Storytelling Advertising
– a Visual Marketing Analysis

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Abstract:

With the growing wealth we have entered a society where functionality is taken for granted and purchase decisions are based on emotional experiences. Except in our own lives, emotions can be felt through stories. Storytelling marketing has become widely popular during the past decade with marketers aiming to entice consumer’s emotions to gain a foothold in their minds. Stories are especially prevalent in advertising, which has become increasingly visual as a result of consumers evolving from examining readers to identity-seeking viewers.

Our need for stories has been extensively researched, as well as their advantages in advertising. The research has, however, mainly focused on the narrative structure of stories. In today’s highly visual world it is, nevertheless, also interesting to question what the visual qualities of stories are in an advertising context. This thesis aims to identify a visual grammar of storytelling advertising; both combined with and separated from storytelling pictures in general.

With the means of iconography and semiotics, as well as with storytelling and marketing communication theory, four storytelling advertisements were chosen for a visual marketing analysis. These advertisements market the companies Stihl, Ray-Ban, and Band-Aid, as well as the Young Director Award by Shots Magazine and CFP-E, each of them showing a story in a different temporal tense.

The results of the analysis reveal that storytelling pictures and advertisements can be visually pinpointed also outside existing definitions. The main difference between storytelling pictures in general and storytelling advertisements in particular is the extent of the story shown in them, resulting from their differing visual purposes. Furthermore, storytelling advertisements convey two distinct messages, a societal one and a marketing message. Characteristic for storytelling advertising is that the marketing message never is commercial to a degree where it jeopardizes the credibility of the presented story.

Keywords: Storytelling, advertising, iconography, semiotics, visual analysis
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Den ikonografiska metoden

Den semiotiska metoden

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1 INTRODUCTION

With the growing wealth in our world more and more of us are materially affluent. We do not buy new clothes because we have worn out the ones we already have, and we do not upgrade an old mobile phone to an *iPhone 5S* because the old one stopped working. No, in the well-off parts of the world we buy things because of how they make us feel and how they make us look in the eyes of others. We have entered a society, in which the functionality of a product is taken for granted, and our purchase decisions are based upon to what degree we believe a product will give us positive experiences (Jensen 2002: 1–2). Rolf Jensen (2002: 1) calls this emotion-oriented society “the dream society”. Research shows that material belongings cannot make us happy beyond a certain point of comfort (Bernstein 2004: 144), and therefore consumers look for experiences that do.

In order for us to feel happy we need to know what it is to feel unhappy, we need know fear to be able to feel safe, and we need to experience adversity to appreciate success. Apart from our own lives, times of happiness and misery can be felt through stories. Stories let us experience and use our emotions from a safe distance. We use stories to learn about ourselves and the world around us (Jensen 2002: 2). Marketers have recognized our need for stories, and during the last decade the marketing technique of storytelling has become widely popular (Mossberg & Nissen Johansen 2006: 7). *Storytelling*, in a marketing-oriented context, is a company’s use of a true or fictitious story as a way of differentiation. By building a company’s, or a part of the company’s, business around a story and thereby enticing the consumer’s emotions, a company can earn a unique position in the consumer’s mind. (Mossberg & Nissen Johansen 2006: 7–8) In advertising, storytelling has always been prevalent, but with growing competition and need for differentiation, storytelling has nowadays taken a more refined form by creating explicit worlds around different brands (Fog, Budtz & Yakabooylu 2003: 146).

Since Gutenberg and times of general literacy the written word has been the medium of knowledge with an increased importance in the information society. Before that, pictures and the spoken word mainly mediated ideas and thoughts. Now as we are exposed to more and more pictures through magazines, computers, and television we might be heading back to receiving information mainly from images. (Jensen 1999: 40–41) Especially in advertising images are exceedingly prominent, increasingly so since
the mid 1990’s (McQuarrie & Phillips 2008: 103). Research shows that the role of the consumer is moving from that of the examining reader towards the identity-seeking viewer (McQuarrie 2008: 96–97). The task of all the marketing images we have at hand is therefore both to provide us with information, and to create impressions of different brands and positive experiences associated with them (Salzer-Mörling & Strannegård 2004: 231). For the marketer this increases the importance of mastering the marketing communication process also visually. Not only do we need to encode the right pictorial messages into advertisements, we also have to make sure that consumers are able to decode them in a desired way. Stories, which traditionally have been told in written or verbal accounts, offer plenty of visual material to decode and are thus interesting to utilize in today’s marketing messaging in the form of storytelling advertisements.

1.1. Research questions

Our need for stories has been extensively researched (see e.g. Jensen 1999; Jensen 2002; Mårtenson 2009), as well as their advantages in advertising (see e.g. Alwitt 2002; Fog, Budtz & Yakaboylu 2003; Escalas 2004a; Escalas 2004b; Escalas, Moore & Britton 2004). The research has, however, mainly focused on the mental processing resulting from the narrative structure of storytelling advertisements. It is, nevertheless, also interesting to question what the visual qualities of stories are in an advertising context. Through the use of visual analysis methods, such as iconography and semiotics, visual elements used in advertising can be studied. Iconography, commonly practiced by art historians, gives rich insight into the cultural meaning of certain motifs, characters, and symbols in pictures, while semiotics studies the effect a picture’s construction and modality has on the viewer. (van Leeuwen 2001: 92) As images, visual advertisements such as press advertisements are built on the same pictorial traditions as art and other forms of visual communication. Therefore these methodical tools used by art historians also lend themselves to the study of visual advertising. (Kuusamo 1996: 151)

Previously visual analysis has been used in marketing research to gauge consumer reactions to different visual forms of advertising, as well as to find optimal ways of affecting the consumer through visual marketing. Examples of marketers using semiotics are Richard Tresidder (2010), who has studied what impressions the food marketing of department store Marks & Spencer gives to its customers, as well as Delphine Dion and Eric Arnould (2011), who have analyzed the visual cues used in
luxury brand advertisements. Since the late 1990’s the beer brand Guinness has employed semiotics in decoding competitive advertising propositions (Harvey & Evans 2001: 171–172). As a result of not being able to study other beer brands in every market of the world, semiotics experts developed a “Competitor Advertising Decoding Kit” for Guinness, which allows Guinness marketers to visually analyze competitors’ brands in the eyes of local consumers anywhere (Harvey & Evans 2001: 175). Visual analysis methods like semiotics have proven to give as accurate results on consumer perceptions of advertising as traditional research methods but to a fraction of their cost (Harvey & Evans 2001: 172–173). By analyzing advertising through our cultural and cognitive frameworks using iconography and semiotics, market researchers are able to cost-efficiently find out how certain elements of advertising affect the consumers that view them (Harvey & Evans 2001: 172).

When analyzing storytelling advertisements, especially printed ones, there are a few prevailing questions that the visual analysis methods of iconography and semiotics can help to answer. Firstly, what can we read from storytelling advertisements? What messages do we come across? And secondly, what are storytelling advertisements, really? David Glenn Mick (1987: 251, 268) argues that with the help of a so-called story grammar, i.e. a canonical sequence of elements needed in a story, the study of storytelling television advertisements can be formalized, helping us to recognize these advertisements from non-storytelling ones. The question is, therefore, can a visual story grammar be identified for storytelling pictures, as well as for storytelling advertisements?

1.2. Purpose

As storytelling advertising has not been studied from a visual standpoint, the aim of this thesis is to visually recognize what storytelling advertisements are and what they look like, and how they possibly differ from storytelling pictures in general. Most of the previous research (e.g. Jensen 1999; Green & Brock 2000; Jensen 2002; Gonzáles, Barros-Loscertales, Pulvermüller, Meseguer, Sanjuán, Belloch & Ávila 2006; Simmons 2007; Mårtenson 2009; Mar 2011) on storytelling has focused on the narrative structure of this advertising genre. Although this narrativity is not disregarded, it is the visual storytelling capabilities that are highlighted here. The visual research that has been done within storytelling (e.g. Lessing 1982/1766; Williamson 1978; McQuerrie 2008; Baetens & Bleyen 2010) addresses storytelling pictures in general, not
storytelling advertisements. The purpose of this thesis is to partly expand the definitions made by previous researchers, as well as to question them in the context of advertising. The prevailing hypothesis in this thesis is that storytelling pictures and advertisements can be visually defined. This hypothesis will be assessed through the use of the visual analysis methods of iconography and semiotics, as well as theories on storytelling and marketing communication. The resulting visual marketing analysis can help marketers make the most of storytelling in advertising and create visually efficient advertisements.

1.3. Method and delimitation

Semiotician Judith Williamson (1978: 17) finds that the key to understanding the meaning of different advertisements is to understand in what way advertisements work. In this thesis storytelling advertising will be studied through the visual analysis methods of semiotics and iconography, which both examine images by the functions of their parts. According to Gillian Rose (2012: 16–17), there are three criteria for employing critical visual methodology. These criteria are: 1. valuing images as informative representations both inside and outside their contexts; 2. thinking of the social significance of images, i.e. the social conditions behind them and the effects they have had and continue to have; and finally 3. considering the researcher’s own way of looking at images, as the researcher, like any other viewer, is conditioned by the society and culture from which they come from.

The storytelling advertisements chosen for the empirical analysis in this thesis were found on the Ads of the World webpage (http://adsoftheworld.com) by typing the word “story” into the search field. Out of the thousands of advertisements that can be browsed on the webpage the search generated a sample of several hundreds of images. Out of these images four advertisements were chosen based on their storytelling qualities and fit into the four storytelling picture categories analyzed in this thesis. The four advertisements were made for power tool company Stihl, eyewear maker Ray-Ban, adhesive bandage company Band-Aid, and the Young Director Award (YDA) by Shots Magazine and CFP-E, the European federation for commercial film producers. According to Rose (2012: 109–110), the main concern in choosing adequate images for semiotic study is not their ability to statistically represent a wider set of images, but rather their ability to prove a conceptually interesting point by showing an ideological
thread in our current society. Hence, this thesis does not use a statistically wide sample of storytelling advertising, but instead, the pictures have been chosen to match the categories analyzed and to present the information needed for analytical conclusions can be drawn.

In the empirical analysis the visual elements of the chosen case advertisements will first, according to iconographic and semiotic practice, be described in detail before the actual analysis. After that, the visual elements will be studied with iconographic and semiotic methodology, followed by analysis based on theories within storytelling and marketing communication. The iconographic methodology mainly stems from the book *Meaning in the Visual Arts* (1955) by Erwin Panofsky, while the semiotic implications of the advertisements are studied with the help of *Reading Images – The Grammar of Visual Design* (2006) by Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen, and *Handbook of Visual Analysis* (2001) by Theo van Leeuwen and Carey Jewitt. As the theories of iconography and semiotics are plentiful and best described separately before being used in analysis, they are dedicated a chapter of their own in this thesis. The theoretical framework consists of material on storytelling, both as a general marketing practice and specifically in the use of advertising. This framework is complemented by more general theories on marketing communication and advertising, as well as by research on our cognitive and affective responses to advertising.

### 1.4. Disposition

In this introductory chapter the theme of storytelling advertising as well as the purpose of this thesis have been presented and discussed. This chapter has also given some insight into the visual analysis methods of iconography and semiotics, and their contribution to the subject matter. The next chapter further investigates these two visual analysis methods and how they relate to each other. The following two chapters give the theoretical framework for the thesis. Chapter three concentrates on storytelling as a marketing technique and its advantages in general and in advertising. In chapter four different aspects of marketing communication will be presented with a focus on visual advertising. Chapter five is the empirical part of the thesis, where four storytelling print advertisements will be analyzed. After the case-specific findings are discussed in this empirical chapter their overall implications for storytelling advertising

1 With the methodological similarities between semiotics and iconography, arguably this applies to iconographic study as well.
will be discussed in chapter six. Finally, in chapter seven, the research results are summarized and evaluated, and possible future fields of study within the subject are discussed.
2 THE VISUAL ANALYSIS METHODS OF SEMIOTICS AND ICONOGRAPHY

What an advertisement communicates can be accredited to either what is being said in the advertisement or to how it is being said. What is being said relates to content, i.e. what position an advertisement claims for a product or service, while stylistic choices constitute how this is communicated. (McQuarrie & Phillips 2007: 4) These two components, often referred to as the content and the stylistic idea², make up the creative aspects of advertisements (Rossiter 2008: 140) and determine the message being sent to the viewers (McQuarrie & Phillips 2007: 4). The content of an advertisement contains the sales message the advertiser wants to come across to a target audience, but as the stylistic idea and the values behind the sales message equally affect the final message of the advertisement, the sum of these two might be something else than what the advertiser intends. In an interview in *U.S. News and World Report* Neil Postman explains how this is especially true in storytelling advertising (Sanoff 1985: 59):

> Commercials are about products only in the sense that the story of Jonah is about the anatomy of whales. Miller beer commercials are not really about beer; they’re about male bonding, they’re about attitudes toward work, and attitudes toward women.

(Sanoff 1985: 59)

To gain access to this underlying message of an advertisement one must study not only its content but also its stylistic idea. This thesis focuses on the stylistic choices made in storytelling advertisements – the visual ones in particular – and does so by studying them through the use of the visual analysis methods of semiotics and iconography. Advertising images lend themselves to visual analysis exceptionally well as these images by design are intended to relate certain concepts and ideas to the viewer (Barthes 1986/1964: 22). According to Peter Larsen (1998: 439), advertisements hold their position as important visual representations as they show the ruling ideological reality concepts in a society. By analyzing advertising images one can understand the current zeitgeist and the messages perpetuated in our society at the moment. According to Grant McCracken and Richard Pollay (1981: 1) “advertising embodies and transmits cultural behaviors, beliefs, values in a manner not unlike myths, proverbs, metaphors

² Other terms used for content are “key benefit claim” and “campaign theme”, whereas the term stylistic idea is sometimes replaced with “creative idea” (Rossiter 2008: 140).
and rituals”. As both stories and advertisements hold messages about our current lives it is interesting to jointly study them with methods that support a deep analysis of them.

2.1. The iconographic method

The iconographic method is used for systematic analysis of the meaning of motifs, characters and symbols in art. The method was originally developed by the art historian Erwin Panofsky for the study of medieval art motifs, but is used today in the visual study of all epochs of figurative art. (Berggren & Lindberg 2005: 1–2) Iconography identifies three layers of pictorial meaning: representational meaning, iconographical symbolism and iconological symbolism (van Leeuwen 2001: 100). Representational meaning is found by recognizing primary or natural subject matter in an image without ascribing it conventional meaning (van Leeuwen 2001: 100). An image with a man wearing a crown is an example of a picture’s representational meaning. The next level of pictorial meaning is iconographic symbolism, where the ideas and concepts attached to a certain motif are identified (van Leeuwen 2001: 100). Here, the man wearing a crown is identified as a king. On the third level the conventional meanings of a subject matter are identified and interpretations are made (van Leeuwen 2001: 115): Iconological symbolism elucidates why artists have chosen to depict certain themes in certain times, and in what ways these themes are portrayed during those times (Panofsky 1955/1993: 58). Iconology sheds light on “those underlying principles which reveal the basic attitude of a nation, a period, a class, a religious or philosophical persuasion” (Panofsky 1955/1993: 55) and can be said to be “iconography turned interpretative” (Panofsky 1955/1993: 58). While interpreting a motif’s representational meaning requires familiarity with different objects, and iconographic study calls for familiarity with specific themes and concepts, iconological understanding requires insight into the human psychology and the worldview of the creator of the picture (Panofsky 1955/1993: 66). In this thesis iconology will be used to study why and how a company might want to emphasize a certain story or theme in their marketing. Please see figure 1 for an example of the three layers of pictorial meaning in iconography.
Figure 1 This is the oil painting of young Louis XV of France by Hyacinthe Rigaud. The representational meaning of this painting is the scene in its simplest form without interpretation – we see a boy sitting on a chair with a scepter in his hands and a crown next to him. The iconographic meaning of the picture is what the combination of these motifs imply when they are put together – in this case we can recognize a king. The iconological symbolism, in turn, is the reason behind this specific motif being painted – perhaps it was to verify the place of the young king, who took over the kingdom from his great-grandfather (The Metropolitan Museum of Art 2014).

Iconographic analysis is based on four basic concepts: symbol, attribute, personification, and allegory. A symbol is a sign or an object that represents a thought, an idea, a quality or a certain amount. A red heart is a typical symbol for the concept of love. An attribute is an object assigned to a certain person or personification to clarify his or her identity. Kings are generally attributed with a crown, a golden apple, and a scepter. A personification is a human character that embodies an abstract concept, for instance, a continent, a country, a branch of science, a virtue, or a vice. The Finnish Maiden personifies the Republic of Finland. An allegory is a picture or a story that through comparison implies a higher meaning than the obvious. Fables, myths, and biblical parables are typical allegories. (Berggren & Lindberg 2005: 1)
2.2. The semiotic method

Semiotics is the systematic study of signs and other carriers of meaning (Nationalencyklopedin 2013). It is concerned with the process of semiosis, i.e. the production, reception, and circulation of meaning in communication (Hodge & Kress 1988: 261). Through an array of analytical tools semiotics takes an image apart and mirrors its components with a broader system of meaning (Rose 2012: 104). The smallest units of meaning are messages, which are composed of at least two signs (Hodge & Kress 1988: 262). Within semiotics a sign is anything that can represent something else (Barnard 2001: 146) and a sign can therefore be our language, pictures, objects, and gestures. Semioticians Robert Hodge and Gunther Kress range signs on a continuum between transparent and opaque, based on how clearly they represent what they are supposed to signify (Hodge & Kress 1988: 262).

The wide definition of a sign makes the realm of semiotics extensive. This thesis concentrates on the theories on visual semiotics by Roland Barthes and social semiotics by Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen. The former theory examines the layers of meaning in a picture, as well as what a picture represents and how it represents it (van Leeuwen 2001: 92, 94). The latter investigates the meaning of how objects, people and places are rendered in pictures, by studying what different motifs symbolize, but also how a picture’s composition, modality and interactivity affect the viewer (van Leeuwen & Jewitt 2001: 3).

Similar to how three layers of pictorial meaning are analyzed in iconography, different pictorial messages are distinguished in semiotics. According to Barthes (1964: 42–43), advertisements convey three messages: a denoted pictorial message, a connoted pictorial message, and a linguistic message. The denotation of a picture is what the picture actually depicts, i.e. the first degree to which we recognize an image above random lines, shapes, and colors (Barthes 1964: 45–46). This level of visual recognition corresponds to the representational meaning of a picture as studied by iconography. The denotation of a picture might, for instance, again be ‘a man with a crown’. The connotation of a picture is how we perceive what is being depicted, i.e. what values and ideas we culturally associate with the picture and how they are rendered (Barthes 1964: 48). This analysis, in turn, is similar to iconographic interpretation. For instance, in our cultural context a man with a crown connotes the concept of a king.
Whereas the third level of analysis in iconography, iconology, still focuses on the visual interpretation of a picture, Barthes’ (1964: 43) third message level looks at the linguistic message of an advertisement. This message plays an important role in today’s society, as writing and speech still are our main information carriers (Barthes 1964: 43). According to Barthes (1964: 44), the function of the linguistic message in relation to a picture is either that of anchorage or relay. Anchorage refers to when text is used to identify pictorial elements and the right level of understanding of an image. In other words, this type of text anchors the image and answers the question “what is it?” (Barthes 1964: 44). In accordance with the earlier example of a picture of a king, the anchoring text to that image might be “a king” or “the king of Candyland”. Relay text, in turn, is autonomous of the visual content and in contrast complements the message of the image. The meaning of relay text is harder to interpret, as it is not fully supported by the accompanying image. (Barthes 1964: 45) Our previous picture of a king might be adjoined with the relay text “the candy everyone likes” or “we’ll make sure your kingdom never runs out”. Anchorage is the most common function of text in relation to a picture, often used in advertisements or press photographs, while relay is typical for film, where the dialogue gives further meaning to the images shown (Barthes 1964: 45).

2.2.1. **Semiotic metafunctions**

Basing their findings on work by linguist M.A.K. Halliday, Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) have distinguished three metafunctions of visual representation, which Jewitt and Rumiko Oyama (2001: 140), in turn, have named representational meaning, interactive meaning, and compositional meaning. These three metafunctions correspond to three different kinds of semiotic communication. (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006: 41–42) Together with the closely related concept of modality they will be described below.

2.2.1.1. **Representational meaning**

In social semiotics representational meaning refers to in what way the world is represented in an image. This metafunction can be seen in the spatial relationships of portrayed visual participants, i.e. people, animals, and other figurative objects that are represented in the picture. These relationships can be separated into two patterns of representational meaning, narrative representations and conceptual patterns. (Jewitt & Oyama 2001: 141)
Narrative representations show unfolding actions, events, and processes of change with participants who ‘do’ things or situations that ‘happen’. Narrative images show scenes within pictures and can be recognized by the vectors they employ. (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006: 59) In semiotics vectors are lines that connect participants to each other and express dynamics between the participants. Vectors can, for instance, take the form of a gaze, an extended arm, a tree branch, or an architectural element. The pictorial participant the vector emanates from is called the actor, while the participant who is subjected to the action is the goal. When both the actor and the goal of a vector are in the same picture the action is transactive. When the goal is missing or outside the picture frame the action is non-transactive. (Jewitt & Oyama 2001: 141–143) Please see figure 2 for an example of a transactive narrative picture.

Figure 2  This narrative picture from the movie Pirates of the Caribbean – Dead Man’s Chest is transactive as both the picture’s actors and the goals of their vectors, i.e. the pirates with their extended swords, can be found within the picture frame.

(Disney 2014a)

Conceptual patterns, the second type of representational meaning, represent participants as what they are rather than what they do, i.e. they show the participants as belonging to a certain category when having some fixed components or characteristics (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006: 59). Definitions and classifications in conceptual patterns are made through the use of symbolic attributes of certain participants as well as comparisons, where participants either are separated by their
differences or brought together by their similarities. (Jewitt & Oyama 2001: 143–144)
Please see figure 3 for an example of a conceptual picture.

Figure 3 As a conceptual pattern this picture from the movie *Pirates of the Caribbean – At World’s End* represents pirates as what they are rather than what they do.

2.2.1.2. **Interactive meaning**

The second metafunction of social semiotics, *interactive meaning*, is concerned with the relationship between the viewers, the producer of an image, and the objects in the image. Through the use of different visual resources the interactive relations between these are implied. (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006: 42) One of these resources is contact. *Contact* between the participants of a picture and the viewer is created through eye contact (Jewitt & Oyama 2001: 145). Pictures where a participant (either a human, an animal or something with humanlike features) looks directly at the viewer are called *demand pictures*, while pictures where the participant looks elsewhere are called *offer pictures*. Demand pictures demand a relationship between the viewer and the represented participant. They also demand some reaction from the viewer – what kind of reaction is modified by the picture participant’s gestures and expressions. Offer pictures, on the other hand, offer us information and an undisturbed insight into the world of the picture. Without a confronting gaze back at us we can freely observe that
world in an impersonal and detached way. (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006: 118–119)
Please see figure 4 for an example of a demand picture.

Figure 4 In Johannes Vermeer’s painting *Study of a Young Woman* the girl in the picture looks at the viewer and hence the picture is a demand picture. She is portrayed in close-up, implying a close personal relationship to her. Nevertheless, her body is shown to us in profile, indicating that our involvement with her need not be whole-hearted.

Another interactive resource of images is the meaning they create through the use of distance. According to Edward Hall (1966: 110), the distance we keep between other people and ourselves indicate the type of relationship we have with those people. In an intimate relationship we let the other person very close to us, while strangers are kept at a distance. The same principle applies to images and how close a picture frame is from the portrayed picture participant. A close-up, i.e. a picture frame where the participant’s head and shoulders, or even less is shown, indicates a close personal relationship – so close that the viewer is allowed to be at this short distance of the participant. A medium shot where the human figure is cut off between the waist and the knees conveys a social relationship, while a long shot, with the whole human figure
portrayed at a distance, proposes an impersonal relationship. (Jewitt & Oyama 2001: 146) Again, please see figure 4 above for an example of the pictorial use of distance.

A third interactive resource of images is the use of point of view. The vertical point of view given in a picture suggests the power relation between the viewer and the participant of the picture. A picture participant who is at the viewer’s eye-level gives the impression of being equal with the viewer, while a participant looking down on the viewer symbolically has power over the viewer, and a participant looking up is under the power of the viewer. (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006: 140) The horizontal point of view given indicates the level of involvement the viewer is to take to what is being represented. Frontal portrayal of the participant suggests full involvement, while a profile or back implies detachment. The degree of power or involvement is determined by the degree to which a vertical or horizontal point of view is taken. (Jewitt & Oyama 2001: 135) Figure 4 also exemplifies the effect of the chosen horizontal point of view.

2.2.1.3. Compositional meaning

Kress and van Leeuwen’s (2006: 177) final social semiotic metafunction is compositional meaning, which is concerned with the compositional functions of images. There are three visual resources that can be employed in regards of composition: information value, framing, and salience. (Jewitt & Oyama 2001: 147) The information value of different elements in a picture lies in their placement in the composition, i.e. whether they are placed to the left or the right, the upper or lower part, or the center or the margin of the picture (or the advertisement page). In the western world we read from top to bottom and left to right. This makes us perceive the placement of elements in a picture in certain ways, which differs from the perception of, for instance, Asians looking at the same picture. (Jewitt & Oyama 2001: 148) An object placed to the left is according to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006: 181) presented in the West as ‘given’, i.e. something, which the viewer is already acquainted with and finds self-evident. Contrarily, an object placed to the right is ‘new’, which means that it is not yet known and therefore debatable (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006: 181). Furthermore, objects placed in the top half of a picture are presented as ‘ideal’, meaning that the information they hold is general or idealized. Objects at the bottom are put forward as ‘real’, i.e. they hold information that is more down to earth, specific, and practically oriented. (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006: 186–187) Finally, objects in the center of a picture are presented as the core of the representation, binding together
more marginalized objects that are of lesser importance. (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006: 196) Please see figure 5 as an example of the compositional meaning in a picture.

**Figure 5** In this Volkswagen advertisement the name of the brand is placed on top showing that this is the ideal that should be sought after. A Volkswagen Beetle is placed in the bottom half of the picture representing in turn what is ‘real’ and how the ideal can be attained.

(Figures continued on page 17)

*Framing* as a compositional resource refers to whether or not elements in a picture are separated from each other or presented as connected. Connection can be shown through the use of similar colors and forms, connecting vectors and the absence of separating framelines and spaces. Separation, conversely, is achieved through framelines of different thickness, empty spaces, contrasting colors and forms and other disconnecting means. (Jewitt & Oyama 2001: 149–150) The final, compositional resource, *salience*, refers to how certain elements in a picture can be visually made more prominent than others due to their coloring, size, sharpness of focus, tonal contrast, perspective et cetera (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006: 202).
2.2.1.4. Modality

*Modality*, or ‘reality value’, is an important visual resource that benefits from being discussed together with the three metafunctions described above. Modality is the degree to which a picture is perceived to be realistic, based on the form of the picture message and its modality markers (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006: 154). *Modality markers* are individual visual cues that run on a scale from one extreme (realistic) to another (unrealistic). Color is an important indicator of modality and provides us with the modality markers of color saturation, color differentiation and color modulation. *Color saturation* is a modality marker with a scale running from black and white to full color. *Color differentiation*, in turn, has a scale running from monochrome to a maximally diversified color palette, while *color modulation* refers to a scale running from unmodulated color, where only one shade of each color is used, to fully modulated color, where many different shades of a color are used. (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006: 160)

Other modality markers are contextualization, representation, depth, illumination, and brightness. *Contextualization* refers to whether or not the background of an object in a picture is shown. The range goes from full contextualization, where the object is put in a realistic setting, to unmodulated contextualization, where the background is either absent or only hinted at. *Representation* refers to the degree of abstraction of an object, with a scale running from a representation with maximum detail to an abstraction showing only the essentials. (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006: 161) *Depth* is a modality marker with a scale going from maximal deep perspective to the complete absence of depth. *Illumination* has a scale running from full play with light and shade to its absence, while *brightness* refers to a scale running from two degrees of brightness, black/white or dark grey/lighter gray, to a maximum number of different degrees of brightness. (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006: 162)

As modality is based on the notion of realism it is important to consider what the concept of realism really means. The most common way to define realism is that of naturalistic realism, i.e. the reality that we perceive with our own senses (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006: 158). *Naturalistic modality*, therefore, measures how closely a picture depicts the reality that we see with our naked eyes. (Jewitt & Oyama 2001: 151) A color photograph of a tree has a higher degree of naturalistic modality than a charcoal sketch of that same tree, because the photograph is able to render the tree in a more lifelike manner. There are, however, also other types of coding orientations to modality than
naturalism. *Technological modality* is based on how efficiently a picture renders an object’s being on a conceptual level and how well it helps us understand the measurements and the scientific reality of that object. A technological picture might not show naturalistic reality, as that is not its purpose (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006: 164). Meticulously drawn renditions of the human anatomy or professional blueprints are examples of high technological modality. *Sensory modality* is used in advertising, fashion and food photography, interior decoration etc. Pictures that have high sensory modality appeal to our senses and give us emotional pleasure due to colors and contrasts that are stronger and sharper than in reality. Finally, *abstract modality* measures how well a picture can generalize an object and strip it from its superfluous qualities to its bare essentials. This modality is popular within academics and abstract art, where detachment and a search for the innate truth is in focus. (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006: 165) Please see figure 6 for an example of modality in a picture.

**Figure 6** The modality of this Fiat scooter advertisement is closest to being sensory as the colors and contrasts of it are slightly emphasized beyond the naturalistic. The picture also scores low on contextualization and depth as it does not have a realistic background setting and is not rendered in perspective.

(Drori Shlomi / BBDO 2014)
2.3. The combination of semiotics and iconography in visual analysis

Semiotics and iconography are most easily separated by their objects of study – the semiotic method focuses on modern media images while iconography traditionally has used for art works of the past (van Leeuwen 2001: 117). While iconography studies the meaning certain motifs have gained in given cultural and historical contexts, semiotics focuses on how we perceive the pictorial elements themselves irrespective of time. Semiotics therefore treats cultural context as a given, which is shared by all acculturated to contemporary popular culture, whereas iconography stresses the importance of the context and culture producing a certain image (van Leeuwen 2001: 92). Furthermore, iconography and semiotics study visual meaning from different vantage points. While iconography studies what a motif means based on external references, semiotics focuses on how meaning is conveyed through visual structures.

In other words, as iconography identifies pictorial elements, semiotics studies the codes behind the identification. (Kuusamo 1996: 61–62) Finally, iconography favors the original meaning of art works in the past over their present meaning (van Leeuwen 2001: 102), while arguably semiotic analysis does not discriminate meaning on the account of time.

Despite their traditional differences in focus, the iconographic and semiotic methods are similar in several ways. Firstly, they both engage in a search for context for visual representations (Kuusamo 1996: 62). Secondly, it has been argued that also the third stage of iconographic analysis, iconology, is comparable to the connotational level of semiotic analysis, which would imply that semiotics is the natural continuation of the iconographic method (Kuusamo 1996: 150). And thirdly, they are united by the pictorial history of fine arts (studied by iconography) and other visual culture (studied by semiotics) (Kuusamo 1996: 151). Thus, these two visual analysis methods complement each other and can be used in parallel for a comprehensive analysis of modern advertising material.

In order to arrive at semiotic connotations the iconographic ones are of importance, as they provide a cultural background for semiotic conclusions. In our postmodern world the realms of these two methods tend overlap more and more. Iconographic symbols and intertextual references, historically used in earlier epochs of fine arts, are today consciously used in logos and advertising (van Leeuwen 2001: 107, 110). With the proliferation of visual images in social media and the growing globalization one might also argue that iconographic interpretation has become a part of modern everyday life.
In turn, semiotics, as a fairly new method of visual interpretation, also offers interesting insights into artworks of the past.

2.4. Visually analyzing storytelling advertisements

Using visual marketing analysis for studying storytelling advertisements allows for us to look beyond the psychological effects of the story format in storytelling print advertisements and instead focus on how the stories are conveyed visually. The iconographical method helps us understand the meaning of the presented objects in a storytelling picture and thereby helps us put together a probable narrative as a sum of the shown parts, while semiotics helps us interpret the nuances of the story, giving us the information on how we are to perceive it. Iconography tells us, for instance, that a shiny-armoured young man standing on top of a beheaded dragon might be a knight or a prince who has just slayed a monster. Semiotics, in turn, tells us that we are to admire him as he is depicted from below, and that he has executed this bravery for a certain princess or kingdom as we see him glancing towards a castle far behind him. With the use of iconography and semiotics storytelling advertisements can be scrutinized in depth and thereby these methods help us find what the components are that bring both the story and the commercial message best forward to the viewer. Without these visual analysis methods we could not systematically pinpoint what it is in the storytelling pictures that create either the story or any other message. We would only have to guess based on our impressions of the pictures and how the motifs make us feel.
3 STORTELLING

To its simple core, storytelling is the act of telling a story. A story, in turn, can be defined in many ways. A typical definition, dating back to Aristotle, is that a story is an ordered series of events with a beginning, a middle, and an end (Bennett & Royle 1999: 55). Annette Simmons (2007: 19) defines a story as follows:

[A] story is a reimagined experience narrated with enough detail and feeling to cause your listeners’ imaginations to experience it as real.

(Simmons 2007: 19)

In the context of this thesis the value of Simmons’ definition is that it focuses on experiencing – something, which is crucial in modern marketing, as will be shown further down in this chapter. Another definition of a story is that of Barbara Czarniawska (1997: 18), who sees stories as consisting of plots of causally connected events that culminate in a solution to a problem. For her, stories follow a three-step process that go from “an original state of affairs, [to] an action or an event, and the consequent state of affairs” (Czarniawska 1998: 2). This action-based progress resonates especially well with marketing and advertising, which are all about offering solutions to target audiences, who can improve their state of affairs by taking some particular action. The means-end theory, which will be presented in chapter 4, suggests that effective advertisements need to enclose a way for the consumer to reach a desired end state (Gutman 1982: 71). Czarniawska’s (1998: 2) definition of a story presents stories as great tools for just that, for leading the audience through a process where a specific action is taken to reach a desired goal.

A third definition of a story is Richard Francis Kuhn’s (2005: 2):

A story is a representational recounting of an event, imagined or experienced, reported in conversation, exhibited in visual presentation, performed in dance, and often preserved in ceremonial enactments.

(Kuhn 2005: 2)

This definition is interesting as it points to the fact that stories can take several forms, among them the visual. These four definitions touch upon the essence of what will be focused on in this chapter: stories can take several forms, especially a visual one, and through the representation of events they generate experiences in the audience, which
from a beginning and middle ultimately lead to some form of conclusion. For all intents and purposes of this thesis the word *narrative* is used in parallel to story. David M. Boje (2001: 2), however, differentiates between these two concepts. He sees narratives as descriptions of events, or sequences of events, that consist of characters and a chronological plot with a beginning, a middle and an end. A narrative’s plot comes together as a whole and manifests itself in established contexts. Stories, on the other hand, consist of incoherent parts; they do not necessarily have a clear plot, and might appear wherever whenever (Boje 2001: 2). For Boje (2001: 2) the story precedes the narrative, and becomes a narrative when it is structured with a coherent plot.

In a business context, storytelling can encompass a wide range of a company’s functions. Jesper Højberg Christensen (2002: 36–37, 39–40) divides storytelling into actions of external and internal branding, where the external represents a marketing-oriented formal use of stories and the internal an organization-theoretical approach to storytelling. In an internal branding context storytelling is informally used to explain and clarify a company’s history and culture. Internally everybody in a company can be part of telling stories as it is a way of creating a joint identity within the organization. (Højberg Christensen 2002: 36–37, 40) This kind of *organizational storytelling* is a great tool for learning and communicating within an organization. Many leaders use it for mediating shared meaning, communicating visions of the future, enhancing employees’ self-knowledge, and inspiring support for new initiatives. Using stories within companies can also create a sense of community and belonging, while also shedding light on people’s everyday lives. (Kaye & Jacobson 1999: 46)

*Marketing-oriented storytelling* is meant for external stakeholders. Højberg Christensen (2002: 36) categorizes marketing-oriented storytelling by the intended receivers, into storytelling for the public and storytelling that is targeted towards a market. A company’s use of stories in PR focuses on creating good rapport with different stakeholders in order to keep up a favorable reputation and generate better financial results. Storytelling towards a market, in turn, is about building a single image for a company and its products through marketing actions such as advertising. (Højberg Christensen 2002: 36) It is about using stories as a way of differentiation (Mossberg & Nissen Johansen 2006: 5). Whereas storytelling within an organization and for the public is expected to be based on truth, stories used in marketing might also be fictitious (Højberg Christensen 2002: 36). Examples of fictitious storytelling are the
characters Ronald McDonald for the fast food chain McDonald’s and the Marlboro Man for Marlboro cigarettes.

In marketing-oriented storytelling the brand-owner, i.e. the company, is the storyteller and the market is the audience (Salzer-Mörling & Strannegård 2004: 228). By building a company’s business around a story, thereby enticing the consumer’s emotions, the company can earn a unique position in the consumer’s mind. (Mossberg & Nissen Johansen 2006: 6) Stories can also work as great frameworks and references for developing new products for a market (Mossberg, Therkelsen, Huijbens, Björk & Olsson 2010: vi). Good stories have a way of inspiring, entertaining, explaining and convincing, and can simplify important marketing messages for consumers (Saarikoski 2004: 35). Stories explain and make sense of a company’s actions and products in an easily accessible way (Salzer-Mörling & Strannegård 2004: 229).

In this thesis the focus will be on marketing-oriented storytelling towards the commercial market. This chapter will look at the backdrop that has created our need for experiences and stories, and then continue onto examining what impact stories have on us as readers, listeners, and viewers. What makes good stories will be examined, as well as what stories can do for us in marketing and especially in visual marketing.

3.1. Exercising emotions through storytelling in the dream society

The current storytelling trend in marketing has according to Jensen (2002: 1) its origin in our modern society, the dream society, which is the successor to the industrial society and the informational society. The dream society can be found in the affluent parts of the world, where functionality of products is taken for granted and enticing consumer emotions creates sales. According to Jensen (2002: 1–2) the post-materialistic consumer increasingly seeks experiences in their purchases, and rather buys stories, adventures, and lifestyles than certain functions of a product. The products themselves become secondary to their story and could in the future be categorized, not by function, but by what experiences they give us (Jensen 1999: 37). This is how Susan Fournier (1998: 367) aptly describes today’s market: “Consumers do not choose brands, they choose lives”. Because of the new dream society, the task of marketers today is no longer to sell the drill, nor hole in the wall, but to sell the experience of making that hole or the lifestyle the hole enables us to.
Even though we might no longer need our senses or intellect for our survival as in earlier societies, we still have a want of making use of them, and do therefore apply our feelings and wits for fun (Jensen 1999: 36). We have a need to express our emotions and thoughts (Jensen 1999: 183). This we do when we cry to dramatic movies or when we yell at sportsmen on a field. Jensen (1999: 183) calls non-serious employment of emotions emotional jogging, as we exercise our emotions just as we do our body and our mind. Our need to feel makes us prioritize emotional experiences over neutral ones and therefore we buy products that make us feel a certain way (e.g. independent, loved, or valued) (Mårtenson 2009: 126–127). In the dream society emotional needs of the consumers are met through storytelling as stories give meaning and let us feel things in our materialistic world (Jensen 2002: 7). Stories captivate our emotions as they teach us about our surroundings and about ourselves. They teach us what it is to be human and help us find our identities. (Jensen 2002: 2) Jensen (2002: 7–9) recognizes eight different emotional needs that product stories in today’s marketplace seek to satisfy. These are: love, control, recognition, tradition, freedom, caregiving/caretaking, change/conflict, and the search of the big answers (Jensen 2002: 7–9). As an example, an iPhone smart phone might meet a person’s need for recognition, while a Harley Davidson motorcycle someone’s need for freedom. As certain emotional needs are trendy at certain times the demand for different kinds of stories may change just like other markets vary over time (Jensen 1999: 38). It is safe to say, however, that with our current societal changes the demand for stories in general is greater than the supply, which is why storytellers are in great demand and companies that sell experiences instead of functions are one step ahead of others that do not (Jensen 1999: 34, 37, 42).

Jensen (1999) is not alone in his thoughts about the future of the marketplace. B. Joseph Pine and James H. Gilmore (1999: xii, 5) also find that with evolving technology, increasing competition, and rising affluence we are entering a new economy, one that follows the industrial and service economies that we have lived in up until now. In this new experience economy customers are engaged in products and services by consuming them together with memorable experiences, and companies create high value through mass customization, i.e. individual customization at a low cost (Pine & Gilmore 1999: 3, 72). Just like Jensen (1999: 37), Pine and Gilmore (1999: 12) recognize that the value of future market offerings is created outside the products and services and inside the consumer and their experiences. Although they do not explicitly speak of stories, at least not to the extent that Jensen (1999) does, Pine and Gilmore (1999: 3) exemplify prominence in the experience economy with the Walt
Disney Company, which through its various forms of entertainment, products, and services entertains its customers by staging all-encompassing story experiences.

3.2. Stories and our minds

Stories have the ability to stimulate our brains through the use of metaphors. Reading or hearing a story activates our brains in the same way as if we experienced something first-hand. When we read words that describe odors the same region in our brain is activated as if we would smell that particular odor in real life. The same is also true for words describing colors, motion, and feelings. (Gonzáles, Barros-Loscertales, Pulvermüller, Meseguer, Sanjuán, Belloch & Ávila 2006: 908) Reading “Maria picked up the red flower. She felt the rosy fragrance in her nose” therefore activates the same regions in your brain as experiencing the moment yourself would. Interestingly enough, stories also seem to activate the same networks in the brain that we use for understanding the thoughts and feelings of others (Mar 2011: 124). This capacity is called theory-of-mind (Mar 2011: 104). A study shows that the more a person reads or watches fiction, the more empathetic that person is, irrespective of their personality (Oatley 2011: 159). In an advertising context this should steer marketers to use stories, as stories make consumers more sympathetic towards marketing content.

Stories are effective as they have the ability to change our beliefs. Research done by Melanie Green and Timothy Brock (2000: 718) shows that the more encompassed we are by a story, the easier it alters our beliefs. This stands even when readers are aware that they are reading fictitious stories. Annette Simmons (2007: 9–10) writes of story thinking and of stories as a tool to influence others. Although her storytelling standpoint is organizational it bears some interesting points also for marketing-oriented storytellers. With our modern use of science we are conditioned into thinking rationally and critically, making seemingly objective decisions based on hard facts. This works well for us as we thus easily can prove the legitimacy of our decisions. (Simmons 2007: 9) Fact is, however, that our objective decisions are in reality based on our subjective beliefs on objective data (Simmons 2007: 10). Therefore, to influence people and their actions we need to influence their subjective beliefs (Simmons 2007: 16). This can be done through story thinking and by using stories as a tool. Stories have the ability to stimulate human emotions and pointing people’s emotions in a certain direction by framing the objective facts in a desired way. Telling a story influences in what way the listeners feel about and view reality, impacting the conclusions they make.
about that reality and what actions they take. (Simmons 2007: 11–12) This is due to the fact that stories have the ability to activate the parts of our brain that make us feel and respond to our sensory experiences. Although we function under the pretense of being rational, we still rely on these parts of the brain and interpret our experiences as stories. (Simmons 2007: 15) By using stories one can help people see other points of (subjective) view (Simmons 2007: 16), while still employing rational objective facts (Simmons 2007: 12).

Stories are closely linked to emotions, which play an important role in dream society marketing. Emotions improve both our short-term and long-term memory, which makes us remember emotional events over trivial ones. As stories have a way of generating emotions, advertising that uses stories is likely to be remembered by the consumer, and the products advertised for are also likely to be prioritized over other similar ones. (Mårtenson 2009: 126) Research indicates, however, that television advertisements (but not press advertisements!) that cause high levels of emotional arousal actually are more difficult to retrieve information from than neutral advertisements. With a higher emotional response the advertisement may change a person’s attitude towards what is shown, but due to lesser verbal reflection, the person might not remember as much as in the case of more neutral advertisements. (Zielske 1982: 22)

3.3. Creating a good story

An important part of successfully using storytelling as a marketing technique is having a good story to base the marketing on. Returning to Aristotle’s definition, a story is a series of events or actions rendered in an entity with a beginning, a middle, and an end (Skalin 2002: 184). The events of a story, which are often causally and temporally linked, are chosen on the basis of how well they portray the main point of the story (Gergen & Gergen 1988, cited in Shankar, Elliott & Goulding 2001: 433). Except the story itself, a story consists of the way the story is told. This is called the double logic of storytelling. (Mossberg & Nissen Johansen 2006: 247) The art of storytelling, its nature, function, and structure, is called narratology (Skalin 2002: 173). As this thesis focuses on visual storytelling in press advertisements, narratology here becomes synonymous with the visual execution of these advertisements, which here is studied through semiotic and iconographic analysis.
Klaus Fog, Christian Budtz, and Baris Yakaboylu (2003: 30) identify four elementary aspects of storytelling: the message, the conflict, the characters, and the plot. The *message* in a story is the story’s premise, or its prerequisite for existence. (Fog et al. 2003: 32) The message presents the story’s ideology and moral, and is proven by the events of the story (Mossberg & Nissen Johansen 2006: 48). A typical message in many stories is that love conquers all – think, for instance, of Snow White, Sleeping Beauty, and Romeo & Juliet. Important in storytelling is, that a story only has one message, otherwise it risks becoming messy and unclear (Fog et al. 2003: 32). The second element of good storytelling is the *conflict*. Good times cannot fill up an entire story, because without a conflict there is no story and the reader becomes bored. Our human nature is such that we seek balance in our lives, and when it is stirred we take all measures possible to restore harmony. Therefore the conflict sets the story in motion, making the main characters take action. (Fog et al. 2003: 33) As chaos holds the promise of better times, a good story needs suspense and conflict to pique and keep our interest. (Jensen 2002: 3, 6) Suspense is a viewer’s emotional and cognitive response to episodes of hope and fear in a story (Alwitt 2002: 35). The conflict of a story should not, however, be too dramatic for the hero or the reader to handle. If there is no way to resolve a conflict the reader will soon be bored. (Fog et al. 2003: 35) The conflict and the way it is settled lets us know the message of the story, as it helps us recognize a moral dilemma and how it is to be managed (Fog et al. 2003: 34).

In the core of a story are its *characters*, the third aspect of storytelling identified by Fog, Budtz, and Yakaboylu (2003: 37). For the conflict to pan out, a story needs characters that interact with each other and that the readers can identify themselves with. All characters have a specific role that complements the other characters in the story. (Fog et al. 2003: 37). Fog, Budtz and Yakaboylu (2003: 37–42) distinguish six different characters in western storytelling. The *hero*, or the protagonist, is the person whose task it is to solve the conflict and prove the message of the story (Fog et al. 2003: 39). By solving the conflict the hero reaches their *goal* (Fog et al. 2003: 37), which might be a princess and peace in the kingdom or, in a company story, a successful product launch. The hero’s *opponent*, the antagonist or ‘the bad guy’, creates the conflict by trying to destroy something that the hero values (Fog et al. 2003: 37). This character drives the story and is essential to it (Fog et al. 2003: 39). Often the opponent personifies moral adversaries like greed or evil (Fog et al. 2003: 37), but does not need to be a specific person. The opponent can also be difficulties that need to be conquered (e.g. natural forces), psychological conditions of the hero (e.g. a fear of heights) (Fog et
al. 2003: 39), or even a big conglomerate company conducting business in an immoral way. To defeat the opponent the hero is assisted by one or several helpers (Fog et al. 2003: 37). These Sams, Little Johns, Robins, and Doctor Watsons show their loyalty and commitment to the hero throughout the story (Fog et al. 2003: 41). Except actual people, the helpers might also take the form of a quality of the hero, like Robin Hood’s ability to shoot with a bow and an arrow (Fog et al. 2003: 37) or Snow White’s pure heart. In the end of a story there is usually some outer circumstance that finally helps the hero attain their goal (Fog et al. 2003: 38). This giver might be the returning King Richard of Nottingham or the rain that saves an native tribe from a devastating drought. The receivers are the ones benefited by the hero and the giver’s actions (Fog et al. 2003: 38). These might be the poor villagers earlier trapped by the fear of a werewolf, or the princess saved by the heroic prince.

The final element of good storytelling, according to Fog, Budtz, and Yakaboylu (2003: 42–43), is the plot, which is organized in a beginning, a middle, and an end. In the beginning of a story the scene is set, the characters presented, and a sample is given of what lies ahead. It is important to catch the reader or viewer’s attention at the very kickoff of a story. The harmony of the beginning of a story changes when the conflict is presented. As the conflict becomes more evident the hero of the story reaches a point of no return – a choice of action has to be made that affects the whole outcome of the story. With the hero involved, the conflict escalates and reaches its climax – here the hero is put to the ultimate test in confrontation with the opponent. This most exciting part of the story finally phases out into harmony as a solution is found to the conflict. (Fog et al. 2003: 42–43) Jensen (2002: 5) describes the plot in a similar fashion to Fog, Budtz, and Yakaboylu (2003: 42–43), but sees it in a circling motion that simulates our lives. According to Jensen (2002: 5), a good story, as our lives, alternates between times of ease and times of struggle in a circling motion. From the security of everyday life we, as well as storybook characters, are called to adventure either voluntarily or by force. Before entering the battle ahead we question the adventure, the goal, and ourselves. We find out who our enemies are. When the battle is over we have either won or lost. In both cases we evaluate our gains and go back to our secure everyday lives. We have come full circle but are soon heading for a new battle, a new story. (Jensen 2002: 6–7) Story plots can take endless forms, but Northrop Frye (1957: 162) identifies four generic plots: comedy, romance, satire, and tragedy. As they all possess their own atmospheric qualities, as well as typical endings (Frye 1957: 162), these different generic plots can arguably be used to render different marketing messages. A comic
plot might work well for convenience products, whereas tragedy might better strike a cord when selling home insurance.

3.4. Good storytelling

Good storytelling, as well as good marketing, should be able to both generate interest and convince the reader. A good story challenges the reader and gives them new insights. (Saarikoski 2004: 44) In classic rhetorics, i.e. the art of speaking and writing effectively, a distinction is made between outwitting, persuading, and convincing listeners. As nobody wants to be outwitted or persuaded, it is the task of the storyteller, or the storytelling marketer, to convince the listeners of a message. Listeners will be grateful for the help they receive to come to the right conclusions. (Rydstedt 1993: 7, 29) According to Rita Mårtenson (2009: 487) the most well-received advertisements among consumers are the kind that employ our cognitive abilities by only giving us a clue as to how we should decipher their messages. Applying this to storytelling, one can argue that the best stories are the ones that do not explicitly state the obvious but only hint at the messages of the stories.

Already before storytelling became a boom in business, Herbert Eatton Todd (1973: 43) found that storytelling has a great deal in common with selling a product. Firstly, both to sell a product and to tell a story you must know it well. For this preparation is key. When you know all the details of your story/product, you know which details are the important ones to highlight. Secondly, the storyteller/salesperson has to like their story/product in order to convince their audience about it. If you think what you are telling/selling is good for your audience, chances are they will think so too. Finally, the storyteller/salesperson must enjoy telling their story/selling their product, as their enjoyment will show. (Todd 1973: 43–44) Because marketing-oriented storytelling is a combination of traditional storytelling and selling, the storytelling marketer does well in applying Todd’s (1973: 43–44) rules in advertising: know the story you use for selling your product; like it and like your product; and enjoy telling/selling it. Aptly describing this, Miriam Salzer-Mörling and Lars Strannegård (2004: 229) calls storytelling-based marketing storieselling.

In addition to pointing out the similarities between selling and storytelling, Todd (1973: 44) gives a few other pointers on good verbal storytelling that are beneficial to keep in mind in a marketing context. He stresses the fact that a storyteller never should simplify their language to supposedly meet an audience’s level of knowledge – both
adults and children will know when they are being talked down to and will resent the storyteller for it. This might be difficult for many advertisers to swallow, seeing as it is a general rule in marketing to match your copy to the level of your audience (Bowdery 2008: 56). Furthermore, Todd (1973: 45) finds that it is important to involve the audience in the storytelling by asking questions and engaging them by using repetition. An element the audience can identify and join in on is bound to captivate it, thereby this arguably also makes much sense marketing-wise.

Peter Guber (2007) has put up a set of four truths that he finds are important for great oral and organizational storytelling. First, the story has to be true to the storyteller, meaning that the person telling the story must share the values of the story while also openly following them (Guber 2007: 55–56). Taking this beyond the marketing department, it is important that the entire personnel of a company can back up the story being told by a company. A good marketing story for the external public should also internally unite a company, rather than impose restrictions. (Saarikoski 2004: 40) Second, telling a story is all about expectation management, where the storyteller implicitly promises the audience that listening to the story will be worth their while. Guber (2007: 56–57) speaks of understanding your audience so well that you can identify and fulfill their emotional needs and orchestrate their emotional reaction. According to him a great story can do this through a surprise element – “a great story is never fully predictable through foresight – but it’s projectable through hindsight” (2007: 57). Third, good storytelling is true to the moment, which means that the way a story is told depends on the context it is told in. No storytelling moment is the same. (Guber 2007: 57) Just like Todd (1973: 43), Guber (2007: 58) finds preparation crucial – when a storyteller knows their story well, they can be flexible enough to improvise in any situation. Finally, Guber’s (2007: 58) fourth storytelling truth concerns the value proposition of the story itself. There needs to be a worthy mission that the story captures and pursues. Despite being made for organizational storytelling, Guber’s (2007) four truths can be adapted to marketing-oriented storytelling. The terms Guber (2007) uses are familiar marketing concepts like ‘value propositions’ and ‘expectations management’. What he teaches the marketing-oriented storyteller is that the company behind a story needs to be sincere; it needs to know its audience; see potential in varying the story in different contexts; and it has to make sure the story has a higher meaning and cause.
Knowing what a great story is or what expert storytelling is like is all well and good, but where can these stories be found? Again working from the realms of organizational storytelling, Barbara Kaufman (2003) suggests a few different ways for a company to discover their stories. According to her, a company has to spike their senses to perceive what stories are to be found around the company. One needs to listen and find common threads both in the past and the plans for the future. (Kaufman 2003: 13) Good stories can also be found in day-to-day activities, but perhaps not where one usually looks. Often a story about a failure has more value than a success story due to the learning experience it offers. (Kaufman 2003: 15) For Kaufman (2003: 14) good stories are shared stories, and she stresses the fact that stories should be encouraged in all parts of a company, engaging every employee. Storytelling is a “multi-actor, multi-level process”, which is done best when it engages and integrates a company’s all stakeholders and actions (Mossberg et al. 2010: iv, v, 4). What this teaches the marketing-oriented storyteller is that great stories can be found all over, even where the marketing executive does not know to look. Beverly Kaye and Betsy Jacobson (1999: 47–48) largely agree with Kaufman on where to look for good stories, but add a few of their own tips to the list. They state that when searching for stories one should look for consequences, lessons, and future experience. By consequences, they mean that we should look back at our lives chronologically and try to find causality in events, i.e. identifying events that have lead to other events. Lessons, in turn, often create interesting stories, as we need our prior experiences for learning them. (Kaye & Jacobson 1999: 47) Finally, what Kaye and Jacobson (1999: 48) mean by future experiences are what others would call scenarios. By imagining ourselves in different situations we can learn much about ourselves and the marketplace we function in, while possibly coming across great stories.

### 3.4.1. Fact or fiction

In storytelling marketing there is an ongoing debate on whether or not the stories used by companies need to be true. According to Jensen (1999: 98–99) a company’s story need not be real as long as the consumer sees an authentic connection between the message of the story and the company. However, people do have an innate quality of wanting good stories to be true (Jensen 1999: 102), and might therefore choose to believe illusions that they know are false (Baudrillard 1994: 81). Nevertheless, at some level a story has to be plausible (King 1981: 112). Ville Saarikoski (2004: 39) speaks of veracity and realism when assessing the truthfulness of a story, and takes into account
to which degree a story conflicts with known facts. Allan, Fairthlough and Heinzen (2002, cited in Saarikoski 2004: 39) place stories on a continuum of truthfulness, ranging from true to untrue stories. On this continuum stories based on facts are known and real and more likely to be trustworthy than stories that are legends, which in turn are more reliable than myths, fictions, and fantasies (Allan, Fairtlough & Heinzen 2002: 39).

According to Yiannis Gabriel (2004: 21) there needs to be a mutual understanding between the storyteller and the consumer on what is true or false in a story, and how the story should be seen and interpreted. The importance of the level of truth in a story is affected by the application of the story, and whether or not the story is claimed to be true (Mossberg & Nissen Johansen 2006: 161–162). A company that uses a fictitious story in showcasing its ethical standards, and claims it to be true, is bound to head for trouble with external stakeholders. How well a target group reacts to a fictitious story is also dependent on their knowledge and interest in the subject in question (Mossberg & Nissen Johansen 2006: 164). An adult might not care whether or not Santa Claus in Santa Park, Lapland, is the actual Father Christmas or not, but for a preschooler it could mean the world to have seen the ‘real deal’.

Common practice in marketing-oriented storytelling is to embellish a story with fictitious details but to keep the gist of it true. Many museums, for instance, mix fact with fiction in order to create a pedagogical story about historical events (Mossberg & Nissen Johansen 2006: 162–163). Often storytelling marketers use famous stories in their marketing. By doing this, a marketer does not need to create an entirely new world for a company or a product, and the viewer’s attention can be drawn to the marketing message behind the story. (Fog et al. 2003: 156–157) Reusing old stories might pose some trouble for us in the future, however. When the western world runs out of its own traditional stories businesses might have to turn their gazes to other countries, where exciting legends and myths still are plentiful. (Jensen 1999: 41–42)

When it comes to fact and fiction in storytelling pictures Marie-Laure Ryan (2010: 21) takes the same stance as Mossberg and Nissen Johansen (2006: 161–162), noting that the intention of the picture, whether it is meant as a truthful illustration or posing as make-belief, is the key parameter for assessing its truthfulness. Ryan (2010: 21) remarks that some pictures are hard to classify as either genuine or fake, but finds that it does not matter in cases where it does not bare any consequence. In advertising, however, there are arguably consequences to a very large degree when using false
pictures, which makes this question relevant, especially when using a fiction-based marketing technique like storytelling.

### 3.5. Storytelling in advertising

One might argue that stories have always been prevalent in advertising, but fact is that during the last decade they have taken an even more refined form in advertisements and commercials, as the need to differentiate a brand from its competition has grown. Differentiation through storytelling is done by creating a story and a world around a brand that showcases the brand’s individuality. (Fog et al. 2003: 146) The trend of storytelling in advertising is likely to continue as it has been proven that there is a clear connection between narrative advertising and the consumer’s intention to buy a product. This is due to the fact that human beings are culturally conditioned to think in narratives about their lives, organizing their experiences into a narrative form (Bruner 1990: 45). As a matter of fact our entire lives take the form of a story, with a clear beginning, a middle, and an end (Shankar, Elliott & Goulding 2001: 431). As narrative advertising leads to narrative processing, the individual creates meaning for themself by incorporating the brand story as props in their own life story (Escalas 2004a: 171). This phenomenon is called *self-brand connection* and is also proven to have a straight connection to the consumer’s intention to buy a brand. (Escalas 2004a: 169, 176)

A traditional way of using stories in advertising is basing intrigues around a brand or a product and following distinct characters in several episodes (Fog et al. 2003: 146–147). Typical for narrative commercials is that the characters evolve over time and that the stories portray causal relations between different events (Escalas 2004a: 169). A Swedish example of this kind of advertising are the television commercials of retailing company *Ica*, where viewers have been able to follow a soap opera-like story about a supermarket for over a decade³ (Dunér 2011). These commercials have substituted the hard sell of price and product information with stories that have the task to entertain and involve the consumer emotionally (Fog et al. 2003: 147). Fog, Budtz, and Yakaboylu (2003: 149) have found that commercials in episodes lower our guards towards sales messages, as we engage ourselves in the stories and identify with the characters. We easily recognize ourselves with known characters and stories, which makes it easier for us to also sympathize with brands associated to them and with what these brands represents (Fog et al. 2003: 149). When consumers connect with

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characters and regard them as authentic they also connect the characters’ identities and values to that of the marketed product. (Fog et al. 2003: 156) The story format makes it easier to demonstrate a product’s meaning and function in a social context (Fog et al. 2003: 147; Escalas 2004a: 171).

Other advantages of using stories in advertising are that they make viewers more susceptible to emotional sales arguments (Escalas 2004b: 43), and have the tendency to hook and engage viewers better than other advertising formats by giving them upbeat and warm feelings (Escalas, Moore & Britton 2004: 112). The reason behind this is narrative transportation, which refers to a story’s ability to make us lose ourselves in the story and travel to other worlds (Escalas 2004b: 38). Narrative transportation makes a story-embedded sales pitch convincing as we respond to it emotionally with less cognitive activity and sense of realism (Green & Brock 2000: 718–719). By painting mental images stories make marketing communication more personal and trustworthy (Green & Brock 2000: 711, 716). Commercials that are able to create suspense in the viewer give especially good results. These commercials engage the viewer, making them feel like the commercial is shorter than it actually is and making the viewer more positive towards the commercial and its message. (Alwitt 2002: 47)

### 3.6. Storytelling pictures

When defining storytelling press advertising and storytelling pictures it is interesting to look at how researchers have earlier viewed the relationship between narratives and images. Judith Williamson (1978: 152) writes of story-pictures that render series of events in one single synchronic picture. Story-pictures inseparably link the present in a story to both the past and the future on a visual continuum by showing objects and motifs that hint to different points in time in the story. Sunny green pastures surrounding a castle in the distance may, for instance, signal the future, while a slain dragon by the feet of a knight indicates an earlier turn of events. (Williamson 1978: 153–154) To comprehend a story we need to understand the meaning behind these objects and motifs hinting to it (Williamson 1978: 164).

What Williamson speaks of as story-pictures, has thanks to the 18th century art critic Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1982/1766: 181) become known as art with a pregnant moment. According to Lessing (1982/1766: 181, 183) a pregnant moment hints to both the past and the future of a story, showing a scene that just precedes the climax of the story. Thus, for Lessing, the most narrative pictures are not the ones showing a murder,
a kiss, or any other resolution, but the ones that hold the suspense of what is coming while suggesting the past. Also Edward McQuerrie (2008: 102) writes of images that have the look of a still picture in a movie, stopped just before its climax, but he calls these *frozen narratives*. According to him frozen narratives engage the consumer by enticing them to elaborate on what has happened in the past and what is going to happen in the future. The advantage of this category of images is that the time spent on the advertised brand does not come from the consumer’s focus on the advertisement but rather the consumer’s focus in the story, which can go on even after the initial advertisement exposure. (McQuerrie 2008: 102)

According to Williamson (1978: 155), advertising that deploys stories forces its viewer into other representations of time than the viewer’s own. These representations never hold present states, i.e. there is no present in the advertisements, only pasts and futures, because in our real present we do not enjoy the pleasures of the product in an advertisement, we can only look at them. Our time is substituted for that of the advertisement’s, and the hope of the marketer is that we will insert ourselves into the given future or the given past presented in an advertisement, by imagining ourselves buying or having bought a product, or enjoying or having previously enjoyed a service. (Williamson 1978: 155) This way our real present presents us with the opportunity of obtaining the past or the future of the advertisement (Williamson 1978: 158). Storytelling advertisements often promise us either a future by showing the moment right before we consume a product, or nostalgize on the past by showing us the good times when we supposedly were about to consume a product (Williamson 1978: 158, 161). Either way, products in advertising always remain unconsumed, leading the viewer to temptation and anticipation (Williamson 1978: 161). Stories and the concept of time work well when advertising for products, as goods marketed in advertisements can be seen as physical memorabilia of past and future times (Williamson 1978: 156).

In the context of storytelling photography, Jan Baetens and Mieke Bleyen (2010: 165) speak of *photo narratives* and note that the concept both can refer to sequences of photographic images (e.g. picture-stories or photo-essays) or narration within a photograph itself. They find that the reason why photographs are neglected as a storytelling media is because photography mostly has been used for reality-documenting purposes, and because photography generally has been defined as an art form in which it is crucial to find the “decisive moment”, where a picture both visually and to its content has meaning. In the early ages of photography the photographic
medium had a more narrative function, but it was soon surpassed by the advances in cinematography. (Baetens & Bleyen 2010: 165–166) Baetens and Bleyen (2010: 168) claim that photographs can be seen as narratives because of the way we look at them. Seeing a picture we automatically conjure up the context it was taken in in our minds, and due to our innate desire for narratives, and the fact that narratives help us process information, we place the picture in a story. (Baetens & Bleyen 2010: 168)

Baetens and Bleyen’s (2010: 169) definition of photo narratives within a single picture is threefold. Firstly, a photo narrative needs to show a duration of events that has a chronological structure with some reason to unfold causally – Baetens and Bleyen (2010: 169) call this reason an “agency”. In other words there has to be a motivated story that develops over time. Secondly, the story has to be visible in a single picture frame; it cannot merely exist outside it in the mind of the viewer. A picture of a tree might elicit a story of how somebody (an agent) planted that tree there and what will happen to it as it is fully grown, but this is in the mind of the viewer and not in the picture itself. Finally, the story of a photo narrative needs to curry favor with the audience by evoking curiosity about the development and the end of the story, i.e. the story needs to induce some suspense in the viewer. (Baetens & Bleyen 2010: 169–170)

In order for a single picture to be truly narrative all these three criteria – i.e causality, a single frame story, and suspense – need to be met (Baetens & Bleyen 2010: 171).

3.6.1. Arguments against storytelling pictures

While Williamson (1978), Lessing (1982/1766), and McQuerrie (2008) clearly see the ability of pictures to tell stories, Lorenzo Menoud (2005, cited in Ryan 2010: 19) claims that pictures should not be regarded as narratives, as they are static and do not have a temporal dimension, i.e. they cannot show progression in time. He claims that the only media capable of telling stories are language, theater, dance, and cinema. This does not, however, take into account visual synchronicity in time in story-pictures, described by Williamson (1978: 152), nor story-evoking pregnant moments, explained by Lessing (1982/1766: 181). Furthermore, it does certainly not consider the narrative power of series of pictures used in, e.g. comic books (Ryan 2010: 16).

According to Karl Kroeber (2006: 14) one of the central challenges of storytelling is that it is an act of selection, with different media offering different possibilities for this selection. Whereas verbal storytelling, i.e. text or speech, can choose not to tell the reader of the surroundings in which the story occurs but instead focus on the thoughts
and feelings of the characters, visual storytelling is obliged to show a setting and can hint at the character's feelings only through their facial expressions and gestures. (Kroeber 2006: 15) Just as in storytelling movies, it is crucial in storytelling pictures to have a clear sense of what to show to the audience, i.e. what is relevant to the story and what is not, as the medium is challenged and enabled in its own way. Marie-Laure Ryan (2010: 15) sees differences in storytelling media just as Kroeber (2006: 15), although she focuses on the ambiguity of narrative pictures. Whereas verbal storytelling consists of more well-defined arguments, pictures do not have the ability to pinpoint a message. The sentence “the cat is on the mat” is much clearer in focus than a picture of a cat on a mat, she argues, as a picture might bring to our attention details that are not emphasized verbally, e.g. the color of the cat, or the size of the mat. (Ryan 2010: 15)

In the pictorial context Salzer-Mörling and Strannegård (2004: 229–230) differentiate between ‘stories’ and ‘visual images’ by stating that stories operate on a cognitive level, whereas visual images are more concerned with aesthetic and expressionistic experiences. What Salzer-Mörling and Strannegård (2004: 230) call visual images are, however, perhaps not what every other marketer might agree upon. For them visual images are abstract signs that give impressions, rather than stories that create meaning. Therefore a press advertisement might be a story, despite its visual form, whereas a company logo can be defined as a visual image. (Salzer-Mörling & Strannegård 2004: 230) Although a little abstruse, their definition offers the possibility of seeing pictures as stories, while at the same time excluding images that have more abstract features.
MARKETING COMMUNICATION AND ADVERTISING

Storytelling advertising, as advertising in general, is a form of marketing communication. Marketing communication is the promotion of a company and its offerings with the aim to position these in the minds of different target audiences. (Fill 1995: 15–16) As the products of market leaders today are generally equal, the task of marketing communication is to create favorable brand personalities and product associations in consumers’ mind (Mårtenson 2009: 17). Besides differentiation, marketing communication is used for informing, persuading, and reminding consumers of a company and its offerings (Fill 1995: 3). Nowadays marketing communication is seen as all contacts between a company and its stakeholders that try to favorably influence the market’s opinion of the company. Marketing communication might also take place between consumers or it might happen on a societal level, when information with a market-orientation is shared publicly. Traditionally, however, marketing communication is defined as a company’s (mostly one-way) communication with consumers. (Mårtenson 2009: 19) This is also the form of marketing communications this thesis will focus on.

The tools of marketing communication, i.e. advertising, sales promotion, public relations, and personal selling, are referred to as the promotional mix. (Fill 1995: 6) To these also sponsorship activities and Internet homepages (as well as social media pages) can be added as important ways for a company to communicate with its audiences (Mårtenson 2009: 19). In this thesis advertising is the main focus. A classic and widely used definition of advertising is that of the American Marketing Association from 1948:

> Advertising is any paid form of nonpersonal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods, or services by an identified sponsor.

(American Marketing Association 1948: 205)

The virtue of this definition is that it points out that advertising is not communicated from one person to another but rather happens non-personally, and that the audience knows that the favorable image portrayed comes from a known sponsor, i.e. most often from a company or an organization. However, as seen in the introductory chapter of this thesis, companies are now moving away from traditional non-personal communication to more enticing forms of advertising, where storytelling is an integral part (Mossberg & Nissen Johansen 2006: 7). This shift can also be seen in the
American Marketing Association’s current definition of advertising, which rather speaks of more general “announcements and persuasive messages” than straight-sell “promotion” and acknowledges the fact that these can take place in both space and time:

The placement of announcements and persuasive messages in time or space purchased in any of the mass media by business firms, nonprofit organizations, government agencies, and individuals who seek to inform and/or persuade members of a particular target market or audience about their products, services, organizations, or ideas.

(American Marketing Association 2014)

This definition points out the fact that advertisements most often are targeted to specific audiences. A third definition in the Merriam-Webster dictionary only speaks of “persuading the public” in general:

Techniques and practices used to bring products, services, opinions, or causes to public notice for the purpose of persuading the public to respond in a certain way.

(Merriam-Webster 2013)

Merriam-Webster’s definition acknowledges current tendencies in advertising by describing advertisements as “techniques and practices”. This allows an interpretation where different forms of advertising can be considered. Perhaps a suitable definition of advertising that includes storytelling advertising as well as other modern formats would be a combination of the above-mentioned three: *Techniques and practices placing non-personal announcements and persuasive messages in time or space purchased by an identified sponsor to bring products, services, opinions, or causes to the notice of a particular target market.*

Advertising can be done both nationally and locally, by commercial and non-commercial sources, to other businesses or to consumers, for a product (or service) or for the company itself (Cohen 1988: 6–7, 9). Irrespective of the category of advertising, this activity, like other forms of marketing communication, involves several aspects for a company to consider, such as what the messages sent out to the consumers ought to mediate, who the receiver of the information is thought to be, and how this receiver is reached in the best way. (Fill 1995: 17) These aspects are included in Wilbur Schramm’s (1955: 3–10) basic model of mass communication, which will be covered in the next section of this chapter.
4.1. The communication process

Schramm’s (1955: 3–4) model on mass communication (please see figure 7 below) breaks up the communication process into components: the source, the process of encoding, the signal or message, the process of decoding, the receiver, and feedback. In communication the source of the communication is the individual or the organization sending a message. The source is important as it affects the credibility of the message. (Schramm 1955: 3) In advertising the source can be personified by a spokesperson. A spokesperson facilitates the communication if they can easily be associated with the object of the message, if they have credible expertise, if they convey conviction, and/or if they are attractive to the user. (Fill 1995: 26)

Figure 7  Schramm’s model on mass communication

The next component in Schramm’s model, the process of encoding, refers to the transfer of the intended message into a symbolic style that can be understood by others. The ability of the source to diagnose a particular situation and the audience (e.g. their motivation or level of education) affects the source’s ability to encode a purposeful message. (Schramm 1955: 4) Stuart Hall (2005: 114) calls the intended encoding of a message the preferred or the dominant code. The dominant code need not be
congruent with the actual transmitted message. At this point of the communication model storytelling is of special importance. According to Hall (2005: 108) events in our lives need to be encoded as stories before they can be communicative events, i.e. before they take message forms that can be communicated. Human beings are naturally storytellers, *homo narrans*, and “all forms of human communication need to be seen fundamentally as stories” (Fisher 1987: xiii), as all our thoughts are processed into language, attitudes, and actions when we communicate them and perpetuate the social construct that build our world view (Berger & Luckmann 1966/1996: 45, 81, 147). As attitudes and actions are not documented first-hand, stories are then the documented form of expression that thoughts are encoded to and which we most naturally respond to (Fisher 1987: xiii).

The *signal* is the actual transmission of a message through different media. Messages can be encoded to take the form of words, pictures, symbols, and music. It is important that the right channels for the transmission of a signal are chosen. (Schramm 1955: 4) Advertising and other non-personal forms of communication are generally less effective than personal means of communication, such as word-of-mouth, as they are less flexible in regards of content and timing and cannot employ the same methods of persuasion. However, mass communication reaches large audiences and is therefore still an important means for commercial signal transmission. (Fill 1995: 25–26)

**Decoding** in Schramm’s (1955: 4) model refers to the comprehension and interpretation of the symbolic style of a message. The *receiver’s* own experiences, perceptions, attitudes, and values, as well as their understanding of the source, affects their ability to interpret the message as it was intended, i.e. understand its dominant code (Schramm 1955: 4). The concepts of denotation and connotation described in chapter 2 are strongly connected to the process of decoding, as denotation is the act of recognizing the content of a message and connotation is evaluating that message (Schramm 1963: 8). For the communication process to work successfully the *field of experience* of the source and the receiver have to overlap and take the form of a mutually understood message and signal (Schramm 1955: 6). To reach common ground with their customers companies put much effort and money into researching their target markets and testing their advertisements (Fill 1995: 28). Besides reaching the intended denotations in the decoding process, it is important to get customers to choose the right connotations of a message. Hall (2005: 114–116) suggests three hypothetical decoding positions for receiving messages, i.e. three ways of
understanding the connotations of a message. These positions were created for a television context but can also be applied to other forms of communication. The positions are: a dominant-hegemonic position, a negotiated position, and an oppositional position. A receiver operating inside the dominant code decodes a message as it was intended, i.e. understands and approves its preferred meanings (Hall 2005: 114–115). Taking a hegemonic-dominant position might be exemplified by someone unquestioningly believing the information given in a newscast. A receiver taking a negotiated position acknowledges the preferred meaning of a message but decodes it in a way that fits their own views and circumstances (Hall 2005: 115–116). An example of this is how different religious rules might be fitted to an individual believer’s worldview. Finally, an oppositional position is taken by someone who understands the intended message but chooses to decode it from another frame of reference, i.e. receives it in a completely different way than in its preferred code (Hall 2005: 116). Hall’s (2005: 116) example of this final position is someone listening to a debate but only counting specific words uttered during it.

When a receiver has caught a message they react to it somehow. This feedback, i.e. the communication back to the source, might be calling the company, using a coupon, buying a product, or just storing the information in one’s long-term memory for later use. Feedback is important for the source as it tells if the message has indeed been received and how the message has been interpreted. Obtaining and evaluating feedback is an important part of both efficient and effective marketing communication. (Schramm 1955: 9) In the case of mass media and advertising, feedback is hard to acquire, but the success of this communication can be measured in sales, customer inquiries, store visits, attitudinal change, or advertisement recognition and recollection. (Fill 1995: 27) Connected to response-based feedback is elaborative encoding, which Percy and Rossiter (1983: 176) suggest as yet another step in the communication process. Elaborative encoding – also known as cognitive responses – is not necessary for communication but tends to be a natural step in decoding a message. Elaborative encoding are the thoughts or images the individual produces as a response to a message – e.g. imagining a jingle when seeing an ice-cream truck, picturing silky hair when seeing a shampoo bottle, or smelling sun-kissed skin when seeing a commercial for sun lotion. (Percy & Rossiter 1983: 176)

The element of noise has been added as a final component in Schramm’s mass communications model. Noise is disturbance in the communication process, which may
affect the quality of the message reception. Noise occurs when the receiver is prevented in decoding a message due to the fact that some of the information transmitted is either omitted or distorted. Both cognitive and physical factors might lead to noise in the communication process. Cognitive noise is when the message is encoded in a way that makes it difficult for the receiver to decode it (e.g. confusing imagery), while physical noise is when the receiver is physically prevented to decode a message due to distraction or because there being several competing messages. (Fill 1995: 28)

This thesis examines in what ways the messages in storytelling advertisements are decoded and what the implications of that decoding might be. This is done through the use of semiotic and iconographic analysis.

4.2. Effective advertising

It is said that we, on average, encounter more than 600 advertisements each day (Clow & Baack 2010: 143) and up to 4000 commercial messages (Yeshin 2006: 156), but only recall a fragment of these. An effective advertisement is one that is noticed, remembered, and that encourages the consumer to take some form of action. (Clow & Baack 2010: 144) There are different theoretical approaches to creating effective advertising. One of them is the means-end theory, which suggests that effective advertisements need to include a message of how, i.e. with what means, the reader can reach a certain desired end. This theory helps marketers to position products (e.g. a suit) as solutions to obtaining desirable value states (e.g. to be well-dressed or to appear business-like). (Gutman 1982: 71)

Based on the means-end theory a model called the Means-End Conceptualization of Components for Advertising Strategy, or in short, the MECCAS, has been developed (Clow & Baack 2010: 174). The MECCAS model allows marketers to make more sophisticated marketing decisions by helping them understand the key elements of advertising strategy in the chosen means-end chains (Peter & Olson 2008: 435, 437). According to the model, effective advertising has five elements that move the viewer of an advertisement to a desired end. These elements are: message elements, consumer benefits, a leverage point, a driving force and an executional framework. (Peter & Olson 2008: 436) When creating an advertisement, marketers must understand the relationship between the consumer and the product and choose the correct means-end chain to model these elements on. This means that the marketer must know which product attribute and linked value is the most important for the customer, or which
have not been tapped into yet by competitors. If one, for instance, would need to buy a premium pen for everyday writing, then the advertisement for it could focus on the pen’s soft flow over the paper, but if that same premium pencil is bought for showing off, then the advertisement can focus on its sleek design. In the MECCAS model the product attributes (i.e. the smooth tip or modern design of the premium pen) are the same as the *message elements*, whereas the functional benefits (e.g. the ease of use or the expensive look of the pen) are the *consumer benefits*. As message elements lead to consumer benefits, consumer benefits, in turn, lead to valued end states by the consumer, i.e. they lead to the *driving force* for the consumer to buy a product. A premium pen used for everyday writing leads to less ache in the wrist of its user, whereas that same premium pen showcased to the owner’s friends is a way of mediating prestige. The driving force for buying a product is part of the consumer, not the product, and should therefore be left to the consumer to discover. Explicitly stating “this premium pen makes your friends envy you” might not ring well with the consumer even though that is the actual purpose of buying an expensive pen. For this purpose the advertisement needs a *leverage point*, i.e. a link between the message elements and consumer benefits (i.e. the attributes and the functional benefits) and the driving force (i.e. the basic value or goal for buying the product). The leverage point is what attaches a product to a certain value and is often a psychosocial consequence that the use of the product activates. In an advertisement for the premium pen, we could see the owner’s friends glance a second too long at this sleek-designed pen, or we could see that same owner be able to play tennis as his wrist does not ache from writing. The creative way these four elements are communicated in an advertisement comprises the final fifth element of the MECCAS model, the *executional framework*. In this element, details as the setting, the casting, the clothes, and the storyline are included. In other words it is the style in which the advertisement and its message is carried out. (Peter & Olson 2008: 436–437)

Another theory helping creatives make effective advertising is the *hierarchy of effects model*, which maps out the six stages a consumer takes before making a purchase. These steps are: awareness, knowledge, liking, preference, conviction, and the actual purchase. According to the theory, advertisements need to address these stages in order to be effective. (Clow & Baack 2010: 173) A very similar and perhaps more famous model is *AIDA*, which was developed in the 1920’s to help marketers target their

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4 A *creative* is a term for art directors, copy writers, and other artists, who physically create advertisements (Clow & Baack 2010: 154).
desired audiences. AIDA is an acronym for attention, interest, desire, and action. (Pieters & Wedel 2008: 52) Also theories of attitudinal change address effective advertising. According to these, consumers form their attitudes to products in sequences consisting of cognitive, affective, and conative steps. (Clow & Baack 2010: 173) By building advertisements that make use of different orders of these steps different marketing strategies can be addressed. The cognitive element refers to our rational thinking, and advertising that uses cognitive strategies approaches the consumer through mental processing of the marketing message. Affective strategies, in turn, foremost invoke emotions, while conative strategies stimulate behavior prior to rational and emotional liking of a product. (Clow & Baack 2010: 202–206)

Effective advertising targets its audience through the use of the right type of advertising appeal. The advertising appeal is chosen based on the product, the objective of the advertisement, the creative brief given, and what the wished end result is. The most common advertising appeals are: fear, humor, sex, music, scarcity, rationality, and emotion. (Clow & Baack 2010: 177–191) The last two of these, the rational appeal and the emotional appeal (familiar also from theories of attitudinal change, addressed above), are also called message themes. Message themes are the key ideas of advertising that either speak to the left or the right side of our brains. (Clow & Baack 2010: 161) ‘Left-brain’ themes are rational and logical with a focus on numbers, words and concepts, while ‘right-brain’ themes speak to our emotions and focus on feelings, images, and abstract thoughts. Most advertisements have a theme of either kind, but sometimes the two are used together when it is deemed necessary that the ad is both rationally and emotionally convincing. (Kay 2003: 37) To convey the different advertising appeals and message themes there are different executional frameworks, which, as mentioned earlier, are the way of presenting an advertisement. Typical executional frameworks are: informative advertisements, authoritative advertisements (i.e. ads using a convincing authority), testimonials, and demonstrations. These executional frameworks all mainly play on more rational message themes. Others, like animations, slice-of-life (i.e. ads showing solutions to every-day problems), dramatizations, and fantasy, are more emotionally charged. (Clow & Baack 2010: 207–212) An interesting side note here is that when reading stories both sides of the brain are used; the left for understanding syntax and the right in appreciating metaphors and humor (Levy 1985: 39). This means that stories target both our rational and emotional needs.
4.3. The visual aspects of an advertisement

The look of an advertisement plays a key role in what the advertisement conveys, and therefore it is important to know what constitutes this look. An advertisement’s message is a sum of its parts. The main parts are the text, i.e. the *copy*, and the artwork, i.e. the *art*. A part of the art is the *visual*, i.e. the picture, which can either be a photograph, an illustration, or some other image. (Bovée & Arens 1992: 318)

The purpose of the visual in an advertisement is several-fold. The visual needs to: capture the targeted readers’ attention; help them identify the subject of the advertisement; generate interest in the other parts of the advertisement as well as complement these and the claims made in them; and create a positive impression of what is being advertised for. (Stansfield 1969: 640–641) As the visual stands for the general feel of an advertisement and most often is the first thing the reader looks at, it is important to choose the right visual for an advertisement (Bovée & Arens 1992: 319). Creatives and advertisers need to consider what subjects to use in the visual, the stylistic execution of it, and whether to go for a photograph, a rendered illustration, or perhaps not a visual at all. The benefits of photographs are the realism they offer and the emotions they evoke, while illustrations make it possible to create any imaginable visual without phototechnical restraints. (Bovée & Arens 1992: 331–332) As with many other aspects of creative advertising production the choice of subject matter is tricky. Bovée and Arens (1992: 329–330) list ten different types of subjects in visuals: 1. the product in its package; 2. the product without its package; 3. the product in use; 4. product demonstrations; 5. product features; 6. product comparisons; 7. customer benefits; 8. humorous pictures; 9. testimonials; and 10. negative appeals, where the lacking of a product causes a problem. When choosing an effective visual for an advertisement Fairfid M. Caudle (1989: 215) contends the idea of using aesthetically involving and satisfying advertising art instead of mere illustrations. Her definitions of illustrations and of art differs from that of Bovée and Arens (1992: 318) in that she sees illustrations as images created for purely decorative purposes, while art is recognized by its ability to “evoke a response in the viewer that endures and grows” (Caudle 1989: 161).

The arrangement of an advertisement’s copy text and visuals is called the *layout*. Creating a layout in the planning stage of an advertisement helps creatives understand what the general idea of the advertisement is. In other words, the layout works as a blueprint. The layout on the finished advertisement determines the feel of the
advertisement and the message being sent. (Bovée & Arens 1992: 323) Different studies have investigated what the most effective layouts of advertisements are. The highest-scoring print advertisements are the ones with a single visual that occupies 60–70% of the total advertisement layout (Liesse 1990: 52). Other research shows, however, that the bigger the picture the better the advertisement is at producing favorable attitudes (Percy & Rossiter 1983: 182). According to David Ogilvy (1985: 88–89) the headline of an advertisement should not take up more than 10–15% of the layout, and more than 20% of the advertising space should not be allotted to the body copy, as advertisements with more than 50 words of copy tend to drop readership rates. Research also shows that the logo of the advertiser should show in the advertisement, but should preferably not take up more than 5–10% of the layout (Bovée & Arens 1992: 327–328).

McQuerrie (2008) has studied the development of advertisements from more text-based layouts to picture-dominated ones. He sees a change from so-called documentary layouts, where ads function as documents of text with separated pictorial elements, to picture-dominant layouts, where the (few) textual elements occur on and in the pictures (McQuerrie 2008: 96–97). The reason behind this change is according to McQuerrie (2008: 108) the changes in the consumers and the media-viewing environments. The affluence following World War II has increased the amount of advertising, making the consumer immune to verbal claims like “Tide gets clothes really clean” but not to pictures with the same function. As pictures do not require any voluntary effort, they have the ability to embed brand messages that would otherwise go unnoticed. (McQuerrie 2008: 109)

Effectiveness set aside for a moment, there are a few artistic principles creatives need to consider when creating the art of an advertisement. In advertisements, as in art in general, the balance of the layout is important. A layout is balanced from the reference point in the optical center, which is situated about five-eighths from the bottom of the advertising space. There are two types of balance, formal and informal. Formal balance is based on symmetry and matching elements with equal optical weight on both sides of an ad. Informal balance is less rigid and looks at the overall balance of the page. If an object of great optical weight is placed close to the center in an informally balanced advertisement, another object with less optical weight should be placed further away from the center. Another visual guideline to keep in mind in creating advertising art is how to address the eye movement of the reader. Stepping a little on the toes of the
social semiotic principles described earlier in this thesis, one can generally say that the placing, size, colors, and contrast of an object in an advertisement determines the reader’s eye movement over the ad, as does pointing fingers, arrows, and other similar objects. A natural tendency of western people is to read layouts in a Z-motion, as we read pages of text. (Bovée & Arens 1992: 320–321) Besides the actual objects in a layout that direct attention, also spots of open space of any color help to concentrate the focus and direct the perception of the reader (Pracejus, Olsen & O’Guinn 2006: 83, 88). When these general artistic principles are under control, creatives need to think about the proportion of the elements in the advertisement as well as the clarity of the advertisement. Different elements of an advertisement should be given space in proportion to their importance, and elements that are not absolutely necessary for an advertising message should be eliminated. It is valuable to strive for simplicity and unity, i.e. to keep the different styles and fonts of an advertisement to a minimum. To enhance recognition and memorability it is worthwhile to make sure there is continuity between the advertisements of an advertising campaign and preferably also between different campaigns for the same product. (Bovée & Arens 1992: 320–321)

4.3.1. The picture as the medium of the future

A picture can be defined as “any two dimensional representation in which the stimulus array contains at least one element that is not alphabetic, numeric, or arithmetic” (Lutz & Lutz 1978: 611). According to Clow and Baack (2010: 176) advertising with pictures tend to generate more favorable attitudes toward both the advertisements and the brands promoted than only text-based advertisements. Research by Iris Hung and Robert Wyer (2008: 231) shows that entirely visually loaded advertisements are rated as highly believable under conditions of high cognitive load, while all-verbal advertisements are evaluated as less trustworthy under the same conditions. This is believed to be the case because visual information is easier to process when viewers also have other things on their minds. Pictures also tend to longer hold the attention of consumers than the other parts of an advertisement when the consumers are not actively shopping for the shown product (Rayner, Miller & Rotello 2008: 705).

An old Chinese saying goes: ‘a picture says more than a thousand words’. This describes how pictures are able to summarize large quantities of complex information and deliver it almost instantaneously. (Andrews 2011: 14) Pictures are often ambiguous, which can be of advantage in marketing when different consumers interpret different visual
messages in ways that are meaningful for them (Mårtenson 2009: 477). Ambiguity also makes an image interesting, which entices the viewer to deeper and longer mental processing and tempts them to look at an image several times always finding new meanings in it (Mårtenson 2009: 480). Besides their informative quality pictures hold both aesthetic and entertainment value and visual marketing is therefore often regarded in a positive light (Mårtenson 2009: 477).

Research shows that our brains are able to faster process visual information than verbal (Childers & Jiang 2008: 267). Interestingly enough, pictures also seem to stay in our minds longer and more vividly than words. According to Allan Paivio’s (1991: 8) dual-code theory, stimuli are represented in memory in verbal code, visual code, or both. This means that when perceiving stimuli we store them as imagery and in words. Storing them as both provably enhances recall (Paivio 1991: 97). While some research shows that both words and pictures can be coded dually (Percy & Rossiter 1983: 172), other findings indicate that only pictures are dually coded, indicating that pictures are easier to remember than just words (Clow & Baack 2010: 176). Whatever the case, pictures have been shown to be more effective as mnemonic devices as words (Paivio 1991: 99). In terms of advertising this would indicate that visual advertisements would be more easily remembered than advertisements that only use copy text. Mårtenson (2009: 477) argues that visual advertising also helps overcome differences in educational level, seemingly due to the fact that these advertisements can be understood on more than one level.

Although evidently much research supports the use of picture-based advertisements over only verbal advertisements, there are studies that suggest that using pictures is not always the way to go. Kathy Lutz and Richard Lutz (1978: 614) have found that verbal representations are more effective when complex issues need to be presented to a reader that has prior knowledge of the subject in question. Pictures, on the other hand, present a great way to introduce new information to viewers. Furthermore, forming mental images based on verbally coded information seems to be more powerful than forming them on visual stimulation. When processing words a reader is also able to form mental images that are personally relevant to them, rather than images that are forced upon them. (Lutz & Lutz 1978: 615) Copy text, especially long such, can be seen as beneficial in situations where the reader has time and is willing to process verbal information, such as on public transportation or when searching for information about a specific product category (Bowdery 2008: 148).
Advertising images are subject to competition both as representations and as pictures. It is not only the represented products that compete for the viewers’ attention but also the pictures themselves. Advertising pictures both have to depict the best possible image of the product as well as be as fascinating as possible. (Larsen 1998: 441–442) Due to this reason it is interesting to examine which pictures are the most effective in advertising. Research shows that especially concrete pictures and words are useful in advertising. Concrete words can represent places, persons, objects, and things that can be seen, heard, tasted, smelled, or felt, while abstract words cannot be experienced through our senses. (Percy & Rossiter 1983: 178) Concrete words are more efficient in communicating ideas; they have more meaning and tend to be more easily comprehended than abstract words (Yuille & Paivio 1969: 471). Furthermore, concrete words, as concrete pictures, have high imagery value, i.e. they easily evoke mental pictures from our long-term memories. High-imagery pictures better communicate ideas to us than low-imagery pictures, as they feel more personally relevant to us. High-imagery pictures also activate several parts of our memory making it easier for us to remember them. (Mårtenson 2009: 482–483) Therefore, in regards of comprehension and recall, advertisements with concrete pictures and words, such as a cat, car or book, are more effective than abstract concepts like freedom or poverty (Percy & Rossiter 1983: 182). According to Paivio (1991: 148), this is due to the fact that abstract words generally only are verbally coded while we implement dual-coding on more concrete stimuli. High-imagery advertisements are even claimed to lead to more favorable attitudes among viewers (Clow & Baack 2010: 176); as well as generate higher believability and intension responses (Percy & Rossiter 1983: 186). Arguably these research discoveries also favor stories in advertising as stories have the ability to give us clear mental images. According to research, complex images that combine several concrete elements in one picture are easier to remember than sequences of simpler pictures (Mårtenson 2009: 478). This, in turn, further advocates the use of storytelling print advertisements that show several elements of a story in one single frame.

4.3.1.1. Different types of advertising images

Classification of advertising images could be done in many ways. One such classification is done by McQuerrie (2008: 99), who has grouped advertising pictures into look-trough and look-at pictures. According to him, look-trough pictures depict specific objects and scenes, onto which the pictures function as transparent windows.
The meaning of a look-through picture is congruent with the meaning of its motif. Look-at pictures, on the other hand, might show many things but only depict themselves as images. They represent ideas, which give them their meaning. The goal of look-through pictures is to show the consumer something with meaning outside the picture, while the goal of look-at pictures is to show pictures with meaning in themselves. (McQuerrie 2008: 99–101) Look-at pictures pose special interest to this thesis as they inherently have the qualities needed for semiotic and iconographic analysis. McQuarrie (2008: 101) further suggests categorization of these look-at pictures into genres. He specifies a tableaux genre, where an image is loaded with a gathering of elements that are culturally or subculturally coded. In advertising images of this genre meets the goal of stalling the viewer with plentiful imagery – instead of quick glances consumers are persuaded to longer gazes. (McQuerrie 2008: 102) Another genre of look-at pictures is the frozen narrative (McQuerrie 2008: 102), which was described in section 3.6.

Besides look-at and look-through images McQuerrie (2008: 104) describes pictures as visual rhetorical figures. According to him, a rhetorical figure is a representation that deviates from the normal but does so by following a specific set of rules. Rhetorical figures are common in verbal language, with examples including metaphors, puns, and rhymes. (McQuerrie 2008: 104) Together with Barbara Phillips, McQuerrie (2004: 114) introduces a typology of visual rhetorical figures, which is constructed upon the relationship of two separate visual elements. This typology specifies how these different rhetorical figures affect consumer processing and response. According to Phillips and McQuerrie (2004: 114) previous typologies of visual rhetorical figures (e.g. Wenzel 1990; Corbett & Connors 1999; Plett 2001) have been constructed on verbal rhetoric figures and do not take the marketing perspective into account. The new typology by Phillips and McQuerrie’s (2004: 116) suggests nine exhaustive rhetorical figures that are the result of two dimensions in a matrix (please see figure 8 below). These dimensions are visual structure, i.e. the physical representation of two visual elements, and meaning, i.e. the cognitive process needed to understand the combination of these two elements. There are three possibilities of visual structure, ranging from the least to the most complex: juxtaposition, fusion, and replacement. (Phillips & McQuerrie 2004: 116) Juxtaposition is merely positioning two objects next to each other (either above or sideways), e.g. placing a shoe and a bed next to each other. Fusion is blending the two elements together, e.g. a water glass with a sky inside it, while replacement is replacing

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5 A motif is what a representation aims to portray, i.e. it is the object of a depiction (Nationalencyklopedin 2014a).
one visual element with another so that it is evident that the other is missing, e.g. replacing the wine bottles in a wine cellar with milk cartons. (Phillips & McQuerrie 2004: 117)

**Figure 8** Phillips and McQuarrie’s typology of rhetorical figures

As with visual structure there are three possibilities of the meaning dimension in Phillips and McQuarries’ (2004: 118) typology (again, please see figure 8). These possibilities range in their degree of ambiguity, and are: connection, comparison through similarities, and comparison through opposition. Finding a *connection* between two visual elements is to understand that these two elements are intended to be associated in some way, but not compared, e.g. a tree and a fruit. *Comparison through similarity* is when two elements are compared due to some aspect they share or are supposed to share, e.g. fruits and wine gums. Finally, *comparison through opposition* shows two elements, which are compared as a proof of their incongruence, e.g. a cactus and a throat. (Phillips & McQuerrie 2004: 118–119)
As the two dimensions in the typology are combined, nine rhetorical figures are created (Phillips & McQuerrie 2004: 116). The advantages of rhetorical figures in advertising are their ability to invite attention through their artful deviation from the norm, and their way of rewarding the reader through pleasurable cognitive elaboration (McQuerrie 2008: 107). Besides cognitive elaboration complex and ambiguous images result in better likeability and better recollection of an advertisement. Higher ambiguity, but not higher complexity, also aids in belief change regarding the advertised product. (Phillips & McQuerrie 2004: 128–129)

Caudle (1989: 162) recognizes three cognitive mechanisms that most often appear in magazine advertising art: association, visual incongruity, and metaphorical symbolism. Cognitively advertising might rely on creating positive associations to the marketed product. These can either be associations through similarity (i.e. when a certain object brings into mind a similar object, e.g. custard and ice cream), contrast (i.e. when an object brings into mind its opposite, e.g. black and white), or contiguity (i.e. when an object brings into mind something that is somehow linked to it, e.g. toilet paper and a lamb) (– notice the similarity to Phillips & McQuerrie’s three types of meaning; Phillips & McQuerrie 2004: 118). Especially association through contiguity is applied in advertisements through the use of different visuals that supposedly impart their desirable qualities to a product. (Caudle 1989: 163) The second cognitive mechanism of advertising art, visual incongruity, refers to grabbing the attention of and puzzling the viewer by combining elements in advertisements that do not generally belong together, thus bringing the visual connotations to a whole new level (Caudle 1989: 165). An example of visual incongruity is showing an image of a synthesizer with the shadow of a grand piano and an accompanying orchestra. Caudle’s (1989: 165) final cognitive mechanism, metaphorical symbolism cuts close to what is studied by semiotics and iconography, i.e. the symbolic meaning of an image and its elements. An example of this might be an advertisement for breath mints showing Arctic scenery to symbolize the product’s refreshing effect.

4.4. Copy text

Although this thesis generally focuses on the visual aspects of advertisements it is important to be knowledgeable of the role text plays in commercial messaging. The typical reader of an advertisement generally first looks at the visual parts of the ad, continuing to the headline and then the copy text (Ogilvy 1985: 88–89). As the
meaning of an advertisement is not always entirely clear through its visuals, copy text helps the reader on the right track as to how the advertisement is meant to be interpreted (Mårtenson 2009: 487). In this context it is in interesting to go back to chapter 2 and Barthes’ (1964: 44–45) thoughts on the function of text that accompanies pictures – according to him, text can either describe or complement pictures (i.e. work as anchorage or work as relay). Although Barthes (1964: 42–43) separates the linguistic function from the pictorial messages (i.e. the denotations and connotations), it is interesting to dwell a moment on how these concepts are connected – just as Peter Larsen (1998: 460) has done. Larsen suggests that copy text not only conveys a message in itself in relation to an advertisement image, but also reinforces the denotations and connotations of said image. By doing this the copy text narrows the range of possible advertisement interpretations (Larsen 1998: 460), hence closing the gap to what Hall (2005: 114) describes as the dominant or the preferred meaning of the advertisement (see section 4.1).

Before creating an advertisement creatives need to have a copy platform, i.e. a creative guide for the production of an advertisement. The copy platform answers the questions of who the most likely buyer of a product is, why this buyer would buy the product, i.e. what their wants and needs are, what product features satisfy these wants and needs, and how all this should be communicated. (Bovée & Arens 1992: 281–284) The process of turning the copy platform into an idea is called either visualization or conceptualization (Bovée & Arens 1992: 284). This stage in the creative process requires a close balance of creativity and discipline (Stewart, Cheng & Wan 2008: 139).

According to Clow and Baack (2010: 191–192) advertisements should contain five linguistic parts to be effective. These parts make up the copy text of an advertisement. The first part, the headline, is the promised benefit of the advertisement, which should be simple, concise, and action-oriented. The headline should give away enough information for the reader to know what the advertisement is about and still keep up their interest. (Clow & Baack 2010: 192) It should also attract the reader’s attention, create the mood, suggest the visuals, and be memorable while ideally at the same time it ought to present a complete selling idea. As headlines are, on average, read three to five times more often than the body copy of an advertisement it is important to make these few words count. There are some examples of ‘magic’ words that have proven to attain interest. These are: “now”, “free”, “announcing”, “amazing”, “introducing”, “improved”, “revolutionary”, and “at last”, among others. The types of headlines chosen
vary from advertising campaign to advertising campaign but can be classified into a few categories. These are, for example, benefit headlines (that promise advantages), news/information headlines (that broadcast announcements), provocative headlines (that pick interest), question headlines (that ask for attention), and command headlines (that order to action). (Bovée & Arens 1992: 292–297) The subheadline accompanies and specifies the headline. It reinforces the promise given by providing additional information and it leads the reader to the body copy. (Clow & Baack 2010: 192) Subheadlines are written in smaller type size than the actual headline but are still distinguished from the even smaller body text. (Bovée & Arens 1992: 297)

The body copy (sometimes also ‘amplification’ or ‘text’) is where the unique selling proposition of an advertisement is conveyed together with other features of the promoted product (Clow & Baack 2010: 192). The body copy should be compact and clear (Clow & Baack 2010: 192), while appealing to the reader's self-interest, preferably as directly as possible (Bovée & Arens 1992: 298). Research shows that good body copy stresses a major idea, clearly positions the product, emphasizes the ultimate benefit, accents the brand name, and is sharp and tight (Spielman 1984: 16–22). As with headlines, there are different types of body copy. Straight-sell copy emphasizes the consumer benefits of a product in a straight-forward fashion and is therefore often useful for complex products or services. Institutional copy rather markets the organization behind the product than the product itself. Narrative copy presents a problem scenario with a solution by using storytelling. Dialogue/monologue copy portrays a realistic conversation between characters, who, by using their own words, give credibility to a product that either or both of them are using. Picture-caption copy is the same as anchorage, which was discussed in chapter 2 (see section 2.2). This type of copy explains illustrative visuals in print ads. Finally, device copy uses linguistic devices as wordplays, rhymes, poetry, humor, exaggerations, and other tricks to get the sales message across and make it memorable. (Bovée & Arens 1992: 300–302)

Clow and Baack’s (2010: 192) fourth element of copy text is proof of claim, where earlier promises are backed up with some form of evidence. This evidence can be provided in many forms, such as guarantees, seals of approval (e.g. “Approved by the Finnish Dental Association”), samples, testimonials, and visuals (Clow & Baack 2010: 192). Also research results or statistics are effective proofs of claim (Bovée & Arens 1992: 302). Finally, advertisements should contain a close, an encouragement of the desired form of action the reader is asked to take. Depending on what the purpose of
the advertisement is this copy could read “buy now”, “give us a try”, or “tell your friends”. (Clow & Baack 2010: 192–193) Optimally these encouragements to action are also given within the body copy as ‘trial closes’ (Bovée & Arens 1992: 303). Besides these five elements advertising copy often also contains boxes, panels, and slogans. Boxes are copy emphasized by drawing a line around them. Sometimes they contain coupons, contact information, or other important features that need to draw the reader’s attention. Panels, in turn, are boxes that run the whole width or length of an advertisement. Slogans (or ‘taglines’) are short, memorable, and simple statements that are used to differentiate the product or company from its competitors. Slogans encapsulate a key theme or philosophy and are used for a longer time period to provide continuity in marketing activities. (Bovée & Arens 1992: 308)

The secret to writing effective copy is difficult to spell out, but good advice is in galore. A few recommendations are to: write single-mindedly without trying to make too many points; to build up excitement; to use the active present tense; and to keep the copy simple and down to earth with contractions natural to verbal communication. (Bovée & Arens: 1992: 301) When aiming for effective advertising copy it is also useful to have knowledge of what not to write. Obfuscation, or beclouding, is trying to disguise a message in difficult wording or long sentences. This is not efficient in advertising as getting your point across is key in marketing communication. Another way to lose readers is to use euphemisms (i.e. embellishing substitutes), and abstract or vague wording. As today’s consumers are both educated and intelligent it is also wise to leave clichés and superlatives out of the copy, together with text that insults specific groups of consumers. (Bovée & Arens 1992: 309–311) As with pictures, concrete wording is the best to aid the comprehension and recollection of an advertisement, while lengthy grammatically complex sentences have lesser effects on advertisement readers (Percy & Rossiter 1983: 179). By avoiding abstract words it is easier to tangibilize both product benefits and service offerings (Stafford 1996: 24). To gain positive response to an advertisement it is also worthwhile to write with a positive tone and direct the message to the reader. By using the word ‘you’ instead of ‘I’ the advertiser better gets their point across. (Bovée & Arens 1992: 311) Research shows that when storing messages in our memories we do not actually learn the content of the message itself, but our cognitive responses to it, i.e. we remember our own reactions to the message, not the message itself (Greenwald 1968: 183). In order to attain an attitudinal change in the reader it is also important to try to generate personal experiences for the reader, as such responses are proven to have a positive impact on both reader attitudes and intentions of
purchase (Woodside 1983: 145). Additional repetition of a message also helps us remember the marketing content of an advertisement. Repetition should, however, not be overused as the best advertisements are the ones that keep us wanting more, while only hinting at their messages. (Mårtenson 2009: 487)

### 4.5. Selection as an influence on perception

Despite the fact that this thesis focuses on the execution of the visual elements in advertising it is also necessary to shortly take into account the importance of consumer preferences and cognitive behavior in viewing ads. There are two routes to personal persuasion and research shows their impact on changing consumer attitudes. The central route to persuasion is taken when a person is able and motivated to evaluate presented arguments. This route normally leads to fairly permanent attitudinal changes that can predict a person’s behavior. The peripheral route to persuasion occurs when a person does not willingly engage in the cognitive effort needed to process a message. Attitudinal changes through this route take place when we perceive either positive or negative message cues, as well as when we process so-called heuristics, i.e. sets of rules used for making decisions based on earlier information. (Petty & Cacioppo 1983: 21) A similar psychological dichotomy is present when we process stimuli. If we consciously make an effort to attend to stimuli, we engage in high-level cognitive processes that activate appropriate information in our long-term memory. If we, on the other hand, do not seek to process certain stimuli we will still engage in low-level cognitive processes that occur automatically, e.g. recognizing the picture content of an advertisement. (Mitchell 1983: 198) As we only use 25 % of our brain capacity for conscious elaboration, it is easy to understand how also non-active advertising processing is of importance in marketing (Franks 2003: 43).

The selective attention system in our brains amplifies sensory input that we find important and attenuates information that we seek to ignore, which lets us focus on what is relevant for us (Kastner & Ungerleider 2000: 332). Naturally, this means that products and advertisements that we selectively choose to notice are able to get a better foothold in our minds than those that we do not have the same interest for, as we devote more time and attention to the interesting ones (Mitchell 1983: 198). Research also shows that viewing stimuli at pre-specified locations generates higher responses than stimuli at other locations (Bushnell, Goldberg & Robinson 1981, in Tavassoli 2008: 75). The same goes for pre-specified attributes (e.g. color, shape) (Pfaf, van der
Heijden & Hudson 1990, in Tavassoli 2008: 77). Our evaluation of an input is likewise determined by whether or not the input fits our predetermined goals (Ferguson & Bargh 2004: 568) and choices (Festinger 1968: 3). Furthermore, we acquire information based on our strategies for processing certain material. Our memory of a material depends on how it was processed – if we focused on the music in an advertisement when seeing it, we will remember the music but not the advertisement’s content, and vice versa. (Mitchell 1983: 201)

Selection of certain stimuli over others also shows on an unconscious level. According to research, our emotional reactions to sensory inputs guide our future actions. If we react positively to an input our emotional control is likely to make us more approachable to it in the future, while if we react negatively we tend to avoid the input the next time we are subjected to it. (Damasio 1994, in Tavassoli 2008: 76) The mere exposure effect is another subconscious reaction to stimuli. According to research, we tend to give a positive evaluation of objects that we have repeatedly been exposed to (Zajonc 1968: 23), even when we do not view them intentionally or actively respond to them (Janiszewski 1993: 389–390). One explanation for this is that our brains mistake the fluency of the repeated processing as liking (Bornstein & D’Agostino 1994, in Tavassoli 2008: 74). Interestingly enough also physical motor action, like pulling one’s arm or extending it, produces subconscious preferences (according to this pulling an object towards oneself would make one more susceptible to it, while extending it away would have the opposite effect) (Cacioppo, Priester & Berntson 1993: 14).

Although we are able to ignore unwanted inputs to some degree, research shows that attention-grabbing advertising executions do not go entirely unnoticed by consumers. According to Eriksen and Eriksen (1974, in Tavassoli 2008: 80), we always partake in some semiotic analysis of also ignored sensory inputs, and it has been shown that engaging in semiotic interpretation is a prerequisite for recalling visual stimuli (Klatzky & Rafnel 1976: 720). However, it has also been proven that increased salience, which attracts attention, might also heighten the devaluation of an input (Tavassoli 2008: 83). This means that instead of generating more interest a flashing sign or large banner might be valued lower than if it were less conspicuous.
5 EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS

Storytelling advertisements can take different forms. There are advertisements with pictures that refer to famous stories, like the fairytales of the Brothers Grimm, advertisements with sequences of pictures that create a narrative storyline, just like comic books, and advertisements that simply consist of copy that tells a story. However, there are also pictures that in themselves tell a story. Within the premises of this thesis, storytelling pictures are pictures that show a story within a picture frame. Earlier research (Lessing 1982/1766: 181; Williamson 1978: 152; and to some extent also McQuerrie 2008: 102; Baetens & Bleyen 2010: 165) has demanded that all tenses of a story should show within a single picture frame. Questioning this stance in the context of storytelling advertisements, where the picture’s main task is to engage and intrigue rather than tell a whole story, storytelling advertisements have here been categorized into subgroups according to what tense the story in them seems to take place. These groups are the past, the present, and the future, with an addition of a group where all three tenses can be sensed in a single picture. Storytelling pictures of the past group show a scene where the story has already unfolded. The present group consists of advertising pictures where an event is currently happening. Storytelling pictures in the future group show scenes where the story is just about to take place. The all-tenses group consists of pictures that simultaneously hint to a past, a present, and a future. These four subgroups are to be regarded in parallel to Aristotle’s three chronological parts of a story: the beginning, the middle, and the end (Skalin 2002: 184). The past group shows the ending of a story, the present group the middle, and the future group the beginning. The all-tenses group shows both the beginning, the middle, and the end of a story.

In this chapter the four above-mentioned groups of storytelling pictures, will be explored and analyzed for their visual qualities by the means of semiotics and iconography, but also in the light of the earlier presented storytelling (chapter 3) and marketing (chapter 4) theory. The reason for choosing this type of storytelling advertisements, where the story is within the picture frame, is that they single-handedly strive to present stories without using techniques other than visual referencing. The actual four storytelling pictures chosen for the analysis were found on the Ads of the World webpage (http://adsoftheworld.com). As a part of the visual marketing analysis these four advertisements will first be described in detail,

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6 The selection process of the analyzed advertisements can be found in chapter 1.
facilitating both the iconographic, semiotic, storytelling- and marketing-based analyses, which follow. For explanations on the terminology used in the visual analyses, please see chapter 2.

5.1.1. **Unfolded stories in the past tense – Stihl**

Bill liked to barbeque in his garden. But aside from barbequing he did not spend much time there, never tending to the greenery in it. His wife would nag at him for not buying a hedge trimmer as he had promised to do so many times already. The shrubs and the trees in Bill’s garden had a tendency to grow quickly – so quickly, in fact, that one time when Bill was barbequing, he heard a crack and a creak and then something strange happened: he was scooped up by the greenery in his garden and pressed up against his house! What on earth! No doubt was Bill surprised to learn how unruly gardens can be, but more annoyed at the thought of how his wife would say: “I told you not to wait too long!”.

Figure 9  Advertisement of power tool company Stihl: *Don’t wait too long.*

(Altmann, Vinciguerra, Dermaux & Lemoigne 2007)
This is a narrative interpretation of outdoor power tool company Stihl’s European advertisement (please see figure 9 above) for gardening products (Publicis Conseil 2007). Let us take a look at what this reading is based on and what more we can read into it by visual marketing analysis. In the Stihl advertisement we see the frame of a white-walled wooden-floor living room with a turned on TV set to the left, a coffee table in the middle of the room, and a light leather sofa to the right. Behind the sofa is a black switched-on floor lamp with a beige shade. On the coffee table there is a remote control, a whiskey glass of water, and a paper with program listings, which, in turn, has a pair of glasses and a pen on it. On the armrest of the sofa is another remote control. There is a terracotta-colored carpet on the floor. A large double-framed window to the garden dominates the picture. It is the kind of window that opens up like a sliding door. To the sides of it are orange curtains. Pressed up against the window are green shrubs, plants, and trees – you can almost not see the blue sky behind them. Squeezed in between the greenery and the window are a man and his barbequing equipment. He is in the left frame of the window, dressed in casual shorts, a checkered shirt, and worn white sneakers with socks. He is holding a set of grilling tongs in his right hand, and a grill wire rack with sausages and skewers in his left hand, which is extended towards the right window frame. In the right window frame a red barbeque grill is propped up, waist-high in the shrubbery, with a bag of coal underneath it. At the same height as the grill, but to the left of the man, is a bottle of squirted-out mustard. In the left corner of the left window frame there is an aluminum foil tray with some more sausages and skewers on it. In the right corner of the advertisement there are two white boxes, one with a picture of a hedge trimmer and another with the orange Stihl logo and the text “Don’t wait too long”.

Looking at the iconographic meanings of this advertisement, the switched-on lamp in the right corner of the room poses an interesting object for interpretation. Although lamps and light traditionally are symbols of religious and spiritual awakening (Biedermann 1993: 394), a more mundane reading is surely in order for this advertisement. Lamps often symbolize intelligence (Cirlot 1971/1990: 176) and enlightenment (Lurker 1988a: 412), and are also often placeholders for the sun (Cooper 1986: 111). Light, in turn, is a symbol of consciousness (Chetwynd 1982: 242), but also masculinity as opposed to darkness, which is feminine (think of yin and yang, which have masculine and feminine connotations, where yang is white and yin black) (Biedermann 1993: 394). In the Stihl advertisement the bushes in the garden have grown to the point where they have gotten in the way of the natural sunlight and the
lamp has had to be turned on as the sun’s placeholder indoors. The artificial light of the lamp can been seen as the enlightenment of the poor man stuck between his garden and the window glass – he has finally come to his senses, thinking: “This has to stop, I need to buy a Stihl hedge trimmer”. As power tools generally belong to the masculine domain, this light can also be seen as a reference to the fact that the man now knows that he has to ‘man up’ and resolve his gardening problems (with a Stihl power tool).

Another interesting symbol in this advertisement is the window, which often is depicted in art due to its quality of mediating light (or mediating enlightenment, as concluded in the previous paragraph) (Biedermann 1993: 84). Just as light, windows can symbolize consciousness, as well as rationality and possibilities (Cirlot 1971/1990: 373). The iconography of the window supports the reading made above. Coming to his senses the man in the advertisement has listened to reason and is offered a possible solution to his problem by power tool company Stihl. His previous apathy is indicated by the sofa and the turned-on TV. The TV shows a clean-cut green field – indicating that he has perhaps been watching some sport, i.e. watching others engage in action. The clean-cut field also underlines how lazy he has been in regard of his own garden. The man is now engaging in a manly activity – barbequing, which could be seen as a reference to him taking charge of his problem. The fact that he is about to eat (as he is preparing food), is also significant, as eating is a symbol of becoming conscious through internalizing something (think of the expression ‘food for thought’) (Chetwynd 1982: 129). The qualities of what is being eaten are often seen as being transmitted to the person eating it (Cooper 1986: 236). Coming back to the masculinity referred to earlier, this is interesting as the sausages and skewers the man is barbequing have a typical phallic form. This is another reference of the man realizing that he has to man-up and buy a power tool. Additional ones are the fact that he has been engaging in watching sports on TV – a rather manly activity – and drinking from a whiskey glass – whiskey traditionally being a more masculine drink as well.

Finally, it is interesting to take a look at this crystal whiskey glass of water on the table in the Stihl advertisement. Crystals are often seen as objects of contemplation (Cirlot 1971/1990: 74) – in this picture we notice that there has been a need for contemplation to reach a solution. Water, in turn, has several symbolical meanings. In modern psychology it is often interpreted as a symbol of unconsciousness, but also as rebirth and as a mediating element (Cirlot 1971/1990: 365). Water is the liquid counterpart of light (Cooper 1986: 220), and a symbol of yin (Cooper 1986: 221) and femininity
(Lurker 1988b: 792). It is also a purgative element that nourishes change (Biedermann 1993: 406–407). Coming back to the symbolism of eating and drinking, we can conclude that, since the glass is half full, the qualities of the water have been assimilated by the man. Up until now he has been unconscious and feminine, in regards of not having taken the manly decision to by a power tool for his unruly garden. The water has, however, nourished the shrubs outdoors, as well as his realization that there needs to be a change.

Semiotically Stihl’s advertisement offers an abundance of readings. At first glance, looking at its representational meaning we find that the advertisement is narrative rather than conceptual, as it seeks out to show an ongoing situation (Jewitt & Oyama 2001: 141, 143). Interesting here is that the clear vectors, that would generally express the dynamics of the situation, are missing in the picture. The man has extended his right hand, a vector, towards the barbeque, indicating that he was about to barbeque his skewers and sausages, but this is not central in the story. The movement of the man being pressed up against the window has already happened and hence the vectors expressing this cannot be found in the picture. They are only in our minds after viewing the picture and realizing its story. Due to its static nature the advertisement is perhaps to some extent conceptual after all. It categorizes its participant, the man, as having been unconscious and feminine, but now being reasonable and manly as he has reached enlightenment. Not taking action is categorized as something negative, whereas taking action – using Stihl – is positive and manly.

When analyzing how this advertisement interacts with the viewer we can conclude that the type of contact it seeks is that of an offer picture (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006: 118). The viewer is not confronted with a piercing gaze of the man in the picture but can rather comfortably observe him from a long-shot distance. This allows the viewer to take in the storyline and make necessary inferences. Interestingly enough the viewer is below the eye-level of the man, which would generally indicate that the picture participant has power over the viewer (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006: 140). The lamp is at the eye-level of the viewer, perhaps indicating that also the viewer is being enlightened, whereas the man is superior as he has already come to his senses. The frontal angle of the man invites us to involve ourselves in what is happening to him (Jewitt & Oyama 2001: 135). Hence, we are invited to connect and concern ourselves with the need of buying a Stihl power tool.
To its composition the Stihl advertisement is centralized, drawing the attention of the viewer to the static action in the window. At the same time the picture is also clearly framed. The window works as a frame between what is indoors/outdoors, while its dual pane horizontally splits the picture into two conspicuous halves. Indoors the situation is still comfortable and the problem has not yet been acknowledged, while outdoors the story has unfolded and the man is faced with a problem. To the left in the picture, as separated by the window frame, we have what is ‘given’ or old (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006: 181). Here we see the man in his awkward predicament as well as the water glass with its symbolism. The right side of the advertisement shows us the ‘new’ (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006: 181): the turned-on lamp/consciousness, as well as the Stihl logo, i.e. the solution to the problem. Visually salient in the advertisement are exactly these things: the man, the lamp, and the logo.

The Stihl picture meets all the criteria of natural or even sensory modality. The colors of the picture are saturated and differentiated, and a correct use of shadowing, illumination, brightness, depth, and conceptualization has been employed (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006: 160–162). The picture is, however, hardly realistic. We all know bushes and trees do not grow at a speed that could surprise a poor man barbequing in his garden. Still we are asked to buy into the illusion and the story for the sake of the argument.

What makes Stihl’s advertisement a storytelling one? It does not meet all the criteria posed by the researchers in chapter 3, but still gives a strong sense of a story. Following Fog, Budtz, and Yakaboylu’s theories (2003: 30), we can identify a plot, a conflict, characters, and a message in the advertisement. The plot has been declared for above, and the conflict is the menace of the growing garden. The hero is the man in the picture and his goal is to be able to barbeque in his garden. His opponents are the fast-sprouting bushes and his helper will be the Stihl hedge trimmer he realizes he has to buy. When the action has unfolded the man himself is the recipient of his heroic undertakings. Finally, the message of the story is summarized in the little white box next to the Stihl logo: “Don’t wait too long”, i.e. do not wait too long to fix your gardening problems by buying a Stihl power tool.

As specified by Baetens and Bleyen (2010: 169), Stihl’s advertisement clearly indicates events that have causally and chronologically unfolded over a duration of time, and could therefore be seen as a storytelling picture. It also hints to several tenses, as required by Williamson (1978: 152). The past is most strongly referred to by the
leisurely scene in the living room, by the bargequing, and by the quickly growing garden, whereas the present is the current precarious state of affairs with the man being pressed up against his window. The future tense is suggested by the solution to the man’s situation, but it is not explicitly shown in the picture with a reference like an open product catalogue on the coffee table or a Stihl storefront in the distance. Instead, the logo with the accompanying text fulfills this duty. Although it displays synchronicity, the Stihl picture does not exactly show what Lessing (1982/1766: 181) would call a pregnant moment, as the actions in the story have already climaxed and unfolded. It is also questionable whether or not the picture induces suspense in the viewer, which was another of Baetens and Bleyen’s (2010: 170) criteria for storytelling pictures. The picture surely evokes curiosity, but as the events have already taken place the viewer is more interested in what has happened than what is going to happen. But who is to say this is wrong, as the story is in the past and not the future? The picture is all the same interesting. Finally, Baetens and Bleyen (2010: 169) pose that the story in storytelling pictures should take place in a single picture frame. This is certainly the case here, as this is not just a picture of a man barbequing or watching television, but a picture where the viewers undoubtedly realize what story has unfolded.

Using Schramm’s model on mass communication (1955: 6) we can attempt to pinpoint the target group of the Stihl advertisement. According to the model, the fields of experience of the sender and the receiver need to overlap in order for the signal, i.e. the message, to be decoded correctly by the receiver (Schramm 1955: 6). Looking at the advertisement it is clear that it holds many masculine symbols, leading us to conclude that the target group must be male. To some extent, whoever is able to understand the predicament of the man in the advertisement shares some of the field of experience with the Stihl marketers. However, arguably the target audience is still men – with houses, gardens, and an interest for sports – and they will relate to the message better than others.

Another aspect of Schramm’s (1955: 9) model, feedback, also poses special interest in the analysis of the Stihl marketing message. Despite there being a clear line of communication, going from the sender through encoding and decoding to the receiver, the Stihl marketers have not provided the consumer with any outspoken way to provide feedback. The advertisement does not have a webpage address the consumers can go to, nor does it give any direct incentive for the consumer to take action. The only
encouragement provided is the tagline “Don’t wait too long”, which literally tells the consumer to wait with their purchase, although not for too long.

According to the hierarchy of effects model (Clow & Baack 2010: 173) the Stihl advertisement does not place in the stage of purchase, or in the action phase in the AIDA model (Pieter & Wedels 2008: 52). Being quite sparse with information the advertisement assumes awareness of the brand, and educates the consumer in when and where to use Stihl products. It does not induce liking or preference of the brand but all the same it tries to convince the viewer that this is the right time to make a purchase – placing the advertisement in the second last conviction stage in the hierarchy of effects model. In the AIDA model the Stihl advertisement does not pass the phase of attention. It does not create an interest for the product itself by trying to sell it as such, but it rather effectively catches the attention of the viewer. The fact that the Stihl advertisement does not explicitly spell out its message to the viewer might very well be the strength of it. It only hints to a solution to a problem, letting the consumer use their cognitive abilities to draw their own conclusions about the marketing message (Mårtenson 2009: 487).

Analyzing the Stihl message with the means-end theory (Gutman 1982: 71) we notice that it does not at all show a means to an end, i.e. it does not show the consumer how to reach a certain value with the help of the product. Quite the opposite – the advertisement and its copy shows us how not to do it and what can happen if you follow the man in the advertisement. Based on this we can conclude that the message appeal used in the advertisement is a fear appeal (Clow & Baack 2010: 178). However, as the situation shown is so absurd and unrealistic, humor is arguably also central in the Stihl message. Despite the humor, the advertisement clearly speaks to the logical left side of our brains (Kay 2003: 37), giving it a rational message theme (Clow & Baack 2010: 161). One might argue that this approach sits well with the proposed male target group, who traditionally has been perceived as more rational than the emotional female (Nelson 2009: 1).
5.1.2. *Action in the present tense – Ray-Ban*

All of a sudden Johnny scooped Ellen off of her feet and her skirt rode up to her waist. Ellen felt the burning gazes of everyone around her but she didn’t care – let them look!

Figure 10 Advertisement of eyewear company Ray-Ban: *The Bronx 1956; Genuine since 1937.*

In 2012 Ray-Ban posted a series of advertisements that show supposedly provoking imagery from different decades. One of these advertisements (please see figure 10 above) presents a young couple dancing in the Bronx in 1956 (Marcel Agency 2012). In this sepia advertisement we see people dancing in, what looks like, an outdoor environment. Slightly to the left, but mainly in the middle of the picture, a young couple is doing a dangerous-looking dip in the style of 1950’s boogie woogie or rock n’ roll dance. The young man is wearing Ray-Ban Wayfarer sunglasses, a slightly buttoned-down white shirt with rolled-up sleeves, creased pants, and black and white creeper shoes. The woman is wearing thick eyeglasses, a short-sleeved knitted sweater, a striped black skirt with a white-laced petticoat, and black shoes with loose white socks. He is bending forward, supporting her weight with his arms under her back, looking at her while biting his lip in smiling concentration. She is lifted up with her back to the ground, kicking one of her legs straight up in the air and bending the other.

(Marcel Agency 2012)
The movement has slid up her skirt showing all of her legs. She looks at the viewer with a big laughter on her lips. Around the couple are older dancing couples as well as other people. All are frowningly looking at the youngsters in the middle. Although casual, these people are conservatively attired, dressed in darker colors than the young couple, and none of them are wearing glasses of any sort. Down in the left corner of the advertisement is the small text “The Bronx, 1956”. In the right corner is the bright-red Ray-Ban logo with the tiny text “genuine since 1937” underneath and the bold capital letter text “never hide” to the left.

The iconography of dancing is largely related to religious worship (Lurker 1988c: 713) but also has other connotations. It symbolizes the passage of time, change, and metamorphosis (Cirlot 1971/1990: 76). It refers to strong emotion (Cooper 1986: 29), the union of man and wife (Cirlot 1971/1990: 76), erotic desire (Lurker 1988c: 713), and the search of a partner (Bruce-Mitford 1997: 76). In early-Christian times dancing was connected with heathenism and the devil (Lurker 1988c: 713). From the disdained looks of the people observing the young couple it is easy to infer that the couple’s wild dancing style is deemed as inappropriate, perhaps mostly due to the sexual (note her bare legs and the horizontal intimacy) connotations mentioned above. Together with the “never hide” text, Ray-Ban is showing that by wearing the company’s glasses customers can break barriers, and actually have been doing that already since the 1930’s (note the text “genuine since 1937”). For Ray-Ban the symbolism of change and metamorphosis is arguably relevant, as they in their rebelliousness want to give the impression of having been facilitators of changing times.

Often attributing educated scholars, eyeglasses have come to symbolize wisdom and respect through the ages (Magnuson 2012). These qualities have, in turn, transferred to attribute nerdy behavior among spectacle-wearing youth and children. In addition to breaking barriers of general convention, Ray-Ban’s advertisement seems to try to break the dry image of eyeglasses. The kids in the picture are neither nerdy nor do they evoke respect – quite the opposite with their “modern” moves. As eyes are said to be the windows to our souls (Lurker 1988d: 59), sunglasses arguably block the view to that private sphere, making the wearer seem cool and distant (Americana: The Institute for the Study of American Popular Culture 2002). The scene in the Ray-Ban picture does not look particularly sunny, making the sunglasses worn by the young man obsolete, were it not for giving him this air of coolness. As he is cool, the girl he is dancing with becomes cool by association, as does her Ray-Ban glasses and by extension all Ray-Ban
glasses, not just Wayfarers. Symbolizing knowledge (Cooper 1986: 237) our eyes are also our windows to the world (Lurker 1988d: 59), and seeing symbolizes understanding (Cirlot 1971/1990: 99). As glasses are like an extra set of eyes, this could be interpreted as if the dancing couple knew something the rest of the people in the picture do not. They see the progress, as symbolized by their dancing, and wear another set of lenses, i.e. their glasses, through which they observe the world.

Particularly salient in this picture is the young woman’s shoe-clad foot and bare leg that is pointing straight up in the air. Feet often symbolize freedom of movement (Cooper 1986: 53), whereas shoes are a sign of liberty (Cirlot 1971/1990: 296). Shoes also connote authority (Cooper 1986: 168), possession, and power (Lurker 1988e: 636), while feet are a symbol of victory, conquest (Lurker 1988f: 221), and contempt (Biedermann 1993: 86), as victors earlier set their foot on their opponents as an act of submission, and conquerors would step on a piece of land to mark it as theirs (Lurker 1988f: 221). Feet, legs, and shoes also have sexual connotations. Both feet and legs are typical masculine phallic symbols (Cirlot 1971/1990: 111; Cooper 1986: 15), whereas shoes have been used to symbolize fertility (Lurker 1988e: 636) and the female sex organ (Cirlot 1971/1990: 295). In some parts of the world grooms have been known to give their bride a pair of shoes as a sign of engagement and dominance (Lurker 1988e: 636), whereas shoe-related expressions like “unter dem Pantoffel stehen” (German; freely translated “to be under the slipper”, meaning the predicament of a henpecked husband) signify female power (Lurker 1988e: 636). Freedom, contempt, conquest, and sexuality can also be sensed in the Ray-Ban advertisement. In their nonchalant contempt of other people’s thoughts, the young couple in the picture has taken the freedom to act out their sexuality, conquering the narrow-mindedness of the society in which they live. The symbolism of the girl’s bare pointed leg, along with its shoe, mirrors the intimacy between the young couple, also predicting the progress towards sexual liberation as well as female empowerment.

Let us see what the text “The Bronx, 1956” connotes in combination with the Ray-Ban image. Of New York City’s five boroughs the Bronx is the northernmost, known as the Borough of Universities thanks to the many universities and colleges situated there (Hershkowitz 1977: 599). In the 1950’s the Bronx was mainly populated by middle-income families (Encyclopedia International 1967: 320) of either Caucasian or Hispanic descent (Stern, Mellins & Fishman 1995: 944). After World War II great parts of Bronx fell into serious decline, much due to low-cost housing projects that drove away more
affluent citizens (Stern, Mellins & Fishman 1995: 954). In the Ray-Ban advertisement the young couple might be two free-minded university students among typical petty bourgeoisie of the 1950’s Bronx. The surrounding people’s clothes, which are not fancy but clean-cut and proper, indicate that they belong to conservative middle-class women and men. It is not hard to imagine that these people would look down on the liberal thoughts and culture that the two students represent and showcase in their dancing.

Looking at the semiotics of this picture we can see that its representational meaning is clearly narrative, as it has actors that do and emanating vectors that express what is happening (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006: 59). The limbs and bodies of the young couple are the vectors that initiate the narrative moment: his forward-bent torso and arms lift her body up head-down, while her kicked-up foot and extended arm around his neck indicate that she is happily in on the dance move. The most expressive vectors in the picture, however, are the scorning gazes emanating from the surrounding folks eyes. These gazes show their negative reactions to the situation. As both the actors and the goals of their vectors are in the same picture, the action here is transactive (Jewitt & Oyama 2001: 143), meaning that all of the narrative is going on within the picture.

The interactive meaning of Ray-Ban’s advertisement is intriguing. The rest of the people in the picture, the young man included, are looking at someone within the picture, creating contact between each other, but the upside-down girl is looking at the viewer from behind her glasses. She is laughing and demanding contact with us, challenging the viewer to relate to her. We are to agree with her liberal worldview and join in on the fun. The picture is a long shot, proposing that we do not know personally any of the participants in the picture (Jewitt & Oyama 2001: 146). Our view of the couple is slightly obscured by a woman standing to the left of the picture frame. She is out of focus, but adds to the impression that the viewer is an outsider, not directly participating in the situation in the middle of the picture. Interesting here is that the front-on horizontal point of view invites us to involve ourselves with the picture – just as the girl’s eye contact with us – but vertically we are at the eye level of the surrounding on-lookers, indicating that also we are looking down at the couple, not quite identifying ourselves with them (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006: 140). This effect emphasizes the provocative nature of the picture – we are made to notice that the situation is inappropriate from the point of view of the surrounding people. If we were at the eye-level of the couple it would render an atmosphere of us-against-the-world,
but instead Ray-Ban is showing that they are the ones fighting the world – a world of which also the viewers are a part.

The compositional meaning of the Ray-Ban advertisement corroborates its representative and interactive meanings. Particularly salient in the picture are the couple, who are in focus and are prominent due to their lighter-colored clothing and the light skin of the girl's legs. The couple is slightly framed by the out-of-focus woman to the left and the straight posture of a man dancing to their right. The are situated slightly to the left in the picture, indicating that they represent what is ‘known’, whereas the reactions of the people around them are ‘new’ (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006: 181). Also the text “The Bronx, 1956” is placed to the left. As viewers, it seems, we are to involve ourselves with the situation, by taking the stand-point of the on-lookers, while all the same seeing something familiar. This rhymes well with how the picture is placed back in time, to the Bronx in 1956; the viewers are supposed to be aware of there having been a more conservative social climate in that part of New York in the past, and as the observers of the dancing young couple we are assumed to take the roles of past conservative on-lookers, who are provoked to consider the ways of modern times. As the Ray-Ban logo is placed to the right, the company's involvement in these modern times is presented to us as new information. Looking further at the informational value of the picture we can note that there is no particular top-down division in it, except for the fact that we find all the text and the logo in the bottom part of the advertisement. This would indicate that whereas the situation presented in the top part of the picture is general or a sample of a larger phenomenon, Ray-Ban at the bottom connects the shown scene with reality and is the key to obtaining the rebellious cool lifestyle of the couple.

It is interesting to take a look at the modality of the Ray-Ban picture as we are dealing with a black-and-white image, supposedly taken in the Bronx in 1956. On the scale of color saturation, the picture scores low with is sepia finish. Sepia does not represent naturalistic modality as we think of it today with our modern technology. Still, the picture’s color differentiation and color modulation are highly realistic – it has a diversified palette of browns and shades. Being a little grainy this makes the picture believable as a historic account. The bright red Ray-Ban logo, together with the hardly-historic lettering in the “never hide” text, indicate, however, that the advertisement is meant for modern eyes – were these also black and white and old-fashioned, we would get the impression that the whole advertisement was made in the 1950’s. This would
alter the meaning of the advertisement, as we would be thrown back in time and Ray-Ban could no longer assume that we know about the subsequent social progress that the company purportedly has participated in molding. Looking further at the image’s modality we can note that it is more concerned with presenting us with a scene than a realistic historic account. The picture has a background but it is out of focus, not giving us any clues to the particular location of the scene. It does give us some details – we see the wrinkles on people’s faces and what type of jewelry the women are wearing – but these details are fairly uninformative. The picture gives an accurate sense of depth and brightness, but when it comes to illumination it seems like the couple has been artificially made more salient by placing extra light on them.

The above modality cues combined give the impression that this picture is staged and not an actual photography of the 1950’s. Does this matter? It shows that Ray-Ban perhaps were not the provocateurs they set themselves out to have been in the past, but the modern consumer is arguably more concerned with a company’s image here and now than what it used to be. Therefore, the advertisement does effectively convey the message it seeks to, despite the fact that this message is staged. This lets us conclude that, as a picture, the Ray-Ban image is fictitious. But as Yiannis Gabriel (2004: 41) notes, that is all right, as we and the company have a mutual understanding of this. The picture does not conflict with any known facts, and is therefore actually truthful, by definition of Ville Saarikoski (2004: 39). Its gist is based on fact, and it could very well have taken place, but it is embellished with fictitious detail, and this particular scene never happened.

As a storytelling picture the Ray-Ban advertisement leaves room for improvement. It follows Fog, Budtz, and Yakaboylu’s (2000: 30) definition of a story by having a message (Ray-Ban as a facilitator of progress or Ray-Ban as a means to coolness) and a conflict (the opposition to progress among conservatives), but fails in showcasing a clear plot and some of the typical characters of a story. It is easy to recognize the heroes in the picture, as well as the opponents and the helper (i.e. the Ray-Ban glasses), but what/who are the goal, the giver, and the receiver? These are missing because there is no clear plot in the picture. The advertisement shows a moment that is fully rendered in the present tense, i.e. we are in the midst of action, and due to this we have no way of knowing what has happened or what is going to happen in the story. If the story had a beginning, a middle, and an end, we would here see the middle part of it. As the Ray-Ban image does not hint to a past or a future, it is not a story-picture, as by definition of
Williamson (1978: 152). Neither does it have Lessing’s (1982/1766: 181, 183) pregnant moment, since we seem to be in the climax of things rather than in the anticipation of it. The picture is not a frozen narrative (McQuerrie 2008: 102) either, as we, again, are not given any clues on how to ponder on neither the past nor the future of the image. Nor does the advertisement visually follow Baetens and Bleyen’s (2010: 169–170) three story criteria of showing a picture frame with a duration of events that are causally linked and evoke curiosity about how things will be resolved. We are not held in suspension by the picture because the situation already unfolds in front of our eyes. Questionable is also whether or not we witness any kind of a solution to a problem, which is something stories should have by definition of Czarniawska (1997: 18). If the conflict/problem is the resentment in the 1950’s towards modern times and ideals, then Ray-Ban’s advertisement does not really offer us a solution to that resentment but only shows itself as a stakeholder in those modern times.

Let us finally look at the efficiency of the Ray-Ban advertisement as a marketing message. Starting with Shramm’s (1955: 3–4) mass communications model we can note that the fields of experience between the source and the receiver play an important part in viewing this ad. The dominant code for reading the advertisement assumes us to know both what the Bronx, the 1950’s, and the young couple’s wild dancing connotes. Without this knowledge we cannot crack Ray-Ban’s marketing message of being revolutionary eyewear manufacturers for the cool kids since many years back. Advertisements are made for specific target audiences (American Marketing Association 2013) and it is interesting to ponder on whom the particular target audience with this field of experience is. Since the receiver is to relate positively to the liberal message of the advertisement but also know its implications, they ought to be someone fairly liberal, modern, and well-informed themselves. As the protagonist barrier-breaking couple is young and the antagonist surrounding folks are older, one might assume that the target market is a younger one (or at least one that is young at heart).

By looking at the means-end theory (Gutman 1982: 71) we can note that the Ray-Ban advertisement efficiently shows the young-hearted target audience how to attain the valued end state of youth and coolness. It is telling us that by using Ray-Ban glasses you can be as cool and rebellious as the couple in the picture. Breaking this down by using the MECCAS model (Peter & Olson 2008: 436–437), one can note that the message elements, i.e. the product attributes, shown are the dark-glassed well-known Wayfarer
sunglasses and the thick-glassed nerdy design of the spectacles. In this case the consumer benefits of the sunglasses are not the fact that the sunglasses cover your eyes from the sun, but that they cover your eyes from other people’s glances and give you a cool sleek look. The benefits of the eyeglasses of the girl are that they give you both eyesight and insight, as well as a modern look. These benefits lead to the valued end states of being cool, youthful, sexy, and smart, sticking out from the crowd, and making others notice you. These are the driving forces that the consumer viewing the advertisement are hoped to have as reasons for buying Ray-Ban glasses. The leverage points, i.e. what attaches these values to the product, are in the Ray-Ban advertisement the fun the couple is having while doing something so seemingly outrageous, the disdainful glances the dancing couple gets from the older people around them, and being the center of attention at the event they are attending. The creative style by which this is communicated to the viewer is placing the message at a dance in the 1950’s, using two young funky-dressed main characters to contrast with older conservative bystanders.

The executional framework of the Ray-Ban advertisement is that of dramatization (Clow & Baack 2010: 209). This gives the advertisement a clearly emotional message theme that shows the consumer how to attain a certain lifestyle and status by playing on feelings and abstract notions as youthfulness and sexiness (Clow & Baack 2010: 161). It speaks to the right side of the brain (Kay 2003: 37) by appeals of emotion, humor, and sex (Clow & Baack 2010: 179, 181, 189), but also to the rational left when activating the reader’s quest for narrative connections (Levy 1985: 39). The Ray-Ban advertisement relies on the cognitive mechanism of association by similarity (Caudle 1989: 163), as the coolness of the Wayfarer sunglasses are carried over to the (usually less cool) spectacles. To its layout the advertisement is clearly picture-dominant (McQuerrie 2008: 97) and conveys the message with fairly abstract copy (“Never hide”). The level of abstractness of the Ray-Ban picture makes it harder for the reader to decode it (Paivio 1991: 148), but gives all the more enjoyment when they do (Clow & Baack 2010: 176). According to the hierarchy of effects model (Clow & Baack 2010: 173) the ultimate goal of the Ray-Ban advertisement seems to be to move the consumer to a stage of preference. The consumer is assumed to be both aware and knowledgeable about the Ray-Ban glasses, liking them for their youthfulness and cool design. The advertisement does not try to convince or facilitate purchase, but it rather seeks to make the product preferred by the viewer by different levels of visual meaning. Using
the terms of the AIDA model (Pieter & Wedel 2008: 52), the Ray-Ban advertisement seeks to invoke desire in the viewer, which is the predecessor for action.

5.1.3. Things are about to happen in the future tense – Band-Aid

“Alright, suspect number two is headed for the black Camaro. You ready Montgomery?” Leroy Montgomery felt the adrenaline pump in his veins and small droplets of sweat race all over his body. This was it. The moment had come.

Figure 11 Advertisement of adhesive bandage company Band-Aid: Sweatproof.

Showcasing innovative thinking in its Australian market, Band-Aid’s “Sweatproof” advertisement (JWT 2008; please see figure 11 above) points out that the adhesive bandage company’s products are apt for both active and various use. In the advertisement we see a police stakeout taking place in what appears to be a musty motel room. In the right forefront of the advertisement is a sweaty man, cut right under his eyes and below his hips by the photo frame. The man is wearing dark blue jeans and a buttoned-down Western-style shirt with rolled-up sleeves. He has a golden necklace with a pendant in the shape of an onion or a teardrop. In the bottom right corner of the
picture we see the arms of a man who is taping a microphone and its chord to the sweaty man’s chest with three Band-Aids. This man is wearing a dark brown suit and a white shirt. To the right side of these two men is a black-framed mirror and a table with used coffee mugs and take-away food cartons. The men are in a beige-walled poorly-lit room with a draped window in the far left-end corner of it. There is a bed in the bottom left corner of the picture and a small table with two chairs behind it, underneath the window. Between the bed and the table is a bedside table with a lit table lamp. The bedside table also holds a white stationary phone and some other non-discernable gadgets. At the table by the window, sits a heavy-set man in a white shirt. He is wearing headphones, listening to a large old-fashioned recording device in front of him on the table. To his right another man, dressed in a dark suit and a white shirt, is pressed up with his back against a strip of wall and the front door, lurking sideways out the window behind a closed curtain. It is sunny outside, the sun peaks in from behind the curtain and under the doorframe. On the bed there are two black bags and a spread-out pile of mug shots. In the ceiling the ceiling fixture is turned off. In the upper left corner of the advertisement there is a small blue-white-red box of Band-Aids with the company logo “Band-Aid” next to it to the right. Below the logo is the tagline “Sweatproof”. All text is in red.

Prominent in the foreground of the Band-Aid advertisement is the bare-chested sweaty man. In Western art nudity has generally had ambiguous meaning: that of the pure and innocent, nuditas virtualis, and that of the lascivious and exhibitionistic, nuditas criminalis. It is said that one cannot observe a nude without the conflicting attraction to both its physical and spiritual beauty. (Cirlot 1971/1990: 230) As newborn babies are nude, nudity is often present in initiation rituals where newcomers enter a new world. To be nude is also seen as giving oneself to higher powers, dispelling the social and hierarchical differences that clothes symbolize. (Biedermann 1991: 291) Beside giving the Band-Aid commercial a sexy edge, the nudity of the man in it can be seen as him mentally preparing for entering a new situation when being undercover in a world of criminals. Besides the nudity also his sweaty skin tells us that he is confronted with a new nerve-racking situation – breaking into sweat typically symbolizes transformation from one form to another (Chetwynd 1982: 138).

The sweaty man’s casual dress differs from that of the other police detectives in the picture. The clothes we wear symbolize the artificial human systems we are conditioned to (Chetwynd 1982: 89), which means that our clothes tell everyone around us who we
are or who we want to be (Bruce-Mitford 1997: 84). The sweaty man’s attire can presumably be likened to that of the criminals he is trying to infiltrate. In a sense the man is shown going through an initiation ritual of his own as he is entering the criminal world by wearing its attributes. The other agents around the man are not dressed in uniform, as many policemen are, but they are, all the same, uniformly dressed in their business suits, which symbolize conformity and originally stem from British military uniforms (The Economist 16.12.2010). Besides his casual shirt and jeans the sweaty man differs from the others by wearing a golden necklace. Gold represents everything that is hard and expensive to obtain. Often it also has negative connotations, as gold has the ability to morally ruin a person and make them greedy. (Bruce-Mitford 1997: 39) In the advertisement the man represents the criminals in his attempt to imitate them. We learn from his appearance and the heavy golden jewelry that the criminals are interested in expensive outer attributes and are therefore perhaps also somewhat morally corrupted. As gold often is linked to the symbolism of rulers and sovereignty and could traditionally not be worn by just anyone (Biedermann 1991: 154), the man shows with his necklace that he has a certain status and that he is to be taken seriously. Gold is regularly also held as a symbol for the sun and the light from the sky (Biedermann 1991: 153), which further links the man in the dark motel room to the sunny outside, where the criminals supposedly are.

Dwelling on the man’s attire a bit further we notice that he is wearing jeans and a Western-style shirt. Just as the shirt, jeans are typically attired to Western apparel worn by the cowboys in America (The New Encyclopaedia Britannica 1991: 521). From motion pictures and television we have learned about cowboys and the Wild West with its dangerous small towns filled with trigger-happy crooks7. By dressing the sweaty man in these clothes, referring us to the dangers of the West, Band-Aid shows us how its products should be perceived as cool and exciting. As we know, Band-Aids as such do not hold a particularly sexy image, being usually plastered over small self-inflicted wounds. In combination with symbols of the cowboy and the depicted police stakeout, however, they become enticing. By referring to the Wild West, the advertisement also links the Band-Aid brand to its American roots (Johnson & Johnson Corporate 2012), strengthening that American image on the Australian market. Just as in the United States the name “Band-Aid” is synonymous for adhesive bandages in Australia (Creswell 2009), showing what a strong foothold the brand has in both countries.

7 See, for instance, "High Noon" (Zinnemann 1952), "Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid" (Hill 1969), and "Once Upon a Time in the West" (Leone 1968).
An attempt to cut free from its family-centered image can be sensed by the association made to criminals in the Band-Aid advertisement. Criminals typically personify rebellion against authority (Biedermann 1991: 349) as well as our sinister unconscious (Chetwynd 1982: 109) – both concepts that do not go along well with the brand’s typical kid-friendly image. In culture and art crime is often represented by shadow, as the dark side of society (Chetwynd 1982: 108). The Band-Aid advertisement picture is drenched in shadow, referring us to this dark side. Also in old Western movies crime would take place in the dark (Chetwynd 1982: 70). The only natural light we see in the advertisement sneaks in from the covered window and underneath the doorframe. We also see artificial light shining from the table lamp. The sweaty man is being rigged up with a microphone to face the criminals outdoors in the light. Just as nudity, stepping from darkness into the light symbolizes a birth process of change (Chetwynd 1982: 242), and to feel light is to experience the final reality (Cooper 1986: 116). As light also represents consciousness (Chetwynd 1982: 242), we might infer that the man is about to experience something he has not experienced before. In the picture we see Band-Aids being taped onto the man’s chest, making Band-Aid a facilitator of this transformation. Lamps, the other source of light in the picture, symbolize intelligence (Cirlot 1971/1990: 176) and often take the role of placeholder for the sun (Cooper 1986: 111), which in turn is a manifestation of morality (Cirlot 1971/1990: 187). In the Band-Aid advertisement one might compare the lamp in the dark room to the policemen in the story, who work for morality in a world of crooks. They are, however, separated from these crooks – just as the room is separated from the outdoors with a curtain. Curtains generally represent separation, and parting a curtain – which is carefully done here by one of the police agents in the advertisement – represents uncovering a mystery. (Cirlot 1971/1990: 74) Arguably detective work done by the police is just that – uncovering secrets.

Here one might argue that the men we see in the picture might as well be the criminals themselves. Besides their clothing discussed before, what is it that makes them policemen? Numerous police shows, like the CSI, NCIS, Criminal Minds, NYPD Blue, 24 et cetera, have taught us that the objects we see in this advertisement are typical attributes of police officers: the take-away cartons, as the detectives do not have time to sit down for a proper meal; the recording device used to tape evidence against the criminals for court; the black bags possibly holding a ransom to save a poor hostage;

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8 A quick look at Band-Aid Brand Australia’s Facebook homepage shows that the brand today clearly is linked to families and children, showing kids in as good as every posted picture (Facebook 2013).
the mug shots, taken of the criminals after earlier offences and used here to identify them; and finally the tucked-away microphone, which helps these good guys record what the criminals are saying. Although the microphoned man in the advertisement presumably is a policeman, he might also be a civilian set up to deliver something to the crooks in exchange for a kidnapped daughter or something else. That would explain his extensive sweating and nervousness for the task ahead. It does not, however, explain his clothing, which does not remind of a person who has enough money to be targeted for ransom. As with the police attire the place of action in the Band-Aid advertisement is also familiar from many cop series. We recognize the room as a motel room by its bland interior design, its bed with an old-fashioned bedspread, and the fact that the front door leads directly outside, just as it would from a single-level motel room.

The semiotic representational meaning of the Band-Aid advertisement is clearly narrative. We are introduced to a situation that takes place and see people engage in different activities. (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006: 59) Action-carrying vectors in the picture are the arms of the brown-suited man taping Band-Aids onto the sweaty man’s chest and the gaze of the man by the window, looking outdoors. Even though we cannot see his eyes, we know by the position of the sweaty man’s head that he is looking down towards something, forming a vector with his gaze. The goals of both men’s gazes are outside the picture frame, making these actions non-transactive. Only the Band-Aid-taping man’s arms have a clear goal for their transactive action, letting us know that this is the main event in the advertisement. (Jewitt & Oyama 2001: 141–143) While the advertisement is clearly narrative it also holds a few conceptual patterns, as it by the use of different attributes (e.g. the police attire mentioned before) categorizes what we are looking at (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006: 59).

To its interactive metafunction the Band-Aid picture gives us many interesting points to notice. The picture is an offer picture, as it does not lend us the opportunity to form eye contact with the main character, i.e. the sweaty man, or anyone else in the picture (Jewitt & Oyama 2001: 145). We are invited to take in the situation without disturbing it. Fact is that we do not see the sweaty man’s eyes all together, due to how the picture frame is cut, which lets us know that his feelings and thoughts are not essential in the advertisement, but more so his bodily reaction to stress, which provide proof of the

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9 See, for instance, "NCIS: Stakeout" (Wharmby 2008), "24: Day 2: 12:00 A.M. – 1:00 A.M." (Cassar 2003), and "Numb3rs: Black Swan" (Behring 2008).

10 See, for instance, "CSI: Miami: The DeLuca Motel" (Lamar 2008) and "Criminal Minds: Paradise" (Gallagher 2008).
prominent features of the “sweatproof” Band-Aids. As the sweaty man and the arms of the brown-suited guy are shown in a medium shot, we are made to recognize ourselves with them on a personal level (Jewitt & Oyama 2001: 146), as if assumed that we have been in a situation where we have ourselves used Band-Aids despite copious amounts of sweat. Interesting here is that the viewer is placed at the eyelevel of the brown-suited man, who is taping the Band-Aids onto the other man. Either, one might argue here that Band-Aid has not entirely been able to shake off its family-oriented image with this advertisement (as this resembles how parents usually put Band-Aids on their children), or then it is the actual application of Band-Aids that the viewers (of any age) are supposed to identify themselves with. As we horizontally see the taping hands from the side, it is, however, more likely that we are not to link ourselves too closely to this person, but rather to the predicament of the sweaty man, who is all but facing us frontally.

The composition of the Band-Aid advertisement tells us some final semiotic aspects of it. Most salient in this picture is the sweaty man’s chest and the three Band-Aids placed on it. The man takes up a good part of the advertisement and is lit up by light from above although we cannot see any ceiling fixtures above him and he is supposed to be in a darkened room. The Band-Aid logo pops out too in the advertisement, but not as strongly, letting us know that we are supposed to look at the man first and only after that the logo. The logo is situated in the upper part of the advertisement, this providing us with the information that it represents what is ideal (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006: 186). The Band-Aid application takes place in the bottom part of the picture, where things that are reality-oriented are (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006: 187). This, in turn, lets us know that, while Band-Aid promises to be sweatproof, it in reality is sweatproof to the extent that you can use it despite extraordinary heavy sweating. As the logo also is placed to the left in the picture we are to infer that Band-Aids and the fact that they are sweatproof are familiar to us from before (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006: 181). The sweaty man is placed to the right, indicating that it is new information to us that the Band-Aids are, de facto, this good in practice (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006: 181). There are no direct frames in use in the Band-Aid advertisement, but the sweaty man’s lighter clothing and lit up appearance separates the right side of the advertisement from the left. To the left we have two police detectives, one by the recording device and the other by the window. Again what these two are doing is due to the composition perceived as something that is given and the man to the right as something new (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006: 181). It is no news to us that the scene we are seeing is a police stakeout
– we recognize the setting – but the fact that this man and his Band-Aids are heading out into the action is interesting and different. The man himself is also somewhat framed by the mirror to his right and the vertical light coming from the window, making him even more salient in the picture.

We can notice that the Band-Aid picture has high naturalistic rather than sensory modality due to its rather flat color scheme. The picture’s color saturation is somewhere in between black-and-white and full color, but it scores fairly high on color modulation – looking at the sweaty man’s shirt we see, for instance, several shades of light blue. The color differentiation in the picture is somewhat low – the picture has a warm tone, which gives it a rather undifferentiated color palette. Although the scene we see is dusky the picture plays with lighting, illuminating objects of interest and becoming due to that more naturalistic. The brightness of the picture is not particularly contrastive, but not entirely bland either. Separated from the rest of the advertisement is the Band-Aid logo and slogan, which with their bright and colorful execution rather give a sensory impression than a naturalistic. This difference points out to the viewer that the picture and the logo/slogan are not to be mixed up to a too large extent – Band-Aid has nothing to do with the criminal world, it is the same happy brand that everybody knows. Regarding the modality markers contextualization, representation, and depth the Band-Aid advertisement shows high values. The picture has an intricate background with plenty of details giving us much information about the scene. The separation between the sweaty man in the front and the scene going on in the background gives the picture a strong sense of three-dimensionality. The modality of the picture, i.e. its warmish but fairly detailed look, together with the iconographic details discussed before, gives us the feeling that what we are witnessing in the advertisement is an actual movie scene, as seen on TV or the big screen. It lets us know that the narrative we are seeing is fictitious and not real. With this Band-Aid disassociates itself from any possible criminal activity the picture might refer to, showing us that this is all make-believe, but it lets the viewer play with the thought of where Band-Aids might be applicable.

As opposed to the previous two advertisements the story in the Band-Aid picture will mainly unfold in the future – the man is about to enter the scene of action. Relating the scene in the picture to our previous knowledge about police series and movies we can make up a general storyline for what has happened before and what will happen next. All the props we see in the picture, the taped-on microphone, the recording device, the
mug shots, and the black bag, help us build a probable story in our heads. The picture confirms the thoughts of Karl Krober (2006: 14), who speaks of storytelling as an act of selection – what is shown in the picture is what creates the story for us. Arguably, however, telling a story with a picture is not just about sifting out relevant objects to show to the audience, but to pick out objects that help us conjure up a narrative. The difference between these two lies in taking a picture that only shows a scene as it plays out in the moment with the objects that happen to be there, and showing a scene with objects that give clues also to the past and the future of the story. This reasoning follows the thoughts of Williamson (1978: 152–153), who argues that story-pictures should show the past, the present, and the future by hinting to these tenses with different objects and motifs.

By fulfilling the demands of Williamson’s (2006: 152) definition of story-pictures, with its references to the present, the past, and the future, the Band-Aid picture also presents the parts a storyline needs to have according to Aristotle (in Skalin 2002: 184), i.e. a beginning, a middle, and an end. Yet, it does not meet the requirements for showing a pregnant moment, as defined by Lessing (1982/1766: 183) – the scene is not at the advent of the story climax, it precedes it. Would we see the sweaty man just about to step out into the action, meeting the criminals, that would be a pregnant moment – but naturally that would not do the job of marketing Band-Aids as aptly as this scene does where the man is being prepared for action with the help of Band-Aids. The Band-Aid advertisement almost fully fulfills McQuerrie’s (2008: 102) specifications of a frozen narrative, which should have the look of a movie still of a climax situation that entices the audience to contemplate on past and future events in the storyline, but here again the climax is missing. The Band-Aid advertisement certainly has the viewer pondering about the situation and the story shown in the picture, making them unknowingly also spend time on the Band-Aid brand. The viewer is induced to ponder on what consuming the product is like, just as Williamson (1978: 158, 161) proposes storytelling advertisements often do. The viewer is also enticed to further wonder about how the story will progress, which is one of the three things Baetens and Bleyen (2010: 169–170) find that photo narratives need to do. Their two other requirements for photo narratives are showing a motivated duration of events and doing this in only one picture frame. The Band-Aid picture surely at least implies a series of events that take place due to the criminals actions, but these are more in the minds of the viewer than in this specific still picture.
Fog, Budtz, and Yakaboylu (2003: 30) require stories to have four elements: a message, a conflict, characters, and a plot. Just as Sanoff (1985: 59) argues is the case of most advertisements, the commercial message of the Band-Aid advertisement is not the same as the message of the story in it. The message of the story might be something along the lines of “a parent’s love conquers all”, “good always wins over evil”, or “greed never pays off”, but the advertisement rather shows “Band-Aids stay on even though you sweat extensively”. Likewise the conflict in the picture largely lies in the trouble created by the fact that the man sweats so much that his hidden microphone threatens to expose him to the criminals. In comparison, the conflict of the story should rather be that a child is kidnapped for ransom or a certain object has to be delivered, or else something terrible will happen. Trying to find the characters of the Band-Aid story we recognize the sweaty man as the hero due to his salience in the picture. The goal is whatever he is trying to accomplish by going undercover—the picture does not tell us what this goal is, but the action in itself implies that there is some objective driving him. The opponents in the Band-Aid story are the criminals the sweaty man is trying to infiltrate. We do not know much about these criminals, except that they make him sweat, that they might have an interest for expensive objects (think of the man’s golden necklace), that they keep at a motel, and that they possibly look like someone in the mug shots on the bed. As the actual opponents are missing in the Band-Aid picture, the sweaty man in his attire personify them instead. The main helpers in the Band-Aid story are not the other detectives in the picture but the Band-Aids, while the giver, who ultimately saves the day by helping the hero attain his goal, is the man who thinks of taping the microphones onto the sweaty man’s skin with the use of Band-Aids. Finally, the receiver of the hero’s actions are also not the supposed kidnapped person who is being saved but actually the sweaty man himself. Clear here is that we can find all these characters in the story, but as with the message and the conflict they only stay at the level of the advertisement, they do not reveal a whole story. Nor can we recognize the whole plot by the advertisement picture, which is the final of Fog, Budtz, and Yakaboylu’s (2003: 30) four story elements. The plot shown in the Band-Aid advertisement only links to the advertisement, not the possible story that is refers to. We only know that a man is sweaty from having to soon meet criminals, but we do not know why and what will happen when he meets them.

Finally, it is interesting to look at the marketing implications of the Band-Aid advertisement. The family-oriented image of the brand is certainly out the window with this advertisement, letting us know that Band-Aid is aiming here for a different target.
audience than before. Herbert Eatton Todd (1973: 44) argues that good stories should not be simplified in order to meet the audience’ level of knowledge, and Rita Mårtenson (2009: 487) states that successful advertisements are those that engage the consumers in cognitive activity, letting them decipher the marketing message themselves. Hence, the audience targeted with the Band-Aid advertisement are people who are familiar with police television series and movies and knowledgeable enough to understand why a microphone is being taped onto a sweaty man. To be able to read the iconographic implications of the different objects shown in the picture and to understand what is happening in the situation the viewer must have previous experience with it – or in the words of Schramm (1955: 6), the receiver (the viewer) needs to share the field of experience with the sender (Band-Aid) of the signal (the advertisement) for the preferred code (“sweatproof”) of the picture to get through (Hall 2005: 114). In this case, this largely excludes small children, who are targeted in other Band-Aid marketing, but encompasses a broad adult audience. Television ratings show that police dramas like the NCIS are among the most viewed shows on air (The Nielsen Company 2013), having a target audience of 18 to above 50-year-olds (Carter 2012). Likewise the Band-Aid advertisement hits a broad demographic market, which only seems to be separated from other market groups by its appreciation of action and suspense. Many people in this market might create a self-brand connection to the situation in the picture, which means that they enter into the story shown by imagining themselves in that situation, thus creating meaning from it for themselves (Escalas 2004a: 171). For them old and boring Band-Aids become a thrilling resolution to a sticky but exciting situation. These people can be both men and women alike, and those who do not identify themselves with the bare-chested man in the picture, might just find him attractive and have an interest for the advertisement through that.

Having defined the target audience for the Band-Aid advertisement to be a broad adult one, it is interesting to look at what the purpose of this advertisement is. Using the MECCAS model (Peter & Olson 2008: 436–437) we easily recognize “sweatproof” to be the key consumer benefit communicated in the advertisement, and consequently “adhesiveness” to be the central message element, or product attribute. The value, or the driving force, this creates for the consumer is not having to worry if a Band-Aid stays on or not and thereby exposing oneself to danger. The everyday danger one might be exposed to is getting an infection in an open cut or wound, whereas the danger of being exposed shown in the advertisement is falling at the mercy of evil criminals. This is the leverage point of this advertisement, i.e. this is how the message elements and
consumer benefits of Band-Aid are being linked to the driving force of the consumers – by showing the scene of a man rescued from criminals by Band-Aids. The final fifth element of the MECCAS model is the executional framework (Peter & Olson 2008: 436). The executional framework used in the Band-Aid advertisement is dramatization (Clow & Baack 2010: 209) done in the style of a police show, and it follows an emotional message theme that targets the right side of our brains (Clow & Baack 2010: 161). The advertising appeal (Clow & Baack 2010: 178) chosen is that of fear, the fear of being exposed, which is something that creates suspense and by extension engagement in the viewer (Alwitt 2002: 47).

So what is the purpose of this Band-Aid advertisement? Thus far, we have recognized its broad target group, the marketed product value, and its style of execution. A possible raison d’être for the advertisement can further be pinpointed by using the hierarchy of effects model that maps out six steps a consumer takes before product purchase (Clow & Baack 2010: 173). As the advertisement clearly showcases a consumer benefit (“sweatproof”), it places on the second step in the model: sharing knowledge about the product. Due to its enticing storyline it also borders with making the consumer like the product – the consumer should think that Band-Aids are as cool as the story shown. In the AIDA model (Pieter & Wedel 2008: 52) the Band-Aid advertisement also dabbles in two stages: it both captures the attention of the viewer and generates interest for this particular story/consumer benefit.

The effectiveness of the Band-Aid advertisement relies on many factors. The advertisement takes a very central route to persuasion, requiring the viewers to actively engage themselves in the advertisement to understand its message (Petty & Cacioppo 1983: 21). The picture of the bear-chested man easily attracts the attention of the viewer, and the unorthodox use of Band-Aids hopefully keeps it, but to understand what the advertisement is trying to mediate one needs to actively look at both the picture and read the anchorage-type advertisement copy. Active processing like this is what changes consumer’s attitudes (Petty & Cacioppo 1983: 21). Together the picture and this picture-caption copy effectively communicate the marketing message of Band-Aid – the text repeats what is shown in the picture, without making it too obvious (Mårtenson 2009: 487), and does this with a fairly concrete word, “sweatproof” (Percy & Rossiter 1983: 179). According to Paivio’s (1991: 97) dual-code theory, sharing information both visually and verbally in this way helps us remember it. To accomplish the same with only text or only with a picture would require much more cognitive
processing from the viewer. What also enhances our memories of this advertisement is its use of a rhetorical figure, which has the ability to intensify cognitive elaboration (Phillips & McQuerrie 2004: 128–129). In the picture we see regular adhesive tape being substituted by Band-Aids. This rhetorical figure is created by combining the rhetorical factors replacement and similarity (Phillips & McQuerrie 2004: 116) – the Band-Aids resemble adhesive tape and have replaced these because of their extraordinary sweatproof qualities. By the terminology of Caudle (1989: 163) this creates the cognitive mechanism of association through similarity, which further makes this advertisement effective.

5.1.4. **The story shown in all tenses – Young Director Award**

“Three, two…” One more second and all pool hell would break loose. Willy saw his plan fall into place and the plot unfold. Quietly to himself he whispered: “Action!”

Figure 12 Advertisement for the Young Director Award by Shots Magazine and CFP-E, the European federation for commercial film producers: *Born to create drama; Pool.*

(TBWA\PHS Helsinki 2010)
The Young Director Award (YDA) by Shots Magazine and CFP-E, the European federation for commercial film producers, has supported up-and-coming international film producers since 1998 (Young Director Award 2013). In YDA’s campaign “Born to create drama” the Finnish marketing agency TBWA\PHS Helsinki exhibits excellent visual storytelling by making suspense-evoking press advertisements and video commercials, where children, i.e. future directors, create dramatic situations in different ways (This is not advertising 2012). The YDA advertisement “Pool” (TBWA\PHS Helsinki 2010; please see figure 12 above) shows a scene by a public swimming pool where a young boy is watching a man open a door labeled “men”. Behind his back the boy holds the letters W and O, creating a situation where the poor man is unknowingly entering the women’s locker room.

In the YDA advertisement the boy stands to the left in the picture frame, his shape cut from above his ankles. We see him from behind. He is wearing a pair of black swimming trunks and his hair is wet, dripping over his shoulders. To his right is the short side of the pool with a pool edge that is fairly broad and goes up to the boy’s knees. The pool’s clear water is split into lanes by divider ropes. In the corner of the pool, by its long side, is a ladder. On that side of the pool, behind the ladder, is a locker room door and a man who is about to enter it. The man is also wearing black swimming trunks and seems to have wet hair. By his blurry contours we can tell that he is moving in the direction of the door. The walls of the pool hall are white, just as are the floor tiles and the pool itself. The ceiling is wooden and has a rectangular ceiling fixture. The YDA picture is duotone with a cold blue-grey tint. In the right bottom corner of the advertisement is a colorful YDA logo, which says “Young Director Award – By CFP-E / Shots”. This text is yellow on a pink and turquoise background that looks like two strokes of hand paint. Thigh-high on the right side of the boy is the text “Born to create drama” in turquoise.

The iconography of the YDA advertisement shows a clear theme: that of the dichotomy between the masculine and the feminine realms and our conscious and subconscious minds. In patriarchal cultures masculinity represents consciousness, whereas femininity symbolizes the unconscious (Cirlot 1971/1990: 290). As a prominent feature in the YDA advertisement water represents the subconscious and female. Water is non-formal, intuitive, dynamic, mysterious, and motivating. (Cirlot 1971/1990: 364) It shows a congress of potential (Cirlot 1971/1990: 364), as it is the source of life and a symbol of birth, conception (Cooper 1986: 220), and transition (Cirlot 1971/1990: 365).
While water represents the source of life it is also the grave of all and connotes forgetfulness (Cooper 1986: 89), death, annihilation (Cirlot 1971/1990: 364) and the hereafter (Biedermann 1991: 452). Diving into water represents searching for the secret of life (Cooper 1986: 220), while emerging from water symbolizes rebirth (Cirlot 1971/1990: 365). Finally, water also represents the layers of our personalities (Biedermann 1991: 451). In the YDA advertisement both the man and the boy have gotten out of the pool water, this possibly referring to a change that has happened or is about to happen. The water in the picture represents the presence of femininity and the unconscious, and as the man is stepping into the womens’ locker room, it raises the question: what will happen when the man enters a female realm?

The child of the advertisement personifies both innocence (Cooper 1986: 15) and playfulness (Chetwynd 1982: 77), making the event by the pool likewise. As the pool scene is presented from a child’s perspective it has a funny undertone to it rather than a sexual one, which it might have had had the letter thief been an adult. Perhaps the boy thinks that the man might get ‘girl cooties’, i.e. be contaminated with characteristics of the opposite sex, if he steps into the wrong locker room. Children often portray parts of our childhood that we carry with us to our adult lives (Chetwynd 1982: 76). Maybe we as adults are also afraid of catching each other’s cooties? Women are supposed to be feminine, and traditionally men are definitely not, which makes it so dangerous for a man to walk into a women’s locker room. Being of one sex you do not know too well what being of the other contains – an ignorance, which in the picture is represented by, for instance, the symbolism of water (Cirlot 1971/1990: 364). The child can also personify future possibilities (Cooper 1986: 15) and the potential of transformation (Chetwynd 1982: 76). Contraposing a grownup and a child in a picture symbolizes moving through different periods of life (Chetwynd 1982: 56), and what we see in the picture – besides the dichotomy of the female (unconscious) / the masculine (conscious) – is again also the theme of change, which, in turn, is a key element of stories (Jensen 2002: 5).

The theme of change in the YDA advertisement is further taken on by the symbolism of the door in the picture. Doors symbolize transformation from one state to another; they symbolize hope and possibility as well as new life and inauguration (Cooper 1986: 39). Forbidden doors symbolize repressed states and unconscious content (Chetwynd 1982: 397) – just as the feminine symbol of water in this picture (Cirlot 1971/1990: 364). Entering a forbidden door might lead to new discoveries and future possibilities after
some initial catastrophes (Chetwynd 1982: 397) – ‘possibilities’ being a symbolism that is shared with the symbolism of the child in the picture. Thresholds of doors are borders between the inner and the outer, the conscious and the unconscious (Chetwynd 1982: 396), while they at the same time divide past and future (Chetwynd 1982: 397). The inner and outer are also symbols of the two sexes, the outer having manly connotations while the inner female (Chetwynd 1982: 33). According to Chetwynd (1982: ix) “part of the battle of the sexes is a result of the inner rift between feeling and thinking”. A man’s feminine side is in his unconscious self and a woman’s masculine side is in hers (Chetwynd 1982: 252), both fighting the conscious dominant side. What we see in this picture is therefore not only the split of the female and the male but also the split of our selves, with the female feeling part taking over as the man steps into the female realm of the locker room.

In the YDA advertisement we see two naked bodies whose connotations also are reciprocated in many other elements in the picture. Bodies are symbols of the unconscious (Chetwynd 1982: 53), making them also symbols of the feminine in contrast to the masculine mind (Chetwynd 1982: 54). Being naked symbolizes the natural and the innocent (Cooper 1986: 131), which rhymes well with the symbolism of the child in the picture (Cooper 1986: 15). Nudity also symbolizes birth, creation, and reincarnation (Cooper 1986: 131), which is mirrored in the symbolic meanings of water (Cirlot 1971/1990: 365), and underlines the advertisement copy “born to create drama”. Just as thresholds, also naked bodies represent timelessness (Cooper 1986: 131), making the event in the picture unbound to a specific moment and more conceptual to its nature.

The opposites of the YDA advertisement – the feminine/male and the unconscious/conscious – are strengthened by the symbolism of the sharp lines we see in the picture: the divider ropes in the pool, the pool edges, the straight lines between the floor tiles, a black line in the floor outside the locker room and the linear building structure of the room. Lines symbolize borders and division. They are associated with ropes that are symbolically restrictive and binding. Lines are also symbols of the paths we choose in life. (Cooper 1986: 115) In the picture the opposites are divided both physically and mentally: the women’s locker room is behind a closed door and we are given the impression that men should not go there, just as the masculine should not mix with the feminine realm. However, in the advertisement this border is about to be crossed – and is actually crossed as the man steps over the black line in the floor right
outside the locker room. This introduces a dramatic change to the status quo. The child in the picture symbolizes a coming future (Cooper 1986: 15), which is about take place when the borders of the feminine/masculine are being overstepped. Perhaps the predicted dissolution of the picture is that of more neutral gender roles? Or perhaps it promotes becoming better in touch with all sides of yourself (both the conscious and the unconscious) on a personal level? The state of events as we see it in the picture is, however, for the moment being still in limbo, and reflects on an earlier passive stance. This passiveness is represented in the picture by the water, the boy’s wet body and hair, as well as the man’s (Cirlot 1971/1990: 370).

The lighting in the YDA advertisement underlines the other iconographic implications of it. Light in itself symbolizes consciousness (Chetwynd 1982: 242), which we by now have learned to be a manly attribute (Biedermann 1991: 260). In the picture the light is present on the outside of the door, where the two males are, indicating once more that the women’s locker room is beyond the known. Light also connotes wisdom (Bruce-Mitford 1997: 25), truth, and enlightenment (Cooper 1986: 116), strengthening the interpretation that there is something to be discovered behind the closed door in the picture. Just as light, the source of it – the lamp – also symbolizes intelligence (Cirlot 1971/1990: 176), wisdom, and guidance (Cooper 1986: 110). Looking at the picture as a flat 2D rendition, we see that the lamp is placed above the boy’s head (although, in depth it is actually further away), casting a glow in his wet hair. This gives us the impression that the boy represents enlightenment on this side of the locker room door and that he is the one who guides the man to knowledge when causing the locker room mishap by removing the two crucial letters in “woman”. Interestingly, letters in themselves also connote ways of wisdom, while words are seen as intermediaries between the mind and material substance (Chetwynd 1982: 12), making the notion of the feminine and masculine realms concrete here in the words “woman” and “man”.

The colors of the YDA picture give further iconographic meaning to the advertisement while also introducing a certain atmosphere to it. The color white is dominant in the picture on the wall and floor tiles of the pool hall where the boy and the men are. White represents the unstirred (Biedermann 1991: 467), mirroring the fact that on this side of the door everything is still in a stable state of affairs. Paired with its counterpart black, white represents masculinity, which is superior to the feminine black (Cirlot 1971/1990: 60). Therefore, symbolic meanings linked to white, like purity, perfection (Bruce-Mitford 1997: 106), innocence, chastity (Cooper 1986: 59), and truth (Biedermann
are also linked to masculinity. Just as these values, white as a color is positive (Cirlot 1971/1990: 56), making masculinity the positive norm (just as it is in our traditional patriarchal society) and the feminine black negative. Although, the state of this side of the locker room is visually described as pure, innocent, and true, the men of the picture – who represent the epitome of the masculine in it – wear black swimming trunks, indicating opposite feminine values, which in the picture are to be discovered on the other side of the door. Besides evil and darkness, black symbolizes negative values as chaos, humiliation, and self-denial (Cooper 1986: 58–59), together with complete unconsciousness (Biedermann 1991: 399), occult wisdom, and the maternal (Cirlot 1971/1990: 57). As opposed to the light outside the door, these are all things that are to be discovered behind the (in-itself-also-darker) door to the female locker room. Just as in much else in the picture, the black and white in the YDA advertisement also mirrors the dichotomy of the conscious and unconscious (Cirlot 1971/1990: 60). The cold blue-grey tint of the picture makes the journey between these two eerie. Blue represents truth and revelation (Cooper 1986: 56), and darkness made visible (Cirlot 1971/1990: 54), further underlining the shift from the unconscious to the conscious.

Looking next at the semiotics of the YDA advertisement we see that the picture to its representational meaning is narrative with conceptual elements. The picture shows an unfolding situation, which gives it its narrative qualities (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006: 59). The vectors that construct the narrative representation are the extended arm and leg of the grownup man, and the gaze of the young boy. The fact that these vectors are transactive, i.e. that they emanate from an actor to a goal that is in the picture (Jewitt & Oyama 2001: 143), and that these transactions happen as a sequel, is what creates the storyline here. The man’s arm and leg are extended towards the door, which lets us understand that he is about to enter the room behind it. The boy, in turn, sees the man enter the room. All of the narrative is there. What makes the catch of the story here is, however, not the narrative qualities of the advertisement but the conceptual ones, i.e. the classification of the participants of the picture (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006: 59). It is the fact that it is a man, not a woman, who is about to enter a women’s locker room (disguised as a men’s locker room) that makes this story interesting. By themselves none of these two representational meanings (the meaning of the man and the meaning of the women’s locker room door) would make the advertisement interesting, but together with the narrative meanings they create a story. Just the fact that there is a man and a locker room in disguise does not make a story. Neither does the fact that a
man enters a room, nor that a child watches him do it. But put together we have an intriguing situation.

The second semiotic metafunction, interactive meaning, studies the relationship between the picture, the viewer, and the producer of the picture through the use of eye contact, distance, and point of view (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006: 42; Jewitt & Oyama 2001: 145). No picture participant in the YDA advertisement demands eye contact with us, hence the picture is an offer picture – it offers us free view into what is happening without demanding any particular reaction from us (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006: 118).

When it comes to distance we can notice that the relationship we have to the portrayed people in the picture is rather impersonal. The man is presented in a long shot, showing all of his body, whereas the boy is in a semi-medium shot, with the picture frame cut right under his knees and by his left elbow (Jewitt & Oyama 2001: 146). Neither of these people are close to us but we are to assume a distant social relationship to the boy, who is closer to us and tells the story of the picture. One could say that we are engaged in the boy’s point of view of the situation, although this is not quite true because quite literally we do not see the situation from his point of view. Vertically, the boy’s eye-level is lower than ours, indicating that we are senior to him in status and in age (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006: 140). Horizontally we are also placed behind the boy, connoting that we are detached from him (Jewitt & Oyama 2001: 135), although we at the same time see part of his face and are shown what it is that he is looking at. We are placed fully behind the man in the picture, which tells of a complete detachment from him. All of the uses of these interactive resources (eye-contact, distance, and point of view) remind us of cinematic storytelling, where the story is told by one character but where neither that character nor the rest of the story require direct involvement as they are fairly impersonal to us. This rhymes well with the theme of the advertisement: it tells of an award for young directors and shows therefore a young director in the making, someone who is “born to create drama”. As viewers we are senior to the boy, indicating that we perhaps ourselves have been budding directors but are now slightly older, although not as old as the grownup man, whose eye-level is still portrayed above ours.

The compositional meanings of the YDA advertisement underline the findings of the two previous semiotic metafunctions. Looking at the framing of the picture we see that the room portrayed in it is cut into two distinct halves by the architecture of the room. To the left we have the boy with the stolen letters behind his back, and to the right we
have the man, the disguised locker room and the pool. The informational values of this tell us that we are to recognize ourselves with the young boy, who is placed to the left and therefore acts as the ‘given’ in the picture (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006: 181). The unfamiliar right side of the picture is occupied by the man, who is the object of the boy’s gaze, and who also is the object of the storyline. Again it is pointed to us that we are not brought to sympathize with the man’s predicament, but with how ingeniously the boy has crafted the drama by removing two letters from the locker room door. Looking further at the framing of the picture we can distinguish an upper and a lower part of it, separated by the border of the floor and the wall. The upper part of the picture represents the ‘ideal’ (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006: 186). What we find here is the falsely accredited locker room door together with the man. They represent an idealistic illusion that reflects the unconsciousness so strongly hinted at in the iconography of the picture. In the lower part of the picture we have the boy and the letters that he holds behind his back. These are what is real. The reality is what the boy knows, that the door has a hidden identity, which attributes he has stolen. Reality is also the pool water in the bottom half of the picture, which we know to be a feminine element (Cirlot 1971/1990: 364), hence the truth is feminine – the door goes to the women’s locker room. The top half of the picture is lighter than the bottom, and light represents consciousness (Chetwynd 1982: 242), but in this picture we know that this consciousness is false. If we divide the upper half of the picture horizontally, we actually see that the light is lighter in the left side of it, above the boy’s head, showing that this is the known reality shown in the picture, while the reality of the darker right side of the picture, occupied by the man, is false.

Studying a final semiotic aspect of the picture, modality, we are able to sheds some more light on how the YDA advertisement has been made to seem like a story-like memory of a budding movie director. Making the YDA picture look realistic are its full contextualization and representation, as well as depth. The picture is set in a realistic-looking swimming hall, which is rendered with detail and in perspective. The picture is a photograph, but it is both unsaturated and undifferentiated in color, with its blue-white duotone. However, the blue and black colors used in the picture are fully modulated, i.e. the picture shows the full scale of shades of these two colors. Adding to the picture’s slightly unrealistic look is the use of stark contrast, bright lightning, and the lack of shades on the two persons in the picture. Due to the particular way these modality markers are set, the picture is closer to being naturalistic rather than abstract, but this is a naturalism taxed by the abovementioned shortcomings. The fact that the
picture is slightly non-real is emphasized by the neon turquoise, pink, and yellow logo and the copy added to it. In contrast to the picture both the look of these bright-colored advertisement features give us the impression that we are looking at something which is not quite as real and current as the reality we are in right now.

The YDA advertisement markets the act of creating drama, but does it in itself exemplify a good storytelling picture? Following Aristotle’s (Skalin 2002: 184) definition of a story, we can argue that the picture very well tells a story as it hints to a beginning, a middle, and an end of one. This pool story starts from when the boy sets the stage for drama and steals the two letters from the locker room door. The middle of the story is what we see in the picture when the poor man unknowingly falls into the boy’s trap and is about to enter the room. The end of the story is the embarrassing tumult that will ensue when the man or somebody else in the locker room discovers he has crossed a forbidden border. In contrast to the three other pictures analyzed in this thesis, the YDA advertisement is the first one where all these three tenses are clearly shown in one picture. Thereby the picture meets Williamson’s (1978: 152) criteria for story-pictures, as it creates a continuum of events by showing motifs that hint to both the past and the future, e.g. the letters in the boy’s hand and the movement of the man towards the door. The picture also fulfills Lessing’s (1982/1766: 181, 183) requirements of a pregnant moment, as well as McQuerrie’s (2008: 102) frozen narrative, as it renders the moment right before the man steps into the women’s locker room and all hell breaks lose. By these criteria the YDA advertisement is the most adequate storytelling picture of the four analyzed advertisements, as in the others the pregnant moment was either still to come in the story (Band-Aid), just bypassed (Ray-Ban), or well gone after the story events had unfolded (Stihl). Finally, confirming that the YDA advertisement in fact is a good storytelling picture is its compliance to Baetens and Bleyen’s (2010: 169) definition of photo narratives within a single picture frame: the YDA picture has a clear agency – it is the boy who sets the events in motion through his actions; these events unfold as a causal narrative that we can see within a single picture frame – we do not have to use our imaginations much to know what the boy has done or what will happen when the man enters the wrong locker room; and lastly, the story is such that it keeps us interested and engaged in what has happened and what will happen when the events finally unfold.

Looking further at the story of the YDA advertisement we notice that it also presents a clear plot, which is one of the four criteria Fog, Budtz, and Yakaboylu (2003: 30) have
set up for stories. The other three are the presence of a conflict, a message, and characters (Fog, Budtz & Yakaboylu 2003:30). The conflict of the YDA story is evident: it is the problem of mixing genders, physically, but mostly mentally. It is the schism between the male and the female. The message of the YDA story is not as clear as its conflict, however. Is the message that the two gender roles are not be mixed? Or quite the opposite: that they should? It helps us to look at the story characters (Fog, Budtz & Yakaboylu 2003: 37–42) to sift out the message of the YDA story. We clearly have a hero in the story, the boy, from whose perspective the story is being told (or actually the perspective of the grown-up boy/director). The boy’s goal is to create a dramatic scene where someone, a man, enters a locker room where he is denied access because of his sex. The boy’s opponent is anyone who might find out what he has done and tell on him, i.e. anyone who does not find his prank amusing or gender roles free to be played with. Helping the boy in this story is his ability to create drama, which is referred to also in the advertisement copy “born to create drama”. The giver of the story is the man, who finalizes the boy’s plot, and the receivers of the drama are all the bystanders who witness it – the audience of the director. Taking into regard these characters one might say that the goal of the boy and the advertisement is to mix up the gender roles, but even more so it is to create drama and discussion. This is also exactly what movie directors seek to do.

The marketing implications of the YDA advertisement show how the storytelling format lends itself to the advertisement’s purposes. Irrespective of the provocative purpose of the YDA pool story, the aim of the advertisement is to shed light on the Young Director Award. This is done by engaging the viewers through a story. The viewers are taken on an emotional jog (Jensen 1999: 183), where they are to feel the coming embarrassment of the poor man and the elation of the young boy when the plot falls into place. According to theory-of-mind the viewers will experience the events of the story themselves just by becoming aware of them (Mar 2011: 104). This might lead them to appreciating the work of directors and other storytellers. One might argue that storytelling is the perfect fit for advertising the Young Director Award, as the format is an exact copy of what the products of these young director’s are – stories. Who is then the target audience of the YDA advertisement? Is it the public in general or other directors? Hard to say. As seen in the semiotics of the picture we are visually brought to recognize ourselves with an older version of the boy, i.e. with the grown-up director. However, using Schramm’s (1955: 6) vocabulary, the field of experience needed by a receiver to decode the signal of the YDA advertisers is not director-specific. What the
receiver needs to infer from the picture to understand the story is the swimming hall setting and the implications of a man walking into a women’s locker room. It seems the target audience of the YDA advertisement is the general public – just like the wide audience of a new blockbuster movie. It seems also, however, that we are all made to recognize ourselves with the directors, just as we are to feel with the winners and losers when watching an award show.

According to Clow and Baack (2010: 144) an effective advertisement is one that is noticed, remembered, and that encourages to action. As we have seen the storytelling format both makes the advertisement noticeable and easy to remember, but if the target audience of the YDA advertisement is the general public, then what is it that this public is encouraged to do after having viewed this advertisement? Applying the means-end theory (Gutman 1982: 71) we notice that the advertisement does not, in fact, encourage us to any action, nor to attaining a desired end state. Being entertained by the story in the advertisement the receiver might be curious to learn more about the award, but for that we are not given any clues on how to proceed. The copy text does not hint to a channel and time to tune in for the award show, neither are we encouraged to visit a certain web page. Despite the success of this advertisement as a storytelling picture it does not in itself encourage any change in behavior in the viewer. This can also be seen when examining the advertisement with the AIDA model (Pieter & Wedel 2008: 52) or the hierarchy of effects model (Clow & Baack 2010: 173). The YDA advertisement takes us as far as grabbing our attention and making us interested, but there is nothing for us to desire or take actions on in the advertisement. Likewise, it might make us aware, know and like the advertisement itself, but there is nothing for us to prefer or be convinced about.

It seems storytelling cannot by itself make an advertisement efficient, but only help it on the way. In this case the YDA advertisement would need relay copy (Barthes 1964: 45) to complement the message of the picture. Following Paivio’s (1991: 8) dual-code theory we know that the visual message can be enhanced by a verbal message. “Born to create drama” certainly explains to us the story of the YDA picture, but it does not tell us what the advertisers wish us to do. For this we have seen that concrete words, e.g. “Thursday 9 PM on Channel 4”, are the most effective (Yuille & Paivio 1969: 471). In the form it is now, the picture-caption copy of the YDA advertisement expects a great deal from us. Perhaps here is a field of experience the general public does not share with the producers of the advertisement? Perhaps it is self-evident for directors and other
industry folk to know what the copy is about and where to find more information about the Young Director Award? “By CFP-E/Shots” might be both the so called proof-of-claim that guarantees the quality of the award (Clow & Baack 2010: 192), as well as the close that lets the target audience know where to look for more information (Clow & Baack 2010: 193). If only other directors in fact are the target group of this advertisement, it might very well do its job. This goes to show how important also good copy is to a storytelling advertisement. However, through its storytelling format, the picture involves the viewer in complex cognitive elaboration, which both gives pleasure and aids higher likeability and recollection of the advertisement (Phillips & McQuerrie 2004: 107, 129). The engaging story of the YDA advertisement accesses our peripheral route to persuasion, which has proven to be the most effective way to lower our guards to process information (Petty & Cacioppo 1983: 21). So despite the fact that the YDA advertisement partly is dependent on its copy, it would not be as effective without its storytelling right-brained, humor-based advertising appeal. This emotional appeal is what makes movies enticing and it is how the Young Director Award grabs its viewer’s attention.
6 DISCUSSION

When studying objects and subjects that surround us we discover the many layers and aspects they consist of. Storytelling, for instance, consists of both the narrative itself as well as the way it is told by the storyteller (Mossberg & Nissen Johansen 2006: 247). Likewise, an advertisement is formed by its content and its stylistic execution (Rossiter 2008: 140), while a picture is made up by motifs, which mediate both denotational and connotational meanings (Barthes 1964: 42). The study of picture-based storytelling advertising must therefore be done with methods that dig beneath the surface of the advertisements while also examining the surface itself. With the help of iconography and semiotics we can visually analyze an advertisement in fragments but also as a sum of its parts. Combined with theories of storytelling and marketing communication these two methods help us to conduct visual marketing analysis, and to understand the underlying messages and mechanisms of storytelling advertisements.

In this thesis four storytelling advertisements were analyzed with the means of iconography and semiotics, as well as with storytelling and marketing communication theory. The advertisements belong to power tool company Stihl, eyewear maker Ray-Ban, adhesive bandage company Band-Aid, and the Young Director Award (YDA) by Shots Magazine and CFP-E. These four advertisements were chosen from a sample of hundreds of advertisements generated when typing the word “story” into the search field of the Ads of the World (http://adsoftheworld.com) webpage. Each advertisement exemplifies a storytelling picture, in which a story is shown within a single picture frame. They differ from each other in that one picture shows the story after it has unfolded (Stihl), another while it is unfolding (Ray-Ban), a third before it will unfold (Band-Aid), and the last picture hints to all three tenses of a story at once (YDA).

6.1 Key findings of the iconographic reading

Looking first at the iconographic implications of the analyzed four advertisements we see that all perpetuate certain social constructs outside the realms of their commercial message, just as Sanoff (1985: 59) describes. In the Stihl advertisement we see a man who has neglected his garden to the degree that it has got him into some serious trouble. With several masculine connotations this power tool company’s advertisement is telling its (male) viewers to ‘man up’ and engage in some (manly) action. Here
coming to ones senses, becoming enlightened, and engaging in action are seen as masculine traits, emphasizing the patriarchal societal structure we live in by tradition.

The Ray-Ban advertisement, in turn, sets out to question the conservative society of the past by showing a scene of supposedly provocative nature. Here we see a young couple dancing frivolously in the midst of older more narrow-minded couples. In this advertisement Ray-Ban is visualizing times of change and presenting itself as the facilitator of that change. The advocated theme of this advertisement is values belonging to a liberal and modern mindset.

Also in the Band-Aid advertisement change and initiation is in the focus, as we see a young man about to step into the crossfire when being undercover in a police operation. In a classic story of good versus evil we are brought into preparation for battle. Prevalent in this Australian advertisement is the presence of cultural Americanization, which both the West and the East has experienced since World War II (Stephan 2006). With references to American popular culture and typical cop series we have all come to know, Band-Aid underlines a dangerously cool American image that goes against its traditional kid-friendly (but also American) character.

Finally, also the YDA advertisement questions societal structures, just as the Ray-Ban advertisement, but does it in a more current context. With iconography that underlines the dichotomy between the masculine and the feminine, as well as the corresponding conscious and unconscious sides of our minds, the YDA advertisement puts our gender roles into light and shakes up the notions of what is male and what is female. Here we see a man stepping into a women’s locker room by the design of a young boy who has managed to disguise the door leading there. Without taking a stance for either a traditional or a more liberal gender role view, this advertisement seeks to create discussion, just as directors do when making movies (young directors being the motif of this picture).

### 6.2. Key findings of the semiotic reading

Next, let us look at what we have learned semiotically from these advertisements. Being storytelling advertisements all four of them are narrative to their representational meanings. The most evident vectors can be found in the Ray-Ban advertisement where the situation is clearly happening in the moment. The other three advertisements have less clear vectors and instead incorporate conceptual elements, which interestingly hold
an integral part in telling the stories in them. In the case of the YDA advertisement the conceptual representation focuses on the classification of man versus woman, while the Band-Aid advertisement focuses on the characteristics of good cops versus evil criminals. The Stihl advertisement focuses on so-called manly features, which seemingly need to be incorporated for a successful outcome in handling power tools. These classifications are presented as the conflicts that make the shown stories interesting for the viewer.

Also to its interactive meaning the Ray-Ban advertisement differs from the other three, as it is a demand picture in which we are challenged by the gaze of the portrayed girl. In the rest of the advertisements we are offered an undisturbed view into the stories that unfold. Dictating our relationship to the narrative scenes in the advertisements, our eye levels in these four advertisements are all at the height of where the action is in them. In the Stihl advertisements we are directly looking at the barbeque (and the man’s crotch), which is also were the hedge trimmer should be according to the advertisement. In the Ray-Ban picture we are at the level of the surrounding folks scornful eyes. In the Band-Aid advertisement we see the last adhesive bandage being placed on the man’s stomach, while in the YDA advertisement our eyes are led to the poor man’s hand opening the door to the women’s locker room.

Looking next at the composition of the four storytelling advertisements we notice that all of them but the Band-Aid advertisement show the main character, the hero of the story, to the left in the picture frame. The main characters are who drive the action or whom the story happens to. In the three ‘left-heroed’ advertisements we are supposed to recognize ourselves with the given mentalities of the hero (we are lazy like the barbequing man, liberal like the dancing couple, or hungry for drama as the young boy), while in the Band-Aid advertisement the logo is placed to the left as the ‘known’. In the other three advertisements the logos are rendered to the right as new answers to old problems, while in the Band-Aid advertisement the use of adhesive bandages as aids for undercover police work is novel, and therefore placed to the right as new information to us.

Modality-wise all four advertisements mark themselves as storytelling pictures. They seek naturalistic modality, but in all of them this naturalism is taxed. In the Stihl advertisement the picture seems very real to us – in fact, its qualities are so tangible that it is borderline sensory in its modality. What ultimately lets us know that it is a storytelling picture, however, is the unrealistic motif of it: a man and his barbeque
suddenly being jammed between the man’s house and his garden. The Ray-Ban advertisement is naturalistic in everything else but color saturation. Its sepia finish is supposed to have us think that it is from another century, but the colorful logo on top of it lets us know we are to look at the picture with modern eyes. The Band-Aid advertisement, in turn, is somewhat unnaturalistic due to its warm-toned color differentiation, slight unsaturation, and sharpish contrasts. The chosen degree of modulation nicely underlines the movie-like character of the story in the picture. Finally, also the YDA advertisement is naturalistic with its well-rendered context and sense of depth. This advertisement gets its storytelling quality from its blue-white duotone, which gives it memory-like features. Just as in the Ray-Ban advertisement, as well as in the Band-Aid advertisement, the YDA logo starkly contrasts with the rest of the picture.

6.3. Storytelling pictures as storytelling advertisements

Let us next look at the four advertisements from a storytelling perspective. For the analysis in this thesis, storytelling advertisements were categorized into groups based on whether they present their story as happening in the past, the present, or the future, i.e. whether they show a picture scene from the end, the middle, or the beginning of a story. To these categories another group was added, where the picture hints to all of these tenses or parts of the story. In the Stihl advertisement we witness the ending of a story. From the picture we can read that a man has been assaulted by his garden and ends up being pressed up against his house by it. Hence we know the end and the middle of this story. We can also deduce a context for this picture through visual analysis, but we cannot know what events have triggered the rest of the story, i.e. we cannot for sure know the beginning of the story. As an opposite of the Stihl advertisement, the Band-Aid advertisement shows the beginning of a story. We see a man being prepared to act as an undercover agent in a police operation. This we can assume from the iconography of the picture. We can also infer that he will meet up with some criminals and that they will engage in communication, but we do not know how the story will unfold, i.e. we do not know the end of the story. The Ray-Ban advertisement, in turn, shows a scene at the height of action where are young couple is dancing in the midst of scornful conservatives. Supposedly this is the middle of a story. Studying it closer, however, we learn that there is no story in this picture. The Ray-Ban advertisement does not hint to a beginning or an end of a story, it only shows a secluded scene. The YDA advertisement, on the other hand, both hints to a beginning
and an end, while the events unfold. From the picture we learn that a boy has set the stage for drama by removing two letters from a locker room door and we know that it will result in a tumult when the man in the picture steps through the door. Though initially presented in this thesis as belonging to a fourth all-tenses storytelling group, the YDA advertisement is in fact an example of an advertisement where a story happens in the present tense, i.e. it shows the middle of a story. Hence, there is no fourth storytelling picture advertisement group – advertisements that do not belong to these three groups are not storytelling advertisements. The Ray-Ban advertisement is not a storytelling advertisement. What differs the Ray-Ban and the YDA advertisements from each other is the fact that the Ray-Ban picture does not hint to more tenses or phases of a story than one.

It seems pictures can only hint to one tense in each direction of the storyline, i.e. one tense into the future and/or one tense into the past. Figure 13 explains this visually.

**Figure 13** A visual representation of the ability of storytelling images to hint one tense into the future and/or the past.

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beginning (Band-Aid) \rightarrow middle
beginning \leftarrow middle (YDA) \rightarrow end
middle \leftarrow end (Stihl)
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The Stihl advertisement shows the end of a story and can therefore also tell the middle part of it. The Band-Aid advertisement shows the beginning of a story and can likewise also tell the middle, while the YDA advertisement shows the middle of a story, and can therefore tell both the beginning and the end of it. As it is not a storytelling picture the Ray-Ban advertisement only shows what is happening in the moment without any hints to earlier or later events of a story. According to Williamson (1978: 152) story-pictures show both the past and the future events of a story in a single picture frame. Out of these four advertisements the YDA is the only one that fully does that. The YDA advertisement is also the only advertisement, which shows a pregnant moment, as defined by Lessing (1982/1766: 183), and is a frozen narrative, according to McQuerrie (2008: 102). In the YDA picture the story is stopped right before climax. Would the man in the Band-Aid advertisement be shown just as he is about to step through the motel room door, that advertisement would also fill the criteria for having a pregnant moment and being a frozen narrative. Furthermore, as the Band-Aid advertisement does not fully hint to both the future and the past, we have no way of knowing what will happen when the man steps outside the door. If we, for instance, somehow knew that
he will be shot when stepping outside, or that he will get his little girl back, that would change the situation. That would also shift the Band-Aid picture into a present tense storytelling image. To show a pregnant moment, it seems, the story in the picture needs to be shown in the present tense.

According to the above standards only the YDA advertisement qualifies as a storytelling picture, but do these criteria also have to be followed in storytelling advertisements? We can clearly sense intriguing stories, although only parts of them, in both the Stihl and the Band-Aid advertisements, and is not that the purpose of advertisements? To intrigue and to engage? According to Mårtenson (2009: 487) the most well-received advertisements are the ones that let us decipher their messages on our own. In storytelling advertisements where only a part of the story is disclosed the consumer needs to employ their cognitive abilities to fill in the rest of the story. Baetens and Bleyen (2010: 169) require photo narratives to show a chronologically structured duration of events with some reason to unfold. Arguably this is also done when the whole story is not shown in a picture, i.e. when either the beginning or the end of the story is missing. More important to Baetens and Bleyen (2010: 169–170) is that none of the story in a picture is imagined outside the picture frame and that the storytelling picture evokes curiosity in the viewer. In advertising curiosity and interest are key, which makes Baetens and Bleyen's (2010: 169–170) definition of photo narratives highly relevant also for storytelling advertisements.

Stepping outside the predefined requirements for storytelling pictures it is interesting to see what iconography and semiotics give us in terms of defining storytelling pictures in an advertising context. Looking at the analyzed advertisements it seems all four of them can offer elements for iconographic reading. The elements shown in the three storytelling advertisements (Stihl, Band-Aid, and YDA) show visual cues that hint to either the past or the future of the unfolding events, while the Ray-Ban advertisement only lets us read its iconographic meanings in the moment shown. As defined by Kroeber (2006: 14), it seems selection of the right objects is important in order to show a story in several tenses. Therefore a storytelling picture arguably has to be created by design, it rarely comes about by chance. In other words, taking a picture of just any unfolding event does not create a storytelling picture as it might lack the right symbols of the past and/or the future to show an actual story.

Continuing onto the semiotic reading of storytelling advertisements we find more ways to define storytelling pictures and advertisements. First off we see that categorizing
pictures by their representational qualities is not adequate for classifying them as either storytelling or non-storytelling pictures. Although semiotically pictures are either narrative or conceptual, a narrative structure does not guarantee a storytelling picture. Narratives can be recognized by their use of vectors (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006: 59). Out of the four analyzed advertisements the Ray-Ban advertisement has the clearest vectors with its bodies in movement and directed gazes. As we have seen, ongoing action does not, nevertheless, automatically translate into storytelling. In fact, it is the conceptual qualities that create the conflict in the stories in the other three advertisements (e.g. the problem of the man stepping into the women’s locker room in the YDA advertisement).

All advertisements show their main characters in either medium or long shot, which lets us know that we are to assume a non-intimate relationship with them – a relationship where we can regard their lives without taking too much personal interest in what goes on in their heads but rather in what happens to them in the story. Of the four analyzed advertisements all but the Ray-Ban advertisement are offer pictures, where we can have an undisturbed look at the unfolding events without challenging gazes from any of the picture participants (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006: 118-119). Again, as we now know that the Ray-Ban advertisement is not a storytelling one, also this interactive meaning proves itself useful in defining storytelling pictures. In offer pictures we are offered insight into other worlds, where, in the case of storytelling pictures, some particular events unfold. Would the events unfold, however, while a picture participant engages us in eye contact, i.e. if, for instance, the bare-chested man in the Band-Aid commercial would look at us while being taped with adhesive bandage, our focus would shift from the story to the participant’s interaction with us. It would freeze the story, as we would ponder on what the man is thinking, why he is looking at us, and what he is trying to tell us. The same goes for the YDA advertisement, but perhaps not for Stihl, where the events have already unfolded. It would seem offer pictures are best for showing ongoing stories.

Continuing to look at the interactive meaning of these more-or-less storytelling pictures, we see that the eye level of the viewer not only is set at the height of action but also at the main spot of the story in the picture. In the Stihl advertisement the eye level is at the barbequing man’s midsection and his barbequing equipment – this story is about the barbequing man who was not ‘man enough’ to buy a power tool and fix his garden. In the Ray-Ban advertisement we are at the eye level of the surrounding folks
observing the young dancing couple – the message here is about the clash between conservative and liberal values. Our eye level in the Band-Aid advertisement is at the height of the man’s bare chest, the taped-on microphone, and the adhesive bandages, which tells us that we are following somebody who is about to go undercover and is being aided by adhesive bandages. Finally, in the YDA advertisement our eyes level with the door handle, which the man is about to pull before entering the women’s locker room, and that is also the climax and the pregnant moment of that story.

Generally speaking, as we read from left to right, one would assume that the narrative in storytelling pictures would best be shown progressing from the left side of the picture frame to the right – just like Super Mario and other old video game heroes progress from left to right to reach their goals. Among the four analyzed advertisements only the YDA picture somewhat works in this way: we see the boy and his letters to the left and the man about to step through the door to the right. By now we know this advertisement is the most storytelling one out of these four, and it seems that none of the others work in this way. Instead the composition in the other three advertisements focuses more on solving a problem. In the Stihl advertisement the predicament of the barbequing man is the problem to the left and the Stihl logo to the right is the solution. In the Ray-Ban advertisement the attitude towards the liberal dancing couple is the problem to the left while again the Ray-Ban logo to the right is the answer. Deviating from the others, the Band-Aid advertisement places the logo of the company to the left along with the problem setting, which is the police stakeout. To the right is the solution to the stakeout and a new use for Band-Aids: the man going undercover with a microphone taped on by adhesive bandages.

It is interesting, but perhaps not surprising, to notice that all four advertisements use a slightly taxed naturalistic modality. None of them are fully naturalistic; they use different ways of marking themselves as pictures from other worlds. In the YDA and Ray-Ban advertisements this is mainly done with the lack of color saturation, while the Band-Aid advertisement deviates from the naturalistic with its warm tone. The Stihl advertisement is technically the most naturalistic one out of these four but its subject matter lets us know it is not real. For complete immersion in extraordinary experiences, Lena Mossberg (2014) speaks of the importance of having a physical frame around the location of an experience. She calls this experience location an enclave11, which is

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11 The word “enclave” means a territory that lies within the borders of a country other than the one the territory belongs to (Nationalencyklopedin 2014b).
physically and/or mentally separated from the territory of our everyday lives (Mossberg 2014). The not-quite-realistic looks of the four advertisements work as similar frames between the story world in the advertisements and the world we are actually in. Because of the lack of color saturation or the warm tint of the picture, we know that we are looking at non-real scenes, stories. In storytelling pictures everything in the picture is within an enclave, whereas a colorful logo put on top (as, for instance, in the YDA advertisement) belongs to our everyday world. A differing logo and copy of a storytelling advertisement marks the advertisement picture as part of the shown story.

Finally, it is also interesting to look at the role of the marketed products in storytelling advertisements. Out of Fog, Budtz, and Yakaboylu’s (2003: 37) map of story characters the products of the analyzed advertisements most clearly fall into the role of the helper, who facilitates the undertakings of the hero in the story. In the Band-Aid advertisement the adhesive bandages help out the nervous sweaty man in his undercover task, and in the Ray-Ban advertisement the glasses on the young dancing couple are presented as part of what gives them the courage to break ruling norms. The Stihl advertisement, in turn, plays on what happens when a helping Stihl power tool is missing in the story. In the YDA advertisement marketing is not done for a product but for an event, and therefore there is no clear helper in this picture. Helping the hero boy in the story is his talent for creating drama. This talent, in turn, is awarded by the Young Director Award, which, however, does not help him in his quest. In storytelling advertisements for products it seems the helper of the story is the product, but when using storytelling advertising for events, and probably also for services, this role is not as discernable. Notable here is that the stories in these advertisements are, nevertheless, not about the products themselves but about the heroes, the personified consumers, who receive the help of the marketed products to reach their goals.

6.4. Marketing implications of storytelling advertisements

Finally, let us have a look at what implications storytelling has on marketing within the context of advertising. All of the examined advertisements have fairly broad target audiences. The Stihl advertisement showcases the most pinpointed one: explicitly male consumers. It has proven useful to examine these target audiences with the help of Schramm’s (1955: 6) mass communication model and its fields of experience. In order to understand a story in an advertisement the symbols of it need to be within a viewer’s field of experience. These symbols are partly in the copy texts of storytelling
advertisements but mainly in their visuals. Therefore visual analysis has been helpful in defining the target audiences of the storytelling advertisements in this thesis. As storytelling advertisements are well-equipped with visual cues, they allow for plenty of possibilities for decoding and identification. When viewers can identify themselves with the heroes of the stories, as well as with the storylines, they are also highly likely to be engaged by the advertisement and its message. According to Todd (1973: 45) it is important in storytelling to engage the audience, and naturally engagement is what marketers also seek with their advertisements.

With the hierarchy of effects model, as well as with the AIDA model, marketers can map the effects of their marketing activities (Clow & Baack 2010: 173; Pieter & Wedel 2008: 52). Using these two models we see that engagement is the foremost task of storytelling advertisements. None of the analyzed advertisements encourage to explicit action – the YDA least of all. Although the YDA is the best advertisement storytelling-wise it only creates awareness and grabs the viewer’s attention. The most action-oriented of the four advertisements is Stihl, which tries to convince the viewers not to wait too long in their power tool purchase. The Band-Aid advertisement educates its viewers and creates interest, while the Ray-Ban advertisement tries to affect the viewer’s preferences and invoke desire. It seems there is no coherence in in what stages in the hierarchy of effects model or AIDA model these storytelling advertisements place, but what they have in common is that they do not try to encourage to any particular action. The reason for this might be the same reason as for why their modalities are not quite naturalistic – in order to keep a boundary around the story worlds (i.e. the enclaves) in them, the advertisements cannot be too much infected with marketing messages. If the advertisements were more straightforward the stories in them would lose credibility.

According to the means-end theory advertisements need to include a message of with what means viewers can reach a certain desired end (Gutman 1982: 71). Arguably storytelling advertisements are particularly apt for this as they provide the viewers with a narrative account of how the hero in a story has found a way to reach a goal thanks to the consumer benefits of a product. This end goal does not necessarily need to be the same as the overarching goal of the story, it can also be a smaller one – as in the Band-Aid advertisement: the overall goal of the man in the Band-Aid story might be to regain his kidnapped daughter, but the driving force shown in the advertisement is to keep his microphone cord in place despite heavy sweating. This difference in objectives means
that when creating a storytelling advertisement for a product, the story in itself does not have to be about the product – the product only needs to fulfill a function within the story. The purpose of the story is to grab and keep the attention of the viewer and to showcase the product in a way that can be easily processed by the viewer.

As the stories in storytelling advertisement rarely are about the products they advertise for, and as the messages conveyed by the advertisements never truly are purely commercial, it is important for the advertisers to lead viewers to the desired interpretations of the storytelling advertisements. To help the receivers decode a message within the dominant code, i.e. in a preferred way (Hall 2005: 114), advertisement copy plays an important role. This can be seen in all of the analyzed storytelling advertisements. “Don’t wait too long”, “Never hide”, “Sweatproof”, and “Born to create drama” are all slogans that work as relay to the visuals of the advertisements, i.e. they complement the messages of the images and give the interpretations the right tone (Barthes 1964: 45). Therefore, although the visuals set the stage for these storytelling advertisements, it is the copy that makes them commercial. This is also something that separates storytelling advertisements from storytelling pictures: an advertisement’s commercial message lies in the copy text, whereas the message of the picture in itself rarely is commercial. Hence, to make a storytelling picture into a storytelling advertisement we need copy text to steer its decoding. It seems copy text often also serves to provide the missing third tense of a story shown from the end or the beginning, just as in the Stihl advertisement where the slogan “Don’t wait too long” tells us that the events have unfold as they have because the man in the picture procrastinated his power tool purchase for too long.
7 SUMMARY

Stories are all around us. We read them in the books, see them on television, and hear them from our friends and colleagues. Stories are the way we process information into intelligible entities. Stories are how we systemize our life events into comprehensible accounts. (Fisher 1987: xiii) To become part of our life stories marketers create stories of their own (Escalas 2004a: 171). By engaging consumers and giving them something to identify themselves with, these market-oriented stories are a way of helping consumers internalize commercial messages in the marketplace (Mårtenson 2009: 126). Market-oriented stories are told to us as verbal accounts, in television commercials, or physically when we visit a company. These stories can also, however, be told visually in print advertisements.

This thesis focuses on the visual storytelling capabilities of print advertisements. With the means of iconography and semiotics, as well as with storytelling and marketing communication theory, storytelling advertisements have here been analyzed for their visual qualities. Earlier research (Lessing 1982/1766: 181; Williamson 1978: 152; and to some extent also McQuerrie 2008: 102; Baetens & Bleyen 2010: 165) has concluded that pictures ought to show all tenses of a story within a single picture frame to qualify as storytelling pictures. Questioning this stance in the context of storytelling advertising three narrative advertisements that show only one part of a story (the beginning, the middle, or the end) were chosen for the empirical analysis of this thesis. A fourth advertisement, which hints to all tenses of a story, and thereby follows the earlier definitions (Lessing 1982/1766: 181; Williamson 1978: 152; as well as McQuerrie 2008: 102; Baetens & Bleyen 2010: 165) set, was added to the analysis. The companies behind these advertisements are power tool manufacturer Stihl (whose advertisement shows the end of a story), eyewear maker Ray-Ban (shows the middle of a story), adhesive bandage producer Band-Aid (shows the beginning of a story), and the Young Director Award by Shots Magazine and CFP-E, the European federation for commercial film producers (hints to all tenses of a story). The four advertisements were explicitly chosen to fit into the four above categories of storytelling pictures. They were selected from a sample of hundreds of advertisements generated when typing the word "story" into the search field of the Ads of the World web portal (http://adsoftheworld.com).

The key question for the empirical analysis in this thesis was threefold: what messages do we come across in storytelling advertisements; can a so-called visual story grammar
be identified for storytelling pictures outside the existing definitions; and, if so, can storytelling advertisements be differentiated from storytelling pictures? The analysis of the four advertisements shows, that even though storytelling pictures by definition should hint to three tenses (the past, the present, and the future) at once, storytelling advertisements are perfectly adequate when only showing one part of a story. These advertisements are fully capable of catching and keeping the attention of the viewer, while delivering meaningful cues for visual decoding. It seems storytelling pictures and advertisements can only hint to one tense in each direction of the story continuum, e.g. from the beginning of a story to the middle but no further into the future. The analysis shows that the YDA advertisement (which belongs to the all-tenses group) hints to both the future and the past while the Ray-Ban advertisement hints to no other tense than its own present tense. Advertisements that do not hint to other tenses than their own, like Ray-Ban, are not storytelling pictures, nor storytelling advertisements. The Stihl advertisement shows the end of a story, but also hints to the middle of it, while the Band-Aid advertisement presents the beginning and likewise hints to the middle. This leaves us with only three groups of storytelling advertisements: advertisements that show the beginning, the middle, or the end of a story, while hinting one tense into each direction of the storyline. Even though an advertisement that hints to no other tense than its own might be highly narrative when we look at its representational qualities with the means of semiotics, this narrativity is not enough to qualify the advertisement as a storytelling advertisement. The analysis in this thesis shows that conceptual characteristics are as important as narrative qualities in visually creating storytelling pictures.

The iconographic and semiotic readings of the analyzed advertisements present means of defining storytelling pictures and advertisements. Technically it seems storytelling pictures, as well as advertisements, are most often offer pictures, i.e. they give the viewer full insight into the story without interrupting them with eye contact with any of the picture participants (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006: 119). Even though eye contact is an effective means to engage a viewer into contemplation (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006: 118), eye contact in storytelling pictures and advertisements stops the ongoing story from proceeding. It seems stories in pictures are shown either in a sociable medium shot or as a more detached long shot. Naturally, to decode a story from a picture we need to see the surroundings and the context the hero of it is in. Furthermore, when regarding a storytelling picture we do not necessarily need to be at the eye level of the hero, but rather the focus in these pictures is at the height of the action in the story. In
storytelling advertisements the hero is also not automatically placed to the left, which often is common practice in narrative pictures (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006: 181). The horizontal composition is instead used for showing a solution to a problem, and therefore the problem is placed to the left in the advertisement and the marketed solution to the right. Finally, the visual analysis tells us that storytelling pictures and advertisements always present a somewhat taxed modality in order to keep the story confined to its enclave and to let the viewer know that what they are seeing is, in fact, a story.

Storytelling advertisements are well-equipped for visual decoding. This is thanks to the plentiful picture elements that produce the stories in them. These elements also give at hand other symbolic readings and means for consumer identification. It seems all the analyzed storytelling advertisements in this thesis incorporate messages that are not directly related to the intended commercial announcements made. These messages perpetuate certain social constructs in our societies (e.g. traditional gender roles), that, however, form the basis of the commercial messages of the advertisements, as consumers are supposed to identify themselves with these social constructs. In the same way as the message of a storytelling advertisement might be several-fold, so can also the story in the advertisement have another goal than the overall goal of the advertisement. The analysis in this thesis shows that the stories in storytelling advertisements do not need to be about the advertised product. Rather the product is the helper that solves a problem for the hero in the story. Also the copy texts of storytelling advertisements are decommercialized to the degree that they do not encourage to direct action. In the same manner as too naturalistic modality or challenging eye contact arguably breaks the story format of storytelling advertisements, so does very direct copy, which wears on the credibility of the story. The copy texts of storytelling advertisements sift through the several levels of messages in the storytelling pictures and present the commercial content. Good copy text in a storytelling advertisement can replace the missing third tense in the storytelling picture, so that we know what has happened in the beginning or in the end of the presented story.

To summarize, the visual marketing analysis in this thesis shows how storytelling pictures, as well as storytelling advertisements, can further be pinpointed from the existing definitions. Storytelling pictures are most often offer pictures of a somewhat taxed modality. These pictures show the hero either in a medium or long shot and the
eye level of the viewer is at the height of the action of the story. The semiotic definition of narrativity does not by default qualify a picture as a storytelling one – quite contrarily, conceptual characteristics are important for creating depth and conflict in storytelling pictures. The main difference between storytelling pictures and storytelling advertisements, it seems, is how much a picture needs to show of a story to fulfill its purpose. While the task of a storytelling picture is to recount as much of a story as possible, a storytelling advertisement can arguably do with less of the story, as its main purpose is to attract and engage consumers. Therefore, as defined earlier (e.g. Williamson 1978: 15), storytelling pictures ought to preferably hint to all three parts of a story (the beginning, the middle, and the end) at once, while it is enough if a storytelling advertisement only hints to two parts so that the storytelling format becomes evident. Hence, storytelling advertisements can be grouped into three categories – those that show the beginning (and hint to the middle), those that show the middle (and hint to the beginning and the end), and those that show the end (and hint to the middle). Only the second group of these storytelling advertisements qualifies as storytelling pictures. Furthermore, it seems storytelling advertisements can also be defined by the way their composition is based on solving a problem, rather than showing a previous tense of the story to the left and the future to the right. Finally, storytelling advertisements present messages at several levels. The analyzed advertisements perpetuate certain social constructs in our society, while also mediating a commercial message. The stories in these advertisements are not about the products in themselves, but rather the products are the helpers of the story. For the correct interpretation of storytelling advertisements copy text is used to fill in the blanks of the missing third tense and to sift out the commercial message. This is not done in a straight-sell manner by encouraging to any particular action, but rather as witty relay to the picture.

7.1. Research limitations and directions for future research

In this thesis the analysis, just as the iconographic and the semiotic methods, are based on the western pictorial tradition. Therefore, the results of the analysis are applicable only to marketing in the western world. It would be interesting to know what visual marketing analysis of storytelling advertising gives at hand in different cultures. Perhaps storytelling advertisements are only successful in some cultures, or perhaps specific types of stories or societal messages are more prominent in certain countries than others. For a broader view of the use of storytelling advertising research could be
done on the type of companies that use storytelling advertising. By studying complete advertising campaigns of storytelling advertisements one could study why certain companies choose to use storytelling in their marketing and in what ways different companies benefit from it. Perhaps also the channel a storytelling advertisement is placed in affects the story in it, just as probably the marketed product or service does.

Even though the qualitative visual analysis methods used in this thesis are not intended to give a statistical overview of pictures within the given categories, it might be beneficial to analyze a few more storytelling advertisements for assurance of saturated data. There is a possibility that another set of storytelling advertisements would have given a slightly different outcome than the analyses made on the chosen advertisements. It would also be interesting to see whether or not the results were different if somebody else conducted the exact same analyses. Although the visual analysis methods used in this thesis are based on standardized theories, the readings are always subject to the references made by the researcher. Iconography and semiotics are inexpensive and time-efficient ways of studying pictures, but when further researched, storytelling advertisements could also be evaluated with a test audience and with practical cases. As with all advertising, it would be extremely attractive to know what the monetary value of storytelling advertising is in comparison with other types of advertisements. And are some stories more lucrative than others?

Finally, one might argue that advertising has seen its golden age as marketing is moving onto digital channels and taking the form of peer-to-peer influencing. With this in mind it would be interesting to study the use of storytelling pictures in social media. Facebook, Instagram and Twitter are just a few of the channels, which are continuously filled with pictures that tell stories of people’s ordinary and extraordinary lives. What do these pictures tell about the consumers who took them and about the societies that we live in, and in which ways can marketers make the most of using them for commercial purposes?
SVENSK SAMMANFATTNING


För att konsumenter skall kunna tolka visuella marknadsföringsbudskap på önskat vis måste marknadsföraren utnyttja bilder på rätt sätt. Berättelser, som traditionellt förmedlats verbalt och skriftligt, erbjuder rikligt bildspråk och är därför intressanta att använda i modern visuell marknadsföring.

Syfte och problemformulering


Tidningsannonser, liksom annan visuell reklam, bygger på samma bildtradition som konsten och kan därför med fördel studeras med dessa visuella analysmetoder (Kuusamo 1996: 151).

Med hjälp av visuell marknadsföringsanalys, d.v.s. med hjälp av kombinationen av visuell analys och teorier om marknadskommunikation och storytelling, kan storytelling-reklamer studeras från ett visuellt perspektiv. Vad kan vi visuellt läsa av storytelling-reklamer? Denna avhandlingens syfte är att definiera vad storytelling-reklamer visuellt är och hur storytelling-reklamer möjligen skiljer sig från storytelling-bilder. Detta görs dels genom att utvidga nuvarande definitioner av storytelling-bilder och dels genom att ifrågasätta dessa i ett reklamsammanhang. Resultaten av den visuella marknadsföringsanalysen torde hjälpa marknadsförare att maximera sin användning av storytelling i tryckt reklam genom att ge en fingervisning om vad effektiv storytelling-reklam visuellt är.
Material och metoder


Den ikonografiska metoden


vetenskapsgren, en dygd eller en last. Suomineito, eller Finska mön, personifierar republiken Finland. En allegori är en bild eller en berättelse som genom underförstådda paralleller uttrycker ett högre budskap än det påtagliga. Fabler, myter och bibliska liknelser är typiska allegorier. (Berggren & Lindberg 2005: 1)

**Den semiotiska metoden**


**Tidigare forskning inom storytelling**


traditioner, frihet, omsorg, förändring och sökandet av svar på de viktiga frågorna i livet (Jensen 2002: 7–9).


Berättelser kan definieras på många olika sätt. Aristoteles beskrev i tiderna berättelser som en serie händelse med en början, en mitt och ett slut (Bennett & Royle 1999: 55). Simmons (2007: 19) i sin tur definierar berättelser på detta sätt:

[En berättelse] är en återskapad upplevelse som skildras i detalj och känsla så att den som lyssnar i sin fantasi kan uppleva den som verklig.

(Simmons 2007: 19; egen fri översättning från engelska.)

av en serie händelser som kronologiskt går från en början till en mitt och en klimax, som löses upp och leder till ett slut.


Tidigare forskning inom marknadskommunikation

Storytelling-reklam och reklam i allmänhet är en form av marknadskommunikation. Genom marknadskommunikation strävar företag efter att placera sig och sina produkter i sina målgruppens medvetande. (Fill 1995: 15–16) Genom att kombinera olika definitioner (American Marketing Association 1948; Merriam Webster 2013; American Marketing Association 2014; se dessa i kapitel 4 i avhandlingen) på reklam, får en definition som lämpar sig för modern reklam, däribland storytelling-reklam:

Reklam är tekniker och metoder som placerar icke-personliga meddelanden och övertygande budskap i tid och rum. Dessa är köpta av en identifierad sponsor för att röja uppmärksamhet för produkter, tjänster eller tankesätt på en viss målmarknad.


Reklambilder kan klassificeras på många olika sätt. McQuerrie (2008: 99) har grupperat dem i bilder som vi tittar på och bilder som vi tittar igenom. Den första gruppen syftar på bilder vars innebörd sammanfaller med deras motiv, medan motiven i den senare gruppens bilder innehar mening i sig själva utöver det uppenbara


Den empiriska undersökningen

Tidigare forskning (Lessing 1982/1766: 181; Williamson 1978: 152; och till viss del även McQuerrie 2008: 102; Baetens & Bleyen 2010: 165) har definierat storytelling-bilder som bilder som visar både början, mitten och slutet av en berättelse i en och samma bildruta. I denna avhandling ifrågasätts denna definition på storytelling-bilder i en

Resultatredovisning

Syftet med denna avhandling var att definiera vad storytelling-reklamer visuellt är och hur de möjligtvis skiljer sig från storytelling-bilder i allmänhet. Den empiriska analysen visar att även om storytelling-bilder per definition borde hänvisa till både dätid, nutid och framtid, så räcker det bra för storytelling-reklamer att endast avbilda antingen början, mitten eller slutet av en berättelse eftersom detta är tillräckligt för att förmedla berättelseformatet och för att fånga och behålla tågres uppmärksamhet. Det verkar som att storytelling-bilder och -reklamer endast kan hänvisa till ett tempus i vardera riktningen av tidsaxeln i en berättelse. Av de analyserade reklamerna visar Stihl-


Storytelling-reklamer är välförsedda med element för visuell avkodning. Dessa element skapar berättelser och ger möjligheter för konsumenter att identifiera sig med de förmedlade budskapen. De analyserade storytelling-reklamerna innehåller budskap också utöver de kommersiella. Dessa budskap vidmakthåller rådande föreställningar i vårt samhälle, t.ex. hittas de traditionella könsrollerna i YDA-reklamen. Dessa

**Fortsatt forskning**

Denna avhandling har presenterat och analyserat storytelling-bilder och reklamer ur ett visuellt perspektiv. Den ikonografiska och semiotiska analysen bygger på västerländsk bildtradition och därmed är resultaten begränsade till västerländsk marknadsföring. I fortsatt forskning skulle det vara intressant att studera storytelling-reklamer i andra kulturer och se vilken typ av företag det är som använder sig av storytelling både här hemma och på andra ställen i världen. I denna avhandling begränsades antalet analyserade storytelling-reklamer till fyra, men det kan tänkas att resultaten skulle ha varit lite annorlunda ifall analysen gjorts på fler eller andra reklamer. Det är också sannolikt att en annan forskare skulle ha kommit fram till delvis andra resultat, med tanke på att de visuella metoderna till viss grad bygger på subjektiv tolkning (om än med objektiva riktlinjer). Skulle man vilja studera storytelling-reklamer ur en helt annan synvinkel kunde man se vilken effekt dessa reklamer har på en testpublik. Genom en fallstudie kunde man också forska i hur storytelling-reklamer tagits emot på marknaden och vilka ekonomiska effekter dessa har i jämförelse med andra reklamer. Slutligen kunde forskningen av storytelling-bilder utvidgas till användningen av bilder i sociala medier. Marknadsföringen har delvis flyttat ut på nätet där konsumenterna själva delar med sig av sina produktupplevelser i form av bilder. Vad berättar dessa bilder om konsumtionen och hur kan de utnyttjas av marknadsförare?
REFERENCES


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