 2017) and therefore should not only consider topics related to women but also to men. Due to the fact that there are not many studies about the potential role of the use of masculinities in femvertising, the study is relevant to add more knowledge to the field of brand communication.

To find out more about the possible role of masculinities in femvertising I will use Procter & Gamble (P&G) as a case of study, and its campaign #WeSeeEqual,

and the video commercial from one of its brands: Gillette, The best men can be; as examples to collect data that will serve to this paper as empirical material.

Purpose, aim and research question

The purpose of this study is to explore how masculinities could be involved in femvertising pieces as well as the potential role that masculinities could have within femvertising.

The aim of this study is to provide a bigger understanding of the inclusion of masculinity within the production of femvertising.

As a guideline for this study, I have formulated the following question:

- What characterizes the femvertising pieces targeting women and/or men, produced by the house of brands P&G for their brands Gillette, Fairy, Ariel and Always?

Demarcations

This study will be focused on analysing four campaigns of brands mentioned above (Ariel: #ShareTheLoad, Fairy: #MakeItFair, Always: #LikeAGirl and Gillette: The best men can be); using Feminist Critical discourse analysis and Multimodal Discourse Analysis as tools.

Relevance in Strategic Communication

The relevance of this paper in the field of Strategic Communication, relies on the growing tendency of brands to generate campaigns that support a specific activist cause, such as feminism. This study will contribute to the field of brand communication, due to its focus on house of brands, how they handle femvertising among their brands, and what happens when femvertising involves masculinities on its realization. Brand communication is essential to keep a company on the market for a long term (Kapferer, 2008).

As Connell & Messerschmidt (2005) express, hegemonic masculinity is what stops gender equality, and according to Hsu (2007) femvertising aims to empower women in order to achieve gender equality. Thus, this studies departures from the

believe that femvertising should attack hegemonic masculinity; to change the power structure by attacking the chief enemy, as Foucault (1982) establishes.

Since this paper wants to look into the potential role of masculinities within femvertising and according to the literature review there is lack of information about it, this study will bring fresh information to the field of brand communication.

Structure

Following the introduction chapter, this paper will continue with insights on the existing literature concerning brands and society, and femvertising. Afterwards, an introduction to the theoretical framework with Michel Foucault where his theory of power will be explained, and the theory of hegemonic masculinity by Connell & Messerschmidt as well. The method section covers the methodological aspects of the thesis, how the research has been carried out, as well as methodological limitations. The analysis deals with the results of the study, followed by a discussion and conclusion where the findings are discussed in relation to the existing literature and theoretical framework. Possible further researches can be found as well at the end.

Literature Review

In this section I will first discuss literature that examines the interaction between brand and society, before going on to a more in-depth look at the existing research on the phenomenon of ‘femvertising’. The aim of this review is to unpack the ways in which brands deal with the challenge of coming up with new ways to advertise their products, and appeal to various target markets audiences, while also presenting themselves as responding to popular social movements. In the particular case of this study, the relevant social movement is the various strands of feminism over time, which have contributed to the claim that brands have engaged in cynical ploys to respond to the zeitgeist without actually advancing social change; in short, that what they do amounts to little more than ‘femvertising’.

Brands and society

According to Champlin, Sterbenk, Windels & Poteet (2019) “Brand responsibility” is a way that the brands have found to appeal to their audiences, to show themselves more empathic and ethical; making the brand differentiated from others, and then being easier for the consumer to make a choice. In words of Madrigal & Boush (2008),

Marketers strategically communicate specific trait inferences that they want to become associated with their brands, which, collectively, comprise a brand’s personality. The development of a brand’s personality relies on a variety of marketing activities (e.g., sponsorships, spokespeople, etc.), including positioning the brand through the use of advertising. (p. 2)

To complement their idea, Madrigal & Boush (2008) add that “is the perceived goal compatibility that exists between the brand and the consumer that is most apt to contribute to long term consumer–brand relationships” (p. 2)

Champlin et al (2019) argue that when a corporation decides to take a stand towards a particular issue in society it should be careful, because might seem, on the eyes of the consumer, that it is handling the issue in a vane way, that does not

cover the whole issue or even worse, that is harming the movement instead of helping.

They add that in order for the consumer to react to the “brand-cause fit”, there needs to be a match between the brand and the activist cause that they are standing for. It does not have to be an obvious connection, but there has to be a rational one that is shown in a way on the advertising piece, and on how the brand behaves. (Champlin et al, 2019).

Champlin & Sterbenk (2018) argue that advertising agencies see themselves as being able to generate changes in society; by positioning brands as activists on a particular cause, that then creates a conversation among their customers that could eventually lead them to change the ways in which they behave. In their words

In some ways, it seems agencies view themselves as agents of change. Ad teams help brands be “divisive” by positioning them as leaders of conversations about important issues in society, and as catalysts, pushing consumers to make decisions that matter. (Champlin & Sterbenk, 2018, p. 138)

Advertising agencies help brands on building a personality, by making compromise to a movement or a cause. For some brands it could be easy to find a cause, because it could be directly related to what they do. (Champlin and Sterbenk, 2018). A case that exemplifies this is Tony’s Chocolonely, a chocolate brand from the Netherlands, they support fair trade for cacao farmers. (Tony's impact - Tony's Chocolonely, 2020). Is easy for consumers to make connections between their activity and what they support, the link is clear, they sale chocolate, they support cacao farmers.

According to Champlin and Sterbenk (2018) it could get really hard for a brand to choose a cause to support when there are not easy connections for the consumers. The work to be done here is tougher, but when the goal is achieved the results can be better than with an obvious cause to support.

A good case one could apply Champlin & Sterbenk’s argument to, is Nike, that has linked their famous “Just do it” to racial inequality issues, when they supported the Football player Colin Kaepernick on his protest against the police in the US and its violent treatment towards racial minorities. Kaepernick as a form of protest decided to bend his knee during the American national anthem before starting a match, claiming that he was not going to stand up and show respect for flag that do

not respect minorities; referring to cases where the American police had made unnecessary use of their force against racial minorities. Kaepernick was kicked out of the NFL (National Football League) for these actions. After this, Nike launched a commercial video having him as starring character. (Colin Kaepernick becomes the face of Nike's Just Do It campaign, 2020). From this Nike managed to survive a boycott started by republicans who were against Kaepernick actions and increase their sale and their shares on the stock market. (Nike's Colin Kaepernick ad sparked a boycott — and earned \$6 billion for Nike, 2020)

In words of Champlin and Sterbenk (2018) “in line with expectations from the Millennial generation, ad agencies are helping brands go beyond traditional, digital, and social advertising to truly enact positive change” (p. 139). Therefore, this new way of advertising is also a response to the millennial generation, that is expecting from brands to think outside the box; and to show real commitment for the causes that brands claim to support. Not only say it, but show more actions. (Champlin & Sterbenk, 2018)

Mitchell and Shaw (2010) introduce in their book the term “the big ideal”, which they describe as a standing point of view that a brand embraces, should not be confused with a tag line, it is a more elaborated message:

It is a highly structured form that conveys the ethos of the brand or company to people from different cultures and to employees and consumers alike. It can be said in just seconds, but doing the necessary thinking to get it absolutely right takes months. It is simple, but not simplistic. (Mitchell & Shaw, 2010, p. 8)

Mitchell & Shaw (2010) claim that a brand should be recognized not only for its ideas, but mainly for its ideals, and that consumers will be more attached to a brand that shares their ideals. Therefore, it is important for a brand to communicate these ideals.

The texts mentioned above support what Varadarajan & Menon (1988) argued, that a cause related marketing is an opportunity for a brand to show that they mean well and at the same time making money out of it. This cause related marketing, implies a big effort from the brand but it could also end up with the brand gaining loyalty from its consumers. (Varadarajan & Menon, 1988). In their words,

The recent trend seems to be to seek a middle ground between voluntary and mandated support. Corporate philanthropy seems to be driven by the

concept of "enlightened self-interest" (...) Therefore, social responsibility is treated as an investment that improves the long-term performance of the organization. (Varadarajan & Menon, 1988, p. 59)

One social initiative that has become more popular nowadays is feminism. (Zeisler, 2016) Brands have been taking stands on it. Using feminism as a tool on advertising employing "pro-female talent, messages and imagery to empower women and girls" (Hsu, 2018, p. 28) is known as femvertising.

Femvertising

The increasing awareness of gender equality, criticism of more people towards the role of women in commercials and women starting to work in leadership position at advertisement companies, advertisements began to show the opposite: a message of female empowerment also known as femvertising and these advertisements spread to more well-known media such as television commercials, thus reaching a larger audience. (Champlin et al., 2019)

As mentioned above femvertising is one of the ways companies make use of brand responsibility, where brands use their support on social issues to show their social responsibility, transparency and ethical approach. Åkestam, Rosengren & Dahlen (2017) state that "femvertising, compared to traditional advertising, reduces ad reactance. This in turn enhances ad and brand attitudes among a female target audience." (p. 795)

Femvertising can be described as advertisements showing female empowerment and evidencing gender-based inequalities while also promoting and increasing the sales of the brand. As example of this Hsu (2017) claims that

Female empowerment advertising also helps brands sell. For instance, Dove's Campaign for Real Beauty since 2004 has not only resonated with women, who shared Dove's videos in peer-to-peer communications, but also increased Dove's sales from US\$2.5bn to US\$4bn in the campaign's inaugural year. (p. 30)

Different focusses of femvertising can be carrying "pro-female messages and confront negative or unrealistic portrayals and stereotypes of women and girls" (Hsu, 2017, p.32). Femvertising also aims to break traditional stereotypes and

discuss topics such as body image issues and taboo topics (e.g. menstruation). (Hsu, 2017)

Historically, commercials showed women in their traditional roles, such as a housewife, or a non-functional role, such as a focus of physical attractiveness (Hsu, 2017). Hsu (2017) argues that “femvertising focuses on empowering women and girls and represents a sharp contrast with and a significant progression from the long-standing strategy of inadequacy advertising and other stereotypical portrayals of females” (p. 30)

There are several themes that can be found when looking at different femvertising. One of these themes is advertisements promoting realistic body images (Hsu, 2017). Hsu (2017) establishes that “this type of femvertising embraces a wide range of body shapes and sizes, defying stereotypical, narrow-minded, unattainable beauty standards that stress thinness, youth or even sexualization of women” (p. 32)

The second theme in Hsu’s (2017) paper focuses on self-confidence beyond the focus on beauty. These types of femvertising focus on the strength, confidence and accomplishments of women rather than just their beauty.

Hsu (2017) points out another type of advertisement that focusses on breaking gender stereotypes in areas by showing advertisements that include women pursuing science-based careers; women competing in sports and activities normally male-associated; woman with strong, athletic and muscular bodies to indicate power and showing their success; mothers beyond their natural role of nurtures. These commercials are made to empower women to take part in these sports/activities and break gender stereotype.

Other themes that Hsu (2017) mentions include promoting equal opportunities and equal pay and the support of men on this issue. Lastly, the taboo topic of menstruation and normalizing this can also be a theme of femvertising.

In the critical review of the use of femvertising, Castillo (2014) used a survey to assess the role of brands in femvertising messages and found that over half of the respondents had purchased a product based on the way a woman was depicted in the advertisement. Many also claimed that they enjoyed the empowering messages of femvertising and believe that they have an impact in breaking down gender-based inequalities. Besides Castillo, other studies have shown a positive impact of brand responsibility, including femvertising, on the company sales (Edelman, 2018;

Nan & Heo, 2007). Furthermore, the gender-based inequalities can vary greatly per country and therefore the impact of femvertising can be very different depending on the roles of women and the level of pre-existing gender equality in a country (Champlin et al 2019).

Åkestam et al (2017); Hsu (2017); Nan & Heo (2007) have pointed out good aspects in femvertising, seen as way of communicate a positive and empowering message to women and also gain profit for the company. As example of successful femvertising Hsu (2017) introduces “This Girl Can” campaign, which inspired 2.6 million women across the UK to overcome their fears of being judged and start exercising more (Sport England, 2016).

However, femvertising also gets some negative reviews. Some of these include the use of femvertising to increase sales while not truly caring about feminism, exploiting the underlying motive of female power (Hsu, 2017).

In opposition to femvertising Gill (2007) argues that advertising

Has responded to feminist critiques by constructing a new figure to sell to young women: the sexually autonomous heterosexual young woman who plays with her sexual power and is forever ‘up for it’ (...) it (femvertising) represents a shift in the way that power operates: from external. Male judging gaze to self-policing, narcissistic gaze. It can be argued that this represents a higher or deeper form of exploitation than objectification – one in which the objectifying male gaze is internalized to form a new disciplinary regime. In this regime, power is not imposed from above or outside, but constructs our very subjectivity. Girls and women are invited to become a particular kind of self, and are endowed with agency on condition that it is used to construct oneself as a subject closely resembling the heterosexual male fantasy (p. 151 – 152)

In other words, femvertising might be creating another form of oppression over women, an oppression being performed by women. To Gill (2007) women will be trying to reach an unreachable dream, and again setting women inside a stereotype. Not allowing the women to just be, without any kind of pressure.

On addition to what it is mentioned before, Rottenberg (2018) says that by

Encouraging young upwardly mobile women to build their own portfolio and to self-invest in the years once thought of as the most “fertile” suggests that neoliberalism is increasingly interpellating women—but particularly

young and so-called aspirational women—as generic (rather than gendered) human capital. I accordingly posit that reproduction continues to present a stumbling block in this conversion process, especially since reproduction and the care work it entails are thoroughly disavowed in neoliberal rationality. As this rationality increasingly converts certain women into generic human capital, however, the link between *these* women and reproduction and care work is slowly being attenuated. In other words, reproduction and care work are already being outsourced to other women deemed “disposable,” since they are neither considered “strivers” nor properly “responsibilized.” (p. 4-5)

This means that by targeting young women mostly, femvertising is underplaying the role of older generations within feminism and leaving them as part of the problem. It also reinforces the believe that the reproductive characteristic of women is what it is keeping them away from progressing, and not the system that does not give enough guaranties to women that want to be mothers to do it without slowing down their professional career.

Finally, to Lazar (2006) “advertisers distil feminism of its values and priorities to produce a signifier that is emptied of its political content, resulting in a brand of popular “commodity feminism” that is in the service of commodity consumption” (p. 505), this meaning that the nature of femvertising itself compromises feminism.

Femvertising and gender equality

A study with interviews to Swedish women made by Dahlbeck Jalakas (2016), shows how many women use the commercials that include femvertising, as a way to spread the word in social media of positive examples of the pursuit of gender equality.

Moreover, Becker-Herbey (2016) stablishes, after conducting interviews to USA women consumers, that the for them (the interviewed women) the success of femvertising relies in the brand that produces the pieces, because they should show an organic support by complementing the pieces with other actions such as equal opportunities within the company for men and women, more women in leadership positions and so on.

In addition, Rodrigues (2016) in her study argues that customers who believe in gender equality use the trends or hashtags promoted for companies in their social media accounts, to generate conversations around the femvertising piece and sometimes even thank the brand for creating the space and the opportunity to talk about gender equality.

Furthermore, Tsai (2011) in her study claims that groups of people that historically have felt subjugated by a hegemonic group, which could be the case of women, use these kinds of commercial with message of empowerment for their community as a way to relate and see themselves represented and supported.

On the other hand, Mendes (2011) and Sternadori & Hagseth (2014)

express that femvertising is just another way that companies have exploit in order to sell more.

In Sternadori & Hagseth (2014) words “there appeared to be much enthusiasm to turn women’s consumption into a guilty free experience (you deserve it!) and no interest in transforming the industry” (p. 19). Expressing here how the intentions of femvertising do not go further than to the surface and not really making a change in the gender equality situation.

Femvertising and masculinities

According to Davidson (2015), when brands saw that femvertising was having success with brands targeted to women, they started to create femvertising for intersex products or more male oriented, and the results were positive, in short and long term. But there is no mention of how the brands made use of masculinity in femvertising.

Moreover, in a study made by Drake (2017) were findings about how millennial women in the US are more likely to compromise and maybe take actions (buy) towards femvertising than men.

Other than this information, there is lack of studies of the role of masculinities in femvertising.

Conclusion

As mentioned above on this chapter, there is a need for companies to re think the way they advertise their products. As a result of these companies have implemented the use of activist causes to advertise their products while trying to appear authentic to their customers; otherwise they might be perceived as cynical.

As a consequence of using of activist causes on advertisement strategies, femvertising has emerged as a phenomenon, implemented to empower women and promote the feminist movement through advertising.

The fact that studies have shown that women are more likely to buy items being influence by femvertising than men, could lead us to think that it is the reason why there are no substantial research regarding masculinities and their role in femvertising.

Going through the literature review, there was lack of studies related to the role of masculinities in femvertising. What will happen if femvertising is used to target men? Or which ones are the characteristics of femvertising used to target a male audience. Having in consideration that femvertising deals with feminism and that women are not the only ones involved with feminism. Therefore, this thesis strives to contribute to the gap that was found in relation to masculinities and its potential role within femvertising.

Theory

In this chapter I will present the theory that has informed the execution of this study. I have adopted a Foucauldian approach to power, which I will introduce in the first section; in the second section, I will lay out the concept of hegemonic masculinity as developed by Raewyn Connell, and then refined in the work of Connell and Messerschmidt.

Subject and Power

Foucault (1982) proposes that to study power and its relationship with subject, we should look into the confrontations or conflicts that are created around the different types of power. So, not seeing power from the inside, but more the strategies that oppose to this power. In his words

I would like to suggest another way to go further toward a new economy of power relations, a way which is more empirical, more directly related to our present situation, and which implies more relations between theory and practice. It consists of taking the forms of resistance against different forms of power as a starting point. To use another metaphor, it consists of using this resistance as a chemical catalyst so as to bring to light power relations, locate their position, and find out their point of application and the methods used. Rather than analysing power from the point of view of its internal rationality, it consists of analysing power relations through the antagonism of strategies. For example, to find out what our society means by sanity, perhaps we should investigate what is happening in the field of insanity. (Foucault, 1982, p.780)

One could argue that this could be applied to femvertising, taking hegemonic masculinity as a resistance.

Foucault (1982) argues that the oppositions against historical relations of power (such as: men over women, parents over children), have in common that

they are "transversal" struggles; that is, they are not limited to one country. Of course, they develop more easily and to a greater extent in certain countries, but they are not confined to a particular political or economic form of government. (p. 780)

By this, Foucault means that these struggles do not depend on an ideological exercise of power, like capitalism or communism. These relations of power are present in any kind of environment. Nevertheless, Foucault (1982) points out that these relations of power do not perceive this, they

criticize instances of power which are the closest to them, those which exercise their action on individuals. They do not look for the "chief enemy" but for the immediate enemy. Nor do they expect to find a solution to their problem at a future date (that is, liberations, revolutions, and of class struggle). (p. 780)

This implies that in order to get to resolution of these struggles it is necessary to go for the "chief enemy" and generate a solution. Foucault (1982) says that a solution needs a revolution or a class struggle. Applying this to femvertising, one could argue that it is not generating a revolution or a class struggle, because is not pointing out the "chief enemy". Femvertising has been trying to achieve gender equality by telling women how to feel better with themselves (Hsu, 2017).

To emphasize, Foucault (1982) explains that "the main objective of these struggles is to attack not so much "such or such" an institution of power, or group, or elite, or class but rather a technique, a form of power" (p. 781). Applying to what this paper concern one could argue that the form of power that we are facing is hegemonic masculinity. Foucault (1982) describes that

This form of power applies itself to immediate everyday life which categorizes the individual, marks him by his own individuality, attaches him to his own identity, imposes a law of truth on him which he must recognize and which others have to recognize in him. It is a form of power which makes individuals subjects. There are two meanings of the word "subject": subject to someone else by control and dependence; and tied to his own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge. Both meanings suggest a form of power which subjugates and makes subject to. (p. 781)

This means that this type of power determines ways of behaviour that segregate, for example: women from men, black from white, poor from rich, etc.

According to Connell & Messerschmidt (2005) what stops gender equality to happen is the Hegemonic Masculinity, therefore this study will identify Hegemonic Masculinity as the “chief enemy” that femvertising should be attacking in order to generate social change that will show as gender equality.

Later on, Foucault (1982) introduces the appearance of the ‘state’ and he blames on the state the prevalence of the struggles in relations of power, Foucault (1982) highlights

the fact that the state's power (and that's one of the reasons for its strength) is both an individualizing and a totalizing form of power. Never, I think, in the history of human societies--even in the old Chinese society--has there been such a tricky combination in the same political structures of individualization techniques and of totalization procedures. (p. 782)

With this assertion, Foucault (1982) expresses how dangerous this form of power is, it makes the individual think that recognizes it as an individual with all that this implies (differences in beliefs, gender, social status, etc.), but at the end, exercises generalization techniques. One can connect this with femvertising and this paper, when says that advocates for feminism but ends up reproducing ways of oppression over women. (Gill, 2007) These ways of oppression reproduced by femvertising will be identify on this paper, having in consideration what Foucault (1982) describes.

Foucault (1982) introduces the pastoral power claiming that this kind of power can guarantee a reward (e.g. heaven after dying); the leader of this power does not only rules or teaches, it is also willing to sacrifice himself for his flock (e.g. Jesus died for all sinners); pastoral power not only takes care of the community as a whole, it sees each individual (e.g. god is omnipresent omniscient); and last, this type of power seeks to know every single detail of the individual (e.g. sacrament of confession). To Foucault (1982) pastoral power has been taken out of the ecclesiastical world to be applied and adapted to different scenarios, such as government, in a subtle way. In some cases, explicitly saying that this type of power is as far away as possible from any kind of ecclesiastical way of ruling.

Foucault (1982) expresses that perhaps one of the new aims of philosophy is not longer to understand what we are as individuals but more to reject what we have been told to be by the (under masked pastoral) power. To apply this to the present paper, one could see hegemonic masculinity as the under masked pastoral power,

in that sense femvertising could be used to reject the hegemonic masculinity that allows the reproduction of stereotyped gender roles in society. (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). This paper will see if in the femvertising pieces that will be analyzed will be possible to find discourses that reject the reproduction of stereotyped gender role, in order to reject what women have been told we are.

Hegemonic masculinity

Connell & Messerschmidt (2005) establish that hegemonic masculinity was understood as an excuse to keep letting men over rule women. Hegemonic masculinity does not mean that most men are part of certain type of masculinity, in fact only a small portion of the whole could be part of hegemonic masculinity, even though it is not the majority, it is what majority of men is normed to. In Connell & Messerschmidt words,

Hegemonic masculinity was distinguished from other masculinities, especially subordinated masculinities. Hegemonic masculinity was not assumed to be normal in the statistical sense; only a minority of men might enact it. But it was certainly normative. It embodied the currently most honoured way of being a man, it required all other men to position themselves in relation to it, and it ideologically legitimated the global subordination of women to men. (p. 832)

According to Connell (2005) the allegations that masculinity should transform often are dismissed, but not because these allegations are against reform, but because there is a belief that men cannot change. Connell (2005) argues that mass culture assumes the existences of a “real masculinity”.

In Connell’s (2005) the definition of masculinity is bonded to the male body, at least on the English-speaking world, she clarifies. The relationship between the male body and the actions of a man works in two ways. The male body directs actions, and the example that Connell uses to describe this is that “men are naturally more aggressive than women; rape results from uncontrollable lust or an innate urge of violence” (p. 45). Or the other way, the body limits men to perform certain actions, here the example is that “men naturally do not take care of infants; homosexuality is unnatural and therefore confined to a perverse minority” (Connell, 2005, p. 45). Connell (2005) argues that this a strategy of the modern gender

ideology and that the first step for social analysis is to comprehend the relation of the male body and the obvious expectance of masculinity that society has.

In Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) hegemonic masculinity is not a generalized concept and does not look to be an umbrella term. It is more a way to read the context of time and space where a hegemonic masculinity has been played.

Connell (2005) exposes how a group of theorists have claimed that men inherit within the “masculine body genes tendencies to aggression, family life, competitiveness, political power, hierarchy, territoriality, promiscuity and forming men’s clubs.” (p. 46).

There is a consensus between Collinson & Hearn. (1994) and Hearn (2004), who have indicated that the concept of masculinity is not clear but seems to always end up leading to be connected with domination and power. First, to Collinson & Hearn (1994)

familial imagery is a condition and consequence of management’s position as patriarchal ‘heads’ of the family whose authority is expressed in paternalistic discourses. The inherent masculinity of this discourse is rarely addressed in the literature. Similarly, the way in which particular workplace cultures appeal to highly masculine values of individualism, aggression, competition, sport and drinking is often neglected even by more critical studies of corporate culture. (p. 4)

On addition, Hearn (2004) in his work raises the question of “how exactly do the various dominant and dominating ways that men are - tough/ aggressive/ violent; respectable/ corporate; controlling of resources; controlling of images; and so on – connect with each other?” (p. 58)

To Connell (2005) this perception of masculinity has permeated the media, and these ones have reproduced it on their way of writing these ideas and paradigms of masculinity. He argues that “the endocrine theory of masculinity, like the brain-sex theory, has also passed into journalistic common sense”. (p.47)

Although, to Connell & Messerschmidt, hegemonic masculinity does not mean aggressiveness or violence, it is more about to see who is in the top of the social sphere on a specific time in history. To Connell & Messerschmidt (2005) “it (hegemonic masculinity) could be supported by force, it meant ascendancy achieved through culture, institutions and persuasions” (p. 832)

In concordance to Connell & Messerschmidt (2005) masculinity does not embody a specific type of men, it is more a way of men to represent themselves within certain practices.

According to Connell & Messerschmidt (2005) there are enough studies that prove how hegemonic masculinity it is not self-reproduced, there has to be prevalence of men permissiveness towards some behaviors that imply the segregation and/or undermining of women.

To Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) hegemonic masculinity is open to change, in one time in history the dominant male figure could be oppressive and in other time of history could be a more comprehensive figure. But to them this was a very optimistic view on how the hegemonic could end up, still possible in theory though.

Connell & Messerschmidt (2005) concluded that the concept of hegemonic masculinity includes a hierarchy between men, since studies have shown that there are indeed types of masculinities that are more dominant and accepted. The concept of hegemonic masculinity also implies the ordination over other types of masculinities that do not conform to the hegemonic one, but pursue it or not. To Connell & Messerschmidt (2005), this hierarchy between men should not be seen the same way as the existence hierarchy between men and women. For them

it is a mistake to deduce relations among masculinities from the direct exercise of personal power by men over women. At the least, we also must factor in the institutionalization of gender inequalities, the role of cultural constructions, and the interplay of gender dynamics with race, class, and region. (p. 839)

According to Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) hegemonic masculinity had a particular geographic placing, but now they suggest that should be seeing from three levels: local, regional and global. Like this:

1. Local: constructed in the arenas of face-to-face interaction of families, organizations, and immediate communities, as typically found in ethnographic and life-history research;
2. Regional: constructed at the level of the culture or the nation-state, as typically found in discursive, political, and demographic research;
- and 3. Global: constructed in transnational arenas such as world politics and transnational business and media, as studied in the emerging research on masculinities and globalization. (p. 849)

Connell & Messerschmidt (2005) argue that with possibility that there is now of studying the world from a wider perspective we can find out how hegemonic masculinity could be different depending on the country, but if two hegemonic masculinities are compared then, there is going to be one that will be closer to the global concept of hegemonic masculinity. Therefore, what it is hegemonic masculinity in a country could be seen as nonhegemonic masculinity by the world. For example, in a Muslim country what it is as hegemonic masculinity differs to what it is seen as hegemonic masculinity in an occidental country. Putting these two in comparison we will find that the occident country will be closer to the global concept of hegemonic masculinity and therefor the concept of hegemonic masculinity in a Muslim country would be seen by the world as nonhegemonic. On this aspect race should be also taken into consideration as a collateral effect.

Connell & Messerschmidt (2005) also argue an institutional and cultural complicity on maintaining the hegemonic masculinity that reinforce the relegation of other types of masculinities as a norm.

To Connell & Messerschmidt (2005) it is easy to find in society how the term masculinity has excused men from acting in certain ways. According to their study, the concept of masculinity has been linked to allowances that excuse men to perform dominant over women that can simply lead to toxic behaviours, that as I said before are excused within the frame of masculinity.

A suggestion given by Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) on their work is that to define and to understand hegemonic masculinity in a holistic approach there should be taken into consideration the changes that are occurring on femininity. Since historically, the concept of masculinity has used the opposite (femininity) to define themselves, and vice versa. This aspect could be taken into consideration in terms of femvertising, as I mentioned before, when discussing power, it might be more revolutionary to target femvertising to men. Combining Foucault's (1982) stand on power and Connell & Messerschmidt's (2005) stand on hegemonic, one could argue that this might be an aspect to be considered by companies when doing femvertising, if there is a real intention of making change in society regarding gender equality.

In conclusion and summing up, hegemonic masculinity will be seen in this paper as a non-static, exclusive and normative concept that allows the segregation of nonhegemonic masculinities and women in society. This paper will also consider

that the pursuit of hegemonic masculinity could lead to toxic actions by men, over other men or women.

Conclusion

When talking about power from a Foucauldian point of view, one can conclude that it is not exercised with violence and it is not perceived as aggressive, it is perceived as needed and beneficial (pastoral power). But still, it involves subjection and therefore leaves places for subordination and struggles. In words of Foucault (1978) "Where there is power, there is resistance, and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power" (p.95). As it was discussed before to Foucault (1982) it is possible to change this power, and the way of doing it is by revolution or class struggle in order to get a solution.

In relation to hegemonic masculinity, this paper will see it as a power relation, that has subjects (non-hegemonic masculinities and women). This power, as the one described by Foucault is not perceived as aggressive or imposed. It is normalized and accepted in society.

Methodology

In this part I will present how the study will be developed. The theoretical framework on which I stand is Social Constructionism. This project will use Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis and Multimodal Discourse Analysis on Gillette's commercial The best men can be and P&G's campaign We see equal as a focus of the study. The data will be collected from their web pages.

Later on, I will introduce the of the elements from Feminist Critical discourse Analysis from Michelle Lazar, that I will be using during the next chapter. Then I will do the same with Multimodal Discourse Analysis by Ledin and Machin, highlighting which aspects are relevant for this study.

Furthermore, I will show the epistemology and ontology on which I place myself to develop the study. At the end of this section I will present the data that I will be analysing in this paper.

This is a qualitative study that aims to understand the characteristics present in femvertising created by P&G as a house of brands with the intention to fight gender inequality.

Ontology and epistemology

As this research aims to understand the characteristics of P&G's femvertising, the epistemological framework for this paper is social constructionism. According to Burr (2015), knowledge is achieved by social significations. This means that our knowledge and reasoning is marked by our social circumstances which are constructed by communication. P&G's femvertising is a result of the communication between P&G and their customers, hence social constructionism fits as a suitable study of knowledge for this case.

To Burr (2015) social constructionism takes us to question things as they are presented to us, to question if they are really what they are saying they are. With that said, in relation with this study, social constructionism will help to question the

characteristics from P&G's femvertising and its connection or contribution to P&G's goal of achieving gender equality.

In Burr (2015) words "we should not assume that *our* ways of understanding are necessarily any better, in terms of being any nearer the truth, than other ways." (p. 4), because all forms of understanding come from different backgrounds therefore, they all respond to different types of reasoning that are products of culture that relay in economic and historical arraignments.

Foucault (1972) establishes that discourses are "practices which form the objects of which they speak" (p. 49). This means that discourses respond to particular moments of time or for specific events. This could be in form of a written text, music, painting and in this case commercial videos.

The social constructionism perspective will be supported in this study by Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA), which acknowledges that discourse is a single component that is part of social practices and only one aspect of how we built our realities. (Lazar, 2007). FCDA deals with the existence of a physical world, apart from spoken words. Since FCDA recognizes the existences of both, then both can be affected by each other.

The same applies for Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA), it also admits the existence of discourse and physical world among with it, where one affects the other. (Ledin & Machin. 2020)

By using the concept of hegemonic masculinity by Connell and theory of power, I position myself on a social constructivist ontology, that it is complemented with Multimodal Discourse Analysis and Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis as methods.

My epistemology is marked by the use of FCDA and the directions of Connell's hegemonic masculinity. This locates me on a feminist epistemology, which focuses in the study of power relations (Grasswick, 2011) and how it affects the creation of knowledge, that can express in discourse.

Data collection

On this section I will present the empirical material, first explain why and how it was selected. The empirical material is separated into two categories: 1)

Commercials belonging to the campaign We See Equal and 2) Gillette's commercial.

For this study I decided to focus in a single case, which gives me the opportunity to have a deeper understanding of the phenomenon, which is to understand the characteristics present in femvertising that is targeted to men and/or women. The specific case being P&G at its initiative to fight gender inequality.

P&G is an American multinational house of brands¹ that has existed since 1837. Its more than 50 brands include Beauty, Grooming, Health Care, Fabric & Home Care; Baby, Feminine and Family Care products. Being present in 160 countries P&G is one of the biggest companies in the world. (Procter & Gamble. 2006).

In 2017, P&G launched their initiative #WeSeeEqual, which consists of a three-dimension program to contribute to the fight of gender equality in society. The dimensions are: 1. Advertising and media, where they use their big platform as advertisers to tackle the misrepresentation of women; 2. Education and Economic opportunities, for which they have programs to make sure that young girls complete their education and empower women to have their own business; and 3. Inclusive environment inside and outside P&G, where their main goal is to achieve 50/50 gender representation within the organization. (Gender equality in P&G, 2020)

For this paper, I will only focus on the first dimension, which includes campaigns as Share the load (Ariel), Make it Fair (Fairy) and Like a Girl (Always), where their intentions are to change the perspective of how women are perceived in our society and empower men and women to achieve gender equality. (Gender equality in P&G, 2020)

In 2019, Gillette (a brand that belongs to P&G) launched a very controversial campaign: The best men can be, on the frame of the #MeToo movement, this campaign to the date (August, 2020) has more than 30 million views on YouTube, with a lot of mixed reactions. Watching this commercial one would think that it would also be part of P&G's bigger project: #WeSeeEqual. Gillette's commercial is an attempt to raise awareness about how men see and treat women and how they could make it different. Surprisingly this commercial is not included on P&G's gender equality initiative. Like the other commercials this one also empowers men

¹ "House of brands, meaning a company that markets a range of separate brand names (Procter & Gamble)" (Neumeier, 2006, p. 105)

and women and shows a different view of how women should be perceived in our society.

According to the definitions of femvertising made by Hsu (2017), which consists on evidencing gender-based inequalities while also promoting and increasing the sales of the brand. Gillette's commercial meets what its necessary, according to Hsu (2017), to be called femvertising and therefore belong to the campaign We See Equal.

With this explained, the selected empirical material for this case are: The commercials belonging to the campaign We See Equal and Gillette's commercial The best a man can be.

The reasoning behind choosing the commercials belonging to the campaign We See Equal is because these are the ones that P&G uses as examples of how they are fighting gender inequality in advertising and media. On the other hand, the reasoning behind choosing The best a man can be, is because it is also a commercial that evidences gender inequality (Hsu, 2017), it was very controversial when it was released and also belongs to the house of brands P&G, but it is not present in the campaign We See Equal.

Commercials belonging to We See Equal

On this section will be found three campaigns that P&G includes on their gender equality initiative #WeSeeEqual. The campaigns are: (See Image 1)



Image 1 P&G's layout of advertisings that are part of #WeSeeEqual

1. Ariel: #ShareTheLoad (India, 2019) Are we teaching our sons what we have been teaching our daughters?

Ariel is a brand that belongs to the multinational business group P&G. Ariel is known for their laundry products. It is present in Europe; Latin America; East, Southeast and South Asia; South Africa, Maghreb, North Africa, Pakistan and the Middle East.

(Procter & Gamble. 2006)

The commercial that will be analysed on this paper belongs to its advertising campaign in India for the year of 2019. (Gender equality in P&G, 2020) The video has more than 9 million views on YouTube to the date (August, 2020) and about 90% of the reactions on the same platform are positive. (4.3 thousand likes vs. 371 dislikes)

2. Fairy: #MakeItFair (UK, 2016)

Fairy is a dishwasher soap from the UK that belongs to P&G since 1927 (Procter & Gamble, 2006). The commercial that is part of the analysis of the present paper was released in 2016 targeting the UK. To the date (August, 2020) the video has a little more than 5 thousand views on YouTube. It only has 24 reactions on the same platform

3. Always: #LikeAGirl (USA, 2014)

Always is a menstrual hygiene brand owned by P&G. The products have a worldwide market (Procter & Gamble, 2006). The video was launched in 2014 to the American market. (Gender equality in P&G, 2020) The video on this paper has to the date (August, 2020) more than 68 million views on YouTube, and the reactions are 90% positives. (314 thousand likes vs. 35 thousand dislikes)

Gillette

It is important to remember that Gillette also belongs to P&G and that this campaign is not included on their gender equality initiative #WeSeeEqual. Gillette is an American razors brand

that is present in the worldwide market. (Procter & Gamble, 2006) The data selected for this section is: The best men can be, this video was launched in 2019 to the American audience. To the date (August 2020), the video collects more than 33 million views on YouTube. The reactions here divided, about 60% of them are negative (813 thousand of likes vs. 1.6 millions of dislikes).

Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis as method

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) aims to achieve social change through using the critique of discourse as method (Lazar, 2005).

Lazar (2005) argues that “CDA is known for its overly political stance and is concerned with all forms of social inequality and injustice. Moreover, the debt CDA owed to feminist approaches in women’s studies in providing an impetus to the fledgling field in the 1980 has also sometimes been openly acknowledge” (p. 2)

FCDA as theory shows that in fact society is more focused on one side than the other (men over women) and not as neutral as is trying to be portrayed (Lazar, 2005).

To Lazar (2005), “The task of feminist CDA is to examine how power and dominance are discursively produced and/or resisted in a variety of ways through textual representations of gender social practices, and through interactional strategies of talk” (p. 10). In other words, FCDA tries to find systematic exercises of power and dominance over women, by looking into discourses.

FCDA cannot and will not appear as neutral, in fact one of their purpose is to raise questions around the notion of scientific neutrality. It wants to defeat the status quo, specially the patriarchy (Lazar, 2005).

It is important to highlight that FCDA does not equal analysing phenomenon from the perspective of women (Lazar, 2005).

In words of Lazar (2005), “For feminist CDA, the focus is on how gender ideology and gendered relations of power are (re)produced, neglected and contested in representation of social practices, in social relationships between people, and in people’s social and personal identities in texts and talk.” (p.11). This means that the feminist perspective adds to CDA the concern of finding discourses that contribute to the existence and reproduction of gender inequality.

The aim of FCDA is to highlight the forms in which often assumptions of gender and hegemonic relations of power are taken for granted (Lazar, 2007). FCDA does not only limits to be an academic text, it sees on the issues that deals with a possibility to impact in communities that affected by these issues. (Lazar, 2007).

Lazar (2005) ads that “As feminist critical discourse analysts, our central concern is with critiquing discourses which sustain a patriarchal social order: that is, relations of power that systematically privilege men as social group and disadvantage, exclude and disempower women as social group.” (p. 5).

On one side FCDA contributes to in a critical way to the uses of language and discourse, being influenced by a feminist view of reality. Additionally, it recommends how the use of a feminist language and discourse contributes to gender studies. (Lazar, 2007)

Lazar (2007) argues that the need of a FCDA lies on the existence of critical feminist position within gender CDA, therefore not all the studies applying a gender CDA are feminist. She also expresses that even though CDA has been useful tool, it is a product of the thinking process of white privileged men. This is also the reason why this study has chosen FCDA as method, the feminist input is needed here or a better understanding of the phenomenon.

Themes in FCDA

Since FCDA looks to identify and critique the discourses that do not make possible for society to achieve gender equality, therefore with FCDA I will look thematize, to analyse the four commercials that are part of this study, gender structures like this:

- Stereotypical binary gender roles: Which consists in all the discourses that show the stereotypical and traditional gender roles that historically have shaped how men and women should act. (Lazar, 2005)
- Discrimination against women: This theme consists in the discourses that undermine women for the fact of being women. (Lazar, 2005)

Multimodal Discourse Analysis as method

Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA) seeks to have an understanding of the object being analysed from how the visual materials interact with the audience that it is being targeted to and how people act against it (Ledin & Machin, 2020)

Ledin & Machin (2020) argue that

there was a preference for 'monomodality'. So, writing came without illustrations, art used only the visual on a flat canvas. These became institutionalized into formal disciplines based on the single modes literary studies and art criticism. But this has changed (p. 21)

Nowadays, the multimedia products are multimodal, they appeal to all the senses (Ledin & Machin, 2020). Therefore, it is important when analysing to look into as many aspects as possible.

MDA is inspired by Halliday's "social semiotics" theory of communication, which according to Ledin & Machin (2020) is a systematic analysis, the whole composition needs to be analysed. It is not only to understand the meaning of a sentence, for example. It is about understanding how it is part of the full picture, why does it mean, what it means on that specific scenario.

Modality then, is about considering many aspects at the same time of one image, e.g. object against typography, colour against composition.

MDA looks at iconography, modality, colour, meaning of typography, textures and materials, visual composition and diagrams.

For this paper the tools of MDA that will be used to analyse are: iconography, colour and meaning of typography.

The aim of analysing iconography is to have a better understanding of how the visual elements can lead to "hidden meanings" (Ledin & Machin, 2020, p. 10). It is necessary to understand the discourse that it is being handled. For this; objects, settings, people and photogenia will be taken into consideration. (Ledin & Machin, 2020)

Looking at colour, for Ledin & Machin (2020) it is not only looking at the colour (blue, red yellow, etc.), but to also look at all the meanings that brightness, saturation, purity, modulation, differentiation, luminosity, fluorescence and hue bring to an object.

The input that brightness can give to colour is related to "clarity and obscurity. The same metaphorical associations can be found in language where truth is associated with light, lies with darkness". (Ledin & Machin, 2020, p. 98)

For saturation “its meaning potential seems to lie in its ability to express emotional ‘temperature’. Less saturated colours are more toned down, subtle, gentle, even peaceful or possibly moody. More saturated colours are emotionally intense, bold and engaging.” (Ledin & Machin. 2020, p. 100)

With purity in colour Ledin & Machin (2020, p. 101-102) refer to how ‘clean’ the colour is, if it is mixed with others or if it is a pure red or blue; and what this suggests in matters of meaning is that as less purity a colour has, more creativity or alternativity implies.

With modulation, Ledin & Machin (2020) refer to how natural the colours are, when the colours are modulated means that are “textured with different shades, as colours are seen in the natural world” (Ledin & Machin. 2020, p. 103). This indicates that low modulated colours are used for less real situations, Ledin & Machin use the example of cartoons, where “colours show none of the nuances and variation created by the play of light and texture”. (Ledin & Machin. 2020, p. 103)

Differentiation in Ledin & Machin (2020) is “the scale that runs from monochrome, which could be black and white or just shades of the same colour, to the use of many colours.” (Ledin & Machin. 2020, p. 104). The use of many colours could mean fun or energy, meanwhile the use of scales of the same colour, or white and black refers to nostalgia and classiness. (Ledin & Machin. 2020)

Luminosity measures that “though light is shining through it (e.g. coloured glass), to its opposite”. (Ledin & Machin. 2020, p. 106) A high luminosity means that the image is related to magic or supernatural aspects. (Ledin & Machin 2020)

In terms of fluorescence, Ledin & Machin (2020) say that this refers to spark in colours, and that is use to imply “vitality and energy” (Ledin & Machin. 2020, p. 106).

The last aspect of colour that MDA looks into is related to how much blue or red there is on an image. Blue refers to “cold, calm, distance and back grounding” (Ledin & Machin, 2020, p106), while red suggests “warmth, energy, salience and foregrounding” (Ledin & Machin. 2020, p. 106).

When analysing typography MDA looks at the different types of letters, the shapes and the sizes. (Ledin & Machin. 2020)

Themes in MDA

The features that I will use from MDA for the analysis of the four commercials that are part of this paper are:

- Iconography
- Colour
- Meaning of typography

Reflections and limitations

Ledin & Machin (2020), use examples of printed or physical advertisements to implement Multimodal Discourse Analysis, this paper adapts some features of this tool in order to analyze the empirical material.

FCDA could be considered as not partial, but Lazar (2005), points out that this is one of the characteristics from FCDA, that is not trying to be neutral, it wants to expose discourses that do not allow gender equality to finally happen. I am aware that I might not sound neutral on the analysis and conclusions of the paper.

Analysis

In this chapter I will describe and analyse the empirical materials under the light of Feminist Discourse Analysis and using Multimodal Discourse Analysis.

First, I will start giving a description of the commercials, to then analyse the data with the tools given by FCDA, which divides my analysis with two themes: Stereotypical binary gender roles and Discrimination against women. Later on, I will move on with the themes provided by MDA: iconography, colour and meaning of typography.

Description of the commercials

Ariel: #ShareTheLoad

In this commercial we can see a woman talking to her daughter on the phone while she is preparing a special meal for her son. She takes the food to her son to his room; he is playing a video game on his phone wearing headphones. The woman notices that the room is a complete mess and she complains on the phone with her daughter about it, to then start picking up the mess, while her son is eating and playing on his bed.

Then, the woman questions her daughter about calling in the morning, she should be working. The daughter tells her mom that she quit her job, the mom is surprised and sits down to take in the news.

The mom is surprised about her daughter quitting and says that she was doing really well on her job, she does not realize why she had to quit. The woman looks sad and says that they were feeling proud for her.

The woman starts saying to her daughter that after getting married the chores in the house were going to increase, but that she is not alone, that she has her husband to help her. Meanwhile, is possible to see her son creating more mess in his room by taking out more clothes from the closet and throwing them to the floor.

Now the woman looks surprised because her daughter is telling her that her husband does not know how to do any household chores. Right after she is questioning her daughter about her husband, she starts looking at what her son is doing, how he got ready, and left a mess behind him. Then she says to her daughter: “He may not know, the mistake is ours”, she reflects how she taught her daughter the household chores, but not to her son, and she says “we teach our daughters to stand on their own feet. But we do not teach our sons to **lend a hand**”

The woman stands up and starts picking up and putting inside a basket all the clothes that were around the room, to then hand him the basket and say that she has been making a mistake and that it is time to make it right.

In the next scene we can see the woman teaching her son how to wash his clothes. The commercial finishes with the question: “Are we teaching our sons what we have been teaching to our daughters?”

Fairy: #MakeItFair

The first image that appears in this commercial is a sink, then we start seeing and listening to the voice of a small girl (Girl 1) saying that boys do not clean because they are lazy, she laughs after saying this. Next, we see another girl (Girl 2), a bit older than the one before, saying that before men used to do more of the outside work, like going to wars, growing food and that women did the house work and that she thinks that is the reason why it has stayed like that as years have gone by.

Moving on, the commercial shows a statistic saying that on average, in the United Kingdom women spend 117 minutes more than men every day doing household chores. Next, they show an old couple (Couple 1) at their kitchen, and the woman says: “I just get on with it”. The next scene is a young couple (Couple 2), sitting at their couch, the man starts saying that he spends an hour doing household chores, he is interrupted by the woman saying that he does not spend an hour doing chores, they have a small back and forward conversation about it.

After, in the following scene, there is another young couple (Couple 3) at their kitchen, where the man asks the woman if she really thinks that she spends half an hour every day, to which she answers yes. He looks surprised with her answer and

makes emphasis on the question by saying: “on cleaning?”, to which she answers again yes. Then he asks “when?”.

The next scene, is another young couple (Couple 4), they are sitting on the dining table and the man starts saying that “I probably do enough”. Later on, in the video, there is an older couple (Couple 5) sitting on their living room, the woman questions the man about when was the last time that he did the dishes, and he cannot answer this question.

Then, the commercial shows that Fairy decided to change the label packaging from Fairy to Fair to imply that the division between man and woman of household chores should be fair. In the next scene, Couple 4 is back on the picture, they receive a bottle of Fairy soap with the new packaging. The woman is happy with the change and receives the bottle with excitement.

The following scene is now Amanda Abbington, a British actress, saying that it is on the subconscious of people, and that it is part of society, that women stay home and look after the kids, and the men go out to work. We could say that she is essentially describing an aspect of hegemonic masculinity by Connell and Messerschmidt (2005).

Later, a bottle of Fairy with the new packaging is shown getting empty on a time-lapse. Couple 4 is back again; the man is saying now that he has been doing “really good” after they got the bottle, and especially if she cooks. And we can see images of the couple cleaning in the kitchen together, while this is shown it is possible to see in the kitchen, by the sink a decoration that says “Mummy”. The woman says that there have been a few jokes about having the bottle with the new packaging and that maybe it has helped subconsciously to make the man more aware of the situation with the dishes.

Amanda Abbington, the British actress, appears again to say that society needs to question why this is still happening, have a conversation about it and then do something about it to change it. While she is speaking, all the couples are shown smiling and laughing. The screen goes green once more to now write “Progress is being made. But there’s a long way to go. How fair is your home? Join the discussion.” The commercial finishes showing a woman hand holding the bottle of

Fairy soap with the packaging that says “Fair” and putting it on a surface to leave it there. “A small change to make a big point”, the commercial says.

Always: #LikeAGirl

This commercial shows a social experiment conducted by Always. The commercial starts with a teenage girl (Girl 1) in a professional filming studio, getting ready to be filmed. The next scene. Letters appear to read “What does it mean to do something “like a girl”?”.

The director of the commercial greets Girl 1 and starts telling her what it is going to happen.

First, a group of teenagers (boys and girls) are shown individually and the director of the commercial asks them to do things like throwing a ball, running or punching “like a girl” and they do it in an exaggerated clumsy way.

Then the director asks the same to younger girls (around 10 years old) and they do it in a “normal” way.

Later, the commercial writes that “A girl’s confidence plummets during puberty”. As off voice the director of the commercial starts asking Girl 1 how does she think that affect girls when someone uses “like a girl” as an insult. Now Girl 1 says that for sure plays with their self-confidence.

A new young woman (Girl 2) shows up now, and she is asked by the director to give advice to young girls that are told to throw, fight or run “like a girl”. To what she says “Keep doing it cause it’s working. If somebody else says that running like a girl, or kicking like a girl, or shooting like a girl is something that you shouldn’t be doing, that’s their problem. Because if you’re still scoring, and you’re still getting to the ball on time, and you’re still being first, you’re doing it right. It doesn’t matter what they say. I mean, yes, I kick like a girl, and I swim like a girl, and I walk like a girl, and I wake up in the morning like a girl because I am a girl. And that is not something that I should be ashamed of, so I’m going to do it, anyway. That’s what they should do.”

Always raises the question: When does “like a girl” become an insult? After a reflection with all the girls that participated in the social experiment, the director

asks again the same things as in the beginning: run, throw a ball and punch like a girl. Now they do it as they would do it in a real-life scenario.

Gillette: The best a man can be

As a general description, Gillette's commercial starts showing actions performed by me that hurt other people, including women and other men. Gillette points out how these actions have been happening to the eyes of everyone and no one has done something about it. Then makes a reference to the #MeToo movement, claiming that this movement is making a difference, men realize thanks to the #MeToo movement, how bad their actions were; and that it is time to act different and to stop those who keep reproducing these actions. At the end the commercial reflects on how everything that men are doing is seen by children and that they are learning from them.

The Gillette's commercial starts with a reference to the #MeToo movement and its connection to toxic masculinities, while this is mentioned on the clip, men are looking themselves into a mirror and seem to be reflecting upon the news that they are listening about sexual harassment and how the #MeToo movement has been growing.

2006 is the first time that #MeToo is mentioned in social media was by Tarana Burke, an activist; after she heard a story from a black girl that had been abused, and the only thing that she could say at the moment was: "Me too". (Williams, 2018)

In 2017 the actress Alyssa Milano brings back the #MeToo movement by telling her own story, helping women that have been victims of sexual harassment to come out and speak about it. After this the movement had a big repercussion in society. It created a snowball effect; thousands of women told their stories about sexual harassment. (Gibson, et al, 2019).

Next to this, Gillette references itself by mentioning its old tag line: "Is this the best a man can get?". The commercial discards the old tag line by teenagers destroying a billboard that was showing an old commercial by Gillette.

By asking the question: “Is this the best a man can get?”, Gillette is questioning men about their actions and in a way is also questioning itself, about its past, about how its haven been handling its publicity. The commercial emphasizes by asking “Is it?”. Followed by images of, teenage boys chasing another boy, a child being the victim cyber bullying; three boys in a couch watching a TV show where a group of men are whistling to a woman. Then the TV changes to a TV show, where a white man improperly touches a black woman that it is hired as a domestic servant. And the last image that TV shows is a group of young people at a party.

On this scene, we can see that the room where the TV is located is the same the whole time, but the TV changes, making the reference of how these inappropriate behaviours have been shown through time.

Later on, we can see in the commercial kids fighting while their fathers are present and excuse their behaviour by saying “Boy will be boys”. The excuse is reproduced by a group of men of different races and ages, as way say of showing that this is something that happens often and on any kind of family.

Following on, Gillette gives again a reference to the #MeToo movement, by showing news about sexual harassment and how the movement is growing and making a shift; claiming that “... something has changed”. After this they show how some actions that were accepted before are seen now with other eyes because of the #MeToo movement. Actions as the one where we can see a TV show recorded with live audience where it is possible to see a man touching a woman employed as a domestic servant at his house inappropriately, in front of his children and laughing about it. After the news about sexual harassment are growing, the commercial goes back to the same live audience, who does not find what they are seeing entertaining anymore, on the contrary it is possible to see guilty and accusation in some of the audience members. This is followed by the words “and there is not coming back”, Gillette’s way to say men and society that times have changed.

In the next scene, men appear looking themselves into a mirror again, but this time they look determined, not as the beginning of the commercial where they seemed to be feeling guilty. While they look themselves into the mirror, the narrator on the commercial says “because we believe in the best in men”.

After this scene, the commercial turns more positive, after the plot twist that was the #MeToo movement, men are shown doing the right thing, by stopping other men on their actions. For example: There is a man in a party bothering two girls, then another man comes

in and ask the other man to leave the girls alone. Also, a man with the intention to pursue on the streets a woman that he does not know and that has not shown any interest on him, is stopped by another man who says “not cool, not cool”. Gillette keeps showing more actions while the narrator says: “Some already are... (acting the right way)”.

Now the narrator makes a reference to the new generation, saying “Because the boys watching today... will be the man of tomorrow”, to then show different kid faces, the last one with the caption “The best a man can get”. The commercial finishes with a blue background saying: “It’s only by challenging ourselves to do more that we can get closer to our best”.

Stereotypical binary gender roles

Ariel: #ShareTheLoad

With the general description of the commercial we can see how the women are assigned with the stereotypical gender role of taking care of the house chores, how it is a women’s responsibility. It is interesting to analyse what the woman says to her daughter when she realizes what has been happening, she says: “we teach our daughters to stand on their own feet. But we do not teach our sons to **lend a hand**”, on this line we can read how things are not equal, the woman talks about teaching daughters to “stand on their own feet”, which means a bigger responsibility than lending a hand. Even though, the commercial has a turn where at the end the mom starts teaching her son to do laundry, the message is still implying that the responsibility relies in women, by saying that boy should “lend a hand”. Meaning that they should help, not be as in charge of it as a woman, just help. This can be described by Connell & Messerschmidt (2005) as allowances to hegemonic masculinity to keep reproducing stereotypical gender roles in society.

Zeisler (2016) introduces the term feel-good feminism, which consists of dealing with struggles of feminism, in a way that does not bother the peace of everyone. Therefore, in the eyes of Zeisler this constitutes a feel-good feminism femvertising, there are no accusations to external factors to what is happening, there is no accusation to the opposite gender, here it is the woman who takes the blame for the problem. This is also supported by Foucault (1982), who argues that when aiming for a solution there needs to be a revolution or a class struggle in order to get to the “chief enemy”. There is no accusation to hegemonic

masculinity, that allows these behaviours to be reproduced (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Hegemonic masculinity is not being attacked here; it is the woman who criticizes herself.

This agrees with Lazar (2006) as reinforcing the stereotypical gender role, the women should be caring, nurturing and on the position to accept the blame for what happens around them.

Fairy: #MakeItFair

The commercial initially seems to be directed to both women and men, but still shows how the big responsibility is on the women side. The men are welcome to help and when they do, there is recognition of it. For example, the man from Couple 4, says: “After having the new bottle, I have been really good, especially if you cook (talking to this wife)”. Showing how the man only feels obligated to do the dishes when his wife has cooked, it is not a chore for him, it is more like a reward that he gives to his wife for cooking. In words of Lazar (2007) this a good example to point out how “the complex, subtle, and sometimes not so subtle, ways in which frequently taken-for-granted gendered assumptions and hegemonic power relations are discursively produced, sustained, negotiated, and challenged” (p. 142). In this case, it is a subtle way, like hegemonic masculinity, and does not appear aggressive.

This couple is also shown doing the dishes together, earlier the video was saying how women were doing more than men, and that women would do the dishes by themselves, while now they show the couple doing it together. There is not a single scene of men doing the dishes by themselves. This is again evidence of allowances to hegemonic masculinity (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005) and this happens in the resolution of the commercial, where everything should have been solved.

Even though the commercial seems to be targeted to men and women, at the end the hand that is holding the Fairy bottle is a woman’s hand. (See Image 2) They could have shown two hands holding the bottle, a man’s and woman’s hands, but this shows that Fairy is still a product for women. Is the commercial directly to men and women? To Lazar (2005) this would represent a discourse “which sustain a patriarchal social order: that is, relations of power that systematically privilege men

as social group and disadvantage, exclude and dis-empower women as social group.” (Lazar. 2005, p.5)

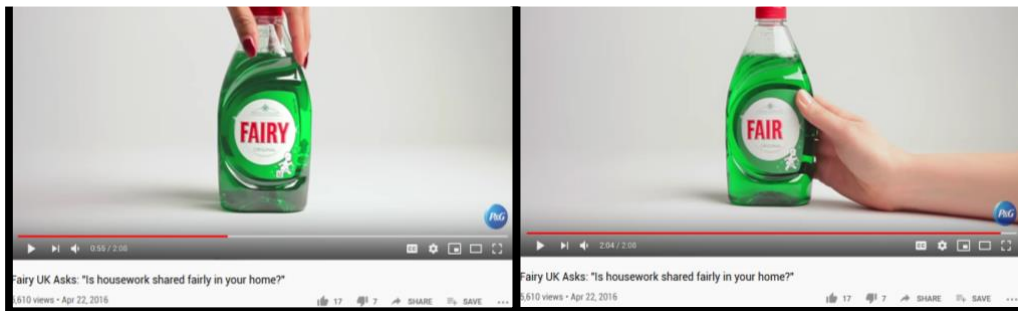


Image 2 Bottles of Fairy held by women. (00:00:55) and (00:02:08)

Always: #LikeAGirl

To Connell & Messerschmidt (2005), the fact that Always includes boys in this commercial is a good choice, because it brings into the picture what is happening in terms of feminism and empowering girls from the opposite side (men). Even though the commercial is clearly targeting women (because of the nature of the product), in the eyes of Foucault (1982) this would also represent a step in the right direction, for the same reason, it goes to the opposite of the struggle, to try to understand the bigger picture of the issue.

This ad shows a rejection to what has been told girls that they should be, and this represents from Foucault's (1982) perspective, a beginning into changing the relation of power.

Finally, from Lazar's (2005) perspective, the commercial will not represent a discourse that is trying to keep reproducing traditional gender roles, on the contrary is taking down stereotypes.

Gillette: The best a man can be

In this commercial, there is an emphasis on the stereotypical gender binary roles assigned to men, as behaviours that they need to change. The commercial evidences that stereotypical gender roles in men can have a negative effect in men and women.

Previous studies have explored the relationships between hegemonic masculine and crime (Messerschmidt. 1997; Bufkin. 1999), finding out that there is a link between these two, but not as natural result of hegemonic masculinity, more as consequence of pursuing of hegemonic masculinity. And this is a topic

that Gillette touches upon with the commercial, Gillette exposes how being normed under hegemonic masculinity leads to aggressiveness and sometimes crime (harassment). (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005)

Gillette references itself by mentioning its old tagline: “Is this the best a man can get?”. On previous commercials the brand, had used this tag line as a reference of power, of all the things that men could get, it was all about showing men how it is possible to get whatever they want because they are men, those commercials were not controversial at all, they were even a sign of pride between men. (Looking Back at 100 Years of Gillette Advertisements, 2020; Gillette Co., 2020) In only six seconds Gillette tries to change its message of pride to shame. The commercial discards the old tag line by teenagers destroying a billboard that was showing an old commercial by Gillette. Here we can connect this to Foucault (1982) when he talks about one of the new aims of philosophy, that is not longer to understand what we are as individuals but more to reject what we have been told to be by the (under masked pastoral) power that we are. To Foucault (1982) this is a way to get closer to changing the status of power, by rejecting what we have been.

By asking the question: “Is this the best a man can get?” Gillette is questioning men about their actions and in a way is also questioning itself, about its past, about how it has been handling its publicity, again, this to Foucault (1982) represents a start to change the power dynamics.

Discrimination against women

The European Institute for gender equality defines discrimination against women as

Any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex and gender that has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, and on a basis of equality between women and men, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field. (Discrimination against women, 2020)

Ariel: #ShareTheLoad

In the commercial we can see how there is discrimination against women performed in two moments.

First there is the behaviour that the commercial aims to fight, the daughter of the woman had to quit her job, because now that she is married, there was not enough time to do the household chores by herself and to work. Therefore, she had to choose.

Later on, in what it is supposed to be the solution for the problem established before, the commercial shows again discrimination against women by saying that mothers need to teach their sons to help in the house, so they could help the future wife. However, as mentioned above, this is a way of impairing women and men, because big part of the responsibility still relies on women.

Fairy: #MakeItFair

This commercial is a confirmation of how women have been discriminated against by having the major responsibility of washing the dishes, and therefore ending up with having less time for their enjoyment activities. The commercial wants to make a fair division of the responsibility of doing the dishes between women and men. However, after the fair division has been done, there is still a sign in the kitchen that says “mummy”. Additionally, the two times that someone is holding a Fairy bottle, it is being held by a woman. They are saying that there should be a fair division, yet keep showing how the situation is unequal and seems like the responsibility is still on the women’s side.

Always: #LikeAGirl

Here the commercial evidences from beginning to end how girls have been discriminated by the common expression “like a girl”. Which indicates how girls should do things, how boys and girls look ridicules if they do things “like a girl” and how can be used as an insult. This shows discrimination against women, by implying that women are clumsier or weaker.

Gillette: The best a man can be

The reference to the #MeToo movement, represents to Lazar (2005) a discourse that is trying to stop reproducing actions that allow the oppression of women, such as harassment. It is also from Foucault's (1982) and Connell & Messerschmidt's (2005) perspective it is a way to approach a topic from its opposite, which leads to a better understanding of the situation. Gillette is addressing sexual harassment towards women, from the side of men.

This act also represents to Foucault (1982) an accusation the "chief enemy", Gillette is openly expressing that men have performed sexual harassment that they should feel ashamed about it.

Gillette's commercial makes a reference to catcalling, when it shows a man with the intention to pursue on the streets a woman that he does not know and that has not shown any interest in him, is stopped by another man who says "not cool, not cool". This is an interesting scene, because the man saying "not cool, not cool" is a black man and the man that is stopped it's a white man. Here Gillette also addresses, what Connell & Messerschmidt (2005) mention on their work: that within hegemonic masculinities not only women are considered less, but also other types of masculinities that are not hegemonic, such as different races from the historically dominant one (white men). To Foucault (1982) this would represent a revolution, because the hegemonic masculinity is being rejected by a non-hegemonic. Therefore, creating a tension that generates revolution or class struggle.

Another behaviour that is addressed by the commercial is Mansplaining, which consists of a woman and a man interacting, where the man demonstrates a dominant behaviour and gives information without being asked for it by the woman. (Conner, McCauliff, Shue & Stamp, 2018). In the commercial we can see a woman talking in a work meeting and being interrupted by a man, to correct her in what she was explaining, by saying: "Actually, why I think she is trying to say". It is possible to see how the woman felt undermined by the man.

The narrator on the commercial refers to "what she is actually trying to say" as "the same old excuses"; that are used to legitimize the existence and persistence of the behaviours that have been shown through the video. This is another proof, according to Connell & Messerschmidt (2005) that hegemonic masculinity keeps allowing the reproduction of behaviours that do not let gender equality to happen. It also shows how the hegemonic is not perceived as

aggressive, like Connell & Messerschmidt (2005) claim. If it would be perceived as aggressive, then there would not exist “the same old excuse”, as the commercial says.

Iconography

Ariel: #ShareTheLoad

In terms of image, the commercial can be analysed from a denotative meaning, to Ledin and Machin (2020, p. 38), the denotative meaning gives us an idea of where we are in a literal sense. By the images we can easily feel that we are in a family house, more exactly in a room (See Image 3). But if we go into the connotative meaning, that to Ledin & Machin (2020, p. 39) is about to read the cultural associations that image gives us. In this case, we can see that it is not only a family house, it is an Indian family house, and this can be understood through the whole video, which is important if we do not know in advance that the commercial is targeted to India. This commercial might not have had the same positive perception in a European country, for example. When analysing this commercial under Foucault’s (1982) perspective is needed to take into consideration where the commercial is taking place, which in this case is India, and consider its national context and different gender norms. This is also supported by Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) when they argue that hegemonic masculinity varies depending on different levels: local, regional and global.



Image 3 Indian woman talking on the phone, with her son on the background. (0:00:32)

Fairy: #MakeItFair

When looking at this commercial from their visual composition, in terms of connotation, if we see Image 4, we place ourselves in a kitchen and that is it. But considering denotation, where we analyse the cultural aspects (Ledin & Machin. 2020) we can see behind the sink a letter sign that says “Mummy”, as I mentioned before. And this is still after having the new bottle of Fairy soap in their kitchen. This gives a message that the kitchen is a place for mothers.



Image 2 Setting of a kitchen (00:01:26)

Lazar says that one of the aims of FCDA analysis is to show that some practices are not coincidental, these are generated to be like this (Lazar. 2005, p. 5) and that we can argue when looking at Image 4, this image places women in a kitchen; by having a decoration sign that says “Mummy”.

“Gender ideology is hegemonic in fact it often does not appear as domination at all; instead it seems largely consensual to most in a community” (Lazar, 2005, p. 7). This is evidence that supports what I said before, that placing a woman in the kitchen is normalized on an extent that does appear aggressive at all. There are no comments on YouTube referring to this. Actually, there are no comments at all to this video on YouTube.

Always: #LikeAGirl

Looking at this commercial from the denotative aspect of the image we could say that there is an idea of how girls should behave, and that this idea is present in boys, the same way as is in teenager girls. On the other hand, the younger girls in the commercial have not the same ideas in mind about how to do things “like a girl”, to them is just to do it however they would do it. Which could show that younger girls have not been as exposed to hegemonic masculinity as the teenage girls and the boys in the commercial. One could say that this is an implicit and subtle attack to hegemonic masculinity.

Gillette: The best a man can be

The denotative aspect from this commercial let us see the representation of how the hegemonic masculinity is perceived by Gillette. As we know from Connell and Messerschmidt (2006) is what allows behaviours that underplay the role of the woman in society. The profile of the men guided by hegemonic masculinity in the commercial is white, strong and good-looking men (privilege men, we could say as well). Therefore Gillette is showing how the actions of the most privilege men (what men aim to be) is having a negative effects in society, resulting in an attack to hegemonic masculinity; which to Foucault will represent a struggle of classes aiming for a change in the relations of power that could be effective since is trying to tackle the chief enemy, in this case being hegemonic masculinity the chief enemy of gender equality, as has been established before.

Colour

Ariel: #ShareTheLoad

When analysing colour on this commercial, we find that in the scale of differentiation, which sees to how many shades of the same colours are used (Ledin & Machin. 2020). If we take a look at Image 5, we can see that the colours are on shades, not completely black and white, but it is not full with colour. This, to Ledin & Machin (2020) shows that the creators of the commercial want to appeal to the nostalgia, and that it is charged with a more symbolic power, which makes sense because it is about getting into Indian mother minds, that idea is to make them reflect on what they have done wrong, to go back to their actions to see how they have failed.

In terms of saturation, we can see that the colours are not too saturated, looking at Image 5, we find that the scale is more pastel, the colours are not showing a strong presence. To Ledin & Machin (2020, p.101) this shows that the advertising might be directed to an older target group, a more mature one. Which reinforces the conclusion that this is an advertisement directed to women, not to young boys and realize that they should know how to do laundry. It is for mothers, to assume their accountability and to show how they can fix it.



Image 5 Woman teaching her son how to do laundry. We can see bottles of Ariel in the back. (0:02:32)

When analysing luminosity and fluorescence, if we take a look at Image 5, it is possible to see how the general picture is more in the shadows but, there are also Ariel bottles in the back, and those have luminosity, this indicates to Ledin & Machin (2020, p.106) a sense of magic. Something similar happens with fluorescence, that it is also present on the Ariel bottles that we see on the back, this indicates vitality and energy (Ledin & Machin. 2020, p 106). The commercial is making us see how the brand brings magic and energy to a family, how they are telling us the right message.

Fairy: #MakeItFair

Now, moving to analyse the colours on Image 4, we can see that fluorescence and luminosity are present here on the bottle of the product as it was on the video from Ariel. Showing how magic (Ledin & Machin, 2020) can be the new packaging of the dish soap, “bringing fairness” to a home

On Image 4 we also find similarities with the Ariel video regarding brightness and saturation. In both commercials the colours are not so bright and not much saturated. To remember, this for Ledin & Machin (2020) implies that the message is being targeted to a more mature audience; we could say then that this can apply equally to men and women, but then we have to remember the “Mummy” sign on the kitchen; and also bring back something that was mentioned during the description of the video, that the bottle of the soap is always held by a woman’s hand. (See Image 2), from Ledin & Machin (2020) one could say that this image has a hidden meaning, this let us know how Fairy perceives that its products are for women.

When looking to Image 6 we can find an significant difference of light, it is the same setting, the two takes were supposed to be filmed during the same interview, but the one from the beginning, where Girl 2 talks about how things were in the past is considerably on a darker mood, than the one where Girl 2 is talking about what the word ”fair” means to her. Coming back to Ledin and Machin (2020:98-99) the brightness denotes optimism, and darkness a more down mood. This gives us the tools to think that what Fairy is trying to say to their audience is that what Girl 2 was talking about should be considered as something that should not keep happening. To later tell us that what they are doing with the

bottles of Fairy (changing the label) is a step that brings light to where it was dark. This also gives us the sense of feeling optimistic, which takes us to feel-good feminism. (Zeisler, 2016)



Image 3 Girl 2 talking in 2 different moments of the video. (00:00:15) and (00:01:40)

Always: #LikeAGirl

The colours used on this commercial are saturated and with high differentiation (See Image 7), this to Ledin & Machin (2020) indicates that the messages are being targeted to a younger generation. This we can connect to a critique that femvertising receives from Rottenberg (2018), she states that when femvertising targets young girls, it is relegating older women and making them part of the problem, by not involving them. To Rottenberg (2018), this sends the message that mature women cannot participate or be part of the change. She adds that by targeting young girls, the media reproduce in a subtle way, the idea that the reproductive characteristics of women dumped them to the patriarchy. (Rottenberg, 2018)



Image 7 Compilation of images of Always's commercial

Looking at Image 2 again, it is also possible to see contrast between the girls and the background. The background is especially dark to make a good contrast with the girls, and give them even more light, so the attention of the eyes of the audience goes immediately to the girls. (Ledin & Machin, 2005) This also creates an effect of luminosity on the girls, and this to Ledin & Machin (2005) communicates a sense of magic. It also makes the girls appear brighter. Mixing these two aspects, we can conclude using Ledin & Machin (2005) that there is truth and magic on what the girls are saying. This gives the feeling that Always is giving credibility to what the girls are saying and at same time, communicating that what they are saying is magical and therefore generates change.

This brings us back to Foucault (1982) who establishes that these types of struggles can be solved by accusing the “chief enemy” and generating “revolution or class struggle”, but that these types of struggles tend to accuse the immediate enemy. In this case the use of “like a girl” as an insult. To then create the “solution” of changing the meaning of this expression. But letting the “chief enemy”, that in this case could be hegemonic masculinity or patriarchy, free of any guilt. And therefore, not bringing the real solution to the struggle.

In the eyes of Zeisler (2016), this would be considered this to be, feel good feminism, in the way that is addressing serious topics in a way that does not let them feel as serious as they are. It is framing a serious problem within a romanticized story line. (Zeisler, 2016)

Gillette: The best a man can be

In terms of colour, when looking these scenes, as the majority of the video, (See Image 8), one notice that there is low saturation of colours, to Ledin & Machin (2020) this gives a feeling of emotional temperature, which means that the message is trying to be subtle, this might be trying to balance with how powerful and controversial is the message that the video is transmitting. It also gives a more serious tone to the topic. Less saturation to Ledin & Machine (2020) gives a connotation that the message is directed to a more mature audience, which makes sense since razors are used for men that are facing puberty and above. Regarding Foucault (1982). Gillette with the video wants older men to start

acting, being aware that children are watching and learning from them. This is again, from Foucault's (1982) perspective, a rejection of the self which constitutes a step closer to changing the power dynamics, because it creates revolution.

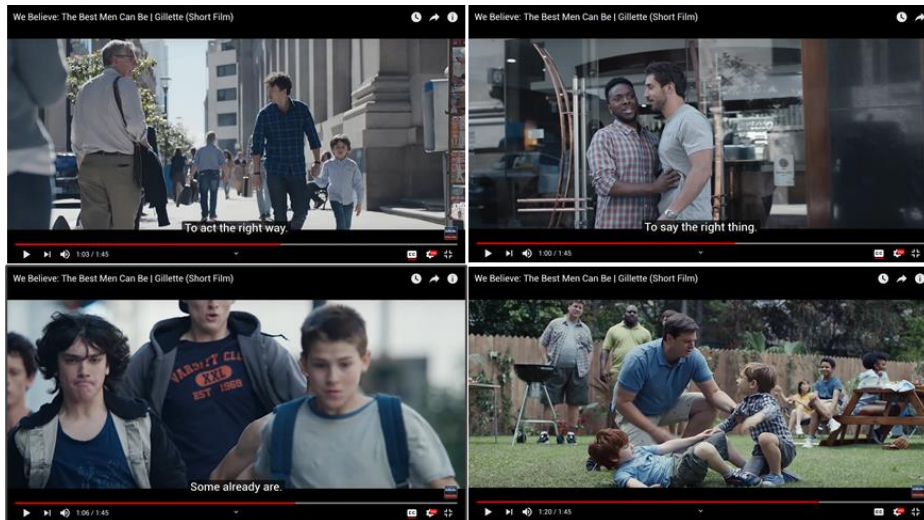


Image 8 Compilation of images from Gillette commercial.

Meaning of typography

Ariel: #ShareTheLoad

Taking a look to Image 3, we find typography. The letters are white, simple and bold. To Ledin & Machin (2020, p. 114), boldness in a typography means emphasis, if the typography was not as bold it will indicate neutrality, but on this case Ariel and P&G do not want to show neutrality, they are taking a stand, they are accusing mothers of not teaching their sons the same they teach their daughters. The font is also even, they are organized on a horizontal level, this indicates that the message is serious, it is not fun or playful (Ledin & Machin 2020, p. 125). This suggests once more that the video is targeted to a more mature audience.

The message might be strong, and it is already emphasized by the boldness on the font. But the whole typing is not spread in all the screen, this to Ledin & Machin (2020, p.127) indicates humbleness in telling the message. We could say that this an attempt from Ariel of not sounding too aggressive, once more an example of feel good feminism (Zeisler, 2016), not wanting to make anyone feel uncomfortable.

Fairy: #MakeItFair

Now, we should talk about typography in Fairy's commercial. The font that is used here is similar to the one in Ariel's commercial, with the difference that here the typography is not as bold as the one we have analysed before. According to Ledin & Machin (2020) less bold letters could indicate a sense of subtleness. To this, we can say that the message that Fairy is trying to give does not have the pretension to be polemic or controversial.

Bringing back Foucault (1982), this would not represent the aim of looking for a solution, there are no accusations to a “chief enemy”, there are no revolutions nor class struggle. Something similar we could say by bringing Connell & Messerschmidt (2005) into the conversation, there is not clear intention to change the hegemonic masculinity.

Always: #LikeAGirl

In terms of typography, the situation is very similar as it was in Ariel's commercial. The font is bold, and this expresses that the messages that is carrying is serious and powerful (Ledin & Machin, 2020)

Gillette: The best a man can be

When seeing the typography in the commercial (see Image 9), one finds that the font is not bold, this to Ledin & Machin (2020) indicates shyness, and this could be to balance the strong message that the commercial is sending with images and audio; and not be seen as aggressive by the viewers.



Image 4 Typography from Gillette's commercial. (00:01:37)

Discussion & Conclusion

Discussion

To recapitulate, both campaigns #WeSeeEqual and The Best men can be belonging to the business group Procter & Gamble, however a big difference can be seen when comparing the commercials between the two campaigns.

#WeSeeEqual is a big initiative from P&G to pursue gender equality, inside the company and within society. They aim to reach society, change the way that women have been stereotypically portrayed in commercials and contribute to the pursuit of gender equality. Since they are one of the biggest and most powerful advertisers in the world with more than 50 brands, P&G have the possibility to make their voice heard all over the world. (P&G, 2020).

As mentioned before some of the campaigns that are included within this initiative are: #ShareTheLoad (Ariel), #MakeItFair (Fairy) and #LikeAGirl (Always). These three commercials reflect what Zeisler (2016) calls feel good feminism, because they do not make anyone feel uncomfortable, but they address a topic that should make people feel uncomfortable, which is gender inequality. This is where these commercials differ from The best men can be by Gillette. In Gillette's commercial, viewers feel uncomfortable with what they see. This is probably the reason why this commercial was not well received and is not included in #WeSeeEqual.

All the commercials in their own way make references to hegemonic masculinities, some just showing it and others attacking in different levels of intensity and this could be due to the different cultures in which where the commercial are promoting, we have to remember that according to Connell and Messerschmidt the state of hegemonic masculinity differs within different contexts (this meaning, cultures, countries, and so on). Therefore, some of the attacks to hegemonic masculinity might not be perceived as aggressive as others, because the way I perceive hegemonic masculinity differs to the hegemonic masculinity present in other contexts different from mine.

The best men can be, is also pursuing gender equality and is a clear reference to the feminist movement. Here bigger issues are addressed, such as harassment, mansplaining and abuse. Not only who gets to do the dishes or the laundry. Here, women are being empowered by tackling the hegemonic masculinity, by showing in a more controversial way on how gender equality is being threatened.

Why is it important or relevant to keep having commercials as the one from Gillette? According to Foucault (1982), for a better understanding of a situation we should look at the opposite and see what is happening there. In this case with femvertising, we have mostly touched upon what is happening with feminism in relation to women, but a big part of feminism also implies work on the side of men, as not only women are involved in feminism.

Gillette's commercial is a representation of what Foucault (1982) calls the new aim of modern philosophy, because it is not trying to understand how the individual is, it is rejecting what the individual has been told that should be, in this case, men as individuals. Understanding how Foucault sees power and how it affects the subject, we can understand how power influences the way brands use femvertising the way they do. To Foucault (1982) power cannot be defeated, it is necessary to understand it and act according to how it works in order to have a successful strategy. Therefore, my assumption is that Gillette as a brand, after a study of its market and the global context, read that hegemonic masculinity had changed or at least started to change, and that is why they decided to take the risk of making The best men can be. They found out later that hegemonic masculinity might not have changed, because the majority of its customers felt attacked, they saw themselves reflected in the commercial. Which might have led Gillette to take a step back, by not changing its tagline, from "The best a man can get" to "The best men can be"; and P&G to not include the commercial in the campaign #WeSeeEqual.

Conclusion

In this study, I have presented the analysis of how a house of brands like P&G, deals with femvertising by using its big initiative to fight against gender inequality: #WeSeeEqual; and the controversial video The best men can be, launched by Gillette, one brand that belongs to P&G. The analysis was made using tools from Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis, and Multimodal Discourse Analysis. Using a

theoretical framework consisting of Foucault theory of power and hegemonic masculinity by Connell.

One of the findings of this study is that the commercial from Ariel and Fairy, even though it seems to be targeting men and women at first sight, the brands still considers women as their main consumer and treat them as so.

The commercial from Fairy represents a discourse that keeps reproducing gender roles, in this case “women’s place is in the kitchen” as a decoration sign saying “Mummy” can be seen by the sink in one of the kitchens. Furthermore, all shots where a bottle of Fairy was held showed a woman’s hand.

In the case of Ariel, the mom is the one who takes all the blame for the struggle that she is going through and additionally, says in a moment of the commercial “we teach our daughters to stand on their own feet, but we do not teach our sons to lend a hand”. Which represents also a discourse that systematically places women in a position where the big responsibility of the household chores relies on them, and gives men less responsibility by saying that “we do not teach our sons to lend a hand”. Not to be able to stand on their feet, but only to lend a hand, to help. This suggest it is not seen as their responsibility as well.

Always is a brand that has as only consumer people with menstruation, which in most case are women. So, it is not a surprise that this commercial is targeted to women, more specifically young women. This commercial would not appear as reproducing gender roles that allow to keep oppressing women. To Foucault (1982) a way to find a solution to the struggles created by relations of power is to reject what we have been told that we are; this commercial does just that. To Connell & Messerschmidt (2005) and Foucault (1982), this commercial would also represent a positive aspect, since boys are included in the commercial. According to them, exploring the situation from opposite gender brings a better understanding to the issue.

There are things that these commercials have in common that does not represent a search for a solution. From Foucault’s (1982) perspective and it is the fact that on any of the three commercials are strong accusations to the “chief enemy” and therefore, no revolutions nor class struggle. Which is key to change the state of power. Also, these three commercials represent good feel feminism to Zeisler (2006), to her statements, while exposing gender inequality should make people

uncomfortable, leave them with emotions to fight (create a revolution), not a storytelling that plays with emotion to let people feeling good and happy at the end.

On the other hand, is Gillett's commercial: The best men can be. This commercial represents, from Connell & Messerschmidt's (2005) perspective a good attempt to change hegemonic masculinity and stop reproducing traditional gender roles. This commercial address women struggles, but from the opposite side: hegemonic masculinity, which to Connell & Messerschmidt (2005) is the way to have a better understanding of the situation to get closer to the possibility to change the hegemonic masculinity.

From Foucault's (1982) perspective, there is a clear accusation to the "chief enemy", the commercial accuses hegemonic masculinity for being responsible on different types of struggles, including gender inequality. Furthermore, the commercial also rejects what the hegemonic masculinity (under masked pastoral power) has been telling that men are; which also represents, to the eyes of Foucault (1982) a clear step to revolution or class struggle, that could lead to a change on the state of power.

Both types of commercials deal with hegemonic masculinity, but in different ways. The first three (Ariel, Fairy and Always), do not expose hegemonic masculinity as the "chief enemy". Different from the one from Gillette that attacks hegemonic masculinity and pictures as the "chief enemy".

In conclusion one could say that there are two different approaches to the same matter, gender equality, from the same house of brands: P&G. On one hand three commercial that represent femvertising in its more traditional way; and on the other hand, a commercial differing from traditional femvertising. While differing from traditional femvertising may address gender inequality problematics on a more serious level and thus result in a bigger change in society, it does not make the cut to belong to the #WeSeeEqual campaign like the other three commercials using traditional femvertising.

Further research

A suggestion for further research would be to look into the effect that femvertising could have on a brand reputation, if it is targeting men while addressing hegemonic masculinity and its issues. Furthermore, to investigate if the femvertising

addressing masculinities is more effective than the traditional femvertising, regarding its impact on the fight for gender equality. Also, to see how the implementation of masculinities in femvertising is perceived in different cultures, for example how a commercial like the one from Gillette (originally launched in the USA) would be perceived by another culture, for example Latin-American culture.

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