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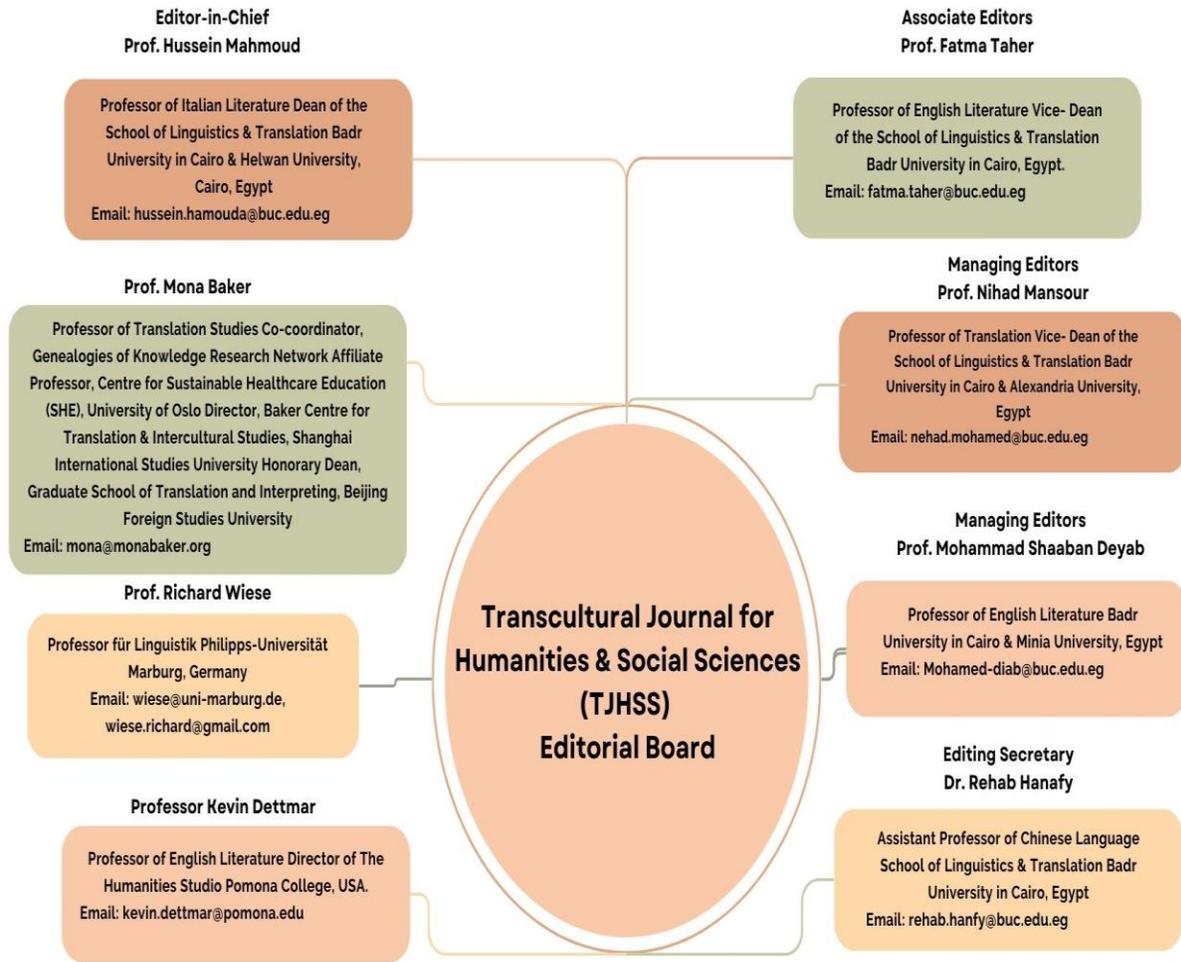
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Editorial Foreword

The first section of this edition of the research papers of the International conference on Transnational Feminism: Explorations, Communications, Challenges & Horizons is clearly conceived as a collection of research papers on the diversified approaches of the intersection between feminism, literature, linguistics, and translation. The diversity of the research papers closely connects to academic experiences and cultural backgrounds of the contributors. While presenting diversity in approaches, this section contributes to achieving a collective discussion of the multifaceted concept of translational feminism.

The section includes studies on the challenges of recent development of translational feminism, gender problematics in the translation of non-literary texts, the English translation of the *The Odyssey* (2018), gender bias in machine translation, the deafening effect of non-feminist translations of literary works, Arab Egyptian Feminist Voices in Translation, and lastly written in Arabic; obsession & rebellion in feminist movements writings.

In an attempt to have a wide reach and significant impact, the second section is allocated for miscellaneous research papers written in English, Spanish and Chinese. A semantic visual study of the image of orientalism in Indian epic tales, literary dissection the literary works of Antonio de Zayas, (Spanish), how poetry reflects and summarizes social life, and a study of Lin Shu's travelogues prose in Chinese are engaged in and/or preoccupied with recent trends and fast growing leaps in linguistic and literary studies.

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Section I

Gender Problematics in the Translation of US Advertising: Exploring Hegemonic and Toxic Masculinity in Translated Commercials in German and Greek

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Abstract: Within the context of equality-oriented translation and transnational communication, this study explores hegemonic and toxic masculinity in US advertising as well as ways of sustaining or challenging these problematic types of masculinity through translation. As the field of feminist translation, formed by pioneering scholars including Barbara Godard, Luise von Flotow, and Sherry Simon, has traditionally focused on the translation of literary texts, it is interesting to concentrate on gender problematics in the translation of non-literary texts, such as audiovisual advertisements. Although feminist translation—in the traditional sense of the term—may not seem to be generally compatible with the realm of mainstream advertising, since both advertising and its translation have been predominantly oriented around profit rather than equality, specific translation techniques can reduce sexism in the translation of advertising. In this study, I analyze how different translation techniques used in the German and Greek translations of a US commercial either retain or reduce the sexist manifestations of hegemonic and toxic masculinity found in the original. Specifically, the data analyzed consists of a famous US Old Spice commercial from 2010 along with its 2014 and 2019 translations into German (dubbed and subtitled respectively) and its 2017 translation into Greek (subtitled). Based on these findings, I discuss how translators of commercials can use equality-oriented techniques to benefit both societies and companies in the prominent global sociocultural context of gender equality today.

Keywords: equality-oriented translation, advertising translation, mainstream advertising, hegemonic masculinity, toxic masculinity

1. INTRODUCTION

Within the context of equality-oriented translation and transnational communication, this study explores hegemonic and toxic masculinity in US advertising as well as ways of sustaining or challenging these problematic types of masculinity through translation. As the field of feminist translation, formed by pioneering scholars including Barbara Godard, Luise von Flotow, and Sherry Simon, has traditionally focused on the translation of literary texts, it is interesting to concentrate on gender problematics in the translation of non-literary texts, such as audiovisual advertisements.

Evidently—regardless of the type of translation—a feminist, or equality-oriented, translator must deal with both the complexity of the source and target texts and the dominant patriarchal norms, which foster sexism. As von Flotow has observed, “translators live between two cultures, and women translators live between at least three, patriarchy (public life) being the omnipresent third” (1997, p. 36). This is actually the case with equality-oriented translators regardless of their gender.

However, with regard to gender awareness, the case of advertising translation is quite different from other types of translation, such as the translation of either fiction or nonfiction books. In fact, it may be difficult for an advertising translator to promote gender equality through their work since the focus of an advertising translation project is on the most profitable result possible. Although the translator is required to provide various (typically at least three) versions of translations, explaining their rationale, offering back translations, and commenting on the aesthetics and visuals of the advertisement (Tsikogiannopoulou, 2021), they do not decide the final result (Torresi, 2010/2021, p. 11; Tsikogiannopoulou, 2021); therefore, the use of equality-oriented language cannot be guaranteed.

Difficulties in advertising translation are often related to intersemiotic cohesion (see Díaz Cintas and Remael, 2007/2014, p. 171), especially the close connection of image and language in advertising (see Stöckl, 2007, p. 245). If the original image does not change in translation, the language (either oral or written) must remain in accordance with this original image in the target text. Thus, one may wonder whether it is possible to create a non-sexist translated advertisement if the original advertisement is already sexist on the visual and/or the verbal level. This question is rather difficult to answer as it depends on various factors, inevitably including commercial interests, as mentioned. Since the ultimate objective of an advertisement is the promotion of a product, gender-fair language use may be considered a minor issue by the advertiser; yet, to sacrifice gender-fair language in favor of commercially appealing language may require breaching the translator's moral code, leaving the equality-oriented translator in a professional dilemma. Given these many and sometimes competing factors, equality-oriented translators of audiovisual advertisements can feel not only "lost" in translation but also "trapped" in translation (Vergopoulou, 2020, p. 233, 2022, p. 173).

Nevertheless, I argue that specific translation techniques can reduce sexism in the translation of advertising. Specifically, I analyze how different translation techniques used in the German and Greek translations of a famous US commercial either retain or reduce the sexist manifestations of hegemonic and toxic masculinity found in the original. Thus, I explore how translators of commercials can use equality-oriented techniques to benefit both societies and companies in the prominent global sociocultural context of gender equality today.

2. THE DATA

In this study, I discuss four main texts—an original US commercial from 2010 along with its 2014 and 2019 translations into German (dubbed and subtitled respectively; targeting Germany) and its 2017 translation into Greek (subtitled)—with a focus on hegemonic and toxic masculinity fostered through advertising targeting men. The data under analysis are as follows:

- US Old Spice Commercial (Old Spice [United States], 2010)
 - German Old Spice Commercial 1 (Old Spice [United Kingdom], 2014)
 - German Old Spice Commercial 2 (Old Spice [United Kingdom], 2019)
 - Greek Old Spice Commercial (Old Spice Greece, 2017)

The advertising spots promote Old Spice body wash and body spray products by Procter & Gamble (P&G). Particularly, the promoted products of the main texts are Old Spice After Hours Body Wash (in the US Old Spice Commercial), Old Spice Wolfthorn Body Spray (in German Old Spice Commercial 1), Old Spice Captain Deodorant Body Spray (in German Old Spice Commercial 2), and Old Spice Whitewater Deodorant Body Spray (in the Greek Old Spice Commercial).

Old Spice is a US brand offering men's grooming products in the categories of body care (e.g., shower gels and deodorants), hair care (e.g., shampoos and conditioners), and beard care (Procter & Gamble, n.d.). Originally, Old Spice was launched by the Shulton Company, founded by William Lightfoot Schultz in 1934 in New York (Biebel, 2012; Fragrantica, n.d.). Surprisingly, the company's first products targeted women, with the Early American Old Spice line for women appearing on the US market in 1937, followed by the equivalent line for men in 1938 (Borisov, 2019; Sestric, 2021).

The first advertising posters from the 1930s focused on the Americanness of the brand, characterizing their product as "America's Own Aroma" and "An Early American fragrance that all America loves," which—in combination with the brand name, Early American Old Spice—aimed to create nostalgia for "good old America, on the basis of its stability and regularity of life in past years" (Borisov, 2019). While the original Early American Old Spice women's product line was discontinued in 1970 (Borisov), the brand's products for men have become "the ultimate symbol of traditional old-world charm and masculinity" in the US and beyond (Biebel, 2012), used by "nearly every American husband and father at some point" (Fragrantica, n.d.).

Despite its illustrious and profitable past, a 2014 case study by the University of Southern California revealed that by the early 2000s, Old Spice "suffered from 'an outdated brand image'" (Sestric, 2021) and was considered "a relic from Dad's era" (Berner, 2004) and "the aroma of grandparents" (Borisov, 2019). Yet, this situation began to change in the late 2000s (Sestric) when multinational, US-based corporation P&G—the second-largest consumer goods company globally after Nestlé in 2021, offering products for beauty, health, home, and family care (Consumer Goods Technology [CGT], n.d.)—which had acquired the Old Spice brand in 1990 (United Press International, Inc., 1990), decided to reposition the brand with creative marketing and advertising campaigns that targeted and appealed to the younger demographic (Berner; Sewell, 2010). In fact, "Old Spice's real moment of reinvention" did not come until 2010 (Sestric), when, as Chief Executive Officer of P&G Bob McDonald pointed out, the brand's initiatives served "as a leading example of the power of multimedia marketing" (Sewell, 2011), strategically using both traditional and new media (mainly television and YouTube) to promote its products in creative ways.

Specifically, February 2010 saw the launch of an advertising campaign produced by the US-based global advertising agency Wieden+Kennedy and entitled "Smell Like a Man, Man"; it was more commonly known as "The Man Your Man Could Smell Like," the title of the campaign's first advertising spot (source text US Old Spice Commercial). Featuring the character of Old Spice—popularized as "the *Old Spice Guy*," a name even used by the company (Norton, n.d.)—this spot became "a viral video sensation" (Norton), "an overnight success," and "a cultural phenomenon, generating significant word-of-mouth buzz online and off-line" (D&AD, n.d.). It received the 2010 Cannes Lions Film Grand Prix, the advertising industry's highest honor, and was nominated for an Emmy for Outstanding Commercial (Norton).

In addition, in July 2010, an unprecedented marketing and advertising innovation from the aforementioned campaign came to fruition: the Old Spice Response Campaign, produced by the same agency. Drawing on integrated marketing, which combines advertising and social media, the campaign gave a call to action, prompting social media users (including celebrities such as Alyssa Milano and Ashton Kutcher) to send more than 2,000 questions and comments to the brand's official feeds on platforms such as Facebook, Twitter (rebranded as X in July 2023), and Reddit within 48 hours (Ehrlich, 2010; Norton, n.d.). In response, 186 custom video messages featuring the Old Spice character were produced and posted on the brand's official

YouTube channel (Old Spice [United States], n.d.) in just over two and a half days (D&AD, n.d.; Parpis, 2010). This pioneering “experiment in real-time branding” proved to be “one of the fastest-growing and most popular online interactive advertising campaigns in history” (D&AD). As Matt Cutler, Chief Marketing Officer of Visible Measures, noted, it was “a record-breaking campaign for social media ... not just approaching but surpassing the reach of traditional broadcast” (Parpis). In fact, the videos of the Response Campaign received more views on YouTube in the first 24 hours after their release than Barack Obama’s 2008 election-night acceptance speech received in the same timeframe (D&AD; Norton).

The “Smell Like a Man, Man” campaign commercials (the US Old Spice Commercial and other similar, subsequently produced advertising spots) along with the Response Campaign videos made Old Spice “the number one brand channel on YouTube” (D&AD, n.d.), with the campaign receiving more than 1 billion media impressions (Norton, n.d.). As Wieden+Kennedy Global Interactive Creative Director Iain Tait explained, “we just brought a character to life using the social channels we all ... use every day. But we’ve also taken a loved character and created new episodic content in real time” (as cited in Ehrlich, 2010). In this way, the audience’s intense engagement with and excitement about the interactive, direct, and innovative style of the campaign created a strong “*para-social relationship*” (Horton & Wohl, 1956, p. 215)¹ between the audience and the character of Old Spice. Since the brand’s optimal marketing and advertising success of 2010, Old Spice has become “the authority on the male grooming experience and has leveraged [its] heritage [as an American icon] to become the No. 1 selling anti-perspirant/deodorant stick and body wash brand with guys of all ages [in the US]” (DiCarlo et al., 2016).

3. ANALYSIS OF SOURCE TEXT

The source text of this study, the US Old Spice Commercial, produced in 2010² by agency Wieden+Kennedy as mentioned above, is analyzed here on both the nonverbal and verbal levels, with particular focus on the ways in which elements at each level contribute to the construction of hegemonic and toxic masculinity.

Before proceeding to the analysis regarding these two gender-related concepts, a brief reference to the sophisticated technical work involved in the spot’s production is warranted. Despite the fast setting changes and the unexpected appearances and disappearances of various props, the spot under analysis is an uncut, one-shot film created with a moving set, specially designed devices and equipment,³ and minimal use of computer-generated imagery, as art director Craig Allen and copywriter Eric Kallman revealed in a 2010 interview (TWiT Tech Podcast Network). The creative conceptualization and the technical complexity of the US Old Spice Commercial aside, the commercial is highly problematic in its representations of gender—specifically in relation to hegemonic and toxic masculinity.

Hegemonic masculinity can be defined as a particular type of masculinity that is culturally appreciated and fostered (Connell, 1995/2005, p. 77), perpetuating the de facto subordination of women and those men who do not conform to its ideals (1987, p. 183). Toxic masculinity constitutes the extreme form of hegemonic masculinity and involves societally detrimental traits, such as ruthless competition, lack of empathy, and sexist and homophobic attitudes and practices (Kupers, 2005, p. 717). While toxic masculinity is obviously harmful as it negatively affects people of any gender, hegemonic masculinity is also, though less obviously, harmful as it exalts one specific category of men, thus demeaning other categories of men in addition to all categories of women and non-binary persons. In the subsequent sections, I explore

both the concepts of hegemonic and toxic masculinity further in relation to the nonverbal and verbal levels of the spot under analysis.

Analysis on the Nonverbal Level

In the US Old Spice Commercial, the man protagonist (the only character in the spot) transitions seemingly effortlessly from a bathroom to a sailboat to the back of a white horse on the beach in only half a minute (Old Spice [United States], 2010, 0:01–0:31), as though he had extraordinary powers.

The analysis on the nonverbal level in relation to hegemonic masculinity begins with physical appearance and artifacts (see Jackson, 2014, pp. 121–123) since “true [i.e., hegemonic] masculinity is almost always thought to proceed from men’s bodies” (Connell, 1995/2005, p. 45). The first and most striking element to notice in the US Old Spice Commercial is the protagonist’s semi-naked body. The character, played by Black American actor Isaiah Mustafa, is presented as attractive and quintessentially masculine by remaining shirtless for the entire spot, which focuses on his athletic, sculpted upper body. His upper body is further highlighted by the camera zooming in and out on it repeatedly throughout the spot, alternating between medium long shots (i.e., $\frac{3}{4}$ shots) and medium shots.⁴

Noticeably, the spot’s opening scene aims to create strong sex appeal by depicting the man with only a bath towel around his waist, implying that he wears neither clothes nor underwear (Old Spice [United States], 2010, 0:01–0:12). Although it is later revealed that he wears trousers under the towel, he remains shirtless; a shirt landing on his shoulders (Old Spice [United States], 0:12–0:14) serves merely as a decorative accessory that further highlights his muscular upper body. Of course, a significant element here is that the protagonist is a Black man, fostering stereotypes connecting race and gender with sexuality (see also Freeland, 2011, pp. 77–78; see below).

The spot ends with a surprise and a dose of absurd humor as the man character suddenly appears sitting on the back of a horse in the final scene (Old Spice [United States], 2010, 0:27–0:31). An explicit connection is created here between masculinity and nature. Specifically, the man seems to ride the horse confidently, not even touching the animal with his hands, without fear of falling off; this implies that he has already tamed it and prevailed. As Jackson has noted with regard to haptics, touch—and, in this case, lack of touch—can convey meanings related to “power, status and prestige” (2014, p. 119). Thus, this imagery also suggests that the man is fearlessly ready to conquer nature through exploratory adventures in a wild landscape (featuring beach, sea, animal, and plant elements). Furthermore, the protagonist’s gender identity is intersected with his racial identity (see Crenshaw, 1989) since the particular imagery used recalls stereotypical fantasies—constructed by White people—that link Black masculinity with animalistic beauty and hypersexuality (see also Freeland, 2011, pp. 77–78).

Another, less explicit connection is created in this scene through the depiction of the man on horseback: a connection between masculinity and sports. Particularly, the image is easily associated with the sport of horseback riding (equestrianism), aided by the positive stereotype that Black men are good at sports and fitness activities. It is well known that “sport has come to be the leading definer of masculinity in mass culture” (Connell, 1995/2005, p. 54) and that “prowess of this kind becomes a means of judging one’s degree of masculinity” (1987, p. 85). Indeed, sporting success and failure respectively are inextricably linked with the hierarchization of men into distinct categories that assesses masculinity as if it were measurable.

In his analysis of masculinity and men’s bodies in advertising, Antony Easthope noted that advertisements display “the male body ... as an object of sporting interest” and that this body

“is represented by the perfect young man” (1896/1992, p. 51). He described the characteristic presentation of men’s bodies in advertising as follows:

Very little fat, tensed muscle and tight sinew can give a hard, clear outline to the body. Flesh and bone can pass itself off as a kind of armour. The skin surface can take part in the masculine fascination with armour from ancient breastplate and greaves down to the modern American footballer, whose body subtly merges into strapping, pads and plastic plating. (Easthope, p. 52)

This description accords completely with the presentation of the character’s body in the US Old Spice Commercial: muscular and exposed to a degree intended to be attractive without being exaggerated or overly revealing. Furthermore, the actor selected to play the character is a former American National Football League (NFL) player. Thus, the character’s physique is one of a former professional athlete and not, for example, an average man who enjoys exercising or recreational sport, aligning with the bodily patterns of hegemonic masculinity embodied in the role.

In the realm of oculosics (see Jackson, 2014, pp. 116–117), the protagonist’s gaze is another central indicator of hegemonic masculinity. The man sustains intense, straightforward, uninterrupted eye contact (in accordance with the single uninterrupted shot of the commercial) with the camera throughout the course of the advertising spot—a minor exception occurring as he lowers his gaze for less than two seconds during his line “Look down” (Old Spice [United States], 2010, 0:11–0:12). This active type of gaze, a typical instance of the male gaze (see Mulvey, 1975), through which hegemonic masculinity is expressed, is intended to enable an assertive, self-confident man to exert a seductive sense of dominance and control. Moreover, the protagonist’s unwavering gaze, which gives the viewer the illusion that the character is staring at them for half a minute and thus embracing them with his absolute, monopolizing attention, also creates a strong “*para-social relationship*” (Horton & Wohl, 1956, p. 215) between the real spectator and the fictional character/real actor, as also mentioned above.

With regard to kinesics (see Jackson, 2014, pp. 110–116), the protagonist’s hegemonic masculinity is fostered by facial expressions and posture, which seem to play a crucial role in connecting masculinity with power. As sociologist R. W. Connell has pointed out, “the social definition of men as holders of power is translated not only into mental body-images and fantasies, but into muscle tensions, *posture* [emphasis added], the feel and texture of the body” (1987, p. 85). Not coincidentally, in the US Old Spice Commercial, the character’s posture is always straight and upright, conveying confidence and dynamism. Even when he sits on the back of the horse, his position is almost vertical, with his right hand assuredly touching his body (waist) and his left hand holding and touting the promoted product (Old Spice [United States], 2010, 0:27–0:31). His ability to control the animal—so powerful that he does not even need to hold the reins or any part of the animal—implies that “the power of men becomes ‘naturalized’, i.e. seen as part of the order of nature” (Connell, 1987, p. 85).

As regards the character’s facial expressions, it is interesting to note that he seems to be both serious and not serious at the same time. For example, the opening scene shows the man smiling widely, nonchalantly, and attractively to draw the viewer’s attention (Old Spice [United States], 2010, 0:00–0:12). In contrast, he wears a serious (unsmiling) facial expression in the closing scene that could be characterized as ironic or enigmatic, congruent with the non-sequitur horse scenario in the scene (Old Spice [United States], 0:27–0:31). In the words of Jason Bagley, creative director at Wieden+Kennedy, the man protagonist “has just the right mix of confidence [and] over-the-top bravado, but doesn’t take himself so seriously” (as cited in Parpis, 2010).

Regardless of whether the protagonist takes himself seriously or not and despite the conglomeration of different elements in his facial expressions, the principal sense evoked through the body language used in the advertising spot is one of arrogance strictly related to hegemonic masculinity.

This hegemonic masculine arrogance is not only conveyed through the extralinguistic elements of the character's body language but is also very evident in the spot at the level of vocalics/paralanguage (see Jackson, 2014, pp. 109–110). In the context of the spot, the aggressive tone, high volume, and low pitch of the man's voice add to the image of the character's arrogant and dominant attitude. The most striking paralinguistic feature in this case, however, is the unusually fast tempo of the character's uninterrupted monologue, which concurs with both his uninterrupted gaze and the spot's uninterrupted shot and once again conveys an intensified sense of the man's power and assertiveness. Yet, the fast delivery of his speech (in combination with all other elements mentioned above) reaches a degree that may challenge the audience of the commercial as it purposefully employs an aggressive marketing approach (see also Stošić Mihajlović and Trajković, 2019, p. 10), which strives to coerce the viewer into paying attention to the character promoting the particular product in the advertising spot.

Analysis on the Verbal Level

Although traits of hegemonic masculinity are evidently present on both the nonverbal and verbal levels of the US Old Spice Commercial, toxic masculinity emerges more blatantly on the verbal than on the nonverbal level. Of course, the elaborate combination of audio and visual features is what fosters both hegemonic and toxic masculinity in this audiovisual advertisement. Table 1 offers the full body copy and slogan of the source text in English.

Table 1: US Source Text

US Old Spice Commercial	
<p>Man Protagonist: Hello, ladies. Look at your man. Now back to me. Now back at your man. Now back to me. Sadly, he isn't me. But if he stopped using lady-scented body wash and switched to Old Spice, he could smell like he's me. Look down. Back up. Where are you? You're on a boat with the man your man could smell like. What's in your hand? Back at me. I have it. It's an oyster with two tickets to that thing you love. Look again. The tickets are now diamonds. Anything is possible when your man smells like Old Spice and not a lady. I'm on a horse. (Written: Smell like a man, man. Old Spice)</p>	

(Old Spice [United States], 2010, 0:01–0:30)

Although one would expect the brand's commercials to target men since it offers exclusively products for men, the character's monologue opens with a salutation addressing women: "Hello, ladies." Nevertheless, the advertising spot closes with the written slogan "Smell like a man, man"—also the campaign's title—which addresses men. Thus, the spot strategically aims to target both women and men by using the protagonist to address each of them. The marketing decision to mainly address women almost throughout the course of a commercial promoting a men's product may seem creative and certainly innovative, since no other men's body care commercial has employed a similar tactic before, but the reasoning behind this advertising strategy is in fact quite stereotypical. As Kallman explained in a 2010 interview regarding the commercial—with interviewer Leo Laporte rushing to confirm the validity of the copywriter's assumption—he guessed that women (and not men) are the ones who do the shopping for their households, including the purchasing of body wash products for both themselves and their man partners (TWiT Tech Podcast Network, 3:46–4:02).

This assumption, based on heteronormative and heteropatriarchal stereotypes, presupposes not only that every woman has—or should have—a household with a man partner, but also that she is—or should be—the one who is responsible for purchasing decisions in respect to hygiene and body-care products for herself as well as him (and, in turn, any other household members). However, this would probably not be the expectation for purchasing decisions in respect to other types of products, such as electronic gadgets—despite the large number of girls and women who actively engage with computers and the internet in the twenty-first century, contrary to stereotypes related to gender and technology (Kearney, 2010, p. 9; Mazzarella, 2005, p. 2; Rickert & Sacharow, 2000).⁵ Not coincidentally, the purchasing decisions in this case concern the specific domain of hygiene and the general category of body care, which have traditionally and stereotypically been associated more frequently and more directly with women and femininity.⁶

Directly after the salutation, the man character delivers the following words, continuing to address woman viewers and not men: "Look at your man. Now back to me. Now back at your man. Now back to me. Sadly, he isn't me. But if he ... switched to Old Spice, he could smell like he's me." The man's aggressive speaking style is reinforced by the use of the imperative mood in the rapid, repetitive utterances—most of them elliptical (omitting the verb)—appearing here ("Look at your man. Now back to me. Now back at your man. Now back to me") and again later on in the monologue ("Look down. Back up," "Back at me," "Look again"). However, the finishing touch of masculine aggressiveness is the direct comparison that is drawn between the man protagonist and the hypothetical man partner of the woman viewer ("Sadly, he isn't me. But if he ... switched to Old Spice, he could smell like he's me"), which promotes the concept of hegemonic masculinity as it regards a particular category of men as socially superior to the remaining categories.

Here, sexism is the result of both hegemonic masculinity in general, which is potentially problematic, and toxic masculinity in particular, which can overlap with hegemonic masculinity in many respects as its extreme form and is demonstrably problematic, as discussed above. In order to emphasize the hypermasculinity of men who use Old Spice, the product is compared and contrasted with other products (presumably of competitors, although this is not explicitly stated). The man protagonist suggests that any other body wash is characteristically "lady-scented body

wash,” meaning that a man who uses it “smells like ... a lady.” The protagonist’s words—combined with the paralinguistic features of aggressive tone, low pitch, high volume, and fast speaking tempo, as discussed above—debase femininity and, more specifically, any feminine traits in men, a practice characteristic of hegemonic masculinity (see also Brittan, 1989).⁷ Thus, these words can reinforce misogynous and homophobic attitudes, resulting in toxic masculinity. In accordance with Terry A. Kupers’s description of toxic masculinity, what is conveyed through such words is “the need to aggressively compete and dominate others” (2005, p. 713) through a direct contrast to both other men and women—since toxic masculinity “foster[s] domination, the devaluation of women, [and] homophobia” (p. 714).

Moreover, the written slogan, which is also the campaign’s title, “Smell like a man, man” (i.e., not like a woman), completes the image of a hypermasculine product by creating and exaggerating an antithesis between masculinity and femininity as well as by bisecting men into alpha males (hypermasculine men) and beta males (men who are not traditionally masculine or masculine enough, i.e., “feminine” men). This stereotypical, constructed conceptualization, Kupers has elaborated, worries men “lest others will view them as unmanly for their deviations from the hegemonic ideal of the real man” (2005, p. 716), igniting the anxiety of fragile masculinity (see DiMuccio and Knowles, 2020, pp. 25–26; Vandello et al., 2008, p. 1325). Therefore, the “Smell like a man, man” slogan is oriented toward a fantasy of an idealized masculinity that only offers an illusion.

This fantasy of idealized masculinity can condition men to feel omnipotent and, for this reason, superior to everyone else—both other men and women, not to mention non-binary persons. Indeed, according to prevalent social expectations on which the advertising realm draws and which it, in turn, influences in a vicious cycle, “the masculine ego must try to master everything other than itself: physical reality both as nature on the outside and the body on the inside; other people in society; its own unconscious and femininity” (Easthope, 1986/1992, p. 46). In conclusion, in the US Old Spice Commercial, this omnipotence stemming from hegemonic and toxic masculinity is conveyed through the elaborate combination of extralinguistic, paralinguistic, and linguistic features, as analyzed above.

4. ANALYSIS OF TARGET TEXTS

Three translated versions of the 2010 original US Old Spice Commercial are discussed in this section: the 2014 dubbed German Old Spice Commercial 1, the 2019 subtitled German Old Spice Commercial 2, and the 2017 subtitled Greek Old Spice Commercial. These are analyzed with the same focus on the concepts of hegemonic and toxic masculinity, with particular emphasis on the verbal level of the target texts.

Analysis on the Nonverbal Level

The lengths of the source and target texts are similar as all four texts last approximately half a minute, with the original US Old Spice Commercial running for 32 seconds, German Old Spice Commercial 2 and the Greek Old Spice Commercial running for 30 seconds, and German Old Spice Commercial 1 running for 37 seconds.

One may wonder why separate dubbed and subtitled versions of the same German commercial were produced to promote different products of the same brand in 2014 and 2019. Indeed, it would be much more practical and economical for the company to edit the 2014 dubbed version visually and reuse it to promote the featured product in 2019. However, although dubbing has traditionally been the predominant mode of translation in Germany (Fox, 2018, p.

1), the 2014 dubbed version received negative responses on YouTube with regard to the pronounced American accent of the man protagonist (speaking German; Old Spice [United Kingdom], 2014). This accent was used deliberately, for the sake of humor and presumably also to emphasize the Americanness of the brand, but the reception was not positive. Such critical reactions to the shortcomings of the dubbed version—combined with German viewers’ increasing preference for subtitled over dubbed films and series in order to enhance enjoyment while watching the original productions in English (Fox, p. 1)—may have contributed to the company’s decision to create a new, subtitled version of the same commercial to promote another product five years later.

Furthermore, German Old Spice Commercial 1 is lengthier than the other spots due to the addition of a scene at the end of the spot promoting “die neue wilde Kollektion von Old Spice” [the new wild collection from Old Spice] (Old Spice [United Kingdom], 2014, 0:30–0:33). The scene—which seems to strengthen the sense of hegemonic and toxic masculinity created—features the “Wolfthorn” product series in the foreground and a wolf howling in the natural landscape in the background (Old Spice [United Kingdom], 0:30–0:36).

The overt association of a man’s product (and, in turn, the man) with a wild predator (the wolf) aims to enhance the man’s hypermasculine attributes linked to nature, beastliness, power, and wildness. Such attributes include independence, instinctiveness, leadership, authority, and domination—which can culminate in dangerousness, uncontrollability, and violence (see also Ellis, 2017) when the man is symbolically turned into a beast. In this way, the commercial crosses the fine line between hegemonic and toxic masculinity. The visual metaphor in which the wolf stands for the man—imagery that fosters toxic masculinity—supports Connell’s observation that “to sustain patriarchal power on the large scale requires the construction of a hypermasculine ideal of toughness and dominance” (1987, p. 80). In modern patriarchal societies, the realm of audiovisual advertising, in which everything can be exaggerated, highlights this ideal of hypermasculinity—which can lead to the manifestation of toxic masculinity—through commercials such as the ones under analysis in this study.

Analysis on the Verbal Level

In this section, the concepts of hegemonic and toxic masculinity are explored further on the verbal level of the translated versions in German and Greek. Table 2 presents the full body copy and slogans of the US source text as well as the target texts in German (German audio and English audio with German subtitles) and in Greek (English audio with Greek subtitles) for analysis.

Table 2: US Source Text and German and Greek Target Texts

US Old Spice Commercial	German Old Spice Commercial 1	German Old Spice Commercial 2 (Audio)	German Old Spice Commercial 2 (Subtitles)	Greek Old Spice Commercial (Audio)	Greek Old Spice Commercial (Subtitles)
<p>Man Protagonist: Hello, ladies. Look at your man. Now back to me. Now back at your man. Now back to me. Sadly, he isn't me. But if he stopped using lady-scented body wash and switched to Old Spice, he could smell like he's me.</p> <p>Look down. Back up. Where are you? You're on a boat with the man your man could smell like.</p> <p>What's in your hand? Back at me. I have it. It's an oyster with two tickets to that thing you love.</p>	<p>Man Protagonist: Hello, Ladies. Schaut zu eurem Mann. Wieder zu mir. Wieder zu eurem Mann. Wieder zu mir. Leider ist er nicht ich. Würde er aber statt ladyhaftem Duschgel einfach Old Spice nehmen, könnte er riechen wie ich.</p> <p>Look down. Back up. Wo seid ihr? Auf einem Boot mit dem Mann, wie euer Mann riechen könnte.</p> <p>Was ist in deiner Hand? Wieder zu mir. Ich hab's. Eine Auster mit zwei Tickets für dein Lieblingskonzert.</p>	<p>Man Protagonist: Hello, ladies. Look at your man. Now back to me. Now back at your man. Now back to me. Sadly, he isn't me. But if he stopped using lady-scented body spray and switched to Old Spice, he could smell like he's me.</p> <p>Look down. Back up. Where are you? You're on a boat with the man your man could smell like.</p> <p>What's in your hand? Back at me. I have it. It's an oyster with two tickets to that thing you love.</p>	<p>Man Protagonist: Hello Ladies, schaut Euren Mann an, jetzt mich.</p> <p>Leider ist er nicht ich.</p> <p>Aber er könnte riechen wie ich, wenn er Old Spice Body Spray nutzen würde. Schau Dich um.</p> <p>Du bist auf einem Boot mit dem Mann, der riecht[,] wie Deiner riechen könnte.</p> <p>Schau mich an, dann in meine Hand.</p> <p>In dieser Auster sind 2 Tickets für Dinge, die Du</p>	<p>Man Protagonist: Hello, ladies. Look at your man. Now back to me. Now back at your man. Now back to me. Sadly, he isn't me. But if he stopped using lady-scented body spray and switched to Old Spice, he could smell like he's me.</p> <p>Look down. Back up. Where are you? You're on a boat with the man your man could smell like.</p> <p>What's in your hand? Back at me. I have it. It's an oyster with two tickets to that thing you love.</p>	<p>Man Protagonist: Γεια σας, κυρίες μου. Κοιτάξτε τον φίλο σας. Πίσω σ' εμένα. Τώρα πάλι εκείνον. Πίσω σ' εμένα. Δυστυχώς, δεν είναι σαν εμένα.</p> <p>Αλλά αν χρησιμοποιούσε Old Spice, θα μπορούσε να μυρίζει σαν εμένα.</p> <p>Κοιτάξτε κάτω. Ξανά πάνω. Πού είστε; Σε ένα σκάφος με αυτόν που μυρίζει όπως θα μπορούσε να μυρίζει ο φίλος σας. Τι κρατάτε εκεί; Πίσω σ' εμένα. Εγώ το έχω. Ένα κοχύλι</p>

<p>Look again. The tickets are now diamonds. Anything is possible when your man smells like Old Spice and not a lady. I'm on a horse.</p> <p>(Written: Smell like a man, man. Old Spice) (Old Spice [United States], 2010, 0:01–0:30)</p>	<p>Schau genau. Die Tickets sind nun Diamanten. Alles ist möglich, wenn dein Mann nach Old Spice riecht und nicht nach Lady. Ich bin auf einem Pferd. Man Narrator (not seen): Die neue wilde Kollektion von Old Spice. Jetzt auch in Deutschland erhältlich (Written: Old Spice)⁸ (Old Spice [United Kingdom], 2014, 0:01–0:35)</p>	<p>Look again. The tickets are now diamonds. Anything is possible when your man smells like Old Spice and not a lady. I'm on a horse.</p> <p>(Old Spice [United Kingdom], 2019, 0:00–0:27)</p>	<p>liebst. Jetzt sind Deine Tickets Diamanten. Alles ist möglich[,] wenn Dein Mann nach Old Spice riecht und nicht wie eine Lady. Ich sitze auf einem Pferd.</p> <p>(Written but not in a subtitle: Smell like a man, man. Old Spice)⁹ (Old Spice [United Kingdom], 2019, 0:00–0:29)</p>	<p>Look again. The tickets are now diamonds. Anything is possible when your man smells like Old Spice and not a lady. I'm on a horse.</p> <p>(Old Spice Greece, 2017, 0:00–0:27)</p>	<p>με 2 εισιτήρια για εκεί που ονειρευόσασταν. Κοιτάξτε πάλι. Τα εισιτήρια είναι, τώρα, διαμάντια! Όλα είναι πιθανά όταν ο φίλος σας χρησιμοποιεί Old Spice.</p> <p>Είμαι καβάλα στ' άλογο.</p> <p>(Written but not in a subtitle: Old Spice[:] Μαν, μύρισε σαν άντρας[.])¹⁰ (Old Spice Greece, 2017, 0:00–0:29)</p>
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The key element of the target text analysis on the verbal level revolves around the translation of the two excerpts from the original that emanate toxic masculinity. As discussed above, these excerpts are the following: “But if he stopped using *lady-scented* [emphasis added] body wash and switched to Old Spice, he could smell like he’s me” and “Anything is possible when your man smells like Old Spice and *not a lady* [emphasis added].”

In German Old Spice Commercial 1 (dubbed), both of these excerpts appear (translated) in German—which could be due to the need for lip-sync in dubbing. In both excerpts, the use of “lady-/“Lady,” a word borrowed (see below) from English (Anglicism), facilitates the lip sync of the dubbing of the US Old Spice Commercial in German.

With regard to the first excerpt, the adjective “lady-scented” is rendered as “ladyhaf[t]” [ladylike] in German. Drawing on both direct and oblique translation methods (Vinay & Darbelnet, 1958/1977/1995, pp. 30–42), three translation strategies are simultaneously utilized here: (a) borrowing, also known as loan, which consists of “the borrowing of individual items” (Chesterman, 1997/2016, p. 92; see also Vinay and Darbelnet, pp. 31–32); (b) calque (used alongside borrowing/loan), which consists of “the borrowing of syntagma” (Chesterman, p. 92; see also Vinay and Darbelnet, pp. 32–33); and (c) modulation (Vinay & Darbelnet, pp. 36–37), specifically in the form of “*abstraction change*” (Chesterman, p. 100), in which a concrete concept in the source text is conveyed through a more abstract concept in the target text. Specifically, combining the strategies of borrowing/loan and calque, the term “ladyhaf[t]” [ladylike] is used in the target text instead of ‘damenhaft’ [ladylike], which would not carry the same connotations in this context (see below). In addition, applying the strategy of modulation (in the form of abstraction change), the more abstract term “ladyhaf[t]” [ladylike] is used in the target text instead of the more specific term ‘ladyduftend’ (which would contain ‘-duftend,’ the literal translation [Chesterman, pp. 91–92; Vinay & Darbelnet, pp. 33–35] of the English term “-scented,” used in the source text).

With regard to the second excerpt, the method of direct translation is exclusively deployed. The phrase “not [like] a lady” is translated into German as “nicht nach Lady” [not like a lady], again using two translation strategies: literal translation and borrowing/loan (Chesterman, 1997/2016, pp. 91–93; Vinay & Darbelnet, 1958/1977/1995, pp. 31–35). Once again, instead of the German word ‘Dame’ [lady], the English word “Lady” is selected—which, like many other Anglicisms, has entered the German lexicon and appears in the *Duden Wörterbuch* [Duden Dictionary] (Bibliographisches Institut [Bibliographical Institute], n.d.b).

The spot’s use of referee design (Bell, 1984, 1991, 2001)¹¹ through Anglicisms—which associate the promoted product with the values of “quality, reliability and practicality” as well as “progress” (1991, p. 136)—along with the deliberate use of an American accent in the German audio, as mentioned above, is presumably intended to emphasize the American origin of the product as well as the humorous and nonchalant style of the advertising spot. However, it must be taken into consideration that the choice of the English term “Lady” over the German ‘Dame’ [lady] also has a significant effect on gender images in the spot since the English term can carry pejorative connotations (Penguin Random House, n.d.) that the latter does not (Bibliographisches Institut, n.d.a).

As becomes evident, this target text, just like the source text, overemphasizes hypermasculine men by belittling non-hypermasculine men—and women, prompting the man viewer to avoid being associated with women and/or femininity at any cost,

as the German excerpts “ladyhaf[t]” [ladylike] and “nicht nach Lady” [not like a lady] suggest. Although the translation of the two aforementioned excerpts in German Old Spice Commercial 1 is accurate, it is still problematic as regards power relations and asymmetries/imbances related to gender representations since it unavoidably retains the sense of hegemonic and toxic masculinity of the original.

In German Old Spice Commercial 2 (subtitled), the translation of both excerpts mentioned above is treated somewhat differently than in German Old Spice Commercial 1 (dubbed). As regards the first excerpt, the segment “[if he] stopped using lady-scented body spray and” is heard in the English audio but omitted from the German subtitle. However, the second excerpt is fully translated into German, with the subtitle including the segment “nicht wie eine Lady” [not like a lady]; here, direct translation is again employed through the strategies of literal translation and borrowing/loan. Overall, the omission of part of the first excerpt lessens the sense of toxic masculinity of the source text (also heard in the audio of the target text).

Yet, this omission of the reference to “lady-scented body spray,” although socially beneficial, was likely not intended deliberately to lessen toxic masculinity. In fact, it can be observed that the target text also omits or reformulates other segments from the original in the subtitling; thus, it does not adopt a strict direct translation approach overall. This is not to be considered strange or unusual since subtitles almost always constitute a reduced form of the spoken audio, as Jorge Díaz Cintas and Aline Remael noted in their discussion of subtitling (2007/2014, p. 145; see also pp. 145–171). This reduction unavoidably includes omissions/deletions (Díaz Cintas & Remael, p. 162).

The case of the Greek Old Spice Commercial (also subtitled) is unique in relation to the translation of both excerpts examined as its approach vastly differs from that of German Old Spice Commercial 1 (dubbed) and partially differs from that of German Old Spice Commercial 2 (subtitled). In the Greek commercial, both excerpts are omitted from the subtitles although they are unavoidably heard in the English audio. It is remarkable that despite the fast tempo of the protagonist’s delivery, which generally plays a crucial role in subtitling (Díaz Cintas & Remael, 2007/2014, p. 148) and, in this case, could theoretically justify many omissions, the only parts omitted from the subtitles are from the two excerpts under analysis: the segments “[if he] stopped using lady-scented body spray and” as well as “and not a lady.”

Given that only these segments are excluded from translation, the two omissions might not be coincidental. In general, since written text in the form of subtitles has a stronger impact than oral speech (Díaz Cintas & Remael, 2007/2014, pp. 196, 200), emotionally charged words such as “taboo words, swearwords and interjections are often toned down in subtitles or even deleted” (p. 195). In this instance, the segments “lady-scented” and “not a lady” can be considered emotionally charged language as these phrases are sexist—though, unlike swear words, their offensive nature may not be apparent on the semantic level, they foster toxic masculinity on the pragmatic level, as already discussed in detail. Therefore, the subtitler of the Greek Old Spice Commercial presumably considered them too aggressive to appear in the subtitles and chose to avoid translating them. The subtitler may not have made this decision as an equality-oriented translator with the intent of strategically subduing the notion of toxic masculinity in the target text, but they likely aimed to soften its aggressive marketing tone in order to make it more palatable to consumers regardless of gender and thus more effective in the target language and culture.

Besides, it must be noted that a “direct, or literal translation” (Vinay & Darbelnet, 1958/1977/1995, p. 31) of these segments into Greek would probably not be very natural and could have been rejected outright. In fact, as regards the first segment, which includes the key word “lady-scented,” Greek cannot support a calque similar to the one chosen in German Old Spice Commercial 1. Yet, the second segment, which includes the key phrase “not a lady,” could be literally translated (Chesterman, 1997/2016, pp. 91–92; Vinay & Darbelnet, 1958/1977/1995, pp. 33–35) into Greek without special difficulties—although the connotations conveyed might not be the same as in the English and German texts.

Regardless of the reasoning behind the omissions in the German and Greek subtitling, the Greek Old Spice Commercial conveys the least competition among men and the least devaluation of women or men with feminine attributes; precisely owing to these omissions, it emits the least toxic masculinity compared to all other source and target texts under analysis.

5. CONCLUSION

Regardless of whether one finds the Old Spice commercials funny or not, it cannot be disputed that they are at least creative on many levels, including those of conceptualization and technicality. However, more importantly, it can also not be disputed that unhealthy gender-related images harming men, women, and non-binary persons are perpetuated through such spots in the name of humor. If P&G wants to claim that they are “leveraging [their] significant voice in advertising and media to tackle gender bias” (Procter & Gamble [USA], n.d.),¹² they must also seriously consider that the overt or covert devaluation of people on the basis of their sex and gender does not tackle gender bias but instead enhances it. Therefore, since the general theme of masculinity seems to be central in Old Spice’s marketing and advertising, a critical re-evaluation of the dynamic dimensions of this notion—which does not need to be exclusive, dominating, aggressive toward others, or constructed in diametrical contrast to femininity in order to prove its existence—could help the brand produce commercials that are still creative but also equality-oriented, benefiting both the company and society (Bahadur, 2014).

Finally, although it may be difficult to render an already sexist original spot less sexist in translation, the case of the subtitled Greek Old Spice Commercial shows that this is not impossible, using the method of omission. The reasoning behind the omissions explored in detail above may be unknown—they might have been justified on the grounds of specific constraints—but regardless of the reasoning, the result remains the same: Subtitling contributed to the mitigation of hegemonic and toxic masculinity and thus can be used to reduce sexism in advertising.

Notes

1. Coined by sociologists Donald Horton and R. Richard Wohl, the term “*para-social relationship*” refers to a “seeming face-to-face relationship between spectator and performer [or character]” (1956, p. 215), an illusory effect that can be created through public interaction with mass media.
2. The US Old Spice Commercial (Old Spice [United States], 2010) was produced in 2010 but has since been used to promote different products of the brand in different target languages and cultures throughout the years. For example, in 2020, an edited version of the commercial was uploaded on the official UK YouTube channel of the brand to promote Old Spice Captain Deodorant Body Spray (Old Spice [United Kingdom], 2020).
3. One can watch the final US Old Spice Commercial along with an alternative on-set take from the production process here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rArZl8vh8aY> (Michel, 2014).
4. In a medium long shot, the human body is typically framed from head to knees, while a medium shot frames the body from head to waist (Cherif et al., 2007).
5. Interestingly, Van Badham has discussed the “mentrification” of computers, which pertains to “cultural products whose original association with women was redrawn for audiences of men” (2019).
6. In addition, it is not only body care in particular but also care in general that seems to be a central definer of femininity; in other words, not only is a woman supposed to buy body wash, but she is to buy body wash for her man partner because she cares not only for his personal hygiene but also for him holistically and altruistically. Care is very often presented as the quintessential attribute of women, as if it were innate in women and incompatible with men. This stereotypical notion in relation to gender roles and social expectations (see also Manne, 2018) is validated by the (seemingly naïve) explanation by the copywriter of the commercial as regards its conceptualization.
7. In general, drawing on the notion of fragile masculinity, it is likely socially acceptable for women to use men’s body care products but not vice versa. Furthermore, femininity seems to threaten masculinity (as the spot also suggests), while there is no such exaggerated social fear of femininity being distorted by masculinity, subtly illustrating that femininity and women are not valued as much as masculinity and men—both in the world of advertising and in the real world.
8. [Man Protagonist: Hello, ladies. Look at your man. Back to me. Back at your man. Back to me. Unfortunately, he is not me. But if he just used Old Spice instead of ladylike shower gel, he could smell like me. Look down. Back up. Where are you? On a boat with the man your man could smell like. What is in your hand? Back at me. I have it. An oyster with two tickets to your favorite concert. Look closely. The tickets are now diamonds. Anything is possible when your man smells like Old Spice and not like a lady. I am on a horse. Man Narrator (not seen): The new wild collection from Old Spice. Now also available in Germany. (Written: Old Spice)]
9. [Man Protagonist: Hello, ladies, look at your man, now at me. / Unfortunately, he is not me. / But he could smell like me if he used Old Spice Body Spray. / Look around. / You are on a boat with the man who smells like yours could smell. / Look at me, then in my hand. / In this oyster, there are 2 tickets for things that you love. / Now, your tickets are diamonds. / Anything is possible when your man smells like Old Spice and not like a lady. / I am sitting on a horse. (Written but not in a subtitle: Smell like a man, man. Old Spice)]
10. [Man Protagonist: Hello, my ladies. / Look at your boyfriend. / Back to me. / Now at him again. / Back to me. / Unfortunately, he is not like me. / But if he used Old Spice, / he could smell like me. / Look down. / Up again. / Where are you? / On a boat / with the one who smells / like your boyfriend could smell. / What are you holding there? / Back to me. / I have it. / A seashell with 2 tickets to where you were dreaming of. / Look again. / The tickets are now diamonds! / Anything is possible when your boyfriend / uses Old Spice. / I am on horseback. (Written but not in a subtitle: Old Spice[:] Man, smell like a man[.])]
11. Allan Bell (1984, 1991, 2001) explored referee design (in contrast to and along with audience design) in media and advertising, explaining that in referee design, the speaker “creatively uses language features ... from beyond the immediate speech community” (Bell, 2001, p. 147) to hypothetically address “certain third persons not physically present [called the ‘referees’],” namely “reference groups, who are absent but influential on the speaker’s attitudes” (1984, p. 161).
12. Marketing and sustainability expert Thomas Kolster listed some of P&G’s recent initiatives toward gender equality:
 - Ariel’s campaign “Share the load” in India challenges gender stereotypes and encourages men (and their sons) to “share the load” of washing; the Always campaign “Like a girl” changed the meaning of the sentence “Like a girl” from being an insult to a statement of pride; SK-II

empowers women; and recently Gillette asked men to go up against toxic masculinity and become “The best a man can be”—and the list goes on. (2020, p. 23)

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