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Changes in Female Identities in Popular Media. Alcohol in the Advertisements of Women's Magazines from the 1960s to the 2000s

The data for the paper consists of advertisements of women's magazines where alcohol is either the main product or appears as part of other advertising. The advertisements have been collected from popular Swedish women's magazines around the years of 1968, 1976, 1984, 1992, 2000 and 2008. In the paper we approach advertisements by applying Judith Butler's theory on performance. We ask what kind of drinking-related subject positions the women magazines have built for women from the 1960s on and what transformations have taken place in these in the four decades since. Our semiotic, rhetorical and phenomenological reading of visual material identifies a variety of consumerist female subject positions that the advertisements have repetitively performed for the women reader. We call them a responsible consumer, a hedonistic consumer, a distinctive consumer, the consumer that plays with stereotypes, and a transgressive consumer. Our analysis shows how these subject positions historically emerge, what kinds of life style changes they undergo and how they are in a specific way attached to the categories of age, class and ethnicity.