

Lund University
Department of Sociology

GENDER, POWER, AND WORK
IN TV-ADVERTISEMENTS

Author: Johanna Illergård
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Supervisor: José Pacheco

ABSTRACT

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Abstract

Advertisements use cultural symbols and myths that exist in society. When women are represented at work in advertisements it often illustrates their subordinate position to men. This illustrates the gender system: how men as a group have more power than women as a group. The concentration here is on TV-advertisement's representation of women in connection to work, power, and objectification. Men's representations are only used here compared to women. Some central theories are Yvonne Hirdman's system of gender which explains how men have higher rank than women and that femininity and masculinity are kept apart, Laura Mulvey's male gaze theory highlights an active male and passive female dimension in camera work and narration in film, Sandra Lee Bartky's points out how psychological oppression of the subordinated operates, and Erving Goffman's phenomena that he found in his study *Gender Advertisements* (1979) are put in the context of advertisements today. The previous mentioned theories are combined with the qualitative method of semiotics and applied on six selected TV-advertisements. Some helpful tools are, e.g. Stuart Hall's encoding/decoding theory of reading texts and Roland Barthes' concept of myth. The analysis is presented in themes – gender, power, and work – in order to facilitate the reading. The study illustrates how powerful and infiltrated the gender system is in following the male norm, e.g. the analysis of the advertisements indicate that still today women have to improve their looks, show their bodies, listen, and receive instructions, while men solve problems and give instructions. The “superwoman”, who manages to do all the work at home and on the job in addition to this she also fits into the narrow beauty ideal, is not as independent as she might appear at first in advertisements. This myth does not favour women, instead it puts more demand on real women.

Keywords: gender, power, work, advertisements, semiotics, objectification, women, men

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Promises! Promises!

“The promise of the commercial is not just ‘You will have pleasure if you buy our product,’ but also (and perhaps more important), ‘You will be happy because people will envy you if you have this product’. The spectator of the commercial imagines herself transformed by the product into an object of envy for others—an envy which will justify her loving herself. The commercial image steals her love of herself as she is, and offers it back to her for the price of the product.”

—John Berger (quoted in Kilbourne 1995: 123)

1. INTRODUCTION

Why is TV-advertising fascinating? Advertising is a natural part of our daily life. Everywhere around us advertisers try to appeal to us by selling products and services – that we may or may not need – that represent a desirable lifestyle. There are different sides to the reason why advertising is fascinating. On the one hand, a new advertisement is enjoyed as a brilliant entertainer or as a piece of art. It is also fascinating to observe the concentrated form of advertising. It communicates in an extremely short time span; therefore an efficient message often operates in different levels, (e.g. in images, text, sounds, and a combination of these in order to reach all of our senses). Advertisements are often *polysemic* – it is possible to make different interpretations – the meaning that is first noticed might turn into another observation after frequent exposure. The context effect how people understand and interpret advertisements. The interpreted meaning is also different because of individuals have different frame of references (e.g. generation, culture or education). The effectiveness of an advertisement heavily depends on if it succeeds in using signs that the target group understands. Advertisers purposefully apply strong cultural symbols with specific meanings because the meaning should be easily and sometimes instantly recognized. On the other hand, the fascination for the effectiveness of moving images ought to bring critical attention to the social myths and values that might “slip by” without further reflection in the received message. The powerful medium of television has great influence on people and is especially excellent to draw upon symbolic myths and values that exist in society with the aim to evoke emotions, associations, fears, fantasies, desires and hopes. It is therefore important to locate the meaning and associations a message send about, e.g. gender.

Why is it interesting to study gender representations in relation to power and work in advertising? Women today, just like men, have the potential to be independent and make a career. Equal living and working conditions for women have clearly improved, but women and men are still not considered as equals in many aspects. Men and women are assigned different attributes and behaviors that are considered appropriate in relation to gender. Masculinity and femininity are valued differently, e.g. when it comes to power and work. The different systems and patterns that are used by society are therefore reproducing the traditional gender roles constantly. These processes are complicated to change. These patterns – that are limitations for both women and men – are reproducing themselves. To study gender,

power, and work in TV- advertisements is in line with a desire for gender issues and new thinking about gender to be brought up for discussion

Media has been criticized by feminists concerning its reproduction of old stereotypes and unrealistic beauty ideals that are believed to have negative effects on people, e.g. in forms of eating disorders and low self-esteem. Advertisements have a history of portraying women as being submissive to men, decorative objects, and shown at home.

Studies have identified that in advertising women are less often used in work representations compared with men. Women represented as professionals are often in subordinated positions, while professional men are shown in powerful and influential positions. The advertising business may in their defense claim that they must use symbols and codes that already exist in our culture to sell products. However, there is a reciprocal relationship between media and society: when consumers buy the advertised products, one indirectly approves of the advertisements, and therefore contributes to keeping and reproducing certain representations.

This Master thesis is part of an interdisciplinary course in Cultural Studies. The author's educational background is mainly in Communication Studies, Psychology and Human Resource Management. The focuses on gender, power and work representation in TV- advertisements is, in a sense, to connect these interesting subjects to each other. Gender differences in power are a highly relevant topic in the debate on how to achieve equal conditions and possibilities in private and public life for men and women.

1.1 Aims

Gender roles are continuously under transformation and advertising resembles a culture's norms and ideals. As a result, women today ought to be represented as more equal to men than previously. The purpose of this thesis is to study representations of women in TV- advertisements in relation to power and work. It is not a new phenomenon to study women in advertisements, e.g. in the seventies it became an important issue within women's studies. Since gender portrayal in TV- advertisements alternates over time, new empirical studies have the possibility to capture the spirit of the time within a specific cultural context. This thesis is based on the belief that media and society interact in the use and reproduction of gender stereotypes. The aim is to analyze TV- advertisements in relation to gender, power and work

in western society. Examples from North American and European research are presented and compared to the representations in Swedish advertisements.

1.2 Framing of questions

The aim is to analyze representations in TV-advertisements from the perspective of communication and cultural studies but also to apply feminist theories about gender, power, and work.

The primary questions are:

- How are women represented in TV-advertisements in relation to occupations?
- How are women represented concerning type of profession, power relations, and objectification of subjects compared to how men are portrayed?

The secondary questions are:

- How are power relations represented between men and women regarding powerful and influential occupational positions?
- How is the balance between men and women represented as problem solvers and decision-makers?

1.3 Limitations

There are many possible aspects and interesting directions to examine when studying representation in advertising. For example issues of class, religion and ethnicity. In this thesis, however, the focus is on TV-advertisements in relation to gender, power, and work. A restriction is made to focus on the analysis of women's representation in relation to occupation and professions: men will only be analyzed in comparison to women. In order to fully understand advertisement's constructed meanings (visual/verbal/auditory languages or codes) it is hardly enough to apply a textual analysis, the socio-economic context in which it is created might also be taken into account. In addition to this, an audience reception study to get the complete knowledge about advertisements might be done (Dines & Humez 1995:1), for example, to study how a group of adolescents perceives an advertisement, and whether it has any effect on them or not. This would have been interesting but it would have taken a different direction in this thesis. To cover this would of course have been an enormous project. The time-span and format restriction of a master thesis has forced a narrow focus.

Here, the focus is on the meaning of the texts, related to the phenomena in society (its socio-economic context). The processes of making commercials, for example, the power relations within the production teams; like who has the executive decision on what representations to use), are not covered here. A further restriction is to reject the marketing perspective of advertising; the large amount of literature on advertising in this field is however noted.

1.4 Disposition of the thesis

This thesis is organized as follows: in Chapter 1, *Introduction*, the aims, framing of questions and limitations are presented. The choice of focus, on women's representation in relation to occupation in TV- advertisements, is explained in the background. Introduced in Chapter 2, *Gender, Power, and Work in connection to ads*, are Hirdman's two logics of the gender system, Bartky's attention to the psychologically oppression of the subordinated, Mulvey's gaze theory with an active male/passive female dimension in films, a gender perspective on work, the socialization of identity, media's effects on gender identity, Goffman's interesting results from his *Gender Advertisements* (1979) study and a summery that puts these theories in relation to the aim of this study. Covered in Chapter 3, *Analyzing moving images*, are the qualitative methods of semiotics, the signs and codes of television, Hall's encoding/decoding theory of reading texts and Barthes' concept of myth (the produced meaning that people subscribe things). Also presented are the gains and losses of semiotics, the selection of advertisements, the procedure of the analysis, and a summary that rounds off the chapter by putting these tools in relation to the aims. Presented in Chapter 4, *Gender representations in TV-advertisements*, are summaries of the selected advertisements, a semiotic analysis is applied on the TV-advertisements and presented in the themes: power, gender, and work. The analysis is rounded off by putting the main observations from the analysis in relation to the primary questions. In Chapter 5, *Final discussion*, some final comments are made on this study of gender representations in TV- advertisements.

2. GENDER, POWER, AND WORK IN CONNECTION TO ADS

Feminist theories combined with methods within communications provide an understanding of cultural gender in relation to power, work, and advertising. This chapter covers feminism, the cultural interpretation of gender, the psychological oppression of the subordinate, the active male gaze/passive female object, a gender perspective on working life, the shaping of gender identity, Goffman's *Gender advertisements* study, different phenomena in advertisements, and a summary that connects these theories to the primary questions.

2.1 The analytic perspective of feminism

Culture has taken on many different meanings depending on who is defining it. Used within the framework of this thesis is Corner's definition of culture: "the conditions and the forms in which meaning and value are structured and articulated in society" (Corner quoted in Van Zoonen 1994:6).

Cultural Studies and feminism derives, among other traditions, from left politics and Marxist theories. Both these perspectives use a cultural critique that aims to contribute to a better understanding of relations of power and exclusion (ibid.). The political movement concerned with women's oppression and the ways and means to empower women has evolved into a useful perspective when analyzing popular culture.

Popular culture is important to feminists because it involves a struggle over meaning within patriarchy and capitalism. Tania Modleski criticizes how feministic work too often is seen as "something else". The discussion of the popular culture consumed by women is in many ways perceived as particular, whereas when discussing popular culture consumed by men it is seen as ungendered and therefore universal (Storey 1997:136).

Feminism is a field compound of different directions comprised of the radical, Marxism, liberal, psychoanalytic, existentialist, socialist, post modern, dual system theory, and so on (ibid.). The fragmentation within feminism makes it impossible to see feminist theory as a homogenous and consistent field (Van Zoonen 1994:3). However, there is one shared assumption: that societies have profound gender inequalities and historical masculine power (patriarchy), which has been exercised at the expense of women's rights and interests (Crawford & Unger 2000:98). What distinguishes feminism from other perspectives is its

focus on analyzing gender as a mechanism that structures the symbolic and material world but also our experiences of it. However, this obviously does not mean that gender is the only defining factor of how we perceive the symbolic world (Van Zoonen 1994:3).

2.2 The symbolic gender

Gender is based on the *cultural interpretation* of the biological differences between men and women. This does not mean that the biological differences constitute gender, however the interpretation of these constitutes the bases for gender (Lundgren-Gotlin 1999:5).

2.2.1 The system of gender

The gender process organizes our social relationships but also creates institutions, practices and notions. Yvonne Hirdman argues that gender is a symbolic category rather than a role or socially constructed sex (Hirdman 1990:8). People shape their understandings of “feminine” or “masculine” behavior, which are changeable over time and culture (Lundgren-Gotlin 1999:5-7), functioning as changeable figures of thought of “men” and “women” (Hirdman 1990:7-8).

2.2.2 Gender related to power

The gender shaping process permeates societies in different levels, e.g. toys that are gender specific. The structured order of gender constitutes other social systems; this in turn creates meaning and order and generates new legitimacy to these gender formations. In this way the system of gender reinforces traditional gender roles and continues to keep the sexes apart (Lundgren-Gotlin 1999:5-7).

Yvonne Hirdman explains two logics behind the system of gender:

- *Dichotomy*, which is the taboo between male and female (they should not mix).
- *Hierarchy*, which is build on the notion of the man having higher rank than the woman (Hirdman 1990:9).

The system of gender should be seen as a network of processes, expectations, phenomenon and perceptions, whose interrelations give rise to certain patterns (ibid.:8).

The main points are that differences in gender are constructed, symbolized, characterized, and are changeable over time and between societies and cultures. Gender is expressed in relationships, institutions, texts, laws, images etc. The analytical tool of gender describes

relationships between men and women in different historical contexts, on language, individual and social levels (Lundgren-Gotlin 1999:7).

2.3 Psychological oppression

Sandra Lee Bartky refers to Frantz Fanon to emphasize how the psychologically oppressed become their own oppressors through internalization of inferiority and “...exercise harsh dominion over their own self-esteem” (Bartky 1990:23). Fanon describes the psychological effects of colonialism on the colonized in *Black skin, white masks* (ibid.:22). He argues that psychological oppression operates systematically and is institutionalized by breaking the spirit of the dominated and by rendering them incapable of understanding agencies responsible for their subjugation. This facilitates domination and those who benefit from the established order maintain their legitimacy with less apparent violence than otherwise required (ibid.:23).

2.3.1 Three kinds of oppression

Fanon’s description of the experiences of oppression falls into three categories: *stereotyping*, *cultural domination* and *sexual objectification*. Bartky argues that fragmentation and mystification are central when explaining oppression of women. *Fragmentation* is the splitting of a person into parts; a visible form in *stereotyping* may show as a war between a true and false self. In *sexual objectification* this may take the form of a degrading and forced identification of a woman with her body. *Mystification* is the systematic obscuring of the agencies of psychological oppression and reality “...so that its intended effect, the depreciated self, is lived out as destiny, guilt or neurosis” (ibid.).

A way for men to maintain dominance is through fragmenting perception (a kind of sexual objectification), e.g. men whistling after a woman on the street. Sandra Lee Bartky mentions how Sartre expresses this as being “petrified by the gaze of the Other” (her body is made into an object as if it was public property) (ibid:27). The woman is being-made-to-be-aware of her own flesh. They could have enjoyed her looks silently but she had to be *made* to see herself as they saw her. She must be made to know she is looked at: she is being-made-to-be-aware of her own flesh (ibid).

Sex objects are, according to Sandra Lee Bartky, characterized by involving one person who objectifies and one person who is objectified (ibid.). In a narcissistic way the observer and the observed can be the same person; taking pleasure in ones own body as another might take

pleasure in it (ibid.:28). One consequence of being subject to men's evaluating eye is that women have learned to devalue themselves.

2.4 Pleasure of looking at women

Laura Mulvey argues in *Visual and other pleasures* with the help of psychoanalytic theory that cinema routinely privileges the male gaze (Mulvey 1989:17). She believes that in film the male narcissistic fantasy and anxiety are projected onto the female image, a signifier of sexuality detached from reality and from referring to actual women, and becomes attached to a *new* referent, the male unconscious (ibid.:xii).

The structure of representation demanded by the patriarchal ideological order is characterized by the image of the passive woman for the male's active gaze. From the psychoanalytic perspective this representation of women can signify castration, and activate fetishistic or voyeuristic mechanisms to circumvent this threat (ibid.:25).

2.4.1 Woman as image, man as bearer of the look

Scopophilia occurs when looking itself is a source of pleasure but it may also be the pleasure in being looked at (ibid.:17). There is a sexual imbalance in the pleasure of looking, the split between active/male and passive/female. The male gaze projects its determining fantasy onto the styled accordingly female figure. Her role is to be displayed and looked at. Her appearance is coded for erotic impact connoting to be-looked-at-ness. Women displayed as sexual objects signifies male desire (ibid.:19).

A similar active/passive heterosexual division of labor is the control of the narrative structures (ibid.:19-20). The split between narrative and spectacle supports the active man in advancing the story, and further representative of power, as the bearer of the look of the spectator (ibid.:20). For his enjoyment, using his fantasy, the female is displayed and as a spectator he gains control and possession of the woman (ibid.:21).

2.4.2 Gaze in three levels

Three levels of gazes occur in the cinema: that of the *camera* when recording the film, that of the *audience as it watches* the final product, and that of the *characters at each other* within the film (ibid.:25). Mulvey argues that the spectator's position is inscribed as masculine (active and voyeuristic) and the woman's body exists as the erotic exhibitionist "...so the

male protagonist on the screen can occupy the active role of advancing the story-line” (ibid.:162).

2.5 Work and achievement

When we meet someone for the first time we notice if they are male or female (Hatch 2000:322). Another example to illustrate how we define ourselves based on gender is when we experience insecurity and anxiety when we cannot place a person in a gender category. The dominating cultural interpretations of women and men are expressed and maintained in language and behavior. Power relations of both society and concrete organizations are structured by gender (ibid.). The language in itself is gender determined, hence its meaning circles around a network of understandings and images which have obvious connections to “male” and ”female” (ibid.:323).

2.5.1 The work at the household

In comparison to the idealized image of the “career woman” the full-time working homemaker has low status. A woman is not a worker unless paid, that is what phrases like working woman and working mother suggest (Crawford & Unger 2000:394). To keep a household functioning it requires chores which certainly qualify as work: cooking meals, shopping for food, scrubbing floors and toilets, changing beds, ironing and mending clothes, scheduling, doing household planning and record keeping (ibid.).

2.5.2 Keeping everybody happy

Caring for others’ emotional needs and keeping the family in harmony are women’s responsibility (ibid.:398). Women spend time talking and listening to their husbands, friends and family. Women’s relational work expands her immediate family. She is in charge of letters, phone calls, and visits to distant family members. She remembers birthday cards, negotiates conflicts, and organizes holidays and reunions. Women’s labor is about the same all over the world although the specific family rituals vary accordingly to, e.g. social class and ethnic group (ibid.). Relational work of women, just like housework, is ignored in traditional definitions of work. Still it requires skill, energy, and time, and has social and economic value (ibid.:399).

2.5.3 The gender system at work

The female and male work place is a product of the gender system (ibid.:402). Less than one-third of women being employed were in professional occupations and the higher paying management jobs in 1997. Job options for women have expanded, however workplaces continue to be characterized by sex segregation: there are women's jobs (e.g. secretaries, nurses, and elementary schoolteachers) and men's jobs (e.g. computer specialists, engineers, and pilots).

Occupations having equal ratios of men and women may remain segregated in tasks or the individual work place (ibid.:402). Within general occupational categories there are also great deals of sex stratification: "men tend to occupy higher status and paid positions" (ibid.:403). Most of management at work (decision making, policy shaping, treatment of media and of professional systems) are run by men and most of these men in charge are served by women on the job (secretaries) and in the home (housewife) (Hatch 2000:321). As women formerly enter male jobs sex segregation has begun to decline (Crawford & Unger 2000:403). The level of specific jobs however does not seem to decrease. "The closer to the top of the corporate hierarchy the fewer women" (ibid.). Men holding supervisory jobs are double that of women the same age. Only 9 percent of women have decision-making power over others promotion or pay. To think of any jobs in which women typically hold the authority to determine overall work policies and conditions is quite difficult (ibid.:405).

2.5.4 The paid job is an extension of the unpaid work

The feminine characteristics that are valued in women – care taking, empathy, intellectual and sexual flattery of men – are subordinating, and keep women out of the professional life, the top ranks in business and the government (ibid.).

Paid jobs that are typically female (serving others) are extensions of the unpaid work mothers and wives do. "Even when women and men are in equivalent jobs, such as corporate management, women are expected to be more caring and supportive than men, creating extra demands on their time and energy" (ibid.). Caring fit into the feminine stereotype, therefore it is often seen as a natural by-product of being female, rather than an aspect of job competence. "This contributes to devaluation of women's work: If women perform certain functions "naturally", it suggests that, virtually any woman can do them, and they need not to be rewarded by employers" (ibid.).

2.6 Socialization of gender identity

Gender formulation is important in the process of creating a self-identity. Definitions of femininity and masculinity are formed in the real world through interpersonal contact with family, peers, and school personnel (Fowles 1996:225). Parents encourage gender-typed activities, and preferences in gender-specific toys are observed already in children at 26 months of age. By 31 months of age children will mark their gender by appropriate toys, clothes, behavior, and attitudes. By observing and interacting with same-sex models, children adopt and confirm consistent gender behaviors (ibid.:220).

2.6.1 Media's influence on gender identity

Construction of gender begins in family settings (ibid.). Television has little to do with real-world interaction, not being characterized by face-to-face communication, but it is very much characterized by attention, selection, and interpretation. The spectator has the possibility to accept or reject symbolic content of the media according to his or her needs (ibid.).

Even though television has little coercive power, the media still play some part in the determination of self, identity, and self-esteem. The symbolic gender roles in advertising images play a secondary role supplying distant and navigational aids. Young people use mediated gender depictions in construction of ideals of attractiveness, which helps them rank their own surface as well as others. Gender stereotypes of personality can only become fixed after it has been brokered in the young ones reality (ibid.).

Researchers have different opinions on the issue of media's influence on people. Stuart Hall, referred to in chapter 3, *Analyzing moving images*, would argue that the audience is able to reject symbols and myth provided by media, while others would say the opposite. Douglas Kellner for instance points out the danger of overemphasizing audiences' power to resist ideologies encoded in dominant media texts (Dines & Humez 1995:3). Provided through the symbolic myths (e.g. what is good, bad, positive, negative, moral or evil) media helps us in the process of constituting a common culture through the appropriation of which we insert ourselves into this culture. Kellner stresses how media images contributes in shaping our deepest values and our view of the world, e.g. it demonstrates who is powerless, who has power and who can exercise force and violence (ibid.:4).

2.7 Goffman's Gender Advertisements

Sociologist Erving Goffman made a study on *Gender Advertisements* (1979) which will be introduced here and referred to further in the empirical analysis of the selected TV-advertisements. He divides advertising photos into six categories for illustration: relative size, feminine touch, function ranking, family, ritualization of subordination, and licensed withdrawal (Goffman 1979:28-82). The study describes how women are more often than men portrayed subordinated in different forms, e.g. by being dependent on men's protectiveness and involved in activities that were perceived as less important to them and to society. Here follows a summary of his findings of the gender advertisement study:

- *Relative size* implies that women are in general pictured as shorter than men and this signal less authority. Only when a man is a woman's social inferior he is shorter than her (ibid.:28-29).
- *Feminine touch* shows that objects are caressed, touched or held by women, never grasped, shaped or manipulated (ibid.:29-31).
- *Function ranking* indicates that men are portrayed in executive roles, giving women instructions especially in occupational roles. Women are more often shown receiving help than males. This kind of subordination is also active when the target group is women. Men are underrepresented in portrayals of the nursery and the kitchen or when they are shown in these female domains they are represented in an unrealistic way (ibid.:32-37).
- *Ritualization of subordination* states that women are likely to be physically subordinated, e.g. by caving postures, offering smiles of approval or by having her sitting on a bed when a man is standing up. A man can accord her authority, when she is engaged in a pursuit, by his extended arm, which marks his social property and guard against encroachment. Women are portrayed in clowning and costume-like characters while men are displayed in gear they are totally serious about (ibid.:40-56).
- *Licensed withdrawal* suggests that women are pictured psychologically drifting from the social scene, which leaves women disoriented for action, e.g. when being close to a male her face is dreamy and lost as if his readiness and aliveness to the surrounding scenes were enough for both of them. She is being saved from seriousness, e.g. in uncontrolled ecstasy over lemon scented products (ibid.:57-82).
- Gender roles are revealed in *family portrayals*, e.g. women are shown more akin to their daughters than men are with their sons. Also, the father is portrayed standing a little bit away from the family since the distance is required for his protectiveness (ibid.:37-38).

2.8 Advertising and gender

Gender is crucial in contemporary advertising, both because the codes and conventions of advertising images are highly gendered, but also because advertisers practice market segmentation by gender (Dines & Humez, 1995:73). Advertising images are closely linked with the ideology of sexuality in that it provides culturally sanctioned ideal types of (heterosexual) masculinity and femininity (ibid.).

2.8.1 Beauty achieved artificially

The advertising industry is organized around capitalism: the driving force behind production, distribution and consumption of services and goods is the profit motive (ibid.:71). Advertisers subscribe to a low notion of what characterize femininity: dependency, concern with beauty, fear of technology, and fixation on family and nurturance, when targeting women (ibid.:73). Media activist and feminist Jean Kilbourne stresses how advertisers, especially in advertisements for beauty product, are promoting a narrow ideal of femininity. The ideal beautiful woman is artificial (white young model who is thin and follow skin and hair conventions like shaved body areas) and can only be achieved artificially (ibid.:73).

2.8.2 Shifting gender ideology for profit

In the service of profit, the advertising industry has not been slow to grasp the 1990s shifting conditions of gender ideology in our time nor to appoint another liberation movement (ibid.). As a sign of this shifting gender ideology in advertising Danae Clark illustrates this when writing about “commodity Lesbianism”, stressing how contemporary advertisers use cryptic visual codes, lesbian style, when courting the gay and lesbian market. In the social world, these acts have political meaning and when it leaves the political realm and enters the fashion world, it becomes chic (ibid.).

2.8.3 Happiness via the marketplace

Jhally points out in the article “Image-Based Culture: Advertising and Popular Culture” (Jhally 1995:78), how advertising is the market place’s ideological tool which structures institutions of contemporary consumer society (ibid.). Advertisements address how we can become happy and satisfied through the purchase of goods or services via the marketplace (ibid.:79). However, surveys about what makes people happy are primarily “social” life and not material life. People value things like personal autonomy, control of one’s life, self-esteem, a happy life, loving relations, a relaxed-tension-free leisure time, and good

friendships (ibid.). Advertising images aims to connect goods with these things that people perceive as the locus of happiness. Advertising absorbs and fuses a variety of cultural references and therefore nestles goods into our social life and strengthens its cultural significance (ibid.:80).

2.8.4 Gender identity connected to Goffman

Jhally stresses how the commodity image-system is primarily about satisfaction, but it is also about areas such as gender identity. To get attention and persuade the audience, advertisements use images, and representations of women and men. The advertisements do of course not use gender images but images drawn from a narrow and concentrated pool (ibid.:81). Goffman has shown how advertisements heavily draw upon the domain of gender display meaning how we think men and women behave, and hence, not how men and women actually behave. These conventions of gender display figure so prominently in the image-system because the audience easily recognizes them, but also because gender strikes at the core of individual identity. Understanding ourselves as either male or female is central to our understanding of who we are (socially defined at this time within this society) (ibid.:81). These portrayals should not be understood as true reflections of gender. Gender (especially women) in advertisements is defined along the lines of sexuality. To get attention and communicate, sexuality provides a powerful resource that can break through the attendant noise instantly (ibid.:82).

2.8.5 “Superwoman”

In recent years a “new woman” has emerged in commercials, argues Kilbourne in the article “Beauty and the Beast of Advertising” (Kilbourne 1995:125). “She is generally presented as superwoman, who manages to do all the work at home and on the job (with the help of a product, of course, not of her husband or children or friends), or as the liberated woman who owes her independence and self-esteem to the products she uses” (ibid.). The “superwoman” does not represent any real process; instead these new images show a created myth of processes, an illusion that reduces complex socio-political problems to mundane personal ones (ibid.).

2.9 Summary

The perspective of feminism is a useful tool that highlights gender relations. In this thesis feminism is applied to facilitate the analysis of the advertisement's representations of women. Society today, theoretically, ought to provide equal conditions for men and women. Goffman's results from 1979 – that advertisements showed women in subordinated positions – are applied on the advertisements in the analysis.

Hirdman's gender system explains that men and women are kept apart by society's focus on their differences and that the man is the norm, while she is the exception. Parallels can be drawn from Hirdman's to the focus on gender and power to Bartky's theory. She argues that women are psychologically oppressed by objectification, e.g. by splitting a person into parts. Mulvey's gaze theory is also in line with Hirdman and Bartky's theories. Mulvey argues that the male norm is served through the gaze of the camera; women's bodies are shown like objects. She also suggests that a role dimension portrays men as active, women as passive. Since Mulvey's gaze theory relates to cinema, it may be questioned why the male gaze is applied here, but this phenomenon may as well also be active in the context of television advertisements.

Advertisements connect products to feelings and locus of happiness in order to provide "satisfaction" via the marketplace. The female body is sexually exploited, more frequently than the male body, to get instant attention. Men are represented more often than women in important activities. The uneven division of work (in responsibility, decision-making, higher status and salary), between men and women in society may be mirrored as stereotypes in advertising. The analysis is put in relation to what Jhally and Kilbourne found in advertising, e.g. the artificial beautiful women and the femininity characterized by dependency, family and fear of technology.

The next chapter, Chapter 3, presents the methodological tools of semiotics. These are, in Chapter 4, applied on TV-advertisements during the analysis of women's representation, compared to men, in relation to gender, power and work.

3. ANALYZING MOVING IMAGES

Introduced in this Chapter are the theories and methods of Stuart Hall, Roland Barthes, Ferdinand de Saussure, and Charles S. Peirce. These tools will, in the next chapter, be applied on selected TV- advertisements to locate the gender codes in relation to work and power during the semiotic analysis. Let us first grasp how interpretation of texts operates and then proceed to the presentation of semiotics, the selected qualitative method.

3.1 Encoding and decoding of media texts

Stuart Hall implies in his article “Encoding/Decoding” (Hall 1980) that the communication of a message is a process of meaning-making. This process is also shaped by the social structure where meaning making is happening (ibid.). Hall’s encoding/decoding model is useful as an analytical tool, because it has a distinction between denotation and connotation. A sign’s literal meaning (denotation) is distinguished from its associative meanings (connotations) (ibid.:133). However, “...in actual discourse most signs will combine both the denotative and the connotative *aspects*...” (ibid.).

Encoding is “the process of communicating a message by means of signals that are written, spoken, or visual which are combined according to particular codes” (Selby & Cowdery 1995:224). This means that the *encoding* of the message’s meaning, hence the process of journalistic production, shapes the texts, which have been produced in a certain way (Eriksson 2000:277). A text is not closed, instead it shows different levels of power relations. The dominant ideology marks its values on journalism and therefore favors certain meanings in front of other ones (ibid.). Completing the encoding process when employing the codes and conventions of TV makes the meaning appear as natural and given, and thereby hence deny its own ideological construction (O’Sullivan et al. 1998:136).

The process of interpreting a message is *decoding*. “Usually satisfactory decoding depends not only on an understanding of the words or images employed but also of the beliefs and values of the encoder” (Selby & Cowdery 1995:222-223). The *decoding*, how the audience makes sense of a text, is not always consistent with the encoded meaning (O’Sullivan 1998:137). The message can be interpreted in various ways; it is *polysemic*. *Polysemic* is the capability of multiple meanings, “...visual texts are often described as polysemic because they can be read in different ways” (Selby & Cowdery 1995:231). Texts obtain multiple

meanings (being polysemic) and need to be actualized by audiences, involving the cultural competent application of codes governing the text (Van Zoonen 1994:79). "The more closed the text is, the more obvious is the *preferred meaning*" (O'Sullivan et al. 1998:137).

The text's dominant meaning or the *preferred meaning* limits the interpretation for different audiences (ibid.). Every sign has the capacity of having more than one meaning, multi-accidental, depending on the circumstances of its usage (Van Zoonen 1994:79). The preferred meaning is the one that favors an interpretation that accepts the existing order of society and may steer the interpretations in a certain direction, e.g. it does not favor ideas about how society's social structures are unfair, wrong, or in need of change (Eriksson 2000:277). The viewer is active when creating meaning, but Hall also points out that the possibility to establish different interpretation of a text among viewers should not be overestimated (ibid.:278). The degrees of understanding and misunderstanding of encoding/decoding are dependent on the degrees of symmetry/asymmetry (Hall 1980:131). The lack of understanding codes has to do with structural differences of positions and relation between the audience and broadcasters (ibid.). Some degree of reciprocity must exist between the encoding and decoding moment to achieve an effective communicative exchange (ibid.:136). An advertisement's images are anchored by the rhetorical language and will therefore be read with considerably consistency by audiences (O'Sullivan et al. 1998:137).

3.2 Semiotics – symbols for reality

Semiotics or semiology is "the study of the ways in which signs communicate meanings and of the various rules that govern their use. Its specialized vocabulary aims to describe just how the various signs and codes that are to be found in all media texts work to produce meaning" (Selby & Cowdery 1995:232). The ground for semiotics are set by the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure, who accounts for most linguistic signs, and the American philosopher Charles S. Peirce, who developed an effective semiotic analysis of images and other non-verbal signs (Bignell 1997:14).

Almost anything can be considered a sign. The French cultural theorist Roland Barthes applied semiology to various forms of popular culture, ranging from hairstyles, toys, soap to wrestling (Barthes 1997). The most striking form of human sign production is language, however our social world is pervaded by messages containing both linguistic and visual signs.

Some examples of visual signs are traffic signs, dress codes, gestures and advertising images (Bignell 1997:14).

3.2.1 A sign consists of two components

A *sign* "...is a composite entity made up of (i) the physical or material thing that is perceived through the senses, and (ii) the meaning that this thing has for us. In semiotics the former physical entity is referred to as *the Signifier* and the latter concept or meaning as *the Signified*" (Selby & Cowdery 1995:233). For example: the combination of letters forming the words rain is the signifier, whereas the concept it refers to - a particular type of weather - is the signified. In the case of words the relation between signifier and signified is completely arbitrary and based on convention rather than a self-evident relationship between the four letters r a i n, and water falling from the sky. In other sign systems the relation between signifier and signify is less arbitrary (Van Zoonen 1994:75).

3.2.2 Symbol, icon and index

Pierce distinguished between iconic, indexical, and symbolic signs. In isolation signs are ever meaningful, their relevance derives not only from the particular articulation of signifier-signified, but also from their relation to other signs (ibid.:75). A *symbol* is a "...sign that stands for an object or event as a result of members of a community agreeing over its use, rather than by any representational relation to what it denotes" (Selby & Cowdery 1995:234), e.g. the word cat stands for a specific animal. *Iconic signs* resemble the things that they represent (ibid.:226), e.g. a photograph that represents a real cat. An *indexical sign* is "a sign which is connected with the thing it signifies but which does not represent or picture this in the straightforward and direct way that iconic signs do" (ibid.:226), e.g. Churchill is associated with his cigar, therefore this object can evoke this historical individual (ibid.).

3.2.3 Metaphor and metonymy

A *metaphor* is "...used in media studies to describe a 'visual' figure of speech in which the unknown is described by relating it to the known" (Selby & Cowdery 1995:229). Metaphoric images are used frequently in advertising to give the viewer an idea of the product's qualities. For instance a deodorant advertisement would assert qualities of coolness in a setting of mountain streams, even though the product may not itself be cooling. *Metonymy* is "a figure of speech in which an attribute or aspect of a thing is substituted for the thing itself" (ibid.).

Television functions metonymically when the items included in the images, e.g. a protesting striker on the news, is representative of the whole strike (ibid.).

3.3 Levels of meaning

Meaning is produced, mythical, and tied to a particular place and a certain historical period; meaning is not given, natural or real. However because it is a product of a specific culture it may be perceived as common sense (Bignell 1997:22). To understand reality Barthes distinguishes between denotation and connotation (also referred to as first and second order of signification). Let us imagine taking two photographs of the same street, one using color film in sunshine, and another one using black and white film in rain. The photographs have the same *denotation* (what is photographed), but different *connotation* (how it is photographed) (Fiske 1997:118-119). *Connotation* concerns the latent cultural values and beliefs expressed by a sign or sign system. This can take on the form of associations or of complete narratives, labeled as *myth* by Barthes (Van Zoonen 1994:76).

3.3.1 Myth and connotation

The social phenomenon Roland Barthes calls “making of *myth*”, is not myth as in traditional stories. Instead, it is a way of thinking about products, people, places or ideas which are structured to send particular messages to the readers of the text. Myth picks up existing signs and their connotations and orders them purposefully to play a particular social role (Bignell 1997:16). Myth is the using of signs to communicate a social and political message about the world. The myth appears to be exclusively true, but distortion or forgetfulness of alternative messages are always involved (ibid.:22). By removing the naturalness, semiotics can see through the myth by showing how myth is constructed and how it promotes a way of thinking, while eliminating alternative ways of thinking (ibid.:25).

3.3.2 Myth and ideology

Fiske and Hartley distinguish a third order of signification, also referred to as *mythology* or an *ideology* that “...reflects the broad principles by which a culture organizes and interprets the reality with which it has to cope” (Fiske & Hartley 1989:46). “An ideology is a way of perceiving reality and society which assumes that some ideas are self-evidently true, while other ideas are biased and untrue” (Bignell 1997:25). The shared ideology of the members of one group will always conflict with members of another group’s shared ideology. The ideological interest of a particular group in society is served by myth, the bourgeois, who

control the industrial, political and commercial institutions of the society (ownership, power and control) (ibid.). As the economy and political balance of power changes the dominant ideology of society is subject to change (ibid.:26). Advertisements play a highly ideological role, "...since by nature they are encouraging their readers to consume products and consumption is one of the fundamental principles of contemporary culture, part of our dominant ideology" (ibid.:27). Advertisements make use of myth, by using already meaningful signs in an attempt to attach mythic signification to products. It is more difficult to see through a contemporary myth because it appears natural; myth's ideological message has to be overcome (ibid.).

3.4 Signs and codes of television

A *code* is a system of signs, which is recognized (Selby & Cowdery 1995:47) and organized into groups (Bignell 1997:9). Camera angles and movements bestow meaning of the western *code* of body language (Van Zonnen 1994:76). Below are examples of what the technical codes of television images, including framing, lens type, composition, camera angle, focus and color, signify and how it is used to tell a story and what meanings are associated with different kinds of camera work.

Framing varies from extreme close-up, often used to present emotion signified by actors' facial expressions, to extreme long shots, often used to establish a setting (Bignell 1997:142). Lens type varies from telephoto, to connote voyeuristic concentration on a small part of the camera's field of vision to wide angle, used to accentuate perspective and connote drama. Camera angles vary from low-angles to connote powerlessness to high-angles, which connotes authority and dominance. Composition varies from dynamic composition, to connote disorder and disorientation, to static composition, which connotes calm and order. Focus may be deep focus, to connote the importance of all the elements in the shot or selective, which connotes the importance of part of the shot, which is in soft focus and connotes nostalgia or romance. Some colors like gray, green and blue are coded as cold and uncomfortable, while others are coded as warm and comfortable, like brown, red and yellow. Black and white now often connotes artistry but has traditionally connoted actuality (ibid.). (For further information on what different camera angles signify see appendix.)

Technical codes like lighting, composition, camera angles, and movements are important when creating the meaning of the image as a whole, but it is important to remember that one is engaged in an analysis of advertisements and not the making of a technical account for photographic magazine (Selby & Cowdery 1995:47).

3.5 The choice of semiotics

There is a range of methods that are possible to use when the subject of study is TV-advertisements. A good start in the process of finding the most suitable method is to decide on what perspective to employ. Here, the concentration is on media texts (TV-advertisements), but alternative focuses could instead have been on different production conditions or on audience reception. Once the perspective is chosen, the next step is to determine whether to use a qualitative method which has a deep focus on what is significant for a few subjects, or to use a quantitative method which examines how frequent a phenomenon appears. Qualitative methods allow for generalizations while quantitative methods do not.

The preference to use the qualitative method of semiotics (which is able to unravel myth) derives from the perspective of being distrustful of the implicit message advertisements send, e.g. about gender, power, and work, without the audience questioning it. A fruitful analysis will come from using the semiotic method in combination with tools of communication theory and theories that originate from the perspective of feminism. This specific combination of analytical tools is chosen in relation to the primary questions and the aim of the study.

3.5.1 Why semiotics?

The aim of interpretative research methods varies widely. Strauss and Corbin defines qualitative research as “any kind of research that produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification” (quoted in Van Zoonen 1994:134). The interpretative aim of qualitative research is about understanding the everyday meanings and the interpretations people ascribe their surroundings and the acts that follow these interpretations (ibid.:134-135). The starting point of the research effort is the belief that reality is constructed by human beings (ibid.:136).

Advertisements use cultural and ideological symbols to shape meaning. Symbols have different meaning in different cultural contexts and social positions. The qualitative method of semiotics stresses how individuals interpret and give reality to its meaning. Meaning is always

a subjective matter of how individuals perceive their reality deriving from how the individuals interpret situations differently depending on their frame of reference.

The decision to use a qualitative method is based on the perspective that meaning cannot be measured or observed in an objective matter, and therefore it is a very useful method when searching for hidden meanings and associations about gender in TV-advertisements. Content analysis provides information on how often something occurs, for example in advertisements. The results from using semiotics as a qualitative method helps to unravel structures of meaning that clarifies how single discursive expression generates meanings, here, in the specific advertisements that are chosen for the analysis (ibid.:77-85).

3.5.2 Critique of method

In the search for a suitable method, the focus of the study ought to be put in relation to which method is likely to bring the most lucrative results for this particular study. Before the choice to use semiotics was made, the gains were compared with the losses of using this method. The heavy amount of details that derive from the semiotic analysis results in a focus on a limited sample of texts. Van Zoonen points out that the data from this kind of analysis are specific and therefore generalizations that concerns all advertisements is not possible to make (ibid.:80). This could be considered a downside with the method, especially if the purpose of this study would have been to make generalizations. This is not the case here. If the aim, however would have been to formulate generalizations, a quantitative method is likely to suite that kind of study better.

Another downside with semiotics is that the analysis of connotative meaning requires a comprehensive knowledge of the culture, which the sign system originates from. The quality of the analysis depends to a large extent on the researcher's knowledge of cultural codes (ibid.:85), so does the reliability and validity of the method. However, the qualitative method employs subjectivity. It has the perspective that individuals construct a subjective reality, which makes reliability and validity less important to this type of method. Semiotics is considered to be a very powerful tool when gaining an understanding of how systems of signs in mass media can evoke emotions, associations, fears, hopes, and fantasies (ibid.:79).

3.6 Selecting television advertisements

During the selecting of advertisements, the aim was to find portrayals of active professionals from a total of 250 television advertisements, which had been randomly recorded by the author. The advertisements were aired on random occasions and on Swedish television channels (TV3, TV4, Kanal 5) during the summer and fall of 2003. Women in professional roles were significantly underrepresented compared to men. Out of the 250 advertisement there were about 30 advertisements that used work representations, and only five of these had portrayals of professional women. However, the aim here is not to make a quantitative study by providing facts on the frequency of women's representation, instead the concentration is on selecting a few advertisements to apply a deep analysis on. Six TV-advertisements are selected out of the 250 recorded. With the aim of this thesis in mind the connection to analyze work portrayals becomes evident, but it is also important to highlight what women simply are occupied with; because these representations mirror reflections about gender in society.

3.6.1 Procedure of the analysis

The procedure of the analysis begins by watching the advertisements to get a first impression and then write short summaries of every advertisement to provide an overview of the stories. Every sequence, or cut, in the advertisements are then mapped, e.g. in terms of its denotations and connotations. Starting by determining the tools in use to mediate an effective message, e.g. the camera angles, what image, sound, and text shows separately, and the meaning it sends when combined.

The semiotic tools, like metaphor, metonym, icon, index, symbols etc., which are explained in Chapter 3, are applied on the selected TV-advertisements to make the implicit meaning appear. The next step is to, in connection to the primary questions, use a feminist perspective and apply the theories in Chapter 2 on the analysis, but also to put it in relation to prior results of, e.g. Goffman's *Gender Advertisements* and phenomena found in advertisements. In addition to the useful semiotic analysis and the other theories taken from Chapter 2 and 3, Billy Ehn and Orvar Löfgrens's book, *Kulturanalyser*, on how to do cultural analysis, is a helpful guide. It describes analytical strategies and how to work with themes to get a rich analysis (Ehn & Löfgren 2001).

3.6.2 Cultural analysis

Critical cultural analysis is about scrutinizing stereotypes and to see the well known with new eyes (ibid.:145). It aims to discover new interesting patterns by penetrating first impressions, articulating the hidden and silenced downed perceptions of reality, by applying theories and asking unconventional questions (ibid.:145-149). The selected strategies that will facilitate the interpretation of meaning during the analysis are: perspective, contrasts and dramatizing. This is what the strategies involve:

- Occupy a *perspective* and alienate yourself towards the phenomenon. Change levels of thought, e.g. abstract and concrete, search for similarities and differences, search for synonyms, and use metaphors to release “invisible” stereotypes (ibid.:153-156).
- Using *contrasts* by using opposites like good/evil, we/them, clean/dirty work/spear-time, children/adults, play/seriousness etc. A concept’s true meaning becomes clearer by mapping its limitations (ibid.:157-158). For example: What is acceptable? What is normal? What is work?
- *By dramatizing* how the everyday values would act in a crises situation. The limitations of what is the right and wrong thing to do are marked when a culture’s values are threatened. By thought let people switch roles, turn social hierarchies upside down, and unite the inconsistent (ibid.:158-160).

3.7 Summary

This chapter has introduced the qualitative method of semiotics, which in the next chapter is applied on the selected TV-advertisements. The analysis aims to break through the construction, and the ideological interests, that are served by myth. Barthes explains how myth is structured to promote a certain perspective, while it eliminates alternative ways of thinking, in order to play a social role. The understanding of how myth serves the people in control of the industrial, political, and commercial institutions in society will help throughout the analysis.

Stuart Hall’s encoding/decoding theory provides some helpful analytical tools for the analysis, e.g. the multiple readings of texts when it is polysemic, the comprehension of ideology, and the preferred meaning of the text. The procedure of the analysis begins with identifying what the advertisements actually represent; its denotation (the associations) and its connotation (latent cultural values). Other helpful tools that can be applied to the

advertisements are metaphors, metonyms, signs (symbols, icons and indexes), and technical codes of television (the associated meaning from the camera work in use). The strategies from the cultural analysis have provided a guide on how to enrich the analysis and inspired a division of the presentation of the analysis into themes: gender, power, and work. The specific combination of the semiotic tools and the feminist perspective that is used during the analysis, provides gains in a wholesome view that otherwise would not have developed in such a particularly fruitful way as it now has. The analysis is presented in the next chapter, Chapter 4. The methodological theories and tools that have been used during the analysis are mostly present in an implicit way in the text, while Goffman's study and the theories that provide the feminist perspective are shown in a more explicit matter to the reader in the text in Chapter 4.

4. REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN TV-ADVERTISEMENTS

In this chapter the theories introduced in Chapter 2 and Chapters 3 are applied on the selected advertisements through a semiotic analysis to answer the primary questions: how women are represented in relation to gender, power and work. Presented under each of the three themes – gender, power, and work – is the analysis of two of the selected advertisements. To provide an entire view of the analysis the application of the theories, (on the advertisements), and what comes out of the analysis is presented in the same chapter.

4.1 Summaries of the advertisements

Humor is a popular way to promote products in advertisements. Humor is used in several of the selected advertisements; therefore it is a reoccurring point that will be given attention to in the analysis. Before the analysis begins, the six selected TV-advertisements of “GB Glace”, “Wasa”, “Läkerol”, “Head and Shoulders”, “Kronfågel” and “Milda” are presented in summaries.

4.1.1 “GB Glace”

High hills, forest and timber surround two lumberjacks who are taking a break. A man who is dressed in red clothes throws a package of ice-cream to a colleague who is dressed in blue. Both reach their skirt’s breast pocket and pick up a spoon. The man dressed in red asks the man dressed in blue if he has ever felt like a kitten some time. The man considers the question for a few seconds, then looks at his colleague and answers that he has sometimes. The product is shown on a stub and a male speaker-voice expresses: “rugged outside, soft inside”.

4.1.2 “Wasa”

A woman is standing in a light and bright kitchen and eats crispbread. She has beige clothes on and has her brown hair tied up in a ponytail. During the advertisements sequences instrumental music is used. She closes her eyes when she enjoys the crispbread. The camera is focusing on her pink lips and then tilts up with focus on her face when she opens her eyes with an intense and dreamy look. Her boyfriend walks up to her and stands behind her while he reaches for her crispbread. She gives him a clever look – and instead of letting him taste her crispbread – she hands him the package. He smiles at her. She walks with a big smile on her face to her car and discovers it has a flat tire. She shrugs her shoulders and takes the bike instead, still smiling.

On her way to work she is facing different everyday problems that she manages effectively. Since she is biking she is able to avoid the traffic jam. She even finds time to buy flowers and manages (unknowingly) to escape getting water poured over her head. She has now arrived at work and the sight of the crowded elevator makes her change her plans again, with a smile on her face, she runs upstairs. In the office landscape she is balancing her chair while she eats crispbread, and as the speaker finishes the promotion of the product, (claiming crispbread will help you manage slight accidents in life in a more *balanced* way), her chair falls backward and she falls to the floor. The product is presented and, while the male speaker expresses “you become what you eat”, two hands crack a crispbread in half.

4.1.3 “Läkerol”

A man is eating at a restaurant. A young woman dressed in jeans and a yellow top yells that he (the man who is eating) is having an attack and pushes his chair. He falls backwards to his surprise. Another man in a blue suite yells (here referred to as the “businessman”), in reaction to this, if there is a doctor in the room. ”Yes, I am a dentist”, answers a man in sunglasses while he stands up and takes off his coat that covers his white doctor’s jacket. He runs to the man “in need” who lies on the floor. They all (the young woman, the man and the dentist) lean over the man (here referred to as the “patient”) on the floor. A hand reaches (it is the dentist hand) the “patient” three ”chewy” pastilles. The “patient” eats them while he is still lying on the floor and then he smiles at the dentist and the “businessman”. The dentist looks, with a huge smile, at the “businessman” who returns his smile. The young woman (who yelled out he was having an attack) stands at their left and looks at the men. A male speaker-voice promotes “Läkerol”, while the product is shown in a close-up.

4.1.4 “Head and Shoulders”

A woman walks in a corridor (she wears a skirt, a blouse and high heels). She pulls her hand through her long, dark hair and scratches her scalp. She straightens her blouse and a button falls off. She reaches for it, but drops her purse/handbag and its content falls out on the floor.

Suddenly she is sitting at a salon and a male hairstylist is standing behind her while he is informing her that the dandruff shampoo presented in an ice-cube will refresh her hair. She closes her eyes while he is shampooing her hair, enjoying it. She opens her eyes and looks with an intense look into the camera at the same time as green leaves fly around her in the blue room.

Now she is surrounded by ice-cubes and her hair is dry. She turns around to show her shiny hair, which has lots of movements. She has tied her blouse shorter, which puts focus on her stomach.

4.1.5 “Kronfågel”

Three men and a woman sit in a coffee-room at work. They look bored as if it was a Monday morning. The male main character, here called the ”daydreamer”, asks the others what they are doing for the weekend and then the ”daydreamer” covers his ears when his colleague answers him. His colleague asks what he, the ”daydreamer”, means with the weekend and replies that it is several days away.

The woman, the receptionist, is now sitting behind a reception desk and a man dressed in a suite, who is likely to be her boss, stands next to her. They both look at a paper that the boss is holding. The ”daydreamer” is standing behind them. He turns to them and tells them how nice it is that the weekend is approaching after such a long and tough week of work. The boss and the receptionist look at each other and she shakes her head.

People are shown in an office landscape. The ”daydreamer” walks by a young man who is sitting at his desk in front of his computer. The ”daydreamer” tells them to have a nice weekend. The young colleague looks puzzled, so does another woman. Another woman sees this and turns her head to look at the ”daydreamer” as well.

While a hand reaches for a package of chicken in a refrigerator, someone whistles the product’s theme song. The advertisement finishes with showing the logotype on the fridge door, which is closing.

4.1.6 “Milda”

Two actors played by two Swedish comedians are coming backstage at a theatre. Robert Gustavsson plays Dracula and Carina Lidbom plays a lady (perhaps she will be one of Dracula’s victims). Dracula is dressed in a black tuxedo and a cape with a black collar. He lies in his open coffin while he reaches for a sandwich and expresses that he must have a sandwich or otherwise he “dies”. With help of other people who work backstage she touches up her make-up and changes her white dress (with deep cleavage), which represents that historical time. She tells him there is not enough time and that he will not make it. He puts

butter on his sandwich while he answers her that if Dracula wants a sandwich, he will have a sandwich. We're about to go on stage, she says. It's a tradition, that is what Ernst Hugo always did, he says. Then it was called Flora, she replies. He repeats the name of the product twice. When Ernst Hugo ate, one was able to see that it tasted really good, but on the other hand he was a great actor, she argues and walks towards him. He replies: "what about Margaretha Krook, talk about great". She closes the top of the coffin while he continues talking: "you'll never get as good as her". Dracula's coffin is pushed towards his stage entrance, while she hurries off. The product is in a close-up and a male speaker finishes of the advertisement saying that "Flora" has changed its name to "Milda", but it is the same content and the same good taste.

4.2 Gender: "GB Glace" and "Wasa"

Humor is a popular tool to promote advertisements. In the "GB Glace"-ad the humor is in the exaggeration of the male stereotype. The characters are in this advertisement in a realistic setting, but the play with stereotypes makes it surreal. The "Wasa"-ad gives a more realistic portrayal. The exaggeration is instead in the product's ability to make her smile when she faces problems. It is almost as if she is happy the car has a flat tire – in that way she can ride her bike to work – but would it not be more realistic if it took longer for her to get to work. The "Wasa"-ad has a slightly humorous ending having her falling off her chair.

Stereotypes show signs of subordination and superiority. Tolson argues that it is fruitful to analyze advertisements in order to understand the stereotypes that the dominant ideology has imposed on those it identifies as the subordinates (Tolson 1996:187). The "Wasa"-ad and the "GB Glace"-ad is presented as a gender theme.

4.2.1 The myth of the hard working blue-collar men

Gender constitutes other social systems, which in turn generates new legitimacy to the formation of gender. In other words the system of gender reinforces traditional gender roles (Lundgren-Gotlin 1999:5-7), and operates as a network of processes whose interrelations give rise to certain patterns (Hirdman 1990:8). Hirdman's system of gender has two logics; the *dichotomy* – keeping the sexes apart, and the *hierarchy* – men having higher rank than women (ibid.:9). The system of gender can be applied to these two advertisements. The *dichotomy* of male versus female stereotyped jobs in the "GB-glance"-ad is enhanced with the representations of two men, who have a typical gender segregated job; they work as

lumberjacks. To replace the men, with women, in their professional job appears unfamiliar. Jhally's points is supported by Goffman that, these displays are not true reflections of real behavior (Jhally 1995:81). The timber and the tractor reinforce the image of hard manual labor that demands masculine strength. Women have other behaviors, characteristics and work associated with them, and they often differ from men.

Workplaces that separate gender, for instance by tasks, are a product of the gender system (Crawford & Unger 2000:402). The lumberjacks' job demands physical strength that women do not always possess. There are probably some women who work as lumberjacks but they do not fit into the female stereotype. The stereotype that traditionally characterizes femininity is dependency, fixation on nurturing, family, beauty and fear of technology (Dinez & Humes 1995:73).

Media use gender to illustrate class symbolically. Working-class males may for example be devalued when characterized with stereotypically "feminine attributes" (Dines & Humez 1995:2). The "GB Glace"-ad illustrates this phenomenon when the lumberjacks represent the working male stereotype, which is usually tough men who do not show any feelings. The kittens are the opposite of what is characterized with tough men. Actually it is unrealistic to feel like a kitten, not just for a man but also for a woman. Kittens are associated with a baby cat that is cute, soft, playful, furry, helpless, and dependent on their mother, just like a little child. Perhaps a child may talk about this kind of feelings.

The *dichotomy* of keeping men separate from women is kept in the "GB Glace"-ad by stereotypes that describe women as soft, men as hard. Since women are absent in the "GB Glace"-ad, no women can here be in a physically subordinated position of the men, which Goffman calls *ritualization of subordination* (ibid.: 40-56). Goffman's *relative size* indicates that peoples heights express their social rank and authority (ibid.:28). This concept can be applied on the "GB Glace"-ad. Since the advertisement only portrays men, they cannot prove their height in order to achieve more power than women. The younger man is a little bit taller than the other man, but his rank by height (ibid.), is evened out with the fact that the other man is somewhat older than he is. The younger man ask him the question about the kitten, which indicates that he looks up the "wiser" man who, therefore, expresses more power than him. Goffman's concept of *licensed withdrawal* suggests that women are pictured psychologically drifting from the social scene, which leaves them disoriented for action

(ibid.:57). The men in the “GB Glace”-ad are not drifting from the scene, hence represent the opposite of how women are portrayed in Goffman’s findings. However, no women are portrayed here to illustrate this. Goffman’s *feminine touch*, that women have a role that caress or touch the product (ibid.:29), is not visualized in the “GB Glace”-ad.

The men’s appearance; one of them has a rough style with messy hair and five-o’clock shadow, while the other one has a softer boyish look with long hair in a ponytail. Their flannel shirts, their helmets with ear protection and the tractor visualize and reproduce this masculine stereotype. Advertisements use stereotyped gender displays because they are easily recognized and strike at the core of individual identity (Jhally 1995:81). The “GB Glace”-ad uses associations of traditional male work so that the audience understands that for example, the “soft” conversation is exaggerated in order to illustrate the product:

Sequence 1. Speech: “ Du, Matte...”

Sequence 2. Speech: “ Ja...”

Sequence 3. Speech: “ ...har du känt dig som en kattunge nån gång?”

Sequence 4. Speech: “ nån gång”.

It is unexpected that they begins to talk about kittens – certainly about feeling like a kitten. The absence of women makes “the soft inside” of the men come out clearer than if the men were compared with women’s femininity face-to-face. The exaggeration, the game with “feminine” attributes makes their conversation fictional and unreal, therefore humorous. The qualities of the product are often illustrated by the characteristics of the people portrayed in the advertisements. The “GB Glace”-ad is a *metaphor* – for “rough on the outside, soft on the inside” – meaning that it describes a visual figure of speech where something is described by relating to something else (Selby & Cowdery 1995:229). The ”GB Glace”-ad plays with the tough male stereotype – who do not talk about feelings or show sensitivity – by portraying the opposite (but only in speech; their appearance is in accordance with the traditional male stereotype). If the opposite of the traditional male is female who talk about feelings and are sensitive, this advertisement is ludicrous of women. The level of intelligence in “feeling like a kitten” is quite low and is not a serious question when it comes from an adult man. It is more likely that children would be thinking in this way. Perhaps this is a strategy to reach the target group of children?

In media men are portrayed more often than women working outside the house, while women are more often shown in the house (Sepstrup 1982:131). Men often have roles of being experts who instruct women (Goffman 1979:32-37). This can be applied to the “GB Glace”-ad. In line with this theory the men are portrayed at work and outside the home. The men are not represented in a situation where they collaborate with women, hence Goffman’s *function ranking*, which indicates that men give women instructions in advertisements is not active in the “GB Glace”-ad (ibid.:34). The other statement by Goffman and by Sepstrup cannot confirm here since no women are represented at all.

The “GB Glace”-ad is polysemic, that it has multiple interpretations (Selby & Cowderly 1995:231), the characters are ludicrous and unrealistically presented; the stereotype of the macho hard working men who at the same time have soft characteristics. The ludicrous portrayals of the men can be put in connection to Goffman’s concept of function ranking (Goffman 1979:36). Goffman stresses how men can be unrealistically presented as child takers or ludicrous. By showing men in unrealistic activities or competencies, (e.g. scrubbing floors), it preserved the image of his real competence (ibid.). It is a sort of strategy to let the men keep their masculinity.

4.2.2. The myth of the modern superwoman

The “superwoman” is a created myth (Kilbourne 1995:125) of a woman who manages to do all the work on the job and at home with the help of a product. She owes her self-esteem and independence to the product (ibid.). The “WASA”-ad portrays a modern woman of today who, at least at first sight, has a healthy and conscious lifestyle. She is associated with values that represent a happy and good life; she is in her twenties or thirties, lives in a nice house with a man that she shares her life with, and she has a job that she likes. She has similar characteristics as the superwoman: she is beautiful, manages her job at the office and her home with the help of the product. She owes her independence to the product, it is understood that without it she would be hopeless and clumsy. She is able to smile when she is facing problems due to the product. It appears as if the product charges her, like a battery for a doll; that is, if she eats it regularly. The “Wasa”-ad demonstrates what Jhally’s claims; that advertisements address how consumers can get a better life by connecting goods with values in order to provide “satisfaction” via the marketplace (Jhally 1995:78).

The “WASA”-ad is *polysemic*, meaning can be interpreted in different ways (Selby & Cowdery 1995:231). It has the paradox dimension of a healthy versus a stressful modern lifestyle. It may be questioned why she eats standing up when this signals a busy and stressful lifestyle, when she portrays a healthy modern woman. The woman works at an office, but because she can eat crispbread at her desk, a legitimate question is if her tasks require any problem solving or other intelligence at all? Why does she not go to a lunchroom? Is she so stressed that she does not have time to go there, or is she secretly eating while she is supposed to be working?

The “superwoman’s” lifestyle is conscious and independent. It is understood that she has *chosen* to live with a man because she is in love with him, not because she is dependent on him; she makes her own money. The “superwoman” portrayed in the “Wasa”-ad also shows subordinated signs. Goffman’s *ritualization of subordination* states that women are likely to be physically subordinated, e.g. lying on the floor or by canting postures (Goffman 1979:40-56). Goffman stresses how the floor is associated with dirt and a lower place (ibid.:41). This concept can be applied to the “Wasa”-ad. In the end scene, the woman falls backwards on her chair. Even though the “Wasa”-woman is never seen laying on the floor it is clear that she will soon land on the floor, which according to Goffman indicates a subordinate position. The point made here, is that she is clumsy because she is discharged. It appears as if it is time for her to be re-charged with the product in order to regain the strength to manage her daily problems (still it could only be a few hours since she had “WASA” for breakfast).

Another sign that Goffman stresses in *ritualization of subordination* is that a person offers smiles to get approval (Goffman 1979:40-56). Due to eating the product the “WASA”-woman smiles as soon as she meets a problem. The difference illustrated here, compared to the *ritualization for subordination*, is that she is smiling at herself; she is not looking for approval. When her boyfriend attempts to taste her crispbread she gives her boyfriend a smart smile, pulls away from him and hands him the package (even though he is physically taller than her she does not appear as though she is a subordinate position in his presence). The product puts her in power (that she otherwise would not have) and he accepts this. She has control of her problems and manages to be less clumsy than otherwise. The product actually makes her independent of others, but she is dependent on the product.

The woman in the “WASA”-ad is portrayed in her kitchen. Women are represented in the home two times as often as men (Sepstrup 1982:130). This may be associated with the female stereotype of being responsible for the household. The “Wasa”-woman is not represented as a housewife, a mother or serving any man. There is a purpose in having her man present; it gives her the authority and credibility that she needs in order to present the product. By showing her with her boyfriend she confirms the idea that she lives the “happy life” according to the traditional social status. Traditionally, he would protect her and take care of her, e.g. financially, while she would care for the household and take care of their children. Hence traditionally, a woman is ascribed this status by having “captured” a man.

4.2.3 A woman’s touch and a man’s gaze

Goffman’s *feminine touch* shows that objects are caressed, touched or held by women, never grasped, shaped or manipulated (Goffman 1979:29-31). In the “WASA”-ad a woman’s delicate hands are illustrating the product in a manipulated manner. Unlike what Goffman found in his study, she is not caressing the product as if it was a precious thing: she breaks the crispbread in half.

By applying Bartky’s gender perspective on Fanon’s three categories of psychological oppression *stereotyping*, *sexual objectification* and *cultural domination* (Bartky 1990:23), on the advertisement it facilitates the analysis. Bartky argues that women’s subordination is internalized and refers to Fanon who expresses that the subordinate become their own oppressors and “...exercise harsh domination over their own self-esteem” (ibid.). Women internalize society’s focus on female bodies (whether women want to or not), putting women’s looks and body in focus as if they are public property (ibid.:23-27). The concept of *stereotyping* can be applied on the “Wasa”-ad. The woman is stereotyped when she confirms to an artificial beauty ideal and in, a way, she is depending on the product; without it she is incapable to handle her day, at least not in a calm and none clumsy way.

When *stereotyping* is applied on the “GB Glace”-ad it shows stereotypes in a different way. The men’s looks are in line with the traditional masculinity stereotypes but have stereotyped feminine characteristics when they talk to illustrate the *metaphor* of the product: “soft on the inside, hard on the outside”. The concept of *cultural domination*, can also be applied on the “GB Glace”-ad, and this phenomena is visible by giving the men feminine characteristics (who are subordinate to the masculine). The men shown in the ad reproduce traditional gender

patterns: the men have higher rank than women; when they are given soft (feminine) characteristics which are not realistic. The class issue is distinct here and the men are subordinate to other successful working male representations.

Bartky's theory that has been illustrated on the advertisements can be connected to Mulvey's male gaze, which also is useful to apply onto the advertisements. The camera does not *sexually objectify* the men shown in the "GB Glace" -ad. They are fully dressed (with the exception of showing their skin on their lower arms since the sleeves of their shirts are pulled up). Mulvey's theory stresses how men's role is active, while women's role is passive, in advancing the story of a film (Mulvey 1989:19-20). The men in the "GB Glace"-ad are advancing the story in the ad. They can not be put in comparison to women, since women are not present here. The technical codes (Selby & Cowderly 1995:57) stress an equal relation between the men; using an eye-level camera angle to emphasize this.

In the "Wasa"-ad the woman is *sexually objectified* when the camera uses a close-up and focuses on her pink lips and her eyes when she opens them after having closed them because of the satisfaction of the taste when she eats the product. The focus on her mouth and eyes contributes to *cultural domination* because it follows the male norm. Mulvey's theory is applied here and illustrates how the woman's mouth is sensually filmed. Even if it is just for a second, it is enough to get our attention and to satisfy the *male gaze* (Mulvey 1989:19-25). Because the myth of the superwoman as a successful and independent person she has an active role in advancing the story. Mulvey claims that women have a passive role, and men the active role (ibid.:20), which (except for the objectification) is the opposite of what is portrayed in the "Wasa"-ad. This may be a way to make the "superwoman" believable, e.g. a woman who is not instructed by any man, she has to be shown in an active role. Therefore it may also be a point in not making her into an object in the sense that the audience notices this too much. People have learned the language of the technical codes, having been constantly exposed to it, and therefore the audience may not react when women are objectified – and used as eye-catchers – because people are used to media following the male norm. Women have internalized the male gaze and are used to being exposed to beautiful women in the media and even look at themselves from the male gaze perspective.

Mulvey's theory also gives attention to other male privileges in films (ibid.:19-25) but these phenomena are not active in this ad. The "Wasa"-ad does, neither has male characters gazing

at the woman to make her into an object, nor does it use camera angles and other technical code to illustrate her powerlessness. Instead the ad uses an eye-level perspective (Selby & Cowdery 1995:57) which puts her in an equal position with the audience and the characters in the ad.

4.2.4 Women are sensual eaters

The gaze signifies male desire. When the woman in the “Wasa”-ad has the role to be displayed and looked at; the camera illustrate how she sensually enjoys the crispbread in a close-up. The camera never shows her boyfriend eating, but it is understood that he will also eat it (since we see him reach for the package).

In the “GB Glace”-ad, for example, there is no close up that focuses on the lumberjacks’ mouths when they enjoy or eat the product. Hirdman’s concept of *hierarchy*, giving men privileges over women (Hirdman 1990:9) is applied here and the ad is in accordance with this phenomena. Hirdman’s first logic, *dichotomy*, separating women and men, can also be applied here to illustrate how it appears to be more interesting to see a woman eating. It even seems as though it is not even worth showing a man when he eats. Men are promoting edible products here, but are never seen eating the product; hence there is no close-up to enhance the sensual way they are eating. This gives the impression that men are not used as an eye-catcher because the male norm does not think they are as sensual as women are when they eat.

4.2.5 Beauty ideals have effects on society

In the “Wasa”-ad a superwoman conforms to the ideal of the beautiful women, an ideal that satisfies the male norm. It is not enough for a woman to have abilities and qualities, she must also be beautiful. The gender system is legitimizing when advertisements reproduce these kinds of female stereotypes in order to favor men. Kilbourne stresses that advertising’s usage of stereotypes creates a mythical “WASP”-oriented world in which no one is overweight, poor, ugly, struggling or disabled either physically or mentally (Kilbourne 1995:122). When many women internalize these stereotypes they learn their “limitations” and thereby establish a self-fulfilling prophecy. “If one accepts these mythical and degrading images, to some extent one actualizes them” (ibid.:125). The woman looks at herself from the viewpoint of the male norm. She has internalized the male gaze, a consequence of women often getting their confirmation and value through their body and looks.

4.3 Power: “Läkerol” and “Head and Shoulders”

The aim with the ironic humor and the fast cuts used in the “Läkerol”-ad is to reach the young people (the “MTV-generation”, who are also known as the ironic generation). The use of irony is distinct, when the seriousness of the situation is exaggerated, drawing parallels to how emergencies and doctors are portrayed in American soap operas. The audience comprehend that an acid attack is not an emergency, therefore it becomes funny.

The “Head and Shoulders”-ad is the only one of the six advertisements that does not use humor. This ad also distinguishes itself from the others because it advertises a hygiene product, while the others promote edible products, e.g. ice-cream and crispbread. The ad uses a *metaphor* to illustrate the refreshing effect of the shampoo, e.g. ice cubes and green menthol leaves that fall around the woman’s head in the salon.

4.3.1 A woman is attentive to other’s needs (but incapable of helping)

Karin Ekman argues that woman’s power – whether it is political, economical or social – is subordinate to men (Ekman 1998:8). It is important to emphasize that this is not the same as arguing that all men possess more power than all women do, however that as a group men do they have more power than women do have as a group (ibid.).

Hirdman’s concept of the gender system and its two logics: *hierarchy* and *dichotomy* (Hirdman 1990:9), can be applied on the “Läkerol”-ad. The *hierarchy*, that men have higher rank than women, is illustrated here in the representation of the men as smart, active helpers, while the young woman is represented as incapable of helping and without giving her a profession that would prove her intelligence. When Hirdman’s concept of the *dichotomy*, keeping the sexes apart, is applied to the “Läkerol”-ad, it illustrates how the men are given more important roles than the woman (the exception of this rule is the male patient who has the most passive role of them all). Here, it appears as their biological differences subscribe men and women different qualities and skills to handle a situation. Even though the young woman does not receive instructions from the men, her role is less important compared to the roles of the men.

In the first scene she controls the situation in an active way. It may be argued that she chooses the man who is having an attack, since virtually everyone who is eating might have the same problem; an acid attack. She pushes him backwards; an action that demands speed and

strength, which, for an instance puts her in power over the man who falls helpless to the floor. The “businessman”, who calls the “emergency” to his attention – assuming the girl does not have the ability or skill to help the man who is having the attack – calls for a doctor since he does not have the solution to this problem either. The dentist comes to their rescue.

4.3.2 The myth of the heroic doctor

With *function ranking* Goffman indicates that men are portrayed in executive roles, giving women instructions, especially in occupational roles (Goffman 1979:32-37). This concept can be applied to the “Läkerol”-ad and the phenomenon illustrates how the ad confirms the traditional portrayal of men and women: men are the experts that instruct women. The young woman portrayed here may be quick and attentive, but the men take over in order to help the man. Because of the dentist’s authority, helpful knowledge, and initiative he becomes a hero. Doctors are associated with high intelligence, have the skill to cure people, and have “all the right answers”. Their knowledge is seldom questioned, at least not by older generations.

The dentist in the “Läkerol”-ad is ascribed the highest status compared to the other people who are portrayed in the ad. The dentist does what is expected of him; he “rescues” the man (the “patient”) by giving him tablets that stop the acid attack. Goffman’s *feminine touch* shows that objects are never grasped, shaped or manipulated, but caressed, touched or held by women, (Goffman 1979:29-31). The “Läkerol”-ad does not focus on feminine hands that caress the product: the dentist puts the tablets in his hand and puts them in the mouth of the “patient” who lies on the floor. In accordance with the findings of Goffman a man is representing manipulative action in this ad.

The dentist shows that he takes all the credit for solving the problem, when he smiles and looks at the “businessman” (but never at the young girl) with a big grin, non-verbally saying that he or that the men did a good job. The young woman stands next to them and smiles. They are not giving her any approval of the action that she has contributed to. The connotation of their smiles can also be that they give themselves credit for their actions, a kind of confirmation between the men.

Goffman’s concept of *ritualization of subordination*, e.g. how offering smiles of approval is a subordination that is used more often by women (Goffman 1979:40-56), can be applied to here to illustrate this phenomenon in the “Läkerol”-ad when the “patient” smiles at the dentist.

The dentist is a status figure, who has high education and traditional authority in society. The dentist is ascribed the highest rank of the people represented in the “Läkerol”-ad, then the “businessman”, then the girl, and the “patient” on the floor has the least power of them.

4.3.3 The symbol of clothes

People are displaying their social status and power by the clothes they are wearing. The girl in the “Läkerol”-ad is an ordinary girl, while the man which calls for help by a doctor is dressed in a suit, which signals a successful “businessman”. The doctor’s white jacket is a well-known symbol that signals a dentist’s traditional profession of high status. The man on the floor has the least power; the clothes are ordinary, maybe boring, and have no connection to a profession that would give him authority. He is passively lying on the floor (another active person would probably ask what the young woman who pushes him down is thinking).

Other signs of power are when the people in the advertisements are physically taller than their subordinate. Goffman’s *relative size* illustrates that people’s height illustrates their level of power (Goffman 1979:28-29). This concept can be applied to the “Läkerol”-ad and thereby illustrates this phenomenon in the end scene, when the “patient” is saved, the individual’s height is distinct when they are gathered standing around him while he still lies on the floor. The young woman is represented as shorter, having the least power, and the men, who are taller than she, have the same height, representing more power.

4.3.4 The myth of the man who can solve a bad hair-day

In the “Head and Shoulders”-ad the woman has a problem with dandruff. She receives help from the male hairstylist whose full name is put in text, while her name is not shown. Men are often presented with last name and title of profession as if they take their jobs more serious than women would in professional portrayals (Konsumentverket 1987:13). The woman’s profession in the “Head and Shoulders”-ad is unknown, but her clothes signal some sort of status; she dresses “classy” with a blouse in light blue and a skirt in dark blue.

The male hairstylist in the “Head and Shoulders”-ad is the problem-solver and the expert who helps the woman to achieve, what Kilbourne calls, artificial beauty the *artificial* way (Kilbourne 1995:73). This is in accordance with Goffman’s concept of *function ranking* (Goffman 1979:32-37). Men are represented as experts while females get instructions from them, hence putting the women in a subordinate situation.

Another concept of Goffman that can be applied to the “Head and Shoulders”-ad is *relative size* (Goffman 1979:28-29). This phenomenon enhances how the male norm is active here. The hairstylist is in a superior position because he is standing up while she is sitting in front of him in a subordinate position. He convinces her by putting his hand on her shoulder – she should not worry, he knows what he is talking about. She needs to refresh her hair with the dandruff shampoo and her problems will be gone.

4.3.5 The gender stereotype of a beauty expert

The profession of a hairstylist is considered to have less authority and status than other professions, e.g. like engineers. The male hairstylist is likely to have a diploma from beauty school and many customers are likely to listen to his advice within his field of hairstyling. The professional category of hairstylist is a gender segregated labor market; most hairstylists are women – it is not considered to be a macho or masculine profession – but of course there are also men who work as hairstylists. Stereotypes are restrictive and narrow set of meanings within an ideology (Tolson 1996:187). The dominant ideology imposes their stereotypes on the subordinate. In order for ideology to operate it must be possible to construct some sense of the “typical” (ibid.). Maybe it is irrelevant to consider whether he does not fit into the stereotype of hairstylists or not, however, what is important in this context is that he is a man. He gives the woman advice and finds the solution to her problem, a problem she could not solve herself.

4.3.6 The myth of the fairytale woman

The norm in advertisements is to portray women that are young, thin and traditionally beautiful. Sepstrup points out that in advertisements women are, more often than men, younger than in reality (Sepstrup 1982:128). Several of the analyzed advertisements, e.g. the “Head and Shoulders”-ad, use a female beauty ideal which contributes to keep this ideal alive in society.

The woman’s role in the “Head and Shoulders”-ad is to reproduce the traditional female stereotype used in advertisements; that women are occupied with beauty. The clothes the woman is wearing – a skirt, a tight fitting sleeveless blouse and shoes with high heels – enhance her femininity. The woman who has a dandruff problem is obviously not busy with important activities that require intelligent decision-making and problem solving skills. Her

hair problem has destroyed her mood and her day; she is having a bad hair-day. It is not unusual that women feel inadequate because they cannot live up to a beauty ideal that has both a flawless and artificial surface. Kilbourne expresses how women feel inadequate to live up to the beauty ideal: “if a woman has “acceptable” breasts, then she must also be sure that her legs are worth watching, her hips slim, her feet sexy and that her buttocks looks nuder under her clothes” (Kilbourne 1995:124).

Goffman’s concept of the *feminine touch* (Goffman 1979:29-31) is applied to the “Head and Shoulders”-ad. The woman in the ad runs her fingers through her hair after she has used the product (but her hands are never shown touching the bottle). She also uses her fingers to scratch her scalp, straighten her blouse and pick up the things that fell out of her handbag. She puts her body in focus when she is caressing her own body, by moving her hair in order to uncover her neck and tying her blouse in order to expose her fit stomach.

The woman in the “Head and Shoulders”-ad now has shiny dandruff-free hair with lots of movement. The hairstylist did know what women ought to look like to satisfy the male gaze and the woman now has beautiful hair which makes her confident. Her day is no longer wrecked by the dandruff. She has become a gorgeous woman who because she feels confident and beautiful also acts superior, certainly in comparison to how she behaved before the hairstylist and the product came to her rescue in becoming perfect.

4.3.7 Men have brains, women have bodies

Hirdman’s system of gender can be applied to the advertisements to see how the phenomenon illustrates different power relations between men and women and how men and women are kept apart, the *dichotomy* (Hirdman 1990:9). In the ad for “Head and Shoulders”, the *dichotomy* is shown in the way the woman is portrayed as confident, fulfilled and happy when her surface has become “flawless”. This can be compared to the men portrayed in the “Läkerol”-ad who are happy because of their active and heroic behavior and not because of the way they look. The woman in the “Head and Shoulders”-ad confirms that today traditional representations of women are still active. Women in advertisements are decorations – objects to look at – concerned with their bodies and looks (Sepstrup 1982:130).

When Hirdman’s *dichotomy* is applied to the “Head and Shoulders”-ad it illustrates how gender is kept apart. The advertisement puts focus on that the man who instructs and helps the

woman. The advertisements represent the woman as if a woman ought to be instructed, in order to look beautiful and she ought to care for her looks in order to please the male norm.

Hirdman's concept of *hierarchy*, the man is the norm and the woman the exception, can be applied to the advertisements. The hairstylist's expertise and problem solving ability gives him higher rank than the female client. She is subordinated into only caring about her appearance; at first she is not happy. At the salon she is suddenly smiling – and when he has helped her and solved her beauty problem – she exposes her body in a sense that she has something that is worth showing to other people. She becomes happy and confident. The product makes her beautiful.

Both the advertisements, the “Läkerol”-ad and the “Head and Shoulders”-ad, use male speakers but female main characters. It is as if the female's actions are given authority by a male speaker. This indicates that a woman does not have enough credibility and status to promote a product. This is in the same line as Hirdman's concept of *hierarchy*. This can be applied to the “Läkerol”-ad, to show how the male speaker illustrates the man as the intellect, the male norm, while the female is the body, the exception that is the object.

4.3.8 Women are eye-catchers – to serve the profit motive

Advertisements use sexuality as a mean to charge a product positively. In male (heterosexual) sexuality a woman's role is to be an object (Ekman 1998:94). Advertisements signal to the female observer that *he* is the target by satisfying the male gaze. Male sexuality is the norm that females are forced to adjust to. Advertisements expect the female target groups to be attracted to the notion that men are turned on by female stereotypes (ibid.).

In the “Head and Shoulders”-ad the woman is displayed as an object and confirms the ideal of the beautiful woman. A beauty that is created artificially; she owes her beauty to the product. The ad shows how the woman serves the male gaze. Her eyes challenges, the observer by looking straight at them with an intense look, her stomach and her body turning her back walking away from us.

The phenomenon of objectifying women has deep impact on women. A woman is constantly objectified by others. As a consequence, a woman has learned to see her body as an object, a separate thing from her real self, constantly in need of improvement, disguise and alternation

(Kilbourne 1995:122-124). She is made to feel ashamed and dissatisfied with herself, “whether she tries to achieve “the look” or not” (ibid).

4.3.9 Subordinate women into objects

Bartky’s theory on psychological oppression is another tool that can be applied to illustrate tendencies of power in the advertisements. To show how domination is kept and reproduced in these advertisements Fanon’s categories *stereotyping*, *cultural domination* and *sexual objectification* (Bartky 1990:23) are used in the following reasoning. The “Läkerol”-ad and the “Head and Shoulders”-ad both use *stereotyped* women who are subordinate to men, which also illustrates an effect of *cultural domination*. The women’s professions are unknown while the men in these advertisements both have professions and are experts who offer solutions. Comparing the dominant men with the women in these two advertisements, the men distinctively have active roles, while the women have passive roles. As noted before, the woman in the “Läkerol”-ad has an active role at first. She gives notice of the “emergency” and pushes the man to the floor, but then she lets the men, which have more authority, be the active heroes as if she was less capable than them to solve the problem:

Sequence 2. Speech: “He’s having an attack...” (screams the young woman)

Sequence 8. Speech: “Is there a doctor in the room...” (screams the man in a suite inquiring)

Sequence 9. Speech: “Yes, I am a dentist...” (says the man in the white doctor’s jacket)

Bartky’s focus on women’s subordination – how a woman internalize the male norm and look at her self as an object (Bartky 1995:23) and in the center of her happiness – cannot be illustrated in the “Läkerol”-ad, but it is active in the “Head and Shoulders”-ad. *Sexual objectification* is used in this shampoo-ad when she gazes straight into the camera, at the spectator, using an intense look. She turns her stomach and hair into fragmented parts to look at. This, of course, happens after she has transformed into a woman with new washed hair, the product makes her into an object worth looking at. She becomes confident because she is aware of what she is, an eye-catcher.

In the “Head and Shoulders”-ad the woman looks straight at the camera which has the effect of looking the audience straight in the eye as if she is trying to seduce the audience. This happens after she “has become perfect” with the help of the product and not in the beginning

as she looks down to the floor. She turns into a proud sexy woman (that seems to enjoy her objectified body in a narcissistic voyeuristic way as an effect of the male gaze). The camera focuses on specific body parts, fragmenting her body into being an object to explore in a sexual way.

Laura Mulvey argues that cinema routinely privileges the male gaze (Mulvey 1989:17). There is a sexual imbalance in the pleasure of looking, the slit between active/male and passive/female. The male gaze projects its determining fantasy onto the styled accordingly female figure. Her role is to be displayed and to connote a to-be-looked-at-ness as a sexual object that signifies male desire (ibid.:19). Mulvey's theory of the gaze can be applied to the advertisements. In the "Läkerol"-ad the camera does not enhance any body parts – objectification of neither women nor men – to satisfy the male gaze. The representation may support Mulvey's theory in another way; the active/passive division of labor of control of the narrative structure (ibid.:19-20). The woman in the "Läkerol"-ad turns from being active into becoming passive and let the men control the situation. The men's active actions are valued more than the young women's action. The men also play a bigger part in advancing the narrative story in an important and powerful way.

Mulvey's gaze can be applied to the "Head and Shoulders"-ad and this is illustrated in different ways. Two levels of gazes are illustrated in the "Head and Shoulders"-ad when Mulvey's three gazes are applied to it: that of the *camera* when recording the film, that of the *audience as it watches* the final product. But not the gaze of the *characters at each other* at least not that supports the male fantasy (ibid.:25).

She closes her eyes when she enjoys the washing of her hair. When she opens her eyes she looks intensely straight into the camera. The camera comes closer, as if it lets the male spectator be teased by her closeness. She appears for a second to psychologically drift from the scene, what Goffman calls *licensed withdrawal* (Goffman 1979:57-82), as if the scent of the product would put her in a dream mood. She looks down for a second, while she turns around to toss her hair. Then the camera changes focus to her fit waist and stomach while she tightens her blouse shorter to expose her stomach. Then she returns her focus and looks straight into the camera as if she is flirting with the audience.

The camera angles in use and the focus on close-ups on her body enhance that the woman connotes the male fantasy. Mulvey would describe how the woman is displayed for his enjoyment and as a spectator he gains control and possession of the woman (Mulvey 1989:21).

4.3.10 The male gaze is internalized – she knows she is a goddess

Women are supposed to maintain their bodies – often represented in advertisements as if it is relaxing to do so – hence their looks ought to be their hobby (Ekman 1998:58). In the “Head and Shoulders”-ad the woman’s beauty – or rather the representation of her lack of beauty – controls her mood. In the beginning of the advertisements her head is turned down towards the floor but after she has new washed hair she is a changed person. She is happy and feels good about herself. Now she is confident enough to be the seductive woman who exposes herself as a sexy woman. When Mulvey’s theory is applied on the “Head and Shoulders”-ad it illustrates the concept of Scopophilia; the pleasure that occurs when, e.g. a person knows he or she is being looked at (Mulvey 1989:17).

Bartky’s point can be applied here; the tendency for women to internalize their inferiority (Bartky 1990:27). It appears as if she has internalized the male norm and use men’s gaze when she looks at herself. She has internalized the male gaze of what is considered to be beautiful and she sees herself in a narcissistic way, taking pleasure in her own body. She is aware that men will view her as a goddess and this thought empowers her. However, the beauty lies in the spectator, the male gaze, who at anytime can remove her from this position. She is in power for the moment, but only temporary. Females are always judged on their beauty, while men are valued for just being men and for what they achieve (Ekman 1998:94).

Kilbourne stresses that 20 percent of women in college-age have an eating disorder (Kilbourne 1995:124) and advertising’s representations of women who are dismembered, separating their bodies into parts in need of improvement or change must be put in relation to this. The increase of eating disorders and plastic surgery today is one of the effects of media’s usage of images of only perfect ideals.

4.4 Work: “Milda” and “Kronfågel”

Just like the other advertisements have illustrated, humor is a strategy to become popular to the Swedish audience in order for them to purchase the products. Humor is used in both the “Milda”-ad and the “Kronfågel”-ad.

The “Milda”-ad uses comedians that today are popular and respectable. In their speech they literally remind us of the great actors and actresses that have promoted the product before. When the ad draws upon earlier ”Flora”-ads by mentioning two classic Swedish actors, it uses *intertextuality*, meaning that (media) texts never stand alone but are bound to other texts both historically and to contemporary media (Fiske 1997:108-127). The polysemic, multiple interpretations (Selby & Cowdery 1995:231), give different associations on different levels that are funny, e.g. Dracula uses the expression that he will die before he dies, and it is understood that he probably will die on stage later when he is performing his role.

The “Kronfågel”-ad is also *intertextual* and portrays an odd man who daydreams about Friday, the audience knows from other advertisements before that Friday is the day when he eats chicken. The advertisement is unrealistic in the ludicrous representation of the male daydreamer. In real life he would probably be fired, but here, in the ad they let him continue his work. He lives in his “Friday-dream-world” and pays no attention to what the others are telling him.

The analysis of the “Kronfågel”-ad and the “Milda-ad is presented here in the theme: work. During the analysis the theories from previous Chapters have also been applied here with the purpose to answer the question of this thesis.

4.4.1 Gender division in jobs

Goffman indicates with *function ranking* that men are portrayed in executive roles, giving women instructions especially in occupational roles (Goffman 1979:32-37). Men are more often shown in roles that require intelligence and authority. This is applied to the “Kronfågel”-ad and it shows this phenomenon; the male boss is instructing the female secretary whose work is to serve others (often males). In this sequence she is sitting behind her desk while she receives instructions from the man who is likely to be her boss. Women shown outside of the home have jobs that are submissive in favor of the competent men at the office (Sepstrup 1982:131-132). When women are represented at work, they let the men talk,

while they are silent. Women who are represented in everyday situations in the home may however have a dominant role (ibid.).

The concept of *function ranking* that men are unlikely to be shown realistically in activities in the kitchen (Goffman 1979:36) is applied to the ad. What at first seems like it illustrates the opposite of Goffman's statement in the "Kronfågel"-ad, instead has tendencies that still hold on to old gender patterns. The men (and a woman) are portrayed in the coffee room at work, which also has a kitchen, but no one is doing any typical work, e.g. cooking or doing the dishes, in the kitchen. They are just taking a break. It is, however, likely that they all will wash their own cups afterwards.

Goffman showed how women are likely to be physically subordinated, *ritualization of subordination*, e.g. by having a woman sitting on a bed while a man is standing up (Goffman 1979:40-56). This can be applied on the "Kronfågel"-ad and find that it is illustrated when the boss stands up while instructing the receptionist who is sitting down behind the desk.

Bartky refers to Fanon's concepts that he uses to illustrate how domination is kept: *stereotyping*, *cultural domination*, and *sexual objectification* (Bartky 1990:23). These concepts can be applied on the advertisements. In the "Kronfågel"-ad the woman represents a *stereotyped* (Bartky 1990:23) role of being a secretary that serves her male boss. By having a man playing the executive role and the woman playing the secretary, the stereotype connected to gender specific jobs is reproduced. The typical female paid job is an extension of the unpaid work of mothers and wives often *servicing men* in management or at home (Crawford & Unger 2000:405). The "Kronfågel"-ad does not follow the traditional norm of advertisements when it portrays a middle-aged woman. In general women in advertisements are young, skinny, and in-line with the beauty ideal of today. The concept of *sexual objectification* is applied to the "Kronfågel"-ad but there is no sign that these phenomena are active here. However, the phenomenon of *cultural domination* (Bartky 1990:23) is shown in the represented stereotyped job division of gender which gives the male boss higher rank than woman.

4.4.2 Same job but different salary

The traditional division of labor between men and women put women responsible for the household, while men work outside the home (Sepstrup 1982:130). In the "Milda"-ad there is

no segregation between women and men in the professional choice, they are both actors. There is no sign here that the man has a higher job position and status than the woman, but men in general have higher salary (Crawford & Unger 2000:403). Therefore according to this norm in society, it may be assumed that he is likely to have better salary than she does.

4.4.3 Women's looks are important at work

What keeps the sexes apart, called *dichotomy* (Hirdman 1999:9), is their behavior and characteristics. In media men are offered to deepen their interests and relax in an active way in their spare-time, e.g. by playing golf (Ekman 1998:57). The tendency to keep women's versus men's activities separate have different rank, *hierarchy* (Hirdman 1999:9), when it comes to power. Hirdman argues that the men are the norm, women the exception. These concepts can be applied on the "Milda"-ad. The actor argues that if Dracula (which he portrays) is hungry he will certainly eat; he grabs a sandwich and spreads butter (the product advertised) on it. The actress in the advertisement however, does not have time to relax and eat during the short break. The woman needs to maintain her appearance by changing dresses and improving her hair and make-up however the demands and the care for looking beautiful is different for a man. When women are portrayed in working life they are also decorative, e.g. they have less clothes on and show more skin, compared to how portrayals of men are (Konsumentverket 1987:13). The importance for working women to look great indicates that a woman's intelligence, skills, and competences are not valued if she is not also good looking. This illustrates how a woman is the exception while a man is the norm in society. This can be related to a myth of a superwoman and the demands put on women today. The superwoman is a myth; intelligent, independent, does a good job, manages the work of household (Kilbourne 1995:125), and often fits into the category of "natural" beauty.

The theories that have been applied to the advertisements here, e.g. Hirdman's gender system, facilitates the understanding of why a woman does not only have to work harder to prove her intelligence, while a man gets credit just by being a man; she also needs to strive to look her best. The ideal beautiful woman in advertising is artificial, a myth, that is achieved artificially (Dinez & Humez 1995:73). Since the female ideal is an artificial myth, many women have difficulties living up to this look in a natural way. To achieve the natural look is costly and takes hours, e.g. by using cleansing product, lotion, face masks, scrubs, and self-tanning creams. "Women are constantly exhorted to emulate this ideal, to feel ashamed and guilty if

they fail, and to feel that their desirability and lovability are contingent upon physical perfection” (Kilbourne 1995:122).

4.4.4 No male gaze represented at work

When Mulvey’s gaze theory is applied to the “Kronfågel”-ad, neither the women nor the men are objectified by the camera. Mulvey’s male gaze theory is not supported here (Mulvey 1989:19-25). The woman is subordinated to men in other ways; her secretary job and her lower physical position (which the application of Bartky and Goffman’s theories has already shown) sitting behind the receptionist desk, while her boss is instructing her standing up next to her. The technical codes enhance an eye-level angle, which is connoting equal relations between the people and in relation to the audience. The men and women in the advertisements are gazing at the daydreamer when he makes strange comments, but the gaze is not an objectifying look.

4.4.5 The myth of the “mother” at work

The woman in the “Milda”-ad has the characteristics of a mother figure; she keeps track of him by telling him he does not have enough time and that he will not make it:

Sequence 2.	Speech:	“Nej, nej, nej, näe jag måste ha en smörgås...”	(says the actor)
Sequence 3.	Speech:	“...innan jag dör...”	(says the actor)
	Speech:	“Du hinner inte...”	(says the actress)
Sequence 4.	Speech:	“Om drakula vill ha en smörgås...”	(says the actor)
Sequence 5.	Speech:	“...så tar Drakula en smörgås...”	(says the actor)
Sequence 7.	Speech:	“Vi ska in nu...”	(says the actress)

Traditionally women do not only keep the household functioning, they also keep their friends and family happy. Crawford and Unger expresses how women are expected to be more caring and supportive than men and that it is seen as by products rather than as job competencies. Care taking, empathy, intellectual and sexual flattery of men, valued characteristics in women, subordinate and keeps women out of professional jobs. This is illustrated when Bartky’s theory is applied to the “Milda”-ad; the woman is *stereotyped* (Bartky 1990:23) and objectified in the way she is a mother figure, telling him to hurry, not necessarily putting him in a childish role. Between the represented actors is a sort of a mother and son relation, or maybe a brother and sister relation, in that they are teasing each other in a competing way,

e.g. by saying that the colleague does not have enough talent as the classic actors had when they advertised the product. This also illustrates how the ad is using *intertextuality* to remind the audience of earlier advertisement for the product:

- Sequence 8. Speech: “Du, de’ e’ tradition, de’ gjorde alltid Ernst Hugo...” (says the actor)
- Sequence 9. Speech: “då hette de’ flora...” (says the actress)
- Sequence 10. Speech: “Flora, Flora...” (says the actor)
- Sequence 11. Speech: “När Ernst Hugo åt, då såg man verkligen att de’ va’ gott, men han va’ ju en stor skådespelare...” (says the actress)
- Speech: “Margaretha Krook då...” (says the actor)
- Sequence 12. Speech: “...snacka om stor. Henne kommer du aldrig att komma i närheten av...” (says the actor)

Since both of them behave in this way neither is more submissive nor superior to the other in this sense. The concepts of *cultural domination* and *sexual objectification* (Bartky 1990:23) can be applied on the “Milda”-ad. These phenomena are present here, but not in a very distinct way. The rank between them appears to be on the same level. The activities that they are occupied with when they are on a break separate men from women, called *dichotomy* by Hirdman. He enjoys his break in a more relaxing way, while she is occupied with both keeping him on time acting like his mother, and getting a satisfying look that lives up to the beauty ideal for women. She is aware that women are objectified sexually, whether they want to or not. Ekman points out how the objectification of males and females operate in a different matter, a woman is depending on her looks in many situations, while a man gets authority just by being a man; a woman needs to be beautiful (Ekman 1998:94).

4.4.6 The myth of the non-working daydreamer

In the “Kronfågel”-ad the main character is a daydreamer who believes the weekend is coming up soon. Due to the “Kronfågel”-ads shown before, its *intertextuality*, the audience understands that he connects Fridays with chicken (which he loves). When his colleagues indicate that the weekend is not coming up yet, the daydreamer covers his ears so he will not hear their answer:

- Sequence 1. Speech: “Oh, vad gör ni i helgen då...” (says the daydreamer)
- Speech: “Helgen, ...vadå helgen.. De e ju flera dar’ dit...”
(says his colleague)
- Speech: “Trevligt, mysigt...” (says the daydreamer while he covers his ears)

The daydreamer’s low power is enhance by his clothes and his odd behavior. His tie is too short and even though he is portrayed in the office, but he is never shown doing any effective work. Instead he interrupts the boss and seems to have no clue of how to behave in work and in the social situations at work:

- Sequence 2. Speech: “Oh,...skönt att de e’ helg efter en sån lång och kämpig arbetsvecka...” (says the daydreamer who interrupts his colleagues)

The secretary has a subordinate job but she seems to have more status than the daydreamer. She even shakes her head in order to show the boss how strange the daydreamer’s comment is. This is, of course, after the boss has offered a look at her to show he thinks it is a weird behavior. It appears as she does a good job and her body is not objectified; this contributes to the associations that she has more power and status at the office than the daydreamer has.

4.4.7 The male gaze is active on stage

Mulvey’s theory of the gaze is applied to the “Milda”-ad, but because there is neither a focus on her body in a close-up nor letting a man gaze at her, this phenomenon is not supported here (Mulvey 1989:19-25). The technical codes of the camera do not portray her in an unequal position towards the actor. However in her role as an actress on stage she is an object, representing a to-be-looked-at-ness, to satisfy the men’s needs and to please their gaze. Feminism would argue that this phenomenon keeps women in a subordinate position, which the patriarchy culture is gained by.

The woman in the “Milda”-ad is not objectified by the camera, neither by her coworkers nor by the audience. However she sends more sensual signals than her coworker. She aims to fit into the female beauty ideal when she applies more make-up and wears dresses that enhance her cleavage. It gives the impression that she is aware of that she may be objectified, as a

display to look at, by the audience and perhaps also by the male characters looking at her when on stage. Because she changes dresses it is likely to assume that this might signal a possibility to see her nude skin, but this is not fulfilled. The man is fully dressed and is thereby not represented in this matter.

4.4.8 Deadly kisses in power

The advertisement for “Milda” is *polysemic*, concerning the understanding of who has the most power of the characters. The actress is standing up while the actor is put in a subordinate position because of Dracula’s coffin. He holds up his position by his sharp tongue when she tells him he will never make it; he argues that Dracula will do whatever he feels like. She proves her higher physical position by closing his coffin. This, however, that does not make him stop talking. The audience never sees Dracula on stage, but one knows from *intertextuality*, that women will fall dead because of his deadly kisses. His role ascribes him power. Her role, on the other hand, puts her in a subordinate position since she is likely to be one of the victims that die by his vampire teeth.

4.5 Women’s representations in advertisements: a summary

The main points from the analysis are summarized here and put in connection to women’s representations in relation to power and work (but also to occupation and objectification).

The analysis has indicated that women are, in these representations, occupied with smiling, listening to instructions, passively observing, receiving beauty advice, and improving her looks. A woman’s role also involves showing her body and being a mother figure. These activities subordinate women in comparison to men’s activities. Hirdman’s theory of the gender system (1990), when applied to the advertisements is illustrating that men and women are separated. For example, showing a man in a context that indicates that he is about to eat (but he is not displayed in an intimate camera shot when he enjoys it), while a woman is sensually eating in a close-up. Men are occupied in roles of experts that give help, solve problems, and give instructions. Men may be subordinated if they are shown as ludicrous, e.g. in roles of blue-color men who are talking about kittens in order to illustrate that these tough men are soft inside (a characteristic that is associated with females) or as strange daydreamers at work.

In these advertisements women are represented and used as sexual objects and eye-catchers, while men are not. The signals sent here are that the advertisements will sell because it is more interesting to watch a woman eat rather than a man, as well as it satisfies the male gaze. When Mulvey's gaze theory (1989) is applied here it illustrates how the woman's lips and her intense eyes are filmed in a close-up when she sensually enjoys the product. A woman represented in advertisements may also expose her fragmented body to the observer when the product has given her, what Kilbourne (1995) would call, "artificial" beauty. Bartky's theory of psychological oppression (1990) is applied here and shows how the woman has internalized the male gaze and that she is aware of that she is a goddess – therefore she feels powerful – and flirts with the spectator. This ad illustrates that women are still today portrayed as concerned with their bodies and looks (Sepstrup 1982:130). Beauty lies in the eyes of the observer (the male gaze), therefore people can take this power, that she has only perceived, away from her at any time. An advertisement may also use subtle connotations, e.g. by connecting a product with subtle associations of possible nude skin exposure, but never fulfill this in images, e.g. as in the "Milda"-ad when she changes dresses.

Only three of the advertisements use working women as main characters: receptionist, office worker (administrator) and actress. Men were presented in work representations with various statuses in all the advertisements and in a wider range of work positions: executive boss, lumberjack, office worker, dentist, businessman, hairstylist, and actor. Fewer women than men were portrayed at work in powerful positions, which involved decision making or problem solving: the male boss has a powerful and influential position when he instructs the female receptionist (in the "Kronfågel"-ad), the dentist's authority is illustrated when he "takes over" and solves the "patient's" problem (in the "Läkerol"-ad), and the male hairstylist solves the woman's (dandruff) problem (in the "Head and Shoulders"-ad). None of the women in the advertisements have a particular powerful position at work. When it first appears as equal power conditions for the man and the woman may exist, their gender characteristics assign them different power levels. For example, the actress in the "Milda"-ad has in addition to her work tasks, a role of a mother figure, what Crawford and Unger (2000) would call unvalued feminine by-products and she improves her looks in order to adjust to the male gaze. Having women displayed as decorative at work is a phenomena (Konsumentverket 1982:13) that still exists in advertising today.

The representation of the “superwoman” (Kilbourne 1995:125) is an effort to have the consumers identify with an “independent” woman. The woman in the “Wasa”-ad is shown in control of her life but the analysis shows that this only happens when specific conditions are fulfilled, e.g. when it is due to the promoted product (and incapable without the product). This indicates that a woman is not skillful enough to be in power of her life just by being herself. Another condition is that the woman needs to be put in relation to a man, her boyfriend, to prove that she lives a happy life. A male speaker can also give a woman authority to represent and promote a product in an ad. This indicates that she needs a man’s authority to be trustworthy when it comes to convincing us to buy the product. The new efforts to portray a myth of a “superwoman” have failed to show real independent women, even though these portrayals in comparison to previous representations have improved. Women are today still not shown as independent or in powerful positions. Goffman pointed out in his study in 1979 that men often are represented as the ones who give expert instructions to women, which puts the women in subordinate positions to the men (Goffman 1976:34).

Another situation where women are presented as having some level of power is when a woman has a subordinate position to others, but *one* strange man is her social inferior. This indicates that a woman may have power over a ludicrous man, a man that does not conform to the norm of a “real” man. This man is represented as odd, consciously absent or without control of his situation. The receptionist (in the “Kronfågel”-ad) is associated with higher social status than the daydreamer who is not involved in any tasks at work. The young woman (in the “Läkerol”-ad) also illustrates how she is subordinated into a role as a passive observer when she lets the men take over the “emergency”, but she still has more power than the “patient” who lays “helpless” on the floor.

Parallels can be drawn to the “GB Glace”-ad, which, in order to make the advertisement funny, has turned the characteristics of the macho stereotype upside down. By giving the men soft characteristics, the men are put in a subordinate position, but because these images are not realistic of macho behavior and because it is more acceptable to make fun of blue-color men (Dinez and Humez 1995:2), these representations are not a threat to the male norm. The analysis shows, by applying Hirdman’s gender system theory (1990), how this advertisement illustrates women’s lower rank compared to men without even having women present.

5. FINAL DISCUSSION

It is time to round off this thesis with a final discussion on the accomplishment of the study, the study's validity, if the primary questions have been answered, suggestions for new studies and some thoughts that have arisen along the progress of the work on how female myths have different effects in society.

5.1 Have the primary questions been answered?

The purpose and aim of this study have now been fulfilled; the primary and secondary questions at issue have been answered. With the combination of applying semiotics with a feminist gender perspective on these advertisements, it has brought insights on how women, compared to men, are represented in relation to work and power, but also in connection to objectification and occupation in the six selected TV- advertisements. The theories of Hirdman, Bartky and Mulvey were particularly useful to apply on the advertisements, but also the use of Goffman's *Gender Advertisements* study from 1979 to see if the same phenomena are still active today.

5.2 Were the answers that came out of the analysis expected?

In the beginning of this study when the subject was formulated, it was based on an idea that the phenomenon of gender in advertisements has changed into more reasonable representations of women. This study, surprisingly, illustrates how distinct the gender system really is.

Even though this study uses a qualitative, not a quantitative, method, it was during the selection process unpredictable that few women in the advertisements were represented at work. It was unexpected to find that the representations of women in many ways used the same phenomenon that Goffman found in his *Gender Advertisements* but also the theories of, e.g. Hirdman, Bartky, and Kilbourne, had illustrated.

The initial standpoint was that gender representations today must have changed from before because of the idea that society has developed into questioning this belief. Advertisements might today use less bimbo roles, but still her replacement, e.g. the "superwoman", is not in favor for women's independence. By becoming aware of how powerful and infiltrated the gender system is, and how little change actually has taken place in representing women in

advertisements, has therefore resulted in a deeper understanding of the intensity the gender system operates and reproduces itself in society.

The male gaze of camera was at some point visible in the advertisements, but overall Mulvey's gaze theory was not as prominent as it probably would be when used on real films. Although two of the ads analyzed here show how women are used as eye-catchers and objects, a change may have occurred on the extent, frequency, and on how distinct these stereotypes are used. Here the objectification happens for such a short time since advertisements have to be accepted by the people.

5.3 A critical eye on this study – is the study valid?

Although the qualitative method of semiotics provides subjective results, the aim has been to look at the advertisements in an objective matter and show phenomena that other researchers would also be able to find. However, a researcher's background will effect his or her perception of things in some sense. It is likely that this study is filtered by the perspective of a female author.

Since the qualitative method does not provide facts in tables or plain figures, someone may argue that it is difficult to prove what has come out of the analysis. The analysis involves interpretations of cultural symbols that are active in the advertisements. Therefore the study's validity depends on the author's knowledge of the specific culture and its symbols and codes. The analysis is built up by applying theories in an explicit way on the advertisements to illustrate how phenomena are active and how different symbols, e.g. power and social status, are present. The findings become more visible in this way and also give validity to the analysis. The presence of the method during the analysis is presented in a more implicit way. To establish a foundation for the analysis it is necessary to present, in detail, semiotics because it has a wide theoretical dimension compared to other methods. Chapter 3 is expanded as a consequence of this.

This study does not provide any results that can be used in terms of generalization of all advertisements existing, but it brings specific information on interpretations of meaning (on gender, power, and work) in a sample of advertisements, that have been created in our time. There is a reciprocal relationship between media and society. Images draw upon existing

cultural symbols and thereby mirror attitudes and phenomena that are active in society. By showing how the gender system is reproduced in the advertisements it also gives attention to how the gender system operates, overall, in society.

5.4 Suggesting new directions for studies

The chosen theories and methods have facilitated, and resulted in, a rewarding analysis of the selected TV-advertisements. This study focused on women's representation, but it would also be interesting to make a study that concentrated on men's representation and on the stereotypes on male myths that are distributed and reproduced in media.

Another interesting direction could be to follow up on a question that arose during the analysis; if objectification is more common in a hygiene product category than, e.g. in a food category. In this study, five of the six selected advertisements advertised edible products, while one promoted a hygiene product (shampoo), and this ad also objectified the woman more significantly than the other advertisements. A possible study would be to concentrate on specific product categories and then compare them to other product categories to see how women are represented differently. This can of course also be related to target groups.

Another potential study that has caught my attention is the enormous frequency of objectifying women in music videos, e.g. in certain genres, and it appears as though this phenomenon is escalating here. Male singers may use female models, while female singers are not unlikely to use themselves as object in order to promote their own music. The phenomenon of objectification could be put in relation to consumer patterns. Do female objects really sell more than when women are not exposed in this way? How are the representations different in different genres? Another suggestion is to look at how teenagers perceive these images and if it has any effect on their life etc.

Another phenomenon in music videos is its use of placements of products, in order to finance the production costs. Perhaps this can also be studied and then be related to the reproduction of the gender system. Is it not just a legitimate way for companies to let their products be implicitly connected to, e.g. objectified "celebrity bodies", representations that would not be accepted in ordinary advertisements?

5.5 Thoughts of the achievement of the study

The analysis has shown that women are used as eye-catchers. The common exposure of the male norm and the male gaze in society may play a part of the reason why this phenomenon, using women as objects (in a wider extension than men), is not always noticed and reacted to. It appears as normal because it is what we are used to being exposed to. The application of the theories and the methods in this thesis has facilitated the uncovering of how advertising produce and draw upon myths.

People are aware of that the humorous and ironic representations of stereotypes in advertisements are not realistic. The advertisements are funny because of gender exaggerations, but still the audience may also accept these sorts of representations without criticizing them because they are not realistic portrayals, “they are just funny”. But the humorous advertisements also contribute to the reproduction of the gender system. These reflexive gender role representations are something to acknowledge and reflect on. Looking back, this phenomenon could have gotten more attention in this study and perhaps resulting in another interesting and favorable dimension.

5.6 Women’s roles and its effects on their lives

Men cannot be totally responsible for the subordination of women, neither can women be fully blamed for subordination themselves (already as children we are socialized into different gender roles, e.g. by getting appropriate toys). But in a sense all people contribute to keep up the existing system of gender; that men as a group most likely have more power than women, as a group, in society.

The subject of parenting illustrates how society assigns different demands on women and men. In order to be perceived as a good mother, the demands are higher than to be perceived as a good father; it is part of the traditional gender system where women are the primary care takers of children while the men primarily are economic providers. Parents today often strive to have equal care responsibilities and may argue that it is their free choice to let the mother stay at home with the children, while the father is working (since he often brings home more money) because it suits them both best. Not only is the family contributing to the larger structural pattern in society that, e.g. shows that most families conform to this division, that reproduce the traditional gender patterns, but they are also part of the gender system that

operates in society. This larger pattern may make it more difficult for a man to take time off from work in order to care for his children, while it is easier for a woman to take care of children (it is the expected gender behavior) and instead it may be more difficult for her to get a leading position at work.

The stereotyped representations of gender ideals used by the media contribute to problems in society. It is important to see through these created myths that are distributed in media and in society, and thereby question these myths instead of celebrating these ideals. Society needs more positive role models that strike out of the traditional gender system, e.g. successful businesswomen as cooperative leaders and fathers who are care takers etc.

The myth of the “superwoman” puts even higher demands on the female role; not only ought a woman to look her best, and to be successful at work, she also needs to be a good daughter, mother and wife. The beauty myths and female ideals displayed in advertisements, by mostly showing women who only are striving to be beautiful and who are not often engaged with intelligent tasks, can be put in relation to problems in society. Many people strive to look their best by dressing in a fashionable matter, training their bodies, putting on make up or by getting a new haircut. It is important to look good and many women put their sense of worth in relation to her body and beauty. This may come as a result from comparing herself with today’s narrow beauty ideals, and this leads to insecurities and low self-esteem. This phenomenon is mirrored in the increase of eating disorders and plastic surgery in society.

This knowledge and consciousness of how, e.g. the gender system, the myth of the artificial beauty ideal, and the “superwoman” are active, and how it reproduces itself in society, raises a question of how people can contribute to changing these phenomena in order to develop more equal gender conditions. No simple solution to how individuals can change society into becoming equal in terms of gender will be provided here. The intention with this thesis has been to focus on the representation of women but also to highlight and bring these phenomena to the surface to make people aware of how ideas of what women and men ”ought ” to be like are reproducing itself in society and in advertisements.

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APPENDIX

Choices offered under technical codes (Selby & Cowdery 1995:57 table 3.1)

Shot size

Big close-up	Emotion, a vital moment, drama
Close-up	Intimacy
Medium-shot	A personal relation to the subject
Long shot	Context, public distance

Camera angle

High	Domination, power, authority
Eye-level	Equality
Low	Weakness, powerlessness

Lens type

Wide angle	Dramatic
Normal	Everydayness, normality
Telephoto	voyerism

Composition

Symmetrical	Posed, calm, religiousity
Asymmetrical	Natural, everyday
Static	Lack of conflict
Dynamic	Disturbance, disorientation

Focus

Selective focus	Draws the attention - 'look at this'
Soft focus	Romance, nostalgia
Deep focus	All elements are important - 'look at everything'

Lightning

High key	Happiness
Low key	Sombre
High contrast	Theatrical, dramatic
Low contrast	Realistic, documentary

Film stock

Grainy	Documentary realism, authenticity
Smooth 'fine' grain	Natural everydayness

Colour

Warm (yellow, orange, red, brown)	Optimism, passion, agitation
Cool (blue, green, purple, grey)	Pessimism, calmness, agitation
Black and white	Realism, fact, actuality

Cinematic codes

Zoom in	Observation
Zoom out	Context
Pan (left or right)	Survey, follow
Tilt (up or down)	Survey, follow
Fade in	Beginning
Fade out	Ending
Dissolve	Passage of time, a link between scenes
Wipe	An imposed conclusion
Iris out	Old movie
Cut	Simultaneity of time, attention