

Every Woman's Dream? Analyzing Advertisements

Framing this unit

In this activity we will focus on an advertisement as a means to discuss the development of Israeli society and the status of women in Israel since the twentieth century. This resource can be used to examine the changing role of women in the ensuing decades and the stereotypical portrayal of women in advertisements. This discussion can include different perspectives and touch upon topics such as equal rights, the status of women in various spheres of life, the development of various types of feminism, and more.

The advertisement we are analyzing in this unit is for new NurGas products aimed at women. It is not dated but is probably from the 1940s or 1950s. Most of the advertisement is in red, with a well dressed housewife in the center wearing an apron and high heels. She wears a fashionable but conservative dress and is happy and smiling. The advertisement suggests that by purchasing these products, a housewife will be able to save herself time during the day.

According to the text, the woman is delighted to have received a new gas stove, described as "every woman's dream." On the right-hand side of the poster are two more items: a product that looks like a fridge and a water heater.

The advertisement includes a text stating that NurGas products can make women's work in the kitchen more enjoyable and save her time. The texts are written in the Hebrew feminine form, reflecting the prevailing attitude that a woman's place was in the home. The woman in the poster, who dreams of household appliances, seems proud of her gendered role in the home.

Group Activity

In pairs or small groups search the internet for an advertisement that promotes a product. Is this a good advertisement in your opinion? Why or why not?

Consider the following points:

- How central is the product itself in terms of graphics and design?
- What information do we learn about the product from the advertisement?
- How convincing is the advertisement?
- What are the means used to catch the consumer's attention and to promote the product?
- Is the advertisement appropriate for different target audiences? Why?

Make a list of characteristics that make an advertisement a good one.

Each group will present their advertisements and explain what makes them good/bad advertisements.

Discussion

Look at the [Every Woman's Dream, NurGas Advertisement](#) and discuss the following questions:

- What is the woman wearing and what is she pointing to?
- What products are featured in the advertisement?
- What is the title of the advertisement?
- What are the benefits of NurGas products according to the text on the right?
- Which company created this advertisement?
- Why do you think a woman featured in the advertisement?
- How does the company guarantee that the products will improve the lives of the purchasers?
- What can we learn about gender stereotypes from the advertisement?
- What was your reaction to this advertisement?
- Do advertisers portray women in the same way today? Give examples from contemporary advertisements.
- The poster suggests that only women use home appliances such as stoves, fridges, and water heaters. Was this true then, and is this true today?
- Are there advertisements today which appeal to only one gender?
- Do men and women appear on advertisements only in the traditional roles of women as housewives and men as breadwinners?
- Do you usually buy products as a result of advertising?
- What influences your decision to buy a particular product?

Creative Activity

- Create a timeline of how gender roles have changed since 1900. Include the important events that led to changes during the subsequent years.
- The National Library of Israel published a blog post for International Women's Day: [IWD Special: Fixing the Sexist Ads of the Past!](#). Look at the examples of the fixing that the NLI team did and fix some modern advertisements too!

Primary sources in this lesson

[Every Woman's Dream, NurGas Advertisement](#)