

Genders in ads: stereotypes of femininity

Sociologists call *gender* the attitudes and behaviors that are expected of us because we are a man or a woman. *Gender socialization* is the process by which we learn how to behave according to our gender. One way we learn that is by looking at advertisements. Ads most often show an exaggerated version of stereotypes we share about genders in our society. In that way, they help teach what is expected of us as men and women in our culture.

Erving Goffman¹, who is one the most famous sociologists of the 20th century, has tried to identify those stereotypes. Here are a few ads he selected because he found them especially interesting.

1. First



2.Second



What has happened to women has now happened to perfume.



3.Third



Question 1: Try to find the stereotypes about women in each of these groups of ads.

Question 2: By group of 4, try to find a few ads in the magazine you've been given that reflect those stereotypes about women (or different ones).

Question 3: Try to sum up the representations of women in ads: what are the “qualities” and expected behaviour of women in advertisements?

1. Erving Goffman (1922-1982) was an American sociologist. In his work, he tried to understand the way we act with each other in our everyday life, the way we present ourselves to others.

Keywords

ad = advertisement

sociologist: someone who studies human societies

to behave : se comporter

behaviour: the way we behave