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## Images of women in the semiotic landscape of the Baltic states

In researching the linguistic landscape (LL) of nine cities in the Baltic states, this article will show that female discourse is significant within public areas and spaces. This has been linguistically proven by female personal names in ergonyms, as well as by female ergonyms and themes within graffiti texts. However, there are multi-modal advertisements which display female products publicly, which can be viewed from the perspective of the semiotic landscape. A total of 294 photos showing women were selected from the LL database in order to describe visual images of women, by focusing on the archetypes and concepts of a woman's role in society.

The research showed that any target audience is linguistically identified more often than not by age, which social and ethnic group one belongs to, while images emphasize the target audience more commonly by sex, that is, by female gender, for example, images of women or female body parts and of women's products (e.g. women's clothing on a mannequin).

Selected materials are generally characterized by absolutization of the perfect appearance, one which includes the maintaining of certain stereotypes, that a woman is both beautiful and slender, that she is physically fit, replete with perfect makeup, someone who belongs to the cult of youth, who reflects how popular and successful women should appear. This is the standard example, one that exemplifies the need for solitude, narcissism and emotional concealment, all wrapped up within the glorification of an advertisement for perfume.

According to the data, typical female activities tend to be the receiving of beauty treatments, various forms of relaxation such as traveling, dancing, visiting the tanning salon or sunbathing, and most significantly of all, shopping. These images mainly emphasize service-sector occupations: waitresses, bank employees, flight attendants, masseuses, cabaret dancers or exotic dancers. In regard to the roles of wife and mother, they are viewed as social roles, which are represented as being inseparable from each other. The female lover (flirtatious temptress) and female friend, are two of the most common archetypical images reflected in the semiotic landscape of the Baltic states.

In conclusion, the visual representation of women in the Baltic states is related to the perception of life as pleasure, emphasizing the significance of sensuality and entertainment.

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## Introduction

As we move through any city in the world, we knowingly or unknowingly examine various buildings and advertisements with readable texts, images, symbols, artefacts, and even a few examples of advertising copy that is crass and insensitive. In their own way, they all indirectly influence our ideas and notions about social issues, including that of a woman's image and role in society.

Female discourse is formed by different types of written texts and images, many of which play a significant part in the everyday world of public communication in the Baltic states. This is demonstrated by the widely practiced application of female personal names as company names, or so-called 'ergonyms'. For instance, in the city of Valmiera in Latvia, 13 out of 105 recorded local company names were created by female anthroponyms (also mythonyms), such as *Evita*, *Vija*, *Līga*, *Rēzija* and *Artemīda*, the "Hellenic goddess of the hunt, archery, wild animals, forests and hills, and the moon", while only three are male anthroponyms (or literary character names): *Rimants*, *Austris*, *Kristaps*, *Vinnijs Pūks* and 'Winnie the Pooh'. Moreover, only female personal names are used in ergonyms in *Druskininkai* and *Visaginas* (both in Lithuania), e.g. *Monika*, *Inga*, *Vika*, and *Agneta*. Especially striking are how advertisements, posters, and forms of graffiti utilize verbal texts about women (typifying or exulting romantic or sexual relationships with them), while images of women (both complete and partial, e.g., face, hands or legs) and photos of women's goods (clothes, cosmetics, hygienic products, jewelry), openly dominate public spaces. Women are also indirectly depicted by the use of female nouns in ergonyms. For instance, the wedding salon name *Baltoji dama*<sup>2</sup>, 'The White Lady', is used to refer to a bride in general, while at the same time denotes a particular photo of a bride on advertising hoarding in *Alytus*, Lithuania.

The aim of the article is to look at these public advertisements and to characterize the visually-represented images of women in the context of identity and social processes, particularly focusing on typical archetypes and notions about the role of women in society. The basic research questions are: (1) How are women displayed visually? (2) Which are the most typical features of images of women? (3) Which things, goods and services, and social roles are ascribed to women? (4) How are women's relationships with others (e.g., other women, boyfriends/husbands, friends, colleagues, children) shown? Research is based on the LL approach and semiotic landscape methods, the social semiotics theory in visual communication, and the conception of visual identity in marketing and popular culture, as well as archetype theories.

<sup>2</sup> Here and further on examples are followed by the author's translation to English.

This article is divided into several parts. First, the research materials and methods are explained, which will support the basic theoretical background on the research issues. This is followed by various research examples that have been provided for comparison and further discussion. Next, the general description of selected public advertising is provided, which will highlight typical characteristics, while also interpreting certain examples of advertisements. Analysis and interpretation of the social roles of women and their archetypical images, will be followed by a summary, and finally, the most significant of these conclusions are given.

## Materials and methods

The research began in Rēzekne, Latvia, in 2008, and consisted of photographing every advertising hoarding or poster (written messages demonstrating completeness of text, features of a defined text genre, objectives and functions) in the public spaces of a city, then analyzing and interpreting them using the Linguistic Landscape (LL) approach. LL research was then conducted in Ventspils and Valmiera (Latvia); Pärnu, Narva and Viljandi (Estonia); and Alytus, Druskinkai and Visaginas (Lithuania)<sup>3</sup>; in which 7,347 advertisements were selected. The whole of the LL research in these nine Baltic cities was carried out from 2008 through to 2014, with the acquisition of data in each city. All advertisements were analyzed according to the 24 sociolinguistic criteria in the statistical program SPSS, and the accompanying photos were gathered and compiled in a digital and freely-accessible form at [www.lldata.lv](http://www.lldata.lv). Until now, the public signs of the Baltic states have been examined mainly from the perspective of sociolinguistics and language politics (e.g., Marten *et al.* 2012, Lazdiņa, Pošeiko, Marten 2013), with little attention paid to nonverbal information (such as images in posters – Pošeiko 2012, graffiti – Pošeiko 2013).

However, it is not only evident in written texts, but also in the multiple various images contained within collected photographs. To examine texts formed by diverse sources of information (written text, images, sounds) or multi-modal texts, a wider point of view is necessary. The semiotic landscape (SL) theory provides this. The SL approach is similar to LL in that the methodology pertains to acquisition and analysis of public signs in the city. If the LL method is focused on linguistic and sociolinguistic analysis of public signs (Gorter 2006; Backhaus 2007; Shohamy, Gorter 2009), then the SL approach is based on the understanding of

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<sup>3</sup> Research of LL was carried out by students and researchers of Rēzekne university college (including the author of the article) within the scope of the Rēzekne university college project “Research of Linguistic Landscape of Rēzekne City and its Comparison to Other Baltic Cities” (supervisor Sanita Lazdiņa, Heiko F. Martens) and ESF project “Linguo-cultural and socio-economic aspects of territorial identity in the development of Latgale region” (supervisor Sanita Lazdiņa). The author of the article has individually carried out LL research in Valmiera during 2012, Daugavpils under 2013 (Latvia), during 2013 in Visaginas (Lithuania) and Viljandi under 2014 (Estonia).

language, graphic design, layout, composition of text, visual elements and symbols, as well as various discourses (e.g., spatial, transgressive, commercial), all of which are tools used to express ideas and communication. Therefore, a disclosure of implicit and explicit information of verbal and nonverbal text is also necessary (Kress, Van Leeuwen 1996; Scollon & Scollon 2003; Jaworski, Thurlow 2010). In both cases it was emphasized that the text can be polysemic and open to multiple interpretations.

In conducting this research, 294 public advertisements were selected from the LL photographic database, which clearly showed images of female products (photographs, picture, and sticker). All image details of the advertisements were described, paying particular attention to women's facial expressions, their poses, clothing and accessories, as well as the depiction of stereotypical female situations. Additionally, texts (slogans, to buy or use particular goods or service stimulating phrases) in any language relating to women were excluded from public advertisements and translated, in order to better understand the content.

The next step was putting images and their descriptions into social semiotic and commercial identities in which concrete gender and sexuality are highlighted, as well as archetype theories. They are briefly discussed below.

## Theoretical framework

Social semiotics is an approach to visual communication that seeks to understand how people communicate by a variety of means and modes, which are historically specific and socially and culturally shared opinions (or 'semiotic resources') in particular social settings (Halliday 1978; Hodge, Kress 1998; Van Leeuwen 2005). It is more or less focused on unlimited interpretation of the information that is presented in the form of images and the free combination of formative elements, with special attention paid to social issues. One illustrative example of a gender and sexuality study of social semiotics can be found in the research of visual representation of the heterosexuality of men in leaflets that are aimed at teenagers in Great Britain (Jewitt 1999). This research showed that all visible verbal and non-verbal tools, texts and explicit ideas as semiotic resources used on selected public advertising are combined together with implicit information: deeper meaning, contexts and socially determined notions.

As advertisements have become more diverse and accessible to everyone, more attention is being paid within the sphere of advertisement management to the perception mechanisms of the advertisement, adjustment of implicit information to the recipient's psychological characterization, cultural experience, and collective subconsciousness, and in so doing, discusses the psychoanalysis of advertising, archetypes and archetypical characters (e.g., Koptev, Klark 2003; de Muijnck 2009; Lankovskis 2010).

By evaluating materials on mythology, folklore and history, as well as modern tendencies of cultural development and improving theory of analytical psychology by Carl G. Jung, the new characters of the collective subconsciousness are defined. It must be mentioned that the system of 12 archetypes was created by archetypal branding theoreticians Margaret Mark and Carol Pearson, according to the results of qualitative research conducted in 33 countries where consumers' attitudes towards more than 13 thousand brands were examined (Figure 1).

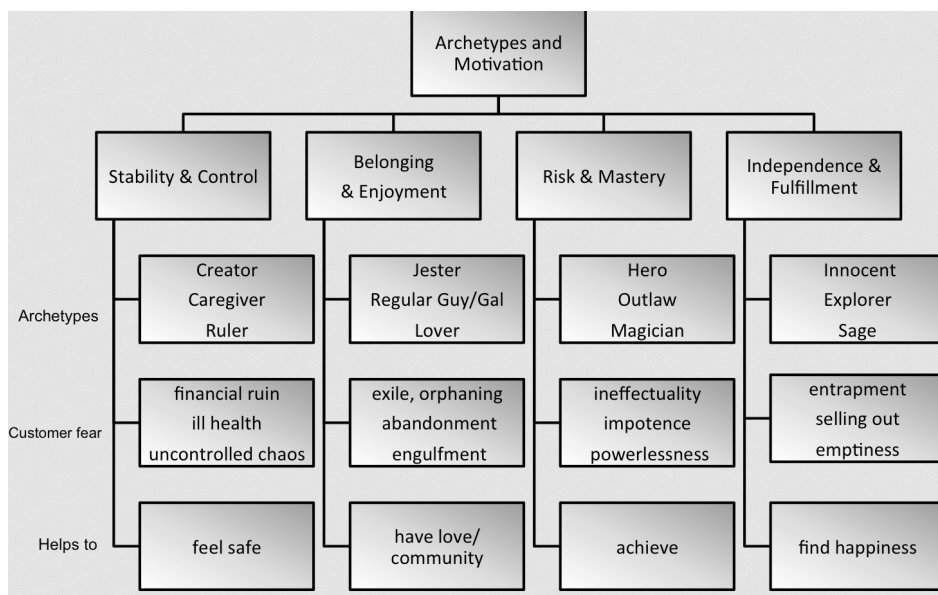


Figure 1. Archetypes and motivations according to M. Mark and C. Pearson

Source: Mark, Pearson 2001: 18.

Marketing specialist Andrey Ivaschenko (*Андрей Иващенко*) has created an 8-archetype model (Warrior, Thinker, Keeper, Esthete, Friend, Child, Pilgrim) and archetypal space (plane quadrant), that is based on human temperaments (extraversion and introversion) and levels of perception of information (logic, sensorics, ethics and intuition). He builds connections between the archetypes and conceptions of specific brands, and links advertisements to their recipients (Ivaschenko 2005).

Both archetype models share a number of common features which show that some individual expressions of archetypes are prevalent and firmly entrenched within modern culture. In some studies, these archetypes refer not only to people, but also to the culture of materialism (things), which visualizes the instincts and drives present in the human subconsciousness, as well as the kinds of needs that are related to the characteristic features of humans.

An advertisement is not only a recommendation designed to persuade people to acquire a certain product or service, but it is also utilised in order to frame an interesting story, one that often features a remarkable character who has a clear life goal. More often than not, these stories focus on successful relationships, in which the gaining of trust and friendship are paramount, and the more people this attracts, the more successful the advertisement (Mark, Pearson 2005: 8).

It can be concluded that visual identity is very important – a consciously-built conception or public image by which various means (colors, slogans, symbols, and images) represent a given company, brand or article (Dawson 2013). Thus, in order to decode visual information and characterize visual communication, linguistic analysis of a text needs to be complemented with research of the context of nonverbal text, as well as by interpreting the deeper, archetypal level.

### Characterization of Research Units

A general overview of selected advertising was devised using two forms of criteria: the target audience and the typical features of signs.

The LL database from nine Baltic cities consists of more than 7,000 units. Of these public advertisements, nineteen are company signboards with linguistic indication that the apparel/shoe store or hairdresser is solely for men, for example: *viss vīriešiem*, *De Lera, all for men* and *Sieviešu un vīriešu frizētava* ‘Hair salon for men and women’ in Daugavpils, *Мужская, meeste* ‘men’ [hair salon], *Fashion for men* in Narva. Meanwhile, potential customers who are linguistically indicated in 11 ergonyms, for example: *Naiste juuksur* ‘Hair salon for women’ in Narva, *SJ apģērbi sievietēm* ‘SJ women’s clothing’ and *Šarms frizētava dāmām un kungiem* ‘Hair salon for men and women Charm’ in Valmiera.

Furthermore, a potential female customer is also linguistically indicated by slogans in advertisements, e.g. the slogan of the cosmetics company *tianDe* in two different languages *Skaistai būt viegli!* *Красивой быть легко!* ‘It is easy to be beautiful’ in Daugavpils, the slogan of the cosmetics line *LHYPERL Paris, Jo Tu esi tā vērtā!* ‘Because you’re worth it’, in Valmiera; in listings of offerings, e.g., *Мужскуemples of offerings*, ‘Haircuts for men and women’ in Narva and *Nauji drabužiai moterims* ‘New clothing for women’ in Alytus. In the city of Visaginas, it was women who were the target audience of a recent advertising campaign against abortion, which was demonstrated by the emotive words: *Mama, padovanok man gyvenimą!* ‘Mom, please give me life!’ along with a child’s drawing depicting an infant in a woman’s hands.

When women become the target audience, they are more often communicated with through nonverbal means. For instance, in hair salons women are visually depicted as having fashionable hairstyles, while nearby street advertisements show women with well-manicured hands. Similarly, in areas close to tanning solariums there are pictures of women with perfect tanned skin, and equally, near



spa centers there are plenty of images of women lying on massage tables, just as in close proximity to clothing stores there are mannequins dressed in women's clothing, etc. Therefore, we can assume that specific types of companies (hair salons, beauty salons, apparel and shoe stores) are mainly commercial outlets intended for women, which are indicated by the many different images of objects and products (clothes, shoes, bags, cosmetics), or images of women, and so, an additional verbal form of advertising text becomes unnecessary.

Professor of social sciences and anthropology, Joanne Finkelstein, in her analysis of popular culture (especially advertising and movies), and the specific 'objects' represented in it, as well as the attitudes of public personas, names several features of the visualized world: the personification and glorification of objects, fiction and falsehood, stereotypical characters and their familiarity, and also the main principle of life – "to look good because people are watching" (Finkelstein 2007: 1–38).

Looking at the survey's findings, we can observe some similarity in features. First, visual perfectionism is the dominant visual characteristic in the public advertisements of the Baltic states, absolutizing the appearance. In many of these advertisements, they show slender, visually attractive and well-groomed women with athletic bodies and a sense of style that includes fashionably modern clothes, matching accessories, and perfectly applied hair styles and makeup. In a plus-size clothing store in Daugavpils, discriminating attitudes toward "nonstandard" women can be observed in one of its advertisements, in which approximately one third of the poster shows only a fraction of the image of an overweight woman, thus reducing the proportions of her body. This example shows how the image of stereotypically attractive women has become the standard for female proportions, which is supported and maintained throughout society, including visual advertising.

Another indication of how public advertisements aimed at women use non-verbal communication, is the imagery of the cult of youth, images which are dominated by either young and/or middle-aged women. During the research, we came across three posters advertising a range of cultural events, in which only three older women were depicted, and as such were shown to be happy while in the company of a man their own age. In two other advertisements, older women were depicted, but this time in the presence of a much younger woman. In these advertisements, it is the younger woman who gives advice, and is subsequently seen to protect the older women, advising them on how to take care of their health and well-being (e.g., by reminding her to check her breasts for lumps). All five advertisements focus on providing help, essentially, the caregiver archetype (see Figure 1). But it is these images of the younger woman which implicitly demonstrates their initiation and mental victory over an older woman, in which the roles are reversed (mother–daughter).

In addition, we discovered three advertisements for facial creams that featured two photographs of the same woman in contrast (see Image 1), thus showing the necessity to delay the process of aging, as well as the possibility of a miraculous change (revival).



Image 1. Advertisement of facial cream Vichy in Ventspils

Source: S. Pošeiko, 2008, <http://ldata.ru.lv/LATVIJA/Ventspils/> (accessed: 21.05.2014).

Another characteristic feature of public advertisements is how fear of loneliness is so often ceased upon, and in all of the cases researched, only 22% of women were shown in the company of other people such as colleagues, friends, and children. Interestingly, even in photographic showcases in many wedding salons, the bride was pictured by herself, or more accurately, alone. Arguably, this might be explained by the belief that the groom is not allowed to see his future wife before the wedding day, which is thought to be an indicator of a happy life together in the future. Conversely, it might also indicate that weddings are more psychologically important to women.

However, these solitary images of women often show facial expressions and poses that depict independence and freedom, self-confidence and a certain self-delight, seldom that of loneliness and sadness.

A certain degree of familiarity in public spaces is demonstrated through the use of photographs of famous women (Penelope Cruz, Britney Spears, Celine Dion), which allows consumers to feel closer to the world of celebrities, in an attempt to give the impression that one can belong to another distinctly different social group. Furthermore, certain products such as cream, shampoo and mascara, become a kind of unifying element. It is an indirect indication that there are no strict boundaries, or if there are, they are relative. For example, Image 2, explicitly shows world-famous model and nineties icon, Linda Evangelista, alongside a specific brand name and the phrase *Pasijausk ypatinga!* 'Feel Special!', with additional information about discounts and promotional gifts, as well as the period of the particular sales campaign (representative meaning). The implicit message seems to be that, with LHYPERL Paris cosmetics you will feel as special (visually attractive) as Evangelista (contextual meaning) does. In this case, verbal sugges-



tion links the idea behind the brand with the depicted woman (the ‘target’ woman whom one wants to resemble) and the potential customer.



Image 2. Advertisement of the cosmetics line LHYPERL Paris in Alytus

Source: S. Pošeiko, 2008, <http://lldata.ru.lv/Lietuva/Al-ta/> (accessed: 21.05.2014).

Using images of famous women is commonplace, since these images function as desired examples, helping the company associate their specific product or brand with the public image of a certain woman, most notably in her professional environment of activity. Here is another example of this marketing principle in effect: in the window of an optician seven advertisements showed the world-famous model, Gisele Bündchen, in various physical scenarios that presented an array of sun glasses using the same phrases/slogans – *Gisele plays with Vogue*. Implicitly, the advertisements express: (1) these sun-glasses are high fashion; (2) trying out different images and changing accessories and clothes is both fun, while also emphasizing the emergence of the changeable or chameleon archetype (according to Silbert 2008: 63–75) and the child archetype (Jung 1991: 82–96); (3) and that the magazine is a companion of equal worth to people.

Glorification in public space is often demonstrated by advertisements for perfumes. Many perfume advertisements are designed to create admiration, suggesting that these specific products can reveal the true nature of women. Hence, the natural odor of a woman is rejected as a sign of being uncultured, and therefore is replaced with an artificial scent. This can be exemplified with the advertisement of the perfume, Escada, where the same dark red color is used for the woman's dress and the perfume bottle, indicating mutual harmony. The fact that the bottle is visually depicted as being much larger than the woman, indicates that the role of the product, the perfume itself, is done in terms of getting to know the woman's sensuality. Similar color harmony can be observed in advertisements for the per-

fumes, Black XS and Gucci, in which the black and golden colors are used, both in the design of the perfume bottle as well as the woman's clothing, and subsequently, the hair color and makeup. The woman seen in the advertisement for Axe Vice deodorant, was situated in a police station, followed by the words: *Axe Vice padara meitenes nerātnas* 'Axe Vice makes girls naughty'. Alternatively, the woman who represents 'the proper' girl (also see: the excellent pupil), dressed in a pink blouse which is buttoned up to the chin-line and with a flower pinned to the right breast, was depicted as being a smiling, carefree rebel who was satisfied with her assigned situation, and who had surrendered to the outlaw and child archetype as befitting her image.

Lipstick is also a conspicuous element of femininity that is commonly appropriated for public advertisements. In 56% of the images taken, women were depicted with colored lips (dark red color), which is astonishingly high when compared with 13% of images showing women wearing high-heeled shoes. However, unlike the primary function of perfume advertising, their role is secondary.

Further attention should be paid to the emphasizing of a woman's hands (palms and fingers), in images that are a characteristic feature of feminine advertisements (Goffman 1976: 29), which demonstrate emotions and interaction with oneself, other people and objects. In Baltic cities, for example, dreaminess was visually represented with the woman placing her face in the palms of her hands, while inclining her head and looking upwards. The unexpected joy felt over receiving a bouquet of roses was shown with the woman lifting her hands and spreading her fingers, while smiling widely. In order to express logic and strategic thinking, advertisement showed the woman with a chess piece that was lifted up in one's fingers whereas, in order to express caring for other people, advertisements showed people placing their hands on the shoulders of the person needing mental support, while people holding hands or hugging each other, showed the closeness of their relationships.

In depicting a conversation between two women, if one covers her mouth with her hands, it indicates a decreased volume in speech in order to facilitate the confidential nature of what they are talking about (secret), thus implying trust. However, the idea of touching oneself most often indicates a sensual action, an erotic gesture. For example: playing with bead necklace by gently running it through one's fingers while exhibiting an open mouth, smoking a cigarette in underwear and high-heels, or placing one's thumb behind women's panties or underwear (see Image 3).

The aforementioned examples show that visual information in various public spaces of Baltic countries demonstrate a certain behavior principle, one that is mentioned by J. Finkelstein, who goes on to emphasize: "look good, because people are watching", which supports the tendency to depict an ideal (visually improved), even fictive image of the woman, by choosing not to reveal her true visual appearance and emotions. An important role is also assigned to the things that characterize women: perfume, flowers, underwear, lipstick and high-heel shoes.

## Woman's social roles and archetypical characters

As established earlier in the article, the imagery of women in advertising often depicts them existing in solitude.

The research also showed that there were three other types of images in which a woman was usually shown in the company of a man: weddings (though not always), photographs depicting family, and work relationships. It is worth noting that in only two of the images does the woman make eye contact with the man, and therefore by doing so, she is indicating an awareness of being together, and that mutual coexistence is important, as well as 'going public with the relationship.'

In regards to the imagery of wife and mother, these were social roles that were mostly presented alongside each other, thus showing them as being inseparable entities. Pictures of families typically featured happy and carefree expressions, of people spending time relaxing. The following activities and forms of relaxation were used as reasons for families getting together: swimming, travelling, photo sessions, cozy moments spent on the sofa eating snacks in front of the TV, riding a merry-go-round and other types of entertainment. Visually, the positive side of family life was revealed and subsequently idealized.

Overall it is clear from the advertising seen in the streets that beauty treatments, the various forms of relaxation such as dancing, traveling and shopping, are promoted as the typical past-times and hobbies for most women, strongly emphasizing that enjoyment is a natural way of life for most women.

An example of this can be seen in the advertisement for an international retail chain, *Monton*, featuring the words/slogan, *Karsta izpārdošana*, 'Hot sales', alongside the image of a woman getting genuinely excited about the upcoming discounts. This perception of a woman pursuing an easy life, where the individual is blissfully content spoiling themselves, is closely associated to that of the fun-loving archetype, one whose sole goal is to experience as much as joy as possible (Mark, Pearson 2005: 186–192). However, the sense of humor or irony, or even self-irony, that is characteristic to this archetype, is not a typical element of public advertisements in the Baltic states. A similar motivation can be observed in the child archetype, as stated by A. Ivashenko, someone who perceives life as a game, and who strives towards all things new, while the guard archetype is someone who is characterized by desire for balance, comfort, peace and relaxation (Ivaschenko 2005).

When examining the world of careers and employment, the most common imagery was within the service industry, which tended to depict women as barstaff, on-floor service staff, bank tellers, flight attendants or masseuses, which was followed by professions in both the fashion and film industry, professions that involved posing in front of the camera, or acting, which are generally seen as being typical professional roles for women.

In terms of other imagery represented in the entertainment industry, women are also reduced to stereotypes such as cabaret dancers or exotic dancers. As for

businesswomen, they are often characterized by either bowties or ties, jackets with wide lapels, or having a hair style modelled on a man, thus emphasizing the masculine side of the woman – the animus archetype (Jung 1991: 82–96). It has to be noted that in the advertisements shown in public, female doctors or tailors were represented by drawings instead of the standard photographic imagery.

Focusing on the most visually displayed images of women in public advertising, one motto stands out, 'es redzu tikai tevi', meaning, I see only you. This motto supports and communicates the idea of the typical archetypical image of the woman as lover, while emphasizing the themes of love, sexuality and aesthetics. The essence of this archetype is expressed through different forms of love, for example, parents' (in this case, mother's) love, friendship, physical and spiritual love (Mark, Pearson 2005: 170–185).

In public advertising, a woman is commonly represented in the form of a temptress, one that is externally characterized by sexual attraction and dressing provocatively (scant clothing and exposed parts of the body décolleté and long legs), and by gazing in a way that is perceived as coquettish, (lips slightly open, while a faint smile can be glimpsed), secretly implying that the woman is longing for intimacy and sexual pleasure (see Image 3).



Image 3. Advertisement of perfume Moschino Funny in Pärnu

Source: S. Pošeiko, 2008, <http://ldata.ru.lv/IGAUNIJA/P-rnava/> (accessed: 21.05.2014).

According to M. Mark and K. Pearson, the art of seduction is in its own way a challenge to the prospective lover (Mark, Pearson 2005: 172). However, in comparison with men, the woman's behavior could be described as passive, since in the photographs it is the man who initiated physical – contact by hugging her from behind, or touching her body with his hand.

The following is an example in which a woman's sexuality (the lover's archetype) was used to advertise a product: in the city of Valmiera, there was an advertisement that used the phrase, *Perfect vision*, along with a picture of a pair of men's sunglasses, through which one can get a glimpse of a half-naked woman lying on the beach, her upper body more visible than her raised legs, positioned outside the frame of the sunglasses. Thus, we can conclude that the goal of the advertisement was to show that the criteria for selecting qualitative sunglasses was the ability to see that which is most valuable to a man, the nakedness of an attractive woman.

That outwardly self-confident women are mainly depicted living in solitude, quite possibly implies that not only is independence viewed as a lifestyle, but that alienation and dislike for competition, and other unfulfilled psychological and physical needs, are all causes for concern, deliberately provoking a state of mental discomfort. Fear of loneliness, of not being desired, of being unloved, coupled with the constant intellectual and physical improvement of oneself as a woman, including the forming of relationships, is the basis for this archetype (Mark, Pearson 2005: 171). Therefore, the following hypothesis can be stated as thus: advertisements focus on less self-confident women or women with unfulfilled desires of one type or another, encouraging them to strive for emotional and physical intimacy, while simultaneously stimulating dissatisfaction with their current life situations, and creating a desire to resemble the women that they see in various forms of advertising imagery, as well as perpetuating a longing for intimacy and love. Therefore the answer is at hand, and a solution is proffered: the use of specific products or services (e.g., erotic underwear, colorful makeup, beautiful clothes or jewelry) are all fast and effective method in achieving these goals. In the advertising slogan, *Drogas: Laiks pārmaiņām!*, meaning: *Time to change*, which was displayed with different sets of photographs advertising a range of cosmetics at a number of stores throughout the city of Ventspils, implying that things themselves have no importance, what matters are the emotions which they provoke, and in turn, the events which follow.

Although it is much harder to visually depict spiritual love in the public spaces of the Baltic countries, emotional unity is suggested by photographs of older couples that show them being kind and respectful to one another. Since the images of women shown in advertisements were often those of the female individual in search of sexual intimacy and love, it can therefore be asserted that only the archetype of the lover is exhibited, and in doing so, the woman fails to reach such heights as that as defined by the quality and ecstasy of experiencing spiritual love (Mark, Pearson 2005: 172).

In turn, something of material value compensates for this lack of spiritual love, and as viewed in public advertising, several dozen red roses, the keys to new house, a car or jewelry are offered by way of recompense. This is further exemplified by an advertisement seen in the city of Druskininkai, in which the question (in English): *How deep is your Love?* is asked, with a backdrop showing a gold

ring inset with a large ruby, displayed within the folds of a silk cloth. The image is directly stating that the more valuable the ring, the deeper the love, therefore, the jewelry serves as an emotional indicator showing the depth of someone's love.

Seldom depicted is the archetype of the regular guy (also a friend, upstanding and reliable), that unlike the lover's archetype, values being together much more, and enjoys the feeling of belonging to a group, not accentuating the desire to be alone, but to relish having a predetermined and unique role among a group of people, friends others (Mark, Pearson 2005: 171). The depiction of friendly relationships is typical used in the advertisements of telecommunication companies (see Image 4), and/or the posters for family comedies.



Image 4. Advertisement of O karte in Daugavpils

Source: S. Pošeiko, 2013, <http://ldata.ru.lv/LATVIJA/Daugavpils/> (accessed: 21.05.2014).

Similarly for the purpose of athletic activities and building a cohesive team spirit, this archetype is used to demonstrate brand models, a community that is characterized by the equal worth of its members, unity, a heightened sense of belonging and having trust among one's own people.

The archetypal image of the woman-hero is characterized by brave and energetic moments of action (see Figure 1, as well as Ivaschenko 2005) as can be seen in eight specific advertisements, that highlighted professional competence, selflessness and awareness of objectives, as well as supporting self-assertion, and possessing a masculine nature (see Image 5). Evidence of this archetype can be observed in advertisements for sporting goods and its various forms of activities, but only those in which above all victory, satisfaction and pride at a successful accomplishment were emphasized, such as a woman holding aloft a trophy or wearing a winner's medal around their neck.





Image 5. Advertisement of sunglasses in Alytus

Source: S. Pošeiko, 2008, <http://ldata.ru.lv/Lietuva/Al-ta/> (accessed: 21.05.2014).

In regards to a woman being portrayed as a child of nature, this is characterized in simple visual terms, with the woman appearing natural and in a relaxed mood, often against a photographic backdrop involving an area of water, or at least the hint of a natural water environment, such as a pond or a lake, observed in four distinctly separate photographs. The women in these photographs had long hair, billowing dresses and genuine smiles, and none of them were wearing any makeup or jewelry, thus eschewing the artificial improvements of such things in an attempt to represent the innocent and the authentic.

To summarise, it can be concluded that in public advertising the imagery and use of women is to depict and to emphasize the importance and meaning of appearance and sexuality, in essence, to become the lover's archetype. The imagery suggests that to reach self-realization, women should strive for such things as relaxation and entertainment, while at the same time emphasizing the archetypal role of giver (of food, information, relaxation, agitation), one that values emotions, and the ability to create the required atmosphere, where reason or logic either have less importance, or none at all. It is clear then that women are not perceived as physical laborers, researchers or creators of new products.

## Summary and main conclusions

The research was an attempt to look at public advertising in the cityscape of the Baltic states, to highlight and analyse visually depicted information. It is only one form of interpretation, a methodological way that allows us to 'read' verbal and nonverbal, explicit and implicit texts and writing (also at the archetypal level), by paying attention to issues related to visual identity and sexuality, and indirectly, the values of modern culture and society, along with world views and its often incumbent stereotypes. The results partly can be interpreted as just one person's –

the receiver's – interpretation, based on their individual social experience, knowledge and comprehension.

Generally, the research showed that a male target audience is linguistically indicated more often than not. However, in terms of photographic imagery, the female target audience is emphasized far more frequently. It is often through visual images that the essence of advertisements are revealed, functioning not only as a supplement to the verbal text, but even as an autonomous text. An important principle of visual illustration is the emphasis on various details (e.g., objects, body parts).

Public advertisements that use images of women are characterized by the absolutization of the perfect appearance, and subsequently the maintenance of the stereotype, that a woman is beautiful and slender, physically fit and replete with perfect makeup. This is reinforced by the imagery of the cult of youth, how popular and successful women are reflected, solitude, narcissism and emotional concealment, using such products as perfume to glorify these ideals, while promoting relaxation and entertainment-related themes. There are no differences between domestic business advertisements and international advertisements, which suggests that these are general tendencies, less related to local characteristics.

Research of the selected advertisements revealed that there are many conceptions created and maintained in public advertising in regards to what constitutes a typical, modern woman, and mainly focuses, on one hand, on her egocentrism, while on the other, implying personal satisfaction in the creation of an artificial public image/visual persona (a mask). All of which is generated by a fear of alienation, the need to acquire material goods, and achieve one's goals as quickly and easily as possible. Although some advertising shows women in the company of other people (men, other women, children), most depict women alone which mainly demonstrates that loneliness can be viewed as having double meaning, both comfortable and uncomfortable.

The common archetypical image of a woman in the semiotic landscape of the Baltic states is women-lover, with added focus on the significance of sensual enjoyment and relaxation. The motivation behind these advertisements is to promote the idea of love and community, or, at the very least, some kind of relationship. Women are depicted as being concerned with physical changes and sexual satisfaction, and much less on spiritual and professional improvement.

These visually-represented conceptions form society's views of a woman and her social role, as well as opinions about what should/can be expected of her. All of the aforementioned characteristics can be ascribed to common tendencies currently inherent in modern society, such as self-awareness, how people think, various worldviews, and models of accepted behavior and relationships.

In researching the semiotic landscape, it was shown that visual identity plays a significant role in creating a public image, one that is extremely difficult to attain due to the rhythm of modern life that is incredibly fast-paced, and requires an ability to look perfect and be omnipresent at the same time.

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