The Value of a Woman:
Representations of Femininity in the Advertisements of *Vogue* Magazine

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Tutkielmassani tarkastelen miten mainokset esittävät naiseutta. Tutkimusmateriaalina käytän kuuluisan muotilehden Voguen Iso-Britanniassa vuonna 2009 ilmestynyttä vuosikertaa. Vogue oli tutkimusmateriaalina mielenkiintoinen, sillä joka numerossa on runsaasti mainoksia, jopa puolet kokonaissivumäärästä. Lisäksi lähinnä vaate-, asuste- sekä kosmetiikkamerkkien mainokset tukevat vahvasti lehden toimituksellista aihepiiriä.

Tutkielmani kantavana teoriana on Judith Williamsonin semantiikasta lainaava teoria mainosten merkitysten rakentumisesta. Williamsonin mukaan mainoskuvat koostuvat merkeistä samalla tavalla kuin teksti koostuu sanoista. Mainoskuvan merkkejä ovat ne komponentit, jotka luovat kuvan, kuten malli, vaatteet ja tausta. Jokainen merkki koostuu merkitsijästä, merkitystä ja referentistä, jotka tuovat merkin kautta mainoskuvaan merkityksen. Merkitys toimii sitten valuuttana, jota voi vaihtaa muiden merkkien merkitysten kanssa.

Mainoskuvien merkitykset tulevat puolestaan referenssirakennelmista. Referenssirakennelmat ovat kulttuurisia konventioita ja ideologioita, ja täten myös sukupuoli voi toimia referenssirakennelmana. Tutkin naiseuden kulttuurillista muodostumista eli esittämistä Judith Butlerin performatiivisuusteorian pohjalta. Mainoskuvissa naiset ovat usein seksiobjektin asemassa: tätä kulmaa tarkastelen Laura Mulveyn katseen teorian kautta.

Käsittelen ensin mainoksia, joissa valitsimieni teorioiden väitteet toteutuvat. Tarkastelen, miten Williamsonin teorian mukaan naiseus toimii merkkinä mainoskuvassa, ja minkälaisia merkityksiä se kiinnittää mainostettavaan tuotteeseen. Seuraavaksi tutkin minkälaisia merkityksiä nimenomaan perinteinen naiskuva tuo mainokseen ja käsittelen aihetta konventionaalisen naiskauneuden ja rodun kautta. Väitän myös, että miehiselle katselle alistetut mainosten naiset toimivat heteroseksuaalisen halun kohteina.

Seuraavaksi esittelen mainoksia, jotka poikkeavat totutusta naiskuvasta. Näitä löytyy muutamia, mutta ei yhtä suurta määrää kuin perinteisiä naiskuvia esittäviä mainoksia. Naiskuvat poikkeavat eniten naisellisena pidetyn käyttäytymisen kuvauksen osalta, vähiten ulkonäköä koskevien odotusten kohdalla. Myös homoseksuaalisuuteen viitataan, vaikkakin sen heteronormatiiviseen maailmaan tarkoitetussa pehmennytyssä muodossa.

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1. An Introduction to Women's Magazines and a Few Words about Advertisements

In this study, I will deconstruct advertising images of the British version of the women's fashion magazine *Vogue* to inspect how they represent women. Using the theory of decoding advertisements by media critic Judith Williamson, introduced further in section 2.1, I will claim that each advertisement image is constructed of signs, and that each sign has a meaning and thus a value of its own. This meaning originates in a construction of connotations called a referent system. I will introduce images that each feature the sign "woman" and discuss how her representation affects the overall message of the advertisement. I will draw their meanings from the referent system of the feminine gender, which I will deconstruct by using the performativity theory by Judith Butler, discussed in section 2.2., as well as the theory of the gaze created by Laura Mulvey and the topic of section 2.3. I appreciate that the representations of gender have changed and will continue to change through time. My concern, however, will be the modern woman, as my source material is the volume 2009 of *Vogue*. I will also concentrate solely on the actual images of the advertisements and exclude the possible advertising texts from my analysis, although in some cases the names of the brands advertised may influence the reading of the advertisement.

Feminist critique towards advertisements, as well as towards women's magazines, is as critical today as it was in the beginning of advertising. Advertisements recreate the images of gender and construct the way it should or should not be presented and women's magazines, as the manuals to being a woman, offer a perfect medium for this. Furthermore, they both are said to serve as an indicator of the position of women at the time of their publication. Marjorie Ferguson argues about women's magazines that "they are not merely reflecting the female role in society; they are also supplying one source of definitions of, and socialisation into, that role" (1983, 184). Moreover, the decision of choosing the advertisements inside a

women's magazine such as *Vogue* as an object of research is "motivated primarily not by what they reveal about advertising but what they reveal about societies, cultures and economies" (McFall 2004, 2).

As I study the British version of a magazine being published globally, the society in question is the dominant of modern day Britain, similar to that in the rest of the Western Europe as well as in North America. I will show, that critics have throughout the history of the study of advertising claimed that the role of a woman in an advertisement is traditionally a sexual object or a homemaker. However, in this modern society of 21st century Britain, with gender equality as one of its key values, the role should have changed into a more neutral and liberal direction. Despite this, I found plenty of images, discussed further in section 3 and its subsections, which still promote the idea of women as objects of heterosexual desire and which subject their female viewers to a very narrow concept of the feminine appearance and behaviour. However, I also found that there were some advertisers who did not borrow from the stereotypes but presented women with models of untraditional femininity. These advertisements are the subject of section 4 and its subsections.

The source of my study material, *Vogue*, falls easily into the category of women's magazines, although the genre itself is very diverse. Cynthia White acknowledges that in the field of women's magazines several very distinct periodicals may be found and defines women's magazines as "any periodical intended primarily for female use" (1970, 18). Joke Hermes, however, calls the genre "blurred" (1995, 6) as it has grown to consist of many subgenres and divisions, such as gossip magazines and fashion magazines. Hermes argues that because of the wide range of choice in the field of publishing for women, the feminist reader will also find a magazine meant just for her (1995, 96-7). However, she also writes (1995, 9):

> Part of me can understand why [women's magazines] continue to inspire concern and criticism in feminist observers. Women's magazines' emphasis on 'woman' and

> ‘femininity’, however liberated parts of them have become, remains unsettling, given that they are still overwhelmingly heterosexual in orientation and predominantly white in colour.

As a magazine, *Vogue* is commonly known as the ‘fashion bible’ and one clearly directed to female “worshippers”. The fashion photo shoots found in *Vogue* are of female fashion and its other featured sections are also about issues generally thought of as “feminine”: furnishing and decoration, beauty, health and fitness as well as travelling and culture. *Vogue* also includes articles about people and phenomena seen interesting for its female readers, such as an interview with Ivanka Trump in the January 2009 issue. In the article Ms Trump is defined not only as the Vice President of Acquisitions and Development of the Trump organization but also as rich, sexy, beautiful, not to mention the daughter of ‘The Donald’.

Despite the aforementioned variety, women’s magazines are often the subject of feminist criticism. Women’s magazines have been studied ever since the beginning the new wave of feminism, which emerged in the 1960’s in Europe and the US. In her famous text *The Feminine Mystique*, published in 1963, Betty Friedan investigated the portrayal of women in American women’s magazines and claimed that they fostered the idea that women’s lives are to be confided to their homes (Courtney & Whipple 1983, 3). Twenty years later Marjorie Ferguson stated that women’s magazines reflect the position of women in any given time in society at large as well as in the minds of its readers (1983, 1-3). She argues that the reason behind the different approaches of the magazines for men and those aimed at women is that society presumes that men already ‘know’ how to be masculine, whereas women need to be taught what is feminine and what is not. According to her, women’s magazines are “about femininity itself – as a state, a condition, a craft and an art form which comprise a set of practices and beliefs” (Ferguson 1983, 1). In the 1990’s, however, feminist criticism started to take into account the pleasure that the reader derives from women’s magazines, also acknowledging the fact that the magazine may be read in an empowering way and that the

average reader can also be critical of the content (van Zoonen 1994, McRobbie 1997). In the 21st century, despite the ever-existing gender roles in the magazines, critics have admitted that women's magazines offer a distinctive feminine world to their readers, a space meant just for women (Hirdman 2002).

The two industries of magazine publishing and advertising actually developed in conjunction with each other as the first industrially manufactured goods belonged to the realm of home and women were their primary target market (Scanlon 1995, 167-8). These goods began to be widely advertised in women's magazines consequently creating a symbiosis which strengthened positions of both industries (Töyry 2006, 213). By the beginning of the 20th century, advertising had become the most important revenue for the publishers of women's magazines in the Western world (White 1970, 65). Today, advertising is as an inseparable part of *Vogue* as any women's magazine. For example, out of the 234 pages of the January issue of 2009, 116 have an advertisement on them. As advertisements cover approximately half of the pages, the magazine is a very fruitful object of study. An accustomed *Vogue* reader expects this ratio of advertising and is not surprised by it when flicking through the magazine. As readers try to suss out the latest trends, they are told, perhaps even without acknowledging it, what to wear and how to look like not only by the articles of *Vogue* but also by its advertisements.

Thus, advertising has been a part of the world of women's magazines from the very beginning of their publication. Similarly to women's magazines, advertising has often been critiqued from the feminist view-point: in fact from the very beginning of the Women's Movement in the 19th century (Strinati 2006, 166). However, the first academic study of the portrayal of women and men in advertising was conducted as late as 1971 by Courtney and Lockeretz. They concluded that in print advertising the roles that were reserved for women were usually picturing her as working at home or as a sexual object. A similar study by

Wohleter and Lammers examining advertising from the years 1958, 1968 and 1978 showed that although there had been an increase of women shown in working roles during this time, the portrayal of men and women in family roles changed very little; women were still the domestic goddesses and men the ones being served (Courtney & Whipple 1983, 6-8). In the 1980's and 1990's studies also showed that advertising produces a very narrow role for a woman to identify. Critics claimed that the female body was most often used as a manifestation of heterosexual desire (Winship 1987, Jhally 1987, Cortese 1999) and accused advertisers of prompting a gender specific consumer culture (Betterton 1987, Craig 1992). However, they also stated that the reader shares the responsibility in the interpretation of gender in advertising images. In the 21st century critics have studied the role of the viewer further, claiming that he or she is not just a simple receiver of advertising messages, but active creator of meaning, capable of also criticising the advertisers' intentions (Silverman 1996, Cronin 2000).

Even an accustomed *Vogue* reader may have difficulty distinguishing the editorial content from the advertisements in the magazine from time to time. The glossy pages are riddled with friendly advice such as "Skin should be groomed to perfection so the look is strong, but bare in terms of make-up", "Never mind the global recession. The diamond business is booming and the bigger the better" and "The best way to show off long, long legs? Chanel's little piece of micro magic". All of the examples above are picked from the editorial content of the magazine. Similarly advertisements in *Vogue* may include editorial elements, such as long columns of text and even subtitles. Thus, it is not surprising that according to McCracken, the editorial matter of a women's magazine supports the readers' needs of consumption through its format (1993, 42). By sharing the same goals as purchased advertisements, convincing women that femininity is dependent on things that can be bought, *Vogue*'s editorial structure endorses the same aims as its advertisers.

Thus the collaboration between magazine publishers and advertisers has gone as far as making the advertising material almost indistinguishable from the actual articles (Scanlon 1995, 168). Also, as opposed to television advertising, advertisements in women's magazines are not seen as an interruption in the editorial flow (McCracken 1993, 38). Instead, they work as a logical and natural extension of the actual content of the magazine. Ferguson claims that it is fact advertising why the cult of femininity is upheld by women's magazines. She says that the magazines steer "female attitudes, behaviour and buying along a particular path of femininity, and a particular female world view of the desirable, the possible and the purchasable" (1983, 2), which is exactly what the advertisers wish the consumer to think also.

2. Advertising Gender

Judith Williamson argues that advertisements are one of the most important cultural constructions that affect our everyday lives. They seem to have a reality of their own and form "a vast superstructure with an apparently autonomous existence and immense influence" (Williamson 1985, 11). This separate universe of advertisements is linked to the viewer's world by sheer exposure. The real world outside the advertisements is the world of gender, race and sexuality, and these two worlds, the inner and outer universes of advertisements, are bound to influence one another.

The simplest idea behind advertising, however, is persuasion. By using advertisements the makers of products are trying to persuade the consumer to buy their specific product (Ryynänen 2007, 24). Because of the limited space in which to make an impact on the viewer (such as one page in a magazine) advertisements aim to create meanings effectively (Kortti 2007, 105). Thus images familiar to the consumer have to be featured, so that the viewer will be able to recognise the intended message immediately. Symbolic messages are often used, but media very rarely decodes its messages to a form where the consumer is able to directly

see the different elements of this interaction. To affect the behaviour of the consumer, gender is one of the most used strategies in this symbolic interaction. Gender has a large variety of recognisable features and out of all the forms of cultural communication advertising uses gender the most: a gendered body is an economical way of communicating a desired message.

Pictures of gender have been used in advertising ever since an image of a woman first appeared on a magazine cover as a way for the publication to draw the attention of potential readers in the 1890's (Kitch 2001, 4). The picture became a selling tool and the image of the woman on the front cover represented “both a specific type of female beauty and a ‘style’ that conveyed model attributes – youth, innocence, sophistication, modernity, upward mobility” (Kitch 2001, 5). This is how, in the late 19th century, the first mass media stereotype, the 'Ideal American Woman', was created. Since these early days a picture of a woman has been used to sell commodities in all varieties. She has had many roles: in the 1930's she was sophisticated young urbanite, in the 1950's a suburban housewife. In the late 1960's the representation of a woman in advertising started to change into a more hedonistic and independent direction. Although the model has changed along the years as well as sprouted new permutations, the image of a woman is still used to sell products all over the media. However, there are certain conservative values which have always remained, such as woman as a homemaker (Kortti 2007, 118-121).

In the next subsection, I will introduce the theory of decoding advertisement by Judith Williamson. She states that an advertising image consists of signs with value. I will explain that this value is a currency that can be transferred between the signs of the image. The actual message of the image is based on this transference. I will show that the meaning is created by the viewer with the aid of webs of meaning and connotations, originating from the world outside the advertisement. As I claim that in an advertisement featuring an image of a

woman, she is also one of the signs and drawing value from the connotations of the feminine gender, in subsection 2.2 I will introduce how gender and femininity is created and represented. I will also discuss how the cultural and ethnical background affects her representation.

As already stated, one of the traditional representations of a woman in an advertisement is the object of heterosexual desire. In subsection 2.3 I will discuss this concept by introducing Laura Mulvey's theory of the gaze, which states that a woman will always be the passive object of the active male gaze and thus his desire. I will also draw attention to some studies which have shown that the world of advertising is ruled by heterosexuality whereas homosexuality is either invisible or softened by heterosexual conventions. But first, I will introduce Williamson's theory which is rooted in the field of semiotics.

2.1. We Exchange Because We Know: Judith Williamson's Theory of Decoding Advertisements

As already noted, genders are often used in advertising due to their easily recognisable features. The image of a woman is used to sell products as variable as lawn-mowers and facial creams, and she is seen so often in advertising that the viewer thinks it almost a natural consequence. However, Williamson's theory reveals the mechanism behind the structures of the image and "penetrate[s] the apparent autonomy and reality of adverts" (Rose 2007, 76). Although Williamson's work *Decoding Advertisements,* first published in 1978, is not strictly a feminist text, she refers to the hierarchal ways of gender representation in her image analysis. For this reason it has been later often used in feminist criticism to analyse how the representations of women conventionalise the conception of natural gender behaviour (O'Barr 1994, Vitellone 2002).

Williamson's theory borrows its terms from the field of semiotics. David Chrystal defines semiotics as "the scientific study of the properties of signalling systems, whether natural or

artificial" (1980, 317). The key element of the semiotic theory is the sign. According to the semiotics, as originally introduced by Ferdinand de Saussure in the late 19th century, a sign consists of two parts: *the signifier* and *the signified*. The signifier represents the material side of the sign, the real object, such as any word written on this page. The signified is the meaning these letters create or, according to Roland Bathes, "the signified is not 'a thing' but a mental representation of the 'thing'" (1981, 42). Innis notes that although de Saussure himself was strict about his use of terminology, it has now spread to an ever larger domain (1986, 24) and Barthes writes that the term *sign* itself is quite ambiguous, for it is used in many different vocabularies from medicine to theology (1981, 35).

Williamson has also made use of the terminology and attached it to the vocabulary of advertisements. She claims that an advertisement image consists of signs, and that they too may be divided into a signifier and a signified. She explains that (1985, 18)

> …signifier and signified are materially inseparable, since they are bound together in the *sign*, which is their totality. What is *meant* by a sign, the signifier, may be talked about separately from what means it, the signified: but an understanding of this terminology involves the realisation that the two are not *in fact* separated either in time or space: the signifier is neither anterior nor exterior to the sign as a whole.

Williamson recognises that the implicit function of advertising is to sell things to the consumer. However, she also says that they have another function: they create structures of meaning (1985, 12). Advertisers take a product with certain kind of properties and their job is to make those attributes *mean* something to the consumer. For example, shampoo that contains high amounts of silicone will make hair shiny. However, the product will never be advertised using the word silicone. Instead, this attribute is translated by an advertisement into a promise: if you buy this shampoo, your hair will be shiny. This again can be translated to other values: if your hair is shiny, you will look healthier and will seem to the world to be rich enough to take good care of your hair, for example. Advertisers translate simple product qualities as "human statements; they are given humanly symbolic 'exchange-value'"

(Williamson 1985, 12). They do this by the help of the signifier and the signified.

Let's take an example. In fashion advertising, a sign may be a female model on horseback. The signifier may be that the woman sits proudly on the horse, in a cowboy hat and boots. Alternatively she may be a lady, wearing a long gown while sitting coyly with legs prettily on the same side of the horse. Both these models have a more important role to play than just demonstrate which outfit is better for riding a horse: they are creating another, less obvious meaning. Their function is to bring out latent meanings, emotions, connotations and feelings: a woman in a Western style outfit has a completely different latent meaning, the signified if you will, from the lady in a gown on horseback.

Williamson calls the latent meaning of the sign, in our example case the meaning of the cowgirl or that of the riding lady, *value* attached to that sign. This value may then be used as sort of *currency*. In advertising, the meaning of the woman, the value of that sign, is transferred to the sign of the product advertised: that product, say a tube of mascara, is a sign as much as the woman and so also consists of the signifier and the signified and has a value and thus a currency of its own. Williamson describes currency as "something which represents value and in its interchangeability with other things gives them 'value' too" (1985, 20). She argues that the transference works because "images, ideas or feelings, then become attached to certain products, by being transferred from signs out of other systems (things or people with 'images') *to* the products, rather than originating in them" (1985, 30). The advertisers choose the sign of the woman whose value seems more attractive as a currency to be traded with their product: the cowgirl's value may be freedom and independence, the lady is attached to sophistication and elegance, for example.

By now, we have come to see that two variations of the same sign, a woman, may have two, or more, different values attached to it, depending on how it is represented. Williamson explains that as there is actually very little real difference between brands of products of the

same category, such as mascaras or hair conditioners, the first function of advertisements is to create a sense of difference between the product advertised and the rest the brands of the same product category (1985, 24). This is done by providing the product with an *image* which is created by attaching values to it, for example by using a face of a famous actor or supermodel in the picture together with the product. However, Williamson reminds the reader that "[t]he identity of anything depends more on what it is *not* than what it is, since boundaries are primarily distinctions: and there are no 'natural' distinctions between products" (1985, 24). By choosing the sign of the woman dressed in cowboy gear *over* the woman in a dreamy dress, an advertisement is creating a distinction between its product and the others. Williamson writes that advertisements "use distinctions existing in social mythologies [e.g. gender] to create distinctions between products" (1985, 27): an advertisement may want to send a message that its brand is connected to the feeling of freedom and independence by using the mythological image of the cowgirl, whose values are *not* high-class sophistication and grace of the lady.

Williamson then moves to the next stage. She writes that after this distinction between the two products is made by using different signs to advertise them, the difference ceases to exist as such (1985, 29). The connection between the product and the woman in a stetson becomes inevitable, almost natural: being attached to the image of the cowgirl long enough, the values begin to rub on the mascara brand and after some time it will only seem obvious that such a wild and free product is advertised by a cowgirl. Williamson explains: "while the *logic* of the system, from which it derives its meaning, lies in the differences only… the *appearance* of the system is one of 'logical' connections and similarities". The juxtaposition of two completely irrational things such as a woman on horseback and a tube of mascara becomes logical "simply because it exists" (1985, 29). The viewer who trades the two values never sees the transportation happening: to them it actually seems as if the value of elegance is *first*

attached to the mascara rather that originating from the sign of the woman.

Advertising therefore offers the viewer *objective correlatives*: the viewer is supposed to bypass the sign, the picture of the woman, that actually creates the meaning and where the values originate, and attach them to the product instead. Remember, the viewer is unaware of the currencies that are being traded. He or she thinks that the meaning is already there and originates from the product itself and thus "certain objects become taken for granted as having certain qualities" (Rose 2007, 90). Advertisers led the consumer to consider that by buying a product like shampoo, they will get not only clean hair, but beauty, respect and admiration in a bottle. According to Williamson (1985, 31),

> The technique of advertising is to correlate feelings, moods or attributes to tangible objects, linking possible *un*attainable things with those that *are* attainable, and thus reassuring us that the former are within reach…It is not the ad that evokes feeling, it simply invokes the *idea* of a feeling; it uses feeling as a sign which points to the product. But then emotion is also promised when you *buy* the product. So the feeling and the product become interchangeable as signifier/signified.

Williamson writes that "this 'meaning of the signifier' involves a correlation of two things: the significance of one [e.g. the cowgirl] is attached to the other [e.g. the mascara]" (1985, 19). However, this transference is not created by a narrative in the picture, nor by words or arrows. It happens simply because of the juxtaposition of the two signs in the same advertisement image. According to Williamson, "this correlation is non-sequential; the two things are linked not by the line of an argument…but by their place in the picture, by its *formal structure*" (1985, 19).

I have this far referred to the value of signs many times. I have explained that this value stems from the meaning of the sign, its signified, which is then used as a currency and transferred between other signs of the advertisement and their values. This transference, however, requires that the sign has a significance that may be used as currency in the first place. The connection between the signifier and the signified is problematic as there is no logic why a certain sign, an image of a woman for example, should have that specific

meaning it does (Rose 2007, 80). Rather, the connection seems to be totally arbitrary and may thus be questioned and explored. However, the meaning must be there and it must exist before the advertisement is even created, no matter how ambiguous it seems; otherwise an advertising image featuring a woman on a horse and a tube of mascara would mean nothing at all.

Significance is not actually embedded in the advertisement image but derives from the world outside it. In semiotic theory, the sign has yet another part except those of the signifier and the signified. This is the *referent*. The referent is "[the] entity in the external world to which a linguistic expression refers; for example, the referent of the word *table* is the object 'table'" (Crystal 1980, 299). Thus, the referent is the real object that a sign refers to in the outside world: a referent for the sign *woman* could be the writer of this section. This means that also the signs in advertisements have their referents in the world exterior to them. In fact, Williamson explains that for the advertisement to create value, exterior systems of meaning are *necessary*. These systems are the simplest, and in fact the only, way for an advertisement to create meanings and messages: the signs of the advertisements must have referents in real life, which in turn are a part of the systems of the outside world. She calls these webs of meaning *referent systems* (1985, 19).

By using referent systems, the advertisements move to another level, that of connotation. As a sign is denoted it always has connotations. Barthes claims that "society continually develops, from the first system which human language supplies to it, second-order significant systems" (1981, 90-1) and in the world of advertisement images, connotations define the value of the currency offered to be traded with the brand. This is how connotation actually takes the place of denotation: a picture of a woman on horseback denotes a woman on horseback, but the way she is dressed, poised and positioned *connotes* qualities such as independence, freedom or elegance. The use of direct description becomes unnecessary, since

what is being referred to should be evident to the viewer through their society, culture and so on. The connotations of the signified are drawn from the referent system, a system *already in the mind of the viewer*.

Williamson explains that referent systems' purpose is to provide advertisements the basic meaning needed to create value: a referent system draws meaning from the outside world to the world of the advertisement (1985, 99-102). She writes that "[t]here is a cognitive outline in which the product is inserted: *we exchange because we know*" (1985, 100). The viewer should know what they are supposed to be reading in an advertisement the moment they see it, and that is why advertisers use well-known cultural mythologies and stereotypes to sell their products: they are already attached to a meaning, already part of a referent system. According to Williamson, referent systems are what make the advertisement seem truthful and its message real: they act as a guarantee for the advertiser's message. She also sees that this is the part where the advertisement moves to the realm of *ideology*.

When discussing ideology, Williamson refers to the writings of Louis Althusser. Althusser claims that ideologies, such as ethical and political beliefs or the views on gender, always have a material existence. According to Althusser, each individual produces ideology daily through their actions: "I shall therefore say that, where only a single subject…is concerned, the existence of the ideas of his belief is material in that *his ideas are his material actions inserted into material practices governed by material rituals*"[1] (Althusser 1984, 42). Williamson writes that this is what ideology and advertisements have in common: the message of an advertisement is always produced from something already known based on the society the individual lives in: "[This is] a central part of ideology: the constant *re*-production of ideas which are denied a historical beginning or end, which are used or referred to 'because' they 'already' exist in society, and continue to exist 'because' they are used and

[1] Italics as in the original.

referred to" (Williamson 1985, 99). Furthermore, ideology, just like gender, is not only used through advertisements, it is indeed *produced and reproduced* by them, making the ideology even more prevailing. Thus advertisements also become part of the material existence of ideology.

Semiotics, as used by Williamson, "offers a very full box of tools for taking an image apart and tracing how it works in relation to broader systems of meaning" (Rose 2007, 74). These broader systems of meaning, i.e. the referent systems, may be found in our everyday lives, including the meanings that the signs of the genders provide. Semiotics is able to cut though the surface of the polished advertisement image, to the core of its ideology. Rose defines ideology as "knowledge that is constructed in such a way as to legitimate unequal social power relations" (2007, 75). She also writes that constructions of social difference, such as gender, race or sexuality, are articulated through the advertisement images themselves (2007, 77). Williamson writes that "ideology is always precisely that of which we are not aware" (1985, 41). However, according to her, ideology is something that we, as users of media applications and viewers of advertisement images, activate and re-create daily: it is not delivered to us from 'above'. She also says that this creates the false sense of freedom of choice. The consumer is led to believe that they have the power to choose what an advertisement means to them, when in fact the advertisement and the ideology it refers to has already made the choice for them. As Williamson puts it: "advertisements *work* by a process in which we are completely enmeshed…they invite us 'freely' to create ourselves in accordance with the way in which they have already created us" (1985, 42).

Williamson also explains that as the viewer makes the transfer of currencies, they themselves become one of the things exchanged in the process (1985, 45). According to Barthes, the semiotic sign is more than a linguistic sign because a semiotic sign, for example a brand of shampoo, gives value to its user as well. Barthes writes that "many semiological

systems have…a substance of expression whose essence is not to signify; often they are objects of everyday use, used by society in a derivate way, to signify something" (1981, 41): we become differentiated from other people by what products we use and identified by it. They become to signify us. After the viewer has made the exchange of meanings, the product gives the meaning back to them by creating a significance that is attached to the viewer. This is most notable if they then go and buy the product: this has given them a chance to purchase into whatever significance they read from the advertisement earlier. Ideology works on this level also: Williamson states that advertisements make it seem as if the buyer is not simply expected to randomly choose between a number of brands, but naturally buys one because they recognise themselves as a kind of a person who uses that particular brand. She writes that advertisement's aim is to make you as a consumer to believe that "you do not simply buy the product to *become* a part of the group it represents; you must feel that you already, naturally, belong to that group and *therefore* you will buy it" (1985, 47).

To decipher the messages of advertising, Williamson also uses Jacques Lacan's theory of the mirror-phase, which refers to the first time a child recognises themselves in the mirror. According to Williamson, the advertisement image becomes a mirror of sorts: the viewer should be able to recognise themselves from the signs represented in it (1985, 60-7). As explained previously, the viewer first makes the connection between the signs and gives the product advertised its value. By buying the product, however, the product gives the value back to the viewer. Furthermore, an advertisement may work as a mirror: the people used in advertisement images as signs that lend their value to the product become to represent the viewer instead. Williamson writes (1985, 64)

> we are in the same relation to the product as [the people in the advertisement image] are; it becomes the 'mirror' axis which unites them and us, although we are spatially separate…we are given a single representation whose relation to ourselves can be clarified by the use of the 'mirror-phase' idea.

Indeed, Williamson explains that the mirror-image in the advertisement is usually unattainable and idealistic. It is the aim of an advertisement to suggest that by buying the brand advertised that ideal self in the mirror may be achieved, although it is, in fact, impossible.

Furthermore, Williamson claims that a viewer is not "a simple receiver but a creator of meaning" (1985, 41). Williamson explains that "as an advertisement speaks to us, we simultaneously create that speech…and are created by it *as its creators*" (1985, 41). She calls this "the vicious circle, in which we give meaning to ads and they give meaning to us" (1985, 41), and says that the individual has to enter the space between the signifier and the signified to understand what means and what it means. Here, ideology again is at work. It feeds the viewer assumptions of those meanings, which it claims do not *need* to be questioned: in the root of ideology is the idea that "because things are as they are…this state of affairs…must 'make sense'" (Williamson 1985, 29). Referent systems seem to be truthful simply because they exist. This is the case with the representations of femininity also. Because women are imaged the way they are in advertising, the viewer is supposed to take it for granted that this is the way a woman should indeed look like. In turn they will also start to produce the same kind of femininity on their bodies: simply because it seems as the only one naturally existing.

Thus, it is through the viewer, a person existing in time and space, that an advertisement derives its meaning. However, this meaning is something existing outside the individual, in society and culture. The prevailing cultural conventions and ideologies influence the way that person sees and interprets what they see, and the way they have constructed their referent systems. In fashion and beauty advertisement, which is the primary field of the products advertised in *Vogue*, the referent system used is very often that of gender. As a referent system, gender is often sold as a giveaway with the product: in buying into the message of the advertisement, we also buy into the conventions of representing gender. Viewers may criticise

an advertisement for giving an unrealistic image of femininity, but as a referent system it will still remain in their minds, and very often gender is ignored and bypassed as something natural.

Williamson claims that advertisements use a technique that makes unattainable things seem attainable through the product. However, the woman of the advertisement simply does not exist and it is a well-known fact that the images of women in almost all advertising are digitally 'improved'. This results to the fact that she becomes the woman everybody should be but no-one is. Why then, if consumers are fully aware that the female image of the advertisement cannot exist in the world outside the advertisement, is this kind of imagery still used and why do consumers keep buying into it? The answer is that images of women are used in advertising simply because they bear a meaning to all viewers: they are a part of a very efficient referent system. In the following two subsections then, I will discuss the feminine gender as a referent system both in media in general as well as in fashion advertising in particular; how it is created and how it, in turn, creates the gender ideology of the viewer.

2.2 The Corporal Signs of Gender: Femininity as a Referent System

In the previous section, I wrote that Williamson recognises that advertising serves two functions: selling as well as creating meanings. To create a meaning the signs in the advertisement must be easily recognised and processed. They must *connote* something: a feeling, an attitude, a desirable trait. This is the only way the sign can ever bring any value to the image. Rossi also sees the dualistic function of advertising: on one hand, it persuades the consumer to buy the product advertised but at the same time it induces that the viewer adopts a certain idea of beauty (2007, 133-4), or, in Williamson’s terms, see a pre-arranged meaning created by the reference system of gender. As the viewer makes the transfer between the signs

of the advertisement, they also use the gender system as their referent system, and enforce the idea of the conventional looks of a beautiful woman: to buy the product is to buy into the ideal. Rossi sees this as a part of the process of recreating the self of the consumer, including their gender.

In the following two subsections, I will discuss how the referent system of femininity is created. First, I will take a look at the theories of gender in general, and then introduce Judith Butler's theory of performativity. Based on that, I will claim that gender is manifested on the surface on the body, and in advertising especially this also includes the size of the body. As I am interested in the outer, corporal signs of gender, I will also take a look at ethnicity and claim that it also affects the way gender is represented. In other words, I will discuss how the referent system of the female gender is created and how it is used to sell women the images of themselves.

People are often divided into two opposing genders: men and women. Ever since the Ancient Creece, the male has been privileged over the female, which was seen as the weaker, more cautious, domestic and nurturing gender (Cranny-Francis et al. 2003, 1-3). Feminist studies have often criticised this gender system for making a distinction between two opposing genders according to the biological sex, as it is suggested that this is not a natural consequence (Butler 1990, Foster 1999). They often borrow the views of anthropologist Gayle Rubin, who suggested that a further distinction can be made between the terms *gender* and *sex* (Rubin 1975). Sex is determined by the biological body a person is born with, but gender is learned by social conventions: a person may be born a woman but not feminine. Instead, they *learn* the features of their gender from the society and culture around them. Thus, this alternative gender view sees gender as a product of classification and labelling.

One of the most influential figures supporting the view that gender is learned, and not innate, is poststructuralist feminist thinker Judith Butler. Butler denies the existence of

"natural" gender altogether and sees that gender is not based on physiological features. To her gender is not being, but *performative*. Butler (1990, 140) asks the reader to consider that

> ...a sedimentation of gender norms produces the peculiar phenomenon a "natural sex" or a "real woman" or any number of prevalent and compelling social fictions, and that this is a sedimentation that over time has produced a set of corporal styles which, in a reified form, appear as the natural configuration of bodies into sexes existing in a binary relation to one another.

Butler says that the "social fiction" of gender is performed by "acts, gestures and desire" which "produce the effect of an internal core or substance, but produce this only *on the surface* of the body" (1990, 136), thus creating a false sense of gender being determined by the outer corporeal signs of biological sex.

Butler calls the performative features of gender "a ritual social drama" (1990, 140) which is repeated in everyday situations. It is through this repetition that people both learn and show the conventional behaviour of their gender. Butler sees also that although gender is acted out by the individual, its structures are rooted in the public (Butler 1990, 140):

> Although there are individual bodies that enact these significations by becoming stylized into gendered modes, this "action" is a public action. There are temporal and collective dimensions to these actions, and their public character is not inconsequential; indeed, the performance is affected with the strategic aim of maintaining gender within its binary frame – an aim that cannot be attributed to a subject, but, rather, must be understood to found and consolidate the subject.

Advertisements are a part of this public action of gender and offer the social drama of gender almost everywhere we go. In advertisements, gender roles are both acted out and reinforced and they support the idea that there is certain normative feminine and masculine behaviour, such as heterosexuality. Furthermore, advertising makes all people both the subject and the object of this classification. On one hand, it creates and recreates the representations of gender by showing images of certain kind of femininity and masculinity to the consumer. On the other, as Williamson states, by creating the meaning of a sign, a person of their own gender for example, the viewer creates him- or herself as a representative of that gender and

enforces the ideologies behind it. The consumer is the subject of the gender system by buying into its representations, thus creating and recreating his or her own gender and being its object.

Moreover, by selling idealised femininity, advertisements in fact sell gender acts and instructions for performing gender. Lacan's theory of the mirror-phase, as used by Williamson and referred to in the previous section, is convenient when describing the attitude of women towards their representations in advertisements. They should be able to recognise themselves in the female models featured in the image and believe that using the product advertised is a great way of performing the femininity the models represent. Thus, in advertisements the "corporeal signs" Butler claims the gender to be manifested on should be feminine to the extreme. However, as Williamson explained, the mirror-image in the advertisement is usually unattainable and idealistic. In the present culture, femininity is often attached to such features as long hair and smooth complexion, and by taking care of her hair and skin a woman performs her gender in the way she is so often told she should by advertising. However, the feature present-day advertisements are most often accused of idolising is the extremely thin feminine body type.

In media, the often mentioned ideal size for a woman is the 'size zero', meaning the size tag of their clothes. Women, who fit this almost non-existent size are often referred to as 'the size zeros': the size of the woman's body becomes to represent her as a whole. Although the size zeros are seen in all forms of media, advertising is the most body-conscious of them all. It uses images of conventionally beautiful, slim women because it is trying to convince the viewer to pursue the 'good life' (Rossi 2007, 132). The thinness of the woman's body is the self-evident convention that the advertisements suggest is the object of this pursuit, and which can only be attained, of course, by the product advertised. However, as the ideal body of advertising is unattainable, "no-one embodies the ideal and the ideal embodies no-one"

(Rossi 2007, 133)[2]. In advertising conventionally ugly (fat) women, are often used only as a contrast to the desired, ideal beauty: the flawlessness of the beautiful woman becomes emphasised in comparison. This is how the viewer commits with the conventional beauty code: a common-looking woman becomes ugly when juxtaposed with the unattainable beauty, and her fatness becomes part of her flaws (Rossi 2007, 143).

Thus, thinness is one of the most prevailing features attached to the performative of femininity today. Susan Bordo describes "the image of the slender body" as "a body whose gender meaning is never neutral" and whose signification "overdetermines slenderness as a contemporary ideal of specifically *female* attractiveness" (1993, 204-5). Bordo says that the ideal female body has grown thinner and thinner through the centuries. She explains that this is because women today have two ideals to strive for: "a spare, 'minimalist' look and a solid, muscular, athletic look" (1993, 191). What is common for both these body types is that they are both thin, "tightly managed" and without "the soft, the loose; unsolid, excess flesh" (1993, 191). Moreover, Bordo writes that although muscles are traditionally a sign of primitive and unleashed sexual desire, the tight body of a present-day swimsuit model has stepped into the realm of culture. The firm developed body means sexuality under control, sexuality "that is not about to erupt in unwanted and embarrassing display" (Bordo 1993, 195). Traditionally, women are seen as more prone to emotional outbursts than men and the tight female figure is a symbol of control over such issues.

In relation to gender, the outer corporeal signs also include those of the person's ethnicity. Women are not a single, coherent identity, although some feminist critique analyses gender in isolation from other social phenomena (Strinati, 2006, 199). However, a person's ethnic background is as much part of their identity as gender is and these parts are in interaction with each other. Thus, the theory of *intersectionality* is used often in present-day feminist

[2] Translation from Finnish my own.

criticism, because it not only acknowledges the existence of these different aspects of identity, but also allows that these aspects to be looked at the same time (Weston 2010, 15). According to intersectionality, gender must be seen as a construction which overlaps other social phenomena, such as ethnicity, and should always be studied in relation to them (Lykke 2010, 50).

As a meaning creating media, advertising also creates the meanings of ethnicity and affects the way it is seen in relation to the representation of femininity. For this reason it is important to acknowledge the ethnic backgrounds of the representations of women in advertisements also. Anthony J. Cortese, who has used the idea of intersectionality in his work, notes (2008, 14-15) that

> Ethnic and gender representations in advertising are intricately linked to social arrangements and the power structure. The mass media is the strongest glue that bonds the diverse groups that compose a heterogeneous national and global community.

Cortese, who has studied advertisement images of American magazines, says that researching images of ethnic minorities particularly in advertising is important not only because they are the images that take part in shaping cultural attitudes about race, but also because advertising reflects the operative power relations in contemporary society. Advertisements show to what extent the dominant groups are willing to accept ethnic minorities as part of the mainstream society. As a product of the mainstream culture, advertising is an apt barometer not only for sexual equality but also for racial and ethnic assimilation (Cortese 2008, 91).

Unlike many other dimensions of culture, advertising has a way of making images of ethnic minorities blend in into the general imaginary of the field. Cortese finds that advertisements use *symbolic racism*, which he defines as “subtle ethnic stereotyping, trivialisation of minority empowerment or racial equality, or the absence of ethnic representations” (2008, 15). Advertising uses familiar, stereotypical images of race to sell products, and by doing this it enforces the assumptions the viewer may have about ethnicities.

Cortese claims (2008, 15) that

> Symbolic racism involves seemingly fundamental illustrations of events and situations relating to race that have racist postulates and approaches built in as undisputed assumptions. This allows racist remarks to be presented without ever bringing into question the racist assumptions on which the assertions are grounded.

Symbolic racism intersects often with the representations of gender. For example, even though a black or Latino woman is featured in a mainstream Western world advertisement, she is still often presented according to Western beauty standards: her skin is lighter brown, her hair is straight and her eyes are blue or green (Cortese 2008, 98). In its most extreme, symbolic racism means the use of strong racial stereotyping. Black women, for example, are often depicted as sexual predators, wild and animal-like, active in their search of the next sexual pray. Latinos in general are mostly located in the background or as part of a group, but Latino women, Latinas, are often seen as sex symbols, attractive and available (Cortese 2008, 102-108). They are considered to be not only exotic and naturally beautiful but also "inarticulate, subservient, passive and gullible" (Cortese 2008, 106). The stereotype for Asian women is also that of a sex-object, but they are often seen as passive and eroticised, and as "exotic, sensuous, promiscuous but untrustworthy" (Cortese 2008, 108).

2.3 The Object of the Gaze: Women and Sexuality in Advertising

This far I have discussed the ways gender is performed, and claimed that the outer physical signs of women are coded to the extreme to serve the efficient meaning creation preferred by advertising. I have taken into account the size of the body as one of the manifestations of femininity and noted that ethnic background also affects the way women are represented. Next I will discuss sexual identities, which is also coded and exploited in advertising. As studies have shown, in advertisements women are often used as sex objects and for this reason I will next introduce Laura Mulvey's theory of gaze. Mulvey claims, that in an image the position of the woman is the object of male desire. I will also explain how Mulvey's

theory assumes heterosexuality as the norm and finally discuss alternative ways of looking.

Cultural theorist Laura Mulvey states that there is only one possible role for a woman in an image: to be the object of *the gaze*. Because of the unequal positions of the genders, she argues that this gaze is specifically male (Mulvey 1989, 14-16). Mulvey herself based her theory on Hollywood cinema, but the theory has been since used extensively to expose the hierarchies of gender representations in all media (Mayne 1993, Thornham 2007). As a construction with similarly conventional ways of representing gender as Hollywood movies, the theory can easily be adapted to advertising as well. Furthermore, because Mulvey studied cinema, her images often included people of both sexes. She attached the gaze to the male actors and calls them the "screen surrogates" of the male spectators (1989, 20). However, in the advertisements of a women's magazine, where products are sold primarily for female use, male figures are not usually visible. Mulvey claims, that in the absence of men, the camera works as the link between the advertisement image and the real world outside it: the gaze of the camera and what it captures become the gaze of the actual viewer. This makes it possible for the male viewer to identify with the male gaze, even though there are no actual men visible in the picture, and for the female viewer to position herself as the object of the gaze (1989, 19).

Mulvey's starting point is *scopophilia*, which means the pleasure of looking, a term borrowed from Freud (1989, 16). Scopophilia occurs when we take others as objects of looking and, as Mulvey argues, can also be gained by looking at images of others. According to Mulvey, in the world ruled by sexual inequality, the roles of the gaze are always divided according to gender: into the active male subject that holds the passive female as its object. Mulvey argues that it is impossible for the male viewer not to identify himself as the bearer of the gaze and for the woman viewer not to identify herself its object (1989, 20). This is because of the ways that the genders are acted out in the images and thus the female

representation is often passive, an icon, “a perfect product” (22). Mulvey states (1989, 19):

> The determining male gaze projects its fantasy onto the female figure, which is styled accordingly. In their traditional exhibitionist role women are simultaneously looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to connote *to-be-looked-at-ness*.

Thus in advertising, where photographs of carefully made-up and positioned women are retouched in order to best represent the most conventional of beauty, women are intentionally placed under the male gaze and often heavily eroticised and objectified. Diana Fuss also claims that fashion photography, which is the category of most of the images in *Vogue*, frequently shows women in “classically exhibitionist and sexually provocative poses” (1992, 713-4). She states (1992, 713):

> Playing on the considerable social significance attributed to a woman’s value on the heterosexual marketplace, women’s fashion photography scopophilically poses its models as sexually irresistible subjects, inviting its female viewers to consume the product by (over)identifying with the image.

It may seem contradictory, however, that *Vogue*, similarly to many other fashion magazines primarily intended for female use, is full of images that are explicitly erotic and typical for male pornography, images of “all too receptive, quite nearly orgasmic” models “waiting to be taken by more than a camera” (Fuss 1992, 714). This is because scopophilia also occurs in being *looked at*. Thus women in images are coded for the purpose of *recognition* and thus *identification* (Mulvey (1989, 18). According to Mulvey, the identification as the object of the gaze brings with it the desire to become the person in the image.

It is this process of identification that makes Mulvey’s theory apt when studying the representation of gender in advertising. The theory is also parallel to the idea of advertisements acting as a mirror as argued by Williamson as well as to Butler’s claim that performativity is rooted in public action, such as advertisements. As the woman posing sexily in an advertisement image acts as the mirror reflection of the viewer, the viewer identifies

herself as the object of the gaze and wishes to become like the woman in the image. She does this by performing her gender the same way the woman in the image does and thus re-creating the same gender norms the advertisers originally did when they set up the photo shoot. Moreover, advertisements in *Vogue* are coded for identification by more than just the image itself. The conventions of fashion magazines, the captions, titles and teasers, serve as a signal for the woman viewer that the pictures are for identification, not for desire: the woman reader should want to *be* the woman, not to have her (Fuss 1992, 736).

By presenting women as objects of the male gaze, and treating them as such, the traditional imagery of advertising pushes genders into the conventions of heterosexuality. At the same time homosexuality, quite literally, is moved out of the picture and into the (invisible) margins: the traditional conventions of advertising images assume their viewers to be strictly heterosexual. Butler, as described in the previous subsection, sees that heterosexuality is not a "natural" consequence of either sex or gender, but is created by forcing us to belong to either one of the two binary sexes, thus eliminating alternative sexual identities. As a gender-producing technology, advertising takes part in this process: just like the conventions of gender, the conventions of heterosexuality are seen in advertising, often as part of being a natural woman (and a man). In fact, advertisements featuring people are almost always also advertisements of heterosexuality: advertising produces images representing heterosexuality as a natural state, the one and only option, with which the viewer is automatically assumed to identify (Rossi 2003, 11).

There are some examples, however, of imagery with homosexual features in advertising. One of these is *lesbian chic*, a style where the conventions and visual codes of butch-lesbianism, such as a masculine way of dress, are visible. However, these are softened (thus made acceptable for main-stream viewing) by associations to heterosexuality: despite her androgynous looks and masculine clothes, a female model still wears make-up or has long

hair, and thus can still be seen as the object of the male gaze (Vänskä 2006, 116-117). Lesbian chic present in the mass media creates a model of a "domesticated" lesbian. Media is blamed for masking what is not articulated and creating images of lesbians which are "idealized and unattainable version[s] of appearance, beauty and style" (Moritz 1995, 128). These claims sound very similar to those made of the representations of women in general.

Mulvey's theory has its critics (De Lauretis 1984, Silverman 1996, Cronin 2000). One of the problems it is claimed to have is that Mulvey does not take into account that some men do not desire the women they look at and some women desire and enjoy looking at other women. However, there exists one tactic of looking that allows the existence of a gaze that challenges the norm of heterosexuality: even advertising with overtly heterosexual imagery can be looked at with a *queer gaze.* The term can be used of a process of intentionally looking at an image to see any underlying implications of cracks in its heteronormative façade. This means that although heterosexuality is assumed to be the dominant regime, there will be some implications in an image, much subtler than lesbian chic, that expose underlying homosexual desires. The value in queering the gaze is that if the existence of other readings except the heterosexual one are possible, even if acknowledging them is harder than just seeing the obvious, heterosexuality as the norm can also be questioned. By seeing alternative sexual identities in an image where there seems to be none, the gender performance itself is challenged and the binary structure of the two sexes is exposed as the construction it ultimately is (Cranny-Francis et al. 2003, 174-175).

The idea of women *only* as the objects of the male gaze is also in other respects problematic. Although in advertising women are often presented as objects, it does not mean that a woman viewer looking at these images submits to the narrow female norm imposed on her. Instead, she can make her own interpretations. Furthermore, every viewer, whatever their gender, can move between the positions of the subject and the object of the gaze (Rossi 2005,

89-90). Thus a woman viewer may also identify herself as the holder of the gaze without feeling anxiety of being forced to look at another woman in an oppressing way. Moreover, women interpret pictures according to their age and social and ethnic backgrounds (Laiho 1996, 70). And although Mulvey's article is a landmark text in revealing *looking* as a concept that is dependent on time and that produces meanings, the theory should be read as a tool of interpreting the ways media reproduces the conventions of the gender system. The gaze itself is not a natural entity, as the gender system itself is not natural, but instead, it is "knowledge and power, desire, production of identity and different ways of pleasure" (Koivunen 2006, 8)[3]. As cultural constructions, ways of looking are also conventions that may be and in fact are challenged all the time.

3. Representing Women: *Vogue* Advertisements That Do Not Break the Pattern

The advertisements of *Vogue* fall mostly into two major categories: fashion advertisements, including brands of clothes, shoes and bags, and beauty product advertisements, including those for make-up products, body and facial lotions and perfumes. There are some advertisements from other groups as well, such as travelling, beverages and even technical products, although these are more uncommon. This is not surprising, given the strong identity of the magazine as a guidebook on the up-to-date trends and fashion.

A woman in fashion advertisement has a very paradoxical performative to act out: she has to be sexy and respectable, seductive and passive at the same time. Women in fashion imagery are "passive flirts, who do not grow old and do not work" (Laiho 1996, 61). Fashion advertising, as advertising in general, is a gender producing technology, which sells gender ideals, models of identification and objects of desire (Vänskä 2006, 47). Vänskä also states (127)

[3] Translation from Finnish my own.

> [I]n fashion advertisement...the boundaries between the product and the idealized female model are not clear-cut. Her ideal femininity is the product of the fashion industry and of the fashion advertisement, and it is sold to the female spectator as a commodity, packaged in bright colors, chic fashion items, immaculacy and youth. She seduces the reader to indulge in this multiplied fantasy of the ideal feminine self.

As mentioned earlier, *Vogue* as a women's magazine reflects the contemporary attitudes towards women in the contemporary British culture. Its advertisements, as are cultural construction almost seamlessly integrated to the magazine, should also reflect the same. However, in today's world fashion is a phenomenon that hardly ever respects the boundaries of nations. As a magazine *Vogue* has to compete with the internet, where a picture of a famous fashion icon wearing a certain dress can spread in a matter of seconds. Soon all of the fashionistas within its reach will be wearing the same dress, ordered from the same online shop. In this respect, the fashion advertisements of *Vogue* can also be seen as multinational phenomenon, as the same images are available for everyone online. However, as *Vogue* is a global magazine with local versions, its contents are edited and selected to suit the culture of any given country, the United Kingdom in this case. This is why the advertisements of *Vogue* annual volume 2009 can be studied against the contemporary world view of the popular culture of Britain. It must be noted, however, that this culture is greatly influenced by the North-American world-view.

In any culture, however, advertisements are a medium through which genders are produced and reproduced. They are often accused of using unrealistic images of women and representing unattainable ideals. In sections the following subsections, I will discuss advertisements of the British version of *Vogue* that represent women with the conventional features of femininity, those that stay within the tight boundaries dictated by society. In section 3.1 I will exemplify how women are used in advertisements in general, how her value is derived from the referent system and how this value can then be used to create meanings. In 3.2 I will discuss the referent system of femininity further and concentrate on the actual

signals in the image that make the viewer use this particular system as the interpretation tool for the image. I will also study how the representations of femininity are intersected with those of ethnicity. Lastly, in subsection 3.3 I will discuss study how the advertisements of *Vogue* promote the idea of a woman as the object of the male gaze and ultimately as the object of his desire. It would be impossible for me to discuss all of the advertisements of *Vogue* from the year 2009, as there are hundreds, but in each subsection I will concentrate on those which best exemplify my claims.

3.1. The Product Takes Over: Decoding Value in the Material World of *Vogue* Advertisements

In a magazine like *Vogue* the products advertised are part of a lifestyle the reader is supposed to inherit. As already mentioned, most are advertisements for brands of clothing and accessories or make-up advertisements. The world of *Vogue* is certainly a very material one, as from time to time it was very hard to distinguish if a picture in the magazine was indeed a paid advertisement or part of the editorial flow. Furthermore, most of the advertisements of *Vogue* in the year 2009 feature a woman as a part of this material existence. However, although the sign of a woman always brings with it certain values attached to the gender alone, such as femininity and motherhood, the way of picturing her also greatly affect the type of gender performance she gives and the lifestyle she depicts. This in turn affects the value of her as a sign and, in turn, the value of the product advertised. In the end, the product takes over the meaning and the woman as a sign is bypassed as an empty shell. In the following section, I will study the use of the woman as a sign in the advertisements of *Vogue*, how and what value she creates and also the tactics used by advertisers to make it seem as if the product were the actual source of the meaning.

Firstly, I will refer to the theory section 2.1. I suggested that a value of a sign is dependent on the referent system it uses for connotations. I used an example of a woman in horseback

and will now introduce an advertisement of the same category. Clothing brand *Hermès* (FIG. 1) presents the viewer with a woman and a horse, but it is hard to tell whether she is an elegant lady or an unruly cowgirl. On one hand, her clothing does resemble the outfit of a cowboy, with its fringes and a hat that echoes a stetson. On the other, the model lies on a horse on her back, so she will not be riding it very fast or far. Furthermore, her costume is not straightforwardly suitable for the prairie; it consists of only a skimpy tunic with no trousers.

In this case, the value attached to the girl through connotation may then be found in both the referent system of the cowgirl as well as that of the riding lady. In the system including the cowgirl, the elements of wildness and danger are sourced, as well as the sense of freedom of riding alone in the windy wilderness. On the other hand, the woman's seductive pose on the horse and her scantly clothed lower limbs suggest the elements of elegance and sensuality, traced from the system of the lady. Furthermore, even the horse borrows from both these worlds: on one hand it is a creature governed by its instincts, unbridled and without a saddle, on the other, in this picture it has become very domesticated, almost only a platform or a piece of furniture for the model to lie on. In this case, it is also evident that the latter system is used to soften the impact of the other and so the wild cowgirl of an even wilder west is tamed to be a fashion model lying on a horse on a beautiful beach wearing goatskin garments.

This is how the advertisement, and indeed also all the rest introduced in this thesis, works: it connotes to the two referent systems and draws the values from them, attaching values to the signs. However, it must be noted, that although the image of a woman on a horse is eventually impacted by two referent systems, their effect is not equal. It is the final representation of the sign and the formal structure of the advertisement image that determine which of the systems is the dominant one. This happens very often in advertisements including representations of women: an image of a woman performing femininity in an

untraditional way is often brought back to its conventions by softening the representations with something ultrafeminine. In this case, the wild and free cowgirl, historically a very untraditional role for a woman, is feminised by her pose, outfit, hair and make-up.[4]

After decoding the way values are created in *Vogue*, I will take a look at the exchange processes behind them. As an example, I will use an advertisement for *Pantene Pro-V*, which uses the shape of a woman's body effectively for its purposes (FIG. 2). The model of the picture is naked, with only her hair to guard her intimacy. However, she is not posed sexily, her breasts are not on show, and her legs are firmly crossed. Her head is down, and this deprives her of individuality; her face is hidden and she could be anyone, any woman. However, it is quite certain that she is a woman as her body shape is clearly visible. The shape of her hair also echoes the shape of the female body: the girl holds it in the middle, thus forming a "waist" and the form of the female body thought to be natural. Her form all in all is that of nature: is seems that all that is needed to create a meaning is the bare female body.

The woman, or her body, is an example of the objective correlative mentioned by Williamson. In order to communicate intangible attributes that cannot be presented in the advertisement otherwise, this shape of the woman is used as a value-bringing sign to the otherwise quite numb message of the sole shampoo bottle. The viewer reads the message and thinks that the strength and well-being represented by the body of the woman in fact originates from the sign of the brand name and not the other way around. This message is enforced by the shape of the woman's shadow in the background: it echoes the shape of the shampoo bottle instead of the shape of a woman. The values attached to the sign of the woman are clearly linked to the brand and her values become those of the product. As the advertisement suggests that this shape and form is natural for a woman, it also suggests that same naturalness to be attached to the product advertised. As Williamson wrote, one of the

[4] This is also evident in the phenomenon of lesbian chic, introduced in section 2.3.

functions of advertising is to make the intangible attributes of the product mean something to the consumer. The value of this female sign is that of natural beauty and the force of nature that keeps the hair shiny and strong, and this can now supposedly be found in the bottle of *Pantene Pro-V*.

Thus, as an objective correlative the sign ‘woman’ is very efficient. As this shampoo advertisement proved, even the bare female body shape is loaded with strong connotations, a very useful feature in advertising. However, as already mentioned, even in as simple an advertisement image as that for *Pantene Pro-V,* consisting only of the woman and a shampoo bottle, the woman as a sign is easily ignored as the source of those connotations. The formal structure of the image and features such as the shadow and the “waist” promote the idea that all the values actually originate from the product: the woman’s hair is so shiny because she uses the shampoo advertised. This is what the viewer, without decoding the exchange system behind the meaning, is supposed to see when looking at the image. Furthermore, the image also claims that *because* the woman is such a natural, strong entity she will use the product, which also is natural and strengthening. Thus all the values originally attached to the woman and transferred to the brand, in the mind of the viewer are the values of the shampoo. The product has taken over the meaning.

As previously mentioned, several referent systems may, and often do, influence the reading of a single advertisement image and sometimes other signs in the image also bring value to the exchange process between the sign of the woman and that of the product. In the advertisement for *Yves Saint Laurent* (FIG. 3) not only is the sign of the woman used but also another, an actual one: the model poses in front of the Hollywood sign erected in 1923 in the hills of Los Angeles. In this advertisement, all these signs, the woman, the Hollywood sing and the brand, participate in the exchanging process. The Hollywood sign brings with it the connotations of the glamour of the film industry, and takes the viewer to the world of the rich

and the famous. These values are then attached to the female model. She stands dramatically; eyes closed and hand on one side of her face as if she were an actress of an old Hollywood film. Her glamorous hair and red lips intensify the impression of show biz glitz. Her stance is powerful and over the top, just like a great diva's pose should be: one hand on the hip and legs apart. The value of this modelling stereotype of a diva, boosted by the values of the Hollywood sign, is again attached to the product advertised: the clothes and accessories of the brand *Yves Saint Laurent*.

The image also contains other subtle visual clues to help the viewer read the intended message behind the advertisement. Firstly, the shape of the woman's body echoes the shape of the sign behind her: her upward torso and spread legs remind the letter Y standing the wrong way up. The letter is also included in the Hollywood sign, visible on the woman's right hand side, as well as in the brand name and, maybe even more importantly, in *Yves Saint Laurent*'s well-known acronym *YSL*. Furthermore, the same Y shape also appears on the stitching of her bag. Lastly, the structure of her shoes is similar to the framework holding up the letters of the sign behind her. These features link her to the referent system of the Hollywood sign and then back to the brand even more intently: they are not mere arbitrary coincidences, but visible hints which point out that the woman, the Hollywood sign and the brand are actually part of the same structure of meaning.[5]

These clues cement the relations of all the signs in the image and lead the viewer to see that they are all part of the same meaning creation process: the woman consists of Y's just like the sign and is hold up by a similar structure as its letters. Thus the woman becomes to represent the Hollywood sign almost literally. Furthermore, as the woman also embodies the brand with her Y-shaped stance, everything the sign represents merges together with all the of

[5] Similar visual clues can also be found in the two previous example images: in FIG. 2 the colour of the woman's hair and its shine is similar to the swirl of colour on the shampoo bottle and the sheen on its surface, and in FIG. 1 the colour of the woman's wrist band is identical to that of the horse's coat and its shape imitates the horse's mane blowing in the wind.

the consumer's impressions of *YSL* through the woman. However, as already mentioned, advertisers presume that the viewer bypasses these hints and sees that the meaning they create is actually originating in the brand. This meaning is that the brand *YSL* is part of the glamorous lifestyle or the rich and famous and favoured by those living in the shade of the Hollywood sign. Thus it promises that any consumer who buys the brand will also be included in this group, no matter where they actually live.

As stated earlier, Williamson claims that advertisements have a way of making the product mean something to the consumer by translating its qualities as human statements with humanly symbolic exchange-value. In the previous image, for example, this value was the lifestyle of the Hollywood diva. The value can also be a less tangible asset, such as a feeling the product is claimed to produce. Williamson says, that advertisements aim for to make it seem that the product not only represents a feeling but actually creates it (1985, 36). In the advertisement for Michael Kors's fragrance *Very Hollywood* (FIG. 4) the feeling the product is claimed to generate is represented by a woman.

In the image for *Very Hollywood* a man and a woman stand on the red carpet. The woman is wearing a figure hugging golden dress, which radiates in the sea of otherwise darkly suited men. She is smiling widely as if enjoying the attention she is receiving from the swarming paparazzi. The female model is, in fact, the only person showing any emotion at all in this image: all of the male photographers stand stone-faced and her date has turned his face away from the viewer. Thus the man's state of mind is left a mystery, as it is inconsequential for the meaning of the advertisement. However, it is easy to picture him gazing adoringly at the beautiful woman radiating happiness next to him.

Again, the formal structure of the image invites the viewer to look at and identify with the woman, she being the centre of attention: even all the lenses, including that of the actual camera that took this shot, are aimed at her. The radiant lady is actually the only female in the

image and she comes to represent the feeling of confidence and utter happiness at being admired at. The viewer is again supposed to make a connection between the state of mind of the glamorous girl and the feeling the product will bring when worn. This feeling will become interchangeable with the product, making it seem as if the product is its source and not the other way around: all the eyes are admiring the woman, as they would any bearer of such an elegant smell. The product then becomes to represent the feeling, although it is actually represented by the woman in the image.

Both this advertisements for *Michael Kors* as well as the previous one for *YSL* (FIG. 3) borrow from the same referent system, that of the glamorous life of a Hollywood superstar. It is noteworthy that these images only connote the life of the rich and famous for a person, whose culture includes this imaginary: as stated earlier, the referent systems are cultural constructions, learned by the viewer through his or her own society and its customs. The fact that these two advertisements, and others as well, borrow their meaning from things such as the Hollywood sign means that they are meant for consumers living in a culture where a woman in a golden dress on a red carpet is connected to the glamour of a film premiere. This proves my earlier claim of the cultural context of the British version of *Vogue*: it is determined by the popular culture of the contemporary Britain, which in its turn is much influenced by the popular culture of North America.

Secondly, another aspect the two previous advertisements have in common is that the women in both of them represent a lifestyle of the rich and famous. In fact, one of the most used strategies of advertising is to imply that by buying the product the consumer may enter the same lifestyle as the people in the advertisement image. This way “a product may be connected with a way of life through being an accessory to is, but come to signify it” (Williamson 1985, 35). Thus, the products become to signify the lifestyle, the value of which was first represented by the women in the images. Another image using the same strategy the

advertisement for a clothing brand *Aspinal of London* (FIG 5. December 2009). In this image, a woman is used to signify a lifestyle supposedly attained by purchasing an actual accessory: a bag from.

The lifestyle is suggested by showing a pair of female legs getting out of the back seat of a car. A hint of other body parts are visible: part of her arm, chest, of course, and a wisp of long hair as if proving that the person is actually female, but it is the legs that take central stage. Even the bag she is holding and evidently promoting seems to merge into the background, as it is black as are her dress and shoes and even the car she is coming out of. The legs are the representation of the lifestyle *Aspinal of London* is wishing to be part of. This way of life, which requires for women to have long, smooth, sexy legs and to step out of the back seats of limousines, is the value that the woman brings to this image. The value is then attached to her bag, which, in the end, takes over the value. Furthermore, Williamson argues that "the product and the 'real' human world become linked in the ad, apparently naturally, and the product may and does 'take over' the reality on which it was, at first, dependent for its meaning" (1985, 35). For a viewer it should seem that only by buying the bag or the fragrance or the clothes by *YSL* can this lifestyle be attained. The products become to represent the lifestyle and finally move from a simple accessory to its signifier.

The fact is, however, that the advertisement can only refer to the lifestyle it wishes to convey, but never actually create it. As noted previously, advertisements will never be able to complete connections between the signs and their referent systems by themselves. This creation work is done in the mind of the viewer, who uses the already existing referent systems to create values and trade the currencies, but the viewer will only create the meaning because the advertisement *invites them to do so*. The signs of the advertisements must always address someone, and this process Williamson calls *appellation*[6] (1985, 50).

[6] Williamson's theory on appellation is greatly influenced by Althusser's idea of interpellation. Althusser claims

As I explained in the theory section, before the viewer creates the meaning of the advertisement he or she has already been created as the creator of meaning by the advertisement. This is appellation, which always takes place before the transfer of currencies: “Every ad necessarily assumes a particular spectator: it projects into the space out in front of it an imaginary person composed in terms of the relationship between the elements within the ad” (Williamson 1985, 50). However, Williamson also notes that the person invited by the image for transferring is not an actual individual ‘you’. The subject is rather an imagery one, created by the structure of the image, a space where the real ‘you’, the viewer, will position him- or herself in.

If the position that the advertisement is inviting the viewer to step into has already been created by it, what does this mean in terms of the advertisements in *Vogue*? The assumption is that the reader of *Vogue* is female as is the consumer for whom the products advertised in it are aimed. It is also evident that they are assumed to share a certain world view, such as admiring a lifestyle that contains luxury items like expensive hand bags and limousine rides. However, appellation works even if the viewer does not agree with this way of life: he or she will still be able to read the message behind the signs of the advertisement and are invited to do so. By offering the reader this specific lifestyle to be admired, the magazine suggests that they will not buy the products advertised to become part of the group. On the contrary, as Williamson claimed, its readers will buy the products because they already believe they belong to this group.

When the advertisements in Vogue are studied, it is clear even on the basis of the examples in this section, that the group the reader should belong to also include the diva in front of the Hollywood sign by *YSL* and the glamorous lady on the red carpet by *Michael Kors*. Another image suggesting a certain lifestyle that the viewer is assumed to adopt, or see themselves as

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that “all ideology hails or interpellates concrete indivuduals as concrete subjects” (1984, 47). This way it “’recruits’ subjects among the individuals…or ‘transforms’ the individuals into subjects” (1984, 48), thus influencing them to adopt the assumptions of that given ideology.

already part of, is for a luxury accessory brand *Jimmy Choo* (FIG. 6). In the image, three women are propping up a bar, each wearing items from the designer's latest range. Behind them a bar stool is visible, inviting the viewer to join the company of these women. Or rather, the image is adjusted so that it seems as if someone has left the seat to take the picture: the viewer is already positioned as part of this group and is now only admiring it through the lens. The picture also cuts out the models' heads so that only their bodies are visible and thus their true identities are also hidden[7]. This makes it easy for the reader to forget that these women are individuals and they become to represent only the group of luxury brand buying women, the group that the advertisement is convincing the reader to belong to.

However, the viewer will find one oddity in the picture: the model sitting on the stool on the right seems out of place. While the other two seem relaxed and confident, the third woman has crossed her legs and hands and sits at an odd angle as if she was nervous and not completely sure of herself. She seems almost embarrassed to show off her accessories and tries to hide her shoes and bag from vision altogether. Furthermore, the two other women have turned towards each other slightly, leaving the third woman somewhat outside their group. When looked at the brand closer, the reason for this is revealed: the advertisement is actually for a low-price clothing store *H&M* who has created the collection promoted here in cooperation with *Jimmy Choo*. The price point for these items is considerably lower compared to the genuine articles, thus making the luxury brand available to the masses and opening up the group who identifies itself through the brand to a much larger group of people. The two confident women represent the group that anyone who buys the items from *H&M* can identify with: they are happy with their purchases and invite the viewer to join the group by buying them also. The third woman however, is not so sure: she is hesitant to enjoy the status that the brand brings, because she knows that the items are not the 'real deal'. This

[7] This seems to be one of the recurring themes in the advertisements of *Vogue*: to show just a part of a woman, but one so feminine that it represents her as a whole. This can also be seen in FIG. 2 and FIG. 5 as well as in many images introduced in the following sections.

then actually creates two groups that the viewer can identify with: the group of consumers who are glad to have been able to buy the brand for a fraction of a price of its actual cost and the group of those who feel that the real status lies only with the items from the higher price point. This double message of the advertisement suits well the differing images of the brands advertised, and both *H&M* and *Jimmy Choo* secure their clientele with its meanings.

In this section, I have shown how Williamson's theory of decoding advertisements can be used to expose the structures behind the meanings of advertisement images. I claimed that referent system, which are culturally bound, coexist in images, and that several of them can be used to create the desired message. I showed how these referent systems influence one another and how appellation is used in the advertisements of *Vogue* to create different groups for consumer identification. I also proved that the culture where the referent systems of the images are based in, is the popular culture of the modern day Britain.

Williamson states: "Advertisements create their own consumers, they tell *you* what you are like" (1985, 51). Bearing in mind, that if the target clientele of the advertisements of *Vogue* is women, they must create the conventions of the representations of women. For example, the very first advertisement image introduced in this section, *Hermès*' girl on a horseback, only works because its referent system, women, is clearly marked and the gender performance evident. Without the referent system of gender there would be no values and no meanings. Thus next, I will take a closer look at the representations of women in *Vogue* advertisements in reference to their gender and its conventions.

3.2 To Recreate Ourselves: Femininity Performances in *Vogue* Advertisements

In the previous section, I referred to advertisements which used women as signs creating meanings attached to the products. In these examples the women served as signs of immaterial qualities such as strength or happiness, or derived their meaning from other signs

in the image. I noted that the values the representations created are caused by their connotations through a referent system of gender, and a group they created may be widely called ‘women’. Most of the advertisements in *Vogue* are images of women performing their gender in a way that makes the product desirable to the viewer. It also contains various images where the gender is presented in a way that is correct according to the conventions of society. Moreover, by referring to the feminine gender as a complete reference system, advertisements are actually creating the conventions and the ways to perform femininity. Next, I will consider how advertisements of *Vogue* cause sedimentation of gender norms, as Butler calls it, and create the social fiction of the female gender. I will study how the referent system of femininity itself actually works in the advertisements of *Vogue*, and what are the signs of femininity that are used to sell the products.

As *Vogue* is a fashion magazine, its advertisements seem to be more focused on what women should look like rather that female behaviour. However, this is also part of performativity: the cultural codes and rules that establish the ways a woman should dress or wear her hair. Many of the advertisement images concentrate on selling women femininity that is coded, in Butler's terms, on the surface of their bodies. They offer women beauty ideals that they should achieve to act out on their faces or in the parameters set for their body shapes and sizes.

Lacan’s theory of the mirror-phase, also used by Williamson, is in effect when considering women’s beauty and body shape ideals and how they are represented in advertising and sold to the consumer. Williamson claimed that we may see our ideal, the unattainable self in the people depicted in advertisements, just as we can recognise ourselves in the mirror. Williamson's idea connected to Butler's theory of performativity can be seen in many advertisements and especially in those connected to the selling of the ideal beauty. This means that as a woman I may look at an advertisement image and as I see the woman

represented in it, I will not only desire to become her but through the advertisement image think that I am *already* her and it is because of this that I should buy the product: to realise this true me. This is taking appellation one step further. Williamson explains (1985, 68-9):

> …our faces, having already been removed from us…by the mirror, can be taken over completely, as the only time our face *ever* appears to us completely is at a distant, as an *image*; and…our face becomes, not part of us, the consumer, but the *product*: and is sold back to us, to recreate ourselves".

This idea of advertising creating our ideal selves is very clear in the case of gender. In *Vogue*, the viewer is presented with models of female behaviour, appearance and scripts for gender performance.

Advertisements for beauty products and fashion brands are prone to representing women with images in which they should be able to recognise themselves and to see that the gender performance given is actually the one they are, or should be, already performing. This is evident in the advertisement for *Dior* (FIG. 7), which also features a 'real' mirror to emphasise the image as the viewer's true self. The image consists of a woman in a red dress, leaning over a table, holding a mirror. She is coded for extreme femininity with red lips and thick eye-lashes. The background is grey and thus the bright colour of the woman's dress and lips is emphasised even more. She is the pop of colour in the otherwise dull-coloured, hard, masculine world.

At first glance it seems that the woman is admiring her own image in the mirror and the advertisement seems to be saying that by using the brand advertised you could look as nice as the lady in the vibrant red dress. However, when looked closely, it appears that the mirror the woman is holding is at an odd angle in comparison to her. The woman has turned her head away from the viewer, so there is no way of telling what she actually looks like. Instead of seeing the face of the lady, the viewer is actually peering over her shoulder and sees her own reflection in the mirror. This is a reflection of the perfect woman, complete with red lips, a reflection of the viewer's true self. The message of the advertisement is not that the viewer

should become like the model in the image, but that she already is like her. It suggests that *Dior* should be chosen not because the viewer wants to become a person who uses it, but because she already is one: she is the woman with the boldly-coloured lips and dress.

An advertisement for *Moschino* (FIG. 8) also features a woman with a mirror. It seems that she has just finished getting dressed and her outfit is complete once she has pulled on her gloves. The image seems to suggest that femininity is something that can be dressed on and stripped off, something depending on appearance. This woman has put on all feminine conventions and is now a complete woman in her dress, hair-do and strong make-up. However, she does not need or want to check her appearance from the mirror. She has turned her back to it and is rather looking straight at the viewer with one gloved hand helping the other: instead of the mirror, she is reflecting herself on the viewer. This shatters the previous analysis of the image, as the viewer becomes the mirror, and the femininity that the woman bears in her clothes in no more anything that she can strip off. The viewer is forced to consider what she has in common with the model who is showing all the signs of her gender. Respectively, the advertisement image itself serves as a mirror, but as a mirror that shows a predetermined image of the viewer: the gender she should be performing.

In fact, this is how many advertisements of *Vogue* create and then reflect gender back to their viewer[8]. An example of this is another advertisement for *Dior* (FIG. 9). The woman of the image is looking straight at the camera as if she were admiring her reflection on the surface of a mirror. The viewer is faced with the look she should strive for head-on. The product advertised is lipstick, but the model's face is posed so that all other features seem as important as her lips: her lashes are long and thick, her skin is smooth, and she has even raised her hand on her face to reveal her manicured nails. The model's hair is covered by a

[8] This is the second recurring theme in the advertisements of *Vogue*. For example FIG. 3 can also be read as belonging in this category. In the image, the woman strikes a pose as if modelling in front of a mirror, although her reflection is actually the viewer admiring the confidence she is exhuming, a feeling connected, of course, to the product advertised.

big hat, which, despite its seeming extravaganza of feathers, fades into the black background, drawing the viewer's eyes towards the fair face that is gazing under the rim. By buying the lipstick the consumer is a step closer to femininity, but it is not enough. To wholly become the woman reflected from the mirror of the advertisement, the viewer should have not only the full lips the lipstick promises to deliver but also the thick lashes, the smooth skin and so on. The lipstick does not work without the rest of the package, and without all these other signs of femininity the viewer will stay an incomplete match for the advertisement mirror, and thus, an incomplete woman.

In addition to the beauty advertisements selling gender performances on the faces of the women, they also do this on their bodies. As discussed in section 2.2, the body shape is a very gender-specific aspect. The idea of the 'perfect' body shape is one of the things being measured also in *Vogue* advertisements. At times, the introduction of the perfect female body can be very bare as in the advertisement for *Prevage Body* lotion (FIG. 10). The image features a headless, faceless body, an unidentified reflection of the viewer. The body seems to be perfect according to the conventions of society: thin waist, firm arms and thighs. At first, the message of the image seems to be that this ideal body is represented as the result of the product. The advertisement once again acts as a mirror for the viewer and she should realise that this is the body she should strive towards to complete the reflection.

However, closer inspection shows otherwise. Instead of presenting the headless body as perfect, the advertisement uses arrows to draw attention to its non-existing flaws. In fact, the body in the picture is not an example of the results of using the lotion advertised and, furthermore, it is not a real woman at all. The body is that of a plastic mannequin and, as such, absolutely out of reach of any woman to achieve. It is the epitome of man-made convention, the body without Bordo's "excess flesh", unreal in its firmness. This headless

plastic model literally is “no-body”. The viewer mirroring herself [9] in the image realises that if a man-made perfection has flaws, then they will definitely also have them. What is mirrored back to them is not the perfection but the flaws. The advertisement suggests that the only way of achieving perfection is purchasing the lotion advertised.

The attitude of advertising towards the representations of female body is ruled by dualism: on one hand pleasure and sensuality are emphasised, on the other, the ideal is asceticism and the control of desire with rationalism (Sarpavaara 2004, 73). Advertisements often claim that a woman with the perfect body should be both a hedonistic life-enjoyer who eats ice-cream with indulgence as well as a thin and controlled athlete. The dualism also makes a distinction between the two genders: the body of a woman in advertising becomes a sensuous creature ruled by her feelings, whereas that of a man is rational and disciplined.

In the advertisement for *Calvin Klein*[10] swimming costumes (FIG. 11, July 2009), a woman is enjoying the garments of the brand in a swimming pool with a very dualistic body performance. The man she is with is just reaching for a passionate kiss, although the woman refuses to be subdued[11]. Instead, she has lifted her head and guides the man’s stare down towards her tight, toned body. Her face is showing pleasure but even so, she is backing away from the man, her body just slightly turning away instead of pressing against his. The woman is, quite literally, on the verge: she is leaning out of the pool to the safe, firm land but still her sensual side keeps her in the pool in arms of passion. This perfect female body is obviously ruled by dualism, as the woman seems to surrender to passion at the same time as she is trying to stay in control and back away from the situation. Her tightly managed muscular

[9] From now on, I will assume that the reader of *Vogue* is female. This is based on my previous claims of the magazine, including its advertisements, being specifically for female consumption and because the claims I make of the representations of the women in them is looked at from the point of view of a female spectator.
[10] Referred to as *CK* from now on.
[11] The relationship between a man and a woman is the third occurring theme in the advertisements of *Vogue*. Very often the representatives of the two genders act restrained towards one another. FIG. 4 can be seen to be included in this category, as the man in the image does not show any actual emotion towards the woman, although the viewer is left free to imagine affection.

body also mirrors that of the male model, who is lean and muscular and their bodies are coded through strong heterosexual implications. The result is that wearing the *CK* brand bikini comes with a paradox: to wear the costume, a woman should look like the model in the picture, with a toned and tight body, the result of rationalism. On the other hand, becoming the woman caught in the heat of passion, a sensual life-enjoyer with no restraints of culture to hold her back, is only possible by purchasing the bikini.

The pool is used to symbolise the restrained side of the female body also in the advertisement for clothing brand *UGG* (FIG. 12). This advertisement features two pictures[12]: in the first one, the model is lying on a sun lounger, in the next, she is sitting on it. Although she is also wearing a swimming costume and the setting is by the pool, these two images differ greatly from the *CK* advertising advertisement discussed previously. Whereas the *CK* woman was on the verge between her two sides, the *UGG* girl is very firmly on dry land. She has evidently never been in the pool, as she is completely dry and there is not even a wet towel in sight. Whereas the *CK* model was standing with her arms open towards the viewer, the model in the *UGG* advertisement leans in and sits with her arms and legs crossed.

The two pictures can be read like a story: in the first the woman is caught sunbathing by the viewer and she tries her best to cover her body by crossing her arms. In the second, she has realised that hiding all is not possible when lying on a lounger, so she has sat up to gain more coverage and to avoid the intimacy of the lying down position. Her figure is definitely slim, but it is not as purposefully coded for sex-appeal as the previous model's: her breasts are small and curves seem to be non-existent. She depicts Bordo's minimalist look, with nothing hanging, bulging or sacking, not even in the most usual feminine places. Still, she could not be described as an androgynous model either: her femininity is emphasised by the one-piece swimming costume, the high-heeled shoes and the ring of substantial size she is

[12] A multipictured advertisement is the fourth category of advertisements found in *Vogue*. Many of them, like FIG. 12 contain two images spread over two pages, but other varieties will also be introduced later in this thesis.

wearing, as well as her long hair, that even her huge hat cannot completely cover. Furthermore, her slim, long legs take the central position in the second image.

This woman represents the rational side of the female body and hides her sensuality well: her pool-side manners are controlled and demure, even after being taken by surprise. However, her luxurious surroundings and sunbathing ways also refer to the life-enjoyer in her. Still, the *UGG* girl seems younger and more innocent than her *CK*-wearing sister. The advertisement suggests, that a woman should only be the object of desire, as the *UGG* girl was when she was surprised by the viewer, and not subdue to the passion, as the *CK* woman is in the brink of doing. Evidently, *UGG* desires to keep its brand image clean and respectable.

Gucci, on the other hand, relies on yet another image of the female body (FIG. 13). Whereas the *CK* woman was sensual and the *UGG* girl chaste, the women of the house of *Gucci* are neither. They are all very slim, and at that represent the Western beauty ideal. They are all wearing clothes that are not especially revealing or clinging to their bodies, but which all bear some resemblance to wildness and nature: there are leopard prints, feather coats and leather trousers and jackets. One of the models is even forming a bird-like figure with her body. There are two men in the picture with the women but unlike their *CK* bikini-clad sister, the *Gucci* models seem to be more or less unaware of their male companions' presence who seem equally uninterested in the women. It is evident that these girls are not staying slim to please men. Their slimness is neither presented as desirable nor demure, but part of their near androgynous look.

However, despite the lack of curves and bare flesh, the girls are still undoubtedly female: they are wearing dresses and high heels, they have long hair and make-up. Three of the models stand with attitude, legs apart and defiant expressions on their faces, and one of them has even decorated her body with a tattoo. Together with the wildness of their clothes, leather

and animal print, they look like an angry mass ready for rebellion and to confront the existing social order. However, as the girls' slender bodies are emphasised as a culturally constructed ideal of female attractiveness, despite their male viewer seeming lack of interest, their rebellion is not long-lived. Their slender bodies are far too weak for conquest or pose any real threat to the male order. Two of the women have realised this and have sat down defeated. Even the natural wildness of the leopard print is tamed by bringing it to culture through fashion: it is represented in a blue hue and decorated with sequins. The *Gucci* girls with their tiny frames remain an empty promise of a rebellion which never comes and their wild, defiant attitude is tamed by the dominant culture and gender norms.

In *Vogue* advertisements, as in fashion advertisement in general, the female gender performance is very rarely a domestic goddess or performing the role of the mother either. However, in other advertising both these roles are very common. Although *Vogue* mainly focuses on fashion, some of its advertisers have taken advantage of its target market: it seems that even the Gucci shopping group of women is supposed to act maternally from time to time. This is proved by the advertisement for *LG* brand refrigerators (FIG. 14).

The *LG* advertisement is one of the few in *Vogue* for any technical equipment. In the image, the woman is depicted in a very 1950's style attire, with a hem of her dress a respectable length, mumsy shoes with flat soles, finished off with a pearl necklace around her neck. She is standing beside the fridge and holding the door open for food and smiling to welcome the guests, as a happy little housewife should. This woman is clearly the guardian of the fridge and in charge of what goes in and out. The first in line to fill the fridge is a little girl, holding a cake big enough to feed a large family. The next person in the line is also a woman, holding a whole turkey, also dressed down in flat shoes with a scarf and a jacket to cover her body completely. After her comes the first man. He, however, does not seem to be bearing any food and looks at fridge as if only invited there to admire its technical qualities or

possibly be fed by the women.

The woman holding the door is not stylish nor is she suggested to be sexy in any way. She has hidden her body from the viewer by turning away from the camera and also partly hides it from the men in the picture by remaining behind the refrigerator door. Her role is to nurture and take care of her large family and consequently she has pushed whatever sexual desires she may have aside: she is as cold as the fridge she is promoting. This picture works in contrast with the other advertisement images of *Vogue*: it enforces the dual role reserved for women. On one hand, they are represented as sexual and sensual creatures, on the other they are supposed to act constrained and sensible. In comparison to almost every other picture of *Vogue*, the wife and mother of *LG* represents the other end of the spectrum. She is a reminder for the reader that even for the women who belong in the same group as the *Calvin Klein* woman on the verge of desire or the *Gucci* girls with their seeming rebellion, in the end motherhood, by the conventions of society, is suggested to be one of the most natural roles for a woman.

However, as Butler claims, gender, and all its conventions, is a not a natural consequence of the biological sex a person is born with. Advertisements, however, use the idea of a natural gender to their benefit. In this, there is also a paradox involved. On one hand beauty products are promoted with an idea that the viewer should buy the products because they already are a woman, as the mirroring advertisement image suggests, and because of that naturally behaves like one. However, they also claim that this natural look or performance of femininity is only achieved with the aid of the chemical or technical products advertised that are in fact results of science. To become the “natural” woman they already are, the viewer must rely on science to make it happen.

The advertisement image for *L'oréal*'s *Collagen Filler Double Action Lip* (FIG. 15) takes advantage of the idea of science creating the good looks thought natural for a woman. In the

image, former supermodel Linda Evangelista uses the product promised to make lip contours disappear. Evangelista holds the tubes containing the product as if a plastic surgeon holding a syringe. She is also wearing a white garment of which the viewer may only see the collar: it could be a lab coat, worn to emphasise her expertise and to give her an air of a scientist. Evangelista demonstrates the effective qualities of the product by applying it with a light touch and creating an instant “sparkle” to emphasise the effect. We are also told her age, 43, to underline the fact that she is not actually as young as she looks.

Evangelista’s image is that of a conventionally and naturally beautiful woman and her face indeed resembles that of a much younger model: she has no lines or wrinkles, not even outside the lip area that the product is claimed to affect. In fact, her face is smooth to the point of unnaturalness and the viewer might suspect that some heavy-handed photo shopping has been used to create her look. Although Evangelista may be regarded as naturally good-looking, the message of the advertisement tells the viewer that natural beauty is not enough. To be truly good looking, a woman should not only buy the product advertised to smooth her lips, but also use another for the wrinkles on her forehead, in the corners of her eyes, and so on. To look like a 43-year-old when you are 43 may be natural, but in the realm of advertising never desirable.

The advertisement for *L'oréal's* lash serum (FIG. 16) also mirrors the idea of natural femininity being the result of science. It features the face of actress Freida Pinto with long luxurious lashes but otherwise in a nude makeup to enhance her natural good looks. Again, Pinto is posed as if the viewer was looking at a mirror. However, across her face a chart has appeared as if she was being scientifically measured against the existing beauty standards. To highlight the scientific aspect of the image the advertisers have included a sign of the pipette, again with a miraculous sparkling drop at its end, as if its presence was the proof of the product in action. The viewer, who is mirroring herself against the image, is encouraged to

use the same scale to measure the beauty parameters of her own face. The advertisement suggests, that as anything scientific, also the features of femininity can be measured as well as improved, and all the viewer needs to do to reach Pinto's measurements is to purchase the product advertised.

The beauty standards measured on Pinto's face, and by her face, belong decidedly in the Western world. This is interesting because Pinto is actually an Indian actress. Her ethnicity, however, is quite well concealed in the image: Pinto's hair is tied tightly back and her complexion is rather light. The beauty image discussed this far has been looked at from a Western point of view. This is not surprising considering that I am studying the British version of *Vogue*. However, with its history as a colonising empire and the numerous different nationalities residing on the island, the beauty image represented for the women of multicultural Britain is very narrow. Cortese writes: "Advertising is a very powerful force that articulates, develops, transforms and elaborates [the] idea of ethnicity, gender and social class" (2008, 15). As the portrayal of a group, such as people of a certain ethnic background, indicates the power they have in society, their absence indicates the same. Through this non-representation in the media the powerless groups are kept powerless: for example, the absence of Asian models in European fashion magazines secures the Western beauty code dominance in fashion advertisement and, through this, in Western gender ideals. Although I did manage to find some non-white women on the pages of *Vogue*, the women of stereotypical Western European and white North American appearance were dominant. Cortese argued that advertisements use symbolic racism and familiar, stereotypical images of race to sell products, just as they use those of gender. Next, I will show some examples to see if and how this is done in the advertisements of *Vogue*.

An advertisement for *Martini* (FIG. 17, October 2009) features not only one but two non-white female models. They are shown as a part of a group of four, two of whom are men and

only one of these is white. In this respect, the advertisement differs from the ones introduced earlier. However, both the *Martini* girls are both relatively light-skinned, and the other also has straight hair that brings her back inside the Western beauty ideals. The other girl has an afro, but her eyes are closed so that another of her possible ethnic features, brown eyes, are hidden from the viewer. The world that they live in is decidedly a white man's world. This is evident as the only other people in the bar are the staff, two white male waiters. They are standing on the background, away from the interracial group and evidently hoping for its fast departure.

The lighter-skinned girl is sitting next to the black man but seems uninterested: although she is laughing, the woman is looking at a completely different direction away from the man with her legs and arms tightly crossed. The darker girl, on the other hand, sits next to the white man and has a completely different body language. She has a hand on his knee and they are both facing down, and smiling as if sharing some secret joke. The darker girl is touching the white man intimately, while her lighter-skinned friend behaves more properly. The advertisement is hinting that the darker girl is more sexually available than her friend and this is one of the racial stereotypes of black women.

On the other hand, the group may also be seen as an example of racial assimilation. In advertising, assimilation is seen most in the area of employment, less so in close social contact, such as friendship or residential vicinity, and the least in interracial romantic relationships (Cortese 2008, 100). The people in this advertising image are definitely in close social contact, it is even hinting at an interracial romance. However, the advertisement also claims that the darker the skin the more prone a woman is to have casual sex. Furthermore, traditionally it is more acceptable for a mixed-raced couple to consist of a black woman and a white man than a black man and a white woman. Thus, in addition to the close social contact between the white man and the black woman shown as a shallow sexual attraction, the

advertisement also denies the existence of sexual attraction between the lighter-skinned woman and the black man, thus reproducing the traditional racial roles.

It is evident that ethnic women are used because their ethnicity brings certain connotations to the image, such as in the *Martini* advertisement example above. Although the image itself is very rarely openly racist, the connotations of race have been developed for centuries and through times when things like segregation were the everyday norm. This is why there is always a chance of symbolic racism in the advertising image. One form of this is to deny the people in the images their cultural backgrounds, such as the culture-bound idea of beauty, and try to fit all women within the boundaries of Western looks and preferences.

Clothing brand *Next* (FIG. 18) also relies on Western beauty standards in their advertisement. The model featured is definitely a black woman. However, beyond her skin colour and brown eyes, she could be of any ethnic background. Her hair is straight, her facial features Western and her body that of any swimsuit model: long, lean and tightly-managed. Even her complexion is relatively light. According to Cortese, advertisements may also show minorities and people from the mainstream culture “in exactly the same way, regardless of any cultural, economic or physical differences” (Cortese 2008, 95). However, by assuming that all the diverse cultures are the same, they deny the unique sociohistorical backgrounds of various peoples. This image denies beauty beyond the Western ideals.

Furthermore, it is interesting that the colour of the bikini she is wearing is decidedly white. White clothing is often attached to innocence and purity, and for this reason is the traditional colour for a wedding dress. In this image, however, the virginity of the white wedding dress has been deleted by attaching it to the sexy bikini the model is wearing. This suggests that the black woman can never be quite as pure as a white one, and for this reason she can wear white in the form of skimpy clothing. On her, even the colour white is attached to sinful garments. It can also be argued, that the woman’s dark skin is used as a contrast against the

whiteness of the clothing she us selling, and the garments are thus better presented in the image. In this case, however, the sinfulness of the dark-skinned woman is emphasised: she serves as the opposite to the purity of the white garments.

In the advertisement for *Tom Ford*'s fragrance *White Patchouli* (FIG. 19), however, the blackness of the model is undeniable and easily recognisable. She is not pushed within the boundaries of Western beauty outwardly, as she bears all the outer signs of a black woman: she has curly, African hair, full lips and dark skin. The woman is photographed naked and she uses her hand, with long, animal-like nails, to hide her breast. Her head is tilted backwards and her lips and eyes are partially closed with pleasure. Thus, although she is marked as black, she is animalized and sexualised through her race. Her looks and erotic pose signify the contents of the bottle and promise that the smell of it will make the wearer erotically as wild and animal-like as the exotic black woman of the image.

Although the model is clearly of African heritage, her look, the outer bodily signs of her race, are not presented as the ideal. She is marked for otherness, treated as a contrast to the presumably white reader of the magazine. Furthermore, the black woman is holding the pure white perfume bottle up in the air, as if on a pedestal. The sacred object radiates white light on her face and body, recreating them as white as well: the ideal introduced in the image is the whiteness of the bottle, not the appearance of the black girl. Especially in make-up advertising, the ideal skin glows but does not shine. However, the heavenly glow is usually only reserved for white women (Dryer 1997, 122-142). In this image, where the only person present is black, it is the white perfume bottle that is the source of that glow. The black woman merely acts as a reflection: her skin shines because of the light which floods from the bottle, acting as a reminder of the white skin’s seeming superiority and purity. Similarly to the *Next* advertisement, the *Tom Ford* woman is used to complement the pure whiteness of the product. In addition to this, the same image of her is used twice in the same

advertisement, recreating her as a sort of exotic ornament or a pattern on a wall, something less that human. This pattern acts as a mnemonic, and the model's black appearance stands in contrast to the whiteness of the product, making its hue even brighter.

Although the Western beauty ideal requires the use of mostly white women in the British version of *Vogue*, black models are still visible on its pages from time to time. Women of Asian backgrounds, on the other hand, are a rarity. This might be due to the fact that fashion models are usually required to be tall, whereas most Asian women are naturally petite. This, however, is again another factor that excludes various kinds of appearance outside the Western ideal. Mosaic tile manufacturer *Bisazza Mosaico* (FIG. 20) is one of the few who has decided to use an Asian model for their advertisement campaign. However, instead of showing her enjoying the luxury of Italian glass tiles in contemporary attire, the image shows the Japanese woman in full geisha costume bound and thrown on the floor. This harshly treated woman is treated equally bad as a sign too: apparently she is more valuable as a stereotypical representative of her race rather than a potential point of identification for the viewer, as she is coded for extreme otherness. The tiles gain a value of the exotic Asia as well as the erotic Asia: the geisha is traditionally, although erroneously, seen as the epitome of Japanese female sexuality, willing and able, a trained prostitute. In the image the untrustworthy side of her is disabled, as she is bound up and thus unable to deceive or escape. Furthermore, the ropes make is impossible for the woman to escape the traditional role that she has been forced into by the advertiser. She is bound to only mark the traditions of her country, and the only role available for Asian women is this stereotype. All the woman can do is to lie still as she oozes the values attached to her onto the Italian glass tiles.

In the present section, I have discussed how the representations of women in advertising of *Vogue* suggest femininity is to be performed. I argued that one of the strategies of advertisements is to claim that the femininity performance can be completed by the products

advertised. All in all, this is a paradox, because to become the natural woman the reader already is, she is enticed to buy the products that mark her feminine: she buys the product to become the woman she already is. This, of course, is not the only paradox involved in advertising, as I claimed that in *Vogue* on one hand women are presented to be sensual life-enjoyers, on the other chaste and controlled. Lastly, I also discussed the representations of other ethnicities besides white is *Vogue*, and found that the advertisements include images of stereotypical behaviour and appearance. As mentioned earlier, one of the prevailing roles for a woman in advertising is to be the object of desire. In the next section I will look at the constructions of desire in advertising more closely. I will do this in reference to the theory of the gaze by Laura Mulvey.

3.3. Gender under Scrutiny: The Gaze in the Advertisements of *Vogue*

Laura Mulvey's theory of the gaze states that in the world ruled by sexual inequality, a woman is always an object to the male gaze. However, the nature of *Vogue* magazine makes the idea of a male viewer holding the female subject of an image seemingly difficult. As by definition, the magazine is for women, then the pictures must be constructed so that they will please the female, not the male, reader, and thus it would seem obvious for the gaze to be female. However, as Fuss states, the magazine itself serves as a signal for the female reader that she should not look at the women in the pictures with sexual pleasure, but with identification in mind. And, as Mulvey claims, the only position for the female viewer to identify with is as the object of the gaze. By being the object of the gaze, women represented in the advertisements are signs with such values as sex appeal and seductiveness, which they then transfer to the product advertised. Women are used not only to present the product but to *re*present it: they are wearing them, holding them and using them, although all the while *they* are being the actual object to be looked at.

The gaze is not a construction that cannot be dismantled. The theory of the gaze is often seen in a very simplified manner and thus easily criticised. Instead, the reader should see the theory as an interpretation of a visual order that is linked to the psychoanalytic theories of how sexual desire is constructed (Koivunen 2006, 87). In some advertisements women may be resistant, even defiant, to the male gaze. However, I also argue that in advertising, an industry which relies heavily on stereotyping, a woman is still an object of the gaze if she is portrayed as such. A woman lying on a bed half-naked can hardly be read to represent anything else than an object of desire. Although Mulvey's theory has its critics, who claim that a woman viewer is not confined to the object position of the image, the way a fashion advertisement image works makes it extremely hard to convey a woman without objectifying her. If the woman of the advertisement is the mirror image of the viewer of the picture, as Williamson claims, she must be represented as an object: an object of the desire of identification for the female viewer and an object of sexual desire for the male one.

First, I will introduce advertisements from *Vogue* which not only show a woman as the object of the gaze, but also show the way the gaze is constructed. The following advertisement images for luxury brands *Versace* and *Dolce & Gabbana* play with the idea of objectifying women in a very concrete way, as they show not only women as the direct object of the gaze but also the male as its subject. The images exemplify how the conventions of a women's magazine such as *Vogue* affect the way a viewer reads the images and positions herself in the constructions of the gaze. They work as signals that instruct the reader on how the rest of the images in the magazine should be looked at: the woman viewer should identify herself as the object and the male viewer as the subject of the gaze.

The image of the advertisement for *Versace* (FIG. 21) shows a woman literally in a spotlight. On the left hand corner another figure can be traced, but very unclearly: the woman is being watched by a person hidden in the shadows outside the spotlight's reach. The

concealed person is male, although nothing else is revealed of his identity. The viewer is just about able to make out the outlines of his profile and see that he is sitting on a chair, the most visible part of him is a clenched fist on the armrest. The woman in the spotlight is wearing a very bright pink jacket, and it seems that there is nothing under it: her long tanned leg peeks from the folds as she herself pushes back the hem of her garment. She is obviously very conscious about being watched and strikes a pose and has a knowing look on her face. In such a brightly coloured jacket she can hardly go undetected either. However, she seems to be unaware of where the man following her is exactly located: she is not looking at his direction at all. Perhaps she is so blinded by the bright lighting, that she is unable to see her silent observer. All she can do is stand in the spotlight and feel the man's gaze upon her.

This image is in essence about how the gaze is constructed: there is a female object who is very aware of her position as such, but still unable to identify the subject of the gaze, and the male subject hidden in the shadows, invisible to the object, but nevertheless the absolute holder of the gaze. The image also claims that the woman is content about being objectified and in fact she encourages it by taking an active part in her exposure. The pink colour of the jacket and the woman's seductive appearance also refer to prostitution: while she is selling the garments, she is also selling herself, and thus making herself the actual 'object' advertised. The advertisement suggests that when it comes to the gaze, seeking the centre of the spotlight, the position of the object, is natural for women as it is also natural for men to stay watching in the shadows. All he has to do is to sit and watch as his dream woman makes the viewing easy, the clenched fist on the armrest an uneasy reminder of the power that the subject has to its object. The silent male observer is the force behind the gaze, the seemingly passive entity with a clenched fist ready to be used, a force that may not be seen but always felt, hidden in the conventions of the image itself: the shadows outside the spotlight. The same conventions, the same spotlight, also deny the woman the subject position as the light

shining in her eyes is so bright that it is impossible for her to act as the observer in this image.

Without the subject, the holder of the gaze, the object cannot exist. This is exemplified by the next advertisement image for *Dolce & Gabbana* (FIG. 22). The picture features three female models [13], two of whom are in the midst of a heated battle. The third woman has just stepped into the room from a door in the furthest corner. The two fighting women are being filmed by a camera; their fight is reflected in a small screen apparently showing the scene the person behind the camera is filming. This person is, again, nearly hidden; only a hand and an arm are visible in the picture. The masculinity of the arm and the big tattoo on it refer to the film maker being male.

Next to the feet of the battling ladies, painted on the floor, is a circle with an arrow coming from it: the sign of the male gender. This space is reserved for women by the male gaze, who governs their visibility in the picture. Women are the ones in front of the camera, not behind it. Women are the object of the gaze, not its origin. Like the previous advertisement, also this one claims that this is the natural order of things. As the two women are violently trying to push each other out of the picture, the third model just stepping into the room seems shocked that she has missed her opportunity to fight for her spot in the image. On the floor under her feet there is another arrow guiding her to her rightful place, the space under the gaze of the camera. All the three women seem very aware of the cameraman's presence, and the last woman stepping is looking straight at him. However, none of them attempt to steal his subject position. Instead they battle over the best place in his field of vision.

The image is staged to look like a real 'behind-the scenes' footage of a photo shoot. It claims that this is actually what happens in the studio while shooting advertisement images:

[13] This image belongs to the fifth category of the advertisements of *Vogue*, in which two or more female models are pictured with one another. In some cases their relationship seems to be distant and the women are almost nonchalant of each other. An example of this is FIG. 13, where the models are all looking at the camera barely registering each other's existence. In other images, such as in the present one discussed, the women are in some interaction with each other, although most of it seems staged and often competitive. There are also examples of friendlier and even romantic relationships between women in advertisements, these are discussed later in this section as well as in section 4.2.

women are fighting over the object position of the gaze. Although the battle seems staged for the camera, the pose directed by the male cameraman, the message of this composition is still the same: women will do anything to be in front of the lens. They are craving to be on camera, knowing that there is a man watching them, gazing at them through the lens. The small screen shows the image visible to the viewer of the picture, the actual image being printed on the magazine. This means that it is the man behind the camera who controls what the viewer of the advertisement will see. He owns the space where the ladies battle as well as governs the ways of their representation: the subject of the gaze is in control of its object.

In both previous examples the holder of the gaze is hidden, but still visible in the image. However, for a woman to be objectified in an image, the visible presence of the male holder of the gaze is not necessary. Instead, the conventions of the image, just like the shadows and the spotlight of the *Versace* advertisement, create these positions. The camera lens becomes the shadow hiding the observer, whereas the brightness of the spotlight upon the woman in the image signals for the viewer that she is under the gaze, although the actual male holder of the gaze is not in the picture. Further, in the world ruled by inequality between the genders, these two positions thus enabled by the conventions of the image are reserved for the male as the subject and the female as the object for identification.

In the advertisement image of clothing brand *French Connection* (FIG. 23) the purpose of the woman is not unclear: she is the object of the male gaze, although this time an actual man is not in sight. Instead, the gaze works through the camera: the viewer looks through the lens as if they were there actually watching the girl in the same room. The photographer has captured the model standing on the edge of a frame in a short, clinging dress and high heels. The model is coded to be the passive object of the gaze: in addition to her clothing, her pose is overtly sexual and very suggestive. She holds nonchalantly on to the frame, seemingly to stop her from falling, but in fact the purpose is to make her body position as sexually

tempting as possible.

Furthermore, the “frame” she is holding on to seems to be the letter ’C’, derived from the brand name. Thus the advertisement uses the same strategy as *YSL* used in FIG. 3: it connects the woman and all she represents very concretely to the brand name and the values attached to her are attached to the brand through her. The dominant of these values is being the passive object of the gaze and thus also the object of male desire[14]. Although the woman looks straight at the viewer, she does not challenge the gaze and instead turns her back towards the camera. This is also where the dress she is wearing is the tightest and thus it is the best possible angle for the viewer to get an idea of her body under it. The woman knows that she is being looked at and does not attempt to escape, although the frame she is holding on to has been revealed to be a defective and thus escapable. Instead, she holds on to the frame that borders her like a piece of art in a museum and is satisfied with being gazed at by the viewer.

The next advertisement image for *Max Mara* (FIG. 24) also features a woman who has accepted her fate as the object and abandoned the aspiration of reaching the position of the subject of the gaze. Again, although there is no man in the picture, the gaze works through the camera. Even in the absence of the clenched fist its power is still visible. Whereas the woman of *French Connection* seemed to be free to leave her frame and walk out of the picture (even though she seemed equally unlikely to even dream of doing it), the *Max Mara* woman is defeated and totally succumbed under the power of the gaze.

In the image, the woman has lowered herself defeated on a sofa. Although her legs are crossed, signalling the remnants of her resistance, her arms are open and laying passively at her sides. Her cape, which she has used to cover her bare shoulders, has fallen off from one side and although the other side is still covered she does not attempt to lift it. What would be the point of covering up, since she has already been exposed to the gaze? The camera is

[14] A very probable assumption, as the brand often shortens its name to the acronym *FCUK*, derived from the words *French Connection United Kingdom*.

approaching her from above, as if intending to lower itself, and the viewer looking through the lens, on top of the woman. The woman does nothing to challenge the gaze coming on her, she even refuses to look at the camera and by leaning her head back she exposes even more bare flesh. This way her identity is also hidden, because for the gaze the personality of the female object is irrelevant. Her head tilt may also be a sign of sexual pleasure that the viewer looking at her through the camera may fantasise causing, although the woman's face is empty, completely void of any feeling. To signal ultimate submission to the gaze, the woman has hidden her eyes completely with darkly tinted sunglasses. They cover her face even more and are the final act of stripping her off of any chance of even laying eyes upon the viewer and thus challenging the gaze. Resistance is futile and the woman has accepted that she is and always will be the object, never the subject, of the gaze.

This far, I have exemplified how the gaze is constructed in the advertisement images of *Vogue*. The theory of the gaze is also very apt when interpreting how images of women are used in advertising. As stated earlier, the traditional female representation is the object of male desire. For this reason advertisements are often claimed to be overly sexual and borderline pornographic. In fact, soft pornographic imagery has become part of the everyday life of Western culture to the extent that it is impossible to escape it: sexual images are seen everywhere in the media, whether the consumer wants it or not. In this flood of pornographic material, advertisements are blurred and lost into the mass. In order to compete with other media imagery, advertisements create more and more sexual images. This leads to the point where it is next to impossible to make a distinction between an advertisement image and a pornographic one. This phenomenon of blurring the boundaries is called *pornification* (Rossi 2005, Paasonen, Nikunen & Saarenmaa 2007).

Pornification may be seen as a manifestation of the gaze. One of the conventions of pornification is the representation of women only as objects of male desire. In pornographic

images the woman is coded in, as Mulvey put is, to-be-looked-at-ness: she is coded only to be the object of heterosexual desire. The advertisement image for *Tom Ford*'s perfume *Black Orchid* (FIG. 25) uses the conventions of pornification effectively. The image shows a naked woman who lies on her belly. On what she lies is left a mystery and the undefined black space could be anywhere the viewer fantasises: her bed, his bed, the kitchen counter. However, the spotlight is again on the woman and although the space around her is not revealed, she is fully exposed. She has managed to completely cover her breasts, but the price of that is that the small of her back and a trace of upper buttocks are showing. Her utter nudity guarantees that she can never completely cover herself from the gaze; if she attempts to protect her derriere, she will end up revealing some other intimate area. The conventions of the image make sure that she will never be completely covered. The viewer may also imagine that as the camera moves up her body, the woman is exposed even more. Her sultry make-up and red nails signal her position as the object of desire and her hair is pulled back from one shoulder as to expose her naked body even better. The angle of the camera is suggestive, as if the viewer was invited to take the place next to the woman on the imaginary counter top. All in all, the woman is coded to the extreme to be the object of sexual desire.

An advertisement for *Calvin Klein* (FIG. 26) serves as an example of another image coded for the male gaze. This time they have used a naked woman to arouse the attention of potential customers for their fragrance *euphoria*. The woman of the image has ruffled, messy hair, as if she has just been lying in bed. She is naked and the only thing she has to cover up with is a purple shawl, hastily snatched from her berth. Her breasts are hidden by the fabric, which seems to be dangerously slippery and nearly falling off. The fabric is also so sheer that the woman's skin shines through in places. There is again an interesting play with shadow and light as they govern what is seen against the blackness of the background, an empty

undefined space the viewer may fantasise according to his or her [15] liking. The darkness of the shadow is not a reliable cover for a woman under the gaze: as the angle of the lighting changes, the fabric she holds to cover herself becomes sheer in new places revealing more of her body. At the time the picture was taken this happens on her derriere, as this is where the light hits her and where, predictably, the viewer, hidden in the shadows, is also situated.

The movement of the woman's body implies that she has been taken by surprise. It seems that she was just about to get totally undressed when her task was interrupted by the viewer. Her face, however, does not show surprise or resentment towards the holder of the gaze. Instead, it has a seductive look that signals that this was what the woman was expecting to happen eventually. The viewer is free to fantasise what happens when she turns around and lowers the rest of the shawl. And this is what she will do eventually, for that is what she has been coded to be waiting for. The woman is heading back to bed and is inviting the viewer to join her. She has been waiting for the gaze to identify her as its object and then to ravish her.

However, in the tidal wave of pornographic imagery the viewer meets on a daily basis, *Tom Ford* and *Calvin Klein* advertising images are easily lost in the mass. It seems that a naked woman is not enough to arouse the attention of the viewer anymore, and pornification of the media requires more and more explicit use of erotic imagery. This is seen in the advertisement for *Moët* champagne (FIG. 27), where the advertisers use a very overt metaphor of oral sex to sell its product.

The image shows actress Scarlett Johansson dressed in a black evening gown holding a champagne bottle. Although Johansson is not pulling or holding the cork, a shower of champagne erupts out of the bottle as if just opened. Her hand caresses the neck of the bottle and the viewer is left to wonder if that is the reason for the eruption of the drink. Johansson's

[15] The theory of the gaze assumes that the image is looked at by both a female and a male spectator: the male viewer will be sexually admiring the woman pictured and the female viewer will identify with the woman pictured. Thus, they can both create a fantasy about the space where she is standing: the male viewer according to where he would like to take the woman, the female viewer according to where she would like to be taken.

head is raised, and the movement of her hair indicates that she might have just pulled it up from the direction of the bottle. Has she just touched the bottle orally and has this caused the drink to shoot out? The mystery of the flying champagne is magnified by the way Johansson looks at the camera. Her mouth and eyes are sensually half open, her hand is on her hip and she has an attitude of challenging the viewer to imagine all the tricks she has up her sleeve to cause the liquid to unload.

A pair for this image is another advertisement for *Moët* (FIG. 28), found in the same issue of *Vogue*, just a few pages apart. Whereas the backdrop for the previous advertisement was yet again an undefined black space with the light shining on Johansson, this time she sits on a luxurious sofa. She holds the cap of the bottle in her hand and has raised it to her lips, as if caressing it with her tongue. On the next page there is a picture of the champagne bottle, standing upright with the same unexplained eruption of liquid from the mouth. Johansson's eyes are on the product and her hand is in her hair, as if she was in the grips of a wave of pleasure. The juxtaposition of the two images of this advertisement as well as the combination of the two advertisements for Moët in the magazine suggest that to make the champagne shoot out, Johansson has to either caress the bottle with her mouth or simply just hint that she is willing to do so. Her achievements in life are reduced to be the creator of sexual pleasure for men, and the male gaze sees her simply as a sign of fantasy, sexual ability and inhibition.

As mentioned earlier, critics have argued that the theory of the gaze does not take into account a woman viewer's ability to move between the positions of the object and the subject. In addition to this, critics often draw attention to the fact that Mulvey's theory does not allow the queer gaze. Can we not say, for example, that looking at the passively positioned model of the *French Connection* advertisement who refuses to move from her object position, may bring pleasure both to male and female viewers? However, in Western

society advertisements are often assumed to be watched is from a heterosexual point of view. Also the conventions of the traditional advertisement image strive for heteronormativity and objectification of women. To assure that this happens, advertisers often use male models in the images together with women. This, of course, is in line with Mulvey's theory of the gaze. Mulvey explains that the male protagonist, the male model, acts as a surrogate of the male viewer, giving the viewer an opportunity to feel as if he is the one in the picture and thus holding the female model subdued under his gaze. The male model of the picture is very rarely the passive object of the gaze. Rather he is used to underline the position of the woman as the real object of the image: in the world ruled by sexual inequality, to lower her to her "natural" position as the object of the gaze. Furthermore, he is used to prevent homosexual desires both in the object and in the subject of the gaze.

Advertisement for *Calvin Klein Jeans* (FIG. 29) is an example of an advertisement image that uses a male model as a substitute for the male viewer, thus supporting the heteronormative world view. The advertisement consists of two images. In the first image actress Eva Mendes [16] presses her naked body against a male model, who is wearing nothing but a pair of very tight jeans. Mendes finds her male companion irresistible, as she has tangled herself all around him. She has wrapped her leg around the man and his hand, is hidden under her thigh, invisible to the viewer who is left free to imagine its whereabouts. Their bodies seem to be glistening with sweat, lips are parted and eyes half closed. This all refers to a physical activity that has just happened, or is about to happen. Most obvious connotation is passionate love-making between the two of them.

The second image features Mendes alone. Her skin is still wet and she is gripping the wall

[16] Using famous people is naturally very usual in advertising. This way the advertisers benefit from the image the celebrities have previously built in other media: their image becomes value also attached to the product advertised. For example, Eva Mendes as well as Scarlett Johansson, the star of the previous image, have been ranked as one of the sexiest women on the planet by several magazines, and for this reason their sex appeal may be seen stronger than that of a less famous model. And, of course, this advertisement also influences their images as a sex symbols further, thus making it an even more obvious value attached to them in any future advertising.

as if in a state of frustration. She looks straight at the camera and at the viewer behind it. This image completes the story that began in the first picture. The first picture dips the jeans in sexual innuendo, leaving them soaked with heterosexual attraction. In the second picture Mendes is wearing the jeans the man was wearing in the first one. She has taken his trousers and is now the active party of this sexual game. It leaves the viewer free to take the place of the man of the previous image by showing Mendes alone as the object of the gaze. It also instructs the viewer in directing their gaze in the first image: the man of the first image was just a prop, and the woman the actual object to be looked at. The image represents her as heterosexually charged and actively looking for the next big thrill, but at the same time under the command of the gaze to direct her frustration to the male viewer looking at her.

Ermanno Screvino (FIG. 30) also uses a female as well as a male model in its advertising image. However, what *Calvin Klein* did with a twin image advertisement, *Ermanno* tries to do with one picture. The image shows a woman sitting on what seems to be the edge of a bed. Between her legs, on the floor, sits a man with his eyes closed. There is an interesting play with the passive versus active roles of the genders: instead of the passive female and the active male, the image seems to have reversed the roles completely. The woman is the active, the alert, the commanding one, whereas the man is on the submissive side, completely helpless, letting the woman define even the angle of his head. However, the woman is not looking at the man and thus she is not identifying him as the object of the gaze. Instead, she is looking at the camera and at the viewer. In doing so, she defines herself as the real object of the gaze, as the *Calvin Klein* woman did by stealing the jeans in the previous example. Her gaze, instead of operating as the surrogate for a female viewer’s gaze, responds to the look of the viewer. It signals willingness to do to any male anything he wants her to do, and thus bringing her from the active position of holding the gaze back as its actual object in the image. Furthermore, her outfit, purple leather gloves and a fur coat, also refer to her being a

naughty mistress ready to fill the male master’s every wish. Thus, instead of showing her as a strong woman in charge of her own sexuality, the image diminishes her as a sexual fantasy for the male viewer.

In fashion photography, another recurring theme is to have two or more female models strongly marked to perform the traditions of their gender, with long hair and strong make-up, in all other aspects but one: they are depicted in deep intimacy with other female models of the picture with no man in sight (Rossi 2005, 105). Women in advertising are repeatedly represented together, clothed only in revealing underwear, their bare bodies close to each other, arms around each other's waists or shoulders. In some pictures the models seem to be reaching for a kiss, in others they lean on each other with their breasts touching. Surely such closeness and display of affection among conventionally beautiful, sexually available-looking women is a way of pleasing the woman viewer and thus making her the holder of the gaze instead of its object? Rossi disagrees. She states that by using pictures of female couples, the advertisers are not aiming to please the homosexual woman, but the heterosexual man. The conventions of the pictures belong to a subgenre of heterosexual porn, which is based on the notion of men being aroused by the sight of sexual intimacy between two women. As men look at these pictures, they put themselves in the position of completing the otherwise defective intercourse (Rossi 2005, 105-107). The women looking at the image are not in the realm of desire, but again in that of identification: by buying the clothes advertised they aim to get closer to the ideal being performed by the fashion models. They become the object of the male viewer fantasising of the complementation of the intercourse and thus his gaze.

The advertising image for *Cesare Paciotti* (FIG. 31) draws the consumer’s attention by presenting two female models in a position that refers to deep intimacy and even sexual attraction. One of the girls is sitting on a bench, while the other is lying on the ground between her legs. They are both wearing short black skirts and stockings. The lying woman is

not wearing a top, just a bra. However, the viewer cannot see her breasts as they are hidden behind the other woman's leg. The woman on the ground is caressing the sitting woman's leg, and she has lifted her chin up and is leaning backwards. All the outer signs of a deep lesbian sexual attraction and pleasure are visible. However, the position of the women is strangely static. The girl lying on the ground does not seem to be moving her hands upwards the other woman's thigh at all and the sitting woman is equally reluctant to open her legs further. Her head position is imitating pleasure, but her face does not. In fact, both women have empty, vacant expressions on their faces. They are not in any way trying to make eye contact with each other or even look at each other's bodies. Their obvious lack of enjoyment of their seemingly risqué pose refers to the fact that these women are not depicted as object of lesbian lust, their purpose is not to bring sexual satisfaction to each other, let alone to the lesbian viewer. They are not capable of doing this, as they are coded as sexual teasers for the male gaze. The male viewer is free to fantasise that all the women really need to generate an intercourse is him and the female viewer is denied the pleasure of watching. She is condemned solely to be the source of the pleasure, the sexual object who is willing to play-act a lesbian to please her man.

In this subsection, I discussed how the role of the woman as the object of sexual attraction is present in the advertisements of *Vogue*. I concluded that while some advertisements exposed the constructions of the gaze, the roles were still traditionally casted. Many of the images used the woman's position as the passive sexual object to their advantage and represented them in various sexually provocative poses. Even when men were included in the images, they acted only as markers of heterosexual tension. References to homosexuality were used, however only as a cloak for further heterosexual desire.

In section 3 and its subsections, I studied the advertisements of *Vogue* from a very traditional point of view. First, I claimed that women are presented with unattainable beauty

ideals and traditional ways of performing gender. Secondly, I concluded that women are denied the role of the sexual subjects and only represented as the willing objects. However, I also claim that *Vogue* include images of women performing non-traditional femininity and rebelling against their position as the object. These advertisements are the subject of the next section.

4. Non-traditional Representations of Women in the Advertisements of *Vogue*

This far I have introduced advertisements that include representations of women with value connoted from the traditional gender referent system. However, in the 21st century it would be alarming if no advertisement image in *Vogue* featured representations that differ from the norm and break away from the boundaries of tightly managed femininity. After all, the issue of representation of women in advertising has been the object of study ever since the 1970's and it is also from the same decade that consumers' attitudes towards the images of gender in advertisements, both televised and printed, have been surveyed. A study conducted as early as in 1972 for the readers of *Redbook* magazine showed, that 75 per cent of those who responded thought that advertisements downgrade women (Courtney & Whipple 1983). In addition to this, more recent studies on the impacts of advertising that have taken into account the age of their readers (Currie 1997) as well as their race (Frisby 2004), find that the representations also affect the way that women perceive themselves: teenage girls believe that the female stereotypes represented in advertising are true models for adulthood and African American women feel their body-confidence lowered when being exposed to images of thin and physically attractive women of their own ethnicity. With all this knowledge of the impacts of advertising and the attitudes of the consumers, surely is can be expected that not all the advertisements in the *Vogue* magazines published in 2009 include merely traditional and highly conventional representations of women, with no different kinds of femininity

visible.

Thus I would like to acknowledge that, as a product of the 21st century, the advertisements of *Vogue* also offer some unconventional gender images and positions of identification to the women which do not fit the "norm". I will do this by introducing advertisements that differ from those analysed in the previous chapter: images which present femininity beyond the conventions of traditions of gender and heterosexuality.

Firstly, however, I would like to point out that many critics argue that the viewer of the image is not totally at the mercy of the advertisers' message: whatever the actual representations of things such as gender are, they will always be subject to interpretations. Kaja Silverman, for example, suggests that instead of only seeing the binarisms of sufficiency/insufficiency and ideal/failure when looking at images, the viewer should see that they offer corporeal identification not for the ideal, but for the 'good enough' equivalent of it (1996, 220-227). Thus, the responsibility of interpreting the message behind the representations of femininity lies with the viewers themselves: "Implicit in this principle is the knowledge…that since no one can ever *become* the ideal, there is no such thing as either 'natural entitlement' or 'organic insufficiency' in relation to it. All that is available to us is the possibility of effecting a 'good enough' approximation" (1996, 225). Also, bell hooks has argued that images may be looked at with the oppositional gaze, which allows the viewer, in bell's case a black woman, to create deviant interpretations to its overt meaning (1992, 115-131). She, however, points out that this can only be possible if individual women are aware that the representations that are forced on them as the norm can be opposed and criticised.

Thus, keeping in mind that the viewer is not an empty vessel to be filled with the gender roles promoted by the advertisements, some of the images I claimed earlier as renewing the traditional gender roles could be interpreted in a more oppositional light. For example FIG. 30, introduced in section 3.3 as the representation of a woman as the object of male desire,

could also be seen as a representation of a woman taking her pleasure in her own hands and controlling her sexuality as firmly as she is holding the head of the semi-conscious male at her feet. However, advertisements including *overt* non-traditional gender roles were surprisingly few in number considering the high ratio of advertising in *Vogue* in general. Especially images where the woman was not the object of the male gaze were hard to find, as well as those where she was not presented as the object of heterosexual desire.

In the next section, I will discuss advertisements that offer the viewer non-traditional representations of femininity and different ways to form it: on their bodies, by their looks or with their attitudes. In section 4.2, I will introduce images that defy, destruct or disarm the male gaze. I will do this by referring to the theories of Butler and Mulvey, but also keeping in mind that the message that the advertisers themselves want to be read from the image is not necessarily what I am interpreting from it. In other words, I am using my oppositional gaze.

4.1 Unconventional Ways: Representations of Women Performing Their Gender Differently

In this section, I will discuss advertisements that offer feminine performances that differ from those introduced in section 3.2. As Butler claimed, femininity is learned, not an innate quality. This may also be seen in the consumer behaviour as many products a person buys or should be interested in buying are often sold and marketed according to the consumer's gender. Thus, as already noted, advertisements of technological devices are scarce in *Vogue*: women by definition should not be interested in technology. The few advertisements for high-tech I found include the previously introduced advertisement for *LG* refrigerators (FIG. 14) as well as an image for *Hewlett-Packard*'s digital notebook (FIG. 32), in which a female model dressed in her best cocktail dress and high heels holds the device like a clutch handbag, while she watches dreamily at the cherry blossoms falling from the sky.

The reason for their rarity may also be the fact that in *Vogue,* a fashion magazine,

advertisements for technological products are not as clearly part of the editorial flow as those of *Gucci* or *Dolce & Gabbana*, for example. However, the reason behind this is that traditionally women are not perceived as interested in technology, not at least to the extent that men are. This is proven by the approach of the two advertisements I just referred to: *LG* sells refrigerators to women because they are supposed to be interested only in domestic appliances, *HP* tries to convince female consumers that their product is as stylish as a handbag and purchasable for this reason. However, there is one advertisement of a product of technology that tries to convince women to buy their brand for the sake of its technical qualities. This is the image of *Peugeot* and its new convertible 308 cc (FIG. 33).

The surroundings of the *Peugeot* image differ greatly from the girly pink hue of the *HP* advertisement. In the image, a woman is driving the car through a white, snowy landscape. The viewer is able to see only her head, shoulders and hands. Her hair is in a practical bun, as if preventing it from flying around in the wind. Nothing in the image suggests that she is used only to create sex appeal - the most stereotypical place for a woman in a car commercial is on the hood of the car in a bikini, not behind the steering wheel. In neither of the advertisement for *LG* or *HP* the woman is actually using the product as intentionally as in this image: *Peugeot* has put her on the driver’s seat.

The attitude that she is driving with is convincing: her head is faced forward with chin down, both hands on the steering wheel as if determined to go to places. She looks also to be really enjoying the high speed and is not afraid to push the pedal despite the dangerously icy road. There is not a hint of hesitation in her demeanour to suggest that she would be out of place in the advertisement introducing the technical qualities of the car. She is clearly enjoying the control she has over the vehicle as well as the sense of freedom it provides. This is a reflection of the position a woman should ideally enjoy in the contemporary Western society: she is in control of her own life and free to steer its course to whichever direction she

prefers. Although another quality that the female driver may represent is safety (the car is so well-built that even a woman is safe driving it), I claim that the attitude of the driver and her obvious lack of uncertainty echo of a representation of a strong woman in charge.

Another example of a strong woman in command of her own life is offered to the readers of *Vogue* by watch makers *TAG Heuer* (FIG. 34). The image introduces tennis player Maria Sharapova wearing a watch. Internationally acknowledged also for her beauty, Sharapova is this time shown only as a tennis pro and a professional athlete. She is dressed in a tight tank top or possibly a sports bra, but her breasts are not on show: her chest is hidden by the shadows and the neckline of her top is so high that not a hint of cleavage can be seen. Sharapova has also lifted her hand in front of her chest as if protecting it from view even more. The image is cropped just below the chest line so that the rest of her body is invisible. The hand Sharapova holds in front of her is in a fist, and she seems ready to punch someone. Her eyes are focused somewhere to the left of her and away from the viewer, with a confident and challenging expression on her face.

The advertisement clearly derives its meaning from Sharapova's profession and her success in it, not solely from her gender performance and its referent system. The defiant attitude is underlined by the fact that the same hand that is in a fist also contains the watch advertised. It is from this strong gesture that the image really gets its power and the value that is attached to the fist is the attitude that the advertisers wish to be attached to the product as well. Thus this time the source of the value is not Sharapova's gender. The strong and confident Sharapova holding the watch in the hand that also holds the tennis racket is a representation of a woman in charge of her own destiny and of the position of women in contemporary Western society.

Next, I will move on to discuss advertisements featuring distinctive images of beauty and the female body. In the previous chapter, I discussed the idea of dualism ruling the body of a

woman: on one hand, she should be a sensuous creature, enjoying life to the full, on the other, a controlled ascetic. I mirrored this idea to two images of women in or by a pool (FIG. 11 & 12). I will now introduce another poolside scene, an advertisement for clothing brand *Bally* (FIG. 35). This image, however, differs from the previously mentioned as the dualism of the female body is not visible and the woman is not divided by the conventions of her gender. Instead she is in charge of them.

In the image a woman is sitting by a pool with a man who is in the water, with his elbows on the pool's edge. Despite the presence of the pool the woman is not wearing a bathing suit. Instead, she is wearing a flowy dress with long sleeves and, although the dress has a low neckline, her chest is well hidden under its ruffles. The neckline is also decorated with a twine. There are no signs that she has ever been in the pool as she is completely dry, whereas her male companion is bare-chested and wet-haired. The man and the woman are not making any contact with each other; they are both staring into the distance, to a location outside the image. The woman is making a move as if to leave the chair that has been placed by the pool and her one foot has already taken a step towards the direction of her gaze. The man is standing passively, with no sign of any motion of getting out on the dry land.

Whereas the women of the advertisements of *CK* and *UGG*, also located on a poolside, were torn and uneasy, the woman of *Bally* is simply bored. She has no inner struggle between the two dualistic sides, no temptations to fight. She sees the pool, the man and knows what is expected of her: she should now play her role of the sensuous seducer versus the virtuous rationalist. But she does not care of these expectations and refuses to obey them: her lack of swimwear shows that she has already decided to stay on dry land. However, this does not mean that she is simply a rational ascetic. In fact, she is about to refuse both the roles: her demeanour suggests, that any given minute she will get up from the chair, so awkwardly placed by the pool on the first place, and walk out of the picture, leaving both the pool and

the poolside behind. She shows no connection to the man and the man shows no interest in her, so leaving is easy. This does not mean, however, that the woman is immune to temptation. Instead, she is in charge of it, as is shown by the twine on her neckline. The ends of the twine disappear behind her leg and are most likely in her hand. The woman herself is in control of the amount of cleavage on show at any given time. She is pulling the strings and can decide herself how she, as a woman, will be portrayed; and being faced by the role of a woman torn, she prefers to leave it behind.

The woman of *Bally* is challenging the expectations that are imposed on her by the conventions of society. Another way of challenging the gender norms is parody. By focusing the viewer's attention to what is overtly feminine behaviour and what is not, they are free to contemplate on their own visions and beliefs about gender. This makes it possible to unravel the structures of the gender system and to make room for other types of perceptions of femininity. Parody is the chosen strategy of the next advertisement, for *Moschino*'s fragrance *Glamour* (FIG. 36).

In the image, a conventionally very feminine woman sits at a table with the fragrance bottle in front of her. She has a black see-through blouse on and her bra is visible under it, and the blouse has ruffles around the collar with a very soft, feminine cut. The make-up on the woman's face is also done with very strong feminine connotations, with red lips, sparkling eye-shadow and long black lashes. All this show of femininity is juxtaposed, however, by her holding a lock of hair above her lips, as if forming a moustache.

This simple gesture makes the viewer to draw attention to femininity and its components and they are shown in the woman. This happens because of two reasons. Firstly, because of the face she makes while holding the lock of hair on her lips. Her expression makes her look ugly; unconventional for this, or in fact almost any, type of advertisement. The woman does

not attempt to please the viewer with the sultry look so common in fragrance advertising.[17] Instead, she makes fun of herself, and by ignoring the gender norms telling her to act in a certain way, she exposes the expectations of the viewer, the media or the society. As she makes fun of the female gender performance, the viewer is forced to think about the ways he or she sees femininity usually being performed.

Secondly, the moustache she is imitating echoes an outer corporeal sign that does not belong to conventional femininity, but to masculinity. By forming a moustache on her face, the woman again breaks the rules of the gender performance. The gesture signals that the woman decides to mould herself anew, adopting those gender features that she wishes to possess, whether feminine or masculine. All in all, the image breaks away from the traditional representations of femininity. By creating a humorous image of a conventionally very feminine woman making fun of her own features, the advertisement actually parodies the very media it represents. The image may still be gender producing technology, but the femininity it produces is exceptional. This also challenges the conceptions of gender in the mind of the viewer.

Interestingly, *Moschino* uses parody also in another of their advertisements featured in *Vogue* (FIG. 37). This image consists of two pages. The first one of them includes several small images and the other just one. The small images on the first page show a woman in different states of mind: in some she is laughing, in some she is crying, in some just making humoristic facial expressions. On the next page, however, the same woman is standing with a face devoid of emotion, wearing a crazy avant-garde dress, shoes and hair.

Williamson has also noted the existence of this type of advertisement where the image consists of several different pictures of the same individual: she calls them multiple-identity advertisements (1985, 56-57). She suggests that as the viewers combine the images, they will

[17] For an example of a traditional fragrance advertisement, see FIG. 26.

also identify with the whole thus created: "…we create ourselves from the multiplicity of the ad: our individuality is implied in the presentation of these *different* kinds of individuality" (Williamson 1985, 57). She adds, "The multiple-identity type of ad…provides a way for ads to incorporate potential criticisms, and flaws in their own system of meaning. This applies especially to their attitude to women, who have for so long been seen as one 'feminine' entity by advertisements" (1985, 57). The *Moschino* image does just this: it lets the viewer look behind, or even straight at, the structures of advertisement images and see their flaws.

The big picture represents a traditional fashion advertisement image with the woman in clothes and make-up no-one would wear in everyday life. It is staged, as advertisements are, and the woman in it does not exist in the reality outside the advertisement, not at least in the way that she has been created here. The big picture is a parody of a fashion image and the woman in it is contrasted with the woman the viewer will be able to create by combining the small images on the first page. Here, the woman is represented showing several emotions. Although her face in every image may not look conventionally attractive, the feelings she is showing humanise her. Thus, she is attached to the reality outside the advertisement, unlike the woman in the big picture. The whole created by the small images show the woman as a complex entity and it is with this whole the viewer is able to identify with.

The juxtapositioning of the two pages and their images reminds the viewer how the advertisement world differs from the world outside it. This *Moschino* advertisement states, that by presenting women with a very narrow array of roles to identify with, represented by the emotionless model on the second page, advertisements forget about the diversity behind the word *women*, and indeed the diversity inside the word *woman*. The image very cleverly parodies the conventions of the very media it is part of and thus is also able to criticise them, showing that in the life outside the advertisements the gender performance may vary and change. The value attached to the brand through this advertisement is freedom of being the

complex individual the viewer sees herself to be: the “correct” performance of femininity is replaced by a variety of performances.

Parody in the two *Moschino* advertisements is used to criticise the existing gender norms and also take a stab at advertising as the creator of such conventions. However, although they both introduce women with roles outside the advertisements’ usual conventions, the women in the images have all *the outer corporeal signs* of conventionally beautiful women, as in fact have also the women in the three previous images of this section. In other words, the way they have acted has not made a difference to the femininity coded on the outside of their bodies: their dress, their hair, their make-up and especially their body shape and size. As explained in section 2.3, Butler claims that as gender is performed, it will create an illusion that its features are innate. However, instead of a person being born with a certain gender, Butler argues that it is learned and created on the surface on the body, by corporeal signs. None of the previous advertisements of this section flaunted the conventional beauty of their female subjects, but despite this, the appearances of all the women were decidedly as feminine as that of any other model in any other of the previous examples. However, parody and the criticism that it entails also enable the appearance of different kinds of bodies on the pages of *Vogue.* An example of this is the advertisement for *Dolce & Gabbana* (FIG. 38) that criticises the existing body illusions of the media.

The image is located in a very traditional fashion advertisement landscape: the beach. The main characters in the picture are the five models on the foreground. Three of these models are young women, all wearing something else than beachwear. Two of them are older ladies in skimpy swimsuits. It would be easy to claim that the old ladies are only used to emphasise the perfection that is represented by the younger women. However, the fact that the young ones are all wearing evening attire, one of them is even in a tuxedo, suggests that it is in fact them who are in the wrong place. And respectively, it is the older ladies with their swimsuits

who really belong to this scene. The two ladies seem to be making fun of the young models, the other one striking a pose imitating the younger woman in front of her. With these older characters the advertisement criticises the very media it also represents. The image reminds the viewer that the real world is in stark contrast to the world of advertisements, where perfect people spend their time on beaches in evening attire. In reality, people grow old and get wrinkled and the eternal youth advertising offers as the ideal is impossible to achieve. The old ladies have indeed tried, but with their fake tans and strong eye-liners, products of advertising themselves, the women have both failed miserably.

The people in the background take a seemingly passive attitude towards the scene in front of them, the only one attentively watching is the woman on the far left corner. The background group consists of people of all ages, looks and from both genders. They are all wearing beachwear: this gang representing the variety of the human race all belong to the same world with the older ladies. The advertising image has brought the ideal, represented by the young models, into the middle of its audience, the older ladies and the background crowd. The juxtapositioning of these characters shows how wide the gap between the two worlds, the world inside and the one outside advertisements, can be. It exemplifies how, despite the gap, the world of advertising still concerns and affects everybody, just like the gender norms and conventions it offers also do. Although the people on the sun loungers (who all belong to the world outside advertisements with the older ladies) seem uninterested in the happenings on the beach, their appearances show that they too have been affected by the representations of gender in advertisement images: they have tried to mimic the looks of the young models by shaping their bodies, changing their hair etc.. However, they do not come even close to looking like the three young ladies: none of them embody the ideal, just like none of the models embody the ‘real’ people on the beach. For them, as well as for the two older ladies, the femininity sold through advertising is unattainable.

The unattainable body shape in advertising, and represented by the younger models in FIG. 38, is slender, tight and managed. Although the wrinkled older women of the picture embody a different kind of image, it must be noted, nevertheless, that the standing lady has a relatively tight and managed body, even though clearly a more aged one than usually seen in advertisements. The other lady may have a looser silhouette, but because she is sitting her body is not completely visible. All in all, it was hard to find representations of bodies with any excess flesh in *Vogue*; however, I did manage to find one. This is, ironically, an advertisement of another magazine, one called *LOVE* (FIG. 39).

The advertisement consists of a picture of the cover of the magazine. On it singer Beth Ditto is posing nude with only a small tutu dress she is holding in her hand covering her private areas, her chest is completely bare. As such, this arrangement does not greatly differ from anything usually seen on the cover of women's magazines. In fact it is somewhat similar to the front cover of the June 2009 issue of *Vogue* itself (FIG. 40), an issue dedicated to "body talk" and introducing "a celebration of shape and style". This celebrated body shape is represented on the cover by the naked, tight body of a Russian supermodel. What is different on the cover of *LOVE* magazine is the body shape that Ditto represents: her shape is ruled by the soft, the loose, the unsolid flesh that Bordo claimed most advertisers avoid.

As I mentioned earlier, the image itself is nothing special, yet Ditto makes all the difference. With a daring attitude, she poses in a way that is usually reserved for a woman half her size. The image does not apologise for its conventions nor does it make fun of Ditto. It also stays clear from parody by not dressing Ditto in the pink tutu, a symbol of eternal girlishness, but instead gives Ditto the control over the garment. The sexiness of her pose is also rebellious, as the dualism which usually rules the female body is forgotten. The managed sexuality under control is suddenly released and Ditto becomes a contrast to the fake desire represented by such images as the June *Vogue* cover, in which the woman acting seductively

is brought inside the conventions of continence by her tightly managed body.

It is interesting that *LOVE* magazine has decided to use this advertisement within the pages of *Vogue* in the first place: although it resembles the fashion magazine's other images in form, it differs greatly in content. However, the advertisers have not made a hazard choice here, as the image has three outcomes in terms of its message. Firstly, as the content of the advertisement is so distinctive from the editorial flow of *Vogue*, the possibility that the reader will acknowledge it is much greater. Thus, the strategy is to get the advertisement noticed and its image differentiated from the rest of *Vogue*. Secondly, by choosing Ditto on the cover is also a statement that *LOVE* is a magazine which introduces the stars of today to its readers with no compromise. Finally, by choosing an image so different from the rest of *Vogue*, although so similar in form, may also be read as criticism against the existing conventions of female beauty and, most importantly, against the media, *Vogue* magazine in this case, that uphold these conventions. *LOVE* magazine acknowledges that even *Vogue* is read by real women and in reality women come is all shapes and sizes although most of these are made invisible by the media. The image clearly states that *LOVE* promotes the idea that there are alternatives to the female body shape usually offered as the only acceptable one.

The other body type that is not as often represented in *Vogue* is the androgynous body. Androgynous bodies defy the conventions of femininity because the seductiveness the curvaceous chest or derriere attached to the ideal body shape is not present. In addition, although the models of many of the advertisements so far introduced are admittedly slim, they lack the masculine signs of androgynous women and are coded feminine either with long hair, strong make-up or red nails. However, the advertisers for clothing brand *Zadig & Voltaire*[18] (FIG. 41) and hair salon chain *Toni & Guy*[19] (FIG. 42) have both decided to use women with a very androgynous look.

[18] Referred to as *Z&V* from now on.
[19] Referred to as *T&G* from now on.

As mentioned earlier in section 2.2, the feminist reading of the androgynous body type is twofold: on one hand the androgynous body means the woman is rejecting the outer corporeal signs of femininity by small breasts and narrow hips, thus creating a body shape close to a young boy's. On the other, however, it can also be seen that the thin androgynous frame is weak and passive, with no force to overcome the dominant masculine order. In advertisement pictures, where the signs in the image affect the reading of each other, both these feminist interpretations may be possible. The models in the advertisements for *Z&V* and *T&G* belong to the first interpretation group.

Interestingly, the two images share a strong resemblance: both pictures feature a blond girl with short hair in a very similar pose. Their stance is powerful and dynamic, with their balance on the right foot and hands behind their backs. Both women have masculine clothes on, the *Z&V* girl in double denim, the *T&G* model in a biker jacket and a pair of trousers. The *T&G* woman is also wearing a see-through shirt, but despite this, the viewer will struggle to see her breasts and the woman is also tugging on her jacket as if in the process of hiding her chest altogether. Neither of them wears a lot of make-up, there are no red lips or smoky eyes.

Half of the women's faces are invisible, but the half that is showing wears the same challenging expression, as if daring the reader to interpret the gender they are representing. To do this is made harder than in most advertisement images as their hair and the garments hide their features so that the only thing really on show is the silhouette of their androgynous bodies. With this comes the freedom of choosing features of femininity. The similarities these women share enforces the message that an androgynous body can indeed be read as representing the desire to leave the feminine norms behind and to create a new way of performing a woman. Thus, in the case of these two advertisements, the androgynous body may be read to represent the rejection of the conventional feminine body type, and the latter reading, the androgynous body representing women as weak and passive, is not apt. These

androgynous women have no fear of being interpreted as powerless, because by attaching to their body shape the elements of strength and toughness, their bodies are transformed from objects of desire to manifestations of individual identity, free from the pressure of the feminine norm.

Finally, to counterpart the analyses of section 3.2, I will introduce one more image featuring a woman and a mirror. This advertisement image for clothing brand *Akris* (FIG. 43) is an interesting reflection of the *Moschino* advertisement (FIG. 8) introduced earlier: the women in both images are photographed from a similar angle and standing in front of a full-length body mirror located on the right hand side of the image. Both women also have heavily applied eye-make-up, red lips and their hair is tied into a bun. However, despite all these similar elements, the actual reflections of the women differ greatly: whereas the woman in the *Moschino* advertisement is mirroring her gender to the viewer of the image, the *Akris* model has turned her body towards the actual mirror in the image and only her head is turned to face the camera. On her face there is a look of annoyance, as if the viewer was interrupting a private moment, and she has also crossed her arms as if for protection or assurance.

Unlike the *Moschino* woman, the model of *Akris* uses the actual mirror in front of her and does not rely on the viewer for a reflection. The viewer is equally unable to use the woman as a reflection: the feeling of intrusion of an intimate moment does not invite this analysis. Instead, the woman of the image is actually using the mirror to inspect her unique looks: in the image, she is acting as an individual rather than a faceless model, only worth the value the gender system provides. This message is strengthened by the garments she is wearing, a loose jacket and a pair of trousers, which offer no intensifying factor to her gender, unlike the long lady-like gloves the *Moschino* model was pulling on. The *Akris* woman is not willing to act only as the representative of the group the viewer should consider herself to belong to or as an example of a performance of femininity. Instead, she is represented as a unique individual,

with a similarly individual reflection.

The look of annoyance on the face of the woman in the *Akris* advertisement is an interesting feature that makes the viewer consider the motivations of the messages behind the advertisement image: often the women of advertisements have their eyes seductively closed and lips parted, whereas the *Akris* model looks at the viewer tight-lipped and eagle-eyed. This look may also be read as silent rebellion against the dominant conventions of *the gaze*, as the woman is not prepared to submit to the role of the passive object of the male subject. Her resistance may not be aggressive, but in the world of the advertisement images, where the male gaze seems to be the dominant construction, it does shake the foundations of the way the genders are represented. The ways in which the women in the advertisements of *Vogue* defy the gaze is the subject of my next section.

4.2 Defiant Looks: Representations of Women Challenging the Male Gaze in the Advertisements of *Vogue*

As already noted, Mulvey's theory of the male gaze has its critics (see section 2.3) who claim that the gaze is not a natural entity that cannot be challenged and that images of women may also be looked at with varying points of view and roles for identification. In the world of advertising, which relies so heavily on the conventional structures of the genders and their representations, finding images that challenge the traditional roles of the gaze are rather hard to come by. However, in the year 2009, some were present in *Vogue* and thus in this section I will be able to introduce images that defy, challenge and even modify the male gaze.

First, however, I will discuss an advertisement which challenges Mulvey's argument that the roles of the image are pre-determined by gender so that the woman viewer can only identify with the object of the gaze. I claim, that contrary to the theory of the gaze, a woman may look at an image of another woman without the feeling of anxiety and that a female viewer may even identify with the object of the gaze without the burden of being objectified.

I illustrate my point with an image including a woman and one more horse, the advertisement for luxury watch makers *Rolex* (FIG. 44).

In the image an accomplished equestrian Zara Phillips, wearing full riding gear, stands next to a horse holding the reins. Phillips is looking straight at the viewer with a slight frown, her gaze cool and collected. The difference to the advertisement image for *Hermès* (FIG. 1), also featuring a horse, is noticeable: whereas the woman of *Hermès* lies nonchalantly on a horse, Phillips is ready to mount her steed and gallop to the world outside the structures of the image. She is an active agent, an able subject, in control of the big strong animal next to her.

As obviously in charge of the horse, Phillips is also in charge of the way she is represented. it is very hard to see Phillips as a passive object of the gaze. Moreover, her gaze is challenging any viewer to see her as such. The frown tells the viewer that she might, in fact, be worried about the opportunity to be put in that position and is ready to ride away at the slightest hint of objectification. On the other hand, she is an excellent object for the female viewer to identify with: she is presented as strong, successful and breaking the conventions of society. In this case, however, the gaze is also a multi-gendered one, as its subject becomes anyone of any gender who may look at a person like Phillips with respect and admiration. Thus the male gaze is defied and its power to oppress destroyed.

In section 3.3, I introduced advertisements which exposed the structures of the image, re-enforcing the idea that the male viewer is the subject and the female the object of the gaze. The next image, however, defies all of these conventions. It is an advertisement for *Dolce & Gabbana*[20] (FIG. 45) and, again, it is interestingly parallel to the previous *D&G* advertisement (FIG. 22) I discussed in section 3.3. However, the present image forms a very different picture of the structures of the gaze.

In this image, the same three women who fought for the best place in the field of vision of

[20] Referred to as *D&G* from now on.

the male cameraman in the previous advertisement are presented in a more peaceful atmosphere. Two of them are relaxing on a pair of sofas, while the third one has again just stepped into the room. The room is the same one as before judging from the painting hanging on the wall behind the women. The most obvious distinction to the previous image is, however, that the camera*man*, mostly invisible in the first image, is now completely seen and is exposed to be a woman. Thus the subject of the gaze is re-gendered. As it is the cameraman who is in charge of the visual outcome of the image, the representations of the women is bound to change as well, especially when compared with the previous *D&G* advertisement.

Contrary to FIG. 22, the models do not fight for their place in the spotlight anymore. In fact, they look unwilling to pose for any camera: their postures are passive and static and in their eyes there is a look of irritation, as if they were displeased with being in the advertisement in the first place. The clothes they are wearing also lack the floral femininity of the dresses of the first image: they are more masculine and casual, almost as if the women had just left their pyjamas on before stepping into the set. The woman walking behind is also wearing a veil on her face. They lounge on the armchairs with their legs apart and postures slouching: the feminine grace is all but forgotten.

This time the women are not aiming to please the male gaze. There is no need: the cameraman being exposed to be a woman signals, that the gaze can indeed be of any gender. The power of the male gaze traditionally represents is lost. This is also represented by the empty screens in the background: the woman dominating the way of looking has turned the camera away from its usual female objects and is now filming something outside the actual image, thus outside the structures of a traditional advertising picture and also outside the norms of gender representations. What the object of the camera is, is not shown to the viewers, but left to their own imagination.

The sitting women still pose for the actual viewers of the advertisement, but as the camera

has turned its lens away from them, the women have lost their zeal. They are not forced to battle for the place in the male-ruled space in front of the camera anymore, but free to represent gender in their own ways. The woman stepping in the background is lifting her veil and looks at the viewer with an air of surprise, somewhat similar to her expression in the former picture. However, this time her gaze is not on the cameraman, but on the viewer. It is as if she were seeing the viewer for the first time now and realising that she is the object of an image. However, instead of accepting this role, the walking woman seems to be directing her steps out of the image. As the veil has been lifted, she is now able to see that the structure of the image will not keep her confined within it: she can also go forward to the space outside it, out of the reach of the gaze, and create her own way of looking and being looked at.

Whereas FIG. 22 enforced the structures of the gaze as male dominant, the present *D&G* image defied them. In fact, what is common to all the advertisements discussed in this section is the rebellion against the traditional roles of the gaze. This defiance is evident on many levels and is more powerful in some images than others. In the previous picture, for example, the women did pose for the camera but their lack of enthusiasm revealed their resentment towards the task. The next advertisement begins from the very first level of defiance, as it depicts the moment the woman of the image actually realises that she is the undeniable object of the gaze. This image is another advertisement for the fragrance *Very Hollywood* by *Michael Kors* (FIG. 46).

As did the previous image for the same product (FIG. 4), this one also borrows its values from the mythical world of Hollywood glitz. The advertisement reads as if a sequel to the red-carpet image, where the same pair has stepped into a limousine after the glamorous event they attended earlier. The woman still wears all the signs of her stardom: she is dressed in the sparkling evening gown adorned with diamonds all over. The lenses of the paparazzi are forever present, reflected on the tinted window of the car. This time the man is smiling but

the woman is not. He is also wearing sun-glasses and this makes him immune to the flashes of the cameras outside. Despite his wide smile, the man knows that the actual object of their lenses is the woman next to him. The car window is half-closed, but it still exposes the woman to the cameramen outside whereas the man has to lean in to be seen. It could also be that he has reached over the woman to the control switch of the window and opened it in the first place.

This time however, the attitude of the woman has changed: whereas in FIG. 4 she was represented as clearly enjoying the attention of the men behind the camera, now she does not embrace her position as the object of admiration. Her unsure demeanour signals that she has finally realised her role in the image and the fact that it cannot be changed as long as she is represented in the way that she is. I claimed earlier in the discussion on FIG. 43, that the silent rebellion against the male gaze is often evident in the gaze of the women themselves featured in the images. This may be seen in this image, too: the difference in the attitude of the woman towards the gang of photographers has changed from FIG. 4 and this is most evident in the expression on the woman's face. There is a sad look in her eyes and her mouth is half-open, as if she was just in the middle of a sentence, perhaps about to ask the paparazzi to leave her alone. In addition, her expression tells the viewer that she no longer enjoys being the evident and the only object of the gaze. Now that she has realised her role, the potential to challenge it is much greater. As she is no longer hiding behind the fake smile she was when she stood on the red carpet as the centre of male attention, she is free to decide to close the window for good and to leave the male gaze outside.

Another reluctant object is seen in the advertisement of *Givenchy* (FIG. 47). This time the woman is lying on a bed, which in itself could suggest that the male gaze creates her as a simple object of sexual desire. The bed she is reclining on and the room she is resting in are ornamental and luxurious, simply oozing all things romantic. The woman is looking straight

at the camera, wearing all white. However, it is again the way the woman is looking at the camera and at the viewer behind it that overrules all the connotations that the opulent room and the bed lend her. Her look is strong and angry; her dark hair and cold stare stand out in the seemingly perfect white space she is spending her time in. The woman's defiant attitude make the rest of the image look staged, unreal and herself not belonging in it.

Instead of asking the viewer to join her in bed, the woman's look is pushing him away. Her attitude suggests that the viewer is someone who tried to enter the room without being seen and take the woman as the object of the gaze by looking at her from the shadows. [21] However, as the woman looks straight at the viewer, he is exposed and brought to light. The viewer loses the power of invisibility and the woman's cold stare forces him to back out of the room. At the same time the woman of the image becomes the holder of the gaze. The bedroom scene, which so often includes a representation of a woman as the thing to be looked at, is turned upside down. The woman of the image becomes the person in charge of the gaze and thus the maleness of the gaze is questioned.

In addition to the power of the gaze, this *Givenchy* advertisement juxtaposes a woman and a bedroom, but in a way that also makes her objectification difficult. Another image that defies the gaze is an advertisement for *Peak Performance* (FIG. 48). At first glance, the image resembles a typical holiday snap: a woman with skis wearing a padded overall by the brand advertised. When compared to many of the advertisements previously introduced, however, this "normality" becomes one of the features to challenge the gaze. The woman actually looks like she is just about to put her skis on and leave to slide down a hill-side. Again, as Phillips in the *Rolex* (FIG. 44) advertisement, she is represented as an active agent, someone who is actually using the product and thus brings value to it by her actions, rather than by her gender or appearance.

[21] The idea of the woman of the image watched by a man in the shadows is discussed in connection to FIG. 21.

In addition to this, there is a bright ray of sun shining behind the woman caught on camera. This means that as the viewer is somewhat blinded by the light, the object of the gaze is hard to distinguish. Thus the way of looking has to be adjusted and the roles of the gaze re-created: as the woman is hard to "see", objectifying her is not possible. On the other hand, as the sun shines brightly to the lens, the viewer through the camera becomes illuminated and more visible. As the viewer is the one in the spotlight, he is the new object of the gaze. Moreover, as the sun shines brightly behind the woman's back, the features of her face are in darkness: this time she is the one hiding in the shadows.

The image of the woman is juxtaposed with a picture of a ski-lift on her left. This further enhances her position as an active party of the gaze, as it is strongly hinted that she is about to ski down a hill, not just standing passively as the object for the photographer. Moreover, the ski-lift has another symbolic value, as it elevates the passengers towards the brightly shining sun. It takes the woman away from the reach of the camera, disabling the gaze to work at a lack of a subject. Thus the same light that disabled the gaze from working in the image of the woman is a refuge for her again, as it welcomes the object and shields her from the gaze of the viewer.

During the discussion of the previous images in the present section, I have repeatedly referred to the women as having a challenging attitude towards and/or a possibility to escape the gaze. The women in the advertisements now introduced are not passive objects, like the woman in the *Max Mara* advertisement (FIG. 24), for example, was. Instead, they are represented as active and able, some even on the verge of leaving the image for good. However, as I claimed earlier, the defiance against the gaze is not as strong in all the images. For example, the difference between the *Max Mara* woman who submitted to her destiny as the object and the *Givenchy* girl lying on the bed in white linen is not as substantial as that between the women of *Max Mara* and *Peak Performance,* for example. After all, the ski-lift

was right next to the woman just waiting to take her away. However, this *potential* to escape the gaze apparent in the image of *Peak Performance* and some of the other examples is just that: a promise not necessarily fulfilled. However, this departure is depicted best, and actually occurring, in the next image, an advertisement for *Chanel* (FIG. 49).

In the image of *Chanel*, the aim is to depict the roles of the gaze and thus the conventions of the genders as natural as its shooting location. The big old tree in the middle of the image exudes the same seeming permanence that is often attached to the conventions of genders. However, the garden, with is sparse vegetation and neatly cut grass, is as culturally constructed as femininity. The female model pictured in the shadow of the branches of the tall tree has turned her back to the camera and is walking away. It is evident that she is not just going wandering, as her demeanour is much more determined: her head is bowed down slightly and her gaze is fixed on the ground instead of the great expanses in front. Her intentional stride suggests that she is attempting to escape the field of vision of the camera by distancing herself from it and thus refusing to succumb to the gaze.

Interestingly, the woman does not attempt to challenge the maleness of the gaze by claiming the subject position herself. Instead of adapting to the role as the object, however, she has taken her fate into her own hands and decided to leave the both of the roles behind her. The woman has not gotten very far yet and is still the object of the gaze in the otherwise rather empty and colourless landscape. Nevertheless, her stride will take her further and further from the viewer's field of vision, until she disappears behind the treeline in the distance. This act signals that she refuses to believe that her gender determines her natural position to be the object under the male gaze. After she is gone, the image consists of nothing but the vastness of the landscape with the big tree abandoned in the middle, stripped off of its historic structure of meaning.

As I explained in sections 2.2 and 3.2, one of the uses of the male gaze is to represent

women as object of heterosexual desire. In advertising, lesbians are pushed to the margins, and only represented through lesbian chic or used to pleasure the male viewer by creating a fantasy of a *ménage à trois*. However, I managed to locate a few images in *Vogue* that represent women in situations of intimacy with a strong undercurrent of homosexual desire without the implications of pornification. The first one of these is an advertisement for luxury clothing brand *Alberta Ferretti* (FIG. 50, March 2009).

The image for *Alberta Ferretti* features three women in a coffee-shop like environment. Interestingly, the image is somewhat similar to the *Dolce & Gabbana* advertisement (FIG. 22) introduced in section 3.3 and actually published in the same issue of *Vogue*, just a few pages apart. Both the advertisements feature two women in the front of the image with hands locked together and a third woman in the background. A similar old world feeling is also created by their dresses and the location.[22] Instead of the somewhat static fighting position of the *Dolce and Gabbana* models, the women of *Alberta Ferretti* are dancing. Their movement it obvious from the way their garments move around bodies in a swirl. They have pressed their foreheads together and look each other intensively in the eye. The third woman is not willing to fight for the role of the object either: she looks lazily towards the camera, her gaze not really focusing on anything. She does not seem to care about the viewer witnessing the intimate moment in the coffee-shop as she corrects her stockings nonchalantly. In addition to this, there are some rose petals and a few faded roses on the table in front. They echo the extremely feminine flowery dresses the women of *Dolce & Gabbana* wear. In the present image the women have stripped off these symbols of virginity and femininity, and forgotten them on the table to be dried, destroyed and turned to dust.

The two dancing women display a deep sexual attraction towards each other: their fingers

[22] The location and the costumes actually refer to the flapper girls, a style of dress and gender behavior that appeared in the North America and Western Europe in the 1920's. The flapper girls were famous for discarding the social and sexual norms of the time by drinking, smoking, having casual sex and cutting their hair short.

are intertwined, and they look at each other in the eye intimately. The women dance as if no-one else was there to see them, and choose to be unaware of the gaze and the role of the object that they should have under it. In previous images, mirrors have proven to be reflecting the attitudes of the outside world towards the representations of women; in this image, however, the reflection shows the two dancing women. They themselves do not care about the mirror in the background or about its reflection. The fact that the mirror reflects the dance of the women reinforces the intimacy of their action and the approval they are receiving from their surroundings. Their stocking-legged friend with the indifferent attitude towards the camera is sharing their worldview: it could be that a wild dance she did just moment ago with one of the women is what made her stockings fall off in the first place. All in all, the image represents women in a situation of sexual attraction towards each other, with indifferent attitudes towards the conventions of the male gaze.

However, the image that perhaps best captures the romantic feeling between two women is yet another advertisement for *Chanel* (FIG. 51). Located in a similar blank and natural space as the previous *Chanel* advertisement (FIG. 49) it features two female models with their profiles to the camera. This time, however, the women are not attempting to escape the field of vision of the camera, quite the contrary: they linger in front of it. They stand very close to each other, as if frozen in time, wearing identical long skirts, similar jackets and top hats. They are almost like mirror-images of one another. The dark-haired woman holds the fair-haired one by the collar as if trying to draw her nearer. The fair-haired model has her hands in the jacket pockets.

The image completely lacks the heterosexual implications usual for advertisements featuring two women in close contact. The black and white tones of the image make it even more delicate, as if it is a real scene of a love affair from decades ago. The moment captured in the image is incredibly sensitive: the dark-haired woman is obviously just about to reach

for a kiss. The object of her affection, the blond girl, is still undecided on what to do, as the hands deep in her pockets signal hesitation. However, her true feelings are revealed on her face as she looks at her companion gently, with her head already slightly tilted towards her direction.

The different attitudes of the two women towards their feelings for each other echo their rebellion towards the oppressing male gaze, so often present in advertisements. Although both of the women seem almost oblivious of the fact that they are being watched, the dark-haired girl seems uninterested in being seen, whereas the blond haired woman is still conscious of the heterosexual norms; her unsure position with the hands in the jacket pockets reveals this. However, her true feelings are taking over and it seems that she also is about to abandon the traditional roles. As a small reminder of this potential is the masculine top-hat both the women are wearing with an otherwise very feminine look. Also the solid tree trunk that was featured in the scenery of the previous image, casts now only a small and narrow shadow in the background: the bulk of traditional gender imagery together with the long history of heterosexuality presented as the norm is not playing any part in the image. The women look at each other tightly and do not see the gaze and seem almost unaffected by the norms the world around them is promoting. All they see is each other. The male gaze fails to see them only as the objects of heterosexual desire and the viewer is faced only with a vision of pure romance and love.

In this section, I have discussed advertisements from *Vogue* that represent women in a way that differs from the traditional norms. In the first subsection, I introduced images in which women break away from the traditional gender performance, and show signs of femininity that are usually either invisible in advertising or strictly reserved for male representations. In the second subsection, I discussed how the women of advertising can challenge or defy the alleged maleness of the gaze and re-gender or even seize its subject position. However,

because of the conventions of the advertisement themselves, the task to find suitable images for these discussions was much more difficult than it was for the previous ones. The 21st century female consumer is still offered a surprisingly narrow role of femininity. This is true especially when considering, for example, the allowed body shape for a woman, as, for instance, all the women in the advertisements discussed in relation to the gaze are still very slim. This suggests that a heavily built woman is not considered to be even a contender for the object position of the gaze.

5. Conclusion

My research of the advertisements in *Vogue* suggests that not only is certain kind of femininity purchasable but indeed the only one worth the money. Williamson claims that advertisements aim to make the viewer believe that by buying the product he or she will be able to attain all the values the image holds in its signs: they will acquire a set of beliefs and values by which he or she recreates him- or herself. Thus, the buyer is both the product and the consumer. Williamson writes: "Advertisers are selling us something else besides consumer goods: in providing us with a structure in which we, and those goods, are interchangeable, they are selling us ourselves" (1985, 13). Research into the representations of genders in advertising is crucial, as Williamson (1985, 169) points out: "There is nothing 'wrong' about symbols as such…[But] there is…a danger in having *people* involved as part of the currency in these systems. When people become symbols they need not be treated as human beings."

In this study, I examined how women in the advertisements of *Vogue* magazine represent femininity. I also studied what values these representations attach to the products advertised. I introduced several advertisement images and concluded that, with some exceptions, the representations of women in *Vogue* advertising are traditional and follow the conventions of

gender representations. By being subjected to the male gaze, I argued that women in the advertisements are presented as the objects of heterosexual male desire. The advertisers prefer these conventional representations because they have easily recognisable meanings. These culturally constructed meanings are based on the referent system in the mind of the viewer.

Vogue is a very famous and distinctive representative of the genre of women's magazines. Women's magazines are claimed to present women with conventional gender roles and to offer instructions on how to attain these roles. This is also what is stated of advertising: it uses easily recognisable gender acts to make the message behind the image clear. As gender roles are culturally constructed, they are also culture-specific. The culture within which I studied the images is the white Western European and North American culture, as I used the British version of the globally published magazine.

I chose *Vogue* magazine as my object of study because of its vast advertisement content: usually more than half of the pages of each issue are covered by advertisements, and very often one single advertisement image extends over an entire spread. Also, the same brand can be promoted by several advertisements in the same issue, sometimes just pages apart.[23] This repetition enforces the image of the brand in the mind of the reader, but it also makes advertisement blend in with the editorial content of the magazine: as the reader becomes used to their way of narration, the advertisements seemingly cease to interrupt the editorial flow. In the same way, the reader also starts to see the gender imagery of the advertisements as part of the magazine's edited content.

I argued that the women in the advertisements are not chosen arbitrarily, but that each posture and garment they wear serves a function, which affects the overall meaning behind the image. To prove this I introduced Judith Williamson's theory of decoding advertisements.

[23] For example *Chanel*, FIG. 49 and FIG. 51, in the August 2009 issue.

I chose the theory because it “offers a very full box of tools for taking an image apart and tracing how it works in relation to broader systems of meaning” (Rose 2007, 74). The theory, which borrows its terminology from the field of semantics, claims that each advertisement picture consists of signs, as much as each page of a book consist of words. In an advertising image, the signs are the pieces the picture consists of: the background, the props as well as the people.

Williamson states, that similarly to linguistic signs, the signs in an advertisement consist of a signifier and a signified. In an advertisement image, the signifier of the sign is its outer appearance. However, it is the signified of the sign that actually brings meaning to the image. For example, in an advertisement, a woman may be sitting relaxed with her legs apart on a throne or she may sit upright on a wooden stool with legs tightly together. The signifier, the outer appearance or the denotation of these signs, is the same thing: a woman sitting on a chair. However, their signifieds, what the signs connote, differ distinctively. Thus it is the signified which actually brings the meaning to the sign through connotation.

Williamson concludes that the meaning produced by the signified becomes a value attached to the sign. All the signs in the image have meaning, a value, and these values can be traded. Thus, the meaning becomes a sort of a currency, an exchangeable feature of each sign. In advertising, this exchange process is mandatory because a name of a brand or an image of a product has no meaning by itself. Williamson states that the viewer of the image does not make this trade consciously: for the viewer it seems that the value originates in the product. According to Williamson, this is the core of advertising: the image of the product itself would mean nothing to the viewer, but together with other signs and through the exchange of values, the product or the brand can be attached with a great array of meanings.

The values the signs have bind the advertisements to the “real world” – it is from there where the meanings actually originate from, through the sign’s third component: the referent.

In semiotics, the referent is the real, tangible object to which the word refers. In advertising, Williamson argues, the signs draw value from entire webs of meaning, called referent systems. Referent systems are located in the mind of the viewer, governed by the culture and society to which he or she belongs. The viewer uses referent systems without even realising it: the advertisers strive to make it evident to the viewer how the picture should be interpreted and which referent systems used. As semiotics is able to cut though the surface of the polished advertisement image to the core of its ideology, I concluded that Williamson's theory is suitable to the deconstruction of advertisements involving representations of gender.

As the referent systems are based on the conventions of society and culture, I claimed that gender, as a cultural construction, may be used as a referent system. To discuss how the referent system of gender in general and femininity in particular are created, I introduced Judith Butler's theory of performativity. According to the theory, no one is born feminine of masculine. The gender specified behaviour is something learned through the customs of society and then imitated, performed. I claimed that one of the sources performativity is learned from, and also re-created in, is advertising, which relies on easily recognisable representations to make its meaning clear.

One of the easiest ways to perform gender is to mark it by the outer signs of the body: women are to have long hair, soft skin and a small waist, for eaxample. The female reader of *Vogue* should be able to recognise herself in the female models of the advertisement images and believe that using the product advertised is a great way of performing the 'true' femininity the models represent. This means that the femininity sold by the advertisements must seem desirable for women. It is in the interests of advertisers that only a small array of feminine representations are to be found attractive: advertisers can claim that their specific product helps the viewer to attain the right kind of femininity.

One of the main features of the desirable feminine performance I discussed is the size of

the female body. I introduced the ideas of Susan Bordo who claims that thinness is the contemporary ideal of female attractiveness. Bordo says the body type promoted by the advertisements is “tightly managed” and without “the soft, the loose; unsolid, excess flesh” (1993, 191). However, according to Rossi the body of the advertisement is unattainable: “no one embodies the ideal and the ideal embodies no one” (Rossi 2007, 133)[24].

Referent systems work side by side and a sign may borrow from multiple systems. The constructions of social difference, such as race, are also articulated through the advertisement images (Rose 2007, 77). The theory of intersectionality is often used in present-day feminist criticism and can be applied in the study of advertising, as race and ethnicity affect the outer appearance of a woman, the femininity they represent and thus also their value as a sign. I claimed that as a meaning producing media, advertisements create images of race and ethnicity. I introduced the study of Anthony J. Cortese, who argues that advertisements contain features of symbolic racism: subtle stereotyping of races. Many of the stereotypes are of women.

As I already explained, the female body of the advertisements is created to be desirable for women. In addition to this, I claim that it is also created sexually desirable for men. In her theory of the gaze Laura Mulvey argues that in an image of a woman, the woman is the object of the male gaze. As the world is ruled by sexual inequality, the roles are always divided according to gender: the active male subject holds the passive female as its object. Mulvey argues, that because of the ways that the genders are acted out in the images, a woman viewer will always identify herself as the object of the gaze, never the subject. Mulvey’s theory compliments Butler’s theory of performativity: as the woman identifies herself as the object of the gaze, thus sees herself in the woman of the advertisement image, she starts to imitate and perform the same gender representation.

[24] Translation from Finnish my own.

The theory of the gaze attaches sexual connotations to the image: the male gaze is watching the female object with desire. As advertising is often accused of overly sexual imagery, the theory of the gaze is an apt tool in studying how the desire within advertisements is constructed. This also suggests that the sexuality advertising promotes is particularly heterosexual. I argued that heterosexuality is a consequence of the same cultural conventions as gender in general. Homosexuality and lesbianism are often invisible in advertising, because advertisements claim that being the object of male desire is as much a sign of femininity as long hair, and as such a position to strive for. There are some examples of homosexuality in advertising, lesbian chic being one of them, although these are often softened by heterosexual implications. I introduced the idea of the queer gaze, which can be used to see beyond the heterosexual front of a traditional advertisement image exposing the homosexual tones lying underneath.

The theory of decoding advertisements exposes the process of creating meaning through the sign of a woman and how the referent system of gender is used in *Vogue*. The value of signs is transferred from one to the other creating meaning for the product in many of its advertisements. The woman as a sign represents many things: from a feeling attached to the product to a lifestyle promoted by it, even if only a part of her is showing in the image. As advertisements must always address someone, I argued that in the advertisements of *Vogue* the person appellated is the female viewer, thus proving that the intended viewer of the images is assumed to be a woman. As the referent systems influence one another, they also influence the appellation process. This can be used to the advertiser's advantage to create groups for consumer identification.

Next, I examined how women perform their gender in the advertisements of *Vogue*. I introduced Lacan’s theory of the mirror phase and applied it to advertisements: as the viewer looks at an advertising image, he or she identifies him or herself in it as if looking in a mirror.

The theory suggests that the viewer wants to strive to resemble the mirror image, the model used in the advertisement. In the advertisements of *Vogue*, the mirror is actually present in some images. In other cases, the image itself acts as a mirror.

Earlier I claimed that the gender performance affects the size of the female body seen desirable. In *Vogue* the thin, tightly managed feminine body is present in most advertisements: in its extreme a plastic body is used instead of a real woman. The unattainably slender female body is ruled by dualism: on one hand it should be a body of a life-enjoyer, on the other that of a controlled athlete. In the advertisements of *Vogue* both these sides exist, although women struggle in their pull. In *Vogue*, the controlled side was the dominant one.

I also examined if *Vogue* accepted other ethnic female performances besides the white woman. Other ethnicities were present in the advertisements, but their skin was often light in colour and their hair was straight. In some images, they were marked with otherness with wild beast-like behaviour. Overall in the advertisements of *Vogue*, race and ethnicity was often used as a marker of exotic values and otherness.

Next, I studied how the male gaze is evident in *Vogue*. The gaze was present in many images. Its presence was as concrete as a threatening figure in the shadows watching a woman in a spotlight or as a hand suggesting a cameraman who controls how the women of the image are presented. Even if the holder of the gaze was not present in the image, the object position of the woman was highlighted by her pose, lack of clothing or attitude. There were also numerous allusions to sexual acts performed by women to men, such as a woman caressing an erupting champagne bottle. Lesbianism was represented as a marginal phenomenon, false and lacking.

Although the traditional femininity performances, from the slender shy girl to the man pleasing sex object, were dominant in the advertisements of *Vogue*, I found images featuring

non-traditional gender behaviour. They showed women in control of their own destiny or as strong and able athletes. The dualism of the female body was referred to as something that women can refuse to partake in. The alternate size and type for the female body was introduced and some advertisements allowed women to bear masculine elements. The mirror theory was used to challenge the viewer to think of alternate ways of female representations. However, these examples were only a few. In addition, the most usual body type for the women otherwise representing non-traditional femininity was the size zero, suggesting that if women's behaviour deviates from the traditional femininity, their outer appearance must make up for it.

The theory of the gaze was challenged in some advertisements. It was suggested that a female viewer is able to look at an image of another woman and identify with her without the feeling of being oppressed by the male gaze. Even the definite maleness of the gaze was destroyed in some cases. Women can be reluctant to adopt the object position, challenge the gaze or able to escape it. In addition, the heterosexuality of the gaze was challenged, as in some advertisements the women showed sexual attraction and even romantic love towards each other.

However, the small number of examples deviating from the conventional representations shows that although the way of performing a woman may be changing, the change is slow in the world of advertising, which relies heavily on stereotypes. Most often the difference to traditional roles is present in the behaviour of the woman represented, least often in her looks, especially in the size of her body. In some cases advertisers are willing to admit the existence of homosexual desire, although heteronormative behaviour is prevailing. Also, the representations of race and ethnicity are subject to stereotyping, more subtle in some cases than others.

According to Williamson, the referent systems are what make the advertisement seem

truthful and its message real: referent systems act as a guarantee for the advertiser's message. Thus, the fact that certain representations of the female gender are used over and over again only reinforces the narrow conventions that women are subjected to. I introduced advertisement images that firstly proved that women can be analysed as signs and then I suggested that besides the products and brands, the advertisements of *Vogue* also sell certain kind of femininity: mostly thin, white and heterosexual. Future research might consider if the images of femininity are always the same, or whether femininity differs from brand to brand or product to product. A critical look to masculinity in advertising in women's magazines could also be a suitable object of study.

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APPENDIX

FIG. 1, *Vogue*, March 2009

FIG. 2, *Vogue*, October 2009

FIG. 3, *Vogue*, February 2009

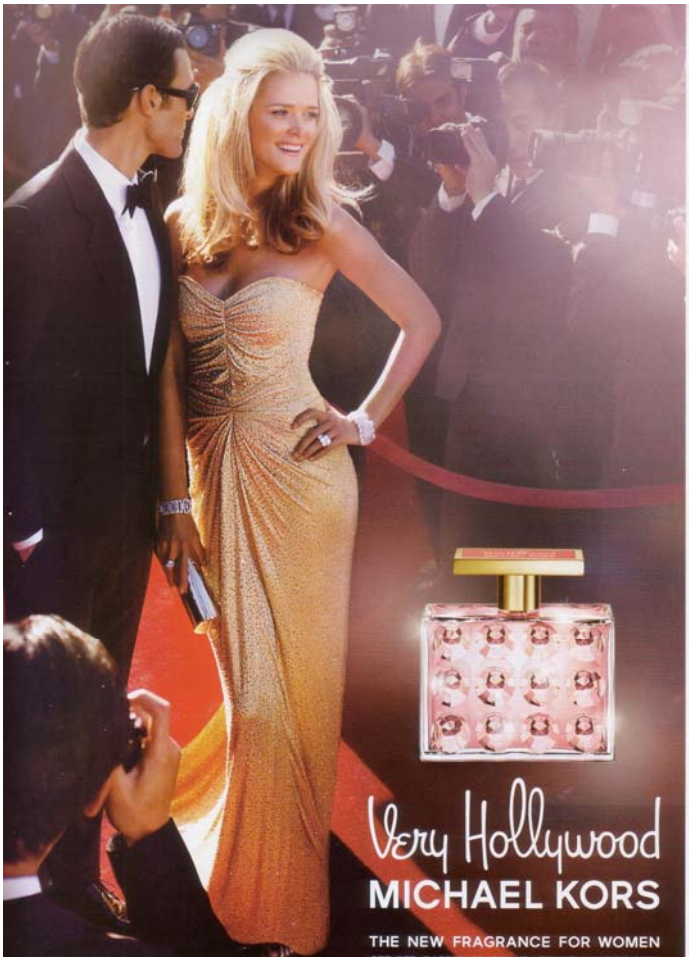

FIG. 4, *Vogue*, November 2009

FIG. 5, *Vogue*, December 2009

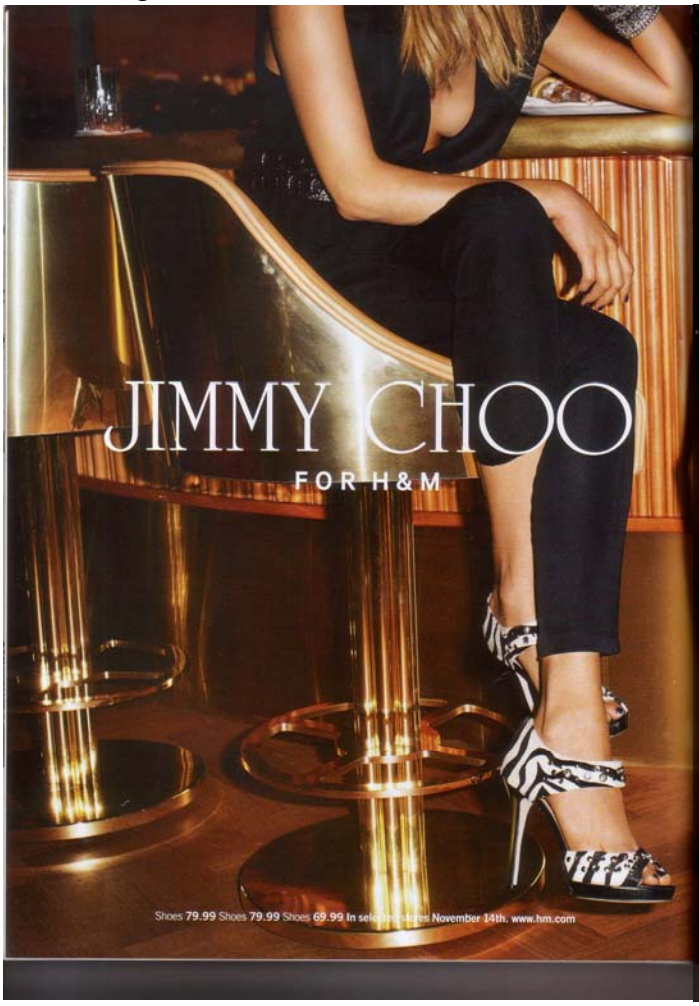

FIG. 6, *Vogue*, November 2009

FIG. 7, *Vogue*, October 2009

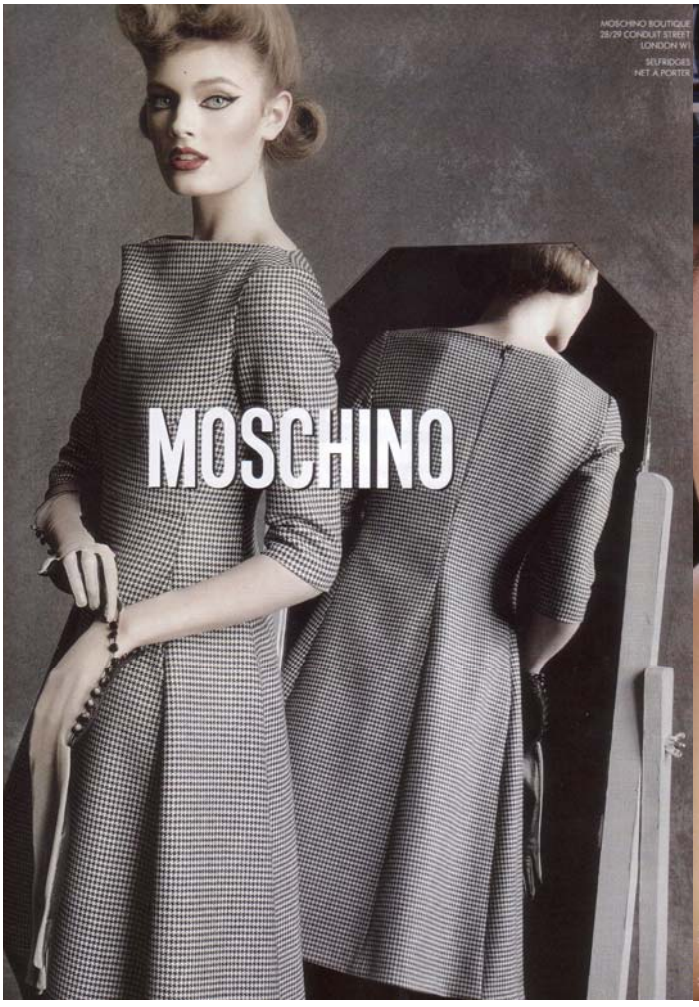

FIG. 8 ,*Vogue*, October 2009

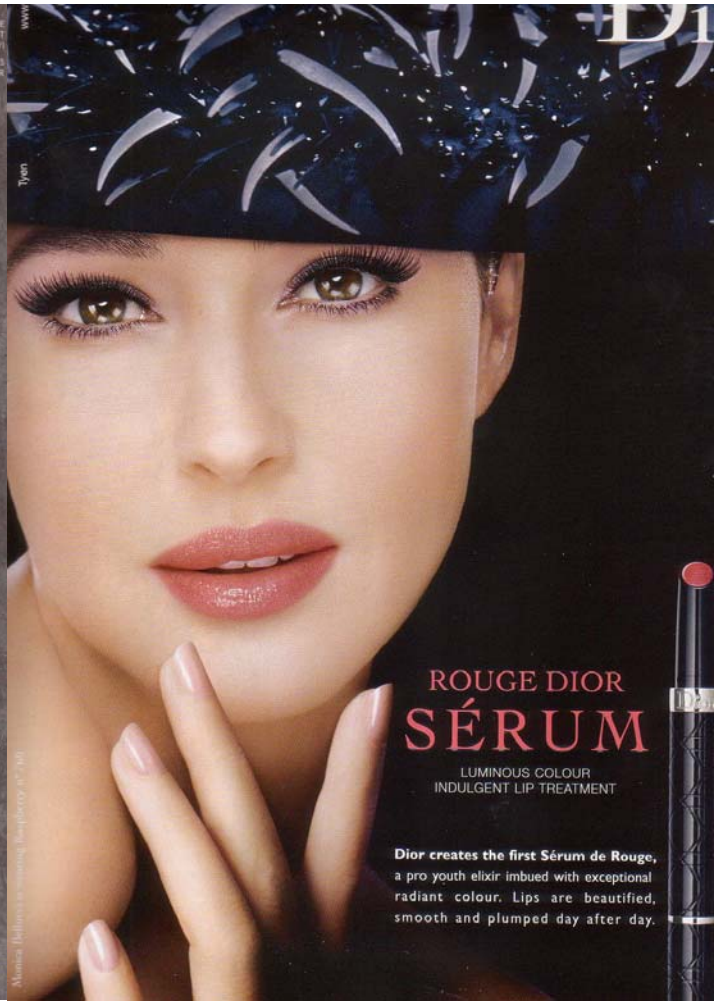

FIG. 9, *Vogue,* November 2009

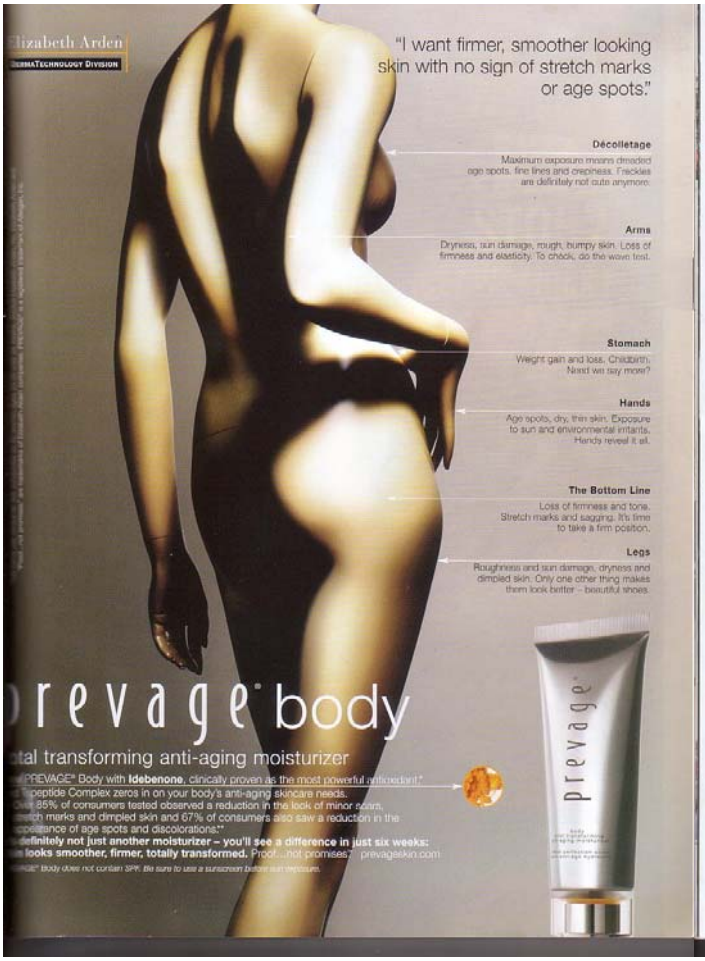

FIG. 10, *Vogue*, June 2009

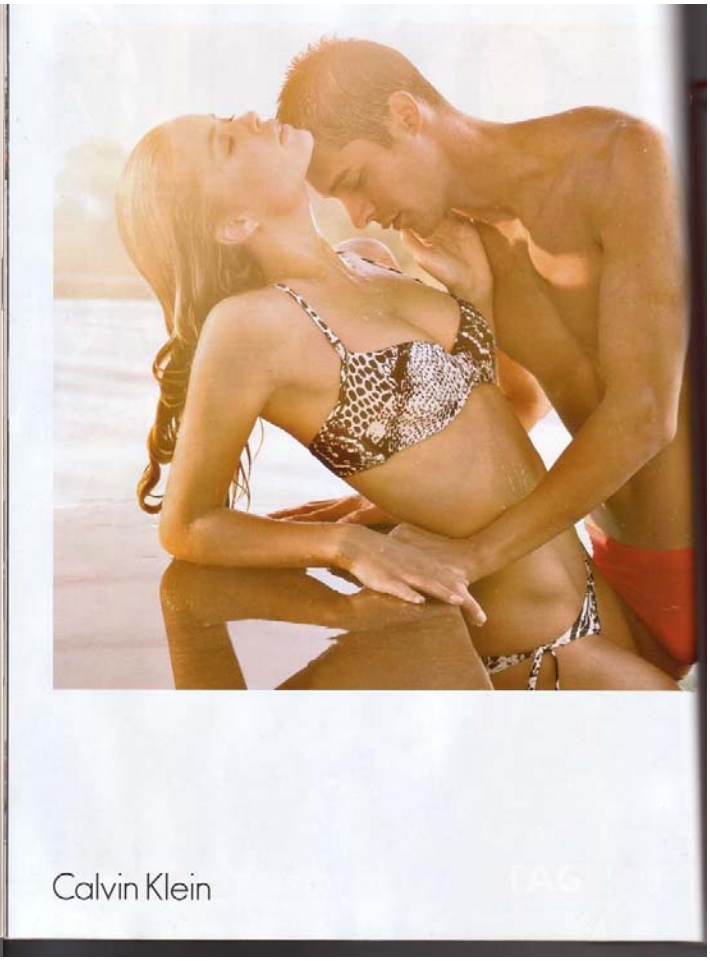

FIG. 11, July 2009

FIG. 12 ,*Vogue*, June 2009

FIG. 13, *Vogue*, July 2009

FIG. 14, *Vogue*, June 2009

FIG. 15, *Vogue*, September 2009

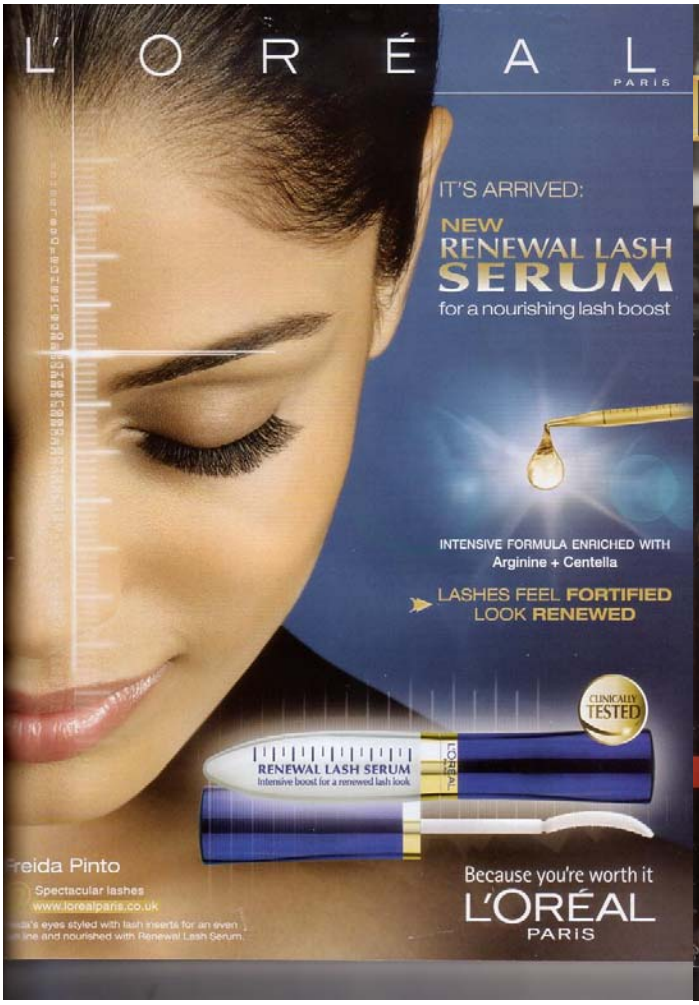

FIG. 16, *Vogue*, November 2009

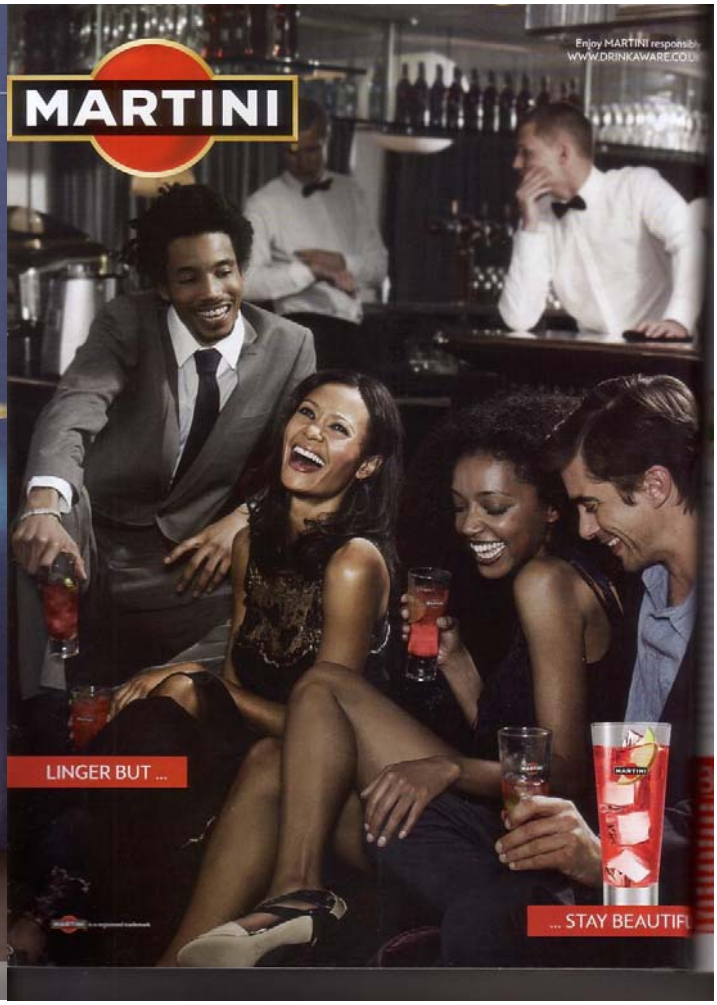

FIG. 17, *Vogue*, October 2009

FIG. 18, *Vogue*, June 2009

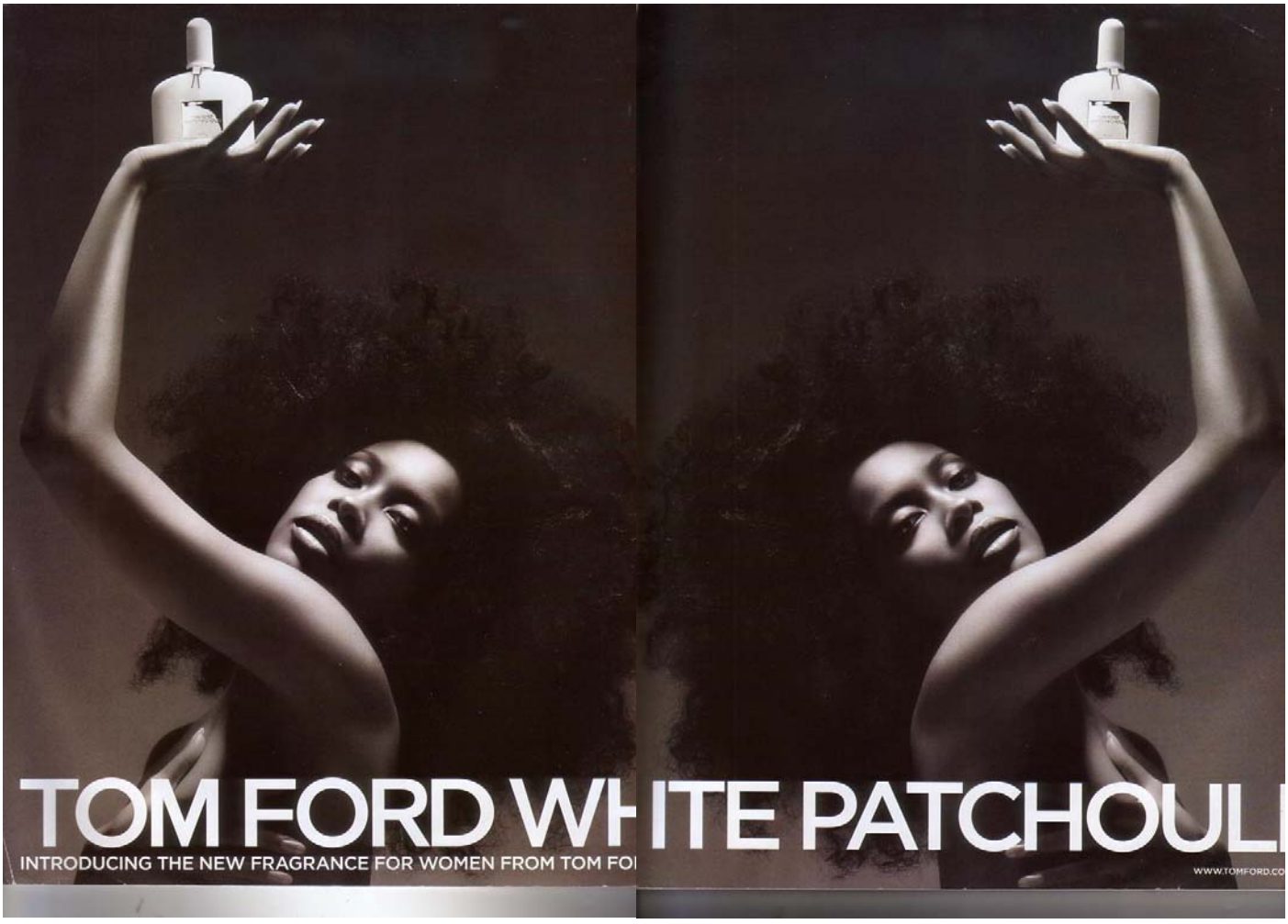

FIG. 19, *Vogue*, June 2009

FIG. 20, *Vogue*, June 2009

FIG. 21, *Vogue*, September 2009

FIG. 22, *Vogue*, March 2009

FIG. 23, *Vogue*, October 2009

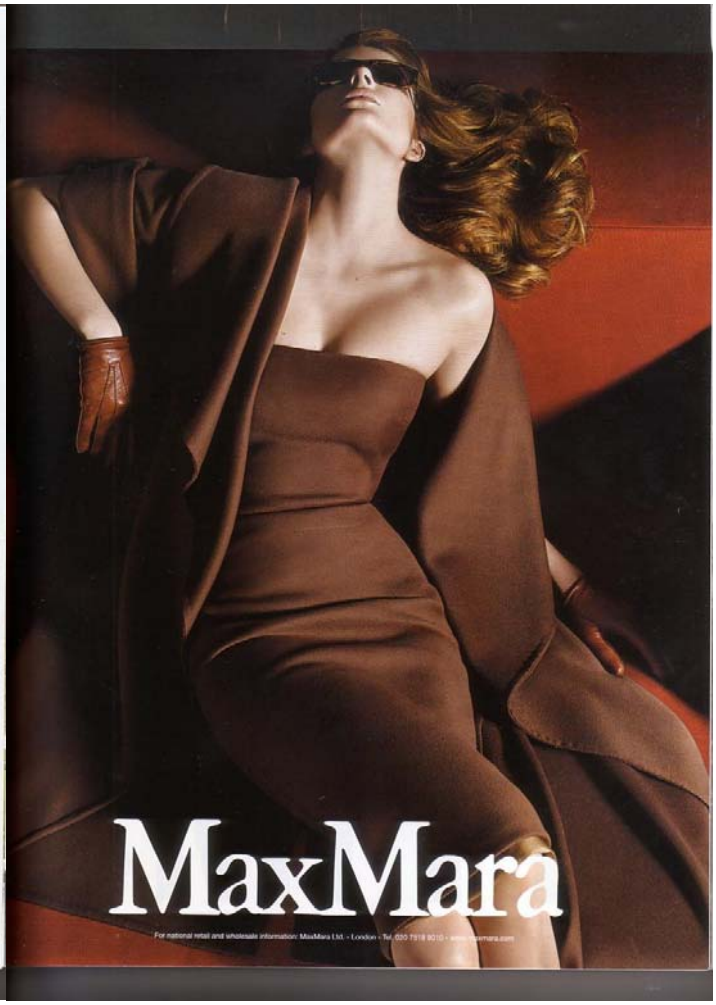

FIG. 24, *Vogue*, September 2009

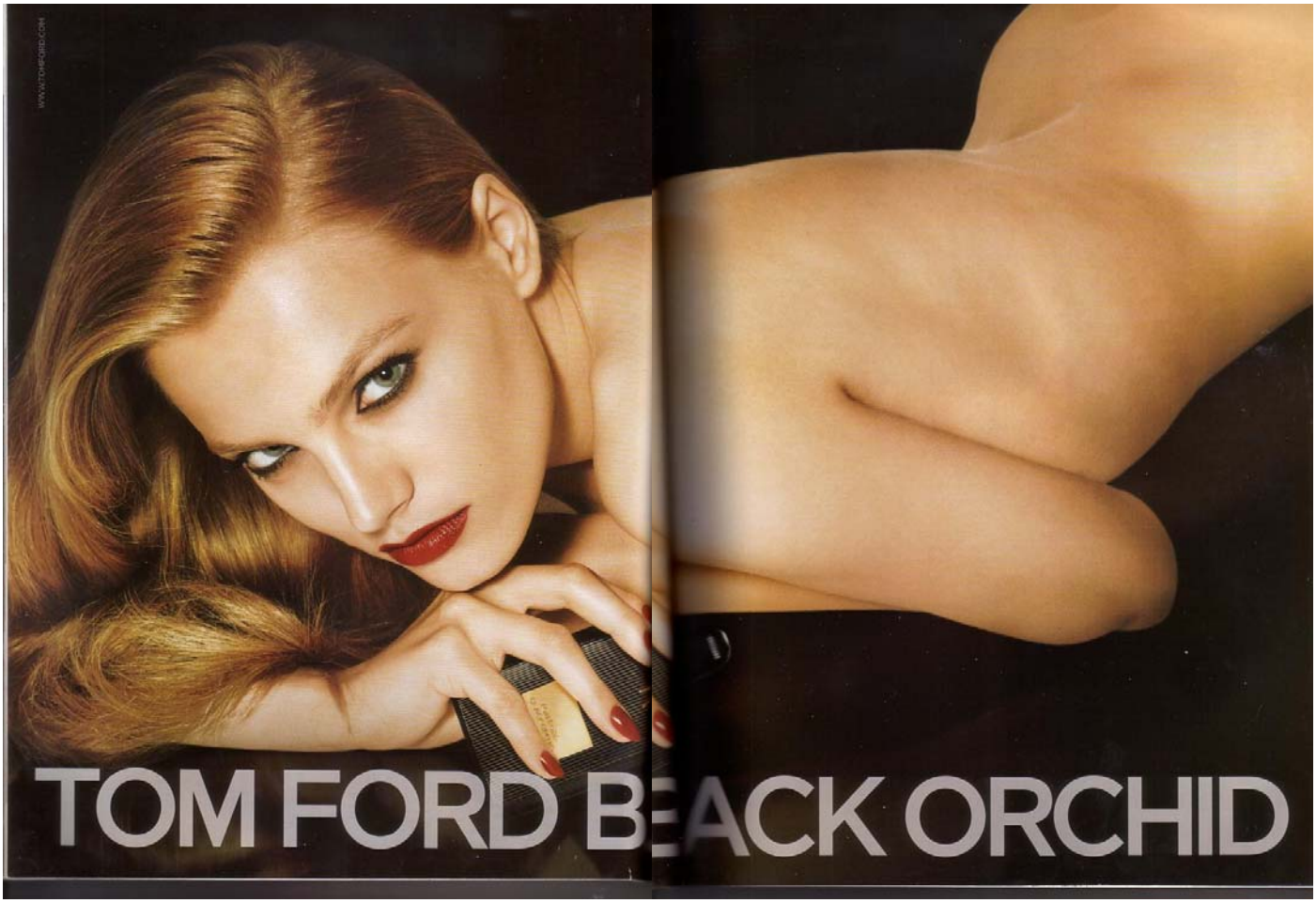

FIG. 25, *Vogue*, October 2009

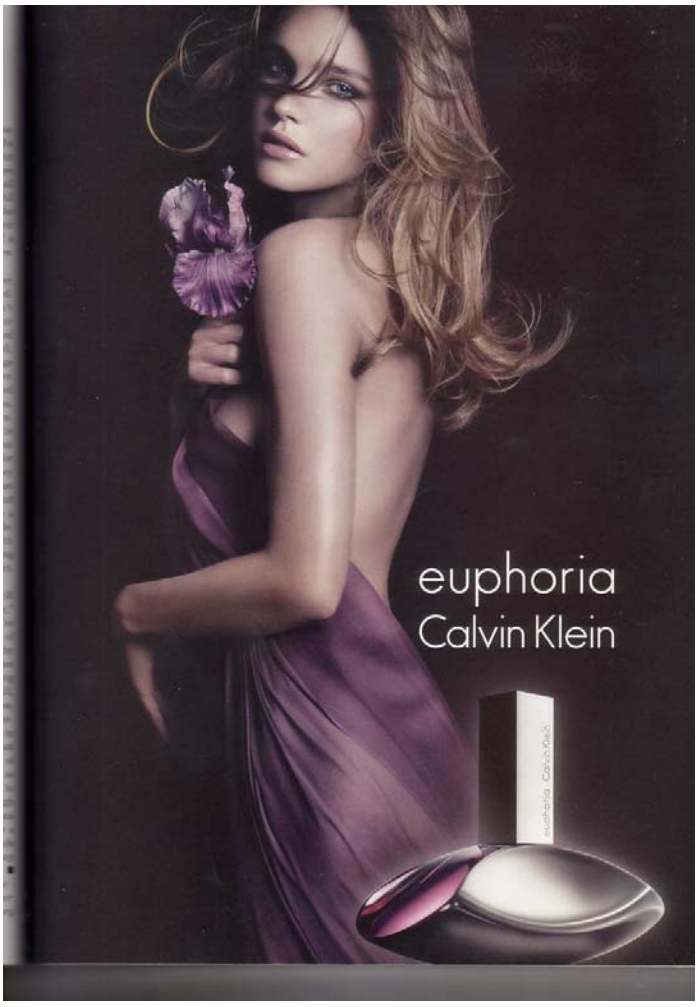

FIG. 26, *Vogue*, October 2009

FIG. 27, *Vogue*, October 2009

FIG. 28, *Vogue*, October 2009

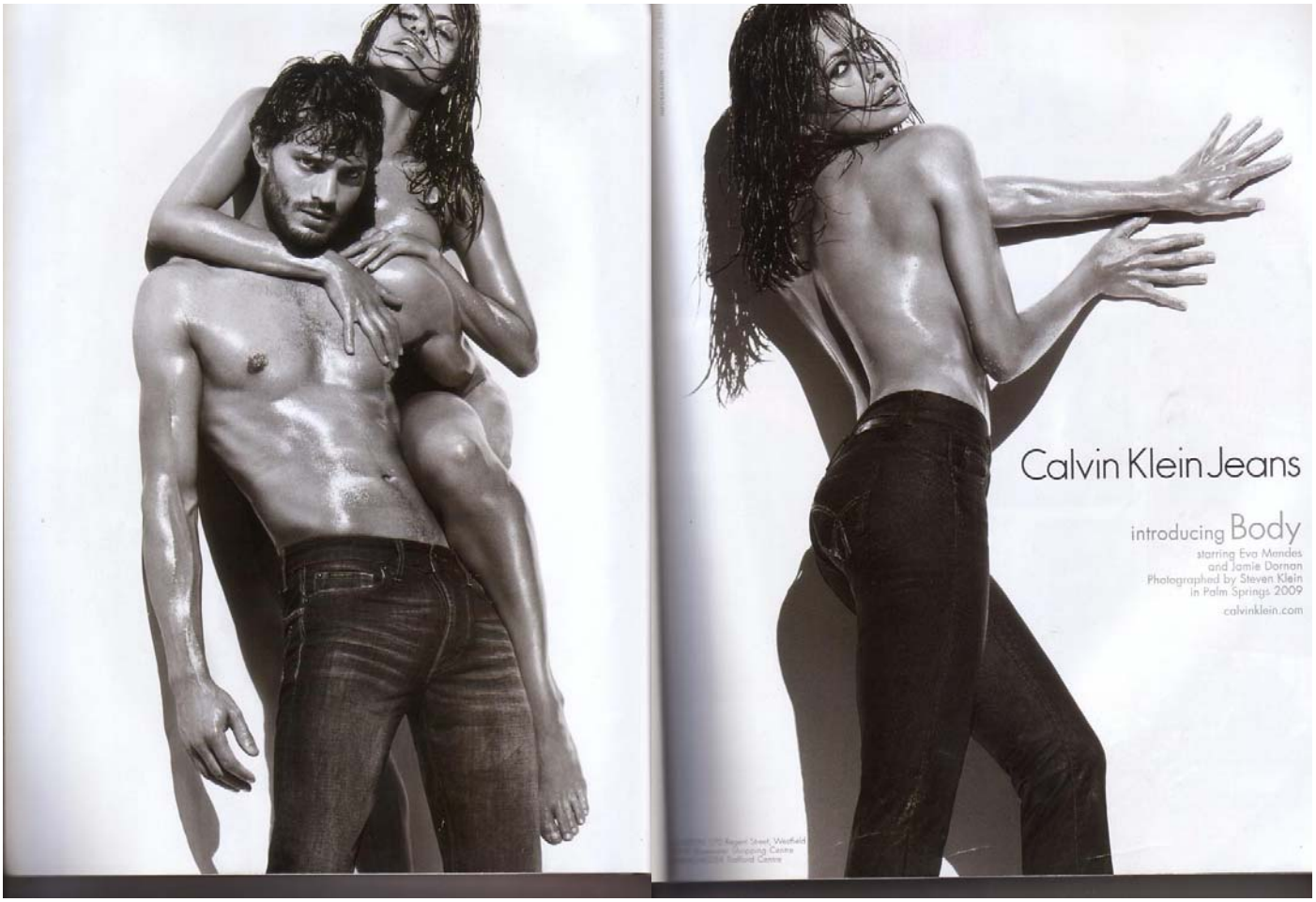

FIG. 29, *Vogue*, November 2009

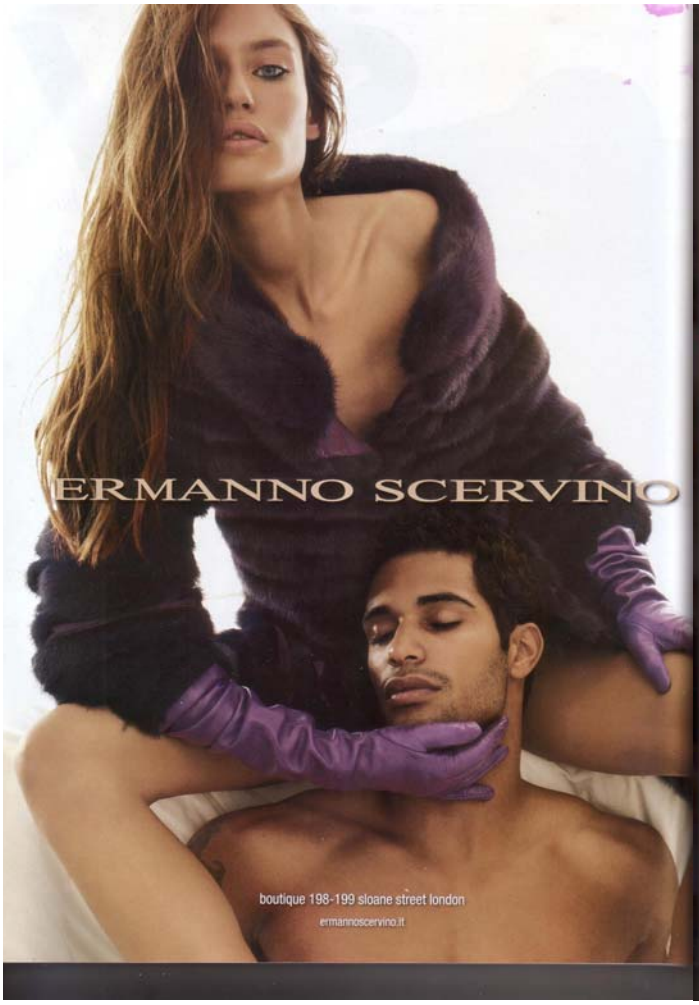

FIG. 30, *Vogue*, September 2009

FIG. 31, *Vogue*, September 2009

FIG. 32, *Vogue*, February 2009

FIG. 33, *Vogue*, August 2009

FIG. 34, *Vogue*, June 2009

FIG. 35, *Vogue*, March 2009

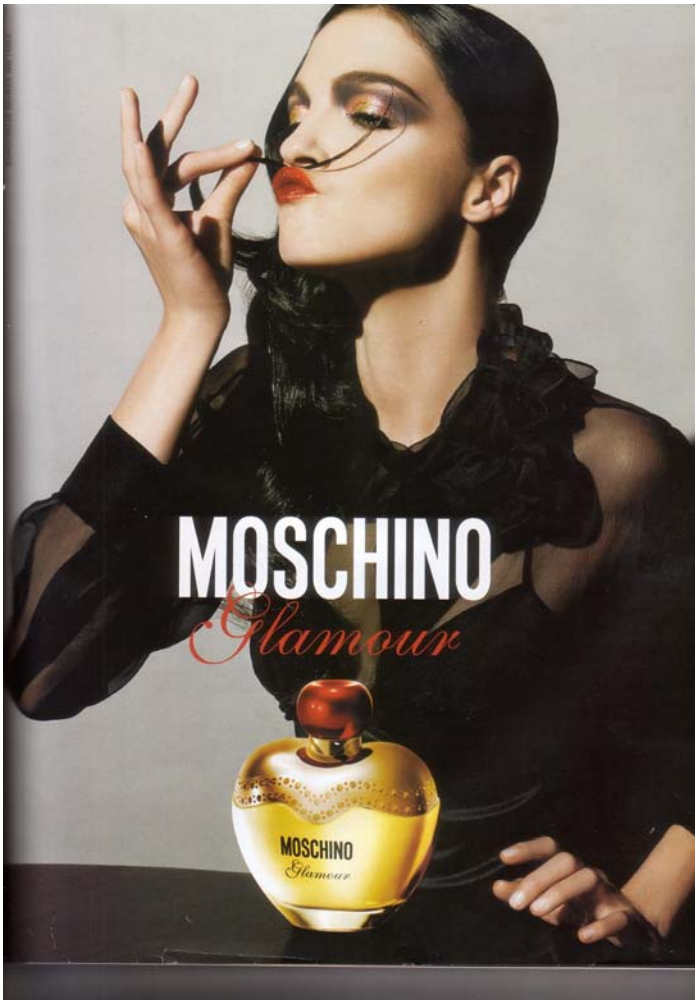

FIG. 36, *Vogue*, December 2009

FIG. 37, *Vogue*, March 2009

FIG. 38, *Vogue*, January 2009

FIG. 39, *Vogue*, April 2009

FIG. 40, cover of *Vogue*, June 2009

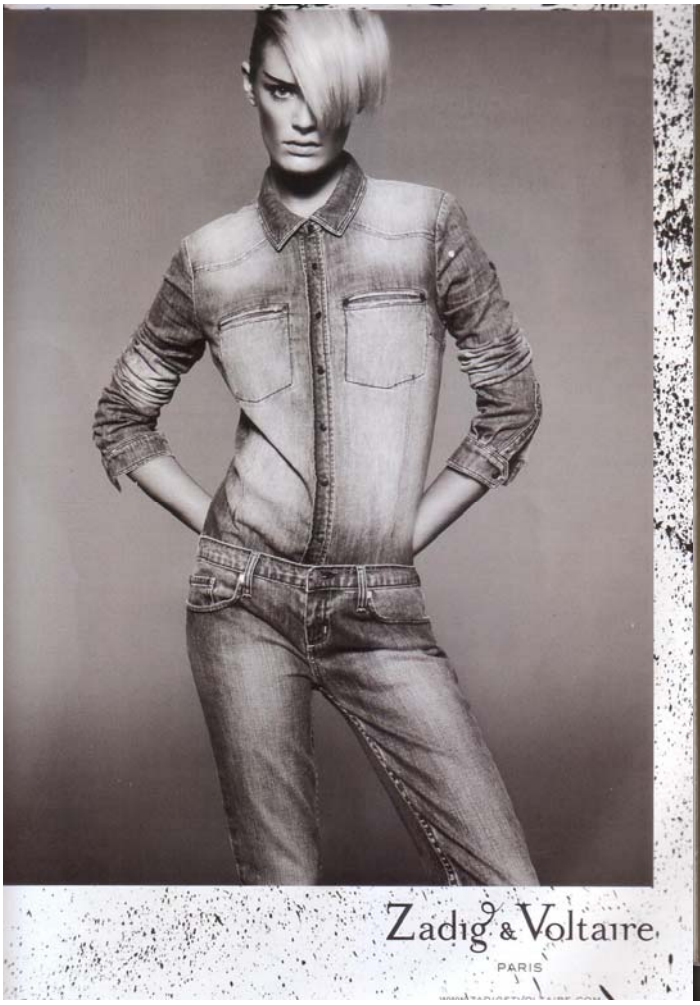

FIG. 41, *Vogue*, April 2009

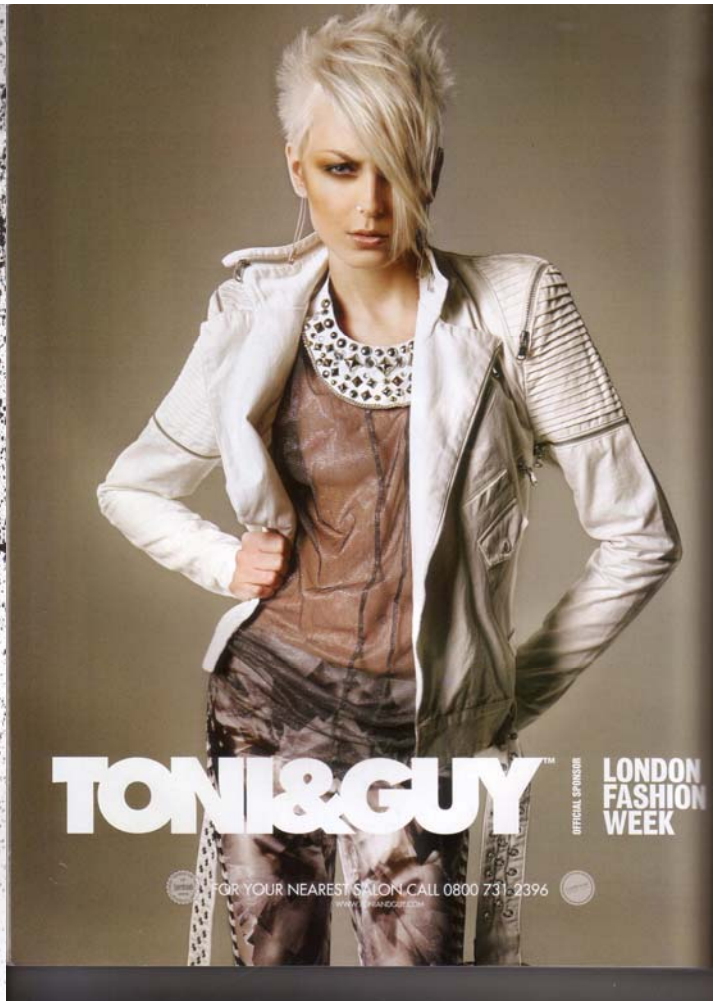

FIG. 42, *Vogue*, December 2009

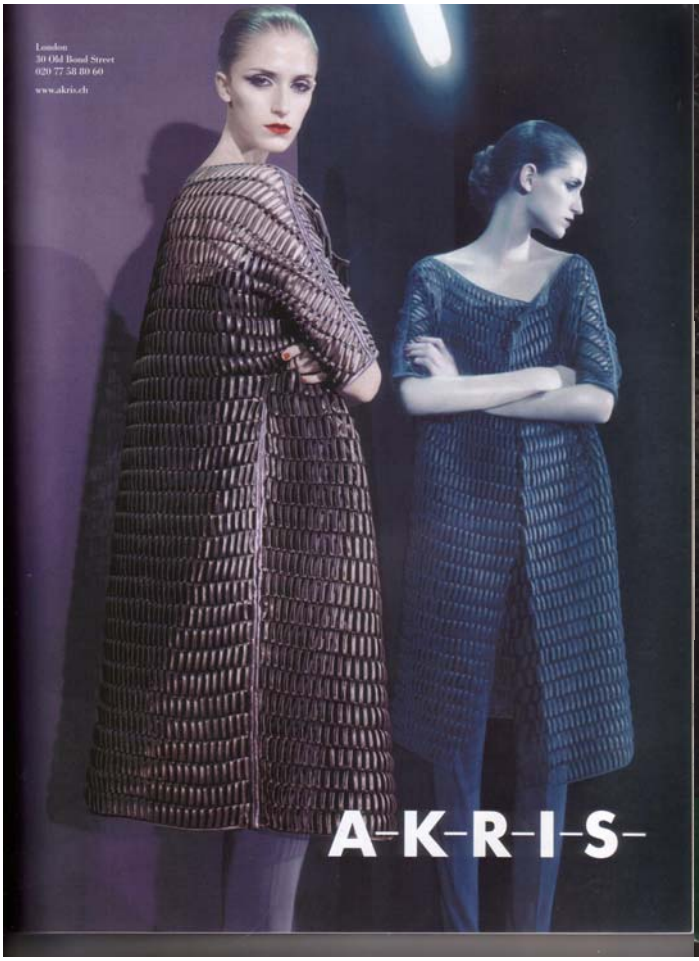

FIG. 43, *Vogue*, March 2009

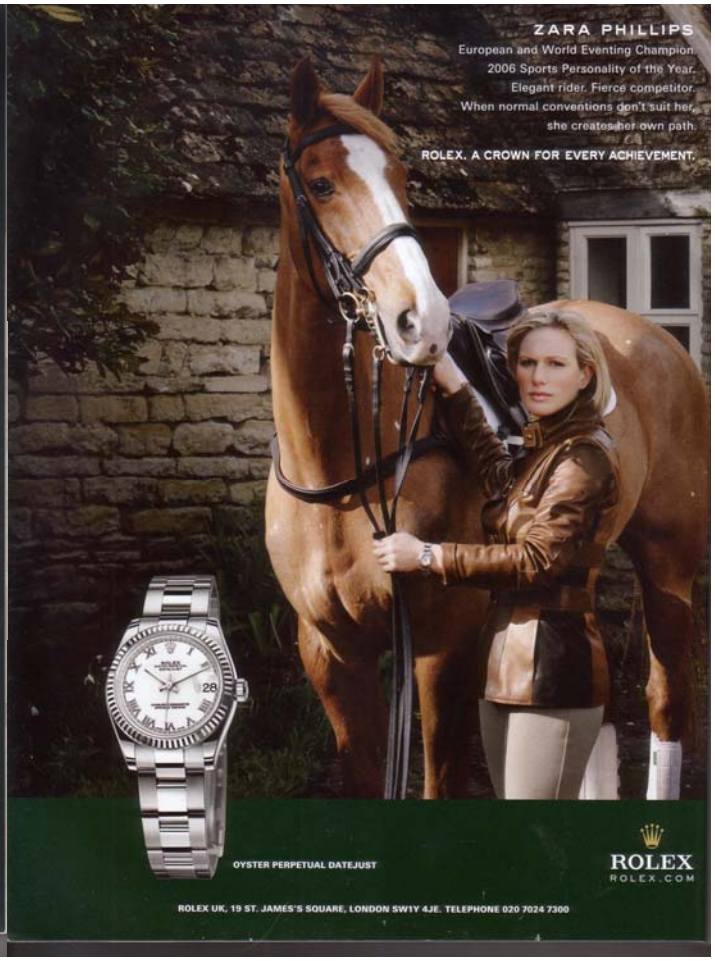

FIG. 44, *Vogue*, September 2009

FIG. 45, *Vogue*, February 2009

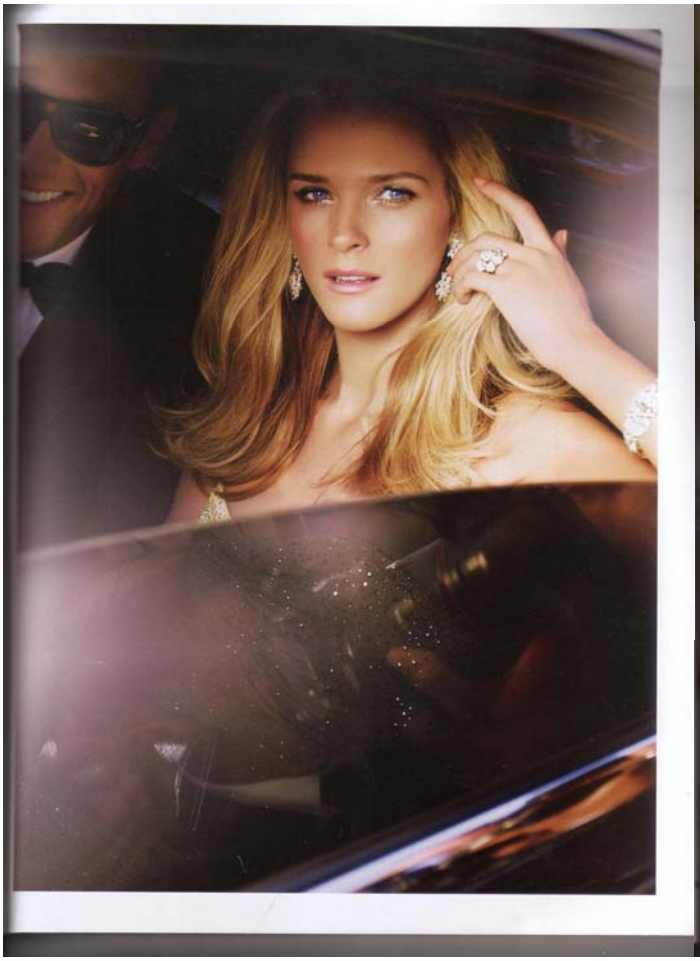

FIG. 46, *Vogue*, December 2009

FIG. 47, *Vogue*, October 2009

FIG. 48, *Vogue*, November 2009

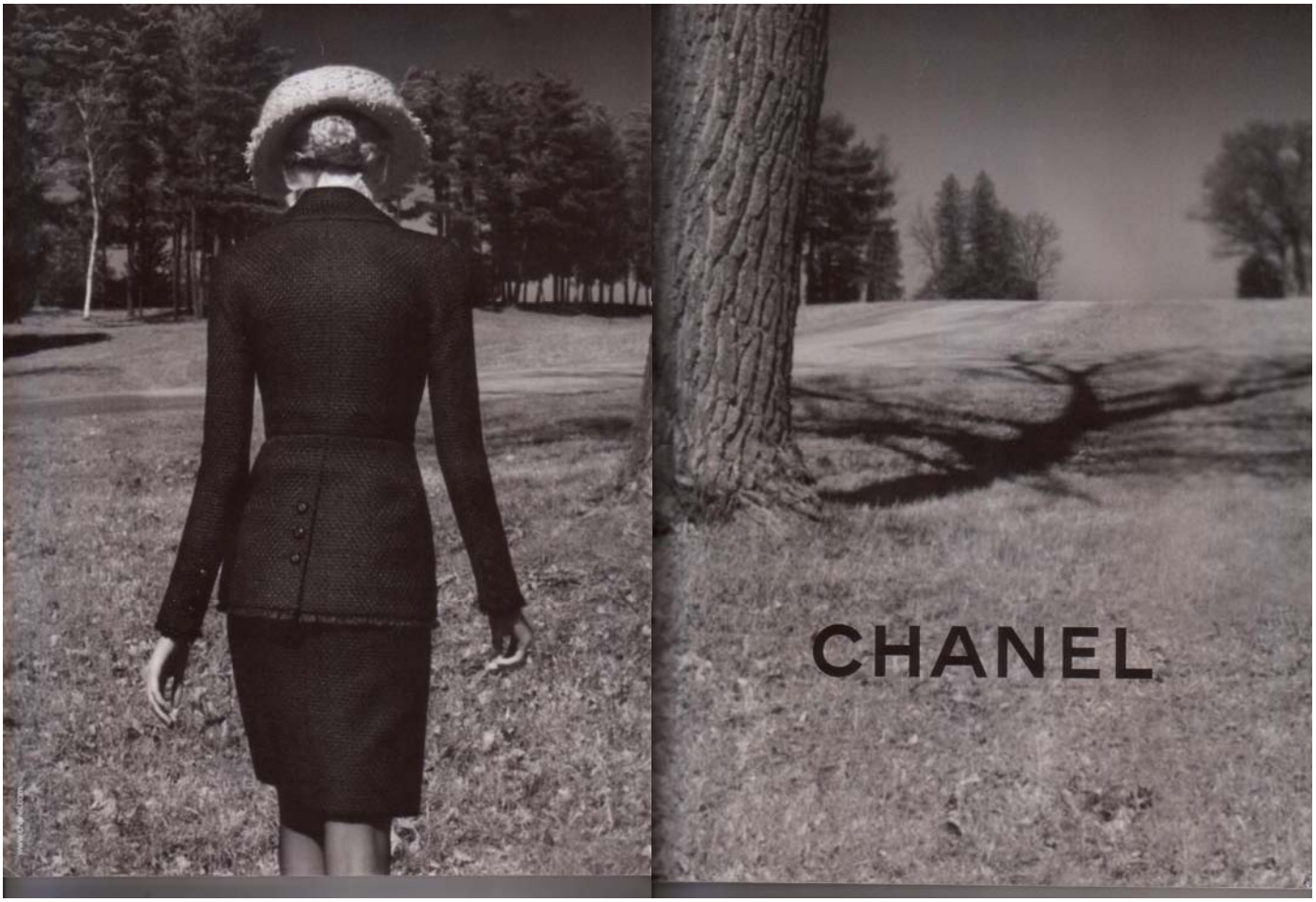

FIG. 49, *Vogue*, August 2009

FIG. 50, *Vogue*, November 2009

FIG. 51, *Vogue*, August 2009