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Attraction, Aesthetics and Advertising

An Interdisciplinary Look at the Presentation of “Ugly Models”

A Master’s Thesis for the Degree Master of Arts (Two Years) in Visual Culture

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KOVM12, Master Thesis, 30 credits
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Spring Semester 2014

Abstract

To attract and to appeal to their consumers, designs and concepts of advertisements continually have to be changed in an industry that is saturated with similar campaigns. In this thesis, I analyse how this change is created through the depiction of “ugly models”. The focus lies on the way of their presentation in advertisements in order to make the “ugly” attractive. Based on the models’ presentation on their agency’s website and the theoretical input of the Hegelian Karl Rosenkranz, I show that ugliness is made attractive through the inclusion of caricatural and grotesque elements in these “ugly models”-advertisements. The thesis therefore aims to examine intermedially and interdisciplinarily how “ugliness” as unconventionality in advertising is used. The first part of the thesis concentrates on the theoretical framework that begins with a categorisation of “ugly models” in the advertising industry and is concluded by a conceptual analysis of the concepts “ugly”, “grotesque” and “caricature” in Rosenkranz’s theory and his aesthetic system. Through this analysis, I highlight important characteristics for each concept that function as tools in the second part, the semiotic image analysis. By elaborating how Rosenkranz’s concepts – that function as signs in this context – are signified in the three selected advertisements, I show that caricatural and grotesque elements occur in the advertisements and are used to make ugliness appealing to the consumers. In this connection, especially the different effects as well as feelings and emotions that are evoked through these depictions stand out to attract attention and create an interest for the product. Lastly, this leads to an illusion of ugliness – as the aesthetically unappealing – in advertising.

Keywords: Ugly Models, Karl Rosenkranz, caricature, grotesque, advertising

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B Glossary

Formlosigkeit – shapelessness

Geisthäßliche – ugliness of mind

Idealschöne – ideal beauty

Inkorrektheit – incorrectness

Kunsthäßliche – artistic ugliness

Naturhäßliche – natural ugliness

Negativschöne – negative beauty

Niedrigkomische – lower comedy

Nureinheit – absolute uniformity

Selbstbestimmung – self-determination, self-empowerment

Unfreiheit – unfreedom

Ungestalt – deformity

Verbildung – deformation, distortion

1 Introduction

“Ubiquity is the new exclusivity”.¹ With this statement, chief executive of the advertisement agency “Kaplan Thaler group”, Linda Kaplan Thaler, highlights the fact that advertisements are placed everywhere to reach consumers in today’s media culture. Consumers are therefore confronted with different kinds of advertisements, images and appeals on an everyday basis. Sooner or later, this oversaturated visual stimulation causes blindness and immunity towards repeatedly published concepts and designs. People get used to them and overlook their presence. Consequently, advertisements lose their appeal. To counteract this tendency and to be able to reach consumers despite the vastly growing range of advertisements, agencies constantly have to find new ways of attracting the consumers’ interest. These redesigned campaigns might stand out through the subjects, objects, environments and actions which they depict. A leading trend to attract attention is to work with character models.² Whereas idealised beauties set an example of how perfect a person can look and live with the respective product in his/her life, character models cause for instance a funny moment and encourage the consumer to sympathise with them – and thus with the company behind the advertisement.

One model agency that specialises in these character models especially stood out to me: “Ugly Models” that was founded in 1969 and is situated in London. In comparison to other agencies which represent character models, “Ugly Models” upgrades character models by engaging people with – what they promote as – different, extreme and bizarre body and facial features. As I looked at the website’s portrayal of the models and linked advertisements that depict them, these attributes were visually reflected both in the models and their presentation. Moreover, in sections like “specials” and “portfolio” these extreme and bizarre attributes were especially enhanced through the models’ presentations. In most cases attributes such as “overweight”, “gangly”, “tattooed” and “pierced” can visually be ascribed to the models. There are, however, also models that are simply not in line with the fashion trends as far as the hairstyle or clothing is concerned, for instance. In this connection, the agency’s current

¹ In: Story, Louise, Anywhere the Eye Can See, It’s Likely to See an Ad, The New York Times, retrieved 24th March 2014, <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/01/15/business/media/15everywhere.html?pagewanted=all&_r=1&>.

² A contemporary example (February 2014) of a company promoting its products with character models is the Swedish grocery store “ICA”. By showing a disabled man for instance as knight or super hero with bold and enhanced colors – especially in their advertisements –, they present one example of an unconventional way to depict alternative models in their campaign.

owner, Marc French, repeatedly stresses the unique, characterful and unconventional nature of the models in several interviews. Thus, everyone that feels different, yet comfortable in their own skin, is welcome. The agency's agenda confirms this statement on their webpage by stating: "We like our women fat and our men geeky, we like the *extremely* tall and the *shockingly* small. No one is *too* abstract for our books! We are Ugly. [...] [S]o if you think you have that special unique something that sets you apart from everyone else, then apply now"³ [*emphasis added*]. When it comes to descriptions of the models by the agency members and interview partners, the frequent use of superlative and extreme words becomes striking. With characterisations such as "most extraordinary", "weird piercings" and "midgets", the press for instance emphasises the extreme nature of the "ugly" models.

A theorist that dealt with ugliness as an extreme is the Hegelian Karl Rosenkranz. In his theory about the *Aesthetics of Ugliness* (1853), ugliness embodies the transition between beauty and caricature which is the endpoint of ugliness. He not only uses ugliness as primary source for his definition of the aesthetic system, but also sees it as an important feature to create the comical and the caricature. Considering the agency's extreme descriptions of their "ugly" models, the question of ugliness resulting in caricatures in relation to the models' presentation arises: Their choice of extreme and superlative words points to an exaggerated description of the models' physical characteristics. On a linguistic level, terms and phrases such as "extremely tall", "shockingly small" and "midgets" – instead of only using the words "tall" and "small", for instance – add another layer of extremeness to these descriptions. Thus, the emphasis of the models' presentation lies on their unique features which, in turn, points to a one-sided, exaggerated presentation of these features compared to other physical elements. This linguistic presentation hints at characteristics of the caricature.

Another recurring and emphasised characteristic of the models is their bizarreness. Whereas caricatural elements point to humorous effects, bizarreness has a more serious notion to it. Bizarreness – together with caricatural elements – creates arbitrary effects. In his theory about ugliness, Rosenkranz deals with the aspect of arbitrariness primarily in relation to the concept of the grotesque. Arbitrariness stresses the unexpected and unpredictable elements in images in this context. With their appearance, "ugly" models embody an unexpected motif within the realm of advertising and show an unexpected as well as untypical way of promoting a prod-

³ Ugly Models, About Us. Ugly Models Agency, Ugly Enterprise LTD 2011, retrieved 11th February 2014, <<http://www.ugly.org/UGLY-MODELS/index.php/about-us-2.html>>.

uct. This points to grotesque depictions of the models. Similarly, the way these models are presented in advertisements relates to the unexpected and untypical.

Advertisements with these “ugly models” reflect their extreme and bizarre physiognomy. In contrast to advertisements with – in the common sense – beautiful models or ordinary character models with less prominent body and facial features, the emphasis in “ugly models”-advertisements lies on their prominent features and is a crucial part of the models’ marketing. However, the appearance of these features differs: Whereas the presentation of some models appears rather weird and causes a comical effect, other advertisements stress the bizarreness of the models and tend to evoke a more shocking feeling. Although these ambivalent presentations and their reactions appear contradictory, they share the same effect which is to attract the consumers’ attention. Especially the focus on the models’ prominent and bizarre bodily features – compared to other pictorial elements – is outstanding. Based on Rosenkranz’s theoretical influence as well as the models’ visualisation, the question of caricatural and grotesque elements in “ugly models”-advertisements arises. Although advertising, caricature and grotesqueness derive from different fields, it is interesting to find out, in an intermedial and interdisciplinary analysis, to what extent advertisers use caricatural and/or grotesque elements to make “ugliness” work in advertisements and with what effect. Briefly put, what makes these advertisements marked with “ugliness” attractive and why?

1.1 Research Question, Research Goals, Hypothesis

The aim of this thesis is twofold: Firstly, my theoretical analysis discusses the concepts of “caricature” and “grotesque”, not only in connection to the concept of the “ugly” but also in relation to advertising. Secondly, I want to show that advertisers utilise elements of “caricature” and “grotesque” to successfully incorporate “ugly models” in contemporary advertisements. My research question is thus: How are “ugly models” presented in advertisements in order to make the “ugly” attractive? The factor of attractiveness is crucial for the advertisements’ success. Depending on the level of appeal, the advertisements will attract attention. This points to the effect advertisers want to achieve by displaying “ugly models”. Their appearance in advertisements causes unexpected reactions as the marketing of a product with “ugly models” is unusual and rare. Through a bold and memorable presentation of the models,

this effect is enhanced even more. To facilitate the understanding of the thesis' structure and its content, the thesis will be divided into the following sub-questions:

- What characteristics are inherent to the concepts of ugliness, caricature and grotesque in Rosenkranz's theory?
- What caricatural, grotesque and ugly elements can be found in the selected "ugly models"-advertisements?

The first sub-question highlights the need to define general characteristics and attributes of the three concepts as they appear in Rosenkranz's theory. These characteristics will be employed in the image analysis and thus function as a foundation for my interdisciplinary approach in the thesis. By applying a conceptual analysis (see chapter 1.3 for more detailed information) as a methodological tool to approach the theory, I attempt to investigate the meanings of the three concepts. The second sub-question points to the basic assumption of the thesis that advertisers use caricatural and grotesque elements as a technique to make the ugly in advertisements attractive for the consumer. To elaborate distinctive caricatural and grotesque components – according to Rosenkranz – in the selected advertisements, I will thus concentrate on a semiotic image analysis to approach the advertisements.

1.2 Relevance of the Work

I plan to analyse the treatment of using the "ugly" in a mainstream medium such as advertising that is dominated by beauty ideals. Specifically the relation between the caricatural and the grotesque within the ugly in advertisements presenting "ugly models" is of high interest in this case. As elements of both concepts are recognisable – for instance through exaggerated and bizarre visual elements – in these advertisements, they function as a basis to investigate the question at hand. With this intermedial and interdisciplinary analysis (see chapter 1.3), I attempt to contribute to the discussion of contemporary standards of approaching the "ugly" in mass media – as unconventionality in advertisement. This will furthermore show how ugliness in advertising amends the usual focus on beauty ideals. Instead of promoting a product with ideal beauty, advertisers utilise ugliness as a tool to evoke certain feelings. Ugliness therefore widens the spectrum of tools with which products can be promoted in advertising

nowadays. However, it has to be stressed that ugliness does not counteract beauty in advertising but complements it.

Additionally, I will show how concepts of “caricature” and “grotesque” within ugliness can be embedded in today’s popular culture. Furthermore, the examination of how the caricatural and the grotesque are connected to the ugly as well as to each other in Rosenkranz’s theory opens up a new layer of meaning within these concepts. This inquiry will therefore not only elaborate the occurrence of the three concepts in “ugly models”-advertisements, but will also examine the currency of Rosenkranz’s theory.

1.3 *Theories and Methods*

My approach to answer the research question includes two methods: In the first part of my thesis, I will concentrate on the concepts of the “ugly”, “caricature” and “grotesque”. All three concepts emerged in the field of aesthetics. As I aim to analyse the relation of the caricatural and grotesque within the ugly in connection to advertisements interdisciplinarily and intermedially, an analysis of their meanings and characteristics within Rosenkranz’s theory is of great importance. Intermediality refers to the aspects of “mixed media”, “change of medium” and “intermedial relations/references” which show a high relevance for this case.⁴ As this thesis combines the fields of art with the field of advertising (communication studies) by analysing the occurrence of ugly, caricatural and grotesque elements in advertisements, it mixes two different media and investigates their relations. Thus, this thesis links these two media forms aesthetically and shows their mergeable character. Similarly, the interdisciplinary approach connects two different academic fields:

Interdisciplinary research [...] is a mode of research by teams or individuals that integrates information, data, techniques, tools, perspectives, concepts, and/or theories from two or more disciplines or bodies of specialized knowledge to advance fundamental understanding or to solve problems whose solutions are beyond the scope of a single discipline or field of research practice.⁵

Rosenkranz’s theory and the three concepts derive from the field of arts whereas advertising is regarded as a sector of communication studies. Thus, by applying his theory and the

⁴ Rajewsky, Irina O., *Intermedialität*, Francke, Tübingen, 2002, pp. 15.

⁵ National Academy of Science, *Facilitating Interdisciplinary Research*, The National Academies Press, Washington, 2005, p. 26.

three concepts to the selected advertisements, this thesis approaches the case at hand inter-disciplinarily.

To elaborate how the concepts are used in relation to each other and other relevant terms, I will apply a conceptual analysis. As my image analysis looks for characteristics and general attributes in the “ugly models”-advertisements, an analysis about the way the concepts are used and defined is fruitful to ascribe a caricatural and grotesque value to the advertisements. Hence, the question of “What characterises the ugly/caricatural/grotesque?” shows a high significance in this case. In this regard,

“[c]onceptual analysis is a technique that treats concepts as *classes* of objects, events, properties, or relationships. The technique involves precisely defining the meaning of a given concept by identifying and specifying the *conditions* under which any entity or phenomenon is (or could be) classified under the concept in question”.⁶

For this thesis, especially the notion of concepts being treated as relationships is of great importance. It not only stresses the idea of concepts as intertwined systems, but also points to the assumption that the concepts share intersected characteristics and meanings. Establishing a system of defining attributes for each concept is therefore crucial to elaborate elementary intersections. Conceptual analysis as an analytical method has a long tradition in philosophy. Yet, there is neither a fixed definition nor an analytical procedure of how to apply it. Philosophers such as Ludwig Wittgenstein (1958) or Frank Jackson (1998) have either viewed conceptual analysis from a linguistic point of view or discussed the method itself in connection to aspects like “intuition”, “a priori use” or “empirical results”. Thus, they ascribed different roles and shades of meaning to conceptual analysis. As this thesis’ goal is to find relations between the concepts of ugliness, caricature and grotesque – especially in Rosenkranz’s theory – through their characteristic terms, these perspectives show no relevance or are too specific for this case. However, contemporary philosopher Hans-Johann Glock provided a general definition of conceptual analysis on which this thesis will draw.⁷ From his point of view, conceptual analysis

⁶ Furner, Jonathan, “Conceptual Analysis: A Method for Understanding Information as Evidence, and Evidence as Information”, in: *Archival Science*, No. 4, 2004, pp. 233-265.

⁷ In his book „What is Analytical Philosophy?” (2008), Glock discussed numerous philosophical methods in a detailed way. One of his main arguments is that analytical philosophy is not fixed but tied together by “mutual influence” and “family resemblance”.

[...] is based on the assumption that philosophical questions cannot be answered immediately but have to be scrutinised and resolved by taking concepts emerging in these questions to pieces and analysing and thus defining them.⁸

With this definition, he stresses the role of attributes that define concepts. Descriptive attributes are thus important to elaborate a concept's meaning. This approach is significant for the theoretical analysis in this thesis as it highlights the need to elaborate terms that are related to concepts.

Through this analysis, I will provide an in-depth view on how these concepts are dealt with and how their meanings are constituted in Rosenkranz's theory. The results will be examined and applied onto the case at hand. However, critical voices question the conceptual analysis as a method since, for instance, only a set of texts can be analysed.⁹ This, in the end, leads to generalisations of the results. Therefore, an absolute idea of the concepts in question cannot be provided. This method nevertheless attempts to clarify conceptual problems and to give insight into conceptual understandings. As these conceptual understandings take on a crucial role in my thesis, especially for the image analysis, this method is useful for my investigation.

I will mainly base my analysis on Karl Rosenkranz's *Aesthetics of Ugliness* which centres around the notion of ugliness being the transitional point between the beautiful and the caricature as theoretical source. He was the first scholar to not only theorise ugliness, but also to view it as a crucial component of his aesthetic system. With this perspective, Rosenkranz introduced a new analysis of the aesthetic system since ugliness – a thus far neglected concept – has been seen as the opposite to beauty. Furthermore, it was connoted with the evil that had to be avoided. In the context of this thesis, especially Rosenkranz's view on the relation of ugliness and caricature is crucial. As he approached a definition of this relation through the inclusion of terms which build upon one another, an analysis of the terminological connections is important to investigate main characteristics of the concepts. One of the terminological connections is constituted by the grotesque as a characteristic of ugliness (see chapter 3.1.4). Thus, Rosenkranz considers the grotesque as part of his aesthetic system. He furthermore uses the term with other attributes such as weird and bizarre in relation to descriptions of *Naturhäßliche* (natural ugliness), for instance, which gives a deeper insight into his perspec-

⁸ Glock, Hans-Johann, "Analytische Philosophie", in: Christian Nimtz & Stefan Jordan (eds.), *Lexikon Philosophie: Hundert Grundbegriffe*, Reclam, Stuttgart, p. 27 [transl.]. Original text: "[...] beruht auf der Annahme, philosophische Fragen ließen sich nicht unmittelbar beantworten, sondern müssten zunächst dadurch hinterfragt und geklärt werden, dass man die in ihnen auftauchenden Begriffe in ihre Bestandteile zerlegt und analysiert und so definiert."

⁹ Nimtz, Christian, "Begriffsanalyse Heute", in: *Zeitschrift für Philosophische Forschung*, No. 66 (2), 2012, pp. 218-247.

tive on the grotesque. On a content-related level, it becomes apparent that Rosenkranz's terminological ascriptions of caricature also appear in relation to the grotesque. Whereas he attributes a degrading value to caricature, other scholars such as John Ruskin (1867) view degradation in connection to the grotesque. Through identifying relations between the ugly, caricatural and grotesque, I will therefore point out their connections in Rosenkranz's aesthetic system.

Although other scholars such as Christian Hermann Weisse (1830) attempted to include ugliness in the aesthetic system before Rosenkranz, they mainly concentrated on beauty as the starting point and ascribed a secondary status to ugliness in their analysis. Rosenkranz, on the other hand, approached his analysis in the opposite way. His impact on future ideas about the aesthetic system is highlighted and commented on by numerous modern scholars that refer to his point of view. It thus becomes apparent that Rosenkranz's theory of *Aesthetics of Ugliness* remains important today. Yet, modern scholars fail to construct a theory based on ugliness as the primary issue. Works about ugliness often result in anthropologies that deal with ugliness from different perspectives and fields or in works of reference. I will therefore use Rosenkranz's original text despite it being a theoretical source from the mid-19th century.

By means of a conceptual analysis, I will appoint a set of characteristics to the three concepts. This set of characteristics will then serve as an analytical tool in the image analysis of the advertisements. Through this analysis, I will examine how these characteristics are visualised in the advertisements. As the image analysis will centre on the advertisements and the occurrence of these caricatural, grotesque and ugly elements, I will use a semiotic image analysis to approach the advertisements. Since the main intent of this thesis is to analyse how "ugly models" are presented in advertisements in order to make the ugly attractive, a conceptual approach to the analysis of the advertisements is needed to understand the visual composition and its meaning. How are Rosenkranz's characteristics of the three concepts signified in the selected advertisements? As semiotics centre on what meaning of objects is conveyed through signs, this method is fruitful for my investigation. The focus of this analysis will lie on visual semiotics in order to elaborate how meaning is produced through visual signs.

Specifically Judith Williamson's (2005) notion on advertising as a tool to produce meaning through signs will function as the basis for the semiotic analysis. She not only draws on classical semiotic understandings such as the sign that consists of the signifier and the signified, but also relates them to the field of advertising. Her approach therefore provides insights into the mechanisms of advertising and introduces ways to decode them. Especially Williamson's

remark on advertisements' function to stand out through specific images is important since this step creates difference to other brands that promote the same good.¹⁰ She thus argues through sets of advertisements and the advertisements' relation to each other. In contrast, scholars such as structuralist Varda Langholz-Leymore (1975) focus on the whole system of advertisement, whereas Roland Barthes (1977) provides his analysis of the relationship between image, meaning and linguistics with only one advertisement. For the case at hand, Williamson's aspects of difference and relations between advertisements are of great importance since "ugly models" constitute an extreme example for the creation of difference. As becomes apparent, visual semiotic analysis requires both a descriptive and an interpretative level. Therefore, a content analysis as a quantitative approach or a compositional interpretation as a rather formal description would not cover the analytical scope for an in-depth examination of the advertisements, for instance.¹¹ In the end, the image analysis will examine to what extent caricatural and grotesque elements are featured in the "ugly models"-advertisements which draws on the second sub-question of this thesis. Although caricatural and grotesque elements take on an intriguing role in this thesis, I will use caricatures and grotesque images primarily as visual support for my argumentation.¹²

The subjects of my analysis will be selected advertisements. As the agency "Ugly Models" commands a high number of models, not each model's portrayal can be incorporated. I will therefore select three advertisements – from the official website's category "Portfolio" – that depict "ugly models". The advertisements were mainly selected for semiotic interest. Whereas the tattooed and pierced man, Samppa (advertisement 1), represents one of the main groups of "ugly models" and Dell Keens as one of the most famous models is a representative of the agency's success (advertisement 2), the thin man exemplifies the depiction of an average person who becomes "ugly" through his presentation in the advertisement (advertisement 3).¹³

¹⁰ Williamson, Judith, *Decoding Advertisements: Ideology and Meaning in Advertising*, Marion Boyars, London & New York, 2005 [1978], p. 24.

¹¹ For definitions of "content analysis" and "compositional analysis" see: Rose, Gillian, *Visual Methodologies: An Introduction to Researching with Visual Materials*, 3rd Edition, Sage, London, 2011.

¹² Since the grotesque is regarded as an aesthetic style or category – compared to caricature as an aesthetic genre – to which obvious visual examples cannot be ascribed, I will select these grotesque images according to the elaborated characteristics in the conceptual analysis.

¹³ The caricatures and grotesque images used as visual support in this thesis do not, however, depict the actual models from the advertisements as this would be a too obvious correspondence, but random people or other celebrities. These images merely serve as a means to exemplify visual characteristics of and parallels between the advertisements and elements of caricatures as well as grotesque images. It is thus not my intention to find identical equivalences for the advertisements from the other two visual art forms.

1.4 Current State of Research/Sources and Literature

In the field of advertisement, scholars have mainly focused on the concept of beauty and the creation of ideals as these are the fundamental elements to awaken the consumer's desire. However, Barbara Sutrich concentrated on *Ugliness in Advertisements* (2003) in her doctoral dissertation at the University of Applied Science in Vienna. She elaborates criteria for ugliness to function in advertisement arguing that it depends on the product and the target group whether ugliness in advertisement can work. Furthermore, ugliness in advertisement should not transgress a certain barrier of appeal for the consumer in order to be successful. According to her, "ugly" advertising creates attention by breaking with social norms and standards, e.g. through the use of blood, vomit or people with animal limbs. However, although attention is generated, consumers might not be able to decode and accept the message which would result in not purchasing the product and avoiding the brand, for instance.¹⁴

Advertising in general has been the focus of many scholars during the past century. They approach the phenomenon not only from a cultural and social point of view, but also pay attention to economics and marketing strategies. Especially during the postmodern era, when the advertising market was saturated with similar campaigns, agencies had to create new ways to reach consumers and to sell their product. In this relation, consumers as the recipients have become an important sector in the examination of advertising and its effects. Marketing research thus concentrates on consumer behaviour and consumer psychology in order to find out what attracts the consumers' attention the most. Although these perspectives and analyses take on an important role in the field of advertising, I will approach it from a classical aesthetics point of view. As I am especially interested in references between different types of media, this intermedial and interdisciplinary approach will be the basis to examine possible aesthetic linkages. With the combination of the fields of arts and advertising, I will thus show visual connections between the selected advertisements and the concepts of ugliness, caricature and grotesque.

These concepts have been part of the academic and philosophic discussion in relation to art for centuries. Each concept has been embedded in the scholars' respective historical context and relates to previous philosophical perspectives. However, the concepts are mainly applied to the field of art and art history. Current research primarily deals with philosophers such as Rosenkranz within their respective fields and examines their relevance today. Yet, there have

¹⁴ Sutrich, Barbara, *Hässlichkeit in der Werbung: Wie man Hässlichkeit in Werbungen richtig einsetzt und mögliche negativen Folgen vermeidet*, FHW, Vienna, 2003, pp. 1.

been no interdisciplinary and intermedial attempts to analyse the connection between advertising and “caricature”, “grotesque” and “ugly”. Jonathan E. Schroeder and Janet L. Borgerson, however, discussed the concept of “fetishism” – as an example for a sector of art which is applied to a popular culture phenomenon – in relation to advertisements in their article “Dark Desires: Fetishism, Ontology, and Representation in Contemporary Advertising” (2003). They elaborate how stereotypes of fetishism are used in advertisements for instance to create psychological fulfilment or emotional satisfaction and thus to sell products. With their article, they thus exemplify an interdisciplinary discussion of the relations between art and advertisement.

1.5 Delimitations

Although this thesis attempts to show in an intermedial and interdisciplinary manner how “ugly models” are presented to make ugliness attractive in the field of advertisement, caricatural and grotesque elements constitute only two concepts that can be analysed under this question. Due to the restricted space in this thesis, related concepts, e.g. the burlesque, that for instance appear in Rosenkranz’s aesthetic system cannot be considered in the analysis. Furthermore, the agency “Ugly Models” engages a high amount of models that are featured in advertisements. Since not all of them can be analysed in this paper, the three selected ones serve as samples to show how advertisements with these models look like. However, the use of caricatural and grotesque elements in “ugly models”-advertisements is not to be regarded as prevailing method to depict ugliness. These elements can appear both individually as well as together and can be mixed with other visual features that break with social or aesthetic norms, for instance fetish elements.

1.6 Structure of the Work

After setting the framework for this thesis, the following section will give an overview of the most common forms and models of advertisements. This will serve as a basis to categorise “Ugly Models”-advertisements within these forms and models afterwards. Both parts will

help to get an insight into the agency's and the advertisements' possible purposes of working with unconventional models.

The next chapter will focus on a conceptual analysis centring on the caricatural and grotesque in the ugly. This section will not only concentrate on establishing sets of meanings for and relations of the concepts, but will also examine Rosenkranz's notion on ugliness as a constitutive component of aesthetics. To show that Rosenkranz's theory remains important nowadays, I will conclude this theoretical chapter with a discussion of modern voices on his ideas. In a short comparison, I will then outline aesthetic parallels between art and advertisement which will illustrate that this art-based theory can be applied to the field of advertisement. Thus, I will not only answer important terminological questions, but also highlight main aspects of Rosenkranz's theory. The comparison will furthermore highlight how Rosenkranz's ideas about beauty and ugliness relate to today's standards of beauty and ugliness in a mass medium such as advertising.

The third chapter will then begin with an examination of what "Ugly Models" regards as ugly based on the range of models on their website. In this part, I will also relate "Ugly Models'" view on ugliness to Rosenkranz's classification (see chapter 3.1). This will be followed by the analysis of the selected advertisements. I will do this by utilising my results from the theoretical section as analytical tool for the semiotic analysis. In this chapter, I will argue for my hypothesis that advertisers use elements of "caricature" and "grotesque" as techniques to make the "ugly" work in their advertisements and to make it attractive for consumers. Considering the high amount of conditionalities for ugliness in Rosenkranz's theory and within the agency's agenda, the last sub-chapter of this section will open up a discussion about the transitional and fluctuant definitions of ugliness.

2 Laying the Foundation: Basic Functions of Advertising and the AIDA-Model

“Communication tool”, “integral element of capitalism” or simply “entertainment” – there are numerous definitions and functions ascribed to advertisements by scholars and academics. Depending on the scholars’ field, these definitions as well as the contents of analysis may vary. Whereas sociologists focus on the ethics of advertisements, for instance, economics are interested in marketing strategies and finances. Due to this wide range of existing concepts, functions and models of advertising, a complete overview cannot be given at this point. Since the main concern of this thesis is the utilisation of ugly, caricatural and grotesque features as attention-attracting tools, the following section will concentrate on a general definition and effects of advertisements as well as on the model AIDA that describes basic steps to create the desired effects.¹⁵

In general, advertising can be defined as a tool for agencies to promote different goods, services or ideas in mass media in order to inform consumers about the product and the company behind it.¹⁶ The way of promoting these products, however, not only takes on different shapes in different media, but has also changed over time. Whereas earlier advertisements tended to have a rather informational character, they were soon designed to also have an emotional appeal.¹⁷ It thus becomes apparent that advertising in either form aims to evoke a feeling and to cause a reaction in consumers.

The emotionalising effect appears to be the predominant aim of agencies nowadays as it asks consumers to reflect upon their standards of life, identify themselves with the advertisement’s characters and thus create a desire for the product. Hence, it appeals to the emotional side of consumers who relate this feeling to and purchase them through the product. This feeling is therefore one of the significant effects of advertisements. It is, however, only one of many goals that agencies want to achieve. The scholar Ingomar Kloss, for instance, proposes the following aims that can be used to communicate a specific message in advertisements:

¹⁵ AIDA is only one marketing and advertising model. As it was the first model to describe different phases of consumers engaging with a product and is the foundation for numerous future models and strategies, I will mainly refer to AIDA. Other models such as DAGMAR, that focuses more on advertising as communication tool as opposed to advertising as selling tool in the AIDA model, cannot be taken into consideration due to the restricted writing space. However, these models can also be traced back to AIDA.

¹⁶ Krieg, Ulrike, *Wortbildungsstrategien in der Werbung: zur Funktion und Struktur von Wortneubildungen in Printanzeigen*, Helmut Buske Verlag GmbH, Hamburg, 2005, p. 5.

¹⁷ Yeshin, Tony, *Advertising*, Thompson Learning, London, 2006, p. 13.

Advertising pursues economic objectives in an indirect manner through a wide range of communicative goals: Advertisements aim, for instance, to create publicity, to inform, to attract attention, to arouse curiosity, to create sympathy, to generate currency, to emotionalise.¹⁸

Kloss not only stresses different effects whose significance varies depending on the type of advertisement, but also points to its functions. Although advertising as economic incentive is certainly the most important function for companies, it fulfils numerous other roles that subdivide advertising into smaller forms and types. These key roles are to inform, persuade and sell, and have to be seen as intertwined and not as isolated from each other.¹⁹ Within informative advertising – as opposed to emotionalising advertising –, the content about the product is presented in a rational and descriptive manner. This content may vary from introducing a new product to showing the product's functionality to highlighting changed prices. The persuasive role of advertisements centres around changing the consumers' attitude towards a product, service or brand. As soon as companies bring out new versions of their product, they want their consumers to remember the new characteristics that are ascribed to the product, for instance. With these constant changes and product developments, a currency of the brand is created which emphasises the company's high status in the market. Lastly, by reminding consumers of the product and its brand, advertisements are supposed to raise the volume of sales. Especially advertisements with seasonal and temporal offers evoke the feeling of urgency to buy the product since it is only available for a certain amount of time.

These effects and functions can only have an impact on consumers if the advertisements are designed to be perceptible for them. To systemise the process from contemplating a purchase to the actual buying, scholars have established numerous models in marketing that list these different steps in a chronological order. One of the basic and earliest models that centres on the hierarchy of effects is AIDA: **A**ttention, **I**nterest, **D**esire, and **A**ction.²⁰ These steps build on one another and are key points for the advertising agencies to manipulate consumers to persuade them into buying the product. Advertisements should thus attract attention through specific means such as colours, specific images and humour. Once consumers perceive an advertisement, the interest in the product has to be evoked. With exclusive words such as “better lifestyle” or “healthier”, the desire to purchase the product is created. This desire leads

¹⁸ Kloss, Ingomar, *Werbung: Lehr-, Studien- und Nachschlagewerk*, Oldenbourg, Munich, 2000, p. 5 [transl.]. Original text: “Werbung verfolgt ökonomische Ziele auf indirektem Weg über eine große Bandbreite von kommunikativen Zielen: Werbung will z.B. bekannt machen, informieren, Aufmerksamkeit schaffen, Neugier wecken, Sympathie vermitteln, Aktualität erzeugen, emotionalisieren.“

¹⁹ Yeshin, Tony, *Advertising*, Thompson Learning, London, 2006, pp. 8ff.

²⁰ Tyagi, C.L & Kumar, Arun, *Advertising Management*, Atlantic Publishers and Distributors, New Delhi, 2004, p. 251.

consumers to take action and purchase the product. Since this model was introduced by E. St. Elmo Lewis in 1898, scholars and marketing professionals have constantly extended and re-structured it.²¹ They either added new steps such as satisfaction (AIDAS) or reduced its phases, for instance in the CAB model that stands for “cognition (awareness or learning), affect (feeling, interest or desire) and behaviour (action)”.²² However, it becomes apparent that the more recent versions are based on AIDA as they either complement it with further steps or paraphrase its steps.

2.1 *Categorisation of “Ugly Models”-Advertisements*

Evidently, successful advertising is closely linked to creating feelings in consumers. These feelings may vary from curiosity to sympathy to desire which shows that advertisements can affect consumers in many and different ways. Just as varying as the feelings are the methods that are used to present products in an attractive and appealing way to consumers through the advertisements. Attracting attention in a mass media culture such as advertising can take on diverse forms, e.g. a bold layout, unexpected features and a memorable slogan. The main component to stand out and therefore to catch somebody’s eye is to embody otherness and differentness. One way of achieving this effect in advertising is to present the product through the means of ugliness. It can appear in form of either ugly features or ugly models. The following section will thus concentrate on categorising “Ugly Models”-advertisements within the previously elaborated forms, effects and models of advertising to highlight the role of ugliness in advertising.

With over 1,000 clients, “Ugly Models” is one of the leading agencies to represent character models. These character models are neither high fashion top models that represent the idealised beauty nor “average people” who play a part in a mobile phone commercial, for instance. The agency’s models rather constitute people with extreme body features such as being very big or tall such as Sultan Kosen, Guinness World Record holder for being the tallest man in the world. On their webpage and in numerous interviews, “Ugly Models” repeatedly stresses the unique and unconventional character of their models, thus ascribing the value of otherness

²¹ Moore, Ian, *Does your Marketing Sell? The Secret of Effective Marketing Communications*, Nicholas Brealey Publishing, London & Boston, 2005, p. 255.

²² Boundless (ed.), *Marketing: Boundless Marketing Open Textbook*, Boundless, Boston, 2013, p. 775.

to them. The aspect of otherness is in turn crucial to transgress social norms which enhance the advertisements' memorability.²³ "Ugly Models" is therefore a great example for the high demand of ugliness in mass media culture. "We placed one ad in 1969 for a unique appearance and since then the rest is history".²⁴ With this statement, the then owner confirms the rapid growth of the ugly models' demand that still remains to this day.

The reason for "ugly models'" success within the field of advertising is their emotionalising effect. As part of emotional advertising, ugliness in general always evokes feelings within consumers and thus enforces a reaction. In this relation, Barbara Sutrich points out that

[e]motional advertising, on the other hand, appeals to the consumer based on feelings and suggests a certain mental state to him or her if he or she uses the service advertised or buys the product advertised. [...] Ugly advertising is to be rated as emotional advertising since it stimulates sense organs of the target group and implements certain feelings.²⁵

Thus, consumers are personally affected by this type of advertising. Ugliness as emotional advertising and embodiment of otherness not only attracts the consumers' attention, but also generates a relation between consumers and the product or service. Through this relation, the product will be kept in mind which increases the probability of consumers buying it.

Emotional advertising – and thus ugliness – is closely linked to affecting and attracting the consumers' attention. This refers to the AIDA model that views attraction as the first step in the consumers' engagement process with the product. Since ugly models embody otherness and popularise with their partly provocative presentation – as opposed to idealised beauties – in the field of advertising, they attract attention and generate an appeal.

Attention as a cognitive process is indispensable for any kind of perception. The selective and targeted concentration of one's perception on a specific chosen subject area is of key significance. Therefore, attention is a selection mechanism at the same time, as stimuli not triggered by it are excluded from the process of perception.²⁶

Perception, attraction and appeal are therefore crucial components to affect consumers and to create interest. They are furthermore bound to the aspect of innovation as advertisers con-

²³ Sutrich, p. 1.

²⁴ Ugly Models, About Us. Ugly Models Agency, Ugly Enterprise LTD 2011, retrieved 26th March 2014, <<http://www.ugly.org/UGLY-MODELS/index.php/about-us-2.html>>.

²⁵ Sutrich, p.9 [transl.]. Original text: "Emotionale Werbung dagegen spricht den Rezipienten gefühlsbetont an und suggeriert ihm ein bestimmtes seelisches Befinden, wenn er die beworbene Dienstleistung in Anspruch nimmt bzw. das beworbene Produkt kauft. [...] Hässliche Werbung kann zur emotionalen Werbung gezählt werden, da sie die Sinnesorgane der Zielgruppe reizen und Empfindungen implementieren."

²⁶ Schmidt, Siegfried J., *Handbuch Werbung*, LIT Press, Münster, 2004, p. 106 [transl.]. Original text: "Aufmerksamkeit als kognitiver Prozess ist unabdingbar für jegliche Art von Wahrnehmung. Kennzeichnend ist die selektive und zielgerichtete Bündelung der Wahrnehmung auf einen ausgewählten Gegenstandsbereich. Aufmerksamkeit ist somit gleichzeitig ein Selektionsmechanismus, weil Reize, die sie nicht auslöst, aus dem Wahrnehmungsprozess ausgeschlossen werden."

stantly have to design “new”, unexpected and thus outstanding campaigns. Especially the more extreme and bizarre models from “Ugly Models” create this remarkable moment since their appearance transgresses aesthetic standards both within advertisement and character modelling.

3 Forging the Tools: Conceptual Analysis of the “Ugly”, “Caricature”, and “Grotesque” within Rosenkranz’s Aesthetic System

“Aesthetics of ugliness? And why not? [...] Nobody is surprised if in biology there is talk of illness or if in ethics there is talk of evil, if in law there is talk of injustice, if in religious studies there is talk of sin.”²⁷ With this comparison, Rosenkranz not only justified his analysis of ugliness, but also stressed its importance. Before he introduced his theory of ugliness as an inherent component of the aesthetic system, ugliness was mainly regarded as a negative opponent to the beautiful. As such, it was considered to embody the evil which had to be eschewed. Ugliness was thus not seen as an element of the aesthetic system. However, Rosenkranz challenged this intellectual tradition by arguing that ugliness is a necessary and constitutive part of the aesthetic system. A great comprehension of beauty can therefore only be obtained if ugliness is regarded as inseparable part of it.²⁸ As *Negativschöne* (negative beauty), ugliness complements *Idealschöne* (ideal beauty). Although ugliness and beauty form a union, ugliness is of relative status while beauty is to be considered as an absolute term. This hierarchy not only highlights the coexistence of beauty and ugliness, but also stresses the idea of ugliness taking on a secondary role in the aesthetic system. “Its existence lies in the *negation of beauty*.”²⁹ Ugliness can thus not exist without beauty whereas beauty is not dependent on ugliness to appear beautiful. Moreover, Rosenkranz saw ugliness as a transition from the beautiful to the comical which he extended to the term of the caricature in a later chapter. “The comical is impossible without ugliness as an ingredient that is dissolved and formed back into beauty by it.”³⁰ He thus led from the beauty-ugliness relationship to an inevitable consequence of this relationship. By applying his characteristics of ugliness – with the grotesque being one of them – to the creation of the caricature, Rosenkranz established a new view on both the beauty-ugly-caricature relationship and the role of the caricature. This point of view is of special interest for this thesis as it is based on the concept of ugliness as a necessary component of the aesthetic system to create the comical. Yet, through this comical effect it transfers into beauty which makes the ugly bearable.

²⁷ Rosenkranz, Karl, *Asthetik des Häßlichen*, Reclam, Stuttgart, 2007 [1853], p. 5. [transl.]. Original text: "Eine Ästhetik des Häßlichen? Und warum nicht? [...] Niemand wundert sich, wenn in der Biologie auch vom Begriff der Krankheit oder wenn in der Ethik vom Begriff des Bösen, in der Rechtswissenschaft vom Begriff des Unrechts, in der Reigionswissenschaft vom Begriff der Sünde gehandelt wird."

²⁸ Pöltner, Günther, *Philosophische Ästhetik*, Kohlhammer Urban, Stuttgart, 2008, p. 160.

²⁹ Ibid, p. 161 [transl.]. Original text: "Seine Existenz liegt in der *Negation des Schönen*."

³⁰ Rosenkranz, p. 7 [transl.]. Original text: "Das Komische ist ohne eine Ingredienz von Häßlichkeit, das von ihm aufgelöst und in die Freiheit des Schönen zurückgebildet wird, unmöglich."

Therefore, I will begin this chapter by elaborating on how Rosenkranz not only classified ugliness in the aesthetic system, but also viewed the relationships of the concepts of ugliness, caricature and the grotesque. Additionally, I will highlight what characteristics he ascribed to them. As Rosenkranz saw beauty and ugliness as a unified system, I will furthermore investigate main characteristics which he attributes to beauty. This will also highlight the role and characteristics of ugliness. In a third sub-chapter, I will briefly examine modern perspectives on Rosenkranz to elaborate the currency of his ideas. Thus, this sub-chapter mainly highlights Rosenkranz's theoretical value nowadays. This chapter will, in the end, lay the theoretical and conceptual foundation for my image analysis in chapter 4.

3.1 *The Elements of Ugliness*

In his *Aesthetic of Ugliness*, Rosenkranz attempted to integrate ugliness in the metaphysics of beauty. As *Negativschöne*, it is a part of beauty and has to be reflected upon in analyses about its ideas. “The ugly is not just absence of beauty, but a positive negation of it. Whatever does not fall under the category of beauty cannot be subsumed into the category of the ugly”.³¹ Ugliness should, in conclusion, be regarded as part of beauty and not as opposite. Thus, Rosenkranz argued for a system that illustrates beauty and ugliness – and later the caricature – as an intertwined relationship.³² Within this system, ugliness takes on three different forms: the *Naturhäßliche* (natural ugliness), the *Geisthäßliche* (ugliness of mind) and the *Kunsthäßliche* (artistic ugliness). These different forms influence the varying definitions of ugliness and are thus a crucial part of the classification of ugliness. Moreover, ugliness does not simply equal the opposite of beauty. Although the term *Negativschöne* indicates a negative value, it does not equal the negative and incomplete. In this regard, Rosenkranz set up a system of general conditions that classify ugliness before he moved to the formal aspects of ugliness. Especially the attributes “negative” and “incomplete” are two defining terms that build upon other factors and cannot be seen as ultimate descriptions. In this relation, Rosenkranz stresses the need to use comparatives. Neither beauty equals the “complete” nor

³¹ Ibid, p. 158 [transl.]. Original text: “Das Häßliche ist keine bloße Abwesenheit des Schönen, sondern eine positive Negation desselben. Was seinem Begriff nach nicht unter die Kategorie des Schönen fällt, das kann auch nicht unter die Kategorie des Häßlichen subsumiert werden.“

³² With this approach, Rosenkranz distinguished himself from his teacher Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel who approached these terms dialectically in order to define them. At the same time, he elaborated and developed the definitions separately and thus did not connect them to each other.

should ugliness be put in the same category as the “incomplete”. A draft of an artist, for instance, may be incomplete because it is only in process of becoming complete. This incomplete state does not ascribe an ugly value to the draft but should rather be regarded as less beautiful. These terms thus have a relative status and have to be defined according to the art form in which they are applied. In the following, I will give an overview about the three different forms of ugliness and the general conditions to classify ugliness in the aesthetic system.

According to Rosenkranz, *Naturhäßliche* can generally be defined as the excess of naturally given forms and their abnormal transformations.³³ Since he refers to the plant and animal world in this part of his analysis, he mainly uses terms that relate to these forms of appearance. In relation to the vegetational system, he uses keywords such as “overgrowing” and “self-generated *Ungestalt*” (deformity) – of one plant in comparison to a group of plants – to explain the excess of naturally given forms.³⁴ Additionally, Rosenkranz mentions monotony in landscapes as a component of ugliness since it causes shapelessness.³⁵ These landscapes are in turn divided into three original forms: monotony, contrast and harmony. All of these forms can appear beautiful or ugly depending on the aesthetic environment, e.g. lightning. In connection to the animal world, terms such as “deformity”, “malformation” and “disproportion” indicate ugliness.³⁶ This shows that especially deviations compared with original forms constitute ugliness in *Naturhäßliche*.

In his perspective about *Geisthäßliche*, Rosenkranz relates his elaboration of ugliness in the plant and animal world to human beings. Since people are part of nature, the same attributes can be applied to them. However, the *Geisthäßliche* centres mainly around ugliness that begins in people’s minds. A mind that embraces honesty, kindness and pureness of will is regarded as beautiful. Thus, people with ugly features can look beautiful since their character is reflected in their appearance. In turn, beautiful people can look distorted and thus ugly if they have a low or bad morale. Yet, as long as virtue is amongst these low morals, the person may still appear in a beautiful way: “[...] [E]very virtue embellishes, every vice uglifies”.³⁷ Another important aspect for Rosenkranz’s view of *Geisthäßliche* is the malfunction of mind. With this component of *Geisthäßliche*, he refers to mental and physical illness of people which he sees as the origin of ugliness. Visible symptoms of physical illness as well as mental insanity

³³ Rosenkranz sees the abnormal transformation only as part of ugliness if it is caused by illness or a violent intrusion that results in deformity. Natural transformations such as a caterpillar becoming a butterfly are regarded as necessary.

³⁴ Rosenkranz, p. 26.

³⁵ The aspect of monotony as ugliness is further defined in chapter 3.1.2.

³⁶ Ibid, pp. 29.

³⁷ Ibid, p. 33 [transl.]. Original text: “[...] [A]lle Tugend verschönt, alles Laster verhäßlicht.”

deform the body, for instance, which results in a separation of body and mind. It is only during the healing process that beauty recurs since the body is revitalised.

It becomes apparent from these two forms that nature predominantly focuses on preserving life and therefore on shapes that are necessary for human beings to survive. The mind puts honesty and kindness first. In both forms, beauty takes on a secondary role. However, this hierarchy alters in the third form of ugliness: the *Kunsthäßliche*. Beauty is regarded as the absolute here, totality and “sensually appearing expression of the idea”.³⁸ The occurrence of ugliness is relative and its role questioned: Why would the artist want to depict ugliness next to beauty if the ultimate goal is showing pure beauty? Rosenkranz suggests that it highlights the appeal of beauty, yet he relativises this statement by saying that ugliness’ role is to complement the totality of the worldview. Through ugliness, a one-sided, superficial depiction of the artistic idea can be avoided.³⁹ This aspect furthermore refers to ugliness being *Negativschöne*. It is only in the context of the totality of the worldview that ugliness does become aesthetically bearable. Within the field of arts, ugliness can only appear in connection with some sort of beauty. However, it also has a notion of eventuality to it and visualises the possibility of beauty becoming ugly. This eventuality emphasises the fact that ugliness cannot replace beauty’s role. In relation to the aesthetic realisation, Rosenkranz suggests that ugliness has to be treated with the same criteria as beauty. Art should not hide or distort ugliness: “It has to show us the ugly in its entire dreadfulness but it has to do so with the same ideality with which it treats beauty”.⁴⁰ Whereas beautiful elements of beautiful objects should be highlighted, ugly features in ugly objects should be enhanced. In this manner, eventual, undefined and characterless elements should be abandoned within the respective art. Additionally, ugliness has to be subordinated into the rules of symmetry and harmony, for instance, and show its necessity in the totality of the worldview.⁴¹

These three forms of ugliness already show general contexts in which ugliness can appear. On the one hand, *Naturhäßliche* and *Geisthäßliche* refer to everyday situations and attempt to explain ugliness from a “real life”-perspective. The *Kunsthäßliche*, on the other hand, embeds ugliness within the field of Fine Arts and suggests ways of treating it. Lastly, it is this form on which Rosenkranz builds his aesthetic system. As *Kunsthäßliche* could not exist without the knowledge of the other two forms, all three forms have to be regarded as a system. This high-

³⁸ Ibid, p. 41 [transl.]. Original text: “sinnlich erscheinende Ausdruck der Idee”.

³⁹ Ibid, pp. 43.

⁴⁰ Ibid, p. 47 [transl.]. Original text: “Sie muß uns das Häßliche in der ganzen Schärfe seines Unwesens vorführen, aber sie muß dies dennoch mit derjenigen Idealität tun, mit der sie auch das Schöne behandelt.”

⁴¹ Ibid, p. 49.

lights Rosenkranz's use of conditionalities. To clarify the concept of ugliness, the following sub-chapter will examine how Rosenkranz defined the role and meaning of beauty.

3.1.1 *Beauty as the Absolute Instance*

Rosenkranz views beauty as “[...] the sensual appearance of natural and spiritual freedom in harmonious totality”.⁴² This main definition already shows the significance of the terms sensuality, freedom and totality. They recur in connection to beauty and are the major characteristics of it. Whereas the harmonic character refers to the soothing feeling that is ascribed to beauty, the aspect of totality is furthermore mirrored in beauty being the divine and original idea. This in turn relates to beauty as embodiment of pure ideals.⁴³ In order for beauty to appear in these pure forms, the characteristic of freedom has to be guaranteed. Rosenkranz regards freedom as mother of beauty and as foundation for pure ideals.⁴⁴ Freedom is in this relation characterised as *Selbstbestimmung* (self-determination, self-empowerment). Thus, free movements as well as feelings and consciousness of freedom beautify whereas *Unfreiheit* (unfreedom), e.g. illness and character-related vices, uglifies. This logic of beauty is complemented by the characteristics of unity and correctness. Unity encompasses the harmonic and natural relation of a conception and its shape which puts an emphasis on the relevance of natural standards and norms. This natural and truthful character furthermore defines correctness: “The truth of natural forms is what gives beauty its correctness”.⁴⁵ In the end, it becomes apparent that beauty is an absolute entity as contrasted with ugliness as a relative entity. However, ugliness is not regarded as counterpart but as part of beauty by Rosenkranz. He rather views beauty and caricature as opposites: “The opposite of the sublime is hence the mean; of the pleasing the adverse; of beauty the caricature”.⁴⁶ As distortion and deformation of the beautiful ideal, caricatures embody all expressions of ugliness that function as methods to achieve a caricatural effect. Yet, through the deformations as distorted mirrors of beauty, caricatures also remind the viewer how the ideal forms look like. They therefore draw the atten-

⁴² Ibid, p. 57 [transl.]. Original text: “[...] die sinnliche Erscheinung der natürlichen und geistigen Freiheit in harmonischer Totalität.”

⁴³ In this connection, Rosenkranz remarks that in order to show “dramatic depth”, the artist cannot avoid depicting ugliness and evil.

⁴⁴ Ibid, p. 65.

⁴⁵ Ibid, p. 60 [transl.]. Original text: “Die Wahrheit der Naturformen gibt dem Schönen die Korrektheit.”

⁴⁶ Ibid, p. 66 [transl.]. Original text: “Der Gegensatz des Erhabenen ist also das Gemeine; der des Gefälligen das Widrige; der des Schönen die Karikatur.”

tion back to beauty. This relation emphasises the absolute role that Rosenkranz ascribes to beauty in his aesthetic system. Additionally, it shows that caricatures and ugliness take on a very specific role in his point of view. The following sections will thus elaborate on Rosenkranz's conception of ugliness and caricature – and later the grotesque – to clarify their definitions and characteristics.

3.1.2 *Everything is Relative: Ugliness and its Conditions*

For Rosenkranz, ugliness is divided into three main characteristics: *Formlosigkeit* (shapelessness), *Inkorrektheit* (incorrectness) and *Verbildung* (deformation, distortion).⁴⁷ All three characteristics are defined according to their relation to beauty – whose shapes are in turn measured by nature. Shapelessness refers to the relation of a conception and its natural shape. As soon a conception loses its natural shape or is not depicted in its natural form, it becomes alienated and thus shapeless. Natural shapes play furthermore an important role within the characteristic of incorrectness. Through the study of nature, art has to analyse natural shapes in order to depict nature in its best condition – one function Rosenkranz ascribes to art.⁴⁸ If these natural regularities are disregarded, incorrectness and thus ugliness is created. Another aspect that distinguishes ugliness from beauty is its characteristic of *Unfreiheit*. It embodies the lack of freedom and functions as a kind of barrier in the form of illness, moral evilness or madness. Thus, *Unfreiheit* distorts freedom which results in a distortion of beauty and the creature's external appearance.

The three main characteristics mentioned above are further divided into other sub-characteristics. In this connection, shapelessness is influenced by amorphousness, asymmetry and disharmony. Rosenkranz sees limitations of shape as a necessary characteristic of amorphousness. Each conception has its specific original shape that distinguishes it from other conceptions. Thus, external distinctions are crucial for a creature to appear beautiful. If shapes of objects are monotone, they create a *Nureinheit* (absolute uniformity).⁴⁹ Although uniformity and purity are regarded as beautiful, they become ugly and unbearable sooner or later due to their lack of diversity. Diversity of shapes is thus regarded as beautiful since it has a pleasant effect.

⁴⁷ Ibid, p. 63.

⁴⁸ Ibid, p. 60.

⁴⁹ In this relation, Rosenkranz gives the example of a building that is plain and monotone in itself. It is only through signs in form of ornaments, for instance, that creates this necessary distinction.

However, it becomes ugly if the single elements are joined in a chaotic and illogical way, e.g. if a children's book is placed or depicted next to classical writings. To generate logic and regularity, it is therefore crucial to group single pictorial elements into themes. In terms of symmetry as a second subcategory, the synergy of sameness and difference is important. The "object" and "mirrored object" have to interact in order to appear beautiful. As soon as a feature in the mirrored shape is left out or depicted in a distorted way, a disproportion and incompleteness arises. This leads to a deformity and monstrosity of the picture, for instance. The interrelation of monotony and variety as well as sameness and difference is what Rosenkranz presupposes for a harmonic image. Although these arbitrary elements are part of the image, they are unified within their group of elements and create an exciting tension with their counterparts. If the single units do not correlate with their counterparts and appear isolated from them, a disharmony evolves that disrupts the proportions of the relations. Through this process, the overall unity of the picture is disrupted which makes it ugly. Disharmony, however, does not only appear ugly but can also be regarded as interesting. Pictorial elements that can belong into this category are for instance contradictions, weirdness or crime.

The aspect of shapelessness is closely bound to the characteristic of incorrectness. Whereas Rosenkranz subdivides shapelessness and distortion into smaller categories, he provides a general definition of incorrectness before relating it to specific artistic styles and genres. From a general point of view, incorrectness has to be regarded as added or left out features that transgress normal characteristics of an object. In contrast, correctness contains the trueness of things as it shows naturally and historically given shapes. Although incorrectness refers to formal visual aspects, an image is not necessarily ugly if single details are added or left out. In this relation, Rosenkranz points out that the "soulful manifestation" and the "ideal force" of images are the most crucial aspects: Artists have to study natural shapes, yet their task is not to copy nature in its details. This would result in a plain, cold and thus ugly painting.⁵⁰ In preference, artists are supposed to be original and show the ideal truth of the natural shapes, for instance, to convey a message.⁵¹ If this is the case, formal incorrectness takes on a secondary role.

As far as the different styles and genres are concerned, Rosenkranz argues that incorrectness evolves from ignoring the norms within a specific style and from transgressing the boundary from one genre into another. Each style is characterised by a specific aesthetic quality that in

⁵⁰ In a later chapter, Rosenkranz calls this copying and the lack of mechanic skills "dilettantism".

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 115.

turn sets up the norm.⁵² If an artist mixes different styles by accident, the image becomes ugly. However, if one style is used to complement another on purpose, ugliness does not necessarily occur. Similar rules apply to combining different art genres. Each genre depicts beauty with its own aesthetic techniques. A genre can complement another one to stress a meaning, yet it is not allowed to overshadow the individuality of the main genre. Each genre has its own qualitative characteristics. As soon as it reaches its original effect within another genre, it becomes incorrect and thus ugly that in turn has either a ridiculous or horrible effect to it.

The third main characteristic of ugliness, the deformation or distortion, emphasises the aspect of freedom. “Hence, without freedom, there is no true beauty; without *Unfreiheit*, there is hence no true ugliness”.⁵³ *Unfreiheit* is thus the reason for shapelessness, incorrectness and deformation/distortion. Rosenkranz dedicates the major part of his book to the latter since he differentiates it in three sub-categories: the mean, the adverse and the caricature.⁵⁴ He approaches this section by categorising absolute beauty as the highest instance. The sublime and the pleasing are extreme versions of absolute beauty that are subordinated to it and connected to each other.⁵⁵ Additionally, Rosenkranz ascribes an eternal character to the pleasing and a free character to the sublime. Since ugliness is the negation of beauty, sub-categories of it limit the sublime and the pleasing.⁵⁶ These sub-categories are the mean as negation of the sublime and the adverse as the negation of the pleasant. Similar to the sublime and pleasant, the mean and the adverse are connected, yet have to be differentiated. Whereas the mean points to the excess of consuming things (over-eating), for instance, the adverse is the result of this excess and shows the limitation of freedom (vomit afterwards). Another aspect that Rosenkranz refers to is the appearance of *Unfreiheit* and limitedness becoming freedom and eternity. This appearance is the origin of the caricature (see chapter 3.1.3). Generally, the caricature is the distortion of an ideal image. The distortion is caused by the self-destruction of ugliness through its appearance of freedom and eternity. Since ugliness is the freedom that

⁵² Rosenkranz does not only consider the different artistic eras as styles, but also divides them into sub-categories of national style and style deriving from a specific aesthetic school.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 161 [transl.]. Original text: “Ohne Freiheit also keine wahrhafte Schönheit; ohne Unfreiheit also keine wahrhafte Hässlichkeit.”

⁵⁴ The first two sub-categories are in turn divided into smaller defining categories. The mean is constituted of the greedy, the weak/fragile and the menial; the menial is in turn divided into the average, the coincidence and arbitrariness as well as the raw. The adverse is divided into the plump, the dead and hollow and the abominable. The abominable has own sub-categories that are the vulgar, the disgusting and the evil. The evil consist in turn of the crime, the ghostlike and the diabolical.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ In this relation, Rosenkranz stresses the fact that there is the possibility of ugliness negating beauty. Nevertheless, ugliness does not necessarily uglify beauty in all cases.

contradicts itself through its limitation and limits its own eternity, it mitigates its effect through the appearance of freedom. This effect makes the ugly comical.⁵⁷

3.1.3 *The Endpoint of Ugliness: Many Roads Lead to the Caricature*

“The beautiful is therefore one end of the ugly at the entrance, the comical at the exit the other“.⁵⁸ The comical fraternises with ugliness but realises the relativity and non-entity of ugliness. Through this realisation, it takes ugliness’ repulsive character away. For Rosenkranz, the comical plays a major role in definitions and conditions of ugliness. At the end of each chapter, he proposes the comical as an alternative effect to the respective characteristic of ugliness. This effect can be caused for instance by misdoing an art piece on purpose or by a repetitive occurrence of a monotonous feature. Rosenkranz mentions the latter when he talks about amorphy.⁵⁹ The recurrence of the same identity, e.g. a line in poetry, as a result of monotonous ugliness, causes a comical effect. If the artist attempts to include variety in his work, yet constantly falls back into monotony, this effect is especially emphasised. Another example of ugliness that becomes comical is the intentional utilisation of formal mistakes within the specific art genre. In relation to incorrectness, Rosenkranz brings in the aspect of language mistakes and jargon in poetry.⁶⁰ Although these points are regarded as ugly elements, they can have a comical – and even ridiculous – effect if the artist has included them on purpose. In this case, these aspects highlight their humorous and contradictory character within people’s mind and make the depiction of these characteristics pleasing.

These examples of comical effects as a result of ugliness already stress ugliness’s role as transitional character between beauty and caricature. Rosenkranz generally defines caricature as an exaggeration of specific characteristics that distort the overall image, object or person.⁶¹ The characteristics constitute an element of individualisation. As soon as the individual feature dominates the image, it spreads apart the general appearance and turns into a hyper-individuality. It is thus the contrast and relation between individual and general features that

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 164.

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 17 [transl]. Original text: “Das Schöne ist also am Eingang die eine Grenze des Häßlichen, das Komische am Ausgang die andere.“

⁵⁹ Ibid., pp. 75.

⁶⁰ Ibid., pp. 154.

⁶¹ Ibid., pp. 164.

constitute the caricature. This points to disproportion as an additional condition to create caricatures. Through this disproportion, caricatures bring to mind their ideal, proportionate form which causes the comical effect.⁶² Although these formal aspects play an intriguing role in producing caricatures, the main condition is to evoke the appearance of a “dynamic totality”.⁶³ According to Rosenkranz, the image should become organic. The distortion, for instance, is supposed to pervade the whole image which turns the disharmonic, deformed and abnormal arrangement into harmony again. In the end, this elaboration shows that caricatures share characteristics of ugliness with a mean and adverse nature as opposed to absolute beauty with its sublime and pleasing characteristics. However, only if a set of ugly characteristics are combined and/or one of them is exaggerated in a way that distorts the overall picture, does a caricature come into being and depict ugliness as comedy. Another distinction to ugliness is the caricature’s specific relation to an archetype that it caricatures – as opposed to ugliness that refers to general distinctions such as weak and strong.⁶⁴

Within art, caricatures take on different forms which are the satire, parody, travesty and grimace.⁶⁵ The satire mocks the negligible through its exaggeration. It thus reveals the negligible’s powerlessness which in turn causes a ridiculous effect.⁶⁶ To depict such vices and imbalances, Rosenkranz highlights animal limbs as usual figurative tool. The parody and travesty have similar roles: Parody twists the meaning of general matters and visualises the immoral situation whereas travesty concentrates on details. It decomposes the archetype into its smallest formal and content-related components and visualises them in a pleasing way. As a last form, the grimace turns normal and noble forms into disgusting ugly ones. It can either just have a comical effect or a comical effect with an unpleasant overtone which results in ignoring the respective depiction. All of these forms utilise exaggeration as a tool to achieve the ridiculous and comical effect.

Rosenkranz furthermore points out that caricatures have three functions that are connected to art: to portrait, to symbolise and to idealise. Whereas the portrait relates to a specific person, the symbolised caricature refers to a group of people through an altered form. For

⁶² Rosenkranz stresses the role of becoming comical rather than being comical. As distortions of their original forms, caricatures are aesthetically regarded as ugly and horrible. In this relation, he points out that there are numerous forms of caricatures such as humorous, ridiculous and sublime as well as gloomy, dreadful and mean.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 365.

⁶⁴ Because of their moderate production, some images belong to the category of caricature although they were not intended to. Another type of caricatures that has to be distinguished are the bad caricatures with which the artist wants to harm and hurt people instead of creating a comical effect.

⁶⁵ Rosenkranz also writes about natural caricatures that have an accidental nature to them. These caricatures usually refer to social, cultural or political injustices such as pseudo-reformers of a state.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 371.

Rosenkranz, the ideal caricature is, in the end, the fantastic one. Through exaggerated exaggeration, the distortion becomes the centre of the comedy which ascribes a harmless appearance to ugliness. This distortion transfers the caricature into the fantastic. It annihilates itself since it transgresses the boundaries of reality and thus takes on a fairytale-like freedom.⁶⁷ Because of this state, the fantastic caricature denies moral dangers and satirises itself. Although this hyper-exaggerated style might evoke the impression that fantastic caricatures are not subject to the aesthetic rules, the enormity of the fantastic sets its own conditions: The features within this enormous depiction have to be visualised in a proportionate manner in order to avoid falling back into a horrible ugliness. However, it is through the fantastic's enormity that these caricatures show a freedom, boldness and grace and arise into the eternity of the idea itself, the truth, the good and lastly the beauty.

3.1.4 *The Grotesque as a Tool to Evoke the Comical*

Although the grotesque does not take on a major role in Rosenkranz's theory, he included this concept in his chapter about coincidence and arbitrariness. As this chapter is part of Rosenkranz's analysis of ugliness, the grotesque constitutes one of its components. It is thus integrated in his perspective of the aesthetic system. Especially the role in the aesthetic system that Rosenkranz ascribes to the grotesque is interesting for this case. For him, it is a tool to evoke the comical from ugliness. To create a comical effect, elements of coincidence and arbitrariness are needed. According to Rosenkranz, bad coincidence and bad arbitrariness parody ugliness through its subjective enormity.⁶⁸ In this connection, he categorised the bizarre, the baroque, the grotesque and the burlesque as coincidences and arbitrariness. All of these forms are related to and merge into each other: "None of these forms is beautiful in the sense of the ideal; there is certain ugliness in each one of them, but there is also the possibility in each one to transition into the gayest comedy".⁶⁹ For Rosenkranz, the grotesque takes on the role of *Niedrigkomische* (lower comedy), especially if it transfers into the earthy-sensual, the obscene and the raw. In addition, Rosenkranz emphasises the grotesque's lower comedy

⁶⁷ Ibid, p. 396.

⁶⁸ Ibid, p. 206.

⁶⁹ Ibid [transl.]. Original text: "Keine dieser Formen ist schön im Sinne des Ideals; in jeder existiert eine gewisse Häßlichkeit, aber in jeder auch die Möglichkeit, in die heiterste Komik überzugehen."

character by stating that “The grotesque equals, in many respects, children’s taste [...]”.⁷⁰ As a mixture of unpredictable forms and unexpected thematic jumps, it both attracts attention and diffuses the viewer’s feelings. Thus, the grotesque is the arbitrariness that mocks all aesthetic rules.⁷¹

Despite of integrating the grotesque into his aesthetic system, Rosenkranz mentions the term frequently in connection to other aspects of his analysis. This gives further insight into his definition and characterisation of it. The grotesque appears in connection to *Naturhäßliche* for the first time.⁷² Together with the bizarre, it describes the weird shapes of natural formations. He then neglects the term until he relates it to the aesthetic system. After this inclusion, the grotesque sporadically recurs as an example for a style that creates a comical effect through a horrible, awkward or unmannerly way, e.g. farts as “sounding indecency” or grimaces as an extreme version of caricature that turn from ugliness to the comical through grotesque and bizarre design.⁷³

Rosenkranz not only mentions the concept of the grotesque explicitly, but also states aspects that can be traced back to the grotesque. The most salient context of the appearance of the grotesque is the degradation of people whose body parts are replaced with animal limbs and monstrosity. In the chapter “the diabolic”, Rosenkranz highlights the satyr mask as subhuman depiction of the satanic. It is created through the combination of animal symbols for the satanic such as the lion or the dragon, inanimate things such as beer mugs as well as human heads and the human body in general. By later relating this definition of the satyr mask to bizarre and grotesque grimaces, Rosenkranz already draws a connection to the animal-human depiction. With this connection, he not only refers to his own definition of the grotesque as unpredictable and unexpected, but also points to the grotesque’s demonic character. The German philologist and literary scholar Wolfgang Kayser (1981), for instance, confirms this character by ascribing the role of the “embodiment of demonic and sublime forces” to the grotesque.⁷⁴ Through this definition, the ambivalent nature of the grotesque is further stressed. In his chapter about “the caricature”, Rosenkranz takes up the animal-human connection and relates it to the degradation of people. The replacement of human body parts with animal limbs visualises the depraved characteristics of a person since it satirises the person through the depiction of a lower creature. In the end, this leads to the satirical caricature. Thus, the satirical function of

⁷⁰ Ibid, p. 211 [transl.]. Original text: “Das Grotesque ist in vieler Beziehung der Kindergeschmack [...]”

⁷¹ Ibid, p.210.

⁷² Ibid, p. 25.

⁷³ Ibid, pp. 222, 376.

⁷⁴ Kayser, 1981, as quoted by Yates, 1997, pp. 2.

the animal-human combination is stressed in this context. However, scholar John Ruskin (1867) views the animal-human degradation as one effect of the grotesque in the chapter “Grotesque Renaissance” of his book *The Stones of Venice: Vol. 3*.⁷⁵ Modern scholar Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin (1984) further stresses this perspective by saying that degradation is the “essential principle of the grotesque”.⁷⁶ These references point to the assumption that both the animal-human combination and the aspect of degradation can be related to the concept of the grotesque.⁷⁷

3.2 Modern Voices on Rosenkranz

The elaboration of the concepts “ugliness”, “caricature” and “grotesque” within Rosenkranz’s theory has shown that all three concepts are related to each other in his aesthetic system. With his perspective on ugliness as part of beauty, he furthermore stressed the need to depict both in order to create a totality. Although this theory evolved in the mid-19th century, Rosenkranz is still part of the academic discussion when it comes to aesthetics and ugliness in particular. The way with which he and his theory are dealt differs in terms of context and scope. Whereas some scholars only refer to him or summarise his ideas, others embed his theory in their discussion about aesthetics or other related fields.

In his book *Health and Illness: Images of Difference* (1995), the philologist and historian Sander L. Gilman, for instance, highlights Rosenkranz’s notion of physical and psychological illness as origin of ugliness. This not only exemplifies how Rosenkranz’s theory can be applied, but also stresses the relevance and value of his ideas in modern times by making it part of the discussion about the aesthetics of health and illness. The relevance and value of Rosenkranz’s ideas is furthermore highlighted by numerous anthropologies and works of reference that discuss ugliness or aesthetics in general. Scholars frequently include his theory as part of their own discussion to add another perspective on the aesthetic system. However, some of them do not go beyond a summary of his basic arguments. In *Ugliness: The Non-*

⁷⁵ Ruskin, John, *The Stones of Venice: Volume the Third, The Fall*, John Wiley & Son, New York, 1867, pp. 123-182.

⁷⁶ Bakhtin, Mikhail, *Rabelais and his World*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1984, p.19.

⁷⁷ Rosenkranz himself confirms this assumption in an indirect way when he describes animal scenes in some of the Pompeian mural paintings as grotesque and satirical after giving his explanation.

Beauty in Art and Theory (2014), Andrei Pop and Mechthild Widrich refer to Rosenkranz in their introduction by categorising him and his ideas into the range of 19th century philosophers and their remarks on aesthetics. Especially ugliness as active negation of beauty as well as ugliness as sign is stressed here. Other examples that deal with Rosenkranz are *Philosophische Ästhetik* (2008) by former philosophy professor Günther Pöltner and *The German Aesthetic Tradition* (2002) by philosophy and literary professor Kai Hammermeister. Both scholars integrate Rosenkranz in connection to Hegel after elaborating on his view on aesthetics. Pöltner primarily concentrates on providing Rosenkranz's main ideas. Hammermeister, on the other hand, complements his summary by relating Rosenkranz's ideas to other philosophers. Additionally, he highlights Rosenkranz's notion on ugliness as a necessary component to depict totality. Through this aspect, Rosenkranz distinguishes himself from Hegel according to Hammermeister. In the end, these references to Rosenkranz emphasise his impact on the understanding of ugliness and the aesthetic system and show his influence on modern scholars.

3.3 *Rosenkranz and Advertising?*

Rosenkranz's theory emerged in 1853 in the context of aesthetics and centres primarily on the Fine Arts such as architecture, poetry and painting. How can his theory then be applied to advertisements in the postmodern era? To show that these two apparently different visual forms are relatable to each other, thus making Rosenkranz's theory applicable to the field of advertisement, in the following section, I will examine to what extent advertisement and art share the same aesthetics. These aesthetic parallels will give access to apply a theory based on aesthetics in the Fine Arts to the field of advertising. The focus will lie on a general comparison of formal and content-related aspects within art and advertisement. For this thesis, the aspects of content and technique are most important to answer the research question. Since motifs of advertisements and the artistic means to visualise them are the focus here, aspects that are connected to the interpretation process such as the influence of the place of distribution show no direct significance. This chapter therefore not only highlights the common basis for art and advertising, but also links Rosenkranz's theory to the case at hand.

From Andy Warhol to Damien Hirst – there are numerous artists that are part of the “artistic advertising” trend. Through their engagement with either advertising companies or magazines, these artists animate the discussion about the narrow gap between art and advertising. In this connection, the question of “What is art?” arises. Over the last centuries, the definitions of art have been changed and new perspectives have been added. From a traditional point of view, the term “art” generally refers to the Fine Arts such as paintings and literature.⁷⁸ It has been classified as high culture and is therefore ascribed a high value.⁷⁹ In contrast, advertisements as mass-mediated, commercialised and profit-driven products are connected to low culture.⁸⁰ Thus, there is an apparent distinction at first glance. The economic Tyler Owen (2000) points out in relation to commercial culture that “[g]enres that rely heavily on equipment and materials, which I describe as capital-intensive, tend to produce popular art. Genres with low capital costs, which I describe as labor-intensive, tend to produce high art”.⁸¹ From this stance, the relations of high culture-Fine Art and low culture-popular/commercial art become visible. Although this categorisation stresses the distinction of art and advertising as far as their reputation and value are concerned, both visual forms have aesthetically and artistically approached each other over the 20th century. Modern fields such as “commercial art” and “advertising art” highlight this trend.

The following comparison concentrates on “content/technique” in art pieces and advertisements. Artists usually deal with aspects such as social, political or aesthetic problems and thus focus on transmitting their current environment from their point of view. Advertisements, on the other hand, focus on transferring a certain belief through the choice of certain images. These images are supposed to evoke a feeling in consumers – as was elaborated in chapter 2.1. –, thus making the consumer believe in the created idea of advertisements. Nevertheless, art and advertising make use of each other when it comes to the motifs that they show: With his depiction of Campbell’s *Black Bean* soup can (1968), Andy Warhol presents an early example of the integration of utilitarian objects – that are generally associated with popular cul-

⁷⁸ Sturken, Marita & Cartwright, Lisa, *Practices of Looking. An Introduction to Visual Culture*, 2nd edn, Oxford UP, New York & Oxford, 2009, pp. 2.

⁷⁹ The distinction between high culture and low culture evolved in the modernist era. Although this thesis focuses on advertisements in the postmodern era whose representatives suppress the high/low culture distinction, its proceeding value and currency remains important as scholars such as Tyler Cohen (2000) or Sascha Bru and Laurence Nuijs (2012) show.

⁸⁰ Bru, Sascha & Nuijs, Laurence, “Introduction”, in: Sascha Bru & Laurence Nuijs (et al) (eds.), *Regarding the Popular: Modernism, The Avant-Garde and High and Low Culture*, Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co. KG, Berlin & Boston, 2012, p. 5.

⁸¹ Cowen, Tyler, *In Praise of Commercial Culture*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 2000, p. 40.

ture – into art.⁸² In reverse, the company “Keri” promoted its Shea Butter (2006) by transferring Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres’s painting *La Grande Odalisque* (1814) into a print-advertisement.⁸³ These examples show the mutual influence and mergeable character of both visual forms: “[...] [A]rt feeds advertising and vice versa”.⁸⁴ This also becomes apparent through advertisers that use artistic movements as creative technique. Above all, the surrealist images stand out in this connection. Judith Williamson, for instance, talks of the “cultural image of Surrealism” when she describes surrealism in advertisement as the juxtaposition of unreal and real objects/situations in order to affect the spectator.⁸⁵

This comparison has shown that art and advertisements approach each other at some points. Especially the influence of artistic methods and motives on designs of advertisements stands out. From a capitalistic point of view, the advertising industry’s main purpose is to sell products. Nevertheless, these approaches to visualise a campaign show that art – in the general sense – influences the aesthetic stakes of advertisements. In the end, how can these aesthetic stakes be connected to art and specifically to Rosenkranz’s theory? Both in his theory as well as in advertising, beauty takes on an absolute and dominating role. It sets up the norms and the ideals.⁸⁶ In both contexts, the term beauty does not refer to natural appearances. Although Rosenkranz writes about studying natural shapes in order to depict them in the correct way, he suggests that a good artist portrays these shapes in their ideal version and in connection to a creative concept. This is relatable to modern ways of depicting beauty. Although companies usually work with conventionally beautiful models, they enhance their appearance with Photoshop to make the models look even more flawless and perfect. Two other important similarities are the aspects of monotony and incorrectness: Rosenkranz describes the recurring juxtaposition of identical things as too monotonous, boring and thus ugly. In the advertising industry, this monotony plays a crucial role. As the market is oversaturated with images and similar campaigns, companies have to create advertisements that stand out. Thus, variety and diversity are important features in the creative process. Although they are not necessarily re-

⁸² Kodner Gallery, Black Bean (from Campbell’s Soup 1), Warhol, Andy, Kodner Gallery Fine Art 2012, retrieved 18th April 2014, <<http://www.kodnergallery.com/black-bean-from-campbells-soup-i/>>.

⁸³ Sturken, Marita & Cartwright, Lisa, *Practices of Looking. An Introduction to Visual Culture*, 2nd edn, Oxford UP, New York & Oxford, 2009, pp. 115.

⁸⁴ Glancey, Jonathan, Is advertising art? Art: THE CREAM OF BRITISH DESIGN & ADVERTISING Saatchi Gallery, London, The Independent 2014, retrieved 18th April 2014, <<http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/is-advertising-art-1593252.html>>.

⁸⁵ Williamson, 2005, p.132.

⁸⁶ In contrast, the formal and conceptual characteristics that Rosenkranz elaborates in his chapter about ugliness, e.g. the mean, the adverse and asymmetry, are generally regarded as against social and aesthetic norms in advertising. As highlighted in chapter 1.4, Barbara Sutrich categorises vomit and blood as against social norms which refers to Rosenkranz’s chapter about the adverse.

garded as beautiful as Rosenkranz explicitly views them, they are still a major component of advertisements. Another crucial aspect is what Rosenkranz defines as “correctness” in his theory. Specifically, an image is regarded as beautiful if one genre complements another but does not overshadow it. This is comparable to art movements such as Surrealism that support the overall concept of the advertising campaign. Surrealism is in this sense the tool that complements the idea and basic aesthetics of the advertisement, yet it is not supposed to overshadow the advertisements’ role as advertisement with its occurrence.

4 Looking through Rosenkranz's Glasses: Semiotic Image Analysis of "Ugly Models"-Advertisements

The comparison between art and advertising has already shown to what extent art can be connected to advertising and vice versa. Furthermore, it has stressed that Rosenkranz's definition of beauty shares common aspects with modern beauty ideals in advertising. Rosenkranz's theory, in turn, has highlighted main characteristics of the concepts "ugliness", "caricature" and "grotesque". In the following chapter, the occurrence of these characteristics will be analysed in the selected "ugly models"-advertisements. The first part will stress how the agency "Ugly Models" defines ugliness. Through the examination of the agency's self-promotion on their website and in interviews as well as their choice of models, I will therefore highlight the agency's interpretation of ugliness. The results will be connected to Rosenkranz's categorisation of ugliness, specifically to *Naturhäßliche* and to *Kunsthäßliche*, to draw a connection between his and the agency's view on this categorisation.⁸⁷ The application of Rosenkranz's categorisation on the case at hand will furthermore establish the aesthetic context for the following image analysis. Subsequently, I will briefly describe the advertisements and highlight the most important features through a general image analysis. This will not only reflect upon the advertisements' role and function, but will also set the foundation to connect these recurring elements to Rosenkranz's definitions of the caricature, the grotesque and ugliness.

After examining this rather general point of view, I will analyse the advertisements from a classical aesthetics' perspective. The following semiotic image analysis will elaborate what caricatural, grotesque and ugly elements occur in the selected advertisements. These sub-chapters will not only centre on signs that point to the concepts according to Rosenkranz's definition, but will also discuss the effects that result from the respective concepts. Taking the results from the first parts as point of departure, I will discuss the concept of ugliness in a last sub-chapter. Rosenkranz views the grotesque as part of ugliness and the caricature as endpoint of it which points to the occurrence of ugliness in these advertisements. However, considering the altered definition of ugliness by "Ugly Models" as well as Rosenkranz's numerous sub-categories for it, the question of an ultimate definition of ugliness in advertising arises. This question will be answered through a discussion about ugliness as fluctuating term for disregarding social and aesthetic norms in advertising, thus constituting an abnormality.

⁸⁷ Although *Geisthäßliche* is also part of Rosenkranz's categorisation, it will not be taken into consideration as it centres around people's character-related ugliness which does not play a role for my argumentation.

4.1 *Ugly=ugly? – The Agency’s View on Ugliness in Relation to Rosenkranz*

The agency’s website shows a distinctive categorisation of their models. They are divided into “girls”, “men” and “specials”. The first two are further divided into girls or men 1-4 and “new faces” which mark different age groups. “Specials” is supposed to signify models with even extremer looks. The most outstanding aspect of the models’ presentation on the website are the threefold photographs that present the models. Usually, the middle one shows a close up of the models’ face and shoulder area. The remaining two images show either a rather neutral looking full body shot or an arranged photograph.⁸⁸ With this variety of photographs, the agency provides its clients with different facets of the models. This gives an insight into the models’ arranged look as well as their more naturally unconventional appearance – although it has to be considered that the models pose either way. Nevertheless, it becomes apparent through these divergent looks how much impact on the unconventionality of the models the artificial presentations can have.

Although the agency is called “Ugly Models”, the term “ugly” only appears indirectly in the descriptions of the models. “Ugly” – with a capital U – refers as an abbreviation to the agency as a brand. The term “ugly” is usually replaced with unusual and unique. In an interview, the current owner Marc French points out: “I don’t see anyone as ugly. I see everyone as individual, so for me to say that one person is uglier than another, I don’t see it”.⁸⁹ However, although the agency does not regard its models as ugly per se, they brand them with this characterisation and its – as is generally regarded – negative connotation. In this relation, French adds that “The word ugly now is the new beautiful”.⁹⁰ Although he admits in some interviews that some of the models might be considered ugly, it is more about their character and their confidence in their own skin.⁹¹ This view on his models highlights the agency’s stance on ugliness and points to the fluctuating nature of the word. In this context, ugliness is not regarded as a negative description of something or somebody. It rather marks difference and promotes variety, skills, personality as well as the every-day look in the model and advertising business.

⁸⁸ This is just a general observation that does not apply to every presentation. Some models are presented with two superimposed pictures whereas others are shown with three naturally appearing photographs. “Special” models are – as the name implies – partly presented in a rather eye-catching fashion with only one photograph.

⁸⁹ Thomas, Emily, Ugly Model Agency Recruits Bearded Ladies, Tattoo Artists, Huffington Post 2014, retrieved 18th April 2014, <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/02/20/ugly-model-agency_n_2497885.html>.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ MMXLLI, What is Ugly? A New Exhibit Showcases the Diversity of the Human Form, MMXLII 2014, retrieved 18th April 2014, <<http://mmxlii.com/category/art/>>.

It becomes apparent from this view on the models and their presentation on the website that there are different levels of presenting ugliness. Relating these levels to Rosenkranz's categorisation of ugliness, especially the *Naturhäßliche* and *Kunsthäßliche* stand out. *Naturhäßliche* encompasses the excess of naturally given forms which stresses ugliness as a deviation from original forms. In the context of this thesis, the determination of what is the original form becomes questionable. The answer ranges from the average, every-day look to beauty ideals in advertising as predominant and "normal" regarding aesthetic guidelines. Looks that are regarded as the normal and average in an every-day environment are called "character" in the advertising industry, whereas beautiful models are equalised with perfection in an every-day environment. This already stresses the importance of the context for the definition of ugliness. Since the arguments in this thesis are based on advertisements as visual material, beauty will function as the norm in this context – or original form according to Rosenkranz's terms. The ideal beauty – within the realm of advertising – usually encompasses physical features such as a thin and tall body, a firm and smooth skin as well as healthy looking hair and nails. With a majority of models looking according to these criteria, advertisements with them create a predominant beauty standard. In this sense, the "ugly model" Sultan Kosen as the tallest man – listed under "World Records" on "Ugly Models" website – exemplifies an excessive appearance that sets him apart from the average sized models, for instance (figure 1).⁹² Other strands of Rosenkranz's definition of the *Naturhäßliche* that mark the importance of deviation as criterion for ugliness are "deformity", "malformation" and "disproportion". These aspects touch upon the excess of one (or more) specific feature(s) that cause(s) disproportion, deformity or malformation of the overall appearance and in relation to others. Sultan Kosen, for instance, embodies disproportion with his size not only in relation to others but also through the relation of his body parts to each other. In this context, his feet are too big in relation to his head and his legs appear too long for his upper body.

This – more or less – natural appearance is stressed through the arranged images that promote the models as well as the advertisements. Rosenkranz refers to this as *Kunsthäßliche*. In his elaboration of aesthetic realisation of ugliness, he highlights the fact that ugliness should be treated in the same way as beauty, thus emphasising ugly features and pursuing the same rules, e. g. harmony. In connection to ugly models, this treatment becomes not only visible through the threefold presentation on the website, but also through examples such as Tommy Mattinson, one of the "special" models that is also listed in the "World Record" section (fig-

⁹² "Ugly models" are not the only model types that fall under this criterion. Size zero models that are even too thin for some runways are another example for the aspect of excess.

ure 2+3). Whereas figure 2 shows his “neutral” face, figure 3 depicts his arranged and enhanced “show face”. The photograph of his “neutral” face looks balanced and unspectacular. If there is one little thing that stands out, it is his slightly jutting ears. Mattinson’s “show face”, in turn, reveals his unique feature. The whole image is concentrated towards his mouth, eyes and nose which create a one-sided tension. Thus, a disharmony of the picture evolves whereas the criterion of harmony is given in the photograph with his “neutral” face. Furthermore, Mattinson’s “show face” confirms the notion of enhancing already existing “ugly” features. This example shows yet again the importance of relations. Mattinson’s distorted face does not only cause disproportion, deformation and malformation, but also distinguishes him from the average model.

This elaboration has shown that the aspects of relation and comparison play an important role for the categorisation of beauty and ugliness. For the following analysis, the ideal beauty in advertising that has been described above will function as a reference to establish an aesthetic system of “ugly models”-advertisements. It is thus only through the consideration of beauty and ugliness that a distinction between both is rendered possible. Rosenkranz mentions this aspect when he describes ugliness as a complementing tool to depict the totality of the worldview. It can only appear next to some sort of beauty in connection to art. In the context of “ugly models”-advertisements, the aspect of beauty is primarily reflected in the quality of the advertisements. Thus, the aesthetic realisation – in Rosenkranz’s terms – of the advertisements is reminiscent of the beauty ideal that the advertising industry has established.

4.2 Applying the Tools: The Aesthetic System of “Ugly Models”-Advertisements

Advertisement 1 shows Samppa, one of the “x-files”-models from the “specials”-section, in an ad for a casino (figure 4). The model is placed at the centre of the advertisement that depicts him in an upper body shot. Since the background is kept simple with a plain white-greyish wall, the focus lies on the presentation of the model. From a pure bodily perspective, his most prominent features are his piercings and the tattoos. This rather alternative and punk physical appearance is enhanced by his presentation. The central attractions are Samppa’s head and face. Through the piercings’ placement on the top of his head, between his eyes as well as the bigger ones on his nose and ears, an alternative character is ascribed to him. This

is enhanced through his tattoos that are partly visible on his face and upper body. Samppa's aggressive expression with his puckered brows and outstretched tongue points to pugnacity. This attack is addressed to the casino that is signified through the dice in the signal colour red. By licking it, he challenges the power of casinos or gambling, and puts himself in a superior position. This action not only provokes with its sexual reference, but also emphasises Samppa's toughness and confidence. His punk clothes that adhere to the other elements in the advertisement with their colour stress this confidence as they signify an alternative attitude. Through this depiction, the advertisement wants its recipients to identify with the model and gain as much confidence and toughness to gamble as him. At the same time, it appeals to the tough recipients and challenges them to gamble. This is furthermore enhanced by the pun that says "Play Safe". Together with the advertising text, it not only promises a safe gambling environment, but also enhances the gambler's toughness and confidence by implying a successful gamble. In the end, the casino as a dubious gambling business wants to encourage the recipient to become a member of their club.

Dell Keens for a "Calvin Klein Jeans"-advertisement is the second example for an "ugly model" in an advertisement (figure 5). The advertisement's whole design is oriented towards his look. While the yellow-red striped background is only partly visible, Dell is positioned in the middle of the image. In a sitting position, he looks dreamily and almost sad wearing a denim jacket, a patterned white T-shirt and dark coloured pants. Calvin Klein's brand logo and the product name are placed horizontally in white letters and different sizes at the centre of the advertisement. This partly covers Dell's breast region and thus draws more attention to his hands at the bottom and his face at the top. At the same time, the brand-logo stands out through the division of dark and bright colours which connects the product to the producer. Furthermore, through the slight turning of his head, Dell's jutting ears become visible. Additionally, the half opened mouth reveals Dell's buckteeth that are – together with his jaw – his most significant facial feature. In the end, the forward-styled hair completes his look that is reminiscent of James Dean. Another outstanding feature is the colour in advertisement 2. It reflects Calvin Klein as a brand who used these subdued colours as trademark and as design for various campaigns in the 1990's.

The third and last advertisement is an example for an average looking man with an advanced age that becomes "ugly" through his presentation (figure 6). The design of this advertisement for "The Phone Book" by BT centres on the model itself and a bold slogan that supports the man's appearance on a white background. The left part focuses on the male model whose

most significant feature is his thin body. Because he is dressed in shorts and a sleeveless shirt that are depicted in a three-quarter body shot, this feature is even more emphasised. The man's laborious facial expression adds another level of intensity when he tries to rip the phone book. His attempt of ripping it stresses his non-existent physical strength. In this connection, thin therefore equals weak. The man's advanced age and his nerdy glasses have the same effect and enhance the weakness. The right side of the advertisement provides the brand logo and the slogan "2 out of 10 people use The Phone Book from BT to show off how strong they are". This pun not only relates to the man's physique and creates irony, but also addresses the other "8 out of 10 people" who might get the strength by using the variety of services that the phone book offers.

The three selected advertisements from the agency's "portfolio"-section depict three different "ugly models" that stand out through their own individual appearance. Each of these examples constitutes its own level of caricatural, grotesque and ugly elements which will be elaborated in the following sections. To analyse how Rosenkranz's characteristics of these concepts are signified in the advertisements, I will approach the semiotic image analysis conceptually. In this connection, the concepts themselves embody the respective "sign". A "sign" in semiotics is constituted of the "signifier" and the "signified".⁹³ Whereas the signifier is described as thing and material object by Judith Williamson, the signified embodies its meaning and idea. In the following analysis, Rosenkranz's already elaborated defining attributes therefore take on the role of the signified as meaning that will be ascribed a signifier in the advertisements. By looking for pictorial elements and relations that signify Rosenkranz's characteristics, I will analyse the occurrence of the three respective concepts.

4.2.1 *The Caricature as Sign*

The general image analysis already shows the different layers of meaning within the selected advertisements. However, whereas these remarks stress the idea behind the advertisements' design, the following sub-chapter will highlight how this design reflects Rosenkranz's defining characteristics of the caricature (see chapter 3.1.3). For him, the most important element of caricatures is the exaggeration. This exaggeration refers to – usually – one specific charac-

⁹³ Williamson, 2005, pp. 17.

teristic which causes a distortion of the image, the object or the person. Thus, exaggeration is the first signified that refers to a signifier in the advertisements.

In advertisement 1, the specific characteristics are the numerous piercings and tattoos of Samppa. These piercings and tattoos ascribe a wild and rebellious value to the model which is enhanced through his presentation. As he is shown in an upper body shot that puts his pierced head and the partly exposed, tattooed shoulders into the focus, he emphasises not only his rebellious character, but also puts his most significant feature into the main focus. Through the exposure of his piercings and tattoos, he therefore stresses the value that these features attribute to him. This is supported by his stretched out tongue, the aggressive facial expression and his punk clothes that were apparently pieced together. The whole advertisement is geared towards this image. Instead of hiding his tattoos with casual clothing, unscrewing the piercings on his head or giving him a more relaxed facial expression, these characteristics are even more highlighted. Although the dangerous look is part of the advertisement's concept, Samppa's alternative appearance and the image that is usually ascribed to it are stressed even more through his presentation. The pose and the facial expression are thus the main signifiers of exaggeration in this advertisement. Through Ron Leishman's caricature "Cartoon Man Pierced with a Nail" (figure 7), these exaggerations are stressed even more. This actual caricature depicts a man with multiple piercings that shows similarities to Samppa as far as the number of his piercings is concerned. In this example, the focus also lies on the number of piercings that is exaggerated through the big nail as a piercing through the man's chest. The rebellious value that is generally ascribed to people with an over-pierced body is furthermore highlighted through the man's haircut, the red hair colour and his mischievous facial expression. This image thus shows significant similarities to the advertisement with Samppa.

A similar focus is put on the model in advertisement 2. In this example, the individual feature is Dell's jaw and his teeth. As a consequence, his face is an important factor to create an exaggerated effect. With the placement of the brand-logo in the centre of the advertisement, a focus is put on the top part. Additionally, the brighter colours in the background and Dell's head in comparison to his clothes enhance this effect. The camera angle and his slightly raised head also support the focus on his head and specifically his jaw. It becomes already visible that numerous pictorial elements are concentrated towards his head and jaw. By keeping his mouth slightly open, thus stressing his buckteeth, he completes the exaggeration of his jaw-line that is the major signifier in this advertisement. Dell's jaw-line as outstanding feature is highlighted through the caricature of Shane McGowan (figure 8). Similar to Dell's depiction

in the “Calvin Klein”-advertisement, McGowan’s jaw-line is the caricatured object that is also complemented by his big ears.

The last example differs to a little extent from this. Since the man’s specific characteristic is his thin body (in connection to his age) which is a rather unspectacular and frequent body feature, a concept with a slogan is used. It stresses the man’s weakness that is an inevitable result of being thin as the advertisement suggests. Through his sporty outfit and the unsuccessful attempt to show off his physical strength by ripping the phone book, the man’s thinness and weakness is even more emphasised. The whole idea of advertisement 3 is therefore concentrated towards the man’s physical appearance. In this advertisement, the thin look of the model in relation to the slogan is the signifier. It is thus the whole concept of the advertisement that creates the exaggeration. The caricature “The Man Tries to Lift a Weight” (figure 9) emphasises this idea by showing a thin man in a sporty outfit during his attempt to lift a – for him – heavy barbell. The whole idea as well as the look and the facial expression correlate to the advertisement.

The aspect of exaggeration shows that the models’ features are a crucial part of the advertisements. Since the focus in all three advertisements lies on the individual features – a characteristic that is furthermore highlighted by Rosenkranz –, these features are defining components. However, distortion as an effect of exaggeration and thus another signified is only gradually visible.⁹⁴ Especially physical deformations such as Dell’s jaw-line hint to initial distortions of single persons as they alter the unity and harmony of their appearance as well as concentrate the viewer’s attention towards that body part. This concentration and attention towards specific body parts is also given in the two other examples, yet on a more arranged level. With their significant features, the models create a tension towards these body parts which puts other pictorial elements into the background. This effect does not immediately become apparent which points to Rosenkranz’s notion on caricatures constituting a “dynamic totality” that will be examined at a later point. Within the signified of distortion, the importance of relations is therefore stressed. In the end, the different forms of distortion lead to the aspect of disproportion between individual and general features within an image. Disproportion is thus another signified.

In the advertisements, different levels of disproportion become apparent. As the whole image of Samppa in advertisement 1 is created around his tattoos and especially the piercings, his

⁹⁴ As an effect of exaggeration, distortion – and later also disproportion – has almost the same signifiers. However, the relation of pictorial elements differs slightly with each characteristic.

presentation in front of a white-greyish wall appears uniform and well-balanced. However, through his overall facial expression with the puckered brows, the stretched out tongue – which exposes his crooked teeth – and the red dice on his tongue the emphasis is changed towards his face. This causes a slight disproportion in relation to the rest of the image. Advertisement 2 shows a more visible level of disproportion. In this example, the pictorial elements lead the viewer's eye towards the top part of the advertisement to stress Dell's look. Through the subdued colours and shadows in the lower part of the picture, this effect is even more stressed. Although Dell's face constitutes only one third of the picture, it attracts the most attention. Yet, the jacket is the advertised product that represents the clothing line and not his jaw-line which dominates his face and the picture. The third advertisement is dominated by the model as well although he is not placed at the centre of the picture. Through his actions, the man becomes the animated part of the advertisement. His look that is supposed to contradict this action enhances the pictorial shift towards the left side. Although the slogan takes up the other half of the picture, it supports the model's role with its message as opposed to dominating the whole advertisement.

From the characteristics of exaggeration, distortion and disproportion and their different levels of visibility it becomes apparent that the advertisements provide a synergy of elements that make the images harmonic again. This refers to Rosenkranz's notion of "dynamic totality" that is the main condition to create caricatures for him. Since, in this case, the main visual forms are still the advertisements whereas the caricatural takes on the supporting role, the pictorial elements are planned through and aesthetically unappealing effects such as severe distortions are avoided.⁹⁵ Rosenkranz writes in this relation about the caricatural elements' pervasion through the image. This balances the image and results in a harmonic picture. In each of the selected advertisements, this "dynamic totality" becomes visible. Although they centre around the models' appearance and put a focus on these features, the formal aesthetic realisation accommodates their unconventional looks. Examples for this realisation are for instance the interplay between models and plain backgrounds as well as their appearance as the leading theme of the advertisements' concepts.

Through this examination, it is highlighted that formal elements of the caricatural occur in advertisements. This leads to the question of archetypes for each advertisement with their caricatural elements and their effects. For Rosenkranz, archetypes are a basic distinction be-

⁹⁵ This touches upon the aspects "correctness" and "incorrectness" within Rosenkranz's characterisation of ugliness that deals with complementing one genre with another. These aspects will be discussed in chapter 4.2.3.

tween caricatures and a merely ugly presentation. He distinguishes mainly between the functions “portrait”, “symbolise” and “idealise” that point to assigned archetypes. In connection to the advertisements, especially the aspects of “symbolise” and “idealise” are important: Whereas the symbolised caricature refers to a group of people, the idealised one points to the fantastic. Advertisement 3 points to an idealised caricature whereas the advertisement with Dell is an example for a symbolised caricature. Samppa’s appearance in advertisement 1, in turn, combines the functions of “symbolise” and “idealise”.

With his look, Dell shows that ugliness can be successful in a beauty-dominated business. This beauty-business in advertising becomes the archetype that comes to mind as reference to advertisement 2. However, it does not necessarily make fun of this archetype. As Rosenkranz points out, there are numerous forms of caricatures whose appearance affects their effects. The advertisements at hand exemplify these forms: Dell’s advertisement takes on a more sublime, yet gloomy form of caricatures. The subdued colours do not only refer to “Calvin Klein” as a brand, as the general analysis has shown, but also create a dreamy atmosphere. The model’s face appears both dreamy and sad which – together with the camera angle – causes the ambivalent effect. Additionally, the faint colour evokes the feeling of an old image which ascribes a historical value to the advertisement. In contrast, his jaw-line and ears have a more comical effect since they are not conforming with this sublime and sad feeling. Through this effect, these body parts appear self-ironic and point to Rosenkranz’s definition of travesty. In relation to self-irony as sub-archetype, travesty depicts details of the sub-archetype in a pleasing way.

Advertisement 3 reflects idealised caricatures that point to the fantastic. In this case, the archetype embodies stereotypes that are assigned to thin people. As the fantastic is characterised through a harmless appearing ugliness and a self-satirical effect, it reflects the thin man’s depiction in the “Phone Book”-advertisement. Through the exaggeration of his thinness in relation to his attempt to rip the phone book, the man not only makes fun of himself and his thin physical appearance but also of the stereotype about thinness equalling weakness. With this presentation, he relates to a combination of Rosenkranz’s notion on the satire and on the parody. As pointed out in chapter 3.1.3, the satire mocks the negligible – in this case the thinness – through its exaggeration. Two apparently contrasting features – thinness and physical power – are connected in this case and cause a ridiculous effect. This is enhanced through parodistic features. By depicting the stereotype of thin equalling weak in an exaggerated form, the ad-

vertisement makes fun of it and the people who believe in it. In the end, the pun of the advertisement is created through this exaggerated and comical presentation.

Since advertisement 1 embodies a combination of the symbolised and the idealised caricature, it shares a set of characteristics with each of the two other advertisements. In relation to the archetype, both the beauty-business and stereotypes of pierced and tattooed people are visible. With his punk appearance, which is an example for a dreadful caricature, Samppa mocks the norms of the beauty-business. In turn, by exaggerating the aggressive and rebellious character in connection to his look, he plays with the stereotype of alternatively looking people being dangerous and defiant. This is also enhanced by the paradox of his appearance and the advertising text "Play Safe". Despite of dreadfulness and self-irony, this advertisement thus conveys a humorous effect. The aspect of self-irony is furthermore stressed by the denial of moral dangers according to Rosenkranz's terms. Through his provocative licking the dice that shows a sexual reference, Samppa depicts an immoral action. This immoral depiction points to advertisement 1 being a parody. As Rosenkranz states, one characterisation of parody is the presentation of an immoral situation. His stretched out tongue and his aggressiveness in the facial expression as results of Samppa's punk style show examples for an exaggerated immorality. Similar to advertisement 3, Samppa's appearance in connection to the advertising text causes a comical effect.

4.2.2 *The Grotesque as Sign*

This analysis has shown that the selected advertisements and caricatures share similar characteristics. Through the examination of caricatural elements in the advertisements, not only aspects concerning the aesthetic visualisation such as exaggeration were highlighted but also the ambivalent effects of this presentation. Although some of the advertisements have a more dreamy or dreadful effect, all of them show a comical or humorous notion in relation to their specific characteristics. One tool to evoke this comical effect from ugliness is, according to Rosenkranz, the grotesque (see chapter 3.1.4). The following analysis will therefore elaborate the occurrence of grotesque characteristics in the advertisements.

To evoke the comical, the grotesque, as a tool, depicts it in different ways. For Rosenkranz, these ways are the horrible, the awkward and the unmannerly. All three ways describe pictori-

al features in the selected advertisements. Through his aggressive facial expression and the numerous piercings all over his face, Samppa shows an example for the horrible. He uses his looks to evoke an intimidating and combative feeling as “gambler”. His stretched out tongue not only supports this feeling, but also points to the unmannerly. By polarising this presentation, an obscene character is ascribed to him which refers to Rosenkranz’s notion on the grotesque as *Niedrigkomische*. Because of this break with social and aesthetic norms, Samppa depicts the “unmannerly” in advertising and provokes with his style. Looking at Gabby Nathan’s grotesque image (figure 10), especially similarities regarding the horrible and *Niedrigkomische* are visible. Although this image shows a doll-like girl instead of a man, the characteristics still become apparent. The horrible is visualised through the blood that comes out of the girl’s eye as well as through her partly elongated and exaggerated body parts. The dark green-red colours enhance this effect. In turn, *Niedrigkomische* results from the connection of strangling the plastic doll in her hands and the girl’s excessive facial expression.

Similar to Samppa, the element of provocation through the models’ looks is also visible in the other two advertisements that appear rather awkward than unmannerly. Dell evokes the feeling of awkwardness not only through his characteristic features but also through his ambivalent facial expression. In relation to an advertisement for a clothing line, these aspects enhance the awkwardness. Gil Yefman’s grotesque image “Just Dad” (figure 11) shows the element of awkwardness as well. The rather rapid change in colour as well as the asymmetrical forms and distorted lines that are both visible in the shifted hairline, the ears and eyes differing in size or the big teeth with the distorted upper lip, create an almost surreal picture of a man’s head which causes awkwardness. The thin man in advertisement 3, in turn, creates this effect with his gangly presentation. Through this presentation and the surrounding elements that point to the opposite of physical strength, he appears even weaker. This impression is also the reason for awkwardness in Yuri Kats’ grotesque image (figure 12). Standing in front of a plain violet wall, the thin limbs of the man are even more stressed. His face that almost resembles the colour of the walls appears inanimate and makes him look like a living corpse. These elements stress the awkwardness in the picture.

Depicting the comical in different ways highlights the ambivalent appearance of “ugly models”. Ambivalence is a crucial element in Rosenkranz’s definition of the grotesque as it stresses the different feelings that arise from a grotesque depiction.⁹⁶ In the advertisements, these

⁹⁶ In Rosenkranz’s theory, the aspect of ambivalence also occurs in connection to the animal-human relationship (see chapter 3.1.4). Although there are no examples of “ugly model”-advertisements that depict humans with

feelings and effects range from the comical or humorous to the gangly and to the dreamy and to the obscene or dreadful. Although this variety of motifs and their effects – that partly occur in each advertisement – attract attention, they diffuse the viewer’s feelings at the same time as Rosenkranz phrases it. Examples for this ambivalence in the grotesque pictures are for instance the relations of horror-*Niedrigkomische* in figure 10 or awkward-comical in figure 11. In the context of the advertisements, the most outstanding example is Dell’s face: His expression appears dreamy and sad which evokes a more sympathetic feeling whereas his buckteeth and jutting ears add a humorous notion in this context. Since they deviate from the other pictorial elements, these paradox feelings occur.

Although the previous two aspects are important characteristics of the grotesque, the main elements for Rosenkranz are arbitrariness as well as the unpredictable form and the unexpected thematic jumps. Since advertising is a medium that is designed to transmit specific messages and feelings through motifs, there can be no talk of arbitrariness per se. However, Rosenkranz also writes about arbitrariness that mocks all rules. Considering idealised beauty in advertising as the norm that establishes the common rules, ugliness itself and thus the caricatural and grotesque as parts of it embody a – planned – arbitrariness in the advertising industry.⁹⁷ As ugliness mocks major aesthetic rules in advertising, it allows to present “ugly models” in a random fashion. Advertisers that work with ugliness in some way follow no strict rules but utilise ugliness as an excuse to depict the models or subjects how they want to. This presentation varies from the rebellious character of Samppa to the interplay of thin/weak and strong in the portrayal of the old man.⁹⁸

Arbitrariness is closely bound to unpredictable and unexpected depictions. These depictions therefore show the abnormal. In this context, the portrayal of “ugly models” as well as the exaggerated exposure of their prominent features embodies not only the abnormal in the advertising industry but through the abnormal character also the unexpected. The exaggerated and caricatural way of depicting these models furthermore stresses the aspect of the unpredictable form. “Ugly models” reflect the unpredictable form not only through their difference

animal limbs, the optician company “Synoptic” currently (April 2014) promotes its campaign with a man whose head is masqueraded with a donkey-head. This campaign shows an example for Rosenkranz’s animal-human relation in a modern advertisement.

⁹⁷ A contemporary example of this – planned – arbitrariness is “ICA”’s campaign with a disabled man that was referred to in the introduction. Although this campaign is planned-through, it shows a person who is generally regarded as weak and helpless as knight or super hero. Thus, two arbitrary things are connected to convey a message.

⁹⁸ The agency shows numerous other examples of such a – planned – arbitrariness that are even more visible. For an anti-smoking campaign, a female model is for instance shown with a fishhook through her top lip.

in comparison to ideal beauty standards in advertising but also through the way of their presentation. Through this extreme depiction of the abnormal, the advertisements highlight the exaggeration in the picture which refers back to the caricatural. This extremeness contributes to the provocative side of “ugly models”-advertisements. The combination of caricatural and grotesque features is not only visible in the advertisements but also in the grotesque pictures: Nathan shows her doll-girl with exaggerated limbs and Kats presents his man with an exaggerated thinness, whereas Yefman works with distorted lines. These aspects also visualise the unpredictable forms. Other characteristics for the grotesque are the unexpected thematic jumps that are also visible in the advertisements. As highlighted earlier, the thin man is equalised with weakness. By showing him in the process of ripping the phone book and trying to show off his physical strength, the advertisers connect apparently two divergent characteristics. In the “Calvin Klein”-advertisement, Dell as model is unexpected in connection to promoting a clothing line. Samppa shows the unexpected thematic jumps with his aggressive expression, the obscene tongue-gesture and his alternative look in connection to a casino membership – which is usually promoted with people at a gambling table or images of gambling machines. With these depictions, the advertisements thus differentiate themselves from the norm and other brands with the same product.

In the end, this chapter has shown that elements of the grotesque occur in “ugly models”-advertisements. The selected advertisements are, however, only a few examples that depict grotesque elements. Other examples such as gurning champion Tommy (appendix 2) support the above mentioned arguments as well. Although the level of intensity differs in the advertisements and some defining characteristics have to be relativised according to the context, grotesque elements can be traced in “ugly models”-advertisements.

4.2.3 The Ugly as Sign

The previous two chapters have elaborated signs for caricatural and grotesque elements appearing in the advertisements. As the caricature is the endpoint and the grotesque a component of ugliness, their occurrence in the advertisements implies that elements of ugliness are part of their depiction as well. For Rosenkranz, there are numerous conditions that define ugliness. He therefore uses other concepts such as shapelessness and distortion to establish a

definition of ugliness. Although these defining concepts do not explicitly point to ugliness per se and have to be analysed in relation to the whole picture, they confirm the occurrence of ugliness in the pictures. As ugliness is the positive negation of beauty in Rosenkranz's terms, it has a negative notion to it, yet it is reminiscent of the beautiful ideal at the same time. This ambivalent characteristic is also visible in the advertisements: These advertisements negate beauty ideals as far as the models are concerned and are usually compared to these ideals. The agency "Ugly Models" confirms through their perspective that ugliness is the new beautiful. With "ugly", however, they refer to unconventionality rather than to aesthetically unappealing features. Considering Rosenkranz's numerous defining concepts as characteristics of ugliness and the agency's view of it, the question arises if and to what extent "ugliness" becomes a collective term for abnormality in this context. This chapter will therefore analyse the occurrence of ugly elements before a last section will discuss what role the term "ugliness" embodies by reflecting upon Rosenkranz's definition of it as well as upon the results of the previous chapters.

Since elements of the caricatural can be traced in the advertisements, they show the endpoint of ugliness. This stresses the point that the advertisements entail characteristics of ugliness as well, yet these characteristics function as a technique to visualise the caricatural. Furthermore, only a set of "ugly" characteristics occurs rather than all conditions that Rosenkranz enumerates. Ugliness as negativity is therefore relativised. It rather functions as the basis from which the comical evolves. Although the specific features of the models have an ugly nature to them compared to other models, they are presented in an exaggerated way that turns "ugly" into "comical". The initial value of ugliness is thus abolished. However, formal characteristics of ugliness are still apparent. The grotesque is for instance an integral part of ugliness and thus embodies a technique to show the caricatural as well. Besides the grotesque, there are three main characteristics for ugliness according to Rosenkranz: shapelessness, incorrectness and deformation/distortion (see chapter 3.1.2).

Shapelessness occurs if the relation of a conception and its natural shape is disrupted which means that the conception loses its natural form and becomes ugly. As highlighted in chapter 4.1, the natural form is the ideal beauty in the concept of advertising. With their features and the exaggerated way of their presentation, the "ugly models" in the advertisements embody this disruption of the beauty ideal in advertising. Shapelessness is thus another signified that looks for signifiers in the respective advertisement: Although piercings and tattoos per se are not necessarily a rarity on models these days – in comparison to the model standards 50 years

ago, for instance –, their quantity and excess on Samppa in advertisement 1 is striking. Through the exposed way of presenting them and the image that is ascribed to him because of the piercings and tattoos, Samppa contrasts with conventional beauty in advertising described in chapter 4.1. Thus, the piercings and tattoos change his natural body and ascribe an alternative character to him. In advertisement 2, Dell's jaw-line and jutting ears embody the disruption and thus shapelessness. As deformed facial features, they are not conforming with beauty standards in advertising and thus mark abnormality. The third advertisement differs from the first two as far as "natural ugliness" is concerned. In this case, the model's "ugliness" is forced and arranged. His distorted face with the extended lower jaw, the sporty outfit to visualise his thinness and his attempt to be strong as an apparently weak man are combined features to create ugliness to some extent. Although his thin physique cannot be regarded as ugly, it is used to ascribe weakness to the man which can be considered as abnormal to the average strong and muscular male models.

Although the frequency of ugliness in advertising increases, beauty is still regarded as the norm and as the expected. Thus, "ugly models" create shapelessness as they alienate the familiar pictures associated with this industry. However, considering the fact that advertising can be further divided into sub-categories such as informational or emotional advertising which aim for different effects (see chapter 2), the line between beauty as natural form and ugliness as shapelessness blurs to some extent. Since it is the goal of emotionalising advertising to attract attention and evoke feelings in consumers, different means are used to stand out. Ugliness embodies one of these tools and is more frequently depicted. As Rosenkranz points out, uniformity and an apposition of similar objects become boring and ugly if they are shown too often. Looking at the advertising industry as a whole picture, ugliness is an example for variety. Although Rosenkranz talks about the relation between monotony and variety in the same picture, he also defines ugliness as positive negation that reminds viewers of the beautiful. By looking at advertisements that depict ugliness, beauty as the ideal image comes to mind. This not only shows that ugliness as an aspect of variety and difference can be beautiful, but also points to Rosenkranz's conditions that can be interpreted according to the different context.

The tendency towards a beautiful depiction of ugliness becomes also visible in connection to the characteristic of incorrectness as the second signified within the concept of ugliness. For an image to appear as correct, no features should be added or left out – according to the classification of *Kunsthäßliche* (chapter 4.1). However, if they help to convey the overall message

of the idea, they are not regarded as incorrect and ugly. In connection to the advertisements, “ugly” features of the models are enhanced – that furthermore refers to the relation of the models’ presentation and the *Kunsthäßliche* –, and features such as a pun are added to emphasise a message. Thus, the aspect of ugliness as a consequence of incorrectness does not apply in these cases. This is further emphasised by the distinction of a main and a complementing genre or style. Only if the main genre dominates the picture, incorrectness can be avoided. Although Rosenkranz writes about complementing one genre with another on purpose, which is only partly the case in these advertisements, other visual movements in advertising such as Surrealism show such a relation on purpose. Nevertheless, the comical and ironic character in advertisement 3, for instance, shows a planned inclusion of the caricatural and grotesque – without necessarily calling it that way. Since the caricatural and the grotesque (and ugliness) only stress the meaning and the presentation of the models and do not overshadow the advertisements’ nature as advertisements, they are not considered as incorrect. The aspect of incorrectness thus shows that the apparent ugliness entails beautiful characteristics that partly shine through. Consequently, incorrectness as signified does not directly refer to signifiers in the images since it does not occur.

Although the third characteristic of deformation/distortion has already been highlighted in connection to the caricatural, it has an extended meaning in Rosenkranz’s definition of ugliness. One aspect that explains deformation/distortion as characteristic of both ugliness and caricature is ugliness’ self-destruction. Through this self-destruction, ugliness mitigates its original effects and becomes comical which in turn leads to the caricature. This exemplifies how ugliness functions as a tool to evoke the caricature. In the context of advertisements, this aspect confirms not only the occurrence of ugliness, but also stresses its transformation into the exaggeration and thus into the caricature. The original effects of ugliness are almost replaced through caricatural effects. They therefore only have a secondary role. Since, in this case, ugliness refers to the models’ specific and different features, it appears in various forms.

This leads to another fundamental part in Rosenkranz’s theory, and specifically in his definition of deformation/distortion which is also the last signified. Ugliness is divided into numerous sub-categories with deformation/distortion being one of them. In turn, deformation/distortion itself is constituted of different sub-concepts such as the weak/fragile, the raw (with the obscene as one definition) and the vulgar. These sub-concepts do not only show the numerous different sections and definitions that ugliness entails, but also how the models’ “ugly” features relate to Rosenkranz’s view on ugliness and thus embody signifiers. The thin

man in advertisement 3 is an example for the weak/fragile. His thin look and especially the contrast to his attempt of ripping the phone book emphasise the man's weak appearance. In advertisement 1, the raw and especially the obscene stand out. Samppa's aggressive expression and his dice-licking tongue as sexual reference point to the unashamed that defines the obscene in Rosenkranz's theory. Dell in advertisement 2 is an example for the vulgar that Rosenkranz partly defines as the illogical, inconsistent and paradoxical. With his crooked front teeth and jutting ears as physical deformations, he, as model for a clothing line that usually hires models with perfect bodies, adds to the illogical, inconsistent and paradoxical appearance of the overall advertisement. In the end, the aspect of deformation/distortion highlights the assumption that ugliness is the initial point for the caricatural in both Rosenkranz's theory and the selected advertisements. Furthermore, it shows the many effects that result from different elements of ugliness. This, in turn, stresses the diversity of the term "ugliness" itself.

The analysis of Rosenkranz's characteristics of ugliness in connection to the advertisements has already emphasised the different strands and effects of ugliness as well as the "beauty in ugliness". The latter point is especially intriguing as it relativises the general association of ugliness equalising the negative. This also touches upon the agency's perspective of ugliness. As pointed out in 4.1, the term "ugly" marks individuality and unconventionality from their point of view. Additionally, Marc French's statement about ugly as the new beautiful highlights the different layers of meaning of the term "ugly". Its meaning thus varies according to the various ways with which it is treated and the purposes for which it is used. In relation to the agency's name, it has the function to attract attention. By connecting the two apparently paradoxical words "ugly" and "model", they stand out as model agency and mark difference. Ugliness is therefore used to offer an opposing branch to the conventional beauty industry. As a consequence, they do not ascribe an ugly value to the advertisements since the agency does not consider their models as "ugly". The agency's perspective thus shows another stance on the ugly in ugliness or the beauty in ugliness.

The aspect of beautiful ugliness in the "ugly models"-advertisements can also be traced back to Rosenkranz's examination of the caricature. Since ugliness is relative, it requires the relation to beauty as the absolute which it, in the end, negates. An ugly depiction thus only reminds of beauty without having actual beautiful elements in it. In contrast, the caricature does not simply negate the aesthetic rules but – as distorted picture – reflects upon the qualities and

shapes of beautiful elements.⁹⁹ This not only stresses the aspect of individuality within caricatures, but – according to Rosenkranz – also enables caricatures to appear in a beautiful way. In the end, the qualities and shapes of beautiful elements have an even stronger energetic effect in the caricatures.¹⁰⁰ Rosenkranz’s remark on beauty in caricatures – that have ugliness as their origin – shows another example for the effects that can be achieved with ugliness and, in the end, caricatures as tools. Since it was already elaborated that caricatural elements can be found in “ugly models”-advertisements, these effects are also applicable on the advertisements. This furthermore stresses Rosenkranz’s notion that caricatures do not necessarily have to have a ridiculous or comical effect which is a characteristic that is generally attributed to caricatures. Looking at the three selected advertisements, the models and their specific facial and bodily features are presented in a qualitative manner which ascribes a beautiful value to the pictures. Furthermore, as Rosenkranz highlights in his remark above, the models’ specific features – as the distorted beauty in advertising as far as the motif is concerned – appear energetic and dominate their respective advertisement.

4.2.4 Discussion – Ugliness as Abnormality in Advertising?

It becomes apparent through the elaboration of beauty in ugliness as well as in caricatures that “ugly models”-advertisements also entail beautiful elements. Although the three “ugly” models with their specific features initially mark ugliness, the execution of the advertisements still corresponds to the norm in advertising which highlights the qualitatively beautiful value. The ugliness-beauty relation furthermore stresses the ambivalent character of the advertisements and adds to the discussion of ugliness’ role in this context. From the advertiser’s point of view, ugliness is supposed to attract attention and to provoke the consumer’s stimuli which relate to ugliness as emotionalising advertising (see chapter 2.1). Attention and provocation is caused by ugliness as the unconventional and unexpected motif to promote a product. This function already points to ugliness as a collective term for everything that is abnormal in advertising. Its initial role is thus to mark difference. This role transforms into different directions within the respective advertisement. “Ugliness” as a single word or concept is connected to other concepts which result in pairings such as “ugly-disgusting”, “ugly-weird” or “ugly-

⁹⁹ Rosenkranz, 2007, pp. 66.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

physical imperfections”.¹⁰¹ Therefore, the term “ugly” leaves its meaning that is generally associated with the pure aesthetically unappealing. In fact, it becomes the interesting and the unusual within the context of advertising. This interest is, in the end, caused by ugliness as a tool to create abnormality within the realm of beauty.

From a classical aesthetics’ point of view, ugliness in advertising functions as the initial point to visualise the grotesque and the caricatural. Similar to its usual role in advertising, ugliness is used to create further concepts with differing effects. In this connection, the grotesque evolves from ugliness. As component and one sub-concept of ugliness in Rosenkranz’s theory, it not only has to be regarded as effect of ugliness but also as a visual style to achieve different effects such as ambivalence or the unexpected. Through the depicted motifs and their relation to each other, the grotesque effect is created. As a visual style, the grotesque functions partly as a tool to contribute to the creation of the caricature. The caricature is thus another result of ugliness. Through changed compositional relations of pictorial features in caricatures, the initial effects of ugliness are altered or replaced. This stresses the relation between ugliness, the grotesque and the caricature as a system and shows that the occurrence of one visual art form does not rule out the others. In the end, the classical perspective highlights the fluctuating role of ugliness as well. According to Rosenkranz’s theory, the term itself not only entails different sub-concepts and thus directions, but it also leads to different results and effects.

The classical and the advertising perspective on ugliness’ role in advertising show that only to some extent does it fulfil its original role as being aesthetically unappealing. “Ugly models” are hired to promote a product and embody the aspect of abnormality in comparison to the beauty-dominated advertising industry. Through the way of depicting the models – the aesthetic technique –, their presentation and their specific features gain a different appearance with different effects. As highlighted earlier through the grotesque and the caricatural, these effects range from the comical/humorous to the gloomy to the obscene and do not appear isolated but become intertwined. In this context, ugliness is thus not only loaded with the pejorative adjectives awkward, imperfect or abnormal, but also with positive characteristics such as comical, amusing or pleasing. Although ugliness becomes visible through the models’ features, it is rather sold as controversy through its abnormality in comparison to conventional

¹⁰¹ The pairing “ugly-disgusting“, for instance, appears in Barbara Sutrich’s (2003) doctoral dissertation. As stated in chapter 1.4, she partly refers to ugliness in advertising as the disgust (blood, vomit or pus).

advertisements which is the reason why it functions in this context. As long as it embodies abnormality, ugliness will be a successful tool to attract attention and interest in the consumer.

Through this discussion about ugliness as abnormality, the aspects of the caricature and the grotesque as means to depict ugliness have rudimentarily been addressed. They turn ugliness' original effect of the aesthetically unappealing or the imperfection into the humorous and the interesting since these advertisements show the unexpected. However, this occurrence of caricatural and grotesque elements does not apply for every advertisement equally. As the image analysis has shown, the advertisements differ not only as far as the intensity of caricatural and grotesque elements is concerned but also in terms of their effects. This stresses yet again the ambivalent character of them and especially highlights the caricatures' nature that not always results in the ridicule – as is generally attributed to them. Overall, the image analysis has shown that caricatural and grotesque elements occur in “ugly models”-advertisements. However, it has to be stressed that only elements of these two visual forms appear. The advertisements do not equal actual caricatures or grotesque images which explains their gradual occurrence in the advertisements. Nevertheless, through their occurrence, they frame the advertisements from an aesthetical point of view which is similar to the Surrealism movement as aesthetic technique in advertising (chapter 3.4). Both concepts therefore influence the aesthetic stakes of contemporary advertising and function as tools to present the “ugly” and make it attractive.

Despite of caricatural and grotesque elements making ugliness attractive, the feelings and the emotions that arise when looking at the advertisements become crucial. As highlighted in the image analysis, the single advertisements lead to partly paradoxical effects – as results of Rosenkranz's characteristics – that cause mixed feelings towards the images. Thus, not only the motifs in the advertisements attract attention but also the feelings and emotions they create. These feelings emotionalise the advertisements, which makes them interesting and attractive. In this connection, it becomes furthermore apparent that the term “attractive” does not equal “beautiful”. It rather has a more engaging notion to it. In the end, ugliness becomes a tool to evoke these engaging emotions and affect the consumers' feelings. Through its difference to usual beauty depictions in advertising, ugliness has a more memorable character. Consumers keep the respective advertisement in mind which enhances the popularity of the product. This refers back to the advertising model AIDA: attention, interest, desire, action (see chapter 2.1). In order to achieve the effect of attention and interest, and thus to engage the recipient or consumer, the motifs of advertisements constantly have to change. The difference

and/or abnormality of ugliness and specifically “ugly models” draws the consumers’ attention to the advertisement whereas the created feelings, e.g. sympathy, evoke interest and desire to purchase the product. Therefore, not only what is shown to attract attention is important but also how it is presented to appeal to consumers: On the one hand, ugliness as abnormality embodies the access to attraction. On the other hand, only an illusion of ugliness as the aesthetically unappealing is created since the overall quality of the pictures adheres to aesthetic standards of the advertising industry. Together with the mixed emotions and feelings that arose by looking at “ugly models”-advertisements, this shows that ugliness and specifically “ugly models” influence “what” is shown as a tool to attract attention. They do not, however, change the aesthetic stakes of “how” the advertisements are designed. In this context, the concepts of the grotesque and the caricature are translated into the field of advertising to function as tools for transforming ugliness into the interesting and humorous which makes it attractive.

Another aspect that evolves from the occurrence of caricatural and grotesque elements in advertisements is the currency of Rosenkranz’s theory. The interdisciplinary and intermedial analysis of his aesthetics of ugliness within advertisements has highlighted the persistent value of his conception of ugliness and its relation to the grotesque and the caricature. Through this application not only his characterisation of the three concepts was elaborated, but aesthetic parallels to the field of advertising were also highlighted. In this connection, the thesis has shown that his theory is applicable to a contemporary phenomenon. However, as becomes apparent from the overall analysis, not all of Rosenkranz’s theoretical perspectives are relevant and suitable for this case. Although the numerous sub-concepts with their detailed definitions and relations to each other highlight the complexity of the theory, they have to be relativised to some extent in the context of advertising. The level of intensity as far as the occurrence of these characterisations is concerned, for instance, varies in each advertisement and does not conform with Rosenkranz’s theoretical complexity to a full degree. In this context, the overlapping of different concepts is one example of this complexity: As stated in chapter 3.1.4, the grotesque for instance is closely connected to the concepts of the bizarre, the baroque and the burlesque. They share similar characteristics and would therefore also be applicable to the case at hand. To avoid an overload of concepts, the grotesque as the climax of their characteristics was selected for this thesis. Therefore, it has to be stressed that a simplification of Rosenkranz’s ideas was unavoidable to apply them to “ugly models”-advertisements. Nevertheless, his theory presents valid aspects that contributed to explain how “ugly models” are presented to make “ugliness” attractive in advertisements.

5 Conclusion

The advertising industry continually changes its concepts and designs to attract the consumers' appeal in a media culture that is saturated with similar images. One of these changes is the work with character models and, in this case, specifically "ugly models". Although advertisements usually want to appeal with the depiction of beautiful and perfect models, "ugly models" popularity increased in a market that is dominated by beauty. The agency "Ugly Models" that hires these models frequently stresses their extreme and bizarre looks that point to the concepts of the grotesque and the caricature. Considering furthermore the theoretical input of Karl Rosenkranz who viewed ugliness – with the grotesque as component – as transition between beauty and caricatures, the following research question has been formulated: How are "ugly models" presented in advertisements in order to make the "ugly" attractive? This question not only has addressed Rosenkranz's characteristics of the concepts "ugliness", "grotesque" and "caricature" but also their occurrence in the selected three advertisements as tools to visualise ugliness.

To show what type of advertising "ugly models"-advertisements embody, the thesis has firstly categorised them according to the aspects of general function, forms and models in the advertising industry. This elaboration has established them as emotional advertising that is supposed to affect the consumers' feelings and stimuli. Furthermore, the advertising model "AIDA" has highlighted that ugliness in advertising is a tool to attract the consumers' attention. "Ugly models" thus stand for change and otherness as far as aesthetic norms are concerned.

In the next section, these theoretical advertising-based notions have been complemented with the main theoretical inquiry of Rosenkranz's *Aesthetics of Ugliness*. The conceptual analysis of his theory has not only highlighted Rosenkranz's classification of ugliness into *Naturhäßliche*, *Geisthäßliche* and *Kunsthäßliche* but also main characteristics of the concepts "ugliness", "grotesque" and "caricature". It has become apparent that the grotesque and the caricature are two defining concepts of ugliness in Rosenkranz's aesthetic system. Ugliness is mainly characterised by shapelessness, incorrectness, and deformation/distortion. In turn, the caricatural as endpoint of ugliness primarily shows characteristics of exaggeration, distortion and disproportion which result in different effects. The grotesque as one tool to create the caricature is not only defined by horrible, awkward and unmannerly depictions, but is also constituted by the characteristics of ambivalence, arbitrariness as well as unpredicted forms and unexpected thematic jumps. Additionally, general ideas about the concept of "beauty" have stressed

Rosenkranz's perspective on aesthetics. Through this elaboration, Rosenkranz's aesthetic system as well as aesthetic parallels with advertisements have become apparent. In the end, these parallels have shown that advertising and art share – to a certain extent – similar aesthetics. This provides access to apply a theory based on the Fine Arts to the field of advertising.

The characteristics of the concepts and their classification have functioned as tools to analyse the case at hand. By connecting Rosenkranz's classification of ugliness to the context of advertising, terms like "beauty" have been clarified. This has established a reference to ugliness in the context of advertising. Additionally, this part has highlighted the agency's definition of "ugliness" which has contributed to the discussion of the role of ugliness at a later point. The subsequent general analysis not only has pointed out important pictorial features, but also has reflected upon the advertisements' role. Through the following semiotic image analysis – in which the concepts have embodied the sign and their characteristics were signifieds that looked for signifiers in the advertisements –, these pictorial elements have been viewed from the point of view of classical aesthetics. The conceptual approach has shown that the three advertisements entail characteristic elements of caricatures and the grotesque which point to the occurrence of ugliness according to Rosenkranz's theory. Each of these concepts appears in different ways and has its own level of intensity that influences the overall effect of the respective advertisement. Through Rosenkranz's theory, the thematic progression of these concepts within the advertisements has furthermore been explained. With the models' ugly features as starting point or foundation, an abnormality to beauty as norm in advertising is created. However, through the grotesque and the caricatural elements, these ugly features are – generally said – turned into the interesting and humorous. Ugliness as the aesthetically unappealing therefore becomes appealing again. This appealing character is also enhanced by the qualitatively beautiful images. In the end, an illusion of ugliness as the aesthetically unappealing is created.

The analysis thus not only has highlighted that the grotesque and the caricatural function as tools to visualise ugliness and make it attractive, but has also shown that Rosenkranz's notion on the aesthetics of ugliness can be transferred into and applied to a contemporary phenomenon such as advertising. His ideas about ugliness – that evolved in the mid-19th century – as transition from beauty to the caricature still show relevance and value to this day. The application of his theory on advertising furthermore stresses the intermedial and the interdisciplinary character of it. Although Rosenkranz's theory shows a greater level of complexity than

could be presented in this thesis, the structure of his definitions for the concepts confirmed the initial impression of “ugly models”-advertisements as exaggerated and bizarre.

In the end, this thesis has elaborated the occurrence of the concepts from an aesthetical perspective to show how ugliness is made attractive for the consumers. Due to the limited writing space, the actual role of the consumers who decide about an advertisement’s success could not be considered. Taking the aesthetical perspective of this thesis as point of departure, it would be interesting to elaborate the consumer culture’s role in the context of “ugly models”-advertisements with their grotesque as well as caricatural depictions. Although this thesis has partly touched upon the consumer in relation to the models and the forms of advertising, the detailed reception of “ugly models”-advertisements by consumers remains to be answered. In this context, their role and influence on depictions of “ugly models”-advertisements becomes important as well. This, in turn, leads to the question of how depictions of ugliness in advertising have changed over the years to stay appealing. It would therefore be interesting to analyse the development of these depictions diachronically instead of synchronically as this thesis does. In this relation, the impacts of consumers for the possible development as well as of caricatural and grotesque elements on ugliness in advertising are interesting aspects that have to be considered.

X Appendices

1)



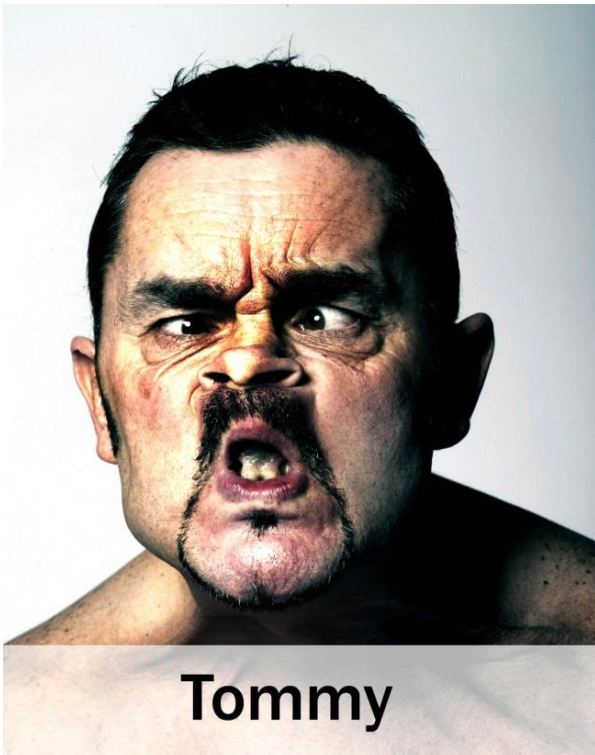
Unknown Photographer, “Sultan Kosen - World's tallest man - 8ft 1in (246.5cm)”, from Ugly’s “Guinness World Records”-section.

2)



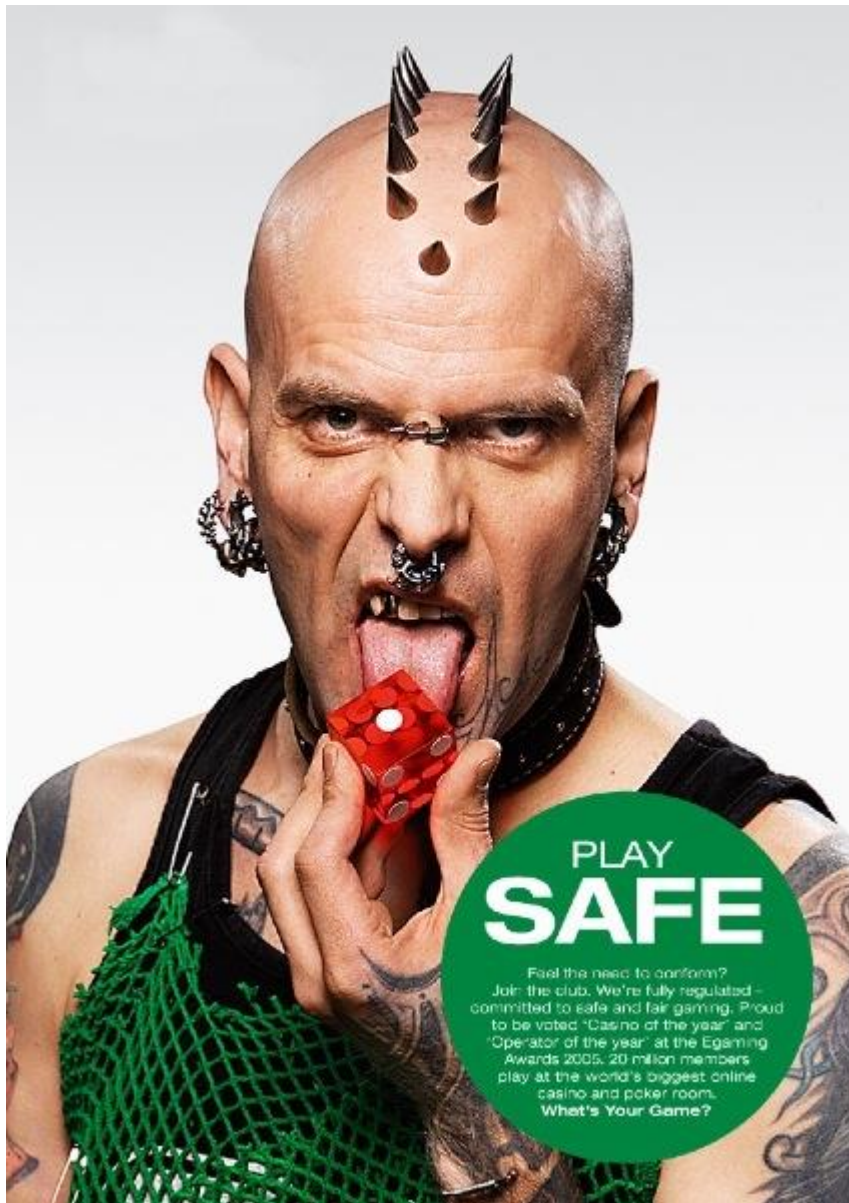
Unknown Photographer, “ugly model“
Tommy Mattinson with “natural” face.

3)



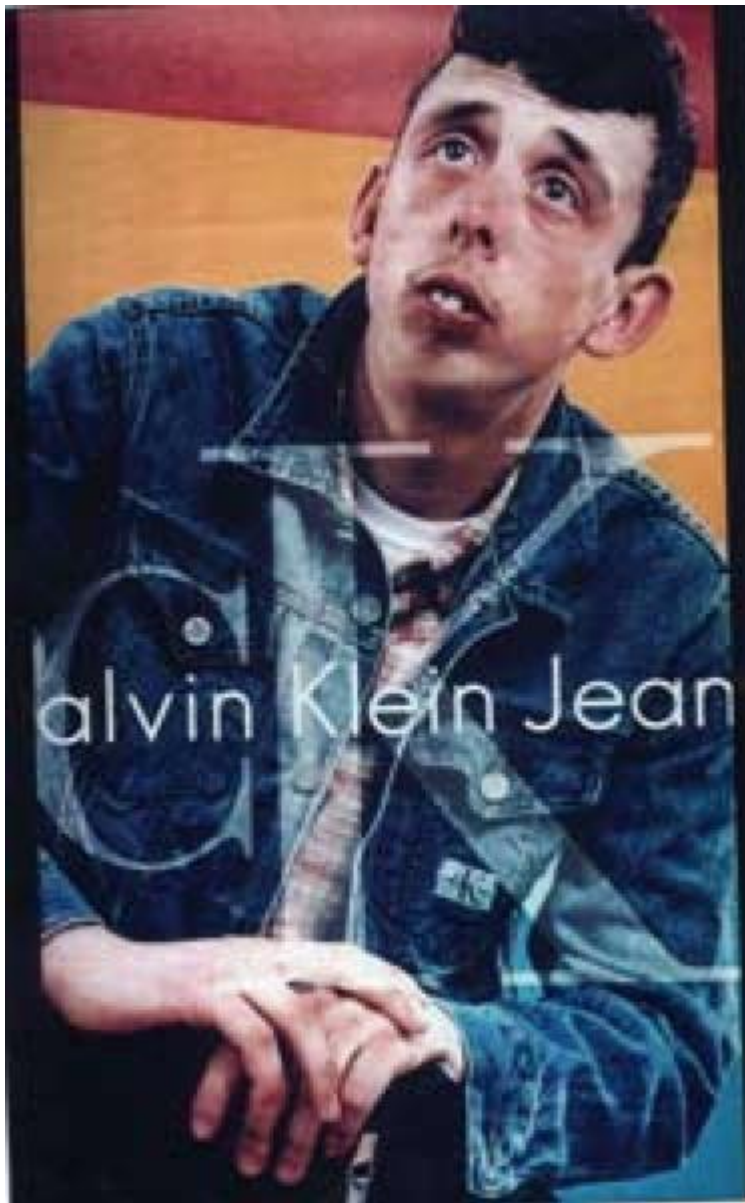
Unkown Photographer, “ugly model” Tommy
Mattinson with “Showface”

4) Advertisement 1:



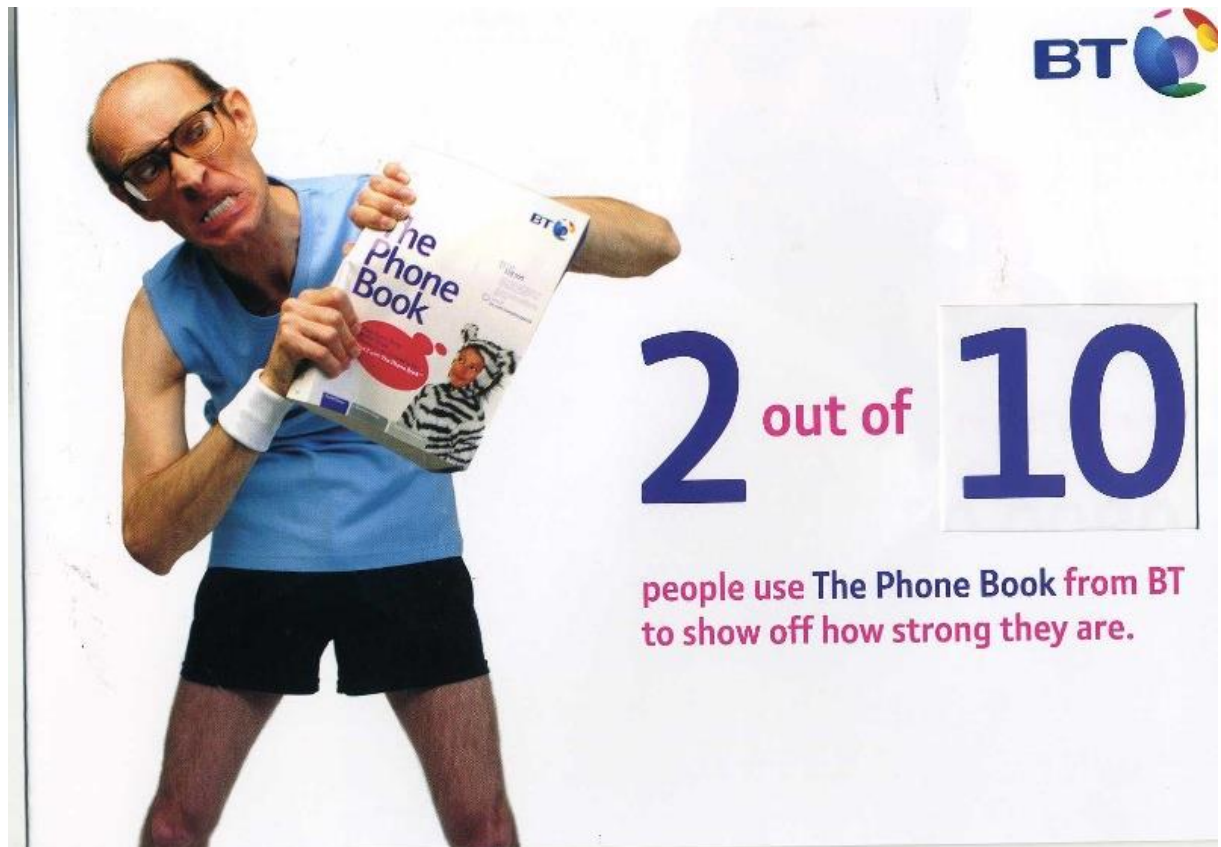
Unknown Photographer, Casino advertisement with “ugly model” Samppa.

5) Advertisement 2



Unknown Photographer, "Calvin Klein" Advertisement depicting one of the most famous "ugly models" Dell Keens.

6) Advertisement 3:



Unknown Photographer, Advertisement with male “Ugly Model”, “The Phone Book from BT”.

7)



www.clipartof.com · 1047372

Ron Leishman, Caricature "Cartoon Man Pierced with a Nail".

8)



Brendan O'Rourke, Caricature of Shane McGowan, 2010.

9)



dedMazay, Caricature “The Man Tries to Lift a Weight”

10)



Gabby Nathan, “You Are Not Your Job”, Acrylic on Canvas, 130 x 175 cm, Courtesy of the Artist and Serge Tiroche and ST-ART Collection, Jaffa, Haifa Museum of Art, 2008.

11)



Gil Yefman, "Just Dad", Acrylic, Pastel and Pencil Crayons on Paper, 21 x 16 cm, Courtesy of the Artist, Haifa Museum of Art, 2002.

12)



Yuri Kats, Untitled, Oil on Canvas, 50 x 30 cm, Courtesy of the Artist and Tavi Dresdner Gallery, Tel Aviv, photo: Ofer Nov, Haifa Museum of Art, 2008.

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