Deconstruction of the Capitalist Discourse - Creating an Advertising Narrative On the Example of Lush Cosmetics

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DECONSTRUCTION OF THE CAPITALIST DISCOURSE – CREATING AN ADVERTISING NARRATIVE ON THE EXAMPLE OF LUSH COSMETICS

Diplomski rad

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Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to offer a Critical Discourse Analysis of the crucial elements that come into play in the creation of a brand and managing its advertising. The thesis is done in a form of multimodal analysis with language and its various forms as the main focus. The crucial terms for analysing these concepts are manipulation and persuasion which both imply a certain form of discursive power. The paper gives an analysis of how this power is used in the creation of a global advertising discourse and the creation of desired mental models. The paper also mentions the terms sustainability, CSR, and greenwashing, as either participants or variants of the manipulative discourse. After a short overview of the relevant theoretical background, an analysis of various layers of company advertising and means of communicating with its customers is presented. The paper presents an analysis of the global communication or the macro level of discourse, and then an analysis of the individual level of communication, the micro level of discourse. The analysis ends with a conclusion that summarises the main implication of the paper and encourages further reading and investigation of the field of effect of the Critical Discourse Analysis.

Key Words: *Lush Ltd, Critical Discourse Analysis, manipulation, persuasion, advertising, mental models, shared knowledge, common ground, brand personality, capitalism*

1. Introduction

The world of capitalism, as the word itself implies, depends on capital to survive. Profit is, therefore, the ultimate adherence and goal. From a distance, capitalism can be seen as yet another system among many, however more sophisticated, as it represents, or at least it should, the evolution and progress of humanity. However, the fact that capitalism relies on profit to such an extent opens many different questions as to how exactly the system survives. By finding ways of making profit would seem the obvious answer. Regarded with more attention, subtle nuances can be found in answering this question.

Delving deeper into the matter, let us remove the veil of the words *capitalism* and *system,* which might serve as a hindrance to seeing the bigger picture, and focus on the cogs, or the counterparts, as capitalism can also be seen as a network of counterparts with the same goal. The counterparts can be seen as the cogs of the capitalist mechanism. Naturally, counterparts denote anything that serves the purpose of keeping the system alive. With this network view of capitalism in mind, the image of capitalism changes in perception, it becomes somewhat tangible. The tangibility lends itself to new answers to what capitalism actually is. It might now be said that capitalism is a network of counterparts whose purpose is making profit. Therefore, capitalism, as the hypernym of all profit, benefits from any kind of profit, by making its counterparts dependent on the system. To continue making profit, keep it, and stay inside the system, the counterparts must also give profit back. Profit, and its circulation are again the only known value to the system.

This simplified explanation of the ways of capitalism serves as an introduction and a means of reaching the part of the capitalistic hierarchical structure that will be the subject of analysis in this paper. It also serves the purpose of placing the subject matter in its respective place in the capitalistic hierarchy. The same line of thinking applied to the simplified explanation of capitalism above can also be applied to the layers of its counterparts. If any object with the purpose of serving the capitalist system is just a means of making money, then this seemingly easy and obvious process of giving and taking money becomes more complex. The deeper one delves, the more complex it becomes. The question of ethics, friendliness, and benevolence of the counterparts in question, as well as their true intentions, is then subject to different interpretations.

The example on which the body of analysis of this paper will be based is a proverbial one — sales. It is proverbial in the sense that its main goal is straightforward, profit. The act of

investing profit into making more profit — fuelling profit with profit, capitalism with capital. This seemingly easy process again has its levels of observation. Thus, it can be noticed that advertising and sales provide companies with various assets to play with in order to achieve their goals. Stores and companies relentlessly push forward to stay in business, or in other words, to stay inside the system. Advertising, discounts, and trademarks are some ways of keeping up, however, they are not always enough. This gives way to the crucial element of this analysis, and that is human, who has, in this equation, been labelled as *customer*. Customers themselves help maintain the system by selling their time for money, then spending that money back into the system. It might seem that a single customer is completely an irrelevant figure in this equation, compared to the vast amounts of money that circulate throughout the entire structure of capitalist networks. However, customers are what sales and capitalism are comprised of and, consequentially, depend on.

All the above is even more obvious and true in the case of selling items that are not considered a necessity but a luxury, such as cosmetics. Since it is of the utmost interest for a company to make the customer spend money on their products, it is important to mask the above-presented data into a plausible cause or item worth buying and create a personality behind the brand name. This exactly is the subject of this paper — an attempt to deconstruct a capitalist discourse through an analysis of the discursive tactics employed in brand creation based on the example of *Lush Cosmetics Ltd.*[1]

2. Language and Discourse

Since this paper is envisioned as a multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis, it is important to mention that the central point of CDA is, in its essence, language. Nevertheless, that does not, by any means, make it exclusively concerned with language itself. It has often been argued that language as such cannot be analysed properly outside of its context and all its other constituents, without such an attempt resulting in a blunt, sterile, prescriptive linguistic analysis. Critical Discourse Analysis must take into consideration the context of the communication, its participants, reasons for communication, medium of communication, society, the situation of communication, and participants' relation to each other. If there are pictures and other forms of non-verbal communication, they should also be included in the

[1] Further referred to as *Lush.*

analysis, because discourse links text and context together. The two interact in creating a meaningful unit to be perceived by its recipient(s) as intended by its sender(s). Language is always in context (Cook, 05).

2.1 Manipulation and Persuasion

As Van Dijk highlights, both manipulation and persuasion play an important role in Critical Discourse Analysis, because manipulation, in a greater manner than persuasion, involves discursive power abuse. On a social level, manipulation can be seen as a means of confirming inequality, while on a cognitive level, it is understood as a means of interfering with the process of understanding and creating mental models (Dijk, 06). Manipulation, other than through language itself, can be achieved through different media, as it is usually true in the world of advertising, which is, more often than not, multimodal (Van Leeuwen, 05; Day, 99; Messaris, 97). When manipulation is stripped of its inherently negative associations, it becomes a form of persuasion with recipients as the differentiating factor. Persuasion allows for the recipients to decide how to act upon the presented arguments, while manipulation usually puts the recipients into a more passive role, especially if the subordinate members lack the knowledge to resist it (Wodak, 87). Mental models can be seen as the ways our cognition, understands and represents our experiences (Dijk, 06). Personal experiences are intertwined with a representation of self. Such experiences are unique even when they are partly shared with others. According to (Conway, Singer and Tagini, 04; Metzinger, 03), self is then the central aspect of those discourses that include self-awareness, self-representation, subjectivity, and consciousness. However, it is also among the most complex categories in cognitive science (Dijk, 08).

On the other hand, for a discourse to be understood, there is one more crucial component, and that is shared sociocultural knowledge. Van Dijk (08) looks for insight in (Clark, 96; Krauss and Fussell, 91; Pickering and Garrod, 04) to conclude that (individual) discourse production strategy understands that such shared knowledge is implied and, as such, does not need to be explicitly expressed, it can remain implicit. It is presumed that the recipient either already has that knowledge, or that, having the existing knowledge, the participant will be able to reach necessary conclusions by inference. This implied knowledge is often referred to as the "Common Ground" of speakers and recipients (Dijk, 08). The notion of implicitness and reliance of the individual on its own inference, based on the Common Ground (Dijk 08) provides the world of advertising with good ground for manipulation and persuasion to develop.

It could be argued that persuasion is what pertains more to the world of sales and advertising, as the customers are always left with a choice, however, on a broader scale, when it comes to the creation of a brand, manipulation is present. Therefore, manipulation and persuasion are just two manifestations of discourse with the scale and severity of effects and possible outcomes as their crucial difference. That is why, due to their nature, advertising and sales are inherently somewhere on the border of these two notions. The natural boundary between the two notions is quite vague, intertwined, and often overlapping, thus the crucial element for discerning should be that manipulation includes people being acted upon against their best interests or consciousness (Dijk, 06). To avoid antagonising, it is important to mention that it is not always that communication is in the best interest of the recipient, like with requests, commands, imploration, and so on (Van Leeuwen, 05). Such discourses must have a certain way to reach a larger audience, for example, media or advertising.

Van Dijk (06;08) uses (Tulving, 83; Neisser and Fivush, 94) and their work on episodic memory and the processing of personal experiences to contribute to his research. He concludes that discourse, particularly manipulative discourse, begins in short-term memory information processing, which is the understanding of what constitutes a discourse. Such processing happens online and ad-hoc, it stretches through various discourse structure levels, it is hypothetical, fast, and efficient, and there is not too much room for more thorough analyses. Thus, an essential part of manipulation involves focusing on and controlling this simple understanding of discourse. This can be achieved through non-verbal messages, printed in salient positions, using peculiar, large, and bold font, etc. This is performed in order to draw more attention to the message/image, to increase its processing time and the efficiency of its intention. However, most manipulation tends to aim toward more stable results. That is why it wants to focus on affecting long-term memory — knowledge, attitudes, and ideologies. Telling a story, therefore, means formulating a personal mental model one has of an experience while understanding it means the ability of a recipient to construct and interpret that model as such. “Understanding is not merely associating meanings to words, sentences or discourses, but constructing mental models in episodic memory, including our own opinions and emotions associated with an event we hear or read about.” (Dijk, 06; 367). Once formed, mental models stay in episodic memory to be recalled whenever stimulated. The most successful manipulations focus on turning mental models into beliefs and ideologies. Therefore, it is of crucial value for the manipulator or the persuader, that the recipient, or the customer, in this case, understands their discourse as it was intended to be understood, and forms the desired mental models, in

order for buying expensive, often overpriced, luxurious items to be justified and perpetuated (Dijk 06; 08).

Manipulation is mostly semantic[2], and it can be emphasised and deemphasised through specific speech acts, manipulating explicit and implicit information, metaphors, as well as non-verbal cues like photos, font, text layout, etc. In a similar vein, contexts have their different manifestations on macro and micro levels of discourse analysis (Dijk, 08). Context can also control discourse style — what works in one, may not be in work in another context. The word *context* is used to denote a connection between an event or action and its situation. They can be seen as unique, ad-hoc constructs that involve personal mental models, perceptions, perspectives, and knowledge. Just like manipulation, contexts are often planned according to the desired outcomes of a communicative situation. Therefore, in the appropriate context, every customer is a potential bearer of the desired mental models and the company's ideologies (Dijk 99; 06; 08).

3. Brand Personality

Brand personality is a set of human characteristics associated with a given brand that serve a symbolic or self-expressive function. The reason brands borrow human characteristics like values and traits, is to create the "personality" of the brand. Through this anthropomorphization of an inanimate object, the brand's perceived personality becomes a participant in society and a part of the process of customers' self-identification. Through it, a person can self-express, and by supporting it they can achieve the emotional benefits of having acted upon the causes and values supported by the brand. This "personality" differentiates the brand from other similar brands or brands in the same niche. Furthermore, as consumers accept and endorse, they build strong relationships with the brand, projecting their positive attitudes and their personalities onto the brand, reinforcing its credibility, and positively affecting its image (Phau and Lau, 00). The personality of the brand allows customers to connect to the attributes they adhere to in a brand and develop a desire to connect with the brand, believing that the same way they project their beliefs onto the brand, through using the brand with values similar to theirs, they strengthen and reinforce their core values and beliefs. Lau and Phau (00),

[2] In this example, semantic denotes playing with meanings and contexts of words and concepts in order to form or influence forming mental images. Van Dijk (06) gives examples in politics, religion, society etc.

in their article about brand personality, suggest that there are certain connections between the personality dimensions of a brand and the dimensions it triggers in human personality.

However, Lambin (97) argues that product attributes alone are not enough to develop strong brand equity, which is why it is important to create brand personality. The attributes of a brand alone are easy to copy, and the same attribute might become the competitor's target, which could result in the brand losing advantage over its competitors. By including a unique personality into the equation, the brand stands out from the rest of the competing products. An example of this in the cosmetic world may be seen in the recent surge of natural, organic, herbal, and plant-based cosmetic products, some of which are of Croatian origin, and should, at least intuitively be accepted more in the local community. However, *Biobaza*, *Tinktura*, or other handmade products, often with more natural content inside, tend to have a less widespread market and a smaller annual revenue than Lush Croatia Ltd.[3] This further emphasizes the importance of developing brand personality and identity. Schiffman and Kanuk, (97) say that consumers adhere to brands with personalities of a similar self-image. The brand then serves as a friend, or a partner to support the idea that consumers believe in. Brand personality creates depth and texture, through which advertising, promotions, packaging, and other marketing elements can easily synchronise and achieve cohesion and coordination. An example of this, in the world of cosmetics, are the products which are usually only expected to keep your body clean, that can now depart from their primary function, and become human rights advocates, or fighters for a sustainable, inclusive environment.

Furthermore, research by Aaker and Schmitt (98) divides customers into individualists and collectivists, where individualists may use the brand personality as a means of differentiating their sense of expression from that of their referent others, while collectivists may use the same personality as a means of expressing their similarities to their referent others. In other words, consumers may use the brand personality either to feel unique in or connected to their community. Customers reflect their values in brands and allow for the same to happen

[3] Annual revenue for the year 2021 for BioBaza products was 7.72 million dollars[1]. A fact that should be taken into consideration is that BioBaza is only a special line of natural cometics launched by a business group with different products.

Annual revenue for Tinktura, a Croatian company that sells cosmetic products very similar to those of Lush Cosmetics, was 1.58 million dollars for the year 2021 [2].

Annual revenue for Lush Croatia, not including stores from anywhere else but Croatia, was 16.06 million dollars for the same year. However, the manufacture in Croatia does not produce for Croatian market only [3].

vice-versa. Because of this exchange of character traits, customers constantly strengthen and upgrade the personality of the brand. In an ideal advertising discourse, through this exchange, customers make friends with the brand and increase their loyalty to it, while the brand's personality does its purpose of attracting the capital of its supporters. Factors that affect the influence of the brand's perceived personality on consumers differ according to age, marital status, and gender (Phau and Lau, 00).

4. Sustainability, Corporate Social Responsibility, and Greenwashing

Some already completely ordinary ethical criteria are, or at least they should be, mutual well-being, social inclusion, sustainability, improved quality of life, etc. Marketing today is focused on putting various ethical norms into brands which are then represented through product labels and advertising. Sustainability is one of the most prominent and recently increasingly popular marketing strategies. In the 1970s, ecological issues were a new topic in the field of marketing strategies. A decade later, social as well as ecological issues moved to the centre of attention. This reorganisation of focal points in marketing resulted in extensive research in this field. Marketing strategies developed similarly, with sustainability as the field of action in which there was the biggest perceived possibility for growth and development (Kumar et al., 12).

Sustainability, even though it is usually understood as environmental sustainability, is not limited to environmental issues only, it includes economic and social issues as well. Therefore, business practices should assess all the layers of sustainability (Obermiller et al., 08). Sustainability is a crucial part of Corporate Social Responsibility, a common term in marketing, with numerous similar definitions, all of which include cooperation of the mentioned values within a company with a goal to maximise the beneficial effects a company can have on the environment and society, consequently, of course, on its business as well. Mostly it is defined as a voluntary integration of social and environmental concerns into business operations as well as raising the awareness of the impact these businesses or companies have in shaping society and its everyday life, and the responsibility that comes with it. Sustainability complements CSR. (Sanclemente-Tellez, 17). According to several studies (Hoeffler and Keller, 02; Keller, 03; Mohr and Webb, 05; Van de Ven, 08) about the way CSR engagements are communicated, it has been established that communicating about greenness and ecological activism contributes to maintaining customers and recognisability of the company's

products/services in the market. It also positively affects the image and the equity of the brand. The increased interest in this topic is also justified by the fact that such communication can influence customers' behaviour. (Marín, Ruiz and Rubio, 2009).

There is an increasing number of companies that communicate about their contribution to the environment and the greenness of the products they offer. Green marketing and advertising have, over the course of about 20 years, nearly tripled and in the present modern world, their popularity is growing almost to an extent of oversaturation. Simultaneously, as the greenness of products and companies is becoming, in theory at least, almost a prerequisite, greenwashing is becoming a more frequently used tactic. Greenwashing can be understood as a manipulative discourse tactic used to influence consumers' opinions about and attitudes towards the company's environmental practices (firm-level greenwashing) or benefits that a certain product or service has for the environment (product-level greenwashing) (Delmas and Burbano, 11).

Another instance of greenwashing is often referred to as executional greenwashing, in which executional elements affect the cognition of the consumers by evoking nature and associating it with the company and its products or services. Companies, especially stores which sell cosmetic products, may then be decorated with plants and/or certain nature imagery, which should hint at the values of the brand personality. Sometimes, even a subtle implication is enough, so certain executional elements may evoke natural imagery through colours or sounds only. A number of studies by (Hartmann and Apaolaza-Ibanez, 09; Delmas and Burbano, 11; Hartman, Apaolaza-Ibanez and Alija, 13), show that imagery used to evoke nature can be as emotionally stimulating as a real nature experience.

According to Petty and Cacioppo (1981) and the research work of (MacInnis and Jaworski, 89; Batra and Stayman, 90; Han, 92; Grunert, 96), there are two different types of persuasion/manipulation pathways according to the motivation of the consumers and their ability to process information that a certain message conveys. Competent, experienced, and motivated customers develop attitudes based on their active thinking about a certain issue, and always strive to discern relevant information that the message provides. Those less experienced and motivated will mostly use executional elements to base their inferences about and categorisation of the communicative situation on. If the amount of information provided is restricted,to, for example, the company's website, with no possibility for a deeper elaboration

of the topic, even the expert customers are affected by the executional elements, since it is perceived that there is little reason to question the sincerity of the message.

5. Semantics of Beauty

This section describes the language that is used to create a discourse dancing on the edges of sensual and sexual. Besides communicating the brand personality, and beneficial actions it "takes" towards the environment, a lot of emphasis in advertising cosmetic products, is also placed on communicating the pleasurable, desirable effects that a product has on a customer's body. Typically, it is the female body, and audience that is targeted, that is why cosmetic advertising often assimilates sensuality with femininity.

The usual formula for advertising such actions follows this principle: name of product + verb/noun/adjective of sensual nature + the body part of the consumer (Ringrow, 16). The image that the product is represented by is usually characterised by an increased degree of naturalism. It not only imitates or strives to come close to the natural, colour, shade, depth, condition, and so on, but it surpasses it. The exaggerated final result makes advertised concepts or objects better than their real-life variants. Sensory modality is particularly often employed in cosmetics advertising because cosmetics are often associated with pleasure, aesthetical improvement, and self-care, thus elements of sensory modality serve as stimuli to enhance the perception of these notions. Hair is portrayed as more voluminous, and glossier, colours appear more radiant and richer, skin is usually flawless, and the people advertising the products are happy and relaxed. It is, consequently, implied that the consumers' body parts and moods would also benefit in the same way (Van Leeuwen, 05).

It is also almost self-explanatory, that cosmetic products advertising should follow the problem-solution pattern (Hoey, 83) (Hoey, 01). This pattern suggests that a product can be offered and presented as a solution to the problem that a customer is facing. This connects such communication to notions of language and power, and language and gender since the companies are the ones holding the solution and the customers want it. There is also a connection between cosmetics and achieving the desired (female) appearance. Ringrow (16) differentiates two names for this example Commodified Femininity (Benwell and Stokoe, 06) and Consumer Femininity (Talbot, 10). Such feminism is linked to sensory modality, and furthermore reinforces the belief that a certain, desired look, mood, or attitude can be achieved through consumption (Benwell and Stokoe, 06). The values that are usually advertised are independence, liberation, choice, self-worth, and other sensual nouns, adjectives, or verbs.

When such values are “bought” then the feminist actions that they represent become a commodity which consequentially renders all such activism Commodity Feminism, as Goldman (92) named it. The choice between a host of products is often interpreted as freedom, and even though choice is often linked to feminism it is, by far, not always true, since many choices subordinate women or subject them to sexual norms (Ringrow, 16).

Hoey (01) further researched the Problem-Solution pattern and introduced Plan and Response as its intermediate stages. The idea behind it is the conditioning of the desired responses or reactions. A company can advertise a product that gives flat hair life, sensitive skin some calming, etc. and it can offer to position itself as the plan mediator. If the plan is to get hair volume, the desired response should be reaching for that certain product (Coupland, 07). The products are ointments for the concerns of the fragmented body, and the more fragmented or compartmentalised the body is, the higher the number of product options, and areas for gathering capital. Since “the face has heavy semiotic significance in a Western context as it tends to always be on display” (Coupland, 03: 127), it is a great example of this body fragmentation, since the face itself offers a plethora of product options and areas the same products could affect.

6. About the Company

With an insight into the terminology and background processes involved in its business, it is in order to explain to the reader slightly more about the company in the example of this paper.

Lush is a cosmetics company that prides itself on being handmade, fresh, and cruelty-free. Lush was founded in 1995 by six co-founders: Mo Constantine, Mark Constantine, Rowena Bird, Helen Ambrosen, Liz Bennett, and Paul Greeves. The company started as a union between Liz Weir and Mark Constantine who met in the seventies in a beauty salon where they had been working at that time. Since their working contracts had been nearing expiration, they decided to open a brand of their own called *Herbal Beauty Clinic*. However, it was not until they made a cooperative contract with *The Body Shop* that they became very successful. One interesting fact about *The Body Shop* is that it is, even today, one of the biggest rivals of *Lush.* The two shops share similar values and products and had even been considering a merger, which never happened.

This cooperation proved to be both very lucrative and dangerous for *The Body Shop*, as Constantine and Weir had become their biggest suppliers, and to rely solely on them, might have meant disaster. The cooperation ended there, with Constantine and Weir selling certain product recipes to *The Body Shop*. The money they had gathered, served Constantine and Weir as start-up capital for another similar business attempt of their own — *Cosmetics to Go*. The idea behind it was a mail-order company that had been offering, at the time, revolutionary, novel items like bath bombs, massage bars, and solid shampoo. "Mark and the team experimented and played with ingredients, innovated, and focused on issues like fighting against animal testing. They developed a strict buying policy that ensured that no supplier tested on animals [5]." This new cosmetic venture of theirs resulted in overtrading which forced the owners to sell [4] [5] [6].

Relentlessness is, clearly, a trait both Weir and Constantine have, so instead of giving up, they decided to try again, this time as *Cosmetic House*. Having already made a certain name for themselves, under their old business name, their new brand became popular very fast. Very soon, *Cosmetic House* became *Lush.* The founders published a competition in their newsletter to ask customers to choose a new name for them, and *Lush* was the winner. Along with a winning name, they won a massive investment. A former customer of theirs decided to convince his boss to invest in *Lush*. After this investment, the only way for *Lush* was up. They opened several stores and the company started growing intermittently. Currently, *Lush* has more than 900 stores in over 40 countries [4] [5] [6].

6.1. The Discourse of "*The Lush Story*"

In the story presented on their website, *Lush* addresses its customers/readers as if they have come to attend a *Lush* conference to learn about how things should be done in the world of cosmetics.

"We have fought (…) animal testing for years. We continue to fight animal testing now. (…) If Lush can do it, why can't everybody else? (…) We believed you wanted effective products. (…) So, above all, we believed you wanted good value products, not cheap, but loads of hair and body goodness for your money. (…) you get really good value for money (…) It's a real puzzler why we're not the number one cosmetics company. For the sake of the environment, we NEED to be number one [7]."

Having in mind the fact that *Lush* prides itself in being 10 % employee-owned [7], and the fact that some of the owners and founders of *Lush* are often personally presented through company's or product's storytelling approach to advertising discourse creation, (Figures 3,4) the use of the pronoun *we* seems like a logical choice for this purpose. It evokes a family-like feeling and increases trustworthiness. However, there are certain aspects of this *we – you* discourse that are interesting for this analysis. The *we* counterpart of this discourse has power over the *you* counterpart because it is the *we* counterpart that controls the disclosure of information and its presentation. It is also a very versatile discourse concept because it allows the company to make the customer feel included in the actions that the company and its products "take". However, there is a small step in between that allows for this to happen, and that is the moment of purchase. The company almost always uses the pronoun *we*. The pronoun *you* is mostly used when the company mentions customers' money or desires that it can fulfil. Therefore, this imaginary *you* needs only to complete a purchase, ideally repeat purchase, to be included in the *we* discourse. Because of the discursive power it has, that can be abused, this discourse can easily become a manipulative one.

Lush furthermore communicates the price of their products implying that judging from everything they do to provide ingredients and help the planet it is implied that the price and quality of such products will be luscious (Figure 5). The customers get value for money as they get both product effect on their body and product effect on the environment and/or society. Both discursive power abuse and commodification of values and activist actions will be analysed in greater detail soon.

7. Elements of the Macro Discourse

7.1. Actions

In an interview with a creative buyer[4] from *Lush* Cowan (15) found out about some actions that *Lush* does that can be interpreted as altruistic. These actions are usually oriented towards the less developed societies with a salient position in the global Common Ground (Dijk, 08). One such example is the collaboration with the Peace Community of José de Apartadó,

[4] A creative buyer is a persona, whose personality traits are in tune with those of the brand's personality. This person is usually employed to represent the company, by sharing its beliefs as of their own. Creative buyers also travel on behalf of the company to make new deals and provide material for the company's business (Cowan, 15).

Colombia, from which the company obtains its raw cocoa. The company deals and works directly with the source of its material. “Where it’s a raw material we use, we can provide a market for it and support the initial infrastructure (…) We gave the community equipment that improved the way they measure moisture. Once farmers learned these skills, they were able to conduct training with their families and the communities, which is now an available source of income for them (…) but we are realising the technical expertise we can bring (…) We are helping new partners to develop experience, technical expertise and share knowledge about quality so they can improve processes themselves” (Cowen 15, 30-31).

The intention of such an affectionate way of communicating the company’s altruistic activities is to encourage compassion and cause endearment in a customer’s mind and to highlight the amiability of the brand’s personality. The reason for communicating them is to try to imprint the brand personality into the global Common Ground (Dijk, 08) and create a discourse that will justify both the quality and the price of the company’s products. Stripped of its altruistic emotional component, this and any similar company’s action can be interpreted through the white saviour complex. The dominant mass producer which happens to be a white, modern world cosmetics company, comes to a subordinate a less developed society, primarily, because there is material to use for the production of capital. The modern man then modernises the less developed man, and offers it profit and prosperity. What seems like a fair trade, not necessarily has to be so. While the societies *Lush* visits get only an improvement, *Lush*, in this trade besides the (raw) material, also receives a privilege of creating and advertising story from the experiences of its search for products’ material. Such a privilege further reinforces their dominant role in this discourse and can be used as an argument for discursive power abuse. It must be noted that the word *abuse* might be more associated with physical, mental, or sexual abuse, and is, therefore, inherently antagonistic. However, abuse is here used in a lighter form, to mean that the sender of the message manipulates discursive situations so that they themselves could have the most benefits and profit. The discourse is created in the best interest of the company, not the customer or the society, they might be important, but surely come after the company.

In the example of Colombian cocoa, and numerous others like providing fair-trade olive oil from a woman-led peace cooperative in Palestine, shea butter from Ghana, or Antonio, who hand-picks salt and helps protect its source, we can find notions of stereotypes [7]. Since the word *stereotype* represents a universally accepted mental model of a situation or/and

object/person, it is inevitable to notice that is connected to the already mentioned notion of Common Ground (Dijk, 08). Some conclusions that can be based on common ground about the story of cocoa, from a stereotypical point of view, in my opinion, are: Colombia has a good climate for cocoa production, and cocoa from there is of high quality. Since it is sourced directly it must be good, but also expensive. Colombia, like the entire South America, is connected to indigenous people, who are associated with nature. If it is procured from such a community, it must be of the highest purity, natural. Such communities are usually less developed and poor. There are numerous other implications, that can be made about this and other *Lush* ventures, but the reason they are mentioned here is that they are very important for the dominating role of the discourse. The company uses its suppliers as scaffolding to become part of the global Common Ground (Dijk, 08). The company's global discourse consists of borrowing elements from this shared knowledge about its cooperant countries and communities to be associated with. Since all of the cooperants of *Lush* are always communicated in the context of the previously mentioned *we* discourse, as members of the *Lush* family, they are also a living commercial for the brand (Cook, 05). This way, *Lush* tends to carry the first desired mental model into the common ground — *Lush* is a cosmetics company that focuses on finding associations, communities, and cooperatives in need, to give them the financial and technological help they need to prosper, in exchange for their, usually, indigenous raw natural material. The inherent characteristics of this discourse are implicitness and inferencing since a lot of its efficiency relies on what should already be known. Since the company itself is the creator of the discourse and has an overview of its intentions, the customers can only use their own inference to gauge the intentions of the company's action(s) and can only rely on their inferencing and the inferencing of the company being similar as a reference for evaluating the sincerity or true intentions of a company's message or action. This way, *Lush* becomes the dominant participant of the discourse.

Another interesting example of borrowing components of the Common Ground (Dijk, 08) is the story about *Lush* lavender, which is, in a slightly cliché manner, sourced from Provence. The story starts with an olfactory-visual stimulation of a trip to France. "You won't need a ticket to experience Provence this year, (…) many of our lavender-infused products will do just the trick."[8] France and Provence are proverbial examples of common mental models (Dijke, 06). France is often associated with love and romance, while Provence is known for its soothing lavender fields. The efficiency of representation of the desired mental image in the continuation of the story depends on these implications. This quote is flooded with sensual

adjectives, it is almost as if the customer is invited to a lush, mesmerising bath by their beloved. At this point, for comparison, it is important to mention the fact that *Lush Croatia* has existed for 27 years [9] and that certain Croatian islands, like Brač and Hvar, are famous for their lavender. Secluded Croatian islands can also be seen as smaller, less developed communities, from a point of view of such a big, wealthy company, and be a good ground for *Lush* ingredient-obtaining ventures to improve the production and quality of life of a smaller community (and profit from it). However, the Common Ground (Dijk 08) about Croatia, and Croatian islands is less globally available, so it cannot be used to communicate a globally more or less unified image. In these examples, we can see how Common Ground (Dijk 08) can be employed in advertising discourse creation and developing desired mental models associated with the brand in the minds of customers (Dijk, 08).

If product attributes alone are not enough for a company and its product to be recognised and remembered Lambin (97), then the authenticity of *Lush* ingredients or the altruism that comes as a result of its procurement are not strong enough to build a recognisable brand name. Since Common Ground (Dijk, 08) is a vast area and is inseparable from humankind, it also offers insight into human psychology and can serve as a source of inspiration for the world of advertising. The brand borrows from humans to become a personality, and to become a personality it must have opinions and attitudes about relevant topics. In the following chapter, I will discuss the beliefs and attitudes of the *Lush* personality and the way this personality is orchestrated.

7.2. Beliefs and Attitudes

Fierce repugnance towards animal cruelty comes as a core value of the company since from the beginning and through its evolution, *Lush* refused animal testing in all its forms. They did, and still do, however, use certain animal products in the creation of their products. To date, *Lush* states to be 95 % vegan, as in free of animal by-products [7]. Like many, *Lush* is of the opinion that animal testing is cruel, inhumane, and in this day and age unnecessary. As they say themselves, *Fighting Animal Testing* is their most prolific campaign [10].

The fact that manipulation needs to target long-term memory processing to be successful (Tulving, 83; Neisser and Fivush, 94) implies that the stimulation of the customers' cognition

by the company needs to be strong and memorable in order to successfully translate the brand personality onto the Common Ground (Dijk, 08) One such attempt happened on the 24th of April 2012. As a part of the campaign, a woman was dragged across the street and lain on an improvised hospital bed in the shop window. The woman was approached by a male scientist in his white robe. The male scientist then violently shaved her, put drops of liquid in her eyes, stretched her mouth, chained her, etc. The entire performance was quite disturbing and violent. The aim was to provide the public with a graphic representation of what testing cosmetics on animals really looks like, which was, subsequently, supposed to help spread the awareness about Humane Society International campaign petition on banning animal testing. The whole performance was conducted inside the shop window of the *Lush* store on Regent Street in London. There were *Lush* employees in front of the store, ready to explain the situation (and advertise) (Figures 6 and 7). On July the 11th 2013 the petition was implemented [10] [11]. With the context of the situation, we can propose the second *Lush* desired mental model that the company wants to transfer into the Common Ground (Dijk, 08) — *Lush* is a vegan/vegetarian cosmetics company that cares for animals and fights for their rights.

Here is what *Lush* headquarters said to portray the brand personality this way: "The ironic thing is that if it was a beagle in the window and we were doing all these things to it, we'd have the police (…) here in minutes. (…) But somewhere in the world, this kind of thing is happening to an animal every few seconds on average" [10]. The comparison of the human relationship to dogs or cats and their relationship or lack thereof to other animals used for testing or food production, etc. is one of the classical arguments in favour of veganism and vegetarianism. It is intended to point a finger at human hypocrisy, asking the world how it can do or tolerate it. *Lush* is again, even more explicitly, perceived as the saviour, this time of animals. *Lush* is pointing a finger at hypocrisy, strongly imprinting its second desired mental model through this shocking protest. However, in the same way that *Lush* suppliers were subordinated by being represented under the umbrella term *Lush* family, animal rights become a part of the subordination, since they join the *Lush* family as parts of its personality — beliefs, and attitudes. This means that the previously mentioned shocking demonstration was also employed to increase awareness about the existence of the company. Thus, through such actions, *Lush is* commodifying activism (Ringrow, 16) by making the advertising function the dominant part of the altruistic public discourse.

Let us further discuss the hypocrisy at which a finger is being pointed. These are the words about the demonstration from the director of Cosmetics, Toiletries, and Perfumes Association, Dr. Chris Flower: "'It is a pity that *Lush* chose to run this campaign in a country where the testing of cosmetic products on animals is banned and which has the strictest animal welfare provisions regarding the use of animals for scientific purposes anywhere in the EU. (…) It is a pity the campaign is directed at an industry that has done more than any other to develop and promote the use of alternatives" [11]. *Lush* is pointing a finger at the cosmetics industry and at the world in order to differentiate the brand from the actions stated in the official headquarters' quote and place itself on a morally higher perceived discursive position. The discursive implications here are that certain cosmetic companies use animals to test their product, *Lush,* clearly excluding themselves from this group, through such a demonstration, places itself as "better than the other". The w*e* family is better than *them.* However, in Britain, the ban on animal testing has been in power since 1998, and since 2004 in Europe. In the year 2013, a ban on selling anything tested on animals was implemented [12] [13]. The intention of this demonstration was to raise awareness about the petition, signed in 2013. By choosing to support Humane Society International campaign petition on banning animal testing, *Lush* borrows values, attitudes, and actions, that the HIS represents, for its brand's self-identification. Through this identification, the brand is allowed to advertise participation in implementing the ban and take credit for the work of others.

The discourse and context of this demonstration also touch upon the questions of gender and power. The two main participants of the demonstration were a man and a woman. Stereotypically, the man was the scientist, the woman was the "lab-rat". The man was stronger and was the tormentor of a helpless woman. A scenario that could be associated with rape and violence against women, which perpetuates the position of the female sex/gender, as the weaker participant of the global capitalist discourse. Furthermore, another similar example of exploiting the human form is the role of sales assistants in the mediation of the protest. It is a common protocol that, whenever *Lush* promotes a campaign, the sales assistants should communicate it to the customers. The campaigns are always presented through the previously mentioned *we* discourse, through which *Lush* projects the beliefs and attitudes of its cooperants onto itself using sales assistants as its medium. A sales assistant is, therefore, a representative of the company's values and in the mind of the customers, the assistants are represented through these values. Therefore, the content of discourse is again permeated with the name *Lush* as its most salient participant. The sales assistant can also use their knowledge of *Lush* ingredients

and products, to create immediate ad-hoc discourses inside the micro level of discourse, only by selecting which ingredients and effects to communicate based on the Problem-Solution pattern (Hoey, 83) of an individual customer. In other words, sales assistants can greatly affect how customers perceive the company and its products.

It seems like it is in the interest of any capitalist discourse to find a sitting duck that will harness room for marketing propaganda. Thus, continuing on the topic of hypocrisy, let us discuss *Lush* entering a very influential market by opening a store in Hong Kong, in 2015. In Hong Kong, animal testing is not banned, however, it is not necessary for imported cosmetic products that comply with the Consumer Goods Safety Ordinance (Cap. 456) [14]. In China, the mandatory animal testing law was removed only slightly more than a year ago in May 2021. The ban still applies to cosmetics that are to be used on children, use new ingredients, or are under special supervision [14]. Doing business with countries that still test on animals, after a demonstration like the one mentioned, indicates ground for questioning the communicated intentions. That is why *Lush* has a different advertising plan for this market. Since China and Hong Kong are globally known as polluted countries, the company focused on offering its *naked* range of products. In its *naked* line of products *Lush* focuses on making all its products packaging-free, sending a message of being a sustainable company, and fulfilling its CSR duties. Therefore, in Hong Kong, *Lush* is at war with plastic, presenting the *we* family again, as better than others, since it does not use packaging [34]. An Industry and Competitor Analysis found that the trend of organic cosmetics consumption is rapidly increasing in Hong Kong (Man and Him, 20). If this is true, then it is a matter of time before these countries implement the ban since the laws about this question are rapidly changing. According to research into *Lush* popularity in Hong Kong, around 75% of participants have heard of *Lush* but 51% never used them, and 25% did not know what the brand is (Man and Him, 20). It is then also a matter of time when *Lush* will have an opportunity to assert dominance on the market by taking credit for affecting the course of action with its beliefs and attitudes. In the example of *naked* products, we can see a micro discourse structure element, communicating a desired mental model and outcome, or Problem-Solution (Hoey, 83) on a macro level of discourse. From this communication of a global solution for pollution stems another notion of the second desired mental model (Dijk, 06) — *Lush* is a sustainable company that wants to help the environment. It is interesting to wonder, though, how the same protest that had been conducted in England, would have unravelled in Hong Kong.

Another global issue *Lush* decided to permeate with its advertising presence is the issue of human rights. This issue is perfectly complementary to the discourse that *Lush* employs and serves as an opportunity to strengthen its desired advertising personality imprint on the global Common Ground (Dijk, 08) as well as widen its scope. When campaigning in the domains of this issue, *Lush* focuses on the inclusion of people of all skin colour, religion, sex, gender, and/or sexual orientation. *Lush* wittily uses the recent COVID-19 situation to advertise its strong, straightforward attitudes about all kinds of sexual, racial, or any other forms of discrimination, and to refresh its representation in the public's mind (Figure 10). One of the company's earlier human-rights-oriented campaigns was *Gay Is Ok*, in which *Lush* created a golden soap bar with the same heading moulded into the soap (Figure 11). A soap, that had previously been seen only as an inanimate object used to wash hands with, became a human rights advocate. The instructions, explaining how to become a part of the campaign were simple. "Just take a selfie with the soap and use the hashtag written on it" [15]. This message can also be interpreted as: "Buy a soap to become a human rights advocate." and "Identify *Lush* and its stores as your safe place." The intention behind the campaign was to raise awareness about the fact that there are still countries in which it is illegal to be gay. Another intention was to address an important event that had been happening — U.S. Supreme Court had to decide on the question of marriage equality. These are the words about the campaign from the company's website: "On social media, (…) support had a social reach of 30 million, but when the U.S. Supreme Court ruled on marriage equality (just 24 hours after the launch of our campaign), that number swelled to include an additional 40 million!" [15]

The adverbial clause in brackets of the quote above implies the company's campaign effect on the decision of the U.S. Supreme Court. In the global Common Ground (Dijk, 08), the United States is often associated with freedom and democracy. The US was also the host of the first gay pride. Therefore, *Lush* is campaigning for gay rights from *"the birthplace of democracy"* where there is a lot of freedom of interpretation of elements of one's personality that it can borrow, and be easily accepted, which makes it similar to the previous examples of such practices of playing with global mental models from such a safe space (Dijk 06). Additionally, the countries in which it is illegal to be gay, which were the supposed focus of this campaign, have probably not seen the campaign since such countries usually have strict laws on gay propaganda (in advertising).

Furthermore, by anthropomorphising a soap into a gay activist, the company opens an opportunity for the customers to identify with the brand. Upon purchase, the customer may feel

like the action both reinforces their attitudes and helps the community, which can spark positive feelings (Phau Lau, 00). The purchase makes the customer a member of the *Lush* family. The entire LGBTQ+ community, and its supporters, can, and ideally, should identify themselves with the company through this product, and furthermore serve as scaffolding for the perpetuation of the desired brand personality mental models in the global Common Ground (Dijk, 06; 08).

With the progression of the LGBTQ+ alphabet, the rights of transgender people have been pushed to the foreground, thus participating in creating and becoming a part of the global community. *Lush*, naturally, used this expansion to further widen its advertising discourse. Taking into consideration that it is a very convenient fact that raising awareness about any topic presupposes raising the company's awareness, it seems logical that *Lush* decided to support transgender rights by trying to raise awareness about it through billboards (Figure 12) and a website article [16] [17]. "We want Trans and Non-Binary people to feel safe, respected, and supported, whatever role they play at Lush. We want our everyday interactions to feel empowering and affirming, and for Lush to be a place where people of all genders feel welcomed, always." [17] This inseparability of the mutual rising of awareness makes the quote "*This is my identity, not a trend*" on the billboard even more interesting. It is printed in a recognisable *Lush* font, which will be analysed in the final part of the analysis, and positioned next to a big *Lush* logo through which the campaign advertising identity splits into transgender identity and brand identity. Such positioning of the campaign advertisement implies that the first and dominant implication communicated is the connection of the customers' lifestyles to the brand's "lifestyle". The actual explanation of the context of the quote is found below the billboard, in a much less salient position, therefore, receiving less initial attention that the actual quote. Through these actions, the brand also invites transgender people to identify with the brand and be a part of the *we* family. Both the brand and the LGBTQ+ community are not trends, they are identities. Since it is a company of global influence, it can be expected that individuals will perceive it as being able to do more, regarding the issues in question, than themselves (Phau and Lau, 00). In this situation, *Lush* borrows a voice from the discriminated communities in order to advocate for their rights in exchange for an opportunity to widen the scope of reach of its global advertising discourse, as well as to enrich the second desired mental model with an additional implication — *Lush* is a unique cosmetics company that welcomes differences and promotes love.

There is one last important fact to highlight at this point of the discussion, and that is the, aforementioned, hypocrisy at which a finger is being pointed. The core of the hypocrisy, or contradiction as one might euphemistically call it, lies in its contradicting discourses. One such example is the existence of two *Lush* stores in Saudi Arabia [32] and their cooperation for oil (Aronczyk, 13). As it has been concluded, *Lush* desires to be perceived through its beliefs and attitudes, of which its store is then a representation. The context of doing business in Saudi Arabia, which is in the Common Ground (Dijk, 08) often represented as the aggressor and as having restrictive laws regarding women, (homo)sexuality, animals, etc. seems like a context complete opposite of the one a personality like *Lush* would desire to be a part of. However, the Arab World is also a profitable market and offers raw materials, therefore, cooperation with it can be lucrative, so *Lush* enters this market on a quest of bringing peace to this area that needs it [37]. This situation, like a lot of other similar situations, some of which are analysed in this paper, where there is contradiction or hypocrisy, highlights the notion of foregrounding and backgrounding that (Dijk, 08) mentions as discursive strategies of manipulation. What is foregrounded is the most salient, therefore *Lush* carefully selects what to fight for and communicate. It also has the control of methods employed to foreground the positive aspects and implications of its actions. The backgrounded is, in an ideal situation, invisible, as it could diminish the effect of the manipulation. This selective play with the foregrounded and backgrounded elements is an argument in favour of the earlier claim that on a global level of discourse, there is manipulation present, and since through this entire chapter I have been discussing concepts that are mostly processed in the long-term memory, which is what a successful manipulation is geared towards, the claim is, furthermore, reinforced.

In her article Aronczyk (13) wrote about similar examples where *Lush* displayed elements of commodity activism (Ringrow, 16) and hypocrisy. She mentions another protest/campaign by *Lush* in which *Lush* was singlehandedly vocal about the fracking and exploitation of tar sands in Canada. Not long after the campaign in which *Lush* again used its employees as the protest's main actors, there was an anti-campaign in which *Lush* was condemned for attacking Canada while doing business in Saudi Arabia (Aronczyk, 13; Figures 13, 14). Aronczyk (13), furthermore, argues that regardless of its intention, marketing activism, performed by corporate actors can potentially weaken the role of actual protests to bring about social or environmental change. This seems logical since the purpose of such a protest is never single-sided and it is always, besides being a protest, an advertisement for the company and the brand (Cook, 05). Therefore, *Lush* and its way of advertising and brand creation may be doing

more harm than good for the entire situation, which would then mean, that the only participant that profits from such commodified actions is the commodifier itself. All the altruistic nature then stems from the desire to camouflage the role of the commodifier, saviour, or the dominant participant of this profit-oriented discourse. And since employing a discourse of protest as a form of presenting the company's advertising discourse is proven to be beneficial for the trustworthiness and credibility of the company and can even influence its power over more dominant discourses, it seems like a great tool when in skilled hands. Furthermore, such discursive situations can easily be extensively documented and shared on social media by *Lush* staff members, their partners, or just the regular public, which then serves as free advertising (Chouliaraki, 10; Aronczyk, 13).

In this chapter, I analysed the macro or the global level (Dijk, 08), of the *Lush* discourse along with the mental models and contexts that create it and the Common Ground (Dijk, 08) that influences it. In the same way that *Lush* uses the Common Ground (Dijk, 08) inferences as scaffolding to imprint the existence of its brand's personality into the global Common Ground, its products, consequently, use the created imprinted knowledge in the Common Ground about the company as scaffolding for communication on the individual level of their discourse.

8. Elements of the Micro Discourse

Having presented the reader with an analysis of the crucial elements of the global, macro level of the brand personality creation discourse, it is time to present the reader with an analysis of the micro, or the individual level components of the same discourse. This level can also be interpreted as the reason for the necessity of creating such a global discourse. The starting point of the analysis was the macro level, the level of global Common Ground mental models (Dijk, 08, 06). The scope of analysis now reduces its focus to the shop floor and product level. Hierarchically then, it is a top-to-bottom approach to analysis. This approach has been chosen over the bottom-to-top option because it fits the nature of the analysed matter better. As it was already mentioned, a product and its attributes could easily be replaced or not as popular, since no emotions or bias have been created or developed relating to the brand in the customers' minds. If a company wants to make a product recognisable and sell it, then that product must be the bearer of a story (Phau and Lau, 00). As it can be seen from the examples in the previous

chapters, *Lush* definitely has this notion in mind. That is why the final product, which is the *Lush* line of cosmetic products is exactly that, the bearer of its company's story.

8.1. Store setting

According to *Merriam-Webster* online dictionary, the word *lush* is an adjective with several meanings [18]. Its field of meaning revolves around *lavishly productive and creative*. When speaking of environment, the word *lush* can be used to mean *characterised by abundance*. In collocation with society or a country, *developed,* prospering. In collocations with food, *delicious,* in collocation with senses *opulent, appealing to the senses.* All the meanings are in the range of sensual adjectives, and we can see, from the examples in the previous chapter that *Lush* strives to embody all the meanings of this word. As I have already mentioned, these meanings and their conceptual interpretation at the global advertising level should then be projected onto the products and the shop floor.

When looking at a *Lush* store from a distance, the only thing a potential customer can see is the *Lush* logo, usually accompanied by an opulent scent that emanates from the store. The notion of scents is a very distinctive category that is hard to describe, however it serves as an olfactory stimulation to improve both the visual experience that a customer has of the store and their memorisation of the brand name/personality. The category of scent is not defined, yet it gives the creators of the capitalist discourse the ability to exercise creativity in the field of describing and advertising (through) it (Cook 05). The scent invites from afar, already hinting at the meanings of the word *lush* to the potential customer. A closer view of the store and its setting furthermore justifies the instances of the meaning of the word *lush*. The store setting also gives an impression of being queer and quirky, because, besides the abundance of colours and scents, a lot of products resemble food, are uncommonly shaped, or have an unusual way of application (Figures 1, 2, 8, 9, 15-17). This way, on a micro level of discourse, the store setting can also be seen as reinforcing the macro discourse level implications of support for the discriminated communities that can also be perceived through a pallet of colours, as well as reinforcing the image of *Lush* as a unique cosmetics company.

The store setting is planned, and there is a global guideline for decorating stores. Not all the stores are the exact replica of each other, however, they do have similar elements of store

decoration. Sensory and nature modality are also the most present on this level of discourse. Since a tendency to work with raw, implicatively high-quality material is communicated on the macro level, it has to be reinforced and represented on the micro level as well. Therefore, the furniture inside the store is minimalistic and imitates the simplicity of nature. Cupboards, drawers, and crates are all wooden and have an asymmetric, naturally imperfect shape, adding to the impression of real nature. Crates like the ones used for placing products inside *Lush* stores are the same crates that farmers use to put their fruit and vegetables in. Customers place the products they want to buy in rugged, knitted, straw shopping baskets, while the products they actually buy, go into branded paper bags. The abundance of various plants, furthermore, contributes to the creation of a jungle-like, nature-invoking environment. Employing sensory and nature modality on the micro level has the same function that communicating the indigeneity of the ingredients has on a macro level.

The simplistic black and white packaging nicely contrast the vibrant colours of the store, creating a visual image that, to me, resembles Pre-Raphaelite paintings in which everything is foregrounded (Figures 1,2, 15-18), and the entire store setting acts as a huge painting[5]. Inside the store, upon closer view, nature and sensory modalities are enhanced through products' resemblance to food (Figure 9). Also, certain ingredients, like lemons, garlic, chocolate, olive oil, etc. are often put close to the products they can be found in, and some of the plants that the store is decorated with, like mint, basil, thyme, etc. are also found on products' ingredient labels (Figures 1,2, 15-18, 20). Plenty of other products appear edible too. All this is a method of creating a nonverbal micro-level discourse that serves to support and represent the macro level of the global discourse on the individual, shop floor level, and helps create an implication of a natural, safe, and beneficial cosmetic company and product. The macro level of the *Lush* discourse is characterised by saturation of the global discourse with positive contributions of the company and its products to the world. The micro level is characterised by saturation of the customers' senses, through nature and sensory modality, and saturation of the individual customer with the information about the positive effects the products have on their bodies (and the environment).

The stores are also syntagmatically ordered (Cook 05) which means that, through evoking each other, in the consciousness of a customer they work together to increase the

[5] Even though the idea of comparing Pre-Raphaelite art with the store setting appearance seems interesting and prolific, due to the limitations of the scope of this paper, I will leave it as just a visual remark for the reader.

customers' consumption and the company's profit. Syntactically explained, these implications work together to form a sentence, and the same way words express their meanings through their relationship to other words in the sentence, closely aligned products refer to one another. Thus, in the shower section, one can find shower gels, creams, and jellies, while right next to them are lotions and creams to enrich the skincare, that are to be used in or after the shower. Similarly, hair products are in the same relationship, therefore, shampoos, conditioners, hair masks, henna hair colour, etc. are all part of another sentence. The human body then becomes a (subconscious) micro discourse inside of a micro discourse. The successfulness of advertising inside the micro-discourse, through elements of sensory and nature modality, is influenced by the competence and motivation of the customers (Petty and Cacioppo, 1981).

8.2. Font

The company also has a font in which it communicates on the global, macro level of the discourse and the one that it uses for its micro level (Dijk, 08), or the shop floor level advertising (Figures 18, 20-23). The first font is quite basic and does not really communicate originality. I believe it is because it was not its intention in the first place. Using a basic font might be attributed to imitating the simplicity of nature. However, the crucial benefit of using a non-specific font for external advertising is that it provides the company with an opportunity to be advertised through the font itself. Since such a font is quite common and ordinary, the saturation of Common Ground (Dijk, 08) with the information about *Lush* products, actions, and attitudes can cause individuals to associate the font with the company, even if the font is not (directly) advertising *Lush*. This way *Lush* can dominate the counter-discourses of the less successful competition.

My conclusions about the second font stem from the previously mentioned claim that employing protest as a form of advertising discourse enhances credibility and gives discursive power (Aronczyk 13). Therefore, in figures 21, 22, and 23 the advertising billboards and walls of the stores are full of signposts that say *shower power* or *shower to the people,* even the bath bombs are *ballistics* and represent *the art of bathing.* Expression *shower to the people* is quite similar to the expression *power to the people* that was used in the US. It was a certain rebellion of the young against what was perceived as oppression by the older generation. It was also used by pro-democracy students to protest America's Vietnam military campaign (Dick 08).

Hence, the font that is used for product labelling and store decoration embodies this notion of protest on the micro level of discourse and connects it with the implications of the macro level discourse (Dijk, 08). The writings are big and flashy, the lines on the letters sharp as if all together working to represent the revolution of body care the company offers. Some of the billboards seem like they have been made for or taken from an actual protest parade (Figures 20-23). All this serves to reinforce the image of a quirky, original, rebellious, opinionated, and sincere cosmetics company. Since products are what unites the two discourses, the font on the packaging is a mixture of external and internal advertising variants, used to bring these two discourses into a mutual referencing relationship, the image of one recalls the image of the other.

8.3. Product mediation

Since both the brand personality and the products that it represents are inanimate, they need to borrow from humans on both levels of the discourse. On this level of discourse, *Lush* sales assistants take the role of mediators that communicate the pleasurable effects the products can have on the customers' bodies using the awareness of the macro level of the discourse as scaffolding to gain dominance over the micro discourse. It should come as no surprise that *Lush*, like any other employer, tends to employ like-minded people whose personality fits their discourse, or those who seem susceptible enough not to see the backgrounded elements of the macro-level discourse structures (Figures 4, 10). These employees are then crucial for the efficient cooperation between the two levels of discourse.

Lush has also found an innovative way of advertising the importance of its sales assistants. The company has a peculiar, uncommon custom of putting a sticker with an avatar-like photo that represents the face of the person who made the product (Figure 25). This kind gesture of including their manufacturers in the discourse of their shop floor advertising (Figure 5, 25) as members of the *we* family perfectly complements the global discourse and introduces the final nuance of the second desired global mental model — Lush is a conscious cosmetics company that values and cares for its employees. But just like with previously analysed examples, there are some discourses that counter this mental model. Numerous reports of workers worldwide being mistreated, violated, or underpaid by the company have been documented [28] [29] [30].

8.4. Product outline

Figures 24 and 25 represent the standard packaging of the company. The design formula is as follows: the frontal part, which is to always face the customer, contains a big name of the product, usually written using the internal advertising font[6], and printed on the most salient position. *Lush* logo usually takes the second most salient place, and it is printed using the external advertising font. In between are types of products and witty stories that describe the products. The background contains information about the product ingredients. The font in green intuitively represents natural products in the ingredients, the black one represents synthetics [20]. The word *synthetics* contains a meaning completely opposite of the word *natural*, and on this level of communicating directly to the individual customer, it is backgrounded, and restricted to only a trace amount of attention because it might threaten the desired mental model projection (Dijk, 06).

As I mentioned earlier, the company has a packaging-free line of products, which make 35 % of all the company's products. The other 65% need packaging [22]. The packaging that *Lush* uses is an example of good cosmetics practice. According to CSR practices, a company, having created the need to make containers for its products, should try to minimise the damage it does to the environment and maximise social benefit. Therefore, the pots that *Lush* uses are one hundred per cent consumer plastic. On the micro level, the company created a discourse with customers to ensure their return and reinforce the company's desired mental model (Dijk, 06). The company asks customers to collect five pots, as the company calls these containers, to receive a free face mask when they return the pots to any *Lush* store in the world [21]. Due to the elusively interpretable word *consumer* in the syntagm *consumer plastic*, the company subtly creates an impression in the customers' minds that only the pots they return are recycled into new ones. This reinforces the personality that *Lush* wants to create through communicating the importance of recycling, and, consequently, the environment.

[6] The company translates the ingredients labels and product description labels according to the country it sells in. In certain countries, the names of the products are also translated. The font, the packaging, and the positioning of the labels on it are the only things that do not change. If a country uses a different writing system, the text on the product packaging is translated into it using either internal or external advertising font [20].

8.5. Charity Pot

Quite a witty name for a product — pot because it comes in previously mentioned pots, charity because the profit earned through its sales goes into supporting various communities, associations, projects, etc. The company decides whom to support, and the process of deciding repeats itself on a certain basis. It has supported numerous different causes, projects, and associations through this lotion. According to the company's website, *Charity Pot* has donated 53 million English pounds since 2007 [22]. Figure 26 shows the packaging of *Charity Pot.* This is the only product that is often printed differently since it supports different associations in different countries. "One body lotion can change the world" [23]. The product embodies the beliefs of its company and as such, on the micro level of discourse, it opens an opportunity for the sales assistants to communicate the elements of macro discourse inside the context of a micro discourse to increase the chance of selling the product. The product is made from organic cocoa butter, from the raw cocoa material mentioned in 7.1. which implies its quality. Such cocoa butter, which is usually used to produce chocolate, which is usually associated with pleasure, makes the body lotion a chocolatey confection mixed with floral essential oils that softens the skin [24]. The formula invites both natural and sensory modality by evoking the use of both the senses of smell and taste, evoking edibility through chocolate and cocoa butter, and naturality through raw material indigeneity. Such a modality helps strengthen the need for the pleasurable effects of the product. (Delmas and Burbano, 11).

The core of the customer-product connection lies in the Problem-Solution pattern. In practice, we can see an overlapping between the sensual product action advertising discourse formula by Ringrow (16) and Problem-Plan-Response-Solution pattern by Hoey (83, 01) If a customer's problem is rough, dry skin, that needs soothing and care, then the need for using this lotion "full of nourishing ingredients [24]" should come as a response to the desire for resolving the problem. The recommended plan is to continually use the product, therefore continually purchase it. The continual use should result in the resolution of the customer's problem. To strengthen the visualisation, product descriptions are always presented in the form of stories a few sentences long. Such stories are always brimming with sensual verbs and adjectives that encourage visualization and trigger an emotional reaction. This "soothing body lotion feeds your skin" (…) glide it generously onto the skin to soothe and soften, anywhere that needs some extra love. (…)" [32] The lotion that "feeds your skin" [24] is communicated through the sensory modality of edibility borrowed from the sensual adjectives *nourishing* and

soothing, and the entire micro discourse of the store setting that creates a non-verbal context of naturality — so fresh it could be eaten. Besides solving the customers' problems on an individual micro level, this product can directly affect potential problems of the global, macro level of discourse. The same formula for resolving the customer's skin problem can be used to advertise the altruistic function of the brand personality. The Problem is then identified as the like-mindedness of the customer and the company regarding the issue discussed, and the perception of the actual need for help of the party the altruistic action is directed at, in the mind of a customer. Other steps remain the same. This then becomes a lotion that "softens the skin and sparks a revolution" [23]. With which you can "nourish your skin whilst funding groups working in the areas of animal protection, human rights, and the environment" [23].

This product is the perfect example of discourse flexibility. Since it is a product, and without the entire network of discourses as its background story and its mediator it couldn't have the influence that it currently has, it is an element of the micro discourse. The fact that it directly supports actual charity projects, allows its direct association with the brand personality values. Unlike other products where this association happens through implication based on the macro discourse that the product is only a synonym of, *Charity Pot* is the micro discourse representative of the company, and could, even without a mediator, to an extent, communicate certain company's desired mental models (Dijk, 06).

8.6. Rose Jam & Ro's Argan

This combination of products is a perfect example of syntagmatic product positioning (Cook 05). One, ideally, elicits the purchase of the other. The product name *Rose Jam* itself is a sensory modality that targets the palate and taste buds with the sensory modality of edibility that is furthermore strengthened by the non-verbal micro discourse of the store setting. The product invites you to "lather up with this rose, lemon, and argan oil for soft, sweet skin." [25] The product will "leave skin soft, hydrated, and sweetly scented" [25]. A mixture of sensual adjectives and verbs like *lather up, hydrating, sweet, soft, sweetly scented,* etc., help reinforce the association of positive effects on the customer's applied body part with the product. The product also highlights that it uses not just any, but the Damascene rose oil. In a similar fashion to the mesmerising France in chapter 7.2., the Damascene rose borrows its global Common Ground (Dijk, 08) salience to *Lush,* which uses it to increase product marketing value. This oil "is obtained by steam distillation from the fragile pink petals and comes from Senir, Turkey" [26].

Without the actual context behind the name, *Ro's Argan* implies, in the context of the entire *Lush* discourse, a certain imperfection specific to nature, it might evoke adjectives like rugged or hand-made. This implication stems from the use of the s-genitive with *Ro* in the syntagm *Ro's Argan*. When hearing the words Ro's Argan and Rose Jam, pronounced together without the written words it might be hard to discern whether it is Ro's Jam and Argan or Rose Jam and Argan. Then *Ro's Argan* might seem to have been named by an indigenous tribe member, who made the jam or provides argan or rose oil, whose name is Ro. This modality is used to convey the atmosphere of home production which implies quality. The products borrow modalities from each other to gain credibility for their own individual modalities. As long as the actual context behind the inspiration for the name remains backgrounded, it is left to inferencing. The real context behind the inspiration for the name of *Ro's Argan* was the name of one of the *Lush* co-founders Rowena Bird [27].

8.7. Commodifying Gender

As the final remark, I will touch upon the question of gender in communicating the (sensual) effects of products on the customer's body part. Unlike the usual tradition of cosmetic companies to commodify femininity (Ringrow, 16), *Lush* commodifies the entire gender category, by choosing not the employ gender-specific advertising. It might seem confusing that a cosmetic product is not gender specific, however, at its core it really is. The perception of inanimate objects anthropomorphised as embodiments of a gender category is a result of years of history of human interaction and interconnectedness that resulted in innumerable discourses and the evolution of the primordial Common Ground (Dijk, 08).

The English language only distinguishes the animate gender category, with the occurrence of the, linguistically omnipresent, terms of endearment where the pronoun *she* is used to refer to a boat, car, or motorbike. As such, it is not restricted by the category of gender and allows more freedom for communicating on a neutral, wider level of discourse. *Lush* products are never marked for gender. The only representation of gender that the product has is the one that the customer has of it. Since there is no clear gender distinction for products on the store setting level of the discourse, it is logical that the products should also follow this discursive regulation. When inquired about the *men's* section, the sales assistant will smile and say that there is not such a thing in *Lush.* If a customer meets such a concept for the first time, the fact itself may be so memorable to them, that they will remember the communicative experience vividly. This discourse counter-discourses the perceived normal discourse in the

mind of the customer. A discourse that neutralises gender in cosmetics might result in the customer combining the emotional value of the communicative event with the context in which they discovered such concept — micro discourse (non-verbal) context of the store setting, for the creation of a relatively efficient, however, without proper global context, short-lived mental model (Dijk, 06). However, taking into consideration the historical development of the world of cosmetics, and its gender markedness, cosmetic companies cannot avoid working with the global Common Ground (Dijk, 08). The sensual adjectives that are used in describing *Rose Jam Charity Pot Ro's Argan* and many other *Lush* products are also not gender marked. All stores are decorated as jungles of colour and scent, and in such jungles (macro) individual colours (micro) may blend into the colour-oversaturated background and melt with the foreground to be seen as a whole (the jungle). However, on the individual level, colours of the products send a different message. The product might be blue, green, or black or it might be given a name that (subjectively) implies a name for a product for men, *Dirty* [33], *Wasabi Shan Kui [34], Charcoal [35],* etc. These executional elements (Delmas and Burbano, 11) could in less motivated and competent customers, be enough to infer that the certain product is made for men.

The expectation of a gender-syntagmatic store ordering of cosmetic stores comes as a result of years of commodifying the female gender, femininity, and associating it with sensuality. Therefore, in order for men not to become sensual or feminine when using cosmetics, they must have a special, usually specific category of products, which is perceived as needed, rather than desired. In the process of commodification, the male body is much less compartmentalised than the female one, therefore, offers fewer opportunities for making profit (Ringrow, 16). *Lush* is playing with this discourse. By deleting the category of gender or gender-syntagmatic ordering of the store, *Lush* employs a counter-discourse, through which it identifies itself. By being different from the others, the company differentiates the brand from them. A motivated, competent customer, that would in this context be an imaginary male, not burdened by the implications of commodified femininity, should then use active thinking and its own knowledge to infer that gender as a category is not relevant for this topic. A less motivated and competent customer, who might be a man who has just stumbled inside the store to look for a present for his wife, will probably be more susceptible to the immediate, executive elements, like colour or product name, influencing his decision. In the same ways that the customers perceive the gender of the product in the example above, through their individual Common Ground (Dijk, 08) filter, they validate and perceive all other aspects and modalities

aimed at them on this, micro level of discourse (Petty and Cacioppo, 1981). Despite trying to counter-discourse commodity femininity, *Lush* still reproduces the same commodification (Figure 28). The idea that *Lush* hereby adds to the mental model notion about human rights is that *Lush* is a different cosmetic company that promotes gender equality. However, if men still rarely shop at *Lush* and according to marketing analysis, women aged 20-35 are its products' targeted group [31], then we can say that it is the implicit orientation towards the female gender that gives the company the boldness to perform such unusual advertising stunts, such as proposing that cosmetics have no gender. The advertising discourse of *Lush* boldly invites men to try pink glitter, only because they can propose such action from the position of confidence in the buying power of its existing audience towards which it is oriented. There is no harm for the company if a person that has never even seen their products continues to keep it that way, there is much more damage if the targeted customers do not respond. Therefore, this inclusion of the male gender into female gender salient discourse can furthermore be interpreted as encouraging gender equality in the eyes of the company's targeted audience. Women will portray *Lush* as a mediator that will help men understand women, by helping them embrace their own sensuality. *Lush*, thus, has a greater chance of the targeted audience identifying themselves with the intentions of the brand personality, and reiving a potential (male) customer, who might be introduced into the *Lush* family through the mediation of their beloved.

Just like customers either identify themselves with the personality of the company or use it to differentiate themselves, the company's personality does the same thing vice-versa, it either identifies with or differentiates itself from the human values that it borrows for its global advertising discourse (Aaker and Schmitt, 98).

9. Conclusion

From the presented analysis, it can be proposed that the commodifying element, which is inherent to the capitalist system, is represented as exploiting the emotional or behavioural value of a concept as a means of providing profit and is, and, therefore, the crucial factor for gauging the intentions of the company. The primary intention behind the creation of the products is not even to be advertised, but to be sold and provide capital. The creation of this global advertising discourse puts society and the Common Ground (Dijk, 06) in interrelation. The need for creating such a discourse exists due to the existence of society and its common

ground. Therefore, successful brands survive by adapting the personality of a brand, so that it can effectively communicate to the desired (target) society/community. That is why *Lush* attempted to create a personality that is at the same time both unique, universal, adaptable, and relatable. However, as the examples imply, it's the most adaptable when exploiting opportunities for making profit. Every aspect of the company is made with the intention to fuel back the capital. Since that gathering of capital includes the previously mentioned societies, and their beliefs and attitudes, instead of straightforward attempts to sell the company's products, these attempts must be masked by the company's personality. Since *Lush* is either the most salient or the most saliently implied participant of the activist discourses, such activism loses its primary function as it is subordinated by brand personality representation. The company creates a discourse in which the actual bare context is that the company created the need for the use of the raw material in its cosmetic products and it is advertising it as beneficial for the environment, humans, or animals. This way, the company strives to satisfy the existence of the need for a better world in the global Common Ground consciousness (Dijk, 08), by investing a portion of its profit in the same (problematic) areas where it created the need for its (marketing) presence. The creation of an ever-expanding *we* family and an activistic approach help create a feeling of intimate atmosphere and give the company the credibility that furthermore masks the previously mentioned facts. *Lush* is seen as the hypernym for the entire family including the values that it borrows from it.

If, as it is seen from the examples above, profit really is the only known value to the capitalist system and its counterparts, then the efficiency and significance of the company's altruism breaks upon either achieving customer's purchase or even earlier, because of its core intention — making profit. This furthermore proves, that *Lush* global advertising discourse is just an excerpt of an insight into the intricate hierarchical network of capitalist discourses, and from that perspective, it seems interesting to think about the discourses with greater discursive power than the dominant participant of this analysis, that shape the *Lush* global advertising context. The field of sales and advertising, especially cosmetics and beauty advertising is an intertwined network of discourses, expected behaviours, reactions, common ground, body language, non-verbal elements, music, scent, etc. Each of these categories could be analysed both separately and from different perspectives. Therefore, the field of sales and advertising is a great source of inspiration for observing the behaviour of language in different contexts which can teach a lot about the emotional psychology of an individual or a society.

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10. Figures

Figure 1. (https://www.278create.com/work-lush)

Figure 2. (https://www.vxdeal.com/?product_id=89156401_38)

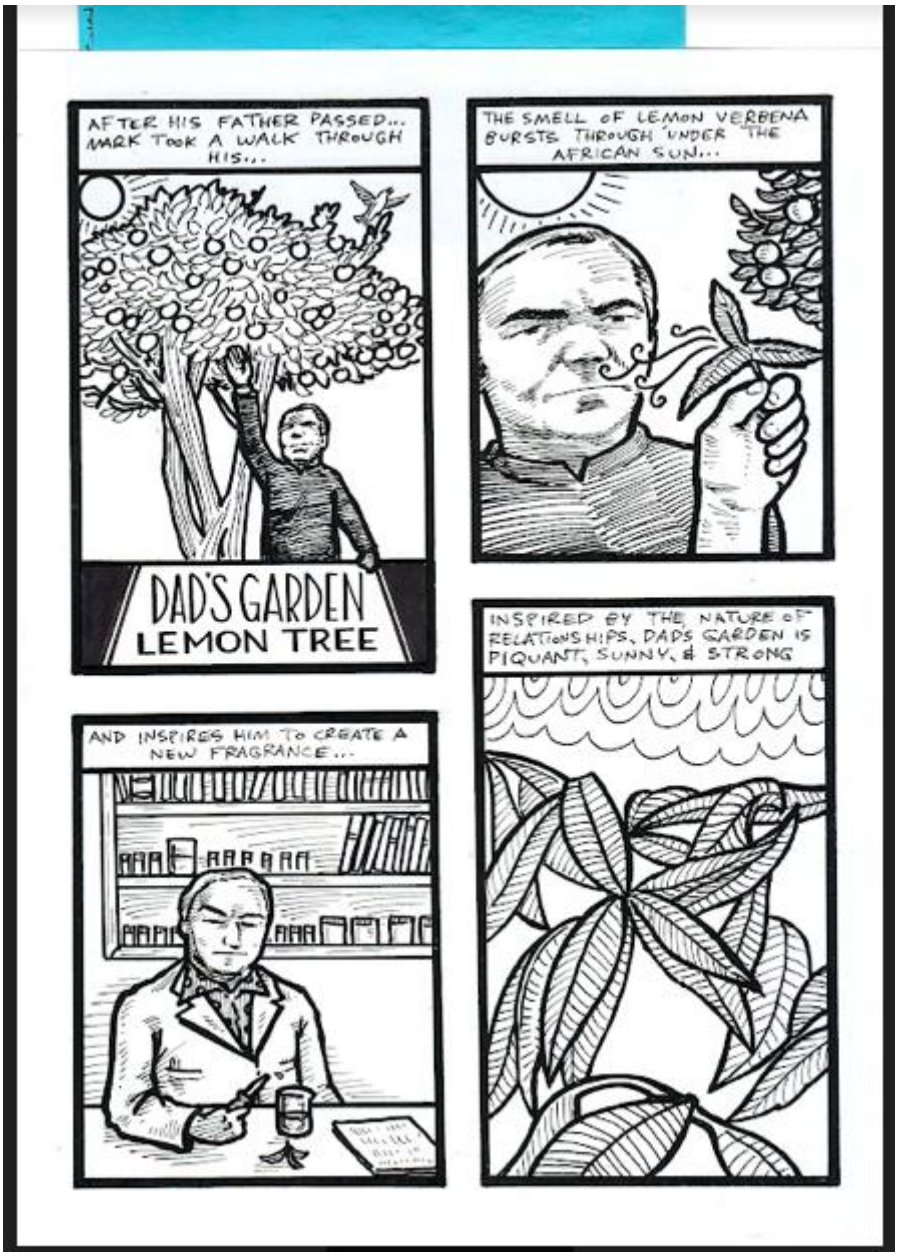

Figure 3. (Shared by Lush Facebook chat assistant upon inquiry.)

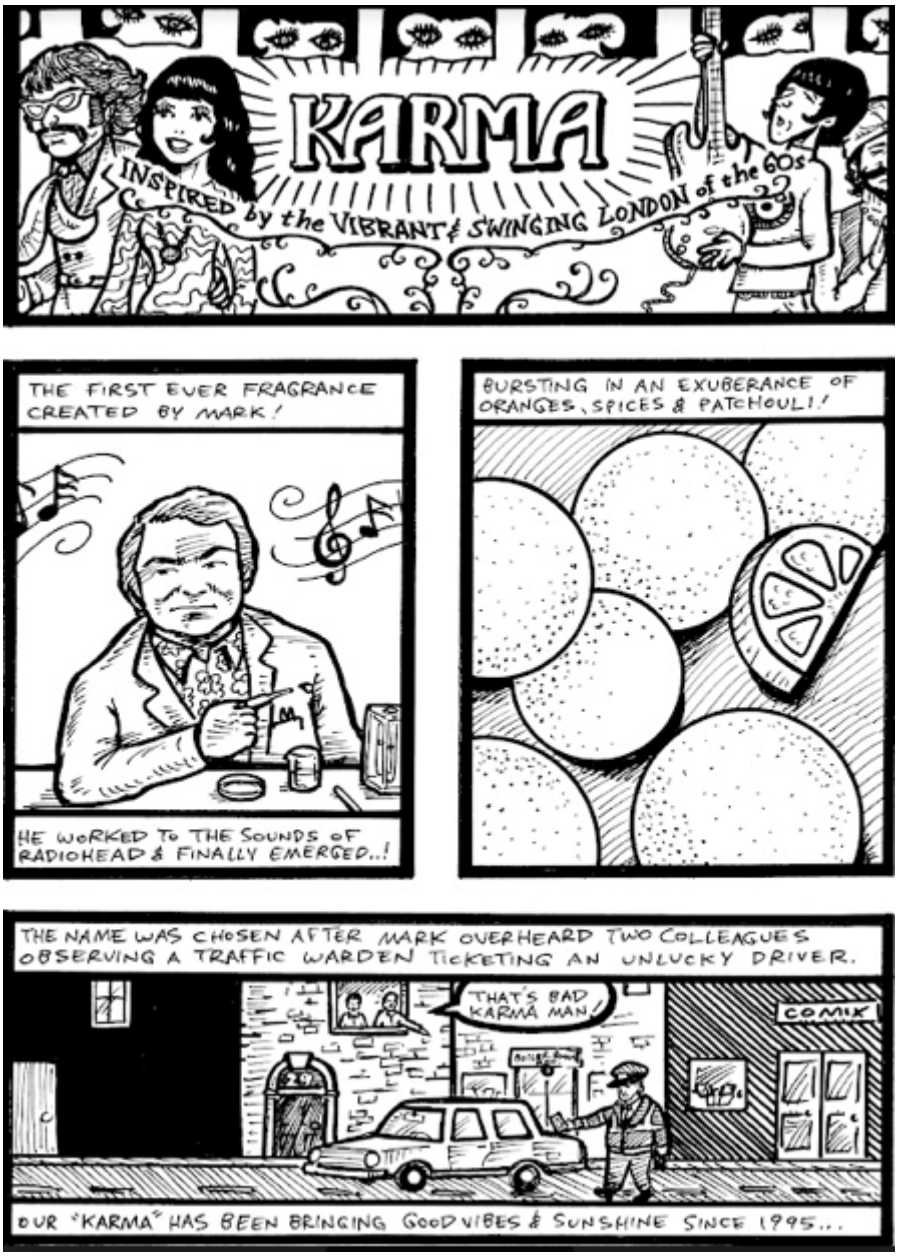

Figure 4. (Shared by Lush Facebook chat assistant upon inquiry.)

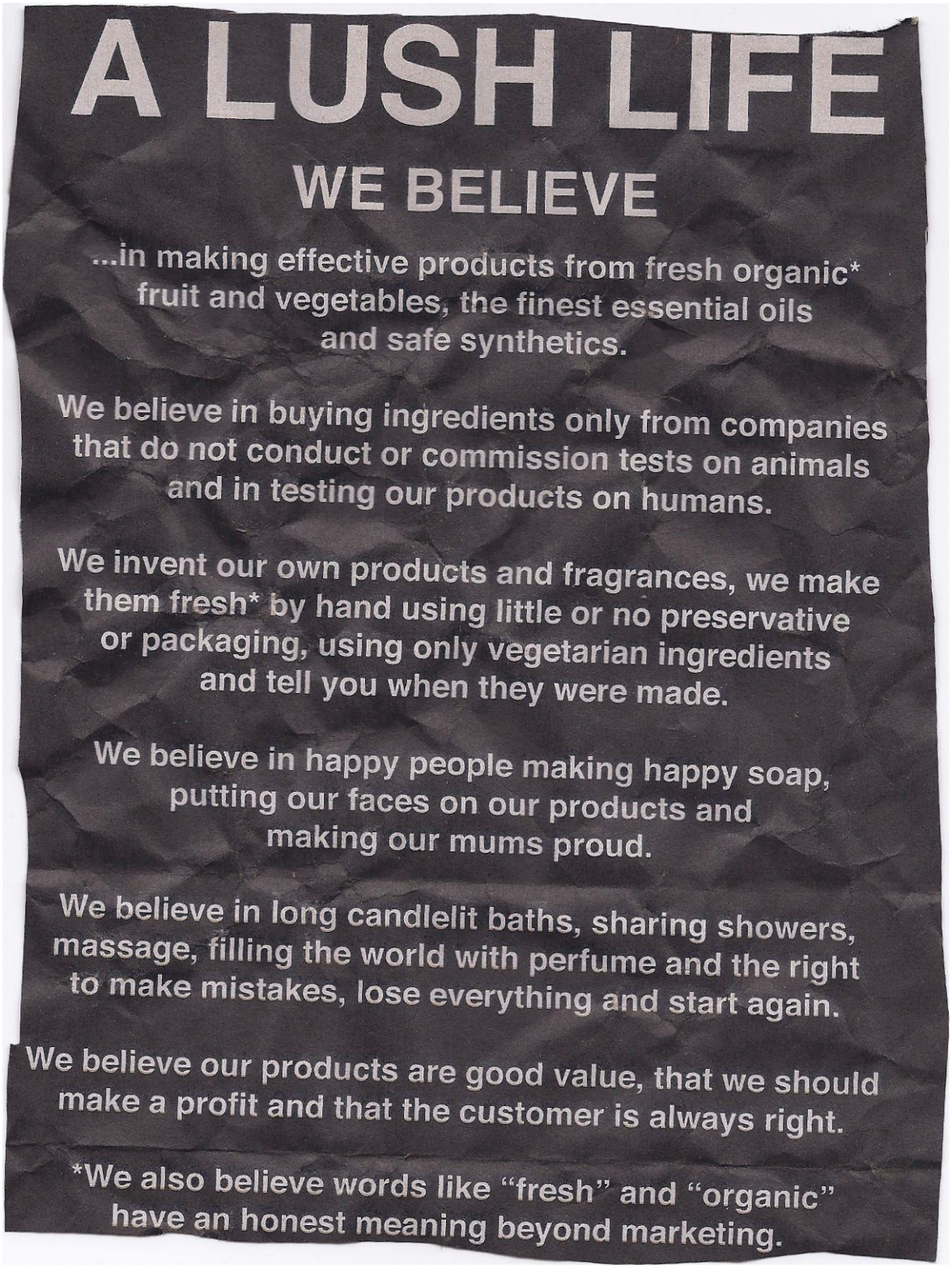

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Figure 14. (Aronczyk, 13)

Figure 15. (https://www.bdcmagazine.com/2019/06/portview-completes-fit-out-of-worlds-biggest-lush-store/)

Figure 16. (https://www.urbanyvr.com/lush-robson-street-grand-opening/)

Figure 17. (https://weare.lush.com/press-area/)

Figure 18. (https://www.sbid.org/project-of-the-week-lush-liverpool/)

Figure 19. (https://echochamber.com/article/lush-flagship-london/)

Figure 20.
(https://eoutlet.2021cheapsalesstore.ru/category?name=how%20long%20do%20lush%20fresh%20face%20masks%20last)

Figure 21. (https://foursquare.com/v/lush/5853f5a3da54ae2d25e9bc1f/photos)

Figure 22. (https://www.pinterest.com/pin/402157441728896092/)

Figure 23. (https://latana.com/post/lush-deep-dive/)

Figure 24. (https://www.gq-magazine.co.uk/gallery/vegan-mens-grooming-products)

Figure 25. (http://theblushdiaries.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/photo-2-1.jpg)

Figure 26. (https://www.chickadvisor.com/item/lush-charity-pot/)

Figure 27. (https://www.tattooedtealady.com/2015/09/the-lush-scent-addiction.html)

Figure 28. (https://thenotice.net/2012/07/lush-emotional-brilliance-range/)