

Ads — *part of our lives*: linguistic awareness of powerful advertising

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INTRODUCTION¹

Advertising is a discourse that epitomizes 'powerful' language. Language is not only static, rigid and precise but also dynamic, volatile, fluid and malleable. These characteristics are primarily prominent in its social function, as language is used in various discourse types or genres. Language is particularly dynamic, and is malleable in its interplay with social systems in various discourse types, such as advertising. Such is the significance of the social function of language that Michel Foucault defines culture in terms of 'orders of discourse'.² Therefore, it has come as no surprise that in recent years attention has shifted from what has been called 'the scientific study of language' — the study of language within sentence boundaries — to the study of language as the raw material of a multiplicity of discourse types, such as literature, the news and advertising.

Advertising presents a real challenge to the language student because it represents a discourse type that originated from 'new technologies',³ such as radio waves, print, photography, tv, etc. This discourse type developed in late twentieth-century high-tech capitalist societies, and 'created new kinds of relationship between participants'.⁴ N. Fairclough points out that advertising is one type of discourse where processes of technologization of discourse are particularly prominent as both advertising and technologies are fed by social scientific research.⁵ Indeed, the second half of this century has been called the product era (1950s), the image era and the 'positioning' era.⁶

ADVERTISING AS PERSUASIVE DISCOURSE

Advertising, in a way, is an art of persuasion and as such it should fall under the rubric of rhetoric. The art of persuasion is the subject-matter of classical rhetoric. But persuasion is 'a socially oriented form of reasoning'⁷ that does not deal with principles derived from formal logic inasmuch as it is not concerned with any valid logical form of arguments. Rhetoric deals with *probable* premises and with *enthymemes*, that is with syllogisms that also move from probable premises, but to *emotionally* and *pragmatically* influence the listener.⁸ Umberto Eco writes that 'in this sense the new rhetoric considers the persuasive discourse not as a subtle fraudulent procedure but as a technique

of "reasonable" human interaction, controlled by doubt and explicitly subject to many extra-logical conditions'.⁹ It is, therefore, expected that advertising heavily employs rhetorical techniques in order to promote persuasion, since its target is to sell products and services.

Persuasion can be achieved by means of either conviction or seduction, or a combination of the two. Both conviction and seduction are processes that can be subsumed in a relation of species to genus under the hyperprocess of persuasion. Conviction involves setting out a series of argumentative steps. On the part of the readers conviction involves comprehension of those argumentative steps as such. In other words, readers are supposed to be convinced about a particular point; they are expected to arrive at a particular conclusion, via a logical process of accepting a form of reasoning. This logical process, therefore, is a cognitive process because it involves the activation and participation of one's cognitive faculty.

Seduction, on the other hand, entails the emotional involvement of the reader-viewer/listener so that s/he adopts the speaker's/writer's perspective. In other words, s/he may be lured or seduced into being persuaded without being convinced or without even being aware that conviction has been bypassed.¹⁰

It is widely acknowledged that advertisers aim at seducing prospective 'victims' so that they create a market for their products or services. Within this framework advertisers exploit both linguistic and paralinguistic features in order to influence 'emotionally and pragmatically' their listeners/readers/viewers so that they construct the prospective buyers of their products and services. As A. Ries and J. Trout write, 'advertising is not a debate. It's a seduction', and they add, 'the prospect won't sit still for the finer points of verbal logic. As the politician said, "If it looks like a duck and walks like a duck, I say it's a duck"'.¹¹

THE OBJECT AND PURPOSE OF ANALYSIS

In this paper I will attempt to analyse an advertisement in *The Economist* magazine¹² (figure 1); a double-page ad for Du Pont products, or rather for Du Pont chemical company, in general. It consists of a full-page picture extending onto the opposite page, which is occupied



Isabelle Caravola, ballerina, photographed in a rehearsal room at the Paris Opera Garnier.

*Du Pont's registered trademark

From the LYCRA* that gives her leotards their comfort
and freedom of movement to the
SURLYN* film that packages
her morning müsli and the
CORIAN* covering her kitchen
counter, products discovered
by Du Pont bring comfort,
safety and convenience
to every part of her life
... your life too.

One of the world's great science and discovery companies for almost 200 years, Du Pont today is a major European supplier of products and technologies that protect and improve our daily lives.
If you regard Du Pont as a company with whom you should be doing business, or if you would like more information on its activities throughout Europe, please write to Wijnand van Lerschoot Hubrecht, Manager Marketing Communications, Du Pont de Nemours Int., 2 ch. du Fanelon, P.O. Box 50, CH-1218 Le Grand Saconnex, Switzerland.



Part of our lives

Figure 1.

mostly by the text of the ad. Although the picture covers the largest part of this double-page spread, it does not seem to dominate it, as is the case with ads in which both the product advertised and the text are included in the picture frame, the latter assigned a peripheral or ancillary role deriving its meaning from the picture, parasitic on it as it is, or quite often acting as caption to the picture. This ad is a long copy ad.

The aim of the analysis is twofold: on the one hand, it will attempt to show that the linguistic techniques used in advertising discourse need not fall within the spectrum of pronounced deviations in the use of language, a feature that characterizes literature and, in particular, poetry.¹³ For that purpose the advertisement chosen for analysis is rather prosaic, but still indirect and unobtrusive; it does not exhibit any major poetic/rhetorical techniques such as metaphor, ambiguities and vagueness of meaning, or phonetic features such as rhyme and alliteration. However, the study will prove that, despite the absence of such innovative use of language and linguistic deviation, the language used is still highly rhetorical, an argument that contributes to a more comprehensive claim about the

literariness of advertising discourse and its permeation with what is conventionally thought of as poetic language. The picture, too, is considered to be significant as it interacts with the text to generate specific meanings. It is, therefore, considered to be the visual text of the ad and is analysed in this function as a particular mode of meaning.

On the other hand, the analysis will show how both linguistic and visual techniques are used ingeniously for the construction of the prospective consumer of the products and services advertised.

THE CONTEXT OF THE AD

This ad occurs inside a weekly publication without making any reference to it and without any other text in the magazine making reference to it either. However, it still occurs within a syntagm inasmuch as it derives some of its meaning from its co-occurrence with the 'accompanying discourses'¹⁴ in the weekly in which it occurs, *The Economist*. Its occurrence in a weekly such as *The Economist* assigns it a specific kind of *institutional legitimation*.¹⁵ In other words, its occurrence in the context of a weekly such as *The*

Economist may determine in a large measure social correlates of the text: it may determine what kind of genre it is; if it is an ad, then it approximately determines the type of ad, and so on; it also determines its source as it does its readers-viewers. For instance, as you leaf through an issue of *The Economist* you are not likely to come across an ad for lipsticks or lingerie.

The text that appears in a magazine such as *The Economist*, therefore, has an institutionalized legitimacy and authority by virtue of its appearance in the magazine. Moreover, the reader-viewer is probably familiar with a certain set of paradigmatic possibilities apart from the specific syntagm, which is actualized by the specific choice of this paradigm. Other paradigms that are texts related to the one at issue in intention or interpretation are called 'intertext'.¹⁶ Indeed, this particular ad is one in a series of similar ads advertising Du Pont in other issues of *The Economist*. So the ad under consideration can be regarded as an instance in an advertising campaign launched by Du Pont.

Therefore, the ad derives part of its meaning by reference to its occurrence in a syntagmatic axis and by reference to its paradigmatic axis, too. This fact implies that a text-content dichotomy is naive, but, despite the acknowledgement that 'context has to be theorized and understood as another set of texts',¹⁷ I will have no more to say about the conditions of production and reception of this ad and consequently of the set of social messages governing these conditions, what R. Hodge and G. Kress call the logonomic system.

THE MODES

This ad is carried by two modes:¹⁸ picture and language. I will examine them separately, although the meaning created is derived from the interplay of the two modes. The text consists of two iconically overtly different types of print, and is presented alongside the picture. The upper part consists of a ten-line justified text printed to look handwritten.¹⁹ The other type of text is situated at the lower part of the same page and is set apart by its print and its iconological density.²⁰ At the very bottom and under the logo is the ad's slogo²¹ printed again as if it were handwritten, but in a more handsome handwriting as far as size is concerned.

The picture is a black-and-white photograph of a pretty girl, who turns out to be — if you read the very small print of the caption — Isabelle Ciaravola, a ballerina: *Isabelle Ciaravola, ballerina, photographed in a rehearsal room at the Paris Opera Garnier.*

GRAPHOLOGY

It is well known that meanings are carried by words and word combinations. However, we must not forget that the substance of language can also be exploited as a vehicle

for carrying meanings, too. This type of meaning can be called paralinguistic, but it is in its interplay with semantic meaning and other pragmatic features that its significance lies.

Paralinguistic coordinates include features such as choice of script, and use of graphic and phonic paralinguistic features, too, because, as G. Cook points out, 'the function of paralinguistic is more often to express attitudes and emotions, to regulate and establish social relations, to mediate between words and a particular situation'.²² And, although paralinguistic is seldom exploited in literature, it thrives on advertising.²³

In the ad under analysis the features that are dominant are the black-and-white photograph of the picture-part and the copy of the ad alongside it, which is printed to look handwritten. Besides the handwriting, the other characteristic of the copy is that it is printed in such a way as to look like a poem. It is flanked by ample margins on both sides and the text is justified so that each line looks like a verse in a poem.

These two iconic features help to contrast the copy with text that relays 'objective scientific facts', that is with 'scientific' discourse whose function is descriptive, whereas its use is informative and it appeals to cognitive skills. More specifically, it seems to be in sharp contrast with the lower text whose graphological iconicity likens it to scientific text.

Concentrating on the upper copy of the ad, we can remark that the graphic exploitation gives it an air of familiarity and immediacy, personalizes it and makes it look more dependent upon particular people and contexts. Moreover, the elegance and finesse of the symmetrical, neat, cursive, joined handwriting accentuate the expectations for the personal and poetic character of the content of the copy, so much so, that if it turned out to be an account of Sir Isaac Newton's theory of gravitation, it would most probably engender not just confusion but also anger.

The text, then, like literary writing, deviates from rules of normal usage and exploits graphology and pictorial layout of text to generate meaning. In one word, we can say that the text consists in *indexical* script and typeface.

THE MODE OF PICTURE

The picture of the ad extends onto the opposite page with the copy, a feature serving visually to blend the two parts of the ad as does the first line of the copy that starts from within the picture. This visual merging of the two modes helps to mediate trafficking and interplay between them so that the one rebounds against the other, gaining and giving meanings and implications.

The picture is a black-and-white photograph of a young woman seated on a bench against a black-and-white

background. Goffman points out that what is significant is not what a photo is but what a particular photograph is *of*.²⁴ This photograph of a subject is not taken showing its object as it was in regard to some other matters (other than photography). It is not a photograph of a commercial model staging an act in which she 'poses', an activity different from what she is. A photograph of a model putting on an act of being a business woman, playing at being a serious person, triggers instinctive incredulity. In contrast, this photograph is very believable. It is a public picture, designed, as Goffman would put it, 'to catch a wider audience — an anonymous aggregate of individuals unconnected to one another by social relationship and social interaction, although falling within the same market . . . the same outreaches of appeal'.²⁵ As its function here is to advertise products, it, moreover, is not only a public picture, but also a commercial one.

The black and white of the photo may reduce its cost, but it also adds to the realism of the picture, as it makes it resemble photographs of notables in the press. This is an element that excites the reader-viewer's curiosity or interest. However, it is a near anonymous photo of what could be considered a rather unnoteworthy individual, a ballerina. It is not a 'caught' or 'candid' photograph showing the object in regard to some matter other than photography; neither is the advertiser's intention to pass the picture off as a caught one.

Instead, the emphasis is on the subject as a person and dancer, not on the model. It is a photographic portrait of a model that is frankly 'posed'; as Goffman would put it '[her] having taken up a position before the camera simply in order to be photographed in no way detracts from the picture being thought an authentic "real" one. Moreover, what is pictured is what is really going on, namely, portraiture, the giving of the model over to the process of being rendered'.²⁶

This photograph, furthermore, is not part of a sequence of acts. It is a photographic recording of an emblem. The assumed posture of the ballerina choreographs an illustration of the action she ordinarily engages in and in this sense 'she crudely mimes a posture plucked from [her] own role, momentarily transforming the living tools of [her] trade [her ballet shoes] into dramaturgic equipment and [herself] into a pantomimist of fixed expressions'.²⁷ Moreover, her ballet shoes fill almost the whole picture together with her legs and arms, which, although not at work at the moment of photography, are read the way they are portrayed, as a comment on her professional life (her main realm of being?) (see below for implications).

But the emblem is one of finesse, elegance and radiant beauty. She is choreographed for a front view, with her head, trunk, limbs and eyes all oriented in the same direction, that of the viewer. The direction of her gaze

towards the viewer, coupled with a broad smiling expression, underlines the realism of the photograph and encourages the viewer to feel s/he is an actual participant in the privacies of the depicted scene which is formatted by the accompanying copy alongside the picture, deceptively viewed as an utterance just escaped from the smiling, gazing-at-the-viewer subject.

The direct alignment of all features involves the viewer to a point of mock interaction as if she were smiling and talking to him/her making him/her privy to her secrets and daily routine. These subtle meanings are not just generated by the picture alone, but are also reinforced by its interplay with the accompanying text both at the level of the form (graphology) and at the level of semanticopragmatic meaning. Therefore, her expression can be seen as 'the simulation of viewer-responsive facial expression'²⁸ and this feature contributes to rendering the portrait quality of the photo into a scene as it is cued by the expanded background.

Moreover, this is not just a photograph of a young ballerina. It is a photograph of 'a depiction of . . . femininity that is fitted or matched in such a way as to make it function socially', because men and women 'take their cues about "gender behaviour" from the image of that behaviour that advertising throws back at them'.²⁹ The photograph is a typification of flawless feminine beauty and elegance as it is 'a natural pose' for the gender. It is a pose of a 'closed' figure, head tucked into hands, which are a continuation of a pair of fine, long legs, firmly pressed together, toes only pressing against the floor. Cursive ('closed') lines, like the line of the lower part of her back, coupled by the circular line of the background, are only suggestive and left in the background uncommented on as extensions and implications of those fine legs. Her hands cradling her head coupled by her satin ballet shoes, embracing her feet and lacing up her ankles,³⁰ both restrict and enclose features of femininity shielding them from what is public. The black and white of the photograph, adding a romantic dash, underpins the projected femininity epitomized in it.

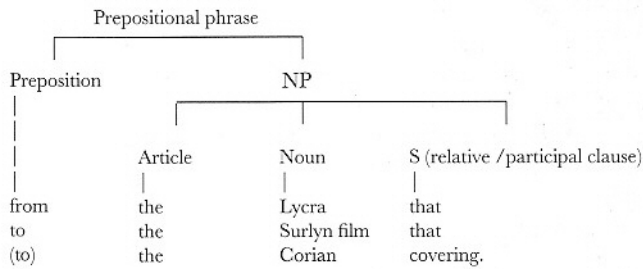
THE MODE OF LANGUAGE

Apart from the graphological layout of the copy that makes it resemble a stanza, parallel structuring, a feature frequently encountered in poetry, also characterizes this ad, creating a rhythm and giving it a poetic polish.

The first half of the text is a series of parallel grammatical structures of the pattern:

<i>Preposition</i>	<i>Article</i>	<i>NP</i>	<i>Relative/participial clause</i>
From	the	LYCRA	that . . .
to	the	SURLYN	that . . .
and (to)	the	CORIAN	covering . . .

More specifically, the structure is as follows:



Parallelism suggests a connection of meaning through an echo of form.³¹ Indeed, all the nouns in these prepositional phrases denote similar convenience products, which moreover have similar functions in our everyday lives, denoted by the relative/participial clauses (*that gives her leotards their comfort . . . that packages her morning muesli . . . covering her kitchen counter*). The similarity is affirmed in their superordinate *products* and reaffirmed in the modifying, elliptical relative clause (*discovered by Du Pont*).

The main clause, echoing the form of the dependent ones, repeats the pattern of the preceding relative clauses (NP + verb + objects direct), uniting the services provided by the products (*products discovered by Du Pont*) in the main verb phrase whose direct objects, a conjunction of nouns denoting a conjunction of modern life values (*comfort, safety and convenience*), label the concrete with the abstract, substituting the concept for the function, the general for the particular:

comfy leotards	packaging muesli	covering kitchen counter
↓	↓	↓
comfort	safety	convenience.

Moreover, the parallel structure technique is repeated at the end of the handwritten text:

to every part of her life
(to) (every) (part) (of) your life too

and is sealed in the slogo at the very bottom of the ad:

(to) (every) Part of our lives

in which the preposition is eliminated and the structure is transformed to a modifying predicate, as it follows the logo:

DU PONT
Part of our lives.

One can readily provide the equation sign between the logo and its slogo.

Furthermore, the parallel structure reinforces a rhythmic prosodic structure, a characteristic of poetry, in which all stressed syllables are the most significant syllables of the text because they are syllables of the words for the products or for the beneficial effects they secure for their

beneficiaries, i.e. the customer, 'her' or 'you' or 'us'. So in reading the ad the reader-viewer will stress the words LYCRA, SURLYN and CORIAN — all capitalized in the text — which are the heads of the prepositional phrases.

It is significant that the products advertised as providing comfort, safety and convenience are foregrounded in the text and as such they are also thematized. Moreover, they are the nouns that constitute the subjects of transactive verbs, i.e. they are presented as agents of actions, as is the main verb too (*'bring comfort'*, etc.). The beneficiary in all cases is 'her', which is surreptitiously transmuted to 'your' and the latter to 'our', both wittily and wittingly landing on an inductively inferred generalization (see below).

The benevolently agentive constructions are moreover couched in relative clauses presenting their propositional content as factual, indisputable, presupposed shared knowledge.

Moreover, the definite article preceding the names of the products transmutes them into definite descriptions generating existential implications which drive home the existential status of all these products.³² These implications are reinforced by the total suppression of any verbs indicating the ontological status or the provenance of the products.

The definite article concretizes the referred products *the LYCRA, the SURLYN film, the CORIAN*, presenting them as familiar entities populating, if not dominating, the modern world and our daily lives. The use of the plural makes the sentence less focused and precise, more complex and diffused.³³ This is probably a sufficient reason for departing from the particular and the specific (inductive reasoning) instead of departing from the general (deductive reasoning).

THE LOGO AND THE SLOGO OF THE AD

Conventional letter shapes have been slightly altered to take up the whole space of an oval shape, which iconically may be thought of as representing an all-inclusive set iconically dominated by the letter shapes of the name *Du Pont*, probably reflecting the domination of the world (a closed set) by Du Pont products.

This logo, then, acts as summary of the content of the handwritten text and is reaffirmed in the slogo following it, *Part of our lives*. This slogo drives home the idea of the domination of our lives by Du Pont products, summarizing once more the content of the handwritten copy.

So we could conclude that the logo at the bottom of the ad iconically represents the products advertised, or rather it represents their main feature: their domination of our lives, in the sense of their being an indispensable part of our modern, comfortable lifestyle.

Moreover, both the logo and the slogo seal the two graphic styles of the text of the ad generating corresponding implications. The typeface of the former has the

semiotic austerity of the conventional typeface of most printed texts and of all scientific texts. It thus ties in nicely with the text immediately preceding it, in which Du Pont is presented as 'one of the world's great science and discovery companies' and reflects the efficiency, determinateness, competency, precision, factualness and austerity of the scientific aspect of its ontology. In one word, it is meant to project the presumed powerfulness of the company.

The graphic style of the slogan, on the other hand, is sharply contrasted with that of the logo and reflects the mystic, the personal, the private, the independent, the subjective, in one word, what makes life interesting to live. This slogan, located right under the logo at the bottom of the page, printed in the same romantic stylized script as the upper copy but in larger letters, seals the ad and links with the upper copy, the two virtually embracing the scientific looking typeface of the text.

The only colour in the ad, spoiling its romantic look, is the red of the logo, but this was probably thought necessary to catch the eye. Indeed, the reader-viewer starts from the logo and the slogan, and then moves up to the text.

THE AD AS AN ARGUMENT

As the ad attempts to persuade the reader-viewer to adopt the advertiser's perspective (whatever that may be), it can be assigned a certain perlocutionary role. It was noted at the beginning of the paper that advertising is an art of persuasion, a form of rhetoric that need not, however, deal with formally valid logical argumentation. R. L. Root Jr. notes that ethos and pathos are essential to the rhetoric of advertising, whereas logos is the least developed element of proof in advertising.³⁴ In this respect, too, advertising discourse resembles literary rather than any other type of discourse, because it appeals to our emotional world rather than to our cognitive skills.

However, this particular ad was chosen for analysis, with a view to determining to what extent, if at all, advertising discourse resembles literary discourse, on the basis of the type of advertising that it instantiates. This ad belongs to the type of advertising that can be called advocacy advertising since it does not merely 'advocate' certain positions concerning products or services, but implicitly endorses certain positions regarding ideas and values or the interpretation of those positions. The purpose of the particular ad is, naturally, commercial; however, it belongs to that brand of advertisements that attempts to achieve its advertising goal indirectly: by creating a certain position for products in the prospect's mind, which will be grounds for the prospect's action — in the case at issue, to get top-level vice-presidents of companies to reach the conclusion that use of Du Pont products will enhance their own lines of consumer products. But how is this 'positioning' of the company's products achieved? By

simulating or advocating a more intelligent and intellectually higher position for the corporation in general. (See below where Du Pont is portrayed as a dispenser of modern life values as these are assumed to be perceived by intelligent people). From that point of view its rhetoric is of particular significance as there must be a concern for probable truth in its textual structure; at the same time the ad must accommodate an effort to convince the audience of the validity of its textual message and the positions represented therein. Purely advertising discourse, rather than be concerned about issues of truth and validity, focuses on the impact it will have and it therefore does not have to concentrate on the argument or its logos. On the other hand, advocacy advertising, as the product of a mixture of discourses, has not only to present an argument, but also to show some concern for its strength. So, advocacy advertising has to maintain a balance between both aspects of logos, on the one hand, and aspects of ethos and pathos, on the other.

It was shown above that there is a smooth transition in the text from the specific and the concrete referenced in the prepositional phrases, from exemplification, in one word, from the particular to the general which acts as the conclusion (*products discovered by Du Pont bring . . . your life*) of the 'argument' presented in the text.

It is immediately noticed, however, that if the text is viewed as an argument, its underlying or guiding structure is that of inductive reasoning. An inductively inferred conclusion is valid only with a certain probability and is not necessarily valid as in a deductive inference, in which true conclusions necessarily follow from true premises. Therefore, the form of the text does not guarantee the form of a valid argument, since valid inferences are deductive inferences. It follows, then, that there is no necessarily true inference derived from premises which are only probabilistically true.

But Eco noted that rhetoric, and hence advertising, mostly deals with probable premises and with enthymemes.³⁵ If we examine the form of the text carefully, we will discover that there are premises that are suppressed (enthymemes) and therefore assumed to be shared by the reader by implication. For example:

Lycra, Surlyn and Corian are Du Pont products,
is a suppressed premise in the form of an elliptical sentence.

If Lycra, Surlyn and Corian bring comfort, etc., and
if they are Du Pont products,
then all Du Pont products bring comfort, etc.,

is another enthymeme in the syllogism, which of course can be overtly false. Another suppressed premise is the following:

If Du Pont products bring comfort, etc., to every part of
her life

then Du Pont products bring comfort, etc., to every part of your life,

and from there to:

If Du Pont products bring comfort, etc., to every part of your life
then Du Pont products bring comfort, etc., to every part of our lives,

which is encapsulated in the slogan of the ad.

The smooth transition from the specific and particular to the more general, that is the inductive reasoning displayed in the upper part of the ad, is therefore duplicated in its lower part as is the parallel structuring repeated in this part of the handwritten copy. This feature of laying the emphasis on the specific and the particular, rather than concentrating on the general, is characteristic of poetic writing and is reflected in the heavy use of definite descriptions in the text, which allude to presupposed, shared knowledge, forming a link of intimacy between the ad writer and the audience, the poet and the addressee.

MODALITY OF MODES

'Modality', write Hodge and Kress, 'is pervasive, appearing everywhere in an utterance or text, pressing all aspects of the verbal code into the service of modality'.³⁶ The modality of the ad under consideration displays high affinity to the present and the real, to fact and truth.

Visual modality markers serve to signal their affinity with the mimetic values realized by the text. The realism of the picture (actual person, portraiture, gaze, posture, black and white, alignment, smile, etc.) ties up with the modality emanating from the text, an aggregate of iconic (handwriting) and textual features.

The text is cast in the 'elegant' mode of the declarative structure refusing to involve directly its recipients by using the face-threatening imperative mode³⁷ (the context being relevant to this point as the ad appears in *The Economist*, a sophisticated magazine). All verbals in the text are in the present simple, a tense connected with constative speech-acts, timeless truths and general laws. J. Lyons writes that 'timeless and omnitemporal propositions are expressed characteristically by sentences in the so-called present tense: cf. "God is just", "The sun rises everyday"'.³⁸

The present tense, therefore, is the carrier of generalizations like the ones 'inferred' in the text. Goffman writes that 'the texts accompanying the pictures are cast in the style of generalization-by-pronouncement found in the writings of freelance body linguists, strayed ethologists and lesser journalists'.³⁹

The modality of high affinity to the real, and therefore to the true, is also reinforced by the use of the definite article, which concretizes and makes more realistic the reference of the noun it modifies by making it specific.

In conclusion, both the picture and the text join forces in presenting their claims as real, law-like statements or 'eternal truths'.

THE INTERPLAY BETWEEN THE TWO MODES

We have already pointed out that meanings are not derived separately from the picture and the text. On the contrary, the picture blends with the text, each one deriving meaning from the other and the two of them together yielding a more integrated perception of the meaning of the ad.

It has already been noted that the romantic element of the black-and-white photograph, accentuated by features identified above, such as characteristics of femininity, is reinforced by the handwriting of the text on a surface level and reaffirmed by the texture of the copy.

The text is also read and interpreted against the background of the picture, not only as regards its coherence, but also as far as cohesion is concerned. The third-person pronouns used in the text do not have any endophoric/anaphoric use in the text since there is no preceding noun-phrase to which they could refer. They refer, instead, exophorically to the subject of the picture.⁴⁰ However, as in ads pictures and texts merge to complement each other, it could be claimed that 'her' refers endophorically to the woman pictured and is, in this sense, a texture-forming, cohesive link.

Moreover, it is worth noticing that the young woman in the photograph is seated at an angle towards the text. These relative positions have semiotic force: although the source of the text is an unidentified narrative voice, relaying 'facts' about the pictured woman, the recipient of the ad comes very close to interpreting the text as a speech-act whose source is located in the subject of the picture. The obscure, unrevealed identity of *I* is fused with the identity of the pictured woman as her visual presence 'distracts from [the] absence [of an identified *I*] creating an illusion'⁴¹ of face-to-face interaction and so partially muffles this narrative voice. The photographed woman seems to endorse the content of the text, or even to address the reader-viewer herself.

This illusion of a simulated face-to-face interaction is generated and reinforced by all the features that have been identified: position of the subject towards the text, the iconicity of the text, its graphology (handwriting exhibits affinity to speech), its texture, and elements isolated in the picture, the woman's alignment, direct gaze, smile, orientation towards viewer, etc. However, the appeal of the ad would be attenuated if she were the unambiguous source of the text, as she lacks the authority and hence credibility to relay near-scientific or mock-scientific facts and pronounce 'truths'. On the other hand, the appeal is strengthened as the semantic structure

of the text echoes an expert authority, even if mystic and unidentified, seconded by the elegant woman in the photo.

BUILDING THE MARKET: THE IDEOLOGY OF THE AD

Fairclough sets up three parameters along which the ideological content of an ad should be seen:⁴²

- *Building relations*, i.e. what is the relationship that the advertiser wants to construct with his/her reader-viewer?

- *Building images*, i.e. what resources are readers driven to draw upon? and

- *Building the consumer*, i.e. how is the perspective consumer constructed in the ad?

I will attempt to deal with these issues very briefly.

The ideological representation of the assumed *relation* is mediated by the personalization technique, which is not very prominent in the handwritten text, though. In this part the reader is directly addressed and personalized quite subtly in the possessive adjectival expression *your life too* but the advertiser refrains from any face-threatening acts such as use of imperatives and personal pronouns. By not using such forms the advertiser assumes equal power relations. 'Declaratives and imperatives', write R. Fowler and G. Kress, 'express the relation between speaker and addressee in different ways: the speech roles assigned in one case are "giver of information" and "recipient of information"; in the other "commander" and "commanded"'.⁴³

The prevalent mode in the handwritten text is the declarative form. But a giver of information is a *knower* of information, an expert, and it is quite clear that knowledge is the basis of power. If there is 'imposition', it is not sustained for very long as the direct reference *your life* is fused into *our lives* thus eliminating face threat and potential antagonism between advertiser and reader.⁴⁴

The *image*, which is built for the producer and the products through lexical items such as *comfort, freedom of movement, safety, convenience*, evokes in the reader corresponding frames of comfort, safety and convenience. These frames project an all-inclusive frame, that of modern life seen from a specific ideological perspective. The values of modern life that are thus projected are characterized in terms of perpetuated ideologies produced and reproduced by the media and conveniently shaped by daily experiences, by such attributes as *convenient, safe and comfortable*.

Therefore, the frames thus evoked serve not only to embrace ideologically the products advertised and hence the producers and their services, but also to enhance their contribution to the values of modern life. The producers appear to be generators of at least some of those values, thus portrayed, as one might say, as societal benefactors, too.

The *subject position* created by the ad for the reader is that of a person who highly values modern life with its widely accepted values. Moreover, the subject is set up as someone — a sophisticated 'someone' — who already, and probably unknowingly to him/her, enjoys a high standard of modern life as this is ideologically perceived in our Western culture (factual mode of presentation of propositional content, subtle involvement of reader).

Besides, the professional life of the subject photographed is foregrounded both in the picture and in the text thus commenting on, emphasizing and valuing professional life as the essence of her being. Consequently the subject position that is built is of a highly professional one.

The viewer projects herself into the persona created by direct address, *you*, as the narrative voice is fused with the woman's voice addressing the viewer; moreover, as the voice slides smoothly from talking about 'her', the epitome of femininity and elegance as the beneficiary of Du Pont products, to addressing the reader 'your', the reader-viewer is all too ready to indulge in the pleasure of fantasizing and identifying with the subject of the photograph, adopt her lifestyle, values, elegance and . . . figure. The realism of the picture and the rhetoric of the text permit the reader-viewer to establish relations of sameness, transference and identification from the implications of resemblance to real world. In one word, she is ideologically constructed as the perfect consumer of Du Pont products. She, too, indeed, like the lady in the ad, uses, and must use, all these products.⁴⁵

Du Pont is also portrayed as benefactor/provider of services and values, of commodities that make up modern life, the life of comfort, safety and convenience and as such Du Pont is pictured as assuming power and controlling our everyday lives, since the comforts of such lives depend on the products produced by Du Pont. In this sense the reader-subject is constructed as dependent on the products for a high standard of living and therefore as lacking power inasmuch as his/her dependence on these products is underpinned or just assumed.

Moreover, the element of factualness, which is pervasive in the ad, creates a subject who is assumed to be 'enjoying' all the products produced by the company. This element not only creates a sophisticated subject who is well versed in the use of the products without even realizing it but also it further enhances the image of the producers of the products, Du Pont, through its conspicuous and ubiquitous services to the public. The combined implications of the rhetoric of the text and the image portray the company as public welfare dispenser.

Modern life values are seen to be transferable and obtainable through the use of Du Pont products. Moreover, the rhetoric of the ad implicitly alludes to obtainability of vigour and youth, rewarding jobs⁴⁶ and

other values conveyed by the portrayed subject(s) in the photo, by suggesting that use of the products is a means of achieving this desirable state of existence.

The ad is highly sophisticated for highly sophisticated people (see above), featuring in a highly sophisticated weekly. It does not contain any overtly sexually stimulating features or any straightforward, directly expressed, overt pop methodology. The products and services advertised are given meaning in terms of people, and preferably handsome, competent, powerful or elegant people, and so the meaning of one thing, as has been said before, is transferred to or made interchangeable with another quality whose value attaches itself to the product or the services.

Ads are a kind of reality that not only has an enormous effect on our daily lives but also forges and regenerates ideological stereotypes, a reality that forges values and what Goffman called the ritualization of everyday life. Ads create a world in which we are not only invited to live but also in which we actually do live, since we take cues for our daily lives and existence from the world created by the world of advertising.

CONCLUSION

This study has attempted an analysis of a corporate advertisement at various levels: at the levels of the written text, the pictorial text and the typographic text, because all these are interacting to produce a multiplicity of meanings, associations and implications.

The stylistic techniques used are in a large measure the same as the ones used in literature as the text of the ad displays deviation from rules of what is called normal usage. This deviation, as we have seen, is witnessed both at the level of the graphology and the layout of the text, and at the level of the content of the text. At the former level, it has been noted that the copy of the ad resembles poetic writing, but at the latter level, too, it was stressed that features like parallelism and prosodic structure are techniques employed in literary discourse.

Moreover, pragmatic and stylistic features such as foregrounding of definite noun-phrases in non-subject positions alluding to assumed presuppositional knowledge are characteristics that feature more in poetic writing than in other types of discourse. Besides, in its pseudo-scientific mode of text presentation, the line of argumentation that is followed is inductive rather than deductive, thus leading to the generalization by way of stressing the particular, a mode of writing again characteristic of literature rather than of any other type of discourse.

Furthermore, the text of the ad does not shrink away from addressing the reader directly, as the use of 'your' is not the impersonal and general 'your' but the personalized 'your'. This technique is also frequently encountered in poetry (apostrophe).

However, the interest of this advertisement lies in the fact that, despite the characteristics identified, which have been considered to deviate from rules of normal usage, there is no strikingly innovative use of language. For example, there are no instances of metaphoric use of language, of lexical or anaphoric ambiguity, or of vagueness of meaning, or double meanings,⁴⁷ all linguistic phenomena which primarily characterize poetic use of language.

Moreover, even if we accept the view that 'poetic language need not violate any rules of language and still remain what it is, that is, a highly patterned and organized mode of verbal expression',⁴⁸ we can confidently conclude that the analysis of the ad shows that its text is indeed highly patterned and organized, and in this respect it resembles poetic discourse.

The point that needs to be driven home is that, even in the absence of those major poetic deviations from normal usage of language, advertising discourse seems always to use language very ingeniously indeed, to a point where it resembles literature. This is, unlike the case of literature,⁴⁹ due to the very distinct intentions of the ad writer: to sell the product or the services or, as in the case at issue, to advocate and promote the corporate image and thereby invite business associates; and this is true despite Ries and Trout's claim that advertising is becoming 'less poetic and more effective'.⁵⁰

Moreover, to the extent that this advertisement attempts to enhance the corporate image, it belongs to the field of advocacy or corporate advertising, as was noted above, which is a rather new field. There is added interest to this ad, also, because it reflects the type of advertising originally initiated by non-profit-making, mostly public or state organizations, now in the hands of profit-making, private companies, mostly multinational companies, which wish to portray themselves as public benefactors in keeping with a more recent universal trend of having a hand in making our world a better place in which to live. Even so, advocacy advertising, too, seems to need to follow the patterned, organized language of poetic discourse in order to have the desired impact on its audience.

NOTES

1 - A shorter version of this paper was presented at the ESSE/2 Conference in Bordeaux, September 1993. I wish to thank my colleague, Michalis Milapides, for practical help and suggestions in this respect. In relation to the present paper, I would like to thank two anonymous reviewers who suggested improvements, as well as Kostas Masmanidis, Country Manager of Dow Chemicals, Greece, for sharing with me his expert estimation of the particular ad. I must also thank *The Economist* for permission to reprint the ad.

2 - Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Pantheon, 1971).

3 - G. Cook, *The Discourse of Advertising* (London: Routledge, 1992).

- 4 – Ibid., p. xvii.
- 5 – N. Fairclough, *Language and Power* (London: Longman, 1989), pp. 211–23; *idem*, 'Technologization of discourse', *Centre for Language in Social Life Research Papers*, 17 (University of Lancaster, 1990).
- 6 – A. Ries and J. Trout, *Positioning: The Battle for your Mind* (New York: Warner, 1986).
- 7 – Umberto Eco, *A Theory of Semiotics* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1976), p. 277.
- 8 – Ibid., p. 277.
- 9 – Ibid., p. 278.
- 10 – K. Sornig, 'Some remarks on linguistic strategies of persuasion', in *Language, Power and Ideology*, ed. R. Wodak (Amsterdam: Benjamins, 1988), pp. 95–113.
- 11 – Ries and Trout, *Positioning*, p. 60.
- 12 – The same ad appeared more than once, but it is included in issues 325/7783 (October 1992) and 325/7789 (December 1992). Moreover, slightly different versions of the same ad appeared in issues of that time. They depicted, for example, a farmer or a racing driver holding a baby in his arms (the happy father frame). They featured very similar texts of the same pictorial, graphological set-up.
- 13 – G. Cook, 'Stylistics with a dash of advertising', *Language and Style*, 21/2 (1988), pp. 151–61.
- 14 – Cook, *The Discourse of Advertising*.
- 15 – R. Hodge and G. Kress, *Social Semiotics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1988).
- 16 – Cook, *The Discourse of Advertising*, p. 29.
- 17 – Hodge and Kress, *Social Semiotics*, p. 8.
- 18 – See Cook, *The Discourse of Advertising*, on modes.
- 19 – Henceforth, I will refer to it as 'handwritten' to avoid clumsy expressions.
- 20 – In this study I will focus my attention on the former text as it seems to be both the gist of the ad (the copy) and the text that accompanies the picture.
- 21 – Cook, *The Discourse of Advertising*, uses the term 'slogo'.
- 22 – Ibid., p. 71.
- 23 – e.e. cummings is a notable exception, though.
- 24 – This section draws heavily on Erving Goffman, *Gender Advertisements* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979).
- 25 – Ibid., p. 10.
- 26 – Ibid., p. 17.
- 27 – Ibid., p. 19.
- 28 – Ibid., p. 16.
- 29 – V. Gormick, 'Introduction', in Goffman, *Gender Advertisements*, p. viii.
- 30 – I owe this observation to Katy Kabitoglou.
- 31 – G. Cook, *Discourse* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).
- 32 – B. Russell, 'On denoting', *Mind*, xiv (1905), pp. 479–93; P. F. Strawson, 'On referring', *Mind*, LIX (1950), pp. 320–44.
- 33 – G. Kress and R. Hodge, *Language as Ideology* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979).
- 34 – R. L. Root Jr., *The Rhetorics of Popular Culture* (New York: Greenwood, 1987).
- 35 – Eco, *A Theory of Semiotics*.
- 36 – Hodge and Kress, *Social Semiotics*, p. 127.
- 37 – P. Brown and S. Levinson, 'Universals in language usage: politeness phenomena', in *Questions and Politeness: Strategies in Social Interaction*, ed. E. Goody (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), pp. 56–311.
- 38 – J. Lyons, *Semantics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), p. 680.
- 39 – Goffman, *Gender Advertisements*, p. 24.
- 40 – M. A. K. Halliday and R. Hasan, *Cohesion in English* (London: Longman, 1976).
- 41 – Cook, *The Discourse of Advertising*, p. 157.
- 42 – Fairclough, *Language and Power*.
- 43 – R. Fowler and G. Kress, 'Critical linguistics', in *Language and Control*, eds. R. Fowler, B. Hodge, G. Kress and T. Trew (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979), pp. 26–45, esp. p. 28.
- 44 – 'Synthetic personalization' (Fairclough, *Language and Power*) is abundant in the lower part of the text but I have no space to deal with this part of the ad.
- 45 – Synthetic personalization is conducive to creating this subject position as the reader projects her/himself into the subject position created by the pictured subject. 'A common dimension of synthetic personalization is simulated equalization', writes Fairclough, *Language and Power*, p. 221. As the series of this ad (see note 12) ranges over a number of 'successful' professionals, both male and female, depicted in them, the specific advertising campaign aims at catching a wide aggregate of people in its net. Therefore, the presumed reader-viewer may be female in this specific version of the series, but even this is not necessarily so. The ad is also targeted at prospective business associates, who need to be persuaded that the use of Du Pont lines enhances modern aspects of a high standard of living.
- 46 – See note 12.
- 47 – As in Cook, 'Stylistics with a dash of advertising'.
- 48 – E. Stankiewicz, 'Linguistics and the study of poetic language', in *Style in Language*, ed. T. Sebeok (Boston, MA, 1960), pp. 69–81, esp. p. 70.
- 49 – Cook, 'Stylistics with a dash of advertising'.
- 50 – Ries and Trout, *Positioning*, p. 27.