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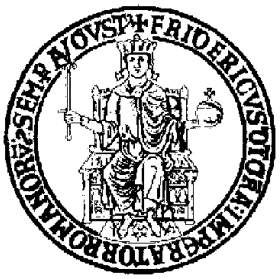
FEDERICO II



FACOLTÀ DI SCIENZE POLITICHE

Dipartimento di Scienze Statistiche

SEZIONE LINGUISTICA

Dottorato di Ricerca in

LINGUA INGLESE PER SCOPI SPECIALI

XXII CICLO

Tesi di Dottorato

Message in a Bottle

A linguistic and semiotic analysis of brand names of fragrances

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NAPOLI 2010

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Preface

It all started in Liverpool in 2006. I got to the airport early for my flight to Italy so I had plenty of time to explore. The new terminal had opened in 2001 and was officially named 'Liverpool John Lennon Airport' after one of Liverpool's most famous offspring. The Beatles grew to international fame and popularity in the 1960s and introduced a new style of music to popular culture. The name 'Beatles' is in itself an interesting naming story. The world-famous Fab Four experimented with different group members and several name changes before plumping for the 'Beatles'. They first performed under the name 'Black Jacks', then renamed themselves the 'Quarrymen', followed by further name variations: 'Johnny and the Moondogs', the 'Beatals', the 'Silver Beetles', the 'Silver Beats', the 'Silver Beatles', and finally the 'Beatles'. Outside the terminal building, underneath the sign for John Lennon Airport and the trendy logo featuring a caricature of John Lennon was the motto 'Above us only sky', from the lyrics of Lennon's famous song 'Imagine', which struck me as being particularly appropriate for an airport. Inside the airport concourse, I admired the statue of Lennon, complete with his trademark spectacles. Having arrived early, I sat for a while in the observation tower, watching the planes landing and taking off. Several low-cost carriers operate from Liverpool and I admired the brightly-coloured tailfins of Ryanair and Easyjet, both relatively new airlines, both with compound names – 'Ryan' being the surname of the founder, Tony Ryan, and EasyJet, conveying both simplicity through the use of the adjective 'easy' and modernity through the use of a compound with internal Capitalization.

It all seemed a far cry from the ‘old days’ when I was growing up in Liverpool and the then small, provincial airport was simply known as Speke Airport, from the area in the south of Liverpool where the airport was (and still is) situated. The name ‘Speke’ derives from the Old English ‘*spec*’, meaning ‘brushwood’. The area was known as Spec in the Domesday Book. Local legend has it that the favourable surrounding agricultural land and the abundance of local pig farms in the thirteenth century gave rise to the ‘speck’ technique of producing salt-cured ham. The technique was exported to other European countries and even today, we can buy ‘speck’ at the delicatessen.

The homophonic potential of the name Speke has suffered its fair share of Liverpudlian jokes over the years. Perhaps the most well-known is the exchange between an elderly lady at the bus stop and a bus driver:

Lady: *Excuse me, is this bus going to Speke?*

Driver: *It hasn’t said a word yet, love.*

Feeling a little peckish, I sauntered over to the airport cafè, called ‘Daytripper’, named after the Beatles’ song, and treated myself to a Cadbury’s Crunchie Blast chocolate bar (now discontinued, unfortunately!). I then had a wander around the Duty Free shop. I saw bottles of Beaujolais and Chianti lined up against new wine labels such as ‘Arrogant Frog’ and ‘Mad Housewife’. Finally, I decided to buy a bottle of perfume as an early Christmas gift to myself. I toyed over getting a traditional classic such as Chanel’s ‘No 5’, or going for a new concoction such as

‘Flowerbomb’ by L’Oréal, but in the end I settled for my usual ‘Happy’ by Clinique in its bright orange packaging. I think it reflects my outlook on life.

So, that’s when I can actually pinpoint the start of my fascination with names and brand names which has led to this study.

I have deliberately resisted the extremely tantalizing temptation to make use of colourful visual imagery to enhance the aesthetic appeal of this work. There are two main reasons for this. Firstly, to quote the original Pringles strapline, ‘Once you pop, you can’t stop’. In other words, it is all too easy in the dazzling and delightful world of brands to get carried away by the creation of visual pleasure. Besides, it is my belief that we should ‘not judge a book by its cover’ but rather focus our attention on solid principles and foundations. My only concession to arousing sensory stimulation is through the use of an olfactory tool: scented paper.

We are all indebted to so many people both in our professional and private lives. It seems inadequate to merely list them neatly on the page of a book. All acknowledgements have been made privately.

Introduction

I chose to focus my research on fragrances because I believe that this commercial sector offers some remarkable and distinctive features. Although the existence and use of perfumes is steeped in history and culture, the international market has recently witnessed a boom in demand and sales, particularly for men's fragrances. Women, and men in particular, appear to be more prepared than ever before to purchase products for personal care and grooming which allow for personal choice, self-enhancement and the creation of social identity. Today we are witnessing the emergence of perfume and beauty product websites which have sprung up and allow global customers from different cultures and with different linguistic codes not only to be informed of new products on the market but also to purchase items online, particularly if these items are not readily available in their local environment. Unlike some other product categories, fragrance brand names are rarely changed to suit local linguistic and cultural norms. Until quite recently, the avoidance of the very word 'perfume' with regard to fragrances for men provides insight into how culture-bound the actual social act of applying fragrance to our bodies really is. In some cultures, fragrances for men were traditionally marketed as 'aftershave' or 'eau de toilette'/'eau de cologne', but never 'perfume'.

However, the main reason for my interest in studying brand names in the fragrance market is because of the enormous scope for creativity in this sector. As Cook (1992: 104) states, "A smell has no denotation"; he points out that "a new perfume

can be called virtually anything". Accordingly, the potential for naming in this sector is appealing and endless. It is also interesting to observe how similar products (bottles of perfumed liquid) are named to target either men or women in certain ways. A further intriguing characteristic of this sector is that items for men are frequently purchased by women as gifts and vice versa, items for women are frequently purchased by men. The target audience of the brand message is therefore not always the end-user so gender roles and relationships tend to play a key role in the naming process.

The main research questions which prompted this study are:

- What different types of linguistic strategies are used in the process of naming in the selected sector?
- What currents of meaning and ideology can be observed in these names?
- Is it possible to identify any specific semiotical strategies in the creation of these fragrance names?
- Is it possible to distinguish different trends in the naming of men's fragrances as opposed to women's fragrances? What kind of male/female profiles emerge from these names?
- What are the implications of these names in a global context?

The corpus that the present study is based on consists of the names of new fragrances launched between January 2006 and June 2010. The brand names under

scrutiny in this research work are taken from the website http://www.mimifroufrou.com.

This website is a kind of themed blog, specializing in fragrances. Besides advertising various scents from around the world, it gives information about new perfume launches, reviews of perfumes, celebrity fragrances, beauty notes, and an index of perfume houses. There are also other, quirky features such as fragrant recipes and even a 'scented quote of the day'!

The corpus is taken from the alphabetical index of new fragrances on the website, scents which were launched from 2006 until the present day.

The website is colourful, practical and informative. The fragrance reviews are written by professional and knowledgeable '*noses*'. Appealing images of fragrance bottles, celebrities, launch parties and inspiring works of art all serve to render the website modern, up-to-date and interesting in an engaging way. The style of writing is direct and at times offers particular insights into the perfumer's personal preferences. Intratextual references are made to reviews of other fragrances listed on the site. There is a comments section where people give their thoughts and personal reaction to their experience of certain fragrances as well as making enquiries about how to obtain their favourite but sadly discontinued fragrances. A number of links and permalinks are offered to various websites such as perfume houses and manufacturers of beauty and cosmetics products.

The corpus consists of 1336 brand names of fragrances launched between January 1st, 2006 and 30th June, 2010. The breakdown of fragrance types is as follows: 989

for women; 263 for men; 35 unisex and gay scents; and 49 'other' types of fragrance including fragrances for children, room fragrances, bedlinen fragrances, scented candles and pet perfumes.

The methodological approach consists of a linguistic and a semiotical analysis. Peirce's (1903) three aspects of signs (symbol, icon, index) serve as operative tools. The analysis focuses on graphical, phonetic, morphological, semantic, lexical and rhetorical aspects. The names of the fragrances are thematically categorized. Since global consumers have very different cultural backgrounds, the analysis is made within the sociocultural framework of Hofstede's (2001) Theory of Dimensions of National Cultures as well as Tajfel's (1981) Social Identity Theory. In order to observe the characteristics and tendencies of the naming of fragrances for men as opposed to fragrances for women, references are also made to various approaches to gender theory: Dominance Theory (Zimmerman & West 1975; Spender 1980; Fishman 1983), and Difference Theory (Coates 1986, 1993; Tannen 1990). Finally, McCracken's (1986, 2005) Meaning Transfer Model is used as a reference to demonstrate in a practical sense how semiotics lends itself to marketing strategies.

The lists of new fragrances were downloaded from the website in early 2010.

The index for fragrances launched in 2010 is updated to 30th June. The form of the fragrance names branded in the English language is observed from a linguistic point of view and salient graphical, phonetic, morphological, semantic, lexical and rhetorical aspects noted. Subsequently, a list of themed categories is drawn up and the meaning of the names analysed according to Barthes' concept of myth. Although

the brand names are listed on the website under the year they were launched, the analysis is not of a diachronic nature therefore evolutionary naming trends are not considered.

CHAPTER ONE: **SIGNS**

1.1 Communication Models

> *Communication does not signify a problem newly discovered in our times, but a fashion of thinking and a method of analyzing which we apply in the statement of all fundamental problems.*
> (Richard McKeon (1900-1985)
> http://www.colorado.edu/communication

Communication can be defined as "interaction by means of mutually recognised signals" (Hartley 2002: 32). All communication involves signs and codes. Signs are artefacts or acts that refer to something other than themselves; that is, they are signifying constructs. Codes are the systems into which signs are organized and which determine how signs may be related to each other.

Early models of communication offer an informational approach to communication. The Shannon-Weaver Model (1947) identifies six elements that are required for communication to take place: a source, an encoder, a message, a channel, a decoder, and a receiver. The source (sender) is seen as the active decision-maker who determines the meaning of the message and the decoder is merely a passive target. It is a linear, one-way model, sometimes colloquially referred to as a '*conduit*' view of language (Finch 2000: 134) where the receiver is viewed as having a secondary role. However, critics challenged the 1947 model as being too simplistic, and declared that meaning is not 'extracted', but 'constructed'.

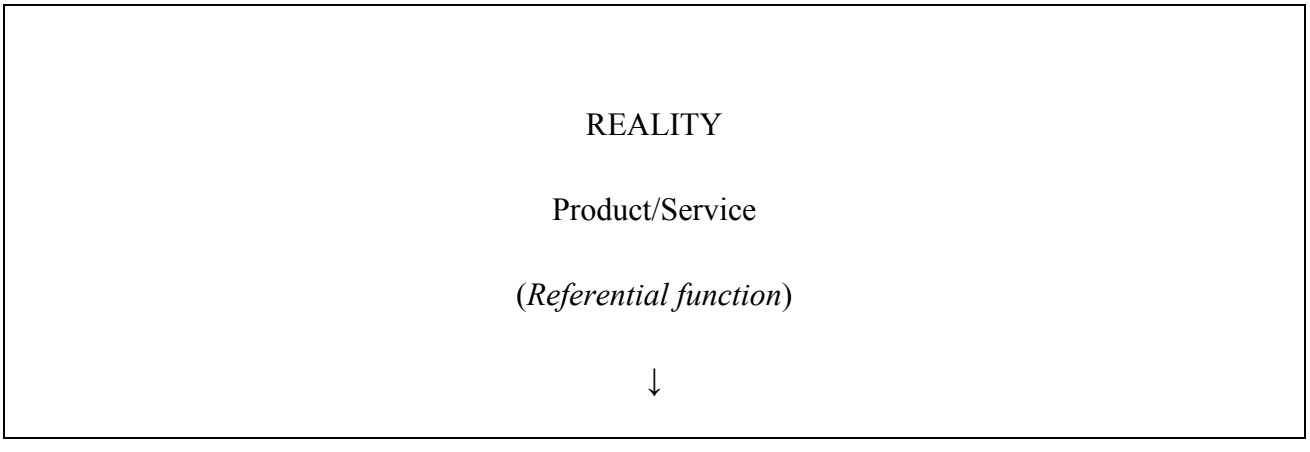
The Lasswell Formula of communication (1948) gives a slightly broader interpretation of communication. It states that communication consists of a communicator, a message, a channel, a receiver and an effect. It allows for different channels of communication and takes into account the effect of the communicated message. Newcomb's Model (1953) adds a new dimension. This model introduces the concept of the role of communication in a society or a social relationship.

Of the two main schools in the study of communication. (Fiske 1982, 1990: 2), the 'process' school concentrates on the transmission of messages and how accurately the chosen system of moving messages around really works. This school of thought views communication as the transmission of a 'message' from a sender to a receiver and is concerned with how senders and receivers encode and decode and how transmitters use the channels and media of communication. The second school sees communication as the production and exchange of 'meanings'. Here, the emphasis is on how messages, or texts, interact with people in order to produce meanings. It is therefore concerned with the role of texts in our culture. The main method of study is semiotics. Each school has a different interpretation of communication as social interaction through messages. While the process school defines social interaction as the process by which one person relates to others, semiotics defines social interaction as that which constitutes the individual as a member of a particular culture or society (Fiske 1982, 1990: 3). As far as the message is concerned, the process school sees a message as that which is transmitted by the communication process. In semiotics, the reader brings aspects of his or her cultural experience to

bear upon the codes and signs which make up the text. Interacting with the text leads to the discovery of meanings.

A further model of the communication process, that of the Russian linguist and semiotician Roman Jakobson. Jakobson's model (Jakobson (1956), quoted in Appiano 1991: 3-5), bears a resemblance to both the linear and triangular models and as such bridges the gap between the process and semiotic schools. Jakobson outlines first of all the constitutive factors which must be present for communication to take place and then models the functions that this act of communication performs for each factor. According to Jakobson, in every concrete speech act the addresser sends a message to the addressee, the message uses a code (usually a language that is known to the addresser and the addressee), the message has a context (or referent) and is transmitted through a channel (a medium such as live speech or writing). Each of these aspects has a linguistic function in the communication process (referential, phatic, metalinguistic, emotive, conative, poetic).

The following diagram shows the way in which the linguistic functions of branding fit into this model of the communication process:



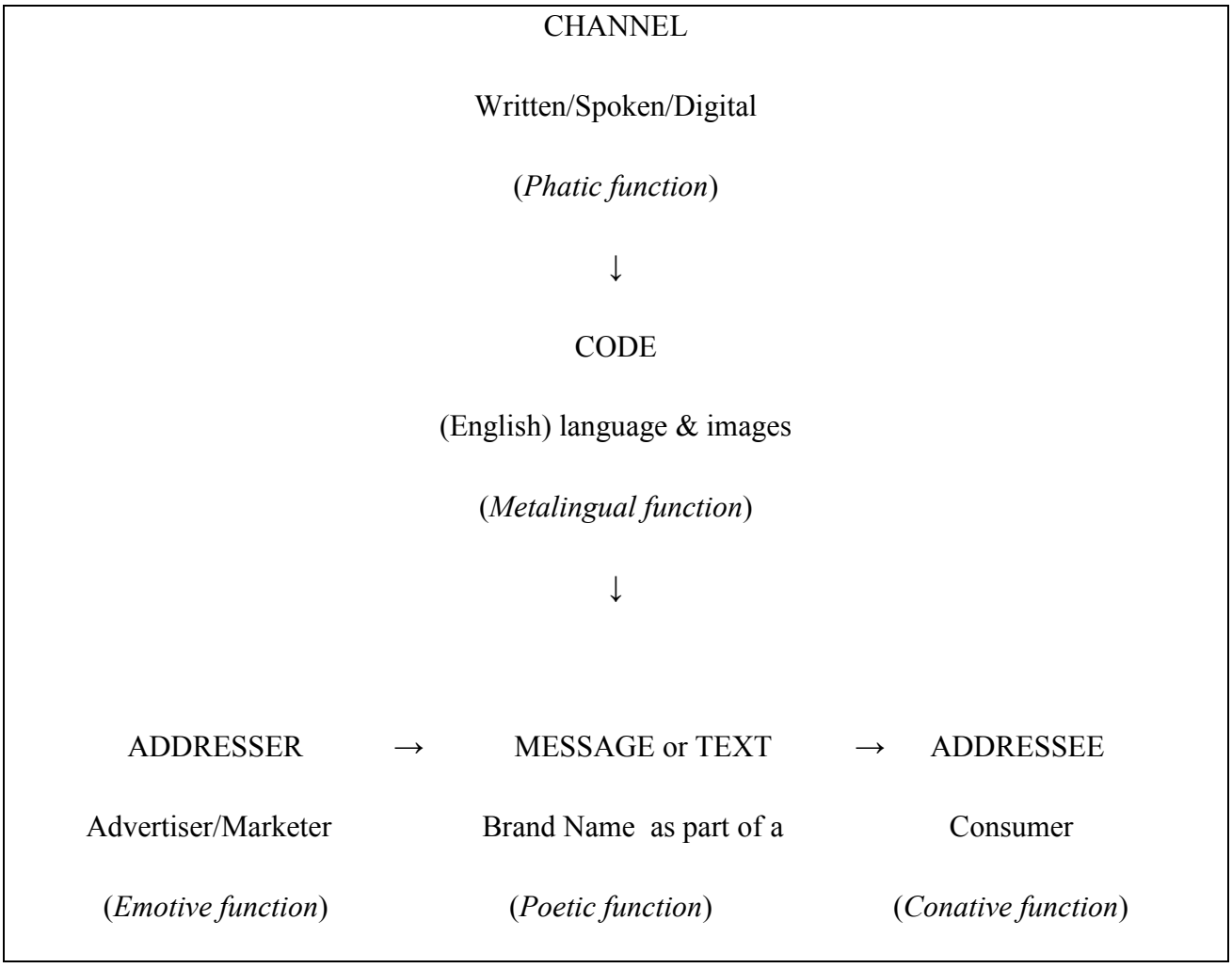


Figure 1. Elements of branding communication and their corresponding functions of language.

If we consider the title of this study, 'Message in a Bottle', and imagine that a castaway on a desert island writes 'RESCUE ME!' on a scrap of paper, puts it inside a bottle and tosses it into the sea, Jakobson's linguistic functions can be attached to the various elements in the communication process as follows:

The referential function is the reality of the situation, i.e. the context of being shipwrecked; the phatic function is the way the message is communicated, i.e. a handwritten note inside a bottle that floats on water and is carried across the sea. The metalingual function corresponds to the code of the English language used in writing

the words contained in the message and perhaps a (helpful) visual clue as to the whereabouts of the writer. The emotive function is the writer's intention in writing the message – here the writer (the castaway) wishes to persuade the reader (an unknown person who finds the note) to follow a specific course of action i.e. do something to bring about a rescue operation. The conative function is the way the person who finds the message reacts to it and this may or may not correspond to the intention of the writer. The poetic function is the language of the message – in this case the language consists of the use of an imperative written in Capital letters and punctuated by an exclamation mark in order to show the urgency of the dramatic situation.

The poetic function is oriented towards the code and the meaning simultaneously: the code is used in a special way in order to communicate meaning that could not otherwise be communicated.

This study deals principally with the poetic function of language i.e. the actual message that is encoded by advertisers and semiotically imbued with associations that seek to persuade consumers to purchase their brands.

1.2 Semiotics – a World of Signs

All abstract sciences are nothing but the study of relations between signs.

Denis Diderot (1713-1784)
(Oxford Dictionary of Quotations)

Modern-day semiotic method is based on the writings of the American logician Charles S. Peirce (1839-1914) and the French linguist Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913). Saussure defines semiotics as 'a science that studies the life of signs within society' (de Saussure, quoted in Leeds-Hurwitz 1993: 4). The reason why semiotics lends itself well not only to the field of branding but also as a source of insight into the creation of brand names, is because it provides the theoretical tools, developed largely by Saussure and Peirce, for understanding how we encode and decode meaning from the representations we make.

Semiotics grew out of the study by the ancient physicians of the Western world of the physiological symptons produced by particular diseases. The term semiotics, from Greek *semeion* 'mark, sign', was coined by the founder of Western medical science, Hippocrates (460-377 BC). A symptom is, in fact, a perfect example of what a semeion is. It is a noticeable sign – such as a dark bruise, a rash or a sore throat – that stands for some physical condition – such as a broken finger, a skin allergy, or a cold. The semeion is a natural sign, that is, a sign produced by nature. The premise that guides semiotic analysis is that the recurring patterns which characterize sign systems are reflective of innate structures in the sensory, emotional, and intellectual composition of the human body and the human psyche – hence the term *structuralism* in the literature to refer to semiotic method.

Saussure is concerned with how cultural meaning is produced, holding it to be structured like a language. Human signs – words, gestures and symbols – can stand for all kinds of things. These are called conventional signs since they are invented

by human beings in cultural settings for conventionalized purposes. Like natural signs, they also consist of two parts: 1) a physical part – the sounds or letters that make up a word, such as 'table' – and 2) the entity, object, being, event, and so on that the physical part has been designed to stand for, whether it be real or imagined.

For Saussure, a signifying system is constituted by a series of signs that are analysed in terms of their constituent parts, which he termed the *signifier* (the physical part of the sign e.g. the word 'table') and the *signified* (the object that the physical part stands for i.e. the actual table itself).

The signified is, in effect, the meaning captured by the sign. It is to be understood in terms of concepts and meanings which are broadly common to all members of the same culture, who share the same language. Saussure distinguishes between *langue* and *parole. Langue* is the term used to describe the innate knowledge of the systematic pairings of labels (signifiers) and concepts (signified) which form a language. Saussure says that *langue* consists of the 'deep' structure of language. *Parole* refers to the individual utterances, termed by Saussure as the 'surface' of language. The number of possible utterances is infinite and brand naming techniques show how varied language is in creating meaning.

Although the link between signifier and signified can appear obvious to members of a speech community, clearly there is no logical reason why certain sounds/letters should represent specific concepts. Saussure refers to this phenomenon as the *arbitrariness* of the sign. He illustrated the principle of arbitrariness at the lexical level, in relation to individual words as signs.

For example, there is no logical reason why the sounds and letters which form the word '*mouse*' should signify a small, cheese-eating rodent instead of an elephant. Language plays a crucial role in constructing reality. In the field of naming products, this concept of arbitrariness allows for a great deal of freedom.

The underlying argument behind the semiotic approach is that since all cultural objects convey meaning, and all cultural practices depend on meaning, they must make use of signs, and in so far as they do, they must work like language works, and be amenable to an analysis which basically makes use of linguistic concepts.

Peirce, on the other hand, formulates his own model of the sign and of the taxonomies of signs based on a triadic model consists of: the *representamen* (sign vehicle); an *interpretant* (sense of the sign) and an *object* (referent) (Peirce, quoted in Chandler 2002: 29). In his typology of signs, Peirce distinguishes three basic types of sign: icon, index and symbol. An *icon* bears a resemblance to its object. Visual signs are generally the most obviously iconic – photographs and maps. Olfactory signs are also iconic. Fiske points out that "some perfumes are artificial icons of animal smells indicating sexual arousal" (Fiske 1982: 47). An *index* is a sign with a direct existential connection with its object – smoke is an index of fire. A *symbol* is a sign whose connection with its object is a matter of convention, agreement or rule. Words and numbers are symbols, as well as a whole array of other meaning-bearing conventional symbols which can be used in communication on a global scale.

Icons, indexes and symbols are part of the fundamental semiotic instruments used for advertising. As Fiske (1982, 1990: 3) explains:

> The message [...] is not something sent from A to B, but an element in a structured relationship whose other elements include external reality and the producer/reader. Producing and reading the text are seen as parallel, if not identical processes in that they occupy the same place in this structured relationship.

In recent years, a poststructuralist school of thought has emerged within semiotics. The leading figure of this school is the late French semiotician and philosopher Jacques Derrida (1930-2004). The main premise in poststructuralism is that signs and texts have a *constantly changing* meaning. The most beneficial effect of poststructuralism on semiotics has been to make analysts more aware of the subjectivity that interpretation invariably entails.

Meaning generated by signs may be influenced not only by cultural, age and gender differences of audiences, but also by social and ideological developments and tendencies. In the 1970s, *Charlie* (Revlon) became a top seller among a new style of 'trouser wearing' women.

Specific references to particular subjects such as ecology and an affinity with nature in fragrance names may create positive associations to a greater or lesser extent in consumers' minds, depending on their individual tastes and also specific world trends at the time the fragrance is launched. In 2007 the Lush company launched a fragrance called *Go Green* with the pledge that 10% of the proceeds from each

purchase would be donated to environmental organizations leading the fight to protect the planet.

1.3 Names – 'What's in a name?'

What's in a name? That which we call a rose
by any other name would smell as sweet.
(Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, act 2, sc.2)

In the second act of the play, Juliet tells Romeo that a name is an artificial and meaningless symbol and that she loves the person who is called 'Montague', not the Montague name and not the Montague family. he declares: "What's in a name? That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet". She is therefore emphasising the arbitrariness of names.

A name is a special kind of sign. It is of particular interest because it links the possessor of the name to the culture in which he or she is born. All names have historical and culture-specific meanings. Many modern names have deep-rooted origins and most of the common given names in Western culture come from Hebrew, Greek, Latin or Teutonic languages. Examples include: *Kenneth,* 'handsome' (Gaelic); *Claire,* 'bright' (Latin); *Dorothy,* 'gift of God' (Greek); *Naomi,* 'pleasant one' (Hebrew) (Crystal [2]2006:75).

Naming a thing is the first stage in appropriating it and assuming power over it (Romaine 1999: 15). The act of naming a newborn child is his or her first rate of

passage in society, it marks the creation of a separate individual with a unique personality. In Christianity, the Sacrament of Baptism creates a bond with the Church. If a person is not given a name by his or her family, then society will step in to do so. Newborn babies who are abandoned by their mothers are immediately named by caring hospital staff.

In the 1960s, a British television programme called 'The Prisoner' aimed to show how the lack of a name would lead to a loss of identity. The series revolved around a totalitarian world where people were given numbers instead of names (Number 1, Number 2, etc). The idea was, obviously, that a person could be made to conform to the will of the state and could be more easily controlled by state officials if he or she did not have a name.

The act of naming things is universal. In a bid to generate formal anthropomorphism, name giving is extended across cultures to inanimate referents. Apart from people, places, pets, buildings, streets, etc. we also name hurricanes *(Katrina)*, storms, *(Alex)*, even the site of acts of terrorism *(Ground Zero)*.

As Danesi (2008: 56) points out, "Throughout the world, naming objects and artefacts is felt to bestow on them a mysterious life force".

Perhaps we find it easier to relate to things if they have a name. Not only do we want to dish out names, but we are also keen for these names to have a meaning. As Crystal (2006: 74-75) remarks, "We want names to mean something." In the classic children's story by Lewis Carroll, the main character, Alice questions the necessity of name meaning:

"Must a name mean something?" Alice asked doubtfully. "Of course it must", replied Humpty: "my name means the shape I am - and a good handsome shape it is, too. With a name like yours, you might be any shape, almost." (Lewis Carroll, *Through the Looking-Glass* (1871) htpp://www.literature.org)

Bookshops are full of baby naming books marketed at couples who are about to become parents and are prepared to do a great deal of background reading on the subject of the origin and meaning of names in the quest for the perfect name for their offspring.

"A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches"

(Proverbs 22)
(http://www.bibleinsong.com)

The selection of a brand name is therefore of the utmost importance in bringing a product into the world, as it creates a link with a particular culture and acts as a site for meaning generation. A successful brand name will almost certainly bring great riches to the manufacturer of the product.

1.4 Brand Names as Signs

A brand name is more than a word.
It is the beginning of a conversation..
Lexicon Branding Agency,
(http://www.allaboutbranding.com)

According to Romaine (1999: 251), "In industrialized societies such as in the United States and western Europe, people may be exposed to as many as 1,500 ads per day

through television, radio, magazines, newspapers, and billboards." (Romaine 1999: 251). This means that 1,500 brand names are being advertised, albeit at varying levels of exposure in different types of media. The average supermarket carries approximately 45,000 separate items (Rivkin & Sutherland 2004: 7). There are more than 14 million names of US businesses (Rivkin & Sutherland 2004: 7).

The word 'brand' originates from the Old Norse '*brandr*' meaning 'to burn'. (Chambers Concise 20th Century Dictionary, 1985). The idea of marking things, people or animals by burning identifying marks onto them is clearly an ancient one. To 'brand' was originally the searing of flesh with a hot iron to produce a scar or mark with an easily recognizable pattern for identification or other purposes. The Egyptians branded livestock as early as 2000 BC. In the late medieval period, trades people and guild members posted characteristic marks outside their shops, leading to the notion of trademark. Even today, among the best-known trademarks surviving from early modern times are the striped pole of the barbershop and the three-ball sign of the pawnbroker shop.

The practice of branding was introduced to North America in the sixteenth century by the Spanish conqueror Hernàn Cortés (1485-1547). Texan cattle ranches needed to keep track of their cattle. A special tool called a branding iron was used to mark the owner's initials onto the skin of the animals. The first 'brand name' in the USA consisted of the initials of the ranch owner (JAN) – José Antonio Navarro, and this name was registered with the authorities in Texas in 1838. Used primarily as proof of ownership, it developed over time into a practice for keeping records on quality.

Branding has also been used on human beings – the branding of prisoners, for instance, was a form of punishment used by the ancient Greeks and Romans and later adopted by the Anglo-Saxons. Criminals, slaves, army deserters and 'sinners' (such as women allegedly involved in witchcraft) have all been branded in the past.

Although the words branding and advertising are often used interchangeably, branding and advertising are by no means one and the same. The brand is really the core meaning of the product while the advertisement is just one of several possible vehicles used to convey that meaning to the world. Naomi Klein (2000: 5) reminds us that the real origins of modern branding as we know it today originated in the nineteenth century when goods began to be produced in factories. These products included not only entirely new products, but even old products in startlingly new forms. The market was now being flooded with uniform, mass-produced products that were virtually indistinguishable from one another (Klein 2000: 5).

Around 1880, soap manufacturers started giving names to their products so that they could be identified. Some of the original names are still to be found today: Ivory, Pears', Colgate. Manufacturers soon discovered that by simply bestowing descriptive or colourful names on products, sales figures rose dramatically. The concept of the brand was thus created. Klein explains that it was precisely because the Industrial Revolution witnessed a virtual flooding of products on the market that, "Competitive branding became a necessity of the machine age." (Klein 2000: 6). When we name products and transform them into brands, it seems that we bring them to life. Things with names have a personality and we are able to have strong

feelings about them. “In effect, when a product is named, it enters into the human cultural sphere, becoming identified as a separate entity with a unique personality” (Danesi 2008: 56). Danesi observes that naming a product makes it possible to refer to it as if it had a distinctive character or quality. It is easier to remember things as words than to remember the things themselves because “a word classifies something, keeps it distinct from other things, and above all else, bestows socially relevant meanings to it.” (Danesi 2008: 58).

If brand names served merely to differentiate and label goods at the point of purchase, one would think that once the consumer has bought the item and removed the outer packaging, it would not be necessary to print the brand name again, but many products also have the brand name ingrained into their surface – for safety reasons (e.g. tablets), for emotional bonding with the consumer (e.g. soap bars, perfume bottles, chocolate), or perhaps merely for the sake of fashion (e.g. sunglasses).

Although the widespread use of brands is essentially a phenomenon of the late 19th and 20th centuries, some of the oldest registered brand names still remain strong brands today and include: Coca-Cola (1886); Kellogg’s (1906); Kodak (1898).

Branding naturally boasts its own specific terminology. It may be useful to bear in mind some definitions:

Trademark – Trademarks (™) are the marks used to distinguish and protect one company’s products or services (SM) from another’s. They can include a product or service name (made up of letters/words/numbers), a symbol/logo, a slogan/strapline,

or any other mark that is deemed to be unique e.g. packaging design (shape, size and colour).

Brand – Brands are defined by the American Marketing Association (AMA) as, ‘‘the name, term, sign, symbol or design, or a combination of them, intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of the competition.” (http://www.marketing.about.com).

Logo – A logo is a recognizable and distinctive graphic design, stylized name, unique symbol or other device for identifying an organization.

Slogan/Strapline – A slogan/strapline is a catch phrase or small group of words that are combined in a special way to identify a product or company. Some memorable straplines include:

Tesco – *Every little helps*

Nike – *Just Do It*

Microsoft – *Where do you want to go today?*

KitKat – *Have a break, have a KitKat*

Coca-Cola – *The right one.*

Straplines may last for years while others are changed on a regular basis to tie in with a seasonal event (e.g. Christmas) or a whole new advertising campaign, lending a slightly different, updated image to a product or service, without changing the brand name.

By legal definition, a brand is a trademark. All brands, along with other semiotic components such as logos and slogans are identifying indices of the producer as they 'point to' or indicate their origin. Most US trademarks are registered with the federal government through the *Patent and Trademark Office* (USPTO).

The Intellectual Property Office (UK-IPO) is responsible for trademarks in the United Kingdom.

In Italy it is necessary to register trademarks with the *Ufficio Italiano Brevetti e Marchi* (UIBM).

Anybody who claims rights to a mark can use the letters TM. The registration symbol ® can only be used when the mark is registered with the authorities in the country of use. Some brands can therefore be registered in one country but not another. Once a brand is registered, it is guaranteed legal rights. The legislative function is mainly to protect a company's product from imitation by competitors. In order for a trademark application to be successful, the name must be unique – so that there is no possibility of confusing it with another product's name. The potential brand name should also be suitable for the desired market, whether that may be local or global.

The regulatory body for approving new applications for brand names in some sectors of trade may be more or less strict. In industrialized countries, rigid laws stipulate that anyone who uses a trademark or brand name acquires the legal right to prevent others from subsequently using a similar one. Anyone who uses one that is likely to cause customer confusion is considered generally to be an infringer and can

be sued. Unlike patent or copyright infringement, trademark infringement is defined solely by the likely confusion of customers. The usual remedy after a court trial finding trademark infringement is an injunction prohibiting the infringer from using its mark.

In the branding of fragrances, there are occasions when two perfume houses launch a fragrance with the same name e.g. *Man* (Jill Sander), *Man* (Calvin Klein). In such cases, it is the company name which steps in as the main differentiating factor. Complex and rigid trademark laws bear witness to the power of brand names as primary constituents in the product's signification system.

Sometimes, companies request trademark registration for a word that is deemed unreasonable for one company to have rights over as competitors may be unfairly prevented from using it. When in 1997 British Airways (BA) launched the low cost airline Go, there were initial reservations about allowing BA to have rights over such a word. The outcome was that in order to make Go distinctive, BA had to register the name in conjunction with its logo. In this case, it was the name along with its visual identity which were protected together.

Some brand names enjoy worldwide exposure and are instantly recognizable. In a few cases, the brand name as an identifier of a product is so powerful that it is used by consumers as a metonym to name the product type. Examples include aspirin, hoover, nylon, vaseline, kleenex. Such names consequently lose their legal status as trademarks as the name has fallen into generic use. This is obviously a negative outcome for the company concerned. The befallen brand-become-household name

not only loses its legal protection, it also loses its Capital letter and ends up in a dictionary of general language. Today, some well-known brand names e.g. Google, Play-Doh, Velcro, are at risk of losing their legal status.

New brand names are not only created to attach to new products, but oor sales figures or other concerns can cause a company to rebrand a particular product. Rivkin & Sutherland (2004: 66) describe how a few years ago the Logitech company had disappointing sales figures for their new scanner, *Scanner 2000.* The company renamed the machine *ScanMan* and in a short time, sales figures doubled. Evidently, the new compound name containing internal Capitalization and playing on rhyme was more appealing that the previous one with its hackneyed reference to the New Millennium. The fast food chain Kentucky Fried Chicken abbreviated its name to the acronym KFC in 1991 for different reasons. Firstly, it wanted to distance itself from the notion of fried i.e. unhealthy food in an age when healthy eating was becoming fashionable. The company also hoped to change its image of serving solely fried chicken dishes, as it had introduced a much more varied menu. The subsequent advertising campaigns aimed at steering consumers away from its old image, even referring to its initials as standing for 'Kitchen Fresh Chicken'. Now, surprisingly, the company has decided to revert to the original Kentucky Fried Chicken name in its new US outlets. Other companies may change their brand names in an attempt to revamp their image and to appear more modern, or perhaps to facilitate packaging and distribution requirements for products which had previously been branded under different names in different countries. Consumers

may react dramatically and unexpectedly to abrupt name changes of the brands they know and love. We need only recall the initial reluctance on the part of UK consumers to adapt to the new name for Opal Fruits (now Starbust), Jif (now Cif), and Oil of Ulay (now Olay).

de Mooij (2010: 39) remarks: "In a world of abundant brands and communications, differentiating a brand by its attributes or benefits is very difficult. It will work only if a product has unique attributes that distinguish it from the competition". When unique attributes are lacking, it is possible to suggest uniqueness through the use of a groundbreaking name which is unlike that of competitors' names. A brand name that is often cited as doing just that is the telephone company Orange. At the time of its launch in 1994, the use of a colour for a name was attractively 'different' and unexpected in the sector. It signalled something new in a stagnant market. It motivated people to take notice of the name and in a way, also motivated people to be part of it. The Orange name was obviously useful for exploiting excellent visual impact in its advertising campaigns. In early print advertisements, the bright orange colour contrasted sharply with the monotonous, grey surroundings of technology. The strapline "The future's bright, the future's Orange," using parallelism (repetition of 'the future's') and the substitution of 'bright' for the Orange brand name was very powerful as the brand name became synonymous with a positive future. However, even such successful brand names may offend consumers in specific areas of the market. In Northern Ireland, the 'Orange' future was synonymous with the

Protestant ‘Orangers’ so the brand name did not make such a hit with the Roman Catholic community.

Danesi (2008: 57) notes that “The coinage of an appropriate brand name has always been perceived to be the first crucial step in getting a product into social consciousness. Often this implies keeping in step with the times”. For example, brand names designed to appeal to a generation of customers accustomed to an Internet style of communication and text messaging have become popular. In such ‘new’ areas, where technological advances are rapid, it is necessary to find ‘new’ branding techniques, for example graphically, we find instances of spelling deviation such as dropping vowels, e.g. *Flickr,* symbolic names such as the alphanumerical MP3, and new coinages such as *Wii.* Brands can be viewed as being the logos of the global economy. Brands have become the key medium of exchange between companies and consumers and they are a primary force of globalization. It is therefore valuable to observe current trends of practice and predominant conceptual themes in order to identify particular tendencies and procedures which may or may not be suited to a global environment.

1.5 The Study of Brand Names

> *In making a speech one must study three points: first, the means of producing persuasion; second, the language; third, the proper arrangement of the various parts of the speech.*

(Aristotle 384 – 322 BC)
The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations

While advertising language has long attracted researchers, the specific study of brand names is relatively new, although branding and naming studies are becoming more frequent in recent years. An early study looks at the way certain types of brand name are given to certain product categories (Peterson & Ross 1972), observing perceptions of words and their appropriateness as brand names. Later, brand names in distinct product domains examined (Leblanc 1992; Piller 1996). Other studies deal with the linguistic features of brand names and memory for the brands (Collins 1977).

Strategically desirable brand name characteristics are investigated by Robertson (1992) (http://www.emeraldinsight.com/journals);

and the mental representation of brand names is examined by Gontijo et *al.* (2002) (http://www.anderson.ucla.edu/documents).

The relation between brand-name linguistic characteristics and brand-name memory is the focus of work undertaken by Lowrey & Shrum (2003, *Journal of Advertising* 32) (http://www.jstor.org) .

Frequency is the focus of other research: Schloss (1981) examines which linguistic features are used more often than others while Friedman (1986) looks at the frequency of brand names in literature.

Etymological aspects of brand names are examined by (Room 1991) and Clankie focuses on Brand name genericization (Clankie 2002).

Affixation in brand names is studied by(Smith Stvan 200)

Phonological aspects, in particular sound symbolism are the focus of (Klink 2000) (http://www.springerlink.com), and Yorkston & (http://www.stanford.edu/class/linguist62n/yorkston.pdf)

MenonMenon2001)http://www.stanford.edu/class/linguist62n/yorkston.pdf

Various aspects of foreign branding are analysed:

Foreign name branding (Leclerc, Schmitt & Dubé 1994).

Foreign branding and stereotypes ((Haarman 1986, 1989).

Foreign name branding (Leclerc, Schmitt & Dubé 1994).

Leclerc F., Schmitt B.H. & Dubé, L. 1994 *Foreign Branding and its Effects on Product Reception and Attitudes.* Journal of Marketing Research, Vol.31 (2), 263-70)

The phenomenon of invented foreign forms or 'mock language' (Hill 1999).

The contribution of brand names in the construction of social identity (Bell 1999; La Dousa 2002; Piller 2001).

Iconicity in brand names (Piller 1999). http://www.languageonthe move.com

Hill (1995, 1999a, 1999b) – phenomenon of invented foreign forms – 'mock language' e.g. Häagen Dazs

Construction of social identity (Bell 1999; LaDousa 2002, Piller 2001).

The impact of cross-cultural differences (Schmitt et al. 1994); Aaker & Keller (1990)

CHAPTER TWO : **CODES**

2.1 Types of Code

The photographic image
is a message without a code.
(Roland Barthes 1915-1980)
The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations

In order to discuss codes, we can start from the definition proposed by John Fiske: "A code is a system of meaning common to the members of a culture or subculture" (Fiske 1982: 19). Signs do not occur singly, they occur in groups. The placement of signs into appropriate groupings stresses that meaning arises not solely, not even primarily, from the relationship of signifier to signified, but from relations between signs. In other words, where there are signs, there is a system. It is therefore clear that "codes provide a framework within which signs make sense" (Chandler 2002: 147).

Although many codes exist, e.g. codes of dress, codes of practice, codes of logic etc., it is language that most often serves as the model code as it is a digital code (i.e. the signs are clearly distinguishable from one another). "The primary and most pervasive code in any society is its dominant natural language, within which (as with other codes) there are many 'sub-codes'" (Chandler 2002: 149). Lyons (1981: 18) points out that as natural languages are codes, they may be compared with other codes in all sorts of ways: in terms of the channel along which the signals are

transmitted; in terms of the form, or structure of the signals; in terms of the kind or range of the messages that may be encoded; and so on.

All codes share a number of characteristics:

1. Codes have a number of units arranged in paradigms from which one is chosen.
2. These chosen units are combined syntagmatically into a message or text.
3. Codes convey meaning derived from the agreement among and shared cultural experience of their users.
4. Codes are transmittable by their appropriate media of communication.
5. Codes can be a way of classifying, organizing, and understanding material as well as of transmitting or communicating it.
6. Codes are, by their very nature, full of gaps and inconsistencies and subject to constant change (O'Sullivan *et al*. (1983), quoted in Leeds-Hurwitz 1993: 53).

A syntagm is a sequential pattern which reflects the restrictions on word order in a language whereas a paradigm is the set of alternative words which could be used equally legitimately in a particular position in the syntagm. Codes therefore follow sets of rules but Chandler points out that "Codes are not simply 'conventions' of communication, but rather procedural *systems* of related conventions which operate in certain domains." (Chandler 2002: 148). Codes are discernible, not only in what a message says, but in its style, or mode of address. In other words, codes are a

cultural phenomenon, expressing the relations between people and groups (Hartley 1982: 32).

The semiotic tradition suggests that the flood of signs, images and myths surrounding us, influence our behaviour by way of codes. Codes are maps of meaning, systems of ideas that people use to interpret their own and others' behaviour – similar to what sociologists call 'frames' or schemas'. Codes provide ways of making sense of the world, to the extent that we use them to guide our actions and shape our behaviour. Codes thus connect semiotic systems of meaning with social structure and values.

In order for communication to take place, messages need to be created from signs which stimulate the generation of meaning that relates to the meaning generated in the message in the first place. It is only through sharing the same codes and using the same sign systems that the two meanings generated will approximate one another. When marketers and consumers do not share the same code, the communication process may be distorted or hampered:

> Semiotics highlights the way that we ourselves take part in the creation of meaning in messages, suggesting that we are not mere bystanders in the advertising process, but participants in creating a code that unites the designer and reader. If we are not aware of the relevant referent system, we will not be able to decode the message. (Leiss *et al.* 2005: 165).

2.2 The Linguistic Code

Words are, of course, the most
powerful drug used by mankind
(Rudyard Kipling 1865-1936)
The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations

The classification of language as a code was stressed in the previous section. Perhaps the most striking characteristic of language by comparison with other codes or communication systems is its flexibility and versatility. In 1958, the linguist Charles Hockett (cf. Chandler 2002: 22) identified 13 design features which distinguish human language from the communicative abilities of other animals. Among the more specific of these properties that contribute to the flexibility and versatility of language (i.e. of each and every language system,), there are four which are of particular interest to any analysis of brand names: arbitrariness; duality; discreteness; productivity. Regarding arbitrariness, Lyons (1981: 19) explains that the vast majority of words in all languages have an arbitrary connection between their form and meaning in that, given the form, it is impossible to predict the meaning and given the meaning, it is impossible to predict the form. It is obvious that in this way, arbitrariness increases the flexibility and versatility of a communication system in that the extension of the vocabulary is not constrained by the necessity of matching form and meaning in terms of some more general principle. Looked at from a semiotic point of view, arbitrariness offers both advantages and disadvantages. On the one hand, it makes the system more flexible and adaptable, but it also makes it more difficult and laborious to learn. A further

complication is that arbitrariness in a semiotic system makes the signals more difficult to interpret, not only for regular code-users, but as mentioned above, for anyone intercepting them who does not know the system.

Duality in language refers to the presence of two levels of structure, so that the units of the primary level are composed of elements of the secondary level and each of the two levels has its own principles of organisation. Generally, the lower-level elements do not in themselves convey meaning, but when combined together they form units which in most cases have a distinct and identifiable meaning.

Language is composed of discrete units that are used in combination to create meaning. Discrete sounds are sometimes said to be the building blocks of language. By combining sounds, we form words, and words communicate meaning. By combining discrete sounds in different sequences and numbers, speakers can pronounce an infinite number of words. The letters of the English alphabet symbolize discrete sounds. In English writing, most letters no longer represent a single sound. Some single letters are rendered in spelling as two letters. This is because changes in the way words are spelled have lagged behind changes in pronunciation since the invention of the printing press.

Productivity makes possible the construction and interpretation of new signals. Most animal communication systems appear to have a closed or highly restricted number of different signals that their users can send and receive. Human language systems, on the contrary, enable their users to construct and understand an indefinitely large number of utterances.

Language performs a two-fold function. At the same time as language and sign systems shape our reality, they are also media in which to communicate about this reality. In process communication models, a medium is a channel by which information is transmitted from a source to a receiver. However, language and other signs do not simply name pre-existing entities, but rather allow us to be 'shaped' by sign systems. All of our lives are lived through the signs which language gives us to think, speak and write with. All of our thought and experience, our very sense of our own identity, depends on the systems of signs already existing in society which give form and meaning to our consciousness and reality; it is language that "gives us the words which divide up our reality in meaningful ways" (Bignell 2002: 7). In Jakobson's words, it is generally assumed that "the basic, the primary, the most important semiotic system is language: language really is the foundation of culture" (Jakobson (1971) quoted in Leeds-Hurwitz 1993: 13).

2.3 Words, Mere Words

"In the beginning was the word"
(John 1:1)
The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations

A standard definition of the word is found in a paper written in 1926 by the American linguist Leonard Bloomfield. According to Bloomfield, 'a minimum free form is a word.' By this he meant that the word is the smallest *meaningful* linguistic unit that can be used on its own. It is a form that cannot be divided into any smaller

units that can be used independently to convey meaning. For example, *book* is a word. We cannot divide it up into smaller units that can convey meaning when they stand alone. When we are able to divide a word up into separate units, we refer to these units as *morphemes;* the smallest units that have meaning or serve a grammatical function in a language. Any chunk of a word with a particular meaning represents a morpheme. Morphemes are the atoms with which words are built. Morphemes tend to ave a fairly stable meaning which they bring to any word in which they appear.

Plag (2003: 8) defines words as "syntactic atoms, i.e. the smallest elements in a sentence." Fiske (1990: 48) notes that words are symbols with no obvious connections to the idea they represent, whose connection with their object is a matter of convention, agreement or rule. Our understanding of words is dependent on our knowledge of a language which we learn through education and socialization and is informed by our culture (Bignell 2002:7). Furthermore, Bignell states that "the capacity of linguistic signs to be meaningful depends on their existence in a social context and on their conventionally accepted use in that social context." (Bignell 2002: 8).

We are aware that the English language has 9 word classes: nouns; pronouns; verbs; adjectives; adverbs; determiners; prepositions; conjunctions; interjections. However, there are different ways of observing words. The *orthographic* word is a unit in the writing system of a language. It is an uninterrupted string of letters which is preceded by a blank space and followed either by a blank space or a punctuation

mark (Plag 2003: 4). In effect, there exist other, alternative ways of observing words: *phonologically* (in terms of sound structure), *semantically* (in terms of meaning), and *syntactically* (in terms of sentence structure). The brand names of fragrances in this study are observed not only as orthographic units, but also specific phonological, semantic and syntactic characteristics are noted.

A root is a morpheme which forms the core of a word. It is the unit to which other morphemes may be added. All roots belong to one of the lexical categories, i.e. they belong to the word classes of noun, adjective, verb or adverb.

Word classes can in turn be divided into two groups: open classes and closed classes. Open classes are noun, verb, adjective and adverb are content words and it is these word classes which can have more words added to them as the language grows and changes. Pronouns, determiners, prepositions, conjunctions and interjections all belong to closed classes. Closed classes of these functional words have a smaller, restricted membership which rarely changes.

The unit above the word in the language hierarchy is the phrase. A phrase is a group of words which have a grammatical relationship to each other and which together form a structural unit (Blake & Moorhead 1993: 11). Noun phrases consist of a group of words in which the most important, 'head' word is a noun or pronoun. Adjectival and adverbial phrases usually consist simply of the adjective or adverb preceded by one or more intensifiers. A prepositional phrase is a unit of structure in which a preposition is the most important word. Lastly, a verb phrase has a lexical verb as its head word.

A clause usually contains more than one element of structure but must contain a verb (Blake & Moorhead 1993: 15). A sentence is the highest level in the grammatical hierarchy. It contains one or more clauses and can be classified according to structure or function. A simple sentence is made up of one finite clause with subject, verb and object (Blake & Moorhead 1993 :17).

Brand names of fragrances are generally made up of one word e.g. *Sapphire* (La Prairie), a phrase e.g. *Purple Lips* (Salvador Dali). Clauses appear, e.g. *I Am King* (Sean John), but are infrequent.

Whole sentences are unlikely to be used as brand names as shorter names are generally preferred as being more memorable and facilitating packaging design. Although not included in the corpus, a citrus fragrance from 2010 reaches into the realms of traditional English nursery rhymes to create a descriptive yet memorable brand name in the form of a sentence: *Oranges and Lemons Say the Bells of St. Clement's* (Heeley).The brand name is the first line of an English nursey rhyme:

> 'Oranges and lemons', say the bells of St. Clement's;
> 'You owe me five farthings', say the bells of St. Martin's.
> 'When will you pay me?' say the bells of Old Bailey;
> 'When I grow rich', say the bells of Shoreditch.
> 'When will that be?' say the bells of Stepney;
> 'I do not know', says the great bell of Bow.
> Here comes a candle to light you to bed.
> And here comes a chopper to chop off your head!
> (Traditional English Nursery Rhyme: htpp://www.rhymes.org.uk)

The last word 'spoken' by each of the bells rhymes with the names of the bells and the words that the bells 'say' are sung in a way that emulates the ringing of the

individual bells of Old London. The nursery rhyme dates back to cultural rituals of eighteenth century London and various cultural practices of the time, such as money lending, are mentioned in the words of the rhyme. The end of the rhyme refers to the ritual at Newgate prison when on the eve of their execution, prisoners on death row were visited by a candle-bearing 'bell-man' who would hold a candle in one hand and ring the execution bell in the other. The sound of a church bell ringing at 9am on a Monday morning would signal the start of any hangings to take place that week. The rhyme is an enduring cultural legacy and is still a popular chant with English schoolchildren today - especially as there are actions involved in the chant, complete with the mimicry of chopping off someone's head – but the actual meaning is confined to a specific, local custom rather than a global practice and shows how the meaning of a brand name is intrinsically linked to culture as well as to language. In this particular case, consumers who are unaware of the cultural implications may perceive the name as being simply a descriptive name referring to the essential oils in the scent.

It has been estimated that average speakers of a language know from 45,000 to 60,000 words (Plag: 2003: 4). New words are added to languages on a regular basis, therefore adding further challenges for our mental lexicon. Any arbitrary meaning assigned to a word needs to be accepted by the speech community which uses the language. However, the attraction of an ambiguous or polysemic name is that it has greater meaning potential among consumers and therefore more effective. The topic of meaning is discussed by Humpty Dumpty and Alice, in the following exchange:

‘When I use a word, it means just what I choose it to mean – neither more nor less’.

‘The question is,’ said Alice, ‘whether you can make words mean so many different things.’

‘The question is,’ said Humpty Dumpty, ‘which is to be master – that’s all’.

(Lewis Carroll (1871) *Through the Looking-Glass*) http://www.literature.org)

As Humpty Dumpty pointed out to Alice, we are the masters and words are our servants. We can make them mean whatever we want them to mean. The only thing missing from Humpty Dumpty’s analysis is the social dimension.

Romaine states that “Language is the primary means through which we understand the world and our place within it.” (Romaine 1999: 15). The following section outlines the various processes which combine together to organize the various processes of signification through language.

2.4 Signification – Language as a Signifying Practice

It would be so nice if something
made sense for a change.
(Lewis Carroll (1865)
Alice in Wonderland)
http://www.literature.org

The meaning of linguistic expressions is commonly described in terms of the notion of ‘signification’. That is to say, words and other expressions are held to be signs which, in some sense, signify, or stand for, other things (Lyons 1977: 95).

As Hall (1997: 5) puts it, “Languages work through representation [...] They construct meaning and transmit it. They signify.” (Hall 1997: 5). Language is able to construct meanings because it operates as a ‘representational system’ (Hall 1997: 1), in which we use signs and symbols to stand for or represent to other people our concepts, ideas and feelings. Semiotics is therefore a key field of study for understanding how meaning is constructed and represented through language.

In Hall’s words, then, languages work through representation. They are ‘systems’ of representation. Languages all use some element to stand for or represent what we want to say, for example written language uses words. These elements construct meaning and transmit it: they signify. They do not have any clear meaning in themselves, rather, they are the vehicles or media which carry meaning because they operate as symbols, which stand for or represent (i.e. symbolize) the meanings we wish to communicate. In other words, they function as signs. Signs stand for or represent our concepts, ideas and feelings in such a way as to enable others to ‘read’, decode or interpret their meaning in roughly the same way that we do. Language, in this sense, is a signifying practice. (cf. Hall 1997: 4). So it is through culture and language that the production and circulation of meaning takes place. ‘Language’ therefore provides one general model of how culture and representation work, especially in the semiotic approach.

Chandler (2002: 220) notes that Peirce emphasizes the role of interpreters as signs do not exist without interpreters. Anything can be a sign as long as someone interprets it as ‘signifying’ something – referring to or standing for something else.

As already mentioned in section 1.2, Peirce draws up a typology of signs which identifies 'differing modes of relationship' between the sign vehicle and what is signified. In Peirce's view, signs which are characterized by arbitrariness are termed 'symbolic' signs. A second mode of relationship is the 'indexical' mode. Indexical signs have a concrete and often causal relationship to their signified. The third mode is labelled 'iconic'. In the Peircean sense, the defining feature of iconicity is merely perceived resemblance.

In 1957 Barthes published *Mythologies,* a collection of short essays which dealt with a wide variety of cultural phenomena. Barthes' ideas bring us closer to the semiotic analysis of contemporary media. He sets up a systematic model by which a negotiating, interactive idea of meaning can be analysed. At the heart of Barthes' theory is the idea of two orders of signification, both of which require the use of codes.

In Barthes' terms, denotation and connotation refer to the first and second levels of meaning in a sign. The term 'denotation' refers to the literal meaning of a sign; it describes the relationship between the signifier and the signified within the sign, and of the sign with its referent in external reality. 'Connotation' is a term used by Barthes to describe one of the three ways in which signs work in the second order of signification. This is when meanings move towards the subjective. It is when the interpretant is influenced as much by the interpreter as by the object or the sign o meanings which lie beyond denotation but are dependent on it. Besides connotation, Barthes includes myth and symbols in the second level of meaning of a sign. (Fiske

1982, 1990: 86-87). When we consider media texts such as brand names, it is clear that linguistic, visual, and other kinds of sign are used not simply to denote something, but also to trigger a whole range of connotations attached to the sign. For Barthes, this bringing-together of signs and their connotations to shape a particular message is the making of 'myth'. In this sense, myth is not a reference to mythology, but rather to ways of thinking about people, products, places or ideas which are structured to send particular messages to the reader or viewer of the text. Myth takes hold of an existing sign and makes it function as a signifier on another level.

In one of these essays, called *Myth Today*, Barthes goes so far as to declare that "Myth is a type of speech". He also specifies that "Myth is not defined by the object of its message, but by the way in which it utters this message." (Barthes (1957) in the translation by Lathers 2000: 109). Barthes' concept of myth as a system of communication and meaning suggests that "every object in the world can pass from a a closed, silent existence to an oral state, open to appropriation by society" (Barthes (1957) in the translation by Lathers 2000: 109). *Mythologies* uses semiotics as the predominant means of analysing aspects of everyday culture. The main argument behind the semiotic approach is that since all cultural objects convey meaning, and all cultural practices depend on meaning, they must make use of signs, and in so far as they do, they must work like language works, and be amenable to an analysis which basically makes use of linguistic concepts (e.g. the signifier/signified

and langue/parole distinctions, the idea of underlying codes and structures, and the arbitrary nature of the sign).

Saussure's linguistic model of representation is therefore developed through its application to a much wider field of signs and representations and the semiotic approach to the problem of representation is manifest in a wide variety of cultural fields such as branding, advertising, photography, fashion, etc. Interpretation becomes an essential aspect of the process by which meaning is given and taken. Commodities such as brands become the signifiers for myths of nationality, masculinity, femininity, nature, etc. Connotation and myth are the main ways in which signs work in the second order of signification, that is the order in which the interaction between the sign and the user/culture is most active. While connotation signifies 'expressive' values, myth signifies values associated with concepts. The idea is that ordinary signs can serve to classify the world into conceptual categories, thus making it appear meaningful. Of course, such classifications originate in the language, and so it is not the world that supplies the meaning to the categories, but vice versa.

Myths are produced within signification. They are produced when signs are multiplied up so that their 'denotative' meaning includes (apparently intrinsically) signs of conceptual values. Hence it follows that myths are not ready-made, existing somewhere in a pre-formed state and waiting to be used. They are a product of the active, generative process of language, formed and reformed according to the relations between social groups and forces.

If we are to understand our social and cultural world, we must think not of independent objects but of symbolic structures, systems of relations which, by enabling objects and actions to have meaning, create a human universe. Readers or spectators have actively to introduce cultural codes in order to interpret a sign by uniting signifier and signified.

In an important essay on semiotics and publicity images, 'Rhetoric of the Image' which was first published in 1964 and subsequently in 1977, Barthes draws attention to the levels of meaning in ads. He calls the denotative, first level of meaning of an advertising image a non-coded iconic message and says that interpretation at the iconic, denoted level is relatively unproblematic and even goes so far as to suggest that the photographic image is a 'message without a code'. The second level is a coded iconic, or symbolic, message. The latter is based on pre-existing bodies of knowledge of a practical, cultural, national, historic or aesthetic nature.

In this essay, Barthes suggests that we can read the component signs of an ad for Panzani pasta products as a myth. The meaning of the advertisement is constructed not simply by discrete signs but by the ordering of the world that it implies (Dyer 1982: 129).There are some packets of pasta, a tin of spaghetti sauce, a sachet of Parmesan cheese, some tomatoes, onions, peppers, and a mushroom, all either in or emerging from a string shopping bag. Images are polysemic, i.e. they have multiple meanings and are open to diverse interpretations. The linguistic message, the brand name of the pasta, serves to 'anchor' the message. In Barthes' view, images in such a text are rarely presented to us without words of some kind. The use of a linguistic

code therefore limits the potential meanings of a text. In a similar way, the selected pictorial advertising campaign and/or tagline for a particular fragrance may actually limit the meaning potential of a particular brand name. If we take as an example the shots used in the advertising campaign for the fragrance *Apple Bottoms* (Nelly), we may be disappointed to discover that photographs simply depict models clothed in items from a fashion line. Our expectations may have been completely different, for example the apple as a symbol of perfection and also temptation (Garden of Eden), along with nakedness and possible sexual connotations from the word 'bottom'. In a similar way, the visual for Estée Lauder's *Pleasures* depicts the actress Gwyneth Paltrow kissing a puppy under a banner that says, 'I live for moments like this', a moment which may not be everybody's idea of pleasure and therefore the advertisement limits somewhat the potential meaning interpretation of the brand name.

At the connotative level, the scene in the Panzani advertisement represents a return from the market, which implies both the freshness of the products and the healthiness and wholesomeness of home cooking. A sense of Italianness is conveyed not only by the linguistic message – the brand name Panzani, but also by the dominant colours (red, pale yellow and green) which convey the idea of Italy through symbolic and indexical reference to the Italian national flag. The placing of food items on the table is not unlike a still life painting and therefore the ad is evocative of the world of art.

Hartley explains that there is a distinction between signs and the objects they refer to – their referents. The sign-system determines the way in which we will see the referent, and referents are not pre-given entities with fixed determinate properties. Both sign and referent are merely potential when it comes to meaning (Hartley 1982: 34). Hartley goes on to point out that the elements which make up a sign potential are precisely its arbitrariness, multi-accentuality, orientation, and its capacity for connotation and myth. The concept of multi-accentuality reminds us that signs do not have a fixed, internal 'meaning', but only meaning potentials, which are actualized in use. All signs can have meaning potential 'accented' or directed towards a particular kind of meaning, depending on the context of the utterance, and on the speaker. Hartley (1980: 22) quotes the point made by Dale Spender (1980), who theorized that the sex of the speaker may contribute to the accentuality of a specific meaning. Spender uses the example of qualifiers such as *perhaps* or *maybe* to make the point that these terms which are generally used to qualify statements, may not always appear as qualifiers, depending on whether they are uttered by a male or female speaker. (Hartley 1982: 22). One of the implications of the notion of multi-accentuality is that signs do not have a fixed dictionary meaning. The concept of orientation brings to the fore the idea that all signs express not only a relationship between each other, and a relationship between the signifying system and its object or referent, but also a relationship between the addresser and addressee – the speaker and hearer, writer and reader.

Understanding how meaning is constructed through fragrance naming is an important step towards apprehending the role of branding in our personal lives and in society as a whole. Through signifying practices, people make meaning from the fragrances they choose. The fragrance as sign becomes a commodity sign formed at the locus between the brand name and the object (the fragrance).

2.5 Brand Language

Do not say a little in many words
but a great deal in a few
(Pythagoras 580 – 500 BC)
The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations

Brand names represent an interesting field of linguistic analysis because they possess special linguistic status and several particular characteristics. Firstly, they are written with a Capital letter and as such resemble Proper nouns. However, Proper nouns generally refer to a unique, individual entity, whereas the referent of a brand name is just one of many identical objects. The referents of the brand names of fragrances are all very similar. Common nouns are included in dictionaries but brand names are not. Brand names therefore appear to belong to a rather 'grey' area; they are neither Proper nouns nor common nouns, but something in between. Despite not being worthy of dictionaries, brand names are used by millions of people all over the world on a daily basis.

Most brand names tend to be short, consisting of just one or two words. They therefore conform to the so-called 'principle of economy' outlined by George

Kingsley Zipf in the period between the two World Wars. Zipf's principle of economy hypothesized that languages are apt to evolve economically and that 'compression strategies' such as abbreviation and acronymy tend to occur progressively more frequently. Such developments are plainly materializing in some modern discourse types such as text messaging, for example the initialism AAMOF (as a matter of fact) and the alphanumerical message CuL8r (see you later). Some numbers in English have a particularly useful function in messages of this type as they are homophones for prepositions e.g. 2 (to); 4 (for). The letter U is a homophone for 'you', used in brand names and company names such as *Phones4u* mobile phone shop.

Lengthier brand names consisting of phrases, clauses or even sentences may be chosen for the purpose of showing originality e.g. 'I Can't Believe it's not Butter.' However, namers are often given specific indications on how long the brand name should be in order for the name to actually fit on the packaging.

A typical peculiarity of brand language in English is that while the norm in general language is to go from specific to general, in brand names, the opposite often occurs, i.e. from the more general producer name to the specific brand name (e.g. Nintendo Wii, Ford Fiesta), thereby deviating from English grammar rules.

In a global world, the choice of language code for a brand name is vitally important. Marketers may choose a specific language code for several reasons: because the language is the official language or is readily understood in the desired markets; because the language is *not* the official language of the country where the goods will

be marketed and therefore will allow the brand to distinguish itself; or possibly for economic reasons - the language code chosen (e.g. English) is considered a global language and is therefore less costly as no translated names or different packaging are required. Cook (1992: 107) notes that "The effect of names is often modified by their preservation, untranslated, for a foreign market." Goodman & Graddol remark that in many countries, the social élites with disposable income are those who are bilingual in English. English-medium branding can thus effectively target higher income groups (Goodman & Graddol 2002: 216). The name therefore distinguishes itself by the very choice of linguistic code.

Obviously, whichever code is chosen, a special check, a so-called 'linguistic screening' should be run on the name in order to avoid potential linguistic offence or embarrassment when the product is marketed globally. Costly mistakes have been known to occur when such precautions are not taken. Some examples include: the Vauxhall Nova (*no va* means 'does not go' in Spanish); the (Silver) Mist Rolls Royce (*mist* translates as 'manure' in German); Colgate Cue (*cue* is a vulgar expression for 'backside' in French). Some products which are branded in the English language in various national markets of the world may sound peculiar or offensive to native English speakers. The following table lists some examples:

Brand Name	**Product type**	**National Market**
Erektus	energy drink	Czech Republic

Prick	potato chips	Brazil
Shitto	pepper sauce	Ghana
Bum Bum	ice cream	Germany
Swine	chocolate	China
Bonka	coffee	Spain
Fart	juice drink	Poland
That's	car (Honda)	Japan
Naked	car (Daihatsu)	Japan
Big Thumb	car (Nissan)	Japan
Cok	baby food	Russia
Pshhit	soft drink	France

Table 1. Unusual brand names from around the world.

Although native English speakers may smirk at such brands, we must remember that these names are not being targeted at them. Just because a name looks strange to some people, this does not mean that it is ineffective within a specific market.

A good brand name should not only label and identify a product in a mass market but should also bring flattering associations to mind, associations that will help it to sell. The names given to cosmetics and other beauty products frequently recall images of beauty, cleanliness, sophistication and naturalness.

As Danesi (2008: 57) points out, “Brand names, clearly, do much more than just identify a product […]they are constructed to create signification systems for the product.”

It is important to remember, however, that brand names are not typically encountered in black Times New Roman characters on white paper. Brand names fit into a more complete context, comprising colour, logo, strapline, billboard, packaging, design. Brand names need design, straplines, advertising and communications to bring them to life.

The phenomenon of branding is therefore both a visual and verbal form of communication and the brand name represents a combination of concepts and relations which all contribute to the creation of a particular communicative context. It is the name, however, that constitutes the most important element of the brand. The name is also the one single element that is least likely to change. Packaging, colours and slogans have a shorter life expectancy.

When faced with the task of naming a new product, marketers have at their fingertips a whole array of strategies to choose from. Particular brand naming strategies are selected in order to project a specific type of meaning. One common method is to use eponymy (people names). These names can either be the name of the founder of the company (e.g. Kellogg’s, Gillette), or names of invented characters (e.g. Uncle Ben, Susanna). According to Danesi (2008: 57) “products bearing the names of the actual manufacturers evoke images of tradition, reliability, artistry, sophistication, and so on […] Products named after fictitious characters

elicit specific colourful and appealing images." (Danesi 2008: 57). In the case of fragrances, the manufacturer or *heritage* name (e.g. the perfume houses of Chanel, Calvin Klein etc.) is therefore frequently used in conjunction with the brand name of the specific fragrance in order to imbue the product with positive connotations of tradition and professional mastery. On the other hand, products named after a fictitious character suggest certain qualities that the name itself is designed to emphasize. Fictitious characters lend themselves well to advertising campaigns where the character 'comes to life'. Hieronymy consists of the use of religious or mythological names (e.g. Nike).

Descriptive and suggestive names come under the category of rhetorical names. Ever since the time of the Ancient Greeks (Plato, Aristotle etc.) and Romans (Cicero, Horace etc.), the use of figures of speech, or tropes, has been seen primarily as an essential part of persuasion. Rhetoric is a form of discourse employed by orators and writers to strengthen and embellish their speeches and compositions.

Descriptive names are at the lowest end of the rhetorical scale They usually describe the product in some way. Toponyms (e.g. SEAT Ibiza, Milky Way) are one kind of descriptive name as they describe the geographic location of a product or company, or at least connect the product to that location. Descriptive names may also indicate something about the product or indicate what the product can do for you, e.g Fresh & Clean, Off! Although fairly straightforward information is relayed (who the manufacturer is, where the company is located, or what the product can do), descriptive names still create signification because they identify the product not

as a simple product but as something that belongs somewhere, is created by someone, or can do various things.

Suggestive names go far beyond descriptive names. They are constructed rhetorically to make suggestions about product use that reach into lifestyle, myth and other domains of human life. Suggestive names rely heavily on connotations.

At times, brand names borrow the styles and idioms of other types of discourse e.g. scientific or legal language. Therefore, a brand name may use particular linguistic and stylistic features which are more appropriate in a different context. This of course helps the brand to distinguish itself.

"Catching our attention and imagination and aiding memory (cf. Dyer 1982: 139-140) have been identified as the primary functions of advertising language. In a saturated global market, brand names need to adopt strategies to ensure that the name is distinctive, appealing and memorable.

The notion of 'distinctiveness' is of prime importance for a brand name. Distinctiveness represents the extent to which the attributes of a construct are unique or original. Intrinsically speaking, the visual and verbal distinctiveness of a brand may be a combination of any of the following: name, letter, numbers, a symbol, a signature, a shape, a slogan, a colour, a particular typeface.

2.6 *Wordplay* – Linguistic Creativity

Language is an anonymous, collective and unconscious art;
the result of the creativity of thousands of generations.
(Edward Sapir 1884-1939)
The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations

Language is our most important vehicle of communication and in communication, language can perform a variety of functions. Language is the medium in which we 'make sense' of things, in which meaning is produced and exchanged. Meanings can only be shared through our common access to language. Therefore, language is central to meaning and culture and has always been regarded as the key repository of cultural values and meanings. (cf. Hall 1997: 1). In short, language may be defined as the means of expression of human thought.

"The term 'wordplay' includes every conceivable way in which language is used with the intent to amuse." (Chiaro 1992: 1-2). Brand names have many functions: labelling, informing, differentiating, persuading, signifying meaning and creating a bond with the consumer. Amusing consumers can be considered an all-embracing technique which contributes to achieving the goal of 'connecting' with consumers and is manifest in a vast number of creative ways.

David Crystal explains why wordplay is so popular: "Wordplay involves the bending and breaking of the rules of the language, and it appeals to something anarchic in our personalities, which appreciates the incongruous and the bizarre." (Crystal 2006: 173). Thus, the breaking of rules and deviation from generally accepted conventions contribute not only to the distinctiveness of a brand name, but

also help to generate meaning: “We decipher a certain meaning from the style of the language used, the way in which it is written” (Williamson 1978: 85).

“A thousand years ago there were about 50,000 English words. Today, there are 700,000, 1 million or even double that number.” (Hitchings 2008: 7). Hitchings justifies the fact that we cannot identify a specific total because for example, prefixes and suffixes can multiply the terms that branch from a single root. Our understanding of words is dependent on our knowledge of a language which we learn through education and socialization and is informed by our culture.

CHAPTER THREE : **CULTURES**

3.1 Definitions of Culture

Everything is arranged so that it be this way,
this is what is called culture.
(Jacques Derrida 1930-2004)
The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations

Cultures are not synonymous with countries. They are not limited by political boundaries. “Culture is what defines a human community, its individuals, and social organizations” (de Mooij 2010: 48). Culture can be described as the integrated sum total of learned behavioural traits that are manifest and shared by members of society. Culture, therefore is a kind of process or a set of practices. According to Hall, culture is primarily concerned with the production and the exchange of

meanings – “the giving and taking of meaning between the members of a society or group.” (Hall 1997: 2). Hall points out that, “Meaning is also produced whenever we express ourselves in, make use of, consume or appropriate cultural ‘things’; that is, when we incorporate them in different ways into the everyday rituals and practices of daily life and in this way give them value or significance.” (Hall 1997: 4). Fragrances form part of our daily grooming routine and can therefore be classed as cultural ‘things’. Culture involves at least three components: what people think, what they do, and the material products they produce. Thus, mental processes, beliefs, knowledge and values are parts of culture. Culture also has several properties: it is shared, learned, symbolic, transmitted cross-generationally, adaptive and integrated. The shared aspect of culture means that it is a social phenomenon – culture is learned, not biologically inherited, and involves arbitrarily assigned, symbolic meanings. The human ability to assign arbitrary meaning to any object, behaviour or condition makes people enormously creative and readily distinguishes culture from animal behaviour.

Hall mentions the existence of shared ‘cultural codes’ among members of the same culture. (Hall 1997:4). In this sense, our thoughts and feelings act as systems of representation in which our concepts, images and emotions ‘stand for’ or represent in our mental life, things which are or may be ‘out there’ in the world. Similarly, in order to communicate these meanings to other people, the participants to any meaningful exchange must also be able to use the same linguistic codes – they must, in a very broad sense, ‘speak the same language’ (Hall 1997: 4).When people share

the same ability to recognize, decode, and produce signs and symbols, they share semiotic habits. When

groups of people do not share the same habits, then different cultures become apparent: “Differences in semiotic habits delineate cultures.” (de Mooij 2010: 54).

The term culture can be applied either to national groups or to sub-groups within a society. These sub-groups may consist of a country, an age group, a profession or a social class. Therefore, when discussing culture, we need to carefully define which level of culture we are referring to.

Our ideas, our values, our acts, and our emotions are cultural products. We are individuals under the guidance of cultural patterns, historically created systems of meaning. Advertising reflects these wider systems of meaning: it reflects the way people think, what moves them, how they relate to each other, how they live, eat, relax, and enjoy themselves (de Mooij 2010: 49).

Edward Sapir (1884-1939) and Benjamin Whorf (1897-1941) observed the linguistic and philosophical differences between cultures, and the impact language has on our perception of reality. Their findings can be divided into two parts: the theory of linguistic relativity and the theory of linguistic determinism. The theory of linguistic determinism hypothesized that the structure of language has a significant influence on perception and categorization. According to this viewpoint, language is not only an instrument for describing events, it also shapes events – the worldview of people depends on the structure and characteristics of the language they speak. We impose our ideas on the environment as a result of the language we have.

The contrasting argument, the theory of relativity, is that language reflects culture. The language a person speaks reflects all manifestations of culture, its expressions and values. Expressions of culture are particularly recognizable in the use of metaphors. “There are two ways of looking at the language-culture relationship: language influences culture or language is the expression of culture” (de Mooij 2010: 59).

Hall’s (1976) patterns of culture according to context, space, time, and information flow also constitute a fundamental distinction between cultures as they refer to the degree of directness of communication in cultural models. He distinguishes cultures according to the degree of context in their communication systems. In *high-context* communication, most of the information is part of the context, so very little is made explicit. The information in a *low-context* message is carried in the explicit code of the message. Therefore, for members of low-context cultures, meaning resides in the words themselves i.e. in the strictly linguistic message, whereas, in high context cultures, most of the information is conveyed by the context.

To the observer, an unknown high-context culture can be completely mystifying, because symbols that are not known to the observer play such an important role. Thus, high-context communication can also be defined as inaccessible to the outsider. Low-context cultures are characterized by clear verbal messages. In advertising, argumentation and rhetoric are found more in low-context cultures, whereas advertising in high-context cultures is characterized by symbolism or indirect verbal expression. Cultures are on a sliding scale with respect to context.

Most Asian cultures are high context, whereas most Western cultures are low-context cultures. The brevity of the linguistic message in most brand names is a key point when discussing high and low-context cultures. If a brand name is to be interpreted by members of a low-context culture, then the name must be loaded with signification in order for communication to occur.

3.2 Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions

Culture is to a human collectivity
what personality is to an individual.
(Hofstede 2001: 10).

Culture is defined by Hofstede as "the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another. (Hofstede 2001: 9). He distinguishes four manifestations of culture: symbols, rituals, heroes and values.

'Symbols' are words, gestures, pictures or objects that carry a particular meaning recognized only by those who share a culture. The words of a language belong to this category. New symbols are easily developed and old ones quickly disappear. Coca-Cola, Nike and Google are examples of brands that have become global

symbols. However, these symbols may evoke different associations for different national cultures.

'Heroes' are people – alive or dead, real or imaginary – who possess characteristics that are highly prized in a society and who thus serve as role models for behaviour.

'Rituals' are the collective activities considered socially essential within a culture. Brands are part of a ritual and advertising helps make the ritual. Manufacturers use and create rituals around their products to differentiate them from competitive products. (de Mooij 2010: 53). When a new brand is launched, marketers constantly seek new rituals and gimmicks to attach to the brand in order to circulate myth and help to promote the product. For example in May 2010, customers in France who showed an interest in purchasing *La Cologne du Parfumeur* (L'Occitane) were offered a chilled drink containing the typical ingredients of an eau de cologne. The drink contained lemon water, orange blossom, orange juice, lavender syrup, mint, and rosemary. In this way, consumers were able to 'sip it, then spray it'. Kenzoki has created a novel idea of freezing perfume in special ice cube trays in your home freezer, the idea being to generate new sensations on the skin when applying the iced scent. Such vogues help to maintain interest in the market as they stimulate consumers' imaginations, as well as promoting the idea of the perfume house being skilled and avant-garde.

Hofstede refers to symbols, heroes and rituals as being practices of culture. ((Hofstede 2001: 10). They are visible to an outside observer. However, their cultural meaning is invisible; it lies in the way these practices are interpreted by the

insiders of a culture. It is at the core of culture that 'values' are embedded. Hofstede defines values as "a broad tendency to prefer certain states of affairs over others", as 'feelings with arrows in them' such as evil versus good, dirty versus clean, and ugly versus beautiful. (Hofstede 2001: 6). Five value dimensions have been identified across which cultures vary: Individualism, Masculinity, Power Distance, Uncertainty Avoidance, and Long-Term vs. Short-Term.

Individualism is apparent when the interest of the individual prevails over the interests of the group. People look after themselves and their immediate family only, as opposed to people belonging to in-groups who look after them in exchange for loyalty. In individualistic cultures, one's identity is in the person. Direct and personal forms of address are preferred e.g. personal deixis and imperatives. Individualistic cultures are low context cultures with explicit verbal communication. The roots of individualism are in England. In early English society, as early as the 13th century, children at the ages of 7 or 9 years – both male and female – did not grow up in an extended family but were put out to hard service in the houses of other people. Individualists tend to see brands as unique human personalities, even naming their children after big brands, e.g. Harley, Canon, Timberland for boys, and Ikea, Nivea and Pepsi for girls. (http://www.simpletoremember.com).

In collectivistic cultures, people are 'we'-conscious. Their identity is based on the social system to which they belong. In collectivist cultures, people are more interested in concrete product features than in abstract brands. Collectivists belong to high context societies and visuals are of great importance.

Masculinity as opposed to femininity values take into consideration a number of values which differentiate between ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’ cultures. Masculine cultures are distinguished by high values of assertiveness, competition and material success, as opposed to feminine cultures which promote the quality of life and interpersonal relationships. The dominant values in a masculine society are achievement and success while the dominant values in a feminine society are caring for others and quality of life. Being a ‘winner’ is positive in masculine societies and is negative in feminine societies.

Power Distance values measure the extent to which cultures have respect for those of higher status. In large power distance cultures prestige is an important appeal. Power distance refers to the extent to which less powerful members of a society accept and expect that power is distributed unequally. In large power distance cultures, power is centralized and one’s social status must be clear so that others can show proper respect. Since prestige is an important appeal, global brands may help to provide appeal. In continental Europe, some luxury alcoholic drinks have social status value in high power distance cultures. In large power distance cultures, people are well-groomed, especially when in public. Your position in the social hierarchy is defined by the clothes you wear, your shoes, your makeup and of course your fragrance. In low power distance cultures, people take less care of their outer appearance. Differences in makeup and fragrance usage can therefore also be explained by power distance value dimensions.

Cultures with strong uncertainty avoidance are active, aggressive and intolerant. The concept of uncertainty avoidance refers to the extent to which people feel threatened by uncertainty and try to avoid these situations. Members of high uncertainty avoidance cultures express in their behaviour a need for purity related to several product categories, such as mineral water and washing powder. Whereas high uncertainty avoidance cultures have a passive attitude to health by focusing on purity in food and drink and using more medication, low uncertainty avoidance cultures have a more active attitude to health by focusing on fitness and sports.

Long-term and Short-term orientation are evident in attitudes to thrift and sense of shame as opposed to spending and concern with face. This dimension concerns the extent to which a society exhibits a pragmatic future-oriented perspective rather than a conventional historic or short-term point of view.

Cultures vary in their scorings for the different value dimensions but since any one nation can have various combinations of scores, it is clear that placing a product to appeal to consumers on a global basis is not an easy task.

Cultural dimensions can be observed in both the construction of brand identities and in the way brands are advertised. In other words, the brand name of a product may appeal to specific values, while the advertising style selected for the brand may appeal to the same or different values.

3.3 *It Takes Two to Tango*: Branding and Advertising

Advertising is the rattling of a
stick inside a swill bucket.
George Orwell (1903-1950)
The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations

In the words of Dyer, advertising means "drawing attention to something". (Dyer 1982: 2). Once a brand name has been created, it becomes the core element of a comprehensive branding contextual framework. Branding is not merely a question of obtaining a trademark, it is a process of evolving as a well-reputed name on the market. In the case of fragrances, in a similar way to other product categories (e.g. automobiles, some electronic goods, etc.), the objective of becoming 'well-reputed' is greatly helped by the indexical reinforcement offered by the joint use of the brand name along with the name of the designer or perfume house as in *Pretty* (Elizabeth Arden), *Guilty* (Gucci), *Driven* (Avon), *Lights of Champs Elysées* (Guerlain). The fragrance is often closely linked to the designer through the use of the preposition 'by' as in *Fleur du Mâle* **by** Jean-Paul Gaultier, even when the designer is foreign (from a non-English-speaking country) and the fragrance name is in a different linguistic code to English. The brand name itself may include the name of the perfume house, for example *Hilfiger Woman* (Tommy Hilfiger), *Hugo Boss Man* (Hugo Boss), and consumers are also invited to 'connect' with the Givenchy perfume house and *Dance With Givenchy* (Givenchy). Branding means creating a recognition and an identity. The concept of branding a product (or service) can be summed up as incorporating everything you do, say, print and write - all consistent with the same brand message. Advertising, on the other hand, is the actual *process*

of displaying the brand message by means of various media. Branding and advertising together form the marketing process.

Once a name has been selected, advertisers need not only to inform potential consumers of its existence, but ideally, encourage them to buy it. "Advertising's central function is to create desires that previously did not exist." (Dyer 1982: 6). The brand name of a particular product helps advertisers to provide appealing and catchy logos and advertisements, for example a print ad for *The Beat* (Burberry) shows several trendy young men dancing to 'the beat'. At times, the visual in an ad may be intentionally shocking, as in the visual image for the fragrance duo *Masculine* and *Feminine* (Dolce & Gabbana) which shows a group of 'floating' naked men and women in various positions. In this case, the advertisement provoked some criticism from advertising standards authorities as it was deemed to be promoting group sex.

On the subject of advertising as a discourse type, Cook (1992: 5) notes that "Advertising is a prominent discourse type in virtually all contemporary societies". Dyer emphasizes the role of consumers in this discourse:

> "Ads are not invisible conveyors of messages or transparent reflections of reality, they are specific discourses or structures of signs. As such we do not passively absorb them but actively participate in their production of signification, according to the way they 'speak' to or 'ensare' us. We come to advertisements as social readers." (Dyer 1982: 115).

Today's consumers are assumed to be more discerning and more skilled in communicative competence than in the past. Consumers have a lifetime of

advertising experience and these savvy consumers have greater decoding abilities than ever before.

Leiss *et al* tell us that "Advertising texts document the strategies employed by advertisers to negotiate the meaning of goods with audiences, and in this respect they represent a very important part of the discourse of consumption" (Leiss *et al.* 2005: 161). Modern articulations are necessary to ensure that branding keeps in step with modern developments as the types of messages communicated are shaped by changing practices and technology.

Cook (1992: 13-14) points out that discourse types may be described in terms of their social function, but equally, societies may be categorized in terms of the types of discourse they use. Advertising occupies a salient position in the interplay of social systems and discourse types. "Advertising [...] tries to manipulate people into buying a way of life as well as goods" (Dyer 1982: 5). At the same time as becoming ever more prominent in its homelands, advertising is constantly colonizing new territories. However, although it is both part of, and helps to create a new global culture which ignores national boundaries, it can also reflect differences between cultures, even among the advanced capitalist societies. Advertising, in its many facets, permeates the whole of modern society, but this has not always been the case. In early societies, the meanings carried by objects were passed on to individuals through culture and customs. In a consumer society, needs and commodities must be introduced by some other means." Marketing and advertising become the chief matchmakers." (Leiss *et al.* 2005: 203).

It was in the late nineteenth century that factory-produced goods of indistinguishable quality and similar prices caused a situation of over-production and under-demand and thus the market needed to be stimulated. Gradually, advertising agencies were established and began to apply new persuasive techniques in order to promote goods. Advertising as a professional sector came into existence.

People satisfy a number of needs through the consumption of goods. These needs include both material needs and social needs. Obviously, there is no apparent, strong material need involved in the use of perfume. The application of a fragrance can be considered more of a luxury. If we focus on social needs, then it is clear that the social need of smelling pleasant in company that is satisfied by perfume, could be accomplished just as well by using a cheap bar of soap or a body deodorant. The following section (3.4) will observe a different type of social need – that of belonging to social groups. Where fragrances are concerned, it would appear that one of the main reasons people buy and apply fragrances is because of the *symbolic* value of their particular brand. "They define themselves, and are encouraged to define themselves, as persons through the brand of perfume which they use." (Vestergaard & Schroder 1985: 6). We can therefore understand. as noted by Vestergaard & Schroder, that "it is hard to see how commodities like perfume could be advertised at all in a purely informative and unpersuasive way." (Vestergaard & Schroder 1985: 7).

When considering brand name construction, de Mooij (2010) outlines the desired aim of balancing inherent values with values held by consumers:

> The purpose of advertising is to develop strong association networks in people's minds. The values selected to differentiate brands relate to the cultural mind-set of the strategist but should also relate to the cultural mind-sets of the target group. What makes advertising effective is the match between the values in the advertising message and the values of the receiver. (de Mooij 2010: 40).

de Mooij lists some rules that advertising must follow in order to be effective:

Advertising must

- create meaningful associations
- be relevant and meaningful
- be linked with people's values
- reflect the role the product or brand plays in people's lives
- reflect or arouse people's feelings and emotions
- be instantaneously recognized (cf. de Mooij 2010: 40).

In some respects, these rules are similar to the maxims outlined by Grice in his Cooperative Principle (1975, quoted in Bonvillain 1993, 1997, 2000: 109) which refer to quantity, quality, relation and manner. Cultural norms dictate what can be said and what should not be said in particular occasions, as well as the different ways of expressing what is said. The four maxims of the Cooperative Principle are incorporated in Sperber & Wilson's Relevance Theory (1986) which states that when hearers and readers make sense of a text, they interpret the connections between utterances as meaningful and relevant, making inferences by drawing on their own background knowledge of the world.

All these elements are influenced by the culture of the interlocutors, in this case, both the culture of the advertiser and that of the audience. “Effective advertising reflects culture, is a mirror of culture.” (de Mooij 2010: 41).

A great many aspects and manifestations of culture will vary considerably among different cultural groups. Three broad areas where evident traces of these differences can generally be seen are: colour, superstitions and humour.

3.3.1 Colour

Life is colour
Julian Grenfall
(1888 – 1915)
The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations

Culture reveals itself in preferences for colours. In the Western art world of the late eighteenth century, the ‘complement’ to red was usually described as blue-green. After 1800, the notion that there are three ‘primary’ colours of light (red, blue and yellow) was predominant. When the eye observed one of these primary colours, it became fatigued by the strength of a particular primary colour and ‘demanded’ the remaining two in order to restore its balance. It became increasingly common to describe the complement of red as simply green, a mixture of equal parts of blue and yellow (Gage 1999: 22).

Colour associations vary from individual to individual and also between cultures. They are related to the cultural context and experiences people may have had during their own lives with particular colours.

In 1813, Charles Hayter's colour circle introduced the idea of perceptions of colour. Hayter segmented the circle into the polar contrast of warm colours (yellow, orange, red) versus cold colours (green, blue, purple). Although anyone with a gas fire will now know that the high-frequency energy of the blue-violet flame is hotter than low-frequency red end, most people today still think of yellows, oranges and reds as warm colours and blues and greens as cool colours. Berlin and Kay (1969) identified eleven basic colour categories in nearly one hundred languages.

Although colours can be classified into categories and we can to a greater or lesser extent distinguish between different shades, colours may well symbolize startlingly contrasting cultural meanings to various people in diverse parts of the world. In English, white usually brings with it connotations of purity, cleanliness, harmlessness and peace, while in China, for example, white is the colour of mourning. Black is the colour of mourning in the Western world and it often connotes with evil, darkness, desperation and other, generally negative concepts. It is by no accident that washing machines in Western countries are almost invariably white, while in the Chinese market, washing machines tend to be red, pink, yellow, orange etc. Red is the representative colour of passion, blood and fire. In China red is considered to bring good luck. Green is almost universally connected to nature and ecology, but in English it is also traditionally associated with envy as in the

expression ‘green with envy’. In other languages, notably French and German, it is yellow that is associated with envy. The colour purple is favoured mainly in the English language for its sense of pomp and royalty. Pink and blue have come to signify gender differences, i.e. pink for girls and blue for boys. In Italy, households traditionally display a pink or blue ribbon on their front door to signify the arrival of a newborn baby within the residing family. Pink or blue sugared almonds are also offered to well-wishers who make formal visits to welcome the child into the community (pink for newborn girls and blue for boys). However, the pink/blue distinctions, apparently firmly entrenched in our society, are in reality a fairly recent phenomenon. We need only read this excerpt from an American magazine in 1918 to question our seemingly fixed convictions of the ‘normality’ of such distinctions.

> Pink or blue? Which is intended for boys and which for girls? This question comes from one of our readers this month, and the discussion may be of interest to others. There has been a great diversity of opinion on this subject, but the generally accepted rule is pink for the boy and blue for the girl. The reason is that pink, being a more decided and stronger color, is more suitable for the boy; while blue, which is more delicate and dainty, is prettier for the girl.

Widely misattributed to the ‘Ladies Home Journal’, this is actually from a Chicago-based trade magazine called ‘The Infants’ Department: A Monthly Magazine of Merchandising Helps for the Infants’ Wear Buyer’ (vol.1, n. 10, June 1918: 61 quoted in Chandler 2002, 2007: 156).

It would appear that a long-standing, strong link between the colour blue and femininity is due to pictures of the Virgin Mary. Only in more recent times – since

just before the First World War - has pink acquired such a powerfully marked status as 'feminine'. Western culture finds no problem in associating the colour pink with girls and women. If you take a walk down the 'toys for girls' aisle of a toyshop, the predominant pink colour of Barbie and her cronies is overwhelming. The 'toys for boys' department is usually dominated by browns, blacks, dark greens and all shades of blue.

Colour plays an important role in the brand identity system. It helps to 'tell a story' and has a significant impact on people's emotional state and ability to concentrate and learn. Williamson affirms that the "use of colour is simply a technique, used primarily in pictorial advertising, to make correlation between a product and other things." (Williamson 1978: 24). Colour can be utilized in branding for the actual name of the brand in various product types: Orange (telecommunications); Blue Riband (biscuits); Red Bull (energy drink); Yellow Tail (wine). Colour is also prominent in the choice of font for the brand name, for the packaging, for the colour of the product (some fragrances have surprisingly bold and varied colours), as well as in advertising campaigns.

3.3.2 Superstitions

Superstition is the poetry of life
Johann Wolfgang von Goethe
(1749 – 1832)
The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations

Superstitions are cultural practices and beliefs for which there appears to be no rational substance. Superstitions are often passed on from generation to generation, they vary from culture to culture and are sometimes deemed ‘old wives’ tales’. However, they may have survived to the present day owing to their deep historical roots. A lot of superstitions involve black cats, for instance. Sometimes black cats bring good luck; this may be due to the fact that in Ancient Egypt, cats were considered sacred. However, in times when witches were burned at the stake, it was believed that those witches in hiding turned themselves into black cats. Therefore, crossing paths with a black cat would bring that person bad luck.

A ladder leaning against a wall forms a triangle – the symbol of the Holy Trinity family: father, mother and child. Walking under the ladder disrupts the triangle, destroying wholeness of the family.

Ancient people believed that a shadow or reflection was part of their soul. If someone broke something onto which their shadow or reflection appeared, people believed that their soul was harmed. Therefore, when a person broke a mirror it was considered unlucky or harmful.

Numbers can be said to be the inspiration for some superstitions. Numerology is the belief that numbers possess mystical meanings. We need only mention the number 13 (unlucky in English) or 17 (unlucky for Italians) to understand the power of underlying meaning in numbers. Although the exact reason is open to hypotheses, it is common for number 13 to be removed from any form of human contact (street numbers, floors in buildings, seats on aeroplanes etc.). In Japan, number 4 sparks off

a similar phobia, whereas 5 brings good luck in Asia. One of the most popular brands of cigarettes in Asia is called 555. The number 666 is generally recognized as being a satanic number, while 3 and 7 have positive connotations. The number 3 has a long history of being associated with myth, legend and religion, probably because of the Holy Trinity, and 7 is considered lucky because it is the Divine number. In China, the number 8 is considered to be lucky: the Olympic Games of 2008 in China started on August 8th, 2008 (8-8-8).

3.3.3 Humour

Humour is odd
Jonathan Swift
(1667 – 1745)
The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations

Humour is found in all culture, although it is more common in low uncertainty-avoidance areas and small power distance cultures. It took many years before brand names made use of humour to help promote products. Berger (2004: 17) explains that humour in advertising generates "what might be called a '*halo effect*', a feeling of well-being that becomes attached to the products being advertised."

According to the French sociologist Jean Baudrillard, in modern consumer societies we now feel obliged to have fun: "Consumerist man […] regards enjoyment as an obligation; he sees himself as an enjoyment and satisfaction business. He sees it as

his duty to be happy, loving, adulating/adulated, charming/charmed, participative, euphoric and dynamic" (Baudrillard 1998: 80 quoted in Berger 2004: 19). In Baudrillard's view, modern consumers have come a long way from the old Puritan ethic of hard work and abstention for the glory of God. It is now our 'duty' to have fun, and we do this, to a great degree, by being a member in good standing (and good purchasing) of our contemporary consumer culture. Humour, if well-used, can add a positive new dimension to branding.

Brand names have become the core of modern advertising. According to Danesi (2008: 57) "throughout the history of modern advertising, the coinage of an appropriate brand name has always been perceived to be the first crucial step in getting a product into social consciousness."

In order for communication to take place, advertisers may have to assume that consumers will understand the encoded message because they either share a common culture or a common frame of reference. Values, assumptions and world views are built into the cultural codes embedded in the names of brands and these will be decoded according to the specific experience and values of the individual consumers. Advertisers utilize a language, images, ideas and values drawn from the culture and assemble a message which is then fed back into the culture. "Both communicator and receiver are products of the culture – they share its meanings" (Dyer 1982: 13).

3.4 Target Audiences

Talk to people about themselves
and they will listen for hours.
Benjamin Disraeli (1804-1881)
The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations

In the past, an advertiser could easily pick out a target audience as customers were divided into a few simple, socio-economic groups. Nowadays, with the proliferation of media, the digital world, information technology, the Web, blogs, the development of a complex, sophisticated, multi-faceted audience with individual quirks and behaviour patterns, the tremendous increase in purchasing power in the West and increasingly in Asia, the increasing homogeneity of competitive products and services, the increasing competition in every field of activity, the emergence of a caring society, but above all the requirement nowadays for companies to openly communicate with all of their audiences – all these factors have altered the balance of power and made the brand a central pivot in twenty-first century life.

Various themes are incorporated into the structure of the brand name in diverse ways in order to target specific sectors of society. “The language used by advertisers shows that they think of people as targets on which they wish to make an impact, rather than as human beings.” (Dyer 1982: 83).

However, advertisers must opt for either targeting specific consumers or seek to target as many consumers as possible across a broad spectrum. As audiences are fragmented into smaller and smaller market segments, the operative codes for each target group become more specialized. Advertisers generally like working with

narrowly defined groups, rather than with diffuse, broadly-based general audiences. The more narrowly one can define an audience and the more specialized the knowledge one can draw from, the more certain one can be of speaking to people in a language they will respond to (cf. Leiss *et al* 2005: 165). At the same time, it is obviously more advantageous economically to adopt strategies which will succeed in appealing to a wide range of sub-groups or to the mass market.

Marketers seek to base the product image on a prior analysis (motivational research) of the interpretive predilections of the target audience. They may therefore construct the image either for mass markets by using open codes of interpretation (symbols recognised by the average person everywhere) or for specific sub-groups (such as teenagers) by using restricted codes. Advertisers therefore appeal to different audiences along different dimensions or even create demand for a particular brand through a myriad of advertising techniques.

As advertising permeates every aspect of modern society, there is no escaping it. Cook remarks on the ubiquitous nature of advertising and observes that " reactions to it are correspondingly complex, experienced and sophisticated" (Cook 1992: 199).

As early as 1957, Vance Packard complains about the way advertisers use psychological methods to tap into our unconscious desires in order to 'persuade' us to buy the products they are selling. He refers to advertisers as 'probers' who look for ways to "effectively manipulate our habits and choices in their favour". (Packard 1957: 32). According to Packard, women have traditionally been targets for this kind of research since they are the people who make most of the purchases in our society.

Advertisements which flatter consumers and which disguise the emptiness and drudgery of much household work and glorify the role of housewife are guaranteed a certain amount of success.

One of the ways in which advertisers classify consumers in order to then exert 'control' over them, is through stereotyping.

3.5 Stereotypes

Stereotypers are all the same
(T-shirt slogan: http://www.zazzle.co.uk)

"'Stereotypes' are fixed notions about persons in a certain category." (Hofstede 2001: 14). The word 'stereotype' was first used by journalist Walter Lippmann in 1922 to describe judgements made about others on the basis of their ethnic membership. (Jandt 2007: 77). Standard behavioural traits were quickly adopted by marketers as a simple strategy to convey ideas.

"Advertising depends on the use of effective stereotypes because it must attract attention and create instant recognition. Advertising simplifies reality and thus has to use stereotypes." (de Mooij 2010: 51). Stereotypes are powerful and convincing because they are readily understood by most people. Perhaps this is because the exploitation of stereotypes is so common in other forms of discourse and media. Standard jokes are made about national stereotypes (using the introductory formula: '*There was an Englishman, an Irishman and a Frenchman*'[...], etc.).

As Goddard *et al.*(2000: 57) put it, "Stereotyping is very much about the process of applying a simplified model to a real, complex individual, often to negative and derogatory effect". Although stereotyping *is* used in a derogative way, for instance to ridicule sub-groups of society: nationalities, *carabinieri*, ethnic groups, mothers-in-law, etc., it seems apparent that stereotyping in branding picks up on the more positive stereotypical traits, particularly through the use of particular language codes, or symbols (diacritics) to imbue products with the positive associations and characteristics of the speakers of that language. However, one major advantage of an overcrowded market is that consumers are offered choices. Advertisers may be skilled at targeting consumers, but the decisive purchasing decision lies in the hands of the consumer.

3.6 Identity and Branding

To thine own self be true
Hamlet Act 1 sc.3
William Shakespeare
(1564 – 1616)
The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations

In a world which is increasingly obsessed with image and makeovers, identity plays an important role. Identity in its various manifestations has grabbed our hearts and minds, because we are desperate to express our need to belong but also overtly to differentiate ourselves and our aspirations from those around us. If identity is the

idea that marks the twenty-first century, then branding operates at its point of delivery. It is not necessary to take out a mortgage to buy a fragrance, and High Streets and Duty Free Shops offer plenty of opportunities to purchase perfume. A Dior dress might be out of reach, but a Dior perfume is easily accessible and can serve to catapult a consumer into a feeling of well-being, satisfaction and belonging:

> The consumer society brings into being a distinctive way of life based on a notion that individuals can regard their affiliation with social groups as a fluid milieu of temporary associations that are based on styles of appearance and behaviour as well as on choices of activities. No one is bound permanently to particular circumstances originating in accidents of birth or fortune; on the contrary, everyone can participate in an eternal process whereby groupings are dissolved and regenerated (Leiss *et al.* 2005: 204).

The way we talk, along with other social codes such as how we dress or how we behave, is an important way of indicating our social identity. Perfume is an important way of expressing our identity. People become associated with particular scents, especially if they habitually wear a specific fragrance. This question of identity, who we are, how we perceive ourselves, whether it is on an individual, social or institutional level, is something which we are constantly building and negotiating all our lives through our interaction with others.

'Identity' has traditionally denoted a set of social and cultural norms – a sense of shared belongings and behaviours. Social identity (as opposed to personal identity) is defined by individual identification with a group. Developed by Tajfel (1979), Social Identity Theory is concerned with when and why individuals identify with and behave as part of social groups, adopting shared attitudes to outsiders. Social

identity theory explores the phenomenon of the 'ingroup' and the 'outgroup'. The application of this theory in brand associations is evident in, for example, the famous slogan for the Woolwich Building Society, "I'm with the Woolwich". A more recent example is the X Box slogan, "It's good to play together" expoiting the double meaning of the personal pronoun 'it' to be either impersonal and a general statement about playing games with other people, or 'it' to signify the specific X Box brand referent.

Branding gives products names and these names along with advertising campaigns, serve to transform products denotatively and connotatively into physical and mental objects. Products become meaningful signs as they are linked through representation to cultural traditions, values, rituals etc. As noted by Danesi (2008: 192), these representations are powerful because "they have social and cultural relevance". A fragrance is a smell, nothing more, but fragrance has a social meaning, partly because it is worn on social occasions i.e. to smell in a particular way among other people. Barthes refers to objects being 'semanticized' in this way (Barthes (1967) quoted in Vestergaard & Schroder 1985: 6). Objects become carriers of information about what kind of people we are or would like to be. This process encourages advertisers "to exploit people's needs for group membership, self-identification, and so on." (Vestergaard & Schroder 1985: 6).

Marlboro and Nike have successfully exploited consumers' need to feel part of a group or class of people who are free spirited and adventurous or who are athletic and dynamic respectively. Fragrance advertisers speak of particular fragrances

being suitable for people who are adventurous/daring/sexy/sporty etc. to play on consumers' desires and these qualities may also be inferred from the brand name itself.

Social identities do not spontaneously occur within consumers – they are shaped by a lifetime of experience, social interaction and self-expression. Consumers choose brands in an attempt to express aspects of the self to others. Thus, brands provide a badge of identity and are passports to global culture. In this sense, identity can be defined as a self-relevant social category. When perceived as self-relevant, a social category serves as the identity that makes up a person's self-concept. When people associate themselves with a particular brand or branded image, they immediately assume a new identity. The discourse of branding is thus vital to the construction of consumer identities. It is not only linguistic signs (words), but also iconic signs (visual representations), which contribute to the expression of meaning. We are encouraged to see ourselves, the products or services which are advertised, and aspects of our social world, in terms of the mythic meanings which advertisements draw on and help to promote. Williamson (1978: 11-12) declares that advertising "has a function, which is to sell things to us. But it has another function, which I believe in many ways replaces that traditionally fulfilled by art and religion. It creates structures of meaning".

The appeal of an advertised message includes values and motives that define the central message (cf. de Mooij 2005: 217). The appeal connects with specific emotions that make the product interesting or attractive. Appeals may focus on

security, esteem, sex, achievement, pleasure, etc. Vestergaard and Schroder (1985:73) point out that people need to expose themselves to lifestyles and values which confirm the validity of their own lifestyle and therefore create a sense of meaning for the world and their place within it.

It is for this reason that a signification process takes place whereby a certain commodity is made the expression of a certain lifestyle and values. The ultimate objective of this signification process is to attach the desired identity to a specific commodity, so that the need for an identity is transformed into a need for the commodity.

> Which brand of jeans or perfume you wear become indexical signs of your social identity […] Once products have different social meanings by virtue of the different mythic concepts they seem part of, products become signs with a certain social value. They signify something about their consumers, the people who buy and use them. (Bignell 1997, 2002a: 36).

Salient social identity is thought to guide thinking, judgement and behaviour. According to Douglas Holt, some brands, such as Coca-Cola, Harley-Davidson, Budweiser, Nike, rise to iconic status because "customers value the brand's stories largely for their *identity value*" (Holt 2004: 3). Thus, "Acting as vessels of self-expression, the brands are imbued with stories that consumers find valuable in constructing their identities. Consumers flock to brands that embody the ideals they admire, brands that help them express who they want to be" (Holt 2004: 3-4). Such brands are loaded with myths and cultural meanings. It is the identity value of a brand that proves so successful with consumers. However, identity takes many

forms: “Brand names evoke place, class, age, and gender distinctions” (Rivkin & Sutherland 2004: 5). Hofstede underlines the politically correct trend in the English language of distinguishing between sex and gender, the former being used to refer to biological functions and the latter when referring to social functions. (Hofstede 2001: 280).

Various societies have always made social distinctions between the different characteristics of males and female, even at a tender age. The following nursery rhyme is still chanted in school playgrounds in Britain today.

> What are little boys made of?
>
> “Frogs and snails and puppy-dog’s tails.
>
> That’s what little boys are made of!”
>
> What are little girls made of?
>
> “Sugar and spice and all things nice.
>
> That’s what little girls are made of!
>
> (Traditional English Nursery Rhyme: http://www.mamalisa.com)

Consideration of gender issues needs to be made in any study on branding. Advertising has always portrayed men and women in different ways:“In its visual and verbal representation of the sexes, advertising comes to function as an ideological apparatus for the reproduction of our gender identities”. (Vestergaard & Schroder 1985: 73-74). We are accustomed to the traditional view of woman as the homemaker that is so frequently portrayed in advertisements, for example. Nowadays, refreshingly new roles are assigned to women to tie in with women’s social progress in modern society.

A study by Jhally (1987) observes the differentiated codes used by advertisers in their messages directed at male and female audiences. The study found that for female audiences, advertisers were likely to encode the themes of beauty, family and romance, while for men the most common themes were ruggedness and fraternity. (Leiss *et al* 2005: 167). Gender characteristics are displayed in advertising because they are deemed to be representative of our everyday life and therefore we can relate to such message messages. Even the way we speak is considered to be gender-specific. Coates (1986, 1993) observes that speech is an act of identity because when we speak, one of the things we do is identify ourselves as male or female. Gender studies have produced a number of theories to account for gender differences in language. Dominance Theory (Zimmerman & West 1975; Spender 1980; Fishman 1983) takes the difference in power between men and women as the main cause of discoursal variation. Men tend to have more power than women, whether it be physically, financially or in workplace hierarchies. Spender (1980) maintains that language embodies structures that sustain male power. The theory states that males and females have very different world views in terms of relationships, uniqueness, masculinity, nationalism. Difference Theory (Coates 1986, 1993; Tannen 1990) points out that men and women develop different styles of talking because, in fact, they are segregated at important stages of their lives. According to Difference Theory, playing in single sex groups as children, and having same sex friendships in adult life, leads men and women to have separate 'sub-cultures' each of which have their own 'sub-cultural norms', that is, rules for

behaviour and in particular, talking. The theory explains that women desire from their relationships collaboration, intimacy, equality, understanding, support and approval. Men, on the other hand, allegedly place a greater premium on status and independence, and are less concerned with overt disagreement and inequality in their relationships. Tannen (1990) reiterates the fact that that boys and girls grow up in different worlds and as adults they travel in different worlds, reinforcing patterns established in childhood.

Nowhere can we see the idea of 'natural' male and female preferences and behaviours better than in the way consumer products are marketed. Many products are targeted at male or female consumers with the idea that the product is 'naturally' the province of one sex or the other. The language used about these products and the names given all serve to reinforce their femininity or masculinity. A prime example of this is cosmetics: while face make up is still exclusively targeted at women consumers, other cosmetic products (such as deodorants, soaps, bath/shower gels, as well as fragrances) often have a male range as well as a female one. In these cases, the product for men frequently differs from the one for women in the way it is named and described. Sometimes, what is effectively exactly the same product is described very differently, to construct a distinctively different picture of the narratee, the person supposedly addressed by the text. (cf. Goddard & Patterson 2000: 38). For example, Gillette have a brand of razor for women called 'Venus Power' after the Roman Goddess of love and beauty, while the men's version is branded 'M3 Power', with more modern, scientific and technological connotations.

“The associations (meanings) that people attach to the objects of the material world influence their purchasing and decision processes.” (de Mooij 2010: 38). As an industry, advertising concentrates primarily on women because they are the chief consumers. In the United States, for instance, women wield 75% of the buying power. (Romaine 1999: 252). Consequently, 75% of all consumer advertising budgets in the United States is spent on ads that will appeal to women. Of course, there is no single identity profile of a ‘woman’. Various strategies of address must be taken into consideration.

Age is an important factor to bear in mind as feelings of nostalgia and emotional attachment are generally stronger in older consumers. Younger consumers are more prone to exploration, variety and change and this stimulates the choice of new perfumes. Older consumers prefer to stay with ‘classics’, marketed by established perfume houses. We can term this phenomenon the concept of material possession attachment. A consumer often develops a personal history with a perfume through daily applications and associations with memorable, emotional moments. Many components need to be considered in to succeed in creating emotions that will be deemed significant by the consumer. “A brand is a network of associations in the mind of the consumer” (de Mooij 2010: 38).

Williamson (1978: 57) speaks of the ‘multiple-identity’ ad as a way of providing the means to show that the product is suitable not only for all kinds of women but for all the kinds of women within you. There are a great many strategies and techniques utilized in addressing consumers but in the end, as Williamson points out: “Advertisements are selling us something else besides consumer goods: in providing us with a structure in which we, and those goods, are interchangeable, they are selling us ourselves”. (Williamson:1978: 13).

Perhaps the most effective names are those which arouse many different connotations simultaneously, allowing the product to appeal to incompatible desires within one person, or to different types of people (Cook 1992: 106).

In particular, the constantly changing role of women in society means that myths which were perhaps appropriate and successful in the past are now outdated, therefore "advertisers and the producers of the mass media are having to find ways of triggering off new gender myths" (Fiske 1982: 90).

3.7 Ideology and Marketing

I would to God thou and I knew where a commodity of good names were to be bought.

(William Shakespeare, Henry IV, Part I, I, 2)
The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations

Bignell notes that "An ideology is a way of perceiving reality and society which assumes that some ideas are self-evidently true, while other ideas are self-evidently biased or untrue". (Bignell 2002: 24). The main function of ideology is "to make the existing system appear natural and acceptable to us all". (Bignell 2002:25). As branding and advertising texts aim to encourage their readers to consume products, and consumption is "one of the fundamental principles of contemporary culture, part of our dominant ideology" (Bignell 2002: 26), it is clear that branding and advertising have a highly ideological role. Signs, codes and social myths which are

already in circulation are integrated into branding messages. Williamson (1978: 13) emphasizes the importance of the role of ideology in modern society. She points out that the real distinctions between people are created by their role in the process of production. However, the products of their work, i.e. things that we consume, are transformed into indicators of our place in society by means of consumption, thus "instead of being identified by what they produce, people are made to identify with what they consume" (Williamson 1978: 13).

Signs give myths and values concrete form (such as brand names) and make them public. When we use these signs we maintain and give life to specific ideologies, but we are also formed by those ideologies, and by our response to ideological signs. Dyer (1982: 129-130) notes how ideology serves as a blueprint for creating new meanings. In branding, myths and concepts which are already available in a culture as signifieds of ideological systems can be inserted into a brand name. The signifieds thus become signifiers of different structures i.e. the brand names. The connotational process depends on the consumer's knowledge of the forms of ideology used in the brand name. This is particularly relevant for some types of branded products such as fragrances which are on sale under the same name on a global level and are also easy to order from online fragrance stores. Instead of the 'use-value' of goods, today we focus more on 'exchange-value'. (Dyer 1982: 116). Brand names can help to sell commodities not for themselves as useful objects but in terms of ourselves as social beings in our different social relationships. It is therefore through consumption and by associating goods with personal and social meanings

that we seek to fulfil those hopes and desires that are not satisfied in real life and "we become identified in terms of what we consume." (Dyer 1982: 185).

Berger (1972) suggests that advertising takes advantage of our desire to have a better life for ourselves, but we are spurred on by the idea of being glamorous and the object of envy by others. Branding, like advertising, exploits these traits of desiring glamour and envy, particularly where fragrances are concerned, as powerful scents are said to enhance sexual attraction. Berger points out that advertising makes greater and greater use of sexuality to sell products and services. He declares that purchasing products and services is always charged with fantasies and dreams of sexual desirability and power.

Althusser's concept of 'hailing' (1971) consists of attempting to make another individual recognize and accept a form of ideology. If a hailing is successful, an individual becomes a 'subject' of a particular ideology and hence is 'interpellated', interpellation being a successful hailing.

McCracken's (1986) Meaning Transfer Model is a marketing model based on the Peircean semiotic triangle (Peirce (1903) quoted in Chandler 2002, 2007: 30). The Meaning Transfer Model describes how "meaning moves from culture to us through goods." (McCracken 2005: 165). McCracken uses the phenomenon of celebrity endorsement to illustrate how meaning transfer works. The endorsement process depends upon the symbolic properties of the celebrity endorser. Using a 'meaning-transfer' perspective, these properties are shown to reside in the celebrity and to

move from celebrity to consumer good and from good to consumer. (McCracken 2005: 97).

Celebrities lend star power to products to help create an image and identity in the minds of consumers. A celebrity gives a face, name and personality to the brand. The advantage of using celebrities is that they generally possess qualities that are already widely recognized and appreciated, therefore the task of transferring such meaning to a fragrance is greatly facilitated.

The consumer society does not set up its own fixed models of behaviour to replace traditional ones but rather constructs, through marketing and advertising, successive waves of associations between people, products and images of well-being in an endless series of suggestions about the possible routes to happiness and success. Marketing is so fascinated with the communicative tools of symbol, image, and icon because they are ideal for such constructions. They work by allusion, free association, suggestion, and analogy rather than by literal and logical rule. The intention is that the whole ensemble of goods and messages should be as versatile as possible and should appeal simultaneously to the entire spectrum of personality types and lawful urges. Modern goods are viewed through a psychological lens and interpreted as being symbolic of personal attributes and goals. We can therefore say that all commercial objects have a symbolic character.

The brand stands not for a product, but for a distinguishing aspect of a cultural entity. It stands for a certain quality or unique value proposition. The brand is an index of the quality or value. However, any product in the paradigmatic class, i.e.

product category, will have nearly the same inherent qualities as all others in the class. Each will be a paradigm example. Therefore, all branded objects in the class are the same cultural entity with nearly the same inherent qualities or semantic features of the class. It is through marketing that brands acquire the additional significance: arbitrary qualities or values that distinguish consumers rather than products. As symbols, brands signify those qualities. Through consumption, brands transfer significance to consumers. Finally, brands become indices of consumers rather than of products, signifying consumers as cultural entities. Thus we witness a cyclical process of meaning transfer.

CHAPTER FOUR : FRAGANCES

4.1 Historical and Cultural Traces of Perfume

Pleasing is the fragrance of your perfumes;
your name is like perfume poured out.
Song of Solomon 1:3
(http://www.biblestudytools.com)

Perfume is big business: the perfume industry's worldwide annual sales today are between $25 to $30billion (http://www.nytimes.com/2009/06/20). These are not figures to be sniffed at. The market is currently experiencing an overload as new fragrances are constantly being launched and older, popular scents are either relaunched with a touch of hype or are brought out in a special 'summer version', a 'cool weather version', or a limited edition. It is not clear whether perfume companies are releasing more perfumes because the market demands them, or are luring in shopaholics during these tough recession times to ensure profit margins are reached. The main launches take place towards the end of the year, with Christmas presents in mind, as in our ideology, perfumes make 'the perfect gift'.

Perfume launches are arranged on a grand scale with celebrities of the moment adding glamour and glitz to the event. Since the world launch of *Poison* by Dior in 1987, a launch has to be on a massive global scale in order to succeed.

The word 'perfume' comes from the Latin *per* – through, *fumus*- smoke (Chambers Concise 20th Century Dictionary). Since the beginning of recorded history, humans

have attempted to mask or enhance their own odour by using perfume, which emulates nature's pleasant smells.

One of the oldest uses of perfumes comes from the burning of incense and aromatic herbs used in religious services, often the aromatic gums, frankincense and myrrh, gathered from trees. The Egyptians were the first to incorporate perfume into their culture followed by the ancient Chinese, Hindus, Israelites, Carthaginians, Arabs, Greeks, and Romans. The earliest use of perfume bottles is Egyptian and dates to around 1000 BC. The Egyptians invented glass, and perfume bottles were one of the first common uses for glass. With the fall of the Roman Empire, the influence of perfume dwindled. It was not until the twelfth century and the development of international trade that this decline was reversed. By the 1600s scents were applied to objects such as furniture, gloves and fans.

Today, many of the products that we use on a daily basis are 'perfumed'.

Fragrance is used as a marketing tool to render many products more appealing and can be found in a vast array of everyday products. We do not only have fragranced products for the body, such as soap, toothpaste, shampoo, conditioner, deodorant, nailpolish, make-up, hand cream, lip salve, but we also have fragranced household products: washing-up liquid, washing powder, fabric conditioner, fly spray etc. Even the so called 'fragrance-free' items have "odour neutralisers" in them to take away their intrinsically nasty smells.

'Fine fragrance' – what we regard as 'scent', 'perfume', 'cologne' or 'eau de toilette' is just over a century old. Most date it to the release of *Jicky* (Guerlain) in

1889. Fragrances were created throughout the twentieth century but it was only in the 1960s that ordinary people began to buy perfume in quantity. The advent of popular air travel meant that people who had never been abroad before began to spend time browsing in perfume stores or could buy perfume in duty free shops.

New designer scents were marketed fiercely in the 1980s and for the first time ever, blatant erotic advertising styles were adopted, generating enormous attention from the media. Although the idea of celebrity endorsement for fragrances was not new – in the 1950s, internationally renowned actresses such as Audrey Hepburn and Joan Crawford had endorsed perfumes - the 1990s saw the advent of a boom in celebrity endorsed fragrances, commencing from Elizabeth Taylor's *White Diamonds.*

Smelling good is a potent sign that we have made an effort, we are intending to please, and may also consider using fragrance as a tool for seductive purposes: *Eau Flirt* (Harvey Prince & Co.) is marketed as being "clinically proven to attract men" (http://www.mimifroufrou.com). People`s sense of smell influences behavior and sets different moods. It may even evoke memories of the past.

Today it seems that fragrances need to have an inspiration and a purpose.

Some perfume houses e.g. Calvin Klein spend a great deal of time and effort

conjuring up brand names for their fragrances based on a central theme. The 'Calvin Klein consumer' is enticed with promises of *Escape; Crave; Free.*Calvin Klein is tapping the secret fantasies of our minds. We are all seeking the same secret desires, or perhaps merely trying to escape the same reality.

4.2 The '*Scents*' of Smell: describing perfume

Sweet Smell of Success
Film (1957) written by
Ernest Leham (1920 - 2005)

It is notoriously difficult to describe perfume:

> In the naming of a perfume, as the topic has no components to be denoted, there can be no components shared between topic and vehicle though there may be components shared between the effect of the perfume and the effect of the vehicle –or a relationship of metonymy between user and perfume. (Cook 1992: 104).

As perfume presents such peculiarities, the only way of denoting the perfume itself is by a unique name, combined with direct experience of the fragrance. However, the name still carries connotations of its country of origin or perhaps of other products made by the same manufacturer that the consumer has personal experience of. All other descriptions create qualities for the perfume by fusing it with something else and with the associations and connotations involved. "In the case of perfume, the only relevant fact is whether it is liked by 'you', or by the people 'you' want to like it. (Cook: 1992: 105). One of the many paradoxes involved in the naming of fragrances is that the referents of fragrance names are rather similar to one another – they are all scented liquids. It is through the colour of the liquid and the packaging, the design and texture of the bottle, as well as all the elements involved in the brand name, that make up the sense, or meaning of the fragrance, and it is this meaning

that differentiates the fragrances in the mind of the consumer. Williamson reminds us that, "Perfumes can have no particular significance [...] The function of differentiation rests totally on making a connection with an image from outside the ad world" (Williamson 1978: 25).

Tungate reports of research in the UK which suggests that sales of fragrances for men were worth £208 million in 2006. (Taylor 2008: 14). The Moodie Report, 2008, published figures on the number of global fragrance launches between 2000 and 2007. In these 8 years, a total of 4177 fragrances were launched, of which 2611 for women , 1121 for men and 445 unisex scents.

Although we use various terms to speak about 'perfume', technically, the specific name depends on the concentration of essential oils contained in the fragrance:

'*Perfume*' is the costliest form of fragrance with 22% of essential oils. *Eau de Parfum* (EDP), comes next with between 15 and 22% essential oils. This is followed by *Eau de Toilette* (EDT) with 8 to 15% oils. The weaker *Eau de Cologne* has just 4% essential oils. For those who prefer a lighter concentration, *Eau Fraîche* and aftershaves have between 1 to 3% essential oils, and are the lightest dilutions of fragrance

The world of perfume has its own metalanguage. Expert perfumers are rather unflatteringly referred to as the 'noses' of the industry. Fragrances are sometimes referred to by the French '*jus*', which literally means 'juice'.

Perfumery takes some of its language from music, and the composition of a perfume is seen as a combination of notes. The broad structure of most modern perfumes is

based on three layers of notes, referred to respectively as top notes, middle notes and lower notes.

According to Vestergaard & Schroder (writing in 1985), "Twenty-five years ago men couldn't use fragrances without being branded as homosexuals" (Vestergaard & Schroder 1985: 78). It was the use of fragrances that was considered socially alien for men, even though the products for men had been marketed for decades, ever since *Jicky* in 1889. The cosmetics industry, eager to expand sales, began to produce and market more products labelled 'aftershave' and 'eau de cologne', targeted at men. Perfumer Marc Jacobs explains that "Men's fragrance, unlike women's in a certain way, is very personal. It's a layer on top of skin – for women it can be like changing a make-up colour, but not for men" (http://www.mimifroufrou.com). In other words, women have more experience in applying products to their bodies while for men, the social act of applying fragrance is more exceptional. Today, social developments have brought about more tolerance regarding the use of grooming products for men, including scents targeted at gay men or unisex scents for the young generation who care less about gender distinctions than about their social group (cf. Tungate 2008: 15). However, the term 'perfume' is generally avoided when referring to products for men, and the preferred term is 'fragrance'.

CHAPTER FIVE : **A LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF BRAND NAMES**

5.1 Introductory Remarks

The first impression is of surprise at the sheer number of fragrances launched in the set period. It has to be made clear that not all of the fragrances which are launched as 'new' brands are in fact totally new. As pointed out in section 4.1, they are sometimes brought out in a different form, perhaps a summer version Eau de Toilette (EDT) of an Eau de Parfum (EDP), or if a brand has been successful and is selling profitably, the perfume house may bring out a 'new' version of it, such as *Driven Black* (Avon) a later version of the début fragrance *Driven* (Avon). Celebrities also cash in on their name by marketing several versions of the same name. Stella McCartney has fragrances called *Stella* (2003) and *Sheer Stella* (2004). Even a 'new' size bottle is a good excuse for having a launch party. The corpus also includes limited editions, for example *280* (Floris) which consists of just 280 copies of the scent to commemorate the 280th anniversary of the perfume house. Some fragrances are 'exclusives', i.e. made with rare ingredients or can only be found either online or in specific department stores, e.g. *Harrods Rose* (Bond N°9) for Harrods of Knightsbridge. Other fragrances are marketing gimmicks, for example *By George!* (VisitEngland), and are used for non-profit promotional purposes. A few would appear to be jokes but are in actual fact fragrance compositions, albeit mainly for creating a 'buzz' and keeping the company in the public eye, e.g. *Flame* (Burger King), which smells like a Whopper, 'America's favourite burger'. Perhaps this is

the start of a new trend in fragrance composition – recreating the aromas of national culinary delights.

The second impression is a startling realization that the overwhelming majority of fragrances listed are for women. Fragrances for men represent a mere fifth of the total number of names collected. As the aims of this research are of a strictly linguistic nature, not commercial, no attempt has been made to compare the number of launches made year per year or to note exactly which months of the year witness the highest number of launches. Although an interesting feature of the fragrances market, the growth rates of fragrances for men, and for the emerging unisex scents are not observed. The focus is specifically on the names given to the fragrances and the meaning that may be generated from these names. The unexpectedly high number of samples does not permit an in-depth analysis of all the fragrances, and although a shorter time span could have been adopted, a longer period was preferred in order to capture a more representative section of the fragrance market. It was feared that short-lived naming trends and fads from one particular 'season' may influence the overall picture, in the same way that fashions come and go. Of the total number of fragrances collected (1336), 989 are of fragrances for women, 263 are of fragrances for men, 35 of a combination of unisex fragrances and fragrances for gays, and the final category comprising 49 samples includes fragrances for children, pets, bedding, scented candles and room fragrances.

Total Number of fragrances collected: **1336**
N° Fragrances for Women: **989** Percentage of total: 74,026 %

N° Fragrances for Men:	**263**	Percentage of total:	19,685 %
N° Unisex/Gay Fragrances:	**35**	Percentage of total:	3,667 %
N° of Other Fragrances:	**49**	Percentage of total:	2,619 %

Table 2: Breakdown of samples in corpus.

Total number of new fragrances launched globally 2000 – 2007: 4177

(http://www.moodiereport.com)

Average number of new fragrances launched globally per month 2000 – 2007: 44

Total number of fragrances collected in corpus: 1336

Average number of fragrances launched per month in time span: 25

Estimated corpus percentage of global launches : approximately 50%..

5.2 Language is the Name of the Game

They have been at a great feast of languages and stolen the scraps.
(Shakespeare: 1564-1616 *Love's Labour's Lost*, Act V, i).
The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations

Brand names are made up of various combinations of letters, numbers and other symbols. Combinations of letters form words and words too are symbols. (Graddol *et al.* 1994: 102). The relationship between a word and the entity that it symbolizes, however, is much more complex than for other symbols. Fiske (1990: 48) describes how, for Peirce, words are symbols with no obvious connections to the idea they represent, whose connection with their object is a matter of convention, agreement

or rule. Peirce's interpretation of differing modes of relationship between the sign vehicle and the signified (symbol, index, icon) can be applied to brand names.

First of all, the symbolic mode regards not only words, but also the use of arbitrary or conventional signs that have been agreed on and learnt.

H I − *, # @ 1, 2, & 3 ! are all symbols selected from any modern keyboard. Today, many product types bear symbolic brand names which consist of single letters of the alphabet, initialisms. acronyms, alphanumeric names, letter substitutions, numbers and punctuation marks – these are all examples of this symbolic mode of relationship.

The use of individual letters and symbols as a signifying practice in communication is ubiquitious. Some letters have particular appeal and usage, particularly in the world of advertising and branding. Letters which occur less frequently in general English, such as K, Q, X may contribute to creating distinctiveness. The brand name 'Kodak', for instance was coined precisely because it is considered to be distinctive. In general English language use, particularly in newspapers, both asterisks and the letter X are often used to substitute taboo words. When this practice is adopted in advertising, it can have huge impact. People nowadays are sufficiently trained in this form of lexical substitution to transcode instantly the following advertising slogan for the Australian beer brand called 'Castlemaine Four X':

"*Australians wouldn't give a xxxx for any other lager*" (http://www. www.adslogans.co.uk)

The brand name 'Four X' is represented symbolically, in a similar way to a 'four-letter word'. This shows how a brand name can be used effectively (or in this case, symbolically represented) in an advertising campaign in a humorous way. The advertisement is memorable, easily understood, and everyone shares the joke of the double *entendre* of using a four-letter expletive.

In a similar provocative way, in 2001 the clothing company, French Connection started using the acronym FCUK as a tongue-in-cheek controversial advertising technique in its UK stores.

In branding, letters are sometimes used as a substitute for words in a style that is original and modern, suitable for young people who are used to dealing with short, abbreviated messages. *B Exquisite* by Bijan cleverly uses the initial letter of the perfume house as a homophonic substitute for 'be' and thus helps to convey the idea that it is possible to achieve consummate excellence by purchasing and wearing this particular – Bijan - brand of fragrance. Single letters as a brand name are possible because the names are supported by a well-known perfume house or a celebrity. *S* stands for Sherrer, *F* is for Ferragamo, *M* is for Mariah Carey, and *U* is for Ungaro. Two letters may also be used, as in the initials *CH* for Carolina Herrera. Other instances of two letters include Hugo Boss' more easily recognized symbolic names for fragrances: *XX (*fragrance for women), which stands for the female sex chromosomes, and *XY* (fragrance for men), which stands for the two distinct male sex chromosomes. Initialisms are also found, such as *SJP NYC* (Sarah Jessica Parker, New York City), which is reminiscent of a personalized car numberplate,

status symbol of the wealthy and famous. Initialisms which are commonly used in language can be readily transformed into brand names of fragrances, particularly when they signify something 'special', such as *VIP* (Usher), or even more importantly, *V.I.P.* (Bijan). A fragrance which shows groundbreaking originality in using symbols is *CKIN2U* (Calvin Klein). This highly distinctive brand name of a unisex fragrance reads like a text message and is targeted at young people, the text-messaging generation.

P.S. I Love You (Bath & Body Works) uses the abbreviation of *post scriptum*, which is commonly used in informal communication styles. *Love etc.* (The Body Shop) is said by the perfume house to give women the freedom to attach a personal meaning of love to the brand name.

The fragrance *A*Men Sunessence* (Thierry Mugler) uses the conventional star symbol to indicate something special, to further rate men who are already in the top 'A' grade.

5.2.1 Punctuation and Fragrance Brand Names

Punctuation marks may seem out of place in a brand name as they are such short and isolated texts. In recent years, there have been evident signs of a strong interest in ensuring that punctuation is used correctly. In 2003, the book '*Eats, Shoots and*

Leaves, The Zero Tolerance Approach to Punctuation' by Lynne Truss bemoaned the fact that today's society seems to pay little attention to punctuation and gave humorous guidelines on how to use punctuation correctly. The title of the book is an amphibology (ambiguous in its construction), derived from a joke on bad punctuation:

> *A panda walks into a café. He orders a sandwich, eats it, then draws a gun and proceeds to fire at the other patrons.*
>
> *"Why?" asks the confused, surviving waiter amidst the carnage, as the panda makes towards the exit. The panda produces a badly punctuated wildlife manual and tosses it over his shoulder.*
>
> *"Well, I'm a panda", he says at the door. "Look it up."*
>
> *The waiter turns to the relevant entry in the manual and sure enough, finds an explanation.*
>
> *'Panda: large black-and-white bear-like mammal, native to China.*
>
> *Eats, shoots and leaves.'*

The whole point of the joke rests on a single comma: the panda in the joke is conforming to the erroneous entry in the manual which defines a panda as being a mammal which first eats, then shoots, then leaves. The verb forms 'shoots' and 'leaves' are homonyms for the stems and leafy parts of a plant.

Several examples of punctuation being used for distinctiveness are found in the corpus: *A.Maze* (The People of the Labyrinths) demonstrates an intriguing use of a full stop after the first letter of the verb 'amaze' so that the name can read as either 'amaze'(be wonderful) or 'a maze' (as in labyrinth).

A further example is *Love, Chloé* (Chloé) where the reputation of the perfume house is closely entwined in the sense of love and the brand name resembles the closing line of a personal letter or message through the use of a comma.

It would appear that hyphenated brand names were popular in the 1920s but today have gone out of fashion as there are other more stimulating ways of creating an original name (Rivkin & Sutherland 2004: 100). Exclamation marks in brand names are on a par with shouting in speech. They stress the urgency of the directive. Searle (1976) classifies Speech Acts into the following groups: representatives; directives (e.g. imperatives); commissives; expressives; and declarations/performatives.

The impact of *Outrageous* (Kerry Katona) becomes more dramatic when it has an exclamation mark in the fragrance *Outrageous!* (Frederic Malle). Greetings such as *Hello Sugar!* (Bath and Body Works) as well as directives e.g. *Flirt!* (Flowerlife), confidently yet imaginatively flaunt traditional branding conventions in the sector of fragrances.

Other directives include *Let It Rock* (Vivienne Westwood) and *Go Green* (Lush). The Lush company's brand message is a direct appeal to follow a particular way of life.

5.2.2 Deixis in Fragrance Brand Names

Deixis is used in the brand names of fragrances, for example: *Rock Me!* (Anna Sui) *Call Me*, (Demeter Fragrance Library) *Love Me*, (Demeter Fragrance Library), and *Be My Valentine* (Demeter Fragrance Library) as an alternative strategy to make direct appeals to the consumer. *Be My Valentine* was launched in the month of January, in order to coincide with consumers' desires to purchase gifts for their partners to celebrate St. Valentine's Day, celebrating love and affection between intimate companions. Marketers strategically place meaningful gifts on the market in order to cash in on any possible purchase that consumers may be encouraged to make because of cultural traditions.The brand acts as an 'interlocutor' between the wearer of the scent and the partner or potential partner in a relationship. The jocular and direct mode of address we find in *Marry Me!* (Lanvin), would be considered unthinkable and even rude in private English. Therefore, there appears to be a greater tolerance in levels of politeness in branding. The use of an imperative for someone's hand in marriage runs counter to the traditional style of request.

Appellations made using personal deixis invite the reader to recognize him/herself as the individual being spoken to and also to recognize him/herself as a member of a group – 'men/women like you' – since 'you' is both singular and plural in English.

Yu (Mane) is full of originality. It is short, starts with an 'unusual' letter, is the Chinese word for 'rain', therefore has connotations with liquid, and is a homophone for 'you' in English and as such makes a more direct appeal to the consumer – again, a reference to both the individual consumer and all consumers. Other examples of personal deixis to 'close the distance' between product and consumer

include *My Morgan* (Morgan), *World of Your Own* (Grassroots), *My Life* (Grès), *My Dream* (Grès) and *My Passion* (Grès).

de Mooij (2010: 223) points out that "In individualistic cultures, the public tends to be addressed in a direct and personalized way", but this strategy is unlikely to appeal to consumers from collectivist cultures.

5.2.3 Numbers in Fragrance Brand Names

Numbers appear in 34 fragrance names. They take the form of single digit 'lucky' numbers such as *7* (Loewe), two digit 'lucky' numbers such as *21*(Costume National), numbers used to represent times of the day using the 24 hour clock and the abbreviated '*h*' for hours' *09h25*, *15h10*, *20h50* (Irie Walsh) the hash symbol to represent 'number' in #02, #08, #09 (Jacomo), and numbers to represent decades as in the series *'60, '70, '80, '90, '00* (Mila Schôn). The perfume house Amouage launched a duo of distinctive alphanumerical names to celebrate its twenty-fifth anniversary in 2007: *Jubilation 25* for women and *Jubilation XXV* for men, interestingly selecting Roman numerals to denote the fragrance for men.

de Mooij (2010: 71) reports that "Americans need data to evaluate things" so brand names containing numbers will appeal to American consumers.

According to Baudrillard (1981), the borderline between the symbols we use and reality has all but disappeared in today's mediated world. He refers to this state of affairs as a universal 'simulacrum' – a negation of the concept of reality as we understand it - that is to say, a mindset where the distinction between texts and reality has merged completely (quoted in Danesi 2008: 74).

Symbols are not used simply in brand names to identify goods, but the goods themselves are symbols:

> Modern goods are recognized as psychological things, as symbolic of personal attributes and goals, as symbolic of social patterns and strivings. In this sense, all commercial objects have a symbolic character (Leiss *et al*. 2005: 229, quoting Levy).

5.2.4 Indexicality and Fragrance Brand Names

Peirce's (1903) second mode of relationship is indexical and this indexicality is manifest in different ways. Writing itself can be indexical, if the focus is not only on 'what' is written, but 'how' it is written. The font in which a text (brand name), or part of a text is set can convey vast amounts of connotative meaning – it can convey a mood, age, signal clues as to content, or even suggest a point of view (cf. Graddol 2002: 45). Handwritten style fonts, for example, are often used to give the receiver the impression of a personal form of communication.

Although not among the main aims of this research, some letters in the brand names of fragrances are slightly altered in order to create an iconic representation of the

product or something associated with it, for example, curved letter forms can convey the impression of parts of a body and a sense of sensuality. Letter shapes can therefore create signification. The letter O is a perfectly rounded form visually, the circle offering a target and drawing the eye to its centre. The letter X, visually, has a regular, uniform shape with balance and symmetry, and like O it is a target letter, drawing the eye to the central point at the cross of two diagonals. According to Rivkin and Sutherland (2004: 11), "Words with double letters are visually more pleasing than without them". Words with double letters are also easy to exploit in graphic design. We need only observe the fragrance name *Nooka* (Nooka) which has as its strapline 'The future distilled'. The double 'o' of the brand name is presented as a pair of spectacles, looking into the future. Even lower case as opposed to upper case letters can be used to signify various degrees of loudness. A further indexical mode is the imitation of another writing system (a different alphabet) as this creates an index of another culture. Different typographical and calligraphic techniques can also be used as signifiers so that a foreign language can signify the product directly by uniting language and product, for example the use of particular diacritical marks may indicate the 'Frenchness' of a product.

In Peirce's (1931, quoted in Chandler 2002: 42) terms, a definition of indexicality is that an index stands "unequivocally for this or that existing thing". This is in contrast to iconicity, which consists merely of perceived resemblance. Therefore, all brand names are indices of the manufacturer/perfume houses which create the products/fragrances and the brand names. In the same way, the fragrance you wear

becomes an indexical sign of your identity. Products as brands are signs with a certain social value as they signify something about their consumers. When a brand name closely links the product to the manufacturer, designer or to the place of origin of the product, it can be deemed an indexical name. The corpus contains 27 brands which do not have a particular brand name, relying instead on the reputation of the perfume house to market the fragrance: *McGraw* (Tim McGraw), *Cerruti pour homme* (Cerruti), *Gucci* (Gucci) are examples of such fragrances. The consumer may have had personal experience of a different brand launched by the perfumery in the past and is willing to trust the company to have produced a quality fragrance. A novel, distinguishing branding technique is to use partial reduplication of the perfume house in the brand name e.g. *Chance* (Chanel), *Versus* (Versace). *Fuel for Life* (Diesel) is a metonym for the Diesel company.

Words may well be symbols, but they are very flexible symbols, whose meaning shift in different contexts. As Dyer (1982: 140) remarks, "Words not only describe things […] they communicate feelings, associations and attitudes – they bring ideas to our minds".

5.2.5 Iconicity and Fragrance Brand Names

According to Peirce (1931, quoted in Chandler 2002, 2007: 36) iconic signs are signs in which the signifier is perceived as *resembling* or imitating the signified and possesses some of its qualities. Iconicity in turn can be split into three different

types: *image*, *diagram* and *metaphor*. In the realm of brand names, image in this sense refers to the use of sound symbolism where there is a direct association between the spoken form and the meaning of the name, whereas spelling deviation represents a perceived resemblance to the written form.

Onomatopoeic names are vocal icons simulating the sounds that certain things, actions, or movements are perceived to make. When discussing sound symbolism, reference is sometimes made to the 'Joyce Principle' as examples of phonetic symbolism are often found in the works of James Joyce, particularly in *Finnegan's Wake* (1939). The Joyce Principle supports the existence of sound symbolism, whereas the 'Juliet Principle' refers to Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* and Juliet's famous allusion to the arbitrariness of names (*What's in a name?)*.

Hinton *et al*. (1994: 2-5).distinguish between:

- *Corporeal* sound symbolism – e.g. *Achoo*!
- *Imitative* sound symbolism – representing environmental sounds – e.g. *bang*, *knock*, *swish*, *cuckoo*, *grr.*
- *Synesthetic* sound symbolism – referring to the use of vowels and consonants to consistently represent visual, tactile or proprioceptive properties of objects, such as size or shape, for example certain words suggest smallness.
- *Conventional* sound symbolism – the analogical association of certain phonemes and clusters with certain meanings – e.g. '*gl*'. This type of sound symbolism, unlike other categories, is largely considered language-specific.

In the corpus we find examples of corporeal sound symbolism, e.g. *Mmm* (Kenzo Kenzoki), and imitative sound symbolism, e.g. *Fizz* (Kenzo Kenzoki). Other phonetic devices include rhyme, e.g. *Zen for Men* (Shiseido) and alliteration e.g. *Burberry Brit* (Burberry).

Orthographical distinctiveness is frequently adopted as a strategy in brand naming. As Crystal (1988: 76) points out,

> One of the most noticeable present-day trends is the use of deviant spelling as part of a trade name or advertising campaign. The motivation for the distinctive trade-mark is to provide an unambiguous, identifiable product name, which will not be confused with a 'common' word in the language.

However, the corpus presents no significant spelling deviations, and this may be due to the fact that other methods of creating distinctiveness are considered more appropriate and effective in the sector of fragrances.

5.2.6 Word Classes and Fragrance Brand Names

The corpus contains brand names from the main word classes of the English language – Noun, Adjective, Adverb, Verb and Preposition –:

Noun: *Adventure* (Davidoff); Adjective: *Guilty* (Gucci); Verb: *Dreaming* (Tommy Hilfiger); Preposition: *Within* (BCBG).

Phrases are also present:

Noun Phrase: *Purple Blossom* (American Beauty); Pronoun: *He* (Usher);

Adjectival Phrase: *So Luxurious* (Daisy Fuentes);

Verb Phrase: *Driven Black* (Avon).

Adverbial Phrase: *Intimately Him* (David Beckham);

Prepositional Phrase: *In The Mood for Love* (Gianfranco Ferré).

5.2.7 Word Games

Besides words and phrases, other grammatical structures include clauses e.g. *I Am King* (Sean John), which can be interpreted as signifying either the fragrance or the end-user, in this case a man. Brand names which make such sweeping statements can be profitably embedded into advertising campaigns which promote the ideas inherent in the name. Here, the interplay of relationships between the consumer (possibly a woman), and the male end-user can create further undercurrents of meaning.

The definite article is found in fragrances such as *The One* (Dolce & Gabbana), and *The Secret* (Antonio Banderas). The vast majority of brand names, however, float in a kind of structural ambiguity as they are deprived of any sort of determiner, therefore giving an impression of having no context. However, this lack of

determiners creates a similarity with the headlines of newspapers, which have the function of capturing attention, at times in a dramatic and memorable fashion.

Neologisms can readily be understood and the use of different forms of the new word are immediately comprehensible because as Yule points out, "there is a lot of regularity in the word-formation processes in our language" (Yule 2006: 53). Word-building processes fall into two broad categories: inflection and derivation. Whereas inflection is driven by the requirement to form a word with the appropriate form in a particular grammatical context, derivation is motivated by the desire to create new lexical items using pre-existing morphemes and words. When you need a new word, you do not usually need to make it up from scratch. It is possible to create new lexical items by recycling pre-existing material. Examples of neologisms through affixation include: *Vanillary* (Lush), and *Womanity* (Thierry Mugler), both using suffixes. Compounds from two free morphemes are also found e.g. *Wonderwood* (Comme des Garçons).

In the sector of cosmetics, it is common to find beauty products with 'foreignized', generally 'Frenchified' names, serving as indices of 'foreignness' and capturing the stereotypical positive connotations of a particular culture in the name. However, in the case of fragrances, the names are usually either in one language code or another, except for a few sporadic exceptions which use two codes at the same time, generally French and English, e.g. *Trésor in Love* (Lancôme), *I Love les Carottes* (Honoré des Prés).

Fragrance brand names which are blends include: *Africanimal* (M.A.C. Creations) from Africa + animal; *Aromadisiac* (Avon) from aroma + aphrodisiac; *Stylessence* (Jill Sanders) from style & essence; *Pinkitude* (Demeter Fragrance Library) from pink + attitude.

Ungradable items are graded to create originality, as in *Very Hollywood* (Michael Kors). Other lexical techniques include reduplication e.g. *Can Can* (Paris Hilton) *Tuca Tuca* (Lush) as well as partial reduplication e.g. in *Mandarine Mandarin* (Serge Lutens).

Marked lexical items occur in the corpus through the use of the morphological system of English, particularly the suffixes *–ess* and *–ette.* In general English, *w*e have pairs of terms where the unmarked form is male, and the marked form female. Not only does this suggest that the male figure is the 'norm' and the female one 'deviant', but the female form clearly has derived status and, in the case of *–ette*, implies diminution or imitation. Examples of fragrance brand names containing marked forms include: *Bronze Goddess* (Estée Lauder) and *Princess* (Vera Wang). The term 'goddess' is sometimes used to describe sexual prowess and for the consumer this may be a positive connotation, bearing in mind that the consumer is not always the end user of the product.

Honorifics are also present: *Miss Charming* (Juliette Has a Gun); *Miss Sixty* (Miss Sixty). The title 'Miss' is prefixed to the name of an unmarried woman or girl. Some years ago, 'women's libbers' fought to introduce the neutral honorific 'Ms.' into the language in order not to be forced to disclose information on a woman's marital

status. It now seems paradoxical that such anti-feminist names should be deemed suitable to attract modern women.

Lady Vengeance (Juliette Has a Gun) and *Lady Rebel* (Mango) also seem to be paradoxical as the feminine counterpart of a Lord is not traditionally associated with vengefulness or rebellion. *Lady Million* (Paco Rabanne) has more positive connotations of aristocracy and wealth.

Other ways of referring to women include *Vamp à New York* (Honoré des Près) which is a semi-derogatory term to describe a "woman, who, while not necessarily attractive, has a certain allure, usually striking, exotic, overtly sexy and is usually a heartless, man-eating seductress." (www.urbandictionary.com).

Puns do not appear frequently in the corpus and when they do, they may be misinterpreted by some audiences. An educated French speaker will interpret *Fleur du Mâle* (Jean Paul Gaultier) as a pun on Baudelaire's 'Les Fleurs du Mal' – Flowers of Evil, whereas to a non-French speaker, the fusion of meanings may consist of:

a) Flowers;
b) Frenchness and connotations of Frenchness (the linguistic code and the circumflex;
c) Masculinity (male)(cf. Cook 1992: 105).

A further pun is to be found in the pet fragrance *Pawfum* (Juicy Couture) which plays on the phonological similarity of 'perfume' and a pet's paws.

"The pun is a miniature of language play functioning creatively". (Cook 2000: 83).

5.3 You Are What You Wear

Weigh the meaning and look not at the words.
(Ben Jonson 1572-1637)
(The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations)

The 1336 fragrance brand names in the corpus are grouped into 49 themed categories as in the table below:

Category	**N° of Fragrances**	**% of total**
Foreign Language	**149**	**11,153**
Combination	**123**	**9,206**
Love & Relationship	**85**	**6,362**
People	**68**	**5,089**
Emotions/Characteristics	**62**	**4,640**
Other	**56**	**4,191**
Flowers & Plants	**42**	**3,143**
Places	**38**	**2,844**
Actions	**36**	**2,694**

Numbers/Symbols	**34**	**2,544**
Magic /Secrets/Fantasy	**33**	**2,470**
Time/Seasons	**33**	**2,470**
Purity & Innocence	**30**	**2,245**
Self	**29**	**2,170**
Perfume House	**27**	**2,020**
Night	**27**	**2,020**
Arts and Media	**24**	**1,796**
Female	**23**	**1,721**
Universe	**22**	**1,646**
Speech	**21**	**1,571**
Male	**20**	**1,497**
Gems/Precious Metals	**20**	**1,497**
Physical Contact	**20**	**1,497**
Temperature	**19**	**1,422**
Nature	**18**	**1,347**
Sport	**17**	**1,272**
Fashion/Style	**16**	**1,197**
Uniqueness	**16**	**1,197**

Colour	**15**	**1,122**
Material/Texture	**15**	**1,122**
Dirt/Dark Side	**15**	**1,122**
Fruit	**15**	**1,122**
Water/Liquid	**14**	**1,047**
Food	**14**	**1,047**
Life	**14**	**1,047**
Future	**14**	**1,047**
Celebration	**13**	**0,973**
Adventure	**11**	**0,823**
Fun/Funny	**11**	**0,823**
Forbidden	**10**	**0,748**
Travel	**10**	**0,748**
Power	**9**	**0,673**
Day	**9**	**0,673**
Parts of the Body	**8**	**0,598**
Patriotism	**7**	**0,523**
Royalty	**7**	**0,523**
Animals	**6**	**0,449**

Two language s	**6**	**0,449**
Choice	**5**	**0,374**

Table 3 Themed categories of fragrance names.

The first stage of analysis consisted of dividing fragrances named using the code of the English language from those expressed in other, 'foreign languages. As we can see from the above table, a total of 149 fragrances are named in 'Foreign languages', consequently, 1187 are in English - 88,847% of the total number of names collected. Some nations e.g. France and Italy stereotypically denote beauty, elegance and style, and French and Italian perfumeries have an excellent and longstanding reputation. The oldest perfumery in the world is *Officina Profumo-Farmaceutica di Santa Maria Novella* in Florence. This 600 year-old pharmacy which was started by Florentine monks is now a trendy global marketer of perfumes and medieval elixirs.

French names in the corpus include *Le Parfum* (Josephine Baker), and *Cuir* (Lancôme) while Italian names include *Palazzo* (Fendi). The Spanish language offers us *Estilo* (Image Enterprise), *Deseo* (Jennifer Lopez) and Latin names also appear, e.g. *Paeonia* (L'Occitane). Besides actual brand names in French, a great many fragrances are labelled *homme* for men's fragrances, in preference to 'for men', although the same is not true of perfumes for women – they are not identified by the French word 'femme'. This practice is a way of marking products for men as being deviant from the norm, i.e. products for women, and is a singular case of markedness. The naming of a fragrance conveys information, triggers responses,

activates thoughts and may evoke memories for the consumer. Once a fragrance has been purchased and used, then olfactory memories also become significant in a consumer's future purchasing motivation.

Combined themes are popular. Brand names in this category consist of a mixture of more or less poetic combinations: *Purple Diamond* (Estée Lauder) is a combination of colour + gem , *Orange Flowers* (Ava Luxe) is a combination of colour + flower, while *Strawberry Flowers* (Fresh) is a more unusual mix of fruit + flower. *Mediterranean Fig* (Pacifica) combines place + fruit, and *Chocolate Amber* (Bath and Body Works) is a an enticing mixture of food + colour. Chocolate is the sweet food *par excellence* that women are supposed to crave when they desire affection. *Black Fleece* (Brooks Brothers) is a combination of colour + material, while *Warm Vanilla Sugar* (Bath and Body Works) is an exotic and sensual concoction of temperature + food.

Love is in the air in fragrance names. Love is expressed in many ways ranging from the mere sensation of love as expressed by *In the Mood for Love* (Gianfranco Ferré), and moving to tentative feelings such as *Prelude to Love* (By Kilian), *In Case of Love* (Pupa) and finally, simply *Love* (Creative Scentualization), and *With Love* (Hilary Duff). Love is coupled with luck as in *Love & Luck* (Ed Hardy), or graded as in *Better Love* (June Jacobs). *Love, Beyond Love* (By Kilian) lies in an unknown territory which is so intense that it is ungradable. We all know that love makes the world go round. In bleak times of repression, we still have the energy to hope for love or express love. Human beings need to have more love and to re-state the

message of love. Terms of endearment in the form of *Darling* (Kylie Minogue) can be used by either men or women. Relationships can also be of a more scientific nature, as in *Chemical Bonding* (Ineke). Eponyms appear both in the form of the designer name, e.g. *Nina* (Nina Ricci), and in the names of the many celebrities who have launched fragrances, e.g. *Kate* (Kate Moss). A celebrity endorser can be any individual who enjoys public recognition and whose fame generally transpires from the world of film, television, fashion or performing arts, but can be from any other field too, such as sports, politics, business, art, and the military. Celebrity endorsed fragrances are not a new phenomenon, but have caught the imagination of the buying public who are fed a constant diet of celebrity gossip via the media. 'Sell-ebrity' perfumes are always in demand. Celebrities are well-known internationally and consumers already have a clear idea of the connotations they attach to a given celebrity, so it is consequently a simple process for the myth to be created. Ironically, few celebrities seem to wear their own fragrances. Their involvement in the development and creation of the perfumes may be little or non-existent. Marketing is all about creating desirability and the attraction of these celebrity perfumes is for the common consumer to have a seemingly luxurious item that bears the name of a celebrity whom they admire or want to emulate.

The high percentage of names concerning relationships and emotions shows a bias towards the characteristics of feminine cultures (cf. Hofstede 2001).

In the Emotions and Characteristics category, both internal *Intelligence* (The beautiful Mind Series), and external *Pretty* (Elizabeth Arden) characteristics are

present. Aggression lurks in *Insolence* (Guerlain), assertiveness in *Attitude* (Giorgio Armani), strong reaction in *Shock* (Rubino Cosmetics), and fascination in both *Captivating* (Ghost), and *Seductive* (Guess).

The mythic meaning constructed in a brand name relates to our understanding of the real world outside the name. We must first of all recognize the connotations of the signs in the brand name and then transfer these connotations to the product for sale. For example, if the fragrance in question becomes a sign for feminine beauty, then purchasing the product for ourselves, or as a gift for someone else, seems to offer the wearer of the perfume a share in its meaning of feminine beauty for herself. In the words of Williamson, "The technique of advertising is to correlate feelings, moods or attributes to tangible objects, linking possible unattainable things with those that are attainable, and thus reassuring us that the former are within reach" (Williamson 1978: 31). Buying and using the product (an attainable thing) gives access to feminine beauty (a social meaning). To possess the product is to 'buy into' the myth, and to possess some of its social value for ourselves.

Bliss Booster (Scentology) clearly suggests that the fragrance has an almost therapeutic function, similar to an anti-depressant.

Many perfumes contain natural ingredients from plants and flowers. Therefore, references to such items cannot be considered unusual and may constitute either ingredients of the scent or inspiration for the scent. Language expressions often liken women to flowers, e.g. we speak of young girls 'sprouting up' and 'blossoming into women', and compliment women on their 'rosy cheeks'.

The corpus contains examples such as *In Bloom* (Avon), *Flower* (Kenzo Artistes), *Rose* (Paul Smith), *Jasmine* (L'Occitane) and *Wild Honeysuckle* (Dawn Spencer Hurwitz).

The Places used to anchor the brand message are generally large cities, e.g.

London (Burberry), *Tokyo* (Kenzo), and of course, the most romantic city in the world, *Venice* (Memento). The notion of 'Purity' is evident in the fragrances branded *Pure* (Hugo Boss), and *Original* (Claire Burke).

Fragrances with brand names which resemble 'Speech' may consist of directives e.g. *Little Kiss Me* (Salvador Dali) – the bottle is littered with dozens of tiny, lipstick-clad mouths with the lips pouted in readiness for a kiss – as well as phrases in a more dialogic form of collaboration in a couple: *My Place or Yours Gina* (Benefit), resembles the cliché used to make arrangements for a date. *Honey I Washed the Kids* (Lush) alludes to the task of sharing family duties – in a feminine society. It is also an intertextual reference to the comedy film 'Honey I Shrunk the Kids'(1989).

'Men' are referred to as simply *Man* (Benetton), or a special type of man, *Fantastic Man* (Byredo). There are occasional references to the longer, rather old-fashioned term 'gentleman', as in *Gentleman Driver* (Guerlain), which the company explains as being 'an old word used to stress modern values'.

The 'Colour' terms are almost representative of personality types, e.g. sensual *Soft Yellow* (Jill Sander) and delicate *So White* (Lush), as opposed to the rather loud *Luscious Pink* (Mariah Carey).

The notion of ‘Dirt’ constitutes a concept that rarely appears in the sector of pleasant-smelling fragrances. *Dirty English* (Juicy Couture), is original and effective in the sense that it allows for new associations and new myth-making. The brand name is reminiscent of Persil’s ‘dirt is good’ campaign conjuring up positive connotations of dirt in the belief that getting messy is a natural part of learning, having fun and enjoying life. Stereotypical impressions of the English are usually more focused on the ‘stiff upper lip’, self-restraint and city businessmen in bowler hats so the choice of nationality appears to be a deviation from the traditional stereotypes. ‘Dirty’ may have connotations with sexual talk, as in general English we have the expression ‘to talk dirty’, and consumers may recall the massive box office hit film ‘Dirty Dancing’.

Food and fruit fragrance names for women generally connote with sweet and tempting sensations e.g. *Irresistible Apple* (Bath & Body Works), *Fig* (Marc Jacobs), *Caline Sweet Appeal* (Grès). On the other hand, the more bitter taste of *Pure Coffee* (Thierry Mugler) is a fragrance for men. However, specific distinctions between the way fragrances are named for either men or women are not analysed and remain a building block for future research.

5.4 Conclusions

Begin thus from the first act, and proceed; and in conclusion,

at the ill which thou hast done, be troubled, and rejoice for the good.
(Pythagoras 580-500 B.C)
The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations

The analysis shows that a myriad of different linguistic strategies are utilized in the process of naming new fragrances. Brand names are observed as semiotic entities, as they can be symbolic, indexical and iconic. However, as noted by Leiss *et al,* a semiotic analysis offers no guarantees: "the semiotic approach favours individual readings of messages and therefore struggles to lend itself to quantification of results (Leiss *et al.* 2005: 166).

Since no information can be given about a smell (cf. Williamson 1978: 25), this explains why the names of the fragrances in the study are extremely varied. The findings show that a wide range of themes are used in order to differentiate fragrances and to make connections with other signs which have meaning for us. The brand names are classified into 49 themed categories and the results show that a large percentage of name types are oriented towards people, relationships and feelings. Relationships and emotions are typical of feminine cultures. The emotions and feelings themselves run between extremes, from *Insolence* (Guerlain) and *Outspoken* (Avon), to *Fantasy* (The Beautiful Mind Series) and *Simply Chic* (Celine Dion), thereby appealing to different characteristics possessed by different types of women and consequently appealing to broad sections of the market. The sense of urgency conveyed by directives and exclamation marks is an appeal to short-term orientation cultures, while the use of deixis, references to the independent self, and direct forms of speech-like address are suitable for individualistic cultures. The use

of status symbols such as gems and precious stones may appeal to consumers from large power distance cultures.

The notions of purity and being well-groomed are appeals that help to sell products to consumers from strong uncertainty avoidance cultures, as too are evident traces of competence behind the brand, for example when a brand name is clearly indexically linked to the perfume house or when it is endorsed by a celebrity.

Brand names constitute a kind of reality which have an effect. They are specific representational practices and produce meanings which cannot be found in reality. Brand names sell luxury goods, not as useful objects but in terms of ourselves as social beings in our different social relationships. Brand names translate statements about objects into statements about types of consumer and human relationships. People and objects can become interchangeable. It is in this way that brand names are seen as structures which function by transforming an object into something which is given meaning in terms of people. The meaning of one thing is transferred to or made interchangeable with another quality, whose value attaches its qualities to the product. Two things are made interchangeable or equal in value. This is what is termed 'currency' (cf. Williamson 1978: 20). Currency is something which "represents a value and in its interchangeability with other things gives them value too" (Williamson 1978: 20). Brand names have a particular function in evoking emotions and feelings through promises of pleasure connected to the purchase or possession of a product. The act of consuming the product sign releases or creates the feelings it represents. However, some paradoxes exist: by applying fragrances

named after sweet food and fruit for example *Chocolate Amber (*Bath and Body Works), *Mediterranean Fig* (Pacifica), a woman not only acts a subject, displaying modern cravings for sweet comfort foods but also acts as object, consumed and consumable. Therefore, by the act of purchasing such brands, women themselves contribute to the suggestion that women are commodities. In a similar way, it is paradoxical that women are seemingly content to purchase and wear scents which have names that are belittling to women, such as *Wrapped With Love* (Hilary Duff*),*conveying the idea of woman as a gift to be unwrapped, or *Happy Hooker* (Artware Editions), which connotes woman as a prostitute.

The high proportion of fragrance names which are connected to people names, human characteristics and emotions show a tendency towards anthropomorphism. This trend appears to reveal a basic human need for security, thus the brand names of fragrances act as platforms for reinforcing myths related to our hopes and desires.

A comparison of naming trends in men's and women's fragrances was not made due to a number of factors. The size of the corpus and the disproportionate numbers of brand names – a much lower incidence for men's fragrances as opposed to fragrances for women - did not favour such an analysis. This type of research can be considered a second stage of the research project. A narrower and more specific aim would be beneficial, for example observing the frequency of the use of colour terms in brand names, or carrying out an analysis of references to particular emotions.

The fact that 88,847% of fragrance names in the corpus are branded in the medium of the English language is significant. Despite its perceived lack of eloquence and

sophistication in comparison with French, for example, the English language is considered by marketers to be the preferred medium for branding fragrances. The appeal of English for potential consumers derives from other, specific cultural connotations. English is representative of a Western lifestyle and it also appeals to the literate élite. The paradox is that English is a World language but fragrance brand names are biased towards particular cultural values which are not representative of the majority of the population of the world. de Mooij reminds us that there may be global brands but there are no global people or global motivations for buying these brands (cf. de Mooij 2010: 5). Fragrances are special goods which have and create special meanings in our personal and social lives and are inextricably linked to our whole being and existence as social creatures.

Concluding Remarks and Further Studies

The findings show some of the different linguistic strategies used in the process of naming of the fragrances launched on the global market within the given time span. The various categories which emerge from the study identify the most frequent semiotical and ideological characteristics present in the discourse of brand names. The adopted methodology offers wide scope for further research projects. First of all, a similar study could focus on several product categories to provide and contrast data on the predominant traits across different market sectors. Likewise, the same methodology could be applied to a diachronic analysis within the fragrances sector,

with the aim of observing the evolution of fragrance brand names over a wider period of time. A further idea would be to focus specifically on one or more of the thematic categories which emerge from this study and examine how often the given characteristic appears in the brand names of different market sectors. The most obvious and immediate project, however, is to observe different naming trends in fragrances for men as opposed to fragrances for women as the way meaning is constructed through fragrance naming is an important step towards understanding ourselves.

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