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## **Can Marketing Transcend Entrenched Gender Biases?**

Thinh Nguyen

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## Can Marketing Transcend Entrenched Gender Biases?

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## Markets, Globalization & Development Review



# Can Marketing Transcend Entrenched Gender Biases?

## Introduction

This Dialog contribution started as a Book Review (see the next major section); however, while it was being reviewed MGDR published a Media Review of Barbie (Le Porte and Cavusoglu 2023). The editor felt that the review could be expanded into a Dialogue contribution by bringing in ideas from the Barbie media review as well as from another MGDR media review that had insights into issues of gendered marketing.

In this expanded contribution, now a Dialogue essay, the first major section is the Maclaran and Chatzidakis (2022) book review, followed by reflections on the two additional media review items from MGDR, and finally the essay closes with a concluding section.

## Review of *Gendered Marketing*, Book by Maclaran and Chatzidakis (2022)

Gender has long been a pivotal lens through which we scrutinize social constructs and marketscapes. In the realm of academic exploration, Pauline Maclaran, Professor of Marketing and Consumer Research and Andreas Chatzidakis, Professor of Marketing at Royal Holloway, offer a profoundly feminist perspective that shapes their scholarly endeavors. Their book, *Gendered Marketing*, transcends conventional analyses, delving into a nuanced understanding of marketing practices within the intricate web of gender biases.

This book reflects a strong commitment to gender equality. The authors' industry background prior to academia offered a unique perspective, unveiling how deeply embedded gender norms influence marketing strategies. This blend of experiences fuels their profound exploration of the underlying ideologies in marketing practices, particularly those related to gender issues. At its core, this book aims to spotlight the pervasive absence of female scholars in history, emphasizing the significant oversight of their contributions in academia. Through historical examples, the authors uncover the overlooked brilliance of figures like Maria Parloa, Lucy Maltby, Helen Lansdowne Resor, and Eliza Lucas Pinckney, highlighting the historical injustice of disregarding their impact. They confront systemic biases entrenched in historical narratives, raising crucial

questions about the dismissal of certain voices, whether due to gender, race, or deviation from established norms.

The book unfolds through three critical lenses that most attracted to me: “Diversity and Meritocracy”, “The Male Gaze and The Subject-Object Binary”, and “Gendered Marketing Limitation”. Each section meticulously dissects the multifaceted nature of gender biases within marketing realms. The discussion extends far beyond a mere acknowledgment of disparities, delving into the systemic underpinnings that perpetuate gender imbalance.

In the intricate world of societal norms, gender performativity emerges as a pivotal concept. Drawing from feminist theory, the authors challenge the conventional notions of male dominance and female objectification. They boldly propose that gender is performative, not an innate trait, questioning the norms dictating these roles. This concept closely intertwines with marketing strategies inadvertently reinforcing these imbalances and upholding prevailing power structures. Furthermore, “Gendered Marketing” uncovers how societal structures restrict us. Whether it is the gendered division of labor perpetuating wage gaps or color-coded marketing reinforcing social norms, the authors spotlight these barriers. They emphasize the need for systemic changes and inclusive practices in marketing, technology, and workplaces to dismantle these biases.

In its essence, “Gendered Marketing” advocates for a transformative journey toward inclusivity, fairness, and reshaping societal norms. Through this perspective, the authors endorse demarketization strategies and emphasize the crucial roles of individuals and corporations in promoting a gender-equal world. These actions, whether through consumer choices or corporate commitments, signify a broader societal shift toward gender inclusivity. Ultimately, “Gendered Marketing” urges proactive steps to reform marketing practices. It is not solely an academic text; it is a catalyst for challenging established norms, reforming beliefs, and creating a fairer, more inclusive society.

### **Diversity and Meritocracy**

Throughout history, female scholars have often been overshadowed and overlooked, their remarkable contributions obscured by the prevailing narratives dominated by their male counterparts. The voices that are absent – figures like Maria Parloa, who revolutionized American kitchens with culinary innovation, or Professor Lucy Maltby, an uncelebrated luminary in Pyrex bakeware design – serve as emblematic examples of the underappreciated brilliance that has woven itself into historical evolution. The enduring absence of luminaries such as Helen Lansdowne Resor, who steered JWT’s woman’s editorial department, and Eliza Lucas Pinckney, an enterprising figure from the 18th century, underscores a glaring issue in the

historical canon – the selective recognition of female scholars and their monumental contributions.

This discussion, however, transcends the mere acknowledgment of gender disparities; it unfurls into a profound inquiry of the reasons behind the silence enveloping certain scholarly voices. It forces us to confront whether the absence of these voices is a consequence of their viewpoints being minoritarian, gender-related, race-related, or simply too novel for acknowledgment. As we confront the overarching dominance of white, male figures within academia and other domains, the underlying rationale for this silence becomes multifaceted. Does it primarily stem from a systemic bias toward certain perspectives, or does it speak to a historical propensity to dismiss unconventional or groundbreaking ideas that challenge established norms?

Throughout history, figures like Charles Darwin, Vincent van Gogh, and Nicolaus Copernicus reshaped scientific thought and art with their groundbreaking contributions. Despite their innovative ideas, these figures encountered skepticism in their lifetimes and gained recognition only after. This trend is not limited to the overlooked female scholars; it extends to male scholars as well. This raises questions about the historical dismissal of unconventional ideas that challenge established norms, prompting us to speculate beyond the notion of systemic bias. Certainly, Charles Darwin and his contributions to evolutionary biology altered the course of scientific thought. His groundbreaking theory of evolution through natural selection, presented in his seminal work *On the Origin of Species* published in 1859, was met with widespread skepticism and controversy during his lifetime. Darwin proposed that species evolve over time through a process of natural selection where individuals possessing advantageous traits for survival and reproduction are more likely to pass those traits to subsequent generations. Despite facing significant opposition, Darwin's ideas gradually gained traction and began reshaping scientific paradigms after his death in 1882. His theory laid the foundation for modern evolutionary biology, with subsequent scientific discoveries in genetics and paleontology further validating and elaborating on his concepts. Closely to that, Vincent van Gogh, one of history's most renowned artists, experienced a life marked by creative fervor juxtaposed with personal turmoil and marginalization. Van Gogh's distinctive post-impressionist style, characterized by bold colors, emotive brushwork, and introspective themes, was largely unappreciated during his lifetime. Despite producing an extensive body of work, including masterpieces like "Starry Night" and "Sunflowers", Van Gogh's art struggled to find recognition and commercial success. His mental health challenges and erratic behavior further contributed to his isolation. It was only after his

tragic death by suicide in 1890 that the artistic community began to recognize the brilliance and emotional depth of his paintings. Today, Van Gogh is celebrated as a pioneering figure in art history, his works revered for their profound emotional resonance and artistic innovation. Finally, in the 16th century, Nicolaus Copernicus catalyzed a seismic shift in cosmology by proposing the heliocentric model of the solar system, which postulated that the planets, including Earth, revolved around the sun. His revolutionary theory challenged the prevailing geocentric view endorsed by the Church and scientific community, which positioned Earth as the center of the universe. Copernicus meticulously developed his heliocentric model in his seminal work *De Revolutionibus Orbium Coelestium*, published in 1543, the year of his death. However, his heliocentric hypothesis was met with substantial skepticism and resistance during his lifetime. It was only in the years following his passing that astronomers and scientists, including Galileo Galilei and Johannes Kepler, further substantiated and embraced Copernicus's heliocentric model. Eventually, his work became the cornerstone of modern astronomy, reshaping humanity's understanding of the cosmos.

This dialectic presents two compelling yet divergent arguments. On one front, there is a fervent insistence that the oversight of women's contributions parallels a broader pattern of white, male dominance in historical narratives. The historiographical tapestry, predominantly woven by white male scholars, is not a neutral portrayal of intellectual prowess but rather a reflection of deep-rooted societal prejudices and biases. Conversely, there arises a pertinent query concerning the rationale behind the silence enveloping certain scholarly voices. Does this omission solely result from gender bias, or does it extend to an intrinsic resistance to innovative perspectives or those associated with specific racial or ethnic backgrounds? An analogy is drawn to everyday necessities – while a cooking book may not singularly transform the world, it contributes to the ongoing dialogue, an intellectual construction that collectively fortifies us against societal stagnation.

This discourse remains open-ended, compelling us to confront the intricacies that underlie the acknowledgment or dismissal of particular voices in historical narratives. It beckons introspection regarding the criteria for recognition and the systemic biases that continue to shape our understanding of intellectual merit and historical significance. As we navigate this deliberation, the imperative for a more inclusive and equitable approach becomes resoundingly clear – one that transcends the confines of gender, race, or novelty, fostering an environment where diverse voices

authentically and equally contribute to shaping our shared historical tapestry.

### **The Male Gaze and The Subject-Object Binary**

Throughout the book, we saw gender difference as being produced by social practices rather than being natural. This binary delineates man as the subject and woman as the object, a construct that permeates societal structures, especially evident in gender performance and the perpetuation of the male gaze. This imbalance of power remains deeply entrenched, and while marketing and advertisements endeavor to subvert this binary, they often inadvertently underscore its existence, reinforcing existing power imbalances.

The statement “gender is something we do rather than have” encapsulates the core concept of gender performativity, as articulated by philosopher and gender theorist Judith Butler (Butler 1988, p.53). This idea challenges traditional assumptions about gender and invites us to reconsider the nature of our identities and expressions. Foremost, gender and, to some extent, sex are primarily shaped by societal and cultural influences rather than being purely biologically determined. It is created, reinforced, and maintained by societal institutions, cultural practices, and interpersonal interactions. The relationship between gender, consumption, and societal perceptions has seen an intricate evolution, deeply rooted in historical, cultural, and economic transformations (Firat 1991). Initially, consumption was seen as the utilization or destruction of value while production was associated with creating value. This distinction was crucial in defining what was considered productive or merely consumptive. During the rise of capitalism, Marx’s insights complicated perceptions of consumption. Labor-power became a commodity, sparking debates about whether activities like home food consumption contributed to exchange-value in the market, which, under capitalism, was not considered productive for capital accumulation. Gender roles intertwined with these ideas, as men were associated with the productive public sphere while women were confined to the consumptive private sphere. This cultural division reinforced the values attributed to each domain – productive work linked to masculinity in the public sphere and the devaluation of the feminized private sphere, synonymous with consumption. This association of femininity with consumption affected societal attitudes, downplaying women’s economic significance despite their crucial roles in the home. Women were praised as mothers but devalued for their consumption habits, creating conflicting expectations – encouraging consumption for economic growth while stigmatizing them as mere consumers. These associations became deeply ingrained in societal consciousness, shaping marketing strategies and



visual culture where the feminine was aligned with shopping and consumption, contrasting with the association of masculinity with production in the public sphere.

From that standpoint, these constructs define what is considered “masculine” or “feminine” behavior, appearance, and identity. When individuals conform to or resist these constructs, they engage in acts of gender performativity. Gender performativity highlights the power of societal norms and expectations in shaping our identities. Goffman (1979) suggested that gender identity is a fabricated construct, a mere illusion shaped and crafted by the available schedules of portrayal within society. In Goffman’s view, society operates akin to a stage, with individuals assuming roles dictated by societal norms and expectations. These roles are not intrinsic; instead, they are adopted and performed as individuals navigate various social contexts. Goffman’s insight emphasizes the performative nature of gender, implying that individuals do not inherently possess a fixed gender identity but rather enact and perform gender based on the societal cues and scripts available to them. Gender, therefore, is not an inherent trait but an adaptive response to the prevailing scripts available in a given social setting – part of the performance of impression management. Eventually, Goffman’s concept challenges the notion of a stable, essential gender identity, highlighting instead the malleable and performative nature of gender. It underscores how societal norms, cultural expectations, and available portrayals within social contexts shape and mold individuals’ expressions of their gender. Accordingly, individuals may feel pressured to conform to these norms, even if they do not align with their true selves.

In dissecting the dynamics of gender, it becomes evident that gender is not a static possession but a dynamic performance. The attempt to redefine gender roles within marketing and advertising ventures into the complex territory of challenging established norms. The feminist discourse surrounding this binary engages with the dichotomy of Neoliberal Feminism. Feminism and neoliberal feminism represent two distinct approaches within the broader feminist movement, and “neoliberal feminism has given feminism a bad name” (Maclaran and Chatzidakis 2022, p. 55). Feminism seeks to address and rectify the historical and ongoing gender-based inequalities and injustices faced by women and individuals who do not conform to traditional gender norms, while neoliberal feminism emphasizes individual empowerment and market-driven solutions to gender inequalities. Hence, the latter is not a call to convince people that they are the same but rather an acknowledgment that, biologically and psychologically, males and females are inherently different.

As highlighted in this book, the burden then shifts to individuals to decide how they navigate these differences, fostering a personalized approach rather than a one-size-fits-all solution. Gender neutrality refers to an approach that seeks to avoid or minimize gender distinctions, which promotes a society or environment where gender is not a defining factor in how individuals are treated or how products and services are designed or marketed, while gender fluidity is the idea that gender is not fixed but can be a flexible and changing aspect of an individual's identity. People who identify as gender fluid may feel different genders at different times or reject the notion of a fixed gender entirely. Gender neutrality focuses on creating environments and practices that are inclusive and accommodating for all genders, aiming to eliminate gender-based distinctions. Gender fluidity, on the other hand, acknowledges the fluid nature of gender itself, allowing individuals to express their gender identity in ways that may change or transcend traditional categories. By highlighting the fluidity of gender and sexuality, Maclaran and Chatzidakis (2022) destabilized the categories of male and female thereby emphasizing the fluidity of gender and sexuality. Yet, marketing and advertising have often contributed to gender stereotyping in developing new products and services either by emphasizing or constructing gender difference rather than similarities. Markets do not have the capacity to recognize and give value to many qualities that are culturally coded as feminine and the problem is devolved to an individual and personalized level rather than being seen as stemming from macro-level cultural effects that present a collective challenge for women.

### **Gendered Marketing Limitation**

As we have seen, there are many gender-based barriers, which encapsulate systemic biases ingrained within various societal structures, significantly impacting perceptions, choices, and opportunities across aspects of life.

The gendered division of labor perpetuates imbalances, positioning men in strategic roles with higher ranks and better pay while women are predominantly confined to customer-facing positions that emphasize empathy and care. This division not only reinforces wage disparities but also obstructs the holistic representation of women in leadership roles, hindering their progression within organizations. On top of that, gendered division of labor significantly influences career choices, especially among young men who resist jobs in the service sector due to perceived threats to their masculinity. Lupton (2000) outlines these threats, including the fear of being feminized, the absence of homosocial relations to reinforce masculinity, and the dread of being perceived as effeminate by peers. These preconceived

notions hinder diverse career explorations and limit professional development opportunities for men.

The intersection of feminism with technology perpetuates stereotypical beliefs, portraying men as technology creators and women as mere users. The co-creation thesis (Fox et al. 2006) posits that technology is not a neutral entity but is created within a sociocultural framework, emphasizing this bias by highlighting the dominance of male product engineers, reinforcing the narrative that men primarily design technology while women are relegated to its passive utilization. Moreover, aesthetic labor becomes sexualized labor, especially within the hospitality sector. This phenomenon occurs when the emphasis on aesthetics, presentation, and physical appearance in certain service-oriented industries crosses into a realm where it becomes more than a mere concern for professional presentation. Instead, it can start to involve, directly or indirectly, a focus on physical attributes that are sexualized or objectified to cater to certain expectations or desires of customers or clients. Within the hospitality industry, the pressure to embody specific physical attributes or conform to certain standards of attractiveness might extend beyond professional presentation to cater to certain patrons' desires or the establishment's branding strategies. Employees in roles that require extensive guest interaction, such as servers, hosts, or attendants, might encounter situations where their appearance is subtly or overtly sexualized, affecting how they are treated or evaluated in the workplace. This can lead to discomfort, objectification, and in some cases, harassment or discrimination.

In marketing, color-coded marketing, exemplified by the “pink for girl and blue for boy” stereotype, imposes limitations on product choices and incurs additional costs for both producers and society. This binary color approach reinforces societal norms and expectations, constraining the spectrum of available choices and influencing product designs, which can lead to higher production expenses and reinforce gender stereotypes from an early age. From another example, the perception of competence linked to gender cues influences consumer behavior. Studies (e.g., Hess and Melnyk 2016) indicate that feminine cues in branding often evoke warmth and increase the likelihood of purchases while masculine cues may diminish this probability. Notably, major brands, including Apple, strategically incorporate such cues, as observed in the deliberate choice to feature a pink flower upon the release of the iPhone 6, amplifying its appeal among certain demographics.

The multifaceted gender-based barriers entrenched in societal structures have a profound impact on life aspects, perpetuating systemic

biases. While gender-based barriers indeed persist, societal evolution hints at the gradual breakdown of traditional gender roles. Although the gendered division of labor persists in certain industries, trends show a shifting landscape, welcoming women into historically male-dominated fields and encouraging men to embrace roles traditionally associated with femininity. Additionally, the dynamics of technology and marketing are evolving. Initiatives aimed at neutralizing gender biases in technology are gaining momentum, challenging the co-creation thesis. Similarly, progressive marketing strategies are attempting to dismantle color-coded stereotypes, offering more inclusive and diverse product ranges that defy traditional gender norms.

Familiarity often breeds acceptance, making it arduous to abandon established organizing systems. The complexities of dismantling deeply ingrained gender-based barriers present substantial short-term challenges. However, a transformation towards more inclusive structures that transcend gender norms and biases is essential for sustained societal growth. As marketers, we might not fully design a new organizing system, but fostering conditions conducive to the emergence of an equitable and diverse structure within existing frameworks is feasible. This involves challenging established gender norms, embracing inclusivity in workplaces, technology, and marketing, and ensuring systemic changes that champion diversity. Through these measures, we lay the foundation for a future where societal norms, opportunities, and perspectives reflect a more equitable and inclusive reality.

## **Revisiting Two Additional Reviews from MGDR**

To advance the discussion from the book review a bit further, we now turn to two additional reviews from the pages of MGDR – this time, media reviews – that deal with gendered marketing issues. The first is a media review of the animated film “Turning Red”, where the author Hazal Bayar (2022) comments on complex interactions of gender issues as well as inter-generational issues. The second is a no-holds-barred critique, by La Porte and Cavusoglu (2023), of the type of feminism depicted in the 2023 blockbuster film “Barbie”.

### **Turning Red: A Mélange of Generational and Gender Issues**

Representing gender performativity through bodily transformations is a common theme in movies that deal with such subject matter. An example is Turning Red, a film which portrays how societal expectations shape individuals’ identities and expressions. As the review author Bayar (2022) masterfully depicts, Meilin is a Chinese-Canadian girl who experiences a magical transformation – an ancient “curse” – into a red panda during

puberty. Meilin's transformation into a red panda can be seen as a metaphor for the pressures and changes of adolescence, including the exploration of her own sexuality and desires. Her mother, Ming, represents the "tiger mother" stereotype, embodying the pressure for academic success and obedience in Asian cultures. Ming's character reflects the tension between traditional values and the modern world, as she struggles to reconcile her daughter's individuality with societal expectations.

Through Meilin's struggles with her traditional upbringing and her desire for independence, the film uncovers the complexities of female adolescence and the clash between tradition and modernity, shedding light on the role of women in society and the burden of upholding familial and social expectations. Just as gender is something we do rather than have – articulated by philosopher and gender theorist Judith Butler (Butler 2004) – Meilin's journey involves performing different aspects of her identity. As Bayar (2022) further scrutinizes, the red panda serves as a metaphor for the challenges faced by young women as they navigate puberty and societal norms. Moreover, the dynamic between Meilin and Ming further underscores this theme, as Ming embodies the societal pressures placed on previous generation women to conform to traditional roles while Meilin seeks to break free from these constraints. Ming's constant repression of her own desires and emotions reflects the sacrifices often demanded of women in order to maintain familial harmony and uphold cultural traditions. Adding another layer, through the interactions with Ming and Meilin, the grandmother symbolizes the continuity of cultural heritage and the transmission of values from one generation to the next. *Turning Red*, thus, illustrates gender performativity through bodily transformations, highlighting its dynamic and socially constructed nature.

### **Barbie and Faux Feminism**

As the review authors La Porte and Cavusoglu (2023) indicate, in its purest form, the 2023 film "Barbie" intended to communicate to girls that they could be anything. Within the context of deeply ingrained beauty ideals, this effort promotes body diversity and the portrayal of feminist ideologies. Unfortunately, critics may argue that these initiatives serve primarily to expand its market and enhance profitability rather than genuinely challenging societal norms.

The authors of the review draw our attention to the fact that, firstly, the film's attempt to acknowledge the inflexible beauty standards embedded in our society through the introduction of Fashionista Barbie dolls and the "You Can Be Anything" series further amplified this message. Linking this discussion with the examination of gender performativity and societal constructs, we recognize the dynamic nature of gender identity as shaped

by societal norms and cultural expectations. Gender performativity, as theorized by Judith Butler, emphasizes the role of social practices in producing gender differences rather than attributing them to natural or biological factors. In this light, marketing and advertising, including Mattel's initiatives with Barbie, play a significant role in perpetuating or challenging societal norms surrounding gender and beauty ideals. Since her inception, Barbie's physical attributes, modeled after the German doll Lilli, have epitomized the Caucasian, thin, and blonde aesthetic synonymous with Western ideals of femininity. This portrayal has not only perpetuated narrow beauty norms but has also contributed to the reinforcement of the male gaze in media representation. In the film "Barbie", this trend is evident as Barbie's character is positioned as an object of male desire, from Ken's unwavering infatuation to the unwanted attention and harassment she faces from men in the Real World. Despite attempts to diversify the cast and introduce characters like "Weird Barbie" to challenge conventional beauty standards, the movie ultimately revolves around Barbie's physical appearance and her interactions with male characters.

Secondly, while the film may claim feminist intentions, its portrayal of Barbie's experiences in the Real World and her interactions with men raise questions about the sincerity of its feminist messaging. Barbie's encounters with harassment and objectification, while intended to spark discourse on gender politics, are sometimes treated lightly or played for humor, undermining the seriousness of these issues. Additionally, the film's depiction of Barbie's transition into a human and her subsequent gynecologist visit, while addressing reproductive health, may reduce a woman's identity to her genitalia and exclude transgender individuals from the narrative.

Thirdly, Barbie's portrayal in both the film and broader cultural context reflects the unequal gender roles and opportunities that persist within society. While Barbie is positioned as the central character, her narrative often revolves around her interactions with male counterpart, Ken. This dynamic mirrors the systemic biases ingrained within various societal structures, where men are often placed in strategic roles with higher ranks and better pay while women are confined to customer-facing positions that emphasize empathy and care. Barbie's depiction perpetuates these imbalances, highlighting the gendered division of labor that obstructs the holistic representation of women in leadership roles and limits their progression within organizations. As Ken gains prominence in the narrative, Barbie's character becomes emblematic of the challenges women face in breaking free from traditional gender roles and accessing equal opportunities for advancement and recognition. Thus, this raises a question

that La Porte and Cavusoglu (2023) also ponder: does the Fashionista Barbie line genuinely aim to deconstruct beauty ideals and instill the message in young girls that they can be diverse and unique, or is it merely a marketing ploy to capitalize on societal trends?

## Concluding Comments

This essay reviewed an important book that explored many aspects of gendered marketing. The book by Maclaran and Chatzidakis (2022) showed that gendered dimensions of marketing theory and practice traverse a complex landscape embedded with ideological assumptions. The book's context extends beyond mere academic contemplation. It initiates a thought-provoking discourse, challenging industry practices and advocating for systemic change. To explore this discourse further, this essay brought into discussion two media reviews from MGDR that examined gendered marketing practices: the review of the film *Turning Red* by Bayar (2022) and the review of the film *Barbie* by La Porte and Cavusoglu (2023).

As summarized above and closely examined by Bayar (2022), "*Turning Red*" explores the complexities of gender and generational issues through Meilin's magical transformation into a red panda during puberty. Meilin's journey reflects the clash between tradition and modern as she navigates societal expectations and her desire for independence. Conversely, "*Barbie*" purportedly aims to promote body diversity and feminist ideologies but, as also pointed out by La Porte and Cavusoglu (2023), it perpetuates narrow beauty standards, reinforcing the male gaze. Barbie's portrayal in the film reflects unequal gender roles and opportunities, raising questions about the sincerity of its feminist messaging and its true intentions behind promoting inclusivity.

Tracking the evolution of feminist thought in its critique of market-related structures, the Maclaran and Chatzidakis book engenders introspection and seeks to alter the status quo. Its resonance within academic spheres, media studies, sociology, and gender studies renders it a pivotal reference for scholars and students alike. It is hoped that, because of this Dialogue essay and more, further contributions dealing with gendered marketing, in MGDR and other outlets, will bring in ideas from this book.

Through a comprehensive exploration grounded in feminist theory, the Maclaran and Chatzidakis book raises a fundamental question: can marketing transcend its entrenched gender biases to empower and revolutionize consumer experiences? On the one hand, Maclaran and Chatzidakis (2022) shed light on the fluidity inherent in gender and sexuality, challenging the rigidity of conventional definitions. On the other hand, the

authors turn to the idea of demarketing. While demarketing primarily addressing consumption patterns rather than overhauling production systems, it plays a pivotal role in demarketization strategies. These strategies aim to discourage products or advertisements that perpetuate or reinforce stereotypical gender roles, thus contributing to a paradigm shift in consumer behavior. Lastly, Maclaran and Chatzidakis (2022) also emphasize the dual role of both individual consumers and corporate entities in advancing the ideological assumption of fostering a gender-equal world. They spotlight the significance of consumer choices and corporate actions as vehicles for social change, highlighting the symbolic differentiation that individuals seek through supporting causes or purchasing products from brands that align with gender equality objectives. These actions serve as symbolic gestures, signaling an alignment with progressive ideologies and a commitment to challenging conventional norms, thereby contributing to a broader societal shift toward gender inclusivity. As scholars and practitioners continue to engage with these ideas, the book's impact is poised to catalyze further contributions and advancements in the field of gendered marketing, ultimately striving for a more equitable and empowered consumer experience.



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