Semiotic Analysis of Cosmetics and Beauty Advertisements

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1 Introduction
Advertising is inescapable nowadays. We are surrounded by leaflets, billboards, TV-commercials or adverts on the internet that tell people to buy a certain product or service. Advertising influences our decisions and creates meaning and ideal images of human beings. Cosmetics and other beauty products, which are obviously used as beautifiers, are generally intended to help people pave the way to belong to a particular social group. As everything is about the perfect appearance nowadays, people tend to buy certain products just to look approximately like the models that advertise these products.

Considering the huge influence of advertising and how it affects people’s feelings, decisions and attitudes, it is crucial that we as consumers understand how meaning is created and conveyed through adverts. This should prevent us believing advertising messages and buying certain products without a second thought. In my business administration studies I have the possibility to see the issue of advertising from a more economical point of view. As a result it is quite obvious for me that the cosmetics industry like all other industries just wants to maximize its profits. To achieve this goal they seduce people to buy their products by promising them that when doing so they will look like the models in the adverts.

However, I am not only interested in the economic realm but also curious to find out how meaning is created in advertising and how the messages conveyed influence the viewers of adverts. Thus, I use a semiotic approach in this thesis to investigate the characteristic features of beauty and cosmetics advertisements that aim to convey a particular message. As advertising is often criticized for its stereotypical portrayal of gender and the objectification of women in terms of sexuality, I will take a closer look at the gender portrayal in this diploma thesis. The aim of this is to find out whether men and women are still depicted in stereotypical ways. In addition, I will try to find out whether issues like nature, sports or glamour that are associated with lifestyle and are currently very important in society also play a crucial role in beauty and cosmetics advertisements.

The first part of my paper provides a general introduction and introduces my topic. This general part includes information on the importance of the body and the current beauty ideals in terms of women and men. Further, I give some information on semiotics and advertising, especially on various techniques and strategies used in advertising and on the roles of gender in adverts. Additionally, I take a look at the various codes that advertisers make use of and that help to convey particular messages.

As already mentioned, semiotics provides the theoretical basis for this thesis. Semiotics is also referred to as the study of signs and seeks to discover how meaning is
generated in advertisements through the interaction and combination of signs. Further, semiotics concentrates on how implicit messages are sent through adverts and how the targeted use of various components of ads (e.g. distance, perspective, props, settings, etc.) influence these messages. This chapter further provides information on the founding fathers of this discipline, Ferdinand de Saussure and Charles S. Peirce.

The second part of my thesis deals with the empirical analysis and starts with a short overview of the various brands I examine in this diploma thesis (e.g. Nivea, Maybelline New York or Gillette). This overview contains information on what products a brand produces, whom they use as testimonials (in the case of prominent people), etc. For the analysis, 97 adverts of beauty advertisements were taken from the internet and divided into four groups according to the shot size used. The first group consists of adverts that show close-ups of female models, depicting their face, shoulders and sometimes also their hands. In the second group the upper part of the female body is depicted, while in group three the whole body of women is pictured. The last group, however, consists of 21 adverts in which products for males are advertised.

Within the third part of this diploma thesis I deal with the meaning of colours. As colours are all around us and are also said to affect our feelings, the use of them is of great importance in this paper. Advertisers use certain colours to underline the messages sent in their adverts. In this part of my paper, I provide a brief analysis on what colours are frequently used in terms of female or male advertisements.

In the last part of my diploma thesis I summarize the main results of the analysis. By comparing female and male advertisements I outline differences in terms of what is important in female and male advertisements, and on the portrayal of gender in cosmetics and beauty adverts.
2 General Part

2.1 The importance of the body

In late modern societies the body has become a tool which can consciously be formed. Thus, the body can be seen as a medium of self-expression. Since fitness, physical well-being and the perfect body are extremely important in the consumer society we live in, the beauty industry is booming. In the U.S., for instance, people spend more on fitness and beauty than on education or social purposes; and this trend can already be discovered in Europe as well (cf. Davids 2007: 11-18).

As a result of this body mania, another phenomenon has occurred mainly in the western part of the globe, namely the slimness craze. Being slim is associated with being healthy and therefore many industries profit from this cult. Until the 20th century, being too slim was seen as something unhealthy and slimness was associated with illnesses or poverty, but since the early 1920s, however, the figure of women has become a key element when it comes to the judgment of female beauty. But it was not until the 1960s when the obsession of women of being slim started getting more extreme. Suddenly not only models started getting skinnier and skinnier but also ordinary women. This slimness craze, of course, has a lot of dark sides, which can be discovered especially in Europe or North America, where more and more people, mainly women, suffer from eating disorders like anorexia or bulimia (cf. Davids 2007: 21-25). However, in the U.S., especially in slums where there is a lot of poverty and where a lot of black singers live, as well as in Africa, thin bodies are still not regarded to be beautiful. On the contrary, they are rather connected to illnesses or to a low social status (cf. Posch 1999: 14).

Interestingly, though people have different preferences, studies have shown that in Western society there is a huge consensus when it comes to the question who is attractive and who is not. It is assumed that the reason for this consensus is due to the worldwide spreading of current beauty ideals by the media (cf. Davids 2007: 44-45). Scientists further assume that there have always been certain beauty standards, which do not change frequently (i.e. people have always liked similar attributes of a body). But what has changed is, for example, fashion (cf. Henss quoted in Davids 2007: 46). This beauty ideal that is said to be the same since the ancient world comprises large eyes, light skin or full lips in terms of women, and a square face and dark skin in terms of men. Furthermore, beauty ideals are also influenced by our culture. In the Arabic world, for instance, the slim bodies that are preferred in the Western world are not considered to be beautiful. The reason for this is that Arabic men favour curvy female bodies (cf. Davids 2007: 46).
2.2 What is beauty?

Schönheit ist nur ein Versprechen von Glück, nicht seine Erfüllung.

(Stendhal 1975 quoted in Liessmann 2009: 8)

Is beauty an expression of subjective sensation or are there objective criteria for beauty? Obviously, beauty is definitely crucial and a daily challenge and seems to have become a duty recently. Posch (1999: 14), for instance, claims that beauty manifests itself in body attributes like weight or skin. Moreover, beauty is considered to be something outstanding and not achievable for everyone. To maintain this exclusive status, the norms and expectations are raised. Nonetheless, beauty is something subjective and depends on the social context. In the media, beautiful people are presented as role models. Additionally, luck, love, and success seemingly also depend on people’s looks, figure or smile (cf. Liessmann 2009: 9).

Beauty has a very contradictory character, because on the one hand it is something desirable, while on the other hand an exaggerated beauty cult is seen as superficial. Remarkably, the look of women is always judged more critically than the look of men. Women receive more endorsement when they are beautiful, but they also receive more criticism when they do not fit the norm. This means that they are more often judged by their appearance and not by their actions (cf. Posch 1999: 15-16).

Since women are more occupied with their looks than men do, they are also more prone to promises of the cosmetics industry. Interestingly, women’s self-worth depends a lot on their outer appearance, while this issue is not so important for men. It is not true, however, that women have always emulated a certain beauty ideal and that they are the fair sex inherently. In the animal kingdom, for example, the most beautiful males often chose quite inconsiderable females. Further, in ancient Greece male bodies were considered to be more attractive than female bodies. But in the 18th century, the myth of the fair sex came into existence and the efforts in terms of beautiful bodies began (cf. Posch 1999: 17).

Although it is nowadays no longer necessary for women to prettify themselves since they are no longer dependent on men in terms of a secure financial existence, beauty is still defined as a female characteristic. However, looks are also important for men by now. Fortunately, they are not under as much pressure as women are, since they can also demonstrate their handsomeness through money, performance or social status (cf. Posch 1999: 21-22).

2.3 The current beauty ideal and the influence of the media

The current beauty ideal in terms of women is characterized by an extremely slim body and a striving to preserve youth as long as possible. The female body, which has been provided with
more fat tissue in the area of the thighs than the male body, should be trained to obtain taut tights and a slim waist. The only parts of the body which are permitted to be in a ‘normal’ condition are the buttocks and the breasts. However, the latter need to be firm and not too big. Fat, however, not least because it is a symbol for the ugly, unhealthy and undisciplined, is totally out. Today’s focus is rather on the body itself, since human beings define their place in the world through it (cf. Posch 1999: 48).

The world we live in is a world in which stability-ensuring parameters such as family or religion are becoming less important due to the ever-increasing hectic and mobile lifestyle. Thus, our own bodies seem to be the only constant variables to count on or to influence and change. Unfortunately, our physical appearance is often put on a level with our intelligence, character or work ethic, and thus many corpulent or fat people are considered to be stupid or lazy (cf. Vitas 2002: 31-32).

Advertising also plays a significant role in terms of this problem, since it tries to convey the impression that through buying a certain product the customers can achieve a state of perfection for which he or she longs emotionally. Because of the omnipresence of particular media messages the conveyed ideas manifest themselves in the subconscious of people, especially women. As a result, many females tend to forget that all the supermodels or actresses are professionally styled, shot from a complimentary angle and definitely enhanced digitally before they are depicted on magazine covers or in advertising (cf. Vitas 2002: 32).

One can ask the question why women do not simply ignore such advertisements? One reason might be that they have been considered to be the fair sex (as mentioned above) for decades if not for centuries. Women still judge themselves and are judged by others more than men are. A further problem is that beauty as well as social relations are often seen as commodities and are consumed accordingly (cf. Vitas 2002: 89).

A big threat to people’s beauty is age. Age is so to speak beauty’s arch-enemy and according to the cosmetics industry “a disaster that needs to be dealt with” (cf. Media Awareness Network: Internet Source). Many men, for example, have younger mistresses to forget about their own age. In previous times, when people died at a young age, old age was admired. Today, however, people who are 70 and look like 60 are admired for their youthful appearance. To cut a long story short, nowadays we rather respect youthfulness than age and this phenomenon can also be discovered in the media (cf. Posch 1999: 50-51).

In general, it is not as tragic for men to look their real age, than it is for women (cf. Posch 1999: 50-51). Men with grey hair are still considered to be attractive, while women with grey hair are seen as unattractive (cf. ads 4.12 or 4.17).
What is also alarming is that today’s idea of beauty is more homogeneous than ever before. To blame are the media. Many people believe that the only way to be beautiful is to fit the ideal mentioned above. Discrepancies are no longer seen as a sign of individuality or non-interchangeability, but one is rather labelled an outsider.

Furthermore, according to Media Awareness Network (Internet Source) “research indicates that exposure to images of thin, young, air-brushed female bodies is linked to depression, loss of self-esteem and the development of unhealthy eating habits in women and girls”. Alarmingly, the beauty ideals promoted by the media are unattainable for the majority of women. However, many women internalize these ideals and judge themselves by the beauty standards the advertising industry promotes (cf. Posch 1999: 74).

3 Semiotics

3.1 What is Semiotics? – A definition
According to Nick Lacey, (1998: 56) “semiotics is the study of signs” and was developed simultaneously by Charles S. Peirce and Ferdinand de Saussure. The latter termed his creation semiology, while Peirce invented the term semiotics. However, both definitions have the same meaning, and both have their roots in the Greek term **semeion**, meaning sign.

Obviously, Peirce and Saussure worked independently from each other. However, they both centred their work around the sign. Signs, according to Chandler (1997: Internet Source), “take the form of words, images, sounds, odours, flavours, acts or objects, but such things have no intrinsic meaning and become signs only when we invest them with meaning”.

Semiotics does not only deal with verbal signs but also with non-verbal signs. In short, all sorts of things can be signs. Semiotics is, for instance, also important in terms of picture analysis and began to play a major role in cultural studies in the late 1960s. Chandler points out that “semiotics involves the study not only of what we refer to as ‘signs’ in everyday speech, but of anything which ‘stands for’ something else” (cf. Chandler 1997: Internet Source).

3.2 Ferdinand de Saussure’s concept of signs
The Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure established a basis for semiotics by developing a ‘dyadic’ or two-part model of the sign (cf. Lacey 1998: 57). Bronwen and Ringham (2006: 246) further argue that de Saussure, who mainly focused on the linguistic signs and their arbitrariness, is the founder of modern linguistics. Further, he invented the terms signifier and signified; both in combination form a sign (Chandler 1997: Internet Source).
The signifier is the (physical) form of a sign (e.g. taste, visual material, acoustic) and the signified is the mental concept we associate with a very object. The following example aims to make the meaning of signifier and signified more clearly:

We read the following letters:

D-O-G

The mental concept of a dog is triggered in our head:

Saussure also worked with the terms denotation and connotation. In fact, a denotation is the literal or common-sense meaning of a sign. Connotation, on the other hand, is defined by the Oxford Advanced learners Dictionary (2005: 322) as follows: “connotation is an idea suggested by a word in addition to its main meaning”. This means that when perceiving a sign one often has particular associations with it depending on the situation or the personal background (e.g. age, gender, ethnicity, etc.). A person who, for instance, is afraid of dogs or simply dislikes them will have negative feelings towards this animal, while a dog lover would feel positive about a dog. (Lacey 1998: 58)

Since the relationship between signifier and signified is usually arbitrary we know that the word ‘dog’ for a furry, barking animal is quite accidental, and this animal could have also been called cat. This is exactly what Saussure meant, namely that because of the arbitrariness between signifier and signified the relationship between the two must be learned.

3.3 Charles Sanders Peirce’s concept of signs

The American Charles S. Peirce was also important in terms of the development of semiotics. Peirce declared that “Nothing is a sign unless it is interpreted as a sign” (Chandler 1997: Internet Source). According to Peirce anything can be a sign. What is important is just that someone interprets this sign as standing for something (cf. Chandler 1997: Internet Source).

Of prime concern to Peirce was the development of universal sign categories, and his production of a theory of signs marked the foundation of an American branch of modern semiotics (Bronwen and Ringham 2006: 240).
Chandler (1997: Internet Source), however, further mentions that in contrast to Saussure’s
dyadic model Peirce invented a triadic model of the sign:

- Representamen
- Interpretant
- Object

This model of the sign is also referred to as ‘semiotic triangle’.

The triangle is based on the notion of mediation: one term is related to another via a third correlate. With
regard to the definition of a sign, the correlates or corner points of the triangle are (1) the sign vehicle
(Peirce’s representamen), (2) the sense (Peirce’s interpretant) and (3) the referent (Peirce’s object)
(Bronwen & Ringham 2006: 175).

The following illustration shows the semiotic triangle (cf. Bronwen & Ringham 2006: 175):

![Figure 2: Semiotic Triangle](image)

Peirce also invented a categorization of signs, namely iconic signs, indexical signs and
symbolic signs (cf. Chandler 1997: Internet Source and Lacey 1998: 66). In the following,
there is an exact description with aims to make these terms clear:

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Icon</strong></td>
<td>There is a resemblance between signifier and signified (e.g. pictures, photographs, portraits, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Index</strong></td>
<td>There is a relationship of contiguity between signifier and signified (e.g. smoke is an index for fire, red skin is an index for sunburn, etc.).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Symbol</strong></td>
<td>In a symbol, there is an arbitrary relationship between signifier and signified and thus the relationship must be learnt (e.g. language, traffic lights, traffic signs, etc.).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Figure 3: Icon, Index and Symbol](image)
Iconicity is a strategy that is frequently used in advertising. According to Beasley and Danesi (2002: 40) “brand names and logos are often iconic”. A picture of a body lotion in an advert, for example, is an iconic sign that stands for the body lotion itself.

Indexicality, however, is also used in advertising, mainly in terms of the arrangement of elements. In shoe advertisements, for instance, “the toes of the shoes point indexically to the lettering of the ad”, thereby highlighting the product name by indication (cf. Beasley & Danesi 2002: 40).

Symbols seem to be omnipresent. The most obvious symbolic sign is language. Besides, in our everyday life we find a lot of other symbols as well: a red cross, for example, stands for first aid, the traffic sign ATTENTION (!) asks people to be cautious, and colours do also have symbolic meaning (cf. Beasley & Danesi 2002: 40).

3.4 Myth
Another important person who made a crucial contribution to semiotics was Roland Barthes, a French literary theorist, writer and semiotican (cf. Bronwen & Ringham 2006: 212). Barthes invented the term ‘myth’ in this field of study, not having anything to do with Greek myths or legends, but referring rather to “how signs take on the values of the dominant value system or ideology of a particular society and make these values seem natural” (Lacey 1998: 67). To cut a long story short, Barthes felt that myths are “dominant ideologies of our time” (Chandler 1997: Internet Source) and that their main function is to “make dominant cultural and historical values, attitudes and beliefs seem entirely ‘natural’ […]” (Chandler 1997: Internet Source).

The following example should help to make the myth-concept clear: A red flower with green leaves and a thorn, for example, can signify one’s mental concept of the flower rose (denotative level). The sign ‘rose’ can then signify the mental concept of love or romance. Romance, for instance, is a myth. The myth is about heterosexual love and affectionate caring for each other. Especially on special occasions such as St. Valentine’s Day, a red rose can have no other meaning than romance (cf. Lacey 1998: 67).

To conclude, we create our own form of truth when decoding advertisements. Further, Bronwen and Ringham (2006: 22) argue that the semiotics of advertising has its root in the work of R. Barthes.

3.5 Code
Dyer (1990: 131) claims that a code is a set of rules that is known by the sender as well as by the receiver of a message and plays an important role in our daily lives. Codes are forms of
social knowledge and derived from social interaction. This means that it depends on a person’s social class or ethnicity which codes he or she is taught by the society they live in. Codes also organize our understanding of the world (cf. Dyer 1990: 131-135).

Advertisements, for example, undergo a complex coding process before they are printed in magazines or published on the internet. Many people are involved in this encoding process, such as costume designers, art directors or photographers. All of these people make decisions that influence the process of how the picture will look like at the end. As a result, codes play an important role when it comes to the semiotic analysis of an advert (cf. Dyer 1990: 135). The various codes that are used in advertisements, such as angle, shot size, non-verbal codes or colours are discussed later in this paper.

3.6 Stereotypes
The origins of stereotypes are found in the real world, according to Lacey (1998: 138). Stereotypes are social constructs that become consensus views. Mostly, they are used by people about others they do not know. A popular stereotype is, for instance, that students are generally lazy, poor, badly dressed and politically left-wing. Since the media provide a lot of information and have a lot of influence it is not surprising that they have a huge influence in terms of stereotypes as well (cf. Lacey 1998: 138).

Jones and Jones (1999: 105) also ask to consider that stereotypes are never natural, but ideological. This means that “the representation of the individual, group or nation appears to be natural” (Jones & Jones 1999: 105). Stereotypes create divisions between particular groups of a society and can naturalize the power relationship in society. As a result it is unsurprising that women are often seen as subservient to men and that this position is legitimized. Since stereotypes simply reflect current ideological values of a particular society they cannot be true or false. Without doubt, they are an effective vehicle of representation (cf. Lacey 1998: 139).

4 Advertising
Advertising is omnipresent in our culture, no matter whether you are watching TV, reading the newspaper or waiting for the bus. Advertising in the form we know it developed in the late 19\(^{th}\) century, when improvements in technology and mass-production made the manufacture of products of the same quality and price possible. Furthermore, the first newspaper began to “rely on advertising for a significant part of its revenue”, namely the *Daily Mail*. It was also in the late 19\(^{th}\) century that advertising became a profession and that the first advertising agencies were founded (cf. Vestergaard & Schröder 1985: 4).
Advertising messages do not longer just describe a product, but advertisers focus on the creation of brand names, logos, the designs of packages or bottles, print ads, etc. The main aim of all these things is to arouse particular desires in people’s minds. In short, today’s advertisers do not focus on the product and on the conveyance of information, but they put the emphasis on the benefits that may be expected when purchasing it. In addition, advertising is often said to manipulate people and influence their personal lives, by modifying their personal values in terms of beauty, status, etc. (cf. Beasley and Danesi 2002: 14-15).

4.1 Advertising – A form of communication

Advertising is a one-way mass communication (cf. Vestergaard & Schröder 1985: 13 and Schweiger & Schrattenecker 1986: 2-3). According to Janich, (2001: 34) one-way-communication means that the producer does not get any direct feedback but needs market research or other analysis of buyer’s behaviour instead.

In general, communication involves at least two persons, namely the addresser (i.e. the person speaking) and the addressee (i.e. the person spoken to). The two persons transmit meaning, which has to be embodied in a particular form of code. Additionally, there needs to be a channel which makes it possible to communicate a message between two persons (e.g. in writing letters on paper). The whole communication situation takes place in a certain context (i.e. very situation in which two persons are placed, knowledge they share, cultural background, etc.) (cf. Vestergaard & Schröder 1985: 14). This communicative situation is illustrated in the following communication model (cf. Schweiger & Schrattenecker 1986: 10):

![Communication Model](Schweiger & Schrattenecker 1986: 10)

To transform this model of communication in the field of advertising one can say that the addresser is the advertiser, the addressee the reader of the advert, the meaning that is conveyed is an attempt to convince the addressee to buy the product, the code is language and also a kind of visual code, the channel is, for instance, a printed newspaper, and the context includes, for example, the situation the reader is in (i.e. can he or she afford the product). Since the receiver of the advertising message is part of a more or less circumscribable group
of people it is not possible to adapt the communication to the individual attitudes and needs of the target group (cf. Schweiger & Schrattenecker 1986: 2-3).

The advertising company tries in case of commercial advertising to influence target subjects through advertising messages. For this purpose the advertising idea is encoded, (i.e. the idea is transformed into words and pictures or printed as an advert). By using an advertising medium (e.g. newspapers or TV) the receiver comes into contact with the advertising material. The message is then decoded and interpreted by the receiver.

What is important in this case are personal values, experiences and needs of the target subject. Sometimes there is a gap between what the sender wants to convey and what the receiver understands. As a result one can say that it is very difficult to decode adequately (cf. Schweiger & Schrattenecker 1986: 11).

The target’s attitudes towards the medium are important and often influence the interpretation of the message (e.g. deficient credibility of a newspaper). To sum up, target subjects are not only influenced by their own values and attitudes but also by their surroundings or the actions of competitors (cf. Schweiger & Schrattenecker 1986: 12).

What is of great importance is to attract the consumers’ attention with advertisements. It is crucial that the receiver interprets and decodes the message according to the sender’s intention. At this we should keep in mind that feelings or needs influence our behaviour. Moreover, personal attitudes, moral concepts, interests, etc. are crucial drivers. In general one can argue that we as consumers perceive more easily what we want to perceive (i.e. selective perception) and that it is difficult to perceive something that we do not want to perceive (in German: Wahrnehmungsabwehr) (cf. Schweiger & Schrattenecker 1986: 59).

Thus, the main aim of advertising is to influence the target subjects according to the sender’s view. Schweiger and Schrattenecker (1986: 60) also argue that “die Möglichkeit der Beeinflussung ist umso größer, je geringer die gedankliche Kontrolle des Umworbenen ist.” As a result it is essential that the person wooed does not recognize the manipulation attempts as such, because this is the only way that the target cannot resist these attempts knowingly (cf. Schweiger & Schrattenecker 1986: 58-60).

4.2 Celebrity Sells

When brands choose celebrities to be associated with, they hope that some of the stars’ glamour will rub off on their brand and that the brand will be associated with some of the positive attributes of the prominent person. Celebrity endorsement can also enhance the reputation of a brand. Consumers like to buy such products since they hope that by doing so this will bring some glamour into their own lives as well.
Stars are frequently seen as role models and people tend to identify with particular celebrities. Frequently, they try to resemble their idols in terms of hairstyle or clothing (cf. Pringle 2004: Introduction).

Since public fascination with celebrities has a long history, the media makes it easier for people to get closer to their idols (cf. Pringle 2004: 5). Nowadays almost all cosmetics companies ‘use’ the faces of celebrities to represent their brands.

### 4.3 Techniques and Strategies in Advertising

Advertising is not only important to make people buy a product, but also has particular functions after the buying act. The reasons for this are the following (Moser 2002: 51):

- advertising is crucial to strengthen brand loyalty,
- to win regular customers,
- to reassure people who may have felt unsure after buying a product, and to make them buy it again, and
- to explain how the product is used or to show which emotions can be triggered by using the product.

There are various models that deal with the effects of advertising. One model that has existed since the end of the 19th century is the so-called AIDA-model. According to this model there are four levels in terms of an advertising effect, namely (cf. Moser 2002: 79):

- **Attention**
- **Interest**
- **Desire**
- **Action.**

According to Janich, (2001: 22) advertisements should attract attention, maintain interest, create desire, make people take action and make buying decisions. As a result, an advertisement should address these four levels to be effective.

### 4.4 Picture-Text-Relation

Images are according to Goddard (2002: 13) often seen as the attention seeking devices. However, readers of advertisements do not only focus on images, thereby isolating it from the verbal text presented together with the pictures. The same is true for verbal texts: they are also not read in separation from the images. Therefore, Goddard (2002: 13) suggests that “writing is a form of image-making, too”. Certain typographical features, such as sizes, fonts or styles of the verbal language are also of great significance.

Janich (2001: 188) also feels that in linguistic analysis the picture-text-relation is of great importance, since language and pictures complement one another. Not for nothing the
old saying indicates that ‘a picture paints a thousand words’. Language is better suited to rational or factual argumentation, while emotions can be conveyed more easily through pictures (cf. Janich 2001: 191).

4.5 Components of written advertisements

The standard components of written advertisements are, according to Leech, (1966: 59) the following:

- Headline
- Illustrations
- Body copy (i.e. the main part of the advertisement’s message)
- Signature line (i.e. the brand name, often together with the slogan or picture of the brand pack)
- Standing details (i.e. basic information in small print that appears in the same form on various advertisements, such as address of the firm, how to get additional information, etc.)

![Figure 5: Components of print advertisements (on ad 1.7) based on Leech (1966: 59)](image-url)
A headline can also be described as the hook of an advert. In addition to pictures the headline is the central text element to attract the reader’s attention and interest. The slogan, however, is also often used as hook line. The headline’s main aim is to pick out the additional benefit of the product as a central theme (i.e. unique selling proposition). By doing so, companies try to distinguish their products from the products of competitors. The additional benefit can, for instance, consist mostly of showing various situations of usage (cf. Janich 2001: 43-46).

The body copy is the actual body of text in an advertisement. The main aim of the body copy is to explain the hook addressed in the headline or to supplement the graphical material with further information. In general, the body copy provides more information about the product than the hook or the slogan. This text is rarely read but conveys the impression of credibility by simply existing (cf. Janich 2001: 47-48).

Another important element of an advertisement is the slogan. The slogan should be short and summarize the main message of the advertisement. A further key feature of a slogan is to enhance the recognition of a brand or a product, thereby being image-generating. In addition, the slogan is important for identification purposes and should be connected with a product or the company in general (e.g. ‘Because you are worth it’ by L’Oreal Paris), and should imprint in people’s minds.

Last, there are the images or illustrations that generally function as eye-catchers and are easier to be comprehended than texts with regards to content. Emotional messages can be also conveyed easier. By using targeted advertising strategies in terms of pictures, memory images can develop and allow a company’s names and brands to be connected with visual images (e.g. Marlboro and the cowboy) (cf. Janich 2001: 48-49).

4.6 The role of women and men in advertising

The female body ideal in advertising is with very few exceptions, young, very slim, and taut. One has to differentiate between two types of advertising in which the female body is deployed. In the first case the female body is a kind of product (e.g. in adverts for cosmetics, fashion or body care); while in the second category of advertising the female body only has a supporting function. In the latter female bodies are usually depicted in a more realistic way (cf. Vitas 2002: 19-25).

It is difficult for women to cope with the extreme female body image that is targeted at them, since they often suffer from body-image distortion (i.e. they perceive themselves to be, for example, heavier than they really are). Many women feel quite insecure and dissatisfied with their bodies. These feelings are, of course, enforced when being confronted with all the perfect bodies in advertisements (cf. Vitas 2002: 29-30).
Women are often shown “mentally drifting from the physical scene around them” in advertisements. Frequently, they are in touch with males while doing so. Men, however, are shown in such situations as being ready to cope with the situation alone (cf. Goffman 1976: 65). Additionally, women in adverts frequently bend their legs “as though that part of the body were being employed in a dissociated way.”

Women often withdraw themselves from “social situations at hand through involvements, including emotional response” such as responses of pleasure, delight or laughter (cf. Goffman 1976: 68). Goffman (1976: 69) further points out that when men and women are depicted together in euphoric states, the female expression is more expansive, like in real life (i.e. females, for instance, smile more than males).

Bending postures of the body and head can be frequently observed in adverts featuring women. The lowered position of the head indicates “acceptance of subordination, an expression of ingratiatiation, submissiveness, and appeasement” (cf. Goffman 1976: 46). Smiling women are also frequently used in advertisements. A smile often has the function of a mollifier. In cross-sexed encounters women smile more expansively and more often than men do (cf. Goffman 1976: 48).

Strikingly, men are presented quite rarely in advertisements directed at women. When they are, they are not presented like men are in adverts addressing a male audience, namely not as machos but understanding and friendly (cf. Vestergaard & Schröder 1985: 90). When men and women are depicted together the man usually takes over the executive role, while women are mostly shown while receiving help from men (e.g. being spoon-fed) (cf. Goffman 1976: 32-35).

Vestergaard (19985: 117) also argues that “most people would probably agree that many individual consumer adverts function on the level of day-dream”. Through adverts, women’s unfulfilled desires to be all beautiful, successful, wealthy, etc. are addressed. When one sees the beautiful actresses or singers who are successful in terms of either career or sex, the reader becomes aware that all her desires are not satisfied in her own life (cf. Vestergaard & Schröder 1985: 117).

Vestergaard (1985: 118) further quotes Berger who states that although the women seeing those adverts are aware that even when buying all the products they will not achieve what they are wishing for, in their dream world they can, far away from the dissatisfaction of everyday life. A very important ideological aspect in adverts is the absence of work. This fact also belongs to the day-dream issue that is important in terms of advertising (cf. Vestergaard & Schröder 1985: 146).
4.7 Decoding Advertisements
As mentioned above, the advertising company encodes the message sent through the advert. The reader then has to decode and interpret this message accordingly (cf. Schweiger & Schrattenecker 1986: 11). Dyer (1990: 131) points out that the codes used are forms of social knowledge and derived from social interaction. Important codes in terms of a semiotic analysis of cosmetics advertisements are described in the following in further detail.

4.8 Visual Codes
Props that are used in advertisements can be as important as the product itself, or rather insignificant. They are used to demonstrate the product’s use or which result can be achieved when using it. Some props are used frequently in advertisements since they are symbols of love, wealth, luxury or power. Dyer (1990: 105) points out that a Rolls Royce, for example, indicates wealth or power, while drinks like champagne stand for good taste or extravagance (cf. Dyer 1990: 105).

What is also important in terms of creating a particular message in advertising is the setting. According to Dyer, (1990: 105) settings, like other objects, carry meaning. The setting can be vague or consist of a number of particular props. Outdoor settings, for instance, generally give the impression of being “real”, while indoor settings can be anything from natural to contrived. However, although some indoor settings look quite natural, in fact the furniture is usually more expensive and everything is tidier than in real life (cf. Dyer 1990: 106).

Colours are used to attract the reader’s attention (cf. Lacey: 1998:38) and to make products and packages more lively (cf. Moser 2002: 197). Bright colours, for instance, catch people’s eyes easier than pastel shades. Colours can trigger positive as well as negative emotional reactions. As a result, the choice of colours to convey a particular message is of great significance. In general, it is possible to say that black/white advertisements receive less attention than colourful advertisements (cf. Moser 2002: 200).

The most important part of an advert is the testimonial. A testimonial is an identifiable person (e.g. a singer or actor) that recommends a particular product (cf. Dyer 1990: 106). Especially in cosmetics advertisements testimonials are of great importance as I will prove later in my diploma thesis.

4.9 Technical Codes
The message that is conveyed by a picture can be influenced by the following things (cf. Lacey 1998: 16):
The Angle, for instance, refers to “the camera’s angle in relation to the vertical” (cf. Lacey 1998: 16). A low angle is used to indicate power, because as a viewer, one has to look up at the person depicted. A high angle, however, makes it necessary for the viewer to look down at a character or object and thus makes us superior.

Another crucial element is the distance. The term distance is here used to refer to the distance between the object and the camera. There are 6 various forms of distances (cf. Lacey 1998: 18), namely:

- Extreme long shot (e.g. landscape)
- Long shot (e.g. group of people)
- Medium shot (e.g. one or two people)
- Medium close-up (e.g. part of body)
- Close-up (e.g. face)
- Extreme close-up (e.g. part of the face)

Dyer (1990: 107) also mentions cropping. Here, pictures are cut to put the focus on certain parts of the model’s body (e.g. eyes, legs, hands or lips). In addition, lighting is used to create a certain atmosphere. While the use of light makes an image seem happier, the lack of light gives it a mysterious or threatening character (cf. Lacey 1998: 107).

4.10 Non-verbal Codes

Body language or non-verbal communication (i.e. gestures, facial expression, body movements, gaze, etc.) play a crucial role in the social behaviour of human beings (cf. Argyle 1979: 13). Since verbal and non-verbal communication are tightly connected, body language complements verbal utterances. Further, certain body signals often have different meanings depending on the respective culture (cf. Argyle 1979: 57 & 66). Non-verbal codes are often used by human beings unconsciously. Lacey (1998: 11) mentions eight aspects of non-verbal codes mentioned by Argyle:

- Facial expression
- Gaze
- Gestures and other bodily movements
- Clothes and appearances
- Bodily posture
- Bodily contact
- Spatial behaviour
- Non-verbal aspects of speech (e.g. tone of voice or grunting agreement)
- Face
The face is one of the most important – if not the most important – part of the body when it comes to sending non-verbal signals. The face consists of various parts which can operate independently from each other (cf. Argyle 1979: 201-203):

- mouth: show tongue or teeth, open it more or less
- nose: to wrinkle ones nose, widening of the nostrils
- eyebrows: e.g. raising the eyebrows
- skin: pale, reddened, dry, moist

Various facial expressions can express various feelings. There are seven main categories when talking about facial expressions for feelings, namely: joy, surprise, fear, sadness, anger, interest, disgust and distaste (cf. Argyle 1979: 204).

4.11 Gestures and bodily movements

A gesture is, according to the OALD (2007: 648), “a movement that you make with your hands, your head or your face to show a particular meaning”. Gestures are not used as a substitute for language but for its complement (cf. Argyle 1979: 244). Argyle (1979: 252-253) claims that there is a connection between gestures and other aspects of one’s personality:

1. Gestures mirror the emotional condition.
2. Gestures can be controlled and manipulated. This means that people’s gestures can convey an impression that does not fit their actual mood swings.
3. The way that gestures are used depends on the personal background of the person (age, gender, health, profession, etc.).

Of great importance in terms of gestures are, of course, the hands. Hands cannot communicate feelings as easily as the face can. However, Argyle (1979: 206) makes it clear that the posture of the hands makes it, for example, possible to see if someone is nervous (i.e. the hands are sweaty, shaky, etc.).

4.12 Bearing

There are three main forms of bearing (cf. Argyle 1979: 255):

1. standing, sitting, crouching,
2. kneeling, and
3. lying.

The reader must also pay attention to the posture of arms and legs as well as to the shoulders and spine. Additionally, bearing is important to convey interpersonal attitudes. Argyle also mentions claims of Eckman and Friesen (1967) who state that the facial
expression conveys more information about a particular feeling, while the bearing shows the intensity of the very feeling (cf. Argyle 1979: 258-263).

4.13 Physical contact
The physical contact is the primary form of social communication and stimulates various receptors that react to warmth, pressure, etc. Physical contact is usually performed by hands, arms or mouth and is directed to hands, arms, shoulders, knees, head or the upper part of the body. Further, physical contact conveys the impression of intimacy. The physical contact can also occur in forms like tickling, caressing someone, kissing, hugging, etc. or people can simply touch themselves (cf. Argyle 1979: 267-277).

4.14 Clothes, physique and other aspects of the outside appearance
The outside appearance is generally of great importance and can be seen as a part of non-verbal communication. Clothes, for instance, are said to make a statement about the wearer. In western societies great importance is also attached to attractiveness, since it also influences other people. As a result, many people “manipulate” their body image to fit an ideal (cf. Argyle 1979: 303).

Aspects of outside appearance are, for instance, clothes or jewellery. The main aim of clothes is to protect its wearer from cold, heat or rain and to hide certain parts of the body. Another purpose of clothes is to give information about his or her personality, group membership, etc. Clothes or jewellery are completely under the control of those who wear it. For hair and skin this is only true to a certain extent. In addition, clothes are not only effective in terms of its wearer but also in terms of one’s vis-à-vis (cf. Argyle 1979: 304-305).

Jewellery is often just used to emphasize the beauty of the woman wearing it or to show how rich someone is. Further, hair is also of great importance and one can wear various forms of hairstyles. In a study done by Freedman (1969) it was discovered that women consider men with beards to be more masculine. As a result they feel more feminine in their presence (cf. Argyle 1979: 306).
5 Analysis

The analysis of pictures is of high relevance to me, since in adverts the values and attitudes of our society are mirrored and also work as ideals for many people. I’m especially interested in what ideals are created in advertising with reference to the ideal woman and the ideal man. In this part of my paper I will look at 97 advertisements of cosmetics or other beauty products.

The approach I will use is semiotics. As already mentioned above, semiotics focuses on the sign. Therefore, I will turn my attention to all types of signs and their meanings in this part of my paper. Before starting with the actual analysis I will outline the criteria according to which I divided the adverts into different groups. I will then provide brief information about the 23 brands advertised.

5.1 General Information on the advertisements

The name of a product should not only label the product but also trigger certain associations that should help to sell it. Furthermore, Dyer (1990:141) points out the following:

The names given to cosmetics and other beauty products frequently recall images of beauty, cleanliness, sophistication and naturalness: Moondrop, Natural Wonder, Rainflower, Sunsilk, Skin Des. Sometimes the names of products cover scientific authority: Eterna 27, Clinique, Equalia. Men’s toiletries (not ‘beauty products’, you notice) also have evocative names: Brut, Cossak, Denim, Aramis, Devin.

For my analysis I will use advertisements for 23 different brands. Thus, I want to briefly outline some information about the companies as well as about prominent models that work as testimonials in for them in their advertisements.

5.1.1 Avon

Avon is one of the leading beauty companies in the world and was established in the USA over 120 years ago. Besides beauty products the company’s product line includes fashion, jewellery, lingerie and home products. The prices are affordable and Avon’s products are of a high quality. A face of the company is actress Reese Witherspoon. Avon is concerned with women’s wellbeing and takes action in the field of breast cancer and against domestic violence. Although Avon is a company to focus on products for women, it also collaborates with actors, such as Patrick Dempsey, to create fragrances for men (cf. Avon websites).

5.1.2 Axe

Axe has established itself as one of the world’s most famous grooming brands. First launched in 1983, Axe does not only feature deodorants, but also shower and hair gels. It is a brand of Unilever, whose portfolio ranges from nutritionally balanced foods to household care products and beauty products. The Axe advertisements have already won important awards and the brand is definitely a leader in Europe and Latin America (cf. Axe website).
5.1.3 **Biotherm**

*Biotherm* was founded in 1952 and provides products for men and women. Back then biologists found out that in French thermal springs an ingredient exists that is called Pure Thermal Plankton and has incredible power on the skin. This very ingredient together with a lot of other natural ingredients forms the basis for *Biotherm’s* body care products (cf. Biotherm website).

5.1.4 **Braun**

The *Braun*-company was established in Frankfurt am Main, Germany, in 1921 and first made radio parts. In 1950 the first electric shaver came onto the market. In 1990 *Braun* entered the business segments of electrical oral care and female hair removal. Today *Braun* is also a brand of *P&G (Procter and Gamble)* and also offers shavers or epilators for women. The core values for *Braun* are respect towards their employees, the environment and their customers (cf. Braun website).

5.1.5 **Clinique**

*Clinique* was founded on the philosophy that great skin can be created. Each of the *Clinique*-products is allergy-tested twelve times and one hundred percent without fragrance. *Clinique* is a brand for various generations and according to the company’s mission statement “a symbol of personalized beauty around the world”. In the U.S. *Clinique* is the number one prestige line of skin care (cf. Clinique website).

5.1.6 **Covergirl**

*Covergirl* is a brand of *Procter and Gamble* and was originally founded in 1961. The company provides a lot of innovative products that are meant to help women to feel beautiful. Faces of *Covergirl* are, for example, Drew Barrymore or Taylor Swift, who fit the category of women that are “not bound by traditional standards of beauty”, and who the company wants to have as models (cf. Covergirl website).

5.1.7 **Dove**

*Dove* is a brand of the *Unilever* group and was introduced in 1957 as a beauty soap bar that was a lot milder than other soaps. *Dove* tries to bring out one’s “true inner beauty” through their products, such as deodorants, body lotions or shampoos. *Dove’s* main aim is to make women enjoy their own beauty and individuality, no matter whether they fit the current beauty ideal or not. The name *Dove* may be seen as an image of peace, since the soap was originally developed for the US Marine Corps (cf. Dove websites).
5.1.8 Estée Lauder
The company was founded in 1946 by Estée Lauder who also gave it its name. The main belief of the foundress was that every woman could be beautiful. Faces of the brand have been Elizabeth Hurley and Gwyneth Paltrow. The protection of the environment is a particular concern for the company and therefore it is constantly trying to find environmentally friendly raw materials. Estée Lauder is against animal testing and uses recyclable materials as much as possible (cf. Estee Lauder website).

5.1.9 Garnier
Garnier is a brand of the L’Oreal Group, which is one of the world’s leading cosmetics companies, and uses effective formulae and active natural ingredients for their skin and hair care products. Garnier states that for them “beauty on the outside is the direct result of care on the inside”. The company recommends using their skincare, because by doing so ones skin will look brighter and younger (cf. Garnier website).

5.1.10 Gillette
Gillette is a brand of the Procter and Gamble Company and provides shavers for men and women as well as shower gels or deodorants for men only. The company believes that there is a Goddess in every woman, no matter what women wear or how they look. Gillette Venus is the world’s number one women shaving brand and the company understands that for many women shaving means showing off their femininity. The current “face” of Gillette Venus is actress and singer Jennifer Lopez. Gillette is also aware that looking good is not only important to women but also to men, because it helps to feel good and to perform well. Therefore, men need products that are tailored to their needs and Gillette offers all these grooming products. Male faces of Gillette are David Beckham or Thierry Henry (cf. Gillette websites).

5.1.11 Head and Shoulders
Head and Shoulders, founded in 1950, is also a brand of P&G. Since then the company’s field of business has been hair science. In 2007 a new formula was introduced which is meant to help to target the source of dandruff. With Head and Shoulders shampoos one can get a healthy scalp and healthy looking hair (cf. Head and Shoulders websites).

5.1.12 L’Oreal Paris
The French brand offers a lot of beauty care products to men and women, which are up to date in terms of scientific advances. According to the company statement L’Oreal Paris “provides affordable luxury for people who demand excellence”. The world’s most beautiful and most
successful models and actresses, such as Eva Longoria, Doutzen Kroes or Laetitia Casta endorse the company by starring in their advertising campaigns (cf. L’Oreal websites).

5.1.13 Lancôme Paris
For Lancôme beauty does not only mean a beautiful appearance, but an emotion that is reflected on the skin’s surface. Therefore, they consider it to be important to bring mind, body and soul in harmony. For 75 years the company has provided first-rate quality service to their customers and offers high-performance products. Testimonials for this brand are, for instance, Kate Winslet or Julia Roberts (cf. Lancôme websites).

5.1.14 Maybelline New York
The Maybelline Company, founded in 1915 in New York, was first a family-owned business, famous for its very first product, mascara. The company was named after the founder’s sister Maybel who had the idea to invent a product to make the eyelashes darker. In 1996 Maybelline was acquired by L’Oreal USA, and in 2002 it became the number one cosmetics brand in the world. Two years later Maybelline officially became Maybelline New York. The company’s goal is to help women feel more beautiful and to recognize their potential through empowerment, for instance, through exploring new looks (cf. Maybelline website).

5.1.15 Nivea
Beiersdorf is one of the leading companies for skincare and Nivea is one of its most successful products. The company sets value on sustainability and by supporting children’s development organizations it shows that it is aware of its social responsibility. The main aim of the company is to “constantly improve” and to “make life a little better” (cf. Nivea website).

5.1.16 Oriflame
Oriflame was founded in 1967 and is now an international beauty company. Oriflame offers Swedish, innovative beauty products which are based on natural ingredients and never tested on animals. The social environment and nature are close to the company’s heart and it supports a lot of charities all around the globe (cf. Oriflame website).

5.1.17 Pantene
Pantene was developed by the company Hoffman-La Roche and was launched in Europe in 1947. In 1985 Pantene became a brand of Procter & Gamble, was then re-launched nationally in the U.S. and is today a global brand for hair care. P&G tries to provide environmentally friendly products to improve the lives of people around the world. Sustainability and social responsibility are important for the company as well (cf. Pantene websites).
5.1.18 Revlon

Revlon was founded in 1932 and is now a global cosmetics company. The portfolio ranges from hair colour, to fragrances, skincare or other beauty products like nail polish. Faces of Revlon are Halle Berry or Jessica Alba. The company’s vision is to provide glamour and innovation combined with high quality products at affordable prices. Revlon tries to raise money and awareness for women’s health issues (cf. Revlon website).

5.1.19 Rexona

Rexona is a dual-gender brand which was created in Australia in 1908 and is now a brand of the Unilever Group. For Rexona the environment is important. For this reason they have developed a roll-on deodorant which is the most environmentally friendly on the market, using 1,000 tons less plastic than an older example of this very deodorant. It is also important for Rexona to provide affordable products for people with lower incomes (cf. Rexona website).

5.1.20 Rimmel London

Rimmel was founded in 1834 by a French perfumer. In 1996 Coty Inc. acquired Rimmel which today is the best-selling cosmetics brand of Great Britain. The Rimmel products are inspired from London’s unique street style and everything is about experimentation, having fun and self-expression. Faces of Rimmel London were among others supermodel Kate Moss, singer Sophie Ellis-Bextor and the current model is Lily Cole (cf. Rimmel website).

5.1.21 Schwarzkopf

Schwarzkopf was founded in 1898 by Hans Schwarzkopf and today is a Henkel-brand and among the world’s top three hair care brands. Schwarzkopf points out that hair has always been an important and powerful way to express beauty. For the company, reliability, quality, competence and trust are key points in their philosophy. Schwarzkopf also wants their customers to enhance their individual style (cf. Schwarzkopf website).

5.1.22 The Body Shop

The company believes that there is only one way to be beautiful, namely nature’s way. In their products are a lot of natural ingredients from all around the world that are intended to help to “enhance [their customer’s] natural beauty and express [their] unique personality”. It’s also a huge goal for The Body Shop to protect the planet by using its resources wisely and by taking a stand against animal testing (cf. The Body Shop websites).
5.1.23 Veet
For more than 80 years Veet is a leading provider of depilatory products. Today, over 30 million women around the world use the hair removal products of Veet. Veet is a brand of Reckitt Benckiser (RB) and tries to develop new products to meet the continuously changing needs and requirements of their customers. Veet provides depilatory products for women as well as for men (cf. Veet website).
5.2 Detailed Analysis
The analysis in terms of semiotics seeks to understand the use of language and especially that of pictures used in an advertisement. By taking a closer look at advertisements, one can learn how the adverts are constructed and what the underlying message is. When analyzing adverts there are, of course, a number of factors that must be considered, such as the context, personal values, education or experiences of the target readers, etc. Due to these factors it is almost impossible to find one exact meaning of an advert, since different human beings might interpret it in different ways by making use of their background knowledge.

The style of an advertisement for cosmetics is, of course, closely connected with the image that a particular cosmetics company wants to promote. In general, all companies that have the intention to make profits will try to persuade potential customers to buy their products or services offered. The persuasion process mainly aims to present the advantages of the product or service and to show consumers that it could enhance their quality of life.

For my analysis I divided the 97 advertisements into four groups. The first three groups focus on advertisements aimed at women, while group IV comprises adverts for male products. In the following, I will take a closer look at each of the four groups and provide a detailed analysis. Before starting with the analysis, I will briefly outline my hypothesis.

5.3 Hypothesis
1. As a consequence of today’s mass communication one is constantly confronted with advertisements, either on television, in newspapers or magazines or at the bus stop when facing huge billboards. Due to this overflow of information it is important to draw the readers’ attention to a particular product. Thus, advertisers use various techniques or strategies to make their adverts persuasive. Many rely on testimonials or focus on general trends, such as sports, nature, etc. to catch the readers’ attention. I want to find out whether this is also true for cosmetics advertisements.

2. It is often a criticism that advertisements convey questionable messages with reference to body ideals. I want to find out whether this is really true and whether slimness and trained bodies are really of such great importance in beauty advertising.
5.4 Group I: Close-ups – Face and Shoulders in female advertisements

In this part of my diploma thesis I examine thirty cosmetics advertisements showing the face, shoulders and sometimes the hands of the women advertising a particular product. In this case, Kress and van Leeuwen (1998: 131) talk about ‘close personal distance’, meaning the distance between people who have a very close, often intimate relationships, that makes it possible to touch one another.

As mentioned above, an advert can be interpreted in many different ways. In the following, I will provide my own interpretation, which is, of course, not said to be the only ‘true’ way of understanding the following adverts.

The two advertisements that function as representatives of this category are the following:

Figure 6: Halle Berry for Revlon (Ad 1.30)

At first, I took a closer look at the advert to find out whether the typical components of an advert are to be found in this case as well. The signature line indicating the name of the brand Revlon is placed in the bottom right corner. The testimonial, in this case actress Halle Berry, makes up the illustration or the image of this advertisement. Another key visual used here is an image of the product together with a coconut and some water in the left centre of the advert. Moreover, the headline is to be found above the depicted product, the body copy below it. Additionally, the standing details are in the bottom left corner.

Halle Berry is a successful actress and a former ‘sexiest woman alive’. Thus, she embodies not only beauty and success but also sex-appeal. In fact, famous people appear frequently in advertisements of the cosmetics or fashion industries. According to Pringle
Halle Berry’s short hair, which is rather unusual for testimonials, reinforces the expression on her face. Halle Berry looks directly at the reader, while tilting her head to the right with her lips half open. Her gaze is powerful and her smile seems to ask the reader to look at her and her perfect complexion. Her hands/arms are half behind, half above her head and she seems to be comfortable in this position. The sleeves of the sheer white blouse she is wearing are quite loose and flared. The exact location of the actress cannot be defined in concrete detail, as there is just a light-blue background. This suggests that this very product cannot only be used in a particular situation but at any possible occasion.

Since the advert shows Halle Berry’s head, shoulders and parts of her arms we talk about a close personal distance shot (cf. Kress & van Leeuwen 1998: 131). This distance means that in real life, a person is standing close enough to touch. We usually only allow people we know or to whom we are close to enter this intimate area. By applying this strategy the advertiser wants to speak to the readers on an emotional level, allowing them to associate with the actress.

Since most people know Halle Berry and also that she is already in her forties this advert does not only address younger women but also women of her age. Advertisers want to show that ordinary women can look as youthful as Halle Berry, because she definitely does not look her age.

So the advert stands for female beauty and the message of the advert is that you do not need to be in your twenties to be beautiful and have a perfect complexion. This is exactly what Posch (1999: 50) mentions in her book Körper machen Leute. Youthful looks of elder people are admired, while the general attitude of the advertising industry is one of ageism. Through the use of the coconut and the water surrounding the product the issue of nature is not only addressed indirectly, but a connection to the advertised ingredients of the powder, namely coconut water, is also established. Karmasin (2011: 285) points out that water is important as it “moisturizes, cools, and rejuvenates”. These are definitely effects that are promised to buyers of cosmetics products, and Halle Berry’s perfect complexion shows that it apparently works.

What is interesting is that there are only four colours used in this advert, namely, blue, white, brown and black. Since I do not want to foreclose the following chapter I just want to
briefly mention the meaning of these colours. Blue is among other things the colour of the sea and in broader context the colour of water. This forms a connection with the water surrounding the product and the main ingredients of *Revlon Colorstay Aqua*. The colour white stands for innocence, purity and is also regarded to be the colour of perfection (cf. Color-Wheel: Internet Source). Halle Berry’s blouse is white, indicating that she is perfect and that the buyers of this powder will be perfect as well.

What is different to many other cosmetics ads is that the actress’ skin colour is not white but cocoa-like. This shows that not only white women are targeted for advertising cosmetics products like some decades ago, but that we now live in a multi-cultural world. This goes hand in hand with what Lazier and Kendrick (1993: 209) state, namely that the notions of beauty have changed in the past years, especially in terms of facial features, which are now more exotic or multi-ethnic.

The second representative advert for this first category is the following:

![Figure 7: Ad by Nivea (Ad 1.1)](image)

Again, at first, I tried to find out whether this advert - contained all the usual important components of an advert. In this case the signature line is in the top right corner, while the model, being placed in the left part of the advert covers approximately two thirds of the same. The image of the product itself found in the bottom right corner, while the slogan is placed next to the signature line in the top of the advert. The body copy as well as the standing details and the headline can all be found in the bottom quarter of the advertisement.

What is striking here is that the model is placed at the left-hand side of the advert. The reason for this is that the left human hemisphere is the analytic and linguistic part, while the right hemisphere deals with pictorial perception (cf. Marko 2007: Course Handout). It is more
than obvious in this case that the illustration is of greater importance than the verbal elements. This goes hand in hand with my hypothesis that in cosmetics adverts, pictorial elements are of greater importance than verbal elements. This is to a large extent also true for the previous advert, although the illustration in this case is rather to be found in the right part of the advert, whereas the product, on which the focus should probably be laid on, is on the left-hand side.

However, what is similar to the advert analyzed before is that the main colours used here are again white, blue and brown. The model is wearing a white blouse revealing her naked shoulders. According to Color-Wheel (Internet Source) white is not only the colour of perfection and purity, but is also used in advertising, since it is “associated with coolness and cleanliness because it’s the color of snow” (cf. Psychology of Colors: Internet Source). Besides, white is associated with angels who usually wear white clothes.

This advert for a gel-foundation features a model that is not a celebrity. She is young, has light skin, blue eyes, full lips and blonde hair. This is, according to Miriam Davids (2007: 46) the typical model for adverts, since she totally fits the western beauty ideal. This goes hand in hand with the slogan of the advertisement saying ‘beauty that moves’. The model has tilted her head to the right and looks dreamily at something or someone not to be identified by the reader. Additionally, her mouth is closed. However, she has a little smile on her lips.

The woman is touching the area around her cheek and ear. Perhaps she is about to run her fingers through her hair as women frequently do when they are a little bit sheepish or want to attract the attention of a handsome man. The use of hands or the general focus on female hands is also something that Goffman (1976: 29) also mentions in his book *Gender Advertisements*. He states that more focus is laid upon female hands than male hands. In addition he points out that women are often shown using their hands and fingers caressing the surface of something (e.g. a bottle of perfume) or tracing the outlines of an object.

This way of touching, the so-called ritualistic touching, has to be distinguished from the utilitarian touching that grasps or holds something. Since ritualistic touching does not involve anything very prehensile the face is often used instead of the fingers. Sometimes people are also depicted touching their own body (cf. Goffman 1976: 29-31).

This touching of one’s body conveys not only the impression that the own body is something precious and delicate but also a feeling of intimacy. Both arguments can be true for this advert. First, the model is wearing a golden bracelet as well as diamond studs. Danesi (1999: 49), for instance, states that
fact, designed to do something that is entirely alien to other species – to communicate who we are to others or what we want them to think we are.

The general message of jewels is according to Argyle (1979: 306) that they should emphasize the beauty of the woman wearing it. The overall message sent through these pieces of jewellery is that the woman is not only young and beautiful, but may also live according to her social rank.

Perhaps she got the jewellery from her boyfriend or a rich admirer at whom she is now looking with a little smile on her lips. This is, of course, a very sexist way of perceiving this image, but women are still often seen as sexual objects. Secondly, the argument of intimacy leads me to the thought that we as readers may participate in such an intimate situation between the woman and a man that cannot be seen from our perspective. Perhaps they are very much in love and looking at each other dreamingly.

To sum up, the advert should convey the idea that when using this foundation-gel not only your complexion will be perfect, but your whole appearance will fit in the category of a beauty ideal, and this is, of course, what all women hope to achieve. This goes hand in hand with the use of the colour white, since this colour is associated with angels. In this case this would mean that the model with her golden hair and white shirt or dress is as beautiful as an angel. Of course, men will adore angel-like creatures. If this is true the idea conveyed by this ad would be questionable as it would reduce women to a role of a precious appendage and not as a self-confident human being.

After choosing two advertisements with representative functions I took a closer look at the remaining adverts and again chose a few to show that the characteristics I pointed out before are not accidental but a general trend in advertising. Since this first category is the one that features a lot of celebrities I tried to find out whether celebrities were depicted differently from not-prominent models or whether different colours where used in the adverts.

To come back to the issue of celebrities, in fourteen out of thirty advertisements prominent women worked as testimonials for the various brands, as can be seen in the following diagram.
The advertisement I chose for this purpose are ad 1.3. (model Adriana Lima), ad 1.13. (model Lily Cole), ad 1.22 (actress Jessica Biel) and ad 1.27 (singer Rihanna). What is striking here is that all of these adverts are made up of the typical components of an advertisement, namely the signature line, slogan, headline, body copy, standing details and illustrations. In all the adverts the product advertised is depicted. In all advertisements the product is placed in the right third of the advert.

In advert 1.3, 1.13 and 1.27, in which Lily Cole, Adriana Lima and Rihanna are testimonials for mascara, not only the mascara itself is depicted but also the brush, which is, of course, the most crucial element of this very product. In the Revlon advert with Jessica Biel the product is as mentioned above also placed in the right third of the advert. In this case a lipstain and balm are advertised.

All four testimonials have their lips half open and look directly at the reader. All have their head tilted, and all but Adriana Lima have naked shoulders. In the background of the adverts featuring Lily Cole and Adriana Lima buildings can be discovered. In the case of the Rimmel advert we see Big Ben which is a famous landmark of London, while in the Maybelline ad there are only some blurred houses or skyscrapers and another woman to be seen. These things do not come as a great surprise in the Rimmel or the Maybelline advert.

Since the Rimmel campaigns uses the slogan ‘Get the London look’ and Lily Cole, who is a successful runway model, is from this pulsating and trendy city, the choice of the background was thought through properly. London is also one of the most important cities in terms of fashion and lifestyle and many women have the intention or desire to live this lifestyle of fun and self-expression as well. And this is exactly what Rimmel wants their products to fulfil (cf. chapter 5.1.20). Even if they can only afford the products by this cosmetics company that are inspired from London’s unique style instead of jetting to or living in this great city themselves, it is enough to bring a bit of London’s fashion, charm and looks in their lives.
The same is true for Maybelline. As the brand’s full name Maybelline New York already suggests Maybelline is tightly connected with New York where the company was founded, and which is beside London another great, if not the greatest, fashion metropolis in the world. New York is said to be the city that never sleeps, a lot of stars live there, and ordinary women, of course, long to have some of that glamour as well.

Adriana Lima embodies this glamour, success and attractiveness that many women would proverbially kill for. She is one of the most successful models on the planet, runs the catwalk for the most important underwear label, namely Victoria’s Secret, and earns millions of dollars per year.

What is also important here is the dream-like quality of the adverts. This helps women to leave their stressful everyday lives behind and to flee into an imaginary world of success, beauty and wealth. Vestergaard and Schröder (1985: 118) quote Berger who states that although the women seeing those adverts are aware that even when buying all the products they will not achieve what they are wishing for in reality, they flee to a dream world, in which they are far away from the dissatisfactions of life and in which beauty and success is within reach. And this is not only true for the Rimmel or Maybelline advert (ads 1.13 and 1.3) but also for Revlon and Covergirl (ads 1.22 and 1.27).

The latter uses the face of Rihanna (ad 1.27), one of the most successful singers in the world and newly announced sexiest woman in the world in 2011 by a magazine. Rihanna is young, beautiful, rich and exotic since she comes from Barbados. When analysing all adverts of this first category it becomes obvious that in terms of cosmetics many companies count on celebrities with various ethnical backgrounds. A reason for this might be that by doing so they will make sure that not only the ‘typical’ white woman can identify with the products advertised but also women of other skin colour or nationality. Especially the brand Covergirl explicitly states that they want models that are “not bound by traditional standards of beauty” for their campaigns (cf. chapter 5.1.6).

I will now focus on the Revlon ad 1.22 featuring the American actress Jessica Biel. In this first category this is the only advert that does not only show a female but also a male model. Jessica Biel is tilting her head towards her naked left shoulder, thereby almost touching the head of the male model, smiling at the reader.

This could perhaps indicate that she was successful in terms of attracting the man’s attention and that she is now keeping him on tenterhooks before kissing him. This idea is supported by the text used in the advert which suggests that “Just Bitten is a unique 2-in-1 lipstain and balm. For a flush of colour and a kiss of softness”. The background of this advert
is conveys the impression that they are standing somewhere outside while the sun is shining, drawing on the important issue of nature that I will elaborate in more detail later.

Next, I would like to take a closer look at four adverts that support my ideas in terms of the second advert (ad 1.1) I described in detail above. The adverts I chose for this purpose are ad 1.2, ad 1.4, ad 1.9 and ad 1.15. Like the advert I analyzed as an example these four do not feature celebrities. The first advert (ad 1.2) is designed according to the same principles as the representative advert. This may be due to the fact that both adverts advertise products by Nivea. The model is on the left-hand side, while a picture of the product as well as the verbal elements such as signature line, slogan, and body copy are found in the right half. Like in ad 1.1 hands play an important role. The woman depicted has her lips half open and is looking at someone who cannot seen by the reader. A single tear is running down her right cheek. It seems as if a man is holding her face with his left hand, since the thumb that is seen belongs to a male rather than a female hand. The woman’s fingers, which are manicured perfectly but also restrained, however, are touching the man’s hand, while she is apparently looking at him. Perhaps the man is about to leave and the woman is crying because she does not want him to.

The advert 1.2 suggests that the mascara advertised “resists your feelings – even longer”. This extreme resistance is also shown in the illustration. Despite the fact that the woman is crying, there are no black stains or traces of blurred mascara on her cheek. Her eyes and especially her eyelashes are still in perfect condition. This is, of course, due to the use of Nivea’s Extreme Resists Lengthening mascara that resists even tears and allows you to look perfect even if you are crying. And this is, of course, what women want: to look perfect in any situation imaginable.

The eye area is, however, of great importance since the eyes are the part of the face that can ‘hypnotize’ men. To make this work it is necessary to use mascara that will make your eyelashes dark and long. If you have the perfect eyes, people will, of course, envy you and this will give you a kind of reassurance in return (cf. Vestergaard & Schröder 1985: 87). Such perfect eyelashes can be seen in ads 1.3, 1.5 or 1.29.

The second advert I looked at (ad 1.9) is constructed in the same way as the one before. The model is placed on the left-hand side, while the product, the slogan and signature line can be found in the right half of the advert. Like in the example advert, the woman has blonde and long wavy hair. She has her mouth half open and is shown almost in profile from the right side. She is looking at something. This something may be the little goldfish that is placed in height of the model’s nose in the advert.
In general, although there is again no particular background identifiable, this advert definitely focuses on nature. This can be shown with the following 3 points:

1. The bottle is in green, which is the colour of nature. On this bottle there are trees depicted, which, of course, also symbolize nature.
2. These very trees are also shown in the right centre of the advert together with the sentence “92% biodegradable formulas”. In addition, the complete right part of the advert is designed in various shades of green, together with a headline saying “Love the earth, love your hair”.
3. Lastly, there is another indicator for the importance of nature, namely the little goldfish mentioned before.

In fact, nature is a very important issue in the case of cosmetics advertising. Natural elements can also be found in the other two adverts left here, namely in ad 1.4 and ad 1.15. The background of the latter advert is blurred, but since the advert features The Body Shop and since this brand strongly associates itself with nature (cf. also the slogan “Nature’s way to beautiful” and the message of the body copy “we believe there is only one way to be beautiful. Nature’s way”). I suppose that the model is here placed in front of some trees or a hedge. A natural element can also be found in the last advert (ad 1.4) where a butterfly is sitting on the naked shoulder of the model and another one in her blonde curls. I will elaborate the issue of nature in further detail later.

In the advert of The Body Shop the model is placed on the right-hand side of the advert, her brown shoulder-length hair framing her face. The model is smiling, showing her perfect teeth and is looking at something or somebody that seems to be above the right shoulder of the reader, since her face is turned towards the reader. The model is propping her head on her left arm and seems to be quite comfortable. What is also striking here is that no particular product is advertised, but that this is a general advertisement of The Body Shop.

The last advert (ad 1.4) features a blonde model with wavy hair who is looking over her naked shoulder directly at the reader. The model has rosy cheeks, blue eyes, full lips (which are closed) and in general a quite natural look. This naturalness is supported by two words in the left centre of the advert saying “innocent beauty”.

Here, the natural and innocent look is promoted. As mentioned above, the butterflies sitting on the left shoulder of the model and in her hair are there to support this idea. Again, the background of the advert is difficult to identify since it is only dark grey.

What is different to other adverts promoting a mascara is that the product is shown in a horizontal position and not upright. Moreover, in this case there is no body copy to be found
and the typical signature line of Maybelline “Maybe she’s born with it. Maybe it’s Maybelline” is also used in this advert.

Strikingly, this is one of the few adverts that on the one hand advertise mascara but on the other hand do not show extreme long lashes although this is exactly what should be advertised here. In contrast to the advertisements featuring celebrities and mentioned before, there are no lurid or outstanding colours (such as pink or red). Perhaps the reason for this is that these colours are rather associated with celebrities and glamour than with ordinary women.

Lastly, I will briefly look at three adverts of this category that either deal with anti-wrinkle (or DNAge) products or use testimonials that are not of the typical age of the models that usually feature in cosmetics advertisements. First, I would like to focus on the Lancôme advert featuring actress Julia Roberts (ad 1.17). Although Julia Roberts is already in her forties and mother of three children this advert shows her with wrinkle-free skin, perfect complexion and youthful looks.

I chose this advert because it caused a lot of resentment when it was first published. The reason for this is that in reality Julia Roberts, who is beyond doubt a very attractive woman, does not have such a perfect face without any traces of age. There was a debate whether it is acceptable to work pictures over to such an extent or whether this conveys a wrong impression to readers, and in the end the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) banned Julia Robert’s advert for Lancôme since it was “overly perfected” and showed an unrealistic image of the actress (cf. Sweney 2011: Internet Source).

The following pictures are intended to provide an impression to what extent the pictures of Julia Roberts and Christy Turlington were digitally enhanced (cf. Poulter 2011: Internet Source):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Julia Roberts</th>
<th>Christy Turlington</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

*Figure 9: Pictures of J. Roberts and Ch. Turlington in original and after digital enhancement*
The same is true for Christy Turlington’s advert for Maybelline. Turlington, a former model, is also in her forties and has a lot more wrinkles in reality than this advert reveals (ad 1.12). The product she is advertising here is an anti-aging product called The Eraser. This name suggests that by using this very product your complexion will be as perfect as Christy Turlington’s. In this very advert some parts of Turlington’s face are covered with the foundation, while others are not.

By doing so Maybelline wanted to show the effects that can be achieved when using The Eraser. According to Sweney (2011: Internet Source) “the ASA ruled that both ads breached the advertising standards code for exaggeration and being misleading and banned them from future publication”. To conclude, in advertising there is a lot about manipulating people and digitally enhancing pictures to convey the idea of perfect beauty, but fortunately there is also an institution that puts a halt to pictures that are worked over too exaggeratedly by Photoshop.

However, the choice of elder women who are famous and whose real age is known by the public is a very clever one. The reason for this is that the cosmetics industry wants to emphasize the success of the product. What is also a problem in terms of celebrities is that many claim to have a formula for success in terms of good looks, namely sports. Unfortunately, many stars conceal that they have already had some plastic surgeries, which of course have covered the tracks of aging (cf. Posch 1999: 56-57). Ordinary women admire them, however, and hope that by buying the products they are advertising they will achieve the same results.

The third advert features a woman that is not famous but also has wrinkle-free skin. The model seems to be in her late twenties or early thirties. This is an age in which people usually do not have to deal with wrinkles or tracks of aging. Such adverts tempt young woman to start using anti-wrinkle-products to obviate aging. According to Posch (1999: 179) the dream of a perfect body fills the coffers of the beauty industry. Although insiders believe that anti-wrinkle-products do not live up to their promise, the rewards are rising (cf. Posch 1999: 179).

The problem is that cosmetics products are separated by law from medical products. This is the reason why anti-wrinkle-products cannot operate in the way that is promised via advertisements. Even the head of the cosmetics company The Body Shop confesses that anti-wrinkle-products do not live up to their promise. Although they cannot prevent the formation of wrinkles these products are quite popular. What is alarming, however, is that how bad they are for the skin’s health, since its main ingredient is acid. This acid cauterizes the outermost
layer of the skin; thus baring younger dermal layers. And despite this millions of women rely on these products (cf. Posch 1999: 180).

Strikingly ‘elder’ models are only used when they are celebrities. This proves that age is still frowned upon in advertising. In two of the three adverts (ad 1.7 and 1.12) the models are again placed at the left-hand side of the advert. In the latter Christy Turlington’s face is cropped, but, however it almost covers one hundred percent of the advert.

Cropping, according to Dyer (1990: 107) means that pictures are sometimes cut to put the focus to certain parts of the body (e.g. eyes, legs, hands or lips). It is also interesting that women are shown more frequently in such a way than men. In this case we see the lower part of Christy Turlington’s face including the throat, chin, lips, nose and eyes.

The woman in ad 1.7 looks back over her left shoulder directly at the reader. She, like Turlington, has dark hair and a wrinkle-free skin. The woman is wearing a white shirt and earrings. The meaning conveyed by these things is already described above.

In Julia Roberts’ advert (ad 1.17) her picture covers the complete advert, the white blouse she is wearing partly revealing the upper part of her body. Roberts is also wearing earrings and looks directly at the reader with a little smile on her lips. A white or light pink rose is depicted behind the product advertised in the right bottom corner of the advert. A rose in light pink stands for grace, joy or perfect happiness, while a white rose suggests innocence, purity or girlhood (cf. Stritof 2011: Internet Source). The rose, of course, also functions as a symbol of nature. The rose is also the brand’s symbol. Together with the jewellery it conveys an idea of perfection, something that cannot be achieved by everyone.

To conclude the analysis of this first group featuring adverts of cosmetics products presented by models at a “close personal distance”, there is definitely a certain pattern to be discovered in terms of how the adverts are composed. Twenty out of thirty adverts in this category positioned their models on the left-hand side of the advert, while only twenty percent (i.e. six) adverts placed them on the right side. Further numbers may be read from the following illustration.
In fact, this is the category that features most prominent faces, namely 43 percent. The prominent people here have various ethnic background (e.g. Brazil, Japan, India or Barbados) which shows that advertising companies do not only want to attract the attention of the white-western-female target group but also the attention of women that do not fit this group. The easiest way to succeed in this attempt is, of course, to use testimonials with various ethnic backgrounds, since it is easier for women to identify with such women than with the general blonde and blue-eyed western ideal.

Interestingly, in 2000 Revlon tried to modernize the company’s image and to focus on ‘girl-next-door’ models instead of celebrities. Surprisingly, this campaign was not a success and the sales fell 3.1%. In turn, Revlon decided to return to celebrity endorsement using actresses like Halle Berry or Julianne Moore, and promptly the company’s market share started growing again (cf. Pringle 2004: 22).

Here, it is also striking that ‘elder’ models are almost only used when they are celebrities (e.g. Julia Roberts or Christy Turlington), whose age is publicly known. By using so-called ‘no-age-women’ as examples of how, for instance, tracks of aging can be concealed the companies want to increase their credibility and the credibility of their products. Such women are still considered “to look as beautiful as any star who is her contemporary” (cf. Pringle 2004: 142). However, if there is too much manipulation in terms of the images used in advertising so that they convey a completely wrong picture of reality, and are thus not acceptable to the target audience, there are fortunately organizations that keep a watchful eye on the whole industry to prevent people from being taken in by this manipulation.

Caressing hands and naked shoulders were also of great importance in the adverts of this category. Since close-ups already convey the impression of intimacy and close personal distance to the model depicted, the use of caressing hands further backs up this idea. This is
especially important because women should get the feeling that they can be near the admired star or that they can be as beautiful by using a particular product advertised. Since women tend to flee in a world of dreams, beauty, wealth and success to leave their often stressful and unglamorous own life behind, advertisements, of course, try to send messages that simply help women to dream. The naked shoulders on the one hand have a seductive role, on the other hand also convey a feeling of intimacy.

The theme of nature is also important in this category. Advertisers want to convince potential buyers that their products consist of natural ingredients (cf. ad 1.9). According to Posch (1999: 72) the natural look is in great demand nowadays. The main aim is to make people look as if everything is totally natural. But women with natural make-up certainly look different than women without any make-up. I will provide further information on this issue later in my diploma thesis.

Currently, fashionable women do not leave the house without makeup. They want to look as if they do, but in reality the art of beautification is to cover up this effort. Modern cosmetics products are not meant to clog up the pores of your skin but just to beautify it. Therefore, they are more transparent, thinner and conceal less. To achieve the desired effect, however, women need to have clean skin, which often requires additional cosmetics products (cf. Posch 1999: 73).


The natural look as well as things that refer to nature (e.g. flowers, butterflies, water, etc) plays a more significant role in terms of models that are not prominent (cf. ad 1.1, ad 1.2, ad 1.15 or ad 1.18). In case of prominent models such as Adriana Lima, Lily Cole or Emily DiDonato (ad 1.3, ad 1.11, ad 1.13 or ad 1.29) the city (London, New York), parties and glamour play a superior role.

There are three brands whose adverts look rather sterile and science-like. Berger (1999: 64) suggests that cosmetics ads are often extremely simple and understated. In addition, there is often a lot of empty or white space. This white space is a sign itself and stands for elegance, refinement or quality. Advertisements of supermarkets, however, lack of such white space (cf. Berger 1999: 64).

However, this white or empty space can be discovered in advertisements of the brands Armani, Clinique and Esteé Lauder. This may mainly be because these companies want to convey the feeling that their products are of high quality. As mentioned above, Clinique, for instance, is the number one prestige line of skin care and a brand for various generations (cf.
Chapter 5.1.5). Beasley and Danesi (2002: 58) also point out that when buying beauty products from *Clinique*, consumers have the feeling that they are “getting products imbued with scientific validity.”

Furthermore, in these adverts the colours are used quite scarcely (cf. ad 1.16, ad 1.18, ad 1.19 and ad 1.26). In three of four adverts the models have combed the hair of their face, thereby opening the view to a smooth, young and fresh-looking complexion. What also contributes to the science-like quality is the use of dropping glasses (pipets) in ads 1.19 and 1.26.
5.5 Group II: Medium close-up - Upper part of the body in female adverts

In this second category I deal with 22 adverts showing the upper part of the female body, and advertising products like deodorants, body lotions and shampoos. Like in the previous group I focus on a few aspects in particular, namely luxury and glamour, thinness and youth, and intimate situations. Again, I choose three examples that function as representatives for these sub-categories.

Here, for the majority of adverts the so-called medium close shot that shows the models cut off at the waist is used. In terms of the distance between the model and the reader Kress and van Leeuwen (1998: 131) talk of a far personal distance. This distance does not allow for touching each other easily, but it is appropriate for talking to one another.

First, I will take a closer look at adverts that can be associated with glamour. Traditionally, women were shown as mothers and wives in adverts. However, the images of women in advertising have changed and for about two to three decades “the dominant image of femininity […] is that of the beauty and fashion ideal” (cf. Vestergaard & Schröder 1985: 81). Over the years it has become more and more important for women to be glamorous and to maintain their physical appearance rather than focusing only on domestic chores. The following advertisement stands for this glamour and strength of females:

![Figure 11: Ad by Pantene (Ad 2.19)](image-url)
Like the majority of printed adverts this advert for Pantene consists of the typical components such as signature line, slogan, illustration, body copy and standing details. Interestingly, here these components are placed in the bottom half of the advert. Thus the focus is on the illustration that takes the most space of the advert. Here, not one particular product is advertised but a whole line of hair care products.

The model depicted has wavy dark hair and also a dark complexion. She looks directly at the reader with her lips a bit open and a seductive glance. Our shared knowledge tells us, for instance, that when somebody is looking straight in the viewer’s eyes, he or she is self-confident and not shy or insecure like people who avoid eye contact. Kress and Van Leeuwen (Kress and Van Leeuwen 1996:122 cit. in Van Leeuwen 2005:120) also identify that “If a person (or animal) represented in an image looks at the viewer, the image realizes a ‘demand’: ‘the gaze […] demands something from the viewer, demands that the viewer enter into some kind of imaginary relation with him or her’”.

Further, the model’s hair is shiny and voluminous, which is obviously the result of having used the advertised products. The model is wearing a halter-neck top in teal blue that reveals her naked right shoulder and she seems to be about to go out. Teal blue is a colour that is associated with the rich, expensive or unique (cf. The Meaning of Color: Internet Source)

The model depicted is obviously a quite self-confident and strong woman, who is aware of her sex-appeal. Her strength is also addressed in the headline of the advert, “can your strength hold up against breakage?” Here, of course, this sentence refers to the strength of the model’s hair after using products by Pantene, but the overall meaning can also be associated with the strength of a modern woman.

The model’s full lips in combination with her seductive gaze suggest that she is focusing on the reader. Her glance might also connote flirtatiousness and perhaps she wants her vis-à-vis to treat her to a drink or she intends to convince him to accompany her to a party. For me, this advert also conveys a feeling of superiority that is caused by the great styling and the model’s beauty although superiority is a feature that is rather attributed to males in general.

However, despite the model’s self-confidence and beauty it is striking that women are still only represented in limited roles, concerning beauty (see ad 2.19) or in relationships (see ad 2.20), but they are rarely shown at work, as business women or in positions involving authority. On the contrary, women’s sex-appeal is used to imply that when using the product advertised they will appeal to men. Interestingly, the beauty of the models obviously does not
only lure male but also female customers and contributes to the profits of the cosmetics companies.

The primary aim of this advert is, of course, to sell products, but it also celebrates self-assurance and self-confidence. The woman depicted incorporates strength and power and thus the advertisement conveys particular values. These values are conveyed indirectly, by looking directly at the reader and by the choice of dress and hairstyle that suggest self-confidence.

The next ad that fits the category of beauty and glamour (ad 2.7) shows a woman in profile with half her naked back and her long and dark blonde hair. The model is leaning her head forward, tilting it a little to the right and looking directly at the reader with a small smile on her lips. Here, the image of the model takes the whole space of the advert. The signature line, body copy, etc. are placed in the bottom of the advert. The focus here is definitely on the long and shiny hair of the model.

Mühlens Achs (1993: 39) states that in terms of women, when talking about sex-appeal the focus is on flowing hair on the head. However, hair in general is of great importance nowadays, especially for women. According to Berger (1999: 129) the hair is one of the most important ways to establish our identity. In addition, “hairstyles are an important way we send messages to others about our beliefs and personalities” (cf. Berger 1999: 129). With reference to ad 2.7 it is obvious that the model is proud of her beautiful long hair which definitely contributes to her status as a beauty ideal in the western world.

The model’s sex-appeal is further emphasized by her back that is only half covered by a black shirt or dress. This also suggests that the woman is maybe ready to go out. Another detail that contributes to the glamour factor is the name of the product namely Pantene Pro-V Shine.

However, for me advert 2.7 is a bit unnatural, since in real life one rarely has such straight and shiny hair. Besides, the model’s bearing does not seem natural to me at all, and the cushiness of her position is also questionable. This implies that beauty definitely has its costs but that women are expected to take it on. Her hair falls in a quite unnatural way down her back and gives it a strange form. There are no single strands of hair hanging in her face or that are not in the right place, which is also quite unnatural.

Glamour and shine are also important in ad 2.14. Here, actress Aisharya Rai works as a testimonial for L’Oreal Paris. The actress is dressed in a silvery-shiny top, wears evening make-up and jewellery and seems to be ready to go to a gala. The product she is advertising and also wearing is a lip gloss called “Glam Shine”. The colour of the lip gloss is also used in the background of the advert that sparkles and shines in various nuances of purple and rose.
Purple symbolizes luxury and power and conveys an idea of wealth and extravagance (cf. chapter 6).

This advert, however, does not appeal to me at all. This may be due to the actress’s rather earnest facial expression as she is not smiling and has raised her left eye brow in a way that suggests on the one hand that she expects the reader to do something, and on the other hand appears to be a little patronizing or even snobbish. The way her hair is done further contributes to her serious look. Another reason may be that I also follow the stereotype that women in advertising need to wear their long hair down and be all smiles. This particular facial expression of superiority, however, may also be used to indicate that the product by *L’Oréal* is not only good for the ordinary woman but also to people of a higher social class.

The idea of luxury and wealth is also been taken up in ad 2.12 in which again the typical female colours rose and pink are used and in which jewellery also plays a role. We see various trinkets like earrings or bracelets lying on a sideboard in front of a mirror. However, the model in this advertisement does not convey a feeling of superiority towards the reader but looks like the nice girl-next-door.

The woman depicted has obviously just used the deodorant advertised and is now admiring her smooth and “gorgeous underarms” that she has folded behind her head. It looks like she is preparing to go out, looking in the mirror and at her gorgeous arms. The message of the advert is that after using “Beauty Finish” you are perfect and a real beauty even without wearing too much make-up.

This natural look has been popular for about 15-20 years and Berger (1999: 161) describes it as follows:

> The natural look is best described in terms of what it is not – it is a “look” in which no makeup is used, no lipstick, no eye shadow, no cosmetics of any kind. It is based on the rejection of cosmetics, of that which is artificial and contrived. It is only meaningful, then, in the context of a beauty system in which, at one pole, there is glamour and cosmetics, and at the other pole, diametrically opposed, there is beauty and naturalness. […] Thus, the natural look […] is more than just a style; it is a sign of a certain orientation toward life and society. It is a kind of statement about oneself […]

In advertising, of course, it is quite unlikely that women are depicted without wearing any kind of make-up. Berger (1999: 163) also points out that “there is also a natural look that involves makeup of a special kind – to give the effect of naturalness”. This means that stylists invest a lot of time and energy to make models look as if they do not wear any make-up but in fact they all do, because otherwise they would not look so beautiful. Decorative cosmetics help women to escape everyday occurrence, and provide them with some kind of glamour (cf. Karmasin 2011: 293).
Here, for the facial skin the principle of naturalness is applied in the majority of the adverts (see, for instance, ads 2.12, 2.13, 2.22). This goes hand in hand with what Karmasin (2011: 294) recognizes, namely that “Ein perfektes Make-up muss auf der natürlichen Haut eine zweite schönere Natur erzeugen, die schöner als natürlich ist”.

Additionally, the eye area is of great importance when it comes to the use of make-up. Women’s eyes are said to exercise power in terms of alluring men. Similarly, mouth and lips have to appear “strahlend, feucht, lasziv anlockend” (cf. Karmasin 2011: 294). This is true for ads 2.3, 2.14, 2.19. Moreover, the exercising of power via one’s look is depicted in ads 2.9 or 2.19.

Next, I will concentrate on the issue of thinness and youthfulness. Since in the meantime there are not only beauty or fashion tips in the magazines in which some of these adverts are printed, but also exercises that should help women to stay fit and to form their bodies according to the current beauty ideal, the slimness craze is buoyed.

People already invest more time in their own bodies than in meeting friends or spending time with the family. By doing so, human beings want to show that they have immediate control over the world they live in. People who are really focused on their appearance give a lot of attention to their style of clothing or their performance in sports. The problem is that as long as the body is young, styled and slim it is considered to be a status symbol (cf. Davids 2007: 14).

Over time the idea of how the perfect female body looks like has been altered. Characteristics like curvy or full have been replaced by slim, taut and to a certain extent also muscular (cf. Davids 2007: 14-15). Unlike in previous times when women were admired for their full breasts and large hips since they were perfect for child bearing, women are nowadays literally forced to have a slender figure. (cf. Ware 1996: Internet Source).

At the same time, not only slimness is important but also youthfulness. Since the aesthetic female ideal of our time is young, fit, slim and good looking, this trend is also reflected in advertising. Despite the lower social status and the lower financial wealth of younger people, they seem to be an ideal for older people, who often wish for the mindlessness and spontaneity that is often associated with youth (cf. Davids 2007: 16-17).

A good example of an advert that features a young and (extremely) thin model is ad 2.5. The advert again consists of the typical components but the focus is definitely on the model and not on the text. Here, a young and blonde woman is advertising a deodorant. She seems to be dancing in the park or a garden and having fun. The advert suggests that the deodorant gives you so much energy that you do not need to go to a gym anymore. This idea
of getting energy is supported by the background showing the blue sky, grass and bushes, since many people use nature to recuperate.

![Figure 12: Ad by Nivea (Ad 2.5)](image)

Since the model is only wearing a bikini top and hot-pants one cannot overlook how thin she is. Her waist is extremely slim and her breasts are small. However, the message of the advert is that the young woman is full of energy thanks to the product by Nivea. The slogan also goes “Beauty is a zest for life”. Here, it is indicated that beauty and zest for live are two attributes that are connected. Additionally, by using this slogan the brand suggests that you are only beautiful when you look like the model in the advert. However, in reality women who have normal figures and weights are happier and more balanced than women who constantly have to worry about maintaining their weight and good looks.

The main message that advertisers obviously want to convey by this advert is that the reader of the advert connects the idea of being beautiful, slim and happy with Nivea. It is not explicitly stated in the advert that happiness, energy and beauty are effects of the product, but that is obviously what the picture indicates. The slim model in ad 2.5 definitely fits the current western beauty ideal. Although there are still groups of the population that see slimness as indicators for illnesses or poverty, the majority admires slim bodies. This extreme slimness may not be healthy but this is never an issue in advertising. Interestingly, this standardization in terms of beauty ideals can be observed in terms of women rather than men.

Ad 2.4 also features a model that is quite thin. We see the half-naked back of a young woman who looks over her left shoulder with a big smile. She is standing in front of a building that cannot be further identified. The sky is mirrored in the windows of the building.
and we see green grass in the left bottom of the advert. The model is obviously having fun, enjoying some time out in the city. Her arms are thin and her breast are obviously also quite small. This contradicts Posch’s (1999: 70) claim that the only part of the female body that is not forced to be small, taut and firm are the breast (cf. also ad 2.8).

Like in the advert mentioned before the woman is also young and beautiful and the advert again sends the message that this woman fits a beauty ideal, namely the ideal that being thin is equal to being beautiful and healthy. Additionally, the naked back of the model does not reveal a single mark. Again, this is a symbol of youth since when getting older humans usually get moles or age spots.

The problem here, as mentioned before (cf. chapter 2.3), is that female bodies are generally seen as beautiful when they are muscular, fat-free and well-defined. The prototype of this ideal is the so-called tubular body (e.g. singer Madonna). To achieve the goal of such a body, one does not only need a lot of discipline and willpower, but also a lot of time that ordinary women simply do not have (cf. Posch 1999: 70). Furthermore, magazines contribute to the idea circulated by the fashion and beauty industry that being thin also means being healthy and attractive. White middle-class girls are especially affected by this thinness mania (cf. Jones & Jones 1999: 114).

This beauty craze does not only endanger people’s physical and emotional well-being, but asks among other things for time, energy and money. The question is who is able to spend so much money and time on beauty? The ordinary woman has a job, family, friends and hobbies which demand money but also time and energy. Thus, the wish to look like these models is a quite fruitless task for women to pursue, as only a very small percentage achieves this ideal (cf. Ware 1995: Internet Source).

For models, on the other hand, their beauty is their job. They are paid to take care of their looks twenty-four hours a day. Ordinary women, however, are constantly stressed because of their wish of being as beautiful as the models in advertising. Posch (1999: 189-190) correctly determined that “Der Nutzen von Schönheit steht also in keinem Verhältnis zu den damit verbundenen Kosten, zu den vielen kleinen und großen Kompromissen und Einschränkungen.”

Finally, I will take a closer look at a subcategory of adverts that depict women in intimate situations. Interestingly, in this category two of four adverts do not only show women but also men. Generally, in female adverts men do not play a crucial role. While in almost thirty percent of male adverts, women are depicted, although a product for men is
advertised, in the three female categories men are only pictured in six out of 75 adverts. This is also true for the advert I chose as a representative:

![Advert by Nivea](image)

**Figure 13: Ad by Nivea (Ad 2.6)**

This advert by Nivea shows a woman who has obviously just taken a shower. The woman has long dark hair and is covered by just a blue towel. Her hair and skin are still wet and there are water drops on her upper chest and arms. She has her eyes closed and rubs her right cheek against the man’s cheek that is standing behind her.

The male model has closed eyes as well but he is not half-naked like the woman. Moreover, he is touching her arm with his hand and definitely fits the male beauty ideal that asks for prominent facial features and designer stubble. The advert is intimate since the woman has just taken a shower and is barely dressed, and because it shows a very private situation between her and the male model.

In this advert various kinds of cream oil showers are advertised. The advert promises “beautifully soft skin”. This idea of beauty and softness is supported by the flowers that are lying around the bottles of the shower gel, since they are also something beautiful and tender like one’s skin will be when using the Nivea products. Additionally, the light colours used for the package contribute to the idea of tender skin.

Skin is in general of great significance in cosmetics discourse. The reason for this is that skin is always portrayed as being in danger, since skin can be dry, reddened, sensitive or chapped. The skin also shows unmistakable the age of the owner. Therefore, the ideal condition of skin is constructed as smooth, wrinkle-free, flawless, taut and naturally beautiful. What is outstanding is that a natural beautiful condition can still be enhanced, since naturally beautiful is not beautiful enough (Karmasin 2011: 277).

In general, intimacy is constructed as of great significance, showing attractive people that obviously care or love each other. The main message of all these adverts is, of course,
that as long as you use a particular body lotion or shower gel, you will be loved too (like the people in the adverts). As a result, readers associate, for example, feelings of happiness and intimacy with a partner with products by Nivea (cf. figure 13).

The second advert of this subcategory that also shows a man and woman in an intimate situation is ad 2.20. Again, both models have their eyes closed. The man is sitting behind the female and fondles her left ear or cheek, while the woman is raising her left arm to touch the man’s head. Furthermore, the man is wearing no shirt and he obviously wants to seduce the woman. What further contributes to the feeling of intimacy is the colour of the woman’s top and the background. White is the colour of purity, innocence and virginity (cf. Color-Wheel: Internet Source) and thus is perfect to depict a very private moment. The creases in the white background, however, remind me of a creased sheet which further conveys the idea of intimacy and sexual seduction.

However, for me advert 2.20 does not only convey an idea of privacy and intimacy but is in a way discriminatory towards women. The reason for this is the slogan “touch and be touched” and a sentence in the body copy that suggests “to leave your skin smooth and instantly ready to touch and be touched”. For me the message of this Nivea advert is that firstly, women are seen just as sexual objects who can be touched by men whenever they like, and secondly that women need to use body lotions to ‘provide’ soft skin in order to be touched by a male. Here, females are not shown as independent or self-confident, but rather as objects for male satisfaction.

Dyer (1990: 117) also states that advertisements define women in terms of the commodities advertised. Beauty products like this body lotion, for instance, are not sold as commodities, but rather as helpful devices for a relationship with males. The result of this is that many females identify themselves with what they consume. When looking at the advert, one does not relate it to the body lotion advertised but rather to something sex-related. Currently, the motto in advertising is obviously “sex sells” (cf. also ad 3.19) and, despite emancipation, women are still depicted as objects, which help to sell a certain product.

Another problem is that women are never beautiful enough. The beauty industry keeps telling people that it is possible to fit the ideal and to be young, slim and fit. By conveying a feeling of inferiority, women are induced to buy products, which cause the whole industry to boom. Whole branches of economies profit from women’s desire for a perfect appearance and their willingness to pay for it. If women were happier with their looks, they would not buy so much cosmetic products.
As a result, it is important for the beauty industry to address potential customers on an emotional level (cf. also Posch 1999: 178). Nowadays the number of singles is constantly rising and of course, the majority long for a partner. The cosmetics industry knows about this desire and thus uses pictures of happy couples in intimate situations for their advertising campaigns to show consumers that this luck of having a perfect partner (that also fits the male beauty ideal) is within reach when using their products.

Interestingly, in the last ad (2.10) of the intimacy sub-category the model’s face cannot be seen. She is standing with her back to the reader and is putting on a white bathrobe. Half of her back is still naked, which again suggests an atmosphere of intimacy. The model’s blonde short hair is a little stringy. Again, the woman is quite thin as her naked back and the prominent backbones reveal.

The model is looking at a mirror clouded with steam. Consequently, the reader cannot see the model’s face. On the mirror somebody has written “After a Hot Shower Your Skin Will Love Dove Body Milk”, and an arrow that points down at something that the reader cannot see, perhaps a bottle of a body lotion by Dove. This text supports my assumption that the model has just taken a shower. Now it is suggested to her to use a Dove product, as her skin will love it. The reader cannot see the model’s face here as the mirror is fogged. Since there is no particular body lotion advertised it can be assumed that all products by Dove would be perfect for women’s skin after a hot shower.

To sum it up, glamour does play an important role in cosmetics advertising. Cosmetics companies try hard to convince women that they can have the glamour factor in their ordinary lives as well and feel like supermodels every single day by showing how apparently easy it is to achieve the desired results. Moreover, many brands focus on the natural look and try to convince potential buyers that the models depicted are naturally beautiful. This is not true as there are barely any adverts in which models do not wear any make-up.

Being slim is also an important issue in this category as slimness is associated with beauty, fun and health. Additionally, women are still depicted as objects for male’s satisfaction and not as independent individuals.
5.6 Group III: Medium shot – Whole body in female advertisements

In this part of my diploma thesis I concentrate on 23 advertisements of which the majority show the whole female body. Here, the shot sizes used are the so-called medium shot (i.e. cuts off the models approximately at the knees) and the medium long shot that shows the full figure (cf. Kress & van Leeuwen 1998: 130).

In terms of social distance Kress and van Leeuwen (1998: 131) talk about close and far social distance shots. When using the first the whole body can be seen, while the latter also allows the reader to see what is around the subject depicted.

Here, I divide the adverts in sub-categories of sports, nature, and glamour. In 13 % of all 97 adverts of my corpus, sports (e.g. gymnastics, dancing, jogging, etc.) play a role. Like in the groups before, I will now present examples of advertisements that work as representatives for a sub-category. The first advert I will concentrate on and that represents the sports sub-category is ad 3.3.

![Figure 14: Ad by Nivea (Ad 3.3)](image)

This advert by Nivea shows a woman doing gymnastic exercises on the floor. She is not too slim but trained and conveys a feeling of being in balance with her own body. Further, she seems to have fun while practicing. The model is only wearing white hot-pants and a white sports bra that reveal her perfect body. The product advertised here is a body cream that promises to “firm your skin contours”. It seems likely that the advert is meant to convey the idea that using the body lotion alone will not lead to the desired results, namely to a firm and taut body; you also need to stay fit and train your body to look like the model in the advert.

The background is in the typical Nivea-dark-blue and is perhaps used as a contrast to the female model. This body lotion obviously helps to firm women’s bodies in terms of female problem areas (i.e. buttocks, stomach and thighs). This may also be the reason why the
model is depicted barely dressed, namely to show her firm body parts. The use of the colour blue further contributes to the mood of comfort and balance the model radiates as this colour is considered to be beneficial to both mind and body (cf. chapter 6).

In general, doing sports is very important in our society. Davids (2007: 13) points out that people who are doing sports are said to be fit and healthy and these are attributes that are welcome in society. Surprisingly, doing sports was a taboo for women for centuries, because female bodies were not supposed to resemble male bodies. Nowadays, however, manly female bodies are presented as ideal in many magazines. What is crucial, however, is that one should not exaggerate the muscle training, because too many muscles are considered unfeminine (cf. Posch 1999: 71).

Interestingly, trained bodies are everywhere nowadays as they are not only associated with health and beauty but also with physical performance. Trained bodies are also frequently associated with corresponding inner values (cf. Davids 2007: 12). This, of course, leads to the disadvantage (e.g. in terms of job-related success) and also discrimination of people whose bodies do not fit this norm.

Another advert by Nivea that shows how important doing sports is nowadays especially in advertising is ad 3.12. Here, a woman is also depicted in underwear to show the reader what an ideal body looks like. The woman is smiling exaggeratedly while she is looking at something that we as readers cannot identify – perhaps the body lotion that is standing in the right front of the illustration.

The model’s happiness is obviously due to the product she is using, “Happy Time Body Lotion”. She is holding a hoop in the brand’s typical colour blue while she is standing on a white sofa or bed. It is suggested here that the model has her trained figure because she is doing hula hoop (i.e. she is whirling a hoop around her body by the movement of her hips). Strikingly, in both adverts (3.3 and 3.12) text is used very little. Obviously, the illustration should speak for itself.

Doing sports is, of course, important since it has many positive effects such as good circulation, stamina, and balance, and it also conveys the feeling of freedom, strength, independence and willingness to perform (cf. also Posch 1999: 158). The model depicted in advert 3.12 also seems quite satisfied with herself and looks like a strong, modern woman. Again sexuality plays an important role, although the product advertised has nothing to do with sex in general. Since an almost naked model advertises a lotion the media again contributes to the gender role stereotyping that is criticized by many people, especially feminists (cf. Jones & Jones 1999: 106).
In addition to the light-blue background we see two pictures of flowers, one on the wall, and another on the desk next to the sofa. Next to the bottle of the body lotion are white blossoms. These flowers contribute to the idea of soft skin after using Nivea products. Further, there is a yellow and a dark blue cloth (perhaps towels) lying next to the bottle also using the same colours that are used in the product package and thus contributing to a harmonious picture. Moreover, there are also a white blanket and cushion that show that the woman is perhaps doing her exercises in her living room. This implies that one does not necessarily go to a gym to do something for your body but that one can stay fit even at home.

To me this is strange since the home should be a place of comfort and relaxation and trimming your body to be slim and fit a beauty ideal has nothing to do with relaxation. However, in this advert, again, the importance of sports to fit the category of the western beauty ideal is emphasized. Interestingly, the model depicted is not as thin as many of the models in group II. The same is true for ad 3.3 or 3.10.

In the latter, two ordinary women are depicted, again in underwear. They are also about to do hula-hoop. Like in ad 3.3 a body lotion is advertised that is meant to firm women’s skin. As mentioned above (cf. chapter 5.1.7) Dove tries to make women enjoy their own beauty, no matter whether they are slim or curvy. This is a very laudable idea considering the fact that the majority of cosmetics or beauty companies only use extremely thin models that embody a quite questionable ideal that has often nothing to do with health anymore.

In ad 3.10 the text says “shape up your curves”. This also shows that having curves is okay and also appreciated by some brands as it is only natural. Furthermore, the text in the advert suggests “make your curves look their best”. Again, this will make a contribution to the fact that ordinary women will feel beautiful again, even though if they are not size-zero.

However, it is a contradiction that in times where individualism is written with a capital I the ideal human being is the one who fits the norm in terms of body characteristics. The problem is that nowadays the perfect woman is supposed to manage to reconcile family, professional success, exciting sexual life and radiant beauty. This ideal is not only absurd but unfortunately often also seductive to many women (cf. Posch 1999: 118-119).

Posch (1999: 78) also points out that a further problem is that the myth was created that today’s women are capable of getting the body they want just through will power. Those who do not manage to do so, have to blame themselves for not working hard enough and for not being consistent enough. However, in reality, women are more and more unable to cope with the expectations they have to face in western societies.
Although there are adverts (ads 3.3 or 3.10) that show women of normal weight, there are, of course, also adverts that depict fat-free females with slim arms and legs and small breasts. Examples are ads 3.19, 3.20 or 3.21 by Veet and Nivea. The first shows a young woman in bikini, lying on sand (according to the text in the Sahara desert in Egypt) with closed eyes and her mouth open, looking as if she is sexually aroused. The model is without doubt beautiful and has a slim and trained body. Here, not only her trained and slim body is emphasized but also the sexual depiction of female models.

Goffman (1976: 41), for instance, points out that women are more often shown on floors or in bed than men. Beds and floors are places that are associated with something that is not as clean or pure as other places in a room. A lying position conveys the feeling of not being able to defend yourself very well. Furthermore, lying on a bed also expresses sexual availability. In this case, the same message is conveyed by the woman sprawling on the ground with her eyes closed and her left leg tucked up. This bending of the legs is also typical for women (cf. Gofmann 1976: 68).

Here, the typical objectification of women that is often criticized by feminists plays a role. The model is not only barely dressed which, of course, is supposed to engage the male viewer's fantasy, but the seductive sprawling on the hot Sahara sand further contributes to the idea of sexuality.

In ad 3.20 the cropping-strategy is used again. The viewer sees a female kneeling on a blue blanket and the picture is cropped a little bit above her navel. Here, a product called “Bikini Kit” is advertised on the totally hair-free bikini zone of a very slim model. Her stomach muscles and legs are obviously trained and in the background we see an open air pool and some other bathers. Again, the importance of sports is emphasized in this advertisement, since the woman is obviously training her stomach and legs.

Additionally, we also see that the hair-free female body is the non plus ultra nowadays as Mühlen Achs (1993: 39) states in the following: “Die Behaarung des Körpers und des Gesichts ist, als prähistorisches Relikt unserer wilden, d.h. aggressiven, „tierischen“ Vergangenheit, ein exklusives „männliches“ Attribut und wird daher am weiblichen Körper verabscheut und durch glatte Ästhetik ersetzt“.

The next advertisement functions as a representative of all adverts of the corpus of this third category that focus on nature in particular and on natural elements or product ingredients. Outdoor settings are also considered to be more ‘real’ than indoor ones and are therefore frequently used in cosmetics advertising (see chapter 4.8).
This advert by Lancôme shows actress Devon Aoki lying in the grass in a park. The products advertised are lying in front of her and the product line is called “Supernature”. This indicates that using these very products will make a natural beauty more beautiful. Accordingly, the products are better than nature.

Liessmann (2009: 70), for instance, also mentions Kant’s idea that natural beauty cannot simply be taken as a role model for artificial beauty: “Eine Naturschönheit ist ein schönes Ding; die Kunstschönheit ist eine schöne Vorstellung von einem Dinge”. Vestergaard and Schröder (1985: 156) further point out that one has to realize that in the field of advertising “there is no contradiction between the natural and the artificial”. Adverts thus convince women that one can only get a “natural look” by using cosmetic products.

Using make-up should help women to always have rosy cheeks to look as if they have been on a little walk. Devon Aoki has the sort of perfect complexion that people often have after spending some time outside. The product advertised here, however, is said to be better than nature, since it promises to help women to get rosy cheeks without necessarily going outside.

Lancôme’s association with nature and beauty is also found in their logo that shows a rose. In general, many companies try to convince potential buyers that they just use natural ingredients for their products and this idea is, of course, more easily conveyed when the model is depicted outside in a park or garden.

In this advert the idea of sexuality is again of great importance. This is because Devon Aoki wears a dress with a slit up the side that reveals part of her backside. The actress is also not looking directly at the reader. This is also a phenomenon that occurs frequently in terms of depiction of females, as women are often shown “mentally drifting from the physical scene around them” in advertisements (cf. Goffmann 1976: 65).
Vestergaard and Schröder (1985: 159-160) also mention that in advertisements nature and “the natural” occur in four variants, namely:

1. nature as an ingredient in the products
2. products are represented as improvements on nature (e.g. cosmetics)
3. many adverts counteract natural process in the name of the natural (e.g. hair colour to restore a youthful look, indicating that grey hair is not natural)
4. advertisements try to sell products “by imposing nature as a referent system” (e.g. a car is placed in a beautiful landscape)

Nature or natural settings also play a significant role in ads 3.5, 3.15 and 3.16. The first advert (3.5) shows a beach scene in which a model in a violet bikini is standing at the beach with closed eyes, spreading her hands and turning her face towards the sun. In the background we see the sky, a hilly landscape and the blue sea. The almost white sand and the sun make this place look like paradise.

The product advertised here is a razor by Gillette Venus that has the same colour as the woman’s bikini. Its form also reminds me of a slim but a slightly curvy female body like the body of the model. Razors for males, however, are quite edged and in dark colours. Here, like mentioned before, the hair-free female body is again of great importance.

The general idea of beauty that is important in terms of adverts by Gillette Venus is already conveyed by the name of the brand’s name. In the ancient world Venus was the goddess of beauty, love and eroticism. The issue of the goddess also plays a role in this advertising campaign since the slogan says “Reveal the Goddess in You” (cf. ad 3.9).

Strikingly, many adverts simply paint a picture of how one has to be to belong to a particular social group through texts and also through the pictures used (cf. Vestergaard & Schröder 1985: 6). Potential buyers of the promoted body shaver in advert 3.5, for instance, get very little factual information about the product but they are told, however, that if they use this very product, they will get “smooth skin worth of a goddess” and thereby manage to belong to a group of women who are not just beautiful but like goddesses.

This idea of beauty and success with reference to Gillette Venus is supported by the brand’s current model for Gillette Venus, singer and actress Jennifer Lopez (see ads 3.4 and 3.9). Ad 3.4 shows Lopez in an intimate situation with her daughter Emme. The advert further implies that women who use products by Gillette Venus are not only good-looking and successful, but also have the time to take care of their children (while they are of course still looking great and not stressed at all).
In the right part of the advert there is a statement by Lopez saying “It’s the everyday moments that make me feel like a goddess”. Because of this statement the whole advert becomes more personal. Thus, Lopez approves and affirms what the brand promises, namely that feeling like a goddess when using their products is true. This statement further implies that Lopez feels like a goddess since she is not only beautiful and successful, but also manages to reconcile family and job. This is without doubt what most women or mothers long for and as a result the *Gillette Venus* advertisements appeal to many women as the brand’s market leader position shows (cf. chapter 5.1.10).

Unsurprisingly, for potential customers the product design is of great importance. Therefore, the so-called aestheticization of products is crucial for producers, because the better a product looks, the more people will decide to buy it (cf. Vestergaard & Schröder 1985: 7). This special product design is used with reference to the razor advertised here, since this is not only a colour but also a form that appeals to the majority of women.

Next, advert 3.15 also shows a beach scene. A male and a female model are dancing under a palm tree. The perfume by *Oriflame* is supposed to give women the feeling that they can have what the model has when using this perfume; beautiful looks and a handsome Latino who is courting them on a beach that reminds the reader of holidays and relaxation.

Roland Barthes would describe this concept of feminine beauty as a myth. As we can see here, in advertising particular signs are often presented with an easily readable mythical meaning (e.g. a model that works as a sign for female beauty) that is placed next to another sign whose meaning is rather ambiguous (cf. Bignell 2002: 33). With reference to ad 3.15 this is the name of the perfume.

The female model in advert 3.15 stands for this product. Such a connection is made on symbolic grounds rather than through the use of the product advertised. This concept also forms the basis of an advert that became famous all around the globe: the Marlboro man (cf. Leiss 1990: 254). Leiss (1990: 254) further states that “the Marlboro Man is the product; in ads of this type, the person does not testify to or explain use, but conveys a range of attributes (here ruggedness, masculinity) to be associated with the product according to the personal prototype he or she represents”. The model’s attributes are transferred to the product thus establishing a connection between the two of them. This means that product and model become interchangeable (cf. Leiss 1990: 254).

Bignell (2002: 33-34) takes this idea further and states that “The mythic meaning of ‘feminine beauty’ [...] is carried over onto the name of the perfume, the linguistic sign which
appears in the ad. So the name of the perfume becomes a linguistic sign that seems to connote feminine beauty as well. The product has been endowed with a mythic meaning.”

As a result, when buying this perfume that is seen as a sign for feminine beauty, the buyer hopes that the product will generate an association with the concept of feminine beauty (cf. Bignell 2002: 33). This means that the reader of the advert establishes a relationship of desire with reference to the situation depicted; either a desire to have an attractive male companion, to be at such an amazing place or to be as beautiful and lady-like as the model is. The model’s beauty is enhanced by the beauty of the location: white sand, crystal clear water and beautiful pink flowers.

Bignell (2002: 50) further points out that perfume adverts are not only targeted at women to increase the desirability of a brand, but also at men, since forty percent of men buy perfumes as Christmas presents. In advertising this is called ‘overlook’ and “refers to the targeting of one audience with an image apparently designed for another audience” (Bignell 2002: 50).

The woman in ad 3.15 is not only sexy because of her beauty, but her dress also connotes fashionablility. The colour pink stands for love and romance (cf. chapter 6) and is definitely a colour that attracts the reader’s attention. The dress is quite short and shows off the woman’s legs, which is considered to be sexy in our culture. The feeling of an intimate if not sexual situation is also triggered because of the Latino who has an open shirt and his right hand on the woman’s hip.

In addition, the female model has her barely dressed left leg between the men’s which contributes to the idea of intimacy. They are dancing very close to each other and the female model is putting her left hand around the man’s neck. Although this openly-depicted sexuality is often prejudicial to women as they are often postmarked as sexual objects, sex-appeal can also work in favour of a female, since it guarantees admiration (cf. Lacey 1998: 73).

In general, in 34 percent of all 97 adverts natural elements such as butterflies, flowers, sky or water were used. Eighteen adverts of my corpus depicted people outside (e.g. at the beach, in a desert or park, etc.). This frequent use of images of nature or the labelling of a product to be ‘natural’ although it does not consist of natural ingredients is misleading. However, the majority of cosmetics companies jumped on the bandwagon thereby making enormous profits each year.

Next, I will enlarge upon glamour that also plays a role in this category (see ads 3.6, 3.9, 3.17 and 3.23). Ad 3.23, for instance, shows a woman in a quite short turquoise dress.
Her long dark hair wavy and definitely styled and she also wears high-heels that contribute to her sex-appeal.

Danesi (1999:13-14) claims that although high-heels are uncomfortable to wear millions of women wear them. One reason for this might be that they are erotically exciting to males. Danesi (1999: 13) also points out that

High heels force to body to tilt, thus emphasizing the buttocks and breasts: they highlight the female’s sexuality. They also accentuate the role of feet in sexuality. As the social historian William Rossi has written, across many cultures feet are perceived as sexually desirable. Putting on stockings and high heels is everywhere a highly erotic act, and this is borne out by the fact that in most sexual portrayals, women are perceived as looking sexier in stockings and high-heel shoes than without them.

The text of this advert suggests “Get Superstar like smooth skin”, which further contributes to the idea of glamour. Another ad by Veet (ad 3.17) also combines the idea of glamour and sexiness. Here, the same model is wearing a long evening dress in champagne. Furthermore, black lace is used in the décolleté area. The model is also wearing a glamorous bracelet and high-heels. Interestingly, in both adverts the model is making the victory symbol that here obviously stands for the first letter of the brand’s name.

The following advert features singer and actress Jennifer Lopez and functions as a representative of this sub-category:

Jennifer Lopez is currently the testimonial for Gillette Venus and is depicted in a short and fringed silver dress with plunging neckline and a lot of glitter. Lopez is also wearing earrings and a ring. The singer has wavy long hair, slim legs and is obviously totally in action. Her right hand in which she is holding a microphone is behind her head. This, together with the black background and the spotlights indicates that she is performing on stage. The text of the
advert even says “Get Your Goddess Showing”. This means that when using products by Gillette Venus you will not just be star-like but like a goddess. This is, of course, tempting for women. All these things together contribute to the idea of glamour that is addressed here.

La Grange (2005: 7-8), for instance, refers to the work Seeing is Believing by Arthur Asa Berger who feels that there is a relationship between envy, glamour and publicity. The latter shows the reader of an advertisement people whose lives are enviable since they have been transformed by consumption. The fact that the readers envy the person depicted make him or her glamorous. La Grange (2005: 7-8) further states the following:

Publicity starts by working on the natural appetite for pleasure, something that is real. It does not, however, offer the pleasure as it is. Rather it promises happiness, happiness gained by being envied by others, and this is glamour. It is not therefore offering the pleasure in itself. The better the publicity, the more the spectator is aware of what they are missing. Yet this glamour is very solitary. Being envied depends on your not sharing your expectations with those that envy you. This explains the impersonal and unfocused look of many glamour images. The buyers imagine themselves transformed by buying the product and envy this transformed self. In effect, the publicity image has lowered the spectator’s self-esteem and offers it back if they buy the product.

In general, beauty products, especially decorative cosmetics, help women to escape everyday occurrence, and provide them with some kind of glamour (cf. Karmasin 2011: 293) and also with a particular attribute that makes others envy them like they envy the models depicted in various adverts.

To conclude the analysis of this third group my assumption has not been falsified that sports, nature and also glamour do play a crucial role in cosmetics advertising. Sport is generally of great importance nowadays as being fit is associated with being healthy. Additionally, trained bodies of females are currently not the exception but the rule. It is obviously not important what you do to stay fit as various forms of ‘training’ are depicted (e.g. gymnastics, dancing, hula-hoop, etc.). Further, the adverts of this category frequently show half-naked female bodies revealing trained stomach muscles and legs as these are definitely the problem areas of women. The overall message of these ads is that one has to be slim and trained to be attractive and to fit the western beauty ideal.

In our society nature is currently more important than ever. Green/Nature is definitely in and the beauty industry has embraced this trend to promote and sell their products. ‘Nature’ or ‘the natural’ appear in various forms such as product ingredients (see ads 2.21 or 1.30) or simply placing models in accordant landscapes (see ads 3.11, 3.18, 3.19). By depicting models in paradisiacal settings advertising companies trigger particular wishes and desires in the readers of the advertisements. Women identify with the models and situations depicted and hope to get what is shown in an advert when buying the advertised products.
Glamour, however, is created by women envying the models depicted in advertisements. In addition, the models that embody the ‘glamour-factor’ are not only beautiful and dressed accordingly, but are often also celebrities that human beings associate with glamour and lifestyle (e.g. singer Jennifer Lopez or model Adriana Lima in ads 3.6 and 3.9). In general, these adverts paint a picture of how one has to be to belong to a particular social group. Again, this contributes to women’s desire to escape their everyday life, which they try to realize by buying razors by *Gillette Venus* or hair removal products by *Veet*. 
5.7 Group IV: Male advertisements

Men’s bodies have appeared quite frequently in advertising since the 1980s. As a result, not only women are shown as sex objects nowadays but also males. In advertisements, no matter whether for clothes, food or cars, men are generally depicted with washboard stomachs and massive chests. Since women have gained more equality in previous decades, men seem to consider muscles as an important means to express their masculinity (cf. Elliot & Elliot 2005: 4).

Jones and Jones (1999: 116) quote Rutherford who states that “For men to put their bodies on display contradicts the code of who looks and who is looked at. […] Men have held the power of the look, the symbolic owning of women’s bodies. Reversing the gaze offers the symbol of men’s bodies on offer to women.” Stratton (2001: 187) further points out that for a long time men were afraid to buy cosmetics products since they were afraid to be considered effeminate or even homosexual.

In the 21 advertisements I analyze in this fourth group half-naked, muscular men are of great importance. Six out of 21 adverts feature naked and trained upper parts of the body (about 29%). In four of these adverts the male chest is hair-free. This may also be due to the fact that razors or hair-removal products by Gillette and Veet are advertised.

In general the males depicted in the chosen advertisements rarely establish a connection with the reader (e.g. by looking directly at the viewer). Only in one third of the adverts men catch the reader’s eyes, while 61 % of the female models do as can be seen in the previous three groups (cf. Figures 17 and 18).

Argyle (1979: 220) points out that when it comes to establishing relationships between people the gaze plays an important role. Women generally focus on the force of their gaze when they, for instance, want to attract men’s attention. Apart from that it is striking that the main colours used in these adverts were rather dark colours such as blue, black and grey.
Before going into further detail, I again take a brief look at the components used in these adverts. As representatives for this group I use among other things the following advert:

![Gillette Ad](image)

**Figure 19: Ad by Gillette (Ad 4.2)**

Ad 4.2 consists of a signature line, a slogan, a head line and a body copy. Here, all four elements are placed in the lowest part of the advert, together with an illustration of the product. The same is true for two adverts by *Veet*, namely ad 4.1 and ad 4.9. Here, the image of a half-naked male model who is about to get out of the shower with a white towel wound around the lower part of his body takes the rest of the space in the advert. The shower looks quite modern with glass walls, a big shower head, and grey slabs.

Interestingly, we cannot see the face and the breast-upward part of the half naked male model in this advert, since the image of a young attractive man who seems to be in the city or at work, wearing a blue long-sleeved shirt and a tie is placed over it. Obviously, this is the same man who has apparently left his flat after he has taken a shower and the reader of the image is now confronted with the result. This supports the message sent by the headline of the advertisement which suggests “Gillette fresh & clean body wash. Out-of-the-shower freshness that lasts”.

The message of this advert is that men will feel as fresh and clean as if they had just left the shower for the whole day. This is the reason why both situations are depicted in one advert. The shower situation is quite obvious since the product advertised is a shower gel. The
situation of the young man being, for instance, on his way to work or to a date after work (see the background of the male model where there is a building site as well as a few other people and high buildings) is meant to show how long the effect of this shower gel will last.

The male model does not look directly at the reader but at something that cannot be identified. The main colours used here are grey, blue and white. As mentioned before I will provide detailed information on this issue in the next chapter. Strikingly, the male model is totally clean-shaven (not only his face but also his trained chest). This is interesting since many men grow a beard to reassert their masculinity (cf. Berger 1999: 135).

Advert 4.1 again shows a half-naked man who turns his back to the reader in a bathroom, cuddling a dark-haired woman. The whole situation is quite intimate and sexuality definitely pays a role. Both faces are not visible to the reader. The models wear jeans and again the main colours used are white, grey and blue. Here, however, the image of the product is placed in the right bottom-part of the advert, while in ad 4.2 it was on the left side. What is similar to the other advert is that again the illustration takes almost the total space of the advert. Further, in this case there is no signature line and slogan. The headline of the advert is placed at the centre of the advertisement, which is relatively uncommon in this category.

In the second advert by Veet (ad 4.9.) which is also created according to the same principles as the advert I mentioned before, the headline is placed above the body copy and not in the middle of the advert. Here, the illustration again covers most of the space, and the face of the male model cannot be seen. The headline suggests that “This’ll put hands on your chest”. The message here is that men’s chest should be hair-free to attract women’s attention. Furthermore, the advert almost promises that when using the Veet’s hair removal products women’s hands on males’ chests will be guaranteed. This, like in many of the adverts of the previous 3 groups indicates that men also need to fulfil certain criteria to attract women’s attention such as having trained bodies with hair-free chests. Here, men are also seen to a certain extent as sexual objects.

What is uncommon here is that we only see the upper part of the male’s body and not his face. But this is seemingly a common strategy in terms of advertisements by Veet. The brand frequently uses only parts of the body, for instance, legs or chest to show the effects of their hair-removal products (cf. Group III: ad 3.20; Group IV: ads 4.9, 4.18 and 4.20).

This so-called cropping, as already mentioned, should put the emphasis on certain parts of the body (cf. Dyer 1990: 107). Surprisingly, it is not only used in adverts showing women in such a way but also with reference to men. Especially in the latter group the focus
is reduced to a particular part of the body, namely the legs and the chest. In ad 4.18 a trained hairy chest is depicted showing a totally smooth and hair-free area in the middle of the advert.

In this advert there is barely any text used and the illustration is obviously speaking for itself. However, the text next to the depicted product says “Do not confuse with bath gel”. This indicates that the advertised hair removal product is so effective that it is enough to simply apply it to your skin like a shower gel and in the next moment you will have your chest-hair removed. The same is true for ad 4.20, but here male legs (one hairy, one hair-free) are used to show the effectiveness of this very product. The pinkish background colour is quite unusual for male adverts.

To come back to ad 4.9: the light-blue background cannot be further identified. In combination with the use of the cropping strategy one can assume that the advert should address all men and not only a particular group with a particular social background, job or look.

The last advert I would like to mention in terms of naked and trained chests is ad 4.6. Here, a combination of shower and shaving gel as well as a shampoo of the brand Nivea is advertised. Again the advert consists of a signature line (here in the right top corner of the advert) and a slogan that is placed near the bottom of the advertisement. The slogan is, however, linked to the signature line since a white line connects the two of them, thereby also indicating the seams of the bathroom slabs. What is on the one hand a little bit strange but what obviously contributes to the linking of the two elements is that the seam is also seen on the male model’s body.

The product is here also placed at the right bottom corner of the advert and the package is kept in a dark blue like in the adverts for Veet or Gillette (cf. ad 4.1 or ad 4.2). Furthermore, there is also a body copy, standing details and a headline in form of 3 terms that are arranged triangle-like in this advert. Each term is standing next to the part of the body that it is supposed to be applied to. Next to the model’s hair is the word ‘shower’, next to his hand in which he holds a shaver is the word ‘shave’ and in height of his shoulder the word ‘shower’. These words are also found on the bottle itself, namely below its name Active 3. Further, there are also three symbols used next to the illustration of the product that indicate for what purposes this product by Nivea can be used.

Again the model is trained and hair-free on his chest. He is smiling at the reader, tilting his head to the right and rubbing his nose with the back of his right hand in which he holds a shaver. With his left hand he touches his stomach. Obviously, he has just soaped his
chest and shampooed his hair with the product advertised. What is also different to the advert 4.2 is that the model here smiles whimsically and has a designer stubble.

The model is also standing in the shower, but here there are also water drops on the tiles and water is surrounding the product as well. Moreover, the foam that is also on the male’s chest and hair is on top of the bottle, thereby showing that he has just used it. The man is obviously having fun in the shower. Again, the main colours used in this advert are blue and white. This may also be due to the fact that blue and white are also the colours of the Nivea logo.

Next, I will focus on another phenomenon that is said to occur in terms of men’s advertisements, namely women. Bignell (2002: 61) claims that there are often scantily dressed women in men magazines’ adverts. This is also true for the advertisements I take a closer look at in this diploma thesis. In 6 out of 21 adverts women are shown. In two of these adverts, however, there are only women depicted advertising a certain product not related to them like lotions or deodorants for men. The examples I chose for this purpose are the following:

Figure 20: Ad by Nivea (Ad 4.17)                                Figure 21: Ad by Axe (Ad 4.11)

In ad 4.17 a man, who is obviously advertising Nivea’s DNAge lotion is sitting on a couch and is hugged by a woman with dark long hair who may be his wife or girlfriend. The latter is perhaps about to lean her head against his. Further, the man caresses the fingers of the woman’s left hand which rests on his left shoulder/upper chest. Like in the Nivea ad 4.6 the signature line and the slogan are connected via a white line.
The product is again placed in the right bottom corner of the advert, showing not only the package but also the bottle of the product. The slogan “What men want” is a little bit contradictory here, since on the one hand this could be a reference to the DNAge cream that obviously prevents elderly men from having wrinkles, on the other hand it could also be a reference to the caresses of a beautiful woman. The main colours used here are various nuances of grey and brown, but there is again the typical Nivea-blue in the product package and the woman’s blouse.

The man is not looking directly at the reader, but the woman is. Both have a smile on their lips and seem to enjoy their time together. The man, who has already grey hair, is definitely older than his female companion. Further, he seems to be well-off. This is suggested firstly by his sweater which seems to be of higher value material (and the fact that he is not simply wearing a T-shirt) and secondly by the headline which says “For Men who know what a good investment looks like”. The message sent through this statement is that the anti-aging product is of a high quality and although it might be expensive it is definitely worth it.

The results of the usage can first and foremost be seen on the man’s face which is clean-shaven and wrinkle-free, but also in the fact that he has attracted the attention of a beautiful and definitely younger woman. Additionally, in the background are the blurred contours of a doorframe, which supports my theory that the two are sitting perhaps in the living room of the man’s house or flat. All these things contribute to an atmosphere of intimacy that is quite rare in the category of male adverts (except the fact that males are frequently shown in the bathroom).

Apart from that it is worth mentioning here that women are often said to be the fair sex. Thus women’s appearances are observed and judged more critically than men’s, since the latter are seen as objects of prestige. As a result, one can argue that there is definitely a correlation between the attractiveness of women and the professional status of men. Although women do not need to be beautiful to make their living, beauty is still of great importance in the western society.

Men, however, do not need to look youthful or handsome, since their fertility is preserved up to an old age, and external resources, like income, are of a greater significance (cf. Davids 2007: 26-28). This is also true for this advert as the man is definitely in his late forties, while the woman may be in her early thirties.

In general, elderly men are frequently portrayed as active, creative, healthy or wealthy by the media, while elderly women are given negative attributes such as rigid or unpleasant.
Since in our society beauty and youth are extremely important, age is seen as something that should be avoided at all costs. Further, older women are no longer seen as sexually desirable while men of the same age are still depicted as physically attractive and admirable for younger women (cf. Jones & Jones 1999: 136-137).

This activity, power and health are also pictured in advert 4.12 in which the former football star Eric Cantona is advertising products of the brand L’Oreal. This advert shows Cantona with a few signs of aging, with wrinkles and grey beard. However, since he is a famous person with quite an erotic charisma and seems to deal with his age quite confidentially he is the perfect model for cosmetics products for men. This is true for many products that are advertised by males who are still active and full of power (cf. Karmasin 2011: 307).

However, in general, older bodies are strikingly absent. There are also patterns of racialization in terms of eroticized images. White bodies are definitely over-represented. Interestingly, they are often not Anglo-American or Northern European bodies, but bodies that are coded as ‘Latin’. Latinos usually have dark hair, olive skin (cf. ad 4.7 or ad 3.15) and are often considered to be more erotic than ordinary whites (cf. Gill 2007: 99).

The next advert I chose to show the importance of female models in male advertisements is ad 4.11. Here, a deodorant of the brand Axe is advertised. It is remarkable that there are no traditional components like slogan, signature line or body copy used in this advert. The whole advert just consists of an illustration and the image of the product. There are also two other adverts of the same brand (ad 4.13 and 4.15) that feature women. In the latter there is also a man depicted, but I will provide further detail on this advert later. Another similarity in terms of these two adverts is that the product is placed in the right bottom corner of the advertisement.

Coming back to ad 4.11: a seductive and very scantily dressed woman (she is only wearing red underwear) is lying on her stomach with her legs crossed. Her dark brown long and slightly wavy hair is falling over her left shoulder while she is looking alluringly at the reader. The idea of seduction is supported by the red underwear the female model is wearing. Red, as already mentioned is associated with passion and desire (cf. Berger 1999: 63).

The woman is not simply lying on the quilt but on a soft woollen blanket. The whole room setup seems quite expensive and so does the blanket. In her left hand the woman is holding the deo-can, presenting it to the reader. Her lips are obviously smeared with chocolate as she seems to have bitten of a piece of the product advertised. The deodorant advertised is part of the Axe-series “Dark temptation – As irresistible as chocolate”. This message suggests
that when men are using products of this line, women will want to eat them up like a bar of chocolate.

   The woman on the bed is obviously waiting for her lover to come back home or to meet him at a hotel room. By using such an advertising strategy the company uses women’s sex-appeal to seduce men to buy a particular product. The woman is also depicted as a sexual object which again contributes to the typical stereotyping of women in advertising.

   In ad 4.13 the text next to the product reads “the axe effect”. Depicted is a woman in white clothes with white wings made of feathers. She is sitting on a street, surrounded by skyscrapers. Feathers are lying on the street, some still flying through the air. The message of this advert by Axe is that the deodorant smells so seductive that even angels fall from the sky since they cannot resist this scent. Although there is again no man depicted in the advert it is suggested that the product has such an intensive smell that women react to it even before they see the man using it. The colours used here are rather dark as in the majority of the adverts in this category.

   The last advert I want to mention is advert 4.15. Again, a deodorant by Axe is advertised. Here, the product is again placed in the right bottom corner and the text next to it says “Side effects may occur. You’re welcome”. The illustration for the first time does not only show a woman but also a man. The bearded man is lying on the floor in front of a staircase and a blonde woman, who is a scantily dressed police-officer, has her right knee on his back holding him down. Furthermore, she is also pressing his head to the ground with her right hand. In her left hand the woman holds a club.

   The man is wearing a colourful shirt and has his right hand handcuffed on his back. The uniform of the woman is obviously not a real police uniform since it is a low-scooped one-piece-suit with hot pants. Additionally, the woman is wearing boots and a cap. She is looking at the reader, while the man is not. On the staircase behind the man there is a skateboard lying on the floor.

   This, together with the text I mentioned before, suggests that the man was skating and the ‘police woman’ was stopping him because of the Axe-scent and is now arresting him, which is seemingly nothing bad (cf. the text saying “You’re welcome”) and exactly the effect that men can expect when using this product. Although the text sounds like a warning (“Side effects may occur”) the illustration shows clearly that these side effects may be appreciated, since there are probably hardly any men who would not like to be handcuffed by a blonde and sexy ‘police woman’. However, although the woman has power over the male in this advert, she is still depicted in a quite sexualized way.
In magazines for men the contents of adverts often deal according to Bignell (2002: 61) with “sex, sports, gadgets, and fashion, a mix of ingredients which are linked by their relationship to leisure rather than work”. Since sports is a very important issue nowadays as many people associate being fit with being healthy, I will also take a closer look at the male adverts in terms of sport. What is significant here is that all the men that are depicted half-naked are obviously doing sports since they all have a six-pack.

Furthermore, sport plays a role insofar as there are also sportsmen who work as testimonials for various brands, for instance, David Beckham (see ad 4.4) or Roger Federer, Tiger Woods and Thierry Henry for Gillette (see ad 4.3). The latter three all hold their respective piece of sports equipment in their hands, namely a football, a golf club and a tennis racket.

Apart from that there is an advert for Rexona (ad 4.10) in which a Formula One racing car is depicted together with its driver. This racing car, however, is not only important in terms of sports but also in terms of myth. This very car connotes masculine power and is thus part of the sign system that creates the myth of masculinity. Masculinity is a social creation, not a biological definition and means being physically strong, skilful and rugged (cf. Lacey 1998: 68).

Additionally, men are often depicted in ways that can be associated with success, dominance or activity (cf. Karmasin 2011: 289). The issue of success can be found, for instance, in ad 4.3 featuring 3 (former) successful sportsmen, namely Roger Federer (former number 1 tennis player), Tiger Woods (former number 1 golf player) and Thierry Henry (very successful football player).

Furthermore, the Gillette ad describes them as “Gillette Champions” which further contributes to the issue of success. The idea of success and status is also conveyed in ad 4.5 in which actor Patrick Dempsey advertises a perfume by Avon. Dempsey is obviously driving a valuable car (see the wooden steering wheel), perhaps a vintage car, and he is at present one of the most famous actors starring in the series Grey’s Anatomy.

Lastly, there is another advert (4.14) that can be associated with sports. Gillette advertises a deodorant for sensitive skin that even rough guys like the rugby players British teams can have. Here, we see a man who is obviously currently engaged in a rugby game. He is totally dirty and seems to be quite tough. The man is wearing grey blue shorts and football socks and has a tense facial expression.

The player is leaning against some of the other players of whom the reader can only see the legs. They are obviously fighting for the ball that is lying between their feet. Further,
since the man is bald and not very handsome he does not look like the typical male model that usually advertises shower or shaving gels. The guy tries to pick a little white flower while he is fighting for the ball.

The player’s facial expression and posture on the one hand, and the picking of the flower on the other hand, let the viewer assume that even rough guys have a sensitive side. The white flower, of course, symbolizes this sensitivity, thereby creating a connection with the sensitive deodorant. This goes hand in hand with the slogan “Strong but Sensitive”.

To conclude my analysis of this group of adverts it is to say that half-naked and trained male bodies are definitely of great importance. One reason for this might be that “muscularity is still perceived as a cultural symbol of masculinity” (cf. Elliott & Elliott 2005: 4). What is different to women is that men admire muscular bodies, but the perfect bodies depicted in adverts do not affect their self-image or self-esteem. However, men favour more realistic depictions of male bodies, since they are firstly less threatening, and secondly depict a goal that is easier to attain (cf. Elliott & Elliott 2005: 12-15).

Gill (2007: 98) further suggests that the models are generally white, they are young, they are muscular and slim, they are usually clean-shaven (with perhaps the exception of a little designer stubble), and they have particular facial features which connote a combination of softness and strength – strong jaw, large lips and eyes, and soft-looking, clear skin (according to Edwards 1997). This combination of muscularity/hardness and softness in the particular ‘look’ of the models allows them to manage contradictory expectations of men and masculinity as strong and powerful but also gentle and tender – they embody, in a sense, a cultural contradiction about what a man is ‘meant to be’.

This is absolutely true for the adverts I analyzed in this group. Although in many adverts clean-shaven men are depicted, beards are, however, still important, especially designer stubbles (cf. ads 4.5, 4.6, 4.7). Berger (1999: 135) further points out that “the rise of moustaches and beards may have something to do with an attempt, on the part of many men, to assert their masculinity in the face of all the attacks on male identity mounted by both the unisex movement and the feminist movement”.

Mühlen Achs (1993: 39) describes the hairiness of the body and the face as “prähistorisches Relikt unsereer wilden, d.h. aggressive, “tierischen” Vergangenheit, ein exklische “männliches” Attribut”. Since male body hair is usually concealed in daily life with clothes, stylists often use three-day beards as a sign for male independence, aggressiveness and virility (cf. Mühlen Achs 1993: 39).

The eroticized presentation of males is obviously still a general rule. However, there are not only hairless and muscular models in such advertisements anymore, but also thinner and more vulnerable-looking men (cf. Gill 2007: 99). This phenomenon can be seen, for
instance, in ads 4.19 or 4.21. Additionally, the distance that we keep from each other is important in terms of the social relation between the reader and the person depicted.

In this category most adverts can be classified in the categories from ‘far personal distance’ to ‘far social distance’. Here, we talk about a distance that shows people from the waist up and a distance when not only the whole body can be seen but also the surrounding. In our culture the latter is often used when we do not know each other (cf. Kress & van Leeuwen 1998: 131).

Elliott and Elliot (2005: 14) present a survey done with men to find out how they react on certain advertisements. What they found out is that “male respondents could relate more to this leaner body type” and that though they admire muscular bodies they also point out that more realistic bodies are not only less threatening but also provide an image that is easier to attain (cf. Elliott & Elliot 2005: 12-13).

In the majority of the adverts no particular background can be identified. Interestingly, when a particular background is depicted a bathroom or especially showers play an important role. This is due to the fact that shower gels or shampoos are advertised.

In comparison to female advertisements it is surprising that in this group nature does not seem to play a great role. There are only four adverts that can be associated with nature. The first one is ad 4.21 in which the blurred background suggests some trees and bushes.

Next, in ad 4.14 men are shown on a sports field and we can see grass and a flower. Further, there is an advert that is set on a race course in a desert-like region (ad 4.10). In advert 4.5 we see the blurred contours of trees in the back window of a car. This suggests that in this category nature does only play a secondary role, while for women nature and natural ingredients in their products are of greater significance.

Although not only women have problems with dry or reddened skin, the majority of products are still aimed at women (cf. Karmasin 2011: 287). What seems striking is that in terms of products for men there are hardly any creams or lotions that are based on science and have been developed for aging male-skin. Products for the handsome male body and skin, however, promise energy (see ad 4.12 “Full Power”), vitality (ad 4.17) or refreshment. Furthermore, most male models are not blonde like many of their female counterparts but have dark hair (see ads 4.6 or 4.7) and striking facial features (cf. Karmasin 2011: 289).

When using cosmetics men are always shown receiving some kind of reward in advertisements, for instance, they get the attention or admiration of a female person like in ads 4.1 or 4.17. This goes hand in hand with what Mühlen Achs (1993: 33) states in her book Wie Hund und Katz namely that men in fact manipulate their bodies, but unlike women because of
the benefits they gain from it rather than to enhance their appeal for the other sex. In female advertisements, however, neither the admiration of males nor social success is depicted (cf. Karmasin 2011: 290).

What is different to adverts featuring female models is the models facial expression. Mühlen Achs (1993:87-88) puts it as follows:


In fact, men are rarely depicted showing a hearty laugh (see ad 4.6 or 4.8), but frequently with quite serious facial expressions (see ads 4.4 or 4.5). However, some of the male adverts have a humorous character as they depict quite funny situations (e.g. ad 4.14, 4.15, 4.19 and 4.21). This is definitely not the case in terms of female advertisements.
6 Colours – An analysis of the adverts in terms of colours

Colours are all around us and are said to affect our feelings and to attract our attention. Therefore, the right use of colours is very crucial in terms of creating an advertisement. This means that adverts can be enhanced in their manipulative power by the use of specific colours. In the following I will provide an analysis of the main colours used in the four groups of advertisements I introduced before, as well as an overview in terms of which colours are used most frequently in adverts aimed at females or males. Here, all 97 adverts except one are in colour which shows how important the use of colours is in advertising.

6.1 Dominant Colours in Female Advertisements

First, I would again like to start with group I (face and shoulders). In this group I focus in particular on adverts featuring stars, ordinary women and adverts that present a scientific construction. In terms of the adverts in which celebrities worked as testimonials for cosmetics products the dominant colours were reddish (red, pink, violet and rose), while the ‘high-quality-products’ mainly used the colours white and light blue. These are also the colours most frequently used in the adverts featuring ordinary models and not celebrities.

Reddish colours like rose or pink are generally associated with women rather than with men. This is what we already learn during infancy, when little girls are dressed in pink or rose, and boys, for instance, in blue. Heller (2005: 116) states that this is in total contrast to our colour symbolism, since red (to which category rose belongs) is a male colour, while blue is according to an old tradition the colour of little girls. This is the reason why baby Jesus wears rose clothing in many pictures. As a result, in areas were religion played an important role (e.g. in the catholic areas of Belgium or the Netherlands) rose was the colour of young boys until the 1960s (cf. Heller 2005 116-118).
However, nowadays rose includes all positive or negative female characteristics. Typical attributes that are ascribed to rose are the strengths of the weaker gender, such as charm or politeness. Among other things rose is considered to be the colour or tenderness, but together with other mixed colours such as violet, rose stands for the artificial or fashionable (cf. Heller 2005: 120-124). Pink further signifies romance and love and also denotes feminine qualities (cf. Color-Wheel: Internet Source).

Red is the colour of passion, desire, and love but also of danger and power. It is also an emotionally intense colour and brings texts and images to the foreground (cf. Color-Wheel: Internet Source). In advertising text is often printed in red to highlight something (see ads 1.12, 1.20 or 2.1). Unfortunately, red writing is often difficult to read, especially on white or black backgrounds (cf. Heller 2005: 65-67).

Purple, for instance, was the colour of the rulers in the ancient world. In the western world, however, it is still the colour of royalty. Furthermore, it is the colour of independence and wisdom. People who wear this colour usually want to attract others’ attention. Violet is also the colour of magic and mystery, and is considered to be a fashionable colour. It symbolizes luxury and power and conveys ideas of wealth and extravagance (cf. Heller 2005: 167-177 and Color-Wheel: Internet Source).

While products for women are often designed in this colour, technical products or products for long-term usage are not since violet is often seen as a colour for just one season. In general, this colour is mainly used for the packaging of cosmetics products for mature women. However, when one wants to convey the idea of rejuvenation the use of the colour green would be better (cf. Heller 2005: 167-177 and Color-Wheel: Internet Source).

In this first group, reddish colours were predominantly used for the packaging of the product or the product itself (cf. ads 1.10 or 1.22) as well as for the background of the advert (see ads 1.27 or 1.13). Once the colour pink is used for the slogan of an advert by The Body Shop (see ad 1.15). The reason for this might be that pink offers a great contrast to the green background and is thus easy to read.

The use of the colours pink, red, rose or purple is easy to explain since these colours contribute to the erotic message that many of the ads featuring women convey. Additionally, many women also associate pink with glamour and parties and this is, of course, something that most women like to be identify with.

Another colour frequently used in this group, and generally in all groups featuring female adverts, is white. White is associated with innocence, purity or virginity and is also
seen as the colour of perfection. Especially in advertising, it is associated with cleanliness and coolness (cf. Color-Wheel: Internet Source).

Since white is often associated with hospitals or medicine in general, brands like Biotherm, Clinique or Armani trust this colour when designing their advertising campaigns. One reason for this is obviously that these brands want to convey the impression of high quality and scientific research. Interestingly, white as a background colour does only occur in the adverts I just mentioned.

Figure 24: Die Sauberkeit (Heller 2005)  
Figure 25: Die Unschuld (Heller 2005)

Heller (2005: 161) further points out that “der Überfluß an Farben hat zum Überdrüß geführt“. What Heller means here is that the whole world is constantly getting more and more colourful; from clothes to medicine and from toothpaste to tiles. As a result white is a modern colour again and can also be associated with functionality and neutrality. This can be seen, for example, in the fact that many of the models in this group wear white clothes (cf. ads 1.1, 1.7, 1.17, 1.30).

As mentioned above the colour white is dominant in all three groups dealing with adverts aimed at females. In the second group (adverts showing models’ upper part of the body) the colour white was again used in terms of clothes (see ads 2.8, 2.13, 2.20). This was also true for the third group (cf. ads 3.8, 3.16, 3.21). Since white is also a colour of innocence, virginity and cleanliness it also contributes to the feeling of intimacy that is conveyed by the ads 2.1, 2.10 and 2.20.

The cleanliness-issue is addressed since the first two adverts also show bathroom scenes. In addition, the majority of the product packages also mainly use white together with restrained colours like light pink or lavender light green or light yellow (see ads 2.4, 2.6, 2.7).

Here, I would also like to come back to the issue of innocence. In the last century women started wearing white wedding dresses. The first woman who had a white wedding dress combined with a veil was Queen Victoria who married Prince Albert of Sachsen-Gotha
in 1840. She was the most important bride of the 19th century and triggered a trend with her choice of colour (cf. Heller 2005: 155).

Today the majority of women still chose a white wedding dress since they want to feel like a princess or queen for one day like the women back in the 19th century did. Such an important moment is depicted in ad 3.22 (cf. Heller 2005:156). The use of white roses further contributes to the idea of innocence, girlhood, and purity (cf. Color-Wheel: Internet Source).

The most famous colour and also a colour of great significance in all three groups is blue (or light blue). It is among the top-three colours in all groups. Blue is the colour of the sea and the sky and stands for depth and stability. Trust, loyalty or truth, are often associated with blue. It is often stated that blue is “beneficial to the mind and body” (cf. Color-Wheel: Internet Source). Additionally, blue is also associated with calmness (cf. Heller 2005: 28).

In the advertisements I examine light blue is a dominant colour. According to Color-Wheel (Internet Source) it is associated among other things with health, softness or tranquillity. In the first group the background is often in light blue. Additionally, it is used as the colour of the sky and together with water (cf. ads 1.8 or 1.19). The same is true for the second category. However, here blue is also used in darker nuances (cf. ads 2.6 and 2.16) and for clothes (cf. ad 2.19).

In category III dark blue is used, for instance, in ad 3.3. This may be due to the fact that this is an advert for Nivea and this dark blue is also to be found in the Nivea logo. Again, blue can be found in the sky or sea (cf. ads 3.5, 3.16 and 3.21).

Blue is also a colour that can be associated with sportiness (cf. figure 27). Here, this frequently goes hand in hand with the colour of the sea or sky (or just as a background colour) since in many adverts in which these elements play a role, women are also depicted doing sports or at least looking quite trained and sporty (see ads 2.5, 2.11, 3.3, 3.12).

![Figure 26: Das Gesunde (Heller 2005)](image1)

![Figure 27: Die Sportlichkeit (Heller 2005)](image2)

Green is mainly associated with nature (e.g. trees, grass, etc.), harmony and fertility. Furthermore, it is the colour that symbolizes life. This life refers to herbal growth which is in
contrast to limp and draughty. Interestingly, green is also the colour of youth. The saying “to be wet behind the ears” is derived from this fact meaning that someone is still immature. Green is also said to have healing power (cf. Heller 2005: 71-77 and Color-Wheel: Internet Source).

The colour green is often used in advertising since it is related to nature. Many brands use, for instance, green packages to relate their products to nature and to convey the impression of selling ‘green’ products (cf. adverts 1.2, 1.9 or 2.21). This green of the packages is often combined with other natural elements such images of plants (ads 1.25, 2.21.) or animals (ads 1.4, 1.9).

![Dominating Colors in Female Advertisements](image)

**Figure 28: Dominating Colours in Female Advertisements**

To conclude, the dominant colours used in female advertisements are white, (light) blue, reddish and green. Reddish colours were of particular importance in group I and II, since they are often associated with glamour and especially in group I in which many celebrities work as testimonials for certain brands, glamour is an important issue. What's more, reddish colours contribute to the image of erotic and sensuality that is conveyed in many adverts.

Unsurprisingly, white is the most dominant colour in the first three categories (42%). This may be due to the fact that it has mainly positive connotations, such as perfection, purity or cleanliness. Since women should be convinced to buy certain products to achieve perfect looks, the frequent use of this colour is quite obvious. Additionally, white is associated with cleanliness and medicine and thus the perfect colour to advertise products on a level that should convince customers that they are as effective as medical products are (cf. adverts by *Biotherm* or *Clinique*).

Light blue is important here as it symbolizes the sea and the sky, which are important elements in cosmetics advertisements. It is also often associated with confidence, which is of course an important factor in terms of buying decisions. People will buy a product when they
are confident that it is of a good quality and that it will help them to achieve the desired results.

Green, however, stands for nature which is of great importance nowadays. The relatively frequent use (11%) of this colour can be explained by the fact that many companies want to convince people that their products consist of natural ingredients and provide a natural look.

6.2 Dominant Colours in Male Advertisements
Unsurprisingly, the most dominant colours in this group are rather dark colours. An exception is white which again a dominant colour in group IV:

![Dominating Colors in Male Advertisements](image)

**Figure 29: Dominating Colours in Male Advertisements**

Blue in various nuances and shades is definitely the most dominant colour in the male advertisements I took a closer look at. As mentioned above this colour is often associated with sea and sky as well as with confidence. Furthermore, blue is used to symbolize stability, loyalty, and wisdom (cf. Color-Wheel: Internet Source).

Here, the colour blue (together with white) is frequently used to advertise products that can be associated with cleanliness, such as shower gels or shaving gels (cf. figure 13). Good examples are ads 4.1 or 4.6. White is also often used in terms of clothes (e.g. ads 4.12 or 4.21), as well as for the texts in the adverts as well as on the products.

Blue, however, is further linked to intellect and is a typical masculine colour. Dark blue is among other things often associated with depth, power, seriousness or expertise, while light blue is linked to attributes like softness and health (cf. Color-Wheel: Internet Source). It is also said to have calming effects on people.
The frequent use of blue can at least in case of the *Nivea* adverts be explained with the general use of the colours dark blue and white in the brand logo. Darker shades of blue also indicate dependability which is, of course, an important attribute when advertising a certain beauty product. However, various nuances of blue are used in clothes (cf. the jeans in ads 4.1 or 4.9), the background (see ads 4.3. or 4.10) or in the product packages (see ads 4.2, 4.4, 4.8).

The colour grey is the second colour frequently used in this category. According to Heller (2005: 218-219) grey is a quite neutral colour that is often associated with negative things like cold, winter, or loneliness. This colour is also the only one that has no direct psychological properties (cf. Color-Wheel: Internet Source). Here, grey is used for clothes (see ads 4.14 and 4.19) and also for the product package (see ads 4.17 and 4.12). In combination with colours like dark blue or orange the packages convey the idea of a first class product, since grey is, like black, also linked to elegance (cf. figure 30).

Additionally, the colour black is not only associated with elegance or power but also with death and evil. Usually, black has negative connotations, but it also stands for strength and authority (cf. Color-Wheel: Internet Source and Heller 2005: 89-90). Here, black is used for clothes (see ads 4.7 and 4.16) as well as for the background (see ads. 4.7 and 4.16).

To sum up, in male adverts the majority of the adverts are also in colour (except one). The colour blue is without doubt the most frequently used. Here, it is mainly associated with shower or shaving products and bathroom scenes. The colours white and grey are mainly used for clothes and packages. All in all, in adverts aimed at males darker colours are used more often than in female advertisements.
7 Results

The body images propagated by the media are not realistic for the majority of women and neither affordable considering financial or temporal aspects, nor are they probably desirable at all. However, women still shape their bodies according to men’s desires and their representation presented in the media.

The representation of women in cosmetics advertising is still stereotypical although they are no longer depicted as housewives or mothers. The media still highlight characteristics like beauty, softness, relationships or sexuality, but women are rarely depicted as powerful female role models such as successful business women, etc.

These adverts pressure women to get such perfect bodies like the models in the media. As a result, women take unhealthy routes to reach their goals. Such cosmetics or beauty adverts contribute to the lowering of females’ self-confidence. Women often point out that they feel unattractive in comparison to the ideal images of women presented in the media. The worst case is that especially young western females develop eating disorders or depressions (cf. Kroon n.d.: Internet Source).

But is this really a drawback in terms of emancipation? Despite all the negative aspects of such idealized presentation of females one must not forget that this sexualized depiction of women is not necessarily seen as discrimination by many females but as a form of emancipation. Many women like the idea of themselves as strong and sexy career women who beautify themselves for their own sake and not for the sake of others.

Still, there is a problem. The images presented in the media allow slimness or youth to appear as natural. It becomes ‘natural’ to be thin and to use decorative cosmetics to fit the beauty ideal. Women try to escape into a world in which they are successful, wealthy and beautiful like the celebrities in the cosmetics advertisements. By doing so they tend to forget that all the perfect bodies and faces in the media are digitally enhanced, that the stars have a lot of employees who take care of their children or houses and that it is their job to train their bodies and to look beautiful.

Strikingly, women are still reduced to objects of beauty and sex in beauty advertisements. In the majority of adverts women are pictured with seductive gazes, full lips, barely dressed and also in intimate situations with men. Men, however, are often depicted in situations that can be associated with sports. Trained bodies are essential in both female and male advertisements. While females need to have slim arms and legs, a trained stomach and small breast, males usually have designer stubbles and trained chests. In the majority of the adverts men are depicted as quite masculine, strong and self-confident, while women are often
pictured lost in thought or dreamingly looking elsewhere and not at the reader. Interestingly, however, there are also adverts in which women directly look at the reader, indicating an atmosphere of demand and seduction.

The females depicted are from various cultures and have different skin or hair colours. Interestingly, age is still a taboo in cosmetics advertising. There are only three adverts in all three female categories that feature ‘elder’ women. Two out of these three adverts have been banned as the pictures of the celebrities working as endorsers for the brands have been digitally enhanced to an extent that evokes wrong ideas of what results can be achieved with particular products. In contrast to this elder males are depicted quite frequently, as age with reference to men is associated with power, financial security and charisma.

The analysis of my adverts has shown that companies use various strategies to make their adverts effective. Issues that play an important role with reference to adverts directed at females are nature, sports and glamour. The cosmetics companies do not only advertise with natural ingredients but frequently there are natural elements or outdoor settings used to establish a connection to nature (e.g. grass, trees, butterflies, water, etc.).

Sports play a role insofar as many body lotions promise firm skin and combine this idea with sporty females who do hula hoop, dancing or gymnastics. In addition, female bodies generally need to be slim, trained and fat-free to meet the beauty ideal. Especially adverts of group II and group III emphasise the attractiveness of trained bodies. Doing sports is obviously still connected with the idea of health, but in fact some of the trained models are too thin and this is probably not healthy.

Glamour is also crucial in terms of female adverts. As women are said to tend to flee into dream worlds to leave their everyday lives behind, glamour and celebrities are also important devices in cosmetics advertising. Popular testimonials such as Adriana Lima, Jennifer Lopez or Halle Berry offer ordinary women the possibility to be close to them and to have something in common by using the same cosmetics or beauty products.

Furthermore, they show that it is possible to combine professional success, beauty and family. As this is what the majority of women try to achieve advertising companies use this knowledge and design accordant campaigns to convince women that when buying a certain product they can have a little bit of glamour in their lives as well.

To sum up, advertising companies use women’s fear of being not accepted or loved, and their insecurities and dissatisfaction with reference to their bodies to sell their products. However, it is the women’s task to free them from this body cult and to accept who they are instead of trying to achieve a goal that is almost impossible to reach. What is being promoted
in the adverts is women’s sex appeal and their role as self-confident beauties but not as successful business women.

The analysis of the use of colours in the 97 adverts did not reveal many surprises. In female adverts the typical colours used were various nuances of red and pink which are typical female colours. Further, white plays an important role in both female and male advertising. White is a quite neutral colour and especially important in advertisements that depict intimate situations. In male advertising darker colours such as grey, black or blue are important. This does not come as a great surprise as these are associated with males than with females.
8 Conclusion

This diploma thesis investigates how meaning is created in cosmetics and beauty advertisements. For this purpose 97 adverts of cosmetics and other beauty products have been analyzed in terms of semiotics to find out which attitudes and feelings are generated to achieve the desired result, namely making people buy the products advertised. Further, this thesis aims to show how people’s perception of beauty is manipulated in advertising. In addition the differences in the depiction of male and female models are being discussed.

The first chapter provides general information with reference to beauty and the current beauty ideals of western society. Until the 20th century slimness was associated with illnesses and poverty, but in the 1960s women’s obsession of being slim started being carried to extremes. Today, there is a consensus in terms of what the ideal body should look like. The current female beauty ideal is not only characterized by slimness but also by youthfulness. As this ideal image is omnipresent in the media it manifests itself in the subconscious of human beings. Thus especially women suffer from illnesses such as bulimia or anorexia since they strive to be as thin and beautiful as the models in advertisements. Additionally, women buy the products advertised hoping that they will achieve the ultimate state of the beauty ideals depicted in the adverts.

The second chapter is dedicated to the basic notions of semiotics. Semiotics is also referred to as the study of signs and provides the theoretical information on which this thesis is built. Semiotics tries to reveal how meaning is generated through the use and combination of signs. In fact, advertisements are complex sign systems that convey particular messages through the targeted use of settings, people or props.

The next chapter introduces the role of advertising that is getting more and more important. The main aim of an advert, of course, is to persuade its reader to buy the product advertised. Another sub-chapter here deals with advertising as a form of communication and explains the communication process with reference to advertisements. To create a persuasive and effective advert, advertising companies should also make sure that their adverts contain the following components (cf. Leech 1966: 59): signature line, slogan, body copy, headline, illustration, and standing details. In addition the role of women and men in advertising is discussed in more detail, showing that the ideal woman is thin, young and taut, while the ideal men has prominent features and a designer stubble. Further, it is revealed how an advert is decoded and on which things one has to focus. These are, for instance, visual codes (e.g. props or setting), technical codes (e.g. distance), and non-verbal codes such as body language.
or clothes. These codes of cosmetics and beauty advertisements contribute to the creation of meaning.

For the empirical analysis of this diploma thesis I analyzed 97 beauty and cosmetics advertisements dedicated to women and men. The adverts were divided into four groups; each consisting of adverts that share a particular feature, namely the shot-size to find out how meaning is created. Furthermore, the importance of general trends such as sports, nature or glamour in these advertisements was investigated. The results only apply to the corpus of adverts I investigated in this thesis.

The first group that consists of adverts showing women’s face, shoulders and sometimes hands is made up of thirty adverts. The analysis of these adverts has shown that celebrities frequently work as testimonials for various brands as in 43 percent of the adverts prominent models, singers or actresses from various ethnic backgrounds advertise a certain product. By choosing celebrity endorsers advertising companies try to make sure that women from various countries and with various cultural backgrounds can identify with their products. Moreover, celebrity endorsement makes it easier for women to be like the star they admire by having the possibility to use the same cosmetics product. Interestingly, ‘elder’ models are almost only used when they are celebrities whose real age is publicly known. So-called ‘no-age-women’ help companies to sell anti-wrinkle products by being depicted with perfect complexion or wrinkle-free facial skin. Naked shoulders and caressing hands are also of great significance as they convey a feeling of intimacy and seduction which are both important in cosmetics advertising. Additionally, the study has shown that nature and the natural look are as crucial in beauty advertisements as a sterile and science-like atmosphere. The latter was frequently used by brands that want to convey the idea that their products are of high quality and imbued with scientific validity.

The second group features adverts showing women’s upper part of the body. The analysis of the 22 adverts has proved that glamour plays a significant role in cosmetics advertising. The female models that can be associated with glamour are depicted as quite self-confident and beautiful. However, the representation of women is generally limited on roles such as the beauty or mistress, but rarely as business woman or in positions that involve authority. A further important aspect in this group is slimness. Some adverts picture very slim and trained young females that contribute to the idea that one can only fit the western beauty ideal when fulfilling these criteria. The problem is that slimness is presented as something healthy but in fact, many models or ordinary women have poor eating habits to achieve this questionable goal. Another important issue in this category is intimacy. Here, women are
depicted half-naked, after having a shower, with obviously soft skin that is touched by a male. What has become obvious is that women are still just seen as sexual objects who can be touched by men whenever they like. This shows that females are still rather seen as objects for male satisfaction and not as independent or self-confident beings.

The third group consists of 23 adverts showing women’s whole body. The adverts were here divided in the sub-categories of sports, nature, and glamour. The first category of sports has revealed that firm body contours are essential to fit in the western beauty ideal. People who are doing sports are said to be fit and healthy and these are attributes that are welcome in our society. Nature does play an important role in all adverts that feature female models. ‘Nature’ is presented as an ingredient in the products or as a tool to improve nature (e.g. cosmetics). Further, outdoor settings that show beautiful places such as beaches or parks are used to add to the dream-like atmosphere that many women can associate with as it allows them to leave their everyday lives behind.

The fourth category features adverts directed at males. The analysis of this group has shown that hair-free trained chest and designer stubbles are crucial in cosmetics advertising. Surprisingly, women also play a significant role in terms of advertisements directed at males. In some adverts there are only sexy and attractive females pictured although a product for males is advertised. In particular, the study of the twenty one adverts further demonstrated that female bodies are more often depicted in a sexualized way than the male body. Sport plays a role insofar as there are also sportsmen who work as testimonials for various brands and the majority of the male models have trained bodies. Elder males are still portrayed as active, healthy and wealthy while elderly women are still given negative attributes in ads.

Colours are said to affect our feelings and to attract the attention of human beings. As a result advertisers use certain colours to underline the message of their ads. The dominant colours used in female advertisements were various reddish colours, white, light blue and green. The typical colours used in male adverts are various shades of blue, grey, black and white. Generally, black-white photography takes more of a back seat in cosmetics and beauty advertising.

To conclude, my analysis has shown that different cosmetic brands use similar advertising strategies. The majority of brands focus on issues that are important in our society, such as nature or sports. However, it became obvious that one brand does not only use one standard model in terms of how they create their adverts but various strategies. It would be interesting to find out how these brands design their TV adverts but that would be another topic.
German Summary

Nach der Analyse der ersten von vier Gruppen, in die die 97 Werbungen eingeteilt wurden, hat sich die zu Beginn aufgestellte Hypothese, dass Sport und Natur eine wichtige Rolle in Kosmetikwerbungen spielen, bereits bestätigt. Viele der Werbungen, die analysiert wurden, waren genauso gestaltet, wie es zu Anfangs erwartet wurde.


Das folgende Kapitel beschäftigt sich mit der Rolle der Werbung. Das Hauptziel einer Werbung ist es natürlich, den Leser zu überzeugen, das beworbene Produkt zu kaufen. Ein

Die 97 Werbungen, die bei der empirischen Analyse untersucht wurden, wurden in 4 Gruppen eingeteilt. Jede dieser Gruppen enthält Werbungen, die ein bestimmtes Charakteristikum teilen, nämlich die 'Shot-size'. Hier wird auch auf die generelle Bedeutung von Sport, Natur und Glamour näher eingegangen.


eine hohe Qualität und wissenschaftlich bestätigte Wirksamkeit ihrer Produkte hinweisen wollen.


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http://picasaweb.google.com/himanskikhanna.com/DropBox#5232973699007724226
Ad 1.6

Ad 1.7
http://multivu.prnewswire.com/mnr/nivea/35987/

Ad 1.8

Ad 1.9

Ad 1.10
http://www.visit4ads.com/advert/NEW-Color-SensationalT-Lipcolor-Maybelline-Make-up-Range/75842

Ad 1.11

Ad 1.12

Ad 1.13

Ad 1.14

Ad 1.15
http://www.go-green.ae/greenstory_view.php?storyid=1137

Ad 1.16

Ad 1.17
http://www.blogher.com/lancome-ad-banned-regular-ladies-rejoice

Ad 1.18
http://beaut.ie/blog/tag/spring-summer-09/
Ad 1.19

Ad 1.20

Ad 1.21
http://www.mahoganyglam.com/2008/08/i-kept-seeing-t.html

Ad 1.22

Ad 1.23
http://www.behance.net/gallery/Maybelline-Define-Your-Beauty-Mascara-Campaign/417388

Ad 1.24
http://guanabee.com/2009/03/rihana-covergirl-ad

Ad 1.25
http://twenty2.onsugar.com/tag/Target?page=1

Ad 1.26

Ad 1.27

Ad 1.27

Ad 1.28

Ad 1.29
http://www.seeceeme.com/category/geen-categorie/

Ad 1.30
http://www.celebrityendorsementads.com/celebrity-endorsements/celebrities/halle-berry/revlon/

Ad 2.1
http://getitfromboy.blogspot.com/2008/10/angel-locsin-armpits.html

Ad 2.2
http://getitfromboy.blogspot.com/2008/10/angel-locsin-armpits.html
Ad 2.3
http://www.gosee.de/news/art/m4-motion-tush-schwarzkopf-pro-diadermine-4240

Ad 2.4

Ad 2.5
http://www.keywordpicture.com/keyword/nivea%20deodorant%20energy%20fresh/

Ad 2.7

Ad 2.8

Ad 2.9

Ad 2.10
http://yinnyang.co.uk/2010/08/adspiration-4/

Ad 2.11
http://mediasoul.co.uk/smallwebsites/oriflame/consultant2.html

Ad 2.12

Ad 2.13

Ad 2.14

Ad 2.15
http://www.flickr.com/photos/vitamares/3961512675/

Ad 2.16

Ad 2.17
http://www.bellasugar.com/Respect-Scalp-Love-Hair-Head-Shoulders-2078970

Ad 2.18
Ad 3.11

Ad 3.12

Ad 3.13

Ad 3.14
http://beaut.ie/blog/tag/garnier/page/2/

Ad 3.15
http://popsop.com/26617

Ad 3.16
http://thebeautyphilosopher.com/2010/07/03/holiday-inspiration-summer-holiday-fragrances/

Ad 3.17

Ad 3.18

Ad 3.19
http://www.zakizaheer.com/nivea-sunblock-work-in-most-places/

Ad 3.20

Ad 3.21

Ad 3.22

Ad 4.1
Ad 4.2
http://psychommercials.com/2011/06/09/gillette-will-give-you-the-body-and-job-youve-always-wanted/#.TuCk9NWwWeQ

Ad 4.3
http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2009/12/01/thierry-henry-gillette-ad_n_375984.html

Ad 4.4

Ad 4.5
http://main.stylelist.com/2008/12/10/patrick-dempsey-unscripted-beauty-gossip/

Ad 4.6
http://adstrategy.files.wordpress.com/2010/10/niveaformen2.jpg

Ad 4.7
http://katjusa.com/?p=247

Ad 4.8

Ad 4.9
http://www.visit4ads.com/advert/Veet-For-Men-Veet-Range/23185

Ad 4.10

Ad 4.11
http://www.ebay.com/itm/AXE-DARK-TEMPTATION-FRAGNANCE-DEODORANT-BODY-SPRAY-4-oz-/120732089442

Ad 4.12

Ad 4.13

Ad 4.14

Ad 4.15
http://blog.timmelideo.com/post/116479859/ad-mockup-for-axe-deodorant

Ad 4.16

Ad 4.17
http://www.welovead.com/en/works/details/7e7BntwB
Webliography – General Information

Figure 9: Julia Roberts and Christy Turlington Comparison Pictures

„Advertising bosses crack down on airbrushing used to sell face cream: L'Oreal's Julia Roberts ad is banned“ (2011). This is Money. [Online].


Appendix
Ad 1.1.

Ad 1.2.

Ad 1.3.
Ad 1.9.

Ad 1.10.
**Ad 1.14.**

**FAIRER SKIN IN 4 WEEKS**

**NEW & IMPROVED Moisture White**

- Whitens even skin tone, enhances brightness for a glow against hyperpigmentation.
- Nature's way to beautiful.

---

**Ad 1.15.**

**NATURE'S WAY TO BEAUTIFUL**

WE BELIEVE THERE IS ONLY ONE WAY TO BEAUTIFUL, NATURE'S WAY. WE BELIEVE THIS FOR YEARS AND STILL DO. WE CONSTANTLY SEEK OUT WONDROUS NATURAL INGREDIENTS FROM ALL FOUR CORNERS OF THE GLOBE, AND WE BRING YOU PRODUCTS BURSTING WITH EFFECTIVENESS TO ENHANCE YOUR NATURAL BEAUTY. WHERE WE'RE DOING THIS WE ALWAYS STRIVE TO PROTECT THIS BEAUTIFUL PLANET AND THE PEOPLE WHO DEPEND ON IT. WE DON'T DO IT THIS WAY BECAUSE IT'S FASHIONABLE. WE DO IT BECAUSE, TO US, IT'S THE ONLY WAY.

---

**Ad 1.16.**

**Imagine having nothing to hide.**

- Brightness.
- Sun spots.
- Dark spots.
- Even skin tone.

**New Even Skintone Illuminator**

The first illuminating, serum from Estée Lauder. Brightens to completely transform the look of skin, one day at a time. Delivers feeling.

Intensively, radiant, skin feels radiant. In 7 days, skin looks visibly bright. In 2 weeks, skin feels naturally even, glowing and more even-toned.

For every skin type.

Go to estee.com/campaign/serums.

---

**Ad 1.17.**

**LANCÔME PARIS**

**Now, Aura is our science.**

**NEW TEINT MIRACLE**

NATURAL LIGHT CREATOR FOUNDATION. GLOWING SKIN PERFECTION.

Julia Roberts
Ad 2.1. USE REXONA WOMEN AFTER EVERY BATH. NOTHING KEEPS YOU DRIER EVERY DAY.

Ad 2.2. MAKE A PERFECT IMPRESSION EVERY TIME. NOTHING KEEPS YOU DRIER EVERY DAY.

Ad 2.3. Your daily Luxury: DEEP CARE... but a WEIGHTLESS feeling.
Ad 2.4.

When is a woman beautiful? When her skin is at its softest.

Johnson's knows the most beautiful thing a woman can wear is soft skin. That's why we bring you the amazing power of Dual Moisture Bond. Not only does it seal in 24-hour moisture, it gives skin added moisture boost. Leaving skin beautifully soft for 24 hours at once.

Ad 2.5.

Beauty is a zest for life.

An energising way to start your day.

No gym membership required.

NIVEA Deodorant Energy Fresh

Designed with the refreshing energy of citrus and cool mint.

NIVEA.co.uk/energyfresh
Ad 2.6.

Ad 2.7.

Ad 2.8.
Waves or twists? I say, why choose? Pantene, Nature Fusion:+d+

Ad 2.18.

Ad 2.19.

can your strength hold up against breakage?

Ad 2.18. Pantene. Breakage to Strength collection. Put it to the test and experience healthier hair that's ready to take on damage. Pantene's advanced collection with an Anti-Breakage system. Add in

can your strength hold up against breakage?

Ad 2.19. Pantene. Breakage to Strength collection. Put it to the test and experience healthier hair that's ready to take on damage. Pantene's advanced collection with an Anti-Breakage system. Add in
Ad 3.3. 

FIRM YOUR SKIN CONTOURS

WITH ACTIVE OILS AND Q10 PLUS.

Ad 3.4. 

“IT’S THE EVERYDAY MOMENTS THAT MAKE ME FEEL LIKE A GODDESS.”
- Jennifer Lopez

Ad 3.5

Introducing Venus Breeze

New smoothly silky skin is a Breeze

Introducing Venus Breeze

The new moisturizing shave Gel that allows a closer, more efficient shave. Use it to reduce irritation and"
Ad 3.12.

Ad 3.13.
Ad 4.1.

BECAUSE
NICE GIRLS DON'T DO
BEAR BACK.

Ad 4.2.

GILLETTE FRESH & CLEAN BODY WASH,
OUT-OF-THE-SHOVER FRESHNESS THAT LASTS.

Ad 4.3.
Ad 4.4.

All men are not equal. Neither are their razors.

Ad 4.5.

UNSCRIPTED
PATRICK DEMPSEY

follow your passion

EXCLUSIVELY FOR AVON

Follow your passion to your AVON Rep redistributed. Visit FOR AVON at www.avon.com/patrickdempsey
Ad 4.6.

Get more done in the shower with the extraordinary lather of Nivea's first 3 in 1 shower gel.

ACTIVE3

Discover more about what men want at NIVEAFORMENusa.com

SHOWER

Ad 4.7.

get up to 2 tones fairer!
performance you can measure.

GARNIER MEN
PowerLight
Fairness Moisturizer with SPF 15

Garnier Men PowerLight

Fairness Moisturizer with SPF 15

Take care.

Garnier Men PowerLight

Fairness Moisturizer with SPF 15

Fairness Moisturizer with SPF 15

Fairness Moisturizer with SPF 15

Fairness Moisturizer with SPF 15