

**Anna SZLÁVI**

***Billboards: The Distorting Mirrors We Live By***

In this multidisciplinary study, blending the issues of visibility and gender studies, I attempt to demonstrate, with the methods of cognitive semiotics and psychology, how visual information affects our conceptual categories. The analysis focuses on the image of women and their representation in Hungarian advertising, specifically billboards. On the one hand, the presentation will examine the features of the WOMAN category as it is defined by ads. Using cognitive linguistic tools, I will identify the typical social roles and physical attributes of the woman portrayed by billboards. The second part of the analysis, then, will turn to show empirical, psychological, evidence that these visual representations are one-sided, stereotypical, and distorting, and as such they contribute to and deepen our confined gender conceptions.

**Anna SZLÁVI** was born in 1984 in Budapest, Hungary. She received her MA in American Studies and Italian Studies, with a specialization in linguistics, at Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest. She is now a PhD candidate of Cultural Linguistics, writing her dissertation on visual communication, with a special focus on the category of women. E-mail: [anna.szlavi@gmail.com](mailto:anna.szlavi@gmail.com).

