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Oh, I feel like a woman!

– A qualitative semiotic gender study through texts and images in the
Swedish fashion remote commerce

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Abstract

Oh! I feel like a woman! – A qualitative semiotic gender study through texts and images in the Swedish fashion remote commerce is a bachelor thesis on how clothes are portrayed in illustrations and photographs of models and in texts in mail-order catalogues and websites in the Swedish fashion remote commerce. The thesis aims to compare how genders and fashion are connected and manifested in the fashion remote commerce by portraying different gender stereotypes. The research is conducted through a case study by a semiotic discourse analysis on three different periods in time, using one remote commerce company from each year; Allmänco's mail-order catalogue from 1939, ELLOS's mail-order catalogue from 1984 and the NELLY's and NLYMAN's websites from 2017.

The main conclusion of the thesis is that the studied remote commerce fashion companies use texts and images, which co-exist in an intermediality to communicate different gender roles. These roles can be applied through Erving Goffman's theory of Performativity.

Keywords: fashion, advertisement, gender, stereotypes, remote commerce, mail-order catalogues

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1. Introduction

The way of consuming clothes in Sweden has changed since the beginning of the 1900s, the remote commerce now involves new distribution channels, for example online shopping. Today we no longer use the mail order catalogues to purchase clothes; we are rather more dependent on Internet to do our online shopping.¹ Fashion companies have changed how they market themselves towards their target groups. For example, in Allmänco's spring-summer catalogue of 1944, they use the term "Fruklänning" to describe and market dresses to mature women.² The catalogue has chosen to label the dress "wife dress" which leads to questions about why the focus lies on the woman being a wife and not a woman in general - but also how the man is portrayed in contrast to the woman during this time period, and if he is marketed as a family father.

The choice of topic in this essay is based on our shared interest in the remote commerce. We have joined together in the question on how fashion is marketed by studying how men and women are portrayed in various mail order catalogues, and how it has evolved from 1939 to 2017. Specifically, we are interested in how gender is represented in images and texts and how the remote commerce has changed as the Swedish cultural and social society has evolved. This is a topic that is very relevant because of today's debates of gender equality; it is therefore interesting to study how gender is portrayed in fashion advertisement. .

1.1 Background

Remote commerce is a form of distance trade where you buy your product via, e.g., a catalogue, a brochure or an advertisement, which is distributed and delivered through mail before the customer has laid an eye on the product.³ The product is then delivered at the door or at a postal service for the customer to collect. Due to the technological developments, remote commerce does not only include order sheets, but now also includes trade via telephone, television and the Internet.⁴

The remote commerce has existed in Sweden since 1879, when John Fröberg in Finspång started a mail-order company with a varied range of goods, an idea he had picked up from

¹ Valdemar Lönnroth (2016). *Ökad internationell press på e-handeln och modebranschen*. P. 17.

² See appendix 4.1.

³ Hans Eiser, Cecilia Henriksson & EO Holm (1985). *Postorderhandeln – en växande distributionsform?* Stockholm. P. 4.

⁴ *Nationalencyklopedin*, postorderhandel.

Germany. It was, however, not until the 1920-1930s that the mail order catalogues also included ready-made clothes. This was initially a way to simplify for the inhabitants living far away in rural areas, instead of them having to take a long trip to the nearest town.⁵ Initially the mail-order industry worked in two different ways and their aim was either persons with trade rights, later wholesalers, or peddlers whom served as middle hand between the private consumer and the mail-order company. The peddlers went from door to door with the catalogue, and depending on how much they sold they received a commission.

In the 1950's materialised a new generation of mail-order companies targeting the private consumers directly without any middle hands.⁶ In 1953 the remote commerce had its real breakthrough, before that it only accounted for 1% of the overall retail sales.⁷ The new generation of mail-order companies grew bigger and many of the old mail-order companies started to change and follow the new companies to also include private consumers in their target group. The wholesalers did not welcome this, since it directly affected their own sales, and before the 1970's many had to shut down.⁸

Between 1950 and 1962 the remote commerce doubled its' sales in the Swedish retail market to a little more than 2%.⁹ Many remote commerce companies started in Borås and nearby, for example Ellos, Josefsson, Rowells, Haléns and Cellbes, counting as the "big five" in the new generation of mail-order companies.¹⁰ In the mid 1960's the department stores expanded, resulting in decreased sales in the remote commerce and many smaller mail-order companies with a similar assortment of goods had to be shut down.¹¹

In the 1990s the World Wide Web was created and remote commerce shifted to the Internet.¹² In 2006 Sven H.G. Lagerström wrote in *Paket för miljoner: om postorder i Sverige* that 50 % of the remote commerce was conducted through internet.¹³ With the smartphones and Internet accessibility today, the remote commerce has shifted to include mobile devices such as smartphones and laptops, which are available everywhere.¹⁴

⁵ Ingmar Tufvesson, *Varuhandeln: idag, igår, imorgon*. 6., [rev.] ed. Malmö: Liber-Hermod. P. 77-79.

⁶ Sven H. G. Lagerström (2006). *Paket för miljoner: om postorder i Sverige*. Borås: Jonito. P. 171-173.

⁷ John Ekström (1958). *Den textila konsumtionen*. Published. Stockholm. P. 204-209.

⁸ Lagerström (2006), p. 171-173.

⁹ Eiser, Henriksson & Holm (1985), p. 4-9.

¹⁰ Lagerström (2006), p. 171-173.

¹¹ Eiser, Henriksson & Holm (1985), p. 4-9.

¹² Vladimir Zwass, E-commerce. (2016). In *Encyclopedia Britannica*.

¹³ Lagerström (2006), p. 14.

¹⁴ Zwass, E-commerce. (2016). In *Encyclopædia Britannica*.

1.2 Purpose and research question

The purpose of this essay is to conduct a qualitative semiotic comparative study from a gender perspective, in how different genders are portrayed in texts and images in the Swedish remote commerce. The study will focus on three different years between 1939 and 2017.

Each period has a material that will represent the men's clothing and one material that will represent the women's. The different periods also have different materials depending on how the remote commerce is represented in the chosen time.

The research questions for this study are:

- *How is the garment communicated to the customer?*
- *How are the gender roles presented as different stereotypes in the Swedish fashion remote commerce?*
- *How can the mail-order spread be read as a type of performance in form of text and images?*

1.3 Limitations and material

This study is conducted in fashion advertising, but due to the amount of material the study is collected based on different criteria. The study is limited to advertisement in the form of mail-order catalogues from companies that sell fashion through remote commerce. The chosen companies are Swedish and have the market's biggest consumer group at the chosen time period, including women and men with an average income. They have a large turnover in Sweden at the chosen time and have been selected in order to account for the different shapes the remote commerce has evolved in.. The study is once more limited due to the massive material and because there are several clothing categories for both men and women. We have therefore chosen two garments from the leisure clothes category; dresses for women and jackets for men. Neither of these garments has changed its significance between 1939 and 2017 and therefore suits well for this study.

1.3.1 Allmänco's mail-order catalogue

During the 1950's it became common for young people to get their own allowance, making it possible for them to consume a fashion made directly for them. Before this, fashion was divided in two consumer groups, children and adults.¹⁵ The first material used consists of two pages from the mail-order catalogue, Allmänco AB. This company focuses on fashion for

¹⁵ Karina Ericsson Wärn (2012). *Modebibeln: den svenska: 1867-nu*. Stockholm: Bonnier fakta.

women and men and started in Borås on 1 November 1920.¹⁶ By 1931 Allmänco was the biggest mail-order wholesaler in the country and was thriving throughout the 1930's until the second World War started in 1939.¹⁷ Before the war and the rationing had begun, they had a turnover of 10 million SEK and saw themselves as Sweden's biggest remote commerce.¹⁸

1.3.2 ELLOS's mail-order catalogue

ELLOS was registered as a corporation in 1944, but did not release its' first mail-order catalogue until 1953.¹⁹ In the 1980's the biggest consumer group in Sweden was women at an age of 30 years with a low to average income.²⁰ The second material is therefore a mail-order catalogue from the Swedish mail-order company ELLOS AB, targeting women at an age of 30-60 years. They also sell clothes to men in the same age group and therefore target themselves at the largest consumer group in the mid 1980.²¹ In 1981 the company had a turnover of 495 million SEK. This figure can be compared to another large mail-order company at the time, Josefssons AB, which had a predicted turnover of 265 million SEK.²² ELLOS had a boost in the beginning of the 1980's when the remote commerce increased its' total sales volume with 7 %, partly because of the cheaper prices and the convenience of not having to travel to the actual boutiques.²³ The following year in 1981, ELLOS had 30 % of the shares in Sweden's total remote commerce and increased its own sales with 37 % in the first quarter of 1982. It was predicted to increase with 2 % in the total remote commerce in 1982, which therefore made it the biggest Swedish mail-order company in ready-to-wear clothes for men and women in the 1980's.²⁴

1.3.3 NELLY/NLYMAN's websites

The last material is a page chosen from two websites; NELLY and NLYMAN from the company Qliro Group AB. The companies write that they want to be the number one fashion remote commerce in the Nordic countries. They target themselves to trendy, outgoing and youthful men and women between 18-35 years of age.²⁵ The total fashion remote commerce revenue in 2015 was 8.4 billion SEK.²⁶ In 2015, Nelly's remote commerce revenue was about

¹⁶ Sven H. G. Lagerström (2006). *Paket för miljoner: om postorder i Sverige*. Borås: Jonito.

¹⁷ Lagerström (2006), p. 83.

¹⁸ Allmänco AB (1940). *Allmänco katalog, Hösten och vintern 1940-1941*.

¹⁹ Allas bolag (2017) *Ellos AB* & Gustaf Nilsson (2014). *Postorderkungen gör bokslut*. Göteborgs tidningen.

²⁰ Eisler, Henriksson & Holm (1985), p. 15.

²¹ Nelly.com (2017). *OM NELLY.COM, NLYMAN.COM & QLIRO GROUP*.

²² Lotta Edling (1981). *Postorderföretaget som ökade 27 procent ännu effektivare med*. Dagens Industri. .

²³ Lotta Edling (1981). *Trots minskad konsumtion postorder - succé som växer fram*. Dagens Industri.

²⁴ Lotta Edling (1982). *Säljrush i postorder kräver nattskift*. Dagens Industri.

²⁵ Nelly.com (2017). *OM NELLY.COM, NLYMAN.COM & QLIRO GROUP*

²⁶ HUI Research (2015). *E-Barometern Helårsrapport 2015*, p. 9.

1.2 billion SEK, which makes it one of the largest Swedish remote commerce companies today.²⁷

ELLOS, for example, used to be a traditional remote commerce company with a mail-order catalogue, but since 2014 they only sell clothes through their website.²⁸ Unlike ELLOS, Nelly started as a remote commerce, while ELLOS has been forced to reorganize their business to fit the modern consumer market.²⁹ The largest consumer group in fashion remote commerce in 2016 was men and women at 25-34 years of age, which makes Nelly and NLYMAN more on target than ELLOS, as they target an older consumer group.³⁰

1.4 Previous Research

There has not been any direct comparative studies done on different gender roles in fashion remote commerce advertisements, but there have been studies on remote commerce. Sara Hjelm Lidholm has carried out a study on how Internet has changed and affected companies in the shifting of trade from mail-order trade to trade via internet. Her study differs from our study, since she focuses on mail-order companies in a ten-year period and not on mail-order catalogues per se.³¹ When we instead searched in the database Lubsearch (2017) using the keywords; fashion, advertisement, gender and stereotypes we received 19 results as academic journals.³² Using the same keywords we searched the Jstor database and found 895.958 results, some more relevant to our study.³³

One of the few studies that have been conducted in the field of fashion advertisements was done by Katharina Lindner, a study being discussed in "Images of Women in General Interest and Fashion Magazine Advertisements from 1955 to 2002". She studies how women are portrayed in advertisements by comparing one general and one fashion magazine from 1955-2002. Even though she has a historical perspective, she limits herself to printed advertisements for women. Lindner finds a difference between the magazine types where

²⁷ Allas bolag (2015). *Nelly Scandinavia AB*.

²⁸ Kollega (2016) *Ellos digitala resa*. p. 24-25.

²⁹ Valdemar Lönnroth (2016), p. 17.

³⁰ DIBS (2016) *Svensk E-handel 2016*, p. 40.

³¹ Sara Hjelm Lidholm (2011). *Omskapande processer: när Internet kom till postorderföretaget*. Diss. Göteborg: Göteborgs universitet.

³² Lubsearch, *Search results* (2017).

³³ Jstor (2017) *Search Results*.

Vogue portrayed women more stereotypical in their advertisements. When it came to sexualising the woman, it was more frequent in 1955-1975.³⁴

Other researchers do not limit themselves to fashion. Erving Goffman looks at gender in advertisements in general, as published in his book *Gender Advertisements*. He is interested in the social behaviour and focuses on how men and women are portrayed and how we as a spectator look at, and understands, advertisements differently, depending on if the picture is portraying a man or a woman. According to him, if we see an image representing a man in a suit with a briefcase we take him seriously, while if an image represents a woman in a costume we feel that she is playing a role and we do not take her seriously. Goffman's conclusion is that how genders are portrayed in advertisements is based on gender stereotypes by society. He does not have a historical perspective nor does he specifically study gender roles in particular, instead he focuses on how women and men have different roles depending on how we as spectators perceive the material.³⁵

Another study is conducted by Judith A. Wiles, Charles R. Wiles and Anders Tjernlund, "A comparison of gender role portrayals in magazine Advertising, the Netherlands, Sweden and the USA". They centre on different roles in magazine advertisement in three different countries, which all have a history of rapid advancement for women in areas like politics, work, etc. Although the rapid advancement for women, it was still more common for all countries to show a man in a working role than a woman.³⁶ A similar research is Chia-When Chi's and Cecelia Baldwin's study about gender stereotypes in magazine advertisements, "Gender and Class Stereotypes; A Comparison of U.S. and Taiwanese Magazine Advertisements". They want to see how the advertisements have changed in time as the culture has changed over time, by doing a comparative study in magazine advertisements. They focus on how the culture affects different stereotypes in magazines. It shows that even though there is a cultural difference, men in both countries, were portrayed as superior to

³⁴ Katharina Lindner.(2004) "Images of Women in General Interest and Fashion Magazine Advertisements from 1955 to 2002" *Sex Roles* 51: 409

³⁵Erving Goffman (1976) *Gender advertisements*, London: Macmillan.

³⁶ Judith A. Wiles, Charles R. Wiles, Anders Tjernlund, (1995) "A comparison of gender role portrayals in magazine advertising: The Netherlands, Sweden and the USA", *European Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 29 Issue: 11, pp.35-49.

women. It also shows women more sexualised in advertisements, and that gender stereotyping still occurs in both cultures.³⁷

In Emmanuella Plakoyiannaki's and Yorgos Zotos's article "Female role stereotypes in print advertising: Identifying associations with magazine and product categories" from 2009, is a study in gender roles presented. They focus on female stereotypical roles in printed advertisements and compare how frequently some roles are shown and how they differ in magazines across the UK. They research if there is a connection between stereotypes and product categories and finds that women in decorative roles are more often associated with hedonic products. Women portrayed in traditional, non-traditional and decorative roles were instead associated to utilitarian products.³⁸ In Paul Jobling's book, *Advertising Menswear; Masculinity and Fashion in the British media since 1945*, he describes how the man has been represented in media dealing with sex, gender, class, race and age, a study conducted in the field of Visual Culture. He concludes that the man is in fact portrayed as sex symbol in advertisements, which becomes clearer, and more daring after the 1960's. This study is similar to ours, but is limited to studying men and just like the other studies it is not conducted in the field of Fashion Studies. Limited research has been made in this field, Philip Warkander and Emma Lindblad are two researchers that have obtained a PhD in Fashion Studies in Sweden, but none of them focus on gender roles in fashion advertisements.³⁹

1.5 Methodology and Theory

The study will be conducted in the field of Fashion Studies because of our background in this field and the choice of empirical material, fashion remote commerce advertisements, that will be researched through an interdisciplinary perspective. This means that the research will involve knowledge, methods, expertise and terminology from different disciplines. This particular study will include methods in semiotics from the semiotician and sociologist Roland Barthes' terminology of denotative and connotative meanings, and a method in

³⁷ Cecilia Baldwin & Chia-When Chi (2004). "Gender and Class Stereotypes: A Comparison of U.S. and Taiwanese Magazine Advertisements" *Race, Gender & Class*, Vol. 11, No. 2, Published by: Jean Ait Belkhir, Race, Gender & Class Journal.

³⁸ Emmanuella Plakoyiannaki & Yorgos Zotos, (2009) "Female role stereotypes in print advertising: Identifying associations with magazine and product categories", *European Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 43 Issue: 11/12, pp.1411-1434.

³⁹ Emma Lindblad (2017). *Looking vanlig, neither too much nor too little: a study of consumption of clothing among mainstream youth in a Swedish small town*. Diss. Stockholm: Stockholms universitet, 2017. Philip Warkander, (2013). *"This is all fake, this is all plastic, this is me": a study of the interrelations between style, sexuality and gender in contemporary Stockholm*. Diss. Stockholm: Stockholms universitet, 2013.

discourse analysis, based on Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe's discourse theory. The study will also be applied with theories; the representation of the garment by sociologist Roland Barthes, the feminist film theorist Laura Mulvey's theory of the Male Gaze, the concept of voyeurism by psychoanalytic Sigmund Freud, art historian Norman Bryson's theory of "the glance", "the come-on-look" by film theorist Annette Kuhn, a theory in fashion by fashion theorist Barbara Vinken. It also includes gender as a performative act by gender theorist Judith Butler, theories of performativity by the sociologist Erving Goffman and Hans Lund's theory of intermediality.

1.5.1 Methodology

We have chosen to do a qualitative comparative case study with a semiotic and discourse analyse. All materials are chosen with the help of Laclau and Mouffe's discourse theory, which is an understanding of the social as a discursive construction. They mean that a discourse is words, concepts, themes and images that together creates one discourse that binds every word together, and gather them under the same form of umbrella or discourse. In our thesis the discourse is, for example, the Swedish fashion remote commerce with a focus on texts and images. In every discourse all the different words have an already decided meaning, which is built on their relationship to each other. Some words are nodal points, which is what creates the discourse and therefore are what the other words are structuralized according to. For example, the mail-order catalogue is a nodal point. It is important to have in mind that the meaning of the discourse is not determined for all eternity, it can always be changed in time and the selected discourse can therefore differ from 1939 to 2017.⁴⁰

When we have identified the discourse, we will do a qualitative case study. The difference between a qualitative and quantitative case study is that with a qualitative study you get a deeper knowledge. The empirical material used for a qualitative case study can be in the form of videos, text and pictures, such as catalogues and websites, as it is in this study.⁴¹ A qualitative case study means that we have taken a little part of our empirical material and decided that this is going to represent our study, instead of analysing every single page. In this study we have selected two pages each from our two chosen catalogues and one page per website. Hence the study has let the empirical material from each period represent the chosen

⁴⁰ Marianne Winther Jørgensen & Louise Phillips (2000). *Diskursanalys som teori och metod*. Lund: Studentlitteratur. P. 31-37.

⁴¹ Runa Patel & Bo Davidson (2011). *Forskningsmetodikens grunder att planera, genomföra och rapportera en undersökning*. Johanneshov: TPB. P. 99-100.

period and become its reality. The chosen pages cannot speak for the entire catalogues or websites; they can only make indications of something, which cannot represent the whole reality. This will be clarified in the conclusions of this study.⁴² The case study will then be conducted through a comparative method, which means that we have taken similar variables from each material, applied this with the chosen theory and then compared the variables with each other.⁴³

This case study will be using a semiotic method, which is a theory about how human beings communicate through signs. It is also a tool to the understanding of how pictures interact with each other. This method includes the possibility to see and understand signs as well as understanding the message in pictures in catalogues, videos and other visual expressions. In a semiotic theory the material becomes the message to the person reading, viewing or looking at it, and the material becomes the medium that you communicate through, in our case the catalogues and videos. Using this method is a way to interpret the picture elements as a sign that stands for something. Firstly, you want to identify the most significant parts of the pictures before analysing all parts separately as well as together. The last thing you do is to interpret the meaning in relation to the context of the picture. When using this method you want to find out what the material says and represents. Barthes terms "connotation" and "denotation" is a division of how to analyse the material and will be used in this study. Denotation means that you describe the picture or video just as you see it while connotation is when you analyse the values, associations and thoughts of the video or picture.⁴⁴

1.5.2 Theory

The representation of the garment

In his book *The Fashion System*, Roland Barthes writes about his theory "The representation of the garment" and how garments are represented in two different ways; "image-clothing" and "written clothing". Image-clothing means that the picture is represented to you as a photo or an image. A written garment is when a garment is described and presented using words. Although it is the same garment being represented the presentations do not share the same structure since they are not made of the same substances. Barthes explains structures with how different parts of something relates to each other.

⁴² Rolf Ejvegård (2009). *Vetenskaplig metod*. 4. uppl. Lund: Studentlitteratur. P. 35-36.

⁴³ Ibid, p. 44.

⁴⁴ Yvonne Eriksson & Anette Göthlund (2013). *Möten med bilder att tolka visuella uttryck*. Johanneshov: MTM. P, 41-44.

Because of the difference in substance, they do not have the same relations with each other. For the "image-clothing" the substance is conducted by forms, lines and colours but for the "written clothing" the substance consists of words. The "real clothing" is what the "image-clothing" and "written clothing" shall represent together. The real clothing has a technological structure, which Barthes means is how the garment is constructed, while the image-clothing has a plastic structure and the written clothing has a verbal structure.

With the three structures come three kinds of shifters; one from the technological to the iconic, one from the technological to verbal and from the iconic to the verbal garment. The shifters helps transform textile into an image. To be able to transform from the technical structure to the image structure you need a pattern that instructs you how to do this. If you want to go from a technical to a verbal structure you need a very descriptive language with instructions and measures needed to prepare the garment. For the last transformation, from iconic to verbal you need a colourful language that includes different adjectives describing the image of the garment. Here you must be able to explain with words what the garment looks like and which impressions and feelings the garment gives you. The verbal part shall be able to speak for itself and represent the garment without a picture.⁴⁵

Intermediality

Hans Lund writes about intermediality in his chapter "Medier i samspel" in his book, *Intermedialitet: ord, bild och ton i samspel*. Intermediality means that meaning is produced when more than one medium interact; for example word, images and sound.⁴⁶ Intermedial relationships between words, sounds and images create a world with temporary connections as well as permanent relations. To understand this better one can divide the field into three different categories; *combined media*, *integral media* and *transformed media*. The first category, combined media, refers to media that can be added to each other in different ways. The different media can either integrate at the same place, called "co-existing", or from isolated positions integrate with each other, called "interreference", two concepts coined by the Hungarian literature historian A. Kibédi Varga.⁴⁷ Interreference media could be the relationship between the picture and its' title or a movie and its' music. Co-existing, on the other hand, can occur in an advertisement picture or in a cartoon series. The second category,

⁴⁵ Roland Barthes (1985), *The Fashion System*, London: Cape. P. 3-6.

⁴⁶ Hans Lund, (red.) (2002). "Medier i samspel", H. Lund, *Intermedialitet: ord, bild och ton i samspel*. Lund: Studentlitteratur, p. 10.

⁴⁷ Ibid, p. 20

integrated media, could be pictograph. The most significant for this category is that if the integrated media falls apart, they will lose their meaning. The last category, transformed media, consists of different media referring to other types of media that are only there in the background for the person reading, viewing or listening. An example of this is movies that are based on books.⁴⁸

Fashion

Fashion theorist Barbara Vinken writes about fashion and how it acts and appears in the shape of men and women. She explains that with the 1800's male renunciation men gave up fashion and accepted a more serious role, while fashion was left for women. This marked a line between dressing as a man and an unmarked gender and dressing as a woman with a marked sexuality. For the bourgeois, women became a metaphor for the nobility's castration and loss of power. Men became authentic and real and women became inauthentic and sheer appearance. Fashion was seen as proof of vanity and a childish game for women.⁴⁹

Coco Chanel said that she dressed "the real natural woman" in the appearance of the dandy, which Vinken explains is actually a translation of a translation. The dandy's fashion and femininity is what the man lost after his renunciation and tries to wear again in the shape of a dandy. When a woman dresses up "naturally" she is dressing up as a woman dressing up as a man dressing up as a woman.⁵⁰ Fashion has become a differentiation of the natural gender and a form of disguise, which in itself is a disguise taking form in men and woman dressing up as the "appropriated" civil profession and social status according to their genders.⁵¹ "This disguise" only works in relation to masculinity, which is built on the sign for femininity and femininity is built on the sign for masculinity. This means that one cannot take femininity and the sign for women and make it authentic, because it only works when they are in a relationship to each other. If the woman dresses up more sexually it only serves to mark her as a form of fetish femininity, not to make her equal to the man's authenticity, because inauthenticity cannot work without authenticity.⁵² This does not mean that fashion represents the sexes, which means that it is impossible to dress naturally, and therefore fashion only represents the unmasked sexuality by driving on clichés of gender roles.

⁴⁸ Ibid, p.19.

⁴⁹ Barbara Vinken (2005). *Fashion zeitgeist: trends and cycles in the fashion system*. English ed. Oxford: Berg. P. 11-14.

⁵⁰ Vinken (2005), p. 23-24.

⁵¹ Ibid, p. 23-24 & p. 52.

⁵² Ibid, p. 25-27

Vinken also writes that the way of fashion has changed. Earlier, in the time of haute couture, women embodied the fetish of the femininity, while in the 1980's the femininity and masculinity distanced themselves from the "natural gender", still the diversion between them remains.⁵³

Different theories in looking

Laura Mulvey writes about the male gaze in her essay "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" which is a study in feminist film studies. She writes about a heterosexual imbalance in the pleasures of looking, an idea, which she drew from two psychoanalytic concepts; the castration complex and the mirror stage. Mulvey argues in her essay that the visual is based and constructed through a gendered way. The sexual imbalance is divided on the woman as having a passive role, being displayed as a sexual object and dressed in order to play on and signify male desire. The man, on the other hand, is seen as active, the film's protagonist and the one controlling the fantasy and the movement of the camera. He represents power and the one whose eyes the audience sees the film through and identifies themselves as. He cannot bear to be the one who is looked at; hence the woman acts as the object and the one being looked at.⁵⁴

Mulvey also writes that the castration complex, which Freud explains has implications in visual images in which the women only are seen as castrated, not men, and cannot be seen on their own terms.⁵⁵ In *Möten med bilder att tolka visuella uttryck*, Yvonne Eriksson and Marianne Göthlund writes about how the man often is portrayed as active, even if he is standing still he tightens his muscles and becomes active, and therefore he is not objectified.⁵⁶ The male gaze is used by photo theorists to explain power and how women are seen as objects and how this is connected to Sigmund Freud's concept of voyeurism. This is when you look at someone with a pleasurable eye, without them looking back at you.⁵⁷ The object is thus seen as passive, free to be looked at by the viewer, who also is the one in control. This

⁵³ Ibid, p. 28-29.

⁵⁴ Mulvey, Laura. "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema." Film Theory and Criticism : Introductory Readings. Eds. Leo Braudy and Marshall Cohen. New York, Oxford UP, 1999, s. 837-838.

⁵⁵ Gillian Rose (2012). *Visual methodologies: an introduction to researching with visual materials*. 3. ed. London: Sage. P. 158-159.

⁵⁶ Eriksson & Göthlund (2005), p. 74-77.

⁵⁷ Liz Wells (ed.) (2004). *Photography: a critical introduction*. 3. ed. London: Routledge. P. 170-171.

is a way of looking often seen in pornography, but also in fashion images and advertisements.⁵⁸

Except for the male gaze there are other ways of looking, there is for example the theory of "the glance", which is a look of recognition, identification and compassion and a theory by art historian Norman Bryson.⁵⁹ "The come on look" is another way of seeing, which is also used in pornography, fashion images and advertisements. This is when the viewer is invited to look at the portrayed. The look is often amplified with the model putting her head on the side, spreading her legs or a prominent bust in combination with self-touch. The male and female touch differs, as the male touch is more active than the female one. This look is studied by the film theorist, Annette Kuhn.⁶⁰

Gender construction

Judith Butler, a gender theorist, writes about her theory on performativity in her article "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory". She says that gender identity is something performative made by social sanctions and taboos.

A central part of Butler's performativity theory is that one's gender is not a firm identity by birth; instead it is something that you become by repeating different acts and performances over time. If the gender is established by acts that means gender is a constructed identity, a performative accomplishment, which will be performed and believed by the social audience and the actor's themselves..⁶¹ Gender reality is performative and is only real when it is being performed. Most different types of acts can be expressive to a certain gender or identity, and these acts will then either compel with the expected gender identity or not.⁶² Butler says that our bodies are nothing but galleys and based on how we portray ourselves, for example with clothes, our gender is constituted and we become that gender. It is all about engaging in a specific discourse and learning the correct codes for that discourse; how to behave, speak and move in that context. To be able to handle all of these different discourses you need different bodies, depending on the context.

⁵⁸ Eriksson & Göthlund (2005), p. 67.

⁵⁹ Ibid, p. 70.

⁶⁰ Ibid, p. 68-69.

⁶¹ Judith Butler (1988), "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory", *Theatre Journal*, Vol. 40, No. 4, The Johns Hopkins University Press. P. 520-521.

⁶² Ibid, p. 527.

When a child is born one cannot decide its' gender, the child will have to repeat what is seen as a normal behaviour of a girl/boy in order to become one. Butler says that there is no male/female-behaviour, instead we are taught about our different gender roles, which cause them to become our identity. Our genders are therefore performative actions and our genders are manifested by clothes. One must speak, behave and most importantly dress according to one's gender.⁶³

Performativity

In the book *Jaget och maskerna: en studie i vardagslivets dramatik* the Canadian-American sociologist Erving Goffman writes about the performativity, which he draws from dramaturgy. He examines the individual and how one can present and control the view of others in an everyday situation, and what he can and cannot do while doing his performance for them.⁶⁴

In his theory, Goffman's starting point is that the social interacting consists of three different parts; the scene, the actor and the audience; and we are always playing different roles.⁶⁵ Goffman defines a performance as a collected activity in which one participant/the actor tries to influence other participants, whom Goffman calls the audience. The role, which the actor plays is connected with who the audience is. If the actor performed the same role in front of the same audience on several occasions, a social connection is created and the same role can be played in front of the same audience or an audience similar to the first one.⁶⁶ Another important component in Goffman's theory is the façade, which Goffman calls it, or the scene, which it also can be described as. This is the place in which the actor is performing and it has a crucial role in how the actor's performance is interpreted. Some facades that are being used the same way over and over again tend to contribute to a stereotype. This is linked to that specific role, regardless if the actor wants to perform in that facade when he is playing that role or if he wants to perform as that role when he is performing in that facade.⁶⁷

⁶³ Lars Holmberg, (2008). *Teorier om mode: stil som historiskt och teoretiskt objekt*. Stockholm: Carlsson, p. 326-329.

⁶⁴ Erving Goffman (2009). *Jaget och maskerna: en studie i vardagslivets dramatik*. 5. uppl. Stockholm: Norstedts. P. 9.

⁶⁵ Holmberg (2008), p. 167.

⁶⁶ Goffman (2009), p. 23.

⁶⁷ Ibid, p. 29-33.

1.5.3 Definitions

The word "stereotype" is referred to as a generalization of a representation of distinctive characteristics of belongings to a particular group, e.g. race or gender. A stereotype is built by some knowledge and simplifies how you handle expressions from the environment. It can also affect how someone should be and helps keeping prejudice and negative attitudes alive.

1.6 Disposition

The thesis is divided in four parts. The first part presents our material in the form of a semiotic denotative analysis. The second part is investigating how the garments are presented and communicated. The third part aims to study how gender roles are presented through different stereotypes and how the genders are looked upon in the mail-order catalogues and websites. The last part aims to explore the mail-order catalogues and website pages as a form of performance.

2. Analysis

2.1 A denotative analysis of Allmänco, ELLOS and NELLY/NLY MAN

Because the study is built on material from three different Swedish fashion remote commerce companies in the form of texts and images, we have chosen to do a semiotic analysis. Our material will first be described through a denotative description.



Image 1 and image 2. *Allmänco catalogue; spring and summer of 1939 (Allmänco katalog; våren och sommaren 1939)* from the Textile museum's archive.

The first and second image is from Allmänco's spring and summer catalogue of 1939. In the first image from the mail-order catalogue in the women's section there are four photographs showing a woman with short hair dressed in a dress with different patterns, dark stockings and a pair of black high-heeled shoes. In the first photograph, to the left, the model has her left arm by the side of her body and her right arm in a pocket by the side of her dress. She is smiling and looking straight at the observer. In the second photograph we find the same model as in the first one. She is also now looking straight at the viewer and smiling, has her left arm by the side of her body and her right arm resting on her hip. The next photograph is of a different model standing straightforward, tilting her head forward, smiling and looking to her right. She has both her arms by the sides of her body with her hands slightly turned upwards. The last photograph shows a fourth model with her arms by the sides of her body and looking straight at the observer.

In the first image of the female dresses the headline reads "Pique, this year's fashion fabric in these three piquant dresses. A grand number for the season!"⁶⁸ (Our translation). Below the models, centred to the bottom left, there are four product information boxes about the dresses with the numbers 206-209. Below this product information follows another box about the next dress, number 208 and then 207 and 209.

The second image is from the men's section of Allmänco's mail-order catalogue. There are three illustrations of three different men wearing jackets. The first illustration to the left is of a man in a cropped picture wearing a jacket and a cap. He is looking to his side, smiling and has his left hand in his pocket and his other arm slightly upwards in a 90-degree angle. The other illustration, DD429, is also cropped and only shows the upper body. The model has his body towards the viewer and is looking away to his right. The model also has his arm in a 90-degree angle with his right arm slightly more to his face. In his right hand he is holding a pipe. In the last illustration the third model is also cropped to half body standing in front of the observer with his right arm by the side of his body and his left hand in his pocket. The model is looking away from the observer to his right.

For the male spread there is a description of the four different jackets to the right in the image. The headline is centred to the left and reads "Lumber jackets, also called Boliden Jackets".⁶⁹ (Our translation). At the right side of the page it says "Well-known types and qualities".⁷⁰ (Our translation). The first product description box is for jacket number DD436 at the left side of the page.

⁶⁸ See appendix 4.2.

⁶⁹ See appendix 4.3.

⁷⁰ See appendix 4.3.

Image 3 and image 4. *Ellos Summer sale. The summers success now from 69 SEK, 1984 (Ellos Sommar rea. Sommarens succé nu från 69:- 1984)* from Gothenburg University library, Humanities Library.

The third and fourth images are from a sales catalogue from Ellos spring and summer catalogue of 1984. The page has one large photograph that covers the whole sheet and one smaller photograph that is cut in a gley to the left. The larger photograph shows a woman with curly brown loose hair sitting on a white chair turned to the side, facing the observer with her head and the rest of her body. She has a black dress, a belt in her waist and is barefoot with a pair of high-heeled sandals tossed aside. The model has her left arm leaning on the chair and her left hand outstretched, leaning on her knee. Her right leg is bent slightly upward and leaning on her left leg. In the smaller photograph there are two other women with curly blonde hair, standing in a counter pose wearing the same dress as the first woman but in two different colours, pink and white combined with a black belt in their waists. They are facing each other and both have their left arm in a 90-degree angle by the side of their bodies and their right arm on their thighs. There is one text on the top of the page: "Spring fresh and summer cold corset dress; Now 69:-"⁷¹ (Our translation). In a text at the bottom in the centre of the page we find a product description.

The page of the men's fashion from the Ellos catalogue has three photographs that are cropped to half body with a man wearing a jacket in each of the photos. On top of the page is written: "Unbeatable price for the modern jacket with suede-feeling. Non-iron. Machine-washable."⁷² (Our translation). Underneath we again find a product description.

The first photo from the men's page is smaller; the man is standing in front of the camera with his face in half profile. He has his mouth slightly open and his left hand in his left jacket pocket while his right arm is slightly dropped from a 90-degree angle. His jacket is half-zipped up and underneath he is wearing a shirt and a tie. In the next photo the man has the same pose except for his head, which is facing the camera with a smile. Instead of the blue colours he is wearing the same outfit in beige. In the last photo the man is standing facing the camera and looking to his right with his mouth closed. He is wearing a skirt with a jumper and a jacket in khaki beige colours. He has his hand in his left trouser pocket and his right hand on his right thigh. In the left corner is written in red letters: "Summer jacket with the

⁷¹ See appendix 4.4.

⁷² See appendix 4.3.

right fashion details".⁷³ (Our translation). Underneath there is a product description to the jacket in the third photograph.

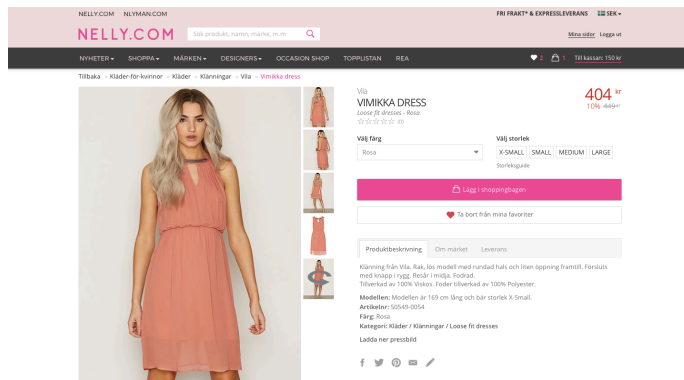
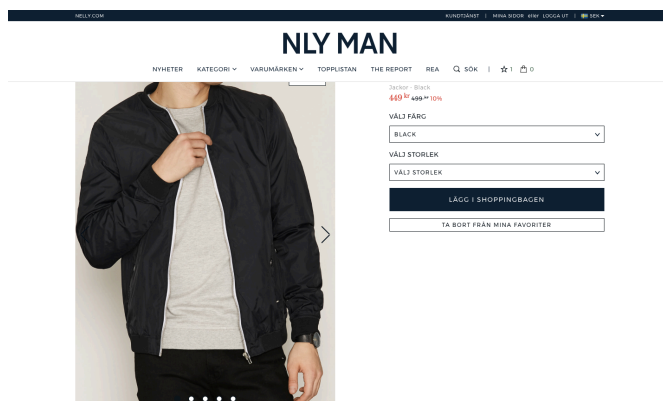


Image 5 from NELLY.COM

In the fifth image, which is a screenshot of the website NELLY.COM (2017), we find one large image, four smaller images, and one 365-degree image to the right of the large image. All pictures, except for the fourth small picture, depict a female model wearing a pink loose dress, while the fourth small picture only shows the pink dress. The model has long curly blonde hair, blue eyes and wears make-up. The large image is zoomed in and only shows a little below the dress. Her hands are by the side of her body and her mouth is open. The big picture is the same as the first small picture. In the second picture she has the front of her body pointed at the left and her back towards the observer. The model is looking over her left shoulder and in eye contact with the observer, keeping her arms in a 90-degree angle. The third small picture shows the model's whole body in a counter pose with her dress ending just below her knees, she is wearing a pair of heeled sandals and keeps her hands by the side of her body, which is twisted to the right.⁷⁴



⁷³ See appendix 4.3.

⁷⁴ See appendix 4.6.

Image 6 from NLYMAN.COM

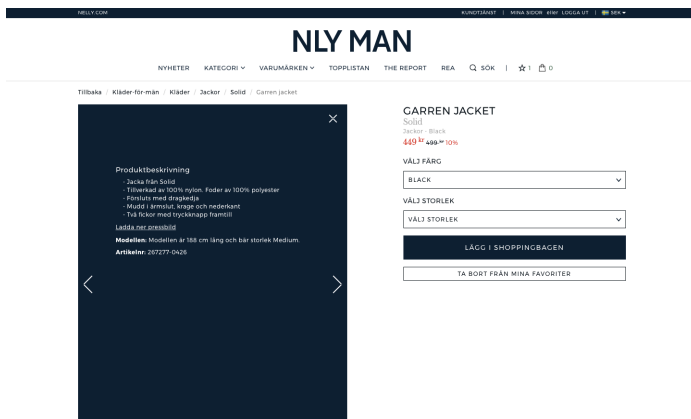


Image 7 from NLYMAN.COM.

The sixth image is chosen from the website NLYMAN.COM (2017) and is one in a series of four pictures, along with a 365-degree picture at the end. The picture shows a male model wearing a black unzipped jacket, a grey sweater along with a pair of black jeans. On his left arm, which is by the side of his body, he is wearing a black watch. His right arm is bent by the elbow and he has his hand in a fist, smoothly resting on his chest. The picture is taken straight forward, in a counter pose, but is cropped below the models jaw so the observer cannot see his face. It is also cropped by his thigh, as far as his left arm reaches. It is possible to understand that the model looks to his left in the picture.⁷⁵ At NLYMAN.COM you can find a product information box with information about the jacket by clicking in the right corner.

2.2 How is the garment communicated to the customer?

This chapter aims to compare and show the material through two different perspectives; how the companies and genders differ from each other, but also how the remote commerce has evolved in time. We will do this by first applying Roland Barthes' theory of the representation of the garment, with focus on the overall picture.

2.2.1 The presentation of the garment

Every time period presents their catalogue differently depending on if it is meant for men or women. The images and the texts in the catalogue are basically the same for men and women. Roland Barthes writes about the representation of the garment in three forms; the real garment, the image garment and the written garment. We will first focus on the written

⁷⁵ See appendix 4.7.

garment and how it is presented in relation to the "real" and technical garment and to the image and iconic garment.

In the Allmänco catalogue from 1939 the product description is more descriptive and differs from the ELLOS 1984 catalogue, and it is even more different to the 2017 online pages from NELLY/NLYMAN, exactly how will be described here. Below is an example on how Allmänco describes dress 208 from the catalogue:

DG208, Female dress. Outstandingly beautiful summer dress made by heavy quality piqué in a stylish flower pattern on a white or crème coloured bottom. A chic model with a collar and cuffs made by white piqué, a white zipper and a belt with a buckle. The skirt is tucked in the front.⁷⁶ (Our translation).

The product description is detailed and uses adjectives to present the customer with a feeling that you could almost imagine yourself wearing it, just by reading the product description. This is what Barthes describes as the written garment, a text that describes the technical clothing or the real clothing. When we go from a technical structure to a written structure Barthes explains that one must use instructions on how to make the garment, which include material-information and a guide on how to sew it.⁷⁷ This is however not apparent in the product information box from the dress above, which only includes the information about what kind of material the dress is made of. Here the men's fashion and the women's fashion differ, and the details on how men's jackets are made are clearer. Here is for example the product information for jacket DD439 from Allmänco:

DD439. Jacket made by extra thick and pressed velveteen in a subtle check pattern in the colours blue/grey or beige/brown. A beautiful surface. Model with a collar, two rowed buttoning and two breast-pockets with a pocket nap that you can button. Long sleeve with a cuff to button along with a tight waist with an elastic spring precipitants on the sides. Boy size, 6-12 years old, price per garment 3.75. Young man size, 14-18 years old, price per garment 4.10. Men's size, 46-56, price per garment 4.70.⁷⁸ (Our translation).

The product description for the men's jacket includes more technical information, and the jacket is also more technically advanced than the dress. If the dress had had the same finesses then it would probably be included in the product information. Beside the product information it is also, according to Barthes' theory of representation of the garment, important to not only describe the garment in technical terms but also to describe the garment using a

⁷⁶ See appendix 4.2.

⁷⁷ Barthes (1985), p. 3-6.

⁷⁸ See appendix 4.3.

colourful language. This is the final step to make the written garment independent, and separated from the technical or the real garment and from the iconic and image garment.⁷⁹

In the description box of the dress 208 from Allmänco the dress is described with colourful words, for example they use words like; "Outstandingly beautiful, heavy quality, stylish flower pattern, chic model" to describe the dress.⁸⁰ This is a must to be able to capture the dress' essence for the reader. The jacket DD439 is described in a similar manner with the words; "extra thick, subtle check pattern, beautiful surface".⁸¹ Even though both the dress and the jacket are described with colourful words, the dress is described with more colourful words while the jacket has a more subtle description.

When instead looking at how the information boxes from ELLOS's for men and women garments differ, we find that they do not contrast as much as they did in the Allmänco catalogue. For example, the information box for women contains the following:

Dress in comfortable cotton. Spring fresh and summer cold! Delicates 40°. Corset model, half-buttoned with a zipper and wrinkle elastic at the back. Lacing at the front and a tie belt in the waist. Length 68 cm in C38. Sizes after colour. 536.3637 Black (C34-46). 536.3705 White (C34-46). 536.3713 Cerise (C34-46). Per piece 69:-⁸² (Our translation).

While the information box for the jacket D for men is written in the following matter:

The spring and summer jacket. Of 65% polyester/35% cotton with lining in pure cotton. Delicates 40°. Up-to-date model with square knitted ok and a hidden hood in the collar. Drawstring in the bottom of the jacket, closes with a zipper. A inside pocket with buttons and four pockets with zipper and a overlying edge. Sleeves with elastic band and adjustable width with a zipper. Sizes C46-56, C-centimetres 173-185. 847-0237 khaki beige. Per piece 169:-⁸³ (Our translation)

Here the use of adjectives from 1939 has changed, most visibly in the information boxes for women, which do not include as many adjectives in 1984 as they did in 1939. The box for the dress includes the descriptive words; "comfortable cotton, spring fresh and summer cold".⁸⁴

The focus is now instead on technical details, much similar to the page from the men's fashion where there are not any colourful words describing the jacket at all.⁸⁵ The same phenomenon is seen today in the description boxes from NELLY and NLYMAN, which are written as (for women):

Product description:
A dress from Vila. Straight, loose dress model with a round neck and a small opening in the front.

⁷⁹ Barthes (1985), p. 3-6.

⁸⁰ See appendix 4.2.

⁸¹ See appendix 4.3.

⁸² See appendix 4.4.

⁸³ See appendix 4.5.

⁸⁴ See appendix 4.4.

⁸⁵ See appendix 4.5.

Sealed with a button in the back. Elastic waist and lined. Made out of 100 % viscose. The lining material is made out of 100 % polyester. The Model: The model is 5'6 inches tall and wears size X-Small. Item number: 50549-0054. Colour: Pink. Category: Clothes/Dresses/Loose fit dresses. Download press photos⁸⁶ (Our translation)

And the jacket from NLYMAN (for men):

Product description:

The jacket is from Solid. It is made out of 100 % nylon and the lining material is made out of 100 % polyester. The jacket is sealed with a zipper. There is wristlet at the end of the sleeve, collar and at the bottom of the jacket. The jacket also has two pockets with push buttons at the front of the jacket. Download press photos. The Model: The model is 6'2 inches tall and wears a size medium. Item number: 267277-0426⁸⁷ (Our translation)

The text no longer describes the garment in such a colourful way so the reader can imagine the dress or jacket in front of them, instead the focus is on the technical description. But as Barthes states, even if the technical description is clear enough with measurements and a guide how to sew it, it cannot represent the written garment solemnly on it's own. The written garment is made of the parts; one that describes the technical structure and one that describes the image, which must be done in a colourful and describing manner.⁸⁸ This means that the description boxes are dependent on the images in the catalogues and websites and cannot stand on their own. Hans Lund talks about this phenomenon, which is a type of intermediality, the images and the information boxes work in interplay with each other. Neither the information box nor the images can fully replace the other and instead co-exist.⁸⁹ The image of the dresses in the Allmänco catalogue from 1939, which shows four women in four separate photographs, could easily be misinterpreted. The women could be posing in front of a camera for a private purpose, maybe they are on their way someplace else or the photographer just wanted to eternalize the moment. As a viewer the information box and the headline on top of the page makes it clearer, and is printed in a large font; "Pique. This year's fashion fabric in these three piquant dresses. A grand number for the season!"⁹⁰

The co-existing of the images and the texts on the pages are visible in the ELLOS 1984 catalogue, for example in the page for the men's fashion one can see two headlines written in red saying: "Unbeatable price for the modern jacket with suede-feeling. Non-iron. Machine-washable."⁹¹ and "Summer jacket with the right fashion details".⁹² Without the images, the

⁸⁶ See appendix 4.6.

⁸⁷ See appendix 4.7.

⁸⁸ Barthes (1985), p. 3-6.

⁸⁹ Lund, (2002), p. 10.

⁹⁰ See appendix 4.2.

⁹¹ See appendix 4.5.

⁹² See appendix 4.5.

text would not have the same meaning. The consumer would not understand that it was specifically the depicted jacket model ELLOS meant had the "right" fashion details. Without the images there is a puzzle piece missing, which cannot be understood on its' own and can only be understood by co-existence with the other puzzle piece. Even though in 2017 there are not the same tempting headlines as in 1939 and 1984, the pictures cannot be understood by their own. They would be taken out of their discourse, which in this case is the website which the dress can be purchased from. The pictures and texts are still co-existing and could not be understood separately, even though the texts today are playing a smaller part compared to the images, which in turn have become more important today than before. The same dress can for example be seen in up to four different perspectives plus a 365-degree angle.⁹³ The men's jacket can be seen in three different images plus a 365-degree angle.⁹⁴

2.3 Gender as a stereotype

In the third chapter we examine and compare how different gender stereotypes can be presented in the remote commerce.⁹⁵ We do so by stating how we look at gender in fashion with the help of Barbara Vinken's theory. The study looks closer at how different gender roles are manifested in fashion in our different time periods and if this is visible in the product information of the garment. We will also illustrate if the models are presented differently if they are illustrating a man or a women and by studying how the observer might look at them differently.

2.3.1 Femininity and masculinity

As stated above, a stereotype is a generalization, a specific thought about something or someone that might or might not be true. Several other individuals, though, adopt this thought. In our material the gender stereotypes as well as masculinity and femininity have been portrayed differently throughout time.

Fashion theorist Barbara Vinken writes that the female body is the tool for fetishism and through the body women are supposed to reach the ideal form. To shape femininity is a full time job where it all comes down to the body and how it should be taken care of, for example through diets, workouts, fixing the hair and shopping.⁹⁶ Below follows two production

⁹³ See appendix 4.6.

⁹⁴ See appendix 4.7.

⁹⁵ Nationalencyklopedin, (2017). "*Stereotyp*"

⁹⁶ Vinken (2005), p. 25.

information boxes from the Allmänco catalogue, the female dress 206 and the male lumber jacket 441.

Size: 40, 42, 44, 46. Size information, page 231. DG206 Female dress, elegant dress made by graceful quality, broad-striped pique in blue/white or red/white. Seamed in a dashing model with collar cuffs, button garnished slit with a short sleeve. Belt in a different colour and two pockets. A real beautiful fashion dress to an exceptional low price⁹⁷ (Our translation).

In the previous chapter we talked about Barthes' theory of the represented garment and about how the different garments' product information is a part of the written garment. For this chapter, we will look at certain words that distinguish themselves in the product information but using fashion theorist Barbara Vinken's theory on fashion. For the female dresses in the Allmänco catalogue they have used the words "dashing", "graceful" and "elegant" to describe the dresses. Vinken says that one must use a different word of the vocabulary for female fashion accordingly to how feminine they are. Therefore, words that describe typical female attributes are also used on the garment itself. These words above are most often linked to femininity, and like Vinken writes in her fashion theory, women are a sheer appearance that only cares about fashion and looks.⁹⁸ The chosen words from the Allmänco catalogue are therefore words that could easily describe a female.

DD441. Lumber jacket made by decent, hard-wearing quality from velveteen in brown and blue suede colour. The jacket has a sleep collar, a hidden zipper in the front of the pocket, two breast-pockets with a pocket nap that you can button, sleeve with a button at the end of the linen folding and a wide elastic spring waist. Careful ready-made clothing with a double seamline. Size: 6 years, price per garment 2.30. Size: 8-10, price per garment 2.60. Size: 12-14, price per garment 2.85. Size: 16-18, price per garment 3.15. Size: Mass 46-56, price per garment 3.65.⁹⁹ (Our translation).

For the production information box above, which comes from the Allmänco men's section, one can see that they don't use the same amount of descriptive words of value. These are words that normally are not used to describe a person, but rather an item. The words are not as emotionally descriptive as are the words describing the female dresses.

⁹⁷ See appendix 4.2.

⁹⁸ Vinken (2005), p. 25-29.

⁹⁹ See appendix 4.3.

The first information box below comes from the women's section in the ELLOS 1984 catalogue and the two other product information boxes are taken from 2017, NLYMAN and NELLY.

Dress in comfortable cotton. Spring fresh and summer cold! Delicates 40°. Corset model, half-buttoned with a zipper and wrinkle elastic at the back. Lacing at the front and a tie belt in the waist. Length 68 cm in C38. Sizes after colour. 536.3637 Black (C34-46). 536.3705 White (C34-46). 536.3713 Cerise (C34-46). Per piece 69:-¹⁰⁰ (Our translation)

Product description:

The jacket is from Solid. It is made out of 100 % nylon and the lining material is made out of 100 % polyester. The jacket is sealed with a zipper. There is wristlet at the end of the sleeve, collar and at the bottom of the jacket. The jacket also has two pockets with push buttons at the front of the jacket.

Download press photos. The Model: The model is 6'2 inches tall and wears a size medium. Item number: 267277-0426¹⁰¹ (Our translation)

Product description:

A dress from Vila. Straight, loose dress model with a round neck and a small opening in the front. Sealed with a button in the back. Elastic waist and lined. Made out of 100 % viscose. The lining material is made out of 100 % polyester. The Model: The model is 5'6 inches tall and wears size X-Small. Item number: 50549-0054. Colour: Pink. Category: Clothes/Dresses/Loose fit dresses. Download press photos¹⁰² (Our translation)

The information in these examples has become more neutral and does not contain the same emotional words to describe the garment as in 1939. Although the product information boxes have been modernized, in regard to how gender is described with less descriptive words than in the Allmänco catalogue, the images are still typical representations of gender stereotypes. The biggest transformation occurred between 1939 and 1984 where the information became much more neutral in describing male and female garments. Since 1984 the neutral description has remained consistent, as we can see in the product information from NELLY.

Eriksson and Göthlund write about how the man is portrayed as active in images even if he is standing still.¹⁰³ When reading the product information boxes for the male garments they are all described as active, letting the customer know about the fabric, quality and its suitability for active use. This differs from the product information boxes for the dresses, which only describes for the customer what the garment looks like visually and how it feels to wear it.

Judith Butler states that gender is constructed by repetitive acts over a period of time, in which our genders are manifested through our clothing and behaviour.¹⁰⁴ This means that Butler separates sex and gender, where the latter is something that one can choose by

¹⁰⁰ See appendix 4.4.

¹⁰¹ See appendix 4.5.

¹⁰² See appendix 4.6.

¹⁰³ Eriksson & Göthlund, p. 74-77.

¹⁰⁴ Holmberg (2005), p. 236.

behavioural patterns and the first is something you are born with.¹⁰⁵ In the images from Allmänco, ELLOS and NELLY it seems apparent that the models are portraying their biological sex and gender, they are co-existing. In the image from NLYMAN, the biological sex of the model is not apparent, but the gender as expressed by the clothing, which is clearly male. We cannot, however, be certain that the model is actually male, even though the image shows a male garment and is obviously targeting consumers that want to express themselves as male. This will all be further elaborated in the next chapter.

2.3.2 Different ways of looking

As we now have stated what femininity and masculinity are, the study will go deeper to see how the models are looked on differently in the images, depending on if it is a man or a woman represented in them. If we start by looking closely on the images from Allmänco, one can see that in the illustrations of the men, all men are active in some way. The first illustration shows a man wearing the jacket DD436 while he is raising his hand and holds a pipe. He is standing like if he is looking at, and perhaps speaking to, someone across him. In another illustration of a man wearing the jacket DD439, he is active by smoking a pipe he holds in his right hand. The third illustration is of a man wearing the jacket DD41-42, with his hand slightly lowered, as if he has done something and is about do something else. This is amplified by the man looking slightly to his right as if he has found something that has caught his eye and is thinking about what he is going to do next.¹⁰⁶

Marianne Göthlund and Yvonne Eriksson write about the man being portrayed as active even if it is only by tightening his muscles.¹⁰⁷ In the Allmänco catalogue from 1939 all illustrations of men are active in some way, or gives evidence of an activity that has just taken place and is now ending. On the other hand the woman is the one being looked upon, the passive object and the man's opposite. Before looking to the woman and if she is portrayed as passive the study goes a few years ahead to 1984 and ELLOS and 2017 and NLYMAN to see how the man is portrayed there.

In the ELLOS catalogue the difference is not as apparent as in 1939, for example is the man no longer “caught in the act”, but is instead posing in front of the camera. In the first photo, where the man is wearing the blue jacket, he is turning his head to the side, has his hand in his pocket and his mouth slightly open. He might have his muscles tightened but it is not

¹⁰⁵ Butler (1988), p. 520.

¹⁰⁶ See appendix 4.3.

¹⁰⁷ Eriksson & Göthlund (2005), p. 74-77.

quite visible due to the jacket. In the other photographs the men are also posing for the camera. In the first photograph a man is wearing a beige jacket, looking straight at the camera with a smile, he has his right hand in his pocket and the other hand in front of him as to grip something. In the next one the man has his hand in his trouser pocket and is looking right across.¹⁰⁸ They can all be interpreted as being active, but they are not as active as the models represented in the mail-order catalogue from 1939. If we now instead look at the model in the photograph from NLYMAN, one can see that the male model has gone from having an active role to a clearly passive role, which is more similar to a manikin and an object.

Laura Mulvey is another theorist who writes about the man being portrayed as active, the one that drives the fantasy and the movement and is therefore the subject, while the woman is passive and the object, theories she takes from her study in film.¹⁰⁹ She traces it back to Freud's theory of castration and how the woman cannot be looked up on in the same way as the man because the absence of phallus. This has led the man to look at the woman as someone who is lacking a penis and therefore should be looked up on. This makes the man the subject looking at the woman, who is the object.¹¹⁰ This active role the man is given is what Mulvey describes as the male gaze, and it can be seen throughout the material. In all the material, from the Allmänco 1939, ELLOS 1984 and from today in NELLY one can see how the woman is portrayed as passive. For example, in the photographs of the women in the Allmänco catalogue the woman is looking straight at the person behind the camera with her hands beside her body, by the sides of her body or in a pocket.¹¹¹ She might have done something before the photograph was taken, but in that moment she is passively looking back at the camera without any signs of activity. The same signs of passivity are seen in women's fashion in the photograph on NELLY's website and in the ELLOS catalogue. In the catalogue spread from ELLOS a woman is sitting in a chair with no signs of activity at the moment the photograph is taken, except for sitting down laid-back and with her arm resting on the back of the chair. In the other image the women are standing in front of the observer, laughing and looking at each other with one hand in front of them and the other beside their bodies.¹¹²

The theory of the male gaze becomes clear with Freud's concept of voyeurism, which he links to the male gaze, something that Mulvey later would coin. He says that a voyeuristic gaze is

¹⁰⁸ See appendix 4.4.

¹⁰⁹ Mulvey (1999), p. 837-838.

¹¹⁰ Rose (2012), p. 158-159.

¹¹¹ See appendix 4.2.

¹¹² See appendix 4.4.

when someone who is seen as active takes the liberty to look at someone who is passive and, at the same time, is also the one controlling the events in for example the movie or in this case the movement in the photograph. The voyeuristic way of looking is thereby a way of looking in which the portrayed is innocent and left to the viewer to be looked up on by the male gaze and not only by the audience, but by the photographer and by a male co-model.¹¹³

The female model is always suppressed by the male gaze, something that is evident in the photographs. But just as we mentioned above, the male model does not have the clear active role that Mulvey insists that the man has. In the page from the men's fashion in the ELLOS catalogue from 1984, he is portrayed simply in a jacket standing posing in front of the camera. He could have his muscles tightened and thereby be active, as Eriksson and Göthlund points out. This is, however, not evident in this case, but if so one might just as well argue that the women in the same ELLOS catalogue could also be active.

This way of looking is elaborated by art historian Norman Bryson, who makes a distinction between the gaze and his concept of the glance. The gaze, which is explained as an objectifying way of looking at a person, and the glance, which instead is when the observer is identifying with the portrayed and feels recognition and compassion, in this case with the models. Bryson does not say that the gaze has to be a male one but instead says that the observer can take different roles depending on whom he/she is identifying with.¹¹⁴ In the mail-order catalogues and web shop pictures from the websites, the observer can identify with the portrayed, something that might lead to a purchase. In the picture from NLYMAN the model is seen standing straightforward with his hand on his jacket as to show the details and the functions of the jacket. The model is portrayed without a face and the photograph is zoomed in on the jacket.¹¹⁵ The photograph does not show the model's face, which makes it easier for the consumer to identify by imagining a face of whoever he/she wants, like for example the one the jacket is meant for.

The theory is evolved by Mieke Ball who says that the gaze and the glance are not limited to one sex by introducing another gaze, "the involved look". This is when the observer understands his or her position as an observer, and the picture is representing an image and not a real reproduction of the reality. She describes that the observer can look differently at

¹¹³ Wells (ed.) (2004), p. 170-171.

¹¹⁴ Eriksson & Göthlund (2005), p. 70.

¹¹⁵ See appendix 4.7.

the person portrayed, depending on whom he/she is identifying with.¹¹⁶ This is apparent in how the material is portrayed in all the photographs and illustrations from the companies, where the observer can look at them differently. For example in the Allmänco catalogue the illustrations of the men are different from the illustrations of the women depending on who the intended observer or consumer is. It is connected to how we look at women and men and which gender roles we bestow on the different sexes. As mentioned above Vinken says that how we look at the fashion and how it is portrayed is dependent on how we traditionally have encoded men's and women's gender roles in history, something which is manifested in fashion and clothing.¹¹⁷ In the Allmänco catalogue from 1939 the man is bestowed an active role with a pipe in his hand, on his way to or caught in the moment of an activity. The man is portrayed in this manner because that is how a man should be seen and identified as in Sweden in 1939. In the same time the woman is doing nothing but posing with a careful smile as she has been told to stand there and smile while the cameraman takes the photo. She is looked upon and portrayed in the way the woman was supposed to be looked upon and portrayed in 1939, something that women at that time could identify themselves with. In this context the difference between how the man and woman are portrayed and is looked upon is not strange it is normal in 1939.

If we now instead look at how men and women are portrayed through another perspective, "the come-on-look", a way of looking developed by Annette Kuhn. Here the portrayed invites the observer to look, the model is taking on a role as an object being looked at. It differs from the voyeuristic perspective of looking, instead of letting the observer feel guilty about looking without the portrayer's knowledge, it is okay to look, looking is invited.¹¹⁸ In ELLOS this perspective of looking is present in the way the model in the black dress has laid her head sideways as to welcome the observer into the picture, the way she has her leg running up, which results in the skirt of the dress almost blowing up, and her prominent bust. "The come-on look" is a way of looking that plays on erotic tension, very much used in advertisements of this type and in pornography, as here demonstrated in ELLOS.¹¹⁹

In NELLY this is visible in the way the model is staring back at the observer with her mouth slightly open and her lips painted with lip-gloss. The observer is invited to look, amplified by

¹¹⁶ Eriksson & Göthlund (2005), p. 70.

¹¹⁷ Vinken (2005), p. 11-14.

¹¹⁸ Eriksson & Göthlund (2005), p. 68-69.

¹¹⁹ Eriksson & Göthlund (2005), p. 68-69.

different gestures and the position her body has in the photograph.¹²⁰ If we instead take a look at the man in khaki beige jacket in the ELLOS catalogue, he is also looking at the observer with an inviting look at the same time as he has his hand in his pocket and the other firmly on his upper thigh.¹²¹ "The come-on look" cannot only be applied to women in the material but also on images of men, it might be codified as a feminine look but does not mean it has to be a look only seen in images of women.

2.3.4 Gender blurring

As we now have narrowed it down to how women and men have been portrayed and what is seen as feminine and masculine, we have closed in on the concept of gender blurring. As showed above, gender blurring is when the lines between the genders are blurred out and is not as black and white as they might have been. To have a female sex does not equal to having a feminine fashion and having a male sex does not equal to having a masculine fashion. The fashion is becoming more and more androgynous. Vinken says that in the 1980's the lines between the sexes' fashion started to get blurred out. That did, however, not mean that the lines between femininity and masculinity were blurred out, the line between what was and still is feminine and masculine remains.¹²²

The Allmänco 1939 catalogue is a clear example on what is seen as feminine and masculine. As mentioned before one can see the man being illustrated as active while the woman is illustrated as passive. Another example, also visible in the material, is the female and masculine touch. Annette Kuhn writes about the male and female touch, which differs in the sense that the male grip on items in the pictures is usually much firmer than the female grip, which is more of an easy touch. This signifies that the man is in control, in ownership, of the item in question. The so-called female touch signifies that the items are valuable or of higher state than the woman.¹²³ In the female section of the ELLOS catalogue the model gently slides her right leg towards her left leg. This could be interpreted, as she does not have full control of her own body. In the photographs in ELLOS catalogue, there are two photographs of a man with one hand in his jacket pocket and the other one firmly in front of him, which could be interpreted as signs of the male grip. Instead of opening his hand with hesitation, which can be the case in the woman's section in Allmänco, he is showing confidence and

¹²⁰ Eriksson & Göthlund (2005), p. 68-69.

¹²¹ See appendix 4.5.

¹²² Vinken (2005), p. 28-29.

¹²³ Eriksson & Göthlund (2005), p. 69.

control, which is a typical masculine trait according to Annette Kuhn's theory.¹²⁴ In the lower right part of the male section in the ELLOS catalogue the male model has his hand on his right thigh, which can be interpreted as a sexual sign. In comparison to the female model in the same catalogue he places his hand firmly on his thigh, whereas we have already noticed that the female model barely touches her own leg.¹²⁵

In the Allmänco catalogue, in the women's section the women are hesitating. The woman wearing the model dress 207 is for example standing straight forward with her head laid a little bit towards the side, her arms beside her body and her hands bent upwards. This can also be interpreted in the theory of the male grip and the feminine touch, where in this case it is the latter that is visible.¹²⁶ In the men's section of the catalogue one can see illustration of the man holding a cigar in two of the images and in third one the man has his hand firmly closed.¹²⁷ All three illustrations show signs of what could be interpreted as masculinity. This could be compared to the woman in the women's section wearing dress model 206, keeping her right hand in her dress pocket and the other hand beside her body, firmly closed.¹²⁸ She could be interpreted as having masculine traits, but what in this case speaks against this is the insecure way in which she is keeping the rest of her body.

In the chosen photograph of the model from the NELLY website, neither the male grip nor the feminine touch is shown clearly, though she has her arms and hands resting at the sides of her body. Though her hands are half-open in a half-grip, it is more likely interpreted as feminine, but as it is not a clear pose it is not possible to say.¹²⁹ In the NLYMAN website the male model has his left arm beside his body while with his right hand he is gripping the jacket across his chest.¹³⁰ His grip can also be interpreted as a masculine trait because of the way he is gripping. He is not stroking with an easy touch, he is gripping with what could be signs of confidence, control and ownership over his jacket.

When Vinken talks about fashion and how the gender roles are blurring, she says:

" Woman as dandy, woman as transvestite. In the early days of *haute couture*, woman certainly embodies the fetish of femininity. This clear relation changes in the fashion of the 1980s, in the era of postfashion. That does not mean that as result the division between femininity and

¹²⁴ See appendix 4.2 & appendix 4.5.

¹²⁵ See appendix 4.4.

¹²⁶ See appendix 4.2.

¹²⁷ See appendix 4.3.

¹²⁸ See appendix 4.2.

¹²⁹ See appendix 4.6.

¹³⁰ See appendix 4.7.

masculinity has grown less sharp; it has however, distanced itself ever more from 'natural' gender."¹³¹

What she means here, as mentioned above, is that the gender roles are not as sharp as they used to be. This could be the case in this study, but it is not evident in the way the man and the woman are portrayed in fashion. The man still has an active role and the woman still has a passive role. The male grip is still something visible in images of men while the feminine touch remains visible in the images of women. Even though Vinken mainly speaks of fashion in relation to clothes, the way that the clothes are portrayed in fashion is connected to gender, which is a part of fashion itself.

As mentioned in different ways of looking, "the come-on look" can be amplified with facial expressions, a look which is often seen in fashion magazines and pornography when illustrating women.¹³² Different facial expressions have been codified as feminine or masculine expression, where it is seen as feminine to have a facial expression with a slightly open mouth and an inviting gaze.¹³³ This is evident in the chosen catalogue spread from ELLOS, where the man in the blue jacket does not look back directly at the observer but is looking at something or someone with an inviting gaze and a slightly open mouth. This facial expression cannot be seen in the chosen photograph from NLYMAN because of the cropped head but though it is evident in ELLOS 1984, it could mean that a feminine facial expression was accepted in male models.

Judith Butler writes that the human being is not born to a gender; you become a gender through choices and actions that are bestowed upon you.¹³⁴ The theory thereby connects to Vinken's theory of how gender is manifested in fashion. Both theorists mean that clothing is a way of dressing up and convey a gender to the surroundings. The men in the men's section of the Allmänco catalogue, the ELLOS catalogue and in NLYMAN are transmitting a gender, which they have been made out to be by dressing up in clothes that have been codified as masculine. This line to what is acceptable and what is not has, however, changed in the cause of history, and the typical male stereotype does not look, or is written about, in the same masculine way in 2017 as it was in 1939.

¹³¹ Vinken (2005), p. 28-29.

¹³² Eriksson & Göthlund (2005), p. 68-69.

¹³³ Ibid, p. 77.

¹³⁴ Holmberg (2008), p. 236-239.

2.4 The mail-order spread as a type of performance

In the last part of the study we will continue by answering the third question, of the mail-order spread as a type of performance. This part will convey if the way men and women are portrayed in fashion is a type of masked performance depending on genders, with the help of Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity. It will also study if the gender stereotypes conveyed in the previous chapter are not only roles of gender but actual roles which the companies are selling to the customers. This will be elaborated with the theory of Erving Goffman and the way he is looking at social behaviour as a type of performance, which in this case is the mail-order catalogues' and websites' communication to the customer.

2.4.1 Gender as a performance

Butler says that gender is constructed and one becomes its gender by repetitive acts over time. Since gender is constructed by different acts, it is possible to change gender by behaving differently. This can be seen as a type of performance where one acts differently depending on the situation.¹³⁵ By being a part of a specific discourse the person learns how to act accordingly when it comes to how to behave, speak and move. We do these things, act, walk and talk accordingly to how the interpretation of being a man or a woman is. The way we dress is also how we portray ourselves and a way to manifest our gender.¹³⁶ Erving Goffman says that through social behaviour he looks at how men and women are being portrayed. Based on if an image is portraying a man or a woman, the spectator looks at them differently. A woman is many times seen as playing a role when she is wearing a certain kind of garment, while men are always taken seriously no matter what they are wearing.¹³⁷

The audience are the one's looking in the catalogues and on the websites. The genders that are being performed through the models to the viewers are based on repetitive acts, discourses and how men and women are looked upon differently. The gender roles in the 1939 Allmänco catalogue are portrayed accordingly to how their genders are manifested through the clothes they are wearing, since they are wearing stereotypical garments for both genders. The genders are being performed through how the clothing portrays them. For the men's section the models are a part of a different discourse, where for each discourse one must learn the specific traits like the right behaviour and how to speak and move properly. The women in the female section of the catalogue are all sharing the same behaviour when it comes to pose,

¹³⁵ Butler, (1988), p. 520-521.

¹³⁶ Holmberg (2005), p. 326.

¹³⁷ Gornick (1976), p. viii-ix.

facial expression and gestures. For the male section the models also share a similar pose, gestures and facial expressions. These repetitive acts are what construct the genders male and female.¹³⁸

In the ELLOS catalogue from 1984 the female section features a single female model while the male section features three male models. When looking at the images of the male models they constitute seriousness, and you get a sense of where the male models might work or do in their spare time, you create a story surrounding them that seems believable. The male gender is portrayed as someone that you would like to be while the female gender is portrayed as less dominating. The female gender is being performed as something that is below the male gender, since the female picture does not give the same serious impression. Instead, one might interpret it as her dressing up and playing a role in front of the camera, a role that the observer will interpret as not being genuine. This is what Goffman talks about when he says that the way we look at men and women being portrayed differs.¹³⁹

In the image from NELLY, the female model is once again portrayed as a typical female model. Her manners, looks and type of garment give the viewer the knowledge of her being a woman. Her gender can be seen as performative in the way she expresses impressions typical of a woman in the image. In the NLYMAN image we can see how the model is performing gender through his clothes even though we cannot see the models face. Both the male and female models are using gestures that are typically interpreted as male and female.

There is, though, a clear image of the male and female model and their behaviour. Butler says that there is no male/female-behaviour; we are instead taught how to act in a specific way to become our gender. What is the same for all female models from the different catalogues and websites is that their gender is performed according to how the women have been taught to act. In the first image, from Allmänco, the women are not as sexualised as in the images from ELLOS and NELLY. The gender performances have therefore shifted between 1939 and 2017. In 1939 the sexualisation of gender and the stereotypes of male and female were seen differently. One constructed gender with the same type of garment as today, but the female/male would probably be described with different performative words today. The stereotype of 1984 and 2017 is more sexualised in the female sections of the catalogues, which must mean that the gender performances are different today. There is a new definition

¹³⁸ Butler (1988), p. 520-521.

¹³⁹ Gornick (1976), p. viii-ix.

of being a woman from 1984 and onwards and therefore one constructs gender thereafter. For the male models the stereotype has shifted as well and become more feminine from 1984. Before that, in Allmänco, the models indulge power and control, but for NLYMAN and ELLOS those attributes have disappeared. In the NLYMAN image it differs again as we cannot see the models face and can therefore not be completely certain of which gender the model has. The performance for this image is rather neutral and does not say as much as the previous images. The performative male gender has therefore also undergone a change in how it is portrayed in catalogues and websites.¹⁴⁰

2.4.2 Stereotypes in performance

The gender roles which are portrayed above as a type of performance can also be seen as a type of acting performance in the mail-order spread in form of texts and images, and thereby a form of intermediality. Erving Goffman talks about performativity, which he has drawn from the dramaturgy and then applied on everyday situations. He means that the individual is performing when interacting with other people, which in this case are the models or illustrations of men and women.¹⁴¹ Goffman explains in his theory that there are three parts that make up the social situation; the actors, the scene and the audience. With actors he explains that he means the person or the participant trying to influence the other participants or the audience, which in this case are the observers or customers.¹⁴²

In the mail-order catalogues and websites, there are the models fronting the pages, being the actors trying to influence us as consumers with stereotypical roles depending on which time the mail-order catalogue or website is from. In the Allmänco catalogue from 1939 there are four models fronting the chosen page from the women's section. This is in the age of the "Folkhemmet" or "the people's home", referred to important part of the social democratic politics describing the emerging welfare state. The woman in this time period did not have the same role in the Swedish society as she has today. She might have worked but was not the main family provider, that role was occupied by the man. Her role was usually to take care of the children while man worked. This role can be interpreted as evident in the Allmänco catalogue, in which the woman stands dressed up in dresses with patterns waiting for her husband to come home and greet her, alternatively she is waiting for her husband and children to come to the kitchen table and have the dinner that she just prepared for them.

¹⁴⁰ Holmberg (2008), p. 236-239.

¹⁴¹ Goffman (2009), p. 9.

¹⁴² Ibid, p. 23.

Just as the woman is playing a role the man can also be seen as playing a role in the Allmänco catalogue. While the woman can be interpreted as a housewife, the man can be interpreted as a man just on his way home from work, when he stops to smoke a cigar, as shown in the illustration of the man wearing jacket model DD436 and DD441-442. The third man's pose could be translated as a man smoking a cigar at work while trying to figure out his next business strategy, since smoking was more socially accepted and displayed in fashion advertisements than it is now in 2017. For example, in the photographs in the ELLOS catalogue from the men's section and in the NLYMAN webpage there are no cigars or cigarettes present.¹⁴³ The roles the models play according to Goffman's theory of performativity are different depending on in which time the photographs has been published, they are drawn from different contexts with different social and cultural values, which for example the cigar is an example of.

In the men's section from the ELLOS catalogue the man is portrayed as man who is dressed up and thereby could be working, but because he does not have his suit he could be on his way home or on holiday. Because it is a summer jacket and most people are on holiday in the summer it is most likely that this is what the men are trying to communicate to the customer. In the chosen page from the woman's section in ELLOS the women in the small photograph standing together in a white and a pink dress look like they are trying to convey the feeling of two women on holiday, and this is further amplified by the blue pool in the background. The other women in black, in the second photograph from ELLOS, do not seem to be on holiday, but still seem to have had a long summer day, which the shoes tossed to the side could be an example of.

Neither the page from the men's section nor the page from the women's section would be conveying the same message if the photographs were featured alone without the headlines, because the headlines are clarifying the message communicated. As mentioned above the words and photographs are co-existing in intermediality, according to Hans Lund.¹⁴⁴ It can also be seen as the facade or the scene in which the play is featured, something that Goffman explains has a crucial role in how the actor's performance is interpreted.¹⁴⁵ If the dresses in the woman's section in ELLOS catalogue would not have had the headline: "Spring fresh and

¹⁴³ ELLOS (1984), p. 481 and NLYMAN (2017) *GARRET JACKET*.

¹⁴⁴ Lund (2002), p. 19-20.

¹⁴⁵ Goffman (2009), p. 29-33.

summer cold corset dress; Now 69:-"¹⁴⁶ (Our translation), then the images would not have been interpreted in the same way as if it would have said, for example: "Nice autumn dresses in different colours". This is because the words "summer" and "summer cold" are implying that it is a hot and sunny day in a time of the year where most people celebrate their holidays. The same thing is applied to the men's section in ELLOS, which has the headlines "Unbeatable price on the modern jacket with suede-feeling. Non-iron. Machine-washable."¹⁴⁷ (Our translation), and "Summer jacket with the right fashion details"¹⁴⁸ (Our translation). The words; "modern", "summer" and "right", gives the jacket a meaning to the fashionable customer who wants to dress right for the holiday season.

In the page from the website NELLY the woman in the photograph is playing or communicating a role that sends out a message of sex. With "the come-on look" visible, which was mentioned in the previous chapter, and the slightly open mouth, the model could be interpreted as she is sending out a sexual message. The image could be interpreted as wanting to influence the audience or the customers, which in this case is to become this role. If they buy this dress they become her and might get the man. To whom is this role communicated, to the men who want to have her or the women who wants to be her? In Goffman's theory of performativity, the role the model takes is interpreted in this sexual manner because we have seen it in several social occasions, like for example in pornography and in other fashion advertisements.¹⁴⁹ The role can thereby be interpreted as being built on our cultural and social values and drives, because we have chosen to interpret the role in this way.

Vinken writes about this phenomenon through the male renunciation and how fashion and luxury in the 20th century became connected to women already from the start. She cites Simone de Beauvoir from her book *Les deuxième sexe*, which was written in 1949, in which Beauvoir writes: "When she has accepted her vocation as a sexual object, then she gladly adorns herself, she 'costumes herself to the pleasure of all men, and to the pride of her owner."¹⁵⁰ What Vinken wants to express here with Beauvoir's words is that even though the male renunciation took place in the 1900's, as described by Veblen, the leisure class and how women involuntarily were submitted to an objective economic status it now something

¹⁴⁶ See appendix 4.4.

¹⁴⁷ See appendix 4.5.

¹⁴⁸ See appendix 4.5.

¹⁴⁹ Goffman (2009), p. 23.

¹⁵⁰ Vinken (2005), p. 6.

women have come to accept.¹⁵¹ The female model from NELLY is thereby communicating an objectifying sexual role, which the women today, according to de Beauvoir, have accepted. Even though Beauvoir wrote this in 1949 it is still relevant today. The woman as seen in the photograph from NELLY has signs that can be interpreted as sexual as described above, for example "the come-on look". These signs point to the model communicating a role as a woman dressing up to appeal to opposite sex, and not a role as dressing up to satisfy her own needs. A model dressing up for her would not have to be portrayed in a way that attracts the opposite sex, if the women's final goal was not to become attractive. The woman from the NELLY website is showing us a way to reach a goal we believe men want, but if the final goal was not to attract men then she could have been portrayed as a completely different role in a nonsexual way.

In the photograph from NLYMAN the man is portrayed with a cropped body, without a head. It does not have a headline, thus not implying that the jacket should be intended for a special kind of man, nor does it imply that the company wants to influence the costumers to take on a stereotypical role. This makes it possible for the audience or the costumers to imagine by themselves to whom the jacket is for and to create whatever role they want the man to have. It can be a particular profession or it can be someone close to them like for example a boyfriend, a brother or even themselves. This creates possibilities for all kinds of men, they just have to be between 18-35 years old and be trendy, outgoing and youthful.¹⁵²

¹⁵¹ Ibid, p. 6.

¹⁵² NELLY (2017). *OM NELLY.COM, NLYMAN.COM & QLIRO GROUP.*

3. Discussion and conclusions

The purpose of this study was to compare how genders and fashion are connected and manifested in the fashion remote commerce by portraying different gender stereotypes. This, to see what message the remote commerce companies are sending out to their customers and what subconscious message the customers are buying when they are purchasing a garment. This has been analysed conducting a semiotic analysis in four parts, in which the first one has been a denotative analysis to clarify how the models are portrayed to emphasise different signs. The remaining parts have then consisted of conative parts to convey the materials underlying message.

The main topic in this thesis has been the relation between femininity and masculinity versus what is codified as male and what is codified as female, and their relationship to fashion. Most often femininity is connected with females and masculinity with males, but it is not always that easy. Vinken says that the lines between genders are blurring out, something, which is apparent in the way men, and women dress but also in the way men and women are portrayed in fashion. In the empirical material of this thesis, Vinken's theory is visible in men's facial expression in the ELLOS catalogue but cannot be followed in NLYMAN's way of portraying fashion, because of the model's cropped head. Henceforth the theory of Vinken cannot be applied in the men's section since it is not portrayed in the same way. The image does not fill a role, it keeps the door open for interpretations. Until 1984, the material shows that the man has been given a stereotypical role, in the same way as the women from the Allmänco catalogue have been given a role of for example the housewife, being connected to which cultural and social values our society is built on. If the concept of gender blurring was seen as universal then the signs would have been visible in the women's section of Allmänco, ELLOS and NELLY, which they are not. The woman is portrayed in a traditional manner of femininity and even in NELLY the woman is seen as being objectified to appeal to the opposite sex, thereby indirectly appealing to the female consumer when she dresses up as a stereotype turned into the man's ideal attraction.

It is, however, important to remember that the results are based only on the study materials used in this particular case. We have chosen to look at two specific garments, dresses for women and jackets for men. If we instead would have looked closer at another type of garment this study could possibly have come to a completely different conclusion. It is very

possible that the theory of gender blurring in women's fashion could have been more apparent in suits, for example, since it is a garment, which has been codified to masculinity.

To take out what is codified as femininity and masculinity we have looked closely on how the garment is presented in texts and images and how the different media co-exist. The words are used to amplify the images just as the images are used to amplify the texts or the words in the mail-order spread and websites. This points to what the fashion companies are sending out to the consumer, different gender roles that according to Goffman could be interpreted as different actors playing parts in different plays. Thereby we are answering our research questions and also closing in on previous research in which Goffman has done a similar study to ours. He, however, focused on how men and women are portrayed in gender advertisements. What he does not evaluate is how fashion and gender co-operate to portray a role, and this is something that can be elaborated even further after this study. Previous researchers focus more on gender and advertisement in general. They find that women and men are portrayed according to the stereotypical roles; women are more sexualized while men are portrayed more according to a profession. None of the researchers, which are mentioned above, have compared men and women in different time periods as we have done in this study. Katharina Lindner and Paul Jobling, which have done the studies that are the most similar to ours, does only show how women or men is portrayed and sexualized and does therefore not compare them to each other. We differ ourselves from Lindner's study, and where she says that the woman is portrayed in more stereotypical way between 1955-1975; we state that the woman still has a stereotypical role, which is often sexualized. The other previous researchers focus more on gender and advertisement in general, as a result the fashion perspective is not interpreted in the analysis and the results become inconclusive. It is here this study stands out once again, as we do an interdisciplinary study where different perspectives from different areas are studied, through the main field of fashion.

We have contributed to the field of fashion with new knowledge, which we have gathered through proven theories and methods and come with the conclusion that our thesis is true, stereotypes in fashion remote commerce exists and is communicated to the customer for her/him to buy. Future research could evolve this phenomenon further in why we buy this role and if the customer is even aware of this purchase. If the customer is not aware of him/her buying a role, what does he/her believe he/she has bought? Another question we have stumbled upon while conducting our research is the sexualised image, that for example both ELLOS and NELLY is communicating in the women's fashion. Why is this? Are the

fashion companies communicating sex to appeal to the opposite sex and thereby appealing to the intended customer or why is this stereotype being communicated for us to buy? If the customer is buying to appeal to the opposite sex then is the customer buying and dressing for her/himself or for someone else?

4. Appendix

4.1 Appendix

Nedanstående 4 modeller äro av statens industrikommission fastställda typer och till fastställda priser

STRELEKAR 40—42—44—46.

4 B-poäng.
DC 16 = Stand. 18 c M 40110 Damklänning. Trevlig, klädsam modell i bästa stelstuförande. Tillverkad av mjuk, smidig västarkvalitet i högröd, marinblå och modern turkos (blågrön) färg med stilfullt ringmönster i vitt. Modell med liggande krage och små slag. Smakfull garnering på fickorna i vitt samt avskuren i midjan. Skärp att knyta.
 Pris pr styck **12.40**
 Högstpris i detalj incl. oms. 19.50.

4 B-poäng.
DC 17 = Stand. 18 c M 40200 Damklänning. Lättläst, trevlig modell som kommer att uppskattas. Tillverkad av extra prima västarkvalitet i knallröd eller ljus marinblå färg med litet i vitt. Liggande krage med små slag samt modern kort ärm. Två bröstfickor. Avskuren i midjan och skärp att knyta.
 Pris pr styck **12.15**
 Högstpris i detalj incl. oms. 19.00.

6 B-poäng.
DC 18 = BW 3005 c M 40300 Fruklänning i smyckat klädsam modell. Tillverkad av prima västarkvalitet i stilfulla blommönster på mörk botten. Liggande krage samt slag av vitt k-siden. Garnerad med dekorativa glasknappar. Avskuren i midjan och skärp med spänne. Kjolen med motveck.
 Storlek 40—46. Pris pr styck .. **14.70**
 Högstpris i detalj incl. oms. 23.00.
 Storlek 48. Pris pr styck **16.15**
 Högstpris i detalj incl. oms. 25.50.

9 B-poäng.
DC 19 = BW 3008 c M 40400 Salklänning. Av kraftig, men extra mjuk och behaglig västarkvalitet med stilfulla blommönster på marinblå botten. Försedd med hängslan och två fickor samt knäppes ända ned. Jackan i modern modell och ärm med uppslag.
 Pris pr styck **14.95**
 Högstpris i detalj incl. oms. 23.50.

Speciell Fruklänning

Solkänning med jacka

Extra populär fru-modell

EXTRA POPULÄR FRUMODELL

6 B-poäng.
DC 20 = BW 3005 c V 88888 Damklänning i frumodell. Av extra prima västarkvalitet i marinblå bottenfärg med mönster i vitt. Trivsamt modell med kragen av marinblått k-siden och knäppes med klädda knappar. Avskuren i midjan och kjolen med motveck.
 Storlek 40—46. Pris pr styck **14.55**
 Högstpris i detalj incl. oms. 23.00.
 Storlek 48. Pris pr styck **15.95**
 Högstpris i detalj incl. oms. 25.00.

Piqué' - - ÅRETS STORA MODETYG
I DESSA
3 piffiga klänningar

**STORA
SLAG-
NUMMER
FÖR
SÄSONG-
EN!**

206
208
207

209

STOR
SI
DG185
somm
litet k
färg n
med l
dern i
Pris p

DG19
nytt l
röd l
smak
knapp
Pris p

DG19
kvali
svart
kliche
smak
Pris p

DG206 Damklänning, elegant klänning,
av stilfull kvalitet, bredrandig piqué i
blått/vitt eller rött/vitt. Sydd i käck
modell med snibbiga kragslag. Knapp-
smak
garnerad sprund samt kort ärm. Skärp
sträv
i brytande färg samt två fickor. En
verkligt vacker modeklänning till
exceptionellt lågt pris.
Pris pr styck **5.75**

DG18
elega
mode
nerin
knapp
Pris p

DG208 Damklänning, enastående vac-
ker sommarklänning, av kraftig kva-
litet piqué i stilfulla blommönster på
vitt eller crème-färgad botten. Chic
modell med krage och ärmuppslag av
av ytt
vit piqué, vit dragkedja samt skärp
kort
samt
till.
Kjolen med veck fram-
Kjok
Pris p

DG207 Damklänning, en förtjusande modeklän-
ning, tillverkad av extra prima kvalitet piqué med
tryckta blommönster. Blå bottenfärg med mönster
i vitt samt vit bottenfärg med mönster
fantasimönster. Smakfull modell med kort ärm,
rynkad vid axeln, kragslag av enfärgad vit piqué
samt knappgarnerad framklaff. Skärp med spänne.
Kjolen med veck framtill.
Pris pr styck **5.65**

AV RANDMÖNSTRAD WISTRA
DG209 Damklänning, en flott klänning, tillverkad av
mjuk och härlig wistra kvalitet i moderna randmönster
med huvudfärg i blått/vitt och rött/vitt. Sydd i proper
rosentmontering och trevlig skärning framtill. Skärp med
spänne samt Kjolen med motveck.
Pris pr styck **7.25**

236
234

— ALLMANCO A.-B. — BORÅS —

LUMBERJACKOR s. k. BOLIDENJACKOR

Välkända typer och kvaliteter



DD436



Modell till DD439, tyg som provet



DD441-442

DD436 Bolidenjacka av kraftig, smidig kvalitét enfärgad velvetin i mörkbrun och mörkblå färg. Propp modell med krage och herrlag, tvåradig framskäppning samt 2 bröstfickor i hålglan med knäppbara ficklock. Fram nedtill något rundkuren och bak rakakuren med resinfällning vid sidorna. Bästa konfektion med smekket axelstycke, ringad ärm samt dubbla sömmar. "Enskildsmärket" å varje plagg.

Manstolekar 46-56. Pris per styck **3.90**
Storlek 6-12 år. Pris per styck **3.30**
Storlek 14-18 år. Pris per styck **3.60**

DD439 Jacka av extra tjock och godigen tryckt velvetin i dukset ruttmönster med färger i blått/grönt eller brun/beige. Sammenhængende vacker yta. Modell med krage och herrlag, tvåradig framskäppning samt två bröstfickor med knäppbara ficklock. Lång ärm med knäppbar manschett samt åtsittande midja med resbandinfällningar vid sidorna.

Genstolekar 6-12 år. Pris per styck **3.75**
Ynglingstolekar 14-18 år. Pris per styck **4.10**
Manstolekar 46-56. Pris per styck **4.70**

DD441 Lumberjacka av pålitlig slottark kvalitét velvetin i brun och blå modiefärg. Modell med lösgående krage samt dold bisetta framtill, två bröstfickor med knäppbara ficklock, ärm sömmar.

Storlek 6 år 8-10 år 12-14 år 16-18 år Mann 46-56
Pris per styck **2.30 2.60 2.85 3.15 3.65**

DD442 Lumberjacka av pålitlig kvalitét vindtyg i modern grå eller brun färg. Sydd i samma populära modell som jackan DD441. "Trenskildsmärket - Högsta kvalitét" å varje plagg.

Storlek 6-12 år. Pris per styck **2.85**
Storlek 14-18 år. Pris per styck **3.40**
Manstolekar 46-56. Pris per styck **4.10**

— ALLMÄNCO A. B. BORÅS —

**Vårfräsch och sommarsval
snörlivsklänning**

Nu 69:--

a

129:--
69:--
BOMULL

a Klänning i skön bomull
— vårfräsch och sommarsval! Fin-
tvätt 40°. Snörlivsmodell, halv-
knäppt med dragkedja och rynkre-
sår bak. Snörning fram och har
knytskärp i midjan. Längd 68 cm i
C38. *Storlekar efter färg.*
536-3897 Svart (C34—46)
536-3705 Vit (C34—38)
536-3713 Cerise (C34—46)
Pr styck 69:--

454 ellos

Köpinformation
se sidan 402
i katalogen

4.5 Appendix

Oslagbart pris på den moderna jackan med mockakänsl
Strykfri • maskintvättbar

C Jacka med mockakänsla, mycket skrynkelhärdig av Alova-3000 (97% polyester/3% polyurethan). Helfodrad med nylonlångt. Fintvätt 40°. En innerficka, två halvsneda framtickor och en bröstficka med dragkedja. Slängs med dragkedja och har omlottmanschetter. Storlekar C46—56. 847-0195 Natur 847-0187 Blå Pr styck 299:—

C ~~398:—~~ **299:—**

POLYESTER/ POLYURETHAN

POLYESTER/ BOMULL

d

Sommarjacka med de rätta modedetaljerna

d Vårens och sommarens jacka av 65% polyester/35% bomull med foder i ren bomull. Fintvätt 40°. Aktuell modell med rutstickat ök och dold kapsuschong i kragen. Dragband i nederkanten, slängs med dragkedja. En innerficka med knäppning och fyra fickor med dragkedja och överliggande kant. Ärmor med resärmudd och reglerbar vidd med bågdragkedja. Storlekar C46—56, C-centilong 173—185. 847-0237 Khakibeige Pr styck 169:—

198:— **169:—**

Tag fram Ellos-katalogen - ring 033-33 000 - gör fynd!

ellos 481









4.6 Appendix

NELLY.COM NLYMAN.COM FRI FRAKT* & EXPRESSELEVERANS SEK

NELLY.COM Sök produkt, namn, märke, m.m. Mina sidor Logga ut

NYHETER SHOPPA MÄRKEN DESIGNERS OCCASION SHOP TOPPLISTAN REA Till kassan: 150 kr

Tillbaka Kläder-för-kvinnor Kläder Klänningar Vila **Vimikka dress**



Vila
VIMIKA DRESS
Loose fit dresses - Rosa
☆☆☆☆☆ (0)

Välj färg: Rosa

Välj storlek: X-SMALL SMALL MEDIUM LARGE
Storleksguide

Lägg i shoppingbagen

Ta bort från mina favoriter

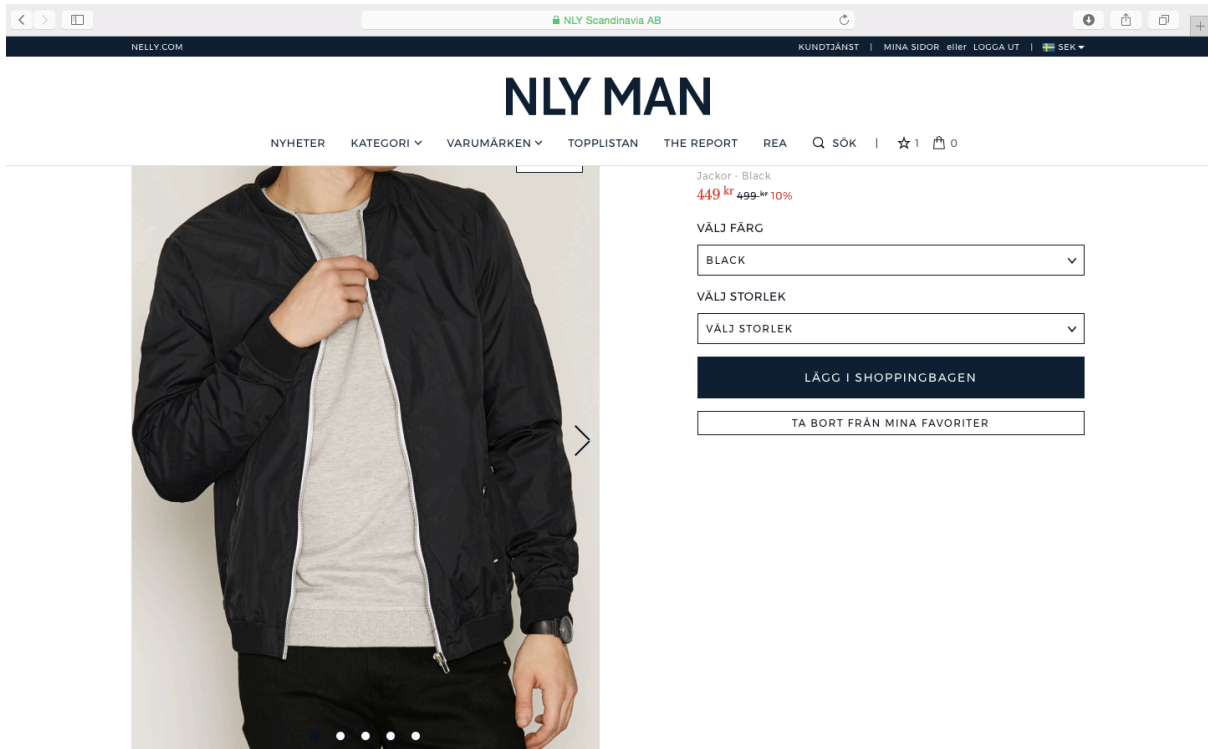
Produktbeskrivning Om märket Leverans

Klänning från Vila. Rak, lös modell med rundad hals och liten öppning framtill. Försluts med knapp i rygg. Resår i midja. Fodrad.
Tillverkad av 100% Viskos. Foder tillverkad av 100% Polyester.

Modellen: Modellen är 169 cm lång och bär storlek X-Small.
Artikelnr: 50549-0054
Färg: Rosa
Kategori: Kläder / Klänningar / Loose fit dresses
Ladda ner pressbild

f t p e

4.7 Appendix



The screenshot displays the NLY MAN website interface. At the top, a dark navigation bar contains the text "NELLY.COM" on the left and "KUNDTJÄNST | MINA SIDOR eller LOGGA UT | SEK" on the right. Below this, the "NLY MAN" logo is prominently displayed in the center. A horizontal menu below the logo lists: "NYHETER", "KATEGORI", "VARUMÄRKEN", "TOPPLISTAN", "THE REPORT", "REA", "SÖK", and a shopping cart icon with "1" and "0".

The main content area features a large image of a man wearing a black bomber jacket over a grey t-shirt. To the right of the image, the product details are shown:

- Product name: "Jackor - Black"
- Price: "449 kr" (with "499 kr" crossed out and "10%" discount indicated)
- Color selection: "VÄLJ FÄRG" with a dropdown menu showing "BLACK".
- Size selection: "VÄLJ STORLEK" with a dropdown menu showing "VÄLJ STORLEK".
- Buttons: "LÄGG I SHOPPINGBAGEN" (dark blue) and "TA BORT FRÅN MINA FAVORITER" (white).

4.8 Appendix

The screenshot shows the NLY MAN website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the NLY MAN logo and various menu items: NYHETER, KATEGORI, VARUMÄRKEN, TOPPLISTAN, THE REPORT, REA, SÖK, and a shopping cart icon showing 0 items. Below the navigation bar, a breadcrumb trail reads: Tillbaka / Kläder-för-män / Kläder / Jackor / Solid / Garren jacket.

The main content area is split into two columns. The left column is a dark blue sidebar with a close button (X) in the top right corner. It contains the following text:

Leverans

Standardleverans: Fri frakt vid köp över 199kr, 3-5 arbetsdagar.
Expressleverans: 59 kr, 1-3 arbetsdagar (upp till 3 dagar för postnummer som börjar på 62 och 82-98).

- 14 dagars returrätt. [Klicka här](#) för mer information om byten och returer.
- Säkra betalningar: Välj mellan kortbetalning, direktbetalning, faktura, konto/delbetalning, eller PayPal.

The right column displays the product details for the GARREN JACKET. It shows the product name, color (Solid), and material (Jackor - Black). The price is listed as 449 kr, with a 10% discount from the original price of 499 kr. Below the price, there are two dropdown menus: "VÄLJ FÄRG" (set to BLACK) and "VÄLJ STORLEK" (set to VÄLJ STORLEK). At the bottom of the product details, there are two buttons: "LÄGG I SHOPPINGBAGEN" and "TA BORT FRÅN MINA FAVORITER".

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5.3 Image literature

- Appendix 4.1: Allmänco AB (1944). *Allmänco katalog; våren och sommaren 1944*. Retrieved from the Textile Museum of Sweden in Borås.
- Appendix 4.2 and 4.3: Allmänco AB (1939). *Allmänco katalog; våren och sommaren 1939*. Retrieved from the Textile Museum of Sweden in Borås.
- Appendix 4.4 and 4.5: ELLOS AB (1984), *Ellos Sommar rea. Sommarens succé nu från 69:- 1984*. Retrieved from Gothenburg University, Humanities Library.
- Appendix 4.6: NELLY.COM, *NELLY.COM (2017) VIMIKA DRESS*.

- Appendix 4.7: NLYMAN.COM, *NLYMAN.com (2017) GARREN JACKET*.
- Appendix 4.8: NLYMAN.COM, *NLYMAN.com (2017) GARREN JACKET*