Diplomarbeit

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„*Berehynia, Barbie* and *Business Woman* - Looking at Ukrainian Advertising for Women through the Lens of British Cultural Studies"

Verfasserin

Lyubov Gramann

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Dedicated

To my dad who always believed in me but unfortunately could not share my achievements.

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1. Introduction

> Magazines addressed to women are one [of] […] mass cultural form – a multi-million dollar business which presents pleasurable, value-laden semiotic systems to immense numbers of women.
>
> (McCracken 1993: 1)

> I do not regard advertising as entertainment or an art form, but as a medium of information. When I write an advertisement, I don't want you to tell me that you find it 'creative'. I want you to find it so interesting that you *buy the product.*
>
> (David Ogilvy 1983: 7)

Advertisements are forcefully woven into everyday life, and it is almost impossible to ignore them and to understand their deeply hidden messages at least straight away. We are surrounded by frequent promises of a better life or better appearances presented either on street billboards, displays of shopping malls or simply from unwanted flyers pushed into our post boxes. "Advertisements provide pictures of reality and define the kinds of people we could be and the kind of lives we could lead" (Dyer 1982: 14).

By applying different techniques, advertisers manipulate our minds cautiously imposing a certain way of thinking, of how we could possibly improve our standards of living or satisfy our deep desires through consumptions (Beasley & Danesi 2002: V). Our weaknesses are the biggest advantages for the advertising industry since the power of modern advertising focuses not just on a product itself, but also on the benefits you could get after buying it. Raymond Williams sees advertising as a magic part of our culture and significant discourse of our modern time. He calls the creators of the ads – skilled magicians:

> The skilled magicians, the masters of the masses, must be seen as ultimately involved in the general weakness which they not only exploit but are exploited by. If the meanings and values generally operative in the society give no answers to, no means of negotiating, problems of death, loneliness, frustration, the need for identity and respect, then the magical system must come, mixing its charms and expedients with reality in easily available forms, and binding the weakness to the condition which has created it. Advertising is then no longer merely a way of selling goods, it is a true part of the culture of a confused society (Williams 1980: 190).

One of the most efficient methods of targeting and selling products to a specific audience is through print magazines. Most magazines are gender specific and allow advertisers to reach a particular sex group and to increase the selling revenue. Since advertising was introduced in print media, women became a major target group for different companies to endorse a variety of products and services. By placing their adverts in women's magazines marketers must utilise different codes and conventions to attract women's attention to a gender specific text. Although the methods of appealing to a female audience have changed significantly in the last century, the representation of women remains almost the same. The images of women predominantly progress from a housewife into the role of an emancipated woman fighting her way through the world of patriarchal prejudice. Very often, women are placed into one of three roles, housewife, businesswoman and sex object. Women's magazines, unlike others, can act as a medium of socialisation proliferating definite gender stereotypes and the ideals of global femininity standards. However, the representation of women in global media might differ from country to country suitably adapting to certain societal traditions and its social context.

There are many women's magazines that circulate around the world. While the theory of globalisation and increased trade business improves communication proficiency and raises the global integration level between various cultures, the numerous magazines, especially those with remarkable popularity, are spread to various countries in an adapted way, in order to edge into a specific cultural environment. For instance, the American edition of *Cosmopolitan, Elle* or *Baazar* will differ significantly from those of the Ukraine or Germany*.* Likewise, advertising cannot just cross the border of one country and be expected to be understood and accepted by the other one because it may not mean "there" what it means "here" (Fowles 1996: 22). Fowles emphasises that symbols, items and traditions make invisible culture visible, and "the meanings that predominate in the minds of most members of a culture are the meanings that define that culture. Cultures are little constrained by reality or nature; they are nearly self-contained human constructions that exist within nature, interesting it only at points" (ibid.).

Very often various products smartly presented on the pages of glossy magazines attract women's attention and push them to a meaningless purchase. However, the quality of advertised products is often questionable, as the promised characteristics presented in the advertisement usually differ significantly from the real value of the item. It is astonishing how easily a person can be influenced by a piece of a professional invention. Compared to men, women are usually more persuaded by such hoaxes and trapped into unnecessary purchases. Thus, they fall under the largest target group for most types of advertising. In order to produce a perfect advert and to win over the female audience, people who work in the advertising branch must apply special persuasion techniques, different modes of representation and competence to understand the way women think. Equally, women should have the right to know, or at least be aware of some tricks and traps, to be able to confront the hidden subtext of advertisements and to control their material desires. This subject is one of this thesis' main concerns. It is my aspiration, both to find out and to expose the powerful, yet simple way of helping women to control their shopping cravings. Moreover, my focus sets on advertisements for the female audience in women's magazines. Women's magazines are important because besides their recreational subject matter, they also sell almost everything: advice, behaviour ideas, images, products and information how to purchase them; they even sell feminine identities to their readers. John Storey (2006: 119) mentions that women's magazines try to reach their readers by "a combination of entertainment and useful advice" and often can be very pleasurable. Storey emphasises that "pleasure is not totally dependent on the purchase", we can gain an "enormous visual pleasure" through a magazine advertisement per se, by just looking at it (ibid.). "Magazine advertisements, like the magazines themselves […] provide a terrain on which to dream" (ibid.). Interestingly, Janice Winship admits that women's magazines are so pleasurable because women acknowledge the existence of the variety of work they complete every day:

> They [women's magazines] would not offer quite the same pleasure, however, if it were not expected of women that they

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perform the various labours around fashion and beauty, food and furnishing. These visuals acknowledge those labours while simultaneously enabling the reader to avoid doing them. In everyday life 'pleasure' for women can only be achieved by accomplishing these tasks; here the image offers a temporary substitute, as well as providing an (allegedly) easy, often enjoyable pathway to their accomplishment (Winship 1987: 56-57).

As Storey (2006: 119) adds, "[d]esire is generated for something more than the everyday, yet it can only be accomplished by what is foremost [for] women an everyday activity – shopping". And women's magazines assist women in this pleasurable weakness because magazines themselves are commodities that are bought and sold on the market. Many women, actually,

> purchase the advertisements whether literally, through buying the magazine, the bulk of each is ads, or more indirectly, through the higher prices we pay for the advertised products (McCracken 1993: 15).

For this reason, magazines' advertising plays a colossal role both in shaping the cultural content of a particular issue and in the economical survival of the magazine itself.

It is the goal of this thesis to discover the most satisfying answer for women to resist the manipulative pressure of advertising and to be able to avoid excessive purchases. Additionally, the objective is to provide examples of techniques scholars of visual communication have relied upon to be able to detect the impact of advertising on women's behaviour and the way they think.

Moreover, a particular interest of this thesis is the number of culturally specific adverts aimed at the Ukrainian female reader. Drawing upon three stereotypical models of Ukrainian femininity and culturally peculiar ads, the idea of the thesis is to expose the national specificity of the Ukrainian femininity in print advertising compared to Western femininity presented in the advertisements in British women's magazines. These adverts are essential for further comprehensive semiotic analysis and are to be found in the second part of the thesis. However, some of the Ukrainian ads have been already applied as practical examples in the theoretical part. This study uses ideological concepts combined with semiotic analysis proposed

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by Roland Barthes. For the purpose of this study a selection of popular glossy magazines, easily obtainable to women in the Ukraine and UK, are chosen at random starting from 2006 to 2011. Advertisements, to be analysed in this thesis, are selected from such Ukrainian fashion magazines as *Cosmopolitan* (Ukrainian edition), *Elle* (Ukrainian edition), *Natali, Zhensky Zhurnal (Woman's magazine), Caravan and Pink.* Likewise, the British editions of *Cosmopolitan, Vogue, Glamour, Company* and *She* are to be used for comparative analysis.

The constituent focus of the Ukrainian analysis includes advertisements containing cigarettes, household items and some specific Ukrainian culture inherent ads. The analysis of British adverts takes into account beauty and health products, for they occupy the most space in women's magazines in an attempt to target a modern wave of Western femininity. By comparing the Ukrainian and British ads and by applying Western studies, this thesis intends to unravel the impact of print advertising on the construction of Eastern femininity presented on the pages of the Ukrainian glossy magazines.

Compared to the East, advertisements in Western women's magazines have already been widely studied, and many feminist scholars have dared to relate their theories on how women's identities are constructed and emulated by the influence of this particular type of media. The main goal of this thesis is to demonstrate the individuality and the ideology of the Ukrainian society that creates and imposes certain stereotypes on the Ukrainian modern femininity. Thereby, this paper attempts to reach beyond and take a close look at advertising as a form of visual communication through a culturally specific lens, and also through the lens of semiotics.

Semiotics or semiology, a branch of linguistics, is the science of signs and how the signs produce meanings, either visually or verbally. Precisely, how signs work is a main concern of semiotics. Originally, semiotics was developed for studying language, which is the most important medium, and we use it practically all the time in every culture; especially when we want to express ourselves either orally or in a written form. Additionally, "much of the media uses language either as the primary medium of communication, or to support other media of communication like pictures, for instance"

(Bignell 2002: 2). This thesis seeks to make use of the non-linguistic media of communication, in particular visual and verbal signs in a form of print advertising, taking cultural context into consideration.

It has become one of the main approaches to decode meanings of ads by the use of signs. Kress and Van Leeuwen in "Reading Images" (2006: 2) make a point that meanings are culture specific and "belong to culture, rather than to specific semiotic modes". They argue that it is up to culture to choose if a certain meaning is expressed by one or by different semiotic modes. Moreover, Dyer (1982: 13) admits that any type of visual communication could only be understood if both advertiser and potential consumer were products of the culture with shared meanings.

Undoubtedly, people are free to interpret messages differently. There is always room for fantasy depending either on their language, education or social shift. Advertisements usually carry or tell us illusive stories of a better life or a better us by means of various semiotic modes, images, written comments or colour, for instance.

Drawing upon Barthes' (1957) semiotic mode of myth for better understanding the underlying meaning of advertising, the assumption is that the concept of femininity in Ukrainian print advertisements can be interpreted in terms of mythic meanings, which the ads lean on and help to promote the product. Barthes (1957) claims that advertising immerses into the mythic level of mind by means of the fact that its contents insert mythic ideas within it. Thus, such advertisements have a deep subconscious effect on us, for myths let us identify as individual personalities and as different classes. Moreover, ideologies of a certain society reproduced in ads, make a significant impact on the female reader's perception of their consumption, since 'by nature' they encourage women to consume products. The dominant ideology of a certain class in culture, those who control and own the political, commercial and industrial foundations, tends to maintain the stability of the society, so that their power and control can stay unconverted. Therefore, in order to eliminate oppositional and alternative ways of thinking, certain so-called 'natural' stereotypes or, according to Barthes, myths are created to be more effective in maintaining the society. The Ukrainian stereotypical models of femininity, which will be introduced in

two last chapters of this thesis, are excellent examples of how such a myth is created by the Ukrainian patriarchal system.

Advertisements as well, at some level, belong to modern-day myths that satisfy the natural desire for myth that people experience in extremely materialistic surroundings. Beasley and Danesi (2002: 77) explain,

> while modern peoples no longer rely on myths to explain the world, they still require the psychological power of the poetic imagination to "explain" things to them in metaphysical ways. This continues to thrive in different forms – in cultural mythologies, in superstitions, and in the connotative substance of many advertisements.

Hence, in this thesis I shall pay particular attention to Barthes' semiotic approach and draw my attention to the semiotic mode known as "myth". "Myth, for Barthes, is a type of speech about social realities which supports ideology by taking these realities outside of the arena of political debate" (Bignell 2002: 25).

What is more, the myths that are created within a particular culture usually change in the course of time and can only acquire their power because they relate to a particular context of a certain culture. Therefore, culture and its ideologies play a significant role in the construction of meanings within the production of print advertising.

Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996: 2) also put emphasis on the cultural and the semiotic modes of dependency on meanings. Meanings, therefore, are scattered between various semiotic modes and the manner in which way some things can be expressed "either visually or verbally, […] is also culturally and historically specific" (ibid.). Further they emphasise that

> […] even when we can express what seem to be the same meanings in either image-form or writing or speech, they will be realized differently. For instance, what is expressed in language through the choice between different word classes and clause structures, may, in visual communication, be expressed through the choice between different uses of colour or different compositional structures. And this will affect meaning. Expressing something verbally or visually makes a difference (Kress & Van Leeuwen 1996: 2).

Johnson (2008), therefore, agrees with Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996, 2001), and draws our attention to the importance of visual and verbal modes in analysing advertising in cultural context:

> Applied to advertising, we might say that consumers make sense of advertising by interpreting the interplay of verbal and visual representation within a meaningful cultural context to form some type of meaningful impression (Johnson 2008: 4).

To sum up, there are two major strongly interwoven aspects to be taken into consideration whilst analysing advertisements from the perspective of visual and verbal modes in my thesis; namely the aspect of semiotics and the cultural aspect per se.

In their work, "Analysing cultures", Danesi and Perron (1999: 40) combine semiotics and cultural studies within one field of "cultural semiotics" that grew into a real field of study in the middle part of the twentieth century. They define cultural semiotics as

> …the science that applies sign theory to the investigation of signifying orders […]. It now includes, among other things, the study of bodily communication, aesthetics, rhetoric, visual communication, media, myths narratives, art forms, language, artifacts, gesture, eye contact, clothing, advertising, cuisine, animal communication, rituals – in a phrase, anything that has been invented by human beings to produce meaning (Danesi & Perron 1999: 40).

Whatever one's point of view, it is very clear that two main scientific approaches are to be applied for examining advertisements in this thesis. The Cultural Studies, formed by Raymond Williams, Stuart Hall and John Fiske among others, predisposes particular interest of advertising related to the representation and codes of meaning that are the essentials for culturally specific beliefs. The methodological tools of Roland Barthes' semiotics (1957), inspired by the semiotics of famous linguist Ferdinand de Saussure, helps to demystify advertising ideology and creativity. Many different works were also realised by advertising leaning on the theory of Saussure's semiotics. Among them are: cultural critic anthropologist, Claude Levi-Strauss (1958), Victoroff David (1972), Williamson Judith (1978), Spillner Bernd (1980), Dyer Gillian (1982), Perez Tornero J.M. (1982), Handl Heimo L. (ed. 1985), Leiss William et al. (1986), Henny Leonard (ed.1987), Umiker-Sebeok Jean (ed. 1987), Danesi Marcel (2008) and many other no less important followers of the semiotics.

Finally, it is the author's hope that this thesis will represent a useful contribution in the examination of print advertisements, especially made for female readers of women's glossy magazines. There is no one particular recipe for advertising to women; however, the most important factor to reach a woman is to share and understand her cultural and social experiences. As Stuart Hall would say, we should talk to her in a similar language that is appropriate to her needs, her way of thinking and emotional balance.

Concentrating on decoding media advertisements, it is important to remember that the media and its audience are an inseparable part of a complex social structure. People usually respond differently to various ads depending on their cultural experiences. Thus, the next chapter highlights the importance of Cultural Studies and its elements: ideology, myth and semiotics in the understanding of media and, in particular, its medium of print advertising.

2. Drawing on Cultural Studies

Media creators have always been interested in cultures while studying the prospective audience. The process of monitoring usually considers age, gender, race, the social and political situation of the country to which the audience belongs. Cultural knowledge plays an important role in creating the potential success of advertising by establishing trustworthiness in visual argumentation. When the media creator, while producing an advertisement for instance, shares the same cultural knowledge, "a consistency of visual interpretation can be more easily established. […] However, when a visual message is distributed across cultures, establishing consistency is more difficult" (Barnes 2009: 9). Likewise, "being persuaded by the visual appearance of an advertisement, consumers are also influenced by their cultural knowledge of a product" (ibid. 3). The point is that reliability of visual interpretation on the whole, is culture-dependent. And media is the most obvious reflection of our culture. The remarkable thing is that many people receive their information, entertainment, fashion and the notion of the world and themselves to express their individuality from television, magazines or movies. In relation to this, Kellner (2011: 7) adds,

> Media images help shape our view of the world and our deepest values: what we consider good or bad, positive or negative, moral or evil. Media stories provide the symbols, myths, and resources through which we constitute a common culture and through appropriation of which we insert ourselves into this culture. Media spectacles demonstrate who has power and who is powerless, who is allowed to exercise force and violence, and who is not. They dramatize and legitimate the power of the forces that be and show the powerless that they must stay in their places or be oppressed.

We were, figuratively, born into media and consumer society; therefore, it is in our own interest to learn how to understand, read and interpret messages and meanings critically. Kellner (ibid.) points out, "[l]earning how to read, criticise, and resist sociocultural manipulation can help one empower oneself in relation to dominant forms of media and culture". Barnes also agrees with Kellner and notices,

> Visual literacy is a requirement for the understanding of visual communication and its visual messages. Becoming visually literate

makes people more resistant to the manipulation, propaganda, and persuasion embedded in TV commercials, political campaigns, and magazine, newspaper, and World Wide Web imaginary. By learning about the visual devices and conventions utilized by the media industries to develop persuasive image-oriented messages, individuals can become aware of how meaning is created, and they are less likely to be persuaded by the message (Barnes 2009: 6).

Apparently, acquiring knowledge of critical media literacy is a central tool for people to understand how to resist a persuasive cultural milieu. In view of this, we might concede that Cultural Studies allow us to view one's culture critically. It helps us to understand and interpret that this specific aspect of culture that I am studying in this thesis, namely printing advertising and our relationship to it. As a theoretical field, Cultural Studies analyses the production and political economy of culture, cultural texts including their audience and their reactions. However, in view of its complexity, this approach alone does not allow us to focus on the aspect of media. Thus, as Kellner (2010: 10) notices, the combination of Cultural Studies and Media Studies, including elements of semiotic, psychoanalytic, ethnographic and critical textual methods, can avoid such limitation. Kellner (ibid.) proposes a multiperspective approach to fill the above-mentioned gap, namely the approach that "(a) discusses production and political economy, (b) engages in textual analysis, and (c) studies the reception and use of cultural context"[1]. Kellner comments further,

> [b]ecause it has been neglected in many modes of recent cultural studies, it is important to stress the importance of analysing cultural texts within their system of production and distribution, often referred to as the political economy of culture" (Kellner 2010: 10) [2].

At this point it is essential to draw attention to some eminent approaches in Media and Cultural Studies, especially to the work of Stuart Hall. Hall (1997), in his "*Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*" discusses the importance of meanings, language and

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[1] This model was proposed in Hall (1980) and Johnson (1986-1987) and conducted in the early work; though it was neglected in mid-1980s. Nevertheless, Douglas Kellner tries to recapture the spirit of the early Birmingham project.

[2] "The term *political economy* calls attention to the fact that the production and distribution of culture take place within a specific economic system, constituted by relations between the state and economy" (ibid.). We can see it on the example of Ukraine, described in the next chapter.

representation in a cultural construct. Any culture preserves various meanings on a certain topic and possesses many ways of interpreting it. Those cultural meanings are not just our mental imagination, they control and categorise social practices and influence our behaviour and, therefore, can have real practical impact (3). Meanings give us a sense of our own identity and understanding "with whom we 'belong' – so it is tied up with questions of how culture is used to mark out and maintain identity within and difference between groups" (Hall 1997: 3). No matter in which social communication we take part, meanings are always being produced or exchanged (ibid.).

Media is one of the biggest sources of modern meaning production. However, one of the most privileged mediums, through which meaning is produced and distributed, is language. Individuals who belong to the same culture must share similar ideas, images and models to be able to understand the world in more or less the same way. Additionally, in order to transfer these meanings to other people they must apply similar linguistic codes and, figuratively, speak the same language. The idea is that the other members must have similar knowledge to be able to understand "what 'you' say into what 'I' understand and vice versa", to read images in an approximately similar way, interpret body and facial language in more or less the same way (Hall 1997: 3). All those processes and the way to reach mutual understanding work through representation.

To sum up, members who share the same culture and the same sets of concepts and images are able to interpret and perceive the world in the same way. Conversely, the unique way in which concepts and meanings are created and structured, distinguishes them from other cultures. Hereof, our understanding or decoding particular symbols, signs or practices might already be pre-established because the meaning is naturalised. According to Hall (1997: 4), meaning is not just a casual object or a combination of sounds or words; it is people who attach meaning to such an extent that, sooner or later, it becomes natural and conventional. For instance, if we look at the advertised image of a man wearing a suit, a tie, a pair of glasses and holding an expensive leather case, we probably think he is a businessman. However, the biggest concern in the naturalisation process is

the creation of ideologies, stereotypes and prejudices. This will be demonstrated in the examples of stereotypical models of femininity, created within the Ukrainian cultural context in chapter five.

"The meaning is *constructed by the system of representation* […] and fixed by the code", emphasises Hall (1997: 21). Each single element we use to signify a meaning is a *symbol* (because it symbolises the meanings), or in a different way, functions as a *sign*. Signs stand for or characterise our ideas in such a way that we could be able to decode or interpret their meanings in a similar way. Signs are placed into languages, and it is thanks to languages that we are able to transfer our thoughts into words or images, and use them for communication or for expressing meanings. Although the term 'language' is being used in a rather broad and general way, we can also apply it for visual images like advertising, and for any other non-linguistic things like the language of fashion or the language of gestures and facial expressions. Consequently, language is a signifying practice that operates as a *representational system* through representations (ibid. 3). The relation between things, concepts and signs is central to the production of meaning in language. The process, which brings these three elements together, is what we call *representation* (ibid:19).

> Representation can only be properly analysed in relation to the actual concrete forms which meaning assumes, in the concrete practices of signifying, 'reading' and interpretation: and these require analysis of the actual signs, symbols, figures, images, narratives, words and sounds – the material forms – in which symbolic meaning is circulated (Hall 1997: 9).

An important fact is that meanings are never straightforward, but fluid and changing. They change and modify with the context, history, culture or situation. Accordingly, representation cannot be regarded as a one-way transmitter; it is rather *dialogic.* The idea of this 'dialogue' is that it collaborates shared cultural codes, which cannot remain fixed forever. The codes do not simply emerge preformed in our heads; rather it is important to be aware of the function of ideology and political economy in forming these codes. In other words, it is the ideology of a certain society or of a certain social group and their attitudes towards ideas that shape a

particular meaning. Hence, meanings are always negotiated to harmonise with the situation.

Judith Williamson, in her book *Decoding Advertisements* (1978 [2010]), explains that there are different stages to the formation of a meaning. One of them is "*transferring* the meaning of one sign to another"; that is, the active participation of the viewer or the reader of the advertisement is imperative (ibid: 43). Thus, in order for the audience to transfer the meaning or to decode the message correctly, advertisers have to borrow their resources from the social knowledge of the audience and transform these resources into messages, that is, to encode them (Hall 1980: 1972-79).

Fowels emphasises that the main mission of the advertisement is to convince customers, to transmit the encouraging associations of the "noncommodity material onto the commodity" (1996: 11). The idea is that advertisement encourages us to make that transfer of meaning onto the product, "to make the signifier a sign" (Jhally 1990: 131). The systems of meanings, from which we get the facilities to finish the transfer, are referred to, according to Williamson, as "*referent systems*" (1978 [2010]: 26). They represent the bulk of knowledge from which both the viewer and advertisers draw their resources.

In Figure 1, a tobacco ad for L&M cigarettes, located in the Ukrainian woman's magazine, *Natali*, demonstrates the transferring of the appeal symbols to the product. It seems that the advertiser was expecting that the portrayal of affection would encourage a reader to associate the scent of a girl with the aroma of L&M cigarettes. In other words, the reader would make a link to the product. The Ukrainian text in the ad says, "*Aroma Unites the World*". This advertisement, portraying two young people of different nationalities who, figuratively, are connected by the aroma of L&M, is a perfect example of a multicultural relationship that can be established through smoking the same sort of cigarettes. Moreover, to make things worse, the English message around the L&M logo: "*Enjoyed in 70 countries*", supports the internationality of the image and additionally, exposes the worldwide success of this particular brand of cigarettes.

Figure 1 "L&M"- cigarettes. Natali, October 2006. Ukrainian text: *Aroma Unites the World.* Warning: SMOKING CAN CAUSE CANCER (p. inner front-cover)

Consequently, the transferring of the L&M product is performed by means of associating two aromas, the cigarettes' smell and the girl's scent. Judith Williamson explains transferring the meaning onto the product:

> Things 'mean' to us, and we give this meaning to the product, on the basis of an irrational mental leap invited by the form of the advertisement. […] The advertisement provides a supreme arena […], a 'metastructure' where meaning is not just 'decoded' within one structure, but transferred to create another. Two systems of meaning are always involved: the 'referent system' and the product's system […] (Judith Williamson 1978 [2010]: 43).

In relation to this, Fowles (1996: 13) approaches advertising as a sort of paid communication that transfers "symbols onto commodities to increase the likelihood that the commodities will be found appealing and be purchased". For this reason, advertising must be consumed with caution. Importantly, advertising usually tends towards the anonymity of the product; that is to say, the advertiser generally does not want too much interference between the product and the consumer, it is supposed to be an unobstructed relationship (ibid: 16). Therefore, nothing else has to be named in the ad, except the product itself, as it is with the prominent logo of

L&M in the ad (Figure 1). It has to be, as the famous advertising leader David Ogilvy (1983: 18) declares, the "hero of the communication". Undisputedly, the influence of visual effect must be taken into consideration by the production of a successful advertisement for printed media. The influence of the so-called key image of the product that bears the core message of a particular brand shall be gradually implanted into the consumers' unconsciousness in order to evoke their memory pictures one day. However, one of the main criticisms of advertising is that it seeks to manipulate people insomuch that it makes us dependent on goods; that is to say, we can be happy or accomplish crucial goals in life only through constant consumption.

> Advertisements are now so numerous that they are very negligently perused, and it is therefore (…) necessary to gain attention by magnificence of promises and by eloquence sometimes sublime and sometimes pathetic. Promise, large promise, is the soul of an advertisement (Samuel Johnson 1758, in Williams 1980: 170).

The next main concern is that the images presented in advertisements are usually deformed or overstated, especially the representation of women as mythic and stereotypical. Hence, ads produce meanings that do not exist in reality, and there is no such reality that could restore the deceitfulness of the ads; thus, there are no "simple alternatives to stereotypes" (Dyer 1982: 114).

Hall (1997: 11) emphasises that we should think of meaning not "in terms of 'accuracy' and 'truth' but more in terms of exchange – a process of *translation*, which facilitates cultural communication while always recognising the persistence of difference and power between different 'speakers' within the same cultural circuit". Thus, the 'speakers', who are in a dominant position, have the power to apply ideological meanings onto those of the subordinated.

2.1. Ideology

In her book *Decoding Advertisements*, Judith Williamson (1978 [2010]: 41) emphasises the ideological practices of advertising in creating

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meanings. Her crucial point is that we do not receive meaning from advertisement, rather meaning "works *through* us, not at us" (ibid.). The process of meaning exchange is dependant on the readers' cultural knowledge and the dominant ideologies they experience within their society.

The notion of ideology is one of the fundamental concepts in cultural studies, fully developed within Marxist theory, and followed by a scope of such cultural analysts as R. Williams (1977), A. Gramsci (1971, 1986), L. Althusser (1970 [1999]), J.B.Thompson (1984) and T.Eagleton (1991) among others. Dominant ideologies operate in reproducing social relations of domination and obedience, thus attempting to understand ideas in the view of power. Generally defined, ideology evolves into a range of ideas and beliefs alleged by particular dominant groups (Kellner 2011: 9). For instance, ideologies of class support upper class and defame the working class. Ideologies of gender in advertising encourage sexist representations of women, which portray them as housewives or as sexy bodies, denying them their proper position as complete human beings.

Raymond Williams (1977: 3) emphasises the range of meanings that the term 'ideology' can hold from clearly recognised political ideologies to more subconscious "common-sensical meanings" or "taken-for-granted beliefs". He identifies two categories to Marxist ideology: 1."Ideology as the ideas of a particular social group". This means that ideas are not independent, but come from various unequal social classes and the social relations within which people lead their lives; and from the economic organisation of society that identifies those class relations (ibid: 3). 2."Ideology as a system of illusory beliefs", meaning the ideologies are of an illusive reality or a distorted representation of the truth; hence, the real interests are concealed in order to mask the real structure of society (ibid.).

The second category of ideology can be functional and beneficial while analysing contemporary media production. Williams (1980: 185), in his study of the origin of advertising in Great Britain, analyses the absurdity of the material objects that advertising sells, pointing out their insufficiencies. In order to corroborate their validity, advertising applies additional fantastical meanings to material objects, which Williams terms "magic"

(ibid.). The fact is, that most of the advertised goods often fail to satisfy consumers' needs and expectations; hence, the use of 'magic' is crucial to relate to those needs. For instance, advertisements in women's magazines promise that wearing this lipstick or using that shampoo will gain women more male attention or help them to get a better job. Even behind the simplest ad of 'Orbit' (see Figure 2) in the Ukrainian edition of *Cosmopolitan*, the Williams' 'magic' helps to promote the ideology of thinness.

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Figure 2 '**Orbit' - chewing gum. Ukr. Text: '***Chewing is beneficial. Chewing gum helps to overcome stresses. ***Cosmopolitan, September 2009, p.91**

We do not need to be a member of Ukrainian society in order to comprehend the ideology of this ad. It is enough to relate to our common social knowledge of the culture. In the ad, a piece of a chewing gum is placed on the scales. The scales are commonly used to symbolise weight regulation; hence, are suggestive of losing weight while chewing Orbit gum. It was mentioned in the previous chapter that one of the stages of creating meaning was *transferring* the meaning of one sign to another one (Williamson 1978 [2010]: 43). In the ad, the sign of chewing gum is transferring its meaning onto the sign of the scales; in doing so, it creates a new meaning, the ideology of thinness. This meaning is not stated explicitly in the ad; it is, rather, constructed in our fantasy in relation to our common social knowledge. The whole process of transferring meaning is what Williams calls 'magic'. In the end, however, according to Williams (1980),

advertising not only sells products but the ideas as well. What is more, if we do not speak Ukrainian, we can miss another hidden idea of the ad that is mentioned in the verbal image: '*Chewing is beneficial. Chewing gum helps to overcome stresses*'. Taking the advertisement literally, chewing 'Orbit' brand is not only beneficial for losing weight, but it also regulates our stress hormones.

Not surprisingly, this 'magic system' affects people's minds insomuch that consumers use products as a means of expression, a kind of communication tool, and ultimately start to be dependent upon the magic system (Williams 1980: 185). In terms of ideology, the imaginary needs and magical urges can be understood as "an illusory, distorted picture of the world" (McCracken 1993: 68). As Williams shows, magical urges, for example, conceal the real failure of commodities to satisfy many human needs (Williams 1980: 185). This vision of ideology would argue that a magazines' ad, for instance the L&M cigarettes in Figure 1 portrays a man passionately smelling a girl's face, which in fact disguises the harm tobacco can cause to a man's own health and the health of the girl.

In Althusser's ([1999]: 30) point of view, ideology represents individuals as subjects; he calls it 'interpellation'. Appellation: "Hey, you there!" is a process of ideological machineries calling individuals 'subjects' (ibid.). Interpellation creates subjects who identify their own existence in the dominant ideology and freely accept being in it. Althusser takes this as an indication that subjects, even before they are born, are already a part of ideology.

Advertisements, representing the verbal image 'you', address us as individuals included in a certain group. '*You're fabulous! – And Don't Forget it!*' or '*Look deeper, you'll discover more*' (Cosmopolitan March 2009, UK edition). These appellations, per se, engage in an exchange: between 'you' as an individual, and the invented subject addressed by the ad. You have to take the place of the person 'addressed to', the spectator the ad produces for itself. Williamson ([2010]) points out that every ad obligatorily imagines an exact spectator:

it projects into the space out in front of it an imaginary person composed in terms of relationship between the elements of ad. You move into this space as you look at the ad, and in doing so 'become' the spectator, you feel that the 'hey you' *really did'* apply to you in particular. […] Thus we are addressed as a certain kind of person who is *already* connected with a product: there is only one receiver of the ad, the subject 'you', already there in the very address. […] Being connected with the product as an individual […] we give it its meaning by our own individuality (Williamson [2010]: 50).

Thus, by 'appellation' we are intended to make an illusionary choice, that is, in fact, a forced one. As a result, we do not have the possibility 'not' to individualise the advertised product; while creating a meaning in the ad, "as active receivers, and its appellation of us, as subjects, are synonymous and simultaneous" (ibid: 55).

Advertisements as "means of representation and meaning", according to Dyer, "construct ideology within themselves through the interventions of external codes which are located in society" (1982: 129). That is to say, advertisements will apply concepts, images and myths that are already located within the certain society. Moreover, the ideology used by the ad will not simply mirror it; it will modify it, suitably producing new meanings (ibid.). In the ideology, which ads reproduce, individuals distinguish from others by virtue of products they consume. "Social status, membership of particular social groups, and our sense of special individuality, are all signified by the products which we choose to consume" (Bignell 2002: 36). Hence, the sorts of food we eat, the brands of clothes or perfume we wear, turn into "indexical signs" of our "social identity" (ibid.). We interpret and decode advertising by making sense of visual and verbal representation "within a meaningful cultural context" to create a certain kind of meaningful idea (Johnson 2008: 4). Thus, by means of verbal and visual images, advertising produces discourse codes that generate representations of the "social world"; however, they can also distort, readdress and speed up the abstract organisation of this world (ibid.). In other words, advertising holds codes that are powerful with specific cultural meaning and ideological subtext. For instance, advertising in the UK and US women's magazines, has for some time been a crucial force in loads of discourse codes that

imply thinness as the ideal body image of femininity. In spite of the growing negative critiques, the bulk of fashion ads, exercise programmes and diet ads keep this image alive. What is more, the messages in ads simply bombard women with products that prevent facial aging. Johnson (2008: 6) emphasises that our individualities "as members of groups and categories, as a society – is intimately tied to the image system communicated through advertising". But advertising does not operate alone in these ideological routes; it is, actually, essential because of its everyday reputation in cultural environments. "Ideology consists of the meanings" constructed by the "economic conditions of the society" where we live: "a real way of looking at the world around us, which seems to be necessary and common sense" (Bignell 2002: 37). However, while using this ideological way of observing the world, we support our present social organisation: "a consumer society" (ibid.). We, as individuals, have a need to be a part of, that is, to have a meaningful social place, connected and sometimes supported and satisfied by ideology. In this sense, ideology is positive and very important. But, if ideology meanings conceal and naturalise an unfair social system, or "a turning of reality into apparent unreality, almost unliveable while social dreams and myths seem so real", then it is practically always a threat that should be taken with caution (Williamson [2010]: 169). For instance, the critical account of the stereotypical representations of women as mythic identities in women's magazines' advertisements are, in fact, due to patriarchal ideology, and that this could be corrected if women were represented realistically. Feminists have argued that ads focused on female audience label women in terms of a commodity. As Dyer (1982) points out, most of the advertised products are sold "not as commodities but in terms of what they can do for relationships. […] Women are made to identify themselves with what they consume – 'You, Daz and your Hotpoint automatic'" (Dyer 1982: 117). There is a special gap, consciously created by the ideology of advertising, where women fit themselves into this gap as individual subjects. Thus, "[c]onscious choices, intentions and beliefs are seen as the effects of women's ideologically produced subject-position, rather than being freely chosen" (Bignell 2002: 60). However, ideologies are not always effective and the dominant ideology of a society is not fixed;

it is a historically dependent thing that is flowing and changing (ibid.). Two hundred years ago women were inferior to men and the ideal female's body did not look thin; it was natural to have curves. Today, these ideological views have been replaced; however, it does not mean they are more accurate. In fact, it would be difficult to accept that present ideologies need to be changed, "since the function of ideology is to make the existing system appear natural and acceptable to us all" (Bignell 2002: 25). Williamson ([2010]: v) emphasises, it is not enough to complain and "just saying something is wrong – even though it is […]. We need to understand how the system works: which is where theory and analysis play a crucial part".

Feminist researchers analysing gender in print media texts, can see through the authoritative ideological meaning of the text (van Zoonen 1994: 106). "They recognize the hegemonic thrust of media output and are able to resist its devastating effects", compared to ordinary women, who are still attracted by its allures and persuasions (ibid.). Therefore, the significance of including ideology into, for instance, ad analysis, is to raise the alertness of ordinary women to the extent that they finally become aware of the patriarchal nature of media production and reconsider their illusory preference for it (ibid.). Thus, in the course of this thesis, as a small contribution to such research, examples of gender ideological examinations will be presented as a part of the ads semiotic analysis.

2.2. Myth and semiotics

Another frequently applied tool for examining print advertising is semiotics – a method to analyse meaning by observing the sign – which can explain how ideology operates in advertising through its textual codes, and how to examine the underlying rules that help to decode the use of signs. Therefore, semiotic reading of advertising investigates how its ranges of buried meanings are constructed at a deeper level, through the interplay of its codes of icons, symbols, shadows and colours in the ad text, connotative and paradigmatic chaining and verbal images.

Roland Barthes was the first to introduce a semiotic approach to analyse advertising. In his book, *Mythologies* (1957), he suggests that all aspects of everyday culture from wine and milk to fashion and advertising could be understood as sign-systems. Barthes demonstrates how these obviously simple things are packed with ideological beliefs. They can be expressed by associations or by complete stories, marked as 'myth'. For Barthes, myth is a signifier of ideology; that is to say, myth serves the ideological practices and values of the dominant classes in society that protect the status quo – the 'bourgeoisie norm' (Storey 2009: 255). Ideology, in this sense, is the historical process created by specific cultures, and is presented as if it were changeless, eternal and, thus, natural. Likewise, media creates and reproduces shared hopes, desires, memories and fears, thus playing a similar role as myths in the early centuries. Although a myth, in the sense of traditional stories addressed to mythologies, is not relevant here. The myths performed in advertising are not the majestic myths of gods, heroes and the sort of beast-creatures that are "the creation of the world, human birth and death… saviours and seers, and cataclysmic physical events" (Levy 1981: 51). But rather they are "the ways of organizing perceptions of reality, of indirectly expressing paradoxical human concerns" (ibid.). Myths in advertising are related to places, products, the manner of how people think or concepts that are organised to send certain messages to the reader of the text. Barthes claims that advertising is effective because "it utilizes mythic to construct its messages" and demonstrates how images, colours and specific words build the terminology of persuasion in advertising (Beasley & Danesi 2002: 26).

Before we move to a concept of *myth*, it is essential to pay attention to Barthes' notions of *denotation* and *connotation* as important concepts in studying advertising. Barthes developed these concepts in *Elements of Semiology* (1967a) where he points out:

> The first system (denotation) becomes the plane of expression or signifier of the second system (connotation) […] the signifiers of connotation […] are made up of signs (signifiers and signified united) of the denoted system (Barthes 1967a: 91).

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Thus, Barthes approaches *denotation* and *connotation* as references to the first and second levels of meaning in a sign. Denotation relates to the "literal meaning of a sign, and connotation to meanings which lie under the surface of denotation, however, dependent on it" (Dyer 1982: 128). Connotative interpretations of signs are introduced to the reader outside the literal meaning of a sign, and are "activated by the means of conventions and codes" (ibid.). Importantly, the readers can only comprehend or figure out what these two systems mean if they have an understanding of certain cultural codes and "associative meanings without which the second system, connotation, is not possible" (ibid.). For Barthes (1967a: 91), the concept of *connotation* is of a great importance for it embraces the knowledge of a particular culture.

Bignell (2002: 17) points out that media texts, such as magazines' advertising for instance, very often link one signified idea with another, or a signifier with another, to be able to fix connotations to readers and objects and provide them with "mythic meanings". Bignell goes on to explain that in advertising, for example, the "linguistic, visual and other kinds of signs are used" not just to mean something but also "to trigger a range of connotations attached to the sign" (ibid.). Barthes calls this phenomenon, "the bringing together of signs and their connotations to shape a particular message, creating the myth" (ibid: 16).

In his analysis of the myth of the photograph of a black soldier saluting the French flag (*Cover of Paris Match*, see Figure 3), Barthes leans on the disparity between *denotation* (explicit or literal meanings of words and other phenomena) and *connotation* (cultural meanings that become attached to words and other forms of communication). He demonstrates how different levels of meaning are associated, namely, the relationship between the levels of denotation and connotation. Therefore, the *connotation* of the photograph of the young black soldier tends to represent, according to Barthes, the myth of Algerian conflict (by means of holding back change and decolonisation), in order to give French imperialism a positive image.

Here Barthes also shows the difference between language and myth, where myth supports the existing formation of power, which belongs to the bourgeois class. In the photograph, *Paris Match* cover (Figure 3), this class is referred as ideology. As we have seen, the role of the mythologist, thus, is "to expose, or often to remind us, of the artificial and constructed nature of such [image]" (Allen 2003: 38).

Therefore, Barthes' project in *Mythologies* is to use *semiology* (sometimes referred as *semiotics*) to demystify and depoliticise what appears to be natural. He draws upon the Swiss linguist, Ferdinand de Saussure's (1916 [1983]) statement that language consists of *signifiers* and *signifieds* and, thereby, extends semiotic chain to interpret the mythic sign. Barthes modifies Saussure's relation that linguistics was only one part of the philological science of sign. He argued that semiology relates to linguistics because signifieds cannot be present without language, even signs such as images or pictures cross through the transmittal of language (Barthes 1967a: 9-12). Hence, semiology, by recognising linguistics as a parent discipline, is used by various theorists in other fields, such as psychology, literature, anthropology, etc.

In Saussure's ordinary language, *the sign* "rose", for example, is composed of a signifier "r-o-s-e" (the written form of an acoustic image) and a signified (the related mental notion this signifier produces). These together construct a tri-dimensional pattern: the signifier, the signified and

the sign (Barthes 2009: 137). Likewise, Barthes' mythic language that includes advertising and other cultural disciplines, the complete sign of ordinary language transfers into the original signifier, a concept of *a second-order sign system* (Barthes 2009: 135-7). That is, the sign r-o-s-e has turned into a signifier of the other semiotic chains that now produce new signifieds such as love, success and passion. The concept of Barthes' *second-order sign system*, complemented by Raymond Williams' 'magic' of advertising discussed in chapter 2, builds a concept of myth. Both of the concepts take root in the context of historically determined language. However, "the second-order meanings may appear to be natural and eternal properties of the products, they are linked to a particular historical time" (McCracken 1993: 77). For instance, women, smoking 'Marlboro' cigarettes may signify coolness, sexuality and confidence at one time period, while at another it may only mean health issues or a bad taste because a new brand of lady's cigarettes is more in trend now. It shows that myths created by advertising change or retain intentionally in accordance with the market and economic situation.

Williamson ([2010]: 12), leaning on Barthes' semiotics, emphasises that advertisements, besides selling products, create structures of meaning; the ads create messages to make the goods mean something to us. Ads offer a structure that can transform the language of objects to another object, or to that of people, and vice versa (ibid: 12). This idea can be better explained in the example of an ad that promotes a Ukrainian chocolate - "Corona" (the crone) in Figure 4. This ad is evidence of Barthes' suggestion that the sign 'rose' on a second order or a *second-sign system*, carries a connotation of love and passion. Various signifiers in the ad support this statement; for instance, a heart, created out of mini-chocolate pieces, obviously represents love. Moreover, love is literally reflected in the mirror where the chocolate is placed. The signifiers of approaching male and female hands and the silky piece of a textile (bed-linen) undeniably connote the meaning of passion similar to what the sign rose signifies. However, this ad is not about a rose passion, it is just a practical explanation of Barthes *second order system*. In fact, the Ukrainian brand "Corona" promotes its famous chocolate.

Figure 4 'The Crone" – chocolate. '*Chocolate miniatures "Corona'. – Share your pleasure"*. Caravan, Nov. 2009, p.99

Figure 5 '*Beware of Counterfeit Perfume! Packaging should carry a hologram*. Woman's Magazine, Oct. 2008, p. 265

The smooth and silky texture of the bed-linen as a signifier can be associated with the soft and melting structure of another signifier, chocolate. Chocolate, on Barthes' second sign system, connotes a particular sweet product that is also known as an aphrodisiac that supports sexual strength and passionate love. The Ukrainian caption: "*Share your pleasure*", is ambiguous. At one level, the rational intention can mean: you should share the pleasure of the chocolate's exclusive taste with the one you love. Logically, a bar of a chocolate is a *signifier*, and its *signified* is that such a delicious chocolate is worth sharing with your loved one. However, there is another connection that can decode the hidden narrative meaning if we go deeper into the rhetoric of the advertisement. Three strong signifiers of love, pleasure and passion (a rose, a mirror and chocolate) are located between two approaching hands, suggestive of the following: if you buy and eat this particular brand of chocolate you will be empowered by romantic feelings and strong sexual desire; thus you should share these intimate pleasures with your partner. In this sense much of the ad context works at our unconscious level, where we make a link between

chocolate and its taste. So in this sense we have to make the connection, an exchange, which is only represented by the visual message, though the linguistic message makes a hint to the underlying level. Even outside the ad it is well known that chocolate is a very exclusive and delicious dessert; therefore, this meaning is integrated into the ad, conveyed by it and creates a new meaning. Chocolate was always considered a symbol of pleasure; thus, we could state that they are interchangeable and their value is fixed to the product. Thus, a myth and a new meaning of pleasure are created by means of transferring, associating and exchanging of meanings from the first sign system to the second one.

In his 'mythic semiotics', Barthes approaches a tri-dimensional pattern by applying different terms to its elements. For him the signifier is "form", the signified is "concept" and the sign-myth is "signification" (Barthes 2009: 140). Remarkably, the signifier, according to Barthes, is empty; what is full is the third element, the sign, because it carries the final mythic meaning (136). For myth, actually, is important a sum of the whole mythological system or "referent system" (Williamson [2010]: 20)[3]. Barthes calls it "a global sign, the final term of a first semiological chain […], which will become the first term of the greater system which it builds and of which it is only a part" (Barthes [2009]: 137). This process can be better demonstrated in a very simple but remarkable example of a culturally specific Ukrainian ad (see Figure 5).

In this ad a woman's hand is holding a mini garbage container with a spray button on its top. The Ukrainian text states: *'Beware of Counterfeit Perfume! Packaging should carry a hologram'*; suggesting a warning related to the purchase of imitation perfume. Although, the sign – garbage container - already carries its original (external) meaning, which for the ad, according to Barthes, is empty. Yet, I argue that this meaning plays an important role in creating the ad's myth. For this ad, the garbage container carries a positive function of warning; hence, a reader should be aware of the possible danger of purchasing something non-original, a fake, in

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[3] For Williamson the *referent* is the concrete thing in the real world, to which a concept or a word refers. However, the whole external 'reality', including the collection of signs in an advertisement is itself "a mythological system", or "referent system".

Ukraine. The signifier - garbage container - has a rational meaning of collecting trash; thus, its function seems to appear purely from its place in the transferring of the signified in the ad. Hence, it has a second role as a signifier, however, on a new and different level, the level of *the second-sign system*. The form of the container resembles a bottle of perfume and the spray button on the top suggests the one that a perfume bottle has. Thus, the whole garbage container looks like a perfume bottle. Additionally, in case we need one more mental image of the suggested description, a woman's finger is about to press the spray button, imitating the use of perfume. The rational meaning of the container, which is blended with an imagined bottle, conveys the message of a poor quality of the counterfeit perfume. Thus, what seems to be a part of the main signifier for transmitting a message about 'spraying trash' turns out to be a message in itself. Precisely, this message is a final sign; that is what Barthes means by 'a global sign', the end and the beginning of the greater system – the myth (Barthes [2009]: 137). However, and again, I argue, the initial (first level) and external meaning of the signifier – garbage container, carries a crucial role for the final mythical message. The significance of the garbage container is, in fact, the opposite or the paradigmatic contrast to something original and unique as, for instance, a real *Coco Chanel* perfume. Thus, it is a significant process of exchange between a rational meaning of the signifier and the final sign of encoded myth.

The paired paradigmatic contrast is another important tool of analysing advertisements in frames of synchronic approach; that is where signs stand out against each other and create mythic connotation, a strong component of the unconscious mind. For this thesis, the specificity of colours and their oppositional patterns that create such mythic powerful connotations in ads is of a particular interest. If we dig deeper into the ads' connotative symbolism, it will be discovered that the contrast of two colours, for instance, white and black, invokes a connotative struggle between *purity* and something more *disgraceful*.

It is important to emphasise that any advertisement is a text. And a text is a complex sign that consists of different signifiers to coordinate the thematic surface structure to merge their underlying signifiers (Beasley &

Danesi 2002: 39). Signifiers such as colours, tones of colours, the direction of the models' bodies or their physical appearance, the arrangement of the verbal signifiers, the background view, etc., are all components that can be analysed by particular semiotic notions, such as *oppositions, code, combination, symbolicity, iconicity and indexicality* (ibid.).

A *symbol* is a sign that does not "resemble or cause the signified" but is related to it only by convention or 'contract'" (Dyer 1982: 124). A rose and red colour symbolise love and passion; however, it is not because they look similar to these; but because people of various cultures for many years have associated a rose and a red colour, in certain situations, with love and passion. Beasley and Danesi (2002: 40) emphasise that the symbolism leads to a decoding of the "underlying signification systems generated by advertisements". The colours are frequently used in ads' encoded meanings; thus, knowing the culture-specific connotations of the colours, it is possible to decode the myth of a certain ad.

While analysing print advertising examples of semiotic construction of myth in women's magazines, the duty of the mythologist becomes more complicated, since the obvious and natural quality of myth's ideological messages have to be taken into consideration. Synchronic analysis is beneficial in areas of ideology, and myth, for Barthes, is an entirely ideological process. For Williamson ([2010]: 100), synchronic structures are ideologies, and this necessarily "implicates the very tools that fit so well by taking the job of describing and deconstructing them". Thus, when we bring the external shared knowledge into the ad analysis, it does not mean we provide this knowledge with a proper status; rather, it is to point out that the ad is supported by this knowledge (ibid). When we are fully familiar with the external meaning of the signifier, we can better produce 'transferring' of meaning from one signifier to the other one. That is, according to Williamson ([2010]: 100), we are able to make an "exchange because we [already] know". Let us consider the next example of a mythic ideological coding in a Ukrainian ad that warns against counterfeit perfumes in Figure 6.

Figure 6 '*Marilyn?" - Beware of Counterfeit Perfume"- "Packaging should carry a hologram'*
(Ukr. Text). In *Pink* (Ukr. Edition), March 2008, p.122

First let us identify the denotative meaning of the picture or its surface level, and then decide how it connects to mythic meanings. There are iconic signs in this ad, denoting a woman, a bottle of unknown perfume and a sign of a hologram. There are also linguistic signs presented in Ukrainian language. It reads: "*Marilyn?"* (in the middle of the picture) – "*Beware of Counterfeit Perfume*" (in capital letters) – "*Packaging should carry a hologram*" (in small font). The entire image consists of two main colours, white and black. The colours are powerful codes; if they are used in opposition, they create "a system of contrasting meanings" (Beasley & Danesi 2002: 39). In the ad, the contrast of white and black signals onward oppositions of *good vs. bad*, or *truth vs. false*. This distinction relation is known as *paradigmatic structure*[4] (ibid.).

At first glimpse of the woman we notice her ironic smile. It is a warning, since women in ads commonly have a friendly or a sexy look. Her facial expression is itself a sign that belongs to well-known cultural codes. According to her hairstyle, the woman could be the famous legend-actress, Marilyn Monroe. Moreover, the linguistic sign: "*Marilyn?"* anchors our

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[4] Claude Levi-Strauss (1958), the French anthropologist developed a paradigmatic method of analyzing myths that involves oppositions in them.

confusion. Barthes (1967a) adds the concept of anchorage to the notion of code in advertising. Anchorage implies that

> [a]d texts are constructed with signifiers that imply an endless chain of signifieds from which the viewer can choose some and ignore others: i.e. the text's signifieds are anchored to specific signification systems by specific interpreters (Beasley & Danesi 2002: 67).

Taking into consideration that visual images in advertisements are polysemous (have many meanings), they are usually anchored by the readers to specific socially meaningful text.

In the ad, anchored by the linguistic sign: "*Marilyn?*" we might assume that the answer can be: *yes or no*; it depends on our external knowledge about the real appearance of Marilyn Monroe. However, as much as it looks strange to us, we can see very well what it signifies, since the disbelief of the question itself and the mistrustful picture direct us to the preferred reading of the ad. No, the woman does not look like Marilyn Monroe as she has Asian features. Yet another forewarning opposition is the use of the Asian type of woman vs. the white Western type usually preferred by glossy magazines. The text in the middle of the picture states: "*Beware of Counterfeit Perfume*". The link between an iconically represented perfume bottle and the linguistic sign assist in acknowledging that this ad is for a perfume product. Drawing on the presence of the perfume bottle without any name or logo, we can assume that the perfume shown in the picture has no brand. But what does the linguistic signifier '*counterfeit*' signify? We move to the next underlying level. '*Counterfeit*' means that something is not real but false or fake. The next question is: what is then a fake in the ad? Moving back to the picture, we might assume that the signifier 'counterfeit' relates to the woman, who is actually not the real Marilyn Monroe but somebody else because she looks Asian. Thus, another opposition, the woman is not original, she is a fake, falsified Marilyn Monroe. This decoding of the picture seems to be supported by the next linguistic line: "*Packaging should carry a hologram*". What does the signifier 'hologram' signify? Obviously it does not refer to an imitation of Marilyn Monroe, since the hologram is not placed next to the portrayal of

the imaginary Marilyn but to the perfume bottle and on the top of the perfume package.

The image of the hologram is contoured in a red frame. The red colour, with commonly known connotations of passion, sexuality, sensuality, etc., can also symbolise warning, prevention, threat and danger. For the case of this ad, the red frame around the hologram has a connotation of warning; it signifies the danger of buying a counterfeit perfume.

Also the colour of the perfume package is an important sign. As compared to the colour of yellow water in the bottle, what might symbolise happiness, liveliness and sunshine, the blue colour of the perfume package evokes calmness, depression, mystery, mysticism, etc. Hence, it is a possible indication of a myth in the ad, which can only be deciphered by referring to another source. We should refer to the shared knowledge of Western and Eastern cultures to be able to understand the Ukrainian connotation of the ad; hence, to move to the second level of a sign system. In other words, as it was mentioned in the beginning of the analysis, we should use our external knowledge (specific and historic) as a tool to make an exchange to reveal the myth of the ad. As Williamson puts it,

> At all levels [of] denotation and connotation, signification intersects with knowledge – which produces the movement between levels. But in dealing with *connotation*, as opposed to the *work* of denotation, we have to look at the 'forms' of knowledge that advertisements employ – that they turn into signifiers (Williamson [2010]: 100).

Therefore, in order to move to the next level, we need to first answer the following question: why is Marilyn Monroe actually mentioned in this ad, or what is she doing here? Probably because Marilyn Monroe was a famous and rich American actress who loved expensive things, especially perfumes, she could possibly represent the perfume in this ad. Or perhaps the fact that she was a top celebrity, she could easily be taken for a model to advertise any sort of advertisements. Ads in women's magazines, in order to better convince the consumer to buy the product, often place celebrities' photos next to the advertised product.

Coming back to the picture, we stumble on the Asian face again. No, we are sure it is not Marilyn Monroe's face. Hence, now we need to make a

connection between different signifiers: the woman, the bottle of perfume and the perfume package. They all connote a cheat, the woman is not Marilyn Monroe and the perfume is a fake, it does not have any name. The mythic meaning of the ad, that the perfume is a counterfeit, is construed from a few connotations of the iconic signs, denoting the false face of Marilyn Monroe: the ironic smile, the Asian features and the oppositional, black and white colours of her dress, are all pointing at the false personality. Additionally, connotations of the linguistic signs 'counterfeit' and 'hologram' anchor our strong disbelief. All of these connotative elements, when they are put into a paradigmatic relation with each other, at the same time they create combinatory and associative patterns, which are known as "*syntagmatic* relations" (Beasley & Danesi 2002: 39). Even though they are implicit in the ad, syntagmatic relations show the controversy of the meanings in the ad and, in doing so help us to see a different side of the story or myth.

Finally, according to Fiske and Hartley (1978), there is a third level of signification in the ad, the level of dominant ideology. Concentrating on the woman's Asian facial features, a well-known fact becomes apparent to us. We all know, or at least have heard, that people of Asian nationality, especially the Chinese, are very good at producing counterfeit goods. In spite of the permanent ban from the side of Ukrainian authorities on the import of counterfeit products, Chinese goods continue to flood Ukrainian markets. Consequently, this ideological information takes a fixed place within the myth, suggesting that everything that comes from China or looks Asian must be a counterfeit. Therefore, the last concern of why Marilyn Monroe has an Asian look and what it has to do with the ad, actually has a mysterious ideological connotation that is embedded in the deepest invisible signification level that creates a new connotation meaning, and which helps to decode the myth of the ad. It is significant that we do not leave the area of signifier, an area of all involved elements. In Barthes' signification (the myth), signified can turn into the signifier of another signified at another level and continually be formed as signifiers (Barthes [2009]: 143). Thus, in the ad, the signified "Marilyn Monroe" becomes a

signifier for counterfeit – manipulative deception on the level of connotation, and so on. Barthes ([2009]: 143) explains it as follows:

> [a] signified can have several signifiers: this is indeed the case in linguistics and psycho-analysis. It is also the case in the mythical concept: it has at its disposal an unlimited mass of signifiers […].

In his *Elements of Semiology* (1967a), Barthes, by discussing 'staggered systems', points out that he is dealing with "two systems of significations which are imbricated but are out of joint with each other " (89). Figure 7 shows a simplified form of two systems of significations and the exchange of meanings between two levels.
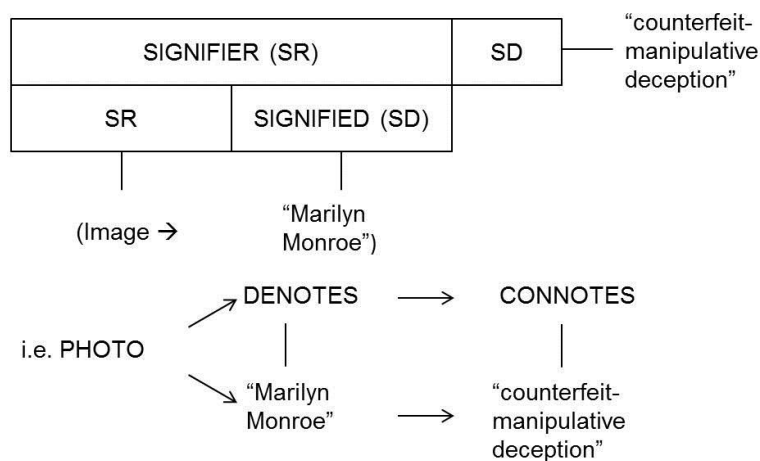
Figure 7. **The process of myth creation. The transferring of denotation into connotation.**

The photograph in the ad signified "Marilyn Monroe" for this ad, but she in turn becomes a signifier, as mentioned above, for the counterfeit – manipulative deception. The split of these two systems is balanced by the viewer's knowledge, without which connotation does not function. In other words, the constant movement of meaning back and forth between the image and the text, the paradigmatic relations of the signs, link and exchange of meanings between signifier and signified, would not give us a complete understanding of the ad if the assumed reader is not familiar with the particular concepts of certain cultural knowledge and concepts.

It is significantly that "the point of departure is constituted by the arrival of a meaning", what keeps the "spatialization" of the levels is only a metaphor (Barthes [2009]: 146). In the ad it is an imaginary Marilyn

Monroe, who is a metaphor. The crucial point is, while decoding the myth we collect all the elements (e.g. "Marilyn Monroe" and everything attached) of ideological systems, change them into signifiers of initial systems by arranging them by means of another structure, and all this happens only in our thoughts. "This only exists in so far as it exists inside our heads" (Williamson [2010]: 102).

As we have seen in this analysis, an advertisement, in order to reach the viewer, constructs ideology within itself, by means of external cultural codes, which are signifieds of ideological systems and thoughts that already exist. The connotational process entirely depends on the shared "knowledge of the forms of ideology that advertisements employ" (Dyer 1982: 130). For instance, a foreign reader can decode the Ukrainian models of femininity, which are represented in print advertising only if the reader is familiar with Ukrainian ideology; in other words, when they understand its codes. However, not every native reader is able to identify the myth of advertising and understand the meaning of the ad immediately. It is because meaning in advertising is naturalised and "goes without saying" (Bignell 2002: 26).

Barthes' theory (1957) of signification (the myth) has expanded into a certain art of advertising, making it perhaps the most attractive target for semiotic analysis. Although this all might seem rather abstract, semiotic analysis can be seen as an implementation of the interpretive interest a regular reader of women's magazines, for instance, undertakes all the time.

Each country has its own different range of women's magazines. Regardless of the culture they all tend to cover the same topics, since they represent similar global ideology of print media for women. The character and the individuality of each glossy issue enables female readers to feel a close connection with the particular magazine they prefer to read. It is comparable to feeling close to your friend, and indeed the language of the magazines sometimes gives us a feeling of talking to a friend. What is more, women's magazines establish a female reader's identity and reproduce the ideals with which she identifies. These types of magazines usually confirm the reader's world of perception and the way she sees herself as a certain kind of individual. The next chapter will explore how

women's magazines function and what kind of impact they can have on their female readers.

3. Women's Magazines

3.1. Women's magazines, ways of reading

> "A magazine is simply a device to induce people to read advertising" (James Collins 1907).[5]

We may be on the road after work, relaxing at home, at the doctor's waiting room or simply wishing to escape from our surroundings. We grab that glossy, colourful, often irresistibly nice-smelling magazine to share a world of perfection promised by numerous advertisements placed on its pages.

It has become a recognised fact that thousands of women's magazines have always served the reading interests of generations of women all over the world. Suitably enough, the publishers address a large female audience by relating to their needs and consumerism, making colossal profit in selling the advertised goods inside of the magazines, and the magazines themselves.

As any other form of mass media communication, women's magazines are commodities containing a large amount of advertisements. The spending costs of advertisers are usually about half the cost of producing one copy of a magazine. Women's magazines usually advertise products such as cosmetics, clothes, food, domestic appliances and cars. When we buy a magazine we also purchase the goods and services, which are advertised within a certain magazine. Robert Goldman (1995: 88) emphasises that in buying a magazine, a woman becomes an intrinsically important part,

> [w]hen women buy a magazine, they become part of a "package" the magazine has sold to companies that advertise in its pages. Women readers, as potential consumers, are marketed to media buyers just as other goods are sold. Using images of femininity and feminism combined with specific descriptions of purchasing power, household income, age and lifestyle characteristics, women's magazines make their pitch to potential advertisers in the pages of trade journals. A magazine's appeal to readers is putatively based on editorial content; the appeal to advertisers is based on the audience whose attention (and buying power) it can command.

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[5]Room 101 – a random collection of advertising quotes, online: James Collins, http://adland.tv/content/room-101-random-collection-advertising-quotes 05.04.11

However, readers usually comment on the pleasure they receive while reading magazines. They like the fact that they are able to escape the real world and relax in an imaginary world of beautiful and perfectly dressed, successful women. Even though some of the readers admit they can never afford to buy those high-fashion dresses, they like the idea of fantasising and imagining themselves a part of that world. McCracken (1993: 7) points out that these readers, unfortunately, do not see the utopian vision of having pleasure even by participating in this world as passive observers. She adds,

> [t]he numerous levels of women's attraction to this form of mass culture frequently disguise the fact that attractive experiences are ideologically weighted and not simply innocent arenas of pleasure. (McCracken 1993: 8)

In other words, despite the massive attractiveness that magazines represent to women, the real truth behind the ideology of pleasure within their pages is often masked. It is because the visual and verbal signifiers in women's magazines offer numerous levels of connotations; "along with the pleasure come messages that encourage insecurities, heighten gender stereotypes, and urge reifying definitions of the self through consumer goods" (McCracken 1993: 9). Nevertheless, the creators of such narratives in magazines do not realise that they construct these negative contexts. In their defence, journalists argue that their aspiration is to support and help women in any field they feel the need for; for instance in cooking, possible health or financial issues or just psychological support (ibid.).

Women's magazines not only attract the attention of a female audience but also are of interest to many scholars and researchers who try to decipher the principles of the magazines' construction applying different viewpoints. One of the prominent approaches, and the one of important for this thesis, is the semiotic approach. While reading and trying to decode the whole text like a magazine, we need to keep in mind in which way our reading influences the meanings of the signs that are used in a particular issue (Bignell 2002: 55). Bignell formulates the important questions to pay attention to while reading the women's magazine:

> We will need to ask how far polysemy, the multiple meanings of signs, is limited by the context and interrelationships of signs with

each other. We will need to ask how the mythic meanings in magazines relate to ideologies, and whether these meanings are being naturalised in support of an ideology (Bignell 2002: 55).

Ellen McCracken (1993: 13) adds, "[t]ogether, the visual images and headlines on a magazine cover offer a complex semiotic system, communicating primary and secondary meanings through language, photographs, images, colour, and placement". Each magazine stands for idyllic mirror images in which women see the reflection of the imaginary future of a better self. Reading or just looking through magazines, a woman automatically participates in the creation of idyllic images. Combining dreams and everyday reality she achieves an effect of temporary sensational pleasure and satisfaction (ibid.).

As Bignell (2002: 55) indicates, femininity is a "mythic identity constructed by the coded connotations of signs in society". Hence, there is a special role constructed by the codes of women's magazines where real women position themselves into the role as "subjects" believing themselves to be a part of the perfect, thus mythic world, created by women's magazines.

3.2. Reading semiotically into a 'mythic world' of femininity

All magazines are divided into various categories and different target audiences: magazines for teenagers, for women between twenty and thirty-five, health magazines, fashion magazines, etc. However, it does not mean that only the purchaser will read the magazine. There will be other readers who do not belong to the certain group and, in fact, the higher a magazine's cover price, the higher numbers of additional readers share the magazine. Bignell (2002: 57) argues, while semiotic analysis can tell us that there is an 'ideal' reader whose interests are considered and depicted by a magazine there will be enough of non-'ideal' readers of the magazine's "signs and meanings".

The biggest space that covers women's magazines are advertisements. Thus the costs that advertisers provide usually supply about half the costs that magazines spend for their production. Despite

their popularity, magazines occupy a low rank of entertainment source. The fact is, we do not read a magazine from the beginning to the end, but sort of browse them. It is because their design allows us to read them randomly, today, next week or next month. Often it depends on our mood.

Interestingly, we decode the meanings partially by the way we read magazines. Thus, the reading pattern of browsing magazines, which is the first phase, according to Bignell, is called "syntagmatic (linear)" (2002: 63). It is when we look through the magazine and our concentration is basically focused on visual signs and linguistic signs, which are printed in large letters. That is why the colour and the size of the ads will probably first catch our attention at this stage of reading. The second pattern is a detailed reading of a particular editorial article independently of the arrangement of the magazine's pages. At this stage "linguistic syntagms" become our focal point (ibid.). The third pattern of reading is quite "linear, evenly focused on linguistic and visual signs, and depends to some extent on a memory of the first two readings" (ibid.). All of the three patterns involve us in the process of decoding, the way in which we read and what we read. Depending on our reading (slowly, fast, attentively, etc.), which is entirely in our hands, the effect of decoding will vary.

When we buy a woman's magazine we cannot expect that the representation of feminine identity, portrayed inside the magazine, truly reflects the identities and the lives of real women. Representations, as it was mentioned in chapter 2, are composed of meaningful signs as they refer to socially recognised codes, which make it possible for readers to identify with and to decode them. In reference to this, Bignell (2002: 59) advises not to criticise magazines for depicting false representations of women's lives but, rather, to interpret, using semiotic analysis, the way the signs and codes of magazines produce mythic femininity. She suggests starting the debate by considering insomuch the signs and codes of magazines are relevant for the construction of mythic femininity (ibid.). One such approach would be to establish the difference between femininity and masculinity. This dissimilarity is, as a rule, already encoded in how women's magazines are distributed on the market, that is their placement in a particular area of newsagent shops or magazine stands. It is important

because of being differently signified, women's magazines hold codes, in which potential readers can identify them. The idea of these coding systems is to allow "magazines to function as signifiers of a defined mythic signified femininity" (Bignell 2002: 60).

Unlike a traditional conception of magazines linked to women's domestic chores, there is a new potential that offers women to take some time off their duties and enjoy quiet time on their own (McLoughlin 2000: xi). Reading women's magazines could be an escape from our daily routine of the same surroundings. Reading always depends on a certain social context and the place which women occupy in the society, for instance, as a mother, a partner or as an employee. We read on a bus, while sitting at the doctor's office or by taking a break at work. Although women's magazines represent all the above-mentioned situations, they also create the meanings of these situations for those who read them. Women's magazines create a special women's world. Janice Winship, a British feminist, argues that this world is a dream, a myth, a concept developed by means of signs (1987: 7). It is "'the woman's world', which […] is created precisely because it does not exist outside" the pages of magazines (ibid.).

Living at the margin of the men's world, constantly struggling with their feminine self-esteem, women really need support, which they find in an imaginary world of magazines. As Judith Williamson ([2010]: 13) points out, living in the world of certain ideologies "[w]e feel a need to belong, to have a social 'place'; it can be hard to find. Instead we may be given an imaginary one […]. The mass media provide this to some extent and can (potentially) fulfil a positive function in our lives". That is precisely what women's magazines offer to women. Bignell (2002: 60) notices, "[t]he function of women's magazines is to provide readers with a sense of community, comfort, and pride in this mythic feminine identity". From this perspective, "the semiotic code of women's magazines works to construct a mythic world of the feminine, which compensates for the lack of a satisfying social identity for real women" (ibid.). In other words, as Williamson ([2010]: 41) writes about advertisements, we can also apply it to magazines. The magazines speak to us, we simultaneously produce that speech or an identity "(it means to us), and are created by it as its creators (it assumes

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that it means to us)". Hence, we are identified as active receivers by the magazines. Apparently, magazines reproduce the real gender relations of culture into a mythic femininity that give real women a desirable identity. However, for Winship (1987) and other researchers, this phenomenon carries a negative connotation. "It naturalises an ideological view" of what, actually woman represent; leaning on this, "it naturalises the consumer culture which magazines stimulate through advertising and editorial material" (Bignell 2002: 60). Therefore, women are regarded as consumers of goods by means of codes and signs of women's magazines, and this is supported by the fact that magazines themselves are commodities. Moreover, a woman's idea of being feminine is, in fact, a mythic identity artificially constructed by the magazines or "by the coded connotations of signs in society"; that is to say, by ideologies (ibid.). Bignell argues that, in fact, "[f]emininity is not a natural property of women, but a cultural construct" (2002: 60). There is a promotional deception created by the codes of women's magazines, women take that shape, sometimes for real, and apply it to their identity. In doing so, they objectify themselves and become the "subject to the ideologies encoded in women's magazines" (ibid.). We shall see in one of the following chapters, on the examples of Ukrainian stereotypical gender models of femininity, the artificial way of creating and promoting such models by the Ukrainian media. However, ideology is not always successful and efficient. Even though they seem 'natural', it is possible, for particular matters, to criticise it and the social context of which it is a part. Bignell (2002: 60) emphasises, "[i]deology is a site of struggle, where opposition and critique always threaten the edifice of naturalisation and conformity".

McCracken (1993: 3) also points out that women's magazines construct a coordinated and fixed myth about femininity, which is overlapped with their own ideology. However, sometimes it might contradict the ideal connotations of femininity presented in women's magazines:

> Readers are not force-fed a constellation of negative images that
> naturalize male dominance; rather, women's magazines exert a
> cultural leadership to shape consensus in which highly pleasurable
> codes work to naturalize social relations of power. This ostensibly

common agreement about what constitutes the feminine is only achieved through a discursive struggle in which words, photos, and sometimes olfactory signs wage a semiotic battle against the everyday world which, by its mere presence, often fights back as an existential corrective to the magazine's ideal images (McCracken 1993: 3).

On the other hand, as McCracken notices, every segment of the magazine, which starts with its front cover, including narratives and extends to numerous ads, provides women with a sense of pleasure (ibid.). Apparently, the production of entertainment and pleasure for women is the main concern of the publishers of women's magazines.

3.3. Pleasure of women's magazines

When we buy a magazine we expect it will give us a feeling of satisfaction and happiness. Winship (1987: 53) compares this occasional purchase to a favourite box of chocolate that no one ever thinks of giving to you. Figuratively, when we buy a magazine we buy a piece of temporary pleasure. However, unlike a box of chocolate that usually does not last long, magazines give us a possibility of regaining the pleasure of reading and discovering something new and exciting again and again. Bignell points out,

> [t]o buy a magazine is itself an anticipation of pleasure and can be both regular and controlled, unlike the lack of control over pleasure in many aspects of people's lives. A magazine is a sign which connects pleasure with the mythic meanings of masculinity or femininity (Bignell 2002: 65).

Thus, by buying and reading women's magazines a female reader unconsciously buys the ideology of mythic that femininity magazines ascribe to her. Moreover, they offer "imaginative story lines in which women achieve the successes and satisfactions everyday life cannot be depended on to deliver" (Winship 1987:53). As Winship notices, all the women's pleasures are encoded both, in the pages of magazines and in their physical manifestation (1987: 52). We can see this by the quality of the paper, colour, design and visuals that signify luxury, pleasure and relaxation. Most of the magazines' glossy pages, excluding stories and

advises, are dedicated to fashion and advertising. Significantly, all these colourful visual images usually overshadow the written text and have a direct full impact on their readers (ibid: 55). The smell of the perfumes tests, integrated into the pages of the magazine, signifies femininity and the pleasure of self-adoration. All these pleasures are different from the work we perform every day, like cooking or cleaning. "Women themselves experience that merging – of work and leisure, of work and pleasure; and the tensions of that are embodied in women's magazines" (Winship 1987: 55). Additionally, advertising in women's magazines is similar to the consumption of propaganda; for instance, domestic appliances promise to reduce the amount of our daily labour pegged to the utilisation of the product we might buy. No matter how boring and blank the product is, advertising makes it a piece of art for real pleasure.

Comparing to newspapers, the magazines' format looks more sophisticated, and a multiple number of ads do not have a negative effect on their reader rather, they evoke an interest to decode them. Bignell (2002: 65) emphasises that women's magazines are able to mask the products placed on their pages inasmuch to make the process of consuming enjoyable:

> The physical nature of women's magazines has connotations which help to encode their purchase and their reading as enjoyable private pleasures offered specifically to a woman reader.

However, Winship (1987: 55) argues, we do not necessarily immediately think of the product while looking at artfully created advertising. We "frequently luxuriate in the advertisement" without any intention of buying the presented goods. Hence, we resist the magazines' ideology; without buying the product, we can still enjoy the good life through the image. That is a kind of return for the "experience you do not and cannot have" (ibid. 56). Beautiful, artistic and unusual advertisements bring us into the state of a dream. No matter what a woman's position in society is, either she is married, single or engaged, she can read her own dream story in a visual image. Fowles (1996: 17) emphasises that only if the reader feels the message to be artistic, "where symbols artfully reach through cognition to

the layers of feelings and do so in an ultimately pleasurable way, is that individual likely to be attached significantly by the content".

Figure 8 "Wins –wine". Natali-March'2005, p.157. Ukrainian text: *"Wine cooler. Wins… The Dreams come true".* Warning (in big letters): Excessive consumption of alcohol is harmful to your health.
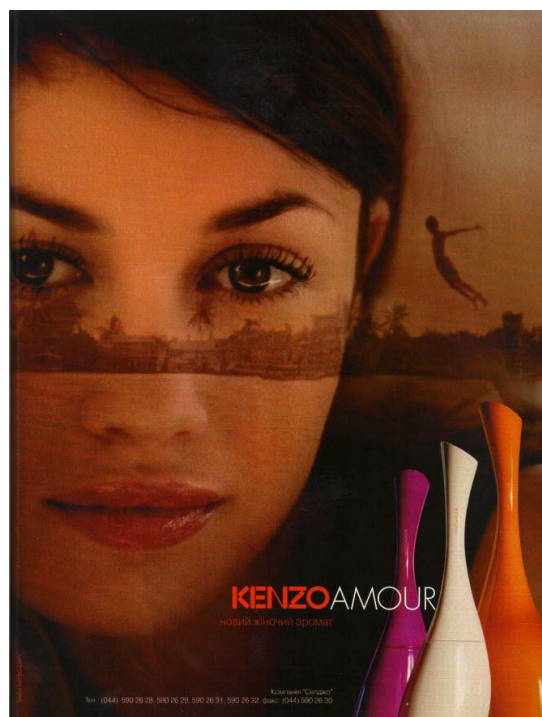
Figure 9 "Kenzo Amour" - New Fragrance for Women. Elle, December 2006, p.21- Ukrainian edition.

Figure 8 is a very explicit image of a woman's daydream. It reminds us of a series of frames in a movie, some fragments of fantasies the pictured woman might associate with a fresh sip of Wins. Leiss et al. (1986: 210) call such ads "life style format" advertisements. These ads usually give a picture of a variety of "leisure activities (entertaining, going out, holidaying, relaxing). Implicit in each of these activities, however, is the placing of the product within a consumption style by its link to an activity" (ibid.). "*The dreams come true*", - says the Ukrainian text in Figure 8. Shopping, luxury, sex and passionate love, - isn't that what women want? Or it is just what they dream about, at least for a while. The illusory image is framed; there is no pretence that it is a reality. The framing device transfers the happening into the one of dreams, perhaps into a fleeting holiday romance with a hot, rich and sexy man you have always dreamed of but knew he did not exist.

Kenzo Amour (Figure 9) is a peaceful image of a mythic girl immersed in a trance of memories. It is also a dream, however, compared to the "Wins" ad's straightforward suggestion that this dream is somehow blurry and can be read through the girls floating transparent face. She is not here, at least not her mind, she is somewhere at the beach (seen in the background) observing the jumping boy. The smell of Kenzo perfume (we can smell it, too, as a sample is attached), perhaps reminds her of those unforgettable moments she spent on that island. The general mood of the image is very dreamy and tranquil. Both advertisements confirm Winship's (1987) and McCracken's (1993) suggestions that the images of women in ads are usually considered to be mythic, stereotyped and idealised. When a woman reads a magazine she "participates in the construction of the idealised images; she performs a kind of pleasurable work by combining fantasy with elements of her everyday reality" (McCracken 1993: 13).

4. Representations of Western Femininity in Print Adverts

The stereotypical representations of women in the media and the effects of such images on the female audience have always been at the centre of feminist critique in Western culture where the feminist movement accuses the media of portraying 'distorted' images of women.

Irigaray ([2000]), following psychoanalytical theories, considers Western philosophy as "guaranteeing masculine order and its claims to self-origination and unified agency" (234). Therefore, Western philosophy is often said to be 'phallocentric', in other words patriarchal, with men considered 'naturally' to occupy the public sphere, while women are domestic and private. Thus, Irigaray regards the feminine as "constitutive exclusion" of the phallocentric discourse; she explains that "[the 'otherness'] of the feminine" is in the female excluded body, "the unthinkable and the unrepresentable " (ibid: 233-234).

This thesis takes into account Smith's (1988) approach to femininity and its representation as a reaction of how it is shown in the media. She means,

> to address femininity is to address a textual discourse vested in women's magazines and television, advertisements, the appearance of cosmetic counters, fashion displays, and to the lesser extent, books… Discourse also involves the talk women do in relation to such texts, the work of producing oneself to realize the textual images, the skills involved in going shopping, making and choosing clothes, making decisions about colours, styles, make-up (Smith 1988: 40).

The quotation suggests a connection between body images in the media and women's attitudes towards them.

Many critics in Western patriarchal culture argue that advertising and the articles that prevail in women's magazines help to fortify the fact that women are like passive, dependent and submissive bodies to be looked at. Moreover, the women who are represented in the media tend to be young and, as a rule, pretty, yet "defined in relation to their husband, father, son, boss or another man" (van Zoonen 1994: 17). These features look similar to popular and high culture, since in fine art women's bodies have been

used in analogous ways, and it implies that in Western society "to be looked at is the fate of women, while the act of looking is reserved to men" (ibid: 87). John Berger's (1972: 47) famous words on this statement have been frequently cited:

> Men act and women appear. Men look at women. Women watch themselves being looked at. This determines not only most relations between men and women but also the relation of women themselves. The surveyor of woman in herself is male: the surveyed female. Thus she turns herself into an object – and most particularly an object of vision: a sight.

The above quote suggests that in contemporary Western femininity, women seem to have more representational and self-presentational matter than men. And "representation bears a close relationship to *stereotyping*" (Johnson 2008: 75). Similar to ideology, the stereotype functions by being "plausible, and by masking its own value-system" (Macdonald 1995: 13). One of the stereotypical tendencies in most of the advertisements is presenting women as being busy with unimportant things and their place is in the home. The adverts in Figures 10 - 11 are examples of such statements. The advert for 'Johnson' body care products (Figure 11), portrays a woman relaxing in bed and enjoying her 'stress less' moments, as the text suggests.

Figure 10 '**Accurist**'- **a watch. In Cosmopolitan, July 2006, p. 204.**

Figure 11 Johnson-body lotion. In Glamour, February 2008, p.19.
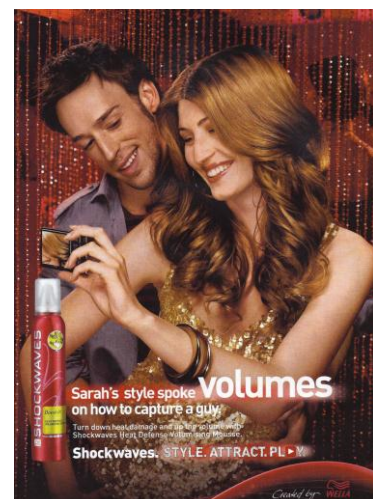
Figure 12 '**Shockwaves**' – **styling mouth. In Cosmopolitan, Sep. 2007, p.48**

Evidently the ad's idea is that by using the Johnson's product women can get not only baby soft skin, but also, it will boost women's moods and reduce tension.

As McCracken (1993: 4) points out, in order to endorse a product as a remedy to supposed female weaknesses, advertising often promotes feelings of anxiety and insecurity encoded with "subtexts or secondary meanings".

The ad for the watch 'Accurist' (Figure 10) absorbs a semiotic domain of mystery. It displays a naked woman, half-sitting, half-lying on the chair; she is wrapped in a smooth, shinning ribbon, suggestive of an extension of an advertised watch on the woman's wrist. For the advert ideology, a woman is an empty *signifier* but her attractive, sensual body is *signified* of a piece of art similar to that expensive watch. *'Me time'* – states the visual image, a note of explicit sexuality. The first-person line, combined with the seductive position of the woman, connotes sexual pleasure. The signification (the myth) here seems to be that just as the design of this exclusive watch needs to be accurate (as the product name itself), with nothing suggesting less than perfection, so does the woman's body. Comparable to a female model in European nude paintings, the woman in this ad is exploited as an object. Additionally, as Berger mentions, in his *Ways of Seeing* (1972), contemporary advertising often reproduces not only bodily and facial expressions but also the poses of models in Western art. In fact the whole image in Figure 10 reminds us of an act of posing in front of an invisible painter. The following quote supports this suggestion:

> In the art-form of the European nude the painters and spectator-owners were usually men and the persons treated as objects, usually women. This unequal relationship so deeply embedded in our culture that it still structures the consciousness of many women. They do to themselves what men do to them. They survey, like men, their own femininity (Berger 1972: 63).

Figure 12, confirms Berger's above statement; a woman is looking at herself from the male perspective, namely, by means of a mirror. Berger suggests that even if women do the looking, they do it through male eyes (1972: 47). A mirror as *signifier* connotes an ambiguous, traditional meaning of love and vanity, which is controversial to this ad's ideology. A

man, in Figure 12, is observing the reflection of the woman's image of beauty in the mirror; however, the image can vanish at any moment, or at least as soon as the woman takes her makeup off, or, say, she gets caught in the rain and, thereby, destroys her perfect hair style that is artificially created by the advertised product.

Western contemporary discourses of femininity are not faultless ideological networks but rather contain disagreements and ambiguities within them. Following Roland Barthes' theory that myth "'transforms history into Nature'", Myra Macdonald, in her *Representing Women* (1995), explores the production and reproduction of 'myths of femininity' in media. She argues that "[t]he diversity of real women, potentially challenging to male authority, is transformed into manageable myths of 'femininity' or the 'feminine'" (1995: 2).

In his, *The Masque of Femininity,* Tseëlon (1995), while examining how heterosexual women perform in every day life, investigates five paradoxes, which provide culturally dominant beliefs and expectations about the women's representation: *the modesty paradox* – women as a construction of seductiveness; *the duplicity paradox* – women as a construction of artifice but marginalised for lacking essence and identity; *the visibility paradox* – being culturally invisible women are constructed as a spectacle; *the beauty paradox* – women as a construction of ugliness while signifying beauty; *the death paradox* – women as a construction of death and protection against it at the same time. For each of the paradoxes, women construct a kind of protection 'masque'. Considering the beauty paradox, for women, the way their bodies look is much more important than for men. It seems like the ideal state of the body is a never-ending quest to reach for, and can be possessed by only a few, and only for the short-term (Longhurst et al. 1999: 219). Therefore, women work hard to prevent the threat of ugliness by means of makeup, cosmetics, exhausting fitness training, dieting, injections and plastic surgeries.

In her earlier study, Judith Williamson (1978 [2010]) exposes how effortlessly media images integrate discourses that are critical of advertising, such as semiotics, ethics and feminism. In her later work, Williamson (1986) conducts special research about femininity in

advertisements, especially the way that it is adjusted with constructs of the home, the exotic, leisure and 'colony'. Somewhat abstractedly, she argues that this adjustment represents the 'Other' that serves both to legitimate and to cover up the exploitative nature of capitalism. The invasive male-female opposition, that is kind of 'natural', ministers the ideological function of shading other dissimilarities such as class or the distribution of labour.

Many feminist scholars indicate that the destructive effects of 'to-be-looked-at-ness' might have a negative impact on ordinary women. For instance, Wendy Chapkis (1988) tells how cultural messages about beauty and slenderness influenced her own and other women's sense of being normal and, in particular, of being 'truly feminine'. Janice Winship (1987) puts an emphasis on the pleasure of being a woman and the guises of femininity in women's magazines from which women desire to free themselves.

In fact, the concept of 'femininity' is subject to fundamentally different interpretations in the field of cultural studies. Femininity as a term itself is rather controversial and has been of interest for many feminist critics. However, the scope of various definitions usually depends on the perception and approach; thus, it is not possible to give an exact formulation of femininity as the idea is not "only an effect of patriarchy" (Holland 2004: 10).

The condition of being feminine in Western culture is usually described by women's performance, since the traditional perception of femininity, according to feminism, is just an act of gender presentation that is enacted by the social expectations of a certain society (Lockford 2004: 3-6). Some feminists, for instance, would argue that wearing makeup, sexy clothes or altering a woman's body size support the persistence of women's social and cultural oppression "by perpetuating the idea that the women's value is to be measured through how much they accord to social standards for sexiness and beauty" (Lockford 2004: 13). Feminism has a variety of divisions and approaches but, broadly speaking, it struggles to analyse and alter the power ideology of patriarchal societies, societies where men take a dominant position over femininity and dictate their values and ideas.

Femininity as a representational act might have originated with Simone de Beauvoir in *The Second Sex* (1949 [1983]), who named the concept as "one is not born, but rather becomes, a woman". De Beauvoir points out, "[p]recisely because the concept of femininity is artificially shaped by custom and fashion, it is imposed upon each woman from without" (ibid: 692).

Jackie Stacey, in her *Star Gazing* (1994), examines the memoirs of female fans of Hollywood stars in 1940s and 1950s Britain; she starts from the thought of the "impossibility of femininity" within a culture, which specifies it as "an unattainable visual image of desirability" (1994: 65-6). This corresponds to the extensive number of magazine advertisements with mirror images that offer the female reader a picture, which is presented exactly as the reader's self. Therefore, Stacey (1994) argues that the "work of femininity" entirely depends on consumption (66). Likewise, Thornham, in *Women, Feminism and Media* (2007) notices, "women are both subjects and objects of exchange, their sense of identity, bound up with a sense of 'woman as image', forever unattainable, always invoking a sense of lack" (2007: 43). Also Lockford (2004: 6), in *Performing Femininity*, emphasises, "[i]nsofar as cultural norms for femininity govern women's bodies, they are performative". Hence, all adequate forms of femininity - gesture, posture, gilding, the way women move, physical appearance, etc. - are dictated by cultural norms that construct "women's gender performances that are a cultural stereotype for feminine qualities [and] is easily recognizable" (ibid.). In fact, contemporary femininity, in Tseëlon's (1995) term, is a 'masque' in which women perform their individual relation to this concept. Hoagland (1982: 87) argues that as soon as a woman "steps outside the limits of the feminine stereotype she is a subject to derision, attack, and denial. [She] fails to consider the context of [this perception] – a society based on the rule of [patriarchy]". The stereotype of femininity evokes a ground for the ideology of special protection for women; via strengthening heterosexuality (ibid.). Since men feel and see themselves as constant protectors, they must create and preserve an atmosphere of danger for women. That is why they put them in the status of helpless victims, and thereby, targets to be attacked

(Hoagland 1982: 87). But when women are out of men's control, this safety turns into violence or "predation (pornography, rape, "domestic violence [wifebeating]…[etc.]" (ibid.). Thus, Hoagland (1982: 91) emphasises that femininity characterises "any group men in power wish to justify dominating"; hence, "the model for oppression in Anglo-European thinking is the male concept of femininity". Oppression, femininity as a form of a complement to male gender, and the campaign of women's vote, - that is what the 'First-Wave' of feminism movement in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was foremost fighting against. Feminism has a variety of divisions and approaches, but, broadly speaking, it struggles to analyse and alter the power ideology of patriarchal societies, societies where men take a dominant position over femininity and dictate their values and ideas. Thus, continuing to fight against a woman's position as an overshadowed object by another consciousness, or the 'other', in de Beauvoir's conception (1949 [1983]), the 'Second-Wave' of feminism drew attention, this time, to women's private domains, such as reproduction, work, language use, appearance, etc.; basically, "the aim was on the entirety of women's condition" (Chaudhuri 2006: 4). Wolf emphasises, we should not underestimate the influence of feminism, for feminism "gave us laws against job discrimination based on gender; immediately case law evolved in Britain and the United States that institutionalized job discrimination based on women's appearances" (1991: 11). Betty Friedan, an American journalist, became famous for her *The Feminine Mystique* (1963 [2001]), where she broke the iron grip on the women's print media advertising for household products, which were promoting the kind of 'feminine mystique'. In Friedan's view, education and professional work were the answers to escape the role of housewife for many women (Chaudhuri 2006: 17). Friedan's manipulative model of the media, with the slogan 'the personal is political', set a new agenda that included sexuality, fashion and personal style (Macdonald 1995: 86). Although in the 1970s, "feminist and consumerist ideologies and discourses" had a clash against each other, they occasionally learned each other's tricks. As a result,

the diet and skin care industries became the new cultural censors of women's intellectual space, and because of their pressure, the gaunt, youthful model supplanted the happy housewife as the arbiter of successful womanhood (Wolf 1990: 11).

However, the ads, promoting household products, did not vanish entirely from the pages of print magazines. Going through the sheer size of British women's magazines, I found that the advertisers almost completely removed the images of happy housewives from the household ads. By 'almost completely', I mean that the only image where a woman is still present within a household ad was found in UK's 2008 edition of *SHE* (see Figure 14). Compared to the old images of happy housewives in such ads, a woman in this advertisement looks pretty much exhausted, lost and not very happy. However, I argue, this image is perhaps, the only one that realistically reflects the representation of a woman as she really is. The remaining adverts for household products, found in British women's magazines, are presented either with extensive verbal images, or with children's toys and images of cartoon/comic characters next to the advertised products (see Figures 13 and 15).

Figure 13 "Persil-liquid". Cosmopolitan, August 2011, p. 148

Figure 14 "Easy Clean" – household utilities. SHE, March 2008, p.102

Figure 15 "Persil-powder". Mr. Tickl is inside. Cosmo, November 2007, p. 269

Actually, such new techniques were planned strategically, in order to target mothers with kids, again (as after the First-wave), trying to play on maternal

anxieties and fears about hygiene. The myth of such advertisements is easily created by means of *intertextuality*[6]. The connotation of a rabbit relaxing in the foam in the washing machine (Figure 13), or a round creature with long hands, a children's book character named Mr. Tickle (Figure 15), would hardly be interpreted by an ordinary adult, who does not have kids and does not read children's literature. In other words, the decoding of the myth of such adverts is consciously transferred onto women via their children's knowledge and desires to collect those funny creatures, which are strategically hidden inside of the household products of particular brands. Thereby, advertisers hoped to survive the extremely competitive market of numerous household products.

Although women broke the power of the old structure, the era of new anxieties, such as eating disorders, ageing and cosmetic surgery, became the fastest-growing medical and beauty spheres. Absurdly, for a couple of decades, women had to fight against household germs; and at present, against their own bodies. Naomi Wolf, in her bestselling book *The Beauty Myth* (1990: 10), points out, "[a]s women released themselves from the feminine mystique of domesticity, the beauty myth took over its lost ground, expanding as it waned to carry on its work of social control". She discusses how the cultural industry, filled with beauty and thinness images, produces a generation of women suffering from bulimia by prescribing to the idea of - 'a pleasure to look at'. Wolf warns that we, in our contemporary society, experience a kind of "violent backlash against feminism"; it exploits the images of women's beauty as a "political weapon" against women's progression: "the beauty myth" (Wolf 1990: 10). Paradoxically, for many years men have used the "patriarchal myth of the 'eternal feminine' [by means of religion, biology and other 'scientific' discourses], to justify women's oppression" (Chaudhuri 2006: 17). In the contemporary world, they have changed to another myth, the beauty myth (ibid.). However, this myth is not about women but about politics, economy and dominant ideology against women. Wolf (1991: 14) argues, "[t]he myth flourishes when material constraints on women are dangerously loosened". For

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[6] *Intertextuality* is a parallel presence of other texts in the ad. It connects the ad to the meaning chains in a culture (Beasley & Danesi 2002: 110).

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instance, as soon as the sexual revolution unlocked the truth about female sexuality, "beauty pornography" invaded the markets and "commodified "beauty" directly and explicitly to sexuality" (ibid: 11). The reproductive rights took power over Western women's own bodies by creating eating disorders and mass neurosis over the ideal female weight (ibid.). As Wolf points out, in spite of the fact that women in the West now have more power, more money and a number of legal acknowledgments than ever before, "there is a secret "underlife" that poison[s]" their freedom" (1991: 10). Grey hair, too much hair, too little hair, dry skin, greasy skin, pale skin, chapped lips, dark under-eye circles, puffed eyes, too thin or too short eyelashes, deep wrinkles, too dark teeth, too small or too big breasts, too thin lips, ugly nose, etc., are the worst enemies women ever had. Going through a bulk of British women's magazines, from 2006 through 2011, such as *Cosmopolitan, Vogue, Glamour, Company* and *She,* I have stumbled upon an excessive number of beauty and health advertisements, which seem to be the reason for anxieties among many women. Following Foucault, Susan Bordo (1992: 14) notes, "women, as study after study shows, are spending more time on the management and discipline of their bodies than we have in a long, long time".
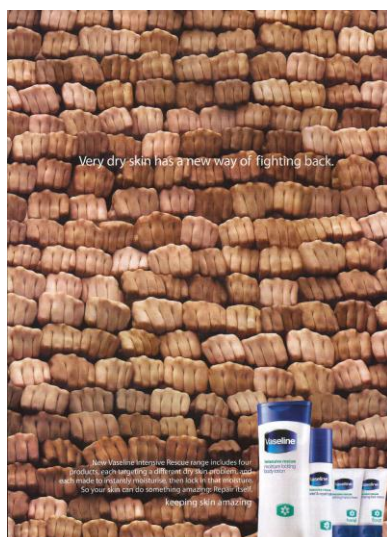
Figure 16 "Vaseline"-skin care. In Cosmopolitan, January 2008, p. 194

Figure 17 'E45"- skin care. In Cosmopolitan, January 2008, p. 130

Figure 18 'St. Ives' – lotion and body wash. In Glamour, February 2008, p. 96

Therefore, It does not come as a surprise that in Western democratic countries female beauty takes a major cultural place. The female body has become the biggest anxiety of the contemporary woman. Literally, they have to fight with their bodies every single day. And this fight is constantly supported by the images of advertising (see Figures 16-18).

The famous UK brand for skin care, *Vaseline*, factually wages a constant battle against the over-dried body. The following linguistic statements in one of *Cosmopolitan's* covered adverts are: '*Goodbye to dry skin. Don't let dry, flaky skin ruin your day. Help your skin fight back with Vaseline'*. What is more, *Vaseline* has its own technical expert, who emphasises, "*Healthy skin can lose up to half a pint of water every day – but you can double that if your skin is dry. It's essential to moisturise regularly"* (Cosmopolitan, November 2007, p. 274). In addition, the visualisation of a real fight of a *Vaseline* campaign, anchored by the slogan: '*Very dry skin has a new way of fighting back'* (Figure 16), and supported by the multi-army of humans' fists, generates a mass panic in women's heads by creating an immediate desire to buy certain products to save their skin from wilting and drying off.

Also, 'UK's No1' campaign for dry skin, '*E45'* (as stated in the ad, Figure 17), expects the reader to notice its dramatically impressive difference in the ad; how your body can look before and after using the super- moisturising E45 lotion.

In contemporary advertising for health and beauty products, the representation of femininity is often bound by the emphasis for the healthy and natural. Hence, the body care advertisement – '*St. Ives'* in 'Glamour' 2008 (Figure 18), in order to reproduce the ideology of 'healthiness' and 'naturalness', places its model directly into nature. The ad, similar to Althusser's ideology of subjectivity (discussed in chapter 2), poses an appellative question to its female readers: '*Are you happy with your birthday suit?'* A woman's skin as a signifier, *nourished* by the 'St. Ives' products, has a connotation of a precious gift a woman can give herself for her birthday. On the second level of the sign-system (see chapter on 'myth and semiotics), woman's skin is transferred into a signified of clothing, a

sort of a suit (as in the text), thus, pointing at the body as an object, as a piece of clothing we can put on and take off.

All three adverts are constructed by means of strong oppositional paradigms to encode the myths of the campaigns. In the ad for *Vaseline* (Figure 16), the human fists, used iconically and comparable to hammers, are of white and dark skin colours; they connote a strong, united power, ready to fight the drying skin cells. In the ad, E 45 (Figure 17) selling the professional skin therapy, the oppositional contrast of a sandy-dry body to the powerful visual image of a watery-moisturised body, evokes anxious feelings of one day having such terrible skin. The *'St. Ives* advertisement (Figure 18) plays on the opposition of black and white, giving the reader a dramatic effect of the difference between an 'evil' – dry unhealthy body as a black colour signifier - and by representing happiness of having a naturally healthy and moisturised body, a sort of second skin - 'a suit', as a white colour signifier.

These three ads also contribute to a more general ideological discourse in which the body's traditional centrality to feminine identity is divided into different codes of appearance; according to Macdonald (1995: 193-4): "ideal bodily shape and size; appropriate forms of make-up and cosmetic care of skin and hair; and the adornment of the body through clothes and accessories". Macdonald (1995: 194) argues that, in fact, "[i]t is not the body, but the codifying of the body into structures of appearance, that culturally shapes and moulds what it means to be 'feminine'" (ibid.).

Wolf (1991: 16) emphasises that middle-class Western women became materially stronger, however, they can be weakened psychologically by drawing on "more technological sophistication" and a strong continuity in the messages addressed to them. Therefore, the large amount of highly professional ads that are easily accessible to women, successfully sell the advertised products. Macdonald notices,

> Advertisers[…] happily made use of concepts that had acquired new status thanks to feminists and other liberties movements: '[f]reedom', 'independency' and 'pleasure' … were reduced to matters of lifestyle and consumption. Women could now 'do their own thing', without worrying about male reactions, even though men often continued to hover anxiously in the background (Macdonald 1995: 92).

Threatened by women's freedom, male-dominated organizations try to create guilt out of women's own liberation, "latent fears that [women] might be going too far" (Wolf 1991: 16). For instance, Western economies are consciously subjected to the permanent underpayment of women (ibid). "An ideology that makes women feel "worth less" was urgently needed to counteract the way feminism had begun to make [them] feel worth more." (Wolf 1991: 18). The problem of work discrimination has become vital, not because of the fear that women "will not be good enough, but that they will be, as they have been, twice as good" (ibid: 22). To compete with their male counterparts and to gain success in the professional sphere, women were imposed upon to look more beautiful. Unaware of this tactic's implication, a new 'super woman' now had to include ""serious "beauty" labour to her *professional* agenda […]. Women took on all at once the roles of professional housewife, professional careerist, and professional beauty" (Wolf 1991: 27). Moreover, as Macdonald (1995: 91) points out, to cope with all that psychological and physical weight and to remain glamorous and businesslike, women started to spend money on various supportive gears, from microwave ovens to body lotions, mascaras and silk lingerie. Macdonald (1995: 91) proceeds pointing out,

> [t]his new version of consumerism, claiming feminist credentials, undoubtedly strengthened many women's perception that feminism was an essentially middle-class movement. Advertisers' slogans which picked up surface aspects of feminist discourse muddied the waters of feminist campaigning.

The quote above suggests that the patriarchal system has simply turned feminism into a caricature in order to introduce the new ideology of modern neurosis - the beauty myth. In reality, the powerful tool of imposing beauty had the idea of distracting women from their jobs and weakening their professional skills. Moreover, as Wolf (1991: 66) points out,

> *[t]he beauty myth, in its modern form, arose to take the place of the Feminine Mystique, to save magazines and advertisers from the economic fallout of the women's revolution*.

For this reason, the ideology of advertising had to be altered in accordance with women's new urgent 'needs' for beauty and health products.

The liberating changes in many women's lifestyles and their self-perception as a "new superwoman" (Macdonald 1995: 91), or what Winship (1987: 45) calls "New Woman", brought about the modern ideology of the New Woman liberation. The strategy behind this ideology is: while looking at beauty, health or fashion adverts, women identify their 'liberated femininity' through consumption. One influential way to stimulate the consumption of extremely busy working women is to keep them ugly, "the self-hating, ever-failing, hungry, and sexually insecure" (Wolf 1991: 66). Therefore, the strategies of many beauty and health advertisements suggest that with the support of the advertised products that bring self-improvement to female bodies, women also gain a sense of self-esteem. Just a couple of verbal examples from women's magazines support this statement: <u>Cosmopolitan, November 2007</u> – *'Perfection in a single brush stroke! New – perfect touch' (Yves Saint Laurent – makeup); 'Keep things smooth. Stay in control' (Andrew Collinge – hair care);* <u>Glamour, February 2008</u>: *'AVEENO is clinically proven to improve skin's health in one day'* (skin care); *'Why not wake up in great skin' (Clinique); 'The UK No1 for dry skin' (E45); 'Your little line issues, resolved' (Dior-creams);* <u>She, March 2009</u>: *'Skincare. In a tablet' (Imedeen-pills): 'Healthy-looking body and Pantene Pro-V (hair care)'; 'To help visibly improve the appearance of ageing, try the Olay Regenerist Precision Solutions range'; 'How to minimise redness with make-up' (Bobbi Brown);* <u>Company, March 2009</u>: *'Save your scalp from winter (Head&Shoulders-shampoo); 'Target stubborn areas' (Garnier-body care);* <u>Cosmopolitan, August 2011</u> – *'Forget dull - be daring. A nourished feel you can trust' (Garnier-Nutrisse-hair colour); 'Wanted: Gorgeous glowing skin' (Clarins-skin care); 'Dull hair? No problem' (Sunsilk-hair care); 'Be beautiful! Be brilliant! New Lipfinity colour & gloss' (Max Factor-makeup).* The exaggerated problems with women's physical representations are the secret strategies in both advertising and glossy magazines that introduce women to troubles they never knew they had before. McCracken (1993: 57) points out that, in fact, "the problems are often artificially stimulated or magnified" to play on women's self-confidence and to make them feel bad about the way they look. In reality, the images of beautiful, thin and healthy women offered in advertisements provoke the

opposite reaction of insecurities for the female reader, that is, the fears of being too fat or being ugly. As McCracken (1993: 136) notices, this oppositional strategy that relates beauty ideals to feelings of insufficiency, facilitates the continued consumerism; women always return for more health and beauty goods. However, women's personal experiences encourage their belief in the advertised myth, since, usually, beautiful women get all the male attention, respect and power in the social and public spheres. Therefore, in order to approach the ideal of beauty similar to the advertised one, women put their everyday masques, such as make-up, sophisticated hairstyles, artificial nails or eyelashes to get the necessary confidence and authority in a culture where women, in general, are invisible.

Another strategy in women's magazine ads that promises the New Woman success, power and self-esteem, is the representation of sexual freedom. Liesbet van Zoonen (1994: 87), in her book *Feminist Media Studies*, accentuates the fact that women in women's magazine adverts are often represented in pornographic, soft-core elements. She argues that the central element of Western patriarchal culture is "the display of woman as spectacle to be looked at, subjected to the gaze of the (male) audience" (ibid.). However, for contemporary women femininity is often associated with sexuality, since the visual images in beauty ads frequently combine female sexuality with the advertised product.

As Williamson ([2010]: 31) points out, in order to sell the product, which actually has no meaning, the significance of it must be expressed by an object or by a person who is already familiar to us or has a certain meaning to us. The ad (Figure 19) for *'Lipcote'*, transparent lipstick sealer, sets up the correspondence between the *Lipcote* and a woman through the central signifier of a woman's seductively opened mouth. Importantly, we see only the close-up of the woman's face; her eyes are closed and a special accent is at the woman's bright-red lips. She is a sign, moulded by the object (by her mouth) that men desire, and displayed to be looked at by men. The bottle and the lips are connected by the red colour that connotes sexuality and passion. An important visual image: *'Lick it. Suck it. Bite it.'* is a strong signifier that supports the ideology of the sexuality of this ad, and the

crucial element in selling the product. Supposedly, using this product, women will visualise themselves as sexy and seductive as the woman presented in the ad.

Figure 19 'Lipcote'- lipstick sealer. In Cosmopolitan, January 2008, p.8
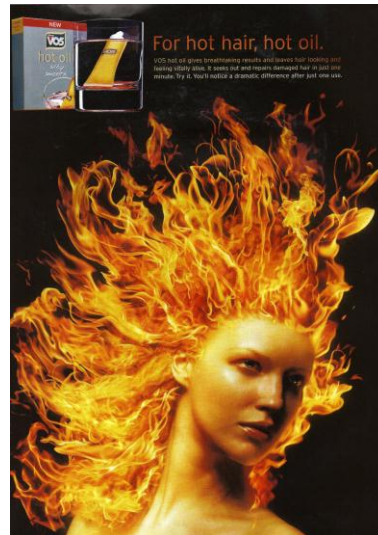
Figure 20 'VO5' – oil for hair. In Cosmopolitan, July 2006, p. 223
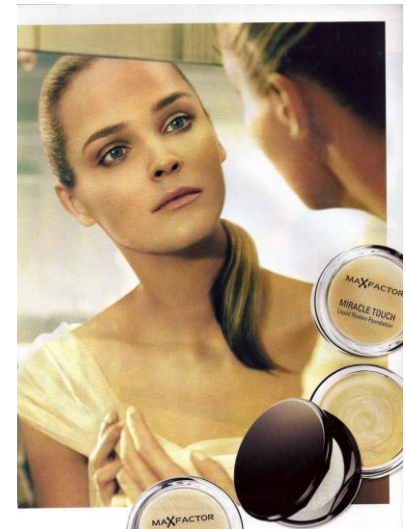
Figure 21 'MaxFactor' – liquid foundation. Cosmopolitan, January 2008, p.43

The overwhelming number of hair product advertisements in the British women's magazines draws the analyser's attention to the point of women's mysterious appearance. In chapter three, 'Women's Magazines', the representation of mythic femininity in print magazines and in their ads was already discussed. Marjorie Ferguson (1983: 56), in her *Women's Magazines and the Cult of Femininity*, points out that one of "the side to the 'mysterious female' stereotype is the echo that it provides of primitive fears of the female as unknowably threatening". In patriarchal mythology, representation of a woman is synonymous with inauthenticity and duplicity, for she appears as "made up, claiming false identity, trying to appear forever younger and prettier than nature made her" (Tseëlon 1995: 34). In the advert for hair care 'VO5' (Figure 20), a woman's image looks similar to the mythological gorgon, Medusa, whose beauty and demonical gaze are deadly to men. The woman's image seems designed to provoke seduction and threat to men. In gender studies, women and death share many characteristics; thus, "they are both mysterious, ambiguous, unrepresantable, silent and threatening man's sense of wholeness and

stability" (Tseëlon 1995: 113). Therefore, perhaps, hair has become one of the most powerful attributes in cultural communication and a strong indication for Western femininity, as it provides information about a person's status and wealth. Being a key cultural signifier of femininity, especially long hair, for many women the loss of it can mean loss of sexual attractiveness (Holland 2004: 62). Thus, the length of the hair, texture, colour and style are important elements of a woman's overall appearance, for it is a strong connotation of females' identities (Dyer 1982: 98). Very often women in adverts, as it is in the ad for 'Lipcot' (Figure 19), are portrayed with their hair mysteriously hiding their eyes or their faces.

Another, and a very important, ideological strategy for representing women's mystery in advertisements and, foremost, for selling products, is through the mirror image; hence, it explains its frequency in health and beauty ads. A mirror is an essential companion for most women's bags; it functions as a medium for self-control between a woman per se and her appearance. Thus, we find as a regular "advertising trope the image of woman with mirror, [who is] self-absorbed but available for our gaze" (Thornham 2007: 39). The advertisement (Figure 21) for 'Max Factor's' product, 'The ULTIMATE look': Miracle Touch Liquid ILLUSION Foundation', portrays a woman staring at her reflection in the mirror. She looks mysterious, "self-absorbed", in Thornham's term (ibid.), and concerned, or disillusioned, to match the product's confusing name. The ad is a double-spread; it occupies two pages of a January 2008 'Cosmopolitan' edition; one part is presented in Figure 21, another, for the lack of space, is to be reproduced in writing form. This ad tells the reader: 'Transform the way you see yourself. Be YOU. Be beautiful'. Unquestionably, the female's duty to be beautiful has a hidden ideological message of consumerism. 'Transform the way you see yourself', in fact, indicates that what you see in the mirror (your face) is not good enough, it has to be transformed into 'be beautiful'; thus, by means of the advertised product. 'Be YOU. Be beautiful'- offers a classic example of women's magazine messages, presenting "the desirable as though it were the possible – just as they present the possible as though it were desirable" (Ferguson 1983: 58). The appellation, 'Be YOU. Be beautiful', itself, as in

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Williamson and Althusser's ideology of subjectivity, involves an exchange: "between you [(the reader)] as an individual, and the imaginary subject addressed by the ad" ([2010]: 50). The reader has to exchange herself with the person 'spoken to', the imaginary spectator. Williamson argues that the advertisement offers us, as an object of desire, us as a rational and unified subject (ibid.). It functions similar to Lacan's mirror-image, as ideal ego, "offering to bind our 'fragmented' selves into unity via the product" (Thornham 2007: 42). Williamson notices, the eyes of a model in beauty ads are often level with our own and, a kind of, stare back at us as if they were our own reflection ([2010]: 68). The face, looking at us from the Max Factor ad, already has the significance of an object, and is the possession of the manufacturer; however, is purchasable (ibid.). It is inferred that we can pick up a unity with our suitable image; "our face is always Other in the mirror, yet is ours, so why should not [this face becomes 'our']" (ibid: 69).

To sum up, the representation of Western femininity is as an ambiguous concept as the term 'femininity' itself. However, I tend to Bordo's (1989: 17) point of view that femininity is not a term but, rather, "a matter of constructing […] the appropriate surface presentation of the self", merely through the deployment of standardised or stereotypical and culturally transmitted rules of visual images in media. As we have seen in this chapter, in the ad examples, the images of women in print media, in particular in women's magazines, have made rather minor changes. Speaking of the female images in the beauty and health advertisements, it was revealed that women, as before, are represented as objects, subjected to male-made images of femininity, successfully sold in the beauty market by means of the old concept of 'eternal-feminine'; thus, helping to keep under control the extreme changes of historical female liberation.

The concepts of femininity and representation of women often vary in the world; thus, many different classifications can be given depending upon the specific cultural models that exist in any society. The representation of the Ukrainian femininity is one of this thesis' main concerns. In order to better understand the cultural specificity, it is important to establish related context, and to share the concepts and ideas of Ukrainian culture in order to compare it to Western culture. Thus, the following chapter pays attention

to introducing and decoding the Ukrainian context and the representations of the Ukrainian femininity.

5. Representations of Ukrainian Femininity

One of the most interesting facts about Ukraine is its geographical location. It is conveniently situated between Europe and Asia and combines both European and Western cultures. Ukraine is the second-largest developing east European country with a population of 46 million scattered over 603,700 sq.km. In 1991 Ukraine became independent with its official secession from the Soviet Union that allowed a change from a planned economy to a market economy. However, the period of transition was not easy, and caused poverty for a large amount of people, foremost because of radical currency inflation. Many Ukrainians lost their jobs because with new Western technology their professions lost their utilisation (Bobak et al. 1999; Cockerham 2000; Panarinin (n.d.)[7]).

The new post-Soviet Ukraine, whose citizens belonged to all the same class, became a country with an unequal lower and upper class distribution, including a few people in the middle class. In order to survive many Ukrainians were forced to embrace two or more jobs, and had to grow some of their own food in the countryside or buy some vital essentials through a bargain market system.

Corruption and unregulated state control delayed the progress toward a new economic reform, civil freedom and privatisation. Nevertheless, by 1996 the economic policy in Ukraine became more stable and it was much easier to handle the inflation. In spite of prevailing difficulties, by 2000 the economy was making progress towards improvement. Even though some Ukrainians were able to earn as much as their middle-class counterparts in Western countries, the high cost of living would not allow them to have the benefits and privileges of their Western neighbours. Unlike those, the majority who belonged to the lower class stayed below the poverty line and could only afford the bare essentials to survive. The upper class consisted of the smallest group of people who somehow, were related to the government (Vyshnyak 2003: online).

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[7] Year not defined; online source.

The real independence appeared to be evident only in big cities, especially in Kyiv (Kiev)[8], the capital of Ukraine. The Western influence manifested itself in high-end stores, fashionable shopping malls and a strip of expensive restaurants and cute cafés, which overflowed into the streets of the city. Nevertheless, unlike being the most important economic element of the ex- Soviet Union after Russia, Ukraine still faces problems fighting corruption and recovering the legislative structure for businesses to fix the ambiguities in law regulations.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the fall of the "iron curtain", and the declaration of independence in 1991, the awareness of the Ukrainian women changed significantly. The fresh, contradictive principles of universal equality among men and women were proclaimed by the new authorities and captured in the Ukrainian constitution:

> Equality of women's and men's rights is ensured by providing women with opportunities that are equal to those of men in the sociopolitical and cultural spheres, in education and in obtaining professional accreditation, at work and its remuneration, special actions targeted at women's work safety and health, establishment of pension privileges, creation of conditions for combining work with motherhood, legal protection, material and moral support of motherhood and childhood, including paid vacations and other privileges to pregnant women and mothers (Ukrainian Constitution 1996, Article 24; cited in Hankivsky & Salnykova 2012: 11).

The quote above about gender policy, however, contains a number of nuances. The first thing to notice is that it is only focused on women, their work, health and professional benefits. The second emphasis is on their equal opportunities in the cultural sphere despite the fact that they already occupy two-thirds in that sector and it is not necessary to promote this area additionally. Finally, the combination of the words "mother", "motherhood" and" childhood" accentuates a masking predominant role of a woman as a mother.

Catherine Wanner (1988: 112-115), who did extensive research on the Ukrainian educational system, emphasises the negative influence of the Soviet society that distorted and perverted images of women and men

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[8] There are two possible variants how to pronounce the name of the capital: the 1st one is Ukrainian and the 2nd is Russian. However, and since the independence of Ukraine the former variant is more preferable.

struggling for gender equality. Even after the fall of "the iron curtain", the gender role of Ukrainian women did not change overnight; rather it took a long time to transform. Even now Ukraine remains strongly influenced by its past political ideologies. Wanner confirms that even the traditional school system did not change much form the old gender stereotype in the beginning of the 1990s (ibid.). Moreover, some elite schools started offering additional psycho-training classes separately for boys and for girls. Girls were taught how to be feminine, gentle and caring, accurately familiarising them with their future roles as mothers, targeting a new independent Ukraine. Boys, on the contrary, learned how to be confident and make decisions on their own. Ironically, those classes were held separately because boys had to learn different skills and be taught by different educational models. They were considered to be born for other societal functions (ibid.).

Nevertheless, the new standards of life, new values, the Western influences and moral standards slightly changed the post ideological Ukrainian representation of femininity. The old attached image of a Soviet "super woman" as "a hard working mother" lost its meaning and became outdated. The new national movement began to impose and articulate basic conceptions of nationality, which were formerly forbidden. The revival of old traditions supported the stimulation of the traditional Ukrainian gender order. The image of *Berehynia,* means mother-protector, had to be slightly shifted from the past, as the new, formerly veiled, attractive patterns of "Western femininity" started bombarding new markets of Ukrainian consumer culture. Falsely accepted for "real", Western freedom and over-confident femininity attracted the Ukrainian female population. Hence, there are two main standard models of femininity: the so-called *Barbie* (inspired by Western culture) and *Berehynia,* the embodiment of national identity. These were imposed by the new ideologies of nationalism and consumerism, and had to be perceived as a national versus a cosmopolitan model of femininity. The third alternative model of femininity is an image of *Business Woman.* It occupies a rather marginal space in the discourse of the Ukrainian society and also belongs to the Western culture. Let us take a close look at all three models.

5.1. *Berehynia* – the model of mother-protector

The new image of *Berehynia* was artificially created after Ukraine gained its independency. The idea behind it was to forget the old image of a "hard working mother" and to produce something that was similar to the Ukrainian history of folk culture. Based on popular folk motifs, traits of some famous characters in Ukrainian literature and, foremost, ancient pagan beliefs with elements of a matriarchal myth of the great Mother-Earth and Christian inspirations of the Sacred Virgin, the image of *Berehynia* pretended to become an incarnation of a native Ukrainian femininity, embedded in and returned from Ukrainian genuine national traditions.

Berehynia as a term, originates from the name of a small river nymph that protected the banks (*berehy*) of rivers (Rubchak 2005: online). However, the nymph was transformed into a mother-earth symbol in the 19th century and has gone through different alterations (ibid.). Today it takes the form of hearth-mother or, so-called, domestic Madonna, and is related to the protection of both the family and the nation (ibid.).

Natalia Gudz (2004) expresses three main elements that support the historical image of *Berehynia.* First, the Orthodox Church always held to the patriarchal system and supported the separation of male and female roles (ibid.). Although the belief of the Holy Virgin was rather popular in Ukraine, the role of a woman, meant to be the Mother of Jesus Christ, was coined on the religious dogmas (ibid.). Second, in the conventional Ukrainian agrarian society the distribution of house duties powerfully relied on gender division (ibid.). While women had to take care of all the home chores, men occupied the spheres of trade and tough field labour (ibid.). Third, the historical event of *Zaporizka Sich*[9] strongly influenced the social, political and cultural spheres of the Ukrainian society, and caused the creation of strictly masculine organisation where women were not

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[9] **Zaporizka Sich.** A military unit of the **Army of the Ukrainian National Republic** organized in November 1918 in Katerynoslav. Its initial cadres came from the Railway Guard Corps. In April 1919 it was reorganized into the Second Sich Division. It was commanded by **Otaman** Yurii Bozhko. Its top combat strength was 1,200 soldiers. The division suffered heavy losses during 1919. Some of the survivors took part in the **First Winter Campaign** (1919–20) in the ranks of the Volhynian Division. This article originally appeared in the *Encyclopedia of Ukraine*, vol. 5 (1993).

welcomed and considered to be a peril for the aggressive male spirit (ibid.). As a symbol of an everlasting struggle for independence and individualism, "it served as an Orthodoxy stronghold and belief in forefathers" (Gudz 2004: 5).

In reference to the above mentioned events, it seems fairly clear that the agrarian economy, the influence of Orthodoxy and the strong supremacy of *Zaporizka Sich* in all spheres of the Ukrainian society of that period produced a patriarchal moral, keeping women at the margin and endowing them with the roles of housewife and mother.

Because of some certain social and economical issues the idea of a housewife became attractive for an ordinary woman of the post-Soviet era. A reduced control over the private sphere (previously it was the state that normally took care of children and old people) and, at the same time, the growth of the psychological-recreational role of the family under the conditions of the economical crisis, urged women to accept the image of housewife. Additionally, the reduction of working places and the high competiveness of the labour markets pushed women into the direction of the private sphere (Kis' 2002: online).

On the whole, after the Ukrainian Independence, numbers of transformations affected the new image of a woman as a hostess of her house and family; foremost, because of the pressure of the market ideology of a mass consumer. The most striking thing is, as researcher Tatiana Zhurzhenko (2001: 30) admits, the massive amount of new goods and services for the Ukrainian market imposed by the advertising branch; it turned the procedure of consumption into a true art requiring factual skills and experiences from women. This is due to the fact that advertisements use and dispose of meanings that perfectly fit into a certain culture and its society, in particular stereotypes of gender. The separation of traditional roles between a man and a woman in the society and the family became one of the beloved areas of advertising. A woman is usually shown either at home or in the superstore fulfilling her duties as a housekeeper, wife and mother. Those specific settings, such as a living room, kitchen, bathroom or baby's room, reflected in advertising, strengthen the stereotypical image of a woman as a housewife.

Figure 22 'LG'- vacuum cleaner. Ukr. text: *'Under the power of quality. – Cleaning is fashionable! Red colour is my favourite, the colour, which is as fearless and as unique as I am, fashionable and seductive. And him? He is my darling that helps to keep my image even when I clean. He is powerful, reliable and infallible'* Elle, December 2006, p. 93

Figure 23 'Miele'- washing-machine. Ukr. text: "*Why do you trust Miele? Do you enjoy the comfort and convenience? Or the Impressive design and legendary German quality? Miele takes care of everything*". - Caravan, Nov. 2009, p. 61

Figure 24 'LG' - Vacuum cleaner. Ukrainian text: *'Happy New House! The preparations for celebrating New Year always takes so long that in the end you are pretty exhausted and don't have energy for the feast itself. It will never happen if all you care you ward to the clever technique LG. Because it cannot only decorate the interior but make our new happy life much easier'.* - Elle, December 2006, p. 275

Everyday chores reflect the realistic lives of Ukrainian women who, in fact, really do perform this kind of work (see Figures: 22 - 24). Additionally, as Kis' (2007: online) points out,

> the core elements of the Berehynia image are self-sacrificial motherhood. Christianity and devotion to the nation. It is also important that Berehynia has certain matriarchal implications, which encourage a woman to be dominant, competent and decisive but only within her proper domain.

The tendency of escaping, the extensively represented in the mass media and enrooted into the female consciousness, "complex of Berehynia" failed, after the monument in honour of *Berehynia* was erected in 2001 on the main Independence square in Kyiv [10] (see Figures 25 and 26).

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[10] The monument was erected in honor of the 10th anniversary of Ukraine's independence in 2001. According to ex-President Kuchma the monument is associated with the image of "Oranta", a symbol of Berehynia – guardian of the Ukrainian nation.

Figure 25 Kyiv-downtown. The Independence square with the monument to Berehynia in the foreground (http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/7/76/Downtown_in_kiev.jpg), December 4th, 2012.

Figure 26 The close-up image of the monument to Berehynia (http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/7/76/Downtown_in_kiev.jpg), December 4th, 2012.

Figure 27 Virgin Orans icon in Kiev (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oranta), December 4th, 2012.

The monument took the place of the massive statue of Lenin, which previously stood on a 40-foot pedestal facing the main square. Paradoxically the father of the Russian Revolution has now been appropriately replaced by the mother of the Ukrainian Revolution (Rubchak 2005: online source).

Yet, *Berehynia* now has obtained an iconic status, and this status is used deliberately. Leonid Kuchma, the former president of Ukraine, unveiled a statue of *Berehynia*, a woman holding her arms above her head, indicative of the Eastern Orthodox Praying Virgin, also known as Oranta. A domestic Madonna had been merged with the Virgin Mary to shape an even more forceful symbol of Ukrainian femininity. This way of legalisation of an artificial image of *Berehynia*, supported by the state, almost proclaims it as a sacred one and by doing so it is practically untouchable to criticism and deconstruction (Kis' 2002: online).

In her article in the monthly Kyiv magazine, *Zhinka (Woman),* January 1992, Kateryna Motrych expresses her attitude towards the extremes of how women can be perceived in contemporary Ukraine in a sincere form of parody. Motrych writes:

> The Ukrainian woman has a responsible mission (she is perhaps the only woman in the world, emancipated from her very inception, who never waged a battle for equal rights with her husband, but

always fought instead for the equal rights and liberty of Ukraine) […]. Like the Blessed Virgin, the Ukrainian woman must give birth to the Ukrainian Saviour […]. And it is up to us all to create the conditions within which she can once again be herself, the *Berehynia* [pagan goddess-protectress] of the nation. In a free and democratic Ukraine, the first thing that we must do is to liberate women from heavy and deliberating work, and provide the means that will enable them to devote themselves to child-rearing for the first seven years of the child's life. So commands the Almighty God. Our ancestors knew well that during these initial seven years it was the mother's biosphere that protected her children from disease, and healed them […]. The salvation of our nation is – Woman. The Mother, and the grandmother of the human race […]. To her we must return her sacred mission, encompassing that of the Blessed Virgin and the *Berehynia*. In her hands we must once again place the cradle that rocked the [all male] *Zaporizhs'ka Sich*, the hetmans, the geniuses, the philosophers and the food producers (quoted in Rubchak 1996: 319).

However, the false impression of the strong, extraordinary and high-placed Ukrainian woman, in fact, does not have anything in common with the everyday reality. The image of *Berehynia* is nothing but a fantasy, an ideological dream and a way to escape the fierce reality where a woman remains ignored, powerless and oppressed in a world of illusions. Obviously, this world turns around the false model of mother-protector - *Berehynia* proudly looking down at us from the pedestal. This fantasy vision, moreover, inspires Ukrainian women to confront their own dilemma in the social-political area.

Looking from the semiotic perspective, the *Berehynia* monument, which is also called Oranta, is just a symbol. Its reference to the image of a Ukrainian woman as a mother-protector is stipulated; thus, nobody could possibly identify what it stands for without being told. Moreover, referring to mythology, the Virgin Orans or Oranta (The Great Panagia) is a famous Orthodox Christian depiction of the Virgin Mary. The image is believed to be one of the most sacred symbols in Ukraine, "a palladion defending the people of the country. It has been called an "'Indestructible Wall'" […].

Legend says that as long as the Theotokos[11] is extending Her arms over Kiev, the city will stand indestructible. The embroidered handkerchief on the belt of the Mother of God is popularly thought to be for wiping away the tears of those who come before her with their problems and concerns" (Orans of Kiev: Wikipedia).

Hence, an interpretant, the Virgin Mother (object), is represented as a saintly, honourable, protective woman (interpretant). "The significance of the monument melds with the (ritual) significance of *visiting* monument" (Lidov 1999:188).

5.2. *Barbie* - the Western model of Ukrainian femininity

The next model – *Barbie* - is a clear association with modern market ideology and consumer culture. This model originates from the famous Barbie-doll, and is very popular and much loved by all children of both genders. Kis' (2007: online) notices, that "the Barbie doll remains one of the most obvious symbols of globalization in post-Soviet countries". The image draws not only upon her name and her look but also upon her self-absorbed narcissistic way of life. The representation of the Ukrainian *Barbie* image, for Western discourse has a similar relation to 1920s image of the "'flapper' woman" (Macdonald 1995: 81). It was an unmarried 'modern miss', who loved enjoying and spoiling herself, dancing, exercising or driving open-topped cars (ibid.). She was earning money by working in the public sphere, foremost, as a secretary, or sales assistant (ibid: 82). Moreover, she was wearing "bobbed hair, and clothes which gave an androgynous look to her svelte figure, her sophistication was symbolized by her elegantly displayed cigarette" (ibid.).

 For Ukrainian discourse, *Barbie* is the embodiment of a gorgeous, sexy, self-confident and charismatic woman, who leads an expensive lifestyle and mainly intends to please men with a prospect of finding a rich

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[11] *Theotokos* is the Greek title of Mary, the mother of Jesus used especially in the Eastern Orthodox, Oriental Orthodox, and Eastern Catholic Churches. Its literal English translations include *God-bearer* and *the one who gives birth to God.* Less literal translations include Mother of God. Roman Catholics and Anglicans use the title Mother of God more often than Theotokos (Wikipedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theotokos).

husband. The image of *Barbie* is actively supported and rapidly proliferated by the Ukrainian media, foremost by the women's magazines. "Natalie", "The Woman's Magazine", "The Only One", "Lisa" and Ukrainian editions of "Cosmopolitan", "Miss" and "Elle" among others, update their female readers about men's main requirements. At the same time they provide advice on how to reach beyond your possibilities and turn into a perfect woman. These magazines play the role of mediator and teach women the basics to success, namely sexuality, beauty, slimness and to be skilful in cooking and child-rearing. Furthermore, they demonstrate how to choose the right outfit for themselves and their families, and familiarise women with astrological signs and teach them how to buy more for less. It seems that with all that information, you do not need to have an intellect, a degree, a talent or a hobby. In addition, the Ukrainian magazines sell alluring ads, portraying a shallow and happy woman, a clear prototype of the Ukrainian Barbie, who only cares about the beauty of her body.

The phenomenon of "faceism", prevailing in Ukrainian advertisements, is worth mentioning in this subchapter. The core idea is that the images of men are usually represented as "faces": upwards from the waist, and women as "bodies", in full-length. As researcher Archer (1983: 726) states, "[h]ead and face are the centre of the spiritual life, with intellect, personality, identity and character". The image of a man might be slightly blurred if a man appears in the same advertisement with a woman (see Figure 29). Yampolsky (1995: 3-11) notices that the core attention of the post-Soviet illustrated editions is not really a "women subject" but the representation of her body or some parts of the body. Consequently, the image of a woman "without a head", practically means the deprivation of her human characteristics. She is considered to be an object unable to speak, think, act or feel, namely she becomes an easily manipulated toy (see Figure 30). Figure 30 presents the famous Ukrainian luxury cosmetic trademark "Brocard" (similar to big Austrian/German cosmetic companies "Douglas" and "Marionaud") in the October issue of Ukrainian "Woman's Magazine". The headless female body metaphorically handcuffed by the shopping bag of the cosmetic company "Brocard" is a perfect association with the Barbie lifestyle. *"In Captivity of Beauty",* says the Ukrainian text within the ad.

Figure 28 **"The Wild Orchid" – lingerie. In "Natali", October 2006, p. 38.**

Figure 29 **"Trino"- Bianco Vermouth. "So light!"- Ukr. Text. "ELLE", Ukr. Edition, Dec 2006, p.257**
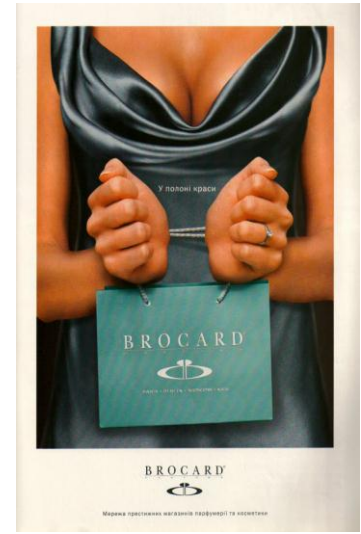
Figure 30 **"Brocard"- Ukrainian cosmetic trademark. Ukr. Text:** *'In captivity of Beauty'*. **In "Woman's Magazine", October 2008, p.65.**

Leaning on the above-mentioned debate and Archer's (1983) estimation, we can interpret this advertisement as following. First, a woman does not need brains to look beautiful (headless body). Second, cosmetics make a woman look sexier, although they could be addictive and expensive (tied-up hands). "But no worries, you can afford it, if..." This "if" stands for an obvious connection to a man. The woman in the ad is engaged; the engagement ring on her left hand reveals it. In other words, the ad's subtext can suggest: if a woman buys expensive cosmetics, she belongs to a world of success.

Moreover, to keep up with the implication of the ads, magazines publish stories about successful women to support all the above-outlined judgments and, in doing so they create passable standards of femininity (Kis' 2002: online). The main concern of the Ukrainian researchers, Taran (2001) and Kononenko (2000), about this is that the only real purpose of such women's magazines is to turn a woman into a doll in order to become an object of male consumption. Moreover, even gender-neutral editions of magazines tend to such subjects.

In comparison to *Berehynia,* who is mostly attributed to the cultural reflection of the homeland, *Barbie* is usually perceived through her body, as an aesthetic object for male erotic fantasies. What we see from these two stereotypes, a Ukrainian woman is believed to serve either a man or a patriarchal society. In other words, the concern is that the personality of the woman is not relevant. There is no concern about her needs, creativity or intellectual potential.

To sum up, in present modern conditions, these two models of *Berehynia* and *Barbie* cannot be associated with Ukrainian women. Under the current socio-economic conditions, it is not possible for a woman to stay at home and enjoy family life, either by being a devoted mother or egoistically pampering her body.

5.3. *Business Woman* – the Western model of Ukrainian femininity

The *Business Woman* model comes from the West; however, it has undergone some changes in order to suit the image of the post-Soviet "working mother" in the Ukraine. The point is that the Western model of the Business-Woman as individualist does not have a proper place as a complete model in the Ukrainian society. However, it looks attractive for women as it presents more freedom, emancipation and self-realisation. In relation to this, Zhurzhenko (2001) regards *Business Woman* as a separate type of identity with its unique Ukrainian traits. The major problem is, however, because of the stereotypical gender view, the function of the Ukrainian *Business Woman* is not taken seriously but rather, perceived as an ordinary female employee who, by virtue of vague economical conditions is forced, for the time being, to make money. Obviously, in a more favourable situation she would probably return to the traditional gender role division (see images of Ukrainian *Business Woman* in Figures 31 – 33). Additionally, the general opinion is that this type of woman cannot be fully committed to her career, for she always balances between her professional and family roles. Moreover, the image of a *Business Woman* is also regarded as a transformation of the *Berehynia* image into the business

environment, while the functions of the moral guardian are often applied to her style of work (Zhurzhenko 2001: 41- 42).
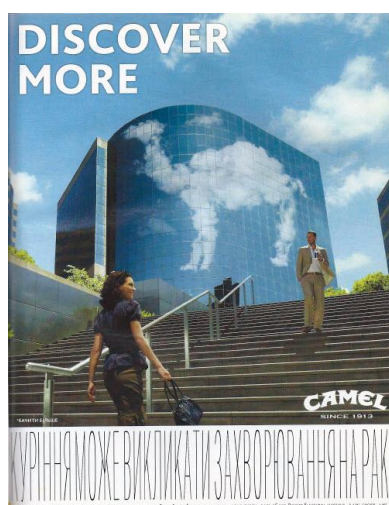
Figure 31 'Camel''- cigarettes. Cosmopolitan, June 2007, p.65

Figure 32 'Intertop' – shoes. Ukr. text: '*We deliver the most fashionable in the world!'* Woman's magazine, October 2008, p. 175

Figure 33 Business-bag for businesswoman. Text: '*Carrier and kids are not obligatory mutually exclusive concept '.* Cosmo, March 2008, p. 137

Zhurzhenko (1999: 165-171) continues her argument that the way to pursue the role of a *Business Woman* is usually surrounded by many unpredictable obstacles. Besides economical competition and bureaucratic hurdles, she must constantly fight through the barrier of men's hierarchical limits in the empire of high business and politics. Being materially restricted to financial resources (e.g., start-up capital), and constrained by professional requalification, women are displaced into the fields of small businesses and shadow economies. The core place of the female business mainly occupies marginal shapes of economic activity, foremost trade and shuttle businesses, followed by extremely hard-working conditions, minor income and low reputation (ibid.). The unbearable and harsh co-existence of the conservative gender stereotypes and contemporary schemes of gender equality, stir up a role conflict (ibid.). To solve this conflict and to choose between career and family is often to be decided in favour of the latter (Gavrilitca 1998: 65). Gavrilitca points out that this phenomenon in social psychology is known as "rejection of woman's career" (ibid.).

Finally, all three models of femininity in the modern Ukrainian society are not completely formed and correctly articulated in the public discourse; thus, considered irrelevant. They do not reflect the last socio-economic changes of a woman's position in the course of the 20th century. I argue that these three models are mythic; they are constructed and used as signs to communicate a social and ideological message about the Ukrainian society. Their myths appear to be true only because they are based on the culturally dominant patriarchal ideology that dictates the forms of femininity a Ukrainian woman should possess. Bignell (2002: 24) points out,

> An ideology is a way of perceiving reality and society which assumes that some ideas are self-evidently true, while other ideas are self-evidently biased or untrue. Ideologies are always shared by the members of a group or groups in society, and one group's ideology will often conflict with another's.

As a result, the old models that reproduce gender stereotypes continue dominating the Ukrainian culture. This is due to the fact that women's quest for self-realization can be fulfilled only through their bonds with men and within the traditional roles of housewives, mothers and lovers.

The above-presented chapter demonstrates the significance of print media in our everyday lives and in a certain cultural context. I argue, therefore, that the role of advertising, inside of the interactions of production and consumption, should be seen not only from an economical perspective, but from a cultural perspective as well. Advertising is not just a manufacturing expenditure hoping to shift some commodities off the store shelves, but

> is rather an integral part of modern culture. Its creations appropriate and transform a vast range of symbols and ideas; its unsurpassed communicative powers recycle cultural models and references back through the networks of social interactions. This venture is unified by the discourse through and about objects, which bonds together images of persons, products, and well-being (Leiss et al. 2005: 5).

Certainly, advertising is one of the most important cultural phenomena shaping and reflecting our lives. We cannot avoid it, but we can understand how this system works. Judith Williamson ([2010]: 17) points out, "[w]e can only understand what advertisements mean by finding out *how* they mean,

and analysing the way in which they work." Thus, the next sub-chapter pays close attention to the Ukrainian tobacco adverts and the representations of the Ukrainian women in print media in comparison to the Western stereotypes of femininity.

5.4. Pleasure and freedom in Ukrainian tobacco adverts

According to the European Commission Report on the "Implementation of the EU Tobacco Advertising Directive" dated 31 July 2005 (2008), the tobacco advertising ban for all forms of media such as radio, print media and internet was put into force for all EU countries. However, in many nations, including Ukraine, tobacco smoking is still advertised in many women's magazines; even though, the national ban on all advertising, was signed into law on 13 March 2012, by the Ukrainian President, Viktor Yanukovich[12].

Given that this type of advertising still sells the "sinful" products by promoting pleasure and freedom to the Ukrainian women, it is important to pay close and critical attention while analysing it. Regrettably, tobacco advertising delivers very little information about quality and the side effects the products cause; instead, it sells identity and lifestyle.

The Ukrainian Kyiv Tobacco history began 150 years ago when the son of a tobacco salesman opened a small company for the production of Turkish cigarettes in Kyiv. Now, the Ukrainian tobacco market is considered one of the most competitive, dynamic and the largest in terms of tax payments to the national budget. The consumption of cigarettes, according to the 2010 - 2012 consumer survey, did not change and remains stable (Ukrainian Imperial Tobacco Group 2012: online). On average 36 percent of Ukrainian citizens, including women, consume 17 cigarettes per day (ibid.).

Tobacco use among women is an exceptionally upsetting public health issue; however, the discourse created around smoking in Ukrainian women's magazines convinces women of the opposite. Tobacco

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[12] WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (March 2012)

manufacturers encourage them to smoke by pledging glamorous and liberated identities. The portrayal of people smoking as stylish, independent and glamorous supports the idea of smoking, particularly among young women. Advertisements symbolise female smokers as very attractive, emancipated and slender. Conveniently, the tobacco industry takes these appealing characteristics into consideration and produces motivation for smoking.

Appearance, in reality, is a key aspect for young women who usually start smoking to look more adult, or perhaps because everyone at work or at university smokes. In other words, smoking is a "visual signifier of age and feminine sophistication" (Tinkler 2006: 66). Besides, women who smoke at work in the company of men can identify with gender equality or shared identity; they believe that they appear mature and experienced. Even those who do not smoke but just accompany someone in a smoke, are regarded as polite and respectful, especially in a social context. This sort of a good manners protocol is extensively promoted in the print media images of smoking, because image is a central aspect for both those who experience the pleasure of doing it and for those who do not like it but keep it up anyway (ibid: 60).

The significance ascribed to the language of smoking comes from the increased importance of the "visual as a means of communication" (Tinkler 2006: 59). To create a visual effect while smoking, to look fashionable, competent and sophisticated, is a part of the Ukrainian women's lives. People often rely on reading and creating visual cues, and are skilled at both. The importance ascribed to the visual partly depends on the situations of a new, sophisticated and modern life; people are forced to trust appearances in making judgements about individuals rather than their knowledge of people or their character. In our culture, the cigarette is a *sign* that invokes images and meanings of sexual cool. Danesi (2008: 4) emphasises that people smoke because it is "meaningful". And to the semioticians it is not surprising, for cigarettes have always been filled with different socially-based meanings (ibid.).

When women started smoking in the beginning of the twentieth century, the cigarette was interpreted as a threatening symbol of equality

and independence. *Virginia Slims,* an American tobacco brand, has always related to this interpretation, associating cigarette smoking with female freedom and power. Hence, the main purpose of the ads is to increase sales and to promote the idea of women's equality. In fact, all the *Virginia Slims* ads are similar in that they target women strategically, demonstrating how the old times have changed and that women are now free and equal. For a new post-Soviet liberated Ukrainian woman this message was very appealing and a cigarette became a strong signifier of modern identity, freedom and independence for many young women.

From the beginning cigarettes were mainly a male product and considered to be a "male thing"; this belief provoked females to borrow the smoking practice, as it seemed to offer a "symbolic prop through which they [could] tactically communicate their independence from social patriarchy" (Danesi 2008: 9). For women to smoke "their own brand" of cigarettes, in fact, has been promoted by the company as a subversive social act "(ibid.).

Figure 34 **Virginia Slims – Ukrainian campaign.** *"Do you think you know me? Check it out".* **"Virginia Slims - More than you can see." Natali, May 2006, back cover.**

Figure 35 *"I am everything you are looking for. Even more than you can imagine."* **"Virginia Slims -More than you can see". Natali, Oct. 2006, p.227**

"Do you think you know me? Check it out" (see Figure 34). *"I'm everything you expect. Even more than you can imagine"* (Figure 35). These are the words of two mysterious blond- and black-haired women representing the *Virginia Slims* campaign in two Ukrainian women's magazines, *Natali*, of May and October 2006 editions. With the slogans: "You've come a long way, baby", "Find your voice" or "It's a woman thing", *Virginia Slims*, in the

late 1960s, similarly appealed to women with the shared conception of women's liberation rhetoric. Women, since then, started smoking at the same rate as men. *Virginia Slims*, in fact, was the first, most successful and longest-lasting cigarette brand exclusively created for women. On the other hand, Gloria Steinem (2011: 235) argues, "the Virginia Slims theme, "You've come a long way, baby", has more than a "baby" problem. It makes smoking a symbol of progress for women".

The models portrayed in the *Virginia Slims* ads reveal a significant transformation of the image. They look like individuals, comfortable to represent the new free spirit identity and the freedom that the cigarettes give to female customers. They are independent and do not need male support. Men are generally not present in the *Virginia Slims* ads, for they can obstruct the spirit of women's liberation. The *Virginia Slims* campaign in the Ukrainian women's magazines definitely targets two specific groups of women, namely the Western stereotypical models of femininity: *Barbie* and *Business Woman*. By advertising elegant cigarettes, the campaign promotes a status of freedom, success, self-esteem and the pleasure of relaxation for the confident and already socially-established type of Ukrainian women. *Virginia Slims* invites them to accentuate their self-assurance with the cool accessory of a light, slim cigarette, to prove to men that where women have come from is not just into a liberated status of femininity, but into a male form of liberated womanhood.

The first thing, or what is noticeable on the surface level of two Ukrainian *Virginia Slims* ads (Figures 34 and 35), is the women's over-confident look along with a slight smirk in their eyes. The caption, "*More than you can see*", states their appeal to the male viewer that they are more than the images of women. Since they do 'what men do' (smoking) regardless of the negative consequences, men should treat them as equals. What is more, the connotation of the women's short haircuts signifies the gender parity. In Western feminist discourse, short haircuts serve as a strong signification of liberation. In Figure 35, the blond woman is wearing a black biker-jacket, which usually belongs in the male wardrobe and signifies masculinity, strength and sexuality.

The prominent signifier of both ads is the black background and the colour itself, for semioticians like Kress and van Leeuween, is considered to be a powerful mode (1996: 225-238). It can denote "people, places and things as well as classes of people, places and things, and more general ideas" (ibid: 229). It can also be used by the people to denote themselves "and the values they stand for, to say in the context of specific social situations, "I am calm or I am energetic', and to project 'calm' or 'energy' as positive values" (ibid: 230). The black colour, or darkness, connotes the unknown, fear, mystery and it is also symbolic of the night, when lust and sexual seduction take place. The linguistic texts: *"Do you think you know me? Check it out"* or *"I'm everything you expect. Even more than you can imagine"* is an appeal, an invitation to absent men to accept a sexual challenge thrown by the mysterious female stranger (see Williamson [2010]: 80). For Williamson colour is "simply a *technique*, used primarily in pictorial advertising, to make correlations between a product and other things" ([2010]: 24). Colour can tell us a story, can connect an object with a person, an object with an object, an object with a world or simply create the oral connection, as it is prominent in the *Virginia Slims* adverts. The black hair and the black clothing of the mysterious beauty in Figure 34 seem like they blend into the mystifying darkness of the ad. The image of the woman is literally floating in the gloom, and it can disappear at any minute, similar to the smile of the Cheshire cat from "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland"; and the cat is no less mysterious than the woman in the *Virginia Slims* ad. However, the deep black is not all that constructs the full meaning in this ad. The colour that is not remarkable at first sight, in fact, is pushing through the darkness; it is the intense red colour of the verbal image, placed under the cigarette package. The denotation of a red text-stripe connotes into an image of a cigarette and complements the red-scarlet colour of the woman's lips. Importantly, the red lips are the most prominent signifier of her face; that is, as Williamson ([2010]: 21) calls, "the means of oral consumption". The image of the linguistic caption and the mouth are linked by colour as if the running text were an indicator from one to another. Therefore, the link of the text and the mouth is equivalent to that of the cigarettes and the mouth, which is the underlying (mythic) meaning of the

ad. Besides, there is a clear sexual implication here: the woman's slightly open mouth and the intense red colour of her lips connotes sexual implication and seduction. There is an accompanying connection between the product and the woman in the ad. Williamson emphasises that "[t]he product, which initially has no 'meaning', must be given value by a person or object" that has a value to us; hence, cigarettes are a good example of such an essentially 'meaningless' product ([2010]: 31). Thus, the shape of the woman's eye, sophisticatedly highlighted by the black eye-liner, is deliberately replicated in the artificially created image presented on the top of the cigarette package; that is, the combination of the cigarette and the linguistic text that imitates smoke. In this case language is used *indexically* to indicate an extra meaning to the one directly, and obviously *signified* (Dyer 1982: 124). Consequently, the signifier, the verbal image, is signified by the woman's eye (and, as earlier indicated, by her mouth), becomes a signifier: "it is then returned to its original status of signified through the conduit of the product" (Williamson [2010]: 34). Obviously, we have reached Barthes' second, underlying, sign-system signification level, the level of myth (see chapter "Myth and semiotics"). Advertising, as Bignell (2002: 17) writes about myth creation, "often connect[s] one signified idea with another, or one signifier with another, in order to attach connotations to people and things and endow them with mythic meanings". The implicit ideology of the *Virginia Slims* brand encourages a female consumer to use the product by suggesting that a cigarette can boost the idea of feeling more sophisticated, independent and liberated, as they already are. Whether or not these ads persuade the Ukrainian consumer to buy *Virginia Slims's* ideology is open to debate. We, the readers, can only decipher the codes of these ads by our knowledge of associative meanings, and by the shared cultural codes of a certain society, without which the second system or connotation does not function (Barthes 1967a: 91). However, for me, as a native Ukrainian, there is a different ideology that circulates in this campaign; it is poking through the linguistic signifiers (*"Do you think you know me? Check it out". "I'm everything you expect. Even more than you can imagine". Virginia Slims. "More than you can see"*). These social appeals are symbolic of a liberated Ukrainian woman, a beautiful, desirable

and mysterious object, she represents a dominant ideology for this *Virginia Slims* campaign. A Ukrainian woman already knows that she is everything a man can expect: beautiful, smart and successful. Even though the most attractive and desirable men in Ukraine are already aware of the Ukrainian women's inherited characteristics, most females are pushed to invent something new, unusual and mysterious to draw men's attention. Therefore, the linguistic texts in the two ads are addressed to invisible men; however, the message, directed to women, is that the consuming of a *Virginia Slims'* product gives women an opportunity to become mysterious, alluring and seductive females.

The success of *Virginia Slims* at the Ukrainian market and the portrayal of smoking women in glossy magazines as glamorous, sexually attractive and liberated, have encouraged not only smoking among young women, but also attracted the fresh wave of new tobacco brands targeting a Ukrainian female customer; among them are *Sobranie*, *Style*, *Glamour*, *Muratti*, *Camel*, etc.

The ideology of many Ukrainian ads is to encourage the members of the culture to take up the challenge, to cease their struggles and achieve their goals, to make their dreams come true by broadening their horizons and to find the identity they want to be. *Sobranie* brand (Figures 36 - 38) is one of the most appealing campaigns to a contemporary Ukrainian woman. Women as men are encouraged to strive for a better life, perhaps to leave behind the prejudice against the Soviet woman and to embrace the new and liberated woman of the independent Ukraine.

The dominated gamma of pink colours of the three ads makes an immediate connection to the product's campaign name: *Sobranie – Pinks*. All three women are wearing expensive looking, perhaps silk, evening dresses; two of the dresses are in pink colour, matching the mood of the ad. Pink connotes young spirit, femininity, tenderness, relaxation, freshness, joy, love, and acceptance. Actually, pink is a blend of two colours, red and white. White associates with fullness, while red encourages achieving the potential. Hence, pink combines both of these energies into one strong connotation. We can literally see those women illuminating liveliness and energy.

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Figure 36 Sobranie- Pinks- cigarettes. Ukr. text: *'…I can afford it'. 'Broaden your horizons'*. Natali, May 2005, p.61

Figure 37 Sobranie-Pinks- cigarettes. Ukrainian text: "NEW SUPER SLIMS". *'…I can afford it'*. Cosmopolitan, June 2007, p. 25

Figure 38 Sobranie-Pinks- cigarettes. Ukrainian text: *'… I can afford it'*. Cosmopolitan, October 2006, p. 144

Two of them are walking barefoot in the rain; it might be the connotation of a free spirit and liberated nature of the women (Figures 36 and 38). Also, they are not looking into the reader's eyes, rather, their bodies are turned away; they are looking straight towards the horizon. The verbal image in Figure 36: *'Broaden your horizons',* supports the campaign's appeal to challenge and strive for something better. The barefoot woman (Figure 38), with her outstretched hands (connotation of freedom), stands in front of the palace (the scene reminds us of a romantic Italian city like Venice). Her beautiful dress is completely wet from the rain, but it does not bother her. Her high-heels are carelessly scattered next to the woman, suggesting the relaxed attitude towards wealth and material things. The woman is saying: *"…I can afford it"*. The verbal image suggests a remarkable contrast to the caption in *Virginia Slims* ad, *"I'm everything you expect. Even more than you can imagine"* (Figure 35). In contrast to the association of the dark, mystifying and seductive mood of the night, the verbal image *"…I can afford it"* (Figure 38), engages a semiotic domain of joy, freedom and pleasure of the dawn. However, the ad is suggestive of various subtexts. Taking into consideration that the ad promotes a tobacco campaign, the rational objective level then says that the woman is successful, independent and can afford smoking elegant cigarettes. Hence, given that

the verbal image is *signifier*, and it is *signified* that she is free to do what she wants. Another subtext suggests, because of her liberated and cheerful nature, the woman can afford a careless attitude towards material things; hence, her destroyed dress and the scattered shoes are the connotations of such a statement. Moreover, the woman can afford travelling and enjoying the aurora on her own, without male company.

We can see that the ad is evocative of various subtexts, since its connotative index is at the upper limit; thus, it offers a high degree of ambiguity. For semiotic analysis, as it is mentioned in the theoretical part of the thesis, the key to decipher an underlying subtext is to consider the surface signifiers in the chain, the "connotative chaining" (Danesi 2004: 268). One of these chains in the ads (Figure 36 and 38) is an implication that the women escaped sexual escapades and amusements; that is why they are barefoot; they took their high-heels off to be able to run faster. The cigarettes, the street lanterns, the palace pillars and the high-heels are symbolic of a phallus in psychoanalytical theory. Another possible relevant interpretation is the ambiguity of the dawn, the dawn as the end of a night, the source of the end of women's captivity from the dominant male. Or, the dawn of creation, the Garden of Eden; Eve is striving to seduce Adam while running barefoot in the rain. Whether the former idea of escape or the latter myth of Eden is applicable here, we will never know, and it is absolutely not the point of the semiotic analysis to find this out. It is also not the purpose of semiotics to criticise the creators of such ads. Danesi (2004: 268) points out, the Semiotician should, "in theory, approach an ad like […] any [other] text, [for the] [a]dvertising's textuality provides an opportunity to examine how varied sign processes are realised in a contemporary textual form".

Let us consider some other visual cues that lead to other subtexts. The women in Figures 36 and 38 are barefoot, which connotes fertility and the woman's biological function as mother. There is another, oppositional ambivalence, in the ad: the women's bare backs and shoulders, the silky gowns are highly sexual; however, the females' slightly turned position, is a connotation of modesty. According to Beasly and Danesi (2002: 126), such "paradigmatic juxtaposition of eroticism and modesty" gives the women particular sexual allure. In fact, most of ads' underlying subtexts can be

deciphered by the techniques of connotative chaining, which also include the size and the shape of a product, colours and silhouettes, the logo and the name of the product and all applicable signifiers of the surface level.

The language of ads, or the verbal technique, is of great importance for decoding the underlying level of the advertisement. The above caption of the ads, *Sobranie*: *"…I can afford it"*, is deliberately designed to strengthen the subtext. The function of the language in advertising is to support, reinforce or simply to state the meaning of the subtext. Moreover, it contributes in establishing the connotative structure of product imagery (Beasly & Danesi 2002: 112). There are a lot of verbal techniques that advertisers use for creating effective ads in order to get the product into the reader's consciousness. We have already seen in the *Virginia Slims* ads how the language functions as a sign. The verbal captions in those ads are designed in such a way as to produce the visual shape of cigarette smoke by means of words in order to add to the magic and, perhaps, to create the motion within the ads; that is to say, to bring them to life. Williamson [2010]: 85) points out that,

> Language can make very precise references, which we decipher as part of the 'real world', since it is the most accessible to us of all the forms used in ads, and we use it ourselves – it almost becomes *our* speech. Ads can use language closer to or further from our own, to produce different effects – we decipher a certain meaning from the *style* of the language used, the *way* in which it is written.

Williamson also notices that the ads may use language similar to pictorial signs, "it can be present, to be deciphered, or absent, [or] to be filled in" (ibid.). The latter one is also known in semiotics as *intentional omission*: "[t]his capitalizes on the fact that secretive statements like *Don't tell your friends about…*; *Do you know what she's wearing?* grab people's attention" (Danesi 2004: 269). Likewise, the missing text in the ad's caption *"…I can afford it"* (Figures 36), invites us to play with our imagination and to fill in the gap. What can this woman afford? To smoke or to embrace the liberated style of life? The answer is up to reader. Bignell (2002: 74) notices that the use of linguistic signs and codes is also a way to create the "mythic community of the 'women's world'" in women's magazines. For instance, the use of the imperative mode, both in ads and women's magazines,

where the reader or the viewer is often addressed as 'you', "creates the effect of advice coming from an unseen authoritative source" (Danesi 2004: 268): *"Do you think you know me? Check it out"* (*Virginia Slims*, Figure 35).

Advertising language very often seems to be quite standard and inconspicuous; however, more often it entertains us by being highly creative and sometimes playful. As Dyer (1982: 152) points out, ambiguous meanings and punts are often used in advertisements, also the use of rhymes, alliteration and other types of repetitions are designed to attract attention and rouse emotions. There is a good example of *alliteration* in the ads of *STYLE* campaign, the brand specifically targets young women (see Figures 39 - 41). The caption: *"My own STYLE super slims"* demonstrates the alliteration of '*s'*. I have to add that the Ukrainian or Russian word '*own'* = '*vlasny' or 'sobstvenny'* and contains 's' as well. Thus, there is at least one 's' in four words of the slogan. Danesi (2004: 269) emphasises that "[t]he repetition of sounds in a slogan or jingle increases the likelihood that a brand name will be remembered and be imbued with a poetic quality." There are other ways of using language to create certain effects. For instance, the *"Soft elegance"* construction sets the context of the ad for various interpretations (see Figure 41). The first central signification is to narrow down the meaning of menthol to "soft", the possible opposite of the cigarettes, "strong".

Figure 39 STYLE –cigarettes. Ukrainian text: *"My own STYLE super slims"*. "New super slims!" Natali, Oct. 2009, p. 27

Figure 40 STYLE –cigarettes. Ukrainian text: *"My own STYLE super slims"*. "New super slims!" Cosmopolitan, Febr. 2009, p. 125

Figure 41 STYLE –cigarettes. Ukrainian text: *"My own STYLE super slims"." Soft elegance".* Caravan, November 2009, p. 92

The second essential signification metaphorically anchors "softness" to elegance, the feminine representation of what young girls look like and usually associate with. The caption *"Soft elegance"* evokes a dominant discourse within the *STYLE* cigarette advertisement in Figure 41, where the reference is not only to the taste of the cigarettes, but also to the personification of the girl.

The most evident interpretant of the girl's soft features are her soft hair and the soft way she touches a flower. Additional chain of signifiers (visual cues) that indicate softness are the girl's blouse, its colour and the fabric texture, the soft shade of her lipstick and the lips per se, the soft smile, etc. Additionally, the image of the butterfly that stands for the symbol of the *STYLE* campaign makes us think of the butterfly's soft wings and its soft way of flying. However, the similar symbol in *Sobranie* campaign in Figure 37 has a connotation of the butterfly's thin and delicate wings. In other words, the caption: "*New Super Slims*" (Figure 37) is anchored to the thinness and delicacy of the butterfly's wings. From the other side, on the Barthes' mythic ideological level of sign-system signification, it carries a connotative meaning of the ideology of body thinness that can increase the sale of the product. In fact, in order to understand advertising and to analyse it from the semiotic perspective, we should consider every possible signifier in the visual image, including language, which can appear to be the most important indication of the ads' myth.

Let us consider again, the linguistic texts of the two campaigns: *"…I can afford it"* (Figures 36-38) and *"My own style SUPER Slims".* Both texts are written in the first-person pronoun 'I'; this technique suggests the absence of the writer; we are in a kind of face-to face communication with ourselves. The advertiser gives us the opportunity to take the place of those girls and accept their identities as our own. Moreover, the caption: *"…I can afford it"* is written in italics, as if it is written by hand, perhaps by our own hand, or that is just the advertiser's implication. This technique is another way to demonstrate how language serves to 'naturalise' the gender identities. The ideological component of this method is that advertisements

"encode the identities they offer in certain ways... Some gender identities are coded as 'natural' while others are not" (Bignell 2002: 73).

Additionally, the brand name itself is a signifier that constructs a signification system for a product. What could be more *stylish* than to smoke *STYLE*? Even the spelling of *STYLE* makes you feel you are in-fashion. Besides, it suggests individuality, where the language is used to keep up with modern times. However, we know such ads are aiming to reach the mass of young women who generally classify their "style-ness" by the same standard; hence, it makes them all less individual, instead, more stereotypical.

Another salient aspect of verbal techniques is *figurative language*, also known as rhetorical language. "It tries to create effects by breaking or exploiting language rules" (Dyer 1982: 152). One of the rhetorical figures, *alliteration*, was already demonstrated in the example of *STYLE* ads. Another rhetorical figure, *metaphor*, creates dominant imagery for the product, e.g., "*Soft elegance*" (in *STYLE* ad), or *"Be the decoration of your life!"* (Figures 42 and 43).

Figure 42 *Glamour – Lilac* **– cigarettes. Ukrainian text: "Be the decoration of your life"! Cosmopolitan, June 2007, p. 89**

Figure 43 *Glamour-5* **– cigarettes. Ukr. text: "Be the decoration of your life"! Natali, Oct. 2006, p.11;Cosmo, Oct. 2006, p.133; Elle, Dec. 2006, p.123**

The latter caption refers to my last two advertisements of the luxury tobacco brand, *Glamour*. Interpreted figuratively, the caption: *"Be the decoration of your life!"* suggests that the beautiful woman in the ad (Figure 42) can be treated as a decorative object similar to the orchid, that she holds in her hand, to make life beautiful and glamorous as her own. Also the brand name *Glamour* as a signifier suggests that this campaign is trying to reach women who lead luxurious and glamorous styles of life. Precisely, the number '5' on one of the cigarette packs (Figure 43) is a possible association with the famous perfume CHANEL No. 5, which is quite expensive and only people leading an extravagant and exclusive way of life can afford to buy it. Another possible indication of a glamorous lifestyle is encoded in the women's eyes, specifically in their dilated pupils. The eyes reveal that these women can afford enjoying something exclusive and forbidden, perhaps consuming drugs, since drugs can cause the dilation of pupils. Beasley and Danesi (2002: 128), however, emphasise that the dilated pupils refer to sexuality and desire:

> It is documented fact by psychologists that the female face is perceived as more sexually attractive when the pupils are dilated. In fact, in earlier times in Italy, extracts of the drug *belladonna* were used for its cosmetic effect, given that it produces extreme dilation of the pupils. This drug is now used by eye doctors to facilitate eye examinations; but its cosmetic applications explain the origin of its name, which in Italian means "beautiful woman".

The women are aware that they are beautiful and sexually attractive; they show it by their confident, straightforward and piercing looks. The eye contact, the women are establishing with the viewer, is extremely compelling as a sexual signifier. Also, the features of the women' faces are unmistakably representative of a sexual state of readiness and desire.

Importantly, the interpretation of any advertising text, using semiotic approach, is just a possible version of interpretation and difference of opinions about what this or that means is not only inescapable, but, as Danesi points out, a "part of the fun of semiotics" (2004: 268).

The advertisements' analysis, presented in this chapter is an attempt to show the ways in which the visual and verbal images, including an advertising text, generate a rich selection of connotations, in particular

sexualised representations of women. These can be decoded semiotically by analysing visual or verbal cues of the ads texts surface level. Williamson points out the importance of the signifiers in the adverts:

> No matter how much you try to talk about what is 'in' the ad, you always end up back at signifier, the structure of signs in an advertisement, because what the signs should or did refer to has been totally effaced and they have been made to point inwards, to the ad itself and the product it is selling ([2010]: 167).

Williamson refers here to Barthes' approach, where the signifier takes another shape at the second level of sign-system signification and returns back in a form of myth (signification).

As soon as the subtext has been deciphered, the relevance of the ad seems to disappear, even in the case of extremely connotative tobacco ads. In fact, semiotics helps us to demystify advertising strategies. Those who create ads may not be aware of the prevailing sexist imaging through textual choices, but "when the textual choices are combined with the visual images", it is hard to believe that "a visually and verbally literate person" who creates advertisements is absolutely unaware of the sexist context (Johnson 2008: 159). In addition, the tobacco ads are not only selling the ideas of freedom, sexuality and pleasurable state; they sell women ideas of identity and certain life styles. Women presented in tobacco ads always look happy, healthy, and energetic, having youthful-looking skin. However, the reality is that fanatical smokers are usually depressed, smell badly, have grey-looking skin and are definitely physically unfit. But what is the answer to the problem of advertising? Beasely and Danesi (2002: 159) suggest learning how to read the subtexts the ads and brands produce with the help of semiotic analysis. "When the human mind is aware of hidden codes in texts, it will be better able to fend off the undesirable effects that such codes may cause" to the reader (ibid).

6. Conclusion

From the analysis presented in chapters 4 and 6 on Western and Ukrainian feminine representations in women's magazine advertisements, we can draw the following conclusions. Both British and Ukrainian advertisements are merely constructions of dominant ideologies. Although the ideology of modernity, employed by the concept of the New Woman's liberation, underlies most of the contemporary advertising discourse in British and Ukrainian adverts; the appeal differs from country to country. To explore femininity and the types of stereotypes it represents in a given country, we need to know what kind of historical ideologies circulate within the conventional discourse. In Western societies like British, for instance, some aspects of feminine representations in contemporary print media have changed significantly; however, others remain the same. After the First-Wave of feminism weakened the patriarchal religion of the Western world, the next movement completely erased the image of a 'happy housewife' from advertisements in women's magazines. Obviously, feminist politics of some sort are relevant to Western femininity research. In order to revive patriarchy and to restore the loss of the advertisers' consumer, the new ideology of a 'beauty myth', as Wolf (1991) terms it, was created. We have seen how beauty and health adverts bombard women in British print adverts by convincing them to buy into the myth of created hegemony. The process of product "mythologization" (Beasley & Danesi 2002: 15; Barthes (1957)) that the ideology adverts construct by means of external cultural codes, is very powerful; it naturalises the image meanings into the female reader's subconscious. Unaware of these tactics, women are tricked into consumerism and everyday performance, desperately trying to achieve the unrealistic beauty images and body ideals portrayed in women's magazine ads. Moreover, the unrealistic body ideals lead to psychological anxieties and eating disorders. However, it is not easy to prove a direct underlying link between the print media and female audience performance; hence, many critical theories dispute it. In relation to this, the analysis of Western femininity in British women's magazine adverts revealed that women, as potential consumers, are no longer seen as positioned or interrogated by

media texts, centred on the heartless objectives of patriarchal ideology; rather, women are regarded as "active producers of meaning, interpreting and accommodating media texts to their own daily lives and culture" (van Zoonen 1994: 150). As Williamson notices, "in buying products with certain 'images' we create ourselves…our lives become our own creations, through **buying**…We turn into the artist who creates the face, the eyes, the life-style", and in doing so we are both consumer and the advertised goods ([2010]: 30).

While Western femininity is shaped and represented by the stereotypes of feministic and patriarchal backwash, Ukrainian femininity in the post-Soviet era is affected by the newly independent nationalist ideology; the concept of a "'God-given' or 'natural'" predisposition to motherhood and domesticity persists as before (Rubchak 1996: 316). Compared to Western magazines where the household advertisements are not relevant anymore and female images have been successfully replaced by the images of children's toys and cartoon characters, the Ukrainian women's print media today, as in the past, proliferates with images of housewives in household adverts. These are the important points to draw from such portrayals of women's appearance: first, they are associated with washing machines and vacuum cleaners, thus displayed as objects; and, second, women in household adverts are designed to look alluring and sexually attractive, as if domestic work would make them feel that way. As an example, the absurd visual text of a Ukrainian advert for vacuum cleaners in Figure 22 states: *"Cleaning is fashionable! Red colour is my favourite, the colour, which is as fearless and as unique as I am, fashionable and seductive. And him? He is my desired that helps to keep my image even when I clean. He is powerful, reliable and infallible".* Such representations of women as sex objects are also present in Western beauty ads in British women's magazines; it accentuates the sexual liberation and open sensuality of the contemporary woman. However, comparing the semiotic analysis of both countries, the results reveal that sexual stereotypical images, foremost, prevail in Ukrainian print adverts to endorse the images of newly independent and confident Ukrainian women. The myth ideology of advertising is so influential that women simply believe that if they do not

match the images of beauty and sexiness, they will not be able to compete with other successful female rivals, who actively participate in the consumer media exchange. Thus, the status of women in Ukraine, since the declaration of independence in 1991, has not improved despite the government's and media's claims of the social liberation of Ukrainian women. On the contrary, the media does not only help women to reconstruct their own identities, it disregards whatever efforts women in Ukraine have made to alter their roles to construct alternative identities and lifestyles. In doing so, the media evidently discourages the emergence of a new woman. Moreover, information in Ukrainian print media, supported by the new national movement of the patriarchal class, continues to impose and articulate basic stereotypical concepts of femininity; thereby, persistently reinforcing the newly created myth of Ukrainian femininity that seeks to convince women that they finally have a new identity. Thus, the three models: *Berehynia*, *Barbie* and *Business Woman*, created artificially, support the stimulation of the Ukrainian gender order. This is due to the fact that advertisements exploit and assign meanings that perfectly fit into a certain culture and its society, in particular stereotypes of gender. The image of *Berehynia* as the revival of old traditions combined with the cult of mother and protector of the hearth, have become the most significant factors to impede the formation of a genuine feminist consciousness in contemporary Ukraine. The reflection of this image on the pages of Ukrainian women's magazines is presented in the advertisements for household products. The models of *Barbie* and *Business Woman* as misleading Western patterns dominate the pages of Ukrainian women's magazines as well. The semiotic analysis of tobacco adverts show how, by virtue of different techniques, the mythic and stereotypical identities of women could be created. Using specific types of signs and codes such as colours, images, words and the paradigmatic relation of signs, a passable personality can be easily created. The tobacco advertisement analysis has shown how the created images can sell the identities and lifestyles of models in women's magazines to the Ukrainian reader. The real mission of such magazines is to make out of a woman an object - a doll similar to *Barbie* that will satisfy male consumption. Therefore, Ukrainian magazines

effectively put on the market glamorous ads, portraying a shallow and happy woman who cares only about the beauty of her body. Such treatment of women by the print media, instead of reducing the feminine stereotype, enhances it further. Unfortunately, women's magazines do not portray women in professional roles; they reduce them to sexual objects and to the status of housewives. Ukrainian women's magazines, in the role of mediator, aim to teach women the fundamentals of beauty, sexuality, slimness, skills in cooking and child-rearing. Additionally, in order to reinforce sufficient standards of femininity, they publish stories about mythic successful women. Apparently, the Ukrainian world turns around false models, even though one of them *(Berehynia)* has a real pedestal in the central square of the Ukrainian capital; the evidence of belonging to a patriarchal society. Consequently, this stereotyping and fantasy vision of a false model cause Ukrainian women to confront their own dilemma in the socio-political area.

Both, British and Ukrainian women's magazines create certain codes to persuade women to picture themselves in the role of 'subject' and to create the mythic identity they believe to be real. To escape patriarchal pressure women seek support and find it in the imaginary world of women's magazines; however, the utopian vision of pleasure disguises the ideological bias of its nature (McCracken 1993: 8). Apparently, the semiotic code of women's magazines helps to create a mythic world of femininity to repay the deficit of a pleasing social identity for real women. Using the coded connotations of signs in societies, women's magazines succeed in creating an artificial identity; hence, the aspect of femininity is not a natural possession of women, but a cultural construct. This promotional trickery, created by magazines, encourages women to objectify themselves and become the victims of the hidden ideologies in women's magazines.

Displaying women as sexual objects in advertisements has deeper social connotations. Hence, if print advertising in women's magazines does shape opinion, anticipation and ways of thinking, then the reader of these ads may accept the way women are portrayed as reality. What Ukrainian women and Western women, in general, need is for magazines to finally start showing women in positions that represent their actual characteristics

and individuality. Moreover, magazines should start publishing educational articles with descriptive manuals that would explain methods of decoding ads at their underlying levels, which could be helpful for women to control their shopping cravings. Print media has to be convinced to start working for us and not against us. I argue, the resistance of women against the persuasive power of advertising is not in escaping the advertising images, but rather in pursuing them as visual communication. That is why it must become an object of study and curiosity of the educational system, and needs to be integrated into the school curriculum. What women need is to be educated in the subject of visual literacy to be able to look at advertising critically. Otherwise, women will never break from the media-prescribed roles of sex stereotypes, housewives, mothers and dependent wives.

The most surprising fact in comparing the two societies is that, given the considerable changes in cultural and political backdrop over the last two or three decades and the changing image of women, some radical transformations are expected; however, it can be concluded, that the perception and portrayal of femininity in advertising hasn't changed much.

Comparing the ads of two countries reveals something remarkably similar, and, at the same time, contradictory. This uniqueness is easy to explain, as nothing better reflects a country or era than its advertising. It is an indissoluble part of the shared unconscious of a particular nation and its culture. Media and advertising creators dig deeply and search our everyday lives to reflect our national eccentricity. We can see the whole myth of a culture in advertising while the announcement of advertising speaks for the ideals of the whole nation.

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8. Table of Figures

9. Index

10. Abstract (English)

This thesis addresses one of the main criticisms of advertising in women's magazines: that it seeks to manipulate women insomuch as to make them dependent on goods, and to persuade them that they can be happy or can accomplish crucial life goals only through constant consumption. As potential consumers, female readers are sold to media customers like any other goods. Women's magazines, using images of stereotypical models of femininity combined with particular depiction and explanation of purchasing power, thrive as conduits for advertising messages.

The aim of this thesis is to show how the Ukrainian print media, supported by the new ideological national movement of a patriarchal class, imposes and articulates basic stereotypical concepts of femininity on Ukrainian female consumers by means of women's magazines. Consistently reinforced, the newly created myth of Ukrainian femininity seeks to convince women that they finally have a new identity. Thus, three models: *Berehynia*, *Barbie* and *Business Woman*, created artificially, support the stimulation of the Ukrainian gender myth, continuously portrayed in images of print advertising.

Leaning on British Cultural Studies, in particular the theories of ideology, Barthes' semiotic approach of 'myth' and Western representations of femininity, this thesis demonstrates how, by virtue of different techniques, the mythic and stereotypical identities of women can be created. The results of semiotic analysis of Ukrainian and British advertisements, show how culturally dominant ideologies of a certain society and the ideologies of print advertising encourage women to objectify themselves and become the focus of hidden ideologies of women's magazines. Apparently, the ideological and semiotic codes of women's magazines help to create a mythic world of femininity to repay the deficit of a pleasing social identity for real women.

11. Abstract (German)

Diese Diplomarbeit behandelt das Thema rund um die Kritik an Werbung in Frauenzeitschriften, welche den manipulativen Einfluss auf Frauen und die Versuchung einer Abhängigkeit zu Produkten zu schaffen beschreibt. Zudem besteht das Bestreben Leserinnen davon zu überzeugen, dass kontinuierlicher Konsum zu einem Zustand des glücklich sein und der Erreichung von Lebenszielen beiträgt. Als potentielle Konsumenten werden weibliche Leserinnen wie Handelsware an die Printmedien, unter anderen auch Werbeagenturen, verkauft. Frauenmagazine wirken als Kanäle für Werbebotschaften indem sie Bilder von stereotypisch weiblichen Modellen mit spezifischen Abbildungen und Beschreibungen von Einkaufskraft kombinieren.

Ziel dieser Arbeit ist es aufzuzeigen wie ukrainische Printmedien, unterstützt durch die national-ideologische Bewegung der patriarchalen Klasse, grundlegende stereotypische Konzepte der Weiblichkeit gegenüber ukrainischen Konsumenten durch Frauenmagazine auferlegt und zum Ausdruck bringt. Verstärkt durch den neu geschaffenen Mythos einer ukrainischen Weiblichkeit wird versucht Frauen von deren neuen Identität zu überzeugen. Daher unterstützen die drei Modelle Berehynia, Barbie und Geschäftsfrau, die alle künstlich erschaffen sind, die Stimulation des ukrainischen Gender-Mythos, welcher kontinuierlich in der Printwerbung dargestellt wird.

In Anlehnung an die britischen Kulturstudien, im Speziellen die Theorien der Ideologie, Barthes' semiotischer Ansatz des Mythos und die westliche Vorstellung von Weiblichkeit, demonstriert diese Diplomarbeit wie, durch Anwendung unterschiedlicher Techniken, mystische und stereotypische Identitäten von Frauen geschaffen werden können. Die Ergebnisse der semiotischen Analysen von ukrainischen und britischen Werbungen zeigen wie die kulturell dominante Ideologie einer bestimmten Gesellschaft, sowie die Ideologie der Printwerbung, Frauen dazu anregen sich als Objekte darzustellen und somit zum Fokus von versteckten Ideologien in Frauenmagazinen werden. Offensichtlich hilft der ideologische und ‚semiotische Code' in Frauenzeitschriften eine mystische

Welt voll von Weiblichkeit zu erschaffen, um das Defizit einer gefälligen sozialen Identität von echten Frauen auszugleichen.

12. Curriculum Vitae

PERSONAL INFORMATION	Lyubov Gramann
EDUCATION	
University	2006 – 2012 MA English and American Studies (Diplomstudium der Anglistik und Amerikanistik) 2005 – 2009 Bachelor study Intercultural Communication, German, English

Courses	2004 Oct.- International Economics, Vienna University
	2004 March-June - German Advance Course, Vienna University (Matura Level)
	2001 Aug. - German Basic Course, Vienna University
	1996- 1997 Kiev State Centre of Tourism
	    - Guide/Interpreter
	    - Business English and business etiquette
	1990- 1991 - Kiev State Courses of Foreign Languages
	    - French (basic)

University	1991 – 1996 Kiev State Linguistic University, Faculty of Romanic Germanic Philology University Degree (diploma) – teacher of English
SPECIAL SKILLS	
Languages	- Russian (native) - Ukrainian (native) - English (Fluent) - German (Fluent)
PROFESSIONAL	*EXPERIENCE*
Private tutoring	2008 – 2011 Vienna, Austria Russian classes (private tuition)
'Lernquadrat' Nachhilfeinstitut	2006-2007 Vienna, Austria English tuition
Russian Embassy, UAE	2002 - 2004 Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates Teacher of English
International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies	1998 – 2001 Kiev,Ukraine Administrative Assistant & Logistics Officer
ICN Pharmaceuticals, Inc.	1997 – 1998 Kiev,Ukraine Administrative Manager
Metalpressmash Entpr.	1996 – 1997 Kiev/Ukraine Administrator/Interpreter
JV "Shopfitting Company LTd"	1995 – 1996 Kiev/Ukraine Office Assistant/Interpreter
OJA " Radical" Courses of Foreign Languages	1993 – 1997 Kiev/Ukraine Teacher of English