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Greek whisky : the localization of a global commodity

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4. “Keep walking”: whisky marketing and the imaginary of “scale making” in advertising

“Keep walking”

Political statement in English by G. Papandreou (MP and president of PASOK) in the mass media (*Eleftherotypia* daily newspaper, 7 March 2008), adopting the slogan of Johnnie Walker advertising campaign into the national political discourse

Imagining the “global” and the “local”

While commercial Greek cinema was busy with the nationalization of modernity and tradition, marketing and advertising have been more inspired and excited by the “global” and the “local”. However, both mediascapes of the Greek cultural industry constitute a distinct trajectory of the localization of Scotch whisky in modern Greek imagination. As Appadurai has argued,

Mediascapes, whether produced by private or state interests, tend to be image-centered, narrative-based accounts of strips of reality, and what they offer to those who experience and transform them is a series of elements (such as characters, plots and textual forms) out of which scripts can be formed of imagined lives, their own as well as those of others living in other places. These scripts can and do get disaggregated into complex sets of metaphors by which people live (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980) as they help to constitute narratives of the Other and protonarratives of possible lives, fantasies that could become prolegomena to the desire for acquisition and movement. (1996: 27-47)

Generally speaking the mediascape is the full panoply of distributive mechanisms, institutions, media technologies, and the images they carry. Both mediascapes (cinema and marketing) have focused on the image of Scotch whisky in their own ways; they have used narrative to tell their stories to their audiences and they have offered character types such as the cosmopolitan, the urbanite or the successful male as food for imagination. In addition, these mediascapes have circulated widely-imagined modernized and globalized lives and have based their techniques on the seduction of acquisition and consumption. Their distinct difference lies in their use of ideology, which is also time specific. From the end of the 1950s to the period of the dictatorship, commercial Greek cinema produced narratives of modernization as that was the period when several major social transformations were taking place. Urbanization, economic development, capitalistic commoditization, youth movements, migration and a consciousness of rupture with traditionality emerged in various forms. Marketing and advertising, on the other hand, was established as a professional career in 1966 and capitalized on various forms of “scale” making.

Recent scholarship has argued that an emphasis on the terms “global” and “local” or “national” and “foreign” can be understood as a form of “scale making” (Tsing 2000: 327- 360). The “ideology of scale” that is, “cultural claims about locality, regionality, and globality”, “stasis and circulation” and “networks and strategies of proliferation” has been apparent in marketing and advertising projections (Tsing 2000: 327-360). Scale making is “a key issue in assuming a critical perspective on global claims and processes in the making of scales—not just the global but also local and regional scales of all sorts” (Tsing 2000: 327-360). Such scale making is manifested in the mediascapes of Scotch whisky and, more specifically, in the “project” of marketing and advertising in the last decades.

Now that mass media have become a part of people’s daily lives, the efficacy of marketing and advertising cannot be underestimated. The quantities of images and discourses relating to products, commodities, ideas and (more recently) services are growing ever larger with the arrival of new forms of communication and information such as the Internet and mobile technologies. This is a period in which almost nothing is excluded from the sphere of marketing and advertising. Moreover, “mediascapes” have become increasingly influential as they refer

Both to the distribution of the electronic capabilities to produce and disseminate information (newspapers, magazines, television stations, and film production studios), which are now available to a growing number of private and public interests throughout the world, and to the images of the world created by these media. [...] What is most important about these mediascapes is that they provide (especially in their television, film and cassette forms) large and complex repertoires of images, narratives, and ethnoscapas to the viewers throughout the world, in which the world of commodities and the world of news and politics are profoundly mixed. (Appadurai 1996: 104)

Such images can directly impact upon social landscapes that have become filled with neon advertisements and large wall posters, and they are able to influence the way audiences perceive reality (Baudrillard 1988: 166-184) and live in their “imagined worlds” (Appadurai 1996: 103). These landscapes are multiple worlds constructed by the historically situated imaginations of groups and persons around the globe. These imagined worlds can in some cases influence and even challenge official and widely held views. However, although the “project” of marketing is very powerful, we cannot presuppose its ability to remake the social world according to its ideas.

Marketing agents are among the producers of such images that constitute mediascape formations of imagined worlds. It follows that their major products, i.e. advertisements, express their imagination and the values that they want to project to consumers. More importantly, advertisements express their “ideology of scale”, which is historically and culturally specific. Any effort to understand it and situate it outside of the social conditions in which it was produced is bound to collapse (Tsing 2000: 85). The social life of whisky in advertisements should therefore be understood as a continuous process of evaluation and reevaluation from the side of the marketing agents.

Moreover, the development of marketing in Greece was based upon a globalized paradigm of “consumerism as an inclusive formal system that strives to appropriate—and thereby also produce—local cultural difference as content” (Mazzarella 2003: 4). Locality, nationality and globality have been invested with various meanings and have been intertwined with a marketing ideology of consumerism.

In his well-known work about the history of sugar in the Caribbean, Mintz makes an important distinction between “inside” and “outside” meanings (1985: 167). Inside meanings are the multiple meanings that consumers give to a product. These are placed in opposition to outside meanings, which are to do with the significance of a product for colonies, political institutions, commerce and law. Similarly, De Certeau has argued that the powerful “strategies” of commercial institutions such as the cultural industry aim at projecting such “outside meanings” in Mintz’s terms to the consumers (1984). However, consumers give their own “inside” meanings to the products they consume and within this context they practice a tactic against the strategies of the powerful industry. While both sets of meanings are important for an understanding of globalized commodities, this chapter of my study examines the “outside meanings” or the strategies of projecting whisky in marketing and advertising and how they have become an “ideology of scale” and a concrete “project” (Tsing 2000: 85). More specifically, by analyzing the materiality and discourse of whisky advertising in Greece, I seek to illustrate how whisky has been imagined and valued by marketers and by the marketing agencies involved in creating their advertisements. I argue that these advertisements are “exercises of imagination” on the part of corporate officials and marketing agents, to imagine the consumers they are seeking (Foster 2008: 72) and constitute “mediascapes” that express and form “imagined worlds” (Appadurai 1996: 103). However, these exercises of imagination not only express the cultural industry’s imagined conceptualizations of a product but also tend to construct and give legitimacy to a “discourse of authenticity” and cultural knowledge (Mazzarella 2003). This “discourse of authenticity” can be expressed in the making of global, local or even national scales (Tsing 2000: 86).

Anthropological approaches to marketing have shifted from understanding it as a “rhetoric of persuasion” to more complicated models where the overall result is affected by a number of different agents and practices (Lien 1997, Miller 1998, Foster 2002, Moeran 1996). Some anthropologists have tried to understand the “production” of the “culture of marketing” as expressed by marketers and other agents who cooperate in marketing agencies and projects. Their work has indicated that decision-making at this level is not necessarily based on rational choices and reasoning but is influenced by the value systems and social codes within such contexts.²³ Miller, for example, has examined marketing in an ethnographic perspective to conclude that “it is the actions of rival companies rather than the actions of the consumers that is the key to understanding what companies choose to do” (2002: 251). Furthermore, O’Hanlon’s research in New Guinea demonstrates how foreign advertisements or products are used to express issues of particular local character (1993).

Rather than focusing upon this continuum (of production), marketing and advertising can be examined as “ideologies of scale” (Tsing 2000: 85). By examining marketing and advertising discourse in Greece on a large body of advertising in print media and on television from the end of the 1960s (when marketing was established in Greece) to the present, I argue that the product (whisky) was “caught up” in a “project” deeply intertwined with the concepts of the “national”, the “local” and the “modern”. These meanings are based on the globalist fantasies of marketers (articulated in their products) and their abilities in “scale making”, and they are

²³ The relationship between audiences and media is much more complicated. Ethnographies have presented a world where the messages of the industries are not always circulated and internalized according to their strategies and where advertisements have come to signify more diverse meanings than sociologists and anthropologists had claimed (O’Hanlon 1993, Miller 1998).

socially and culturally specific. However, this is not to say that they do not follow international trends in the discipline of marketing.

As Lien has argued, marketing is both a practice and a discipline (1997: 11). Marketing as a practice is to do with the production process, which is the context where actual actors engage in practicing this profession with their own cultural notions. Marketing practice and products can be localized, always depending on the circumstances of their production. The discipline of marketing, on the other hand, is an expert system, a discourse of strategies that aim to commoditize and sell a product (De Certeau 1984). As such, marketing is a western liberal discourse that operates within capitalism and has deeply influenced the formation of contemporary multinational capitalism internationally.

From making brands to advertising

Brands of whisky have been in existence for a long time. The oldest distillery dates back to 1608 in Ireland and its product is still known as Bushmills (Jackson 1998: 9). Brands such as Johnnie Walker, Jameson, Bell's and many more have been exported and widely distributed for more than one hundred and fifty years. These brands were based upon the family names and history of ownership of the distillery of production. However, there are also brands such as Cutty Sark that were inspired by historical circumstances.

Brands first appeared in the food industry in mass-produced standardized commodities like Heinz pickles, Campbell's soup and Quaker Oats cereal "in an effort to counteract the new and unsettling anonymity of packaged goods" (Klein 2000: 6). Familiar, everyday personalities and attributes were projected through brands that replaced the anonymous food products of small neighborhood shops. In the same manner, the moment that whisky was exported and widely distributed in other countries in a standardized form, the brand had to be part of the package. Within a few decades most anonymous standardized products had been transformed into brands.

Nowadays there are few standardized products that are not branded. Even small production units try to brand their own commodities and present them to their consumers in a friendly way. Brands are now necessarily bound to commodities, but they can also include services, means of transport and even international institutions or non-governmental organizations. It is therefore instructive to see how brands, which emerged as signs of particular products, have evolved into a world of symbolism.

More particularly, the power of branding has become more pervasive through the commercialization of fashion clothing. Before the 1970s the logos on clothes were placed on the label inside the garment and were not visible. Gradually this trend changed, with Lacoste's crocodile and Ralph Lauren's Polo horseman taking the lead (Klein 2000: 28). Logos were placed visibly on the outside, and this made clear the price that the consumer had to pay to obtain these products. This was the beginning of the brand mania that has extended to most commercial standardized clothes all over the globe. The trend is so powerful that within a few years "fake" brands appeared on the market, copying the logos of the original brands and making 'brand-name' clothing accessible to people of any social stratum.

Whisky brands are imagined by marketers as "global brands" or "megabrands". That means they are available in most countries in the world; they share the same

structure and administration principles as well as similar marketing and advertising choices, and they carry the same logo everywhere (de Moij 2005: 14). They are also regarded as single-product brands or “monobrand” because they represent one particular product and nothing more. However, this trend has been changing in the alcohol sector with ready-to-drink (RTD) beverages such as the products of Smirnoff and Bacardi. The basic characteristic of any brand is the deep symbolism that it carries. The meanings that are attached to a brand involve a lengthy marketing endeavor that requires both time and money. The effect of this process is always ambiguous and the success of any product is a combination of social, historical and economic factors.

At the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s individual brands in the beverage sector moved a step further to become actively engaged in cultural branding. Through marketing and advertising, brands of whisky in Greece became associated with “high culture” and art (as in the case of Haig), with sophistication (like Johnnie Walker), with spaces and sponsoring, and even with particular personalities. Thus the brand began to occupy various aspects of social life. Typical examples are the branded whisky ashtrays found in coffeehouses and bars all over Greece, along with cigarette lighters and playing cards, bar towels, glasses and various other objects.

The branding of whisky as a strategy began in Greece with the expansion and popularity of bars in Athens and other areas. On Skyros most bars opened in the 1980s, though the first bar had appeared at the beginning of the 1970s. This expansion coincided with the development of tourism and the pursuance of state policies and construction plans for several areas of Greece both during and after the dictatorship. Under these conditions the bars became standardized products for the mass consumption of alcoholic beverages, where the importers would invest in branding. Through the bar the first branded objects appeared that were given to the owners by the retailers. Still today the towels bartenders use, the ashtrays on the bar and mirrors in the bar are all branded products. On Skyros as well as in Athens there are few bars that do not display products branded with whisky logos. More surprisingly, coffeehouses that “traditionally” did not serve any imported beverages (and especially not whisky) nowadays serve whisky in branded whisky glasses. Nightclubs are also extensively branded, with small logos added next to their advertisements or with an advertisement for whisky on their façade.

Despite the strategies noted above, advertisements of whisky brands in recent years have also been based on abstract ideas and, in some cases, the commodity as such has gradually disappeared, to be replaced by landscapes, people, other objects, slogans or information about the product. The commodity yields its position to images in a virtual form and usually moves into the background or to the side or even disappears completely.

The creation of a brand by a corporation is intertwined with marketing and advertising, so that the brand becomes recognizable and associated with specific values that can influence consumers and relate to their lifestyles. In order to understand how specific brands have been projected in Greece and how marketing agents have imagined the values projected through these images, I will now trace the social history of the different styles of advertising.

Advertising in Greece

The cultural industry in Greece was expanded when the professional discipline of the advertiser and marketing agent appeared on the public scene in the 1960s. The development of the marketing profession in Greece coincided with the decline of commercial cinema and the emergence of a consumer society. Especially at the end of post-authoritarianism, the gradual development of private media and television developed marketing and advertising. One of the main reasons for the expansion of marketing and advertising was the foundation of Greek national television (EPT) and the establishment of the two private channels ANT1 and MEGA in 1989.²⁴ It was not until the 1970s that the national television broadcaster became widely available to the Greek public. The first public television broadcast was in 1968. It took the form of a journalistic interview of the two of the most popular Greek cinema actors of the time, Aliki Vougiouklaki and Dimitris Papamihail. During the interview the guests were offered Scotch whisky, which they drank with the journalist while discussing their careers and relationships. The offering of alcohol in this context was intended to create a more intimate and relaxed atmosphere, while the choice of whisky represented the particular view of the director and the journalist regarding the “modern” beverage that should be offered to these movie stars. No doubt this instance of localization of marketing was unintended; it had not been designed by marketing directors and no import company had sponsored the program and supplied the drinks. The style of the first television interlocutors and the journalist as modern Athenians, the very first to be broadcast on Greek television, encompassed whisky as the appropriate beverage to consume.

Marketing agents, like their associates in the film industry, used mediascapes to express their imagination and to deal with the emerging concepts of imported commodities, style and consumption. However, there is a clear difference between them and their predecessors in the film industry: the marketing agents did not project whisky as an alienating force. On the contrary, the “project” of marketing and advertising invests Scotch with a positive modernity, a “national” character, a “global” aura and a “local” meaning.

The marketing and advertising of imported alcohol and whisky in Greece has been a long endeavor by various importers and, more recently, multinational corporations. This project of communicating consumption patterns and commodities to the Greek public has been more successful since the establishment and development of television and new technologies of communication after the 1970s. The fact that alcohol is the “glue” of Greek society, in combination with the absence of any legal prohibition on marketing and advertising alcohol in mass media and television, has given rise to a certain impunity in marketing. This impunity can easily be observed nowadays when watching evening films or soaps on any private television channel where the programmes are interrupted for advertisements. It is no coincidence that a large number of these advertisements are for whisky brands and a few other imported alcoholic beverages.

²⁴ Greek radio broadcasting began in 1938, leading to the foundation of EIR (Ε.Ι.Ρ. Ελληνικό Ινστιτούτο Ραδιοφωνίας). In 1965 the first experimental television programme was broadcast from Zappio; in 1966 came the first news report; and in 1968 the first journalistic programme was presented to the Greek public. In 1970 EIR was renamed EIRT and in 1987, under law 1730, the radio and television stations merged to create ERT (Ελληνική Ραδιοφωνία και Τηλεόραση), the national broadcaster of Greece.

Furthermore, the strategies of marketing can be experienced in various other ways in the Greek capital: in an outing to an Athens jazz club where the sponsor is Scotch whisky, in a Greek music club which has been transformed into an advertisement for whisky (Figure 4.1), on advertisements in boulevards, on ashtrays in coffeehouses and bars, in magazines, at public events, in the streets, and finally within Greek households with the glasses, ashtrays and lighters used there. The extent to which whisky brands are projected and promoted in daily life is striking. However, even more striking is the fact that most people take this for granted—especially because this phenomenon has been part of their lives for quite some time now.



Figure 4.1 Entrance to a club with live Greek “quality” music known as “stavros tu notu” (Στάυρος του Νότου). The club represents “modern” Greek “arty” (έντεχνη) music. The façade of the club has been completely transformed into an advertisement.

According to one of the major brand managers of whisky in Greece, whisky has the highest consumption rates because “it was one of the first spirits imported into the country and the one with the biggest advertising budgets over the years”.²⁵ As a result, the marketing of whisky has major significance for the importers (Σύγχρονη Διαφήμιση 17-23, 1992, v. 528). The fact that Greece is the only country in the European Union where there are no restrictions on alcohol marketing has resulted in a massive number of campaigns by various companies (European Association of Advertising Agencies 2003). The field is so diverse that new ideas and concepts are

²⁵ Interview with the brand manger of Johnnie Walker, D. Kalfa, Athens 17/01/06.

constantly being put into practice and more local Greek advertising companies are taking the lead. In recent years there have been whisky advertisements made in Greece by Greek advertising companies, and these are exported to Portugal, Spain and other countries.²⁶ While there are no restrictions and no state regulation, the industry has created a self-regulatory code, which is based on the idea of “moderate and safe drinking”.²⁷ As a result, many advertisements include slogans such as “drink with responsibility” (απολαύστε υπεύθυνα).

This development in Greek marketing in recent years can be understood as a result of the arrival of multinational companies. These companies have been focused on their corporate citizenship and their own marketing strategies and some have been eager to create their own marketing departments. Within this context, “local” national symbols, familiar places and aspects of cultural heritage have repeatedly been used in marketing in recent years (Foster 1995, Yalouri 2001). In Greece as elsewhere, the “national” and the “local” are concepts that are strategically used, reused and recycled, while also comprising important ideological categories in daily life (Appadurai 2001: 6, Miller 2002: 256).

In recent decades, and more particularly since the 1990s, the belief that advertising should be “localized” has been prominent among many marketers and multinationals all over the world (de Moij 2005: 26). In that sense, a new trend has been emerging, which can be described as “strategic localization” (Coe, Neil M; Lee, Yong-Sook 2006), a form of “localism”. Despite the fact that many whisky advertisements and campaigns are still standardized for global markets, it is no surprise that new strategies have been used in different countries, taking the supposed “local” into consideration. More specifically in Greece, various Greek and international marketing agencies have been producing an extraordinary number of Scotch whisky advertisements, not only for Greece but also for other Mediterranean countries.

One of the few ethnographies that has paid special attention to the issue of marketing in Greece has been the study by Petridou, *Milk Ties, A Commodity Chain Approach to Greek Culture* (2001). In this rather experimental work, Petridou examines the way commodity chains such as the milk and cheese industry in Greece construct and reproduce social relationships. By approaching marketing departments as cultural contexts with certain values and principles, she elaborates on perceptions of tradition and modernity from the side of the industry and that of the actual consumers. Marketing in this context is the means for expressing certain socioeconomic processes; for that reason, her analysis illustrates how conceptions of “modernity” and “tradition” have been invested with particular meanings throughout different decades. In fact, the projections of industrial progress and computerized technology in TV advertisements after the 1980s were associated with the “modern” despite the fact that during the first half of the twentieth century milk and cheese were advertised as “traditional” subjects. The main reason for this change has been the fact that the industry conceived itself as the torchbearer of modernization because it had to struggle to establish itself in political and economic structures that did not favor the industry’s development or its neoliberal values.

²⁶ One characteristic example is the campaign for Grant’s Scotch whisky designed by LoweAthens in 2006.

²⁷ Personal communication with the general secretary of the Greek Alcoholic Beverages Association, Mr. Kardaras (interview in Athens 22-12-2005).

Similarly, Greek marketing of whisky has invested in the meanings of “modernity” as well as in “globality” and “locality” during different periods. “Modernity” and “globality” came first during the 1960s, to be followed by “locality” much later.

Distinction. The emergence of the main advertising themes in Greece in the 1960s and the 1970s

This part of the study examines the way in which local and global advertising in Greece has been projecting whisky since 1970, the period when the drink became widely promoted and distributed. After the Second World War a number of Greek advertising companies were founded and engaged actively in the Greek market. Some of the most famous are Adel (1946), which came to be connected in 1987 with Saatchi & Saatchi advertising, Alector (1947), Olympic (1958), Delta (1965) and Ikon (1974). However, most advertising companies were founded after the 1960s and particularly in the 1970s. The Association of Advertising Companies, called EDEE (ΕΔΕΕ-Ένωση Διαφημιστικών Εταιριών Ελλάδος), was founded in 1966 and played a major role in the promotion of advertising in Greece, creating a legal and structural context for its development.



Figure 4.2 Haig and King George IV whisky advertisements in the *Kathimerini* (*Καθημερινή*), a daily newspaper in 1963. The bottles are clearly depicted. The first caption reads “Superior whisky all over the globe” and the second “Supplier to His Majesty the King of the Greeks”. This latter phrase symbolically corresponds to the British phrase “By Royal appointment” found on various products.

During the 1960s the marketing of whisky was mainly based on advertising in magazines, newspapers and posters and it was concerned with the clear projection of the commodity (in contrast to the gradual disappearance of the commodity from advertising images nowadays). Advertisements at that time had very limited space in which to circulate their meanings and most of them were very simple and small. Promotion was limited to the printed media and radio, and slogans were not widely

used. The emphasis would be on the cosmopolitan “global” nature of the drink, its “global” appreciation (as in the White Horse campaign of the 1960s (Figure 4.3), or the beverage’s prestigious connotations to the King of Greece and the “global” preference (Figure 4.2). More importantly Scotch is projected as a beverage of class distinction in various occasions.

Many whisky advertisements in the 1970s and the 1980s were adapted to Greek standards. In this adaptation process the marketing agents would take the main advertising theme (i.e. the photograph or the style of the portrait), which had usually been created for the British and American market, and change the text to adapt it for a Greek audience. The meaning of the advertisement would change as a result. This process of localization of the text by marketing agents was also followed in other countries.

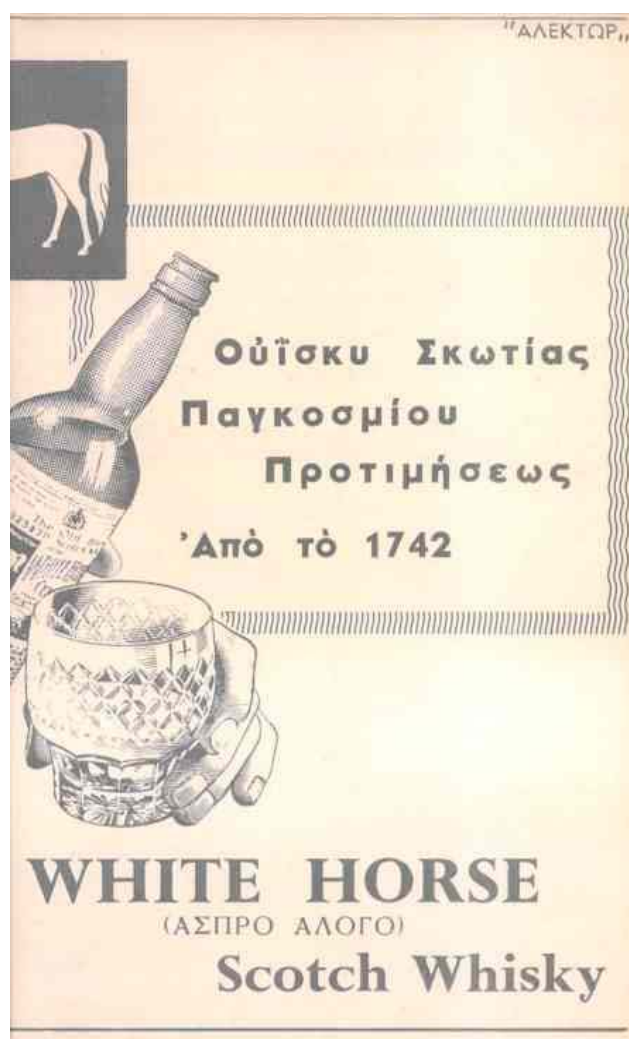


Figure 4.3 “Scotch whisky of global preference since 1742”. Advertisement for White Horse from the 1960s.

One of the first advertisements actually made for the Greek market, by the advertising company Alektor, was for White Horse whisky (Figure 4.3). In this simple sketch there is a horse at the top; further down, one hand holds a whisky bottle while the other holds the ‘proper’ whisky glass. The hands are masculine and well groomed, and thus there is a clear representation of a certain class and gender. The whisky glass

is made of crystal, short and old-fashioned but also quite luxurious. In this way the knowledge of how and in which glass the drink should be served emerges. The old-fashioned glass also has the connotation of something classic and durable. The advertisement is one of the few that presents the name of the whisky translated into Greek. However, the translation is probably there because the whisky was not yet popular or well known. The advertisement reads “Scotch whisky of global preference since 1742”. “Scale making” is again used to invest the “global” with a cosmopolitan and high-status aura. Similar “global” themes also emerged in a variety of advertisements for other brands, such as Johnnie Walker, and not only during the 1960s.

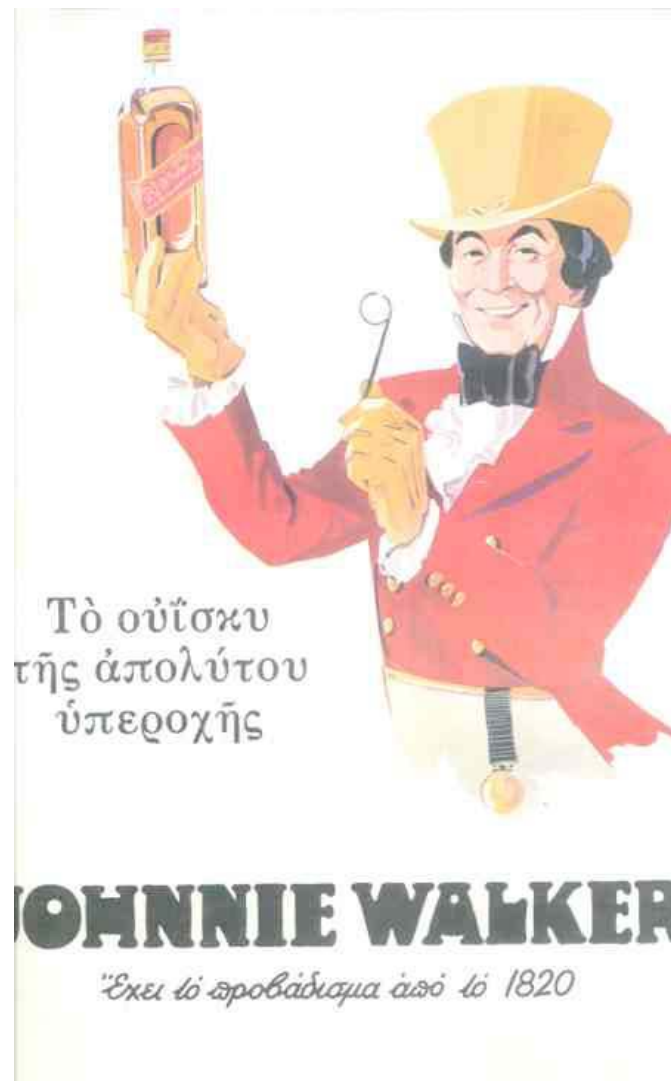


Figure 4.4 Johnnie Walker, “The whisky of absolute superiority” (1960s).

Advertising for whisky was based on an initiative of the importers in cooperation with the company that owned the whisky label or was associated with the importer. The design of the advertisements usually focused on an image of the bottle, the name of the whisky and a comment about how famous, superior, cosmopolitan, “global” and popular this whisky was. Most of the advertisements for Johnnie Walker from this period, which were reproduced in various forms, are typical examples (Figure 4.4). Usually they place Mr. Walker in the centre, and under the name of the whisky

is written: “The whisky of absolute superiority” (1960s) (Το ούίσκυ της απολύτου υπεροχής). This phrase characterized the whisky for a long time, establishing the brand and creating a distinctive placement for the product: whisky was projected as a “distinctive” drink for “superior” people. The word “superiority” also expresses the superior character of the whisky in relationship to other beverages.

Since that period, various other whisky brands (including Haig, Chivas Regal, Dimple, Special Malts and others) have also projected an image of whisky as “superior” and “distinctive”. It was no accident that a similar trend was projected in Greek cinema in the sixties. In several films whisky was projected as the drink of the wealthy while wine and ouzo were the drinks of the poor. Economic and social differences were thus expressed through consumption habits and, more particularly, alcoholic beverages. The word “superior” is thus bound to the economically “superior” person who is able to spend more money on alcohol.



Figure 4.5 Pronunciation at the “threshold of perception”: In both advertisements the “right pronunciation” is given in Greek at the bottom of the page. The first one is a Dimple (1987) and the second a J&B (1980).

During this same period in Greece, the right “accent” often appeared at the “threshold of perception” (Figure 4.5). At the bottom of the advertisement, below the name of the whisky (which was always written in English), the pronunciation of the name would be given in Greek script. The focus on the right pronunciation of the whisky presented was an important characteristic of these advertisements. Even though people who would not be able to read the name of the whisky in English did not speak English, there was an effort to pronounce it correctly even by non-English speakers. The importance of this advertising technique lies in the transfer of actual “knowledge” to the consumer which can be valued when it is practiced as a form of distinction of consumption. The knowledge of how to pronounce the name with the “right” accent in English (and in foreign languages in general) carries a heavy

ideological significance in Greece that is associated with the status and distinction of the actor. To speak a foreign language is a sign of education and therefore a form of distinction. Ever since the foundation of the Greek state, Greek education has included the promotion of foreign languages; in recent decades courses in French, German or English have been obligatory in public schools. In addition, the preference for international-cosmopolitan education is expressed in the variety of French, German, British and American schools in the Greek capital as possible educational choices for the children of middle and higher-class Athenians.

This technique should be understood in general within the context of the use of foreign languages in Greek-made advertisements, where phrases, words or dialogs appear in English. In recent decades almost half of the slogans for whisky have been in English, thus pursuing a form of distinction (Papanikolaou 1999: 34). This awkward trend of Greek-made advertisements that insist on the use of English indicates an effort on the part of marketers to identify whisky with a certain notion of something “foreign” and “distinctive”. Moreover, the use of foreign languages, including the “English accent” seen in the advertisements above, appeared during a period when Greece was emerging from linguistic homogenization and enforced unification of the State. As such the linguistic style of these advertisements (with a specific focus on English) was not strange to the literary production of the time, which expressed a “heteroglossia” (Tziovas 1994). Similarly, Greek films produced during this time of the golden age of cinema included an extraordinary linguistic spectrum that incorporated English, French, Italian and even Turkish expressions depending on the occasion and the characters (Georgakopoulou 2000).

The use of foreign words and phrases can be seen in many contexts within social life in Greece. Apart from placing the social actor within the social stratum of the middle or upper class, it is connected to a certain notion of being “modern”, progressive and knowledgeable. Already from the 1960s in Greek cinema words such as “Daddy” and “bye” were widely used in many films to satirize the adoption of these words by high-class Athenians. Furthermore, the number of non-Greek names of clothing shops in many areas of Athens, such as the shopping areas of Kolonaki (Κολωνάκι) and Patisson (Πατισίων), is striking. Names are usually in English or French, or Greek names may be written in Latin script. Even more surprisingly, shops that sell Greek commodities might transform their names into English or Latin versions so as to connote transnationality, Europeaness and modernity.

Since the 1970s, when advertising became the norm with the advent of television in Greek households, television advertisements have been based on a particular set of economic and legal relationships involving three agents. The first is the client, which is usually the importer of the alcohol and has a set of expectations for the marketing of the product. The client is also aware of the different strategies that can be used, but the design of the overall project is within the control of the contractor, i.e. the advertising company. The advertising company has as its responsibility the actual creation of the scripts for the television advertisements and the design of the other means of marketing, in collaboration with the client. However, advertising companies in Greece do not usually have the means to direct and film television advertisements. Therefore, the third agent takes over, namely the production company. The production company contracts with the advertising company to film and produce the script. Usually the client supervises the process of filming, but the completion and success of the advertisement is the responsibility of the production side. When the project is completed, it is handed over to the advertising company to be presented to

the client. The client inspects it and suggests possible changes that should be made, or accepts the advertisement as is.

The creation of the advertisement is thus a continuous collaboration between director, client and advertising company and is characterized by different aesthetic, cultural, and consumption criteria. According to a director of television advertisements who was interviewed during my research (and whose identity is kept anonymous)

The advertising company supervises the filming. Therefore the director is always restricted and often in disagreement with the supervisors. However, there has to be some kind of consent between the parties. Personally I have had many problems directing advertisements, but in the end it has to be filmed according to the client's wishes.

Although many of the television advertisements made for the Greek market before the 1990s were designed elsewhere and adapted for Greece, in recent years more and more companies have decided to create their own television advertising in Greece.

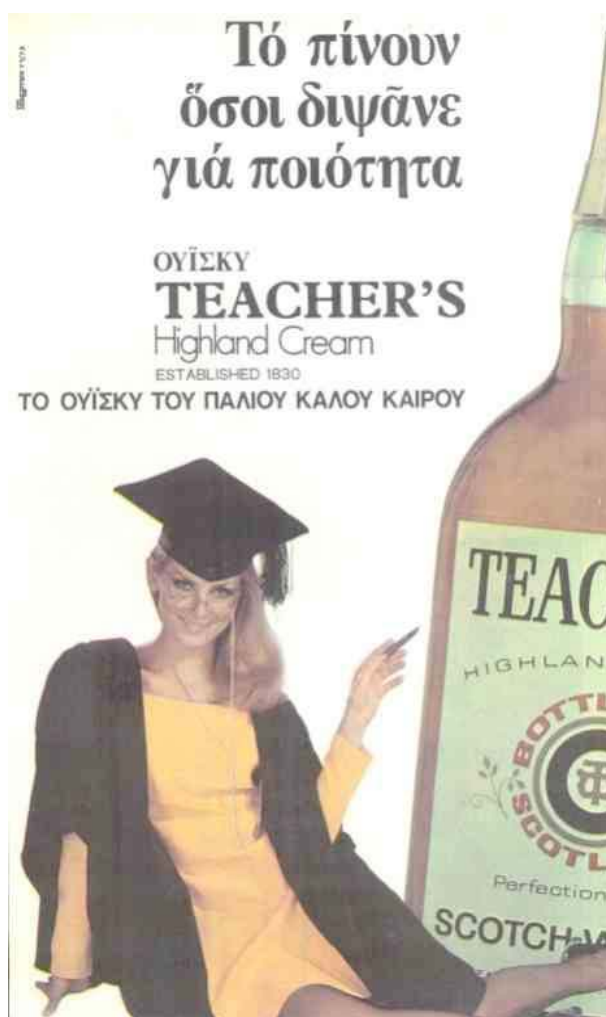


Figure 4.6 Teacher's (1973): "It is drunk by those who are thirsty for quality."

Along with the language theme, a second theme that emerged in various advertisements for whisky during the 1970s and later is that of female emancipation.

More particularly, women were projected as stylish persons through the consumption of alcohol, as well as “modern” and independent beings. A classic example from this period is the advertising campaign for Teacher’s in 1973 (Figure 4.6 with a text adapted for the Greek market). The idea of a woman in the position of a male academic teacher was used in various countries, but the text was changed for the Greek audience. In the centre of the poster is a woman dressed in British academic dress, just like the man pictured on the brand’s logo. The advertisers preferred to replace the old man with this glamorous woman, who is projected as British-educated and a teacher; she is blonde and charming but at the same time very sophisticated, and above all she has : quality”. The slogan invented for the Greek market was “it is drunk by those who are thirsty for quality” (Το πίνουν όσοι διψάνε για ποιότητα), thus distinguishing the female consumers of the beverage who are presented as having elevated taste.

It should also be noted that Britishness is associated with quality, a tendency that is observable in Greek social life. The connection of Britishness with whisky is apparent also in the actual consumption of whisky in Greece, expressed in the total control of the market by “Scotch”. The idea that “women who are thirsty for quality” and who are “modern” and independent can consume Teacher’s whisky as an expression of their identity is obvious. Such themes emerged in many advertisements, especially in the 1970s and 1980s when feminism was at the centre of public discussion. However, since 1990s whisky advertisements have focused more on a projection of “masculinity” rather than “femininity”. Whisky has been presented as a masculine drink in various other countries as well as Greece, and this is expressed in most advertisements around the globe. This globalized and standardized projection of “masculinity” is concerned with images of “economic success”, “maturity” and “leisure”, while other themes are combined in different cases. Views similar to those of marketers elsewhere are also evident in Greece and are articulated clearly in the fourth theme that emerged after 1990s, namely ‘lifestyle’ and sexuality.

The third theme, sexuality through drinking, was already appearing in a variety of advertisements from the 1970s. A Ballantine’s poster of 1976 (Figure 4.7), for example, presents several heterosexual couples dancing close together while at the center of the poster a happy, smiling female face emerges. The slogan is “Carefree life—good whisky necessary” (Ξένοιαστη ζωή...Απαραίτητο ένα καλό ουίσκυ). The “carefree life” refers to a life without problems, a life young people know how to enjoy and that brings them together—and whisky is a “necessary” ingredient. The possibility of meeting a partner through drinking at a party or out dancing has been projected by various other whisky brands, including Johnnie Walker, Haig and Cutty Sark. Indeed alcohol, including whisky, has been a means for meeting sexual partners or engaging in relationships throughout Greece as elsewhere. Bars and clubs are spaces where alcohol consumption is encouraged and they provide possible socializing spaces for both genders. These “modern” spaces where men and women can easily mix stand in opposition to the “traditional” male spaces such as coffeehouses where access by women is restricted in most parts of Greece, including Athens. In that sense whisky, like other imported beverages such as vermouth, have been presented since the 1970s as part of a lifestyle where people socialize in “modern” places with “modern” drinks and meet possible partners. This trend emerged after the Second World War with the popularization and standardization of night entertainment, but became even more apparent during the 1960s and 1970s.



Figure 4.7 Ballantine's (1976) SIGMA. "Carefree life—good whisky necessary."

A fourth theme evident since the 1970s is related to the production of the product. In magazine advertising the focus was on the way in which whisky is produced. This standardized form of advertising has been used in global campaigns in various ways, though it has not always been very successful. "Knowing how" the whisky is made, and with what processes it is preserved and aged, has also been a consideration for marketers in the Greek market, especially in recent decades when single malt whiskies have become more popular and distinctive. A variety of whiskies (such as Jack Daniel's, Glenfiddich, Grant's, Dewar's aged whisky and Jameson) have used their own production heritage as a symbol. More specifically, issues of "tradition", time spent maturing, knowledge of the family of producers, and issues of love and care for the spirit are articulated. Kinship is also a major subject in this type of advertisements. Usually the story begins with the founder of the whisky brand and the continuation of the "tradition" by the family—despite the fact that most distilleries are owned by multinational companies.

The final theme, "lifestyle", emerged during the 1990s. This involved an effort to relate the product to a certain social identity. For example, at the beginning of the 1990s J&B presented a campaign with an interesting use of language. One magazine advertisement read (Figure 4.8): "Modern men, dynamic ones, those who know how to live fully and enjoy every moment of their lives, have their own whisky, J&B. Rare

moments do not just come. Create them”. The concept of “lifestyle” can be articulated as a set of concepts and practices, a “way of doing and being” in the world, which has been clearly projected in various advertisements of the 1990s and 2000s. Brands like Johnnie Walker and Cutty Sark project leisure as a distinctive paradise for a certain class of people who “know how to live their lives” and engage in yachting and skiing. Whisky is thus connected with successful people, usually men who are aged between thirty and sixty and have a “modern” image. The “modern” is presented as upper class and close to what could be considered “distinctive” forms of leisure. Furthermore, certain localizations are expressed in these advertisements—such as the appearance of the whisky-cola cocktail, which is very popular in Greece, especially among women.



Figure 4.8 J&B (1990). “Modern men.”

The economic prosperity and the modernity expressed by the characters in such advertisements is also intertwined with the theme of “success”. Success is a target fulfilled by modern men—whisky consumers—who have a distinctive style. Whisky is indeed a symbol of success to the extent that consumers can afford it. “Success” is also presented as a masculine attribute in most advertisements of the 1990s.

A similar case can be found in advertising for Haig, which since that period has been projecting an identity closer to art, thus distinguishing the consumers of the beverage. One of the first advertisements to set this trend had the caption “Famous friends of art at openings, in company with John Haig”. The poster presents a man and a woman in their thirties who are visiting a gallery and drinking whisky. Since then Haig has maintained this same attitude by supporting cultural events, cooperating

with jazz clubs and publishing jazz news leaflets. “ART IS REAL” is a monthly leaflet covering jazz news, concerts in Greece and new jazz releases. The whisky logo is dominant in most parts of the leaflet and the front cover always features the most recent advertisement for the brand. Furthermore, at the first jazz club of Athens (called Half Note), Haig is a major sponsor of many “ethnic” and “international” events, thus claiming a “global” and “cosmopolitan” identity. Similar techniques have been used by Jameson, which sponsors jazz events in the other jazz club in Athens, Bar Guru Bar.

Since the 1990s single malt and special brands have also begun to be circulated in the Greek market by the various multinational corporations that nowadays own these distilleries. Single malts have been booming internationally, especially since the 1980s, as a result of the purchase of the distilleries by multinational corporations. It was during that period that many forgotten distilleries were reopened and single malt whisky was reinvented. Diageo owns, for example, Caol Ila from the Island of Islay, Cardhu from the Highlands, Clynelish from the Highlands, Cragganmore from the Highlands, Lagavulin from Islay, Talisker from the Isle of Skye, Oban from the Highlands and many more distilleries all over Scotland.²⁸ Pernod Ricard owns Laphroaig on Islay, Aberlour in Speyside, Glenallachie in Speyside and many more. Single malts have been promoted in Greece in various ways in recent years. These whiskies appeal to connoisseurs who have already been drinking whisky for a long time and are interested in expanding their “taste”; they are presented as top-quality Scotch whisky, targeting consumers who will continue to drink whisky but who want to be distinctive, especially in a country where blended whisky is highly popular.

Localisms

As noted in the first part of this chapter, the Greek market for imported drinks grew larger during the 1990s as a result of the arrival of huge multinational corporations. The corporations tried to expand their own products, including whisky, through various strategies. Marketing departments became part of these companies, and advertising (especially on television) was increased. In this context advertising became more competitive. Despite the fact that the consumption of whisky was already high during that period and individual brands were well known and very popular, advertising became more intense as a result of the competition.

In recent years, and more particularly at the first conference on alcohol marketing in Greece in 2001, a number of issues have been articulated from the perspective of the marketers.²⁹ These have included conceptions of “masculinity”, “success”, “maturity” and “modernity” and the values of “tradition”, “friendship”, “honesty” and “devotion”. These themes still appear in a number of advertisements made in Greece or adopted from abroad and in that sense their localized character is ambiguous. However, according to the brand manager of Johnnie Walker in Greece, the issues of “modernness”, “success” and “masculinity” have emerged as central concepts in Greece. According to her, whisky expresses masculinity in Greece and the beverage “is promoted as a sophisticated drink for modern people who know what they want in

²⁸ Most of the single malt whisky distilleries in Scotland are owned nowadays by Diageo and Pernod Ricard. For more information on ownership and distillers of Single malt whisky see Michael Jackson’s *Malt Whisky Companion* (published by Dorling Kindersley Limited).

²⁹ Report on the first marketing conference in Greece 2001.

their life and succeed in achieving their goals” (interview in Athens, D. Kalfa 17-01-2006).

Though these themes appear continuously in a variety of advertisements, in recent years and more particularly after the 1990s the theme of “lifestyle” has been emerging. Furthermore, during this period ‘localism’ has become part of marketing, which has extended to nationalization in several advertisements.

Until the beginning of the 1990s several companies tried to advertise their own products all over the world with a single advertisement or similar advertisements. Characteristic of this period were the advertisements for Jack Daniels, Cutty Sark and Johnnie Walker that were also adapted for the Greek market. Despite their wish to minimize advertising costs by using the same idea everywhere in the world, some companies decided that marketing should be adapted to “local” circumstances and that local advertising companies within the importing countries should produce the advertisements for their own markets. Coca Cola, for example, has tried to adapt in numerous cases, as Miller has demonstrated (2002: 253). This trend emerged in a period when companies were becoming more concerned about the “local” and were trying to suit their strategies to the specific case in each country. In Greece, advertisers for the beers Heineken and Amstel, for example, had already been trying since the 1980s to associate their products with an “authentic” Greek life in their television advertising and had paid close attention to their “ideology of scale” (Tsing 2000: 85). At the end of the 1980s the plot of an Amstel advertisement was as follows:

A shepherd is sitting in a cafe in a mountain village square drinking beer.

The square fills up with his flock of sheep.

The shepherd continues to drink his beer, relaxed, while the villagers complain.

The shepherd praises Amstel beer.

In contrast to beer, whisky emerges in advertisements as the ideal “gift” (*doro*). This is accurate enough, as whisky has been in recent decades an appropriate and prestigious gift for birthdays and name-day celebrations. Alcohol is a very common gift in Greek social life. More recently, at Christmas time, baskets of champagnes and special whisky have become common gifts between professionals in companies. The Greek shipping companies in particular, which own one of the largest fleets in the world, send baskets of whisky and champagne to the families of their employees. In addition, whisky gifts regularly appear in a number of magazines, such as *Epsilon* (Έψιλον) (in the Sunday newspaper *Eleftherotypia*) and *Athinorama* magazine, during Christmas (*Eleftherotypia* Dec 18, 2005, *Athinorama* Dec 8, 2005). The same theme also appeared on television in 1991 in an advertisement for Chivas Regal:

Focus on the bottle of Chivas Regal

Voiceover:

“Expensive gift? Of course! But when you give someone this gift, they will always remember you”.

The same technique has also been used for more than a decade in magazines and on posters, a characteristic example being the advertisements for Johnnie Walker Black Label. The text of the advertisement is “Give the most personal gift with just a phone

call” (Figure 4.9 Κάντε το πιο προσωπικό δώρο με ένα μόνο τηλεφώνημα). On the advertisement there is a phone number which people can call to specify the name and the message that they would like printed on the whisky label and have the gift sent to the recipient’s address. Also on the label in the advertisement is written “Long live John” (Χρόνια Πολλά Γιάννη), a wish that is articulated at name-day celebrations and on birthdays. On the actual bottle there are dozens of Greek names, making it clear just how ‘personal’ this gift is. According to the brand manager for Johnnie Walker this advertisement has not been used in any other country, because in Greece whisky is characteristically “local”.

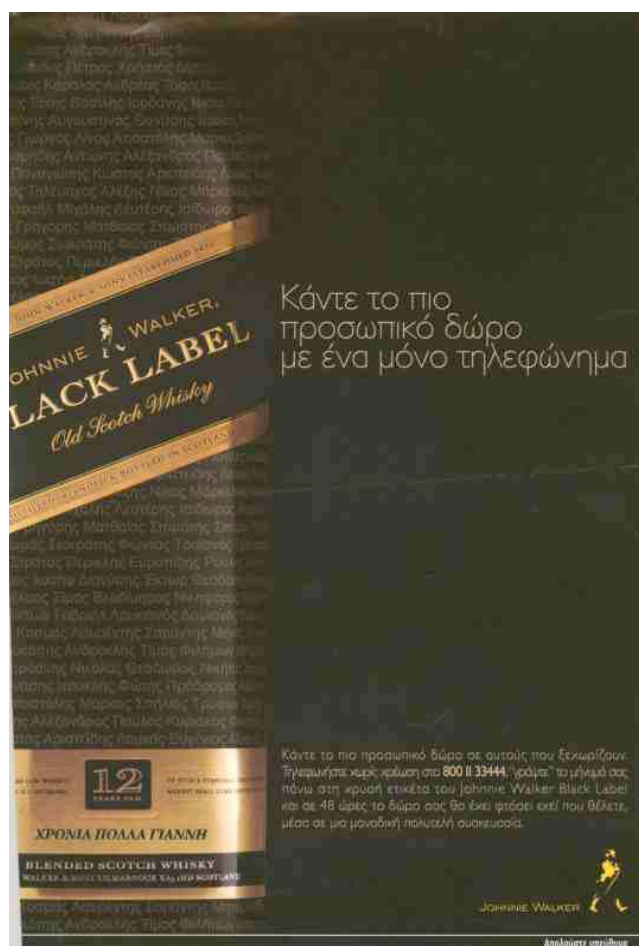


Figure 4.9 Johnnie Walker Black Label (2005). “Give the most personal gift with just a phone call.”

Another popular localizing strategy has been the use of particular places that carry cultural or national significance, another form of “scale making” (Tsing 2000: 86). Several imaginaries have employed the “national” scale in an effort to address patriotic feelings and follow the “local” ideology of marketing. A characteristic example is the television advertisement for J&B (2003) that was filmed on the Athens metro a few years after its opening in March 2000. The Athens metro opened at about the time that Greece gained official entry into the European Monetary Union and that relationship added prestige to the new transport system and its opening. Consequently the metro system was projected by the Greek government as one of the biggest achievements in post-authoritarian Greece, and it was used as a persuasive argument for the city’s capacity to host the Olympic games in 2004. The metro system gained

public approval and it became the most recent symbol of Greek modernity and modernization (Calotycho 2003: 7). The metro advertisement was filmed in English and shown with Greek subtitles despite the fact that it was made for the Greek market.

The use of recognizable spaces and their strategic projection can be found in a number of other magazine advertisements for whisky. In 2006 the LowAthens company created a campaign for Grant's whisky. Among its advertisements was one which presented a structure designed by the famous architect Calatrava for the Olympic stadium in Athens in the context of the Olympic games of 2004, which was intended to be a landmark of modern Greece (Figure 4.10). More specifically the stadium was celebrated as the trademark of the Greek Olympics and came to represent meanings of "Greekness", "Europeanization" and "cosmopolitanism" (Traganou 2008: 185). The advertisement reads, "When everybody could see only bones, somebody could see architecture". The connotation is that the competence of some people can be extraordinary because they "view" the world in a different way. In the same way consumers are encouraged to "try a different angle" and "view" a different reality with the "angle" of Grant's. Within this context localism embraces a landmark of the "nation", a symbol of "Greekness, in order to invest Grant's with a "local" aura.

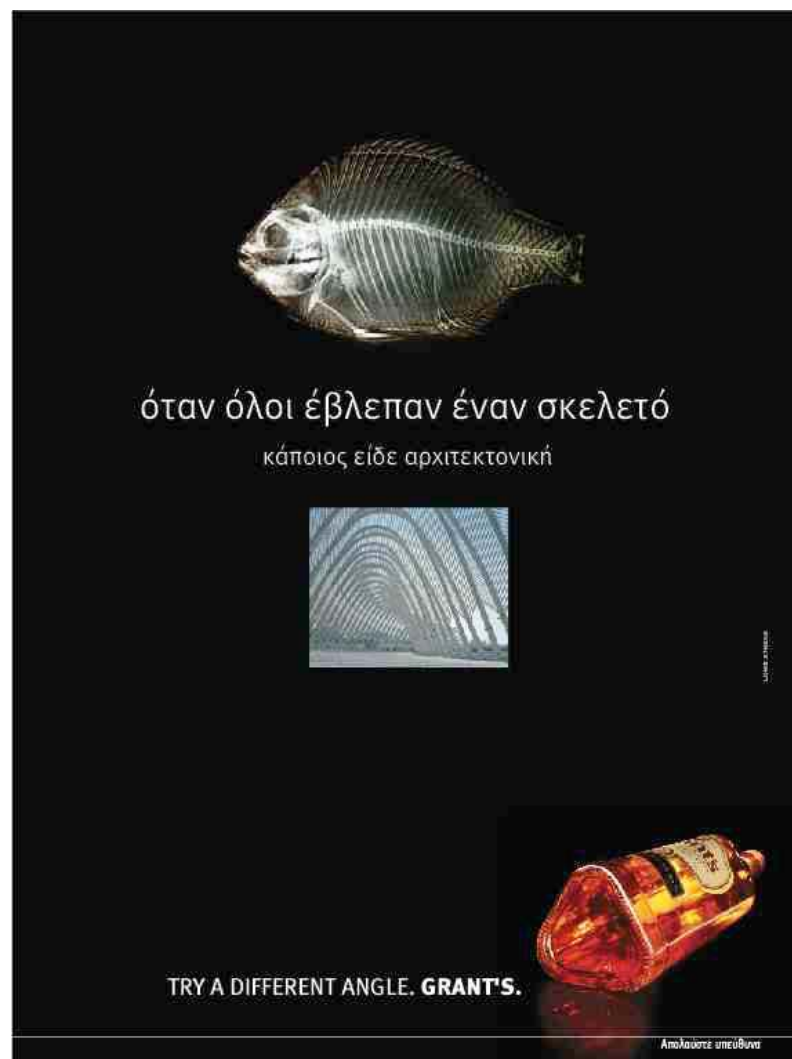


Figure 4.10 Grant's (2006) by LowAthens. "When everybody could see only bones, somebody could see architecture."

More recently the theme of national scale making has been projected by several brands, a characteristic example being the Famous Grouse advertisement shown while the European Football championship was taking place in 2004. Nationalization as a strategy aims at the association of the product with certain national characteristics. It can appropriate certain “key-symbols” such as flags, national colors or cultural heritage. The famous Grouse was presented in this way for the Greek audience (Figure 4.11):

Grouse with its head bent behind a football.
 Slowly straightens up while turning its face to the front.
 Its face is painted with the national colors of Greece, blue and white, and the characteristic cross that forms part of the Greek flag.
 Walks slowly.
 Slogan states: Think different, Think Greece.



Figure 4.11 Famous Grouse television advertisement (2004).

The advertisement was greatly appreciated as an expression of the popularity of whisky in Greece and as a tribute to the Greek team in the European championship. Again localism and an “ideology of scale” had tried to appropriate and materialize “Greekness” and nationality in a clear case of scale making (Tsing 2000: 86)

However, this has not always been the case with national scale making attempts in advertisements. In 1992 an advertisement produced by Coca Cola depicted Coca Cola bottles replacing the columns of the Parthenon. This generated widespread dissatisfaction, expressed in the mass media and political discourse, because one of the “sacred” symbols of Greece had been compromised by a symbol of Americanization and U.S hegemony. Yalouri (2001: 110) describes how issues of the distortion of the actual form of the Acropolis, of commodification, Americanization and the dislocation in Greece of power over the Greek past are associated with such unsuccessful practices.

Marketing, advertising and scale making

An understanding of marketing and advertising requires an already established knowledge (in Chapters 2 and 3) of the cultural and economic interactions that initiated and reproduced this initial trajectory of Scotch whisky within the context of the strategies of the cultural industry. The mediascapes of commercial Greek cinema and of marketing and advertising are filled with exercises of imagination about various themes such as “modernity” and “tradition”, the “local”, the “global”, and the “national”. More specifically, the imaginaries of marketing and advertising have shifted from the ambiguous identity of Scotch whisky evident in the cinematic genre to clear techniques of scale making (Tsing 2000: 85).

This chapter discussed the cultural claims of locality and nationality as forms of scale making (Tsing 2000: 85). By shifting away from approaches of marketing and advertising production, I have examined the concepts of scale making in marketing and advertising discourse to conclude that the terms “national” and “local” have excited and inspired the imagination of marketers. Moreover, Scotch is projected as a superior distinctive beverage for high class people who have taste. Following Bourdieu, I argue that distinction in advertising is a way of concealing and reproducing social hierarchies and inequalities (1984). The distinction is reproduced by education, which is expressed in the use of the English language and in the accent at the threshold of perception. Generally speaking, the use of the English language in the marketing of Scotch has been a longlasting pattern that claims a higher status in Greek society and expresses cosmopolitanism and distinction. Within this context it has been appropriated by public discourse and has even been used in political messages (such as “Keep walking”, A. Papandreou).

Moreover, distinction in the marketing and advertising of Scotch is evident in the terms of “art” and “lifestyle”. These two features became entangled with an upper class style and were expanded to the themes of culture and arts. Haig, for example, has become the “arty”, “jazz” and “ethnic” drink, Johnny Walker the “scientific” and “serious” beverage (sponsoring talks by scientists and intellectuals such as the astronaut Neil Armstrong) and Cutty Sark the “sporty” and “dynamic” beverage.

Distinction was followed by “scale making” with a specific focus on the categories of local versus foreign and national versus Scotch (Tsing 2000: 85). The “local” is expressed by transforming name days or Christmas celebrations into occasions for gifts of Scotch whisky. More specifically, names and name days (*giortes*) can be engraved on the bottle of Scotch (Johnny Walker), thus personalizing the impersonal realm of the commodity.

In addition, the national can be seen in the use of various landmarks that are deployed strategically as symbols of the Greek nation. The metro system, for example, a recent symbol of Greek modernity and modernization which was projected by the Greek government as one of the biggest achievements in post authoritarian Greece and became a persuasive argument for the city’s capacity to host the Olympic games in 2004, has been used in a strategic localist manner. The 2004 Olympic stadium that was celebrated as the trademark of the Greek Olympics and came to represent meanings of “Greekness”, “Europeanization” and “cosmopolitanism” has been incorporated in a Scotch whisky advertisement (Figure 4.10). Finally, the Greek flag adorned the body of the grouse of Famous Grouse Scotch whisky during the European football competition in 2004 (Figure 4.11).

