

# Selling Stories, Telling Tales: Animal Representation in Norwegian Commercials.

A qualitative study through the thematic lenses of Authenticity, Anthropomorphism & the myth of Norwegianness.

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Amalie Bodd

## Abstract

This research investigates the portrayal of animals in Norwegian commercials and explores how their audiovisuals serve as instruments in promoting consumerism. Through the lenses of authenticity, anthropomorphism, and the myth of Norwegianness, the study aims to comprehend the nuanced role animals play in selling products or services. Four commercials intended for the Norwegian market were analyzed by applying rhetorical and semiotic/myth analyses rooted in Roland Barthes' theories. The key findings reveal that animals are strategically employed as symbols, conveying ethical, cultural, and emotional messages. Authenticity emerges as a narrative tool, constructing an image of innocence and genuineness. On the other hand, anthropomorphism bridges the gap between animals and humans, presenting a direct line of communication between viewers and animals. The myth of Norwegianness underscores the influence of cultural context on consumer perceptions, with the Norwegian countryside holding a pivotal role in shaping this myth. This study has significance in revealing how animals function as communicative tools in commercials and, by extension, in political communication beyond traditional contexts such as campaigns and debates. The findings offer insights into how viewers can perceive different animals and the agricultural landscape in Norway, thereby contributing to a broader understanding of animals' roles in the political landscape of consumerism.

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# 1. Introduction

Mahatma Gandhi once said, "The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated" (PETA, 2022). Historically and culturally, animals have been an integral part of human life. Some are considered dinner, while others are considered a man's best friend. These roles have evolved throughout history. This thesis will look further into animals' role in commercial media. I seek to understand how our values and perceptions of different animals influence how we utilize them for commercial gain. This thesis examines how media can function as a mirror to comprehend better the relationship between animals and commercial media regarding ethics, values, and cultural norms.

Using animals in media has a long history, using several different species. Over time, they have transitioned from mere subjects to powerful symbols and even anthropomorphized characters in storytelling. Their portrayal in media, whether in news reporting, advertisements, or entertainment, reflects cultural norms, values, and societal relationships with the animal kingdom. Historically, animals have held multifaceted roles in society. They were used as food, transportation, labor, and companionship. The media has both mirrored and influenced the human-animal relationship. The transition from a predominantly utilitarian view to encompassing animals as companions and sentient beings has paralleled broader shifts in societal values. Animals also hold a monetary value in society. According to Lerner and Kalof,

“Just as it affects women’s body image and health, this economic imperative behind commercials has important implications for the treatment of animals. In the U.S. culture, ... animals are important moneymakers both as pets who need food and other care and as producers of meat, clothing, and other products. Advertisers must, then, perpetuate a

clear distinction between animals to be loved as family members... and animals to be used as food or workers” (Lerner & Kalof, 1999, pp. 569-570).

This distinction is similarly found in other Western cultures, exemplifying how animals have a cultural context within their representation in media. Further, there is an economic imperative behind commercials with animals in media representation, which we will look further into in this thesis.

#### Commercials and Political Communication

Political communication extends far beyond debates, election campaigns, and lobbyism. It seeps into different mediums, including commercials, films, books, music, and podcasts, to name a few. Television journalism, particularly commercials, has a distinctive position within these mediums. Even when not overtly conveying a political message, commercials contribute to the broader discourse by shaping perceptions, reinforcing cultural norms, and influencing consumer behavior. (translated) “Politics is about more than media exposure. Rhetoric is more than presentation style and presentation of personal images” (Johnson, 2002, p. 27). It functions as a mirror in which we understand the world around us.

“Entertainment in relation to politics is directed at a particular medium and a particular genre... [where] Sound bites, immediacy, symbolism, emotions, face, personality, celebrity, “deep reads”, sensationalism, and what have you are alleged to guide television journalism” (Van Zoonen, 2005, p. 11). In other words, our relationship with televised information is often connected to entertainment and is assumed to be without hidden agendas or for political gain. Von Zoonen argues that the public's impressions of televised information contribute to people's political opinions.

#### The Dairy Industry's Role

Some of these opinions pertain to the dairy industry, which has, over the years, become more controversial. According to a study by Ly et al. (2021), four factors create this controversy: Cow-calf separation, the fate of excess dairy calves, pasture access, and disbudding (meaning

removing horn buds from young animals). All these factors have the commonality of encompassing animal welfare, reflecting animal treatment in industrial animal production. Ly et al. (2021) believe these factors have become increasingly important for consumers when choosing dairy products. Due to these factors, dairy farms are likely concerned with addressing this skepticism and criticism. In another study, researchers “detected a significant relationship between the farmers' perceptions [of the importance of animal welfare] and their gender, educational level, whether they enjoyed their work, or whether they applied the custom of religious sacrifice” (Kılıç & Bozkurt, 2013, p. 1329). This reflects how farmers themselves also vary in how they view their role in animal welfare and their production on dairy farms. Based on these studies, it is clear that both the public and dairy farmers have conflicting opinions on animal welfare.

Interestingly, Lindena and Hess (2022) did a study in Germany where 3,085 dairy farms were evaluated on their level of animal welfare. They believed that farms with fewer animals would have a considerably higher level of animal welfare. As it turns out, the size of the farm did not make a tangible difference. Other factors not evaluated in this study could have made a significant difference, such as the farmer’s knowledge of animals and definitions of what creates a higher level of animal welfare. In other words, “in contrast to the widespread assumption in public discussion, larger dairy herds are not necessarily associated with poorer animal welfare” (Lindena & Hess, 2022, p. 8924). The increasing controversy is then not necessarily grounded in the size of the farms in a way one might assume.

## 1.1 Research Question

Within the landscape of understanding the role of animals in media, a fellow student has written a thesis on how the meat industry is depicted through Norwegian commercials (Bratlien, 2020). Firstly, she found that the wording used by the producers of her dataset resulted in the animals being depicted as having lost a sense of self. This occurred when the humans in the commercials used words like “it” instead of “him/her” when referring to the animals. Secondly,

she found that the scenery in which the animals were depicted did not match the minimum requirement that animals have regarding outdoor space (Bratlien, 2020). Other research studies animals in commercials as well, but none were found that uncovers a Norwegian context outside the meat industry. With this research, I wish to fill that void and further our understanding of how animals are utilized as tools in our communications outside of the meat industry. It should broaden our understanding of how different animals hold deep cultural meaning—connecting it to a Norwegian perspective to recognize how our culture is essential to our perception of imagery and animals. Within the context of this thesis, the analytical framework is firmly grounded in three fundamental thematic lenses: **Authenticity**, **Anthropomorphism**, and **the myth of Norwegianness**.

Four commercials were chosen for this analysis, all of which display animals differently. Three of four commercials depict agricultural animals, while the last depicts a pet. They will be referred to as Commercial 1, Commercial 2, Commercial 3, and Commercial 4 and will be presented in detail before each chapter of the analysis.

*RQ: How do these commercials depict animals, and how does their audiovisual representation promote the consumption of their product(s)/service(s)?*

There are an endless number of commercials that depict animals. I evaluated several factors when narrowing down which to choose for this thesis. First, I assessed whether the commercial sold a product or service or created brand awareness. Then, I evaluated if they sold animal products such as meat or if they did not. Lastly, I narrowed it down to commercials that did not sell animal products, which potentially could change how the companies advertised themselves. This was because the research question primarily examines how animals are represented to sell a product or service, not *an animal product itself*. Therefore, the four commercials chosen aim to sell dairy products (animal byproducts) by TINE SA, recycling services by Infinitum AS, and lottery services by Norsk Tipping.

### Nuances in the Dataset

Commercial 1 aims to bring brand awareness, similar to Commercial 4. Commercial 2 is also produced for TINE and has a few similarities to Commercial 1, but it is different because it aims to sell a specific product. Commercial 3 lies somewhere between these as it seeks to highlight a particular problem that their services can resolve. Commercial 1, 2, and 3 are all agricultural animals, whereas Commercial 1 and 3 display cows and Commercial 2 display a goat. Commercial 4, on the other hand, depicts a dog that plays a different role than the other animals, and commercial 2 will bring nuances to the analysis regarding the roles of different animals (when evaluating two commercials, which may seem alike at first glance). Although commercials 1 and 2 are both produced by TINE, take place in the countryside, and both display agricultural animals, there will be nuances that play an integral role in the overall messaging and efficiency of the commercials. We will look further into these in the analysis chapter.

TINE, Infinitum, and Norsk Tipping are all well-established companies with a strong presence in Norway. TINE is a large dairy production company privately owned by around 9,000 farmers (Om TINE, n.d). Infinitum is a privately held stock company and an official partner of the Norwegian government. Lastly, Norsk Tipping is a state limited liability company that reports to the Ministry of Culture and Equality and monopolizes the lottery in Norway. These companies are similar in that they are large corporations with a solid societal presence, which further provides an even starting point between the datasets for the analysis.

Moreover, to answer the research question, it was essential to provide a dataset that sufficiently displayed animals in their commercials while still attempting to gather a variety of ways they were represented. I looked at about 100 commercials published in Norway (originally for TV/video advertisement use, then posted to YouTube where I found them) over the past 20 years. Four commercials were selected as they would provide enough nuances to gather a thorough impression to answer the research question while also being a dataset that would fit within the constraints of a master's thesis. All of them have been published for the Norwegian audience with Norwegian as both written and oral language.

## 2. Theory

The use of animals as signs has been present since the beginning of language. “Animals were seen in eight out of the twelve signs of the zodiac [and] among the Greek, the sign of each of the twelve hours in the day was an animal ... The Hindus envisaged the earth being carried on the back of an elephant and the elephant on the tortoise.” (Berger, 1980, p. 6). As language describes feelings, animals have historically been used as metaphors in expressing these emotions. Berger (1980) writes about how animals offered explanations by lending their character and name to a mysterious quality. It is essential to look at these factors carefully and understand that animals have such a deep-rooted presence in the human understanding of language and medium. When analyzing these commercials, we can draw resemblances to how the Greeks used animals in their understanding of myths, similarly to how we do today.

People’s perception of animals can be shaped as early as infancy. Berger mentions that “no other source of imagery which can begin to compete with that of animals” (Berger, 1980, p. 20). Toys, cartoons, pictures, and decorations depicting animals, especially ones prevalent through the rise of Disney and its merchandise, surrounded children in the 19th century at the same speed as zoos became popular in the West. The world of animals and the world of humans became more and more distant. Big cities were created, farms in the countryside were established, and humans found other ways to include animals in their everyday lives. The early impressions for children became integral to most childhoods and have contributed to the gap of “otherness” diminishing at a very young age. “Zoos, realistic animal toys, and the widespread commercial diffusion of animal imagery all began as animals started to be withdrawn from daily life” (Berger, 1980, p. 24). This distance is what these commercials diminish with the use of anthropomorphism. As animals today become more exotic and remote, the exposure of animals in this way is still prevalent far beyond childhood comic books and field trips to the zoo.

Berger makes an excellent point in his book “About Looking” (1980), where he explains the concept of looking at animals and how man and animals have the ability to communicate through looking. This ability has existed since the beginning of time, and this connection has become increasingly rare through the modernization of society and capitalism. He explains that primarily through the creation of zoos, we have received the ultimate consequence of animal marginalization, which is the look between a man and an animal “which may have had a crucial role in the development of human society.” (Berger, 1980, p. 26)

### *2.1 Authenticity*

According to Gunn Enli, “a common treatment of the term *authenticity* in academic literature is to position it in opposition to whatever is fake, unreal, or false, and further to acknowledge its multiple meanings.” (Enli, 2015, p. 2) She highlights that authenticity in media is mainly considered a positive characteristic where audiences appreciate raw and unscripted moments. Further, she explains that authenticity is rooted in cultures, and with cultures changing throughout history, the definition of authenticity also varies. Building on this idea, this thesis will examine how commercials portray authenticity in a dynamic cultural context. She calls authenticity a “moving target,” which brings specific challenges. Enli explains that due to this ever-evolving definition of authenticity, few scholars choose to define the term and instead acknowledge its complexity.

Several aspects of authenticity's significance can be evaluated by examining how authenticity plays a role in media. In media, authenticity, and trustworthiness are two terms that can often be interchangeable without careful consideration. In a time where the media plays an integral role in how we understand the world, it is essential to understand the difference between the two and keep that in mind when consuming media.

“The media are normatively supposed to provide the people with trustworthy, balanced, and neutral information about the world. Though we all know that this is not always the

case ...The significance of trustworthy media becomes even more evident when crises affect public health and safety, such as infectious diseases..., natural disasters..., or terrorism... In such unpredictable circumstances, the mass media serve many functions, of which the most important are distributors of information and supplier of answers to the public's questions, but also provider of an arena for collective crisis psychology through public debate and ritual grief." (Enli, 2015, p. 3-4)

This thesis will follow Lindholm's (2008) definition of the term authenticity." At a minimum, it is the leading member of a set of values that includes [terms like] sincere, essential, natural, original, and real" (Lindholm, 2008, p. 1). He explains how the first thinker to ever speak up about what authenticity meant was Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778), whose writings explored his opinion that we should demand complete honesty from oneself and the world. He was the first to speak publicly about his authentic thoughts and feelings, believing that judgment should not count for anything (Lindholm, 2008, p. 8). Authenticity is primarily divided into two parts: *origin*, meaning genealogical or historical, or *content*, meaning identity or correspondence.

Noteworthy, Lindholm lends the question of how authenticity and national identity are tied together, specifically, the relationship between authentic cuisine and national identity. This bridges two of the lenses this thesis utilizes surrounding what is authentic and what the myth of Norwegianness is. Lindholm explains how, for example, Italians often refer to pasta as a symbol of the Italian nation. While this is true, there are about 300 types of pasta shapes and a vast range of different sauces, so every part of the country, every town, and every family has their own idea of what Italian pasta is. What unites them is that "being Italian means making, eating, knowing, and loving pasta in its multi local forms, though mama's is always best" (Lindholm, 2008, p. 81). This illustrates how national collectiveness in culture and beliefs can unite a country regardless of the nuances that differentiate us from one another. We will see how this is the case in Norwegian culture as well.

As we delve into this thesis, we see how these terminologies are intrinsically linked with both authenticity, which we have already presented, and anthropomorphism, which will follow. Between all of the terms presented lies trustworthiness. As mentioned, trustworthiness is a term that, at times, is confused with authenticity, plays an integral role in political communication and is a cornerstone in many cultures. It is still essential to understand how the term differs from the rest while also underlying the significance of the other terms and processes. Regarding media and political communication, trustworthiness holds a special place. For example, according to Johansen (2002), the media has shifted how politicians can operate in several ways, and perhaps one that is most noteworthy is their demystification. Johansen explains that, due to the media's ability to portray politicians in close proximity and broadcast it to millions of people, they can no longer rely solely on the public persona they have created.

Consequently, politicians would not be able to attain their powerful positions without sharing more of their personal lives. Therefore, the "private person" has seeped through the public façade, and politicians are asked to portray a real version of themselves, creating trustworthiness around their persona (Johanson, 2002, pp. 24-25). This thesis will examine the fine distinctions of authenticity to gain a better understanding of its cultural foundation, evolving definitions, and connection to media and politics.

## *2.2 The Myth of Norwegianness*

Vassenden (2010) explains how the term "Norwegianness" encompasses multiple dichotomies that are tied to conceptions of "Norwegian" and "non-Norwegian." He presents the role of citizenship, which will be explored shortly, and continues by explaining the role of culture, ethnicity, and, more specifically, the conception of "white" and "non-white" within the term "Norwegianness." In this thesis, we hope to discover the intersection between citizenship and culture and how these terms pertain to elements of Norwegianness—specifically looking at nature and the Norwegian countryside as solid components of the Norwegian identity.

The myth of Norwegianness will guide the analysis by looking at how media representations of animals align with the country's cultural landscape. Norway's focus on nature and wildlife and its commitment to sustainability have become a cornerstone for evaluating the authenticity of animal portrayals. As previously highlighted, politics intricately intertwines with everyday life, shaping our perceptions of nationality within the cultural contexts that confine it. Citizenship is an intrinsic part of this discourse. "... citizenship is not something that pertains if it is not depressed in everyday talk and actions, both in public and the private domain. Citizenship, in other words, is something that one has to do, something that requires performance (Van Zoonen, 2005, p. 123). This is a facet of the myth that is Norwegianness and is part of the myths of every other country as well.

Roland Barthes's notion of myth shapes the framework in which we understand ideas surrounding the greater meaning of signs. He states, "Myth is a type of speech... myth is a system of communication...a message" (Barthes, 1957/1972, p. 107). Barthes contends that myths are ancient tales and contemporary cultural constructs that convey ideological messages. He argues that myths operate by transforming historical or cultural meanings into naturalized, timeless concepts, often serving the interests of dominant social groups. As humans, we grow up creating ideas about the world and our surroundings based on the influences of our peers, parents, and personal experiences. When consuming media, the audience brings with them these ideas, these myths, in their interpretation of that content. This trickles into the political landscape as well. Barthes specifically writes about the Bourgeoisie, who

"As an ideological fact, completely disappears: the bourgeoisie has obliterated its name in passing from reality to representation, from economic man to mental man. It comes to an agreement with the facts, but does not compromise about values, it makes its status undergo a real *exnominating* operation: the bourgeoisie is defined as *the social class which does not want to be named*" (Barthes, 1957/1972, p. 137).

Barthes's view exemplifies that myth is as essential in media as in politics, making it a helpful lens this thesis will utilize.

### 2.3 Anthropomorphism

Most of the commercials analyzed in this thesis can be interpreted as anthropomorphism, and it is, therefore, vital to know what it is and its role in media. According to Clair Parkinson in *Animals, Anthropomorphism and Mediated Encounters (2020)*, anthropomorphism comes from the Greek *anthrōpos* meaning human, and *morphē*, meaning form, and was previously referred to as “attributing deities with humanlike characteristics or bodily form” (Parkinson, 2020, p.2). This is one reason Parkinson describes anthropomorphism as somewhat problematic.

Further, “The overexpression of similitude between humans and other animals has become synonymous with Disney and a set of representational practices apparent in popular culture that reduce other species to simple tethered, furred and scaled human analogs (Parkinson, 2020, p. 1). Argumentatively, she displays a sense of worry in the way animals are depicted in such a way. “... anthropomorphism remains to some extent weighted down with associations to childishness, a lack of objectivity and sentimentality” (Parkinson, 2020, p. 1). Although anthropomorphism is considered by some as problematic in giving deities humanlike behaviors and human bodies, in addition to simplifying animal complexity to childlike behavior and worth, it still plays an essential role in explaining how the animals in this dataset are depicted.

The “otherness” becomes diminished with the display of anthropomorphism. Leona F. Cordery (2002) explains otherness as “only through knowing what I am not can I define my position and probably also status so that the image of the other is rather an image of one oneself” (Cordery, 2002, p. 87). At the same time, Roussillon-Constanty and Thornton (2018) highlight otherness concerning animals. They write that “accepting of the otherness of non-human creatures goes beyond the condescension of the mini-me syndrome since it obliges the perceiver to leave the comfort zone of the centrality of the human and venture out into a new world of competing and ultimately co-operating othernesses” (Roussillon-Constanty & Thornton, 2018, p. 4). This sheds light on how vital “otherness” is to incorporate when discussing animals in commercials with

displays of anthropomorphism such as in this thesis. They continue to write about how “... otherness ... is becoming a movement towards a pan-species definition of the word 'creature'” (Roussillon-Constanty & Thornton, 2018, p. 15), which could have implications on how the commercials are received.

## 3. Method

### *3.1 Two Qualitative Research Methods*

A rhetorical and a semiotic/myth analysis have been used to answer the research question. This is based on the fact that commercials are multi-faceted, and by using several methods, I was able to understand the animals' role in the commercial more thoroughly while also contributing to a better understanding of how the research question fits in the larger political landscape.

A qualitative approach was chosen to ensure a more detailed understanding of animals' role in commercials in Norway. Although one could have used a quantitative approach to consider the animal's presence in commercials systematically, it would have lacked the depth and nuances a qualitative approach gives as there are complexities that would be harder to quantify, such as cultural context. It was, therefore, decided that a qualitative research method would be most beneficial to answer the research question.

#### *3.1.1 Rhetorical Analysis*

A rhetorical analysis was chosen as a method based on the persuasive nature of advertisements. The theoretical framework was based on Joan Leach's (2000) definitions of methods. Leach explains ethos as "One form of persuasive argument [which] relies on the establishment of the credibility of the author or speaker," while pathos is "another form of persuasive argument [which] appeals to emotion" (Leach, 2000, p. 214). Logos, on the other hand, Leach explains, comes from the Greek word Logos, which means logic. "Part of the province of rhetoric is to examine how logical arguments work to convince us of their validity... While people today find certain forms of logic persuasive, historical texts indicate that earlier audiences would not have

found those forms of logic persuasive.” (Leach, 2000, p. 214) These are the building blocks of our rhetorical analysis.

### *3.1.2 Semiotic & Myth Analysis*

Within the signs and signifiers analyzed in this thesis, symbolism plays an integral part in understanding the role of animals in relation to humans.

“Most studies of animal symbolism have tended to be either societal overviews, with expansive and complex parameters, or intense and detailed analyses of specific social events. There is, of course, a great mass of animal-related symbolism intimately involved in our everyday behavior. This ranges from politicians' preference for posing with dogs (never cats) to animal-related language and expressions in word and song, to consumer products with animal labels, to design. The human social enterprise is saturated with animal symbolism and if properly decoded, perhaps, we might learn more about the intricacies of social interaction, and the convoluted subtleties of human motivation” (Bryant & Snizek, 1993, pp. 27-28).

In each of the commercials analyzed in this thesis, I present how each animal holds specific symbolic meanings and how these can influence our perception of the animals and the commercials. Along with this, the commercials themselves contribute to the extension of their myths. In the commercials analyzed in this study, several myths are represented and perhaps challenged, which are essential to unpack. How are these commercials contributing to the myths surrounding animals? How are their representations affecting these myths? That is what we will dive into in the following chapters.

### *3.2 Three Thematic Lenses*

In the research process, it was evident that a few common themes were present in the dataset. They were gathered into three main themes in which the commercials were analyzed and categorized. Seeing the commercials through the lens of authenticity will aid us in the quest to understand what role animals have in communicating different facets of what is “real” and “natural.” It will also unpack how the producers seek to display these qualities in their commercials. By considering anthropomorphism, we hope to see how removing the “otherness” between humans and animals is utilized as both a commercial and rhetorical tool. Lastly, by analyzing the commercials through the lens of the myth of Norwegianness, we can gain a better understanding of how culture is implicated and our attitudes toward how animals are represented in them.

## 4. Analysis

### 4.1 Commercial 1: “Snakkende Kuer” by TINE SA (2010)

#### 4.1.1 Description of the Data

##### Commercial 1: “Snakkende kuer” (Talking cows) by TINE SA (2010)

The commercial is 1 minute long and shows seven countryside farm scenes. These scenes are loosely associative rather than following a storyline.

The first scene shows a lush green farm, rolling hills, a couple of red barn-looking houses, and five cows standing freely on the field. One of the cows, the middle one, is mooing.



*Reklamefilmercom (2010, September 13) Screenshot 00:01*

The second scene is a closeup of one cow. She is brown and white spotted, with yellow tags in her ears and a gray collar. She sounds like a mature woman and says in human words

(translated), “Ah, yes, now I can really tell it is summer. It is really fantastic.” In the background, we see the fjords and what looks like apple trees.



*Reklamefilmercom (2010, September 13) Screenshot 00:03*

The third scene is a wider shot. The rolling green hills and fields are still there. We see six cows in the far background and two main cows in the center of the screen. Additionally, a microphone on a long stick from the left corner ends in the middle of the screen. The two main cows are one, black with white spots, and the other, brown with white spots. The cows grin (translated) “We can speak. Of course we can! But aren’t you going to ask us something?” as they laugh.



*Reklamefilmercom (2010, September 13) Screenshot 00:10*

The fourth scene is a cow that sounds like a young woman. It has the same green hills in the background. She says (translated), “ We are smarter than what people think.”



*Reklamefilmercom (2010, September 13) Screenshot 00:16*

Then the scene cuts back to the two cows from the third scene who continue what the teen cow said. They say (translated), “ Yes, but we do not want people to know that because perhaps our whole secret will be ruined.”

Followed by a shot of three very young calves who sound like young teens. They say (translated), “ Yes, in the beginning, I thought everything was quite boring just to walk around, but now I understand that we can do whatever we want.” While she says this, two young calves run and play on the field.



*Reklamefilmercom (2010, September 13) Screenshot 00:26-00:32*

We cut back to the young woman from the fourth scene. She laughs (translated), “I did think when I was a teenager that I was going to have such a great time here, but somehow it is even better, which I honestly do not understand how I was able to do.”

From there, we cut to two cows, by some farmhouses and a barn in the background. A farmer is petting and feeding them as they say (translated), “He is so kind, and we get such great food. Yes, it could not be any better.”



*Reklamefilmercom (2010, September 13) Screenshot 00:43*

Then it cuts back to the third scene where the cows say (translated), “ It would be easy to slip up and say, oh thank you so much you are so kind, but we cannot do that, we just have to say moo.”

Finally, the last scene is of a cow walking into the sunlit green fields and open Norwegian countryside, mooing, while a white text appears on the screen (translated), “We do everything so that the cows will thrive. That is how you make great milk”. Followed by the TINE logo and their slogan (translated), “perhaps the world's nicest milk,” and a calm male voice saying, “TINE,” and their famous jingle.



*Reklamefilmercom (2010, September 13) Screenshot 00:58*

#### 4.1.2 Introduction & Contextualization

##### Brand Awareness

In Commercial 1, there is no specific product they are trying to sell. Instead, they aim to promote their brand and core product, great milk. The text at the end, “Sånn blir det god melk av” (That is how you make great milk), connects the actions of all the happy cows on the farm to their products. The cows are the main characters of the commercial, and their role is to communicate how well TINE takes care of them. This tells us something about what TINE wants viewers to associate them with. Most of TINE’s products are dairy products. Creating a commercial that explains how great the cows have it on their farms and that this treatment, in turn, creates excellent milk efficiently promoting a majority of their products without needing to name a specific one.

##### How were the commercials received?

Commercial 1 was met with a certain amount of controversy. The commercial was released in 2010 and shown on television. The Green Party in Norway complained to the Norwegian Consumer Council as they believed the commercial spread wrongful information (Brakstad, 2010). They argued that the commercial did not depict how it was in reality for the cows at the dairy farms. According to the news publication *Nationen*, The Norwegian Consumer Council did not consider the complaint valid to pursue, and therefore, the case was closed. Though TINE has over 480 commercial videos on its YouTube channel, this particular one is not to be found.

##### Genre Inspiration

The advertisement seems to draw inspiration from a famous British short film (1989) and series (2003-2016), *Creature Comforts*, created by Nick Park (IMDB, n. d.). In this short film and series, the characters are animals who speak to a microphone (alluding to animals speaking with a

reporter). The stop-motion film is humoristic, and similarly to the TINE commercial, the animals speak in “human form” as though it is what they always do. They film real animals on a farm but have animated the mouths of the cows, so they are synchronized with a human voiceover – making it look like the cows are speaking in human form. This is similar to the content in *Comforts Creatures* as they also have human voices given to animals in a documentary-style, artificially non-scripted way. Overall, it gives the impression that this is being recorded on a real TINE farm with real cows.

#### 4.1.3 Authenticity

##### Rhetorical Analysis

The setting in which the commercial takes place is one of its main features. The open landscape, green rolling hills, and extensive farmland are the settings where the commercial takes place. Without explicitly stating it, TINE is implying that *this* is the environment all their cows live in all the time. It is as though the “reporter” (represented by the microphone in the frame) came unannounced to the farm to see how the cows live without any preparation or modification to their surroundings. This adds to the *authenticity* of the commercial while also lending itself to how TINE aims to seem credible to viewers and potential buyers in regards to animal welfare and their products.

If we modify the saying “straight from the horse's mouth” to “straight from the cow’s mouth,” we understand how TINE is quite literally trying to make the viewer believe that if the cows are saying that they could not have any better than their current situation on the TINE farm, it *must* be the truth. This way, TINE is gaining a form of credibility, which could be argued is based on questionable representation. It is important to a company like TINE to remove the “otherness” from their product and livestock. According to Landbruk.no, the average Norwegian lowered their milk consumption from 3.1 dl in 2000 to 2.3 dl in 2017, likely lower in 2023. In addition, *Discover* magazine writes, “Milk is probably not the health superfood it was once made out to be” (Putka, 2021). That notion and the increase of people concerned with animal welfare at

dairy farms make it crucial for TINE to remove the “otherness” and make their products more appealing. In this thesis though, the main premise is not to evaluate if the commercials are truthful, but regarding authenticity and credibility, it should be briefly mentioned, which it will sporadically.

Commercial 1 uses emotional appeal to convey authenticity in several ways. There is an element of animal agency in the commercial where the animals speak directly to the viewers and express feelings of content and happiness, making them relatable and authentic. There is also a sense of humor between the cows, which evokes a sense of emotional engagement and authentic connection between the viewers and the animals. Further, the farmer petting and caring for the animals lays the foundation for the authenticity of the animal treatment TINE aims to convey.

As mentioned, the setting where the reporter is questioning the cows is made to look like we, as viewers, are seeing a random day in their lives, and this is how they always live. The emphasis on “naturalness” portrays the animals’ natural behavior on the farm, supporting the notion of authenticity. Moreover, the narrative of the animals keeping their ability to speak a secret consistently reinforces authenticity by showing the cows “mooing” in front of the farmer and speaking like humans when they are alone. Lastly, there is an emotional appeal to the authenticity in Commercial 1 in the feel-good ending of the commercial where the cow is walking into the sunset and the statement across the screen (translated), “We do everything for the cows to thrive.” This is followed by the statement (translated), “That is how you make great milk,” which connects authenticity to milk quality and creates a positive association with the brand.

Commercial 1 displays signs of authenticity through logical reasoning as well. The animals and the farm are displayed as realistic scenes from an average day and may, for many viewers, be aligned with their imagery of the reality of farms. There is a more extensive discussion concerning free-range animals in agriculture and ecological responsibility (Økoliv, n.d.), and the imagery of the cows running around, playing, and being with their “friends and family” is a

direct visual counterargument to those concerns. The authenticity is reinforced again by the reasoning at the end of the commercial, connecting the cows' happiness on the farm with the quality of their products.

#### Semiotic & Myth Analysis

The semiotic elements of Commercial 1 contribute to the narrative we have already discussed. The visual elements of happy cows, expressing the contentment on the farm, and the farmer petting and hand-feeding the cows are all semiotic clusters of signs that reinforce the myth of authenticity in the commercial. Two myths are prevalent through the lens of authenticity. One is how the cows have it so great on TINE farms that they choose to keep their ability to speak like humans a secret in order to keep their reality as is. In other words, it is the myth of the ideal, animal-friendly farm. The other is the myth of authenticity in context of the persuasion of the commercial.

As the theory chapter introduces, authenticity can sometimes be confused with trustworthiness. There is a sense of urgency in how TINE showcases the cows in the commercial, where they spare no time going straight into their messaging; the cows cannot have it any better than on their farms. Further, they spend the whole commercial reiterating this message. TINE intends to seem trustworthy by showing a real farm with real cows while also emphasizing the bond between the cows and the farmer. "Authentically sourced" is often a term that gets spread around in regard to consumer products. Here, TINE suggests a harmonious relationship between the farmer and his cows, pointing to TINE's products being authentically sourced from caring and traditional farms. Further, the slogan (translated) "That is how you make great milk" also reinforces the idea that the authenticity of how TINE treats their cattle is reassured by the happy (talking) cows seen in the commercial.

Based on Barthes's theories, the commercial takes a simple sign of cows and elevates them to a mythical level by attributing them with human-like behaviors. One could argue that this mythical transformation enhances the perceived authenticity of TINE by comparing the cows with an almost magical quality. As Barthes argues, myths are vehicles for conveying ideology. In

this commercial, the speaking cows serve as an ideological tool to promote the authenticity of TINE and their dairy products. It suggests that by choosing TINE, consumers align themselves with a particular set of values. The anchorage in the commercial is the slogan at the end, connecting the visual imagery of the commercial with the result it provides its consumers.

#### Final Thoughts on Authenticity

The authenticity within Commercial 1 is the creation of a believable and relatable world where cows, as anthropomorphized characters, express their contentment and pride in being part of the milk production process. This authenticity is achieved through a combination of emotional and logical appeals, playing semiotic elements that include the use of familiar farm imagery and evoke a sense of relatability.

#### *4.1.4 Anthropomorphism*

##### Rhetorical Analysis

In several ways, anthropomorphism is used as a tool in Commercial 1. The cows speak like humans and represent humanlike behaviors and desires, which makes them more relatable. The commercial's persuasive nature might tint the viewers' perception, but there is undoubtedly an element of "expertise" that the cows hold. One cow explains that (translated) "we are smarter than what people think," this anthropomorphic behavior aids the overall idea that TINE is trying to convey: that even the cows, who are the ones living on the farm, think they are well taken care of.

Moreover, the cow's first words are (translated), "Ah, it is so nice that it is finally summer." This statement alone has positive associations. Although these attitudes towards summer are often the case in most places worldwide, they are widespread for Norwegians who live in darker, colder climates for most of the year. This statement is tied to emotions surrounding summer vacations and pleasant weather and is regarded as the best time of year for many. By doing this, the commercial is framing the situation in a way that is associated with happiness and serenity.

The appeal to emotions takes a step further, emphasizing how happy and content the cows are on the farm. The animals express this repeatedly in different ways. During the commercial, the younger cattle run and “play” as young human children would. There is also a layer of humor in the commercial and in how the animals speak. They are laughing and jokingly speaking throughout while also keeping a somewhat humorous take on their “secret.” They laugh and say (translated), “There are times when we want to say, “thank you,” but we cannot do that. We just have to say moo”. These are all examples of how anthropomorphism appeals to emotions in Commercial 1.

There is also a smaller element of logical reasoning within the realm of anthropomorphism in the commercial. At the end of Commercial 1, as mentioned before, the anchorage enhances the idea that when the cows are content and happy, they produce great milk. This reasoning is reinforced through the anthropomorphic elements of the cows themselves saying they have it great on the farm. Therefore, the viewers understand that there is a close association between the quality of the cows’ lives and the quality of their milk.

#### Semiotic & Myth Analysis

Anthropomorphism is revealed in Commercial 1 through the use of signs and symbols as well. There is personification that takes place when the animals speak and behave like humans. This sort of behavior is a cluster of semiotic signs that bridges the gap between the animal and human worlds and blurs the boundaries between the two. This is even more evident when the mouths and faces of the cows are animated to look like they are speaking like humans. These are all semiotic tools that work towards the overall persuasion process that takes place in this commercial.

According to Lvi (2021), “In many human cultures, cows symbolize fertility, generosity, motherhood, the origins of life, and they are related to serenity. Cows ... are recurring presences within mythologies and ancient religions. [It is] an animal, yes, but it’s also a powerful symbol, myth, and metaphor.” These are present throughout history and in some places all over the world. Therefore, the cow has symbolic meaning, reiterating the message it is trying to convey.

As a symbol of fertility and the origin of life, without any consideration of anthropomorphic tendencies, the cows themselves are a symbol that represents something natural and with abundance.

The choice of human voices is also essential to note. They are all female (obviously, as they are dairy cows), but a point has been made to include as many different ages as possible. From a marketing perspective, this could be motivated by a wish to target as many age brackets as possible within the commercial. It can also be because they want to illustrate that all sorts of cows are at the farm, including their children. Still, it is interesting that in Commercial 1, they start with more mature cows who sound older. Although we are refraining from discussing the complete accuracy of the commercials, this does not represent how most dairy farms are.

Although this is a commercial and not a news segment or documentary, and complete accuracy is optional, some discrepancies exist between the cows in the commercial and the real ones on this point. According to TINE.no (2023), cows on dairy farms live until they are about 4.5 years old and have had around three cattle. This would be considered a young woman in human age as, according to TINE.no, they would otherwise live until they are 10-15 years old when living until their natural death. Therefore, the older cows in the commercial would have realistically been sent to the slaughterhouses long before that age, and we should only hear, theoretically, younger cows speak. Regardless, these voices in the commercial evoke a sense of happiness and serenity, which ties nicely with their symbolic meaning and message.

Anthropomorphism also contributes to creating a myth surrounding TINE's dairy products. The myth of "Natural Harmony" is illustrated in Commercial 1. It suggests that the animals live in perfect harmony with humans and have a common understanding while also communicating with each other effortlessly. The animals also willingly participate in human activities such as speaking and performing (producing milk) for human benefit. These anthropomorphic elements all reinforce the myth of natural harmony in the commercial.

Also, another myth supported by the anthropomorphic tendencies in this commercial is the myth of hidden human potential. This myth constructs a narrative where the animals possess human-like qualities but choose to hide these capabilities to maintain the established power dynamics between humans and animals. This is interesting as this almost makes it so that TINE is trying to sell the idea that the cows *prefer* to have it this way. It aligns with Barthes' idea that myths naturalize cultural conventions and beliefs, which, in this case, the myth is how the cows choose not to reveal their abilities as they prefer to stay on the farm, seemingly the most natural thing.

While anthropomorphism attempts to humanize animals and give them human-like characteristics, oversimplifying their behaviors and complexities could ultimately lead to misconceptions about them. One of the cows in this commercial explicitly says that they are smarter than what humans think, which perhaps is included to combat this exact thing. When we consider how anthropomorphism has been used, we can see that creatures in stories from creators like Disney or Asbjørnsen & Moe often connect only one or two characteristics to the animals, which often will either misconstrue their actual abilities or oversimplify them. In Commercial 1, we are left with the impression that the cows are much more intelligent than humans think, not only in the way that they can speak like humans, but in the way that they are aware of seasons (knowing that it is summertime), and that they are capable of intentionally keeping a secret (that they can speak). This somewhat shows that in Commercial 1, the anthropomorphism is not overly simplifying them.

TINE is not the only company using cows with anthropomorphic behaviors in commercials. One of the first examples of this was for the Norwegian chocolate called Stratos. According to *Kampanje.com*, their cow (with anthropomorphic characteristics) was first shown in 1979. Their cow is animated, which differs from the ones we see with TINE. We also have other examples, particularly with the cows in commercials for Melkesjokolade by Freia, where they use "real" looking cows with anthropomorphic characteristics similar to TINE. This tells us something about the Norwegian historical and cultural context in which Commercial 1 occurs.

The historical anthropomorphic discourse is essential to consider when we expand on how the animals are used to bring brand awareness to TINE.

#### *4.1.5 Myth of Norwegianness*

##### Rhetorical Analysis

There are several ways that the myth of Norwegianness is used as a rhetorical tool in Commercial 1. The rolling hills and lush landscape are often used to show how Norway looked traditionally while also used to illustrate the epitome of Norwegian culture. These images do, therefore, lend themselves to a sense of patriotism, pride, and loyalty to the country of Norway. When TINE uses this as their commercial backdrop, they are making an almost seamless connection between these characteristics, which are so tightly connected to what it means to be Norwegian and nationalism to themselves. From a rhetorical perspective, we can then argue that by TINE connecting their brand to patriotism, pride, and loyalty, consumers of their brand are invited to conform to what it means to be Norwegian.

At the end of Commercial 1, the white writing across the screen states (translated), “Perhaps the world’s finest milk,” which seems to have been borrowed from somewhere else. This tagline was most likely taken from Carlsberg Group, a leading company within the brewing industry, whose tagline has been since 1973 some variation of “Probably the best beer in the world” (Alonso, 2022).

##### Semiotic & Myth Analysis

As we touched on previously, the breathtaking Norwegian countryside, is a national symbol of what is the essence of the myth of Norwegianness culturally. It evokes a national identity, which TINE aims to be associated with. The animals in Commercial 1 also hold a symbolic meaning. As discussed previously, the cows symbolize fertility and the circle of life, and for this commercial,

they symbolize something *natural*. The connotations surrounding this term hint to the viewers that choosing TINE is both *natural* and *a natural choice*.

There is also a sense of localism shown in Commercial 1. Although TINE is one of the largest dairy producers in Norway, this commercial gives the impression that behind this large company are small farms operated by loving and kind farmers whose top priority is ensuring that the cows live a good life. This gives the big capitalistic company a face and relatability, an efficient tool for a commercial like this. Therefore, TINE creates a shared identity between them and its viewers. Combining traditionalism and localism provides a strong sense of national identity in Commercial 1.

The myth of Norwegianness is represented through different ideologies displayed in the commercial. It is tightly connected to culture, nature, and national romanticism ideologies. Without explicitly stating this anywhere, TINE aims to tell the viewer *something* about the myth of Norwegianness and seeks to leave the viewer thinking that they go hand in hand. The myth of Norwegianness is complex and has changed throughout the years. In the nineteenth century, the myth of Norwegianness could be considered differently than today, primarily due to globalization and digitalization. The world has become a smaller place with technology, and travel and cultures have changed drastically because of it. Norwegianness today is more than just Caucasian, blonde, blue-eyed families on beautiful hillside farms across the fjords on a summer's day eating Norwegian strawberries, which always leads to a sticky narration of Norwegian culture lacking a sense of diversity in its explanation. Today, as Vassenden (2010) mentions, Norwegians are of all colors, shapes, and backgrounds, with family histories stretching far across the globe with all their unique traditions, food habits, and ideas of the world. Although this is the case, TINE still points to some specific signs that pertain to the traditional myth of Norwegianness. We see the beautiful landscape and the rolling hills as signs that tell us something about openness, freedom, and calmness, which again speaks to the more prominent myth of Norwegianness.

Not only is this important to TINE because it is, at times, a counterpart to the narrative that the animals in the agriculture industry are not given enough freedom, space, or calmness, but it is also tying this back to the myth of Norwegianness and how consuming their products is part of being Norwegian. So, by facilitating the connection between TINE as a company (Commercial 1), their product (Commercial 2), and the myth of Norwegianness, they are contributing to both the idea of TINE as a company, providing products that are essential to being Norwegian and that their animals are provided with plenty of space, calm environments, and nature. The animals in the commercials play an essential role in supporting this myth by first being traditional agricultural Norwegian animals while also providing statements supporting the ideologies of freedom, calmness, and openness.

Tying in with the myth of Norwegianness is a cultural heritage myth, golden age myth, and national pride myth. These are all woven together in a way. The cultural heritage myth is the idea that Norwegian dairy farming and producing high-quality milk are deeply embedded in the nation's cultural heritage. This reinforces the connection that TINE aims to create between its products and Norwegian tradition. Further, the golden age myth pushes this narrative by portraying the cows as content and articulate beings, suggesting that life on the Norwegian dairy farms is idyllic and harmonious. This myth aligns with the romanticized image of rural Norway, bringing us to the next myth: the national pride myth. This myth is strongly represented throughout the commercial, which has already been established, but the anchorage at the end brings it home. The statement (translated) "TINE, Perhaps the best milk in the world" suggests that TINE dairy products contribute to our agricultural industries' national pride and excellence. This reinforces a sense of suppository in Norwegian-made products.

#### Impact on Social Values

Throughout the analysis of Commercial 1, findings speak to more extensive conversations of authenticity and nationalism. We have looked at how anthropomorphism and the myth of Norwegianness play a central part in displaying the animals in Commercial 1. We should also shine some light on the environmental responsibility and cultural identity that play a part in the commercial.

In a time when global warming and sustainability are ever more critical, TINE is connecting its dairy products with environmental responsibility. By associating its dairy products with contented cows and pristine nature, the commercial implies that by choosing TINE as the producer of dairy products, one is choosing a company committed to responsible environmental stewardship. Secondly, Commercial 1 also taps into the cultural identity we discussed previously. The quintessential Norwegian rural scenes, traditional farms, and happy cows together resonate strongly with Norwegian pride and a sense of cultural identity.

## 4.2 Commercial 2: “Simply the Best” by TINE SA (2014)

### 4.2.1 Description of the Data

#### Commercial 2: “Simply the Best” (Singing Goat) by TINE SA (2014)

The commercial is 31 seconds long. Similarly to Commercial 1, the scenes are loosely associative and aim to illustrate a “cause and effect” case. It is set in the Norwegian countryside, on top of a mountain, overlooking the fjords on a sunny day.

The first scene pans across the scenery, and a white goat sings, “I’m simply the best.” The goat stomps with the beat of the music. The song playing is The Best by Tina Turner.



*TINE SA (2014, October 3). Screenshot 00:04*

The following two scenes overlap, and we see a closeup of the goat. She signs, “Better than all the rest, yeah.” Then we see her hooves step in the beat of the song again, the same way that

Tina Turner would, as she sings, “Better than anyone. Oh, I'm the best!” her tail is wagging with the beat of the music.



*TINE SA (2014, October 3). Screenshot 00:13*



*TINE SA (2014, October 3). Screenshot 00:14-00:18*

We then see the goat from afar, through an open window with white shutters, but now the goat is not singing anymore. She is bleating. The camera zooms out, and we see the back of the heads of a couple sitting inside, looking at the goat.



*TINE SA (2014, October 3). Screenshot 00:23*

The commercial cuts to the front of the couple's faces, sitting inside a cabin (which we can tell as all the interior is exposed wood, which is very common inside cabins in Norway), eating their breakfast, and looking distraught. A calm female voiceover says (translated), "It is easy to think highly of yourself when you make such great milk."



*TINE SA (2014, October 3). Screenshot 00:24*

The final scene is the same breakfast table without the couple sitting there. In the blurred background, we see the goat. There is a blue plate with a slice of bread, carefully placed slices of white goat cheese, and a little green garnish. Next to the plate is a sealed package of the white goat cheese and a white text stating, (translated) "Real white goat cheese, wonderfully fresh and delicate," in addition to the TINE logo. The voiceover says (translated), "New, TINE real white goat cheese."



*TINE SA (2014, October 3). Screenshot 00:28*

#### 4.2.2 Introduction & Contextualization

##### Context

This commercial was published in 2014 for TINE AS, and according to *Lofotposten*, the star of the commercial, the goat, is a real goat from Saupstad farm. *Lofotposten* continues to explain how the need for a commercial for goat cheese was voiced by the goat cheese producers themselves, who believed that their product needed more publicity. The owners, Hugo Vink and Marielle de Roos at Lofoten Gårdsysteri at Saupstad in Vestvågøy explained how happy the goat was and that the movements we see in the commercial were all from the goat herself, who did “exactly as the director wanted” (Johansen, 2014). They also explain how they initially planned on using the song “I Believe I Can Fly” and found that “The Best” by Tina Turner was a better fit. The actors in the commercial are also locals from Vestvåg Teaterlag.

##### Genre Inspiration

The commercial seems to draw inspiration from *The Charlie Brown and Snoopy Show*, created by Charles M Schulz and aired from 1983 to 1985 (IMDb, n. d.). The popular show, which continued to air with shows and movies later on, displays a boy with his friends and dog. They all understand one another, but once the adults, either parents or teachers, talk to them, it sounds like muffled noises to the kids and the viewers. Similarly to the advertisement with the goat singing, the humans beside the goat only hear the bleat, not the singing.

##### Layered messaging

There are several ways Commercial 2 drives its message home. The goat thinks she makes delicious milk, and the voiceover explains that it is not strange that she thinks that way since she does make such great milk. We know that the goat thinks she is great because she sings the famous Tina Turner song “The Best.” Further, there is a third way their message comes across through the animal chosen for this commercial: the goat. Generally, although particularly from an American standpoint, “the coinage/acronym GOAT stands for ‘Greatest of All Times’” (Engle,

2023) and is often used to describe athletes who have been performing at a consecutive high level over time. Examples of this are people like Serena Williams, Tiger Woods, Michael Jordan, and Kobe Bryant, who have all shown to be the strongest athletes within their field over time. It is, therefore, a clever way for TINE to subtly convey its message further.

#### 4.2.3 Authenticity

##### Rhetorical Analysis

The way that Commercial 2 conveys authenticity is different from Commercial 1. The commercial itself is much shorter than Commercial 1 and appeals to credibility in a different way. The commercial has three parts. The first is the Tina Turner classic pop song playing throughout the commercial with the goat signing on the mountaintop overlooking the fjords. The second is the couple in the cabin looking baffled at the goat by the kitchen table. Lastly, the piece of bread with the goat cheese, an unopened cheese package next to it on the same kitchen table with the voiceover stating how it is easy to be so confident in a product when they make such great cheese. Together, these three scenes create a story but not a story of credibility.

One could argue that there is a sense of authenticity in how the goat is a real goat from a real dairy farm, but that could be considered a far stretch. On one hand, TINE, as a company, holds credibility in the Norwegian society within the dairy industry as it is a brand people know. On the other hand, a large cooperation that is tied to controversies surrounding animal welfare could possibly connect them to less credible attributes. As one of the largest dairy producers in the country, any product tied to its name can carry some form of credibility issues. As with any company reaching a large group of people, there will always be a chance that *someone* who is critical of something the company does or does not do. Authenticity, on the other hand, is more difficult to distinguish. Being authentic is, according to Lindholm (2008), being “real” or “true,” in Commercial 2, we see a real goat, but it is doing things that are not real (singing). On the

other hand, the people in the cabin seem more authentic, and their reaction to the goat appears truthful.

Moreover, Commercial 2 appeals to emotions to a more considerable extent than credibility. Firstly, the music choice acts as an appeal to emotions. Tina Turner was at her peak of popularity many years ago, but her most popular songs are still quickly recognizable today. Since the commercial aims to sell a new product that TINE's audience might not have tried before (white goat cheese in solid form), framing the product with familiar scenery and familiar music helps the overall intent, which helps to make the product more recognizable to their consumers. So, the nostalgia of the music choice is therefore contributing to the emotional appeal in Commercial 2.

Authenticity is further depicted in Commercial 2 when we see the couple looking at the goat. Their shocked expression is somewhat comical and gives the commercial a humorous twist. The commercial tells us something about how TINE exemplifies how animals are central to their operations. John Berger (1980) explains the concept of how animals are perceived in relation to other animals or humans. We, as humans, categorize animals and understand them in relation to how we perceive and understand ourselves. This is interesting to note, as TINE presents the opposite in commercials 1 and 2. The main characters being animals, having either themselves or the narrator explaining the world from the animals' perspective could be intriguing for viewers. This observation is based on the notion of John Berger, which was just mentioned, as the animals give the humans in the commercial context. Without the cows in Commercial 1, the farmer would not be a farmer. Without the goat in Commercial 2, the couple in the cottage would not be eating goat cheese.

The messaging is straightforward in Commercial 2. The music is stating that it is simply the best, while the goat is singing that she is simply the best. The voiceover makes logical reasoning by explaining that it is not so difficult to understand that the goat is so confident in herself since she makes such great cheese. There is a simplicity in the messaging, and there are no

explanations for why it is such great cheese or what distinguishes their cheese from anyone else's. We do not even see the people in the commercial eating the cheese or stating how good it tastes. This tactic can give the impression that TINE is so confident in their new goat cheese that there is no need for flashy marketing techniques because their product holds its merit.

It is also worth noting that the people in the commercial look like ordinary people in the sense that they do not have extravagant appearances or clothing. This is no coincidence. By choosing a couple like this, the commercial makes it easy for many to relate to them. By connecting its message to real people, a real goat, and genuine reactions, the commercial fosters a sense of trust and credibility, making viewers more likely to believe in the excellence of TINE's new goat cheese.

#### Semiotic & Myth Analysis

The visual semiotic elements in Commercial 2 have a few of the same characteristics as Commercial 1. The scenic backdrop creates the framework in which the narrative takes place. Like in Commercial 1, rolling hills overlooking fjords hold a strong position in Norwegian culture. This landscape is considered authentically Norwegian and contributes to the idea of this TINE product being natural. Further, including this landscape connects the product to Norway's cultural identity. It suggests that the cheese is not only of high quality but is also authentically Norwegian, adding depth to the myth of authenticity. This idea is further confirmed with the anchorage at the end, where the TINE logo is shown, and the explicit display of the goat cheese with the tagline that emphasizes its qualities: authentic, great cheese.

The choice of soundtrack is also significant. The song "The Best" by Tina Turner simplifies the decision-making process by suggesting that this goat cheese is not just good but the best. This aligns with the myth of excellence by reinforcing the idea that it is a superior choice for consumers. Semiotically, some similarities can be drawn between TINE as a company name and Tina Turner as an artist's name. This is not of any considerable significance, but it is interesting to note.

Just like there were symbolic meanings for the cows in Commercial 1, there are several symbolic meanings for goats as well. Some of them are dark and often connected to satanic imagery, while others connect them to purity and authenticity. Villalobos and Fuentes (2017) write about how the goat has, to ancient men, been associated with burning sexuality and lust while also being considered a whimsical and unstable animal who has been a symbol of Christ. Parkes (1987), on the other hand, writes about how the goat has a central meaning in the Hindu tribe “Kafir”. In their views, the imagery of a goat on a hillside is tightly connected to being the mediator between man and the spiritual world. Although we can, with some certainty, state that these symbolic meanings were not intentionally meant to be tied to the TINE product, one could argue that goats generally seem to hold symbolisms further than the natural world. It seems obvious that TINE will display a goat in a goat cheese commercial, so I believe that although there are these associations and symbolic meanings to the animal, TINE did not choose a goat based on these connections.

#### Final Thoughts on Authenticity

Drawing a comparison between commercials 1 and 2, authenticity is used as a funnel for the imagery that displays anthropomorphized animals and notions of Norwegianness. As building blocks, we will move on to the Anthropomorphism chapter, where we will look further into how the goat in Commercial 2 is used from an anthropomorphic viewpoint. Like Commercial 1, authenticity is achieved through a combination of emotional and logical appeals, playing semiotic and mythical elements that speak to the extensive conversion in which the discourse of authenticity takes place.

#### *4.2.4 Anthropomorphism*

##### Rhetorical Analysis

Similarly to Commercial 1, anthropomorphism holds a central role in Commercial 2. The commercial’s main character, the goat, is singing and moving to the song’s beat, displaying human-like behaviors. As mentioned, the commercial does not explain *why* they believe their

goat cheese is so great. They show the goat singing that she is “The best,” the voiceover works as an anchorage of the message by stating that it is not hard to understand that the goat “feels that way” when she makes such great cheese. By depicting the goat with anthropomorphic characteristics, the commercial conveys the key message that they make the best goat cheese.

As we saw in Commercial 1, there is a sense of comic relief in showing the goat with her anthropomorphic behaviors. Appealing to emotions through amusement can be an efficient way of breaking barriers when constructing commercials. Often, people will be more skeptical of a product or service when they know the context in which it is being displayed is a commercial. By appealing to emotions of amusement, the messaging feels less targeted towards the consumer and could be more pleasant to watch. This can contribute to the efficiency of the commercial. Animals, especially cute ones like a goat, also appeal to emotions of comfort and happiness. Further, the expressions on the faces of the humans in the cabin also contribute to the comical impression of the commercial. Collectively, using animals with anthropomorphic characteristics is an efficient way of marketing and appealing to emotions.

#### Semiotic & Myth Analysis

The commercial revolves around the goat, naturally. Still, the people, the backdrop, the final scene with the sandwich on the kitchen table, and the voiceover also play a role in the overall message of the commercial. They collectively communicate that this is simply “The Best” goat cheese.

Tina Turner, the artist who originally sang the song “The Best,” was known for her legs and how she danced. In the music video of this song, we see her dance, and we see a horse. The way the camera moves back and forth between Turner's different body parts and the horse makes it so that the viewers draw connections between them. The way the camera zooms in on the calves, legs, and behind the two is similar to how Commercial 2 moves the camera on the different body parts of the goat. This is a clear connection that the commercial is aiming to achieve.



*Tina Turner. (2009, March 13). Screenshot 00:14-00:15*

*TINE SA (2014, October 3). Screenshot 00:10*

There is a significant difference, though, that the music video does not show examples of anthropomorphism like the commercial does. The horse's movements in the music video are "natural," while the movements of the goat are choreographed or animated to match the way that Tina Turner and the horse in her music video moved.

The backdrop of Commercial 2 also holds semiotic and mythical characteristics. The ideas surrounding what is natural and authentic, which, as established, are tightly connected to the Norwegian countryside, are easily related to the product in Commercial 2. As mentioned earlier, there have not been any explanations as to why their cheese is the best, but there are semiotic signs which unconsciously explain this. The Norwegian countryside is a cluster of semiotic signs connected with natural, clean, authentic myths. We will look further into these signs and myths in the next section.

By acting like a human and proclaiming the cheese to be "the best," the goat reinforces the myth that choosing this product aligns consumers with a particular set of values and ideals related to excellence and authenticity. They are then tied to superiority and exclusivity, which many consumers find appealing. From a marketing perspective, this could be considered an efficient way of using anthropomorphism to connect their goat cheese to the myth of "the elite."

Similarly to Commercial 1, an anthropomorphic reduction discourse occurs in Commercial 2. For several reasons, the oversimplification of animals with anthropomorphic characteristics can be

challenging. Firstly, the complexity of animals, their needs, and behaviors are often lost with anthropomorphism. In this case, the goat displayed in the commercial is a dairy goat who produces milk for TINE, who uses it to sell products such as cheese made from the goat's milk. Again, like Commercial 1, the reality of the goat's life and their surroundings are not fully displayed in this commercial. Placing an anthropomorphic goat on the top of a mountain, overlooking the fjords, will give many viewers the impression that this is how the goats live. By oversimplifying their reality, it seems to communicate a narrative that perhaps is not based on the reality of the goat's life.

Animals, like humans, have a complexity that can often be overlooked, especially in short-form content such as this commercial. Interestingly, it seems to be a theme across the TINE commercials that the animals are reduced to simplified beings without nuances. This has its benefits in commercials, however. When the plotline and characters are simple, the messaging can be more easily understood in the way the communicator wants. By this, I mean that with complicated storylines with complex characters, there is room for more misunderstandings and miscommunications. It is, therefore, understandably crucial to simplify the plot and characters in a short commercial.

It is, however, essential to acknowledge how these simplifications can have ramifications on how we view the characters in the commercial. In this case, the goat has no further depth to her than the fact that she is confident in her milk. It could also be argued that the goat is portrayed as less intelligent based on how the humans look at the bleating goat. The commercial aims to convey the storyline that the goat herself is singing about how she is simply the best. However, the humans only hear the bleating, insinuating that the average person "does not understand" goats the way TINE does. Alongside that, it may also insinuate that the humans find the goat both annoying and less intelligent. This again contributes to the discourse of anthropomorphic reduction in Commercial 2.

#### 4.2.5 *Myth of Norwegianness*

##### Rhetorical Analysis

Many of the same elements of the myth of Norwegianness are displayed in both Commercial 1 and 2. Firstly, we have established that it is evident that TINE makes a point of connecting its brand to the Norwegian countryside. Secondly, Norwegian agriculture is displayed in a way that not only creates an image of all agricultural animals living the way they do in these commercials but also that this reality is tightly connected to what many consider the myth of Norwegianness. Thirdly, the credibility tied to TINE as a company in Commercial 1 is similar to that of Commercial 2. However, its primary goal is to sell a specific product, as opposed to Commercial 1, where brand awareness was the primary goal.

In Commercial 2, there is a connection between the song that the goat sings, “The Best” by Tina Turner, and the rolling hills and beautiful fjords in the Norwegian countryside as well. This connection is between the visual message and the audio message. Connecting the two makes it evident that not only does the goat think she is simply the best, but Norway is somehow also simply the best. This lends to the idea that Norway has a strong national pride, which is tightly connected to the Norwegian countryside.

Emotionally, the commercial is of the humoristic kind where some will find the singing goat funny. What brings the humoristic theme onwards in the commercial is the abrupt silence when we see the couple staring at the goat in disbelief, and the goat is no longer singing but bleating out. The couple seems to be in their 50s or 60s, and the lady is wearing a traditional Norwegian cardigan while the man is wearing a casual blue/gray button-up shirt. We see that the inside of the cabin is all exposed wooden paneling, and the couple is eating what can be assumed to be breakfast at a table by an open window. This is a setting that many Norwegians can relate to and a familiar setting when visiting the average cabin across Norway.

A narrative sequence throughout the commercial makes it easy to follow. The introduction of the singing goat, showing the couple's surprised reaction, and linking it all to the quality of Norwegian TINE dairy products reinforces a logical progression where the idea that there is a direct link between the entertaining goat and the product's excellence takes place. Combined, this supports a logical appeal, which Commercial 2 differs from Commercial 1. The animals' role in both are essential to note. The rest of the commercial would not have its meaning without the animals, and they contribute to both the narrative and the associations to the myth of Norwegianness that the viewers are left with.

Rhetorically, the myth of Norwegianness is shown in Commercial 2 through the Norwegian countryside, the couple's attire in the cabin, the cabin itself, and the breakfast set-up, integral to the plotline while also being essential to what many will consider quintessential Norwegian.

#### Semiotic & Myth Analysis

Norway is known to have its own form of goat cheese, which is different from most of the world. It is a brown cheese, and when people refer to goat cheese in Norway, it is often assumed that it refers to brown goat cheese. This gives the goat a regional relevance, which ties the goat to the myth of Norwegianness in a unique way, specifically for this culture. There is also a symbolic meaning of the setting in which the commercial takes place as well. By featuring the goat in a natural, picturesque environment, the commercial aligns the clusters of symbolic meanings of Norway with the dairy product featured in this commercial. This, again, combines the connotations of what is pure, natural, and authentically Norwegian with TINE and its products, similar to Commercial 1.

There is an underlying sense of superiority that takes place in Commercial 2. In Commercial 1, the cows speak of how great they have it on the farm but do not state that they have it any better than any other cows. They simply say how great they have it but do not go in-depth about *how* they have it so great (other than that they can "do whatever they want").

From a semiotic/myth analysis standpoint, and through the lens of the myth of Norwegianness, Commercial 2 also displays characteristics formed by the myth of excellence. As mentioned, they do not explain why they are the best or why the goat thinks she is the best. It is simply a blanket statement. The statement does not tell us anything about the characteristics of the quality of the cheese, but rather the subjective superiority of their products over other competitors, which differentiates the two commercials. The myth of Norwegianness is displayed in a way that depicts it superiorly while simultaneously connecting it to the product TINE sells in the commercial. The song choice and the goats' behavior contribute to the myth of excellence. Combining the goat cheese product with the myth of excellence contributes to a desirable alignment with excellence that is appealing to consumers. In this case, consumers are positioned as individuals who appreciate excellence by choosing the products associated with the signing goat. They are led to believe that their choice reflects their great taste for the best regarding food and cultural values. The myth encourages consumers to view the products as not just good but excellent.

Norwegianness is a multi-faceted term, and in regards to these commercials it tells us something about the associations that TINE aims to be connected to. This includes the two myths mentioned previously: the myth of excellence and the myth of national pride. Together, they paint an image that is not only easy for Norwegians to relate to but also desirable to relate to as well. The desire to be connected to excellence is a natural want, so the connection between TINE's products and these myths is a clever rhetorical tool to utilize in their commercials.

#### Conclusion of Commercial 2

In conclusion, the analysis of Commercial 2 reveals a compelling narrative deeply rooted in the myth of Norwegianness. This narrative is constructed through a multitude of discourses that touch upon the country's natural beauty, cultural heritage, emotional connections, exceptionalism, and national identity. As the singing goat stands proudly atop a Norwegian mountain, overlooking the fjords in the brilliant sunshine, the commercial symbolizes the picturesque landscapes that have come to define Norway. This visual representation invokes a

discourse of the nation's natural beauty, enticing consumers to experience the pristine authenticity of Norwegian dairy products.

Berger (1980) highlights Aristotle's work in "History of Animals" where it says, "Some of these qualities in man, as compared with the corresponding qualities in animals, differ only quantitatively: that is to say, man has more or less of this quality, and an animal has more or less of some other." (Berger, 1980, p. 8) I point this out as it considers animals to have the same qualities as man, with the only difference being the quantities of these qualities. When considering this, we might realize that humans are much more similar to animals than people often think. Further, when considering man and animals in such proximity, it is understandable how the producers of these commercials so seamlessly blur the line between human and animal behaviors. The commercials by TINE (commercials 1 & 2) suit this proximity that Aristotle explains, which is interesting because if TINE was a company that produced meat products, they might not have wanted to create this connection as strongly as they do now as a company that produces dairy products.

As we transition to our analysis of Commercial 3, it is important to understand these discourses. Commercial 2 has demonstrated how authenticity is constructed through a profound connection to the myth of Norwegianness. This authenticity is not merely a marketing ploy; it is a reflection of the deep-seated cultural values and pride that the nation holds. In Commercial 3, we will explore how similar or distinct discourses are at play or if they bring something entirely new to the discourse of authenticity. As we continue, we will be attentive to how these discourses may evolve or transform to accommodate the specific themes and messages of Commercial 3.

## 4.3 Commercial 3: “Pant for dyra” by INFINITUM (2022)

### 4.3.1 Description of the Data

#### Commercial 3: “Pant for dyra” (Recycle for the animals) by INFINITUM (2022)

The commercial is 30 seconds long. The first scene shows a large, open, green field with trees and mountains in the background. In the middle of the screen is a country road going diagonally, with a red car that the camera follows as it drives away from where the camera is.



*Infinitum No. (2022, June 30). Screenshot 00:01*

In the second scene, we are inside the car. Techno music is playing as though it is played from inside the car, and we see a young couple sitting in the front seats. They are smiling and seem to be having a great time. The woman drinks from an orange, black, and blue tin can.



*Infinitem No. (2022, June 30). Screenshot 00:02-00:03*

The third scene is a close-up shot of the outside of the car, and we see the woman throwing the can out of the window.



*Infinitem No. (2022, June 30). Screenshot 00:05*

The camera follows the can as the car drives away.

The music leaves with it, and we see the can be hidden amongst the grass in silence.



*Infinitem No. (2022, June 30). 00:06*

The next scene is of a large machinery that plows the grass, including the can, which we can audibly hear and visibly see be crushed.



*Infinitum No. (2022, June 30). Screenshot 00:09*

We are then moved into a barn. We see a farmer walking down an aisle in the middle of the frame, raking the hay around for the cows on either side of the aisle.



*Infinitum No. (2022, June 30). Screenshot 00:14*

As we see the cut-up can between strands of hay, a calm female voiceover says (translated), “What we throw in nature ends up in the food supply for the animals.”



*Infinitum No. (2022, June 30). Screenshot 00:17*

The last scene before the screen goes black is a close-up of a cow eating hay in the barn.



*Infinitum No. (2022, June 30). Screenshot 00:21*

While the screen is black, the voiceover says the same thing as the white lettering on the screen. (translated) “Bottles and cans can have a new life. Animals cannot. Recycle everything.

Recycle for the animals”. We see the recycling logo, but there is a cow instead of the price (usually 2-4kr).



*Infinitem No. (2022, June 30). Screenshot 00: 24*

Lastly, the Infinitem logo appears with the statement beneath (translated), “Recycle for the animals.”



*Infinitem No. (2022, June 30). Screenshots 00:26-00:29*

### 4.3.2 Introduction & Contextualization

#### Context

According to *Kampanje.com*, the Infinitum commercial was made through Pulse Communications, which has plans to further its slogan of “recycle for the animals” (“pant for dyra”) in the future. The commercial is directed by Daniel Farhe and produced by Emma Torhen in the production company Fenomen. On Infinitum’s website, there is a two-minute video accompanying the commercial where the farmer further discusses the complications of throwing cans and trash in nature, which ends up in the animals’ food supply.

This commercial has a more classic form with no anthropomorphic animal behaviors. The cows are “mooring,” and a female voice descriptively adds a voiceover to the commercial. Although many think Walt Disney was the first to display a voiceover for Mickey Mouse in *Steamboat Willie* in 1928, the first was, in fact, Canadian Reginald Fessenden in 1900 (Hoke, 2021). This voiceover style is prevalent in commercials to convey essential facts and a story for short-form videos. This makes the commercial more informative with a more storytelling narrative than the others.

Infinitum commercials have historically been of high production value and have included major athletic superstars like Aksel Lund Svindal and Karsten Warholm. According to *Kampanje.com*, this new commercial with the slogan “pant for dyra” (Recycle for the animals) is part of a new approach their communication company, Pulse, has initiated. In other words, it is expected that there will be further commercials that will address the same topic.

#### What are they trying to convey?

Commercial 3’s primary goal is to sell a service. This commercial aims to change the behavior of many Norwegians who throw cans and garbage in nature. Infinitum wants Norwegians to recycle ALL bottles and cans. With this commercial, they are trying to convey a message that

they believe that not all Norwegians are aware that what they throw in nature can end up in the food supply of animals, which in turn can lead to injury or death. Although neither Commercial 1 nor Commercial 3, and we will soon see also Commercial 4, are not selling a specific product, they are all selling an idea and building their branding publicly with their commercials. A difference worth noting is that Commercial 1 aims to promote the quality of its main ingredient. In contrast, Commercial 3 aims to promote a change in people's behavior, leading them to use their services.

### *4.3.3 Authenticity*

#### Rhetorical Analysis

This commercial is different from the two previous ones in a few ways. Firstly, it has a different tone. The first two commercials are more humoristic compared to Commercial 3, which has a more serious tone. This seriousness contributes to the credibility of the commercial. There is no explicit explanation as to why the viewer should believe the narrator and its message. The narration is calm and informative while refraining from overt persuasion, opting for an understated, knowledgeable tone. This approach fosters a sense of trust rather than manipulation, aligning perfectly with the concept of authenticity.

However, the entire commercial backdrop serves as an implicit endorsement, affirming the credibility. The pristine countryside, the farmer tending to the cows, and the unspoiled environment collectively create an environment of authenticity. This authenticity derives from depicting a genuine, unadulterated farm and real cows. Further, the commercial itself stands out as it is not selling a product, but it falls somewhere in between a commercial for brand awareness and for selling a service. Infinitum earns its money from people recycling, so although the commercial encourages people to recycle for the animals, it is still encouraging for their own gain as well.

The emotional appeal in Commercial 3 is crucial in eliciting feelings of responsibility, empathy, and care from viewers. The audience's emotional journey begins when the woman throws the can out of the car window. The action is portrayed with striking cinematography, creating a vivid image as the can lands in a field, engulfed in a cloud of hay by the giant machine-cutter. The viewer can immediately be struck by a feeling of fear when they see where the can ends up. The following sequence shifts to the barn, where cows stand waiting to be fed. The visual progression forces the viewer to confront the potential consequences of thoughtless littering. The innocent cows, oblivious to the waste in the food, can evoke a strong emotional response from the audience.

As the commercial unfolds, it guides the audience to a deeper emotional connection. When the narrator softly utters the line, "What we throw in nature can end up in the food supply for animals," the message is reinforced by the image of a cow chewing its cud. The viewer is encouraged to empathize with the animal, envisioning the potential harm their careless actions might cause. This emotional manipulation is subtle yet powerful, potentially striking a chord with the viewer's values and principles regarding the ethical treatment of animals.

The commercial concludes with a transition to black and white, creating a stark contrast that highlights the seriousness of the message. The text appears: "Bottles and cans can have several lives. Animals cannot. Recycle everything. Recycle for the Animals" — resonates deeply with viewers, appealing to their emotions by emphasizing the irreplaceable nature of animal lives. This statement is profoundly impactful as it underscores the importance of empathy, responsibility, and moral duty. Recycling is not just an environmental act but a matter of ethical consideration.

The logical appeal in Commercial 3 predominantly hinges on cause and effect, a pivotal aspect of authenticity anchored in the real world. The commercial explicitly illustrates a cause-and-effect relationship, making it transparent and comprehensible to viewers. The cause is the seemingly innocent act of littering, symbolized by the woman throwing a can out of the car

window. The effect is depicted through the industrial machinery in the field and the cows in the barn. This logical progression connects human actions with real-world consequences, encouraging viewers to consider the tangible, immediate impact of their choices, which underlines the call to recycle.

The last frame has a symbolic meaning as well. The black-and-white screen serves as a stark difference from the colorful images beforehand. The monochromatic look can be perceived as straightforward, no-nonsense undertones, underscoring the overall message: that there is no gray area; *everything* must be recycled. This sort of visual argumentation appeals to logic.

Commercial 3 utilizes appeals to credibility, emotions, and logic to convey authenticity. It does this by showcasing the purity of the natural surroundings, a realistic-looking farm, and exemplifying ethical treatment of animals. The commercial taps into the viewers' ethical, collective responsibility while using cause and effect to underline a logical appeal of real-world consequences. It simplifies how responsible recycling can be straightforward and have significant positive consequences on the animals around us.

#### Semiotic & Myth Analysis

Authenticity is often used in advertisements as the core of a successful campaign. In Commercial 3, we see how clusters of signs, symbols, and myths work together to push their narrative forward. Compared to Commercial 1 and 2, Commercial 3 could seem more authentic as it does not use anthropomorphism and shows an actual barn with real animals with no qualities outside the natural world. On the other hand, it holds many of the same semiotic signs we analyzed in the previous commercials. In Commercial 1, we also see a farmer who looks similar to the farmer in Commercial 3. They both attend to their cows and are not the center of attention in the commercials.

As mentioned, the natural landscape is an integral part of the Norwegian identity. Showcasing this scenery creates an association between recycling and clean, untouched nature. It is displayed as though the backdrop is untouched and the way the landscape is meant to be,

without the interference of litter and trash. The couple, driving a car through this landscape, is another critical semiotic element. Their ordinary appearance, with no extravagant clothing, fancy gadgets, or car, signifies relatability. They are every man and every woman, individuals whose actions and choices viewers can empathize with. By choosing authenticity in the portrayal of the protagonists, the commercial signals to viewers that authenticity is accessible and attainable.

Another semiotic sign in the commercial is the can. Its presence and subsequent journey symbolize human waste, thoughtlessness, and potential environmental harm. The can's transformation from a frivolous throwaway object into a symbol of environmental responsibility represents a semiotic process. It exemplifies the shift the commercial is aiming to influence. That is, a thoughtless act, such as throwing a can out in nature, can profoundly impact the environment and animals.

As Roland Barthes states (1952/1972), myths are stories that societies tell to reinforce their values, beliefs, and ideologies. In the case of Commercial 3, the underlying myth is that of responsibility — responsibility for our environment and the animals. The barn with the cows is a symbolic cluster. It is here that the myth of responsibility unfolds most predominantly. The cows symbolize innocence, evoking empathy from viewers who might suddenly realize the gravity of their thoughtless act. This symbolism ties directly into Barthes' concept of myths as conveyors of ideology. The commercial suggests that choosing responsibility is not only an individual decision but one that reflects an entire value system.

As we touched on previously, the black-and-white transition serves as another mythic element. It can represent a moral crossroad where viewers are presented with a choice of whether they are part of the problem or the solution. The imagery can insinuate that by choosing to be part of the solution, one also participates in the grander, instinctive human drive to preserve our planet and our fellow animals.

As Lindholm (2008) explains, a lack of authenticity is what is fake and unnatural. Commercial 3 is pushing the narrative that humans have a responsibility to protect what is real and what is natural. It exemplifies how the small action of recycling is not just a personal choice but a choice we collectively must make as a society to preserve our planet and save animal lives. The signs and symbols throughout are utilized as a vehicle for the ideology of responsibility that underscores the myth of authenticity.

Commercial 3 skillfully taps into the emotional, ethical, and logical dimensions of the audience's thinking. It speaks to authenticity by framing it as a result of responsible, ethical choices that emanate from one's daily actions. Through the discourse, the commercial highlights that authenticity is not only a personal journey but a collective commitment to preserving the environment and safeguarding the lives of all creatures. The cows symbolize the stakes involved, as does the transition to black and white, drawing the audience into an emotional and moral discourse. The final call to recycle is a logical, straightforward, and actionable discourse that reinforces the authenticity of ethical considerations. Commercial 3, therefore, imparts a powerful message: Authenticity is not a distant goal but a present and tangible reality constructed through choices rooted in ethics and a profound understanding of one's connection to the world.

#### 4.3.4 Anthropomorphism

##### Rhetorical Analysis

Commercial 3 differs from the previous two in specific ways, but the biggest is the lack of anthropomorphism. It is the only commercial in this thesis that does not depict animals with anthropomorphic tendencies. Therefore, it appeals to credibility, emotions, and logic in other ways and uses animals differently than the others. Since the cows in Commercial 3 are real cows who behave like ordinary cows, one could argue that the commercial shows *real cows in real situations*, which could be a rhetorical tool for their messaging. This appeals to credibility as it tries to depict real-life situations.

As we first saw in Commercial 1, anthropomorphism provokes a strong emotional appeal through their use of the talking cows and creating connections between their reality and ours as humans. This sort of connection works as a great tool to appeal to emotions while also implementing elements of humor and curiosity in the commercial. Commercial 2 also follows a similar path where the anthropomorphic goat employs characteristics tied to authenticity.

In contrast, Commercial 3 evokes emotions through its environmental and ethical discourse. As it lacks anthropomorphic traits, it relies on other ways of communicating its message. It instead leans on the audience's emotional and logical responses to a moral dilemma. Since the commercial follows a cause-and-effect structure, it seems reasonable to assume that they purposefully omitted anthropomorphism to illustrate how genuine and honest their messaging was. It presents a real-world issue without a cute animal protagonist, instead focusing on the human impact of environmental neglect. This appeal to logic underscores the idea that ethical considerations and environmental responsibility are matters of common sense.

Although the previous two commercials have heavily appealed to emotions through anthropomorphism, Commercial 3 still appeals to emotions without using animals with human-like behaviors. They do so by appealing to emotions regarding people's environmental concerns. The audience may rather have emotions evoked through their empathy towards animals and the consequences of thoughtless littering, as opposed to the cuteness and relatability that anthropomorphism creates in the other two commercials. Therefore, the argument made in Commercial 3 is rooted in moral responsibility through the appeal of emotions and logic. One could argue that this is a purposeful choice to establish credibility that would otherwise not be as prominent with animals with anthropomorphist tendencies.

#### Semiotic & Myth Analysis

To compare Commercial 3 to the previous commercials, let us recap. Commercial 1 introduces us to talking cows, a clear example of anthropomorphism. The cows are portrayed in a way that humanizes them, wearing smiles, interacting with the farmer, and even talking. Semiotically,

these cows serve as signs that convey qualities like happiness, contentment, and authenticity. The barn, the farm, and the farmer are semiotic elements, representing tradition and a solid human-animal connection. In Commercial 2, an anthropomorphized goat takes center stage. The goat stands atop a mountain and sings, epitomizing human qualities like excellence, charm, and confidence. Semiotically, the picturesque mountain landscape and the goat symbolize success and excellence, suggesting that the product it represents is the best choice.

Commercial 3, on the other hand, deviates from the anthropomorphism strategy. It features an ordinary couple on a countryside drive and focuses on an ethical and environmental message. The semiotic elements include the idyllic countryside, the couple, the car, and the environment. These elements emphasize the consequences of littering and how it affects the environment, specifically the animal food supply. The field, the barn, and the cows eating symbolize the negative impacts of irresponsible actions on nature and animals, which can often be overlooked.

An integral semiotic sign in Commercial 3 is the music and audio. The cinematography is fast-paced, following the beat of the sounds. The loud music from inside the car abruptly disappears when the car hits the land field. It is as though the frivolousness is over, and seriousness begins. The loud machine cuts through the silence, and we get pushed over to inside the barn where it is quiet, and we hear the farmer move the hay around and a couple of cows mooing. It gets silent and calm, and we hear a serious female voiceover. This audio pushes the narrative forward semiotically, similarly to the visuals, bringing the message forward together.

In Commercial 3, the discourse shifts significantly. In the context of the four commercials in this thesis, the absence of anthropomorphism can be striking, but as mentioned, it seems deliberate. It communicates a different message - one focused on environmental responsibility and ethical considerations. Instead of portraying animals as human-like characters, it spotlights the real-life impact of human actions on the environment and animal food supply. It attempts to hold a mirror to the audience and urges them to recognize their role in the larger ecosystem. The discourse in Commercial 3 addresses the audience not through endearing animated

characters but through real-world scenarios. Showing how these scenarios can happen without much thought using a littered can and a hay-cutting machine effectively signifies a problem caused by human negligence. This shift in the discourse moves away from emotional appeals based on the charm of anthropomorphic characters and toward a more reflective, issue-driven narrative.

Comparing Commercial 3 with commercials 1 and 2 reveals the power of discourse choices. Commercial 3 targets a different audience sensibility, emphasizing environmental and ethical concerns. It might speak to individuals who are less swayed by cute, talking animals but who respond to the discourse of responsibility and consequences. The absence of anthropomorphism in Commercial 3 does not diminish its impact. Perhaps it does the opposite. It tells a compelling story using the semiotics of real animals, which suggests that consumers need to be aware of the repercussions of their actions on the environment and, by extension, on the well-being of animals.

#### Final Thoughts on Anthropomorphism

In essence, commercials 1 and 2 employ anthropomorphism to convey emotions and authenticity, while Commercial 3 opts for a discourse of reality, making the environment the central theme. It utilizes semiotics to symbolize carelessness and its consequences. The myth here is not one of talking animals but a reflection of our responsibilities toward the natural world and the beings that inhabit it. In the discourse of advertising, anthropomorphism remains a powerful tool. However, Commercial 3 demonstrates other efficient ways of rhetorically conveying a message. It focuses on environmental and ethical discourse to engage audiences in thinking about their actions and the consequences on a larger scale. This prompts a question of whether a commercial or advertisement generally has a moral obligation to encourage these forms of reflections in their audience or if they could just be for entertainment and sales purposes. Further, it can make us question what role these animals have on these driving forces, if not through anthropomorphism, then what?

#### 4.3.5 *Myth of Norwegianness*

##### Rhetorical Analysis

Commercial 3's approach to the myth of Norwegianness is not as prominent as in the other commercials. It establishes its ethos through realistic scenarios. The use of what looks like genuine landscapes and authentic characters works like a foundation for the way that Commercial 3 speaks to the myth of Norwegianness. The audience can trust this portrayal as an accurate reflection of rural Norway, making it convincing and reliable. Comparatively, Commercial 1 relied on talking cows to create a persuasive atmosphere, whereas Commercial 2 used a singing goat to elicit charm and appeal. Commercial 3 takes a different route by placing trust in real-life scenarios that reflect Norwegian rural life, presenting a real problem and its solution.

In terms of emotional appeal, Commercial 3 also takes a different path. It wants the viewer to feel empathy for the animals, which would lead to the viewer recycling more. Compared to commercials 1, 2, and 4, which we will see in the next chapter, they all use animals as comic relief, evoked through anthropomorphism. They relied on talking animals with human-like qualities, making it easier for the audience to connect emotionally. However, as we established, Commercial 3's emotional approach is more contemplative and rooted in consequences, offering a different perspective on the myth of Norwegianness. This is interesting as it shows a different side to how animals are represented in commercials, bringing forward nuances in their role as promoters of consumerism.

We have seen that the logic appeal in Commercial 3 is consequence-based. It illustrates how an irresponsible act of littering has far-reaching ramifications, ultimately potentially contaminating the animal food supply. The commercial presents a logical argument that underscores the importance of responsible behavior for the country's ecological and agricultural integrity. Again, in contrast to Commercial 1 and 2's use of anthropomorphism as a logical appeal to create a connection between the audience and the product. Commercial 3, however, relies on the logic

of environmental responsibility to convey the myth of Norwegianness, presenting a perspective that seems more authentic than the other commercials.

In the discourse of Norwegian identity, these commercials play their unique roles. Commercials 1 and 2 appeal to an emotional and logical connection through charming, anthropomorphized characters. At the same time, Commercial 3 employs credibility, evokes contemplation, and encourages logical thinking to draw the audience's attention to the importance of environmental responsibility and, in turn, to recycle and use their services. These commercials reflect the versatility of rhetorical strategies in communicating diverse aspects of the myth of Norwegianness. In doing so, they contribute to a multi-dimensional perception of the country and its values, going beyond the surface to touch upon the heart of Norwegian culture and identity. As we know, the Norwegian countryside and its nature are such integral parts of the myth of Norwegianness.

#### Semiotic & Myth Analysis

I found that similar to how anthropomorphism is not as present in Commercial 3 as the others, the same holds for the myth of Norwegianness. Some elements peek through in a way that can tell us something about their commentary on the myth, but not as prominent as the other commercials.

In Commercial 3, the can is a powerful semiotic sign. It symbolizes the negligence of the modern world, the thoughtless act of littering that affects the purity of Norway's landscapes. This simple object becomes a compelling sign of recklessness and carelessness. It reflects how many Norwegians emphasize the importance of sustainability and the protection of our natural surroundings. It symbolizes dirtiness, which for many Norwegians is the opposite of what they connect with the Norwegian countryside: cleanliness. Unlike the anthropomorphized characters in commercials 1 and 2, the can is an inanimate object but carries profound symbolic weight regardless.

Commercial 3 suggests that littering directly influences the food supply of animals, linking environmental responsibility with the myth of Norwegianness. The emphasis is on personal responsibility and the idea that individuals play a significant role in preserving the nation's pristine environment. This myth underscores Norway's dedication to environmental preservation as a fundamental aspect of its identity. This reinforces the previous findings regarding how Commercial 3 is centered around environmental responsibility. It aligns itself with Norway's strong emphasis on ecological preservation, and the commercial instigates a conversation about personal responsibility, urging viewers to consider the consequences of their actions on nature. This commercial is, therefore, an outlier in certain ways as it does not utilize the portrayal of charming and friendly animals but rather a more realistic representation of animals in the Norwegian countryside.

The narration in Commercial 3 also plays a significant role in shaping the discourse of responsibility. The calm and serious tone of the voiceover reflects a sense of introspection and contemplation, suggesting that environmental responsibility is an inherent aspect of the myth of Norwegianness as the issue at hand is presented in the context of a barn in the Norwegian countryside. The lines (translated) "what we throw in nature can end up in the food supply for animals" deliver a powerful message, framing environmental issues as something that is everyone's responsibility.

Moreover, Commercial 3 broadens the discourse of the myth of Norwegianness by portraying the country as a place where inhabitants are committed to environmental sustainability. It communicates that being Norwegian involves caring for the land, waters, and animals that coexist in this beautiful environment. The discourse encourages viewers to reflect on their responsibilities within this context, fostering a sense of shared commitment to ecological preservation. Through language, narration, and visual elements, this commercial contributes to a multifaceted understanding of the myth of Norwegianness that goes beyond stereotypes, adding layers of social and ecological consciousness to the national identity.

### Conclusion of Commercial 3

Commercial 3 provides an essential nuance to the overall position animals have in commercials. As explained previously, all four commercials chosen for this thesis have been mindfully chosen, and Commercial 3 highlights elements that the others do not. Commercial 3 is actually *about* animals, unlike the three others, which solely use animals to provide brand awareness or sell a product or a service. Therefore, the animals in Commercial 3 exemplify a real problem that affects them. This means that the cows are, in a way, used in the commercial to front their own issues, which positively benefits them.

In contrast, none of the other commercials use their animals to benefit the animals depicted in the commercials. In Commercial 4, we will see another perspective again, where we no longer look at agricultural animals. However, as the animal is a dog, a pet with which so many have a different relationship than cows and sheep, it might lead to different results than the other commercials.

## 4.4 Commercial 4: “Stakkars meg” by NORSK TIPPING (2021)

### 4.4.1 Description of the Data

#### Commercial 4: “Stakkars meg” (Poor me) by Norsk Tipping (2021)

The commercial is 45 seconds long. It is about a dog named Otto living with his two owners, “Mom” and “Dad.” The commercial follows the dog throughout the house as what looks like the couple is getting ready for work.

The first scene is in a white bathroom. It is somewhat messy, with an array of colorful objects that fit in a bathroom. In the foreground, a blurred-out woman is brushing her teeth, and in the background, a man is also brushing his teeth while sitting on a (closed) toilet. In the middle of the screen is a chocolate-colored Labrador seated on a bright red, round bath mat, making the viewer focus on the dog.



*Norsk Tipping. (2021, August) Screenshot 00:01*

While the camera moves closer to the dog, we hear him say (translated), “Okay, just a small suggestion from me. What if just nobody went to work today, and we just stayed home and rubbed each other's belly?”



*Norsk Tipping. (2021, August) Screenshot 00:05*

We follow them into the kitchen, and the couple are now dressed and moving fast-paced around the room, getting ready. Again, the kitchen is bright, and there are accents of color everywhere. The dog says (translated), “Okay, but can I join you then? Join you to work? Or you? Or whoever, actually. In terms of work, I am pretty open to anything. Please”



*Norsk Tipping. (2021, August) Screenshot 00:09*

In the same kitchen, we see the dog lying and moving around on the floor to be in the way of the owners in an attempt to get their attention. The dog says (translated), “You will not get out if I lay like this. Or like this. Or this. You will not get out now.”



*Norsk Tipping. (2021, August) Screenshot 00:17*

The last scene is of the dog walking after the “Dad” as he puts his jacket on and walks to exit the front door. The dog says (translated), “Dad, do not go! Dad, please! I have a belly that needs to be rubbed and cuddled.” We then see the man open the front door, pick up a newspaper left on their doormat, and return inside.



*Norsk Tipping. (2021, August) Screenshot 00:25*

The man closes the door behind him, returns to the dog, and says (translated), “Why do you look so upset? Did you think I was going to work, Otto? It's Saturday!” as he cuddles Otto. The dog gets very excited, and happy music starts playing in the background as he says (translated), “What? It is Saturday?! Have I looked this cute for no reason? Then, I might be able to have some Saturday treats! Or a Saturday walk? Or Saturday cuddles?”



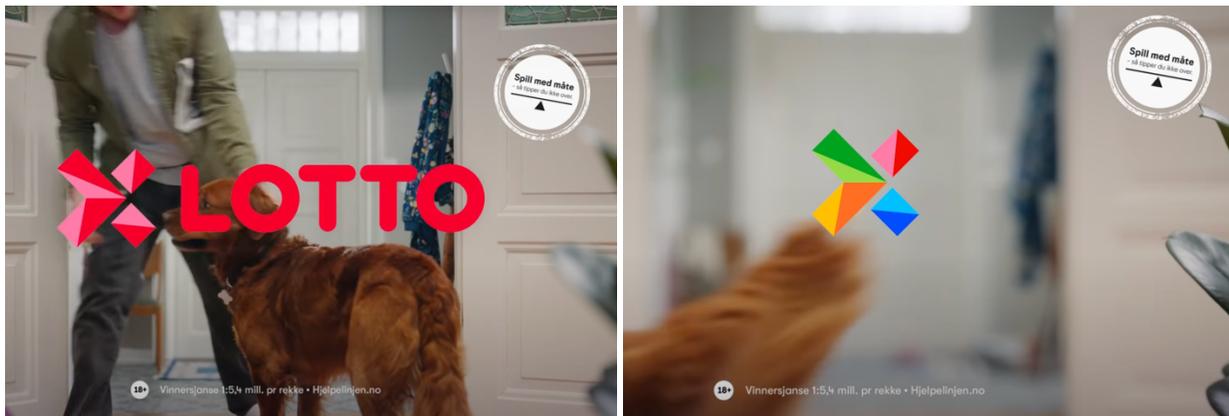
*Norsk Tipping. (2021, August) Screenshot 00:33*

Simultaneously, the dog is licking the owner's face, and white letters across the screen state (translated), “Suddenly, it is Saturday. Saturday's Lottery Day. Saturday is Otto-day.” Followed by the “Lotto” letter logo and their tilted cross logo in colors at the end.



*Norsk Tipping. (2021, August) Screenshot 00:37-00:41*

Also worth noting is that the whole commercial has Norwegian subtitles, although they speak in Norwegian. At the end, when the white letters appear on the screen, in tiny letters at the very bottom of the screen, it says (translated), “18+. The chance of winning is 1:5,4 mil. Pr row - thehelpline.no” In addition to a white, round stamp in the right-hand corner stating, (translated) “Play in moderation and you will not tip over,” which is a wordplay in Norwegian as “Tipping” means to bet.



Norsk Tipping. (2021, August) Screenshot 00:43-00:44

#### 4.4.2 Introduction & Contextualisation

We are now moving into a different style of commercial than the rest. As we concluded in the previous chapter, Commercial 4 differs from the rest of the sample as it portrays a pet instead of a farm animal. Further, Commercial 4 is at a residential home, not in the countryside, at a cabin, or a farm. Like commercials 1 and 2, Commercial 4 also has animals that display anthropomorphic characteristics.

##### Context

The Lottery commercial is a part of a grander series about the dog Otto. According to Norsk Tipping's own website (2022), his commercial is called "Stakkers Meg" (Translated: "Poor me") and is one of 13 commercials with Otto, the dog. The initial commercial won the prestigious prize Gullfisken 2020 and was produced by the communication company POL. The award was given to the production company TRY for ten years prior to POL's win, making it an even more significant victory.

According to *Kreativt Forum*, "The Lotto Otto" commercial was created by the communication company POL with Janne Brenda Lysø and Christian Lauritzen. The director was Lars Kristian Flemmen, who is known for his work with "Parterapi" and "Jul i Blodfjell". The film production company was Tangrystan.

##### What are they trying to convey?

Commercial 4, "The Lotto Otto" commercial, is similar to Commercial 3 as they both sell a service, and the commercials also work as a brand awareness tool. It is similar to commercials 1 and 3 as they both do not specifically explain or show their service in the commercial.

Moreover, Commercial 4 displays a dog who turns from being sad and frustrated because his owners are leaving for work (as he thought) and then becomes happy to see that it is Saturday

because that means that the owners will stay home. Norsk Tipping draws similarities between this situation and how customers can also be happy it is Saturday because they can play the lottery on Saturdays. Differently from Commercial 2, as mentioned, this commercial does not show its product or service but instead sells the *feeling* of happiness most viewers have when seeing the happy dog in the commercial.

#### Genre Inspiration

Similarly to Commercial 1, the dog in this advertisement also speaks like humans, but not to a reporter the same way as shown in *Creature Comforts*. This advertisement seems to be taking inspiration from the very first “talking” dog on television. *McDuff, the Talking Dog* aired as a TV series on NBC in 1976 and showed a dog who was a ghost who could speak both “dog” and “human” (IMDb, n. d.). The ghost lived in a veterinarian's house, and he was the only one who could understand and see the ghost dog. Although this plot differs from the advertisement (especially regarding the veterinarian understanding the dog, which the humans in the advertisement do not, and the dog being a ghost), both display a dog who “speaks” human.

#### 4.4.3 Authenticity

#### Rhetorical Analysis

In a broader context, this strategic approach serves as a multifaceted legitimization strategy for Norsk Tipping. It strategically positions itself apart from other commercial betting companies without any altruistic purposes. Commercial 4, produced for the Norwegian lottery, intentionally distances itself from the stereotypical associations typically attached to lotteries — namely, the often negative connotations of gambling and societal vices. The commercial constructs a narrative that deviates from the conventional perception of lottery-related activities by deliberately portraying a playful dog, a charming and inviting home, and the inclusion of relatable individuals.

This nuanced depiction aims to present a more wholesome and socially responsible image, challenging preconceived notions associated with the lottery industry. In its emphasis on authenticity, Commercial 4 not only aligns seamlessly with Norsk Tipping's carefully cultivated image but also underscores the recognition that credibility plays a vital role in authenticating this deliberately constructed representation. By intertwining authenticity and credibility, the commercial navigates public perception, effectively reshaping the narrative around the Norwegian lottery and contributing to its distinct identity in contrast to profit-centric betting competitors elsewhere.

Throughout the commercial, we see a big, bright house, and the viewers immediately see how the house is relatively messy. We can assume that this is laid out that way for several reasons. Firstly, the messiness contributes to the overall impression that this is an authentic house and family that did not cleanup for the viewers to see it. It is as though we get a sneak peek into some private moments in this family's lives. Norsk Tipping is not mentioned throughout the commercial, and we only see it appear with the logo and name at the very end. There is, therefore, little to show for other ways the commercial appeals to credibility tied to the brand.

While Commercial 4 takes creative liberties by featuring a dog that thinks like a human, it maintains a logical narrative. The story is cohesive and understandable despite the fantastical element of a talking animal. The logical progression of events and the logical reasoning behind the dog's actions construct a narrative that appeals to the viewers' rationality. Otto, the dog, displays feelings that seem authentic through his candid expressions of longing and joy. The audience is instantly drawn into the emotional world of the character. The scene where the dog's owner reveals it is a Saturday and his relief at not being "cute for no reason" plays with the viewers' emotions.

The dog as an animal has a special place in many Norwegians' lives, and this position of the dog is what Norsk Tipping aims to be associated with. Lerner & Kalof (1999) write how Paul in 1996 wrote,

“The belief that it makes sense to divide animals so that a dog is a pet, a cow useful, and a bird “wild” is a set of cultural meanings taken-for-granted in the commercial, which might be nonsensical or offensive to the viewer if, for example, the cow was to be trained and the dog used as food. These meanings vary by time, place, and group, but the divisions in the ad are presented as natural, not as historically and geographically contingent” (Paul, 1996, pp. 178-179).

This tells us *something* about how we as humans perceive different animals, and there is a hierarchy in how we value their lives and happiness. It shows how a cow (similarly to goats) has usefulness that makes them desirable for humans for food, leather, wool, and fur. On the other hand, dogs are primarily used for three completely different things: as a companion, protection, or service dog. We could argue that because of this differentiation, there are elementary differences between the four commercials that exist purely because the animals they portray are different.

As mentioned, Commercial 4 does not visually or audibly state anything about the lottery. There is no explanation for why they should be considered credible or even why one should use their services and play the lottery. On the other hand, it is a form of brand awareness similar to Commercial 1. It does appeal to emotions, as it displays the charming dog Otto and the playful colors of the background, which are connotations that would benefit Norsk Tipping because it tells the viewers subconsciously that playing the lottery is fun and innocent. It works efficiently to draw these connections without showing someone playing the lottery because of the other connotations described earlier.

#### Semiotic & Myth Analysis

The dog, Otto, is the central semiotic element in Commercial 4. As we have seen, commercials 1, 2, and 3 used clusters of signs that were tightly connected to the rural countryside, while Commercial 4 is in a completely different setting, a residential home. As established, all the elements displayed throughout the house are carefully chosen and placed as they serve as visual contradiction and emphasize the commercial's playfulness. They simultaneously

contribute to establishing a sense of authenticity as they project a home that seems real and unaltered. The colors sporadically throughout the commercial match the colors on the Norsk Tipping logo, drawing connections for the viewer between the innocent, playful scene of events and the brand.

The character of Otto, the talking dog, is a powerful semiotic sign. Dogs are often symbols of companionship and loyalty, and by giving Otto the ability to speak and express human-like emotions, the commercial transforms the familiar into something extraordinary. This semiotic choice also exemplifies the unique bond between humans and animals, portraying it as a source of authenticity. Throughout the commercial, Otto uses symbolic gestures, such as positioning himself in the way, vocalizing emotions, and expressing distress. These gestures are powerful semiotic signs that convey the dog's desire for human companionship and his emotional attachment to his owners. The gestures symbolize the authenticity of the emotional bond between humans and animals, highlighting the importance of this connection.

Further, Commercial 4 features scenes of everyday life, such as brushing teeth, morning routines, and pet care. These mundane activities serve as semiotic signs of authenticity by suggesting that authenticity can be found in the ordinary moments of daily life.

#### Final Thoughts on Authenticity

When considering the construction of authenticity in Commercial 4, we see how the semiotic signs work together to bring credibility and emotional appeal to the commercial. The commercial builds authenticity through a relatable domestic setting: a couple getting ready for their day. Otto, the dog we as viewers can hear his thoughts, provides the disruptive element that challenges norms, triggering curiosity and empathy. The bathroom and kitchen settings are packed with semiotic signs - colors, everyday objects, and human behaviors. These signs symbolize normality and routine, grounding the viewer in the ordinary, drawing comparisons between the scene and playing the lottery, and insinuating that playing the lottery is just a part of everyday life.

#### 4.4.4 Anthropomorphism

##### Rhetorical Analysis

It has already been established that Commercial 4 shows an animal with anthropomorphic characteristics, like commercials 1 and 2. However, there are some critical nuances. Commercial 1 shows cows who talk like humans, and the reporter in the commercial understands them. In Commercial 2, the goat is singing like a human, but when the scene pans to the human couple, we hear bleating from the goat, insinuating that the humans do not hear the human-like singing. We see this in Commercial 4 as well. The dog speaks in human form, but the humans do not understand what the dog is saying. It does not even show that the dog is trying to speak like a human or bark like a dog, so it could be argued that we, as the viewers, are listening to the dog's thoughts. Here, anthropomorphism contributes not only to removing "otherness" but to displaying a sort of comical relief.

Interestingly, Berger (1980) writes about how the idea of a pet should be considered a new phenomenon as, in the past, animals have been used solely for specific purposes, such as a guard dog or a cat that catches mice. He continues to explain how, in the 16th century, "pets" referred to a lamb raised by man and that today's idea of pets, where we keep animals regardless of their usefulness, is a modern invention (Berger, 1980, p. 12). Berger describes this relationship with pets as modern. However, I would also consider it predominantly a Western practice as several places worldwide still find pets to be helpful commodities with a function and purpose. If this is the case, the commercial with Otto would most likely have a different reception in other parts of the world than Scandinavia.

Anthropomorphism is a powerful rhetorical tool used in commercials to humanize non-human subjects, allowing viewers to connect emotionally. The commercial establishes Otto's credibility through the revelation of his extraordinary ability to be understood by the audience. There is not much else that appeals to credibility surrounding the anthropomorphism theme as the commercial strays so far away from the service that Norsk Tipping provides. It could be safe to

assume that if Norsk Tipping aimed to appeal to credibility, they would take a different approach than they do in this commercial. They would, for example, speak of their seriousness to encourage customers to play responsibly or how fairly the game is to play. Therefore, in Commercial 4, it is evident that appeal to credibility was not the priority in the same way that emotional appeal was.

The emotional appeal is central to Commercial 4. Otto's speeches are filled with the pathos of desire, yearning for more time with his owners. This emotional connection triggers empathy, positioning Otto as a lovable figure, a dog wishing for more cuddles and attention. The narrative device where Otto's emotions mimic those of humans is used to pull at the viewers' heartstrings. The emotional journey between the couple and Otto mirrors human interactions, intensifying the emotional response. The playfulness of Otto makes it entertaining to watch, which brings these feelings forward to Norsk Tipping as a company.

At the end of the commercial, where white text is displayed across the screen, we see it says (translated), "Suddenly, it is Saturday. Saturday's Lottery-day. Saturday is Otto-day. Lottery". This connects the dots, making a logical progression of the commercial and tying the series of events back to the lottery and Norsk Tipping. Further, calling it an "Otto-day" gives the dog an enhanced position in this family dynamic. It tells us something about the relationship these humans have with their dog, where the dog "knows" that Saturdays mean it is "his" day. This message reinforces the role that the dog has in their lives, where Saturday is a great day because they can be with each other. This is directly connecting these emotions to the brand, making it a logical progression of ideas that speaks both to logic and emotions.

Emotional appeal is a commonality across all the commercials. Anthropomorphism is a powerful tool to create an emotional connection between the audience and the non-human subjects, which we see in commercials 1, 2, and 4. Commercial 4 primarily centers on Otto, the dog, exploring the emotional appeal through anthropomorphism in a domestic setting and showcasing the special relationship between a dog and his owners. Commercials 1, 2, and 4

integrate anthropomorphism into their narratives to capture the audience's attention. The anthropomorphized subjects' credibility and emotional and logical appeals are common threads that run through most of the commercials.

#### Semiotic & Myth Analysis

The audio is an essential semiotic cluster of signs in this commercial. As mentioned, the dog does not move his lips or “show” that he speaks. Further, the music at the end works as a tool to wrap up the commercial, making it sound like entertaining times on a Saturday as it is Otto/lottery- Saturday. Again, it plays on the foundation that this is a playful and fun commercial because playing the lottery can also be playful and fun.

The colors throughout Commercial 4 are all specifically chosen and placed. They are vibrant and fun, which we have established the association Norsk Tipping wants the viewers to be left with. Perhaps more importantly, all the colors throughout Commercial 4 are all in the Norsk Tipping logo, making the commercial seem “on brand” with their existing brand awareness. Green, yellow, red, and blue are the colors that together give this playful look.

The use of anthropomorphism in Commercial 4 reinforces the myth of innocence. The central element of the myth of innocence in this commercial is Otto, who is depicted as an innocent and well-intentioned character. Anthropomorphism enhances Otto's innocence by allowing him to speak and express human-like desires. Otto's monologue about wanting his owners to stay home with him directly manifests this anthropomorphism. It connects him with ideas of innocence as if he comprehends the human concept of work and longs for companionship without ulterior motives.

Comparatively, Commercial 4 emphasizes the myth of innocence more explicitly than the other commercials in the thesis. While Commercial 1 revolves around authenticity and the myth of cows that speak, it does not dwell on innocence as a central theme. Commercial 2 focuses on the myth of excellence embodied by the goat, and while the goat is portrayed as skillful, it does

not carry the same air of innocence as Otto in Commercial 4. Commercial 3 does not show anthropomorphic animals but still touches on the innocence of the animals portrayed.

Moreover, the portrayal of Otto is central to the construction of the myth of innocence. He is depicted as a fluffy, affectionate dog with big, expressive eyes. These physical attributes accentuate his innocence, aligning with viewers' preconceived notions of innocent and adorable pets. The viewers' gaze is drawn to Otto's innocence through his expressions, such as the longing in his eyes when he wishes his owners would stay home. Further, throughout the commercial, Otto's primary desire is companionship with his owners. His deep need for their attention and affection paints a picture of innocence and vulnerability. It triggers viewers' emotional engagement and empathy as they recognize the universal human quality of longing for connection. In the end, when Otto realizes it is Saturday, there is a sense of relief that both the viewers and the dog have, making it a relief that it is Saturday, which in turn makes it a relief that the viewers can play the lottery on that day. This connection is essential.

Otto's simplistic communication, where he expresses his wishes clearly but is misunderstood by his owners, further underscores the idea of innocence. His inability to convey his desires effectively amplifies the notion of childlike innocence, where understanding and communication are at their most basic level. The way the owners do not understand Otto creates a sense of a problem-solving storyline in the narrative. While these moments add humor, they also highlight the gap in communication between Otto and the humans, which could emphasize Otto's innocent intentions. Then again, the narrative offers clarity when the owner reveals it is a Saturday, not a workday. The resolution of the narrative reaffirms Otto's innocence, as he wonders if he has been "this cute for no reason." The innocence discourse is sealed with this charming twist highlighting Otto's unassuming nature. It, therefore, takes away the connotations that the lottery holds. It is an efficient way of connecting the two without detaching from the seriousness of gambling with money. Instead, it gives the game a playful image of innocence and joy.

#### 4.4.5 *Myth of Norwegianness*

##### Rhetorical Analysis

Norsk Tipping means “Norwegian Gambling” in Norwegian, which already illustrates how the company has taken ownership of being a gambling company for the Norwegian people. It establishes strong ties to the associations surrounding the myth of Norwegianness with “Norwegian” in its very name. There are clear challenges with having this strong connection while also being attached to gambling, which has its own connotations. This tender relationship will be unpacked in this chapter.

The emotional appeal in Commercial 4 is multifaceted. Anthropomorphism, personifying Otto, creates an immediate connection with the audience, which can evoke empathy. The narrative hinges on the relatable theme of companionship, an emotional chord that resonates with viewers. Otto's plea for the company and his owners' obliviousness to his feelings elicit sympathy, aligning the audience with the dog's perspective. As a rhetorical technique, the emotional appeal in Commercial 4 underscores the sense of empathy, which is essential for communicating its core message. Through the character of Otto, the commercial humanizes the act of gambling, emphasizing the emotional aspect and showing how it is not just a rational decision but a social activity that can bring joy and connection, the same way a dog could.

##### Semiotic & Myth Analysis

The primary sign in Commercial 4 is Otto, the dog. Anthropomorphism enables Otto to become a symbol of the human connection with animals in Norwegian culture. His human-like speech evokes familiarity and comfort, aligning with the Norwegian perception of animals as not just pets but as part of the family. The myth Otto creates is the idea of animals as companions in Norwegian culture. This myth aligns with Barthes' concept of myth, where everyday objects or ideas are elevated to a mythical status, constructing shared cultural values. In Norway, the strong connection between humans and animals, evident in the folklore and history of the country, underpins the importance of companionship.

### *Responsible Gambling*

In the discourse of the myth of Norwegianness within Commercial 4, the emphasis on responsible gambling reveals a cultural commitment to social responsibility and the welfare of its citizens. Norway has strict regulations that are only to be found in a few other places in the world regarding ensuring that the game remains within ethical boundaries and is designed to benefit the community. This discourse emphasizes that being Norwegian implies a sense of collective responsibility, where the well-being of all is imperative. The credibility of Norsk Tipping is rooted in these responsible practices, and it aligns with Norway's values of social responsibility and care for its citizens.

### *Work-Life Balance*

The day of the week twist at the end of the commercial, where Otto's owners reveal it is Saturday, adds a significant layer to the narrative. It symbolizes the surprise element that characterizes the commercial. The twist mythologically represents the Norwegian work-life balance. Saturdays are often associated with leisure and relaxation in Norway. The commercial underscores the significance of taking time off and the value placed on rest and personal time. This myth celebrates the Norwegian way of life, where work and leisure are harmonious. These are ideas that Norsk Tipping would profit from being associated with.

### Final Thoughts on Myth of Norwegianness

In Commercial 4, the myth of Norwegianness, portrayed through anthropomorphism, is reflected in the country's unique approach to responsible gambling, highlighting the values of social responsibility and care for its citizens. Moreover, the commercial showcases the deep cultural emphasis on companionship and mutual understanding, emphasizing the importance of relationships and empathy in Norwegian society. Finally, the discourse illustrates Norway's commitment to work-life balance, underscoring the nation's dedication to allowing its citizens to enjoy leisure. These aspects combined create a distinct Norwegian cultural perspective that sets it apart from other narratives portrayed in the other commercials.

## 5. Conclusion

*How do these commercials depict animals, and how does their audiovisual representation promote the consumption of their product(s)/service(s)?*

### 5.1 Authenticity

Overall, the presence of animals across the commercials contributed to some form of authenticity. In Commercial 1, the animals have removed their “otherness,” the commercial aims to show a real farm with real animals who express how amazing they have it on the farm. In Commercial 2, they show authenticity by portraying a real goat from a real dairy farm and the authentic-looking couple and their reactions. Further, goats are connected to the symbolism of purity and authenticity, with which cows have similar associations, such as naturalness and Mother Earth. Collectively, these two commercials from TINE bring an image of what it is like to be a Norwegian dairy farm animal. Showing the real animals supports an impression of authenticity, which builds the overall image TINE aims to convey. That is, the animals on their farms are having a great time outside in the Norwegian countryside, which is why their products taste so great (and why you, as a consumer, should go and purchase them).

Moreover, Commercial 3 depicts more authentic imagery as they do not use anthropomorphism (since anthropomorphism could suggest that the scene of events was fiction because humans construct anthropomorphism). The environment in the background is authentic, and perhaps the most significant difference from the other two commercials is that the barn is relatively accurate looking in that they show the stalls the cows live in, as opposed to only open landscapes. The discourse presented in this commercial supports authenticity by emphasizing

that there are consequences to our actions for the larger ecosystem around us. In a juxtaposition to the seriousness of Commercial 3, Commercial 4 brings up how animals can symbolize authentic innocence and playfulness. Further, the animal in Commercial 4 is a dog, which many societies have entirely different associations with than agricultural animals. They are companions, indoor living pets, as opposed to the barn-living/ outdoor cows and goats. There is an authentic bond between a dog and its owners, which is depicted in Commercial 4 and not present in commercials 2 and 3. We saw in Commercial 1 that the farmer was petting the cows, and they enjoyed it, in addition to the farmers feeding the cows in both Commercial 1 and Commercial 3. This cannot be compared to the authentic bond the owners had with their dog in Commercial 4, but it does depict a form of relationship between them. Overall, animals play a central role in how authenticity is utilized to promote consumerism in all four commercials.

## 5.2 Anthropomorphism

Anthropomorphism has historically been used to minimize the differences between humans and animals, making them more relatable and often appealing to emotions. In commercials 1, 2, and 4, anthropomorphism had an integral role in communicating the overall message of the commercials. In Commercial 1, cows with anthropomorphic qualities were used to have the cows themselves explain how great they have it as dairy cows. Further, using female voices of all ages contributed to the commercial potentially resonating with women of all ages, which is a clever marketing technique. There is a myth of natural harmony where the cows seemingly prefer to be at the farm and hide their ability to speak like humans. Similarly to Commercial 2, TINE explains that because these animals have such an excellent quality of life on their farms, that is why they produce such great milk (and other dairy products).

The goat in Commercial 2 has qualities and effects on the messaging that are similar to the cows in Commercial 1. The goat is singing that she is simply the best, and the narrator explains that this is because she produces such great milk, which follows the same order of argumentation as Commercial 1. As discussed in the analysis, the downside of utilizing anthropomorphism is the

oversimplification of animals and their needs. These two commercials portray the animals as reasonably one-dimensional, not explaining in detail how they live on the farms. Commercial 3 does not have any anthropomorphic animals. This could be to keep the seriousness of the messaging they are trying to convey. Commercial 4, on the other hand, has a similar way of depicting the animals in an anthropomorphic way. The dog, similar to the goat in Commercial 2, is not understood by humans in the commercial; they is only understood by the viewers. The dog, Otto, appeals to emotions of innocence, playfulness, and belonging. These are all connotations that would benefit Norsk Tipping to be associated with, as gambling typically has the opposite associations.

Anthropomorphism plays an essential role in how we perceive animals and their actions. As humans, it is sometimes hard to understand how they think, what they think, and their needs and wants. With anthropomorphism, we give them human-like qualities that make them easier to relate to. In commercials 1, 2, and 4, anthropomorphism has been utilized to appeal particularly to emotions in the viewers so that their brand is associated with feelings of happiness and joy.

### 5.3 Myth of Norwegianness

The essence of Norwegianness was displayed throughout all four commercials in this thesis. The animals all had a role in the overall impression the commercials gave of Norwegianness. Commercials 1, 2, and 3 show large, open, lush, green Norwegian countryside. This is perhaps the strongest symbol of patriotism throughout the commercials. There is a sense of pride and loyalty which takes place. The symbolism of cows as something *natural* lends to the idea that their products are a natural choice, a Norwegian choice. This is based on the assumption that most Norwegians have heard that we must drink milk to become big and strong. Most Norwegians have grown up being served milk in school, so naturally, many would believe that milk is integral to the Norwegian upbringing.

Commercial 2 holds much of the same imagery of the Norwegian countryside as Commercial 1. Vassenden (2010) mentioned similar ideas which argues that Norwegians can often perceive themselves as the best in the world if they are remotely close to being it. Therefore, the statement “I’m simply the best” transcends the Norwegian identity as much as it is part of the interpretation the goat has of herself. Norway is known for producing a brown variation of goat cheese, so the product that Commercial 2 is selling is a new variety of something very familiar to most Norwegians. Further, the normal-looking couple wearing a very normal-looking knitted sweater at their cabin are examples of how most Norwegians dress when they are at a cabin. Overall, Commercial 2 displays many signs that contribute to the myth of Norwegianness throughout. However, perhaps it is not as tightly connected to the goat’s role in the commercial compared to how other animals are.

Similarly to commercials 1 and 2, Commercial 3 shows the rolling hills and the Norwegian countryside. Further, it speaks about perceiving this landscape. The animals in Commercial 3, therefore, exemplify how perceiving Norwegian nature will save their life as well. Commercial 4 does not show the Norwegian countryside as the other commercials did. It shows another element of the myth of Norwegianness, though, which is also very integral to the term: The Norwegian leisure culture. One could argue that it is an unspoken rule that the weekends are precious for Norwegians, and by just stating that it is Saturday, all Norwegians understand that this means leisure time. The dog in Commercial 4 symbolizes safety and joyous times, which Norsk Tipping aims to connect with their lottery games. They are perceived as a responsible company that preserves the safety of Norwegians and is therefore trusted as the national lottery company. The dog acts as an illustration of innocence and companionship, which are, again, connotations that tie Norsk Tipping to the myth of Norwegianness.

All four commercials display elements within the myth of Norwegianness throughout. Some more similarly, others differently. They all have animals depicted that further their messaging and play an essential role in the commercials.

## 6. Discussion

The implications and significance of this research extend into several critical areas within media, political communication, and animal representation. By examining the themes of authenticity, anthropomorphism, and the myth of Norwegianness, as portrayed in a selection of commercials, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of the complex interplay between media messaging, culture, and ethics.

The significance of recognizing how authenticity, anthropomorphism, and the myth of Norwegianness are deployed to influence perceptions cannot be understated. These themes create a lens through which society interacts with the animal world and connects them with cultural identity. This research, therefore, echoes the responsibility of media and political communication in shaping public values and ethical considerations. The broader consequences of this research extend to animal welfare and the ethical treatment of animals. The portrayal of animals in media is not merely an artistic expression but a reflection of societal attitudes toward animals. This implies that the media carries an ethical responsibility in portraying animals, whether for entertainment, political communication, or commercial gain. The significance here is rooted in the realization that media has the power to influence public empathy and perceptions of animals, ultimately influencing their treatment in the real world.

It is difficult to define to what length animals have autonomy over themselves because in many cultures, at least Norwegian culture, humans consider animals to be *less than* humans. If we take small human children as an example, we often speak about how they do not have the capacity to consent or deny their exposure online and, therefore should not be publicized online. Where does that line go for animals? One thing is the extent to which humans are capable of controlling animals. However, perhaps we should consider where the line *should* go regarding how much control and exploitation humans have over animals. If we only look at this

through the lens of communication, should we, as humans, exploit the likeness and fondness of animals for our capitalist gain? The discourse of animal rights is a sticky debate and, therefore, challenging to unpack yet important to do. Anthropomorphism plays an integral role in how the animals in all four commercials are shown within the realm of the animal rights discourse. These elements should be considered when creating commercials like the ones in this thesis.

We should also consider what the commercial is *not* showing. They explicitly show the cows on the farm outside with the ability to roam free and get pets from the farmer. They do not show how cows are mostly (usually 8-10 months of the year) standing inside, shoulder to shoulder, and rarely get the opportunity to roam free outside (TINE, n.d.). They do not show how the cows are artificially inseminated once a year to birth a calf, who is immediately taken away from their mother and then slaughtered, or how the cow is milked for a year until the milk supply is empty. This process is repeated three times until the cow is slaughtered herself. This reality is not depicted in the commercial. By making the visual imagery in the commercial seem like reality, TINE is gaining a highly selective sense of authenticity in which the consumer is (dare I say it) fooled into thinking that this is the truth.

After analyzing these four commercials, it is evident that animals play an important role in how companies communicate with their audiences. It is interesting to consider how our relationship with animals differs from person to person and from animal to animal. We look at a pig differently than we look at a dog. Are these differences based on societal norms, human instincts, or practical reasons? It should be safe to say that it probably lies somewhere in between. How should we consider media with industrial animal representation if industrial animal welfare is controversial as is? One could argue that commercials are not the arena for fact-based information about animal welfare or that commercials have any obligation to portray animal life honestly. However, there are moments when some form of information based on reality should be expected. For example, in Commercial 1 by TINE, *The Talking Cows*, it is made in a documentary-style way, which would suggest that the information they are giving should be somewhat truthful.

It is essential to explore the significance of animals in media to gain a better understanding of how these images affect our relationship with them. Often, it is easy to observe imagery in everyday life without taking a moment to process and understand its significance. As animal welfare evolves to be a topic of interest within the political landscape, research like this can contribute to an insight into how our portrayal of animals in media, particularly commercials, affects views of consumerism and consumption. Humans have historically used animals for food, clothing, protection, or companionship, to name a few. Utilizing them for marketing purposes is not something that is too different from everything else we have used them for elsewhere. Through the thematic lens of authenticity, anthropomorphism, and the myth of Norwegianness, it can be understood that animals play an important role in how companies produce commercials. In the words of Albert Einstein, “Our task must be to free ourselves by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature and its beauty” (Sullivan, 2072).

As Berger (1980) explained, our closeness to animals has diminished at the same pace as our industrial and technological revolution evolved. As most people live in cities and towns, our only interactions with animals are predominantly with our cats and dogs. Our relationship with agricultural animals becomes estranged as they are far removed from our everyday lives. We understand that beef and pork are meat from cows and pigs. Nevertheless, the journey from the calf taken from its mother at birth to living in a small metal stall, shoulder to shoulder with other cows most of their life, before being slaughtered, cut into pieces, packaged, and transported to a store where we pick up a steak and bring it home to cook, disappears from our thoughts. Perhaps the only reminder we get is a commercial where the cows are standing on an open farm, speaking as humans about how they “could not have it any better”. Perhaps that is the very reason that these sorts of commercials have an important role and the power to mold our relationship with animals and our outlook on the agricultural industry. Perhaps this is why we should expect the information in commercials to be truthful and given with integrity.

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