

**Narratives of femininity as means of promotion:**  
A case study on Dove's advertisement and audience responses

Master's thesis  
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Tiivistelmä – Abstract <p>Tutkielman tarkoituksena on selvittää, miten yritykset ja organisaatiot voivat hyödyntää kohderyhmiensä palautetta mainontansa kehittämisessä houkuttelevammaksi yleisöilleen. Sosiaalisen median nousun myötä myös yritysten ja asiakkaiden välinen suhde on murroksessa, kun yritysten sijaan potentiaalisilla asiakkailta on valta määrittellä, millaista sisältöä he haluavat.</p> <p>Tutkielma on tapaustutkimus Doven Real Beauty -kampanjan kahdesta mainoksesta, #ChooseBeautiful ja #MyBeautyMySay. Tutkimuksessa tutkitaan, miten mainokset luovat narratiiveja naiseudesta hyödyntäen semioottisia ja diskursiivisia resursseja, ja miten näiden narratiivien avulla pyritään mainostamaan tuotetta ja brändiä. Lisäksi tutkielmassa perehdytään yleisön reaktioihin kyseisiin narratiiveihin ja tuotteiden mainontaan niiden kautta.</p> <p>Analyysissä hyödynnetään narratiivista ja multimodaalista tutkimusta. Lisäksi löydöksiä tarkastellaan postfeminismin ja integroidun markkinointiviestinnän näkökulmista.</p> <p>Tutkimuksen tulosten mukaan Dove onnistuu vetoamaan yleisöönsä hyödyntämällä moninaisia semioottisia resursseja tarinankerronnassaan. Narratiivit vetoavat yleisöön tunnetasolla, herättäen yleisössä positiivisia tunteita myös brändiä kohtaan. Useimmat katsojat kokevat, että Dove nostaa esille tärkeän yhteiskunnallisen aiheen. Tästä johtuen yrityksen kaupallinen agenda mainonnan taustalla ei vaivaa heitä. Toisaalta, osa katsojista kokee kaupallisen agendan vievän uskottavuutta Doven mainonnalta.</p>	
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# 1 INTRODUCTION

This study aims to determine how companies attempt to appeal to their audiences through improving advertising campaigns based on the public's response. This is done by conducting a case study of Dove's two recent ad campaigns from their "Real Beauty" campaign, and the response the two adverts have received.

The relevant fields of the study are integrated marketing communication studies, multimodal discourse studies, narrative studies, post-feminist studies, and social media studies, thus making it an interdisciplinary study by combining linguistic and social semiotic studies with communication theories.

In today's digitalised world, it has become increasingly easier for the public to share and express their opinions, and thus affect the content companies and organisations develop and share. Because of this, companies now need to be even more careful than before about the way they present themselves and their products in the public eye, in order to get the public behind them. Previous research has mainly been conducted with a focus in marketing and communication theories, which is why research combining these theories with a linguistic point of view could introduce new ways of examining the phenomenon, thus benefiting marketing and communication research even further.

By examining the linguistic and multimodal means companies use in their advertising, and how the public responds to them, we can determine the ways in which particular semiotic and discursive resources are used to appeal to audiences. Moreover, we can examine and describe how these resources are not only used for appeal, but to promote a brand or a product, to women specifically. Additionally, based on the findings of this study, we can also see whether the social media responses of viewers can have an effect on the advertising content produced by companies.

It is important for companies to know how to attract customers, as presenting the company in the wrong way could permanently damage their reputation. Even the smallest choices, such as one choice of words, can influence the message that is conveyed, and thus the company's public image. This is why it is important for companies to be aware of every choice they make in advertising.

The risk of conveying the wrong meaning has amplified after the rise of social media. It may only take one person to overturn a company's image, as social media has made it possible for

the public to share ideas and opinions in an increasingly fast pace, thus enabling quick and vast changes in perceptions and attitudes. However, companies can also utilise this swift exchange of opinions by monitoring the feedback they receive online, and deploying the information in their following campaigns or other marketing or communication strategies. This type of research gives companies the opportunity to learn how to benefit from social media as a mode for feedback, as well as how to interact with their audiences to further strengthen stakeholder relations.

## **2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

In order to be able to discuss how semiotic and discursive resources are used to appeal to female audiences in today's advertising, this study will be based on two theoretical frameworks of Integrated Marketing Communication and Femininity in Advertising, which I will discuss first in this section. Integrated Marketing Communication provides a useful framework for discussing the reasons behind choices made in Dove's advertising, as well as their effect. In addition, theories of Femininity in Advertising can further our understanding of how the advertisements are consciously targeted to females and how they are received by female viewers.

As Integrated Marketing Communication examines the ways in which messages are produced and communicated in the most effective ways, it is a useful tool for further discussing the effectiveness of the semiotic choices made in advertising. Moreover, as representations of femininity in media and advertising have been rather widely researched, previous theories in the field can provide new dimensions to the discussion of the development of femininity in advertising. Together these two theoretical frameworks will offer a lens through which I will discuss the results of the study and its implications and applications on a more general level.

### **2.1.1 Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC)**

Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) aims to control the various elements *of the promotional mix*, which scholars Mangold and Faulds define as advertising, personal selling, public relations, publicity, direct marketing, and sales promotion, to produce a clear message that achieves the chosen organisational objectives, such as the objective of selling a product (2009: 357).

Promotion focuses on stimulating awareness, interest and purchase through messages, and uses a combination of disciplines, such as advertising and PR, to reach target audiences (Tench & Yeomans, 2009: 411). Promotional mix works with other marketing activities to achieve several objectives, such as raising an organisation's profile, redefining its image, helping to promote credibility, demonstrating empathy with audience, and stimulating trial and purchase, to name a few (Tench & Yeomans, 2009: 411). As mentioned above, advertising is a part of the promotional mix. Tench and Yeomans (2009: 269) define advertising as "the use of paid-for media to inform and to persuade to make something known or to gain publicity".

Persuasion works as a tool of the promotional mix. It involves sending messages to receiver(s), and there are three factors affecting its effect: the character of the speaker, Ethos; the nature of the message, Logos; and the attitude of the receiver, Pathos (Aristotle, cited in Tench & Yeomans, 2006: 257). The first one of these, Ethos, leads us to the question of *credibility* of the sender, which is the attitude toward the sender of the message held by its receiver (Tench & Yeomans, 2006: 258). Perloff (1993, as cited in Tench & Yeomans, 2006: 258) presents four elements of credibility: expertise, trustworthiness, similarity, and physical attractiveness. Some theorists have also added power to this list, meaning that the sender's authority over the receiver can have an effect on the process of persuasion (Tench & Yeomans, 2006: 258). The second factor, Logos, deals with what makes a message convincing and how the message is received and used by the receiver (Tench & Yeomans, 2006: 258).

Petty and Cacioppo (1986, as cited in Tench & Yeomans, 2006: 259) present two main routes for persuasion: the central and peripheral routes. The central route relies on reason and evaluation, while the peripheral route appeals to the receiver's emotions and is often used in advertising (Tench & Yeomans, 2006: 259). The third factor, Pathos, is about the receiver's attributes, both demographic and psychographic, meaning the receiver's age, geography, occupation, gender, and personality traits (Tench & Yeomans, 2006: 262). All of these factors affect the attitudes, beliefs and values of the receiver, which, in turn, affect the way the message is received and interpreted, thus affecting its persuasiveness (Tench & Yeomans, 2006: 264).

Although different factors of the promotional mix have been rather extensively studied, Mangold and Faulds (2009: 357), go on to add the role of social media to the promotional mix. While previous research has not accounted for social media as a part of the promotional mix, or offered tools for marketing managers to incorporate social media into the companies' marketing strategies, Mangold and Faulds note how social media has changed how companies communicate with their audiences, stating how social media has influenced awareness, information acquisition, attitudes and post-purchase communication and evaluation (2009: 358).

Mangold and Faulds (2009: 359) point out that the first role of social media from an IMC point of view is for companies to be able to communicate with their audiences through various platforms. Not only can companies talk to their audiences, but they can also listen to their audiences. Johnson (2007: 64) points out that it is important for advertisers, and other producers of content, to monitor audience reactions, assess them and incorporate the information from them

in ongoing production processes. This way the audience gets their voice heard and the company can benefit from it as well, as they need to appeal to the audience's preferences and attitudes. This process of monitoring and assessment can be applied to advertising campaigns, as the seriality of the campaigns allows the company to revisit past feedback from the public and use it in improving their advertising strategies.

The second promotional role of social media is that it enables the audiences to communicate with each other (Mangold and Faulds, 2009: 359). Social media offers new platforms for people to express their opinions, and thus for anyone to see a certain social environment through new eyes, which can possibly make one aware of a thought or a criticism in the public debate he or she has not thought of before, as Benkler (2006: 11) argues. Benkler goes on to add that social media enables people to communicate their opinions to others in a way that cannot be controlled by the mass media, thus shifting the power to the people (2006: 10). Mangold and Faulds (2009: 359) see this shift in power as a challenge for companies and organisations - managers should learn how to harness the power of the phenomenon, in order for their companies to benefit from it.

Mangold and Faulds (2009: 361-364) go on to suggest nine ways of shaping the discussion on social media, thus making use of the platform in promotional means: provide networking platforms; use social media tools to engage customers; use both traditional and internet-based promotional tools to engage customers; provide information; be outrageous; provide exclusivity; design products with societal talking points and consumers' desired self-images in mind; support causes that are important to consumers; and utilise the power of stories. All of these ways aim to raise discussion around the brand or product, which in turn generates more awareness and consumption of the product.

All of the aforementioned theories and factors can be applied to discussing the findings of the present study as well in relation to how the advertisements' narratives have been designed with their target audiences in mind, and how effective the advertisements are in appealing to said audiences. Moreover, as these days social media plays a big part in giving people a chance to voice their opinions about advertising, for instance, IMC theories can also offer some further insight into how the audiences have affected Dove's advertising tactics between the two advertising campaigns which are examined in the present study.



### **2.1.2 Femininity in advertising**

In addition to IMC, I will examine the concepts of femininity and empowerment, as my chosen data of Dove's Real Beauty campaign is mainly targeted at female audiences, and thus attempts to use its view of femininity to appeal to its audiences.

Traditionally, media has represented women and femininity in a narrow and stereotypical manner. This manner has included representing women as passive, sexual objects, and it has trivialised women's culture (Lazar, 2009: 371). These days, contemporary media has started representing women as autonomous, strong and assertive people, although still embracing their feminine practices (Lazar: 2009: 371). This change in representations of women in media has come about through postfeminist discourse, which assumes that women today can have it all, and are just as equal as men in society (Lazar, 2009: 371-372).

The postfeminist discourse has been stated to produce new femininities that are neither feminist nor traditional forms of femininity (Lazar, 2009: 373), as they have reclaimed, for example, beauty practices to be used as a source of pleasure and celebration of self, instead of beauty practices being seen as oppressive, objectifying or exploitative of women's insecurities, as they were in the eyes of second-wave feminists (Lazar, 2009: 374). Popular forms of feminism in advertising have been critiqued for making it appear as if a social change has occurred, yet harnessing feminism to other discourses in order to produce a compelling message with feminist values, although void of any political content or radical potential. (Lazar, 2009: 373).

The role of femininity and empowerment in advertising has been widely researched by, for example, Lazar (2006, 2009), Johnston and Taylor (2008), and Duffy (2010). As Johnston and Taylor state (2008: 941), companies have incorporated emancipatory ideals into marketing campaigns for a while now. Duffy (2010: 28), also notes that the "quest for profit" has led companies into marketing their products and services through consumer empowerment, meaning that companies want their audiences to receive and interpret the core messages of the companies as empowering, thus leading to more consumption through positive emotions, and thus, more profit for the company.

Consumption through empowerment is a common advertising strategy for most cosmetics companies targeting their products to women, which is why the upcoming discussion on femininity in advertising will be focused around the notion of advertisements creating a sense of empowerment.

Lazar's study (2006: 514) on the representation of women in media supports the notion of consumption through empowerment, as she concludes that diversity of female identities and the promotion of "real women" as opposed to models in previous decades in advertising, have led to empowerment and the unity of women everywhere. Lazar also presents four main features to analysing femininity and empowerment in advertising: *empowered beauty*, which presents products as empowering agents helping women realise their "true beauty" (2006: 507); *knowledge as power*, referring to beautification through classes or workshops held by the a cosmetic brand, for example (2006: 508); *agentive power*, meaning women's agency to function as individuals and the confidence and ability to act being enabled by the consumption of certain products (2006: 510); and *sexual power*, referring how women have "reclaimed" the power over their own sexuality (2006: 512).

As implied above, Michelle Lazar has done extensive research on the role of femininity in advertising. In addition to the main features of analysing femininity and empowerment in advertising (Lazar, 2006) presented above, she also brings forth the concept of entitled femininity (Lazar, 2009). By entitled femininity, Lazar refers to the postfeminist subject, who is not only entitled to be pampered and pleased, but also to celebrate feminine practices and stereotypes unapologetically (2009: 372).

Firstly, Lazar (2009: 375) focuses on the concept of pampering and pleasuring oneself. This focus is basically an identity that is supported by consumer culture, and thus vastly used in advertising. It satisfies women's needs and desires through consumption of products (Lazar, 2009: 375). According to this view, it is an entitlement to live a life of self-absorption, hedonism and narcissism, even. This identity is represented as self-indulgence and pampering, for example in the form of consumption of certain products or services, as well as through acts of pleasuring the self and enjoying an exclusive space of consumption. (Lazar, 2009: 375, 379). An important element of this identity is that it is not only experienced individually, but also shared with all of women, thus making it a collective experience. Lazar (2009: 380) notes that there are women-only spaces, which are female-only spaces reserved for women's use in the public, which comes across in advertising through language use.

Secondly, Lazar focuses on the aspect of unapologetic celebration of all things feminine (2009: 381). As mentioned above, during the second wave of feminism, a critical view of femininity was adopted, where femininity was considered to be an obstacle for achieving gender equality (Lazar, 2009: 381). As conventional feminine values and behaviours were rejected, masculine

values and behaviours were often favoured instead, thus considering the feminist identity to be anti-feminine.

As a response to this, third wave feminism aimed to re-validate conventional feminine qualities and recognise differences between women and men. Subsequently, the postfeminist discourse started to celebrate femininity as a reclamation and re-signification of stereotypical feminine values and practices, according to Lazar (2009: 381). Lazar states that this postfeminist celebration of femininity in advertising is based “upon doubledistancing from masculine values and traits as well as from a supposedly humourless and outmoded feminism” (2009: 381). Thus, there are now multiple new femininities recognised, mixing the normative and non-normative elements of femininity. These are called hybrid feminine identities. (Lazar, 2009: 385).

According to Lazar (2009: 387), the postfeminist feminine identity is a combination of normative and “new” imagining of femininity, although whether or not any femininities are actually new can be argued. These hybrid femininities may involve a mix of various elements, for example, as seen in Lazar’s study (2009: 387) the hybrid of ‘feminine’ and ‘bold’, where a seemingly normatively masculine trait, ‘bold’, is contrasted with a feminine trait. However, as Lazar (2009: 387) notes, these are made-to-seem contradictory elements in advertising, and are not, in fact, contradictory at all. Advertisers make use of lexical items such as the adversative ‘yet’ to underscore a contrast of sorts in the hybrid of identities, thus giving the audience a sense of empowerment through seemingly unconventional notions of femininity (Lazar, 2009: 387).

Lazar (2009: 389-390) sums up her theory on entitled, celebratory feminism as a production of a “new postfeminist feminine consciousness”, which embraces feminine things and practices, is distanced from masculinity, and combines feminist and feminine identities. While it consciously reclaims traditional views of femininity for transgressive purposes, it also continues to utilise gendered stereotypes. She goes on to argue that the postfeminist feminine identity positions women as desiring subjects, who embrace the myth of beauty and the consumer culture that supports it (2009: 390).

Wu and Chung (2011), have examined the hybridised representations of a ‘modern woman’ in Chinese television commercials. In their study, they have come up with three dimensions for investigating the representations of women in advertising. These dimensions are the roles portrayed, appearance/projection, and verbal characteristics (Wu & Chung, 2011: 184). In relation to Lazar’s concept of hybrid female identities, I believe these dimensions to be of great value in examining the ways narratives of femininity are constructed in advertising, as they

account for the ways in which advertising has changed from a traditional view of femininity to modern representations of women in advertising, much like they have in the Western media as well due to the development of feminism (Wu & Chung, 2011: 184).

The first of the three dimensions, is the roles portrayed in the advertisement. Traditionally, representations of women have portrayed them as homemakers, in what Wu and Chung (2011: 185) describe as family and decorative roles. However, these days, women are more likely portrayed in occupational or recreational roles in advertising (Wu & Chung, 2011: 185). This ties in with Lazar's (2009: 387) similar findings as well as the idea that women are now represented through hybrid identities as well, combining traditionally male-seeming and feminine-seeming qualities.

Second, the appearance/projection refers to how women are represented in television commercials in terms of their appearance. For example, traditionally women have been represented as dependent and maybe even submissive to men, which relates to the traditional role of a homemaker. Traditional feminine traits, as told by Wu and Chung (2011: 185) have generally been shyness and naivety, for example. Yet again, a change can be observed between this traditional representation of women in advertising and the modern-day representations, as today women's right to choose for themselves and to celebrate their femininity is emphasised in advertising (Wu & Chung, 2011: 185). Furthermore, the traits associated with women in television commercials are now, for example, attractiveness, intelligence, and confidence (Wu & Chung, 2011: 185).

Third, the dimension of verbal characteristics means the analysis of the characteristics of language that the female characters use. This dimension features three aspects: voice over, force of speech, and functions of speech (Wu & Chung, 2011: 185). According to Wu and Chung (2011: 186), traditionally, male voice overs have been preferred because of the authoritativeness of tone of the male voice, but now that the meaning of femininity has changed, female voice overs are becoming more and more frequent. Although male voice overs may be seen as more convincing, female voice overs might be more popular now because female audiences can relate to them more, thus finding the entire advertisement more credible. Force of speech refers to the tone of voice, whether it be soft or assertive (Wu & Chung, 2011: 186). The different forces of speech can carry different meanings and appeal to audiences in different ways. Lastly, the functions of speech in the language women in advertising use, have gone from often indirect

speech acts and implicit directives to direct requests or explicit directives in advertising, according to Wu and Chung, 2011: 186).

Although Wu and Chung's (2011) research was conducted on Chinese female representations in advertising, I believe that the traditional representations of femininity in advertising they present are globally applicable, as is the case with Lazar's theories as well. Thus, I believe that their views can be useful indicators of the development of representations of femininity in advertising in comparison to more traditional representations of femininity.

These studies provide a useful background to discussing the development and change in narratives of femininity in advertising. Based on these aforementioned studies, we can see how the representations of femininity in advertising have developed from presenting women as passive and even submissive homemakers to independent, empowered and active agents. The advertising strategy of consumption through empowerment is in the core of this development. I will utilise these theories and frameworks later in the present study, when I discuss the ways in which the advertisements' narratives represent femininity and whether they, too, utilise the concept of consumption through empowerment.

### **3 METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK**

As the aim of the study is to examine ways in which companies can construct advertisements utilising feedback from the public, I have chosen to analyse Dove's highly well-known Real Beauty campaign, in order to determine how Dove attempts to appeal to its audiences. Not only will I be examining the case from Dove's point of view, I will also examine how Dove's social media audiences have addressed the campaign, in order to determine how Dove's audiences see the campaigns, and subsequently, the promotion of Dove's products through the means chosen by the company.

#### **3.1 Collection of data**

In this study, I decided to compare two of Dove's most recent campaigns at present, #ChooseBeautiful and #MyBeautyMySay. These two were chosen because Dove's Real Beauty campaign has been accounted as one of the most successful advertising campaigns of the last decade, campaigning for diversity and empowerment of women all over the world. However, #ChooseBeautiful has been one of the most criticised campaigns of Dove's Real Beauty campaign, receiving vast amounts of feedback online. #MyBeautyMySay, was chosen for comparative reasons, as it was the following campaign Dove released after #ChooseBeautiful, and can thus provide interesting insights into how Dove may have utilised the great amount of feedback they received for #ChooseBeautiful in the following advertisement.

Moreover, as the two campaigns followed each other, I believe that their audiences are more or less similar, which I believe is beneficial in terms of the analysis of the audience's reactions to both of the advertisements as it will provide commentary for both of the advertisements from the same cultural and societal context.

The data will be transcribed in order to provide evidence of the narratives and multimodality seen. In order to analyse the feedback the two advertisements have received, I will read through the comment sections on YouTube for each advertisement, and categorise them based on their frequency to be able to analyse and discuss the most common responses. I will discuss the methodology behind the transcribing and analysing processes in more detail below, along with the other methodological approaches I will use in the analysis of the data.

### **3.2 Research aim and questions**

In order to examine how Dove aims to appeal to its audiences through advertising, and how the audiences respond to Dove through social media, my study aims to answer the following questions:

1. How are narratives of femininity constructed multimodally in Dove's two ad campaigns #ChooseBeautiful and #MyBeautyMySay?
2. How does Dove use their narratives of femininity as means of promotion?
3. How do social media audiences address the narratives of femininity suggested by the campaigns?
4. How do social media audiences address the promotion of Dove's products via their narratives of femininity?

I believe that answering these four research questions will not only reveal how Dove has constructed narratives which aim to appeal to audiences but also how they view their target audience and the audience's interests and how they consciously make decisions targeting to appeal to those interests, which in turn, may reveal how those efforts direct the planning and creation of their advertising strategy.

I chose narratives of femininity as the main target of the analysis due to Dove's reputation as a company that celebrates all kinds of femininity. As mentioned above, the company is also known for its empowering campaigns for women, which is in line with the advertising strategy of consumption through empowerment, which I discussed above. That is why I believe it is not only important to analyse how they advertise but also how this form of advertising is used for means of promotion.

Moreover, the analysis of social media audience's responses to these advertisements and the promotion of products via the advertisements has the potential to unveil how the company may or may not utilise the feedback they receive online in monitoring and assessing the success of their campaigns. This, in turn, can showcase how companies in general can construct advertisements utilising feedback from the public.

### **3.3 Analytical methods**

The analytical methods will be largely based on qualitative analytic tools provided by Analysis of Narratives, Multimodality, and Thematic Analysis. These tools will be implemented to analyse the two advertisements by Dove.

The methodological framework will work as the main tool for the analysis of data, providing a more detailed description of the semiotic and discursive resources used. As mentioned above, marketing and communication research has dominated the research on the effects of audience feedback and consumer-generated media, also known as social media, on company strategies. Although advertising in itself is a vastly examined field of study, the field is lacking a different point of view, which I believe could be complemented by supporting communication studies with Analysis of Narratives as well as Multimodal Discourse Studies due to the narrative and multimodal nature of video advertisements. With help of these two analytical methods, the advertisements can be analysed in further detail to see how each and every semiotic choice made has an impact on how the narratives are built.

As advertising in general is usually formed through stories, or in other words *narratives*, the analysis of narratives will be the focal point of the study. By analysing how the narratives of the two advertisements are built, we can unravel the ways in which the advertisements aim to appeal to audiences. The analysis of narratives of femininity will be based on the principles of narratives by Bordwell and Thompson (1997), and the elements of narrative analysis presented by Abbott (2008) and Heath and Coombs (2006). I will also place a special focus on rhetorical form systems of narratives in examining how Dove uses these narratives as means of endorsement by persuading the audience. These analytical approaches will be discussed in further detail below.

The basis for the analysis of this data will be Andrew Burn's (2014) model of metamodal kineiconic, which examines the modes in a moving text and how these modes work together, in order to examine the multimodal elements of the narratives. It is important to note, however, that within the constraints of this paper it will not be possible to examine every single frame this closely. Thus, the most relevant frames in relation to the narrative form of the advertisements will be chosen for closer inspection in order to determine how Burn's metamodal kineiconic model is realised in the data, and, in terms of the bigger picture, how it is used to create narratives. I will discuss this metamodal kineiconic model in more detail below.

In order to be able to analyse the narratives and multimodality in greater detail, both of the advertisements will be transcribed in order to showcase the linguistic and multimodal means used to construct narratives of femininity. Additionally, I will provide transcripts of relevant screen captures to support some of the findings in terms of multimodality. The data will be transcribed similarly to the way Pennock-Speck and del Saz-Rubio (2013) utilise Baldry and



Thibault's (2006: 142) proposed model of multimodal analysis. To be more precise, this will be done by transcribing what happens in the advertisements multimodally, in other words in terms of visuals, audio and actions. Based on these transcripts, I will then analyse relevant frames and the actions taking place in said frames as well as sounds and images featured to see how the multimodal choices made create a storyline.

Lastly, as both of the advertisements were published on Dove's YouTube account (Dove US), I will be focusing the analysis of social media audience's feedback on the comment sections on YouTube to provide evidence of how these audiences address the aforementioned narratives. Furthermore, I will examine YouTube's comment sections of the two advertisements to determine how the audiences address the promotion of Dove's products through these narratives. The analysis of social media audience's feedback will be a Thematic Analysis, in which the essential or common responses are categorised based on their frequency and discussed further.

### **3.3.1 Analysis of Narratives**

Stories, in other words, narratives, are a part of everyday life – we think, describe and interpret occurrences and events in life as stories (Heath & Coombs 2006: 349). Subsequently, advertisements, as well, are essentially stories made to impact their audiences. In this study, I will analyse the narratives created by Dove by applying the elements of rhetorical narrative presented by Heath and Coombs (2006) as well as Abbott's (2008) elements of causality, normalisation, and masterplot, in addition to utilising Bordwell and Thompson's (1997) theory of the principle of narratives as well as their tools of analysing narratives, with a focus on rhetorical form systems. By analysing these basic principles of storytelling, I can determine how Dove aims to appeal to their audiences through its narratives in advertising.

The study of narratives has been a part of organisational communication research of publicity and promotion for years. Promotion, as mentioned above, is a strategic function that can benefit from the use of narratives, which help in constructing meanings by means of, for example, identification and symbolic convergence, meaning the coming together of a cohesive group of people sharing the same emotions and meanings (Heath & Coombs, 2006: 347).

Studying the way narratives are used for means of promotion helps us determine the most useful ways stories should be told in order to persuade audiences (Heath & Coombs, 2006: 347). One of the most important factors of a narrative is its power, as the aim of most narratives is to

persuade the listener or viewer to interpret the narrative in a certain way. To be able to achieve this, the narrative has to be effective and convincing. Power is about all of the elements of a narrative that generate feelings and thoughts in the receiver. These elements can be strong or subtle, but they all play a role in how the receiver interprets the meanings of the narrative. (Abbott, 2008: 40)

Abbott (2008: 41) presents three main elements to examine when analysing the power of a narrative: causality, normalisation, and masterplot. Causality means the linearity of a story. Humans are always looking for a sequence of cause and effect to make sense of events. To gratify this need for causality, narratives often make use of describing events consecutively, in an orderly fashion. (Abbott, 2008: 41). Normalisation refers to the narrative coherence in which a collection of events is described, thus making the events seem plausible (Abbott, 2008: 44). Lastly, masterplot means the greater, adaptable form of a story - it goes beyond its narratives. Masterplots can often affect people without us realising it, and they are often integrated in our cultures, thus being very compelling ways of narration. (Abbott, 2008: 47).

Repetition is another important element of narration. The two most frequent means of repetition in narratives are themes and motifs (Abbott, 2008: 95). Abbott (2008: 95) defines themes as abstract entities, such as beauty, violence or love, whereas motifs are more concrete ways of representing the underlying themes, for example roses or fists. Not only is repetition an effective way of persuasion, it also makes it easier for the receiver to interpret the meanings behind the message by emphasising certain themes and motifs (Abbott, 2008: 95). However, the identification of themes and motifs could lead to a number of different interpretations, thus it does not produce an interpretation in itself, but it does help in, for example, eliminating some interpretations and supporting others (Abbott, 2008: 95). Subsequently, we can conclude that repetition of themes and motifs is an effective way of constructing a powerful narrative.

It is important to note, however, that a story does not only have to be constructed the right way to be powerful, but it also has to be reinforced by repeating it so that the targeted audiences will remember it and possibly change their behaviour because of it (Heath & Coombs, 2006: 348). Heath and Coombs (2006: 348) present twelve elements that they claim as useful to consider in this process: “exposure to a message; attending to a message; liking or becoming interested in a message; comprehending the message; acquiring the skills to use the information and evaluation contained in the message; yielding to the message; storing the message content in memory; recalling the message content from memory; deciding on the basis of the information

retrieved; behaving in a manner that is based on the information; reinforcing behaviour that leads to positive outcomes; and consolidating behaviour that are positive so that they become routine and repeated". Considering how the organisation's message and the stories supporting it could be constructed in a way that supports this process of message internalisation by the audience is an important part of building a convincing and well-functioning narrative. As mentioned above, the goal of promotion is not to only develop a story around the organisation or its product, but also to keep that story alive for a longer period of time by, for example, formulating many different story lines, all of which share the same meaning and merge into one story (Heath & Coombs, 2006: 349).

Heath and Coombs (2006: 350) go on to explain the basis of a rhetorical narrative, which is basically answering to questions of who, what, when, where, how, and why. First, one has to look at the narrator(s) of the story and determine who tells the story and why, and who else is presented in the story. It is also important to pay attention to the context of the story. Second, the auditors – to whom is the story told and why, and how is the story interpreted by its auditors? Third, the plot and theme that are central to the story. Fourth, the moral of the story - what can one learn from it? Fifth, the characters of the story and how they are presented. Sixth, the location of the story, and lastly, the relationship enacted by the actors of the story. (Heath & Coombs, 2006: 350-351).

Bordwell and Thompson (1997) explain the basic elements of narration through the perspective of film production in their book *Film Art*. Although the book itself mainly deals with films and television, the narrative elements it discusses can be applied to analysis of television commercials as well. In this study, to support the theories of Abbott (2008) and Heath and Coombs (2006), I will focus on Bordwell and Thompson's (1997) theories on characters, patterns of development in narratives, and rhetorical forms of narratives.

According Bordwell and Thompson (1997: 93), characters are the driving forces in narratives, in that they create causes and register effects, by triggering and reacting to events. Characters also have traits involving psychological drives, attitudes or preferences or other qualities (Bordwell & Thompson, 1997: 94), all of which affect the way the characters function and react to events. They go on to explain how mental subjectivity can sometimes make the audience relate with a character, as learning about the character's mind and thoughts can help the audience understand the character (Bordwell & Thompson, 1997: 105). Whereas this kind of

narration is highly subjective, objective narration accounts for the characters' external behaviour (Bordwell & Thompson, 1997: 105).

As the story progresses, the audience's perception of the characters may go from a more objective viewpoint to a subjective one, offering more information in terms of the degree and depth of knowledge (Thompson & Bordwell, 1997: 104). From an advertising point of view, these aspects often provide the audience with a plot development which makes the advertisement both interesting and relatable because of the subjective viewpoint. Because the subjective viewpoint often makes the audience relate to the advertisement on a more personal level, it is used a great deal in advertising, making it an important aspect of analysis in the present study as well.

Not only can patterns of development of the story be realised through characters, but also through a change from an initial situation to a final one (Bordwell & Thompson, 1997: 99). This change implies the causality of events and continuum of time and space, which is extremely relevant to narratives, as was discussed in relation to Abbott's (2008: 41) theory. The opening of a moving-image text is supposed to raise the audience's expectations by 'setting up a specific range of possible causes for and effect of what we see' (Bordwell & Thompson, 1997: 99). Then, as the story proceeds, the patterns of development become narrower through causes and effects that are taking place (Bordwell & Thompson, 1997: 99).

Commonly, the general pattern of development involves a change in knowledge, as, for example, a character learns a lesson when the events unfold (Bordwell & Thompson, 1997: 99). This seems to be especially common in the field of advertising, as often the characters are presented with a problematic starting point, but once certain events unfold, they learn information that they can then utilise to solve said problem, often through the use of a certain brand or product. However, it should be noted that Bordwell and Thompson (1997: 107) go on to explain that this conception of narrative assumes the action to primarily be caused by individual characters as causal agents, in so that the narrative centres around the personal psychological causes of the characters, for example, their decisions and choices.

As mentioned above in relation to the field of IMC, persuasion is an important tool of promotion. Rhetorical forms are ways of persuading the audience into holding a certain opinion about something, or even into acting a certain way (Bordwell & Thompson, 1997: 139). In my analysis, I will apply the four basic attributes to defining rhetorical form, as described by Bordwell and Thompson, in order to make even more distinct deductions on how the narratives

appeal to audiences. These attributes are: addressing the viewer openly; presenting arguments and evidence to make the argument seem the most plausible of all options; appealing to emotions; and attempting to persuade the viewer to make a choice that has an effect on their everyday life (Bordwell & Thompson, 1997: 139).

### **3.3.2 Multimodality**

In this section, I will further explain the features and analytic tools of multimodality that I will be utilising in this study in order to deepen the analysis of the narratives of femininity created.

Multimodality theory aims to understand the ways in which people communicate with each other in different ways and through different sign systems of multiple modes, that can be found, for example, in forms of narrative moving-image texts (Burn & Parker, 2003: 4; Burn, 2014: 375). It is useful to examine the ways in which meaning are created in narratives through means other than simply text, as they can reveal even more about the meanings conveyed. They can also add different layers to a narrative by either supporting or contradicting textual meanings.

Modes are anything from linguistic units to sounds and gestures, as well as filming and editing (Burn, 2014: 376). They are all important ways of meaning-making in today's media texts as they complement each other (Matthiessen in Royce & Bowcher, 2007: 1), which is why it is important to study them in more detail, and in relation to narratives in advertising.

Although multimodality has been researched for decades now by names such as Kress, van Leeuwen and Halliday, in this study I will apply Andrew Burn's model of the metamodal kineiconic, which has been built upon the theories of the aforementioned scholars. I have chosen Burn's model as the main analytic tool of my study, as it combines the main modes of interest in this study, which are not only the audiovisual modes, but also modes of editing. Moreover, Burn's model takes into consideration how those modes interact with each other and co-create meanings.

Burn's metamodal kineiconic means "the nesting of modes within modes in moving image texts" (Burn, 2014: 377). Burn divides the model into orchestrating modes of filming and editing, which include frame, angle, proximity, segment and transition, to name a few, as well as contributory modes, which are embodied modes of speech and dramatic action, auditory modes, and visual modes. All of these can be broken into even smaller units of meaning, such

as facial expression, speech, melody, lighting and set design, and thus offer a great deal of data to analyse in multimodal research. (Burn, 2014: 377).

In addition to simply analysing the modes themselves, their structure, it is also important to take into consideration the agency of people in determining what meanings the modes carry, and to treat the two, structure and agency, as interdependent by basing the analysis on the interaction of the two in terms of how meanings are created (Burn & Parker, 2003: 2, 3). Moreover, Burn and Parker (2003: 3, 4) present three main points of consideration in analysis of multimodal media texts: a systematic approach to meaning-making; analysis of the audience and their engagement with the texts; and analysis of political, economic and social contexts in which the texts are produced. These points are important to consider in the further discussion of my analysis, as they showcase how coherent narratives are created in the advertisements, and how the audience decodes these narratives and their meanings in the context the advertisements exist in. This discussion of the agency of people in determining the meanings the advertisements carry is supported by Critical Discourse Analysis.

The research of multimodality in advertising has gained interest in recent years among scholars. According to researcher Del Saz-Rubio (2009: 2539), there has been a notable shift from language-based advertising to advertising strategies utilising images and music in appealing to audiences. In order to influence their audiences and get them to purchase products, advertisers now need not to only convey information about the products, but also to appeal to audiences emotionally, and change the audience's values and behaviours through effective advertising (Del Saz-Rubio, 2009: 2539).

In her study, Del Saz-Rubio accounts for two dimensions to be used in the analysis of multimodal advertising discourse: the product-claim dimension, and the reward dimension (2009: 2537). While the product-claim dimension offers information, or claims about the product to its audience through modes of language, the reward dimension aims to persuade the audience by means of music, images and non-verbal communication, which are often seen to appeal to the audience's emotional side. (2009: 2537).

According to Del Saz-Rubio (2009: 2537), both of these dimensions are vital for the analysis of advertising, even though advertisers themselves may favour one dimension over the other. Additionally, it is important to note that these dimensions may overlap, meaning that linguistic modes can be a part of the reward dimension, appealing to audience's emotions, and that images and music may contain information about the product as well (Del Saz-Rubio, 2009: 2537). As

Del Saz-Rubio finds in her study, the choice of preferred dimensional strategy affects the way an advertisement is constructed and what multimodal modes and persuasive methods are used (2009: 2549).

As mentioned above, there are many semiotic means through which meanings are constructed in advertising. Television commercials usually rely heavily on sounds, for example speech or music, in capturing the audience's attention and conveying meanings (Jessen, 2013: 443). Speech and music are only two of the many ways in which advertisements aim to appeal to audiences. Other modes can support or contradict these modes.

In relation to the relations between different semiotic modes, Jessen (2013: 443) presents the concept of address strategy. Jessen's address strategy focuses on the ways in which the audience is spoken to, in other words, how the audience is being persuaded through speech patterns, and, in addition, the other modes used, and their level of similarity or dissimilarity with the speech patterns (Jessen, 2013: 443). The similarities or dissimilarities between different modes links to the concept of multimodal cohesion, in which information is linked between different modes, and different media, in order to elaborate or expand on the given information (Jessen, 2013: 444).

Van Leeuwen (2005: 219) explains information linking as causal and temporal, which assists the audience in understanding how the different bits of information, or modes, are meaningful in relation to each other. As mentioned above, cohesiveness in terms of causality and temporality is one of the key aspects of narratives, thus tying effective use of multimodality and narratives together.

In accordance with van Leeuwen's (2005) information linking, Dash (2016: 213) explains how television commercials are often created strategically so that speech patterns, music, and sound effects create a continuum. This is done by, for example, altering rhythmic and melodic forms, which gives the audience a sense of forward motion, temporality and continuity (Dash, 2016: 213). Van Leeuwen (2005: 181) also notes the importance of rhythm in constructing and expressing meaning. Rhythm organises and structures moving-image texts and sounds, thus providing cohesion by "fusing" these different modes together (Van Leeuwen, 2005: 181). This showcases how analysing the rhythm in which all the different modes of a moving-image text come together helps in examining the way meanings are constructed through a systematic use of modes and also how the texts are interpreted by the audience.

Pennock-Speck (2013: 44) also addresses the importance of analysing the role of sound and images, along with any other forms of non-verbal communication, in television advertising. According to him, sound and images reinforce the verbal messages presented in advertisements. He goes on to add that these elements do not usually supply the main message, but only work as complementary elements in creating meanings (2013: 44).

Additionally, he goes on to add that it is challenging to connect precise meanings to particular types of sounds, for example in terms of music (2013: 44). We can, however, detect major and minor chords, or up-beat and slow tempos, which helps us in determining whether the music is, for instance, happy or sad (Pennock-Speck, 2013: 44). There are many different ways of meaning-making through sounds and music through, for example, different kinds of harmonies, melodies and styles, and these different elements are connected to emotional states, and thus they relate to other modes of multimodality (Pennock-Speck, 2013: 44). Furthermore, sounds other than music should also be taken into account in multimodal analysis. As Pennock-Speck (2014: 44) argues, intonation and voice quality, along with other paralinguistic features, are important elements of meaning-making in advertising.

In addition to analysing the meanings sounds carry, it is also relevant to analyse where they come from. Sounds can be divided into diegetic and non-diegetic sounds (Pennock-Speck, 2013: 45). Diegetic sounds accompany images in an advertisement which gives a sense of reality to the advertisement. Thus, diegetic sounds are often used in advertising to make connections with reality in order for the audience to relate to it. (Pennock-Speck, 2013: 45). Diegetic sounds are sounds whose source can be seen in the advertisement, they are a part of the advertisement's represented world. For example, background noises, such as traffic or birds, if the advertisement is filmed outside.

Non-diegetic sounds, on the other hand, are sounds that one cannot detect as belonging to a character or another element in the advertisement, but they are superimposed. For example, a voice over would be an example of non-diegetic sounds. (Pennock-Speck, 2013: 45; van Leeuwen, 2005: 11). The use of diegetic and non-diegetic sounds in advertisements is an interesting element of analysis as it also relates to the narrative elements of the advertisement. For example, the choice of a voice over can be effective in that it provides relevant information in a clear manner, but a character speaking to the audience may be more relatable, and thus the meanings portrayed may get across better.



In the present study, I will analyse these aspects of meaning-making through use of sounds. This analysis will take into account speech acts, music, and digetic and non-digetic sounds in order to dissect how each of them contributes to the construction of the narratives.

Moving on from modes of sound to visual modes, Van Leeuwen (2005: 7) introduces the concept of framing in the context of visual communication. Framing refers to the composition of the visual elements in, for instance, an advertisement. What this basically means, is the placing of elements either together or separate (Lirola, 2012: 493). These elements can be disconnected, through means of empty space between elements or discontinuities of colour, for example, or the elements can be visually connected to each other. This can be done, for example, through similarities of colour or visual shape. (Van Leeuwen, 2005: 7). The reason why the analysis of frames is important in this context, according to van Leeuwen (2005: 7), is that disconnected elements are often interpreted as independent or separate units of meaning, which might even contrast other meanings produced. Meanwhile, connected elements are seen as belonging together, thus creating a continuum of meaning, and complementing each other (Van Leeuwen, 2005: 7).

In addition to the concept of frames, Lirola (2012: 493) presents two other visual characteristics that are important in multimodal analysis: prominence and information value. Firstly, prominence means the result of ‘the interaction of several factors’ (Lirola, 2012: 493). These factors can be, for example, colours, placement, and image. Secondly, information value refers to the dimensions of visual space, and how spatial relations of different modes are organised. It involves three components: left/right, ideal/real, and centre/margins. For example, usually old or known information is considered to be on the left, whereas new information is often on the right. Similarly, the main focus is usually in the centre, whereas the margins usually feature additional information. (Lirola, 2012: 493).

As mentioned above, colours are important elements of meaning-making in advertisements. They are considered to be one of the most important elements in visual analysis, as the choice of colour often reflects society’s underlying ideologies about what different colours represent. (Lirola, 2012: 497). Without society, colours would not carry the meanings they carry, and thus they could not be used as representative elements giving meanings for things (Lirola, 2012: 497). For example, as discussed above in the section of femininity in advertising, certain things, are seen as traditionally feminine. This applies to colours as well. For example, the colour pink

has been connected with feminine qualities for ages, and advertisers still use it in attempts to appealing to female audiences.

The aforementioned features will also be taken into account when analysing the visual modes of the two advertisements, as they are supporting features of the underlying narrative. Choices of colour and framing create meanings just as words do, which is why they are important means of meaning making, and thus should also be analysed.

Furthermore, Pennock-Speck (2013: 45) explains three dimensions for analysis of visual representation in terms of short sequences of images. The first one is gaze. This refers to the way in which characters in advertisements look directly at the audience or away, possibly at another character or something or someone outside the frame of the image. The importance of this dimension lies in the way it addresses the audience: a character gazing directly at the audience gives an impression of demanding a response from the audience. This is called a demand image, whereas an offer image represents a character gazing away from the camera, thus giving the audience a chance to contemplate, rather than demanding a response. (Lirola, 2012: 498).

Second, is the angle of interaction. This means the angle from which the audience views the characters of the advertisement. This represents and suggests relations between the characters of the advertisement and the audience.

Third, is distance, in other words the physical proximity and intimacy of the characters and the audience. (Pennock-Speck, 2013: 45). Lirola (2012: 498) also notes that the subject positions constructed for the audience is important to analyse, as these positions draw the audience into what appears as direct interaction between the audience and the characters of the advertisement.

All of these aforementioned dimensions deal with the relationship between the characters in the advertisement and the audience, thus making it easier to examine the ways in which advertisements position the characters and products in relation to the audience, and how these ways affect the audience's perception of the advertisement, which will be an integral part of the analysis of the present study in order to showcase how the advertisement aims to appeal to its viewers.

### 3.3.3 Thematic Analysis

In the present study, I will utilise methods of thematic analysis to discover how social media audiences respond to the narratives of femininity presented in the two advertisements. Moreover, the thematic analysis will also reveal the different recurring views on the promotion of products through said narratives. Using thematic analysis will allow me to identify recurring patterns in the data, thus allowing me to group frequently appearing views together from a pool of a rather large amount of data. For the purposes of this study, this method will make it easier to qualitatively examine the vast amount of responses the two advertisements have received to discuss the most frequent categories of responses in more detail.

Thematic analysis is about identifying and analysing patterns, or themes, from a pool of data (Aronson, 1994: 1; Braun & Clarke, 2006: 79). It is often used in analysing and describing qualitative data. Although it can be complemented by quantitative data, the analytic tool is qualitative in essence, as it requires the researcher's involvement and interpretation (Braun & Clarke, 2006: 80; Guest et al., 2012: 9). Instead of explicitly counting the frequency of certain words, for instance, the focus is rather on identifying themes and describing and discussing them (Guest et al., 2012: 9). According to Guest et al. (2012: 11), in thematic analysis, it is important to consistently be able to provide data evidence of the interpretations made.

The thematic analysis of the data of the present study will be grounded in a contextualist method, which means that the meanings derived from the data will be subject to the individual audience member's own experiences as well as to the broader social context surrounding the viewers and the advertisements (Braun & Clarke, 2006: 81).

Braun and Clarke (2006: 82) define themes as patterned occurrences of response in a set of data. Moreover, themes are relevant in terms of the research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2006: 82). Due to the amount of data and the research questions at hand, I will conduct a rich description of the data set instead of a detailed account of one particular aspect. This is done to provide an overview of the most prominent themes found from the set of data (Braun & Clarke, 2006: 83). The thematic groups will be listed and described by paraphrasing their most common content, but direct quotes will also be included as examples, as suggested by Aronson (1994: 1).

According to Braun and Clarke (2006: 83) there are two primary ways of thematic analysis, which are inductive and theoretical thematic analysis. While inductive thematic analysis is data-driven in that research questions may emerge from the data analysed, theoretical thematic

analysis aims to find answers to specific ready-made research questions from the set of data at hand by examining pieces of data in more detail (Braun & Clarke, 2006: 83, 84). The present study will be based on inductive thematic analysis, as the aim is to conduct a rich description of the entire data set, thus identifying prominent themes rather than aiming to answer specific research questions, as is customary with theoretical thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006: 84). However, the research questions will be taken into account when compiling the thematic groups, although this will be done on a more general level to make a distinction between responses to the advertisements and responses to promotion of products through the advertisements.

The themes will be analysed on a latent level, meaning that I will not only take into consideration the semantic content of the responses, in other words, what the viewers have written, but also analyse their responses on a deeper level by aiming to identify any underlying ideologies or reasonings behind their responses (Braun & Clarke, 2006: 84). I believe this to be a useful level of analysis in the present study, as it links the semantic content of the responses to the cultural and societal context surrounding it, thus providing more information on the reasons behind the viewers' opinions.

Although thematic analysis is a useful tool for describing and interpreting qualitative data, it has also been critiqued for its issues related to reliability (Guest et al., 2012: 10). As the interpretations are made by the researcher, they can never be entirely objective, as researchers implicitly and unconsciously interpret and define the data points from a subjective perspective. Consequently, this may affect the findings of the analysis (Guest et al., 2012: 10). However, according to Guest et al. (2012: 10), these issues of reliability can be minimised by a systematic analysis.

For the means of this study, the thematic analysis method is especially useful, as it enables the collection and interpretation of larger amounts of data, such as YouTube comments. As there are hundreds of comments to analyse, forming themes of responses eases the overall discussion of the most frequent and dominant responses from the audience members by compiling a list of meanings of the responses, rather than individual comments. Moreover, a rich description of the entire set of data will provide better suited answers to the research questions than detailed analyses of just a few comments. However, I will introduce and discuss examples of all thematic groups identified from the data set to be able to produce an evidence-based analysis on a latent level.

The thematic analysis of the data of the present study will be conducted by going through the individual comments of the viewers in the comment sections of each of the two advertisements at the time of writing. In other words, all comments before the 28th of May, 2017, which is the date of collection of data.

After careful review of the comments, they will be grouped into themes based on their frequency. Due to the restrictions of this study and research economical reasons, I will focus the thematic analysis on the most common themes only, in order to be able to discuss them in great enough detail. This means leaving out comments which are not related to the research questions, such as spam.

## 4 ANALYSIS

In order to discuss the first two of the research questions of this study, I will first examine and analyse the narratives of femininity of the two advertisements, #ChooseBeautiful and #MyBeautyMySay, from a narrative and multimodal perspective. Second, I will examine the audience responses of the advertisements based on a thematic analysis of the data I have collected from the comment sections of the ads on YouTube in order to discuss the last two research questions. Furthermore, I will discuss each advertisement separately at first, before discussing any possible similarities or differences of the narrative choices made and their effects.

For research economical reasons, I will focus the analysis around a certain set of semiotic means of meaning making. These will include the modes discussed above, which are visual aspects, such as characters' looks, gaze, and colours; textual aspects, such as speech acts and written text; sounds and rhythm; and cinematic aspects, such as framing and angles. As discussed earlier, these are often the most prominent ways of meaning-making in advertising as together all these modes help in creating the story. It is important to note, however, that there are many other factors that could be analysed, but in this study, I will focus on the ones that are the most prominent to building a narrative.

I will begin the analysis with an overview of the plot of the narrative and how it proceeds. I will then move on to describe the multimodal features which play a part in creating and supporting the narrative, such as angles, colours, and music, which have also been indicated in the tabular form of the transcription. After the analysis of both of the ads, I will summarise the findings and compare the two in a separate section.

### 4.1 Multimodal construction of narratives of femininity in #ChooseBeautiful

The #ChooseBeautiful advertisement focuses around an idea of having two doorways to walk through, one that says 'average', and another one that says 'beautiful'. The setting looks to be in front of a shopping centre, with long walkways leading up to the doors. The ad shows multiple women from different backgrounds, age groups, and from different parts of the world being faced with the choice between these two doorways, as well as their thoughts on the situation, and whether they would choose differently given another chance.

In narrative terms, the ad is constructed linearly in a clear manner. In the opening scenes (Table 1), one can see a few different women walking over to the doorways, and stopping to look at

something. At this point, the signs above the doors are not shown yet, leaving the viewer curious about what it is that has everyone stopping and looking. While the women look towards the doorways, a voiceover says “It was my choice and now I will question myself for the next few weeks, maybe months”, setting the scene for a choice to have to be made before entering the building. Based on this quote, it can be determined that whatever the choice is, it is not an easy one and has a real impact on the person saying it, and most likely on other people who are faced with the same choice. This gives the question posed more power, as it underlines how important of a question it is to one’s sense of self. Moreover, all of the women seen in the opening scenes have serious and confused facial expressions, further supporting the notion of a thought-provoking question being asked. The aforementioned quote also shows how the narrative of the ad is carried by the actions of the characters, and their reactions to those actions.

Time	Frame	Shot	Text	Soundtrack
0:00 - 0:05		High angle long shot follows an African American woman walking and stopping to look at something.	-	Light rhythmic piano music, no melody, just chords.
0:05 - 0:07		Medium shot, eye-level angle of Indian two women looking at something and talking.	Voiceover: “It was my choice--”	Voiceover begins.
0:07 - 0:09		Medium shot, eye-level angle of an Asian woman walking towards a door.	“-- and now I will question myself --”	↓
0:09 - 0:11		Mid shot, eye-level angle of a still Caucasian woman looking into the camera.	“for the next few weeks, maybe months”	↓

Table 1.

As two signs above the doorways are revealed, another voiceover explains how everyone walking through was confronted with the choice of the two doorways (Table 2). The choice is between a doorway that says ‘average’ and another saying ‘beautiful’, implying that whoever walks through either of the door, identifies themselves with said description. The different doorways are then shown having been put up in many different parts of the world from San Francisco to London and Delhi. This suggests that the question posed, how people see themselves, as average or as beautiful, is universal.

Early on it can also be realised, that the advertisement only features women walking through the doorways, suggesting that it is not only about women, but also directed to female viewers. This choice of audience targeting also shows how the ad is most likely meant to pose the same question to the audience as well, making them relate to the characters and think about the choices they would make in a similar situation. All of this sets the initial stage of the narrative, the issue of defining oneself based on the two alternatives given.

Time	Frame	Shot	Text	Soundtrack
00:23-00:25		High angle long shot with two women, an African American and a Caucasian, walking.	Another voiceover: "We had an option of two pathways to walk--"	↓
00:26-00:28		Eye-level long shot from behind the same two women, showing them walking towards the doors with the signs above.	"-- and they led to two doorways"	↓
00:29-00:30		Wide shot of the two doorways in different parts of the world, one shot zooming in and one tilting up to reveal the doorways.	-	↓

*Table 2.*

The advertisement continues to show a dozens of women walking through the average door but also has some of the women explain how they felt about the situation they were faced with, and why they chose to walk through the average door instead of the one saying beautiful (see







examples in Table 3). The explanations are often shown in an interview format, by having the woman in question talking to a non-diegetic interviewer, one who is not actually shown or heard in the advertisement itself. This allows the viewer to get a glimpse into the subjective mind of the character, in other words, why the character acts in the way she does, and how she reacts to the events occurring. As stated by Bordwell and Thompson (1997: 105) this is a common way of bringing the characters closer to the audience in filmmaking. It adds an emotional value to the message of the advertisement, which appeals to viewers as being relatable. However, the women do not talk straight to the camera, but look at the non-diegetic interviewer. This way the focus stays on the characters and their thoughts instead of forming a relationship between the character and the viewer by having the character address the viewer by looking into the camera.

In addition to the gaze that goes past the camera, the angles of the shots support the narratives created. As can be seen in Table 2, there are varying angles from a bird-eye view high angle, which places the viewer above the characters and events of the advertisement, to eye-level wide and medium shots of the women. The starting point is always at a wide high or medium angle, usually showing the women walk through the doors, but not really showing their faces or other identifiable features (Table 2). As they walk through the doors, the angle is usually eye-level and straightforward, showing the women's faces, as if to see what their expressions look like walking in through the door of their choice (Table 3). Lastly, there is an eye-level interview scene from a mid or close up shot, as if to bring the viewer closer to the character and their thoughts (Table 3).

Almost every one of the women are seen explaining how they did not feel comfortable with the choice that they had made. Many also point out that their choice was not necessarily based on what they truly thought of themselves, but rather on what they believe society to define them as. This adds another dimension to the advertisement's message: not only do the women have to define themselves through these two attributes, but they are also lead to think about where their decision derives from, themselves or the outside world. This is an important factor to consider in terms of the ad's message. As the advertisement aims to empower all women, regardless of age, ethnicity or size to view themselves as beautiful, realising that the concept of beauty is a social construct is a pivotal step in accepting that everyone is beautiful.

Through the narrative of this ad, one can see how the women of the ad start to realise this as the advertisement progresses, for example in the examples in Table 3 below. Moreover, for the

viewer this is emphasised even more so by presenting so many women from different parts of the world facing the same issue of self-image. As can be seen in Table 3 below, there are Afro-Caribbean, Asian, Caucasian and Indian women, among others, represented in the advertisement. Furthermore, the women are of different ages as well, yet they all have experienced the same struggle. This diverse set of women further supports the underlying message of female empowerment, beauty and unity, despite varying appearances, ages and backgrounds.

Time	Frame	Shot	Text	Soundtrack
00:48-00:52		Mid and medium shots of the same woman walking through the 'average' door.	"I went through the average door"	↓
00:53-00:57		An eye-level, interview-style medium shot of the same woman talking with her friend.	"Oh really?" "Yeah" "Oh, my Gosh" "yeah, I didn't even hesitate"	↓
00:57-01:08		Medium shot of an Asian woman walking towards the doors, then panning out to a long shot of her walking through the average door.	[in a foreign language] "Beautiful to me it's too far away out of reach. I chose average."	↓
01:09-01:17		Medium shot of a Brazilian woman looking at the doorways, then long shot of her walking towards the 'average' doorway, and a short close up of her being interviewed.	[in foreign language] "I regretted my choice because it was different from what I live from who I am."	Violins start getting stronger




01:18-01:31		High-angle long shot of a Caucasian woman walking towards the doorways, mid shot of her stopping, close up of her interview, and a mid shot of her walking through the 'average' door.	"Am I choosing because of what's constantly bombarded at me, what I'm being told that I should accept, or am I choosing because that is what I really believe?"	↓
01:32-01:35		A long shot of an Indian woman walking through the 'average' door, and a close up of her interview.	"I walked in the door which said average and I didn't feel really good after that--"	↓
01:35-01:42		A high angle long shot of a group of women and girls walking through the 'average' door.	"--because obviously, I had rated myself average and nobody else."	↓


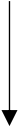
*Table 3.*

After introducing the main issue at hand and showcasing how many women feel they should choose the average door, the advertisement takes a different turn. After a stream of women are shown defining themselves as average, the ad shows women walking through the beautiful door. For most of these women, however, it seems to be a deliberate decision instead of their first instinct. Moreover, in most of these cases, the women do not choose the beautiful door themselves, but are guided to the door by another woman, be it their friend or mother, for example. For those who choose the beautiful door on their own, it seems to be an unusual decision, almost as if it was a special occasion (see examples in Table 4).

These examples showcase how women are often prone to undermining their own looks, yet other women think the opposite, and would do what they can to make the other realise their own beauty. Yet again, this underlines how the women of the ad feel the need for someone else's approval before defining themselves as 'beautiful', rather than simply choosing it on their own. This approval may come in the form of someone else guiding them to the beautiful door

or someone else telling them they are beautiful (see Table 4). This level of uncertainty and need for outside support is rather characteristic of the traditional, normative femininities represented in old Western media where women were showcased as shy and even submissive, as discussed above. Yet, the example in Table 4, with the woman of the first frame saying “Every day I go through the average door but yesterday was a unique day so I chose to go through the beautiful one.” showcase agency, independency and action, which are more common features of representations of women in modern, post-feminist discourse. By adding features like this, the advertisement creates interesting combinations of old and new narratives of femininity.

Time	Frame	Shot	Text	Soundtrack
01:51-02:04		A high angle long shot of a Brazilian woman walking towards the doors, then a medium shot of her walking towards the 'beautiful' door, and a long shot of her walking through the door.	[in a foreign language, subtitled] “Every day I go through the average door but yesterday was a unique day so I chose to go through the beautiful one.”	The piano and violins start playing again.
02:05-02:17		A Caucasian woman is walking towards the building with her daughter and her friends, pulling the younger girls to the 'beautiful' door instead of the 'average one'.	“I wanted to go through the average door but my mum just pulled me over to the beautiful door.”	↓
02:17-02:28		High angle long shots and mid shots of an Indian woman pushing another Indian woman in a wheelchair on the pathway leading to the 'average' door, noticing the signs and going back for them to take the other pathway towards the 'beautiful' door.	-	↓






02:28-02:29		An eye-level mid shot of an Indian woman pushing her friend through the 'beautiful' door.	-	
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*Table 4.*

When interviewing the ones who walked through the beautiful door, the responses about how the women felt afterwards are significantly different from the ones who walked through the average door. This adds to the storyline of the narrative, showing how the women learn a lesson and have a change in knowledge after the so-called experiment of having to choose. As a result of choosing beautiful, they feel empowered and 'triumphant'. However, the women who at first chose the average door are also shown stating that they would choose to walk through the beautiful door if they were given another chance, thus ending the narrative on a revelation that everyone should see themselves as beautiful (see Table 5). Moreover, the facial expressions of the women are also significantly different when the women are talking about choosing average and when they are saying that given another chance they would choose beautiful. Where as in the former case they look pensive, some even sad, in the latter case they are often smiling (compare Tables 3 and 5). This change also signals character, and subsequently plot, development of the narrative as at the start the women seem insecure, as if they are questioning themselves, thus giving the plot a starting point. However, after the series of events of the advertisement, the women are all depicted happy, resolving the plot of the advertisement through a new found sense of self-love or appreciation.

It is interesting to note, however, that when the women are interviewed by themselves, they are more likely to state that they would walk through the beautiful door with pride, but in cases where they are interviewed with someone else (see part 03:01-03:06 of Table 5) there is, yet again, noticeable hesitation about "admitting" to thinking that they are beautiful. Again, the other woman is seen giving her approval saying "You can [walk through the beautiful door]". This supports the notion that although women themselves might define themselves as beautiful, it is other people's and society's opinions and standards that they mirror when defining themselves in cases where other people might hear them. In other words, they are more careful about calling themselves beautiful, as they might be considered vain or full of themselves, or because they think other people might not agree. Yet again, this falls in line with the traditional view of femininity as submissive and shy, rather than the post-feminist style of strong,

independent and confident femininities. The advertisement in question, however, tries to break through this habit by inspiring the women to celebrate their beauty, even in front of other people. This is shown by having the signs in a public space, in plain sight for anyone to see what the women choose.

Time	Frame	Shot	Text	Soundtrack
02:45-02:50		An eye-level medium shot of an Asian woman being interviewed.	(in a foreign language, subtitled)  "Given another chance I would choose beautiful."	↓
02:50-02:54		An eye-level medium shot of an Afro-Caribbean woman being interviewed.	"I think I would walk through the beautiful door. Yeah."	↓
02:54-03:01		An eye-level medium shot of a Brazilian woman being interviewed.	[in foreign language, subtitled]  "I think the beautiful door is completely open for me."	↓
03:01-03:06		An eye-level medium shot of two Afro-Caribbean women being interviewed.	"Maybe-- maybe I could walk in that door."  "You can."	↓
03:06-03:11		An eye-level medium shot of an Indian woman being interviewed.	"Next time I look in the mirror I will see somebody really beautiful looking back at me."	↓



03:11-03:23		Several high angle mid shots of women and girls of all types walking in through the beautiful door.	Voiceover: "Beautiful is a great word so why not see what's on the other side of that."	Voiceover finishes. Music continues.
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*Table 5.*

Furthermore, the narrative of the advertisement is further supported by the choice of music. As the narrative is rather soft in nature, discussing the women's inner thoughts about their looks, thus showcasing their possible insecurities, the choice of music also supports the feel of the advertisement. The light piano and violins keep the atmosphere light and soft, which suits the narrative better than more aggressive music. Moreover, as the advertisement ends on a positive, uplifting note, so does the music, which seems to get more rhythm from the violins as the advertisement progresses. This helps uplift the feel of the advertisement towards the end, leaving the viewer with positive emotions.

The softness of the advertisement also comes across in the choices of colours. As can be seen from the examples above, the colours chosen are rather neutral and light, with pastel shades. The colours have a light hue to them throughout the advertisement instead of rough contrasts, which further enhances the other multimodal choices made.

Lastly, the ad ends with the campaign hashtag #ChooseBeautiful, the company logo, and finally a call to action for the viewers, asking them "What would you choose?". This interactive survey asks the viewer to make the same choice as the women in the ad had to make, thus aiming to bring the issue at hand even closer to the viewer and thus ending the narrative (Table 6).

Although Dove does not exactly promote any of their products in the main part of the ad, the call-to-action is a clear way of promoting the brand by trying to connect with the viewer. At this point the viewer has mostly likely already thought about what he or she would do in a similar position, and is likely to respond. It is also likely that the viewer may have developed some sort of an emotional response to the advertisement and the women in it, thus maybe relating these emotions to Dove as a brand, as well as their products, making it a name that sticks to their minds. Moreover, by taking part and responding to which door they would choose, they are directed to a landing page on one of Dove's websites, where they can learn more about the campaign. This way the viewer is drawn to learn more and thus develop a

positive relationship of sorts with Dove, where trust is built through sharing similar values and beliefs.

Relating the message beyond the advertisement also builds the narrative even more, as anyone is invited to think about the same issues as the characters of the ad. By distributing the ad on YouTube and other social media, it has the potential of reaching more parts of the world, thus supporting its message of unity and everyone sharing the same problems.

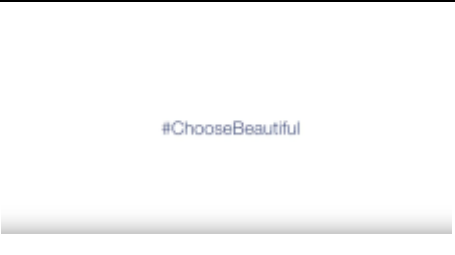


03:23-03:27		Campaign hashtag on a white base.	Text on screen: "#ChooseBeautiful"	↓
03:27-03:30		Company name and logo.	Text on screen: "Dove"	↓
03:31-03:40		Interactive survey for audience of which description they would choose, 'beautiful' or 'average'.	Text on screen: "What would you choose? Beautiful. Average."	Music fades out.

Table 6.

#### 4.2 Multimodal construction of narratives of femininity in #MyBeautyMySay



Dove's #MyBeautyMySay advertisement tells the story of nine women of different ages, ethnic backgrounds and professions. Each of the women have had other people telling them what to do and how to look like, and in this ad, they get a chance to debunk these comments other people have made about them, and define themselves in their own terms. The advertisement carries on Dove's overall campaign message of defining beauty in one's own terms.





At the start of the narrative, the women are introduced as vague characters, accompanied by what other people have said about them (Table 7). No faces are shown completely, but rather just blurry close up shots and mid shots of the women living their everyday lives. This



represents how the viewer does not know the character yet at the start of the narrative. At the beginning of the ad, the characters describe the initial problem, or the starting point, of the narrative which is other people's definitions and expectations of them. For example, the first character, a woman called Heather, is a boxer who has been told that she is too pretty to fight, and has had people assuming she simply is not able to fight well because she is good-looking (see Table 7). All of the characters of the ad have similar problems of other people making assumptions of their capabilities or looks based only on what they see.

Each of the characters are introduced separately, usually facing away from the camera (see Table 7). Instead of showing the women speaking, there is a voiceover explaining what they have been told by other people. This emphasises how it is not the women's own voice, but rather someone else's, although the voiceover is of the woman in question. The words and opinions of other people have even more emphasis when they are said by the woman in question, which in a way represents the way in which people do not often realise that the things they say about other people. stay with those people for much longer than maybe intended.

Time	Frame	Shot	Text	Soundtrack
00:00-00:01		Low angle close up shot of a Caucasian woman boxing.		Rhythmic and fast drum music.
00:01-00:03		An eye-level mid shot of the same woman boxing.	"They said I was too pretty to fight."	A woman's voiceover starts.  Music continues.
00:03-00:04		An eye-level mid shot of the woman walking.	"Aw she can't fight."	↓

00:04-00:05		A high angle close-up of the woman putting boxing gloves on.	"You're going to mess up that beautiful--"	↓
00:05-00:05		A low angle, blurry close-up of the woman's hand and face.	"--face."	↓
00:05-00:07		An eye-level mid shot of a Latin, overweight woman walking outside.	"They said I was too fat."	↓
00:07-00:09		A low angle close up of the same woman.	"Only skinny girls can dress well."	↓




*Table 7.*

As the advertisement progresses, the viewer gets to see more and more of the women, and instead of “watching from the outside in”, so to speak, the viewer is addressed and challenged as the women talk straight to the camera, or in other words, to the viewer, instead of having a non-diegetic voiceover. It is at this point that the women say what they feel instead of accounting for what other people think, which is why the choice of a shift between a non-diegetic voiceover with blurry images and a diegetic speaker looking straight at the viewer gets the point across more efficiently and builds on the advertisement’s narrative. This shift also makes a clear distinction between other people’s voice and the women’s own voices.

As opposed to Dove’s #ChooseBeautiful advertisement, #MyBeautyMySay does not provide the characters with set attributes to define themselves by. Instead, the women are given a chance to describe themselves as they see themselves one by one, and to emphasise the aspects they want to bring to people’s attention. Thus, the narrative progresses the same way for each character. Additionally, the women are taking negative comments made by other people (see

Table 8), and spinning them around to their advantage, thus taking control of their own selves and defining beauty on their own terms, instead of conforming to other people's definitions of beauty.

The advertisement shows a rather diverse set of women of different ages, sizes, ethnicities and professions, and thus also the negative comments the women have faced are fairly diverse (see Table 8). What is notable about the ad, however, is that although the women speak about these negative comments, they are not presented in a self-victimising way but rather in an empowering manner. This comes across through the choices made in the filming and editing of the advertisement. For example, many shots are from an eye-level or low angle, giving power to the women in relation to the viewer, as opposed to high angles, where the viewer would be 'placed' higher to the characters, as if looking down on them. This creates a sense of equality and strength. In addition, the variation between close up and mid shots shows how the women are not hiding anything (see Table 8). Moreover, the soundtrack is rhythmic, fast-paced music instead of a melancholic low tempo track, which further gives the impression that the women are empowered, active agents in their own lives. Had the soundtrack been more melancholic, it could have entirely changed the way the women of the advertisement are seen as well.

Time	Frame	Shot	Text	Soundtrack
00:07-00:09		A low angle close up of the same woman.	"Only skinny girls can dress well."	↓
00:09-00:12		An eye-level mid shot of a woman walking to the window and setting her bag down.	[in a foreign language, subtitled] "They look at me head to toe. How can she be a lawyer?"	↓
00:12-00:13		An eye-level mid shot of an elderly woman looking out a window.	"They said I didn't dress for my age."	↓

00:14-00:15		A low angle close up shot of a Caucasian woman, tilting down from her face to her hands.	"They said my nose was too prominent."	
00:16-00:17		An eye-level mid shot of an androgynous woman walking down a street.	"They said I was too masculine."	

*Table 8.*

The ad continuously emphasises the problem, or conflict of the story, which is how other people have defined the characters of the ad. This can be seen, for example, in the example in Table 9, where the ad moves from the starting point of introducing the problem, to the characters refusing to be defined by anyone else's opinions or expectations of what they should be like. At this point, the women use pronouns, such as 'he', 'she', and 'they' in describing what has been said about them, while the moving image shows them from an outsider's perspective. Once the women start to refuse the statements made about them, they are shown looking straight into the camera, as if they were talking to the viewer. Additionally, at this point the pronoun used becomes 'you', for example in the scene at 00:39-00:41, where one of the women, Rain, says "You're not me, I'm me". By doing so, the viewer is taken in to the world of the ad, rather than just having them looking in from the outside. This creates a very compelling way of telling the women's stories, which is likely to appeal to the viewer's emotions.

It is also at this point that one of the characters, Marcia, first uses the pronoun 'I', in saying "I said no way" (see 00:37-00:38 in Table 9). This implies a shift in the narrative as it the first indicator of moving on from other people's statements to the women's own beliefs. Moreover, up until this scene the shots have had a lot of movement, they have been blurry so that the women's faces are not shown very clearly, and the women have not spoken with their own voice. Thus, this is quite clearly a turning point in the ad. Not only is it a more still shot of a woman speaking straight to the camera and addressing the issue by refusing to define herself through other people's opinion, the music also stops in this scene, emphasising the speech act's importance. It is after this that music comes back with a slower, yet strong beat, to give more room to what the women have to say.

Time	Frame	Shot	Text	Soundtrack
00:36-00:36		An eye-level, blurry close up shot of a Latin woman.	"He said."	↓
00:36-00:37		An eye-level long shot of a Latin, overweight woman.	"They said." "She said."	↓
00:37-00:38		An eye-level medium shot of a Caucasian woman talking to the camera.	"I said no way."	Music stops at the beginning of the shot.  Music with a stronger but slower beat starts in between current and following shots.
00:39-00:41		An eye-level close up of a Caucasian, androgynous woman talking to the camera.	"You're not me, I'm me."	↓
00:41-00:44		A low angle medium shot of a Caucasian woman looking at the camera.	"I'm not gonna be defined by anyone's expectations."	↓



*Table 9.*

In addition to the core message of the ad, #MyBeautyMySay builds an empowering narrative of femininity, or femininities, to be more specific. Whereas before post-feminism media advertisements have provided us with fairly normative representations of femininity, this ad takes a different approach. This is done by showcasing and even celebrating women of all ages, sizes, and ethnic backgrounds, as well as by showing them in different roles. In addition, the


women themselves underline how the way they look does not impact their capabilities in different lines of work, for example. These supposedly unconventional hybrid femininities of a beautiful boxer and lawyer, an overweight fashion blogger, and an androgynous model all support the message of the ad, which is that there are all kinds of women, and one kind should not be more acceptable than the other.

The theme of femininity underlies every stage of the narrative. For example, in the beginning of the ad, at 00:22 (see example in Table 10) one of the women, Rain, says that she has been called ‘boyish’ and ‘ugly’, and “When they were talking about female, they weren’t talking about me”. This is one of the main parts where a question of “what is femininity” can be raised, and the advertisement itself clearly aims to change the norms of what we perceive as feminine through means of diverse characters who would not necessarily fit into the category of normative femininities.

In addition, one of the other women, Elizabeth, says “This was not pretty” when talking about her curly, textured hair (see Table 10). Based on this, it can be assumed that ‘pretty’ is considered to mean finer, straighter hair, for example. These comments show how normative realisations of femininity are the most prominent even in today’s world, and if one’s looks are ‘outside the norm’ they are not considered as feminine. In other words, feminine is seen to mean words like ‘pretty’, ‘elegant’ and ‘put together’, which is why, for example, Rain feels that others do not see her as feminine because of her androgynous looks, and Elizabeth feels that because of her ‘crazy hair’, she is not seen as pretty by others.

Time	Frame	Shot	Text	Soundtrack
00:22-00:23		An eye-level close up shot of a Caucasian, androgynous woman talking to the camera.	“Boyish and ugly [laughs].”	↓
00:23-00:25		A low angle close up shot of the same woman looking up.	“When they were talking about female, they weren’t talking about me.”	↓




00:25-00:26		An eye-level mid shot of an African American woman standing outside.	"This was not pretty."	↓
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*Table 10.*

The narrative does not only build representations of femininity in terms of how women look, but also in terms of women's roles in society. As mentioned above, the advertisement also tackles prejudices against conventionally beautiful women, who have often been portrayed as weak or dumb in advertising and media in the past before post-feminism. For example, Heather's story is about how people have told her that she is "too pretty to fight", while Marcia has been viewed as "too beautiful to be a lawyer" by others. The implication here is that conventionally feminine women cannot be intelligent or strong. Both of these women are seen contradicting this notion by emphasising that their looks do not define what they can or cannot do (Table 11). In relation, the advertisement also features fashion blogger Jessica, who has been told that she is "too fat", and that "only skinny girls can dress well". Despite of these supposed conventions of how a fashion blogger should look like in order to be taken seriously in her line of work, Jessica also states how her "style is one hundred percent unapologetic" and that her looks do not define her capabilities (Table 11).

By bringing forth these capabilities, the advertisement suggests that if a woman is normatively feminine, she cannot be talented in any other profession than ones involving looks, such as fashion and blogging. Similarly, if a woman is not considered normatively feminine, it is assumed that she cannot succeed in lines of work that are focused around attractiveness. This again shows how the ad's focal point is in breaking the norms of what femininity means and the narrative built around this question showcases diverse forms of femininities in order to get the point across.

Time	Frame	Shot	Text	Soundtrack
00:48-00:50		A low angle mid shot of a Caucasian woman talking to the camera.	"'Cause my face has nothing to do with my boxing."	↓

00:51-00:53		An eye-level close up shot of the woman playing with a boxing toy and looking at the camera.	"I'm ranked number one in the country and number two in the world."	↓
00:53-00:57		An eye-level medium shot of a Latin, overweight woman with her dog, looking at the camera.	"As a fashion blogger my style is one hundred percent unapologetic."	↓
00:57-00:58		An eye-level medium shot of a Latin woman talking to the camera.	"I don't wanna change my teeth."	↓
00:58-01:01		An eye-level close up shot of a Caucasian woman looking into the camera.	"My looks have nothing to do with my capabilities."	↓

Table 11.

### 4.3 Discussion of narratives of femininity

Although both of the ads carry a very similar message, their narratives have been constructed fairly differently. Whereas #ChooseBeautiful shows women struggling with how they perceive themselves, depicting them as insecure about their looks, #MyBeautyMySay features women who have strong views of who they are as individuals and what makes them beautiful. Furthermore, #ChooseBeautiful is more about women's inner battle with their self-image, whereas #MyBeautyMySay is about the effect of other people's words on women's self-image. These differences in the advertisements' approaches largely also impact their differences in narratives.

One of the most noticeable differences with the two advertisements is that #ChooseBeautiful only introduces two superimposed attributes, 'average' and 'beautiful' for the women to describe themselves with, while #MyBeautyMySay gives the women a chance to describe



themselves through any attributes they themselves deem as valuable. These attributes can be related to their looks, or their capabilities. It is also worth noting that the characteristics the women of #MyBeautyMySay were described with by other people were always connected to the way they looked, which supports the advertisement's message of people judging each other based on their looks, without knowing how the other person is actually like. This is evident, for instance, in the case of Heather, a talented boxer who other people only see as "too pretty to fight". The women, on the other hand, do not just define themselves based on their looks. This is a crucial difference in comparison to #ChooseBeautiful, where the women do not have a choice but to define themselves through their looks.

Multimodally the two advertisements were also constructed quite differently. Whereas in #ChooseBeautiful many of the shots were from high and eye-level angles, in #MyBeautyMySay low and eye-level angles were preferred. This might say something about the relation between the viewer and the characters in both ads. As discussed above, in #MyBeautyMySay the choices made in terms of angles and framing affected the way the characters were positioned in relation to the viewer, they were equal or the characters could even have some level of power. However, as #ChooseBeautiful was filmed almost as if it was a documentary, with plenty of high angles, it positions the viewer to look down on the characters. This does not necessarily mean that the viewer is more powerful per se, but it does give the impression of the viewer following the events from a distance.

Furthermore, the colours of the advertisements are also quite different. Whereas #ChooseBeautiful uses very neutral, soft colours, #MyBeautyMySay has many stronger and deeper colours. The colour choices indicate the general feel of the advertisements, as #ChooseBeautiful is meant to be an emotional, relatable advertisement but not in an aggressive way. Thus, neutral colours work better with the advertisement's intentions, whereas the bolder colours of #MyBeautyMySay complement the empowering message of the advertisement and its more aggressive nature.

Both of the advertisements had quite a diverse set of women in terms of ethnic backgrounds, ages, professions and looks. This allowed for many different types of femininities to be showcased, although in #MyBeautyMySay these differences seem more emphasised and celebrated than in #ChooseBeautiful. This may be because there are less characters, allowing the viewer to get to know the fewer characters better than the multitude of women in #ChooseBeautiful. As the viewer learns more about the women, he or she is more likely to also

acknowledge the differences in the femininities they represent, whereas with #ChooseBeautiful everyone has the same issue or question to answer, instead of them each explaining exactly what their personal view is behind why, for instance, they would describe themselves as average over beautiful. In addition, the women of #ChooseBeautiful all look seemingly normatively feminine compared to #MyBeautyMySay's representations of women.

This also relates to the narratives built. While #ChooseBeautiful unites all of the women by showcasing how we all share the same feelings and problems in terms of our looks, it does not share enough information about the thoughts and feelings of each woman to build a strong, personal narrative of their stories. However, in #MyBeautyMySay, it is exactly the clear, personal stories and feelings that are the driving forces of the narrative. Thus, it could be argued that in #ChooseBeautiful the narrative is driven by the volume of people going through the same experience, while #MyBeautyMySay is driven by the characters personal attributes.

However, despite some of their differences, both of the advertisements invite the viewers to take part in the narrative by sharing their own experiences about the topic. Both advertisements also succeed in this, as many viewers shared their feelings about the topic in the videos' comment sections, as will be discussed below.

#### **4.4 Audience responses to #ChooseBeautiful**

When discussing how the advertisements have been received by their audiences, it is important to examine their written responses in more detail. As the two advertisements are on YouTube, I have chosen to analyse the comment sections of both ads on the video streaming site, to gather an overview of the most common reactions to both the question of how the narratives of femininity suggested by the ads were received and how the promotion of products through said narratives were reacted to. This was done by manually going through each comment and placing them in thematic groups based on their frequency, as discussed above.

The first advertisement, #ChooseBeautiful, had received over 1 400 comments at the time of data collection, May 28<sup>th</sup> 2017, most of them ranging from 5 to 24 months old. Although the ad has received many comments, most of the comments are similar in nature and thus naturally form categories related to the research questions. After inspecting the data multiple times, the categories I formed based on their frequency are *suggestions on improving the experiment*, *audience members relating to characters' situation*, *emotional responses*, *contemplation of*

*society's norms*, and finally *audience's reactions to promotion of products through the ad*. Each of these five categories, along with examples, is discussed in more detail below.

### **Suggestions on improving the experiment**

#ChooseBeautiful received a number of comments suggesting ways to improve the advertisement. For example, viewers thought that the advertisement's message would have come across better had the average door been locked so that even the ones trying to go through the door, would not have been able to, but would rather have had to end up choosing the beautiful door. In some of the audience's point of view, this would have brought the core message of 'everyone is beautiful' forward better.

However, it would appear that the point of the advertisement was for the women to come to the same realisation on their own, rather than by being forced to go through the beautiful door by having the average door locked. This way they would have to consciously think about the reasons behind their choice and justify it to themselves, instead of simply having to walk through because there was no other way.

Additionally, this internal debate that the women of the advertisement go through is a crucial part of the narrative of the advertisement, as it provides the overall plot characteristic differences, making it more diverse and also more relatable. This aspect, however, was not discussed by the audience members who wished for a different kind of an experiment.

An even larger number of people thought that the attributes chosen for the experiment could have been different. For example, one comment said:

“Disappointed in media influencing superficiality. What about strength and intelligence. Why isn't average just as good as beautiful? Why can't they be the same? People are average and beautiful at the same time and there's nothing wrong with either one of those things. Why not think about something important?”

This was seen as one of the most problematic features of the advertisement. A number of viewers thought that focusing on looks was troublesome, although some defended the advertisement by explaining how Dove's Real Beauty campaign is about making women accept and celebrate their looks, which is why it is important to make women realise that anyone can be beautiful. Although the attributes emphasised were in line with the ad's core message, the advertisement received some backlash for not including attributes related to capabilities or talents over looks. Thus, much of the critique was about the advertisement only focusing on

femininity in terms of looks, and although the advertisement featured a diverse set of women from all over the world, and subsequently diverse femininities, it was not enough for the viewers who wished that the narratives of femininity would have included indicators of capabilities and talent as well.

Moreover, some viewers would have been interested in knowing how men would have reacted in this same experiment. In fact, they wondered why Dove has not included men in their Real Beauty campaigns, explaining how men can also have the same issues and insecurities about their looks.

### **Audience members relating to characters' situation**

Another prominent thematic group of comments was audience members' comments relating themselves to the advertisement's characters' situation. A number of, especially female, audience members could relate to the advertisement and explained in their comments how they would have reacted in a similar situation. Many of these comments also explained reasons behind why they would have chosen one way or the other. Most of these comments, however, admitted that they, too, would have chosen the average door. This shows how the advertisement succeeded in being relatable to its target audience.

In some cases, however, going through the average door was not necessarily seen as a sign of having a low level of self-esteem, but rather as a sign of recognition of the fact that the experiment focused on looks, and while they did not feel like they could choose beautiful for themselves look-wise, they emphasised the fact that they have other attributes worth celebrating. For instance, one comment said:

“I'd boldly go through the average door. I know I'm not pretty, and I'm okay with it. I can guarantee you that you will not find a person with thinner lips, a big nose, and unsymmetrical face. I also have an eye that droops. There IS a high beauty standard, and there are just some people who are not pretty. Why do so many people get plastic surgery if this is not true? Like I said, I'm average at best, and I'm not being humble or trying to get attention. There are just more important things in my life to worry about.”

Other comments, although fewer, had women and men saying they would walk through the beautiful door. Many of these comments also wished that other people would find the same level of self-love and acceptance as they had, and acknowledged the issue presented by the

advertisement in real life as well, even if they themselves did not experience it first-hand. For example, one comment said:

“I would walk through that beautiful door and drag my momma with me. I know that I don't have by any means a "pretty" face by social and media standards. But I am confident with myself now. But my mom still isn't. No matter what I say she never believes it, and she honestly is beautiful, and her kindness just amplifies it even more. I hope we can break these high standards because everyone truly is beautiful in their own ways.”

What seems to be a common factor in many of these comments is the recognition of social and other forms of media in creating these standards of beauty, mostly in terms of looks, that women, and men, feel unable to accomplish. Many viewers seem to feel the need to distinguish between the standards set by media, and so called ‘real life’ standards. According to many of these viewers, acceptance of oneself is realised through ignoring the standards set by media and by bringing forth the ‘real life’ standards and trying to make those standards the norm in today’s media, much like Dove is aiming to do with their advertising.

### **Emotional responses**

As can be expected, a number of viewers had strong emotional responses to the advertisement. Especially the ones who related themselves to the characters’ experiences seemed to be emotional over the message of the advertisement. A number of comments said “This made me tear up” and “This made me upset”, for instance. Most of the people who had this kind of an emotional response and who could relate to the message and see how it is a real life universal issue also praised the advertisement, and Dove along with it, for bringing the subject up for discussion in such a compelling way. One comment, for instance said:

“I love these campaigns! They really are a wonderful look at how we see ourselves. My favorite was when the mom pulled her daughter over to the beautiful door. YES! We are all beautiful and powerful. Too bad more women don't see that. Thank you for your eye opening view.”

Many viewers admitted that the advertisement felt empowering, and some even said it had them in tears because of how strongly the subject impacted them on a personal level. The reason behind this, according to most of the comments, was because it made them think about the issue from their own subjective point of view. Because the issue is such a personal matter, many felt emotional thinking about it. Another comment said:

“these ads NEVER cease to amaze me. EVER. they always evoke tears and make me REALLY think. They bring up perceptions of yourself and I see MANY times they show people their own perception is WAY to harsh. Dove sincerely inspires. I thought for a second if I was put in front of those doors (without previously knowledge) what would I have chosen. I would choose beautiful. It took me a long time to get to where I am today and there are some days I DO feel average and unattractive but I know I am beautiful flaws, fat, freckles and all. Please remember you are too! #choosebeautiful”

Most of the emotional responses were positive reactions to the advertisement, explaining how the ad made them relate to the women in it and made them think about their own body image. Although there were negative comments as well, especially in regards to the promotion of a brand and its products through this type of advertising, those comments were more analytical rather than emotional, and will be discussed below.

### **Contemplation of society’s norms**

While some had an emotional response to the ad, others took on a more analytic approach. In these cases, audience members started contemplating the choices that the women made through society’s standards and norms. For example, one of the comments said:

“Thing is nowadays thinking your "beautiful" is considered being vein. This really doesn't help with anyone's confidence because it makes you think you can never be beautiful and your always "average". It's sad to be honest”

A number of other viewers also agreed, with another comment saying:

“If you look closer, you'll see that almost every women who choose the beautiful door were not alone but with friends or family. Everyone can make its own opinion on this. Personally, i believe that women choose the average door not only because they think they aren't beautiful, but also because they fear what people would say if they go through the beautiful door. For instance "she's not beautiful", "she's boastful". I think that women, and people in general, fear a lot other's people looks, so when they are in groups, they feel stronger. Conclusion : surround yourself :)”

As discussed above, it could again be argued that the determining factor in how women, or people in general, view themselves depends on other people more than on their own beliefs. The fear of other people disagreeing or of being considered vein seems to be the main factor leading the women of both the advertisement and the audience to describe themselves as average. Thus, it would seem that many of the viewers agreed with the advertisement’s

representation of how women perceive themselves and the cases in which it is “acceptable” for women to acknowledge their own beauty.

As has also been discussed above, the main root of the issue is the social notion of beauty, in other words the standard of beauty that is propagated by media in television, magazines, online and on social platforms. It is through these standards that people mirror their own looks and subsequently define themselves as either average or beautiful. Many viewers, again, agreed with the advertisement’s representation and narrative of how this is where the issue stems from. For instance, a viewer commented:

“this is a real thought provoking ad(again by Dove) on how we perceive ourselves mostly influenced by the social notion of beauty..made me tear up a bit..”

### **Audience’s reactions to promotion of products through the ad**

Lastly, people also addressed the promotion of products through an ad, such as #ChooseBeautiful. These comments ranged from ironic “And if you want to be beautiful, buy Dove cosmetics!” to comments that go deeper into analysing why and how the advertisement has been made. One of these kind of comments said:

“They are playing on insecurities even more so than other companies. They know that there are more women in the world that are insecure about themselves than secure, so that's the market they go for.”

The vast majority of these comments discussing the promotion of products through means of empowerment of all kinds of femininities saw it as a negative marketing tactic. These viewers saw the advertisement as exploitative as it focuses on women’s insecurities. Although the ad seemingly aims to empower women to be able to eliminate these insecurities, to some the advertisement does the opposite by bringing even more attention to the reasons behind these insecurities.

Moreover, many viewers found it problematic that Dove would do this for promotional reasons. Although the advertisement does not directly aim to sell a product, it does increase brand recognition which may in turn lead to an increase in sales. This is what most of the critique is focused around.

In addition to viewers finding the promotion of products problematic through this kind of advertising, some also felt that the narrative itself was the opposite of what it aimed for. One comment, for instance, said:

“I get that Dove is a cosmetics business and everything, but the message I'm seeing here is "Women should define themselves by how they look", and I think that's pretty tasteless.”

Although Dove seemingly tries to make a point that all women are beautiful no matter what they look like and are a sum of more than just their appearance, many viewers found that the advertisement actually sends the opposite message. This comes from the fact that only attributes related to appearance are discussed in the ad. As discussed above in terms of how viewers would have improved the experiment, many thought that more focus should have been placed on other attributes relating to capabilities or interests, for example.

However, the advertisement did also receive some positive comments in relation to the brand and its promotion, with some viewers praising how the brand promotes self-love. One comment said:

“Such a beautiful message, Dove are beyond a cosmetics brand to me now, they're a self love brand :)”

All in all, it seems that the viewers fall into two major categories, those who relate to the advertisement and its narratives of femininity, and thus consider the promotion of the brand and its products through this type of advertising as acceptable, and even moving, and those who see the advertisement and brand promotion as exploitative of women's insecurities.

#### **4.5 Audience responses to #MyBeautyMySay**

Dove's more recent ad, #MyBeautyMySay had about 800 comments at the time of data collection, May 28<sup>th</sup> 2017, ranging from a couple of weeks old to 10 months old. Much like #ChooseBeautiful, the audience reactions to #MyBeautyMySay could also be thematically grouped into four distinct categories based on their frequency. These categories are *inspired audience*, *sharing stories*, *complimenting the characters of the ad*, *critique of victimisation of women* and *critique of empowerment as a marketing tactic*.

##### **Inspired audience**



The #MyBeautyMySay advertisement managed to raise a positive emotional reaction in a number of the audience members. Most comments said that the viewers felt inspired by the advertisement. It could be argued that the reason behind this is because of the personal level of the stories shared in the ad. Although the ad is rather short, under 2 minutes, it manages to let the viewer into the world of the characters in a very relatable manner.

Additionally, the advertisement received a great deal of positive feedback for addressing an issue that is reality for many women. Some viewers praised Dove for the work that they are doing in creating advertisements supporting positive body image for women of all ages, sizes and ethnicities. For instance, one comment said:

“Saw this ad on one of my favorite Youtuber's channels and was actually inspired to click. This is truly beautiful and admirable what you're doing for ladies of all walks of life. Good on you, Dove.”

Due to its relatability, a number of viewers felt that they, too, should have the confidence of the women in the ad to stand up to other people's prejudices and negative comments and celebrate their own type of femininity as it is. These audience reactions show how the advertisement addresses a universal issue, yet gives viewers something to inspire them, and possibly makes them think and act similarly to the women seen in the advertisement. One comment like this said:

“They say I'm too pretty too fat and can't have a dream well I guess I have dove to look up to for courage! GREAT VIDEOS DOVE!”

The advertisement's narrative of femininity, or femininities to be more exact, appeals to viewers as it offers a rather diverse set of femininities to relate to. With various different representations of women and femininities, it is possible for female viewers to relate themselves to all or specific characters of the advertisement.

“I just love watching these videos! They give me so much confidence to be myself :)”

However, there were also opposing views, although fewer than supporting ones, saying that there is not in fact enough diversity in the video. A few comments said that Dove focuses primarily on Caucasian, young women in their advertising, and only has a couple of representations of different ethnicities. One comment, for example, said:

“I don't see a single person I can identify with in this video. The diversity is not great. Ad producers think that if you stick one Latin looking woman in an ad that should fix it. More diversity needed - show women of every colour not just white”

### **Sharing stories**

In addition to viewers commenting how inspired they felt because of the ad, they also often shared their own experiences of what other people have told they are or should be like. Again, this shows how Dove managed to gain the attention of some audience members in a relatable way that made them want to take part in the narrative by sharing their own stories.

This category overlaps with the category of inspired audience as they both account for positive emotions and a sense of relatability. Some shared more of their story than others, but a common factor was that the viewers went through a similar narrative as the women of the ad, by first telling others what they had been told to accept by others, and then moving on to say how they felt about it and how they embrace it. For example, one comment shared the following story:

“I've had dentists tell me to cut my front teeth-to shorten them. I had a boss suggest my curly hair was not "professional". Another female boss was critical when I wore nice clothes to work (I can shop on a budget) and sneered maybe I was being paid too much at \$9 an hour. Can someone say, "Jelly". I've had people tell me to use fake tanner-so I wouldn't look so pale. I've had people tell me my nose is wrong, my face is too full. It makes me think about all the money, time and stress some of us women have wasted over the years on beauty pressures. I remember as a kid they only sold one kind of Barbie and all the beauty ads, magazines and models looked like that one Barbie for many years. It's great to see people embracing the fact that there are different kinds of beauty today. Be you. Being yourself is beautiful.”

Similarly to the narratives of femininity presented in the advertisement, some viewers also shared some non-normatively feminine stories of themselves. For example, one viewer has not been viewed as feminine because she does not like wearing earrings or carrying a purse, which are accessories often connected to a normative view of femininity, at least in the media of the Western cultures. The viewer explained:

“I love this concept. people have toll me I'm not a woman because I don't like carrying a purse or earrings that I'm not enough a woman because I'm not delicate.”

Furthermore, another viewer shares her own story of how she beat the boys at her school in arm wrestling against the odds, as the boys saw her as a “soft girl”. This is another example of the

kind of hybrid femininities Lazar (2009: 387) discusses, and which can also be seen in the advertisement itself.

“One time I saw boys arm wrestling in school and then one of them said "Oh, she can't wrestle. She's just a soft girl", so I showed them whose the softie by beating them all. Girls shouldn't be defined by they're looks. #MyBeautyMySay”

Based on these comments it is clear that the advertisement succeeds in building a relatable narrative of femininities for many women, albeit not necessarily for every woman.

### **Complimenting the characters of the ad**

Another recurring theme was viewers' comments which were focused around specific characters of the advertisement. Most of these comments would usually target exactly the things that were highlighted in the advertisement, for example in Rain's case her androgynous looks. This shows how viewers saw these characters as the real people they are, rather than as characters made up for means of promotion. Most likely this is also one of the reasons why many of the viewers could relate to the characters so well, as they saw them as genuine people with similar stories as the viewers themselves.

“Honestly, I've been obsessing over Rain all day. They're absolutely amazing and so confident.” Another reason behind audience members' direct comments at the characters could be because the characters also talk straight to the audience. This can be seen in the way the characters look at the camera when they speak with their own voice about their own feelings. This creates a connection between the characters and the viewers, which makes the viewers feel that they can direct their comments to a real person, who will understand what they mean due to possibly shared experiences. Moreover, some of the women seen in the ad had posted comments on the comment section of the video themselves, bringing them even closer to the audience, which in turn received even more comments from viewers. For example, one viewer said this to the women of the advertisement:

“your all beautiful just the way you are and I hope you never change the way you look and they can't tell you how you are suppose to look because they aren't you.”

Some women were also recognised from elsewhere as well. These women received comments from viewers who had related to their situation, either through hearing about it elsewhere or through the advertisement. These viewers usually had similar kind of problems with how their

features were received by other people, which is why relating to another woman going through the same struggle was evidently helpful to them and inspired them to have the same type of attitude about their own features. For example, one viewer thanked one of the women of the ad:

“Elizabeth came to my school once and read some of her poems to us. The poem that got me was "Hair" because I related to it the most cause we have the same hair type and people are always telling me to get it done. And now when my hair isn't done, I don't let people get to me. #MyBeautyMyStory”

### **Critique of victimisation of women**

#MyBeautyMySay received its share of negative comments as well. The biggest portion of negative comments consisted of viewers who perceived the advertisement's message to victimise the characters. According to these viewers, the advertisement does not empower women, but rather portrays them victimising themselves by saying “they said”, “he said” or “she said”, instead of simply representing women as strong without being oppressed, so to speak, by others. One viewer addressed this by commenting:

““Who are this 'they' who are always telling you what you can and can't do, and why must you present women as always being victims of 'them'? Why can't women be powerful in their own right without there being some imagined outside force oppressing them? Why must these types of adverts be framed as 'fighting back' rather than just 'fighting'?”

These comments also link this victimisation of women to feminism in a negative way and there were numerous comments accusing Dove of “feminist propaganda” also in other advertisements in addition to #MyBeautyMySay. These comments also minimized the impact of the opinions of others on one's self image and criticised how Dove encourages this type of supposed victimisation. For example, one of these comments said:

“Thank you Dove for showcasing the idea that women are incapable of dealing with opinions without making victims of themselves”

Many viewers also disagreed with the narratives being empowering for women. The viewers felt that instead of addressing other people's opinions, the women should simply not pay attention and accept themselves as they are. For instance:

“This is not how empowered women act, this is how children act. Instead of blaming every body else and claiming to be a victim of "they", instead of denying reality and claiming that you are beautiful no matter how you look, except the way you look and deal with it.”

### **Critique of empowerment as a marketing tactic**

Moreover, the advertisement was critiqued for using means of empowerment as a marketing tactic. For example, one comment said:

“You love us now, right? We've relieved you of the weight of your nagging social enfranchisements and given you our endorsement to enjoy feeling good about yourself, so you'll give us your brand loyalty now. Yes?”

These viewers felt that Dove is not genuinely interested in these issues but rather aims to endorse them to further their brand recognition and loyalty by emphasising values they know will appeal to their target audiences. Another commenter also critiqued the promotion of products through this type of advertising:

““Somewhere along the way, it has become the norm to judge women based on their appearance and use their beauty against them." Well Dove, some marketers use women's insecurities to sell them product while you... do the exact same thing from a different angle.”

However, not all of the comments relating to promotion of brand and product were negative. Although a number of viewers still acknowledged the fact that Dove is still promoting themselves through this type of advertising, they felt that the message of the advertisement was important enough to support, albeit with a sales agenda. One such viewer commented:

“I love this. 🌸 I don't care if your selling a product...thank you for the beautiful message. You didn't just plug a product, you intended something loving, kind and inspirational. Thank you for that. 🌸”

All of these reactions raise the question *how are companies supposed to market their brand or products?* Although many audience members felt that they got something positive out of the advertisement, some criticised it for using insecurities to market their brand, which, according to this opinion, is just as bad as judging women based on their appearance in the first place. Would the narrative of the advertisement have the same sort of effect or relatability if it did not provide an issue to solve and only focused on celebrating differences without a clear juxtaposition of a start and a finish?

Although this issue raised by some of the viewers is reasonable, it could be argued that the advertisement would not have the same effect emotionally, if it did not build a narrative of overcoming obstacles. These types of narratives often appeal to viewers stronger on an

emotional level as there is a sense of reward in the end, after overcoming said obstacles. This is something a simple celebration of oneself would most likely not achieve, at least in the same extent.

#### **4.6 Discussion of audience responses**

Although the two advertisements have been made to support the same core message, the ways their narratives of femininity are built and how the audiences reacted to said narratives were rather different. The most noticeable thing the reactions to the two advertisements had in common was the conversation they sparked of societal norms of beauty. In both of the comment sections, this aspect was discussed and most people felt that there is a difference between what the standard of beauty is in everyday life and what the media is presenting it to be. Many found this problematic and were pleased that companies, such as Dove, try to showcase different types of femininities in their advertising.

The audiences' reactions to the respective narratives of femininity in the two advertisements were both mostly positive, although for slightly different reasons. Whereas #ChooseBeautiful succeeded in representing a narrative of a more classic type of femininity in different parts of the world, thus appealing to women universally, #ChooseBeautiful represented a more varied set of femininities with clearer distinctions between characters. In other words, #ChooseBeautiful made many female viewers feel like they were going through the same self-image issues, and thus brought them together as one, while #MyBeautyMySay embraced individuality by introducing more complex, hybrid femininities, which in turn led to people relating to the different characters stronger and even more so as individuals.

Both advertisements succeeded in appealing to viewers in a way that made them want to take part by sharing their own thought and stories about similar issues. Moreover, the viewers with positive reactions did not seem to mind that the advertisements were also done with a promotional agenda, as they felt that the message conveyed was important enough to share either way. Thus, it could be argued that the narratives in both advertisements were built in a relatable manner and that marketing through empowerment works rather well in cases like these, even though few viewers saw this marketing tactic as controversial.

It may also be worth noting that most of the time both of the advertisements succeeded in appealing to female viewers specifically, and usually the negative comments or comments

criticising the use of empowerment, and victimisation as some would put it, often came from male audience members. This would suggest that means such as marketing through a sense of empowerment works with female audiences but not with male audiences. This may be because female viewers could relate to the advertisement and generally may feel a stronger need for inspiration from outside sources in order to feel empowered.

As discussed above, some viewers did not agree with the way the narrative of #MyBeautyMySay was constructed as they felt that it endorsed women's self-victimisation instead of representing women as strong individuals. In comparison with #ChooseBeautiful, it is interesting to see how the audience responses did not focus as largely on the victimisation of the women in the comments of the former advertisement, as they did with #MyBeautyMySay's comments. This may be because in the #ChooseBeautiful ad, the women describe themselves negatively, while in the latter all the negative comments are superimposed, coming from other people. This could explain why some audience members feel that the latter advertisement makes it seem like the women are victimising themselves by emphasising the fact that other people have said negative things about them.

However, it is worth noting that this is also the case with many of the women in the #ChooseBeautiful advertisement. The difference is that in #ChooseBeautiful, it is not explicitly stated that other people have said these negative things. However, in the advertisement it can be seen how the women themselves wonder whether how they view themselves comes from themselves or what they have been told that they should accept by other people. Thus, it would seem that some viewers deemed the explicit use of phrases such as "he said", "she said" and "they said" in #MyBeautyMySay as victimisation of the women by putting the blame on other people. This is an interesting juxtaposition between reactions to the two ads, which, essentially, carry the exact same meaning, but in which the narratives are built differently.

Moreover, narratives of the same core message were also built differently in terms of what attributes were emphasised in the two ads. As #ChooseBeautiful received quite a large number of comments about the use of 'average' and 'beautiful' as the only attributes the women could describe themselves as, viewers were mostly pleased to see that in #MyBeautyMySay the focus was not on the women's appearance anymore, but their capabilities were also celebrated. This is an example of how previous audience feedback can be used in determining ways of appealing to one's audiences in more effective ways.

## **5 DISCUSSION**

As discussed in more detail above, the two advertisements have been constructed rather differently, although they both convey the same core message of Dove's Real Beauty campaign, which is that everyone is beautiful in their own way. In order to explicitly answer the research aims and questions set in the beginning of this study, in this section, I will discuss the findings of this study in relation to the research aim and questions, as well as discuss the implications and applications of the study on a more general level, and in relation to previous research, thus compiling a thorough overview of how companies aim to appeal to their audiences through improving the semiotic and discursive resources used in advertising based on audience responses.

### **5.1 Findings in relation to the research questions**

First, I will discuss the research questions set for the study. Although many of the parts in the following discussion have been stated above in the analysis, I will summarise and discuss the findings in relation to each research question for further clarity before discussing the study's general implications and applications. The questions were as follows:

1. How are narratives of femininity constructed multimodally in Dove's two ad campaigns #ChooseBeautiful and #MyBeautyMySay?
2. How does Dove use their narratives of femininity as means of promotion?
3. How do social media audiences address the narratives of femininity suggested by the campaigns?
4. How do social media audiences address the promotion of Dove's products via their narratives of femininity?

#### **Multimodal construction of narratives of femininity**

The focus of the first question is in the multimodal construction of narratives of femininity. As stated above in the analysis section, the two advertisements shared many of the same qualities. First of all, they both go from a starting point and initial problem to a solution or revelation in the end, aspiring to inspire and empower other women. Thus, the narratives are linear, in that there is a clear sequence of cause and effect. As Abbott (2008: 41) states, this kind of causality



of events is one of the main elements of constructing a powerful narrative because of people's innate need for causality and orderliness. Secondly, the two advertisements also seem plausible in that they seemingly account the stories of real people. This means that there is enough narrative coherence to the narratives that people can believe them (Abbott, 2008: 44). Thirdly, the advertisements' narratives also fit a masterplot, or overall theme in other words, of empowerment of women, making them very compelling to female audiences (Abbott, 2008: 47). This shows in the way the narratives of the two advertisements go from a starting point of negative views to a final resolution of positivity and empowerment. All of these factors have an effect on the power of the narratives of femininity constructed in the ads, and both have been constructed relatively similarly in terms of causality, normalisation and masterplot.

However, there are also differences in the multimodal choices made in the two advertisements, as discussed above. Firstly, while #ChooseBeautiful is less aggressive in its approach, letting the viewer just follow the events as they unfold and only featuring the characters in offer images, looking away from the camera (Lirola, 2012: 498), #MyBeautyMySay challenges the viewer with demand images (Lirola, 2012: 498) where the characters gaze directly at the audience, as if asking for a reaction or response. This creates a difference in the relationship and power between the viewer and the advertisement. In #ChooseBeautiful, viewer has the power, as he or she is looking from the outside in, but in #MyBeautyMySay, the advertisement addresses the viewer, thus challenging the viewer.

Secondly, #MyBeautyMySay reveals more about its characters' individual traits by means of speech, through which various different attributes are used to describe the women, and appearance, as all of the women have distinct styles of clothing, hair and makeup, and they are also seen in their own environments. In comparison, #ChooseBeautiful groups all of the different women together by presenting them in the same environment and featuring similar comments from each woman. Moreover, the women of #ChooseBeautiful stay anonymous, whereas the names of the women in #MyBeautyMySay are shown on screen, building an even stronger sense on individuality in the narrative.

Thirdly, the colour choices between the two advertisements are drastically different. The colour choices in #ChooseBeautiful are light and soft, even pastel-like colours, which are often connected to femininity, as femininity is often linked to softness whereas masculinity is linked to hardness in many cultures around the world. However, in #MyBeautyMySay, the colours are vivid and bold, and the contrasts are stronger. This supports the other multimodal choices made

in the advertisement, such as the fast pace of the scenes, the music, and framing. They all convey a sense of boldness, whereas the multimodal choices in #ChooseBeautiful are subtler and less confronting in terms of colours, music, scenes and framing.

Fourthly, as mentioned above, the narratives differ from each other in terms of music. #ChooseBeautiful has a very light and mellow piano track, accompanied with some violins, in the background, whereas #MyBeautyMySay features a more bold, rhythmic soundtrack of drums and percussions. The music of the latter advertisement is almost aggressive and has build-ups, making it livelier than the soft music of #ChooseBeautiful. These choices in music support other multimodal choices made in creating the narratives of insecure women in #ChooseBeautiful and strong, active and bold women in #MyBeautyMySay.

As can be seen from the summary of findings above, the two advertisements construct very different narratives of femininities even though they share a similar core message of female empowerment. Furthermore, the two advertisements follow the same basic principles of constructing a powerful narrative but because of the multimodal choices made, they do so in very different ways. This goes to show how much further insight the study of multimodality can offer this type of research.

### **Promotion of brand through narratives of femininity**

In terms of promotion, Dove seems to aim to increase brand recognition as a self-love brand. Next, I will discuss how Dove does this in these two advertisements based on my findings.

First of all, as the two advertisements are not advertising or trying to sell any certain products, it is rather clear that by creating these campaigns of female empowerment and diversity, Dove aims to associate itself with postfeminist ideologies, which are shared by many of their audience members.

Second of all, in these two advertisements, as well as in all of the Real Beauty campaign ads, Dove seems to have chosen empowerment of women as the main ingredient of the narrative. As has been stated in relation the previous research, this is a very common theme in postfeminist media and advertising, as it celebrates all forms of femininity, thus relating to most, if not all, women.

It could be argued that Dove aims to achieve this positive association by building narratives that are relatable to their female audiences. By identifying what is important to their audiences, Dove can create narratives that persuade the audience members to get behind the brand and

their products due to shared values. As viewers relate to the advertisements, they share it on to their friends, who may share it forward if they, too, find it relatable. This way Dove can increase people's awareness of their brand as a messenger of self-love. As people associate these positive emotions with the brand, they are also more likely to buy their products.

Third of all, the promotion of the brand and its products comes into play in the very last frames of the advertisements, where people are asked to share what they would choose, as well as with hashtags, which viewers are invited to use when they comment online. Yet again, all of these actions by the users share the advertisements forward, generating even more awareness.

### **Social media audiences' responses to the narratives of femininity**

As stated in the previous chapter, there were several themes of the most frequent responses from social media audiences of the two advertisements. The audience was mostly divided between people who related to the advertisements and people who criticised them. However, as most of the audience responses were from female viewers, which fit the target group of the advertisements better, I will focus the discussion of this part on the female viewers' comments.

Although both of the advertisements succeeded in relating to their female audiences, there was a noticeable amount of feedback on the attributes chosen for #ChooseBeautiful. As explained above, many were unsatisfied with the chosen attributes 'average' and 'beautiful', between which one had to choose from. Most of the critique of the narrative of femininity in terms of #ChooseBeautiful was related around this issue. I believe this shows how women want to be represented through more than just their looks in modern day media and advertising. This notion is also supported by many postfeminist theories, as will be discussed below in relation to previous research.

However, many women seemed to respond well to the narratives of femininity presented in #MyBeautyMySay. This could be because of the more varied representation of different femininities altogether, and because of a reduced focus on appearance.

### **Social media audiences' responses to promotion of Dove's products via the narratives of femininity**

A large portion of the critique towards the two advertisements was focused around the promotion of products through narratives of femininity. Some viewers thought that it used

women's insecurities against them by taking advantage of their insecurities for means of promotion.

Although many disagreed with Dove's way of promoting itself through empowerment, others felt that the cause Dove supported needed more visibility, and that advertising was one of the right kind of platforms to bring the topic forward. Many of these audience members were also happy to associate themselves with the brand because of the importance of the issue at hand.

Furthermore, as stated in the previous chapter, it should be noted that most of the critique came from male viewers, whereas most of the female viewers did not see the promotion of products through these narratives as problematic. This is important to remember, as the target group of Dove's Real Beauty campaigns are women, which is why their responses carry more weight in this case than the male viewers' responses.

In light of these responses it should be emphasised that when it comes to advertising with a promotional agenda, it is hardly ever possible to please everyone. That is why companies should be aware of their target groups, as they are the ones whose responses are the ones to pay the most attention to, rather than the viewers who are not likely consumers of the company's products or services. Forming powerful and persuasive narratives can only be achieved when one knows their audience.

## **5.2 Findings in relation to the research aim**

Now that the findings related to the more specific research questions have been summarised and discussed, we can examine how the present study can be applied in answering the more general aim of the study, which was to determine *how companies attempt to appeal to their audiences through improving advertising campaigns based on the social media audience's responses*.

Although it is not certain whether Dove reviewed the feedback they received from #ChooseBeautiful to improve their following Real Beauty campaign #MyBeautyMySay, it does seem as if the main element of critique from the former advertisement had been fixed accordingly to the audience's preferences in the latter. The main element of critique in this case would be the use of attributes that only relate to looks, as discussed above.

Whether this is the case or not in the case presently discussed, assessment of feedback is an important step in improving advertising campaigns to appeal to target audiences better, as can be observed based on the findings of the present study. It is important to identify the values that the company in question shares with their target audiences, and the base the core messages of each advertisement around those values. This way the advertisement is more relatable, thus evoking positive emotions in viewers and, in turn, a positive perception of the company.

Especially with longer campaigns, such as Dove's Real Beauty campaign, companies are provided with an opportunity to constantly improve their advertising by systematically assessing the success rate of previous advertisements before producing new ones. Thanks to social media there is a large pool of data about audience responses readily available on the company's own social media channels, making it easy to familiarise oneself with the target audience, and even interact with them.

Whereas prior to the rise of social media, different media outlets and companies had much of the power in determining what the social ideologies and values supported in media were, these days it is up to any and all people using social media. There has been a shift in power from companies to people. Consequently, companies need to be aware of this change and actively familiarise themselves with their target audiences in order to be able to win them over.

### **5.3 Findings in relation to previous research**

There are many similarities between the findings of the present study and previous research on femininity in advertising. Over the years, companies have discovered and identified ways in which to best appeal to their female audiences in advertising. Whereas before products and services were "pushed" to consumers, now the focus is on "pulling" consumers in with effective advertising and other forms of marketing by producing the kind of advertisements, for instance, that interest the consumers and make them want to know more about the company, and subsequently, consume more of their products and services (Mangold & Faulds, 2009: 360).

As mentioned above, according to Duffy (2010: 28), these days companies market their products and services through consumer empowerment on their "quest for profit". Consumer empowerment can be seen, for instance, in Dove's advertising. The two advertisements feature the core message of "everyone is beautiful in their own way", as stated above. The core message in itself is not necessarily enough to empower Dove's audiences but #ChooseBeautiful and

#MyBeautyMySay present this core message through their narratives of femininity in such a persuasive way that it manages to appeal to the female viewers. As seen in the examples of audience responses, many audience members said that they felt empowered after watching either of the two advertisements, and they also described many other positive emotions. These reactions will most likely lead to more consumption, and thus, more profit for Dove, precisely as Duffy (2010: 28) describes.

As discussed above, Lazar (2006), too, has discussed the use of empowerment in advertising. Lazar's concept of empowered beauty (2006: 507), refers to advertising that presents products, or in this case, Dove's brand, as an empowering agent helping women to realise their beauty. It would seem that the entire core message of Dove's Real Beauty campaign focuses around this concept. Moreover, Lazar also introduces the concepts of agentive power (2006: 510) and sexual power (2006: 512), which I believe are a crucial part of the narratives of femininity constructed in Dove's advertising, and especially in #MyBeautyMySay. As mentioned in the discussion of femininity in advertising, agentive power means women's agency to function as individuals (2006: 510), whereas sexual power refers to women reclaiming the power over their own sexuality (2006: 512). In the #MyBeautyMySay, we can observe the use of both of these postfeminist concepts in appealing to female audiences, as the advertisement emphasizes each woman's individuality, confidence in themselves and power over their own agency as well as sexuality.

Moreover, the #MyBeautyMySay advertisement features several different femininities from more normative ones to hybrid ones. The advertisement celebrates stereotypical feminine values and practices, as in Jessica's case, more masculine femininities, such as Rain, as well as different combinations of the two, in other words hybrid femininities, like Heather and Marcia, as is common for postfeminist discourse (Lazar, 2009: 381, 385). In other words, the advertisement does not hold one type of femininity over the other by, for instance, presenting all of the women as strong, emotionless, almost masculine-like characters, as used to be common for second wave feminist discourse. Instead, it celebrates feminine practices unapologetically as well. As mentioned above, Lazar calls this type of femininity in advertising entitled femininity (2009: 372).

#ChooseBeautiful, however, does not feature as wide of a range of femininities, and focuses more on the representation of seemingly normative femininities by presenting all of the women in the same situation and in similar manner. The narratives of femininity lack the same level of

individuality as the narrative of femininity in #MyBeautyMySay. The women of the advertisement are seen talking about seemingly normatively feminine traits, such as beauty, instead of other attributes. Moreover, most of the women seem submissive rather than dominant, and they are shown in traditional roles, such as the role of a mother or a confidant, if in any role at all. However, as mentioned above, this can also be seen as a representation of the postfeminist discourse in advertising, as it embraces conventionally feminine identities, reclaiming traditional views of femininity for transgressive purposes, as Lazar's theory on entitled femininity suggests (2009: 389).

Furthermore, the present study can also be compared to the study by Wu and Chung (2011) that was discussed in more detail above. To summarise, Wu and Chung analysed representations of women and femininity in advertising based on three dimensions: the roles portrayed, appearance/projection, and verbal characteristics (2011: 184).

According to Wu and Chung (2011: 185), women have been traditionally portrayed as homemakers in media and advertising, but these days rather in occupational or recreational roles. This seems to hold true in Dove's advertising as well. The women in #ChooseBeautiful are seen in a recreational role as they are seemingly going shopping as they are walking in to a shopping centre. However, in this case the representation is not as strong as it is in #MyBeautyMySay, where the women's occupations, hobbies and lifestyle are much more explicit. Again, it could be argued that #MyBeautyMySay builds a stronger narrative of the different femininities through its individual representation of each woman as an active agent.

There are also differences in the appearance/projection of the women in the two advertisements. As Wu and Chung describe (2011: 185), traditionally women are often portrayed through conventionally feminine traits, such as shyness and naivety. In terms of #ChooseBeautiful, this seems true still, as many of the women seen in the advertisement seemed shy or timid when faced with the question of defining one's own looks. However, it is important to note that such conventionally feminine traits are still a part of the varied representations of femininities and the ad does not, for instance, present women as dependent on men, which used to be a dominant feature of female representations in media. However, the contrast between the appearance of women in #ChooseBeautiful and #MyBeautyMySay is yet again rather striking. The women in #MyBeautyMySay fit the modern day representations of women in media, which often include associations with traits such as attractiveness, intelligence and confidence, in addition to celebration of one's own femininity (Wu & Chung, 2011: 185).

Another dimension introduced by Wu and Chung (2011: 185) is the dimension of verbal characteristics, meaning the characteristics of language that the female characters use. Whereas before female voices in advertising may have been indirect and implicit, if existent at all, in today's advertising they are increasingly more assertive and explicit directives (Wu & Chung, 2011: 186). This can also be seen in #MyBeautyMySay, for example, as the female characters talk straight to the camera and address the viewer by saying 'you', for instance. Moreover, according to Wu and Chung (2011: 186), these days female voice overs are often preferred to over male ones, as when targeting female audiences, the viewers can relate to a female character's voice more, thus finding the advertisement more credible. This also applies to the two advertisements in question, as both of Dove's advertisements had female voice overs. If the voice overs and characters were changed to a male's voice, it would not have the same level of relatability to female viewers, which would affect the advertisements' persuasiveness.

Moving on from the previous research on femininity in advertising, the present study should also be discussed from the point of view of multimodal advertising discourse. As mentioned above, according to Del Saz-Rubio (2009: 2537), there are two dimensions advertising can be analysed through, one of which is the reward dimension. The reward dimension aims to persuade the viewer by the multimodal modes used in the advertisement, thus often appealing to the viewer's emotional side (Del Saz-Rubio, 2009: 2537). This seems to be the case in both of the advertisements discussed, as neither of them tries to offer information about a specific product, but rather sells an idea or a value. This persuasion is done through several different modes which all aim to persuade the viewer to believe in the same value. This persuasion is achieved by narration of relatable stories, which appeal to the viewers emotionally.

Moreover, as discussed above, IMC provides some useful theories for examining the success of Dove's advertising strategy. As presented earlier in this study, Mangold and Faulds (2009: 361-364) list nine ways of making use of social media for promotional means, which are: provide networking platforms; use social media tools to engage customers; use both traditional and internet-based promotional tools to engage customers; provide information; be outrageous; provide exclusivity; design products with societal talking points and consumers' desired self-images in mind; support causes that are important to consumers; and utilise the power of stories. Not all of these are relevant for the analysis of Dove's case, but in terms of the two advertisements discussed here, a few of these tips apply.



First, Dove succeeds rather well in engaging customers by building a narrative that pulls the customer in to the stories presented. Second, the narratives are built with the consumers' desired self-images in mind. In both of the advertisements the characters show their insecurities but turn them into positives, or at least try to. In #MyBeautyMySay, this is more explicit, whereas in #ChooseBeautiful, the focus is more on the process of learning to love oneself. Not only is this relatable for many of the female viewers, but it also offers a talking point on a current issue that a great number of women deal with on a daily basis. This also relates to the point of supporting causes that are important to consumers. As can be seen from the audience responses, many female viewers agreed that self-love is an important topic, and that women's self-image should be improved. They also seemed to think that advertising is a great platform for doing so, as it brings out representation of different types of women in the mainstream media, instead of only representations of an "ideal" woman. Finally, the advertisement also utilises the power of stories in that it creates narratives, which catch the viewer's attention in the topic and invite them to take part by sharing their own story.

All of the aforementioned ways of utilising social media in marketing aim to create content, in this case advertisements, that people share. When people share something enough so that it becomes viral, it may even get articles written about it, which is great additional advertising for a company, and for no extra cost. All of this, in turn, creates more brand awareness, as well as positive associations to the brand itself, thus possibly increasing the sales of their products as well.

Considering how widespread many of Dove's Real Beauty campaign advertisements are, it could be argued that the company does well in integrating social media in their marketing strategy. Especially #ChooseBeautiful received a great deal of attention online after its release and even though it did receive some negative feedback as well, the level of recognition the advertisement received from viewers as well as media indicates that overall the advertisement succeeded in appealing to its audiences. Whereas #ChooseBeautiful managed to generate a great deal of attention, #MyBeautyMySay succeeded in taking its audiences views and opinions of what factors to highlight into account, making it an even more empowering advertisement for female viewers.

## **5.4 Implications and applications**

As mentioned above, the aim of this study is to show how companies can utilise social media in learning how to appeal to their audiences more effectively. Although this study focuses on the aspect of advertising, many of the elements presented in the study can also be applied to other organisational activities that can be monitored through social media. For example, any other parts of the promotional mix can benefit from monitoring public feedback online in order to determine the general attitude towards an organisation or even a person or an event. It is important to note that this does not only apply to commercial purposes but to the public sector and non-profit organisations as well, for example in crisis communication situations. It is important for organisations to be aware of the effects of language use and be able to harness the use of narratives in the promotion of their agendas in a way that persuades the audience to agree with the organisation's message.

As social media not only makes it easier for organisations to communicate with their audiences, and vice versa, but also for the audiences to communicate with each other, it is also important for organisations to learn how they can benefit from this fast-paced exchange of opinions and information. As discussed above, this gives the public even more power in determining what kind of content or products organisations develop and how they advertise it. This change has even further implications socially and culturally, as it allows laypeople to come together and have power over the way things are presented in the society, thus having a profound effect on culture and society as a whole by redefining norms.

Additionally, this study provides an additional perspective to both the field of organisational communication research as well as linguistic and multimodal research. Going forward, similar studies could be made from different perspectives, for example, about how advertising of products or services aims to appeal to men, or different age groups. Furthermore, as mentioned above, other parts of the promotional mix could also be researched in more detail, for example, how successful and persuasive a publicity campaign is from a linguistic or narrative perspective.

Going forward, this type of research could also benefit from combining qualitative research with quantified thematic analysis, for instance. Due to the limitations of this study, quantitative analysis of the audience responses was not possible in the present study but I believe it would provide even more credibility to studies of audience responses. However, thematic analysis seems to be an effective way of examining large sets of data, such as the ones analysed in the present study. I also believe that the multimodal analysis of the narratives constructed provided

much more insights into the narratives of femininity than more general analysis could have done on its own.

This type of research would allow for a better understanding of all types of organisations, ranging from non-profit organisations to the private and public sectors. It provides valuable information for the field of linguistic research as well, as it can give us an even more precise insight into how persuasive language is constructed and performed in a number of situations, and this knowledge could thus be extended to any sort of communicative situation.

## 6 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Dove uses several modes of meaning-making in supporting the narratives of femininity, or to be more specific, femininities, in its two advertisements #ChooseBeautiful and #MyBeautyMySay. Through the semiotic and discursive resources used, Dove builds narratives that appeal to viewers on an emotional level, thus evoking positive emotions towards the brand itself. Although neither of the two ads feature any of Dove's products, the advertisements succeed in promoting the brand and products by supporting a cause that is important to many women, as can be seen by the audience responses. Although some viewers disagreed with Dove's use of empowerment as a marketing tactic, the majority appreciated the two campaigns, and Dove seems to have succeeded in consistently improving the appeal of their advertising.

As the present study was a case study on Dove's two recent advertisement campaigns for the Real Beauty campaign that lasted for about a decade, it is only a fraction of an indication of how Dove may have utilised audience feedback in developing their advertising. Going forward, the field could also benefit from researching and comparing the most recent advertisements with their older ones to determine the improvement on an even larger scale.

However, I believe that the focus of the study was fitting for its purposes of examining the role of social media in relation to audience responses. Had the study compared one of the first Real Beauty advertisements with newer ones, there may have been less data available of the audience responses of that time. Thus, I believe the present study is a sufficient indicator of the current relationship between organisations and social media audiences and how their interaction translates to modern day advertising.

In addition, it is important to keep in mind that as technology evolves at an increasing pace, so will social media and its functions. This may create more challenges, but also opportunities, for companies in their external communication, such as advertising, in terms of reaching their audiences in desired ways. Thus, future research will have to keep track of new developments to be able to determine the most effective ways of communication between organisations and audiences. Moreover, companies will have to utilise this information and consistently monitor the developments themselves as well, to be able to identify the right platforms for communication and the right messages with which to persuade their audiences. Furthermore, they also have to track the trends and ideologies of the time to be able to construct their

advertising in a way that audiences can relate to. As far as today's research and experience in the field shows, the way to achieve this is by interacting with target audiences.

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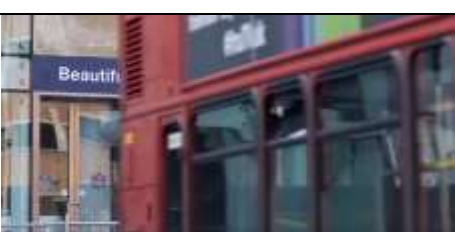
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## 8 APPENDICES

### 8.1 Transcription of #ChooseBeautiful






Time	Frame	Shot	Text	Soundtrack
0:00 - 0:05		High angle long shot follows an African American woman walking and stopping to look at something.	-	Light rhythmic piano music, no melody, just chords.
0:05 - 0:07		Medium shot, eye-level angle of Indian two women looking at something and talking.	Voiceover: "It was my choice--"	Voiceover begins.
0:07 - 0:09		Medium shot, eye-level angle of an Asian woman walking towards a door.	"-- and now I will question myself --"	↓
0:09 - 0:11		Mid shot, eye-level angle of a still Caucasian woman looking into the camera.	"for the next few weeks, maybe months"	↓
0:12-00:20		Wide shots of cities in different parts of the world and mid to long shots of people putting up signs.	-	↓
00:20-00:22		A wide shot of a bus driving past the camera, revealing signs saying 'beautiful' and 'average'.	-	↓





00:23-00:25		High angle long shot with two women, an African American and a Caucasian, walking.	Another voiceover: "We had an option of two pathways to walk--"	↓
00:26-00:28		Eye-level long shot from behind the same two women, showing them walking towards the doors with the signs above.	"-- and they led to two doorways"	↓
00:29-00:30		Wide shot of the two doorways in different parts of the world, one shot zooming in and one tilting up to reveal the doorways.	-	↓
00:31-00:33		A mid shot of a group of Indian women pointing at the doorways and looking at them.	Voiceover: "It was a bit confronting actually to be honest--"	↓
00:33-00:36		A medium shot of an Asian woman taking a photo of the doorways.	"-- to see these big--"	Rhythmic violin accompanying the piano.
00:37-00:40		A mid shot of a young Caucasian woman standing in between the two doorways, looking at them and gazing around herself.	"-- signs and feeling like you had to choose and --"	↓
00:41-00:44		A mid shot of a Caucasian girl walking towards the 'average' doorway in a group of people, then walking over to the 'beautiful' one,	"-- be self-conscious of how you perceive yourself and perhaps --"	↓






		then stopping and looking back at the others.		
00:45-00:47		A low angle long shot of an Afro-Caribbean woman walking through the 'average' door.	"-- if it lines up with how the rest of the world perceives you"	↓
00:48-00:52		Mid and medium shots of the same woman walking through the 'average' door.	"I went through the average door"	↓
00:53-00:57		An eye-level, interview-style medium shot of the same woman talking with her friend.	"Oh really?" "Yeah" "Oh, my Gosh" "yeah, I didn't even hesitate"	↓
00:57-01:08		Medium shot of an Asian woman walking towards the doors, then panning out to a long shot of her walking through the average door.	[in a foreign language] "Beautiful to me it's too far away out of reach. I chose average."	↓
01:09-01:17		Medium shot of a Brazilian woman looking at the doorways, then long shot of her walking towards the 'average' doorway, and a short close up of her being interviewed.	[in foreign language] "I regretted my choice because it was different from what I live from who I am."	Violins start getting stronger

01:18-01:31		High-angle long shot of a Caucasian woman walking towards the doorways, mid shot of her stopping, close up of her interview, and a mid shot of her walking through the 'average' door.	"Am I choosing because of what's constantly bombarded at me, what I'm being told that I should accept, or am I choosing because that is what I really believe?"	↓
01:32-01:35		A long shot of an Indian woman walking through the 'average' door, and a close up of her interview.	"I walked in the door which said average and I didn't feel really good after that--"	↓
01:35-01:42		A high angle long shot of a group of women and girls walking through the 'average' door.	"--because obviously, I had rated myself average and nobody else."	↓
01:43-01:50		A medium shot of a Caucasian woman walking towards the building, a long shot of her stopping and looking at the signs, and a mid shot of her walking away.	-	The music slowly stops as the woman walks out of the frame.
01:51-02:04		A high angle long shot of a Brazilian woman walking towards the doors, then a medium shot of her walking towards the 'beautiful' door, and a long shot of	[in a foreign language] "Every day I go through the average door but yesterday was a unique day so I chose to	The piano and violins start playing again.







		her walking through the door.	go through the beautiful one."	
02:05-02:17		A Caucasian woman is walking towards the building with her daughter and her friends, pulling the younger girls to the 'beautiful' door instead of the 'average one'.	"I wanted to go through the average door but my mum just pulled me over to the beautiful door."	↓
02:17-02:28		High angle long shots and mid shots of an Indian woman pushing another Indian woman in a wheelchair on the pathway leading to the 'average' door, noticing the signs and going back for them to take the other pathway towards the 'beautiful' door.	-	↓
02:28-02:29		An eye-level mid shot of an Indian woman pushing her friend through the 'beautiful' door.	-	↓
02:29-02:35		An eye-level medium shot of a Afro-Caribbean young woman walking through the 'beautiful' door and a medium shot of her interview.	"It's quite a triumphant feeling it was like telling the world I think I'm beautiful."	↓
02:35-02:39		Eye-level medium and long shots of a group of young Asian women walking towards the 'average' door but then quickly	-	↓





		changing to the 'beautiful' door.		
02:40-02:44		An eye-level medium shot of a Caucasian woman and her daughter being interviewed.	"I just wish more young women realised it."	↓
02:45-02:50		An eye-level medium shot of an Asian woman being interviewed.	"Given another chance I would choose beautiful."	↓
02:50-02:54		An eye-level medium shot of an Afro-Caribbean woman being interviewed.	"I think I would walk through the beautiful door. Yeah."	↓
02:54-03:01		An eye-level medium shot of a Brazilian woman being interviewed.	[in foreign language] "I think the beautiful door is completely open for me."	↓
03:01-03:06		An eye-level medium shot of two Afro-Caribbean women being interviewed.	"Maybe-- maybe I could walk in that door."  "You can."	↓

03:06-03:11		An eye-level medium shot of an Indian woman being interviewed.	"Next time I look in the mirror I will see somebody really beautiful looking back at me."	↓
03:11-03:23		Several high angle mid shots of women and girls of all types walking in through the beautiful door.	Voiceover: "Beautiful is a great word so why not see what's on the other side of that."	Voiceover finishes. Music continues.
03:23-03:27		Campaign hashtag on a white base.	Text on screen: "#ChooseBeautiful"	↓
03:27-03:30		Company name and logo.	Text on screen: "Dove"	↓
03:31-03:40		Interactive survey for audience of which description they would choose, 'beautiful' or 'average'.	Text on screen: "What would you choose? Beautiful. Average."	Music fades out.

## 8.2 Transcription of #MyBeautyMySay

Time	Frame	Shot	Text	Soundtrack
00:00-00:01		Low angle close up shot of a Caucasian woman boxing.	-	Rhythmic and fast drum music.
00:01-00:03		An eye-level mid shot of the same woman boxing.	"They said I was too pretty to fight."	A woman's voiceover starts.  Music continues.
00:03-00:04		An eye-level mid shot of the woman walking.	"Aw she can't fight."	↓
00:04-00:05		A high angle close-up of the woman putting boxing gloves on.	"You're going to mess up that beautiful--"	↓
00:05-00:05		A low angle, blurry close-up of the woman's hand and face.	"--face."	↓
00:05-00:07		An eye-level mid shot of a Latin, overweight woman walking outside.	"They said I was too fat."	↓

00:07-00:09		A low angle close up of the same woman.	"Only skinny girls can dress well."	↓
00:09-00:12		An eye-level mid shot of a woman walking to the window and setting her bag down.	[in a foreign language] "They look at me head to toe. How can she be a lawyer?"	↓
00:12-00:13		An eye-level mid shot of an elderly woman looking out a window.	"They said I didn't dress for my age."	↓
00:14-00:15		A low angle close up shot of a Caucasian woman, tilting down from her face to her hands.	"They said my nose was too prominent."	↓
00:16-00:17		An eye-level mid shot of an androgynous woman walking down a street.	"They said I was too masculine."	↓
00:17-00:18		An eye-level close up of an African American woman's lower torso and camera.	"They thought that catcalling was a compliment."	↓










00:19-00:21		A low angle close up shot of a Latin woman blowing at a dandelion.	"He said you can fix those teeth quite easily."	↓
00:22-00:23		An eye-level close up shot of a Caucasian, androgynous woman talking to the camera.	"Boyish and ugly [laughs]."	↓
00:23-00:25		A low angle close up shot of the same woman looking up.	"When they were talking about female, they weren't talking about me."	↓
00:25-00:26		An eye-level mid shot of an African American woman standing outside.	"This was not pretty."	↓
00:27-00:28		A low angle close up of an African American woman taking pictures with a camera.	"They would holler from across the street."	↓
00:28-00:29		An eye-level, blurry mid shot of an African American woman.	"Look sophisticated."	↓
00:29-00:30		An eye-level close up shot of a Caucasian woman.	"Embarrassing nose."	↓







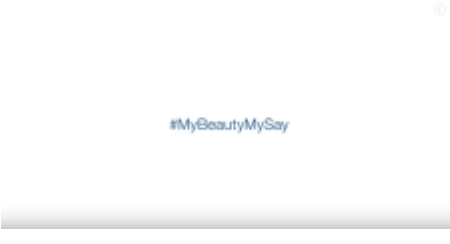
00:31-00:31		A low angle mid shot of a Latin, overweight woman.	"Too chubby."	↓
00:31-00:32		An eye-level extreme close up of an elderly woman's face.	"Just too skinny."	↓
00:32-00:32		An eye-level close up of a woman holding her sunglasses to put them on.	"Manly."	↓
00:33-00:33		An eye-level mid shot of an African American woman walking.	"Crazy hair."	↓
00:33-00:34		A low angle close up shot of a Latin, overweight woman.	"Never look good."	↓
00:34-00:34		A low angle close up shot of an African American woman.	"Too wild." "Too cute."	↓
00:35-00:35		An eye-level medium shot of a Caucasian woman.	"Too beautiful."	↓


00:35-00:36		An eye-level long shot of a Latin, overweight woman walking.	"Too fat."	↓
00:36-00:36		An eye-level, blurry close up shot of a Latin woman.	"He said."	↓
00:36-00:37		An eye-level long shot of a Latin, overweight woman.	"They said." "She said."	↓
00:37-00:38		An eye-level medium shot of a Caucasian woman talking to the camera.	"I said no way."	Music stops at the beginning of the shot.  Music with a stronger but slower beat starts in between current and following shots.
00:39-00:41		An eye-level close up of a Caucasian, androgynous woman talking to the camera.	"You're not me, I'm me."	↓
00:41-00:44		A low angle medium shot of a Caucasian woman looking at the camera.	"I'm not gonna be defined by anyone's expectations."	↓

00:44-00:48		An eye-level close up shot of an elderly woman talking to the camera.	"I don't dress my age, I dress myself the way I am."	↓
00:48-00:50		A low angle mid shot of a Caucasian woman talking to the camera.	"'Cause my face has nothing to do with my boxing."	↓
00:51-00:53		An eye-level close up shot of the woman playing with a boxing toy and looking at the camera.	"I'm ranked number one in the country and number two in the world."	↓
00:53-00:57		An eye-level medium shot of a Latin, overweight woman with her dog, looking at the camera.	"As a fashion blogger my style is one hundred percent unapologetic."	↓
00:57-00:58		An eye-level medium shot of a Latin woman talking to the camera.	"I don't wanna change my teeth."	↓
00:58-01:01	 <small>My looks have nothing to do with my capabilities.</small>	An eye-level close up shot of a Caucasian woman looking into the camera.	"My looks have nothing to do with my capabilities."	↓
01:01-01:04		An eye-level medium shot of an African American woman talking to the camera.	"This is me. This is my hair."	↓



01:04-01:05		An eye-level medium shot of a Caucasian woman talking to the camera.	"My beauty."	Music changes to just a few singular beats.
01:05-01:05		A low angle mid shot of a Caucasian woman talking to the camera.	"My beauty."	↓
01:06-01:06		A low angle close up shot of an African American woman talking to the camera.	"My beauty."	Music stops.
01:07-01:07		An eye-level close up shot of a Caucasian, androgynous woman talking to the camera.	"My say."	Last voiceover. Music starts again.
01:08-01:08		A low angle mid shot of an African American woman sitting on a set of stairs and looking into the camera.	Text on screen: Hannah Photographer	↓
01:09-01:09		An eye-level close up shot of a Latin woman looking into the camera.	Text on screen: Elaine Administrator	↓
01:10-01:11		An eye-level close up shot of a Caucasian woman looking into the camera.	Text on screen: Grace Burlesque Dancer	↓

01:11-01:13		An eye-level mid shot of a Latin, overweight woman sitting on a couch with her dog.	Text on screen: Jessica Fashion blogger	↓
01:13-01:14		An eye-level mid shot of an African American woman.	Text on screen: Elizabeth Poet	↓
01:14-01:16		An eye-level close up shot of a Caucasian woman looking into the camera.	Text on screen: Marcia Partner, Law Firm	↓
01:16-01:17		A low angle close up shot of an elderly woman.	Text on screen: Judith Clinical Psychologist	↓
01:17-01:19		A low angle close up of a Caucasian, androgynous woman looking into the camera.	Text on screen: Rain Model	↓
01:19-01:22		A low angle extreme close up of a Caucasian woman boxing and looking into the camera then starting to walk away smiling.	Text on screen: Heather Boxer	↓
01:22-01:26		A blank white screen with text appearing on it.	Text on screen: #MyBeautyMySay	↓

01:26-01:30	 The image shows the Dove logo, which consists of the word "Dove" in a blue, cursive font with a soft glow effect. Below the word is a small, stylized yellow and orange bird icon. The logo is centered on a white background.	The company logo on a white base. Logo fades out.	Text on screen: Dove	The music stops as the company logo fades out.
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