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Análisis del sexismo en los anuncios de perfume

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Abstract

The issue of woman's objectification and sexualisation has been one of great importance over the past few years. The most dangerous part of it is that stereotypes around women are created, normalised, and internalised, giving rise to violence and aggressiveness against women. This prevailing sexism has been approached from the point of view of Cognitive Linguistics, Critical Discourse Analysis and multimodality. In order to prove this sexism, I have collected 200 perfume commercials in which women were explicitly sexualized. To carry out the analysis of my corpus, I have used some of the theoretical tools of Cognitive Linguistics (Lakoff and Johnson 1980, 1999; Peña and Samaniego 2011; and López Rodríguez 2008, 2009), Critical Discourse Analysis (van Dijk 2015), and multimodality (Pinar 2015). Offering a ray of hope, future generations are expected to become increasingly aware of this issue, which is the beginning of the change.

Key words: stereotypes, sexism in advertising, Cognitive Linguistics, Critical Discourse Analysis, multimodality.

Resumen

El problema de la cosificación y sexualización de la mujer ha resultado de gran relevancia durante los últimos años. Lo más peligroso de esto es que se crean estereotipos alrededor de la mujer, se normalizan e internalizan, dando lugar a violencia y agresividad contra las mujeres. Este aún existente sexismo ha sido abordado desde el punto de vista de la Lingüística Cognitiva, el Análisis Crítico del Discurso y la multimodalidad. Para demostrar este sexismo, he recopilado 200 anuncios de perfume en los que las mujeres son sexualizadas explícitamente. Para realizar el análisis de mi corpus he consultado las teorías de la Lingüística Cognitiva (Lakoff 1987, Lakoff and Johnson 1980, 1999; Peña y Samaniego 2011; y López Rodríguez 2008, 2009), Análisis Crítico del Discurso (van Dijk 2015), y multimodalidad (Pinar 2015). Ofreciendo un rayo de esperanza, es de esperar que las futuras generaciones se vayan dando cuenta de este problema, lo cual es el principio del cambio.

Palabras clave: estereotipos, sexismo en publicidad, Lingüística Cognitiva, Análisis Crítico del Discurso, multimodalidad.

Contents

1. Introduction

As stated by López Rodríguez (2008:16),"the representation of women in the written media has received a great deal of attention and critics have analysed different strategies used for the acculturation of women in the press (Tuchman 1979, Gough-Yates 2003, Machin 2005).".In this line, it is important to bear in mind that advertising is highly influential and it "reveals a pattern of symbolic and institutionalized sexism" (Cortese 2008: 57). Women are usually portrayed negatively in advertising. To contextualize this topic, feminist studies started to do research about gender, stereotypes and sexist attitudes. Consequently, the Women's Movement fought against the idea of androcentrism as a complaint against the normalised sexist behaviour (Fernández Martín 2010: 68).

The analysis of the issue of sexism in advertising is relevant in the sense that we still live in a sexist society, where the media is fraught with women's objectification and sexualisation. Although there has been countless research done in this field, this paper provides an analysis from the point of view of Cognitive Linguistics, Critical Discourse Analysis and multimodality, which helps to shed some more light on the objectification of women in advertising. One of the main objectives is to prove that women not only are objectified when the fragrance is for women, but also for men. Thus, no matter the gender of the consumer, women will be objectified in the commercials.

Hence, the aim of this paper is to analyse the hidden sexism against women in perfume commercials, no matter if the fragrance is for female or male usage. This analysis has resulted in the conclusion that it does not matter if the commercials are directed to women or to men, that the woman is always going to be degraded and sexualised to the point of being compared with objects, animals, foods or babies. The main objective of this study is to deconstruct sexism in perfume commercials through the corpus selection in order to raise awareness of the issue.

The study has been divided into five sections. Section one deals with a previous contextualisation that serves and helps the reader to understand the aim of the paper, containing its objectives and the main sources. Then, section two contains the methodology and the corpus selection. This leads to the third section, the theoretical framework, which comes in handy for understanding the basis of the study. Next, in section four the data is analysed. This section is subdivided into the analysis of the commercials from the point of view of Cognitive Linguistics (animal metaphors, the Great Chain of Being and the DIVIDED SELF metaphor), CDA and multimodality, and the physical and psychological consequences of sexism in advertising. Finally, the last

section contains the main findings and conclusions of the paper as well as some suggestions for further research on the issue.

2. Methodology and corpus selection

Focusing on the corpus, I have collected 200 recent perfume commercials that were published between 2007 and 2021. They were retrieved from YouTube and different blogs and webpages, with the purpose of showing sexism in men's and women's perfume commercials. In the commercials that I have chosen women are explicitly and brutally objectified and sexualised, which shows how women are still perceived in society.

In agreement with Tognini-Bonelli's (2001: 128-129) distinction between corpus-based and corpus-driven analyses, in this case, ours is corpus-driven. The first one stands for a corpus as "an adjunct to the development of theoretical positions", whereas the latter "takes the corpus data as the primary source of evidence" As I have mentioned, it is corpus-driven because, after analysing the corpus of commercials, we have been able to draw conclusions about woman's objectification in advertisements. Several sources have been used to carry out the analysis of our corpus, especially López Rodríguez (2008, 2009) and Cortese's (2008) contributions.

This study is qualitative, as it provides a detailed analysis of the corpus without paying attention to quantification. Hence, a deep analysis in order to discover the hidden messages regarding women in advertisements has been carried. For doing so, different points of view have been taken into consideration: Cognitive Linguistics and The Great Chain of Being and the DIVIDED SELF metaphor; Critical Discourse Analysis, focusing on the different social inequalities; and then, multimodality, to show how different modes can be combined within the same field.

Regarding methodological steps, several have been taken in this study. First, we have created a corpus of 200 perfume commercials. We have analysed the metaphorical conceptualization underlying perfume commercials in order to check whether women/men are objectified and/or sexualized. Third, we have studied and considered all the consequences that women's objectification and stereotyping involve. This comes in handy in order to raise awareness of women's objectification so as to make a change.

3. Theoretical framework

3.1. Cognitive linguistics

Cognitive Linguistics is a discipline which flourished in the 1980s with the work of George Lakoff, Ronald Langaker, Charles Fillmore, and Len Talmy among others. Moreover, it "has progressed since then into a rich and multifaceted research paradigm, offering new tools to many branches of linguistic enquiry and giving new coherence to a range of linguistic interests" (Dancygier 2017: 1). As stated by Dancygier, Cognitive Linguistics is based on the idea that meaning is central in linguistics. She claims that "language study needs to be *usage-based*", which means that language cannot be separated from its usage, context or culture (Dancygier 2017: 1-2).

The main principle of Cognitive Linguistics is the relationship between language and cognition (Dancygier 2017: 2). In addition to this, there are several concepts that emerged from this discipline, which are going to be explained in the following subsections. We will mainly focus on metaphor.

Cognitivists claim that a metaphor is a matter of thought, a mechanism used every day with the aim to communicate (Peña and Samaniego 2011: 265). Moreover, Peña and Samaniego also state that there exist two levels within metaphor:

- The conceptual level, which is represented as *A IS B* (for example, LOVE IS A JOURNEY).
- The linguistic level, which is created by all the linguistic expressions from a certain metaphor /for example, OUR RELATIONSHIP HAS HIT A DEAD-END STREET).

Peña and Samaniego (2011:265) claim that for cognitivists, a metaphor is a way of "conceptualizing our experience" and it is not a rhetorical figure that should be used only in poetry (Peña and Samaniego 2011: 266). Contrary to the traditional theory, cognitivists maintain that metaphor is "mainly a matter of thought and only secondarily a matter of language" (Peña and Samaniego 2011: 266). What is more, basic conceptual metaphors "pertain to the common conceptual apparatus shared by members of a culture" and they are "systematic, experientially bound, unconscious, cognitively automatic, and widely conventionalized in language" (Peña and Samaniego 2011: 266).

3.1.1. Metaphor

As stated, metaphor, which is one of the basic notions in cognitive linguistics "is understood as a mapping or set of correspondences across conceptual domains. […] There is a source domain and a target domain" (Peña and Samaniego 2011: 265). In other words, a metaphor is a mapping between two domains: the source, which is usually concrete, and the target, which tends to be abstract. Another important concept is the concept of *mapping,* which is defined as "a set of correspondences" (Peña and Samaniego 2011: 270), which are several in the case of metaphors.

Focusing on the classification of metaphors, Ruiz de Mendoza (1997a) creates a twofold division depending on the mapping process previously mentioned: *one-correspondence metaphors* and *many-correspondence metaphors*. Prototypically, "metaphors are many-correspondence mappings which are predicatively used" (Peña and Samaniego 2011: 275). Peña and Samaniego (2011: 276) state the existence of a threefold distinction according to Lakoff and Johnson (1980): structural, in which the concept is metaphorically structured in terms of another (ARGUMENT IS WAR); orientational, which are based on spatial orientation (HAPPY IS UP and SAD IS DOWN); and ontological, which are the ones based on the Great Chain of Being.

Related to what has been previously developed, Lakoff and Johnson (1980: 8) claim that a metaphor, far from being a poetic device, it is a matter of words that can be found in everyday life, in thought and action, as our conceptual system or the way in which we think, and act is metaphorical in nature. Besides, we are not aware of our conceptual system, so metaphors help us to "structure how we perceive, how we think, and what we do" (Lakoff and Johnsen 2003: 9). Lakoff and Johnson (1980: 10) also claim that "metaphors as linguistic expressions are possible precisely because there are metaphors in a person's conceptual system." This idea is crucial, as metaphors cannot be separated from ourselves or our language.

3.1.2. The Great Chain of Being

According to López Rodríguez (2008: 19), the major premise of The Great Chain of Being (Lovejoy 1936, Tillyard 1959, Lakoff & Turner 1989) is that "every existing thing in the universe has its place in a divinely planned hierarchical order."

Moreover, as stated by López Rodríguez (2009: 81), The Great Chain of Being "presupposes that the natural order of the cosmos is that higher forms of existence dominate lower forms of existence." For that reason, and regarding the hierarchical organization of the Great Chain of Being (*cf* Lakoff & Turner, 1989), humans stand above animals (López Rodríguez 2009: 79). In the same line, Peña and Rosca (2021: 232) claim that it classifies entities into different categories, "each of which is characterized by the properties of the inferior level."

Besides, "Higher-order entities are human beings, followed by animals, plants, and inanimate substances or things, which represent the lowest category within this chain. Attributing an entity of a level some characteristic trait of another category can be done in metaphorical terms" (Peña and Rosca 2021: 232).

With respect to the previous idea, several metaphors which compare humans with other life forms (animals, for instance) arise. This is important because animal characteristics are attributed to humans and it "seems to have important linguistic and conceptual repercussions since when people are equated with animals, they are being degraded and, therefore, the animal-related metaphor is likely to become a vehicle to express undesirable human characteristics (Talebinejad & Dastjerdi, 2005)" (quoted from López Rodríguez 2009: 81). Besides, López Rodríguez states that animal metaphors, apart from being used as a tool to denigrate marginal groups, "mark ethnic boundaries and the dominance of the white race is preserved in language." (2009: 79). In other words, humans are attributed with the bestial qualities of animals as a way of proving their non-rational capacity (López Rodríguez 2008: 31).

Similarly, as observed by Peña and Rosca (2021: 232), "Human beings are endowed with those properties that characterize lower forms of existence together with a series of features that set them from non-human beings (Lakoff & Turner 1989: 167-168)." The basis of this metaphor seems to be the lack of control, as it presumes that humans cannot control their animal instincts and they do not use their rational side (López Rodríguez 2009: 81).

3.1.3. The DIVIDED SELF metaphor

In relation to the animal metaphors previously explained, in line with López Rodríguez, the DIVIDED SELF metaphor (cf Lakoff & Johnson 1999, Kövecses 2005), "conceptualizes people as consisting of a rational part (the subject) and an emotional bodily part (the self)." This implies that there is an animal inside each person (2008: 31).

López Rodríguez (2009: 78) claims that "in the forging of social identity dualisms seem to play a pivotal role and the use of metaphors tends to reinforce the dichotomy between "the self" and "the other" (Lerner & Lakoff, 1999; Coviello & Borgerson, 2004)." López Rodríguez also states that, according to Altman (1990: 504), "metaphors […] are a part of power structure (or struggle), part of the way in-groups of various sorts delineate their discursive boundaries, name and expel the Other, express and reinforce their bonds, their sense of being "at home" with each other."

Then, in accordance with the current society, ""the self" is represented by the male white heterosexual, leaving other groups such as women, homosexuals, blacks or people of different races in the category of "the other" (*cf* Baker, 1981; Baider & Gesuato, 2005)." (López Rodríguez 2009: 78). Furthermore, López Rodríguez claims that this metaphor is marked via language and some social groups use as a way of oppressing "the other", "imposing their ideology though linguistic means." (2009: 78).

Finally, as a way of connecting the purposes of animal metaphors and the DIVIDED SELF metaphor, López Rodríguez (2009: 94) states that those metaphors are used to degrade particular social groups regarded as inferior or marginal.

3.2. Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is defined as "discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social-power abuse and inequality are enacted, reproduced, legitimated, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context." (van Dijk 2015: 466). It is characterized as a social movement because critical discourse analysts are in favour of exposing and challenging social inequality (van Dijk 2015: 466).

According to van Dijk (2008b), there has been a misunderstanding of CDA as if it was a special way of doing discourse analysis, so the preferable and more general term would be *critical discourse studies* (CDS) (van Dijk 2015: 466). It is "not one direction

of research among many others in the study of discourse. Rather, it is a critical perspective that may be found in all areas of discourse studies […] In other words, CDA is discourse study with an attitude." (van Dijk 2015: 466).

Finally, as reported by van Dijk (2015: 467) CDA focuses on social problems and political issues in a multidisciplinary way, trying to explain the social interaction and structure and focusing on "the ways discourse structures enact, confirm, legitimate, reproduce, or challenge relations of *power abuse (dominance)* in society."

3.3. Multimodality

"Multimodality designates a phenomenon rather than a theory or a method – the phenomenon that discourse is almost always multimodal." (van Leeuwen 2015: 447). In other words, different modes are combined and integrated in discourse and the properties and differences between these are studied (van Leeuwen 2015: 447).

Norris (2004, p.4; Norris, 2011) claims that multimodal interaction deals with what individuals express and the other's reaction and perception in interaction (Pinar 2015: 1). Moreover, she "studies the *embodied* (language, gesture and gaze) and *disembodied* modes (music, print and layout) used by people in interaction." (Pinar 2015: 1). The human mind cannot be separated from multimodality and interaction "since "a person always thinks, perceives, and/or feels something when interacting with others, and at least some of these thoughts, perceptions and/or feelings are communicated through a person's actions" (Norris, 2004, p.xi)." (Pinar 2015: 7).

In relation to what has been previously stated, "According to Forceville (2010: 59), analysing multimodal metaphor and metonymy is a productive way to gain insight into multimodal discourse, since their prototypical manifestations target and source occur in different modalities." (Pinar 2015: 3)

Finally, as reported by van Leeuwen, there exists a huge interest in multimodality due to contemporary communication. For that reason, we cannot study discourse separately from multimodality, "whether in the context of conversation, social media, the workplace, or the public sphere." (2015: 447).

4. Analysis of sexism in women's and men's perfume commercials

As explained above, we understand metaphor as a "mechanism enabling the language user to talk about one thing in terms of another and on its potential to clothe or disguise the message in order to unveil the true assumptions that inform the use of such linguistic products" (López Rodríguez 2008: 16). Moreover, López Rodríguez claims that it "seems to fulfil a clearly social function not only in reflection the cultural views of a particular community but also as a cognitive mechanism that allows the language user to talk about one domain of experience in terms of a completely different one (Low 1988, Kittay 1989)." (2008: 18). In the same line, metaphors are motivated by culture, as we use them in order to share our beliefs and ideas (López Rodríguez 2008: 16). In other words, they "are charged with an ideological or attitudinal component (Fernando 1996) which reflects a bias on the part of a speech community towards other groups of peoples, mores, situations and events." (López Rodríguez 2009: 78). According to Peña and Rosca (2021: 228), we use figurative language in our everyday speech, which allows us to communicate with the other members of the community. In other words, meaning is embodied. Our bodily experience shapes our linguistic realizations […] Our everyday experience allows us to understand and give linguistic shape to abstractions." (Peña and Rosca 2021: 230).

Indeed, metaphors help to construct social identities (López Rodríguez 2009: 78) and to keep "the community together in detriment of marginal groups (Berstein, 1997; Mills, 1995)" (López Rodríguez 2009: 79). If we take into consideration the forementioned Great Chain of Being and the DIVIDED SELF metaphor, females are seen as lower forms of existence and they are often viewed as animals or foods, carrying all the negative connotations that it involves (López Rodríguez 2008: 16) and it "reinforces the dichotomy between "the self" and "the other" (Lerner & Lakoff, 1999; Coviello & Borgerson, 2004)" (López Rodríguez 2009: 78). Related to the hierarchy of the Great Chain of Being, Kövecses (2000: 2) claims that "our metaphorical conceptual system is organized by a hierarchy of metaphors at different levels of specificity."

However, there exists a downside when making use of metaphors and a price to be paid. "Low (1988: 27) affirms that the price is that the fact that a vehicle highlights one aspect of the topic also implies that it plays down, or hides, others." (López Rodríguez 2008: 18-19). Peña and Rosca state that "by hiding or playing down some aspects of a

concept, prejudices towards given social groups could be fostered and perpetuated." (2021: 230).

For that reason, López Rodríguez (2008: 19) claims that metaphors may hide how women are considered within society. Indeed, metaphors create stereotypes about women, which has led to the acceptance of *sexist* metaphors (López Rodríguez 2009: 79). Before continuing, it is important to define *sexism* and some other related terms (*sexist discourse, sexual harassment* and *feminist critical discourse analysis*) as they come in handy when giving some examples later on. "Sexism refers to discrimination against people on the basis of their SEX. It tends to reflect the belief that one sex is inferior in some way to the other. […] Sexism may also involve exclusion or the use of generalizing or stereotyping remarks about males or females." (Baker & Ellece 2011: 128-129); "sexist discourse refers to ways of representing people stereotypically, which leads to their marginalization or social exclusion on the basis of their sex." (2011: 129); "sexual harassment can be perpetrated by or directed at males or females, and it is often related to abuse of power or expressions of dominance. It consists of verbal or nonverbal messages relating to a person's sexuality or gender (Baker & Ellece 2011: 129-130); and lastly, Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA) is "a form of CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS which is used to critique 'discourses which sustain a patriarchal social order: that is, relations of power that systematically privilege men as a social group and disadvantage, exclude and disempower women as a social group' (Lazar 2005: 5)." (Baker & Ellece 2011: 46). In relation with the latter, Peña and Rosca state that "Critical Discourse Analysis (Van Dijk 1984, 2009, 2011; Fairclough 1995, 2003) focuses on how language use contributes to and fosters social inequality. Powerful elites might use language as a tool to control submissive groups." (2021: 228). Finally, Cotter (2015: 799) states that Critical Discourse Analysis has been useful for "revealing societal power operations and invoking a call to social responsibility."

The problem comes when we internalise sexist metaphors. According to Cortese, "cultural and biological factors are at work here. The notion of the ideal woman is a social construct; it did not impose itself on an unwilling culture." (2008: 89). In the same way, López Rodríguez (2009: 79) argues that these metaphors reduce women to sexual objects whose main role is to comply with man's sexual desire.

Not only can we see these metaphors and sexism in language, but also in advertisements and the media. "As social artifacts reflecting culture, advertising messages

provide an opportunity to compare metaphors in different nations." (Morris and Waldman 2011: 942). Moreover, "metaphors have a key role in creative thinking that is particularly important in public and commercial communication." (Morris and Waldman 2011: 944).

Regarding the representation of women in the media, it "has received great deal of attention" (Morris and Waldman 2011: 945), as it "reflects the traditional beliefs, myths, tales and practices of our society and a culture based on commodities" (Cortese 2008: 89). As stated by Butler, "gender is not a radical choice or project that reflects a merely individual choice, but neither is it imposed or inscribed upon the individual." (1988: 526). In the same line, Fernández Martín mentions that "man's experiences were seen as the norm and females' experiences as the anti-norm (Schulz 1975)" (2010: 68). Consequently, this has "reduced women's space, and women's actions." (Fernández Martín 2010: 68). Pauwels asserts that "the popular portrayal of women and men as language users has stressed their fundamental differences" making men "as norm-makers, language regulators, and language planners." (2003: 550). Butler (1988: 524) states that this reinforces the heterosexually based system of marriage (Butler

When it comes to perfume commercials, which is the aim of this paper, it is essential to mention that they are ruled by gender stereotypes. According to Sczesny and Stahlberg, "the classification of perfumes as 'women's' and 'men's' fragrances is based on certain gender stereotypes." (2002: 815). Furthermore, "stereotyped language was particularly damaging to women in the context of the mass media and educational materials" (Holmes and Meyerhoff 2003: 554).

To begin with, I am going to focus on some Axe commercials. In general terms, Axe creates very sexist commercials, always degrading the image of women. Firstly, let's analyse "The Axe Effect –Women – Billions." Commercial. *YouTube*. 5 Mar. 2013 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I9tWZB7OUSU&list=PLB0862DD464127A4D

As we can see in these two images extracted from the commercial, there are several women running across nature and after, swimming in the ocean. Considering the way in which they run and act, it looks like they are imitating wild animals. For that reason, we can clearly talk about the use of animal metaphors when representing women. In this line, López Rodríguez states that animal metaphors strengthen heteronormativity and the exclusion of certain marginal groups, as well as reinforce the stereotypes that were previously created, in this case, of women (2009: 80). Moreover, these metaphors "clearly mark the dichotomy animal / human and are frequently employed to encode aggressive behaviour (Lakoff & Turner 1989, Kövecses 2002) [...] women are presented as creatures to be feared." (López Rodríguez 2008: 25).

At the end, the man uses the deodorant for attracting those women, who are seen as beasts, without rationality, being driven by their instincts. In addition to this, López Rodríguez states that "relationships are often conceptualised in terms of hunting and, as seen, most animal terms metaphorically portray the man in the role of the hunter, whereas the woman assumes the passive role of the prey." (2008: 30). This is the exact thing that happens in the commercial, as it looks like the man is the hunter and the women are preys falling head over heels for the man, the hunter.

As an aside of the Axe commercials, there is one in which a woman explicitly becomes a tiger, which is a clear-cut example of an animal metaphor. The images have been retrieved from "ROBERTO CAVALLI – New Fragrance (2012)" *YouTube* 25 Mar 2012 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I8FmayL6WpA.

In this commercial, there are several frames of a woman and a tiger that appear intermittently. It suggests that the woman is a tiger who goes after a man. López Rodríguez claims that these metaphors reinforce the stereotypes about women (2009: 95). She also states that "the notion of control appears to underlie the metaphorical identification of women with animals. […] This need for control ultimately implies the idea of domesticity and servitude, since animals are either tamed, domesticated or hunted." (2008: 31). The thing that has captured my attention is the use of a tiger to represent a woman because, according to López Rodríguez, "most animal metaphors used predominantly with men are usually based on the size (big), strength and habitat of the animal (wilderness). […] Women, by contrast, are seen as small domestic animals." (2009: 83). For that reason, even though the woman is represented by a tiger, which is a fierce animal, she is not conceived as fierce and strong, but as something threatening to be afraid of.

In the next commercial, "Axe Commercial" *YouTube*, 6 Jul. 2008 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fbU_j0bxWpU&list=PLB0862DD464127A4D&index=3 we can highlight these two moments.

At first, the man appears cycling and distributing newspapers all over the neighbourhood. Then, one woman looks at him from inside her house, through the

window (first image), and then, as the man continues to ride his bike, several women appear as if they were waiting for him inside a house (second image). This represents the ancient idea of women as housekeepers, subordinated to men and being forced to stay at home taking care of the children and doing the housework. Moreover, Fernández Martín claims that this kind of sexist language is useful when "men's "domestication, dominance, property status, sexual access and the thrill of the hunt" are applied to women (Whaley & Antonelli, 1983: 220)." (2010: 81). This is based on López Rodríguez's perception about the danger of "providing models for women to follow" by mirroring "women's concerns, interests or even women themselves." (2008: 37). Moreover, Cortese maintains that in advertising "women are primarily depicted as sexual objects or sexual agents." (2008: 57). Conclusively, "sexist language uses where men's "domestication, dominance, property status, sexual access and the thrill of the hunt" are applied to woman (Whaley & Antonelli, 1983: 220)." (2010: 81).

Then, we have a clear example of how dangerous is the assimilation of sexist metaphors. "Girl fight by Axe" *YouTube*. 25 May 2010 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V6rAQHa1gmc&list=PLB0862DD464127A4D&index=6.

There is one woman smelling a man's worn t-shirt. Suddenly, a second woman tries to grab the t-shirt from the woman's hands agressively. This leads to a fight, as it can be clearly seen in the second image. Two girls fighting for a man means that there is no sorority and even within the same marginal group. Furthermore, we can also state that women here are being compared to animals or beasts, acting agressively according to their instincts in a primitive form, as they are fighting for an object (the man's t-shirt), like animals do. In the same line, López Rodríguez claims that "aggressiveness seems to be the main characteristic for the encoding of this animal metaphor." (2008: 30).

Finishing with the last Axe commercial, we have "AXE Apollo Fireman" *YouTube*. 11 Feb 2013. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pmUy56m96Xk

At first sight it looks like a common situation. A house is on fire and a firefigther, wearing his uniform, arrives at the place where the fire is taking place to put it out. As he enters the house, he visualizes a girl with a perfect phyisical appearance (considering that she is in the middle of a fire). The man reaches her and takes off his uniform in order to put it on the woman's shoulders. Finally, he holds her in his arms, and rescues her from the fire. The man, thanks to his actions, is portrayed as a hero. Not only for being a firefigther, but for rescuing the woman in a corageous way, doing without his uniform. In this line, the metaphor of the Great Chain of Being comes into play. The woman is being compared to a baby, who, despite being within the same hierarchical level, is placed as a defenseless creatura that cannot take care of herslef. According to López Rodríguez, babies "are young small beings that require full-time attention" and they "are defenceless and need to be protected because they are unable to do anything on their own." (2008: 33). In the commercial, the woman is rescued and carried like a baby, suggesting that she cannot do it by herself and that she needs constant attention. Moreover, the metaphor of comparing woman to babies has sexual nuances as well. (2008: 32). As stated by López Rodríguez, babies are associated with games, as people usually play with them. For that reason, the metaphor of WOMAN AS PLAYTHING arises. As it has sexual connotations,

it unleashes the metaphor SEX IS PLAYING (2008: 33). Once more, the woman is being compared to something that degrades and sexualizes her.

In line with the latter example, we have Robert Pattinson's commercial "DIOR HOMME – The New Fragrance" *YouTube*. 1 Feb 2020. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ocjdar1yqW8

At first, the woman and the man are walking through a dark street, when three men appear out of nowhere. The man perceives it as a threat, so he takes a step forward and grabs the woman gently, as a way of protecting her. Once more, the metaphor woman as a baby appears. The woman is seen as a baby in the sense that she must be protected at all costs, as it looks like she cannot defend herself. As stated by López Rodríguez, "babies are defenceless and need to be protected because they are unable to do anything on their own." (2008: 33). Although it looks like the man is not doing anything bad by protecting her on that way, the hidden meaning is that a woman needs to be protected all the time because it looks like she cannot do it by herself. From the point of view of the DIVIDED SELF metaphor, "the practice of considering the man/ the male as the prototype for human representation reduces the woman / female to the status of the "subsumed," the invisible," or the "marked one." (Holmes and Meyerhoff 2003: 553). Consequently, it shows that a woman needs a man in her life, as she craves for constant attention, and she cannot do basic things by herself (according to the commercials).

Following with the Great Chain of Being, we can also find the metaphor of women compared to food, as it is the case of "Sweet Turns Suggestive | Bitter Peach | PRIVATE BLEND | TOM FORD" *YouTube*. 1 Oct 2020 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XlmngIc2Txk

In this commercial, a woman appears as a representation of a peach. Her body, her lips, her eyes and the rest of her body is compared to the skin of the fruit. In this case, the woman is being compared to food, which is the lowest level in the Great Chain of Being. Returning to López Rodríguez's words, "females tend to be seen as lower forms of existence, such as animals or foods, with the possible negative import attached to them." (2008: 20). In this case, the woman is being compared to a small portion of food, easy to grab and eat, and not filling enough, which underlies the idea of availability and promiscuity (López Rodríguez 2008: 23). In the same line, López Rodríguez states that "this idea of not being a proper meal is important in the conceptualization of women as edible substances, for the idea of availability goes hand in hand with unimportance." (2008: 21). The main consequence of women being perceived as food is that they are also being sexualised. In López Rodríguez's words, it "reveals that in many instances food camouflages sexual desire. In fact, casting women in the guise of foodstuffs enables the language user to present females as objects of lust" and "the main idea condensed in such metaphoric identifications, namely, that women are sexual objects." (2008: 23). In this connection, Fernández Martín states that "women are at the disposal of men for them to enjoy and taste." (2010: 80).

As we have seen so far, women are compared to animals, babies and food in perfume commercials. Now, I am going to analyse four commercials in which women are seen as supernatural creatures, and one in which a man is considered a God of the Olympus in order to see the differences regarding gender stereotypes. As stated by López Rodríguez, this "reveals an extreme dichotomy of praise and abuse (Hughes 1991)." (2008: 35), as women are attributed with negative connotations.

Going back to Axe, I am going to analyse the commercial "Axe Excite New Ad. (HD)... "Even Angels Will Fall"" *YouTube*. 27 Nov 2011 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EqGQCM_JlUc

In the first part of the commercial, angels start to fall from the sky. They are all women, dressed in a tiny dress, a halo over their heads and wings. They walk directly towards a man, who looks at them as if they were mad. After arriving, the angels throw their halos against the floor. Hence, a dichotomy between good (women) angels and bad (women) angels is created. In agreement with López Rodríguez, "angels are supposed to be asexual and pure; elements that might account for its figurative sense when applied to caring and nice women." (2008: 35). In this sense, women as angels represent purity and asexuality. This is based on the ancient idea that women had to be pure and respectful until matrimony (which did not occur with men). Then, when the angels break their halos, they are seen as the complete opposite. They are portrayed as promiscuous, wanting to seduce the man as if they were evil creatures. In this way, the idea of the dark angel arises. According to López Rodríguez "the dark angel […] allies of Satan […] with their metaphorical usage when applied to females that are well-known for their unruly

behaviour." (2008: 36). Thus, women evolve from being pure creatures to evil ones who do not follow the rules and want to charm and corrupt men.

In "Olympea, Paco Rabanne" *YouTube*. 24 Oct 2016 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WxLgkmA-deA, the woman is represented as a kind of goddess.


After watching the commercial, one may think that it is not sexist, as the woman is represented as a deity, looking powerful and independent. However, as sexism is so internalised in our society, it does not mean what we expected to. López Rodríguez has a good point in relation to this idea, which is that "goddesses, indeed, are to be adored, which accounts for […] presenting women as models to be followed." (2008: 35). Indeed, she mentions that "power and woman do not usually go hand-in-hand […]. In fact, *goddess* appears in the collocation *sex goddess*, the sense of power being downplayed by the idea of physical beauty and sexual expertise." (2008: 35). Once more, the woman is being valued for her physical appearance and her ability to satisfy men, rather for her values and her power. Even though she is presented in that way, the metaphor opens our eyes, and it shows us a very different reality.

Then, the metaphor of the woman as a siren appears in these two commercials: "Versace Eros Pour Femme | Fragrances" *YouTube* 15 Apr 2015 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uYdMgjCKTz4&list=PLhS774N-PC6PohrBXbJaThZigTgHlpyTh&index=4 and "Jean Paul Gaultier – Le Male" *YouTube* 5 Aug 2020 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ajfUBzyp9IY.

As we can see in the Versace commercial, the woman is in the water, swimming like a siren. It is true that she does not persuade the man with her call (as in the second commercial), but she does it in a very similar way with her deep look. She is able to seduce   and   persuade   him   in   order   to   steal   his   golden   arrow.
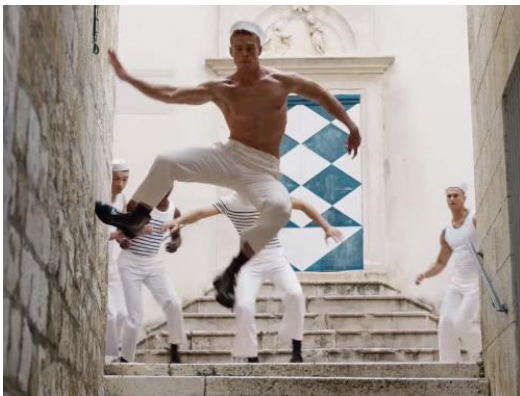
The second one (Jean Paul Gaultier) is much more explicit. As we can see, there is a woman at the top of a lighthouse making a siren call. Moreover, there is an image of a woman dressed up as a siren. In mythology, sirens are known for captivating sailors with their calls and driving them crazy so as to seduce and kill them. This is exactly what occurs in the commercial: the man is running anxiously, enchanted by the woman's call, until he reaches and kisses her. According to López Rodríguez, "*siren* conveys the idea

of powerful sexual attraction." (2008: 35). Once more, women are seen as sexual objects with the negative connotation of being harmful for men.

WWomen are also metaphorically compared to mythological creatures such as angels, goddesses or sirens, but usually with negative connotations. OOpposittelyly, there is the case of men portrayed as a God of the Olympus in "Invictus – Paco Rabanne" *YouTube* 8 Mar 2016 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q4sIMP57Atc.


In this commercial, the man is seen as a deity, praised by everyone. In the second image, two women appear semi-naked on both sides. Moreover, in the third image, it also appears a gigantic semi-naked woman. This woman, despite being enormous compared to the man, appears behind him and pointing to him as if he was a superior creature. We can draw two conclusions from this commercial: firstly, woman's sexualization and objectification appear no matter if the commercial is directed to the male or to the female audience; and secondly, there is a huge difference regarding women's and men's representation as mythological creatures. Despite being pictured in the same way, women always go hand in hand with negative connotations or objectification, whereas men go hand in hand with power, control and greatness.

As stated by Pauwels and previously mentioned, "the popular portrayal of women and men as language users has stressed their fundamental differences" making men "as norm-makers, language regulators, and language planners." (2003: 550). This is important to understand the next commercials. Even though we are not talking about language, men are seen as norm-makers also in the media, as everything revolves around them. This idea is the basis of the following commercials: "Carolina Herrera – Bad Boy" *YouTube* 25 Jul 2019 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-JBnoifM9Hk&list=PLhS774N-PC6PohrBXbJaThZigTgHlpyTh&index=31 and "Paco Rabanne 1 Million Intense advertising campaign with Mat Gordon and Dree Hemingway" *YouTube* 22 Jan 2015 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FR6mE3Q979Y.
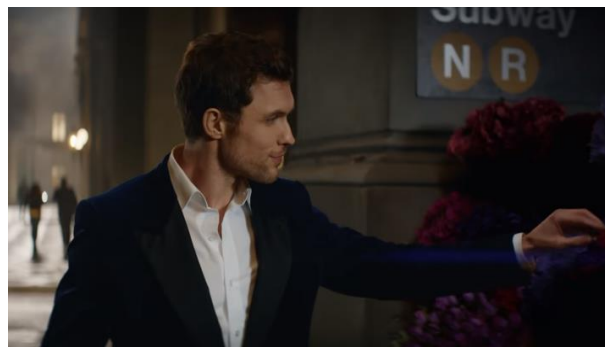
In the first commercial, a man is walking along New York streets, doing whatever he wants, creating his own rules and disobeying the established ones. For instance, he breaks a cordon in which the word "CAUTION" is written in capital letters and he also steals a flower from a stall in the middle of the street. These two actions are illegal, but he does them anyway, as he is able to create his own norms. The title "Bad Boy" also suggests that, even when doing bad things and breaking the law, he is not judged or critisiced by the rest of the people. This would be the complete opposite if a woman was the one doing it, as women, no matter if they are portrayed in a good or in a bad way, will receive negative connotations.
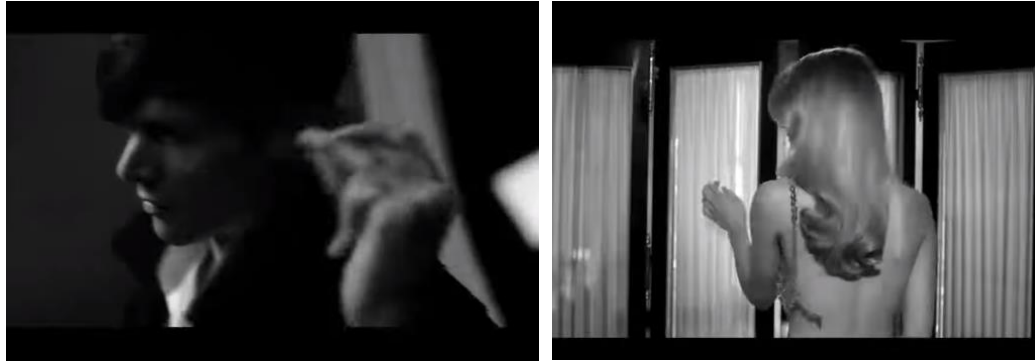
The second commercial is very similar to the first one. The man seems to be the one who makes the rules and imposes them to the rest. In this case, he achieves whatever he wants by the snapping of his fingers. Accordingly, he is able to take off all the woman's clothes without asking her for permission, and without even touching her. In this sense, the notion of control comes into play. As López Rodríguez states, "this notion of control ultimately hints at stereotypical views of womanhood, implying the idea that some kind of restraint needs to be exercised upon women." (2009: 95). Again, the woman is stereotyped and not respected by men. Moreover, and unsurprisingly, she is being so sexualized that the man does not need to touch her to make her a sexual object, "docile and submissive, whose main role is to comply with man's sexual desire." (López Rodríguez 2009: 79).

Continuing with the notion of control, it is important to analyse the following commercial: "1 Million, the Fragrance for Men by Paco Rabanne | Sephora" *YouTube* 28 Mar 2015 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K2458_tD1eY&list=PLhS774N-PC6PohrBXbJaThZigTgHlpyTh&index=27.

In accordance with the latter commercial, the man makes his own rules and does whatever he wants only by the snapping of his fingers. Even the lights change when he does it, which means that even the material things act as he wants. The shocking part occurs when he es portrayed as a giant, holding a tiny woman with his hand. This implies

that he is also controlling the woman, as she is so small that she cannot do anything by herself. According to López Rodríguez, "generally, hand in hand with size goes weakness." (2008: 32). Hence, the man is perceived as big and strong, making his own norms at ease, whereas the woman, who is almost unnoticeable, is so small and weak that she cannot scape from the man's hand.

The commercial that perfectly represents the notion of control is the "D&G fragrance range of Spring / Summer 2007" https://sexinfashionadvertising.blogspot.com/2016/11/dolce-gabbana-gang-rape-okay.html.


One can easily perceive the notion of control, as both images create nuances of rape and agression. Several men, with serious faces, are around (and even up) a semi-naked woman, who looks like she has fainted. Here, the forementioned WOMAN AS PLAYTHING metaphors comes into play, with all the negative and sexual connotations that it involves (2008: 33). The woman also looks like a baby, very small, light and manageable compared to the rest of the men. Regarding the agressiveness that this commercial represents, Cortese (2008: 79) claims that media creates a pattern of aggressive behaviour and masculinity.

Taking the DIVIDED SELF metaphor into consideration, López Rodríguez (2009: 79) states that "the self", due to the dominant ideology, is represented by the male white heterosexual only, which leads to the oppression of other groups.

For that reason, such aggressive commercials should not be taken for granted, as media influences the new-coming generations deeply, and violence against woman may become a common thing.

In this same line, the commercial "Unforgivable Woman (Sean John)" *YouTube*. 9 Jul 2008 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-26O7scM0U0 represents perfectly well how dangerous it is to normalize aggressiveness and violence against women.
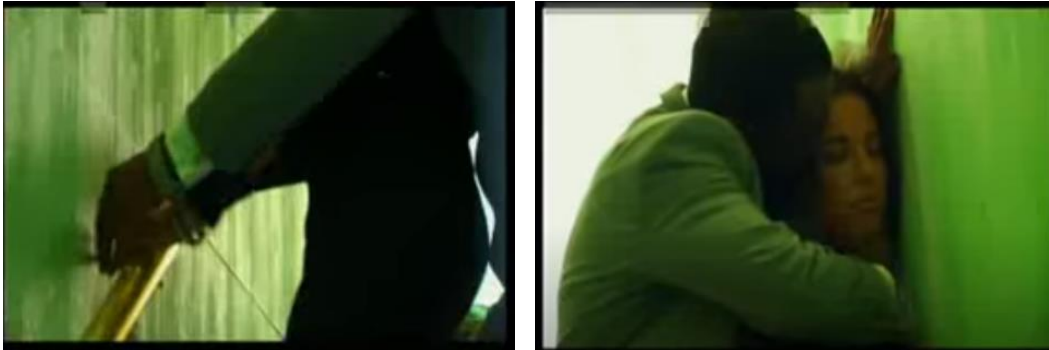
Sadly, this commercial is very shocking and even scary. It portraits a rape scene perfectly well. The man grabs the woman's hands aggressively from the back, without letting her make the minimum movement. Then, he assaults the woman and grabs her by the neck, which means that she can barely breath. Here, the woman is being submissive until she is being rapped without making any facial expression, shouting or crying. If this type of commercials normalizes such things as rapes, violence or aggressiveness against woman, it is highly probable that the society will try to imitate those actions and interiorize them as the norm and as the correct thing to do. According to Cortese, "advertising not only makes this sexual genre of violent abuse tolerable but also unmistakably glorifies it. Sexual violence has become romantic and chic instead of being seen as grievously contemptible." (2008: 85).

One of the most explicit and famous commercials which shows sexism in an exaggerated manner is "Faceless Mariana Braga for Tom Ford for Men" 2007 http://thenotice.net/2013/11/sexualization-and-agency-of-women-in-advertising/.

Needles to say, this is the most sexist commercial that we have analysed so far. The hipersexualisation and objectification reaches such an extent that, in order to

advertise a perfume, they place it in the "faceless" woman's private parts. As stated by Cortese,

> "Two general patterns seem to emerge concerning gender and advertising. First, ads tell us that there is a big difference between what is appropriate or expected behaviour for men and women, or for boys and girls. Second, advertising and other mass media inculcate in consumers the cultural assumption that men are dominant and women are passive and subordinate. A key component of the passive, subordinate role is that women lack a voice. The sexual objectification of women requires that they remain silent. Moreover, while the masculine gender role is valued, the feminine counterpart is disregarded or devalued." (2008: 58).

Not only are women sexualised, but also forced to meet men's expectations about them. Indeed, Cortese also claims that

> "Advertisers have an enormous financial stake in a narrow ideal of femininity that they promote, especially in beauty product ads (Kilbourne 1989). […] The exemplary female prototype in advertising, regardless of product or service, displays youth (no lines or wrinkles), good looks, sexual seductiveness (Baudrillard 1990), and perfection (no scars, blemishes, or even pores) (Kilbourne 1989)." (2008: 59).

In other words, advertisers are mainly concerned with selling products and do not care about damaging women's image and degrading their lives. When taking into consideration both The Great Chain of Being and the DIVIDED SELF metaphor in relation to stereotypes, Fernández Martín maintains that "as regards stereotyping, Talbot states that it "reduces and simplifies" individuals, trapping them into rigid categories. She adds that both practices help maintain "the social and symbolic order" and at the same time mark a dividing line between what is normal and acceptable and what is abnormal and unacceptable (Talbot 2003: 471)." (2010: 68-69). This unhappily reinforces sexism and the consequences it brings along, as I am going toexplain in the following section.

5. Physical and psychological consequences from the point of view of Critical Discourse Analysis and multimodality.

As we have seen so far when analysing the commercials, the image of the woman is disrupted, as she is constantly compared to animals, food, babies, objects and divine creatures, but in a negative way, implying that they are made by and for the man. From

this we can derive some conclusions and consequences from the point of view of Critical Discourse Analysis and multimodality.

Firstly, as pointed out in section 3.2., Critical Discourse Analysis is defined as "discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social-power abuse and inequality are enacted, reproduced, legitimated, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context" (Tannen, Hamilton & Schiffrin 2015: 466). In other words, it deals with and challenges social injustice so as to investigate its motivating force. In this sense, Baider and Gesuato claim that "Hine's cognitive-linguistic work reveals the existence of a social imbalance between the sexes, which is to be identified in a discriminatory view of women, exemplified in the English language, according to which women are more likely than men to be viewed and treated as less than people." (2003: 9). The important point here is that, thanks to Critical Discourse Analysis, woman's discrimination can be studied and hopefully changed in future societies. Moreover, Fernández Martín maintains that "the word applied to males is semantically marked as positive while the female one is marked negative" (2010: 76) because the society is "constructed under a patriarchal system where "men are clearly considered higher-order beings than woman" (Fernández Fontecha & Jiménez Catalá 2003: 794)." (2010: 82). In this sense, CDA also criticises heteronormativity, as the man is always the creator of everything, not letting women decide or collaborate (patriarchy).

Then, paying attention to multimodality and going back to Pinar's definition, multimodal interaction deals with what individuals express and the other's reaction and perception in interaction (2015: 1). In this case, multimodality in the media and advertising is crucial. According to Cortese, "advertising images provide culturally sanctioned ideal types of masculinity and femininity. Advertisers targeting women consumers subscribe to very limited notions of what constitutes femininity and, consequently, "feminine" buying patterns (Kilbourne 1989; Steinem 1990)." (2008: 57). In this same way and related to multimodality, Morris and Waldman (2011: 947) state that advertising plays a role in how people live and how peaple think.

Continuing with multimodality, it is crucial to remark that it combines different modes in order to convey meaning. In order to exemplify this idea, we should have a look at the following commercial: "Biotherm Homme" 5 Oct 2010 http://marketingmag.ca/brands/biotherm-homme-completes-force-ful-out-of-home-campaign-5258/

As a way of contextualizing, Morris and Waldman mention that

"advertising uses symbols, common practices, and cultural references to create thoughts, impressions and concepts (Lester, 1997), expressing culture, mirroring how people behave, and providing ideas and images about society's values, fantasies, desires, and norms (Valdivia, 1997). Not only is culture read in advertisements, but advertisements also contribute to the ongoing construction of culture (Lester). In other words, advertisements reflect and shape culture simultaneously." (2011: 947).

In terms of multimodal analysis, there are several modes combining within this commercial. We have the image of a very well-looking and muscular man, combining with the word "FORCE". Thanks to multimodality, both the man and the word are interrelated, indicating that the man is strong enough and that has a lot of force. As it has been proven, we cannot separate multimodality from advertising.

"Advertisers are widely known for sexually objectifying women." (Cortese 2008: 60-61). All the commercials that we have analysed are ruled by patriarchy and sexism. Interestingly, they are also based on heteronormativity, as all of them are starring heterosexual and young couples with no flaws. This can be related to these two Cortese's contributions: "Women need change – specifically, eliminating what is wrong with them. There is an assumption, often explicit, that there is something wrong with their physical appearance, dress, or body odour." (2008: 76); and "ads also sometimes portray men as inherently flawed. There is plenty of room for improvement for men as well as women, the ads say. But advertisers don't seem to be as hard on men as they are on women." (2008: 76).

Sadly, all of this leads to physical insecurities as well as health problems caused by the obsession of achieving the "perfect" body portrayed by the commercials. In the same vein, Cortese admits that "sexual images in media hurt young girls. Unavoidable mass media images of sexually objectified girls (and women displayed as adolescents) can cause psychological and physical harm to adolescents and young women." (2008: 76). Moreover, "the sexual objectification of girls is pervasive and an increasing problem damaging to girls. The problem occurs when society's sexual objectification of women becomes internalized by young adolescents and girls" because it "can result in depression, eating disorders, and poor academic performance." (Cortese 2008: 76).

Talking about body image, there also exists a difference between men and women: "body image is a demanding concern for men as well as women. […] Men are not that concerned with weight and pants size. Instead, they are more concerned about personal hygiene such as sweat, bod hair, and body odour." (Cortese 2008: 69-70). Accordingly, Cortese (2008: 70) claims that women are under more pressure regarding their physical appearance and their status.

In this same vein, Cortese claims that it also encourages cosmetic surgery and dentistry, and makes us question ourselves "who gains by promoting this nonsensical image of the ideal woman? Cosmetic surgery is a \$300 billion industry (Twitchell 1996). The diet industry rakes in \$33 million per year; cosmetics, \$20 billion." (2008: 62). As we can see, they take advantage from women's insecurities to steal them money "unintentionally". However, there are also consequences regarding men's physical appearance, as the ideal man is supposed to be "young, handsome, clean-cut, perfect, and sexually alluring." (Cortese 2008: 70).

Then, focusing on the health consequences that all of this causes, there is also different between males and females. As stated by Cortese, "in females, obsessive-compulsive behaviour may result in anorexia nervosa, in which girls and women starve themselves in an attempt to reach unrealistic cultural standards of feminine beauty", whereas men experiment "muscle dysmorphia", as "these men are obsessed with achieving an unrealistic cultural standard of muscularity as masculinity." (2008: 72). All in all, "anorexia nervosa in women and muscle dysmorphia in men are sad reminders of the debilitating dysfunctions of gender roles in postmodern society." (Cortese 2008: 72).

I would like to finish this paper by launching a message of optimism, as society is increasingly fighting against gender roles, sexism and injustices, and evolving little by little as a community, and not as different people who are superior or inferior among them.

6. Conclusion

This paper has thrown light on sexism in men and women's perfume commercials. However, this would not have been possible without the contributions of: Cognitive Linguistics, from which we have derived several metaphors, which are animal metaphors, women as food, women as babies, the Great Chain of Being and the DIVIDED SELF metaphor; and Critical Discourse Analysis, which focuses on social injustices and inequalities (which is the purpose of the analysis).

First, regarding metaphors, we can come to the conclusion that not only are they useful in poetry and literature in general, but also in every-day life. We use them daily and they represent the community's thoughts and beliefs. The downside of this is that metaphors contain a hidden message, which is women's objectification and sexualisation. Indeed, women are seen as inferior compared to men, as they are equal to lower forms of existence, such as babies (who need constant help and attention), animals (which means that they are something to be afraid of), mythological creatures (which implies that women drive men crazy) and also food (which stands for women's edibility as a way of talking about sexual desire).

Then, regarding Critical Discourse Analysis, it studies the causes of social inequalities and injustices. For that reason, it has been very useful in order to analyse the cases in which women were brutally sexualised. Moreover, it also criticises heteronormativity, as it is imposed in the media, in the society and even in language.

Finally, regarding multimodality, it is a concept that has been very well received recently, as it has been proven that the media and advertising make use of multimodality in order to capture the consumer's attention. For that reason, advertisers make use of a combination of different modes (such as images, words and music...) in order to persuade the audience to get certain products. Hence, we cannot separate multimodality from the society, as it is based on people's beliefs and culture.

As we have seen, these three approaches (Cognitive Linguistics, CDA and multimodality) come in handy for proving that sexism is not just pure speculation, but it is something dangerous that we have very internalised. Consequently, some commercials in which violence or aggressiveness are applied to women are seen as common and not something to worry about. Moreover, it does not matter if the commercials are focused

on the male or the female audience, as women is submissive and at the feet of men in all of them.

Finally, providing some futures line of research, it would be interesting to study the way in which music can contribute meaning to these ads. As advertising uses multimodality, music can also persuade people to buy a certain product or to have a different perception of the commercial. Then, to study other ads apart from those advertising perfumes to check whether sexism is also involved or not, and how it can be changed. Moreover, to carry out a quantitative analysis of perfume ads in order to check the quantity of meaning contributed by verbal and non-verbal modes. And lastly, to focus on commercials launched in other cultures in order to check whether the same conclusions are reached in connection with sexism in perfume ads. This would be useful to show the cultural and social differences among countries.

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