

# Daisy Trio – Marc Jacobs Audio Visual Advert (2015)



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## Audio Visual Advert

### (2015)

#### Unit 1: Investigating the Media

##### Section A: Selling Images

##### – Advertising, Marketing and Music Video

#### Focus areas:

- Media language
- Representation
- Audiences
- Media contexts

#### PRODUCT CONTEXT

- Marc Jacobs's 'Daisy' brand launched in 2007 and was an immediate success. It was followed up with nine other variations. The perfume was developed by the House of Coty, which has been creating perfumes since 1904 and now controls over 43 of the world's most famous brands.
- The advert was directed by Sofia Coppola, the Academy Award winning director of *Lost in Translation*. The advert was released in 2015 and featured the models: Malaika Firth, Ondria Hardin, Antonia Wesseloh and Sophia Ahrens.

#### PART 1: STARTING POINTS – Media language

##### Industry context:

The fragrance industry is reportedly worth over \$38.8 billion and it is considered a high end product. Perfume brands have been popular since the 1960s so contemporary audiences would be familiar with the advertising codes and conventions. Sofia Coppola featured in the first *Daisy* campaign shot by Juergen Teller in 2007. She went on to direct two more adverts for the brand including 'Daisy Dream' in 2014. Marc Jacobs and Coppola have a close friendship and working relationship, collaborating on a number of projects.

##### Consider the use of moving image media language, and codes and conventions:

- The advert conforms to many of the typical conventions of fragrance adverts. The

characters are attractive models which upholds **protagonist stereotypes** and gives the brand **aspirational** qualities.

- The lighting is **high key** and the **colour palette** reinforces the **USP** of the brand; the sense of the simple beauty of the daisy.
- There is a **low angle medium close-up** of the product at the end of the advert which is a typical way of creating brand identity.
- The audio is a song released in 2013, 'The Mother we Share' by the Scottish synthpop band, Chvrches. It **juxtaposes** the simple imagery of the advert. However, a pop soundtrack is conventional of the fragrance advert.

##### Consider how the different elements of media language, and the combination of elements, influence meaning and communicate multiple meanings:

- The *Daisy Trio* advert opens with a **close-up shot** of petals being pulled from a daisy. This immediately **connotes** to the audience a nostalgic sense of childhood and young love.
- The camera cuts to a **wide shot** of the characters – the models. Their **body language and gesture codes** are more suited to young children as they 'play' in the meadow setting. The use of **lens flare** creates an ethereal sense of summer.
- The narrative cuts between **long shots** of the characters participating in a range of leisurely pursuits, such as reading by a stream, lying in a hammock and making daisy chains. The **mise-en-scène** communicates a carefree, simple and light atmosphere to the audience.

##### Consider critical perspectives:

##### Semiotics – Roland Barthes

- The advert's simple, airy narrative means that the audience is not exposed to **hermeneutic codes**. This also explains why there are few **action codes** (Barthes' **Proairetic**). The **body language** between the girls at 0.11 could be seen to connote the telling of a secret, reinforcing the idyllic relationship between them.

- Barthes' semantic code could be applied to the activities conducted by the characters. All of them connote an insouciant, innocent atmosphere.
- **Cultural codes** (Barthes' referential code) reinforce the playful and innocent **ideology**. Audiences recognise the childhood pastimes of making daisy chains and pulling the petals off a flower to determine if someone loves you.
- White could be **symbolic** of purity and innocence in the narrative.

### Advanced Theory:

#### Structuralism – Claude Lévi-Strauss

- Due to the nature of the narrative, the use of **binary opposition** is absent. There is a **visual binary opposite** between the warm sunshine and yellow **colour palette** of the meadow and the cooler, more **low key** shots of the riverside where the characters appear to escape the afternoon's warmth.

## PART 2: STARTING POINTS – Representation

### Social context:

Women have been represented by **narrow stereotypes** in advertising since its early days. The original **stereotypes** were that of a housewife. This expanded to a sexualised figure during the 1960s and 70s. In **1975 Laura Mulvey** developed the theory of the '**Male Gaze**' in relation to film, but which was easily applicable to advertising. Additionally, a key element of advertising is showing audiences what beauty looks like. Advertisers want audiences to buy products so they sell an aspirational lifestyle. Image is key to this and the images of women shown in advertising are usually flawless. According to **Naomi Wolf** in her book, '**The Beauty Myth**', the image is a lie and is unachievable by real women due to the technological advancements in editing. These concepts are explored by Jean Kilbourne in the following video: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?annotation\\_id=annotation\\_493134379&feature=iv&src\\_vid=PTImho\\_RovY&v=jWKXit\\_3rpQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?annotation_id=annotation_493134379&feature=iv&src_vid=PTImho_RovY&v=jWKXit_3rpQ)

### Consider how representations are constructed through processes of selection and combination:

- The advert lacks any overtly **sexual objectification** of the characters. It also appears to challenge the representations of wealth which are often evident in fragrance adverts. However, Coppola did comment that

she wanted to represent the models as if they had just 'escaped from boarding school'.

- The models' representations are created from a combination of elements. They all wear simple, white summer dresses. The style is traditional and reinforces the sense of innocence.
- A close bond is created between the characters, shown through the use of the **wide shot** of the girls lying in the meadow. Their body language and facial expression codes connote that they are comfortable with each other, their touching limbs connotes a loving friendship.
- The advert does reinforce the **idealized image** of beauty. All the models are slim and flawless. Most of the shots show interaction but some long shots are used to emphasise the characters' beauty.

### Consider theoretical perspectives:

- **Stuart Hall's theory of representation** – the message **encoded** relies on the audience's 'shared conceptual map' of idyllic childhood. The **high key lighting, lens flare and pastel colour palette** create a dreamlike nostalgic setting.
- **David Gauntlett's theory of identity** – the characters in the advert could be considered as positive representations of gender. They are presented as intelligent and not reliant on men. However, it does reinforce the stereotype that women are sensitive, emotional and virginal.

### Advanced theory:

- **Liesbet Van Zoonen's feminist theory** – advertising does encourage the representation of the **stereotyped 'super woman'** and the advert shows evidence of this. The characters have idealised beauty and appear to conduct perfect relationships. Their **utopian** representation is an unachievable standard for modern women.
- **Gilroy's ethnicity and post-colonial theories** – The advert does present a positive representation of ethnicity. The black model is represented as equal to the other characters. However, the representation could be considered **tokenistic**.

## PART 3: STARTING POINTS – Audiences

### Social / cultural context:

Marc Jacobs designed the *Daisy* brand to exude 'youthful sophistication and vintage charm, with a touch of irreverence'. In order to achieve this, he uses natural models with youthful exuberance. Jacobs has an international website where a global audience can

access his fashion products: [www.marcjacobs.com](http://www.marcjacobs.com).

The advert has several hundred thousand views on YouTube, while the print adverts are placed in lifestyle publications such as *Cosmopolitan*. *Vogue* ran a ‘behind the scenes’ look at the making of the advert on the *British Vogue* website.

### Consider how industries target audiences, and how audiences interpret and use the media:

- The target audience for Marc Jacobs’ brand is 18 – 24 year old females who know about style and appreciate a natural, pure look. This would be the **ABC1 (NRS)** group and the **Aspirers** according to **Young and Rubicam**.
- The advert communicates a mood to the audience through the **semantic** and **referential** codes.
- The audience is positioned as a spectator to a tender moment of carefree enjoyment through the use of the **wide and long shots**. The audience is teased into the moment by the use of edited **close-ups** of the character’s fingers and bare feet. However, **close-ups and mid shots** of the characters’ faces are deliberately avoided to create an emotional need in the audience.
- Coppola makes **intertextual** references to a film she wrote and directed, *The Virgin Suicides*. The film tells the story of five sisters and their mysterious isolated existence. The **mise-en-**

**scène** in the film often depicts the sisters in old fashioned nightgowns with natural flowing hair. This would engage fans of her style.

### Consider critical perspectives:

#### Reception Theory - Stuart Hall

- The **preferred reading** of the advert is that the audience would aspire to be like the *Daisy* girl, ‘Young, fresh, sophisticated but very feminine’ (Coppola). The director wanted to create an **ideology** of intimacy and abandonment.
- An **oppositional reading** to the advert could be its lack of substance. The advert presents an emotion rather than a clear brand identity. Audiences could also be **oppositional** to the idealized representation of women.

#### Cultivation Theory - George Gerbner

- The theory suggests that advertising has a direct effect on young women’s perception of their bodies by making them internalize an idea of the perfect female body. The advert could be said to encourage size distortion, as an ideal, thin body is being promoted.
- The advert is also presenting a romanticized concept that doesn’t reflect the emotions of real life.