

Objectification and Portrayals of Minority Races in Advertisements

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Introduction

If we are asked this question "How many advertisements have you seen yesterday?" it will be very difficult to answer since we see them every day. And we see advertisements everywhere we go. Now all of us know what the brand logos of "Nike", or "Coca-Cola" look like. This is the result of the advertising strategies of mass media. Whether you like it or not, almost all of us are exposed to certain form of advertisements.

In the capitalist world, people have been trying hard to spread their ideas or information about their products via advertisements. To do so, advertisers have to research what is attractive for the target market to sell their products, or what is acceptable for them. The sociologist Roland Barthes wrote that "in advertising the signification of the image is undoubtedly intentional." (Barthes 1998 p.70) Advertisements, therefore, must include certain meanings in which are shared by the people in specific countries where the products are advertised.

But, to what extent do we trust advertisements? According to the survey conducted by the marketing company Nielsen, people around the world still trust in advertisements: 62% for TV commercial, 61% for Newspaper, and 60% for Magazine advertisements. (Nielsen 2013) Some people say that traditional advertising such as TV

commercial and print advertisements are obsolete in today's dominance of internet media. However, compared to 48% for online video ads and Ads served in search engine, it shows that traditional advertisements are more credible than online advertisements. Traditional advertisements are still the mainstream way of advertising.

This survey also showed that many of us are still influenced by these advertisements. And the omnipresence of advertisements has a certain influence on us. For example, some young teen girls became anorexic because they were over-exposed with the image of "beautiful thin girls". It can be said, however, that this influence is not exclusive to advertisements: other media use the same representation in their contents. What we can say in advertising is that this representation of thin girl has been closely tied with our daily lives. It is obvious that many apparel companies use thin models in their advertisements. This put the pressure on girls who try hard to look like these models in order to wear the same clothes as they wear in the advertisements. These girls' notion of beauty has been changed because of the false-representation of thin models. Advertisements can create not only our image of their products but also our cultural perspectives toward our society.

In terms of social perspective, advertisements work in both creating our way of seeing the world, and reflecting our perspective on certain social matters. It is for this reason I wish to discuss race in connection with advertising. The role of race is vital to the advertising strategy, and advertising effects the way we perceive race representations. In his article "Marketing Blackness", David Crockett examined US advertisements to show the representation of blackness as the form of signs. (Crockett 2008) There must be something in blackness which signifies some cultural and social

message to promote the products. The racial representation in advertising has become a sign or an image which reflects the cultural norm.

This use of racial minorities is actually happening everywhere around the world. For example, in August 2013, there was an argument about the racial advertisement used in Thailand. The Thai division of the American Donut Company "*Dunkin' Donuts*" used the advertisements to promote "*Charcoal Donuts*", which is chocolate-coated donut. This advertisement displays a young woman wearing pink lipstick and complete blackface makeup. In the U.S., it caused outcry against this advertisement as displaying racist stereotype. In Thailand, however, this advertisement is considered as successful: since the advertisement launched, the profit has increased 50%. (Time.com 31/8/2013) What we can learn from here is that advertisements create, and reflect what we feel toward certain minority races. The representation of certain race in advertisements has some meaning embedded in each cultural norm. By analysing advertisements, we can learn what the minority race means to each country.

In this thesis, I will examine the representation of minority races in Advertising. Specifically I will look into how the minority races portrayed in Japanese and American advertisements. Then I will focus on to what extent we consume advertisements as stereotypical and propagandist reflections of racial minorities.

In the first chapter, by using Roland Barthes' theory of mythology and reading the meaning in images, I am going to examine both American and Japanese advertisements. I would like to show how the advertisements of both countries have been portraying racial minorities in certain context. The second chapter, by applying the objectification theory to my examples, I am going to analyse how minority races are treated and

consumed in advertisements. By analysing these intentionally-created images, I intend to figure out some negative and positive aspects of these racial representations.

Chapter1 - Advertisements and Roland Barthes' Theory of Mythology

Part1 - Roland Barthes' Theory of Mythology

Roland Barthes has a huge influence on the field of semiology. Semiology originated from Ferdinand de Saussure who studied the relation between the language we use to determine the objects, and the meaning and concept which are given to the objects. He called the language "signifier", and the meaning or concept "signified". When both signifier and signified are arbitrarily connected to each other, signification occurs. And it creates the "sign". For example, if we see the "delete" button on your laptop, you are seeing the order of words "d" "e" "l" "e" "t" "e". This is the signifier. Then what we actually perceive from this is not just a random order of letters. The word "delete" has a signified meaning of removing the mistyped letters. Ultimately, "delete" has a certain meaning for us as a sign. This signification makes it possible for us to convey messages or meanings via all objects.

Influenced by Saussure, Barthes reinterpreted the relation of signified and signifier. According to Barthes, semiology is trying to decipher the meaning (signified) embedded into certain object (signifier) whose meaning has already been established. Where the linguistic view of signification is different in Barthes' semiology is that it has broadened from one-to-one relationship of objects and meanings to one-to-many relationship. He wrote that "they are not content with meeting the facts: they define and explore them as tokens for something else." (Barthes 1972 p.110) His theory of

signification shows that something is contributing to making the non-arbitrary perceptual meaning and concepts in certain images of photographs and paintings. Barthes developed this theory of signification into what he calls the study of "mythology".

Mythology can be defined as the signification beyond the Saussurian theory of signification. Once the pure signifier attached signified meaning, it becomes the sign. Then, in the process of mystification, this sign per se becomes the signifier, and the new signified attached to it as a signified. This signification makes myth. He wrote that "myth can develop its second-order schema from any meaning and start from the very lack of meaning." (Barthes 1972 p.131) In making myth, there is no need to put something directly relative to the first level of sign.

What Barthes called "myth" here is culturally and historically constructed sign. Therefore the signified of myth is not arbitrarily constructed. As he wrote, "myth is a type of speech chosen by history: it cannot possibly evolve from nature of things." (Barthes 1972 p.108) Myth is separated from the original sign, and it involves the intentional artificial meaning being attached to the original sign.

He used the front page of the magazine "Paris Match" in which a black French boy wearing a uniform is saluting. To use this example, the pure sign is a black boy wearing French uniform is saluting. When this sign is mystified, the new signified is attached: the French uniform and the act of saluting signify French imperialism, and the representation of the black boy signifies the diversity and acceptance of race in France.

In this example, there is nothing relevant to French imperialism and racial diversity when we see each element individually. When we read the picture in that way, distortion and motivation affect our perception toward the image. He wrote that "the manifest meaning is distorted by the concept" (Barthes 1972 p.121), and "there is no myth without motivated form." (Barthes 1972 p.125) Our history and experiences distort the original meaning, and rewrite a new meaning on it. All intentionally-constructed images we see in advertisements or in magazine are distorted to signify meta-linguistic meanings. In that sense, we also read a myth naturally and unconsciously because the mythical signified is distorted by our history and culture. It motivates us to read images in a certain way as if there were some messages conveyed to us. Thus it can be said that myth is a combination of the selection of the images which can have certain mythical signified, and the juxtaposition of these images.

Barthes used a methodology in order to decipher the myth in images, especially in advertisements. In "Rhetoric of the Image", he suggested that there are three messages which are embedded in the images: Linguistic, Coded iconic, and Non-coded iconic messages. The first message is the "Linguistic Message". It is, literally, the verbal sign which is written in our languages. In the advertisement, it is used as a slogan, as a brand logo, or as a caption. Because it is written in our language, we can easily understand what the advertisement is saying. We only need to have knowledge of the language, and it is considered to be a primary message. In addition, however, the linguistic message itself can be a signified: the caption or the word can mean something other than literal messages. Therefore, linguistic messages can contain both denotative and connotative messages.

The second message is the "Coded Iconic Message". In other words, it is the message which is embedded in the images. After looking at "linguistic message", it appears as the set of images in advertisement, such as products themselves, celebrities, or something related to their products. Because an advertisement is usually created full of images, it is natural to include more meanings than what the image itself has. It happens under the procedure of mystification: the already-constituted sign of the image becomes the signifier in which another message is signified. Thus these images are made from our cultural experiences. We need to have cultural experiences to decipher the embedded meanings of the images. And these meanings are connotative.

The final message is the "Non-coded Iconic Message". It is the message which we can perceive from pure images. This message is seen as the traditional Saussurian way of signification. It is what we see in the advertisement as a pure image without cultural experiences. Barthes wrote that "in order to 'read' this last (or first) level of the image, all that is needed is the knowledge bound up with our perception." (Barthes 1998 p.72) He also wrote that "this message corresponds, as it were, to the letter of the image and we can agree to call it the literal message." (Barthes 1998 p.72) When three messages combined together, we can decipher what meaning is embedded in the fully-intentional image of advertisements.

What I am going to do from the next part is to decipher the myth in advertising. Specifically I am going to look at racial representation in advertising. As I showed above, myth is the sign which is distorted intentionally by our history and cultural experiences. Barthes wrote that "there is no need of an unconscious in order to explain myth." (Barthes 1972 p.120) Every intentional image has a certain myth to be read.

Intentional images, therefore, reflect what things really mean to us beyond the traditional meaning of signs.

In terms of intentional images, advertisements fit perfectly with a study of mythology. Advertisements distort the original sign by reflecting our history and cultural experiences. If we see the example of “Paris Match” as an advertisement to sell its magazine, this image must be attractive in targeting certain demographics. And in order to attract them, this magazine has to use intentional juxtaposition on its front cover as if this is very natural for them. What if the black boy would be replaced by a white guy? It would lose some part of its attractiveness because the boy signifies the racial diversity and equality of French society. When the magazine was published, black people was still one of minority races. This magazine used him as an iconic sign of racial diversity because he was the minority.

The racial representation actually has an influence in advertising strategy. These racial representations also reflect our perspective toward certain races. And therefore, each country has certain ways of representing these races. Let's see how the minority races are represented in American and Japanese advertisements.

Part 2 - Content-Analysis of American Advertisements

Since the foundation of America, one of the most crucial matters is the acceptance and unity of minority races in American society. This matter is mainly between white and black people. Black people challenged the dominant Caucasian society. During this social movement, the black race is used in advertisements in a way that suggests they are inferior to white people. Consequently, American society became accustomed to this

typology of the black race. Even now, the way American advertisers use black people in their advertising strategy is relevant to its history. As Crockett writes, "Advertisers use blackness representations to make claims about the presumed viewer that emphasize themes of similarity or difference."(Crockett p.261)

Example 1: This is an advertisement for Nivea's product for men. On the left, there is a picture, and in it, the black man is trying to throw the head which has messy hair and beard. Its caption says "Re-civilize yourself."



Example 1 : Nivea : Re-civilize yourself

What we can learn from this is the man's physical feature: he is trying to throw a head with messy beard. To decipher the coded-iconic meanings in it,

we can perceive it as his face before using Nivea's product. And the replacement of his head can be understood as refreshment or a rebirth. The caption also describes the notion of refreshment and rebirth. By combining the image of the man and the caption together, the image of refreshment is strengthened.

However, when it becomes the mystification beyond its signification, this advertisement has extra meanings in it. The messy head itself can mean "You will still look like him if you are uncivilized." The words "re-civilize yourself" can also signify that the man who used to be civilized, is civilized again by using its product. It is obvious that it reflects the historical bias against black people in America. From here,

we can decipher that the black race is something wild or native that has to be civilized in American society. In fact, the same advertisement which features a white man does not say anything that signifies "civilization". It means that there is a clear distinction in the way advertisers treat black and white races. Thus this advertisement contributes to creating a mythology of the stereotype of black people in America.

Here is another advertisement using black people in an inferior position to the major demographics.

Example 2: This is the commercial from the "Got milk?" campaign by the Milk Processor Education Program (MilkPEP). With the sound of a cowbell, the battle between Milk and Omelette has begun. The black woman pours milk in one travel mug, and puts an omelette into the other mug. She tried hard, as if mentally crazed, to pack omelette into the mug. After packing them, the voice said "Winner, milk has protein." And the caption says: "8oz MILK = 8g PROTEIN."



Example 2: MilkPEP "Milk vs Omelet" 2013

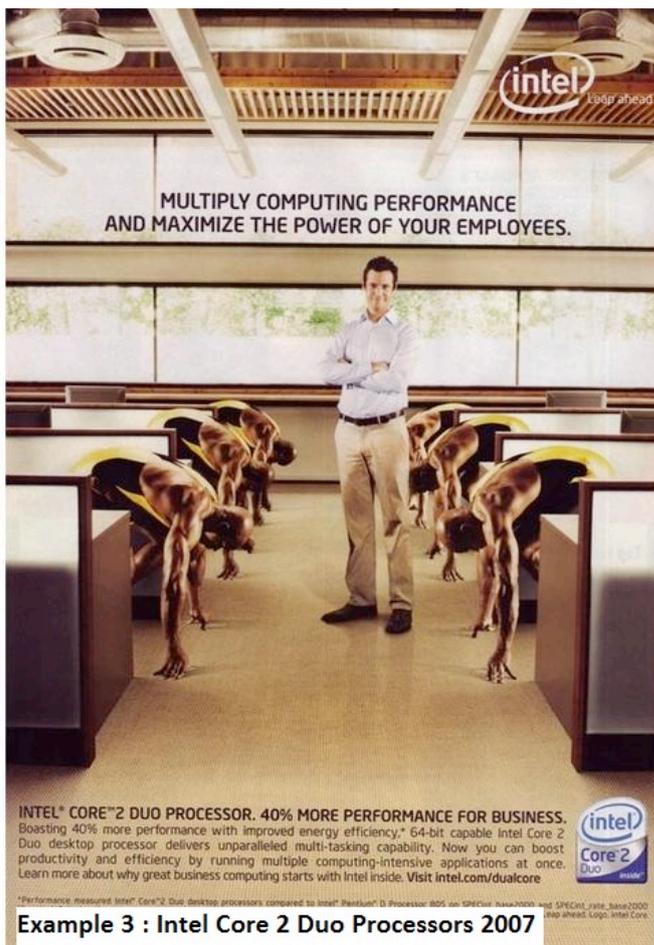
If we understand this literally, what this advertisement is trying to tell us is that milk is healthier and has more protein than omelette. In order to do so, the

black middle-aged woman is trying to pack omelette into the mug. This advertisement intends to compare milk and omelette in the same amount. However, to look into the mystified meaning, the way it treats the black race is not the same as the white race. Since she is packing omelette in an unusual way, it gives us the impression that she is not smart or not logical. By making her look inferior to us, the stereotypical view toward blackness as uneducated has been adopted. Crockett writes that "essentialized

notions of blackness explicitly or implicitly privilege black masculinity while problematizing black femininity." (Crockett p.256)

Advertisements focus not only on the history of dominant whites, but also on the physical features of black people.

Example3: This is an advertisement for Intel's CPU "CORE 2 DUO PROCESSOR". Its caption says "Multiply Computing Performance and Maximizing the Power of Your Employees." There is a white man standing in the centre, and some black men, all of them looking like athletes. They seem to be ready to start sprinting.



The coded-iconic messages are easily read in this advertisement. Considering the juxtaposition of white man and black men, it can be deciphered that the black race is still in a subordinate position to the white race. It is also seen in the example 1 and example 2 in terms of inferiority. In addition, muscular black men are signifying the speed of Intel's CPU. It is constructed under the

assumption that black people, especially men, are good at sports and have good physical features. This is the strategy that "emphasizes the viewer's differences from blackness and makes products claims that are heavily reliant on blackness." (Crockett p.255) Black men are seen as having an ideal muscular body, and it is different from what we

see in the advertisement using white men. This tendency is familiarly adopted in the advertisements of sports companies where black athletes are adopted. In this sense, this idealized myth of the black race is also constructed by its cultural norms.

Compared to black people, Asians are less likely to be in mainstream advertisements. But the use of Asian people is becoming a popular advertising strategy.

Example 4: This is a commercial for the beer company *Heineken*. A white man and an Asian girl are having date in the Asian-looking city. They have fun at the colourful exotic nightclub full of entertainment and music.



If seen literally, the man and the woman are having a nice date in the

Asian city. But what is coded here is that Asian ethnicity is something different to white ethnicity. This is the same as the portrayal of the black race. The advertisement is full of things which signify Asian-ness: Asian lady, Asian Band, Dragon show, Asian food, etc. Asians tend to be portrayed with something else to signify or support their Asian-ness. When everything is combined together, it creates mysteriously exotic atmosphere. The far cultural distance from Asian countries is reflected in the way of representing Asians. And this image in the advertisement is also created by the myth which the American audience has.

Advertisements with the racial representation actually have the mystified meaning in it. Because America is the white dominant society, they treat other races as something

different to them: historically-biased image of black race, black men's physical feature, and Asian as something exotic. These American advertisements actually reflect their stereotypical cultural norms into their advertisements. But this tendency of reflecting cultural norms is not exclusive to America advertisements. I will move on to Japanese advertisements which reflect different social and cultural norms.

Part 3 - Content-Analysis of Japanese Advertisements

The way Japanese advertising agency portray minority races has some differences from what we have seen in American advertisements. Considering the fact that Japan has been an East-Asian mono-culture, it seems unnatural to use minority races as an advertising strategy to make profit. However, they actually use these races in advertisements: “the ratio of advertisements which have foreign people and/or scenes, has increased from 19.0% (1993) to 21.8% (2003).”(Hagiwara 2004 p.14, my translation) Thus these representations of minority races must have a mythology which goes beyond just the meaning of racial representation. I will analyse this from some different perspectives: representations of white children, white males and females, and black males.

Firstly, I am going to analyse the representation of white children.

Example5: This is an advertisement for Kleenex tissues. It features a white girl with an apron in the centre. It is located in the bathroom, and there are some white bubbles on her face. The captions in it are the name of the product "Kleenex", and sentences "誰よりもやさしく拭いてあげる (I will wipe your face more gently than anybody does)" and "世界のティッシュ (Global Tissue)".



Example 5 : Kleenex: Kido

The iconic messages are the white girl with blue eyes, the bathroom, and the clean foam of soap on her face, the black apron, and the brush. When they are decoded, they can be

perceived as two main messages: cleanliness and purity. In that sense, this caption can not only signify the softness or kindness of its product, but also signify the purity by using the girl. We can understand that this sentence is said from the parent's point of view. In the meta-linguistic aspect, this sentence is said by the customers to the child who does not seem to know how to clean the bathroom. What signify cleanliness here is the act of cleaning and the image of the tissue to make something clean. And what signify purity here is the girl herself, the caption, and the strangely white bubbles, which ought to be dirtier since she is cleaning. This association of whiteness and white children is usually put together in Japanese advertisements. It creates the image of purity, or even angelic, in the white girl.

Example 6: This is a commercial for the *Meiji* vanilla ice cream "*Gran*". It is set in the lobby of the hotel or the cafe. The white girl is trying to eat a Japanese lady's ice cream. The voice says "This ice cream is for adults. You cannot appreciate its taste because you are young." Then the girl pretended to cry. The lady says, "Are you fake-crying?". The girl answers "Yes". Then the image of the product is featured. And finally, the girl manages to eat a spoonful of ice cream by approaching behind the lady.



Example 6 : Meiji Gran 2013

This commercial is also using the association of a white child and something which can signify white: ice cream and white clothes. And it

makes a clear distinction between children and adults. What we can see in this commercial is emphasizing the childish behaviour of the girl: she is trying to steal her ice cream. Clearly, there is no connection between the lady and the child. For people who have decent morality, it is not acceptable to steal someone's food. But there is no one to criticise the act of the child, and this commercial is even making it into a nice story. With the association of the white race and something white, what is happening is that it purifies and fantasises her childish behaviour.

Secondly, there are examples of advertisements with the representations of white men and women.



Example 7 : GU "Wear Freedom" 2013

Example 7: This is a commercial for GU, the Japanese apparel company. To the chorus part of the song "Think" by Aretha Franklin, young white people are walking down the street with faces full of smiles. While walking, they take off their clothes in order to change them into GU's clothes. At the last moment, the slogan "Wear Freedom" and the logo "GU" appear.

What the people in this advertisement are doing is just walking down the street and changing clothes randomly while smiling. The positive emotion actually can be seen in many advertisements with white people. If they were replaced by Japanese people walking down a Japanese street, what would it be like? It might seem to be weird to many people. With white people and a western city, it creates the full image of western culture and, consequently, it also creates the image of openness and freedom. One of the main reasons they use white people is that they makes the products more attractive. A study in 1983 reveals that when Japanese people compare two advertisements, one in which a white model is used and the other in which a Japanese model is used, they tend to think the advertisement with the white model as "cool", "attractive", and even "sophisticated". (Iwao 1989 p.4, my translation) Thus the whiteness representation per se has a strong influence on Japanese audiences. By using the white representation, what advertisers are doing is to create and reflect false-and-positive images of western society.

Example 8: This is a commercial for the fabric softener "Lavons Le Linge". There are the Japanese actress Erika Sawajiri and a white male model in the well cleaned bed with white sheets. She chants some phrases of a song and the white guy gazing into the screen says "Ju-nanzai" (literally, fabric softener in Japanese). The caption says its fragrance is really luxurious, and the voice announces the debut of this product.



Taken as it is, there is a man and a woman on a bed. The woman is singing a weird song. From certain perspective, it looks like the

scene from a movie. What is coded in this commercial is similar to example 1 and 2: the white race works in the association with whiteness. Since the man says only a word, his racial representation has strengthened the association. In addition, the positive images toward the white race in advertisements are used: "this product looks sophisticated and genuine". It creates a positive image of the fabric softener: "our sophisticated product makes your laundry soft and clean as in the commercial". Thus a white representation is also used to signify an imaginary or idealized western atmosphere.

Finally, here is the advertisement using a black representation.

Example 9: This is a commercial for Google. The black man is studying in Japan, and living with his Japanese roommate .He is not fluent in Japanese but he can speak a little. When he says "I'm hungry", he insists on going to have a very spicy curry by showing the voice-search result of Google. Then he says he wants to go to the sea, and his roommate introduces exciting activities to him. Finally, the logo and the caption appear. It says "Let's download Google's search engine app."



The coded message in this commercial is: "Google's app helps you to communicate with others" and "It catches your voice accurately

even if you are not fluent in Japanese." With the friendly way of talking, he seems to have a nice relationship with his roommate. This commercial treats him not only as a new person to Japan but also as a person who is trying to be part of Japanese society. In this sense, unlike the white representation which signifies an ideal western society, the

black representation is used to signify cultural diversity and social integration beyond racial differences.



For example, one of SoftBank Mobile's most popular commercial series (Example 10) depicts a black man as a "part of our society". He is a part of a weird family: the father is a white dog, he is the only son and the mother and the daughter are Japanese. He talks Japanese, behaves like a Japanese person, and is well accustomed to his weird Japanese family. At the first time, what can be

seen here is the appreciation of racial and cultural diversity. However, "while the representation of the white race is various in age and gender, the representation of the black race is usually associated with young male..."(Hagiwara p.18, my translation) It can be considered that the image that Japanese people have about black race as physically fit and friendly is used in the Japanese advertisements.

As I have analysed, Japanese advertisements are also using stereotypical images of certain races. Sometimes it is the notion of western society that is used to create positive images of the products. And sometimes it is the bodies of a certain race that are used to emphasise the differences from Japanese people.

Part 4 -Conclusion of Chapter 1

To sum up this analysis, when the images of minority races are in advertisements, they are usually associated with something which can signify or strengthen the stereotypical representation of the races. And the portrayal of these races is patterned in certain way, such as white children are associated with purity and an angelic image, and young black men with the image of friendliness. In other word, we create a mythology of certain races under the norm of our society.

It is actually easier for advertisers to create the advertisements with racial representations since all they have to do is to pick up the race which can fit into the image of their products. However, this also contains the potential danger of creating stereotypes of the minority racial role in the society. It not only creates biased image of these races, but also determine the way they behave as people of certain races. What we are going to do in the next chapter is to examine advertisements from the perspective of creating stereotypes and the objectified images of minority races.

Chapter2 - Advertisements and Objectification Theory

Part 1 - Objectification Theory

In the previous chapter, I analysed advertisements in order to show how Barthes's theory of mythology works in deciphering the meaning of intentional picture. The portrayal of minority races actually has meaning, and it is created by certain patterns applied to each race. Because advertisements are the products of intention and consciousness, it is natural to see minority races have stereotypical and problematic

representation in advertising. What I am going to do in this chapter is to show how the racial representation is recognised and consumed as a mere object.

Objectification theory originally has been developed in the field of gender studies. In terms of gender studies of the male-female relationship in our society, there has been a hierarchical difference: one dominates and another is subjectified. And men still tend to be in the dominant position, which means that women are still under male dominance. Consequently, women are sometimes seen as the means of satisfying men's sexual desire via the popular media. "When objectified, women are treated as bodies and, in particular, as bodies that exist for the use and pleasure of others." (Fredrickson & Roberts p.175) The representation of women in media is used and consumed as a mere object. Objectification theory, therefore, has mostly focused on the portrayal of women in media, where women are objectified, or even dehumanised, by the male dominant world.

According to Nussbaum, there are "seven ways to treat a person as a thing." (Nussbaum p.256) The seven notion of objectification is useful in analysing media contents. The seven notions are:

- 1. Instrumentality: The objectifier treats the object as a tool of his or her purposes.*
- 2. Denial of autonomy: The objectifier treats the object as lacking in autonomy and self-discrimination.*
- 3. Inertness: The objectifier treats the object as lacking in agency, and perhaps also in activity.*
- 4. Fungibility: The objectifier treats the object as interchangeable (a) with other objects of the same type, and/or (b) with objects of other types.*
- 5. Violability: The objectifier treats the object as lacking in boundary- integrity; as something that it is permissible to break up, smash, break into.*

6. *Ownership: The objectifier treats the object as something that is owned by another, can be bought or sold, etc.*

7. *Denial of subjectivity: The objectifier treats the objects as something whose experience and feelings (if any) need not be taken into account. (Nussbaum p.256)*

What is important here is that we treat things as objects which are not mere objects. She wrote that "objectification entails making into a thing, treating as a thing, something that is really not a thing." (Nussbaum p.257) Objectification theory reveals the morally problematic aspects of our society. For these scholars, it was the representation of female body and femininity that was made into, and treated as an object. What is happening in objectification is not only treating as an object, but also creating certain perceptions or stereotypes, or even cultural norms.

On one hand, the theory of objectification is used to analyse "the portrayal of women dehumanized as sexual objects, things, or commodities." (Nussbaum p.249) On the other, it is also possible to apply it in analysing racial representation in advertisements as dehumanised object. Actually, "for women of color, objectifying images are often infused with racial stereotypes." (Fredrickson and Roberts p.176) For example, "black women have a long history of being portrayed as animal-like, particularly in pornographic and sexual context." (Plous and Neptune p.631) The representation of black women tends to be associated with Wilderness: there are frequently animals or something that can be referred to animals.

Even though it is the sexuality that matters here, when it comes to male representations, the same things can be said in advertisements. Not sexuality but the racial representations we see in advertisements is also consumed as a mere object which

signifies and expresses full of stereotypes and biases. In other words, the difference of races can be a victim of objectification. What is actually happening here is that a minority race is objectified in order to express stereotypical racial representation. This is no longer a matter of gender; it is also a matter of racial difference. Objectification can happen without female portrayals. The difference of races can make advertisements more meaningful, and it provides the basic understanding of racial difference as a stereotypical representation. By looking into advertisements, we can understand what role the minority races play in media and our society. In the next part, I will analyse the nature of racial objectification in American and Japanese advertisements.

Part 2 -American Advertisements and Objectification of Minority Races

According to the content analysis conducted Plous and Dominique Neptune, the ratio of advertisements with African Americans increased significantly over time, growing from 8.3% in the 1980s to 11.8% in the 1990s. This indicates a little growth of black representation in American advertisements. However, even though the publicity of black representation has been growing, American advertisers still use these representations as something to be subjectified to the American society. "Most marketing media executives believe advertising has played a role in America's racial problems, that a majority of African Americans feel most advertisements "are designed only for white people." (Plous and Neptune p.637) It means that these minority races are still under the dominance of the white race. And races are consumed as an object to infer some meanings other than the racial representation itself. It can be said that American advertisements treat minority races as an object which arouse the desire to consume their products.

"Averaging over all 10 years, only 0.2% of advertisements in white women's magazines contained a black male, 1.0% of advertisements in white men's magazine contained a black female, 1.0% of advertisements in black women's magazines contained a white male." (Plous and Neptune p.634) It seems that the use of black representation is limited within the advertisements targeting black people. However, black representation is frequently used in the advertisements targeting other people of races. And it is used with certain advertising strategies.

First advertising strategy with black representation is that it is used to signify the inferior position against white people. In the example 1, black representation appears as "uncivilized" by using the phrase "Re-civilize yourself". He is trying to throw the Afro-haired head with beard as if it signifies that being into a white society makes you more civilized. The example 2 uses it as somehow unusual or even crazy by featuring the way how a black woman put omelette into a mug. Even in the example 3, the advertisement juxtaposed black people in a subordinate position compared to the white man in the centre. Every example portrays black people in order to emphasise the difference between white (main audiences) and black (the representation to be consumed by white). And black representation is treated as something to be merged into the white society.

In terms of Objectification theory, this advertising strategy can be applied as "denial of autonomy". Advertisers treat black people as an object which is lacking an autonomy and self-discrimination. In other words, black representation is under the norm of white society, and the way they are portrayed is determined exclusively by advertiser's intention of selling products. The notion of the white society is imposed upon the black representation in the advertisements. And the portrayal of black representation has

become the reflection of stereotypes against black people. Black representation, therefore, is used as an object to signify their stereotypical views against black race.

Another advertising strategy with black representation is using only bodily features. As seen in example 3, what is featured in this advertisement is the body of black people with the association with sports, strength, and so on. The most important thing in this advertisement is the physical and muscular image of black people. "The mass market explicitly weave the product to idealized images of black male bodies that dramatize an essentialized blackness trait: hypermasculine bodies built for endurance and unwavering labor. (Crockett p.258) In other words, black representation is treated only to signify the idealised muscular image, and is associated with the products.

To use the notions of objectification, it can be applied with "instrumentality" and "denial of subjectivity". It denies black representation of being a person with racial identity or subjectivity. Black representation is also treated only instrumentally with advertisers' intention, and it is interchangeable. It is not necessary to treat them as a person with their own feeling and mind since it is the bodily feature that advertisers want to use. What is happening in this strategy is that black representation has been used as a mere object with muscular bodily figure.

Of course, there are some advertisements which are casting for equality. As Crockett wrote, "their blackness universally symbolizes the firm's adherence to broad social goals, like racial equality, which are attainable in the mass market." (Crockett p.252) Even though the black representation is used as a tool of racial equality, the treatment of the black representation is less racially objectified. However, there are still some

advertisements using their stereotypical images of black representation. And they use it as an object which can be fit with their images.

Since Asian is still a minority race in America, Asian representation in advertisements also has specific meanings. Like black representation, it is actually used in order to signify racial equality by using them in a group with other races. However, when it is used solely, it can signify other than racial diversity.

What is usually seen in advertisements with Asian representation is that it is portrayed to emphasise the Asian-ness of the products. In order to strengthen Asian-ness, there are usually some other things which can signify Asia. The racial representation itself has become one of the objects to be used as something Asian. And therefore, this representation is consumed only as a tool, not as a person with own subjectivity.

In addition to this, as in the example 4, it tends to be women when Asian representation is used in advertisements. And she is usually accompanied with a white man. Because Asian representation is used in order to signify Asian-ness, it is natural to believe that Asian women are portrayed to signify some kind of Exoticism of Asian countries. The example 4 can be seen as successful in creating some kind of mysteriousness and exoticism of Asian city. However, while Asian race is portrayed as a sign of Asian-ness, it seems that femininity is also under the objectification. In other words, Asian women in advertisements are treated as a property of white men. When Asian women are portrayed in advertisements, she usually has long, straight, and black hair. It is obvious that these images are created by their cultural norms. The representation of Asian woman is seen as objects which he owns and put his stereotypical image of Asian women.

It is "Instrumentality" that makes Asian representation into an object, or a sign of Asian-ness. And it is "Ownership" that objectifies Asian women as a property of white men. Combined them together, Asian representation is also objectified on the basis of the stereotypical view toward Asian race as somehow mysterious and different from American culture.

While many advertisements use racial representation in a neutral way, some American advertisements still use minority racial representations in their advertising strategies. And these strategies usually turn racial representations into objects with sign. Black representation is used in two ways: physical feature signifies hyper-athletic body and strength, their social position signifies inferiority to the white race in the society. Asian representation is used in order to reflect stereotypical notion about Asia as exotic and mysterious. In both cases, these minority races are objectified by majority race in order to make their products more attractive to them.

Part 3 - Japanese Advertisements and Objectification of Minority Races

While America has a wide range of racial demographics (white 79.96%, black 12.85%, Asian 4.43%), the population of Japan is dominated by Japanese (98.5%). (The World Factbook: Central Intelligence Agency) It indicates that Japanese advertisements are created exclusively for Japanese people since there is no need for targeting niche markets of minority races. In terms of racial representation, Japanese advertisements are like mirrors to show our way of seeing the world. Therefore the way of treating minority races in advertisements reflects our way of seeing them in our society. Sometimes when we see these representations, we tend to see them as more like an object rather than a person.

Even though its dominant demographic is Japanese, we see white representations frequently in many media. "Despite the fact that the appearances of foreigners have been increasing, when it comes to the foreign image, the Western image is still the mainstream in Japanese advertisements." (Hagiwara p.22, my translation) The familiarity of the white race creates a positive image of the white race. However, this is the result of a juxtaposition of Western elements: a European or American city, foreign languages, and white people. The image of the white race is the result of its association with Western-ness. In this aspect, it can be said that the way the white people look like and behave, is already determined. The white race has become a mere object to be consumed as a sign.

Especially, the physical features of white people tend to be used in advertisements. For example, the advertisement of Toshiba also uses whiteness, although they don't use white people at all.

Example 10: This commercial is for a home bakery, which bakes bread easily. It situated at the office, where there are two women. One is Japanese and another is Japanese in disguise pretending to be a white woman with blonde hair, a long nose. She is talkative and has an awkward Japanese accent.



Example 11: Toshiba Home Bakery "SuiPanDa"

The important thing for the advertiser is whether it includes some sense of Western-ness since it is advertising making bread. This

commercial uses the physical stereotypes of the white race. And these portrayals of physical feature are trying to signify Western-ness.

However, this way of using a white representation applies to “fungibility” in the notion of objectification, where people are treated as dispensable and changeable. A long nose, blonde hair, and an awkward accent, they can be changed even by Japanese themselves by putting on some devices. They classified the white representation into a huge group of having long noses, blonde hair, and so on. There is no need for certain people or a certain ethnicity of white because of its vague classification.

In analysing the representation of white children, it would be more difficult to apply, since children are already seen as objects owned by their parents. This is because children are not the agents of their subjectivity. It means that they don't yet have clear notion of self. They are not grown up enough to have their own subjectivity.

In terms of racial objectification, however, racial difference contributes to create more specified view toward white children in Japanese advertisements. As seen in example 5 (Kleenex) and 6 (Ice-cream), White children tend to be associated with something which signifies white. This is not just because they are white, but because they are "white and children". And the way these advertisements treat them is similar to the way we treat a nice little doll from some Western country. This happens partly because of the rarity of seeing white children in reality in Japan, and partly because we tend to see the white race as a sign of ideal Western culture. From the image of dolls, the representation of white children has become an object in imaginary and idealised Western world.

If this tendency is applied to the objectification theory, it includes the notion "Denial of autonomy". It means that these advertisements ignore what the ordinary children naturally do, and they put their stereotypical image to white children as pure or angelic. What is happening here is like changing the clothes of the doll: they can transform in a way advertisers want them to be. Thus white children in advertisements are also under the influence of racial objectification.

The way advertisements treat white children like dolls, is also seen in advertisements with the representation of white women. Even though the female body historically has been the victim of objectification, the difference of sex and race are combined together in Japanese advertisements. As seen in the example 3, white women in Japanese advertisements hardly speak to advertise the products. However, they use full of facial expressions. In 2004, 51.4% of advertisements in which use foreign people, is adopting smile (even fake smile) in their facial expression." And "21.5% of them express "positive emotion" such as fun and joy." (Hagiwara p.20, my translation)

White women are "denied their subjectivity" in the advertisement by using them like a doll. The only difference from the use of white children is that there is no association of parent-children relationship. And it works to strengthen the image of imaginary or unreal Western world by postulating the relativity to our lives.

When we look at the representation of white men, they are used in almost same way to signify Western-ness. However, there is something slightly different from the advertisements with white children and white women. While children and women tend to be used alone or in a group of the same race, white men are juxtaposed with Japanese women. As seen in example 8, the couple, a Japanese woman and a white man, is in the

bed, and the man speaks only a few words or does not speak at all. This is opposite to what is happening in American advertisements with Asian representations. In the American advertisements, there is a couple of white men and Asian couple, and its aim is to signify something exotic about Asian culture. And the man is leading the story, or having an initiative. In the Japanese advertisements, however, the Japanese woman is leading the story, and is in a superior position to the white man as if he were her property.

What we can assume from this advertisement is that the representation of the white man is objectified by showing they are owned by someone. And combined with the signification of white race as an idealised Western culture, it can signify that having a relationship with white men is something idealistic. In this sense, the representation of white men is also treated instrumentally: there is no need for a specific person, all that is needed is the fact that "he is white". Therefore the sign of the white race has become an instrument which is owned by Japanese women to signify ideal life with White boyfriend. In other words, the representation of white men is also under the objectification by treating it as something owned to express and strengthen the relationship between Japanese audience and the Western culture.

The white representation is consumed, and is treated as a tool or an object. Consequently they have become a mere signifier of Western culture as same as the western-style city or foreign languages. The white representations have become the object which satisfies the Japanese consumer with "stereotyped whiteness"

In terms of Objectification, there are two things that can be said about black representations. Firstly, black people are used to emphasise their physical features. The

representation of the black race, mainly young males, is exclusively used to signify only physical differences. This is the same as American advertisements. Japanese advertisements also use them as a tool of advertising hyper athletic features. And consequently, these advertisements are mostly created by sports companies. Black representation is used and consumed like an instrument with the purpose of advertisers.

Secondly, black representation is the sign of cultural diversity, cultural integration, and globalisation. This use of racial representation is also seen in American advertisements with black and Asian people. In Japanese advertisements, however, this idea is created almost exclusively with black young men. As seen in example 9, the black man, who is a roommate of the Japanese man, is trying to enjoy the life in Japan. He is also trying to communicate with his friend in Japanese. And in the advertising series of Softbank Mobile, the black man has become a part of a Japanese family. He has a Japanese mother, a sister, and a father who is a white dog, and he is a very fluent Japanese speaker.

What we can see from these advertisements is the process of social and cultural integration. These advertisements give us the impression that they are becoming "part of us", and that we should appreciate the cultural diversity. It might be a good advertising strategy to emphasise the globalised image in Japanese. However, the way they treat the black representation is far from signifying a globalised society. Instead of appreciating the difference between Japanese culture and black culture, Japanese advertisements are trying to make them a part of Japanese society. Using the objectification theory, it can be said to be a "denial of subjectivity": advertisers treat black representation as an object whose own experiences, feeling, or identity is nothing to do

with the aim of advertising strategy. The black representation is used just like an empty bottle to be filled with Japanese culture and society. And the problem is that these representations have become mere objects rather than people with their own identities.

In sum, black representation is used in two ways in Japanese advertisements. First way is to use their physical feature to signify muscular athletic body. And it is used in both American and Japanese advertisements. Second way, which is only seen Japanese advertisements, is to use them as a becoming part of Japanese society. In both ways, black representation is treated like an object which partly used instrumentally, and partly used by denying their subjectivity.

Japanese advertisers adopt the stereotypical notions, which have been created by the mythical signification, of minority races. On one hand, white representation tends to be used as a sign of ideal Western culture, and treated like a doll or object without their subjectivity. On the other hand, when it comes to black representation, they lose their own ethnicity or identity. Sometimes only their physical muscular feature is used, and sometimes they are forced to become a part of Japanese culture. Japanese advertisements, therefore, also use minority representations as objects rather than using them as who they are.

Part 4 - Conclusion of Chapter 2

This chapter is mainly about applying the seven notion of objectification to American and Japanese advertisements. In both cases, minority races are juxtaposed as if there were a clear distinction against the dominant races. And when advertisements use minority races, they tend to be used as an object more often than dominant races.

Each racial representation is usually treated as an object with full of stereotypes and advertisers' intentions toward these representations.

While these stereotypes are constructed by the advertisements, the advertisements are also created by our social and cultural norms. In other words, not only the advertisements but also the majority people can be the objectifier that makes minority representation into objects with certain stereotypes. We consume these racial representations in order to satisfy our stereotypical images of these races, and advertisers utilise them to satisfy consumers' needs. It is we as a majority races that consequently makes minority representations into a mere object.

-Overall Conclusion-

The minority representations are actually used in advertisements. And the way they are treated is based on stereotypes and biases which are created in the certain society and culture. These representations are, therefore, portrayed to fit with these stereotypical images. In addition, they are usually treated more like an object rather than a person with his subjectivity.

In Chapter 1, I analysed the way these minority races are used in American and Japanese advertisements. With Roland Barthes' study of mythology, it showed that the juxtaposition of every element in advertisements has some meaning beyond the traditional way of signification. The minority races per se signify some other meaning than representing themselves.

When American advertisements use black representation, it is mainly used in two ways: featuring its physical and muscular body, and signifying the subordinate position to white race. Asian representation is used in the association with other Asian elements. And when Asian woman is used, there is almost always a company with a white man.

In Japanese advertisements, white representation is used in order to signify the idealised Western culture. When children are used, it adds the meaning of purity and angelic images. Women are usually portrayed with positive emotions. However, she rarely talks, just like a doll. Men are usually accompanied with Japanese women. When black representation is used, firstly, the same thing as American advertisements can be said: they are using physical features. Secondly, it is portrayed as something which is becoming a part of Japanese society.

Then, what I did in Chapter 2 is to examine and analyse these patterns of using minority races by applying Objectification theory. In American advertisements, black representation is used as a tool to signify masculinity. Also, it is "denied its subjectivity" by being juxtaposed as subordinate position to white race. Asian representation has become a mere sign of Asian-ness, and usually under the "ownership" of white men. In Japanese advertisements, white representation is used as an instrument to signify ideal, or even imaginary, Western culture. It is usually interchangeable; there is no need of a specific person. And black representation is treated as something to be merged into Japanese society by ignoring his/her experiences and racial identity.

In both American and Japanese advertisements, minority races are treated as an object which reflects certain stereotypical images. In order to sell their products, advertisers are consuming minority races. What they put in advertisements is actually

the reflection of our society and culture. In this sense, it is not only advertisers but we that create stereotypical images and make them like an object. The important thing is that objectification is something we create under the norm of our culture and society.

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