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How do Zara and Patagonia as fashion brands create meaning on Instagram through marketing clips in order to emphasize their relationship with the concept of sustainability?

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## Introduction

*"Fashion is about storytelling through clothing; it's about the stories behind them and the ones you create around them. It's a cultural influence, backstory or intellectual touchpoint that you can trace back to what you're wearing."* - Shiona Turini, freelance stylist and fashion consultant, taken from Repeller which is a fashion blog.

Fashion is seen as a universal language in which people tell a story depending on what they wear. Fashion is inextricably woven with time, finding its essence in current, fast-moving trends and its inspiration in emerging styles (Brewer, 2019:1). Since the 1990, the clothes industry has been evolving, and their production methods have changed drastically by delivering clothes in no time. Fast fashion has come to transform the fashion industry. Fast fashion is a term used to describe clothing collections that are based on the most recent fashion trends (Rathinamoorthy, 2018:2). The concept of Fast Fashion is characterized by its low-cost clothing collections based on current, high-cost luxury fashion trends, by its very nature, a fast-response system that encourages disposability (Fletcher, 2018:5). The fast fashion model of production, distribution, and marketing has thrived over the past decade (Brewer, 2019:1). Globalization has made it possible to produce clothing at increasingly low prices, so low that many consumers consider this clothing to be disposable (Claudio, 2007: A449). Clothes can be designed in one place, while being manufactured and sold in different ones. This option might be accessible for everyone, but there are costs behind which are the irreversible damage to the environment and the impact on society, both of them are affecting us all.

According to the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) the fashion industry is the second most polluting industry in the world. The enormous quantities of raw materials create considerable levels of pollution, leaves a significant carbon footprint, and generates alarming levels of waste (Brewer, 2019:2). Yet fast fashion leaves a pollution footprint, with each step of the clothing life cycle generating potential environmental and occupational hazards (Claudio, 2007:A449). Affordable prices, new trends, and mass-marketing add to the throw-away culture, in which many of us are living in.

The preoccupation with lifestyle issues is one of the most significant developments in public policy over the past two decades (Simpson & Mayr, 2010: 108). Discussions about sustainability have increased over the last decades (Strähle,

2015:1). Worrying about our lifestyle choices and the impact these might have on future generations, has been one of the main preoccupations around the world in recent years. Customers around the world are demanding changes in the fashion industry production strategies, in order to minimize the damage on the environment. As a reaction to an increasing customer awareness, the introduction of the green future and lifestyle rhetoric has been a strategy implemented by brands in order to position themselves within the reach of customers and be able to differentiate their products from the competition. Changes in lifestyle as well as the need for individuality result in constantly changing products to respond to the appearing consumer needs (Barnes and Lea-Greenwood, 2006 in Strähle, 2015:141).

But are fast fashion brands really determined to be sustainable? What does sustainability really mean? "To meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (Hariembrundtland 1985, in Strähle, 2015:9), is one often-cited definition of how sustainability can be understood. These sustainable companies have been recognized for putting people, profit and planet at the top of their priorities. Sustainability is not singularly about minimizing negative impact, but also maximising positive impact, allowing individuals, communities and economic systems to flourish (Williams et al, 2009). Consequently, the question of why so many fashion companies have such a detrimental impact on the environment, while certain other fashion companies champion sustainability arises (Brewer, 2019:5).

By being aware of how damaging the industry can be, we see a sudden change into a lifestyle vocabulary anchored in consumer choice and personal display of social responsibility (Simpson & Mayr, 2010:108). On the other hand, there are still consumers today that are not well informed about the topic sustainability (Strähle, 2015:11). Even though discussion can be found everywhere, there is a lack of knowledge and truly understanding of what it means to be sustainable.

Furthermore, we live in a world obsessed with image and social connectivity (Brewer, 2019:1). Social media are fundamentally changing the way we communicate, collaborate, consume, and create (Sinan et al, 2013 in Muthu, 2019: 5). Social connectivity has been simplified by the use of social media in which interaction between each other happens fast and uncomplicated. Changes in consumer habits and behavior are constant and the industry needs to keep up with these, in order to stay on trend. The rise of e-commerce technology has enabled

companies to interact with their communities through social media, which is considered as one of the most powerful innovations in the twenty-first century (Strähle, 2015:2). Nowadays, our attitude toward things, how we express ourselves and the clothes we use everyday belong to this system of discursive relations. The communication between fast fashion brands and consumers has been changing over time. Digitalization has changed the structure of the fashion retail market in recent years (Strähle, 2015:2). The digital interaction between customer and company helps to build trust and loyalty.

Through the use of the different social media platforms, we see that communication increasingly happens on a multimodal level; that is, ideas are expressed through both language and the visual mode (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001 in Simpson & Mayr, 2010:40). On social media, people rarely communicate monomodally, through language alone, but multimodally, through a combination of visual images, languages, sound and even body language (Simpson & Mayr, 2010:87). Marketers have been taking advantage of these changes in communication in order to produce videos, visuals and images for their social media campaigns on i.e. Instagram by using different marketing methods to attract customers.

As mentioned below, the fast fashion industry is considered to be one of the most polluting industries in the world. Changes are being made, companies are aware of the changes in consumer habits and how customers are demanding transparency in their supply chain processes. While some companies have begun to adhere to these changes, Zara still relies upon their business model of producing 56 seasonal campaigns around the year. Zara, as one of the leading players within the fast fashion industry, is a very interesting case to analyze for this thesis, because the Spanish company revolutionized the way the fashion industry operates to this day. They were the ones that introduced the fast fashion concept by delivering items straight away from the catwalk to the stores. They were also the ones who recognized the growing importance of successful communication with their customers in order to create customer desire and demand for the many collections. Hence, Zara is famous for their innovative approach in connecting with their wide customer base. My aim within this thesis is a.o. to analyze how Zara uses language and stories in their sustainability campaign called Join Life on the company's Instagram page in order to communicate to customers and catch their attention with their way of playing with words and images through the method of storytelling.

While their sustainability campaign has been positively received among customers, there are some who accuse them of greenwashing. For clarification, Greenwashing means when a company misleads consumers about their environmental performance or the environmental benefits of a product or a service (Delmas and Burbano, 2011:64).

Patagonia, an American clothing company that focuses on selling outdoor clothing, is taking an oppositional approach to Zara's fast fashion business model of creating numerous collections a year. The Californian brand is considered to be slow fashion as they emphasize their goals of enhancing sustainability, protecting human rights, and empowering communities (Brewer, 2019:6). Patagonia is recognized for its commitment to sustainability and advocacy for the protection of the planet's fragile resources (US outdoor clothing brand Patagonia won the UN Champions of the Earth award, 2020). The award can be seen as a reward for the company's commitment towards building the best products by also limiting the ecological impact and their aim to produce garments that last for generations or can be recycled so the materials in them remain in use (Our Core Values - Patagonia, 2020).

Although Zara and Patagonia rely on different business models and consequently have a different stance on sustainability, both brands use storytelling as their marketing method in their communication through social media. The purpose of this thesis is to analyze stories on Instagram, which are comprised of texts, visuals and images of both companies, Zara and Patagonia with the goal of comparing them in order to understand the way in which both fashion players are approaching their customers. In the case of Zara and Patagonia, both use the marketing method of storytelling through their Instagram platform in order to engage with customers and their aim to try to captivate their attention through the creation of stories, shall be put in the center of this investigation. Stories have always fascinated people and are more easily remembered than facts (Liljander, 2012:284). If the story is well told, which can be a challenge for marketers, will be successful in engaging customers through appealing to their emotions in order to create a unique experience. A company can tell its own story to communicate the brand values and what the company stands for (Liljander, 2012:285).

As different modes of communication have become used in a much more integrated fashion, they have also become an important focus of research in what is now often referred to as Multimodal Discourse Analysis, consecutively abbreviated as MDA (Simpson & Mayr, 2010:87). The method of analysis in this



project would be MDA, because MDA is the study of language in combination with other resources, such as images, scientific symbolism, gesture, action, music and sound (O'Halloran, 2011).

## **Research Objectives**

The purpose of this research project is to explore how the two fashion brands, Zara and Patagonia, with their different business models slow- and fast fashion respectively, communicate their approach to sustainability on the social media platform Instagram. One marketing clip of each company will be analyzed in regard to how meaning is created within those short videos to market the brands' sustainable position. This study is therefore designed to answer the following research question:

**How do Zara and Patagonia as fashion brands create meaning on Instagram through marketing clips in order to emphasize their relationship with the concept of sustainability?**

From this research question, a couple of sub questions arise, which will also be answered: What themes are used in the ads to encourage sustainability? What methods are used in order to communicate brand values? What does Patagonia and Zara have in common in regards to their sustainability approach?

## **Background**

### **Fast fashion**

Fast fashion is a business model which aims to reduce the processes involved in the buying cycle and lead times for getting new fashion product into stores, in order to satisfy customer demand at its peak (Barnes and Lea-Greenwood, 2006: 259). It embodies low-cost collections that imitate trends in the luxury industry and traditionally seeks a 2-week turnover in the market (McGarth, 2012: 4). Additionally, the production is designed to be as time- and cost-efficient as possible to respond to real-time consumers' taste changes (Adıgüzel et al, 2020: 4). By producing garments in record time, a culture of waste is promoted according to Brewer (2019).

The concept of fast fashion first emerged in the late 1990s as a way to react and exploit the rapid changes in fashion and its form of consumption that some companies have begun to adhere to (Buzzo and Abreu, 2019 in Muthu, 2019: 1).

Most basically, fast fashion can be defined as a system that involves design, production, distribution, and fast marketing (Cohen, 2011 in Muthu, 2019: 4).

While the fast fashion model offers profitability and quick expansion for companies adhering to it like i.e. H&M and Zara, there are numerous negative effects that have come into focus of consumers and media alike. At the forefront is the industry's negative impact on the environment (Buzzo and Abreu, 2019 in Muthu, 2019: 2). According to Business Insider, the fashion industry produces 10% of all humanity's carbon emissions, is the second largest consumer of the world's water supply, and heavily pollutes the oceans with microplastics (McFall-Johnsen, 2019).

Recently, the fast fashion model has been under huge criticism but at the same time, it has been proven very successful over the years. But what makes it so successful? The answer is that fast fashion consists of three fundamental components that separate it from other business models in fashion. Those are:

1. Quick response
2. Diversifying of products
3. Low prices

Quick response means to postpone all risky production decisions, until there is enough evidence that market demand exists (Caro and Martinez-de-Albéniz, 2015 in Muthu, 2019: 4). When brands are aware of the demand, they start producing, this is made with the intention to avoid the cost of storage and inventory costs.

The second characteristic of this model, is the constant change of products. Fast fashion creates a global culture, ignoring local tastes in order to produce generic garments that will likely fit the tastes of consumers around the world.

The last component of this model, is the low prices. All garments produced and sold under the fast fashion label are accessible and affordable for everyone. It is no secret that those garments are not made to last, and that after a few washes they will be disposable, contributing to the throwaway culture we nowadays live in.

Another feature of fast fashion brands like Zara and H&M is that most of them offer sub-brands in which they can diversify products, in order to achieve specific goals by i.e. targeting a special customer group. An example for this is Zara, who has a sustainable line called "Join Life", under their sub-brand TRF, which they offer clothes that are made with organic materials, and their target audience is consumers that are on the look for more green and sustainable products.

In addition, the arrival of social networks accelerated the consumption of clothing and made them obsolete after being shown on the Internet (Buzzo and Abreu, 2019 in Muthu, 2019: 2). An example is Zara, the leader of this model, as of December 28, 2020 it has 42.1 million followers on their Instagram account. Everyday Zara posts and promotes clothes and accessories, presenting them to a global audience. This has changed the people's behavior and attitudes towards fashion. An example that the habits of people have changed dramatically is that one in ten women wear a garment only three times before it ends up at the bottom of the wardrobe (Barnardos, 2015 in Muthu, 2019: 2). Social media makes people more aware of what they wear, and especially the platform Instagram has added to a culture where the same clothes cannot be worn repeatedly for many times. The world of social networks like Facebook and Instagram, where people post what they are wearing very often, the psychology in the way they use the same piece has changed and consumers want to feel belonging to the crowd and publicize their purchases (Tan, 2017 in Muthu, 2019: 6).

### **Sustainable Fashion**

Sustainable fashion is hard to define, as even in the fashion industry there is no clear definition of what the term means. Barnes and Lea-Greenwood define sustainable fashion as

*"A new approach of 'fashion with conscience' in the market and refers to a growing number of ethical clothing companies that strive to attract young mainstream consumers by producing fashionable clothes."* (Barnes and Lea-Greenwood, 2006: 361).

Sustainable fashion also has become an expectation, as brands, designers, retailers, and manufacturers are becoming cognizant of the devastating effect of fast fashion on the surroundings (Grazia, 2018 in Muthu, 2019: 38). Pollution, waste, and the global carbon emissions are an example of the damages the fashion industry is causing to the world.

Another definition proposed by Barnes and Lea-Greenwood is that sustainable fashion can be defined as: *fashionable clothes that incorporate fair trade principles with sweatshop-free labour conditions while not harming the environment or workers by using biodegradable and organic cotton*" (Barnes and Lea-Greenwood, 2006: 361). Sweatshop is a term used to describe factory workers that receive unfair treatment, low paid jobs, long hours, and do not receive proper benefits.

The principle of sustainable fashion is to source garments ethically while providing good working standards and conditions to workers and to provide a sustainable business model in the clothes' country of origin (Barnes and Lea-Greenwood, 2006: 361).

As a response to the fast fashion model, the slow fashion movement was created which seeks to promote sustainable innovations, multifunctional and timeless design, and the reuse of textile materials and services based on alternative strategies such as the leasing of fashionable garments (Angel and Gardetti, 2017 in Muthi, 2019: 2). In slow fashion, the main focus is to preserve the natural resources that are consumed globally by the fashion industry (Buzzo and Abreu, 2019 in Muthu, 2019: 2).

One clear example of a sustainable fashion brand is the clothing company Patagonia. Patagonia has built a robust social-responsibility program that analyzes and manages the impacts their business has on the workers and communities in their supply chain (Corporate Social Responsibility - Patagonia, 2020).

Among others due to the growing awareness and criticism that fast fashion is receiving, sustainable fashion, and related terms such as eco-fashion or green fashion, ethical fashion and slow fashion, has become a trending topic today (Khandual and Pradhan, 2019 in Muthu, 2019: 38). In order to gain a competitive advantage, brands are changing their business models in order to be more green, more organic and to help the environment. By doing so, the fashion brands not only gain attention, but their perceived image improves and it is more likely that people who are conscious about sustainability will support them. Consumers' positive mindset towards sustainable brands with environmental concern, business plans and techniques is increasing as pointed out by Khandual and Pradhan (2019 in Muthu, 2019: 38).

Consumers are now more aware of what the costs of the fashion industry are and demand more transparency in all its business practices. Sustainability is now seen as a crucial aspect for fashion businesses due to the consumers' escalating consciousness about the ecosystem (Shen, 2014 in Muthu, 2019: 38).

## **Case studies**

### **Why Zara?**

Industria de Diseño Textil, Inditex group, is one of the world's largest fashion retailers, with eight distinct brands, selling in 202 markets through its online

platform or its over 7,000 stores in 96 markets (Who we are - inditex.com, 2020).

One of the brands belonging to the Spanish Inditex group is Zara.

Today, Zara is the main representative of the fast fashion model (Buzzo and Abreu, 2019 in Muthu, 2019: 1), and one of the most successful fashion retail brands in the world (The Secret of Zara's Success: A Culture of Customer Co-creation | Martin Roll, 2020). It has become a global brand that receives recognition by people independent of their origin, occupation or age, which reflects one of the keys to their success, always putting their customer first.

*"Nurturing a highly intimate relationship with its customers, Zara's designers respond instinctively to their changing needs, reacting to the latest trends and constant feedback received across its Woman, Man and Kids collections, to deliver new ideas in the right place and at the right moment" (Zara - inditex.com, 2020).*

Another key point in their strategy is that every two weeks they have a new collection available in stores, making a total of 26 collections a year. This is done with the purpose to keep up with the demand they nurture themselves and the standard their customers expect, namely to bring fashion's latest trends from the runways into the store in a record time. The brand keeps a close watch on how fashion is changing and evolving every day across the world (The Secret of Zara's Success: A Culture of Customer Co-creation | Martin Roll, 2020).

One big reason why Zara caught the attention to be a case in this research paper is that Zara was named the most sustainable retailer by the Dow Jones Sustainability Index for three consecutive years, from 2016 to 2018 (Conti, 2019: 9). The Dow Jones Sustainability Index tracks the stock performance of the world's leading companies in terms of economic, environmental and social criteria.

### **Zara's Join Life**

Join Life is the name of the collection that Zara distributes around their stores which is categorized for being sustainable. Every collection brought out under the "Join Life" label shall underline the brand's unwavering focus on sustainability according to the company itself (Zara - inditex.com, 2020).

Created in 2015, the Join Life label offers clothing made from the most sustainable raw materials - organic cotton, recycled polyester and Tencel lyocell - and processes aimed at reducing water and energy consumption (Conti, 2019: 9).

Additionally, since 2017 Zara has been in collaboration with Organic Cotton Accelerator (OCA) to encourage the growth of organic cotton in India (Inditex | Sustainability Report, 2019). An initiative supporting organic cotton farmers to ensure that the organic cotton sector grows in a sustainable way that benefits everyone - from farmer to consumer (Zara USA: THE OCA PROJECT | TRFXJOIN LIFE | Milled, 2020).

### **Why Patagonia?**

The brand image of Patagonia, Inc., a California-based outdoor apparel and equipment company, is synonymous with concern for the environment and sustainability through responsible manufacturing and consumption (Chouinard & Stanley, 2012; Hwang, Lee, Diddi, & Karpova, 2016 in Michel et al., 2019: 165). According to Patagonia their core values consist of building the best products, causing no unnecessary harm, using business to protect nature, and not bound by convention. In addition, Patagonia has been named a UN Champion of the Earth, receiving the UN's top environmental honor for a dynamic mix of policies that has put sustainability at the heart of its successful business model (Rukikaire, 2019).

For a researcher that is interested in investigating how fashion companies approach and communicate sustainability, Patagonia's approach seems rather unusual in comparison to how most other fashion companies deal with the topics of sustainability and climate crisis. Even more surprising is the fact that the American clothing company in 2017 had a revenue of around one billion US-dollars according to Craft, which makes the company an even more interesting case to invest, based on the questions of why should such a big company care for the environment and how does sustainability fit together with economic growth that is reflected by this number.

### **Buy Less, Demand More**

Buy Less, Demand More is the name of a campaign that Patagonia recently released in which the brand shows different clips in order to make emphasis of the current damage our planet is suffering. The aim of this campaign is to emphasize that as customers we don't need more clothes, we just have to buy better quality ones. Patagonia release different clips on their social media platforms, in which the method of communication is storytelling, where people still want content they can follow episodically (Gannett in Conick, 2018: 51).

## Theoretical Framework

### Discourse

Discourse can be defined as expressions of ideas that are put out into the world and that 'run to and from in one form or other (Goddard and Carey, 2017:2). These forms of discourse can be referred to the use of language in speech, writing and in multimodal communication. The power of language not only to construct different perspectives, but to establish ideas about which perspective is the normal one (Goddard and Carey, 2017 :29). In the case of Multimodal communication, it can be referred to as the combination of more than one mode in order to communicate, which according to Carter and Goddard (2015:2), makes communication more extensive.

In relation to discourse that has to do with the use of text and writing, the idea of text is taken as an analogy by which phenomena in the social world might be interpreted (Goddard and Carey, 2017:3). Textual expressions allow for individual interpretation and thus enable us to live our lives through stories and we are sharing them through the use of narratives. It can be argued that we are a product of the stories that are told about us and the stories we tell for and about ourselves (Goddard and Carey, 2017:3).

Barker and Galasinski (2001:5) suggest that text is any phenomenon that generates meaning through signifying practices. For the purpose of this research, focusing on advertising strategies to market and sell clothes through social media will be the main focus. According to Barker and Galasinski clothes and advertising images can be seen as textual expressions a.o.

The definition of 'Discourse' as applied so far was referring to a scale of activity or a breadth of perspective (Goddard and Carey, 2017:4). When it was first introduced, discourse theory offered a new analytical perspective which put focus on the rules and meanings that condition the construction of social, political, and cultural identity (Howarth and Torfing, 2005:1).

Over time, the definition of discourse evolved. Thus, discourse is now regarded as a social phenomenon where members of a community share knowledge of how things are done (including how communication is done) as part of their group identity (Goddard and Carey, 2017:4). This group identity can be also referred to

as a discourse community. Referred to ideas of mutual engagement between members, regular interaction and a sense of joint enterprise involving a shared repertoire of language use and practices (Goddard and Carey, 2017:8).

In relation to Gee (1990:142):

*Discourse acts are ways of being in the world, or forms of life which integrate words, acts, values, beliefs, attitudes, social identities, as well as gestures, glances, body positions and clothes. So, in regard to the endeavor at hand, discourse must be regarded as the expression of before-mentioned values, beliefs, attitudes, social identities through ways of talking, writing, thinking and behaving (Goddard and Carey, 2017:9).*

To clarify, the purpose of this thesis is to analyze how discourse is done by two fashion companies that have been selected because they play an important role in the fashion industry and to consequently analyse their posts on their instagram page. This special type of discourse has evolved through the years, as communication in the fashion industry has changed dramatically with the appearance of social media, where members of a community share knowledge of how things are done (including how communication is done) as part of a group identity (Goddard and Carey, 2017:5).

Below there is an example taken from Zara's Instagram account. This type of example shows how a discourse community is formed in regards with the use of the hashtags #.

#recycling #joinlife #zarawoman



**Image 1:** Zara's example of used of # in Instagram.

The language used is basic, however it is representative of discourse used , in an online community. Furthermore the structure is famous among the social media world as it relies heavily on the use of hashtags (#), which will be explained in detail later. The example above shows that discourse communities often built upon ideas of mutual engagement between members, regular interaction and a sense of joint enterprise involving a shared repertoire of language use and practices



(Goddard and Carey, 2017:8). In the case of social media (Instagram) we see that all brands communicate information in the same way, providing a short description and the use of hashtags. This has the intended effect that members of a discourse community who have never met before, evolve forms of online discourse that act as a badge of membership (Goddard and Carey, 2017:8) and thus create the impression of belonging and familiarity.

As previously discussed, discourse involves a process of 'running to and fro' (Goddard and Carey, 2017 :37), which can be regarded as the way in which we engage in different processes like, talking with someone, reading or writing a text, and images around us. In making sense of such texts in the everyday, we are also actively engaged in constructing ideas about ourselves and the social world in which such sense-making occurs (Goddard and Carey, 2017 :37), in order for us to understand these texts that are everywhere around us.

The study that is related to the process of meaning-making is called Semiotics. It has been pointed out that we are constantly surrounded by signs, and that language can be seen as one of many, thus it is important to explain what semiotics is about and clarify how it relates to this research.

### **Semiotics**

According to Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure, semiology, is the science of signs. These signs can be everything, even language as we use language in order to express something, and give meaning to things. He suggested that the study of language as a system should take its place alongside all the other systems of meaning-making that human beings engage in (Goddard and Carey, 2017:17).

Within the field of semiotics, with its focus on the nature of signs, the location and appearance of a piece of communication are seen as an integral part of its meaning (Goddard and Carey, 2017 :17).

In order to communicate we need language. The concept of language, which can be understood as a socially shared and individually represented system of meaning making, gets its unique ontological status because it is being regarded as part of the semiotic world (Dwivedi, 2017 in Leeming 2020:2140). Language is richly influenced by culture, being constantly mediated by all the social factors that come into play whenever it is used (Goddard and Carey, 2017 :26). In the case of language, there are times in which there is a necessity to interpret other signs apart from words i.e. in order to fully explain an idea or communicate something.

Semiotics therefore, takes into account how language and other symbols are being used in communication as part of wider cultural codes (Goddard and Carey, 2017:38). In regard to the critical endeavor underlying this paper, it is critical to mention that videos, movies or clothes e.g. can be seen and consist of symbols or complicated sign codes that have to be deciphered in order to understand their full meaning. Westernised ideals are a feature of broader processes of globalisation and are consequently reflected in the global spread of Western-inflected discourses (Goddard and Carey, 2017:40). In consequence, people might believe that we are living in a period in which there is a lack of cultural diversity and that there is a homogenisation of cultural aspects.

There are signs which carry a series of meanings that have deeper cultural significance (Goddard and Carey, 2017 :41). These types of signs are called connotations. So, when analyzing the video at hand, tribute will be paid to those.

Now, it's time to talk about communication in the fashion world through the use of social media. The crucial question is how to conceptualise this relatively new form of language use - much of it is composed on keyboards, but it really be compared to conventional writing or other discursive forms we have known until the emergence of social media? (Goddard and Carey, 2017 :117).

The combination or integration of language and semiotics (or other resources), form a new method of research called Multimodal Discourse. Below you will find a description of this new research method and the consequences of combining two modes of communication and the meanings created by doing so, will be assessed.

### **Multimodal communication**

The majority of research endeavours in linguistics have tended to concentrate solely on language while ignoring, or at least downplaying, the contributions of other meaning-making resources (O'Halloran, 2004). With all the technology available for us, and the changes we see day to day, there is a need to study language in combination with these other 'meaning-making resources'. In the case of the use of social media which has been the biggest technological innovation of our times, we have seen that language plays a key part but additionally there are other factors that are as important, such as visuals, images or, text that helps us, and most importantly members of the before-mentioned discursive community, to decipher the meanings behind the posts at hand.

Language and other resources are often combined to create meaning in 'multimodal' phenomena (O'Halloran 2011 in Hyland and Paltridge, 2011:120). Semiotic resources are combined with, and integrated into sensory modalities in e.g. speeches, messages and elsewhere in everyday communication. Other examples that can be called 'semiotic resources', 'modes', and 'modalities' (O'Halloran 2011 in Hyland and Paltridge, 2011:120) are videos, stories, and in general anything that combines two or more modes of communication.

Semiotic resources are systems of meanings that constitute the reality of the culture (O'Halloran 2011 in Hyland and Paltridge, 2011:121). All the images we see on social media, the music we listen to, and the language we use, are some examples for semiotic resources. The use of our own senses in order to find meaning in what we see, what we eat, what we touch and so on is an example of sensory modalities.

Additionally, with the use of semiotics it is important to understand what the meaning behind the advertisement is, while not only focusing on language. The analysis and interpretation of language use is contextualized in conjunction with other semiotic resources which are simultaneously used for the construction of meaning (O'Halloran, 2004). Multimodal Discourse Analysis takes into account all semiotic resources that are present on the marketing campaign. By combining these two, a deeper analysis in critical fashion is possible. .

For this research purpose, there is this need to account for the meaning arising from multiple semiotic resources deployed in various media, including contemporary interactive digital technologies (O'Halloran 2011 in Hyland and Paltridge, 2011:122). As outlined before, the aim of this paper is to analyze different posts from two well-renowned fashion brands, and to explore how meaning is being created by the use of text, audio and video in the marketing videos at hand, which are being displayed on the two companies' commercial Instagram platforms. Instagram is a social media platform which a.o. brands can use in order to communicate a message, or share information with a combination of visuals, texts, images and music. There was an explicit acknowledgement that communication is inherently multimodal and that literacy is not confined to language (O'Halloran 2011 in Hyland and Paltridge, 2011:123).

It can be difficult to systematically analyze a combination of different items that make up a marketing campaign which is based on Instagram posts in the first place. In those we can find, visuals, audio, text, pictures, hashtags and so on. While

looking for a suitable method for analysis which takes into account all these factors, Multimodal Discourse Analysis has been recognized as the best method in order to facilitate the research and to explore the research question underlying this thesis.

### **Meaning making through Social Media**

The use of social media represents one of the most transformative impacts of information technology on business, both within and outside firm boundaries (Sinan et al., 2013 in Muthu, 2019: 5). These platforms are free and easy to handle, and there are many ways in which they can be used. Sharing news, images, stories and so on are just a few examples. All this contains messages with information that the receivers get and interpret. Social media - not only carries, but translates and transforms, the sender, the receiver, and the message (McLuhan and Marshall 2001, 1968 in Hadley, 2017:4).

Meanings are created via shared and unspoken assumptions that are embedded in language use (Goddard and Carey, 2017 :23). We use language in order to construct a reality available for all of us. In the case of social media, to change the medium is to change the message—the signs, the symbols and the meanings they convey, as well as the co-creative relationships between author, actor and audience that contribute to meaning making (Hadley, 2017:4).

Social media has come to change the way in which we behave. They have revolutionized the ways organizations relate to the marketplace and society, creating a new world of possibilities (Sinan et al., 2013 in Muthu, 2019: 5). Nowadays we use those platforms in order to be informed about what is going on, watch videos, to learn and so on. Many users' use of language, especially the one of younger generations is influenced by the way we communicate in social media, because in many cases, the language used in those platforms is becoming the day to day language used in everyday life.

In the case of fashion brands, all have their own pages on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram not only to stay relevant and accessible, but where they inform about products, new technologies and about their company. Brands saw the opportunity to connect with their consumers through them (Wolny and Mueller, 2013 in Muthu, 2019: 5). The goal of the brands' marketer is to ensure that all products offered by their company become desirable for the customer. Making objects that constitute our daily life signify meaning beyond their basic functionality (Goddard and Carey,

2017 :3). When we decide to buy and use these products, the objects are imbued with and confer social values including status, prestige and power within the broader social order of capitalism (Goddard and Carey, 2017 :3). By making the customer engage and keep repeating the cycle, social identities are shaped by such practices of consumption as individuals make lifestyle choices (Goddard and Carey, 2017 :3).

Everywhere we go, everywhere we see and everything we do carries social meaning beyond an obvious function (Goddard and Carey, 2017 :4). The purpose of the preceding paragraph has served to underline the importance of how communication has changed drastically in the fashion world.

### **Instagram communication**

Fashion brands are gaining increasing attention in terms of media content, becoming more and more prominent in the media storytelling (Kalbaska et al, 2019:4). Additionally, by designing the content in engaging and encouraging fashion, social media users are more than invited to participate. One advantage among many is that content is easily spreaded around the digital media.

The rise of e-commerce technology has enabled companies to interact with their communities through social media (Zolkepli and Kamarulzaman 2015:2). Online branding is based on the interactive experience of the user and provides the consumers with a symbolic universe endowed with meaning (Kalbaska et al, 2019:4).

Now with social media, the company is able to build a special and unique relationship with the customer that exceeds everything this relation contained until the emergence of social media. This relationship has to be very carefully calibrated because any message from a corporate enterprise communicates something about its identity, acting as a kind of branding (Goddard and Carey, 2017 :16).

In the case of Zara #joinlife - according to Goddard and Carey, the word in language is half someone else's, it becomes one's 'own' only when the speaker populates it with his own intentions, when he appropriates the word, and adapts it to his own semantic and expressive intention (Goddard and Carey, 2017 :30). This special hashtag i.e. is being easily recognized among loyal customers of Zara who follow and use the Instagram platform.

The use of similar hashtags has been popular and is a phenomenon created on and by Instagram. From a language perspective, webs of meaning are about how those terms connect with each other to categorise things, people and experiences (Goddard and Carey, 2017 :33).

Apart from the usage of hashtags, another method of communication which has been very popular in the digital world is storytelling. Brands have realized the potential of it, and how important it is to communicate the brand message through stories in order to create value and connect with the customer. That is why a clear explanation of this specific communicative means can be found below.

### **Storytelling**

Marketing is no longer about the stuff you make but about the stories you tell (Cohen 2011 and Rangel and Rosso, 2015:1). The phenomenon of storytelling as a tool for brands, marketing, and businesses has become surprisingly important (König, 2020:127) because it is a powerful and an enduring means of communication (Alterio, 2003:113). Creating a story and communicating it to potential customers is one of marketing's best tools for building desire, interest and bonds with consumers (Conick, 2018:47). Technology has been key in order to facilitate and enrich the dialogue between consumer and brand.

It is important to mention that storytelling also plays a role in persuasion, because the best way to persuade someone is by telling a compelling story (Delgado-Ballester and Fernández-Sabiote, 2016:116). Additionally, storytelling can promote critical discourse; it can be used to stimulate discussion and encourage listeners to interpret their own experiences (Sarris, 1990:114).

Storytelling has become a remarkably valuable communication tool for businesses (König, 2020:128). Brands have realized the importance of storytelling in order to create meaning and build a unique experience for their customers. It is designed to adapt to a social-connected multi-platform world where stories are shared, co-created and relational, so that consumers not only act as such but further behave as fans (Kalbaska et al, 2019:4). When consumers comment on "corporate" stories, engage with them and share them, it means that the story achieved its objective. By alternating with the stories created by brands in such a way means that the customer is being persuaded successfully, which further enhances his identification and relation with the brand and its product(s). Research shows that facts wrapped in stories are 22 times more memorable than facts alone (Conick,

2018:48) because people remember stories better than they recall facts (Greene et al, 2015: 111).

*“Storytelling is essential to successful branding, since your brand is the sum of all your corporate behaviors and communications that inform your customers’ experiences with your product or company” (Herskovitz and Crystal, 2010:21).*

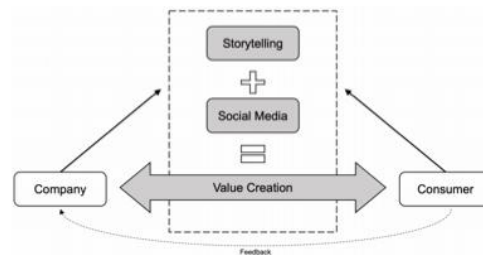
While creating stories might seem easy, it is not an easy task for marketers, because developing creative brand stories is a complex venture (Singh and Sonnenburg, 2012:190). Marketers are aware that a story well told will be in the consumers mind and create meaning and add value for their company. A well-told story can stand outside the flood of content, engage listeners and carry a marketer’s message to the public (Conick, 2018:47).

But what is a good story? According to Esther Choy – the author of *Let the Story Do the Work: The Art of Storytelling for Business Success* – says that the story has to be intriguing, riveting and satisfying (Conick, 2018:50). No matter how long it takes to tell a story, it can be a long one or a short one, but all of them need to have those 3 characteristics. A good story has moments of tension and keeps the audience engaged throughout the beginning, middle and end (Conick, 2018:50). Those stories need to have certain characteristics in order to stay on the customers’ mind. They need to be reasonable and memorable, [...] capture both feeling and thought, [...] something that is fun to construct (Weick, 1995:60f).

Attention is just step one of engagement (Conick, 2018:50) but crucial to catch the customers' attention by creating something intriguing. If it doesn't have any of these characteristics it will be hard for one to keep paying attention or engage with the story. Usually, the story starts by presenting a character, leading him to a conflict, where eventually there is going to be a solution for it. There is a narrative hitch that differentiates narrative stories from all other texts (König, 2020:129).

The second step of the story is called conflict. In this part the listener is presented to situations, issues, topics, and stories that are relevant in present times in order to make the audience relate to it. When a viewer or a listener, depending on the medium, can relate to a character, he feels empathy (Conick, 2018:50). This is when a message gets delivered best. A message ideally contains characteristics, attributes, or intentions, that are eventually meant to have a specific effect, i.e., persuasion (König, 2020:129).

The third and last step is known as satisfying. This is where the conflict gets solved and where the emotional payoff chemically bonds us to a brand (Conick, 2018:50).



**Figure 1:** Description of Storytelling (Kruse & Szabó, 2019).

The combination of storytelling and the use of social media creates value that is shared between the company and the consumer. Listeners are able to interpret and experience information more easily when multimedia delivery is used (Greene, 2015:117). The consumer experiences the story and thus develops a deeper connection with the brand or product in focus, while additionally giving feedback and writing about the experience. The company is able to use this in order to understand more about the consumer. Thus, the relationship between customer and company created by storytelling is a mutual, interactive one, from which both sides draw value.

Storytelling that is shared by the help of social media is known as Digital storytelling. It is a form of short narrative presented as a short movie for display on television, a computer monitor or projected onto a screen (Davis, 2004:115). Digital technology allows a storyteller an opportunity to create stories filled with music and visuals, quickly and dramatically (Greene, 2015:115).

Previous research conducted by myself has shown that the method of storytelling has been very popular with fashion brands that want to establish and sell a sustainable agenda.. They use this method of communication in order to express the need for more care for our planet. That it is why it is important to explain the concept of sustainability and what can be understood as sustainable, and consequently what it means for the fashion industry.



## Sustainability

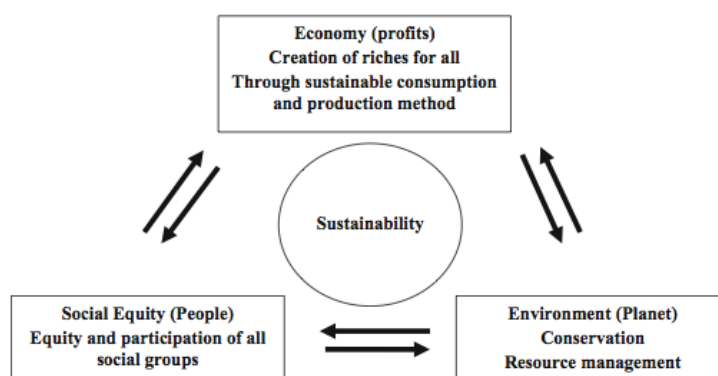
Clothing companies are now in the center of sustainable disputes due to the significant environmental footprint of this industry on the planet (Adigüzel et al, 2020:2). But what does sustainability mean? According to Rathinamoorthy

*"A development that meets present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (2019:2).*

Sustainability is such a broad word, that in principle can be applied to everything. For this research purpose it is important to define what the concept means in relation to fashion.

*"Fashion that is created taking into account all phases of the cycle of clothing and realizing a holistic and systems thinking design perspective that reduces negative impacts and seeks to create positive economic, environmental and social impacts" (Kozlowski et al, 2018:195).*

Behind Kozlowski et al definition there are 3 fundamental aspects that form this concept. Those 3 aspects include the economic, social and environmental area and are closely connected with the fashion industry. Please have a look at the graph below in order to illustrate this point.



**Figure 2:** Economic, Social and Environmental aspects of sustainability (Rathinamoorthy, 2019:4).

Social equity aims to reduce inequalities between the peoples of the world (Rathinamoorthy, 2019:3). Textile and manufacturing production have moved to locations, like the Far East, to reduce their costs and exploit economies of scale (Adigüzel et al, 2020:4). Violation of human rights, poor working conditions, and

cheap labor are some of the examples of the social inequalities that need to be addressed. These have been the most relevant concerns for ethically conscious consumers when choosing clothes (Donato et al, 2020:74). Fashion companies are expected to address these issues by taking care for their workers and making sure they comply with all the safety regulations in their factories. By doing so, they will be complying with the concept of corporate social responsibility (CSR).

*CSR can be defined as a company's ongoing commitment to behave ethically and contributing to the improvement of the quality of all stakeholders, as well as of the society in which that company operates (Maignan and Ferrell, 2001: 76).*

Consumers are growingly requiring fashion brands to improve their social responsibility actions to further ensure the adoption of fair-trade practices (Donato et al, 2020:76).

In the case of the economics aims to continue to produce riches in order to satisfy the needs of the world's population (Rathinamoorthy, 2019:3) are formulated. Economic sustainability occurs when development is financially feasible, whilst also being socially and environmentally sustainable (Gilbert et al, 1996:4). What it means is that a company can be profitable but always also takes social and environmental aspects seriously. The interactions between these factors should show whether the current levels of economic activity are sustainable (Doane and MacGillivray, 2001: 4).

The last important area within the concept of sustainability is concerned with the environment, basically referring to the goal of avoiding to degrade the environment that future generations will inherit (Rathinamoorthy, 2019:3). The considerable damage already done to the planet because of the fast fashion and related industries such as logistics, has to be emphasized at this point.

*High environmental costs stemming from high water usage required during textile production, pollution from chemical treatments used in tinting, and the scale of landfill produced during discarding (Fletcher 2010; Kant 2012; Pulse of the Fashion Industry 2017:73).*

Environmental sustainability strives towards a defined level of environmental quality and keeping the natural resource capital intact (Rathinamoorthy, 2019:3). Thus, the control and protection of natural resources is being regarded as top

priorities within environmental sustainability. In the case of fast fashion, there is no attention of care into following these practices and caring for the environment as its main objective is to finish and deliver the trends in the quickest way possible.

It is important to mention the role consumers play in this area of sustainability. People's consumption behavior plays an important role in the promotion of sustainable and responsible business practices (Lorek and Spangenberg, 2014; Mont and Plepys, 2008:74). Looking for example at millennials, who are aware of the consequences of the fast fashion industry and are demanding companies to be more ethically conscious about their practices, a slow change in the mindset of consumers becomes apparent.

On the other hand, because it is such a broad word and there is still a lack of understanding from a large part of consumers, there are times in which people don't understand what it means to be sustainable. Fashion designers and consumers are often confused by the language of sustainability and create barriers to sustainable behavior engagement (Adigüzel et al, 2020:5). Consequently, how the public sees sustainability is linked to how corporations promote it (Binet et al 2019, in Muthu 2019: 22).

However, the increasing attention to sustainability requires fashion industries to employ novel manufacturing practices aiming to make their clothing production and distribution activities more sustainable (Donato et al, 2020:76). Companies should consider social and environmental performance, not only financial performance, in their business operations (Rathinamoorthy, 2019:4).

After explaining the concept of sustainability in regard to sustainable fashion, it is important to define what transparency is because in order to be fully sustainable, there is the need and request from customers to fashion companies to be transparent in all life cycles of the garments and throughout the production process. The question consequently arises if fashion companies really aim to be transparent and what it means to be transparent in regard to sustainability.

### **Transparency**

Since the Rana Plaza incident that occurred in 2013 in Bangladesh where a garment factory collapsed and workers were killed, people have been questioning how fashion companies operate. The Rana drama revealed the true cost of cheap

clothes, to raise the question about transparency and to draw awareness of the inhumane working conditions (Sburlino, 2019 in Muthu 2019: 61).

The issue of transparency is especially critical for fashion brands since the fashion industry is frequently scrutinized for its unethical supply chain (Amed et al, 2019 in Kim, Kim and Rothenberg, 2020:2). The supply chain of these garments in the fashion industry can vary from brand to brand, as most of these companies work with factories located in different parts of the world. These companies work with factories but most of them do not own them. Fashion brands can also work with suppliers, and the process can be long and complicated. Among these activities, the manufacturing or production process is often said to be the most contentious and non transparent part of the fashion supply chain (Joy et al, 2012 in Kim, Kim and Rothenberg, 2020: 2). Human right violations, low paid labor, and unsafe conditions are just a few of the examples that fashion brands have been accused of committing.

Textile value chains are very complex, because they are fragmented over several countries, and therefore often lack transparency (Jastram and Schneider 2015 in Jastram and Schneider, 2018:4). Transparency is the act of disclosing information to all of the organization's stakeholders through its reporting mechanisms (Martinez and Crowther, 2008 in Kim, Kim and Rothenberg, 2020:1). Transparency also can refer to materials being sourced from sustainable sources, and production is carried out within the sites or cities, which is in plain view of the customers (Ying et al, 2020: 157).

The fashion industry is faced with inconsistencies around its production cycle and transparency is one of them. Fashion retailers face difficulties to have full transparency over their supply chain (Kogg, 2009:2) and there is little transparency in the manufacturing process (Adıgüzel et al, 2020:5). An attempt to trace where materials of a garment really come from is a near impossible undertaking.

Consumers demanding more sustainable products questions how the fashion industry operates and if it is fully transparent. This notion of transparency is one of the most prominent demands of consumers today (Kim, Kim and Rothenberg, 2020:1). Emerging generations of consumers are increasingly expressing their desire for transparent business practices and their willingness to support such brands (Gazzola et al, 2017 and Su et al, 2019 in Kim and Rothenberg, 2020:1). Nowadays, transparency has been identified as a key concept in order to build

trust, loyalty and improve a brand's image. It also serves as a selling point in relation to the competition.

Regarding the trend for transparency, it appears that many brands actually stand as advocates for a positive change by making consumers knowledgeable (Sburlino, 2019 in Muthu 2019:54). Making consumers aware of the brand engagement in green practices is a crucial tool to solve this credibility problem (Adigüzel et al, 2020:56). Numerous fashion brands are responding to this demand for transparency by sharing information on the cost-breakdown of products and manufacturing processes (Kim, Kim and Rothenberg, 2020:1).

An increasing number of global corporations answered to activists' claims for consumers' right to know, and disclosed information about their first-tier supply chain (Sburlino, 2019 in Muthu 2019: 62). There is a fashion transparency index in which brands can register themselves and share information about their processes. Critics of unethical practices are encouraged to access information on fashion business practices that would previously have remained unobserved and consequently unreported (Deloitte 2017 in Muthu and Gardetti, 2020:149). This trend for more transparency is crucial to help consumers to better understand the current economic model that is now involving numbers of intermediaries (Sburlino, 2019 in Muthu 2019: 62) i.e. in the production process as touched upon before.

For mainstream brands transparency and explicit advocacy of green practices might be the only way to successfully market new sustainable products (Adigüzel et al, 2020:56). In the case of Zara, developing a marketing strategy where they fully compromise with the environment in all of their products and exposing their strategies, might be beneficial for them. They do have a sustainable line, called Join Life, that according to the Spanish brand, respects the environment and reduces their environmental impact (Sburlino, 2019 in Muthu 2019: 63). However, the value of such an endeavor can be discussed, as the fast fashion giant keeps producing tons and tons of clothes every week under their regular collections, and no information can be found about their supply chain.

In the case of Patagonia, the brand provides transparency by publicly displaying information about its supply chain through a practice called 'Footprint Chronicles' (Kim, Kim and Rothenberg, 2020:2). In those videos, customers can get an impression of how the factories look like and how the process of elaboration of garments is designed. The videos are open for customer discussion in which they

can share their feedback and provide comments in case they feel that there is a need for improvement. Such efforts toward transparency have allowed Patagonia to build trust with their customers and to hold themselves accountable for their business practices (Gazzola et al, 2017 and Gerlick, 2019 in Kim, Kim and Rothenberg, 2020:2). Authentic transparency has become a real competitive advantage (Sburlino, 2019 in Muthu 2019: 69).

There are brands in the fashion industry that seem to use their sustainable product lines in order to promote sustainability but keep working and developing their other non sustainable fast fashion lines. These brands have been accused of doing greenwashing. What does the term mean? The description can be found below.

### **Greenwashing**

According to environmentalist Jay Westervelt, the method of using the climate crisis as a means of marketing without any fundamental change to business is Greenwashing (in Gandhi and Sharlene, 2019:1).

It is no secret that the fashion industry is one of the most polluting industries in the world. In order to produce and deliver garments on record time, fashion companies make use of different sources in order to complete the products. How could all the inputs into the production process, such as materials, technology, and machinery, reduce the environmental impact? (Gandhi and Sharlene, 2019:1).

Technology, materials and machinery are a small part of the damage caused by the fabric industry. The development of customers expecting products that follow the newest trends was created by the fast fashion industry, in consequence it has created a throw-away culture which adds to the tremendous waste of textile materials. Not only factories have to deal with this problem, additionally customers face the same situation as they throw away all the clothes that they do not want or need anymore.

Greenwashing can occur when lines of clothing labelled as 'sustainable', represent only a small minority of a fashion brand's overall stock, but a large proportion of what the brand "shouts about" in their marketing (Gandhi and Sharlene, 2019:2). There are times in which companies could be tempted to communicate on fake sustainability efforts while in reality nothing is really done (Binet et al, 2019 Muthu, 2019: 22).

The recent change in consumer taste and demands for more sustainable production has made fast fashion brands adapt to these changes. In the case of Zara, the leader of the fast fashion industry, a sustainable line called Join Life has been developed in reaction to the “sustainability” trend and in answer to consumer demands. While this line satisfies a percentage of their customer base as they personally feel satisfied with the changes made by the company, it is a fact that the company keeps producing tons of clothes every week. For this thesis, we are going to focus on the case of Zara as the fast fashion brand, but this problem does not only apply to Zara. Most of the fast fashion brands available in the market, have the same situation. The lines of clothing labelled as 'sustainable' represents a small minority of a fashion brand's overall stock, but a large proportion of what the brand “shouts out” in their marketing (Gandhi, 2019:2)

## Methodology

This section is about Methodology, where I am going to fully explain the design and research strategy applied in this thesis. I divided the section in five areas explaining and taking them into consideration in order to fully understand and address the research question and the aims of this thesis.

## Epistemological Consideration

Epistemology is the study of knowledge and how knowledge is produced (Lamont, 2015:25). Epistemology is about what possibilities of knowing, learning and understanding things, and of those possibilities, we as individuals have, once they become available.

Within the epistemological field there are different positions that can be applied to social research. For this thesis a social constructionist stance has been chosen, because it fits the research topic best. *The claim and viewpoint that the content of our consciousness, and the mode of relating we have to others, is taught by our culture and society; all the metaphysical quantities we take for granted are learned from others around us (Owen, 1992 in Van Niekerk, 2005:63).*

Social constructionism therefore relates to the rules that we as individuals use in order to understand our surroundings and the world we live in. It enforces our awareness of the way in which we perceive and experience the world (Hoffman, 90 in Van Niekerk, 2005:63). The knowledge that we have as individuals is constructed through the interaction with other persons or entities, as in

communication on social media, that teach and pass us knowledge and shape our view of the world.

As this research deals with the study of language and how meaning is created through communication, by taking a social constructivist epistemological stance, it is argued that language is more than just a way of connecting people (Van Niekerk, 2005:63). The focus is not on the individual person but rather on the social interaction in which language is generated, sustained and abandoned (Gergen and Gergen, 1991 in Van Niekerk, 2005:64). For this thesis, language plays a key role, as it is used by combining it with other modes of communication in order to teach, show and pass knowledge with the sole intention to send a message to the receiver in order to create meaning. People socially construct reality by their use of agreed and shared meaning communicated through language (Berger and Luckman 1991 in Van Niekerk, 2005:64). As pointed out earlier, communication through social media is a relatively new phenomenon which is rather new and different to conventional person to person conversation because the interaction takes place within a virtual space, however, the power of language, especially that of storytelling, in shaping the reality of individuals has not diminished. For this reason I chose a social constructivist epistemology to underlie this paper.

### **Ontological Consideration**

According to Christopher Lamont, ontology is the study of being, the nature of social entities (Lamont, 2015: 25). Based on that assumption, two worlds exist, the social and the objective. Ontology can be defined as our understanding of reality and how we react and act towards knowing the world. Two positions can be derived from this argumentation: objectivism and constructionism. In the case of this thesis, constructionism is the position that suits better to this research.

Constructionism asserts that social phenomena and their meanings are continually being accomplished by social actors (Bryman, 2012:33). It implies that reality is shaped and constructed every day by people in the way they interact and use discourse. This reality can be influenced by discourse of the people and our own way of thinking. The assumption that social media influences our reality and the way we see things underlies this research. It implies that social phenomena and categories are not only produced through social interaction but that they are in a constant state of revision (Bryman, 2012: 33).

Following the methodology part, it is important to define which design this research will have in order to explore the case of how meaning making is formed and how



narratives are being formulated in the case of Zara and Patagonia. Also It is a general orientation to the conduct of social research (Bryman, 2012: 35) as issues of replication and reliability should be smoothed out by outlining a structured research design.

## **Research Design**

Research design can be seen as setting out the steps you need to take in order to complete your research essay (Lamont, 2015:40). By looking at different designs, and comparing them with the objectives of this thesis, namely to how narratives are being formulated discursively and how meaning making is formed between Patagonia and Zara a comparative case study design has been chosen.

It is important to outline that a case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the "case") in depth and within its real-world context (Yin, 2014: 16). In the case of this thesis, an exploration of the social media posts of two different corporate organizations which are Zara and Patagonia, will be under focus. It is important to mention that these companies that are going to be analyzed represent types that are extremely different in the way they operate. Their communication methods might be similar in relation to certain issues and product lines in terms of sustainability, both used their social media accounts to communicate those stories, and recur to the use of hashtags to target specific communities online. In the case of Zara they use the #joinlife, and Patagonia creates a well told story in which meaning making is formulated with the use of colors, text and sounds. That is why these companies have been selected, as it is very interesting to look and compare how their business models affect their approach to sustainability and marketing. The study will be conducted in depth, as these are two companies that belong in the textile industry but their procedures are completely different, a comparative case study is the best way to conduct this research.

The objective of selecting a comparative case study is to cover both cases profoundly and be able to compare them. Both companies are in the fashion industry but their approaches are completely different and the way in which they engage and communicate with customers is interesting to look at. One company, Zara, belongs to the fast fashion industry, while the other one is dedicated to be as sustainable as possible. This gives us two cases that might look similar in the way they communicate their sustainable initiatives, but contrast a lot in their business strategies.

In addition, this thesis is based upon a qualitative research design as the data collected is focused on words. Qualitative research can be construed as a research strategy that usually emphasizes words rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data (Bryman, 2012: 36).

Another characteristic that is important to mention in regard to this study is the way qualitative research emphasizes the ways in which individuals interpret their social world (Bryman, 2012: 36). As outlined in the epistemological and ontological considerations section, this is related to discourse and how we use it to communicate, not only by selecting words but by combining different modes of communication and how the receiver gets the message and interprets it. This is something that will be defined in a more detailed manner in the analysis section, as a.o. I will be looking at the words and methods that the two fashion companies use in order to deliver their messages and create meaning.

As mentioned above, the purpose of selecting a comparative design is to be able to compare and contrast these two companies, to see which characteristics work for them and understand the way in which they communicate their messages. The key to the comparative design is its ability to allow the distinguishing characteristics of two or more cases to act as a springboard for theoretical reflections about contrasting findings (Bryman, 2012: 75).

After selecting our research design, it is important to specify which type of data will be collected, in order to address the problem formulation.

## **Data Collection**

Data collection represents the key point of any research project (Bryman, 2012:12). In the following lines I am going to define what the process of collecting and gathering data is going to look like.

My research question "*how do Zara and Patagonia as fashion brands create meaning on Instagram through marketing clips in order to emphasize their relationship with the concept of sustainability?*" provides a guideline as to what categories need to be in the focus of attention (Bryman, 2012: 416).

In order to answer my problem formulation, the best way to collect data is to trace these marketing clips, and see how meaning making is made across these different narratives. For this research, my interest relies on social media as I feel the interest in including contemporary interactive digital data technology. This interest has

driven and determined my choice of data collection selection which is going to be Instagram. In this new online digital technologies, Instagram, is where meaning making is taking place and narratives are being formulated discursively.

According to statista as of October 2020, with over 1 billion monthly active users, Instagram belongs to the most popular social networks worldwide (Clement, 2020). On Instagram, I will be analyzing the business accounts of Zara and Patagonia. As of January, 2021 Zara's account is followed by 42.2 million people with 3,201 posts made by the company. While Patagonia is followed by 4.6 million people with 2,734 posts.

In order to answer my research question, the best way to collect data is by doing a purposive sampling, also known as judgement sampling. This type of sampling is based on the creation of various units to analyze the content at hand with direct reference to the research questions (Bryman, 2012: 416). My research question gives an idea how to trace the stories of these different narratives in order to provide a direction to garner purposive samples.

By conducting the data collection following the purposive sampling approach, namely that the sampling is conducted with reference to the goals of the research, so that units of analysis are selected in terms of criteria that will allow the research questions to be answered (Bryman, 2012: 418). The best way to find an answer to my research question is to analyze how Zara and Patagonia approach customers in terms of sustainability is through their instagram social media accounts. That the term sustainability seems to appear everywhere in recent times, is no coincidence as already touched upon in the theory section. As consumers are more aware of the constant damage we are doing to our environment, companies have been making changes in their processes or business practices in order to keep up with the demand of sustainable practices. The 'sustainable' posts selected for this research have been chosen because they have received positive responses from customers and relate to our problem formulation and consequently, units are selected by virtue of their relevance to the research question (Bryman, 2012: 418). These posts are relevant and contain information that relates to the problem formulation. Additionally, these posts are very popular, which is underlined by the number of likes, responses and comments under the posts, which in turn emphasizes their relevance for this research. Furthermore, I will be focusing on the words used by the companies in terms of sustainability and which methods they use to communicate them in order to give meaning to their words.

After justifying the means of data collection, the next step is to outline how the collected data will be analyzed in systematic fashion to find answers to the research question.

## **Data Analysis**

This part of the research process is crucial in order to analyze the data and select the one that works best for this research.

In order to address our research question, the best method to analyze our data collection is Multimodal Discourse Analysis.

*“Multimodal discourse analysis (henceforth MDA) is an emerging paradigm in discourse studies which extends the study of language per se to the study of language in combination with other resources, such as images, scientific symbolism, gesture, action, music and sound” (O’Halloran 2011 in Hyland and Paltridge, 2011:120).*

Once the data has been collected, the process of the analysis starts. In the case of Patagonia, a 30 second clip was chosen because of the relevance it has in terms of this study. The video will be analyzed, and the results will be put under different categories. The video will be divided in segments in order to illustrate the points of how meaning making is created. Then, a general analysis will be recorded, and then the rest of the information will be put under different categories, which are: colors, auditory and text. This is made with the intention to make it in the best organized way. In addition, screenshots were included in order to illustrate the analysis in a better way.

In the case of Zara, it will be the same procedure; a general analysis and categories to illustrate the points. The only difference is that the clip selected has a duration of 15 seconds.

When finishing with the analysis, I will outline the findings of each company and then do a comparison between the findings of Zara and Patagonia.

## **Analysis**

### **A semiotic and multimodal analysis**

**Image 2:** Screenshot of Patagonia's video

**Patagonia's video "Buy Less, Demand More" posted on their Instagram**



**account November 29, 2020.**

In the following part, I will examine Patagonia's discursive strategy by describing and explaining the content in one of their videos called "Buy Less, Demand More" located on their Instagram account. This video was posted on November 29, 2020 and is one of a series of videos that Patagonia has

published to describe the damage the clothing industry is doing to the environment. The duration of this video is 30 seconds.

"Buy Less, Demand More" is the title of the campaign in which Patagonia released different videos making emphasis on the problems of climate change. This title is a command from Patagonia's side in which they demand the consumer to take action. By using the adjectives 'less and more' they are using a juxtaposition in which they contrast both words and do a comparative degree of the attributes of quality vs. quantity.

In order to describe the video, Patagonia wrote a short description under the video, which reads:

*"The clothing industry contributes up to 10% of the pollution driving the climate crisis. And apparel workers are among the lowest paid in the world. You have the power to change the way clothes are made. Click the link in bio for more. #buyless #demandmore"*

The purpose of the analysis is to understand how meaning in regard to sustainability is created by written text, audio and video and how the company communicates to their online audience. As stated, the analysis will take into account all modes of communication displayed on the video. This video was chosen because of the amount of reproductions it achieved on Instagram, or in other words its spreading and popularity, resulting in a heightened relevance for this thesis. Furthermore, during 2019, one body of the United Nations,

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), released three reports throughout the year emphasizing the current damage the earth is suffering. In it, they state that it is too late, and action needs to be taken immediately in order to prevent more damage. They made strong emphasis on the problems of deforestation, pollution, and melting glaciers. In addition, on September 25, 2019 they released another report in which they stated the current status of our oceans. In it, they emphasize that the oceans were too damaged, in other words screwed. As a result, Patagonia decided to create this video and release it.

As mentioned, the video was posted on Patagonia's Instagram account on November 29, 2020. Patagonia decided to strategically post the video during this time where shoppers especially in the USA and around the world “go crazy” in order to get the most discount out of all stores. This period of time is known as 'Black Friday', and it happens in the third week of November after celebrating Thanksgiving. Black Friday and the following weekend are known as the busiest shopping week of the year (Global Black Friday Statistics for 2020: What You Need to Know - Nosto, 2020). Patagonia decided not to offer any discounts or go on sale during this time. This was made with the sole intention to support their requests to look for a better future and to not contribute to the consumerism and throwaway culture we nowadays live in according to the company. To leave a lighter impact on people and the planet; to join the fight against irresponsible, fast-fashion manufacturing; to buy quality, using multifunctional gear-wear and; repairing it are among the goals stated by Patagonia (2020).

## Description of the video (0.00 - 0.05)

**Images 3-5:** Screenshot of Patagonia's video



The following video will be analyzed according to purposive sampling, thus creating segments of 1, 2, 5 and

6 seconds, to display the different frames within the video with each one creating different meaning.

During the first five seconds of the video, the sound of dramatic music starts playing in the background. This music is intense, loud, and a bit sad. While the music is playing, an image of an industrial chimney polluting the sky appears. There is also more smoke coming from the left side of the video, which makes us believe that there are more factories located nearby. The amount of smoke going into the sky is intense, enormous and non stoping. The smoke illustration covers half of the size of the video and the color used to illustrate that it is sombre, grey, and a bit dark; while the sky in the background appears light blue, clear and sunny. At the meantime, white letter text appears at the center of the video stating:

*We're all screwed.*

The same images continues, while the music keeps playing and a new phrase appears:

*So don't tell us*

And then after one second, a new phrase in the same background appears:

*we can still imagine a healthy future.*

### **Analysis**

The combination of chosen words, phrases, texts, music, colors and images establishes a negative and dramatic standpoint that worries whoever is watching the video. As a recipient, there is an initial worriedness and frustration of what is going on in the world in terms of pollution and natural destruction. The beginning of the video is intriguing, and it is likely that it catches the attention of whoever is watching it.

According to the European Environment Agency:  
*"Factories and power plants accounts for more than half of the total emissions of smoke key air pollutants and greenhouse gases, as well as other important environmental impacts, including the release of pollutants to water and soil, the generation of waste and energy consumption".*

As Patagonia stated under the description of the video, the clothing industry contributes up to 10% of the pollution driving the climate crisis (Patagonia, 2020). According to the World Economic Forum, the fashion industry produces 10% of all

humanity's carbon emissions and is the second-largest consumer of the world's water supply (McFall-Johnsen, 2020). Its impact is often felt in third countries, as most production takes place abroad (European Parliament, 2020).

One of the consequences of factories polluting the sky is: air pollution, as displayed in the video. Air pollution consists of chemicals or particles in the air that can harm the health of humans, animals, and plants (Society, 2020). In addition, there can be negative effects on the environment where ecosystems get contaminated and in consequence we get acid rains, low water quality and damage everywhere. Global warming is an environmental phenomenon caused by natural and anthropogenic air pollution (Society, 2020).

During the first five seconds, there is a lot of smoke non stop going out into the sky. It is believed that during ancient times natives communicated among themselves by using smoke signals. According to Dr. Yonat Eshchar, the native tribes in Northern America used bonfires hundreds of years ago, or even earlier, for transmitting messages, even complex ones. Arguably, the smoke seen on the video can be seen as a reference to this native tradition and as a warning sign that if we do not do something to protect the environment, it will be too late.

Below there is a detailed description and analysis of the semiotic resources/modes of communication found on the video.

### **Auditory**

The idea that music has a strong positive impact on the soul has been acknowledged since ancient times (Ziv, Hoftman and Geyer, 2011:738). Music is often used in advertising to enrich the key message and may be the single most stimulating component in a commercial (Hecker, 1984 in Morris and Boone, 1998: 518). Marketers often use background music matching the visuals to produce better advertising effects (Gorn et al, 1991 in Ding and Lin, 2012: 299). Which is the case in this video, as the music matches perfectly with what is happening in the video.

At the beginning of the video, the music is **dramatic**. Music is viewed as an important background feature in advertising because of its wide use and ability to enhance viewer arousal and affect (Morris and Boone, 1998: 518). The sounds we hear in the background are loud, intense and mortifying. The way it sounds, it certainly influences the listener's feelings combining it with the combination created between the images and text used on the video. Background music acts as an atmospheric cue that affects consumers (Ding and Lin, 2012: 299). Plato asserted



that certain types of music, through their appeal to the emotions, can corrupt the individual by undermining rational thought (Plato in Ziv, Hoftman and Geyer, 2011: 738).

Additionally, this background music can be seen as a way to influence the viewer,, as background music is often used in ads as a means of persuasion (Ziv, Hoftman and Geyer, 2011: 738). Some of this influence may come through music's indirect influence on respondents' feelings and other emotional responses (Clynes and Nettheim, 1982; Alpert and Alpert, 1990 in Morris and Boone, 1998: 518).

The loud, intense and mortifying music in accordance with the images shown underline the severity of natural destruction caused by humans and fueled by the fashion industry. It further appeals to the emotions of the viewers, which helps to affect the viewers emotionally, which has been stated among Patagonia's goals in regard to sustainability, namely to make customers think about their consumerism and to make elaborate choices.

### **Textual Modality**

The words chosen by Patagonia are interesting to look at, as the language of the narrator seems informal. In the first five seconds, there are short sentences appearing at the center of the video. These sentences contain relevant information relating to the climate crisis the world is facing. As pointed out, the language use seems informal which can be argued, suits the laid backness and style of a company that serves the outdoor sports segment. The short sentences might seem as imperatives. An imperative is when someone gives you a command and needs to be done.

Additionally, the tone of the sentences seems tired, exhausted and angry. Arguably Patagonia seems tired of telling us the same information over and over again. A defeated stance, many readers thought, for a brand that makes it a mission to inspire its wearers to enact on climate change (Watson, 2020).

The opening sentence of the video reads: "**we're all screwed**". What we can analyze from this intriguing opening phrase, is that Patagonia wants to capture the attention of their online audience or whoever is watching the video. The use of this strong and intriguing phrase, is one of the main characteristics of storytelling. When you are sharing a story, it is important to start with a phrase that will intrigue and catch everyone's attention. As the recipient reads it, it is more likely they want to stay and keep watching the video, as they would like to know why this statement was being made. As pointed out earlier, a well-told story can stand outside the

flood of content, engaging listeners and carrying a marketer's message to the public (Conick, 2018: 47).

By using the pronoun "**we**" they decide to include everyone, even themselves as a company. By doing so, they are suggesting that there is a problem for all of us. The use of pronouns has an important persuasive function (Simpson and Mayr, 2010: 44), because it creates the idea that everyone is responsible for what is occurring to the planet, and it helps to share the responsibility for actions that are seen as controversial (Simpson and Mayr, 2010: 44), in this case of course relating to climate change and the problematic of the clothing industry. In addition, the abbreviation of 'we are' into 'we're' can be seen as the language use is informal, in order to make us feel closer to them.

The use of the adjective "**all**" is that everyone is included in the statement, it is used as a determiner which signifies that there are no exceptions. It further emphasizes the fact that everyone is screwed, no matter your lifestyle or consumption choices as an example. In regard to sustainability and the feeling of community Patagonia and other companies aim to create by their interactions with their followers on Instagram, this poem helps to create a feeling of belonging and to emphasize an important goal: we as a community make sustainable choices, but it doesn't matter because we are all screwed with no exception. A provocative statement to increase the viewers involvement.

Another word purposely used is **screwed**. According to the Cambridge Dictionary, the word means: in very bad trouble or difficulty. Additionally, this word is very informal, it is considered slang, and what we can see from this, is how a language choice can determine an attitude (Goddard and Carey, 2017 :26). The language choices selected by Patagonia create an attitude of closeness and friendliness towards their audience. In addition, the whole sentence "we are all screwed" can be seen as a metaphor which is basically the means by which we understand one concept in terms of another (Simpson and Mayr, 2010: 43). The use of this type of informal words made into a sentence, can be seen as another persuasive strategy from Patagonia. Additionally, the term emphasizes the severe situation we are arguably in, which makes the viewer reflect and ask himself: Are we really screwed?, which exactly achieves what the brand wants to achieve: make its customers think.

The second phrase by Patagonia is "**so, don't tell us.**" In informal English, the expression 'don't tell me' is referred to when someone is annoyed about any

situation. The use that Patagonia creates, is ironic. Arguably, they want to show that we destroy the environment, we are responsible for it, and the words of people who do not share the same feelings or recognize this fact, should not be given any importance on the matter. The sentence: **don't tell us**, it is an imperative, with the aim to express a direct command. When you say it's too late, don't tell us, 'We can **still** imagine a healthy future.' This can be seen as a critique towards the hypocritical mindset inherent to many that Patagonia criticizes on its website and by this poem incorporated in this clip.

In this sentence, we use **still** as an adverb to emphasize that something is continuing (Still - English Grammar Today - Cambridge Dictionary, 2021). In this regard to highlight the resignation in the first part and optimism in the second reversed poem, indicating to its community and others, that despite the circumstances, Patagonia believes it's not too late for change in regard to sustainability.

In the poem underlying this clip, Patagonia decides to use the personal pronouns: **we** and **us** in almost every sentence. By doing so, Patagonia's company does not set themselves apart from the situation, sending the message to its audience: we are in this together and we believe in the same cause. When they use the phrase: don't tell us, they are directly addressing those who do not believe in the same ideas as Patagonia, and its community (buyers, fans, company). You can see that the use of we and us and the use of the imperative stated above, create a separation between **we vs. them**; we the Patagonia community believe in something, and "you" are not part of the group. By doing so, they ask the audience on which side someone is in the hypothetical battle: with us or them, the others, and this of course is a display of a persuasive function.

### Colors

Coloured ads are better perceived and are seen as more effective than black-and-white ones (Valiente 1973; Hoyer et al., 1975; Waring 1981; Percy and Rossiter, 1983 in Lichtlé, 2007: 40). The color use in advertisements is made with the objective to cause reactions from the audience. Colors can be used as a marketing tool to influence individuals (Lichtlé, 2007: 37).

In the first five seconds of the video, the colors that dazzle are the sombre ones. In the images, we only see, grey, dark with a mixture of some white colors. In the background there are lighter colors, light blue and the sun shining, but those brighter colors are overshadowed by the sombre ones. According to Frank Baker,

blue represents tranquility and calmness. The impression that the darker colors overshadow the lighter ones arguably aims to illustrate the damage we are doing to the world. All the tranquility and calmness is gone, and they are overshadowed by frustration, anxiety and damage.

Color is nature's own powerful signaling system and it contains a significant symbolic power since colors can change the interpretation of things immediately (Sutton and Whelan's, 2004: 154 - 155). When we see darker colors it is likely to feel a negative reaction like sadness or the feeling that there is something missing. In addition, colors are able to stimulate the brain to make choices and interpret things in a certain direction (Sutton and Whelan's, 2004: 154 - 155).

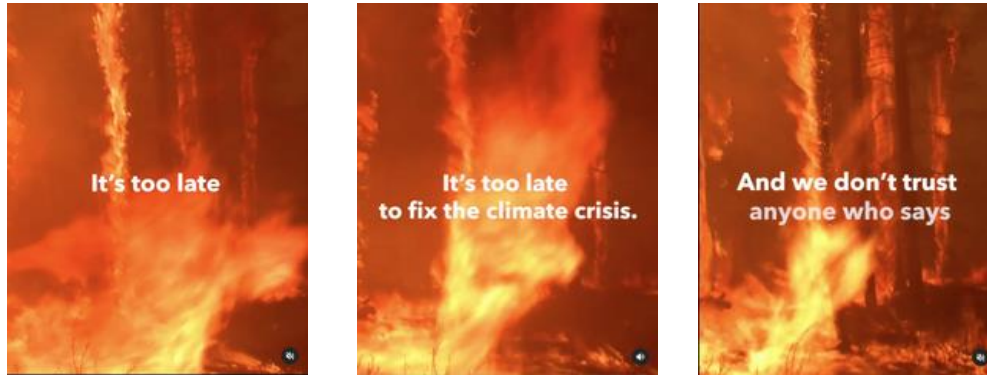
Within those first five seconds, the selection of colours add to the creation of a quite negative atmosphere, which can be seen as the expression of Patagonia's own assessment of our situation relating to climate change and environmental destruction.

### **Visuals**

In many ads, the use of photographs or video serves to prove or at least give the impression that what is being shown in the ad really did happen (Messaris, 1997:vi). During the first five seconds of the video, the images we see are the ones of factories polluting the sky. There is more pollution than clear and blue sky. This is made with the sole purpose to give an idea of what we are doing to the world. With the help of the texts, colors and music, the images come to illustrate the whole point. Patagonia illustrates to its audience that the industrial damage, which is in the foreground because of the chimney shown, is severe and something has to change.

## Description (0.05 - 0.10)

In the next 5 seconds, there is a complete change of text, images and colors.



**Images 6 - 8:** Screenshot of Patagonia's video

During these 5 seconds, there is an image that shows a forest that is burning down, also known as wildfire. The same music keeps playing in the background, but the timbre intensifies when the red and yellow colors of the fires grow. All the trees are burning down; while looking skinny, without leaves, and empty branches. Half of the image is in flames, making the red and yellow colors dominant. The colors used in the background are a mixture of brown and dark red, while at the front of the video there is a shiny yellow, illustrating the flames and how it is burning everything. The first text that appears says:

*It's too late*

*to fix the climate crisis.*

Using the same background a new sentence appears:

*And we don't trust*

*anyone who says*

## Analysis

In these five seconds the recipient is confronted with is the damage we are doing to the world by the creation of a conflict. A conflict is an ingredient that changes a story from good to great by going beyond tension and release to give the listener themes, stories and relatable characters (Conick, 2018: 50). In the case of this video, the relatable character is our planet, the earth and a valuable characteristic of it, the forest which is burning. Another characteristic of storytelling is that when listeners can relate to a character, they feel empathy (Conick, 2018: 50). Which is something we see in this video, as we are living on this planet and we can relate to the earth. By watching this video, Patagonia wants us to feel responsible for all

the damage shown, as there is no one to blame, because our lifestyle choices have to do a lot with it. Everyone has been in a forest or can at least sense and acknowledge the beauty of a forest and seeing it burning down arguably creates an emotional effect on the viewer.

During these seconds, the illustration of a wildfire appears. According to the World Health Organization, a wildfire is an unplanned fire that burns in a natural area such as a forest, grassland, or prairie. Wildfires have been on the news since september 2019, as the growing number of them has been catastrophic and devastating not only for humans, but for animals too. Particularly the USA, Siberia and Australia are some of the regions that have suffered from these natural catastrophes. Climate change causing long-term drought in the region is likely a major factor behind these fires (Pugh, 2020). Climate-related changes have vastly increased the likelihood that fires will start more often and burn more intensely and widely than they have in the past (Borunda, 2020). Thus, the display of a wildfire is an effective means to dramatically display the consequences of our actions, among others because everyone can relate to the beauty of nature and the feeling when it's getting destroyed in such a devastating and dramatic fashion.

Patagonia is a California based company, and California is a state that has suffered and has been affected the most from wildfires. By including the images of a wildfire can also arguably seen as a reference to the brand's heritage, being a Californian company. It can be seen as an act of representation in which Patagonia indirectly makes a statement on behalf of the state of California stating that they are tired of these unwanted things happening not only in their state but in the world.

This sequence is effective in bringing Patagonia's message across, that something has to change, because among the factors outlined above, fire has always been seen as a dangerous, uncontrollable element that is threatening life. It can be interpreted as if the fire is angry with the planet. All that anger is killing and destroying everything that comes at its sight. Most of all, the state of our earth is out of control, fitting in with the tenor of the first part of the poem, that it is too late to fix the climate crisis.

### **Auditory**

Throughout these 5 seconds, dramatic music continues playing in the background. The timbre intensifies when the image of the fire appears. As mentioned, music is often used as an instrument of manipulation and persuasion (Ziv, Hoftman and

Geyer, 2011: 739). Patagonia combines images, text, and music creating a negative ambiance in terms of sustainability represented by the wildfire. Conversely, in a negative mood, message content is analysed more rigorously and recipients tend to be persuaded only by strong arguments (Kuykendall & Keating, 1990; Schwarz, Bless, & Bohner, 1991; Sinclair, Lovsin, & Moore, 2007 in Ziv, Hoftman and Geyer, 2011: 739), which the music helps to intensify.

### **Textual Modality**

**Too** is used as an adverb in combination with the adjective late, underlining resignation and the fact that nothing can't be done. This serves as another provocative statement trying to trigger an emotional response from the audience and to provoke a reflection from the viewer.

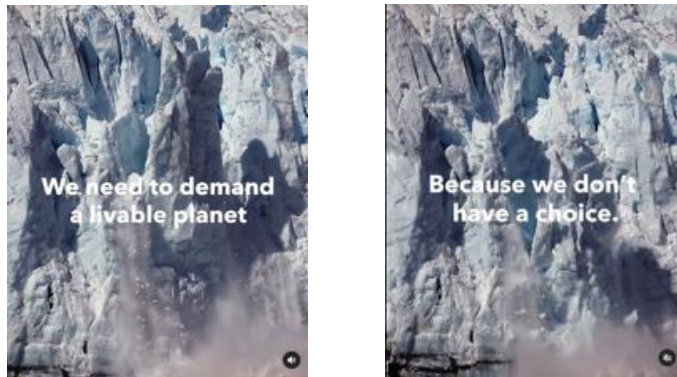
### **Colors**

The colors that we see the most during these five seconds are red and yellow. Red is an intense color and has a vibrant and powerful impact on one's personality and emotions (Singh and Srivastava, 2011:201). In the video, the color was used to illustrate the fire that is destroying the forest, with the use of this color we can see danger and destruction. Red tends to raise blood pressure, pulse rate, respiration, perspiration and excites the brain waves that contribute in stimulating people to make quick decisions (Singh and Srivastava, 2011:201).

Another color that we see, and it intensifies during the video is yellow. Yellow signifies a happy and cheerful disposition of the mind but, when confronted with too much it signifies anger (Singh and Srivastava, 2011:202). In the case of the video, yellow is likely to represent anger and energy, as it intensifies everytime when mixed with red color. These two colors combined, create the impression of destruction.

In these five seconds, the viewer gets shown in dramatic fashion what we can expect if we don't change our behavior. The text suggests that it is too late, showing the viewer that nothing can be done, and the colours chosen underline the drama. Everyone can emotionally relate to the theme of a wildfire which makes it a perfect means of persuasion.

### **Description (0.10 - 0.15)**



**Image 9 - 10:** Screenshot from Patagonia's video

Continuing with the analysis of the video, the next image that appears in between seconds 0.10 and 0.15 are glaciers that are tall and seem strong, and have a nice mixture of white and light blue color. The front part of the glacier, which is at the center of the image, is melting and falling down into the sea, which can be seen as the climax of our video and also as a direct reference to global warming, as melting glaciers have become synonymous with the devastating effects of global warming. It looks terrible to see how something that strong is falling down. The same tone of music keeps playing, but when the glacier melts and falls down a strong and noisily sound can be heard. The first text that appears on the center of the video is:

*We need to demand*

A second later, a following phrase appears under the first phrase, which reads:

*a livable planet*

After one second, this phrase shows up, on the same image of the glaciers and the same music:

*Because we don't*

*have a choice.*

### **Analysis**

In this part of the video, the image is centered around the glaciers. According to National Geographic, a glacier is a huge mass of ice that moves slowly over land, and is also known as 'rivers of ice'. Glaciers, as dominant features of high mountain landscapes, are sites of easily observable consequences of climate change (Allison, 2015: 493).

In addition, there are local communities in Peru, China, Ecuador, and Nepal a.o. glaciers are considered sacred. As Allison argues, glacial decline can therefore be



seen not only as a simple material process, but also has important implications for the ways that local people understand themselves and make meaning in relation to their surroundings (Allison, 2015: 493). People from these communities attach values to these places, and they see them as symbolic and religious locations: sites of inspiration and recreation These landscapes are perceived as animated and require reciprocal actions from local human inhabitants (Bird-David 1999, Harvey 2013, Ingold 2011, Berkes 2008 in Allison, 2015: 493), therefore, the powerful display of melting glaciers can arguably be interpreted not only as a natural catastrophe caused by humans, but also as the destruction of places with reference to a higher authority, which enhances the significance of the destruction

Disruptions in the mountain landscape are affecting cultural and religious perceptions and practices, altering human subjectivities and cosmological orientations (Drew 2012, Crate 2008, Orlove 2008 in Allison, 2015: 496). All of these are consequences of climate change, where local communities are suffering from those developments. Native communities who live in the regions where glaciers are melting are not participating in the global culture of consumption which has been fueled by the fashion industry, however they are suffering from the consequences too.

Another meaning created by the display of the melting glaciers is that glaciers represent irreversibility. Once the glacier falls apart into the ocean it is irreversibly gone, and it will never come back into its original form, and this is something we can't change. This powerfully aligns with the statement that it is too late to fix the climate crisis. Ocean levels will rise but are unlikely they will come back. What Patagonia is additionally trying to say is that we need to be careful of how we treat our planet, as there can't be a turnaround.

In addition, freshwater is a very important resource that can be taken from glaciers. Because water has been trapped in the glacier for so long, many people believe it has not been exposed to pollutants that liquid water is exposed to (Society, 2020). If glaciers keep falling apart, freshwater as an indispensable source of life, would not be available for all of us.

Additionally, glaciers can be seen as something adventurous. Patagonia is a brand that produces sporting equipment for people that like adventurous activities such as hiking in the arctic e.g., so a display of glaciers fits nicely to Patagonia's point of sale and appeals to its target group.

### **Auditory**

During these five seconds, the same music in the background keeps playing. The music doesn't change and it keeps creating the negative ambiance that Patagonia wants the audience to feel since the beginning. As outlined before, music evokes emotion, and has been successfully used experimentally to induce both positive and negative moods (Kenealy, 1988; Parrot, 1991; Pignatiello, Camp, & Rasar, 1986; Thompson, Schellenberg, & Husain, 2001 in Ziv, Hoftman and Geyer, 2011: 739). For the past 15 seconds, we have seen how the tone of the music matches effectively with the images and text. In this case, music activates information and evokes associations based on previous knowledge or familiarity, and when these fit the advertised product, the message becomes more persuasive (Kellaris, et al 1993; North & Hargreaves, 2008 in Ziv, Hoftman and Geyer, 2011: 739).

### **Textual Modality**

In this part there are two types of 'we'. **We** need a liveable planet, because **we** don't have a choice. In the second phrase, there is a forced kind of belonging 'because we don't have a choice' which Patagonia's community doesn't trust, because we have to!

**Livable:** This word is an adjective which is indicating life, living. By adding this morphological element 'able' the word is enabling something, adding an ability, capability to. All this in order to make the planet capable, able to live in.

Patagonia's community says, we have a choice because they are sustainable and care for the environment. But when reading in reverse it reveals more of the we vs them. We as a community who protect and care for the environment, and those who don't believe in climate change.

### **Colors**

The colors that we see the most are white, and light blue because of the color of the glaciers. White represents purity, peace, neutrality and tranquility of the mind and body (Singh and Srivastava, 2011:202). While there is no tranquility during these seconds, it is used to illustrate the color of the glaciers, and the snow. Another color used is blue. Blue is considered to be a cool and non-threatening color which has a tranquilizing effect on the mind (Singh and Srivastava, 2011:201).

The video does not show any tranquilizing activity, rather the contrary, which can also be seen as means to disturb the viewer, arguably to raise further awareness. When looking at glaciers or the landscape in which glaciers exist, one would normally expect or ideally associate a shining white because the ice is in good condition and a shiny blue sky, which overall create above mentioned tranquility and emphasize the beauty of nature. In this sequence, I argue, the white and blue and the forms of the glacier create a sharp contrast, that is rather disturbing and threatening, which contrasts the harmonic pictures one would normally associate with images of glaciers. This can be seen as another means to add to the disturbing nature of the first part of the video and of course has been selected with the purpose to emphasize the urgent need for change Patagonia keeps advertising.

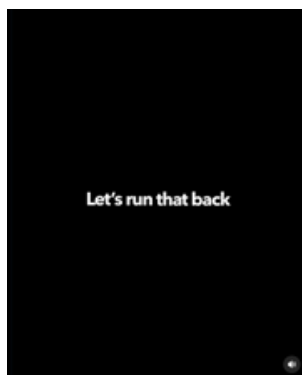
### **Visuals**

The first half of the video seems sad, depressing and if there is no hope and opportunity for a brighter and sustainable future. The 15 seconds talks about things that are occurring to our planet, but realistically not a lot of people seem prepared to talk about it. Arguably, the use of words, the music, the sounds, the pictures, the text, plays with the feelings of the human beings as it makes us stop for a second and think about what we are doing to our earth.

To sum up, the disturbing images, provocative text and dramatic music form a combination that appeals to the viewers' emotions and makes the viewer reflect to answer hypothetical questions: Are we really screwed? Is it really too late? The images created suggest the answer to those questions is yes, which can be regarded as negative and rather atypical for an outdoor clothing company which is known for its efforts in regard to sustainability.

### **Description (0.15)**

**Image 11:** Screenshot of Patagonia's video



As the video continues, a black square appears with white words at the center of the video appearing one by one:

*'Let's  
run  
that  
back'*

Which can be read: "Let's run that back"

and immediately the music changes drastically. The music seems happy, uplifting, energetic, as the melody changes completely into being fast, and with rhythm, which is inferred that there is hope for the planet and for all of us. The video changes completely from the negative side into the positive one.

### **Analysis**

The black square shown at the middle of the video can be regarded as something more than just black color and a geometric form of a square.

During 1915-1916 there was an exhibition called "The Last Futurist Exhibition of Paintings" from a Russian artist, Kazimir Malevich, in Petrograd. The theme behind this exhibition was that with the seeming destruction of the old world, the new world would begin again at zero (Black Square by Kazimir Malevich, 2019). World War I and the Bolshevik Revolution were two major political and revolutionizing events that were occurring at the time when Malevich was creating his black square.

In this exhibition, a black square painted by Malevich caught the attention of everyone present and subsequently, this black square asserted itself as an iconic piece of art (Black Square by Kazimir Malevich, 2019). Malevich made his intention clear: he wanted to completely abandon depicting reality and instead invent a new world of shapes and forms (Five ways to look at Malevich's Black Square – List | Tate, 2021). Malevich referred to it as the "zero point of painting" which he described at the time as "I transformed myself in the zero of form and emerged from nothing to creation" (Black Square by Kazimir Malevich, 2019).

In his 1927 book *The Non-Objective World* he wrote: *"In the year 1913, trying desperately to free art from the dead weight of the real world, I took refuge in the form of the square"* (Malevich, 1927 in Five ways to look at Malevich's Black Square – List | Tate, 2021).

Patagonia inserts the black square at the middle of the video, mixing the genre and bringing this allusion, this indirect reference by applying Malevich black square into the topic of climate change discourse. It can be argued that the black square in the context of climate change and the topic of interest is a visual metaphor, how both companies communicate sustainability, shall display something like Malevich's "zero point", a caesura where Patagonia communicates to its community and

audience to stop and forget what was done before, erase everything or as the text indicates "run it back" and to look at what was shown and regard it from a different angle.

In addition, the black color screen can be seen as an intermission like used in the cinema. Some years ago it was made with the purpose to give a break to the audience. Now, this black screen is used when the movie is changing scenery.

However, this square divides the video in two. The first part focuses on what will happen if we do not take action, if we reach the final point in terms of climate crisis and the predominant type of discourse about climate change will take us nowhere. This part focuses on all the negative things; the attitude we have towards not caring for the environment, and that we have to erase and change this. Then, the video makes a pause, like an intermission, and this is where the black square appears with the white letter text: "let's run that back". In the second part, as will be demonstrated, there is a new beginning, new music and new images. Let's forget about the past, erase what we saw in the first 15 seconds. There is a new beginning, going ahead, introducing positivity because the text says: we can still imagine.

**Auditory** - *The music is in the same tone, for the next 15 seconds.*

For the next 15 seconds, the music in the background is completely different from the first 15 seconds. The change is drastic, and the music chosen can be described as energetic, upbeat, and positive, creating a happy atmosphere.

The changed type of music immediately creates a positive mood, good ambiance, and in combination with the images and texts it makes the viewer feel good about what he sees in the video. Music that induces a positive mood, has long been an effective marketing tool to influence viewers, as it was found to lead to preference of or positive attitudes towards various products and stimuli (Apaolaza-Ibanez, Zander, & Hartmann, 2010; Broekemier, et al, 2008; Gorn, 1982; Middlestadt, et al, 1994; Tom, 1995; Wheatley & Brooker, 1994 in Ziv, Hoftman and Geyer, 2011:739). In this part, the music helps to guide the viewer through an emotional roller coaster as he experienced depressing impressions in the first part of the video and is now given hope, expressed by the positive music, that something positive is still about to happen, which is an effective method to keep the viewer engaged on one side, but to also make him feel good about what is to come.

Another characteristic we see throughout the video, is that music can be seen as a separate instrument that matches whatever is occurring on the video. By doing so, the music presented in combination with the images and text creates a persuasion atmosphere in which Patagonia's messages get delivered effectively because of the viewers' emotional engagement and thus constantly catches the recipient's attention.

### **Textual Modality**

According to Cambridge Dictionary, **Let's** is the short form for let us, which is often used to make suggestions which include ourselves. In this case it is used to make a call for action, and to act together : let us (personal pronoun) refer to community.

Phrase **run it back**: has an informal, urban touch to it. According to Urban Dictionary, the phrase is also often used in context to games such as basketball or computer games. In this context it adds an element of playfulness, but also adds to the brand Patagonia to be received as casual, cool, as in guys lets run that back, which suits the marketing of outdoor clothing well, also the verb run is a verb to describe a sportive activity: to run, which can be perceived as dynamic, which again fits the outdoor clothing segment

### **Color**

The black square is to illustrate the point that nothing happens here, and put the text message in the center of attention: lets restart again. Usually black represents the absence of color. Black is difficult to use in advertising campaigns, represents a challenge for marketers in order to find the best way to use it, but in this case, it is effectively used to illustrate the end of the first 15 seconds, and a new beginning for the rest of the video. It was used in order to portray an intermission for the recipient.

### **Visuals**

The following 15 seconds can be seen as the pay off, according to Carl Marci, chief Neuroscientist, because this part contains the big emotional payoff at the end (Marci in Conick, 2018: 50).

As already touched upon, the second part of the video and poem are characterized by turning Patagonia's ad from a negative surrender into a positive plea to Patagonia's community and its public that it's not too late to change, as the

underlying poem creatively transforms into an expression of positivity to convey Patagonia's powerful message and make people think about it.

## Description (0.16 - 0.18)



**Image 12 - 13:** Screenshot of Patagonia's video

During these two seconds, the image of the glaciers falling apart appears again, but instead of showing glaciers falling down like in between the seconds 0.10 and 0.14, this time the glaciers are rebuilding like they are being rebuilt by magic. The part that fell down, is being reverted and being put back into the glacier, like if nothing happened. The glaciers seem strong, and the colors used to support this impression are a mixture of light blue, white and grey. The music is uplifting, happy, and exciting. While the glaciers are rebuilding, white text appears at the center of the video which reads:

*Because we don't have a choice.*

While the white letter text is appearing, on the background the reverted image of the glaciers falling down into being constructed again appears.

And then, a new white letter text appears at the center of the video:

*We need to demand  
a livable planet*

## Analysis

The image of the glaciers appears again, but this time they are going back again to its original place. Because of climate change, glaciers keep falling apart, and in consequence the water we obtain from them can be scarce. According to the National Snow and Ice Data Center, glaciers store about 69 percent of the world's fresh water.

It may be argued that by showing rebuilding glaciers, the viewer shall be once again lead to reflect about the issue of climate change, because everybody knows that unfortunately glaciers don't rebuild themselves by a magic touch. However, the image of rebuilding glaciers makes the viewer in some way think about the glaciers and in relation with the prior display of their disappearance makes the viewer appreciate that there are still glaciers in the world, and that those need protection. Thus, the message bears a call for action and also underlines the urgency of the task, because everybody knows that ice is a fragile element and from the video the audience gets an intensified impression that the process of melting glaciers is really happening.

### **Textual Modality**

**Need to:** According to Merriam-Webster Dictionary, the verbs need, have to, and must are all synonyms of one another and are used to mean that something is necessary or required. It is usually used when the action needs to take place.

**Demand:** This word is a reference to Patagonia's wider 'Buy Less, Demand More' anti-Black Friday campaign.

### **Colors**

During these two seconds described, we are presented again with white and blue colors in order to illustrate the glacial images. White is used to represent cleanliness and purity, while light blue can be seen as stability. While observing the glacier, there is a mixture of both colors, but the one that appears the most is blue. That it is because water absorbs other colors of the spectrum, so the one that's reflected back to your eyes is blue (Helmenstine, 2020). What Patagonia is doing, is that they are showing us how the planet would look like, if we, the humans, would take care of it. By showing those natural colors, Patagonia arguably gives us the opportunity to see a glimpse of our world if we took measures towards a sustainable environment, which is part of the brand's agenda to make a call for actions to save the environment.



## Description (0.18 - 0.20)



**Image 12 - 13:** Screenshot of patagonia's video

During the next two seconds, the image of the forest burning down appears again, the image we saw during seconds 0.05 - 0.10. Red and yellow colors illustrating the fire dominate the left side of the video. In the background, the happy, positive and uplifting music keeps playing. The image of the fire fading away is appearing slowly, while white texts appears at the center of the video, which reads:

*And we don't trust anyone who says*

Then, the fire is gone. No more red or yellow color. Now, the trees are standing strong, with green leaves, and there are trees everywhere. The color is a bit greyish of all the smoke of the fire that was before. The same music keeps playing, while white text appears at the center of the video saying:

*It's too late*

*to fix the climate crisis.*

## Analysis

For the next two seconds, the image of a forest burning down disappears. Now, we see a forest, full of trees, and leaves. Forests are very important for our planet, we need them in order to live. Forests help stabilise the climate, regulate ecosystems, protect biodiversity, play an integral part in the carbon cycle, support livelihoods, and can help drive sustainable growth (Forests and climate change, 2017). According to the World Wide Fund for Nature: "*besides providing habitats for animals and livelihoods for humans, forests also offer watershed protection, prevent soil erosion and mitigate climate change. Yet, despite our dependence on forests, we are still allowing them to disappear.*"

Furthermore, the fire diminished in size, so it might be interpreted as a big bonfire. This created image represents a successful way of appealing to the audience of

the video and Patagonia's customers, as the Californian brand offers outdoor sport equipment and a bonfire, from a romantic perspective, should be part of a successful outdoor activity/experience. As in the previously section where glaciers are rebuilt, the fire that threatens the life of nature, humans and animals is being magically transformed into a bonfire that suggestively creates nostalgia among Patagonia's community and thus, not only puts focus on the issue of sustainability, but further strengthens the customer's connection with the brand.

### **Textual Modality**

**Too:** used as an adverb with an adjective **late**: underlining resignation and the fact that nothing can't be done.

### **Colors**

The colors used primarily to illustrate these images are green and brown. The red color, which represents danger, fades away. Brown and green are usually together and work well in harmony. In this case, green represents nature, the color of the regrowth of the leaves, and a bit of the grass. The brown color is used to represent the earth and the environment. It is the color of the trees, and represents that natural and simplicity colors that are found in the forests. Green and brown combined give us the image of a forest that looks calm and peaceful, with no trash, and where trees are growing. An ideal place to go hiking or to make a bonfire. But of course, do forests have a much more valuable task to fulfill than just being an outdoor environment, as according to the World Wide Fund For Nature, forests provide ecosystem services that are critical to human welfare. That is why it is very important that we take care of our environment.

### **Description (0.21 - 0.22)**



**Image 14:** Screenshot taken from Patagonia's video.

During the next second, an image of a bunch of American bison roaming on vast herds which could be the Great Plains are galloping uphill while a collective of birds are flying in the background. The colors used to illustrate the image are brown and white. The grass appears light brown, and there is still some melting snow on the ground. While the buffaloes keep moving, white letter text appears at the center of the video, which reads: *We can*

*still imagine  
a healthy future.*

## Analysis

In this part, Patagonia decided to put the text "we can still imagine a healthy future" and here it is why: The video is centered in the image of a large group of american bison roaming on a vast area, which can be seen as a metaphor for the message Patagonia wants to convey. The American bison became almost extinct at the beginning of last century, but with the help of the conservation community that could be avoided and luckily, at the moment they are ecologically extinct but conservation herds of 1,000 or more bison are being established to create a metapopulation (Bison, 2020). Not only does the bison stand as a symbol that by performing an extraordinary effort an unavoidable destiny can be avoided, which can easily be transferred to humanity's fate in light of the climate crisis, but also during the presidency of Barack Obama of the The United States of America, the president signed the law to make the American bison the official National Mammal. This shows the animal's standing within American culture and by including it into this advertisement clip, Patagonia as an American brand uses the bison as a reflection of the brand's American heritage and to show pride in being American. As these animals are also being closely related to Native Americans, further meaning is being created. On one hand it can also be seen as a tribute to the Native Americans who were famous for their handling of the environment which they regarded as sacred, on the other hand does the bison draw a comparison to the precolonial times of America, when the balance of nature was intact and not destroyed by industrial endeavors, which also have been under focus in this advertisement clip.

The American bison can be seen as a symbol of nationalism, in which Patagonia, a US brand, is referring and also representing. John Calvelli, Vice President for Public Affairs in the Wildlife Conservation Society claims: the adoption of bison as our National Mammal represents a validation of the many meaningful ways this animal represents America.

In the background there is a collective of birds flying together. Bison, a keystone species, help create habitat on the Great Plains for many different species, including grassland birds and even many plant species (Bison, 2020).

The bison seem that they are going uphill which arguably can be interpreted as they are going into the right direction, and there is a future for them. With the help of the conservation community they were able to survive and now they are even

helping create a healthy ecosystem. Taking the flying birds and the fact, that there is still melting snow on the ground, one might argue that this image represents spring, or the end of a winter, which in turn might be interpreted as the end of a season or time and goes along with the start of a new time, a new beginning and new hope that spring is often associated with. By outlining that viewers see this message in regard to climate change, the subtle details included in this clip that enhance the power of the messages Patagonia tries to convey to its audience become apparent.

### **Textual Modality**

According to Cambridge Dictionary, we use still as an adverb to emphasize that something is continuing. in this regard to highlight the resignation in the first part and optimism in the second reversed poem, despite the circumstances, it's not too late. Like the bisons, despite hopelessness that was on display in the first part of the video/poem, we believe in change.

### **Colors**

In this part, the predominant color is brown. Brown brings to mind feelings of warmth, comfort, and security (Cherry, 2020). As mentioned, brown represents the earth and the environment, and in this case the American bison. According to Kendra Cherry, brown is a natural color that evokes a sense of strength and reliability. In the image, the bisons seem strong, and secure strolling through the prairie. Those qualities are the ones people need in order to battle against climate change. In addition, Patagonia offers through their garments strength and reliability products, which can be referenced to the way the bisons look like.

## **Description (0.23)**

**Image 15:** Screenshot of Patagonia's video



During this second, an image taken from above appears. In the image there is a forest, full of trees from different colors; mostly green but there are also a couple of yellow and orange ones. The music is the same positive one we started listening to in second 0.15. The sun is shining brightly, and white letter text appears in the middle which reads: *So don't tell us*

### **Analysis**

During this second, the image shown is full of trees. All these trees have different colors and different heights, but all of them look colorful and full of life. Trees are considered representatives of life, wisdom, power and prosperity (Yezi, 2017) and they provide us with oxygen in order to live. Trees are often mythologized as fundamental elements that fuel life and existence (Yezi, 2017). This image full of trees, like the image with the bonfire, shows not only the beauty of nature but arguably also creates a feeling of nostalgia. The trees look healthy and colorful indicating that we are living in a healthy ecosystem. There is no smoke, no pollution, the sun is shining brightly and taking a possibly predominant American audience into consideration, one feels reminded of the Indian summer, possibly in New England, and one might immediately feel the desire to travel there to experience this wonderful natural phenomenon, which can be seen as another subtle detail, that enforces the meaning behind the image in regard to the products Patagonia is advertising to its customers.

### **Textual Modality**

Again, by the use of the personal pronoun us, we can see a clear differentiation created by Patagonia between us, arguably the community, and you the negative others.

In the first part of the poem/video don't tell us had the function of stressing that it's worthless to remind us, the Patagonia community, that we are all screwed and need to start to act when it's too late anyway. That would be hypocrisy and the theme of hypocrisy in regard to sustainable action is a theme addressed and criticized also on Patagonia's website, Thus it can be regarded as an important topic which is also underlying this poem.

In this second part however, the use of the imperative so don't tell us shows determination and positivity in the first place, which in turn creates a sense of belonging among the audience of this clip. Additionally, imperative forms are used to express a direct command, which underscores the urgency and importance of the action, as if Patagonia wanted to say that a positive attitude and action are required now, because there is still hope.

### **Colors**

The color that dominates this image is green. Green signifies a balanced and a rejuvenated mind (Singh and Srivastava, 2011:202). The trees shown seem full of life and healthy and they have different colors. The sun is shining brightly, and what Patagonia suggestively tries to convey behind this, is a.o. the creation of a vision

that if we all take care of the environment, we can all enjoy a world like the one shown in this image.

Some trees have orange in them, while orange color signifies a happy, balanced and an enthusiastic mind (Singh and Srivastava, 2011:202), probably an allusion created to show the audience how we could feel when we took care of our planet.

### Description (0.24 - 0.30)



#### **Images 16-19:** Screenshot of Patagonia's video

In the next six seconds different images appear in very quick succession, while the same music keeps playing in the background. The first image shows some mountains covered by snow, while the sky appears red and yellow which can be interpreted as the sunrise. There is no text illustrated in this image.

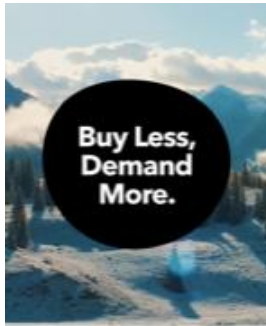
Immediately after, a new image comes into sight showing someone skiing in what appears to be an unfortified mountain landscape covered by snow. The sun is shining brightly, and the snow appears white and covers most of the image.

During the next image, two people who are hiking are in the middle of attention. The image only shows their legs, but it seems they are hiking a mountain. The same music keeps playing throughout these images, and there is no text appearing.

In the final image, a forest covered in snow appears, while the sun shines brightly, and there are fir trees everywhere. The trees are tall, and have an intense green color. There are mountains in the background which are covered in snow. The

same positive music keeps playing in the background, while white lettered text appears at the center of the video and which can be read:

*We're all screwed.*



The video finishes by showing the logo of the campaign "Buy Less, Demand More", which has white text and is surrounded by black color.



Immediately after, the word "patagonia" appears on the video, while the background is the same image of the forest covered in snow, while the sun is shining brightly.

**Images 20-21:** Screenshot of Patagonia's video

### **Analysis**

In this part of the video, Patagonia makes use of images, sounds, colors in order to say to its audience, let's make a change, let's take some action and look how wonderful the earth looks when we take care of it. Don't come and tell us we are screwed, because we "still" have so much beautiful nature to enjoy and protect. . In this part, Patagonia makes an allusion to the IPCC report in which basically it is inferred that our oceans are "screwed" and as a consequence, the earth. In this section, Patagonia is showing the audience of the clip by the use of images of how pretty the world looks and how it still looks like in the future, when sustainable actions are taken, arguably a direct allusion to climate change.

The succession of images can be seen as the rounding off of the video and it is interesting that in this part, not only nature or animals are shown, but in two of the four images active people are being at the center of attention. On one side this could be interpreted that the brand wants to put its product, outdoor clothing into focus by emphasizing the importance of proper equipment to enjoy the beautiful landscape presented, which is being supported by the close-up on the two hikers in the third image, on the other side might the display of action emphasize that action is also required in terms of sustainability and work to animate the viewer to act.

In here, Patagonia put some suggestions for a healthy future, and the phrase: buy less, demand more appears. This part is a complete opposite from the first 15 seconds, it is a juxtaposition between the first part and the second one in which the solution of the problem is presented by the showing of images.

In addition, this part is known as the big payoff in relation to storytelling where the conflict gets solved. According to Carl Marci, he stated that "we can't act on something in the future unless it stays with us, the key is that big emotional payoff at the end." The story is well told, and most likely it will be remembered in the recipients minds.

The presentation of both logos, the one of the campaign and of the brand, aims to strengthen the viewer's connection with the brand, because after the "emotional rollercoaster" Patagonia has created in this short clip, the brand wants to make sure that the viewer connects or associates the experienced with the brand. Patagonia's goal of making its audience and its community reflect, about sustainability, about climate change, about conscious decision-making can be regarded as a commendable endeavor, but one has to be realistic, and acknowledge the fact that Patagonia is a clothing company whose enterprise it is, to market and sell outdoor clothing. Thus, strengthening the brand image and creating a positive association with the brand in the consumers' mind is the ultimate underlying goal behind this marketing clip on the brand's Instagram page.

### **Textual Modality**

Effective marketing slogan, to present two ideas that Patagonia wants their customers to think about or to follow this idea. It is persuasive because of the rhetorical juxtaposition which includes the antithesis but conveys information that is valuable in regard to the brands' approach to sustainability: the brands want its customers to buy less, but if they buy, they shall care about quality. This reflects the brands' business model in 4 words and two ideas: sustainability and good quality.

### **Colors**

During these six seconds, a variety of images appeared on the video. Each one of them has its particular colors, and diverse colors are present. Colors offer sensations and perception and seem to offer possibilities for multifaceted interpretation rather than leaving room for only one way of looking at it (Singh and Srivastava, 2011:199).



All the images shown have light and brighter colors, and work perfectly together with the music playing. Bright vivid colors such as pure red and blue are energizing and outward focused (Morton, 2001 in Singh and Srivastava, 2011:203). All the colors work together in order to demonstrate to the recipient how the world looks and that we need to protect it against climate crisis. Patagonia wants us to take better decisions in terms of sustainable options for our planet and for us. In addition, the color palette seen throughout these 6 seconds is an integration of colors in which they create a visual unity of the sentiments shown in an advertisement (Morton, 2001 in Singh and Srivastava, 2011:203), in those final seconds and in the second part of the video in general, they convey positivity, but also create a peaceful, happy or desirable atmosphere.

**The reversible poem reads:**

Because we don't have a choice.  
We need to demand a livable planet.  
And we don't trust anyone who says  
It's too late to fix the climate crisis.  
We can still imagine a healthy future  
So don't tell us  
we're all screwed.

## **Patagonia's Findings:**

### **Textual Modality**

From the video we can see that Patagonia's clever reversible poem that is at the heart of the video warns readers about the impending climate crisis (Watson, 2020). A reversible poem can be read from both sides, top to bottom or bottom to top and the meaning varies accordingly. The double-back nature of reverse poems plays tricks on their audience (Batema, 2017). According to some journalists and as demonstrated in the analysis, it is a thought-provoking and exceedingly clever poem that takes the viewer through an emotional rollercoaster (Mahas, 2020).

### **Storytelling**

This Patagonia video is a good example when the method of storytelling is well employed. The video starts with this sentence: "we're screwed" which is intriguing, and likely is catching the attention of an online audience. Attention is just step one of engagement (Marci in Conick, 2018: 52). During the first 15 seconds, also the first part of the poem, Patagonia shows us the image of the earth destroyed, making us believe that there is no hope and no future. This is the moment where

tension, anxiety, and nervousness are building up. Marketers use conflict and failure as obstacles in the way of success (Gannett in Conick, 2018: 52). In addition, the relatable character portrayed in the video is the earth. When listeners can relate to a character, they feel empathy (Marci in Conick, 2018: 50).

The second 15 seconds can be seen as what is commonly known as the payoff, in which the conflict gets solved, and in the case of this video, Patagonia informs us that there is still hope, when we start to act in order to solve the climate crisis we are facing. As a great story is developing, the brain releases oxytocin, a hormone responsible for empathy and narrative transportation (Zak in Conick, 2018: 50). Oxytocin is the one that makes us remember good and well told stories. Oxytocin is why great stories often leave us feeling exhilarated, ready to change our own lives, but it's also why narratives without conflict are instantly forgotten (Zak in Conick, 2018: 50).

Patagonia emphasizes that as consumers we have the power to change the way clothes are made (Buy Less, Demand More - Patagonia, 2020). Patagonia is accentuating that as consumers, we can demand better practices - what we buy is what the industry will become (Buy Less, Demand More - Patagonia, 2020), and in the video, one among other messages conveyed is that as consumers we need to act fast in regard to this situation. The message has been, as can be seen in the analysis, supported by the use of images, sounds, text and colors which each create meaning and together convey a powerful message.

Through storytelling an emotional appeal towards the messages conveyed through text, music and images is created in relation to our planet. Through the Buy Less, Demand More ad, customers are advised and encouraged by Patagonia to take action to care for our planet. Strong images of the world's most pressing issues caused by climate change appear and through the use of sounds, colors, and text throughout the video stimulates the audience effectively and represents how Patagonia communicates their stance on sustainability to their community and their online audience.

Throughout the 30 seconds of the video, Patagonia strategically made use of music as another means to communicate their sustainable stance and to underline the intended messages. Music is one of the most important marketing tools in modern societies (Brown, 2006 in Ziv, Hoftman and Geyer, 2011: 739). The music changes depending on what images are shown and the meaning behind them. Distinct musical characteristics, such as tempo and timbre, have effects on emotion and attitude (Ding and Lin, 2012: 300). The music on the video started by

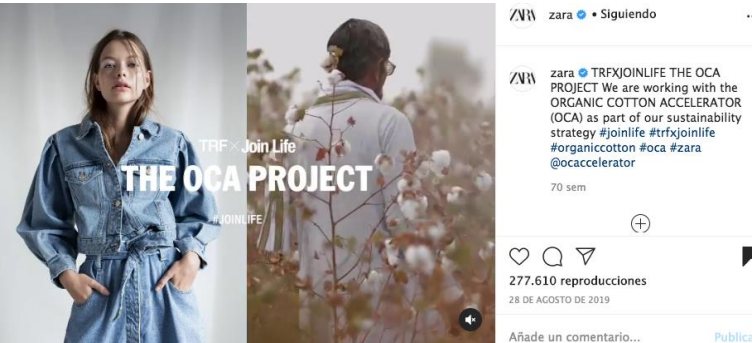
being dramatic, a bit sad and changed completely to the end of the video to add to the positive impressions. In the case of this video, music can be seen as another way to communicate and form meaning on its own, but also to enhance the meaning and messages behind other means like text and images. Music is an invisible language that stimulates emotions and inner feelings (Ding and Lin, 2012: 299). Additionally, music has been considered an efficient and effective means of nonverbal communication for triggering moods (Bruner, 1990 in Ding and Lin, 2012: 300).

### **Colors**

Another method used by Patagonia to capture the attention of their viewers and to form additional meaning in regard to sustainability and climate change was the use of colors. During the duration of the video, we see different images containing a variety of colors, because color is an important source of communication (Kauppinen-Räsänen, 2014 in Kauppinen-Räsänen and Jauffret, 2018: 101). In addition, if applied, the use of color can serve as another method of persuasion. The right colors empower and contribute to the success of an advertising campaign (Singh and Srivastava, 2011:199). It is important to mention that while colors contribute to the success of an advertising when used in the right way, there are times in which colors can be seen in a different way than the intended as it depends more on the person's own experiences. The perception and application color is strongly influenced by one's innate physiological and psychological predisposition, personal experiences, etc. (Singh and Srivastava, 2011:200).

From the analysis we have seen that green adds to the balanced and healthy atmosphere in the image of the forest, that brown brings to mind feelings of warmth, comfort, and security in connection with the bison, that red and yellow add to the alarming image of the burning forest and that white and blue not necessarily reflect calmness, but rather the contrary when intended, in the image of the melting glaciers.

**Zara's video "Join Life, The OCA Project" posted on their Instagram account August 28, 2019.**



**Image 22-26:** Screenshots from Zara's video

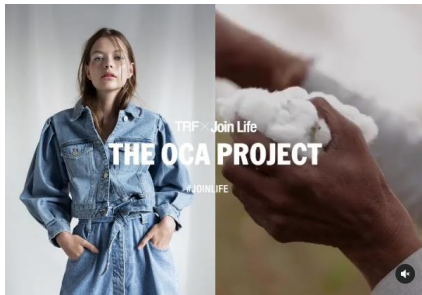
The video to be analyzed is from Zara, and their sustainable line called "Join Life", under which the Spanish company produces and markets sustainable garments, for which, according to the company, always aim to use the best organic materials possible. In this video, their close cooperation with local farmers from an Indian town where those farmers are supported by an initiative of farming organic cotton, is in the center of attention. The video in fact is all about this initiative. Called the OCA Project.

**Description (0.00 - 0.15)**

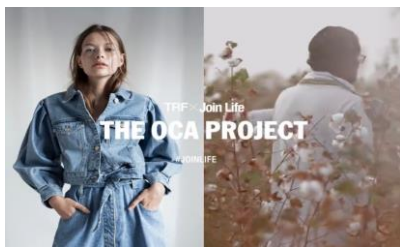
Because of the shortness of the clip and only four cuts, or four scenes respectively, Zara's clip will be analyzed as a whole. First of all, there is no music or any sound in this video.



The video starts with the first sequence with an image of a farmer walking down the middle of the organic cotton crop. The farmer is wearing traditional clothes in white color. The farmer walks slowly, looking and admiring all the crops harvested.



In the second sequence he stops, and with his hands, he starts collecting organic grown cotton from the plant. It can be seen how he selects the best ones, as he drops one that doesn't seem as white as the other. The image is centered on his hands, while he collects all the cotton. With one hand he collects the cotton, while the other one firmly holds what he collected from the tree.



In the third sequence the farmer is shown how he walks between the crops that are full of organic cotton when he moves a what looks like a towel, but is part of the farmer's uniform from his shoulder into his hand.



In the fourth and final sequence the video shifts from the walking farmer to a close up of the farmer's face, while he focusedly keeps looking at the cotton while collecting it.

Throughout the full video, there is an image that covers exactly half of the display, of a lady dressed in denim clothing that is modeling what appears to be Zara clothes. It might be inferred that the clothes she is wearing comes from this sustainable line. In addition, there is a text written in white color in the center of the video, also throughout the whole clip, which reads: TRF x Join Life, THE OCA PROJECT #joinlife

The text, a description of the video in typical Instagram fashion at the bottom/side of the video reads:

*"TRFXJOINLIFE THE OCA PROJECT We are working with the ORGANIC COTTON ACCELERATOR (OCA) as part of our sustainability strategy #joinlife #trfxjoinlife #organiccotton #oca #zara"*

## Analysis

The total duration of the video is 15 seconds. There is no sound or music in the background. Throughout the duration of the video there is a written text at the middle of the video which reads: TRF x Join Life, THE OCA PROJECT #joinlife. While first looking at it, the video, it might look simple but with the use of hashtags,

capital letters in the text and the phrases included a.o. There are several ways in which Zara clearly, but also in discrete fashion, creates meaning in regard to sustainability and to communicate with their followers on Instagram through that clip.

The clip presents us with a story, in accordance with the marketing concept of storytelling, but in this case it doesn't have a beginning, middle or end. Arguably nothing is occurring that especially stands out to catch the viewers attention. In addition, having the model at the left side of the video suggestively distracts the viewer from what is happening in the farmer's video, as the model's image covers half of the screen. The video does not contain a climax, or a conflict in order to grab the audiences' attention. Arguably, it is not a well told story, with the consequence that the audience will likely not be able to remember it beyond watching this video.

One striking aspect of the video that doesn't belong in the auditory or textual modality or the color section is the appearance of the farmer. He wears glasses which make him look sophisticated; he wears a white uniform with a fitting accessoire which looks precious in comparison with what someone would a cotton picker expect to wear; he wears a neat side parting and a trimmed beard and last but not less important his hands even look well-kept, which can be seen as rather surprising for a cotton farmer. Looking closely, all of those aspects seem to give you the impression that, from an analysis perspective the spot seems to lack quality because the farmer with his polished appearance seems out of place, but from a marketing perspective one might argue that he could be perceived by viewers as a man that reflects value and exquisiteness, which in turn will be associated with the quality of the product made out of premium cotton.

The video's design is very simple and basic. It is trying to present the initiative that Zara created in relation to the process of growing organic cotton. The initiative is supported by Zara, under the name of one of their sub-brands TRF who stands for TRAFALUC. An immediate assumption comes to mind, namely that this collaboration might only exist for the purpose to target Zara's specific target group who are in the look for more sustainable products, or customers that demand a change in Zara's practices. Within the next paragraphs, the auditory, textual and color means that are employed in the video are being further assessed.

### **Auditory**

To not include any music or any sound in the video, has arguably been done based on the knowledge that background music can lead to reduced recall of information (Ziv, Hoftman and Geyer, 2011:738). While in some cases might be beneficial, there are times in which music acts as a peripheral cue interfering with message processing and leading to reduced recall (Moreno & Mayer, 2000 in Ziv, Hoftman and Geyer, 2011:743), therefore Zara's marketing team might have chosen not to distract the viewer.

For a marketer, it is hard to find the right music that will fit the ad. If it is not well chosen, it is more likely that it will be a distraction and will not help delivering the message. Several studies conducted on the effect of music in advertising tend to confirm the idea that music distracts listeners and leads to less elaboration and processing of messages (Ziv, Hoftman and Geyer, 2011:740).

The fact that no background music can be heard, also underlines the simplicity of the video, which was probably being done with the intention to demonstrate to the viewer that products created under this label stand for quality and sustainable production and nothing more. Arguably an elegant way to put the quality of the product into focus and to appeal to sustainable-minded viewers, which might be more attracted by simplicity than by extravaganza, which might not represent the matter of sustainability as adequately.

### **Textual Modality**

Throughout the duration of the video, there is text that is centered in the middle of the screen. The first word that is in there is TRF. TRF stands for Trafaluc, which is a sub-brand of Zara. Let's remember that one characteristic of fast fashion is to have sub-brands. According to Zara's online store, every week they have new products available under the TRF label.

The next phrase is **Join Life**, which is the name of their sustainable line. Join Life is a metaphor employed by Zara in which they are not encouraging their online audience to live. Because who can tell us what life is? Is there a general definition of how we are supposed to live our lives? According to JV Chamary contributor of Forbes, life is an entity with the ability to adapt to its environment. But instead, what Zara is aiming and hoping for by naming its sustainable line Join Life, is to encourage people to take part in the Join Life movement that supports this network of organic living and green products that will help them save the earth by being more conscious about what they buy.

It seems that the target audience for this video is people who are interested in buying organic garments and care about sustainable initiatives. That is why Zara includes this text, stated in capital letters: we are working with the ORGANIC COTTON ACCELERATOR (OCA). Furthermore, the name of the initiative where they collaborate with local farmers, is put in the video and in the description of it. Using capital letters to indicate strong feelings may be the most famous example of typographical tone of voice (McCulloch, 2019). Arguably, it seems that Zara wants to put an emphasis on the fact that they have sustainable initiatives.

Another phrase that is interesting to look at is the use of the hashtag #organiccotton. By Zara using this phrase it means that they are categorizing the methods of sustainability in relation to green consumption that has to do with a particular material that relates to the textile industry, which is cotton. Cotton fabric is one of the most commonly used types of fabrics in the world (Hodakel, 2021), and one of the most famous ones. In addition, cotton represents 33% of all fibers used to produce clothes but one single cotton t-shirt is worth 2,700 L of water, enough to satisfy the physical needs of one person for two years and a half (Sburlino, 2019 in Muthu, 2019:60). Cotton is a material that has been criticized for the amount of water waste it takes to produce a tshirt, by Zara categorizing this material is making the emphasis that it is organic compared to other companies who might not use organic materials. Zara wants to emphasize and make reference to the most known material, and stating that they are bringing the matters of organic living to their audience, can be seen as well as a marketing strategy.

In the description of the video, Zara stated that they have their **sustainable strategy**. These words are written in small letters and do not stand out as the rest of the text. While they might be implying that they do have a sustainable strategy, it can't be seen on the video, and there is lack of information about it.

### Colors

On the left side, throughout the video there is the image of a westernized girl wearing a denim outfit. The outfit color is blue. Blue is used to illustrate the clothing of the girl, and the color represents tranquility, trust, confidence, wisdom, wealth (Singh and Srivastava, 2011:202). In this case, as there is no movement and it's just the blue color with a white background, it can be said that tranquility and wealth is what emanates from the left side of the video.



On the right side, there are not that many colors in the video. The only colors we see throughout the video are mostly white, brown and a bit of green, and all of them seem to be in unity. It might be, as the purpose of this ad is to focus on the illustration of the organic cotton. The colors chosen seem very neutral, and clear. In this part, colors are integrated, that is they create a visual unity of the sentiments shown (Singh and Srivastava, 2011:203). The color that pops most in the ad is white. White represents purity, peace, neutrality and tranquility of the mind and body (Singh and Srivastava, 2011:202). In this case, it is used to illustrate the color of the cotton and how pure it looks. While the farmer walks around the crops, there is this tranquility and peace that he emanates, even his clothes are white. According to Singh and Srivastava white is also used to portray humility, and is something the farmer portrays while walking around.

Also, the combination of white, with the shade of brown which arguably goes in the direction of gold, creates an impression of value. Together with the farmer's white uniform and fitting "towel" this impression is even enhanced. By looking at the image at the fourth sequence, the farmer even seems to be presented in a beautiful landscape out of a movie, rather than being in a cotton plantage.

Another color used is brown. This color can be seen in the background, and is used to illustrate the crops. In this case, brown has an earthy and environmental quality and is generally coupled with green (Singh and Srivastava, 2011:202) which is the case of this video. As mentioned, it is only used to illustrate some parts of the background, and the skin tone of the farmer.

There is a contrast between the skin tone of the farmer and the westernized model that is located at the left side of the video. By looking at both images, I can infer that at that point, what the video is showing, it is the face of globalization. Clothes are produced overseas while enjoyed in first world countries. All the damage from producing, creating and fabricating clothes stays in those countries, while first world countries enjoy the finished product. I would argue that a conscious viewer might notice this assumption, and when this happens, this spot would be counterproductive to Zara's goal of positive self-representation. Of course, one might argue as a counterargument, that the target group of this spot, might not be that reflective about this topic of sustainable development and put in simple words, just wants to feel good.

## **Zara's findings:**

As mentioned above, there is no music or sound in this video. One of the benefits of not putting sound is that, there are times in which recall of an ad's content was better without background music than with it (Wheatley & Brooker, 1994 in Ziv, Hoftman and Geyer, 2011:740) and as well, to keep the video simple to bring a key message across: in this label it's about the quality that comes first.

Another finding that is relevant to discuss is how Zara promotes a sustainable line under the name of a sub brand which is TRF, but this sub brand is releasing new lines of clothing at their online store every week.

From this, I can infer that there is a lack of transparency in the way they communicate their strategies, because the fact that a sustainable label releases new products every other week, at minimum makes someone ask if the promoted sustainability is really still achieved or just a marketing means.

Almost at the end of the video, the image centered on the farmers face. There is a contrast between the skin color of the model and his skin color. Arguably it can be seen as what globalization is about. While garments are being designed in first world countries, production is taken overseas where companies can reduce labor and production costs.

## **Comparative analysis**

### **Storytelling**

The aim of both companies is to communicate their sustainable initiatives to an online audience. While both companies use the same method of storytelling, their approaches are very different.

Patagonia created a good story, making it intriguing for the recipient and building a climax and an end. In addition, Patagonia gives a full experience by showing the issue of climate change with the help of some images, sounds and music, making it effective and nice. The story in Zara is not based much about the experience, as there are not pictures like in the one of Patagonia but in Zara is everything about the product. Half of the display is used to portray Zara's products of their sustainable line, and their customers are usually typical white girls who might see the video, and would see themselves reflected in the clip, wearing those colors and that exact same jacket and skirt. In Zara's clip, the product is directly advertised,

while focused only on the process of growing organic cotton but not addressing any issues of climate change.

### **Thematic**

For the past years, there have been consumers and marketers that have wondered if Patagonia only makes this type of ads as a means of marketing to generate more profit. Some consumers and industry professionals questioned whether the statement was disingenuous coming from a profit-motivated apparel retailer and manufacturer (Hwang et al., 2016 in Michel et al., 2019: 166). Recent research found that when online consumers have a predisposition toward ethical products, aligned imagery and tactile priming can be applied to encourage purchases (Yoganathan, Osburg, and Akhtar, 2019 in Michel et al., 2019: 167).

### **Auditory**

The fact that Zara decided to not put any music at all in their ad and Patagonia yes can be seen, as there are times in which music may either enhance or decrease message persuasiveness, through its effect on mood, its fit with the advertised product and its attention-gaining quality (Ziv, Hoftman and Geyer, 2011:740). In the case of Patagonia, the whole duration of the video has music. The music chosen matched the ad was showing and it can be inferred that music can influence listeners' moral judgment, reduce their awareness of unethical ad content, and lead to a more easy acceptance of the message of the ad (Ziv, Hoftman and Geyer, 2011:743).

### **Colors**

In the Patagonia ad, colors are everywhere in order to illustrate the different images. Throughout the video, a great variety of colors are shown. In this case, color has been employed as an effective communication tool in advertising and marketing as it has very clever and persuasive influence (Singh and Srivastava, 2011:200). In the case of Zara, throughout the duration of the ad, the shows of colors are the same, from the beginning to the end. White is mostly used in order to emphasize the humility from the farmer and the purity of the organic cotton.

### **What themes are used in the ads to encourage sustainability?**

In the case of Zara they used the local Indian farmer who has certain characteristics that might seem as a way of romanticizing the clip. He wears glasses, which arguably make him look smart, his clothes are not dirty even though he works harvesting cotton. In addition, the cotton is very valuable, and we can

see this in the way the farmer picks it up, one by one, just selecting the best ones, and doing the process with his bare hands.

For Patagonia, the themes are all those climate issues presented that resolve from the climate crisis we are living nowadays; melting glaciers, wildfires and air pollution from industries. On the other hand, Patagonia makes use of themes that represent a healthy planet, with healthy nature and animals. During the clip we see the forest back to its original colors, and the image of a bonfire. In addition, we see the american bison moving uphill and looking strong.

In the case of both companies, Zara and Patagonia, they have some similarities as both use romantic images in order to create and build desire. For example, in Patagonia there is the image of a bonfire, which is an activity that people would want to do, and these kinds of topics are presented nicer than what they really are.

#### **What methods are used in order to communicate brand values?**

Both companies use the method of storytelling in order to communicate their sustainable initiatives. As mentioned, Patagonia's way of using it is more intriguing, and is a really well told story. But, on the other hand both videos make efficient use of textual means. Patagonia uses a reversible poem that is the heart of the video as it underlines the issue of climate change in a very efficient way. In the case of Zara, the text is the emphasis of the label, making it look that everything is about Zara and their image, and showing to the world how sustainable Zara can be.

In addition, the use of audio is another method used to communicate brand values. Patagonia uses music in order to create meaning, and positive and negative vibes but also underlining other meaning creating methods like images, and the text appearing at the center of the video, which everything is supported by the music. In the case of Zara, the company decided not to include any music in the video in order to emphasize simplicity on the clip, as the clip is all about the product and the quality of it, and not about fancy marketing strategies.

Furthermore, the colors chosen in both videos work effectively. In Patagonia, the clip starts by being dramatic, and the colors keep changing rapidly while contrasting each other while creating meaning, as outlined in the analysis. In the case of Zara, the colors used represent something valuable, as we see a lot of whites which means innocence and purity. In addition, in the background there is

this mixture of white and gold that combines and creates something valuable, which can be inferred that is the cotton.

### **What does Patagonia and Zara have in common in regards to their sustainability approach?**

Patagonia and Zara use the same themes; colors, text and same methods; storytelling, but in a completely different way. At the end, both companies aim to seek positive self representation and that the customer associates the emotions he/she felt during the video with the brand in a positive way.

Patagonia wants the customer to align himself/herself together with the brand in an attempt to fight climate change. This creates a feeling of community that goes above the buying of outdoor clothing, and can be regarded as a very persuasive way of doing marketing because not only the customer is buying a product but further joins the company in a battle against climate change.

In the case of Zara, the value that the company gives to the product is made with the intention that the customer feels good when buying a product from this label. Zara wants the customer to feel that she/he did something positive by contributing to sustainability, but also happy that she/he bought a product that has attached value to it. In addition, Zara wants to emphasize that the product is made by valuable sustainable materials like seen on the video, but in reality it can be dirty cotton picked up by everyone. But Zara wants to create the impression that under this label, the products are made with valuable materials.

### **How do Zara and Patagonia as fashion brands create meaning on Instagram through marketing clips in order to emphasize their relationship with the concept of sustainability?**

As outlined, Patagonia and Zara use various themes and methods in regards to sustainability. Patagonia presents the concept of the current climate change in a way that everyone feels affected and responsible for it. In the video, we can see that sustainability is important because the way images are presented shows an almost death planet, which makes it look emotional and makes us feel emotional too. The main actor on this Patagonias video is the earth.

In the case of Zara, they do not address the issue of climate change, what they do is they show what sustainability means for them, and for them is to produce organic cotton. From Zara's perspective, it is important to give the customer a better feeling

on what he/she is wearing, and make it valuable. While offering a sustainable made product, is all about the product, the company, the image they portray and show to the world, self presentation of the company, and self representation of the customer.

## Discussion

One of my first intentions in regards to this thesis was to analyze if Zara is doing greenwashing. But what I realized is that I can't come to a conclusion to see if what they are doing is greenwashing or not. Definitely, it goes into the direction of greenwashing, and further research needs to be done.

To put this into perspective, at the moment I have no general knowledge of how many products of their fashion lines are sustainable or under the category of Join Life. By doing this research I have the impression that sustainability is presented as something really important for them, but in reality their sustainable products just comprise a small section of their complete line of products.

In addition, there is no way to find out how many instagram users are attracted by this clip, and after watching it go to the store or online in order to purchase something from the Join Life line. What I can observe is that if the video was successful or not as Instagram lets you see the amount of reproductions it has, but there is no way in finding out how impacted where the customers after watching this clip. One finding might be that if someone looks at the video, makes them feel good and interested in Zara's sustainable line, because the video is presented nicely, but then they might go to Zara and buy something else.

There is no question that the video is presented nicely, but what I can infer is that it is more about the presentation and the image that Zara gives to the world, and that they want to make their loyal customers feel good by having a sustainable line.

Not only Zara has been accused of greenwashing, but Patagonia as well. Patagonia creates excellent marketing, their environmental campaigns are very successful but at the end of the day, Patagonia is a company that has the goal to sell clothes in order to make profits. There has to be further research in this matter, as I don't have numbers in terms of sales and these are just interpretations and assumptions from my side. A quantitative research might look interesting in order to analyze how many of those viewers (from the clip) are converted into buying

Patagonia products, or if it is only marketing in order to make the consumer feel good.

## **Conclusion**

For the purpose of this study, I chose to realize a semiotic and multimodal discourse analysis in order to enhance the understanding of the brands involvement, Zara and Patagonia, in relation to their sustainable campaigns, 'Join Life and Buy Less, Demand More' accordingly. These two fashion companies are interesting to look at, as both have been very successful in their own ways.

My aim was to select one clip from each brand and trace these stories, with the intention to describe and explain how meaning making is formed across these different narratives. I did this by analyzing two of their most successful videos from these two world renowned fashion companies.

I believe this study can be useful for companies who wish to include different methods or themes in order to create meaning and brand attachment towards their brand. The findings show how the use of these different methods contribute to build a special bond and relationship between the brand and its customers.

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## Figures

**Figure 1:** Economic, Social and Environmental aspects of sustainability.

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**Figure 2:** Storytelling explanation. Kruse , N., & Szabó, A. (2019). MSc International Marketing Master Thesis .*MSc International Marketing Master Thesis*.

## Appendix

**Image 0:** <https://www.facebook.com/thesustainablefashionforum/> (**cover**)

**Image 1:** <https://www.instagram.com/p/CCs6VwFB6v5/>

**Image 2-21:** Screenshot of Patagonia's video

<https://www.instagram.com/p/CIL4f6fBiPK/>

**Image 22-26:** Screenshot of Zara's video

<https://www.instagram.com/p/B1s5M5vh1oH/>