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# Inclusivity or...?: A Multi-Lens Feminist Analysis of H&M's She's a Lady Commercial

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## Objectives

In this research, I critique H&M's *She's a Lady* ad using intersectional feminist lenses to uncover positive aspects of this commercial and to expose areas of growth for the H&M brand. The ad itself challenges the traditional use of the word 'lady.' From viewing the ad, I draw conclusions about what H&M considers to be characteristics of the modern-day lady.

## Methods

This commercial was analyzed using three major perspectives: feminist disability studies, mainstream feminism, and postcolonial feminism. This allowed for a multi-faceted analysis of the content. The research was conducted by repeated viewing of the *She's a Lady* commercial, with a focus on critical and controversial scenes. The analysis was aided by scholarly articles on advertising tactics & feminism.

## Limitations

There has been no prior scholarly analysis of this specific commercial, although other aspects of the company have been explored in in-depth reports. Due to the lack of previous research, many elements of the ad can be openly interpreted. Furthermore, because the H&M brand was not contacted for this research, the thought-process and intentions behind this ad cannot be definitively determined.



## Conclusions

The *She's a Lady* commercial takes a step toward more diverse advertising by casting women diverse in race, size, gender expression, and age. However, H&M fails to acknowledge women with visible disabilities, which invalidates a large demographic of consumers. This otherwise inclusive ad masks the hazardous manufacturing practices of the company. Ultimately, consumers should be weary of evaluating H&M's inclusivity based on viewing of this commercial alone.

## The H&M Lady

Challenging traditional concepts of what it means to be 'ladylike'



## SHE'S A LADY

NO MATTER HER RACE / AGE / BODY  
SHAPE / SEXUAL ORIENTATION



**But she's also...**  
ABLE-BODIED / WELL-PAID

## Abstract

In September 2016, clothing company H&M released an ad seemingly unparalleled in terms of diversity. With the release of this minute-long commercial, the company projected a message of inclusivity to the public, and the company redefined the word "lady" by including women of different races, body types, and walks of life. However, upon a closer inspection, one can see that key demographics are not represented in this ad - such as women with visible disabilities. Furthermore, H&M is known for labor practices which fail to empower women in the ways which this ad would suggest. This study explores intersectionality within the ad via feminist disability and postcolonial feminist lenses. Analysis of this ad was conducted by repeated viewing of the commercial and its critical scenes, as well as by bringing in work from other scholars to explore H&M's values and practices. This study aims to critique what is shown as well as what is absent from the ad. By evaluating both positive and negative aspects of H&M's "She's a Lady" commercial, I hope to emphasize the importance of viewing media with a critical eye and diving beneath the surface when consuming such content.

## Looking Forward

In the future, H&M can strive to create a safe and prosperous environment for their workers overseas. This is one of the key factors restricting the brand from achieving inclusivity. Additionally, the company can work to include disabled individuals in their advertising. Doing so will promote acceptance and convey the message that disabled women can be "ladies," too. In a broader perspective, this ad can inspire other companies to practice more inclusive casting. For years, consumers have demanded that companies produce representative advertising. With H&M's commercial and other ads from popular brands, it would appear that the industry is shifting to meet this demand.

As consumers, we can be mindful of media consumption. This involves critical thinking about the images and videos in our daily lives. Rather than accepting every bit of content we come in contact with, we can explore and question the things around us.



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