

The representation of young women aged 16-30 in makeup advertisements:

Make up is a big part of many women's lives, and nowadays girls are becoming consumers of this product a lot younger. Advertisements for makeup brands are done in many different ways, such as TV commercials, print ads, youtube videos/tutorials/sponsoring famous youtube beauty guru's, social media accounts. I feel as though everywhere I look I see another commercial for some sort of makeup. This advertising is crucial in order to get women to purchase the product thinking that it is best compared to every other brand.

Therefore the representation of women is constantly changing throughout ads in order to try get more consumers. **But if there is one thing in common throughout all these ads it's that the women shown appear to be so perfect and beautiful leaving some unattainable goals for women to try reach.** ①

I have decided to look at the advertisements by the brand Benefit, as after seeing some of their ads I've become interested in their unique way of advertising and how the women are being represented within them.

These commercials for Benefit's 'fine one-one blush/lip product and 'Hello Flawless' foundation represent women in an unrealistic manner. In many advertisements that are targeted at young women emphasize the aesthetic of looking 'perfect' as society has created a world where beauty and size means everything, regardless of what you might be doing at the time. There are mixed messages being communicated: on the one hand girls are encouraged to challenge stereotypes but all the while remember the importance of wearing make up and making sure they look good.

Benefit have a range of commercials on their Youtube channel but this one is interesting as despite being a make up ad, the focus is not so much on the make up but more their bodies. It is about a cadet course that involves training for learning how to use the product. Within this advert the girls are doing 'army' drills for part of their training. In the first still I've chosen we see a few girls climbing up the net and through the commercial there are quite a few different physical activities that they do. I asked a few friends about this particular still and they all agreed on the fact that it didn't appear to be a makeup commercial but a workout/exercise commercial. **Considering that this is a make up advertisement it gives off the impression that if you are going to war this product then you also need to workout and have a 'nice body.'** ② ③

The choice of costume for the actresses extenuates their bodies. The shorts are black, tight fitting and high-waisted, this makes the women's legs look longer and thinner than they already are. ②

Followed by the button up shirt with this being tucked into the shorts it emphasizes the small size of the women's waist the buttons are done up just after the breasts revealing the whole chest. The young women chosen to be in this commercial all appear to be pretty small despite their heights. By presenting them in this manner its almost trying to show that this is the only type of body that you can have. This advert has used the 'cadet army style' associated with physical fitness yet it is used to sell makeup instead.

This is another video commercial – this time for Benefit's primer named Poreprofessional. In this advertisement (which has been created with Marvel) we see a female protagonist (not the usual gender choice) portrayed as a superhero. This is quite a different representation as

nowadays young women are quite undermined and not necessarily seen as 'hero's because they are too caught up in having to look beautiful.

The superhero we see in this advertisement in the second still is characterised in the typical wonder women way. She is dressed in a tight fitting strapless leotard that clearly focuses on the curves of her body (in reality what women would save the world wearing that?) and she is crouching/standing in an effortless position driving the jet ski. **This is a stark contrast compared to the other female we see, she is merely a character in this advert and is only seen in this part. Viewers see her wearing fairly conservative clothing and clasping a book over her chest. Unlike the superhot this women appears to be struggling while sitting down. This example here shows how the stereotype of female superhero's is developed especially when compared to another 'normal' woman.** ④

These texts, even though supposedly representing a female superheroes and undertaking tasks usually the domain of males could be argued contributing to the undermining of women. In the workforce in the U.S 'women continue to earn 77 cents for every dollar that men earn'. The messages these texts send out is that regardless of what you are doing, you still need to look good (by wearing Benefit makeup) while doing it. So by constantly dressing women who save the world in skimpy outfits our generation are being taught that this is the only way to be a superhero especially under the influence of men. Yet superheroes don't have to be someone who's save the day or world. The description of hero is 'a person, typically a man, who is admired for their courage, outstanding achievements, or noble qualities.' Typically a man. Why is it that only men can be courageous or achieve outstanding things? Even though the word heroine exist for women, as a society we never hear it being said. Women are equally as courageous and achieve as outstandingly as men it's just not noticed as much because according to the stereotype women are too concerned about their beauty and appearance to be good leaders, exactly the stereotype used in these and other advertisements.

The implications of undermining women through stereotypes such as the typical female superhero really makes it difficult for intelligent young women and leaders to succeed in their work fields as many men can't take them seriously and expect these women to be the stereotypes. An article produced by a European correspondent Nicholas Bray proved this by saying 'women leaders are trapped in an identity conflict rate by stereotypes about how they should behave.' As a result of this women merely make up the senior officer positions in companies (in 2012 only 18.1% of these jobs were taken by women), this tiny number is just making the situation go around in circles. There are plenty of capable women in this world to take those positions but the stereotypes is what's holding employers back, yet if these women were employed then these misconceptions would be partially broken eventually allowing more respect for young women. This undermining of women also affects young girls where these stereotypes are drilled into their minds, instantly putting them off entering a particular work field. If the younger generation are being put off something they're interested in because of how men are going to view them, then the small numbers of women in these jobs will remain the same and men will never see that these stereotypes for example 'superheroes' are purely formed from the media and there are women who can undeniably go by the description of courageous and having outstanding achievements along with many noble qualities.