Bryant University
HONORS THESIS

Gender Advertisements: Replication of a Classic Work Examining Women, Magazines, and Facebook Photographs

BY Erica Lawton

ADVISOR • Stanley Baran

_____

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for graduation
with honors in the Bryant University Honors Program

APRIL 2009

Table of Contents

Gender Advertisements: Replication of a Classic Work Examining Women, Magazines, and Facebook Photographs
Senior Capstone Project for Erica Lawton

ABSTRACT

In 1979, Erving Goffman published *Gender Advertisements*, the seminal work in critiquing gender displays in advertising. Goffman noted seven major phenomena that demonstrated the cultural infantilization of women and their ritualized subordination in advertisements. This study, conducted in Goffman's phenomenological tradition, investigates modern commercial advertisements to update Goffman's work and determine the presence of a new phenomenon, the mechanization of women.   Advertisements were collected and studied based on Goffman's five coding categories: relative size, feminine touch, function ranking, ritualization of subordination, and licensed withdrawal. In addition, Facebook photographs were analyzed based on the same coding categories to find whether women portray themselves in personal yet publically available photographs in the same way as women are displayed by others in advertising images. The results indicate that modern advertisements portray women in much the same manner as in the 1979 advertisements from Goffman's original study, and evidence can be found that supports a new advertising pattern of the mechanization of women. However, in Facebook photographs, women tend to display themselves with greater individuality than the way they are portrayed in commercial advertisements. These findings have greater implications on the future of gender displays in advertising and women's self-portrayal, particularly in relation to the creation of a new feminist movement.

Gender Advertisements: Replication of a Classic Work Examining Women, Magazines, and Facebook Photographs
Senior Capstone Project for Erica Lawton

INTRODUCTION

The 1970s was a pivotal decade in the women's rights movements. In 1972, for instance, Gloria Steinem's *Ms. Magazine* was first published, and it quickly became the chief publication for feminists leading the second wave of feminism. In 1973, *Roe v. Wade* was passed, granting a woman's right to safe and legal abortion. By 1979, many women looked back on the decade with a sense of pride and accomplishment. The feminist movement was meant to bring an end to the subjugation of women, and many believed they were on their way to achieving gender equality.

Despite these beliefs and accomplishments, it was also in 1979 that sociologist Erving Goffman published *Gender Advertisements,* a groundbreaking study of the representation of women in commercial advertisements. Goffman's work demonstrated the advertising industry's infantilization of women, despite the progress of the women's rights movement, and noted seven phenomena that were prevalent throughout the purposive sample. These phenomena made Goffman's research and deep analysis stand out from other gender studies of the era, such as Jean Kilbourne's famous documentary *Killing Us Softly*. While Kilbourne emphasized the increased blatant sexualization and commoditization of women in advertising, Goffman focused on gender displays and the nuances of body positions and movements. Because of this landmark approach, *Gender Advertisements* continues to be referenced as the seminal work in critiquing gender roles in advertising.

Since the publication of *Gender Advertisements*, however, advancements have been made toward women's rights and gender equality, including a greater presence of women in the workforce and politics, recently exemplified by the 2008 presidential campaign with the presence of Hillary Clinton and Sarah Palin as serious contenders for president and vice-president, respectively. In addition, media literacy and analysis has brought greater attention to the way that the advertising industry represents women and their roles in society. Taking these developments into consideration, this study sets out to update Goffman's work to

contemporary times and determine whether his findings have - or have not - changed after the thirty years of feminism and cultural enlightenment on magazine advertisements.

Throughout this process, content, critical, and deep contextual analysis will take place to study gender and power displays in advertisements as well as the latent meaning behind each advertisement. It is important to note that this paper will not discuss the overt sexuality that is present in advertisements, as studied in works such as *Killing Us Softly*. Instead, I am continuing in Goffman's tradition and looking at the subtleties – or lack thereof – of gender displays in advertising.

My research is ultimately concerned with two topics: the portrayal of women in advertisements and the way that women portray themselves when given the opportunity to do so in their own lives. Therefore, in addition to replicating Goffman's work, I will also review the social networking website Facebook to determine how women choose to advertise themselves through publicly shared and displayed photographs. By comparing commercial advertisements to Facebook photographs, I hope to better understand the potential effects of the advertising industry on individuals and the ways in which they view and portray themselves.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Prior to the publication of *Gender Advertisements* (1979), Goffman was already a well-known sociologist who was highly regarded for his analyses of human interaction. From *The Presentation of Self* (1959) to *Behavior in Public Places* (1971), Goffman studied facets of everyday life and behaviors to understand their deeper meaning and implication on individuals' self-presentation and creation of identities. What set him apart from other sociologists of his time was his reliance on observation and interpretation rather than traditional post-positivist theory to explain contemporary life (Manning, 1992). Although his work was not classically empirical, his approach was recognized as vital to the ultimate creation of a collective understanding of the human experience.

Goffman applied his significant insight into social behavior in *Gender Advertisements*. During his research, Goffman focused on the underlying sexism in commercial advertisements. He believed that advertisements "depict for us not necessarily how we actually behave as men and women but how we *think* men and women behave" (Gornick, 1979, p. vii). The advertisements, then, are essentially viewed as depictions of ideal, socially acceptable instances of masculinity and femininity in modern society. Goffman contended that carefully posed models and carefully selected settings of advertisements create "a pseudo-reality that is better than real" (Goffman, 1979, p. 23). Although men and women may not act out what is viewed in commercial advertisements, these advertisements provide social cues to men and women as to how they are expected to behave. This demonstrates that "gender differences in function and status not only carry over from the real world to the advertisement world but may find their purest expression there" (Kang, 1997, p. 983). Goffman viewed this as inherently troubling and sought to gain a deeper understanding of gender relations in advertising.

As he reviewed commercial magazine advertisements, Goffman concentrated on anatomical features such as hands, eyes, and knees as well as gestures such as facial expressions, relative sizes and positioning of bodies or body parts, head-eye aversion, and finger biting and sucking. His focus on basic features of advertisements rather than overt sexuality brought an additional level of quality to his analysis, and it enabled Goffman to demonstrate the less obvious, yet clearly apparent upon closer inspection, disparities between men and women in advertisements.

In order to categorize his advertisements, Goffman utilized a coding strategy that arranged the advertisements into the following five categories: feminine touch, function ranking, ritualization of subordination, relative size, and licensed withdrawal. The first category, feminine touch, describes the phenomena of women who lightly or delicately touch objects or their own body parts in an unnatural way. The second category, function ranking, was created after Goffman noted the continued presence of women as subordinate to men within the family structure, the workforce, and nearly any other social arrangement. This relates to the

third category, the ritualization of subordination, in which women adopt postures such as bashful arm or knee bends or lying down in order to indicate submission to men's authority and control. In the fourth category, relative size, women are often smaller than men as a way to demonstrate their delicateness and weaker emotional states. The fifth and final category, licensed withdrawal, describes women in advertisements who appear disoriented and psychologically removed from a social situation (Goffman, 1979).

Based on his coding system, Goffman recognized seven phenomena that were prevalent in his research:

1. Overwhelmingly a woman is taller than a man only when the man is her social inferior;
2. A woman's hands are seen just barely touching, holding, or caressing – never grasping, manipulating, or shaping;
3. When a photograph of men and women illustrates an instruction of some sort the man is always instructing the woman – even if the men and women are actually children (that is, a male child will be instructing a female child!);
4. When an advertisement requires someone to sit or lie on a bed or a floor that someone is almost always a child or a woman, hardly ever a man;
5. When the head or eye of a man is averted it is only in relation to a social, political, or intellectual superior, but when the eye or head of a woman is averted it is always in relation to *whatever* man is pictured with her;
6. Women are repeatedly shown mentally drifting from the scene while in close physical touch with a male, their faces lost and dreamy, 'as though his aliveness to the surroundings and his readiness to cope were enough for both of them';
7. Concomitantly, women, much more than men, are pictured as the kind of psychological loss or remove from a social situation that leaves one unoriented for action … (Gornick, 1979, p. vii)

Using these phenomena as a guide, Goffman chose his final photograph sets "to allow the displaying, delineating, or mocking up of a discrete theme bearing on gender, especially female gender, and *arranged with malice* within each set to the same end" (emphasis added; Goffman, 1979, p. 24). By arranging the photographs with a clear purpose, Goffman could better explain his reasoning for the phenomena in society. His work was not meant to reflect gender behavior in real life or in advertising as a whole. Rather, it was meant to demonstrate that "as pictures they are not perceived as peculiar or unnatural" (Goffman, 1979, p. 25). In

addition, Goffman presented all chosen advertisements are at the end of his written analysis and accompanied them with short lines of further commentary. By including the advertisements instead of merely describing them, Goffman gave readers the opportunity to examine and understand his interpretations for themselves.

Goffman was particularly struck by his impression that the essence of advertisements had become obscured and acceptable over time. He found hundreds of advertisements featuring woman after woman in the same types of domestic, infantile, and subordinate roles, treated as if they were children and men were their parents, and it was rare to find an advertisement that contradicted these images. When Goffman did find an incongruous advertisement, such as a man in the kitchen or a woman as a social superior over a man, it appeared as strikingly unnatural in comparison to the rest of the set. In order to demonstrate this finding, Goffman arranged and contrasted advertisements that featured "natural" male or female behavior with advertisements that featured the same behavior from the opposite gender. The surprise element of these switched-sex advertisements was intended to capture people's attention and shine light on the clear forms of sexism in commercial advertising. In reality, however, there should have been little shock value in seeing a female executive or a man cleaning a house considering the apparent advancements in society (Gornick, 1979).

One of the most critical outcomes of Goffman's research is the development of frame analysis and gender displays, which entails his deep focus on the subtleties of advertisements. According to Goffman, frame analysis involves gaining an understanding of meaning through the study of society and the way that it is structured, or "framed," and gender displays refer to the conventionalized portrayals of the social construction of gender. Frame analysis was thus extended to the setting of an advertisement. Although multiple meanings can be deduced from displays, photographers want to portray a singular image and message. Because of their focus on a simplistic, easily understandable message, many photographers fall back on singular and stereotypical gender displays, which in turn creates a "hyper-ritualization" in which original gender relationships are continually distorted until they are no longer recognizable (Goffman, 1979). Therefore, because gender is only a construction, Goffman

contended that "there is ... only evidence of the practice between the sexes of choreographing behaviorally a portrait of relationship" (Goffman, 1979, p. 8). Goffman's revolutionary development led to one of his most famous works, *Frame Analysis* (1974), and it provided further evidence of the continuation of stereotypical behaviors and postures in advertisements.

After *Gender Advertisements* was published, many criticized Goffman for using a purposive sample instead of a random sample and making assumptions for randomness. Despite these criticisms, this sampling strategy was "not chosen so generalization to a population of visual images could be made; instead, he deliberately selected advertisements that mirrored gender differences, sometimes ones that captured the nuances of social relationships" (Kang, 1997, p. 983). Goffman did not utilize random samples because following in the phenomenological tradition, he wanted to demonstrate key examples of the cultural infantilization of women in advertising as he saw in his own reality. This tradition will be further described in the Methods section.

In addition, some critics at the time, including *New York Times* literary critic Anatole Broyard (1979), believed that advertisements were meant to be intentionally humorous and ironic parodies of traditional gender behaviors and relationships. According to Broyard, modern humor in advertising relies on double meanings, or increased simplification and irony in order to improve understanding. However, as others have noted, irony in advertising in relation to gender displays has dangerous implications. Researcher Rosalind Gill (2007), for instance, studied the irony present in gender reversals in advertisements. According to Gill, irony gives advertisers an opportunity to defend and protect themselves by "drawing attention to their ironic status. Frequently, today, irony is wedded to nostalgia … [and] the use of a 'period style,' usually 1950s, 1960s or 1970s, allows sexism to operate freely under the cover of a nostalgic preoccupation with the past" (p. 111). By displaying traditional gender roles in their advertisements, advertisers are able to point to past gender norms and use history as a defense. If men and women do swap traditional roles in an advertisement, it is also done in a teasing and mischievous way to avoid disrupting the normative cultural functions.

My research project is not the first attempt to replicate Goffman's work; however, unlike other studies, my research attempts to fully recreate Goffman's work in the phenomenological tradition without utilizing random samples. In 1997, for instance, Mee-Eun Kang compared gender behavior patterns from random samples of advertisements in *Vogue*, *Mademoiselle*, and *McCall's* from 1979 and 1991. Kang used Goffman's five categories of decoding behavior to organize her findings, and she also added two new categories, body display and independence/self-assertiveness. Ultimately, much like this work, she found few changes in women's portrayal in advertisements from 1979 to 1991, particularly within the categories of licensed withdrawal and body display (Kang, 1997).

Katharina Lindner (2004) also used *Gender Advertisements* as the foundation for her study, *Images of Women in General Interest Fashion Magazine Advertisements from 1955 to 2002*. Lindner took particular interest in Goffman's assessment of the hyper-ritualization of advertisements and their extension to real life:

> [Goffman] emphasized that advertisements often contain very subtle clues about gender roles and may operate as socializing agents on several levels. Because advertisements are publicly broadcast, the men and women portrayed are often perceived to represent the whole population, and men and women in the advertisements seem to accept these portrayed behaviors, thereby validating the stereotyped roles. (p. 409)

As her research focus, Lindner contrasted the portrayal of women in advertisements from a general interest magazine, *Time*, and a women's fashion magazine, *Vogue*. She concluded that the advertisements in *Vogue* consistently depicted women more stereotypically than those in *Time*, particularly in regard to relative size, function ranking, and "movement," a category created to demonstrate the association between freedom of expression and power (p. 412). While the results initially sound counterintuitive, *Vogue*'s long-standing reputation as a high-fashion magazine explains its persistent use of stereotypical advertisements. Displaying women as inadequate "is a necessity for the existence of a women's fashion magazine such as *Vogue*, which is primarily a means for advertising and selling products that are suggested to be a 'cure' for women's feelings of inferiority and inappropriateness" (p. 420). As *Vogue* glamorizes celebrities, ritzy events, and expensive beauty products in its articles and

photographs, the magazine attracts advertisers who reflect traditionally stereotypical ideals and notions of women, thus creating a harmful cycle. It is important to note that while a magazine's content is indicative of the types of advertisements that it features, it is not responsible for the creation of these advertisements. However, Lindner's research brings light to the relationship between women's magazines' content and commercial advertisements over time, which may be an interesting research topic for further pursuit in the future.

While it will be important to follow commercial advertising in the future, it is also necessary to look at the development of the industry over the past thirty years. In the 1970s, the advertising industry generated approximately $20 billion each year. Despite intense criticism over the past thirty years due to accusations of heightened sexism within the industry as well as in commercial advertisements, the industry has expanded into a $500 billion global network. The growth of technology and the Internet have changed the business practices of the advertising industry. Instead of solely relying on print advertisements, practitioners launch campaigns around the world through viral YouTube videos, iTunes podcasts, automated yet "personalized" e-mails, and social networking websites. While companies still craft their advertisements based on cultural norms and expectations, the expansion of the global audience has enabled the industry to widen its demographics and aim for wider appeals.

Despite its tremendous growth and success, the advertising industry is far from idyllic. Newsstand sales, which are the largest form of profit for the magazine industry, fell by 12 percent in 2008, and "according to Media Industry Newsletter, gross ad pages so far in 2009 have dropped a staggering 22% - that coming off a dismal 2008" (Garfield, 2009). In addition, the advertising industry continues to be chastised for highly sexualized campaigns and sexist views toward women (Reichert, 2003). Part of this criticism comes from a lack of females in executive positions. Fortune Magazine's 50 Most Powerful Women in Business 2008 list did not include any women from the advertising industry. Although Sherry Lazarus used to be a perennial fixture on the list as the Chairman and CEO of global advertising agency Ogilvy Worldwide, a gap remains now that Lazarus has stepped down from her role

("12 List Dropouts," 2008). Women in the advertising industry also make substantially less wages over time than their male counterparts. A 2008 study by the American Progress Action on women's lifetime wage losses found that the average woman makes 78 cents for every dollar made by a man, or an approximate loss of $434,000 in wages for the average female worker over a 40-year career. Specifically, women in the arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media industries lose an average of $238,000 in wages over the course of a 40-year career in comparison to men (Arons, 2008). This gender disparity within the industry may contribute to the less realistic images of women that can be found in advertisements; this, however, would also require further research.

Finally, an additional aspect of this research is the recent phenomenon of Facebook. Facebook, a social networking website, was established in 2004 by Harvard student Mark Zuckerberg as a way to communicate with other students on campus. The website soon attracted users from other universities after becoming public in 2006, and it quickly grew into a vast network for college students across the United States. Since then, Facebook has further expanded, becoming available to any user with an e-mail account, and in March 2009, the website announced that it had achieved over two hundred millionth users. With this remarkable development, "Facebook is rapidly becoming the Web's dominant social ecosystem and an essential personal and business networking tool in much of the wired world" (Stone, 2009).

A number of researchers have studied social networking websites as a phenomenon in itself and its potential effects on the social development of younger generations (Boyd & Ellison, 2007; Subrahmanyam & Greenfield, 2008). Because Facebook is relatively new, however, there have been few studies that specifically focus on the website's content. One of the few was conducted by Shanyang Zhao, Sherri Grasmuck, and Jason Martin (2008) to understand identity performance on a non-anonymous website. Past studies on online dating, which is considered to be an anonymous online activity, have researched how people attempt to create attractive personas through carefully selected photographs or descriptive phrases that hide less attractive features or traits. What makes Facebook different, however, is it is most frequently

used to connect with friends, family members, co-workers, and other offline acquaintances. While individuals have the freedom to create their own profiles, post photographs, and join different groups, there is a greater chance of being known or identified in real life, which places limitations on how people choose to portray themselves (Zhao et al., 2008).

Zhao et al. hypothesized that Facebook users would still use strategies of self-presentation in order to portray themselves in an idealized way. They concluded that Facebook users tended to stay within reasonable normative expectations of their offline personalities by posting basic and truthful information about themselves. However, they also found that most users also embellished aspects of their profile and posted numerous group photographs in order to appear more socially desirable and popular. This apparent "preference for 'show' over 'tell' … may be attributable to the prevailing youth culture, the campus setting with its dense possibilities for off-line socializing, … [and] the distinctive features of the Facebook environment" (p. 1831). For college students, the social networking website is a vital tool. Not only can they use Facebook to look up information on classmates, potential roommates, and love interests, they can also craft their profiles to attempt to display an ideal, cool, and popular image. This frequently translates to their offline personalities and how people perceive them based on what they have already seen on Facebook.

In a sense, all Facebook users, not just college students, utilize their Facebook profiles and the photographs that are posted or "tagged" as personal advertisements. Because they control the information posted on their profiles, they are able to craft an image that is meant to be appreciated and liked by others. Goffman's contention that advertisements create an idealized pseudo-reality can also be extended to Facebook photographs. By choosing particular photographs, Facebook users construct selves that reflect a heightened reality. Users also determine whether certain photographs and photo albums are available to the public or kept private ("blocked"), which enables them to further control their self-image and the way that they are perceived by others.

The connection that can be made between *Gender Advertisements* and Facebook is at the core of this research endeavor. Not only will I update Goffman's research to contemporary times, but I will apply Goffman's principles to Facebook photographs to determine whether the ideal images of reality that can be seen in advertisements are reflected and emulated in Facebook photographs, or if women present themselves in a less idealized fashion. With this intent, my project will provide answers for the following questions:

- RQ1: Have thirty years of feminism and cultural enlightenment changed magazine advertisements?

- RQ2: Do women represent themselves in their personal yet publically available Facebook photographs as independent, strong, and competent, or are they the infantile, dependent, and care-needing women of Goffman's collection?

An additional area of concern is the effects of new technology on the representation of women in advertisements. In particular, a recent advertising campaign for vodka company Svedka called "Join the Party" features Svedka_Grl, a futuristic female robot, or "fembot," with unnaturally large breasts and a nearly non-existent waist. With taglines such as "Support socialized plastic surgery" and "Put a fembot in the White House," many individuals decried the advertisements as distasteful and disrespectful to women (Garcia, 2008). The campaign has also been repeatedly cited by the Distilled Spirits Council of the United States for "violating the trade group's code against depicting 'graphic or gratuitous nudity,' 'sexually lewd or indecent images of or language' and degrading 'the image, form or status of women'" (Mullman, 2007). Despite these public criticisms, Svedka's sales increased by 60% in 2006 to 1.1 million cases, only one year after the campaign's initial launch, and the company was purchased by Constellation Brands for $384 million in 2007 for its "hot, edgy brand built on provocative advertising" (Mullman, 2007). Svedka's advertisements demonstrate a new type of female subordination, a

mechanization of women that creates an ideal that is impossible to naturally attain. Due to the success of the Svedka advertising campaign, I will also seek to answer the following question:

- RQ3: Is there an eighth phenomenon, the mechanization of women, present in modern advertising?

METHOD

This study analyzed the portrayal of gender in magazine advertisements and in Facebook photographs. The sample of magazine advertisements was drawn from issues of national general interest and women's magazines, including *People*, *Marie Claire*, *OK!*, and *The New York Times Magazine*, from January 2008 to January 2009. The advertisements were collected in partnership with Kristen Brekne of Bryant University, another researcher studying advertisements and gender displays. By studying a full-year period of magazines, we intended to build greater insight into the full representation of the portrayal of gender in advertisements, regardless of special issues or seasons. From our sample of over three hundred advertisements, I chose 33 advertisements that fully encompassed the criteria of Goffman's pre-established coding of relative size, function ranking, feminine touch, ritualization of subordination, and licensed withdrawal.

In addition to magazine advertisements, Facebook photographs were analyzed for deeper cultural meaning. The photographs used were gathered from individuals with pre-established Facebook accounts. A Facebook group was created called "Bryant University Research Project – Share Your Facebook Photos!" in order to attract and organize participants. The group members were recruited using the following announcement:

> I'm looking for your Facebook pictures – photos of yourself, your friends, your family, your anything!
>
> I am a senior at Bryant University, and I am working on an Honors Capstone Project called "Gender Advertisements: Replication of a Classic Work Examining Women, Magazines, and Facebook Photographs." This project will set out to determine whether the findings of Erving Goffman's 1979 study of

gender advertising have or have not changed over the past thirty years. As part of my research, I will be studying Facebook photographs and comparing them to contemporary advertisements – this is where you come in!

Your membership in this group will signify your permission for me to use your photographs in my research project. You can also send me a Friend Request and/or message with permission to use your photos (either all photographs or any specific albums/photos).

In return for any photographs used in my project, I will give you $2.00, a copy of my final paper, and an invitation to my presentation and reception in April. Let me know if you have any questions, and please pass this along to anyone and everyone you know – the more photographs I receive, the better my project will be! Thank you for your help!

The main image displayed on the group's page was a computer generated image of a generic camera. An advertisement or a photograph was not used in order to prevent any potential biases.   Invitations to the group were sent to nearly 300 individuals who were personal acquaintances, or pre-established "friends" on Facebook. Individuals who joined the group were also encouraged to send a link to the group to their friends, which would widen the range of participants and take advantage of the website's social networking capabilities.

In addition to the creation of the group, a paid advertisement was placed on Facebook:

The image of the camera that was used for the group was also used in the advertisement to maintain continuity. Minimal details were used in the content of the advertisement in order to attract interest, and Bryant University was named in order to gain credibility from skeptical outsiders.

My advertisement targeted individuals between the ages of 18 and 25 in the United States who were college students at Bryant University, Harvard University, Columbia University, Boston University, University of California – Berkeley, Georgetown University, University of Illinois, Michigan State University, Northwestern University, University of California – Los Angeles, University of North Carolina, George Washington University, American University, Arizona State University, Iowa State University, University of South Dakota, University of Texas – Dallas, and Northwest Missouri State University. These institutions were chosen to represent schools from across the country, and with the exception of Bryant University, were award-winning members of the Associated Collegiate Press. It was initially intended that advertisements would be placed in these colleges' newspapers. However, for the purposes of this study, and because Facebook photographs were being specifically courted, it was presumed that more students would respond to an advertisement regarding Facebook photographs on the Facebook website rather than in editions of school newspapers.

After the creation of the advertisement, 134,373 impressions were made as reported by the Facebook Advertising Manager, and 33 individuals clicked on the link to the group. In total, 93 individuals joined the Facebook group, and 4 individuals sent private messages granting permission to use their photographs, bringing the list of participants to 97. From these 97 participants, over 13,000 photographs were made available; nearly every participant was tagged in at least 100 photographs, and many participants also had multiple photo albums with at least sixty photographs in each album. From these photographs, a final sample of 26 photographs is featured in this study. All of these photographs were similarly chosen based on how well they fit into Goffman's pre-established five coding schemes.

Goffman researched in the phenomenological tradition. This encourages a deep textural analysis of what cultural objects in order to illuminate what society comes to think of as natural when the essence of objects becomes obscured. Because this research was modeled after Goffman's work, it also follows in the phenomenological tradition and does not make assumptions of randomness. In addition, because qualitative research was conducted rather than quantitative research, there was no need for random samples or quantification of results.

Opting for a purposive convenience sample, Goffman rejected randomness in order to demonstrate and present particular examples of how a very specific form of gender stereotyping occurred in real-world commercial displays. This research intends to achieve the same goal through the use of examples of advertising and photographs that can be naturally found in an everyday environment.

A Note on Method

Although the phenomenological tradition may seem untraditional in comparison to more formal, quantitative studies, it is a valid research approach that is useful in this setting. According to phenomenologists Jack T. Hanford and Dudley D. Cahn (1984), phenomenology attempts to "do justice to the uniqueness of the individual and the uniqueness of the individual's world view" (p. 279). The goal of phenomenological research is to understand the meaning of a subject within its natural setting, not to explain or make predictions about the subject in a controlled environment. It recognizes that subjects appear best in a natural state and "will present and presence themselves sufficiently to the consciousness which is willing to see, to listen, and to receive their presence" (Queener, 1982, p. 43).

In addition, because phenomenology is a process that depends upon researchers' interpretations of a particular subject, ontologically it thrives on individual opinions and reflections to come up with a unified approach to the world. As Queener wrote, "The perceiving consciousness, while the organ of perception, can (and does) in reflection present itself to itself for observation and meaning" (p. 43). Phenomenology acknowledges that researchers bring attention to themselves and recognize the inclusion of their values, principles, and life experiences in their studies. Rather than viewing individuals' opinions as a hindrance to the authenticity or purity of research, phenomenology embraces researchers' perspectives as critical toward building a collective understanding of a phenomenon (Miller, 2008).

Using the phenomenological approach, this study's goal is to enhance understanding of the advertisements and photographs that can be found in an everyday setting and how they may relate to our culture. It is not my intention to prove or disprove; merely, it is to demonstrate what is viewed in my social surroundings.

RESULTS: MODERN ADVERTISING

In keeping with Goffman's original work, I analyzed and coded modern commercial advertisements according to five coding categories: feminine touch, function ranking, ritualization of subordination, relative size, and licensed withdrawal. The following are my research results, which are arranged according to the seven phenomena that Goffman found through his research process.

The First Phenomenon

The first phenomenon Goffman noted during his research of commercial advertisements was how a woman was taller than a man only when he was her social inferior. Otherwise, women were overwhelmingly depicted as shorter and smaller than men. According to Goffman, "biological dimorphism underlies the probability that the male's usual superiority of status over the female will be expressible in his greater girth and height" (p. 28). My research produced similar findings to those of Goffman; the majority of advertisements that feature men and women often feature men as taller and women as shorter, especially as a means of displaying power and strength. In advertisements where women were meant to be socially superior to men, the women were frequently taller than the men, which powerfully demonstrated the value that society places on height in relation to influence and control.
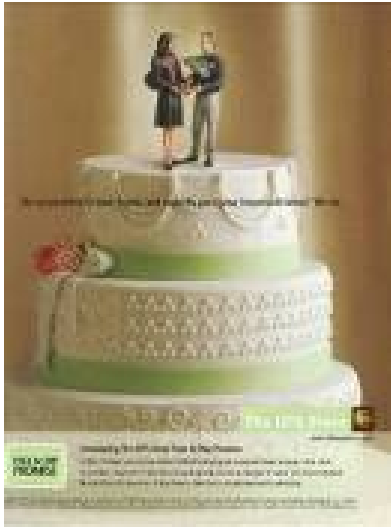
In this advertisement for the United Postal Service (UPS), for instance, the woman is dressed in a business suit while the man is wearing a UPS uniform. Individuals in business suits are typically viewed as members of a socially high and professional class, while individuals in uniforms are seen as socially lower and "blue-collar" workers. In addition to her outfit, the woman is slightly taller than the man, which demonstrates the use of height as a status symbol. She is also handing him a lamp to package and ship, essentially delegating a task to her subordinate. Though the woman's superior status is clear, the man and woman's presence on top of the wedding cake, which is the largest object in the advertisement, takes away from the power of the woman's position. It forces the reader to compare the two to a newly married couple, as if the man would care for and value the woman as a husband would for his wife, and as if the woman is delegating a task to her husband.

An advertisement for the Renaissance Hotel also displays the use of height, space, and costume to display social power. This image is based on the painting *The Birth of Venus* by Sandro Botticelli. In the painting, Venus, the goddess of beauty and love, emerges from a body of water as a grown woman with the aid of one male and one female Zephyr (spiritual servants), and a goddess greets her on the shore with a cloak ("Birth of Venus, by the Artist Sandro Botticelli," 2009). This

advertisement draws upon facets of Botticelli's classic work, including the beautiful woman in the center of the image, a body of water, the two servants waiting nearby, and the long cloak being offered by a servant. However, instead of a female goddess, a man who is significantly shorter than the woman is depicted, a change that demonstrates male adoration

and deference to the superior female. In addition, in the original painting, the Zephyrs are flying above Venus. In this advertisement, the two servants are firmly on the ground and shorter than the leading woman in order to demonstrate their subordination. It is worthwhile to note that the female servant is as attentive as her male counterpart to the central woman as the male servant. This implies that social class remains more important than gender when determining females' subordination.

In comparison to the previous two advertisements, the woman in the center of an advertisement for the city of Austin, Texas is shorter than the man, who is presumed to be her romantic partner. She is also clutching onto his arm, which implies dependency and demonstrates the man's perceived strength and protectiveness.   This is typical of many of the advertisements found in today's magazines, and there are too many instances to list, particularly as a means of displaying subordination. However, throughout the rest of the advertisements featured in this paper, it is telling that every advertisement with a man and a woman shows the man as the taller person.

The Second Phenomenon

According to Goffman, the second phenomenon of advertisements in the 1970s was how women's hands were seen holding or barely touching objects and themselves. As Gill remarked, "while men's touch was functional and instrumental … women's was light and caressing and often seemed to have no purpose at all" (p. 79-80). This phenomenon is still visible in modern advertising, and it was the most prevalent throughout my research. When women were shown touching parts of their own bodies, they were captured as if they were enjoying rapturous, private moments to themselves.

In advertisements for Aveeno and Olay, for example, the women are dreamily caressing themselves to demonstrate their appreciation for the skincare products. Both models have

smiles on their faces as they apply the lotion and body wash; they are not simply moisturizing or washing themselves, they are enjoying the process.

Similarly, in this Miu Miu advertisement, the model, actress Kirsten Dunst, is lightly touching her head with a small smirk on her face, "conveying a sense of one's body being a delicate and previous thing" (Goffman, 1979, p. 31). Her dreamy expression also fits into Goffman's category of licensed withdrawal; she appears as if she is removed from her present surroundings.

In this series of three advertisements from Sally Hansen, each of the three models is gently holding or caressing objects as a way to display their nails. The first advertisement shows a woman lightly caressing a puppy and nurturing it as if it is a child. This depiction fits into the traditionally maternal and caring role of a woman. In the second advertisement, the woman is gently holding an apple; she is not grasping it as if it is something to be eaten. Finally, in the third advertisement, the model is barely holding the Color Quick applicator between her fingertips. This are highly unnatural ways to hold or touch objects, and while Sally Hansen is attempting to draw focus on the product through the delicate display of the hands, they are unrealistic scenes that are demonstrative of the advertising industry's use of women as props.

Sally Hansen is far from the only company that features women holding objects in unnatural ways in their advertisements. These advertisements from Tiffany & Co. and Prada also portray women who are barely holding objects in their hands. The model in the Tiffany and Company advertisement is delicately holding onto the stem of the flower, and the use of the flower, the hand gesture, and the wide-eyed look is meant to exude a sense of femininity and naïveté. In the advertisement for Prada, the

woman is barely holding onto the small purse as she looks away in the opposite direction, an open-mouthed expression on her face. Neither the flower nor the purse serve any particular

purpose in the advertisements, and they are not being used or displayed in functional, or even believable, ways.

The Third Phenomenon

Goffman noted as his third phenomenon that when an advertisement involved a type of instruction, men were always instructing or teaching women as if they were children. Advertisements that involved a type of instruction were relatively rare during my research. However, when such advertisements were found, they were consistent with Goffman's findings as women were always the individuals being instructed or led by men and not the other way around.

In an advertisement promoting tourism in Ireland, the man is teaching the woman how to eat an oyster. While the woman looks confused and appears to be laughing at herself, the man appears to be in control of the situation. The woman has hunched shoulders and her body looks uncomfortable and rigid. The man, on the other hand, demonstrates confidence through his pushed-back shoulders and comfortable stance.

While this Louis Vuitton advertisement does not feature a traditional type of physical instruction, the man appears to be teaching the woman something as he gestures with his hand and she listens intently. In real life, the models are Francis Ford Coppola and his daughter Sofia. Both Francis and Sofia are directors, and the impression gained from the advertisement is Francis is offering fatherly advice to his daughter. While Francis looks focused and driven, firmly clutching a set of papers which appear to be a script, Sofia is dreamily laying in the grass with a slightly overwhelmed expression on her face. Her position on the ground also fits into Goffman's noted phenomenon of women in advertisements lying on the ground. "In contrived scenes in advertisements, men tend to be located higher than women, thus allowing elevation to be exploited as a delineative resource" (Goffman, 1979, p. 43). While Francis is sitting in a chair, her position on the floor suggests her subordinate and infantilized role.

Finally, in this advertisement from Michael Kors, the man is physically guiding the woman off of an airplane and toward a waiting car, demonstrating body-addressed service. The firm grip of his hand on her arm gives a greater impression of her need for his assistance rather than his desire to be gentlemanly. Also, the man is looking ahead directly at the car, and the woman is looking into the distance in the other direction. This further demonstrates men taking control of situations in advertisements while the women simply allow it to occur.

The Fourth Phenomenon

Goffman noted that in advertisements that featured someone sitting or lying on a bed or a floor, that person was frequently a woman or a child. This fourth phenomenon was supported through my research. Women were often found laying on some type of surface, whether it was a bed, floor, or chair, in an unnatural fashion or in an unnatural setting.

In these advertisements for Pima Cotton and Softsoap, both women are posing outdoors in the middle of a city setting. In the image for Pima Cotton the model is laying in the street in a bed of cotton, as if she is one with the elements. The tagline reads "Inspire your senses," as if one should aspire to lie outside in a bed of cotton; if anyone, male or female, was found lying in a city street, he or she would surely be labeled as crazy. Similarly, in the Softsoap advertisement, the woman is perched on a massage table in a robe as others walk around her fully clothed as they go about their day. While these advertisements are not meant to be serious representations of reality, they are perfect representations of the phenomenon; while both advertisements present scenes that are unnatural, it does not appear as outlandish or abnormal to view women in these images as it would be to view men. Picture a man lying in a bed of cotton or sitting on a massage table in the middle of a city street; it is a difficult image to conjure because it would be a much rarer find in an advertisement.

While these advertisements for Gillette Venus razors and clothing company St. John display women who are in a laying position, the tones of the two advertisements are remarkably different. The advertisement for Venus razors is targeted to young women, which is apparent from the teenage girl lying on her bed while she texts someone with her trendy-looking phone. Surrounded by colorful pillows and decorations, the girl's laidback position with her legs akimbo and her feet against the wall is meant to be playful and youthful. On the other hand, the advertisement for St. John emanates a darker mood. While the dark-haired woman's knees are also bent, similar to those of the teenage girl, her serious facial expression and her intent focus on the camera is intended to seem mysterious, and the blonde-haired woman's faraway expression also expresses a sense of confusion and mystification. Yet it is difficult for either woman to be taken seriously while they are lounging in these positions; though it is intended for a more adult clientele, the advertisement for St. John falls into the phenomenon of the infantilization of women. Their positions "can be read as an acceptance of subordination, an expression of ingratiation, submissiveness, and appeasement" (Goffman, 1979, p. 46). Though they are adult models, these two women are little more than slightly grown teenagers in the advertising world.

Finally, this advertisement for The Water Club Hotel is not an exception to my findings,

despite the man's slightly sprawled position on the chaise lounge next to the woman. While the woman is fully lying on the lounge chair, what is especially important to note is the advertisement's setting; unlike other advertisements that feature women lying in unnatural settings, this setting, a hotel, is entirely believable. It is expected that the woman would lie on the chair, but it is also expected of the man; it is not surprising or unbelievable to find him in such a position. In addition, his elevated stance above her still manages to indicate his control over the situation and her subordination to him.

The Fifth Phenomenon

As his fifth phenomenon, Goffman wrote that when a woman's head or eye was averted in an advertisement, it was always in relation to the man with whom she was pictured. This phenomenon was found in modern advertisements, although it did not appear as frequently as the other phenomena.

In an advertisement for dating website Match.com, for example, the man and woman are standing together in a pool with their arms locked in an embrace. As the man looks straight ahead, the woman's body and head are turned to fully face the man, as if she is "allowing [her] feelings to settle back into control while [she] is somewhat protected from direct scrutiny" (Goffman, 1979, p. 62). Similarly, in an advertisement for the movie *Made of Honor*, the head and eyes of the lead actress, Michelle Monaghan, are averted toward the lead actor, Patrick Dempsey. While Dempsey appears self-assured and

collected, Monaghan appears distracted by Dempsey's presence. Also, although the remaining women in the background are looking straight at the camera, they are all out of the camera's focus, implying that they are less important and not typical of the normal woman. The only woman who is in focus, Monaghan, is turned toward Dempsey. This exemplifies Dempsey's control of the situation; he still manages to take attention away from the bride on her wedding day. It also portrays the other women as less important and their confidence as untypical of the normal female behavior toward Dempsey.

This advertisement for Banana Republic is a near perfect example of Goffman's fifth phenomenon. The woman's entire body is turned toward the man, her arm locked into his as she gazes at him with a loving yet rigid expression. The man, on the other hand, appears relaxed as he looks straight at the camera. The slight smirk on his face demonstrates his confidence as well as his control of the situation; while the woman's attention is entirely directed toward him, he appears to be coolly enjoying the attention, yet not completely interested.

The Sixth Phenomenon

Goffman found that woman in advertisements appeared to be mentally drifting while still remaining physically close to a male, "as though his aliveness to the surround and his readiness to cope with anything that might present itself were enough for both of them" (Goffman, 1979, p. 65). This phenomenon was seen in a number of advertisements in a variety of ways.

These advertisements for Burberry and Dolce & Gabbana display an exaggerated scene of female licensed withdrawal and removal from a social situation. In the advertisement for Burberry, the female model has a faraway expression on her face, and she appears to be clutching onto the male's arm. The "arm lock" was one of the four most prevalent behavioral arrangements found in Goffman's original work. Goffman found that through arm locks, "the woman shows herself to be receiving support, and both the man's hands are free for whatever instrumental tasks may arise" (1979, p. 54). By holding onto the man's arm, the woman is using him as a sense of security and a way to stay safe and connected in within their social context. In contrast, there are only two women present in the Dolce & Gabbana advertisement, and they are surrounded by a large group of men. However, both of the women convey feelings of complete removal from their social situation. They appear to be lost within their setting, an overwhelming party filled with people, but they remain anchored through the men who surround them.

The Zales advertisement features a different type of mental drift. In the image, the female is exhibiting an expression of ecstasy as she admires her new engagement ring. She is physically close to her fiancé as he holds her, but she appears to be more focused on the ring than on her present situation.   This advertisement also fits the traditional stereotype of women as obsessed with the idea of weddings and marriage. Goffman warned, however, that

"in American society, women smile more, and more expansively, than men, which arrangement appears to be carried over into advertisements, perhaps with little conscious intent" (1979, p. 48). While the expansive smile featured in this advertisement can be viewed as a type of withdrawal, it does not necessarily indicate complete submission or removal.

The Seventh Phenomenon

In Goffman's seventh and final phenomenon, women appeared disoriented due to psychological loss or removal from a social situation. This is different from the previous category because a male presence isn't necessarily required in the photograph. Goffman wrote the following when describing this phenomenon:

> Women more than men, it seems, are pictured engaged in involvements which remove them psychologically from the social situation at large, leaving them unoriented in it and to it, and presumably, therefore, dependent on the protectiveness and goodwill of others who are (or might come to be) present. (1979, p. 57)

Instead of relying on a man for support, women are portrayed in advertisements as lost in an innocent and childlike way, regardless of the social setting of the advertisement. While examples were found, this phenomenon was more difficult to find than the sixth phenomenon, as women were more frequently pictured with men as they experienced licensed withdrawal.

In the advertisement for State Farm Insurance, the main woman in the passenger's seat appears to be disoriented and completely removed from her present location. The daydreaming woman's psychological displacement

can be seen through the delicate positioning of her hand, her bent elbow, and her dreamy expression. Although she is physically close to the female driver, the main woman appears to be carefree and in an entirely different yet pleasant location in her mind.

In contrast, the advertisement for Nivea features a woman in the background who appears to be unhappily removed from social interaction with two women presumed to be her friends. Her downturned head, hunched shoulders, and uncomfortable smile indicate displeasure and unhappiness, which contradicts the wild smiles and laughter that is evident in the other two women.

As witnessed in these advertisements for United Colors of Benetton and Phi Collection, women dressed in costume can also be viewed as an example of removal from a social situation in an infantilized way. In the advertisement for United Colors of Benetton, for example, the two women appear to be young girls in dress-up clothing. From the way the women are dressed to their blank expressions, they do not appear to have any connection to reality. In the Phi Collection advertisement, the women are dressed in wigs and provocative clothing, and their canting postures, bent knees, self-touching, and wide eyes are meant to exude a childlike, coquettish image. It is difficult to imagine two men in either of these advertisements instead of the women; while it is seemingly natural for women to dress up in different clothing and take on different personas, it does not

appear to be comical or ironic, which would likely be the impression if men similarly dressed up in costume.

The Mechanization of Women: The New Eighth Phenomenon?

Although Svedka was the only company that used images of machines to represent women, a trend toward a mechanization of women could be seen in recent advertising campaigns. A number of companies manipulated and displayed images of their advertised products to emulate features of or the entirety of a woman's body. The use of innocuous objects to represent women has led to the creation of a literal objectification of women.

Pink bottles, for example, are strategically arranged to depict the shape of a woman's lips in an advertisement for UV Vodka. In an advertisement for ChapStick, tubes of ChapStick are meant to represent women's bodies, and the label on each bottle is doctored to look like a dress on a curvaceous woman.

In an advertisement for Jergens, an image of a female mannequin is behind the tagline, "Your skin isn't synthetic. So, why use a moisturizer that is?" While the advertisement is recognizing that women are not mechanized or made of fake parts, the use of the mannequin is still indicative of a growing trend of using objects to represent women.

Although this research is limited to commercial magazine advertisements, the mechanization of women has also been found in television advertisements and subsequently discussed throughout the industry. In particular, a Heineken DraughtKeg campaign that began in 2007 features a robotic woman who contains a DraughtKeg inside of her. The commercial was described in an article in the advertising industry publication *Advertising Age*:

> The commercial opens with her strutting mechanically out to a dance floor, Ms. Roboto style, to the pounding techno beat. Then the front of her pleated, futuristic minidress dissolves to reveal her innards. Va va va womb? Nope. We do not see her reproductive organs. This is, after all, the perfect cyberwoman. What we see is a Heineken DraughtKeg. She then grabs the handy umbilicus and taps a cold one. (Garfield, 2007)

The advertisement is meant to engage men's attention by coming up with the "perfect" woman, who happens to be made of steel and dispenses Heineken with her set of two extra hands that appear from out of the sides of her chest. As the author commented in regard to the company's use of sexist stereotypes, "That isn't futuristic. That's retrograde" (Garfield, 2007).

These advertisements are not being presented as proof of a new phenomenon; more extensive research would be required before indicating any finding along those lines, and this study does not seek to prove or disprove any phenomenon. Instead, the advertisements can be viewed as evidence of a new trend in the commercial display of women that would benefit from further study.

RESULTS: FACEBOOK

As in the previous section, I analyzed and coded Facebook photographs according to Goffman's five coding categories, and they are arranged here according to his noted seven phenomena.

The First Phenomenon

Throughout my research, I rarely found photographs that reflected Goffman's first phenomenon of advertising, which was how women were only taller than men who were their social inferiors. Many of the photographs that individuals post on Facebook are images of family members, friends, and acquaintances, not images of themselves with their social inferiors or superiors. In addition, the average height of a man in the United States is five feet, nine inches, and the average height of a woman is five feet, four inches (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention). Because women are typically shorter than men, many Facebook photographs reflect this biological trait by circumstance, as seen in the following two photographs. Height is not something that is generally important or highlighted in women's own display.

When a woman is taller than a man, however, the photographs are meant to be ironic and comical. As seen in this photograph, the woman poses in an intentionally exaggerated way that emphasizes their seemingly unnatural differences in height. By bending her knees to be shorter than the man, she is recognizing their difference in height and playing it up for the camera because it is so unlikely.

The Second Phenomenon

Goffman's second phenomenon recognized that women in advertisements were seen gently holding, caressing, or barely touching objects or themselves. In photographs on Facebook, however, women are frequently seen clutching drinks, food, and items in a naturally firm way.

In these two photographs, the young women are clutching their drinks without seeming to make an effort toward changing their grasps to appear dainty or more feminine. Unlike commercial displays, which featured objects such as glasses like props, these glasses serve a

utilitarian purpose, and it is clear that the women intend to drink from the glasses rather than simply pose with them.

In this photograph, the three women are shown holding their food in a natural way, and one of the women is actually taking a bite. Unlike one of the Sally Hansen advertisements which featured a woman delicately holding an apple, these young women are tightly holding onto their hamburgers not as props, but as actual, edible objects.

Finally, when women are shown gently grasping objects in Facebook photographs, it is meant to be playful and tongue-in-cheek; they recognize that they are acting in unnatural ways and mocking for the camera. In a photograph of a woman barely clasping a camera between her fingertips, the exaggerated expression on her face indicates that she is not taking herself seriously, and she does not intend the photographer to take her seriously, either. In addition, in a photograph of a woman gently holding a new pair of earrings, she is purposefully showing the earrings off to the camera as if she were a model posing with an object in an advertisement. The focus, however, is still on the two women, not on the object. In both photographs, it can be assumed that neither gesture is indicative of real life. Instead, they are isolated incidences that were in good humor and, consciously or not, intended to parody common gender displays.

The Third Phenomenon

I did not find many photographs that featured a type of instruction. Many of the photographs were taken at events or in locations in order to document the people rather than a particular activity or instruction. However, I did find photographs that featured men in traditionally female domestic roles, which was not seen in my examination of commercial advertisements.

In this photograph, for instance, the woman seems to be instructing the man how to iron.

While the man is ironing a pair of pants, the woman is sitting closely next to him and leaning toward the ironing board as if she is watching carefully and contributing hints along the way. While this photograph demonstrates a type of female-to-male instruction, it cannot necessarily be seen as an advancement. The photograph indicates that the woman is knowledgeable about a domestic activity and has to impart her wisdom to a clueless man. This is consistent with the traditional values that are still apparent in many modern advertisements.

This photograph features a man in the kitchen who is proudly holding a knife and a piece of chopped potato. However, it is unclear if the man intends the photo to be ironic, as if he is playing up his presence in the kitchen, or if he was in earnest. In either case, his role in the kitchen without a woman visibly present is noteworthy. This is the only photograph I found of an individual cooking in a kitchen, and the fact that it is a man rather than a woman contradicts the notion of a woman assuming this position, particularly in relation to the use of traditional gender roles in advertising.

The Fourth Phenomenon

While numerous women were found sitting or lying on a floor, bed, or chair in commercial advertisements, there were numerous photographs of both men and women in seated positions on Facebook. Women's seated positions are not exaggerated, and there is little distinction made in regard to one's social standing, particularly when they are sitting with men.

In addition, the following two photographs are set outdoors. Unlike the Softsoap and Pima Cotton advertisements, however, these photographs do not appear forced or unnatural. They feature both men and women sitting comfortably on lawn chairs in backyard environments. Everyone is looking directly at the camera, and there is no emphasis on any one individual. This implies that a greater equality can be found in reality in relation to this phenomenon, as women are not viewed as less mature or credible.

Finally, in this photograph, the woman lying in bed is using the bed for its utilitarian purpose. The photograph was not taken ironically or with a hidden subtext or subordination or infantilization. Instead, the picture is taken of the woman simply as she is attempting to sleep with no underlying meaning or hidden agenda.

The Fifth Phenomenon

Goffman's fifth phenomenon of commercial advertisements, female head/eye aversion in relation to men, was consistent with the Facebook photographs found in my research. Consistently, when a woman's head is turned, it is in relation to the man with whom she is pictured. Overwhelmingly, this occurs when women are leaning in to kiss men. As the women lean in, either in a romantic or playful fashion, the men frequently remain looking at the camera. Although the men's expressions change from photograph to photograph, ranging from bored to content to joyous, the women typically have serious expressions, indicating their focus on the men.

Although this photograph demonstrates a male with his head averted in relation to a woman as he kisses her head, it is an anomaly in comparison to the rest of my findings in this fifth phenomenon. Not only is the male averting his head, the woman is looking away with a mirthful expression on her face, as if she is looking at or speaking to someone else. Despite this, the photograph does not appear unnatural; it is not unrealistic for a man to be pictured kissing a woman, and it is not necessarily a surprise to find a photo such as this on Facebook. What is surprising, however, is the lack of analogous photographs.

The Sixth Phenomenon

The photographs I found throughout my research contradicted Goffman's sixth phenomenon of women mentally drifting while remaining physically close to men. In the majority of photographs that feature a man and a woman, the woman is looking directly into the camera, even as they are physically close to the man. There is no indication that the women are mentally drifting or leaning on the men for physical or emotional support. Instead, the men and women appear to be equals with mutual regard for each other.

In these two photographs, each woman has a hand pressed against the man's chest, and each man has an arm around the woman with whom he is pictured. Everyone appears mentally present and aware of the situation, and the women do not appear to be leaning on the men for support; both photographs display scenes of reciprocated affection.

In this second pair of photographs, each woman has an arm stretched across the man's chest as she leans into him. As in the previous pair of photographs, both the men and women are happily looking directly into the camera, and neither woman appears to be mentally drifting from her present situation. Although the second photograph features a woman lifting her right left up and leaning more heavily against the man, the action is viewed as a playful gesture and not one that is necessary for physical or mental support.

The Seventh Phenomenon

I did not find any photographs that portrayed women as disoriented due to psychological loss. This result, however, intrinsically makes sense. As established in the literature review section, Facebook is a social networking website, and individuals often post photographs of themselves with their friends in order to appear more social and popular. It is assumed that

people will not take or post photographs of others who are psychologically removed or disoriented, as in reality individuals who are unhappy or unengaged in a social situation would not pose for photographs.

Although I did not find any photographs that featured disoriented women, there were photographs of women in costume. These photographs are different from those in modern commercial advertisements, though, because the women are dressed in costumes for certain purposes. In one photograph, for instance, the young women are dressed up for a themed fashion show, and their costumes and wigs were intentionally chosen and worn. In another photograph, the women are dressed up for Halloween, a night on which both men and women purposefully dress themselves in costumes. Unlike commercial advertisements, these photographs are not perceived as examples of female infantilization because the women are consciously wearing outfits for specific purposes, and it is not as if they are moments on any randomly chosen day.

DISCUSSION

I originally pursued this project after reading *Gender Advertisements*. I was fascinated by Goffman's insight into the nuances and subtleties of magazine advertisements, which I had never before truly paid attention to, and I was motivated to update his work to contemporary times and provide new information regarding the display of gender roles in society. Not only did I want to replicate Goffman's work through the phenomenological tradition to maintain

his original integrity, but I wanted to describe the advertising world as I view it in my own life. Like many other twenty-one-year-old women, I enjoy looking at advertisements in magazines almost as much as I enjoy reading the articles. The advertisements always feature good-looking men and women, and they frequently display covetable and trendy new clothing items and products. These advertisements, though, do not reflect real life. My friends and I do not act like the women in advertisements or know anyone who does. Despite this, society still views these women as not only ideal but representational, and people want to believe that by buying certain products, they can come a step closer to achieving the "perfection" that is reflected in advertisements. The images I came across throughout my research demonstrated that little has changed in the portrayal of women in commercial advertisements from 1979 to today, and Facebook photographs infrequently reflect the phenomena found in advertisements. The first finding is not surprising when taking into account how society has used and continues to use advertisements to simplify life. The second, however, might be considered a heartening surprise, as it demonstrates that when women are free to display or represent their own gender, they do it with much more freedom and individuality than what is seen in most commercial advertisements.

Advertisements help society shape its perceptions of the world and the ways in which it views appropriate gender roles and behavior. According to Davis and Baran (1981), we look to advertisements and other forms of mass media as "simple solutions" for society's problems. These solutions are a heuristic tool that "enable[s] us to continue doing things as we have routinely done them in the past, and we avoid the necessity of questioning routinely experienced self-identities, personifications of others, or the seriousness of situations" (p. 161). Rather than consciously process day-to-day problems or issues, individuals can quickly identify solutions with little to no thought because these solutions ultimately create social norms that dictate appropriate behavior and reactions. Thus, advertisers rely on the same types of images because they allow people to quickly generate the same types of thoughts and reactions every time. While some researchers argue that advertisements can be construed in many ways due to life experiences and cultural influences, advertisers' reliance on consistent images creates less room for interpretation (Kang, 1997).

In comparison, there are no hidden meanings or heuristics needed for Facebook photographs because they capture real moments in time. While it is natural for people to present optimal images of themselves and their friends, reality as captured by real, everyday people who are not in the advertising industry does not emulate the reality exhibited through advertisements. Instead, there are photographs of family, friends, and social situations; women are not infantilized or subordinated in comparison to men. If women do emulate poses, gestures, or expressions from advertisements, they often do so in an intentionally ironic way and the photographs are not taken seriously. Advertisements are meant to portray the advertisers' sense of what is ideal in society; they want people look to advertisements as a guide for their lives. But what is wrong with these Facebook photographs that do not reflect modern commercial advertisements? If a couple is not displaying what's found in an advertisement, does that make their relationship less than ideal? Common sense would say, of course not! Both advertisements and Facebook photographs appear to be natural when reviewed separately, but when comparing the two, it is clear that photographs, which reflect how women portray themselves and their personal realities, are better societal representations. Rather than photographs emulating advertisements, advertisements need to begin better reflecting the relationships, behaviors, and roles of both men and women in reality.

This is not to say that some advancement in the advertising industry have not been made over the course of the past thirty years. As noted in my results, there were categories such as head/eye aversion and male to female instruction that were not as prevalent in modern commercial advertisements as they were in 1979, and recent advertising campaigns for companies such as Dove have made conscious efforts to promote "real" women (Gill, 2007). Recent advertisements for TSE and Kenneth Cole, for instance, prominently feature women who are grabbing rather than gracefully touching their purses. The woman in the TSE advertisement is clutching her purse tightly to her chest in a way that demonstrates determination and strength, not in a gesture of fear. Although the viewer cannot see the model's face in the Kenneth Cole advertisement, one can see the tattoos that completely cover

her arm, a complete contrast to the fragile and delicate women who are typically seen in advertisements.

In addition, these advertisements for Discover and GoToMeeting feature women in dominant positions over men. The woman in the Discover advertisement appears to be instructing the man on how to care for their finances, and the woman in the GoToMeeting advertisement is wielding a chainsaw as a confused-looking man stands in the background. These types of scenes were not found in Goffman's study, and while they are not demonstrative of great changes toward gender displays in the future, they do indicate recognition on behalf of advertisers of different ways in which women can and should be portrayed.

Women have also made great strides in attaining public recognition and respect over the past thirty years. Most recently, as noted in the introduction, Hillary Clinton and Sarah Palin's presence in the 2008 presidential campaign created substantial conversational buzz around the world. The idea of a woman in one of the highest offices in the United States was exciting and noteworthy, and it sparked debates of the return of a new women's movement. Instead of

merely finding one of these women in a magazine advertisement or article, readers saw

images of Clinton and Palin featured on the front covers of notable publications such as *Time*

and *Newsweek*.

These images, however, were not free from controversy. Clinton was often lambasted for not

being feminine enough, and Palin was frequently satirized for being too feminine,

demonstrating the media's need to create a singular, ideal woman in order to properly

categorize them. In addition, their photographs were not always treated the same way as

images of male candidates. Notably, an image of Palin on the cover of *Newsweek* on October

13, 2008, drew criticism because it was showcased her untouched facial features. Andrea

Tantaros, a Republican media consultant, described her assessment of the cover on Fox News:

> This cover is a clear slap in the face of Sarah Palin. Why? Because it's
> unretouched. It highlights every imperfection that every human being has.
> We're talking unwanted facial hair, pores, wrinkles. (Swaine, 2008)

The un-doctored, natural image of Palin on the cover of the magazine was viewed as sexist

because previous cover images of male presidential candidates such as Barack Obama and

John McCain were doctored to cover blemishes and imperfections. However, the editors of

the magazine argued that they wanted to showcase Palin's true identity as a regular person.

Although the Palin cover was not an advertisement, the controversy has sparked a new

question: how "real" is *too* "real"? When an image is used in a magazine, why do we assume

that it should be doctored and that un-doctored photographs are unfair? The Palin campaign

might have attempted to spin the magazine cover in their favor, declaring that the use of an

unaltered photograph fit into Palin's image of an "everyday soccer mom." However, the

Republican critics' anger at the image demonstrates that it is generally assumed that images in

magazines do not and should not reflect real life. Commercial advertisements and images that

seem to reflect reality, however, can be found nearly anywhere – not only in magazines, but

through numerous mediums. We unflinchingly accept advertisements of women barely

holding objects, images of women's profiles as they dreamily gaze into the distance, and

endless stills of seemingly clueless women, and people become outraged when these

commercially available images do not reflect the typical ideals. Ultimately, what makes this "real"? What makes this acceptable?

Part of the hope of the women's movement of the 1960s and 1970s was that women would solve these questions by demanding to be taken seriously in society and reflect the images that they chose for themselves. Despite this optimism, women have continued to be portrayed in commercial advertising in traditional, subordinate ways, and there has not been a large women's movement since the 1970s to address or combat this issue. According to prominent feminist Courtney E. Martin, however, feminism is still present in modern society, but not as it was in the 1960s and 1970s. In Martin's opinion, women "might be less organized, [their] wins may be less dramatic – but that's only because the monolithic women's movement has been diffused. That's more than anything, a sign of success" (Clark-Flory, 2009). By strategically using communication and grassroots campaigns, women can make small changes that contribute to a larger movement.

Goffman's work was especially relevant when it was published because it came after the onset of one of the largest women's movements in history. Although my research does not appear to be published at a similar time, it can be argued with Martin's reasoning that it is actually being published at a time of an ongoing, silent movement. The results of my research can be part of this movement and used to critique subsequent advertisements and the way in which people, particularly women, are regarded in society. In addition, my research on Facebook photographs aims to provide a deeper meaning to the social networking website. With the increasing popularity of social networking sites, it is critical to understand how people are viewing and utilizing these sites, as well as how they are viewing and interpreting photographs of themselves and others. My hope is that my research and analysis will used to study and critique the potential cultural effects of how women present themselves and view the world around them.

APPENDIX

Appendix A - Advertisement Information
The following is the list of advertisements that were featured in this study, accompanied by the publications in which they were found and the date of the publications. They are listed in the order in which they can be found within the text.

1. Svedka. *In Style*, 2008.
2. The UPS Store. *In Style*, 2008.
3. Renaissance Hotels & Resorts. *The New Yorker*, 2008.
4. Austin, Texas. *Redbook*, 2008.
5. Prada: Eyewear. *The New York Times*, 2009.
6. Sally Hansen: Color Quick Fast Dry Nail Pen; Insta-Dry Anti-Chip Top Coat, Insta-Grip Fast Dry Base Coat, Insta-Dri Speed Dry Drops; and Nail Nutrition Daily Growth Treatment. *Marie Claire*, 2008.
7. Miu Miu: Eyewear. *Marie Claire*, 2008.
8. Tiffany & Co.: Paloma Picasso. *Marie Claire*, 2008.
9. Aveeno. *Marie Claire*, 2008.
10. Olay: Botanical Fusion Body Wash. *Redbook*, 2008.
11. Ireland Tourist Board. *The New Yorker*, 2008.
12. Louis Vuitton. *The New York Times*, 2008.
13. Gillette: Venus Embrace. *CosmoGirl*, 2008.
14. The Water Club Hotel. *The New York Times Magazine*, 2008.
15. St. John. *The New York Times Magazine*, 2008.
16. Softsoap: Spa Radiant Body Wash. *Redbook*, 2008.
17. Pima Cotton. *The New York Times Magazine*, 2008.
18. Match.com. *Rolling Stone*, 2008.
19. "Made of Honor." *InStyle*, 2008.
20. Banana Republic. *The New Yorker*, 2008.
21. Dolce & Gabbana. *Rolling Stone*, 2008.
22. Zales. *People*, 2008.
23. State Farm Insurance. *Marie Claire*, 2008.
24. Nivea: Good-bye Cellulite 30-Day Body Beauty Program. *Redbook*, 2008.
25. United Colors of Bennetton. *Marie Claire*, 2008.
26. Phi Collection. *In Style*, 2008.
27. UV Vodka. *Rolling Stone*, 2008.
28. ChapStick: True Shimmer. *People*, 2008.
29. Jergens. *People*, 2008.
30. Heineken: DraughtKeg. Image from *Advertising Age*, 2007.
31. TSE. *InStyle*, 2008.
32. Kenneth Cole. *Marie Claire*, 2008.
33. Discover. *Cosmopolitan*, 2008.
34. GoToMeeting. *Inc.*, 2008.

REFERENCES

"12 list dropouts." (2008, September 29). *Fortune*. Retrieved March 3, 2009, from http://money.cnn.com/galleries/2008/fortune/0809/gallery.mpw_dropouts.fortune/index.html

Arons, J. (2008, December). *Lifetime losses: The career wage gap*. Center for American Progress Action Fund. Accessed February 2, 2009, from http://www.american progressaction.org/issues/2008/pdf/equal_pay.pdf

Broyard, A. (1979, April 18). Books of the times; Saved from seriousness' the possible versus actual. *The New York Times*. Retrieved January 15, 2009, from www.nytimes.com

Boyd, D., & Ellison, N. B. (2007). Social network sites. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, 13,* 210-230.

Cahn, D. and Hanford, J. (1984). Perspectives on human communication research: Behaviorism, phenomenology, and an integrated view. *The Western Journal of Speech Communication, 48,* 188-94.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2005, August 12). *Quickstats: Mean weight and height among adults aged 20-74 years, by sex and survey period --- united states, 1960-2002*. Retrieved March 13, 2009, from http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/ mmwrhtml/mm5431a5.htm

Clark-Flory, T. (2009, March 31). R.I.P. women's movement. *Salon*. Retrieved March 31, 2009, from http://www.salon.com/mwt/broadsheet/feature/2009/03/31/ movement/print.html

Davis, D. K., & Baran, S. J. (1981). *Mass communication and everyday life: A perspective on theory and effects*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Garcia, T. (2008, June 11). Svedka's ad delivers idea in poor taste. *PR Week.* Retrieved November 3, 2008, from http://www.prweekus.com/Svedkas-ad-delivers-idea-in-poor-taste/article/111202

Garfield, B. (2007, August 27). Future may be brighter, but it's apocalypse now. *Advertising Age*. Retrieved March 23, 2009, from http://adadge.com/garfield/post? article_id=120078

Gill, R. (2007). *Gender and the media*. Malden, MA: Polity.

Goffman, E. (1979). *Gender advertisements* (1st Harper colophon ed.). New York, NY: Harper & Row.

Gornick, V. (1979). "Introduction" to *Gender Advertisements* (1st Harper colophon ed.). New York: Harper & Row.

Kang, M. (1997). The portrayal of women's images in magazine advertisements: Goffman's gender analysis revisited. *Sex Roles*, *37*(11/12), 979-996.

Lindner, K. (2004). Images of women in general interest fashion magazine advertisements from 1955 to 2002. *Sex Roles*, *51*(7/8).

"Birth of Venus, by the Artist Sandro Botticelli." (2009). *Loggia*. Accessed March 24, 2009, from http://www.loggia.com/art/renaissance/botticelli02.html

Manning, P. (1992). *Erving goffman and modern sociology*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Miller, K. (2005). *Communication theories: Perspectives, processes, and contexts* (2nd ed.*).* New York, NY: McGraw Hill.

Mullman, J. (2007). Why not nab a hot brand? Just look at Svedka deal. *Advertising Age*. Retrieved March 3, 2009, from web.ebscohost.com

Queener, L. (1982). Interpretation and phenomenology. *Communication* (2), 43-50.

Reichert, Tom. (2003). *The erotic history of advertising*. Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books.

Stone, B. (2009). Is facebook growing up too fast? *New York Times*. Retrieved March 28 2009, from http://www.nytimes.com/2009/03/29/technology/internet/29face.html?scp=4&sq=facebook&st=cse

Subrahmanyam, K., & Greenfield, P. M. (2008). Communicating online: Adolescent relationships and the media. *The Future of Children: Children and Media Technology, 18*, 119-146.

Swaine, J. (2008). Sarah Palin: Newsweek criticised for unflattering cover. *The Telegraph*. Retrieved October 23, 2008, from http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newstopics/uselection2008/sarahpalin/3171956/Sarah-Palin-Newsweek-criticised-for-unflattering-cover.html