2012

A study of visual puffery in fragrance advertising: Is the message sent stronger than the actual scent?

Mark Toncar
Youngstown State University

Marc Fetscherin
Rollins College, mfetscherin@rollins.edu

Follow this and additional works at: http://scholarship.rollins.edu/as_facpub

Part of the Advertising and Promotion Management Commons, and the Marketing Commons

Published In

A Study of Visual Puffery in Fragrance Advertising

Is the message sent stronger than the actual scent?

Abstract

Purpose - This paper investigates visual exaggerations of fragrance advertisements by comparing subjects' expectations resulting from print ads to their subsequent product evaluations. It then considers whether the actual scents fall short, meet or exceed these expectations.

Design/methodology/approach - By means of a semiotic analysis we capture the corresponding literary attributes of the ads to develop adjective pairs describing the meaning of the ads. Interviews are conducted to assess the meaning that consumers draw from the fragrance ads and we supplement these findings by performing a blind olfactory product evaluation of the fragrances. Paired sample t-tests are used to compare subjects' ad expectations to their subsequent product evaluation of the actual scent.

Findings - Our results show that the visual cues and imagery in the fragrance ads appear, under certain conditions, to result in product expectations that exceed actual product evaluations, suggesting the existence of visual puffery. We also found that the more abstract descriptors of the ad resulted in significantly higher expectations, while the more concrete descriptors resulted in significantly lower expectations than the actual product evaluation.

Research limitations/implications - A small sample size of homogenous consumers limits the generalizability of the results. No measures of attitude effectiveness were taken.

Practical implications - Visual puffery may be effective and help marketers, even in countries where verbal puffery is illegal, to use another means to reach consumers.

Originality/value - This paper investigates an under-researched area in advertising. A multi-method approach and primary data are used to assess subjects' ad expectations of a fragrance and the actual product evaluation and demonstrates the existence of visual puffery.

Keywords Puffery, Advertising, Fragrance, Perfume

Paper type Research Paper

1. Introduction

Consumer research in advertising has a long history of investigating how the structure of a persuasive message can influence its effectiveness (Belch and Belch, 2009). One useful way to classify previous research is that which pertains to the verbal aspects of the message, the visual aspects, or research that considers both verbal and visual cues (Stern, 1996; McQuarrie and Mick, 2003a; Stathakopoulos, 2008). Illustrative of the research focusing on verbal cues includes studies focusing on order of presentation of product claims (Kamins and Marks, 1987; Krugman, 1962), whether to include or omit conclusions (Chance, 1975; Kardes, 1988) and the effectiveness of one-sided versus two-sided messages (Eisend, 2006; Belch, 1983; Sawyer, 1973). More recently, researchers have begun to focus on the effects of the visual components of advertising such as visual hyperbole (Callister and Stern, 2007) and visual metaphor (McQuarrie and Phillips, 2005) recognizing that both the verbal and visual information presented in an ad can influence the way an advertising message is processed and perceived (Oliver, 1979; Mitchell, 1986; Edell and Staelin, 1983; Hirschmann, 1986; Smith, 1991; Stern, 1996; Scott and Batra, 2003; McQuarrie and Mick, 2003a; Stathakopoulos et.al 2008).

Research addressing deceptive advertising practices has generally focused on the verbal aspects of product claims, and has not often assessed the role that visuals can play in communicating deceptive, misleading or inaccurate information. This is especially true regarding investigations of puffery in advertising. The purpose of this paper is to introduce and discuss the concept of visual puffery, and to examine whether exaggerated and unsubstantiated product claims can be communicated to consumers using visual imagery. Specifically, the objectives of this research are twofold; first, to examine how advertisers are using visual appeals to generate sensory expectations by consumers. Second, we explore the relationship between the sensory expectations that are created in the minds of consumers by the advertisements and consumers' subsequent product evaluation. In so doing, we seek to identify and measure the extent to which viewers' expectations developed in response to an ad differ from their subsequent evaluation of the actual product in the ad and whether visual puffery exists.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Visuals in Advertising

Historically, advertising research has been dominated by investigations that focused on the verbal content of advertisements. With regard to magazine advertising, this has generally referred to investigations involving the headlines and body copy and investigating how specific linguistic elements affect the processing of advertising information. Illustrative of these studies are the works of Leigh (1994), who investigated the use of figures of speech in magazine headlines, McQuarrie and Mick (1996) who examined the use of figures of speech in advertising language, Djafarova (2008) who investigated the use of puns in advertising, and Mothersbaugh, Huhmann and Franke (2002) who explored the effects of rhetorical figures on consumers' processing effort and focus.

Visual elements of advertisements, such as pictures or symbols are also an important component of many advertisements, and the role of imagery in shaping consumer response and behavior has only recently begun to receive the same degree and sophistication of research attention as the verbal elements in advertising (McQuarrie and Mick, 1999; Fetscherin and Toncar, 2009). The importance of visual imagery in advertising has been recognized since the 1970s when Rossiter and Percy (1978; 1980; 1981) proposed the visual and verbal loop theory which showed "that visual content in advertising is just as capable of increasing the consumer's product attitude as is verbal content" (Rossiter and Percy, 1980, p. 15). Since then it has become clear that visual elements can be effective tactics to achieve a range of advertising objectives, including belief acceptance and change (Miniard *et al.*, 1991; Mitchell and Olson 1981; Peracchio and Meyers-Levy 1994) and memory (Childers and Houston, 1984). Messaris (1997) discusses in his book that magazine ads, and other forms of advertising, often convey meanings that cannot be expressed as well, or at all, through words. As the book title suggests, "Visual persuasion" is an exploration of these unique aspects of advertising.

Using a range of methodologies, illustrative research on the topic includes investigating the effects of visual hyperbole (Callister and Stern, 2007) and visual metaphor (McQuarrie and Phillips, 2005), ethical issues that arise from visual representations in advertising (Borgerson and Schroeder, 2002), the visual imagery and

representation of the male body in advertising (Schroeder and Zwick, 2004), and using interpretive methodologies from art and literary criticism to explore the meanings in advertising imagery (Stern and Schroeder, 1994) to mention only a few. A more recent trend is to build upon theories of verbal rhetoric to understand the effects of visuals in advertising (Scott, 1994; McQuarrie and Mick, 1999; van Enschot, Hoeken and van Mulken, 2008; Stathakopoulos, Theodorakis and Mastoridou, 2008; Phillips and McQuarrie, 2004). The growing consensus, regardless of the methodological tool used, is that visual imagery is a nearly ubiquitous and powerful influence in advertising.

In sum, there are several theories which model the way visual elements in advertising affect consumer response including classical conditioning (Rossiter and Percy, 1978; Shimp *et al.*, 1991), the visual and verbal loop theory (Hansen, 1981; Rossiter and Percy, 1980), the attitude towards the ad or affect-transfer theory (Mitchell, 1986; Shimp 1981), information processing theory (MacInnis and Price, 1987), and the elaboration-likelihood model (ELM) (Petty et al., 1983) which demonstrated both central and peripheral routes to persuasion. Vaughn (1986) developed the FCB grid as a framework for developing creative advertising strategies and this has been extended further by Rossiter *et al.* (1991) who created the Rossiter-Percy grid (Mortimer, 2002). As Scott (1994, p. 256) noted, these theories "have been investigated in overlapping ways, which makes it difficult to stipulate distinct theoretical boundaries". Moreover, Scott (1994, p. 258) suggests that "a second area of research can be characterized by a broad methodological orientation rather than by a unified theory". In fact, there are different interpretative theories and approaches to analyze visual elements of advertising (McQuarrie and Mick, 1999). The four most common are the following.

First, the *archival* tradition is perhaps the oldest one whereby large samples of advertisements are gathered and content analysis is used to examine the frequency with which various types of visual elements appear (Harris and Attour, 2003; Seitz, 1998; Scott, 1994). Second, the *experimental* tradition systematically varies either the presence or absence of pictures per se (McQuarrie and Mick, 1999). The third is the *reader-response* approach which seeks to uncover the meanings that consumers draw from the ads (Mick and Buhl, 1992; Scott, 1994). Extended interviews are used to understand the rich and complex interplay between elements of the ad and consumer perception. Finally,

the *text-interpretive* approach draws on rhetorical and semiotic theories to provide a systematic and nuanced analysis of the individual elements that make up the ad (Scott, 1994; McQuarrie and Mick, 1999).

A few studies (Corbett, 1990; McQuarrie and Mick, 1999; Morgan and Reichert, 1999; McQuarrie and Mick, 2003a; McQuarrie and Phillips, 2005) have used visual rhetoric analysis, an interpretative theory, in advertising research. Phillips and McQuarrie (2002) show that metaphors and hyperbole, which are figurative expressions that involve intentionally exaggerated statements (visual or verbal), appear in 17.3% of advertisement pictures and 44% of headlines and have increased steadily since the 1960s. More recently, Callister and Stern (2007) looked at the use of visual hyperbole as an intriguing form of exaggeration in advertising. To do so they focused on the description of the rhetorical figures present in ads. Like rhetoric analysis, semiotic analysis can also be used by the researcher to assess the effects of images and symbols. Both, rhetoric and semiotics are text-centered approaches (McQuarrie and Mick, 2002). As such, "they make relatively simple and straightforward assumptions about the human system, concentrating instead on the development of elaborated structures that can be used to differentiate types of visual content in advertisements" (McQuarrie and Mick, 2003b, p. 192).

The current study assesses visuals in advertising using two approaches. First, we use a *text-interpretive* approach by means of semiotic analysis (ad system) to identify, capture and to generate the corresponding literary attributes that describe the most prevalent signs within the visual message. Second, using a *reader-response* approach, we conduct personal interviews to learn the meanings that consumers draw from the ads and take the perspective of a human system. We supplement these findings by performing a blind olfactory evaluation of the fragrances.

2.2. Puffery in Advertising

The concept and use of verbal puffery in advertising has been extensively researched in the past few decades. It is widely understood to refer to exaggerated or unsubstantiated advertising claims. The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) defines puffery as a "term frequently used to denote the exaggerations reasonably to be expected

of a seller as to the degree of quality of his product, the truth or falsity of which cannot be precisely determined" (DeFrancis, 2004, p.10). Illustrative of the extensive research on the topic are the early works of Preston (1967), Preston and Scharbach (1971), and Richards (1990) among others. For example Preston (1996) and Richards (1990) investigate the role of puffery as it relates to deception and consider whether puffery constitutes deceptive advertising. Puffed claims, while obviously untrue, are typically not considered deceptive because, by definition of the FTC, puffed claims are subjective claims that no reasonable person would take to be literally true. While the FTC has taken the position that puffery is not deceptive because it does not work, empirical research has not generally supported this (Kamins and Marks, 1987). Moreover, and as Haan and Berkey (2002) argue "if puffery does not work, salespeople and advertisers would not use it" (p. 245). Some researcher demonstrated that under certain conditions consumers believe exaggerated claims (Cunningham and Cunningham, 1977; Rotfeld and Rotzoll, 1980; Rotfeld and Preston, 1981; Olson and Dover, 1978; Kamins and Marks, 1987; Wyckham, 1987; Haan and Berkey, 2002; Cowley, 2006) while others shows that while consumers are able to identify an exaggerated claim, the evaluation of the brand was still more positive when puffed claims were used (Cowley, 2006). Still other research suggests exaggerated claims can produce negative effects (Vanden Bergh and Reid, 1980b). Studies have looked at the effects of puffery on product attitude and purchase intentions (Kamins and Marks, 1987), or considered the use of puffery in ads for specific product categories such as ball point pens (Kamins and Marks, 1987, Vanden Bergh and Reid, 1980b) or automobiles (Vanden Bergh and Reid, 1980a; Vanden Bergh *et al.*, 1983) for example. In addition, there is ample evidence that verbal puffery influences pre-purchase (Oliver, 1979) as well as post-trial product evaluations (Olshavsky and Miller, 1972; Anderson, 1973; Kamins, 1985; Olson and Dover, 1978; Oliver, 1979).

In sum, theses studies suggest that verbal puffery enhances pre and post-trial product ratings relative to trial alone and that, in certain conditions, this effect increases as the puffery becomes more exaggerated (Kamins and Marks, 1987). This last observation brings up an interesting issue regarding the effectiveness of different degrees of puffery. Preston (1996, 1998) introduced six categories of verbal puffery, based upon the strength of the assertion made in the puffed claim. He named the categories "best",

"best possible", "better", "specially good", and "subjective qualities". Haan and Berkey (2002) investigated the believability of each of the six forms of puffery and found that in all but one category, "consumers do not strongly believe or disbelieve puffed statements" (Haan and Berkey, 2002, p. 251). They concluded their findings were generally consistent with Beltramini and Evans (1985) who suggested the consumers are "tired of overused techniques in advertising and, as a result, see little difference in the believability from one advertisement to the next" (Haan and Berkey, 2002, p. 251). A careful inspection of Haan and Berkey's (2002) results yields an interesting observation. The only category of puffery that affected subjects' beliefs was the subjective claim category, which, according to Preston (1996), represents the weakest form of puffery. While the other five types of puffery all involve the use of verbal superlatives and exaggeration, the subjective claim puff is one which makes a subjective assertion about the product with no implicit or explicit reference to the product. This suggests that advertisers of consumer products, who rely heavily on subjective claims, as is the case for fragrances, should be wary of delivering these claims using verbal puffery. Furthermore, and as stated by Haan and Berkey (2002), consumers' beliefs about an advertisement are related to factors other than the verbal puffed claims made about the product. This is important for our study as we argue that this could encourage advertisers to communicate claims about subjective product benefits by using visual rather than verbal puffery.

2.3. Personal Fragrance Advertising

Fragrance advertising represents a significant portion of ad pages and spending, estimated to be in the billions of dollars. Print advertising of fragrances poses additional challenges compared to many other products for the following three main reasons.

First, fragrances have no significant functional benefit and are very intimate purchases where preferences are personal (Busch, 2003). Since odors stimulate the part of the brain responsible for emotional responses, olfaction represents a different path to the consumer than is afforded by other types of cues (Ellen and Bone, 1998). According to Kirk-Smith and Booth (1987), the emotional response generated by a scent depends on "the complex meaning of previous social experience with odors" (p. 159). The emotional aspect of odors may therefore influence a consumer's attitude and motivation to purchase

through the associations it evokes.

Second, because perfume, like many other products and services, is not purchased based upon the functional benefits they provide, advertising a perfume represents a special challenge for marketers because they cannot sell their product based solely on its features. Instead, fragrance marketers speak to people's fantasies, and attempt to create a sensual "mood" using a variety of visual and verbal tactics, including metaphors and other figures of speech as well as a broad range of visual symbols that can often best be understood using a semiotic analysis approach (Toncar and Munch, 2001).

Third, it is difficult to communicate a taste, or in our case a scent in a print ad. This is compounded by the fact that the actual scent of a perfume is only one of a number of salient cues that affect product purchase, many of which are introduced and communicated in the ads. The ad can depict a photograph of the bottle, might include a scent strip in magazine advertising, making a nebulous product a bit more substantive, or use a variety of rhetorical techniques to tap into the human capacity for multi-sensory perception and provoke the consumer to actually envision the scent based on coded images and signs embedded within the print advertisement. In this regard, much fragrance advertising can have transformational effects. Transformational advertising (Wells, 1980) is effective by "developing associations with the brand use experience that transforms that experience into something different than it would be in the absence of the advertising" … "transformational advertising creates, alters, or intensifies feelings" (Aaker and Stayman, 1992, p. 239) and attempts to move the consumer emotionally to a point of greater product acceptance (Cutler *et al.*, 2000). In that respect, transformational advertising enhance mostly hedonic and symbolic benefits but does not appear to affect evaluations of functional benefits (Naylor *et al.*, 2008).

Drawing on biology, psychology, and rhetorical techniques, print advertisements for fragrances are generally quite artistic. For this reason, the text interpretative analysis of the semiotic relations among key elements of the ad is a suitable approach to gain insights about the messages being conveyed in the ads. Busch (2003) explains that the human senses do not work independently, but in tandem to influence desires, decisions, and emotional responses and this feature of human perception suggests that fragrance advertising using linguistic and visual cues actually has the power to affect consumer

expectations and convey the scent of the advertised fragrance. Ellen and Bone (1998) showed that the addition of a more congruent scratch-and-sniff panel to a fragrance advertisement improves attitude toward the ad or the brand. Lambiase and Reichert (2003) used rhetorical analysis to explore sexually oriented appeals in fragrance advertisements. Moriarty (2006) showed how semiotics can be used in advertising to create meaning that does not naturally exist and Clare (1998) demonstrated the usefulness of semiotic analysis for men's fragrance advertising and showed that signs or cues in the ad provide a favorable image of the product. Studies from the Advertising Educational Foundation (2006) as well as Ellen and Bone (1998) discuss the growing emphasis on olfactory cues for differentiation in modern advertising.

3. Methodology

The objectives of this paper are to investigate: (1) how fragrance advertisers are using visual appeals to generate sensory product expectations and (2) the relationship between the product expectations resulting from the ad and the corresponding product evaluations. This task is somewhat complicated by the subjective nature of the meanings generated by the visuals in the ad as well as the scent of a fragrance. To address this issue, we will use the same set of literary attributes when assessing and comparing viewers' product expectations based on an ad with their subsequent product evaluation of the fragrance. The extent to which consumer expectations based on the ad exceed their subsequent product evaluations can be viewed as a form of visual exaggeration, or perhaps *visual puffery*. This basic rationale, that puffery may be conceptualized and even quantified as the extent to which expectations of a product arising from an ad exceed subsequent product evaluations seems reasonable. A similar approach has been used in other studies, including McQuarrie and Mick (1999). Visual claims that, if believed, result in expectations on the part of viewers that exceed the capabilities of the product fit the accepted definition of puffery.

As mentioned previously, in this study we assess visual puffery in magazine advertising using a multi-method approach. First, we use a *text-interpretative* approach by means of a semiotic analysis to identify, capture and to generate the corresponding literary attributes that describe the most prevalent signs within the visual message (ad system). This gives us the descriptors of product attributes and therefore the literary

attributes to be evaluated and on which visual puffery was assessed. Second, we use a *reader-response* approach by means of personal interviews to assess the meaning that consumers draw from the ads (human system). In addition, these findings are supplemented with an actual product test by means of a blind olfactory evaluation of the fragrance. This multi-method approach builds on previous studies to show the value of this approach for consumer research (McQuarrie and Mick, 1999).

3.1 Semiotic Analysis

The literary attributes were developed using a semiotic analysis of the three ads chosen. Semiotic analysis can be used to decode the meaning of advertisements. It is an approach that seeks to interpret messages in terms of their signs and patterns of symbolism (Moriarty, 1995). Everything in an advertisement, such as the model's hair and clothing, the ad's color palate, the lighting and the objects featured in the advertisement, functions as a signifier of something else. All forms of semiotic analysis consider each aspect of the ad in question to be important for the generation of meaning. Semiotic analysis begins with the listing of all of the signs, structures, and codes embedded within the text (Lawes, 2002). Another important part of semiotic analysis involves looking at contrasts and implied contradictions. The structural methods employed by many semioticians involve the study of paradigms as binary or polar oppositions (Chandler, 2001), and there are many contrasting pairs that can be recognized in advertisements. Male/female appears to be the most central opposition, since male and female sexuality is connoted from their pairing in the advertisements. The objective of an advertisement, for example, could be to bring male and female together through the use of the product by the woman to attract the male. The subsequent "power" the woman has over the man, or vice-versa, leads us to the next noticeable opposition; dominant/subordinate. The woman can dominate the subordinate man, or the opposite may occur. Black/white and mind/body are also binary oppositions; the text or background is presented in black and white. And of course, the reverse may also be true.

The researchers used a semiotic analysis of the three ads and the following attribute-adjectives pairs were generated that describe the range of meanings of the three selected ads. These are "adjective pairs" and not "polar opposites" in the literary sense

and are meant to be, to some degree, synonyms rather than antonyms, describing similar, not opposite aspects of the ads. The selected pairs of adjectives were used to identify the elements of visual imagery in the ads and subsequently also in the product evaluation. They are summarized in the following Table I.

Table I.

Adjective Pair
Light/Understated
Bold/Powerful
Arousing/Sensual
Romantic/Feminine
Playful/Flirtatious
Mysterious/Exotic
Earthy/Musky
Fruity/Tasty
Medicinal/Bland
Velvety/Creamy

4. Data Collection

We gathered primary data by means of structured interviews (survey) of potential consumers. The first section of the questionnaire focused on purchasing habits and fragrance use. In the second section subjects were shown a copy of a fragrance ad and were asked to answer questions pertaining to that ad. The questions required subjects to describe how they envisioned the scent by identifying their expectations using the adjective pairs, resulted from the semiotic analysis, on a five point Likert scale anchored by "strongly disagree" and "strongly agree." This process was then repeated with the remaining two ads. The third section tested subjects' actual olfactory perceptions of each of the three fragrances. The subjects were asked to perform a blind olfactory evaluation of the fragrances. They were asked to describe each scent using the same adjective pairs and scale so that their actual product evaluations could be compared to their expectations. This procedure was then repeated for the remaining two fragrances. Respondents were provided a small vial of coffee beans to smell between each fragrance sample, in order to clear the olfactory palate and minimize the likelihood of scents mixing or getting confused. The order of presentation of both the ads and the fragrances was randomly

selected to prevent any ordering effect. Finally, socio-demographic information was collected.

Three different full-page advertisements for women's fragrances from *Vogue* magazine were selected for this study. Vogue was used for several reasons; it is one of the oldest fashion magazines in the market (since 1892), the target audience is females, it is widely accepted as the "Fashion Bible" or "Style Bible", and it is one of the most influential fashion magazines in the world (Weber, 2006). Moreover, it is among the top 10 magazines in the US in terms of ad pages and is also the leading magazine in terms of advertising revenue and circulation. The three advertisements used in this study were: (1) Red Delicious by DKNY, (2) Hypnôse by Lancôme Paris, and (3) Euphoria by Calvin Klein. Fragrances were selected as a product category because of the intensely visual imagery that is often utilized to communicate intangible product benefits as mentioned above. The specific ads were selected primarily due to the relative absence of verbal cues which may explain why these ads appeared not only in the US edition of Vogue but in many international editions as well (*Vogue* UK, *Vogue* France, and *Vogue* Australia, and *Vogue* Italy). The actual ads used in this research are reproduced in Figure I.

Take in Figure I

Three ads were chosen for several reasons. First, we believed that multiple ads would provide a more broad inspection of our research objectives than a single ad. However, we were concerned that too many ads and their associated fragrances would overwhelm the respondents' senses of smell and impair their ability to accurately evaluate the fragrances, a key objective in our research. Finally, related studies used similar number of ads per respondent (Kamins and Marks, 1987; Vanden Bergh and Reid, 1980b; Rothfeld and Rotzoll, 1980; Wychkam, 1985; Ellen and Bone, 1998; Schmitt *et al.*, 1995; McQuarrie and Mick, 1999; Cowley, 2006).

The target audience of women's fashion and beauty magazines such as Vogue is generally fashion-conscious women under the age of 45. Vogue, specifically, reports that the average age is 34 and that 63% of its readership is between the age of 18-49 (Conde Nast Digital, 2009). In addition, approximately 75% of perfume purchases in the United

States are made by women under the age of 25 (Busch, 2003). This suggests that young women are a representative and suitable sample for this research. It should be noted that many studies used student samples (e.g., Vanden Bergh and Reid, 1980b; Kamins and Marks, 1987, McQuarrie and Mick, 1999; Cowley, 2006) compared to ours which is based on consumers. The survey instrument and procedures were pre-tested with a sample of sixteen women to identify problems prior to the actual interviews. Finally, 75 young women below the age of 25 were randomly interviewed outside a major upscale shopping mall near a metropolitan city located in the southeastern part of the United States. Cronbach's alpha was used to assess the reliability of the measurement items used. The overall alpha for all the scales was 0.85. The alpha for the ad rating scales was 0.72, and 0.73 for the fragrance rating scales. This suggests the measurement scales exhibited acceptable reliability.

5. Results

5.1. Descriptive Statistics

Table II presents basic descriptive statistics about the respondents that illustrate their similarity to the target market of these fragrances and advertisements. The age, household income, frequency of travel and enjoyment of cultural visits such as museums and the theatre are provided in the table.

Table II. Descriptive Statistics

Demographic Characteristic (n=75)		Percentage
Age	17	1%
	18	16%
	19	36%
	20	24%
	21	12%
	22	8%
	23	3%
Household Income	$0- $25,000	7%
	$25,001 - $50,000	20%
	$50,001 - $75,000	8%
	$75,001 - $100,000	15%
	$100,001 and above	50%
Travel	Never	4%

	Seldom	12%
	Occasionally	39%
	Often	20%
	Frequently	25%
Culture Visits	Never	3%
	Seldom	12%
	Occasionally	36%
	Often	31%
	Frequently	18%

The self-reported annual household income was generally consistent with the average household income of the typical Vogue readership. The same applies to the travel habits as well as cultural activities, such as visits to museums, art galleries and theatrical performances. Overall, our analysis indicates that our sample is similar to the readership of Vogue. Ninety-two percent of our sample reported buying a fragrance for themselves at least once each year and over 50% reported buying at least twice each year. Eighty-three percent reported that they read a fashion/beauty magazine at least once each month and 55% reported reading one at least twice each month. This information suggests that the women in our sample appear to have substantial exposure to magazine fragrance advertising.

5.2. Viewers Expectations and Evaluations

Since prior knowledge of, or experience with the ads or fragrances used in the experiment could have an impact on subjects' expectations and product evaluations, we first asked respondents whether they had seen each ad and whether they recalled smelling each fragrance. The responses of the women who reported either seeing one or more of the ads or smelling one or more of the fragrances were compared to the responses of the women who reported no previous exposure to either the ads or the fragrances. There were no significant differences between the two groups. While this result allows us to consider our sample as one relatively homogeneous group, it is at the same time somewhat troubling as this seems to suggest that prior exposure to the ads and/or the fragrances in this study did not affect subjects' perceptions of either the ads or the fragrances. One explanation is that there are hundreds of different fragrances and ads out in the market,

while our study is limited to three fragrances and ads. Furthermore, those subjects who were exposed to the ads and/or fragrances prior to our study either did not recall or recognize it, especially this might be the fact in the case of the blind olfactory test, or respondents did not integrate the prior ad and fragrance information into their consciousness based on the parameters established by our dependent measures.

Table III summarizes the average rating of the subjects' expectations resulting from the advertisement ("Ad") as well as the average rating of the subsequent product evaluations ("Fragrance") for the three ads and their respective fragrances.

Table III. Advertisement and Fragrance Evaluations

Mean values	Red Delicious		Hypnôse		Euphoria	
	Ad	Fragrance	Ad	Fragrance	Ad	Fragrance
Light/Understated	2.31	3.41	3.29	3.04	2.43	2.60
Bold/Powerful	3.80	2.81	2.89	3.13	3.80	3.60
Arousing/Sensual	4.04	3.31	3.65	3.11	4.31	3.28
Romantic/Feminine	3.81	3.51	4.03	3.55	3.95	3.49
Playful/ Flirtatious	4.09	3.61	3.43	3.12	3.63	3.17
Mysterious/ Exotic	3.28	2.65	3.52	2.95	3.96	3.15
Earthy/Musky	2.15	2.43	2.33	2.65	2.77	2.72
Fruity/Tasty	3.68	3.41	2.31	2.47	2.13	2.53
Medicinal/Bland	1.60	1.97	1.80	1.93	1.72	1.89
Velvety/Creamy	1.79	2.28	2.47	2.61	2.76	2.40

Since subjects reported both their fragrance expectations and subsequent product evaluations using the same set of scale items, paired sample t-tests were used to consider whether the ads generated scent expectations that fell short, met, or exceeded subjects' actual product evaluations. The tables that follow summarize the similarities and differences between the expectations that were generated in response to the ads and the subsequent product evaluations in response to the blind olfactory tests.

5.3. Red Delicious Results

Subjects' responses to the Red Delicious ad/scent pairing indicated significant differences between subjects' expectations and product evaluations in eight of the 10 adjective pairs. In five of the pairs, Bold/Powerful, Arousing/Sensual,

Romantic/Feminine, Playful/Flirtatious and Mysterious/Exotic, the expectations generated in response to the ad exceeded the subsequent olfactory evaluation of the fragrance. In three pairs, Light/Understated, Medicinal/Bland and Velvety/Creamy the olfactory evaluation exceeded expectations. It appears that based upon their exposure to the ad, respondents expected the fragrance to be more powerful, sensual, feminine, flirtatious and exotic than they ultimately evaluated the fragrance to be. Conversely, the actual fragrance appears to have been lighter, more velvety and understated than subjects expected it would be. These results are summarized in Table IV below and are addressed at greater length in our discussion section. In the table, the expectation/evaluation pairs that differed significantly ($p < 0.05$) are market with *.

Table IV. Red Delicious Mean Comparisons

	Mean Difference	Std. Deviation	t-value	Sig. (2-tailed)
Light/Understated	-1.11	1.39	-6.89	.000*
Bold/Powerful	0.99	1.36	6.28	.000*
Arousing/Sensual	0.73	1.12	5.68	.000*
Romantic/Feminine	0.30	1.26	2.10	.039*
Playful/Flirtatious	0.48	1.31	3.18	.002*
Mysterious/Exotic	0.63	1.32	4.10	.000*
Earthy/Musky	-0.28	1.37	-1.77	.081
Fruity/Tasty	0.27	1.84	1.26	.214
Medicinal/Bland	-0.37	1.14	-2.85	.006*
Velvety/Creamy	-0.49	1.19	-3.59	.001*

5.4. Hypnôse Results

Turning to the Hypnôse advertisement and fragrance results, significant differences were observed between the expectations and the product evaluations of subjects in five of the 10 expectation/evaluation pairs. In four of the pairs, Arousing/Sensual, Romantic/Feminine, Playful/Flirtatious, and Mysterious/Exotic, subjects' expectations exceeded their subsequent olfactory evaluations. In one pair, Earthy/Musky, the olfactory evaluation exceeded expectations. Again, subjects appear to have expected that the fragrance would be more sensual, feminine, flirtatious and exotic than it actually was, but the actual fragrance appeared to be more earthy than subjects expected it would be. These results are summarized in Table V, and again, the significant

differences are marked with *.

Table V. Hypnôse Mean Comparisons

	Mean Difference	Std. Deviation	t-value	Sig. (2-tailed)
Light/Understated	0.25	1.52	1.45	.152
Bold/Powerful	-0.24	1.24	-1.68	.098
Arousing/Sensual	0.54	1.23	3.84	.000*
Romantic/Feminine	0.48	0.95	4.38	.000*
Playful/Flirtatious	0.31	1.20	2.22	.030*
Mysterious/Exotic	0.57	1.34	3.71	.000*
Earthy/Musky	-0.32	1.39	-2.00	.049*
Fruity/Tasty	-0.16	1.47	-0.94	.349
Medicinal/Bland	-0.13	0.96	-1.20	.234
Velvety/Creamy	-0.14	1.36	-0.93	.354

5.5. Euphoria Results

Finally, with regard to the Euphoria expectation/evaluation pairs, significant differences were observed in six of the 10 pairs. In five of the six pairs, Arousing/Sensual, Romantic/Feminine, Playful/Flirtatious, Mysterious/Exotic and Velvety/Creamy expectations exceeded subsequent evaluations. In one instance, Fruity/Tasty, evaluations exceeded expectations. Based upon their exposure to the ad, subjects apparently expected the fragrance to be more sensual, feminine, flirtatious and exotic, while expecting it to be less fruity. These results are summarized in Table VI below and significant differences are marked with *.

Table VI. Euphoria Mean Comparisons

	Mean Difference	Std. Deviation	t-value	Sig. (2-tailed)
Light/Understated	-0.17	1.45	-1.04	.303
Bold/Powerful	0.20	1.40	1.24	.218
Arousing/Sensual	1.03	1.13	7.89	.000*
Romantic/Feminine	0.46	1.24	3.16	.002*
Playful/Flirtatious	0.46	1.29	3.05	.003*
Mysterious/Exotic	0.81	1.17	6.02	.000*
Earthy/Musky	0.05	1.30	0.35	.724
Fruity/Tasty	-0.40	1.31	-2.66	.010*

Medicinal/Bland	-0.17	0.99	-1.51	.134
Velvety/Creamy	0.36	1.30	2.40	.019*

When subjects in this experiment evaluated the three ads and then evaluated the three products in the ads, it became apparent that none of the ads generated expectations among the subjects that were generally matched by their subsequent product evaluations. As summarized in the following Table VII, of the 30 sets of adjectives pairs (10 for each fragrance) subjects' expectations matched their product evaluations in only 11 instances, and in no more than five of the adjective pairs for any individual fragrance. Specifically, subjects' expectations were not significantly different from their evaluations in five of the 10 pairs pertaining to Hypnôse advertising and fragrance, in four of the 10 pairs relating to Euphoria, and in only two of the 10 adjective pairs pertaining to Red Delicious

Table VII. Expectations and Performance

Adjective Pair	Red Delicious	Hypnôse	Euphoria	Total
Ad > Fragrance (Visual puffery)	5	4	5	14
Ad = Fragrance (match)	2	5	4	11
Ad < Fragrance	3	1	1	5
Total	**10**	**10**	**10**	**30**

There is sparse evidence that the ads used in this research generated accurate expectations. Instead, there is more evidence that the ads generally resulted in higher expectations among subjects, expectations that were not met when subjects actually used the products. Almost half (14) of the paired comparisons resulted in significantly higher expectations than product evaluations. One interpretation of this observation is that the visual imagery in the ads communicated exaggerated claims about the product benefits. Across all three fragrances, the expectations generated by the ads that related to the adjective pairs of Arousing/Sensual, Romantic/Feminine, Playful/Flirtatious and Mysterious/Exotic were all significantly greater than subsequent product evaluations. Interestingly, all four adjective pairs seem to be unambiguously favorable characteristics of perfume. A careful inspection of our results yields one additional intriguing observation. Each of the ten adjectives pairs can be categorized as pertaining to either concrete or abstract descriptors. The first six (Light/Understated, Bold/Powerful, Arousing/Sensual, Romantic/Feminine, Playful/Flirtatious, Mysterious/Exotic) are more

abstract and symbolic descriptors, while the remaining four (Earthy/Musky, Fruity/Tasty, Medicinal/Bland, Velvety/Creamy) are more concrete. Across all three ad/fragrance pairs, we observed that in most cases, for the abstract descriptors the ads generated significantly higher expectations that exceeded the actual product evaluation. In contrast, for the concrete descriptors we observe that the expectations in response to the ads fell short of actual product evaluation. We discuss this result further in the next section.

6. Discussion

Readers of magazine advertisements may not overtly recognize the visual themes and messages in an advertisement that emerge from a semiotic analysis. However, if the visual and symbolic message of the ad is successfully delivered and therefore understood, implicitly or explicitly by readers, the ad can convey expectations of the product that exceed, fall short of, or match consumers' subsequent evaluation of the product. To convey a weaker message risks developing expectations that may be insufficient to prompt consumers to consider purchasing the product. However, to convey expectations beyond the product's ability to satisfy these expectations risks dissatisfied customers who try or purchase the product with certain expectations of its performance, but who ultimately learn that the product will not meet their expectations.

Taken together, our results suggest that the visual imagery in magazine advertising for fragrances can be effectively used to make claims about product features and benefits that are not substantiated through actual trial of the product. This brings up the real and intriguing possibility that visual imagery can be used as a mechanism of puffery; making superlative, exaggerated claims that are not substantiated. To our knowledge, the existence and effectiveness of visual puffery has not been previously investigated despite a call made already by Richards and Zakia (1981) in the early 1980s, that pictures and symbols should be regulated as vigorously as words as well as the decision of the 2nd U.S. District Court of Appeals in Manhattan which ruled that puffery can include visual depictions. Moreover, this also poses interesting questions for policy makers because, in contrast to verbal puffery, which according to FTC is recognizable by reasonable consumers and cannot lead to deception (Kamins and Marks, 1987), visual puffery is not immediately recognizable.

Typically, puffed claims have been expressed verbally, in the form of superlatives. Verbal puffed claims are, at least in the United States, legal and acceptable because they are considered by the FTC as the language of advertising and consumers understand as much and are not deceived by puffed claims. This doesn't mean that there are any cultural, ethical or visual issues related to this (Borgerson and Schroeder, 2002; Schroeder and Zwick, 2004; Schroeder, 2005; Schroeder and Borgerson, 2005). As Schroeder and Borgerson (2003) noted, visual issues often are overlooked in advertising research despite their importance in meaning creation (p. 68). Our study is therefore noteworthy as it contributes and extends existing literature by suggesting the existence of another important form of puffery, which we refer to as "visual puffery". In many cases, the visual cues and imagery in the ads used in this research appeared to generate product expectations that were not met when the product was used. This is both intriguing and perplexing and suggests potential legal implications as well. In short, while verbal puffery is legal in the United States because it is presumed to not be effective by FTC, visual puffery may be quite effective and might help marketers, and specifically in countries where verbal puffery is illegal, to use another means to reach consumers.

This study provides a first step toward understanding and assessing visual puffery and we encourage further research in that direction. Given the ubiquitous use of imagery-laden ads in the promotion of personal fragrances, the larger question may be why and how visual puffery, in which type of ads, other type of products and consumer segments, is effective? One plausible explanation is that fragrances are somewhat of a fantasy product, intimately connected to the self-esteem or self-image and perceived desirability and attractiveness of the buyer. Consumers are not buying the fragrance alone, but the imagery that becomes intimately associated with the fragrance. While we offer some evidence in this paper related to fragrances, it is an idea that merits further consideration and research.

It seems likely that the purpose of fragrance ads is to captivate attention, to stimulate interest and desire ultimately leading to purchase intention and behavior. It can also help to build brand awareness, to develop and reinforce brand image and brand personality. It is plausible that fragrance advertising leads to product trial, and product trial is then influenced by the imagery created in the advertising. In one sense, consistent

with the concept of transformational advertising, we can argue that the visual imagery in the ad *creates* an intangible product benefit, the presence of which is either supported or refuted at the time of product trial. When consumers actually try the scent, they may associate the scent with the visual imagery that they have been previously exposed to. They may also associate the scent with the overall brand image, particularly if that image is well-established and understood, such as Calvin Klein. This suggests a somewhat symbiotic relationship between the visual imagery in the ad, the overall brand image and the actual fragrance of the product. A consumer who tries a fragrance in a store often does so with prior knowledge of the brand and after prior exposure to the ads or the fragrance. The scent of the fragrance might become closely associated with the brand image, the visual imagery in the ad, or both. The scent, therefore, *becomes* mysterious, or sexy, or exotic, because it is depicted that way in the ad and reinforced by the overall image of the brand. Future research should explore the existence of this symbiotic and interdependent relationship.

7. Conclusion

This study contributes and extends existing literature by suggesting the existence of visual puffery. Our results show that the visual cues and imagery in the fragrance ads appear, under certain conditions, to result in product expectations that exceed actual product evaluations, suggesting the existence of visual puffery.

The adjective pairs that represented abstract descriptors accounted for nearly all of the instances in which expectations of the ad exceeded product evaluations. For Red Delicious it was 83%, for Hypnôse and Euphoria it was 100% of the adjectives pairs which were significantly different. In contrast, for adjective pairs that represent concrete descriptors, in most instances (Red Delicious 100%; Hypnôse 100%, and Euphoria 50%) we observed that product evaluations exceeded the ad expectations. One interpretation of this result is that the evaluation of these attributes may be significantly more subjective and therefore more difficult than evaluating more concrete attributes. A second possible explanation has its origin in the work of Haan and Berkey (2002). Recall that in their research, only the weakest puffs, subjective claims, influenced claim believability. Respondents in their experiment found subjective claims to be more unbelievable than

the other five types of puffery claims. In our research, respondents' expectations regarding the abstract (subjective) descriptors were generally not met. We put forth this observation merely as an intriguing idea for future research investigating the relationship between the level of abstraction of a visual puffed claim and subsequent product evaluations.

As with all research, there are certain limitations which must be noted. First, we used a carefully controlled setting, with one consumer product for one consumer segment, and based on three magazine advertisements. Our results cannot be generalized beyond the product category nor beyond the consumer segment used in this study in the context of magazine print advertisements. Future research should investigate other product groups (e.g. high versus low involvement products), consumer segments (e.g., male vs. female), gender in ads, ads from different countries and in different cultural settings. Second, one unanswered question is whether the high expectations of viewers influence their purchasing intention and ultimately behavior and if so, to what extent. This research did not explicitly address this issue and future research should investigate that. Third, semiotics is a qualitative research method that is inherently subjective. By arguing for the presence of visual puffery, we are, in some sense, translating a legal term into behavioral variables that can then be identified and measured. We acknowledge that, given the subjective nature of the analysis, other adjective pairs may have been identified by other researchers. Moreover, while primary interview data provides the most relevant and meaningful data for this analysis, we recognize that this is represents a double-edged sword, in that the results must be interpreted with caution. Fourth, we did not include specific measures of the advertising effectiveness of the ads, attitude towards the ad, attitude toward the brand and purchase intentions and hence we can make no claims about the ultimate effectiveness of visual puffery. Instead, we offer some evidence of its existence which should serve as a starting point for future research about this topic.

References

Aaker, D. A. and Stayman, D. (1992), "Implementing the Concept of Transformational Advertising," *Psychology and Marketing*, Vol. 9 No. 3, pp. 237-253.

Advertising Educational Foundation (2006), "Erotic History of Advertising: The Aromatic Aphrodisiacs", available at: http://www.aef.com/on_campus/classroom/book_excerpts/data/2476/:pf_printable ? (Accessed 15 November 2009).

Anderson, R. E. (1973), "Consumer Dissatisfaction: The Effect of Disconfirmed Expectations on Perceived Product Performance," *Journal of Marketing Research*, Vol. 10, February, pp. 38-44.

Belch, G. E. (1983), "The Effects of Message Modality on One- and Two-Sided Advertising Messages," in *Advances in Consumer Research,* 10, Ed Richard P. Bagozzi and Alice M. Tybout (Ann Arbor: Association for Consumer Research), pp. 21-26.

_____ and Michael A. Belch (2009), *Advertising and Promotion: An Integrated Marketing Communications Perspective*, Eighth ed. Boston, McGraw-Hill/Irwin.

Beltramini, R. F. and Evans, K. (1985), "Perceived Believability of Research Result Information in Advertising," *Journal of Advertising,* Vol. 14 No. 3, pp. 18-24.

Busch, B. (2003), "The Scent of Advertising", *Global Cosmetic Industry*, June, pp. 24-26.

Borgerson, J. L. and Schroeder, J. E. (2002), Ethical Issues of Global Marketing: Avoiding Bad Faith in Visual Representation, *European Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 36 No. 5/6, pp. 570-594.

Callister, M. and Stern, L. (2007), "The Role of Visual Hyperbole in Advertising Effectiveness", *Journal of Current Issues and Research in Advertising*, Vol. 29 No. 2, pp. 1-14.

Chance, Paul (1975), "Ads without Answers Make Brains Itch," *Psychology Today* 9, p.78.

Chandler, D. (2001), "Semiotics for Beginners", available at: http://www.aber.ac.uk/media/Documents/S4B/semiotic.html (accessed 15

November 2009)

Childers, T. L. and Houston, M. (1984), "Conditions for a Picture Superiority Effect on Consumer Memory," *Journal of Consumer Research,* Vol. 11, September, pp. 643-654.

Clare, A. (1998), "A Semiotic Analysis of Magazine Ads for Men's Fragrances", available at: http://www.aber.ac.uk/media/Students/awc9401.html (accessed 15 November 2009)

Conde Nast Digital, The Internet: http://www.condenastmediakit.com/vog/circulation.cfm , (accessed 15 November 2009)

Corbett, E. (1990), *Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student*, New York: Oxford University Press.

Cowley, E., (2006), "Processing exaggerated advertising claims", *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 59 No. 6, pp. 728-734.

Cunningham, I. C. M. and Cunningham, W.H. (1977), "Standards for Advertising Regulation," *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 41, October, pp. 91-97.

Cutler, B., Thomas, E., and Rao, S.R. (2000), "Informational/Transformational Advertising: Differences in Usage Across Media Types, Product Categories, and National Cultures", *Journal of International Consumer Marketing*, Vol. 12 No. 3, pp. 69-83.

DeFrancis, V. (2004), "Remembrance of Things Pasta: The Eighth Circuit Addresses Puffery", *Consumer Protection Update*, Vol. 12 No. 1, pp. 10-12.

Djafarova, E.(2008), "Why do Advertisers Use Puns? A Linguistic Perspective," *Journal of Advertising Research*, Vol. 48 No. 2, pp. 267-275.

Edell, J. A. and Staelin, R. (1983), "The Information Processing of Pictures in Advertisements", *Journal of Consumer Research,* Vol. 10 No. 1, pp. 45-60.

Eisend, M. (2006), „Two-sided advertising: A meta-analysis", *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, Vol. 23 No. 2, pp. 187-198.

Ellen, P. and Bone, P. (1998), "Does It Matter If It Smells? Olfactory Stimuli as Advertising Executional Cues", *Journal of Advertising*, Vol. 27 No. 4, pp. 29-40.

Fetscherin, M. and Toncar, M. (2009), "Viewpoint: Visual Puffery in Advertising"*,*

International Journal of Market Research, Vol. 51 No. 2, pp. 147-148.

Haan, P. and Berkey, C. (2002), "A Study of the Believability of the Forms of Puffery," *Journal of Communication Research,* Vol. 8, pp. 243-256.

Hansen, F. (1981), „Hemispheral Lateralization: Implications for Understanding Consumer Behavior", *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol. 8, June, pp. 23-36.

Harris, G. and Attour, S. (2003), "The International Advertising Practices of Multinational Companies: A Content Analysis Study", *European Journal of Marketing,* Vol. 37 No. 1/2, pp. 154-168.

Hirschmann E. C. (1986), "The Effects of Verbal and Pictorial Advertising Stimuli on Aesthetic, Utilitarian and Familiarity Perceptions," *Journal of Advertising*, Vol. 15 No. 2, pp. 27-34.

Kamins, M. A. (1985), " The Effect of Two-Sided Appeals Upon Post-Trial Performance Evaluation, Advertiser Credibility, and the Disconfirmation Level, *Recherches Sur La Communication/Promotion Proceedings of the 12th International Research Seminar in Marketing,* La Londe Les Maures, France, 86-108.

_____ and Lawrence J. Marks, L. (1987), "Advertising Puffery: The Impact of Using Two-Sided Claims on Product Attitude and Purchase Intention", *Journal of Advertising*, Vol. 16 No. 4, pp. 6-15.

Kardes, F. R. 1988), "Spontaneous Inference Processes in Advertising: The Effects of Conclusion Omission and Involvement on Persuasion," *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol. 15, September, pp. 225-233.

Kirk-Smith, M. and Booth, D. (1987), "Chemoreception in human behavior: experimental analysis of the social effects of fragrances", *Chemical Senses*, Vol. 12 No. 1, pp. 159-166.

Krugman, H. E. (1962), "On Application of Learning Theory to TV Copy Testing", *Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. 26, pp. 626-639.

Lambiase, J. and Reichert, T. (2003), "The Contribution of Semiotic and Rhetorical Perspectives to the Explanation of Visual Persuasion in Advertising", in L. Scott and R. Batra, (Eds.) Persuasive Imagery: A Consumer Response Perspective, Lawrence Erlbaum Publishers, pp. 191-220.

Lawes, R. (2002), "Demystifying Semiotics: Some Key Questions Answered",

International Journal of Market Research, Vol. 44, pp. 251-264.

MacInnis, D. and Price, L. (1987), „The Role of Imagery in Information Processing: Review and Extensions", *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol. 13, March, pp. 473-491.

McQuarrie, E. and Mick, D. (1996), "Figures of Rhetoric in Advertising Language," *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol. 22, No. 4, pp. 424-438.

McQuarrie, E. and Mick, D. (1999), "Visual Rhetoric in Advertising: Text-Interpretive, Experimental, and Reader-Response Analyses", *Journal of Consumer Research,* Vol. 26 No. 1, pp. 37-54.

McQuarrie, E. and Mick, D. (2003a), "Visual and verbal rhetorical figures under directed processing versus incidental exposure to advertising", *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol. 29 No. 4, pp. 579-588.

McQuarrie, E. and Mick, D. (2003b), "The Contribution of Semiotic and Rhetorical Perspectives to the Explanation of Visual Persuasion in Advertising", in L. Scott and R. Batra, (Eds.) *Persuasive Imagery: A Consumer Response Perspective,* Lawrence Erlbaum Publishers, pp. 191-220.

McQuarrie, E. and Phillips, B. (2005), "Indirect Persuasion in Advertising: How Consumers Process Metaphors Presented in Pictures and Words", *Journal of Advertising*, Vol. 34 No. 2, pp. 7-21.

Messaris, Paul (1997), *Visual Persuasion: The Role of Images in Advertising*, Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, CA.

Mick, D. and Buhl, G. (1992), "A Meaning-Based Model of Advertising Experiences", *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol. 19 No. 3, pp. 317-339.

Miniard, P. W., Bhatla, S., Lord, K., Dickson, P. and Unnava, H.R. (1991), "Picture-Based Persuasion Processes and the Moderating Role of Involvement," *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol. 18, June, pp. 92-107.

Mitchell, A. (1986), "The Effect of Verbal and Visual Components of Advertisements on brand Attitudes and Attitude toward the Advertisement," *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol. 13, June, pp. 12-24.

Mitchell, A. and Olson, J. (1981), "Are Product Attribute Beliefs the Only Mediator of Advertising Effects of Brand Attitude?" *Journal of Marketing Research,* Vol. 18,

August, pp. 318-332.

Moriarty, S. (2006), "Visual Semiotics and the Production of Meaning in Advertising", available at: http://spot.colorado.edu/~moriarts/vissemiotics.html (accessed 15 November 2009)

Morgan, S. and Reichert, T. (1999), "The message is in the metaphor: Assessing the comprehension of metaphors in advertisements", *Journal of Advertising*, Vol. 28 No. 4, pp. 1-12.

Mortimer, K. (2002), "Intergrating advertising theories with conceptual models of services advertising", *Journal of Services Marketing*, Vol. 16 No. 5, pp. 460-468.

Mothersbaugh, D., Huhmann, B. and Franke, G. (2002), "Combinatory and Separative Effects of Rhetorical Figures on Consumers' Effort and Focus in Ad Processing," *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol. 28, No. 4 (March), pp. 589-602.

Naylor, S., Kleiser, B., Baker, J. and Yorkston, E. (2008), "Using transformational appeals to enhance the retail experience", *Journal of Retailing*, Vol. 84 No. 1, pp. 49-57.

Oliver, R. (1979), "An Interpretation of the Attitudinal and Behavioral Effects of Puffery", *The Journal of Consumer Affairs*, Vol. 13 No. 1, pp. 8-27.

Olshavsky, R. and Miller, J. (1972), "Consumer Expectations, Product Performance, and Perceived Product Quality," *Journal of Marketing Research*, Vol. 9, February, pp. 19-21

Olson, J. C. and Dover, P. (1978), "Cognitive Effects of Deceptive Advertising", *Journal of Marketing Research,* Vol. 15, pp. 29-38.

Perracchio, L. A. and Meyers-Levy, J. (1994), "How Ambiguous Cropped Objects in Ad Photos Can Affect Product Evaluations," *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol. 21, June, pp. 190-204.

Petty, R., Cacioppo, J. And Schumann, D. (1983), „Central and Peripheral Routes to Advertising Effectiveness: The Moderating Role of Involvement", *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol. 10, September, pp. 135-144.

Phillips, B. and McQuarrie, E. (2002), "The development, change, and transformation of rhetorical style in magazine advertisements 1954-1999", *Journal of Advertising*, Vol. 31 No. 4, pp. 1-12.

Phillips, B. and McQuarrie, E. (2004), "Beyond Visual Metaphor: A New Typology of Visual Rhetoric in Advertising*," Marketing Theory,* Vol. 4 No. 1/2, pp. 113-136.

Preston, I. (1967), "Theories of Behavior and the Concept of Rationality in Advertising", *The Journal of Communication*, Vol. 17, pp. 211-222.

_____and Scharbach, S. (1971), "Advertising: More Than Meets the Eye?", *Journal of Advertising Research*, Vol. 11, pp. 19-24.

_____ (1996), *The Great American Blow-Up: Puffery in Advertising and Selling,* Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press.

_____ (1998), "Puffery and Other `Loophole' Claims: How the Law's `don't ask, don't tell' Policy Condones Fraudulent Falsity in Advertising, *Journal of Law and Commerce,* Vol. 1, pp. 49-114.

Richards, J. (1990), "A "New and Improved" View of Puffery", *Journal of Public Policy and Marketing*, Vol. 9, pp. 73-84.

Richards, J. and Zakia, R. (1981), "Pictures: An Advertiser's Expressway Through FTC Regulation", *Georgia Law Review*, Vol. 16, pp. 77-134.

Rossiter, J. and Percy, L. (1978), „Visual Imaging Ability as a Mediator of Advertising Response", in Advances in Consumer Research, Vol. 5, ed. Keith Hunt, Provo, UT: Association for Consumer Research, 621-629.

Rossiter, J. R. and Percy, L. (1980), "Attitude Change through Visual Imagery in Advertising," *Journal of Advertising*, Vol. 9 No. 2, pp. 10-16.

Rossiter, J. R. and Percy, L. (1983), "Visual Communication in Advertising," *Information Processing Research in Adevertising*, Richard Jackson Harris, ed., Hillsdale, NJ. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, pp. 83-125.

Rossiter, J.R., Percy, L. and Donovan, R.J. (1991), "A better advertising planning grid", *Journal of Advertising Research*, October/November, pp. 11-21.

Rotfeld, H. J. and Rotzoll, K.B. (1980), "Is Advertising Puffery Believed?", *Journal of Advertising*, Vol. 9 No. 3, pp. 16-20.

_____ and Preston, I. (1981), "The Potential Impact of Research on Advertising Law," *Journal of Advertising Research*, Vol. 21, April, pp. 9-17.

Sawyer, A. (1973), "The Effects of Repetition of Refutational and Supportive Advertising Appeals", *Journal of Marketing Research*, Vol. 10, February, pp. 23-

37.

Schmitt, B. and Shultz, C. (1995), "Situational effects on brand preferences for image products", *Psychology and Marketing,* Vol. 12 No. 5, pp. 433-446.

Schroeder, J. (2005), *Visual Consumption*, London: Routledge.

Schroeder, J. and Borgerson, J. L. (2003), "Dark Desires: Fetishism, Ontology, and Representation in Contemporary Advertising", in *Sex in Advertising: Perspectives on the Erotic Appeal*, Reichert, Tom and Jacqueline Lambiase (Eds.), Mahwah, NJ and London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, pp. 65-90.

Schroeder, J. and Borgerson, J. L. (2005), "An Ethics of Representation for International Marketing Communication", *International Marketing Review*, Vol. 22, pp. 578-600.

Schroeder, J. E. and Zwick, D. (2004), "Mirrors of Masculinity: Representation and Identity in Marketing Communication", *Consumption Markets & Culture*, Vol. 7, pp. 21-52.

Scott, L. M. (1994), "Images in Advertising: The Need for a Theory of Visual Rhetoric", *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol. 21, pp. 252-271.

_____ and Batra, R. (2003), *Persuasive Imagery: A Consumer Response Perspective*, Mahwah, NJ Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Seitz, V. (1998), "Direct response advertising in the US and European markets: A content analysis of fashion products", *European Business Review*, Vol. 98 No. 5, pp. 268-275.

Shimp, T., Stuard, E. And Engle, R. (1991), „A Program of Classical Conditioning Experiement Testing Variations in the Conditioned Stimulus and Context", *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol. 18, June, pp. 1-12.

Smith, R.A. (1991), "The Effects of Visual and Verbal Advertising Information on", *Journal of Advertising,* Vol. 20 No. 4, pp. 13-24.

Stathakopoulos, V., Theodorakis, I.G. and Mastoridou, E. (2008), "Visual and verbal rhetoric in advertising: The case of 'resonance'", *International Journal of Advertising*, Vol. 27 No. 4, pp. 629-658.

Stern, B. (1996), "Textual Analysis in Advertising Research: Construction and Deconstruction of Meanings", *Journal of Advertising*, Vol. 25, Fall, pp. 61-73.

Stern, Barbara B. and Schroeder, J.E. (1994), "Interpretive Methodology from Art and Literary Critism: A Humanistic Approach to Advertising Imagery," *European Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 28 No. 8/9, pp. 114-132.

Toncar, M. and Munch, J. (2001), "Consumer Responses to Tropes in Print Advertising", *Journal of Advertising*, Vol. 30 No. 1, pp. 55-65.

Vanden Bergh, B. and Reid, L. (1980a), "Puffery and Magazine Ad Readership", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 44 No. 2, pp. 78-81.

Vanden Bergh, B. and Reid, L. (1980b), "Effects of Product Puffery on Response to Print Advertisements", *Current Issues and Research in Advertising*, Vol. 3 No. 1, pp. 123-145.

Vanden Bergh, B., Krugman D., and Salwen, M. (1983), "The Temptation to Puff: Puffery in Automotive Advertising 1930 to 1980", *Journalism Quarterly*, Vol. 60 No. 4, pp. 700-704.

Van Enschot, Renske, Hoeken, H. and Mulken, M. (2008), "Rhetoric in Advertising: Attitudes towards Verbo-Pictorial Rhetorical Figures," *Information Design Journal,* Vol. 16, No. 1, pp. 35-45.

Vaughn, R. (1986), "How advertising works: a planning model revisited", *Journal of Advertising Research*, February/March, pp. 57-65.

Weber, C. (2006), "Fashion-books: review of 'In Vogue: the illustrated history of the world's most famous fashion magazine (Rizzoli)", *New York Times*, December 3.

Wells, W. D. (1980), "How Advertising Works," *Unpublished paper,* Needham, Harper and Steers, Chicago.

Wyckham, R. (1985), "Implied Superiority Claims: Parity Parading as Superiority", in Recherches Sur La Communication/ Promotion Proceedings of the 12th International Research Seminar in Marketing, La Londa Les Maures, France, 360-387.

Wyckham, R. (1987), "Implied Superiority Claims," *Journal of Advertising Research*, Vol. 26 No. 1, pp. 54-63.

.