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Using all available vectors

Flynn did not believe in anything but the beau geste. He once told me that when he bought perfume for a present, he always inquired for Chanel number 10. 'I don't like my women to be only half sure.'

(Raoul Walsh 'Regarding Errol Flynn', in Raoul Walsh (1974)
Each Man in His Time: The life story of a director,
Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York)

In 2005, the German public channel ARD was propelled into the centre of a lively controversy, when product placements were identified in the television series *Marienhof*. Sometimes they were very indirect placements, such as a character's line indicating a preference for carpets because they absorb noise and reduce dust. A very innocent remark, on the face of things, if the studio Bavaria Film hadn't been paid by a floor covering corporation to include it!

German legislation is highly restrictive on the principle of placements. In hindsight, it was realized that such placements had been occurring for a long time in several other series such as *Schimanski* and *Tatort*. The 'scandal' reached such heights that the director of Bavaria Film, Thilo Kleine, and Frank Doehmann, former director of Colonia Media, were sacked.¹ Although recent, this 'affair' seems to hark back to a distant, bygone age! During that period, for the 2004–05 season in the United States, on the major television channels, Nielsen Media Research counted more than 100,000 appearances

¹Scott Roxborough (2005) Scandal gives German TV pause, *Hollywood Reporter*, 26 July.

of placed products (a rise of 28 per cent over the previous season²), without anyone really finding fault. Brand and entertainment are allowed to pursue their commercial relations in any form possible, as long as these are tolerated, not by an often out-of-date legislator, but by the audience at which they are aimed, and which can prove swift to punish.

It would not be logical to leave by the wayside the various placement opportunities offered by the other vectors of culture and entertainment. The basic principle remains the same as for the cinema, and television viewers seem to share the same attitude as cinema goers regarding product and brand placements.³ In practice, however, the methods of use always require adaptation.

Series and television programmes

In France, in television series, until the progressive relaxing of the rules, the 'non-prohibited' placements concerned props that were absolutely indispensable to the plot, cars and institutions such as towns or regions. In the United States, a much more permissive practice, particularly on cable channels, has for a long time permitted all types of placement. The detectives of *Hawaii Five-O* never drove anything but Ford cars. The Microsoft Xbox is played with exclusively in *Two and a Half Men*. People eat Oreo cookies and use their American Express cards in *Friends*. Nokia mobile phones are often present in the series *Alias*, as are Alienware computers in *Smallville*, the imposing Hummer vehicles in *CSI: Miami*, the newspaper *Los Angeles Times* in *Eyes*, M&M vending machines in *The West Wing*, iPods and Levi's jeans in *The Office*, Samsung flat screens in *Dark Angel* and *The District*. Mitel communications solutions are used in *Boston Legal* and *ER*. Burger King is integrated into *Arrested Development*, Philips and Sprint are partners of *24* and

²Caleb Stephens (2005) Marketing firm's deal could triple its staff, *Dayton Business Journal*, 23 October.

³Beng Soo Ong (2004) A comparison of product placements in movies and television programs: an online research study, *Journal of Promotion Management*, 10(1/2), pp 147–58. About game shows, very interesting resources can be found in a 2006 Gould and Gupta analysis, using two consumer studies. The authors point out the importance of the meanings consumers draw, and not only the usual effectiveness, especially because game shows naturally tie product promotion into their content. Stephen J Gould and Pola B Gupta (2006) Come on down, *Journal of Advertising*, 35(1), Spring, pp 65–81. See also Namita Bhatnagar, Lerzan Aksoy and Selin A Malkoc (2004) Embedding brands within media content: the impact of message, media and consumer characteristics on placement efficacy, in L J Schrum (ed), *The Psychology of Entertainment Media: Blurring the lines between entertainment and persuasion*, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Mahwah, NJ, pp 99–116.

While You Were Out, the *Financial Times* is must-have reading material in *Ally McBeal*, Tic-Tac sweets help the lawyers of the Donnell, Young, Dole & Frutt firm relax in *The Practice*, Campbell's Soup is cited in *7th Heaven*, the T-Mobile operator takes care of communications in *Veronica Mars*, and Buick cars are praised by Eva Longoria in *Desperate Housewives*.

Elsewhere, *Six Feet Under* prefers the Toyota Prius and *Prison Break* Yaris or Rav-4, while a Chrysler 300C was promoted in an episode of *ER*. The *NCIS* agents work on Dell computers, whereas Carrie Bradshaw (played by Sarah Jessica Parker) uses an Apple laptop in *Sex and the City*. Home Depot and American Express are placed in *Friends*, and Subway sandwiches were subtly integrated into the script of an episode of the series *Will & Grace* on NBC. This is not forgetting Tropicana, Nissan, Cadillac, Ford, Dunkin Donuts, Motorola, Hermès, FedEx, Toblerone, Coca-Cola, Pony, Philips and even Rémy Martin, Stolichnaya and Marlboro in *The Sopranos*. So far, everything seems to be – fine!

Television series are increasingly courted by advertisers. There are many reasons for this. In the United States, the series produced by the cable channels in recent years have been able to profoundly revive the genre, with their more liberal tone and their more original subjects. The result? They attract a large audience, all the more so since they have fewer commercial breaks than series on the major networks. Furthermore, an episode of a series lasts on average only 42 minutes, and this shorter format is suitable for the seduction of the modern consumer, who is always in a hurry and does not necessarily have the time to dedicate 90–120 minutes to a feature film. In addition, some of the series enjoy production budgets comparable to film budgets, and can therefore retain a high quality, so are likely to retain their audience from episode to episode, over several seasons. The use of recurring characters is the distinctive feature of a series in general. It is also, however, a certain advantage for product and brand placements. This not only acts as an aid to consumer memorization, it also enables brands to instil over time a certain proximity, even a certain familiarity between the character and the audience.⁴ The brand discourse can thus enjoy a very positive implicit testimonial, either direct or indirect.

⁴See in particular very interesting research by Cristel Antonia Russell, Andrew T Norman and Susan E Heckler (2004) The consumption of television programming: development and validation of the connectedness scale, *Journal of Consumer Research*, 31(1), June, pp 150–61. See also Carrie La Ferle and Steven M Edwards (2006) Product placement – How brands appear on television, *Journal of Advertising*, 35(4), Winter, pp 65–86. The technique is not only used in occidental and US television series and television shows. India, for instance, is also practising the technique with the same professional approach and the same concern about the audience's potential rejection if the brands are overexposed. For example, with six sponsors in the *Indian Idol* show, the brand placement technique remains relevant. See Sulekha Nair (2006) Promos should jell with the story, *Financial Express*, 12 February.

The impact of the placement and the prescriptive effect of the characters of a series can be genuinely powerful. In 2004, an imaginary product was placed in the soap opera *All My Children*, shown on ABC since 1970. The brand in question was Fusion, a fictional perfume and clothing brand, used in the plot of several episodes and praised by the characters of the series: it was subsequently actually sold in shops and on the television channel's website.⁵ Finally, unlike a film, a television series offers the considerable advantage of being able to identify its audience with some precision, and therefore to know what sector of the public it is managing to attract. For any advertiser, this is essential: this is how it knows whether the audience matches its target.

Placement in a television series is, however, not without its risks. Here, too, it is important to be vigilant over the details of the placement contract over time. The intensifying competition means that television channels are now particularly quick to shift a series to another time slot, or even to cancel it if the audience figures are not as expected.⁶ What, therefore, are the implications for the advertiser, whose communication strategy may find itself somewhat

⁵Since the first licensing contracts proposed by Kay Kamen at Walt Disney's in the 1930s, licensed products have multiplied. See in particular Gérald Bigle (1987) *Droits dérivés: Licensing et character merchandising*, J Delmas et Cie, Paris, and also Jean-Claude Jouret (1991) *Tintin et le merchandising: une gestion stratégique des droits dérivés*, Academia-Erasme, Paris; and for a complete and updated legal framework, Gregory J Battersby and Charles W Grimes (1985–2005) *The Law of Merchandise and Character Licensing: Merchandising law and practice*, Thomson-West, Eagen, MN; Karen Raugust (2004) *The Licensing Business Handbook*, 5th edn, EPM Communications, New York. Furthermore, those product and/or brand placements, generating demand from consumers even if they are initially just accessories to a fictional identity, are revealing factors of the huge potential impact they might have on the public. In 1994, Paramount Pictures were surprised by the intensity of the *Forrest Gump* phenomenon after the release of the eponymous movie directed by Robert Zemeckis. A number of products – and especially the famous Bubba Gump Seafood Company – even though they had been fictional and created for the movie, were extracted from the movie fantasy world and translated to the real world. There are now Bubba Gump Seafood restaurants in New York, Maui, Miami, New Orleans, Chicago and San Francisco among others; and also in Tokyo, Cancún, and Bali (see www.bubbagump.com). This specific process is called 'reverse product placement'. In France, a similar phenomenon occurred, even if proportional to the smaller French market, with James Huth's *Brice de Nice* (2005) (see www.bricedenice.com).

⁶We may also mention the interesting case of the adventure and suspense mini-series *The Runner*: it was abruptly abandoned in 2000 by the ABC network which had invested several millions in producing it. Producer Mark Burnett and LivePlanet (Matt Damon and Ben Affleck's production company) got it back in 2004, with the purpose of reformatting the concept for an online diffusion on the Yahoo website in 2006. See in particular Kevin J Delaney and Brooks Barnes (2006) Yahoo hopes to make network flop a net hit, *Wall Street Journal*, 16 January.

altered by the decision? Placement should also be practised with caution by the television channels, particularly when they are also producers, so as not to accentuate the very thing – commercialism – the editorial content is supposed to enable viewers to avoid. In fact, the too-obvious presence of one advertiser in a given series can rapidly lead all other competing advertisers to shun the associated commercial breaks, and thereby accelerate the channel's loss of revenues.⁷

Television reality shows are also now a sought-after vector for product placement, given their target audience and the flexibility of integration possible for brands.⁸ Levi's is present in the *Rock Star: INXS* programme on CBS. Coca-Cola was highly visible throughout an entire season of the successful programme *American Idol*, broadcast by Fox. Coors beers were present, and the American Express card was repeatedly mentioned, in several episodes of the reality TV show *The Restaurant*.⁹ Pontiac appears in *Survivor* on CBS, and the Solstice model was at the centre of an episode of *The Apprentice* on NBC. In another episode of *The Apprentice* (on NBC), the participants were asked to work on a Home Depot case or to think about a new jingle for the restaurant chain Burger King. 24-Hour Fitness gyms are promoted in *The Biggest Loser*, still on NBC. 7Up is placed in the programme *Battle of the Network Stars* on Bravo, Jaguar in *Gilmore Girls* on the WB Channel, Hewlett-Packard in *That 70's House* on MTV, and Volkswagen New Beetles take part in *Shorties Watchin' Shorties* on Comedy Central. Each time, we find a placement contract.

Over the 2004–05 season alone in the United States, Nielsen Media Research estimated the number of products appearing on the six major American television networks to be over 100,000.¹⁰ Naturally, not all of them

⁷Jeanne McDowell (2004) The sponsors move in, *Time Magazine*, 23 August. For an in-depth analysis of *The Sopranos* series, see Deborah L Jaramillo (2002) The family racket: AOL Time Warner, HBO, *The Sopranos*, and the construction of a quality brand, *Journal of Communication Inquiry*, 26(1), January, pp 59–75.

⁸For relevant research on this subject, see Alain d'Astous et Nathalie Séguin (1999) Consumer reactions to product placement strategies in television sponsorship, *European Journal of Marketing*, 33(9/10), pp 896–910. See also Rosellina Ferraro and Rosemary J Avery (2000) Brand appearances on prime time television, *Journal of Current Issues and Research in Advertising*, 22(2), Fall, pp 1–15. For original research that proposes a model based on the balance theory 'in which attitude alignment is the explanation for links between a triad composed of the consumer, the sitcom character, and the placed product' see Cristel Antonia Russell and Barbara B Stern (2006) Consumers, characters, and products, *Journal of Advertising*, 35(1), Spring, pp 7–21.

⁹Sharon Waxman (2005) Hollywood unions object to product placement on TV, *New York Times*, 14 November.

¹⁰Lorne Manly (2005) When the ad turns into the story line, *New York Times*, 2 October.

have the same importance. There are very few advertisers like Coca-Cola, that have large enough communications budgets to appear throughout the whole season on a popular programme such as *American Idol*. The figure is nevertheless revealing about the growth of the phenomenon. It is likely that some programmes such as *Survivor*, created by Mark Burnett, would never have seen the light of day without the financial support of product placements, and others would probably not have remained on television without it. This raises an additional question for certain programmes whose intention is to be controversial or critical. These programmes have as much need of finance nowadays as any other. The number of advertisers hurrying to associate their products and brands with them, however, is naturally fewer, conscious as they are of the risk that this type of programme represents.

In a television programme, testimonials in favour of a product or brand are of two types, both of which should be taken into consideration since the methods of placement, or simply of the appearance of the brand, differ according to type. Some programmes call on stars, others on unknowns invited or selected to participate in the programme. With the use of stars, the association gives the brand the advantage of being able to profit directly or indirectly from their celebrity.¹¹ Furthermore, as in most cases the stars are showbusiness professionals, their professionalism can be capitalized on, to promote the product in favourable conditions.

If an unknown is used, this professional approach is not always possible. Some training will often be necessary, if the production and the advertiser wish the brand's integration into the programme to appear as natural as possible. If the placement is successfully carried out, however, the fact that an anonymous consumer is used is not necessarily a drawback. The remuneration stars demand for their testimonial is well-known to everyone, which can in certain cases affect their credibility. When an average consumer is used, and rarely paid because participation in the programme is reward enough, the impact may be infinitely greater among another part of the marketing target audience, if the product or brand placement is well orchestrated, or by the fact of the consumer's natural credibility. Care should be taken, however, since the public are increasingly mature and it is not a question of duping them. Hence, clearly, the impulse for thinking 'integration' and not simply 'placement'.

Others still sometimes use the term 'stealth marketing' to describe these placements. They are committing two flagrant errors. The first is that if it were a matter of stealth marketing, the competent authorities would not be capable of decoding the placements, and this would not necessarily profit the

¹¹Jean-Marc Lehu (1993) *Origines et modalités d'utilisation des stars dans la publicité*, PhD thesis directed by Professor Pierre Grégory, Paris 1 Panthéon Sorbonne University, Paris.

brands. The second is that the public itself would have to be incredibly naïve to see it as coincidence after coincidence that products turn up on certain programmes. In countries with more rigorous legislation on the subject of stealth marketing, such as France in comparison with the United States, authorities such as the CSA (Conseil Supérieur de l'Audiovisuel, Higher Audiovisual Council) are quick to act and to impose a punishment if the brand has not been 'blurred', or disguised by digital interference.¹²

In July 2002, the CSA issued a formal notice to the television channel M6 following an episode of *Honey, I Shrunk the Kids*, where the action was set in a McDonald's restaurant. In 1998, France 2 was criticized by the organization for what was perceived to be an 'unnecessary' showing of the daily newspaper *France Soir*, in an episode of the series *Nestor Burma*. As for the consumers, or in any case for the majority of them, they have long since ceased to be fooled by this. The essential question is how far we can go, and how we can do so without the development of a feeling of rejection, which would be disastrous for the brand and the programme.

Advertisers should take a further important precaution regarding programmes shown live. These generate larger audiences, but naturally, they always carry the risk of an uncontrollable incident. During the 38th Super Bowl in 2004, MTV was producing the show element of the broadcasting of the American football championship on CBS. During a song sung by Janet Jackson and Justin Timberlake, the latter tore off part of the singer's corset, revealing the whole of her right breast. Around 140 million viewers watched the broadcast.¹³ The event sparked an instant controversy and led to severe condemnation from the FCC (Federal Communications Commission), which launched an enquiry. The NFL (National Football League), CBS and the singers offered their official apologies to anyone who might have been offended by this gesture.¹⁴ However, the advertising sponsors such as AOL showed little appreciation for this live surprise.¹⁵ Admittedly, the use of

¹² Pascale Paoli-Lebailly (2005) Fiction: les marques oui, le placement non, *CB News*, 843, 18 July. See also the report La présence de marques dans la fiction, *La Lettre du CSA*, 181, February 2005. In supplement for covert advertising: article 9 of the decree #92-280 March 27th of 1992, modified.

¹³ See in particular Ann Oldenburg (2004) Jackson's halftime stunt fuels indecency debate, *USA Today*, 2 February, and Kenneth Li (2004) MTV blames Janet Jackson for Super Bowl incident, *Forbes*, 3 February.

¹⁴ Incidents of this kind can also have consequences for celebrities. When the Super-bowl's 'hold on tight' problem occurred, Justin Timberlake had a sponsorship contract with McDonald's. The restaurant chain, well-known for its family positioning, quickly officially stated that it was disappointed, regretting the 'inappropriate' behaviour, without however questioning its marketing relationship with the singer.

¹⁵ Kenneth Li (2004) MTV blames Janet Jackson for Super Bowl incident, *Forbes*, 3 February.

digital technology means that transmission can be slightly delayed, making it possible to intervene if necessary before broadcasting, but the disadvantage is that the excuse of a live programme is no longer valid and the producers become possible targets for a formal rebuke.¹⁶

Novels and plays

In the novel *The Perfect Manhattan* (2005) by Leanne Shear and Tracey Toomey,¹⁷ while the central character ‘effortlessly lifted a case of Budweiser’ (mentioned 15 times in the novel), a gentleman walks into a bar. He is described as wearing ‘a Hermès tie’ (p 40). Further on in the novel, one character is compared to Pierce Brosnan in an Armani suit (p 151), while another, female character takes a ‘Chanel lip palette from her Louis Vuitton clutch’ (p 294). The character of Rosalind doesn’t merely look at her watch, but ‘consults her platinum Cartier watch that hung delicately on her slender wrist’ (p 175). Even when she lights a cigarette (p 332), it is with a ‘signature Cartier lighter’. There are also numerous other brands mentioned in the novel.

Brand placement in a novel may seem logical, if it is perceived as an aid to description and to the development of a mental image to support the story. As we analysed in Part I, brands have an evocative power, which the author may make use of to fuel the reader’s imagination. Placement can thus allow authors a certain economy, even as it enriches the scene, or renders it more precise in the reader’s mind, if he or she knows the brand. Nowadays, many authors use this method of anchoring their descriptions in reality, both in novels and in plays – whether for financial recompense or not – when their story is set against a backdrop of everyday life.¹⁸

Even best-selling authors, who at first glance should not need the financial support, use brand placement. Dan Brown introduced the brands Citroën ZX, Mercedes, BMW, Audi, Rolls-Royce, Aston Martin, Porsche, Ferrari, Heckler and Koch, Smirnoff and the Ritz Hotel, among others, in *The Da Vinci Code* (2003).¹⁹ Mary Higgins Clark mentioned, in particular, the Plaza Hotel, the *New York Globe*, the *New York Times*, MSNBC, Armani and Dodge in

¹⁶ABC uses this technique to broadcast the Oscars’ ceremony to avoid live bad surprises. In 1974, a streaker (exhibitionist) appeared on stage during the live ceremony and there was no possibility of controlling the images.

¹⁷Leanne Shear and Tracey Toomey (2005) *The Perfect Manhattan*, Broadway Books, Random House, New York.

¹⁸Stuart Elliott (2005) On Broadway, ads now get to play cameo roles, *New York Times*, 22 April.

¹⁹Dan Brown (2003) *The Da Vinci Code*, Doubleday, New York.

The Christmas Thief (2004). John Grisham evoked the car brands Ford and Mercedes, the whisky Jack Daniel's and the fast food chain McDonald's in *The Last Juror* (2004),²⁰ and the brands Chivas, Montrachet, the *Wall Street Journal*, the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, *BusinessWeek*, CNN, Exxon, Honda Accord, Lamborghini, Ford, BMW, Porsche Carrera, Bentley, Toyota Celica, Mercedes, Gulfstream, Falcon, Challenger, Hawker and Lear, 'in particular', in *The King of Torts* (2003).²¹

Tom Clancy succeeded in placing Visa, American Express, AT&T, Airbus, Boeing, Viagra, Smith & Wesson, Beretta, Ingram, AK, Uzi, Glock, Mac, Remington, British Telecom, Lloyd's, Holiday Inn Express, Motel 6, McDonald's, Dunkin Donuts, Burger King, Sam Goody, Roy Rogers, K*B Toys, Tiffany, Sunglass Hut, LensCrafters, Kmart, Sears, 7-Eleven, Foot Locker, Toys'R'Us, JC Penney, Victoria's Secret, Gap, American Eagle, Nike, Belk's, San Pellegrino, Perrier, Miller Lite, Tetley Smooth, John Smith's, Coca-Cola, Kool, Marlboro, Gulfstream, FedEx, the *New York Times*, *The Lancet*, the *International Herald Tribune*, the *Wall Street Journal*, *Playboy*, the *Washington Post*, NBC, History Channel, Nick at Nite, ESPN, CNN, HBO, Fox, MSNBC, Sky News, AOL, Monopoly, Air France, Alitalia, British Airways, KLM, Hertz, and the cars Audi, Aston Martin, Lada, Porsche, Ford, Buick, Ferrari, Jaguar, McLaren, Hummer, Chevy, Volvo, and Mercedes, among others, in a single novel, *The Teeth of the Tiger* (2004)!²²

Placements in books are increasing, and more particularly in novels, of course. Thanks to a win-win product placement contract with Procter & Gamble, in 2006, *Cathy's Book* trained young girls to use Cover Girl make-up.²³ In the United States alone, the PQ Media firm estimates that investment in brand or product name placements in books is worth US\$26.6 million. The most famous case to date remains that of the novel *The Bulgari Connection* (2001), by Fay Weldon, alluding to the products of the famous Italian jeweller.²⁴ It was by no means the first in historical terms, but it was undoubtedly the first to be so media-friendly, since it was the first in which the advertiser admitted to having paid the author to place its brand in the

²⁰ John Grisham (2004) *The Last Juror*, Doubleday/Random House, New York.

²¹ John Grisham (2003) *The King of Torts*, Doubleday/Random House, New York.

²² Tom Clancy (2004) *The Teeth of the Tiger*, Berkley/Penguin, New York.

²³ Sean Stewart (and) Jordan Weisman (2006) *Cathy's Book: If Found Call 650-266-8233*, Running Press Kids, Philadelphia, PA.

²⁴ See in particular Lance Morrow (2001) When novels become commercials, *Time*, 3 September; Capucine Cousin (2006) Le placement de produit s'attaque au roman, *Les Echos*, 8 September, p 10; Motoko Rich (2006) Product placement deals make leap from film to books, *New York Times*, 12 June; and the analysis by Richard Alan Nelson (2004) *The Bulgari Connection: a novel form of product placement*, *Journal of Promotion Management*, 10(1/2), pp 203–12.

novel.²⁵ In fact, one of the novel's first scenes takes place in a Bulgari jeweller's on Sloane Street, London, where the millionaire Barley Salt offers his second wife a brooch worth £18,000. The idea came from the managing director of Bulgari, Francesco Trapani, who believed that product placements, of whatever type, were an increasingly important form of communication.²⁶ While the author's contract stipulated that the name Bulgari should appear at least a dozen times, Fay Weldon proposed to make it a central element of the book and even to include it in the title. Although her publisher initially expressed some reservations on the merit of keeping the jeweller's name in the title, it was retained and the book was published for Christmas 2001.²⁷ HarperCollins printed 7,500 limited edition copies for a public relations operation organized by the jeweller.

As might have been expected, *The Bulgari Connection* gave rise to ferocious criticism from the literary community, particularly in the United States. However, the Bulgari 'case' was not the first example of brand placement in a novel, or even in a title. Some may recall the Truman Capote novel, *Breakfast at Tiffany's* (1958), which gave another form of shop window to another famous jeweller, in this case without it having paid for it. Whether imaginary or real, brands have entered into the writer's thoughts ever since they first appeared. Whether it is César Birotteau's indispensable Carminative Balm or the Double Paste of Sultans (1833), various brands illustrate Balzac's *Comédie humaine* (Human comedy). There are other, even more interesting cases. In his play *The Importance of Being Earnest* (1895), Oscar Wilde mentions the Grand Hôtel in Paris. None of his many biographies mention payment of any kind for this. The real brand even becomes an important element of precision when, in Act III, Scene 2, Jack explains to Lady Bracknell that her nephew Algernon lied his way into his house, pretending to be his brother, and drank a full bottle of Perrier-Jouet brut, vintage 1889. Not just champagne, Perrier-Jouet! Oscar Wilde! In 1895! The same Perrier-Jouet that would be drunk almost a century later in the film *Top Gun* (Tony Scott, 1986).

²⁵ Jeanny Lyn Bader (2001) Brand-name lit: call me Tiffany, *New York Times*, 9 September. Other sources considered that the first 'paid' author could have been Bill Fitzhugh, for his novel *Cross Dressing* (2000). The author may have signed a similar arrangement with Seagram to place the names of drinks from the beverages group in the text. See in particular Calvin Reid (2001) Weldon's Bulgari product placement raises eyebrows, *Publishers Weekly*, 10 September; Martin Arnold (2001) Making books: placed products and their cost, *New York Times*, 13 September; and Bridget Kinsella (2000) A novel idea: product placement, *Publishers Weekly*, 5 June, in which the author explains the arrangement was money-based but compensated for by a certain amount of scotch. Bill Fitzhugh (2002) *Cross Dressing*, William Morrow, New York.

²⁶ David D Kirkpatrick (2001) Now, many words from our sponsor, *New York Times*, 3 September.

²⁷ Fay Weldon (2001) *The Bulgari Connection*, Atlantic Press, London.

Once again, we find a classic showdown between two opposing camps. On one side, those who see a literary work as a sacred space that no brand should ever be permitted to desecrate (may this book never fall into their hands!), if only because they consider writing an art, and art and commercial notions are uneasy bedfellows. On the other, there are those who believe that brands are part of everyday life and that, as a result, their ‘controlled’ presence can do no damage to the intrinsic quality of the work. In the best cases, they can even contribute to the plot in one way or another, or in any case, root it in a very real world. It seems in fact that the battle against the invasion of brands into literature hails from a bygone era. On the one hand, free placements have existed almost as long as brands have, and in these conditions, the author and the editor might as well profit by charging for them. On the other, if these placements are badly orchestrated, too obvious or too numerous, the reading public will not hesitate to punish the authors by not reading their books. This is without question the most important and most legitimate form of censorship.

As with placement in a film, the insertion of a brand or a product can be repeated throughout the work. The book has the advantage of time, however, since readers can pause over the brand name when and how they please. In the same way as a film, it can also enable more precise targeting. In 2004, Ford signed a placement contract of this type with the British author Carole Matthews, for her next two books, with the aim of bringing its Fiesta model to the attention of active young women.²⁸ The development of this placement is original: the author had finished her last book, *With or Without You*, just before signing her contract with Ford.²⁹ This meant that her heroine would have to change cars in the following novel, *The Sweetest Taboo*, abandoning her New Beetle (Volkswagen) for a Fiesta. This agreement had an unexpected effect, inspiring numerous articles in the international press, which opened doors for the author into markets where her books were not or very little known, in Europe, the United States, Canada, New Zealand and Thailand, in particular.³⁰

The examples of repeated placements are multiplying. In *Happiness Sold Separately*, by Libby Street,³¹ the heroine Ryan Hadley, in the middle of a psychological crisis on reaching her first quarter-century, is presented as particularly liking Prada, admiring Ralph Lauren polo shirts and being thrilled at the possibility of being cared for in the Elizabeth Arden Red Door

²⁸ Danny Hakim (2004) The media business: advertising – would you base the purchase of a car on the prose of a chick-list novelist? Ford hopes so, *New York Times*, 23 March.

²⁹ Carole Matthews (2004) *The Sweetest Taboo*, Headline, London.

³⁰ For more information see Carole Matthews’ personal website: www.carolematthews.com/carolefaqs.htm.

³¹ Libby Street (2005) *Happiness Sold Separately*, Downtown Press, New York.

salon.³² In the middle of the book (pp 100–1), she even draws up an itinerary to follow in Manhattan. Starting from Trump Tower, there are stops at Gucci, Ferragamo, Cartier, Versace, Harry Winston, Prada, Bergdorf Goodman and, of course, Tiffany's, which is like 'stepping into a dreamworld'.

In a book, placement can also be skilfully used as an element of character positioning. It can spare the author long pages of description that risk annoying readers or causing them to lose track. The positioning of known brands, meanwhile, can be subtly associated with that of the character to which they are attributed. In the case of a story integrating various characters, brands that are well known, but different for each character, can also enable the reader to categorize them more easily. In *Whiteout* (2004),³³ the novelist Ken Follett plays this game with the reader. To go unnoticed, the character of Kit Oxenford replaces 'his Armani wristwatch with a nondescript Swatch'. Cars are often the 'vehicles' used for this type of status transfer. Thus, again in *Whiteout*, the character of Michael Ross owns a Volkswagen Golf, whereas Stanley Oxenford travels in a Ferrari F50. While Miranda Oxenford drives a Toyota, Kit Oxenford owns a black Peugeot coupé, Nigel Buchanan travels in a Bentley Continental, Jim Kincaid uses a grey Volvo, Hugo owns a Mercedes, and Luke (the dogsbody) a 'dirty white' Ford Mondeo! The police, for their part, are limited to Range Rovers, without further identifying details.

Authors are not always *au fait* with the methods of setting up such placement contracts, and above all with the concrete advantages that they can ultimately gain from them. As a characteristic example, we can look at John E Mayer's noir novel *Shadow Warrior* (2005), set in the clandestine world of laundering drug money.³⁴ What might have been just another literary output was transformed into a veritable branded entertainment operation. Aiming to make the world of his novel more realistic, the author decided to integrate the names of brands such as the Grand Hyatt hotel in New York, Porta Bella clothing, Oakley, Jaguar, Nike, Louis Vuitton and Ketel One vodka. None of these placements had been subject to selling, much less to contracts with the brands in question. When the book was launched, the author somewhat modestly tried to contact the New York Grand Hyatt, to ask whether it would be willing to host a book-signing event, since the hotel was mentioned in the book. Highly familiar with publicity techniques, the public relations manager transformed the idea into a large charity cocktail party in aid of sporting associations, and invited several celebrities. The author then contacted Ketel One, which gave him a similar reception, and agreed to take responsibility

³² Joe Piazza (2005) Prada placement, *New York Daily News*, 23 June.

³³ Ken Follett (2004) *Whiteout*, Dutton/Penguin, New York.

³⁴ John E Mayer (2005) *Shadow Warrior*, AuthorHouse, Bloomington, IN. For more information about this specific case, visit www.authorhouse.com/AuthorResources/CaseStudy/Mayer.asp

for sculpting an ice bar in which the book's cover would be presented, for the event planned at the Grand Hyatt. A veritable branded entertainment operation had just been born.

Song lyrics

It is not uncommon for brands to play a part in promoting a singer or musician. In 2006, Absolut vodka offered an exclusive download of the song *Breathe*, by Lenny Kravitz, on its internet site, in the context of a major promotional operation, 'Absolut Kravitz'. The previous year, the new album by the singer Alain Souchon, *La Vie Théodore* (The Theodore life), contained a song titled 'Putain ça penche'. Many press releases called it an 'acerbic criticism of the consumer society', or even a cynical vision of brands, since the singer 'listed 76 commercial brands' in it. The message is extremely subtle, as always with Alain Souchon's work, since he sings, after a stanza composed of brand names: '*Putain ça penche, on voit le vide à travers les planches. . .*' (Bloody hell! It's leaning. We can see emptiness through the boards . . .). Nevertheless, it remains the case that from Nike to Le Temps de Cerises, via Hermès, Calvin Klein, Diesel, Chanel, Converse, Comme des Garçons, La Perla, Cartier, H&M, Puma, Dior, Mercedes, Reebok, Cartier, Weston, Gucci, Zara, Lacoste, Hugo Boss, Jean-Louis David, Zaza de Marseille, 501, Kookaï, Lancel, Cacharel, Porsche, Timberland, all these brands – essentially linked to clothing and luxury goods – received a free, almost four-minute-long, musical shop window.

It is not uncommon for brands to be 'borrowed' by certain singers, in particular today's rappers.³⁵ This approach is sometimes called 'brand-dropping'. Even if the media have only recently picked up on these placements, however, the phenomenon is not a recent one. Some may recall Janis Joplin asking God to buy her a Mercedes-Benz because her friends all drove Porsches, on the album *Pearl* (1971). Moreover, while searching the rap archives, we find the case of the song *Rapper's Delight* (1979), by the trio The Sugarhill Gang. An attentive listener will identify a Lincoln Continental and a sunroof Cadillac in the lyrics, and, above all, in the chorus, the fact that 'everybody go hotel motel Holiday Inn'! In 1976, the Eagles placed Tiffany and Mercedes in the now-classic *Hotel California*, without the fans seeming to notice.

Another forerunner, track three of the album *Raising Hell* (1986), by Run-DMC, was entitled without possibility of misunderstanding 'My Adidas'. The brand name is mentioned 22 times in the song. The majority of sources

³⁵Michael Paoletta (2006) The name game, *Billboard*, 18 February. See also David Kiley (2005) Hip Hop two-step over product placement, *BusinessWeek*, 6 April.

found converge on the idea that the brand was not involved in the song's origins. Unlike certain undesired placements, however, this was a flattering one for the brand. The idea is thought to have come from Russell Simmons (brother of Joseph 'Run' Simmons) because the group wore Adidas trainers. At a concert during the *Raising Hell* tour, Run interrupted the music and asked the audience to take their shoes off and wave one shoe at the ceiling. Representatives of Adidas were in the auditorium: a contract with the group followed.³⁶ The same was true for Angie Stone. That Rémy Martin sponsored one of the singer's tours was not unrelated to the fact that on the album *Stone Love*, the track Remy Red is an ode to the brand's mixed drink.

In 1985, in the song 'Money for nothing', from the album *Brothers in Arms*, the group Dire Straits began and ended the track with a demand that has remained famous: 'I want my MTV. I want my ... I want my MTV.'³⁷ Another line from the song also takes up the refrain: 'You play the guitar on the MTV.' In 1999, on his album *18 Tracks*, Bruce Springsteen sings the track 'Pink Cadillac', in which the singer tells how his love for Cadillac is bigger than a Honda, and bigger than a Subaru! Militant Americanism? In any case, the commercial impact of such placements, especially if they are reinforced by the singer using/consuming the product, can be extremely rapid, since fans are generally very reactive.

The contamination effect in connected segments can become highly profitable to the brand. This was the case in the 1990s, when Grand Puba inserted the name of the clothing brand Tommy Hilfiger into their songs while wearing the clothes on stage. The brand is mentioned notably in '360 degrees (what goes around)' (1992), in 'That's how we move it' (1992), but also in 'What's the 411?' (1992) and in 'Leave a message' (1992), sung with Mary J Blige, and yet again in 'Watch the sound' (1993), sung with Fat Joe F and Diamond D. At the same time, however, the audience reached is highly volatile, and has loyalty to the brand at a moment t only because its singer seems to recommend it. It can completely abandon it at the moment $t + 1$, because the singer's tastes may themselves have changed, or simply because in order to follow the trend of the moment, it is fundamental to keep changing everything, including your favourite singer.

³⁶ Eric Parker (2002) Hip-Hop goes commercial, *Village Voice*, 11–17 September.

³⁷ 'Money for nothing' (written by Mark Knopfler and Sting) remains among the most aired songs on the MTV music channel. Strange? The album *Brothers in Arms* became number one in most of the countries where it was released, mainly thanks to 'Money for nothing', which was the first single released from the album. Nothing strange, on the other hand, that the video of the song was the very first one to be aired on MTV Europe when the channel was launched (six years after its US launch), on 1 August 1987.

Brand placement can also take place during filming of the song's video. General Motors thus paid US\$300,000 for a Hummer to be placed in the video for 'Ching ching', sung by Ms Jade. Beware, however, of possible 'MTV censorship'. Conscious of its prescriptive power, the themed channel often eliminates these videos from its playlist, for fear that they will conflict with the commercials of its advertisers and the latter may look elsewhere.³⁸

French songs have not escaped the phenomenon of brand intrusion into the lyrics of their authors. Whether for a rhyme or for a reference, many brands have benefited from placements over the years. The medication Charbon Belloc recommended by Marie Dubas in 1936 ('Le Tango stupéfiant') (The narcotic tango), the PMU bookmakers 'that closes by midday' in 'Ça sent si bon la France' ('France smells so good'), by Maurice Chevalier in 1941, Bourvil's Jeep® in 1947 ('Le bougie') (The boogie), the Casino de Paris and the Moulin Rouge to dispel Andrex's worries in 1952 ('À la Cabanne bambou') (At the Bamboo Cabin), the extracts from the *Reader's Digest* cited by Serge Gainsbourg in 1958 ('Le poinçonneur des lilas') (The ticket-stamper of the lilacs), Cardin, Carvil, Cartier, Fauchon, Ferrari and Harley-Davidson used by Jacques Dutronc to describe 'Les playboys' in 1967, the inevitable Harley-Davidson also ridden by Brigitte Bardot in 1967 ('Harley-Davidson') are examples. So are Françoise Hardy hidden behind a Kleenex in 1968 ('Comment te dire adieu') (How to say goodbye to you), the *New York Times* demanded by Yves Simon while vacillating between Ford, Buick, Chrysler and Cadillac in 1974 ('J'ai rêvé New York') (I dreamed of New York), the Mercedes in which Michel Delphech 'hides out' in 1975 ('Quand j'étais chanteur') (When I was a singer), Michel Sardou's Dom Pérignon in 1983 ('Bière et fraulein') (Beer and a girl), orgies of Minto, Car-en-sac and other Carambar 'candies' for Renaud in 1985 ('Mistral gagnant') (Winning mistral), Alain Bashung's Concorde in 1998 ('Aucun express') (No express), Alain Souchon's Audi in 1999 ('Le baiser') (The kiss), or Bénabar's Gore-Tex lining in 2001 ('Bénabar').

The most characteristic marketing case, however, is unquestionably that of US rappers. The insertion of brands into song lyrics anchors them in the real world of society and consumption. In the United States alone, the PQ Media firm estimated that US\$30.4 million are invested in placement of product or brand names into songs, whether to praise or criticize them. In most cases they are high-end, even luxury product brands, and alcoholic drinks, cars and clothing are often emphasized. In 1999, in the song 'Daddy figure', Kool G Rap inserted notably Armani, Cristal, Martini, Jacuzzi, Bloomingdale's, Rolex and Moschino into his lyrics. In the original single 'Stylin' (2002), the rapper Foxy Brown mentions (sometimes with 'adapted' pronunciations) Burberry,

³⁸ Evelyn Nussenbaum (2005) Products slide into more TV shows with help from new middlemen, *New York Times*, 6 September.

Mark Jacob, Planet Hollywood, Frankie B and Bentley, among others. The remix also includes Mercedes-Benz, Lamborghini, Hummer and Gucci. KanYe West mentions Hennessy and Coca-Cola in the chorus of 'Addiction' (2005), and in the same year, in 'Diamonds from Sierra Leone', the singer wears Yves Saint Laurent sunglasses, reads the magazine *Vibe*, remembers that he could not afford a Ford Escort and mentions Porsche, Hennessy, Motown and Luis Vuitton.³⁹ In one song, explicitly titled 'Got me a bottle' (2003), 50 Cent and Lloyd Banks ask for bottles of Hennessy, Bacardi, Smirnoff, E&J, Absolut and Tanqueray, and also mention Crown Royal. And adept at brand-dropping, the singer Jay-Z mentions Versace and Guess in 'Coming of age' (1997), Cristal, Rolex, Cartier and Versace again in 'Imaginary player' (1997), Motorola, Bacardi and Nike in 'Reservoir dogs' (1998), and Belvedere, Reebok, Chanel, Prada and Gucci in 'Get your mind right Mami' (2000). As for the different remixes of 'The jump off' (2003), by Lil' Kim, Jaguar, Bulgari, Pac-Man, Ferrari, Sprite, Range Rover, Bentley, Hummer, Mercedes-Benz, Timberland, Porsche and, er, Barbie can be identified in them.

Such placements can also contribute to rejuvenating a brand, as was notably the case for Cadillac at the beginning of the 2000s, when the brand was mainly targeting a 'senior' population. In just a few months, the Escalade SUV model (purchase price: US\$54,000 on average) proved especially popular with rappers, and the average age of the Cadillac owner fell by 12 years! The model quickly became a 'must-have' and also a 'must-mention', in order to avoid being 'out of it'. A study of the words of various tracks from this period shows that the model is explicitly named in 'Earl that's yo' life' (1999) sung by E-40, in 'I'll call before I come', sung by Outkast, in 'Pink lemonade' (2000) by Da Brat, in 'Put ya sings' (2000), sung by Three 6 Mafia, in 'Love don't cost a thing' (2001) by Jennifer Lopez, in 'The Inc' (2001), sung by Ja Rule, in 'Lick shots' (2001), sung by Missy Elliott, in 'Nasty girl' (2001), sung by Jadakiss and Carl Thomas, in 'Still fly' (2002) by Big Tymers, in 'Humble neighborhoods' (2003) by Pink and in 'Freaky' (2004), sung by Young Rome and Guerilla Black. Hardly surprising, therefore, that in the United States, if only 6.5 per cent of habitual Cadillac customers are black, the brand counted 19 per cent among purchasers of the Escalade model⁴⁰

³⁹As is usually the case with rap titles, lots of remixes are recorded. All of them do not include exactly the same lyrics, and as a result, they do not mention the same brand names. Those interested by song lyrics can find more information on various specialized websites, in particular azlyrics.com, songlyrics.com, lyrics-songs.com, musicsonglyrics.com, and paroles.net or chansons-paroles.com for French songs. For an analysis of the coded lyrics of rap songs and the link with drugs use, see Sarah Diamond, Rey Bermudez and Jean Schensul (2006) What's the rap about ecstasy? Popular music lyrics and drug trends among American youth, *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 21 (3), May, pp 269–98.

⁴⁰Earle Eldridge (2001) Escalade scores with athletes, rappers, *USA Today*, 23 October.

– purchasers whose average income was around US\$150,000 (or US\$30,000 higher than the average income of the classic Cadillac customer). In short, how to upset a marketing plan without even intending to? In 1992, Cadillac had already benefited from a musical ode from the group Mc Nas-D with the song ‘It’s my Cadillac’ (on the album of the same name). One of the brand’s cars even appeared on the album cover. The fashion phenomenon of the Escalade brand surprised the brand’s managers by its breadth and above all by its rapidity.

Another case of market and target rejuvenation, and without doubt still one of the most significant today, was via the track ‘Pass the Courvoisier’ (2002). In this song, the rappers Busta Rhymes and Sean (P Diddy) Combs seized on different alcohol brands (see the extract on p 176) with such success that the lyrics are still circulating today around the four corners of the internet, as significant references for the genre. The New York agency Impact calculated that the following year, sales had seen an increase of 18.9 per cent.⁴¹ Courvoisier then skilfully tried to capitalize on the event, in sponsoring events with P Diddy, Missy Elliott and Lil’ Kim, in particular.

In reality, it is not uncommon for alcohol brands to be the subject of placements – without having been requested by the advertiser – in rap lyrics. The proactive approach is still however prudent for many brands, since the rap scene is often readily associated with violence, sex, alcohol and drugs. This may be a hasty and stereotyped association, but it is sustained by the brutality of certain lyrics and certain images,⁴² and sadly by the tragic deaths

⁴¹ Todd Wasserman (2005) Playing the hip-hop drop, *Brandweek*, 25 July. In 2006, in a very interesting study, Christian Schemer and his colleagues confirm the link between rappers and placed brand evaluation. The ‘pairing’ of a brand (conditioned stimulus) with positively evaluated rappers (unconditioned stimulus) produces positive attitudes towards the brand. In contrast, a negative conditioning procedure results in negative attitudes. See Christian Schemer, Jörg Matthes, J Samuel Textor and Werner Wirth (2006) Does ‘Passing the Courvoisier’ always pay off? Positive and negative evaluative conditioning effects of brand placements in rap videos, paper presented to the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication Conference, Advertising Division, 2–5 August, San Francisco, CA.

⁴² On the cover of G Unit’s *50 Cent is the Future* album (2003), two of the three photographed rappers prominently show a gun. One of them is directly pointed toward the photographer. The album was heavily criticized on its release. Some shopping websites (such as amazon.com) even suppressed it. See also the very explicit article by Sheila Rule (1994) Generation rap, *New York Times*, 3 April. We can also be preoccupied about specific placements, such as those for the AK-47 (Avtomat Kalashnikova, model 1947), the famous assault rifle conceived by the equally famous Mikhail Timofeyevich Kalashnikov. According to American Brands agency research, with 33 mentions in 2005 hits, AK-47 was the tenth most cited brand this year in song lyrics. Even more indicative, the brand stood at 14th place in 2004, with ‘only’ 23 appearances, and

of certain artists such as Biggie Smalls and Tupac Shakur, to name but two examples. In contrast, many brands do not hesitate to call on these artists to make advertising films, as did Reebok, which indicated that sales of its RBK brand increased with 50 Cent's placement in 2003. In this type of case, however, everything is controlled. In a song written and performed by the artist, it is another story altogether.

Chorus: Busta Rhymes and P Diddy

Busta: Give me the Henny, you can give me the Cris
You can pass me the Remi, but pass the Courvoisier

Diddy: Give me the ass, you could give me the dough
You can give me 'dro, but pass the Courvoisier

Busta: Give me some money, you can give me some cars
But you can give me the bitch make sure you pass the Courvoisier

Diddy: Give me some shit, you can give me the cribs
You can give me whaever, just pass the Courvoisier.

Extract from 'Pass the Courvoisier', 2002.

It is also noticeable that the brand names are often truncated or adapted to the particular style of rap: 'Cris' for the champagne Cristal, 'Remi' for the cognac Remy Martin, 'Hen', 'Hen Dog' or 'Henny' for Hennessy cognac, 'Burberry' for Burberry and 'Bentley' for Bentley. Such modifications lend themselves to the development of a feeling of appropriation by the specific musical genre of rap and by the artists themselves. They remove part of the commercial character of the placement, and enable it to sound almost natural in the target audience's ears, which might make them more open to the implicit recommendation.

In addition, various research works have confirmed that even if comprehension of the song lyrics was poor, the simple schematic process used by listeners usually enabled them to orient their behaviour in the direction of

54th in 2003 with 'just' seven mentions. Should we blame marketing strength? Violence was often the main purpose of the lyrics concerned, but AK-47 was not the only gun brand chosen for mention. Beretta and Smith & Wesson among others were also regularly praised by many devotees. The AK-47 is probably to date the most extraordinary, international and institutional product placement. The assault rifle is clearly shown on the official Mozambique flag!

the lyrics.⁴³ Furthermore, in relation to all other musical genres, rap has a particular characteristic in the sense that the attention given to the lyrics is voluntarily heightened by phrasing, wordplay, hidden meanings and the rhythm itself.⁴⁴ In 2003, the research agency New Media Strategies published the results of a study indicating that 60 per cent of respondents considering themselves to be fans of hip-hop were interested in films by their favourite singers and in buying products mentioned in their songs, or for which they were spokespersons in an advertisement.⁴⁵ This information is important when we consider that not all placements are necessarily positive. In 2004, 'High all the time', from the album *Get Rich or Die Tryin'*, was telling the always image-conscious 50 Cent⁴⁶ that he didn't need Dom Pérignon, Cris(tal), Tanqueray or d'Alize, and that he hated being in a 'Benz', or in other words, a Mercedes.

Nowadays the palette of musical genres is so varied that placement in a song can be an excellent vehicle for reaching a specific target audience. Certain musical niches make it possible in particular to reach certain population segments, notably the youngest, who are sometimes cynical towards the content of traditional advertising messages, especially since many rappers criticize television in the lyrics of their songs. This is what led McDonald's to appoint the services of a specialist consulting agency (Maven) in order to research those rappers who might be interested, for a fee, in integrating one of its brands into a song.⁴⁷ It anticipated a placement contract that of course came with rights to control the methods of insertion of the brand name. This prudent approach seems logical for the brand manager, especially if we remember, for example, the lyrics of 'You knows I loves you baby' (2004),

⁴³See in particular Christine H Hansen and Ranald D Hansen (1991) Schematic information processing of heavy metal lyrics, *Communication Research*, 18(3), pp 373–411.

⁴⁴See in particular Christy Barongan and Gordon C Nagayama Hall (1995) The influence of misogynous rap music on sexual aggression against women, *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 19, June, pp 195–207.

⁴⁵Kenneth Hein (2003) Cognac is in the house, *Brandweek*, 22 September.

⁴⁶In 2005, American Brandstand agency estimated that the 50 Cent group led the pack for brand name dropping among the chart's top 20. This year the most cited brands ranking put on top Mercedes-Benz, with 100 mentions, followed by Nike (63), Cadillac (62), Bentley (51), Rolls-Royce (46), Hennessy (44), Chevrolet (40), and finally Louis Vuitton and Cristal (dead level with 35 mentions each). See also Michael Paoletta (2006) The name game, *Billboard*, 18 February.

⁴⁷Marc Graser (2005) McDonald's rap song product placement plan stalls, *Advertising Age*, 26 September. McDonald's proposed a US\$5 compensation for each citation of its brand. See also Richard Jinman (2005) Big Mac rap may mean artists' payday, *Guardian*, 29 March.

from the always image-conscious Goldie Lookin' Chain. The retail grocers Tesco were mentioned therein, but it is primarily McDonald's that the group criticized for its chairs bolted to the floor.

As early as 1997, Will Smith was alluding to the fast food chain in 'Just cruisin', indicating that the 'Golden arches' had left him with some digestive problems. The brand's desire for control therefore seems at first glance to be justifiable. It is simultaneously associated with placing artistes' creative freedom under surveillance, however, leading to a potentially enormous reluctance by them to get involved, since they then risk being criticized by their audience for having 'sold out' to marketing.

To avoid such associations, many of these rappers have developed their own line of clothing or products, giving it their own name or recommending it. Hence, if Gwen Stefani mentions LAMB, if Sean 'Diddy' cites Sean John, if Beyoncé sings about House of Dereon, if Pharrell Williams evokes Ice Cream or if Jay-Z includes Armadale vodka or Rocawear in his songs, there is nothing surprising about that, just business logic, man! The marketing and music alliance is therefore only just beginning, and control of the marketing is shared.⁴⁸ Play it again, Sam!

Branded videogames

From the 1980s onwards, advertising banners began to appear in arcade game car races. Since then, however, the placements have multiplied and above all diversified. It is not difficult to identify the oil brand Castrol used in the game *Need For Speed Most Wanted* (Electronic Arts). The snowboards of SSX (Electronic Arts) surf between advertisements for Honda and 7Up. Sam Fisher would no doubt be less effective without his Sony Ericsson P900 and T637 phones in *Splinter Cell: Pandora tomorrow* (Ubisoft) and his Airwaves chewing-gum in *Splinter Cell: Chaos theory?* In *Enter the Matrix* (Shiny Entertainment), the player's avatar uses a Samsung mobile phone, of course. The energy drink Red Bull appears in *Dredd vs Death* (Vivendi Universal Games) and in *Worms 3D* (Sega). The Staples Center ring and Everlast equipment are provided to the boxers in *Fight Night* (Electronic Arts). Jeep® and Quiksilver accompany the professional skater Tony Hawk in the series of games that bear his name on Activision. Intel and McDonald's are present in the very popular *The Sims Online* (Electronic Arts). Puma trainers and outfits were specially designed for Nick Kang in *True Crime: Streets of L.A.* and in *True Crime: New York City* (Activision). The characters of *Ghost Recon II* wear Under Armour clothes, a brand that is also present in *Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2006*. An advertisement for

⁴⁸ See in particular Michael Paoletta (2006) *Destiny's Child: a perfect fit for brands*, *Billboard*, 14 January.

a Panasonic videocamera and another for the television channel Channel 4 are inserted into *Anarchy Online* (Massive Inc). And in *EverQuest II*, the player even has the opportunity to order a pizza from the Hut during the game! With what is commonly known as ‘advergaming’,⁴⁹ the console screen seems increasingly to rival the four other screens (cinema, television, computer, telephone) accessible to the modern consumer.

The primary motivation for a developer to insert a brand into a video game is the same as that found in the cinema: financial support.⁵⁰ Estimates vary too widely from one research agency to another to give a clear picture of the phenomenon, but from Forrester Research to Yankee Group via PQ Media, all estimate that the financial advantages can rapidly reach several tens of millions of dollars.⁵¹ There is a genuine demand. On the one hand,

⁴⁹The expression ‘advergaming’, ‘in-game advertising’ or ‘advertainment’ is used to describe a product placement in a videogame, such as the McDonald’s and Intel signs appearing in *The Sims*; an online videogame on a dedicated website specifically conceived for the brand, such as *BP Ultimate* (www.miniclip.com/games/bp-ultimately-challenge/en/), a driving game using a Volkswagen vehicle consuming, guess what? BP petrol of course; or an offline video game focused on a brand or on a product of this brand, like *Adidas Power Soccer* or *Volvo Drive for Life*, for instance. It can appear on a cartridge, a CD, a DVD, a memory card, a download offer for a portable player or a cellphone. Some authors are still making a distinction between in-game advertising and advergaming, reserving the last expression for games specifically designed for a brand (See P P Gupta (2006) *Emerging role of advergaming*, *Advertising Express*, ICAI University Press, June, pp 23–28), or for online games (see Susan B Kretchmer (2005) *Changing views of commercialization in digital games: in-game advertising and advergaming as worlds in play*, paper presented during the Digital Games Research Conference, *Changing Views: Worlds in Play*, 16–20 June, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada). See also Grant Burningham and Zubin Jelveh (2005) *Virtual stars compete for real money*, *New York Times*, 6 December.

⁵⁰Karen J Bannan (2005) *Companies try a new approach and a smaller screen for product placements: videogames*, *New York Times*, 5 March. Paradoxically, the very first placement in a videogame might have been an unwanted one. On 20 November 1989, Philip Morris addressed an official protest to Sega asking it to withdraw the Marlboro signs from *Super Monaco GP* videogames, in which the brand appeared without Philip Morris’s consent. In 1990, there were similar protests to Namco and Atari about the *Final Lap* videogame. See in particular Les Zuke and Sheila Banks (1991) *Chronology of actions*, official press release from Philip Morris USA, Corporate Affairs, New York, NY, Thursday 21 February.

⁵¹The value of the world videogame market exceeded US\$24 billion in 2005. Estimates for 2008 place it around US\$40 billion, without talking about the online videogame market, for which the growth is even more important. See in particular Gaëlle Macke and Claudine Mulard (2005) *Microsoft, Sony et Nintendo relancent la guerre des consoles*, *Le Monde*, 20 May. See also T L Stanley (2006) *Advergaming, content role juice up marketer’s game*, *Advertising Age*, 6 February; and Erika Brown (2006) *In-game advertising: game on!* *Forbes*, marketing section, 24 July, pp 84–86.



(a)



(b)

Figure 8.1 (a) Screen shots from *Nascar Chase for the Cup 2005* and from *Nascar 06: Total team control*, 2006. Reproduced by kind permission of Electronic Arts. (b) Screen shot from *Splinter Cell: Double agent*, 2006, where a Nokia telephone is used. Reproduced by kind permission of Ubisoft.

videogames are increasingly sophisticated, and the production costs are rising sharply – even if production is outsourced, partially or totally, to the Asian corner of the globe – so the cost of producing a single game can today exceed US\$20 million.⁵² On the other hand, successful titles that exceed the profitability threshold are rare. On the advertisers' side, the market for accessible platforms is highly concentrated, since to date only three console manufacturers (Sony, Microsoft and Nintendo) control almost the entire market. As for games publishers, the market comprises countless small actors and some major names such as Electronic Arts, Infogames-Atari, Ubisoft, Activision, Eidos, Konami and VU Games.

A placement in a videogame offers additional advantages over the same placement in a film. The player generally pays much closer attention than the viewer. The possibility of control and the concomitant feeling of mastering the environment are greater for players.⁵³ They must construct a mental map of the game space, as if it were a real space in three dimensions, each constitutive element of which is important.⁵⁴ Unlike film, the unfolding of events within the same world may be very different from one 'round' of a game to the next, thereby modifying the player's interactions with the environment.⁵⁵ Finally,

⁵² Schelley Olhava (2003) *Marketing Through Games*, White Paper 3850B, August, IDC, Framingham, MA. See also Jean-Marc Lehu (2006) Il faut renouer le contact avec le consommateur, in the inquiry by Ava Eschwège (2006) Jeux vidéo, le nouveau terrain de jeu des marques, *Marketing*, Enquête, pp 32–6; and Matt Richtel (2005) A new reality in video games: advertisements, *New York Times*, 11 April.

⁵³ Torben Grodal (2000) Video games and the pleasure of control, in Dolf Zillmann and Peter Vorderer (eds) *Media Entertainment: The psychology and its appeal*, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Mahwah, NJ, pp 197–213. See also Dan M Grigorovici and Corina D Constantin (2004) Experiencing interactive advertising beyond rich media: impacts of ad type and presence on brand effectiveness in 3D gaming immersive virtual environments, *Journal of Interactive Advertising*, 5(1), September, pp 30–53, published at <http://jiad.org/vo5/no1/grigorovici/> (accessed October 2006).

⁵⁴ Patricia M Greenfield, Craig Brannon and David Lohr (1994) Two-dimensional representation of movement through three-dimensional space: the role of video game expertise, *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, 15, pp 87–103.

⁵⁵ William F Brewer (1996) The nature of narrative suspense and the problem of rereading, in Peter Vorderer, Hans J Wulff et Mike Friedrichsen (eds), *Suspense: Conceptualizations, theoretical analyses, and empirical explorations*, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Mahwah, NJ, pp 107–27. See also Dan M Grigorovici (2003) Persuasive effects of presence, in G Riva, F Davide and W A I Jsselsteijn (eds), *Immersive Virtual Environments, Being There: Concepts, effects and measurement of user presence in synthetic environments*, Ios Press, Amsterdam, ch 13, pp 191–207. About the mediating role of presence and the fact that the player's involvement affects his/her judgement of advertisements, and that the degree of experienced presence within the environment mediates this relationship, see Stefan G Nicovich (2005) The effect of involvement on

the duration of exposure is much longer. Admittedly, a film's life may be long and may give rise to repeat showings. A videogame, however, also allows this repetition to be concentrated in time. As with cinema, the cost of a placement falls within an extremely broad range, from a few thousand to several million dollars in the case of specific partnerships. Compared with the cinema, the flexibility of insertion methods in a wholly created graphic universe, and the possibilities for verification before the game is mass-produced, are also factors likely to seduce still-hesitant advertisers.

It would be difficult to miss the advertising signs for SoBe and Maxell in *Project Gotham Racing* (Microsoft), or those of MTV, among others, in *L.A. Rush* (Midway). As this car driving game comprises 337 miles of roads, Midway was able to sign contracts with 40 different brands. According to the PQ Media firm, the videogame sector is the one that will see the most rapid growth in the next few years. In 2005, for the United States, the firm estimated that investments in product placement in videogames totalled US\$40.4 million (which was in the lower range of the different evaluations).

With each new generation of consoles, the graphics become closer to reality. The characters in games inspired by television series such as *CSI* or *24* resemble the actors of the series in every feature. The same is true for games inspired by films, such as *The Godfather* (Electronic Arts), *The Matrix* (Atari) and *007: From Russia with Love* (Electronic Arts), for example.

Sports games, for their part, no longer show players with anonymous features, but avatars, 'alter egos' of the real professionals, pixel for pixel, which enables them to benefit additionally from an indirect prescriptive effect from the famous sportsperson.⁵⁶ *Top Spin 2* (Power & Magic, 2K Sport) allows you to take up the racket of Amélie Mauresmo or Maria Sharapova, of Lleyton Hewitt or Andy Roddick, among others. It is possible to make the floor squeak and to score baskets in the skin of Tony Parker or Shaquille O'Neal in *NBA Live 06* (Electronic Arts). You are allowed to replace Richard Burns for a drive in *Richard Burns Rally* (Warthog/Eidos). Stepping on to Tony Hawk's skateboard in *Pro Skater* (Activision) is child's play, as is taking the wheel of a kart from Michael Schumacher in *World Tour Kart 2004* (10tacle Studios). You can take up the golf clubs of Tiger Woods or other famous golfers in *PGA Tour* (Electronic Arts), or choose from the 10,000 footballer avatars, from

ad judgment in a video game environment: the mediating role of presence, *Journal of Interactive Advertising*, 6(1), Fall, pp 38–51, published at <http://jiad.org/vol6/no1/nicovich> (accessed October 2006).

⁵⁶Scott Jones, Colleen Bee, Rick Burton and Lynn R Kale (2004) Marketing through sports entertainment: a functional approach, in L J Schum (ed), *The Psychology of Entertainment Media: Blurring the lines between entertainment and persuasion*, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Mahwah, NJ, pp 309–22. See also David Kelley (2006) Rated M for Mad Ave, *Business Week*, 27 February.



Figure 8.2 Screen shots from *FIFA 06* and *PGA Tour 06* (2006).

Source: Electronic Arts.

Adu to Zidane via Rooney, Henry, Kaka, Beckham and so on, to dribble the ball in *FIFA 06* (Electronic Arts). (See Figure 8.2.)

From all these examples it is clear that the virtual universe of the game is becoming increasingly realistic. Consequently, if a game supposedly set in the real world and in our era shunned brands or inserted fictional logos, this could actually damage it; ultimately, it would distance it from the reality of the universe it attempts to reproduce. When a football player appears on the field, he wears a shirt with his sponsor's name on it. A sporting tournament of any kind always has one or more sponsors. Even the International Olympic Committee signs contracts for brands logos to appear up to the doors to the stadium. It is therefore no longer a question of wondering about the presence of brands in games, but rather one of deciding how to place them in a relevant manner, from both the advertiser's and the game's point of view.

For *London Taxi* (2005), Data Design Interactive (www.datadesign.uk.com) was innovative by showing the brands and products placed in three dimensions. Flash detergent (Procter & Gamble), in particular, was used to clean the taxi at the centre of the game (see Figure 8.3). The product therefore became a completely interactive icon for the player, and the game naturally turned into a medium for the demonstration of the product's advantages. A study carried out by AC Nielsen demonstrated the placement's effectiveness on the basis of an increased product awareness among players.

As with a placement in a film or television series, there are various different placement methods according to the advertiser's and the developer's objectives. The most common consists of placing a banner or an advertising poster in the brand's colours. The positive role of the prominence of advertising banners on consumer memorization, particularly in expert players, has been



Figure 8.3 Screen shots from the videogame *London Taxi* (2005). Reproduced by kind permission of Data Design Interactive.



Figure 8.4 Screen shot from the videogame *London Taxi* (2005). Reproduced by kind permission of Data Design Interactive.

confirmed by academic research.⁵⁷ For example, in *Gran Turismo 4* (Sony-Polyphony Digital) there is a screen showing the Mercedes logo, a JVC advertising balloon, luminous signs for the brands Esprit, LG, Virgin and TGI Friday's, a UGC cinema in town, and banners for Michelin, Lexus, Bosch, Shell, Bridgestone, Chevrolet, Castrol, Peugeot, Magneti Marelli, Elf, Toyota, Dunlop and Motul.

The brand can also form an integral part of the scenery, such as a Starbucks café appearing on the corner of a street in *London Taxi* (Data Design Interactive), see Figure 8.4. The impact can be greater, however, if the player must interact with the brand or one of its products, such as choosing a Suzuki motorcycle in the racing game *Moto GP 2* (Climax), drinking Bawls in *Run Like Hell* (Virgin Interactive) and using a Nokia mobile telephone in *Kelly Slater Pro Surfer* (Treyarch). In *Test Drive Unlimited* (Atari), players can configure their car from an existing brand: a Dodge Viper, a McLaren Mercedes, a Pagani, a Lotus 240R and so on, all of which helps to anchor the game in reality (see Figure 8.5).

In extreme cases, the brand is placed at the centre of the game, as in the case of the Cheetos biscuits used to save Chester (the brand mascot) in *Chester Cheetah Too Cool to Fool* (Kaneko); likewise for M&M's confectionery in the Pearson educational game *The Lost Formulas*, for the motor racing game *Mercedes Benz World Racing* (Synetic), giving the German car maker exclusivity, or for the action game *Humvee Assault* (Atari), where the Hummer is indispensable to beating back the many enemies of the United States.

From the marketing point of view, placement may also allow the brand's positioning to be strengthened and its image nurtured. Thus, the Under

⁵⁷ See in particular Shlomo Ron and Michael F Weigold (1997) ADgames: integrating active brand messages into video games as a new medium for marketing, *Proceedings of the American Academy of Advertising Conference*, ed M Carole Macklin, American Academy of Advertising, Cincinnati, Ohio, pp 244–53. Lars-Peter Schneider and T. Bettina Cornwell (2005) Cashing in on crashes via brand placement in computer games, *International Journal of Advertising*, 24(3), pp 321–43; Michelle R Nelson (2001) Advertisers got game: examining effectiveness of product placements in new media, paper presented during the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication Conference, 4–8 August, Washington, DC; David Deal (2005) The ability of branded online games to build brand equity: an exploratory study, paper presented during the Digital Games Research Conference, Changing Views: Worlds in Play, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, 16–20 June. And for an interesting and very relevant research about the role of the implicit memory on brand placement, see Federico De Gregorio (2006) Implicit memory as a complementary measure of brand placement effectiveness in video games, paper presented during the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication Conference, Ad Division research, 2–5 August, San Francisco, CA.



Figure 8.5 Screen shot from Atari's *Test Drive Unlimited* (2006). Reproduced by kind permission of Daimler Chrysler.

Armour clothing brand arrived in the gaming world by choosing the games where the characters were placed in extreme physical conditions, corresponding perfectly to the brand's commercial promise.

The virtual characters in these games truly represent men and women that require high-performance equipment. And this is a great opportunity to equip them with the same gear that their real-life counterparts demand, giving them a competitive performance advantage.

(Steve Batista, marketing vice-president of Under Armour)⁵⁸

Sport, action and shooting are the biggest segments of the market, with 30.1 per cent, 17.8 per cent and 9.6 per cent of sales in 2004 respectively.⁵⁹ As with placements in films, tie-in or promotional accompanying operations can be put in place. In parallel to the release of *Nascar 06: Total team control* (Electronic Arts), competitions were organized by Dodge, Fan Gear, Levi Strauss Signature and Old Spice (Procter & Gamble, see Figure 8.6), among others.

⁵⁸ Rebecca Logan (2005) Under Armour ventures into video game product placement, *Baltimore Business Journal*, 22 August.

⁵⁹ Source: ESA (Entertainment Software Association), quoted by Marion Rojinsky (2005) L'industrie des jeux vidéo veut conquérir les non-joueurs, *La Tribune*, 23 May. For a complete report about advergaming and the influence it can produce especially on a young target audience, see in particular Elizabeth S Moore (2006) *It's Child's Play: Advergaming and the online marketing of food to children*, Henry J Kaiser Family Foundation Report, Menlo Park, CA, July.

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Old Spice
RACING

NASCAR 06
TOTAL TEAM CONTROL

Be owner, crew chief, driver and hero in the first ever squad-based console game.
NOW AVAILABLE

NASCAR 06
TOTAL TEAM CONTROL

EXCLUSIVE CHEAT CODES
UNLOCK COOL NASCAR 06 SECRETS

About

Ever wondered what it feels like to be part of a top NASCAR team? **NASCAR 06: Total Team Control** is as close as it gets. Real-time voice command lets you talk to your pit crew, spotters and on-track allies to help you get to the checkered flag first. Hit the track with Old Spice and Tony Stewart to build a winning NASCAR team. That is, if you can stand the heat.

EXCLUSIVE CHEAT CODES
10,000,000 fans | Old Spice Cars and Tracks

You wouldn't be a top NASCAR driver without the fame, glory and lots of fans. In career mode, 10MM fans gets you rich faster so you can upgrade your team quicker.

So how do you get fans and get them fast? Cheat code. Go to the Fight to the Top Mode of the game, select My NASCAR then select "Edit Driver". For first name type in: Super. For last name type in: Star.

OFFICIAL SPONSOR OF **NASCAR**

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Terms and Conditions ©2005 Electronic Arts Inc. Trademarks belong to their respective owners.
All rights reserved. NASCAR and the NASCAR bar logo are trademarks of the National Association for Stock Car Auto Racing, Inc.

Figure 8.6 An example of a promotional association, between the brand Old Spice and the game *Nascar 06* (Electronic Arts). Reproduced by kind permission of Procter & Gamble France (2006).

The academic research carried out on this subject shows that placements in videogames can be effective,⁶⁰ particularly when they target adolescents

⁶⁰ Ashley Swartz (2004) *The Value of the Game*, Eiko Media, Detroit, MI. A study conducted by Activision and Nielsen in 2005 about the video game *Need for Speed Underground 2* (Electronic Arts), in which appeared a sign for Cingular, showed that 34 per cent of the respondents had a good opinion of the placement, 61 per cent were neutral and only 4 per cent had a bad opinion. Concerning the brand image, 51 per cent of all players answered positively, against 26 per cent of a control group (using a version of the videogame without the placement). See in particular Kenneth Hein (2005) Research: gaming product placement gets good scores in study, *Brandweek*,

and young men,⁶¹ that they allow a relatively good memorization of brands placed,⁶² and that they can contribute to improving preference for the brand.⁶³ This is particularly the case when the brand enjoys an intelligent integration, as in the case of the partnership between Activision and Puma,

5 December. See also the detailed and revealing 2006 report about advergaming by the Kaiser Family Foundation: Elizabeth S Moore (2006) *It's Child's Play: Advergaming and the online marketing of food to children*, Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation Report, Menlo Park, CA, July.

⁶¹Michelle R Nelson (2002) Recall of brand placements in computer/video games, *Journal of Advertising Research*, 42(2), March–April, pp 80–92. For a specific study focusing on Hispanic players, see Monica Hernandez, Sindy Chapa, Michael S Minor, Cecilia Maldonado and Fernando Barranzuela (2004) Hispanic attitudes toward advergaming: a proposed model of their antecedents, *Journal of Interactive Advertising*, 5(1), pp 116–31, September, published at <http://jiad.org/vol5/no1/hernandez/> (accessed October 2006). Today the videogame target population remains mainly masculine, as boys and men represent the main part of the player population. See Justine Cassel and Henry Jenkins (1998) Chess for girls? Feminism and computer games, in J Cassel and H Jenkins (eds), *From Barbie to Mortal Kombat: Gender and computer games*, MIT Press, Cambridge, MA, ch 1, pp 1–45. But girls and women shouldn't be ignored, especially online: one never knows who is hiding behind an avatar. Stereotyped segmentation might be dangerous in the virtual worlds. See also James D Ivory and Hillary Wilkerson (2002) Video games are from Mars, not Venus: gender, electronic game play and attitudes toward the medium, paper presented during the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication Conference, 7–10 August, Miami Beach, FL.

⁶²Ashley J Swartz (2004), *The Value of the Game*, White Paper, Eiko Media, Detroit, MI. If advertisers have to be careful and respectful to the same integration principles as are valid for placements in movies, videogame publishers, for their part, should also manage their games the same way. Players are paying for the game, not for the ads. And as sequels can be a bonanza, those publishers have to choose the placed brands wisely, and integrate them carefully, or in other words, show proper respect to their players. If this is not the case, sequels might be rejected because of numerous prominent placements in the previous episodes. See Eric A Taub (2004) In video games, sequels are winners, *New York Times*, 20 September; and also Jean-Marc Lehu (2006) Le petit jeu vidéo des grandes marques, *La Revue des Marques*, April, pp 46–49.

⁶³Susan Auty (2005) Toying with the mind: product placement in video games, paper for 34th conference of the European Marketing Academy (EMAC), Milan, Italy, 24–27 May. See also David Nichols, Tom Farrand, Tom Rowley and Matt Avery (2006) *Brands and Gaming: The computer gaming phenomenon and its impact on brands and business*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke; Seounmi Youn and Mira Lee (2004) Advergame playing motivations and effectiveness, in M R Stafford and R J Faber (eds), *Advertising, Promotion and New Media*, ME Sharpe, Armonk, NY, pp 320–47; and Isabella M Chaney, Ku-Ho Lin and James Chaney (2004) The effect of billboards within the gaming environment, *Journal of Interactive Advertising*, 5(1), September, pp 54–69, published at <http://jiad.org/vol5/no1/chaney/> (accessed October 2006).



Figure 8.7 Screen shot from *True Crime: New York City*. Reproduced by kind permission of Activision (2005).

which saw the perfect integration of the brand's products into the plot of the *True Crime* series of games (see Figure 8.7). In the same way as for the cinema, considering the attention that the player gives to the action, it is recommended that the placement be prominent.⁶⁴ The range of games is now very broad: from educational games for children to war games for adults, via sport, adventure, science fiction, role playing, simulation games, platform games and police thrillers. It has reached the point where the audience constitutes a mass market: on the one hand, because of its volume (hundreds of millions of players worldwide), and on the other, because the global turnover that it represents is now larger than that of the cinema.⁶⁵ In addition, it is also possible to segment the market and to target a particular, very precise player profile, according to the game in which the product is placed.⁶⁶

Admittedly, as with placements in the cinema, criticism is heard from time to time regarding the possible commercial invasion of games. Too-obvious,

⁶⁴Lars-Peter Schneider and T Bettina Cornwell (2005) Cashing in on crashes via brand placement in computer games, *International Journal of Advertising*, 24(3), pp 321–43. See also Peter Vorderer (2000) Interactive entertainment and beyond, in Dolf Zillmann and Peter Vorderer (eds), *Media Entertainment: The psychology of its appeal*, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Mahwah, NJ, pp 21–36.

⁶⁵Martin Grove (2005) Video games could be new frontier for movie marketers, *Hollywood Reporter*, 15 April.

⁶⁶Beth Snyder Bulik (2004) Interactive: games hot shot marketing, *Advertising Age*, 24 May. Johannes Schaaper (1999) Segmentation des produits enfants: le cas des jeux vidéo, *Décisions Marketing*, 18, September–December, pp 25–35.

and above all badly integrated, placements will quickly damage a game's chances of success. In contrast, those games that set their story in 'real' life would quickly lose their realism if they were free from brands. Nowadays, in an adventure game set in an urban environment in which the streets walked by the hero were innocent of all advertising, we would wonder exactly when and where the action was set. On what planet? A motor race where you could choose neither the exact brand nor the model would lose its charm and authenticity. A sporting encounter without advertising hoardings around the edges of the pitch would be unrealistic. Accessories of everyday life that did not show any brand logo, or only brands that it was impossible to identify, would appear almost bizarre. The characters are increasingly borrowing the appearance and voice of the actors from the feature films on which the games are based, as are the champions for games based on sports. Such realism should be rounded off, like it or not, by the commercial realism that the modern consumer society is acquainted with.

Marketing can benefit from a reasonably precise geographic targeting in the case of online videogames. In 2006, when placing their logo in the game *Counter-Strike*, Subway restaurants specified that only players logging on from the towns of San Francisco, Sacramento and Las Vegas should be exposed to the placement, since they only wished to promote their Subway Daily Special in this specific zone.⁶⁷

The only two genuine limits relate to the nature of the game, on the one hand, and the tolerance of the players, on the other. Many games are set in imaginary or historical worlds where brands would never be found, except at the cost of a damaging incoherence.⁶⁸ In the same way, games 'for adults' are not particularly sought-after by advertisers, or at any rate by advertisers able to invest large sums, since they fear that their brand image will be altered.

When players pay for a videogame, they can be highly critical if the presence of advertising is too great. Massive Inc therefore allowed free access to MMO⁶⁹ *Anarchy Online* if the player accepted the advertisements. The market

⁶⁷The project was abundantly discussed on specialized internet forums and the Valve company – which created the video game – legally contested it: the placement had to be withdrawn. See Kris Oser (2006) A subway in-game brand campaign goes awry, *Madison+Vine*, 8 February. See also Jason Chambers (2005) The sponsored avatar: examining the present reality and future possibilities of advertising in digital games, paper presented during the Digital Games Research Conference, Changing Views: Worlds in Play, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, 16–20 June.

⁶⁸About this topic, see in particular the satirical essay by Michael Kinsley (1990) These foolish things remind me of Diet Coke, *Time Magazine*, 11 June.

⁶⁹MMO is the acronym for massive (or massively) multiplayer online: that is, an online videogame allowing access to many players who can play simultaneously. MMORPG (massively multiplayer online role playing game) is the equivalent for an online role-playing game. For an interesting social analysis of the MMORPG see

for online multiplayer games is certainly the one with the greatest potential. Many of them, such as *EverQuest*, *Ultima Online* or the very famous *World of Warcraft* (WoW) already have several million players enrolled, particularly in Asia (more specifically Korea, China and Taiwan).⁷⁰ This context offers further advantages to the operator: on the one hand, a source of regular income (player subscriptions and advergaming); on the other, the possibility of a total or partial identification of the players with the brand interested in a placement, and therefore the possibility of a more targeted strategy of brand integration.

An academic study published in 2004 demonstrated that players remained fairly positive towards placements, if they added to the game's realism.⁷¹ Thanks to the ever-increasing memory capacity of consoles and games, however, it is possible to avoid in part the potential annoyance of an advertising intrusion. In order to diminish the intrusion effect perceived in the game, placements may be associated with an interactivity algorithm that modifies their appearance, and even the shape of some of them, from one round to the next. This dynamic appearance (fleeting or not) contributes to renewing the game's environment. The developers of online games such as Massive Inc have also understood the profit that can be made from placement; in addition, they can afford the luxury of selling advertising spaces for limited periods. For the advertiser, the advantage is in seeing the return on investment (ROI) indicators as well as the CPM (cost per thousand) in order to evaluate the attractiveness of a placement. Certain advertisers such as GlaxoSmithKline, Volvo, PepsiCo, Siemens, Jeep®, Coast, Mitsubishi, Starbucks and Toyota are now prepared

Nicolas Ducheneaut and Robert J Moore (2004) The social side of gaming: a study of interaction patterns in a massively multiplayer online game, *Proceedings of the 2004 ACM Conference on Computer Supported Cooperative Work*, Chicago, IL, 6–10 November, pp 360–69.

⁷⁰ Roger Parloff (2005) From megs to riches, *Fortune*, 28 November. About the increasing role of communities in building a brand strategy, see Tomi Ahonen and Alan Moore's book (2005) *Communities Dominate Brands: Business and marketing challenges for the 21st century*, Futuretext, London.

⁷¹ Michelle R Nelson, Heejo Keum and Ronald A Yaros (2004) Advertainment or adcreep: game players' attitudes toward advertising and product placements in computer games, *Journal of Interactive Advertising*, 5(1), Fall, published at www.jiad.org/vol5/no1/nelson (accessed October 2006). See also the very interesting research from Wonsun Shin, Yejin Hong and Yuening Jiang (2006) Effectiveness of product placements in video games: game players' perception and virtual reality experience, paper presented during the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication Conference, 2–5 August, San Francisco, CA; and Michelle R Nelson, Ronald A Yaros and Heejo Keum (2006) Examining the influence of telepresence on spectator and player processing of real and fictitious brands in a computer game, *Journal of Advertising*, 35(4), Winter, pp 87–99.

to develop their own videogames,⁷² which are offered to their clients during promotional operations, downloaded to mobile phones or used to generate traffic on their internet site. Another solution proposed by WildTangent (www.wildgames.com) consists in linking the dynamic advertising insertions to free access to the game. With an *ad hoc* demographic segmentation of its many games, WildTangent also allows advertisers to distribute ‘gaming chips’ in the context of promotional operations. These chips can be used to play online. In contrast, if the game is purchased, the advertising broadcasting is stopped.⁷³ Game not over.

⁷²Susan B Kretchmer (2004) Advertainment: the evolution of product placement as a mass media marketing strategy, *Journal of Promotion Management*, 10(1/2), pp 37–54. See also Beth Snyder Bulik (2006) EA places dynamic ads in video games, *Advertising Age*, 31 August; Erika Brown (2006) Game on!, *Forbes*, Marketing section, 24 July. In 2006, Toyota signed with Massive Inc (then part of the Microsoft group) to include real-time adapted ads for its Yaris 2007 in *Anarchy Online*. See Mike Shields (2006) Massive unveils Toyota ad units with *Anarchy*, *MediaWeek*, 19 July; and Jean-Marc Lehu (2007) Advergaming: Analyse comparative exploratoire de l’attitude des joueurs occasionnels et des hardcore gamers à l’égard du placement de marques dans le jeu vidéo, 6th Congress of Marketing Tendencies, Paris, 26–27 January.

⁷³Oser Kris (2006) WildTangent introduces digital game ad currency, *Advertising Age*, 22 March. See also Paul Hyman (2006) Advertisers await game measurement, *Hollywood Reporter*, 25 January.