

Understanding Postmodern Consumer Culture through Fashion Advertisements: Deconstruction of Calvin Klein's Fashion Advertisements

Jaeil Lee

Assistant Professor, Family and Consumer Sciences, Seattle Pacific University

(Received: September 19, 2002)

Abstract

The main focus of this study is to understand realities of postmodern consumer culture by deconstructing fashion advertisements, Calvin Klein's ck One and ck be. The metaphysics of critical theory, visual and textual analysis are used to deconstruct the ads applying one of the postmodern cultural critics, Baudrillard's notion of hyperreality.

Through deconstructing the ads five postmodern characteristics representing hyperreality were found. First, there is no message regarding functional characteristics of the product offered in the ad, which is far from the modernist's utilitarian point of view. Hyperreality in postmodern consumer culture is consumption centered and focuses on the product's symbolic meanings. Second, especially for ck be, the ad uses atypical, irrelevant models and images, which are introduced as a concept of 'real people' rather than the ideal person or body type. Third, there are transformations of the meanings from ck one to ck be such as the notions of globalization and gender which clearly represent ongoing reality in the postmodern culture. Fourth, there are hidden meanings of hedonism and relativism, which are prevalent in postmodernist ideology. Finally, models' bodies are used to convey messages as well as form the ground and figure in the ad that is a significant characteristic of postmodern consumer culture.

In conclusion, the study of Calvin Klein's fashion ads supports the notion that advertising mirrors reality in postmodern consumer culture, which is hyperreality.

Key words: Calvin Klein, consumer culture, fashion advertisement, hyperreality, postmodern.

I. Introduction

Advertising is a medium used to sell products to consumers and, is the parameter in society, which portrays cultural value and reality. Especially for this postmodern era, advertising is the most visible manifestation of postmodern culture¹⁾.

The main focus of this study is to identify realities of postmodern consumer culture by deconstructing Calvin Klein's ck one and ck be fashion advertisements.

The metaphysics of critical theory is used as a paradigm to deconstruct the advertisements. From the paradigm, postmodern reality is assumed to be apprehensible by researcher, and the researcher and the investigated objects are

E-mail : leej@spu.edu

¹ B. Stern, "Authenticity and the Textual Persona: Postmodern Paradoxes in Advertising Narratives", *International Journal of Research in Marketing* 11(1994): 387-400.

not only assumed to be interactively linked, but also findings of the study are assumed to be value-mediated findings. Visual and textual analyses are also used to deconstruct the fashion ads applying one of the postmodern cultural critics, Baudrillard's notion of hyperreality².

II. Review of Literature

1. Advertising

Advertising is not an accidental portrayal of culture³. As McLuhan claimed, ads of our time are the most faithful daily reflections that any society ever made⁴. Advertising not only reflects reality but also creates new meanings by reintegrating materials from our daily lives into meaningful systems⁵.

Ads are the most powerful portrayal in postmodern culture⁶. Stern (1994) states that, "Ads are the gabble of commercial culture in this postmodern era"⁷. The importance of commodities and consumption are symbolic reproduction, representation, and manipulation of their culture⁸. Therefore, what is to be considered as realities are deeply related to the consumer culture. Advertising and consuming its symbolic meanings are not to be separated as independent components. They are inter-related and express the reality of people and their culture.

2. Postmodern Consumer Culture: Consuming Meanings

In postmodernism, consuming signs and symbols is a significant activity^{9,10}. In the postmodern era, continuing industrialization and technological advancements, in line with mass production and mass communication, made it possible for people to participate in interpretation activities¹¹.

Ewen and Ewen pointed out that originality and singularity in objects are no longer important in the postmodern era¹². They note that technology makes it possible to replicate the same products (e.g., paintings, originally hand made crafts) in large numbers. In the postmodern era, unlike the modern era, value is not placed primarily on craftsmanship, product origin, and tradition in the postmodern era; instead, consumers value symbolic meanings. What the object (product) means to an individual is the most important product utility in the postmodern era. Therefore, it is clear that there is a break between modernism and postmodernism. This break is related to the fact that singular meanings of objects no longer exist. Postmodern consumers experience various meanings assigned to objects.

Baudrillard draws on semiology to study

² J. Baudrillard, *Jean Baudrillard: Selected Writings*, ed. M. Poster (California: Stanford University Press, 1988).

³ W. Leiss, S. Klein, and S. Jhally, *Social Communication in Advertising* (London : Routledge, 1990).

⁴ M. McLuhan, *Understanding Media* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964).

⁵ W. Leiss, S. Klein, and S. Jhally, *op. cit.*

⁶ B. Stern, *op. cit.* pp. 387-400.

⁷ B. Stern, *op. cit.* p. 387.

⁸ G. McCracken, *Culture and Consumption: New Approaches to the Symbolic Character of Consumer Goods and Activities*(Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1990).

⁹ M. B. Holbrook and E. C. Hirschman, "Hedonic Consumption: Emerging Concepts, Methods and Propositions", *Journal of Marketing* 46(1992): 92-101.

¹⁰ S. J. Levy, *Symbolism and Life style: in Toward Scientific marketing*, ed. S. A. Greyser, American Marketing Association (New York: McGraw- Hill Book Company, 1963).

¹¹ M. Barnald, *Fashion as communication* (London: Routledge, 1996).

¹² S. Ewen and E. Ewen, *Channels of desire*(NY: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1982).

consumer culture and suggests that consumption entails the active manipulation of signs¹³. He argues that the manipulation of signs is a central phenomenon of the late capitalist society in which sign-commodity becomes "commodity-sign." Signs are able to float freely from various objects and the manipulation through advertising and media allows signs to have new meanings. He indicated that the powerful role of advertising continuously ratifies consumer society.

3. Hyperreality

Baudrillard introduced the notion of "hyperreality" in postmodern society. Hyperreality is a reality without origin, or a reality which is created from simulation and becomes a referential being or a substance¹⁴. According to him, reproduction, the endless reduplication of signs, images, and simulations through the media effaces the distinction between the image and reality.

There are some characteristics of hyperreality. First, there is a difference between reality in modern era and hyper reality or "hyperreality" in postmodern era. Second, there is an ongoing transformation and replacement of reality in this postmodern era. A hyperreal reality occurs when unreal simulacra and simulation replaces that which is "real". Reality absorbs into a hyperreal-reality, then this transformed reality, so called, "hyperreality" becomes a reality of the culture. The over-production of signs and reproduction of images and simulations lead to a loss of clear meanings previously shaped by people in society. Manipulation of signs and symbolic meaning is evident in the design and imagery of the production and marketing processes. The product becomes embedded or situated in a sym-

bolic context that imparts meaning to the product beyond its constituent elements or benefits.

In postmodernity, industrialization brought mass-production, and technology allowed for producing exact copies of original objects. Objects lost their intrinsic as well as traditional meanings. As Baudrillard points out, individual consumers imbue objects with different meanings, therefore, the transgression of symbolic meaning is linked to each individual's pure pleasures¹⁵. Postmodern consumer culture is filled with visual images. Images created by simulation attract consumers' attention by way of various media such as television, music video, magazines, billboards on streets and on buses, as if this simulated reality were real.

As consumers live with these visual images, the simulated reality becomes a reality which, as Baudrillard describes, is "more real than real itself"¹⁶. Simulation and simulacra, which are not real, thus become realities, which Baudrillard calls hyperreality¹⁷. In doing so, realities are changed and appear in different states so there is not a single, ultimate truth, but multiple realities.

Hyperreality is a reality that exists in the symbolic world and is not historically shared but is constructed by people in the postmodern society. As an example, industrialization in the past, brought an endless supply of signifiers (commodities) born with empty meanings and upon which new meanings are given by producers as well as by consumers. In addition, the postmodern market environment promotes an atmosphere that contributes to the creation of simulated images/realities which are hyperreal and blur the distinction between the real and

¹³ J. Baudrillard, *op. cit.*

¹⁴ J. Baudrillard, *op. cit.*

¹⁵ J. Baudrillard, *op. cit.*

¹⁶ J. Baudrillard, *The anti-aesthetic: Essays on postmodern culture*, ed. M. Poster, *The ecstasy of communication*, (Seattle, Washington: Bay press, 1983, p.147).

¹⁷ J. Baudrillard, *op. cit.*

non real¹⁸).

Hyperreality is the tendency of people in a culture to experience, realize, and reconstruct simulation. Firat and Venkatesh maintain that the simulation tends to capture the imagination of consumers who start to behave in line with their imagination¹⁹; thus, simulation becomes the social reality of the culture. The consumption process consists of paradoxically combining "the real" and "the imagery," so one consumes objects, their embodied meanings, and their images all together.

4. Postmodern Consumers

"Baby boomers," (born from 1946 to 1964) are associated with the beginning of postmodern consumerism²⁰. The baby boomers were not alive during World War II, but they lived through the Post World War II, Post-Vietnam, Post-New Left, Post-Hippie, and Post-Watergate eras, which caused tremendous frustrations for them²¹. They are the people who experienced production and consumption, inflation, and interdependent economics²². These economical fluctuations brought social frustrations. Through this series of social as well as economical fluctuations, the baby boomers lost their faith in political narratives and religious authorities. After going through these experiences, baby boomers are trying to find their own ways to live and think.

Generations X and Y are other segments of

postmodern consumers. While Generation Y includes the 30 million Americans aged 12 to 19 years old as of 1999²³, Generation Xers are the 77 million Americans born between 1958 and 1978. Generation Xers are today's main workforce, as well as the main actors in postmodern consumer culture²⁴.

Generation Xers have experienced diversity in gender, family relationship, ethnicity, religion, and political affiliation. Xers adapted different ideals about work and family. They are characterized by pragmatic as well as cynical realism. They are extremely realistic and believe more in cause and effect than in ideas or theories. While baby boomers have respect for authority, Generation Xers do not have respect for authority. Xers also do not have loyalty to organizations, thus, they no longer stay with the same corporations, religious affiliations, political parties, or health care providers, which also is different from the baby boomers²⁵.

Postmodern consumers have experienced dramatic changes in social, political, and economic changes. Thus, postmodern consumers express their unique sentiments through a "celebration of skepticism, subversives, irony, anarchy, playfulness, paradox, ephemerality, fragmentation, style, spectacle, self-referential, and above all-by hostility toward other generations"²⁶.

In order to compensate for the gap between social reality and the ego, postmodern consumers tend to seek fantasy and crave satis-

¹⁸ A. F. Firat and A. Venkatesh, "Liberatory postmodernism and the reenchantment of consumption", *Journal of Consumer Research*, 22(1995): 239-267.

¹⁹ A. F. Firat and A. Venkatesh, *op. cit.*

²⁰ L. Lippman, "Report down plays baby boom retirement crisis", *The Atlantic constitution* 16 (November 1998), sec. A: 3.

²¹ T. Gitlin, *Postmodernism defined*, at last. Utne Reader, (July, 1989): 52-61.

²² T. J. Domzal and J. B. Kernan, "Mirror, mirror: Some postmodern reflections on global advertising", *Journal of advertising* 22 (4, 1993): 1-20.

²³ B. Ebenkamp, "Tipping the balance", *Adweek Eastern Edition*, 40(19, 1999): 4.

²⁴ A. Brancato, "Change the dates", *American Demographics* (January, 1999): 6.

²⁵ K. M. Dunn-Cane, J. L. Gonzalez, and H. P. Stewart, "Managing the new generation", *Association of Operating Room Nurses Journal* 69, no. 5 (1999): 930.

faction for their desires through the transgression of the meanings of objects, as well as of visual images, with the expression of irony, bricolage, and paradox.

Also, postmodern consumers juxtapose with the mixing of codes to create parody, pastiche, irony, and playfulness. Juxtaposition of opposites is another important characteristic of postmodern cultures²⁷⁾. Postmodern consumers believe that "anything can be juxtaposed to anything else"²⁸⁾. Postmodern consumers have experienced diversity in every day of their lives (e.g., gender, race, ethnicity, and political affiliation).

III. Research Method

1. Research Paradigm

A "paradigm" is a set of basic beliefs (or metaphysics) which represents a world-view that shows the possible relationships between that world and its parts. Paradigms are determined based on ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions²⁹⁾.

The metaphysics of critical theory is used as a paradigm in the study. The purpose of critical theory is to find the critique and transformation of reality that is a reflection of the social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic, and gender structures in the given context. One of the assumptions of the critical theory is that knowledge which is a foundation of understanding, accumulates or changes through the on-going process of dialectical process of historical revisions,

thus, generalization of understanding of reality comes only through the mix of social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic, and gender circumstances and values in the given context³⁰⁾. In the study, critical theory is used to find the valued -determined nature of inquiry that is an epistemological difference between the objects³¹⁾.

From this perspective, postmodern reality is assumed to be apprehensible by the researcher based on the researcher's understanding of reality related to social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic, and gender circumstances and values. The researcher and the investigated objects (i.e., postmodern fashion ads) are not only assumed to be interactively linked, but also findings of the study are assumed to be value-mediated findings which are subjective and transactional.

2. Advertisement Selection

Postmodern fashion ads are different from the modern ones for their unique characteristics. According to Lee³²⁾ the unique characteristics of postmodern fashion ads in fashion magazines are: a) editing styles such as multi page ads and serial ads, b) using real people and setting, c) conspicuous usage of the human body, d) black and white documentary ads, and e) usage of visual (image -focused) having minimal or no written descriptions (i.e., only brand names and /or store locations). Based on the criteria, Calvin Klein's fashion ads, cK one appeared in the November 1995 issue of Vogue magazine and

²⁶ S. Brown, "Postmodern marketing: Principles, practices, and panaceas", *Irish Marketing Review-Dublin* 6, (1993): 1.

²⁷ A. F. Firat, "The consumer in postmodernity", *Advances in Consumer Research* 18 (1991): 70-76.

²⁸ T. Gitlin, *Postmodernism: Roots and politics*, ed. I. Angus and S. Jhally, *Cultural politics in contemporary America* (New York: Routledge, 1989): 350.

²⁹ E. G. Guba and Y. S. Lincoln, *Competing paradigms in qualitative research*, ed. N. K. Denzin and Y. S. Lincoln, *Handbook of qualitative research method* (London: Sage Publications, 1994): 105-117.

³⁰ E. G. Guba and Y. S. Lincoln, *op. cit.*

³¹ E. G. Guba and Y. S. Lincoln, *op. cit.*

³² J. Lee, *Symbolic meanings, consumers' responses and interpretations of postmodern fashion advertisements*, Unpublished doctoral dissertation (Ohio: Ohio State University, 2000).

ck be appeared in the September 1996 issue of Vogue magazine were selected for the study.

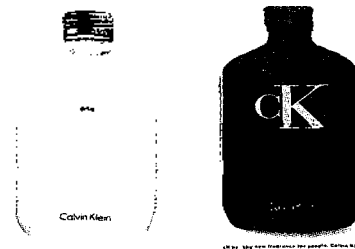
IV. Deconstruction of the cK one & cK be ad

1. cK one and cK be

Calvin Klein's recent perfume products, cK one and cK be, had the biggest debut in fragrance history with heavy promotions to both males and females in the autumn seasons of 1994 and 1996. As cK one was introduced with a large promotion campaign and became the number one fragrance. cK be was supported by a \$ 20 million-plus marketing effort, in addition to media advertising. cK one and cK be, target the 18-to-35-year old market, aimed at both men and women³³. cK one and cK be advertisements have specific characteristics, which have a more realistic looks: they are documentary-like black and white pictures. This documentary style fits into the notion of "real people" suggested by the

Calvin Klein company to give more sense of unfake authentic reality compared to the modern concept of advertising using beautiful and adorned models, which give us some sense of fake and packaged reality.

For cK one, there are three different kinds of advertising format: one page, two pages, or four pages as a special inserted ad. Among them, the two page ad is seen most frequently, therefore, it was selected for this study (Fig. 1: cK one). This cK one ad shows many young people with



<Fig. 2> CK one and cK be Bottle.



<Fig. 1> CK one ad-2page.

³³ P. Sloan, "Real people suit Calvin Klein in cK be, jeans and boxers ads", *Advertising age*, 67, no. 34 (1996): 3, 30.

different body poses and facial expressions. Some models are facing each other and arguing, and others are facing front without any concerns to others but they stand side by side with other models. The copy for cK one is a "fragrance for a man or a woman" and it is written at the bottom of the ad (Fig. 2: Ck one bottle).

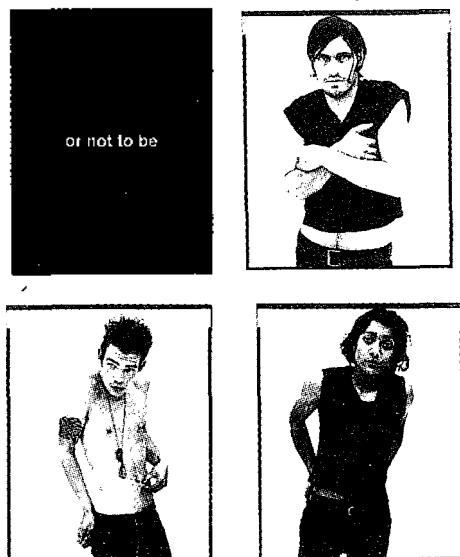
In contrast, cK be is an eleven page serial advertising showing eight different models on



<Fig. 5> CK be Advertisement- Third part: Just be.



<Fig. 3> CK be Advertisement- First part: To be.



<Fig. 4> CK be Advertisement-Second Part: Or not to be.

each page. It consists of three parts; "To be" (Fig. 3); "Not to be"(Fig. 4), and "Just be"(Fig. 5). Each tagline is printed on a separate page with white letters on a black ground. Some of the pictures of each model are following one of three taglines. The copy for cK be is " cK be, the fragrance for people. Calvin Klein" is written at the bottom of the ad (Fig. 2 -cK be bottle).

V. Discussion

1. cK Version of Hyperreality

1) Consuming Meaning

Both cK one and cK be ads present a post-modernist perspective, which differs from the modernists' object-sign relationship. From a postmodern perspective, the ad can be considered as hyperreality. While the product's message is usually seen as essential in ads, these series do not point to an exact message about the product, such as, its usefulness, cost, and fragrance. For example, the only copy in the cK be advertising is, "cK be the new fragrance for people. Calvin Klein". The product's physical characteristics are less relevant and less remarkable than its symbolic value. The copy in the cK one and cK be ads have no relation to the function of the product. This paradox appears to be the "authentic reality", which is what Baudrillard called "hyperreality"³⁴⁾. As surrealism is considered as hyperreality in that, that which is considered as art without art³⁵⁾. In this sense, ads without related product messages might be another version of hyperreality.

2) Decentered Culture: Real people

Calvin Klein's cK one and cK be advertisements show people who are of decentered youth subculture groups. In the cK be series, none of the models conform to the stereotypical image of fashionable models in the media, such as young, beautiful, and well adorned people. The models are neither beautiful nor adorned, but are untidy and unkempt. These images are atypical and irrelevant for mainstream fragrance ads, which normally use beautiful and romantic models and images. In using such models, the commodity is somehow bypassed by an "unreal" advertising image; thus Baudrillard's "hyperreality". It is a paradox and a hyperreality. All undesirable image of models which was considered as an unreal image in modern era, was absorbed into the real image of desirable models. Thus, there is a transformation, which is an ongoing process of replacement of reality. According to Baudrillard, that is a simulation which is totally different from a fiction or lie in

that it not only presents an absence as a presence, the imagery as the real, it also undermines any contrast to the real, absorbing the real within itself. That is hyperreal.

3) Transformation of Meaning from cK One to cK be

There are transformations of meaning from cK one and cK be. The transformations allude the on-going changes of reality in postmodern consumer culture.

The transformations are closely interrelated to the concept of postmodern consumer culture. As the copy says, cK one is for male and female consumers. cK one is targeted for a unisex market, as the copy says, "A fragrance for a man or a woman". cK be, which has the same unisex target market, uses the copy, "The fragrance for people". This copy carries no notions of gender. In contrast, the cK one copy makes a clear distinction of gender: male and female. It is also symbolized by a white and

<Table 1> Transformations of Meaning from cK One to cK be

Product Name	cK one	cK be
Characteristics		
Birth year	September 1994	September 1996
Container shape	Bottle	Same
Bottle color	White (Transparent)	Black (Dim)
Target Market	18~35 yr. Male and Female	Same
Advertising Characteristic	Documentary like Black and white	Same
Copy	"A fragrance for a man or a woman"	"Be", "To be", and "Just be" "cK be The fragrance for people. Calvin Klein"
Hidden Meaning of the copy	Gender difference -Male/female	No gender concept -People

³⁴ J. Baudrillard, *Simulations*, trans. P. Foss, P. Patton, and P. Beitchman (New York: Semiotext, 1983).

³⁵ J. Baudrillard, *op. cit.*

transparent bottle. Gender differences are transparent and can be observed through the bottle. Male models are masculine with manly physiques, and feminine females show, to some extent, erotic body poses and bare breasts. An opened zipper of jeans of a male model serves as a metaphor for masculinity. On the other hand, the cK be bottle is black. One can not see the clear difference of gender through the bottle because it is no longer transparent. The change of bottle color signifies the trend toward the blending of gender or sexual ambiguity. Although cK be targets 18~35 yr. males and females, as does cK one, cK be is for all people. The word "people", is a prime example of a reified symbol of ambivalence and relativism, and has characteristics of ambiguity and uncertainty. cK be is not just the fragrance for male or female but also for bi-sexual, homosexual, Asian, American, European, young or old. The word, "people", may be extended to every human being regardless of gender, age, race, ethnicity, and nationality. Belk indicated that globalization is closely linked to the trend toward hyperreality. Because of "technology, such as automated production and mass-communication, objects and meaning can be globalized"³⁶. We become global citizens and every person around the world have opportunities to know and share the same notions of ideology, products, events, and even fragrance.

4) Postmodern Philosophy of cK be: Hedonism and Relativism

For cK be, "To be or not to be" is a famous phrase derived from Shakespeare's classical masterpiece, Hamlet. To this end, the cK be ad insinuates the philosophy of the designer, Calvin Klein. It is not a matter of importance of your

being, who you are, or to go one step further, whether death or life. The important thing is "just as it is"- naturalness. It represents the notion of not conforming to rules in a given society even though they may be a matter of life or death. It may insinuate the rejection of tradition, institution, or a rejection of death, which is regarded as the limitation of human being. "Just be" hints at the hidden concepts of hedonism and relativism. First, the hedonist thinks that pleasure is the most important thing in life so enjoy and be satisfied, "Just be" even though it is a matter of death or life.

Second, it shows relativism. To some extent, relativism is closely related to individuality. There is no absolute truth; no inferiority nor superiority. Every individual has equality. It doesn't matter whether you are beautiful or not, "just be" is the solution for everything in your life. Every thing can be truth. Your being "Just be" is the truth and the best thing you need to be proud of.

5) The Body as a Center of Postmodern Culture

The models' bodies are conspicuous in the ads. Shilling states that bodies reflect unprecedented individualization in postmodern contemporary culture³⁷. Postmodern people consider their own bodies as objects, which they can manipulate and use to produce meaning. Bodily decoration is related to symbolic communication and becomes a cultural production³⁸. Postmodern people are increasingly concerned with the appearance of their own bodies as expressions of their individual identities and the body is socially and culturally constructed in a given culture³⁹. People who live in this era feel the lost of a clear sense of their views of the world

³⁶ R. Belk, "Hyperreality and globalization: Culture in the age of Ronald McDonald", *Journal of International Consumer Marketing* 8, no. 3,4 (1996): 26.

³⁷ C. Shilling, *Body and social theory* (London: Sage Publication, 1993).

³⁸ G. Faurschou, "Fashion and the cultural logic of postmodernity", *Canadian Journal of Political and Social Theory* 11, no. 1-2 (1987): 68-84.

and self-identity. For them, only the body appears to provide a firm foundation on which to reconstruct a reliable sense of self. In the cK one and cK be ads, no other object besides the human body conveys this message. The bodies are figures and form the backdrop for the ads. Each models' body pose is used as a unique language to express one's individualistic meaning. Gestures and facial expressions are their own narratives to communicate themselves. The bodies are signals and symbols for symbolic diversities. These two ads support what Baudrillard⁴⁰ says, the body is used as a expressive tool of showing a rupture of previous value as well indicating an emergence of symbolic diversity. One can find that one of the characteristics of postmodernism is the transmission of reality mainly through the bodies.

VI. Conclusion

Through deconstructing the ads five postmodern characteristics representing Baudrillard's notion of hyperreality were found. These characteristics clearly define what postmodern consumer culture is. First, different from ads in modern era, there is no message regarding functional characteristics of the product offered in the ad, which is far from the modernist's utilitarian point of view. Instead, the ads take postmodern perspective. Symbolic meanings of the product are offered and the product's physical characteristics are less relevant and less remarkable than its symbolic value in the ads.

Second, the ads use atypical, irrelevant models and images, which are introduced as a concept of 'real people' rather than the ideal person or body type. All the models seem to be rather removed from the fragrance ad and these untidy, unkempt, atypical, and irrelevant models and images replace the stereotypical beautiful

fragrance models. Using Baudrillard's concept, all unreal images of model absorb the real image of desirable models, which becomes a reality of postmodern consumer culture, which is hyperreality.

Third, there are transformations of the meanings from cK one to cK be such as the notions of globalization and gender. The copies and the different bottle colors for cK One and cK be signify the hidden meanings and these transformations of the meanings, which clearly represent changes of ongoing reality in postmodern culture.

Fourth, there are hidden meanings of hedonism and relativism, which are prevalent in postmodern ideology. Especially for cK be, the copy "Just be" is a refined example of postmodern philosophy insinuating there is no absolute truth. "Just be" could be the truth of everything in postmodern consumer culture.

Finally, models' bodies are used to convey messages as well as form the ground and figure in the ad. In postmodern consumer culture, the body is a firm foundation on which postmodern consumers practice as well as reflect their unprecedented individualization. Models' bodies replace other backdrops and figures in the ads, which is simulated reality and it is real than more real, hyperreal. In conclusion, the study of Calvin Klein's fashion ads supports the notion that advertising mirrors reality which, in this case, is hyperreality.

References

- Barnald, M. 1996. *Fashion as communication*. London: Routledge.
- Baudrillard, J. 1983. *In Simulations*. trans, P. Foss, P. Patton, & P. Beitchman., New York: Semiotext.
- Baudrillard, J. 1988. *In Jean Baudrillard: selec-*

³⁹ C. J. Thompson and E. C. Hirschman, "Understanding the socialized body: A poststructuralist analysis of consumers' self-conceptions, body images and self-care practices, *Journal of Consumer Research* 22 (1995): 139-153.

⁴⁰ J. Baudrillard, *op. cit.*

- ted writings*, ed. M. Poster. California: Stanford University Press.
- Belk, R. 1996. Hyperreality and globalization: Culture in the age of Ronald McDonald, *Journal of International Consumer Marketing*, 8(3,4): 23-37.
- Brancado, A. 1999. Change the dates. *American Demographics*. January, 6.
- Brown, S. 1993. Postmodern marketing: Principles, practices, and panaceas. *Irish Marketing Review-Dublin*, 6: 1.
- Domzal, T. J. & Kernan, J. B. 1993. Mirror, mirror: Some postmodern reflections on global advertising. *Journal of advertising*, 22(4): 1-20.
- Dunn-Cane, K. M., Gonzalez, H. P. & Stewart, H. P. 1999. Managing the new generation. *Association of Operating Room Nurses Journal*, 69: 930.
- Ebenkamp, B. 1999. Tipping the balance. *Adweek Eastern Edition*. 40: 4.
- Ewen, S. & Ewen, E. 1982. *Channels of desire*. NY: McGraw-Hill.
- Faurschou, G. 1987. Fashion and the cultural logic of postmodernity. *Canadian Journal of Political and Social Theory*, 11: 68-84.
- Firat, A. F. 1991. The consumer in postmodernity, *Advances in Consumer Research*, 18: 70-76.
- Firat, A. F. and Venkatesh A. 1995. Liberatory postmodernism and the reenchantment of consumption, *Journal of Consumer Research*, 22: 239-267.
- Gitlin, T. 1989. Postmodernism defined, at last. *Utne Reader*, 52-61.
- Gitlin, T. 1989. Postmodernism: Roots and politics. In *Cultural politics in contemporary America*, ed. I. Angus and S. Jhally. New York: Routledge.
- Guba, E. G. and Lincoln, Y. S. 1994. Competing paradigms in qualitative research. In *Handbook of qualitative research method*, ed. N. K. Denzin and Y. S. Lincoln. London: Sage Publications, 105-117.
- Holbrook, M. B. & Hirschman, E. C. 1982. Hedonic consumption: Emerging concepts, methods and propositions. *Journal of Marketing*, 46: 92-101.
- Lee, J. 2000. *Symbolic meanings, consumers' responses and interpretations of postmodern fashion advertisements*. Unpublished doctoral diss., Columbus: Ohio State University.
- Leiss, W., Klein, S. & Jhally, S. 1990. *Social communication in advertising*. London: Routledge.
- Levy, S. J. 1963. Symbolism and Life style, In *Toward Scientific marketing*, ed., S. A. Greyser. American Marketing Association. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Lippman, L. 1998. Report down plays baby boom retirement crisis, *The Atlantic constitution*, sec. A. P.3.
- McCracken, G. 1990. *Culture and consumption: New approaches to the symbolic character of consumer goods and activities*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.
- McLuhan, M. 1964. *Understanding media*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Shilling, C. 1993. *Body and social theory*. London: Sage Publication.
- Sloan, P. 1996. Real people suit Calvin Klein in cK be, jeans and boxers ads. *Advertising Age*, 65: 4.
- Stern, B. 1994. Authenticity and the textual persona: Postmodern paradoxes in advertising narratives. *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, 11: 387-400.
- Thompson, C. J. & Hirschman, E. C. 1995. Understanding the socialized body: A post-structuralist analysis of consumers' self-conceptions, body images and self-care practices. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 22: 139-153.