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An analysis of jewellery advertising through the lens of feminist theory

by

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DECLARATION

I, Neeka Keisha Swigelaar, declare that the contents of this thesis represent my own unaided work, and that the thesis has not previously been submitted for academic examination towards any qualification. Furthermore, it represents my own opinions and not necessarily those of the Cape Peninsula University of Technology.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study is to examine to what extent mainstream commercial jewellery advertisements construct the perception of gender within their representations. The study focuses specifically on the representation of women and femininity within jewellery advertisements. The way in which these advertisements construct 'what it is to be a woman' is studied through the lens of feminist social constructionist theory. In particular, the study focuses on jewellery advertisements of De Beers and Tiffany & Co. The research question the study aims to answer is, firstly: in what manner, as compared to both third- and fourth-wave feminist theories and recent social movements in women's rights, do mainstream commercial jewellery advertisements reinstate societal gender role expectations, in particular that of the female body and femininity; and subsequently: how contemporary mainstream commercial jewellery advertisements intersect with feminist theories of power, ownership and sexuality and how mainstream commercial jewellery advertising has adopted 'commodity feminism' to start presenting femininity as 'owning/doing' a sexual body and gaining empowerment from that sexual power. In short the study aims to investigate how mainstream commercial advertising, in particular jewellery advertising, supports or subverts the construction of gender expectations and roles. The advertisements of Tiffany & Co. and De Beers are compared to other ads that reflect third- and fourth-wave feminist thinking, to investigate the possibility of interesting alternative representations of femininity and female bodies. This study makes use of a qualitative research approach, that of critical theory, and in particular feminist theory and textual analysis. The method of research that is employed is that of Semiotic Analysis. The methods of visual/sign analysis and linguistic analysis is used to probe jewellery advertisements. Thus the pictures (setting, framing, pose, composition) as well as the words are analyzed in relation to gender representation.

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"Beautiful little fools

That's what us girls are destined for

Beautiful little fools

Born to be adored

Where is the feminine race?

Where are these so-called independent women?

Who pick up their flaws

And let the world in,

Where are these girls?

Beautiful little fools

That's what us girls are destined for

Beautiful little fools

Born to be adored

Most of these girls pick up a brush

They might not like art, but their face is a canvas

Designing something that is not their reflection

Becoming a beautiful little Hollywood perception

Beautiful little fools

That's what us girls are destined for

Beautiful little fools

Born to be adored

Didn't your mother ever tell you to love yourself?

Well if your mother was Zelda or Daisy, I guess not

Why can't you be a beautiful little girl

Instead of being a beautiful little fool?

I guess we're all just beautiful little girls

Playing a game of being fooled

Beautiful little fools

That's what us girls are destined for

Beautiful little fools, born to be adored

Beautiful little fools, no

We're all just born to be adored

We're beautiful little fools

We're all just born to be adored"

(Smith, Jorja. 2017. "Beautiful little fools")

Chapter 1

1.1 Introduction

"[T]here is no authentic or 'natural' maleness or femaleness. Instead, the subject is gendered through social practices such as naming and talk that construct and relay meaning" (Brickell, 2006: 93)

"Body decoration is a ubiquitous phenomenon that transcends time and space. There is not one civilization, however limited its available materials may be, that does not practice self-ornamentation. As long as our species has existed, the human body has been a focal point of adornment and a versatile medium for our every longing and fantasy" (Borel, Rances and Ghysel, 2001: 16)

From a young age humans are placed into categories of either male or female. This starts at birth when the doctor excitedly pronounces "It's a boy!" or "It's a girl!" to expecting parents, marking in that moment the category under which the new-born, unknowingly, will be recognized when leaving the hospital. As this child grows up he/she is shown through various influences, (family, school, television), proper dress and behaviour that can be categorized as either feminine or masculine. As Marinova notes, school books that children are exposed to show from the very start that "gender stereotypes are present and reinforced", with images showcasing women "with babies in their hands or preparing food" (2003: 3). She also notes that gender stereotypes are presented in depictions of occupation with women holding positions of nurses and teachers while men are usually portrayed as "soldiers, playing some prestigious sport, executing some heavy job, and, of course, leaders" (Marinova, 2003: 3)

Figure 1 M&S display, November 2018

These same gender stereotypes, which prescribe certain attributes to and differentiate between the two genders (male/female), can be seen in mass media and advertisements in shops all around us. In relatively recent news the British company Marks and Spencer, which is a franchise similar to Woolworths, came under fire for a display that showcased blatant gender stereotypes and sexist undertones in their categorization of 'must haves' for both male and female customers.

The Christmas window display (refer to Figure 1) which intended to present 'must haves' for the festive season contrasted men in suits with women in scanty lingerie. According to the display men needed "outfits to impress" while women needed "fancy little knickers" (Independent, 2018). Gender is thus portrayed as men/masculinity being linked to power, ambition and success whilst females/femininity is portrayed as being sexy.

How specific genders are supposed to act, behave and be displayed is apparent all around us, every day: from the home, to media, to display windows. This reiteration of how specific genders are purportedly supposed to be reflected and exhibited within a specific society starts at a young age and is continuously embedded in the experiences and interactions that the person is exposed to as life goes on. As a woman myself, I too had to learn the different expectations reserved for specific gender categories. As a young child I was constantly reminded through the admonitions of my mother, aunts and other females with whom I shared experiences, of the appropriate actions and behaviour that a 'lady' is expected to exhibit. I was constantly told that a lady does not: speak or laugh too loudly, behave in this/that manner, run around bare feet or climb trees, or voice her opinions too strongly as it might be seen as aggressive and offensive to some.

I remember one incident as a young child, about ten years old, when an argument was started between my mother and me because I wanted to know why I was expected to be in the kitchen, doing dishes and helping with the preparation of food, whilst my brother could run around outside while helping my father with mowing the lawn, washing the dog and various other outdoor chores and activities. I felt like my chores and expectations locked me in a cage while he was free to be wild and have fun. My argument at that age was that both my brother and I had fully functioning hands and thus both of us were capable of doing the chores of the other. Unfortunately, this just continued to upset my mother and I was given the classic speech that relayed the position/functionality of girls and the position/functionality of boys. This instance as well as many others thus constructed a set of rules that I constantly had to be aware of (whether intentional or subconscious) when exhibiting and 'acting out' my gender as a woman.

The construction of my own gender influenced the 'gender-aware' lens through which I now view the world, identifying signs and reflecting on experiences. The idea that my gender was in some ways being constructed by myself, others and experiences led me, within the research process, to the ideologies of feminism, lending another lens through which to perceive the world. In Feminism I found my own thoughts and experiences reflected in theory, becoming aware that more women feel and experience the frustrations of gender confinement and limitations, and that I was not alone. Feminism is noticeably a poststructuralist approach that relies on the argument that society is a construct. According to social constructionism "the child functions in relation to

its environment, constructing, modifying and interpreting the information s/he encounters in his/her relationship with the world" (von Glaserfeld, 1995: 5). Thus, social constructionism can be used as a lens through which can be viewed "a perspective which [theorizes] that a great deal of human life exists as it does due to social and interpersonal influences" (Gergen, 1985: 265). In a sense then, each individual creates their own world based on their perceptions of the real/actual world. Social constructionism is therefore concerned with the "language, the communication and the speech as having the central role of the interactive process through which we understand the world and ourselves" (Galbin, 2014: 82). Feminist theory from this angle is thus the window through which the portrayal of femininity and women within advertising in particular is analysed in this dissertation, through the analysis of language as well as visual imagery.

The advertising industry can be seen as a purveyor of communication and language that influences the viewer's perception of the real world. Feminism is used to analyse the way in which the advertising industry portrays and constructs femininity and how it thus influences the ways in which gender or femininity specifically are perceived. This fictional "world of imagery continues to drench our media with models against which to gauge our own identities: our status as wage-earners, consumers, children, parents, men, women and members of communities or cultural groups" (Griffin, Viswanath and Schwartz, 1994: 492). According to Jhally, "advertising seems to be obsessed with gender and sexuality" (1987: 135) - re-emphasizing the "centrality of culturally constructed gender display in this world of realistic simulations" (Griffin, Viswanath and Schwartz, 1994: 491). Advertising uses gender stereotypes as a means of communicating "general beliefs about sex-linked traits and roles, [and] psychological characteristics and behaviours describing men and women" (Browne, 1998: 83). These gender identities are "socially constructed" and advertising suggests "lifestyles and forms of self-presentation that individuals use to define their roles in society" (Plakoyiannaki & Yorgos, 2009: 1413).

Feminist theorists have been intrigued by the way in which advertising strategically constructs gender identities and represents the 'body', especially the way in which they represent women/the feminine.

> "Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, content analytic studies documented the same
> consistent pattern of gender stereotyping in adverts: women were predominantly shown in
> the home (indeed, in the kitchen and bathroom); depicted as housewives and mothers;
> they were frequently shown in dependent or subservient roles; their appearance – looking
> beautiful and sexy - was more important than anything else" (Gill, 2009: 3)

Because these advertisements relied on gender stereotypes to relay information quickly, the creators had to depend on "crude, easily-recognisable stereotypes" and feminist research

highlighted the constricting collection of "degrading and trivialising images of women: the dumb blonde, the unintelligent housewife, the passive sex object, and so on" (Gill, 2009: 3). Feminists criticized the idea of the 'home' or domesticity being reserved for the female gender, challenging the idea of women being subservient and submissive creatures, and crying out at the way appearance, body and sexuality of the female gender is constantly scrutinized under the ruse of 'what it means to be a woman/feminine'.

For a long time, Western feminist scholars have criticized the field of advertising "as a pervasive cultural institution that represents women in a problematic and often unacceptable way" (Kates, Shaw, & Garlock, 1999: 33). Goldman argues that, in response to feminist critiques of advertising companies, "advertisers' response was to develop 'commodity feminism'- an attempt to incorporate the cultural power and energy of feminism whilst simultaneously domesticating its critique of advertising and the media" (Goldman, 1992). This 'commodity feminism' within the advertising industry can be seen as an attempt to articulate a union between "traditional femininity and what are coded as feminist goals: independence, career success, financial autonomy." (Gill, 2009: 5)

> "In the very recent past, women's cooking or domestic cleanliness or interior design skills were the focus of advertisers' attention to a much greater extent than the surface of the body. But currently there seems to have been a profound shift in the very definition of femininity such that it is defined as a bodily property rather than a social structural or psychological one. Instead of caring or nurturing or motherhood, it is now possession of a 'sexy body' that is presented as women's key source of identity" (Gill, 2009: 6)

This 'new femininity' turns the previously sexually objectified representations of women, into representations of women who are sexual subjects, using their sexual agency as the integral power of their femininity. Femininity is now seen as "powerful, playful and narcissistic - less desiring of a sexual partner than empowered by the knowledge of her own sexual attractiveness" (Gill, 2008: 12). In Hall's terms this new style of advertising can be seen as a way to "rewrite or reconstruct femininity in a way that associates femininity with the possession of a sexually desired body first and foremost", and re-articulates former associations and connotations coupled with femininity such as "domesticity, cooking and caring with this modernised version of selfhood" (Hall, 1988). Though this shift in the portrayal of femininity and women in general has released us from the age-old stereotypes that have bombarded our eyes for years, this new femininity still presents some problems in the way it continues to place successful portrayals of femininity within marked-out boxes and thus excludes whoever cannot fit into those boxes. The focus this new

femininity places on sexual agency, independence and choice is also problematic as it seems women have no choice but to follow these ideologies in order to portray femininity successfully.

1.2 Aim of the Study

This study investigates how the jewellery industry makes use of the construction of gender, in particular femininity and the representation of women in their advertising. The study analyses advertisements of two leading jewellery companies, namely De Beers and Tiffany & Co., with intent to show how women are represented and in turn, how that contributes to popular constructions and ideas of gender. The advertisements examined are not recent ads, the point therefore is not to point out that these two companies have failed in their campaigns but instead to compare and analyse the advertisements in the context of nonstereotyped and feminist-driven advertising. The two companies were specifically selected for their immediate recognisability as well as the fact that both companies are internationally renowned within the jewellery industry, making them prolific influencers of jewellery trends. Drawing on feminist social constructionism, particularly Judith Butler's phrasing of both sex and gender as a performance, as well as feminist theories of representation of women in the advertising industry, the advertisements are analysed against the backdrop of more challenging representations of gender-non-conformity highlighted by jewellery designers and fashionistas. The study thus also aims to compare the De Beers and Tiffany & Co. advertisements to other ads that reflect the thinking of third- and fourth-wave feminism. The sample of advertisements of De Beers and Tiffany & Co. were purposely selected for the rich descriptions they present in the featuring of femininity, the female subject (or an abstraction of her body) and gendered connotations that engage with stereotypical gender ideologies/expectancies. The selected advertisements were also chosen as they are conceptually interesting as they allow for the deployment of theories of adornment, objectification and feminism simultaneously. As for the other advertisements selected from other brands, they were particularly chosen for their representation of non-stereotyped and non-traditional portrayals of femininity, female body and female role. These other brands thus present a sample that is rife with feminist rhetoric and ideology, making them ideal for the examination of female portrayal within advertising as well as ideal as a comparative backdrop for the De Beers and Tiffany & Co. ads.

The advertisements are also analysed against the recent attention called to the rights and roles of women, for example the #metoo[1] movement and the 'pussyhat'[2] project, which might seemingly influence changes in female representation in advertising, as, through public feminist movements more and more advertisers are being made aware of the social injustices and discrimination women are faced with. The research questions are thus how feminism and feminist movements have potentially led to changed portrayals of women, how these advertisements represent gender and femininity, and how/if these representations show the 'new feminist face'?

1.3 Foundations for the Research

The research is conducted through an exploration of the advertisements and approached through an epistemological framing of a triangulated relationship between theories that have currency in feminist critiques (notably of the historically gendered nature of jewellery as investigated by Rebecca Ross Russell), gender in media representations (especially advertising), and the perpetuation of gender constructs through hegemonic patriarchal discourses. In other words, the study investigates the correlation between jewellery and gender, gender and advertising and gender expectations/norms within society in a way that speaks to/of feminist critique, theories and ideologies.

1.3.1 Gender and Jewellery

> *"Costumes and styles are often devoted to cutting off the feminine body from any possible transcendence: Chinese women with bound feet could scarcely walk, the polished fingernails of the Hollywood star deprive her of her hands; high heels, corsets, panniers, farthingales, crinolines were intended less to accentuate the curves of the feminine body than to augment its incapacity... paralyzed by inconvenient clothing and by the rules of propriety – then woman's body seems to man to be his property, his thing... The function of ornamental attire is very complex, [but] often its purpose is to accomplish the metamorphosis of woman into idol." (De Beauvoir, 1989: 158)*

Clothing, adornment and hairstyles have forever been a way for human societies to create and signify differences of class, status, wealth and gender. The business of caring for appearances of the body through various rituals has always been perceived as feminine behaviour. According to

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[1] The Me Too or #metoo movement is an international movement against sexual assault and sexual harassment. Starting originally in 2006 it went viral on social media in 2017 as a hashtag that created a platform that discussed and demonstrated the widespread pervasiveness of sexual assault and sexual harassment.

[2] The 'Pussyhat Project' is a social movement that is focused on raising awareness about women's issues and advancing human rights by endorsing dialogue and innovation through the arts, education and intellectual discourse. (www.pussyhatproject.com)

Kunst "care for the body (munditia) was considered to be the domain par excellence of female behaviour" as "women's supposed obsession with their own bodies served as evidence for their inferiority to men" (2005: 127).

Though, in the West, both men and women adorned themselves lavishly hundreds of years ago, the act of adornment became more associated with the female body, and men that indeed decided to wear jewellery were doing so to show power and wealth. More often than not the man displayed his power and wealth on the hand, neck, wrists or ears of his wife. A man seemingly made the conscious decision to display his "purchasing power by adopting a tendency to use the body of his wife as a place to exhibit his economic wealth" which led the bodies of women to be "turned into a kind of capital bosom to hang jewels upon" (Arnold, 2013: 15). The female body was thus used as a display of power, something to be decorated for others (particularly men) to look at. Jewellery is also seen to be used as a tool for gendering bodies, to highlight the differences between the sexes.

Rebecca Ross Russell, in *Gender and Jewellery* (2009) explores how jewellery and ornamentation, and displays of gender and gender roles, are linked. She makes use of feminist theory as a lens to examine in which manner jewellery adds to the way gender is perceived and portrayed within a society. She analyses jewellery and its link to gender within the categories of: theories of adornment, jewellery as means of ownership/incapacitation and jewellery as means and symbol of sexual ownership. Her work, and particularly these three categories, are explored further in the literature analysis of the study, to determine in what capacity jewellery can be seen as a tool that reinstates gender norms related to femininity.

The work of Russell and other feminist theorists is used as a foundation for the research of this study. The research is triangulated between the notions of jewellery and its links to gender presentation and display (which will include feminist jewellery), gender and its links to advertising, and lastly gender as a social construct. This means that the analysis of the jewellery advertisements will be guided by the thread that connects this triangulation of gender display and usage within jewellery, gender/female representation within advertising and the way gender is constructed, displayed and performed within society.

The way in which femininity is composed in society is thus linked to how jewellery can be used as a means of constructing femininity and how these two notions influence the way in which femininity is structured within advertisements, particularly jewellery advertisements. The study thus analyses the ways in which these advertisements relay messages of traditional usages as

well as 'traditional' femininity in light of newer trends, such as feminist jewellery which addresses the current issues women face in society and daily life.

<u>1.3.1.1 Feminist Jewellery</u>

> *"Jewellery still has a relevance to our society. Its ultimate business is unchanged, concerned as it always was with its unique facility to express emotions and to communicate - not least to communicate ideas which have changed. Traditionally jewellers have frequently attempted to pacify society, pandering to our needs with pretty, decorative designs. Jewellery no longer has to do this. They can produce stronger, more relevant work which might address the dilemmas in society and by doing so, oppose them." (Turner, R. 1996: 88)*

As can be seen from the quote above as well as from media and display windows of shops when walking through a shopping mall, when jewellery is not being used as a personal-political tool, its more popular function as we know it, is decoration and visual display. Jewellery also has the capacity to be neither of these things or both simultaneously. From a commercial point of view jewellery is made to make the wearer feel prettier or more elegant, adding sparkle and a bit of flair to the surface layer of the body for others to admire. This traditional use of jewellery has been prevailing to this day but there are those creative jewellers and designers who have made use of this age-old technique to tell stories and address issues within society through use of their modus operandi.

There is a small number of jewellers that have focussed their attention on gender issues and the gaze to which females are constantly subjected. These jewellers seem to speak to the feminist and queer approval of female choice and female agency, empowered female bodies, rather than the objectification of female bodies. Rebecca Russell investigates jewellers that produce works inspired by queer and feminist theory as well as experimenting with this idea in her own designs and manufacturing of jewellery. She describes her own work as a "creation of a body of work that explores jewellery's potential to serve as a tool with which to critique and queer traditional thinking about the body." (2009: 93)

In this context, the act of "queering", when used as a verb, is applicable as described by well-known queer theorist, Nikki Sullivan (2003: 192): as "a movement between viewer, text and the world that re-inscribes (or queers) each and the relations between them". Queer theory, as with feminist theory, strives to challenge the status quo and normative ways of thinking. It examines

time and space/context as way to deconstruct our "(hetero)normative social order that we are all implicated (wittingly and unwittingly) in reaffirming" (Brown & Hammers, 2004: 94). Queer theory is thus concerned with highlighting the way in which individuals are indoctrinated to construct certain identities, gender identities being only one, and aims to deconstruct these limitations by "continuous self-examination of both our inner and outer worlds" (Brown & Hammers, 2004: 94) that are crucial elements in breaking the normative condition. It is said that:

> "Queer's main goal is in the debunking of the very notion of stability…[it]
> focuses on the potentialities and subversions that lie behind gender ambiguity and
> indeterminacy, therefore calling into question and problematizing all categorical
> thought, e.g., 'woman/female', 'man/male', straight/gay" (Brown & Hammers, 2004: 95)

From this perspective, the research is based on an underpinning reliance on queer theory as it relates to appropriate feminist approaches, through paying attention to the way in which it examines the way identities are constructed within society, forever striving to break the categorical boxes that has shaped identities within society. When applied to jewellery, the act of 'queering' thus challenges the idea of what jewellery is made/used for, in fact what jewellery is in relation to the wearer, viewer and world by which it is surrounded. Thus applying abstract thought to an inanimate object that can then be used for reflection by either viewer or wearer. When applying feminist as well as queer theory to her work, Rebecca Ross Russell thus reconstructs not only the way in which jewellery as a tool is perceived, but also the way in which the body that wears it is perceived.

Russell's analysis of works by jewellers that she found relevant to her specific study is grouped into four different themes/categories that have specific relevance as points of reference for the analysis conducted in the current research: the first category draws attention to the problematic nature of gender construction within society, the second shows jewellery used as a means of communicating alternate narratives concerning the patriarchal interpretations of historical/mythical female figures, the third references and calls into question specific historical/modern practices that have been normalized, and exaggerating these practices to draw attention to the theoretical and political issues surrounding them, the fourth category focusses on the problems inherent in the gaze, shifting the control over the piece to the wearer instead of the viewer (Russel, 2009: 94-95). This typology will help to define themes present in the advertisements that are analysed, providing potential categories through which the 'new face of feminism' is displayed in the ads.

A few jewellery pieces that represent feminist or queer theory are discussed briefly as influences for the purpose of this study. They present modes used by the jewellers to "create jewellery relevant to the central issues of feminist thinking" (Russell, 2009: 93).

The first piece that stands out is one that critiques the standards of beauty imposed on women today as well as the pressures that go along with those standards, drawing attention to the extremes women have to go to in order to attain beauty within a society. Teresa Milheiro created a piece in 2005 entitled "Be Botox, Be Fucking Beautiful" to address modern-day beauty practices that women put themselves through in order to attain the standards put out there by the beauty industries, see Figure 2 and 3 for pictures of this.

Figure 2 "Be Botox, Be Fucking Beautiful" 2005 by Teresa Milheiro. Sterling Silver and old

Figure 3 "Be Botox, Be Fucking Beautiful" by Teresa Milheiro.

Though aggressive and strong, the piece is not just a mere sculpture. It is the interaction with the body itself that makes it undeniably a piece of jewellery, not only used for adornment but worn by a woman who locks herself in by ball and chain, carrying her 'beautifier' around her neck "for the purpose of more easily injecting herself on the go" (Russell, 2009: 98). The text that reads "Be Botox, Be Fucking Beautiful" seems more like a statement the wearer would make about themselves in self-loathing, reminiscent of an anorexic staring in the mirror and chastising herself, than an external message for the viewer. This piece thus serves as a "biting critique, emphasizing the unnaturalness of the painful measures imposed on the female bodies in order to participate in the dominant construction of attractive femininity" (Russell, 2009: 98).

Another piece that refers to the construction of femininity within society is that of Rebecca Ross Russell titled "Be Good" (refer to Figure 4). These three-foot-long earrings consist of an alternation of heavy pink stones (rose quartz) and silver fashioned into rose petals with text stamped onto it. For Russell it addresses the "Eve/Mary or virgin/whore dichotomy as it relates to acceptable roles for women in society" (2009: 115). The metal with text on the one earing reads, "Be Good/ Stand up straight/ Be nice/ Be sweet/ Don't push/ Be smart/ Cover up/ Stay pure/ Be

quiet/ Trust me" while the other reads "Be Good/ Arch your back/ Get bigger/ Get smaller/ Don't eat/ Eat more/ Lay back/ Open up/ Shut up/ Trust me" (Russell, 2009: 115).

Neither of these earrings represent an option for a whole and holistic humanity, instead they can be seen as the rules and limitations that restrict and define acceptable feminine performances. These performances are cast as contrasts: femininity is either innocent, self-critical and submissive or it is portrayed as hypersexual, irresponsible and unworthy of respect. The fact that these earrings are very long and heavy symbolises the weight women must carry while trying to conform to whatever standards of femininity society inflicts on them.

Figure 4 "Be Good" 2009 by Rebecca Ross Russell. Sterling silver and Rose quartz

As Russell puts it:

> "The painful, nearly unbearable weight of the pieces reflect the emotional weight of the constrictive societal norms referenced and the pain of attempting to squeeze into those tight borders, while the comically large size draws attention to the performative aspect of the gender roles implicated." (2009: 116)

Rebecca Ross Russell created another piece that highlights the pressures of constructing gender within society, titled "Atlas", which can be seen in Figure 5. The piece is a sterling silver and amethyst brooch pin that features a figure that is ambiguous in gender, trying to hold up or juggle a series of large squares. On these squares are printed words/text from the "Sugar and Spice" nursery rhyme as well as words such as queer, weird, butch and sissy, words that indicate an ideology of not conforming to gender norms upheld in society.

Figure 5 "Atlas" 2008 by Rebecca Ross Russell. Sterling silver and Amethyst

The piece addresses the weight that is placed on both males and females to conform to the gender norms that are expected within society. The highlighting of the limitations of girls being sweet and innocent and boys being tough is not all that is pointed out in the piece: it also showcases the way in which "misogynistic and homophobic fear" (Russell, 2009: 116) is evoked when the gender standards which are the norm within a society are not met. The artist titled the piece in reference to the Greek-Roman myth of the Titan, Atlas, whose purpose was to hold up the whole world on his shoulders. For Russell the result is not only "a testimony to the weight of societal expectations", but also an "implied question about the worth of continuing to balance such heavy burdens" (2009: 116).

The last piece challenges the idea of jewellery being an object of decoration and adornment. The artist addresses the idea of the female body beautifying itself with ornaments for the pleasure of others to view and gaze at, and contests it with making jewellery have a function of protecting the body it adorns. Kelly Malek-Kosak created a series of rings in 1999, titled "Urban Wear", shown in Figure 6, intended to reflect traditional defence jewellery as well as draw attention to the dangers and challenges faced by women who have to survive and deal with city life.

Figure 6 "Urban Wear" 1999 by Kelly Malec-Kosak. Sterling silver, steel, cement

"Confronted with the threatening conditions of contemporary civilian life - including overcrowding, rampant crime, gun proliferation and terrorism – the need to protect both body and mind has grown… [T]o aid her survival in New York City [the] rings combine weapon-like protrusions – spikes, thorn, blades – with a graspable element that helps the wearer…avoid being frozen by fear." (Ramljak, 2005)

While the execution of the rings could be seen as a tongue-in-cheek and playful adaptation to the more traditional function of jewellery and adornment, the rings would be able to, if needed, cause serious harm. Malec-Kosak draws attention to the dangers woman face within a city, rape and assault being a force of instilled fear that drives women to walk and travel around quickly in agitated states, constantly glancing around for a threat, not trusting anyone and hoping they'll make it to their destination without being harmed. "They emphasize the potential dangers of being a woman in public, while simultaneously providing physical (and mental) defence" for the wearer and at the same time making the viewer aware of the "uncomfortable truth of women's disproportionate likelihood of needing that very defense" (Russell, 2009: 99). This piece thus communicates the position of women within a society that is growing more treacherous whilst at the same time challenging the idea of jewellery being an ornament without any other function but decoration, giving the jewellery a function, one of defence, that will draw attention to the body it is placed on in a "You can look at me, but don't try to touch or come to close" kind of way.

Though these are but a few pieces of jewellery that incorporate feminist thinking within the design and execution, there are many more still that are making use of the medium to tell stories and spread awareness of what it is to be a woman in society today concerning gender expectations and norms. These artists come as a breath of fresh air, challenging the idea of jewellery being purely for decoration and visual pleasure, giving a voice to the wearer through the pieces they wear and starting a dialogue relating to relevant social and political ideas. Rebecca Ross Russell speaks wise words that all women and jewellery designers/manufacturers can take to heart as they move forward:

> "I sometimes feel like I put on jewellery like armour, when I'm nervous, when I'm scared of how I'm going to be perceived. I slip on my bracelet gauntlets, my rings like brass knuckles, my necklaces like shields. They impose a distance, no can stroke my wrists, nuzzle my neck, kiss my fingers. I am buffered by my work, and by the excuse to speak, to defend myself: Yes, I made it out of blowtorches and steel and metal dredged from the ground, adorned it with sharp stones, it is mine. A demonstration of my control over extreme elements (over myself, over you)" (2009: 111)

An interpretation of this is that women need to realise they shouldn't have to get dressed for others to look at, as an object for the gaze or vulnerable to attack by an objectifying gaze that comes from within, they need to own their bodies and whatever they choose to embellish and adorn it with. We aren't objects, take ownership of that body, it's the only one you have. This addresses not only "the idea that women 'should' 'look nice' or even that they are judged entirely by their

looks" (Wolf, 1990) but more essentially it's a challenge to the idea "that a particular kind of beauty and sexiness has become a prerequisite for subjecthood itself' (Gill, 2008: 13).

As the section above has shown, there are ways in which the traditionally gendered use and display of jewellery can be challenged and changed to highlight the plight of women in particular. The way in which the jewellers address various issues such as the weight society puts on the successful portrayal of femininity, the standards that women must strive for and the highlighting of violence against women by turning jewellery (which has always decorated the female body) into a weapon that defends that body, speaks to the way in which jewellery can be used as a tool to address feminine issues and perhaps lead to a new way of perceiving femininity.

The section therefore adds to the triangulation of this study in the sense that it can be applied to the research's examination of the change that is possible within the field of jewellery design, the change from stereotypical and gendered pieces towards a modern idea of women not merely decorating themselves but sending a message to either themselves or others through the use of jewellery. If this historically gendered nature of jewellery can be shown to change with the emergence of feminist jewellery, to what extent then has the advertising of jewellery changed? If feminist ideologies have been adopted by the jewellery industry not only in the way some jewellers think but also how the pieces they produce speak to the wearer and observer, how then has feminism influenced the advertising of jewellery?

1.3.2 Advertising as Representation of Gender Norms

"The script for femininity is written into a culture and is transmitted over time through family, peers, teachers, and the media" (Frith, Shaw & Cheng, 2006: 1)

As stated previously, feminists have criticized the advertising industry for many years. Their main problem was the fact that advertising companies made use of female representations that cast the female/model as a sexual object. For the last four decades "the notion of objectification" has been a "key term in feminist critique of advertising" (Gill, 2009: 4). Its significance to the feminist 'critical' vocabulary lay in its "ability to speak to the ways in which media representations help to justify and sustain relations of domination and inequality between men and women." (Gill, 2009: 4)

The use of beautiful, tall and thin models with perfect skin and perfect hair became the norm in advertisements, no matter which product was being promoted. These women were placed as objects within advertisement frames, their sexual appeal being the function of their bodies. An extreme example of this sexual objectification of the female body can be seen in the advertisements of the New Zealand fashion label, *I Love Ugly,* which are shown in Figure 7. In 2015 they came up with an ad campaign for men's jewellery that made use of naked female bodies as backdrops. The woman's body was seen to be used as a prop to display masculinity.

Figure 7 I Love Ugly ad campaign, 2015. New Zealand

Sexual objectification is thus concerned with the bodies of women being used as objects that invoke sexual arousal and desire within the viewer. At the same time these standardized portrayals of women were seen as an embodiment of what femininity is. Real women were now comparing their bodies to the perfectly edited bodies of women seen in the media. In this sense

women were now judging their own bodies as if they were a third-party observer and in turn self-objectification thus became apparent.

The objectification of women was not the only problem that feminists had with the advertising industry; it was the roles in which females were portrayed that also caused criticism. Though the stereotypical role representation of women in advertisements has declined over the years, the traditional roles of women as domestic, house wife and mother are still present. In 2017 the Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media and J. Walter Thompson presented revealing findings about women's representation in advertising, the research included both print and film advertising and ranged from 2006-2017. The findings revealed that:

> "one-in-ten female characters are shown in sexually revealing clothing – six times the number of male characters; when it came to characters whose intelligence forms an integral part of the character (e.g., a doctor, a scientist), men are 62% more likely to be shown as smart; women are 48% more likely to be shown in the kitchen while men are 50% more likely to be shown at a sporting event; women are significantly more likely than men to be shown in the home; men are twice as likely as women to be shown as managers or professionals." (www.seejane.org, 2017)

These findings showed that traditional gender stereotypes still prevail in advertising, even in light of the latest 'female power' trend. This latest trend showcases the newly liberated female as a sexual subject, no longer an object to be viewed but a sexual being that knows it's being looked at. Gill has identified this figure as the 'fun fearless female,' an "increasingly globalised figure who appears in different transnational sites in magazines like Cosmopolitan" (2008: 8). This new figure is also referred to as "the midriff" and she is "not only a new figure and potential point of identification or mobilization, but also an attempt to redefine femininity" (Gill, 2008: 13)

These representations of how women are purportedly supposed to look and behave in the media, affect the way femininity is perceived within a certain society, in a sense constructing the ideas of what it is to be female. For the purpose of this study the jewellery advertisements of De Beers and Tiffany & Co. are analysed within the context of female representation, particularly how this new "feminist face/body" is used within the advertisements. The study thus looks at how the jewellery industry relays ideas of femininity as well as investigates how feminism has influenced these portrayals in light of the increased usage of feminism within the advertising industry.

<u>1.3.2.1 Media as means to counter Gender Stereotypes</u>

Though gender stereotypes concerning femininity are still present in advertising, there have been innovative ad campaigns that challenge these stereotypes. Non-stereotyped advertisements have started to become more popular, which could be due to feminist movements such as #metoo as well as the global concerns and efforts of women and feminists to highlight the struggles women deal with when faced with the limitations of stereotypes. In a study done by Nina Åkestam in 2017, in which she examined consumer responses to stereotyped and non-stereotyped portrayals in advertising and the effect it had on brand attitudes, the researcher found that "non-stereotyped advertising portrayals of gender, ethnicity, and sexual orientation can lead to improved social as well as brand-related effects" and that "advertisers have much to gain from adapting a more mindful approach to the portrayals featured in advertising." (Åkestam, 2017: 9)

Figure 8 ThisGirlCan campaign by Sport England, 2015

Social media reveals campaigns in which the status quo is challenged relating to gender, the public response is usually a lot more positive than when sexist and stereotyped advertisements make an appearance. One such example is the #ThisGirlCan campaign that was launched by *Sport England* in 2015 (see Figure 8 and 9). The campaign was influenced by a study the company had done in 2014 that showed that "1.75 million fewer women were playing sport than men" (www.sportengland.org). The campaign was designed to bridge the gender gap relating to sports and exercise, ultimately to get more women between the ages of 14-40 to participate in some form of physical activity. After conducting qualitative research with a group of women, the brand found that fear of judgement was the main reason for women not taking part in exercise.

> "Women worried about being judged on their appearance, during and after exercise; on
> their ability, whether they were a beginner or 'too good'; or for spending time exercising
> instead of prioritising their children or studying. Every barrier we'd encountered fitted neatly
> into one of these three areas." (Sport England, 2016)

They also came to realise that advertisements relating to health and exercise showcased models who were thin, slim-waisted and tanned with six-packs did not help to inspire women but instead intimidated and demotivated women. To break the stereotype of what a typical 'fit' woman looked like, as well the stereotype that physical activity is a male past time, the #ThisGirlCan campaign was launched. The advertisement showcased every-day women who were cast off the street, sweating and working hard in all shapes, colours and sizes. The campaign also made use of social media platforms to include women who had dealt with this fear of judgement constricting their physical exercise aspirations, creating a platform on which women could share their experiences and through the campaign be motivated to participate, posting their progress in turn to motivate other women.

Figure 9 ThisGirlCan campaign by Sport England, 2015

In this way the campaign not only challenged gender stereotypes but made use of feminist values to empower women and spread a message of self-confidence and competency, celebrating women no matter how they look, how much they sweat or how good they are at an activity. The campaign thus provided a podium for women to take ownership of their own bodies with an "I don't give a damn" attitude.

The campaign that *Sport England* launched was so successful that it inspired other brands to start challenging the ways in which femininity and 'being a woman/girl' was perceived and portrayed in society due to stereotypes. One such offshoot is the Like A Girl campaign brought out by *Always,* the feminine hygiene brand known world-wide, in 2015 (see Figure10). The campaign focussed

Figure 10 Like a Girl campaign by Always, 2015

its attention on the derogatory and insulting saying that all girls hear at least once in their lives, the most common being 'you throw like a girl' or 'you run like a girl'. The advertisement showcased women and girls of different ages, sizes and ethnicities acting out various activities as 'girls'. A term that is generally used as a sign of failure and incompetence, gained a new meaning, showing girls and women doing these activities with confidence. The gender stereotype of doing something 'like a girl' thus lost its insulting undertones and instead showed girls and women taking ownership of those female bodies and doing what they do to the best of their abilities without shame or fear of failure.

Figure 11 PPS *"Woman Acknowledged" campaign, 2018*

More recently and closer to home, an ad campaign was launched by the South African financial services company focused exclusively on graduate professionals, *PPS*. They launched their "Women Acknowledged" campaign in 2018, aimed at young, up and coming as well as established women professionals, seen in Figure 11 to 13. The campaign addresses the gender stereotypes that women face daily in their lives as well as in their workplace. The campaign aimed to "open [a] dialogue about the stereotypes that women face in the workplace, [aiming] to present a different viewpoint to the way professionally qualified women are viewed in society" (www.pps.co.za, 2018).

In a very honest, open and straight-forward way, the advertisements address labels that women are disempowered by daily and flip them on their heads in a way that empowers women and challenges the bone-dry stereotypes still found today. Each piece in the "Women Acknowledged"

Figure 12 PPS *"Women Acknowledged" campaign, 2018*

series makes use of a derogatory label/statement as a start and immediately follows it up with an empowering statement. This is done intentionally as women tend to not be taken seriously within the workplace as professionals, they are seen as women first and professional second. PPS's incentive with the campaign is to "celebrate the achievements of female professionals and female graduates in South Africa", and acknowledge them for "the role they play in their respective industries" (www.pps.co.za, 2018).

The campaign thus challenges gender stereotypes that try and label and categorise women into different classes of 'woman', instead showing that one can be a woman as well as a professional career woman: that one is not separate from the other but rather make up a whole, a woman comfortable in her body, femininity and intellect. The company launched the campaign as they are "passionate about women and their success across industries" (www.pps.co.za, 2018). With the campaign the company hopes to "encourage women to break the glass ceiling and to create a community of professionals who can benefit from each other's successes regardless of gender" (www.pps.co.za, 2018).
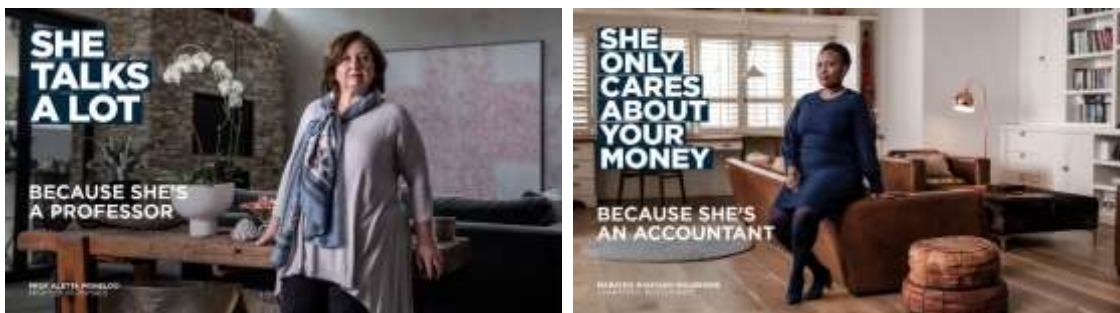

Figure 13 PPS "Women Acknowledged" campaign, 2018

This is thus another way in which an advertisement campaign has strived to address the inequalities and discrimination accompanied with gender stereotypes. The campaign does this by turning the stereotypes into something that does not break women down in their experiences (taking into account multiple realities for multiple women) but instead intends to uplift and empower them to take ownership of their bodies, personalities and intellect and break the mould that society has set out for the 'woman'.

It can be seen that though gender stereotyped advertising still shows its face, there is a new trend for non-stereotyped advertising that has led the companies/brands behind them to success, not only in the campaigns themselves but in the active ways they have empowered many women. There is thus a space for advertising to be innovative in the way gender is displayed. These advertisements are imbued with feminist values and are therefore starting a new trend in how femininity itself is being displayed and advertised. This study examines to what extent the jewellery industry has applied this new trend within their advertising, and how, in particular,

DeBeers and Tiffany & Co., as large mainstream companies, represent femininity. Specifically, the triangulation focuses on how the representation of women within jewellery advertising has shifted in the face of both offensive representations in advertising, and alternative representations of women in non-mainstream marketing.

1.3.3 Gender as Social Construct perpetuated through compulsory repetitive normative performance

> *"The social constructionism perspective says that we never know what universal true or false is, what is good or bad, right or wrong; we know only stories about true, false, good, bad, right or wrong. The social constructionism abandons the idea of constructivist that individual's mind represents a mirror of reality. The constructionism is focused on relations and sustains the individual's role in social construction of realities" (Galbin, 2014: 82)*

From a social constructionist perspective individuals create their own realities based on their perception of reality gained through social experiences and interactions. When applied to the concept of gender, the way an individual perceives gender, whether it is their own or another's can thus be seen as influenced by their perception of gender within experiences and interactions. This means that an individual's gender interactions and experiences are internalised and through this internalising of external stimuli, the individual's perception and display of gender is influenced. For example, if an individual is surrounded by females in nurturing roles such as mother, teacher and nanny, that individual will potentially perceive those roles as characteristically female and it will influence how the individual perceives gender/gender-roles. This idea has been theorised amongst scholars within the social sciences, as Lorber states:

> "The pervasiveness of gender as a way of structuring social life demands that gender statuses be clearly differentiated. Varied talents, sexual preferences, identities, personalities, interests and ways of interacting, fragment the individual's body and social experiences." (1994: 323)

Every individual creates their own world from their perceptions of the actual world. Social constructionism "sees the language, the communication and the speech as having the central role of the interactive process through which we understand the world and ourselves" (Galbin, 2014: 82). Gender display, viewed from this perspective, can thus be seen as an individual's adoptions of the 'rules' and response to interactions with other people and media in society, within the context of gender experience. The experiences thus influence the individual's way of displaying and interpreting gender.

To this point, the study takes as a premise feminist Judith Butler's stance that gender is not only a construct but a performance, that the reiteration and re-enactment of gender performances through repetition becomes 'natural'. To Butler (1988: 519) "gender is instituted through the stylization of the body and hence, must be understood as the mundane way in which bodily gestures, movements and enactments of various kinds constitute the illusion of an abiding gendered self". The repetition of these stylized gestures and enactments lead to convincing performances by the gendered individuals, making the performance seem 'natural'. If gender is established and constructed through a repetition of acts, then according to Butler (1988: 520), "the appearance of substance is precisely that, a constructed identity, a performative accomplishment which the mundane social audience, including the actors themselves, come to believe and to perform in the mode of belief." Social interaction, gendered experiences, language and the gaining and processing of knowledge construct the perception of gender and thus influence the body's performance and portrayal of said gender.

1.3.3.1 Media as means of Highlighting Gender Construction

Feminists are making use of the social platforms available today to highlight this construction of what femininity is within society, making use of Instagram, Facebook and Twitter to draw attention to the inequalities and discrimination faced by women on a daily basis. One such artist is Rora Blue, who in 2016 decided to use Instagram as the platform on which she showcased her "Handle with Care" series. See Figure 14 for the series which included photographs that featured demeaning sayings females are faced with daily. According to Blue the point was "to highlight the sexism and pressure that women face every single day" (2016).

Figure 14 Rora Blue, Handle With Care series, 2016

Blue then invited and encouraged other people to leave comments pertaining to their own sexist experiences on her Instagram. This made the project even bigger and one true to feminist sensibilities in that the collective experiences of a minority/disenfranchised group were being taken into consideration for reflection as well as an outlet of frustration. Some of the comments included: "you hit like a girl," "you're pretty, but you should smile more," "you were drunk, what

did you expect," and "he is mean to you because he likes you". The artist thus challenges the way in which gender, especially femininity, is constructed in society and by making use of social media she includes multiple other experiences, drawing attention to just how broadly this construction of 'what it is to be a woman' is felt and imposed on women.

A Swiss human rights organization focused on gender equality and feminism, Terre Des Femmes, created an ad campaign in 2015 that also showcases how femininity is constructed within society, shown in Figure 15. The campaign highlights how women and their exhibition and display of femininity is judged by the clothes they wear, the height of their shoes' heels or the length of their skirts and dresses. It shows how these outer/superficial layers somehow dictate which class or category of "woman" one is placed into. It draws attention to how femininity is constructed and measured within society. Many women are seen as promiscuous when the neckline of a dress is too low, when the heels are too high or when the skirt is too short. When this "measuring stick" however, is placed against a body, as is done in the ads, one sees how ridiculous these constraints and measurements are when removed from context.

Figure 15 Terre Des Femmes ad campaign, 2015. "Don't measure a woman by her clothes"

The body of the woman is still unchanged, she is still a woman, regardless of the clothes she wears, regardless of the height of her heels, regardless of the length of her skirt or dress. The body against which all the little constructions of femininity are measured is still that of a woman, a human being that should be treated as such. The group brings to attention that the value of a woman and the success of her displaying her femininity cannot be measured by the superficial, such as clothes and shoes.

Though these are only a few examples of how the construction of gender and the performance of gender within a society is challenged, it highlights firstly that these expected performances are universally felt and secondly that there is a space growing from where these performances and constructions can be challenged. The ways in which feminist-driven movements can create

change in the way gender and stereotypes are perceived is thus apparent. This forms the last leg of the triangulation of this study, relating to the question of how perpetuated gender stereotypes shift if gender performances/constructions are not biological instructions but also how it responds to feminist activist movements?

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When looking through the lens that feminism provides, in this study it is assumed that it is apparent that there is a connection between jewellery and gender, the display of it as well as the reification of this abstract idea which confines and categorises bodies, especially female bodies. Though traditional uses for jewellery are more common, there are however jewellers that are thinking outside of the box and using the trade as a tool for communicating issues that are rife in society concerning female expectations and tribulations. Feminism also provides a point of departure through which to view the construction of gender within social spaces and society, at once unmasking how these constructions appear within advertising. It is also clear that feminism over the years, in activist projects and movements, has started to influence media and social media in particular. The study thus aims to investigate how jewellery advertisements not only portray and construct femininity and women, but also how these advertisements have started to adopt feminist thinking, if indeed they have.

Chapter 2

2.1 Research Problem

> *"In women's magazines femininity has always been portrayed as contingent -- requiring constant anxious attention, work and vigilance, from touching up your makeup to packing the perfect capsule wardrobe, from hiding 'unsightly' wrinkles, age spots or stains, to hosting a successful dinner party." (Gill, 2008: 14)*

Advertising has been criticized by many feminist scholars for the adverse effect it has on women and their bodies (be it psychological or physical). The women portrayed in many mainstream advertisements do not represent all the different bodies that can be classified as 'woman'. They are constructed visual representations of women, whose femininity is linked to the strenuous upkeep of a 'sexy body' and appearance (hair, make-up, clothes and accessories). This has been due to the advertising industry's increased usage of 'commodity feminism', a term first used by Robert Goldman in 1992, in his book *Reading Ads Socially*. The term refers to the ways in which advertisers attempt to "incorporate the cultural power and energy of feminism whilst

simultaneously neutralizing or domesticating the force of its social/political critique" (Gill, 2008: 41). This idea came to be when advertising companies realized that objectifying women might not be the best way to attract female consumers and in this way "feminist ideas began informing advertising campaigns as a way to tap into a growing market—the modern working woman" (Gill, 2008:41).

The use of 'commodity feminism' in advertising and the concomitant celebration of women as sexual subjects instead of sexual objects arguably inadvertently constructs a problematic femininity that, although sexually agentic, is focused on a constant and problematic concern with constructing the right look to enhance this sexual power. The formal definition of agentic is "the capacity for human beings to make choices in the world" and it views people as "self-organizing, proactive, self-reflective and self-regulating as times change" (Oxford English Dictionary), which overall shows it as having a positive meaning. The problem comes in when women and femininity are constructed in a way that links this agency with being sexually powerful for men. The problem is thus not that women have been given agency but instead the kind of agency that has been given. This presents a dilemma, as women are no longer portrayed as sexual objects but as subjects aware of their sexual power over men. Although this is perhaps to be applauded in some ways, in certain contexts this unfortunately reads as meaning that a) the only power they seem to possess is their own sexuality and b) they have to constantly measure up to standards of femininity portrayed in the media and advertising (hair, make-up, body, diet, cosmetics).

If clothes, cosmetics and hair have an influence on the right or wrong 'doing' of gender (following Judith Butler, 1988), then surely jewellery is part of the package. According to Russell:

> "When ornamentation occurs in a patriarchal society, there is always a political slant to the act of adornment. Woman is othered through the presentation of the body, modified by adornment to connote to-be-looked-at-ness which, as a form of gender performance, both stems from and reinforces power dynamics between males and females" (2009:3)

Jewellery can therefore be seen as something that signifies a gendered body. When looking at jewellery advertisements one doesn't have to look far to see how the body and the adornment thereof is used to relay messages of femininity or specific female role portrayals. The aim of the research has been to examine if old-fashioned feminine ideals are still present in jewellery advertising (the doting girlfriend, the mother/caregiver, the wife/home keeper) and to investigate the arrival of the figure of the sexually charged independent woman with the body that is physically and sexually attractive that is rampant today.

The research problem in this study is therefore the atomistic ways in which mainstream commercial jewellery advertisements seem to add negatively to the construction of the 'feminine' or what it is to be a 'woman'. In light of recent feminist movements, the problem is that women continue to be seen in portrayals and roles that demarcate and diminish their agency, and that the advertising industry has the tendency to support and replicate dominant representations of women. Following Butler's theory of gender as performance, women often rely on media representations, advertising being one such mode of representations, as reflections of the performances they should adopt. The success of these performances include the role that jewellery, as one element of adornment, should play in that performance. This role has implicitly been problematized by the various new feminist movements and the challenges made to heteropatriarchy by innovative jewellery designs and advertising campaigns.

2.1.1 Research Questions

The research question that emerges is thus to what extent and in what way do jewellery adverts in the mainstream media reflect the changing roles of society in regards to gender and the need for a different, more liberated discourse for women? This issue is becoming more highly demanded given new forms of feminism and given the increasing visibility of non-mainstream jewellery products and marketing that portray non-traditional modes of womanhood.

Primary Research Questions:

•   In what manner, as compared to both third- and fourth-wave feminist theories and recent social movements in women's rights, do mainstream commercial jewellery advertisements reinstate problematic societal gender role expectations, in particular that of the female body and femininity? In other words, how do the adverts investigated perpetuate the compulsory gender-normativity that characterizes hegemonic patriarchal conceptions of gender and sex, as well as how they reflect women's gender performances?

•   How have recent advertising campaigns in non-mainstream contexts countered the reiteration and re-instatement of problematic gender role expectations?

Sub-Questions:

•   How do contemporary mainstream commercial jewellery advertisements intersect with feminist theories of power, ownership and sexuality?

•   Through what kinds of representations has mainstream commercial jewellery advertising adopted 'commodity feminism' *qua* presenting femininity as 'owning/doing' a sexual body and/or gaining empowerment from that sexual power?

- In what way does mainstream commercial advertising, in particular jewellery advertising, support or subvert the construction of gender expectations and roles?
- What kind of mediation takes place in the adverts under exploration between the jewellery that is being advertised and the manner in which gender is portrayed within the advertisements?
- What alternatives for advertising are available in non-mainstream contexts, and how do these adverts counter assumptions about gender?

2.1.2 The purpose of the study

The purpose of the study is to examine to what extent mainstream commercial jewellery advertisements relay representations of gender, and how recent feminist movements may have influenced the representations of women and femininity in mainstream commercial advertising. The study focuses specifically on the representation of women and femininity within jewellery advertisements. The purpose is to reveal gender representation within these jewellery advertisements against the backdrop of recent non-stereotyped and non-gendered advertising and forward-thinking representations, to potentially further the development of female representation within the advertisements of the jewellery industry.

2.1.3 Objectives of the Study

- To use textual analysis (using feminist social constructionist lenses) to compare and contrast the representation of gender within the jewellery advertisements of De Beers and Tiffany & Co, as well as compare the two companies to other non-normative advertisements.
- To ascertain how advertising, specifically the jewellery advertisements of De Beers and Tiffany & Co., perpetuate or undermine the continuous normative and historical forms of gender representation.
- To observe if and in what manner the presentation of female roles in jewellery advertisements has changed from traditional feminine signifiers (mother, domestic) to that of the modern, heterosexual and independent woman empowered by her sexuality.
- To explore to what extent recent feminist activist movements have influenced the representations of women within the advertising industry, specifically jewellery advertising.
- To investigate in which way advertising adds to the construction of performing or 'doing' gender.

2.2 Methodology

2.2.1 Introduction

Research methodology is the way in which the researcher goes about doing the research, the certain "framework associated with particular paradigmatic assumptions" (O'Leary, 2004: 85). In the case of this particular study, the paradigmatic assumption is that of a critical theory. This approach views the world as "a constructed lived experience that is mediated by power relations within social and historical contexts" (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000) and "acknowledges a reality shaped by ethnic, cultural, gender, social, and political values." (Ponterotto, 2005: 130). Critical research involves a "disruption and challenge of the status quo" (Kincheloe & McLaren, 1994, 2000) and is often used as a form of research that involves cultural or social criticism. Critical theorists, across many disciplines, share the same assumptions about the world. According to Kincheloe and McLaren (2000) some of those assumptions,

> "[are that] all thought is fundamentally mediated by power relations that are socially and historically constituted; [b] facts can never be isolated from the domain of values or removed from some form of ideological inscription; [c] language is central to the formation of subjectivity; [d] certain groups in society are privileged over others; [e] oppression has many faces and that focusing on one at the expense of others often elides the interconnections among them; and [f] mainstream research practices are generally implicated in the reproduction of systems of class, race, and gender oppression." (139–140)

Critical theory is thus an approach that sees inequality of social and historic systems and tries to challenge those systems in theoretically activist ways. Critical theory is concerned with power distribution and how that allocated power leads to the oppression of certain groups. It is an approach that is concerned with "empowering human beings to transcend the constraints placed on them by race, class, and gender." (Creswell, 2013: 27) Critical theory is thus applied in this study to examine how femininity and womanhood are portrayed within a social system, in this case advertising, and how these portrayals relay images of power. As the lens of feminism is being used in the analysis, critical theory is applied in the analysis of the rise of feminism in not only activism but also in specific how the advertising industry has adopted its ideologies in the representation of women.

2.2.2 Epistemological Framework

For this study in particular the approach of critical feminist theory is used. It can be seen as an approach that "examines the ways in which literature and other cultural productions reinforces or undermines the economic, political, social, and psychological oppression of women" (Tyson, 2006: 83). Feminist theory thus challenges the status quo in relation to women in particular; how societal and historical power systems oppress women. Tyson (2006) provides a summary of feminist assumptions (across different types of feminisms) as follows:

> 1. Women are oppressed by patriarchy economically, politically, socially, and psychologically; patriarchal ideology is the primary means by which they are kept so.
>
> 2. In every domain where patriarchy reigns, woman is other: she is objectified and marginalized, defined only by her difference from male norms and values, defined by what she (allegedly) lacks and that men (allegedly) have
>
> 3. All of Western (Anglo-European) civilization is deeply rooted in patriarchal ideology
>
> 4. While biology determines our sex (male or female), culture determines our gender (masculine or feminine).
>
> 5. All feminist activity, including feminist theory and literary criticism, has as its ultimate goal to change the world by promoting women's equality. Thus, all feminist activity can be seen as a form of activism
>
> 6. Gender issues play a part in every aspect of human production and experience, including the production and experience of literature, whether we are consciously aware of these issues or not (92)

Feminist theories therefore provide an appropriate lens for this particular study through which to analyse the representation of gender, in specific femininity, in jewellery advertising. These aid in the analysis of how gender is constructed and maintained as "one of the central meaning structures of society" and will provide a "comprehensive analysis of the social meaning of gender that forms a fundamental aspect of contemporary critical theory." (Wake & Malpas, 2006: 91)

As critical feminist theory will be adopted as standing point, this study makes use of a qualitative research approach, which O'Leary defines as "a subjective…process that accepts multiple realities through the study of a small number of cases" (2004: 99). Multiple realties refer to the idea that one person's truth might not be true for the next. The framework within which the study is conducted is that of textual analysis.

2.3 Research Methods

2.3.1 Methodological Framing: Textual Analysis

> *"Textual analysis is a way for researchers to gather information about how other human beings make sense of the world. It is a methodology - a data-gathering process - for those researchers who want to understand the ways in which members of various cultures and subcultures make sense of who they are, and of how they fit into the world in which they live" (McKee, 2003: 1)*

Researchers that make use of this approach to "interpret texts (films, television programmes, magazines, advertisements, clothes, graffiti, and so on) in order to try and obtain a sense of the ways in which, in particular cultures at particular times, people make sense of the world around them" (McKee, 2003: 1). A text can be anything we interpret in order to make meaning of that specific thing. Textual analysis thus makes use of interpretation in the search for meaning and as a way of understanding how other sense-making or meaning-making practices work. According to McKee:

> "Performing textual analysis, then, is an attempt to gather information about sense-making practices - not only in cultures radically different from our own, but also within our own nations. [As] a national culture isn't made up of millions of identical people who all make sense of the world in exactly the same way." (2003: 13-14)

If there are all these differences in the way people make sense of the world, then texts are the way in which, through interpretation, we can gain an idea as to how people make sense of their various realities. Textual analysis therefore strives to investigate not only differences but also similarities within meaning-making or sense-making processes. This method thus seeks to "understand the ways in which these forms of representation [or texts] take place, the assumptions behind them and the kinds of sense-making about the world that they reveal" (McKee 2003: 17). This particular study investigates jewellery advertisements as texts, in specific how they represent gender.

The imagery of these advertisements as well as the words/textual elements within these adverts are analysed. When examining the imagery, the analysis includes looking at the pictures, colours, role portrayals/representations, framing, composition and signs that present certain meaning within context. The analysis also attempts to reveal meanings in the words within the advertisement, why certain wording was used and what meaning is left to be read between the lines.

The adverts examined fall within the period of the last ten years (2008 – 2018) and include magazine, outdoor, billboard and digital advertising platforms/mediums. The study focusses on the advertising used by De Beers as well as Tiffany & Co. The study makes use of ten to fifteen advertisements of each company for analysis and comparison. The differences and similarities of gender representation in the advertisements of these two companies are compared. The way in which these advertisements show influence due to feminist activist movements and recent 'commodity feminism' is analysed and compared.

2.3.2 Analytic Tool: Semiotic Analysis

> *"Social semioticians see social life, group structure, beliefs, practices and the content of social relations as functionally analogous to the units that structure language. By extension of this semiotic position, all human communication is a display of signs, something of a text to be 'read'." (Swan & Manning, 1994: 466)*

> *"Semiotic analysis acknowledges the position, or role, of the individual in terms of a challenge to any notion of fixed or unitary or universal meaning and therefore subjectivity can be engaged dynamically with the image or object. A significant way that subjectivity is acknowledged is in the fact that our perception, or reading, of images and objects can be revealed as socially conditioned" (Curtin, 2006: 61)*

Semiotics is a research method that the social sciences makes use of to investigate the way in which humans make meaning/sense of certain objects, words, images and social experience. Semiotics is thus a method concerned with meaning and sense-making; "how representation, in the broad sense (language, images, objects) generates meanings or the processes by which we comprehend or attribute meaning" (Curtin, 2006: 51). Semiotics, in short, is the study of signs, whether that be written, visual or verbal signs. It is a method that "provides a set of assumptions and concepts that permit systematic analysis of symbolic systems" (Swan & Manning, 1994: 466). Language is what started semiotic studies but it is not the only sign system, there are many others varying in complexity and unity. "Morse code, etiquette, mathematics, music and even highway signs" are examples of semiotic systems (Swan & Manning, 1994: 466).

Semiotics is therefore a reading and interpretation of signs, no matter the shape or form it might take, and seeing how the sense was made of the sign, how the meaning was generated.

> "A *sign* is something that represents or stands for something else in the mind of someone. A sign is composed in the first instance of an *expression*, such as a word, sound or symbol, and a *content,* or something that is seen as completing the meaning of the expression… For example…[s]moke is linked to cigarettes and to cancer and Marilyn Monroe to sex. Each of these connections is social and arbitrary, so many kinds of links exist between expression and content." (Swan & Manning, 1994: 466)

Semiotics is thus the study of what could be taken for a sign as well as how connections are made from interpretation of the sign to the understanding of meaning, the connection between the expression and the content within a certain context. Semiotics depends on these connections being created and maintained within a society. "Typically, these connections are shared and collective, and provide an important source of the ideas, rules, practices, codes and recipe knowledge called 'culture'." (Swan & Manning, 1994: 466) The way signs are interpreted and the meaning attributed to certain signs are thus influenced by culture; social experiences perceived within certain contexts. "Sign functions are important in social analysis because signs, and signs about signs, that represent social differentiation mark and reinforce social relations" (Swan & Manning, 1994: 466). Gender constructs can thus be seen as meanings that are generated through signs, and that meaning and sense-making of gender is influenced by the sign system used within specific societies. Culture influences the way in which gender signs are interpreted and displayed.

In this study the method of semiotic analysis is used to investigate how gender is represented within jewellery advertising within the paradigm of mainstream globalised sign-systems that pervade the advertising industry; the signs and meanings that relate to the interpretation, representation and understanding of gender. "From a semiotic perspective, signs in advertisements draw from shared meanings, visual syntax, and cultural codes for conveying concepts and meanings." (Serafini, 2011: 347) The purpose of the study is to investigate the underlying structure for conveying meanings of gender within jewellery advertisements as well as investigating how recent feminist movements have influenced the meanings relayed in these advertisements.

The method of semiotic analysis is used in two ways: firstly, visual sign analysis and secondly, linguistic analysis. Semiotic analysis is thus used to analyse both the pictures and the words used in the adverts to represent gender.

2.3.2.1 Visual semiotic/sign analysis

"Social semiotics of visual communication involves the description of semiotic resources, what can be said and done with images (and other visual means of communication) and how the things people say and do with images can be interpreted" (Jewitt & Oyama, 1990: 143)

Semiotics when applied to visual images is the study of signs and conveyance of meaning within visual images. "[S]emiotic resources [or signs] are at once the products of cultural histories and the cognitive resources we use to create meaning in the production and interpretation of visual and other messages" (Jewitt & Oyama, 1990: 136). Visual images thus stir up certain meanings within the viewer, a meaning that is influenced by society/culture and at the same time influences the way in which the viewer relays these meanings by use of signs within the society/culture. "Visual social semiotics is functionalist in the sense that it sees visual resources as having been developed to do specific kinds of semiotic work" (Jewitt & Oyama, 1990: 140). This semiotic work is also called metafunctions, meaning that the signs within visual images serve some kind of function. Three metafunctions have been identified within the field of visual semiotic analysis. According to Halliday these three functions are:

"the ideational metafunction, the function of creating representations; the inter-personal metafunction, the part language plays in creating interactions between writers and readers or speakers and listeners; and the textual metafunction, which brings together the individual bits of representation-and-interaction into the kind of wholes we recognise as specific kinds of text or communicative event (advertisements, interviews, dinner table conversations)" (Halliday, 1978)

Kress and van Leeuwen extended on his idea of semiotics applied to visual images, and have slightly adapted the terminology for the three functions as follows:

"'representational' instead of 'ideational'; 'interactive' instead of 'inter-personal'; and 'compositional' instead of 'textual'. Any image they say, not only represents the world (whether in abstract or concrete ways), but also plays a part in some interaction and, with, or without accompanying text, constitutes a recognizable kind of text (a painting, a political poster, a magazine advertisement)" (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996)

The representational metafunction within images can be divided into two patterns namely narrative representations and conceptual representations that the participants within the image convey. The first, narrative representations, relate to "participants in terms of 'doings' and 'happenings', of the unfolding of actions, events or processes of change [these pictures are] recognized by the presence of a vector. A vector is a line, often diagonal, that connects

participants…The vector expresses a dynamic 'doing' or 'happening' kind of relation" (Jewitt & Oyama, 1990: 141) In contrast, conceptual representations are those images that do not make use of a vector and they "represent participants in terms of their more generalized, stable or timeless 'essence'. They do not represent them as doing something but as being something, or meaning something, or belonging to some category or having certain characteristics or components" (Jewitt & Oyama, 1990: 141) Instead of making use of vectors they "visually 'define' or 'analyse' or 'classify' people, place and things (including abstract things)" (Jewitt and Oyama, 1990: 144).

The interactive metafunction stems from the idea that a certain relation is formed between the image and the viewer. These types of images "interact with viewers and suggest the attitude viewers should take towards what is being represented" (Jewitt & Oyama, 1990: 145) There are three factors that influence the meaning gained from these images, they are contact, point of view and distance. Contact refers to how some pictures have representations of participants that look the viewer in the eye, some do not, this contact establishing a certain type of relation to the viewer. Distance refers to how near or far the represented participant is within the picture frame, whether up close and personal like a personal friend or shot at arm's length, creating a gap between the represented and the viewer. Point of view refers to the angle at which the viewer sees the represented participant, from above, below or straight on, from the front or from the back. Point of view is a way for meaning to be relayed through visual images' use of symbolic relation.

The compositional meaning metafunction makes use of various compositional factors to relay meaning through signs in visual images. These factors include: information value, this refers to the placements of specific elements within a representation; framing, "[indicating] that elements of a composition can either be given separate identities, or represented as belonging together." (Jewitt & Oyama, 1990: 149); salience, referring to the manner in which one element within a representation has been made to stand out from the rest, whether this be through size, contrast or colour.

Visual symbolism also forms part of a semiotic analysis of images. These symbols/signs are seen to "represent ideas that are conventionalized through their use in sociocultural contexts—for example, a rose signifies love or caring, a cross signifies Christian values, and the colour red signifies anger" (Serafini, 2011: 346) These symbols are used to convey meaning within a visual text, often beyond a literal level, requiring the viewer to read between the lines in search of meaning. In this study the signs/symbols within the jewellery advertisements are examined in regards to gender representation as well as feminist influence.

2.3.2.2 Linguistic Analysis

"[S]emiotics is concerned with the nature and function of language (be it the relatively ambiguous status of visual language) and the processes by which meaning is generated and understood" (Curtin, 2006: 61)

"Most of the recoverable data about human thought and human behaviour is text of one kind or another" (Bernard, 1998: 595)

Semiotic research method has been applied to the study of language for many years. The way in which language is used to form meaning within societies and cultures has been a major object of interest within the social studies field. Language forms part of every individual's reality, it helps shape it and at once also helps the individual make sense of reality or create reality. As there are multiple realities in the world, and multiple languages around the world, linguistic analysis deems to investigate how meaning is formed through the use of language in different cultures and societies, highlighting both the differences and the similarities of sense-making within the sign system of language.

Take the word 'fat' for example:

"At the simplest level, cultures may ascribe different levels of value to things around them. For example, every culture includes people who have more body fat than others. But there is no universal agreement about whether having more body fat than your fellow citizens is a good thing or a bad thing. In Western countries a combination of medical and aesthetic discourses insists that being larger is not a good thing: it is neither attractive nor healthy, we are forever being told such value judgements aren't natural, nor are they universal. In other cultures, completely different standards apply. In the African country of Niger, being larger is a positive quality and something to be sought after." (McKee, 2003: 5)

In one culture the word has a negative meaning while in another it is seen as a compliment and something towards which to strive. Thus the meaning behind the word is different due to different value judgements within these two different cultures/societies. Linguistic analysis is concerned with how these different meanings got to be associated with specific words, how society and culture influence the sense-making and meaning-making process through language. For this study the words/textual meanings are examined in relation to gender, particularly femininity, as well as feminist ideologies.

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In summary, this study thus makes use of critical feminist theory as a lens through which to analyse jewellery advertisements and the way they represent women and femininity. The way in which this analysis is brought to light is by using textual analysis as the method of investigating the advertisements, a method that has been used by social sciences for many years to understand the ways in which meanings are relayed and interpreted. In this instance, the jewellery advertisements themselves are seen and referred to as texts. The tool used to implement the method is that of semiotic analysis, which aids the examination of the jewellery advertisements as texts both visually and linguistically, helping in the reading of signs and meaning relayed within these texts. The methodology, method and analytical tools have been specifically selected to help in investigating not only how femininity and women are portrayed in jewellery advertisements but also to reveal to what extent feminism and feminist movements have influenced the meanings and signs used within these texts, and relay how the texts thus reflect the signs and meanings associated with femininity within a society at certain points in time.

2.4 Analytic Triangulation

The two forms of semiotic analysis (visual and linguistic) are engaged in ways that triangulate three different yet interconnected areas of study: gender studies, fashion and design (in this instance jewellery) and media representation (in this case advertising). Although these three areas are all interconnected in that they are part of social and cultural studies, at the same time they speak to slightly different fields of study: 1) feminist analysis seeks to comment with the aim of political transformation on the discourses of society as they relate to constructions of gender, 2) comment on jewellery seeks to inform the development design thinking within the context of creativity and commercial enterprise, and 3) exploration of advertising speaks to the ways in which communications reflects and perpetuates social norms and aspirations. The literature that informs these three fields of endeavour comes together in the analysis of the advertisements for jewellery in regards to female representation and the portrayal of femininity. The triangulation thus contributes to the knowledge in each of the three fields.

The combined literature is used to analyse the construction of gender within advertising. For the observation of how advertising, specifically jewellery advertisements perpetuate or undermine the continuous normative construction of gender, especially femininity, social constructionism and feminism provide tools for such analyses and form an integral part in the triangulation of the study. If one can start to understand how gender is constructed in society then one can start analysing how advertisements adapt this construction in their own way, making use of the signs and meanings reflected in society.

Chapter 3

Literature Analysis

For the purpose of this study, the literature analysis focusses on work that consists of the merging of three fields: gender studies, design studies and communication studies. Literature regarding jewellery and its link to gender, gender issues within advertising and feminist social constructionist theories portraying gender as a construct and performance is investigated. The works that are analysed in turn further the investigation of research of gender and feminist issues present in jewellery advertising.

3.1 Gender and Jewellery

> *"Jewellery responds to our most primitive urges, for control, honour, and sex. It is at once the most ancient and most immediate of art forms, one that is defined by its connection and interaction with the body. In this sense it is inescapably political, its meaning bound to the possibilities of the body it lies on. Indeed, the fate of the body is often bound to the jewellery" (Russell, 2009: 1)*

Rebecca Ross Russell presents a collection of essays in her book, *Gender and Jewellery: A Feminist Analysis (2009),* in which she studies gender and jewellery in order to try and gain an understanding of how gender is constructed by the use jewellery and constructs not only a single society, but human societies. In specific she studies how "jewellery can be used to understand more fully the construction of gender and power dynamics from a feminist perspective" (Russell, 2009: 1). As jewellery and the use thereof had been seen as a female occupation, as previously discussed in the introduction, jewellery thus became linked to femininity and the display thereof. The link can be seen to be used as a tool to gender bodies:

> "by turning women's [socially enforced] occupation with their jewellery into female obsession, it became possible to highlight male superiority, despite the fact that men had a vital interest in their wives' demonstration of wealth and power." (Kunst, 2005)

According to Russell there is a distinct link between jewellery/adornment and the way femininity is constructed, jewellery being used as the tool for said construction. George Simmel sees jewellery as "a tool and a means to power, but of a limited and bestowed type. Women can only extend their power over the world through their power over men, and are not, in and of themselves, inherently powerful except through their beauty" (Simmel, 1964). It seems then that the only power a woman possesses is the power of appearance (physical as well as behavioural), and that jewellery, adornment and dress play a role in enforcing these power plays when constructing femininity. Russell makes use of feminist literature in correlation to 1) theories of

adornment, 2) jewellery as a means of ownership/incapacitation and 3) jewellery as means and symbol of sexual ownership. Within these collections Rebecca Russell makes use of case studies of various cultures and their way of using jewellery as a tool and means of constructing femininity. She makes use of a feminist literature to address the construction of bodies and gender as well as power dynamics from a feminist perspective. The literature pertaining to these various categories is analysed to gauge how, historically, jewellery and femininity have been seen to be connected.

3.1.1 Traditional theories of adornment

> *"There is nothing accidental or gratuitous about a people's passionate desire for self-ornamentation. For them, symbolism is not just intertwined with body adornment; symbolism is its very essence."* (Borel, Frances, and Ghysels, 2001: 3)

Sociologist and philosopher Georg Simmel proposed a beginning of general jewellery theory in a section of his work entitled, "An Excursion on the Sociology of Adornment." In it he suggests that "man's first property is that of weapons, and women's first property is that of jewellery" (Simmel, 1964). He also believed that "all sexual difference flows from the original division of property... Men first use weapons to impose their will by force on others, above all on women; women use their first form of property, ornamental jewellery, to seduce, to charm, and to please others with their beauty, chiefly men but also other women" (Klein, 2002: 29). Thus, he sees jewellery as a way of relaying power, but of a limited type. The power that women have seems to be the power they have over men concerning their looks and appearance, which in truth then means they have no real power except in the display of beauty and charm.

This seems to limit women in various ways. Firstly, since the concepts of beauty are constantly changing and also tend to have a time limit because of its link with age and fertility, no woman can remain 'beautiful' for the whole duration of her life. Furthermore, beauty is very seldom linked to other characteristics such as intelligence, achievements or merits. Because of this, "women's power is rarely connected to matters of substance; instead they are left with abstract powers of beauty" (Russell, 2009: 2). Simmel makes this even clearer, referring to women and of the act of ornamentation, when he says:

> "One adorns oneself for oneself, but can do so only by adornment for others. It is one of
> the strangest sociological combinations that an act, which exclusively serves the emphasis
> and increased significance of the actor, nevertheless attains this goal just as exclusively in
> the pleasure, in the visual delight it offers to others, and in their gratitude." (Simmel & Wolff,
> 1964: 339)

If viewed from this perspective, it is seen that not only do women receive power when providing pleasure to others, but they themselves experience pleasure too. Women are seen as 'natural' care-givers and here it seems that the act of giving in itself renders them "passive actors, deriving their satisfaction through endless giving" (Russell, 2009: 2). By making passivity seem like a virtuous characteristic, women remain tame and easy to control, as being anything other than passive would mean a lack of femininity. Judith Butler theorizes that "gender is a constructed category that is reinforced through action and tradition: performing gender." (Russell, 2009: 2) Viewed from this perspective gender is thus seen as a performance where the actions, behaviour and dress all influence the success of a 'feminine' or 'masculine' gender performance. The way people act, dress and behave around us, whether through personal contact or through various forms of media, thus influence our own performances or re-enactments of gender.

> "Gender is in no way a stable identity or locus of agency from which various acts proceed; rather, it is an identity tenuously constituted in time- an identity instituted through a stylized repetition of acts. Further, gender is instituted through the stylization of the body and, hence, must be understood as the mundane way in which bodily gestures, movements, and enactments of various kinds constitute the illusion of an abiding gendered self" (Butler, 1988: 519)

Jewellery can thus be seen as an element needed/used by the wearer to continually perform their gender, to ensure their bodies are displaying the correct markers that society requires. According to Russell gender in culture should be "understood through the socialization that males and females undergo as part of developing an identity" (2009: 2). To her, jewellery can be seen as "one such method of socialization" – "not a result of innate differences between the sexes, but one of many methods used to inculcate difference, in status and self-perception" (Russell, 2009: 2).

The objects that women and men wear are different, some being only worn by women whilst others only by men. "Unisex adornment is little valued... among its other purposes, self-decoration is designed to underscore or even flaunt differences between the sexes, to restate the anatomically obvious" (Borel, Frances & Ghysels, 2001: 23). Along with dress and conduct, jewellery is used within social settings and experiences as a signifier of gender.

Jewellery is thus another way in which gender is signified within a social context. The link presented between femininity and jewellery is therefore one that involves the individual 'adorning themselves' with their gender. When addressing this construction of gender through the use of jewellery Rebecca Ross Russell sees jewellery as a "representation of wealth or honour, specifically as it is linked to gender... [adopting] usages that involve women as a proxy for display,

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in which women do not have ownership of or power over the wealth but rather become an additional asset to display" (2009: 9). The use of jewellery is thus embedded within what is expected of feminine exhibition. The adornment is therefore never done for the individual itself but instead done for the display to the audience that reads the gendered script on the body.

As Russell puts it:

> "Jewellery usages, like those of other forms of dress, develop in large part to construct appropriate gender expression in each generation, and jewellery denoting honour and status represents society's positive reinforcement for conforming" (Russell, 2009: 9)

It is noticeably therefore that when examining the traditional use of jewellery one sees the invisible ties it has to the body it connects with as well as the gender that body is expected to exhibit within a society. It is also noticeable that this tool is used mainly for the gendering of female bodies.

3.1.2 Traditional ways in which jewellery is used as a means of Ownership or Incapacitation

> *"Struggle for control is a hallmark of human civilization, patriarchy and the effort to control of women's bodies, sexuality and production an almost universal constant. Jewellery, as an art form defined by interaction with the body, is deeply bound up with the social structures vying for control of those very bodies" (Russell, 2009: 12)*

Human civilization has forever been caught up in the struggle for control, whether that is of land, money or people. Control and power, or the race for acquiring it, has fuelled the interest of human civilization for years, one only has to open a history book to see its effects. "Shackles. Handcuffs. Slave collars. Leashes. Ball and chain. Their purpose is to reduce or eliminate capability for movement, and thereby gain control over the body in question" (Russell, 2009: 12). When envisioning these objects from the perspective of a slave or prisoner, the purpose is clear – by force control will be taken of the 'other' body. Seen as means of control and incapacitation, these objects would never be classified as jewellery. In contrast earrings, bracelets, necklaces and anklets will automatically be perceived as ornaments and not devices of control. For Russell, the dividing line separating these two categories of objects is not that clear (2009: 12). Russell believes that "[j]ewellery, as an art form defined by interaction with the body, is deeply bound up with the social structures vying for control of those very bodies." (Russell, 2009: 12)

She makes use of case studies to showcase in what manner jewellery has been used to control the bodies, the behaviour of women and thus the construction of gender and femininity. One such case study examines Niger tribes and how traditionally (or historically) they used jewellery, particularly anklets, to incapacitate and in varying degrees disable the wearer.

> "In the manner of anklets, [there are] curious varieties worn by the women of different tribes of the Niger delta. The wealthier of the [Igbo] trading women wear massive anklets of ivory, formed from a hollow tusk, through which the foot has to be passed before it has stopped growing. The weight of the ivory is, of course, very considerable; but it is nothing in comparison with the weight of the anklets worn by the girls and women of the [Hausa people]; those of the [girls] consist of brass rods formed into a huge spiral spring from ankle to knee; while those of the [adult women] are even more cumbersome, being cymbal-like plates of brass, often more than a foot in diameter. These are welded round the women's ankles on her marriage, and are never removed, causing her to walk with a most awkward gait, and allowing her but little comfort in life." (Ferryman, 1902: 228-229)

It is clear that these ornaments cause great pain and discomfort, as well as having a physically incapacitating effect on the wearer and the way they walk. The fact that these ornaments are placed on the body while still young also affects the growth of women, forcing them to adapt the way they walk and carry their bodies. These ornaments or pieces of jewellery "undoubtedly caused not only situational discomfort from the awkwardness induced into the gait, but also irreversible damage to the body" (Russell, 2009: 13). Additionally, these ornaments and the display of them are also linked to wealth, status and maturity which in turn create a social desire among the wearers.

The ornaments were not only linked to wealth and maturity, but to honour and fidelity as well. The anklets were used as the European wedding ring today, without the woman having the freedom of taking it off in cases of infidelity.

> "Burdensome as this adornment is, a woman who should give it away, sell it, or break it by accident, would have been considered to be faithless to her duties; she would be repudiated, driven away with contempt, and it is likely enough that a mere misadventure might be interpreted as a crime that would cost her, her life." (Burdo, 1880: 173)

This type of ornament "ensures permanent physical disability of the entire female population of a society" (Russell, 2009: 13). Females are thus marked with physical incapacitating jewellery, from a young age into adulthood, leading to a link between their perceived/constructed femininity and disability. "This manifests in the understanding of females, regardless of the abilities of individuals, as inherently inferior, disabled by their gender rather than the ornaments themselves." (Russell, 2009: 13) Why do these women not object to this?

It could be that because of this indoctrinated view of femininity as linked to disability, any able-bodied woman would be seen as being 'unfeminine' or not 'woman-like', unable to be seen as a woman within the context of the specific society. "When the male body is considered normative, and indeed in these cases is left unmolested, it becomes impossible to women to function in society without the very ornaments that leave them crippled." (Russell, 2009: 15) Here it is made apparent how jewellery is used in altering the female body and constructing the way femininity is perceived in the society.

In the Ivory Coast, the Dan people have adopted their own version of the anklet. They added bells to the burdensome ornaments, women now had a constant clinging following their every step and move, making monitoring of movements easier. "A Dan woman's status can be determined by the size and number of bells on her ankles... it is hard to believe that anyone could have worn nine kilogram (twenty pound) anklets." (Borel, Frances & Ghysels, 2001: 87) Again jewellery is use to incapacitate the wearer, restricting movement not only physically but also in the sense of losing all privacy.

Another tribe, the Padaung, a sub-group of the Karen people of Myanmar, formerly Burma, also uses their own form of jewellery to incapacitate the female group of the society. Unlike the previous mentioned tribes, they not only focus the use of adornment to the legs but to the neck area as well. Russell believes that "[t]hey are perhaps one of the best known exemplars of the physical transformation and incapacitation of women through jewellery. From a young age, the legs and necks of Paduang females are systematically altered" (Russell, 2009: 16)

> "[G]irls of the Padaung tribe in Myanmar (formerly Burma) traditionally had large golden rings placed around their necks and their calves from about five years old. Over the years, more rings are added, until an adult Padaung woman's neck carries over 20 pounds of rings and is extended by 10-15 inches." (DeMello, 2007: 171)

It is made clear how jewellery is used to form/construct the 'natural' bodies of females and therefore the perception of femininity with it. Not only are the growth and function of the legs altered, but so is the neck by stretching and placement of weight. Now, not only is the walk altered, but so is the vision and movement of the head. These areas are targeted from childhood as sites to be controlled.

> "The limbs and head, the locuses of motion, sight, and thought, are colonized and disabled. Women not only cannot run, they cannot turn their heads or control their own senses of sight, smell, taste... How much easier to control the social role and conceptual personhood of someone whose body has never been beyond the reach of control, whose understanding of their existence as gendered beings is filtered through imposed disability" (Russell, 2009: 18)

This use of jewellery is an occurrence not only seen in 'Africa' or native people of some small tribe, in some forms it appears in Westernised societies as well. Though the use of jewellery was perhaps not the method of incapacitation, Russell points out that:

> "One needs only glance at the contortions of the body into corsets, high heels, tight jeans, chokers, even the augmentation of body parts to extreme proportions, to see that efficiency and practicality in dress is a privilege reserved for the powerful, in the west as everywhere else. To be even more specific, hobble skirts of the late 1800s required hobble garters, which fastened a short length of elastic between the upper legs, prohibiting further movement so as to produce a "ladylike," which is to say an inefficient, even "burdensome" gait. The only real difference is that many western traditions that effect disability utilize garments that are not traditionally considered jewellery – although some, like hobble skirts and chokers, at least blur the line." (2009: 18)

This shows the need to take control of women's bodies and to construct femininity is not one reserved for specific societies. The use of clothing and adornment to control these bodies take many shapes and forms, some harmless like hobble skirts that cause discomfort and a funny walk while others are permanent (anklets, neckrings, even plastic surgery). "Each of these usages speaks powerfully about the respective cultures' attitudes towards and expectations of women and construction of femininity, enacted and perpetrated on the body of each girl in turn" (Russell, 2009: 20)

Femininity is thus constructed with the use of jewellery, the jewellery giving power to the body of the woman (because it is an honouring act of re-establishing proper feminine ideals) – the woman is seen to not have any inherent power but that which is given to her and placed on her body. The jewellery, and the system of construction, is thus what gives the credibility to a 'female' body, and the repetitive use and necessity for it as a signifier within society leads to the usages becoming 'natural'.

3.1.3 Jewellery used as symbol and means of sexual ownership

For Russell, jewellery as a symbol of sexual ownership is "effected through pieces…within the context of a specific society, [that] are created to communicate fertility and/or availability status" (2009: 20). The most obvious of these usages is "wedding and engagement jewellery, which…exist in some form in almost every society." (Russell, 2009: 20) Jewellery is most commonly used in society for recognition and communication of life stages. This is apparent in the use of jewellery as a marker for fertility, availability and marital status. "Almost every culture has some form of jewellery that separates those who are fertile and/or available from those who are not." (Russell, 2009: 22). Feminist scholar, Niyi Awofeso, has done extensive research on the history of wedding rings. She says:

> "Prior to the 20th century, wedding rings were used in a variety of contexts: as adornments, to signify the capture of a bride, to denote a promise of fidelity, to signify classification of women as men's property, as signposts for discouraging potential mating partners of a married woman, and as cultural icons. As a form of decorative art, the significance of wedding rings may be traced from the centre of the earliest known civilization, Mesopotamia (Iraq), to its universality in modern times." (Awofeso, 2002)

In most cultures, it tends to be the woman that wears this ornamentation as a form of identification for, presumably, the male gaze. The male is thus the consumer of the message relayed in the jewellery as well as the consumer of the potentially available woman. "Rings were a symbol of ownership of the bride - the double ring ceremony did not become prevalent in Judaism until the advent of the Reform (and later, Conservative) movements in the early 19th century." (Russell, 2009: 23)

The symbol of the wedding ring was thus deeply connected to the bodies they were presented on: women. An interesting example of this can be seen in the use of puzzle rings as wedding bands. These rings consisted of a construction of three to eight interlocking bands that, once removed, was very hard to reassemble. According to Awofeso they appeared "to have originated in the Middle East, in particular associated with the area of old Turkey" (Awofeso, 2002). "Ancient

Turks used a puzzle ring for their wedding ring... The groom would place the closed ring on the bride's finger. The bride was not shown how to put the ring back together if it were taken off. If the wife ever came home with it undone, the husband would know she had been unfaithful." (Hovey, Vaughn & Murphy-Hiscock, 2008: 68)

The power dynamic in the use of these rings is quite clear, as with the anklets of some tribes, the rings were used as a mark of ownership that, without struggle or dire consequence, could not be removed. The puzzle rings were not as permanent as tattoos or body modification (some tribes make use of piercing and stretching as indicators of femininity), so produced a more socially acceptable way of exerting power. The use and wearing of these rings "[ensured] that the woman could not, even for a moment, escape her role as wife and property of the husband". (Russell, 2009: 23)

Making use of case studies once again, Russell investigates how this usage of jewellery as a means and symbol of sexual ownership, is present in the Indian culture, whether Hindu or Muslim.

> "Strictly regulated jewellery usages sharply delineate the stages of Indian women's lives, based on their marital and sexual availability. The wearing of jewellery is not considered a simple personal choice, but rather a matter of respect for tradition and family, especially towards and regulated by a woman's in-laws. Although there is regional variation, Indian women's lives are almost universally carved into the same categories with accompanying compulsory ornamentation (or lack thereof): that appropriate for a sexually immature young girl, an unmarried girl past puberty, a bride, a wife, and finally a widow." (Russell, 2009: 28)

Jewellery, within the context of Indian culture, can thus be seen as a way of identifying different life stages of a woman – bangles, nose rings and other ornamentation on the body, prescribing the femininity of the wearer. This is a usage exclusive to the women of the society as "[j]ewellery is generally not invoked to signal changes in the marital status of Indian men." (Greenberg, Page & Shukla, 2008: 306) Here it is apparent that jewellery within the Indian culture is deeply linked with marriage and all the things linked to marriage (sexuality, availability, fertility) – relaying messages of femininity in ornamentation for men to witness. The use of jewellery is so thoroughly and deeply intertwined with marriage that it is "almost never considered as a neutral category, something a woman might wear for her own pleasure" but rather "is always understood in the context of presentation for a man." (Russell, 2009: 28)

Rings were thus used to display the status of the female body. Signifying whether that body is ready or able to bear children, to be a wife, to be a mother, marking when it was available for pursuit from interested male individuals, when it was owned by one man – one small band

controlling the actions and interactions other men have in relation to the 'woman body' wearing/displaying it. The sexual availability and sexual status of the body of the woman is relayed in the message that the adornment on the body portrays. Rings were also mainly given from men to women. Traditionally when a groom marries the bride, the bride gets given a ring. It is interesting to see this tradition within European and Western cultures as well.

> "Thus, rings were used as a symbol of the business transaction of engaging a wife…In Christian Europe throughout the medieval period, most weddings took place with a single ring, from the groom to the bride, based on the Roman tradition. During the Middle Ages, more sentimentality began to be attached to jewellery in general. The epidemics of the time led to a drastic increase in memento mori jewellery, often bearing the name or hair of a deceased loved one, or even a living loved one who was out of reach" (Russell, 2009: 25)

Because of death tolls increasing during these times, more emphasis was being placed on the concept of the family from religious and social forces. The wedding and engagement ring thus became important symbols of this need for family (Russell, 2009: 25). Though family was a motivator for marriage and the use of wedding bands, it wasn't until World War 2 that the double ring ceremony became popular. What we take as only natural today was constructed only a few years ago. Young soldiers were going off to war, not knowing if they would make it back. This led to many young soldiers getting married before going to war.

> "It was in this context of surging numbers of marriages and World War Two that American jewellers were able to make the groom's wedding band seem 'natural' or 'traditional'... Jewellers' efforts to popularize the double ring ceremony succeeded in part because wedding consumption became a patriotic act. The industry understood that a wedding band could be presented as a manly object in harmony with war aims." (Howard, 2003: 837)

> "For young men, agreeing to marry and wear a wedding ring could be a way to assert a mature male identity and allay cultural anxieties over homosexuality. Unlike the woman's ring, the groom's wedding band expressed his ability to support a wife, to enter the adult world" (Griswold, 1993: 188).

It appears that through this construction of the double ring ceremony, the jewellery or ornamentation affected not only the body of the woman (wife) but also that of the man, as well as the femininities and masculinities associated to each. Now it is not just the symbol a woman receives as her 'mark' of ownership and marital status (that is linked to ideals of femininity such as motherhood and domesticity, caring and nurturing) but it also becomes a symbol of the man's masculinities (being the protector of the wife, and because of patriotism at the time, being the protector of the American nation, ensuring that while fighting off at war there's American bun

baking in the body of the wife, anxiously waiting at home). Once again successful femininity is constructed only in terms of relation to men, as a wife and mother. "Jewellery resoundingly echoes this fundamental social reality" (Russell, 2009: 33)

Now, like the Niger tribe woman clinging to the anklets as a sign of her femininity, so the man puts on his ring to demonstrate the ultimate masculinity; that of a heterosexual protector of the woman, focused on family. The male identity thus changed by just the adding of a ring to a hand. "The groom's ring only became 'tradition' in the United States when weddings, marriage, and 'masculine domesticity' became synonymous with prosperity, capitalism, and national stability" (Howard, 2003: 837). Jewellery, in specific the wedding ring, can once again be seen as gendering the bodies it is placed upon, in this instance not only gendering but also controlling the sexuality of the individual wearing it. This can be seen through various cultures. A constant reminder of how the body is required to act and behave within society.

3.1.4 The Engagement Ring as a Gendered status symbol

> *"Perhaps the most extreme, and successful, form of branding incorporating the female body as a projection of male honour is one that has become so heavily ingrained into modern American culture that it is almost invisible that is the ritual of the diamond engagement ring" (Russell, 2009: 49-50)*

Just as the double ring ceremony was constructed to guide the feminine and masculine bodies of a society, so the use of an engagement ring was established to add to the picture or portrayal of married life. Heterosexual married life with its two defining categories of male and female. Today it's become such a natural occurrence for an engagement ring to appear, that nobody will think twice about where the tradition came from. Where did this particular every-day tradition come from? The answer, in short, is that an advertising company planted the idea of an engagement ring when working for one of the main diamond distributors.

> "The history of wedding-related marketing includes a well-known but dramatic example of how advertising can spur pervasive and powerful change in the way such events are celebrated. The custom of giving diamond engagement rings in the United States began in the late 1800s, but the economic effects of World War I and the Depression caused it to decline. A campaign created by N.W. Ayers for De Beers, the largest diamond cartel in the world, is credited not only with reversing that trend, but also with making the engagement ring an inseparable part of courtship and married life." (Otnes, Cele & Scott, 1996: 36)

How did the use of this small diamond ring alter the way in which married life, and gender roles therein are perceived? Today when a woman exclaims to her friends that her partner has proposed, amongst the congratulations and ululations of happiness a question will arise: 'can I see the ring?' or 'how big is the rock he gave you?'. According to Russell, what made De Beers advertising so successful was the fact that they "created a narrative whereby wealth and sexual potency are linked in a very specific way, via their "rules" on engagement rings, which have been incorporated from advertising directly into the gospel of wedding etiquette."(2009: 50) This worked both ways in the construction of gender: for men this meant the wealthier you are, the more power you have, the more masculine you are and the better your chances of owning the sexual body of the woman of your choosing; for women it meant that the power they have is their sexuality or sexual bodies, and that the control of that sexual power determines your wealth or status. "Between them, these [examples] prey on the ultimate weaknesses of heterosexual masculinity as constructed in American culture, sexual and financial impotency" (Russell, 2009: 50)

This leads to a portrayal of masculinity that is concerned with power, wealth and sexual conquest and a femininity that relies on appearance and sexuality, man's wealth and power to be truly feminine. The ideal female portrayed in the advertisements "embod[ying] the stereotype of a woman willing to be possessed but only in exchange for possessions."(Albright, et. al, 2009: 49)

> "The De Beers magazine ads, meanwhile, grew more and more explicit with their appeals
> to greed and sex. The language of sensuality may have been deeply encoded in the World
> War II-era messages, but the ads grew bolder and hotter as the nation's morals loosened
> during the sexual revolution of the 1960s... The sexual bargain around the stone emerged
> almost completely from its subtext in a 1987 ad that featured an exhilarated young couple
> frolicking atop a floating pool toy. They are dripping with water and he is lying between her
> legs in an unmistakably copulatory position. "Once she said 'yes,' I wanted her to have a
> diamond that would make her say 'wow,'" said the ad. In other words, she has agreed to
> sleep with him, but now his potency is on the line. Her bliss – and his worth as a man – are
> dependent on his ability to whip out the stone." (Zoellner, 2006: 79-80)

The media is rife with advertisements portraying jewellery as a requirement for love or used as an exchange or payment for sex. This can produce problems for the construction or performance of genders. The advertisements portray femininity as a need to acquire things, whether it be jewellery or men and masculinity as the need to give things in order to attain a woman.

The diamond industry made use of advertising to get people to buy diamonds, which they don't need, in order to get something everyone wants: love. "These strategies worked because Ayers and De Beers had so successfully positioned the diamond as not just an expression of romance, but as interchangeable with it – that is, diamonds had transformed from a symbol into an inextricable component of love." (Russell, 2009: 51)

> "The first time that a man spoke to a woman of his love, devotion, and expressed the wish never to be parted from her ... the symbol of the first milestone was a diamond. The engagement diamond. This diamond ring ... was a badge for the outside world to see. It gave the woman her status as a woman, the prestige of a woman. Nothing else could take the place of the diamond. However, as the years go by, the woman needs further reassurance that her husband still loves her, according to this psychological profile. "Candies come, flowers come, furs come," the study continues, but such ephemeral gifts fail to satisfy the woman's psychological craving for "a renewal of the romance." A diamond, however, which originally symbolized the commitment of love, could serve to fill this emotional "later-in-life" need." (Epstein, 1986)

The diamond engagement ring can be seen as an ornament that influenced the way we perceive marriage and romantic heterosexual relationships today– especially relating to the different roles of the gendered parties. The appearance and popularity of engagement rings had an effect on how present femininities and masculinities are established and experienced in society. Though not as drastic as some of the other usages of jewellery, this one ring still dictates the gender achievement of the body of the wearer, whether it be the body receiving the ring (woman) or the one giving it (man).

<center>***</center>

From the review of literature relating to gender and jewellery, it is clear that the use of jewellery is not always purely for ornamentation but that it adds to the construction of gender within different societal systems. Sometimes jewellery can be seen as both and yet at times it could be neither. Not only is it used to physically incapacitate or to claim the bodies of women as property but also to control the sexuality of those female bodies. These traditional usages of jewellery, viewed through the lens of feminism, show how ornamentation can be used to oppress and assign/construct gender. This can be related to jewellery advertisements in the way in which they construct gender and femininity, especially as the largest part of the market is based on marriage and engagement.

The literature thus provides a strong foundation for the traditional ways in which jewellery is linked to gender. This proves a key element in the analysis of the jewellery advertisements and creates a baseline from which the potential change in usage/gendering of jewellery in these representations is made visible.

3.2 Gender and Advertising

> *"[F]eminist thought in the 1960s called attention to the portrayals of women in advertising and promoted systematic investigation into the area of female role stereotypes in popular media. Particularly, it suggested that advertising in popular media has been a primary means for introducing and promoting female role stereotypes and sexism, calling attention for systematic investigation into this area." (Plakoyiannaki & Zotos, 2009: 1413)*

Over the past few decades, numerous studies have been done to examine the way women are portrayed in advertising. Advertising has become part of our daily lives, bombarding us from all sides, whether it be via cellular mobile, television, billboards, newspapers or magazines. With constructed images constantly surrounding the viewer, those images start becoming 'normal', due to repetition, and in a sense constructs the way in which the viewer perceives the 'real' world. As Pollay says:

> "The proliferation and the intrusion of various media into the everyday lives of the citizenry make advertising environmental in nature, persistently encountered, and involuntarily experienced by the entire population. It surrounds us no matter where we turn, intruding into our communication media, our streets and our very homes. It is designed to attract attention, to be readily intelligible, to change attitudes and to command our behaviour" (Pollay, 1986: 18)

He sees the potential for advertising to penetrate our consciousness and alter the modes of thinking is highly likely. Two reasons he offers for this effect of advertising is firstly "that it is pervasive, appearing in many modes and media" and secondly that it is persistent, "reinforcing the same or similar ideas relentlessly" (Pollay, 1986: 21). Advertisements are thus constantly affecting thought processes as well as behaviours and attitudes. Advertisements can thus be seen as a source of information that influences the meanings we ascribe to certain facts. "People construct their knowledge of the world by arranging and simplifying the information they receive. They create cognitive schemes which are able to describe the substance of their perspectives and dramatically impact social cognition" (Yusof et. al, 2014: 2888).

One of the themes popularly relayed within advertising is that of gender. Advertising makes use of this theme as it is something that is easily noticed and the information will therefore be processed quickly (Kacen & Nelson, 2002: 292), unfortunately, because of the need for quick understanding/reading, this leads to gender stereotypes being used as shortcuts to and/or proxies for the signals of gendered meaning. According to Wolska, "stereotypes are the most significant type of schemes which are used for orientation in the social environment" (2011, cited by Yusof et.al, 2014: 2888). Goffman concurs:

> "gender - femininity and masculinity are in a sense the prototypes of essential expression - something that can be conveyed fleetingly in any social situation and yet something that strikes at the most basic characterization of the individual…expression in the main is not instinctive but socially learned and socially patterned; it is a socially defined category which employs a particular expression, and a socially established schedule which determines when these expressions will occur." (1979: 7)

If gender is then learned or constructed, and if advertising is one mode of receiving information/cues about gender, it is not surprising that feminists started raising their voices towards the unrealistic representations of women. They believe it contributes to the "reinforcement of gender differences and inequalities" (Gough-Yates, 2003: 7), especially in light of the objectification of women as well as stereotypical portrayals.

3.2.1 Objectification of Women

As stated previously, feminist scholars criticized the advertising industry for portraying women as sexual objects. Advertising companies made use of beautiful, thin, perfectly tanned and toned models to sell products aimed at women but also to portray the 'standard' of what femininity is. These women are usually scantily clad, using their bodies or sex appeal to sell the product. As the 'sexiness' of the body had nothing to do with the product, most female bodies not even interacting with the product, the bodies of women were thus being objectified. Many advertisements don't even use the full female body but instead make use of fragmented pieces: chest, face, armpit, legs, arms, hands – making the model seem like less of a person. "To sell their products, advertisers usually focus on portions of women's body rather than the entire body which signifies the view of the fair sex as an object" (Anthony, 2009)

The focus on all these 'perfect' bodily parts that together construct the ideal femininity drove women in society to start measuring their own bodies to the standards of the visual simulations seen in advertising and media. Women thus started looking at their own bodies from a third view perspective, inspecting and perfecting – constructing the femininity that is seen to be 'normal' and

acceptable within a society. "[S]elf-objectification arises once a woman measures her body from a third-person perspective with a focus on their discernible bodily features. It also occurs because advertisements sell images of sexuality, normalcy and popularity more than products" (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). It thus shows how the objectification of women's bodies in advertising affects the way real women construct their bodies and femininity.

> "Advertising discourse both reflects and creates social norms. As one critic points out: the ways in which individuals habitually perceive and conceive their lives and the social world, the alternatives they see as open to them, and the standards they use to judge themselves and others are shaped by advertising, perhaps without their ever being consciously aware of it" (Lippke, 1995: 108)

Objectification of women within advertising thus affects not only the way in which femininity is portrayed but also the way in which the viewer ends up perceiving and exhibiting femininity within themselves and society. It could be said then that these objectified images are influencing the way the viewer sees femininity, "telling women who they are and who they should be" (Kuntjara, 2001). Studies have shown that the objectification of women's bodies in advertising "not only leads women to have an overall more negative self-body image but also it affects how we view women's roles in a society" (Yusof, Jelodar & Hamdan, 2014: 2890).

3.2.2 Studies relating to Stereotypical portrayals

As stated previously feminist scholars have found a particular interest in the way women, the body and femininity has been portrayed in various media, particularly advertising as the portrayals they relay, reflect on how the viewer in turn then perceives and exhibits these ideas (women, the female body and femininity) in society. Studies not only focussed on the sexual objectification of women in ads but also on the stereotypical representations that women faced within media and advertising in particular. These studies started in the 1970s and have continued to be of interest to this day.

In the 1970s for instance, Courtney and Lockeretz (1971) studied the representation of women in print which aimed to establish if stereotypes were still prevalent in a time when the roles of women were changing in society. The results of the study indicated that women were "depicted differently to men in regards to levels of occupation; the setting for their portrayals were inside the home" (Kordrostami, 2017: 8); as well as the woman being a decorative element usually associated with domestic products. Courtney and Lockeretz determined four stereotypes.

They include: "1) a woman's place is in the home, 2) women do not make important decisions or do important things, 3) women are dependent and need men's protection, and 4) men regard women primarily as sexual objects; they are not interested in women as people" (Courtney & Lockeretz, 1971: 94)

In the 1980s Klassen, Jasper, and Schwartz (1993) examined 3,550 print advertisements taken from three different magazines. The advertisements period stretched from 1972 to 1989. The study not only investigated the different ways in which men and women were portrayed but also focused on how the relationship between the two was represented. The study identified three groups, firstly a 'traditional' pose (advertisements casting men and women in stereotypical roles), secondly a 'reverse-sex' pose (ads that portrayed men and women in exactly the opposite manner of stereotypical expectations) and thirdly, an 'equality' pose (advertisements casting men and women in roles/ways neither conflicting or confirming stereotypes) (Kordrostami, 2017: 12). Their results showed that women were depicted in 'traditional' roles more often than men and that ""traditional" portrayals of women have been decreasing and equal sex-role portrayals have been increasing since the 1980s" (Kordrostami, 2017: 12).

Another study done in the 1980s by Sullivan and O'Connor (1988), examined trends in female portrayal in print advertisements from the year 1958 to 1983. Their results showed an increase in women being portrayed in more career-orientated roles, "professionals, sales people, or in midlevel management positions" (Kordrostami, 2017: 12) but it also highlighted the increase of women being used in mere decorative roles.

In the early 2000s, Kacen and Nelson (2002) studied the levels of sexism "(defined as stereotypical portrayals of females, such as decorative, as indicating a woman's place is at home, not career oriented or expert)" (Kordrostami, 2017: 16) in ads ranging from the year 2000-2001. The researchers made use of coding when analyzing the advertisements and rated the ads according to the sexism criteria as follows: a) women who were shown as decoration, b) women placed in the home setting or occupying womanly jobs, c) women having careers but the home being the primary place of importance, d) women and men are equals, and e) women and men as independent individuals. The results showed that sexism and stereotyping still existed in at least four magazines and that the level of sexism had not decreased or improved compared to earlier studies.

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As can be seen from the studies done from the 1970s to the 2000s, stereotypical depictions of women still exist in advertising. Studies pertaining to the sexual objectification of women have also revealed that though it is less frequent "in general", it still appears in female representation in advertisements and is "prevalent in many countries around the world" (Grau and Zotos, 2016: 763). The literature provided by feminists investigating the way in which women and femininity have been portrayed during the years, specifically relating to stereotypes and objectification form a foundation when analyzing the advertisements for this particular study. The way in which women are portrayed in jewellery advertisements over the years by De Beers and Tiffany & Co. is be contrasted and compared to the studies done previously, in light of feminist movements, the study examines if a change has taken place in the representations over the years.

As stated before the study makes use of the merging of literature from three fields: gender studies, design studies and communication studies. This chapter has delved into the way gender can be relayed and performed through the use of jewellery which forms part of the design section of the mergence, and gives a brief introduction to gender issues within advertising. Subsequently, literature pertaining to the other two sections, namely gender issues within advertising as well as the construction of gender, is merged with the analysis of the jewellery advertisements of Tiffany & Co. and De Beers in the chapters to follow.

Chapter 4

Analysis of stereotypical portrayals

4.1 Stereotypical female portrayals in advertising

As mentioned previously, there have been multiple stereotypical portrayals of women in advertising. The advertising industry's use of stereotypes has received much academic attention in recent decades (Hatzithomas et al., 2016). The research examining the appearance of stereotyping in advertising consists of literature that investigates three main areas: the frequency and type/nature of the stereotypical portrayals (eg. Knoll et al., 2011; Hatzithomas et al., 2016; Plakoyiannaki and Zotos, 2009), the social effects that the stereotyped representations have on the consumer/viewer (Dittmar and Howard, 2004; Richins, 1991), and the impact that the stereotyped imagery has on brand effect (Bower, 2001; Eisend et al., 2014; Kyrousi et al., 2016). For the purpose of this study, and this chapter, literature concerning the type/nature of stereotypical portrayals is analysed and serves as a point of departure for the analysis of the jewellery advertisements.

Therefore, what would constitute a stereotype? According to the literature, stereotypes can be defined as "general beliefs about roles, behaviours, psychological characteristics and traits" (Plakoyiannaki and Zotos, 2009). For the purpose of this study a stereotype is defined as generalized beliefs that are widely accepted pertaining to persons of a certain social category, in the context of this research femininity and what it is to be a woman. A stereotype comes to be when a specific idea or image of a person is repeatedly conveyed. The image itself, on its own, might not have any particular effect but the repetition of said image creates/develops a "generally accepted belief about members of a specific social category or group" (Åkestam, 2017: 8). In this way stereotypes offer a way of simplifying and systemising information, an easy yet problematic way to make sense of the world, since, although allowing people to make sense of their place in the world, stereotypes tend to lock the subjects of the stereotyping into essentialist categories of identity that, in terms of popular discourses, suggest determinist characterisations for the individuals being characterised.

For the study, the area of examination focusses on the stereotypical portrayals of women and femininity within advertising, particularly jewellery advertisements. Though traditional representations (mother, nurturer, domestic) within advertising is said to have declined (see Gill, 2003, 2007), there are still other stereotypes present in these visual simulations of femininity.

The most current representation is the independent, sexually agentic women who uses her body and appearance for self-empowerment. She has been nicknamed the Midriff by feminist scholars (Gill, 2007, 2008; Kacen & Nelson, 2002). If, in the 1950s, it was the home that served as the ideal focus for women's labour and attention and from which their 'worth' was judged, "in the new millennium it is the body…[a] sleek, controlled figure is today essential for portraying success", and attention is drawn to "each part of the body must be suitably toned, conditioned, waxed, moisturised, scented and attired" (Bordo, 1993). It has been made apparent that as the old stereotypes of mother and housewife have lessened, it is now the body of the woman and the appearance thereof that become more popular within advertisements (Gill, 2007, 2008, 2009; MacDonald, 1995; Plakoyiannaki & Yorgos, 2009).

The literature reviewed, pertaining to gender/female representation in advertisements, has revealed several categories in which women/femininity is stereotyped. The literature reviewed includes works by Rosalind Gill (2008,2009), Griffin, et al. (1994) and Erving Goffman's "Gender Advertisements" which provides a lens through which feminist analysis of advertisements and the types of portrayals of women can be examined. The literature which has presented these categories of female representation has distilled from a range of different source material and texts which range across various contexts. These categories are compelling in understanding the type/nature of female representation within the advertisements as well as the reflection of femininity within a society. These categories of female representation can be divided into the following: The Housewife, The Vengeful Woman, The Decorative Object, The Sex Object, The Mannequin, The Midriff. The categories will be further discussed in the following section as they pertain to the specific advertisements that are analysed.

These categories are relevant to the examination of the way the jewellery industry advertises and portrays female models and femininity. These categories will serve as a point of departure when analysing the ways in which femininity is portrayed through the use of jewellery and ornamentation, for instance it will help in identifying the differences between how a woman can be portrayed as a decorative object and a mannequin, it will also help to examine which categories are in fact relevant within the jewellery advertising sphere.

4.2 Forms of Gender Display

Griffin, Viswanath and Schwartz did a study of female representations in advertisements. Their aim was to focus attention specifically on the "visual conventions and representational forms associated with advertising images of women" (1994: 488). The intent was to identify constructs within the "symbolic reality of advertising presentation" by looking at the occurrence of

conventionalized elements and relationships (Griffin, et. al, 1994: 493). These occurrences referred not only to roles displayed in the advertisements but also to body positioning and relation of the subject to others within the frame.

> "Our recording units are on stylized 'scenes' and social displays whose coding depends on the recognition of gestalts of pose, gesture, expression, interaction, setting and props; they are conceptual units which emerge from close visual analysis and the identification of recurrent patterns of portrayal" (Griffin, Viswanath & Schwartz, 1994: 493)

The findings led to the construction of categories of forms in which gender (femininity) is displayed within advertisements, which Griffin, et al. discuss in their collective work, *Gender Advertising in the US and India: Exporting Cultural Stereotypes,* (1994: 495-501). These categories of female representation will be examined and relevant advertisements from Tiffany & Co. and De Beers will be analysed in light of these categories.

1. Ritualization of subordination/or woman as accessory:

These portrayals refer to advertisements in which the positioning of the male and female within a frame would lead to the female being perceived as smaller or subordinate to the male. "It includes depictions of women sitting, bending or reclining below male figures who stand over them, snuggling against men who hold them in a protective or proprietary gesture, standing aside and watching deferentially as men talk to other men, and waiting on or serving men…[the] presentation of women as accessories of men" (Griffin et. al, 1994: 495).

In figure 16 this category of female representation is portrayed and stylized within a De Beers ad campaign, entitled *Shape of You*. The advertisements features nude male and female models using the positioning of bodies to resemble different possibilities for cuts/shapes of diamonds. It is noticeable that though these are advertisements that seemingly are using bodies to demonstrate the unity that comes from marriage (or at least the symbol of a wedding ring with

Figure 16 De Beers ad campaign, print

whichever style stone), the females are portrayed as considerably smaller than the males and are showcased as in a position of subordination or in need of protection. The muscular arms of the enlarged male models seem to not only wrap the women's bodies in security but also in a possessive way, almost using their arms as barriers from which there is no escape. It is also interesting to note that the way the bodies are positioned and the inferior size of the female models leads to images invoking the woman as a piece of jewellery, like a necklace wrapped up around the male's neck, her body used as a literal accessory.

Figure 17 Tiffany & Co., holiday campaign 2010, print

In figure 17, the other jewellery company under examination for this study, namely Tiffany & Co., structured their advertisement and representation of the female model in turn. In this advertisement (2010) the setting is presented as a typical romantic scene, a man and women seated at a table lit by a candle, champagne glasses filled with bubbly as he whispers something funny into her ear and she giggles. The woman is portrayed with the purpose of being beautiful and attractive. Plakoyiannaki and Zotos (2009: 1417) believe the physically attractive role, as a decorative role within advertising, is defined by the female aiming for physical beauty/attractiveness. This is not to be confused with the sexual object, the beauty and appeal of the woman is not used to arouse sexual arousal or interest, her beauty is being used as means to inspire female viewers to look like them and male viewers to pursue/obtain their own 'beautiful female accessories'. When looking deeper at the scene however, it can be seen that the female is also being used as a mere accessory in the frame. Firstly, the woman is portrayed smaller than the man, snuggling into his side, her head tilted in his direction with downcast eyes while the man is pictured as bigger and seemingly the one placed in the spotlight. This 'spotlight' is created by his white shirt and bowtie that stand out against the black that can be seen in the rest of the frame, he is also placed in the centre of the frame with the woman pushed to the side of the frame, this centricity is further highlighted by the white candle right next to him that also stands out against the black, in a phallic reference. Furthermore, all the darkness and shadow around them are seemingly men in tuxedos. Apart from the women who gets cut out on the top left corner, these are all men focused on the man in the spotlight who is the only one with a raised head and visible

eyes. The scene now shifts from a romantic setting to one that shows the woman as a mere accessory to the man who has the attention of the surrounding (male) crowd, something pretty to decorate the scene and the arm of her suitor. The necklace, which should technically stand out as it's a jewellery advertisement, fades away in the scene and instead it is the female body wearing the necklace that becomes the accessory. In some way it is almost as if the messaging is directed at a male viewer, informing him that if he buys accessories or jewellery for a female body, that female body can in turn be used as an accessory for his body.

2. <u>Domestic Management</u>:

These are advertisements portraying females in traditional roles or gender displays centred around nurturing. Advertisements that fall under this category of female representation involve the portrayal of women/female models in traditional female roles and ideas of femininity: the mother, the caregiver, the wife, the domestic. Domesticating/housetraining women was "one of the early stereotypes reinforcing the idea that a woman should be a good housewife and a good mother" and this resulted in depictions of women within "the home and happily engaging with the household chores." (Yusof, et. al, 2014: 2890) These simulations reflected the idea of femininity linked to fertility and domesticity. Female bodies are portrayed as mothers and wives looking after children, cleaning or redecorating the house, cooking or serving food, looking at or using household appliances (doing chores). In patriarchal societies, womanhood has always been associated with motherhood, which the advertising industry has tapped into in order to access the consumer market of women with children. Although this is usually done in a more practical way by advertising products that are needed when taking care of a child such as baby milk, nappies, children's toys etc., the 'mother' market is so substantial that even fashion industries have adopted pregnancy wear and 'mommy outfits' to the point where the jewellery industry has done so in parallel as the two industries tend to complement each other.

Figure 18 Tiffany & Co. 2014, print and video

Figure 19 Tiffany & Co. fall 2011 campaign, print and video

In figure 18, a Tiffany & Co. advertisement, a portrayal of a modern mother spending some quality time outdoors with her child is showcased. The image invokes a sense of motherly characteristics not only in the obvious way, which is a mother spending time with child, but also in the way the mother carries the child on her shoulders. This could be seen to resemble the way a mother carries/aids her child while she is pregnant and the further on through life.

In figure 19, another Tiffany & Co. ad, there is another portrayal of the female model as a mother. In this representation the all-encompassing love of a mother for her child is established in not only the way the mother is holding the child in her arms, close to her body in a loving and protective way, but also in the use of colour. Apart from the strip of blue in which the brand name is displayed, the rest if the frame uses light brown, golden and earthy colours in the hair of the mother and child, the colour of her jersey/shawl and even the colour of their skin. Not only is the colour reminiscent of a lioness protecting her cub out in the wild but the u se of colour also creates an image where the mother and child become one, wrapped up in the 'shawl' of a mother's love. The ring the woman wear is in no way highlighted or made to stand out, instead it blends into the mother/child scene almost as if the piece or jewellery and motherhood are somehow connected.

Figure 20 Tiffany & Co. fall 2015 campaign, print and video campaign

In figure 20, Tiffany & Co. once again use a depiction of motherhood in the way they represent womanhood and femininity. This image shows the closeness and love that a mother experiences with her child. The fact that the boy's shirt blends into the white background makes the brand name stand out in the frame, linking the brand to the moment/experience that is being depicted. The black and white colour choice also adds an element of time, suggesting a timelessness, as if to say these types of moments between mother and child have been happening for decades and will do so for decades to come. The colour choice however takes away from the jewellery that is supposed to be the focus of a jewellery company's advertisement, the necklace the woman wears blends and fades away into the rest of the picture and the vector created by the two faces touching move the focus away from the bottom of the frame, making the necklace melt away. It would appear then that, the ads are trying to create an association of the brand with a mother-child

feeling rather than sell specific jewellery. This presents a problem in the lack of father-child bonds but also in the lack of the women seeming to have a career or any other interest as a person. In a way motherhood is portrayed as all-consuming, showcasing the women as capable of doing only one thing at a time, mothering. There is therefore a space for advertisements to tap into mothers who have careers as well, showcasing the multiplicity that a woman is capable of.

3. Object of sexual pursuit:

Sexual objectification identifies itself in representations that separates the woman or her body/body parts from the rest of her 'self', such as personality and intellect. This means the female model is used as an "object to be looked at and evaluated on the basis of appearance" (Szymanski et al, 2011: 8). The body or body parts are singled out with the intent of being viewed primarily as a physical object, not a person, for male desire. Sexual objectification thus concerns not only the woman as a sexual object, but also the woman as an object to be viewed through the male gaze. These advertisements portray the female as an object to be sexually admired and sought after: whether that is a male trying to win the female over within a frame or the viewer of the advertisement being won over by the woman within the frame. The female models tend to have no interaction with the product being sold or their surroundings, their bodies are used as sexual objects to be admired by the male gaze. This male gaze does not mean solely the gaze of a male audience but also refers to the way women view female portrayals with a male gaze, viewing the woman as a sexual object, in turn internalising what would make her look/appear sexier.

Figure 21 De Beers, 2011, print

Figure 22 De Beers, 2010 "Magic Moments", print and billboard

De Beers have adopted this style of female portrayal in their advertisements. Figure 21 shows a split image advertisement, one side a delicate flower containing a ring and the other side a women posed to be admired, staring at the viewer in a sultry and subtly sexual manner. The use of flowers and the colour pink exude ideas of femininity but also allude to a representation of female genitalia, and mixed with the alluring look the model displays, it is clear the female is used within the frame to be an object of sexual admiration. The model does not interact with the product at all

but the look she gives the viewer is one of seduction, almost as if the message being relayed is that of: "Do you see that ring on the left? If you get me that you can have me and my flower". The female model is thus being used as an object within the frame to sell an idea fitting with the male gaze and not necessarily the product.

Figure 22 showcases sexual objectification in a more overt way. In this advertisement the model is depicted lying on her back on a bed, wearing a skimpy shirt and staring up at the viewer. This immediately invokes a sense of the male gaze as the viewer would be put in the position of someone looking over/down at the model, as if the viewer were joining her in the bed with her skimpy outfit. This clearly alludes to sex and in turn portrays the woman as an object to be sexually admired and won over. Again the model does not interact with the product being sold, instead she is objectified and made to lay back for the viewer as if on display. Her body's position, lying down with the camera angle from above makes it seem like she is sexually receptive and passive. The fact that the white bar that contains the brand name and written part of the ad conveniently spreads across both her chest and genital area in the two frames might be considered a sort of 'censoring' when on the contrary it just draws attention to those areas of her body that are involved in sexual admiration. The way she lays back and looks up creates an invitation not only for the male gaze but also for sexual pursuit and admiration.

Figure 23 De Beers 2016, print

Figure 23 displays this invitation for pursuit in an even more obvious way. The model is displayed pulling down her shirt or dress to reveal her chest area while staring straight out of the frame at the viewer. Her gesture itself is an invitation and is accompanied by the lone word on the left, "waiting". This could allude to an innocent display of a woman waiting for someone to steal her heart aka a pursuit of love and partnership but the greater message is that of a woman waiting for a man to buy her a piece of jewellery/necklace. A message of a woman as being passive, not being fulfilled until someone else (a male) comes along to save her and make things better. This second message seems more likely due to the sexual undertones and the sultry stare the model displays. The way she opens her shirt with 'waiting' lingering in the corner alludes to an idea of waiting for a lover or waiting for a sexual interaction whilst connecting that sexual wait to the want

of jewellery. The missing jewellery coupled with the 'waiting' message suggests that she is thus available for sale. The woman has no product to interact with, all she has is her body and in interacting the way she does it is made clear that she is being used inside the frame as a sexual object, somehow turning her body into the 'product' that is up for sale. The advertisement thus portrays femininity or womanhood as a 'waiting game' for either a partner or a donor (someone to buy nice things), a sexual pursuit or purely as waiting to be decorated in ornaments by some other person.

<p style="text-align:center">*</p>

The next few forms of gender display are classified as fashion poses. Unlike the previous three categories that make use of simulated portrayals of gender in every-day life, fashion poses make use of only the body of the female. "[A]ll share the quality of displaying women as 'sights' to be looked at; they all fail to show women actively engaged in any kind of activity, work or leisure, but are designed to present the model as passive and inviting, welcoming the gaze of the anonymous viewer" (Griffin et. al, 1994: 497). These styles of portrayals have also been described as representations of female models/bodies as the 'mannequin'. This role portrayal is seen in advertisements where the woman is not interacting with the product, shows no relation to other people and does not seem to be aware of her physical environment. According to Rudansky (1991: 149), the mannequin is also referred to as the model girl, and her role is solely to exhibit or show off the product. The females/mannequins do not interact with the product, the products are usually displayed on their bodies, jewellery and clothing for instance. These bodies are thus not portrayed as 'real' bodies, they are instead used as hangers and mannequins to advertise the product.

4. <u>Body cant or bashful knee bend:</u>

Discussed at length by Goffman in *Gender Advertisements* (1979), these are fashion poses in which the model "bends and curves her body, bends her knee and points her toe, cocks her head, and generally assumes a contorted posture in which movement is arrested" and she is exhibited as "a 'sight' to be looked at" (Griffin, et al, 1994:497).These contorted bodies in poses aimed to draw the eye are not only seen in advertisements, they flood the television screens but more frequently one sees it as a most recent uploaded 'selfie' on social networks. Girls and woman imitate these pictures every day until the behaviour is natural. Body cants are very good examples of "completely unnatural poses which we have come to accept as 'natural' through repeated media exposure" (Griffin, et al, 1994: 497).

Figure 24 Tiffany & Co. 2013 summer/spring campaign, print

Figure 25 Tiffany & Co. 2013 summer/spring campaign, print

Figures 24 and 25 showcase these fashion poses, ones that have been adopted by women when having photographs taken of themselves or when taking selfies. Both women are sitting on soft, comfortable looking furniture. Yet neither of them is making use of the seat back and leaning back. Instead they are sitting up straight or leaning a bit forward with their hips and shoulders at opposite angles. These bodies are not being used to sell the product, the halves of the adverts with the images of the actual jewellery are doing that. The jewellery they are supposedly advertising is barely visible on their bodies and instead the women are used as sights to be looked at. The 'still life' style of the advertisements also suggest the woman being frozen in a position, restricted and forced to sit still. This speaks to the agency of the women used in the representations; with their movements restricted they perform no activity and in turn have no way to exhibit/express their agency. This juxtaposition of the sight to be looked at (models) next to the actual jewellery which are also sights to be looked at suggests the use of the female bodies within the frames are purely for ornamentation and décor.

5. Recumbent/Reclining figure:

These are poses in which the female body is portrayed on the lower part of the frame, sitting down, lounging or lying on the floor, sofa or bed. "They tend to show the reclining models in 'open body poses', with arms thrown back or legs apart" (Griffin, et al, 1994: 498). These poses have subtle sexual undertones to them, making the model seem that she is inviting the gaze, aware of it and unabashed. These poses present women as passive, sexually submissive and 'asking for it'. They display the bodies of the women and make use of the 'sex' factor to sell the products that the women do not necessarily interact with in the frame. Instead the interaction that the model is bound to is that of basking in the male gaze. This pose is thus often used in advertisements that portray females as sexually desirable objects. The De Beers advertisement, figure 22, is a good example of this pose, making use of the pose to create a sexual object in the female model within the frame.

6. Psychological withdrawal:

"[T]his refers to the tendency to show women, not only passively, but actually in a state of physical or emotional withdrawal, drifting consciousness, daydreaming or staring blankly out of the frame" (Griffin, et al, 1994: 498). These women seem to be unaware of their surroundings, not interacting with said surroundings or any other people pictured with them in the frame. Though they are always beautiful, the effect this withdrawal creates is similar to a victim that suffered a trauma and is somehow locked inside her own mind, unaware of what is around her, or a drug addict, high on the next fix without lending a conscious thought to the outside world. An example of this is an advertisement by Dior (see figure 26). In the image, well-known face of actress Emilia Clarke, better known as the empowered queen Khaleesi or Daenerys Stormborn, from the hit television series *Game of Thrones* is used as the model. Her expression is vacant and dazed, she seems to not notice her surroundings, or the breeze blowing through her hair or her bared chest. She seems trapped inside her own mind, caught in a daydream with no heed to the camera or the viewer.

Figure 26 Dior 2015

7. Feminine touch/self-touching:

Adverts that showcase women who are touching themselves speak to the way in which "female models touch or hold people and objects, gently touching with the extended tips of their fingers" (Griffin, et al, 1994: 499). Women are often portrayed touching their face, hair, breasts, shoulders and hips, always appearing in soft and gentle manner. This is contrasted in how men are pictured holding and grasping objects firmly. While touching themselves the women are also pictured in states of daydreaming or psychological withdrawal. Figure 27 showcases the feminine touch in the way the model softly wraps her hand around her chin and mouth. The way her arm and hand are positioned are reminiscent of body cant/bashful knee as it is not a natural pose but due to the nature of advertising the jewellery she wears it is portrayed as natural, it is a pose that the jewellery industry uses frequently in their advertising.

The model within this frame does not have the chance to appear withdrawn or daydreaming as her body has been chopped to show a particular part only, no facial expressions, only an arm, a shoulder and a sensually parted pair of lips. From a feminist perspective the parted lips of the model can represent a sexual invitation extended to the viewer. Ironically this invitation is extended without the woman being able to 'see' the viewer, or recipient, as her view has been cut off by the edge of the frame slashing across her face.

Figure 27 De Beers, print

8. Engaging gaze:

When there is a lack of psychological withdrawal in models who are posed in passive ways, instead the females are shown to often "gaze directly at the camera, engaging the viewer with seductive eye contact" (Griffin, et al, 1994: 499). Midriff advertising makes use of this pose with the model as the female representation playing with her sexuality. These advertisements relay images of the new, sexy, independent and sexually agentic femininity that the industry has developed in seeming response to anti-sexist critique from feminist scholars. This midriff figure is notable for opening up a "novel vocabulary for the 'sexualised' representation of women in advertising, which aims to banish the emphasis on passivity and objectification" in favour of a "modernised version of heterosexual femininity as feisty, sassy and sexually agentic" (Gill, 2008: 10).This category is useful in the way it aids the analysis of midriff advertising and 'femvertising' as discussed in the next chapter, the engaging gaze is one that forms part of the shift from female model as object to that of sexual subject. Tiffany & Co. make use of this gaze for example in figures 28 and 29. The models are staring directly at the camera/viewer without being abashed or shy or withdrawn. The looks relay a message that seem to say 'yes I know you're looking at me, and I don't mind'. The engaging gaze thus forms part of the 'agency' and 'subjecthood' given to women within midriff advertising.

Figure 28 Tiffany & Co., 2016, print and video campaign

Figure 29 Tiffany & Co., 2016, print and video campaign

9. <u>Body display:</u>

These are advertisements that highlight segments of the female body, not the whole, to place focus on a specific area. These advertisements could be placed in "a category that might be considered a fashion pose but is often simply a direct display of female anatomy, photographs posed and framed to display: a female torso in a revealing bathing suit, a pair of anonymous bare legs, a protruding posterior" (Griffin, et al, 1994: 500)

Figures 28 and 29 show how this extraction of sections of female bodies is used to highlight and draw attention to certain parts of female anatomy. Tiffany & Co. make use of an interesting juxtaposition, on the left are black and white images that crop the model's body to a certain part within the frame, highlighting the neck area in this instance, which is seen as one of the most feminine parts of a woman's body and on the right are colour pictures of the same models' torsos with eyes staring straight at the viewer. In the black and white images, the shadows and lighting form vectors that are used to attract attention to the chest/cleavage area and in the colour images on the right the models stare at the viewer knowingly, almost as if to say "I saw you staring at this part of my body, but I don't mind because I own this body". It is thus interesting to see how a form of female representation that makes use of cutting and pasting parts of female bodies within frames, which in turn can seem to objectify the female body, can be used with another form of representation, the engaging female gaze, to relay a message of subjecthood. Body display is another way for advertisements to engage with the aforementioned midriff character. This new character is concerned with the body and its appearance, the possession of a 'sexy' body being the epitome of femininity as well as being the power that the woman possesses. These advertisements make use of "four central themes: an emphasis upon the body, a shift from objectification to sexual subjectification, a pronounced discourse of choice and autonomy, and an emphasis upon empowerment" (Gill, 2008: 12).

From a feminist perspective it seems then that though the use of cropping and pasting objectifies certain parts, the knowledge that there is a male gaze focussed on her somehow empowers the model and in turn gives the female body agency. Femininity in this instance it seems is portrayed as knowingly showing off a female body without the hassle of overthinking about being objectified.

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From the analysis of literature and advertisements thus far, it is clear that the portrayal of femininity and the representations of female bodies in the case of jewellery advertisements, make use of gender stereotyping, sexual objectification and as of late, 'subjectification' and empowerment. These portrayals of femininity can be classified into different sections as discussed. Representations exist that showcase women as accessories to men, using their bodies to decorate the male counterparts, highlighting stereotypes such as submissiveness and decorative objects. These advertisements are problematic in the way in which these female bodies seemingly have no agency and rely on male bodies for empowerment. Others showcase femininity and the female body in the light of motherhood: nurturing and domestic. These ads present a problem in the way they relay that motherhood is a 'full time job', with the female bodies presented showing no sign of a career or any other interests or activities they participate in. Though feminists have fought against sexual objectification it is present in the advertisements studied. Female bodies are still put on display as objects for sexual pursuit, advertising makes use of certain poses, visual techniques and camera angles to portray the female body as an object to be sexually admired or desired. It is clear however that in recent times the character of the midriff has become a prominent figure within female representation in advertising. This independent and empowered woman with agency and control over her sexual appeal has become the new norm or 'go-to' character for female portrayals in advertising. Having adopted feminist ideologies of empowerment and tweaked it their way, advertising and media have now linked female empowerment to having the best body, according to set standards of course and also at the cost of time and money. This presents a problem as women are still being represented/categorized according to ideals of sex and body. Though the new way of portrayal aims to empower women, it is problematic that women can't seem to be represented without links to sex and their bodies. These categories that have been discussed briefly in this chapter, will be examined in more depth in the chapters to follow. These chapters will consist of delving into the representation of femininity and female bodies within a context of the next wave of feminism, such as the rise of commodity feminism and 'femvertising', and in the context of non-binary or non-stereotyped advertisements.

Chapter 5

The Midriff, 'Femvertising' and Commodity Feminism

5.1 Introduction

This chapter is dedicated to the appearance of the female portrayal of the midriff, and it is deserving of a standalone chapter as it is the female 'character' that has blossomed in media over the last few years and has infiltrated the streets, shops and digital spheres that women often frequent. The midriff has become integral in shaping the way in which femininity is perceived today and has influenced the way in which girls, teenagers and women define and display their own femininity. Over the years, as the advertisers tried to lessen the sexism and objectification that was causing uproar, a new constructed portrayal emerged: "a young, attractive, heterosexual woman who knowingly and deliberately plays with her sexual power and is always 'up for' sex" (Gill,2008:8). This new woman was labelled the Midriff. She is also characterized as the "fun fearless female" (Machin & Thornborrow, 2003) or simply as a "new, more sexually assertive construction of femininity" (Macdonald, 1995). As Gill (2008: 10) notes,

> "[t] he midriff marks a clear example of a 'new' subject -- a 'new femininity'. This figure is notable for opening up a novel vocabulary for the 'sexualised' representation of women in advertising, which aims to banish the emphasis on passivity and objectification in favour of a modernised version of heterosexual femininity as feisty, sassy and sexually agentic"

According to Gill, "Midriff advertising has four central themes - an emphasis upon the body, a shift from objectification to sexual subjectification, a pronounced discourse of choice and autonomy, and an emphasis upon empowerment" (2008: 12). These themes of bettering the situation of women by giving them a voice capable of choice and agency through empowerment, on their own, would serve as positive points in the progress of female representation. These themes reflect ideologies that feminists have been pursuing for years and could be applied and instilled to better the lives of women, in the sense that they would now be empowered to not be confined to traditional femininity and womanhood. The positivity of this is dulled however in the way the advertising industry uses feminism to promote consumerism and turns feminism into a commodity.

Before examining the specific jewellery advertisements that convey styles of midriff advertising and commodity feminism, the study will briefly examine an example of 'femvertising' as background to the analysis of jewellery ads, as evidence of this style of advertising as well as to highlight the potential problems 'femvertising' presents. The example chosen reveals how the

feminist ideology of body positivity is used in the design of 'feminist' driven advertising in a campaign run by *Aerie*, the underwear/lingerie brand owned by American Eagle (see figure 30). The new advertising campaign, released in 2014 was entitled 'Aerie Real' and featured messaging that challenged the expectations and standards of beauty showcased in most ads. For the campaign, *Aerie* decided to use 'real' girls in their photoshoots instead of skinny models as well as laying off on retouching and editing the images of the models.

Figure 30 American Eagle advertisement, 2014, print

As can be seen in the advertisement this 'real' girl is still on the skinny side, white and has perfect skin, even without editing she has no blemishes, cellulite, birthmarks or stretchmarks that are visible. The fact the model is still on the skinny side is problematic as the average women is not model skinny, this excludes women then of above-average weight, women who are curvier and rounder. The lack of cellulite and stretchmarks also create an unrealistic image as most women who have gone through puberty or pregnancy would display these so called 'flaws'. 'Flaws' that instead represent the experiences had and form part of bodies they decorate. The fact that the model is white also excludes women of any other colour or race. The lack of blemishes or marks also portrays a standard that again excludes many female bodies, bodies that might have blemishes, scars or birthmarks.

Though the campaign claimed to use no editing in the images, it is clear that the model is placed in favourable lighting as well as being positioned in a flattering pose. This shows that even without manually editing the image with computer programs, the image has still been manipulated to construct the image of 'real' beauty. At the same time the seemingly feminist message that speaks to body positivity and choice is printed in a colour that almost blends in with the background, showing that the message isn't the true one intended to catch the eye, it's almost as if it was added last minute to ensure somewhere a feminist message could be seen by women concerned with empowerment and body positivity. Furthermore, the wording that stands out in bright pink, 'The real you is sexy', somehow still places a box around what real women are supposed to be like, in this case real women are supposed to be sexy. The fact that this text is larger than the rest

of the text makes it stand out and the colour links it to the underwear the model is wearing, creating a vector from the 'sexy' message straight to the buttocks of the model. The fact that this 'be sexy' message is linked to her behind is not the only problem, as the model is faced away from the camera and has been cropped in such a way that she (the whole being) is reduced to becoming her bottoms. This fragmentation of the female body was highlighted in feminist studies pertaining to sexual objectification.

> "Visually, women are frequently represented in parts. They are fragments, not whole beings…The whole person is lost" (Andersen, 2002: 232)

> "Not only does this body cropping process strip away the humanity of the female within the advertising campaign, but the objectification spills over into reality as male audiences become accustomed to viewing a woman as an amalgamation of parts and develops a callousness towards violence against women" (Shields & Heinecken, 2002).

This objectification has previously been associated with the male gaze but as this advertisement is aimed at a female audience it is clear that female viewers, over time through gendered language they are constantly surrounded by, "have adopted the male gaze as well, viewing their own bodies and their worth through a critical lens" (Shields & Heinecken, 2002). This then shows that, though *Aerie* preaches body positivity, it still manipulates and constructs this 'real' beauty while at the same time portraying the model as an object and leading the female audience to objectify not only the model but also themselves in the pursuit of this 'sexy self'. The brand uses feminist language to try and make the consumer feel that it is supporting products linked to feminist values and by buying said products they are participating in activism. This appropriation of the postfeminist messages of "women as powerful through their consumption allows *Aerie* to position their brand as an advocate for women" (Murray, 2013: 86) and female consumers literally buy into it. The section that follows will examine how 'femvertising' is used and presented within jewellery advertising, specifically in the marketing of De Beers and Tiffany & Co.

5.2 Critique of De Beers and Tiffany & Co. Advertisements

Figures 31 and 32 De Beers 'Right Hand' Campaign, 2003, print

An example of how feminist ideology has been incorporated in jewellery advertising can be seen in the 'Right Hand' Campaign that De beers launched in 2003 (see figures 31 and 32). In these advertisements female models share the frame of the advertisement with a type of 'manifesto' in which De Beers have captured elements of feminist ideology in ideas of empowerment, independence and choice by attributing traditional femininities to the left hand and the new trends of feminism, freedom and choice with the right hand. For instance, the first advertisement (figure 31) reads: "Your left hand is your heart. Your right hand is your voice. Your left hand says 'I do'. Your right hand says 'I did what?'". Here it is made clear how De Beers has constructed two types of femininities: 1) the left hand belongs to the traditional archetype of femininity which portrays the female as submissive and in search of love (always 'doing' what is expected of her) in the role of wife and lover to some male counterpart; and 2) the modern woman who has agency and choice to define her actions as well as the 'voice' to say what she feels. The way they juxtapose these two femininities is problematic in the way it implies that those women who decide to get married are submissive and without a voice, when in fact there is choice involved when a woman decides to get married.

The second advertisement (figure 32) has similar messaging: "Your left hand declares your commitment. Your right hand declares your independence. Your left hand wants to be held. Your right hand wants to be held high." Again De Beers juxtaposes two femininities: the traditional wife character who needs a man to make her feel safe and secure and the free independent women with sexual agency and the choice to exert that sexual empowerment in whomever she chooses while holding up her hand in an act of resistance against stereotyped/traditional female roles. It is clear how the adaptation of feminism within the advertisements presents a problem in the way it classifies and distinguishes between different types of women and thus different femininities, which is contrary to feminist ideologies in the way that they (re)construct women as incoherent, internal and rather stereotyped binaries, rather than coherent, self-justifying and complex wholes.

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It is also good to note that the models are displayed, not as sexual objects but as subjects with agency that are aware of their sexual power. Both models stare directly at the camera in an almost defiant "what're you looking at" way with tiny smirks/smiles acknowledging that they know exactly what the viewer is looking at. It is also important to note how the models' bodies are positioned, one with legs spread open with the shine of the 'right hand ring' drawing attention to her genital area and the other with the right hand with the ring accentuating her curves/body. Though it shows a shift from women being mere object within the frame, it still presents a problem in the way it focusses on the body/sexuality of the female figure, these models also do not represent the average or 'normal' looking women and therefore express a certain category of woman while ironically the advertisements are ended with a revolutionary feminist motivational quote: 'Women of the world, raise your right hand.'

The message carried across by the more empowered imagery is, however, undermined by the shining of the ring on each woman's hand in each image. The overall message seems to be that women don't need to define themselves through marriage, which would otherwise be signified by a ring on the left hand as the historical signifier of engagement and marriage. However, the overpowering focus of each image on the ring turns attention away from the women's empowerment towards the 'commodity feminism' which is referred to, as the advertising industry's way of applying feminist thought in their messaging whilst still somehow using/exploiting the body of women under the superficial guise of sexual empowerment and subjectivity (Gill, 2009: 5). Instead of nurturing, domesticity and motherhood being the indicators of femininity, the arrival of the midriff has revolutionised the standard of female representation to where a woman's appearance, body and upkeep of that body has become traits by which femininity is defined and measured. For example:

Figure 33 Tiffany & Co. Legends campaign 2016, video campaign and print

Tiffany & Co. released an ad campaign in 2016 that featured various famous/influential women across various field of entertainment represented as "Legends" and motivating the viewer to strive to "Be a Legend" (see figure 33). Zoe Kravitz, well known actress, model and businesswoman, was one of the choices of models. Making use of successful females as the models combined with the tagline 'be a legend' can be seen as Tiffany & Co.'s way of adopting feminist ideas of empowerment and self-empowerment in particular as the slogan motivates the female viewer to try and do the same as these famous faces.

Again the model is portrayed as sexually agentic with her sultry eyes staring straight at the viewer and her parted lips hinting at a sexual undertone. The wide blue brand colour dividing the frame highlights the hand on the right displaying the jewellery. The hand is used not merely as an object to be decorated or to show off the jewellery being advertised, instead the hand holding up one finger is again an indicator of independence, and 'making yourself number one' by empowering yourself, not needing anyone's validation. Again it is good to note how she is pictured in a way where it seems she isn't wearing any clothes, as she pictured in portrait style with her bare shoulders, and staring suggestively at the viewer. This highlights the way the portrayal of women has shifted from being a sexual object to a subject aware of her sexual power.

Where with sexual objectification the woman is portrayed as a docile sexual object, this new identity features the woman as sexual subject, aware and comfortable with her sexual appeal, aware of it because of a new sense of self-worth rather than self-objectification which positions the subject as viewing their bodies as if from outside. of the body. Fredrickson and Roberts (1997) found that, in light of self-objectification, women to varying degrees "internalize this outsider view and begin to self-objectify" (Frederickson & Roberts, 1997) by viewing their bodies as objects, objects that need constant attention to attain the 'standard' beauty. The woman now analyses and views her own body as an object, an object to be perfected since that's the only power a woman has. "Midriff advertising adds a further layer of oppression. Not only are women objectified (as they were before), but through sexual subjectification in midriff advertising they must also now understand their own objectification as pleasurable and self-chosen" (Gill, 2008: 19). Gill sees this as problematic: yes, women are portrayed to have gained sexual agency but it is still the focus of their bodies and the sexuality of these bodies that are the focus for the constructions of femininity. To Gill this new development in the way women are portrayed presents:

> "a more 'advanced' form of exploitation than the earlier generation of objectifying images to which second wave feminists objected - because the objectifying male gaze is internalized to form a new disciplinary regime" (Gill, 2008: 18).

This new regime included scrutinising every part of the body; legs, armpits, eyebrows, top lips – just like the fragmented advertisements, some focussed on specific body parts, used to promote products that promise empowerment and happiness. Tiffany & Co. make use of the fragmentation of the female body, which has been discussed previously, to highlight certain parts of the body, but instead of this fragmentation making the female body appear as an object it highlights and adds to the way in which the female body has become a 'seemingly' sexually subjectified, see figure 34. There are still undertones of objectification. The woman is still showing herself off as if on display; the cropped framing combined with the fact that the woman is shown as looking at the camera (whether explicitly as with the picture on the right or implicitly on the left) merely makes it look like someone else is focusing in on a body part or the woman as a whole as an object of scrutiny. This is arguably another version of objectification rather than a representation of subjectivity whereby the camera merely captures a moment of the ordinary life of the woman as she is living in her own body.

Figure 34 Tiffany & Co. 2016, video campaign and print

With midriff advertising focused on the empowerment of females' body image, it is no wonder that after all the maintenance that goes into gaining the perfect body, the 'work' of this body should be put on display. The perfect body is hard to obtain; the standards are quite steep. Once this hard-worked-for body is obtained, sexual power is gained, the power to bring men to their knees and make other women wish they were in possession of said body.

Gill believes that this feminine empowerment is linked to buying the products that whisper that they will 'make you feel more confident' and "better your self-esteem" all "because you're worth it" (2009: 10). The advertisements suggest that buying a certain product will establish empowerment. These advertisements can be seen everywhere: beauty products (cosmetics, hair and skin products), health products (diets and gyms), clothing and jewellery and even perfume.

This means femininity and the construction of it, how women use beauty products, clothes and jewellery in order to portray or act their gender or femininity on their female bodies (female bodies that somehow still need all these things/products to point out and draw attention to the fact that it is a female body) now involves procedures, that take time and money.

As Gill states:

> "Midriff advertising is notable not only for its success in selling brands, but also – much more significantly - for its effective rebranding or reconstruction of the anxieties and the labour involved in making the body beautiful, through a discourse of fun, pleasure and power. In this sense, the work associated with disciplining the feminine body to approximate to standards that are normatively required is made knowable in new ways that systematically erase pain, anxiety, expense and low self-esteem. (Gill, 2009: 10)

Though this newfound character speaks to the empowerment of women, the empowerment is still focused on the sexuality and body of the woman and media and advertising are still constructing the standards of this 'acceptable' female body. These standards often exclude women who are not young, thin and beautiful. It is clear, when looking at media and female representations, to see that "only some women are constructed as active desiring sexual subjects" (Gill, 2003). Bigger women and women with wrinkles are not as likely to receive media representations and are "never accorded sexual subjecthood and are still subject to offensive and sometimes vicious representations" (Gill, 2003).

Figure 35 De Beers fall winter 2014/2015, print

The advertising and specifically the way of advertising these products presents a problem that manifests in various ways such as vigorous dieting and, in extreme cases, anorexia, fuelling the need to buy products that promise to aid in weight loss and anti-aging and even turn to plastic surgery in order to attain the beauty associated with the standards of femininity. This character is one that is being used within the advertising industry is just another construction created as the face of the new 'femvertising' trend. 'Femvertising' has been defined as "advertising that employs pro-female talent, messages, and imagery to empower women and

girls," (SheKnows Media, 2014) and it has been implemented by advertising industries in the attempt to attract and appeal to female consumers. An example of adapting to the changing roles, attitudes and messaging relating to women in society is an advertisement by De Beers that was launched for their winter fall 2014/2015 collection (see figure 35).

Here the model is pictured in black and white business clothing. This portrayal is infused with messages of empowerment and speaks to the changing roles of women; from leaving the house and kitchen to becoming independent and career orientated. Note should be taken that there is still the use of 'feminine touch', a technique used to represent females is advertising, and lip parting that dilute the strong, serious and business-like portrayal of feminism with sexual undertones. The strategy is thus used by brands that speak specifically to women's assumed needs and wants, ranging from fashion, to beauty products to household necessities, speaking directly to the viewer's (woman's) sense of empowerment and self-empowerment related to the purchase of the product. The advertisements are thus speaking to the way in which the (female) consumer wishes to be seen, how she envisions her empowered self to be and simultaneously specifying this empowerment by constant references to bodies(appearance) and sex.

The messages relayed in 'Femvertising' seemingly "promote[s] gender equality both visually and rhetorically, and thus make third-wave feminist language more accessible to the masses" (Hunt & Serazio, 2017:26). The purpose of advertising, to convince people to buy things, not necessarily to enlighten and liberate and empower. By spreading feminist 'word' to the masses they are metaphorically casting a fishing rod with feminism as bait in hopes of catching a consumer. The key then it seems, is making use of feminist ideologies in advertising to hook all the new generation feminists who find themselves part of the Third Wave, who have rejected objectification and have become subjects in their own right, with their own power of choice. "Its champions argue that 'femvertising' is the manifestation of the third-wave feminist's consciousness regarding their own purchasing power and rejection of their own objectification" (Hunt & Serazio, 2017: 25).

'Femvertising' can therefore be seen as a way for third-wave feminist movements to be represented in the media and in turn then influence the values and beliefs within society. The core of the more recent third-wave is "the belief that hearing other women's stories can both enlighten and ground the movement for gender equality" and that "pop culture works hand-in-hand with self-proclaimed proponents of third-wave feminism" (Hunt & Serazio, 2017: 17). Female consumers thus buy into 'femvertising' in the sense that they are ultimately 'empowered' by having the freedom of making the choice to buy a certain product that in turn promises self-empowerment.

Third-wave feminism has been a topic that seems to have multifaceted definitions and is still an ongoing, complex discussion amongst feminist scholars and critics. To understand what this wave of feminism entails one needs to look at the previous waves and what they stood for: the First Wave of feminism is mainly associated with suffrage; the Second Wave focused on female issues pertaining to equal rights, violence against women and reproductive freedom (Bouchier, 1983; Bradley, 2003). Unlike the first and second wave, which had specific political focusses and agendas, the third wave does not have one specific identity or goal that unites the movement (Henry, 2004; Redfern & Aune, 2010). Instead, it is characterized by a stance that aligns itself with minorities who are discriminated against, which for this wave of feminism, is not solely the plea of women as new sexualities and identities have developed in modern society, interlocking forms of oppression as areas in need of scrutiny, including age, race, physical ability, and sexual orientation (Mendes, 2012; Mann and Huffman, 2005).   The third wave has also been termed as a "trendy me-first power feminism' by Genz and Brabon (2009: 10) which is entwined with neoliberal values and rhetoric of empowerment. There is also messaging of the gaining of empowerment by means of consumption and through spreading messages of 'Girl Power', femininity is promoted through a rigorous 'policed set of practices, dispositions and performances' (Gill and Scharff, 2011: 2). The third wave thus concerns itself with the empowerment of individuals by focusing on power, freedom and choice. It is this idea of choice and empowerment that the advertising industry has tapped into when making use of 'femvertising'.

Brands and advertising companies that employ 'femvertising', seem to be heading in a direction that makes advertising more palatable to female consumers. In a survey done in 2014, SheKnows Media examined the responses of women towards female representation in advertisements and found that "71% of women think brands should be responsible for using advertising to promote positive messages to women and girls…52% of the women surveyed reported purchasing a product because they liked how a brand portrayed women in their advertisements". The response thus shows that 'femvertising' indeed does lead to more female consumers participating in buying products designed for them. This is however not necessarily a good thing as women are still buying unnecessary products in hopes of attaining the 'standard beauty'. Buying into the products that promise happiness and self-empowerment does nothing more but create another consumer, the feminist ideologies and language are mere wrappings for the product.

Though the core messages of these ads are generally along the lines of empowerment and self-empowerment, when one looks closer one can see that the campaigns all adhere to five cornerstones. These cornerstones can be identified as the following: (1) the utilization of diverse female talent; (2) messaging that is inherently pro-female; (3) pushing gender-norm

boundaries/stereotypes and challenging perceptions of what a woman/girl 'should' be; (4) downplaying of sexuality (particularly sexuality that does not cater to the male gaze); and (5) portraying women in an authentic manner (Becker-Herby, 2016:19). These cornerstones can clearly be seen as an incorporation and reflection of feminist ideologies, manoeuvred in such a way as to inspire consumerism as a way of activism. Painting a world in which women can empower themselves by consuming, and if that be the case, showing that every woman can somehow 'have it all'. However, there is an important and problematic caveat: they just need to buy the right things, 'although you're an empowered woman, you're not quite there yet honey, so buy this to fix that'. As Lazar put it:

> "This is 'power femininity': a 'subject-effect' of 'a global discourse of popular post feminism which incorporates feminist signifiers of emancipation and empowerment as well as circulating popular postfeminist assumptions that feminist struggles have ended, that full equality for all women has been achieved, and that women of today can 'have it all'" (Lazar, 2006: 505)

This version of the advertising industry's use of feminist rhetoric and ideologies within their advertising strategies has been termed 'commodity feminism' as discussed earlier. In short commodity feminism refers to the way in which the advertising industry has commodified feminism for the purpose of creating new 'empowered' consumers as third-wave feminism washes over into all aspects of society today. Gill refers to it as an attempt to ""incorporate the cultural power and energy of feminism whilst simultaneously neutralizing or domesticating the force of its social/political critique" (Gill, 2008, 41). It has also been described as "the reduction of feminism to a commodity that can be bought and sold on the capitalist market" (Dowsett, 2010: 1). This means that consumer items, whether it be products or media, were now infused with 'feminist morals' and the consumer is thus participating in feminist acts by buying them.

> "In this new batch of enthusiastic empowerment ads, women are increasingly depicted as smart, inspiring, independent and strong – a nearly unrecognizable transformation from depictions of women, hunched over piles of dirty dishes and pushing a vacuum cleaner in sundresses in advertisements of the 1960s" (Condon, 2015: 3-4)

This phenomenon first made its appearance in the late 1980s and 1990s, years which hosted an "expansion of "pro-girl" or "pro-woman" rhetoric in advertising, the corporate media and popular culture" and saw "capital colluded with liberal feminism, primarily to sell commodities to girls and women" (Dowsett, 2010: 1). During these years young girls were introduced to *The Spice Girls*, an all-female pop group that preached girl-power, teenage girls could become a bad-ass female treasure hunter who didn't need men to help her in *Lara Croft* videogames, teenage girls and

young women could follow *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* as she kicked butt and saved the world on television and women could watch the "female protagonists *of Sex and the City* participate in conspicuous consumption as a "feminist" act" (Dowsett, 2010: 1). Since these examples, which are pre-2000s, the 'girl-power' train has been loaded by many others such as musical icons like Beyoncé and Miley Cyrus and television shows such *The Power Puff Girls*, *Orange is the New Black* and *The Handmaid's Tales*, you can even buy yourself a mass-produced T-shirt sporting a feminist message before boarding the train.

Commodity feminism has thus become a "predominant way in which women are sold commodities, and as the way feminism is imagined in the corporate media and popular culture" (Dowsett, 2010: 1). Used in this way commodity feminism has little or nothing to do with actual politics relating to feminism or the material circumstances of women's lives. Instead it "distract[s] and distance[s] women from underlying social and political problems" and at the same time "produces particular forms of female subjectivity that are necessitated by commodity production" (Dowsett, 2010: 2). Brands that make use of commodity feminism focus on messages of empowerment, freedom of choice, body positivity and activism – all of which are inherent feminist points of interest – but often contradict these same messages within the advertisements or campaigns. While feminism attempts to "combat structural oppression against women" — for instance the fight against beauty standards and body regulating — "corporations have an interest in maintaining it, because ultimately, in a fundamentally patriarchal society and marketplace, it sells their products" (Luck, 2016: 7).

5.3 Conclusion

 It is apparent then how advertising has co-opted feminism as the latest trend to ensnare female consumers. Some brands do so successfully whilst others do not seem to see the hypocrisy and mixed messages they relay in their advertising. The shift from women being portrayed as sexual object to that of the sexual subject also presents problems for the way it shapes and constructs femininity, in many cases linking it to consumerism. It also seems that the shift merely moves the position/representation of the woman from explicitly being the object to implicitly being the object. Though these women portrayed do not fit the 'skinny model' category, they are still being ogled at by men, where in contrast advertisements for men do not rely on the gaze of women.

The focus 'femvertising' puts on the individual (empowerment of self, choice and freedom) also shifts attention away from the unity and collectiveness that feminism in its various waves has stood for. As Huntz and Serazio put it:

> "Claiming a feminist identity has become for many something to be purchased or obtained—a word on a t-shirt or an Instagram bio—rather than the courageous act of solidarity and expression of grit that it once was…By making the movement digestible to the masses, the subculture—in this case, feminism—grows in numbers but becomes less collectively driven" (2017: 24)

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From the literature reviewed concerning gender and advertising it can be noted that the representation of gender and femininity in particular has more often than not focused on stereotypes and objectification. Recently however there has been a shift from objectification to 'subjectification', though it is problematic in the way this new subjectification appears to merely be a subtler form of objectification in the portrayals of women. When analysing the De Beers and Tiffany & Co. advertisements it is found that recently there has been a shift from sexual object to a more subjectified representation that seems to exhibit sexual agency, freedom, choice and empowerment. Though these are elements of feminism that should be celebrated, it is problematic that these representations of bodies are being used in the purported pursuit of these ideologies (e.g. with use of feminine touch) and sexuality of these female bodies (parted lips, parted legs, sexual connotations, etc.). Feminism is thus used to mask the foundational reliance on the body and sexuality which is displayed not for the benefit of the people doing the presenting(women) but for others' (presumably patriarchal) gazes. This shift is due to advertising industries realising that adopting feminist rhetoric and stances within their imagery of women draws attention from the female consumer market. It can also be seen that the use of this feminist-driven advertisements in social media has been connected to the third wave, in the way it connects feminism and neoliberalism (with empowerment by consumerism) to create a seemingly 'new' face of feminism that is prevalent today but which also contradicts or problematizes the way femininity is represented in the sense that femininity and womanhood is still restricted to the body and the sexuality of that female body.

Chapter 6

Language, Gender and the portrayal of Women and Femininity

6.1 Introduction

> *"Feminists studying language too have been mostly interested in gender differences, and they believe through linguistic behaviour, the nature and status of women can be revealed"* *(Cameron, 1992).*

The previous chapters examined the way in which feminist scholars have investigated the visual representations of advertisement, the way in which they portray female bodies and femininity. These visual simulations make use of framing, posing, colour, setting and various other techniques that highlight the stereotypical portrayals of femininity as well as this 'new face' of femininity. Sometimes these advertisements make use of text combined with image to add to the way females are portrayed and represented. For this chapter the interest lies in the verbal 'language element' (i.e. words, which include those written down and those spoken) of the advertisements as "language is one of the strongest mediums to represent gender ideas" (Hameed, 2014: 108). To understand the implications and meanings of how language is used to represent gender and femininity in particular, it is necessary to examine how feminists have investigated this area of study: language and gender.

Since the rise of the Second Wave of feminist movements (started in the 1960s and lasted about two decades), scholars in the field of sociolinguistics began to examine gender differences with reference to the broad scope of language. The work of Robin Lakoff entitled *"Language and Woman's Place"*, published in 1973, framed the foundation of this new area of research through work on gender and language that "shaped the direction of research in gender language differences in the 1970s" (Bass, et al, 2014: 2). In her study, Lakoff identified variables that she determined were representations of women's language, and called these combinations of variables the "female register" (1973). In terms of lexical differences, she found that in women's speech there is more usage of "specific colour terms" (e.g. teal, coral), "'weaker' particles" (e.g. less offensive expletives such as *oh fudge*) and "empty adjectives" (e.g. cute, nice) (Bass, et al, 2014: 2). Lakoff (1973) found that women use rising intonation in declarative answers to questions and make use of politer requests as opposed to commands. Lakoff furthered this particular study in 1975 and it became apparent that these two works and their findings would serve to "spark discussion regarding differences between the language of men and women" (Bass, et al, 2014: 2) and would, in turn, form the foundation for further research on the topic.

One of the branches of extended research on this topic that surfaced was that of grammatical gender, how languages reflect gender in the use of grammar. Feminists have been claiming for a while that the use of sexist language can have real world consequences for "gender relations and the relative status of men and women", claims recently substantiated by contemporary feminist scholars who suggest that "grammatical gender can shape how people interpret the world around them along gender lines" (Prewitt-Freilino et al, 2012: 268). The way we use language and the types of language we use can thus be seen to be linked to the way we perceive and portray gender. Studies on the grammatical conventions of gender in language have led to recent concerns about the power of these conventions to generate and shape social stereotypes related to gender (Prewitt-Freilino et al, 2012: 268). It is clear then that language is not just a form of communication but, instead, that language has the power to shape our cognitive understanding of the world we perceive around us (Boroditsky 2009; Deutscher 2010).

A brief literature analysis reveals how, through grammatical gender intersect with sexist language (co-) constructs femininity in terms of stereotyping. The investigations of feminist literature pertaining to gender and the language of advertisements thus informs the analysis of the advertisements that follow in the last section of the chapter in terms of stereotyping, objectification and agency.

6.1.1 Language, Gender and Sexism

> *Languages carry social and symbolic meanings. The meanings given to language speaking in the wider context is related to the power relationships and institutionalised practices within which individuals are embedded. This informs individuals' sense of themselves and their positioning in their languages. (Burck, 2011: 2)*
>
> *As a tool of social practice, language functions as a device not only for transferring information but also for expressing social categorizations and hierarchies. (Sczesny, 2015: 1)*

If languages carry meaning, and gender can be seen as an 'institutionalised' practice, it can be said that language thus affects the way in which we convey and perceive meanings of gender. In the same manner that this study has examined how the female gender and femininity have been represented visually within advertisements, we now turn to how verbal language (written or otherwise) relays ideas of femininity and womanhood. Presently there are no languages that do not differentiate between men and women/ masculinity and femininity, leading those studying languages and psychology to believe that gender is "so fundamental to social organization and social structure that linguistic means to refer to this category are indispensable for speech communities" (Stahlberg et al. 2007: 163).

This means that language, and the use thereof, can be viewed as a means to categorize bodies and shape genders as "women and men used their language differences differently to 'perform their gender'" (Burck, 2011: 1). Given recent studies that have linked gender in language to the way gender is perceived in the world (e.g., Boroditsky et al. 2003; Boroditsky, 2009) one could deduce that when language constantly draws attention to the differentiation between men and women, by e.g. "discriminating between masculine and feminine nouns and pronouns" (Prewitt-Freilino et al, 2012: 269), individuals will therefore be more apt at distinguishing and drawing distinctions between men and women. If language thus has a role to play in how individuals organize their beliefs about gender, it is a fair assumption that differences in "the gendered language systems across different cultures could play a role in societal differences in beliefs, attitudes, and behavioral practices about the role and status of men and women" (Prewitt-Freilino et al, 2012: 269). For the purpose of this study, focus is placed on the way language is used to construct femininity (linguistic signifiers), or the female gender, and how language relays/furthers beliefs and attitudes about women (linguistic manipulation).

The examination needs to start by investigating what linguists and feminists alike have termed 'grammatical gender' and how it relates to femininity and the portrayal of women. Take the English words *steward* and *stewardess* for example. Although based on the same word, the female indicative word *stewardess* becomes a specific term, distinct from the word *steward* and even gaining its own secondary meaning. The Oxford English Dictionary (1989), defines *steward* as a reference to "an official who controls the domestic affairs of a household, supervising the service of his master's table, directing the domestics, and regulating household expenditure…"; while on the other hand the same source defines/refers to a stewardess as either "a female steward" or "a female attendant on a passenger aircraft who attends to the needs and comfort of the passengers". This reveals how the female counterpart is defined in reference to the male term (as was shown in the Lakoff findings of 'female register') as well as how, though there is a similarity in the role they play, the female counterpart is expected to "attend the needs" and "comfort" while the masculine version implies more authority and activeness by using words such as "control", "supervise" and "directing" in its definition. Language thus has way of making grammatical distinctions between men and women, showcasing a traditional/stereotypical gender undertone when making that distinction.

For instance, this word comparison, which showcased masculinity as active, direct and related to business or career whereas the female counterpart is portrayed as nurturing, caring and 'emotional'. It is apparent that the more agentic description/definition is assigned to the male term and the female counterpart is reduced to "female steward", something coming or stemming from the man.

Clearly, the way people use language has a way of placing genders into masculine and feminine categories. For instance, the words *male-nurse* and *female-surgeon*, here the way language is used to categorize genders and highlight exceptions to the 'rules of gender roles' in noticeable. The roles of nurses have always been perceived as a traditionally female occupation, the same goes for surgeons being a career dominated by men. It can be seen then how exceptions to these traditional 'gender role' rules, via language are "marked as exceptions" in order to better categorize gender differences. It is thus safe to assume that "gender is not just reflected in language but the concept of gender is itself constituted by the language used to refer to it" (Weatherall, 2002: 80).

The need for language to discern between men and women/ masculinity and femininity in order to classify and categorize has caught the attention of feminists, not only in the way gender is relayed grammatically, but also in the way it generates stereotyped/sexist language. For instance, in 2014, Veronico Tarrayo did a study in which he investigated the appearance of sexism/use of sexist language in six Philippines preschool English language textbooks. Certain categories pertaining to the use of language were investigated: "'firstness', occupational-role representations, character attributes, and interests and lifestyles" (Tarrayo, 2014: 25). The data retrieved revealed the following: in terms of 'firstness' (the chronological order of gender appearances), males appeared before females more often (e.g. Jack and Jill); in terms of occupational roles, females were portrayed less frequently and occupational roles were limited to stereotypical types of professions, while occupations for males showed a more diverse range of options. In terms of character attributes, females are usually ascribed 'good' looks and passivity while in contrast masculine attributes are associated with aggression, dominance and activity. The textbooks revealed that the number of attributes ascribed in relation to interests and lifestyles of females is higher than those of males but these interests and lifestyles of females are primarily represented as indoor activities (e.g. household chores, shopping) (Tarrayo, 2014: 25).

It is noticeable how femininity here, through language, is shaped to relate to the traditional/stereotyped representation of submissiveness, domesticity, and focus on the body/appearance. Language and the use of sexist language thus not only categorizes men and women, but simultaneously portrays women in a stereotypical/sexist manner, further categorizing femininity.

6.1.2 Sexist language

Sexism has been defined as "words, phrases, and expressions that unnecessarily differentiate between females and males or exclude, trivialize, or diminish either gender" (Parks & Roberton, 1998: 455). Like other languages, English relays the beliefs and values of the culture in which it is used, in this instance relaying beliefs about gender. Sexism within the English language can be found in its grammar and vocabulary. Miller and Swift (1988) identified examples of sexist language as 1) false generics such as 'he' or 'mankind'; 2) hierarchic and separatist terms, such as 'man and wife'; and 3) terms that influence the self-esteem of women or their perceived identity, such as using the word 'girl' to refer to an adult woman.

More recently, in the study mentioned previously, Torrayo (2014) lists the following examples of sexism in the English language:

> • The use of generic masculine pronoun (e.g. Every student has to submit his project);
>
> • Word connotations (the hidden meanings assigned to certain words/phrases, e.g. *call boy*, which signifies call actors before they go on the stage versus *call girl*, a prostitute; woman with sexual connotations as in "She's his woman";
>
> • Masculine-derived expressions like "manning the space shuttle", "manning the phones", "sportsmanship", "penmanship", and "doing a man-sized job";
>
> • Masculine word first (Mr. and Mrs., boys and girls, his and hers, husband and wife, brothers and sisters, he or she);
>
> • Compelling women to define themselves as 'Miss' or 'Mrs.' Whereas men have a unanimous 'Mr' which does not define their 'relationship/age status'; and
>
> • Using negative words for sexually expressive women but not for sexually expressive men (bitch, harlot, tart, whore, slut versus stud or male prostitute). (Torrayo, 2014: 26)

Here again femininity is linked to submissiveness (coming second to men) and to the sexuality of the body linked to the word, whether that word is related to marriage/relationship or literal sexuality or sexual behaviour. Language thus constructs/shapes the gender stereotypes that morph into sexism and sexist language. Sara Mills (2008) takes a new look at sexism in language, in her

work she identifies two forms of sexism, namely overt and indirect. According to her, overt sexism is "clear and unambiguous" and indirect sexism "can only be understood contextually in relation to the interpretation of surrounding utterances" (Mills, 2008). She goes on to describe indirect sexism as being used to categorize a set of stereotypical beliefs/ideologies about women (Mills, 2008).

> "For many feminists, women are particularly subjected to the effects of ideology. In many ways, it is clear that there is a range of belief systems about women which do not 'fit' with the reality of women's lives." (Montashery, 2013: 106)

Idealistic portrayals of femininity and the female body, whether visual or linguistic, thus do not represent the reality of women's lives, femininity and women's bodies. These women who don't fit the traditional/stereotyped ideal are assigned markers that then relate the meaning of gender through language. Montashery did a study that was concerned with "the description of structures in language which seem to determine that terms associated with gender will acquire particular types of meanings in such a way that those terms associated with women will take on a range of clearly identifiable connotations" (2013: 105). The study was thus an examination of what particular structure in language ensures that gender is identified in relation to women, and how these structures lead to meaning and connotations associated with women. The structures that were examined were Metaphor and Metonymy as dominant figures in the construction of gender through language.

Montashery describes metaphor not as a "literary form" or as a "deviation from some supposedly literal language", but rather as something that affects the meanings we create as it is "one of the building blocks of our thinking" that may influence individuals to "think about certain scenarios in particularly stereotyped ways" (2013: 107). An example of how metaphor can construct gender and femininity can be extracted from pet names men tend use for their girlfriends, wives or partners. Some of the examples Montashery identified as "Honey, Sugarplum, Sugarcake, Flower, Kitten, Babybear, Sweetie and Peanut" (2013: 108). Nicknames such as Sugarplum, Sweetie and Honey relay a message of women being sweet. This could be having a sweet/nice personality but could also allude to women being considered as "sweet food to be devoured by men"; or in other categories they are considered as an "aesthetic object to be enjoyed by men (e.g. Flower, Star); or as a pet to play with by men (e.g. Kitten, Babybear)" (Montashery, 2013: 108). The use of metaphor thus highlights the way stereotypical representations of femininity and women come to be constructed through the use of language: 1) object to be devoured by men; 2) object to be admired by men; 3) pet to be played with by men or 4) a vulnerable animal in need of protection that a man can provide.

It is interesting to note that none of these nicknames give the women power of agency, instead they are "food, flower or some harmless and helpless animals". According to Montashery, the use of these words to address and categorise women presents a problem in two ways:" firstly we construct gender [femininity] socially" and "secondly we deny their [women's] agency and identity" (2013: 108). This can be seen not only in the stereotyped portrayals of femininity but also in the use of language pertaining to women that do not 'fit' the expectations of men, a good example of this is the use of the word 'bitch'. Montashery calls this phenomenon of metaphor a tool of gendering within language, the so called "metaphorizing [of the] female body" (2013: 108).

The second structure that was examined in this study was Metonymy which is a figure of speech that replaces the name of one thing with the name of something else closely associated with it, e.g. using 'the bottle' to refer to an alcoholic drink, or 'a skirt' to refer to a woman. A well-known metonymic saying is the pen is mightier than the sword (i.e. writing is more powerful than warfare) (Montashery, 2013: 108). Mills examines the technique of fragmenting the female body (which has been discussed in visual context in previous chapters) in pornographic literature, as a form of metonymy that constructs ideologies of gender or femininity.

Sara Mills (1995) notes that there are two effects of fragmenting the female body:

> "First, the body is depersonalized, objectified, reduced to its parts. Second, since the female protagonist is not represented as a unified conscious physical being, the scene cannot be focalized from her perspective—effectively, her experience is written out of the text. Fragmentation of the female is therefore associated with male focalization—the female represented as an object, a collection of objects, for the male gaze." (133)

When examining the stereotypical portrayals and visual techniques that are applied to construct gender or femininity in previous chapters of this study, fragmentation of the body was one of the main techniques that relayed messages of objectification and sexism. As discussed, visual examples of fragmentation are common in advertisements in the way they crop and focus on parts of the body such as the legs, backside, lips, hips and eyes independently of the rest of their bodies. Thus when this metonymy of fragmentation is applied to language and the shaping of gender, it refers to the way in which women are often described based on specific parts of their bodies, e.g. Doll face, Sugar lips, Sweetheart, Sweet cheeks and Fat Ass (Montashery, 2013: 108).

6.1.3 The Gendered/Stereotyped Language of Advertising

This study has previously examined how advertising makes use of gender stereotyping in its visual elements, especially concerning the representation of female bodies and femininity. The way these advertisements make use of language to form ideas about gender has also been subject to investigation by feminists. Advertisements are seen to embody "all kinds of changes a given society experiences, be they economic, social or referring to personal or group identity" (Cook 1992). This then explains the way the portrayal has 'seemingly' started to move away from stereotyped presentations of females and femininity in the way they have adopted 'femvertising' and feminist messaging. Though modern media is rife with tales of this new 'genderquake' (in favour of women), "which promotes the rhetoric and symbolism of female empowerment and personal freedom" (Plakoyiannaki & Yorgos, 2009: 1412), advertising still shows undertones of stereotypical ideologies concerning women, femininity and female bodies. The reason for this is because the attractiveness of the advertisement relies on the fact that "it must not present some 'undefined/unspecified' object/person", instead it needs to be founded on "some readily recognized archetype" (Pawelczyk, 2008: 313). Fowles (1996) explained the frequent use of categorizing and stereotyping of gender in advertising as a spillage of simulations of men and women because "target audiences are captivated by gender imagery and seek out those models, performers and performances that best exemplify cultural concepts of maleness and femaleness" (1996: 215).

Particular attention has been paid to how femininity and females have been portrayed within advertisements based on the frequent use of archetypes and stereotypes. As the investigation has revealed, language can be regarded as a medium that influences our perceptions and portrayals of gender, the way language is used thus aids in the way femininity is perceived and how female roles are performed and portrayed. With regards to how advertising makes use of language to portray women and femininity, Tuchman (1981) found that mass media, including advertising, "symbolically annihilate" women, i.e. that:

> "…women have been eliminated, marginalized, or trivialized, or they have been instrumentalized and presented as commodities themselves [and] all this is achieved through a traditional depiction of women, one with emphasis on their sexual attractiveness and/or domestic servitude." (Pawelczyk, 2008: 314)

It is thus apparent that advertisements prescribe assumptions of what femininity, what the ideal female body/appearance/ beauty is and therefore what it means to be a woman. When viewed in isolation, each type of advertisement depicts one aspect/characteristic of gender definition but when viewed together, "they reflect the complexity of contemporary womanhood" (Lau, 2016:

1627). The way advertisements make use of the language to convey messages of gender, and particularly femininity, thus defines the beliefs about femininity. Mill and Mullany (2011) explain this as the way language is used to produce "an ideological system that regulates the norms and conceptions for 'appropriate' gendered behaviour" (2011: 41).

<div align="center">***</div>

What this literature analysis has revealed is that language has a link with forming and passing on ideas of gender, it has also revealed the way sexist language (in the English language) focusses on stereotypical female roles and characteristic portrayals. The way advertisements use language to relay ideologies of gender and femininity thus rely on certain techniques and structures, grammar and vocabulary to shape and construct meanings of gender. Relating to femininity it seems that sexist language, whether through grammar and vocabulary or language systems such as metaphor, focusses on the traditional/stereotypical version of gender where women are portrayed as submissive (coming second to men); reliant on men/vulnerable and in need of protection (usually from men); and stress/emphasis is still placed on the sexuality of the body of the female. Thus the same 'categories' or 'characteristics' of stereotyped femininity and gender portrayal that has been noted in visual format, in advertisements discussed previously, can also be seen in language and the use thereof. In this way, it "contributes to the construction and communication of gender" (Maass & Arcuri, 1996). Just as feminists drew attention to sexual objectification and beauty standards in advertising and media, and third-wave feminism reclaimed female bodies and identities with ideas of empowerment and self-love, so feminists have addressed sexism in language and started to re-appropriate these sexist words such as *bitch* and *slut* (e.g. Slutwalk movement[3]) in a way that portrays ideologies of empowerment, choice and freedom.

6.2 Analysis of the Language and Meaning of Gender and Femininity in Jewellery Advertisements

For the purpose of this study jewellery advertisements of two companies, namely De Beers and Tiffany & Co, have been analysed in an attempt to investigate the way in which females and femininity are portrayed. When doing the visual analysis, as seen in chapters 4 and 5, three main categories of representations of femininity and the female were found that shaped the way

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[3] Slutwalk is a transnational movement that calls for an end to rape culture which include issues of victim blaming and slut shaming of women who fall victim to sexual assault. Specifically, participants of the movement protest against the explaining or excusing of rape by reference to a woman's appearance. Rallies started in Toronto, Canada in 2011 when a police officer was quoted suggesting that women stop dressing like sluts in order to avoid sexual assault. The protests take form in marches in which participants dress like 'sluts' in scanty and revealing clothing.

advertisements relay these gendered messages: 1) stereotypical portrayals, 2) objectifying/sexist representations, and 3) depictions that showcase femininity as empowered and agentic. These categories inform the way the analysis of language within advertisements is approached. As has been shown by the literature analysed previously, language and the use thereof shapes the way gender can be perceived and displayed/performed. When analysing the advertisements, the study thus examine how language is used not only to shape ideas/meanings of gender but in particular how females and femininity are portrayed. The three categories of female representation mentioned before will form the basis of the different manners in which femininity is constructed through the use of language namely femininity as stereotyped, femininity as sexual object and lastly femininity as empowered.

6.2.1 Stereotypical representations of femininity

Thus far the study has established that stereotypes related to females and femininity tend to include characteristics/roles of submissiveness and domesticity, evoking images of the wife, the lover and the damsel in distress (woman in need of male protection). The study now examines the following advertisements of a De Beers, *Diamonds are Forever*, campaign released between 2000 and 2005 in light of these categories to see how the ads show further evidence of said categories. It is to be noted that all of the advertisements of this specific campaign are visually, mostly comprised of text, the language use standing out as the text is white on a black background with pieces of jewellery featuring as small add-ons or 'cherries on top' within the frame.

The first advertisement reads as follows: '*If you're a frog, turn yourself into a prince*' (see Figure 36). It is important to note that the words *frog* and *into a prince* are enlarged compared to the rest of the text, which highlights the instructions subtly given to the viewer. The advertisement also makes uses the lingual technique of metaphor to compare the looks/appearance/physical

Figure 36 De Beers 2014, print   *Figure 37 De Beers 2014, print*   *Figure 38 De Beers 2014, print*

attractiveness of the male viewer to that of a frog or a prince. The language of the advertisement suggests a male viewer as it appeals to the need for a man to turn himself from a frog (unattractive and unappealing) into a prince (desirable). Though the language is used for a male audience, it relays underlying messaging/ideas of femininity. First and foremost, it suggests that any man can 'upgrade' his looks and desirability in order to gain female attention by buying and giving a woman jewellery. The use of language in reference to fairy tales conjures up the image of a man buying jewellery in order to gain the adoration of a princess or damsel in distress, which in turns suggests that females are in wait of 'princes' (men) to better their world (albeit it with shiny things) and that the gift of a mere object might 'buy' a female body. It also suggests that women are easily duped, ready to receive objects that will decorate her body like an object the male possesses. The use of language in this advertisement thus relays stereotypical ideologies of femininity as submissive and in need of a 'male saviour' in order to be able to live happily ever after.

Another stereotyped idea of femininity and female gender role is that of the wife, which links femininity to domesticity, nurturing and the household (often the kitchen specifically). This form of female representation can be seen in the language used in Figure 37 which reads as follows: '*Honey, would you and your friends like more beer and sandwiches while you watch the game?*' Here the advertisement, though using a female voice, again addresses the male viewer in the way it suggests that buying a woman jewellery would produce the suggested actions within a woman's performance of her femininity. In this case that femininity is linked to the idea of the woman as the keeper of the house, forever the gracious hostess, as well as the keeper of the kitchen, maker of sandwiches and fetcher of beer. The advertisement thus conveys underlying messages of stereotyped/traditional femininity and female roles can be ensured through the buying and giving a woman jewellery. Again there is a message of being able to 'buy' or 'construct' femininity and the way it is performed through duping a woman with shiny things and ensuring she stays in her place.

The next advertisement takes this idea of using jewellery as means of shaping femininity to a slightly darker area. In Figure 38 it reads: '*Whack! Pow! Whoosh! Kablam! In a tender, loving sort of way.*' Again a male viewer is addressed and suggests the obtaining and giving of jewellery can keep a woman in her place. Here, another element of language, onomatopoeia, is used to relay sounds of fighting with exclamation marks serving to highlight and intensify each word as if isolating each word to resemble a blow/punch. This intense 'action' sequence is contrasted by the following of tender words, which when looked at optimistically could relay an idea of 'slapping some jewellery on you(woman) in a loving sort of way' but when looked at through the lens of feminism speaks to the abuse of women. It portrays femininity as submissive and in this case

abused and suggests an idea of femininity in which women will take the abuse as long as you buy them things, this in turn will be interpreted as love. This need for love, affection and protection is seemingly portrayed as 'all women want', no matter the form that takes. The stereotyped ideal of femininity as passive, submissive, docile and in need of protection is thus relayed through the use of language, but the language also relays other meanings of abuse against women and being able to buy forgiveness from these abused female bodies by giving jewellery that will decorate and validate these bodies anew in the shaping of a certain femininity.

Figure 39 Tiffany & Co. 'Will You' campaign, spring 2015, print

Tiffany & Co. have opted for a nonstereotyped visual representation of femininity and the female body in their 'Will You' Spring 2015 (see Figure 39) yet the language that this advertisement uses still alludes to stereotyped gender and gender roles. An examination of the visual elements is necessary to clarify the juxtaposition of femininities. In the image the female is showcased with a participating gaze with the camera while the male hides his face is her neck and holds a child in his arms. In advertising that relays stereotyped messages, the position and framing of bodies would have been done the other way around with the man staring at the viewer in a power position and the woman serving as an accessory on his side. The image is that of a wedding day and yet the traditional/stereotyped expectations of femininity and female behaviour are challenged in the imagery of the advertisement: firstly in the way the woman is wearing a white business suit instead of a wedding gown (hinting at a career woman, and not a woman dressed up as present for collection by a man), secondly the wedding couple already have a child so the 'virgin' bride image is challenged and thirdly the husband is holding the child thus suggesting that nurturing/caring/mothering a woman does to fulfil her gender role can be filled by a man as well.

Though this advertisement makes use of presenting femininity in non-stereotyped ways in the visual elements/aspects, the way language is used within this text alludes to traditional/stereotyped gender roles. The text (written language element) of the advertisement reads as follows:

> 'Will you know that as perfect as this ring is, it won't be truly beautiful until it's sparkling on your hand as you sip your tea and hug our kids and open the door to a world that gets more incredible all the time, just because you're in it? Will you?'

The use of language thus portrays an image of a women waiting to be decorated by a ring as it will make her more beautiful (implying marriage and successfully finding a partner equals beauty). The language use further invokes an image of the woman/wife in the kitchen or in a household setting drinking tea with no other occupation than being the domestic. This is furthered in the way the text suggests the requirement associated with the wedding ring is the need to bear and raise children. This creates/shapes a view of femininity as the traditional wife, housemaker/host and mother. The idea of the 'woman of the house' is furthered by the way in which the text suggests the opening of a door to the world outside whilst the woman is still inside the house, inviting people in and being a hostess without venturing out into this world the male speaker mentions. It is thus clear that there is a juxtaposition of femininities, traditional/stereotyped femininity put up against the modern woman and femininities. The way the advertisement ends in a question suggests that the female viewer has a choice to make about the femininity she is willing to adopt and perform when it comes to marriage.

6.2.2 Sexual Objectification and Sexism

As has been discussed in previous chapters, the occurrence of women being portrayed as sexual objects. This entails presenting female bodies as objects that are to be admired/sexually desired through the male gaze. The study has examined the ways in which sexual objectification and sexism appear within visual images and the visual techniques that are employed to shape this form of 'femininity'. This leads the investigation of how advertisements can, through the use of linguistic elements, relay meanings of objectification and sexism related to the portrayal of women and femininity.

In Figures 40 and 41, two advertisements of De Beers, it is obvious how women/female bodies are being compared to objects within the texts. The first ad reads: '*Consider it a trophy for your trophy wife'*. In this advertisement the idea of the female body or woman being transformed by means of language is exhibited, morphing from a fully functioning human being to a trophy that should be put on display.

It also highlights the usage of metaphor as theorised by Montashery (2013), as the female body/wife is being compared to a trophy i.e. an object to be won/obtained. This is also a way of fragmenting the body, as suggested by Mills (1995) as the body of the woman is deconstructed and transformed into an object for male pleasure. The definition of a trophy wife has been described as a young, attractive wife regarded as a status symbol for an older man, it is also noteworthy that this saying is seen as derogatory to women.

It is notable however that this objectifying sentence highlights the word wife by enlarging it and making it stand out from the rest of the text, clearly linking the trophy idea to the role of a woman as a wife. This suggests that women, in the role of wife should strive to reach 'trophy' status. This status presents the female as a prize that has

Figure 40 De Beers 2014, print

been/can be won by the husband/male, and as the female body thus becomes a prized object, it also needs to be put on show so that others can see the trophy that the man won. This advertisement, though speaking to a male audience, clearly shapes a form of stereotypical femininity in the form of the 'gold-digger'. The way femininity or women are presented is not only as sexually objectified but also as women who 'accept' their trophy status by receiving other trophies (such as jewellery) to further bedazzle and decorate their objectified status. It suggests that women and their bodies can be bought with jewellery, that women are willing to be portrayed as objects as long as they have security and protection (money and things).

In Figure 41 the woman is portrayed not only as an object but as a sexual object. The text of the advertisement reads: *'Gentlemen, start your wives.'* Here De Beers takes a new spin on an often used catchphrase namely, 'gentlemen start your engines' that is used in the world of racing. Women/wives are thus being objectified and transformed via metaphor into automobiles. This advertisement again makes use metaphor, as explored by Montashery (2013), to compare the body of the woman to that of a car, just another object bound to be enjoyed and used by the man. Not only are they portrayed as objects which are typical 'boy toys' but the use of the word *start* in correlation to the word *wives* suggests a sexual undertone by which the viewer is given the incentive/suggestion that buying his wife jewellery will 'start her engine' or 'turn her on'. This portrays femininity

Figure 41 De Beers 2014, print

in a way where women are not only objects but sexual objects whose sexual desire can be bought with jewellery. It seems then that the women are represented as having no agency or choice but instead are objects to be done with sexually as the 'gentleman' pleases. It also suggests that finding a wife/woman is like a competition (race) to men and the women are mere objects to be obtained as the prize.

Figure 42 showcased another way in which De Beers makes use of language that is targeted at male audiences/viewers to describe/prescribe or shape a type of femininity or female performance. In this case, the text which reads: '*Oysters? Pfffft.*', openly refers to the sexuality and sexual behaviour of women. Oysters are said to be an aphrodisiac, something that stimulates sexual desire, and in the case of this advertisement oysters are made to seem overrated or unnecessary through the use of onomatopoeia that indicates indignation. These two words imply that a man doesn't need oysters to win over a woman if he's got De Beers diamond jewellery,

Figure 42 De Beers 2014, print

which in turn relays a message of 'if you want a woman to have sex with you, buy her diamonds'. Framed in-between the lines of these two words is the idea of the female as a 'buyable' sexual object. The advertisement makes it seem like women have no real sexual substance or choice, or in fact that their sexual choice/performance is based on what the male counterpart can pay for it.

6.2.3 Femininity as Empowered and Agentic

Previously the study has investigated the visual occurrence of the latest 'icon'/category of female portrayal in advertisements. This new character has been identified as the 'midriff', the independent woman that has agency, freedom, choice and is a sexual subject. The study has also explored how advertising makes use of feminist ideologies and messaging to complement this new character. For this chapter the way in which De Beers has made use of feminist ideologies of independence, empowerment and choice in the language use of a few advertisements will be examined.

Firstly, two advertisements of their 'Right Hand Ring' campaign (2003 to 2005), the same campaign that was briefly looked at in chapter 5. This campaign was started due to increasing divorce rate and increasing single career-orientated women who did not fit the traditional wife, domestic/mother female gender role. The advertisements thus aimed to portray this new empowered, independent and agentic form femininity. The first example (see figure 43) reads as follows:

> '*Your left hand balances the checkbook and pays the bills. Arrives early and leaves on time. Keeps a list and gets it done. Your right hand buys new shoes and pays on credit. Arrives late and leaves early. Takes the list and changes it at will. Women of the world, raise your right hand.*'

Figure 43 De Beers 'Right Hand' Campaign, 2003, print

Here, language is used to portray these dualities/different types of femininity. First it does so by directly referring to the left and right hand as separate entities, used as a metaphor that associates traditional female stereotypes with the left hand and the midriff figure who is empowered and independent with the right. The contrast is further accentuated by how the content of the opposing sentences have the same 'topics/themes' (e.g. money, time (etiquette), checklists) and yet have clear differences in how the female approaches/performs these activities. The left hand is associated with household management, punctuality and general organizational skills which in turn are good characteristics of the hospitable wife stereotype. This stereotypical invocation of femininity through these characteristics is purely done so by how the opposing right hand is described since all three characteristics would just as easily have fit a stereotyped male for being rational, calculated and business/management orientated.

The right hand is associated with consumerism, freedom and choice and thus contrasted with the housewife stereotype it speaks of femininity as independence (can pay for herself on credit), choice and freedom (to be able to choose when to be where without restrictions) and empowerment (to be able to invoke change). The last sentence calls out to the viewer to raise

their right hands in consolidation to the arrival of 'girl power'. The way language is used to portray these two types of femininity and position them as opposing forces present a problem in the way it furthers the categorizing of women and femininities. There is no reason why one female body could not be capable of performing the femininity of both the left and the right. This still speaks to the binary that is inherent in the male-female divide, but instead is now used to reflect a female inner division. The call to arms for 'right-handed' women that ends of the advertisement makes use of feminist messaging of unity and oneness for women while the text on a whole dilutes the feminist motives by categorizing and constructing femininity in a way that does not acknowledge that a woman can be a multifaceted and complex build-up of femininities.

This same problem arises in the second advertisement (figure 44) which reads:

> *'Your left hand is the sensible one. Your right hand is the crazy one. Your left hand does what it should. Your right hand does what it pleases. Your left hand will support you. Your right hand will surprise you. Women of the world, raise your right hand.'*

Figure 44 De Beers 'Right Hand' Campaign, 2003, print

Again the contrast of the two echoes of femininity (the housewife vs the midriff) is highlighted in the explicated reference to the two hands (which represent the two femininities) separately in short sentences that follow back to back jumping from left to right (like weighing a pros and cons list). This in itself is a stereotype: of the indecisive and ineffectual woman as opposed to the decisive and effective man. Through this isolation and categorization, the stereotypical portrayal of the female is presented in the left hand reference as the wife, submissive, sensible, restrained and supportive versus the right hand reference of the midriff who is fearlessness, has choice and freedom and strives for empowerment. De Beer's attempt at 'femvertising' thus presents problems in the way it classifies and shapes different types of femininity that leave no space for the shaping of entire femininities in all its glory of complexities and contradictions.

Not only does the linguistic component present a problem but so too does the visual elements that are not quite that convincing. For instance, the positioning of bodies, feminine touch, open legs with highlights to genital area which basically makes the whole empowerment message less effective and compelling due to the still present, if subtle, sexual objectification.

<p style="text-align:center">***</p>

This chapter has revealed how the usage and interpretation of language has an influence in the way people shape ideas of gender. It has indicated how language and the use thereof, through linguistic signifiers and linguistic manipulations, can shape ideas of masculinity and femininity. It has also shown that the way in which people and advertisers use language can relay stereotypes and sexism. Literature has revealed that the use of stereotypes within advertising, regarding gender, is a way in which the brand/marketer can relay familiar and 'known' messages that the audience can relate to. The analysis of the De Beer and Tiffany & Co. advertisements revealed that even in linguistic representation the same main categories of female representation exist: stereotyped, objectified and empowered. As with the visual simulations, this set of advertisements presents problems not only in the way it limits femininity with the use of stereotypical and objectified portrayals, but also in the way that the brands adopt 'femvertising' with their representation of female empowerment coming up short in the shadow of 'subtle' objectification or further classification of femininities. Thus it appears that this new midriff character who forms a core part of 'femvertising' in mainstream media and is associated with 3rd wave feminism's beliefs and ideologies, does not always present the best solution as some advertisements have shown. Though this new supposed girl-power-style of female representation can be seen as an escape or solution to problems of stereotyping and objectification, this new empowerment seems to be very limited and in its own way creates new categories/distinctions between women and femininities.

Chapter 7

Alternative portrayals of Femininity/Gender in Advertising

7.1. Introduction

Up to this point the study has examined how femininity and the female body have been represented in advertisements regarding stereotypical portrayals as well as recent portrayals that make use of the midriff character through 'femvertising'. The analysis of literature regarding both visual and linguistic components of gender renderings in advertising has reiterated how femininity and what it means to be a woman tend to primarily be connected to the home (domestic, housewife, caretaker, mother) and the body (appearance, sexual appeal/sexuality,

objectification/subjectification). These apparent categories of 'femininities', though presenting supposed opposites of a coin (traditional vs midriff), are problematic in the way it creates boxes that restrict and shape gender performances in particular how a woman performs/displays her gender and in turn perceives other feminine performances. Though the appearance and rise of the midriff and 'femvertising' seemed to be a sure way to twist old stereotypes on their heads, femininity is still linked to the body and appearance. This presents a problem, whether it be an empowered body forged in agency and sexual subjectification or not, femininity is restricted to certain physical characteristics that do not represent full and complex human beings.

These problems of female representation in advertising have caused a new wave of change to start rolling towards the shores of media and advertising in the form of 'unstereotyping'. This new wave of styling advertisements makes use of non-stereotypical portrayals as well as gender neutrality or androgyny to contradict and make away with age old traditional portrayals which limited gender display and performance to certain gender categories. This change started appearing due to multiple and various studies that showcased how stereotyped advertising has negative and harmful social effects on women as well as men, it also was influenced by the change of gender roles and rights (equality) in society (e.g. Gill 2003, 2007, 2009; Gill and Scharff, 2011; Grau and Zotos, 2016; Lau, 2016; Noraini et. al., 2014; Plakoyiannaki and Yorgos; 2009).

In 2017 UN Women and a number of other prominent voices in the advertising and marketing industry including WFA (World Federation of Advertisers), founded the Unstereotype Alliance (unstereotypealliance.org). The Alliance identified that creatives and advertisers have a great influence in culture and society and that this power could be used to positively influence the way people are portrayed in advertising and marketing. The Alliance was born from the belief that a "new, unprecedented agenda was needed to break outdated and harmful stereotypes about men and women" in order to speak and relate to our current global multicultural society and "help create a world with unlimited possibilities" (WFA, 2018: 3). They also produced extensive research and understanding of how 'unstereotyping' can have a positive outcome not only in society but for the company/brand as well through using messages that "don't confine either gender to a traditional or limited role but instead show them as progressive and modern, authentic and multidimensional" (WFA, 2018: 3).

It is this modern authenticity and multidimensionality that individuals possess that is lacking in stereotyped/traditional and even midriff/feminist infused advertisements. The advertising industry has found it difficult to portray women and men, or femininity and masculinity, in a proportionate and realistic way. This has been noted in the analysis in previous chapters, where it is show how women and men are depicted in outdated stereotypical ways, even if those gender stereotypes

are currently presented in a subtler manner. As of late standards and regulation of advertisements have been adapted to reduce the occurrence of stereotypical or discriminatory portrayals. The International Chamber of Commerce Code on Advertising and Marketing Communication Practice, which, globally, forms the basis of advertisement standards, specifies that "marketing communications should respect human dignity and should not incite or condone any form of discrimination, including that based upon race, national origin, religion, gender, age, disability or sexual orientation" (iccwbo.org). These changes were put in place as the industry started to realize that advertising that undermines and potentially offends its audience not only "defies good sense" but can also "prove counterproductive" (WFA, 2018: 6).

'Unstereotyping' thus aims to expand the traditional stereotypical portrayals of women and men in order to reflect the changes that are happening in society. Chu et al. (2015) examined the appearance of non-stereotypical portrayals and noted that there has been a slow but sure increase in the use of thereof, in the way male models are used to endorse stereotypical and traditional feminine occupations and products as well as the portrayal of females in non-traditional roles. Non-stereotyped portrayals thus aim to depict people as empowered actors, holding back on presenting people as objects and offering a portrayal of progressive and multifaceted, rather than empty-headed, personalities and identities. Representations in non-stereotyped advertising thus tend to show people in ways that do not follow the standard stereotype for the social category that they are part of/represent (see Taylor and Stern, 1997; Mastro and Stern, 2003).

According to Nina Åkestam there are two ways in which this can be accomplished. Firstly, the representation can showcase a person that does not adhere to a "general stereotype for the culture in question" (Åkestam, 2017: 9). An example of this would be a young girl or woman interested in science or mathematics, or a male shown in a domestic or father role. Secondly, she found that the non-stereotyped advertisements portray people who are not normally featured in advertisements or "not usually featured in [advertisements of a specific] product category, thereby not adhering to an advertising stereotype" (Åkestam, 2017: 9). Examples of this could be a female model that is heavier than the advertising standard modelling lingerie or underwear, or an advertisement that features a same-sex couple instead of a heterosexual one. These examples of identities and personalities are in indeed common in society, but in the sphere of advertising they are uncommon and unusual in therefore present as non-stereotyped portrayals.

It is important to note that there is a difference between non-stereotyped and non-traditional advertisements. The former challenges stereotypes while the latter plays with/on stereotypes (Eisend et al., 2014). For the purpose of this chapter and study focus will be placed on non-stereotyped portrayals in advertisements in relation to fashion and beauty products whereas the

following chapter investigate these portrayals within jewellery advertisements. Non-stereotyped advertisements are not only restricted to counter stereotyped portrayals, which openly contradict or discuss a stereotype (e.g. Like a Girl campaign), but can also include advertisements that don't present stereotypes at all and instead showcase neutral representations (Åkestam, 2017).

This chapter examines how gender and femininity are represented in non-stereotyped advertisements. The aim of the examination is to note the contrast between the way femininity and female bodies/characteristics are represented in stereotyped ads and 'femvertising' compared to the upcoming trend of non-stereotyped and gender neutral advertisements. The examination will be done from feminist perspective and will therefore also aim to investigate the presence/influence of feminist ideologies such as body positivity, empowerment, sexual agency and inclusivity. A look will be taken at brands that incorporate 'unstereotyping' in their advertisements and these representations will range from fashion/clothing, beauty product to jewellery design.

7.2 Examples of empowerment, inclusivity and the challenging of stereotypes in non-stereotyped fashion advertisements.

As the trend of 'unstereotyping' increases within mainstream media and society concerning the display, portrayal or performance (role) of gender, more brands are either adapting or emerging anew to embody this challenging of stereotypes. This part of the chapter will showcase brands that have infused their products and advertising thereof with not only 'superficial' changes, as some problematic 'femvertising' has showcased, but with messaging and imagery that truly challenges the ideologies that accompany categorizing not only bodies but also femininity and masculinity. The adverts that will be examined will range from industries of fashion, lingerie and beauty products. The aim is to examine how the representation/portrayal of female bodies, femininity and female roles have changed by means of challenging stereotypes, in light of feminism as well as the latest development of 'unstereotyping'. These examples will serve the purpose of highlighting that the specific trend of challenging stereotypes/'unstereotyping' and de-gendering is currently present within fashion advertising. The example will therefore serve as foundation for the analysis of the jewellery advertisements in particular. As both fashion and jewellery form part of the adornment/dress practice and consequently have links to the body, expression of identity and gender, it is relevant to examine examples within the fashion industry before delving deeper into the investigation of jewellery ads in particular.

Many clothing/fashion companies and brands have started to tap into the 'unstereotyped' and gender neutral trend in the way they advertise their products, Zara being but one such example. The well-known clothing brand released a line in 2016 entitled 'Ungendered' which showcased androgynous styles modelled by both men and women. Though androgynous style unisex clothing is not immensely original (brands such as American Apparel having incorporated this in their lines for years), it is remarkable that a massively global corporation that influences mainstream fashion/style decided to take a stand for sexless clothing. Men and women were used as models to showcase the line that focused on minimalistic wardrobe staples such as hoodies, tracksuit bottoms, jeans and t-shirts in neutral colour schemes like grey, beige and navy. The line and advertising thus alludes to the challenging of the idea that clothes should be categorized by gender. The challenge goes further by associating the female body and femininity with clothing that would typically be considered male clothing, with the use of specific colours resonating with ideas of male occupations (blue, grey and beige being popular amongst uniforms of the army, navy, police, etc.). They portray the female body as comfortable and confident in wearing what she pleases, opting for comfortably 'unfeminine' clothing instead of dressing up in heels as a 'lady' is expected to do. It is important to note that though the brand is aiming for sexless clothing they focused on bringing masculine features onto female bodies when they could have explored more subversive options such as skirts for men; this shows that though there is a challenge at hand in their advertising strategies, there is still room for improvement/progress.

Figure 45 Zara, 'Ungendered' collection, 2016, in-store advertising, print and website

Figure 46 Zara, 'Ungendered' collection, 2016, in-store advertising, print and website

Zara continued to push the boundaries of stereotypes by using both female and male models in the advertising of their female and male sections (see figures 45 and 46). For the Zara man section, the brand decided to use a female model to display typically male coats. Though this is labelled as male clothing, the same coat was also sold in the female section. The female model, who has somewhat androgynous features, is pictured in oversized and typically male clothing while still hinting at femininity in the wearing of high heels (the feminist's nightmare item). The model is also posed in typically male body positions that would typically be seen in male representations of business men and men in power positions. She is presented with an open

posture, that fills up the frame. This is typically associated with masculinity and power with a more closed-off posture being associated with inferiority and femininity (Dow & Wood, 2009). The advertisement thus alludes to the idea that a woman can also 'be the man' and 'wear the pants' reflecting feminist ideas of agency and empowerment while challenging gender stereotypes. Technically, in order to enhance this challenge of stereotypes, this challenge should also be reflected the opposite way, where male bodies are encouraged to drop the 'being the man' stereotype by adopting a gender neutral style where femininity and masculinity can coexist.

Diesel released their own billboard advertisement campaign in 2015 that intended to not only follow the trend of using androgynous models but lay their focus on trends of diversity and equality. The gender neutral campaign was intended to reflect modern values in a new way. The advertisements spoke to ideas of diversity, inclusivity, equality and 'unstereotyping' not only through the use of visual techniques (models, styling, posing) but through the accompaniment of linguistic elements as well. One of these advertisements featured two people in similar jerseys are embracing each other, the genders of the models are indistinguishable and the similar hairstyle and outfit further blur the lines of standards/traditional gender signifiers. As the bodies/figure of the models are covered, there is no way of discerning their biological sex as to whether they are male, female or transgendered in either direction. If the 'unstereotyping'/'ungendering' of the models was not hint enough, the advertisement continues to read: 'this ad is *gender neutral'*. The fact that there is no distinction being made between and male and female expression combined with the embrace and similar (equal) looks of the models relays ideas of equality and inclusivity.

Figure 47 Diesel 2015, billboard

Diesel continues to challenge stereotypes in the campaign by addressing the notion of women in relationships being the 'property' of their male counterparts. The stereotype that a woman plays a submissive role in heterosexual relationships as the 'object' of the man's affection is challenged in another advertisement that strives for equality. Figure 47 depicts a couple dressed in underwear, each model 'branded' with the word his or hers written in marker on their bodies. This relates to ideas of property and ownership and this is furthered in the text that reads 'what's yours is *mine'*. The advertisement thus aims to relay messaging of equality and femininity is portrayed as agentic and anything but submissive in the way the female model thus 'objectifies' and takes

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control to possess her male counterpart. This is a challenge not only of the submissive stereotype but also of the man being in control stereotype. It is notable however that he is placed in the centre of the frame naked, tanned and toned with a sultry, slightly feminine, look and opened-legged pose. This positioning of the body and face is reminiscent of the female bodies displayed within advertisements that showcased sexual objectification, in this instance that sexual objectification is displayed on a male body.

Though challenging stereotypes the advertisement clearly makes use of stereotypes in order to attain this 'challenge'. It is also important to note how this usage of stereotypes as means of challenging said stereotypes is continued in the way 'hers' is written over his heart and 'his' is written near her genital/rear area. The 'hers' could be seen to challenge the stereotype of the man as the player, i.e. in this case the woman was able to tame him and win his heart. Alongside ideas of empowerment is the idea that the 'his', written in that specific region, could indicate that the woman's power lies within her sexual power over the man. The woman thus holding on the man's heart and the man holding the power of the woman's sexuality. This again is an old stereotype that is applied to challenge gender stereotypes in order to relate ideas of equality, it is thus problematic that this 'equality' is not considered when assigning 'power' in the form of signified body parts.

Acne Studios, a Swedish fashion label, have been working with ideas that would be considered androgynous in an aim to challenge society's norms. In 2015 they released their autumn/winter collection, which showcased their views on gender equality and non-acceptance of current injustices against women. These messages took form in bold, statement prints and pieces that were emblazoned with pro-women feminist content. Slogans such as 'woman power', 'radical feminist', 'gender equality' and 'please call me a girl' are boldly printed within the frames of brightly coloured patches of material, which highlights the messages against the neutral colours of the clothing items. The male models are styled in an androgynous way with oversized earrings and sweatshirts that resemble skirts/dresses. In some cases, traditionally feminine body posture was

Figure 48 Acne Studios A/W collection 2015, print and website

Figure 49 Acne Studios A/W collection 2015, print and website

adopted in the styling/positioning of the male bodies (see figures 48 and 49). In figure 48 the positioning/direction of the model's face, combined with the shadow against the wall creates a vector in an upward and right direction. The same can be said for figure 49 in the way the body and shadow is curved in a position that draws attention right and upwards towards the hand that is holding the chin in the top right corner. According to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) a vector that points in that direction signifies the 'idealized' or the 'new'. This stylization of bodies thus creates a vector that is used to signal the future where not only gender neutral clothing would be socially accepted as the norm but also where current issues relating to women, equality and feminist ideologies would be a topic of discussion that becomes the norm.

The advertisements not only allude to 'unstereotyping' in the androgynous looks, feminine posing and vector techniques but so too in the challenging of the stereotype that men and feminism cannot coexist. Acne thus makes use of male bodies as a backdrop to display female and feminist issues in a way that showcases how male bodies can form part of the movement that strives to attain equality. Femininity has thus been reflected/portrayed on male bodies in an aim to not only challenge stereotypes but also to raise awareness of the need for equality, female empowerment and all in all, inclusivity, where male bodies can participate in the fight/movement.

More recently Acne Studios pushed this idea of inclusion even further when they released an advertisement campaign that featured a same-sex couple of dads in domestic and family orientated setting in 2017 (see figures 50 and 51). The models were Kordale Lewis and Kaleb Anthony, who had drawn attention to themselves by their activity on social media platform Instagram by posting daily updates about the trials of being dads to four kids, like braiding their daughters' hair before school. Acne addresses and challenges multiple stereotypes within this set of advertisements: 1) depictions of parenthood that tend to focus on motherhood instead of fathers; 2) fathers as absent within the domestic and nurturing/caretaker settings; 3) the standard heterosexual family, 4) the depiction of the 'typical' gay man as effeminate and flamboyant.

Figure 50 Acne Studios ad campaign 2017, print and website

Figure 51 Acne Studios ad campaign 2017, print and website

The advertisement showcases the two fathers, who appear to be very masculine with their physical build and manly tattoos, with their children in the setting of the bedroom and family lounge. Not only do the men challenge the stereotype of the gay 'queen' in their appearance but also in their body language and positioning. To further this challenge, the whole family is dressed in clothing reminiscent of sports jerseys, showing that these gay dads still enjoy things that would typically be reserved for heterosexual masculinity. The 'unstereotyping' of these advertisements thus addresses issues of not only femininity but of masculinity as well. The ad aims to show how both genders are capable of performing 'stereotypically/traditionally' female roles, not all gay men are the same and that the standard heterosexual family is evolving into some 'new', modern family. Characteristics of traditional femininity thus seems to be reflected in the actions of male bodies and in that manner the restrictions presented by stereotypical gender ideologies melt away to leave behind 'human' characteristics instead of 'gender' characteristics, to present the complexities and multidimensionality that individuals possess.

Another brand that addressed the complexities of gender and femininity and what it entails to be a woman in specific, is the global corporation H&M who released their #LadyLike campaign in 2016 for their fall/winter collection. The advertisement took on a commercial form and challenged the stereotypes of what a 'lady' is supposed to look and act like. The advertisement aimed at representing the modern woman in a multicultural world that the audience is able to relate to, showcasing natural/normal women that are doing natural/normal things. The advertisement is set to Tom Jones' *She's a Lady,* and the ad aims to modernize ideas of what 'ladylike' behaviour looks like. H&M uses the advertisement to relay messages of female empowerment, individuality and inclusion of different female bodies and most importantly, that there are many unique ways of being a lady and that each way is amazing and acceptable.

Quite often advertisements and television commercials feature women devoid of context (strutting as if on a catwalk, dancing or skipping along), or with cheesy, false-empowering girly atmospheres (twirling and dancing in slow motion with other female friends). This advertisement challenges those stereotypical roles by presenting women as wearing the clothes from H&M in spaces and roles that they actually occupy such as going out to dinner, being at work, or being home alone. It shouldn't be so remarkable/radical to showcase women actually doing things that the audience can relate to, but compared to the other superficial portrayals of femininity it is drastic for a mainstream brand to join the movement of 'unstereotyping' and turn ideas of femininity on its head. The advertisement aims to show the audience what this 'unstereotyped'/'real' behavior of a lady looks like including everything from running a boardroom meeting , eating potato fries alone in bed and checking your teeth for food using a knife as mirror at dinner.

The advertisement showcases multiple challenges to stereotypical representations of female bodies and roles and structures a range of women and femininities, for example:

- Black women with natural hair instead or weaves or wigs
- Women with shaved heads
- Women with armpit hair (fig.68)
- A muscular woman (fig. 69)
- Action shots of women's wobbly bits actually wobbling
- A traditionally thin woman eating junk food without apparent guilt
- An oversized model admiring herself in the mirror (fig.67)
- An elderly woman (fig.71)
- An ethnically ambiguous high powered female in a business position (fig. 70)
- A transgender woman
- Lesbian women

Figure 52 H&M #LadyLike campaign 2016, video campaign

Figure 53 H&M #LadyLike campaign 2016, video campaign

H&M strives to represent female bodies and roles that are not the usual suspects in advertisement frames, the campaign draws attention to women that, amongst stereotypical portrayals, are underrepresented. This is just an example of how feminist ideologies concerning body positivity, empowerment, aging, race and sexuality have been adopted and presented in a positive way where femininity is portrayed as complex, multidimensional and without limits. The campaign therefore not only challenges stereotypes pertaining to women and femininity but ultimately calls for inclusivity and acceptance of all shapes and sizes of femininities and female bodies, free from the limitations of objectification and stereotypical/traditional portrayals.

*

This examination has revealed that there is advertising out there that makes use of challenging stereotypes pertaining to female representation as well as the portrayal of femininity, with this style/trend of advertising bearing signs of feminist ideologies of body positivity, empowerment and

inclusion. It has shown that there is 'femvertising' out there that does not rely on 'commodity feminism' and empty messaging in order to attract mere consumers to their cause. Femininity and female bodies are portrayed in diverse and multidimensional ways that break the limitations of gender categorization. This new femininity has also been placed on male bodies in an aim to challenge male stereotypes. This idea of inclusion thus includes the 'empowering' of male bodies, encouraging men to make away with the limitations of previous categories and adopt/display their own type of femininity. It thus seems that femininity and feminism could be evolving into something that is no longer purely associated with female issues and female bodies, there seems to be potential for true inclusion, equality and diversity by letting go of gender boundaries altogether. The next section will examine jewellery brands and jewellery advertisements in particular, honing in to investigate the presence of 'unstereotyping' within the jewellery industry/sphere specifically. The analysis will deem to explore how jewellery marketing has adopted and embodies the trend of 'unstereotyping' and 'de-gendering'.

7.3 Ungendered jewellery

7.3.1 Performing Gender and Jewellery

> *" If we look to the act of performing a jewel as an extension of the body, we are not only decorating our bodies, we are also creating a strong option to perform ourselves as individuals in a society where we are otherwise treated as a mass. By performing through jewellery our identities as individuals, it becomes possible to break those norms that define what should be understood as feminine or masculine." (Gimeno, 2014: 11)*

It has been made clear that jewellery design (product, 'customer service' or advertising) is capable of transcending the limitations of stereotypical and traditional gender classification. Though these are independent small businesses that aren't mainstream, the possibilities that this trend presents clearly indicates a potential area of exploration within the field of jewellery design and advertising. It seems that through addressing issues of inclusivity, diversity and the challenge of stereotypes, jewellery has the capability of representing more than just ornamentaiton/decoration. The advertisements examined showcased how 'unstereotyping' in the jewellery field, unlike the limited gender portrayals of ads that are stereotyped, objectified or fueled by 'commodity' feminism, presents human bodies as diverse and complex in regards to gender identities. As the current discussion on issues such as gender expectations, inclusivity, diversity and equality increases, so too does the trend of 'unstereotyping' increase within the fashion, media and entertainment industries.   Thus the nature/essence of jewellery is "bound to reflect in some measure the structure and activities of the society in which it [is] current" (Clarke, 1986: 166).

Viewed from this perspective jewellery can thus be seen as an "imprint of time", something that represents a "truly objective atmosphere of time and context of it's creation"(Gimeno, 2014: 4), and in the case of ads examined in this chapter, representing the atmosphere and context of a society calling out for equality and inclusivity. Jewellery thus has the ability to form a dialogue with the body it becomes part of, becoming part of the reality the individual experiences and in some form thus takes part/shapes part of our lives and gender performances. It is this performativity that makes it possible to define a new order, one of gender neutrality, unity/equality and inclusivity through the display of identity through jewellery. This is achieved when individuals display/portray the gender identitiy they have chosen to perform in their everyday lives, without restricting the act of wearing jewellery to the traditional or stereotyped ideas of femininity and masculinity.

If it is assumed then that jewellery forms part of the performance/display of identities and gender, then that in turn suggests that gender itself is a performance. Gender in society/culture can be explained as the "socialisation that males and females undergo as part of developing and identity", which proposes the idea that gender is a learned practice (Burnes and Eicher, 1992: 1). The definition or theory of gender as a performative act was first introduced by Judith Butler (1988) in which she proposes that the way indivuals perceive reality is as an effect of performativity in relation to the norms that govern a society. According ot this theory, society defines what is real and what is not and in the same manner relays do's and don'ts of gender roles, experiences and expectations. This would suggest that as gender ideologies change within the governing society, so too do the performances of gender through individual bodies have the capability of change. As Butler theorises:

> "If gender is a kind of a doing, an incessant activity performed, in part, without one's knowing and without one's willing, it is not for that reason automatic or mechanical. On the contrary, it is a practice of improvisation within a scene of constraint." (Butler, 2004: 1)

Viewed from this perspective it appears that the current shift/challenging of gender expectations and categorization is in part due to the changes happening in society (activist movements, rise of 3rd wave feminism) but also due to the performative nature of gender which allows for change and re-definition within the area of gender definitions and identities. Butler's theory is important in understanding the changes happening within society, advertising and gender representations.

<u>7.3.1.1 Performance of Gender</u>

> *"[S]exual or gender identity is not established at birth. Rather, we are labelled as either masculine or feminine by the culture into which we are introduced. When we learn to speak and recognise ourselves as "he" or "she", as a son or a daughter, for example, we are placed into these roles." (Butler, 2004: 45)*

The American philosopher and feminist scholar, Judith Butler believes that gender is a performance and that we perform these roles repetitively to the point the performance becomes natural. Moreover, she states that one doesn't 'do' ones gender alone as the individual "is always "doing" with or for another, even if the other is only imaginary." (Butler, 2004: 1) Theorized in this way the constructed roles of gender, of femininity and masculinity, being male or female, is merely the script for the body's performance.

From the moment of birth an individual is assigned a sex category based on the genitalia. As soon as the declaration of 'It's a boy' or 'It's a girl" is made, the parents will dress the baby accordingly so that the gender of the child is shown to the world, no need to continuously answer questions of "Is it a boy or girl". In the instance, the parents thus make use of different signifiers and markers to construct the gender of the child. A sex category becomes a "gender status through naming, dress and the use of other gender markers" (Lorber, 1994: 318). Gender can thus be seen as the markers of a sex category. Gender is thus the picture created to represent one's sex. Viewed in this light gender seems to be an act that establishes the individual's sex category. It refers to the way in which certain dress, behaviour, skill and roles become signifiers of biological sex. The individual thus constructs his/her gender based on the repetition of representations of gender experiences, which are also constructed, to the extent that the body of the individual becomes a reflection of this construction of gender. The idea of individuals constructing their realities based on their interaction with the world and other individuals can be used to view gender as a construction of ideas reiterated in social interactions, gender experiences and language, constantly reminded throughout life: "boy or girl child", "boy or girl ready to be married", "man or woman". Society ascribes different expectations and roles to different gender groups and the individual is made to recognize the differences and act accordingly.

The gendered body is one that reflects traditions and beliefs reinstated through language, the body becomes the embodiment of what it is to be "man" or "woman". Gendered bodies can therefore be seen as carefully crafted presentations or performances instead of natural truths. Garfinkel suggests that an individual's sense of gendered self/gender identity arises through "routinized and managed interaction with others within shared 'communities of understanding'

about what gender 'is' and what it 'means'"(Garfinkel, 1967: 181-2). As we go about the process of doing gender we in turn go about constructing the differences between 'male ' and 'female' within social interactions, aligning constructions with social expectations. "These [expectations] are then declared 'natural', which in turn legitimates their ongoing existence" (Fenstermaker & West, 2002: 207).

To Butler "gender is instituted through the stylization of the body and hence, must be understood as the mundane way in which bodily gestures, movements and enactments of various kinds constitute the illusion of an abiding gendered self" (1988: 519). The repetition of these stylized gestures and enactments lead to convincing performances by the gendered individuals, making the performance seem 'natural. If gender is established and constructed through a repetition of acts, then according to Butler, "the appearance of substance is precisely that, a constructed identity, a performative accomplishment which the mundane social audience, including the actors themselves, come to believe and to perform in the mode of belief." (1988: 520) It can be seen that social interaction, gendered experiences, language and the gaining and processing of knowledge construct the perception of gender and thus influence the body's performance and portrayal of said gender.

Judith Butler sees gender as a performative act. She theorises that:

> "[G]ender is in no way a stable identity or locus of agency from which various acts proceed; rather, it is an identity tenuously constituted in time – an identity instituted through a stylized repetition of acts… [G]ender is instituted through the stylization of the body and hence, must be understood as the mundane way in which bodily gestures, movements and enactments of various kinds constitute the illusion of an abiding gendered self…[and that] if gender is instituted through acts which are internally discontinuous, then the appearance of substance is precisely that, a constructed identity, a performative accomplishment which the mundane social audience, including the actors themselves, come to believe and to perform in the mode of belief." (Butler, 1988: 519-20)

Like an actor dons his/her costume and make-up, learns his/her lines and repeats words, emotions and actions in rehearsals to become a truthful representation of a character, so do we, according to Butler, let our bodies play out our gender. "[T]he acts by which gender is constituted bear similarities to performative acts within a theatrical context" (Butler, 1988: 521). To follow the theatre analogy, gender is worn by the body in the choice of dress and hairstyle, in the body language and behaviour, all to fit within the character categories offered by the stage: "man" or "woman", "feminine" or "masculine". The way jewellery interacts with the body thus forms a part of this gender 'outfit'/code. As the stereotypical 'femininity' that is traditionally associated with the

use of jewellery is challenged, so too are recent 'gender trends' challenging the standard 'outifits'/performances of gender in society, with messages of empowerment, equality, diversity and inclusivity enforcing/promoting this change.

7.3.2 'Unstereotyping' Jewellery

Earlier in the chapter the arrival of the new non-stereotyped style of advertising and its presence and adaptation in the fashion industry was explored. This 'unstereotyping' has taken form in the way in which advertising makes use of challenging gender stereotypes (in regards to appearance, dress and gender roles), 'femvertising' (challenges to stereotypes relating to female bodies and femininity) and as of late gender neutrality or 'de-gendering'. These styles of advertising strive to relay/portray messages of equality and inclusiveness and aim to recognize the individuality, diversity, complexity and multidimensionality of the consumer in an attempt to break the limitations of the age old gender categorization model. Just as clothing is used to display the identity of the wearer, so too does jewellery have the ability to affect the gender identity role/performance of the wearer. Leading fashion corporations such as Gucci and Dior have showcased challenges to gender stereotypes concerning gender and jewellery in their collections on the runway. In 2018 Gucci showcased bold, bulky and elaborate necklaces in both the male and female collections. Both male and female models were displayed in similar clothing as well as jewellery, which signifies ideologies of equality whilst challenging gender stereotypes simultaneously (see figure 54 and 55).

As the fashion industry follows the latest trend or flavour of the moment and moves towards an area where characteristics of masculinity and femininity collide to form an inclusive state of 'being'/performing, so too have designers from within the jewellery field started to notice the space for change in regards to concepts of gender. The brands that are examined have exhibited ideologies of inclusivity and non-stereotyped gender identities in areas of process, practice/design and advertising.

Figure 54 Gucci 2018 summer/spring   *Figure 55 Gucci 2018 summer/spring*

<u>7.3.2.1 Brands that challenge the idea of the 'norm' within wedding jewellery</u>

One example of a jewellery brand that infuses ideologies of inclusivity and non-binary gender identities is Bario Neal. Co-founders and designers Anna Bario and Page Neal entered the fine jewelry business with the aim of undermining the heteronormativity of the jewellery/wedding industry and rejecting and challenging stereotypes related to gender. They displayed these ideologies not only in the actual design of the product, but also in the way they dealt with the customer/consumer. The business intended for everyone, no matter their gender identity, to feel comfortable and at home when coming into contact with the brand.

One way they did that was by not making assumptions about the partners of customers coming into the showrooms in search of engagement/wedding jewellery. The team does not make use of traditional and classifying terms such as 'bride' or 'groom', focusing on the monikers and pronouns that the customer prefers e.g. partner. They aim for inclusivity and therefore let go of assumptions of age, race, orientation or gender. They further this gender neutral ideology in the way they label/categorize their jewellery aimed at both same-sex and heterosexual couples by dividing the jewellery in section relating to design/appearance instead of the typical 'male' and 'female, e.g. 'Rings with Stones', 'Bands with Stones' and 'Bands without Stones. Even their advertising is focused on the jewellery and not the gender of the wearer, e.g. figure 56 that showcases the hand of a person that is neither distinguishably male or female and instead lets the jewellery speak to whichever individual, no matter the gender identity, finds the design appealing.

Figure 56 Bario Neal jewellery, website

Another brand that strives to challenge stereotypes by means of inclusivity, equality and diversity is Lolide.com which is driven by jewellery artist, Lori Linkous Devine's philosophy that buying a wedding ring "doesn't mean you have to compromise your values or submit to the gender binary" (www.lolide.com). Lolide offers non-traditional wedding rings inspired by ideas on inclusivity and the defying of gender norms. This philosophy was sparked in the designer when she faced the challenge of designing her own wedding ring. She was motivated by her personal experience of struggling with the gender binary and finding herself not fitting in either box.

According to Lori "we're all painfully familiar with our culture's lingering, antiquated formula for buying wedding jewellery: she gets a big rock, he gets a plain band, everybody moves on" (www.dancingwithher.com) and it is these stereotypes that the brands aims to challenge. One example in which this challenge takes form is in the embellishing, decorating and adding of stones to the 'standardized' plain wedding band that has previously been designated to male bodies (figure 57). This opens a door of possibility for men to break the 'male stereotype' as well as the chance for women who don't associate with the standard solitaire or eternity band to break the traditional mould.

Figure 57 Lolide, website

The artist aims to let the designs of her work help loosen the constraints that sexism and exclusivity that is present in the wedding jewellery industry present. She focuses on the form of the piece – shape, balance, weight – in order to offer an array of silhouettes that range from sturdy to delicate, from simple to elaborate. With most designs customers customize their choice with finishes, stones and metals to the specifications. In this way the company produces an almost endless array of modern and individual wedding rings. This is in correlation to their belief that all gender identities should be equally valued. As the artist states: "if you love lots of sparkle and a big rock, own it; if you just want a plain, simple flat band, wear it with pride" (www.dancingwithher.com) no matter your gender identity. One of their advertisements (fig. 58) showcases two ordinary looking wedding rings, yet because they aren't in the thick-for-man/thin-for-woman mold they are challenging the binary/gender norms. The advertisement thus places a focus on the design of the ring and the symbol of unity and inclusivity (marriage) rather than the gender identities of the wearers.
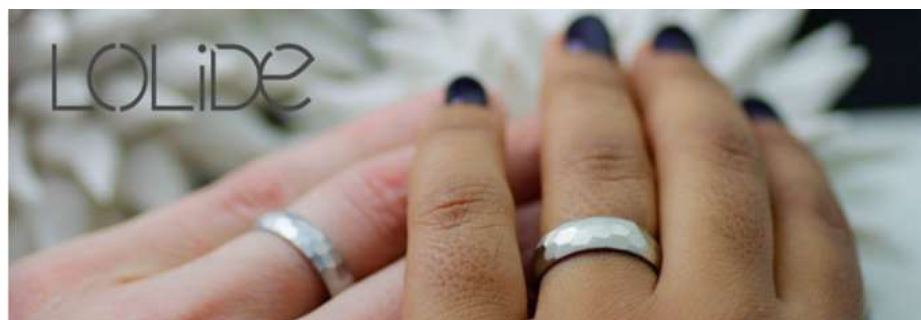
Figure 58 Lolide, website

Figure 59 Tiffany & Co. 'Will You' campaign, 2015, print and video

Tiffany & Co. has also tried their hand at relaying messages of equality and inclusivity within their own wedding jewellery advertisements, seemingly challenging heteronormative stereotypes by including same-sex couples. The first advertisement to be examined (fig. 59) shows a gay couple represented in one of the ads for the 'Will You' 2015 campaign. Though trying to challenge the norm by displaying a gay couple, the positioning of the bodies of the two male models alludes instead a picture of two best friends/two heterosexual men sitting on a staircase, there is a lot of space between them, with just a light touch on the knee connecting the two men. The posture/behaviour of the models shows no intimacy which is strange as it is a wedding advertisement.

Many male-female wedding advertisements show the bride and groom holding hands and looking happy, similar to figure 59, but the settings wherein these scenes take place tend to enhance the romance/intimacy portrayed. Perhaps it's not the lack of intimacy that's the problem here, but the lack of formal background. There are no hints made at the standard wedding/romantic/intimate settings of e.g. the wedding party/ceremony or any honeymoon imagery, instead there's just two guys sitting on steps. The men also portray/embody the stereotypical handsomeness associated with heterosexual depictions of male bodies in advertising.

Figure 60 Tiffany & Co. bridal campaign 2017, print and video

Figure 61 Tiffany & Co. bridal campaign 2017, print and video

In another set of advertisement released by Tiffany & Co. (2017) for the *Believe in Love* campaign, the company attempts again to address issues of inclusivity and gay marriage in releasing three advertisements that featured only the hands of couples divided into three distinguishable categories: same-sex female, same-sex male and heterosexual. Though representing a challenge to the norm of heterosexual couple portrayals by including two homosexual couples, the images still present problems in the way it represents/relays meanings of the individual couples. For instance, the positioning of the hands in figure 60 which shows to women getting married (they both have the standard/stereotyped solitaire ring to symbolize the female), the way the two hands are connected evokes an image of two young girls who are best friends making a 'pinky promise'. The relationship of the female same-sex couple thus seems to be compared to a childhood/childish relationship, as if suggesting playfulness instead of the seriousness/immenseness that is generally associated with marriage.

In figure 61, the hands of the same-sex male couple are positioned in a way that suggests secretiveness and a no-PDA (public displays of affection) allowed attitude. The rings are also not displayed on the 'traditional' ring finger which, compared to figure 60 and 62 that use the left ring finger, invokes that idea that this relationship is not one that can be displayed openly in society. This is not to say that same-sex marriages should subscribe to the trappings of the heteronormative rules of wearing the ring on the left finger. The analysis instead tries to highlight and draw attention to how this difference in styling that is used in figures 60-62, instead of successfully addressing inclusivity and diversity, still portray messaging that still 'others' same-sex marriages against the backdrop of heteronormativity. The hands are barely touching and it appears to be a stolen touch, one that would not be noticed by surrounding people, as if the couple has to hide their relationship. This speaks to the troubles and challenges that same-sex couples face in public and highlights the fact that conservatism still exists in a society striving for inclusion and diversity.

Figure 62 Tiffany&Co. bridal campaign 2017, print and video

Contrasted with both figure 60 and 61 is the heterosexual couple portrayed in fig 62. Unlike the same-sex couples, this image shows the two hands touching fully, finger interlaced, no spaces between them as in the other two adverts. The positioning of the hands invokes ideas of strength, togetherness, unit and stability in the way the two hands are centered in the frame like a 'pillar of strength'. This image thus alludes to the 'seriousness' of marriage that the same-sex portrayals lack. To highlight the heterosexual couple even more, the hands have been put against a pure white background, which further highlights the contrast of the same-sex portrayal who have blurry backgrounds. The heterosexual couple stand strong and together in the light while the same-sex couples almost tend to blur in with the mess of the background. This calls attention to the visual background context: if the people in the picture are in public, then the kind of muted touch is what is expected. If they are in private, which is what the images could show, then such simplistic demonstrations of affection, displayed by the same-sex couples, would perhaps be more indicative of stereotyping.

It seems then that Tiffany & Co. seem to advocate for other gender identities but the stereotypical heteronormative couple/relationship is still the 'better' option. Again it is noticeable how Tiffany & Co. appear to relay messages of inclusivity and equality while still infusing the portrayals with societal gender expectations/ideas. Though it is good that this global company is taking steps to follow the trend of empowerment, diversity and inclusivity, the lingering currents of messaging pertaining to social (and sometimes stereotypical) expectations present problems and in many ways contradicts and undermines the brands credibility and efforts to spread this new ideology.

7.3.2.2 Equality, inclusivity and the challenge of stereotypes

A brand that spreads ideas of equality and inclusion is a jewellery line that launched in 2018 under the name Martyre. The line, that was headed by Anwar Hadid and musician Yonu Laham, was initiated in an aim redefine unisex jewellery and is branded as such. As gender fluidity has started to become more acceptable on a mainstream level, the aim was to create a brand/line that was inclusive to people of all gender expressions and allowed for a diverse range of customers. The jewellery advertisements that accompany this line further relays messaging of equality and inclusivity in the way they address portrayals of gender. For the Martyre campaign, the brand used both a female and male model to showcase the jewellery, showing the same pieces both male and female bodies.

Figure 63 Martyre jewellery campaign 2018, website

In figure 63 both the female and male model are displaying the same set of necklaces, both bodies are also portrayed with bare chests. The female is displayed wearing a suit and is facing away from the camera as if in thought. Both the use of clothing and the posing of the body creates a masculine style image, reminiscent of male models closing the buttons of their blazer while staring off into the distance. In contrast to this masculinity relayed through the usage of a female model, the male model is positioned in a very feminine way. Not only is the pouty, sultry and engaging stare reminiscent of female representations in advertising, but he is also displayed as touching himself (feminine touch applied onto a male body). It is thus clear how the brand is challenging gender stereotypes as a means to convey messages of inclusivity where masculinity and femininity depends on the individual and not the classified gender category. The same could be said for figure 64 that showcases both female and male model wear the same necklaces and hoop earrings with both models facing away from the camera and touching themselves (face and hair). Both bodies are also positioned in a way that creates vectors that point in the upper right direction which as previously discussed symbolizes the new and idealized (a future devoid of gender stereotypes and gender limitations).

Figure 64 Martyre jewellery campaign 2018, website

This striving towards a gender neutral future is showcased in another advertisement from the campaign that portrays a male model in a non-traditional way and challenges stereotypes of masculinity (see figure 65). The model is depicted as staring defiantly and confidentially at the camera, one eyebrow slightly lifted as if to ask "what are you looking at?". He is positioned as touching his face and mouth with his lips slightly parted. His body is also decked out in multiple pieces of jewellery with a multitude of earrings, necklaces, bracelets and rings adorning is otherwise unclothed upper body. The amount of jewellery on display on this male body is a challenge to the stereotypes of the wearing of jewellery being a feminine activity/practice. It is important to note that this challenge has taken on other forms in society, for example the way in which it has become the norm for male rappers and hip hop artists have adopted 'bling' jewellery as part of their masculine role portrayals, to them wearing lots of jewellery is fine as long as it's chunky, over the top and expensive to display masculinity. The body language, engaging stare and parted lips, that has subtle sexual undertones, are reminiscent of female representation within 'femvertising' in which the model is portrayed as a sexually subjectified body instead of a sexual object. It is thus notable that the advertisement makes use of techniques/portrayals that are applied in advertising that challenges female stereotypes with the aims of challenging stereotypes regarding masculinity. The brand therefore aims to invite men to break gender stereotypes while simultaneously calling out for equality and inclusivity.

Figure 65 Martyre jewellery campaign 2018, website

South African jewellery brand Black Betty, established in 2012 by Kristin Weixelbaumer, released a campaign in 2017 that evoked messages of the individuality of non-normative people and empowerment. The collection, entitled 'Shine On', encourage wearers to focus on personal taste as opposed to being 'slaves of style' and feel comfortable in their own skin and gender identity as opposed to being restricted by stereotypical gender expectations. The jewellery showcased bold line and thick curves that have a minimalistic appeal as well as a gender-fluid/gender neutral look.

The advertisements not only disrupt heteronormative dress codes but also the heteronormative gender identities portrayed in advertising. This is achieved by using visual elements that challenge stereotypes as well as through combining linguistic text that relays 'real' stories of the models' experiences regarding gender identities/portrayals (see figures 66 and 67).

Figure 66 Shine On campaign 2018, print and website

Figure 67 Shine On campaign 2018, print and website

Figure 68 Shine On campaign 2018, print and website

The first set of advertisements read: '*I am Brandon'; 'I'm openly and proudly queer. I constantly re-evaluate and express my views on my gender identity'; 'Don't let other people's work define your worth and ability- it'll stop the light of your passion from shining through'*. The model represents queer identities and challenges gender norms and stereotypes in the way he displays a contrast of masculinity and femininity. This is shown in the 'maleness' of being shirtless in a pair of jeans and a buzz cut contrasted against the 'femaleness' of big dangly earrings, displays of 'feminine touch' (fig. 69) and fragmentation of the body where the body is cropped and emphasis is placed on certain parts of the body instead if the whole (e.g. fig.68 and fig.70). The aim is thus for the audience (people who don't fit into the traditional gender categories) to be inspired and empowered as well as identify with the model and the gender neutrality he represents.

This can also be seen in fig. 68 and 69 that depicts Brandon in a stereotypically feminine way, with bold, big earrings and typically feminine body positioning which is contrasted by fig. 70 that has a typically masculine feel.The advertisement goes further in their aims of empowering the audience by focusing in on the model's own tattoo (fig. 70) which speaks to the struggles of being unable to identify with the available gender categories as well as encouraging feelings of self-empowerment and body positivity. This messaging is continued in the campaign in the

Figure 69 Shine On campaign 2018, print and website

Figure 70 Shine One campaign 2018, print and website

advertisements featuring another queer male model, Mziyanda (fig. 71). Here Black Betty challenges stereotypes in the way feminine posture or styling of dress is applied to/performed by the male body and addresses, once again, issues of gender identities. This is achieved through the use of both visual and linguistic elements. This set of three connected advertisements reads: '*I am Mziyanda'; 'What makes me different is the fact that since the age of 9, I have been unafraid to be myself'; 'Be true to yourself. Don't allow certain social groups to stray you away from who you are at the heart of it all'*. In contrast to Brandon who seems to still be in the process of understanding/finding his gender identity, Mziyanda has known that he doesn't tick the traditional gender boxes since a young age (fig. 72).

Figure 71 Shine On campaign 2018, print and website

Figure 72 Shine On campaign 2018, print and website

Figure 73 Shine On campaign 2018, print and website

The ad campaign thus relays messages of inclusivity in the way it portrays different gender identities as diverse, complex. It also relays messages of self-empowerment and body positivity in a familiar way that speaks directly to the audience in aims to promote these messages of 'unstereotyping', inclusivity and diversity. The advertisements thus highlight the idea of gender as performance, a process that is constantly changing, adapting and evolving, as well as connecting the usage/purpose of jewellery within these performances. The advertisements are made accessible to the consumer audience through social media (the #ShineOn), the official website as well as printed postcards/pamphlets that are distributed in shopping malls such as V&A Waterfront in Cape Town. This is just one of the ways that Black Betty shows its connection/understanding of contemporary youth culture, ensuring that their marketing reaches the realm/sphere where consumers can consider/participate in the gender neutral discussion currently happening in society. This is in contrast to the conservative notions of gender presented in the Tiffany & Co. ads. This suggests that Black Betty, as a brand, is 'in tune' with the goings on in society, evidently pronounced by the way the company troubles the divide between persona and actual lived experience by giving lending a voice to the models they use, immediately establishes a connection of 'realness' between the model in the frame and the viewer. This is in contrast to Tiffany & Co. whose models are comparatively 'flat' and represent the conservative and traditional gender identities of the company's target market/consumer base.

Chapter 8

Discussion

> *Gender is such a familiar part of daily life that it usually takes a deliberate disruption of our expectations of how women and men are supposed to act to pay attention to how it is produced. (Lorber, 1994: 318)*

From a social constructionist perspective individuals create their own realities based on their perception of reality gained through social experiences and interactions. The way an individual perceives gender, whether it is their own or another's, can thus be seen as influenced by their perception of gender as they have experienced its manifestations through their own interactions. From the constructionist's perspective, "each of us creates our own worlds from our perceptions of the actual world" based on the usage of language and communication as having the central role of this interactive process of understanding the world and ourselves" (Galbin, 2014: 82). Language and communication derives from more than just the verbal, it also refers to body language, or specific meanings communicated through dress and behaviour. As Butler notes, gender, being so closely linked to the body, can thus also be seen as a construction or performance that is "instituted through the stylization of the body" and therefore should be understood as the mundane/routine way in which "bodily gestures, movements and enactments of various kinds constitute the illusion of an abiding gendered self" (1988: 519). This reflects Goffman's definition of gender as "the culturally established correlates of sex (whether in consequence of biology or learning)" and states that gender display/performance "refers to conventionalized portrayals of these correlates" (1976: 69).

While most people today won't even wonder about how or why gender exists since it is as normal and natural as water to them, social constructionists theorise that "[f]or human beings there is no essential femaleness and maleness, femininity and masculinity, womanhood or manhood" but that once gender is ascribed, "the social order constructs and holds individuals to strongly gendered norms and expectations" (Lorber, 1994: 323). Advertising is one such form of constructed communication through which individuals gain perceptions of gender roles and expectations. This study examined the way in which femininity and the female body are constructed and portrayed within advertising, with a focus on constructions of gender and femininity within jewellery advertisements of De Beers and Tiffany & Co. The study looked at constructions of femininity in recent advertisements of these companies as instances of advertising that reflect contemporary constructions of womanhood and femininity, in contradistinction to other, non-mainstream advertising that presents femininity differently.

The analysis set out to investigate the way in which mainstream media, such as advertising, reflects the changing roles of society in regards to gender (femininity) in light of feminism as well as recent feminist activism, and explore the potential of a more liberated portrayal of women and femininity within jewellery advertising. As society moves towards a less rigid male/female scale of gender with increased activism calling for inclusivity and diversity, mainstream media follows suit in its current use of trends such as commodity feminism, 'femvertising', the challenge of gender stereotypes/limitations and 'ungendering'. From the perspective of gender as a fluid/changeable state of constructed performance, it thus seems only natural that these 'new' non-normative and non-stereotyped gender performances that exist in society would then in turn be constructed and reflected in mass media/advertising, whereby the 'performers' within the frames of advertising imitate/reproduce a wider range of actual gender performances found in society. The study aimed to see how changing performances/roles in society are being reflected in advertising and gauge how mainstream media reflect the latest less conservative gender portrayals. It also set out to examine to what extent feminist messages have caught on and been promoted by mainstream media.

'Femvertising', advertising that makes use of feminist ideologies, is one example of how the change in gender performances in society are reflected within mass media. These styles of advertisements relay 'girlpower' messages of empowerment, equality and body positivity in relation to the way gender expectations regarding women are being challenged in society. Though the De Beers and Tiffany & Co. ads appear to aim at positive messaging and positive female representation, many lack conviction, which is apparent in the way empowerment and body positivity is still linked to the purchase of a product. Acts as inconsequential as buying a pair of shoes or eating a specific brand of cereal bar are now "recognized as gestures of female empowerment just as surely as participating in a demonstration" (Gill, 2008: 4).

Feminism advocates for the rights and roles of women in society, supporting the idea that women have the freedom of choice, able to be and make decisions on their own individual terms. In contrast to that, consumerism is often more about the marketing of gender-specific products that generalizes and normalizes what marketers see as (gender) appropriate products to the mass of people/public, this conflicts with feminist ideologies in the way it proves to be rather anti-individualistic. Another problem the feminism-consumerism blending/combination presents is that feminism relays messages/beliefs of freedom, choice, empowerment and body positivity, while consumerism relays messages that buying into a certain product will achieve empowerment/body positivity. The advertisements that make use of feminist messaging in order to gain consumers thus focusses on ideas of freedom and choice, while simultaneously contradicting feminist

messaging in the way these ads undermine the individual power that women possess to empower themselves and try to solve body positivity issues with the consumption of products. When feminism and consumerism/capitalist ideologies combine, it thus seems that real female and feminist issues are overshadowed by materialistic 'solutions' to women's problems. These advertisements thus emphasise in female consumers that in buying a "product, style or idea" the individual is "purchasing a sign of one's own individuality and empowerment" (Gill, 2008: 8)

Consumerism thus, in most cases, waters down the ideological feminist fire while simultaneously promoting feminism and feminist activism via consumerism, where women can now partake in a form of feminist activism by buying into a brand that promotes feminist ideologies. One example is the De Beers *Right Hand* campaign which urges women to be active and raise their hands in unity against the standardized or stereotyped expectations of women. The campaign uses rhetoric that has activist tones, as if, by buying into this campaign/product, women are able to stand up against the status quo and actively challenge gender norms. The campaign loses credibility/value however, not only in the way the blending of feminist and consumerist ideologies diminishes the effectiveness of feminist messages of independence and empowerment, but also in the way the campaign differentiates/categorises womanhood into different sorts/classes of femininity and pits them against each other. When female representations are restricted to these various prescribed categories, "they serve not only to distort reality" but also, through the maintenance of stereotypes and generalizations "constrain female identities" (Yusof, et. al., 2014: 2889). The use of feminist messaging within this campaign is thus contradicted by the way it addresses only specific types of women (single, independent, non-traditional) and positions married/traditional women in a negative light, consequently creating classifications within womanhood and hinting that the one type is better than the other. De Beers thus makes use of feminist messaging (empowerment, independence and choice), but tweaks these messages to speak to a specific group of women while others are left behind, highlighting how consumerism dilutes traditional feminist values of inclusion, diversity and the acceptance of different femininities.

In light of third-wave feminism, there are however brands that succeed in relaying feminist messaging by creating open platforms for the female consumers to discuss female issues on social media platforms. Third-wave feminists are focussed on female empowerment, shunning victimization and redefining feminine beauty standards as subjects, not objects of a sexist patriarchy, in an aim to work toward an "intersectional analysis of class, race and gender-based oppressions" (Bronstein, 2005: 784). The third wave forefronts the reality of "multiple, shifting bases of identity and oppression" as well as seeking out and embracing "these complexities and contradictions" (Bronstein, 2005: 785). The fourth wave of feminism is made up of young activists

who try to "blend the micropolitics that characterised the third wave" with a motivation that seeks change in "political, social and economic structures" (Maclaran, 2015: 1734) much like the feminists of the second wave. Fourth-wavers make use of the internet and online media to address issues such as intersectionality, identity and the normalising of sex in popular culture, "particularly the fashion and music industries, as well as social media" (Maclaran, 2015: 1735). Third-wave feminism, as well as the blooming fourth wave, views the internet as a tool that allows for the confessions/stories of millions of women and men, where feminist politics can be debated with the advantage of obtaining broader perspectives (Ridout 2007). This kind of 'DIY' feminism through channels such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and Youtube has become a "trademark of the third wave" (Ridout, 2007: xvi), highlighting how this wave has grown as technologies have developed, with feminists born into the techno-era adapting to the times and bringing their activist demonstrations to the global digital sphere.

The advertising industry has adopted this new form of feminist communication and there are instances where this new style of advertising that relays feminist messaging, is used within the context of social media (hashtags) to unite women globally. Take the Black Betty #ShineOn campaign for example, that not only advertised jewellery but simultaneously addressed issues of gender identity and invited their consumers to join the discussion. By making use of social media the company thus creates/opens a dialogue between consumer and brand, generating a platform through which people can share their stories in regards to gender identities, stereotypes, body positivity and inclusivity. The context of these advertisements compared to the De Beers and Tiffany & Co. adverts indicate an underlying understanding of the complexities and construction of gender identities without relying on age old stereotypes that do little to reflect changes in society. It also reflects that Black Betty understands its target market and how this new generation of youth make use of different modes of media platforms and technology. The brand also shows understanding of the generational shift in perspective when it comes to gender, acknowledging that their audience, the youth of today, are less concerned with traditional gender ideologies and are more open to ideas of gender fluidity. The use of feminist ideologies within their advertising thus gains credibility in the way it speaks to real issues women/non-traditional persons face each day. By giving these consumers a space in which to voice their opinion and share their stories Black Betty stays true to feminist ideologies without the effluence of consumerism dampening the value of their messaging. Now women/non-normative individuals have the ability/opportunity to voice their concerns and share their global and diverse stories on a digital platform.

These feminist-driven advertisements showcase ideologies associated with the third wave in the way that it combines feminism and neoliberalism (empowerment through consumerism) to establish a 'new' face of feminism, one that is not necessarily concerned with collective gender issues but instead focusses on individual identities.

The advertisements of De Beers and Tiffany & Co. (especially ones that make use of commodity feminism which is arguably an inherently neoliberal[4] approach and therefore problematic) continue to contradict or problematize how femininity is represented, as womanhood and femininity is still restricted to the body (physical) and the sexuality of the female body. Thus there is still a void in the advertisements of these two companies pertaining to female representation, a void that needs to be filled with the complexities and multidimensionality of being a modern woman instead of the one dimensional representations of women/femininity as solely related to the body and sexuality. This hollowness can be described as the lack of multifaceted and diverse female representations in advertising in a society that has seen a shift in the positions/roles, expectations and gender identities of women. Tiffany & Co. and De Beers are iconic companies that are steeped in tradition, and this could be why the advertisements appear conservative and not as progressive as brand that are jumping on the gender fluidity train/trend. This is due to the fact that the two companies try to accommodate and appeal to their target market (arguably largely white, middle to upper class consumers) and are unlikely to intentionally alienate that target market by veering too far from that audience's perceived ideals by for instance using homosexual or gender fluid imagery within their ads. This in turn would explain e.g. why the inclusion of same-sex couples in the Tiffany & Co. advertisements simply seem to recycle heteronormative ideal with queer 'characters'. Further, the advertising thus still fails to capture/portray women in relatable/realistic ways. These depictions also present femininity as 'either, or', categorizing and limiting the portrayal of femininity and womanhood, creating set characters that women can choose to adopt/perform whilst simultaneously excluding those women who don't fit these standardized moulds.

The analysis reveals that the jewellery advertisements of Tiffany & Co. and De Beers that invoke feminist messaging and ideologies lack in showcasing a liberated, diverse and complex form of femininity as compared to other advertisements that highlight different attributes of personhood that reflect a more complex constitution of womanhood, manhood, femininity and sexuality. Tiffany & Co. and De Beers thus, though applying rhetoric reminiscent of third-wave feminism,

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[4] Neoliberalism "equates consumption with freedom, liberation and empowerment" and though drawing from liberal feminist arguments/ideologies, it presents a serious contradiction to more radical feminist theories that stress "collectivism and social responsibility" (Mendes, 2012: 557-558).

contradict themselves in the way they still make use of "artificial categories of identity, gender and sexuality" and fail to embody feminist politics that allow for differences in identities that are "dynamic, situational and provisional" to be celebrated and showcased (Rampton, 2008). Examples of stereotyped/traditional portrayals being the De Beers *Shape of You* campaign (fig.16) that portrays women as needing protection from strong, muscular males, the Tiffany & Co. 2010 holiday campaign (fig.17) that portrays the woman as an accessory to her male counterpart, a beautiful decorative object at the side of an assertive and attention-demanding man and the focus on femininity as linked to motherhood and nurturing in Tiffany & Co. ads (see fig. 18 and 19). Sexual objectification is another way in which female representation is limited, as was seen in the De Beers *Magic Moments* campaign (fig. 22) which featured the female model as a sexual object displayed in an inviting/suggestive position, lying on her back in bed and the De Beers *Waiting* ad (fig.23) that depicts the female model as a damsel in distress waiting for a man to decorate her with jewellery, another sexual object 'waiting' to be bought.

The last category that female bodies and femininity is limited by is that of the 'midriff' as can be seen in the previously discussed De Beers' *Right Hand* campaign that directly juxtaposes the new, independent and empowered 'midriff' character with stereotyped/traditional female representation as well as the Tiffany & Co. *Legends* campaign. Though there has been a shift in representation from objectification to subjectification, this new subjectification that midriff/'femvertising' encompasses appears to merely be a subtler form of sexual objectification, this new subjectification thus alluding to the idea that women now "understand their own objectification as pleasurable and self-chosen" (Gill, 2008: 19). This is due to the fact that focus is still placed on beauty, sexual appeal/attractiveness and appearance. These female bodies still embody 'heteronormative' male fantasy stereotypes even though they have now gained 'consciousness' in the way they have shifted from being unassuming objects to being aware of their sexual attractiveness/allure. The women are still placed under a male gaze, though now the gaze is exercised by both male and female consumers.

Analysis of the De Beers and Tiffany & Co. advertisements have showcased how sexual objectification has turned to the more recent subjectification/ subtle objectification in the way their female representations, as of late, depict women that seemingly embody sexual agency, freedom, choice and empowerment. Though these are elements of feminism that should be celebrated, the way in which the advertisements make use of these ideologies in their representation of female bodies is problematic as the purported pursuit of these ideologies are still linked to/ dependent on the body (e.g. with the use of feminine touch) and sexuality of these female bodies (parted lips, parted legs, sexual connotation and undertones). This dependency presents a problem as

historically women have been equated with their bodies, rather than being ascribed full personhood based in complex inner- and outer-lives and the bodies of women have also historically been artificially sexualized or alternatively placed in the binary of 'virgin', 'mother'/ 'whore'. If history is not to repeat itself, it seems then that femininity and womanhood need to be redefined in a way that breaks the female=body definition/binary.

Feminine touch, as used by De Beers can be seen in figure 21, with an example of Tiffany & Co. visible in figure 33. Advertisements showcasing female bodies amidst sexual undertones is that of De Beers' *Right Hand* campaign (fig.30) in which the female body is positioned with parted legs and attention drawn to the genital area by way of light, the De Beers *Waiting* advert (fig 23) in which the female model pulls down the front of her dress, baring her chest in a knowing/seductive way and in the Tiffany & Co. Legend campaign (see figures 28 and 32) in which models are portrayed with alluring stares and parted lips and attention is drawn to specific body parts like the chest area. Feminist messaging within these advertisements, is thus being used to mask the foundational reliance on the body and sexuality for distinguishing/displaying gender within an oftentimes conservative society.

The study also analysed advertisements which made use of linguistic elements to relay three categories of female representation: stereotyped, objectified and empowered. Examples of stereotypical portrayals through the use of words/linguistic elements included the De Beers, *Diamonds are Forever*, campaign released between 2000 and 2005 (refer to figures 36 – 38) which depicted females as: damsels in distress waiting for men to improve their lives with jewellery and shiny things, effectively hinting at the 'buying' of female bodies; subservient domestic housewives; and submissive individuals that would accept abuse in return for shiny things. Tiffany & Co.'s example showcased a contradiction of femininities (traditional vs. empowered) in the way the visual elements represented empowered femininity whilst the linguistic elements were rife with stereotypes pertaining to motherhood, being a wife and being a domestic housekeeper (refer to figure 39). De Beers also showcased sexual objectification through the use of language/linguistic elements within their *Diamonds are Forever* campaign (refer to figures 40-42). These advertisements and the female depictions they represented relayed messaging that hinted at the buying of female bodies and sexuality (referring to trophy wives), objectified female bodies by comparing them to objects such as cars, and all in all relayed messaging that portrayed female sexuality and female bodies as being 'buyable'. The empowered 'midriff' character was described through words within De Beers' *Right Hand* campaign and, as previously discussed, presented problems in the way it juxtaposed and separated femininity or womanhood into categories.

These two mainstream jewellery companies thus still seem to reinstate problematic societal gender expectations pertaining to the female body and femininity. Femininity is still being categorized as being 'the one or the other', female representation has not yet reached multidimensionality and complexity within any of the De Beers ads, with Tiffany & Co. attempting but not fully succeeding (see figure 60 which depicts female bodies in a non-normative relationship within a bridal jewellery setting). It is thus noteworthy that though these global companies have failed to convincingly relay feminist ideologies, smaller independent jewellery businesses (as discussed) have incorporated empowerment, inclusivity, diversity and non-conformity into their designs, practice and advertising. These brands try and relay gender messages/representations that speak of multidimensional and complex identities and therefore better reflect modern feminist messages.

These brands reflect ideologies of fourth-wave feminism in the manner in which they focus on diverse identities that do not conform to the norms of society and make use of hashtags and the internet as forms of communicating feminist messages. For instance, by adding a hashtag to their advertising (#ShineOn), Black Betty follows this wave of feminism by way of using modern technology that allows people everywhere to spread their views and beliefs on feminism, or feminist topics such as identity, gender and body positivity. This globalization thus shows the potential for mass change as it the internet and social media are utilized as powerful tools to spread awareness of the issues that women and non-binary individuals face. Essentially using the platform to create worldwide change by informing the masses of these issues in an easy and accessible manner. Black Betty thus strives to answer the problems that feminists of old have addressed (gender norms and body positivity) by way of technology, where masses of people can become part of the discussion.

Jewellery brands such as Black Betty, Bario Neal and Martyre, through broadening their customer market to include those that do not fit into the typical/stereotyped/traditional heterosexual male-female model and creating jewellery pieces and advertising that doesn't limit the buyer to gender categories, also embody ideologies of feminist standpoint theory. This theory is not merely occupied simply by being a woman, but instead is achieved through engaging in critical thought about individual experiences in relation to larger social and political structures. Feminist standpoint theory is thus not reserved for 'women' but instead cater for multitudes of gender identities and marginalised groups that challenge the gender standards and expectations of society.

The study revealed that this focus on multidimensionality, diversity and inclusivity is present in advertising that relays messages of non-conformity pertaining to gender, challenging gender stereotypes and in some cases 'ungendering' or de-gendering gender portrayal/representations. Within the 'de-gendered' depictions, as seen in advertisements previously examined, femininity and female bodies are portrayed in varied and multidimensional ways that break the limitations of gender categorization. Adverts that were investigated showed that this new 'femininity' has also been displayed on male bodies in an aim to challenge stereotypes of masculinity and maleness. Though there are certain strains of feminisms, especially coming from the third wave such as radical feminism, that feel men and masculinity are separate to the feminist cause whilst there are other strains such as libertarian feminism that advocates for the freedom for both men and women from social structural bonds. This study aligns itself with feminisms such as libertarian and postmodern feminisms which see gender as a construct that affects both women and men alike. Black Betty, the jewellery company, addressed similar issues of complex and non-normative/ non-binary identities in their #ShineOn campaign (refer to figures 69-76). The campaign displays messages through male bodies that embody third-wave ideologies such as the destabilization of constructs such as gender, the body, sexual identity/sexuality and heteronormativity (Rampton, 2008). In the ad campaign male models are depicted in feminine ways (positioning of the bodies with large, bold jewellery that traditionally would be associated with femininity) alongside quotes relating to personal stories of the models' sexual/gendered identities and performances, the campaign showcases the complexity of male bodies that challenge the heteronormative standards of maleness and masculinity. In this way Black Betty thus relays messaging that resonates with Butler's idea of gender as a performance, a construct that is acted out by various bodies, and in this case the adverts show how traditional ideas of femininity and femaleness can be performed through and by male bodies. Some feminist logic thus shows potential to include the 'empowering' of male bodies by advocating for a separation from old stereotypes that limit men and provide a space for advertising to instead explore an 'ungendered', diverse and multifaceted arena without societal gender limitations/norms.

The study of De Beers and Tiffany & Co. advertisements revealed that the latter company has tried to address issues of inclusion and challenge to stereotypes within their advertising, whilst the former had very little to offer amongst this new style of gender representation within advertising. Tiffany & Co. aimed at inclusion and diversity by using same-sex couples within wedding advertisement settings, something that was not present in the De Beers advertising. Though Tiffany & Co. is heading in the right direction, it is still problematic in the way the advertisements separate/distinguish between heterosexual and same-sex couples, while at the same time hinting at conservative and subtly stereotyped ideologies. This can be seen in figures

60 to 62, Tiffany & Co.'s 2017 bridal campaign, a set of three advertisements depicting a heterosexual couple, a male same-sex and female same-sex couple. The advertisements depict the same-sex couples in a way that that seems playful and light-hearted, also showcasing these couples against blurry backgrounds that might perhaps be seen to allude to the conservative idea of same-sex couples' reservation of showing affection in public settings. In contrast the advert depicting the heterosexual couple relays messages of unity and strength with the stark white background hinting at ideologies of true, pure and morally correct love. Tiffany & Co. thus seem progressive by including non-normative couples in their advertising but the inclusivity is diluted when one notices the juxtaposition of the straight and same-sex couples, a contrast that alludes to a conservative idea of society that heteronormativity is the more acceptable choice of gender performance. These 'almost there' advertisements of Tiffany & Co. lack the conviction found in more progressive advertising such as the ones released by Black Betty for their #ShineOn campaign for instance. Black Betty succeeds in relaying messages of self-empowerment and body positivity in a familiar way that speaks directly to the audience in an aim to promote 'unstereotyping', inclusivity and diversity. The advertisements highlight the idea of gender as performance, a process that constantly evolves, changes and adapts and link the act of wearing jewellery to these 'unstereotyped' performances.

Though 'de-gendered' and nonstereotyped advertising exists, the study has shown that stereotypical portrayals still exist, in both visual and linguistic ways. These portrayals do not exhibit themselves in obvious and direct ways but the exist in subtle, insidious and perfidious ways. The analysis of advertisements reflected that depictions of femininity and female bodies within jewellery advertisements still make use of gender stereotypes and sexual objectification, with the new style of 'femvertising' still bearing signs of both stereotyping and objectification, even if it is in a subtler manner. Women are still showcased as accessories to men, with female bodies inhabiting decorative roles, as well as being depicted in the spotlight of motherhood, being a wife and occupying the domestic sphere. The advertisements are problematic in the way they do not reflect the gender role changes in society and still rely on/display stereotypical female roles. Though sexual objectification has become less blatant, in light of 'femvertising' and feminist activism, female bodies are still put on display as objects for sexual pursuit (even if the 'subjectified' midriff owns her sexuality) with the use certain poses, visual techniques, camera angles and in some cases linguistic elements.

In conclusion, the study found that there are three categories of female representation to be found within the mainstream jewellery advertisements examined: stereotypical portrayals, objectified portrayals and portrayals that feature the new liberated, 'subjectified' and empowered 'midriff' character. The study showcased how, though feminist messaging and ideology had been applied to advertising, De Beers and Tiffany & Co. still reinstate problematic gender role expectations pertaining to femininity and the female body as the focus is still placed on appearance, sexuality and the body rather and personality, talent, intellect, skill or ability. The mainstream advertisements thus still have a long way to go if they are to reflect the contemporary gender changes in society. Yes, 'femvertising' seems to be the answer to eradicating stereotyped/objectified representations but as the study showed, more often than not this style of advertising is still immersed in stereotyping and objectification. It seems then that a more accurate reflection of social change can be seen in advertising that represents portrayals that are multidimensional and complex, by way of de-gendering or 'unstereotyping' gender roles/expectations.

This study has prompted many other questions about the relation of jewellery, the wearing, production and selling thereof to that of gender expectancies, roles and performances. It has been made apparent that jewellery as something that is attached to/displayed on the body, has a similar ability to clothing and cosmetics/hairstyles that allows it to connect to the gender identities and performances of the wearer. This thus opens up other avenues for potential research such as the investigation of how exactly different individuals attach their multifaceted gender identities/performances to their choices of jewellery. The study has also revealed that there are clear differences in the way same-sex and heterosexual couples are portrayed within bridal jewellery advertising. These marked differences could be further explored and investigates in advertisements to examine the contrast/similarities in the way same-sex and heterosexual couples are represented in relation to the expectations regarding displays of affection/intimacy. In light of 'femvertising' and commodity feminism, further research could be conducted to examine in which way 'femvertising' and feminist messaging influences the buyer/consumer in regards to buying the product or supporting the brand. The increasing trend of 'de-gendering' in mass media and popular culture opens up for the examination of how the 'de-gendering' of jewellery affects the way heteronormative men perceive jewellery. Investigation could focus on checking if this 'de-gendering' increases that specific heteronormative male consumer market, and how alterative male gender identities in turn respond to the 'de-gendering' of jewellery.

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