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Abstract

This thesis is a study of contemporary advertising, aiming to show how the global jeans brand *Diesel* communicates aspects of lifestyle and gender in their campaign *Be Stupid* from 2010. By an analysis of the campaign, the thesis attempts to advocate the importance of advertising in our contemporary society, and why this campaign can be regarded as an important literacy practice. The thesis consists of two main parts. The first chapter of the thesis outlines a theoretical field necessary as a background for the analysis. This includes critical theory, sociologists, feminist theory, and viewpoints from people within the advertising industry. Chapter two presents the analysis, which is divided in two main parts, discussing the areas of lifestyle and gender respectively.

The results of the analysis show, that Diesel is ambiguous in their gender portrayals, with special regard to the female representations. By presenting itself as an anti establishment brand, focusing on creativity and innovativeness, this thesis comes down to the fact that this is just partly true, as Diesel seems to be stuck in the same stereotypes as conventional advertising. The analysis reveals, that a large number of the ads show women in sexually charged postures, body revealing clothes, and to a certain extent high degree of nudity Diesel adds a twist to the conventional ad genre we are bombarded with every day, and dares to touch upon controversies in their text and images. In this way, *Diesel's* advertising represent an anti-normative tendency in contemporary advertising. At the same time, their attempts to be creative and innovative can be questionable. What on the surface seems like liberating gender portrayals can from another point of view be interpreted the other way around, as objectifying and even discriminating.

As this analysis has shown, *Diesel* seems to be stuck in the same stereotypes that we see in conventional advertising, and well established in the advertising discourse, which is the main root of this paradox: They cannot be free from the fact that they actually are a part of this discourse, as their main goal is to sell. Furthermore *Diesels* trademark of using irony in order to appeal to the young generations, is in danger of legitimating these stereotypes. In a literacy context, this can even be more dangerous, as it may make the reader less aware of these stereotypes.

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Table of Contents

Abstract	1
Acknowledgements	2
1. Introduction	5
2. Theoretical Background	7
2.1 Branding, Consumerism and Lifestyle	7
2.1.1 Advertising and Branding.....	7
2.1.2 Global advertising and market segmentation	9
2.1.3 Shock ads and lifestyle brands	10
2.1.4 Youth and consumption	12
2.1.5 Targeting teenagers.....	13
2.1.6 Advertising as culture industry.....	13
2.1.7 Class, capital and lifestyle	17
2. 2 Gender roles and advertising.....	19
2.2.1 Gender and identity	20
2.2.2 Advertising and stereotyping.....	21
2.2.3 Sexualisation of women in advertising	23
2.2.4 Feminism and capitalism.....	25
2.2.5 Advertising as mould or mirror?	26
2.3 Advertising and Literacy	28
2.3.3 Advertising and Rhetorics	29

2.3.5	Texts and readership	31
2.3.6	Visual prominence in ads	33
2.3.7	Rhetorics of the Image	34
2.3.8	Storytelling	36
3.	Analysis	39
3.1.	Lifestyle.....	39
3.1.1	Context	40
3.1.2	The Be Stupid Campaign	41
3.1.4	Youth and Identity	45
3.1.5	Age and generations	47
3.1.7	Experiences and authenticity.....	50
3.1.8	Irony	51
3.2	Gender	53
3.2.1	Objectification	55
3.2.2	Empowerment	64
3.2.3	Male-female relations.....	71
3.2.4	Sexuality.....	78
4.	Conclusion.....	84
	References	89
	Appendix	95

1. Introduction

It is hard to imagine a world without advertising. In our contemporary society, it is around us everywhere. However, one may not pay as much attention to ads as other types of texts one encounter. Today we are part of a widely mediated popular culture. Ads can be delivered through any mass medium, such as television, radio, magazines, and the Internet. It is evident, that ads have become more and more complex, with more layers of meaning (Yannopoulou, Elliot, 2008: 1). It is evident, that the traditional understanding of literacy is challenged. As many researchers have pointed out, the demand for visual literacy, in the sense of being able to read and interpret images, become more and more important in our contemporary mediated world.. Thus, the study of advertising is interesting in a literacy context. This thesis will examine contemporary advertising by analysing an ad campaign from the global jeans brand *Diesel*. The analysis attempts to answer the following research questions:

- Which lifestyle options does *Diesel* communicate in the campaign?
- How are gender roles defined in the *Be Stupid* campaign?
- In which way does Diesel through their *Be Stupid* campaign present a story of gender?
- How can this analysis demonstrate the importance of advertising as a literacy practice?

The word *advertising* has its origin in the latin word *advertere*, which means "turn towards" (OED). According to Jib Fowles, "advertising refers to paid-for messages that attempt to transfer symbols onto commodities to increase the likelihood that the commodities will be found appealing and be purchased". (Fowles 1996: 13).

In order for making goods appealing to the consumers, advertisers must reach their target audience. More and more effort is put in the effort in the work on this. This will obviously make the advertising cheaper and more effective. The agencies become more creative in choosing the arenas where people are engaged in, such as social media. The role of the consumer plays an important part in our contemporary culture, as the market has been

more dominant in people's lives. Increased wealth has also resulted in more focus around consumption. People's consumption patterns have become a social marker, and a way of obtaining status.

At the same time, one can say that the consuming ideology invades society people's lives. The modern media world is recognized by the fact that advertising occupies more and more areas of society. Ads play an important part in public spaces, such as transport, streaming programmes, software and social media.

Many argue that the market opens the opportunity for the consumer to make free, individual choices. One cannot deny the fact that the modern, western societies are based on a capitalist society. The basic idea of this system is the free market, with free competition, in which Advertising is a driving force. With this in mind, it is hard to imagine how Diesel could be able to challenge its biggest competitor on the jeans market, Levis, without the means of advertising. In this way, advertising can be seen as necessary in order to maintain this system that for many promotes the values of the free market and freedom of the individual. However, there have been many critical voices against consumerism, advertising and the capitalist values of the modern society.

In terms of literacy, it is interesting to see the impact of advertising as a genre of text that is accessible to everyone, but aims at a target audience Exposed to a significant amount of ads each day, they are a prominent part of our everyday experience and public environment.. It may be the case that the target audience turns out to be different from what intended from the sender. Hidden layers of meaning can reveal new truths about texts and readership. The first chapter of this thesis aims to give a theoretical background for this thesis

2. Theoretical Background

This chapter aims to give a theoretical background for the analysis of the Diesel Be Stupid campaign. The main purpose of the chapter will be to place the topic of advertising in a critical tradition. In order to do this, it will discuss the processes and the ideologies behind advertising. The first part will look at the concept of branding and market segmentation. It will then examine consumer theory, and how it is linked to capitalism, which is the driving force behind advertising. It will look at critical theory that emerged with the rise of capitalism, and link these to the postmodern theorists of consumer culture.

The second part will introduce feminist theory, and discuss gender portrayals in advertising, which will be crucial as a backdrop for the gender analysis later in this thesis. Finally, it will discuss advertising and literacy. This part will look at the visual prominence of advertising, and see how this is linked to Semiology. We will Before we move on to the concept of branding, we need to define the word advertising.

2.1 Branding, Consumerism and Lifestyle

2.1.1 Advertising and Branding

There is a very strong link between advertising and the concept of branding. This relationship needs to be explained in more depth, but before that, it is necessary to clarify what actually a brand is. According to Gerard Tellis, the term brand refers to “ a clearly distinguishable name, which a firm uses to uniquely identify its product with consumers and distinguish from that of competitors.” (Tellis 2004 : 9).

Consumption plays an important role in constructing our identity. A consumer must identify with a brand in order to desire it. Ideally, the consumer establishes a relationship to the brand that is based on trust and loyalty. The images of advertising represent a "dream world", which stimulates the viewer's interaction. Moreover, this refers to the concept of

"possible selves"(Yannopoulou and Elliot 2008:10). One becomes engaged with the ads as they offer an image one wants to be identified with.

As previously discussed, the capitalist system is tied up to the idea of mass production and competition in the market. No brands want their products to appear as anonymous commodities, but rather exclusive and authentic. The brand image seeks to establish a relationship to the consumer that otherwise would get lost in the commodification processes. By choosing a certain brand, it should give the consumer the safe feeling of having made the right choice. (Blindheim). In order to obtain this, the advertisers of brands are storytellers. If the story is something the consumer can trust and believe in, it increases the chances that the consumer stays committed to the brand. (Hegarty 2011). The concept of storytelling, and how Diesel tells the story of their brand, will be returned to later in this thesis. In the process of connecting a product to a lifestyle, the American anthropologist, Ted Polhemus says that,

companies need to constantly monitor and precisely shape what it is that the brand signifies... In an ever more fragmented and heterogeneous world we all need to be able to send out instant visual signals which explain 'where we are'. (Polhemus, 1998: 11-12)

A brand is promoted through advertising. One of the most important roles of advertising, is to create a brand image. In order to get advertising to work, the consumer must be able to identify with the brand. Ideally, the associations to a certain brand should evoke feelings in the consumer that lead to willingness to buy.

According to Polhemus,

Branding allows an enormous amount of often complex and subtle information to be transmitted in our appearance, with the entire marketing image of a company being compacted into a recognisable style or logo. When we choose to buy and wear certain brands, this information becomes part of our own personal 'advertising' campaign, our own logo. (Polhemus, 1998: 11-12)

What Polhemus postulates, is that brands stand for certain values that creates the brand image, which is highly important in the process of making an individual statement. The goal is to get the consumer to identify with these values.

In order to see how a brand such as Diesel communicates, the following section will look at issues connected to global marketing, the development of other global brands, and their

marketing strategies. This is important in order to understand the premises of Diesel's advertising strategy.

2.1.2 Global advertising and market segmentation

The main goal of advertising is to make certain products more attractive to consumers. (Tellis, 2004). *Diesel* aims to target young people all over the world. All these people do obviously have different backgrounds and lifestyles. The ad's message is successful, if it gets people to act, and purchase the product. Teens find themselves in a period of life where identity construction is more crucial than ever, and consumption is an effective way to express who they are. In order to target this group as effective as possible, advertisers will need to analyse the patterns of the consumer behaviour of this group. As Jib Fowles claims, advertising simultaneously aims to appeal to the individual and the masses. (Fowles 1996: 94) As many as possible in the target group need to be reached, at the same time, the individual consumer must get the feeling that the message is personally directed to them. In a marketing context, the definition of a segment is "one of a number of sections of a market each of which is distinguished by a different set of requirements." (OED).

In advertising today, more and more effort is put in trying to appeal to the right people. The strategies used depend on how the brands are positioned in the market. Whether the brand operates on a micro or macro level, or a combination of both. The concepts of macro and micro segmentation were introduced by Wind and Douglas in 1972. (Weitz and Wensley 2002: 468). Marketers cluster countries that have similar traits into a so called macro segment. The selection of a group is based on broad, objective criteria's, such as demography, language, religion and economy. Within these countries, there are smaller segments, called micro segments. On a micro level, the criteria are made from a subjective standpoint, e.g. behaviour, lifestyle and attitudes. (De Mooij 2004: 54).

The term globalization is defined in the Oxford English Dictionary as "the process by which businesses or other organizations develop international influence or start operating on an international scale"(OED). The last decades have shown that markets are going global. But is this actually happening, or only in the marketers mind-set, as a part of a marketing strategy? The concept of modern branding developed in the US and UK. The motivation behind these processes are grounded in a western psychology, which have been adopted as "universal". The values of big corporate American brands such as Coca Cola and McDonalds, have been

synonymous with what people associate with American values. These brands have been so powerful, that their dominance has been referred to as cultural imperialism (De Mooij 2004: 16-18). In connection to global marketing, the question about standardization of advertising and a global monoculture has been highly relevant. Advertising reflecting set of values will not make much sense in other cultures driven by widely different values. American values, rooted in an individualistic orientation, are very different from for instance Asian countries, which are characterized by collectivistic values (De Mooij 2004: 34).

A scholar often referred to in marketing, is the Harvard professor Ted Levitt. In 1983 he wrote a famous article, called “The globalization of Markets”. Here he argues that the globalization has caused a homogenization of consumers. In his view, it made people more and more similar:

a market segment in one country is seldom unique; it has close cousins everywhere precisely because technology has homogenized the globe...the global competitor will seek constantly to standardize his offerings everywhere...he will never assume that the customer is a king who knows his own wishes. (Levitt 1984: 6)

Mariekede Mooij (2004) rejects this, by arguing that “global consumers” do not really exist. People are products of their culture). Research has shown, that even though people become more affluent and more educated, travel more, and exposed to new medias, the outcome is not a homogenization of tastes. (De Mojii 2004: 10-13). People are actually becoming more diverse. Today, one can see a tendency that the local is becoming more important than the global. Global homogenous markets and global communities, or tribes, are more myths than reality. People sharing the same lifestyle, may have different values and motives for buying the same product. One idea that work in one country, does not necessarily works in another, due to cultural differences. (de Mooij, 2004: 26-28).

2.1.3 Shock ads and lifestyle brands

The case of the Italian clothing company *United Colours of Benetton* illustrates how advertising strategies has contributed to the globalisation of fashion culture, and their advertising strategy, referred to as shock tactics, will now be further discussed. In the 1990's Benetton, revolutionized advertising by their use of shock tactics in their marketing. The brand *United Colours of Benetton* started out as a family business, established in 1965. The Italian psychologist Annamaria Silvana de Rosa has focused on social representation in

marketing. She explains how The Benetton group gradually expanded over the years, from a national industry, to an international, and finally to a global level. (de Rosa 2012: 70). Today, the company has 6500 stores in 120 countries. The global outlook of the company is expressed by the chairman Luciano Benetton:

The purpose of advertising is not to sell more. It's to do with institutional publicity, whose aim is to communicate the company's values. We need to convey a single strong image, which can be shared anywhere in the world. (Luciano Benetton, cited in Sheehan 2004: 243).

This attitude is further reflected on the company's website:

Benetton's universal communication has accompanied the Group's global expansion. When companies export around the world, they normally adapt their advertising to suit different areas. Benetton chooses a single, universal message that is valid for all: beyond borders, skin colour and language. (Benetton Group).

According to De Rosa, one of the sharpest critiques against Benetton, was that they occupied a discourse that did not belong in commercial advertising. Such images were strongly linked to politics, medicine and science (De Rosa: 2012: 75-77). With Benetton, advertising became linked to social issues. Dealing with these kinds of issues was previously only accepted in non-profit advertising. Benetton's advertising, gave rise to a debate on how the content of ads should be. This was totally different from how traditional advertising looked like. It was new to use advertising as an arena for social and political messages. By moving totally away from product imagery, their advertising campaigns pictured people dying with AIDS, death row inmates, taboos such as nuns and priests kissing and blood stained clothes from soldiers of war. For many, placing this kind of imagery in an advertising context was provoking and unsuitable (Giroux, 1993: 23-25).

According to Polhemus, Benetton started a new trend in advertising. With Benetton, the focus shifted. Their advertising did not feature the product, nor signalled attitudes associated to wealth or cost. The brand should reflect the values and lifestyle of the consumers (Polhemus). This stood against the traditional idea the brand should signal that one could afford certain products. This represented a new genre of advertising, which aimed to

“elicit attention for a brand name by jolting consumers” (Belch and Belch 1998, cited in Sandıkcı 2011).

As we will see from the analysis, Diesel adopted the global outlook from Benetton, as well as the lifestyle advertising. We have now looked at how branding is linked to advertising, and examined how market segmentation is important in this process. Now we will move on to see how youths have a central part in consumption and an important goal for advertising.

2.1.4 Youth and consumption

The concept of youth culture has changed over time. In recent years, it has been centred on young people’s consumption patterns. (White and Wyn 2004: 198). According to Steven Miles(2000) cited in Frost (2003 :55) “the market offers the tools to create multiple styles of being.” Advertising messages are very often grounded in young people’s desires of “fitting in”, and as Miles (2000) cited in Frost (2003:55) comments: “consumption may be less an individualized relationship than one that connects to group identity.” Frost responds to this, by saying that “groups, in the sense both of sub-cultures and simply friendship groups can demonstrate membership via market commodities, and young people can identify where they most comfortably belong.” (Frost 2003:55).

According to Sheehan (2004) the idealization of youth is a common characteristic of advertising. They suggest with their messages, that being young is something desirable, whereas becoming old is something that one should fight against. It is clearly evident, that young people dominate mass media. Older people are hardly represented in these contexts. One reason for this, is that the values connected to a young lifestyle is likely to match the desired image for a brand. The age aspect is a very important demographic in market segmentation. As Sheehan (2004) points out, “the youth culture stresses the importance of an individual’s physical appearance to his or her self-concept” (Sheehan 2004:140). Researchers refer to three types of age; the chronological, the biological, and the psychological. (Sheehan: 140). The chronological age refers to ones actual age, the biological indicates the age of one’s body, and the psychological age has to do with how old one perceives oneself to be. The popular terms Generation X and generation Y, have been used to describe distinctive features of successive generations. However, as White and Wyn argues, these terms are too broad to provide a useful analysis of generational change. (Whyte and Wyn 2004: 191). Also the

swedish media analyzer, Mattias Behrer offers some interesting thoughts on how marketing strategies need to adapt to this generation. We will get to know Behrer better and come back to the youth bias in advertising in the analysis, when we discuss lifestyle and age, and how the Diesel campaign may appeal to people's perceived as well as actual age.

2.1.5 Targeting teenagers

The rise of the teenage market has had a huge impact on the development of modern consumerism. During the 1940's, the discovery of teenagers as a new segment resulted in a more specific targeting towards this group of consumers. Due to a growing economic power, a distinctive teenage spending was identified. Youths were at the very centre of the new music, and fashion industry. As Osgerby (2002) points out,

the term "teenager" was increasingly utilized in the world of advertising and marketing, steadily leaking into popular discourse where it was used to denote a new breed of affluent, young consumers who prioritized fun, leisure, and the fulfillment of personal desires" (Osgerby 2002:18).

According to Osgerby, youth was associated with "affluence" in the sense that this group of consumers had the freedom of spending their earnings entirely on leisure activities and products. (Osgerby 2002: 23). The increased living standard and consumer culture gave rise to new leisure industries. Being free from the responsibilities of paying rent and other similar costs, teenagers could spend their money on what they wanted. This leisure oriented consumption, was something the marketers saw as an opportunity to exploit. A lot of market research was done in this period, in order to analyse the driving forces behind teenage spending.

As the focus shifted from the production of goods, to the lifestyle connected to the products, it marked the beginning of "a new consumer value system that prioritized commodity consumption and immediate gratification" (Osgerby 2002: 17).

2.1.6 Advertising as culture industry

Historically, some of the sharpest critique against the consumer culture and the growing capitalism came from what we refer to as the *Frankfurt school*. These thoughts, known as critical theory, have shaped how we look at the modern world, and mass media. This

generation of researchers worked in the time before and after the Second World War, at the institute of Social research in Frankfurt. They operated within mixed disciplines, such as history, sociology, literature and philosophy. This thesis will present two of the theorists of the Frankfurt school, Max Horkheimer and Teodor Adorno. Their work were influenced by the German theorist Karl Marx. With regard to consumption and advertising, his concept of commodification is of particular interest. Before we go further, we will look more into Marxist sociological theory.

The German theorist Karl Marx developed his theories in the nineteenth century, and is regarded as one of the most influential intellectuals of all times. His thoughts have had great impact on a wide range of fields, such as economy, politics, and sociology. In this thesis, we will focus on his influence on the sociological field, and how his ideas are reflected in the theories of the Frankfurt school, and feminist theory. This will also shed light on how Marxist theory is relevant in our modern society, and for the purpose of analyse an advertising campaign such as *Be Stupid*.

Marx developed his theories around the time of the industrial revolution, and the rise of capitalism. Marx was critical to this new model of organising the society, and wanted to replace it with communism (O'Byrne 2011: 68). According to Marxist theory, everything is centred on the means of production. Central in his theory is the conflict between the owners, and the workers. The owners get profit from the labour of the workers, which in Marx view leads to exploitation. The power of the owners as a consequence of the new technologies, spread to other arenas of the society, such as politics, religion and lifestyle preferences,

Marx`s theories are relevant today in the sense that we can use his theories to explain that productional and economical power is valid everywhere. Capitalism is the dominating western ideology, and even though class distinctions seem less valid than before, classes of taste and style are consistent. The elite, defined as the owners, decide what is good and bad taste. And they do this through advertising. In order to illustrate this, one can think of the example of a teenager that takes the decision of buying his new pair of jeans from *Diesel*. But does he really make this decision solely based on his own free choice? According to Marx, he buys particularly this type of jeans, because some people have decided that this purchase is the fashionable and right choice, even though the prize not corresponds with the value. And someone else gets the profit from his purchase. As we will see, Pierre Bourdies theories evolved from these ideas.

Adorno and Horkheimer attempt to show how the economic system of profit making has invaded the cultural sphere. According to the two sociologists, capitalism has made culture a commodity. Their essay "Culture industry as mass deception", written in 1947 is regarded as a cornerstone in cultural studies. The essay sheds light on mass media, and how it is a result of the forces of capitalism. As emphasized by Darren O'Byrne, Adorno and Horkheimer commented on "the way people started to buy and sell symbols, ideas, brands in order to gain profit turned culture into an industry. (O'Byrne 2011: 82).

Whereas enlightenment ideals sought to liberate man from nature, leading to human freedom, capitalism causes the very opposite, and imprisons man. (Finlayson). With this as a backdrop, Adorno and Horkheimer speak of mass culture as a "culture industry". By drawing lines to the Hollywood film industry, they point at how capitalism has coined the two words culture and industry. In their view, these two words are very contradictory in terms. While culture represents something unique, one of a kind, industry is about repetition and copying:

"Culture is a paradoxical commodity. It is so completely subject to the law of exchange that it is no longer exchanged; it is so blindly equated with use that it can no longer be used. For this reason it merges with the advertisement. (Adorno & Horkheimer 2002: 131).

A crucial point in their argument is the distinction they draw between art and mass media. In their view, art is autonomous; whereas mass culture is heteronomous. Whereas art is constituted from the individual's need to express himself, mass culture is a result of the most effective and profitable way of production, more like a commodity. However, these boundaries between high and low culture seem to blur when we go from the modern to the post modern society.

In their essay, the two sociologists suggest, that individuals cannot resist being dictated as consumers. Nothing genuinely new can be created and people make themselves into commodities. The individual is caught in his role as either producer or consumer, but is victim of the same domination. (Adorno and Horkheimer 2002:21). The consumer conforms to a system and is totally enslaved. This is interesting when we at the same time know that much of the strategy behind advertising aims to appeal to the uniqueness of a certain product. We will come back to this later in the analysis of the Diesel campaign.

Towards the end of the chapter, Adorno and Horkheimer give special attention to advertising, referring to it as the culture industry's "elixir of life" (Adorno & Horkheimer)

2002: 131). They range it as one of the most manipulative forces of the culture industry. It is the repetitive nature of advertising they criticise the most. By following the same "formula" it leaves people unable to think for themselves:

personality means hardly more than dazzling white teeth and freedom from body odor and emotions. That is the triumph of advertising in the culture industry; the compulsive imitation by consumers of cultural commodities which, at the same time, they recognize as false" (Adorno and Horkheimer 2002: 136).

Adorno and Horkheimer see this expanding industry as a threat, with a potential to dominate over "high art." In their view, people turns to this industry in search for happiness, but what achieved is not long lasting, only temporary entertainment. In other words, the mass media provided people with "fake" happiness. Popular culture is the juxtaposition of art, that is "real." Adorno and Horkheimer viewed mass media as low culture, and talk about advertising as a manipulative force. In their view, it prevents people from individual thinking, by "infecting everything with sameness" (Adorno and Horkheimer 2002: 94). They argue that, in a capitalist society, where everything is centred on the idea of profit, art is the only resistance to consumption. These ideas are echoed in the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu's thoughts, which will be more closely examined later in this chapter.

Looking at Adorno and Horkheimer's critical thoughts from a contemporary perspective, it can be read as a prophecy; although it was written in 1947, it is still highly relevant today. From another point of view, capitalism is the dominant western ideology, and is strongly linked to the values of individualism and personal freedom. Undoubtedly, many find this appealing, and less restrictive on the individual. However, one may also say that the autonomous subject is threatened by the capitalist system. Regardless of which view one supports, one cannot deny the fact that advertising is an important driving force in order to maintain these values. It is also interesting to see the change from the modern to the postmodern consumer. The postmodernists argue that The boundaries between high and low cultures do not longer exist.

Similar to the Frankfurt school, Jean Baudrillard's theories are grounded in Marxist thoughts. Particularly commodities and their use value and exchange value. Baudrillard is known for his Neo Marxist, semiotic theory of consumption (Campbell 1998:235). Neo Marxists attempt to update the Marxist theories. According to Mike Featherstone, Baudrillard "moves from a materialist emphasis to a cultural emphasis (Featherstone 1991: 15).

However, in contrast to the focus on use value in the Marxist thoughts, Baudrillard understands the consumer society as a system of signs. He argues that commodities are identified by what they signify, so instead of commodities, we consume signs. We need to understand the coded sign system in order to consume. Consumer objects are more linked to feeling of desire, rather than function and need. He argues, that human needs cannot be satisfied through consumption. In this sense, consumption has nothing to do with pleasure. Advertising plays obviously an important part in constructing this world of desires, that cannot be fulfilled. As the media transforms and fragments the signs, for example through advertising, they become free floating and unstable. This influence the distinction between high and mass culture, which becomes more and more blurred. (Featherstone, 1991: 15).

As we will see, Adorno and Horkheimer's ideas will be useful when analyzing a contemporary ad campaign. Are these thoughts still relevant today? How are the capitalist values of our society reflected in the Diesel campaign? This theory is also relevant with regard to literacy, In order to navigate in our culture dominated by advertising messages, it will be increasingly important to be "ad literate" and critical to the messages that are mediated through mass media. This will be further discussed when we come to the section of advertising and literacy.

In the following section, we will remain in the field of sociology, and discuss the concept of lifestyle in relation to class and taste, and introduce the thoughts of the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu.

2.1.7 Class, capital and lifestyle

Advertising plays a key role in our consumer society. As we will discuss later, branding is important in order to establish a relationship between the goods that are sold and the consumers. But what determines what the consumer decides to buy? Is he driven by an individual choice, or mainly determined by the social correlatives, such as class?

Bourdieu offers interesting perspectives on power and class, and how people find their place in the social world. He is an eclectic theorist, in the sense that he uses cross references from other scholars in order to form his own theories. The clearest reference is of Marx ideas of social class, but he also draws on Weber (status groups), and Durkheim (social structures) As

previously discussed, Marxist theory main focus is on materialistic possessions. In Bourdieu's view, power is strongly linked to cultural and social resources (Grenfel 2008).

By introducing the concepts of capital, field and habitus, he moves away from the Marxist outlook.

In advertising and marketing, Bourdieu's theories are useful when it comes to defining a segment. Taste and preferences define where the consumer belongs in the social world. The products one chooses signal where one wants to belong, and who and what one wants to be associated with. Taste and the class are an important part of people's identity. Constructing one's identity is a process of distinguishing oneself from others. A crucial aspect of advertising is to find out which values and lifestyle a certain segment wants, and does not want to be associated with. According to Bourdieu, "...the dominant class constitutes a relatively autonomous space whose structure is defined by the distribution of economic and cultural capital among its members." (Bourdieu, 1979: 260). He points to the fact that social class is a determining factor of what is considered as good and bad taste. Bourdieu's theory suggests, that the dominating class, who has economic and cultural capital define the rules of what is good and bad taste. In this way, he builds on Marx theories.

Bourdieu talks about different fields, such as literary fields, and the cultural fields. Within these fields, there are certain rules. One's ability to know the rules of a certain field, defines where one belongs in the social hierarchy, and once you know them, you struggle to obtain status within this field. According to Bourdieu, People of the dominating class define the rules for what is acceptable (Blindheim 2003: 130). The definition of good taste is unifying for the group, and generates positive attitudes towards the values within that group. This set of rules makes it easier to exclude people who do not belong there. Bourdieu's theories suggest, that people do not make choices totally independent from their surroundings. They want recognition from the right people, in order to keep their status in their social group (Blindheim 2003: 130-31). By choosing to not consume certain products, one excludes oneself from the group.

This is closely linked to another key concept of Bourdieu, referred to as habitus. In his book *Distinctions*, Bourdieu defines habitus as "... both the generative principle of objectively classifiable judgements and the system of classifications of these practices." (Bourdieu, 1979:170). Here he points out, that it is both a principle, and a system. In other words, it both defines a social field, as well as regulates the access to it (Blindheim 2003: 130-

31). We will come back to Bourdieu's well known concepts of cultural and economical capital in the analysis.

Habitus is very crucial in Bourdieu's approach to sociology, and is often referred to when discussing other social phenomena's within this area of research. However, as Michael Grenfell points out, it is a rather complex concept. Grenfell summaries the concept of habitus as "our ways of acting, feeling and being" (Grenfell 2008:52). In other words, it is something one gradually builds up during life. Habitus defines how we are shaped by our life and experiences:

It is in the relationship between the two capacities which define the habitus, the capacity to produce classifiable practices and products(taste), that the represented social world i.e, the space of life styles, is constituted" (Bourdieu, 1979:170).

According to this, Habitus is a product of taste and lifestyle, shaped by people in their social reality. However, the patterns of people's consumer behaviour are quite complex. It is not a coincidence what people buy- sociological factors such as class, gender, and income, are very crucial in this process. Where one belongs in the social world, and what one wants to be associated with, shape which products one wants to purchase. In other words, our tastes and preferences define who we are. However, one of the main goal of advertisers, is to give the consumer the feeling that he makes an individual choice. This is crucial in order to establish a relationship between the consumer and the products. As the product becomes a part of the consumer's identity, the consumer feels he loses a part of himself without this products. (Blindheim 2003: 121).

Bourdieu's theories are relevant In a critical analysis of a contemporary advertising campaign, in order to find out which notions of lifestyle that are reflected in the campaign.

2. 2 Gender roles and advertising

As the forthcoming analysis will look at the campaign Be Stupid from a gender perspective, we will move on to examine the link between gender and advertising. We will draw the lines from the critical tradition we already has discussed, and refer to some scholars of what we call feminist criticism. On the way to find out more on how men and women portrayed in the

Diesel campaign Be stupid, it is necessary to take a closer look at why gender and advertising is such a widely discussed topic, and often been subject to controversy.

The feminist theorists who will be referred to in the analysis, is the american philosopher and professor of gender studies, Sandra Bartky, who focuses on gender analysis in the light of phenomenology, the cultural anthropologist Sherry B. Ortner, the relatively radical feminist writer, Andrea Dworkin, and Sylvia Walby which is a british sociologist, with patriarchy and gender relations as her main research fields.

2.2.1 Gender and identity

First of all, it is important to comment on the two categories gender, and sex. The term sex is a biological definition, which is primarily based on the potential of reproduction. The term gender refers to how the biological sex has been given certain cultural characteristics, in the sense that they are not given, but rather produced, or constructed. (Eckert and Ginet 2003: 10). These ideas are fluid and can change with time, and vary across cultures. We tend to think as sex as biological, and gender as social, but is the distinction in reality as easy as that? Sociologists, and gender theoreticians have debated around the question nature versus nurture. How much of our gender identity are biologically given, and how much are shaped by our social surroundings and upbringing? Why do we regard certain traits as feminine, and other as masculine?

Many would agree there is nothing biological with the fact that women should wear makeup, an men not, or that girls should speak with a lower voice pitch than boys, but biologist and some psychologist will definitely disagree with these claims. However, according to some theorists, science constructs the biological male and female prototypes, whereas our beliefs about gender is socially defined. However, some people believe that all gender behaviour can be explained biological terms. An important case for feminists have been to separate the biological and the cultural. In other words; the female from the feminine. They want to point out, that all women are female, but not necessarily feminine, in the sense that they possess all the imposed characteristics that are embedded in the *feminine*. As Simone De beavour pointed out in her book "The second Sex, one is not born a woman, but becomes one. (Beauvoir cited in Jagger :3). One way of understanding this, is that the patriarchal system has created a whole set of characteristics, that is regarded as feminine.

According to Sut Jhally, “our understanding of ourselves as either male or female is the most important aspect of our definition of ourselves as individuals” (Jhally 1989: 3). In other words, our gender is at the core of constructing an identity. Furthermore, different cultural beliefs and practices, colour how this gender identity is defined. As Fowles points out, the young are especially sensitive to gender imagery in mass media, as they are in the process of defining their own identity (Fowles 1996: 199). There are opposing views whether the gender roles expressed in our society are a result of nature or nurture. However, it seems to be a common agreement among a range of scholars across the sciences that society and culture influence how the biological dispositions are played out in society. How the combinations of genes and social influence give a definition of the role as being a “man” or a “woman.”

Some researchers take a more extreme position. According to the American post-structuralist philosopher Judith Butler, sexual identity is nothing essential or biological. We become the gender we perform. In this way she aims to deconstruct the hegemony of essential thinking. (Eckert and Ginet 2003: 316-16). Despite different views - the question about gender representation seems to be a main topic in our understanding of the world around us, and has been of big importance in the discussion about media and advertising. Much of this discussion has centred around the term stereotyping, which we will take a look at in the next paragraph.

2.2.2 Advertising and stereotyping

The media is an ever growing and important arena where gender roles are displayed, and as Katarina Lindner points out, “advertising is a crucial factor in forming our perceptions of gender roles. Gender inequality is expressed in many ways in our society. Given the high amount of advertising that is exposed to people every day, this is an important channel where these values are communicated. In this way, one can say that advertisements from different time periods, can give an idea of the messages given to society concerning gender issues (Kang, 1997: 979).

The people who are profiled in media function as ideals for ordinary people, and young people, who to a high extent are using advertising and consumerism as a tool to seek

out who they are. The communication of gender roles in advertising are of course very crucial in this context. Advertising constructs a hyper reality, precisely because big corporations want to be associated with the image of perfection.

In connection to gender and advertising, one often comes across the concept of stereotyping. The Oxford English Dictionary defines the word stereotype, as “a widely held but fixed and oversimplified image or idea of a particular type of person or thing” (OED). As stereotypes are based on ideas, rather than established facts, one cannot accept them as truth. However, as people are exposed to stereotypes every day, one can say that they are *learned*. It is evident, that people act and talk according to stereotypes (Simon, 2001: 12). This in turn influences gender behaviour.

However, stereotyping is not necessary negative. They are in fact necessary, as they help us to make sense of the world, and structure all the different expressions we are exposed to. In one sense, it helps us to navigate in the social world (Simon 2011). However, stereotypes are dangerous if they degenerate a certain group, and become subject to marginalization.

The Canadian sociologist and writer, Erving Goffman, has had great impact on the field of gender and advertising. In his influential book *Gender advertisements* (1976) he discusses how advertising confirms the stereotypes connected to women. His research is based on five categories with coded markers that can be used in order to identify gender roles in advertisements. The categories, called *feminine touch*, *function ranking*, *ritualization of subordination*, *relative size*, and *licensed withdrawal*, refer to how women are likely to be portrayed in advertisements. The analysis will show if these categories are still relevant. In order to see how these categories may be applied to the gender portrayals in the Diesel campaign, they will now be presented accordingly:

1. Feminine touch

This first category, refers to how females are depicted touching objects

2. Function ranking reveals how the functions of females seem less important than of males in the ads.
3. Ritualization of subordination.

Women mostly portrayed in domestic settings.

4. Relative size

This category refers to how women are depicted shorter than men,

5. Licenced withdrawal

Women are portrayed mentally distracted from the scene.

(Goffman, 1979)

Goffman has later been criticised for providing biased material to his research.

However, his theories have been very influential within the field of gender and mass media. Since the time of Goffman, women's position in society has gone through a radical transformation, which should suggest an influence of how women are portrayed in ads. What is striking is that Goffman's research on gender portrayals is still relevant in contemporary advertising. According to more recent studies of gender, they show that there are still aspects of the types of stereotyping, referred to by Goffman, that have remained the same. We will now take a look at some theorists who have modified the theories of Goffman, in order to adapt them to contemporary advertising.

2.2.3 Sexualisation of women in advertising

A common stereotype frequently exploited by the media, is the one of the sexualised female. Contemporary research of advertising suggests an increase of sexualised images of women. The scholar, Mee-Eun Kang 1997, has applied Goffman's coding categories and added two new categories; body display (degree of nudity) and independence and self assertiveness. (Kang 1997).

Furthermore, the media researcher, Katharina Lindner (2004) from the University of Stirling, adds two new categories in her work. She used Goffman's theories as the foundation for her study that investigated Images of Women in General Interest Fashion Magazine Advertisements from 1955 to 2002. In this longitude research of magazine ads, she added *objectification* as a new category, which points to women's portrayal in advertising as a desirable object. The notion of objectification has been central to feminist theory. In the

analysis, we will look at this with special regard to the female portrayals. As Lindnerm (Umiker-Sebeok, 1996) supplied the codes of Goffman, by adding Location, movement and risk taking. All the new categories presented here, as a response and supplement to Goffman's codes, will be useful in the forthcoming analysis. Objectification is a common phenomenon in media portrayals. The American professor of communication, Sut Jhally, defines four ways of how women are represented:

1. As symbols for an object.
2. As a fragmented object.
3. As an object to be viewed.
4. As an object to be used.

(Jhally 1989: 7)

As we will see in the analysis later on, many of the ads include elements that signal submissiveness, such as nudity and bondage. This is linked to objectification, and how the female body has been treated as a commodity. According to Andrea Dworkin, "the primary target of objectification is the woman (Dworkin: 113). One of the realms where this is clearly evident is the one of pornography. Dworkin was an American radical feminist. In one of her main works on feminism, *Pornography: Men Possessing Women*, she argues that pornography "is a system of dominance and submission." (Dworkin 1991: 35). She reminds us that the word pornography means "writing about whores." (Dworkin, 1991: 227). As the function of a whore is to serve men sexually, they are victims of male domination. In the decade of generation Y, pornography is mainstreamed as never before, as a result of the widely use of Internet. Internet has made everything more accessible, and today, the Internet may be the strongest symbol of globalization. It is evident that advertising images takes some of its iconography from pornographic conventions of depicting women. We will see examples of this later in the analysis.

2.2.4 Feminism and capitalism

Pornography is an example of an explicit gendered expression. However, many would argue, that our society in general is gendered. This is expressed in various ways in economical, political, social and cultural spheres of life. One example of this is the fact that men and women with same education and experiences are unequally paid, and the fact that typical female jobs are less paid than the jobs more typically male. This may be a sign of discrimination against women. However, the trend towards women occupying more powerful positions in the workspace is a good example of how the gender roles have developed culturally, and moved in the right direction.

Many feminist theorists have focused on the marginalisation of women, made explicit through many arenas of society. An important part of the feminist project has been to question the cultural, sexual, and psychological stereotypes that exist about women. They argue that females are subordinate to men, as they do not have the same social opportunities. This is directly linked to male dominance, referred to as the concept of patriarchy. The British sociologist Sylvia Walby defines patriarchy “as a system of social structures, and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women.” (Walby 1989 :214). Susan Walby presents a new way of “theorising patriarchy”, which is also the title of one of her articles. Here she discusses a model patriarchy that consists of six structures; “a patriarchal mode of production, patriarchal relations in paid work, patriarchal state, male violence, patriarchal relations in sexuality, and patriarchal culture” (Walby 1989: 221-34). She argues that the western society has gone through a shift from a private to public patriarchy. The State, and the public sphere in general is dominated by male power and interests, controlling the state, production, workspace, and sexuality.

Previously in this chapter, we discussed the capitalist society, and how advertising is promoting the capitalist values. Feminists concerned with the materialist conditions of women, are influenced by the Marxist critique of capitalism. The interesting link here, is between capitalism as the driving force behind the advertising industry, and the core concept of feminist theory, which is the one of patriarchy. How can we see that the capitalist system has many similarities with the patriarchal? A high amount of corporate leaders are male,

which means they control larger parts of the world economy. In other words, men are the dominant producers and consumers. In this way, feminists argue that the gendered power is based on the same concept, and defined by the same rules as the Marxist theories of the power hierarchies of the class society. Men are in charge of the power, because they have the economic capital, and power to define people's lifestyle, what that is acceptable, and what that is regarded as high and low status.

In his article, "What is wrong with a little objectification," Sut Jhally, seeks to find out why advertising has such a great power over its audience. He argues that the problem of unequal gender portrayals does not arise from the individual ads, but from the message system, or discourse that advertising is a part of:

The discourse through and about objects (of which advertising sexuality is about) is at the present time a profoundly undemocratic discourse. It is controlled only by advertisers and media. What is needed is not monitoring of individual images but a restructuring of the total system of images so that sexuality can be separated from objectification and objectification can be separated from patriarchal power. (Jhally, 1989)

What Jhally postulates, is a more critical attitude towards the ideology of advertising, that seems to have become an integral part of our society. We will come back to the discussion of discourses in the last section of this chapter.

2.2.5 Advertising as mould or mirror?

If it is the case that advertising are equated with a patriarchal ideology, how does this influence people and society? We may tend to think that we are not affected or persuaded by advertising. We are frightened by the thought that advertising manipulates us to purchase things we did not intend, even though we know that this sometimes may be the case.

Among scholars, there are opposing views whether advertising reflects the values that exist in society, or the other way around, that advertising contributes to changes in society.. This can be referred to as the mould and mirror argument (Eisend 2010: 421).

It can be argued, that the world presented in advertising is idealized, and constructed on fantasies and dreams, and is far from the reality. This may partly be true, but another side of it, is that advertising actually reflects our society. Holbrook (1987), cited in Eisend

(2010:421) argues with the “mirror” argument, which is based on the assumption that gender portrayals in advertising mirror the society. Advertisers pick up on already existing conventions. On the other hand, Pollay (1986) in Eisend (2010), presents the view that advertising shapes and influence the values of the audience. Researchers that support this view, share the belief that advertising is in a very powerful position when it comes to forming people’s attitudes and beliefs.

We see a similar view in Sut Jhallys text, where he states that,

We are communicating ideas about gender using culturally conventionalized routines of behaviour. These displays, or rituals of gender behaviour, help the interpretation of social reality...it is from these conventionalized portrayals of gender that advertising borrows so heavily..they are an extremely concentrated reflection of one aspect of our social lives...Advertisers largely do not *create* the images they depict out of nothing.. Advertisers draw upon the same corpus of displays that we all use to make sense of social life.” (Jhally)

This is echoed in a citation from Erving Goffman, who we talked about earlier in this chapter. He states that, advertisers “Conventionalize our conventions, stylize what is already a stylization” (Goffman 1979:84).

The mould and mirror figure is interesting with relation to our findings from this study of a contemporary advertising campaign. According to this model, it can be interpreted in two ways: Either as signs of existing values of society, or as a contribution to change the society in a certain direction. Since the reality of course is much more complex than these two models can offer, it will probably be a modification of both, and somewhere in between these two ideals. However, it is interesting to find out what advertising can tell us about our culture, but also what it tells us about the producers behind it, and the goals they consciously, or subconsciously set for the development of society. In this climate, it challenges the audience, and how we critically receive these messages. This leads us to the next topic, which will be concerned with advertising and literacy.

2.3 Advertising and Literacy

2.3.1

This last section of this theoretical background will discuss advertising in a literacy perspective. As people are surrounded by, and exposed to these texts and images constantly, they will challenge the traditional idea of literacy. According to marketing researcher Natalia Yannopoulou and Professor of marketing and consumer research, Richard Elliot, there has been a shift in advertising, from functional to symbolic approach. Contemporary ads are more complex to decipher, in the way they tend to use “unanchored rhetorical figures” with the effect that it leaves the interpretation up to the consumer” (Yannopoulou and Elliot 2008). *The Frankfurt school* saw individuals in mass capitalist cultures as having lost all powers of critical perspective. How is the case today? Has the critical ability to the consumers increased with their media literacy? According to Behrer, "Generation Y is not only aware of being marketed to but has grown up in an environment full of brands and commercial media; it's all they have ever known." (Behrer 2011).

The meaning of the world literacy is usually defined as the ability to read and write. However, there is an expanded meaning of the word literacy, meaning competence, or a set of skills that are necessary in order to master certain tasks. (Barton 2007). One can for example be computer literate. In addition to the distinction between those who can read and those who cannot, there is also the level of being able to *use* the written information, which is called *functional literacy*. In order to function in a society, it is necessary to master this. It is the functional literacy, the skills that define of how we interpret ads, which we will concentrate on in this thesis.

According to professor of language and literacy at the Lancaster Literacy Research Centre, David Barton, literacy is a social practice. Much of the activities we do are involved with texts and the ability to read and write (Barton 2007). There are numerous situations in the everyday life where the written word plays a crucial role (Barton 2007), e.g. when we read a mail, flick through the newspaper at the breakfast table, or reading instruction manuals. Furthermore, there are numerous other situations that we not think of as active reading. We may not pay as much attention to these, as it is just something we do. However, we use our skills of reading in order to master these tasks These situations include the act of decoding timetables, traffic signs, and time of day. Similarly, Advertising comes under this category, and can thus be referred to as a literacy practice. Barton makes the point that "understanding

literacy involves studying both texts and the practices surrounding the texts" (Barton 2007, p 76). This is equally important when we aim to understand the function of advertising, and their various symbolic effects.

2.3.2 Literacy and discourses

Literacy is complex, in the way it is linked to class, income, race, ethnicity, and gender. The texts and the practices surrounding the texts are part of what we call a discourse. Discourses are language used in different contexts, for different purposes. In short, a set of rules which dominate within certain groups. According to David Barton, discourses are important for how we make sense of the world (Barton 2007: 73-75). According to Foucault, a discourse can be seen as a set of norms within a social group, which force its members to speak and behave in line with the expectations. In this way, these "discursive communities" (Barton 2007: 75) exclude the individuals who do not master the certain discourse. In this sense, discourses are nearly related to power. We see how these discourses operate in society, such as in media, or the academic field. Discourses are important with regard to advertising, as the companies may want to create their own excluding discourses. in order to build up an identity among the group that is able to "read" the message of the companies.

Young people understand why one type of jeans, such as Diesel is "cooler" than another, whereas their parents cannot. In other words, the grown ups rare excluded from the discourse. From another point of view, it may be the case that the big brands want to influence a larger discourse, as that of the market, or the society. In this case, their aim is not to exclude anyone, but rather influence as many as possible into spending money on clothes, or let the society change in the direction that some clothes become cooler, and more worth spending money on than others. Big companies such as Diesel would probably do a bit of both: They want to exclude, in order to create an identity around the brand, at the same time, their advertising campaigns, reaching such a wide audience, will in the long run change the larger contexts too.

2.3.3 Advertising and Rhetorics

As the main goal for advertising is to persuade people to purchase, it make sense to refer to it as an argument. In that sense, advertising is closely linked to the field of rhetorics.

Research shows that the ads that appeal to our emotion are the most effective.

These ads seem to grab our attention more often. Rhetoric's shares many of the same characteristics as other linguistic fields of study, such as pragmatics, discourse analysis and sociolinguistics. What they all have in common, is that they focus on *language in use*. However, what distinguishes rhetorical tradition from the former, is the emphasis on argumentation. Rhetoric's is the art of communicating effectively, by using arguments. Advertising needs to communicate their message convincingly, and has to use means of rhetoric's in order to achieve

In the Oxford English Dictionary, the word rhetoric is defined as "The art of using language effectively so as to persuade or influence others" (OED). Due to the fact that advertising aims to persuade, it is clear that many of the attributes of advertising can be identified as rhetorical devices. However, this link has not been acknowledged in the same manner within the field of research. Since it has not been carried out much research on the relationship between rhetoric's and advertising, Charles Marsh calls for a "a rapprochement between the two disciplines" (Marsh).

Rhetorics derive from an ancient tradition, going back to antiquity, and the philosopher Aristotle. Within Rhetorics, there are three forms of appeals, referred to as *Ethos, pathos, and logos*. Ethos refers to the appeal that is made by the character of the rhetor. It is much about how the speaker builds up an authority towards his audience.

Pathos appeals to the emotions of the audience, such as love, hate. But also feelings that unify a country and its people, such as nationalism, grief and victory. Topos refers to the references that are used in the argumentation.

With respect to advertising, the three appeals are used in different ways, according to the argument, and the situation. However, it is often an interplay between them. According to the American professor of journalism and mass communication Charles Marsh, "Advertising may be the most pervasive form of modern rhetoric". Following Marsh, the two professors of marketing and commerce, Edward F. Mc Quarrie and David Glen Mick points to the fact that the means of rhetorics "have remained largely unacknowledged, undifferentiated, and uninfluential in advertising theory" (Mac Quarrie and Mick, 1996). Furthermore, William J. McGuire argues that "figurative language...is a neglected topic in persuasion".

2.3.4 The new Rhetoric and the audience

As the word implies, New rhetoric is a modern effort to renew the classical rhetorical tradition. The new rhetoricians pay more attention to the idea of audience. Given the fact that the concept of advertising is largely based on the connection between the sender and the addressee, it is relevant to take a closer look at this direction within rhetorics.

The idea of the “constitutive audience” is a more recent concept within the new rhetoric, and was introduced by professor of communication Maurice Charland (1987). He suggests that the discourse of the rhetoric “creates an image of an audience.” Furthermore, “it generates the conditions of possibility that can structure the identity of those to whom it is addressed” (Jasinski). The rhetor draws together a new audience by appealing to certain values and interests, and in such way “shapes” the identity of the audience.

In the case of advertising, one can say that the target audience is constructed, or positioned in a certain role as consumers. The rhetor must “convince” its audience by argumentation why they should be members. According to this concept, defining an audience is a process of bringing together people that supports the message, i.e. of an ad.

Charland argues, that this is effective rhetoric, as it makes the audience more active. (jasinski). This corresponds with Sut Jhally, saying that “advertising draws its materials from the experiences of the audience, but it reformulates them in a unique way. It does not reflect meaning but rather constitutes it”.

2.3.5 Texts and readership

As Jhally points out, “advertisements...are the only message forms that are not accompanied by credits in terms of who has produced them” In other words, the sender is anonymous. This creates a mystery around them, which makes its sender-receiver relationship more vague. When discussing the cultural positions of text, it is crucial to touch upon the author function. Since much of the reason why we tend to look at works of literature as more valuable than other texts, is linked to this figure.

In the early nineteenth century, the author was looked upon as a genius. This view derives from Romanticism, and has gradually been established as our popular view of literature. However, this view has been challenged by various schools of literary theory, such as New criticism. By undermining the relevance of the author’s biographical information in

the analysis of texts, they turned away the focus from the writer. More importantly, the emphasis should be solely on the text itself. The autonomy of the text gave the text a voice of its own. (Cook).

Roland Barthes and Michel Foucault have contributed to this discussion, as they have commented on the author function. In his text "The death of the Author" Barthes's project is to liberate the text by shifting the focus from the author to the reader. A famous quote from his text underpins his point: "The unity of a text is not in its origin, it is in its destination". (Barthes's in Finkelstein and McCleery (2002: 224). When the author is dead, it gives away the authority to the reader. In this sense, Barthes calls for the "the birth of the reader"

Foucault responds to Barthes text in his essay "What is an author". He claims that the author is a function, more than a person. Among other things, he says that literary reputation shapes how we look at texts. Reading a book written by Shakespeare certainly influence our outlook of the text. We would probably judge it differently if the author were unknown to us. The conclusion of Foucault's thought, is that the author can never disappear, as he will stay alive" as discourses (Foucault in Finkelstein and McCleery: 230). This is interesting, also in a marketing point of view, where the "author" on one hand should be visible, but on the other hand does not act like an author in the sense of a person.

According to Sut Jhally, advertising is the major ideological tool of the marketplace. (Jhally, 1990: 250). He comments on Barthes text the Death of the Author, which he refers to as a celebration of textual analysis in which a focus on production or reception becomes a constraint on the practice of reading" (Jhally and Lewis 1998: 112). According to Jhally, with regard to media texts, it is necessary to "go beyond the texts. Jhally's words make much sense, If we see this in relation to the analysis we have just made of the campaign Be stupid. In order to be able to understand all the different layers of advertising, we need to go beyond the surface and see what is hidden.

As Judith Williamson remarks,

Advertising seems to have a life of its own; it exists in and out of other media, and speaks to us in a language we can recognize but a voice we can never identify. This is because advertising has no 'subject'. Obviously people invent and produce adverts, but apart from the fact that they are unknown and faceless, the ad in any case does not claim to speak from them, it is not their speech. Thus there is a space, a gap left where the speaker should be; and one of the peculiar features of advertising is that we are

drawn into fill that gap, so that we become both listener and speaker, subject and object. [Williamson 1978 p. 13-14 cited in Jhally, Sut 1989]

2.3.6 Visual prominence in ads

The use of visual communication is very important in ads, given the fact that it has to draw the attention and get noticed by an audience. Furthermore, the visual emphasis in media has become more explicit. For this reason, recent research has paid much attention to the visual prominence of ads. In the process of deciphering an ad, one is looking at what the different elements signifies, in order to reveal all the layers of meaning that are hidden. Advertising communicates verbally and visually. The image leads the meaning in a certain direction. It is often interplay between text and image. In certain cases, the meaning of text and image does not correspond. This is a rhetorical strategy that is used to evoke the interest of the viewer. Communication is a process that creates meaning through the use of signs. Pictures and words are two semiotic modes, which have different meaning potentials. (Kress and van Leeuwen 2006). Advertising, that may contain both text and images, is an example of how semiotics can be a tool to decode meanings.

Going back to the roots of semiology, it was founded by the French linguist Ferdinand de Saussure, who wanted to develop a scientific study of language. He claimed that the structure of language is universal. The Language we use consists of a set of rules. Each word is a sign that signify something else. This could be an object or a concept. The form is the signifier, whereas the meaning is the signified. (Kress and van Leeuwen 2006) It is a arbitrary relationship between a word, and what it stands for. The meaning that is created depends on how the different signs work in relation to each other. A sign does not have to be verbal, but can be applied to visual and aesthetic content, such as painting and music. According to the theory, they are all semiotic systems. (Ridless :151)

According to the professor of semiotics at University of London Gunther R. Kress and Dean of the faculty of humanity, “signs are never arbitrary”.(Kress and van Leeuwen 2006:7-9) They see it more as motivational. People give meaning to things based on their motivation. It is not arbitrary. This assumption goes against the Saussurian ideas.

The philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce gives a supplement to the theories of De Saussure, by introducing two types of signs, the *index and the icon*. An index is something that points to something else, such as smoke and fire. An icon refers to the likeness of

something else. According to this, photographs are both iconic and indexical signs. (O'Byrne 2011: 142-43). According to Peirce, the photographic image is a proof of an historical event. The photographer has captured a moment in history. In the same way as smoke does not exist without fire, the photograph cannot be created without this moment or event. In this way, the photograph is indexical. At the same time, the photograph is a sign that depicts a realistic event, and represent something that actually happened, as available for the viewer. In this sense the photograph is an iconic sign. Peircian semiotics is relevant to advertising when discussing the intention behind the photographic medium in ads, and in a literacy context, it is interesting to see how it communicates with the audience.

In advertising, the iconic function of the photograph may be the most important, as the pictures represents a "reality". From another point of view, many of the portrayals of advertising are posed, in the sense that they reveal a relationship with the photographer. We see they flirt with the camera, and are aware of being photographed. These situations would not occur without the presence of the photographer.

The semiotics of Peirce is referred to as pragmatic semiotics, which means its meaning comes from the context and use. People of a certain group determined by gender, age or class, will share a common interpretation for a certain sign. (O'Byrne 2011: 142-43). In order to understand the intention behind the use of signs in advertising, it is crucial to know the rhetorical functions of the signs, we will therefore take a closer look at advertising and persuasion, and how rhetoric is used as a strategic tool in an advertising context, in order to communicate effectively, both verbally and visually.

2.3.7 Rhetorics of the Image

The essay "The Rhetoric of the image," written by the French semiotician Roland Barthes, has served as an influential example of how to analyse a printed ad with a rhetorical and semiotic approach. In his analysis of the ad, Barthes identifies three message levels: the linguistic (the words of the ad), the denoted image (what that is actually photographed) and the connoted image (the symbolic message).

Roland Barthes stressed the polysemic nature of images. The word Polysemy, maning many, refers to that that the image can signify a wide spectre of things (Kjeldsen 2002: 74). The aspect of polysemy is complex, since it is central in the coding and decoding of signs in advertisements. According to the Norwegian guru of media science Ytreberg, the polysemy is particular evident when we move from text to images. In contrast to words, it is hard to give a

strict distinction of meaning of all the individual elements in an image. In this way, the image of a woman with hardly no clothes in a fashion ad, may be associated to sexual attraction for some people, whereas for others, it just evokes the need for shopping new clothes. (Ytreberg). Kress and van Leuwen point out, in their book *Visual grammar*, there is no universal way of reading images- it is culturally specific. This is evident on a both physical and cognitive level. An important distinction between western and non-western way of reading is the reading direction. The western convention is to read from left to right, whereas other cultures may read from right to left, top to bottom, or from the centre to the outside Kress and van Leuwen 2006). This may appear to us as an insignificant detail, but when it comes to advertising, it has a huge impact on how the elements are placed in hierarchies, and again how the viewers interpret the message, and what they pay attention to first.

Furthermore, in order to explain how the relationship between text and image works, Barthes speaks of anchorage. The linguistic message is used in order to anchor text and image. If the image stands alone, it can be too open, and difficult for the receiver to understand the meaning. As Barthes says, “the denoted image naturalizes the symbolic message, it innocents the semantic artifice of connotation, which is extremely dense, especially in advertising” (Barthes, *Rhetorics of the Image*). As cultural theorist and sociologist, Stuart Hall points out in his essay “Encoding, Decoding”, there is no “purely denotative” in advertising discourse. He says that “Every visual sign in advertising connotes a quality, situation, value or inference, which is present as an implication or implied meaning, depending on the connotational positioning” (Hall).

Van Leuwen and Kress question Barthes assumption that an image needs to be anchored to a verbal text in order to create meaning, by saying that “the visual component of a text is an independently organized and structured message, connected with the verbal text, but in no way dependent on it-and similarly the other way around.” Kress and van Leuwen 2006: 18).

Most of advertising images today are based on the photographic medium. As argued by the Danish professor of rhetorics, Jens Kjeldsen (2002), The photography is a very effective mediator of visual rhetorics. (Kjeldsen 2002: 285). Furthermore, he argues that pictures confirm the values already embodied in the viewer. The ads work rhetorically to affirm these existing values. (Kjeldsen). According to Fowles, “photography is the chosen

artistic mode for advertising because of its depictive ability to present fictions as if they were realities” (Fowles). The potential in this medium makes it easier for an audience to identify with the situation that is depicted. Rhetorically speaking, photographs appeal to pathos, ethos and topos. By evoking emotional identification, they wake memories and strengthen their ethos, for instance by using celebrity endorsement. Furthermore, pictures are more memorable than verbal texts. (Fowles). Topos: Uses references and allusions to other texts and iconography. Such as artworks, the bible, or historical events.

Kjeldsen presents two different strategies, or paradigms of visual rhetoric, called the latent and the manifest. He argues, that advertising constructs its messages as a mix of both these paradigms. The latent rhetoric has an ethos appeal. It is more hidden for the receiver, and demands more time in order to work. Ideological (Kjeldsen 2002: 55). The manifest rhetoric, on the other hand, have a much more immediate effect on the receiver, and appeals through logos and pathos.

2.3.8 Storytelling

The use of storytelling is common in advertising, as the brands seeks to appeal to pathos. According to the British linguist Guy Cook, the nature of ads is *parasitic*, in the sense that they take up features from other genres (Cook 2001: 133). Although advertising is a non-literary genre, it shares many of the same characteristics as literature. What first comes in to our minds is the emotional aspect. Ads that are solely based on facts, will probably not appeal as much as an ad that "tells a Story." If the viewer cannot connect emotionally to the content of text and images used in the ads, the effect will simply be diminished. Advertisers and Copy writers are "storytellers," who need to come up with new creative solutions in order to stand out in the market. As we will see in the analysis, some of the ads allude to the fairy tale genre, that often feature the magical number three, and animals that appear to have human like characteristics. With the *Be stupid* campaign, Diesel “sells” a story. This story can appeal to a much broader segment, which is not based on age, but rather mental categories.

We often come across ads that refer to other texts. This phenomenon is referred to as *Intertextuality*. Ads are highly based on chains of associations. These associations are often shared by many people, which make them highly effective in ads. The way "Texts are made up of other texts" (Barton 2007: 81) is important in the process of decoding and interpreting

messages, such as copy texts. David Barton discusses the "literary view of literacy". (Barton 2007: 167). He explains how the term literary originally meant *educated*, and was not tied up with the idea of fiction, as in novels, poetry or plays. For a long time, the world culture was synonymous with art. Popular art had no status as culture. These assumptions changed radically, in the 1800s, with the rise of mass media, such as newspapers, as they became accessible for the masses. Furthermore, the idea of the "autonomous artist" was established in the romantic period. (Web, Jen:45).

Today there is barely no one that talks about an autonomous artist – it looks like all of the artists have some sort commercial bindings, and they are in many ways dependent of the mass media. This development is, and has been provoking for many people. The poet Matthew Arnold rejected for example to define magazines and films as "culture". He felt that the real, high culture was threatened by the mass media. His thoughts are closely examined in his collection of essays, *Culture and Anarchy*, from 1869. With respect to literature, Arnold was concerned with the English contribution to the literary canon, with Shakespeare's works as the most prestigious. (Ytreberg 2008). Today, many would probably call Arnold's view as snobbish, or elitist. However his thoughts reflected a growing scepticism towards mass media, which characterized the spirit of the time, and influenced future thinkers.

In his article "Image based culture: Advertising and Popular Culture" Sut Jhally points out, that functional literacy include the skills of the production side of media. Ideally, one should learn more of the process behind media production. Jhally argues that knowledge of the mechanisms of advertising should be a subject in education. (Jhally). Sut Jhally addresses the need for visual literacy skills, when he claims that, "Just as knowledge of grammar is considered vital in learning foreign languages, so the grammar of images needs to be integrated into the high school curriculum" (Jhally).

To emphasize his point, he suggests photography and video production as school subjects . Furthermore, he advocates the importance of contextual knowledge about advertising as institution, and the political economy of the industry (Jhally). He argues that this is necessary in order to be more in control of the manipulative forces of advertising. In another article, "struggle over media literacy" Jhally points to this again, by saying, "A contextual approach to media literacy allows students to see the media within a framework of interests and power relations". (Jhally)

In line with Jhally, The Finnish professor Nando Malmelin further emphasizes the importance of media literacy, and particularly with regard to advertising. He argues that the society we are a part of, with a growing media culture, we need to be able to interpret the symbolic systems in which advertising is a part of. (Malmelin 2010: 3). He presents a model of advertising literacy which consists of four dimensions: Informational literacy, Visual/aesthetic literacy, rhetorical literacy, and promotional literacy.

In order to sum up this chapter, we have looked at branding and market segmentation. Furthermore, we have placed advertising in a critical tradition, and examined advertising from sociological perspectives, by looking at the theories of the Frankfurt school, Pierre Bourdieu's concepts of lifestyle, and different feminist approaches to gender. With respect to gender portrayals in advertising, we have examined Erving Goffman's research on gender stereotypes in ads. The last part of this chapter has focused on, literacy, rhetorics, and the visual prominence in ads. This knowledge is important when we now move on to the analysis of the campaign *Be Stupid*.

3. Analysis

3.1. Lifestyle

The following chapter will take a closer look at the Diesel campaign *Be Stupid*. The analysis will shed light on sociocultural, semiotic and rhetorical aspects of the campaign, by applying the theories previously discussed. This will include critical theory, feminist criticism, and theories within the fields of rhetorics and semiology. The aim is to get a deeper understanding of the means and functions of a contemporary advertising campaign. The aim will be to give an answer the research questions of this thesis: Which lifestyle options do *Diesel* communicate in the campaign, and how are gender roles defined? Furthermore, how does Diesel through their *Be Stupid* campaign present a story of gender, and why it is so important to be “ad literate” in our contemporary mediated world?

The first part of this analysis seeks to present a general overview of the campaign, by first attempting to understand the larger context of the brand *Diesel*, by looking at how they communicate a certain lifestyle in order to reach a target group. This part aims to tell us something about the audience segment, and how Diesel aims to reach these with their advertising. Some examples from the campaign will be used in order to shed light on the topics youth, age, generation and class. These aspects are all relevant in the processes of defining a segment and reaching the right consumer audience. Youth is important, since the process of creating a brand identity seems to be concentrated around youth culture and lifestyle. The concept of age can be discussed on different levels, according to actual age, physical age and perceived age. How is this reflected in the campaign, and in line with the changes that may have occurred between generations?

The second, main part of the analysis, will discuss the campaign from a gender perspective, and mainly focus on how gender roles are communicated in the campaign. The gender portrayals will be linked to the notions of objectification, empowerment, male female relations and sexuality. Moreover, this thesis seeks to understand how this campaign can tell us something about how advertising functions as a literacy practice. As we shall see, The Be stupid campaign challenges the reader on many levels. The analysis of the campaign will evaluate the visual and is based on the 38 ads from the campaign. The visuals of the entire

campaign *Be Stupid*, will be added as a an appendix to the thesis, and will be referred to by numbers throughout the analysis First of all, we will turn to present some background information about the company Diesel, and examine the larger context for the campaign.

3.1.1 Context

An understanding of the context is important for getting a deeper understanding of the premises of the material we are analysing, as well as for how we evaluate the findings of the analysed campaign. In order to get an idea of which business this brand is a part of, we will look into the history and background of the brand, its competitors on the market, and which tradition of advertising it can be placed in. Furthermore, it is interesting to see the campaign in the context of the time it was made. In this sense, it is important to view the larger socio economic context of the campaign.

The brand Diesel is Italian, and was founded in 1978 by Renzo Rosso. Diesel is today a global jeans brand, present in more than 80 countries with 5,000 points of sale. (XX). Diesel has established itself as a challenger to the traditional denim brands on the market. The jeans market has been highly dominated by American brands and one of Diesel's many competitors on the market, is the well established American jeans brand Levi's, looked upon as the "inventor of jeans". The following quote from the Diesel Facebook page can serve to illustrate how Diesel consciously set about to conquer the lucrative and traditionally North American jeans market: "By 1992 Denim brand communication was almost homogeneously selling the American dream, that was until Diesel changed the game" (Facebook). By developing inventive and creative solutions of advertising, has built a reputation of making use of innovative marketing solutions. In this way, it has pushed itself away from the denim battlefield, and developed a distinctive brand image.

However, the jeans industry is a business full of traditions and capital. Ranked As the world's best selling piece of clothing, the jeans market is one of the leading forces of the fashion industry. Jeanswear has been strongly associated with youth culture and rebellion. When the blue jeans first entered the American market, it came to symbolise much more than a casual street wear. As it became more and more popular among teenagers, it became synonymous with a particular lifestyle and attitudes. By wearing jeans, one rejected conformity and authorities, associated with the adult generation. Values, such as rebellion and

freedom are connected to the youth lifestyle, and an important goal for advertisers has been to commodify such values (Fowles 1996).

Today, Diesel spends billions every year on their global advertising campaigns, distributed in a wide range of media. They operate in a market, which is strongly influenced by hard competition among a growing number of international fashion retailers. From the year Diesel was founded, the international textile industry has changed radically. At this time, most of the textiles of the world were produced in national factories, mainly on behalf of a national market.

Now the situation is totally different. The international economy has pushed the clothing factories out of the western countries, to countries in South East Asia, whereas the designer's commissions have been executed in the home country of the company. This has made the giants of the market more economically effective. The prices have fallen down, which have given western citizens the ability to buy cheaper clothes than ever before. At the same time, the globalization has resulted in harder completion among the fashion companies, such as *HM* and *Zara*. Additionally, the global economic crisis has made this competition even tougher.

In line with this, *Diesel* serves as an example of the growing importance of marketing and advertising. In a market where the competition is sharpened to such a high degree, advertising and marketing will be of special importance when it comes to reaching audiences. Furthermore, as the advertising campaigns expand their national borders and set to conquer global markets, the power of advertising becomes even more explicit. With this in mind, the task of analysing campaigns of big, international fashion brands becomes particularly important, precisely because they influence a large number of people in different countries and cultures.

3.1.2 The Be Stupid Campaign

The Be Stupid campaign is extensive, and consists of 38 different advertisements. It was launched for the spring / summer season of 2010, and appeared as billboards, print ads in magazines and in an online text-only video that aims to expose the message behind the campaign. Diesel has focused on high media exposure, and the campaign was distributed through a wide range of media, such as print and online ads, outdoor billboards, and viral marketing, involving social medias, such as Facebook and You Tube. Over the last 5-10

years, social media have just evolved, and created a whole new arena for marketing. As Lea Greenwood points out, social media has become a very important and effective tool, in order to establish communication with the customers, She says that “Instead of a “push strategy, social media can include a “pull” strategy, in which two-way communication can be established” (Lea-Greenwood, 2013). In addition, sales promotion activities and high media exposure are important in order draw the attention to the brand. In relation the Be stupid campaign, customers were invited to come to local Diesel stores in order to do “stupid acts.” This was a way of interacting with the audience, and create positive associations to the brand.

For more than three decades, Diesel has been present on the market. In 1992, Diesel appeared on the international market, Diesel has gradually shifted the focus from print based campaign to online, guerilla and out of home advertising. Over the years, Diesel has developed a wide range of campaigns,

Be Stupid is a part of long tradition of advertising campaigns from Diesel. Among some of the well known, we find Global Warming ready campaign, and the Diesel Island.

A year after the Be Stupid campaign, Diesel launched the “Diesel Island” campaign in 2011. These ads develop the concept further, by building up an imaginary place where people are “free to create their own laws”. Under the slogan, “Land of the Stupid, home of the Brave” they invite people to get online to be citizens of this exclusive community.

The latest move from *Diesel*, is an advertising campaign that calculates the days you have left to live. One can find out, by answering a questionnaire online, filling in personal details and trivial info such as eating habits. Similar to the Be stupid mantra, it encourages people to make the most of their life, and In Diesel words, “waste the days more bravely.” All the campaigns have had a focus on the youth, as this is their target audience. In other words, this seems to suggest, that The Be Stupid campaign marked the beginning of a new trend in the Diesel marketing. Of this reason, using this particular campaign for the analysis may be of special interest.

A common characteristic of all the latest Diesel campaigns is the use of shock in order to draw attention. The concept of Shock advertising was introduced in the theory chapter, and Demonstrated by the example of another Italian fashion giant. As previously discussed, one of the most successful modern and alternative campaigns for an international corporation have been those of the fashion brand Benetton. The company uses different rhetorical strategies, but aim to sell products all over the world. Through their campaigns, Benetton has succeeded

in presenting themselves as a company that focuses on human rights and awareness, rather than on the business of selling fashion. Benetton's own marketers rejected the critique of making a gimmick out of Social commitment: "Benetton is not about selling sweaters but about social responsibility, and it is a company that represents less a product than a lifestyle and worldview" (Cited in Giroux 1993:12).

Though the use of shock tactics in Benetton's marketing strategy is different from that of Diesel, there are still obvious similarities between Diesel and Benetton. As Sandicki points out: "Through the representational and ideological paradoxes incorporated into their structure, Benetton and Diesel ads appear to push the limits of polysemy and deliberately motivate multiple and even conflicting readings" (Sandicki 2011: 46). As Gilbert (2000) in Bruzzi and Gibson 2000) states, Diesel also operates within "a regional design and marketing culture...with a strong and distinctive brand image". (Gilbert 2000:7 in Bruzzi and Gibson 2000). One might say that the global outlook of Benetton was adopted by Diesel. (Polhemus,1998:20) In this way, Benetton and Diesel have contributed to challenge the norms of the expectations one has of an advertisement. Moreover, this can be linked to a global marketing context, in which the task of catching people's attention seems to become more and more challenging.

However, as we will see later in this chapter, Diesel seems to have redefined this shock effect with irony. The ironic attitude seems to have become one of Diesel's strongest trademarks in order to reach a large multinational group of consumers. Again, this can be linked to the position of Diesel on the international market, and more importantly, how they use this position.

Renzo Rosso has expanded his fashion empire. It is in 2013 estimated to be worth 3\$ billion. According to these numbers, nothing indicates that Diesel is an underdog on the market. However, as this analysis attempts to show, this "underdog-image" created in many of their campaigns, is more of a gimmick and a part of a larger marketing strategy. The founder of Diesel, Renzo Rosso, claims that "[we] at Diesel view the world as a single-borderless macroculture" (Gilbert 2000:7 in Bruzzi and Gibson 2000). However, as the analysis will demonstrate, the company aims to reach an exclusive part of a broad segment only. In other words, Diesel is profiled as an underdog, but at the same time as brand that want o reach a wide audience. How, then, does Diesel communicate its particular lifestyle options to its prospective customers? How is their particular audience segment defined?

Before we move on to the analysis, we will take a closer look the concept of Guerilla marketing, which can be linked to the Diesel strategy.

3.1.3 Guerilla marketing

The concept of Guerilla marketing was developed by Jay Conrad Levinson in 1984, in his book “Guerilla advertising”. The term is taken from warfare, and is defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as “a member of a small independent group taking part in irregular fighting, typically against larger regular forces” (OED). The meaning can be transferred to “a war of marketing,” where one uses different weapons in order to succeed.

This concept aimed to renew the conventional ways of advertising, and meet the demands of the more sophisticated consumers. Although it originally was a low cost-concept directed towards small companies, the guerilla marketing tactics have been adopted by big, well established brands. (Hoffmann 2011:1).

Guerilla tactics are often more humorous in the approach, and delegates more of the control to the consumer. It often contains surprising elements, that engage with the consumers more directly. At some point advertisers become aware that they could not educate their consumers. They had to and follow the new trends of communication.

Guerilla marketing uses unconventional strategies in their advertising, and the goal is to obtain large effect out of low expenses. One of the biggest advantages with this type of advertising, is that it engage the viewers in a very direct way, and the experience becomes more personal and memorable. As a part of the Be stupid campaign, visitors were invited to come to a local Diesel Store and being filmed while doing “stupid acts. This is a good example of the use of Guerilla tactics.

Over the recent years, the popularity of Guerilla advertising has grown. One reason for its popularity, can be that such marketing, that breaks with the conventions, has a stronger appeal to the modern audience. Consumers today seem to approach ads in a more critical way, which can be linked to the “wearout effect” caused by the large amount of ads people are bombarded with every day.

It can also have economic reasons. Due to the global financial crisis, many companies have had to cut their advertising budgets. This serves as a necessary link to the particular campaign that we are going to analyse. The Be stupid campaign was launched, two years after the breakout of the global financial crisis. The crisis has had a big impact on young lives,

since it caused high unemployment rates. How this may effect the message behind the campaign will be further discussed in the analysis.

As this general analysis also serves as a necessary backdrop for the forthcoming gender analysis, Diesel's use of irony will be further examined at the end of this chapter. We will now turn to the analysis of the *Be stupid* campaign.

3.1.4 Youth and Identity

We will start this analysis, by looking at aspects of youth and identity. The general impression one get from looking at this campaign, is that all the models in the ads seem to be around the age 18-30. This confirms the impression of the consistent use of young people in advertising, and also how youth is directly linked to the beauty ideal in conventional advertising. Both genders are exclusively thin, fit and conventionally good-looking. One may see this beauty ideal most explicitly in ad no 1, 2, 3, 9, 17, 18, 19, 25, 31, 33, 37 and 38. The three girls depicted in 1, 2 and 9 do all have big breasts and lips, which is a conventional ideal. In 17, 18, and 19, there is a focus on long and slender legs, which points to ideal of tallness. The male models in ad no 33 and 38 do both have tanned muscular bodies. Common for both genders are thin bodies, no overweight, flawless skin and symmetrical faces. All the women have long hair. When it comes to ethnic race, all the models are Caucasian, except from one girl with brown skin, depicted in ad no. 33.

Most of the ads are scenes away from home and work, in surroundings suggesting leisure time, except from ad no 17 and 21, that probably are home environments, Moreover, this is further reflected in the activities the people are engaged in, which mostly involve play and non-commitment. When it comes to the social settings, we see that these are mainly focused around friendship and / or romance. The traditional family settings are hardly not presented, although no 17 has elements from family life. The various social settings, and the behaviour in these, can give more clues about age, and different stages in life. Although no 17 suggests the idea of a more traditional couple, the other ads that depict couples are not what we normally associate with established relationships. (11, 12, 15, 16, 21, 22, 26, 33)

Constructing an identity is a crucial part of the youth experience. Clothes have always been an important identity marker for young people. The way people dress signals very effectively

who they are, and the belonging to a group. According to xx Frost, “The market offers not just goods, but goods attached to versions of selfhood” (Frost).

In relation to this, one can look at Bourdieu’s ideas on cultural capital. Knowledge of the right style is the key to be accepted, and consumption is an effective tool to define which people do not belong within a group.

According to Rosenlund, “the construction of identities has become a project of the individuals themselves, created on the basis of their choices in the growing number of social arenas, institutions and contexts ”(Rosenlund: 197). By believing in no core self, no "I", the postmodern thinking is a play with identities. There are multiple discourses and identities that are in flux all the time.

Ad no 5, 6, 18, 24, 29 are examples of groups that reflect different contexts of group identity. Furthermore, we see that different identity ideals are expressed across the individual portrayals. The girl in no 37 gives a very different impression than the girl in no. 3. This is also the case the man in no 17 and the man in no 20. These people are not necessarily different persons. It may just be a portrayal of the same person, but with different identities. Diesel says that one cannot be stuck in the same role all the time. The modern consumer can “shop for identities”. (xx).

Some of the situations the characters takes part in, involve risk. (1, 2, 3, 4, 10, 15, 16, 30). Approaching animals, flashing oneself in front of a security camera in the middle of night, hanging out the window of moving cars, and one night stands. These do all belong to the categories of activities many people would maybe not regard as smart. However, it is an important part of the process of forming an identity.

Taking risks is associated with the youth experience. Risk taking is also linked to courage, and the motivation behind such actions may be better self esteem, or to achieve status among friends. However, none of these will have negative influence on one’s social status. We see that the risk taking to a great extent is a part of an individual project. It is not for a collective good. To be stupid is a “safe” way to go. In the *Be stupid* campaign, one can see how the symbolic value of the brand creates a fantasy of new experiences. Empowered by these messages, one can practically do anything. One can go to far away destinations, tame animals, and have as many sexpartners as one desires. Image can solve everything. One can also find evidence for this in the copytext. By saying “stupid creates” it implicitly says that one can “create” this lifestyle on one’s own premises. This whole idea is created by Diesel,

but they make the impression that it is based on an individual choice, with their claim: “we’re with stupid”.

3.1.5 Age and generations

As we discussed earlier, the youth bias in advertising is reflected in the Be stupid campaign. According to Philip Jones, international advertising is particularly successful when it comes to “brands that appeal to the young and the affluent” and he draws attention to the similarities in young people’s tastes and lifestyle in different countries (Jones 2004: 191). This means, that the way the brand communicates age, will have big consequences for the success of sales. In this way, the concept of age is important when analysing the lifestyle aspects of the campaign *Be Stupid*. This kind of lifestyle and age focus is evident throughout the Diesel marketing strategy, here formulated by the founder, Renzo Rosso:

In Europe and the US the gap between the young and the old is not much. Now consumer groups are not fixed by age as much as they are by lifestyle....The young and not-so-young want to look and feel the same. Both of them want to look cool and fashionable. They want to wear similar kinds of clothes and accessories that are considered in fashion. So, there is no target group and the real focus is on lifestyle.

(Rosso cited in Surendrar and Roy: 2010).

Rosso is careful to include the more mature parts of the audience in their segment. He speaks about “the young and not-so-young”. One can clearly see how Diesel appeals to the young. But what about the not-so-young? In many of the ads one can see a high focus on play, and childlike behaviour. (7, 8, 21, 29, 32, 33, 34, 35). The boy removing his glasses with balloons, the giant emoticon, the boys with toyguns, the man dressed up as an Indian, the boy floating in a pool on an inflatable swan. The girl jumping in bed, the boys sitting on a wall as an imaginary motorcycle, the four youths piled on top of each other on gravity racer. This fits well with Diesel’s claim of living against the rules, and the focus on irrational and spontaneous thinking. From these examples, they can indicate that the choosing one’s own lifestyle, should not be affected by one’s age., and feel happy about one’s life. and in line with the postmodern ethos, this feeling of happiness does not need to last forever. What matters, is that it is appealing for the moment. In order to get to this stage, one has to start the search for one’s inner child.

Despite the emphasis on youth and youth culture in the campaign, the focus seems to be more on lifestyle and attitudes and perceived age than on actual age and the conflict of generations. It seems that Diesel communicates that it is ok to feel younger than one is, May it be the case, then, that the way Diesel shows youngsters acting like children is an appeal to the young and in Rosso's words not- so -young?

In order to approach contemporary advertising that targets young people, it is worth taking a closer look at the phenomenon of generations. What defines young people today?

Featherstone argues that,

Rather than unreflexively adopting a lifestyle, through tradition or habit, the new heroes of consumer culture make lifestyle a life project and display their individuality and sense of style in the particularity of the assemblage of goods, clothes, practices, experiences, appearance and bodily dispositions they design together into a lifestyle. (Featherstone 1991:84).

What Featherstone postulates, is that the way of living today may be distinguished from before, as people now are less shaped by traditions, which used to be the guidelines. (...) The expectations and responsibilities that previously pushed people into adulthood are not as valid anymore. This has perhaps opened an opportunity for people to "stay young" for a longer period in life. It may be the case that people's lifestyle, values and attitudes not correspond with their chronological age. As Stephens points out: "People" think young" (Stephens).. Featherstone points to the consumer culture and the strong attention to transformation. There is a strong focus on how people can transform themselves into a younger look, that does not correspond with actual age. (Featherstone). Youth is associated with an appealing an independent lifestyle, and represents ideals of our time. At the same time as people hold on longer to their youth, the maturation process from being a child to the youth experience seems to start at an earlier stage. This may suggest that the old distinctions between the age groups has been blurred. This can be a result of a bigger change in society, where the sharp defined groups are about to decline. We will touch more upon this when we now move on to discuss the campaign in the light of the concepts of class and capital.

3.1.6 Class and capital

Today, one can now see the tendency that the traditional social groupings, such as age and class have declined, and the values connected to the concept of lifestyle have been more and more relevant. As Featherstone say, the concept of lifestyle crosses and goes beyond the traditional demographics:

The preoccupation with customizing a lifestyle and a stylistic self-consciousness are not just to be found among the young and the affluent; consumer publicity suggests that we all have room for self-improvement and self-expression whatever our age or class origins (Featherstone 1991:84).

People may perceive their age differently, according to their lifestyle. This can include factors such as relational status, and occupation. In response to this, advertisers have a complex task in mapping lifestyles. Psychographics Hornik (1989) The traditional psychographic research is based on the so called AIO (activities, interests and opinions). Patrick Vyncke suggest a new lifestyle typology, based on Values, life vision, and aesthetic styles (Vynche, 2002). This aligns with postmodern thinkers, who claim that the importance of the big institutions, such as the family and the church, is on the way down. As Blindheim says advertising is our time's religion? (75). As a substitution for these, people make their own aesthetic communities, that are based on taste. These communities are not committing, and much more loose in its structure. These aesthetic communities are our new identity markers (Nyeng 2004: 187). As previously discussed, Bourdieu's theories suggest, that there is a pattern in people's tastes and preferences. (Blindheim, 2003). Which products people choose to buy, is a complex interaction of taste, values and lifestyle, which is strongly connected to the human desire of being part of a group. Capital can be understood as resources one possess in order to achieve status or power. In certain fields, or arenas, it is necessary to have economical power, whereas in other, education and intellectual values counts much more than money. It is necessary to possess the right capital in order to uphold a position in a group (Blindheim, 2003: 132). Blindheim refers to Habitus as the *fingerprint* of a certain group. Furthermore, people who possess the same habitus tend to mix more easily, in the sense that they find common references in taste and style. In this way, their kinship becomes stronger. (O'Byrne). The concept of Habitus is a key term in sociology, but also highly relevant for advertisers, in their process of defining a segment.). The basic principles of effective communication are based on knowledge of *habitus*. (Blindheim 2003: 132).

By wearing the brand Diesel, the consumer has, more importantly than a pair of jeans, also chosen a *lifestyle*. One can say that the *Be stupid* campaign, is an attempt from Diesel to form the Habitus of their target group. They are doing this by offering a lifestyle. In order to be able to realise what this lifestyle has to offer, it suggest that one must possess a wide range of capitals in order to be able to realise it. The people portrayed in the ads are very homogenous, in the sense that they seem to belong to the same class and race. Diesel may implicitly say, that the lifestyle options that match their brand, is for the white, middle class youths. These are the ones that can afford to waste their intellect on “stupid thoughts” just because they are privileged to do it. This is only an image, will not threaten their place in the social hierarchy. We also see how the brand “borrow” cultural capital and place it in a marketing context. Even though the *Be stupid* campaign contains aspects of risk taking, rebellion and other elements associated with youth, the “activist” language is used to build a “cool” image of the brand, regardless of physical age. These are not politically motivated (3, 38). It is indicated that the “Diesel stupidity” is not something that is socially unacceptable. Diesel shows the consumer how to be “stupid with style.” It is important that it is the right way of being stupid. One can be stupid in a unique way, without losing one’s place in the social hierarchy.

3.1.7 Experiences and authenticity

Throughout the campaign, it t is strong focus on experiences. Experiences of travelling, playing and risktaking. These are all things that have the potential to create interesting stories. It is not interesting to show pictures of one`s latest buy, but rather what one have been doing while wearing them. It is common to think that young people choose brands that reflect their own identity, but how does this actually work? Behrer argues “It is up to brands to fit into the complex identity of youngsters today rather than the other way around. Brands aren’t dictating styles or image anymore”. (Behrer 2011). On the basis of this, can we suggest that Generation Y consists of young people who are more critically aware of marketing strategies? With this in mind, it is interesting to see how big brands, such as Diesel communicate with this generation.

According to Behrer, one of the most important features of today’s branding is to reflect the value of authenticity. (Behrer 2011:) In the case of Diesel, with its borderless,

globalising philosophy, advertising is important when it comes to establishing an authentic image of the brand, and as Behrer argues, a global brand expresses more authenticity (Behrer 2011). This is particularly important with regard to marketing to the generation Y. (transition, age). Behrer argues that the value of authenticity has changed can be expressed in the right to choose. How Diesel express this authenticity? Behrer mentions the aspect of storytelling as one of the most important ways to express authenticity in advertising. Storytelling in ads is very effective, since it link with our emotions and associations. We may have experienced a similar situation as the people in the ads, which makes it easier to believe in the story. In the campaign we see examples of scenes were two actions are paralleled (2, 12). This opens the possibility that story can be told from different point of views, and also a mystery around the characters. Is the girl lying under the bed in no. 12 a secret lover or the curious girlfriend? And what happens if the girl in no. 2 turns around her shoulder and stares the lion in the eyes? As the aspect of storytelling is important when discussing advertising in a literacy context, we will return to this at the end of this chapter. As this part will focus on the gender aspects of the campaign, It will then be discussed how Diesel's advertising is telling the story about gender.

3.1.8 Irony

On the other hand, we see signs of the fact that Diesel, with their use of irony breaks with the traditional understanding of authenticity. Research has shown, that uses of rhetorical tropes in advertising promotes positive attitudes in the audience (Mick). Atrope is a figure of speech. The four master tropes are referred to as metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, and irony. With regard to the analysis of the Diesel campaign, we will first pay some special attention to the trope irony. Irony refers to saying the opposite of what that is intended. A major brand such as Diesel aims to reach a wide audience, and analysing their segment is very important in order to succeed. An important step in this process is to try to create the right associations to the product. In this way, the consumer can obtain a personal and emotional relationship to the brand.

The tagline addresses the audience in an imperative mode. It is no exclamation mark, in order to make the message more friendly and not so direct. Furthermore, the bright colours of the typeface and the bold letters of the text calls on the attention and makes the text stand out. The logo with the brand name *Diesel*, is red box with white letters. This logo is similar to

their main competitor Levi's. But its simplicity, together with the tagline "for successful living" makes an ironic statement, directed to the advertising business. Traditionally, advertising has been linked to the idea that product will make the consumer happy and beautiful. As a persistent feature in all the ads, the tagline "Be stupid" features in all copytext and is placed next to the logo in the bottom right corner, echoed with the same colour and typeface as the body text. "Be stupid" is a manifesto that implicitly means that the brand match a certain lifestyle. In order to reach its audience, Diesel has redefined the word stupid. Instead of all the negative connotations commonly associated with this word, is it now the signifier for a brave, fun and individual way of living. These ads tells the viewer to join and embrace this philosophy, by convincing them that "stupid is the new smart." The audience is invited to adopt Diesels philosophy of a non conformist attitude

It is evident that Diesel wants to establish an exclusive community with their target group.. In ad 8 and 38, Diesel commits to this lifestyle, by saying we're with stupid

Activism, that is often used in protest against social inequalities, becomes ironic in a marketing context, which is based on the capitalist values. In other words, Diesel uses an anticapitalistic language in their own campaign, which is a paradox. There are links between ad no. 3 and ad no 38, that both show youth people in scenes of protest. No 38 shows a young boy that throws a chair on a bonfire. The copy is in bold pink letters Long live Stupid., This slogan in combination with bonfire connotes activism and revolution. However, everything indicates, that this is not a protest against the superfluous lifestyle. The whole campaign is more a celebration of these ideals, but with an ironic twist.. Revolution. He wears Red underpants, scribbled "burn" . His stripped down appearance can assume that this is all he has got left. However, his tanned and fit body suggest that this is more of an performance, and more for fun. He has burned up all his belongings. The sandy beach suggest the boy is on holiday. Some of the ads in the campaign can further exemplify this use of irony.

Ad no. 8 shows the emoticon, or the smiley, which is an easy recognizable icon for the younger generation, used daily in textmessaging and social media. One of the most distinctive differences from generation X, is the generation Y's use of digital communication. Today's teenagers were born into the digital revolution, and this has obviously influenced many aspects of their life. In contradiction to previous generations, The Y generation communicates differently. As Behrer argues, their choices are dominated by a "short cut way of life", where everything is easy accessible (Behrer 2011).

It has been the universal sign of happiness (Behrer 2011). This comes after the text, as it appears in a text message. However, the butts sticking out symbolises the very opposite. Now it becomes more of an ironic statement. Turning one's back to the world, but with a smile. The copy text reads: We're with stupid. With this, Diesel Saying "we are a part of your daily life. In ad no. 23 a girl stands in a middle of the road with a traffic cone on her head. The cone has the inscription. "Slow" and refers directly to the copy text: smart had one good idea and that idea was stupid. It is not very intelligent to make oneself into a trafficsign, but it is fun for the moment.

It is important to have this in mind, since this will colour our impression of the reading of the ads vidently, the discourse of Diesel distinguishes from the conventional discourse of advertising. Diesel has gained a reputation of using playful advertising techniques, that often go against the rules. The use of irony may be used by Diesel in order legitimate the stereotyping use irony rhetorically to make themselves allowed to picture nudity less provoking.

As the aspect of irony is central for how we interpret texts, and which people the texts are aimed at, we will come back to this later in the analysis. The first part of this analysis has looked at the context of the *Be Stupid* campaign. We have examined how aspects of youth, age, and class are reflected in the ads. This is important as a backdrop for the forthcoming section that will look at the ads from a gender perspective

3.2 Gender

The first part of the analysis has examined different issues of lifestyle, and how this is reflected in the *Be Stupid* campaign. The analysis will now look at the gender aspects of the ads. This study is limited to the analysis of one specific campaign. However, as this study of seeks to investigate the cultural beliefs that are promoted in contemporary advertising, it can serve as an example of how gender roles are defined in this context. The findings of the analysis will be discussed on the basis of previous research within the field. It will also be seen in relation to the Lifestyle aspects previously presented. Additionally, It will suggest links to the postmodern condition.

As discussed in the theoretical background of this thesis, stereotypes are communicated in the media, and advertising in particular, has been accused for confirming these stereotypes. As discussed earlier in this thesis, the sociologist Erving Goffman's research on gender and advertising was based on the stereotypes that exist about women. He argued that gender portrayals in advertising were primarily based on subordination to men. Some of these stereotypes referred to how women are lowered physically, and in other instances, psychologically distracted from the scene. As more recent research has shown, Goffman's codes are still evident in advertising portrayals. However, it is important to be aware of the fact that gender roles may be communicated differently today, as the women's place in society has changed radically. As Katharina Lindner points out:

A shift has occurred from portraying women as socially inferior and subordinate to men in very blunt and obviously stereotypical ways (e.g., by showing them in domestic settings) to images of women that contain rather subtle messages about gender roles and about women's place in the social power hierarchy. (Lindner, 2004: 412)

Furthermore, Barkty states,

Women are no longer required to be chaste or modest, to restrict their sphere of activity to the home, or even to realize their properly feminine destiny in maternity. Normative femininity is coming more and more to be centred on woman's body-not its duties and obligations or even its capacity to bear children, but its sexuality, more precisely, its presumed heterosexuality and its appearance" (Barkty: 1988: 107)

According to this, it will be interesting to find out to which extent a contemporary campaign as *Be Stupid* reflects the stereotypes emphasized by Goffman, or whether the stereotypes, together with how they are presented, can be linked to new gender ideals. The ads that now will be commented, serve to shed light on the deeper implications of the rhetorics Diesel perform in their advertising. Which kinds of gender displays do we see in the campaign *Be Stupid*, and how do these messages come across in the visual and verbal elements of the ads?

This second part of the analysis of the *Be Stupid* campaign consists of four main parts, thematically linked to gender issues. The first part of the analysis serves to find out how the

women are portrayed in the Diesel campaign, and will start to take a closer look at the aspect of objectification. How is this linked to the sexualisation of the female body, and the consumerist idea of commodification. The second part will examine the ads from a different angle, in terms of empowerment. Are Diesel communicating liberating aspects? The third part will discuss men/female relations and how they are portrayed together in the ads. Finally, it will look at different aspects of sexuality. The attention will first be paid to the visual aspects of the ads, followed by a discussion of the copytext of the ads. A reflection of how Diesel, by rhetorical means tells the story about gender, will appear at the end of each section.

3. 2.1 Objectification

As an important starting point for analysing the ads from a gender perspective, it is relevant to look at how many men and women represented in the ads. We see that both genders are almost equally represented. 36 women and 31 men are depicted in the 38 visuals. 17 of the ads are single portrayals, whereas the rest of the ads portray social settings. 16 of these are mixed gendered settings. From a gender point of view, it is important to detect whether there are major differences in how men and women are portrayed. These portrayals can be strongly linked to body postures, which has a central place in advertising.

The term objectification is defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as “the demotion or degrading of a person or class of people (esp. women) to the status of a mere object” (OED). In many ways, ideals of attractiveness are partly constructed by advertising and popular media. As we shall see in this analysis, advertisers seek to link beautiful bodies to their products, in order to sell.

According to Mike Featherstone, “consumer culture is obsessed with the body” (Featherstone: 2010: 198). Similarly, The French, postmodern critic, Jean Baudrillard, points to the cultural importance of the body, and speaks about it as “the finest consumer object” (Baudrillard, 1998: 129). He says that the body is a cultural phenomenon, and comments on how capitalism has changed it to a status object. According to Baudrillard, the body has “taken over that moral and ideological function from the soul” (ibid, 1998). The strong focus on appearance can be compared to religious rituals. The body is an exchange object, established in order to gain profit. (ibid). This can be linked to the Marxist thoughts. In our consumer society the body is turned into a commodity that can be used and exchanged.

In the Diesel ads, all the models have the same physical appearance; they are all thin, and look healthy. In the modern western culture, there has been a natural link between beauty and slimness. According to Baudrillard, advertising can play on many opposites, but not on the fat and the thin. The obsession with slimness seems to occupy the advertising discourse. This can be seen in relation to the fact that a thin body gives signals about control. Fitness is linked to beauty, and status, and becomes a “prestige display.” (ibid 139). As Sebeok points out:

Thinness in a woman makes her more angular and hence more masculine...and therefore signifies her identification with more masculine goals such as power and status...since being thin also reduces body mass and hence masculinity, women can both signal their pursuit of masculine goals and still appear feminine and hence attractive to the opposite sex. (Sebeok, 1996:6).

We will use this perspective in order to examine how the female body is portrayed in *Be Stupid*, and we start with the very first ad found in appendix 1.

In ad no. 1, a young woman, dressed in black is petting a wild panther. The scene is set outdoors. The presence of the wild animal suggests it to be an exotic landscape, and could be a wild bush or a desert. The female figure and the black panther are centred in the frontal composition. It is medium shot, and you can see the full figure of the female. The woman partly squats, with one knee resting on the ground. One hand is resting on the knee, whereas the other is petting the panther lying next to her. A white handbag is hanging over her shoulder. She is dressed in a black navel short vest top that exposes her cleavage, and a pair of slim black jeans. Beams of sunlight lights up the cleavage, and call attention to her breasts. The clear blue sky stands in sharp contrast to the brown, sandy landscape, and the light brown tan of the woman's body. The curves and lines of her figure are repeated in the organic landscape. The dark colour of her clothing makes a sharp contrast to the skin tone, and exposes the nude parts of her body.

Ads that show a high degree of nudity, which is a common sign of objectification, occurs mostly in the female portrayals. In nine of the ads, the woman is depicted in bikini (2, 6, 9, 14, 25, 37) underwear (21), or having no clothes on the upper part of her body (31). However, this is also evident in four of the male portrayals (21, 32, 33, 38). Ads that belongs to this category represent models with body revealing clothes, or a high degree of nudity, and can be linked to the category referred to by Kang as body display. (Kang, 1997: 985). As discussed in the theoretical background of this thesis, this category was developed as a

supplement to Erving Goffman's theories, which concerned gender and stereotyping in advertising.

The focus on breasts is most explicit in no 3, where the act of flashing boobs is in the very centre of attention. We will discuss this particular ad more detailed in the next section of this analysis. Also in no 9 there is high emphasis on nudity. In this ad, a pale young girl leans against a rock wall. Her hair and sunglasses cover mostly of her face. The image is cropped so one can only see the upper part of her body. She is wearing a blue bikini top, and a pair of sunglasses. Her left hand is lifted so one can see the curving of her breast. Her mouth is partially open. Her lean, tender skin appears as a contrast to the rough stoned wall. This makes her appear even softer and more vulnerable. A medallion necklace draws attention to her cleavage. Likewise in no. 2, the female is depicted in bikini, in a frontal, full figure pose. This emphasis on breasts is a traditional sexualised female ideal. One of the intentions of using this body appeal in ads, may be to call on male attention. But at the same time as it evokes sexual arousal, the ads represents a body ideal that many women would like to identify with. In this way, it may appeal as much as to women as to men.

In ad no. 1, the woman's sitting position can be analysed in the light of Goffman's category The ritualization of subordination. (Goffman 1979: 40). The kneeling positions can be associated to submission, of being in a lower position to someone else. According to Goffman, this is a "classic stereotype of deference" (Goffman 1979: 40). Furthermore, the squatting position is associated to young children, which use it as a middle stage of sitting and standing up. Although the woman is not in company with another person, she puts herself on the same level as the animal, which can point to the woman portrayed as an animal. The animalistic female, has sexual references, and can be linked to pornographic imagery. Similarly, the lowered position has sexual references to pornography, and the position of giving oral sex to men. The animal can also symbolise the potential danger of the female, and her demonic nature. This is further expressed with the black colour the woman's clothes, that is linked to the back fur of the panther. However, the animal lying next to the woman, can also be a symbol of control. although there is an overhanging danger that the animal may any time wake up, ready to attack, her calm treatment of the animal, may suggest she has managed to tame the animal. If this is the case, it is links the woman to the virtues of power and control.

As we will see, this ad is thematically linked to no 2, which shows a girl and a lion. Also here there is ambiguity in how the female portrayal can be interpreted. This ad will be more discussed in the next section of this analysis.

If we now turn to the surrounding of the scene, the natural exotic landscape of this ad may refer to the gendered dichotomy nature/culture. Traditionally, the Female has been linked to nature, whereas the male has been associated to culture (Ortner). In the article “Is female to male as nature is to culture” Sherry Ortner explains this phenomenon further. The strong link between nature and womanhood stems from the woman’s body and its functions, which is occupied by the natural processes involved in the reproduction of the species (Ortner). Advertising and popular culture has used this dichotomy in their iconography, by depicting women closer to nature than men. (Hope).

In ad no. 1, the exotic landscape may serve to link the feminine with the natural. On the other hand, this kind of landscape of vast wilderness is connected to leisure and adventure, which is typical for masculinized environments. (Hope). By placing the female in a context far out, away from the domestic settings into a typical masculine environment, suggests a play with gender identities. The unprotected environment is further emphasized in the wild animal, and points to the values of freedom and independency embodied in the woman character.

By looking closer at the woman’s image in ad no 1, the way she is dressed, and how she poses in front of the camera, is not very natural, but rather culturally constructed. Her clothing has no practical function. She could be dressed up for a night out, or shopping. In this setting it would be suitable with a backpack and hiking shoes. Instead she wears a handbag and high heels. This footwear is a product of our culture in the sense that it is constructed to make women taller, as tallness is a beauty ideal. However, the strive for tallness may also reflect a desire to “reach up to the man” and be more like him. High heeled shoes can be seen as a way for women to win respect, for example in the working sphere. As women traditionally has been subordinated in these settings, the sound of these shoes has had the effect of making women more visible. However the use of these shoes may also be a symbol of liberation on male premises. Why it is important for women to be taller? At the same time, high shoes are connected to physical appearance, which gives the effect of more beautiful legs and a more erect posture, norms that in themselves are connected to a female ideal, linked to women’s look, and not their importance. At the same time it is a restriction of women’s freedom. High heeled shoes is footwear is suitable for running, and with regard to the woman

in no.1, with a wild panther lying next to her, she could not easily flee from the scene. This may put her in a defenceless position. By merging culture with nature in such an elaborate way, the ad can suggest that the cultural aspects, constituted in this way of portraying women, are natural. In other words, one can say that advertising naturalizes all the culturally specific traits connected to femininity, and makes them the norm.

If we turn to the copy text “smart may have the brains, but stupid has the balls”, this anchors the image by further pointing to the conflict of gender. The two words *brain* and *balls* start with the same letter, and is form an instance of alliteration. It is evident that the phrase has both a literal as well as an idiomatic meaning. Balls refer to the a male testicles, and the idiomatic meaning, “ to have the balls” refers to being courageous. This expression is associated with slang, and informal, oral language. Instead of saying stupid has the courage, it says: stupid has the balls. In such way, the idiom links courage to masculinity. From a gender perspective, the copytext may refer refers to the male/female dichotomy.

The pink colour, which is linked to femininity, stands in contrast to the masculine. The text implies, that in order for women do these stupid things, they need “the balls to do it” In that sense, the ads imply that taking risks is a typically male virtue. Women are expected to be “ballsy”, and act and behave as men. At the same time they are supposed to look like a woman, be beautiful and submissive, and live up to the traditional beauty ideal. This puts the modern woman in a difficult position, where the different ideals are competing.

It is also evident that the text covers larger parts of the animal, which makes it hard to see what is hidden behind the letters. In another setting, the animal would be a natural main focus of the picture, so the fact that it is hidden, can signify that the fact that she has taken control of the animal, which is hidden by the text, and thus made irrelevant. This can points to the fact that the female, sexualised body is the main focus on attention, and more significant than her actions. Implied here is the notion that women are mere “objects to be viewed” (Jhally).

Another ad where we see objectifying elements in an individual portrayal of a woman is in no. 19. In contrast to no 1, this image is a close up shot. The female figure takes up the whole left part of the picture. The ad shows a girl who eats on a round piece of food, probably some sort of candy. The same girl is also seen in ad no. 18, where the girl is in company of two other friends.

In the single portrayal of the girl, she is decontextualized, and the whole attention is directed towards her pose. The focal point is right in the middle of the girl’s legs. She sits

with her legs wide apart, and the image is cropped right under her torso. She leans forward with her head tilted to the right side, in an unnatural pose with her mouth half open. A rough, industrial concrete wall is in the background. The red sunglasses and candy, in combination with her, that is not as revealing as in many of the other ads, gives her a younger, even childish appearance. The way she touches the piece of candy and holds it in front of her mouth fits Goffman's category *feminine touch*. According to Goffman, This category was a common stereotype of female portrayal found in advertising. It refers to how women tend to be depicted while "touching themselves in unnatural ways or caressing and cradling other objects" (Lindner, 2004: 411). The oral emphasis on sucking points to childlike behaviour, and the infantile state. Goffman argued that advertising has aligned women with children. (Jhally). As we see in this ad, it fits well with Goffman's comparison. As we see in this ad, it fits well with Goffman's comparison. Furthermore, the oral focus has clear sexual connotations to kissing and oral sex. This link is made even more explicit from the way she seems to pleasure her sucking. Moreover, we see pornographical references in no 3, no 6, no 8 and no 31.

All the copytexts are based on the dichotomy smart versus stupid. We also see examples of other dichotomies that follow this parallel structure. Parallelism is a rhetorical figure used since ancient times in order to emphasize ideas. Fahnestock describes it as "a formal quality of similarity between two phrases, clauses or even larger units of discourse" (Fahnestock). Parallelism may be found all these levels, in one single text (Cook). The use of parallelism invites the reader to compare and contrast the paralleled units in the sentence. Brains/balls, smart/stupid, answers/questions, Yes/No, head/heart is a juxtaposition of antithetical ideas. In this campaign smart and stupid represent two ways of living, but also two personalities. Diesel has created a role model, which goes against the traditional rules of how a role model should be. However, there is a double meaning in the claim. Metonymic. One can become the person that has all the qualities presented in the ad. There is also an instance of what that is called personification. This is a rhetorical figure where non-human concepts are attributed human characteristics. The two adjectives "stupid" and "smart" are abstractions, but in the ad they become personified in the sense that they can speak. Effect: easier for the audience to identify with a person, than something abstract.

In this setting the copytext "Smart says no. Stupid says yes", can point to the act of resisting or not resisting temptations. Implicitly, Diesel says that Stupid people let go of

temptations, and the implied meaning may be that the products Diesel obviously wants to sell, are objects of desire. I can also be a reference to giving in for sexual pressure, which in this setting confuses the reader. What is the real intention behind the claim? Saying yes can be positive if the girl is in control, but together with this seductive image, with all its submissive significations, it portrays the girl more as a object, than in control of her own body. Sinful behaviour is an expression of irrationality, but it is a natural part of humanity. This meaning can be transferred to the activity of consuming. Diesel implicitly says that some sinful behaviour is not harmful, as long as it leads to pleasure and an appetite on life and experiences. But is this message more directed towards women?

Temptation and womanhood may be linked to the image of Eve, the sinful woman in Genesis. Just like Eve, when she eats of the forbidden fruit, the girl in the ad sucks on her sweets. The reference to the biblical myth has been turned into something positive. Maybe one can say that the classical image of Eve is reversed. To be sinful today is strongly linked to image. Girls should behave naughty and sinful. And she can do it because she wants to. There is no need to be shameful in the “consumer paradise”, as long as the actions are based on a free choice. In order to extend this metaphor, the real intentions behind advertising, as the snake in genesis, is to seduce the consumers to spend more money on their products.

However, in order to get the focus away from this underlying goal, it is important to give an impression that the power is in the consumer herself. But as our modern western culture mainly favours responses expressed as a “yes,” the question here may be whether it really makes room for free choices, after all. In light of this, the girl in the ad is an image of Diesel’s ideal consumer: She has bought a pair of Diesel jeans based on her own free choices, and on top of all this, she is “paid back” with Diesel’s promise of a “happy” and “regret free” life.

The analysis has so far discussed objectification concerning female portrayals. How are these aspects evident in mixed gender settings? According to Kim Sheehan, objectification is a process of dehumanization that is established in advertising by “emphasizing sexually suggestive body parts or not including the head” (Sheehan). Ad no. 6 serves as an example of this, and will be studied more detailed.

Two men and two women stand close together in a row. The men are fully dressed, whereas the women wear only bikinis. One woman is straddling one of the men’s shoulders, turning her back to the camera. The three forms a classical triangle composition. The middle

guy's face is hidden because of the girl's posture. A face is scribbled on the back of the girl's bikini bottoms, to give an illusion of the man's face.

The image can be read in different ways. From one angle, the image can suggest that the man has lifted up the girl. In this case, the man has taken control of the female body, maybe in order to be sexually satisfied. In this sense the portrayal is objectifying with respect to the female. From another angle, the woman can have climbed up herself. From this point of view, the woman is in control of the man both sexually, since this position invites the man to give her oral sexual pleasure, and practically, since he cannot see. From this point of view it is the man that is objectified. Furthermore, the implied meaning here may be that by objectifying women, the man is "losing" his face. Another reading can open up for a new understanding of the genders, with the implied meaning that the man is nothing worth without women. Without her, he loses his face.

The copy reads "Smart critiques. Stupid creates." The copy is here a direct link to creating a man's new face with the help of a woman's body part. It can also point to the practice of new, more public sexuality. The people in the ad are may not be couples, in the traditional sense. Sexuality is just a part of having fun, and not necessarily linked to love and commitments. We will return to this theme later on, as the aspect of sexuality will be further discussed in the last section of the analysis.

In advertising, one often sees the female body sexualised by the emphasis of butts and breasts. The type of objectification where women are portrayed with only parts of their body in a sexually explicit way is predominant in 8. This ad was previously discussed with regard to Diesel's use of irony. In a gender context, this portrayal has clear objectifying traits. By the first glance, ad no 8 shows a yellow round smiley face in the form of a giant frisbee, with two blue eyes. A closer look reveals two bottoms sticking out from the two holes resembling the eyes. The two girls wear tight, blue denim shorts, revealing some bare skin of the girl's thighs. This image has sexual connotations, as the body is linked play.

The last point of this section will focus on the female body as ornament, and look at how this is an important part of objectification.

In no. 35, a girl in bikini lies on all four in a classic nude pose. She is half lying on the floor, holding up her body with both arms. It is hard to define the scene of the shot. The lack of surroundings makes the figure decontextualized. It could be anywhere, but the plain white background could suggest a photostudio, or even a shop window. In this context the female body appears as a mannequin. The whole focus is on the body and the pose. She poses on the

floor almost like an animal. Her mouth is half open, and made even more explicit with the red lipstick. Her seductive expression, combined with the focus on her mouth and her low posture on the floor, gives a reference to oral sex. Moreover, she has a big creation of flowers on her head. The flowers have sexual connotations, as they are symbols for the female genitals. (Giles: 77). This functions more as mask, as it covers her eyes. This gives an anonym effect, cause it hides the eyes. Many of the ads in the campaign show portrayals of women hiding their eyes behind, sunglasses. We also see that in the portrayals where the women face the camera, the images are cropped, or they are looking down. In three of the instances where the women appear alone, they wear sunglasses. Hidden behind sunglasses, the models appear to be more distracted from the scene. Here one can draw a line to Goffman's code of *Liscenced withdrawal*. (Goffman, 1976). However, the use of sunglasses can also be interpreted in another way, as an expression of another side of the woman. the mysterious and cool woman, who can hide where she is looking. As we have seen, the main problem with these portrayals with no eye contact, is the fact that it takes the focus away from the person, which is the subject, and turns it into an object. In an advertisement, the body is objectified in order to please the eyes of the consumer.

If we go back to ad no. 37, this image seems to combine low popular culture aesthetics, such as pornography, with references from classical high art. The posture of the woman has references to high art, and the long western tradition of nude painting. The painters of this period, who were mostly men, tended to use prostitutes as nude models. Furthermore, it may link to the ancient Greece and the idealised nymph or goddess. This ad shows how the female body is made into a sculpture, or a decorative accessory, and functions as an object of sexual desire. According to Goffman, women tend to be depicted in areas considered less clean, such as floors and bed. (Goffman 1976: 41). In this setting, the woman on the floor, combined with the sexualised posture has a submissive effect, and can refer to Goffman's code *ritualization of subordination*. We also see the same phenomenon in ad no 12, where a girl is lying under a bed. The copytext of no. 37 reads: Smart plans. Stupid improvises, and reinforce the impression of the female body as an exhibited dummy, that is more an accessory.

Similarly, we see the ornamentation of the female body in no 31. This ad shows the upper part of a woman's body. She is completely nude, covering her breasts with her hands. The picture is cropped over her lips, which is painted with red lipstick. A male hand is painting small circles around the girl's neck, following the lines of her necklace. By first

glance, it could look like red paint, but when looking more closely, it appears more as a sauce, probably ketchup. This makes sense as it is probably linked to no. 28, showing a couple barbequing. Here we get the association to body and food, which can also be linked to pornography. Implicitly, The female body is a dish placed in front of the man's eyes, ready to be eaten. Furthermore, the painting on the naked woman's body can give associations to tribal rituals, and in this way links the woman body to primitive societies.

We will conclude this section by looking at how these ads can function as a literacy practice, by examining how Diesel uses rhetorical strategies in their argument. As this first section has focused on the aspect of objectification, we can transfer these findings to Diesels story about gender. It is here evident that Diesel, by their use of visual and verbal rhetorical means constructs a story about the beautiful, attractive woman. This is a woman who to a great extent is exhibited, for the purpose of man's desire. This message is mainly communicated through extended use of nudity. This is done in order to evoke feelings, such as desire and jealousy, in both men and women. In this way, they are pathos appeals.

On the other hand, these body portrayals also function to increase the credibility of Diesel in the market context. The models in the campaign follow the conventional ideas of attractiveness. In this way, it appeals to ethos. Diesel builds up an attractive image through attractiveness of the models. By these means, they attain credibility in a market that to a great extent survives on selling attractiveness. Looking at the copy texts reinforces this impression. They aim to connect physical attractiveness to inner qualities, such as courage and impulsivity, in order to link the inner qualities to the product. This can be viewed as a logos argument, where Diesel, if so implicitly, tries to build a logical argument between their clothes in one hand, and attractiveness combined with for example courage and resoluteness on the other.

3.2. 2. Empowerment

The analysis has so far looked at aspects of objectification, and how these are evident in the portrayals of the campaign. As we have seen, this objectification is mostly seen in the portrayals of women, and is in line with the conventions. On the other hand, we have seen that the woman is taken out of the domestic setting, and rather placed in the wilderness, among

wild animals. Despite of the intimidating situations they are placed in, they are in command of the situation. What does this indicate about the gender roles portrayed? Strate states that, “Stereotypically, males are depicted in situations that involves challenge, risk, and mastery” whereas women are dedicated to the home and family care. (Strate, 1992 in Fowles). It is evident that Diesel attempts to challenge these stereotypes. On the other hand, we see that the conventional features of advertising when it comes to poses, nudity, and sexual references still are maintained.

In the following section, it will be looked at how power aspects are implicated in the gender portrayals. This will be discussed by mainly focusing on two ads from the campaign, no. 2 and no. 3. However, references to other ads of the campaign will be given. How do these ads reflect the idea of the empowered woman?

In no 3, a young woman, seen in profile, flashes her breasts in front of a security camera. It is dark, so it could be evening or middle of night. She is wearing tight jeans, a white bra, and sneakers. She stands on a red stepladder in order to reach up to the right level of the camera. This camera is placed on a brick wall that suggests a public building in an urban environment. It is mounted on the outside of the building, which emphasize the control of the whole society, not just a restricted space. The girl on the ladder creates a diagonal line in the composition. Her body is illuminated by a light source that could be spotlight. The viewer is looking up at her. The viewpoint together with her upright standing position, gives power to the character. The high heels are replaced by some more practical sneakers. However, the picture is very stylised, and reminds the viewer that it is a picture taken with the purpose of a commercial context.

The girl’s action of flashing boobs is strongly linked to protest. It makes clear references to feminist activism in the 1960’s. The bra is a classical symbol of femininity. But it has also been a symbol of constraints. “Bra burning” was used as a feminist statement in order to demonstrate against female oppression. However, in this commercial context the image of the girls bare chest obviously plays on nudity. She has not taken her bra off, but pushed it up, which gives the image more sexual connotations, and aligns it to pornographic aesthetics.

In her article “Foucault, Femininity, and the modernization of Patriarchal Power”, Sandra Lee Bartky draws the lines from Foucault’s ideas on power and discipline, and discuss it from a feminist perspective. Bartky speaks of how women go through a wide range of “disciplinary practices” in order to maintain her femininity. The discipline on the woman’s

body includes the body's size and contours, its appetite, posture, and gestures, make up, dress, fitness and dieting. (Barkty 1988).

The slim body contour of the girl links her body to discipline. Our modern form of body discipline is linked to the overtly focus on, fitness and dieting. Great deal of self control is necessary in order to maintain an ideal body. In addition, women need to pay great attention to skin-care, in order to prevent any sign of ageing. (Barkty 1988:99). Looking at this from a different angle, the camera may be seen as a sign of the regime that the female is placed under. The girls with the perfect bodies shown in this campaign are in many ways victims of this regime. At the same time she represents the beauty ideal of our time.

The security camera is strongly connected to control. The original attention behind such cameras in public spaces is to catch people for criminal actions. This has obviously the effect of making people safer. However, it can also have the opposite effect, as people may feel restricted by it. Used as a tool to control movements of humans, it can be a metaphor for restricted freedom, and how the control of the society is threatening the individual privacy. In this sense control is linked to power, and which kind of power can the security camera in this ad be an expression of?

The power hierarchies are expressed on many arenas in society. The act of flashing boobs can be read as a protest against power institutions in general, and the restrictions they make on individuals. However, in a gender context, the most explicit here may be the protest against the patriarchal order. The camera may refer symbolically to establishments and institutions, and oppressive regimes that are working against liberation of women. This can be in the political sphere, the media, religious communities, education systems, the market, business and economy. Here we can draw the lines to Sandra Walby's six structures of patriarchy. She argued that the male power dominates larger parts of the society, (Walby).

Similar to Walby, Barkty argues that, "woman lives her body as seen by another, by an anonymous patriarchal Other (Barkty, 1988: 101). In this sense, the camera can be seen as the man's gaze, who is controlling women psychologically. However, women's situation has changed drastically. The flashing can then serve to demonstrate that women now takes up more space in society, and can take control over her own body and sexuality, which has come from the more mobility and self control.

The ladder the girl stands on, can symbolise the process of obtaining equal status as with men. The image is cropped so one is unable to see how far she has climbed from the ground. However, she is not yet at the top. This may indicate that there is still a long way to go. The ladder also suggest that this is something carefully planned. This is something the girl really wants to do, and not an impulse or something done spontaneously when passing by.

In this context, it is important to discuss how the camera make references to the power of media. Protest to media? The surveillance camera can have many references to other mass media, such as TV and internet. In a mass media context, it also natural to draw the lines to reality TV, such as Big Brother: The younger generation has grown up with the concept of reality TV. It is still a dominant TV concept. In these programmes, people broadcast their intimate feelings and sexual life. After a while they seem to forget that they are under surveillance 24 / 7, and the viewer can take part in all the scandals and events that unfold. Reality TV and authenticity. Core values for young people. It is positive to express emotions in the public. The camera can also be a reference to Facebook. Living ones lives on social media involves both freedom and restrictions. In a social world that everything needs to be documented, creates high pressure on the individual. People show the stories of their own life, and these stories are gendered, in the sense that they create a norm for how men and women should be like.

The fact that it is dark can suggest that this is a type of action that should be held secret could also imply the dark sides of women. The security camera as protection can be false, since women cannot protect herself completely from crime. By flashing one's body in the middle of the night, this can be seen irresponsible, and seem inviting to sexual harassment. From a gender perspective it can indicate that such a behaviour in public space is an illegal territory. In other words, it is a type of behaviour that challenges the gender norms. It is not expected of a girl to behave like this. But empowered by a great dose of "male" courage, she can do it.

Furthermore, an important point is also the fact that the girl in no. 3 does this alone. Very often, we see that people demonstrate in groups, as activism is often a collective effort. This reinforce the A strong focus on individualism in the campaign. With ad no. 3, Diesel encourages the individualistic thinking. If one feels the urge to do something, one should do it, regardless of the number of supporters. At the same time, the girl reinforces the messages the market constantly bombard us with: a woman should be slim and tall with a nice jeans bottom. However, as we in the previous section saw how nudity could be objectifying it is

now a means of protest. As discussed earlier, it is evident that Diesel uses the activist theme, as a part of their own strategy. Diesel's protest against the established norms is obviously more of a paradox, since they to a high degree are stuck in these norms themselves. This suggests that the references to activism are more used as a marketing gimmick, which seems to target the audience in a very effecting way. However, one cannot deny the fact that Diesel is a mainstream brand, and by buying their clothes, one shares the same image as a lot of other people. In reality, one will just be a part of the crowd. This leads us again to the Frankfurt school, and Adorno and Horkheimers view that the consumer has become a slave of the culture industry, or the market.

This paradox is also evident in the next ad that will be discussed. Ad no 2 contains elements that one can be empowering on one hand, and objectifying on the other. This scene takes up the animal theme we have seen in some of the other ads, and link to ad no 1, the girl portrayed with a panther, which we discussed previously in the analysis.

A woman in bikini stands on a green field, turning towards us, with a lion approaching her in the background. As evident in many of the other ads in the campaign, the female figure occupies the left area of the picture. The lion suggests a wild, exotic location, similar to no 1. A camera is hanging around her neck, and with one hand she holds up her bikini bottoms, in order to take a picture of her genitals. Her camera and the lion indicate that she is on some sort of safari, and her original intention was to photograph the wild animals. She is facing down, focused and concentrated in what she is doing.

The reader cannot be sure whether the woman is aware of the lion behind her or not. Thus, we need to be open for both possibilities. Either way, she seems shameless about what she is doing. If we choose the first option, that she is aware of the lion, how can she be untouched by the fact that she is in real danger? Instinctively, she should know that the only wise thing to do in this situation would be to run away from the scene. Despite of this, she chooses to stay put. As the picture cannot tell us anything about the timespan, we do not know how long the girl has been photographing. It can suggest that even not the interruption of wild animals can prevent her from making that last perfect shot of her lower area. This motivation for the action indicates that self-obsessive activities, such as taking picture of oneself, are far more important than safety.

Another possible solution is that the girl has tamed the lion, as we suggested could be the case in no.1. This solution will put her in the most powerful position, as it shows that she has conquered the lion, and the danger. She has taken the power back. Implicitly, Diesel says

that conquering risky situations is the only way to freedom. From the view that the woman is aware of the lion, it invites to the impression that the woman who takes the photograph has the power and is in command of the situation. Regardless if the woman is aware or unaware of the “stalking lion”, would this imply that she makes herself “object and prey”? (S. B. cited in Barkty 1988: 101).

If we then interpret the scene from the fact that she does not see the lion, this can open for some new thoughts. Now it gives the impression that the lion is stalking her, or spying on her, which makes the situation much more intimidating. As we did when discussing the security camera in ad no 1, it is necessary to reflect upon the metaphorical meaning of the lion. A lion is a metaphor for power and strength. This power can be linked directly to the masculine strength, which threatens the woman. On the other hand, the power of the lion can be linked to the woman and her courageous behaviour. This is further emphasized in the copy text, which we will return to at the end of this section.

From the picture it is evident that it is a male lion. Does he then represent the male gaze? However, the viewer can get confused in all the multiple gazes represented in this image. They seem to surround the woman from all angles. On one level there is the woman’s camera lens, then there is the lion’s gaze. Additionally, the ad-photographer’s gaze, who has captured this image to be used in a commercial context, and finally the observer’s gaze. As discussed earlier, the photograph has a referential character. Here it is double referential, as the picture, the ad, refers to another picture, the picture the girl is taking in the ad.

However, the focus here is very much on what that cannot be seen. The girl is the only one who sees what she is taking picture of. Instead of being the object of the photograph, she takes her own pictures, of her own body. This creates excitement, curiosity, and mystery around the image. However, the fact that a woman is portrayed in such a way is empowering in one way, and objectifying in another. We see that this ad shows the highest degree of nudity in the campaign. The image is cropped on the middle of her thighs, and shows an almost full figure pose. Because of this it is linked to the ads that were discussed in connection to objectification (1, 6, 9, 32, 37). She is facing the camera in a frontal position, which makes a high exposure of breasts. Furthermore, as we saw in ad no 3, the way the girl seems pleased by looking at her own body make references to pornography.

The obsession with taking pictures of private character may be a reference to the digital area, and the use of social medias, such as Facebook and Instagram, and how the free circulation of images has made our culture more visually orientated. The photographic

medium is directly linked to objectification, as make something real into an object. One can say that Facebook presents an objectified truth, as it is only photographs of people's reality. However, the popularisation of images has made images a natural part of people's lives, which in turn can have made them less objectifying. The lion can represent the eyes of the public, and how we all have been invited into each other's private spheres. This new reality of looking into unknown private spheres is made possible precisely through the photographic medium. The transition from analogue to digital photography, and the explosion in the use of social media, and how there is hardly any protected space for privacy anymore. Furthermore, the strong focus on the individual has come as a result of the western capitalist society. A self-centred thinking may be symptomatic for the western capitalist culture, and some will maybe argue it even has narcissistic traits. Mike Featherstone points to the obsession of appearance in modern consumer culture. Among the feminist critics, Sandra Barkty is concerned with how women are under a bodily regime in order to maintain young and pretty.

The Copy text reads "Smart may have the brains, but stupid has the balls" Here the copy text balls which refers to the male testicles, are directly linked to the picture where the female genitals is the centre of attention. If the lion connotes the masculine power, this is echoed in the copy text that refers to male courage. However, the stupid act in the picture is directed to the woman that takes the photograph of herself. This in turn links her to courage. "To have the balls" can here be an expression of "girl power".

So far we have mainly discussed the campaign from the content in itself, and from the perspectives of sociologists and various feminist scholars. What about the company behind the campaign? Do they have anything to say about the messages they are sending out? In some cases, ads are withdrawn from the public light. This happened to be the case for the two ads we have just discussed (2, 3) from the *Be Stupid* campaign. They were banned by the ASA (Advertising Standards authority), and the reason was that the content promoted "antisocial behaviour". At the time, the case was covered in media, and according to the newspaper the Guardian, *Diesel* denied the harmful effects of these ads, and claimed "the posters were an effort to give femininity a different, more confident and masculine feel" (Guardian). This claim is revealing much of the gender attitudes to a big corporation as Diesel, hinting to the fact that women must act like males, in order to liberate themselves. Although we are well aware of the marketing context for this campaign, and that *Diesel* first and foremost want to sell more clothes, it can still be interesting to see how they may communicate ambiguous messages when it comes to gender.

As in the previous section, we will place these ads in a literacy context by looking more closely at the rhetorical strategies of the ads. As we now have discussed empowering traits of the female portrayals, the ethos lies now in the credibility of Diesel in understanding the role of the modern, strong woman. They do this partly by references to the feminist tradition of protest. The pathos appeal is a bit ambiguous, as these ads show breasts, but not in the context of passive portrayals. Here the woman is highly engaged in activities. Another ethos appeal is constructed by the awareness of youths and the importance of pictures. They attempt to reach the young generation by demonstrating that they “know” how photographs have become an important part of the youth generation, as the result of the high use of social media, such as Facebook and Instagram. In a visually oriented world, sharing stories have been more connected to visual than verbal messages. Diesel shows here an awareness of the blurring between the private and the public, which characterizes our time and the lives of the young generation. Even the most intimate stories can be shared in public.

3.2.3 Male-female relations

We have now discussed how different aspects of power that have been reflected in the campaign. The woman has been placed in situations confronting the traditional power hierarchies. We also see signs of liberation when it comes to sexuality. High-risk situations involving wild animals are the scenery for sexually explorations of the body, and flashing boobs in front a security camera in the middle of night. However, the women are still placed in the borderline between empowering individuals and sexual objects. The women in this campaign can in one way be viewed as protesting feminists, who fights for “girl power” by modern means. On the other hand, we see examples of how females are portrayed in poses with sexual references, in a stereotyping way. We have seen that many of the portraits of women appearing alone may be interpreted as objectifying. With this in mind, it will now be interesting to find out whether the gender roles are portrayed differently in the ads where women and men are portrayed together.

We start looking at these aspects of male/female relationships by examining ad no 15. This image shows two cars, apparently moving towards us in the same direction on a paved highway. A man and a woman are both leaning out from the window from their respective cars. The woman on the left side of the picture, and the man from the car on the right side.

They are stretching towards each other, in order to meet in a kiss. The scene is set in a dark night or evening, and it looks like that it is raining. In other words, the picture suggests a original and risky meeting between two people in love. The woman has short, blonde hair, and is dressed in red. Furthermore, her car is surrounded by a light, which seems to originate from a car behind her. This gives her a prominent role in the picture, compared to the dark haired male dressed in black. His car is cropped in a way that makes only the half of the care visible in the picture, which makes him less prominent.

Our first impression of the picture is that it appears as a typical film scene. It may look like the ad refer to the classical romantic story from popular culture, which have built numerous narratives on the concept of unattainable, tragic young love. However, this dates back to antiquity, and is later adapted in the western literary tradition, probably the best known is Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet, from the early modern England period. These characters are regarded as archetypal lovers, and has been used as a very common reference.

The cars have a prominent role in this ad. The invention of the car has traditionally been linked to freedom. As more and more people could afford it, it made it possible for people to move over longer distances. Even today, the terms cars and freedom are nearly connected. The car gives relatively young people the opportunity to move longer distances, away from home, and is therefore also linked to youth rebellion and liberation. These values are fundamentally valid for both genders. However, the technical aspects of cars have traditionally made it belong to the traditional male sphere. As a result of this, the classical men's magazines, have created the combination nice cars with nice women. However, as we see in ad no. 15, both genders are on same levels. They are both dependent on each other in a situation where they both are leaning themselves out of their respective cars. In fact, the woman is the one who is literally in the driving seat, and has the best possibilities to escape the scene. Additionally, this picture shows a high risk for the people involved. The act of leaning out of cars in speed for the sake of kissing is obviously a dangerous activity, which tells us more about the implicit meaning of the ad. In one hand, this refers to the cliché of sacrificing everything for love; on the other hand, it refers to a youth ideal of taking risks and be rebellious.

In order to further examine what this picture may tell us about the relation between male and female, it is worth noticing that we here are talking about an impulsive, not-planned activity. The two people are located in their respective cars, and the moment of love can fastly come to an end. These persons are not static, they are on the move, and can therefore not be

symbolising the ideal of a stable relationship. On the contrary, this can symbolise a modern view on love, and a reformation of the old, conservative idea about relationships-The individual is free to make up ones own choices, and nothing is taken for granted or predetermined, as it used to be in earlier times.

To begin with, we referred to Shakespeare and his famous characters Rome and Juliet. If we go back to the context of ad no. 15, the central role of the car as a symbol of freedom, points to the unattainable love, not as in the case of Romeo and Juliet, which were forced to stay away from each other. Here, as in the modern society, stable relationships are becoming more and more impossible, because of the high degree of freedom involved for the individuals. Whereas Shakespeare told us a story where barriers of love was one of the biggest obstacles in life. Finding the right partner was the number one mission in life. Ad no. 15 can leave an impression of the very opposite: a relationship is not an obstacle for living the life fully. This could be an expression in line with our ideals of self-realisation.

The emotional aspects of this ad are reinforced when we now will look at the copy text. It reads “Smart listens to the head. Stupid listens to the heart”. To begin with, the red colour of the letters is traditionally associated to love and sexuality. More importantly, the phrase “listen to the heart” commonly used expression in popular culture in the meaning of following your feelings. Moreover, we see that the copy text connects the depicted motif to the word stupid and in this way conveys that “stupid” in this setting means “the right thing” Thus, the copy text becomes a tribute to the irrational, or the cool and impulsive drives. Seen in combination with what we pointed out earlier, that the ad shows to people with an individual control of the situation, which is free, the copy text strengthens the idea of independence an freedom from other’s warnings. A liberal ideal concerned with the individual, responsible for his own actions and their consequences, even though it can be risky. This seems to be consistent throughout the campaign that underestimates rationality, and the act of thinking through consequences; what counts is to dare to do what the impulses tells you to. “To be stupid” is a protest against moral and logical and rational thinking, and a favouring of living in the moment, and seize the opportunities.

In this context, it can be useful to look at the other ads accompanied with this copytext. Similarly, these seems to be occupied by hard or unattained relationships, where the individuals against all odds reach out to each other in a kiss or physical contact. This is evident in no. 14 and 16. In picture no.14 we see a boy and a girl who playfully tries to rip of each other’s swimwear under water. This ad has obviously a sexual undertone. However, the

important is how the ad expresses the playful and informal qualities of the relationship, in contrast the traditional and conform. In picture no 16, we see a similar scene as in no. 15 of a kissing couple. Also here romantic love is linked to means of transport, in this case a double decker bus. The man is leaning out from the window in the top floor of the bus, embraced in a kiss with a girl balancing on the lower floor window of the bus in order to reach up to the man. The woman has a sexually charged posture, however, what important here is the spontaneous, playful and fearless love. Similar to many of the other situations involving risks, the women seem to be more exposed to it. If we look closely at the picture, we see that the man are held back by a couple of mates in order to not of falling out the window. The woman on the other hand, supports herself, even though the stunt is much more risky for her part. This picture gives an impression of the first love experience, or a young relationship, and emphasis the female control of the relationship.

We will now move away from the romantic aspects of love, to ad no 17, where three models are depicted in a trivial, kitchen environment. The tree models, a man and a woman, probably a couple, and a bear stands in a triangle composition. It is a long shot, showing the full figures of the participants. In the foreground, situated closest to the viewer, is the female figure. In the background is a male figure. They are both standing up, with a relaxed pose. The man is pointing towards the bear, which is ready to help himself with the food in the refrigerator. The woman does not seem to care. The woman is dressed in white, wearing high heels, whereas the man is in the background, standing next to the dishwasher. The ad depicts a traditional couple, in a domestic setting. However, the presence of a wild animal breaks with the trivial nature of the setting. The bear character becomes a surreal element in the ad is, who seems to be awkwardly misplaced in the scene. In this way the bear may be a substitution of a child, evoking in the viewer the cozy and harmonic atmosphere of a Family of three. It can also be an alternative of the conventional family constellation parents and child.

The fact that the woman is placed in the foreground makes her main focus of the picture. The woman figure occupies more space than the male. As women stereotypically are depicted in the home, and often in the kitchen while cooking or looking after children, the scene in the kitchen is a reference to the traditional family constellations, where everyone gathers in the kitchen. At the same time this ad suggest a reversal of the traditional gender roles. The woman is not involved in any cooking or nurturing but in an intellectual stimulating activity of reading the news. She is distracted from the scene, but in control. It may look like there is an argument going on between the bear and the man, however, the

women does not seem to care. She is occupied with her reading, and her body language signals that she will not take part in the conflict or argument. Here again we have an example of a scene with a wild animal together with humans. In contrast to the other ads featuring animals (1, 2, 4, 10, 20, 30), this scene is set in the intimate sphere of the home. Also in this case, the female seems unaffected by being in the company of a wild animal.

This scene, supported by the copy text “Smart says no. Stupid says yes”, can refer to follow one’s gut feeling. Although having a bear in the kitchen as a pet is not realistic, especially not in one’s home, the woman seems very casual about it. The man looks more uncomfortable with the new family member. Thus, the bear can be a symbol of unconventional thinking, and mirror the reversal of the gender roles, and thinking outside the box. It is either “yes” or “no”. “No,” that refers to “smart”, requires more thinking, but if one says no, and stick to this life attitude, one misses out on a whole lot of new experiences. Holding back is not an alternative in the *Be Stupid* philosophy. One should always be open to new possibilities. People, as animals, should follow their instincts by saying “yes.”

The forest animal in a domestic scene alludes to the fairy tale genre. According to Peter Hunt, Fairy tale plots and motifs are commonly used among advertisers, in order “create a sense of wonder and induce viewers to believe that there is something magical in the product that they are offering”, (Hunt). As we see in in the ad campaign, all the characters are placed in everyday situation situations, but with elements of fantasy. By doing this, Diesel encourage a non conformist attitude. The fairy tale plot can also give association to childhood, play. It is evident that The Be stupid campaign emphasize the search for one’s inner child. We will see some examples of this in the forthcoming ads.

Another couple scene in the campaign (no 21) can suggest an interpretation towards reversed gender roles. Ad no 21 shows a couple in a double bed. In contrast to the more public orientated locations in the rest of the ads, this scene is set in the bedroom, which is regarded as a private and protected room. (Sebeok, 1996: 10). The image with a couple in a double bed is traditionally cliché from popular culture, but here we see that the genders are portrayed in an untraditional way

According to Goffman, women are often portrayed lying down, on floors or beds. but this scene shows the man in the a passive position, lying down in the bed, whereas the woman seems to be jumping in the bed. This activity of bed jumping is associated to children. However, the woman seems to be in control. The man is elusive in a defending position with his arms protecting the upper part of his body. Furthermore, his legs seem to point away from

the woman, so as she was a threat. In this way, the woman is portrayed as playful, whereas the man appears as a contrast to this, rather boring and conformist. This may indicate, that the woman dares to show her childish sides, but that this makes the man turning away from her. In other words, she has taken control of the bedroom.

On the other hand, this activity can be interpreted in sexual terms. The scene is set in a double bed, traditionally a symbol for sex and fertility. Also worth remarking, is the long, vertical shaped object placed on the night table, pictorially on the level of the girl's genitalia. In this setting the object function as a phallus symbol, and put emphasis on the sexually charged mood of the scene. Following this thought, it is also interesting the way the man is lying down in a defending position, whereas the woman is coming from the air, falling towards him, with her legs spread. We see that the focus is on both gender's genitals. The man is more exposed, almost nude, which elaborate the sexual connotation. At the same time, it is worth noticing the fact that the picture is cropped so that you can only see the lower parts of the girl's body. This reinforces the focus on the sexual organs. The cropping of the images makes these scenes more interesting, and leaves the interpretation to the viewer, However, the viewer gets a clearer impression of the scene by observing the mirror in the background.

The woman is dress in red underwear, a colour that is a traditional a reference to passion, desire and sexuality. This can imply that that the woman either is the desired object, or the other way around, in the control of her sexuality. If we interpret the scene from the fact that she is not jumping in bed, but rather "flies" in the air towards him, it may imply that she sets the premises for a forthcoming sexual activity. This notion breaks with the traditional gender roles in the bedroom. From another point of view, his reaction can be interpreted as an attempt to approach the woman. In all instances, the image indicate, that woman is in control of the situation. In a sexual context it is also worth noticing the window, which is a traditional symbol of freedom. The light flowing in, gives an indication that these activities are taking place in the middle of day. Traditionally, sexuality has been subject to taboo, and delegated to closed and dark rooms. Here we see an example of the opposite. The room is light and open, with large window without curtains. Furthermore, the scene I set at a time of day, which is normally not associated with sexual activity. This can be interpreted as breaking with the conventions, and the conservative notions of sex.

The copy reads: "Stupid is trial and error. Mostly error". The text can refer to how sex is just a game. Experimentation is allowed. This will naturally result in different outcomes, but new stories. Implied here can be that the stories with errors are more interesting? In a

sexual context, this seems to defend free sexuality, where the traditional norms are dissolved. Within this line of thought, it can be natural to think that the two models of the ad are experimenting youths. In contrast to the first ad we discussed, no 17, these two do not necessarily appear as a couple. One interpretation would then be that the motivation is not long lasting relationship, but more unconditional sex, for a one-night stand. Again, this builds the impression of a liberating view on sexuality. Furthermore, the text “trial and error” supports this view. However, it is worth reflecting on whether the man or the woman is “stupid” here. Seeing this from the liberated woman’s point of view, the man is portrayed as passive and boring. From another angle, this can be reversed, and rather interpreted as he withdraws from the woman, who he sees as an “error”. In this way, a totally different gender perspective is created. Now the woman is viewed as a project of experimentation, which the man is in control of. The portrayal will then be focused around objectification, which we have discussed earlier in the analysis.

Furthermore, as the ad open for a variety of possible interpretation, this serves as a good example of polysemy in advertising, both verbally and visually. How then, does Diesel tell their story from this perspective? We will discuss further aspects of literacy and rhetorics reflected in the ads we have just discussed.

These ads have a strong pathos appeal, as they are thematically built around fundamental values of the human nature, as love, sex and family. The ethos appeal is reinforced by the Diesel claim of the new forms of romantic relationship, where the woman is the one in control. This is further emphasized in the copy text, claiming that being stupid means saying “yes” This can be understood as a logos appeal: Yes in this context is both a yes to what one sees in the ad, and a yes to Diesel. The images encourage reversed gender roles, and thinking outside the box. Accepting this lifestyle is the same thing as accepting the brand. Furthermore, errors are good for the image. In this way, Diesel is in line with the youth ethos, by favouring experiences. One should listen to one’s heart, and buy a pair of Diesel jeans. The red letters connect the symbol of love, the heart, to Diesel. This concluding discussion leads us on to the next section, which deals with the aspects of sexuality reflected in the campaign.

3.2.4 Sexuality

We have just looked at how male / female relationships have been portrayed in the Be Stupid campaign. The final discussion of this analysis will focus on the aspect of sexuality, and how this is reflected in the campaign. We have already seen how many of the ads contain sexual references. In the ads we will look at in this section, these references are particularly explicit. Among other things, we see that the idea of the conventional way of having sex, which involves two partners, are challenged. Sex involving more than two partners is portrayed in no. 12 and 22. We will start to explain no 12 in more detail.

No 12 shows three people in a bedroom, two females and one male. Centred in the composition we see two pairs of legs, belonging to a man and a woman. The image is cropped so we cannot see anything of the upper parts of their body. The man is sitting on the bed, in a relaxed pose, dressed in jeans and sneakers. One of the girls is about to crawl on top of him. She has bare, tanned legs, and green sneakers. The other girl is lying naked under the bed where the couple is sitting, with her head turned towards us in the left side of the picture. Her eyes are wide open, and she covers her mouth with her hand.

The expression of the woman lying under the bed indicates that this is probably the male's bedroom, and she has secretly gone under the bed in order not to get noticed. The couple in the bed looks like they are in the middle of a sexual activity, he sits with his legs spread, and she is on top of him, whereas the naked girl under the bed, suggest that there has been sexual activities going on before. What we first notice, is that all parts we can see of the women's body's are nude, whereas the man is dressed.

The theme of this ad is the classical love triangle, or a three-way romantic relationship. This is very much used in popular culture. In a gender perspective, it is interesting to imagine the gender roles reversed. Would it this scene be recognized as "acceptable" if the same setting was portrayed with two men and one woman? Because of the taboos related to this, it would probably not appear in an advertising campaign at all. We have been "learned" that it is ok for men to have many women; it is even a status symbol. Women on the other hand, would be looked upon very differently in this situation- a woman sleeping with many men, would be in danger of being looked upon as a whore.

If we assume the naked woman under the bed is the man's lover, she must have been in a hurry, and not the time for putting her clothes on before the other girl entered the scene. In this way, the ad may suggest an ideal of switching partners frequently. This can reflect

tendencies of our time, which are centred on excitement and renewal. These ideals can be transferred to relationships. On the other hand, infidelity has been a phenomenon through all times. From this point of view it is maybe not as liberal after all, as it also refer refer to an old ideal of sexuality.

Ad no. 12 is interesting in terms of the possession of sexual power. With the first glance, the male looks rather passive in the situation. The woman is actively crawling on top of him. However, the fact that he has jeans on, breaks with this impression. Since he is the only dressed of the three, this becomes a sign of domination over the women. Even though the action first and foremost is centred on the couple in the bed, the woman under the bed is the main focus, and can serve as the protagonist. The reason for this is that the viewer gets eye contact with this woman. This contact makes us feel more sympathy with this girl. It is clear that the ad refer to the classical plot of the secret lover, who tries to win the man of her dreams, and at the same time the sympathy of the audience. However, the perspective of the image gives the woman under the bed a submissive role. As the right shoe of the man is nearly touching the woman's face, it gets the impression of stepping on someone lying down, in a defenceless position.

The copy text , “smart has the plans, stupid has the stories,” builds further on the idea of sex as something related to impulsivity. It reveals that having affairs gives is related to a “cool” image, and not taboo anymore. No feelings involved. It gives status, and above all “good stories”. However, all the three participants will have their own version of the story indicate impulsivity in terms of sexual adventures. Again, as in no 2, the word stories refer to Facebook. These stories are intimate, but can be shared in the public space. The rational and planned are something looked upon as dull, whereas the spontaneous, irrational actions are connected to the “stupid” and thus the favourable.

What we have pointed out here, reflect a liberal, modern view of sexuality, which indicates that multiple sex partners build a cool image. However, this image is more in favour of the man. When we now move on to the next ad, we will see if this understanding can be applied to ad no 22.

Just as no 12, ad no 22 shows three models, one man and two women. It is hard to judge the exact location for this scene, but it could be on a hotel complex, or a holiday residence. What we see in the picture is a half open hatch, or a small opening in a wall on the left side of the picture. The models are lying down, almost piled on top of each other partly on

a brick wall, and with the upper parts of their bodies inside the small opening: Here, as in no.12, we can only see the legs of the models, sticking out from the hatch. In the background there is a column, indicating that this is a part of a larger building.

In contrast to no.12, where one of the women was excluded from the sexual act, here everyone is taking part, in a threesome. The activities are not taking part within the private sphere of a bedroom, but partly outside. Even though there are no people around, it is daylight, which reinforces the fact that there are no taboos around these issues. This is nothing that has to be hidden, or associated with shame. The holes in the wall, together with the phallus shaped column, are sexual references. Also here, one of the women is crawling on top of the man, but here he seems bit more trapped, as he is lying faced down, and not as able to be in control. Is the woman there to take control, or only to pleasure the man?

Similar to no.12, no. 22 expresses the ideal of spontaneous and incidental sex: in other words, something one does when one feels like it. Naturally, spontaneous actions come easier when there is alcohol or drugs involved. It can look like the persons involved in no. 22 have been to a party, and ended up together. Except from no 13, where the setting might be from a bar or café, and the glass on the table may contain beer, there are no depictions of alcoholic drinks in the campaign. However, the ads are full of situations that could have involved alcohol. Alcohol has a very central role in social life, and is therefore often connected to sexuality. People use alcohol in order to get sexual attention. Alcohol can change people's behaviour and personality, and make people push their own limits. When Diesel uses these references, they imply that in order to take the most of the "Stupid" lifestyle, it involves getting drunk and not thinking of the consequences.

This is further reflected in the copy text, which reads: "Stupid is trial and error. Mostly error." Error refers here to the act of making a fool of oneself, in the sexual domain. Whereas this before was connected to shameful feelings, or morally wrong, it is now more of a "cool" thing to do. It may be problematic if Diesel, as a brand that targets young people, promotes such attitudes. This communicates the message that sex and alcohol are ok, as long as it leads to more fun and pleasure. We know that there is a big problem with girls being raped or forced to have sex without their will. Given the fact that these brands possess such a great power on their target audience these attitudes are easily transferred.

We will now look at an ad that is thematically similar to the other two ads described.

However, this is more open, in the sense that it suggests different possible meanings. As previously stated, it is evident that most of the ads in the campaign conform to the heterosexual norm. However, a no. 11 can go against this convention.

Ad no. 11 could both be a portrayal of two women, or alternatively one woman and one man. The reason for this confusion is that when looking more closely at the ad, the gender of one of the persons is a bit hard to define. The most obvious solution is that this is a portrayal of two women, and either a lesbian couple, or two female friends. However, the sexual undertones of this ad, supports the former alternative.

If we first look at the ad from the assumption that this is a lesbian couple, it shows one woman entering a house, and another woman walking up the stairs from the hallway. The woman in front, leading the way upstairs, is only in her panties. The other female is fully dressed in a pair of baggy jeans and a black vest top with a weekend bag in her hand. They are both wearing black high heels. It is dark outside, but the house is fully lit, and since the other woman is about to enter the house, opens the door, the viewer is “invited” into the scene. The construction of the entrance suggests the scene to be a private home.

The image is cropped so that we can only see the lower parts of the women’s bodies. This adds an element of excitement and fantasy aspect to the scene. Where are the women going? Due to the perspective, the woman in front is smaller in size, but her nude legs makes her the central focus of the image, and makes it more sexual. As in the other ads we have discussed in this section, the obsession with female nude legs seems to be a returning theme. We can suggest from the woman’s nude appearance, that she has been preparing for the other girl’s visit, and is on her way up to the bedroom. Furthermore, from the bag the woman wears, indicates that she has come on a short visit, maybe just to spend the night. The fact that the woman already is on her way up, before the other woman has even entered the house, points to the same tendency we saw in the other ads under the same theme: it is no need to wait for sexual adventures. One should take best and first opportunity. Sex is something playful, and not associated with anything serious. It is unconditional, and not restricted by taboos. The hurry could also imply that the relationship with this woman is an affair. The woman might be in a traditional heterosexual relationship, and this an opportunity, before the husband gets home. Lesbian sex is not as taboo, as with gay. This derives from the porn industry, where this constellation has been used as the ultimate image of male pleasure. The idea of girls experimenting with sex linked to sexual arousal is something constructed from porn aesthetics. Again, we see pornographic references in relation to female portrayals.

We have assumed the gender of the other person entering the house to be a female. From what we see of the person's physique, and loose clothes, this could alternatively be a male, dressed up in women's clothes. In this case, it would be an expression of transgender sexuality, which points to sexual liberation. In either way, the fact that person is coming from outside, and she is almost undressed, it could be the case that the woman in the stairs is a prostitute.

The copytext is placed on the right side, in pink letters, reading: Smart has the plans. Stupid has the stories.

In order to conclude this section, we will take a look at how Diesel rhetorically constructs the story about sexuality. The ads discussed in this last section are all established around the modern idea of wild, youthful sex. Sex appeals to pathos, and we see that Diesel builds up the ethos appeal by understanding that in modern life, there are no one dimensional view of sexuality. A liberated sex life involves going against the convention. In other words; a game without rules. Diesel understands this and elaborates this in the copytext. The logos appeal is that they link errors in sex life to good stories. This in turn links a wild sexlife to the brand Diesel. The effect is that the consumer will get the understanding that both a wild sexlife and diesel products are sources to a more exciting, experimental and "cool" image.

This analysis has examined the text and images of the ads in the *Be Stupid* campaign. It has shown a concentrated picture of many aspects of youth culture, gender and sexuality. In order to sum up, we can say that *experimentation*, *courage*, and *opposition* are keywords in order to express the essence of The Be Stupid campaign. Diesels gives us the message, that ideally one should always go for the opposite of what is expected from the authorities. Whoever has told us to be "smart"; the state, teacher, boss, husband, it is only empty words. Now "stupid" is everything that counts, but not in the traditional sense of the word. According to Diesel, Stupid categorize a whole set of values, or a *lifestyle*. A stupid lifestyle will of course involve risk and danger. According to Diesel, this crazy, on the edge lifestyle is necessary in order to experience life fully.

Wild animals have been used as metaphors for courage and danger throughout the campaign. In 8 of the ads, we see there are animals involved. The appearance of the animals in such a close encounter with humans, sometimes in domestic settings, makes the setting surreal. Diesel ignores the common sense that prevents one from fun and new experiences. In fact in many of the instances, one sees that the humans have overcome this fear, and are in control of the animal.

We have seen how Diesel has told us the story of gender, and it can be argued, that the implicit meaning of “Being stupid” may be different for men and women, as these ideas of social behaviour, are to a great extent gendered. Particularly, in and advertising context, these stereotypes may be even more exaggerated. With this in mind, are the stupid lifestyle differently adopted for men than as for women? Diesel is ambiguous with their portrayals of gender roles. In some of the ads, we see that the gender roles reversed, whereas in others the stereotypes connected to conventional advertising portrayals of women are maintained. We have seen that for women, being stupid includes more nudity. Males seem to have more power in the sexual domain. However, women are more in control of the relationship. In the instances where we have seen the copy text that implicitly says that girls should act like boys, can refer to the fact that the male voice has been more prominent in social life. In order for girls to have a say, she has to do illegal things, and this has to include nudity. She has to conquer new territories in order to make herself more visible.

Rhetorically speaking, we have seen how Diesel uses ethos, pathos and logos in order to get their message across. In a literacy perspective, these rhetorical strategies are important to be aware of as readers. We will come back to this discussion in the forthcoming conclusion of this thesis that will reflect more on the actual findings of the analysis.

4. Conclusion

This thesis has aimed to show how the global jeans brand *Diesel* communicates aspects of lifestyle and gender in their campaign *Be Stupid* from 2010. It has used analytical tools in order to see how a particular campaign can serve as an example of the mechanisms behind commercial texts and images, and attempted to see how advertising can serve as a literacy practice.

The thesis has aimed to show, that in order to be better equipped for this understanding, we need to take these texts seriously. Moreover the analysis has aimed to view these perspectives in a literacy context. Why it is so important with advertising literacy in our contemporary society? Advertising is a crucial part of the world we are surrounded by, and tells us much about contemporary values and ideals. Furthermore, it is an important source to detect tendencies of our time. However, they are much overlooked as important cultural texts. The purpose of this this thesis has not been to give a definite answer to these questions, but rather to reflect upon the possibilities and potential that lies in these types of texts and images. The more we learn about how advertising communicates, and its deeper levels of meaning, the more we can approach it critically. The findings of this analysis can be summed up as following:

The *Be Stupid* campaign from 2010 encourages people to join the "Diesel philosophy". It becomes clear that Diesel offers not only fashionable jeans, but also a *lifestyle*. Consumerism is linked to dynamics of class, gender and lifestyle. Given the fact that the traditional social categories have become more blurred, the concept of marketing segmentation has become a more complex task. We have seen that the campaign can appeal to a much broader segment, which is not based on age, but rather mental categories. With the *Be stupid* campaign, Diesel tells, as well as sells a story. People are engaged in stories, and can easier relate to them. In other words, advertisers see the stories as an effective way of appealing to consumers.

Diesel wants to appear as creative and innovative. We have seen that this is evident to a certain extent. Their bold and colourful style, in form and content, stands out in the myriad of advertising. Furthermore, they add a twist to the conventional ad genre we are

bombarded with every day, and dare to touch upon controversies in their text and images. In this way, *Diesel's* advertising represent an anti-normative tendency in contemporary advertising. At the same time, their attempts to be creative and innovative can be questionable. What on the surface seems like liberating gender portrayals can from another point of view be interpreted the other way around, as objectifying and even discriminating. As this analysis has shown, *Diesel* seems to be stuck in the same stereotypes that we see in conventional advertising, and well established in the advertising discourse, which is the main root of this paradox: They cannot be free from the fact that they actually are a part of this discourse, as their main goal is to sell. Behind this eagerness to sell, they reveal some strategies that have been interesting to examine in a gender perspective. Second part of the analysis was divided into four main parts, discussing four different aspects objectification, empowerment, male/female relations and sexuality.

The first section regarding objectification, discussed whether this notion could be applied to the ads. The analysis revealed, that a large number of the ads show women in sexually charged postures, body revealing clothes, and to a certain extent high degree of nudity. It was also evident, that this nudity, combined with high heels and sunglasses gave a submissive, and anonymous portrayal of the female. Some of these instances suggested a traditional portrayal of the female body in advertising as the desired object for the man's gaze.

In this context, we have seen that *Diesels* trademark of using irony in order to appeal to the young generations, is in danger of legitimating these stereotypes. The use of irony can easily turn things that are viewed as discriminating into something harmless. This analysis has shown us, that these stereotypes are still present, and appear in texts and images alike. In a literacy context, this can even be more dangerous. The reader becomes less aware of these stereotypes. After this analysis, it becomes clear that *Diesel's* kind of irony is not rooted in an attempt to make fun of a submissive female gender role. In many of the ads we have looked at, the humour and irony live side by side with the image of objectified women. This analysis has shown the danger of mixing these two together.

On the other hand, the female is portrayed in opposition to the traditional power structures. They are empowering in the sense that they make their own choices, and in some of the ads seem to have a liberating relationship to their own bodies. Feminists?

Some of the same tendencies seem to be the case when the woman is portrayed together with a man. We have seen many examples that can suggest that the female has taken

the control of the relationship. At the same time, a number of these examples have sexual undertones.

When it comes to the final aspect discussed, sexuality, it shows that Diesel promotes a liberated view. The focus on multiple sex partners was predominant in this context.

From the analysis of the Be Stupid campaign, we have got a deeper understanding of Diesel's marketing strategy. One of these is the gimmick of using anti capitalist means in order to reinforce the capitalist values. This is clearly evident in the activist language expressed in the ads. These are symbols that to a great extent are taken from a political context, and first and foremost associated to left-wing politics, where activism also today is used as means to protest against capitalism. Thus, we can see how *Diesel* promotes capitalism by using the language of those against this ideology. In this way, Diesel follows the trend of opposing the power elites. This language aims to be more democratic, and gives the "power back to the people" in our society. This campaign aims to give the impression, that by wearing Diesel, one is empowered by the consumer's individual freedom. However, what they really has to offer, is a mainstream-image. Given the high amount of money spent on advertising on the globe every minute, it is undoubtedly a big business that has an enormous power and influence. With regard to this it cannot be overlooked, that advertising as an instance of power do have great impact on us.

Furthermore, our time, characterized by the global financial crisis, has obviously had consequences for the advertising business. As the spending power has decreased, advertisers have been forced to think alternatively, The importance of standing out in the market have never been as important than now, when the economy forces people to be more selective consumers. What may this lead to? Adverting with more extreme means and unconventional strategies? This makes analysis even more relevant, as more extreme means of advertising may have more serious consequences.

In the world of advertising and marketing, winning the battle with competitors, is winning consumers. At the same time we are in the middle of a global economical crisis, characterized by high unemployment rates among young people. Youth are less "affluent" and the trust in the power elites and people with high economic capital may have decreased. Advertisements appealing to wealth as symbol of status may strike negatively back to the corporations. At the same time, we see that what Diesel has to offer, is fairly expensive products. Diesel, as well as other big brands combines a kind of rebellious appeal with

commercial means. In the light of this, we may say that in the pursuit of consumers, the high focus on economic capital have been replaced with other values.

However, in a western capitalist society, the emphasis on free choices seems to be a fundamental principle. The high focus and the traditional understanding of literacy is challenged. This is partly because the world has become more and more visual. This opens the demand of more skills connected to understanding images. The analysis has shown, that many of the ads in the campaign are polysemic, in the sense that they open for many possible meanings. This is a global campaign that is shown to people of different cultures. However, we know that ideas about gender vary across cultures. Different cultural beliefs and practices, colour how gender portrayals are interpreted. This means that the interpretation of this campaign will vary, depending on the readers.

This study has been limited to the analysis of one particular campaign. However, the limitations of material have made it possible to examine this particular material more closely. This thesis has many areas of research that yet are to be discovered. In order to expand the knowledge within this field, it could for example be interesting to do a comparative analysis. Another possible project could be advertising in a historical perspective, in order to see how advertising has changed. Hopefully, this study can open for new research areas within this field.

An important point that can be concluded from this study is that more attention and awareness around the topic of advertising and literacy are necessary in order to establish the importance around these issues. As this analysis has shown, there are challenges connected to this task. Advertisers appeal much to our emotions, and our subconsciousness. Intentionally, they want to exploit the fact that we need to consume products in order to fulfil our dreams and desires. Advertisers are well aware of the “wear out effect” caused by the high concentration of ads. Definitely, it is harder to win potential buyers today. Thus, they put more and more effort in the task of creating original and innovative advertising. In this way, contemporary advertising demands more from the consumers, but at the same time, advertisers will adapt to the fact that we have become more critical consumers. As Malmelin points out, “understanding consumer’s literacy skills is a key condition for successful communications” (Malmelin 2010: 10).

In our contemporary mediated world, maybe we are not as far from Adorno & Horkheimers dilemma of the culture industry after all? As the main target audience of advertising is young people, it is especially important to educate students, and give them the

necessary tools to approach these texts and images. This analysis has encouraged for this task, by pointing to the fact that advertising as social and cultural texts are too important to be ignored.

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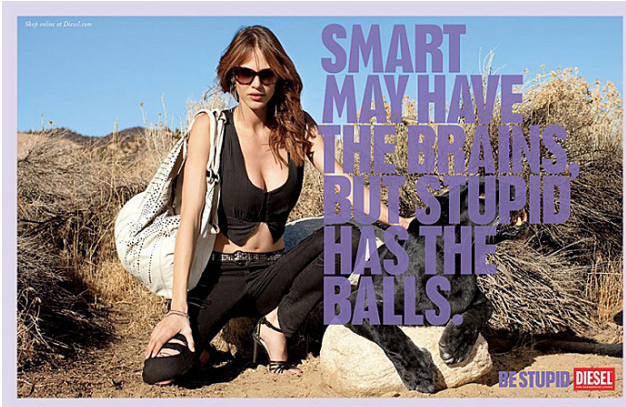
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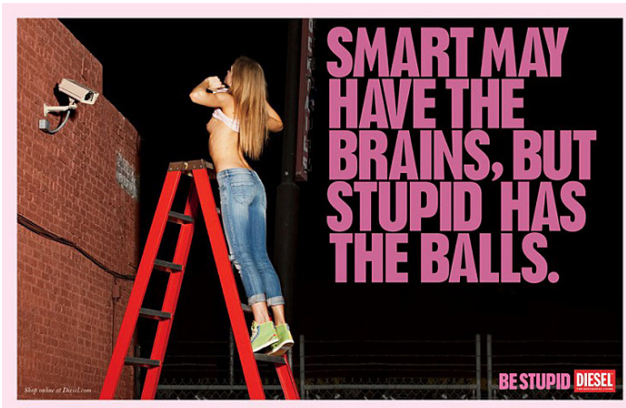
Appendix



Ad No.1



Ad No.2



Ad No.3



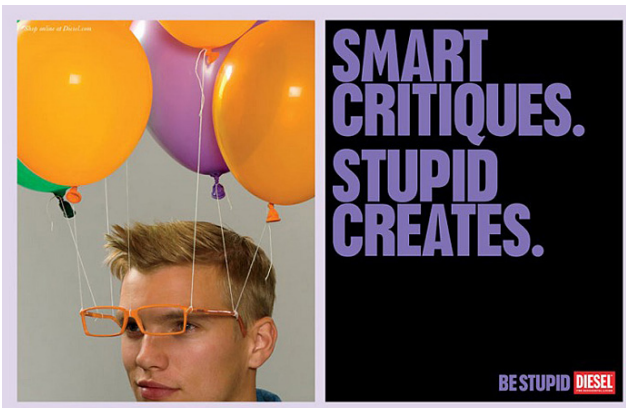
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Ad No.5



Ad No.6



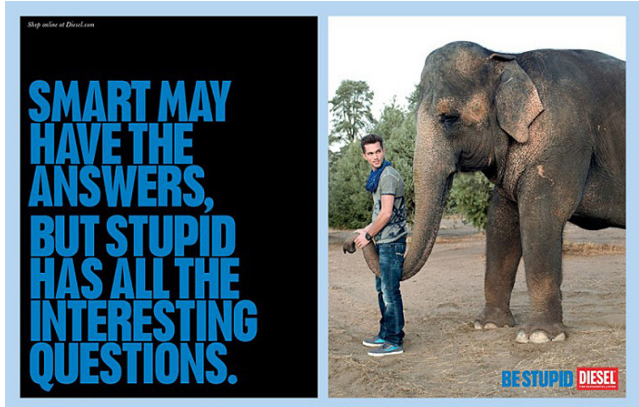
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Ad No.8



Ad No.9



Ad No.10



Ad No.11



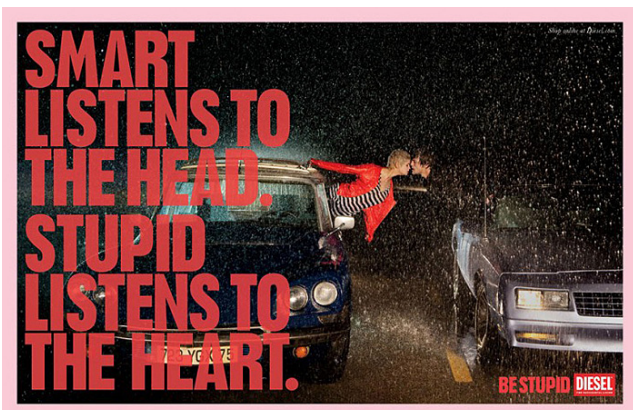
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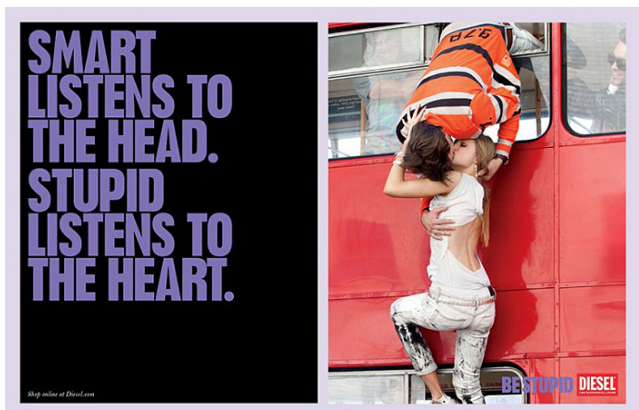
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Ad No.14



Ad No.15



Ad No.16



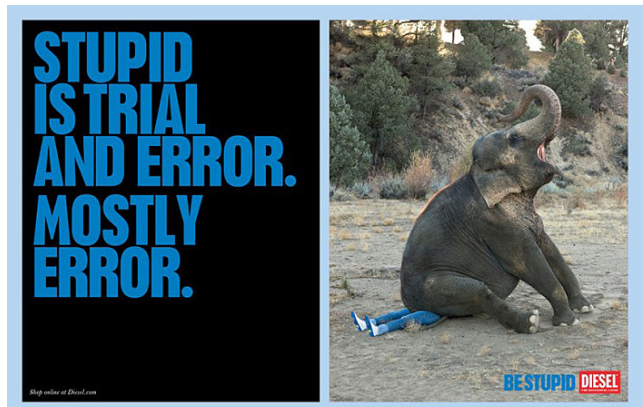
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Ad No.18



Ad No.19



Ad No. 20



Ad No.21



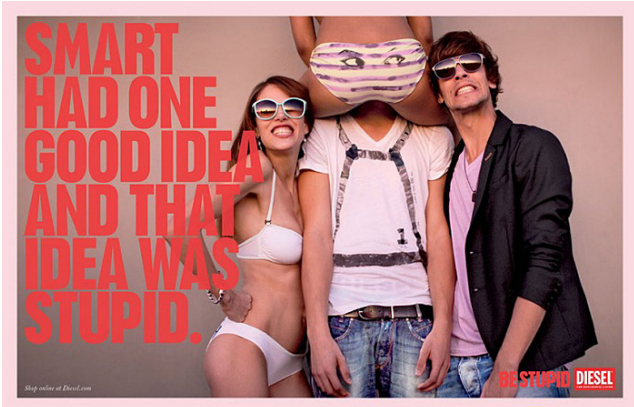
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Ad No.23



Ad No.24



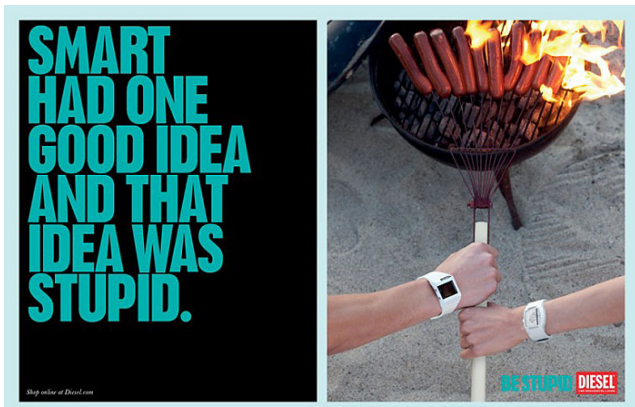
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Ad No.26



Ad No.27



Ad No.28



Ad No.29



Ad No.30



Ad No.31



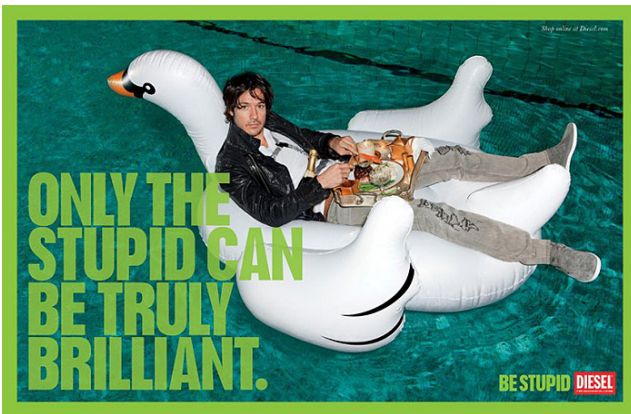
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Ad No.33



Ad No.34



Ad No.35



Ad No.36



Ad No.37



Ad No.38