
| RESEARCH ARTICLE

Portrayal of Women in Moroccan Television Advertisements: A Cultural and Gender Analysis of 'La Sigogne' and 'Tide'

Ahmed Lehfid

PhD Researcher, Department of English Studies, Sidi Mohamed Ben Abdellah University, Fez, Morocco

Corresponding Author: Ahmed Lehfid, **E-mail:** ahmed.lehfid@usmba.ac.ma

| ABSTRACT

The current article examines the representation of women in Moroccan television advertisements that are broadcasted on the Moroccan national channels on a daily basis. This investigation aims to explore how cultural norms and gender roles are reflected and perpetuated through media. As a matter of fact, media plays a huge role in not only reflecting reality but also constructing a fake reality through which people construct their identities. By analyzing 'La Sigogne' and 'Tide' ads, this research aims to uncover stereotypes and social expectations that are imposed on women. Using content analysis, the study unveils the portrayal of women in terms of roles, appearance, and behavior. Findings reveal that the majority, if not all, of advertisements reinforce stereotypes as they depict women as either objects or housewives. By doing so, various feminists call for a reconsideration of the representation of women in Moroccan media.

| KEYWORDS

Women, Moroccan TV advertisements, Media representation, Stereotypes, Cultural norms, Gender equality, sexual objects, housewives

| ARTICLE INFORMATION

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1. Introduction

Visual culture designates a dynamic relationship between what is viewed and the viewer. It not only mirrors reality but also constructs an artificial reality that shapes individuals' identities. Visual culture significantly influences daily life, leisure activities, political opinions, and social behaviors. From a gender perspective, media images of gender do more than just reflect reality; they construct a new one and perpetuate it as an ideal. Consequently, the institution of media shapes women's lives by defining their characteristics and attributes, prescribing social norms and conventions, and creating opportunities for open spectatorship and self-representation.

It is evident that media influences our understanding of gender roles by dictating what it means to be male or female and how to behave accordingly. In terms of women's representation, the media often transform women into erotic objects by promoting an ideal body image that is characterized by whiteness, tallness, thinness, full breasts, and hairlessness. This global model of beauty equates attractiveness with purity and goodness. Across various media platforms, namely TV, films, video games, advertising, and magazines, the message is clear: female physical appearance is paramount. As a result, women learn from an early age that their worth is tied to their looks, a thing that leads to self-objectification. When the media does not represent women as objects, they are frequently depicted as housewives. This matter reinforces traditional domestic roles. In other words, women are responsible for childbearing, taking care of the husband, and managing household chores such as cooking, cleaning, and laundry. These portrayals suggest that a woman's primary role is within the home, thus limiting their capabilities to the domestic sphere. This dual representation, as both erotic objects and housewives, perpetuates a narrow and restrictive view of women's roles in society. In

this regard, this study aims to analyze, decode, and interpret the representations and misrepresentations of women in Moroccan TV advertisements as either sexual bodies or housewives.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Representation: Concepts and Applications

The concept of representation is extensively employed across literary, cultural, and media discussions as a primary method for expressing thoughts, ideas, and beliefs. Representation involves "the act of presenting sb/sth in a particular way; something that shows or describes sth." (Hornby, 2010, p. 1252) This definition implies that representation involves the use of signs to convey intentional meaning.

In his influential work *Representation: Cultural Representation and Signifying Practices*, Jamaican theorist Stuart Hall (1997) defines representation as "the process by which meaning is produced and exchanged between members of a culture. It does involve the use of language, of signs and images which stand for or represent things." (p. 15) In other words, it is the process of using language and pictures to describe and symbolize elements of reality. Moreover, Hall distinguishes between various ways people employ representation and seeks to address the origin of meanings by outlining three approaches, namely the reflective approach, the intentional approach, and the constructionist/constructivist approach.

The first theory concerning representation is known as the reflective approach. According to this perspective, what is portrayed in the media directly mirrors real-life phenomena. This implies that representation accurately reflects the meaning of an object, person, idea, or event as it exists in reality since "language functions like a mirror." (Hall, 1997, p. 24) For instance, news is often considered reflective because it aims to depict real-world events as accurately as possible. Similarly, reality TV reflects actual life by showcasing real people in authentic situations.

The second approach, entitled the intentional approach, "holds that it is the speaker, the author, who imposes his or her unique meaning on the world through language." (Hall, 1997, p. 25) In contrast to the reflective approach, the intentional approach asserts that the production of meaning originates from the author or creator. According to this view, words and representations convey the specific meanings that the author intends them to convey.

Moving to the last approach, the constructionist/constructivist approach explains representation from another dimension. This approach "acknowledges that neither things in themselves nor the individual users of language can fix meaning." (Hall, 1997, p. 25) In other words, the intentional approach highlights that things themselves do not inherently possess meaning; rather, meaning is constructed by human beings through the use of representation. To put it differently, humans create meaning through language, the thing that enables them to represent objects, construct interpretations, and facilitate communication and mutual understanding.

With the advancement of technology and telecommunications, the concept of representation has gained a more discursive dimension as it perpetuates stereotypes. That is to say, representation can play a destructive role by recycling stereotypes related to gender, race, or minority groups. In this regard, representation is

A set of ideas or a set of beliefs about people – an ideology – rather than people as they are. Stereotypes are deliberately misleading; they perform the function of creating attitudes which, by their very nature, are negative attitudes. They function as a form of propaganda; they are the language of ideology – the way it is communicated. (Lowe, 2007, p. 11-12)

Likewise, the British feminist film theorist Laura Mulvey dedicated significant analysis to the function of representation, particularly concerning women's images in the film industry. In her seminal work "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," Mulvey explores the eroticization of women's images in Western films where significant emphasis is placed on the physical attractiveness of women's bodies. Mulvey discusses in her section titled "Pleasure in looking/fascination with the human form" how cinema offers various pleasures such as scopophilia. This term refers to the sexual pleasure derived from looking at sexual scenes or using another person as an object of sexual stimulation through sight, a concept rooted in Freud's understanding of scopophilia "with taking other people as objects, subjecting them to a controlling and curious gaze." (Mulvey, 2009, p. 713) Thus, scopophilia is a form of sexual pleasure derived from watching females who are represented in sexually provocative ways; by so doing, women in a great number of films are reduced to sex objects that are meant to satisfy male audiences' sexual gratification. On the one hand, women are presented as sexual objects which become limited to the traditional role, which is "to-be-looked-at-ness." (Mulvey, 2009, p. 715) Therefore, the woman depicted typically fulfills two roles: first, as an erotic object for the characters within the story, and second,

as an object of eroticism for the audience. On the other hand, men are often portrayed as the agents of action who control the narrative's progression and events as powerful protagonists.

In light of these perspectives, representation includes various dimensions and interpretations. Some view it as reflecting reality as it exists, while others argue that representation is primarily a means of assigning meaning to things, people, images, and ideas. One significant arena where representation operates is within the realms of media and advertising, where it is employed to construct meanings around gender issues.

2.2 Media: Definitions, Functions, and Cultural Impact

Before delving into media, it is crucial to define mass communication. It "is generally characterized by one sender who principally transfers one message to a wide and anonymous audience." (Janoschka, 2004, p. 87) In other words, mass communication refers to the process by which a group of people transmit information to a large audience through various forms of media.

Media as a form of mass communication refers to "the main ways that large numbers of people receive information and entertainment, that is television, radio, newspaper, and the internet." (Hornby, 2010, p. 922) In this regard, media designate the channels and platforms through which information, messages, and content are transmitted to a large audience.

Historically speaking, media first emerged in Europe in the mid-1600s, initially as print media, which relies on words and pictures such as newspapers and magazines. It later evolved to include auditory programs transmitted via radio, followed by the 20th-century introduction of audio-visual programs through television, which combines both sound and images. In the 21st century, industrial advancements led to the emergence of digital media, which is characterized by hypertexts that integrate words, sounds, and pictures like the internet. Digital media offers unparalleled flexibility and enables access to a wide array of programs regardless of time or location. These types divide media into two categories, namely traditional and new media. The former adheres to social norms and is typically controlled by experts who determine what is deemed acceptable for publication, whereas the latter provides unrestricted freedom by allowing anyone to express themselves freely. (The Centers for Quality Teaching and Learning, 2015)

Due to media's serious impact on human beings, a multiplicity of theorists tackled media and made a great effort to theorize this concept and evaluate the extent to which it is able to shape humans' understanding of the world. In this respect, the focus will mainly address three theories, namely, Social Cognitive Theory, Cultivation Theory, and Feminist Media Theory.

Firstly, social cognitive theory "accords a central role to cognitive, vicarious, self-regulatory, and self-reflective processes. An extraordinary capacity for symbolization provides humans with a powerful tool for comprehending their environment and creating and regulating environmental events that touch virtually every aspect of their lives." (Bandura, 2001, p. 267) Simply put, the social cognitive theory posits that humans learn through observation. This theory asserts that by observing the behaviors of others, individuals learn how to conduct themselves in various social settings. Consequently, consuming media products such as advertisements and films can influence people's daily interactions with others. For instance, some theorists suggest that television depictions of the harmful effects of smoking contribute to reducing the rate of youth smoking. (Pajares, Prestin, Chen & Nabi, 2009, p. 11)

Secondly, the cultivation theory, originally formulated by George Gerbner in the 1960s and 1970s, posits that television constructs an artificial reality shaped by those who control the media by reflecting their interests rather than accurately representing the real world. That is to say; this theory suggests that "the entire value system made of ideologies, assumptions, beliefs, images and perspectives is formulated, to a great extent, by television." (Mosharafa, 2015, p. 3) Moreover, this theory addresses the enduring impact of television on viewers. It suggests that the danger of television lies not only in shaping specific viewpoints on particular issues but also in influencing people's broader moral values and general perceptions of the world. This implies that the theory not only explores the long-term effects of television on individuals but also asserts that increased television consumption correlates with greater shaping and influence over viewers' attitudes and beliefs.

Last but not least, Feminist media theory emphasizes

the important role of women in the media and the role of women in defining reality through media content, a major contribution of feminist media theory has been to make us critically aware of the concept of "representation", be it the representativeness of different groups (race/gender) in a white male dominated media industry or how media content is a representation and interpretation of reality from a mainly white male dominant perspective. (Fourie, 2001, p. xxiv)

That is to say, feminism has always focused on media since it transmits and passes patriarchal and ideological messages. Additionally, media plays a significant role in portraying women in negative ways and misrepresent them, which leads many feminists not only to reveal that media is a male dominated institution but also to deny women's oppression and the unequal division of gender that separates men as being "those who know" (Fourie, 2001, p. 383) and women as being "those who do not." (Fourie, 2001, p. 383) To put it differently, the media unfairly depict women and, thus, push feminists to criticize this portrayal by introducing various concepts that highlight women's position in media and the challenges they face due to male dominance and power dynamics. Women are often portrayed as 'the other' in addition to lacking autonomy and existing primarily to fulfill the male gaze and sexual desires. They are depicted as inherently inferior to men. Many prevailing stereotypes of femininity, sexualization, and objectification of women are perpetuated through advertising, where profitability often relies on distorting women's body images. To comprehend this issue fully, it is essential to theorize advertising as a dominant discourse within the media landscape.

2.3 Advertising: Techniques and Insights

As one of the most widely used tools in business, advertising has become essential for companies worldwide to showcase their products. It serves as a form of interaction between advertisers and audiences. It is also a paid communication aimed at persuading people to purchase goods or services. Advertising employs various techniques and strategies to influence consumer perceptions and encourage purchasing decisions. This section seeks to offer a thorough definition of advertising and explores some of the techniques employed in this process, with a particular focus on Moroccan advertising.

Anja Janoschka (2004) defines in her book *Web Advertising: New Forms of Communication on the Internet* advertising as "a paid form of non-personal communication about an organization and its products that is transmitted to a target audience through a mass medium such as television, radio, newspaper, magazines, direct mail, public transport, outdoor displays, or catalogues." (p. 16) In this regard, advertising revolves around providing comprehensive information about a specific product or service being promoted. To achieve this goal, advertising employs a variety of techniques and strategies that aim at convincing and persuading the audience to make a purchase. Moroccan advertising companies, like others globally, utilize techniques such as humor, music, and dance, among others, to raise awareness and promote their products effectively.

To begin with, entertainment serves as a foundational technique in advertising, and it is widely employed not only globally but also prominently in Morocco. For instance, humor, which is the cornerstone of entertainment, is frequently utilized in Moroccan advertising campaigns. This approach uses the influence and popularity of well-known Moroccan celebrities to attract diverse audiences across different backgrounds, social classes, and age groups, effectively capturing their attention towards the advertised products. By featuring Moroccan celebrity comedians, such as Hassan El Fad, known as Kabor (Inwi, 2022), Inwi is one of the companies, along with Maroc Telecom and Orange that control calling networks of Morocco, has successfully shaped consumer perceptions and encouraged product purchases. Similarly, Automobile Dacia collaborates with Simo Sedraty (Dacia Maroc, 2015), a popular Moroccan comedian, YouTuber, and podcaster, to create engaging content that persuades consumers to consider their products and promotions.

Along with humor, music is another commonly used strategy by advertising companies since it has a great influence on Moroccans due to its dependency on famous Moroccan songs. To simplify, advertising companies use top-heard music since it is not only memorized but also attracts the attention of Moroccans. Because of this, music plays an important role in persuading the audience since it remains in their minds. That is to say, a variety of companies employ famous Moroccan singers to transform their songs in order to become suitable for their products. For example, the housing company of Addoha tends to use Saad Lamjarred (Saad Lamjarred | 2016, *سعد لمجرد*), while Maroc Telecom, as one of the dominant companies of telecommunications in Morocco uses Douzi (Maroc Telecom, 2024) as being famous Moroccan singers along with their songs in order to convey that these celebrities are loyal customers, and thus, influence their fans to benefit from these companies' services.

It is evident that advertising companies employ various techniques and strategies not only to increase product visibility but also to influence viewers' perceptions and ultimately convert them into consumers. However, some advertising practices prioritize financial gain and success at the expense of ethical considerations and moral standards. Prior to analyzing the way women are represented in Moroccan advertisements, the following chapter is concerned with the methodology where the article's hypothesis, objective, and approaches are presented.

3. Methodology

This chapter presents the hypotheses, objectives, questions, and instruments that are used to collect data in order to analyze the representation of women in Moroccan TV advertisements.

3.1 Research Hypothesis

It is hypothesized that women are represented as either sexual objects or housewives in Moroccan TV advertisements. As a result, this dual portrayal contributes to the ongoing marginalization of women by limiting their social roles to the private sphere of domesticity and the objectified world of physical attractiveness.

3.2 Research Objective

The objective of the study is to analyze, decode, and interpret the representations and misrepresentations of women in Moroccan TV advertisements by focusing on their portrayal as either sexual objects or housewives. Through examining 'La Sigogne' and 'Tide' advertisements, this article aims to uncover the messages that perpetuate these stereotypical images and shed light on the impact of such portrayals on gender perceptions and the reinforcement of patriarchal norms.

3.3 Research Question

This article attempts to answer the following question.

1. What frequent themes and stereotypes are evident in the portrayal of women in Moroccan advertising?

3.4 Data Collection Procedure

This article uses content analysis to interpret how women are portrayed as sexual objects and housewives by focusing on the cultural and gender implications of these representations. This data collection procedure not only examines what is depicted but also seeks to understand how these depictions shape perceptions and contribute to social constructs of femininity within the context of media and advertising.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Gendered Media Representations: Objectification in 'La Sigogne' Ads

As mentioned in the first chapter, advertising companies employ various techniques and strategies to capture viewers' attention, one of which is the use of body image. However, this approach frequently leads to the objectification of women since they are portrayed not as intellectual or autonomous beings but as objects used to sell products. This pervasive trend makes it nearly impossible to watch television without encountering semi-naked women in commercials or advertisements.

Women's bodies dominate advertising across all media platforms by portraying idealized images of flawless skin, long legs, slim waists, shining eyes, and white teeth to attract attention. This portrayal contributes to turning women into commodities. Media, especially advertising, plays a significant role in reducing women to mere objects of visual consumption. Fredrickson and Roberts (1997) address this issue in their influential article "Objectification Theory" by arguing that objectification constitutes a form of women's oppression because "sexual objectification occurs whenever a woman's body, body parts, or sexual functions are separated out from her person, reduced to the status of mere instruments." (p. 175) This technique establishes a major contrast in how men and women are represented in advertising. This disparity highlights how advertising perpetuates gender stereotypes by portraying men as individuals who are defined by their thoughts and actions and reducing women to objects of physical desire. This is what Unger and Crawford depict as the "face-ism" of men and the "body-ism" of women. (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997, p. 177)



(Reborn Masculinity, 2017)

It is evident that these images portray women not as human beings but as objects, thereby stripping them of their humanity. For example, the above picture portrays a naked woman on a table or shelf used to display products. This example illustrates how women's objectification erases their humanity from these depictions.

In the case of 'La Sigogne', similar tactics are employed by using women's bodies to market this product. This exploitation reinforces the idea that women are devalued entities who are devoid of emotions or personality, as evidenced by the following images. (nour eddine, 2017)



In analyzing the representation of women in "La Sigogne" advertisements, it becomes apparent that advertising often relies on portraying women in specific ways to achieve success. This emphasis on physical appearance in advertising can often lead to self-objectification among women. The latter refers to women "treating themselves as an object to be looked at and evaluated on the basis of appearance." (Szymanski, Moffitt & Carr, 2011, p. 8) In other words, women often strive to resemble the idealized images of women who are portrayed in advertisements, particularly in terms of their body and skin, in order to conform to social beauty standards. Unfortunately, this pursuit can come at the expense of their overall health and well-being.

Due to women's self-objectification, Fredrickson and Roberts argue that this issue leads to various negative effects, such as women feeling ashamed. For instance, women may feel shame about their body shape because they lack the power and ability to attain the characteristics of the idealized body, which is often portrayed as youthful, slim, and white. Consequently, women may objectify themselves by focusing on their appearance and body shape. When they fail to meet these standards, feelings of shame may compel them to hide, avoid the painful gaze of others, or disappear. (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997, p. 181-182)

Objectifying women demonstrates that Mulvey's theory is applicable to advertising as it contributes to the sexualization of women by portraying them primarily as objects of desire that are meant to fulfill men's voyeuristic pleasures. As transmitted by the above pictures, advertising not only promotes products but also conveys values, images, and sexuality. Women are often portrayed as mere bodies used as persuasive tools to increase product demand and sales. This representation reflects patriarchal tendencies and reinforces distorted images of femininity. Media and advertising frequently portray women in sexist ways by diminishing them to objects that are meant to fulfil males' gaze.

By representing women in such ways, feminists aim to persuade advertising companies to abandon stereotypes about women in their campaigns. It is important to realize that 'La Sigogne' advertisements, like many others, do not portray women as they truly are, but rather as a result "of hours in the makeup chair and days of photo retouching" (Suggett, 2016) so as to look thinner and to conform to the beauty standards. In other words, most women in advertising are photoshopped to achieve the image of perfection. Thus, women attempt to fulfil the perfect image of being tall, slim, blond, and white with blue eyes, while men dream of having such women as wives so as to please their sexual as well as voyeuristic desires.

Jean Kilbourne's "Killing Us Softly 4: Advertising's Image of Women" supports the previous points made. Kilbourne criticizes how advertising distorts women's images by portraying them in ways that create unrealistic expectations. She argues that advertising confines women to obsess over their appearance and strive for an unattainable ideal image since it has "been created through airbrushing cosmetics and computer retouching." (Media Education Foundation, n.d., p. 5) As a result, a growing number of women are heavily relying on cosmetics to attain the ideal body. Regrettably, in recent years, there has been a significant rise in demand for plastic surgeries among women who are dissatisfied with their natural appearance by seeking to align themselves with the idealized images portrayed in advertising. This mentality has led to a 114% increase in procedures such as breast implants, liposuction, and eyelid surgery to the extent that "there are now more than two million of these a year." (Media Education Foundation, n.d., p. 6)

4.2 Domesticity and Gender Roles in Tide Advertisements

Women's role as housewives is a product of patriarchal societies as it is perpetuated by systems such as TV advertising that reinforce these cultural beliefs and stereotypes. Advertising normalizes the idea that women belong to the domestic sphere since it portrays them as responsible for household tasks like nurturing children, cooking, and cleaning. Products such as couscous, milk, dairy products, and cleaning products like Tide, Omo, and Ariel often feature women in roles that emphasize their domestic duties. This misrepresentation confines women to the private sphere because it not only reinforces traditional gender roles but also limits them to domestic responsibilities.



(BricoQc, 2008)



(DarijaCafe, 2006)

It is clear that "Tide" advertising perpetuates cultural stereotypes by portraying women solely as housewives who are responsible for domestic duties by limiting their roles to serving their husbands at home. Consequently, women may become financially dependent on their husbands, who are not only perceived as the family's breadwinners but also have the power to provide for their needs. Maria Mies (1986) describes housewifization as a concept where women are unrecognized for their work since it "is considered a natural resource, freely available like air and water." (p. 110)

Therefore, it must be emphasized that confining women's labor to the private sphere ultimately grants men the freedom to participate fully in society. It becomes evident that the naturalization of women's unpaid domestic labor, which is centered on raising children and serving husbands, is not solely due to patriarchal systems. Rather, capitalism also contributes to the devaluation of women's roles while valuing men's contributions. To be clearer, Mies (1986) stated that "capital is able to hide behind the figure of the husband, called 'breadwinner', with whom the woman, called 'housewife', has to deal directly and for whom she is supposed to work out of 'love', not for a wage." (p. 32)

Therefore, the role of women as housewives has significant social and economic impacts on them since the "process of housewifization took place to exclude resident women from wage-labour." (Mies, 1986, p. 96) To clarify, one significant consequence of this situation is increased poverty among women, which often surpasses that of men in many societies. This phenomenon is commonly referred to as "the feminization of poverty". Firstly, poverty refers to the "lack of resources, capabilities or freedoms" (Medeiros & Costa, 2008, p. 58), whereas feminization is an action, a process of becoming more feminine. In this case, "feminine" means "more common or intense among women or female-headed households." (Medeiros & Costa, 2008, p. 58) Thus, the feminization of poverty includes two intertwined phenomena that contribute to the oppression, marginalization, and exclusion of women.

As the pioneer of the concept "the feminization of poverty", Diana Pearce highlighted the economic inequalities and poverty that affect women. She argues that "almost two thirds of the poor over age 16 were women." (McLanahan & Kelly, 2006, p. 127) She emphasizes the idea that despite the fact that women entered the workforce from the 1950s until the mid-1970s, their economic status declined during those years because "female-headed households in particular formed a larger and larger percentage of the poor." (McLanahan & Kelly, 2006, p. 127) This indicates that housewives are particularly vulnerable and poor.

4.3 Private vs. Public: Space Division in Tide Advertisements

Throughout history, the division of spheres has contributed to an ideology that privileges men over women. Women have consistently been associated with the private sphere, while men are linked to the public one. This has resulted in women being confined to their homes, where their roles are limited to bearing children, serving their husbands, and performing household chores such as cooking and cleaning. This domestic world was constructed by men to prevent women from crossing traditional boundaries and becoming autonomous and independent individuals. It is essential to understand that this world was imposed on women rather than being a choice, as depicted in the preceding images.

Additionally, patriarchal ideologies have imposed specific standards on women to fit the mold of the perfect wife, namely traits like passivity, obedience, beauty, and dependency. These standards are reflected in Coventry Patmore's poem "The Angel in The House," where he idealizes his wife as a model woman who embodies these qualities and perpetuates sexist views which dominate in the Victorian era.

Man must be pleased; but him to please
Is woman's pleasure; down the gulf
Of his condoled necessities
She casts her best, she flings herself.
How often flings for nought, and yokes
Her heart to an icicle or whim,
Whose each impatient word provokes
Another, not from her, but him;
While she, too gentle even to force
His penitence by kind replies,
Waits by, expecting his remorse,
With pardon in her pitying eyes;
And if he once, by shame oppress'd,
A comfortable word confers,
She leans and weeps against his breast,
And seems to think the sin was hers;
Or any eye to see her charms,
At any time, she's still his wife,
Dearly devoted to his arms;
She loves with love that cannot tire;
And when, ah woe, she loves alone,
Through passionate duty love springs higher,
As grass grows taller round a stone. (The Angel in the House, n. d.)

Absolutely, Coventry Patmore's poem "The Angel in The House" summarizes his idealized view of women and their role in Victorian society. Patmore portrays the ideal wife as someone who excels in pleasing her husband at all times, responding kindly and lovingly, and even seeking forgiveness without fault. This portrayal reinforces stereotypical expectations of women as emotional, dependent, domestic, lovely, and charming, thus adhering to constructed standards that limit their autonomy and reinforce traditional gender roles. The poem reflects broader social norms of the time when women were constrained to roles primarily centered around domesticity and subservience to their husbands.

In this regard, Douglas Kellner (1995) argues in his book *Media Culture: Cultural Studies, Identity, and Politics Between the Modern and the Postmodern* that "advertising attempts to produce identities by offering products associated with certain traits and values." (p. 256) That is, advertising significantly contributes to perpetuating and reinforcing traditional gender roles as evidenced by the images that illustrate how it divides men and women according to perceived "natural" roles. Kellner's assertion exhibits advertising's role in shaping gender identities by assigning specific roles to each gender. In other words, advertising reinforces the traditional division where men are associated with the public sphere and are characterized by independence, decision-making, and leadership within the family. Conversely, women are often portrayed in domestic roles within the private sphere and depicted as silent, oppressed, marginalized, and deprived of rights. This portrayal not only weakens and undermines women but also confines them to servitude within their homes. Thus, while men enjoy power and freedom in public life, they also exert control over household management. In this regard, Hilde Heyne and Gülsüm Baydar (2005) state in their book *Negotiating Domesticity: Spatial Productions of Gender in Modern Architecture* that "the house is a site of order and purification which is maintained by the woman who does not need to move outside. In other words, the order of domesticity is based on the active agency of men and the passivity of women." This quote highlights gender roles that are entrenched in the private sphere, where women are confined to domesticity and portrayed as passive. Advertising continues to perpetuate this unequal division by framing women as servants, possessions, and properties of men.

5. Conclusion

In light of all that has been mentioned, the portrayal of women in media remains a highly quarrelsome topic in the whole world, including Morocco. It is evident that media, predominantly controlled by men, perpetuates patriarchal and sexist ideologies through its programming and content. Women, as the contrasting gender, often bear the brunt of this representation, particularly in advertising. Here, women are frequently utilized as tools to captivate viewers' attention, thereby generating substantial profits

for industries due to their significant influence in advertising. This situation demonstrates the enduring influence of gender norms and stereotypes within media, where women are frequently objectified or portrayed in limited and traditional roles. Such representations not only reinforce societal perceptions but also impact women's social status and opportunities. Addressing these issues is a call for ending the portrayal of women as mere sexual objects or confined housewives in advertisements. In fact, advertising companies must promote more empowering and diverse representations that reflect women's true potential and contributions to society.

This study has several limitations. First, the scope of analyzed advertisements may be too narrow, thereby potentially missing the diversity of representations across Moroccan media. Second, advertisements and social attitudes can change over time, so findings might not reflect future developments in the representation of women. Moreover, the focus on TV advertisements excludes other media platforms, such as social media, which may also influence representations of women.

Future research should address these limitations by expanding the analysis to include a broader range of media platforms such as digital, social media, and online advertising in order to provide a more comprehensive view of women's representation. Moreover, comparative studies between Moroccan advertisements and those from other countries or cultures could reveal cross-cultural similarities and differences and can offer a deeper understanding of the global and local dynamics of gender representation.

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ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0006-9834-9375>

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