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## Media's Impact on Gender Role Stereotypes Assignment

### **Part 1: Reflection on Gender Stereotypes**

#### 1. What are GENDER ROLE STEREOTYPES?

Gender role stereotypes are preconceptions about the roles and characteristics that men and women should be performing, forming the basis of sexism (Chapter 12. Gender, Sex, and Sexuality).

#### 2. How do gender stereotypes influence typical male/female thoughts, beliefs, decision-making, behaviors, and actions?

Gender stereotypes can impact how male, and females think, make decisions, and act in various ways through:

- Family: As the textbook mentions, family is the first factor of socialization. When applying gender stereotypes in family, parents may separate roles for their children. For example, the boys of the family are tasked with taking out the trash because of their strength, while the girls do the dishes due to the low intensity. As the children mature, they may develop the belief that men must perform duties that require strength, and women must do tasks that are less strenuous.
- Media: The media enforces gender role stereotypes by portraying male and female characters through typical masculine or feminine parts. As the textbook describes, when

given a lead role, women are either casted as a wholesome character or a sexual one (Chapter 12. Gender, Sex, and Sexuality).

- Emotions: Emotions are influenced by gender role stereotypes through the beliefs that men and women have to express their emotions a certain way. For instance, women tend to have greater emotional expression while men suppress them.

3. How are gender role stereotypes used to exploit us by advertisers?

Gender role stereotypes are used to exploit us by advertisers through media techniques, creating the way viewers think about themselves to sell products. In advertisements, gender role stereotypes are specifically seen through pushing products based on the audience, such as lawnmowers to men or cleaning products to women.

4. What can we do to protect ourselves against gender role stereotypes?

To protect ourselves against gender role stereotypes, it is important to be educated in the term, as well as the ability to recognize when it is being used. By being informed on the manipulation tactics the media uses or behavior by others, individuals can advocate and spread awareness on such issues.

## **Part 2: Media Analysis**

1. Stereotypical male media: Gillette, 'The Best A Man Can Get' ft. Tom Grennan

In this media selection, the target audience are men who shave, with an implication that the razor is catered for a man's use. While this ad explicitly shows that the product is for shaving hair, the end of the video also provides the Gillette tagline of "The Best A Man Can Get."

From the slogan and ad, the audience may believe that in order for men to be the "best"

version of themselves, they must look a certain way, which implied, is cleanly shaven. In this video, the males are free, outgoing, and sociable, and the females are supportive. Watching this ad, I noticed that while the females are only showed a few times, their role was to be a supporting character in their male partner's life. By focusing exclusively on men's grooming needs, Gillette implies that a women's grooming needs are less important. Thus, reinforcing the gender role stereotype around personal maintenance products.

2. Stereotypical female media: Dr. Squatch | "Dirty Little Boys" | Natural Body Wash

In this media selection, the target audience are men, with the female actor, Sydney Sweeney explicitly stating in the beginning of the video, "Hello dirty little boys" (Dr. Squatch 0:10). Throughout the ad, Sydney addresses the viewers as men, who are portrayed as weak, unless they buy the product being advertised. In this video, no male figure is shown, only talked about, due to the focus on the female actor. By depicting Sydney Sweeney as a figure of sensuality, the company is catering to the male gaze. In doing so, this is enforcing the stereotype that even in film, a women's role is sexually arousing for the opposite gender and that men have those desire in the first place. While this advertisement for a body wash has the intention to be comedic, its content implies that males are weak when it comes to a women's body.

### **Part 3: Raised Without Gender**

1. What is the difference between sex and gender?

These two terms have their own definitions. Sex is the term used to describe an individual's biological characteristics, while gender refers to social and cultural characteristics of masculine or feminine behavior.

2. How does Goffman (the researcher in the documentary) see gender (at birth, throughout our life, in society, etc.)?

While I could not figure out who Goffman was in this documentary, I am able to relay how Del LaGrace Volcano sees gender in their life. As an intersex individual, Del believes that gendering is harmful. Thus, when raising two children with their partner, Del allows for creativity and choice for their young children, despite their assigned sex at birth. On a typical day, Del's children dress however they wish, as well as the ability to be a boy, girl, or non-binary that specific day. While Switzerland is forward-thinking in questioning gender, there are times in public where people will stare or assign children pronouns to which they do not prefer. Understanding, Del does not correct the public. However, to let freedom in gender be present, Del's children attend progressive schools that focus on creativity.

### 3. Woman's hands vs. Man's hands in advertising

In advertising, the depiction of a woman's hand versus a man's is clearly different. Often, women's hands are viewed as more delicate and gentler, therefore portraying the idea that they must stick to beauty or low intensity actions. I have noticed that in advertisements for lotion, the model is of a feminine hand with long and slender fingers. Conversely, male hands are depicted as large and bulky, taking on more intense advertisements, such as athletic products and drinks. With these media techniques, companies are enforcing gender role stereotypes that men and women have separate parts that they must perform.

### 4. If someone from another planet was to visit North America, how do you think they would describe us? Explain your answer in terms of men and women and how they interact, etc.

If someone came from another planet to visit North America, I think they would describe us as both gender conforming and non-conforming, depending on location. In parts of North America where individuals have more conservative beliefs, an outsider would view this continent as two genders—male and female. With this, each person will have stereotypical appearances and actions, such as women wearing dresses or men doing yard work. On the other

hand, if an area depicts more gender neutrality or freeness, the outsider will see that individuals interact with each other less on gender stereotypes, but more on actions and appearances that are comfortable to them.

## Works Cited

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