



**LUND UNIVERSITY**  
School of Economics and Management

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# **The pirate and the navy**

Challenger brands and their utilization of  
counter-hegemonic ideology in identity communication

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**Master Thesis**

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**Title:** The pirate and the navy: Challenger brands and their utilization of counter-hegemonic ideology in communications

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**Abstract:** Challenger branding is a phenomenon that is gaining significant exposure in academia. However, most research on this branding approach relates to a practical or technical knowledge interest, ignoring the counter-hegemonic critique that exemplifies challenger branding. The critique that these brands base their identity on often shifts after they have been acquired into a hegemonic context, by joining a large corporation or becoming hegemonic brands themselves. This thesis aims to extend critical knowledge by connecting theories of ideology, hegemony, and brand communication to the identity construction of two challenger brands, The Body Shop and Innocent Drinks, and further explores the identity shift of the brands after their acquisition by L'Oréal and Coca-Cola. Counter-hegemony was found to be a pervasive tool activated through a number of signs for challenger identity construction. Further, challenger brand identity differed substantially before and after the challenger brands joined L'Oréal and Coca-Cola.

**Thesis purpose:** To gain a deep understanding of challenger brand communication through a critical analysis that explores the ideological discourse of challenger branding within a hegemonic context.

**Methodology:** The philosophical roots of critical realism guided the research approach through an emancipatory ontological aim linked to the epistemology of modern constructionism. Four advertising campaigns were explored through semiotics and conceptual content analysis, triangulated with a historical brand genealogy using a hermeneutic approach.

**Theoretical perspective:** The research builds on cultural theories with the motivation to explore the challenger brands' use of ideologies in a counter-hegemonic context, and also takes into account how brand narratives and brand identity connects to these concepts.

**Empirical data:** Two campaigns were selected from each brand, The Body Shop and Innocent Drinks, through a systematic qualitative data approach.

**Conclusion:** The findings indicate that the narrative themes changed from critique to a 'call to action' for consumers, and the brand identity changed by being counter-hegemonic to incorporating the dominant hegemonic ideology. This results in wider implications through a dilution of the counter-hegemonic undercurrents central to their identity as challengers, which may endanger the brands' authenticity in time.

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## 1. Introduction

“It’s more fun to be a pirate than to join the navy.”

– Steve Jobs, American entrepreneur (quoted in Tuchman, 2009, p.18)

The above statement encapsulates a sentiment that unites a majority of postmodern Western consumers, who are disenchanted with generic mass production (Corrigan, 1997; Cova & Dalli, 2009; Thompson & Arsel, 2004). They see themselves as caught up in the power structures of a homogenous, risk-averse economic establishment whose prominence seems almost impossible to dislodge (Adam, 2009; Cromie & Ewing, 2009; Paharia et al., 2011). These consumers, in turn, appreciate companies that go up against large establishments with innovative, groundbreaking ideological foundations (Holt, 2004; Holt, 2006; Holt & Cameron, 2010). This branding concept, based on opposing the ‘navy’ of big business, has been termed underdog branding (Paharia et al., 2011) or challenger branding (de Chernatony & Cottam, 2009; Morgan, 2009). Challenger branding is currently a relevant topic to study because the propagation of dominant market ideologies or orthodoxies (Holt & Cameron, 2010) by large corporations is pushing consumers to search for alternative brands that provide the chance to construct opposing identities to mainstream establishments (Cromie & Ewing, 2009). Rousing stories of a challenger disrupting the incumbent’s hegemony (Kim et al., 2008) have long been present in cultural material, prominently exemplified by the biblical David fighting against a more powerful Goliath. The ensuing popularity of challenger brands (Kim et al., 2008; Paharia et al., 2011) paves the way for the general enquiry as to how these brands construct themselves as the small fighter that tries to find a way to dislodge the dominant position of the stronger incumbent by finding ways to critique this incumbent’s ideology, and how such a relational positioning may be sustained over time. In other words, it may be fun to portray a brand as a ‘pirate’, but how long can this brand survive on opposing the ‘navy’?

### 1.1. Research Problem

Brand managers have recognized challenger brands as a pervasive cultural phenomenon in marketing (Kim et al., 2008), relying on tenets that critique dominant ideologies within their industry and promise radical change from it (Haxthausen, 2004; de Chernatony & Cottam, 2009; Morgan, 2009). Challenger brands must successfully narrate this struggle in their brand communications, placing their identity in relation to the entity they are struggling against. Differentiation of these brands through challenging an opponent has proven a promising strategy, which companies such as Ben & Jerry’s have used as an identity staple for decades (Holt & Cameron, 2010; Morgan & Holden, 2012). Even the terms ascribed to this phenomenon, such as underdog brands (Paharia et al., 2011) or challenger brands (de Chernatony & Cottam, 2009; Morgan & Holden, 2012), set up that there must be an ‘other’, an incumbent against which to fight. The ‘other’ may be an orthodox way of doing business (Haxthausen, 2004), an industry or

specific company (Morgan & Holden, 2012), or a cultural paradigm of society (Holt, 2004; Holt & Cameron, 2010; Morgan, 2009). Large-scale institutions and their ensuing dominant values that homogenize markets (Cromie & Ewing, 2009) provide challenger brands with an entity to oppose in their brand narrative. Through explicitly constructing their own brand as an alternative for consumers, this branding approach provides commercial promise.

However, we assert that challenger brands operate in a globalized commercial world that is subject to convergence towards those entities with sufficient financial clout to influence the extant power structures (Chiapello & Boltanski, 2007). As Art Buchwald (in Jackson, 2007, p. 1) cleverly noted, "[i]f you attack the establishment long enough and hard enough, they will make you a member of it". In other words, the success of these challenger brands does not go unnoticed by their opponents (de Chernatony & Cottam, 2009; Holt, 2004; Morgan, 2009), and increasingly they are being acquired and thus transitioned into the ownership of giant corporations (Chesters, 2011; Marati, 2012; Research and Markets, 2012). Challenger brands may thus be communicating identities that no longer reflect their actual position within their market's power structures (Chiapello & Boltanski, 2007). Since such brands are used by consumers to expressly escape the incumbent market player's hegemony, this transition of ownership may mean that the challenger loses its meaning as a consumption symbol (Corrigan, 1997; Thompson & Arsel, 2004). This threat to brand identity may result in significant complications for challenger brands, and calls for more theoretical research on the challenger brand phenomenon and how these brands operate from cultural perspectives (de Chernatony & Cottam, 2009).

The theoretical context of challenger branding has only recently begun to gain significant academic exposure (Kim et al., 2008; Cromie & Ewing, 2009; de Chernatony & Cottam, 2009; Morgan, 2009; Morgan & Holden, 2012; Paharia et al., 2011). Notably, what has been done has focused more on a practical or technical knowledge interest (Tadajewski, 2010), ignoring the hegemonic undercurrents that define this branding approach and thus neglecting the wider context surrounding these brands, which is relevant to emancipate practitioners, scholars, and consumers. Although some scholars (Cromie & Ewing, 2009; Holt, 2002) do touch on concepts of hegemony, we have not uncovered any concise effort made towards enlightening academia and practice as to the extent to which branding, exemplified by challenger brands, relies on manipulation of counter-hegemonic critique. We therefore see inconsistencies between the existing definitions of what a challenger brand identity entails, as well as a gap within literature connecting challenger brands to a counter-hegemonic theoretical context.

## **1.2. Research Context and Purpose**

Current academic research is limited to the point of a brand manager's manual, and neglects the cultural structures these challenger brands rely on. We contend that this is a case of practitioners'

myopia and propose that further research into the phenomenon of challenger branding and its connection to hegemony may be helpful in resolving this problem, as this marketing approach is likely to remain salient in branding due to its relevance for a wider group of stakeholders than just business practitioners (Corrigan, 1997; Cromie & Ewing, 2009; Kim et al., 2008). The perspective that challenger brands incorporate ideologies opposing the incumbents for the commercial purpose of marketing indicates that a cultural critique is necessary, showing how marketing incorporates counter-hegemonic ideologies and remodels them. In order to fully make this brand phenomenon accessible to academics, practitioners, and consumers, we consider it necessary to establish how a challenger identity is connected to and underpinned by notions of culturally constructed hegemony.

Our research purpose is to conduct a critical analysis of challenger brand communication in an ideological hegemonic context, therefore contributing to an emancipated understanding of challenger brands. We strive to contribute to a critical marketing perspective by unveiling the discursive power structures that allow challenger branding to flourish, providing insights on them for a wider audience within academia and practice (Al-Amoudi & Willmott, 2011; Bhaskar, 1978; 1989; Easterby-Smith et al., 2008). Firstly, in our literature review, we will establish the state of research, subsequently addressing gaps and establishing connections not yet drawn in our theoretical framework. Through these means, we aim to contribute a clearer view of a challenger brand identity and its connection to hegemony and ideology in its communication, expanding the “extremely limited” (de Chernatony & Cottam, 2009, p.76) body of research on the subject. This framework may have the potential to be used in future academic research as well as by practitioners when studying challenger brands. Moreover, in an effort to shed light on this concept’s utilization of power structures, as elaborated in general by Foucault (1970; 1972), we will aim to make tangible the ways in which challenger brands subvert counter-hegemonic critique as elements of their communication, and whether this is subject to change as brands become part of the hegemony.

### **1.3. Research questions**

In line with our critical pursuit, we will examine the following two research questions in depth and with several methodological techniques.

1. What signs are employed to communicate counter-hegemonic themes shaping brand identities?
2. How do the counter-hegemonic themes in brand communication differ before and after a challenger brand has entered the hegemony?

We intend to elicit this from the brands’ marketing communications, examining them for counter-hegemonic themes and undercurrents. In addition, we will evaluate these materials for changes in the brand identity communicated as the brands progress into the hegemony,



inspecting whether the degree of counter-hegemonic focus persists or decreases to a less provocative stance as suggested by Paharia and her colleagues (Paharia et al., 2011). Through providing a deeper and richer critical understanding of how challenger brand discourses rely on counter-hegemonic themes to sell, we hope to answer to our emancipatory purpose, improving contextual understanding on branding in general and challengers in particular.

#### **1.4. Method**

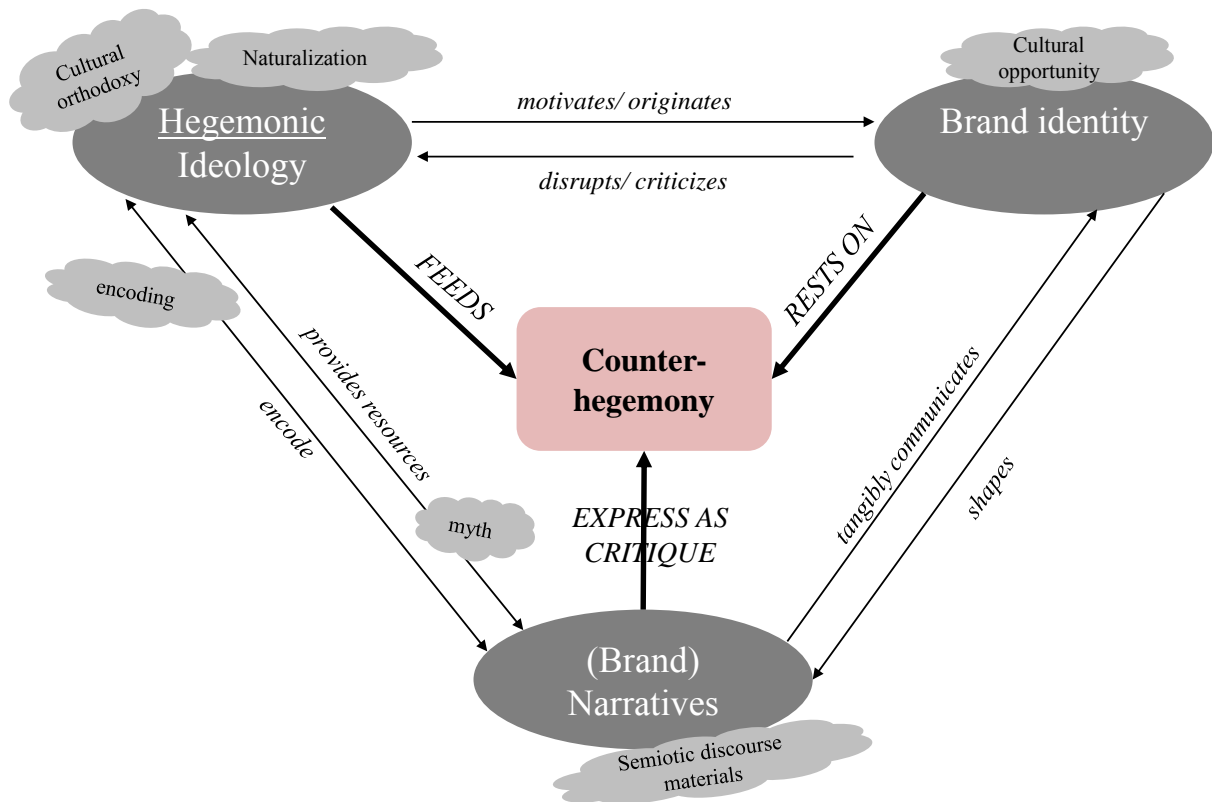
Aiming to contribute to the critical realist tradition, which is still underrepresented in marketing research (Tadajewski, 2010), we have chosen two challenger brands as empirical objects, The Body Shop (TBS) and Innocent Drinks (ID). These brands have explicitly leveraged their positions through counter-hegemonic undercurrents, but have recently transitioned into the hegemony. TBS was acquired by L'Oréal in 2006 (Milmo, 2006) and ID was acquired by Coca-Cola from 2009 onwards (Datamonitor, 2010b). We will evaluate these two brands for their use of counter-hegemonic themes, progressing in four phases.

Firstly, an understanding is needed of the sociocultural context that these brands construct their critiques from. We contribute this context through a historical background genealogy, drawing from Holt and Cameron's (2010) model of cultural innovation. We then conduct a semiotic analysis (Chandler, 2002) of two advertising campaigns from each of the challenger brands, aiming to draw out the signs used to communicate the brand identity and incorporate socially salient critique into marketing. In order to answer our second research question regarding the changes visible in these signs, we have chosen one campaign per brand. The first originates from the pre-hegemonic context and the second that was publicised once the brands had entered into the incumbent's hegemonic environment. To underpin the thematic findings identified through semiotic analysis and minimise researcher bias, we conduct a third phase of analysis focusing on conceptual content analysis (Berelson, 1952). In a fourth phase, we triangulate the results gathered from the previously described methods (Denzin, 1970) in an iterative process of discussion, aiming to further reduce the potential bias and contribute to the emancipatory potential of the thesis. We will start in the following chapter by exploring the theoretical context of challenger brands, pointing out the advances made by literature to date and the gaps still present, which we then strive to rectify through theoretical modelling and empiric examination.

## 2. Literature Review and Theoretical Underpinnings

In order to critically examine challenger brands and their constructions of counter-hegemonic discourse, it is imperative to begin with a theoretical review of the challenger brand phenomenon. Challenger branding, defined as branding that challenges the market norms through differentiated offerings or approaches to marketing (Chapman, 2006; de Chernatony & Cottam, 2009; Haxthausen, 2004; Morgan, 2004; 2009) is a concept that is tapping into the state of mind of consumers today (Cromie & Ewing, 2009; Paharia et al., 2011). The market is saturated with ‘monsters’ to fight, from global warming to Monsanto (Thanem, 2012). The relevancy of challenger branding is further exemplified in the emerging brand research trend of the underdog David vs. Goliath narrative, wherein a small company stands up in the market against an overpoweringly large opponent (Morgan, 2009; Paharia et al., 2011). Although the realms of challenger brands embody a wider range of positioning than merely the underdog, their reliance on the construction of a ‘monstrous’ other is what characterises the general nucleus of the challenger brand.

This ‘monstrous’ other is what motivates the challenger in their brand identities, which have proven a successfully recurring motif to sell to consumers looking for refreshing brands (Adam, 2009). Constructing a brand image opposing the norm, or the ‘monster’, is accomplished through the use of ideologies and social disruption incorporated into branding (Holt, 2004; Holt & Cameron, 2010). However, there is limited critical academic research as to how, on an ideological level, these ‘monstrous’ others are utilized in brand narratives and how they evolve with changing cultural trends. This provides our research motivation to explore concepts of the challenger brands’ use of ideologies in a counter-hegemonic context, through the examination of their brand narratives and brand identities. The following sections synthesize these main concepts and their sub-components into a comprehensive framework (Figure 1) that critically explores the themes. Because there is a gap between literature on challenger brands and theories that encompass ideology, hegemony, and discourse, this chapter aims to connect and synthesize the literature of challenger branding to this theoretical context in order to fully shed light on the structures and mechanisms underpinning challenger branding.



*Figure 1: Conceptualization of constructs relevant to challenger branding (authors' own)*

We will elaborate on this conceptualization in the progress of this chapter.

## 2.1. Challenger Branding

Current branding research is mainly practical and does not shed light on the connections between brand identities and cultural superstructures such as hegemonies. Nor does this research substantially attempt to enlighten stakeholders to the challenger brand's ideological potential. This outlines our research problem that there is a gap in marketing literature and emancipatory theories (Tadajewski, 2010) concerning the positioning of challenger brands. If a critical marketing aim is to be achieved, it is important to examine the positioning through challenger brand narratives. As these narratives are characterised by their reliance on ideologies opposing the hegemonic concepts perpetuated by the market incumbents, we have selected critical theories (Foucault, 1970; 1972; Gramsci, 1971; Hall, 1980; Marx, 1904) that examine how ideologies are used within a hegemonic context. When applied to the context of challenger brands, these theories are useful in exploring critically how challenger brands utilize current counter-hegemonic discourse within their brand narratives. Therefore this literature review and theoretical framework seeks to elicit how brands incorporate counter-hegemonic ideologies through narratives to construct challenger brand identities. Due to the fact that there are no existing empirical models or empirical examples that explore the identity of challenger brands and narrative in a counter-hegemonic ideological context, we propose our own framework on what role counter-hegemonic ideologies concretely play in the construction of challenger brand identities (Figure 2). This attempts to contribute to the limited empirical research within

academia surrounding the phenomenon of challenger branding. The next section examines the current literature on challenger branding.

### **2.1.1. Literature Review of Challenger Brands**

Although the practical relevance of challenger brands is continuously increasing, de Chernatony and Cottam (2009) assert there is still very limited research in the field. We have come across two definitions of challenger brands in academia. The first is a definition based on the context of the 4P framework (Chapman, 2006; de Chernatony & Cottam, 2009; Haxthausen, 2004) and the second definition sits within the context of cultural branding, defined as branding based on culturally rooted ideologies (Holt, 2004; Holt & Cameron, 2010; Morgan, 2004; 2009; see also Appendix A). This section examines the two definitions of challenger brands, and aims to establish a link between the two.

The first definition sits within the context of the traditional marketing 4P context (Borden, 1965; Kotler, 1986; McCarthy, 1960). Within this construct, challenger brands are conceptualized as a brand or business challenging the market norms established by others, normally through a differentiated product approach to the market (Chapman, 2006; de Chernatony & Cottam, 2009; Haxthausen, 2004). Challenger brands develop offerings that are new, typically in terms of the product, the place, the positioning, the price, or any combination of those elements to address untapped needs in the marketplace (Haxthausen, 2004). Ryanair and Virgin are two well-known challenger brands that have discovered new markets through radical product, price, and positioning ideas to innovatively redeploy their assets. They are noted as exciting, visionary, unconventional, boundary pushing, and trendsetting (de Chernatony & Cottam, 2009). These brands exemplify the challenger definition that has relied on positioning through disrupting traditional 4P marketing tactics.

The second definition goes beyond strategic marketing to utilize cultural disruptions in marketing (Holt, 2004; Holt & Cameron, 2010; Morgan, 2009) as a main point in challenger brand strategies. This perspective views challenger brands as offering a differentiated approach and a salient identity utilizing cultural assets and trends (Holt, 2004; Morgan, 2004; 2009). Successfully implementing cultural branding, challenger brands have differentiated themselves by challenging mainstream market values through ideological tactics (Holt, 2004; Holt & Cameron, 2010). Brands such as Ben & Jerry's and Red Bull have defined their identity as brands offering radically differentiated positioning based on opposing mainstream brand identities. This second definition relies more on a more cultural context than the first one mentioned. Contrasting the more limited first definition, this concept of a challenger is inherently differentiated on identity rather than price (de Chernatony & Cottam, 2009), allowing for a more culturally holistic view of how the challenger brand is defined.

However, a cultural approach to challenger branding is also indirectly salient for the first definition. Differentiated market offerings and identities work together in order for brands to position themselves as fundamentally challenging to the market – they construct themselves as challenging the ‘rules of the game’ in their category and flesh out their niche through opposing both mainstream brand identity and traditional marketing constructs (Haxthausen, 2004). Challenger brand positioning thus relies heavily on cultural critiques to make their products an extension of their culturally differentiated, disruptive identity, bringing the two definitions in synthesis with each other (Holt, 2004). Thus challengers provide tangible offerings that act as a symbol of the brand image and the identity its consumers seek to construct, giving the critique commercial value.

### **2.1.2. Challenger Brands and Hegemonic Ideology Theory**

Because challenger brands rely on cultural signs to embody their oppositional identities and products, it is imperative to examine how culturally saturated brands use oppositional constructs. In this critical marketing context, we understand the term ‘hegemony’ as referring to large corporations which dominate majority shares of their respective markets and, by emitting large amounts of influential communications, influence cultural standards, norms and perceptions of ‘correct’ consumption. We accordingly refer to oppositional constructs, narratives, and communicative themes explicitly aimed at the dislodgement of these incumbents as counter-hegemonic. Cultural branding as practiced by challenger brands is based on framing oppositions through ideologies (Holt & Cameron, 2010; Morgan, 2009). Therefore it is crucial to examine how ideologies work with counter-hegemony, and how counter-hegemony rests on ideology. There have been considerable debates on how ideologies become beliefs in society and various theorists have contrasting ideas about how ideologies are communicated. The term ‘ideology’ is seen as referring simply to a system of ideas and beliefs, functioning as the invisible belief structure of a culture (Gramsci, 1971; Marx, 1904; Marx & Engels, 1986). Ideology creates values that become the conventions of a society.

Marx (1904) believed ideologies to be a social production of meaning wherein the ‘material’ relations of society set the stage for ideological conditions through the economic mode of production. Gramsci (1971) accepted Marx’s view of capitalism, although he did not agree that the elite dominate through only ‘material’ determinants. Gramsci’s theory of hegemony ascertains that hegemonic groups in society seek to maintain dominance through the negotiated construction of an ideological consensus. Within branding, this ideological consensus can be seen in dominant corporate cultural orthodoxies (Holt & Cameron, 2010) of brand marketing and advertising. The subordinate brands within the market act in the interests of the dominant brands through negotiating the dominant ideology of the market as normal, therefore perpetuating current market standards (Holt & Cameron, 2010). This communicates to groups, such as

consumers, that the ideology is natural, and therefore is the legitimate choice (Gramsci, 1971). The prevailing ideologies of the market then become part of society through communicated brand narratives and are internalized by the majority of the population of consumers.

However, not all members of society agree with the hegemonic ideology (Gramsci, 1971), and this provides challenger brands with a foothold for creating commercial value from counter-hegemonic discourse. Challengers thrive on the practice of making these hegemonic ideologies seem unnatural in communication. They construct themselves as one of the select few in a subordinate position who struggle to create opposing ideologies to those of the dominant ones. Gramsci (1971) asserts that the organization of power within hegemonies is constantly in flux, that “what exists at a given time [is] a valuable combination of old and new, a momentary equilibrium of cultural relations corresponding to the equilibrium of social relations” (p.398). Ideologies are momentary and dependent on contexts of society. Therefore the cultural orthodoxies of the market are subject to change along with the shifting ideologies in culture (Holt & Cameron, 2010). Similarly, hegemonies are not permanent. The process of introducing an alternative ideology is described by Gramsci (1971) as a counter-hegemony, which provides alternatives to hegemonies that are considered the dominant values by the majority of society at a certain moment. The struggle to constantly redefine the normal meanings of everyday life is the way in which ideologies become a platform of dispute. The brand narratives of challenger brands represent this platform for dispute within our theoretical framework. Brand narratives provide a platform for brands to oppose the mainstream hegemony within their industries – through the discourse surrounding brand communication.

Foucault’s (1970) theories examine discourse as a sequence of signs, as semiotic constructs that assign and communicate specific meanings among objects, subjects, and statements in written and spoken discourse. Through discourse truth is constructed to affect our ideological views on society and embed rhetorical concepts that enable society’s views to take a certain form. Discourse systematically constructs ways of thinking, beliefs, and values, therefore legitimizing powers, constructed truth, ideologies, and how they are maintained within society (Foucault, 1972). It is through discourse, which constructs meaning, that identities for challenger brands are created. The identities in turn rest on the counter-hegemonic discourse that is encoded in culture and thus available as a salient ideological resource.

Brands are particularly important vehicles through which specific ideologies are promoted and naturalized (Holt, 2004). Building a challenger with opposing discourse to their brand’s category is a mode of cultural market segmentation based on trends or on consumer needs that were insufficiently addressed by large brands (Haxthausen, 2004). This provides the lens for a challenger brand to be seen in the context of challenging the dominant ideological hegemony. It is now businesses – hence their brands – that through discourse creation make their brand a

central resource in the negotiation of ideologies. Brand identities are formed and transported based on discourse (Holt, 2004). For challengers, it is essential to understand the construct of discourse in the context of counter-hegemony, as it is one crucial factor shaping this specific brand identity.

In summation, we posit that challenger brands rely on theory of counter-hegemonies that utilize ideological material. Through opposing mainstream ideologies in culture, the orthodoxies of saturated markets are disrupted (Holt & Cameron, 2010). This can be viewed as counter-hegemonic positioning, because these brands seem to challenge the hegemonic powers already in place, which have created and normalized the orthodox ideologies through their marketing. Thus, brands have become relevant ideology setters, doing so through encoding, narrative, and myth, which are needed to transmit the ideological material. These three tenets are examined in detail in the following section.

## **2.2. Narratives Behind Challenger Brands**

Narrative communications are designed by brands with the conscious or unconscious goal of affecting readers in specific ways (Herman, 2012). Scholars (Hiltunen, 2002; Schank, 1990; Weick, 1995; Woodside, Sood & Miller, 2008) assert that people think in stories rather than argumentative or paradigmatic form, which render narration exceedingly useful as a means to convey a desired message. Branding has recognized the substantial symbolic power of narratives and their connection to encoding ideology (Hall, 1980), archetypal myths (Holt, 2002; 2006; Barthes, 1971/1977; Morgan & Holden, 2012), and storytelling communications (Morgan, 2009; Smith, 2011; Woodside, Sood & Miller, 2008). These concepts are important to highlight within brand narratives as they construct the meaning behind brand identity and encode counter-hegemonic ideologies for challenger brands.

### **2.2.1. Brand Narratives**

More precisely described for challenger marketing, brand narratives are the brand stories that communicate the brand identity and disrupt the hegemonic ideology through encoding counter-hegemonic ideologies. Smith (2011) claims the aim of storytelling narratives in branding is to identify discourses that may have some persuasive power that generates strong culturally resonant responses in the consumer audience. The narrative element imperative in challenger branding is the production of conflict. This is seen in the pervasive challenger brand narrative of hero vs. monster (Morgan, 2009; Woodside, Sood & Miller, 2008), which is dominantly used in asserting counter-hegemonic tensions as a rhetorical route a brand may take towards establishing links with consumers. These conflicts of the hero vs. the monster construct a frame of identity for challenger brands. Challenger brands draw their success from the skill with which they weave stories of their brand, the hero, fighting monsters of diverse nature (Morgan, 2009; Woodside, Sood & Miller, 2008). The brands author themselves into stories in which they

heroically refuse to conform (McGinnis & Gentry, 2008). Brand narratives are the tool with which challengers can transmit the identity and the conflict defining them to their consumer audience.

### **2.2.2. Encoding**

In order for a narrative to be understood by the receiving audience, the creators must encode it in signs that are known and relevant to that audience. In this context, Stuart Hall's work has been central to the development of Marxist, Gramscian, and Foucauldian theories, covering ideological, hegemony, and discourse theory in the realm of cultural studies. Hall sees cultural negotiation as one main factor in influencing the adoption of ideologies. He considers hegemony as a way for culture to see ideology as actively encoded into cultural material through subtle discourses. Hall (1980) claims these narratives are created through a process of structured encoding. In order to encode a narrative effectively for recipients, the production process must be culturally encoded. For this to happen, Hall (1980) claims that those encoding the message need to operate within a set of codes that are culturally specific to those decoding it.

This encoding can rely on ideologies to either motivate a counter-hegemonic challenger brand narrative, or oppose the hegemonic narrative of the mainstream market. To effectively construct these narratives, it is crucial to encode them with ideological meaning that the consumer understands. Hall claims, "if no 'meaning' is taken, there can be no 'consumption'. If the meaning is not articulated in practice, it has no effect" (1980, p.128). In other words, if the narrative is not encoded properly during the brand communication process it will have no effect when consumed by audiences. This makes clear the relevance of cultural codes in marketing in general, and in such a culturally saturated approach as challenger branding in particular. In order for a well-crafted message to be encoded as though it appears natural to the brand identity, myth is often used by challenger brands as archetypal narrative.

### **2.2.3. Myth**

Myths represent culturally relevant codes useful in attaching meaning to a brand. Myth is particularly important in challenger branding because the identities draw from archetypes, allowing people to enact these mythical identities with the aid of commodities in everyday life. According to Barthes (1985), language and visual representations of 'signs' are semiological symbols that convey underlying and socially based meanings and messages in society. The process of building an ideology into a highly effective narrative necessitates the use of myth as communicators of a message through signs. Within the context of challenger brands, Holt (2006) claims myths are symbolic narratives that garner cultural power from their role in expressing identity. The power of brand narratives for challenger brands rest on the encoding of these myths through archetypes, and therefore they must be expertly constructed by challenger brand in order to be accepted as authentic identity communicators. Archotyping a brand creates a culturally



salient expression for that brand, as archetypes can be considered universally familiar prototypes or blueprints which infuse the brand with mythical essence and thus resonate with a vast majority of consumers (Mark & Pearson, 2001; Siraj & Kumari, 2011). This conceptualization connects strongly with Morgan and Holden's (2012) challenger types – those archetypes which embody a relational opposition, such as the rebel or pioneer, are highly relevant to challenger brand positioning, sometimes infused with tenets of the hero as they construct themselves as breaking up obstructions. Thus a challenger brand identity necessitates myth and narrative to transmit it in communication, relying on codes to make it comprehensible to the target audience.

### **2.3. The Challenger Brand Identity**

In our literature review of challenger brands, the branding concept's connection to narratives, myths, and encoded ideologies did not become sufficiently visible. This relates to the fact that research done in the field behind the branding of challenger brands is mainly practical and does not shed light on how cultural resources and codes play a role in the formation of challenger identities. This outlines our concern that there is a gap in literature concerning the positioning of challenger brand identities in a cultural context, and how these identities are communicated. Therefore the next section seeks to fulfil how challenger brands construct an identity through critique, moreover synthesizing other relevant challenger identity characteristics into a comprehensive identity framework, which can be found in Figure 2.

#### **2.3.1. Communication through Critique**

Researchers suggest there are two motivations behind the critique narrative present in the brand communication of challenger brands. The critique within challenger brand narratives is a part of the challenger brand identity, as their critique against the hegemony is a fundamental value these brands are founded on. The first motivation of critique is social transformation, aiming to fuel change within society as a whole, which due to its oppositional aim acts as an essential part of a challenger brand's communication strategy (Freundlieb, 2000; Hartmann & Honneth, 2006; Murray & Ozanne, 1991; Tadjewski, 2010). Contrasting the notion of critique as social change, Holt (2006) asserts a second motivation that corporate efforts of critique by brands are more often aimed at profiting from cultural ideologies. They exploit society's critical discourse as best they can via the techniques of ubiquity and proliferation described by Klein (2000), who claims critique is a mask brands wear in order to sell their products. Challenger brands may use both motives for critique – however, we posit that the second motivation is likely to be present in all cases, since commercial companies aim to profit from their marketing activities. Nonetheless, each of these approaches still needs to embody an ideology to become part of the brand identity.

Challenger brands rely strongly on the motifs provided by critique, converting them into ideological narratives broadcasting the brand's opposition of the hegemonic status quo. Thus by referencing critique, brands effectively position themselves as rebels and take advantage of that

myth's psychological attraction to consumers (Mark & Pearson, 2001; Smith, 2011). Critique offers an ample backdrop to forge resonant stories connecting with consumers, as it suggests to them that the consumption of a particular brand will aid in alleviating the hegemony that is being critiqued, therefore this conviction may help forge the relationship between consumers and the brand (Hartmann & Honneth, 2006). Challenger brands thus aim to construct themselves as the heroes working to right the wrongs pointed out in critical discourse within society. They manipulate critique into their brand communications as one rhetorical element shaping their narratives. Thus critique can be utilized specifically to illustrate the monster to be fought and sharpen the role of the game-changer (Klein, 2000), manifesting the challenger brand's supposed heroic role through it and creating a unique selling point. Critique is adopted as a symbol and a commercial tool by challenger brands, which arguably distorts it into something other than what the critique was originally intended for.

### **2.3.2. Challenger Brand Identity Framework**

As mentioned above, we did not come across any effort to construct a comprehensive theoretical model of a challenger identity. In this section, we seek to rectify this gap by first detailing how brands are conceptualized in general, and then providing our adaptation for a challenger context. The essence of brands has been described in the context of personality (Aaker, 1997) and identity (de Chernatony, 1999; Kapferer, 2012). One view we consider useful is Kapferer's (2012) assertion that brands are identity systems representing an essence that distinguishes the company from others (Reid, Luxton & Mavondo, 2005). Communication of this essence is therefore central to branding as a salient identity. Recent models examining brand identity (e.g. Kapferer, 2012; Madhavaram, Badrinarayanan & McDonald, 2005; Reid, Luxton & Mavondo, 2005) have incorporated the relation between brand and communications. However, models communicating a challenger brand's identity to consumers have only recently become a focus of increased academic attention (Madhavaram, Badrinarayanan & McDonald, 2005). We believe that a concrete challenger brand identity model will be useful in aiding stakeholders to grasp the nature of challenger brand identities and the communicative patterns they entail. The challenger identity model we propose (Figure 2) draws on de Chernatony's (1999) conceptualization and incorporates tenets of brand communication that other researchers have touched upon (Ghodeswar, 2008; Kapferer, 2012; Madhavaram, Badrinarayanan & McDonald, 2005). The following five points make up the identity model we have synthesized from the literature: presentation and personality, positioning and relationships, and brand vision and culture. These are made successful through branding discourse techniques, which are explored following the model.

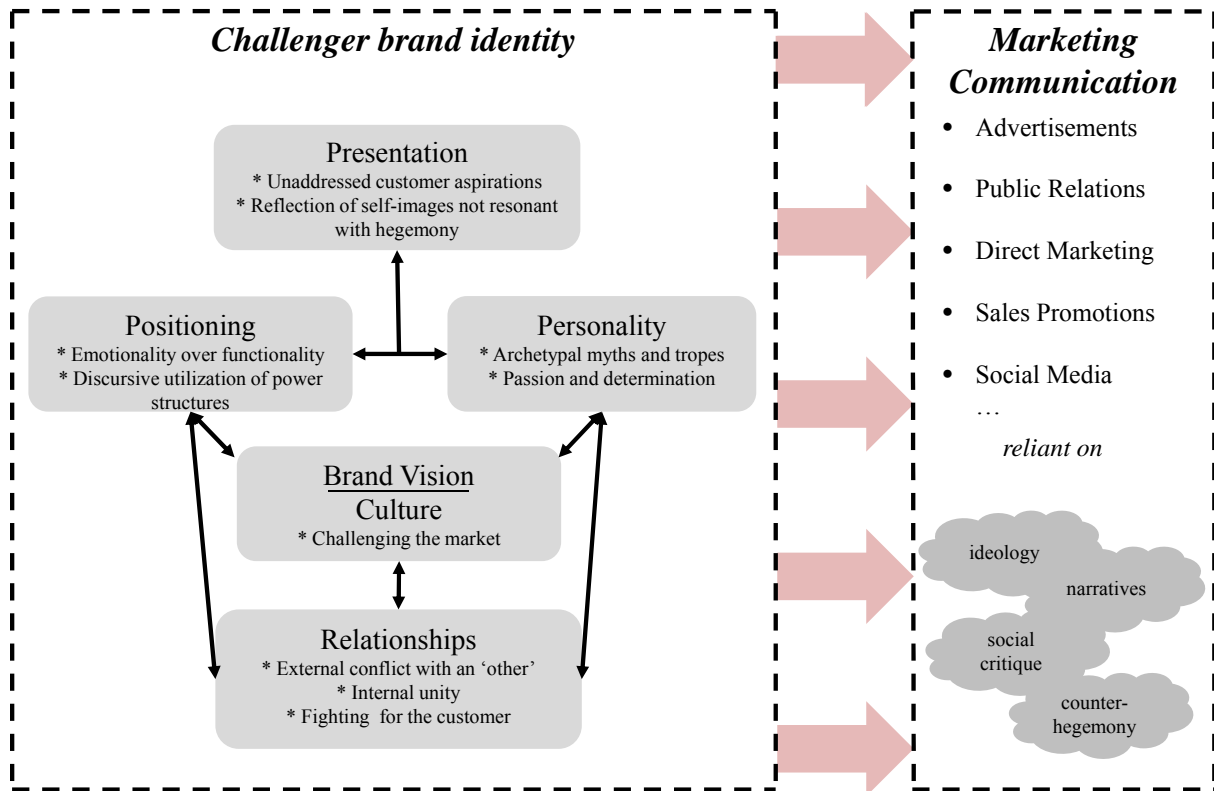


Figure 2: Challenger Identity Model (adapted from de Chernatony, 1999, p.171)

We will describe the five facets of a challenger brand identity in more detail, also elaborating on its connection to marketing communication.

### Presentation and Personality

The challenger brand is one that is railing against the prevalent order, a mover-and-shaker that intends to break ground for consumers and thus wants to garner their sympathy. As Morgan (2009) has elaborated, the challenger need not only present itself as the David to the order's Goliath. In fact, as described previously, we are more often dealing with a general conflict of 'hero vs. monster'. Two major elements to consumers' fascination with challengers are their drive towards empathy and their taste for heroism (Paharia et al., 2011). Both elements provide an essence for the presentation of the brand to the public, as well as help form significant archetypes for the brand personality.

In challenger personality, several archetypal myths play a crucial role. The challenger emulates the mythical outlaw rebel, opposing an oppressive force and in the process coming to represent a hero outside of these oppressing structures (Holt, 2002; 2004; Wertime, 2002; Woodside, Sood & Miller, 2008). Therefore a brand with a challenger positioning evinces in its communication a passion and determination to succeed (Paharia et al. 2011), and mythically frames feats that strive to portray the brand as charismatic (de Chernatony & Cottam, 2009). These characteristics are communicated as the presentation and personality to help form a relationship with consumers.

## **Relationships and Positioning**

As narratives vary to a great degree, there are few relationship patterns that remain the same for the majority of challengers. However, one aspect of relationships that is universal to challenger identities is the existence of an adversary. Challengers are generally constructed in relation to someone or something else and this opponent can easily be constructed from the market's hegemony (Cromie & Ewing, 2009; Thompson & Arsel, 2004; Thompson, Rindfleisch & Arsel, 2006). The challenger brand's relationships are therefore often dependent on creating a strategy against an opposing force. Even though not all challengers position themselves as David, they do play on power structures. Constructing their brand image as counter-hegemonic and possibly with fewer resources and privileges in comparison to the hegemony (Paharia et al., 2011) aids them in garnering support from consumers who view support of the struggling challenger as a badge of honour (McGinnis & Gentry, 2008). Morgan (2009) asserts that challenger strategies can be varied and extend far past the small-player vs. big-player chasm, which is acknowledged to carry dangers in the case of mainstream success for the brand. He elaborates that challenger narratives encompass a number of different positions often incorporating some form of myth. Much mythic positioning constructs an identity in direct opposition to one large competitor (Morgan & Holden, 2012).

## **Brand Vision and Culture**

A challenger brand generally has a driving mission or task, which is often drawn from critical societal or market discourse. In their vision, they tend to focus on establishing a "different view of the category" (Haxthausen, 2004, p.36), creating counter-hegemonic touch-points with customers. A challenger therefore needs to ensure continuity in challenging the market in order to maintain credibility of its vision and culture (de Chernatony & Cottam, 2009). The consistent philosophy of challenging the market should drive all activities within the challenger company, reflecting the effort to do things differently (Morgan, 2004).

According to Morgan (2009), values that are typically constructed into challenger brand identities include conscious naivety, aiming to avoid as much as possible the encumbrance of assumptions stemming from the status quo. Challengers are usually characterized by a strong, emotional point of view (Haxthausen, 2004; Morgan, 2009). They portray themselves as single-minded and willing to make sacrifices, even overcommitted to their mission. Social salience is achieved through expertly combining communications, publicity and social culture in their brand narrative (Smith, 2011). Therefore challengers strive to provide the consumer with symbols of re-evaluation, targeting the establishment and aiming to topple the complacency of beliefs within a marketplace. These symbols are very often drawn from public critiques that attack and disrupt mainstream norms or oppressive structures, and manipulated into forming the challenger brand identity.

### **2.3.3. Manipulating Counter-Hegemonic Discourse From Inside the Hegemony**

Because the challenger brand identity is formed through the previous five points, it is important to examine how the discourse forming the identity is manipulated as challenger brands grow within the market. As previously stated challenger brands utilize counter-hegemonic discourse to their advantage, positioning themselves to disrupt the hegemonic orthodoxies and marketing their products through unorthodox ideologies (de Chernatony & Cottam, 2009; Holt, 2004; Holt & Cameron, 2010). However, challenger brands that have been acquired by large corporations can be perceived as working towards constructing normative, hegemonic positions, rather than transformation through critique.

If brands who move into the hegemony maintain the same positioning and discourse, Paharia et al. (2011) imply that they are in danger of losing not only the credibility of their challenger narratives, inviting criticism and disregard from consumers, but to even neglect the oppositional missions that consumers have trusted them with. Arguably, the demotion of critique to a mere marketing tool is not what consumers intend when they give their patronage to a challenger brand, believing that they are emancipating themselves from dominant brands and helping in changing the market for the better (Cromie & Ewing, 2009). Although the critique incorporated at first criticizes hegemony, the end result entails the danger of being a perpetuation or even a reinforcement of the hegemony rather than a release from it. Therefore the critique may be in danger of missing its purpose, perhaps without the consumer even realizing it. To elicit the implications from this possible manipulation, we aimed to construct a critical realist methodological approach that allows the examination and comparison of challenger communication and its utilization of critique over time, as the brand comes under the incumbent's ownership and thus becomes part of the market hegemony.

### **3. Methodology**

This chapter will detail the approach we have taken to elicit answers to our research questions. We will explain the paradigms guiding our research and the design with which we gathered data. Further, we will elaborate on the different analysis methods and interpretation process, which we used to draw findings from this data. Moreover, we will provide an overview over the measures taken to ensure trustworthiness and reflexivity in our research process.

#### **3.1. Paradigms of Research**

The following philosophical paradigm of critical realism (Bhaskar, 1978; Easton, 2002) and its role within our emancipatory aim (Alvesson, 1994; Alvesson & Willmott, 1996; Dholakia, 1988; Tadajewski, 2010) provides the foundation for the research design and implementation process. The following two sections explore fundamental philosophical aims and provide rationales for our stance.

##### **3.1.1. Point of Departure**

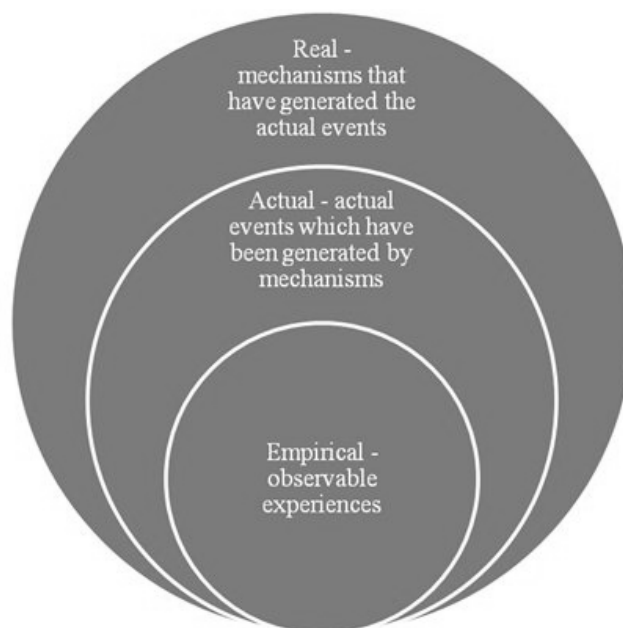
The philosophical point of departure for this thesis is rooted in critical realism (Bhaskar, 1978), which is an emancipatory ontological paradigm that has been explored to a limited extent in marketing (Easton, 2002). Technical and practical knowledge interests have been more influential than emancipatory interests, which are geared towards a deeper understanding of the power structures on which marketing operates (Tadajewski, 2010). As Dholakia (1988) points out, a fundamental tension persists in marketing research between academic trustworthiness and critical thought. Marketing is described as less self-critical than other business disciplines because it is known to reaffirm consumerism and the technocratic management of society (Alvesson, 1994; Alvesson & Willmott, 1996; Tadajewski 2010), therefore ignoring implications for wider stakeholders (Tadajewski, 2010). Because the purpose of the research is to shed some light on the discourse of challenger brands through a critical aim, we aim to provide deeper understanding to a group of wider stakeholders, such as academics, practitioners, and consumers, thus aiding their emancipation in dealing with brands in a more informed manner. We believe that examining challenger brand communications within the realm of marketing and its connection to hegemony and ideology has potential to inform the group of wider stakeholders through the emancipatory perspective of critical realism. Therefore the paradigm of critical realism fundamentally guided our research, represented by the questions:

1. What signs are employed to communicate counter-hegemonic themes shaping brand identities?
2. How do the counter-hegemonic themes in brand communications differ before and after a challenger brand has entered the hegemony?

In this vein, critical realism suggests the perspective that a challenger's development and market stance is contingent in some way on its relation to the hegemony, possibly even necessitating it as an ideological counterpoint. Our research intends to examine this discursive and structural relation between hegemonic and counter-hegemonic objects more closely by semiotically assessing the discourse in the selected challenger brands' communication, embedded in an analysis that explores the changing context of their status in relation to the hegemony. The present research philosophically aims to go beyond practical marketing knowledge interests by critically interrogating the existing structures of society by identifying the underlying structures and mechanisms that cause contingencies for a more socially emancipated (Tadajewski, 2010), instrumental perspective.

### 3.1.2. Philosophical Justification

Critical realism is distinct from the paradigms of positivism and interpretivism (Bryman & Bell, 2007; Zachariadis, Scott & Barrett, 2010) because the ontology exists independently of human knowledge and epistemologically comprises efforts to represent the intransitive (Al-Amoudi & Willmott, 2011). Realism posits that there is no single known reality (Anderson, 1986) and aims to discover the real mechanisms and relationships that lead to constructed knowledge, which advances informed emancipation (see Figure 3). Our epistemological position is characterized by moderate constructionism. Although constructionism is not usually associated with realism due to its claim that there is no outside reality that is not socially constructed, Al-Amoudi and Willmott (2011) point out that a moderate form of constructionism combines well with critical realism. It accepts that there are outside structures that exist independently of construction, but recognizes the relevance of construction in identifying a transitive social world.



*Figure 3: Ontological elements of critical realism (reproduced from Mingers and Willcocks, 2004, p.381)*

The central tenet of critical realism, then, is to identify not only contingent relationships and necessary relationships, but also the “mechanisms” with which contingent relationships “operate on necessary relationships” (Easton, 2002, p.107). In other words, the contingent forces which lead to a necessary relationship’s formation and determine its nature. Such mechanisms include the codes, myths, and ideologies that actors draw from within a society, impacting the specificity of constructs such as authenticity, counter-hegemony, and narratives within marketing. Counter-hegemonic challenger brand positioning is one variant of a contingent relationship between objects, which may have significant effects (Sayer, 1992) on the exchanges taking place on the market and on each of the objects.

Because critical realism is based on how relationships are utilized to promote certain constructions of knowing (Easton, 2002), this paradigm offers potential for our research on ideological structures and processes employed to create constructed brand communications within hegemonic contexts. Critical realism posits that the social world exists as concept-dependent and is subject to interpretation, which is influenced by an individual’s frame of meaning, social powers, or ways of acting (Sayer, 1992). This connects the philosophical stance with the theoretical underpinning of hegemony used within the frame of our research. Because social meaning is constructed through manufacturing knowledge and ‘ways of knowing’ in critical realism (Bhaskar, 1978), the synthesis with the social construction of naturalized meaning (Gramsci, 1971), promoted through myth, narrative, and visual signs (Barthes, 1957/1988; Foucault, 1970; Hall, 1980) provides a justification of the connections we draw regarding theories and emancipatory research.

### **3.2. Research Design**

The research design aims to elicit from empirical data the rhetorical and semiotic tools used in the presentation of the challenger brand identity, as well as their coherence and consistency over time in light of the transition from the counter-hegemony to hegemonic actor. To answer our research questions, we utilized discourse materials emitted by certain brands and examined them for meanings, while gathering supplementary data that fleshed out the cultural constructs from which these meanings stemmed. Thus we considered an approach most suitable which allowed us to analyse visual texts within brand discourse from an interdisciplinary approach (Weiss & Wodak, 2003). Semiotic analysis and conceptual content analysis were the methodological tools that we employed to uncover counter-hegemonic discourses, using critical theories as a lens with which to explore our research questions. Through this interdisciplinary scope we intended to identify which specific myths and counter-hegemonic signs the challenger companies used in their visual and textual narratives to convey the meaning of their constructed identities. The following sections explore the challenger brand selection, the empirical data we extracted from these brands, as well as a rationale for the selected campaigns we analysed. We follow with the



research process, explaining the purpose of each method as well as their relevant adaptations to our research context.

### **3.2.1. Challenger Brand Selection**

Our first task in gathering data for analysis was to choose the brands on which we would base our examination. We chose to focus on two brands based on a challenger mentality, but which had, at some point in their existence, been acquired into the hegemonic structure against which they had previously positioned themselves. Initially, we compiled a list of potential brands that fit the criteria, verifying and expanding this through the input of other researchers. Our next step focused on assessing the depth of data that we could gather on each of these possible brands in order to allow a well-founded analysis. We scanned corporate sources and additionally conducted database research to determine which brands would offer the richest data. Based on these premises, we chose to examine The Body Shop International plc. (TBS) and Innocent Drinks Ltd. (ID). The brands offer two cases for examination to assess scopes focused on Western European markets, which the markets originally addressed by the two companies and their geographic area of distribution, before and after being acquired by L'Oréal and Coca-Cola (Datamonitor, 2010b; Milmo, 2006). The selected brands are two exemplary cases of a counter-hegemonic challenger brand being assimilated into the hegemony (Milmo, 2006) and providing relevant discourses to examine, as evidenced by the brief brand history detailed below.

#### **Innocent Drinks**

Innocent Drinks Ltd., a small company out of the UK since 1999, has been described as the most innovative challenger brand in the beverage industry in Europe (Datamonitor, 2007). In only four years, Innocent became the fastest growing food and drink company in the UK, with turnover growing from £0 to £10.6 million from 1999 to 2003 (Datamonitor, 2008). By 2011, Innocent had a 90% share of the take-home smoothies market share and annual turnover of more than £100 Million a year (Marketing Magazine, 2011). ID is known for opposing dominating cultural orthodoxies of the market space. They pride themselves on being an innovative company started on the fringe of the health trend, amidst the dominant force of unhealthy fast-food corporations.

ID is seen as a challenger for going against the grain of conventional manufacturing companies by having a distinctive non-corporate brand voice (Datamonitor, 2010b; Simmons, 2008). The company's basic principles focus “on how the company differs from the crowd, while providing a natural and healthy product” (Datamonitor, 2007, p.2). This counter-hegemonic strategy began as an alternative to the corporate voice, which ID constructs as the mainstream corporate hegemony (Innocent Drinks, 2013). The company's dominant counter-hegemonic narratives are perceptible in their alternative marketing strategies through unique advertising, the company's environmental saviour archetypal image, and non-corporate strategy (Simmons, 2008). ID joined Coca-Cola in 2009 and were criticised for selling their company to a manufacturing giant that

produces unhealthy drinks (Datamonitor, 2007). However, ID still claims their main aim is to provide consumers with a healthy, natural product (Innocent Drinks, 20103). The next selected challenger brand is more renowned than ID, however contributes a similar oppositional stance to mainstream incumbent ideologies.

### **The Body Shop International**

The Body Shop International plc. is a company with another exemplary challenger brand identity (Morgan, 2009; Wallace & Brown, 1996). Since its UK founding in 1976 (Chesters, 2011), the market approach chosen by the brand has been characterized by the “impetus to change” (Chapman, 2006, p.16) and “values challenging conventional market norms” (de Chernatony & Cottam, 2009, p.78). Over the years TBS has successfully identified new opportunities to depart from the cultural orthodoxies of its time. It has recognized the customers’ aspirations and self-images that were not being fulfilled by the hegemonic actors within the beauty industry and was able to construct an emotional counterpoint as the first company to satisfy them with a natural focus and a clear moral stance (de Chernatony, 1999; Marati, 2012; Roddick, 1994a). This ethical positioning has also helped the company develop a personality that resonates with consumers.

In their brand personality, they have incorporated such archetypes as the hero and the rebel, initially personified by founder Anita Roddick (Entine, 1995; Kaplan, 1995; Morgan, 2009; Roddick, 1994a). The brand managers have defined the company in relation to the hegemonic ‘other’ of the cosmetics industry, continuously staging themselves as an unconventional challenger critiquing what they claim that hegemony to represent – artificiality, business without values, and deceitful exploitation (Roddick, 1994a; 2001; The Body Shop, 1997a). The communicated mission has been to “dedicate [their] business to the pursuit of social and environmental change” (The Body Shop, 1997b, inside front cover) through a supposed culture of activism, social campaigns, and environmental causes. TBS was acquired in 2006 by the world's largest cosmetics producer, L’Oréal (Milmo, 2006), offering a relevant case for examination to assess within our methodological design.

### **3.2.2. Empirical Data Selection**

We executed a planned systematic approach to data collection, initially planning which kinds of qualitative documents we intended to use and then systematically gathering them (Bryman & Bell, 2007). The campaigns and their individual visuals may be referred to as ‘texts’ in the following. For the sake of validity, we used all public texts of discourse from each campaign that were available from company sources to identify the narrative materials that the brand used in their counter-hegemonic discourse. We chose the following campaigns as they reflect best the brand identity and positioning that the companies were striving to convey at each point in time, leading to an ideologically saturated composition of visual and textual signs in each campaign.

### *The Body Shop Campaign Selection*

Throughout its existence TBS has launched numerous large-scale brand communications campaigns. TBS's campaigns are split into three categories aimed at communicating the brand positioning, products, and specific cause campaigns. From this multitude of data, we have chosen to use brand campaigns from print advertising that position the TBS brand, as these campaigns focus on brand identity and thus offer the richest insight into their challenger positioning. Within the brand campaigns, we selected one pre-acquisition campaign from 1997 and one post-acquisition campaign from 2011/2012 for analysis. Each was selected from the entirety of TBS print campaigns because they displayed most emblematically the positioning that TBS was pursuing prior to and after its acquisition with L'Oréal.

The first text, the 1997 'Ruby' campaign, was selected due to the rich ideological material that opposed hegemonic ideal beauty conventions within society. The campaign represents a clear play, both visually and textually, on the dominant marketing exploitation of women's insecurities and reflects societal discourse on beauty ideals (Roddick, 2001). The campaign consisted of three visual advertisements, playing on the unrealistic beauty ideals of Barbie (Roddick, 2001). The 'Ruby' prints were distributed in print in 1997 throughout TBS store windows. The campaign ran nine years prior to TBS's acquisition by L'Oréal, and twenty-one years after they grew out of the niche market, although they still aimed to maintain the small grassroots activist image of the family run company (Roddick, 2001).

The second text, the 2011/2012 'Beauty with Heart' campaign, was aimed at repositioning the brand to maintain its activism identity, authenticity, and founding story after criticism regarding the acquisition and their entry into the L'Oréal hegemony in 2006, as well as sceptical reactions to some environmental claims made by TBS (Marati, 2012). The 'Beauty with Heart' campaign has been selected due to its major brand positioning effort. Moreover, it is the largest TBS brand image campaign after the acquisition by L'Oréal (The Body Shop, 2013a). Within this campaign, since it is temporally extensive and does incorporate some product launches, it was not feasible to use all materials. We therefore strove to collect as much material as possible from corporate sites. To mirror the richness of data available, we chose to expand our collection from visuals to include some verbally dominated materials, seen in section 5. The campaigns were accessed online from TBS's website (The Body Shop, 2013b).

We are aware that our textual choice reflects subjective values of researchers during analysis, and are conscious that the choices of TBS campaigns reflect our understanding and critique of the hegemonic ideology being challenged. These campaigns were chosen with the understanding that they reflect possible differences in positioning and communication that may take place when a challenger enters the hegemony. We understand TBS to be utilizing the beauty industry as their

oppositional hegemon, providing an ideology of aesthetics and beauty (Hall & Salupo Rodriguez, 2003; Sekayi, 2003) that can be opposed to the challenger's advantage.

### ***Innocent Drinks Campaign Selection***

The second brand examined, ID, emitted two large-scale advertising campaigns. The first, intended to create brand awareness for the then new challenger and its smoothie range, consisted of four visuals aligned under the theme 'Made by Nature' (Innocent Drinks, 2013). These were distributed in print on outdoor billboards in the UK in 2001, two years after the brand's inception and eight years before its incorporation into the hegemony. The company was at that point still quite small, resulting in advertising visuals that were ideologically rich and acclaimed for their authenticity and adherence to the essence behind the product (Zukin, 2006).

The second campaign, 'Save the Peckish', was produced in 2011, and was aimed at repositioning the brand to maintain its authenticity and relevance in the face of increased competition within the beverage industry, specifically in health drinks (Innocent Drinks, 2013). This repositioning was also due to the less publicised association with hegemon Coca-Cola, and critical reactions regarding the health claims made by innocent's product range (Smithers, 2007). Following Coca-Cola's acquisition of a majority stake and their entry into the hegemony in 2009, the three 'Save the Peckish' campaign visuals were distributed in 2011 via print media, television advertising, mobile applications, as well as social online media. However, this analysis focuses on the relevant print media. The Press team at ID has provided the print images from both campaigns digitally. We understand ID as claiming to challenge the industrial food and drinks industry at large as the hegemony marketing pre-packaged foods based on additives and preservatives (Pollan, 2006), denying the customers the choice of truly healthy such foods.

As researchers, we acknowledge that the choice of materials was influenced by our educational background in the field of marketing and branding, as well as our understanding of challenger brands and the nature of the hegemonic ideology being challenged. Nonetheless we, as members of the Western European culture to which these materials were addressed, could suppose ourselves to operate on similar cultural codes as the brands' target audience. The following codes are assumed as the dominant hegemonic codes within our cultural framework of understanding when performing the analysis.

### **3.2.3. Campaign Operating Codes**

Critical realism assumes we operate from external codes (Bhaskar, 1978), and the theory of hegemony operates from naturalized dominant codes of society (Gramsci, 1971). To make clear the codes that influence us as researchers, and the audience as receptors of communications, we considered it essential to connect our method of analysis with a framework of codes that convey the hegemonic context relevant to the campaigns. Because the campaigns visuals have dense

meanings behind them, according to historic, economic, and social aspects, the narrative must be understood in terms of a whole system of dominant codes. The following codes determine what cultural frameworks the campaigns were operating in for our framework of analysis, within the context of a Western society.

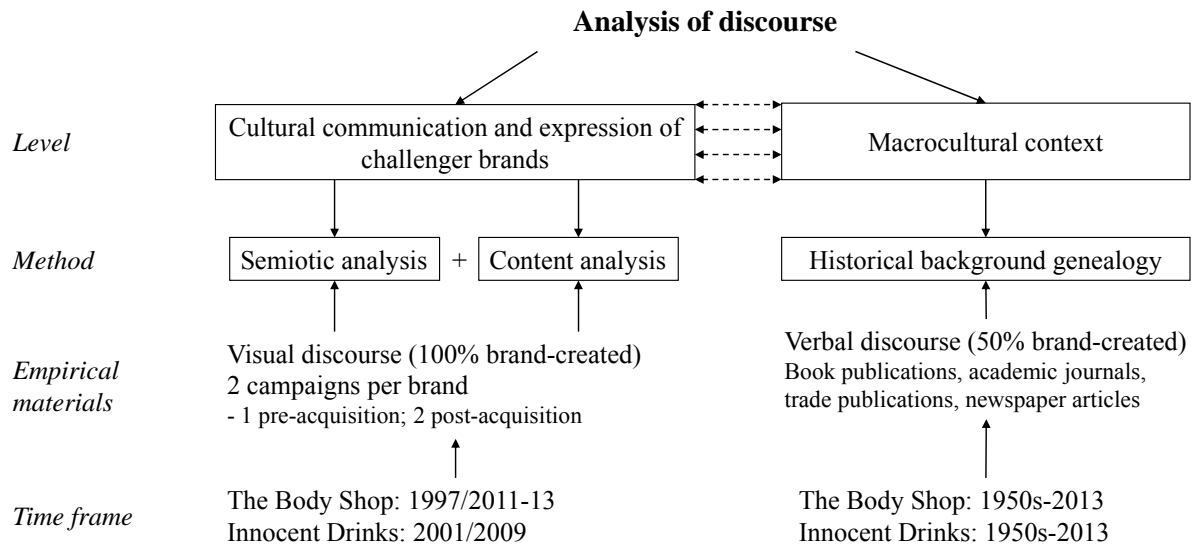
The code TBS's 'Ruby' and 'Beauty with Heart' are operating under is a culturally shaped framework that within Western culture the ideal standard of beauty rests in Eurocentric Western beauty standards, that females should be tall, extremely thin, fair-haired, and subsume Caucasian, Western European facial structures (Bordo, 1994; Butler, 1993; Hall & Salupo Rodriguez, 2003). This hegemony has been made natural to our culture through the construction of media, advertising, the cosmetic industry, and the gender-ruled toy industry (Bordo, 1994; Butler, 2004; Hall & Salupo Rodriguez, 2003) within Western society.

The cultural code ID's 'Made by Nature' and 'Save the Peckish' operate from is rooted in the Industrial Food Complex (Goodyear, 1997; Pollan, 2006; Simmons, 2008). The complex is considered the dominant paradigm for the Western diet today (Pollan, 2006) and is exemplified by industrially produced, unhealthy, chemical and preservative-laden, packaged foods that have been identified as one cause for numerous health problems in Western society (Pollan, 2006; Simmons, 2008). This code provides a framework in which convenient fast-food and packaged foods have been naturalized.

The last cultural code, which all the campaigns are operating within, is the dominant hegemony of consumerism (Campbell, 2005). As researchers we are conscious that consumption is the main tool that enriches capitalism and allows neoliberal ideology of Western society to remain the hegemonic structure (Allen & Anderson, 1994; Campbell, 2005; Chiapello & Boltanski, 2007). Analysing the campaigns through this code provides a hegemonic framework to critique within, therefore making us able to analyse from codes of the neoliberal cultural hegemony against counter-hegemonic discourse the campaigns are perceived to operate within.

### **3.3. Research and Analysis Process**

In line with our critical realist perspective, our research design was based on an external approach, empirically examining data from an outside perspective to allow some degree of emancipation from the brands' intention and engineered meanings in their communication data. As made apparent by the literature review in this thesis, limited research is available in relation to challenger brand identities and their communications. To aid in theory development, we chose an interdisciplinary approach utilizing triangulation of a historical background genealogy, semiotics, and content analysis to identify emergent themes in findings from our data set (Bryman & Bell, 2007; Kempster & Parry, 2011; Oliver, 2012). The pictorial representation below details our approach in eliciting both semiotic and context insights from the data available to us.



**Figure 4: Methodological Process (authors' own)**

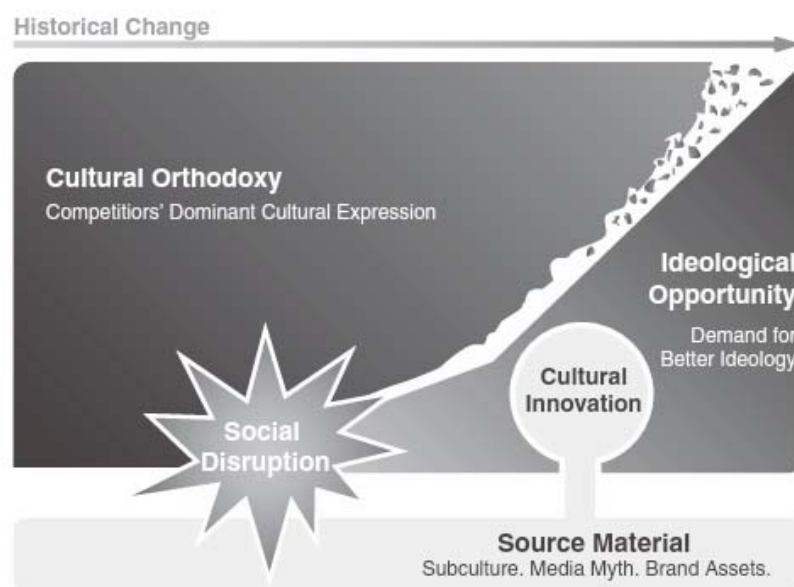
The research was conducted in the following four phases of research over five weeks: firstly, we employed a historical genealogy to shed light on the cultural context from which these brands drew their signs, then we conducted a semiotic analysis of the campaigns chosen. To supplement this semiotic perspective, we further incorporated a conceptual content analysis. Finally, we triangulated all findings elicited from these methods and interpreted them in an iterative process. Our exact approach to each of these tools will be detailed in the following section.

### 3.3.1. Historical Background Genealogy

To more fully inform the understanding of market orthodoxies and cultural ideologies specific to the beauty industry behind TBS and the beverage industry behind ID, we conducted a background genealogy adapted from Holt & Cameron's (2010) Cultural Innovation Model, intended to elicit the cultural context in which the challenger brands marketed their brand communications. We examined industry and public discourse from the times in which the brands' campaigns and transition into the hegemony took place in order to attain a deeper understanding of the brands' genealogy (Holt, 2006) and the sociocultural structures in which signs and meanings from the four campaigns are to be placed (Holt & Cameron, 2010). This was to avoid a narrow focus and simplistic current-perspective interpretation of data in our semiotic analysis (Weiss & Wodak, 2003).

Because the research time period spanned ten weeks, the short-term approach of the Cultural Innovation Model is more relevant to our research questions, as we did not have immediate access to relevant materials before 1976 or 1999, respectively. Moreover, Holt and Cameron's focus on the cultural dimensions is relevant to brand discourse. Ideologies are also considered a highly relevant concept by these two authors, and these are communicated by myths through sourced discourses (Holt & Cameron, 2010). Their work, in line with Hall (1980), also stresses the necessity of understanding codes to discern intended meanings. To generate a successful

cultural expression for a brand, these scholars imply that ideologies, myths, and cultural codes must be matched and adapted to what is resonant in consumer culture at the given time, giving a product or brand cultural rather than functional value and thus escaping mainstream orthodoxies (Holt & Cameron, 2010). We concur with the authors' claim that cultural innovation is a more sustainable advantage than technological or functional value innovation. Moreover, we identified a strong connection between the concepts of myth and ideology as proposed by Holt and Cameron and the ideological myths visible in the signs of our advertisements, enabling us to triangulate and connect our two analytic steps (Barthes, 1957/1988; Chandler, 2002; Holt & Cameron, 2010). Figure 5 shows Holt and Cameron's model in which a brand scans for ideological opportunities in order to disrupt the cultural orthodoxy through a counter-ideology, enabled by source material such as myths.



*Figure 5: Cultural innovation theory (reproduced from Holt & Cameron, 2010, p.12)*

For our historical analysis of the sociocultural constructs in which the brands were operating at the time they emitted their campaigns, we attempted to be as thorough as was feasible. We researched via several academic databases with generic terms relating to each brand, such as “body shop international” up to 2006 for the pre-acquisition period for TBS, yielding 918 results on Lund University’s EBSCOHost platform, and “body shop l’oréal” for the post-acquisition period from 2006, yielding 127 results. We scanned the publications resulting from our search and eliminated duplicates, documents shorter than one page or in other languages than English, those that did not have particular relevance for the industry in question, or those that did not focus on the topic of branding.

To ensure a reasonable level of saturation and that a comparable depth of data was being used, we cross-examined the collected data and opted to consider in depth 26 pieces of public discourse, 13 of which contained some degree of brand-created discourse, and 13 of which were

predominantly from sources external to the brand. As is accepted practice (de Chernatony & Cottam, 2009), we both separately sorted and evaluated the data for each brand, after which we discussed and chose the texts to be incorporated into the sociocultural analysis directly. Notably, there is a multitude of further sources that we incorporated to an extent, as suggested by our references, to further inform our perspectives. Bibliographies detailing the 26 documents used specifically for each of the brands are provided in Appendix B.

### ***Rationale***

Our rationale for the background genealogy is to provide a more in-depth and rich account of how the brands came to use the signs which they relied on to communicate their positioning through eliciting the historical context around the industries. Historical analysis of discourse is a field of increasing importance whose basic premise is to study historical pieces of discourse with the intent to identify the sociocultural background (Brinton, 2001; Weiss & Wodak, 2003). This intention gives the field a high general importance in answering questions like the ones posed in this thesis. Holt (2006) provides a good starting point for this endeavour. He points out that while advertisement analysis has been the primary method of choice where cultural and ideological effects of a brand were examined, only studying advertisements independently leads to inferential leaps in an analysis. Because the context of the situation is not noted, it impacts the trustworthiness of the results.

We considered it paramount to depart from the long temporal scope and strictly linguistic focus that often characterizes historical discourse analysis (Brinton, 2001), and adapted the Cultural Innovation Model concept of Holt and Cameron (2010), who explored the significance of utilizing historical discourse for a successful sociocultural strategy for innovations. Based on Holt's (2006) concept of a brand genealogy, the work on cultural innovation is of high relevance for challenger branding with its reliance on the cultural environment, cultural source material and constructed relation to other dominant marketing actors. It is helpful in making evident the cultural structures that shaped the brands and the societal constructs that they relied on in communicating their own identities. The following section will detail more closely how we adapted the method for our specific purpose.

### ***Method Adopted***

We adapted the Cultural Innovation Model to identify opportunities for ideological counter-hegemonic disruptions of TBS and ID against the dominant cultural orthodoxies. Therefore our research concentrated on what dominant hegemonic orthodoxies were present in the market, and how the brands broke through these orthodoxies with counter-hegemonic ideological disruptions. We adapted the six steps Holt and Cameron (2010) outline in their Cultural Innovation Model to parallel with our approach of an ideological context. We identified the temporally dominant cultural orthodoxies of the Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) industries the brands operate



in, followed by the examination of historical ideological disruptions. This involved detailing the ideological materials that the brands adopted to take advantage of these ideological disruptions, aimed at identifying the source materials employed. Again, we conducted the background research separately and then came together to discuss our tentative results, going through several discussion loops. Due to the amount of data examined and the constraint of time, we refrained from bringing in other graduate researchers in this step. After creating an in-depth contextual understanding, we progressed to the next step of our analysis.

### **3.3.2. Semiotic Analysis**

The second phase of research analysed the campaigns of the brands from a semiotic perspective (Barthes, 1971/1977; Mick, 1986). As our primary method of analysis, we chose to employ semiotic analysis to identify the symbolic messages and meanings embodied by the brand campaigns (Barthes, 1971/1977; Eco, 1979; Holt, 2006; Tsotra et al., 2004). This aided in identifying and understanding the rhetoric patterns that were used in brand narratives. Our semiotic analysis strove to uncover the intentions that are encoded by its producers through rich exploration of meaning behind the signs (Hall, 1980; Langrehr & Caywood, 1995). It is suitable to provide answers to our research questions because it has the potential to inform an emancipated understanding of the meanings which are created, discerned, and naturalized (Mick, 1986) by challenger brand communication, allowing us to identify what role cultural critique plays in the creation and communication of meaning for this branding concept. Semiotics is concerned with meaning and its transportation – more precisely, it is the study of signs. The communication of signs is not simply a conduit of meaning-producing events (McQuarrie & Mick, 1992), it is also a process that establishes a reality (Mick, 1986). This reality creation is enlightened through two semiotics camps.

The first, originating from de Saussure, considered semiotics a dyadic relationship termed signification (Chandler, 2002), in which a sign was composed of a signifier – a visible representation, and a signified – which meaning was attributed (McQuarrie & Mick, 1992; Ogilvie & Mizerski, 2011) to this representation. The second camp, established around Peirce, perceived signs in the semiotic sense as triadic rather than dyadic, encompassing three elements: the sign (conveying an idea), its object (the subject matter which the sign refers to), and its interpretant (Chandler, 2002; Grayson & Martinec, 2004). Notable scholars (Chandler, 2002; Mick et al., 2004; Weiss & Wodak, 2003) have split this camp of semiotics up into three levels of relationships. The first level, semantics, focuses on the relation between signs and the objects to which they refer, such as their denotative connection (Chandler, 2002). At the next level, syntactics examines the relations between signs and other signs, based on structures (Chandler, 2002). Finally, the level of pragmatics seeks to inform on the relations between signs and the agents communicating through their use (Mick et al., 2004).

The meanings of signs can be characterized into three different spheres of signification. As Chandler (2002) notes, the initially recognized two spheres are the level of denotation, which is the surface meaning of a signifier, such as a cross. The second sphere of connotation is the associative, the implied meaning of a signifier, such as a cross representing religion according to Western cultural codes (Barthes, 1971/1977; Langrehr & Caywood, 1995). A third order of signification contributing to meaning has been established by Barthes (1985), who added a level termed myth or ideology, which is created out of the combination of denotation and connotation and can be seen as the extension of metaphor (Chandler, 2002). Signs and the codes relevant to their understanding connote concepts that underpin a certain world-view (Chandler, 2002). They serve to create myths and ideologies while also playing a significant role in maintaining them. The examination of this order of signification has been referred to as social semiotics (Chandler, 2002; Vannini, 2007) and is a critical focus in our analysis. Nonetheless, semiotic analysis on the whole lends itself to a critical marketing study (McQuarrie & Mick, 1996).

### ***Rationale***

Semiotic analysis seemed a particularly fitting tool for several reasons. Firstly, the usefulness of semiotics in examining the content of advertisements has been upheld by a number of notable scholars (Barthes, 1985; McCracken, 1986; Mick, 1986), re-emerging in recent years as a promising perspective on constructed ideological meanings (Ogilvie & Mizerski, 2011). Secondly, meanings and signs are closely connected, as meaning requires a recognizable conduit to be transported from marketer to consumer (Langrehr & Caywood, 1995; van Mulken, 2006). Thus, in identifying and interpreting the signs used in a text, as is the approach in semiotics, we strove to enable ourselves to identify the underlying meanings that these texts created and propagated. This brings us to the third aspect, which suggests semiotics as a meaningful way to answer our research questions regarding challenger brand communication. Due to its potential to examine the changes of meaning as represented by signs in advertisements and to connect these signs with the cultural context from which they stem, semiotics thus has the potential to critically inform us about ideological cultural meanings utilized for branding purposes (Vannini, 2007). With communication that subverts and utilizes cultural meaning, the communication establishes the challenger as representing certain ideologies through the signs used and the codes that these are based on. Thus we believe an evaluation of these signs will allow a new perspective on how challenger branding utilizes societal and market structures to its advantage in communication.

### ***Method Adopted***

We adopted an approach to analysing our data informed both by Saussurean and Peircean concepts, although Peircean theories were of particular relevance as they extend semiotics past language. Relying on these concepts and Chandler's (2002) model for semiotic analysis, we constructed a detailed step-by-step analysis process through which we evaluated the visuals. This model entailed identification of the individual signifiers is based on Schröder's (1993) typology of signs and McQuarrie & Mick's typology of rhetoric figures (see Appendix D). The model aided in the deconstruction of the campaigns into their denotative, connotative, and mythological significations, as well as an examination of the relations between signs and object and the levels of sign combination and sign substitution.

Our semiotics approach has been adapted beyond structuralism to include the third level of social semiotics (Barthes, 1985; Mick et al., 2004), forming a stronger link with our research purpose to understand counter-hegemonic discourse through socially constructed meanings, formed through ideology and mythic codes. Moreover, to parallel with the philosophical paradigm of critical realism, which understands signs as constructions of meanings (Bhaskar, 1978), we both examined each piece of text separately according to these guidelines, eliciting possible meanings from the data and, in a next step, discussed them with each other, and other graduate researchers to minimize subjective bias in the interpretation of data. To further give this data validity, we extended our research to incorporate conceptual content analysis.

#### **3.3.3. Conceptual Content Analysis**

The third phase included a conceptual content analysis aimed at discovering emergent patterns in the data. Content analysis is useful for the identification of communication themes within a data set or group of documents (Berelson, 1952). Within conceptual content analysis it is possible to determine how many times certain themes appear in a set of data (Bryman & Bell, 2007). Once these choices about irrelevant information are made, the next step is to code the text. Once the coding is done, the researcher examines the data and attempts to draw whatever conclusions and generalizations are possible.

#### ***Rationale***

Through providing an overview of the quantifiable aspects of the themes used, conceptual content analysis aided us in establishing the existence and frequency of concepts quantifiably represented by words, phrases, or visual themes in our texts (Bryman & Bell, 2007; Berelson, 1952). Content analysis was used in our research to triangulate the results with the semiotic analysis. For the benefit of accessibility for the reader, we structured the analysis according to a number of themes, which emerged from the overall dataset for each campaign. These are reflected in our analysis section.

### ***Method Adopted***

A conceptual content analysis was performed using the coding program HyperResearch. We coded all textual and visual material on the recurring operational codes using the program, in order to interpret the findings alongside a triangulation of results with the semiotic analysis (see Figure 4). First, we decided upon the level of analysis to be conceptual (Berelson, 1952), examining only the frequency of codes that occurred in the campaigns. This involves developing a pre-defined or interactive set of concepts and categories (Berelson, 1952). We chose 19 different concepts to code for, situated within two groups: a) ideology and b) stand-in signs which represented the ideologies (see Appendix C). These were decided based on the concrete occurrences of visuals and texts within the campaigns.

After the set of codes were chosen, the coding process was performed on themes of frequency, wherein the exact amount of times a stand-in was used, as well as the exact occurrences a reference to an ideology was used. The validity of frequency was maintained as stand-ins for different forms of the same ideology were noted (Berelson, 1952). Developing the set of rules around coding based on visual and textual stand-ins ensured the coding was consistent throughout the text (Bryman & Bell, 2007).

During the next step we coded the visuals and text. Afterwards, it was possible to examine the frequencies within the data and draw inferences based on the codes. Appendix C exhibits the code frequency reports, generated by the HyperResearch coding program. They provide a visual of the quantitative recurrences of stand-in codes and ideological themes. Based on this triangulation, we interpreted our data set to elicit findings in a hermeneutic, iterative approach.

#### **3.3.4. Interpretation**

We interpreted the resulting body of qualitative documents using a hermeneutic approach (Alvesson, 1994; Thompson, 1997; Thompson, Rindfleisch & Arsel, 2006). This was based on forming initial conceptualizations of meanings within the campaign text, which were continuously challenged and revised in reference to the context surrounding the empirical material (Thompson, 1997). As the hermeneutic approach examines micro elements in a text, within the context of the macro phenomenon (Alvesson, 1994), our interpretation of social discourses within the campaigns examined the micro semiotic signs within the macro context of the mainstream orthodoxies identified in the historical background genealogy, as well as the context of the hegemonic codes we identified in the method. We ensured that this iterative process also extended to a revision based on themes emerging from the analyses conducted. Therefore the research design has elicited from empirical data the rhetoric used in manipulation of the challenger identity and its validity and sustained authenticity over time. Working with this hermeneutic approach provided us with the opportunity to perform a discussion at the end of the analysis phase, which synthesizes and triangulates (Bryman & Bell, 2007) the themes and

meanings discovered during the phases of research. In this process of analysis and interpretation, we strove to consistently maintain reflexivity and ensure trustworthiness.

### **3.4. Reflexivity**

The following section outlines our research ethics and efforts at trustworthiness, focusing on inherent biases that we aimed to address through triangulation and awareness of our limitations.

#### **3.4.1. Ethics**

In order to address the bias inherent in our work as researchers, we aimed to triangulate our data by using multiple analysis methods and data sources (Denzin, 1970), to allow us to “get beneath the surface to understand and explain why things are as they are” (Zachariadis, Scott & Barrett, 2010, p.18). In other words, we tried to uncover the underlying mechanisms and structures that contribute to our realities. Triangulation is particularly important to our emancipatory aim, but also to the credibility of our critical realist stance in which subjectivity is present, but must be supplemented by the drive to understand universal structures apart from it (Bhaskar, 1978). We aimed to retain awareness of our subjectivity and move our research beyond it by being open to critical inquiry regarding our personal viewpoints and agendas in the project. In addition to discussions between ourselves as researchers, we continuously sought exchange with the supervisor and other students, addressing contrasting viewpoints to increase reflexivity on our own perspectives and subjective biases so that we were able to acknowledge or eliminate their influence on the research. Moreover, we strove to maintain reflexivity and reduce impact of personal bias on results by ensuring that the analyses of data were always conducted separately and then synthesized in discussion.

#### **3.4.2. Trustworthiness**

Our research was intended as a critical analysis of prevalent uses of discourse and critique by the brands in their effort to win sales through utilizing counter-hegemonic contexts. The project entailed several steps of decisive selection of empirical data, first selecting specific brands as challengers, then selecting campaigns to examine, and finally choosing which discourse material to incorporate into our sociocultural analysis. We were aware of the danger of subjectivity impeding the choices made and thus resulting in biased data. More precisely, we acknowledged that the choice of materials was influenced by our educational background in the field of marketing and branding, as well as our understanding of challenger brands and the nature of the hegemonic ideology being challenged. In choosing the brands we examined and the campaigns we analysed for this thesis, we proceeded carefully and iteratively, seeking and incorporating into our progress the input of other graduate researchers and academics at Lund University wherever feasible. We consciously chose not to incorporate internal perspectives such as company interviews to move away from the practice-based perspective that characterizes most

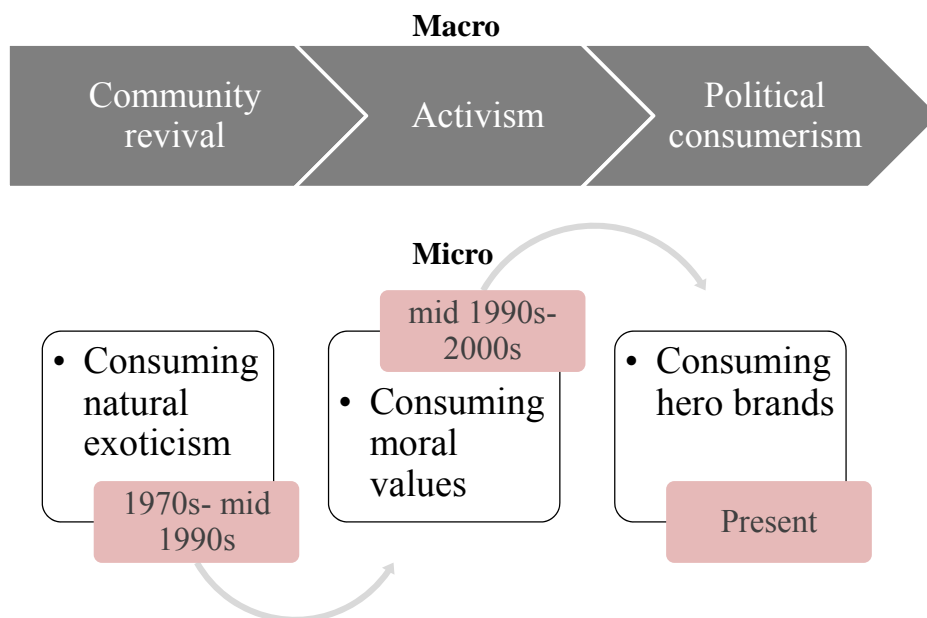
marketing research today (Tadajewski, 2010) and specifically the efforts relating to challenger branding. Moreover, due to the time constraints upon this project, we did not consider it feasible to incorporate into this thesis research on consumer reactions or attitudes to the meanings and symbols communicated by challenger brands.

This elaboration concludes our method section. In the next chapter, we will outline the relevant societal context in which TBS and ID were operating and which hegemonies they disrupted and utilized to construct their identity in communications. As described in 3.3.1., this intends to support an in-depth understanding of the semiotic tools and counter-hegemonic themes we identify in our findings for the semiotic analysis, addressed in chapter 5.

## 4. Historical Background Genealogy

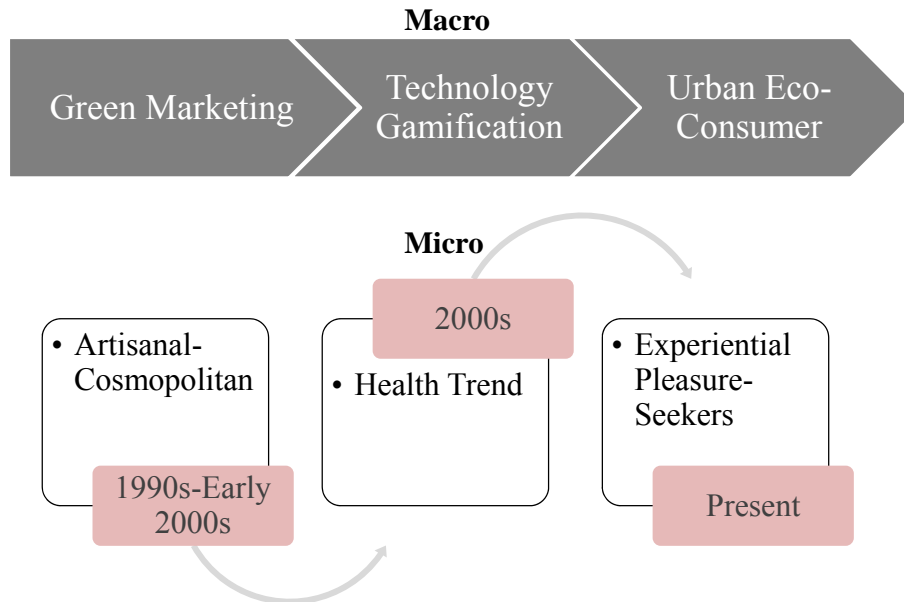
In order to examine the cultural changes in brand marketing throughout the history of TBS and ID, this historical sociocultural background will provide a summary of how each brand has adapted their brand narratives to suit the shifting cultural disruptions and utilize emerging dissatisfaction with the orthodoxy hegemony in consumer culture to their commercial advantage. The adapting discourses of both challenger brands have captured the minds and cultural shifts of consumers in the West.

Since 1976, TBS has utilized ethical doctrines as a form of salvation (see Bourdieu, 1984), wherein their organizational identity has rooted their ideological positioning (Wallace & Brown, 1996). However, in 2006 their entry into the hegemony created an identity issue necessitating repositioning (Research and Markets, 2012). ID has been a challenger brand with a grassroots community-driven identity in the packaged beverage industry since 1999 (Datamonitor, 2010a). However, similar to TBS, their success was impacted in 2009 when Coca-Cola acquired them. Both challenger brands needed to rely on aligning themselves with the right cultural ideologies to enable authentic narratives after being criticized for joining the hegemony. This historical background examines how TBS and ID continuously used the cultural environment to become leading challenger brands in the FMCG industries. The following visual provides an overview of the cultural shifts instrumentalised by TBS, relevant to the ideological changes in their respective beauty and beverage industries.



*Figure 6: Cultural shifts relevant to The Body Shop (authors' own)*

Similarly, the following graph details the corresponding shifts that ID took advantage of in its construction and positioning.



*Figure 7: Cultural shifts relevant to Innocent Drinks (authors' own)*

We will now detail their relevance for challenger opportunities and how the two brands examined took specific advantage of them.

#### ***Macro and Micro Cultural Orthodoxies and Social Disruptions***

As the visuals above suggest, the sociocultural changes and trends that the brands used as levers can be broken down into macro-level and micro-level developments. In the following section we will detail the macro-cultural trends that the brands utilized, and then supplement these with the micro-cultural trends which correspond to these, detailing how the brands relied on them to construct their challenger identities. The macro trends in Western culture offer significant insight into the micro trends of society and how challenger marketing adapted to fit the ideological demands of society throughout certain timeframes. In particular, both companies we examined responded early on by aligning themselves with disruptive ideological trends and opposing the mainstream orthodoxies – that is, the ideologies perpetuated by the hegemonic players at the time. These shifts help explain how TBS and ID gained a foothold on new markets demanding counter-ideologies, selling to them through the subversion of critique of the status quo.

#### **4.1. *Gemeinschaft* Macro-Cultural Shift**

The first macro-cultural shift was a response to the dominant cultural orthodoxy following the end of World War II in 1945, which arose from a period of economic prosperity that occurred mainly in Western countries. Economies were transformed with the rise of industrial corporations and vital public sectors providing new jobs for the growing nuclear middle class (Holt, 2004; Holt & Cameron, 2010). This lifestyle was characterized by climbing up the social ladder to arrive at a 'good life', expressed by suburban houses, newly acquired cars and consumer goods. According to Bourdieu, the essential premise during this time set its focus on economic capital (Corrigan, 1997), therefore turning to consumption as the cultural paradigm



(Ekström, 2010). Business focused on growth and maximization of value; neoliberal perspectives dominated economic policy agendas across the West (Ip & Whitehouse, 2006). Increasing numbers of people hoped to share in the growth of industrial and urban centres, resulting in a mass migration away from rural areas, often criticized to inflict a disconnect between humans and nature (Lammers, 2010; Löfgren, 2010). In the late 1960s, Western societies reached a disruptive tipping point as resistance to this disconnect, from which consumers began once again to romanticise nature and simpler living (Corrigan, 1997; Howard, 1969). Close-knit and basic subcultures reminiscent of Tönnies' *Gemeinschaft* societies that romanticised this simpler living resulted from the resistance to neoliberal growth (see Corrigan, 1997). These communities aimed to counteract the *Gesellschaft* characteristics of neoliberal societies that were characterised by fast-paced, anonymous and disassociated (Corrigan, 1997) ways of living. Within this context, consumers began to demand products that referenced nature.

### ***Natural Exoticism Micro-Cultural Shift***

Corresponding to the romanticisation of nature, a micro-cultural shift towards consumption of natural and exotic resources occurred. Initially, the cultural consciousness was still dominated by standardized, homogenous consumerist ideals. Within the economic climate of the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, the FMGC industry thrived by marketing functional products that increased the aesthetic attractiveness of the home or the person (Corrigan, 1997; Hutchings, 2000; Löfgren, 2010). However, the cultural consciousness began resisting by reflecting the macro-level aspirations towards *Gemeinschaft* living. In line with the search of reconnections to nature (Corrigan, 1997), the early 1970's brought about a disruptive opportunity to cater to those consumers that desired to consume a product that would allow them to feel closer to the tight-knit natural elements of the *Gemeinschaft*. Brands and products, which adopted natural ingredients and elements of exoticism, were thus well positioned to address this new attitude of consumers. TBS was one of the industry's pioneers in the 1970s, and its initial success was due to its ability to market its products as an extension of nature (Kaplan, 1995). The brand managed to disrupt the hegemony of merely aesthetic products that were differentiated on their ability to improve consumers' looks. Consumers were driven to buy from TBS as they hoped to achieve this beauty standard through products that would simultaneously allow them to incorporate more nature into their modern life worlds (Dudley, 2000; Entine, 1995; Hirsch, Kett & Trefil, 2002).

TBS strove to exploit this micro-cultural trend. As the "first natural beauty products company in the UK" (Marati, 2012, p.1), it was based on natural ingredients and differentiating itself through the "resource of the exotic" (Kaplan, 1995, p.59). The company constructed the brand as the epitome of natural beauty (The Body Shop, 1997b). In their brand campaigns, the brand agents crafted a narrative of exotic travels, using tribal ingredients and formulas as a cultural source (Entine, 1995). Through co-founder Anita Roddick and by featuring the communities enrolled in

their *Trade not Aid* sourcing programme, the brand created relatable human entities as proxies for the business (Kaplan, 1995; McGill, 1989; Roddick, 1994a; 1994b). They thus provided a counter-hegemonic position to modern ideologies centring on *Gesellschaft* societies that were driven by the maximization of business growth, effectively constructing an alternative frame of reference for the consumers.

### ***Artisanal-Cosmopolitanism Micro-Cultural Shift***

In a similar vein, a micro-cultural shift occurred within the *Gemeinschaft* Macro trend, which ID utilized to their advantage. In the 1990s Generation X came of age – they were more educated, independent, and brand-conscious (Holt & Cameron, 2010; Wallace, Tolley-Stokes and Estep, 2011). These young adults were the new generation evolved from the micro shift of consuming natural exoticism. They were conditioned to the circumstances of obtaining immediate gratification, yet desired goods and services that were cultivated through artisanal methods and linked to natural sophistication. According to Veblen (1899/1975), their struggle for a more sophisticated lifestyle was accomplished by emulating consumption of the wealthier society. The micro artisanal-cosmopolitan disruption began as a subculture that grew as a desire for middle-class sophistication, as well as an opposition to the still occurring macro orthodoxy of a retail scene marked by the appearance of US-style cheap mass goods where consumers were mostly enticed by pricing (Corrigan, 1997; Gabriel & Lang, 2006; Holt & Cameron, 2010). The cultivation of basic foods to the tastes of a wealthier class in urban centres created a space for socialization within the upper-middle class artisanal-cosmopolitan demographic (Zukin, 2008). These consumption patterns became a means for manipulating authenticity in marketing brands. Consumers desired to purchase beverages that were cultivated by grassroots companies, which provided a new way of literally ‘consuming’ authenticity. ID, whom offered artisanal-cosmopolitan consumers oppositional products to mainstream norms, capitalized on the cultivation of alternative forms of consumption.

ID’s fruit smoothies brought natural products and an oppositional ideology to downtown centres overrun with corporate wastelands, using the opposition to support themselves as part of their positioning as an authentic artisanal urban experience (Zukin, 2008). ID entered the market at an opportune time when they could capitalize on the tastes of a young to middle aged, alternative clientele searching for artisanal products offered to the middle-upper class. The price range of the smoothies and the vision of the company created both a sophisticated and distinctive packaged product, as well as promoting artisanal and natural ingredients (Simmons, 2008). ID’s choice of the halo for the brand logo and simple casual language was a perfect choice at the end of the 1990s to represent a company ‘innocent’ to its core, evidenced by its five principles: be natural, be entrepreneurial, be generous, be commercial, be responsible (Innocent Drinks, 2013). From the start ID positioned their brand narrative as a grassroots counter-hegemonic challenger

brand providing an artisanal mentality focused on natural ingredients to its cosmopolitan consumers, contrasting with the incumbent corporate mass-assembled drinks producers.

#### **4.2. Activism and Green Marketing Macro-Cultural Shifts**

As more companies recognised the potential offered by these shifts detailed above, differentiation through them became harder. Thus, both TBS and ID successfully unearthed a new macro-cultural opportunity to turn into sales, focusing on activism. The environmental effects of the post-WWII macro orthodoxy of mass consumption of cheap products became recognized in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Research on the ozone levels was showing negative impact on the Earth (Dodds, 2007), inducing a general climate of heightening environmental awareness (Bodansky, 1994). After people in the West began realizing the effects their consumption had on the planet, a social disruption emerged around environmental ideology that regarded activism as socially responsible, for both people and companies (Pollan, 2006). The concern for the environment introduced activism as a macro ideological opposition of environmental degradation. As companies recognized activism as a tool with which to sell, Green marketing was utilized as an alternative of products that are presumed to be environmentally safe. Green marketing incorporates changes to the production process, packaging changes, as well as modifying advertising and ingredients that are more ecologically and environmentally friendly (Dodds, 2007). People wanted to feel good about what they purchased, and looked to marketing to guide them through their purchase in a more critical and transparent manner. This ideological disruption offered opportunities for companies to supply products that could connect the consumers back to nature, making them aware of the economic impact on the planet.

Brands like TBS and ID, which through their company identity and founding values could credibly claim a counter-hegemonic aim through activism and Green marketing for themselves, and were thus in an ideal position to gain consumers' favour. Both companies, although at separate time periods, began as challenger brands opposing harmful environmental practices, introducing the counter-hegemonic argument against industrially based chemical-laden FMCG. With the environmentalist positioning (Innocent Drinks, 2013; The Body Shop, 2013b) each brand exhibits an identity as an environmental company producing ecological products relying on a myth of being more 'ethical' than other packaged goods (Zukin, 2008). Both companies actively claim these founding values, finding a niche within the market of Green consumers.

#### ***Moral Values Micro-Cultural Shift***

For TBS in particular, it had become a threat that other companies recognized the opportunities offered by this natural and green focus and introduced substitute products, turning the environmental niche and innovative ideology into a new orthodoxy (Bokaie, 2008). This led them to seek new cultural opportunities for positioning. One proffered itself in the fact that the

drive towards aesthetic self-actualization had continued among consumers (Holt, 2006), and aesthetics continued to be a focal point for marketers, portraying the body and one's looks as a resource to be controlled and optimized wherever possible (Barker & Galambos, 2003; Corrigan, 1997). For the beauty industry, the normalized ideal for women continued to become thinner and younger compared to earlier centuries (Corrigan, 1997; Grammer et al., 2003). Up to the 1990s, this beauty-related micro-cultural orthodoxy resulted in a growing amount young women straining to achieve the unattainable ideals presented to them by the Eurocentric beauty ideal (Fitzpatrick & LaGory, 2003; Morgan, 1991; Russell & Treasure, 1989). In opposition to this ideal, disruptive tendencies of morally based value advertising began emerging.

Public discourse repeatedly chastised the morals of the cosmetics industry and its advertisements for the adherence to and promotion of such a homogenous, standardized ideal of beauty, which was based on unobtainable and oppressive body images (Hubbard, 1991; Willett, 2010). TBS used this cultural disruption criticizing the industry's impact on self-esteem "to launch a major makeover" (Wallace & Brown, 1996, p.1) which would give them relevance for female consumers beyond the natural exoticism of their products. They introduced the Ruby campaign in 1997, offering their products as a representation of liberating women from the standard ideal of beauty. They successfully established themselves as the moral conscience of the cosmetics industry, fighting for the greater good in the face of the standardized Eurocentric beauty hegemony (The Body Shop, 1997b).

With this campaign, the brand extended its stance and ideology of "enviro-activism" (Wallace & Brown, 1996), pioneering cause-related marketing (Chesters, 2011). They strove to mythologize their brand's activism in the face of the beauty hegemony's inaction regarding these causes that consumers had become passionate about (Holt & Cameron, 2010; The Body Shop, 1997a; 1999). Indeed, their ideology of business cloaked as activism was visible in their communicated primary goal to "dedicate [their] business to the pursuit of social and environmental change" (The Body Shop, 1997b, inside front cover). This strove to establish TBS as a trustworthy social actor, which railed against the advertising in the beauty industry as an 'immoral' deception capitalizing on fears (Roddick, 1991) that were exacerbated by constant exposure.

ID also strove to make itself known for ethical activism. In 2003, Innocent became the first food company to develop and use 25 per cent recycled plastic in its bottles, and is currently working towards a 100 per cent recycled bottle (Datamonitor, 2008). Innocent also tries to maintain their authenticity as a socially responsible company through being involved in environmentally sustainable development through its commitment to charities through the Innocent foundation that works with projects that help bring nature and communities closer together (Datamonitor, 2008). The company gives 10 per cent of its profits to the Innocent Foundation, which funds

Non-Governmental Organizations in the countries in which it sources its fruit (Addy, 2008). Their dedication to nature charity forms their ideological stance as a morally dedicated company.

### ***Health Trend Micro-Cultural Shift***

A micro trend particularly relevant for ID soon offered potential for further differentiation. In the late 1990s and early 2000s as a chasm of the Green trend, the Western populations were becoming familiar with the concept of environmental consciousness as being equated with health (Pollan, 2006). For marketing, there was ample opportunity in this shift of orthodoxy. The choice between ‘good’ healthy and ‘bad’ processed food became an emotional issue, surrounded by moral arguments directed at the big manufacturing companies (Goodyear, 1997; Pollan, 2006; Simmons, 2008). The degree to which a company could appear authentically healthy directly affected how consumers became emotionally involved in the purchase of the product. More people were living active lifestyles and using nutrition supplements, organic products were in high demand, and government regulations on ingredients lists started focusing on healthier options. Cultivating health shifted to a disruption focusing on nutrition and quantification of food (Pollan, 2006), the micro health trend emerged against the unhealthy industrial packaged food industry. The mechanization of food production through the use of Ford Assembly techniques, chemical fertilizers and pesticides, corporate food lobbying, government regulations, and heavily increased food processing brought what researchers call the Industrial Food Complex to the West (Goody, 1997; Pollan, 2006). The Industrial Food Complex is characterized by low-nutrition, mass produced, genetically modified packaged food in the West (Pollan, 2006).

ID was a pioneer in the 1990s health drinks market, incorporating a company ideology that included ‘eating clean’ awareness, ‘living as healthy as possible’ guide, and ‘sustainable health campaigns’ (Innocent Drinks, 2012; Neill, 2000). It communicated its company identity around this essence, and thrived on selling it as a counter-hegemonic principle to mainstream marketing within the Industrial Food Complex. However, ID joined in a partnership with McDonalds in 2007, giving rise to critical claims that the two brand identities were incongruent – McDonald's being a controversial and unethical global fast-food group based on industrial food policies, while ID prides itself on its non-corporate community and health minded outlook. ID was criticized that it began to sell out its core identity at the expense of its original principles (Datamonitor, 2007; Marketing Week, 2007). They were further criticized in 2009, when Coca-Cola purchased a large portion of the company (Datamonitor, 2010b). ID needed to concentrate on the health of their products and the authenticity of the company in order to offside these critiques. To do this they concentrated on their core company founding’s mission and vision, explained in the next section.

### **4.3. Technology Gamification Macro-Cultural Shift**

A new chance to make the brands culturally salient again, despite their acquisition into the hegemony, was provided by this next macro-cultural shift. The introduction of the Internet in the majority of households in the 1990s rapidly led to the positioning of technology as more central to peoples' lives (Casey, 2012). The 20-year shift from the Green trend began to include the advancements of smart phones and social media. By 2005, the social disruption of technology erupted in the consumption of experiences through social media and technology as a medium for experiencing consumption (Casey, 2012). The macro-cultural environment evolved to put an emphasis on the society as consumers utilizing technology and encouraging them in being more active in engaging with brands. Elements of entertainment, fun, and the integration of game dynamics, defined as gamification (Casey, 2012) are pervasive in brand communication strategies as a reaction to the desire of consumers who seek experiential consumption.

The growth of the smoothie sector into a category to rival many other soft drinks moved ID from niche to mainstream in the 2000s (Datamonitor, 2010a). They still relied on Green marketing, however they shifted their positioning to include technology-based gamification into their marketing around the time period of 2005 onwards. This is evident in the source material of the 'Save the Peckish' campaign in 2011, wherein online social media games, consumer interactivity, and digital participant contests were promoted alongside the campaign to involve consumers in the product. ID offered a product compatible with the technology-reliant society of the West, while at the same time offering them their own perspective by consuming a product from naturalist ideology, resulting in a socially responsible means to ease them of the tech fabricated society. The counter-hegemonic stance of naturalism within the context of gamification provides an alternative form of consuming a 'naturalist' product while at the same time becoming involved with the medium of technology and experience of the brand product.

#### ***Experiential Pleasure Seekers Micro-Cultural Shift***

In line with this cultural adaptation back towards self-actualization and consumer gamification through play, Western society experienced a micro shift. Prior to this, the global urban population from 1950 to 2007 rose by more than 50 per cent, and is projected to increase by 60 per cent by 2030 (Baqui, 2009). The mushrooming one-stop-shopping centres, growth of convenience stores and fast-food industry are a catalyst for people to catch up to overwhelmingly fast-globalized lifestyles. The current young generation are demanded to do more labour with longer working hours and are constantly under the pressure to perform quickly and competitively in order to sustain their livelihoods (Baqui, 2009). In such time of turmoil, the cultural disruption of experiential pleasure seeking developed (Baqui, 2009; Holt & Cameron, 2010; Maslow, 1987), defined as viewing consumption as life experiences rather than experiencing life through the consumption of products (Corrigan, 1997; Schor, 1999). Marketing disruptions

encompassing the trend of experiential pleasure-seekers alongside their products have positioned their brand narratives to fit with this current ideology. It encompasses experience through technology gamification and at the same time invites people to perform their identities through consumption.

Responding to the social disruption driven by the experiential pleasure-seekers, ID evolved their ideological brand positioning to focus on forming bonds of affection and loyalty with consumers through authentic engagement (Chiapello & Boltanski, 2007; Simmons, 2008). ID has achieved this by creating a brand that is driven by a consistent attitude and by challenging norms in one-to-one communication. A distinctive, purposeful non-corporate voice provides ID with a brand essence through a cultural effort of talking directly to the consumer using language codes that depict a closeness of relationship, such as idiomatic language, much humour, and 'we' and 'you' (Simmons, 2008). These language codes enabled the brand to connect with a demographic that desired close interaction in an authentically driven language communication – it was an opposition to the oversaturation of corporate branding and overwhelming marketing of mainstream corporate brands. The brand positioning became experiential, relationship-oriented marketing, with which consumers could emotionally connect (Datamonitor, 2010b; Simmons, 2008). Therefore Innocent itself as a challenger brand thrives on the characteristics of being non-mainstream and defying the corporate hegemony structure.

Innocent also used the myth of Woodstock to enhance its image as a company with a counter-hegemonic stance to the corporate attitude. One of their largest projects, an annual festival called 'Fruitstock', is built on experiential pleasure seeking (Innocent Drinks, 2013). The space ID provides is more than a festival, its myth through Woodstock coded the ideology that socializing over music, grassroots movements, and naturalism. Consumption spaces promote different kinds of authenticity for different communities of experience (Zukin, 2008). The community of 'Fruitstock' and the myth of Woodstock are seen to promote the discourse that their natural products were aimed not at divisive groupings by social class, income level, or race – they were aimed at the tastes of those seeking a counter-hegemonic ideology to the corporate rat race. Because consumption experiences can be tools to oppose or incorporate ideologies or lifestyles, the development of consumption as an experience has shifted to broaden to consumption as a moral stance.

#### **4.4. Political Consumerism and Urban Eco-Consumer Macro-Cultural Shift**

After the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the developments of experience and technology combined to create another macro-cultural adaptation in Western consumer culture. As technology becomes an increasing part of people's lives, it seems virtually impossible to escape the world of laptops, tablets, PC's, and smartphones. Researchers are debating whether they are harming or improving community life and social relationships (Marche, 2012; Sorensen, 2011). Although people are

connected through technology, they are also disconnected through the loss of personal human face-to-face connections (Farman, 2012; Powers, 2010). The orthodoxy that has grown from technology gamification has been socially disrupted to include consumers searching for the oasis of the simple connection to nature in harmony with their technology-focused lives in urban centers, known as the urban eco-consumer (Farman, 2012; Sorenson, 2011). It has led to a blend of activism and technology-based life – the urban eco-consumer now encompasses the best of both worlds (Farman, 2012). They can feel good about acting consciously, while still experiencing technology and playfulness, through purchasing brands and engaging with social media that back their personal consumer causes, invoking a sense of activism.

In earlier decades, activism only showed significant societal impact on few occasions, but coinciding with a pervasive spread of moralizing brands pushed by profit-driven companies (Aaker, Fournier & Brasel, 2004), consumer culture in the Western economies shifted alongside technology. Buying practices began to showcase rising distrust in brands which claimed to be one thing and were, in fact, something else entirely, as became evident after several company and industry scandals in the 1990s (Entine, 1995; Research and Markets, 2012; Stuart, 2006). Consumers were growing disenchanted with this incongruence between claims and deeds and began to arrive at the conviction that companies needed to be directed towards truly doing good, and in the new millennium began to engage ever more strongly in political consumerism (Micheletti & Isenhour, 2010; Moosbacher, 2002). In their effort to pursue “personal sovereignty” (Holt, 2002, p.70), consumers began to use their purchasing habits in their attempt to reconcile their desires for consumption and their newly accepted responsibility for improving a given societal situation (Micheletti & Isenhour, 2010).

### ***Hero Brands Micro-Cultural Shift***

As described above, consumers had been growing tired of the dishonesty in values that seemed to drive even those companies that portrayed themselves as responsible social actors (Aaker, Fournier & Brasel, 2004; Stuart, 2006) and were penalizing them for inauthentic moral stances. This cultural disruption extended to the micro-level in the cosmetics industry, where TBS, through its acquisition by L’Oréal in that same year, lost significant credibility of its moral stance in the eyes of the consumers. L’Oréal was perceived by consumers as morally irresponsible based on its approach to animal testing (Marati, 2012), and TBS aligning itself with a company that seemed to fit its own position so little (Stuart, 2006) piqued the ire of consumers who had begun to vote with their pay checks. TBS’s heavy reliance on their company’s values now became a handicap and brought them into danger of experiencing boycotts (Aaker, Fournier & Brasel, 2004; Milmo, 2006). In order to reposition itself in a culturally salient way, TBS relied on a trend which actually undermined the disruption it had been instrumentalising with its ‘Ruby’ campaign. For young women, whom TBS sought to address in a more relevant manner



(Valvasori, 2010), the pressure to appear well groomed if not beautiful (Hubbard, 1991) had only increased. As a result, preoccupation with their body image led to an internal conflict of interest for these young female consumers, driving them to desire to increase their beauty product consumption on one hand and to act in a sustainable and socially responsible manner on the other (Valvasori, 2010). TBS introduced its current campaign, 'Beauty with Heart', as an answer to these consumers, claiming to offer them both the opportunity to optimize their looks and the chance to affect change in the world.

The ideology utilized in their most recent post-acquisition reconfiguration moved the brand away from this clear opposition to the hegemony, instead utilizing the aesthetic self-actualization myth (Holt, 2006) and portraying the brand as the people's hero who helps consumers' looks and the environment. Despite its proclaimed status as the "Trojan horse" (Cahalane, 2006, p.1) within the hegemony, TBS turned away from promoting counter-hegemonic culture jams and campaigns, instead proclaiming a new 'beauty movement'. The narratives and signs used by TBS in this new campaign offered up the brand as the resolution to the dilemma of wanting to consume – "look good" – and wanting to conserve – "do good" (The Body Shop, 2012, p.3), highlighting fair trade ingredients and product benefits supporting individual expression and beauty (The Body Shop, 2011; The Body Shop, 2012). Though claiming that activism was ingrained in the brand identity (The Body Shop, 2012), the brand agents turned to a more abstract, emotive rhetoric rich in symbolisms and founding story elements.

To conclude, the current chapter has provided a historical account of the general ideological stances behind the two challenger brands. The background genealogy has outlined how social disruptions feed the counter-hegemonic brand narratives used, and how they form positioning for the challenger brand narrative for TBS and ID. Because challenger brand narratives are often formed in opposition to the dominant hegemony, Holt & Cameron's (2010) adapted cultural model has proven a useful tool in providing a framework in which to outline changing historical ideological positioning of the selected empirical brands. The trends elicited through it and explained above are the cultural opportunities which they brands were seeking to exploit commercially, and thus they were the context which led to the specific production and encoding of the campaigns and their use of cultural resources and myth within them, explored in the analysis in the next chapter.

## 5. Analysis

This chapter will detail our findings elicited from the triangulated approach explained in our methods section. Each campaign is analysed through a content analysis, which was performed in order to identify the main semiotic signs within the advertisements, as well as the ideological themes present. This is followed by a semiotic analysis of each campaign, structured by these thematic findings regarding counter-hegemonic currents within TBS's and Innocent's campaigns. The first section of analysis addresses the campaigns 'Ruby' and 'Beauty with Heart', launched by TBS before and after its 2006 acquisition into L'Oréal, respectively. Following this we will explore Innocent's campaign 'Made by nature', produced before the 2009 Coca-Cola acquisition, and their campaign 'Here to Save the Peckish', post-acquisition. Each campaign is discussed within the codes of the hegemonic context, and the themes of the myth used to specific ideologies.

In the analysis, we rely on and relate back to the sociocultural context explored in the previous section. This background context has enabled us to explore the visual and textual signs in the campaigns within the framework of our operating codes mentioned in the methodology chapter, and further explored in the background genealogy: the Eurocentric beauty standard (Butler, 1993; Fitzpatrick & LaGory, 2003; Morgan, 1991; Russell & Treasure, 1989), the Industrial Food Complex (Goody, 1997; Pollan, 2006; Simmons, 2008), and Consumerism (Chiapello & Boltanski, 2007; Corrigan, 1997). For clarity, and to ensure the analysis remains focused within hegemonic theory, we want to state that working within these codes acknowledges that the analysis compares how discourses surround particular signifiers within the framework of hegemonic codes. Therefore, each campaign includes a summary of the denotative and connotative signs discovered, and then we elaborate on our findings regarding the meaning these transport in relation to counter-hegemony. To accomplish this we continuously relate to the research questions, namely 1) what signs are employed to communicate counter-hegemonic themes shaping brand identities and 2) how these change from before to after acquisition. Following the content and semiotic analysis is a discussion chapter that answers the research questions through a synthesis of our findings, theoretical concepts, brand identity model, and a reconnection with the historical genealogy of the brands.

Summarizing our findings, the main themes that emerge from the TBS 'Ruby' campaign communicate narratives of myth which oppose the idealistic beauty standard, thus framing the hegemonic ideal of thinness as negative. These opposing narratives are cultivated through the signs of mythical full body types, such as Eve, the Renaissance body, and the 1950s pin-up model. These myths 'sell' the company identity as on the side of 'real women', standing against the standard beauty hegemony within the beauty industry. In contrast, TBS's post-acquisition campaign, 'Beauty with Heart', communicates much different themes, which have less counter-

hegemonic meanings. The campaign cultivates the identity of the company as the founder of ethical activism through myths of the pioneer, the earth, and the heart, to promote the brand as the tool for consumer activism. The campaign themes sell the concept of beauty alongside the codes of consumerism as a form of active environmentalism.

For Innocent's 'Made by Nature' campaign, we found it incorporates themes of naturalism, through the myth of nature and humanity's connection to it, thus opposing the artificiality of the hegemony. The positioning of the campaign is formed through the narrative that the smoothie product is a pure symbol of nature, aligning the identity of the company in with this symbol to oppose the hegemony of the Industrial Food Complex. The post-acquisition 'Save the Peckish' campaign established themes of health and the urban landscape alongside myth of the company as the superhero who can save consumers from hunger, also losing much of its counter-hegemonic focus and moving towards a marketplace mythology as elaborated by Thompson (2004). Fruit is the main symbol used to cultivate the health positioning behind the campaign, providing idea that healthy smoothies can be found within an urban environment. This section focuses on exploring the named findings in more detail. We discuss TBS first, and the ID campaigns follow in the next section.

## **5.1. The Body Shop Campaign Analysis**

TBS's Campaigns are explored in two sections. The first relates to the 'Ruby' pre-acquisition campaign, and the following section is attributed to the 'Beauty with Heart' post-acquisition campaign. We explore this first through dominant content themes, which can be seen in detail in Appendix C, followed by an in-depth semiotic analysis of the meanings communicated in the campaign.

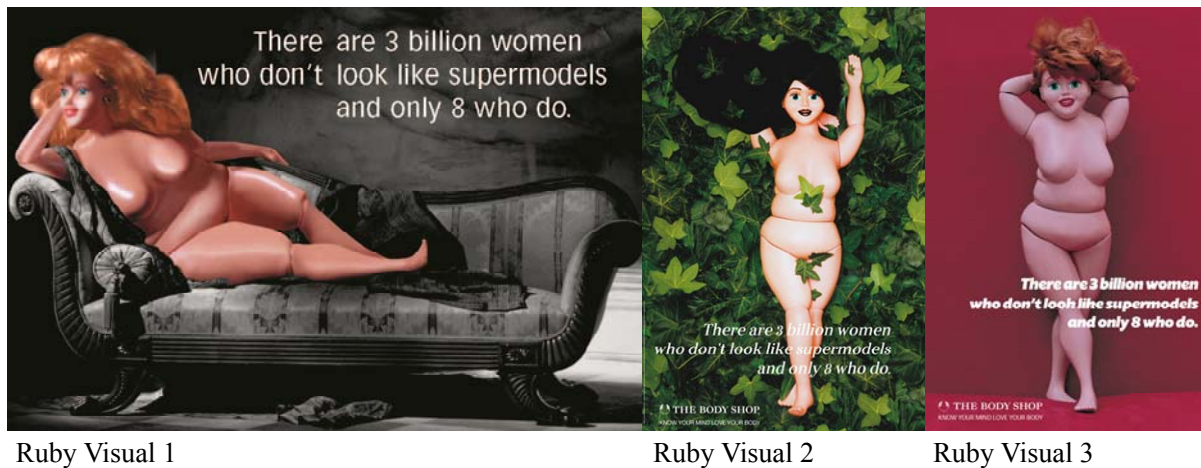
### **5.1.1. 'Ruby' Campaign: Liberation and Sensuality Celebrates the 'Real' Body**

We now detail the content themes which emerge from the campaign, and then elaborate on the semiotic meanings it transports and the connection to hegemony which is inherent in some of these meanings.

#### **Content Themes**

We found that, in its content, the 1997 'Ruby' campaign is counter-hegemonic as it represents a clear play, both visually and textually, on the unrealistic beauty ideals of Barbie. With this campaign, TBS positioned itself effectively against the dominant ideology of the Eurocentric beauty standard, which strives to change oneself to fit a certain body weight, propagated by society as normal (Hubbard, 1991; Hutchings, 2000; Willett, 2010). The text excludes the idealized portrayal of reality that was to be found in most advertisements at the time, instead reflecting the reality of the body as a commodity. This reality depicts a representation of women who do not fit the ideal body type as liberated and sensual, through acceptance of their body

image as ‘realistic’. This is achieved through deploying numerous signs and myth, such as the biblical Eve, renaissance body types, and the 1950s pin-up model in its counter-hegemonic objective. It includes natural surroundings of the full-form feminine naked body, excluding the artificiality that is associated with the beauty industry.



*Figure 8: Campaign visuals The Body Shop pre-acquisition campaign (Ruby) (reproduced from The Body Shop, 2013b)*

The ‘Ruby’ campaign positions the company in opposition to the dominant beauty ideal through the frequent use of the ‘full body Barbie’, represented by Ruby. The sign of Ruby actively symbolizes the realistic body as being a liberatory ideology as an opposition to the Eurocentric oppressive beauty hegemony (Barker & Galambos, 2003; Hubbard, 1991). TBS does not reference company products, but instead fully aligns itself with this oppositional counter-ideology (Gramsci, 1971; Hall, 1980). The content themes reference mythical historical full body types to ‘sell’ the company identity as on the side of ‘real women’, rather than a tool to market company products.

### **Semiotic Meaning**

We found in our semiotic analysis that TBS cleverly combined denotative and connotative signs to subvert the standards propagated by the beauty industry and frame them as the oppressive, supporting their identity as a counter-hegemonic alternative. The counter-hegemonic meanings are found in the critique of the body as commodity, which is achieved through juxtaposition with themes of liberation and sensuality for women.

### ***The Body as Commodity***

Ruby is used as a dominant sign to critique how the beauty industry treats the body as a commodity. TBS’s ideological intention behind the visuals specifically utilizes the indexical sign of a chubby doll (dubbed Ruby by TBS as elaborated by Roddick, 2001) with Barbie’s face, indicating the stand-in of Barbie as the ideal myth of a perfect body type. The paradigmatic alternative of a doll being used as the universal stand-in of women reinforces the adaptation of

Barbie as universal sign for Western culture. The use of a more full body symbolizes the counter-hegemonic argument that a full body is realistic and beautiful, countering the thin body type that Barbie represents and that the hegemony prominently features in its communications. This is accomplished through a blend of text and visual myths. Through rhetorical hyperbole in the text, TBS incorporates the critique that women are driven to ‘want’ to look like supermodels (Stuart, 2006). The text in the campaign itself points out that most women do not achieve this myth of the supermodel in reality:

“There are 3 billion women who don’t look like supermodels and only 8 who do.” (Ruby 1, 2, 3)

The text thus represents the reality of most women whose appearance is not that of a supermodel, and excludes the small percentage of those that are. The ideological positioning is targeted to the ‘real body shapes’ – those ‘3 billion’ that are not supermodels, closer to the image of Ruby’s reality than Barbie’s. The use of the easily identifiable doll as the universal stand-in symbol of women stabilizes TBS’s identity as a brand that is culturally resonant for an audience of ‘real women’, meaning those who have a non-ideal body form. This reflects in the campaign through the following explored signifiers claiming an identity with realistic and natural femininity, relying on historical myths to separate TBS from the hegemonic beauty competitors.

### ***Renaissance, The Garden of Eden, and the 1950s Pin-up Myth***

We found that the focus on the renaissance (Ruby 1), Eve in the Garden of Eden (Ruby 2), and the 1950s pin-up (Ruby 3) successfully incorporated counter-hegemonic meaning into the brand’s communication and identity through a revival of beauty ideals whose supposedly more nurturing stance is now viewed with nostalgia (Corrigan, 1997; The Body Shop, 1997a). This mythical use of Ruby as an opposing body myth to Barbie brings forth the theme that the body is a commoditized cultivation (Barthes, 1985; Corrigan, 1997), one not exempt from the fashion trends of society.

In the visually depicted signifiers of the renaissance (Ruby 1), the position of the naked full body is placed in the classical ‘point of symmetry’ pose, made famous during the renaissance by painters such as Rubens, Michelangelo, and Da Vinci (Corrigan, 1997). The myth used is drawn from the idealization of the feminine body during the renaissance period, connecting with connotations of the ‘Rubenesque figure’ used to describe the full figured body type, which is rarely displayed in today’s cultural environment (Barker & Galambos, 2003; Corrigan, 1997). TBS’s rhetoric subtly tells the reader that their products, unlike those of the hegemonic competition, celebrate the beauty of natural human form, a form that is acknowledged through referencing the renaissance.

Through visual referencing of the Garden of Eden in (Ruby 2), the brand subtly posits that women were created as Eve, not Barbie. Nature is featured prominently through leaves in the

background, in her hand, and on Ruby's body, displaying a most liberating natural state and the doll's clear happiness with it. The myth of Eve framing the ideal form of femininity points to the apparently lacking idea of femininity in our time and hegemonic context, kept apart from the natural body and freedom of Eve. Therefore TBS tries to signify a connection to the 'original woman', that is, the way women were supposed to be. This intention tells women that body weight should not factor into beauty, positioning the brand as the nurturing alternative that strives to fight this superficiality. Eve in Eden was created in a purely natural, unembarrassed state, opposite to the cosmetic changes society promotes as desirable in the current time. When addressed together the signs evoke the feeling that the natural body is paradise and nothing to be ashamed of. TBS claims an ideology (Barthes, 1957/1988) that women, no matter their body type, can and should achieve the same happy, carefree state as Eve.

The theme of Ruby as connoting a 1950s pin-up model can be viewed in opposition to the reference to the "8 supermodels" that TBS is critiquing through their narrative in (Ruby 3). The theme of beauty represented by the full body of the 1950s pin-up model is brought to life through the signs of messy red hair in a loose bun, hourglass figure, red lips, large blue eyes, and naked doll playfully presenting her bare self, which is quintessential to the myth of the 1950s pin-up (Corrigan, 1997) model. It clearly opposes the overtly thin Barbie body, which can be interpreted to be just another variation of these '8 supermodels'. By subverting the doll's shape and hyperbolically pointing out the numbers of supermodels compared to average women in the previously mentioned tagline, the brand aims to unmask these concepts as myths of the trends in body form. Thus TBS constructs a negative picture of the hegemony through an alternative frame of reference, already supplying the female consumer with an oppositional reading of the state of the beauty industry.

The signifiers within the theme of the body as commodity incorporate the naked body as a spectacle, femininity, and natural form as beautiful. The visual myths of the renaissance (Ruby 1), the Garden of Eden (Ruby 2), and the pin-up model (Ruby 3) represent romanticized periods of time and more full-bodied beauty ideals, allowing TBS to utilize mythical signs from different historical eras to oppose the fact now that the hegemony in the beauty industry calls for women to have 'supermodel' bodies. Within the theme of body as commodity, the counter-hegemonic undercurrents are found through TBS referencing the hegemonic ideals explicitly by indexing Barbie through the stand-in Ruby, referring to supermodels as the hegemonic ideal, and then in a counter-hegemonic move deconstructing these cultural ideals as false and oppressing through using historical myths.

### ***Liberation and Sensuality***

Through the themes of liberation and sensuality in the visuals (Ruby 1, 2, 3), TBS seeks to become an ally against the hegemony (Gramsci, 1971), portraying itself as a supporter of the

sensuality and liberation of all women, aware of how hard the beauty industries' standards are on average women, and acknowledging that women are sensuous even if they do not fit those standards. The visual signifiers of the naked open body positioning and texts such as "know your mind" and "love your body" (Ruby 2, 3), aim to position TBS through a second theme wherein their ideological brand positioning empowers women to feel liberated about their sensuality, instead of subjecting their bodies to the judgment of the idealized beauty hegemony. The two taglines are incorporated into the brand's wordmark, so as to make it obvious that emancipated views are a part of TBS's brand identity, setting the brand up as the liberated consumption choice. Liberation and sensuality reinforce the challenger identity of TBS as the opponents of the false ideals of the beauty industry.

The theme of liberation is placed in conjunction with sensuality, evoking the feeling that women should use their sensuality as a form of self-esteem for their liberation. The poses and positions in each picture construct the female body as beckoning women to become content with their sexuality, like Ruby is portrayed to be. TBS expansively constructs the hegemony as faulty through the use of Ruby as the stand-in for an ideology of sensuality and liberation based on the 'real' body that women have, rather than what the beauty industry tells them they should look like. This portrays the hegemony as oppressive, and TBS as liberating from that oppression. This liberates women from the unattainable myth that the female body should always look like the artificial perfection of Barbie.

### **Ideological Connotations**

Through subtle positioning of the small logo in center, which is smaller print than main text, TBS strives to demote its identity as a for-profit company as secondary to the counter-hegemonic ideology it is narrating (Gramsci, 1971). The brand thus subtly points out the dominant ideology, but then critiques it by pointing out its lack of realism, naturalness and lack of real value to women – the dolls displayed are clearly identifiable as unnatural representations in communications for someone with Western codes, but are being portrayed in a very positive light. This can be paralleled with the genealogy background of consuming self-esteem through an opposing moral stance to the dominant standard of beauty. Ruby represents real natural women, portrayed through exotic visuals of historical relevancy. The ideological positioning of TBS against the unattainable ideals of Eurocentric beauty ideal (Fitzpatrick & LaGory, 2003; Morgan, 1991; Russell & Treasure, 1989) provides a counter-hegemonic ideological disruption to the dominant code of beauty (Barthes, 1985).

TBS positioned itself as an ideological challenger brand, openly thriving on critique, not trying to hide anything and instead claiming to call out the hegemony (Barthes, 1957/1988; Gramsci, 1971; Hall, 1980). The company's identity is constructed in relation to a normalization of 'real women', claiming to negate a dominant view of what they should be, and empowering them to

be content to remain what is *not normal* to the industry. Using Ruby as a positive symbolic reference to this lack of conventionality offers women the emotional connection to become a liberated female. Thus, it emerges from the campaign that TBS relies on the construction of the hegemonic beauty ideals as negative, and building itself up as the provider of an alternative, counter-hegemonic ideology that is more positive and beneficial for women. To be able to compare the counter-hegemonic connotations of signs in the ‘Ruby’ campaign, we will now move on to the post-acquisition campaign.

### **5.1.2. ‘Beauty with Heart’ Campaign: Pioneering Consumer Activism Through Beauty and Ethics**

Analysing this campaign from the period post acquisition will allow us to answer our second research question, exploring how the counter-hegemonic themes in brand communication differ before and after a challenger brand has entered the hegemony. The 2011/2012 campaign, ‘Beauty with Heart’ is TBS’s first major brand positioning campaign after the acquisition by the hegemonic L’Oréal. Through its positioning that one can save the earth, be eco-friendly, and encompass beauty simultaneously (The Body Shop, 2013a), TBS’s ‘Beauty With Heart’ campaign goal remains to challenge unethical consumption codes.

#### **Content Themes**

The ‘Beauty with Heart’ campaign positions TBS as the pioneer of consumer activism through signs of the earth, the heart, the environmental product, and the celebrity, which work together to symbolize the founding story of the company as the ethical pioneer (Roddick, 1994a; The Body Shop, 2012). Through these signs, the campaign theme sells the ideology of consumer activism alongside beauty and environmentalism (Barthes, 1957/1988).





We believe true beauty comes from the heart. For us, beauty is much more than a pretty face. It's about feeling good and doing good, too.

We make our products with love and care. We source some of the finest raw ingredients from the four corners of the globe. We harness the skills of artisan farmers and add our expertise to create effective products that are wonderful to use.

We trade fairly so communities benefit as well as you. We never test on animals, and all our products are 100% vegetarian. We campaign with passion on issues close to our heart, because activism is in our blood.

We always keep people, animals and the planet in mind. So when you shop with us, you are choosing...

**BEAUTY WITH HEART**

Beauty with Heart Visual 1



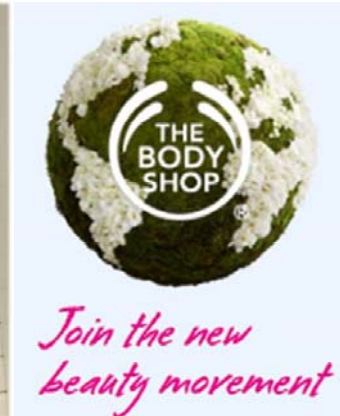
Beauty with Heart Visual 4



Beauty with Heart Visual 5

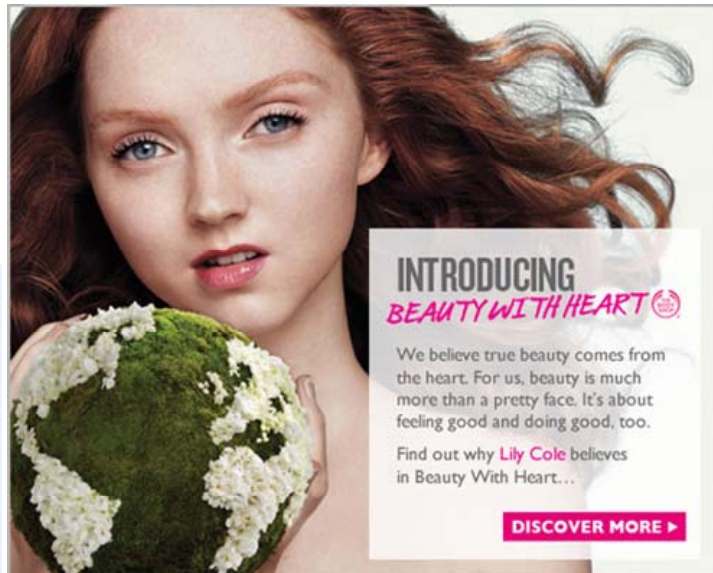


Beauty with Heart Visual 2



Beauty with Heart Visual 3

*Join the new beauty movement*



Beauty with Heart Visual 6

**Figure 9: Campaign visuals The Body Shop post-acquisition campaign (BWH) (reproduced from The Body Shop, 2013b)**

For this second campaign post-acquisition, we found that TBS refrains from placing overtly counter-hegemonic content, changing it to communicating their business practices constructed as exemplary. In the campaign, TBS relies heavily on connotations and associations with nature to communicate the brand essence. Nothing artificial is visible in the visuals, and the setting evokes associations with the mythical Mother Earth. All elements of the text, from nakedness, lack of artificial products, warm tones of the colour scheme to the vegetated globe, combine to communicate naturalness. Through this association, TBS seeks to subliminally encode itself as natural. Aspects of counter-hegemonic positioning most clearly come across through the indirect references to fair trade and to the need for emotional heart in beauty.

## **Semiotic Meaning**

We found in our semiotic analysis that TBS uses denotative and connotative signs to subvert the standards propagated by the beauty industry and frame them as the oppressive, supporting their identity as a counter-hegemonic alternative. The themes of meaning are found in pioneering consumer activism through the founding myth of the company, and attaining ‘true’ beauty through heartfelt purchasing.

### ***‘Pioneering’ Consumer Activism***

One clear theme we uncovered was that TBS’s signs changed to stress strongly its founding myth rather than active opposition to communicate the counter-hegemonic brand identity which resonates with consumers. Through its founding story, TBS positions itself as the ethical ground-breaker within the beauty industry through rhetorically utilising the ‘pioneer’ myth. This seeks a relationship with consumers through the claim that TBS pioneered fair-trade beauty for a better world (BHW 1), seeking trust and admiration from the audience. Further, “we pioneered fair trade in beauty because beauty comes from the [heart]” (BWH 4) places TBS as the creators of fair and eco-friendly products, that they found these positive production techniques through their heartfelt ethics. TBS utilizes signs of fair-trade ingredients, Green beauty products, and community change projects. The text, “Our community fair trade ingredients and accessories from around the world” (BWH 1, 2), actively suggests TBS acts ethically on a global and local scale, which arguably is a tough claim to prove, but indirectly places them as an ally for the consumer once again.

Therefore TBS positions itself as a pioneering social agent pursuing a better world (Marx, 1904; Thompson, 2004) through consumer activism, calling consumers to cast off the hegemonic ideologies and act. The campaign utilizes visual and textual signs, which cultivate environmentalism to put the responsibility on the consumer to be the activist for change. This places the consumer in a position that they have a responsibility to purchase Green products and get involved in social projects, which help the environment and communities to counteract the destruction of the planet. Through the rhetorical tropes in language, a call to action is provided to the audience. Text such as “get informed” “get inspired” “get outraged” “get active”, “Our Global Community, be part of it”, and “our local community, get involved” puts the consumer in position to be the one to take action (BWH 1, 2), being asked to “join” the “movement” (BWH 3). This encodes the message that although we are bound to consumerism, we can get back to feeling good and helping the earth through actively purchasing Green and ecological products. This produces a call to action to get involved globally and locally by purchasing fair trade TBS products. TBS thus claims to have begun the eco-friendly trend towards fair trade and that we as consumers have the power to help the earth, through purchasing TBS products.

### ***'True' Beauty Through Heartfelt Consumption***

Utilizing the essence of 'true' beauty, TBS ideologically positions their identity as a company that can provide women with external beauty, inner beauty, and social activism. Their text, "We believe true beauty comes from the heart. For us, beauty is much more than a pretty face. It's about feeling good and doing good, too" (BWH 1, 6) invokes a broad positioning. The concept of beauty is extended from looks, to feeling and doing – propagating a wholesome concept of beauty, combined with activism. Their central counter-hegemonic opposition critiques superficial beauty as practiced by the industry, and offers beauty with a good heart as an alternative argument. Their reference to true beauty, which implicitly points to false beauty standards of the industry, also propagates that in essence consumers believe there is a true form of beauty, normalizing a specific notion again and thus perpetuating existing power structures. The brand makes the reality claim that in order to feel good, one must purchase products that are good for one's appearance and simultaneously good for the earth. In turn, they promise to deliver this full concept of beauty, trying to create a consumer need for the mentioned concepts of external beauty, activism, inner beauty, and heartfelt compassion – which of course are to be provided by products from TBS. This connects signs for consumer activism with a notion of 'true', desirable beauty, thereby providing an emotional reason to purchase, which is disconnected from counter-hegemonic identity elements. This can further be seen in the text, "[w]e believe true beauty comes from the heart" (BWH 1, 6). The emotive language, such as love, care, believe, heart, good, finest, wonderful, passion, and activism, combines to a narrative of heartfelt, conscionable happiness consumers will attain through purchasing the products. In summary, this positions TBS's mythological essence as the prominent company to deliver 'true' beauty, which is attainable only through acting with heart and responsibly (Thompson, 2004).

### **Ideological Connotations**

Through the founding story of the pioneer with heart, cementing their ethical nature, TBS becomes the social hero who pioneers the activist ideology. In the 'Beauty with Heart' campaign, the story is used in a social setting, one in which pioneers ethics that deliver a better world (Marx, 1904). This propagates TBS and its products as an instrument to improve the state of the world – it portrays the brand as the innovator and harbinger of positive change through beauty products. Thus the campaign aims to capture consumer activists (Micheletti & Isenhour, 2010) addressed in the genealogy, those who believe that through purchasing Green products they are standing up to the hegemony of the mass consumption. In addition, consumers of beauty products have been culturally educated to now consider their purchases responsible for the health of the planet, as well as what is ecological for their bodies, fair for the people making them, and ethically moral (Chesters, 2011; Roddick, 1994a). The brand is trying to communicate clearly a connection and benefit for consumer activism in conjunction with true beauty, through their

attempt to construct consumption as an emotional responsibility that improves the social situation of the planet.

In general, the counter-hegemonic signs have become much less numerous. The ad refers to other beauty advertising only very implicitly through its claim, ‘Beauty with Heart’. Lily Cole, the indexical celebrity sign depicted, has unique features, such as red curly hair, which brings up some connotations of defying beauty standards. However, the counter-hegemonic undercurrent is weaker, as Cole is in fact a catwalk model, one of the “8” rather than the “3 billion” that TBS was supporting in the ‘Ruby’ campaign (Ruby 1, 2, 3). The campaign thus incorporates a woman who is much closer to the formerly critiqued ideal of Barbie, than the Ruby doll. The challenge issued by the counter-hegemon (Gramsci, 1971) is still present, but much more tempered and implicit, advocating a responsible kind of focus on the consumer and on true beauty through buying activism, such as not forgetting the heart and helping nature. The focus on nature is not a counter-ideology (Gramsci, 1971; Holt & Cameron, 2010), as other brands are also championing this as well. However, the text still relies on including natural surroundings, excluding the artificiality that is associated with the beauty industry. The text promotes emotion and actions as paramount to looks, embedding the brand image within a broader, more wholesome idea of beauty than is characteristic of the hegemonic ideology.

As this analysis has shown, TBS placed a number of thematic meanings in their first campaign, ‘Ruby’, which explicitly and implicitly relied on counter-hegemonic ideologies to posit their products as an alternative to the hegemony portrayed as negative (Barthes, 1957/1988; Gramsci, 1971; Hall, 1980). The doll itself is one such example, subverting the Barbie doll. However, after their transition into the hegemony through acquisition by L’Oréal, the signs utilized changed to a more self-referential focus on the founding story and a supposedly unique offer of true beauty, based on heart, which the consumers were to attain through buying from TBS. We will now explore the meanings extant in ID’s communication before and after their acquisition by Coca Cola.

## **5.2. Innocent Drinks Campaign Analysis**

In this second analysis section, we examine ID’s ‘Made by nature’ Campaign, providing a brief summary of the content themes, which can be seen in detail in Appendix C, followed by an in-depth semiotic analysis. This is followed by the ‘Here to save the Peckish’ campaign, organized in a similar manner.

### **5.2.1. ‘Made by Nature’ Campaign: Community through Natural Origins**

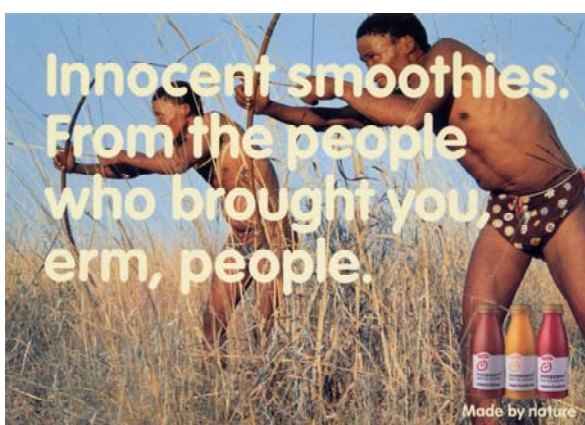
Again, we first explore the content themes which emerge from the campaign and reflect community through natural origins, and then elaborate on the semiotic meanings it transports and the connection to hegemony which is inherent in some of these meanings.

## Content Themes

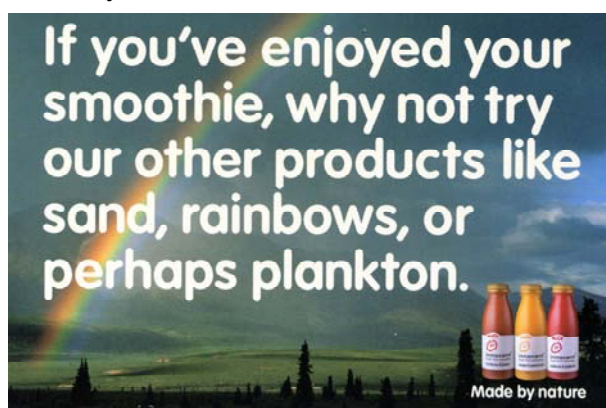
The 2001 ‘Made by Nature’ campaign attempts to resonate with the ideology of naturalism, defined by a philosophical viewpoint according to which everything arises from natural properties or instinct, as opposed to the hegemony of industrial food production (Marx, 1904; Pollan, 2006). The dominant themes of nature, community, natural product, and irreverent language implicitly critique the mass industrial hegemony as artificial by positioning the brand as the only product made by nature, although this claim by a packaged foods manufacturer can be seen as paradoxical. Through narrative ID indirectly portrays the industrial food hegemony (Marx, 1904; Pollan, 2006) as artifice, fundamentally opposing the desire for natural health.



Made by Nature Visual 1



Made by Nature Visual 3



Made by Nature Visual 2



Made by Nature Visual 4

*Figure 10: Campaign visuals Innocent Drinks pre-acquisition campaign (MBN) (provided by ID Public Relations)*

The primary thematic meaning that we found to arise from counter-hegemonic signs is that ID’s advertising campaigns are dominantly featuring signs of nature, which represent an ideology of community-minded naturalism associated with purity and seemingly opposing industrial mass-produced food (Thompson, 2004). Here we see that the company product, the smoothie, and nature reference each other as simultaneous stand-ins for naturalism. This encodes a message to the reader that the smoothies being sold are equated to being a pure symbol of nature, even though they are industrially packaged goods. The additional theme of human signs aims to

naturally pair human communities with nature, sending the message people should consume natural products made from the same natural elements in which we belong.

### **Semiotic Meaning**

We found in our semiotic analysis that ID cleverly combined overtly signs to subvert the standards propagated by the industrial food industry and frame them as the artificial, supporting their identity as a counter-hegemonic alternative. The themes of meaning are found in the critique of industrial food production, which is achieved through the themes of equating the smoothie product to nature through irreverent language, and community through nature.

#### ***Product as Nature: Irreverence of the Maverick***

ID constructs itself as alternative to the industrialized foods through equating themselves with nature and thus implicitly enhancing focus on the artificiality of their competitors. Through the use of the nature theme, ID connects the myth to the positioning of the smoothie product. This is accomplished through the visual product and the language signifiers. The products depicted in the lower right corner are, in all four visuals, the only things that are clearly created by modern production methods, and their size and placement make it obvious that they are not the focus of the visual, connected to the dominant theme of nature, the brand employs a number of verbal signifiers, which lead to the connotation that nature is made up of their product ingredients:

“Innocent smoothies. Part of a product range that includes the Brecon Beacons.” (*MBN 1*)

This rhetoric attracts notice by combining the verbal signifiers “product range,” calling to mind something man-made and possibly mass-produced, and “Brecon Beacons,” which denote a mountain range in the UK. This intends to communicate to the audience that the smoothies and the Beacons, being from the same product range, are of the same natural origin. The communication strives to establish the drink as the agent bringing consumers and nature back together. This combination of the terms ‘product’ and ‘nature,’ as well as the position of the smoothie in the corner of every advertisement, also aims to convince the consumer that this smoothie product is the best option for natural sustenance available to consumers.

To the audience, the brand thus establishes itself as the approachable, irreverent maverick setting out to reconnect people with nature, its own ideological territory. The product is far removed from its actual consumption context in supermarkets and refrigerators, erasing from the communication any signifier that detracts from the central equation that the brand is trying to claim as reality – that innocent smoothies equal nature:

“If you’ve enjoyed your smoothie, why not try our other products like sand, rainbows, or perhaps plankton.” (*MBN 2*)

The text omits any visible reference to the fruit ingredients on which the smoothies are based, once again going beyond a connotation of natural *consumption* to a connotation of pure nature.

The theme of irreverent language is present in the signs throughout the campaign, poking fun at the stiffness of the hegemony (Holt & Cameron, 2010).

As a counterpoint to the anonymous corporate brands that dominate within the hegemony (Simmons, 2008), they bring back a personable, relatable tone of voice into their communications by incorporating wordplay (McQuarrie & Mick, 1992). The brand employs very humorous language and colloquialisms in their advertisements, proclaiming to be the “makers of trees and stuff” (MBN 4) and incorporating approximations of speech such as “erm” (MBN 3). Through language, ID portrays itself as the maverick antithesis to the carefully engineered, relatively neutral tonalities characteristic of other beverage campaigns (Simmons, 2008).

Through the use of nature paired with colloquial language, the brand subtly points out its positioning on the promotion of naturalism, opposite of the dominant ideology of mechanization and anonymity found within the Industrial Food Complex (Pollan, 2006; Zukin, 2008). The identity of the company is claimed to be nature itself, encoding a message to the reader that the ‘smoothies’ being sold are equal to a pure symbol of nature and bridge to it, even though they are industrially packaged goods. This clever use of positioning forms an opposition to the Industrial Food Complex (Goody, 1997; Marx, 1904; Pollan, 2006), even though the company operates within the same industry of packaged goods (Thompson, 2004). Using nature as a symbolic reference to their fruit ingredient offers consumers the idea they are consuming a product that is pure nature. Thus, it becomes visible ID places a number of signs with implicitly counter-hegemonic meanings, pointing out the lack of positive attributes of competing products by implying them to be much less natural.

### ***Community Through Nature***

ID relies on the myths of the romanticization of origins and community, attained through the ideology of naturalism (Barthes, 1957/1988; Thompson, 2004). It posits itself as the conduit back to these natural states while implicitly pointing out that the industrial hegemony does not appear to have such capacity. This is apparent from a number of signs in the campaign, specifically in the ‘Tribal Hunters’ advertisement (MBN 3). The text in the advertisement references humanity at large, and its origins, while the two men hunting in unison and their outfits and weaponry create connotations of life in tribal communities. Such life can be considered an example of the close-knit community-minded naturalist lifestyle (Corrigan, 1997) that consumers were striving for as shown in the background genealogy.

Human signifiers and references are present. However, they do not serve as individual agents acting for their own purpose, but rather as symbols for a community-based lifestyle. For instance, in one advertisement (MBN 1), a group of people are meandering into nature together, whereas in the ‘Tribal Hunters’ visual (MBN 3), two men are hunting presumably to feed the tribal community to which they belong. With these visuals, ID uses a normalized depiction of

African tribalism that is very narrow, utilizing it to tap into the desire for community (Corrigan, 1997; Maffesoli, 1996), where individuals strive to re-establish communities that aid them in their definition of self-origin (Maffesoli, 1996; Muniz & O’Guinn, 2001). This migration back to nature (seen in MBN 1, 3) attempts to activate desires for back-to-basics living as the opposing step to industrialization (Jones et al., 2003; Micheletti & Isenhour, 2010). ID opposes the industrial setting through the positioning of community desires for a return to nature (Corrigan, 1997; Marx, 1904). Nature is portrayed as pure and meaningful, an alternative in the face of the hectic, technology-driven lives based on an unrealistic excess of shopping possibilities, food choices and large consumption quantities (Casey, 2012; Zukin, 2008). The signifiers of humans connoting the ‘simple life’ are depicted as simple desires that humans cannot be without. The consumer is warranted to search for natural sustenance through the product that comes from the same source humans come from – nature.

### **Ideological Connotations**

We found that ID contrasts itself to the hegemony it opposes through positive signs, which are incongruent with this incumbent hegemony, thus incorporating an indirect critique. ID’s ideological intention behind the creation of the campaign is to anchor its identity to the culturally resonant central divide of nature versus artifice (Corrigan, 1997; Dodds, 2007). The signifiers used in the campaign combine to awe-inspiring depictions of natural scenes, which are free of any health claims and do not display ingredients, almost entirely avoiding signifiers of mass-production (Chandler, 2002). In this campaign, the brand thus makes the reality claim that innocent smoothies are “made by nature” (MBN 1-4) and the smoothies producers, the brand itself, therefore resonate with naturalism. Thus they challenge the ideology of unhealthy excess and artificiality of the Industrial Food Complex that the hegemony stands for (Datamonitor, 2008; Simmons, 2008; Zukin, 2008). The projection of nature constitutes an antithesis to industrial mode of production. By displaying natural signifiers prominently, the brand agents evoke a feeling of disassociation with mass-produced foodstuffs that dominate industrial food packaging.

It is possible to the connection in the genealogy that ID used the artisanal-cosmopolitan disruption (Simmons, 2008) through the notion of the *Gemeinschaft* community-minded consumers (Corrigan, 1997), by providing the alternative ideology of naturalism as a tool for consumers. By equating their products, which are made of only fruit to nature itself, demonstrates to the consumer that they are ‘consuming’ the ideology of naturalism when they consume the product as a brand symbol (Holt, 2002; Thompson, 2004). The ideology of naturalism apparent in the campaign also coincides with the Green Marketing trend within Western society. Naturalism fit perfectly as an emerging ideology set repurposed by ID to back up the social disruption of the Green trend in opposition to mass consumption apparent after the



marketing orthodoxies post World War II. ID positioned their brand narrative as a grassroots challenger brand providing an artisanal mentality focused on the naturalism ideology to its cosmopolitan consumers, contrasting with the corporate mass-assembled drinks producers.

### 5.2.2. ‘Save the Peckish’ Campaign: The Urban Superhero Saves your Health

Analysing this campaign from the period post acquisition for ID will allow us to answer our second research question for this brand, through exploring how the counter-hegemonic themes in brand communication differ before and after a challenger brand has entered the hegemony. The 2011 campaign of ID, ‘Save the Peckish’, was launched following Coca-Cola’s acquisition of a majority stake and their entry into the hegemony in 2009.

#### Content Themes

Innocent’s ‘Save the Peckish’ campaign uses signs of the superhero, the urban landscape, and fruit to promote the identity of the company as a saviour of health. While they retain some of their counter-hegemonic characteristics (Gramsci, 1971) such as irreverence, they now seem to be focusing more on their attraction to the urban-eco consumer, encoding that one can both be healthy in an urban environment and be saved from ‘unhealthy’ packaged food.



Save the Peckish Visual 1



Save the Peckish Visual 2



Save the Peckish Visual 3

*Figure 11: Campaign visuals Innocent Drinks post-acquisition campaign (STP) (provided by ID Public Relations)*

This is further illustrated by our in-depth semiotic analysis.

## **Semiotic Meaning**

We found in our analysis that ID using denotative and connotative signs to subvert the standards propagated by the beauty industry and frame them as oppressive, supporting their own identity as a counter-hegemonic alternative (Gramsci, 1971). The themes of meaning are found in the urban superhero through the founding myth (Barthes, 1957/1988; Thompson, 2004) of the company as healthy, and attaining ‘health’ through consumption of the product.

### ***Urban Superhero***

We found that the main theme ID propagated in the new campaign shifted to rely heavily on its product as a sign, humanizing it as an urban superhero. Contrasting with TBS, the consumer is thus put in the passive role. Aiming to regain consumer trust, which had suffered after the acquisition by Coca Cola (Datamonitor, 2010b; Reynolds, 2007), the brand now strongly relies on the hero myth within the realistic setting of urban consumers, and references the product as an end unto itself, found within urban consumption limits, instead of it being a conduit to nature.

Through metaphoric signs such as the red flying cape, the urban landscape, and the audience’s vantage point from slightly below, the product is associated with the Western cultural notion of a cities’ superhero, fighting hunger within industrial urban centers. Notably, ID moves away from the hegemony as the ‘other’ to be defeated and to aid in its identity construction (Gramsci, 1971). The brand and its product range are now claimed to fight the slight hunger, the peckishness, which sometimes attacks consumers in their hectic urban lives, driving them to consume unhealthily and irresponsibly (Wallace et al., 2011). This new enemy, hunger, replaces the industrialized ‘other’ present in the first campaign. The main campaign claim reflects this:

“here to save the peckish” (*STP 1, 2, 3*)

The products and their ingredients are displayed and supported with the secondary claim ‘nothing but fruit’ explored below, all clear signs of how well the smoothie range could appease consumers’ hunger pangs as well as their potential guilty conscience about snacking.

This provides ID with a double positioning through its sign of the superhero, that consumers need to be saved from hunger within their urban consumer settings, and that they can be saved with purely healthy fruit, opposing unhealthy fast-food that now dominates urban centers. Placing the consumer’s hunger as the new monster to fight purports the perceptible victimization of the consumer, reflected in the primary tagline, superhero visuals, and in the complete lack of actual human signifiers. They are no longer displayed in the visuals, only alluded to in the sense of the hungry mass to be saved from their unhealthy and irresponsible tendencies. ID constructs itself as the active party, coming to the aid of those needing rescue from their struggles, to provide a product free from unhealthy additives, ‘nothing but fruit’ to save consumers.

## ***Healthy Ingredients***

Another interesting finding is that in accordance with hegemonic marketing practices, ID now relies much more strongly on the conventional strategy of displaying healthy ingredients, thus again decreasing its counter-hegemonic stance (Cromie & Ewing, 2009; Gramsci, 1971). Within the campaign, the ingredient claims gain the forefront in an attempt to symbolically claim a positioning of health. Two of the three visuals include the verbal claim “nothing but fruit,” (STP 2, 3) constructing a reality claim that the smoothies consist of only fruit, leaving consumers to picture that the smoothies do not have artificial preservatives or chemicals. This is in congruence with the verbal sign that their product represents “2 of your 5 a day” (STP 2). This refers to an institutionalized metaphor (Heimendinger, van Duyn & Chapelsky, 1996) which ID is using to quantify the amount of healthy ingredients that sits within their smoothie. Counteracting their prior stance towards naturalism, this metaphor actually encapsulates the components of quantification present within the Industrial Food System, that being that food is now viewed as quantified vitamins and minerals in the body (Pollan, 2006), not simply as sustenance.

The central equation being communicated is that the product equals fruit and no longer, in fact, nature at large. The natural fruits displayed in the visuals are immaculate, acting as a proxy for health, which the campaign aims to extend to the product. Again, this reflects a decrease in the oppositional undercurrents against industrialization (Marx, 1904; Gramsci, 1971) that characterized the first campaign, and brings the brand into much closer context with artificiality.

## **Ideological Connotations**

In general, we found that ID changed its communication to place more signs referencing consumers’ actual situation – such as the urban backgrounds – rather than the desires they aspire to. Thus, their campaign loses many of the elements of incongruent ideology, which made the previous one implicitly counter-hegemonic. It does maintain some elements, such as its humour and irreverence, but seems to have moved focus from utilizing the hegemonic ideology (Barthes, 1957/1988; Gramsci, 1971) to utilizing the consumers’ hunger and guilty conscience (Chesters, 2011). The commercial intention which innocent pursued in emitting its first major campaign after Coca Cola’s acquisition of a majority stake in the challenger was to re-establish the brand as relevant in the face of increased competition (Datamonitor, 2010b). Moreover, since consumers had developed skepticism about the drink’s health benefits and the Western consumer culture consciousness had expanded from the health disruption identified in the background genealogy to include pleasure-seeking movements (Pohjanheimo et al., 2010), the company aimed to restate the benefits that the brand provided within this new consumption context.

Through the campaign ID sought to portray the smoothie as the bridge uniting the urban experience and health. Thus the brand aimed to capture the urban eco-consumers (Pohjanheimo et al., 2010) unwilling to leave the city environments but keen on products that allowed them to

integrate environmentally friendly, pleasurable, and healthy products into their lifestyles. The brand now gave highest prominence to signs that were directly related to their product range, such as the fruit ingredients, or the smoothie packages themselves. The product was turned into a hero through equipping it with the sign of a red cape and displaying it from awe-inspiring angles, connoting a superhero that brings about a positive end to difficult times. They constructed a hero myth out of the brand's narrative and ideological foundation, as they claimed to have pioneered a new category of healthy product and saved consumers from the unhealthy choices provided by the hegemonic Industrial Food Complex (Zukin, 2008). Innocent posits itself as the only saviour providing a snack that is good for health and the environment in the face of the hegemony's fast-food alternatives, which are implied to be neither of these things.

As shown through analysis of the 'Made by nature' campaign, ID relied on a number of signs that were implicitly counter-hegemonic in their nature, such as the dominance of nature, which is incongruent with their hegemonic enemy's perception of artificiality. As the brand transitioned into hegemonic ownership following the acquisition by Coca Cola, their signs – similarly to TBS – moved away from counter-hegemonic connotations and focused more on the product itself and its saviour role for consumers. Irreverence decreased and the signifiers placed were much more similar to those that other, hegemonic drinks manufacturers might use to market a product based on fruits and sold in supermarkets.

In our analysis, we have explored the signs that characterize these challenger brands' communications, identifying how and to what extent they are driven by counter-hegemonic ideologies (Barthes, 1957/1988; Gramsci, 1971; Marx, 1904). Moreover, we have been able to show that as these brands were acquired and moved from a factually counter-hegemonic position to a context within the hegemonic corporations they were opposing, their signs and counter-hegemonic rhetoric changed as detailed above. In the following section, we will more closely elaborate on what the findings for both research questions mean for the challenger branding paradigm and which reasons we may attribute for their appearance.

## 6. Discussion

This discussion aims to critically explore the analysis findings of TBS and ID campaigns through our research questions to address the research problem and the gaps in literature we have identified. The research problem addresses the limited research made towards enlightening academia and practice as to the extent to which challenger branding relies on manipulation of counter-hegemonic critique. Because we are dealing with an analysis through the lens of critical and cultural theory, this discussion aims to fill a gap that current challenger brand research is mainly practical and does not shed light on the connections between brand identities and cultural hegemonies. Therefore the emancipatory stance in this discussion seeks to explore the ideological manipulation of narrative discourse that TBS and ID engage in.

We will discuss our research questions in the context of hegemonic theory as well as the sociocultural changes from our genealogy chapter. Further, we aim to make original contributions by examining how the identity model we constructed for challenger brands shifted before and after hegemonic corporations acquired TBS and ID. Section one answers our first research question, which examines semiotic signs used within a counter-hegemonic context. Section two explores the second research question, exploring how the counter-hegemonic themes changed by synthesizing the theoretical concepts, addressing the identity model, noting the shift in ideological changes in relation to the sociological background, identifying how hegemonic operating codes were opposed or used, and critical conclusions about the shift in relation to the research purpose.

### 6.1. Counter-Hegemonic Themes and Meanings

The first research question we sought to answer was the following:

*What signs are employed to communicate counter-hegemonic themes shaping brand identities?*

Our findings, detailed in the above chapter, provide tangible themes in signs, which the examined brands use to express counter-hegemony and utilize for the construction of their identity. Both brands in general rely substantially on narratives to define their identity and transport their ideological base (Holt & Cameron, 2010; Paharia et al., 2011), as evident from the sociocultural background genealogy. Whereas TBS has constructed signs that transport its ideology of the caring fighter in the pre-acquisition campaign, narrating it with the aid of tangible figurehead Ruby, ID relies on story-telling with humour, based on an ideology of natural purity. In the specific campaigns examined, these narratives are supplemented by signs engineered to reinforce them and simultaneously point out the culturally orthodox state of the hegemony's ideology, deconstructing it in the process (Gramsci, 1971; Hall, 1980; Thompson, 2004). That is, both TBS's and ID's ideologies are transported with signs which, implicitly or explicitly, juxtapose them against the supposedly faulty ideology characteristic of the hegemony

they oppose (Gramsci, 1971). In their print campaigns, the brands reference the ideological base of the hegemony as an old-fashioned or even bad thing, thus underpinning their own counter-hegemonic stance.

Because of their reliance on emotion, ideology, and relational positioning, our findings corroborate what has been postulated as central to a challenger identity in our model and framework, indicating that the elements detailed in Figures 1 and 2 interact and play a central role in constructing and communicating a challenger identity through signs. In their personalities, both brands incorporate mythologies (Barthes, 1957/1988; Thompson, 2004), communicating them through signs such as the Garden of Eden or idealized tribal living. Moreover, their communication shows passion and determination (Paharia et al., 2011). TBS takes a very decisive stance to fight against beauty ideals and self-esteem issues, whereas ID exhibits passion for nature and humour.

Regarding semiotic relationships, both brands incorporate an element of external conflict into their communicated signs (Morgan & Holden, 2012), which varies in strength. The entity that they are in conflict with is the hegemony within their industry at large, represented by supermodels in the cosmetics sector and the homogenized artificial fast-food in the drinks industry. Moreover, both brands construct themselves as being on the side of consumers, by fighting the hegemonic monster and its naturalized consensus (Gramsci, 1971). They use signs such as opposing verbal slogans in the case of TBS, and the superhero and humoristic tone in the case of ID. Presentations through these signs subvert the hegemonic discourses of the narrow definitions of beauty, and staving off hunger by consuming unhealthy fast-food. This is an advantage for the challenger brands, as it enables them to incorporate alternative aspirations which were unaddressed by mainstream markets. ID relies on the aspiration towards naturalism, while TBS taps into the aspiration to be oneself without being overtly driven to bodily improvement. Thus, both brands activate self-images that are highly salient to their consumers, but unaddressed or distorted by their hegemonic competition, such as the artisanal-cosmopolitan and the moral driven consumer (Thompson & Arsel, 2004), analysed in chapter 4's historical sociocultural genealogy. Positioning themselves entirely based on emotional rather than functional benefits, each of these challenger brands forgoes giving their commercial products a prominent position, focusing more on what values they represent.

Moreover, we can validate our proposition that the challenger identity communication rests crucially on counter-hegemonic signs, which is expressed through the subversion of the hegemonic ideology in communications (Gramsci, 1971; Holt & Cameron, 2010). They reference the power structures to some extent, while portraying themselves as striving to construct new reality claims that show these existing structures as obsolete and negative (Gramsci, 1971). In line with both ID's and TBS's essential brand vision to challenge the

market, they place perceptible signs of their doing so in the form of attacks on the hegemony. Some of these signs explicitly reference the hegemony, drawing forth the negative implications attached to it, such as TBS's plastic doll Ruby subverting Barbie and supermodels. Others, such as the colour scheme or the natural scenes central to ID's first campaign, frame as positive the opposite of what the hegemonic 'other' is seen to represent, creating incongruence. Each campaign for both brands is interspersed with a variety of such counter-hegemonic signs, as subsumed under the themes described in the previous section. These signs are particularly notable in both pre-acquisition campaigns. Thus, through implicit or explicit reference, the signs which stand for the hegemony, such as standardized beauty or artificiality, are made to appear negative to the audience, and the challenger brands are portrayed as the answer and positive alternative, thereby implementing the counter-hegemonic position in communication (Gramsci, 1971; Hall, 1980). The analysis has shown that in their campaigns and narratives, both brands rely strongly on ideologically saturated signs, myths and meanings (Barthes, 1957/1988) that represent and communicate the identified components of a challenger identity. The shift of the identity and the entailed shift in counter-hegemonic meanings is discussed in the next section.

## **6.2. Change in Themes after Acquisition**

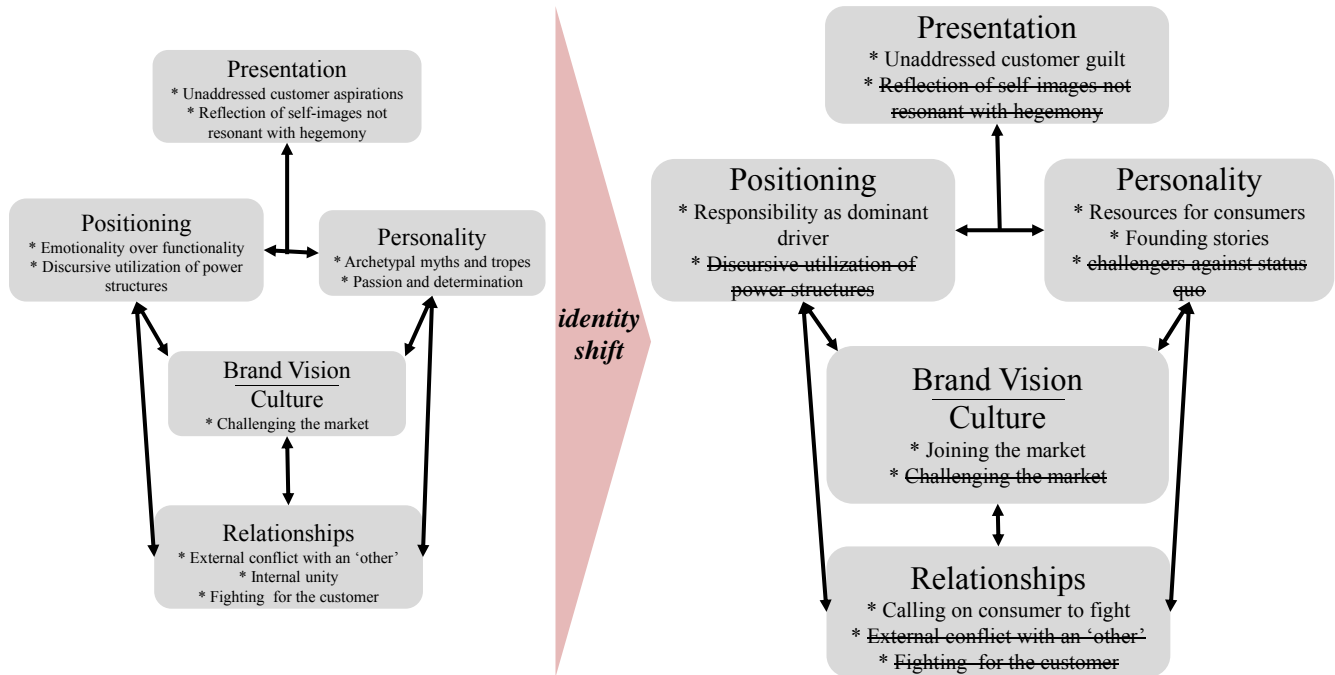
The second question which we have uncovered answers to was as follows:

*How do the counter-hegemonic themes in brand communication differ before and after a challenger brand has entered the hegemony?*

The findings suggest that the counter-hegemonic themes change through two ways, the first conclusion being that their brand identity changed from being counter-hegemonic to incorporating the dominant hegemonic ideology, masked by founding stories. This will be explored through the shifts in our proposed model of a challenger identity, followed by the altered constructs and relations within the identity themes of the campaigns. The second conclusion is that their narrative themes changed from critique to a 'call to action' for neoliberal (Cova & Dalli, 2009; Holt, 2006) consumers. This section will first examine the shifts in identity, following with the explorations of the narrative change.

### **6.2.1. Identity Model Shift**

In examining the communications of the campaigns, we could perceive a shift in the identities, reducing the fit to our challenger brand model. The signs they use play on myths that are incongruent or even oppositional to the hegemonic market and brand ideologies (Thompson, 2004). The brand identity model created as a framework for challenger brand identity shifted from the pre-campaign to the post-campaign for both brands, as visible in Figure 12 and discussed in detail in this section. It is important to make clear how the model has changed in order to discuss the shifts of counter-hegemonic themes present.



**Figure 12: Shift in challenger brand identities, summarized for *The Body Shop* and *Innocent Drinks* (authors' own)**

The presentation of the challenger identity changed from the pre-campaign narrative of Morgan's (2009) 'David' embodying social opposition to the monster of 'Goliath', into the presentation of the brand as a longstanding social pioneer or hero. This presentation was induced by the shifting personality of the brands. The personality shifted from typical challenger archetypes of the rebel and maverick, opposing an oppressive hegemonic force (Holt 2002; 2004; Thompson, 2004; Wertime, 2002; Woodside, Sood & Miller, 2008) to a personification of the hero. This incorporated heroic archetype still retains the challenger outlook (de Chernatony & Cottam 2009; Morgan, 2009), however the heroism is not a personality set up against an opposing force of the dominant ideology, therefore lowering the counter-hegemonic identity in the post- acquisition campaigns (Holt, 2002; Thompson, Rindfleisch & Arsel, 2006).

The emotional positioning of the challenger brand as a grassroots company struggling against large corporations (Morgan, 2009; Paharia et al. 2011) shifted after the brands were acquired by such corporations. Instead they relied on communicating an emotional to consumers wherein responsible consumerism was placed as a core positioning of the brands. This positioning placed the responsibility on the consumer, constructing a relationship wherein critique of the hegemonic ideologies in culture was replaced by creating a 'call to action' to be a responsible consumer through consuming ethical products rather than a consumer who critiques the marketplace and doesn't consume at all, which is thus implied to be worse.

However, the shift in the vision and culture of the brand from challenging the market to joining the market is the most significant shift in the brand identity model. A true challenger needs to maintain its continuity in challenging the market in order to maintain credibility of its



positioning and culture (de Chernatony & Cottam 2009). The change in the use of opposing ideologies within the narratives to dominant ideologies being sold shifted the strategic tools used by the brand from critique to a representation of consumerism. This effort to stay culturally resonant by changing the relational branding strategy embraces the adaptation of forming the brand into an enduring entity, as elaborated by Holt (2004), who details that truly iconic brands must evolve in order to stay the same. The shift in brand principle to stay relevant may indicate the desire to still be perceived as a challenger, although in a different facet than before.

Because challengers strive to provide symbols of re-evaluation, targeting the hegemony (Gramsci, 1971) and aiming to topple the complacency of orthodoxy ideologies within a marketplace and this re-evaluation is attained less in the post-acquisition campaigns, the mentioned shifts in the brand identity model all contribute to a diluted challenger identity for TBS and ID. Challenger brands are constructed in relation to someone or something else, and since this opponent is no longer hegemonic (Thompson & Arsel, 2004), the brands seem to have lost steam. Since being acquired by L'Oréal and Coca Cola, this construction in relation to an opponent is diluted by the fact that the brands no longer challenge the mainstream ideologies of the market through their brand identity. Instead, they strive to tap into consumers' effort towards sustainable consumerism. This shift leads us over to answering our second research question.

### ***Brand Identity Themes Within the Campaigns***

As shown in the model shift in section 6.2.1., the brand narratives communicate a changed brand identity through shifted alignments of social rebels and mavericks to social heroes through identification with the founding stories of the companies. This aligns with the shift of narrative counter-hegemonic critique to an active consumer relationship construction.

In the first campaigns, the brand communication for both brands constructed a clear divide by choosing sides against the hegemony (Gramsci, 1971; Marx, 1904). This is what communicated their brand identity as a challenger brand and what helped them to sell to disenchanted consumers: a firm stance against what the hegemonic large corporations stood for, i.e. Eurocentric beauty standards and the Industrial Food Complex. Within the brand identity of TBS, the rebel positioning is attained through the hyperbole and sarcasm in the 'Ruby' campaign, produced through the humorous indexical use of Barbie as a mythical image that the company was rebelling against. TBS aims to position the identity of the company on the side of the average woman and thus against the beauty industry trying to make her exploitable. Through the use of juxtaposition of Barbie's face with a chubby body, TBS critiques the cultivation of the female body as a thin and unnatural form that has been naturalized by media, the beauty industry, the fashion industry, and the gendered toy industry (Bordo, 1994). This provides TBS the opportunity to encode (Hall, 1980) itself as the challenger who brings forth this critique for its challenger narratives, which ultimately leads to critique commercialization. TBS portrays

itself as a rebel against the existing standards of the beauty industry, constructing a divide between beauty industry and consumers and squarely positioning itself on the consumer side (Gramsci, 1971). Similarly, ID's 'Made by Nature' campaign utilizes the positioning of the irreverence of the maverick, which characterizes the identity of the brand. This identity was present in the overt connection to nature, trying to integrate the brand products into the positioning of nature itself, proving the identity as something comparable to this context. Although not as direct as TBS's 'Ruby' campaign, in ID's 'Made by Nature' counter-hegemonic narrative is also critical. The campaign does not directly oppose the Industrial Food Complex, however it structures the company identity around the ideology ID opposed, by claiming they align with natural ways of living (Pollan, 2006). This subliminally calls the audience's attention to the counter-hegemonic ideology (Gramsci, 1971; Marx, 1904) of naturalism and purity and positions the company as a challenger identity through embodying the binary opposite of the cultural orthodoxy of the industrial food paradigm.

The post-campaign brand identity shifts both brands to social heroes who exhibited the challenger brand identity in their founding, and still attempt to cling to that original essence, although it no longer is the factor defining them. The brand identity is constructed on the myth of the social pioneer and superhero. The brands use these founding story myths because they were in risky waters of being criticized for 'selling out' after they joined hegemonic corporations. As the founding stories are so closely connected to counter-hegemonic meaning, they may evoke such challenger associations in consumers even without explicit reference to a fight against the hegemony.

To achieve this, TBS's 'Beauty with Heart' campaign aims to reinstate their pioneering identity as the brand that originally critiqued hegemonic beauty standards, environmental issues, and the ethical standards of testing, trade, and treatment of women within the beauty industry. Activism and animal rights are claimed to be part of the brand essence as TBS claims they are "in our blood", positioning them as social pioneers still fighting for good (BWH 1). Similarly, ID' post-campaign, 'Here to Save the Peckish', utilizes the founding identity of the company through the myth of the superhero. Replacing the product with the myth of the superhero positions ID as a saviour brand, and thus the current communications campaign focuses more on the product and brand benefits for the individual consumer and constructs the consumer as a passive victim of this internal conflict who needs to be saved by a company that provides healthy alternatives.

An interesting tendency in our findings for this second question is that in the campaigns by both brands, the consumers become the ones who should take the burden of buying Green or eating 'healthy'. Consumers are placed in the context wherein they should now be the positioning agents for the challenger brands, through purchasing their product and being advocates for the brand identities. Both brands now tap into the "bad conscience" of the consumer, but they go

about this with two different approaches. TBS constructs its narratives as a resource for the active or political consumer, whereas ID narratives include the saviour of the passive consumer. This ignores the narratives of what the identity of a challenger brand entails, and assumes consumerism narratives as a 'call to action', rather than being counter-hegemonic. We interpret this as a clear shift from the communication of critique to perpetuating the hegemony. The brands use their original challenger identity to mask their brand narratives as consumer activism, however in reality they are just selling their products on an increased mass level, given the opportunity through the acquisition by large companies.

We have determined that these critique narratives shifted after the challenger brands joined the hegemony. Instead of directly or indirectly critiquing the hegemonic industries the companies are operating in (Gramsci, 1971; Hall, 1980), they move away from prior counter-hegemonic narratives to a self-referential story of the hero, which aims at actively positioning the brand as the crucial resource for responsible consumerism. The brands are thus moving the impetus for action away from their company and masking it as consumer interactivity to get people to purchase their products and promote the narrative of environmentalism for them. Both companies are now also trying to steer the consumer through guilt and the feeling of being lacking (as practiced e.g. by large corporations in the beauty industry), rather than through providing a positively framed alternative to the competitors relying on hegemonic ideologies.

### ***Ideological Background***

Looking beyond the answers to our research question that the central campaign themes evolved from a narrative of oppositional critique to a 'call to action' for consumers, and the brand's identities changed from being counter-hegemonic to incorporating the dominant hegemonic ideology, masked by founding stories, it is important to look back to the sociocultural background and codes to look deeper as to why the shift happened. This adds more depth to our understanding and helps us avoid entirely speculative conclusions.

The shift in TBS's 'Ruby' critique narrative to the dominant Eurocentric beauty standard fits with the ideological disruption consumers were seeking at the time through the exotic naturalist disruption based on a moral stance (Barthes, 1957/1988). The Ruby doll itself offered a welcome change to the standard image of Barbie. Ruby is an exotic temptress presented in natural backgrounds, becoming a symbolic narrative herself as the exotic naturalist critique of standard beauty. Ruby herself was a symbol of a moral ideology, one which opposed the normalized ideal (Hall, 1980) for women continued to become thinner and younger compared to earlier centuries (Corrigan, 1997; Grammer et al., 2003). This shifted with the social disruption of consumers seeking moral roles through political consumerism. The 'Beauty with Heart' campaign offers the narrative of a 'call to action' to fulfil this ideological shift in society. This action stance narrative is provided with the moral of heart, attained through beauty as a code itself. The 'Beauty with

Heart' campaign becomes much less counter-hegemonic because it actually operates within the Eurocentric standard code of beauty, rather than opposing it (Hall, 1980). Women are told they can attain beauty through political consumerism, when in fact this communication subtly imparts a sales message using the duplicity of desired consumer activist ideologies (Thompson & Arsel, 2004) as well as desired beauty. Therefore the shift in exotic naturalism to political consumerism was not only an essential shift in the core values of the TBS as a company, but also the clever use of ideological disruptions in society that were taking place at the time. However, it must be noted that political consumerism was a disruption that occurred years before TBS incorporated the theme into this campaign, lowering the authenticity of the theme within the campaign because it is now merely a trend termed 'Ethicwashing' or 'Greenwashing' in the current time, no longer pioneering.

Similarly, Innocent's change through their campaigns involves the shift in narrative themes as coinciding with the ideological cultural disruptions at the time. The 'Made with Nature' campaign inherently critiqued the Industrial Food Complex through promoting their narratives through purely naturalist ideologies. The myth and signs fitting this ideology (Barthes, 1957/1988) assumed the disruption of the artisanal-cosmopolitan searching for an alternative form of consumption that could fulfil their desire through the myth of cultivating natural ingredients through a sophisticated product. The narrative theme in the 'Save the Peckish' campaign subsumes a completely different message. The campaign incorporates, rather abrasively, the overt messages of the health trend through their quantification of vitamins and minerals of fruit, rather than allowing fruit to be simply, fruit. The narrative of 2 out of 5 fruits a day encapsulates the code of the Industrial Food Complex. The quantification of food to solely functional portions dilutes the counter-hegemonic challenge behind the campaign to merely become another advertisement riding the health trend. Although the ideology of health was incorporated, it cannot be considered an innovative counter-hegemonic disruption at this time, because the campaign launch in 2011 came years after the inception of the health trend.

Their challenger identity is further diluted by this fact, resulting in the explanation of why both companies rely so much on their founding stories within the second campaigns (Thompson, 2004). Their loss in authenticity as a challenger brand, mainly because they assumed the hegemonic operating codes rather than opposing them in the second campaigns (Hall, 1980), as well as riding sociocultural trends in their second campaigns rather than igniting them as in the first, results in the identity shift to attempt to incorporate the people's social hero. The rebel and maverick identity evolved to assume the cultural disruption of 'consuming the people's hero', seen through both brands' reliance on their founding stories. Thanks to these, they still evoke some tenets of the counter-hegemonic game-changer. However, saving consumers as a social pioneer or from bad health does not encapsulate authentic monsters to fight against. It simply places consumption habits as an enemy, resulting once again on the responsibility of the

consumer to ‘consume’ these brands’ products as a symbol of fighting the monster of their own consumption habits. Perhaps the monster now has become TBS and Innocent’s own inauthenticity, as both brands use their founding essence a crutch in place of their old pedestal on which to stand.

### **6.2.2. Implications**

This shift in identity and narrative has many resulting implications. In general, we can summarize our implications by asserting that these brands changed in their communications by moving away from referencing the hegemony and instead turning to reference themselves as standards, relying on founding stories to attempt to maintain salience. This means that they lose the relational element and the counter-hegemonic undercurrents central to their identity as challengers (see Figure 12). These challenger identity shifts are of importance because they may endanger the brands’ authenticity. Where a counter-hegemonic challenger is in reality no longer set apart from the hegemony, the continued pursuance of such a brand identity may be dangerous. The messages and signs communicated to the consumer become questionable in their authenticity, and where consumers believe they are being deliberately misinformed, a brand may be faced with immense and enduring dissatisfaction (Aaker, Fournier & Brasel, 2004), and this is especially relevant for challengers who are so reliant on cultural resources and the perception of the game-changer.

This results in the falsity of brands that appear to emancipate consumers in the market. The shift in identity of the brands from incorporating counter-hegemonic elements to joining the hegemony, although attempting to mask this through invoking themselves as the social pioneer and hero, does not bode well for the authenticity of the brand. It means that challenger brands that have joined the hegemony may have the remnant symbolism of being counter-hegemonic, but not the weight to back this up. They co-opt signs to provide a superficial appearance, however in actuality have joined forces with the giant hegemonic structures they were challenging before (Gramsci, 1971; Hall, 1980). This is a problem, because if their identity is a falsity, it may lead to negative brand images (Thompson, Rindfleisch & Arsel, 2006) and may make it more difficult to sustain authenticity to a wider group of stakeholders in the market.

## 7. Conclusion

The purpose of this thesis has been to shed critical light on challenger brands' relationships to hegemonic and counter-hegemonic discourses. We've argued, through our study of The Body Shop (TBS) and Innocent Drinks (ID), that challenger brands often lose their counter-hegemonic edge after they are bought by larger brands, L'Oreal and Coca-Cola. Our study specifically looked at campaigns pre-acquisition and post-acquisition by the challenger brands, through a triangulated method approach incorporating a sociocultural historical background, semiotic analysis, and conceptual content analysis. Through our analysis and discussion we answered our proposed research questions, which explored what signs were employed to communicate counter-hegemonic themes shaping brand identities, and how the counter-hegemonic themes in brand communication changed before and after the challenger brands entered the hegemony by joining L'Oréal and Coca-Cola.

We found that both TBS and ID rely substantially on mythical signs such as the body as commodity and naturalism as narratives of critique to define their identity and transport ideological meanings. These signs shifted from the pre-acquisition to the post-acquisition campaign, resulting in a change of counter-hegemonic brand identity to incorporating the dominant hegemonic ideologies of consumerism and industrial mass production. This was perpetually masked by themes of health, ethics, and environmentalism within the founding stories of the challenger companies, resulting in a narrative shift from critique to a 'call to action' for consumers. Through our explorations we were able to discern how these counter-hegemonic themes in brand communication were adapted from their original extent through our proposed brand identity model, once TBS and ID had entered into ownership characterized by hegemonic orthodoxies. Over time, the challenger brands are subsumed into the mainstream corporate discourse, which thereby impacts and dilutes the challenger brands' ethos.

### 7.1. Summary of Findings

In our contextual sociocultural background research, we identified a number of macro-cultural and micro-cultural shifts in the mindsets of consumers, which our examined challenger brands tried to address to their advantage. Macro-culturally, in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century a yearning for close-knit and caring living resurfaced among Western consumers (Corrigan, 1997). This was a reaction to modern life, which was spiralling into a continuous race. This resurgence of awareness and effort to slow down was further cemented in the following macro-cultural shift towards accepting activism and demanding green consumption in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century. Moreover, consumer technology changed drastically in this period and thus led to consumers with short attention spans and a high demand for experiences, and combined with this expectation of morally upright companies, Western consumer culture turned towards political

consumerism. The companies made significant efforts to exploit these cultural opportunities, with TBS addressing such micro-cultural shifts as natural exoticism or demand for moral values in a product, finally stylizing themselves as the people's hero with their most recent campaign. ID, in turn, addressed artisanal-cosmopolitan desires in consumers, successfully riding the surging health trend and positioning themselves as a conduit of pleasure for the restless experience seekers of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. These efforts are clearly visible in their communications.

In answer to our first research question, counter-hegemony was found to be a pervasive tool activated through a number of signs for challenger identity construction. We identified a variety of signs, such as the plastic Ruby doll, the natural scenery, the Earth and the caped smoothies. These could be grouped into themes, such as nature or superheroes, that explicitly or more implicitly critique what the hegemonic ideology propagates. In the first campaigns examined, Innocent's 'Made by nature' and TBS's 'Ruby', the opposition to the hegemony is especially strong. Moreover, the data gathered validated our proposed conceptualization model for challenger brand identity and communication (see Figure 2) in sociocultural historical research as well as semiotic and content analysis. For both ID' and TBS's brand personality, myths are crucial ideological resources to bring their personality alive through narrative. In addition, the relational element proved to be highly relevant in semiotics of the first campaigns, relying centrally on external conflict and the brand as fighting for the consumer. This external conflict shifted focus for the following campaigns. In general, both brands are positioned on emotion, eschewing functional benefits and implementing a passionate tone in their communications. Combined with this, their presentations address self-images and aspirations ignored by the hegemony and thus place the brands into a promising position to win over those consumers disenchanted with the ideology of the hegemony.

The second research question resulted in the finding that the challenger brand communications differed substantially before and after the challenger brands joined the L'Oréal and Coca-Cola. The narrative themes changed from critique to a 'call to action' for consumers, and their brand identity changed from being counter-hegemonic to incorporating the dominant hegemonic ideology, masked by founding stories. As the hegemonic force they joined diluted the challenger brand identity, a mask was needed to distract consumers. Using the founding stories and myth of the social pioneer and hero aimed to make the companies appear as more authentic after they joined the hegemony, although through deeper examination we see the brand identity model as having changed, which could somehow destroy the real challenger essence in the future. This indicates to us that challenger brand narratives must ultimately shift after joining the hegemony.

## **7.2. Contribution**

This study has the capacity to critically inform practitioners, academics, and a wider audience in their approach to executing and examining challenger branding. It has shown that there are

significant connections between the challenger approach and a hegemonic opponent, thus addressing the neglect which academia had shown for this aspect of branding previously. This thesis has further brought forth the fundamental connection between the successful branding approach of challengers and the practice of ideology manipulation. Offering valuable insights as to how challenger communication relies on counter-hegemonic rhetoric, our project may help academic and public stakeholders identify challenger discourse and identities. To aid in this endeavour, we have also provided a first empirically based model of what identity and communication components are relevant to challengers, creating a scientific conceptual lens for this branding approach that is likely to gain ever more academic and practical attention (de Chernatony & Cottam, 2009) in the future.

Further, we have contributed to the academic stream of cultural branding (Holt, 2002; 2004; 2006; Holt & Cameron, 2010) through our semiotic analysis of challenger branding, one branding paradigm which relies exceedingly on cultural assets. We have shed light on the process of how brands are able to subvert cultural disruptions as signs into their brand communications, commercially capitalizing on them, and how this is visible in the signs of their narratives. Moreover, we have expanded traditional brand management literature by a challenger brand perspective, pointing out the specificities of this concept and the challenges that go along with sustaining it over a period of time and within the hegemony.

Semiotics, a highly relevant tool for ideological inquiry (Barthes, 1971/1977), has been proven efficient to extract from a challenger's communication the central meanings and their ideological foundations for a critical purpose, thus further illuminating what makes a brand a challenger. In addition, we have introduced a novel approach which goes beyond only semiotic analysis, commonly used for analyses of advertisements (McQuarrie & Mick, 1996; Mick, 1986), enriching it through triangulation with contextual sociocultural factors. Through this combination of analytic methods we have uncovered the cultural orthodoxies that foster success for challenger brands through providing ideological opportunities. This is useful for other researchers interested in this connection, as well as for practitioners intending to craft a successful, credible challenger narrative, because the semiotic tools in which challengers identify their narratives have been critiqued for further research.

We do not claim our thesis as the means for absolute emancipation of consumers from markets or brands, but hope that it may serve as one step towards further enlightenment and agency for any stakeholders dealing with brands. In this vein, we have made some contribution to the still nascent discipline of critical marketing at large (Tadajewski, 2010) by providing an emancipatory point of view on the central meanings and underlying structures which enable challenger brands and cause their popularity, pointing out the discourses which they subvert in their identity creation. This aids scholars and practitioners in more completely understanding the



structures that foster brands and their communications, supporting them in further researching or creating relevant challenger brands. To this end, we offer a clear articulation of communicative themes and adaptations that may identify a challenger and its move into the hegemony, aiding consumers in gaining an emancipated view on narrative and ideology employed by brands. In our thesis we have made communicative conduits for a challenger identity more tangible both to the potential emitter and the potential recipient. This may aid in the effective construction of a challenger brand, but in addition, it may inform consumers and practitioners wishing to maintain a critical perspective on these. We have made an effort to make the central role of the manipulation of discourse visible for consumers, which may naturally also inform practitioners intending to follow the same challenger branding strategy. It is apparent that for the two emblematic brands examined, maintaining an explicitly counter-hegemonic position was either not possible or not feasible, as the signs contained in their more recent communication lost much of the corresponding meanings. With the progressing convergence of challenger brands into large conglomerates (Research and Markets, 2012), we showed the authenticity of this counter-hegemonic identity and discourse becomes increasingly difficult to maintain. Thus, this study has provided the insight that in creating a successful challenger brand, its factual position relative to the hegemony plays a similarly central role as the position that is communicated.

### **7.3. Limitations**

This thesis was also subject to a number of limitations that must be pointed out. Firstly, the project had to be completed in a period of 10 weeks, which led to a time constraint that impacted the depth of data collected and the variety of analysis methods used. A bigger data set, examining a higher number of brands or a larger amount of source materials, would possibly have further bolstered the trustworthiness and validity of the results produced in this thesis. In addition, we did not incorporate dialectic discourse from consumer sources such as social media. In our conception of the thesis we had aimed to conduct an additional stage of analysis based on such data, but found that these materials were difficult to access and not rich enough to allow valid theoretical conclusions. Therefore another limitation of this project may be that it does not include any consumer perspective on how this shift in hegemony and subsequent shift in brand identity may be impact attitude or behaviours in recipients of the communications. We were able to examine only one element of the brands' communications, namely advertisements, whereas their identity is expressed through a variety of additional channels.

In evaluating the changes that the challengers' communication underwent after their move into the hegemony, we did not explicitly take into account other factors apart from this transition itself, which may have led to these changed communications. We thus wish to acknowledge here that we cannot claim that the move into the hegemony was the sole reason for these brands' shift away from counter-hegemonic semiotic signs. We are aware that other aspects, such as the

brands' lifecycle or an identification of changed customer preferences, may have contributed. Although we strove to ensure transparency and trustworthiness as detailed in the method section, the project is arguably limited by its subjectivity in data collection and analysis and the resulting impossibility of direct replication. Its results may not be regarded as generalizable onto any other set of challenger brand. This thesis is most useful as an exploratory look at challenger branding from a critical outside perspective and a point of departure for further research into the way a challenger's communication changes over time.

#### **7.4. Directions for Further Research**

This thesis has provided an in-depth conceptualization of challenger branding and the constructs and ideologies that it relies on. It has identified some of the signs which are typically employed by challenger brands to communicate their specific identities and has shed some light on the fact that it may be difficult to maintain a challenger brand identity for a company which started out as independent, defining its position as the alternative to the hegemonic other, and which subsequently becomes part of this other entity. This shift for both brands may indicate that from a long-term perspective, challenger branding may require an adaptation of brand paradigm. That is, in order to maintain a relevant essence as a challenger brand, these brands may need to move away from solely fighting hegemonic 'others' towards challenging a wider social context through their identities based on founding stories, in line with Holt's (2002) elaborations. To sustain themselves in the market, challenger brands may perhaps have to evolve and challenge a wider context than a hegemonic actor, ideology, or industry.

These insights may be used for future research to further illuminate this concept. As mentioned above, uniting this emancipatory research with a consumer perspective may enable academics to judge whether the change in ownership and communications has any perceptible impact on the acceptance and thus the market outlook for these brands. Studies that determine consumer reactions to the changing signs in brand communications before and after the entry into hegemony would be a promising next step. A related concept that may be examined is the brands' perceived authenticity and possible changes herein. It would be fruitful to extend this research by examining from an internal perspective whether the loss of these counter-hegemonic undercurrents are due to a conscious retreat by the brand managers in reaction to the lost factual counter-position, or whether it results more indirectly from the new influence of the hegemonic environment which the brand now operates in. Also, this thesis may be confounded by further research, which examines other routes and tools of identity communication, apart from advertisements (some of which are detailed in Figure 2).

Notwithstanding these limitations and possibilities for further theorization, this project has made significant contributions towards an encompassing conceptualization of challenger brands, the signs that make them, and the difficulty of maintaining such signs in the face of the change of

ownership into the hegemony. Arguably, it is important to know what signs ensure transparent and successful identification and communication. This project has identified predominant themes and signs, which aid in informing on this count. In addition, most challengers aim to become the leader in time (Morgan, 2009), and where this is realized, each of these brands will face the difficulties in maintaining consistency uncovered above. Both parties will then require awareness for the fact that changed signs transport a different identity, for which this thesis provides a point of departure. They no longer sell the ideology of the hero vs. the corporate monster, instead they rely on ideologies designed to call the consumer into action and place responsibility on them, still pursuing the ultimate goal of a profitable business. It appears as though, regardless of fun, the pirate ultimately wants to acquire gold – which may mean adapting one's strategy and joining forces with the hegemony of the navy, leaving the pirate in search of new constructs to question.

## 8. References

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### Appendix A: process guideline for historical background genealogy

This instruction was developed from Holt & Cameron (2010).

1. **Map the category's/industries' cultural orthodoxy** – map the red oceans. The cultural orthodoxy (the conventional cultural expression – ideology, myth, and cultural codes) used by most incumbents to compete for customer value.
2. **Identify the social disruption that can dislodge the orthodoxy** – what are the tipping points in society? Lead by technology, politics, the economy, religion, media etc.
3. **Unearth the ideological opportunity** – how does this disruption impact category customers (what in their identity and collective desires relate to the disruption and what new cultural codes are they desiring? What is the emergent ideology they are gravitating towards?) – what in the counter-hegemonic discourse are people desiring or connecting with?
4. **Cull appropriate source material** – repurpose existing cultural codes, ideologies and myths to address the ideological opportunity.
5. **Apply cultural tactics** – tactical embellishments of cultural strategy: what tactics have the companies used in branding?
  - 1 – provoking ideological flashpoints
  - 2 – mythologizing the company
  - 3 – resuscitating reactionary ideology: ideological marketing opposite to what the dominant ideology is at the time (most relevant to us because of counter-hegemonic marketing)
  - 4 – cultural capital trickle-down: bringing the ‘rich’ to the ‘middle class’, i.e. Starbucks
  - 5 – crossing the cultural chasm (cultural jujitsu)

### Appendix B: Bibliography for historical background genealogy

These data were used in informing our understanding for the historical background analysis, but not all were cited in the body of the thesis text. For the sake of completeness, they are enumerated here. The first two tables detail the sources from corporate and non-corporate

origin for The Body Shop, respectively. Table 3 and 4 contain similar information for Innocent Drinks.

### The Body Shop

#### Mainly corporate sources used

<b>Title</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Years relevant</b>	<b>Origin</b>	<b>Corporate Input?</b>
<b>Corporate Responsibility: Good works not good words</b>	Anita Roddick	1980's-1993	Speech in academic journal	all
<b>Not free trade but fair trade</b>	A. Roddick	1980-1995	Management publication	all
<b>Full Voice, Issue 1</b>	The Body Shop	1970-1997	Magazine focused on self-esteem	all
<b>Full Voice, Issue 2</b>	The Body Shop	1970-1999	Magazine focused on self-esteem	all
<b>Brand Timeline</b>	The Body Shop	1976-2013	Brand Page on Facebook	all
<b>Values Report</b>	The Body Shop	1997	CSR Report	all (externally verified)
<b>Ruby, the Anti-Barbie</b>	A. Roddick	1997-2001	Dispatch on personal webpage	all
<b>The Body Shop Activist: Body Image</b>	A. Valvasori	1997-2010	Corporate blog (Australia)	all
<b>STRIVING TO BE A FORCE FOR GOOD: Global Values Report</b>	The Body Shop	2011	CSR Report	all (externally verified)
<b>Join the New Beauty Movement</b>	The Body Shop (beautywithheart)	2012	Corporate Tumblr blog	all mixed
<b>Meet Lily Cole: Statement</b>	The Body Shop (beautywithheart)	2012	Corporate Tumblr blog	
<b>Beauty with Heart Issue</b>	The Body Shop	2012	Press release & brochure	all
<b>The Body Shop becomes 'Beauty with Heart'</b>	N. Wright, interviewing TBS country manager B. Verburg	2011-2012	Interview in trade publication	mixed

#### Mainly Non-corporate sources used

<b>Title</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Years relevant</b>	<b>Origin</b>	<b>Corporate Input?</b>
<b>Beauty Imagined: A history of the Global Beauty</b>	G. Jones	1950's – 1970's	Book publication	none

<b>Industry</b>					
<b>The American Beauty Industry Encyclopedia</b>	J. Willett (ed.)	1960's-1990's	Book publication	none	
<b>Case Study</b>	Research and Markets (n.a.)	1990's-2012	Online brand report	none	
<b>Like Oil and Water?</b>	D. Benady	2006	Trade publication	none	
<b>Activists call Body Shop boycott</b>	R. Booth	2006	Newspaper (online ed.)	none	
<b>L'Oréal Chief handed top role at The Body Shop</b>	G. Charles	2007	Trade publication	none	
<b>Body Shop OK's L'Oréal Bid</b>	B. Costello & E. Groves	2006	Trade publication	none	
<b>Socially Responsible Business Brawl</b>	M. Clark	1994	Online commentary	none	
<b>The Body Shop's campaign offers reality, not miracles.</b>	S. Elliott	1997	Newspaper article	little	
<b>EXPLOITING IDEALISM</b>	J. Entine	1995	Online commentary	none	
<b>Investigating The Ethics Claims Behind The Body Shop</b>	J. Marati	1976-2012	Consumer Organisation	little	
<b>Cosmetics Companies Quietly Ending Animal Tests</b>	D. McGill	1989	Newspaper article	little	
<b>Can The Body Shop Shape Up?</b>	C. Wallace & E. Brown	1996	Trade publication	none	

### Innocent Drinks

Mainly corporate sources used

<b>Title</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Years relevant</b>	<b>Origin</b>	<b>Corporate Input?</b>
<b>The Innocent Story</b>	Innocent Drinks	1999-2012	Website	all
<b>Advertising For Beginners</b>	Innocent Drinks	2001	Facebook	all
<b>Sustainable Legacy</b>	Innocent Drinks	2004-2013	Website	all
<b>Fruitstock</b>	Innocent	2005-2006	YouTube	all

	Drinks			
<b>Short Film About Apples</b>	Innocent Drinks	2005	YouTube	all
<b>Taste Not Waste</b>	Innocent Drinks	2011	Press Release	all
<b>Article in the Guardian</b>	Innocent Drinks	2011	Website Response	all
<b>New Year, New Toys</b>	Innocent Drinks	2011	Blog	all
<b>Glow in the Dark Magnet Advertisement</b>	Innocent Drinks	2011	YouTube	all
<b>Posh Bottles</b>	Innocent Drinks	2011	Blog	all
<b>Valentine Label</b>	Innocent Drinks	2012	Press Release	all
<b>Ready, Steady, Grow</b>	Innocent Drinks	2012	Press Release	all
<b>Address Regarding Further Coca-Cola Takeover</b>	Innocent Drinks	2013	Press Release	all

Mainly non-corporate sources used

<b>Title</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Years relevant</b>	<b>Origin</b>	<b>Corporate Input?</b>
<b>The Young Smoothies</b>	R. Neill	2000	Newspaper (online ed.)	Little
<b>Keeping Things Natural</b>	A. Smith	2004	Website	None
<b>Innocent Smoothies Found Guilty of Making False Health Claims</b>	M. Hickman	2007	Online Commentary	None
<b>Innocent Guilty of Sell-Out?</b>	J. Reynolds	2007	Newspaper (online ed.)	None
<b>Not So Innocent</b>	J. Simmons	2007	Online	None

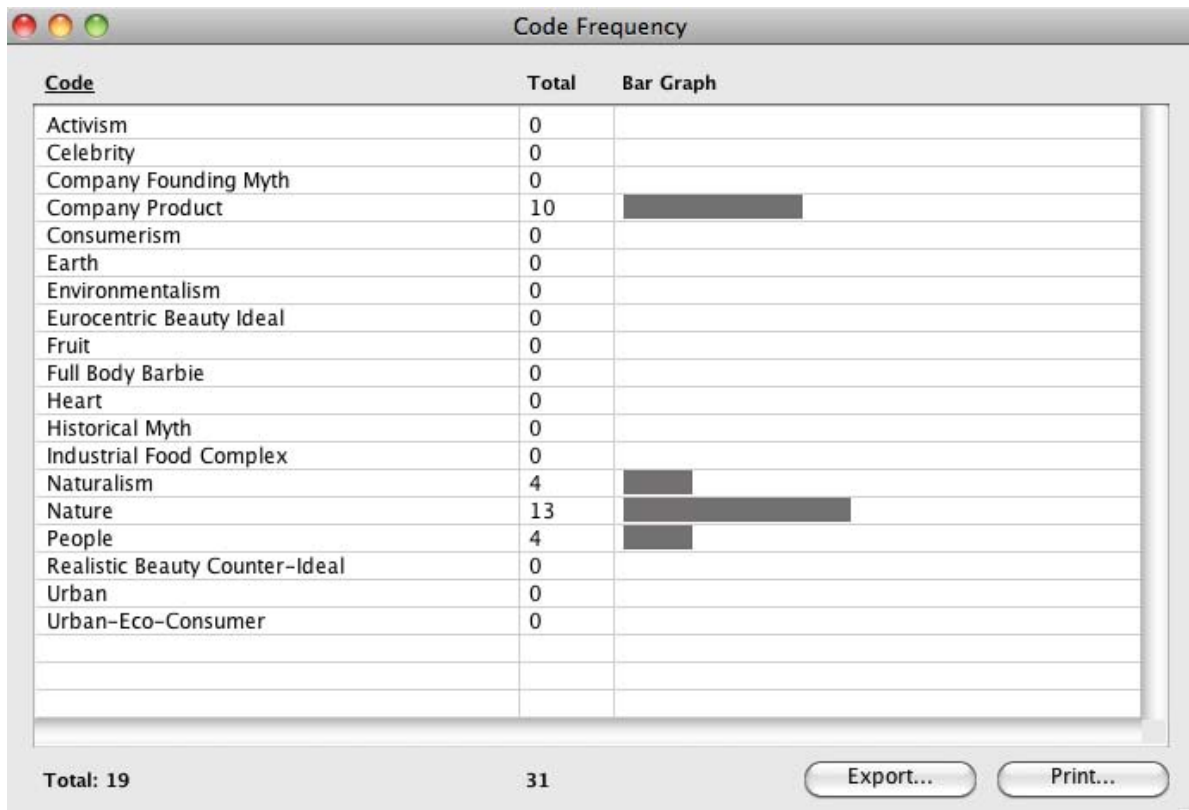
				Commentary	
<b>The Marketing Secrets Behind Innocent Drinks</b>	C. Turner	2008	Online Commentary	Little	
<b>An Innocent Man</b>	R. Addy	2008	Trade Publication	Little	
<b>Innocent Drinks ‘Carbon Footprint’</b>	J. Green	2009	Trade Publication	None	
<b>Datamonitor Case Study</b>	Datamonitor	2010	Marketing Publication	None	
<b>Innocent Smoothie Denies Sell-Out After Coca-Cola gets Major Stake</b>	T. Macalister & D. Teather	2010	Newspaper (online ed.)	None	
<b>Innocent Smoothie Maker Says Charity Cash Bottled for Best Interest Rate</b>	J. Ball	2011	Newspaper Article (online ed.)	None	
<b>Innocent Bids to Regain ‘Entrepreneurial’ Spirit</b>	J. O’Reilly	2012	Online Commentary	None	
<b>Coca-Cola Takes Full Control of Innocent</b>	R. Neate	2013	Newspaper (online ed.)	None	

### Appendix C: Content Analysis results and codes

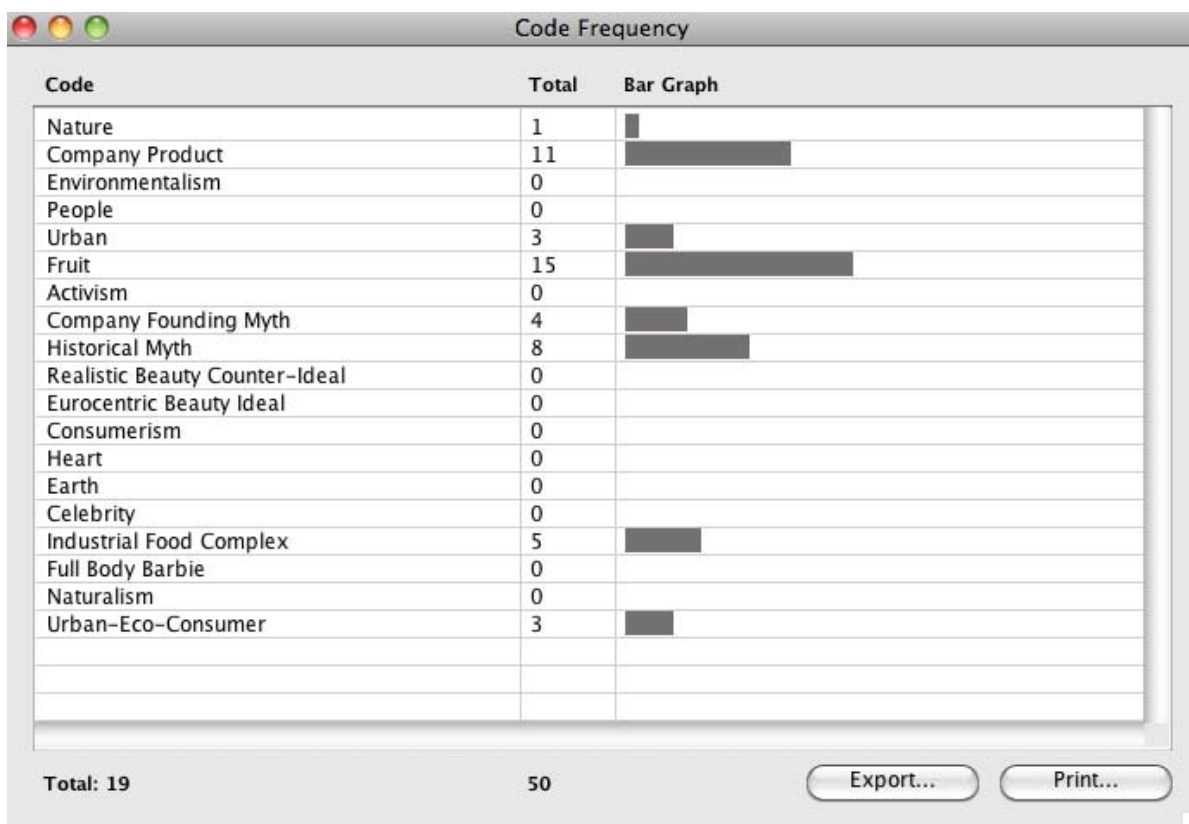
Below are the detailed results for our conceptual content analysis.



**Innocent Drinks pre-acquisition campaign (MBN)**



**Innocent Drinks post-acquisition campaign (STP)**





## Appendix D: Process guideline for semiotic analysis

These instructions were adapted from Chandler (2002) and guided our analysis process of the semiotic materials within our four campaigns. Moreover, we relied on typologies for signs and tropes reproduced below the guideline table.

### Steps in conducting a semiotic analysis of our collected visual materials

		<i>Level/sphere</i>
<b>1.</b>	<b>Define purpose &amp; value framework</b>	
	a) Why is this specific piece of text chosen?	reflexivity
	b) How is it reproduced? How did we gain access to it?	
	c) What values does this reflect about ourselves?	
	d) What codes/cultural mechanisms are we operating under? (what hegemonical views are already established, ( i.e. thin is beautiful dominant ideal in our culture)	
	e) what codes/ideologies were we brought up to understand? = what our cultural maps are (Hall)	
<b>2.</b>	<b>Identify and describe signifiers</b>	
	a) name & describe acc. to type chart	1st order of signification (denotation)
	b) → address <i>denotative</i> signifier & signified; describe why denotative meaning is mapped within a specific culture that consumes the visuals (Hall encoding) - this will help describe the relations of signs to each other (Bourdieu/Baudrillard)	
	c) describe relations of signs (syntax); what is the system in which these signifiers make sense? connect to theory and hegemony	
<b>3.</b>	<b>Identify connotative meanings of signs</b>	
	a) which connection betw. signifier/signified?	2nd order of signification (connotation & semantics)
	b) which tropes used?	
	c) paradigmatic & syntagmatic thoughts: Paradigmatic sphere: what alternatives have they NOT chosen to display in place of the signifiers they are using? Is there a central opposition in the text? (paradigmatic) Syntagmatic sphere: what do the signifiers displayed combine to? What visual myth is used to draw a connotative meaning? Use of myth and connect it with the P and S sphere, which connects to codes (helps transition to next stage for ideologies) Modality? How realistic is the advertisement and are they trying to accomplish a higher level of modality from the grainy advertisements etc.	

[type chart](#)

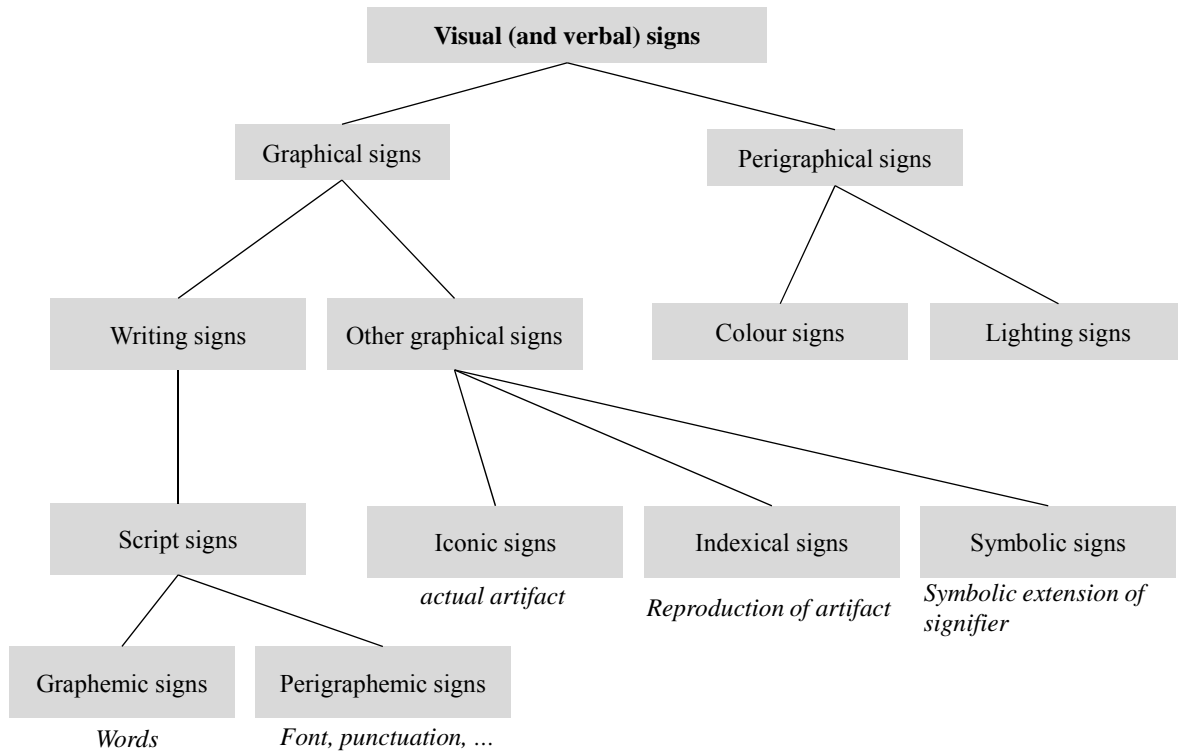
[type chart](#)

[Tropes Chart](#)

4. Find and address underlying ideologies - social semiotics		
a)	what was the sender's intention in constructing these signs (pragmatics)? address codes, ideologies, and the underlying concepts of who created the text and if/how manipulation of counter-hegemonic concepts takes place in material --> connection to critical realism and theoretical framework	3rd order of signification (ideologies; social semiotics) (incl. Modality, intertextuality and pragmatics)
b)	What relationships does the text seek to establish with its readers?	
c)	Does it allude to or compare with other <i>texts</i> within the genre? How does it compare with treatments of similar <i>themes</i> within other genres? Iconic	
d)	Which reality claims are made by the text? Does it claim to be fact? What seems to be the <i>preferred reading</i> ?	
e)	Whose realities does it represent and whose does it exclude? For whom was it intended? Look carefully at the clues and try to be as detailed as you can	
f)	Address dominant, negotiated and oppositional readings	
g)	How do the codes and myth accomplish this subliminal ideological encoding?	
h)	How do the myths, codes, and ideologies construct a counter-hegemonic story that the challenger brand relies on (how it incorporate the discourse through counter-hegemonic ideology that rest within the signs)	

5. Triangulation with Historical Analysis		
a)	How do these findings connect with Holt's innovation model (codes, culture, myth, structure) of our historical analysis?	
b)	Does the counter-hegemonic discourse fit with the cultural disruption Holt alludes to?	
c)	Do the other texts fit with the cultural orthodoxy/red ocean>and do our challenger brands 'signs' use ideological disruptions that can disrupt the orthodoxy and create a blue ocean (open their own market through counter-hegemonic marketing?)	
d)	How do the signs connect with the historical timeline and what events were happening in the companies branding?	
e)	How do the ideologies/vision/core of the company (timeline) compare with the ideologies the advertisements (signs) try to project?	

**Typology of signs** (reproduced from Schröder, 1993, p.203)



**Typology of tropes** (reproduced from McQuarrie & Mick, 2003, p.200)

I. Figuration

All rhetorical figures  
(artful deviations)

II. Figurative mode

Scheme  
(excess regularity)

Trope  
(irregularity)

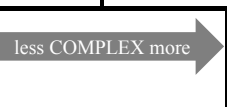
III. Rhetorical operation

Repetition

Reversal

Substitution

Destabilization



- Rhyme, chime, alliteration
- Anaphora, ephitrophe, epanalepsis, anadiplosis

- Antimetabole
- Antithesis

- Hyperbole
- Ellipsis
- Rhetorical question
- Metonym

- Metaphor
- Pun
- Irony
- Paradox

