

MODERN WOMAN ATTACK:  
A Postfeminist Study of the Portrayal of Women in  
Whitening Lotion Commercials in the Philippines

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because I don't know how to say  
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## ABSTRACT

Rollorata, R. E. (2012). *MODERN WOMAN ATTACK: A Postfeminist Study of the Portrayal of Women in Whitening Lotion Commercials in the Philippines*.

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This thesis introduces the concept of postfeminism in understanding the bigger picture of the portrayal of women in existing whitening lotion TV advertisements in the Philippines. Television advertisements are regarded as powerful instruments in affecting the lives and behaviors of the Filipinos. Yet, it is always criticized for propagating highly stereotyped images of men and women.

In our country, advertisements of whitening products are considered one of the most influential in affecting the Filipino audience. Through the years, these kinds of advertisements have coordinated progressive ideas about women giving them a sense of false empowerment and making the audience believe this illusion.

My study explores the past and recent portrayal of women in various whitening lotion commercials shown in the Philippines in the years 2004 to 2011. I aim to determine how much has changed. Using postfeminism as my main framework, I set out to find the mechanisms behind the shift in the representation of women, from the traditional weak and passive to the modern liberated and empowered, and see its connection to media and society at large.

To ground my research, I present a review of related literature that discusses different views and assumptions about postfeminism. I employ the most valid points in those studies and pick the most appropriate to express my own take to explain this phenomenon and uncover the truth in media's notion of women's liberation. Based on my findings, I then conclude that the portrayal of women in recent commercials is moving towards the postfeminist representations.

Keywords: postfeminism, advertisements, media, portrayal of women

## ABSTRAKT

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Ipinakikilala ng pag-aaral na ito ang konsepto ng ‘postfeminismo’ bilang isang instrumento sa pagtuklas ng mga mekanismo sa likod ng paglalarawan sa mga kababaihan sa mga patalastas ng whitening lotion na ipinapalabas sa Pilipinas. Ang mga patalastas na ipinapalabas sa telebisyon ay itinuturing na impluwensyal sa pag-uugali at pagpili ng mga Pilipinong manonood. Ang mga komersiyal ding ito ay patuloy na gumagawa at nagpapakalat ng mga isteryotipo hinggil sa mga lalaki’t babae.

Tinitignan ng pananaliksik na ito ang nakalipas at kasalukuyang representasyon ng mga kababaihan sa ilang mga komersyal ng whitening lotion sa Pilipinas na ipinalabas sa telebisyon noong 2004 hanggang 2011. Sa pamamagitan ng paggamit ng teorya ng postfeminismo, layunin nitong alamin kung ano ang mga nagbago sa pagsasalalarawan ng mga kababaihan noon sa pagsasalalarawan sa kanila ngayon. Tutuklasin din ang mga dahilan sa mga pagbabagong ito at kung anong kinalaman nito sa midya at lipunang Pilipino.

Upang pagtibayin ang mga argumento sa pag-aaral na ito, ilalahad ng mananaliksik ang mga magkakapareho at magkakaibang nosyon ukol sa postfeminismo. Mula rito ay huhugutin ng mananaliksik ang mga argumentong sa paniniwala niya ay ang pinaka-angkop at pinakamabisang paraan upang matuldukan ang mga katanungang umuusig sa pag-aaral na ito.

Keywords: patalastas, midya, representasyon ng kababaihan, postfeminismo

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## **Chapter I. Modern Woman Attack: An Introduction**

I have always been interested in television commercials of beauty products, particularly those of whitening lotions. Not because I like or believe the brands but because I enjoy mocking them. I mock the product itself and the models because they are ultimately fair-skinned to begin with. But this thesis does not and will not deal with Filipinos' notion of beauty or colonial mentality. I hope to bring a new and fresh perspective to the rich collection of studies regarding whitening lotion commercials, and in this case, to whitening lotion advertisements released on Philippine TV in the years 2004 to 2011. Have you ever given your full attention to the women you see in those commercials? Have you ever pondered on how accurately or incorrectly they were portrayed? Have you ever wondered why they were portrayed in this particular way than the other?

I must admit that the first thesis topic that came to my mind was why whitening lotion commercials endlessly present fair-skinned models in a country where most females possess "kayumanggi" skin. I also aimed to find out why Filipinas continually believe and buy those whitening lotion products. Then I realized that several studies were already done about it. If I had pursued those particular topics, my thesis would be nothing out of the ordinary, just like any other. I wouldn't want that. I want to write something that was probably never written before, something that would stand out in the book shelf, something that would launch a long list of studies regarding it.

Before I go defining and explaining postfeminism, let me lay down first the questions, objectives, significance, scope and limitations of this study.

Like what I said, this is not a typical study about Filipino women's obsession for white skin or Filipinos' concept of beauty. My study aims to explore the portrayal of Filipino women in whitening lotion commercials shown in the Philippines in 2004 to 2011. It is one media genre where I have noticed an evident shift from the traditional portrayal of women to a more liberating one. What does the portrayal of women in recent whitening lotion commercials signify? Are they really empowered and liberated? Are they truly resistant to the traditional roles? Have they really broken free from the male-



dominated society and from the consumerist and capitalist culture? I believe that the shift in the portrayal of women in commercials can be explained thoroughly by postfeminism.

Focusing on the concepts of the portrayal of women and postfeminism, my thesis interrogates the relationship between the representation of women in whitening lotion commercials, media and postfeminism. It seeks to compare the characteristics of women portrayed in whitening lotion commercials we saw before to the recent whitening lotion commercials that we have now and discover the reason and ideology behind this shift. I aim to determine the roles of women before to their roles presented now and see how much has changed. I also aim to discover the layers of meaning and its connection to the society as a whole. I seek to examine the complexity of postfeminist characteristics and the way they inhere within media texts, particularly in advertising.

To achieve my goals, I examine and critique selected television commercials of whitening lotion products shown in the country in the years 2004 - 2011. As a tool to answer my questions, I will analyze how women are presented in whitening lotion advertisements and connect it to the larger and more complex structure that governs it. I aim to give closer attention to the career of women in these commercials, their age, social class, attire, physical characteristics, how are they projected as consumers and how males regard them in the story. How much has changed from the advertisements before to the ones we have now? What could these changes represent and what could be its deeper and darker meaning?

I offer a qualitative textual analysis of the commercials by watching the selected TV ads and listing down the variables and indicators I am looking for, analyzing the messages projected regarding women and determining how it qualifies for postfeminist discussions.

I found my forehead creased when I first heard the term 'postfeminism'. I got more surprised when I found out that there is no thesis dealing with postfeminism in the archives of the Broadcast Department in our dear College of Mass Communication. I strongly believe that postfeminism can indeed explain and represent the shift in the portrayal of women in whitening lotion commercials plus all the mechanisms behind it. You can also imagine my shock when I discovered that there are only two books about postfeminism in the UP library system. One is in process and the other one is long

overdue. Good thing there are e-books and journals written by people who call themselves postfeminists. One last thing that surprised me a lot was the fact that there's no available source in the internet about postfeminism in the Philippines. Postfeminist literature seems to be concentrated only in Western and contemporary societies. Thus, it gave birth to my determination to pursue a study about postfeminism in our country. I then aimed to study about postfeminism in the Philippine media setting, in my own little way.

The reason why I am conducting this research about the portrayal of women in whitening lotion commercials in the Philippines is that I was bothered and intrigued by the hasty change in the representation of women in particular recent commercials. I can clearly and surely remember that women were portrayed in whitening lotion advertisements before as mere sex objects. They were seen as parts and not as a whole. Most whitening lotion ads presented women who were primarily insecure and then after using a certain brand of whitening product and achieving fairer skin, they suddenly became confident women who are ready to face the world and win the man of their dreams.

As I observe several whitening lotion advertisements these days, I perceive that women seen in these advertisements are already fair-skinned from the very beginning. These modern women are presented as obviously confident and happy with their body and appearance and flaunting it for the world to see. But then, it turns out that they are fair-skinned because they are using their chosen brand of whitening lotion. I wish to know what this change in the portrayal of women signifies and what does it has to do with the Philippine media and society at large.

Media propagate particular kinds of preferred gendered behaviors and make it appear more natural through repetition. Women are presented in their traditional roles as beautiful, passive and dependent individuals whose primary goals are to look good and please men. Media create an archetype of the ideal woman which is a mythic one. Women are stuck in stereotypes that reinforce the myth of femininity and influence our notion of what being a woman means.

Women were traditionally portrayed in television as sensitive, passive and domestic. Recently, we can observe that women are shown as empowered and liberated.

Instead of being passively trapped in traditional facets of femininity, women are seen flaunting their femininity and playing it by using their own body as a front. This masquerade lets women detach themselves from the image of objectification while demonstrating and controlling the representation of her body (Gill, 2007).

Yes, there are several existing studies about the portrayal of women in media but they had not zeroed in to whitening lotion commercials as their main units of analysis. Their assumptions and conclusions were also not formed by how I will develop mine in this research, by using the framework of postfeminism to guide me to the points of analysis and conclusion.

This thesis is indeed significant because it aims to uncover true women empowerment. It seeks to stop the false liberation of women presented by television advertisements. It addresses the gross under representation of women in media. A little pondering makes you think that the reason why we need to recognize and empower women is indeed very simple. Only women can play that exceptional role in child survival and development. Mothers' conditions through pregnancy, birth, and child-rearing practices influence the quality of life of their children. When we talk about children, we refer to the coming generations that will take our places in society. For us Filipinos, children symbolize the future. Therefore, like how the old saying goes, how we treat women today have comprehensive and critical effects on the kind of citizens we will have in the future (Mananzan, et.al, 1989).

We should also keep in mind that television advertising is not limited to the commercials. It is more of the process of molding audiences to become appropriate consumers. Yes, women are seen as the primary purchasers but television is not always created with women in mind (Brown, 1990). Mass media reproduce ideas and serve as a crucial site of ideological battles and cultural transformation. It is through mediations in public's consciousness that they can truly understand their empirical and material realities for them to be able to participate in relevant social action.

We could also observe that the TV advertisements we have in our media offer a fairly limited range of femininity and only reproduce set-in-stone myths and stereotypes. Instead of replicating usual myths and stereotypes, we must depict women in a wide range of roles and experiences. We need a wide range of representations dealing with

fluid and contradicting identities. We take it for granted that having a dynamic and fulfilling life would equal to a constant reevaluation of one's roles and identities, which is what is entirely absent from the media portrayals of women today.

This thesis can also help to increase the consciousness of women in media and also to develop alternative media forms and products. The relationship between feminists, women in advertising, and the media corporations, which present themselves as supporters of a social message but only capitalize on women's insecurities and identity as a consumer, brings out conflicts and open prospective possibilities for research investigation.

It could also be significant in giving and awakening the voices of women. It's not only to feel empowered but also to empower ourselves and other scholars to make the right choices and interpretations about media, consumerism and relationships in society. For feminism to truly succeed, it must transcend the individual and reclaim a social politics that takes broad and radical change as its ultimate goal.

The more knowledge we have about why and how the media operate, the more we can understand why gender is portrayed in narrow and restrictive ways so we can campaign to change these limited portrayals. We must fight against the dominant sexist language, negative images and stereotypes that involve women in the media. We must also fight for a stronger and fairer representation of women as opinion makers and as agents of social change.

This study is limited to selected television commercials of whitening lotion products shown in the Philippines in the years 2004 to 2011. As a tool to answer my questions, I will analyze how women are presented in whitening lotion advertisements and connect it to the larger and more complex structure that governs it. I aim to give closer attention to the career of women in these commercials, their age, activities, attire, physical characteristics, how are they projected as consumers and how males regard them in the story. How much has changed from the advertisements before to the ones we have now? What could these changes represent and what could be its deeper and darker meaning?

I only offer a qualitative textual analysis of the commercials by watching the selected TV commercials and listing down the concepts and indicators I am looking for,

analyzing the messages projected regarding women and determining how it qualifies for postfeminist discussions. Due to time constraints, I cannot offer and analyze all existing whitening lotion commercials shown in the country to see more of postfeminism.

As for delimitations, my thesis will not investigate all the TV advertisements of whitening lotion products in the Philippines, from the very first to the very last. I'm also not concerned with the TV advertisements of other whitening products like soap, toner and facial wash. I refrain to delve deeper to specify and criticize the larger political economic structure that governs it as a context of explaining gender relations and images because I tend to focus more on postfeminism. I will not interrogate the relationship between the images of men and women, on how they are socially and historically constructed and how interventions in their sphere are effectively brought about.

This study is not about the intersection of ideology and gender differentiation. I choose not to underscore their historical emergence and consequences, or what exactly happens when they intersect.

#### **A. Media's representation of women**

Media's role in shaping people's ideas, beliefs, actions and behaviors seems to be unquestionable anymore. Societies have proved the indispensable role of mass communication in awakening national consciousness and mobilizing the people. Media also became an agent for the preservation of the status quo. It is compelling in both processes of learning and relearning, as well as in socialization and crystallization of ever-changing people's expectations.

Media is also very influential in spreading and preserving a gender ideology in our society that underpins women's subordination. Mass media perpetuate the polarization of masculinity and femininity. The popular press hail masculinity as exceptionally outstanding and valuable and femininity as inferior and less important. Images of men and women in media are continuously created in this gender ideology scheme but it is also through the help of cultural interventions like media that this ideology can be erased and be substituted by a more liberating one.

Notions about the opposite sexes and gender relations are socially constructed and are hinged to one another. As young children, both men and women are socialized into a

gendered world and the images they see in popular media help in their thorough socialization. Usually, women are expected to keep the family intact and men are always regarded as providers. Mass media have been very instrumental in propagating the distinct and impenetrable spheres of men's and women's work. This ideology of sexual division of labor runs deep in our culture and cannot be easily eradicated by just simply reversing the traditional roles. This ideology gave birth to a feminine sphere inhabited by women that are often just extensions of their domestic responsibilities – less powerful, less skilled and less deserving of the higher wage that men receive.

In our patriarchal society, women's sexuality is defined by how well she gets and keeps her partner. Women are expected to have everything, from smooth and flawless skin, long and shiny hair, to a sexy body that makes them every inch a woman. Advertisements of beauty products seem to propagate the “Be More Beautiful and Successful” agenda. Femininity is seen as a profitable business in the production of consumer goods for women to look more beautiful and feel more feminine. Media, particularly advertisements of consumer products for women, generate the notion that femininity must be maintained to please men. Advertisements make women feel more insecure about their physical appearances and as a result, most women think that they have to look beautiful first for them to feel good about themselves.

Portrayals of women barely differ from one medium to another. If there are differences in the portrayal of women in media, these are just because of the fundamental characteristics of each medium.

In our country, television indeed remains strong in influencing the society because of its wider reach and cheaper access. It still functions as the informant, educator and entertainer of the masses and yet, it still presents traditional gender stereotypes. Fiske and Hartley (1990, as cited in Brown, 1990) pointed out that “it is television's familiarity, its centrality to our culture that makes it so important, so fascinating, and so difficult to analyze. It is rather like the language we speak; taken for granted, but both complex and vital to an understanding of the way human beings have created their world.”

Women are traditionally portrayed in television as sensitive, passive and domestic. Recently, we can observe that women are shown as empowered and liberated. Instead of being passively trapped in traditional facets of femininity, women are seen

flaunting their femininity and playing it by using their own body as a front. This masquerade lets women detach themselves from the image of objectification while demonstrating and controlling the representation of her body. But, patriarchy still exists and maintains that the primary division in our society is still between men and women, and not between strictly defined economic classes (Brown, 1990). Our society is still a patriarchal one and male domination has yet to be challenged and conquered.

Watching television is seen to be a leisure activity wherein viewers are asked to lose themselves and blur the distinction between reality and fantasy. The woman watching is made to believe that what she sees in TV connotes “what she wants and what she wants to be”. Women audiences are led to accept that television presents what they want to see and is out to please them. It is in this exact setting that the viewing habits of women as distracted audiences are equated to serve the interests of the advertisers (Brown, 1990).

Media hand in conventional feminine stereotypes where women are presented as commodities and sex objects, most particularly evident in advertising. Advertising plays a central and vital role in the Philippine society by providing information about consumer products, selling them and persuading the audience. It efficiently delineates social perceptions and disseminates these concepts in the most effective and fastest way. Commercials of shampoo and skin whitener products were found to be the most prevalent in molding the perceptions of the Filipino audience (Roy, 2010).

### **B. Women in advertisements**

Advertising is said to reflect the cultural values and symbols of its target market. It offers a tool for understanding the dominant political, economic and social ideology of a state. It should be stressed that advertisers, especially the multinational ones, manipulate and exploit cultural values in a negative manner (MacBride, 1980) as they tend to encourage consumerism. This view of the role of advertising collides with Sinclair who observed that “the study of advertising tells us that what the dominant commercial forces do is to construct these groups into ‘markets’ of ‘consumers’ who are addressed according to their ‘demographic’ characteristics. This is done in a way that

which selectively incorporates their actual cultural characteristics into messages so as to invite them to identify with the commercialized image of themselves” (Sinclair, 1987).

Studies about the role of advertising have grown tremendously with the help of emerging technologies, and one popular area of interest concerns the portrayal of women in advertising. The topic has been studied within and across a variety of cultures including the United States, Australia, Britain, Italy, India, Japan, Kenya and Zimbabwe with a majority conducted in the developed economies of the West and to a lesser extent emerging ones of Asia (Alozie, 2005).

During this period, researches evaluating the degree of gender-role stereotyping in advertising have maintained that it remains extremely flawed because women are often portrayed as “weak, childish, dependent, domestic, irrational, subordinate creatures, the producers of children and little else compared with men” (Kang, 1997 as cited in Alozie, 2005). Two meta-analytic studies conducted two decades apart, the first was conducted by Courtney and Lockeretz in 1971 and the second study was done by Furnham and Mak in 1999 (as cited in Alozie, 2005), about the portrayal of women in advertising surprisingly produced almost similar results:

- Women were rarely portrayed in out-of-home working roles.
- Not many women were featured as a professional or high-level business person.
- Women seldom ventured far from home by themselves or with other women.
- Women were often portrayed as dependent on men's protection.
- Men in advertisements appear to view women as sex objects or as domestic adjuncts. Females were dominantly shown in ads for cleaning products, food products, beauty products, drugs, clothing, and home appliances. Males were dominantly in ads for cars, travel, alcoholic beverages, cigarettes, banks, industrial products, entertainment media, and industrial companies (Kang, 1997 as cited in Alozie, 2005).

Beginning in the mid-1980s, the traditional depiction of women as full-time housewives and subordinates to men began to change. More and more women engaged in jobs outside the home, acquired positions of responsibility and their purchasing capacity rose tremendously. The advertisers realizing that the modern women exerted more influence, not only in household goods and services their families purchased but also



influenced the purchase of durable and expensive consumer goods, began targeting them and presenting them in prominent roles in advertising campaigns. As the roles changed, advertisers were induced to restructure the way women are portrayed in advertisements in order to meet their growing influence and other emerging needs. Advertisers began to feature them in occupational roles, such as product spokespersons, endorsers and decision-makers. They also began to employ them as narrators for household and consumer products (Sivulka, 1998 as cited in Alozie, 2005).

However, change has been slow and inconsistent due to a variety of factors that forced advertisers to create new strategies for reaching and meeting the requirements of women. These factors included demographic changes, lifestyle changes, economic fluctuations and the conservative movement. For example, some advertisers have gone back to the traditional portrayal of women as homemakers who derive pleasure from taking care of their families to satisfy conservative women, while others continued to innovatively address their message to women's issues such as "combating fatigue, balancing family and work, and so on" (Sivulka, 1998 as cited in Alozie, 2005) to meet the needs of professional women.

Women were stereotypically shown as consumers of products, who expressed their own uninformed views for buying a product. Women assumed roles dictated primarily in relation to other people, such as wife or mother, and showed more concern with the social significance of purchasing a product or service.

Acknowledging that patriarchy has described femininity in restrictive terms in order to define masculinity as normal and dominant, cultural feminists fought for the right of women to be given positive meaning that goes beyond equality to claim the moral high ground for them (Luek, 2003 as cited in Parameswaran and Cardoza, 2007). Parameswaran and Cardoza (2007) also noted that the highly compressed narrative form of advertising frequently relies on a discourse of magical transformation to convey the promise of membership in a fantastic community of desirable and fulfilled persons.

Advertising images that show rapid changes in the female body such as losing weight, eradicating signs of aging and achieving fairer skin, aim to reproduce visions of measurable difference that seek to offer empirical evidence of a product's ability to convert women from ordinary subjects into extraordinary spectacles.

### C. The ideal body

It was in the 1990s when renowned supermodel Kate Moss propagated the standard of the ideal body which is the “winnow, youthful body of the sylph” (Gamble, 2006). The materialism and power dressing of the rich, lustrous and modest ladies of the eighties were rejected in the eco-friendly “purity” of the women in early nineties. Lately, girl power’s brash glamour came to a period where girls should act like boys in order to get ahead, which purports the evidence of some elements of vitality and variety to the unyielding idealization of the thin body underpinned by the billion-dollar fashion, cosmetic and slimming industries.

According to Gamble (2006), “the female body is believed to be ordered and perfected into an idealized form, which stands as a symbol of objectified female beauty. In this discourse of perfection, there is no hint of power politics, irregularity or individuality to disturb the gaze”.

This endless crave for unnatural thinness is blatantly supported and encouraged by the beauty industries and glamour fashion photography, which promotes female beauty icons who weigh 25% less than the average American woman. Fashion icons like Twiggy in the sixties and “heroin chic” in the nineties exemplify what Ann Hollander (as cited in Gamble, 2006) describes as “the look of sickness, the look of poverty and the look of nervous exhaustion”. Gamble (2006) also notes that the pressure to maintain a low bodyweight among fashion models in particular leads to a high number of eating disorders among these models and a dangerous co-relation with eating disorders among teenage girls, who now find moral virtue in good looks rather than the good works of a century ago. In *Fat is a Feminist Issue* (1978, as cited in Gamble, 2006), the author Susie Orbach decodes the opposite extreme of fatness as an act of fear or refusal to conform to sexual objectification

Dress codes in postmodern culture are more appropriate strategies for advertising the individual’s consensual body politics. Just as you can rearrange identity in the postmodern fashion codes, you can rearrange the body as well. In “*Material Girl: the Effacements of Postmodern Culture*” (in Schwichtenberg, ed., *The Madonna Collection*, 1993 as cited in Gamble, 2006), the writer Susan Bordo describes the “plasticity” of the body as the postmodern paradigm. She then refers to a quote from *Fit* magazine: “the

challenge presents itself to rearrange things, it's up to you to do the chiseling, become the master sculptress. This 'sculpting' process might involve working out at a health club or plastic surgery, an increasing phenomenon amongst the under-35s. Thus the ideal body is reinvented in the nineties as 'lean, strong, androgynous and physically fit; conveying core western cultural values of autonomy, toughness, competitiveness, youth, self-control'; a masculinization of the female body in keeping with her new competitiveness in the workplace" (Gamble, 2006).

#### **D. The gaze**

Laura Mulvey's 1975 seminal essay "*Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema*" gave rise to the development of theories about the objectification of the female body, which analyzed the portrayal of female stars in terms of their objectification by the male gaze within Hollywood narrative cinema (Gamble, 2006). Using psychoanalysis coupled with structuralism, Mulvey, a distinguished film theorist, discussed that the cinematic pleasures of seeing were primarily a male fantasy. The voyeuristic pleasures of cinematic fantasy paved the way for women characters and female stars to be regarded as fetishized objects of a "masculine" gaze regardless of the spectator's gender. Gamble (2006) also admits that Mulvey's ideas set up the field for much more subject-specific researches regarding audience identification, thus revealing far more complex developments than what she initially insinuated.

Mulvey (1998) expounds on how "traditionally, the woman displayed has functioned on two levels: as erotic object for the spectator within the auditorium, with a shifting tension between the looks on either side of the screen". Mulvey continues to argue that "a woman performs within the narrative, the gaze of the spectator and that of the male characters in the film are neatly combined without breaking narrative verisimilitude. For a moment the sexual impact of the performing woman takes the film into a no man's land outside its own time and space" (Mulvey, 1998).

#### **E. Objectification and possession**

The American group New York Women against Pornography describes objectification as "a process whereby a powerful group establishes and maintains

dominance over a less powerful group by teaching that the subordinate group is less than human or like an object. This precludes the powerful group from identifying with or sympathizing with the less powerful group” (Gamble, 2006). Objectification is clearly manifested in treating women as objects to be used for men’s pleasure. Objectifying women leads them to be passive recipients of the male gaze. Feminists believe that the habit of objectifying the female in film, art and literature has concomitant effects for real women in real situations. A certain study pointed out to medical establishments as guilty of regularly treating women as objects to be worked upon rather than as rational partners in the process of consultation (Gamble, 2006).

John Berger’s 1972 book *Ways of Seeing* introduced a distinct political discussion of the nude by comparing the power relations embedded in the representation of men and women (Gamble, 2006). A man’s presence connoted the promise of power. On the other hand, a woman’s presence meant self-conscious display, splitting her sense of self between the surveyor and the surveyed. “Men act and women appear. Women watch themselves being looked at” (Berger, 1972 as cited in Gamble, 2006). Berger related the reappearance of the nude in the Renaissance with the growth of capitalism and the portrayal of possessions, which included women, in the new medium of oil paint. He also made linkages between the visual and symbolic language of figurative oil painting and the imagery of advertising publicity. The spectator as owner was replaced by the spectator as buyer. But then, the idealized and objectified bodies of women had been present in almost all kinds of media.

#### **F. Researches regarding media’s representations of women**

The women’s movement of the 60s and 70s came up with a political framework for feminists to challenge the media for their condescending and stereotypical images of women. Research results proved that there was indeed both an under-representation and misrepresentation of women. “This ‘symbolic annihilation’ (Tuchman, 1978 cited in Gamble, 2006) by the mass media was held to be deeply implicated in the patterns of discrimination operating against women in society. The aim of these feminist studies of the media was gender equality.”

Conventional researches on women and the media regarded mass mediated communications as the major source for the general reproduction of patriarchal social relations. Studies of representation revealed that males dominated media content and that “roles of males in the mass media have been shown to be dominant, active, authoritative, while females have been shown to be submissive, passive and completely contented to subjugate their wills to the wills of the media males” (*Journal of Communication*, Autumn 1975 cited on Gamble, 2006). The early work on media images of women has been harshly criticized on the basis of three main assumptions:

1. That mass media images consist of unrealistic messages about women which meanings are unambiguous and straightforward. In an article entitled *Research on Sex-Roles in the Mass Media: Toward a Critical Approach* published in 1977, the author accused several studies of women’s portrayal in the media of being consistent with a liberal feminist perspective which creates male versus female categories. The inference was that media content might be less sexist if women characters were shown to have the same occupational distribution as male characters.

Following this perspective, it led to cosmetic alterations in the representation of women because it regarded “maleness” as the women’s goal in media images. In line with this, Tuchman (1978, as cited in Gamble, 2006) proposed that images of women cannot be assessed or judged on how they reflect or distort reality. “To argue that the media distort images of women assumes that the media should somehow reflect ‘reality’ as if it were a mirror on the world. To expect media to provide accurate representations of women is to oversimplify women’s complex relationship with the media and the symbolic processes involved in representation” (Tuchman, 1978 as cited in Gamble, 2006).

2. That both women and men passively and indiscriminately absorb these media messages and meanings.

3. That researchers and members of the academe have a privileged access that makes them recognize and resist such deceiving images.

Effects of the mass media were then normally considered as detrimental to the general population, more particularly to women. Gallagher, author of *Women and Men in the Media* (as cited in Gamble, 2006), pointed out that “[e]valuated in historical context,

its contribution is clear. Its disclosure and condemnation of sexism in media content provided a first, essential springboard. The conception of a text with a unitary meaning gave way to a more sophisticated textual analysis that recognized multiplicity of cultural definitions within a media text”.

Media has succeeded in subsuming our society. Several scholars would say that in today’s generation, it is no longer a question whether the media really distort reality or not. Rather, media has become our reality, the only reality we have. “[S]o there is little point in studying the content of the mass media to see how it may affect our everyday lives; little point in counting instances of mediated hegemonic femininity and making an argument that this sustains the status quo; little point even in studying how people understand the media since, as van Zoonen states, ‘one interpretation is not by definition better or more valid than another’. The media is reality, is inescapable, is our femininity. The idea that the mass media take over reality has been accused of exaggerating their importance” (Gamble, 2006).

Women’s experiences are undeniably shaped by various institutions. The media is indeed one of them. But the idea that reality has foundered inside media, in a way that it can only be defined by the media, is still being questioned. It is still believed that most people would still be able to distinguish between the reality constructed by the media and the kind of reality that exists somewhere else. Dominic Strinati supports this notion when he asserts in *An Introduction to Theories of Popular Culture* (1995, as cited in Gamble, 2006) that “if reality has really imploded into the media, how would we know it has happened?”.

On the other hand, Gamble (2006) states that to declare that the media *is* our reality is further criticized by those who wish to point to the oppression of women as real. In this view, reality is seen as disorganized and disjointed, at the same time showing patterns of inequality. If the media is really our reality, it is debated that we efficiently deny the existence of material inequalities unless they occur in representation.

### **G. The changing roles (?)**

I have said before that the recent commercials I have observed featured seemingly empowered women. But, it has been argued that sexually domineering women could only

be sympathized if they conform to the modern version of idealized femininity. Kathy Peiss (1999), in her book *Hope in a Jar*, contends that women convey their sense of self and their place in society through the use of beauty products. “Advertising employs stereotypes about individuals and groups to express and naturalize the ideological subtext” (Lacey, 1998) “so that its dominant ideas will be accepted as social norms by audiences” (Bignell, 1997). Its goal is to create representations in which the “construction of identity may be closely allied to questions of ideology and power, and to the forms of discourse implicated in the procedures whereby such images are created” (Sedgwick, 2002). As Judith Williamson claims in her 1978 book entitled *Decoding Advertisements: Ideology and Meaning in Advertising*, advertising functions “to sell things to us” and the industry “creates structures of meaning” that identify audiences with the ideological position suggested in the advertisement. Advertising comes with signs booming with meaning and these could be through words, images, or sounds.

We are all aware that media create archetypes of women and influence its audience. Media possess the power to create its own social concept and lead their target audience to think the same way. Sometimes, what they reproduce is more than reality. Societies define cultural norms and standards of beauty and femininity and are then reinforced through media.

Grossberg et al. (1998) claim that “roles had changed and brought new images of the possibilities of what it means to be a woman in American society”. Does it also hold true in our Philippine setting? Can we boldly and proudly say that roles had changed and brought new images of the possibilities of what it means to be a woman in the Philippine society? Do we recognize this reversal of roles or just take it for granted? Is it the prevailing order in the society or just another illusion brought by the media?

I intend to answer these questions by analyzing how women are presented in whitening lotion advertisements and connect it to the larger and more complex structure that governs it. I aim to give closer attention to the career of women in these commercials, their age, social class, attire, physical characteristics, how are they projected as consumers and how males regard them in the story. How much has changed from the advertisements before to the ones we have now? What could these changes represent and what does it throw into the whole media schema in the Philippine society?

## **II. It's a 'Post' World after All: Postfeminism and Its Critiques**

The purpose of this review of related literature is to describe and synthesize various studies about postfeminism. This RRL aims to highlight the key debates, terms and concepts attached to postfeminism in order to see how much has changed from the advertisements before to the ones we have now and what could these changes represent.

This review of related literature presents a short introduction about feminism and its different strands. More importantly, it discusses various definitions of the term 'postfeminism', along with concurring and opposing views and assumptions about this vastly disputed concept. I will lay down both the positive and negative stands and definitions about the highly-debated concept of postfeminism. But first, what is feminism?

### **A. The fight of women all over the world: Feminism in a nutshell**

Feminism focuses on the liberation of women from the oppression of cultural norms and institutional structures in order "to reconstruct society in a way that patriarchy is eliminated and a culture is created that is fully inclusive of women's desires and purposes" (Osborne, 2002). Popular media also has a stake in people's concept of what feminism is and is not. Nonetheless, in constructing the meaning of feminism, media create a singular notion of feminism that is limited to beauty, sexuality, and consumption, thereby restricting the political aspects of feminism to the personal and decreasing the heterogeneity of women's movements. Women are considered as more romantic, sensitive, needy, emotional, and vulnerable than men. They are also evaluated more on the basis of appearance and sexual attractiveness (Lemish, 2008; Meyers, 1999).

Since its famed rise in 1913, feminism as a term has meant equal rights for women such as the right to vote, the right to be educated and even sexual liberation. "The term 'feminism' had various connotations in the 1920s and 1930s but it was not until the 1960s and 1970s that it began its frightening accumulation of qualifiers, each attempting to specify and clarify the various political stakes for feminists. The growth of modifiers was, in rough chronology, liberal, socialist, radical, cultural, women of color, and lesbian. Each strand of feminism traced its origin and its evolution differently, acknowledging



affiliations with liberal, nationalist, student and civil rights organizations, among others” (Gerhard, 2005).

For the sake of periodization, the year 1990 is believed to be the turning point of feminism. Under the prevalent influence of Michel Foucault, a renowned philosopher, historian and cultural critic, there is a shift away from the feminist interest in consolidated power blocks, such as the State, patriarchy and law, to more dispersed sites, events and instances of power abstracted as flows and specific convergences and consolidations of talk, discourse, and attentions. The body and the subject come to represent a focal point for feminism (McRobbie, 2004). The notion of subjectivity and the means by which cultural forms and interpellations, or dominant social processes, call women into being and produce them as subjects while merely describing them as such, means that it is an unproblematic “she,” rather than a problematic “we,” which is indicative of a turn to what we might describe as the emerging politics of postfeminist inquiry (Butler 1990, as cited in McRobbie, 2004).

The year 1990 also witnessed the expression of popular feminism. Andrea Stuart (1990) recognized the wider circulation of feminist values across the world of popular culture, such as in popular magazines, where issues which had been central to the formation of the women’s movement like domestic violence, equal pay, and workplace harassment, were now addressed to a vast readership. “The wider dissemination of feminist issues was the intersection of these new representations with the daily lives of young women who as subjects (“called into being”) of popular feminism, might then be expected to embody more emboldened (though also of course “failed”) identities. This gave rise to the idea of feminist success” (McRobbie, 2004).

Provided below are some of the famous strands of feminism, since feminism is a tremendous movement with tremendous reach. Each strand surfaced in different periods in the feminist movement. The strands differ from one another in terms of the particular issues they focused on, their analysis of those issues and the solutions they came up with to counter those problems.

### ***1. First wave feminism***

First wave feminism, also known as liberal feminism, connotes the first concerted movement fighting for the reform of women's social and legal inequalities in the nineteenth century. Even though individual feminists such as Mary Wollstonecraft had already fought against the injustices suffered by women, it was not until the 1850s that an organized feminist movement arose in Britain where a group of middleclass women organized to discuss topical issues and publish the *English Woman's Journal*. The key issues of first wave feminists were education, employment, the marriage laws, and the plight of intelligent middle-class single women (Gamble, 2006). They were mostly not concerned with the problems of working-class women, nor did they see themselves as feminists in the modern sense because the term was not coined until 1895.

First wave feminists mainly responded to particular injustices they had themselves experienced. "Their major achievements were the opening of higher education to women; reform of the girls' secondary-school system, including participation in formal national examinations; the widening of access to the professions, especially medicine; married women's property rights, recognized in the Married Women's Property Act of 1870; and some improvement in divorced and separated women's child custody rights" (Gamble, 2006).

### ***2. Second wave feminism***

The term 'second wave' refers to the increase in feminist activity which occurred in America, Britain and Europe from the late 1960's onwards. In the US, second wave feminism was born out of the civil rights and anti-war movements in which women, disillusioned with their second-class status, began to band together to fight against discrimination. The tactics used by second wave feminists varied, from highly publicized activism, like the protest against the Miss America beauty contest in 1968, to the formation of small consciousness-raising groups (Gamble, 2006). However, the movement was not a unified one, with differences among black feminism, lesbian feminism, liberal feminism and socialist feminism.

Second wave feminism in Britain was similar in focus, although it was based more strongly in working-class socialism, as demonstrated by the strike of women

workers at the Ford car plant for equal pay in 1968 (Gamble, 2006). “The slogan ‘the personal is political’ sums up the way in which second wave feminism did not just strive to extend the range of social opportunities open to women, but also, through intervention within the spheres of reproduction, sexuality and cultural representation, to change their domestic and private lives” (Gamble, 2006). Second wave feminism did not only make an impact upon western societies, but had also continued to motivate the struggle for women’s rights across the globe.

### ***3. Third wave feminism***

Third wave feminism is a term that describes a resurgence of interest in feminist activism on the part of young women who wish to differentiate themselves from the postfeminist label (Gamble, 2006). This strand of feminism is exemplified by a desire to solve economic and racial inequality as well as several women’s issues. Even so, third wave feminism has yet to achieve widespread publicity and support which were enjoyed by second wave feminism. It was viewed with skepticism by many as a transitory fashion rather than a genuine suggestion that women have reached the next stage in the feminist struggle.

### ***4. Radical feminism***

A frequent theme of radical feminism is the effect of the patriarchal system on the oppression of women. Unlike the liberals, radicals believe that male power is the root of the social construction of gender (Gamble, 2006). They do not believe that this system can be reformed and must be eradicated. Radical feminists believe that confrontation through a “declaration of war” against men and society is the only way to win. Gender, as both a biological and cultural concept, is viewed as a constraint especially for women. Radical proposals against sex inequality have ranged from a call for an androgynous culture, to a replacing of male culture with female culture.

Issues regarding reproduction and motherhood have been taken up by Shulamith Firestone in her 1972 book *The Dialectic of Sex* (as cited in Gamble, 2006). She argued that the elimination of sexual roles can only be achieved by eradicating the fixed role women and men play in reproduction. Contraception, sterilization, abortion and even

artificial insemination all help to diminish the biological and thus the power differentiation between sexes. These confrontational forms of feminist thought have gained much publicity. Consequently, radical activism is often viewed as a main focus of the recent backlash against feminism (Gamble, 2006).

### **5. *Socialist feminism***

This strand of feminism was born from Marxist, radical and psychoanalytic forms. “In *Women’s Estate* (1971), Juliet Mitchell attempts to synthesize these main branches of feminism under the unifying notion of gender, arguing that the oppression of women is rooted in the fact that we live in a class society. Women’s status and function in both private and public domains must change if they are to achieve full liberation. Alison Jaggar, in *Feminist Politics and Human Nature* (1983), takes the notion of work as a dehumanizing activity (distancing the worker from the product of their labor) and connects it to a woman’s existence at home, as well as work” (Gamble, 2006).

Socialist feminism proposes that the women’s movement should be available to women in the working class, which the liberal feminists failed to take into account. It fights for class politics and aims to give wages to women doing household works. In the continuing feminist struggle between unity and diversity, it is believed that socialist feminism presents the strongest possibility of a unitary theory, as it attempts to include racial, ethnic and individual differences within its rubric.

### **6. *Lesbian feminism***

In the mid-1970s, a call to political lesbianism by radical feminists arose that was based on the belief that heterosexuality, as a social norm, was a further indication of women’s oppression. This evolved from the assumption that the only “true” feminists are lesbians because they choose women as sexual partners, which makes them truly woman-centered (Gamble, 2006). In the US, Charlotte Bunch’s *Lesbianism and the Women’s Movement* (1975, as cited in Gamble, 2006) claimed that “the lesbian rejects male sexual/political domination; she defies his world, his social organization, his ideology, and his definition of her as inferior”. Lesbianism rejects heterosexuality and ends the last route of women’s subordination which is sexual domination.

Gamble (2000) also added that in Britain, lesbian feminists suggested lesbianism as a political preference over and above desire and also argued that lesbians were more oppressed than any other women. This resulted to a hierarchy of beliefs and experiences which hailed political lesbianism as the single “correct” feminist identity. Radical responses emerged ranging from continued calls for separatism and the recognition of the need to avoid excluding heterosexual women. Lesbian feminism helped to open debates about heterosexuality and reaffirm the importance of understanding difference (Gamble, 2006).

### ***7. Third world feminism***

Third world feminism poses a challenge to the dominance assumed by western feminists in the general development of feminist thought, which often tends to ignore the specific experiences of ethnic groups located outside the western cultural perspective (Gamble, 2006). Feminists and cultural theorists like Gayatri Spivak, Chandra Talpade Mohanty and Chela Sandoval criticized western feminist theorists for assuming to intervene in cultural issues that have nothing to do with them.

Western women are often presented as educated, modern, having control over their own bodies and sexualities, and having the freedom to make their own decisions. On the other hand, the average third world woman is portrayed as leading “an essentially truncated life based on her feminine gender and her being “third world” meaning she’s ignorant, poor, uneducated, tradition-bound, family-oriented, victimized, etc.” (Gamble, 2006). Gayatri Spivak proposes that non-western women are “spoken for” in first world writing, which makes them the mute, passive and thankful recipients of western ideas, and which often overlooks strategies employed by third world women themselves to fight against their own oppression (Gamble, 2006). Third world women can only be empowered if we speak *to* them and not *for* them.

### ***8. Postfeminism***

In the present era, diversity and contradictions are seen in gender representations in media. These representations, which are termed as “postfeminist”, include portrayals of women who are complex and distinct from one another on a wide range of variables,

including race, ethnicity or sexuality (Lotz, 2001). According to Rosalind Gill (2007), “postfeminism” can be used to describe a certain sensibility, or “gist” prevalent in contemporary media. One of the main attributes of this “gist” is the intertwining of feminist and anti-feminist ideas”.

On the other hand, there’s an emphasis on choice and “power feminism”, veering away from women's oppression to a celebration of their capabilities and achievements. But this choice hinges mainly on consumerism and which products to buy. Furthermore, the femininity of empowered women leans more on the concentration of their “perfect” bodies. This has led to defining postfeminism as a “lifestyle” feminism, which “encourages woman’s private, consumer lifestyles rather than cultivating a desire for public life and political activism” (Vavrus, 2002).

This leads us to my main arguments in this research. As I have observed, the women seen in recent whitening lotion commercials tend to fit in the definition of liberated and empowered women - heterosexual, slim, young and beautiful. But following the argument proposed by postfeminism, they can only be truly empowered if, and only if, they consume a certain product. In this case, they can attain power and satisfaction once they purchase their chosen brand of whitening lotion. Does it hold true for all of my variables? Could there be exceptions? Is there really a shift from the traditional portrayal of women as insecure and passive to the liberated ones? What could these representations mean? Just sit back, relax and enjoy reading.

## **B. What is postfeminism?**

Postfeminists believe that women have really “made it” and that there is no need for the feminist movement anymore since women can already succeed in areas that used to be available only to men. Tasker and Negra (2007) support that view and argue that in postfeminism, “feminism has been overtly ‘taken into account’ to emphasize that it is no longer needed”. Postfeminism proposes individualism but it tends to confuse self-interest with individuality and hails consumption as a strategy for filling in those disappointments. “Postfeminism works to commodify feminism via the figure of woman as empowered consumer” (Tasker and Negra, 2007). Postfeminism underscores educational and professional breakthroughs for women, freedom of choice in work,

domesticity and parenting, as well as physical and sexual empowerment. Discourses about it seldom express the unequivocal view that feminist politics should be rejected. Instead, it is because of feminism's success that it is seen to have been superseded.

Postfeminism is more accustomed to "an individual's buying power, not within a larger cultural cause or movement... and gender politics have become conflated with consumerism" (Murray, 2009). It aims to promote the ideology that power can only be attained by sexually satisfying the opposite sex, which can only be acquired through consumption. It advocates that women love men, women always yearn to look beautiful, and women also long for independence and autonomy.

Heywood and Drake (1997) describe postfeminists as "young, conservative feminists who explicitly define themselves against and criticize feminists of the second wave and as women who claim "power feminism" that rejects victimization". Postfeminist Naomi Wolf disregards Marxist feminism because it leaves women as victims; instead, she "encourages women to expand American liberal democratic ideology... by endorsing capitalistic individualism, which supports the idea that capital is the primary means of solidarity among women" (Murray, 2009). Postfeminist culture merits educational and professional opportunities, as well as sexual empowerment, and is "anchored in consumption as a strategy (and leisure as a site) for the production of the self" (Tasker and Negra, 2007).

In Western and modern countries, much has been written about postfeminism but it still has no succinct categorization or definition because of its intricate history. As Press (1991) says, "the term 'postfeminist' itself is ambiguous, and often connotes contradictory meanings". Gamble (2006) also observes that "outside of its infinitely flexible media distinction, exactly what postfeminism constitutes—even whether it exists at all as a valid phenomenon—is a matter for frequently impassioned debate". "The prefix 'post' lies at the heart of the definitional quandary since the prefix signals both failure and success, both an anti-feminist critique of misguidedness of feminism and a pro-feminist nod to feminism's victories" (Henry, 2004).

Even though there is no explicit definition of postfeminism, its roots can be traced back to Susan Faludi's popular book entitled *Backlash*, published in 1992. According to Faludi (1992), during the 1980s, popular media images and societal institutions created

messages that encouraged society to assume that women “had it all” and that feminist goals could finally be put to rest.

Press (1991) expounds that “postfeminism has been used to describe the mindset of a generation of women who have come of age after the heyday of the women’s liberation movement and reaped the benefits of the social reforms and changed attitudes that the movement gained”. Tanya Modleski (1991) regards postfeminism as dangerous to women by stating that “proclaiming or assuming the advent of postfeminism, are actually engaged in negating the critiques and undermining the goals of feminism—in effect delivering us back to a prefeminist world”.

Mary Douglas Vavrus (2002) sees postfeminists as those who “take for granted the rights that first and second-wave feminists fought for, such as access to higher education, but simultaneously argue that feminism actually harms women, because it gives women unrealistic expectations — that we can indeed have it all”. She further explains that individualism, or a focus on what individual women do in their own lives, undermines much postfeminist ideology. Vavrus (2002) describes this as “a shift from a vision of collective politics for social change to an individualistic focus; successes and failures are attributed to individual women rather than to a complex formula of individual work, group efforts, and structural influences”. She continues to argue that she sees postfeminism to be persistent in media and popular culture.

Rosalind Gill (2007) adds that, “what is novel and striking about contemporary sexualized representations of women in popular culture is that they do not (as in the past) depict women as passive objects but as knowing, active, and desiring sexual subjects”. Gill is quick to emphasize that her statement only holds true for a certain type of woman in the media. She claims that a woman can only be an empowered subject in the eyes of the viewer if she is heterosexual, slim, young and beautiful.

Genz and Brabon (2009) also believe that postfeminism relies on consumerist notions of choice to promote and propagate individualist ideas of empowerment and agency, which later lead to mainstreaming and commoditization. In their book entitled *Postfeminism: Cultural Texts and Theories*, postfeminism “refers to a shift in the understanding and construction of identity and gender categories, and emerged in the late twentieth century in a number of cultural, academic and political contexts” (Genz and



Brabon, 2009). Postfeminism has an evident semantic bond with feminism and with other social, cultural, theoretical and political areas including consumer culture, popular media, neoliberalism, postmodernism and post-colonialism.

“Postfeminism exemplifies feminism’s ‘coming of age’, its maturity into a confident body of theory and politics, representing pluralism and difference and reflecting on its position in relation to other philosophical and political movements similarly demanding change” (Brooks, 1997). Like post-colonialism and postmodernism, postfeminism signifies a complete break in a prior range of usually oppressive relations. ‘Post’ as used in these occasions means that these relations have been overcome and replaced and thus, the emphasis is on a new range of temporal, political and cultural relations. The whole concept of ‘post’ infers a process of a continuing transformation and change. On the other hand, postfeminism is still involved with patriarchy. It does not presuppose that patriarchal discourses and frames of reference have neither been replaced nor superseded.

In the end, “postfeminism is by definition contradictory, simultaneously feminist and antifeminist, liberating and repressive, productive and obstructive of progressive social change. Whether critics see feminism or anti-feminism as more dominant is in the end ‘a matter of interpretation and degree’” (Projansky, 2007).

### **C. Not the death of feminism**

For my thesis, I choose to believe that the prefix ‘post’ in postfeminism does not necessarily have to signify the death of feminism. I think that postfeminism can explain issues in the society without succumbing to the notion that feminism is completely dead or irrelevant. It would be useful for my study to consider postfeminism to mean *after* the height of the women’s liberation movement and the changes in society that it gave rise to. As Robinson (2008) had expressed in her dissertation, I also argue for the need to retrieve postfeminism from its negative interpretations and see something positive because it can be used in analyzing popular cultural representations of women and feminism. It could be useful for studying how gendered representations are smoothly played out in media. Postfeminism is one area where popular culture offers different ways for women to get to know more about feminism and engage in it.

#### **D. The women of today and media**

Women today are creating a sense of self brought by the neoliberal rhetoric of individualism and autonomy and by the feminist discourses of choice and independence. Young women seem to prefer individual choice more than the possibility of equal opportunity. But though it can hold true that many things have improved for women, there are still inconsistencies and injustices based on gender. Gender inequalities still persist (Robinson, 2008).

Susan Faludi (1992) once said that “the agenda of the feminist movement was clearly being set by the media and was designed to undermine feminist goals and achievements. She believes that “the media declared that feminism was the flavor of the seventies and that postfeminism was the new story – complete with a younger generation who supposedly reviled the women’s movement”. The role of the media is undoubtedly powerful in framing the commonly negative and popular interpretations of postfeminism.

Media regularly create and perpetuate stereotypes. They exploit these stereotypes, particularly those concerning gender and race, and it has a lot to do with patriarchy. Media industries are run by an elite group of men who have their own interests to protect. These men control society. They are invisible and deceptive but nonetheless powerful.

Gagne (2001) pointed out that mass media tend to present materials that seem to escape traditional gender roles and expectations, but what they are really doing is to reinforce them. Media reproduce conventional sexual politics, making it look like traditional gender roles are natural and inherent rather than socially constructed. Traditionally, women are either portrayed as sexual objects for the characters within the story or as erotic objects for the viewers. Audiences may take it for granted as their cultural reading, since it is a default position that we take when we are not observant. Not all viewers are set and prepared to oppose what they see on TV. This can be a subtle yet dangerous force in shaping beliefs and opinions.

#### **E. Advertising and postfeminism**

Fueled by the goal of discovering the relationship between advertising and postfeminism, I came across a book that meticulously discussed its complicated connection. In her book *Gender and the Media*, Rosalind Gill (2007) mentioned that

women were traditionally depicted in a narrow range and often unflattering stereotypes. However, as I have observed commercials today, the traditional image of ‘wife-mother-housewife’ is now being superseded by sexually assertive, confident and ambitious women who express their freedom through consumption. This gives rise to the kind of woman every girl should strive to be, one who is intelligent, accomplished, effortlessly beautiful, a wonderful hostess and perfect mother who also maintains a successful profession. It seems that postfeminism in advertising produces a dreamlike positive world, but the truth is it does not eradicate judgment of women. Instead, it is merely modifying the conditions by which women will be looked at and assessed.

Gill (2007) also pointed out that one of the key changes in advertising is the shift from the portrayal of women as sex objects to the vigorous and desirous sexual subjects. We see a kind of woman who knows what she wants and is confident to get it. This expresses the notion that women can gain control through the commodification of their appearance. It propagates the idea that by achieving a particular look through buying the right and preferred beauty products, women can then obtain power. Postfeminist television proposes happiness caused by consumption and the search for love and friendship, without considering the larger political and social repercussions.

The kinds of advertisements featuring fearless and active females appear to give women the promise of power and control by becoming objects of desire. They assure women the status of active subjecthood so that they can later opt to become sex objects because it collides with their “liberated” concerns. Sexual objectification is now not limited to something done by men to women. It has turned into the freely self-chosen wish of active, confident and assertive female subjects.

Just as Schowalter (2009) noted, media, particularly advertising, strengthens this kind of postfeminism. It celebrates women’s “equality” and choice, at the same time selling commodities that support perpetual body maintenance. “This postfeminist definition of the successful woman maintains that women can “try to have it all” as long as they do so without disrupting the patriarchal structure. The flaw of postfeminism is that this “liberation” remains within male-defined parameters. Women can succeed, but only on men’s terms in a man’s world” (Coppock, et al., 1995). “Women can achieve success by adhering to traditional gender roles such as feminine dress and mannerisms.

This insistence on excessive femininity as criteria for success separates women from the agency to challenge these often-contradictory messages. Instead of fighting the system, women are encouraged to enter the public sphere only when they have mastered their feminine performances” (Schowalter, 2009).

Media and advertising corporations that usually boast about supporting a social action just want to capitalize on women’s insecurities and consumer identities. If women were satisfied with just the way they are, why would they waste time buying beauty products that promise to improve their appearance? In the end, they still fall victim to the consumerist culture and traditional roles created and reproduced by the male-dominated society.

#### **F. Women in the Philippine society**

In the Philippine society, the social importance of women depends on their ability to bear children. They are socially defined as wives and mothers. Their identities are usually tied to their relationship with a man in their lives. We glorify motherhood so much both in media and the arts. This can explain why there is so much social pressure on women in their late twenties or early thirties to tie the knot and settle with their partners. Similar pressures can also be seen on young wives who are not yet expectant mothers in their first years of marriage.

Before, women’s works are only auxiliary to men’s because they are deemed to be physically, emotionally and intellectually weaker and less capable at technical fields of work. Society assumed that they would lose their femininity once they get into masculine roles or adapt masculine values. Women’s bodies were traditionally viewed only as sex objects because it is women’s primary duty to please men, serve them and take care of them.

During the 1990s, the country has modernized but we stayed as a patriarchal society where men take over women in important roles in society. Filipinas strived hard for equality and to neutralize the traditional patriarchal standpoint of the Philippine culture. They started exploring in the field of business, law, medicine, and politics that Filipina women have not ventured into before.

Through the years, Filipinas started earning their own achievements. We had two women presidents, several beauty queens, lawmakers, prominent doctors and other women professionals that solidify the notion that Filipino women can do it on their own. There arose new and expanded roles for women that garnered positive images and values. But still, it cannot be denied that they still function under the rules of the patriarchal system.

Philippine advertising has started to recognize these changing roles of women in our society amidst the fact that they have been always criticized for presenting highly stereotyped images of men and women. The Philippine Development Plan for Women (1993, as cited in Arena, 1998) even noted that “commercials and advertisements portray women as either mothers or wives or domestics or girlfriends or companions or sex objects. More than 90% of commercials portray women as passive consumers of products.” But, various studies through the years have found evidence that there had been changes in advertising. Audiences start witnessing progressive roles of women in media and deviations from the sex role stereotypes for both males and females.

### **G. Strong, powerful, independent women?**

Media has started to feature new ideas about women through their images and messages. This can be clearly seen in advertising where images of powerful and liberated women are introduced to the audience to sell more products. Feminism has been glamorized and its fight homogenized. It then results to a kind of culture that requires not only the consumption of the goods but also its mass-produced images. As a result, women are not only persuaded to explore consumer products and the images employed to sell them, but to become these very images.

According to Susan Faludi (1992), postfeminists “aren’t encouraging women to pursue social change, and they certainly aren’t asking men to change. It is a no-risk feminism for a fearful age: just post your achievements, make nice with men, and call it a day”. In current whitening lotion commercials in Philippine TV, Faludi’s claim is evident. We can notice that women in these commercials pose no threat to their male counterparts. They are just out to present and enjoy their beauty and confidence and then that’s it. But what is the reason behind their happiness and satisfaction?

As you get familiar with the advertisements, you can well conclude that they are empowered by using whitening lotions. What's more interesting to point out is that these women are as confident as ever to shout out to the world that they are indeed using artificial skin whiteners. Whether they are aware or not, they are liberated only because of consumerism. When you look deeper on how women are portrayed in these advertisements, you can conclude that they are falsely empowered to further boost mass consumption.

The postfeminist culture hails educational and professional possibilities, together with sexual empowerment, and is "anchored in consumption as a strategy (and leisure as a site) for the production of the self" (Tasker and Negra, 2007). Postfeminism is more accustomed to women's ability to purchase consumer products and not within a larger cultural cause or movement. It seems that women in whitening lotion advertisements don't bother to pay attention to the larger social and political mechanisms that govern them; hence, strengthening the postfeminism concept of personalizing the political.

With my preliminary observations, I can presume that female importance is hinged upon materialism and commodity culture. Feminism's heroic ode is neutralized and depoliticized by various imageries that do not completely embody any real progress. It just propagates a substantial myth of progress, a big well-crafted illusion leading to the reduction of serious socio-political issues into mundane personal ones.

### **III. Launching the Steps to Attack: Methodology**

#### **A. Research Design**

This study focused on the representation of women in whitening lotion commercials shown in the Philippines from 2004 to 2011. The concepts were derived from postfeminism, which served as a guide in describing and comparing the different characteristics of women in the selected commercials, such as physical attributes of women, lifestyle, activities they engage to, different facial expressions, and non-verbal expressions of both the women and spectators in the commercials.

The purpose of this study was to determine and analyze the portrayal of women in selected whitening lotion commercials. It sought to understand the reason behind the shift in the representation of women and its connection to postfeminism. Structuralism and semiotics were also employed in the study. This allowed the researcher to observe and interpret the text using postfeminism, which provided theoretical assumptions and perspectives to the study. Qualitative data was used to explain the portrayal of women in the selected commercials. Data gathered was analyzed using the inductive approach to prevent pre-existing biases from occurring during the analysis and results part of the research.

#### **B. Study Framework**

Postfeminism was used as a lens in providing the theoretical assumptions and perspectives for the study. It was used to interpret and analyze the portrayal of women in past and present whitening lotion commercials.

My framework works by a more favorable definition of postfeminism. I do not see it as a complete disconnection from feminism, but instead explores the ways in which they are closely intertwined.

Semiotics, on the other hand, was used as a guide for gathering important signs and data for describing the commercials' representation of women.

According to Hawkes (2003), modern advertising depends on images, and images are symbols that can convey meanings as effectively as verbal symbols can. Like words, visual images also function as symbols that create multi-leveled meanings that have to be

decoded to be understood. Visual images in advertising are especially important since, according to Bovee and Arens (1986, as cited in Hawkes, 2003), "most readers of advertisements (1) look at the illustration, (2) read the headline, and (3) read the body copy, in that order." Visual images, therefore, carry a great deal of responsibility in decoding the message in an advertisement (Hawkes, 2003).

Thus, the reader will not look for "hidden" meanings, and give them preference, like in the activity of *interpretation*. The reader will be more concerned with the relationship between the various *levels* of meaning, with the *multiplicity* which the text, as a system, enjoys.

To be able to decode the multiplicity of texts in my units of analysis, using the theory of semiotics would be of great help. Semiotics is simply the science of signs. One of the most acclaimed definitions of semiotics was coined by Umberto Eco, who argued that "semiotics is concerned with everything that can be taken as a sign" (Chandler, 2006). In short, semiotics' goal is to analyze how meaning is produced both visually and verbally. It can be applied to anything that signifies the meaning of something in a particular context.

Semioticians study the sign system to find out the production and interpretation of signs (Mick, 1986). Meanings arise through creation and reading of signs, which could be in form of words, images, sounds, acts, smells, or objects. However, these forms are not naturally meaningful unless we give them meaning (Chandler, 2006). Simply put, it is not the metal in a coin that fixes how much it worth, but us, the meaning-maker (Saussure, 1983).

The French linguist Ferdinand de Saussure is regarded as one of the founding fathers of semiotics. His greatest contributions are the duality of the signifier and the signified, and the arbitrary nature of what a sign means (Helmers & Hill, 2004). For him, the signifier and the signified are like two sides of the same piece of paper which is the sign.

Saussure regarded language as a system of signs, that is the study of what signs are made of and what facilitates them. "Sign is the result of the arbitrary association of the signifier with the signified" (Saussure, 1983). The signified, a flower for example, is the concept in mind and not the actual thing that is represented by the signifier, which is



the form a sign takes which could be a spoken word or an image of a flower. “Saussure saw both the signifier and the signified as purely the interpreter’s psychological impression” (ibid).

### ***The Codes***

Every text is a system of signs classified according to codes and sub codes that reflect particular values, attitudes, beliefs, assumptions and practices. A 'text', such as a printed advertisement, an animated cartoon or a radio news bulletin, is in itself a multifaceted sign containing other signs. “Textual codes do not determine the meanings of texts but dominant codes do tend to constrain them. Social conventions ensure that signs cannot mean whatever an individual wants them to mean. The use of codes helps to guide us towards what Stuart Hall calls 'a preferred reading' and away from what Umberto Eco calls 'aberrant decoding', though media texts do vary in the extent to which they are open to interpretation” (Hall, 1980 as cited in Chandler, 2006).

For my data-gathering, I am going to utilize what semioticians call as the “social codes”. The social codes I am going to look into are: the verbal language uttered by the characters in the commercials; their bodily codes (bodily contact, proximity, physical orientation, appearance, facial expression, gaze, head nods, gestures and posture); and their commodity codes (fashion, clothing, hairstyles). These particular social codes will serve as my guides for data-gathering. Postfeminism will then be used for data-analysis.

### ***Semiotics and Advertising***

Using semiotics to analyze advertising was primarily pertinent in print advertisements. While earlier versions of advertising were text based, visual representations became more prevalent since the middle 1920s, which added more ambiguity to advertising messages. “Most advertisements now emphasize how consumers can benefit from the products rather than telling consumers their functions, selling feelings or emotions along with the actual products. Those feelings and emotions are constructed, rather than inherent in the products per se. Semiotics is sensitive to the nuances of the more complicated structures of ad visuals” (Leiss, Kline & Jhally, 1990).

Semiotics sees advertising as a combination of signs, which are letters, words and images, selected by the creators aimed to communicate various meanings to consumers (Mick, 1986). “Fully understanding the intended meaning invites active participation by the readers, since in many contemporary advertisements, verbal information is minimal; visuals signify by convention rather than by resemblance to nature” (Scott, 1994). The mental processing of the consumers is needed to complete the propositions of the commercials (Williamson, 1978).

While different readers may interpret the same commercial differently based on their personal experiences, levels of visual literacy and cultural background, semiotics constricts the possible interpretations with the structure of signs within a picture (McQuarrie & Mick, 1992). It interprets the ad from a trained reader’s perspective who is situated in a given time and society. In this study, interpretation of representations of women in whitening lotion commercials draws on knowledge of postfeminism developed by various scholars, emerging concepts from the social codes, the cultural conventions in Philippine media, images of women in advertising, as well as how I personally view and interpret these representations at present time and order in our society.

The idea is that meaning rises from the *interplay* of signs, that the world we live in is not one of facts but of signs *about* facts which we encode and decode endlessly from system to system. Julia Kristeva (1969, as cited in Hawkes, 2003) says that “[w]hat semiotics has discovered is that the *law* governing or, if one prefers, the *major constraint* affecting any social practice lies in the fact that it signifies; i.e., that it is articulated *like* a language. In simple terms, nobody just talks. Every speech-act contains the transmission of messages through the ‘languages’ of gesture, posture, clothing, hairstyle, perfume, accent, social context etc. over and above, under and beneath, even at cross-purposes with what words actually *say*. And even when we are not speaking or being spoken to, messages from other ‘languages’ squeeze in upon us: horns hoot, lights flash, laws restrain, hoardings proclaim, smells attract or repel, tastes delight or disgust, even the ‘feel’ of objects systematically communicates something meaningful to us” (Hawkes, 2003).

I intend to look at the consistent visual signs and images present in all the commercials because these signs and images also function as symbols that create multi-

leveled meanings that have to be decoded to be understood. The images and signs we see are great tools in decoding the message in an advertisement.

I also refrain to look for hidden meanings but focus more with the connection of the significant elements emerging from the commercials. Every speech-act contains the transmission of messages through the “languages” of gesture, posture, clothing, hairstyle, manner of speaking and social context over what words actually *say*.

Other concepts to be taken into account in this study are **advertising message**, **advertising strategy**, **selling tactics** and **brand personality**. The **advertising message** is the “meat” of an advertisement that attempts to convey what the advertiser intends to through the use of words and/or images. It is the promotional message about the goods or services the company is offering. An **advertising strategy** is “the formulation of an advertising sales message that communicates the benefit or problem/solution characteristics of the product or service being advertised. Strategies are the “what you say or do” about the product or service – for example, “to emphasize heavy users” (Schultz, Tannenbaum, and Allison, 1995).

**Selling tactics** are the efforts to bring the advertising strategies into the system as individual sales transactions. It could be through hard sell which is a sale brought by pressurizing consumers by being aggressive, hardnosed, and confrontational. Contradicting the hard sell tactic is the soft sell. Soft sell allows the consumers to make a choice regarding the product or service by giving them time to think and consider all their options before making a decision. Giving free trials or subscriptions to consumers are also employed as the selling tactics of several corporations.

**Brand personality** is “the set of human characteristics associated with a brand” (Aaker, 1997 as cited in Hamilton and Sun, 2009). Brand personality is the personification of a brand. It suggests assigning human personality traits to a brand to achieve differentiation.

Brand personality is the way a brand speaks and behaves. A brand is expressed as a personality that embodies these personality traits. Brand personality is the result of the consumer’s experiences with the brand. The goal is for the consumers to identify with this brand personality with their own personality traits.

From the marketers' perspective, brand personality is that aspect of a comprehensive brand which generates its emotional character and associations in the consumers' minds. The brand personalities give consumers something with which they can relate to. In this way, it can effectively increase brand awareness and popularity by having a consistent set of traits. Aside from its functional benefits, this is the added value that a brand gains.

There are five main types of brand personalities: excitement, sincerity, ruggedness, competence and sophistication. Consumers are more likely to purchase a brand if its personality is similar to their own. Here are some examples of traits for the different types of brand personalities: Excitement: carefree, spirited, youthful; Sincerity: genuine, kind, family-oriented, thoughtful; Ruggedness: rough, tough, outdoors, athletic; Competence: successful, accomplished, influential, a leader; and Sophistication: elegant, prestigious, pretentious.

### **C. Units of Analysis and Sampling**

My units of analysis are fifteen whitening lotion commercials aired in the Philippines in 2004 – 2011 through VHF channels. I chose the year 2004 as the start of my study's time frame because existing whitening lotion commercials that can be watched and downloaded from YouTube that I found dates back only to 2004, thus leading me to select only fifteen commercials to analyze in this study. I'm well aware of the fact that there were whitening lotion commercials shown in the country even before 2004 but I couldn't find links available on the web as I write this thesis. Fortunately, this limitation did not hinder my study's premise and range of possible discussions and analysis.

Purposeful sampling was used in selecting the units of analysis. The fifteen selected television commercials range from 30 seconds to 1 minute. The fifteen selected commercials used various treatments in plot and cinematography, as well as different advertising and selling tactics. I analyzed the portrayal of women in all fifteen commercials to be able to have a holistic view of how women are portrayed in whitening lotion commercials through the years 2004 to 2011.

### D. Research Instruments and Data Gathering Objectives

I formulated a table indicating the specific concepts and observable manifestations (indicators) which will be employed throughout the study. They were outlined based on the specific objectives that were given at the beginning of the study.

Table 1. Objectives, Concepts and Indicators

Theoretical Guide	Objectives	Concepts	Indicators
Postfeminism	To determine the physical characteristics of the women portrayed in the ads	Beauty and self-empowerment	<b>Skin color</b> (fair, kayumanggi, dark) <b>Body built</b> (frail, voluptuous, slim) <b>Age</b> (20's, 30's, 40's) <b>Clothing</b> (formal, casual, seductive) <b>Hairstyle</b> <b>Activities</b> (What women are doing.) <b>Occupation</b> (housewife, student, teacher, etc.) <b>Social class</b> (Class A, B, C, D or E)
Postfeminism	To determine the emotional characteristics of the women portrayed in the ads	Happiness caused by consumption	<b>Non-verbal expressions</b> (happy, surprised, depressed, etc.) <b>Verbal expressions</b> (words uttered in the entire commercial) <b>Physical movements</b> (gestures, actions of the body)
Postfeminism	To determine how men and other characters regard women in the ads	Search for love and friendship	<b>Non-verbal expressions</b> (happy, surprised, depressed, etc.) <b>Verbal expressions</b> (words uttered in the entire commercial) <b>Physical movements</b> (gestures, actions of the body)

The gathering of data was based on specific data gathering objectives, concepts, and indicators. The values were obtained from the main concepts of postfeminism. A table showing the specific data gathering objectives, concepts and indicators was formulated to determine the data that will be used throughout the research.

A textual analysis guide (see appendices C to Q) showing the objectives, concepts and observable manifestations (indicators) per commercial was structured for the study. I used the textual analysis guide to gather data. Several rows were also provided to the taglines, advertising messages, advertising and selling tactics and brand personality.

The actual text, which is in video form, was downloaded online. I had to formulate and fill out a textual analysis guide. I had to watch all fifteen advertisements over and over again to ensure that all important elements are listed down in the textual analysis guide.

### **E. Data Analysis Procedures**

The data analysis will come from the analysis objectives that were laid out at the beginning of the study. The analysis objectives aimed to answer the following questions: What does the portrayal of women in recent whitening lotion commercials signify? Why is there a change in the portrayal of women and what does it have to do with the media and society at large? How is postfeminism intertwined in this phenomenon? Are women really empowered and liberated? Are they truly resistant to the traditional roles? Have they really broken free from the male-dominated society and from the consumerist and capitalist culture? I also aimed to discover the layers of meaning and its connection to the society as a whole.

The results and analysis of data were organized according to themes that were deemed relevant and important. They were written separately to distinguish which value is being assessed. Following the tenets of semiotics, I determined how the meanings of signs and symbols present in the commercials were constructed. Meaning is not inherent in the commercial itself, but comes from relationships with other things seen with it.

My initial analytical task is to identify the signs within the ads and the codes within which these signs have meaning (e.g. 'social codes' such as physical appearance). Within these codes, I need to identify paradigm sets (such as complexion, attire, hairstyle, etc.). I then identified the structural relationships between the various signifiers. Finally, I discussed the ideological functions of the signs in the text and of the text as a whole which is to be guided by postfeminism, my grounding framework in this study.

The theoretical assumptions and perspectives of postfeminism were used to interpret and analyze all the data that were gathered. Postfeminism retreats from an analysis of sex, gender, class, race, and sexuality systems and instead chooses to emphasize self-reliance and a sort of rugged individualism (Gagne, 2001). As Dow (1996) sees it, the postfeminist construction of “individual lifestyle solutions” implies that masculinist behavior and discourse does not need to be altered. In fact, the issue of male behavior is almost completely ignored by postfeminists. From a postfeminist standpoint, patriarchy escapes responsibility for women’s oppression.

Using the theoretical assumptions and perspectives of postfeminism with the help of semiotics, the study was able to acquire the answer on how women are portrayed in whitening lotion commercials from 2004 to 2011.

### **F. The Researcher**

I have said that I’ve always been interested in TV commercials of whitening lotions. I get amused and intrigued with the effectiveness of the products and the naturalness of the leading ladies’ fair skin. I can also say that I was used to being curious and to question the things around me and not to readily accept it. As a girl, I was reared to fight for the things I believe are right and not to be easily defeated. I believe that women should never be underestimated and disregarded. Everything is changing and the world where women rule the world is not that far from sight, or at least, a world which has no place for gender inequality.

Among the different strands of feminism, I think I identify the most with Third World feminism. I’m one with their goal to provide and explain a particularity of the experiences of the women belonging to Third World countries like ours. The women of the West were always the subjects of feminist studies and it’s already time for women of the Third World to attain the spotlight and have their needs and voices heard all around the world.

As for postfeminism, I could say that I believe it. Not that I acknowledge that feminism is really dead. I’m well aware that there are still violence and injustices prevailing over women all over the world. But to those career women who have attained their goals, I think postfeminism can best explain their situation. They are in the point of

their lives where they almost have it all, but due to the intense influence of media and consumerism, I think they would always yearn for more and contentment would be far from reach, unless we figure out the way to put an end to the forces that continue to propagate repression and inequality.



#### IV. Finding the Power: Results and Discussion










My units of analysis are fifteen whitening lotion commercials aired in the Philippines in 2004 to 2011 through VHF channels. I present the synopsis coupled with the storyboard and my interpretations in each one of the commercials.

My first unit of analysis is Block & White's "*Galawgaw*" commercial released in 2004. It featured a slim, fair-skinned lady in her early 20's dressed in a little black dress. It looked like she just came home from a party or social gathering. She entered her room gleefully and started unzipping her clothes. Then, she was seen playfully dancing all around the room as she strips off her dress and throws it to her bed where her pet dog was lying down.

An image of Block & White Radiance whitening lotion then appeared on the screen. The following shots showed the lady applying the lotion all over her body. A voice-over of a woman is heard revealing the promises of Block & White Radiance which said that it has breakthrough White-Activ plus SPF 20 that brings out your natural fairness in just two weeks. At the end of the commercial, the lady is seen sitting on a bizarrely-shaped white chair that strategically covers her naked body. She then happily delivers the commercial's tagline which is "*Ilabas ang natural na puti*" (Unleash your natural whiteness) and the ending shot was that of the packaging of Block & White Radiance lotion.

This commercial featured a slim and fair-skinned lady in her early 20's. She was wearing a little black dress and sporting an up-do hairstyle. She playfully exposed her back, shoulders, legs and arms throughout the commercial. She stripped off her clothes in such a very happy and playful manner. The mere fact that she was shown stripping off her clothes signifies that she was being an erotic object for the spectators. It seemed like she did not mind showing off her body and even went almost completely naked in front of the screen.

## Storyboard 1. 2004 Block &amp; White's "Galawgaw" commercial

		
1	2	3
<b>Audio:</b> (Background music)	<b>Song:</b> <i>Galawgaw! Kay harot harot</i>	<b>Song:</b> <i>Galawgaw!</i>
<b>Frame Description:</b> The lady enters her room	<b>Frame Description:</b> The lady unzips her dress	<b>Frame Description:</b> The lady removes her dress' strap
		
4	5	6
<b>Song:</b> <i>Nakalilitong masdan</i>	<b>Song:</b> <i>Ang likot-likot</i>	<b>VO:</b> Go ahead.
<b>Frame Description:</b> The lady removes another dress' strap	<b>Frame Description:</b> The lady throws her dress to her dog	<b>Frame Description:</b> The lady dances in front of her dog
		
7	8	9
<b>VO:</b> Ipakita ang iyong skin with new Block & White Radiance	<b>Song:</b> <i>Galawgaw!</i>	<b>Lady:</b> Ilabas ang iyong natural na puti.
<b>Frame Description:</b> Block & White Radiance	<b>Frame Description:</b> The lady applying lotion	<b>Frame Description:</b> The lady sitting on a chair and saying the tagline

This commercial's advertising message was that if you want to unleash your natural fairness and be carefree in flaunting your flawlessness, use Block & White Radiance lotion. The advertising strategy of promising the consumer the benefits of unleashing their natural fairness was stated in the phrase "*Ilabas ang natural na puti*" (Unleash your natural whiteness). Soft sell was the selling tactic that was employed in this commercial. The brand personalities I perceived from the commercial are being carefree, spirited and seductive.

The second commercial on my list is the Silka whitening lotion commercial released in 2005. This ad featured local actress and MYX VJ Iya Villania, another slim and fair-skinned girl in her early 20's, who was dressed in white midrib and shorts. A male voice-over is heard at the start of the commercial saying that Iya's skin is so soft and smooth as she walks around the living room. She was then shown lying on the sofa and touching her smooth legs. Iya then wet her face and took a bath, still with the male voice-over detailing the kind of all-over beauty Silka brings.

The following shots revealed images of different Silka products like lotions, soaps and deodorants and this time, Iya's voice-over was used. She was then seen walking outside and getting the attention of two guys as she passed by them. One man was even heard saying "*Ooooh! Pare, iyan ang hanap ko!*" (Ooh! Dude, that's what I'm looking for!). The last shot showed Iya picking up a bag of Silka products and turning around to say Silka's tagline which was "*Alagang papaya, alagang Silka*" (Papaya care, Silka care).

This ad featured Iya Villania who is a slim and fair-skinned lady in her early 20's. She was initially wearing a white midrib partnered with white shorts which connotes that she's confident in showing her skin to the public. Her back, shoulders, legs, arms and face were exposed in this commercial.

When she walked outside, she was then seen wearing a white dress complimented with her straight long black hair. The gaze was present in this moment. One of the two men who saw Iya passed by said "*Ooooh! Pare! Iyan ang hanap ko!*" (Ooooh! Dude, that's what I'm looking for!). The guys' remarks and stares were so intense that would make you feel that they saw Iya only as a sex object who was out there to fulfill their desires.

## Storyboard 2. First Silka commercial

		
<p>1</p> <p><b>Audio:</b> (Background music)</p> <p><b>Frame Description:</b> Iya walks around the room</p>	<p>2</p> <p><b>VO:</b> So Silka soft</p> <p><b>Frame Description:</b> Iya touching her legs</p>	<p>3</p> <p><b>VO:</b> So Silka smooth</p> <p><b>Frame Description:</b> Iya splashes water to her face</p>
		
<p>4</p> <p><b>VO:</b> ‘Yan ang gandang all-over</p> <p><b>Frame Description:</b> Iya taking a bath</p>	<p>5</p> <p><b>VO (Iya):</b> Para sa gandang alagang-papaya</p> <p><b>Frame Description:</b> Silka papaya lotion bottles</p>	<p>6</p> <p><b>Men:</b> Ooooh!</p> <p><b>Frame Description:</b> Iya passes by the guys</p>
		
<p>7</p> <p><b>Man:</b> ‘Yan ang hanap ko!</p> <p><b>Frame Description:</b> Men getting awed with Iya</p>	<p>8</p> <p><b>Iya:</b> Alagang papaya, alagang Silka</p> <p><b>Frame Description:</b> Iya saying the ad's tagline</p>	<p>9</p> <p><b>Audio:</b> (Background music)</p> <p><b>Frame Description:</b> Silka products</p>

The advertising message delivered was that if you want to achieve beauty and smoothness all over your body, buy the Silka all-papaya-care system. The strategy of promising the consumer the benefit of all-over beauty was used. Soft sell was also used as the selling tactic and the brand personality presented was being simple yet efficient.

Another whitening lotion commercial witnessed by the Filipino audience in 2005 was the SkinWhite commercial featuring actress Marian Rivera, who happened to be not yet famous at that time. Like the Block & White and Silka commercials I had presented earlier, this SkinWhite ad also featured a slim fair-skinned girl in her early 20's. The song "Shine" sung by Regine Velasquez was playing in the background all throughout this ad.





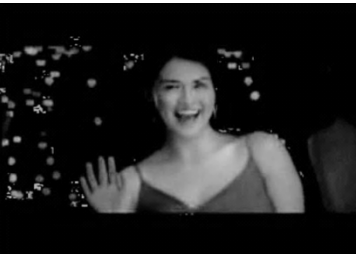




This commercial opens with a sad girl who looks out from the window of a room and sees a restaurant filled with people enjoying their time with their companions. Marian then went out to go home but covered her shoulders with a scarf signaling to the audience that she was indeed shy to show her skin.

At home, she was shown applying lotion to her arms and shoulders then a female voice-over was heard saying "*it's your season to shine with Skin White lotion with Renewwhite 3C and SPF for whiter, stunningly beautiful skin*". After several shots of Skin White lotion and Marian applying the lotion to her body, she then emerged in a party as a happy and confident girl in a red gown. She unknowingly caught the attention of a good-looking guy in the party while she mingled blissfully with her friends.

The next shot showed Marian and the guy walking side by side and catching glimpses of each other. Then, they were seen alone in one corner of the romantically-lighted garden with the guy holding Marian's hand to which Marian acknowledged with a sweet smile. The last image shown was that of SkinWhite lotion coupled with a female voice-over saying the ad's tagline which was "*SkinWhite lotion, shine with SkinWhite*".

This ad wanted to say that if you want to overcome your insecurities, be confident about yourself and shine above the others, use SkinWhite lotion. The strategy of assuring the consumer the power to conquer one's insecurities was used. Again, soft sell was the selling tactic. Being gentle yet powerful were the brand personalities developed for the product.

## Storyboard 3. SkinWhite's "Marian Rivera" commercial

		
<p>1</p> <p><b>Audio:</b> (Background music)</p> <p><b>Frame Description:</b> A shot of people in a restaurant</p>	<p>2</p> <p><b>Song:</b> <i>There I was</i></p> <p><b>Frame Description:</b> Marian looks out to see the people in the restaurant</p>	<p>3</p> <p><b>Song:</b> <i>Alone in the shadows</i></p> <p><b>Frame Description:</b> Marian covers her shoulder with her scarf</p>
		
<p>4</p> <p><b>VO:</b> It's your season to shine with SkinWhite lotion</p> <p><b>Frame Description:</b> Marian applying lotion</p>	<p>5</p> <p><b>Song:</b> <i>You make me shine</i></p> <p><b>Frame Description:</b> Marian waving to the crowd</p>	<p>6</p> <p><b>Song:</b> <i>You keep me shining through</i></p> <p><b>Frame Description:</b> Guy looks at Marian</p>
		
<p>7</p> <p><b>Song:</b> <i>It's true</i></p> <p><b>Frame Description:</b> Marian walking with the guy</p>	<p>8</p> <p><b>Song:</b> <i>I'm shining on, all because of you</i></p> <p><b>Frame Description:</b> The guy holding Marian's hand</p>	<p>9</p> <p><b>VO:</b> Shine with SkinWhite</p> <p><b>Frame Description:</b> SkinWhite lotion bottle</p>

One thing that was constant in the first two commercials was the happiness radiated from the women's smiles and exultant actions all throughout the commercial. But the girl in this commercial was different. She was obviously sad from not being noticeable and confident enough to go out and meet new people. She was insecure to mingle with other people and was primarily confined inside her home. After using SkinWhite, she then became all-smiling and sure of herself.

In this ad, Marian signifies the "at-risk" girl. Young females are said to be "at-risk" if they are not able or willing to achieve the standards of the ideal subject. This creation of the "at-risk" girl fails to consider socioeconomic factors. It instead blames the girls for their circumstances and "failures" which are "attributed to poor choices, insufficient effort, irresponsible families, bad neighborhoods, and lazy communities" (Harris, 2004). This could be seen in this commercial with Marian Rivera who seemed that she was in despair due to her poor choice of not acquiring something that could make her stand out. It couldn't be attributed to anything but her personal limitations and individual choice. These factors decide who will be "at-risk". "The failed subject" (Hasinoff, 2008) is the girl who is not able or not willing to make the right choices.

We move on to the year 2006 with Silka's second TV commercial featuring Iya Villania the second-time around. This ad introduced the sexier packaging of Silka Papaya lotion. In this ad, Iya, as always, was shown as a slim and fair-skinned lady who was still in her early 20's. The commercial opens with Iya pottering a mold of clay in small room. She was wearing a white fitted dress which quite resembled a towel. Then, a man quickly appeared from the back and touched her shoulders. Iya smiled upon the man's presence. Iya's voice-over was then heard saying the lines "*softer, more touchable fairer skin, now in new sexier body*".

The man's hands then smoothly glided and joined hers into the clay she was molding. They let go of the clay and Iya happily leaned back to him as the image of the new and sexier packaging of Silka lotion emerged from the clay and flashed in the screen.

## Storyboard 4. Second Silka commercial

		
1	2	3
<b>Audio:</b> (Background music)	<b>Audio:</b> (Background music)	<b>VO (Iya):</b> Softer, more touchable skin
<b>Frame Description:</b>	<b>Frame Description:</b>	<b>Frame Description:</b>
A shot establishing where Iya is	A man touching Iya's shoulders	The man's and Iya's hands
		
4	5	6
<b>Audio:</b> (Background music)	<b>Audio:</b> (Background music)	<b>VO (Iya):</b> Now in a new, sexier body
<b>Frame Description:</b>	<b>Frame Description:</b>	<b>Frame Description:</b>
Iya acknowledging the man's presence	Iya and the man's hands molding the clay	Silka bottle emerging from mold

In this commercial, Iya was seen wearing a one-piece towel-like clothing which was too sensual. The situation where a man appears behind her, touches her and glides his hands onto hers was executed in such a sexual manner. Iya also said her lines in a soothing and sensual way. It connotes that she was being depicted more as a sex object and not as a mere lotion endorser. "Traditionally, the woman displayed has functioned on two levels: as erotic object for the characters within the screen story, and as erotic object for the spectator..." (Gagne, 2001).



Basically, this commercial wanted to tell the audience that they need to buy the new sexier Silka to attain softer and more touchable skin. The strategy of guaranteeing the consumer the benefit of smoother and softer skin was used and the selling tactic was still soft sell. The brand personalities they wanted to convey were being sexy and improved.

One year later, 2007, Silka again released another commercial introducing a new and more improved Silka whitening lotion. It was still endorsed by Iya Villania with her consistent fair-skinned look and slim body built. Like Silka's first commercial in 2005, Iya was again wearing white midrib and shorts in this commercial which complemented her straight long black hair. She was sitting in very well-lighted room and holding a bottle of Silka lotion. She then said that her skin beauty secret is the new sexier Silka with 3-way action to make her skin feel sexier which contains papaya enzymes to whiten skin, Vitamin E to keep skin moisturized and nourished, and SPF to protect skin from the sun's harmful rays. She happily exposed her face, back, shoulders, arms and legs as she stressed out Silka's various features. The last shot showed Iya smiling and saying the tagline "*alagang papaya, alagang Silka*" with images of Silka lotion bottles to her side.

Iya was wearing revealing white sleeveless coupled white shorts in this ad, pretty much like what she wore in her first Silka commercial (see Storyboard 2). She again happily flaunted her back, shoulders, legs, arms and face which signified her confidence in showing her flawless body.

This commercial wanted the audience to perceive that they should purchase the new Silka whitening lotion because it works completely. The strategy of offering the consumer a complete whitening package in just one lotion was used. Soft sell was still the selling tactic and the brand personalities were being sexy yet gentle.

## Storyboard 5. Third Silka commercial

		
<p>1</p> <p><b>Iya:</b> My skin beauty secret?</p> <p><b>Frame Description:</b> Iya sitting down</p>	<p>2</p> <p><b>Iya:</b> The new, sexier Silka</p> <p><b>Frame Description:</b> Iya holding a bottle of Silka lotion</p>	<p>3</p> <p><b>VO (Iya):</b> With 3-way action</p> <p><b>Frame Description:</b> The new packaging of Silka</p>
		
<p>4</p> <p><b>VO (Iya):</b> To whiten my skin</p> <p><b>Frame Description:</b> Iya leaning down</p>	<p>5</p> <p><b>VO (Iya):</b> Keeps my skin moisturized and nourished</p> <p><b>Frame Description:</b> Iya flaunts her legs</p>	<p>6</p> <p><b>VO (Iya):</b> And now, with SPF to protect my skin from the sun</p> <p><b>Frame Description:</b> Iya shows her back</p>
		
<p>7</p> <p><b>VO (Iya):</b> The new sexier Silka Papaya whitening lotion</p> <p><b>Frame Description:</b> Different shots of Iya</p>	<p>8</p> <p><b>VO (Iya):</b> Alagang papaya, alagang Silka</p> <p><b>Frame Description:</b> Iya smiling to the camera as the ad's tagline is being said</p>	

It was also in 2007 when a new line of whitening products was released for the Filipino consumers. It was the brand Extract endorsed by one of the country's most popular actress, Judy Ann Santos. Their first commercial obviously featured Judy Ann, a voluptuous fair-skinned woman in her early 30's. She was wearing a white backless dress and was sporting short brown hair.

The commercial opened with a shot of Juday's knees as Juday's voice-over is heard in the background saying "*ang maputi, dapat pati siko hanggang tuhod*". The next lines heard were "*batok hanggang katawan, pati mukha hanggang underarm*" as Juday exposed her neck, back, face, neck and underarms respectively. The she went on describing Extract's benefits to its consumers by saying "*kung nagpapaputi ang papaya, ano pa kaya pag may calamansing kasama? Mag-Extract Whitening System. May pinagsamang galing ng papaya at calamansi with CitruWhite. Maputi mula siko hanggang tuhod, pati underarm at mukha, kitang-kita ang iyong kaputian*".

Juday then faced the audience and said "*akala niyo hindi ko kerì to?*" (You didn't think I could do this?). The last shot showed her face as we hear her voice-over which delivered the ad's tagline "*para sa puting pantay, Extract Whitening System*" (For fairness all over, Extract Whitening System).

This is the first commercial in my list of units of analysis that featured a full-bodied woman in her early 30's like Judy Ann Santos. She was not slim but she possessed the voluptuous body that showed her curves. Possession of a "sexy body" is represented as women's key source of identity (Gill, 2007). This newly defined femininity is frequently discussed in feminist popular discourses and can be illustrated in TV series like "Sex and the City", "Ally McBeal" and "Desperate Housewives". The careful scrutiny of women's bodies probably makes up the largest type of media content across all genres and media forms.

It was also interesting to note that she showed almost all her body parts including her back, shoulders, legs, arms, underarm, face, neck, elbows and knees in this particular ad. This connotes that she was also displayed as an erotic object for the spectators.

## Storyboard 6. First Extract commercial

		
1	2	3
<b>VO (Juday):</b> Ang maputi, dapat pati siko hanggang tuhod	<b>VO (Juday):</b> Batok hanggang	<b>VO (Juday):</b> Katawan
<b>Frame Description:</b>	<b>Frame Description:</b>	<b>Frame Description:</b>
A shot of Juday's legs	A shot of Juday's nape	A shot of Juday's back
		
4	5	6
<b>VO (Juday):</b> Pati mukha	<b>VO (Juday):</b> Hanggang underarm	<b>VO (Juday):</b> Mag-Extract
<b>Frame Description:</b>	<b>Frame Description:</b>	<b>Frame Description:</b>
A shot of Juday's neck	A shot of Juday's underarm	Whitening System Extract Whitening lotion
		
7	8	
<b>Juday:</b> Akala niyo 'di ko keri 'to?	<b>VO (Juday):</b> Para sa puting pantay, Extract Whitening System	
<b>Frame Description:</b>	<b>Frame Description:</b>	
Juday flaunting her body	A shot of Juday's face with Extract whitening products	

This commercial mainly wanted to say that to achieve fairness all over your body, you should purchase Extract Whitening System. Ensuring the consumer fairness all over their body was the advertising strategy used and being efficient was the brand personality applied to the product.










The year 2007 also saw the release of commercial whitening products from Belo, the famous cosmetic medical group in the country. I think it was a way of saying that you don't have to visit their clinics to experience their basic services. Instead, you could just go to the nearest supermarket or drugstore to attain some of its famous benefits. Their very first commercial starred Asia's songbird Regine Velasquez, actress and TV host Lucy Torres-Gomez and the Divine Diva Zsa Zsa Padilla. The commercial opens with a bright spotlight moving simultaneously from Regine to Lucy to Zsa Zsa. Zsa Zsa's voice can be heard in the background saying "*only one name touches our skin. Now, one name gets you closer to star white skin*". Then the packaging of Belo Essentials products flashed into the screen as a lady's voice detailed the features of these products such as its signature Dermilight skin system controls darkening deep within the skin and prevents dark pigments from moving up.

The next shot showed Lucy touching her arms and continued revealing the products' benefits and said "*to reveal smoother, more radiant star white skin*". The audience will then see all three of them posing in front of the camera with utmost elegance and confidence.

The camera then focused on Regine who said "*only Belo touches our skin, who touches yours?*" Solo shots of Lucy, Zsa Zsa and Regine then followed and the commercial ended with an image of Belo Essentials products with its tagline "*only Belo knows star white skin*" being said by a female voice in the background.

The three ladies were wearing long white Grecian dresses coupled with their long and wavy hair. They were all noticeably fair-skinned with voluptuous bodies. The ladies were shown obviously content and confidently flaunting their star white skin while delivering their lines saying "*only Belo touches our skin, who touches yours?*"

## Storyboard 7. First Belo commercial “Reveal”

		
<p>1</p> <p><b>Audio:</b> (Background music)</p> <p><b>Frame Description:</b> Spotlight on Regine’s face</p>	<p>2</p> <p><b>VO (Zsa Zsa):</b> Only one name</p> <p><b>Frame Description:</b> Lucy touching her shoulders</p>	<p>3</p> <p><b>VO (Zsa Zsa):</b> Touches our skin</p> <p><b>Frame Description:</b> Spotlight on Zsa Zsa’s face</p>
		
<p>4</p> <p><b>Zsa Zsa:</b> Now, one name gets you closer to star white skin</p> <p><b>Frame Description:</b> Zsa Zsa says her line</p>	<p>5</p> <p><b>VO:</b> Belo Essentials</p> <p><b>Frame Description:</b> Belo Essentials products</p>	<p>6</p> <p><b>VO (Lucy):</b> To reveal smoother, more radiant star white skin</p> <p><b>Frame Description:</b> The three ladies pose together</p>
		
<p>7</p> <p><b>Regine:</b> Only Belo touches our skin</p> <p><b>Frame Description:</b> Regine touches her chest</p>	<p>8</p> <p><b>Regine:</b> Who touches yours?</p> <p><b>Frame Description:</b> Regine points to the camera</p>	<p>9</p> <p><b>VO:</b> Only Belo knows star white skin</p> <p><b>Frame Description:</b> Belo Essentials lotion</p>

We could observe in this commercial that the ladies were wearing more elegant and glamorous Grecian dresses as compared to the first commercials presented. They also sported long and sophisticated wavy hairstyles. Several body parts were still exposed like their back, shoulders, legs and arms but this was done more classily and subtly than in the ads before.

The lines “*only Belo touches our skin, who touches yours?*” delivered by the ladies in this commercial plus the product’s tagline became more direct and assertive as compared to the lines “*ilabas ang natural na puti*” (Unleash your natural whiteness) (see Storyboard 1) and “*alagang papaya, alagang Silka*” (see Storyboard 2).

The advertising message this commercial wanted to convey was that the consumers must buy Belo Essentials products to achieve the kind of star white skin the celebrities possess. The strategy of promising the consumers the benefit of flawless star white skin with Belo Essentials was the key to the ad’s success. I believe that hard sell was used as the selling tactic because it seemed that the audience was not given any other choice but to purchase Belo Essentials. Plus, I think the approach was too forceful and aggressive. Being assertive, prestigious and glamorous were the brand personalities presented.







Belo Essentials also released individual versions of their launching ad that same year. Regine Velasquez was delegated to promote Belo Essentials lotion, Lucy Torres-Gomez was seen endorsing the Belo Essentials soap, and Zsa Zsa Padilla plugged the Belo Essentials face wash.

Like the Belo Essentials “*Reveal*” commercial, Regine’s Belo Essentials lotion ad started with a spotlight fixated to Regine’s body. A close-up of Regine’s face was then shown as she says “*only one name touches my skin*”. A lady’s voice-over then delivered Belo Essentials lotion’s benefits saying “*it controls darkening and stops dark pigments from moving up to reveal star white skin*”. Regine was then showed touching her arms and neck and saying “*it can only be Belo Essentials for my skin.*” The camera then focused on her face as she said her last lines for the commercial “*how about you?*” The commercial ended with the image of Belo Essentials lotion with a female voice-over again saying “*only Belo knows star white skin*”.

In this Regine's solo ad, she was wearing the same white Grecian dress she wore in their first commercial and was also sporting the same long and wavy hairstyle. She gracefully showed her shoulders and arms in the commercial. She was also suavely saying the lines "*it can only be Belo Essentials for my skin. How about you?*".

Apparently, this commercial was indicating that if the consumers want star white skin like what Regine has, they should buy Belo Essentials whitening lotion. The advertising strategy used was the same with the Belo Essentials launching ad which was promising the consumers the benefit of flawless star white skin. Hard sell was still used as the selling tactic and the brand personalities were elegant, refined and assertive.

### Storyboard 8. 2007 Belo commercial with Regine Velasquez

		
<p>1</p> <p><b>VO (Regine):</b> Only one name</p> <p><b>Frame Description:</b> Spotlight focused on Regine</p>	<p>2</p> <p><b>Regine:</b> Touches my skin</p> <p><b>Frame Description:</b> Regine smiles to the camera</p>	<p>3</p> <p><b>VO:</b> Belo Essentials</p> <p><b>Frame Description:</b> Belo Essentials lotion</p>
		
<p>4</p> <p><b>VO:</b> It controls darkening and stops dark pigments</p> <p><b>Frame Description:</b> An illustration of Belo Essentials' benefits</p>	<p>5</p> <p><b>VO (Regine):</b> It can only be Belo Essentials for my skin</p> <p><b>Frame Description:</b> Regine touching her arms</p>	<p>6</p> <p><b>Regine:</b> How about you?</p> <p><b>Frame Description:</b> Regine talking to the audience</p>



(Continuation from the previous page)



7


**VO:** Only Belo knows star white skin

**Frame Description:** A shot of Belo Essentials lotion

A new commercial from SkinWhite was also released in 2007. It featured three fair-skinned and slim girls in their late teen years. This commercial opened with a fair-skinned girl gracefully walking towards the camera. A female voice was being heard in the background saying *“why is Skinwhite the number one in whitening? Because it’s been proven effective. It really works”*. Another two fair-skinned girls then immediately showed up in the screen. The girl who was modeling in the beginning of the commercial spoke and said *“we see real results”*.

Then, a female voice was again heard saying *“your whitest white ever”* as a group of girls was shown touching their necks, arms and shoulders. The third girl who appeared in the ad then said *“so when it comes to whitening”*, to which the second girl who appeared in the ad continued *“I trust only one name. I trust only the number one brand”*. The three girls then got together and posed in front of the camera as the female voice-over says *“only Skinwhite. Millions of women trust Skinwhite through the years”*. An image of SkinWhite lotion was shown and then, the camera focused to the three girls. The girl in the middle ended the commercial by challenging the audience through her parting words *“shouldn’t you?”*.

## Storyboard 9. SkinWhite 2007 commercial

		
1	2	3
<b>Audio:</b> (Background music)	<b>VO:</b> Why is SkinWhite number one in whitening?	<b>VO:</b> Because it's been proven effective
<b>Frame Description:</b>	<b>Frame Description:</b>	<b>Frame Description:</b>
Girl walking towards the camera	Girl smiling to the camera	Girl smiling to the camera
		
4	5	6
<b>Girl 1:</b> We see real results!	<b>VO:</b> Your whitest white ever!	<b>Girl 3:</b> So when it comes to whitening
<b>Frame Description:</b>	<b>Frame Description:</b>	<b>Frame Description:</b>
Girl saying her line	Girls touching their bodies	Girl delivers her line
		
7	8	9
<b>Girl 2:</b> I trust only one name	<b>VO:</b> I trust only the number one brand	<b>VO:</b> Only SkinWhite. Millions of women trust Skinwhite through the years
<b>Frame Description:</b>	<b>Frame Description:</b>	<b>Frame Description:</b>
Girl delivers her line	Girls touching their arms	A bottle of SkinWhite lotion

(Continuation from the previous page)



10

**Girl in the middle:** Shouldn't you?

**Frame Description:** The three girls pose together

The girls were wearing classy white dresses complemented with their sophisticated hairstyles. They were shown happily modeling and flaunting their flawless skin. Only their neck, arms and legs were briefly exposed in this commercial. They were confidently expressing their choice in using the number one brand in whitening which is SkinWhite. They boldly delivered their lines saying *“we see real results. I trust only one name. I trust only the no. 1 brand. Shouldn't you”*

Seeing this commercial would make you conclude that you should use SkinWhite because everyone else is using it because it has been proven effective. The advertising strategy used was to encourage the consumers to join the crowd to avoid being left out since everyone else is buying this latest and number one product. I also think that hard sell was this ad's selling tactic because the consumers were not given the chance to choose any other whitening lotion aside from SkinWhite, just like what was done in Belo Essentials ads. The brand personalities presented were being assertive, accomplished and influential.

We move on to the year 2008 and observe the fourth Silka commercial, starring none other than their sole endorser, actress and VJ Iya Villania, who was always slim and fair-skinned and still in her early 20's. The ad opened with a shot of Iya taking a bath. Then, we see Iya walking in the park wearing a white flowing dress and sporting a long and wavy hairstyle. She passed by a group of cyclists who all looked at her and some even fell off their bikes because their attention was focused on Iya. She then laughed it off.

Iya then came across a man jogging in the park with his dog. The man stopped in his way and got awed with Iya. She then walked away and the camera focused on her legs. She then passed by an area filled with sunflowers and even these flowers moved to see Iya. She got to the side of the fishpond where several men were fishing who eventually turned their heads to look at Iya.

She then settled in another side of the pond where the man who was jogging before approached her and gave her flowers. The clay statue standing nearby came to life and moved its head to look at Iya sitting close by. The commercial ended with Iya walking back to her home with Silka products displayed on her table. Iya's voice-over can be heard saying the tagline "*alagang papaya, alagang Silka*".

A song duet of a man and woman was playing all throughout the commercial. The lines of the song went like this: "*Di mapigilan ang iyong ningning. Palaging may napapatingin. Kutis na kay sarap haplus-haplusin, alagang Silka skin. Kaputiang takaw-tingin, alagang Silka skin. Kinis na takaw-pansin, alagang Silka skin Kutis na takaw-tingin*". The lines of the song clearly represented what was happening in the commercial.

Only Iya's shoulders and legs were shown in this ad. She was happy and smiling and got the attention of every man she passed by, but it seemed like that she didn't mind getting the kind of attention too much. The gaze was again present here. Several men were beholding Iya's beauty. But these men were already content with staring and smiling at her. You could feel that they respect and value Iya more and have no obvious ulterior motive. We could not see anything sensual with the jogger giving flowers to Iya. They would get awed with the girl but did not exude that sensual appeal, making the situations more desirable and acceptable.

This advertisement wanted the consumers to purchase and use Silka whitening lotion to be noticeable and be an absolute head turner wherever they go. The advertising strategy of promising the consumer the benefit of fair and noticeable skin with Silka papaya lotion was used. The selling tactic employed was soft sell. The brand personalities were being terrific and desirable.

## Storyboard 10. 2008 Silka commercial



1

**Song:** *'Di mapigilan iyong ningning*

**Frame Description:**

Iya walking in the park



2

**Song:** *Palaging may napapatingin*

**Frame Description:**

Cyclists stumbling down as Iya passes by



3

**Song:** *Kutis na kay sarap*

**Frame Description:**

Iya laughing at the cyclists

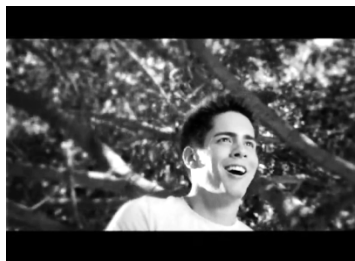


4

**Song:** *Haplos-haplusin*

**Frame Description:**

Iya and the jogger meet



5

**Song:** *Alagang Silka skin*

**Frame Description:**

The jogger staring at Iya



6

**Song:** *Kaputiang takaw-tingin*

**Frame Description:**

Men by the lake look at Iya



7

**Song:** *Alagang Silka skin*

**Frame Description:** The jogger giving flowers to Iya



8

**VO (Iya):** Alagang papaya,

**Frame Description:** Silka Papaya products

I was not able to find more whitening lotion commercials released in the country in 2008 so my next unit of analysis would be the Belo Essentials commercial shown to the public in 2009 featuring film and TV actress Bea Alonzo.

The commercial started with a bright light flashing in the screen. A female voice can be heard in the background saying “*why does the star shine the brightest?*” Bea was then seen sitting in a shiny silver hoop somewhere in a vast universe. The camera moved around her focusing on her face, legs and back. The female voice continued to say “*it’s because of her star-white skin. Introducing Belo Essentials soap and lotion. Now improved with Glutathione that whitens and skin vitamins that moisturize*”.


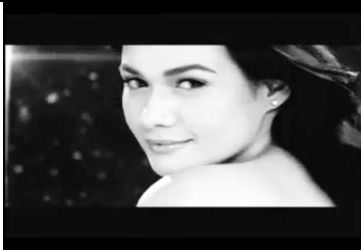

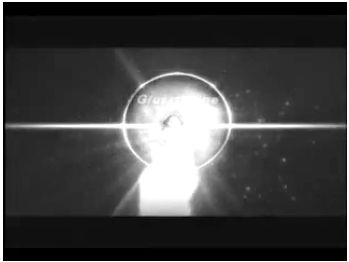




As the female voice-over was detailing Belo Essentials lotion’s benefits, Bea was seen gracefully moving under the water. Bea then emerged from the water and ended the commercial by saying “*only Belo touches my skin*” as images of Belo Essentials soap and lotion also emerged from the water.

Patterned from the launching TV commercials of Belo Essentials, which featured Regine Velasquez, Lucy Gomez and Zsa Zsa Padilla, Bea was also wearing a white flowing dress matched with her long and wavy black hair.

The setting of the commercial resembled that of a sparkling night sky surrounded with stars and other shining elements with a sea of water below. She was obviously way confident with her flawless skin as the camera exposed her legs and her back. She softly but confidently said the traditional Belo lines “*only Belo touches my skin*”.

The advertising message of this ad was quite the same with Belo’s launching commercials. If you want star white skin like Bea’s and shine bright like a goddess, use Belo Essentials lotion. The advertising strategy of promising the consumers the benefit of exclusive star white skin was still used and hard sell was again utilized. Brand personalities were being classy, prestigious, dazzling and enchanting.

## Storyboard 11. 2009 Belo Essential ad with Bea Alonzo

		
<p>1</p> <p><b>VO:</b> Why does the star shine the brightest?</p> <p><b>Frame Description:</b> Bea sitting on a hoop</p>	<p>2</p> <p><b>VO:</b> It's because of her star white skin</p> <p><b>Frame Description:</b> Bea smiling to the camera</p>	<p>3</p> <p><b>VO:</b> Introducing Belo Essentials lotion</p> <p><b>Frame Description:</b> A bottle of Belo lotion</p>
		
<p>4</p> <p><b>VO:</b> Now improved with Glutathione that whitens</p> <p><b>Frame Description:</b> A beam of light coming from Bea</p>	<p>5</p> <p><b>VO:</b> And Skin Vitamins that moisturize</p> <p><b>Frame Description:</b> Bea swimming in water</p>	<p>6</p> <p><b>Audio:</b> (Background music)</p> <p><b>Frame Description:</b> Bea emerges from the water</p>
		
<p>7</p> <p><b>Bea:</b> Only Belo touches my skin</p> <p><b>Frame Description:</b> Bea touching her shoulder</p>	<p>8</p> <p><b>Audio:</b> (Background music)</p> <p><b>Frame Description:</b> Belo Essentials products emerge from the water</p>	

Bea Alonzo's former love team, movie and TV actor John Lloyd Cruz, also starred in a whitening lotion commercial in 2009, not as the one using the product but as the leading man of the girl using the whitening lotion. It was SkinWhite's 2009 TV commercial which featured local teen actress Coleen Garcia.

The commercial opened with Coleen standing on the corner of the street on a Monday morning. She then walked to the sidewalk when a gush of wind softly brushed her skirt. John Lloyd was in his car that moment and smiled as he saw Coleen. The following day, Coleen was about to cross the street but decided not to when she saw John Lloyd's car approaching. John Lloyd then gave way and let her cross the road. As Coleen passed by the street, the camera focused on Coleen's flawless back which John Lloyd also noticed. John Lloyd couldn't help but say "wow" to her flawlessness.

A lady's voice was then heard in the background saying "*unleash your power to wow with SkinWhite Power Whitening lotion with Power Whitening technology that helps reveal your whitest white in as fast as 7 days and lets you whiten continuously*". As the voice-over plays on, we see Coleen applying SkinWhite to her arms, legs and shoulders and smiling to the camera.

The next shot we see shows Coleen walking in the street on a Sunday morning. John Lloyd got out of his car, which was parked in the sidewalk, and approached Coleen wanting to introduce himself. John Lloyd said "*Hi, I'm...*" to which Coleen instantaneously replied "*John Lloyd?*" and they both laughed. A female's voice was again heard in the background saying "*SkinWhite Power Whitening lotion*" as an image of the product was being shown on the screen.

This ad featured Coleen Garcia, a young and slim fair-skinned mestizo in her late teenage years. Coleen wore several casual dresses and sported different hairstyles in this ad. She was always positive and smiling as she walked the streets. John Lloyd then got awed with Coleen's flawless beauty. But just like the male characters' behavior in the 2008 Silka commercial (see Storyboard 10), you could feel that John Lloyd respects the lady and has no dark ulterior motive. He got smitten with Coleen but did not exude that sensual appeal, making the situation more desirable and acceptable.



## Storyboard 12. 2009 SkinWhite commercial

		
<p>1</p> <p><b>Audio:</b> (Background music)</p> <p><b>Frame Description:</b> Coleen standing on the street corner</p>	<p>2</p> <p><b>Audio:</b> (Background music)</p> <p><b>Frame Description:</b> John Lloyd sees Coleen approaching</p>	<p>3</p> <p><b>Audio:</b> (Background music)</p> <p><b>Frame Description:</b> A shot of Coleen's chest</p>
		
<p>4</p> <p><b>Audio:</b> (Background music)</p> <p><b>Frame Description:</b> John Lloyd turns his head to look at Coleen</p>	<p>5</p> <p><b>Audio:</b> (Background music)</p> <p><b>Frame Description:</b> John Lloyd sees Coleen crossing the street</p>	<p>6</p> <p><b>Audio:</b> (Background music)</p> <p><b>Frame Description:</b> A shot of Coleen's back</p>
		
<p>7</p> <p><b>John Lloyd:</b> Wow.</p> <p><b>Frame Description:</b> John Lloyd saying wow as Coleen passed by</p>	<p>8</p> <p><b>VO:</b> Unleash your power to wow with SkinWhite lotion</p> <p><b>Frame Description:</b> Coleen getting a bottle of SkinWhite Power Whitening</p>	<p>9</p> <p><b>VO:</b> With Power Whitening technology that helps reveal your whitest white</p> <p><b>Frame Description:</b> Coleen applying lotion to her arms</p>

(Continuation from the previous page)



10

**John Lloyd:** Hi, I'm...

**Frame Description:**

John Lloyd gets out of his car to approach Coleen



11

**Coleen:** John Lloyd?

**Frame Description:**

Coleen interrupting John before he says his name



12

**VO:** SkinWhite Power Whitening lotion

**Frame Description:**

A bottle of SkinWhite Power Whitening lotion

This commercial was basically saying that if you want to be confidently flawless and beautiful and have the power to enamor a heartthrob, use SkinWhite whitening lotion. The advertising strategy of assuring the consumers the power to wow people with SkinWhite lotion was utilized. I suppose that soft sell was used and being self-reliant, competitive and successful were the brand personalities depicted.

One year passed and another commercial from SkinWhite was shown to the public. The ad started with a girl taking photographs in a park. She then called the attention of her guy friend, who was also taking pictures in the park, by calling him “*hey, Gelo!*”. This guy friend of hers smiled and softly stared at her. The girl then continued taking photographs of plants and insects she found in the park.

As the girl was busy taking pictures, her guy friend was also busy taking pictures of her. As she set to photograph a fountain, she noticed that her guy friend was hiding behind the fountain who was aiming to photograph her. The guy shyly turned away and pretended to photograph something else.

When the two of them settled down somewhere in the park, the girl wanted to look at the pictures he took. The guy was reluctant to give it but the girl eventually took hold of it. She previewed the photos taken by the guy and discovered her pictures in it then smiled. A female’s voice was then heard in the background which said “*SkinWhite classic lotion. Get whiter and whiter with the number one whitening brand*”. As the

audience hears the female's voice, an image of the SkinWhite classic lotion is shown. The girl, dressed in sleeveless and shorts, is seen sitting on her bed and applying the lotion to her legs.

When the voice-over ended, the focus returned to the guy and girl sitting in the park. The girl then tells the guy "*Gelo, may kulang*" (Gelo, there's something missing) and gladly takes a picture of them together. The female voice-over was again heard to end the commercial and said "*SkinWhite Classic, the power to wow*" with the image of the product plus its tagline flashed to the screen.

A mellow song sung by a man was also playing all throughout the commercial with simple lines that went like this: "*isang saglit, isang tingin. Ito ba'y nadarama mo rin? Sana nga ako'y mahal*". Listening to the lyrics would make you presume that it was the guy's song to the girl in the commercial.

Like the other commercials previously presented, the lady here was also slim and fair-skinned in her early 20's. She was wearing a gray off-shoulder top paired with yellow shorts and her hair was tied in a ponytail. Only her legs were shortly shown in the ad which clearly connote that she is not serving as the erotic object for the characters within the screen story, nor as an erotic object for the spectators. Her admirer did not even cause harm and admired her from afar.

The advertising message was for consumers to buy SkinWhite whitening lotion for them to feel free and confident about themselves. The strategy of convincing the consumers of the benefits of using the number one brand in whitening was used. Soft sell was used as the selling tactic and the brand personalities utilized were being gentle, genuine and confident.

## Storyboard 13. 2010 SkinWhite commercial

		
<p>1</p> <p><b>Audio:</b> (Background music)</p> <p><b>Frame Description:</b> Girl taking photographs</p>	<p>2</p> <p><b>Girl:</b> Gelo!</p> <p><b>Frame Description:</b> Girl calls her friend</p>	<p>3</p> <p><b>Song:</b> <i>Isang saglit</i></p> <p><b>Frame Description:</b> Guy responds to the girl</p>
		
<p>4</p> <p><b>Song:</b> <i>Isang tingin</i></p> <p><b>Frame Description:</b> Girl takes photographs</p>	<p>5</p> <p><b>Song:</b> <i>Ito ba'y</i></p> <p><b>Frame Description:</b> Guy aims to photograph the girl</p>	<p>6</p> <p><b>Song:</b> <i>Nadarama mo rin?</i></p> <p><b>Frame Description:</b> The guy as seen in the girl's camera lens</p>
		
<p>7</p> <p><b>Girl:</b> Patingin!</p> <p><b>Frame Description:</b> The girl asks to look at the guy's camera</p>	<p>8</p> <p><b>Song:</b> <i>Sana nga ako'y mahal</i></p> <p><b>Frame Description:</b> The girl discovers her pictures in the guy's camera</p>	<p>9</p> <p><b>Audio:</b> (Background music)</p> <p><b>Frame Description:</b> The girl smiles upon seeing her pictures</p>

(Continuation from the previous page)



10

**VO:** Get whiter and whiter  
with the no. 1 whitening brand

**Frame Description:**

The girl applies lotion  
to her legs



11

**Girl:** Gelo, may kulang.

**Frame Description:**

The girl takes a picture of  
them together



12

**VO:** SkinWhite Classic,  
the power to wow

**Frame Description:**

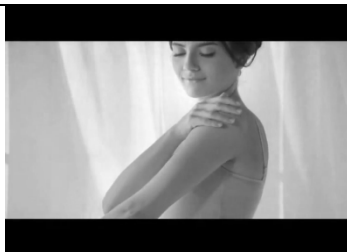






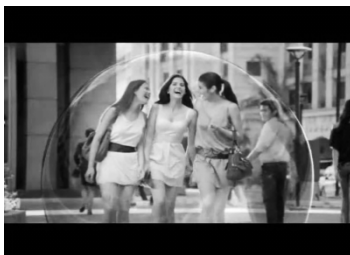
An image of the SkinWhite  
Classic lotion

Another whitening lotion commercial released in 2010 was the Block & White Intensive Whitening Lotions launching ad. The commercial opened with an image of a lady inside her room and touching her arms. The next shot showed the lady walking outside with a ray of sunlight striking her but failed to penetrate as the lady was revealed to be covered by a luminescent protective bubble created by Block & White Intensive Whitening Lotions. People stopped to look at the lady who was confidently walking and not minding the sun. Night fell immediately and she was then shown sleeping in her bed but was still covered by the transparent bubble. A female voice-over can be heard in the background as all of these were happening. She was telling the audience that “*whitening is not complete without sun protection during the day and skin renewal at night*”.

Then the images of Block & White Intensive Whitening Lotions were revealed in the screen. The same female voice can be heard and said “*new Block and White Intensive Whitening Lotions, whitens as early as 5 days. Day SPF 28 protects skin as it whitens. Night, repairs and renews as you sleep*”.

The next shot showed the lady with two of her friends walking outside. Her two friends were also seen protected by the translucent bubble. Together, they walked the streets of town gleefully and securely and got the attention of people around them. The female voice-over ended the commercial by saying “*get the complete whitening experience with Block & White Intensive Whitening Lotions*” accompanied with the images of Day and Night Whitening Lotions flashed onto the screen.

## Storyboard 14. 2010 Block &amp; White commercial

		
1	2	3
<b>VO:</b> Whitening is not complete during the day	<b>VO:</b> Without sun protection	<b>VO:</b> And skin renewal at night
<b>Frame Description:</b> The girl touching her shoulders	<b>Frame Description:</b> The girl covered with a bubble	<b>Frame Description:</b> The girl covered with a bubble
		
4	5	6
<b>VO:</b> New Block & White Intensive Whitening lotions	<b>VO:</b> Day, SPF 28 protects skin as it whitens	<b>VO:</b> Night, repairs and renews as you sleep
<b>Frame Description:</b> A shot of Block & White Intensive Whitening lotions	<b>Frame Description:</b> A lady's back with Day lotion	<b>Frame Description:</b> A lady's back with Night lotion
		
7	8	
<b>VO:</b> Get the complete whitening experience	<b>VO:</b> With Block & White Intensive Whitening Lotions	
<b>Frame Description:</b> The girl with her friends	<b>Frame Description:</b> The girls laughing	

This commercial featured a slim and fair-skinned girl covered by a luminescent protective bubble created by Block & White Intensive Whitening Lotions. This girl was not afraid to go out in the sun because she was being protected by the bubble Block & White Intensive Whitening Lotions have created. She often sported casual dresses and stylish hairdos.

This ad wanted to convey that if the audiences want the complete whitening experience that other brands do not offer, they should buy Block & White Intensive Whitening Lotions. The selling tactic was soft sell and the advertising strategy assuring the consumers the benefit of protected skin with Block & White lotion was used. The brand personalities were being competitive, extensive and assertive.

This particular commercial involved a group of girls who were enjoying their time together. Towards the end of the ad, two of the girl's friends were also seen protected by the bubble and together, they walk the streets of town gleefully and get the attention of people around them. When one watches this ad, one can easily conclude that these women's girlfriends are the most valued people in their lives. In fact, the ads contend that these relationships are more lasting and trustworthy than those with men or potential husbands. The friends enjoy that closeness that emanates from women's experiences in their college dorms, boarding schools, or overnight camps.

Feminists tried to change the way women thought about themselves and others by altering the traditional discourse of romance, that is the sexual and romantic interactions between a male and a female. They instead focused on relationships with other women. These relationships include mother and daughter, female friendships, and sisterhood. The notion of sisterhood underpins the oppression of women as a class and despite the differences among them, their collective subjugation is what they have in common and what unites them all. The concept of sisterhood veers away from the traditional romance discourse. In romance discourse, women contest with one another to get the attention of the man they love. In the idea of sisterhood, relationships with other women do not matter because women are not potential lovers and husbands (Gagne, 2001).

These friendships, not without their problems and jealousies, offer the women an emotional alternative to the stressful world of boyfriends and potential husbands. The bonds that they create provide the women with the support that an infinite number of men

cannot offer them. The friends rely on each other to pay attention to their worries and shortcomings. Ultimately, in function if not in name, they provide each other with an alternative family.

These kinds of friendships do not mark the women's identities as gays. These connections they have with each other create an alternative to their boyfriends, an alternative that grants the women options different from those traditionally signified as "heterosexual" (where women satisfy their desires with one man, serially or monogamously). These friendships seen in the 2007 Belo Essentials launching commercial and 2010 Block & White commercial have created a world within a world or, to use historian Carroll Smith Rosenberg's term, a "female world of love and ritual" that complements the heterosexual world of men in which they also live (Carroll Smith Rosenberg 1975 as cited in Negra, 2004).

Come 2011 and I haven't encountered new whitening lotion commercials circulating in the country's free TV channels. I only came upon with the Belofied Belo Essentials Beauty Makeover commercial featuring Sarah Geronimo and two contestants from Star Power, a talent search program shown in ABS-CBN in late 2010. The commercial was publicizing a chance to win a 150,000 pesos worth of beauty makeover courtesy of Belo by buying various Belo Essentials products. This commercial was not a whitening lotion commercial but it was promoting the use of whitening products including whitening lotions. This ad starred singer and pop princess Sarah Geronimo, Star Power's grand champion Angeline Quinto and another contender from the same talent show, Akiko Solon.

The commercial started with Sarah modeling towards the camera and saying "*it's time to get Belofied*". Angeline was shown dressed in a simple shirt with her hair down but immediately changed into a hip blue dress coupled with a complicated hairstyle. She was delivering the lines "*from dreamer to dream girl*" during her abrupt transformation.



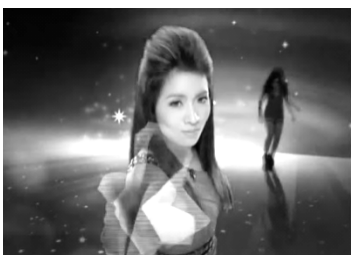
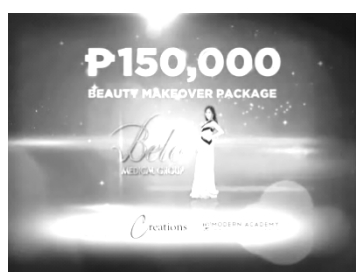
Akiko was also shown sporting just a plain t-shirt and hair tied to a ponytail but quickly switched into a chic blue dress and styled hair as she said the lines "*From so-so to oh so awesome*".

The camera then focused to Sarah who declared the mechanics of the promo. She disclosed the lines "*buy Belo Essentials products and a chance to win a beauty makeover*."



*Log on to Facebook and get Belofied.”* The commercial ended with a shot of Sarah posing in front of the camera together with Angeline, Akiko and two other girls in the background.

Storyboard 15. Belofied Belo Essentials Beauty Makeover commercial

		
<p>1</p> <p><b>Sarah:</b> It's time to get</p> <p><b>Frame Description:</b> Sarah walking towards the camera</p>	<p>2</p> <p><b>Sarah:</b> Belofied!</p> <p><b>Frame Description:</b> Sarah says "Belofied"</p>	<p>3</p> <p><b>Angeline:</b> From dreamer</p> <p><b>Frame Description:</b> Angeline staring somewhere</p>
		
<p>4</p> <p><b>Angeline:</b> To dream girl</p> <p><b>Frame Description:</b> Angeline crushes her old photo</p>	<p>5</p> <p><b>Akiko:</b> From so-so</p> <p><b>Frame Description:</b> Akiko emulating a so-so girl</p>	<p>6</p> <p><b>Akiko:</b> To oh so awesome</p> <p><b>Frame Description:</b> Akiko tears up her old image</p>
		
<p>6</p> <p><b>Sarah:</b> Buy Belo Essentials products for a chance to win a beauty makeover</p> <p><b>Frame Description:</b> The cash prize flashed in the screen</p>	<p>7</p> <p><b>Sarah:</b> And get Belofied!</p> <p><b>Frame Description:</b> Sarah poses with the other endorsers</p>	

In this ad, Sarah was classily made up and dressed in a very elegant long gown. As well as Angeline and Akiko who were both dressed in chic clothing and sported sophisticated hairstyles. This commercial definitely wanted to advocate the makeover paradigm to make girls look better and feel more confident.

According to Butler (1997), subjection can be seen not only as subordination but also as “a securing and maintaining, a putting into place of a subject” (Butler, 1997 as cited in Genz and Brabon, 2009). Therefore, postfeminism and the postfeminist woman must be appreciated within this double bind context of subjectivity. This concept of normalization can possibly explain the position of the postfeminist woman’s use of the technology of cosmetic surgery.

Within this context, this makeover commercial “Belofied” offers an obvious example of the homogenizing aspects of normalization as the participants’ faces and bodies are measured for their deviation from the norms of heterosexual desirability. As Heyes (2007, as cited in Genz and Brabon, 2009) points out, “normalization is obscured... by avidly proffered alternative narratives that stress identity over beauty, and taking one’s life into one’s hands to become a better person”. Angeline and Akiko in the “Belofied” commercial even admitted that they are proud and happy of their transformation and girls should engage in it too in order to be more confident and feel like a star.

### **Synthesis of Findings**

The *bodily codes* (bodily contact, proximity, physical orientation, appearance, facial expression, gaze, head nods, gestures and posture): All women who starred in all the commercials were evidently flawless and fair-skinned. The ages of the women ranged from 20’s to 40’s and emanated an undeniable youthful glow. They also possessed slim and voluptuous bodies.

More female body parts were exposed in past commercials such as in the 2004 Block & White commercial (see Storyboard 1), 2005 and 2007 Silka commercials (see Storyboards 2 and 5 respectively) and 2007 Extract commercial (see Storyboard 6).

Several body parts were still shown in more recent commercials (see Storyboards 7, 10, 12 and 13) but it was done shorter and more tasteful than the past commercials. It

would make you think that women were depicted more sensually before, like what was done in the 2004 Block & White commercial (see Storyboard 1), where a woman was taking off her clothes and the 2006 Silka commercial (see Storyboard 4), where Iya was just wearing a towel-like clothing. They were seen more as sex objects and not as mere lotion endorsers. “Traditionally, the woman displayed has functioned on two levels: as erotic object for the characters within the screen story, and as erotic object for the spectator...” (Gagne, 2001)

Women in more recent commercials were also more classy and elegant. They seem more self-reliant and confident with their selves. They walk freely in the streets and get the attention of the people around. These young women want to be girlish and enjoy all sorts of traditional feminine pleasures without feeling sorry. They appear to be more assertive and competitive in their careers. We now live in a generation where we are expected to choose for ourselves the kind of life we want to live. Girls are now presumed to have their own life plans. They’re expected to be more reflexive in aspect of their lives, from choosing the right man to marry, to taking responsibility for their own working lives, and not being too dependent on a job or on the stable operations of a large-scale bureaucracy which in the past would have allocated its employees specific and unchanging roles (McRobbie, 2009).

Women in the recent whitening lotion commercials seem to fit the descriptions of the “can-do” girl. The creation of the “can-do” girl is one of the key features of postfeminism (Patterson and Sears, 2011). This concept helps link neoliberalism and postfeminism together and how “rhetorics of neoliberalism become particularly visible in representations of young women” (Hasinoff, 2008). This merging of ideologies gave rise to “the remaking of girls and women as the modern neoliberal subject” (Walkerdine, Lucey, and Melody 2001 as cited in Patterson and Sears, 2011) who are capable of working hard and succeeding in the current socio-political landscape. The ideal citizen is represented then as “the ‘can-do girl’ who is successful and career-oriented” and is promoted as an attainable ideal that all young women are capable of achieving” (Hasinoff, 2008). This paradigm sets up a “new normativity” (McRobbie, 2001) for young women showing them how to act and behave in society, particularly in relation to the labor market, elevating the idea that they are “self-making, resilient, and flexible”

subjects (Harris, 2004). This new social norm persuades young women to believe that “girls can do anything” (Harris, 2004) despite the socio-economic differences among them.

The *commodity codes* (fashion, clothing, hairstyles): I observed that women in more recent commercials, those which were released in 2007 to 2011, wore more elegant and classy clothes as compared to the clothing worn by women shown in commercials from 2004 to half of 2007. Take a look at the 2005 and 2007 Silka commercials (see Storyboards 2 and 5), where Iya wore only white midribs and shorts. In the 2006 Silka commercial (see Storyboard 4), she was just wearing a towel-like white clothing. They were too brash and revealing. The ladies in the 2004 Block & White commercial (see Storyboard 1) and in the 2005 SkinWhite commercial (see Storyboard 3), were wearing casual dresses but these were nothing compared to the sophisticated dresses worn by women seen in Belo commercials and other ads released in 2008 to 2011 (see Storyboards 7 to 15). Hairstyles were also improved and more stylish in recent commercials (see Storyboards 7 to 15) than in past commercials (see Storyboards 1 to 6) as brought by the changes in trends and styles through the years.

*Verbal language uttered by the characters in the commercials:* Past commercials, those released in 2004 to 2007 (see Storyboards 1 to 6), mostly utilized voice-overs to tell the story, disclose the advantages of using the products and propagate the taglines. On the other hand, commercials released after 2007 (see Storyboards 7 to 15) gave the girls the freedom to communicate the beauty of the product and deliver the taglines the way they wanted to.

For postfeminists, gender differences, such as wanting to look sexy and aggressive, are playful, stylistic, and not confined to the operations of social power and authority. If women choose to, they can work, talk, and be assertive in their actions while still maintaining all the privileges associated with being an attractive woman (Negra, 2004).

This connotes the postfeminist movement that is said to be beyond feminism, a more comfortable zone where women are now free to choose for themselves (Beck, 1992

as cited in McRobbie, 2009), making them more assertive and competitive than ever. These girls grab educational and professional opportunities like what postfeminism proposes. They now have the freedom to choose what they want to do in life, what to work for and what to do with their femininity.

Projansky (2001) elucidates this type of postfeminism “as the depiction of the present as the end point of a linear feminism that promotes “equal rights”, “choice”, and individualism for white, middle-class heterosexual women. Having achieved (or even almost achieved) this version of equality, in which women can choose “to have it (work, family and heterosexual expression) all” or choose not to have it all, the contemporary era follows a feminist era and inherits the benefits, failures, and pitfalls of that feminism”.

## V. **Attack of the Modern Woman: Analysis and Interpretations**

I analyzed and formulated interpretations of the results discussed in the previous chapter. These interpretations were based not only on the study's findings but also on the topics presented in the Review of Related Literature.

I have previously outlined the comparison between the portrayal of women in past and recent whitening lotion commercials and I could see that the recent portrayal of women in these commercials match and fit the tenets of postfeminism. To rule out confusion whenever I say past and recent commercials from here on, past commercials shall mean those commercials shown in 2004, beginning from the Block & White "*Galawgaw*" commercial up to the 2007 Extract commercial where women were presented as alluring sexual objects, more sensual and less glamorous. From the data I have gathered, I saw a change in the portrayal of women beginning from the 2007 Belo Essentials launching advertisement up to the 2011 Belofied commercial where women were no longer presented as mere sex objects and were more assertive and competitive as compared to the women seen in commercials before.

### **Beauty and Self-empowerment**

Let's start with the "advent" of postfeminist portrayal of women in whitening lotion ads, the 2007 Belo Essentials launching commercial up to the most recent 2011 commercial I have previously presented. First, the Belo Essentials series of commercials starred the brightest and most glamorous personalities in Philippine showbiz. Other commercials like the Silka and Extract TV advertisements also employed famous celebrities. These so-called "A1" girls are glamorous high-achievers destined for prominent academies and are usually pictured clutching A-level certificates. We can say these are ideal girls, subjects par excellence, and also subjects of excellence (Tasker and Negra, 2007). Only the Belo Essentials commercials, among all the commercials presented, contained a lot of sparkle and glamour; "the conjunction of ideal femininities and (sexual) power" (Tasker and Negra, 2007), a succinct potential definition of postfeminism as well.

Unlike the other whitening lotion ads that presented women in their early 20's, the Belo Essentials launching ad featured women in their late 30's (Regine Velasquez and Lucy Torres-Gomez) and early 40's (Zsa Zsa Padilla). "In postfeminist representational culture, age is only acknowledged to the extent that its effects can be erased by cosmetic surgery. "The 'girling' of femininity more generally – the competent professional adult woman who is made safe by being represented as fundamentally still a girl – is itself characteristic of postfeminist representations" (Tasker and Negra, 2007). Postfeminism and girlness rest on each other for their very definitions and existence.

Postfeminism is defined by class, age, and racial exclusions (Adriaens, 2009). It is youth-obsessed, white and middle class by default. It is predominantly relying in consumption as a strategy and leisure as a site for the production of the self. Adriaens (2009) also notes that postfeminist mass media presumes that the pleasures and lifestyles with which it is associated are in some way universally shared and, possibly more significantly, universally accessible.

Based on the findings from the previous chapter, I concluded that women featured in recent commercials are altogether confident and assertive. Take a look at series of Belo Essentials where the leading ladies boldly flaunt their star white skin. The situation is also the same with the 2007 and 2009 SkinWhite commercials and the 2008 Silka commercial wherein the ladies are seen happily exposing their flawless skin to the spectators inside and outside the story. It is evident that they crave superficial attention and want to be successful objects. Undoubtedly, these women are not the creations of a feminist (Adriaens, 2009). These competitive girls were not out to change the world. They were out to earn money and achieve success. It just so happened that they had to embrace their femininity and put it on display as their marketing strategy in the commercials. We could see that they were all consistently self-serving, progressive, career-oriented, free-thinking, pleasure-loving, sexually open, liberated, and assertive (look at the first Belo Essentials commercial up to the Belofied ad). These are the qualities that postfeminists say are the type of characteristics and roles that women should play today (Adriaens, 2009).

Walter (1998) says that, "as women, 'we've never had it so good': Everywhere you look, you see individual women who are freer and more powerful than women have

ever been before. Walter adds that these are ‘new times’ characterized by modernization and de-traditionalism as well as an increasing dissonance of the political and cultural lives of a new generation of women. Women have now reached ‘an open moment’ when they can begin to ‘balance the imbalance of power between the sexes’” (Walter, 1998 as cited in Genz and Brabon, 2009).

Following what McRobbie said in her article entitled “*Postfeminism and Popular Culture*”, these new young women we see in the recent whitening lotion commercials are confident enough to affirm their anxieties about the possible failure in finding a husband and they avoid aggressive or overtly traditional men. This argument can be substantiated by Iya’s behavior in her 2008 Silka commercial where she just brushed off the men’s attention towards her making her look like that she is not interested to find love then and there.

These modern women also blatantly enjoy their sexuality, without showing any fear of the sexual double standard. The ladies seen in the first Belo Essentials commercial up to the 2010 Block & White commercial assertively flaunt their flawless skin and bodies without fearing that they would be judged negatively and be called by derogatory labels.

They are also more than capable of earning their own living, just like the high-paid actresses Zsa Zsa Padilla, Regine Velasquez, Lucy Torres-Gomez, Bea Alonzo and Sarah Geronimo for the Belo Essentials ads, as compared to the women portrayed in past commercials “and the degree of suffering or shame they anticipate in the absence of finding a husband is countered by sexual self-confidence” (McRobbie, 2004) as emanated by Iya Villania in the 2008 Silka commercial and by Coleen Garcia in the 2009 SkinWhite TV ad. The recent commercials speak then to female desire, and in a wholly commercialized way. The women wanted to address the desire for some kind of gender equality, in the world of sex and relationships.

### **No longer mere sex objects**

As I have indicated in my findings, less female body parts were shown in recent commercials as compared to past commercials wherein almost all female body parts were exposed. Yes, the flaunting of body parts was not completely eradicated but it was indeed



lessened in recent commercials. Women in recent commercials wore more elegant clothing, just like in the first Belo Essentials commercial up to the Belofied ad, than the women seen in past commercials who wore skimpy and seductive outfits thus making them look more sensual, like the girls seen in the Block & White *Galawgaw* ad up to the third Silka commercial. The male spectators in recent commercials were apparently more decent and modest in expressing their admiration towards the women, like the guys in the 2008 Silka commercial and the 2009 and 2010 SkinWhite ads, than the ones in past advertisements who would even exclaim in awe upon seeing the girls, like what the males in the first Silka commercial did.

In her 2007 book *Gender and the Media*, Rosalind Gill claims that contemporary culture is symbolized by an increasing and pervasive sexualization, which can be seen in “the extraordinary proliferation of discourses about sex and sexuality across all media forms as well as the frequent ‘erotic presentation of girls’, women’s and (to a lesser extent) men’s bodies” (Gill, 2007). These depictions are brought by a modernization of both femininity and masculinity and a shift from the so-called “sexual objectification” to “sexual subjectification”.

According to Gill, this process is predominantly apparent in the sexualized representations of women who come to be seen not as victimized objects but as knowing sexual subjects: “Where once sexualized representations of women in the media presented them as passive, mute objects of an assumed male gaze, today’s sexualization works somewhat differently, as women are not straightforwardly objectified but are presented as active, desiring sexual subjects” (Gill, 2007). As we can see in recent ads, women were more liberated and confident. They could brush off the spectators’ attention and continue enjoying themselves, like what Iya did in the 2008 Silka commercial. Yes, they were still subjected to the male gaze but they did not take it passively and even used it to their advantage, just like what the ladies in the 2009 and 2010 SkinWhite ads did.

### **Superwoman**

We could also say that women in recent commercials deserve to be called as “superwomen” if compared to the girls present in past commercials. These superwomen want to have it all. They are looking for security, status, power and fulfillment in full-

time jobs and careers in the competitive rat race, and trying to hold on to that old security, status, power and fulfillment that women before could only find in their homes and children. These women are “choosing” not to marry and start a family. They instead look for identity, status, power and fulfillment in job or career. The figure of the postfeminist is the young, unattached and mostly city-dwelling woman (see Storyboards 9 to 15) who is deriving so much pleasure from her independent urban life (Genz, 2009).

The single woman, who is impossible to pity, is emerging as the newest glamour girl of our times. “She is engaging because she lives by her wits. She supports herself. She has had to sharpen her personality and mental resources to a glitter in order to survive in a competitive world and the sharpening looks good. Economically she is a dream. She is not a parasite, a dependent, a scrounger, a sponger or a bum. She is a giver, not a taker, a winner and not a loser” (Genz, 2009).

One look at the results and discussion chapter and you’ll see these descriptions fitting perfectly to the women in recent whitening lotion ads. They somehow bring to life the “new woman” who is who is self-assured and comfortable with her femininity and her sexual difference (Genz, 2009). Critics also assert that postfeminism’s individualism equates to its exclusivity, and it is only appealing to “young women professionals imbued with confidence, an ethic of self-reliance and the head start of a good education” (Genz and Brabon, 2009), but this mostly applies to the featured celebrities in the Belo Essentials ads since they are expected to be the perfect girls everyone should look up to. The ordinary girls featured in the other recent commercials do not obviously show the exact qualities and power the Belo Essentials’ celebrities possessed.

### **Personal choice and individualism**

Empowerment through personal choice, privileging femininity, and balancing careers are prevalent throughout the discourse of recent whitening lotion commercials. Postfeminism promotes competitive individualism and shuns collective action. It obscures the ways in which women are always fearful, subjected to rape and other kinds of violence, and politically and economically underprivileged. We can see that the women in the recent commercials were not relying on anyone else for their happiness and satisfaction. They’re mainly relying on their personal choice to pick the right whitening

lotion for them and be confident in the process. Most of the commercials employed the soft sell tactic to give the audience the freedom to choose the brand of whitening lotion they think is most suited to them.

Postfeminists believe that change comes in the form of personal choices that empower women on an individual basis, not as a collective group (Helford, 2000 as cited in Schowalter, 2009). Postfeminism proposes that women are empowered through their ability to choose their path in life. “Choice is important for postfeminists” (Coppock et al., 1995 as cited in Schowalter, 2009). Embedded in this is the notion that women can now reclaim their femininity. They no longer need to reject it as what they see feminists are doing. This reclamation of femininity is coupled with “a revision of feminism that encourages women’s private, consumer lifestyles rather than cultivating desire for public life and political activism” (Vavrus, 2002). Projansky (2001) expands on this sentiment when she argues that these tenets ensure “a place for femininity in postfeminism”.

Advertising contributes to this version of postfeminism which hails women’s equality and their power to choose, but at the same time marketing commodities that encourage constant body maintenance (Schowalter, 2009). As we have seen in recent whitening lotion ads, the reason behind the women’s empowerment and confidence were the whitening lotions that they have consumed. Postfeminism relies on consumerist notions of choice in order to promote and propagate individualist ideas of empowerment and agency (Ang, 1996).

Postfeminists argue that equality has been achieved and women can already concentrate on achieving their individual goals. These individual goals, from what we lifted from the recent commercials, could be anything from fulfilling a successful career (like the ladies featured in the Belo Essentials ads and in the 2010 Block & White ad), finding a deserving boyfriend or husband (just like the girls seen in 2009 and 2010 SkinWhite commercials) or just being plainly beautiful and liberated (like the girls shown in the 2007 SkinWhite ad and in the 2008 Silka commercial). The popular press paints a picture of this postfeminist utopia in which women can do whatever they please, as long as they have sufficient will and enthusiasm. “Being empowered” becomes synonymous with “making the most of oneself” and “pleasing oneself” (Genz and Brabon, 2009).

Women in recent whitening lotion commercials were aiming to be constantly beautiful and glamorous without that much effort and they seem to be concerned of that thing alone, just be beautiful and glamorous and the day's complete (see Storyboards 7 to 15). Susan Douglas argues that “women’s liberation metamorphosed into female narcissism unchained as political concepts and goals like liberation and equality were collapsed into distinctly personal, private desires” (Douglas, 1995). This “narcissism as liberation” signals women’s liberation with their ability to do whatever they want, whenever they want, no matter what the expense (Genz and Brabon, 2009). It does not matter if whitening lotions are expensive as long as it makes them feel good about themselves. Other social issues like gender inequality and political problems don’t matter as long as these women can afford to consume. Whelehan (1995) argues that is based on an acceptance that it is a man’s world and that men really behave differently from women. It urges women to fight as individuals rather than encourage any more radical social changes (Whelehan, 1995).

The inference is that choice has supposedly always been there, available for the right person who knows how to work for personal improvement. “Postfeminism is seen to be driven by representational concerns for a more attractive and easily sellable image. While focusing on the strong individual’s will, the tokenism inherent in postfeminism displaces the importance of the group nature of the adversity as it obscures the collective nature of oppression and the need for organized action to remedy social injustice” (Genz and Brabon, 2009).

It’s also important to note that women portrayed in recent whitening commercials do not pose as a threat to the male spectators around them (like what was shown in the 2008 Silka commercial, 2009 and 2010 SkinWhite ads and in the 2010 Block & White commercial). They absolutely do not look like ferocious women who would want to start a war with men or even have a little disagreement. Faludi (1995) states “sufficient progress has been made and that now should be a time of back-patting and reconciliation with men”. According to Faludi, postfeminists “aren’t encouraging women to pursue social change, and they certainly aren’t asking men to change. It is a no-risk feminism for a fearful age: just post your achievements, make nice with men, and call it a day” (Faludi, 1995).

Just as Schowalter (2009) noted, media, particularly advertising, strengthens this kind of postfeminism. It celebrates women's "equality" and choice, at the same time selling commodities that support perpetual body maintenance (look at the Belo Essentials' launching ad to the latest Belofied ad). "This postfeminist definition of the successful woman maintains that women can "try to have it all" as long as they do so without disrupting the patriarchal structure. The flaw of postfeminism is that this "liberation" remains within male-defined parameters. Women can succeed, but only on men's terms in a man's world" (Coppock, et al., 1995). "Women can achieve success by adhering to traditional gender roles such as feminine dress and mannerisms. This insistence on excessive femininity as criteria for success separates women from the agency to challenge these often-contradictory messages. Instead of fighting the system, women are encouraged to enter the public sphere only when they have mastered their feminine performances" (Schowalter, 2009).

### **Neo-liberalism, consumerism and postfeminism**

In political economy, neo-liberalism connotes the eradication of the welfare state and the expansion of the global free trade. It encourages individuals to be entrepreneurs and consumer-citizens to self-regulate and self-care. This notion collides with postfeminism's individualist and commoditized understanding of empowerment and agency, which contradicts collective politics and community activism.

When you analyze it, you can see that women buy the products carrying the slogan of feminism which were created by corporations owned and ran mostly by males, with the exception of companies like Belo which is owned and operated by Dra. Vicky Belo. The positioning of liberated and empowered women into active and marketable categories of femininity demonstrates the extent to which this "brand" of girl power represents the commodification and containment of feminism garnering the triumph of "image power" over "political power" (Gills, Howie and Manford, 2004).

Popular representations of feminism in the media sell. Whether in music, film, print or television, the images of independent women capture a really large audience. You can refer to the success of Destiny's Child's hit song "*Independent Woman*", films such as "*Charlie's Angels*", television series "*Sex and the City*" and popular fictions

such as “*Bridget Jones’s Diary*” to conclude that women’s “liberation” is indeed a marketable commodity. These representations entailed that women have conquered the goals of second wave feminism, such as financial autonomy, successful career, and sexual freedom. Hence, the demands associated with the movement of the 1970s have been superseded (Gills, Howie and Manford, 2004). This picture of feminist triumph is so widely recognized that even the cover of TIME magazine’s June 29, 1998 issue proclaimed feminism as dead.

“One rhetorical mechanism through which the media have articulated this distorted perspective is by the construction of a “then” and “now”: two distinct feminisms, one representing women “today”, and the other, either labeled “second wave” or “seventies” feminism, depicting feminisms of the past. These two interpretations of feminism are set against each other, with an implication that women have either moved to a less politicized and less effective feminism; or, more generally, that there is no more need for feminism” (Gills, Howie and Manford, 2004). And this exactly was what I have done in this particular study, comparing the women in recent ads to the past ones describing the women of “today” and the women “then”. From what I have gathered and analyzed up to this point, I can nearly conclude that women have moved to a less politicized kind of feminism which is postfeminism.

These declarations denote that feminism has changed into a movement which is more concerned with style than substance, making the personal prevail over the political. Even it is completely true or not, what matters is that it gave birth to the construction of women as consumers, which relegates feminism as a political movement to a mere style that can be bought (Gills, Howie and Manford, 2004).

I can say that the portrayal of women in recent whitening lotion commercials is not that entirely postfeminist yet, but it is already getting there. Who knows but maybe years from now, we can already witness the absolute postfeminist portrayal of women in our television commercials.

### **The ideology behind**

It is difficult not to admit that certain beliefs and attitudes are so ingrained in media advertising that we sometimes even do not bother to confirm if they are true or not.

They are never questioned or threatened. We don't question why women were portrayed as passive (like the Marian Rivera SkinWhite ad) or why were they showing too many body parts (just like what the girls were doing in the Block & White *Galawgaw* commercial, third Silka ad and Extract commercial). We don't bother to ask why women need to seem empowered and assertive in TV commercials (like the ladies we see from the Belo Essentials' launching ad to the 2010 Block & White commercial). We absorb the dominant cultural reading unknowingly because it is a default position that we take when we are not vigilant. Not all the audiences are constantly prepped up to disagree with what they see on TV, and this can be a subversive yet powerful force in shaping one's beliefs and opinions.

We learn many things from the trials and sufferings of television characters. We even learn what we should *buy* and what we should *look like* from the television (Gagne, 2001). The media often propagate stereotypes whether we want to or not. There is not much chance to overcome these stereotypes if there is no one to contradict the assumptions about the identities of people of certain social groups. Television and the mass media capitalize on stereotypes regarding gender and race and capitalizing on these stereotypes is deeply rooted to patriarchy. A lot of media companies and its branches are controlled by an elite group of men who have their own interests to protect. The sad truth is that these men control society. They are elusive and tricky but nonetheless so powerful.

The mainstream media play a very vital role in instilling notions about gender roles and behaviors. But that does not mean that we just passively accept what they tell us. However, it also does not mean to say that media representations have no influence over our sense of self. Advertisers continually spend millions of pesos just to convince the consumers that the product they offer will make us feel or look better and also enable us to live a pleasant lifestyle. Media representations of gender are the most insidious and powerful of all because of the underlying ideologies from which they draw upon, which are often not evident or extreme.

The market has triumphed to turn everything into a product that can be sold. There are a lot of examples everywhere you look. Women continue to adorn advertisements but the language of today is that of freedom and individualism. It

emphasizes the point that when a woman chooses a brand, she is expressing her choice as an individual, as a mother, as a woman.

Media has started to portray women differently as we have seen in whitening lotion commercials where images of powerful and liberated women are introduced to the audience to sell more products, resulting to the concept of “commodity feminism” or feminism for profit. The media has ingrained feminism into the mainstream and turned it into a servant of the market place. Feminism has thus been absorbed and glamorized and its message homogenized. This gave birth to a culture which demands the consumption not only of the goods available in it, but also the mass-produced images which are its currency. To put it simply, women are encouraged not only to desire the consumer products and the images used to sell them, but to become these very images (Gagne, 2001).

Gagne (2001) states that media plays a big role in blurring the division between feminism-the-movement and feminism-as-marketplace-tool. Advertisers have always employed progressive ideas in order to sell products via a false sense of empowerment and feminism has been one of the favorites of advertisers. The market has begun to exploit stereotypes of the “liberated women” to sell mass consumption products. We are all aware that these commodities such as whitening lotions, soap, shampoo or perfume have nothing to do with the liberation of the woman using it. These products and representations are meant to make money for the businesses and meet the consumerist demands of capitalist culture.

As Schowalter (2009) noted, postfeminism in advertising strengthens this kind of ideology. It celebrates women’s “equality” and choice, at the same time selling commodities that support perpetual body maintenance. Images of successful women having it all will continue to be presented in commercials as long as they do not disrupt the dominant patriarchal structure. Women in whitening lotion ads will continue to be portrayed as empowered and assertive. They will continue to do whatever they want as long as they do not become a threat to the men around them and most especially, to the men owning and ruling the media and the market.



## **VI. The Attack Ends Here: Summary and Conclusion**

This chapter summarizes the change in the portrayal of women in whitening lotion commercials shown in the country in the years 2004 to 2011 connoting the rise of postfeminist representations. This chapter also presents the conclusion to the study by answering this study's central question and synthesizing the researcher's analysis and interpretations.

### **A. Summary**

Women were portrayed in whitening lotion advertisements before as alluring sexual objects. They were seen as parts and not as a whole. Past whitening lotion commercials featured women more as erotic objects for the spectators or as insecure ones who lack the confidence to mingle with other people. They were depicted more sensually and less glamorous than the ones seen in recent commercials.

Recent whitening lotion commercials featured more confident and assertive women. They were also portrayed more glamorously and gracefully. These women in recent ads signify the kind of women who can have it all and freely choose the kind of life they want to live. These girls strive to be the ideal subjects who are able to make the right choices and decisions in relation to their lifestyle which simply fit into the main tenets of postfeminism.

The popular press paints a picture of this postfeminist utopia in which women can do whatever they please, as long as they have sufficient will and enthusiasm. Being empowered now has the same meaning with making the most of oneself and pleasing oneself.

However, this postfeminist definition of the successful woman maintains that women can have it all as long as they do not disrupt the patriarchal structure. Women can only achieve success by adhering to traditional gender roles such as feminine dress and mannerisms.

Both past and recent whitening lotion commercials featured women who got what they want by using their own brands of whitening lotion. This expresses the notion that women can gain control through the commodification of their appearance. It propagates

the idea that by achieving a particular look through buying the right and preferred beauty products, women can then obtain power. But, consumer culture is more of a fundamental element of postfeminism as it is seen as an effective tool to achieve power and pleasure and to boost self-esteem that postfeminist women seem to have. Women construct their identity and get empowered and appreciated through consumption.

Advertising contributes to this version of postfeminism which hails women's equality and their power to choose, but at the same time marketing commodities that encourage constant body maintenance. As we have seen in the recent whitening lotion ads, the reason behind the women's empowerment and confidence were the whitening lotions that they consume. Postfeminism relies on consumerist notions of choice in order to promote and propagate individualist ideas of empowerment and agency.

These representations of the modern and empowered women in recent whitening lotion commercials want to prove that women had indeed arrived at their goals, but the truth is that a massive mainstream power is producing this ideology of postfeminism. That is none other than the capitalist industry of the media. Subsequently, the identities and lifestyles of these young and competitive women are turned into a commodity. They are modified and turned into products which are suitable for the status quo.

The whole process of commodification robs feminism of its political significance which provokes the audience to identify positively with a product that promises its user greater individual, social, economic or political power, when in fact it does none of these things. Individualizing and commodifying feminism destabilize the collective politics of feminism, which has long fought for gender equality, and this is exactly what postfeminism is doing.

Previous whitening lotion ads presented women who were primarily insecure and then after using a certain brand of whitening product and achieving fairer skin, they suddenly became confident women who are ready to face the world and be with the man of their dreams. Recent whitening lotion advertisements presented women who were obviously confident and happy with their body and appearance and flaunted it for the world to see. But then, it turned out that they were fair-skinned because they used their chosen brand of whitening lotion.

The importance is placed on materialism and commodity culture. Women's liberation is hinged at the craze of consumerism and the construction of young females to sexy objects who have been falsely empowered enough to create mass appeal. Feminism's significance is neutralized and depoliticized by representations of empowered women which do not represent any real empowerment at all but only create a myth of progress.

So here are the answers to the research questions I have laid down at the beginning of this study. What does the portrayal of women in recent whitening lotion commercials signify? The portrayal of women in recent ads signifies the rise of postfeminist portrayal of women. It is not yet completely postfeminist but it is already paving the way. Representations of women as empowered, competitive and assertive simply collide with postfeminist characteristics. These contemporary representations do not (as in the past) depict women as passive objects but as knowing and active sexual subjects. But, this statement only holds true for a certain type of woman in the media. A woman can only be an empowered subject in the eyes of the viewer if she is heterosexual, slim, young and beautiful.

This gives rise to the kind of woman every girl should strive to be, one who is intelligent, accomplished, effortlessly beautiful, and maintains a successful profession. Postfeminism in advertising produces a dreamlike positive world, but it does not eradicate judgment of women. Instead, it is merely modifying the conditions by which women will be looked at and assessed.

Are they really empowered and liberated? No, because they are only represented as empowered to cater to the capitalist interests of the media and the market. Recent whitening lotion commercials propagate the notion that women can gain control through the commodification of their appearance. It propagates the idea that by achieving a particular look through buying the right and preferred beauty products, women can then obtain power.

Are they truly resistant to the traditional roles? Yes, they are not passive, incompetent, sensitive and mute sexual objects anymore. Recent whitening lotion ads now present to us a kind of woman who knows what she wants and is confident to get it.

Have they really broken free from the male-dominated society and from the consumerist and capitalist culture? It's a definite no. Postfeminism is more accustomed to an individual's buying power and not within a larger cultural cause or movement. Gender politics have then become conflated with consumerism.

## **B. Conclusion**

*“Woman is not a completed reality, but rather a becoming, and it is in her becoming that . . . her possibilities should be defined” (de Beauvoir, 1949).*

By analyzing the fifteen whitening lotion commercials released in 2004 to 2011, I conclude that there was indeed a change in the portrayal of women in these TV advertisements. It's not yet the ultimate postfeminist portrayal but it's nearly getting there. There are still inconsistencies and glitches, some recent commercials are still hinting the sex object appeal and the notion of empowerment and confidence are more perceived in the celebrities featured, but these are gradually being conquered. We have proved that there has been a change in the traditional representation of women in television commercials and it is evidently moving towards the postfeminist portrayal.

As you get familiar with the advertisements, you can well conclude that women are empowered by using whitening lotions. What's more interesting to point out is that these women are as confident as ever to shout out to the world that they are indeed using artificial skin whiteners. Whether they are aware or not, they are liberated only because of consumerism. When you look deeper on how women are portrayed in these advertisements, you can conclude that they are falsely empowered to further boost mass consumption.

Media and advertising corporations that usually boast about supporting a social action just want to capitalize on women's insecurities and consumer identities. If women were satisfied with just the way they are, why would they waste time buying beauty products that promise to improve their appearance? In the end, they still fall victim to the consumerist culture and traditional roles created and reproduced by the male-dominated society.

Women are traditionally portrayed in television as sensitive, passive and domestic. In the recent commercials, we can observe that women are shown as empowered and liberated. Instead of being passively trapped in the traditional facets of femininity, women are seen flaunting their femininity and playing it by using their own body as a front. This masquerade lets women detach themselves from the image of objectification while demonstrating and controlling the representation of her body. But this same masquerade effectively hides the true meaning and intentions of the massive powers that want to propagate the notion of postfeminism in media representations in the present era.

## **VII. For Future Attacks: Implications and Recommendations**

This chapter includes a discussion on the implications and suggestions of the study for further research in the field of gender and advertising studies.

### **A. Implications**

The portrayal of women in recent commercials is moving towards the postfeminist representations. They are more empowered, liberated, assertive, competitive and pleasure-loving people than the ones portrayed in the past commercials. There have been changes in the representation of women in the commercials through the years but the ideology governing it remains the same.

I have compared the old way of representing women with the new way of portraying them in whitening lotion commercials, much like presenting an old and new feminism. These two interpretations of feminism are set against each other, with an implication that women have moved to a less politicized and less effective feminism

This study reminds both the academe and the audiences to give close attention and examine different media texts for the stories they tell us, more specifically those stories that concern historically and politically significant social movements, such as feminism. We should keep in mind that television advertising does not concern only the commercials. It is more of the process of molding audiences to become appropriate consumers. Yes, women are seen as the primary purchasers but television is not always created with women in mind.

The findings in this study suggest that postfeminism is best understood as a site of interrogation that provides an opportunity to practice decoding media representations constructively and challenges us to broaden our interpretative frameworks. The findings also imply that we should allow ourselves to dive into the complicated entanglements in media texts that characterize gender, culture, theory and politics in the modern world.

This research makes us realize that images of femininity in the mass media may not change the way we actually dress, move or speak but they may influence the way we think about what it means to be a woman.

Feminist media scholars should ponder on the role of self-engagement with our own media consumption practices to move the field forward. We should let our voices be heard, as media scholars and feminists alike, not only to feel empowered but to actually empower ourselves and our students to make choices and interpretations regarding media, consumerism and relationships that matter in our everyday lives. There is increasing evidence that sex stereotyping in advertising indeed plays a major role in reflecting societal ills and helping to sustain them. However, there is also escalating evidence that more responsible advertising could play a positive and beneficial role in helping to change them.

### **B. Recommendations**

This study utilized only fifteen whitening lotion commercials shown in the country in 2004 to 2011, using purposeful sampling in choosing the units of analysis. This research cannot account for all the whitening lotion ads shown in Philippine TV's history and it would be helpful to obtain more interpretations about the portrayal of women in whitening lotion commercials. Given the scope and limitations of this research, I recommend more topics that can be explored:

1. Future studies can look at all existing whitening lotion commercials, starting with the very first whitening lotion ad released in Philippine TV up to the most recent one.
2. Further studies could also explore other media texts such as television shows and films that employ postfeminism in their portrayal of women.
3. It would also be helpful to know what the audiences think of these empowered and liberated women they see on commercials and if they believe these representations or not.
4. Future studies could also investigate what men think of these postfeminist representations of women in media.
5. It is also possible to investigate the interpretations and intentions of the people involved in making and producing commercials of whitening products presented in our media.

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## **APPENDIX A**

### **TIMETABLE**

<b>REQUIREMENT</b>	<b>DEADLINE</b>
Thesis proposal	October 4, 2011
Downloading videos from YouTube	October 26, 2011
Data-Gathering	December 3, 2011
Data Organizing	December 26, 2011
Writing	January 4, 2012
1 <sup>st</sup> Draft of Manuscript	February 1, 2012
Consultation	February 13, 2012
2 <sup>nd</sup> Draft of Manuscript	February 29, 2012
Consultation	March 13, 2012
Final Draft of Manuscript	March 15, 2012

**APPENDIX B****EXPENSES**

<b>ITEM</b>	<b>COST</b>
Printing of First Draft of Thesis	Php 500
Ring binding of First Draft of Thesis	Php 50
Printing of Second Draft of Thesis	Php 500
Ring binding of Second Draft of Thesis	Php 50
Printing of Final Draft of Thesis	Php 500
Binding	Php 1500
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>Php 3100</b>



## APPENDIX C

### Textual Analysis Guide – Block & White “Galawgaw” 2004

#### **Determine the physical characteristics of the women portrayed in the ads**

##### **Concept: Beauty and self-empowerment**

1. What is the leading lady’s skin color? Fair-skinned
2. What is her body built? Slim
3. How old is she? Early 20’s
4. What kind of clothes is she wearing? Little black dress
5. Which particular parts of her body are shown? Back, shoulders, legs, arms
6. What is her hairstyle? Up-do
7. What is her job? She just came home from a party or social gathering
8. To which social class does she belong? Middle class
9. Setting: Room, day

#### **Determine the emotional characteristics of the women portrayed in the ads**

##### **Concept: Happiness cause by consumption**

1. What non-verbal cues is she expressing? Happy, delightful, confident
2. What are her verbal expressions? Ilabas ang natural na puti
3. What are her physical movements in particular? Dancing, stripping in her room in front of her dog

#### **Determine how men and other characters regard these women in the ads**

##### **Concept: Search for love and happiness**

1. What non-verbal cues are they expressing as they see the leading lady?
2. What are their verbal expressions?
3. How do they respond physically to the leading lady? Dog: Watching her owner take off her clothes

#### **Messages**

**Background music/song:** song “Galawgaw” sung by a woman

##### **Transcription**

Woman singing: Galawgaw, kay harot harot tignan. Galawgaw, nakalilitong masdan. Ang likot-likot, kahit saan.

Go ahead. Ipakita ang iyong skin with new Block & White Radiance. With breakthrough White-Activ plus SPF 20. Natural na puti in just two weeks.

Malabnaw. Maliksi. Galawgaw. Ilabas ang natural na puti. New Block & White Radiance.

**Tagline** - Ilabas ang natural na puti.

##### **Overt Messages**

- What is its advertising message? If you want to unleash your natural fairness and be carefree in flaunting your flawlessness, use Block & White Radiance.
- What was the advertising strategy used? Promising the benefit of natural fairness
- What is its selling tactic? Soft sell
- What are the brand personalities? Enjoyable, simple, uncomplicated

## APPENDIX D

### Textual Analysis Guide – Silka Commercial 01 2005

#### **Determine the physical characteristics of the women portrayed in the ads**

##### **Concept: Beauty and self-empowerment**

1. What is the leading lady's skin color? Fair-skinned
2. What is her body built? Slim
3. How old is she? Early 20's
4. What kind of clothes is she wearing? White midrib and white shorts, white dress
5. Which particular parts of her body are shown? Back, shoulders, legs, arms, face
6. What is her hairstyle? Straight long black hair
7. What is her job? Actress, VJ
8. To which social class does she belong? Upper middle class
9. Setting: well-lighted room, outdoor – day

#### **Determine the emotional characteristics of the women portrayed in the ads**

##### **Concept: Happiness cause by consumption**

1. What non-verbal cues is she expressing? Happy, confident
2. What are her verbal expressions? Para sa gandang alagang-papaya, mula ulo hanggang paa.
3. What are her physical movements in particular? Dancing, touching her legs, washing her face, taking a bath, walking in the streets at daytime, flipping her hair

#### **Determine how men and other characters regard these women in the ads**

##### **Concept: Search for love and happiness**

1. What non-verbal cues are they expressing as they see the leading lady? Awed, happy, excited
2. What are their verbal expressions? Ooooh! Pare, iyan ang hanap ko!
3. How do they respond physically to the leading lady? Stare at Iya with awe and admiration as she passes by

#### **Messages**

**Background music/song:** bg music playing

##### **Transcription**

Man's soothing voice: Mukha pa lang, so Silka soft. Her skin all over, so Silka smooth. So Silka hair. 'Yan ang gandang alaga all over with Silka all-papaya care system.

Iya: Ito ang unang papaya care products that cares completely for your skin, para sa gandang alagang-papaya, mula ulo hanggang paa.

Man's soothing voice: Silka all-papaya care system

Iya: Alagang papaya, alagang Silka.

**Tagline** – Alagang papaya, alagang Silka.

##### **A. Overt Messages**

- What is its advertising message? For overall beauty and smoothness, buy Silka all-papaya-care system
- What was the advertising strategy used? Promising the benefit of overall fairness
- What is its selling tactic? Soft sell
- What is the brand personality? Complete, simple

## APPENDIX E

### Textual Analysis Guide – Skin White Marian Rivera 2005

#### **Determine the physical characteristics of the women portrayed in the ads**

##### **Concept: Beauty and self-empowerment**

1. What is the leading lady's skin color? Fair-skinned
2. What is her body built? Slim
3. How old is she? Early 20's
4. What kind of clothes is she wearing? White kamison with balabal covering her shoulders, red dress
5. Which particular parts of her body are shown? Back, arms
6. What is her hairstyle? Long black hair
7. What is her job? Student/waitress/restaurant girl
8. To which social class does she belong? Middle class
9. Setting: Room, party, night

#### **Determine the emotional characteristics of the women portrayed in the ads**

##### **Concept: Happiness cause by consumption**

1. What non-verbal cues is she expressing? Sad, insecure to go out, became happy and confident when she got whiter
2. What are her verbal expressions?
3. What are her physical movements in particular? Looking out in the window envying the people having fun outside, covering her shoulders with a scarf, smiling and waving to the people at the party, talking to her friends, walking happily with the guy

#### **Determine how men and other characters regard these women in the ads**

##### **Concept: Search for love and happiness**

1. What non-verbal cues are they expressing as they see the leading lady? Noticing the girl immediately and admiring her as she makes her entrance
2. What are their verbal expressions?
3. How do they respond physically to the leading lady? Walking beside the girl, smiling at her, holding her hand

#### **Messages**

**Background music/song:** Shine by Regine Velasquez

##### **Transcription**

Song: There I was, alone on the shadows. Couldn't find my world.

It's your season to shine with Skin White lotion with Renewwhite 3C and SPF for whiter, stunningly beautiful skin.

Song: You make me shine, shine. You keep me shining through. It's true. I'm shining on all because of you.

**Tagline** – Skin White lotion. Shine with Skin White.

##### **Overt Messages**

- What is its advertising message? If you want to be confident about yourself and shine above others, get noticed especially by a good-looking man, use Skin White.
- What was the advertising strategy used? Promising the benefits of fair skin
- What is its selling strategy? Soft sell
- What is the brand personality? Simple yet powerful

## APPENDIX F

### Textual Analysis Guide – Silka Commercial 02 2006

#### **Determine the physical characteristics of the women portrayed in the ads**

##### **Concept: Beauty and self-empowerment**

1. What is the leading lady's skin color? Fair-skinned
2. What is her body built? Slim
3. How old is she? Early 20's
4. What kind of clothes is she wearing? Tube white fitted dress
5. Which particular parts of her body are shown? Hands, face, shoulders
6. What is her hairstyle? Tied
7. What is her job? Actress, VJ
8. To which social class does she belong? Upper middle class
9. Setting: room

#### **Determine the emotional characteristics of the women portrayed in the ads**

##### **Concept: Happiness cause by consumption**

1. What non-verbal cues is she expressing? Happy
2. What are her verbal expressions?
3. What are her physical movements in particular? Pottering

#### **Determine how men and other characters regard these women in the ads**

##### **Concept: Search for love and happiness**

1. What non-verbal cues are they expressing as they see the leading lady?
2. What are their verbal expressions?
3. How do they respond physically to the leading lady? Touching Iya's shoulder then gliding his hands into hers

#### **Messages**

**Background music/song:** bg music playing

##### **Transcription**

Iya (soothing voice): Softer, more touchable fairer skin. Now in new sexier body.

#### **Tagline – Alagang papaya, alagang Silka.**

##### **Overt Messages**

- What is its advertising message? For a softer and more touchable skin, use Silka.
- What was the advertising strategy used? Promising the benefit of sexy smooth skin
- What is its selling tactic? Soft sell
- What is the brand personality? Simple, sexier, sophisticated

## APPENDIX G

### Textual Analysis Guide – Silka Commercial 03 2007

#### **Determine the physical characteristics of the women portrayed in the ads**

##### **Concept: Beauty and self-empowerment**

1. What is the leading lady's skin color? Fair-skinned
2. What is her body built? Slim
3. How old is she? Early 20's
4. What kind of clothes is she wearing? White midrib and white shorts,
5. Which particular parts of her body are shown? Back, shoulders, legs, arms, face
6. What is her hairstyle? Straight long black hair
7. What is her job? Actress, VJ
8. To which social class does she belong? Middle class
9. Setting: well-lighted room

#### **Determine the emotional characteristics of the women portrayed in the ads**

##### **Concept: Happiness cause by consumption**

1. What non-verbal cues is she expressing? Happy, smiling
2. What are her verbal expressions? My skin beauty secret, the new sexier Silka. Alagang papaya, alagang Silka!
3. What are her physical movements in particular? Touching her face, legs and shoulders

#### **Determine how men and other characters regard these women in the ads**

##### **Concept: Search for love and happiness**

1. What non-verbal cues are they expressing as they see the leading lady?
2. What are their verbal expressions?
3. How do they respond physically to the leading lady?

#### **Messages**

**Background music/song:** bg music playing

#### **Transcription**

Iya: My skin beauty secret, the new sexier Silka. With 3-way action to make my skin feel sexier. Papaya enzymes to whiten my skin. Vitamin E keeps my skin moisturized and nourished, and now, with SPF to protect my skin from the sun's harmful rays. The new sexier Silka Papaya Whitening Lotion. 3 Way action in one lotion. Alagang papaya, alagang Silka!

**Tagline** – Alagang papaya, alagang Silka.

##### **Overt Messages**

- What is its advertising message? If you want a simple yet complete beauty product, buy the new Silka lotion.
- What was the advertising strategy used? Promising the benefits of a complete beauty product
- What is its selling tactic? Soft sell
- What is the brand personality? New and sexier, all-embracing

## APPENDIX H

### Textual Analysis Guide – Extract “Parts” 2007

#### **Determine the physical characteristics of the women portrayed in the ads**

##### **Concept: Beauty and self-empowerment**

1. What is the leading lady's skin color? Fair-skinned
2. What is her body built? Voluptuous
3. How old is she? Early 30's
4. What kind of clothes is she wearing? White backless dress
5. Which particular parts of her body are shown? Back, shoulders, legs, arms, underarm, face, neck, elbows, knees
6. What is her hairstyle? Short curly brown hair
7. What is her job? Actress
8. To which social class does she belong? Upper middle class
9. Setting: well-lighted room

#### **Determine the emotional characteristics of the women portrayed in the ads**

##### **Concept: Happiness cause by consumption**

1. What non-verbal cues is she expressing? Happy, smiling, confident
2. What are her verbal expressions? Akala niyo hindi ko kerì to?
3. What are her physical movements in particular? Exposing her body parts that are said in the ad

#### **Determine how men and other characters regard these women in the ads**

##### **Concept: Search for love and happiness**

1. What non-verbal cues are they expressing as they see the leading lady?
2. What are their verbal expressions?
3. How do they respond physically to the leading lady?

#### **Messages**

**Background music/song:** bg music playing

##### **Transcription**

Juday: Ang maputi, dapat pati siko hanggang tuhod, batok hanggang katawan, pati mukha hanggang underarm. Kung nagpapaputi ang papaya, ano pa kaya pag may calamansing kasama? Mag-Extract Whitening System. May pinagsamang galing ng papaya at calamansi with CitruWhite. Maputi mula siko hanggang tuhod, pati underarm at mukha, kitang-kita ang iyong kaputian. Akala niyo hindi ko kerì to? Para sa puting pantay, Extract Whitening System.

**Tagline** – Para sa puting pantay, Extract Whitening System.

##### **Overt Messages**

- What is its advertising message? – If you aim to be fair all over, use Extract Whitening system.
- What was the advertising strategy used? Promising the benefits of overall fairness
- What is its selling tactic? Soft sell
- What is the brand personality? Complete, efficient

## APPENDIX I

### Textual Analysis Guide – Belo Essentials Reveal TVC 2007

#### **Determine the physical characteristics of the women portrayed in the ads**

##### **Concept: Beauty and self-empowerment**

1. What is the leading lady's skin color? All fair-skinned
2. What is her body built? Lucy: slim Regine and Zsazsa: voluptuous
3. How old is she? Lucy: Early 30's Regine: Late 30's Zsazsa: Early 40's
4. What kind of clothes is she wearing? Long white Grecian dresses
5. Which particular parts of her body are shown? Back, shoulders, legs, arms
6. What is her hairstyle? Long wavy hairstyles
7. What is her job? Actresses
8. To which social class does she belong? Upper middle class
9. Setting: Room, night

#### **Determine the emotional characteristics of the women portrayed in the ads**

##### **Concept: Happiness cause by consumption**

1. What non-verbal cues is she expressing? Happy, content, confident
2. What are her verbal expressions?
3. What are her physical movements in particular? Touching their arms, chest and face, flaunting their star white skin

#### **Determine how men and other characters regard these women in the ads**

##### **Concept: Search for love and happiness**

1. What non-verbal cues are they expressing as they see the leading lady?
2. What are their verbal expressions?
3. How do they respond physically to the leading lady?

#### **Messages**

With background music

##### **Transcription**

Only one name touches our skin. Now, one name gets you closer to star white skin. Belo Essentials. Its signature Dermlight skin system controls darkening deep within the skin and prevents dark pigments from moving up to reveal smoother, more radiant star white skin. Only Belo touches our skin, who touches yours?

**Tagline** – Only Belo knows star white skin.

##### **Overt Messages**

- What is its advertising message? If you long for star white skin like what these 3 ladies have, you should buy Belo Essentials products
- What was the advertising strategy used? Promising the benefits of star white skin
- What is its selling tactic? Soft sell
- What is the brand personality? Classy, elegant, refined, exclusive, high-profile, full of luster, shine and fame

## APPENDIX J

### Textual Analysis Guide – Belo Essentials Regine TVC 2007

#### **Determine the physical characteristics of the women portrayed in the ads**

##### **Concept: Beauty and self-empowerment**

1. What is the leading lady's skin color? Fair-skinned
2. What is her body built? Voluptuous
3. How old is she? Late 30's
4. What kind of clothes is she wearing? Long white Grecian dress
5. Which particular parts of her body are shown? Back, shoulders, legs, arms
6. What is her hairstyle? Long black wavy hair
7. What is her job? Actress
8. To which social class does she belong? Upper middle class
9. Setting: Room, night

#### **Determine the emotional characteristics of the women portrayed in the ads**

##### **Concept: Happiness cause by consumption**

1. What non-verbal cues is she expressing? Content, confident
2. What are her verbal expressions? It can only be Belo Essentials for my skin. How about you?
3. What are her physical movements in particular? Touching her arms and neck

#### **Determine how men and other characters regard these women in the ads**

##### **Concept: Search for love and happiness**

1. What non-verbal cues are they expressing as they see the leading lady?
2. What are their verbal expressions?
3. How do they respond physically to the leading lady?

#### **Background music/song – background music**

#### **Messages**

##### **Transcription**

Regine: Only one name touches my skin.

Lady's voice: Belo Essentials. It controls darkening and stops dark pigments from moving up to reveal star white skin.

Regine: It can only be Belo Essentials for my skin. How about you?

**Tagline** – Only Belo knows star white skin

##### **Overt Messages**

- What is its advertising message? If you long for star white skin like what Regine Velasquez has, you should buy Belo Essentials products
- What was the advertising strategy used? Promising the benefits of star white skin
- What is its selling tactic? Soft sell
- What is the brand personality? Classy, elegant, refined, exclusive, high-profile, full of luster, shine and fame



## APPENDIX K

### Textual Analysis Guide – SkinWhite TVC 2007

#### **Determine the physical characteristics of the women portrayed in the ads**

##### **Concept: Beauty and self-empowerment**

1. What is the leading lady's skin color? Fair-skinned
2. What is her body built? Slim
3. How old is she? Early 20's / teenagers
4. What kind of clothes is she wearing? White dresses
5. Which particular parts of her body are shown? Neck, arms, legs
6. What is her hairstyle? Ponytail, medium-length, up-do
7. What is her job?
8. To which social class does she belong? Middle class
9. Setting: Well-lighted room

#### **Determine the emotional characteristics of the women portrayed in the ads**

##### **Concept: Happiness cause by consumption**

1. What non-verbal cues is she expressing? Happy, confident
2. What are her verbal expressions? We see real results. / I trust only one name. I trust only the no. 1 brand / Shouldn't you.
3. What are her physical movements in particular? Modeling, touching their necks, shoulders and arms, flaunting their white skin

#### **Determine how men and other characters regard these women in the ads**

##### **Concept: Search for love and happiness**

1. What non-verbal cues are they expressing as they see the leading lady?
2. What are their verbal expressions?
3. How do they respond physically to the leading lady?

#### **Background music/song: bg music playing**

#### **Messages**

#### **Transcription**

**VO:** Why is Skinwhite the no.1 in whitening? Because it's been proven effective. It really works. Girl 1: We see real results.

**VO:** You're whitest white ever.

Girl 2: So when it comes to whitening

Girl 3: I trust only one name. I trust only the no. 1 brand

**VO:** Only Skinwhite. Millions of women trust Skinwhite through the years

Girl 1: Shouldn't you.

#### **Overt Messages**

- What is its advertising message? Use Skinwhite because everyone else is using it because it has been proven effective
- What was the advertising strategy used? Promising the benefits of the no.1 brand
- What is its selling tactic? Hard sell
- What is the brand personality? Leading, popular, effective

## APPENDIX L

### Textual Analysis Guide – Silka Sunshine 2008

#### **Determine the physical characteristics of the women portrayed in the ads**

##### **Concept: Beauty and self-empowerment**

1. What is the leading lady's skin color? Fair-skinned
2. What is her body built? Slim
3. How old is she? Early 20's
4. What kind of clothes is she wearing? White flowing dress
5. Which particular parts of her body are shown? Legs, shoulders
6. What is her hairstyle? Long wavy hair
7. To which social class does she belong? Middle class
8. Setting: Park, day

#### **Determine the emotional characteristics of the women portrayed in the ads**

##### **Concept: Happiness cause by consumption**

1. What non-verbal cues is she expressing? Happy, smiling, confident
2. What are her verbal expressions?
3. What are her physical movements in particular? Walking in the park

#### **Determine how men and other characters regard these women in the ads**

##### **Concept: Search for love and happiness**

1. What non-verbal cues are they expressing as they see the leading lady? Admire
2. What are their verbal expressions?
3. How do they respond physically to the leading lady? Turn their heads upon seeing Iya and expressing words of admiration

#### **Background music/song**

Song: lady singing: Di mapigilan ang iyong ningning. Palaging may napapatingin. Kutis na kay sarap haplus-haplusin, alagang Silka skin.

Guy singing: Kaputiang takaw-tingin

Girl singing: alagang Silka skin

Guy singing: Kinis na takaw-pansin

Girl singing: alagang Silka skin

Girl and guy singing: Kutis na takaw-tingin.

**Tagline** – Alagang papaya, alagang Silka.

#### **Overt Messages**

- What is its advertising message? If you want to be noticed everywhere you go, be a head turner every time you go out, use Silka.
- What was the advertising strategy used? Promising the benefits of beautiful fair skin
- What is its selling tactic? Soft sell
- What is the brand personality? Superb, desirable, enviable

## APPENDIX M

### Textual Analysis Guide – Belo Essentials Bea 2009

#### **Determine the physical characteristics of the women portrayed in the ads**

##### **Concept: Beauty and self-empowerment**

1. What is the leading lady's skin color? Fair-skinned
2. What is her body built? Voluptuous
3. How old is she? Early 20's
4. What kind of clothes is she wearing? Long white flowing dress
5. Which particular parts of her body are shown? Back, face, arms, legs,
6. What is her hairstyle? Long black wavy hair
7. What is her job? Actress
8. To which social class does she belong? Upper Middle class
9. Setting: galaxy, night

#### **Determine the emotional characteristics of the women portrayed in the ads**

##### **Concept: Happiness cause by consumption**

1. What non-verbal cues is she expressing? Confident with her skin and flaunting it, happy
2. What are her verbal expressions? Only Belo touches my skin
3. What are her physical movements in particular? Kind of swimming in the water and later emerging from it, sitting somewhere in a galaxy

#### **Determine how men and other characters regard these women in the ads**

##### **Concept: Search for love and happiness**

1. What non-verbal cues are they expressing as they see the leading lady?
2. What are their verbal expressions?
3. How do they respond physically to the leading lady?

#### **Messages**

##### **Transcription**

Girl: Why does the star shine the brightest? It's because of her star-white skin. Introducing Belo Essentials soap and lotion. Now improved with Glutathione that whitens and skin vitamins that moisturize.

Bea: Only Belo touches my skin.

**Tagline** – Only Belo knows star-white skin.

##### **Overt Messages**

- What is its advertising message? If you want star white skin like Bea Alonzo and shine like a goddess, buy Belo Essentials products
- What was the advertising strategy used? Promising the benefits of star white skin
- What is its selling tactic? Soft sell
- What is the brand personality? Classy, high-profile, full of luster and shine

## APPENDIX N

### Textual Analysis Guide – SkinWhite TVC 09

#### **Determine the physical characteristics of the women portrayed in the ads**

##### **Concept: Beauty and self-empowerment**

1. What is the leading lady's skin color? Fair-skinned
2. What is her body built? Slim
3. How old is she? Early 20's / teenager
4. What kind of clothes is she wearing? Casual dresses and skirts
5. Which particular parts of her body are shown? Arms, legs, shoulders, face
6. What is her hairstyle? Up-do, long wavy hair, ponytail
7. What is her job?
8. To which social class does she belong? Middle class
9. Setting: Outdoor, day

#### **Determine the emotional characteristics of the women portrayed in the ads**

##### **Concept: Happiness cause by consumption**

1. What non-verbal cues is she expressing? Happy, confident, smiling
2. What are her verbal expressions? John Lloyd?
3. What are her physical movements in particular? Walking on the streets at daytime, crossing the street, touching her arms, legs, shoulders as if playing

#### **Determine how men and other characters regard these women in the ads**

##### **Concept: Search for love and happiness**

1. What non-verbal cues are they expressing as they see the leading lady? Awed by the lady, stares, happy, smiling, excited
2. What are their verbal expressions?
3. How do they respond physically to the leading lady? Approaches the girl and introduces himself

#### **Messages**

##### **Transcription**

Lady's voice: Unleash your power to wow with Skinwhite Power Whitening lotion with Powerwhitening technology that helps reveal your whitest white in as fast as 7 days and lets you whiten continuously.

John Lloyd: Hi, I'm

Girl: John Lloyd?

**Tagline** – The power to wow.

##### **Overt Messages**

- What is its advertising message? To be beautiful and have the power to wow a heartthrob, use Skin White.
- What was the advertising strategy used? Promising the benefits of flawless white skin
- What is its selling tactic? Hard sell
- What is the brand personality? Powerful, useful and effective

## APPENDIX O

### Textual Analysis Guide – SkinWhite Classic TVC 2010

#### **Determine the physical characteristics of the women portrayed in the ads**

##### **Concept: Beauty and self-empowerment**

1. What is the leading lady's skin color? Fair-skinned
2. What is her body built? Slim
3. How old is she? Early 20's
4. What kind of clothes is she wearing? Off-shoulder top and shorts
5. Which particular parts of her body are shown? Back, shoulders, legs, arms
6. What is her hairstyle? Ponytail
7. What is her job?
8. To which social class does she belong? Middle class
9. Setting: Park, day

#### **Determine the emotional characteristics of the women portrayed in the ads**

##### **Concept: Happiness cause by consumption**

1. What non-verbal cues is she expressing? Happy, enjoying taking pictures
2. What are her verbal expressions?
3. What are her physical movements in particular? Walking around the park taking pictures, applying lotion to her body

#### **Determine how men and other characters regard these women in the ads**

##### **Concept: Search for love and happiness**

1. What non-verbal cues are they expressing as they see the leading lady? Shy to be seen taking pictures of the girl, obviously has a crush on her
2. What are their verbal expressions?
3. How do they respond physically to the leading lady? Takes pictures of the lady smiling, looks away when noticed by the girl

#### **Messages**

##### **Transcription**

Girl: Hey, Gelo!

-song-

Lady's voice: Skinwhite classic lotion. Get whiter and whiter with the no.1 whitening brand.

Girl: Gelo, may kulang.

**Tagline** – The power to wow.

##### **Overt Messages**

- What is its advertising message? To be free and confident and get noticed by handsome men, use Skinwhite lotion.
- What is its selling tactic? Soft sell
- What is the brand personality? Simple, confident, competent

## APPENDIX P

### Textual Analysis Guide – Block & White Intensive Whitening Lotions 2010

#### **Determine the physical characteristics of the women portrayed in the ads**

##### **Concept: Beauty and self-empowerment**

1. What is the leading lady's skin color? Fair-skinned
2. What is her body built? Slim
3. How old is she? Early 20's
4. What kind of clothes is she wearing? Casual dresses
5. Which particular parts of her body are shown? Back, arms, shoulders, face, legs
6. What is her hairstyle? Ponytail, long wavy hair
7. What is her job?
8. To which social class does she belong? Middle class
9. Setting: Room - day and night                      Outdoors, day

#### **Determine the emotional characteristics of the women portrayed in the ads**

##### **Concept: Happiness cause by consumption**

1. What non-verbal cues is she expressing? Happy, confident, enjoying
2. What are her verbal expressions?
3. What are her physical movements in particular? Walking on the streets on a sunny morning

#### **Determine how men and other characters regard these women in the ads**

##### **Concept: Search for love and happiness**

1. What non-verbal cues are they expressing as they see the leading lady? Smiling
2. What are their verbal expressions?
3. How do they respond physically to the leading lady? Turning their heads and smiling as the lady/ies pass by

#### **Background music/song: bg music playing**

#### **Messages**

##### **Transcription**

Lady's voice: Whitening is not complete without sun protection during the day and skin renewal at night. New Block and White Intensive Whitening Lotions, whitens as early as 5 days. Day SPF 28 protects skin as it whitens. Night, repairs and renews as you sleep. Get the complete whitening experience with Block & White Intensive Whitening Lotions.

**Tagline** – Step into the light.

##### **Overt Messages**

- What is its advertising message? If you want the complete whitening experience that other brands do not offer, buy Block & White intensive whitening lotions.
- What is its selling tactic? Ideal females
- What is the brand personality? Complete, extensive, convenient

## APPENDIX Q

### Textual Analysis Guide – Belo Essentials Belofied! 2011

#### **Determine the physical characteristics of the women portrayed in the ads**

##### **Concept: Beauty and self-empowerment**

1. What is the leading lady's skin color? Fair-skinned
2. What is her body built? Slim
3. How old is she? Early 20's
4. What kind of clothes is she wearing? Long gown
5. Which particular parts of her body are shown? None
6. What is her hairstyle? Long black wavy hair
7. What is her job? Singer
8. To which social class does she belong? Upper middle class
9. Setting: studio

#### **Determine the emotional characteristics of the women portrayed in the ads**

##### **Concept: Happiness cause by consumption**

1. What non-verbal cues is she expressing? Confidence in speaking, modeling
2. What are her verbal expressions? It's time to get Belofied.
3. What are her physical movements in particular? Modeling as if in a runway

#### **Determine how men and other characters regard these women in the ads**

##### **Concept: Search for love and happiness**

1. What non-verbal cues are they expressing as they see the leading lady?
2. What are their verbal expressions?
3. How do they respond physically to the leading lady?

#### **Messages**

##### **Transcription**

Sarah: It's time to get Belofied.

Angeline: From dreamer to dream girl

Akiko: From so-so to oh so awesome

Sarah: Buy Belo Essentials products and a chance to win a beauty makeover. Log on to facebook and get Belofied.

**Tagline** – It's time to get Belofied.

##### **Overt Messages**

- What is its advertising message? If you want to win a 150, 000 pesos worth of beauty makeover, buy Belo Essentials products
- What is its selling tactic? Soft sell
- What is the brand personality? Classy, competitive, assertive

**APPENDIX R**

Videos of the Fifteen Whitening Lotion Commercials Used in This Study