BRAND EXTENSIONS INTO THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY BY LUXURY FASHION LABELS AND NATIONAL IDENTITY: THE CASES OF HOTEL MISSONI EDINBURGH AND MAISON MOSCHINO

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Copyright statement

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Abstract

The luxury fashion industry is closely intertwined with the phenomenon of brand extension. Italian labels have been particularly active in this regard, consistently associating their name with a variety of products and extending into sectors that are sometimes rather distant from the core where they operate, like in the hospitality business. This thesis gives an insight into this phenomenon that sees Italian luxury fashion labels expand their brands into hôtellerie by unpacking the relationship it holds with Italianicity.

Examining the cases of two iconic Italian luxury fashion labels, Missoni and Moschino, and the hotels associated with their names, Hotel Missoni Edinburgh and Maison Moschino, this thesis investigates the different ways in which they refer to Italy and its culture. It is contended that within Hotel Missoni Edinburgh and Maison Moschino there are corporate strategies at play that are aimed at deploying their Italianicity as a means to increase their prestige and strengthen their association with the identity of their parent brands. Moreover, it is contended that the hotels employ strategies of cultural opportunism that see the deployment of characteristic traits associated with Italy and its culture as a way to augment their offerings, maximising the brand extension potential of those labels. However, while Missoni Hotel Edinburgh and Maison Moschino rely on traits of Italianicity for their identity, they also contribute to the construction of ideas of Italianicity.

Through an exploration of the different versions of Italianicity portrayed by these hotels, this thesis posits Missoni and Moschino brand extension practices as pivotal sites for shaping and mobilising notions of Italian national identity. Italy is considered here as a narrative text from a semiotic perspective, acknowledging that it is constituted through a variety of discourses and entities, like the ones produced by Hotel Missoni Edinburgh and Maison Moschino, which actively contribute to negotiate and re-shape notions of Italianicity. As such, the thesis offers insight into the link between the fashion industry and national identity.

Chapter One

Introduction

This thesis examines the phenomenon of brand extension in the hospitality industry by Italian luxury fashion labels with the aim of unpacking the relationship it holds with Italian national identity through two case studies, Hotel Missoni Edinburgh and Maison Moschino.

Aim

The aim of the project is to explain how elements of nationality can be used to create successful brand extensions in the hospitality industry by luxury fashion labels by examining the cases of Hotel Missoni Edinburgh and Maison Moschino and their relationship with Italianicity.

Objectives

To examine the spaces, services and gastronomic offerings of Hotel Missoni Edinburgh and Maison Moschino to identify the traits of Italianicity featured there.
To compare the traits of Italianicity identified in the two case studies to explore situations of dialogue and contradiction.
To investigate the benefits and opportunities associated with national affiliation in the cases of Hotel Missoni Edinburgh and Maison Moschino.
To examine the relationship that the traits of Italianicity identified in the case studies hold with issues of national identity.

In the last few years, many luxury fashion labels have launched new ventures that seek to expand their recognizability outside the usual areas of accessories and cosmetics, by creating new spaces besides flagship stores and multifunctional spaces, like hotels and restaurants, where people can experience a particular lifestyle, often in strict relationship with the philosophy of the brand. This

phenomenon has been gathering momentum and Italian labels are particularly active in this regard. While I was working on this research seven hotels and resorts were opened worldwide as brand extensions of Italian luxury fashion houses and more openings were announced.

Currently, two Missoni hotels have opened in Europe and in the Middle East (Edinburgh in 2009 and Kuwait in 2011) whereas a Maison Moschino hotel was launched in Milan in 2010. In addition to those cases, that constitute the object of my study, there are more examples of brand extension in the hospitality industry by Italian luxury fashion labels. Bulgari Hotels and Resorts feature developments in Milan, Bali and London (opened respectively in 2004, 2006 and 2012). The chain Armani Hotels debuted in 2010 in Dubai and in 2012 a second hotel in Milan followed. Versace launched a Palazzo Versace hotel in Australia's Golden Coast in 2000 and then opened one in Dubai in 2011. Moreover, in 2005, the Byblos Art Villa Amistà was launched and, in 2006, a Miss Sixty hotel opened in the seaside town of Riccione (Italy).[1] However, considering this issue in a broader perspective and not only in terms of brand extension, there are several more examples of the ties between the Italian luxury fashion industry and the realm of hospitality.

For example in 1990 Krizia opened K Club in Bermuda and, more recently, Alberta Ferretti has launched two hotels, Castello Montegridolfo and Carducci76, in Emila-Romagna (Italy). In 1994 Renzo Rosso, the founder of Diesel, opened the Pelican Hotel in Miami (USA), while the label's former creative director Wilbert Das opened UXUA Casa Hotel in Trancoso (Brazil). Blumarine is also associated with an hotel, the Touring Hotel in Carpi (Italy), which was opened in 1959 by the father of Anna Molinari, the founder of the fashion label. Moreover, the Ferragamo family started its venture within the hospitality business in 1995 under the name Lungarno Hotels and currently the group owns six hotels in Florence, two in Tuscany and one in Rome. Suites curated by Bottega Veneta are available at St. Regis Hotel in Florence and Rome and, more recently, also at Park Hyatt Chicago.

However, Italian luxury fashion labels are not the only ones to have entered this field. Other international luxury fashion designers and brands have also associated their name with ventures in the hospitality business. French designer Sonia Rykiel has curated, in 1982, the refurbishment of Hôtel de Crillon in Paris and, in 1985, she designed the restaurant of Hôtel Lutetia. Again in Paris, Christian Lacroix created the look of two different hotels, Hotel le Bellechasse and Hotel Le Petit Moulin. Karl Lagerfeld curated in 1994 the refurbishment of Schlosshotel Vier Jahreszeiten in Berlin and, in 2012, he was asked to make over the Hotel Métropole in Monaco. John Rocha created the interior design of The Morrison Hotel in Dublin in 1999 whereas the Charlton House hotel (Somerset, UK), which opened in 1996, once belonged to Roger Saul, the

1 The hotel is currently closed for refurbishment.

founder of Mulberry. In 1992 Ralph Lauren curated the refurbishment of Round Hill hotel (Jamaica) and in 1998 Oscar de la Renta created the Punta Cana Resort & Club. Recently, Philip Treacy curated the interior design of the G hotel in Galway (Ireland) and in 2003 Azzedine Alaïa designed the 3 Rooms hotels in Paris and Milan. In 2005 Vera Wang designed a bridal suite at Hotel Halekulani in Honolulu (USA) and, similarly, Diane Von Furstemberg designed a suite in 2010 for Claridge's, in London. Moreover, in 2011 Martin Margiela decorated the Maison Champs Elysées hotel in Paris.

However, whereas international luxury fashion designers and brands have also ventured in the hospitality business, they have not done so as numerously and consistently as their Italian counterparts. Moreover, those cases do not respond to a brand extension logic, but are merely occasional 'flirts' with the hospitality industry. While I counted seven cases of brand extension in this field by Italian fashion labels (Missoni, Moschino, Armani, Versace, Bulgari, Miss Sixty and Byblos), there are no comparable hotel brands associated with other international fashion labels.[2] Italian luxury fashion labels have been more active in this area, possibly because they were already particularly active on the brand extension front. Hotels associated with Italian fashion labels also seem to be the most renowned and appreciated, consistently featuring at the top of lists of best fashion hotels worldwide.[3]

In this thesis, I argue that an 'Italian way' of extending in the hospitality industry can be identified, one that sees the creation of spaces where people can 'live' the fashion brands thanks to services and offerings that refer to their world but also to their country of origin, Italy. I contend that Hotel Missoni Edinburgh and Maison Moschino employ corporate strategies that are aimed at deploying their Italianicity as a means to strengthen their association with the identity of their parent brands. Moreover, I argue that these hotels employ strategies of cultural opportunism that see the deployment of traits associated with Italy and its culture as a way to augment their offerings, maximising the brand extension potential of their parent brands Missoni and Moschino. Furthermore, I observe how Hotel Missoni Edinburgh and Maison Moschino also capitalise, in this respect, on the positive connotations associated with Italy and its lifestyle to increase their prestige and reputation.

However, while Missoni Hotel Edinburgh and Maison Moschino rely on traits of Italianicity for their identity, they also contribute to the construction of ideas of Italianicity. Far from being

2 The only exceptions in this respect are Casa Camper and Cheval Blanc. The former is the hotel opened in Barcelona by shoemaker Camper, but this is not a luxury brand. Cheval Blanc hotels are the extensions of luxury conglomerate LVHM into the hospitality industry. The first hotel was opened in 2006 in Courcheval (France) and another is set to open in 2013 in Randheli (Maldives), but these are not related to the identity of the many brands belonging to the group.

3 For example, in 2012 fashion magazine *Elle UK*'s top five best fashion hotels were all related to Italian luxury fashion labels. Hotel Missoni Edinburgh was voted as the best fashion hotel, Bulgari Hotel Milan was awarded the second place (the London hotel featured in the fifth place), followed my Maison Moschino and Continentale Florence, belonging to the Lungarno group (Ferragamo family).

parasitic entities that simply capitalise on Italian identity, brands are active players in its constant re-definition. In this sense, this thesis posits Missoni's and Moschino's brand extension practices as pivotal sites for shaping and mobilising notions of Italian national identity. I consider here Italy as a narrative text from a semiotic perspective, acknowledging that it is constituted through a variety of discourses and entities, like the ones produced by Hotel Missoni Edinburgh and Maison Moschino (and that revolve around them), which actively contribute to negotiate and re-shape notions of Italianicity.

Hotel Missoni Edinburgh was opened in June 2009[4] by the Rezidor Group, a hospitality management company based in Brussels that has a portfolio of more than 400 hotels worldwide. In 2005 Rezidor signed a worldwide license agreement with the Italian fashion label Missoni in order to develop and manage a new brand of luxury lifestyle hotels. In 2011 a second Missoni Hotel was opened in Kuwait City (Kuwait) and more are set to open in the future, starting with Turkey and Qatar. The hotel holds a close relationship with the fashion brand Missoni, it features many of the label's products and the interior design of the hotel was curated by Matteo Thun, who also worked on many Missoni stores, in association with Rosita Missoni, the matriarch of the Missoni empire. The Missoni fashion label was created by Ottavio Missoni (who died in 2013) and his wife Rosita in 1949 (see Casadio 1997a, Missoni 2011, Vercelloni 1995). In the 1960s the fashion label really took off, its clothes started to appear in magazines and the business expanded, leading to the first Missoni fashion show in 1966. The identity of the company is strictly intertwined with extremely lightweight knitwear and brightly coloured patterns such as zig-zags and stripes. The history of the Missoni fashion label is punctuated by several collaborations in different fields and the label has always been very active on the licensing front. The company is still a family business, being currently owned and managed by Rosita Missoni and her children.

Maison Moschino was opened in Milan in 2010 by Hotelphilosophy S.p.A., an Italian hospitality management company that specialises in luxury and design hotels. The company is significantly smaller than the Rezidor Group, with only six hotels in its portfolio. Maison Moschino was launched as a one-off project and there are currently no plans to open more. The hotel was created in close collaboration with the fashion label Moschino, whose designer (Rossella Jardini) and art director (Jo Ann Tan, who curates Moschino's window displays around the world) curated the interior design. The Moschino fashion label was created in 1983 by Italian designer Franco Moschino, who previously worked for Versace as a textile designer (see Casadio 1997b and 2001, Castelli 1993). It was initially constituted only by a women's collection but, as the label

4 See http://www.responsiblebusines.rezidor.com/cs/Satellite/Page/Rezidor/Page/defaultRezidor/1165588170692/en/.

became an instant success, a men's collection was launched, alongside the new line Moschino Jeans. In 1988 the second line Moschino Cheap and Chic was launched, featuring the same surrealism, playfulness, irony and irreverence that characterises Moschino couture. The fashion brand has created a series of fragrances and has been very active on the licensing front (Merlo 2003: 144-145). In 1994 Franco Moschino died and Rossella Jardini, who had collaborated with the designer since 1981, took over as creative director of the fashion label. In honour of the late designer, in 1995 the Franco Moschino foundation was created to assist HIV positive children. The label Moschino was originally controlled by Moonshadow S.p.A., before being acquired by AEFFE in 2000.

Within Hotel Missoni Edinburgh and Maison Moschino, I identify references to Italy and its culture through the deployment of a series of characteristics that are used to connote Italianicity. However, these hotels employ in this respect different traits, that sometimes are even in contradiction, to conjure up a sense of Italianicity that is coherent with the one that characterises their parent brands Missoni and Moschino. This is a function of the richness of Italian identity and the variety of traits of Italianicity it comprises.

The different portraits of Italianicity created by Hotel Missoni Edinburgh and Maison Moschino reinforce the idea that national identity is not a fixed entity but a conglomeration of different traits, a mutable and fuzzy entity that allows enough diversification for brands to pick and choose the most appropriate characteristic for their ends. In these cases, the images of Italy that are portrayed are idealised versions that transcend what the country *is*, to focus instead on what it *could* be or what it *was*, creating narratives where past and present, as well as fiction and reality, are intertwined and confused. For this reason, in my thesis I examine Italian national identity in terms of 'Italianicity'. The word Italianicity was coined by Barthes (1977) by adding the suffix '-icity' to the adjective 'Italian' in order to produce a noun that should be primarily connoted as abstract. I use this term instead of 'Italianness' because it was created to remain open to new additions that, case by case, are linked to Italy and its lifestyle, not crystallising into a definitive list of elements that are Italian *tout court*. "*Italianicity* is not Italy, it is the condensed essence of everything that could be Italian, from spaghetti to painting" (Barthes 1977: 48).

The very notion of Italian identity is a topical subject. Nowadays, within the debate concerning Italian national identity there are two distinct factions. One position claims that for Italy it is not possible to speak of a true and established sense of national identity due to the lack of nation-building elements, while a minority of works argues, on the contrary, that there is.[5] It was

5 Some scholars have claimed that Italians have always shared certain common characteristics (Ruffolo 2004, Bollati 1996, Castiglioni 2009, Patriarca 2010) and a sense of national identity, although generally recognising that in the unification era those were not fully interpreted (Janni and McLean 2003: 122).

only fairly recently, after more than forty years of oblivion, that the issue of the Italian national identity started to be addressed again, both in public and academic discourses,[6] being brought back only in the 1990s by the advent of Lega Nord, the first political party to challenge the unity of Italy by advocating a federal state and the secession of the north of the country (Cartocci 2009: 182). Before that, the issue of an Italian national identity had been addressed consistently only at the time of the Italian unification in 1861 and during the Fascist era.

Contrary to popular belief, Italy is a 'new' country, having just celebrated its 150th birthday, and the question of its national identity remains very much open and debated in contemporary times.[7] The unification of Italy was actually pursued only by a minority of the population, a situation epitomised in the phrase "abbiamo fatto l'Italia, ora dobbiamo fare gli italiani", i.e. "we made Italy, now we have to make Italians".[8] Italian unification was not a 'warm' movement that was buttressed by popular support, but a 'cold' Risorgimento pursued by few (Ruffolo 2009).[9] In Gramsci's terms (2007), it was a 'passive' revolution. Patriotic ideals were shared only by a very exiguous minority of people, so that whilst Italy was a state it was still not a nation (Galli 2009: 49) because it lacked both a sense of community and a common national identity (Giumelli 2011: 56). The unified areas did not even share the same language, even after the Second World War the majority of the population only spoke and understood local dialects. It was only through national schooling, compulsory military service, public administration, television and internal migration that the Italian population became familiar with the Italian language (De Mauro 1963).

During the Risorgimento, popular support for the ideals associated with unification was pursued through a variety of platforms like journalism (Garrone and Peruta 1979, Peruta 2011 and Pella 1961), historiography (Talamo 2007, Valentini 2005), literature (Langella 2005, Quondam 2011, Tatti 2011) but also music and opera (Berti 2001, Sorba 2001). However, these attempts ultimately failed to fill the distance between Italy and Italians and to create a strong sense of belonging among the population (Martucci 1999, Gentile 2011). This, some claim, has compromised inexorably the ability of Italians to develop a sense of national identity (Galli della Loggia 2003, Graziano 2007, Gentile 2010). In a similar way, but far more coercively, Fascism

6 See Patriarca (2001).

7 What we now call Italy was firstly unified under the Roman Empire. After its fall, Italy would not be reunited for over a thousand years. It was in Roman times that the notion of Italy as a geographic entity that includes everything south of the Alps was forged. This notion continued to flourish, first as a literary myth in the late Middle Age, with Dante (Divina Commedia, Inferno IX. 114, see also Covino 1865: 7) and Petrarca (Canzoniere, CXXVIII) and, later on, in the works of "Machiavelli, Pietro Bembo, Baldassarre Castiglione, Vittorio Alfieri, Ugo Foscolo", however remaining confined to the realm of literature rather than politics (Barański and West 2001: 82).

8 The attribution of this phrase is uncertain, with some sources indicating Massimo D'Azeglio and others Camillo Benso Conte di Cavour.

9 In regard to the south of Italy, the domain of the Savoy was perceived as a foreign entity that forcefully imposed taxation and military service over an unwilling population, that fought back with *brigantaggio*, i.e. brigandage. This was violently repressed by the Regno d'Italia (Giumelli 2011: 56). On this issue see Alianello (1994), Guerri (2010) and Izzo (1999).

also attempted to 'make Italians' through different means, like propaganda (Ottaviani 2007, Priante 2010, Bordoni 1974, Zamponi 2003), architecture (Nicoloso 1999 and 2008, Cederna 1979, Pagano 2008, Pettena 2004), historiography (Valentini 2005, Boca et al. 1995, Quazza 1985, Pozzo 1984, Cervelli 1977), fashion (Paulicelli 2002, 2004a and 2004b, Lupano and Vaccari 2009) and food (Marinetti 1989, Jaine 1989, Helstosky 2004), but similarly failed to create a shared notion of Italian identity.

This has caused many to contend that Italian history has precluded the formation of an Italian identity. Firstly, this is because centuries of political fragmentation led to greatly differentiated sociocultural contexts (Ferrarotti 1998) where it is difficult to identify common elements (Calabrese 2009: 41). Secondly, this is because Italians have failed to develop a sense of unified identity in the past, both in the epoch of unification and fascism but also more recently in the post-war era when politics aimed at strengthening national identities were not pursued (Galli della Loggia 2003, Graziano 2007, Barberis 2010, Salvadori 2007, Salvi 1996, Cerroni 2000). In this perspective, there is nowadays no Italian national identity to speak of (Calabrese 2009: 41, Ornaghi and Parsi 2001, Rondolino 2011) and it is impossible, and rather pointless, to recreate now a sense of national identity among Italians (Schiavone 1998).[10] This is in line with a survey from 2008 that showed how 76% of interviewees declared their identities in terms of local or regional units, whereas 70% thought that national identity was questionable (Galli 2009: 48). "Contrary to what happens elsewhere, the Italians have difficulty in identifying with their nation state" (Janni and McLean 2003: 122). However, it has been argued that Italians' claim not to have a national identity is due to the fact that they think about the issue in terms of a nation-state paradigm, which was never fully achieved in Italy, and consider national identity as strictly intertwined with nationalistic sentiments (Giumelli 2011: 59).[11]

I conclude this chapter with some further clarifications with regards to terminology and a brief outline of the structure of this thesis.

Brands are considered here, from a semiotic point of view, as entities whose most distinctive attribute is the one of being capable of conveying meanings (Semprini 1993, 1996, and 2005,

10 It has been claimed that it could be more productive to think about Italian identity in different terms. Bassetti et al. (2008) proposes to use the term *Italici*, instead of Italians, to describe a community that includes Italians, Italian emigrants and immigrants, Italophiles and everyone who shares a certain sense of belonging to Italian culture and certain common values, such good taste and beauty. He estimates there are approximately 250 million *Italici* worldwide (see also Bassetti and Janni 2004, Giumelli 2011 and 2010, Janni and McLean 2003, Bechelloni 2004).

11 In this perspective, Italian national identity appears to lack certain elements that are considered essential to the very notion of national identity. For example, Italy does not possess all the salient features of national identity according to Smith (1991:14), particularly regarding "common myths and historical memories". Italy never developed "a measure of common culture and a civic ideology, a set of common understandings and aspirations, sentiments and ideas, that binds the population together", which Smith (1991: 11) considers as a must for being able to speak of national identity.

Marrone 2007, Codeluppi 2001, Ferraresi 2003, Scolari 2008). In this respect brands like Missoni and Moschino are *semiotic engines* that can create "complex discourse universes with a strong narrative imprint" (Semprini 1996: 11). Brands create fictional worlds that consumers can identity themselves with or perceive as desirable, worlds created to catch people's attention and fuel their imagination (Semprini 1996: 127-128). Brands are social entities immersed in the social and cultural context of their time and in this respect they can convey meanings whose nature is socio-cultural (Semprini 1996: 12), for example with regards to issues of national identity and Italianicity as examined in the present work.

In this perspective, brands are discursive instances that create narratives and that reveal themselves through their empirical manifestations, i.e. through the variety of media and platforms they employ. Brands are abstract entities that can assume different forms (Marrone 2007: 11) and their meaning can be identified only through a thorough investigation of their manifestations (Thellefsen al. 2006: 372). In this context, brand extension constitutes an empirical manifestation of the fashion brands Moschino and Missoni and therefore the analysis of Maison Moschino and Hotel Missoni Edinburgh presented in this thesis can shed light on their meanings.

The present work considers brand extension as the use of an established brand name to extend into new areas or products (Aaker and Keller, 1990, Viot 2011: 216 and Stegemann 2006: 58, Cappellari 2008, Forney at al. 2005, Farquhar 1989, Pitta and Katsanis 1995, Arslan and Altuna 2010). In accordance with other academic studies that focus on the luxury industry, such as Chevalier and Mazzalovo (2008), Cappellari (2008), Okonkwo (2007) and Stegemann (2006), brand extension is used here as an umbrella term that includes both category and line extension.

Category extension "applies an existing brand name to a new category", whereas line extension on the other hand "applies an existing brand name to a product in one of the firm's existing categories" (Farquhar, 1989: 29-30).[12] Both category and line extensions can be achieved by operating either on the vertical or horizontal dimension. A vertical extension involves extending a brand into a different price and quality level (Pitta and Katsanis: 1995: 60 and Arslan, and Altuna, 2010: 170). When the extension operates at a higher price level than the parent brand we have a case of upscale vertical extension, whereas we have a case of downscale (or step-down) vertical extension when the extension operates at a lower price or quality level. On the other hand, the concept of horizontal brand extension focuses on the distance between the parent brand and the extension. Some horizontal brand extensions operate in the same product category of the parent brand, while distant extensions might operate in unrelated product categories (Pitta and

12 However, some authors use different terms to describe these entities (Arslan and Altuna 2010: 170). For example Tauber (1981: 37) employs the term franchise extension to describe the concept of category extension, alongside Pitta and Katsanis (1995). On the other hand Aaker and Keller (1990), Kapferer (2004:224) and Arslan and Altuna (2010:170) use the term brand extension as a synonym for category extension.

Katsanis: 1995: 60). Within Maison Moschino and Hotel Missoni Edinburgh coexist elements of horizontal and vertical brand extension, as discussed in more detail in section 2.5.

In this thesis, the term brand identity is used with regards to the brands Missoni Hotel and Maison Moschino (and their parent brand Moschino and Missoni) to indicate the "substance of the brand, expressed via all the methods of communication used by the brand", an entity that is "emissive" in nature (Chevalier and Mazzalovo 2008: 184). On the other hand, with regards to the corporations that Hotel Missoni Edinburgh and Maison Moschino belong to, i.e. the Rezidor Group and Hotelphilosophy S.p.A., the term corporate identity is used instead. This is defined as "the way in which an organization's identity is revealed through behaviour, communications, as well as through symbolism to internal and external audiences" (Van Riel and Balmer 1997: 341).

In the present work, the term brand value is used, in a semiotic perspective, to identity elements that constitutes the invariants of brands. i.e. "the very foundation" of their identity (Chevalier and Mazzalovo 2008: 192). Brand values represent what brands stand for and belong to the intelligible dimension of brands, i.e. the one regarding the signified or content (Floch 1985). Brand values are articulated in the different empirical manifestations of brands but although they are present in the sensory dimension of brands they actually originate in a deeper level. This is represented by the level of semio-narrative structures, i.e. the most abstract part of the Generative Trajectory as theorised by Greimas (Greimas and Courtes 1986 but also Ferraresi 2000: 243, Nöth 1995: 315, Marsciani and Zinna 1991: 133, Magli 2004: 44, Bronwen and Ringham 2006: 93). Brand values undergo a process actorialisation, spatialisation and temporalisation at the discursive level, acquiring a figurative shape that is then expressed in the textual level of the empirical manifestations of brands examined here.

In the next chapter, I provide a literature review of works relevant to this thesis. Firstly, I examine Hotel Missoni Edinburgh and Maison Moschino in terms of current business practices in the fashion industry. Secondly, I argue that my thesis differs from other studies that examine the relationship between spaces and brands because, in opposition to this literature, I examine also how spaces and services associated with brands can convey meanings beyond the label's world and in relation to issues of national identity.

Chapter Three is dedicated to issues of methodology. Firstly, I address the rationale for adopting an interdisciplinary approach that assigns a privileged position to semiotics. Secondly, I argue that a case study methodology is an appropriate theoretical tool for my research. Thirdly, I discuss the selection process that led to the choice of examining the cases of Hotel Missoni Edinburgh and Maison Moschino. Moreover, I examine issues related to the data and materials considered in this study. Lastly, I address the limits of this study in terms of the inevitable

situatedness of research in humanities.

Chapters Four and Five are dedicated to the analysis of the Hotel Missoni Edinburgh case whereas Chapters Six and Seven address the case of Maison Moschino, arguing that the hotels hold a very close relationship with the brand identity of their parent brand and observing how the traits of Italianicity that they employ are consistent with the ones of Missoni and Moschino. Whereas both Hotel Missoni Edinburgh and Maison Moschino employ traits of Italianicity as a means to strengthen the association between the hotels and their parent brand, to increase their prestige and reputation and to augment their offerings, they portray very different versions of Italianicity.

Both in relation to Hotel Missoni Edinburgh and Maison Moschino, I examine firstly the spatiality of the hotels (Chapters Four and Six) before considering their gastronomic offerings (Chapters Five and Seven). I adopt the semiotic term spatiality to describe the objects of my analysis because I consider the term space to be reductive and inadequate to describe the series of elements, entities and services that need to be examined in order to provide a complete account of Hotel Missoni Edinburgh and Maison Moschino. The term spatiality recognises that the significance of spaces goes beyond the meaning associated with a physical area but also involves narratives and discourses created by different media concerning the spaces in question and the variety of practices that take place there (Marrone 2007: 311).[13] In regard to the gastronomic offerings of Hotel Missoni Edinburgh and Maison Moschino, I similarly take into account all the different aspects of such entities and include the discourses that surround them. "Restaurants are not there simply to feed people [...] eating spaces have become increasingly striking in design and are staffed by carefully selected people who look and sound just right as proprietors compete to outdo each other in redefining ways in which the restaurant becomes a new way of spending an evening" (Ashley et al. 2004: 143). Similarly to Girardelli (2004), who examined the case of the Italian-inspired restaurant chain Fazoli, I also consider the restaurants and gastronomic services of Hotel Missoni Edinburgh and Maison Moschino as composite and multifaceted entities as "the eating place [...] offers a total consumption package - not just food and drink but a whole 'experience'" (Bell and Valentine 1997: 125).

> The eating out location contains a multitude of features and characteristics, ranging from the seating arrangements, lighting, décor and odours to the staff and others present. Each of these, both independently and synergistically, contribute to the overall atmosphere[14] […].

13 On spatiality and semiotics see Cavicchioli (1997), Marrone (2001) and Semprini (2003b).

14 On atmospheric see Kotler (1987) and, with a focus on the hospitality industry, Ariffinet al. (2012), Biehl-Missal and Saren (2012), Countryman and Jang (2006), North et al. (2003), Zemke et al. (2011) and Yildirim and Akalin-Baskaya (2007).

(Edwards 2013: 227)

This package "is never neutral or meaningless" (Girardelli 2004: 311) and I consider it alongside the narratives and the discourses concerning the restaurants.

In Chapter Eight I argue that both Hotel Missoni Edinburgh and Maison Moschino benefit from the association with Italy before confronting the different, and sometimes contradictory, versions of Italianicity they portray. Whereas Hotel Missoni Edinburgh endorses in its corporate identity a sense of Italianicity based on narratives of family and industrial production, on the other hand Maison Moschino is closely intertwined with ideas of creativity and handmade craftsmanship. Moreover, I argue that the myths of authentic Italianicity portrayed by Hotel Missoni Edinburgh and Maison Moschino are constructed entities that hide their nature through an aura of reality before drawing the thesis to a close, in Chapter Nine, by considering how the branding strategies of these hotels contribute to re-shape notions of Italian national identity. In the last chapter, I also discuss the contribution to knowledge of this thesis and make suggestion for further study.

Chapter Two

Hotel Missoni Edinburgh and Maison Moschino:

from fashion to nation

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I provide a literature review of works relevant to this thesis. Firstly, I address the scarcity of studies dedicated to fashion hotels and argue that, in opposition to other spaces associated with luxury fashion brands, they have received less attention within academia. Secondly, I examine the phenomenon of fashion hotels in terms of the current shift from fashion to lifestyle brands affecting the luxury fashion industry. Moreover, I offer a contextualisation of the role of Hotel Missoni Edinburgh and Maison Moschino in terms of business practices, both in relation with brand extension and with the broadening of the customer base of luxury fashion brands into the masstige segment. Lastly, I discuss how my thesis differs from other studies that address the relationship between spaces and brands because, in opposition to this literature, I examine how spaces and services associated with brands can convey meanings beyond the label's world and in relation to issues of national identity. In this sense, this thesis posits Missoni and Moschino brand extension practices as pivotal sites for shaping and mobilising notions of Italian national identity.

2.2 Spaces of fashion

Unlike other spaces associated with luxury fashion brands, the hotels associated with luxury fashion labels have received little attention within academia and remain under-represented. In this respect, my study aims to fill a gap in research by investigating the cases of Maison Moschino and Hotel Missoni Edinburgh.

Some of the fashion hotels mentioned in the previous chapter are addressed briefly in works devoted to the luxury and luxury fashion industry (Riley et al. 2004, Preiholt and Hägg 2006, Chevalier and Mazzalovo 2008, Okonkwo 2007, Tungate 2005, Altan 2012) or to the hospitality industry (Riewoldt 2002b, McNeill and McNamara 2010), but works with a specific focus on them are scarce. In his book Dittrich (2006) addresses the design of several fashion hotels, like Continentale and Byblos, but does not consider any of the hotels that constitute my case studies. Some works have been published on the Armani Hotel in Dubai, although they examine the engineering challenges concerning the Burj-Dabi building where the hotel is located (Baker et al. 2007, Weismantle et al. 2007, Mazeika et al. 2009). The case of Palazzo Versace has been discussed in regard to the re-branding of the Gold Coast (Griffin 2004) and to brand extension strategies (Cipolla and March 2003), whereas the one of Bulgari Hotels has been addressed by Dittrich (2006), Watson (2005), Dev (2012) and, in regard to a lawsuit between the owner of the Ritz-Carlton Bali Resort and Spa and The Ritz-Carlton Hotel Company, by Dev et al. (2010).

Missoni Hotel Edinburgh and Maison Moschino, the specific cases that constitute the object of my study, are even more under-represented within academia. The case of Hotel Missoni Edinburgh had been examined only in a handful of papers, by Allardyce and Dundas (2011) in regard to the seventeenth-century painted ceilings found in the building, by Lewis (2009) with a focus on the architectural features of the hotel, and by Vivaldi (2010) in terms of brand diversification, before I addressed it in an article (Dallabona 2011b) with a specific focus on the relationship between the hotel, its identity and Italianicity. In regard to Maison Moschino, to the present day no academic works that focus specifically on that case have been published.

Other spaces associated with luxury fashion labels, like flagship stores, museums and multifunctional spaces have received much more attention within academia. The world of flagship stores within the luxury fashion industry has been examined in Kent and Brown (2009), Moore (2000), Moore and Doherty (2001), Moore et al. (2010), Napolitano and Nisco (2003), Nobbs et al. (2012) and, in relation to Italian labels, by Marenco Mores (2006) and Potvin (2008). From a semiotic perspective, flagship stores and their relationship with luxury fashion

labels have been examined by Ceriani (1998 and 1999), Hetzel and Aubert (1993) and Hetzel (2003), whereas more broadly issues concerning retailing and spaces of consumption have been discussed by Sherry (1998), Gottdiener (1982 and 1998), Floch (1988), Thurlow and Jaworski (2012) and moreover Giannitrapani (2004), Musso and Bergamaschi (2010) and Girardelli (2004), with a particular focus on Italian identity.

Maison Moschino and Hotel Missoni Edinburgh present similarities with flagship stores. They also aim to reinforce "the prestige of the brand through its up-market location" and to "serve as a promotional device to showcase the brand in a coherent and closely managed setting" whilst encouraging, at the same time, "brand awareness and interest" (Moore 2000: 272-3). Like flagship stores, hotels can guarantee media coverage to the brands and act as "PR machines" but, unlike the former, when the hotels are the result of license agreements like in the case of Missoni Hotel Edinburgh and Maison Moschino, they do not involve any enormous expenditure and can bring significant profits to fashion labels both in terms of royalties and, for Missoni, in terms of hotel supplies since linens, towels, cutlery etc. are provided by Missoni Home.[15]

> While no company will admit to a loss-making flagship, the significant capital investment required to open a new store and the high operating costs associated with their day-to-day running, has led many commentators and analysts to predict that these stores are loss-making showcases which in the majority of cases fail to deliver a contribution to company profitability.
>
> (Moore and Doherty 2001: 278)

Moreover, there is another similarity between flagship stores and the hotels that constitute the object of my research. If "the store is a metaphor for the brand" (Moore 2000: 272), so are both Maison Moschino and Hotel Missoni Edinburgh in regard to the labels from which they originate (Dallabona 2011b: 442).

The hotels launched by luxury fashion labels also show analogies with other places of fashion. Similarly to the museums opened by fashion labels to celebrate their heritage (see for example the Museo Gucci and Museo Salvatore Ferragamo in Florence, or Casa Zegna in Biella), these hotels also act like ambassadors for the brands attracting media exposure and brand awareness, whilst at the same time providing people with a space to socialise under the umbrella of the brand. However, these hotels differ from the multifunctional retail spaces opened by luxury fashion labels (like the complex Armani/Via Manzoni 31 or Armani/Ginza, which include flagship stores, bookshops, cafés and restaurants) because they feature retail only marginally. A small selection of Missoni products, like mugs and ties are available at Hotel Missoni Edinburgh

15 See Pambianco News, 2012. Quando le Griffe fanno da padroni di casa. Available at: http://www.pambianconews.com/approfondimenti/quando-le-griffe-fanno-da-padroni-di-casa/ [Accessed September 16, 2012].

(on display in the lobby), whereas at Maison Moschino guests can purchase some of the items featured in the rooms (although they need to contact staff in this respect). Unlike multifunctional retail spaces, these hotels do not face the danger of socialisation cannibalising sales (Musso 2002a: 1).[16]

2.3 From fashion to lifestyle

Hotel Missoni Edinburgh and Maison Moschino epitomise the current shift from fashion to lifestyle brands affecting the luxury fashion industry. These hotels belong to a particular phenomenon of brand extension, consisting of the expansion of fashion brands into areas that are distant from the core where the brand initially originated. This is referred to as "brand stretching" (Cappellari 2008: 73) and is an extreme case of brand extension, which occurs when, as Fabris and Minestroni (2004: 323) observe, luxury fashion brands enter into the furniture business, or when renowned designers uses their logo on tiles or chocolates.

As demonstrated by the cases of Missoni and Moschino, the tendency is to transform luxury fashion brands into lifestyle brands, entities capable of providing a myriad of products and services to satisfy virtually all the needs of their customers (Chevalier and Mazzalovo 2008: 132, Cappellari 2008: 70, Okonkwo 2007: 139, Frisa et al. 2002).[17]

> Product and brand extension has brought a new dimension to luxury branding. New product and service categories that include a total lifestyle concept make up the new business arena that luxury fashion is being stretched into. Consumers now have the possibility to dress their homes with luxury products from brands like Versace and Armani; to grab a drink at Just Cavalli café in Milan; to have lunch or dinner at Nicole Farhi's restaurant in London or New York while shopping in the unique concept store; not to forget getting down to some dancing at Armani's nightclub in Milan. Product and brand extension has provided an avenue for luxury brands to offer a complete 360º lifestyle provision for consumers. This diversification strategy of product and brand extension is an important means to extend the luxury brand from "fashion" to "lifestyle" through offering home furnishing and hospitality services to complement fashion and accessories.
>
> (Okonkwo 2007: 139)

16 On multifunctional retail spaces see also Musso (2002b and 2005), Moore and Doherty (2001), Pezzini et al. (2006), Marenco Mores (2011) and Potvin (2012).

17 The notion of lifestyle in relation to contemporary consumer behaviour is discussed in more detail in section 2.4.

With regard to Italian brands, a particularly good example of this phenomenon beside the cases of Missoni and Moschino is constituted by Giorgio Armani. He owns a successful fashion empire that has extended into several clothing lines, fragrances, children lines, accessories, eyewear, cafés, chocolate, flowers, nightclubs and hotels (Okonkwo 2007: 138-139 and Moore and Wigley 2004). However, other brands are following the same path, diversifying and augmenting their offerings through brand extension.

In the luxury industry the phenomenon of brand extension[18] is widespread (Roux 1996, Stegemann 2006, Chevalier and Mazzalovo 2008, Cappellari 2008) and is present in many different forms. In this respect, the luxury fashion industry is considered emblematic (Fabris and Minestroni 2004: 321, Varacca Capello and Ravasi 2009: 2 and Okonkwo 2007). Brand extension is not a new phenomenon and has been part of luxury fashion branding for more than a century, as it first appeared in 1911 when French couturier Poiret launched a perfume and a homeware line (Tungate 2005: 12, Merlo 2003: 49). It was not an isolated case, Coco Chanel in the 1920s launched a series of fragrances, a make-up line and a skin-care range, and in 1932 she designed a jewellery line. Since then, virtually all *griffes* have expanded from Haute Couture into prêt-a-porter, creating diffusion lines and also launching new products in other areas such as accessories, fragrances, cosmetics, jewellery and homeware. For example, Moschino has expanded into menswear, diffusion lines (Moschino Cheap and Chic and Love Moschino), children collections, fragrances, accessories, eyewear, furniture (in collaboration with Kartell and Altreforme) and hôtellerie, whereas Missoni has been even more active on this front and features, in addition to those areas,[19] also a home line (Missoni Home) whose origin can be traced back to 1973. The history of Missoni is punctuated by collaborations in a variety of areas. In the 1980s Missoni collaborated with Fiat in regard to car interiors and again, in 2004, they collaborated on a similar project with historic Milan's Carrozzeria Castagna. In 2006 Missoni started a collaboration with Italian mosaic firm Trend, which led to the creation of a collection of vases covered in Missoni patterns (some of which currently feature in the hall of Missoni Hotel Edinburgh). In 2009 Missoni launched a collaboration with Converse to create the line *Chuck Hi Missoni* and in 2011 with Bugaboo to create two strollers featuring Missoni patterns. The same year, Missoni created a capsule collection (of over 400 pieces including clothing, accessories and homeware) for American retailer Target. In 2012 Missoni launched a collaboration with Havaianas to create a line of flip-flops and also worked with Muzungu Sisters on a collection of loafers.

18 Brand extension comprises both category extension, which "applies an existing brand name to a new category" and line extension, that on the other hand "applies an existing brand name to a product in one of the firm's existing categories" (Farquhar 1989: 29-30).

19 In addition to the main Missoni woman collection the brand feature also a line of menswear, the diffusion line *M Missoni*, a children range and a series of fragrances. Another diffusion line, *Missoni Sport*, was closed in 2007.

2.4 Stretching the brand

In this section, I contextualise Hotel Missoni Edinburgh and Maison Moschino in terms of the widespread business practice of brand extension. As discussed, luxury fashion labels like Missoni and Moschino are expanding their brands into areas that are rather distant from the core where the companies originated, like in the hotel business, but what is the rationale for that?

Brand extensions are attractive to companies "because they provide a way to take advantage of brand name recognition and image to enter new markets" (Aaker and Keller 1990: 27). This involves a parasitic relationship between the parent brand and the extension, that relies on the former in terms of reputation. Brand extension is used to capture a greater market share (Smith and Park 1992: 296, Dawar and Anderson 1994: 119, Milewicz and Herbig 1994: 40) and increase brand equity (Stegemann 2006: 58, Viot 2011: 216, Batra et al. 2010: 335, Milberg et al 1997: 138) whilst capitalising on the brand image of the parent brand (Keller 1993: 15, Kim and Lavack 1996: 24, Pitta and Katsanis 1995: 51, Dawar and Anderson 1994: 119) and in this respect luxury brands like Moschino and Missoni seem to be the ideal candidates for making the most of such a strategy. Considering that the *raison d'être* of brand extension is "the assumption that favorable associations and evaluations linked with the brand name will transfer to the extension" (Barone and Miniard 2002: 283, see also Aaker and Keller 1990, Boush and Loken 1991), it it easy to see that luxury brands, which are generally associated with favourable attitudes and evaluations, are going to benefit greatly from this strategy (Roux 1996: 2060).

> Given the potential for evaluative transfer of this nature to occur, an "ideal" deployment of this strategy would seem to involve core brands for which consumers hold favorable evaluations, given that such evaluations would transfer over to extensions offered by these brands. Consistent with this line of reasoning, the marketplace is replete with extensions introduced under brand names that consumers generally hold in high regard.
>
> (Barone and Miniard 2002: 283)

It has been observed that brand extension by luxury brands, like Moschino and Missoni, will be evaluated more favourably than the ones associated with non-luxury brands (Lye et al. 2001: 55). However, there seems to be limits to the transfer of positive characteristics from the parent brand to the extension, the more the latter is distant from the former the more difficult it is for favourable evaluations to be transferred to the extension. However, the brand extensions into

hôtellerie by Moschino and Missoni can nonetheless benefit from the favourable evaluations associated with the fashion labels because high-quality brands like the ones operating in the luxury fashion business "stretch farther than average quality brands" as "one important benefit of building a strong brand is that the name can be extended effectively to more diverse product categories" (Keller and Aaker 1992: 44).

This is because the identity of luxury brands primarily rely on the symbolic meanings that they can evoke, making labels like Missoni and Moschino flexible enough to be successfully extended in different areas, even when those are rather distant form the core where the brands operate (Cappellari 2008: 69, Dubois and Paternault 1995: 71, Aaker and Keller 1990: 28). Luxury brands can be described, in semiotic terms, as "pure forms" characterised by immaterial and transferable qualities (Marrone 2007: 11) that can easily assume different shapes and expand in different areas. In this perspective, brands are characterised by the faculty of acting as mediators between the company and consumers and proposing a contract with the latter, a communicative pact that acts as a guarantee of the offerings' quality and is the result of the faith of the consumer in the production of such offerings (Marrone 2007: 9, Semprini 1997, Lipovetsky and Roux 2003, Bertrand 1999, Heilbrunn 1998). In this sense, the fashion brands Missoni and Moschino represent figures of authority that act as guarantors of the prestige of Hotel Missoni Edinburgh and Maison Moschino.

Brand extension is very appealing to luxury fashion brands because it can increase turnover and, more importantly, profit (Cappellari 2008: 73). Whereas extension like the ones in the hospitality industry of Moschino and Missoni might increase sales indirectly by acting as promotional devices and augmenting brand awareness, their main advantage is that of providing brands with fast profits by guaranteeing "a constant stream of royalties" (Colucci et al. 2008: 129) at virtually no financial cost for the parent brand as they were developed through licensing. These sources of "fast profits" (Okonkwo 2007: 237) can compensate for the losses and substantial maintenance costs that are characteristics of the luxury fashion industry (but also of high-end cuisine, as argued in Chapter Seven in regard to chef Moreno Cedroni). Most high-end lines of luxury fashion labels are loss-makers but cannot be eliminated as they constitute the core of the brand, that would not exist otherwise (Cappellari 2008: 71). Moreover, luxury companies spend considerable amounts of money on advertising and marketing, so brands might be tempted to amortize these substantial expenses on more than one product.

> It's natural to want to amortize communication efforts on a larger number of products. That is why the development of new categories has always been a favourite area for brands.
>
> (Chevalier and Mazzalovo 2008: 130)

However, when it comes to ventures into the hotel business by Italian luxury fashion labels there is a variety of strategies employed besides licensing, which is constituted by "agreements by which one firm buys the right to use an asset for a period of time" that "typically involve a narrow purpose and limited time frame, and are enforced by a contract" (Borys and Jemison 1989: 245). Some brands opted to develop the extensions in collaboration with other firms,[20] for example Bulgari created a joint-venture with Marriot International to create Bulgari Hotel & Resorts (Cappellari 2008: 29) and, similarly, Armani joined forces with Emaar properties to develop and manage Armani Hotels and Resorts (Emaar Properties PJSC 2010). Others, like Blumarine in regard to the Hotel Touring, opted for developing this business through internal resources.

Nonetheless, employing licensing to expand into hôtellerie, like in the cases of Missoni and Moschino, is characterised by significant benefits as this strategy is particularly suitable when the extensions are into areas that are distant from the core where the parent brands operate (Chevalier and Mazzalovo 2008: 362, Cappellari 2008: 23, Colucci et al. 2008: 129).[21] This is because licensing can guarantee quick access to relevant expertise in the areas where the brands want to expand (Quelch 1985: 187-188). For this reason many fashion labels employ licensing as a preferred strategy to expand in certain areas "that require different resources (such as cosmetics, eyewear, furniture and home collections, and perfumes)" (Varacca Capello and Ravasi 2009: 7), similarly in this respect to hôtellerie. Even Armani, despite the fact that the company employs generally a vertical integration strategy aimed at maintaining the maximum control over its different brand manifestations (Moore and Wigley 2004: 3-4), uses licensing in areas that require specific expertise, like for extension into hotels but also perfumes, watches, jewellery and eyewear.

However, licensing is appealing also for the companies that collaborate with Missoni and Moschino on the hotels developments, i.e. Rezidor and Hotelphilosophy. In fact those companies can achieve a greater market share without the high price tag associated with launching a new brand. Brand extension is associated with minimal costs when compared with the ones involved in creating a brand ex novo (Stegemann 2006: 58, Tauber 1988: 27, Milewicz and Herbig 1994: 40, DeGraba and Sullivan 1995: 231, Smith and Park 1992: 297, Keller 2003: 584). This is due,

20 There is variety of different contractual forms and conceptualisations in this sense. Co-branding is characterised by the use of two distinct brand names on one product (Ahn et al. 2010: 8) like for example in the case of Prada-LG mobile phones. In the specific case when luxury fashion brands are involved, co-branding collaboration has been labelled "fashion collaboration" (Ahn et al. 2010: 20). In literature this phenomenon is also sometimes described as inter-brand collaboration or "strategic alliance" (Wigley and Provelengiou 2011: 142).

21 However, within the luxury fashion industry, the use of licensing is widespread ans involve all areas, from designing and producing to distributing their ranges (Varacca Capello and Ravasi 2009: 5, Moore and Wigley 2004: 3), unbeknown to the wider public (Chevalier and Mazzalovo 2008: 361).

again, to the parasitic relationship that the extension holds with the parent brand, as the extension does not need to build its reputation and awareness ex novo, but can count on the parent company's one. Brand extensions therefore can enjoy “the distinct advantage of instant recognition, benefitting from the 'halo effect' of the brand’s established reputation”, whilst at the same time being more easily accepted by consumers and growing faster because of the existing consumers' attitudes toward the brand (Milewicz and Herbig 1994: 39).

Moreover, brand extensions associated with luxury fashion labels are appealing for companies like Rezidor and Hotelphilosophy because they can increase the ability to predict sales, especially in areas where competitors have already extended, element that might have contributed to the growing phenomenon of fashion brands extending consistently in the same sectors (Colucci et al. 2008: 131-136) like perfumes, accessories and, more recently, in the hospitality industry. Furthermore, brand extension has been associated also with a lower risk of failure (Milewicz and Herbig 1994: 39, Viot 2011: 216, Aaker and Keller 1990, Batra et al. 2010) and in this sense Maison Moschino and Hotel Missoni Edinburgh are less likely to fail in comparison to hotels that are not a function of brand extension strategies. However, whilst brand extension is associated with certain benefits it is also characterised by significant risks, in particular the one of effecting the parent brand's prestige and of 'diluting' it. In this sense, Missoni and Moschino have a lot to gain from employing such a strategy but by doing so they also face certain risks.

Firstly, Maison Moschino and Missoni Hotel Edinburgh could fail and this could effect Missoni and Moschino in terms of loss of royalties but, more importantly, in terms of the “risk that failure will backfire on the image of the parent brand” (Batra et al. 2010: 335). This is the principle that Milewicz and Herbig (1994: 40) describe as “one bad egg may well spoil the entire basket”.[22] I contend that this applies both to cases of 'real' failure, i.e. the complete closure of the hotels, and of 'perceived' ones. For example the fact that so far only two Missoni Hotels have opened despite the announcement, since 2009, of new hotels in Oman, South Africa, Turkey, Mauritius and Qatar, and the fact that Maison Moschino has closed down its restaurant in 2012 could also be seen as failures and hold a negative influence on the prestige of the extensions, that in turn can influence the one of the parent brands.

In fact any type of brand extension venture dialogues with its parent brand and does not merely

22 However, in case of failure of the brand extension, a significant distance between that and the parent brand can actually provide some benefits (Keller 1993: 16, Keller and Aaker 1992, Romeo 1991, Roedder John and Loken 1993). This can be achieved through a variety of tools such as sub-branding, that sees a new brand name employed in conjunction with a family brand name (Milberg et al. 1997: 119), like in the case of the brand Armani Exchange, a diffusion clothing line created by fashion label Armani. Milberg et al. (1997) observe that this distancing involves a decrease in terms of negative impact on the parent brand not only in case of failure, but also when the extension is inconsistent, because customer might consider the poor fitting extension as a form of opportunistic behaviour by the parent brand.

receive or passively absorb the characteristics of the latter, but also influences it and can contribute to its re-positioning in the market, as happened in the case of Pierre Cardin, a label that in the 1970s and 1980s employed an aggressive licensing strategy and ended up losing its prestige due to an over-diffusion of products (Fabris and Minestroni 2004: 322, Okonkwo 2007: 300). In this sense it is not only the failure of a brand extension that companies should be wary of, as just for merely existing the brand extensions in the hospitality industry by Missoni and Moschino could have an impact on the parent brands. "Each new introduction under a parent brand umbrella forces consumers to redefine what that name stands for" (Buday 1989: 29). Keller (1993: 15) observes that "when multiple product or service extensions are associated with the brand, the congruence among their associations becomes an important determinant of the consistency and cohesiveness of the brand image" (Keller 1993: 15). This is particularly relevant for luxury brands, as it is believed that "whatever their nature and price, all products sold under the same brand name share a symbolic identity and a core of values expressing the 'quintessence' of that brand" (Dubois and Paternault 1995: 70-71). In fact, "if a firm appears to be stretching excessively beyond its area of competence, negative reactions such as skepticism or even laughter might be stimulated and lead to negative associations" (Aaker and Keller 1990: 30 but also Boush and Loken 1991: 26 Barone and Miniard 2002: 284).

In this sense, in order to protect the reputation and positioning on the market of Missoni and Moschino, it is essential that the brand identities of the extensions Missoni Hotel Edinburgh and Maison Moschino are coherent with that of the parent brands. This is desirable for the labels in question, that for this reason have decided to retain a certain degree of control over the ventures[23] and were involved in the creation of the 'look' of the hotels, and also for Rezidor and Hotelphilosophy as a means of protecting their investment, as the hotels rely on the fashion labels in terms of prestige and reputation to retain their high-end positioning. As discussed in Chapters Four, Five, Six, Seven and Eight, Missoni Hotel Edinburgh and Maison Moschino are coherent with the brand identity of Missoni and Moschino and with the version of Italianicity that they convey, both by relying on the same traits and by employing strategies of cultural opportunism that see the deployment of characteristics that are in line with their identity as a way to augment their offerings by supplementing and maximising the brand extension potential of those labels into areas, like gastronomy, that are removed from the core where they operate.

Moreover, the use of brand extension into hôtellerie might harm the parent brands Missoni and Moschino in terms of "brand dilution" (Aaker 1990, Milberg et al. 1997, Loken and Roedder John 1993, Lye et al. 2001). Brand dilution "damages the brand name through undesirable associations, weakening existing associations" (Lye et al. 2001: 55) and has been labelled by

23 This is not always the case in licensing agreements as they are usually associated with limited control by the parent brand over the new venture (Colucci et al. 2008: 129).

Aaker (1990) as the "ugly" face of brand extensions. Luxury brands experience more dilution effects than others (Lye et al. 2001: 56) and in this sense Missoni and Moschino face significant risks. Moreover, as luxury companies are particularly at risk if they employ brand extension widely and consistently, Missoni is more at risk than Moschino because it employs such a strategy more frequently than the latter. As observed by Loken and Roedder John (1993: 71), "questions have been raised about the possibility that repeated brand extensions will eventually 'wear out' a brand name and that unsuccessful brand extensions will 'dilute' the equity associated with a well established brand name". Brand dilution is associated, in particular, with brand extensions in the 'masstige' sector, which is one of the areas where Hotel Missoni Edinburgh and Maison Moschino also operates, as discussed in the next section.

2.5 Hotel Missoni Edinburgh and Maison Moschino: luxury, masstige and the symbolic power of brands

In this section, the cases of Hotel Missoni Edinburgh and Maison Moschino are explored in relation to practices aimed at broadening the customer base of luxury fashion brands in the masstige segment. In this sense, I argue that it is possible to identify different levels of luxury within the offerings of Hotel Missoni Edinburgh and Maison Moschino.

Despite the fact that Maison Moschino and Hotel Missoni Edinburgh are obviously upmarket and have a price tag to match, they also operate at different price ranges by offering services that appeal to a broader public than the very rich. For example people who cannot afford to stay at Maison Moschino or to dine at the hotel's restaurant Clandestino can nonetheless sip a cappuccino or enjoy an aperitif there, although they might still need to fulfill certain informal social requirements about looking the part and therefore show they possess, if not financial capital, at least forms of cultural capital.[24] Similarly, at Hotel Missoni Edinburgh it is possible to live the brand for less, either in the bar or at Cucina restaurant, which is far more reasonably

24 Bourdieu (1984) defines cultural capital as something that can be acquired both from academics institutions and through "indirectly absorbed" knowledge in the social upbringing of individuals (Miller 1987: 151 and also Trigg 2001: 104). This is particularly relevant for the consumption of luxury fashion goods like the ones associated with Missoni and Moschino as they require knowledge and competence in order to be recognised as such and provide social distinction. Bourdieu in fact argues that luxury objects are "distinguished and distinctive, selected and selective" (Bourdieu 1984: 278) because they are chosen by the higher classes as means of signifying distinction but at the same time they select their own audience in the sense that only a connoisseur has the capacity to properly appropriate and consume them (Bourdieu 1984: 281).

priced than Maison Moschino's restaurant, therefore appealing to a wider base than the one constituted by the hotel's guests. This means that these hotels also operate at the "masstige" level, associating their name with products that are not only characterised by a premium price (Truong et al. 2009). In this sense they present similarities with their parent company Moschino and Missoni, as they also offer products that are very expensive and more exclusive, like their first lines, and others that are cheaper, like diffusion lines (M Missoni, Moschino Cheap and Chic, and Love Moschino) and fragrances.

In this respect, within Maison Moschino and Hotel Missoni Edinburgh there coexist elements of horizontal brand extension (the category they belong to considering that they operate in a different sector but in the same luxury market segment where Missoni and Moschino operate) and elements of downscale vertical brand extension (that sees luxury brands associating their name to goods that are very different, in price or quality, to the high-end products that made the brands renowned in the first place and that contribute to create and reinforce their prestige and reputation).

By extending their brands downward into masstige, Missoni, Moschino and their respective ventures in the hospitality industry can augment their profits and turnover as they reach a broader customer base.

> While there are admittedly negative consequences for the core brand, there may also be tremendous market potential in introducing a step-down brand extension. The greatest potential for highly successful step-down brand extensions exists among prestige-oriented products. Middle-class consumer segments who cannot afford an expensive prestige-oriented core brand may enthusiastically welcome its lower-priced step-down extension. The profit potential for the step-down extension in a large middle-class market may be many times larger than the profit potential for the core prestige-oriented brand in a small upper-income market.
>
> (Kim and Lavack 1996: 28)

However, downscale vertical brand extensions can be dangerous for luxury brands (Arslan and Altuna, 2010: 172, Kim and Lavack 1996: 28, Loken and Roedder 1993 and Kunde 2002). Firstly, masstige strategies can be problematic in terms of maintaining the exclusivity and prestige associated with luxury companies (Stegemann 2006: 63, Roux 1995: 1977, Dubois and Paternault 1995: 73, Phau and Prendergast 2000) because they can reduce "the prestige of the core brand, perhaps because the core brand becomes mentally associated with a lesser quality brand extension" (Kim and Lavack 1996: 28) and, moreover, because vertical extensions offer very little distancing and "the risk of negative information is higher than with a horizontal extension" (Pitta and Katsanis, 1995: 60). In this sense Missoni, Moschino and their respective

ventures in the hospitality industry could risk losing their prestige by associating their name with lower priced products. Secondly, downscale vertical brand extensions can be dangerous for the above mentioned brands because they "have negative impact on the customers" (Pitta and Katsanis, 1995: 62) and carry the risk of creating negative feedback among their original clientèle of the brand. Regular consumers of the more expensive products of Missoni, Moschino, Missoni Hotel Edinburgh and Maison Moschino could feel cheated by these more accessible products (Pitta and Katsanis 1995: 62).[25]

> As another example of a potential dilution effect, successful extensions for brands with an exclusivity and prestige image that effectively broaden the target market may produce negative feedback effects on the brand from members of the original consumer franchise who resent the market expansion.
>
> (Keller 1993: 15)

In this sense, Maison Moschino and Hotel Missoni Edinburgh, like their parent brand, could alienate part of their customers by proposing offerings that aim to broaden their customer base downward. This phenomenon has been associated with claims that a democratisation of luxury is taking place, as "an increasing number of people gain access" to goods that are considered to belong to the realm of luxury (Mortelmans 2005: 517). However, I contend that the masstige phenomenon does not mean that more people can really access luxury goods but that they can merely access certain facets of luxury brands, the cheaper ones. I claim that luxury goods and luxury fashion labels are not necessarily synonyms and that by broadening their customer base Missoni and Moschino do not really contribute to the democratisation of luxury but only to the democratisation of their brand, at least in regard with certain products and lines which are accessible to many.

Scholars are far from unanimous in defining what constitutes luxury goods, not even in research belonging to the areas of marketing and economics (Vickers and Renand 2003: 461, Vigneron and Jonhson 1999: 1, Chevalier and Mazzalovo 2008: xi, Dubois et al. 2001: 6, Moore and Birtwistle 2005: 257).[26] Historically, conceptualisations and connotations of luxury have significantly changed[27] but they revolve around issues of opulence (Klein 1971: 434, Calefato

25 Although it has been argued that "it seems that a certain level of brand prestige can be maintained even when a mass targeting strategy is pursued" (Truong et al. 2009: 380).

26 However, there is a strong argument that luxury is generally associated with particular sectors and product classes. As argued by Jackson (2004: 155) "today there is a strong association between the notions of luxury and fashion". Other categories of luxury goods are perfumes and cosmetics, watches and jewellery, wines and spirits (Fionda and Moore 2009: 347, Jackson 2004) but also hotels, spas, clubs and furniture (Okonkwo 2007: 131), areas where many Italian luxury fashion brands have expanded into. Chevalier and Mazzalovo (2008: ix-x) includes also cars, tourism and private banking in their overview of the luxury industry.

27 In his comprehensive account of the history and development of the phenomenon, Berry (1994) highlights that for centuries luxury had to face criticism revolving around issues of inappropriateness. He observed that luxury was criticised in Ancient Greece from a political point of view, as Plato argued that it could weaken society and

2003), pleasure (Simpson and Weiner 1989: 128, Berry 1994: 1) desirability (Van Der Veen 2003: 408) and superfluity.[28] In this sense, conceptualisations of luxury goods and luxury fashion brands like Missoni and Moschino seem to converge, but when it comes to other traits that characterise luxury the similarities become more problematic, as they only involve certain facets of those labels, the ones that constitute the core where the brand originated and created the prestige of the companies in the first place, but do not represent the phenomenon of brand extensions in the masstige sector.

Luxury goods are associated with issues of rarity,[29] scarcity and restriction (Berthon 2009: 46, Dubois et al. 2001: 11, Mortelmans 2005: 505, Stegemann 2006: 59, Aiello and Donvito 2006: 2, Appadurai 1986: 38). Those traits are suitable to describe the high-end products of luxury fashion brands like Missoni and Moschino but not elements that are the result of downscale vertical brand extension. Luxury fashion brands sustain the scarcity of their most prestigious and expensive products through a variety of strategies like limited production and availability (Phau and Prendergast 2000, Dubois and Paternault 1995, Mortelmans 2005: 505, Aiello and Donvito 2006: 2). Labels like Missoni and Moschino employ strategies of limited distribution in order to create a "well-controlled scarcity" (Chevalier and Mazzalovo 2008: 14) and maintain their

erode the strength of the *polis* (Berry 1994: 45-51). This criticism was also shared by Aristotle and gained popularity in the following centuries, especially since "the luxurious lifestyle of the Romans was considered to be one of the main causes of the destruction of this huge empire" (Mortelmans 2005: 499). This criticism was framed in moral terms by Christianity, that associated luxury with corruption and sin, and until the pre-modern era the debate on luxury involved primarily this sphere (Berry 1994: 20). However, in the Eighteenth century a more positive meaning of luxury emerged (Berry 1994: 20). If the concept of luxury lost part of his moral taint in the Eighteenth century, however the debate over its inappropriateness continued, this time from a political point of view. In this respect, a strong opponent of luxury was Rousseau, who considered the inequality of society as a function of the indulgence in luxury of wealthy people, that he saw as the cause of the poverty of the majority of the population (Mortelmans 2005: 500, Williams 1991: 43). The political debate over luxury continued until the Nineteenth century (see Jennings 2007) and it appears that the controversial nature of luxury consumption is still topical these days.

28 However, it is problematic to define luxury in terms of opposition to necessities (Appadurai 1986: 16, Mortelmans 2005: 504). Firstly, because something that is considered luxury by one person could be regarded as necessary by someone else. For example Bourdieu (1984: 280) reported the words of the artistic director of the Christian Dior label, who argued that luxury is a necessity "for those who can afford it". Moreover, it has to be considered that for centuries "luxury fulfilled a central function in the stratification of a society" as luxury consumption was used by the ruling classes as a tool to display their power and prestige, and in this sense was therefore almost a necessity for them (Mortelmans 2005: 501 and Williams 1991: 28). Secondly the very notions of need and necessity are problematic in the sense that they are far from evident or natural. Particularly significant in this respect are the criticisms by Barthes and Baudrillard toward the concept of needs, which they considered to be linked to the notions of function and usefulness. Barthes (1977: 41-42) argued that function is merely one of the possible meanings that things can convey and not one of their natural attributes. He claimed that function "can be entirely reduced to ideology" as it is "merely an ideological stratagem" employed to naturalise and mythologise meanings that belong the cultural order (Slater 1997: 145). In fact a fur coat can be described as a garment that serve to the purpose of protecting from the cold, but it also distinguishes rich women and signals their status. Similarly, Baudrillard also criticises the notion of necessity because of its ideological nature. He argued "that concepts such as 'need', 'function' and 'usefulness' are ideological notions, 'alibis'" (Slater 1997: 146) created by the "production machinery" as means of convincing people to consume (Mortelmans 2005: 503). Baudrillard (1981: 82) claimed that needs exist only "because the system needs them" and that they are not evident nor unproblematic, as they change from culture to culture and in time, therefore showing their nature of cultural constructions.

29 Berry (1994: 5), however, argues that *per se* rarity is not a sufficient condition to define luxury goods, because the fact that a product is scarce does not necessarily make it a luxurious one.

prestige and reputation (Okonkwo 2007: 105, Moore and Birtwistle 2005: 268, Mortelmans 2005: 505) also in case of vertical brand extension. For example, similarly to a Missoni dress that is only available in Missoni stores or selected stockists, also a Moschino fragrance is not sold though mass distribution. However, with regard to perfumes and other products of vertical brand extension, is not possible to speak of real scarcity, as they are produced in large numbers, although in this case companies then try to convey at least an "impression of scarcity" (Chevalier and Mazzalovo 2008: 49).

Luxury goods have also been associated with exclusivity[30] and premium price[31] (Dubois et al. 2001: 9, Aiello and Donvito 2006 : 2, Mortelmans 2005: 506). Many authors in the marketing field consider exclusivity as a function of price (Mortelmans 2005: 505, Jackson 2004: 158, Fionda and Moore 2009: 349, Vigneron and Jonhson 1999: 4) and in this sense the more affordable facets of the aforementioned brands cannot be considered as exclusive as their high-end ones. However, because those lower-priced offerings are nonetheless associated with luxury brands Missoni and Moschino and share their aura, they are more expensive than other products in the same category, as for example a scarf by Missoni costs considerably more than one bought on the high street. Generally, branded products feature higher prices than unbranded ones (Rao and Monroe 1996: 518-519) and in this sense the aura of luxury brands means they can charge even more.[32]

> To borrow Pierre Bourdieu's notion of "symbolic magic", a fashion designer's label possesses the auratic potency to conjure the mystique of distinction, authenticity and exclusivity which in turn engenders a fervent dedication (verging on the religious) on the part of faithful costumers. The aura surrounding the name of the designer transforms object of no real value to objects of luxury, preciousness, and desire.
>
> (Potvin 2008: 247)

Luxury goods are associated with premium price but that is a problematic issue in the contemporary luxury industry, as many luxury brands like Missoni, Moschino and the related ventures in the hospitality industry, have associated their names to goods that are not always characterised by a high price tag, extending towards the lower-end of the market. Those product,

30 Other traits associated with luxury goods are high quality, which revolves around issues of good design and aesthetic value (Mortelmans 2005: 506, Dubois et al. 2001: 12, Chevalier and Mazzalovo 2008: xi, Aiello and Donvito 2006: 2), high quality materials (Jackson 2004: 157, Mortelmans 2005: 506) and excellent craftsmanship.

31 The high price of luxury goods can be a function of the high quality raw materials used (Mortelmans 2005: 506), of the level of craftsmanship employed, whether that is a true or supposed one (Tungate 2005: 18) but also of "an extra value of any kind gives the product an extra touch of prestige, a certain magic" (Mortelmans 2005: 506), i.e. the brand.

32 This phenomenon is criticised by Testoni (2010: 63), who considers the luxury brands' practice of charging premium prices for their products as "selling smoke", and argues that in this respect the quality of the goods can be quite poor at times.

the least luxurious and expensive ones produced by those brands, are accessible to the mass market but I contend that this does not mean that a democratisation of luxury is taking place, but merely that we see a democratisation of luxury brands.

> Consequently, there are now three distinct product groups in the luxury product portfolio: (a) Lower-priced luxury products such as make-up, cosmetics, fragrance and writing materials. (b) Medium-priced luxury products, such as restaurants, exclusive clubs, eyewear and in some cases wristwatches. (c) Expensive luxury products such as leather-goods, apparel, jewellery, wristwatches, special edition products, hotels and spas.
>
> (Okonkwo 2000: 237)

Scholars have created several conceptualisations in regard to the different levels of luxury that can be found within the luxury industry, as argued in relation with the cases of Missoni and Moschino. Alleres (1990) distinguishes three types of luxury goods: *inaccessible* luxury, characterised by very high prices, *intermediate* luxury, characterised by products that are more accessible than the goods in the previous category, and *accessible* luxury, characterised by even cheaper prices than the ones associated with the other two typologies of goods. It is the latter that nowadays is the most important financially, as Chevalier and Mazzalovo (2008: xi) report that "98% of the luxury business today corresponds to the accessible luxury category", which explains why labels like Moschino and Missoni face the risk of losing their prestige positioning and alienate their customer base by continuing to extend in this area. Similarly to Alleres, Silverstein and Fiske (2003 and 2005) also recognise that contemporary luxury goods are not always associated with premium prices and identified three typologies of *new luxury*, all of which "are not so expensive as to be out of reach" (Silverstein and Fiske 2005: 3), i.e. *accessible super-premium products*, *old luxury brand extensions* and *masstige goods*, which are products that refer to established luxury brands but are sold at much cheaper prices and therefore are accessible to the majority of the population. Considering this, it seems inappropriate to say, as claimed by Fionda and Moore (2009), that premium price characterises luxury fashion labels *tout court*. However, premium pricing is nonetheless one crucial aspect of luxury fashion labels like Missoni and Moschino, at least in their high-end manifestations, which are the ones that actually create the aura and prestige of the brands and that support their connotation of luxury, upon which they can subsequently cash-in through brand extensions.

Many have argued that masstige implies a democratisation of luxury (Mortelmans 2005: 517, Okonkwo 2007, Tungate 2009, Chadha and Husband 2006, Thomas 2007, Taylor et al. 2008, Kapferer 2012) but I contend that the phenomenon merely involves the democratisation of luxury brands. By buying a Missoni fragrance, a Moschino scarf or going for a drink at Maison

Moschino and Hotel Missoni Edinburgh people are not accessing the world of luxury but the one of the brand, and those are different things. However, luxury and luxury fashion brands share an inherent strength: their most distinctive feature is "irreducible entirely to the material" (Berthon 2009: 47).

Luxury brands, like luxury goods, are signs that stand for something else, for the brand or for signalling to "fairly complex social messages", *incarnated signs* "whose principal use is rhetorical and social"(Appadurai 1986: 38). In fact, "more than other products, luxury items are bought for what they mean, beyond what they are" (Dubois and Paternault 1995: 71), and this is true also for the cheaper products associated with Missoni and Moschino. Many academics observe that luxury goods and luxury brands (Slater 1997: 158-159) are purchased in the first place because of their social value, as they are means of distinction for their consumers and work as status symbols (Nueno and Quelch 1998: 61, Chadha and Husband 2006, Vigneron and Jonhson 1999: 4-7, Danziger 2005: 189, Aiello and Donvito 2006: 2). As observed by Veblen (1994), the value of goods is not limited to the attributes of the products *per se* but resides also in their consumers, who employ consumption practices to signal their socio economic status, i.e. wealth, prestige and power. In this sense, goods associated with luxury brands like Missoni and Moschino are purchased because they possess a "semiotic ability to mark social position" and therefore can become "tools for status competition" (Slater 1997: 156).

> Goods are able to mark status because they are part of the lifestyle of a high status group. Consequently, lower status social climbers lay claim to higher status by emulating that lifestyle, by buying those goods, consuming after the fashion of the high orders, "aping" their manners, style, etiquette and so on.
>
> (Slater 1997: 156)

It has been argued that nowadays consumer behaviour is no longer simply a function of social positioning but it is actually shaped by "lifestyles that cut across the social hierarchy" (Trigg 2001: 99, Featherstone 1991, Mclntyre 1992).[33] Slater (1997: 193) argues that in the post-modern

33 The conceptualisation of consumer behaviour in terms of lifestyles replaces models that saw it as a function of class, like those of Veblen (1994), Bourdieu (1984) and Leibenstein (1950). Veblen argued that the leisure class, composed by people that "were not required to work" (Trigg 2001: 100), was characterised by a specific consumption pattern that involved great displays of wealth, that he termed conspicuous consumption, to demonstrate exclusivity, status and social distinction, which were emulated by the lower classes as a means to achieve status. This model goes only in one-direction as "the members of each stratum accept as their ideal of decency the scheme of life in vogue in the next higher stratum, and bend their energies to live up to that ideal" (Veblen 1994: 52). As lower classes acquire goods that were the exclusive domain of the higher classes, those goods lose their power to confer exclusivity and status and as a consequence the higher classes then move on to other entities that will allow them to secure distinction, in a never ending game of catch-up (Trigg 2001: 101). This is because the higher classes expressed their status also through control over matters of taste and culture (Miller 1987: 148-9). However, Veblen's model presupposes that different classes share the same taste, something that Bourdieu (1984) argues against. For Bourdieu, taste revolves around "cultural patterns of choices and preferences" (Slater 1997: 159) that distinguish different classes and cause social stratification (Miller 1987:

era we are living in there has been a "disaggregation of social structure into lifestyles" so that "the relationship between social class and consumption has dissipated" (Trigg 2011: 103). "Identity now comes as much from 'lifestyle' as it does from the classic sociological concepts of gender, class and race/ethnicity" (Caplan 1997: 15). As Mason (1998: 130) observes, after the 1970s "traditional concepts of social classes based on education and occupation were breaking down" and lifestyle "grew in importance as an indicator of social group membership", which could be "secured by adopting appropriate patterns of consumption".

> The shift from a social organisation around class to a social organisation around lifestyle is, semiotically as well as economically and socially, of the greatest significance. The issue is not whether Western post-industrial societies still are or are no longer organised by the social facts of class, or to what extent social class and lifestyle now co-exist and interpenetrate. The issue is that semiotically speaking the culturally dominating paradigm in the public domain is now that of "lifestyle": it organises advertising and its discourses as much as it is beginning to dominate other social and political domains and their discourses.
>
> (Kress and Leeuwen 2001: 35)

The particular kind of brand extensions that constitute the object of my research can be seen as a provider of lifestyle for customers that are fascinated by the world of luxury fashion brands like Moschino and Missoni, projecting "an image of themselves to the public as an expression of their true selves or their ideal selves" (Okonkwo 2007: 129). In this respect, hotels like Maison Moschino and Hotel Missoni Edinburgh are appealing because they let "customers indulge in the fantasy by moving into rooms that are live-in ads" for the brand products (McNeill and McNamara 2010: 149) and let them experience a lifestyle that reflects the philosophy of the brand, in a true 3D brand experience (Kent 2003, Musso 2002a).

2.6 Beyond the brand

150). According to Bourdieu, each class is characterised by its own particular taste. Whereas Veblen theorised a trickle-down model that saw the lower classes always try to emulate the higher ones by copying their consumption patterns, Bourdieu on the other hand argued that there is a "trickle round of tastes" (Trigg 2001: 106). Each class considers its own taste to be natural, which implies the rejection of any other taste (Bourdieu 1984: 56), but "different tastes have different degrees of social legitimacy and value in the wider society" and this causes "inevitable conflicts and competition over the power to define this grades of legitimacy" (Slater 1997: 160-1). For Bourdieu (1984: 56), taste is "the product of the conditionings associated with a particular class of conditions of existence" and in this sense is not only a function of economic capital but, more importantly, of cultural capital. Leibenstein (1950), on the other hand, conceptualised a series of different patterns of consumption: the *Veblen's effect*, a consumption phenomenon where people purchase goods in order to signal their wealth and status privileging products characterised by high prices, the *Bandwagon effect*, similar to Blumer's (1969) collective selection, where people purchase goods because other people are consuming them, and the *Snob effect*, that on the opposite see people avoiding certain goods precisely because other people are consuming them.

The relationship between fashion and architecture[34] has grown increasingly close since the 1990s, when "global retail conglomerates investing heavily in fashion brands" forged a "new dialogue between retail architects and fashion designers as part of branding strategies that aimed to create globally resonant brands with consistent positioning and differentiated appeal" (Anderson et al. 2010: 5). More and more fashion labels have enlisted acclaimed architects to create flagship stores that could showcase and enhance a brands' image (Bingham 2005, Hanisch 2006, Tungate 2005), in a collaboration that implies benefit for both parties. If fashion brands acquire additional visibility and prestige through association with renowned architects as "their involvement helps to secure coverage of the flagship in the 'quality' press and among the cognoscenti – which in turn engenders interest in the company among lucrative target customer groups" (Moore and Doherty 2001: 291), on the other hand the latter can achieve the status of 'starchitects' (Knox 2012) and acquire even more notoriety and prestige, as well as lucrative commissions, on the back of it.[35] This is the case for the collaboration between Matteo Thun and Missoni to create flagship stores, which led to the architect also working on the Missoni Hotel Edinburgh.

The issue of how spaces and services can be used to convey brand identity has received significant attention in business literature, under a variety of labels, like experiential marketing (Atwal and Williams 2009, Holbrook and Hirschman 1982, Pine and Gilmore 1998 and 1999, Schmitt 1999, LaSalle and Britton 2002, Caru' and Cova 2003, Ponsonby-Mccabe and Boyle 2006 and, from a semiotic point of view, Boero 2009), sensory branding (Hultén et al. 2009, Lindstrom 2005, Krishna 2009), brandscape (Gottdiener 1998, Klingmann 2010, Ponsonby-Mccabe and Boyle 2006, Riewoldt 2002a, Sherry 1998, Thompson and Arsel 2004) and servicescapes (Bitner 1992, Aubert-Gamet and Cova 1999, Sherry 1998). My research, in accordance with studies that have examined the relationship between consumption spaces and architecture in terms of brand identity (Borden 2000, Brauer 2002, Kent 2003, Kent and Stone 2007a and 2007b, Kent and Kirby 2009, Kirby and Kent 2010, Manlow and Nobbs 2013), considers those elements in regard to the cases of Maison Moschino and Hotel Missoni Edinburgh. However, in opposition to this literature, my thesis examines how spaces and services associated with brands can convey meanings beyond the label's world and in relation to issues of national identity, with a particular focus on Italy and Italianicity.

In this respect, I extend Musso's (2002 and 2005) conceptualisation of *spazi parlanti* (i.e. talking spaces) in two directions. The term was coined by Italian scholar Patrizia Musso in order to

34 This phenomenon has been examined in Quinn (2003), Fausch (1994), Steiner (2000), Rendell (2000) and Patton (2004).

35 Architects have also explored the realm of fashion by designing clothes and accessories, like for example Gianfranco Ferre', a fashion designer who trained as an architect, or Zaha Hadid, who did collections for Vuitton and Lacoste (Anderson et a. 2010: 5).

describe retail spaces that successfully convey the identity of the brands associated with them, contributing to the creation of a complex *mise-en-scène* that ultimately 'speaks' of the brand (Musso 2002: 1, Musso 2005: 60-61). Musso reflects on the opportunities that spaces can offer to brands and argues that these are fully realised only when such spaces are coherent with a brand identity as *per se* the fact that brands are present in a physical location is not enough to make a place a *spazio parlante*. Many shops and flagship stores, especially in the luxury fashion sector, are aesthetically pleasant and spectacular but ultimately fail to 'speak' of the brand because they are not designed after exhaustive studies concerning either the brand's characteristics or its clientèle, often being merely a function of the taste of the architect that designed them (Musso 2005: 61).

I firstly extend Musso's conceptualisation of *spazi parlanti* from retail to other spaces associated with brands, like hotels, restaurants and bars, as those entities can also respond to the same logic. Moreover, I extend Musso's conceptualisation also in another direction, as I contend that Maison Moschino and Hotel Missoni Edinburgh can convey other meanings besides the identity of the label they refer to, meanings that concern a broader socio-cultural context and that revolve around issues of national identity. This is possible because national identity is not only constructed through discourses of nationalism but also the ones of "nationness" (Borneman 1992: 352) that are created by a variety of media, narratives and practices. Those are more discreet mechanisms that can nonetheless actively contribute to shape nations' identities, as the case of Hotel Missoni Edinburgh and Maison Moschino demonstrate.

In this respect, my research belongs to a body of current works that seek to explore issues of Italian national identity through a variety of media, narratives and practices, like in the cases of Musso and Bergamaschi (2010), Girardelli (2004), Montanari (2010), Helstosky (2003), Chiaro (2009) Barthes (1977), Ardizzoni (2005 and 2007), Buchanan (2008), Girelli (2006), Bolton and Manson (2010), Coleman (2012) and Giusto (2011). More broadly, issues of national identity have been examined in relation to its on-screen representation (Bamford 1999, Chakravarty 1993, Davis 1996, Ezra and Harris 2000, Richards 1997, Kinder 1993 and 1997), to media and journalism (Brookes 1999, Law 2001, Price 1995), to fashion (Goodrum 1998, 2005 and 2009, Melchior 2010, Saucier 2011, Skafidas 2009), to retail (Reimer and Leslie 2008, Sapin 2004, Creighton 1991, Cambridge 2011), to food (Cwiertka 2006, Fromer 2008, Guy 2007, Rabikowska 2010), to brands and marketing (Bulmer and Buchanan-Oliver 2010, Dong and Tian 2009, Perry 1994, Prideaux 2009) and other phenomena like beauty pageants, temporality or architecture (Banet-Weiser 1999, Edensor 2006, Vale 2008).

Now national identity is as likely to be identified in film and television

> products and styles, in popular music, and in fashion. […] The mass media has proved to be the most important way of disseminating representations of the nation.
>
> (Edensor 2002: 141)

As argued by Edensor (2002: 17) national identity can be created and reproduced through different 'mundane' elements like landscapes, films or advertising and is grounded "in the everyday". In accordance with Billig (1995: 6), he also argues that national identity is reproduced through the apparent innocence of everyday discourses, as "daily, the nation is indicated, or 'flagged' in the lives of its citizenry". Edensor argues that national identity can be "found in bewilderingly dense profusion of signifiers, objects, practices and spaces" and is "constituted by innumerable pathways, connections and sources" (Edensor 2002: 33). In this perspective, national identity is a "fluid" (Cartocci 2009: 184) or "liquid" entity (Bauman 2000) that, far from being fixed and established once and for all, remains "perpetually open to context, to elaboration and to imaginative reconstruction" (Cubitt 1998: 3). In this sense, national identity is constantly evolving and open to be modified by a variety of players, including the brands and spaces that are considered here within the context of my thesis.

> A sense of national identity then is not a once and for all thing, but is dynamic and dialogic, found in the constellations of a huge cultural matrix of images, ideas, spaces, things, discourses and practices.
>
> (Edensor 2002: 17)

National identity is not static, but is "never complete, always in process" (Hall 1990: 222). Brands also contribute to this process, constructing myths of national identity that then circulate worldwide, creating and re-shaping, in an on-going process, powerful images whose influence goes beyond the realm of commodities and into culture. In this sense the products, discourses and narratives associated with luxury fashion labels examined here are pivotal, as they can greatly influence "popular notions of Italianess, Frenchness and Britishness" (Davey 1999: 121). In this respect, it is not relevant whether those notions of national identity are the result of narratives developed within the boundaries of the countries in question or outside of them. As argued by Edensor (2002: 144) "the production of national identity" can also occur "outside of the nation". "Images of Italy from the outside feed back into the internal public debate on what it means to be Italian" (Croci and Lucarelli 2010: 253) therefore contributing to re-shaping national identity.

From this perspective, national identity is a "discursive concept, built by different kinds of texts, tourist texts (brochures, leaflets, guides, pictures) and other kinds (movies, newspapers, literature)" (Brucculeri 2007: 1), created by different sources and media, in a comparative

perspective based on difference as a salient identity-making tool (Ricoeur 1996). In semiotic terms, nations are texts (Ferraresi 2000: 245), entities created through narratives (Bhabha 1990) where at times reality and mystification merge (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983). The ideas of national identity that those different elements convey are not natural nor obvious, but constructions whose strength do not lie in their accuracy.

Discourses of nationhood in branding, like the ones employed by Hotel Missoni Edinburgh and Maison Moschino, are intrinsically selective. They do not aim to convey an accurate portrait of nations but only emphasise certain traits associated with them that are functional in reinforcing the positive image of the brands. This means that they contribute to re-shape conceptualisations of national identity by focusing only on positive characteristics and rejecting less desirable associations, creating 'idyllic' images that in turn contribute to reinforce the positive image of the brands. In this sense the notions created by brands as a function of this logic can be described as "benign form of national consciousness because elements that are not benign are not permissible within a nation-branding framework" (Aronczyk 2008: 55). This is not to say that the notions of Italianicity mobilised by Hotel Missoni Edinburgh and Maison Moschino are necessarily benign or harmless. As discussed in Chapter Four, Hotel Missoni Edinburgh reproduces certain ideas about women and home-making practices that refer to gender inequalities. Moreover, despite the fact that such forms of nationalism might "lack the violent passion of the extreme right" they can nonetheless be mobilised in case of war.[36]

The next chapter is dedicated to issues of methodology, before moving on to the discussion of the case studies Hotel Missoni Edinburgh and Maison Moschino in Chapters Four, Five, Six and Seven, where I unpack the relationship they hold with Italianicity.

36 In line with Arendt (1977).

Chapter Three

Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter is dedicated to issues of methodology. Firstly, the rationale for the methodology chosen for this study is described and my research approach is discussed in more detail to clarify of what the methodology consists. This research is characterised by a strong interdisciplinary methodology where semiotic theories are assigned a privileged position. I argue that they are particularly suitable for analysing hospitality spaces because they allow an examination of all the different elements and materials featured in the case studies (architecture, interior design, gastronomy, written texts, advertising) under the same approach and allow for the unpacking of the subtle and complex meanings conveyed by them. Secondly, I argue that the present study adopts a socio-semiotic approach that utilises tools both from structural and interpretative semiotics, in a triangulation of methods to augment the depth and rigour of research. Thirdly, I discuss in more detail the case study methodology of my study, arguing that it is an appropriate theoretical tool in the context of this research. Moreover, the process of selection of case studies is clarified and I argue that the process of self-selection that led to the choice of examining the cases of Missoni Hotel Edinburgh and Maison Moschino is a function of the particular field that I examine, confirming that the world of luxury fashion is a very difficult area to research, as brands are very cautious in allowing access to both their staff or premises. Fourthly, I address issues related to the different data and materials that constitute the basis of this study and discuss the different methods and techniques employed to collect them with regard to observation and interviews. Lastly, the limits of this study are examined, arguing the case for the inevitable situatedness of research in the field of humanities and against the claims that the use of semiotics implies a fixity of meaning, as the results of a semiotic analysis do not imply any claims of being definitive nor of being the only possible ones.

3.2 Rationale for the methodology

This research belongs to an established tradition of works that have used a similar approach, based on semiotics, to examine issues of advertising (Barthes 1973, Kress and Leeuwen 1996, Eugeni and Fumagalli 1999, Bianchi 2005, Volli 2005), branding and marketing (Semprini 1993, 1997, 2003a, Floch 2001, Grandi 1994, Ceriani 2001, Traini 2005), luxury (Mortelmans 1997, 1998; Bertrand 2002, Hetzel 2003, Enzensberger 2005) and spaces of consumption (Sherry 1998, Gottdiener 1982, 1998, Hetzel and Aubert 1993, Hetzel 2003, Floch 1988, Ceriani 1998, Thurlow and Jaworski 2012 and moreover Giannitrapani 2004, Musso and Bergamaschi 2010 and Girardelli 2004 with a particular focus on Italian identity). For example, Girardelli (2004: 307) has examined the case of the American restaurant chain Fazoli employing a semiotic perspective to unpack the company's communicative strategies used to promote its association with Italy, and aimed at the commodification of the Italian national identity and the promotion of its symbolic consumption. Musso and Bergamaschi (2010), on the other hand, examined Italian restaurants in Milan in terms of being providers of Italianicity, using semiotic mapping to argue that references to Italy were a factor contributing to the positive connotations of businesses and to the enhancement of customer experience.

This study is based on the analysis of qualitative data through an interdisciplinary methodology and utilises tools from several theoretical approaches, like cultural studies, marketing, sociology, human geography, critical theory and semiotics in order to provide a better understanding of the phenomena under discussion. Semiotic theories are assigned a privileged position because they are more suitable for the purposes of this study both in regard with the broad variety of materials examined here and in terms of their in-depth analysis. Moreover, semiotic theories are capable of dialogue with different theoretical approaches, as demonstrated by the development of new branches like socio-semiotics, as discussed later in more detail.

Firstly, semiotic theories are very versatile and allow the analysis of rather different elements, having been applied to a variety of phenomena, from written texts to images, from architecture to objects and even social practices, as their main concern is meaning and how that is constructed by different means (Magli 2004, Pozzato 2001 and 2004, Bianchi 2005, Hammad 2003, Fontanille 2004, Lorusso and Violi 2004, Marrone 1995, Cavalieri 2010, Baldini 2005, Ceriani 1995, Schapiro 2002, Manetti et al. 2006, Semprini 1993). Semiotics is “a flexible construct that is applicable to any physical-or non-physical stimulus impinging on any of the human senses or faculty” (Mick at al. 2004: 53), making this approach particularly suitable for analysing the complexity of the hospitality spaces examined here. The possibility to employ the same

framework of analysis for all the materials that I take into account in my research constitutes the advantage of using semiotic theories over other methodological approaches. Whilst there are a variety of established qualitative research methods that could have been used to examine parts of my data, only semiotic theories can account for all of them.

Conversation analysis would have been suited to examine only a limited part of my data (Drew and Heritage 2006, Hutchby and Wooffitt 1998, Hutchby 2006), similar in this respect to visual methodologies, that would have been suited to unpack only the meaning of images and visual materials (Rose 2011, Banks 2001). Although discourse analysis can be used to examine a broader spectrum of data than allowed by the methodologies discussed above, i.e. texts and images (Denscombe 2010: 287, Wodak and Meyer 2009: 16, McHoul and Rapley 2001: 25), similarly in this respect to content analysis (Li and Kuo 2003, Bale 2008, Kompatsiaris et al. 2012), those also could have been used to examine only a limited part of my data. Conversely, semiotics offers the instruments to investigate all the materials that I examine in my research, including gastronomy (see Greimas 1984, Manetti et al. 2006, Parasecoli 2011, Marrone 1995, Buosi 2002) and is more suitable than other methodologies for the purposes of this study because they allow the unpacking of the subtle and complex meanings conveyed by the different entities that I examine in my research by providing tools for their in-depth analysis (Magli 2004, Pozzato 2001, Hammad 2003). This is particularly evident in comparison with content analysis, that is best suited to examine bigger amounts of data and is considered a "rather crude instrument for dealing with the subtle and intricate ways in which a text conveys meaning" (Denscombe 2010: 283), in this sense being less appropriate than semiotics for the present research as it deals with a limited number of complex texts whose significance goes beyond the face value of its element. Moreover, because I triangulate semiotic methods by adopting tools both from the structural and interpretive tradition, in a socio-semiotic perspective, my approach can deliver even more depth of analysis.

3.3 Semiotics and Socio-semiotics

A socio-semiotic methodology is particularly suited to the study of Maison Moschino and Missoni Hotel Edinburgh because socio-semiotics is the branch of semiotics that focuses on the social dimension of signifying processes and examines advertisements, promotional strategies, consumption spaces and social practices. Socio-semiotics can be broadly defined as "the study of

the different signifying systems within society" (Bronwen and Ringham 2006: 189).

> Social semiotic is not 'pure' theory, not a self-contained field. It only comes into its own when it is applied to specific instances and specific problems, and it always requires immersing oneself not just in semiotic concepts and methods as such but also in some other field.
>
> (Leeuwen 2005: 1)

In this respect the socio-semiotic approach transcends the distinction between application and theory, recognising the strict relationship that holds between them and the impact that the analysis of phenomena can have on theory. Like in the case of semiotics, there is no "clear-cut definition" (Randviir 2004: 44) of socio-semiotics, as many different conceptualisations of the discipline exists, allowing the discipline to examine a variety of phenomena, including promotional and consumption spaces, in line with the purposes of this study.

"Semiotics is a huge field, and no treatment of it can claim to be comprehensive"(Chandler 2007: xiv). The field of semiotics (from the Greek *semeion*, meaning 'sign') is quite difficult to define, as it consists of an unbounded number of studies that, at first sight, can appear to have little in common, as "current trends in semiotics are quite heterogeneous" (Nöth 1995: x). Besides the most general definition of semiotics as the discipline that studies signs and signification "there is remarkably little consensus among contemporary theorists regarding the scope of the subject, core concepts or methodological tools" (Chandler 2007: xiv). One of the broader and more topical definitions has been formulated by Umberto Eco, an Italian semiotician, who theorised that "semiotics is concerned with everything that can be taken as a sign" (Eco 1979a: 7). In the words of Mick et al. (2004: 60) "semiotics is primarily a doctrine, philosophy, or perspective that is comprised of certain assumptions and concepts that assist in the description and, occasionally, the explanation of communication and meaning".

Semprini (2003b: 15-29) recognises that the distinctive traits of socio-semiotics, in opposition to semiotics *tout court*, consist in the fact that the discipline focuses specifically on socio-cultural phenomena and social discourses in a perspective that considers both their textual dimension and the context within which they take place. "Socio-semiotics adopts the basic premise that an analysis of material culture, including images, should be done by taking into account exosemiotic processes of an economic and political nature" (Mortelmans 1998: 190). The socio-semiotic gaze focuses on how meanings are strictly intertwined with social conflict and issues of power, taking into account how discourses can constitute social groups and ideologies, or break them up, and support claims of legitimacy concerning beliefs, values or ideologies (Semprini 2003b: 23).

Moreover, Semprini (2003b: 24) also recognises that the socio-semiotic approach is

characterised by a focus on cultural and symbolical dimensions of communicative practices, so that its perspective is similar to the one of cultural studies. In this respect this work, that employs a socio-semiotic perspective alongside the cultural studies paradigm, draws on such affinity to augment the richness and depth of the analysis and provide a better understanding of the phenomena under discussion.

Lastly, the socio-semiotic approach is defined as a "form of inquiry" that "does not offer ready-made answers" but offers "ideas for formulating questions and ways of searching for answers" (Leeuwen 2005: 1). Significant contributions in this field come from French and Italian theorists like Landowski (1999), Landowski and Fiorin (2000) Semprini (1993, 1996, 1997, 2003b), Floch (2001), Ferraro (1999), Marrone (2001, 2004, 2007), Pozzato (1992, 1999, 2001, 2008, 2011), Calefato (2002), Righetti (2003), Traini (2005, 2010), Rutelli (2007), Pezzini (2008), Pezzini and Rutelli (2006), Finocchi (2006, 2009), Spaziante (2007), Boero (2009) and Mangano (2011). My study belongs to an established tradition of works that have used a similar socio-semiotic approach to examine flagship stores and their relationship with luxury fashion labels, like Ceriani (1998 and 1999), Hetzel and Aubert (1993) and Hetzel (2003), and to investigate the advertising strategies of luxury fashion labels, like Arning (2009), Perri (2006), Mazzalovo (2011) and Beasley and Danesi (2002).

Semiotics, like socio-semiotics, is often used as an umbrella term that embraces two very approaches, structural and interpretive. The structural and interpretive paradigms focus on different issues, textual analysis and interpretation, and are sometimes considered as mutually exclusive, but I argue that they can co-exist and be productively employed in studying the phenomena examined here from different perspectives.

Structural semiotics focuses primarily on the textual dimension of the signifying process, and originates from the insights of Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure in regard with *signified* and *signifier* (1916),[37] drawing on the works of Hjelmslev (1961) and Barthes (1973, 1974, 1975, 1977, 1982 and 1983). Greimas (1969, 1970, 1976 and 1983) also belongs to this tradition, although his works are sometimes described as belonging to *generative semiotics* due to the fact that he theorised how meaning is generated from the deeper to the more superficial level of texts.[38] Interpretive semiotics originated from Charles Sanders Peirce (1931), whose work is closely related to logic (Chandler 2007: 3) and on the other hand focuses on issues of interpretation. This tradition is sometimes also labelled as the *American tradition* (Gurbal 2008: 41). However this label, that focuses on the geographical provenance of the founder of such a

37 Although his conceptualisation of sign has been subsequently surpassed by more comprehensive models like the ones of Peirce (1931) and Hjelmslev (1961).

38 On structural semiotics see also Marsciani and Zinna (1991), Pozzato (2001), Magli (2004), Traini (2005) and Paolucci (2010).

tradition and refers to the fact that such an approach is strongly present in American academia, is inadequate to truly represent this tradition because it fails to take into account that such an approach is not exclusive to American scholars, but is also present in Japan (Kawama 1987 and 1990) and Europe, as demonstrated by the works of Italian Umberto Eco (1962, 1979, 1990, 1994, 1995, 1997) and Finnish Susann Vihma (1992 and 1995).[39] The label the *Continental tradition*, that stands in opposition to the *American tradition*[40] to designate structural semiotics, is similarly restrictive and inadequate, firstly because, despite the fact that this "paradigm has heavily influenced Continental European semiotics, most especially in France" (Mick et al. 2004: 5), it is not limited to these geographic boundaries, and secondly because it fails to recognise the different approaches of European authors, suggesting that a homogeneous theoretical landscape can be found on the Continent. Far from being an undifferentiated field of research, European semiotics is constituted by very different currents such as generative and interpretative semiotics. Similarly to semiotics, socio-semiotics also comprises two main traditions: structural and interpretative. Hodge and Kress (1988), Leeuwen (2005) and Vannini (2007) belong to the latter approach and build on the legacy of Peirce (1931) and Voloshinov (1973). Vannini (2007: 120) is particularly critical of the structural approach that, following Saussure, "privilege[s] the study of signifiers rather than the study of their referents" and conceptualises socio-semiotics in opposition to that tradition. However socio-semiotics is not necessarily interpretive and, in contrast to Vannini's claims, can also be structural, as demonstrated by the work of Floch (2001), Landowski (1999), Mortelmans (1998), Marrone (2001, 2007) and Pozzato (1992, 1999, 2001, 2008, 2011). Pozzato (2001: 213) observes, in particular, how a structural approach does not imply the denial of the social dimension of signification, as that was already present in Saussure (1916). Moreover, Pozzato (2001: 205) notices also how Greimas (1966, 1970, 1976, 1983), the structural theorist *par excellance*, already developed analytical methods that aimed to study not only literary texts but social texts like consumption practices, making it a suitable tool for the present study, in addition to the interpretive tradition to investigate issues of interpretation.

In this perspective, structural and interpretative paradigms are closely intertwined and, despite the fact that they are sometimes considered as mutually exclusive, they can actually co-exist and be productively employed in studying social phenomena from different perspectives. My study utilises tools from both the structural and interpretive traditions, in accordance with Randviir (2004: 46-47), who also observes that socio-semiotics should include methods from those

39 On interpretive semiotics see also Pisanty and Pellerey (2004), Petrilli and Ponzio (2005), Volli (2005), Paolucci (2007).

40 Some authors use the words semiotics and semiology to describe respectively the interpretive and structural approach. This is in opposition to Guiraud (1975: 2) who claims that the words semiotics and semiology refer to the same discipline although Europeans use the latter and Americans the former, Holbrook and Hirschman (1993: 3), in line with Culler (2002: 5), theorises semiology as belonging to the structural tradition in opposition to the semiotics methodology originated in Peirce (Gurbal 2008: 67-68).

different disciplines to study sociocultural phenomena.

The specific methods that are employed in this research are discussed in chapters Four, Five, Six and Seven that present the results concerning the cases of Maison Moschino and Hotel Missoni Edinburgh. For clarity's sake, an approach where results and discussion are combined was preferred, and not kept separated in a methodological section to allow for a better readability of this thesis. In those chapters, the semiotic approach is balanced and enriched through the use of a variety of tools and theories developed in the areas of cultural studies, social sciences and marketing, with the goal of providing more depth to my research and a better understanding of the phenomena under discussion.

3.4 Case studies

This section discusses in more detail the case study methodology of my study. Firstly, the reasons that make the case study an appropriate theoretical tool in the context of this research are examined. Secondly, the process of self-selection that led to the choice of examining the cases of Missoni Hotel Edinburgh and Maison Moschino is discussed, contextualising it as a function of the particular field I examine.

"As a form of research, [a] case study is defined by interest in individual cases, not by the methods of inquiry used" (Stake 2003: 134) and is "a strategy for doing research which involves an empirical investigation of a particular contemporary phenomenon within its real life context using multiple sources of evidence" (Robson 1993: 52). In this respect, such a methodology seemed the most appropriate to examine the object of this research (i.e. brand extension of Italian luxury fashion labels in the hospitality business), as that could provide depth to the research and a better understanding of the phenomena under discussion. In fact "the use of the case study method assists in providing in-depth descriptions and illustrations rather than surface-level observations" and moreover "can provide contextual and historical dimensions to research" (Fionda and Moore 2009: 352 but see also Yin 2009 and Tellis 1997).

Furthermore, a case study methodology allows the gathering of relevant information on a phenomenon that has been subjected to very limited attention in academia. The use of a case study methodology belongs to an established tradition within research concerning the luxury fashion industry, as many works have employed such a strategy to examine this field (see for example Ceriani 2001, Vickers and Renand 2003, Moore and Birtwistle 2004 and 2005, Tungate 2005, Okonkwo 2007, Corbellini and Saviolo 2009, Matthiesen and Phau 2010). Because the

case studies examined in this work aim to shed light on the different elements (architecture, interior design, gastronomy) of Hotel Missoni Edinburgh and Maison Moschino with the ultimate aim of exploring not merely the characteristics of the places *per se* but also the concept of Italianicity, they belong to the 'instrumental' case study category. In opposition to intrinsic ones, "this use of case study is to understand something else" and involves "a research question, a puzzlement, a need for general understanding, and feel that we might get insight into the question by studying a particular case" (Stake 1995: 3).

This thesis examines two cases, Hotel Missoni Edinburgh and Maison Moschino and, in line with a multiple case study methodology, allows the distinguishing characteristics of the single cases "to act as springboard for theoretical reflection about contrasting findings" (Bryman 2008: 55). There is no set rule as to what the ideal number of case studies is, as that is a function of the particular field where the researcher operates, of the materials examined and of the approach chosen, where the more in-depth an investigation is, the lesser is the quantity of the cases examined. In this respect, the number of case studies examined here is suitable to the purposes of this study because it employs an in-depth interdisciplinary approach, where semiotics is assigned a privileged position, in order to provide a thorough and detailed account of the different phenomena at stake. Depth, rather than breadth, determined the number of cases comprising the study.

The number of case studies examined in this research was ultimately the function of a self-selection process. Many potential cases concerning brand extension of Italian luxury fashion brands in the hospitality business were initially identified. The luxury positioning of the companies considered was confirmed by international fashion journals, like *Vogue* and *Elle*, the financial press and academic literature (Chevalier and Mazzalovo 2008: 39, Okonkwo 2007: 40, Chadha and Husband 2006), buttressed by adherence to models of luxury fashion labels (Fionda and Moore 2009, Okonkwo 2007, Bruce and Kratz 2007, Moore and Birtwistle 2005) and, more generally, to conceptualisations of luxury brands (Beverland 2004, Jackson 2004, Dubois et al. 2001, Phau and Prendergast 2000 and Alleres 1990). After mapping the field constituted by the forays of Italian luxury fashion companies into the hospitality business (see Chapter Two), several possible case studies where identified but they were narrowed down firstly considering whether they belonged to the brand extension category and secondly according to accessibility in terms of the availability of funding to visit the places in question and of the collaboration of the entities involved.

When the potential case studies were narrowed down considering issues of brand extension, what was considered to be determinant was not merely the fact that an Italian luxury fashion brand was connected to a hotel, but the fact that the name of the Italian luxury fashion brand featured

explicitly in the name of the hotel according to the principles of brand extension. The rationale for privileging cases of brand extension was that I was not only interested in examining the versions of Italianicity portrayed by those hotels but also in comparing them with the ones conveyed by Italian luxury fashion brands in order to identify situations of dialogue or contradiction. In this sense, phenomena of brand extension were privileged because of their relationship to their parent brand. According to this logic, six hotels where identified, but they had to be narrowed down to four because of logistics and availability of funding in relation to visiting places outside of Europe. In regard to those possible case studies, the fashion labels, the hotels and their restaurants were contacted and given the opportunity to take part in the research, by email and phone and this led to a subsequent further self-selection which led to the choice of examining the cases of Missoni Hotel Edinburgh and Maison Moschino.

In the end it was impossible for me to obtain the collaboration of the Italian luxury fashion labels involved. Some companies immediately refused to take part, some failed to even provide an answer whereas others offered to help but subsequently failed to act accordingly. In this sense my research confirms that the world of luxury fashion is notoriously a very difficult area to research, as brands are very cautious in allowing access to both their staff or premises. As observed by Tungate (2005: 3) “the fashion industry, as you might expect, can be haughty and insular, and suspicious of outsiders”. The primary reason for such wariness is the widespread belief that researchers might pose a threat to the brand either by describing the brand in less than enthusiastic terms or by disclosing sensitive information. “All these brands are constantly on the defensive, as they present large and irresistible targets that the media love to pepper with negative coverage” (Tungate 2005: 3). Even if, as an early career researcher, I could hardly be considered as a threat, my research was nonetheless examining a controversial strategy that is widespread in the luxury fashion industry, i.e. extending the brand as a way to cash-in on its reputation. Moreover, in the fast-paced fashion world, academic research is not seen as a priority and generally considered a waste of time and resources by companies.

However, this project never had to rely on fashion labels' authorisation to be completed. Firstly, this is because the hotels that constitute the object of analysis of this study are public and can be visited without requiring any permission from the labels. Secondly, the essential information needed to carry on the core of the research, like promotional materials, are in the public domain and could be obtained through other sources. In this sense, the expected lack of co-operation by fashion labels did not jeopardise the completion of this research but shaped it accordingly, as I tried to secure the collaboration of the other entities involved in the creation and management of the places in discussion (architects, hospitality management companies, chefs) with the aim to achieve a better understanding of the phenomenon I was examining. In opposition to luxury

fashion labels, they have been generally more co-operative and, in some cases, have been really supportive of my research, often providing 'extras' such as tours of the facilities, literature to take away or photographs. In each case, access to spaces and personnel of the different companies involved was mediated by gatekeepers (in the field of luxury that is often the case because these entities are usually rather protective of their resources). The gatekeepers were, in most cases, co-operative and granted me access to relevant information that allowed me to obtain an invaluable insight on the objects of my research, providing richness and depth to the case studies. The process of self-selection that led to the examination of my two case studies is a reflection of the particular field I examined, but is not ideal nor without consequences, as this is very likely to have had an impact on my results, although it is very difficult to estimate it. However, in academia the choice of case studies is often far from ideal, and researchers have to make the best of circumstances they have no control over, although this aspect is rarely explicitly acknowledged.

> Somehow you have to get in there, and although we often, in writing up our results, talk blandly of our samples or our case studies, letting the reader assume that the particular industry, location, site, and respondents were the optimal or ideal for investigating the particular issue in which we were interested, we all know that the 'reality' - if I can use that old modernist term—is a lot messier. A great deal depends on luck and chance, connections and networks, and the particular circumstances at the time.
>
> (McDowell 1998: 2135)

Academic research can be especially 'messy' when examining an elite constituted by top professionals characterised by high-status within their respective fields, as were the people I interviewed for my study.[41] In general, a researcher that investigates any kind of elite is very likely to be considered a potential threat by them as he/she has "the power to open out these people's lives for ridicule or ruination by other groups" (Cook and Crang 2007: 27, see also Cook 1995 and Johnson 1992). Considering this, to obtain and maintain access has been problematic at times, in accordance with literature that acknowledges "the often unpredictable journey of elite research" (Hughes and Cormode 1998: 2100). In many cases I had to deal with excruciatingly painful processes of re-scheduling meetings and interviews (that in certain cases ended up never happening) and moments of frustration when promises of support were not fulfilled (in part or completely) or when interviewees had a change of heart and decided not to give permission for our conversation to be used in my research, so that I was able to include only a limited number of

41 'Elite' is a very popular term that in academia is sometimes used indiscriminately to describe "those actors who are in some way perceived to be more powerful or more privileged than some undefined group" (Woods 1998: 2101 quoted in Ward and Jones 1999: 303).

the interview I originally conducted, as discussed in the next section.

3.5 Data and materials

In this section, issues related to the different data and materials that constitute the basis of this study are addressed, alongside a discussion of the different methods and techniques employed to collect them with regard to observation and interviews.

In this thesis, a wide variety of data was examined in order to make sense of the complexity of the case studies, i.e. Hotel Missoni Edinburgh and Maison Moschino. The materials taken into account are rather different, and span from observation of the places in discussion (hotels and restaurants) to company reports, promotional materials, advertising campaigns, corporate websites, media coverage and qualitative in-depth interviews with purposive sampling. This is defined as a sampling strategy that consists of interviewing people who are relevant to the research question (Bryman, 2008: 334). The rationale for considering such a variety of materials and sources in the present study was to augment the richness of the approach and to strengthen the research by triangulating data sources and data collection methods (Denzin 1989: 246, see also Johansson 2003: 8).

The present study relies on the observation of Hotel Missoni Edinburgh and Maison Moschino, both of which I visited on three occasions between 2010 and 2012. This process of observation is in line with the one employed by Thornton (1995) and relies on "what the researcher sees" (Gray 2003: 83). Before each visit, an "observation schedule" was set up, a sort of checklist constituted by elements "to prioritize" and whose observation were "appropriate for the issues being investigated" (Denscombe 2010: 199-200), like for example the ways in which the fashion labels were present in the spaces of the hotels or their references to Italian culture. During the visits, I took notes in relation to those aspects and, when allowed, I also took photographs of relevant elements. After each visit, additional notes were taken in order to make a record as detailed as possible of what I had observed previously, which included the ambience but also staff and customer appearance and behaviour. However, "the process of observing is far from straightforward" because it is "acutely sensitive to the possibility that researchers' perceptions of situations might be influenced by personal factors" (Denscombe 2010: 197), a reflection of the researcher's situatedness and a topic that I examine in more detail in the next section.

All of the data gathered through fieldwork and observation were analysed according to a

semiotic methodology, therefore the same approach was applied to the observations of the hotels and to the examination of the discourses concerning the spaces in question, like promotional materials, advertising campaigns, corporate websites and reports, and media coverage of Hotel Missoni Edinburgh and Maison Moschino.

Additional data were gathered through interviews with a purposive sampling constituted by relevant professionals and key figures that were involved in the creation and development of the two hotels in question. The interviews are here "used for the factual information they provide" and "used as 'quotes' to illustrate particular points when writing up the findings" (Denscombe 2010: 275), they were not the object of a semiotic analysis themselves. Interviews were coded accordingly to the topics discussed and elements that were in line with the observation check-list discussed above were prioritised.

In this thesis, only four of the several interviews I conducted for this research are featured, as mentioned earlier, because many interviewees had a change of heart and decided not to give permission for our conversation to be mentioned here. This is a function of the particular field that I investigate, as discussed in section 3.3. This led to an imbalance as my thesis only features interviews from Hotel Missoni Edinburgh, a situation that I was unable to 'correct'. This is not ideal and has an impact on my research, although I cannot identify in what measure, and is another demonstration of the 'messiness' of doing research. In regard to Hotel Missoni Edinburgh I draw on my interviews with a managerial figure that has asked to be anonymised and is identified here as "respondent A", Gillian Cavanagh, project architect for Allan Murray Architects for the Hotel Missoni development, Dale Simpson, people and development manager at Hotel Missoni Edinburgh, and Mattia Camorani executive chef at Cucina restaurant (see appendix 1 for a full profile of respondents). Interviews were conducted between 2010 and 2012 and were, with the exception of one, all conducted face-to-face in the UK. Where possible, face-to-face interviews were preferred to ones over the phone, as that generally seems to involve a less strict time pressure and allowed for better explanations, as "in face-to-face situations, researchers and researched can make mutual adjustments to each others' questions, answers, bodily performance and gestures" (Johnson et al 2004: 205). Interviews were either in English or Italian, depending on the nationality of the interviewees.[42]

In this research, an in-depth interview method was employed. Such an approach was privileged because it allows a deeper understanding of the phenomena under discussion as the interview can "take place over an extended period of time, not just a single sitting" and "the interview also can suggest other persons" to interview "as well as other sources of evidence", so that "the more that

42 The transcripts of interviews conducted in Italian required translation into English and it is possible that something might have been 'lost in translation'. In order to overcome this potential limitation the English translation was approved by the interviewee and every quote in the thesis that has been translated from Italian is also featured in the original language in a footnote.

an interviewee assists in this manner, the more that the role may be considered one of an 'informant' rather than a respondent" (Yin 2009: 107). Interviews were semi-structured, a method that combines the "flexibility of the unstructured, open-ended interview with the directionality and agenda of the survey instrument to produce focused, qualitative, textual data" (Schensul et al. 1999: 149), allowing for "the researcher to ask supplementary questions to attain deeper understanding of complex issues" (Ottenbacher and Harrington 2007: 446).

Transcripts of the interviews were sent to the interviewees in order to confirm their accuracy and all participants were offered the opportunity to edit out any information that might be commercially sensitive. This is an aspect of fundamental importance in studying elite groups and I have tried to protect my participants by guaranteeing them the 'right to veto' any sensitive information as well as guaranteeing them anonymity. This was done for reasons of ethical conduct[43] and in order to establish a climate of trust with my informants. According to the same logic, before each interview, participants were thoroughly informed about the aims of my research.

Elite interviews are characterised by specific power dynamics between interviewer and interviewee. In this respect, the "researcher is dependant on the cooperation of a relatively small number of people with specialized knowledge" and "the relationship is inevitably asymmetrical regardless of the research strategies deployed" (Desmond 2004: 265). This situation of dependency contradicts the general assumption that the interviewer is in control because s/he sets the agenda (Schoenberger 1991: 182).[44] However, this does not necessarily mean that the interviewer is totally powerless and passive, relegated to a position of supplicant, as in fact there are a series of strategies that the researcher can employ in order to get the most out of an elite interview. The researcher can assume different roles, such as supplicant (McDowell 1992: 213), ignoramus or expert (McDowell 1998: 2138), as s/he adapts to the different circumstances of each interview. For example, when I conducted the first interviews with top professionals in the hospitality industry I found myself in an ignoramus position as my interviewees possessed a greater knowledge of the field. However the situation gradually changed as I became more knowledgeable and became an expert in the field in my own right. This evolution of power relationships is a intrinsic aspect of fieldwork, where researchers and informants are constantly negotiating their role, adapting and adjusting their reciprocal positioning in terms of power and insider-outsider relationships.

In this respect, the choice of what to wear to interview and fieldwork is far from a marginal aspect. Clothing can convey power and express and reinforce the belonging to a certain group or

43 I observed, in this respect, the ethic procedures of Nottingham Trent University and I received the official approval of the Joint Inter College Ethics Committee (JICEC) for my research.

44 See also Briggs (1986) and Kress and Fowler (1979) in this regard.

class, marking exclusion or inclusion, especially in the fashion world that, *ça va sans dire*, is extremely image-conscious. Often, within this field, to "look good" is required by employers and also an effective tool in furthering careers (Entwistle 2009: 28).[45] Professionals in the field of fashion have to 'look the part' and display the appropriate cultural capital (Bourdieu 1984), i.e. "fashion capital" (Entwistle and Rocamora 2006). In this respect issues of self-presentation had to be accounted for, as a researcher may consider dressing up, or down, in order to 'blend in' with the informants by mirroring their look. "It is not meant to fool or trick people, but to make people feel comfortable and not to draw attention to yourself by wearing the wrong clothes" (Gray 2003: 87). Physical appearance, and clothing in particular, are essential in this respect to provide both "tangible cues of professionalism" (Solomon 1998: 84) and soften the distinction between "the researcher" and "the researched".

> By mirroring the look of my informants at Hotel Missoni Edinburgh I could see that they were more relaxed in my presence and they were spontaneously opening up more. I was even allowed in areas that were strictly staff-only and that are usually precluded to outsiders.
>
> (extract from my field notes)

This was at times problematic because in the beginning as I was not yet an expert in this field and was not completely familiar with the specific aesthetic codes at play there. Whereas I was familiar with the "understated elegance" of the Milanese look (Ferrero-Regis 2008: 13) that allowed me to 'fit' in the Maison Moschino ambience straight away, at Hotel Missoni Edinburgh things were not equally easy, as I ended up feeling slightly overdressed for my first visit. The grey designer jacket I selected ended up looking too formal in comparison with the colourful, and more casual, Missoni cardigan worn by the managerial figure I arranged to meet, that reflected the informal atmosphere of the hotel. As I became more knowledgeable and got a good grip of the field, I found myself choosing outfits that would not make me stand out, in a certain sense mirroring the choices of my informants in terms of look.

Moreover, it is possible that my personal characteristics, as a young Italian female student, had an impact on both the interviews and the knowledge generated from them (Herod 1993). Despite acknowledging this issue however, in accordance with Schoenberger (1992: 217), "I am not sure precisely what difference it makes, and I am not sure how I would know".

45 The concept of aesthetic labour is discussed in more detail in Chapter Four.

3.6 Limits of the study

As with any approach in academia, semiotics is not without its critics. Nonetheless it is an established methodology that has proven to be useful in examining a variety of phenomena like, to mention only a few that are particularly relevant for the present work, advertisements, spaces, food and marketing. Semiotic analysis can face two criticisms, firstly that the interpretation is personal, or arbitrary (Bryman 2008: 394), and secondly that the meanings found are fixed (Chandler 2007: 221-222).

In relation to the first issue, I argue that this is an intrinsic aspect of academic research, especially in the humanities, where all claims of objectivity are rather problematic, and not only a disadvantage of adopting a semiotic perspective. A researcher is not only a producer of culture and knowledge, but also the product of culture and knowledge. Any researcher is, to a certain extent, part of the field s/he is researching (Gray 2003: 17, Plummer 1995, Couldry 2000).

> You are, as a researcher, a participant in the field. The question is how you account for yourself in that position - both to the actors involved and within your research writing. Whatever you do, your presence will have an effect on what you are seeking to observe. You are part of the world you are studying, in a broader 'macro' sense of being part of the culture, but also in the 'micro' sense within the geography of your chosen setting or site.
>
> (Gray 2003: 86)

In this sense, any research is a function of a particular point of view, the result of the specific vantage point of the researcher. Failing to recognise such an issue means not taking into account the way in which knowledge is necessarily produced (Stanley 1990). In this respect, it is impossible to sustain the completely objective position assumed in many scientific works as the researcher cannot transcend from his/her being in the world and speak from nowhere. As Haraway (1991) argues, knowledge is necessarily 'situated'. Moreover this implies that any research is, in a certain sense, partial (Haraway 1997). All approaches are "limited by a particular time, space and social horizon and also motivated, more or less consciously, by desire, interest and power" but "partiality is not only inevitable - a necessary human condition of knowledge production - it is also, potentially, a resource or asset, provided it is made explicit and debated and reflected on" (Johnson et al. 2004: 17).

In this sense, any research can only produce results that are "positioned truth" (Abu-Lughold 1991: 142 quoted in Ang 1996: 78) because "a person who believes he is free of prejudices, relying on the objectivity of his procedures and denying that he is himself conditioned by

historical circumstances, experiences the power of the prejudices that unconsciously dominate him as vis a tergo" (Gadamer 1989: 360). It is an act of intellectual honesty to recognise, as a researcher, those issues of situatedness and partiality.

> The recognition of partialities and positionalities is important as a condition for openness and dialogue. Explicitness about relevant aspects of our self- positioning is important when addressing readers. Yet, if our arguments here about partiality and cultural entanglement are correct, it is not possible to transcend these conditions. There is no all-seeing godlike position available to us, no stance free from society, culture and power. This applies to everyone. We can, however, recognize existing forms of partiality and advance, by dialogue especially, beyond them, arriving at better, but still partial, knowledges.
>
> (Johnson et al. 2004: 52)

In this sense, "there is no such thing as a disinterested knower" (Skeggs 1997: 27) as "our questioning of a text always comes from particular research agenda and this agenda is always partial" (Jonhson et al. 2004: 185). However, the researcher's entanglement in a culture can also offer a privileged insight into particular phenomena and be a precious resource for the research process itself. As an Italian researcher who studies phenomena of Italianicity, my personal history and experiences offered me a privileged insight into the issue and at the same time, by being part of academia, I possessed the theoretical tools and preliminary knowledge to examine this phenomenon with a depth and a critical gaze that would be difficult to be achieved by non-academics. Moreover, the fact that I am a native Italian speaker possibly had a positive influence in terms of negotiating access and conducting interviews, as many of the key figures involved in the hotels that constitute the object of my research were also Italian. Furthermore, due to the close association between Italy and luxury fashion, interviewees and, more generally, the various people I entered in contact with during my fieldwork, never questioned my reasons to research this topic and acknowledged my interest as 'natural' or 'obvious'.

Another criticism that semiotic research faces concerns the fixity of the meaning recognised within the particular phenomenon analysed (Chandler 2007: 221-222). The interpretation of the researcher is a function of the particular time and culture where s/he operates and the specific tools and methods s/he utilises in the analysis. The results of a semiotic analysis do not imply any claims of being definitive nor of being the only possible ones. A given text can be interpreted in different ways by different people, be that different researchers or non-academics. In particular, considering the relationship between the two aforementioned groups (academics/non-academics) *ça va sans dire* that the interpretation of the semiotician might differ from the one of the general public, as the trained eye of the researcher is far more receptive and

attentive to the smaller details. I have examined this issue in the thesis for my specialization degree in Semiotic Disciplines at the University of Bologna (Dallabona 2008). The semiotician examines phenomena in far more detail and in depth than people usually do, elements that can result in discrepancies in interpretations. Semiotics recognises that and does not claim to reveal the secret of phenomena and possess the ultimate key to interpret it.

This research does not focus specifically on this issue of different interpretations, i.e. the reader response. This is a drawback that my research shares with many works in the semiotic field, as they focus "almost exclusively on potential meanings" and "usually lacks direct consumer data" (Mick et al. 2004: 51). This is not however a limit of the discipline *per se*, but only of specific research, as the works of Hespe (1992), Damak (1997) and Krampen (1995) demonstrate. In my case, this was due to the fact that I was unable to interview the users of Maison Moschino and Hotel Missoni Edinburgh in regard to their interpretation of the spaces. Companies who operate in the luxury sector are understandably reluctant to allow researchers to access their clientèle, and this characteristic of the field has shaped the present research. However, to examine the users interpretations of the hotels and compare it with the results of this study is an element that could represent the starting point for further research, as discussed in Chapter Nine.

The next two chapters will be dedicated to the Missoni Hotel Edinburgh case study. Chapter Four examines the spaces and services of the hotel considering their relationship with Italy, with the Missoni fashion label and the version of Italianicity it portrays in order to identify situations of dialogue and contradiction, whereas Chapter Five examines those issues with a particular focus on the gastronomic offerings of the hotel.

Chapter Four

Hospitality Missoni style

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I argue that the brand image of Hotel Missoni Edinburgh is coherent with the one of fashion brand Missoni on a variety of levels and particularly in regard to the elements of Italianicity it portrays. The hotel presents a series of traits that are in line with the brand universe of Missoni both on the semiotic plane of expression and of content, i.e. in its sensory and intelligible dimension (Floch 1985, Chevalier and Mazzalovo 2008, Mazzalovo 2008 and 2012), respectively constituted by the references to the company's material characteristics (the typical Missoni aesthetic constituted by specific patterns and colours) and the values and the myth surrounding the brand and its founders. In this sense Hotel Missoni Edinburgh presents references to the "physique" of the parent brand Missoni in the use of typically Missoni patterns and palettes, to the brand "personality" in the form of its creators, the Missonis, and to the "most important face of brand identity" as theorised by Kapferer's (2004: 108) "brand identity prism"[46] i.e. brand "culture", the values associated with the Missonis and their country of origin, like informality and friendliness.

Firstly, I argue that the visual identity of Hotel Missoni Edinburgh is coherent with that of the Missoni fashion label because it employs a branding strategy centred around the *Missonification* of the space. Moreover, I argue that this process of *Missonification* contributes to create a space connoting Italianicity. Secondly, I examine the relationship that Hotel Missoni Edinburgh holds with the Missoni family. In this respect I argue that the identity of Hotel Missoni Edinburgh is coherent with the one of the Missoni fashion label because the former also attributes a central

46 This is a model created by Kapferer (2004) to analyse brand identity. The brand identity prism includes six elements: personality, culture, physique, self-image, reflection and relationship.

role to the Missoni family and features in its service culture traits of Italianicity that are associated with them. Lastly, I argue that Hotel Missoni Edinburgh employs a series of spatial strategies aimed at augmenting the connotations of domesticity of the hotel to recreate the feel of the Missoni household in terms of privacy and intimacy, producing a sort of hybrid space that is coherent with the Missoni brand ethos. Hotel Missoni Edinburgh relies on certain traits of Italianicity to create its brand identity but, far from being a parasitic entity that simply capitalise on Italian identity, also actively contributes to negotiate and re-shape such notion.

4.2 A case of *Missonification*

This section examines the visual identity of Hotel Missoni Edinburgh and argues that it is the function of a branding strategy aimed at emphasising the coherence with the parent brand Missoni through a carefully constructed *Missonification*, i.e. the process of becoming Missoni (Dallabona 2011b), that involves three elements: the profuse use of the term Missoni, the constant references to typically Missoni patterns[47] and the resemanticization of elements that, despite being unrelated to the world of Missoni, are transformed into signs of the brand and references to Italy by the context. Moreover, I contend that the hotel refers to traits of Italianicity as a means to strengthen its association with the fashion label Missoni.

A variety of terms have been created to describe the work of Missoni and its characteristic traits, such as *Missonologia*, "the association between the finished products, made in wools, silk, cottons, linens and viscose with the help of computerized looms, and the careful blend of colour and design" (Casadio 1997a: 15)[48] and *Missoni-ism* (Vercelloni 1995: 71), but whereas the latter focus on the end products of the label in their quality of representatives of a more general Missoni style, the term *Missonification* that I adopt focuses instead on the role of such elements in transforming spaces into a sign of the label.[49]

The first form of presence of the fashion label Missoni in the Hotel Missoni Edinburgh is evident in the very name of the hotel. By using the name Hotel Missoni, the venture places itself in an established tradition within the field of brand extension of Italian luxury labels in the hospitality

47 Elements that I have analysed also in a previous article (Dallabona 2011b).

48 Which was also the title for an exhibition held at Pitti Immagine in Florence in 1994 to celebrate 40 years of activity of Missoni.

49 In this direction goes also the MissoniArt app, that allows users to transform "pictures into perfect Missoni masterpieces" through the unmistakable "Missoni's colorful textures and patterns" to create "Missonized" photos. See http://www.missoni.it/mobile/.

industry, where the brand name is associated with a term that specifies the nature of the business in a rather simple way, like for example in the cases of Armani Hotels&Resort and Bulgari Hotels, or in a more creative way, as exemplified by Maison Moschino and Palazzo Versace. This is in line with a strategy that is widespread in the field of brand extension in the luxury fashion industry, that involves mentioning the company name in every product, often simply adding a word that works as a specification to describe the products at stake, as for example in the cases of *Missoni Casa* (Missoni's homeware line), with the aim of capitalising on the brand's name and its identity. Moreover, the logo of the Hotel Missoni brand is clearly derived from the one of the parent brand Missoni, the only difference being represented by the fact that the one of the hotel is constituted by several logos of the fashion label.[50] The logo of Hotel Missoni maximises the presence of the Missoni label not only in corporate communication but also in the materiality of the Edinburgh hotel, as the logo is engraved in stone on the façade (figure 1).

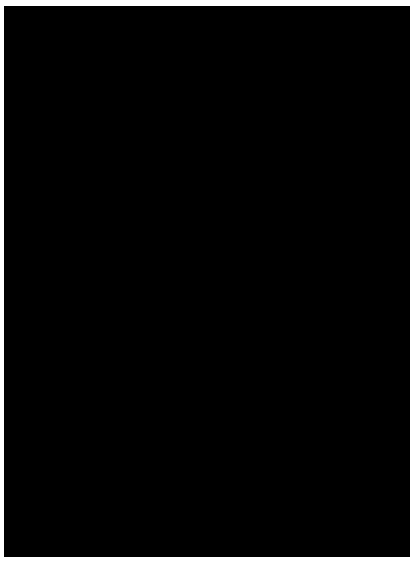


Figure 1: Detail of the Missoni Hotel Edinburgh logo engraved in stone on the façade

Furthermore, by using the name 'Missoni', Hotel Missoni Edinburgh does not only leverage the identity of the fashion label, but more broadly associates its image to Italy. In fact the very name of the brand Missoni is characterised by connotations of Italianicity as it is clearly identifiable as being Italian, similarly in this respect to the case of the brand name Panzani examined by Barthes (1977: 33), that constitutes an indirect cue of geographical origin (Pike 2009: 626).

Secondly, Hotel Missoni Edinburgh presents constant references to typically Missoni patterns and palettes, therefore relying on what Floch (1985) defines as the sensory dimension of the fashion label Missoni or, in Kapferer's (2004: 107) words, on its “physique”. This creates an

50 However, a single Missoni logo is featured on a variety of elements within the hotel in Edinburgh, like on bathrobes and slippers for example.

effect of great coherence between the brand identity of the parent brand Missoni and the one of Hotel Missoni Edinburgh. The *Missonification* of the hotel created through the emphasis on the name Missoni is reinforced through the constant references to the patterns that made the company renowned in the first place and constitute its more recognisable attribute. In the spaces of Hotel Missoni Edinburgh there is a significant presence of typically Missoni patterns, like stripes and zig-zags, in a variety of elements like carpets, sofas, bathrobes, linens, cushions, vases, on the elevator's panels (figure 2) and on the bathroom's doors in the lobby (figure 3). Those patterns are so closely intertwined with Missoni and the processes of identification between them so established that the former can substitute the latter by metonymy (Barthes 1977: 50), working as signs for the fashion label and creating a strong effect of visual presence within the space.

Figures 2 and 3: detail of the elevator and toilet sign at Missoni Hotel Edinburgh.

Those patterns are so intrinsically linked to the Missoni identity that a zig-zag one was chosen by Rezidor to promote the opening of the Edinburgh hotel (figure 4).

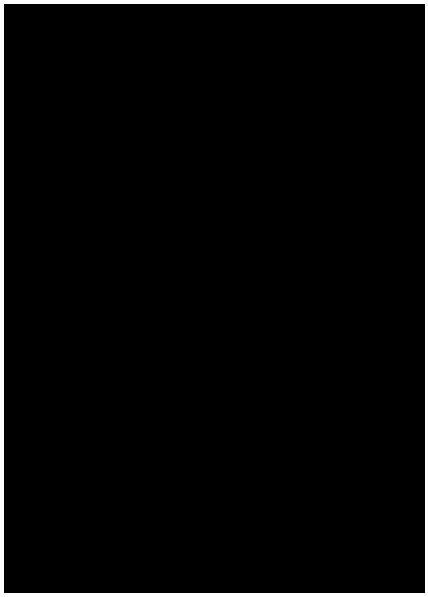


Figure 4: detail of the signature zig-zag pattern of Missoni Hotel Edinburgh.

However, references to Missoni patterns can also be found in less expected places, as a zig-zag one is also featured on the kilt (figure 5) worn by the doorman of the hotel. Here the traditional Scottish garment does not feature a typical tartan motif and is *Missonified* through the use of a typical Missoni patterns, but is also 'Italianised', given that Missoni's identity is closely intertwined with Italy (see also Chapter Five).

Figure 5: Staff in kilt at Missoni Hotel Edinburgh.
Copyright Alice Dallabona (2010)

I argue that this anchors the hotel to the dimension of locale (as discussed also in Chapter Five and Eight) both in relation to Italy and Scotland, providing a means for product differentiation and competitive advantage. Within Hotel Missoni Edinburgh the references to the locale are not only limited to Italy, as the hotel has been designed by Italian architect Matteo Thun[51] in collaboration with Rosita Missoni and features a series of Italian designer pieces by Cassina, Artemide and Zanotta (Perfetti 2009) but also features elements that refer to Scotland, like the above mentioned kilt[52] and furniture by iconic Scottish designer Charles Rennie Mackintosh (Conti 2009 and Schiowitz 2010).

The characteristic Missoni patterns featured in the spaces of Missoni Hotel Edinburgh create an ambience that ultimately refers to the Missoni fashion label and is very coherent, from a visual point of view, with its brand identity. In semiotic terms, those Missoni patterns represent isotopies (Magli 2004: 122-125, Marsciani and Zinna 1991: 43-44 and Bronwen and Ringham, 2006: 109-110) at the figurative level,[53] i.e. recurring elements in the 'text' constituted by the hotel that are responsible for the coherence of its visual identity, similar in this respect to the 'heart' motif featured in Maison Moschino that is discussed in Chapter Seven. In this respect, Missoni has been able to successfully capitalise on an element that was considered to be problematic in terms of brand extension in the lifestyle sector, the fact of being too strictly associated with "a product or to specific signs" and, more specifically, to "a specific type of fabric and a specific chromatic palette", which was believed to have a negative impact on the possibility to extend the brand outside of the realms of clothing and accessories (Chevalier and Mazzalovo 2008: 133). Moreover, the visual identity of Hotel Missoni Edinburgh also shares the same characteristic figures of contrast (Casadio 1997a, Vercelloni 1995) that the typical Missoni patterns and hues feature in eidetic and chromatic terms.

In relation to the eidetic dimension, the semiotic category that pertains to issues of shape and form at the plastic level (Greimas 1989 but also Marsciani and Zinna 1991: 30), the spaces of Hotel Missoni Edinburgh are characterised by the same marked opposition between straight and curved lines that characterise the visual identity of the Missoni fashion label. The Missoni brand is associated with a variety of patterns featuring both straight and curved lines (from zig-zags

51 On Matteo Thun see Buck and Vogt (1997), Horn (1986), Fitoussi and Mason (1998) and Pelosi (2013).

52 That could be also regarded as pastiche and a function of the current post-modern culture that sees a growing proliferation of options in a *supermarket of style* where one can 'mix&match' elements belonging to different realities (Polhemus 1997).

53 The term 'figurative' is here used in opposition to 'plastic' and concerns the two levels of analysis of visual texts theorised by Greimas (1989). Whereas the plastic level revolves around issues of colours, lines and their spatial organisation in their ability to produce meaning, the figurative level concerns on the other hand the presence of shape in the text that resemble configuration of the natural world. The isotopy recognised within Hotel Missoni Edinburgh (and in Maison Moschino as discussed in Chapter Seven) concerns this figurative level and does not represent a case of 'figurative isotopy'. The latter term is used by Greimas (1969) to describe an isotopy present in literary texts that concerns semes (the minimal unit of sense) that are concrete in nature, in opposition to the tematic isotopy that occurs where the semes are abstract (see also Pozzato 2001: 107).

and stripes to patchwork and floral) and those elements also constitute the identity of Hotel Missoni Edinburgh both at the macro and micro level. If in general the spaces of the hotel present a mix of straight and curved lines, the two components of the opposition often co-exist in the same element, like for example in the pictures hanging in the Cucina restaurant. They are constituted by several pieces of multicoloured Missoni fabric[54] enclosed by rectangular black frames where the fabric however does not lie flat as the supporting surface is actually curved, creating the effect of a weaved flow of material (figure 6), creating a complex object from the eidetic point of view.[55]

Figure 6: The curved Missoni decorative canvas in Cucina restaurant

Similarly, on the chromatic dimension, Hotel Missoni Edinburgh features the same figure of contrast that characterises the visual identity of the Missoni fashion label, that is renowned for its clashing multicoloured pieces as exemplified in their iconic stripes and zig-zags. As for the Missoni label, it is impossible to identify any specific dominant colour within the spaces of Hotel Missoni Edinburgh. In terms of visual consistency, it is precisely the lack of any dominant chromaticity that constitutes the specific identity of the space. Like in the case of the fashion label Missoni, Hotel Missoni Edinburgh's visual identity is also characterised by a strong opposition between the categories black/white versus other colours.[56] The role of the former, in

54 The relationship between the Missoni fabrics and the specific know-how that characterised the development of the Italian fashion industry is discussed in more detail in Chapter Eight.

55 In the spaces of Hotel Missoni Edinburgh the dichotomy straight/curved holds a complex relationship with the materic opposition hard/soft. In fact it is not possible to identity a unified semi-symbolic system as curved surfaces are not univocally associated with soft materials (like fabric) but also to hard ones (like wood).

56 The opposition between black and white and other colours, a contrast that emphasise the colourfulness of the space and its chromatic exhuberance, can also be linked to an opposition between a classic pole, revolving

particular, is that of emphasising the 'colourfulness' of the other elements[57] making them stand out by comparison, while at the same time dampening the boldness of the décor. The notion of 'colourfulness' is also intrinsically related to issues of personalisation and homeliness, topics that will be discussed in section 4.4 in regard to the similarities between Hotel Missoni Edinburgh and "third places" (Oldenburg and Brissett 1982). In this sense, elements belonging to the plastic plane both in terms of eidetic and chromatic dimensions contribute to create a space that ultimately represents, and is coherent with, the visual identity of the fashion brand Missoni.

In addition to the profuse use of the term Missoni and the constant references to typically Missoni patterns and hues discussed above, within the spaces of Hotel Missoni Edinburgh there is another type of *Missonification*, constituted by elements that are unrelated to Missoni but undergo a process of resemanticization (Marrone 2001: 301, Lotman 1998, Violi 1997 and Riva 2006) by featuring in the context of the hotel. In this respect, elements that *per se* would not be associated with Missoni if they were not presented in a context characterised by such a theme are transformed into signs of the brand. Within the spaces of the hotel there is a tendency to employ objects that are unrelated to the brand Missoni and arrange them in a certain way so that they resemble the typical Missoni patterns and hues and therefore can be recognised as signs for the brand. This phenomenon will be now examined from a micro to a macro level. At Hotel Missoni Edinburgh the toiletries, many bottles and soaps in different colours, are arranged in a way that presents similarities with the typical colourful stripy patterns by Missoni (figure 7).

Figure 7: toiletries at Missoni Hotel Edinburgh

around the sole use of black and white, and a baroque pole, that involves all the other hues (Marrone 2007: 280).

57 Considering the thermal values of colours, i.e. their warmth of coldness, the spaces of Hotel Missoni Edinburgh are characterised, again, by a complex relationship between the two, so that often warm colours are associated with cold materials and vice versa. For example, the bar counter is red, a colour that is usually associated with warmth but that is 'cooled down' by a shiny lacquer finish. On the other hand the armchair situated next to the entrance actually succeeded in 'warming up' its purple colour thanks to its organic shape and soft matte surface.

In a similar way, the photos of the moon (figure 8) hanging in the bar are again arranged to mimic the typical multicoloured palette that the Missoni brand is so closely associated with.

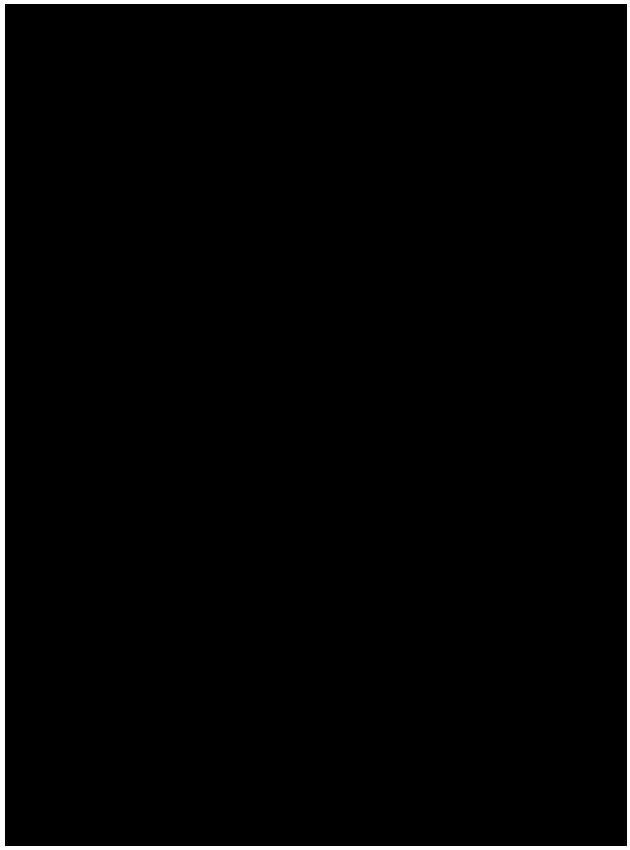


Figure 8: moon pictures at Missoni Bar

Moreover, this process of *Missonification* also acts on a broader scale, influencing the connotations of the outer shell of the hotel. While the development was "greatly influenced by the existing and historical urban context and the development restrictions defined by the City of Edinburgh Planning Department" (author's interview with Gillian Cavanagh), the narratives surrounding the hotel focus on the other hand on the relationship that the building holds with the Missoni fashion label. Allan Murray Architects state that "the complex rhythmic language of the building is inspired by the distinctive Missoni stripes, and a playful approach to pattern making"[58] but actually the project for the building preceded the license agreement with Missoni, which took place in 2005 after a previous franchise agreement with Italian fashion label Cerruti to operate Cerruti Hotels fell through.[59] In this respect, the hotel refers, both in the restored

58 See http://www.ama-ltd.co.uk/Hotel_Missoni.html.

59 See http://www.responsiblebusines.rezidor.com/cs/Satellite/Page/Rezidor/Page/defaultRezidor/1165588170692/en/. It has been reported that the plan fell through due to licensing issues concerning the name Cerruti, because when Nino Cerruti "sold his company and the right to use his name on clothing, he didn't sell the right to use it on

Lawnmarket Building and in the new addition, to the surrounding architectural context but is then resemanticized by the association with Missoni and transformed into a sign of the label, losing some of its Scottish connotations to acquire ones of Italianicity instead. The verticality of the Hotel Missoni Edinburgh's development,[60] enhanced through a series of different pavillon-like buildings (figure 9) and components of different heights, echoes the surrounding historical buildings of Edinburgh, in particular the Royal Mile and the High Street frontages, but is then transformed into a reference to the Missoni patterns by the discourses surrounding the hotel. Similarly, the portico of the hotel was designed in accordance with "the tradition of hard-won public space carved out of the urban frontages (as seen in nearby Gladstone's Land on the Lawnmarket)"[61] that characterises Edinburgh and was not inspired by Italian architecture. This practice, that sees the references to the Scottish locate being incorporated and transformed through a process of *Missonification*, but also of 'Italianisation', echoes the one employed by Hotel Missoni Edinburgh in the Cucina Restaurant (discussed in Chapter Five).

Figure 9: The pavillon-like buildings of Hotel Missoni Edinburgh (copyright Allan Murray Architects)

hotels. In fact, he'd specifically kept that privilege because he'd long wanted to open one himself" (Gross 2004).

60 The predominance of verticality in the outer shell of the building is one of its most distinctive characteristics also in relation to the diachronic dimension. The dichotomy synchrony/diachrony was theorised by Ferdinande De Saussure (1916) in regard to the study of languages and implies that a phenomenon can be studied from an historical point of view considering the events in sequence, i.e. according to the diachronic dimension (which in this case means to consider the building that was demolished to make space for the hotel), or according to the synchronic dimension, considering the elements that are present at a certain time (Bronwen and Ringham, 2006: 63). From a diachronic point of view, the hotel is located where the demolished Lothian Region Council Headquarters used to be, building was characterised by a strong horizontality. The marked verticality of the new Hotel Missoni Edinburgh development presents an opposition, in absentia, with the horizontality of the previous building and in this sense is in line with the historical buildings that surround it.

61 See http://www.ama-ltd.co.uk/Hotel_Missoni.html.

4.3 Family matters

This section examines the relationship that Hotel Missoni Edinburgh holds with the Missoni family, which constitutes the origin of the fashion label and one of its most recognisable traits (the relationship between the Missonis, myths of the large Italian cross-generational family and the structure of the Italian family business is discussed in Chapter Eight). The Missonis are an essential part of the Missoni brand identity, i.e. the brand "personality" (Kapferer 2004: 108), and I argue that they play the same role also in regard to the Hotel Missoni brand. In this sense the identity of Hotel Missoni Edinburgh is coherent with the one of the Missoni fashion label. I examine the presence of the Missonis within the spaces and the discourses surrounding Hotel Missoni Edinburgh, claiming that although they are not consistently featured in the former they are assigned a central role in the brand communication. Moreover, I address how Hotel Missoni Edinburgh is presented as an authentic representation of the Missoni lifestyle and values and how traits of Italianicity that characterise the philosophy of the brand are used to create the hotel's service culture and to strengthen the association with Missoni and their country of origin. As claimed by Rezidor "Missoni is emblematic of a uniquely […] Italian approach to life. Centred on the family. And the enduring warmth of family life".[62]

The Missoni family is strictly intertwined with the identity of the Missoni fashion label, having featured regularly in the media to promote their brand and having starred in several advertisements, for example the iconic 1992 campaign by Italian photographer Oliviero Toscani. More recently, members of the Missoni family have featured in the fall/winter 2010 campaign by Kenneth Anger and in the spring/summer 2010 and 2011 campaigns by Juergen Teller (figure 10). The same marketing strategy that emphasises the association between the Missonis and the fashion label has been employed also when the brand has ventured into brand extension (Margherita Missoni is the face of the company's fragrances) or has collaborated with other companies (Margherita Missoni was the face for the "Missoni for Target" line in 2011).

62 See http://www.rezidor.com/phoenix.zhtml?c=205430&p=brandshotelmissoni.

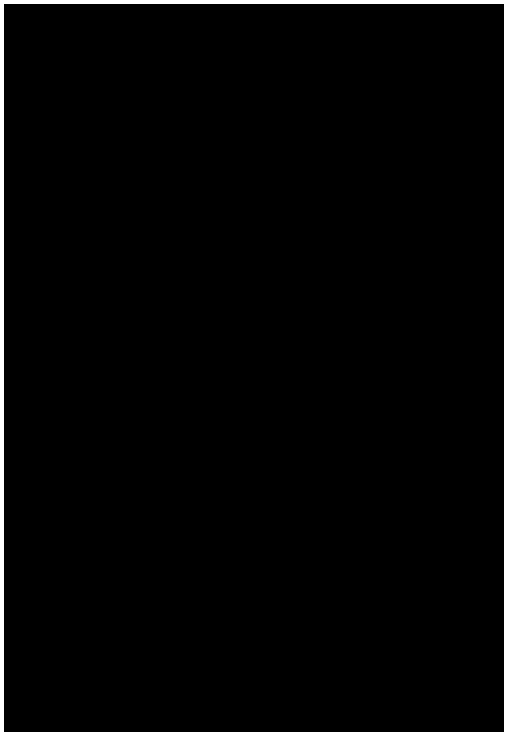


Figure 10: Missoni S/S 2010 advertising campaign featuring Rosita, Otttavio and Margherita Missoni

However, within the spaces of Hotel Missoni Edinburgh the references to the Missonis are rather limited. As I argued in an earlier work (Dallabona 2011b) the Missoni family does not occupy a primary position in the visual identity of the hotel and the only explicit references to them is constituted by a series of photographs of the label's founder Ottavio Missoni that are placed in the gym and focus on his sporting career as a runner, with particular references to the 1948 London Olympics (figure 11).

Figure 11: Detail of Ottavio Missoni's Olympic diploma and photo of his sporting career

The London games constitute an important part of the narrative of the brand, as it was there that Ottavio met Rosita for the first time, the pre-condition for the birth of the Missoni company (Pullella 2012). This circumstance has often been mentioned by the Missonis themselves and by the media, especially on the occasion of the more recent London Olympics (Alexander 2012). In the gym there are no references to the Missoni patterns and palettes examined in the previous section, the *Missonification* here is performed only through Ottavio's pictures. These two strategies complement each other as they show two different elements that are so closely intertwined in the Missoni brand, i.e. the typical patterns and colours, and the Missoni family.

The choice of limiting the presence of the Missonis might appear in contrast with the communication strategy that the Missoni label has employed over the years. However, although the Missonis are not extensively featured within the spaces of Hotel Missoni Edinburgh they are nonetheless very much present in its marketing strategy. Corporate communication by the Rezidor Hotel Group[63] emphasises the personal involvement of Rosita Missoni in creating the identity of hotel and virtually all of the articles on the hotel, not only in fashion magazines like *Vogue* or *Elle*, mention the Missoni family in this regard. This form of personal involvement by the Missonis was considered to be a very strong selling point for the brand, as emphasised by PR Mara Begley, who managed to obtain an editorial in *W* because her "pitch to the magazine highlighted how Hotel Missoni was going to break the mould of fashion-branded hotels because of the personal involvement of fashion house matriarch and design icon Rosita Missoni" (Ward 2009: 20). In this sense, the marketing strategy of Hotel Missoni aims to evoke the Missonis as simulacra of hosts, as discussed in more detail in the next section. Moreover, Begley continues, the Missoni family was also a powerful instrument to guarantee media coverage as she declares that "to clinch the story placement" she "also set up a mother-daughter interview with Rosita and Angela Missoni, who is now in charge of Missoni Fashion" (Ward 2009: 20). However, this strategy is not only specific to the Missoni Hotel, as that is also employed by other hotels that are the result of brand extensions of luxury fashion labels that are clearly associated with their founders or designers, like Armani and Versace. They also emphasise the involvement of such individuals to promote the hotel brand and to guarantee a constant flow of media coverage. In the case of Hotel Missoni Edinburgh, the constant emphasis on the role of Rosita Missoni ended up overshadowing the work of the other entities that were involved in the project (like Allan Murray Architects, that designed the building that hosts the Edinburgh hotel, and Matteo Thun, who developed the interior design in collaboration with Rosita Missoni). This is in line with the luxury fashion industry, where the myth of the brand is similarly centred around the figure of the

63 See for example http://www.rezidor.com/phoenix.zhtml?c=205430&p=brandshotelmissoni.

designer or of the founder of the label, 'obliterating' the team work behind it.

If the typically Missoni patterns and palettes mark the conformity of Hotel Missoni Edinburgh with the identity of its parent brand, the involvement of the Missoni family in developing the project also provides a certain form of authority behind it, and in this sense the Missoni family, and in particular Rosita Missoni, acts as a "sender-judge". In the actanctial model theorised by Greimas (1969)[64] the "sender" is the figure that makes the "subject" do something, in this case respectively represented by the Missonis and the Rezidor Hotel Group, which was attributed by the former the "mission" of creating Hotel Missoni. After the "mission" has been accomplished (and the hotel completed) by the "subject", the Missonis then also act as "judges" as they sanction the conformity of Rezidor's performance in relation to the values of which Missoni is guarantor, like family, friendliness and informality.

I argue that Hotel Missoni Edinburgh is presented as an authentic representation of the Missoni values and lifestyle through marketing practices that emphasise firstly how the hotel was inspired by Rosita Missoni's family home in Sumirago (Varese, Italy), secondly how the matriarch of the label contributed to the hotel's design in terms of home-making practices and thirdly how the service culture of the hotel is in line with the values of unpretentiousness, friendliness and informality that characterise the identity of the Missoni fashion label and, more broadly, of Italy. I contend that those traits of Italianicity are used to strengthen the association between the hotel and its parent brand, at the same time capitalising on positive traits of Italianicity to provide a more appealing brand experience for guests.

One element that is greatly emphasised in the discourses about Missoni Hotel Edinburgh is constituted by the fact that its spaces are inspired by the Missoni family home in Sumirago.

> Considering the Edinburgh hotel it is clear to see that it resembles Rosita Missoni's house in this respect, as it features a unique mix of pieces created by the designers that she loves and respects and Missoni ones and moreover in the hotel there are some design pieces that are exactly the same as in Rosita's house. For example, Rosita Missoni has some Hans J. Wegner's Wishbone Chairs in her own kitchen and they also feature in the Cucina restaurant in Edinburgh.
>
> (author's interview with Respondent A)

Rosita Missoni said, in regard to the above mentioned Wegner's Wishbone Chairs "I have these in all my homes and they are simply the most comfortable for an after-meal chat" (Zargani 2008). In this respect Hotel Missoni Edinburgh constitutes an extension of the Missoni home,

64 On the actantial model see also Budniakiewicz (1992), Finocchi (2009), Magli (2004), Marsciani and Zinna (1991) and Pozzato (2001).

replicating its salient characteristics, with the aim to create a sense of closeness and intimacy between the brand and its consumers. This strategy of recreating domestic environments, although staged and 'inauthentic', is established in the retail sector and is used by many luxury fashion labels for their stores, like in the case of Ralph Lauren (Hetzel 2003) or Paul Smith. In this sense Hotel Missoni, despite rationing the physical presence of the Missonis within the spaces of the hotel, attributes a central role to them in terms of providing "personality" to the brand (Kapferer 2004), in this respect being coherent with the branding strategies employed by the Missoni fashion label.

Moreover, Hotel Missoni Edinburgh is presented as coherent with the Missoni values and lifestyle also because Rosita Missoni contributed to the hotel's design in terms of home-making practices. As observed by Young (1997: 151) "homemaking consists in the activities of endowing things with living meaning, arranging them in space in order to facilitate the life activities of those to whom they belong, and preserving them, along with their meaning". In this perspective, the home is conceptualised as a "process" (Walsh 2006: 126), an entity that is created and maintained through domestic practices which are intrinsically gendered such as decorating, cooking or cleaning.[65] In this respect Hotel Missoni Edinburgh is presented as an authentic representation of the Missoni values and lifestyle because the hotel has been created through the same the domestic practices that Rosita Missoni employs to create and maintain her home, i.e. the one of rearranging the furniture and the one of cleaning. Whenever Rosita Missoni visits the Missoni Hotel Edinburgh she usually makes small changes in the layout of the furniture or updates the décor a little by rearranging home accessories like she does in her own home.[66] Moreover, the domestic practices of Rosita Missoni with regard to cleaning impact on the very interior design concept of the hotel.

The first plan for the Edinburgh hotel featured carpets in every room, an element that Rosita Missoni fiercely opposed solely on the basis that they are difficult to clean and that she would never have them in her own home, criticism that ultimately led to the decision to have wooden floors instead. "Carpets are the dirtiest things in hotels. The maids clean the rooms in 15 minutes —how can they clean the carpet properly?" (Rosita Missoni quoted in Conti: 2009). It is significant that Rosita Missoni presents herself as the home-maker and assumes that women should be responsible for cleanliness, relying on culturally constructed images of women as responsible for creating home (Johnson and Lloyd 2005, Hollows 2008, Sparke 1995, Wood 2012) and perpetuating the myth of Italian women as devoted to taking care of their homes and

65 The role of domestic practices in making the home meaningful is also recognised by Daniels (2008: 123), Miller (2001) and Cieraad (2010).

66 Those might appear like small and almost insignificant practices but, as the study of Pauline Garvey (2001) demonstrates, "the meaning of home isn't just constructed through large-scale redecoration projects but also lie in smaller, everyday consumption practices through which we make homes" (Hollows 2008: 83).

families (see also Chapter Five in regard to myths of Italian women and cooking). The responsibilities of home-making practices are usually allocated to women and domestic life has been generally considered as a site for gender inequalities (Friedan 1965, Hartman 1981, Barrett and McIntosh 1982, Giles 2004, Hunt 1995, Williams 2001, Bianchi et al. 2000, Hochschild and Machung 2003, Johnson and Lloyd 2005)[67] but this does not necessarily mean, however, that women are "intrinsically dissatisfied in the domestic sphere" (Chapman 2001: 144) or that they cannot take pride in their home-making role (Walsh 2006, Pink 2004), as the case of Rosita Missoni demonstrates.

The hotel features services that are inspired by the Missonis' public persona, that revolves around ideas of family and informality, traits that constitute the brand "culture" (Kapferer 2004) and that are also associated with their country of origin, in particular with the myth of a relaxed lifestyle, as discussed also in Chapters Five and Eight. The close association between Missoni, family and informality is particularly emphasised in the spring/summer 2011 campaign by Juergen Teller. The campaign features three generations of Missonis in the family home of Ottavio and Rosita in Sumirago and achieves an effect of informality through visual techniques. The different photos in fact at first glance look like they could have been taken by non-professionals, as they proudly showcase certain flaws and imperfections, like for example the flash of the camera reflected in shiny surfaces, creating a constructed effect of informality that represents the values that the Missonis and their company stands for. In Angela Missoni's words "we wanted the campaign to be a snapshot of an evening with the Missoni family".[68] Connotations of family and informality are also present in the hotel's services, for example in the Cucina restaurant, as examined in more detail in the next chapter, but also in staff culture, which is inspired by the Missoni's identity but that is, more broadly, also associated with Italy and its lifestyle.

Hotel Missoni Edinburgh's service culture revolves around ideas of unpretentiousness, friendliness and informality with the aim of making guests feel welcome, in line with the identity of the Missonis and their fashion label. As Rosita Missoni observes "we are considered good hosts - we have a way of welcoming people which is well known throughout the fashion world".[69] The ethos of Hotel Missoni Edinburgh is constituted by friendliness and informality (see also Chapter Five) and that is visually represented by the fact that staff do not wear formal uniforms, like they do in many hotels in the same category. Staff here wear instead Missoni clothes, which are associated with an informal and relaxed lifestyle that is, more broadly, also considered as a characteristic trait associated with Italy.

From this perspective, staff at Hotel Missoni Edinburgh are seen as "an embodiment of corporate

67 The home is also associated, in this perspective, with oppression and violence (Dobash and Dobash 1980 and 1992, Goldsack 1999 and Stanko 1990).

68 See http://www.vogue.co.uk/news/2010/02/09/missoni-family-at-home-by-juergen-teller.

69 See http://www.huffingtonpost.com/melanie-nayer/rosita-missoni-hotelmissoni_b_829045.html#s246608.

identity" (Solomon 1998: 83). "The clothing worn by workers is part of the performance of an organisation's brand image, and workers' bodies are part of how the brand is communicated" (Pettinger 2004: 180), and in this sense the employees of Hotel Missoni Edinburgh, by wearing Missoni clothing and embodying the identity of the brand, are aesthetic labourers (Warhurst and Nickson 2001 and 2007, Warhurst et al. 2000, Witz et al. 2003), like the ones working in the fashion industry (Entwistle 2009, Entwistle and Wissinger 2006, Pettinger 2004). Like shop assistants in a Missoni store, also staff at Hotel Missoni Edinburgh contribute to portraying the image of the company and are effectively "made up" by employers (Du Gay 1997).

However, staff at Missoni Hotel Edinburgh do not only have to 'look' the part, but also have to embody certain traits that are in line with the identity and culture of the brand by being welcoming and friendly, attributes that are associated with the Missonis and, more broadly, with Italy. Employees of Hotel Missoni Edinburgh are required in this sense to embody both the brand philosophy and some Italian national characteristics. In this double form of commodification of embodied dispositions of staff, employers are looking for "individuals with personal characteristics likely to make them interact or 'perform' spontaneously" in a way that is in line with the brand identity, in other words they are looking for people that possess, in Bourdieu's terminology, a certain *habitus* (Witz et al. 2003: 47). This *habitus* is constituted by certain embodied dispositions that are inculcated into individuals since childhood though learning and experience (reflecting their social conditions) and that guide their behaviour by becoming second nature (Bourdieu 1984 and 1991). These dispositions are genuine and are not consciously staged (Goffman 1969), constituting part of what individuals 'are'. These dispositions are attractive for employers because they can then recruit staff that are naturally able to convey the brand values in a convincing way. As Dale Simpson of Hotel Missoni Edinburgh (author's interview) observed, "we want to be the friendliest hotel in the world and that also influences the way we recruit".

4.4 At home with the Missonis

As observed in the previous section, Hotel Missoni Edinburgh employs a series of marketing strategies that evoke the Missonis as simulacra of hosts through references to their home, their domestic practices and their lifestyle. I argue in this respect that Hotel Missoni Edinburgh also employs a series of spatial strategies aimed at augmenting the connotations of domesticity of the hotel to recreate the feel of the Missoni household in terms of privacy and intimacy, producing a sort of hybrid space that is coherent with Missoni brand values and that can be more appealing

for customers. I argue that in the case of Hotel Missoni Edinburgh the references to the private sphere are created in the public areas through the emphasis of the horizontal dimension in spaces that are intrinsically at a human scale.

Hotel Missoni Edinburgh simulates a domestic environment through spatial strategies aimed at blurring the distinction between private and public, a distinction that is similarly blurred in the real Missoni household, that is used both as a private space by the family but also to promote the fashion label. Besides having featured in the spring/summer 2011 advertising campaign, the Missoni family home in Sumirago has provided the backdrop for countless photo shoots and interviews, like the homes of other members of the Missoni family. As observed earlier, this strategy is functional to create a sense of closeness between the brand and its customers and is widespread in the luxury fashion retail sector, but to blur the distinction between private and public is also a productive strategy to attract customers in other types of businesses.

In the contemporary hospitality industry it is not unusual for businesses to leverage elements of domesticity and comfort to create hybrid spaces that might be more appealing for customers, a phenomenon epitomised in the case of Starbucks.[70] The coffee chain has created "a homely ambience using stripped wood floors and 'comfy' brown leather sofas" with the aim of associating themselves with "more personalised forms of hospitality associated with domestic cultures" (Hollows 2008: 119). This phenomenon of hybridisation is not the exclusive domain of the Western world, as demonstrated by the study of Caballero and Tsukamoto (2006). They focused on spatial entities that characterise the contemporary Japanese culture, such as the karaoke box, love hotels and Manga Kissa, i.e. small cubicles where one or two persons can perform "a wide scope of activities such as reading comic books and magazines, browsing the internet, playing video games, or watching movies, drinking and eating" (Caballero and Tsukamoto 2006: 303).

Another term used to describe architectural hybridization forms of private and public space is "being space" (Trendwatching 2006), defined as a "commercial living-room-like settings in the public space, where catering and entertainment aren't just the main attraction, but are there to facilitate out-of-home, out-of-office activities like watching a movie, reading a book, meeting friends and colleagues, and so on". However, the spaces of Hotel Missoni Edinburgh seem to more closely resemble the conceptualisation of "third place" theorised by Oldenburg and Brissett

70 These phenomena of hybridization are not merely a contemporary trend, as there has not always been a clear distinction between the private and public realm. Modern ideas of home and domesticity based on the opposition between the private and public sphere (McDowell 2007: 131, Waghorn 2009: 270) are a recent acquisition, having become particularly relevant in the Victorian era (Hollows 2008: 15). It has been claimed that a shift towards the private in the domestic environment can be traced back to the medieval period (LeZotte 2009: 7 but also Rybczynski 1987) but others have argued that still in the pre-industrial era the private life and public activities, i.e. the work activities, of the family were not kept clearly separated and "there was little distinction between public and private spaces within the home" (Hollows 2008: 16), so that the household continued to be characterised as a place of "*sociability* rather than *privacy*" (Hareven 2002: 34).

(1982). They coined the term "third place" to designate places "outside the workplace and the home" (Oldenburg and Brissett 1982: 265) that they considered as spaces of pure sociability "populated by a shifting diversity of inhabitants" (Oldenburg and Brissett 1982: 274). One of the most distinctive characteristics of third places is constituted by the fact that they feature a strong personalisation that is achieved through the use of colour, and in this respect it is possible to see how this is relevant for the present case, as the fashion label Missoni is particularly renowned for its colourfulness, that is reflected in the spaces of the Hotel Missoni Edinburgh.

From this perspective, the home is seen as a place associated with the notions of intimacy and privacy (Waghorn 2009: 267, McDowell 2007: 131, LeZotte 2009: 7, Hollows 2008) but also comfort (Botticello 2007: 9), elements that are greatly emphasised in the spaces of Hotel Missoni Edinburgh. The private sphere and the realm of home are also strictly intertwined with issues of gender as they are associated with femininity, while the public sphere is usually associated with masculinity (Hollows 2008: 3 and also Sparke 1995 and Matthews 1987). However, the very notions of private and public are highly problematic, as many scholars have argued that they are not fixed but mobile entities that change over time (Weintraub and Kumar 1997, Sheller and Urry 2003, Sheller 2004 and Hollows 2008).

> This is because public spaces are not purely and self-evidently public; they are, like every other cultural space, characterized by particular configurations of public and private. Indeed what makes the public/private division such a major category of social power is the fact that it is dynamic and flexible, varying from place to place.
>
> (McCarthy 2001: 121)

The categories of private and public are conceptualised in different ways in different cultures (Daniels 2008: 116 Caballero and Tsukamoto 2006: 308 and Helliwell 1996) and moreover the notions of private and public cannot be completely separated as they seem to rely on each other for their very own definition, so that "the domestic is created through the extra-domestic and vice-versa" (Blunt and Dowling 2006: 27). As the case of Hotel Missoni Edinburgh demonstrates, concepts of home, domesticity and privacy resonate beyond the space of the home and can be found in other spaces such as hotels, in addition to cafés, pubs or market stalls (Hollows 2008: 4, Botticello 2007, Caballero and Tsukamoto 2006 and Oldenburg and Brissett 1982).[71] "Elements of what constitutes a home can be found outside of that sphere, through

71 In literature the idea of home has been associated with a variety of issues and, as observed by Waghorn (2009: 269), is an intrinsically fluid notion that is "individually, socially and culturally formed" and that can also "shift with time". Academic literature acknowledges "that home is a complex, multi-faceted and multi-layered concept, whose different connotations are often used interchangeably and/or simultaneously" (Coolen 2009: 3). The idea of home is associated with the one of dwelling, a physical space characterised by certain architectural features (Botticello 2007: 7, Waghorn 2009: 267, Fox 2002: 590, Brown 2007: 266), but also with specific practices that create "a sense of home", like cooking or cleaning for example, that are usually strictly intertwined with issues of gender and are associated with certain social relations. Many studies have also recognised that the idea of home can operate on different scales from regional to transnational (Hollows 2008: 4, Waghorn 2009: 269 but see also

particular social and spatial negotiations of public spaces" (Botticello 2007: 7).

Domestic spaces are traditionally associated with certain spatial characteristics in regard to the specific dimensions and proportions of the rooms, that typically involve a smaller scale than public places (Caballero and Tsukamoto 2006: 306).[72] Those elements are present in the topological articulation of the spaces of Hotel Missoni Edinburgh, that are designed in keeping with consideration of human scale and present a strong horizontality. Those traits are particularly relevant because they feature in the public areas. In this respect, references to the notion of 'private' are considered here to be far more significant when present in a space that is characterised by its public use, like in the lobby area of the hotel, than in the case of spaces that are already conceptualised, to a certain extent, as private, like the hotel rooms.

As discussed earlier, private and public do not exist *per se* but are the result of strategies of privatisation, that is semiotically defined as a modal structure that involves not merely space and actors, but also time (Hammad 2003: 298). In this respect, hotel rooms can be considered as a private space, in opposition to the public areas of the lobby, but only for the limited time between check-in and check-out. Moreover rooms also allow access to actors other than the guests, let us think for example of room service or cleaners. They in a sense 'invade' the privacy of the guest, which often employs different strategies to cope with the occasional intrusion (for example by putting everything back in their suitcase or tidying up their room).

Figure 12: Missoni mosaic vases in the lobby

Das et al. 2008: 352, McDowell 2007: 134, Blunt and Dowling 2006 and Morley 2000).

72 In a domestic environment is possible to distinguish between more private areas like the bedroom and the less private areas like for example the living room (Januarius 2009: 51, Hurdley 2006: 718, Mallett 2004: 72 and Hepworth 1999: 18).

The interior of the lobby area is characterised by a strong horizontality. Although the space features also some references to verticality, for example by featuring stripy patterns, columns[73] and two very tall mosaic vases[74] that almost reach the level of the flooring of the mezzanine where Cucina Restaurant is located (figure 12), the lobby itself is not characterised by a strong verticality, as that is counterbalanced by the presence of horizontal elements, like the mezzanine and the lower ceilings, that emphasise the dimensions of intimacy (figure 13).

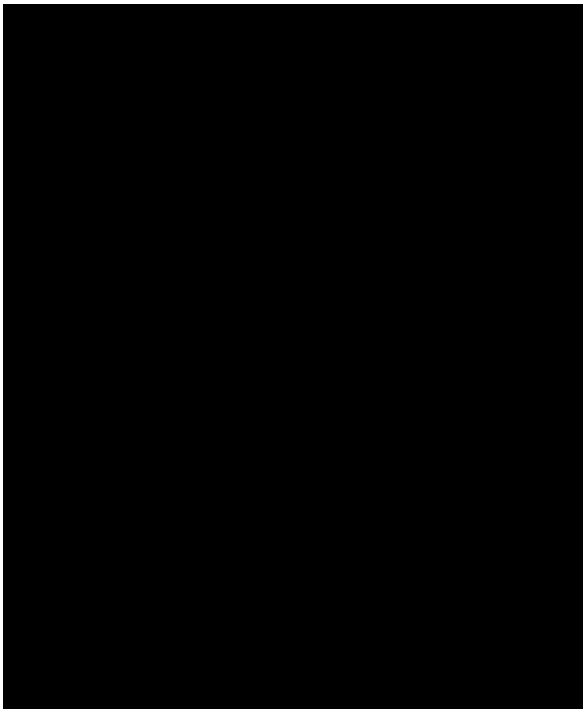


Figure 13: detail of the lobby area of Missoni Hotel Edinburgh

This is in opposition for example to the strong verticality that characterises the lobby of Sofitel Budapest, where the overly high ceilings contribute to create a space that does not feature connotations of intimacy (Figure 14).

73 The space is also characterised to a certain extend by a contrast between the two dimensions, in line with the visual identity of Missoni discussed earlier. The role of the column is particularly significant in this respect. By being a pillar, it is intrinsically intertwined with verticality but the decoration with a horizontal stripy pattern works as a damper that tones down the connotation of verticality of the space. In a similar way, the horizontal stripy pattern of the two gigantic mosaic vases that frame the entrance soften the connotation of verticality that their height would suggest.

74 The results of a collaboration between Missoni and Italian mosaic firm Trend.

Figure 14: detail of the lobby area of Sofitel Hotel in Budapest
Copyright Alice Dallabona (2010)

Moreover, the contrast between the marked verticality of the façade of the Missoni Hotel emphasises even more the horizontality of the lobby area, creating a space that is intrinsically at the human scale and therefore associated with the spheres of the private and the domestic (Caballero and Tsukamoto 2006:136). The outer shell of the Missoni Hotel building, with its grand proportions echoed in the two gigantic mosaic vases, seems to create expectations about the inside, expectations that are unfulfilled as the lobby area does not present such characteristics.

Another feature usually associated with the sphere of domesticity that is appropriated by Hotel Missoni Edinburgh is a specific regime of visibility, the one of privacy, that involves the possibility of being protected from the gaze of bystanders, at least when desired.[75] As observed by Caballero and Tsukamoto (2006: 304), public spaces that employ such a regime of visibility can create "a more intimate and less public atmosphere", and therefore benefit from the positive connotations associated with domestic environments. In the spaces of Hotel Missoni Edinburgh, the private regime of visibility is achieved through manipulations of the topological dimension concerning the categories continuous/discontinuous. The lobby of Hotel Missoni Edinburgh consists of an open space where the reception, the bar and the restaurant are located so that in terms of the dichotomy continuous/discontinuous this area belongs to the former element of this

75 Daniels (2008: 123) discussed the importance of liminal entities in this respect, as for example the Norwegians tend to decorate their windows to create a cosy atmosphere that can be enjoyed from the outside, as well as the inside.

opposition. There are no limits to separate the different areas, but simply thresholds, flexible boundaries that enhance the conjunction of elements and not their disjunction (Zilberberg 2001). The presence of such flexible boundaries between the different zones of the lobby enhance its continuity, which in turn emphasises the internal coherence of the space, constituted by the constant references to the world of Missoni, therefore reinforcing the brand's identity.

However, the space comprises different areas that remain distinct at least in function, therefore showing a partitive totality (Giannitrapani 2004: 3) where the emphasis is not on the wholeness but on the singular parts of the unit. The internal topology of the space (reception on the left, bar in the centre and restaurant upstairs) in fact shows that the lobby area is one open space that represents the sum of different elements, rather than representing an integral totality where the parts lose their individuality. All these different spaces, despite being connected to each other through thresholds and lacking any elements that completely divide the different zones, are dedicated to different functions and retain a certain degree of privacy and intimacy. Considering the issues of visibility and of the points of view (Marrone 2001: 291), the lobby presents areas that remain hidden to the eyes of a localised subject, precluding the complete view of the space both from inside and outside. This is particularly evident in the case of the restaurant, located in a mezzanine floor above the bar, that is not visible from the entrance to the lobby downstairs nor from the outside through the glass walls, because a parapet protects it from the bystanders' glances (figure 15).

Figure 15: Cucina Restaurant at Hotel Missoni Edinburgh

However, the access to the restaurant remains perfectly visible through the glass wall that encloses the suspended stairs, therefore signalling the presence of a public space upstairs. Moreover, the big glass wall at the entrance only allows a little portion of the space to be visible

from outside, as the big mosaic vases and the columns preclude a view of the front of the bar and reception area. In this sense, it can be seen that the specific topological structure of Hotel Missoni Edinburgh and related visibility regime has the effect of turning public space into private ones, so that they can represent characteristics that are commonly associated with the latter despite theoretically belonging to the realm of the former. The spaces of Hotel Missoni Edinburgh guarantee also a certain degree of auditive privacy (Hammad 2003: 299) due to the presence, in the public areas, both of background music and materials that are sound-absorbing, like upholstery, textiles and wood.

Moreover, the spaces of Hotel Missoni Edinburgh also refer to ideas of homeliness in terms of comfort. Comfort is one of the key attributes of the home and that can be achieved, as observed by Sparke (1995: 27), "by cushioning, soft textures and surfaces" and "by gentle curved forms". The public areas of Missoni Hotel Edinburgh are characterised by a widespread use of textiles and upholstery, in the form of soft furnishing that emphasises the curved dimension over straightness and through artworks in the typical Missoni fabrics, contributing "to increase the sense of privacy and soften the environment, both visually and to the touch" (Sparke 1995: 39).[76]

4.5 Conclusions

In this chapter I examined the branding strategies concerning spatiality employed by Hotel Missoni Edinburgh and argued that the brand image of the hotel is very coherent with the one of fashion brand Missoni on a variety of levels, especially through the employment of traits that are associated with them and, more broadly to Italy and its lifestyle. I contended that Hotel Missoni Edinburgh employed corporate strategies aimed at deploying its Italianicity as a means to strengthen the association with the identity of their parent brands and to create a more appealing brand experience for guests.

However, whereas the brand image of the Missoni fashion label and the public persona of the Missonis offered to Hotel Missoni Edinburgh elements that could be directly employed in its spatial articulation and service culture to create a coherent identity for the hotel and a strong association with its parent brand, when it comes to the gastronomic offerings that is not the case. There, those elements had to be implemented with other traits to support the brand extension of

76 However, the palette chosen for the interior design of Hotel Missoni Edinburgh might have been considered inappropriate, due to the use strong colours, in the middle-class households in Victorian times that Penny Sparke (1995) refers to.

the fashion label in order to create a coherent service that could enhance the Missoni experience. In this respect, in the next chapter I argue that Hotel Missoni Edinburgh employs strategies of cultural opportunism that see the deployment of characteristics that are associated with Italy and its culture, appropriating them to maximise the brand extension potential of Missoni in gastronomic terms.

Chapter Five

Italia in Cucina

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter I focus on the gastronomic offerings at Hotel Missoni Edinburgh, that include Cucina restaurant, Missoni Bar and room service provision. Cucina Restaurant is led by Italian chef Mattia Camorani, under the aegis of Giorgio Locatelli. Locatelli is a renowned chef in the UK who runs two restaurants in London (*Locanda Locatelli*, holding a Michelin star since 2003, and *Refettorio*) and is known to the public thanks to several TV shows and cookery books that focus on Italian cuisine.[77] The identity of Locatelli is strictly intertwined with Italy and its gastronomic heritage and his culinary style revolves around the valorisation of freshness, simplicity and the use of high quality Italian ingredients alongside traditional methods. Locatelli and his brand provide prestige and a competitive edge[78] but also authority to the Cucina restaurant, acting as a guarantor of quality and of a certain myth of authentic Italianicity, similar in this respect to the role held by the Missoni fashion label in regard to the hotel discussed in the previous chapter. The association with Missoni provides prestige and differentiation to Hotel Missoni Edinburgh while at the same time emphasising its ties with Italy and its culture, in a similar way the name of Locatelli can provide analogous benefits.

In the previous chapter I observed how the spatiality of the hotel relied on the material characteristics of the Missoni fashion label and on traits of Italianicity that belonged to its brand identity and to the public persona of the Missonis. Here I argue that the gastronomic offerings of Hotel Missoni Edinburgh feature also elements that associated with Italy and its culture but not with the fashion label, with the aim of supplementing the brand identity of Missoni and allowing

77 In 2002 Locatelli featured in the show *Pure Italian* for Food Network UK, and he later filmed two shows for BBC, *Tony and Giorgio* (2003) and *Sicily unpacked* (2012). The latter aired on BBC4 just before Italian crime series *Ispettore Montalbano*, based on the character created by Sicilian novelist Andrea Camilleri. Locatelli also published three cookery books, *Tony and Giorgio* (2003 alongside Tony Allan as a tie-in of the eponymous TV shows), *Made in Italy: Food and Stories* in 2006 and *Made in Sicily* in 2011.

78 Cucina was awarded the prize for best Italian Restaurant in Scotland both in 2011 and 2012.

it to 'stretch' into new areas. I contend that in the gastronomic offerings of Hotel Missoni Edinburgh these strategies of cultural opportunism coexist alongside a process of *Missonification* created through the use of Missoni tableware (figure 16) and the references to traits of culinary Italianicity that are associated with the fashion company's identity. These elements contribute to strengthen the association between the hotel and its parent brand through references to the established associations between the fashion brand Missoni and its country of origin.

Figure 16: Detail of tableware at Cucina restaurant

Moreover, I argue that these different elements contribute to the creation of a myth of Italy that involves the commodification of the Italian identity and promotes its symbolic consumption. Within the gastronomic offerings of Hotel Missoni Edinburgh I have identified a series of characteristic traits that refer to Italy in terms of its culinary traditions and practices and its lifestyle that are employed to create a specific myth of Italianicity in line with the Missoni brand identity. These six traits are: Italian language; local dishes and recipes; Italian ingredients and produce; Italian gustatory isotopy and Italian culinary style; family and the domestic; and sociality, conviviality, informality and friendliness.

5.2 Italian language

The first element that contributes to the creation of the Missoni culinary experience within Hotel Missoni Edinburgh is constituted by the profuse use of Italian language, that is employed to connote Italianicity and as a tool to showcase distinction and cultural capital.

In relation to Cucina, the Italian language is used at different levels, from the very name of the restaurant (*cucina* is the Italian word for kitchen) to the categories of food and the description of

dishes in the menu. In Cucina's menu the dishes are organised into five categories that are presented only by their Italian name: *antipasti* (starters), *pasta e risotti* (pastas and risottos), *carne e pesce* (meat and fish), *contorni* (side dishes) and *dolci* (desserts). Moreover, every dish is firstly presented in Italian and only secondly in English. The importance of the Italian title of the dish over its English translation is not only based on their order but is reinforced through the graphic articulation, as the Italian text is presented in bold, whereas the English text uses regular fonts.[79] Similarly, the lunch menu is entitled *Missoni a mezzogiorno* (literally meaning "Missoni at midday" but translated on the menus simply as "lunch menu").[80]

Cucina's strategy, that suggests connotations of Italianicity through the use of Italian language, is in line with the one employed by Giorgio Locatelli and other Italian restaurants in the UK that operate at different market levels, like Carluccio's, Zizzi, and Jamie's Italian. Italian language here is fetishised and used as a marker to showcase Italianicity and suggests authenticity. Similar to Cucina's strategy, the menu of Missoni Bar features Italian language as a way to suggest Italianicity.[81] Italian is used for the titles of the different sections of the menu,[82] that features many Italian wines, like Prosecco, and spirits, like grappa. Moreover, the majority of cocktails bear Italian names.[83] However, and again in line with Cucina, the rest of the menu, i.e. all the descriptions of the drinks and the lengthy introductions to the various sections, are in English.

This is in line with the widespread practice within Hotel Missoni Edinburgh of using Italian language as a marker to suggest Italianicity and to strengthen the association between the hotel and its parent brand through references to its country of origin. The role of Italian language as a way to communicate Italianicity is recognised in the seminal work of Barthes (1977), who argued that the brand name Panzani could signify Italianicity because the French public recognised it as being an Italian word. However, also Italian-sounding words can connote Italianicity. Girardelli (2011: 315) observed how *Fazoli*, a restaurant chain that offers Italian food in the USA, employs a linguistic strategy aimed at creating and reinforcing a connotation of Italianicity through "simulating the sound of Italian words with syllabic chains that have a basic 'consonant plus vowel' (CV) structure" or by "modifying an English word with the addition of a vowel *o* or *a* at the end (for instance 'Submarine' becomes 'submarino') to simulate the ending of

79 In certain cases some elements are lost in the translation of the titles of the dishes, particularly the references to the provenance of recipes and ingredients, as discussed in more detail in section 5.3.

80 *Mezzogiorno* literally means *midday* but it is common in Italy to refer to lunch this way. The Italian word for lunch is *pranzo* but Cucina privileges instead a term that is used in informal and familiar contexts, i.e. *mezzogiorno*, which is in line with the informality that characterises the Missoni label as discussed in section 5.7.

81 The offerings and identity of Missoni Bar were developed by Rezidor in collaboration with London based consultancy Gorgeous Group.

82 The different sections are entitled respectively *Benvenuto*, *Contenuto Classico*, *Moderno*, *Lusso Missoni*, *La famiglia* and *Missoni innocente*, that can respectively be translated as, *welcome*, *content*, *classic*, *modern*, *luxurious Missoni*, *the family*, and *innocent Missoni*.

83 They are *Biennale, Bellini, Negroni, Negroni elegante, Gallarate, Sartoria, bella Carina, Scozia affair, Vespa, Dolce vita, Paradiso, Giardino, Romanza, Di moda, Rosso granita, Floreale, Fruttato-frullato, Armonioso*.

Italian words". In this sense Hotel Missoni Edinburgh, by using real Italian words, appeals to a different audience, a discerning one that will not be fooled by 'mock' Italian language, reinforcing claims to authenticity.

The menus of Missoni Bar and Cucina presuppose a certain competence from their readers in terms of linguistic but also of cultural knowledge in order to unpack all of the complex references that they include.[84] In semiotic terms, they presuppose a very specific Model Reader (Eco 1979b). This is constituted by an individual that possesses some previous knowledge about the Italian language and Italian culture and that can therefore decipher the menu in all its complexity on his/her own, because s/he possess the necessary cultural capital (Bourdieu 1984, see below). For those who do not possess such competencies, only a partial and incomplete understanding of the gastronomic offerings is attainable, through the English subtitles and explanatory captions or through other intermediary figures, represented by the front of the house staff of Cucina and Bar. These figures constitute *helpers* in the Greimasian sense. In the Actantial Model theorised by Greimas (1966) the *helper* is an actant that supports the *subject* in his/her quest to be united with the desired *object* of value (see also Marsciani and Zinna 1991: 66). An actant is "someone or something who or which accomplishes or undergoes an act" and "it may be a person, anthropomorphic or zoomorphic agent, a thing or an abstract entity" (Bronwen and Ringham 2006: 18). Staff at Hotel Missoni Edinburgh can support the 'incompetent' guests in their process of deciphering the menu but nonetheless they cannot completely substitute for their lack of cultural capital and guarantee a complete understanding of it, as it would be impossible for them to explain every single meaning and cultural reference featured there.

At stake here there are issues of "linguistic exclusions – an insider/outsider distinction based on what food is called" (Kennison 2001: 124). This linguistic competence that sees "speakers lacking the legitimate competence […] excluded from the social domains in which this competence is required" (Bourdieu 1991: 55) constitutes an element of cultural capital that can signal social positioning and distinction (Bourdieu 1984). Distinction is achieved, among other things, not only through the kind of food consumed but also through the way it is spoken about as discourses about food represent another form of cultural capital that is "required in some circles" (Caplan 1997: 146).[85] In this sense, to possess the cultural capital to decipher the menus of Cucina and Bar Missoni in terms of language, as well as in its cultural and gastronomic references, constitutes a sign of distinction.

84 The name of the drink *Biennale* for example is inspired by the eponymous art exhibition that takes place in Venice.

85 On the subject see also Erickson (1991).

5.3 Local dishes and recipes

A second trait of Italianicity that features within the gastronomic offerings of Hotel Missoni Edinburgh, anchoring once again its identity to the country of origin of the Missoni label, is constituted by the references to local culinary traditions of Italy. They are featured alongside dishes like pasta, risotto, gnocchi, polenta, mozzarella, panna cotta or gelato that are more broadly associated with Italy.

The philosophy of Cucina restaurants is one of creating dishes that are "inspired by the classic Italian cooking with a light modern touch".[86] Similarly, the philosophy of Missoni Bar is one that preserves classic drinks, which are served alongside their "modern Italian interpretations". The kind of classic Italian cooking that Cucina restaurants refers to, in terms of its geographic provenance, is constituted by the totality of recipes and practices that can be found within the boundaries of Italy, from the Alps to Sicily. Italy is rich in gastronomic capital and can count on a composite and varied heritage constituted by diverse local traditions, similar in this respect to other nations like China (Bell and Valentine 1997: 17). Cucina's version of Italianicity is based on the conceptualisation of Italian cooking as the sum of all its particular local traditions, as a diverse collection of elements that presents in this sense similarities with the visual identity of the Edinburgh's hotel that, as discussed in the previous chapter, is also constituted by a mix of different (and sometimes contrasting) elements.

Cucina's version of Italianicity also presents striking similarities with the approach to Italian gastronomy of one figure that is regarded as the founder of Italian cooking, Pellegrino Artusi. Artusi is the author of the renowned cookbook *La scienza in cucina e l'arte di mangiar bene* (published at his own expense in 1891), a collection of recipes from all over Italy in formal Italian.[87] At the time Italy had been politically unified for only thirty years and Artusi aimed to bring the nation together and to create a national cuisine by depicting "Italy as a diverse collection of regions where difference was a point of pride" (Helstosky 2003: 123). As observed by Helstosky (2003), Artusi's vision of Italian gastronomy, based on Italy's local diversity in terms of food preparation and products, was functional in creating the idea that the culinary heritage of the country is constituted by the sum of all those local traditions, like in a Missoni patchwork.

Cucina's specific version of Italianicity, despite being rooted in localism and inspired by recipes

86 See http://www.hotelmissoni.com/experience#/0;0;4;3/.

87 At the time the inhabitants of Italy primarily spoke local dialects and not Italian. In those years linguistic unity was still far from being achieved and many authors worked towards that end by deciding to publish in Italian, like Artusi did in the field of cooking. Another significant contribution in this respect is constituted by the literary works of Alessandro Manzoni. Those authors acted in this respect similarly to the printed media examined by Anderson (1991) in creating a sense of national belonging.

and products that belong to different areas, aims to be truly national in the sense that it does not merely represent the culinary tradition of a certain part of Italy but draws upon varied gastronomic realities. Therefore Cucina is not recognisable as a regional restaurant *tout court*, as it includes different recipes and traditions and cannot simply be associated with a specific locale. For example on Cucina's menus it is possible to find northern Italian dishes such as *risotto* or *polenta* (figure 17), but also *pasta all'amatriciana*, of Roman origin, or Sicilian desserts.

Figure 17: Polenta and speck at Cucina
copyright Alice Dallabona (2011)

Here, I use the term Italian 'regional cooking' with caution, because, as Montanari (2010: 80) argues, it is a concept created as a function of political or commercial logic. There are no "'natural' regions separated by 'natural' frontiers" (Bourdieu 1991: 222).

> The creation of regions is a social act. Regions differ because people have made them so. Undoubtedly in many cases differences in the physical environment will influence the creation of regional variations, with different environmental conditions stimulating different individual and social responses [...]. But similar physical environments can be associated with very different human responses, and similar patterns of spatial organisation can be found in very different milieux.
>
> (Johnston et al. 1990: 130)

Regions are "invented traditions" (Cook and Crang 1996: 139 but also Appadurai 1988), but nonetheless "we must also remember the force with which those traditions are invested and reinvested with meaning, and often with vehement local patriotism" (Bell and Valentine 1997:

151).

In Cucina, the local provenance of dishes is addressed in different ways, specifying the area in Italy where a particular recipe or tradition comes from sometimes in terms of the broader level of regions, for example *cannoli siciliani con gelato e frutta candita* (Sicilian cannoli with chocolate ice cream and candied lemon and orange), others in terms of sub-regional units, for example *tagliatelle all'emiliana* (home-made tagliatelle with traditional pork ragout) or cities, for example see the dish *vitello alla Milanese* (i.e. veal cutlet Milanese style). This underlines a strategy that valorises the local as a means to suggest authenticity.

However, the local provenance of dishes is not always explicitly acknowledged (see for example the case of the starter *speck with bagna cauda, rocket and cherry tomato salad*, where *bagna cauda* is a typical dish from the Piedmont region) and at times is lost in translation. On the Cucina menus, references to the provenance of the dish "veal cutlet with steamed vegetables" are completely lost, as there is no mention of the style *alla Milanese* (Milanese style). Similarly, in the case of *tagliatelle all'emiliana*, the dish is simply described in English as "home-made tagliatelle with traditional pork ragout", with no references to the provenance of the recipe. This refers, again, to distinction achieved through displays of cultural capital (Bourdieu 1984), as it was argued in the previous section. Only an individual that possesses some previous knowledge about Italian language and Italian food culture can fully understand the complex gastronomical references to local recipes, whereas those who do not possesses such cultural capital are relegated to a simplified, but incomplete, understanding and again need to rely on *helpers*, represented by the English captions and the front of the house staff of Cucina, figures that in a certain sense echo the shop assistants of Missoni stores.

However, the valorisation of local diversity within Italian cuisine that Cucina presents is not the norm in the international food industry. Although, "specific histories of Italian foodways point to the vast diversity of cuisines in Italy, and that the cuisines vary substantially between region and even town or village", many Italian restaurants in the US fail "to differentiate between these regional differences" and their "Italianness" is "not regionally specific" (Albrecht 2011: 107). The same lack of regional differences is present in UK restaurant chains like *Jamie's Italian* or *Carluccio's*. This demonstrates a tension within the commodification of Italian culinary traditions in the food industry between an homogenising tendency that transcends local difference contributing to the myth of Italy as a homogeneous entity, and a separatist tendency that on the other hand emphasises the local and small-scale. In this respect, the references to regional dishes and tradition in Cucina's menu contribute to create a myth of authentic Italianicity (see section 5.8), where "the 'local' is fixed as the producer of 'authentic' foods for the cosmopolite to consume" (Bell and Hollows 2007: 30). The references to local difference in the

gastronomic offerings of Hotel Missoni Edinburgh are a function of a process of commodification that sees the "staging and (re)construction of cultural difference" so that "constructed meaningful knowledges about (food) commodities and their geographies […] become a crucial means of adding value to those commodities" (Cook and Crang 1996:133). In Robertson's (1995: 29) words, "to put it very simply, diversity sells".

5.4 Italian ingredients and produce

The Italianicity of the gastronomic offerings at Hotel Missoni Edinburgh is not only created through references to the rich local culinary heritage of Italy in terms of recipes and practices, but also through the use of Italian produce. In this sense, Hotel Missoni Edinburgh relies on ideas of Italian excellence in the culinary field, employing the same strategy observed in the spatiality of the hotel (see previous chapter) and that saw the deployment of Italian excellence in the field of design as a marker of quality and Italianicity.

In semiotic terms, Italian produce is presented by Hotel Missoni Edinburgh as an *object of value*, valorised products that are characterised by connotations of 'authenticity' but also 'quality' (see Chapter Four, Six and Eight). Italian produce is valuable because it seems to be generally associated with ideas of quality, very high standards and excellence. Massa and Testa (2012: 115) articulate this concept very clearly in their analysis of the Italian delicatessen *Eataly*, observing how that "promotes Italian food and emphasizes the value of products that are 'Made in Italy' as this represents a universally recognized worldwide standard of excellence in this field". If the label Missoni and its associations with Italian fashion act as guarantors of the aesthetic qualities of the hotel, in regard to the gastronomic offerings this role is played by Italian produce. The gastronomic offerings of Hotel Missoni Edinburgh refer to the Italianicity of its produce in many ways. Firstly by featuring elements that are produced in Italy and that are more broadly associated with its identity and secondly by using produce that is associated with specific locales, in a form of double valorisation that sees the positive connotations of Italy and the small-scale contributing to the creation of a myth of quality and authenticity.

The mini-bars in the rooms feature a series of Italian sodas and there is a supply of Italian mineral water in the gym. Moreover, Cucina's menus feature elements that are labelled "Italian", like a s*elezione di salumi* e *formaggi* (selection of Italian cured meat and cheeses) alongside other products that are produced in Italy and that are strictly associated with its identity, such as *pancetta*, *scamorza* and *mozzarella* cheeses, *aceto balsamico* and extra virgin olive oil. This

products are presented in Cucina as signs of Italy *tout court*, in a metonymic relationship where the part stands for the whole (Barthes 1977: 50). These products have succeeded in creating a common Italian identity both in Italy (Montanari 2010: 35) and abroad (Helstosky 2004: 12) primarily due to the fact that they could be easily preserved and transported, contradicting the close association between Italy and freshness. The corporate communication of Cucina emphasises the fact that the restaurant uses only the "freshest ingredients",[88] in line with established myths of Italianicity that naturalise the association between the country and the attribute of freshness (Barthes 1977: 34). However, considering hard cheese and cured meat, this appears problematic. Despite not being actually cooked and belonging to the side of nature in Lévi-Strauss' culinary triangle (2008: 37) because "the rotted is a natural transformation", they can hardly be defined as fresh although, as exemplified in Cucina, they can nonetheless successfully connote Italianicity.

But within the gastronomic offerings of Hotel Missoni Edinburgh ingredients that are not the exclusive domain of Italy can nonetheless connote Italianicity, as exemplified in the case of *Basilito*, an Italianised version of the Cuban cocktail *mojito*. *Mojito* is magically transformed into an Italian drink through the use of fresh basil leaves instead of mint ones. In this respect basil acts like a transformative agent that is characterised by connotations of Italianicity that can be passed on to other elements simply by association. This can work due to the metonymic relationships between Italy and certain elements that are commonly associated with it, so that the nation can be represented by one of its smaller parts, as observed by Barthes (1977: 50).

The gastronomic offerings of Hotel Missoni Edinburgh also refer to produce that is associated with specific Italian locales. This echoes the strategies employed in the spatiality of Hotel Missoni Edinburgh discussed in the previous chapter that similarly valorised the local, both in regard to Italy and Scotland. Some products used in Cucina refer to their geographical origin in their very name, like in the case of *parmigiano* cheese, which literally means "from Parma" or in the lesser known case of *mocetta ossolana*, a cured meat that, as the name suggests, is produced in Val D'Ossola (Piedmont). This is in line with international policies of "geographical indications" aimed at trademarking and protecting traditional produce (Moran 1993: 264) which resulted in the French "Appellation d'origine contrôlée" and, in Italy, to a variety of labels "including Protected Designation of Origin (DOP), Protected Geographical Indication (IGP), and Traditional Speciality Guaranteed (STG) - that tie a product to its territory of origin, signaling its authenticity to consumers" (Global Agricultural Information Network 2010: 4). These policies validate and valorise the local and Cucina follows this trend, that links food to places as explicitly as possible (Ashley et al. 2004: 88) and favours small-scale terroirs and its traditions.

88 Available at http://www.hotelmissoni.com/hotelmissoni-edinburgh/restaurants/cucina.

As observed by Montanari (2010: 74), however, this is not simply an innocent return to local roots, but a trend that hides economic interests as labels such as 'genuine', 'traditional' and 'authentic' are functional in boosting sales of Italian food-related items, especially to foreign consumers. It is nowadays a common marketing strategy to enhance the geographical affiliation of produce (Hodgson and Bruhn 1993, Hughes 1995). References to the locale in food products convey the impression that they possess additional value, contributing to create and enhance a myth of authenticity that is supported also by food writing (Caplan 1997: 78) and by the media, which often actively contributes to make these produce part of the "circuits of culinary culture" (Cook and Crang 1996: 141). This increases the "monetary value" of such products the more the "consumer knowledge about the commodity in question" increases (Arce and Marsden 1993: 303). In this sense, certain produce becomes signs of cultures and "people are encouraged to gaze upon and collect" them (Urry 2002: 149).

The emphasis on the local and the small-scale proceeds *pari passu* with a world that is more and more globalised, as "the impact of globalization on food culture has been both to augment homogeneity and to increase diversity" (Ashley et al. 2004: 102). As discussed in more detail in Chapter Eight, it has been argued that globalisation does not necessarily involve the annihilation of local differences and a general homogenisation of offerings. The global and the local are closely intertwined in a situation that Pieterse (1995: 49) defines as the "globalization of diversity", that sees local difference being globalised (Bell and Valentine 1997: 190), in a "glocal" perspective (Robertson 1995 and, in semiotic terms, Lotman 2006 and Cobley 2004). Locales contribute to "'re-enchant' (food) commodities and to differentiate them from the devalued functionality and homogeneity of standardized products" (Cook and Crang 1996: 132).

However, the attribution of produce to a specific locale can be problematic. Gastronomic cultures are rarely 'pure' and are, more generally, constituted by a variety of elements of different origin that only subsequently become imbued with meaning and constructed as typically associated with a certain locale. For example, the Italianicity of pasta is nowadays indisputable, but it is believed that it came originally from China (Goody 1982: 166, see also Montanari 2010: 46 and Capatti and Montanari 2005).

> The introduction of pasta into the cuisine of the Italian peninsula is a process of globalization, and the final elaboration of a pasta-based Italian cuisine is, in metaphorical terms, a process of cultural syncretism, or perhaps creolization. [...] Thus the fact that pasta became Italian, and that its Chinese origin became irrelevant is the essential culture-producing process in this case. Whether origins are maintained or obliterated is a question of the practice of identity.
>
> (Friedman 1995: 74)

In this perspective, “foods do not simply come from places, organically growing out of them” but the “differentiation of foods through their geographies is an active intervention in their cultural geographies rather than the passive recording of absolute cultural geographic differences” (Cook and Crang 1996: 140). However in the gastronomic offerings of Hotel Missoni Edinburgh, like in many Italian eateries and in discourses of Italian cuisine, references to local are employed unproblematically, naturalised by myth (Barthes 1977).

5.5 Italian gustatory isotopy and Italian culinary style

In the previous section I examined how the gastronomic offerings at Hotel Missoni Edinburgh create connotations of Italianicity through the use of ingredients that are produced in Italy or strictly associated with its culinary culture. Those were primarily end-products, like cured meat and cheeses for example. What those elements have in common is represented by the fact that they do not undergo significant cooking procedures in the kitchen but are served to guests with minimal manipulation besides slicing or grating. However not all the produce used in Cucina is Italian.

Cucina's Italianicity not only originates from the Italianicity of ingredients *per se* but relies also on Italian cooking techniques that are aimed at the 'Italianisation' of ingredients that do not come from Italy. This practice, that sees the references to the Scottish location being incorporated and transformed into references to the Missoni label through a process of 'Italianisation', echoes the one employed in the spatiality of Missoni Hotel Edinburgh discussed in the previous chapter. Similarly to the case of the outer shell of the hotel's building, where the references to the typical Italian architectural feature of the portico contributed to create connotations of *Missonification*, here the same function is attributed to Italian cooking techniques. As Matteo Camorani, executive chef at Cucina, observes “Italian cuisine is not only a function of recipes or ingredients but also of particular cooking methods” (author's interview). This philosophy of cooking sees Italianicity not merely strictly dependent on the utilization of ingredients that must come from Italy, but puts great emphasis on cooking methods and processes that characterise Italy and that can transform any good quality ingredient into something that tastes Italian.

> There are also environmental issues to be considered, Scottish lobsters are excellent so I privilege them over Italian ones. And the meat here is excellent too, so I don't see why I should buy Chianina beef from Italy

> instead. It is the way we work on those produce that make it become Italian and that that makes dishes truly Italian.[89]
>
> (Mattia Camorani, author's interview)

This is particularly evident in classic dishes like fillet steak with spinach and mushroom, that belong to the tradition of fine dining and are not specifically Italian, but that Cucina transforms into an Italian course by preparing the mushrooms in a typically Italian way, *trifolati* (the *trifolatura* is a method that consists in cooking various ingredients, such as courgettes, potatoes and mushrooms, in a mix of oil, garlic and parsley). In semiotic terms, *trifolatura* is a Narrative Programme (Greimas 1984: 151-163) whereby 'anonymous' ingredients are transformed into a dish that can be connoted as Italian.

This process aims to recreate that "specific Italian flavour" (Mattia Camorani, author's interview) in the dishes, flavour that I define, in semiotic terms, as the Italian gustatory isotopy. The Italian gustatory isotopy is constituted by a series of culturally established characteristics that involves the taste, aroma, temperature and consistency of food (Grignaffini 2004: 4). In terms of cooking methods, Grignaffini (2004: 8) states, traditional Italian gastronomy is characterised, in opposition to forms of conceptual cuisine (like the one of Moreno Cedroni examined in Chapter Seven), by the homogenisation of ingredients, that are manipulated in a way to enhance the unity of the dish. In this respect the relevant dimension is one of continuity, as every part of the dish is representative of the whole. This is the case for the dish *tagliatelle all'emiliana* (home-made tagliatelle with traditional pork ragú). The Italianicity of the *ragú* is not a function of the different ingredients that compose the sauce (pork, onion, celery, carrots etc.) and their provenance, but of the overall transformation that they go through. i.e. the typical preparation process of the *ragú*. The sole use of Italian pork would fail to create a true *ragú* if the traditional cooking methods were to be significantly changed. It is the latter that creates that Italian gustatory isotopy, not merely the use of Italian ingredients, although in certain cases they are necessary.

> If you want to do a very simple dish like *prosciutto e melone* you must use prosciutto that comes from Italy, you can't use prosciutto from somewhere else if you aim to create that authentic Italian taste.[90]
>
> (Mattia Camorani, author's interview)

89 Original version: Bisogna prendere in considerazione anche la questione ambientale. Le aragoste Scozzesi sono buonissime, quindi preferisco usare quelle locali rispetto a quelle Italiane. Lo stesso discorso vale per la carne, non faccio arrivare carne Chianina dall'Italia perché quella locale è eccellente. Non è tanto l'ingrediente quanto il modo in cui noi lo lavoriamo che fa diventare quel piatto italiano.

90 Original version: Se si vuole preparare un piatto molto semplice, come prosciutto e melone, è assolutamente necessario che il prosciutto venga dall'Italia, non da altrove, se si vuole dare quel gusto autentico, quel vero sapore italiano.

This emphasis on creating dishes that are characterised by the Italian gustatory isotopy is in line with Cucina's quest for an authenticity that privileges autochthonous forms of Italian cuisine over 'creole' Italian dishes that were created abroad by Italian immigrants. Italian food has undergone significant transformation in its encounters with other cultures, particularly as a result of Italian immigration to the USA. This complies with the claims of Girardelli (2004: 321), who observed how in certain cases Italian food as it is served abroad "cannot even be recognized as 'authentic' by the same members of the ethnic group they are claiming to represent". This is epitomised in the case of the dish spaghetti and meatballs, possibly the most popular hybrid Italian-American recipe, that in this form is "practically unknown on the Italian peninsula" (Levenstein 2002: 88) but that nonetheless features in many Italian menus around the world, including the UK (having been featured in Carluccio's and Zizzi chains). Cucina rejects those internationalised and inauthentic versions of Italian cuisine as it aims to recreate the "specific Italian flavour" that you would experience if you ate a traditional dish like *tagliatelle all'emiliana* in Italy.

Hotel Missoni Edinburgh also strengthens connotations of Italianicity, in turn enhancing the Missonification of the hotel's gastronomic offering, through references to other characteristics that are associated with Italy and its cuisine like the freshness of the ingredients, a strong attention to seasonality and the simplicity of the dishes. The corporate communication of Cucina restaurants emphasises the fact that they use only the "freshest ingredients".[91] Freshness is an attribute that is widely associated with Italianicity, as already recognised by Barthes (1977: 34). Moreover, another element that is often associated with Italy, upon which Cucina draws to create its specific version of Italianicity, is attention to seasonality. This refers to the supposed Italian custom of living accordingly to a temporality that respects the rhythms of seasons and transcends modernity. In fact "Italy has a long literary history of functioning as an idealized site outside modernity (for non-Italians)" (Parkins 2004: 258). At Cucina this phenomenon is epitomised in the consumption of fresh produce when they are in season, and in menus that change rather often as new products become available, be that from Italy (like in the case of truffle) or, more often, from the UK. Another attribute of Italianicity that features in the corporate communication of Cucina is simplicity. Simplicity is a characteristic of Italian food that is commonly recognised abroad (Girardelli 2004: 308). As a rule, Italian food is characterised by the use of a limited number of ingredients and very simple cooking methods. This is generally associated with positive connotations and it is these discourses of simplicity that Cucina refers to.[92]

91 "Our beautiful, award winning signature restaurant, Cucina, is the pulsing heart of Hotel Missoni Edinburgh. With dishes inspired by classic Italian cooking, using the finest, freshest ingredients, simply prepared. Seasonal menus, importing the very best from Italy". See http://www.hotelmissoni.com/hotelmissoni-edinburgh/restaurants/cucina.

92 Although in some cases the simplicity of Italian cooking can be a limit, like for example in the case of Jamie Oliver's *Great Escape*, as the chef finds that the cooking practices he encounters in Italy are "frequently too simple for him to add value to in order to demonstrate his own culinary

The same characteristics to which Cucina refers (like freshness of the ingredients, a strong attention to seasonality and simplicity) are also a characteristic of the Slow Food movement, whose philosophy is associated with Italy and the Italian way of life (Petrini 2003, Parkins and Craig 2006, Miele and Murdoch 2002: 325, Toyka 2007, Bell and Hollows 2007: 31).[93] In this sense, Cucina anchors itself also to the discourses of this movement to create a sense of Italianicity that can contribute to the prestige of the Missoni brand.

5.6 Family and the domestic

In the previous sections I examined strategies of cultural opportunism that see the deployment of characteristics that are associated with Italianicity but that transcend Missoni's values as a way to augment the company's offerings and to maximise the brand extension potential of the label in the culinary field. In this section and the next I address how the gastronomic offerings at Hotel Missoni Edinburgh contribute to the process of *Missonification* through references to traits of Italianicity that are associated with the fashion company's identity.

The gastronomic offerings of Hotel Missoni Edinburgh refer to ideas of family and domesticity, elements that are associated with Italy and its lifestyle (Barthes 1977, Moliterno 2000: 211, Girardelli 2004, Bell and Hollows 2007, Parasecoli 2004) but that are also characteristic traits of the Missoni brand identity, as observed in Chapter Four and in Chapter Eight.

In Cucina this dimension of familial is marked linguistically ("like the great Italian family kitchen" and "authentic Italian family hospitality")[94] but also emphasised through references to traditional domestic practices, firstly by using recipes and methods that are characteristic of different local traditions of domestic cooking (see for example ragú or *polenta*) and secondly by proposing a series of masterclasses led by executive chef Mattia Camorani.

Let us consider for example the masterclass that focuses on fresh pasta (*pasta fresca*). The use of pasta fresca (in its simple form, like *tagliatelle*, or with filling, like *ravioli* or *tortelli*) is characteristic of the Po Valley (in the Emilia-Romagna region of Italy) and features a very high level of local difference, so that practically every household has its own "family tradition in pasta-making" (Alexander 2000: 556). Domestic cooking in general, and pasta-making in particular, is a gendered activity. Historically in Italy, men did not generally engage with cooking at all, the only exception being constituted by special festivities where the normal order was

skills" (Bell and Hollows 2007: 28).

93 However those three concepts are not exclusively associated with Italy, as they also the defining characteristic of the *nouvelle cuisine*, a phenomenon that originated in France in the 1970s (Miele and Murdoch 2002: 316).

94 Available at http://www.hotelmissoni.com/experience#/0;0;4;3/ accessed 22-03-2012.

inverted (Badii 2004). Such a gendered division of cooking labour is widespread and, despite the "popular impression that patterns of the gender division of labour are changing" (Bell and Valentine 1997: 70), "provisioning and food preparation remain largely the work of women" (Caplan 1997: 9 and also Charles and Kerr 1988, Murcott 1982, 1983 and 1993, Warde and Hetherington 1993 and 1994).

For centuries in Italy "skilled women" (Moliterno 2000: 422) have been making fresh pasta by hand and Cucina's masterclass refers precisely to this gendered domestic tradition that is epitomised in the mythical figure of the Italian "Cooking Woman" (Duruz 2004), the mother that still nowadays remains "at the centre of Italian families, the providers of a constant flow of totalizing care, directed primarily towards their child or children, but also towards their husband, their parents and often their husband's parents as well" (Ginsborg 2001: 77 and also Harper and Faccioli 2010: 110). This figure of the Italian mother (*mamma*) is not only connoted as a care giver, but as the source (and the preserver) of 'authentic' Italian culinary traditions.[95] Especially in regard to pasta-making, "recipes and particular cooking techniques" are "passed from one generation to another" from women, "usually from mother to daughter" (Bell and Valentine 1997: 66).[96] Camorani's masterclasses are closely intertwined with ideas of family and domesticity because the chef acts in a certain sense as a 'surrogate mother' who transmits a type of culinary know-how that is associated with domestic traditions. Moreover, Camorani also provides skills that people can use at home, perpetuating the domestic tradition of pasta-making.[97] Similar to the Italian mamma, chef Camorani acts as a source and guarantor of a 'traditional' and 'authentic' know-how that, from an Italian point of view, is intrinsically related to domestic traditions. If elsewhere pasta-making is primarily connoted as a professional chefs' activity, in an Italian perspective that is considered a typically domestic activity.

5.7 Sociality, conviviality, informality and friendliness

The gastronomic offerings at Hotel Missoni Edinburgh also present references to other

95 This figure featured for example in chef Jamie Oliver's TV show *Jamie's Great Escape*, aired for the first time in 2005 on Channel 4, and tie-in book *Jamie's Italy* (Bell and Hollows 2007: 33).

96 However, that is not always the case anymore as young women reject the traditional girl's education that sees mothers passing on their culinary knowledge to daughters (Giard 1998: 151) and find themselves looking for culinary tips from a variety of sources like books, magazines and TV shows (Giard 1998: 178), untraditional repositories of cooking knowledge like Cucina's masterclasses are.

97 This is also in line with Montanari's (2010: 73) claims that Italian restaurants are nowadays perpetuating domestic traditions that have been progressively abandoned at home.

characteristics that are associated with Italy such as sociality, conviviality friendliness and informality.[98] These are the same values epitomised in the public persona of the Missonis, creating a strong sense of coherence between the identity of the fashion label and the one of the gastronomic offerings at Hotel Missoni Edinburgh, echoing in this respect the spatial strategies discussed in the previous chapter and effectively commodifying myths of Italian lifestyle.

The Italian way of life is associated with ideas of sociality and conviviality and images of families sitting together around a table are often featured in the media when discussing Italy and its culinary culture (Bell and Hollows 2007: 32 but also Parkins and Craig 2006, Helstosky 2004, Ginsborg, 2001 and Counihan 2004). Cucina's corporate communication emphasises this: "Flawless but friendly service. Fantastic food. Convivial conversation. Authentic Italian family hospitality, brimming with laughter and good grace".[99] As observed by Alexander (2000: 557) "social eating is one of the bases of Italian culture". However if Italian (and more broadly Mediterranean) traditional meals are often presented as the epitome of sociality in opposition to Northern customs (Ashley et al. 2004: 55), these forms of conviviality are not as idyllic as suggested.

Not all members of the household experience the same levels of conviviality, and women are often relegated to the position of servants rather than diners (Littlejohn 1963). In Italy "the woman/mother is the cook rather than a full participant in slow conviviality" (Parkins and Craig 2006: 114). In this respect, however, Cucina's conviviality presents a far more comprehensive model where all diners are included and the traditional gender division that is at the basis of Italian family meal is transcended.[100] Cucina proposes a special sharing menu where there are no singular portions of food and everyone can have a taste of everything,[101] referring to a way of eating that is typically Italian and that epitomises the values of sociality, conviviality and informality that are associated with Italy. Similarly, the Missoni Bar employs the same strategy in relation to drink, as guests can order from the *la famiglia* (the family) drink selection, presented on the menu as "a fantastic celebration of the Italian way of life" where drinks were designed "to share and enjoy with the one you love, with friends and family".

The gastronomic offerings at Hotel Missoni Edinburgh rely on aspects of Italian lifestyle that are not limited to Italian family culture. These attributes of sociality and conviviality that are valorised in Cucina and Missoni Bar are also intrinsically linked to ideas of tight-knit communities, to slow and relaxed temporality, and to a passion for food, which are values that

98 Conviviality (it. *convivialità*) is also an attribute emphasised by Locanda Locatelli restaurant that is presented on its website through the claim "welcome to la convivialità" (http://www.locandalocatelli.com/).

99 Available at http://www.hotelmissoni.com/hotelmissoni-edinburgh/restaurants/cucina.

100 However, also the sociality of dining out is far from absolute, being limited to single parties of diners. Forms of conviviality between different tables are limited, so that restaurants meals are "more like private behaviour in a public place" (Warde and Martens 2000: 103, also Caplan 1997: 147).

101 Available at http://www.hotelmissoni.com/hotelmissoni-edinburgh/cucina/menu.

are associated with Italy and are also strictly intertwined with the philosophy of the Slow Food movement.

> Taking the time to cook, time to eat, and then time to recover from both seems to constitute both a cultural identity associated with slow living and an imagined community centered on the shared table.
>
> (Parkins 2004: 261)

Conviviality and sociality are more broadly considered to be intrinsically linked with eating out (Warde and Martens 2000: 108)[102] but I argue that these traits are emphasised in the practice and discourses of Cucina with the aim of strengthening the association between the restaurant and myths of Italian culinary culture through the use of characteristics that are closely intertwined with Missoni's brand identity, contributing to enhance the *Missonification* of the hotel's offerings. Another trait of Italianicity emphasised in the gastronomic offerings of Hotel Missoni Edinburgh is the informality associated with the relaxed Italian lifestyle that is epitomised in the Missonis' public persona. The "Sharing Style" at Cucina is a much less formal affair than the usual restaurant meal, being more closely related to the tradition of the small family-run Italian *trattorie*. Nonetheless, this informality does not mean that the Italian syntagmatic structure of the meal is suspended, as at Cucina the former is integrated within the latter. The regime of informality at Cucina is inserted within the broader order of dishes that characterises the Italian culinary practice.

The canonical structure of the Italian meal is constituted by *antipasto* (starter), *primo* (first dish i.e. pasta, risotto and soups), *secondo* (second dish, usually including meat and fish), *contorno* (side dish, usually vegetables), *dolce* (dessert) e *caffè* (coffee).[103] Italian cuisine follows the rule, shared among many different cultures, that savoury dishes precede sweet ones (Segreto 2004: 7), but its specificity is constituted by the series of different savoury dishes that are consumed in succession within a meal. This phenomenon, as observed by Montanari (2010: 61), characterises the Italian grammatical structure of the meal in opposition to the forms codified in transalpine countries, such as France, that are centred around a single main dish.[104] Within Cucina restaurant, references to the Italian syntagmatic structure of the meal are also used as markers of

102 A departure from the conceptualisation of eating out as an intrinsically social activity is Finkelstein's (1991) argument that the restaurant as a site for "incivility" as customers do not truly and genuinely engage with each other.

103 The labels *pasta e risotti* and *carne e pesce* are used in Cucina's menu instead of the one *primi* and *secondi*, but such labels are so strictly intertwined in Italian culture that can be used as synonym. In Italy it is so obvious that pasta and risotto are *primi* and that meat and fish are *secondi* that the terms can substitute each other.

104 Historically, the custom of consuming a single main dish was also present in Italy. However, such a practice is strictly intertwined with a tradition of scarcity and famine that continued up to the 20th century and that saw workers, especially in the countryside, consume everyday meals constituted by a single course. On the opposite, the festive meals featured the complex aforementioned syntagmatic structure that comprised a succession of savoury dishes (Badii 2004: 70), which constituted the norm only for the bourgeoisie (Montanari 2010: 60).

authenticity because, in accordance with the Italian tradition, pasta and risotto are not considered as starters, as sometimes happens in the UK and the USA.

Moreover, service at Cucina, like in the rest of Hotel Missoni Edinburgh, is centred around values of informality, emphasising in this respect a general tendency towards informality in the restaurant business.[105] However, Cucina transforms it into a sign of the Missoni label, legitimising its brand extension in the culinary field. Staff culture at Cucina, like in the rest of Hotel Missoni Edinburgh, is also centred, beyond informality, around values of friendliness and warmth, elements closely associated with the Italian lifestyle and the identity of the Missoni fashion brand.

This is pursued, in line with the discussion in Chapter Four, through the "policy of selecting and recruiting waiting staff on the basis of their personalities - or, more accurately, on their self-presentation of certain attributes of their performative personalities" (Bell and Valentine 1997: 126). This tendency is becoming more and more widespread in the restaurant business (Crang 1994, Zukin 1995), where the performance of staff is essential to create a particular experience (Edwards 2013: 227). At Cucina, staff friendliness serves the purpose of preventing any form of "intimidation of the waiters" (Bell and Valentine 1997: 127), which is in line with similar strategies employed in other areas of the hotel, creating a coherent environment where the identity of the Hotel Missoni Edinburgh and the one of the fashion brand Missoni overlaps.

If the friendliness of Cucina and, more generally, hotel staff is the result of a series of elements ranging from hiring practices, training, guidelines and discourses concerning the business, at Hotel Missoni Edinburgh there are, however, also strategies in place to promote real forms of friendliness and sociality, although they involve only staff, like for example through calendar shoots and charity runs or the creations of drinks to celebrate certain members, like in the case of *Bella Carina*, named in honour of the hotel's manager. This is part of the service culture of Missoni Hotel Edinburgh, called VITA (the Italian word for life), that focuses on notions of family, friendliness and values such as care and solidarity and that was inspired by Italy, considered as a mythical entity characterised only by positive values.

105 This "informalisation refers to a process in which social and cultural rules become less clear and their non-observance less consequential" (Warde and Martens 2000: 14 but also Ashley et al. 2004: 150). It has been argued that this trend of informalisation will condemn people to a state of anxiety, of "gastro-anomie", due to the lack of rules of conduct in regard to eating (Fischler 1979), but this ignores the fact that eating out still is a fairly structured affair. "Notions like courses, their order, the habit of eating the whole meal in the same place and strong rules regarding disapproved behaviour persist" (Warde and Martens 2000: 14 but also Bell and Valentine 1997:131).

5.8 Conclusions

In this chapter I observed how the gastronomic offerings of Hotel Missoni Edinburgh rely on the same elements of family, domesticity, informality and friendliness that were identified in the spatial strategies of Missoni Hotel Edinburgh (see previous chapter) but supplement them with traits of sociality and conviviality that are more broadly associated with Italy whilst also capitalising on the Italian culinary heritage in order to complement the Missoni brand offerings. In this sense the hotel leverages extensively its Italian appeal, employing several strategies in order to emphasise its connections with Italy and its lifestyle as a way to enable the brand Missoni to extend in the culinary field, at the same time creating a myth (Barthes 1972) of Italianicity that involves the commodification of the Italian identity and promotes its symbolic consumption.

Terms like "authentic" and "real" are buzzwords in the Italian food industry (Girardelli 2004:315) and Hotel Missoni Edinburgh is no exception in this respect. The corporate communication of the hotel greatly emphasises the fact that they offer "authentically prepared"[106] dishes and an "authentic Italian family hospitality"[107] experience. In this sense, the myth of 'authentic' Italianicity portrayed by the hotel is reinforced through linguistic markers. These are aimed at having an effect on the people, i.e. convincing them of this genuine authenticity through a perlocutionary act (Austin 1976) that contributes to the naturalisation of this myth of authenticity. However, authenticity is a problematic concept as it is "culturally determined" (McIntosh and Prentice 1999: 593, see also Gunders 2008: 120, Handler 1986, Trilling 1972, Spooner 1986) and always open for redefinition.

Hotel Missoni Edinburgh draws on the six different attributes of Italianicity that I have identified in the narratives of Cucina and Bar and naturalises them by presenting them as "authentically Italian" *tout court*, creating a myth of authentic Italianicity. Myth possesses the faculty of naturalising elements and concepts by hiding their nature as social and ideological constructs by wrapping them in an aura of reality (Barthes 1972). Myth "operates by confusing nature and history" translating concepts that are culturally constructed "into self-evident laws of nature thereby reinforcing social stereotypes and making them appear inevitable" (Bronwen and Ringham 2006: 213). The myth of authentic Italy created by Hotel Missoni Edinburgh is a constructed entity, similar in this respect to the ones created by Maison Moschino and examined the next two chapters. However, the version of Italianicity portrayed by Maison Moschino in its spatiality and gastronomic offerings is rather different from the one I identified in relation to

106 Available at http://www.hotelmissoni.com/experience#/0;0;4;3/ accessed 22-03-2012.
107 Available at http://www.hotelmissoni.com/hotelmissoni-edinburgh/restaurants/cucina accessed 22-03-2012.

Hotel Missoni Edinburgh.

Chapter Six

Hospitality Moschino style

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter I examine the branding strategies concerning spatiality employed by Maison Moschino. I discuss the close relationship the hotel holds with its parent company Moschino and the traits of Italianicity it employs to enhance its reputation and prestige.

Firstly, I examine how the hotel is coherent with the brand identity of Moschino, a label associated with a quirky, original, extravagant, flamboyant, surreal and playful image. I argue that the close ties between Maison Moschino and its parent brand are emphasised through the visual references to the motif of the heart. Moreover, I contend that Maison Moschino is visually coherent with the label Moschino because it employs similar aesthetics with regard to the dimension of contrast that characterises the fashion brand. Furthermore, I address the relationship between the visual identity of Maison Moschino (with its distinctive flamboyant and surreal style) and kitsch, taking into account the specific traits that characterise the fashion brand Moschino and its ironic reflections over the fashion industry. Maison Moschino was opened in Milan in 2010 by Hotelphilosophy S.p.A. and was created in close collaboration with the fashion label Moschino, whose designer (Rossella Jardini) and art director (Jo Ann Tan, who curates the Moschino's window displays around the world) curated the interior design.[108] In this sense it is unsurprising that the spaces of Maison Moschino present a great level of coherence with the label's communication and visual strategy, as they are the result of the very same creative team.

Secondly, I contend that Maison Moschino capitalises on the connotations of the building that hosts it in terms of immanence and Italianicity, and observe how that became part of the Moschino collections, in a situation whereby phenomena of brand extension are incorporated within other types of brand extension by the label.

Lastly, I examine the references within Maison Moschino to two areas of excellence of the

108 On the other hand the restoration of the building that hosts the hotel was overseen by Milanese based architectural firm Luca Strada Associati.

"made in Italy" phenomenon, fashion and design. I argue that those references not only contribute to enhance the prestige and status of the hotel, at the same time anchoring it to the fashion label Moschino and to its spatial context, but also contribute to create a sense of Italianicity that is in line with Moschino's identity (as discussed also in Chapter Eight).

6.2 A Moschino's world

Maison Moschino presents references to the Moschino fashion label in a variety of areas, from corporate communication to the actual spaces of the hotel. Both the logo and the very name of Maison Moschino present strong references to its parent brand. The logo of the hotel uses the same fonts and proportions as the one of the fashion label, and its name also constitutes part of the hotel's name. Moreover, the latter also hides a wordplay that refers to the particular industry where the company operates, in line with the ironic and playful approach that characterises the label. Maison Moschino refers to the nature of fashion house of Moschino, as the term *maison* is used to describe luxury fashion labels. However, the most consistently employed type of reference to the fashion label Moschino within the spatiality of Maison Moschino is constituted by references to the motif of the heart.

The motif of the heart, especially in red, has been featured consistently and extensively since the very creation of the brand Moschino in a variety of lines and products, from clothing to perfume bottles, and has become so strictly intertwined with the brand's identity that it can be considered as a sign of it. The theme of the red heart constitutes one of the defining characteristics of the Moschino brand in terms of visual identity,[109] and for example constitutes a leitmotif on the fashion label's website, where red hearts are scattered around or presented in the form of customised buttons.[110] Similarly, the motif of the heart occupies a prominent role in Maison Moschino's communication, being present for example in the brochures (in the map *in lieu* of the "you are here" sign) and in the official website of the hotel. Moreover, the motif of the heart is featured in the spaces of Maison Moschino in a variety of ways. The polished door handle of the entrance is actually shaped as a heart, like the one in Moschino's flagship stores in Milan, and so are the keyholes of the guests' rooms (figure 18). The leitmotif of the heart is also incorporated into the design of the hanging keys that decorate the corridors, as their bows are heart shaped (figure 19).

109 The motif of the red heart used by Moschino visually presents similarities with the one featured in the "I love N.Y." campaign and in similar ones that have re-emerged recently. This trend involves references to places but also other entities such as brands, films or celebrities.

110 For example, users can 'like' Moschino's products on Facebook through a heart shaped button labelled "I love".

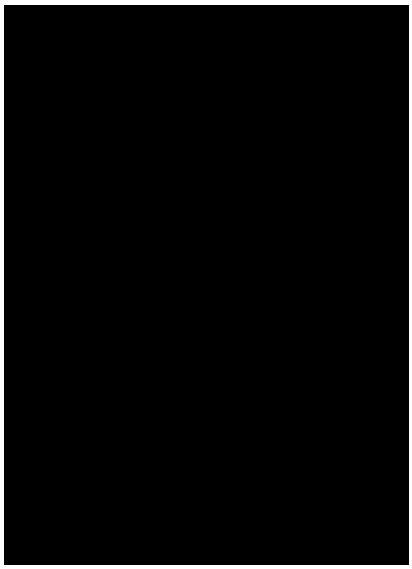


Figure 18 and 19: heart motif in keyholes (copyright Alice Dallabona 2011)
and key-decoration at Maison Moschino

Moreover, the motif of the heart is present also on toiletries, guests information packages and even in the “do not disturb” sign. Furthermore, the heart design is incorporated on the plates that are used both for the restaurant and room service, and in corporate communication regarding the hotel's restaurant, where food is often used to create colourful heart shapes (figure 20).

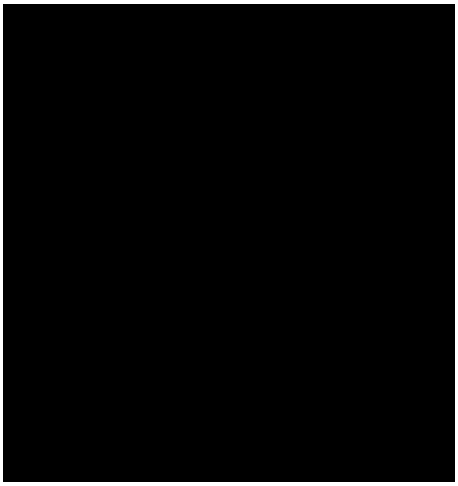


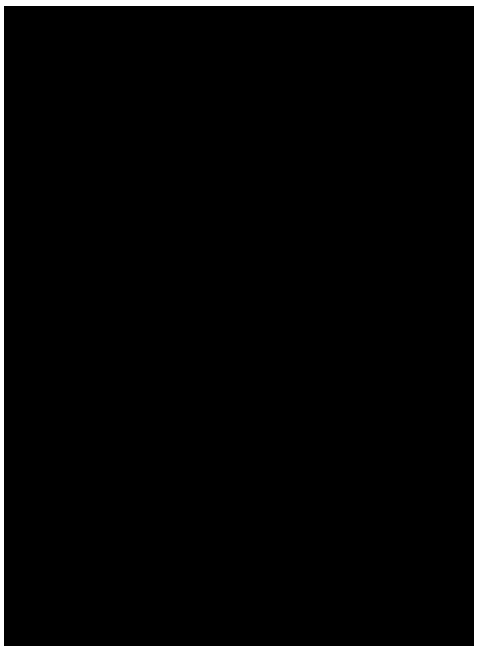
Figure 20: food heart at Maison Moschino

In this sense, the leitmotif of the heart within Maison Moschino constitutes an isotopy at the figurative level that guarantees the coherence of the text constituted by the hotel, contributing to enhance its close relationship with the identity of the fashion label Moschino, where the same isotopy is present.[111] Moreover, Maison Moschino is visually coherent with its parent brand

111 One the use of the term 'figurative' see note 53.

Moschino because it employs the same aesthetics with regard to the dimension of contrast (on a variety of levels) that characterises the fashion brand. The Moschino label is characterised by originality and creativity of its pieces, a mix and match different styles and materials. In this sense, the hotel features spaces that represent the distinctive traits of the fashion label whilst at the same time also replicating some salient characteristics of the visual identity of Moschino's flagship stores.

Within Maison Moschino we find a marked contrast between different shades of white and colours, in accordance with the strategies devised for the Moschino's flagship stores. There, the predominant colour is white (travertine floors, clothing rails, lamps) in order to maximise the effect of the typical Moschino red and of the colourful products exposed (Pegler 2007: 28-32). At Maison Moschino the majority of the rooms adhere to this model, featuring a few colourful statement pieces, like a rose petal chandelier or bedspread (figure 21) that stand out in comparison to the white background constituted by walls, curtains and furniture. However, the hotel also features spaces where this chromatic contrast is absent, like in the *Luxurious Attic Room* that is completely white (figure 22).



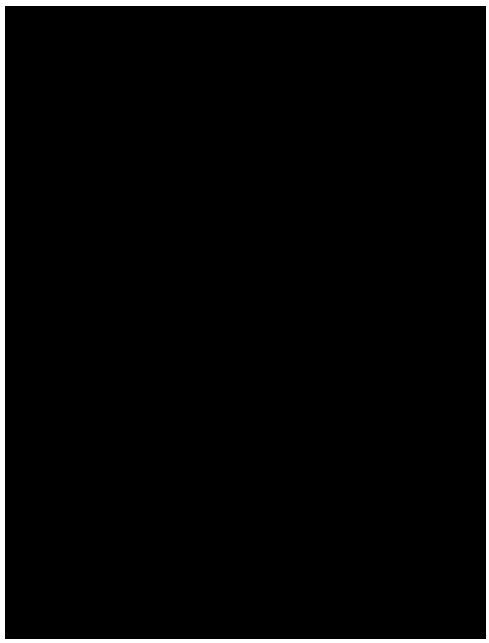


Figure 21 and 22: *Life is a bed of roses* and *Luxurious Attic* rooms

Besides the chromatic contrast, Maison Moschino's visual identity is characterised by other oppositions on a variety of levels, i.e. eidetic, photic and materic. Within Maison Moschino there are spaces where geometric lines are emphasised, like in the *Luxurious Attic Room* (see figure 22) and the *Forest Room* (figure 23), but also others that on the contrary revolve around curved lines like the *Sleeping in a Ballgown Room* (figure 24). Similarly, considering the photic

dimension, the hotel features contrasting elements, from surfaces that absorb light as they are covered in matt textiles and leather, like in the *Sleeping in a Ballgown Room* (figure 24), to ones that reflect it because they are either made of glass, steel or feature a lacquer finish like in the *Luxurious Attic Room* (figure 22). Moreover, there are oppositions concerning the materic level as well, as the two above mentioned rooms also revolve around contrasting materials in terms of textural characteristics, temperature and weight (soft materials versus hard ones, warm materials versus cold ones, light materials versus heavy ones).

Figure 23 and 24: the *Forest* and *Sleeping in a Ballgown* rooms

The figure of contrast I identified in Maison Moschino is one *in absentia*, where different spaces represent one of the two poles of the opposition, in contrast with the figure of contrast *in presentia* recognised in the spaces of Hotel Missoni Edinburgh. This is not to say, however, that Maison Moschino does not feature any space where the two poles of the dichotomies examined at the chromatic, eidetic, photic and materic coexist (like in the case of the restaurant room). However, I contend that whereas in the case of Hotel Missoni Edinburgh the coexistence of all these contrasting traits in the same space, or element, was actually constitutive of the specific visual identity of the hotel, in line with the aesthetics of the fashion brand Missoni, in the case of Maison Moschino the presence of both elements of the dichotomy is an exception, so that generally the hotel respects the aesthetics of the Moschino brand, that features contrasting elements but not in the same piece, as its fashion collections are a mix of minimalist and bold pieces.

The spaces of Maison Moschino also respond to a different type of opposition that characterises the identity of the fashion label Moschino, one between baroque and classical aesthetics or, as Ceriani (2001: 144) puts it, macro-styles. Here, I consider the terms baroque and classical in the conceptualisation of Floch (2001: 56 and 2005: 96),[112] that considered them not in terms of their

112 On Floch's classical-baroque opposition see also Pozzato (2001), Ceriani (2001) and Marrone (2007).

history, as artistic styles associated with particular eras, but as distinctive aesthetics that can be found in different times and media, in accordance with Wölfflin (1950). From this perspective, as Floch (2001: 100) explains, the baroque is not considered merely as a "synonymous with accumulation or abundance – for there is also a 'light' baroque which can be described as 'floating'". According to Floch, the differences between baroque and classical aesthetics revolves around five dichotomies, i.e. linear/pictorial, planes/depth, closed form/open form, multiplicity/unity and clarity/obscurity. In Maison Moschino elements that refer to both the poles of the opposition are present, but not usually in the same spaces. Whereas in the *Luxurious Attic Room* (figure 22) there is a "primacy of the line" which characterises the classical aesthetic, on the other hand in the *Wallpaper Room* (figure 25), objects are linked and seem to merge (Floch 2005: 97) so that the mass is privileged, according to the baroque aesthetic. Moreover, the two rooms epitomise the opposition classical-baroque in other aspects.

Figure 25: the *Wallpaper* room

While the *Wallpaper Room* is characterised by an "open form" where "the work overflows in many directions" (Floch 2005: 97), the *Luxurious Attic Room* room is characterised by closed form, which is associated with a plurality of objects in opposition to the unity that characterises the former. Another room referring to the baroque aesthetics is *Alice's Room* (figure 26), where the plurality of points of view is encouraged, epitomised in the presence of oversized elements (such as cups and light bulbs) so that guests can see "two shapes of quite unequal size coexist in the same field of vision" (Floch 2005: 97), in opposition to the *Shadows Room* (figure 27) where a frontal point of view is privileged. Moreover, the baroque *Gold Room* features soft lighting that does not clearly reveal the contours of the different elements, in opposition in this respect to the *Luxurious Attic Room* where the form of the furnishing elements is emphasised by lighting. This is in line with the eclectic style of Moschino that features references to both a classical and baroque aesthetics and juxtaposes in its collections contrasting elements (*in absentia* as discussed

earlier) that represent the ironic and irreverent 'take' on fashion that characterises the label.

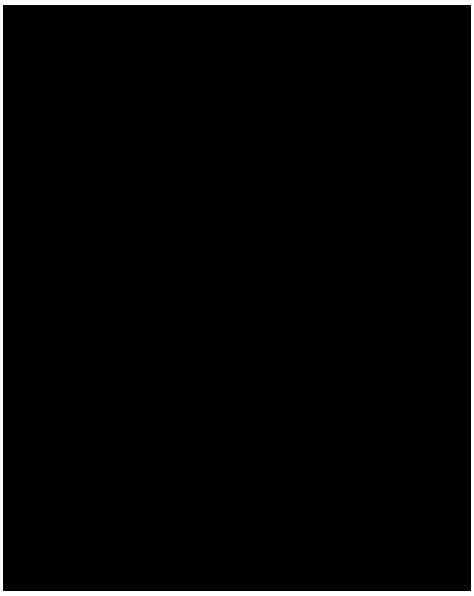


Figure 26 and 27: the *Alice's* and the *Gold* rooms

Moreover, Maison Moschino is characterised by the same traits of surrealism (intended as a specific aesthetic where the unexpected juxtapositions of elements are used to produce the effect of surprise and wonder in the public),[113] irony, originality, fantasy, eccentricity and dreaminess that are associated with the fashion brand Moschino, both in its products and in its communication.

Moschino is renowned for its original and surreal invitations to fashion shows.[114] To mention only a few, the ones for the Spring/summer 2013 men's collection Moschino show, which looked like vouchers for supermarket products (figure 28), or the customised Moschino Rubik cube for the autumn/winter 2009-2010 Moschino women's collection (figure 29).

113 The relationship between fashion and surrealism has a long history, see for example the work of Italian designer Elsa Schiapparelli (Baxter-Wright 2012, Paulve 2003 and Stent 2011). On the topic see also Baudot (2001), Geczy and Karaminas (2012), Martin (1988), Wilson (2004) and Wood (2007).

114 More and more attention is dedicated by luxury labels to fashion shows invitations, that can be quite elaborate and visually engaging.

Figure 28 and 29: invitations to Moschino fashion shows

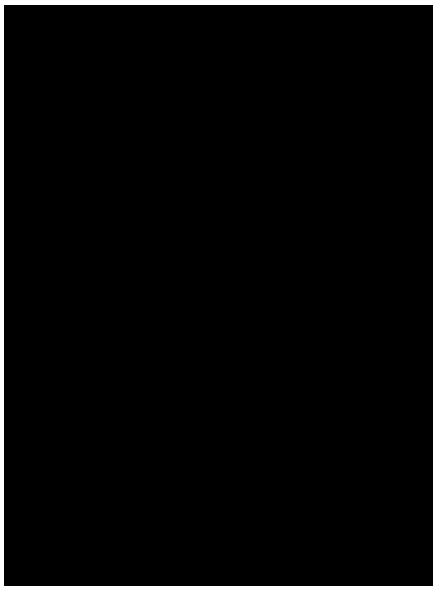
The influence of surrealism on Moschino was also clear to see in 2009, when the label created a display at Milan's International Furniture Fair that featured pieces inspired by a painting of Salvador Dalí.[115] Similarly, the window displays of Moschino boutiques are also characterised by irony, surrealism, originality, fantasy, eccentricity and dreaminess,[116] in line with Moschino's quirky, extravagant, surreal and playful 'take' on fashion. In April 2011 the window display of the flagship store in Milan featured two wardrobes 'dressed' in oversized Moschino clothes (figure 30) while in January 2011 the same shop exposed a dress within a fish tank (figure 31).

Figure 30 and 31: 'wardrobes' and 'aquarium' window display at Moschino's Via della Spiga flagship store

In this respect, the space of Maison Moschino is extremely coherent with the visual identity and philosophy behind the Moschino brand, and that is a function of the involvement of the same team behind the fashion label (designer Rossella Jardini and art director Jo Ann Tan). This team was responsible for the creation of all the interiors of Maison Moschino, which revolves around sixteen room types (called *dreams*), all characterised by different themes associated with surrealism, eccentricity and fantasy. Some rooms are inspired by fairy tales, see for example the *Little Red Riding Hood Room* where a pillow in the shape of a wolf is tucked into bed (figure 32), or *Alice's Room* (figure 26) and *Half a Room*, both inspired by Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* saga, while others are influenced by the natural world (*The Shadow* and *The Forest Room*), all of them are characterised by originality, surrealism, and eccentricity. The same elements are present in the public areas, for example the hotel's staircase feature a series of lamps in the shape of squirrels, poodles and chickens whereas the lobby features also

115 See http://www.vogue.it/magazine/notizie-del-giorno/2010/06/moschino.
116 See also Klein (2005: 96-103).

several decorative sheep (figure 33).



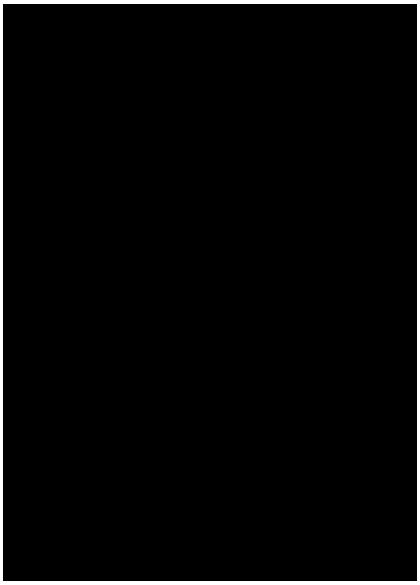


Figure 32 and 33: the *Little Red Riding Hood* room and
decorative sheep and poodle lamp in the lobby of Maison Moschino

The interior design of Maison Moschino, in its originality based on a flamboyant and surreal style, is in line with the brand identity of the fashion label Moschino. In this respect both the hotel and the fashion label are characterised by a strong focus on disjunction, on the difference between them and their competitors, and in doing so they focus on eccentricity, surrealism, flamboyance, some time resorting to kitsch.

Within the fashion industry, the use of kitsch is not a novelty, as many fashion labels have taken inspiration from the world of kitsch both for their products, see the cases of Vivienne Westwood and Dolce and Gabbana, or for their communication, like for example Diesel (Arning 2009). Considering specifically the Italian luxury fashion industry however it is clear to see that Moschino is particularly active in this respect. Let us think for example of the suit presented for the Moschino women's autumn/winter collection 2012-13, characterised by a trompe-l'œil pattern resembling a brick-wall (figure 34). Thinking of Maison Moschino, the *Sleeping in a Ballgown Room* (where the headboard is constituted by a gigantic velvet evening ballgown on a hanger) also features the same references to kitsch that are so strictly associated with Moschino's identity.

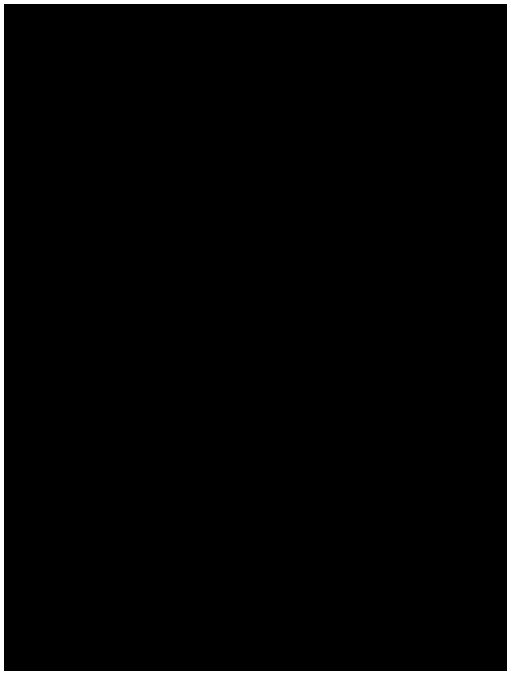


Figure 34: 'brick' suit (F/W 2012-2013) by Moschino

But what exactly is kitsch? In Calinescu's (1987: 232) words, kitsch is "one of the most bewildering and elusive categories of modern aesthetics".

> Kitsch is an elusive term with a colloquial, straightforward meaning. It is commonly used to describe products of bad taste, inferior quality, and exaggerated sentimentality. Plastic flowers, glazed porcelain shrines to the baby Jesus, garden gnomes, and portraits of white kittens in ribbons are all examples of kitsch.
>
> (Arning 2009: 25)

As observed by Attfield (2006: 204), academic literature provides very few definitions of kitsch. Nowadays, the term kitsch is used to describe everything that is "cheap and cheerful" (Miller 2006: 246), and is a synonym for "trash, vulgar, and cheap" (Londos 2006: 295), although it is primarily associated with issues of bad taste. The term kitsch was "introduced as commercial slang in the Munich art markets during the 1860s and 1870s" (Overy 2006: 218 but see also Calinescu 1987: 234) and "has its origins as a pejorative term for mass-produced, poor-quality imitations of artwork and luxury goods that were directed at ordinary consumers in 19th-century Germany" (Atkinson 2007: 523 but see also Binkley 2000: 132 and Dorfles et al 1990). Kitsch has also been considered as intrinsically linked to the European totalitarian regimes of the early twentieth century and their aesthetics, and considered functional to the "duping of the masses" (Atkinson 2007: 254 but see also Greenberg 1939, Calinescu 1987 and Goodman 2003). As Greenberg (1939: 11) observed, such a privileged position of kitsch within the totalitarian

cultures of Germany, Italy and Russia was a function both of the fact that it is more "easy to inject effective propaganda" into it, in opposition to avant-garde art and literature, and that kitsch was "the culture of the masses in those countries".

In this sense, kitsch has historically been linked to the lower classes, to those that 'do not know any better' as they do not possess the cultural capital necessary to appreciate good taste, and that conversely do not possess the power to impose their own taste as legitimate (Bourdieu 1984). However, kitsch seems to have been somehow rehabilitated in recent years as it features more and more often in art and design, so that what was once ridiculed now is being used by legitimate taste-making entities, such as Moschino for example. This "has led many to conclude that taste hierarchies have been undone and matters of aesthetic judgement relaxed" (Potts 2007: 1).[117]

I argue, however, that the use of kitsch by Moschino, despite seeming at first glance to be pushing the boundaries of what is acceptable or not within the fashion industry, does not annihilate the distinction between good and bad taste but actually enhances the opposition between the two. When Moschino features something that is openly kitsch in its collection, like the bag decorated with pendants in the shape of vegetables for example (figure 35), the label does not became kitsch but actually signals and emphasises its distinction with that realm by expressing its role as taste-maker, reflecting ironically on the 'salvific' power of luxury fashion brands, which can magically turn something that is considered kitsch and unacceptable under the fashion rules into something fashionable, stylish and ultimately desirable thanks to the association with the label.

Figure 35: Moschino cheap and chic 'vegetable' bag (s/s 2012)

It is the specific status of Moschino as producer of legitimate culture that allows it to *use* kitsch

117 Supporters of the idea that kitsch has lost any class connotations are Attfield (2006) and Binkley (2000), in opposition to Skeggs (2003) and Holliday and Potts (2012).

and to not *become* kitsch by doing so, as the label "crucially can separate and detach from it" because it is an entity "for whom kitsch can operate as a resource" whilst "others remain marked by its presence". (Potts 2007: 5). As Skeggs (2003: 77) observes "only some can utilise their culture as a property of the self: others are forced to perform it as a 'natural' part of being" so in this sense those who buy Moschino's kitsch pieces actually express their distinction from the world of kitsch, in opposition to those who do not have a choice as they belong to that realm. In this respect the use of kitsch, alongside irony,[118] by Moschino contributes to the perspective of deconstruction it employs, alluding to how the fashion industry works through references to the power of the luxury brand, that can wrap almost anything in an aura of prestige and desirability. The references to kitsch in the spaces of Maison Moschino are a function of the same logic of exposing how the luxury industry produces value and works as a producer of legitimate judgements of taste.

Maison Moschino, as discussed above, represents the philosophy of the Moschino fashion label in spatial terms, but I argue that it can also be conceptualised as a true Moschino fantasy world, as the case of the lobby demonstrates. The lobby of Maison Moschino is coherent with Moschino's brand identity but also replicates some defining characteristics of the real world in relation to the topological opposition above/below in relationship with the categories heavy/light. As in the real world the ground is characterised by heavier materials whereas the sky features lighter particles, in a similar way Maison Moschino's lobby features a material that is characterised by heaviness for the floor (travertine stone)[119] while from the ceiling hang light lamps in the shape of clouds.

6.3 The context of Maison Moschino

As discussed above, Maison Moschino is coherent with the identity of its parent brand Moschino on a variety of levels and capitalises on the reputation of the latter in terms of prestige. However, in addition to that, Maison Moschino is also intrinsically linked to its spatial context as it draws on the connotations of heritage, permanence and Italianicity that characterise the building that hosts the hotel, the former Porta Nuova train station.

118 Kitsch "works well as a stylistic medium for expressing irony and is often used knowingly in this way to refer to art and taste" (Attfield 2006: 207), moreover it has a history of been used for disruptive purposes since the avant-garde (Arning 2009: 26 but see also Calinescu 1987).

119 Travertine stone is used for all of the Moschino's flagships stores floors, see Marreiros and Tacke (2006: 147-149), Pegler (2007: 28-32) and Klein (2005: 96-103).

Figure 36: façade of Maison Moschino

The building is in the Neoclassical style and is characterised by a triangular gable, round arches and ionic columns on the façade (figure 36). The building was designed by Italian architect Giulio Sarti at a time when Milan was ruled by Austria. The building is listed and the restoration that led to the creation of Maison Moschino was negotiated and supervised by the *Soprintendenza per i beni architettonici e per il paesaggio* (Superintendent of Fine Arts, the Italian agency that is in charge of preserving the Italian cultural patrimony in terms of architecture and landscape). The building of Porta Nuova constitutes a monument according to Italian regulations and is, in Debray's (1999) terms, an example of *monument-forme* (monument-form), being relevant for its intrinsic qualities in terms of aesthetic or artistic value.[120] In this sense, the building features connotations of quality but also of Italianicity as part of the Italian cultural patrimony.

Maison Moschino is granted qualities of heritage and permanence through the association with the building that hosts it, as it draws on the history and status that characterise the palazzo of Porta Nuova. This is in line with established practices in the fashion industry, where "the allure of the luxury flagship is further enhanced by the status and heritage of the building it occupies" (Moore and Doherty 2001: 287, see also Kent 2011). The Porta Nuova train station became operative in 1840 and was designed to connect Milan with Monza (a town located approximately 15km North-West of Milan). The train station was active for ten years only, as new developments of train lines towards Como (town 40km North of Milan) meant that a new station had to be built. This was opened in 1850, again called Milano Porta Nuova, and remained operative until 1873.[121] After that, the building that now hosts Maison Moschino continued to be used for

120 In opposition to the *monument-message*, a building designed to transmit to posterity the memory of past events (be that real or mythical), and to the *monument-trace,* that on the other hand is not characterised by an aesthetic or commemorative function but is a function of a metaphoric or metonimyc process (Debray 1999).

121 For a more detailed discussion see Godoli and Cozzi (2004).

train-related duties for a long time, more recently as office space by Trenitalia (the Italian national railway provider). In this sense, the building that hosts the hotel has been the object of a resemanticization process on the paradigmatic level, as its connotation and meaning have changed over times. This process of resemanticization co-exists with other forms of resemanticization that operates at the syntagmatic level, as the meaning of a space is also a function of its surroundings and of the different interpretations of those who experience it and project their own beliefs, interests and emotions into it, according for example to a euphoric or dysphoric valorisation.

Maison Moschino's piazza exemplifies how the city and the urban fabric are ever-changing texts that are created from the encounters of different actors, be that individual or collective, characterised by their own intentions, goals and desires (Marrone and Pezzini 2006). In this sense, a former public space designed to support mobility and the transit of people has become private property. However, I argue that at stake within Maison Moschino is not a process of total privatisation as the outside space of the hotel is only partially connoted as private and is not characterised by the regime of visibility of privacy.

The outside space of Maison Moschino has not changed significantly since the acquisition, the perimetrical walls have not being modified and remain relatively low, guaranteeing the complete view of the square overlooking the hotel (see figure 36). However, the partial barriers that characterised the train station (the ramp and staircase that allow access to the square) have undergone a process of resemanticization and have become selective barriers, performing the actantial role of controlling the access to the Maison Moschino premises (Hammad 2003: 265), whereas earlier they constituted simply openings aimed at channelling fluxes of people and vehicles. Moreover, the area is not characterised by the typical regime of visibility associated with private spaces. The square remains completely visible from the outside and actually its elevated position makes it resemble a stage. In this sense the square, used for the rite of the aperitif (as discussed in the next chapter) is connoted as a social space where people go to be seen, in a context where the spectacularization of consumption is offered to the gaze of bystanders. The same visibility regime is present also in the hotel's lobby, that is similarly characterised by the lack of areas where individuals can be shielded from the bystanders' glance, although the space also lacks in auditive privacy (Hammad 2003: 299). The lack of background music, in conjunction with the travertine flooring, particularly noisy when in contact with heeled shoes (alluding to the sensory experience of fashion), and the scarcity of sound-absorbing materials means that not only can people be seen from any part of the lobby, but also that their presence is easily detected in terms of hearing, therefore guaranteeing very limited privacy to bystanders.

However, if Maison Moschino is granted qualities of heritage and permanence through the association with the Porta Nuova building, the latter is also transformed through association with the former. I do not refer here to the fact that the hotel constitutes a space where the philosophy of the brand Moschino is expressed, as discussed earlier, making in a certain sense Maison Moschino a sign for the label, but to the fact that the Porta Nuova building is transformed, quite literally, into an object of fashion by becoming part of the Moschino collections. In fact the building has been integrated into the brand practices quite explicitly. In addition to the fact that the catwalk show for the Moschino Cheap and Chic autumn/winter 2010-2011 collection was held at Maison Moschino, the building also featured on a series of Love Moschino handbags (figure 37). In this sense a phenomenon of brand extension, the hotel, is used in another one of Moschino's brand extensions, i.e. the second line Love Moschino, strengthening the association between the hotel and the parent brand. This is in line with the strategies discussed in the next chapter, where Moschino fragrances are employed to further extend the label into the gastronomic realm.

Figure 37: Love Moschino bag featuring the image of Maison Moschino

6.4 From fashion to design: the pillars of “Made in Italy”

Connotations of fashion are intrinsically imbued into Maison Moschino not only due to the fact that the hotel is associated with the fashion label Moschino, but also because of its location. In fact Maison Moschino is located within the *Città della Moda* (Fashion City) development in Milan, which is not only the city where the label Moschino was born but also the fashion capital of Italy. When it comes to analysing the meaning of any phenomenon, it is important to keep in mind that signification does not happen in a vacuum. The meaning of a phenomenon is influenced by other meanings that surround it, in a complex relationship where text and context are strictly intertwined. This is a dimension that the semiotician has to take into account in order to fully explore the significance of a phenomenon and in this sense I contend that Maison Moschino is attributed a double connotation of fashion from its context.

Maison Moschino is located in an area of Milan that is intrinsically imbued with connotations of fashion, as part of the *Città della Moda*. This is an element that discourses on the hotel (both in terms of corporate communication and in terms of the press coverage of Maison Moschino) feature consistently. The idea of the *Città della Moda* project goes back to the 1980s, when Nicola Trussardi (of the Trussardi fashion label) envisaged a place within the city of Milan dedicated to the fashion industry. Back then, the boom of Italian fashion industry had just begun and had not yet started to change the physiognomy of Milan through the acquisition of the historical palazzi in the city centre by fashion designers to create their headquarters and stores (Segre Reinach 2006: 125) and through the proliferation of oversized billboards (Frisa et al 2002: 384).[122] As the project of the *Città della Moda* was more and more delayed for a variety of issues, most notably the ones caused by the tangentopoli scandal that constituted the end of the First Republic (Canniffe 2008: 254), the very idea of a space dedicated to fashion became obsolete, as the Italian designers had already established a strong presence in different parts of the city. Even the idea to create an area specifically dedicated to fashion shows was not welcomed by Italian designers, who aimed to retain control over this aspect and did not want to be associated with anything else besides their creativity (Testoni 2010: 166). The inability of the fashion designers to put up a unified front constitutes a distinctive trait of the Italian fashion system, characterised by fragmentation and lack of cohesion.

Recently, the project *Città della Moda* has been re-named *Porta Nuova*, from the eponymous train station, linking it explicitly to Maison Moschino. In the 110.000 m^2 development fashion plays a significant role, both in terms of retail spaces and because of the creation of the Fashion Institute of Milan and of the Museum of Fashion, elements that will contribute to reinforce the connotation of fashion that is already held by the area in which the hotel is located. Already, the area surrounding Maison Moschino is part of that "microfashion" phenomenon "which often

122 As Mascau (2008: 144) observes "Milan is the only city in Italy in which fashion billboards have become cultural landmarks", a phenomenon initiated by Armani in the 1980s.

pleasantly surprises the tourists and indirectly strengthens the perception of Milan as one of the world's capitals of style, giving the impression that the superbrands are, to a certain extent, only the tip of the iceberg, the corporate expression of a general widespread Italian creativity" (Muscau 2008: 151). The area features one of the most renowned independent luxury boutiques of the city, *Corso Como 10*, which is located less than 500 meters away from Maison Moschino. *Corso Como 10* is the shop opened in 1990 by Franca Sozzani, the director of Italian Vogue, a landmark for international fashionistas (see Klein 2005: 10-13) that also hosts the fashion hotel *3 Rooms*, designed in collaboration with French fashion designer Azzedine Alaïa.[123]

As Ceriani (2001: 181) observed in relation to shops, the choice of location has a great impact in semantic terms over the meaning of a place, as the specific roads or neighbourhoods propose a certain syntax constituted by the juxtaposition of different spaces dedicated to various activities. In this sense, the brand Moschino has secured, through Maison Moschino, a presence in an area that is going to be more and more closely associated with Italian fashion and luxury brands, complementing its already established presence in the fashion district of Milan, the Quadrilatero D'Oro, where the two Milanese Moschino's boutiques are located.[124] Maison Moschino is also enclosed in the biggest contextual unit of Milan, even more so because the hotel was conceived as a one-off and there are no plans to transform this venture into a chain of hotels, in opposition to the strategy employed by the Hotel Missoni brand.

Milan is undoubtedly the Italian capital of fashion, despite not being its political capital, similar in this respect to New York (Bruce and Kratz 2007: 133). "To the international travellers who land at Malpensa airport and travel to the city via train and stopping at Stazione Cadorna, the *Ago e Filo* (Needle and Thread) sculpture in Piazza Cadorna by American pop artist Claes Oldenburg, reminds them immediately that Milan is the Italian capital of fashion" (Ferrero-Regis 2008: 11).[125] The city is the "nerve centre" of the Italian fashion industry (Jones 2005: 45 but also Muscau 2008: 143), it hosts not only the majority of the fashion schools in the country, but also the most renowned ones, like the Istituto Marangoni and the Domus Academy. Moreover, more and more international fashion designers are choosing to host their fashion shows in Milan, like for example Burberry for its Prorsum line (Moore and Birtwistle 2004: 420), as the city "is the place to show if you are serious about fashion" (Fionda and Moore 2009: 355), whereas other labels, like Marc Jacobs for example, develop their products there. Milan's reputation as a

123 *Corso Como 10* also includes a gallery, a bookshop, a restaurant, and café.

124 The name *Quadrilatero D'Oro* (literally, the Golden Quadrilateral) originates in 1980s, and is constituted by via Montenapoleane, via della Spiga, via Sant'Andrea e Corso Venezia, the four shopping streets where most of the luxury fashion stores and showrooms are located. The area oozes exclusivity and constitutes an established tourist attraction, especially during the sales season.

125 On the role of Milan as the fashion capital of Italy see also Jansson and Power (2010), Merlo and Polese (2006), Segre Reinach (2006) and Volonté (2012). More broadly, on fashion capitals see also Berry (2012), Breward (2004), Breward and Gilbert (2006), Martínez (2007), Moon (2009), O'Byrne (2009), O'Neill (2007), Rantisi (2004), Rocamora (2009) and Steele (1998).

fashion city is intrinsically linked to a number of quintessentially Milanese labels like Armani, Prada and Moschino, so that the brand both capitalises and contributes to create this image.

However, the title of fashion capital has been gained by Milan only relatively recently. It was only in the 1970s that the city won over Rome and Florence as the result of a series of "economic, cultural and geographical factors" (Segre Reinach 2006: 124). Similarly, it was just fairly recently, after the Second World War, that Italian fashion actually gained popularity among consumers and respect in the fashion industry that is currently attributed to it. Italy is nowadays renowned as one of the homelands of fashion (Vaccari 2005: 48), "the majority of the world's most valuable luxury fashion brands are from Italy and numerous other Italian fashion brands continue to gain fashion authority globally" (Okonkwo 2007: 40). So how did Italian fashion come to occupy such a relevant place? This was actually due to a variety of reasons, the established reputation of Italian embroideries and textiles, tailoring and accessory production (Giordani-Aragno 1983, Caratozzolo 2006 Merlo 2003 and 2011, Steele 2003) but also the consistent American funding that reached the nation after the Second World War, as part of the Marshall plan, funding that led to the fast modernisation of the country in all sectors, fashion included (White 2000).[126]

Maison Moschino capitalises on the heritage and prestige of the Italian fashion industry, that finds in Milan the centre of a "magic circle" (Dunford 2006: 29) of industrial districts (a topic discussed in more detail in Chapter Eight). As the Italian fashion industry bloomed and became more and more renowned and profitable, Milan's image changed, especially abroad, from grey industrial city to a sophisticated, exclusive and elegant capital of shopping (Foot 2003: 147). It is estimated that nowadays Milan hosts approximately 800 mono-brand and multi-brand retail spaces (Pambianco and Testoni 2008: 218). This is a patrimony that has been exploited by the tourist industry, that offers many "fashion tours" around Milan. Maison Moschino, in this respect, capitalises on fashion conscious travellers, which constitutes their most obvious pool of clients,[127] by providing them with a place, within the *Città della Moda*, from which they can start their very own fashion expedition around the city, as the staff is at hand providing information and tips on the city's shopping areas. Moreover, besides providing a place for the guests to experience the world of Moschino, the hotel complements its fashion offerings with a package that is specifically tailored for those who love the brand. The package, called *Shopping Therapy*, offers a discount in all the Moschino boutiques but also in the Alberta Ferretti ones, the reason for that being that the two companies are very strictly intertwined, being both controlled

126 See also Dallabona (2011a).

127 Hotelphilosophy claims that 70% of their guests are there for business, while only 30% come for leisure and observes that whereas they initially expected fashion conscious travellers, and Moschino lovers in particular, the hotels attracts, more broadly, people who are interested in design and appreciate unusual and unique interiors (Zennaro 2011: 35).

by AEFFE.[128] Italian fashion designers Alberta Ferretti created the group AEFFE in 1972, and for a long time it has been a licensee of Moschino, but in 2000 the group has acquired its licenser and now owns, alongside the brand Alberta Ferretti and Philosophy by Alberta Ferretti, also Moschino and Moschino Cheap and Chic.

However, Maison Moschino also refers to another area of excellence that characterises the "Made in Italy" phenomenon, besides fashion, i.e. design. The hotel features pieces that belong to iconic Italian brands that contributed to the history of Italian design like Kartell,[129] Zanotta,[130] Poltrona Frau, Luceplan and Cappellini alongside more recent companies like Italpoltrone and Edra. The hotel, by featuring creations by those brands, is availing itself of the authority and prestige associated with them, creating a space that talks and celebrates Italian design. Moreover, the link between Maison Moschino and Italian design is reinforced also through the presence of a collaboration between Moschino and Kartell. The fashion label in fact subjected to a 'Moschino makeover' the iconic *Mademoiselle* chair (figure 38), originally designed by Philippe Stark for Kartell in 2004.[131]

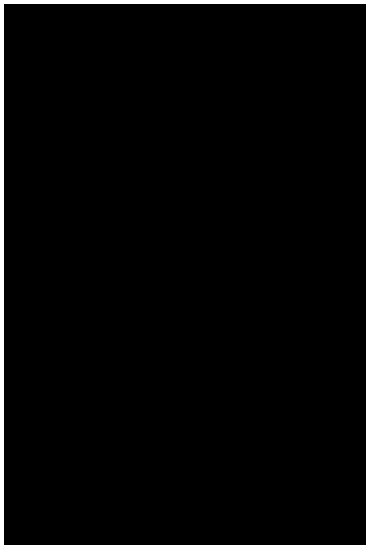


Figure 38: Mademoiselle chair by Moschino

In recent years, these two driving sectors of the Italian economy (fashion and design) have become more and more intertwined. Many Italian luxury fashion labels like Missoni, Armani,

128 AEFFE also owns some hotels, the relais Castello di Montegridolfo and Hotel Carducci 76, in the seaside town of Cattolica, both in the Rimini province (Emilia-Romagna).

129 Kartell is an Italian company founded in 1949 and based in Milan that in the 1960s "became the industry leader in the field of plastic design" also thanks to the practice of collaborating with well-known designers (Hauffe 1998: 138).

130 Zanotta is a company based near Milan, founded 1954. It gained success in the 1960s thanks to iconic products like the *Sacco* anathomical easy chair, the "father" of the bean bag (see http://www.zanotta.it/#/it/prodotti/Poltrone/280Sacco.htm).

131 See http://www.moschino.com/editorials/ru/2010/03/15/le-mademoiselle-di-kartell-costumizzate-per-maison-moschino/. Moschino's version of the chair is available for purchase (by order only) at Maison Moschino.

Versace, Blumarine and Fendi have created their own furnishing and interior lines, in accordance with the principles of diversification embedded in the total living and lifestyle philosophy (see Chapter Two). Others, like Loro Piana that specialises in cashmere and wool fabrics, have lent their products for upholstery purposes, whereas some labels have preferred to collaborate with established furniture firms on one-off projects. Moschino belongs to the latter category, having collaborated with Kartell to reinterpret the *Mademoiselle* chairs but also with another Italian company, Altreforme, to create the *Arlequin Collection*, that was presented at the Salone Internazionale del Mobile (the Milan's International Furniture Fair) in 2012.[132]

Similarly to the case of fashion, it was only after World War II that Italian design gained global recognition (Sartogo 1982: 12, Settembrini 2001: 7 and Bürdek 2005: 121). The boom of Italian design of the 1960s[133] was the result of a convergence of elements like "the modernisation of the country, the development of the production of technical goods, the transformation in an industrial sense of furniture production" (Settembrini 2001: 105) and a specific type of designer. This is a sort of Leonardesque figure, a "Renaissance image of man interested in all aspects of life" (Sartogo 1982: 130) whose specialization is actually constituted by the lack of specialisation.

> Where American design tended to be market-oriented, and German design tended to be theoretical, the Italian style was marked by improvisation and by a cultural tradition that had never been accustomed to strictly separating art, design, and economics – beauty and function.
>
> (Hauffe 1998: 113)

In this respect, Maison Moschino capitalises on traits of Italianicity to enhance its reputation and prestige, but also contributes to strengthen the association between the hotel and its parent brand. In fact the references to its country of origin are a distinctive trait of the Moschino fashion brand, as the label has often played with national stereotypes in terms of food for example (as discussed in more detail in the next chapter) and included references to the Italian flag.

> Fashion has often exploited the possibility of embracing the variety of representations of Italy in the simplified and easily identifiable vision of

132 In line with the name, the furniture line is inspired by the figure of Harlequin, a leitmotiv in Moschino's work, and is constituted by several pieces, like the collar shaped table, the glove mirror and the multicoloured shirt and trousers cabinet, see http://www.moschino.com/editorials/en/2012/04/17/moschino-%E2%99%A5-altreforme-arlequin-collection/ http://www.altreforme.com.

133 At the time, Italian *bel design* broke the dominance of Scandinavian design, which until then retained a leading position worldwide (Wichmann 1988). In that circumstance, "Italian designers proved better able to adapt their designs and materials to the altered technological and product-cultural conditions of the second half of the twentieth century" than their Scandinavian counterparts (Bürdek 2005: 163). Italian design has been celebrated through several exhibitions and many studies on it have been published through the years, like Sartogo (1982), Sparke (1988), Wichmann (1988), Calabrese (1998), Bosoni (2002), Dworschak (2008), Bosoni and Antonelli (2008).

> its flag, performing a sometimes promotional and sometimes protectionist function.
>
> (Vaccari 2005: 53)

Other Italian labels have also used the Italian flag, like Dolce and Gabbana, but they have not done so as consistently as Moschino, that has featured that motif on a variety of products like shoes, helmets, bags and fragrances. Moschino, alongside other Italian luxury fashion labels, took part in the exhibition *Expressions of Style on the theme of the Italian flag* organised by the Camera Nazionale della Moda Italiana in 2004 (figure 39), that celebrated the power of the Italian flag to "express not just aesthetic but also ethical and economic values" closely associated with Italian fashion (Vaccari, 2005: 59). The exhibition also celebrated the pivotal role of the Italian fashion designers in promoting "Italian fashion in the world, making our country a great country" so that they have effectively "become the most significant interpreters of our Tricolour Flag" in this respect "linking the creativity and style of our fashion designers to a strongly symbolic and evocative object".[134]

Figure 39: the Italian flag designed by Moschino for the exhibition *Expressions of Style on the theme of the Italian flag*

However, in the case of Moschino we do not see a simple 'parasitic' inclusion of a symbol of Italy on goods, but a true integration of the Italian flag into the practice of the label, so strictly intertwined with originality, surrealism and irony, as observed earlier. This is, for example, the case for the tricoloured 'cow bag' belonging to the Love Moschino spring/summer collection 2012 (figure 40).

134 See http://www.cameramoda.com/altrieventi/mostre_eventi.php?STL=en.

Figure 40: the 'cow bag' by Love Moschino

In this sense Moschino relies on Italianicity as a distinctive trait, as inspiration, as a tool to deploy the company's ethos and as a source of prestige by capitalising on the country's reputation (see Chapter Eight). In line with its parent brand practices of integrating references to Italy, also within Maison Moschino the emphasis over the pillars of "made in Italy", in terms of fashion and design, are used to create a sense of Italianicity.

6.5 Conclusions

In this chapter I examined the branding strategies concerning spatiality employed by Maison Moschino and how they are employed in strengthening the association of the hotel with its parent brand Moschino. Moreover, I argued that the hotel also employs strategies aimed at deploying traits of Italianicity to enhance its reputation and prestige.

In this sense, Maison Moschino conveys a true 'Moschino experience' through spaces and communication strategies that are in line with the quirky, surreal, playful and ironic style of the label, that is strictly associated with ideas of Italian creativity (as discussed also in Chapter Eight). The gastronomic offerings of the hotel addressed in the next chapter follow the same path, as they were devised by a chef, Moreno Cedroni, whose philosophy centres around values that are also characteristic of the fashion label, like playfulness and irony. Moreover, both the chef and the label Moschino share the same deconstructive attitude and attention towards the media they work on.

In the next chapter, the similarities between the fashion brand Moschino and Cedroni's practices are addressed arguing that also in this respect, like in the spatiality of the hotel examined here, forms of cultural opportunism are present as certain traits of Italianicity are used to enhance the

prestige and reputation of Maison Moschino whilst at the same time allowing the brand to stretch further.

Chapter Seven

Clandestino Milano

7.1 Introduction

In this chapter I focus on Maison Moschino hotel's gastronomic offering, comprising Clandestino Milano restaurant, which also provides room service, and a bar. Clandestino Milano is led by executive chef Antonio Bufi under the aegis of Michelin-starred Italian chef Moreno Cedroni, who licensed the brand Clandestino to Hotelphilosophy (Zennaro 2011: 36). The original Clandestino restaurant (figure 41) was opened in 2000 and is located on the beach in Portonovo.

Figure 41: the original Clandestino restaurant in Portonovo

Moreno Cedroni is a leading figure in Italian gastronomy and is considered one of the most innovative chefs of the country. His first restaurant, *Madonnina del Pescatore*,[135] was awarded its first Michelin star in 1995 and a second one in 2007. In 1998 Cedroni followed one of Ferran

135 Firstly in partnership with Valentino Fiorelli, and from 1987, as the sole owner. The restaurant, opened in 1984 in Cedroni's home town of Senigallia, was originally serving traditional dishes and pizza but was subsequently transformed into a fish restaurant (Cedroni 2007: 57).

Adrià's[136] training programmes at El Bulli and, from that moment on he started experimenting.[137] In 2000 he opened a new outlet to showcase his work on raw fish, *Clandestino* restaurant, the predecessor of Clandestino Milano. Clandestino Milano follows the same philosophy and guidelines as the original *Clandestino*, serving the conceptual menu that was developed by Cedroni for the latter the previous season. However, the Milanese restaurant is radically different in terms of location (metropolitan context/seaside location), temporality (the original Clandestino is opened from April to October, the tourist season in Le Marche region, whereas in Milan the restaurant is always open except in August, the month when cities are left empty for the summer holidays) and décor.

I consider Clandestino Milano as a very successful attempt by the label Moschino to use food and gastronomy as a means to create something that can convey the 'Moschino experience' in a way that is consistent with the identity of the brand. Firstly, I argue that the fashion brand Moschino was already characterised by a specific attitude towards food that supported the brand extension of the label into the gastronomic field in opposition to the case of Hotel Missoni Edinburgh examined in Chapter Five. Secondly, I contend that food and fashion are closely intertwined in the spaces of Maison Moschino. Thirdly, I argue that Moreno Cedroni represents the spirit of the label Moschino, so strictly intertwined with ideas of creativity, irony and playfulness, also in regard to the specific version of Italianicity portrayed. Like for the Moschino fashion label, also the references to Italy and Italianicity by Cedroni are mediated and transformed through a practice that is characterised by irony, inventiveness and deconstruction.

7.2 Moschino & Food

Food is an element from which fashion has drawn inspiration on many occasions but I contend that Moschino has explored this trend far more extensively and constantly than other labels. Moschino has featured, with its signature ironic, playful and extravagant style, references to food throughout its history both on the catwalk and within its corporate communication. The fashion label is characterised by a specific attitude in regard to food that the gastronomic offerings at Maison Moschino adhere to by choosing to entrust Moreno Cedroni, a chef whose signature style

136 Adrià is a leading exponent of the "new cookery" movement that focuses on the principles of excellence, openness and integrity and on respect for culinary tradition that is closely intertwined with technological developments (but that opposes the novelty for novelty's sake of molecular gastronomy) and aims to engage all senses (Adrià et al. 2006).

137 For example he developed the renowned dish *costoletta di rombo* (i.e. turbot ribs), creating ex novo a cut for fish (Buosi 2004). Cedroni's experimentalism can be seen also in his parallel projects, *Anikó* and *Officina*, both launched in 2003. *Anikó* is named after an idiomatic expression typical of the area where Cedroni comes from (which means "everything") and is a delicatessen particularly renowned for its cured fish specialities, that are produced at the *Officina,* Cedroni's experimental lab.

presents striking similarities with Moschino's, to devise them.

Moschino's references to food are not merely an occasional 'flirt' but a constant for the label and they are closely intertwined and integrated within the discourses of the fashion label. Let us think for example at 1990s' pieces like the 'dripping chocolate bag' (figure 42).

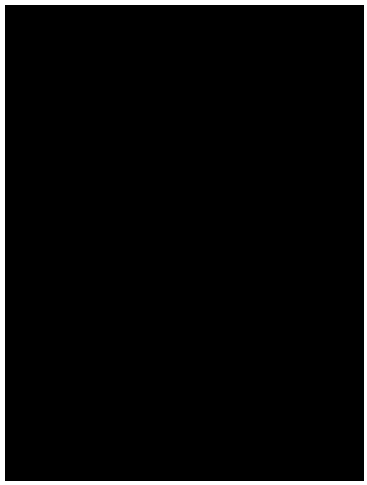


Figure 42: Moschino advertisement (1990) featuring the 'dripping chocolate bag'

References to food consumption have also featured in Moschino's designs in the past, for example in 1989 with the iconic 'Dinner Jacket', a women's jacket decorated with golden cutlery (figure 43). More recently, in the spring-summer Cheap and Chic collection 2012, Moschino has included a bag and matching wedge shoes with fork decorations (figures 44 and 45).

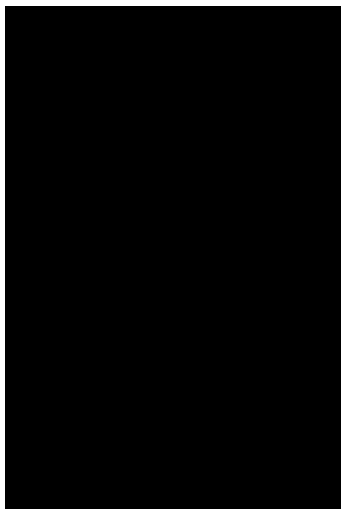


Figure 43: 'Dinner Jacket' ensemble (Moschino A/W 1989/1990)

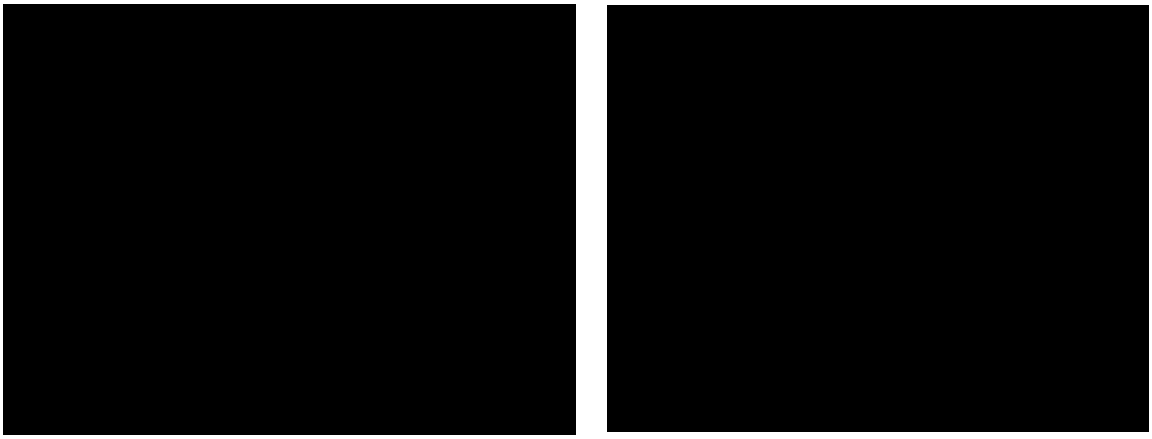


Figure 44 and 45: 'fork bag' and 'fork wedges' (Cheap and Chic collection S/S 2012)

However, it is in the shop windows that Moschino has most consistently engaged with the culinary realm, for example playfully presenting dots on dresses as if they were caused by the flow of salt and pepper (figure 46). Because of the close relationship between food and Moschino, Clandestino Milano is not a gratuitous addition to the 'Moschino experience' provided by Maison Moschino, but an element that is closely intertwined with the discourses of the fashion label.

Moschino has also often played with the stereotypes of Italianicity surrounding food. Let us think for example of the ironic window display (in 2011 for the New York boutique) that featured a mannequin sitting on a gigantic tomato surrounded by equally enormous pasta shapes (figure 47). References to the gastronomic realm, and in particular the references to Italian food, constitute a distinctive trait for the fashion label Moschino, as exemplified by the shopping bag 'In Pizza We Trust' created in 1991 for Bloomingdale (Buck 1991). The bag played on two of the most recognisable attributes of Italianicity, pizza and religion (as the slogan mocks the phrase “in god we trust”) to highlight their nature of stereotypes. In this sense, Moschino uses traits of Italianicity in regard to food in a creative and ironic way, echoing also the label's practice concerning the Italian flag discussed in the previous chapter.

Figure 46 and 47: Moschino's shop windows 'salt shaker' (Milan)
and 'from Italy with love' (NYC) in 2011

When references to food became mainstream at runaway shows, as the 'fruit&veg' print trend blossomed in the spring/summer 2012 women's collections, Moschino behaved rather differently from the likes of Prada, Dolce and Gabbana or Stella McCartney (figure 48). I contend that Moschino went further in exploring this general trend, going beyond the use of the 'fruit&veg' theme as a motif. If many of the pieces of the Moschino Cheap and Chic "Beautyfood" collection are similar, in their use of fruity patterns, to the label's competitors, on the other hand the 'Strawberry Dress' (figure 49), the setting for the catwalk show and the related shop windows displays employ a different strategy.

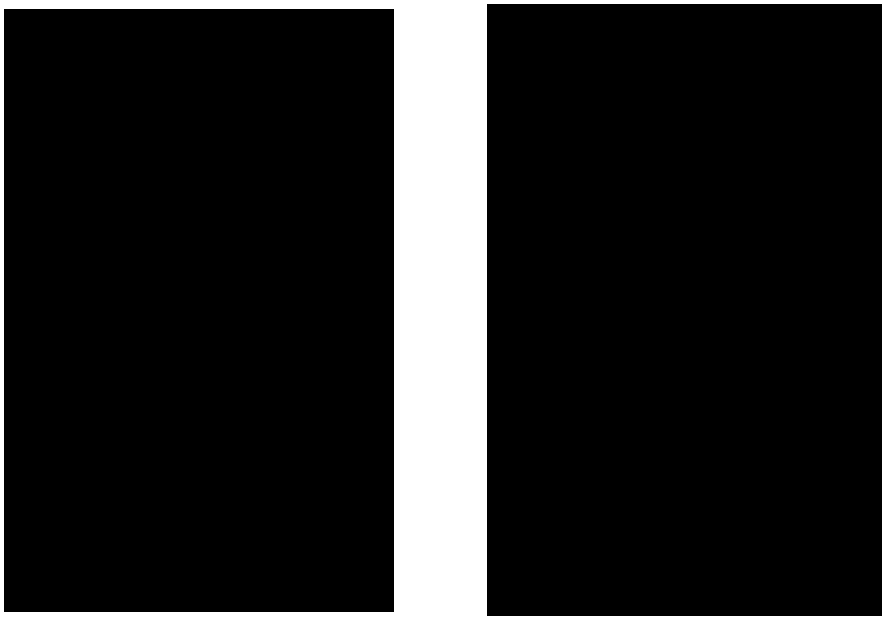


Figure 48 and 49: Stella McCartney dress and Moschino Cheap and Chic 'Strawberry Dress' (S/S 2012)

The 'Strawberry Dress' is an ironic take on the 'fruit&veg' trend. The dress replicates the structure and look of a strawberry (an heart shaped silhouette with a green stem at the top and seeds on the surface) and is more similar to fancy dress than to other examples of 'fruit&veg' dresses seen on the catwalks. By being openly kitsch, the 'Strawberry Dress' underlines a reflection on high fashion and the way it can wrap almost anything in an aura of desirability as discussed in the previous chapter.

Similarly, the set design of the "Beautyfood" catwalk show takes the 'fruit&veg' trend to the extreme, by interpreting it quite literally. The fashion show featured a market stall on the background and this scenario was replicated at different events (in New York, London, Milan, Paris, Berlin and Asia) promoting the collection. There, guests were "able to try beverages made from fresh fruit and vegetables and leave the boutiques with small bags full of complimentary fresh produce".[138] This literal interpretation of the 'fruit&veg' trend was showcased also in the shop windows of Moschino's Via della Spiga boutique in Milan, that saw the 'Strawberry Dress' placed in a blender alongside other fruit (figure 50) or lemon print dresses (figure 51) cut in half to reveal their 'true' nature as lemons, playing on the dimension of /being/ and /seeming/. Those windows displays, like the kitsch 'Strawberry Dress', also stimulate a reflection on the luxury fashion industry, that wraps products in an aura of exclusivity and dream, ennobling items that *per se* would possibly e humble and commonplace. With regard to this ennobling aim (see section 7.4b), but also for its ironic and playful attitude towards the media it operates in, Moschino presents some striking similarities with Cedroni's practice.

Figure 50 and 51: Shop displays for Moschino "Beautyfood" collection (S/S 2012)

In opposition to the case of Hotel Missoni Edinburgh examined in Chapter Five, the fashion brand Moschino is already characterised by a specific attitude towards food that supported the

138 See "Moschino Cheap and Chic 'Beautyfood' at the boutique". Available at: http://www.moschino.com/editorials/en/2012/02/16/moschino-cheap-and-chic-beautyfood-at-the-boutique/ [Accessed February 17, 2012].

brand extension of the label into the culinary field and facilitated the development of a set of coherent gastronomic offerings within Maison Moschino. If the identity of the Missoni fashion brand provided certain traits like conviviality, informality and friendliness, but also references to family and the domestic, that could be used to develop the identity of the gastronomic offerings of Hotel Missoni Edinburgh, the label did not have any specific ties with food so that to extend the brand in that direction meant to stretch those distinctive traits into the gastronomic realm. The Moschino label was already far more equipped from this point of view. In this sense Clandestino Milano is not simply a complementary addition to the 'Moschino experience' provided by Maison Moschino, but an element that is closely intertwined and integrated within the discourses of the fashion label and motivated by its practice.

7.3 Fashion & food at Clandestino Milano

As discussed earlier, the fashion label Moschino holds a very close relationship with food. The label's founder Franco Moschino even compared himself to culinary professionals saying “I am like a chef in the sense that I follow classical recipes that time itself has invented” (Casadio 1997b: 5). In this sense the figure of Moreno Cedroni within Maison Moschino represents the mirror image of that. In fact Cedroni, as a chef of haute cuisine, resembles the figure of the *couturier*, an analogy that is emphasised within Maison Moschino by the creation of a restaurant that resembles an atelier.

In literature, the figure of the chef of haute cuisine has often been compared to that of the artist (Hegarty and O’Mahony 2001: 10, De Solier 2010: 160, Ashley et al. 2004: 144, Fine 1996: 100) or of the architect (Ottenbacher and Harrington 2007, Horwitz and Singley 2004, Castle 2002 and, from a semiotic point of view, Frascari 1986), but also to that of the fashion designer (Gillespie 1994: 23, Barrere et al. 2009: 5, Cerea and Rurale 2010: 8, Buosi 2002: 58). The figure of Cedroni resembles that of the *couturier* on a variety of levels. Like a fashion designer, Cedroni also periodically creates new 'collections', as in high cuisine chefs need to constantly innovate in order to remain relevant in an highly competitive environment (Ottenbacher and Harrington 2009: 444). Moreover, similarly to fashion collections, Cedroni's new collections have to be innovative but also representative of the image of the brand while at the same time also responding to the general trends of the cultural field they operate in, otherwise they risk to compromise the identity and legitimacy of the brand.

Furthermore, Cedroni's practice shares the same dimension of temporal discontinuity that

characterises the fashion system (Buosi 2002) where new, memorable events/collections are cyclically produced after some time of public inactivity (also Gillespie 1994: 23). Each Clandestino collection takes at least a year to be developed, and some dishes have an even longer history. In this sense the work of Cedroni presents a temporality that is similar to the one involved in the creation of a fashion collection (Chevalier and Mazzalovo 2008, Cappellari 2008). However, whereas the sourcing of material and production of fashion goods takes months, in the case of the restaurant business the temporality is much more concentrated, as most of the ingredients are fresh and are freshly prepared for the patrons. While most fashion goods are not usually produced on an *ad hoc* basis, with the exception of the phenomenon of custom-made, that is the norm in the luxury restaurant business.

Similarly to haute couture, in Cedroni's haute cuisine there is much more work involved than meets the eye. Like in the luxury fashion industry, the team work behind each collection is eclipsed in favour of the celebration of the individual genius of the designers, the only figures that possesses the skills and legitimacy in their cultural field to be able to transform their pieces into artwork (Dion and Arnould 2011: 507). If in the luxury fashion industry only the figure of the fashion designer "possesses the auratic potency to conjure the mystique of distinction authenticity, and exclusivity which in turn engenders a fervent dedication (verging on the religious) on the part of faithful costumers" (Potvin 2008: 247), in the culinary field it is solely the head-chef that possesses those qualities.

Both high-end cuisine and the luxury fashion industry focus on the myth of the genius and on the creation of an "exceptional persona", an iconic image to represent and promote their signature style (Dion and Arnould 2011: 508). In Cedroni's case, that is based on a very recognisable look, constituted by a colourful bandana and *parannanza,* the apron used by a washer up (figure 52). Cedroni explains this choice as a function of his unorthodox entrance in the culinary world, he had no formal training as a chef when he started out and felt that he did not deserve to wear the traditional chef's jacket and then, when he became more experienced, he thought he felt that he had earned the right to create a personal look, in a time when kitchens where dominated by white and grey (Cedroni 2011: 46-47).

Figure 52: Moreno Cedroni wearing his signature *parannanza* and bandana

This strategy is widespread in the luxury fashion industry, where designers create iconic looks to distinguish themselves from their colleagues (e.g. Karl Lagerfield and his white ponytail and dark glasses, Marc Jacobs and his skirts), but also among celebrity chefs, that similarly constitute brands centred both around their public persona (e.g. Michelin-starred chefs Gordon Ramsey and the pencil behind his ear or Carlo Cracco and his long wavy hair and beard) and their signature cooking style. Moreover, similarly to the case of fashion designers, also the name of the chef can become a "marketable commodity" (Svejenova et al. 2007: 551), becoming a brand (Ashley et al. 2004: 171) and adding value to products through the association with his/her name (Buosi 2002: 58).

Moreno Cedroni, like many other renowned chefs, employs strategies that are also used by luxury fashion labels like Moschino, i.e. brand extension. In fact haute cuisine and haute couture have something in common, they are both rarely profitable and need to be supported by other revenues.

> Haute Cuisine restaurants on their own are not a profitable business, they need other businesses' financial support to survive. They cannot survive without other businesses' money which, at the same time, do not have a reason to exist without the "haute" restaurant. Just as in fashion industry, the most expensive business is the most creative, the unprofitable and the one which transmits the values of the brand.
>
> (Cerea and Rurale 2010: 17)

Haute cuisine is a form of "prestige" economy that involves a "considerable investment in skill, time and money" (Lane 2011: 696), and represents for the gastronomic industry "exactly what

haute couture dresses and gowns represent for fashion" (Cerea and Rurale 2010: 11).[139] Like in the fashion industry, the phenomenon of brand extension in haute cuisine is not new, finding its pioneer in chef Paul Bocuse (Barrere et al. 2009:10) and nowadays constitutes the norm in the field. Moreover, like in its luxury fashion counterparts, phenomena of brand extension by renowned chefs can be rather opportunistic, often resulting in the simple apposition of the chef's name to a series of cooking related items like knives or pots (see for example the case of Michel Roux Jr.). Such products are primarily aimed at the less affluent segment of the market. Product lines by renowned chefs have been described as the equivalents of the accessories-business for fashion labels (Cerea and Rurale 2010: 8). Similarly to a Moschino fragrance or t-shirt that sells at a fraction of the price of an haute couture piece, products like jams or sauces branded 'Cedroni' also respond to the same logic and can be appealing to a wider audience, constituted by those who cannot afford the cost of the chef's fine dining experience.

However, in the case of Cedroni we do not see a simple case of downscale vertical brand extension (see Arslan and Altuna, 2010, Kim and Lavack 1996, Pitta and Katsanis, 1995, Loken and Roedder 1993, Kunde 2002 and also Chapter Two for a discussion of this strategy) through the creation of less expensive outlets (products ranges and books) but a situation where that is accompanied with the creation of other high-end entities similar to *Madonnina del Pescatore*, i.e. Clandestino restaurant. This is in line with the philosophy of line extension employed by many luxury fashion labels and exemplified by the creation of a Moschino men's collection alongside the women's one (again, on this topic see Chapter Two).

The first of Cedroni's restaurants, *Madonnina del Pescatore*, has been compared to haute couture whereas delicatessen *Anikó* has been described as the gastronomic equivalent of *prêt*-à-*porter* (Cedroni 2007: 177). However, in terms of brand extension, Clandestino restaurant presents more similarities with M*adonnina del Pescatore* than *Anikó*, as it belongs to the realm of haute couture like the former both in regard to pricing and the labour involved. In this sense Cedroni's brand is characterised by two different high-end lines and two diffusion lines located at the "masstige" level (Truong at al. 2009), represented by *Anikó* and the food products by *Officina*.

Food and fashion are also closely intertwined in the spaces of Maison Moschino. The dining room of Clandestino Milano resembles, in many aspects, an atelier as it presents several references, in the typical surreal and extravagant Moschino style, to fashion and its practice.[140]

Firstly, the restaurant features chairs that look almost like mannequins as they are 'dressed' with

139 In the restaurant business, the "haute couture prices" (Gillespie 1994: 21) associated with high-end cuisine are a function of a variety of elements. The "mission" of those restaurants consists in offering "the best in terms of raw materials, service, preparation of food, wine cellar etc. everything must be impeccable, every dish very well prepared and excellent in terms of quality and freshness [...] those issues are extremely expensive but extremely important at the same time" as "giving up one of those could compromise the membership in Haute Cuisine field" (Cerea and Rurale 2010: 11).

140 See http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FkORnKgi7mo&feature=youtube_gdata_player.

blouses and skirts (figure 53), whereas the sofas are constituted by clothes on hangers, elements that, in addition to the mirrored walls and the ice buckets shaped as bags, contribute to create a space that resembles an atelier (figure 54).

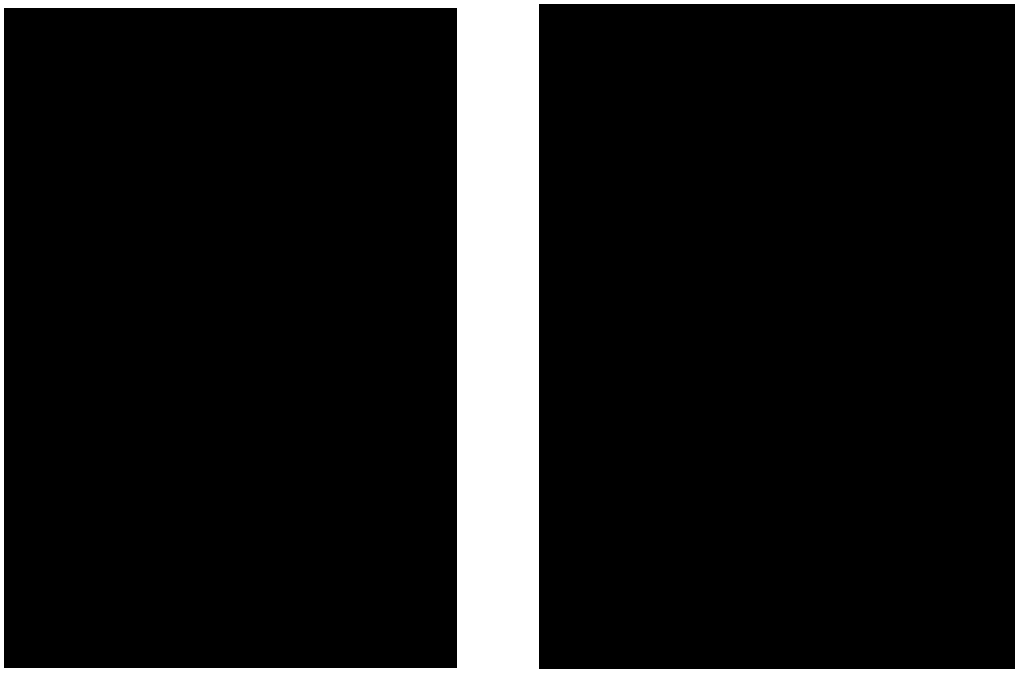


Figure 53 and 54: Detail of Clandestino Milano 'dressed' seats and 'handbag' ice buckets

This similarity is reinforced by constant references to the practice of fashion making throughout the hotel, as in the hall there are floor lamps that resemble mannequins (figure 55) and table lamps shaped as bags and shoes.

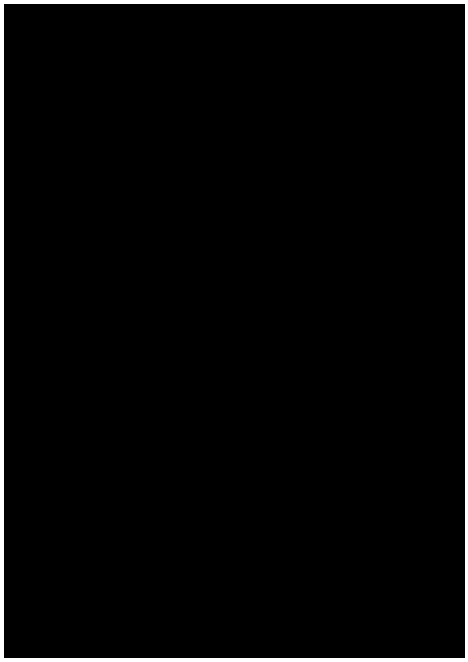


Figure 55: 'Dress Lamps' in the lobby of Maison Moschino

In this restaurant that mimics an atelier, the figure of the chef also seems to refer to the figure of the designer because the former seems to have playfully appropriated some tools of that trade. In the upstairs kitchen area, that remains partially visible to patrons, cooking tools are placed on clothes hangers, alluding to a practice where food and fashion are strictly intertwined.

At Maison Moschino the same references to the world of fashion in food consumption are also present in room service and the evening rite of the aperitif. For room service Cedroni has devised a special hat-box (figure 56) that contains not only the food ordered by the guest, but also a complete *mise en place* with cutlery and wine glasses. From the outside, nothing in the white hat-box betrays the fact that it contains food and, as Cedroni observes, even when it passes through the hall the bystanders have no idea what it might contain.[141] On the other hand, a white shoe-box is used for breakfast,[142] containing up to eight different sweet and savoury dishes (figure 57). The same box is also used for the aperitif, in this case being filled with different preparations and finger food.

The ritual of the aperitif (it. aperitivo) can be considered as the epitome of ideas of sociality and conviviality, so intrinsically linked to Italy and its lifestyle, and is particularly popular in Milan.

> The evening aperitif was usually accompanied by a stroll and became a way to catch up with friends. Going out for an aperitif meant recreating the space of the living room where display, eating, socializing were

141 See http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FkORnKgi7mo&feature=youtube_gdata_playe.

142 That at the time of Cedroni's residency at Maison Moschino was served only as room service.

> interconnected. It is a custom that is still very common and which is considered quintessentially Milanese. It comprises much more than just the social consumption of drinks since the bars now include in the price a vast amount of food.
>
> (Muscau 2008: 147)

The aperitif at Maison Moschino is served either at the bar or in the piazza that overlooks the hotel, both elements that, as Eco (1982: 134) observes, are "centripetal spaces" that "promote contact between people". In this respect then the aperitif at Maison Moschino is characterised by a double connotation of sociality that is strictly related to Italianicity. Piazzas are the "basic component of the Italian urban fabric" (Fusch 1994: 424) and they respond to a series of different logics, being places for socialising, performing economic activities and religious practices.[143]


Figure 56 and 57: 'Hat box' container for room service and MosKit at Maison Moschino

In the spaces of Maison Moschino, food and fashion are intertwined very closely, in a play where the food is presented in a container for accessories and the chef mimics the work of designers by appropriating their tools in a space with constant references to fashion making. But, at Maison Moschino, fashion can also truly become food. On the menu there are elements that aim to represent in culinary terms some Moschino products but this process involves only fragrances, i.e. phenomena of brand extension for the fashion label. Cedroni examined the different notes of Moschino fragrances and created a dessert called "Funny" (part of the conceptual menu *susci figlio dei fiori*) and four cocktails that replicate their eponymous fragrances,[144] recreating the

143 As Canniffe (2008: 1) observes, the term piazza "has been adopted in other contexts to denote some forms of public open space, and even the use of the word has been regarded as enough to indicate the type of public life lived outdoors which is admired in the civic realm of southern Europe". The Italian piazza is also an arena where, historically, the power relationship between different political entities were physically represented (Canniffe 2008), a phenomenon epitomised in the medieval era between the opposition church and comuni (Treleani 2010: 3).

144 Besides *Funny*, also the fragrances *Uomo?*, *Love Love* and *Happy Fizz* have become drinks.

experience of the perfumes in gustatory terms, augmenting the sensory appeal of the brand Moschino (see Lindstrom 2005, Hultén et al. 2009 and Krishna 2009). In this sense, Cedroni works not so much on Moschino fashion but, more generally, on the Moschino brand as a contemporary luxury fashion house that is centred on brand extension practices. Ironically, such a reflection finds its place in a space that is itself a phenomenon of brand extension, i.e. Maison Moschino.

This situation is the mirror image of Moschino's practice of creating situations where fashion can mimic and simulate food. This practice is present also at Maison Moschino, as for example the label has created some pillows that resemble tarts and cupcakes (figure 58) and a 'patisserie' chandelier (figure 59) for the *Sweet Room*.

Figure 58 and 59: detail of cushions and chandelier in the *Sweet Room* at Maison Moschino

In this sense, Cedroni and Moschino are both characterised by playfulness and identify a similar type of Model Reader. The semiotic notion of the Model Reader (Eco 1979b and 1994) is constituted by the figure of the reader as it is imagined by the author that creates a text and is supported by it, i.e. the ideal receiver of such text. Cedroni's Model Reader is constituted by a public that is willing to experiment and have fun with food, not of 'culinary fundamentalists' that do not want to step out of the norms and traditions, and in this sense is similar to Moschino's. Moschino's clothing and accessories can also be quite extravagant and therefore not appealing for a public of 'conservative' fashionistas.

Besides his own playful gastronomic practice Cedroni also encourages his guests to be playful, like for example in the *Gioco del Tonno* (Let's play with tuna). This is a dish inspired by *gioco dell'oca* (game of the goose), a board game similar to *snakes and ladders* and is constituted by a cardboard box (figure 60) that includes four different variations of tuna, where guests are encouraged to follow a sequence of steps, like in the board game, and literally to 'play with food'.

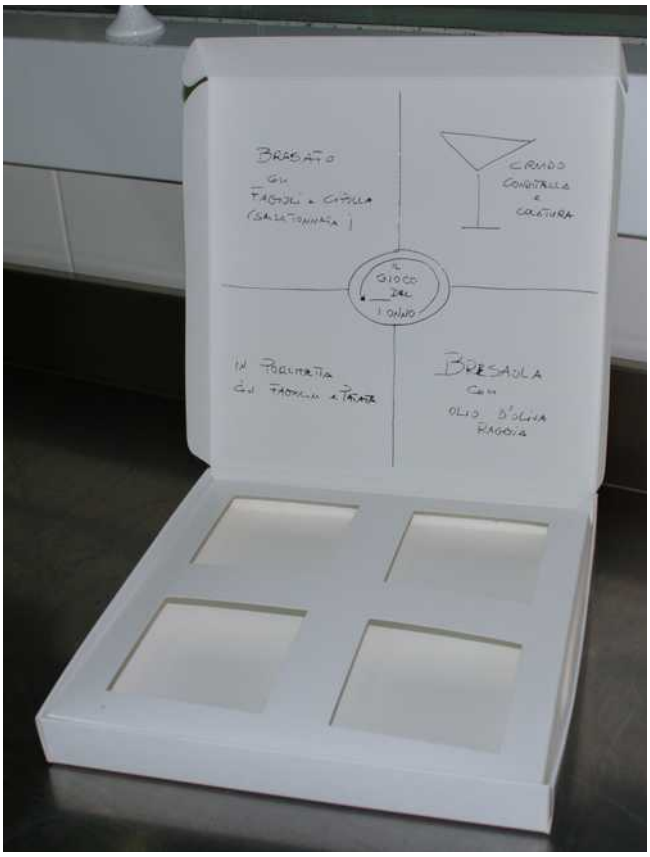


Figure 60: Box for “Gioco del Tonno”.
Copyright Alice Dallabona (2011)

However, we can see that this gastronomic text actually encourages customers to perform a series of codified actions and to follow the steps in the order envisioned by Cedroni, echoing the closure of the interpretation of the deconstructed dishes of Cedroni's mentor, Ferran Adrià, identified by De Solier (2010: 163), who claims that behind the “unconventional new reading” of the Catalan chef lies a paradox as he “simultaneously opens up and closes down the meaning of a dish: the chef deconstructs the traditional meaning, but the diners must accept his meaning as the final signified”. In regard to “gioco del tonno”, like at El Bulli, patrons “are instructed by their waiters on the ‘right’ way to consume each dish in order to understand the chef’s intended meaning” (De Solier 2010: 163).

This does not mean, however, that the reading proposed by Cedroni is the only one possible one, as one needs to take into account also the possible subversions by the reader/customers and the fact that the materiality of the text might convey meaning that the author did not plan or expect. In this respect I draw on Eco's theory regarding the presence of three different intentions in texts. Eco (1990) theorises that the interpretation of a text revolves around three poles that very rarely coincide: *intentio auctoris*, i.e. what the author (in this case a chef) wanted to say through his/her

work; *intentio operis*, that consists in what the text itself says in regard to its specific system of signification and its characteristics (food in this case); and *intentio lectoris*, which is the meaning as it created by the reader, which depends on his/her own knowledge, beliefs or desires.[145] In this sense, despite Cedroni's proposed reading, the culinary text remains open to different interpretations.

7.4 Clandestino Milano & Italianicity

As discussed in the previous chapter, the fashion label Moschino has often featured references to its country of origin, making Italianicity one of its distinctive traits. In section 7.2 of this chapter I observed how the label also played upon a series of stereotypical images associated with Italian food, always showcasing the Moschino signature ironic style. Here, I contend that chef Cedroni's practice is also closely intertwined with notions of Italianicity, so that the gastronomic offerings of Maison Moschino convey the 'Moschino experience' in a way that is coherent with the identity of the fashion label.

7.4a Use of Italian ingredients and references to the Italian gustatory isotopy

The identity of Clandestino Milano depends for its culinary identity on the original Clandestino restaurant in Portonovo. That restaurant is characterised by a particular style of cooking that Cedroni coined as *susci*, an Italianised and revised version of Japanese sushi. The term *susci* itself is an Italianised version of the word sushi, created by substituting the letter H with the letter C, a replacement that graphically represents the Italian pronunciation of the Japanese term. However, Clandestino Milano is different from the original Clandestino restaurant because the menu includes, in addition to *susci*, some elements that are specifically tailored to Maison Moschino's needs as an hotel, like breakfast and room service, and to the new location. Clandestino Milano includes elements that represent the Milanese culinary heritage, like the *cotoletta alla milanese*, i.e. cutlet Milanese style (Zennaro 2011: 37) or *panettone*, alongside dishes, like pasta and salads, that have gradually disappeared from the original Clandestino menu (Cedroni 2007: 146).

The distinctive trait of Cedroni's *susci* is represented by the fact that the chef respects the philosophy of Japanese sushi, revolving around the use of raw fish paired with rice and seaweed

145 See Pisanty and Pellerey (2004 : 381) for a more detailed discussion.

(Ishige 2001, Issenberg 2007), but re-interprets it in an Italian perspective that is strongly rooted in the culinary traditions of Le Marche, re-creating an Italian gustatory isotopy through the use of local ingredients and experimenting with consistencies that do not belong to the Japanese tradition.

The most notable innovation of Cedroni's *susci* is constituted by the fact that he does not use any soy sauce or wasabi alongside the raw fish, like in the Japanese tradition, but instead uses extra virgin olive oil, balsamic vinegar, colatura di alici (a kind of anchovy sauce), tomatoes and burrata (a type of mozzarella) to complement the flavours of the protein (Cedroni 2001, Cedroni 2007). According to a similar logic, Cedroni's *susci* is accompanied by bread.[146] These elements are so commonly associated with Italy and its culinary heritage that they can work as signs of it, representing ideas of Italianicity at a metonymical level (Barthes 1977: 50). Those ingredients contribute to create an aura of Italianicity around Cedroni's *susci*, in addition to the one already associated with the chef's identity, that was chosen as the face of Italian pasta brand Barilla in Europe (Bedijs 2011: 338).

Cedroni is committed both to Italian and local ingredients and limits the use of foreign and exotic ingredients, like kombu seaweed (Japan) or amaranth (South America), to complement and balance the different dishes. They are not used systematically but on an *ad hoc* basis. Cedroni is particularly committed to the use of local ingredients from his region. For example, in terms of extra virgin olive oil, he either uses the Raggia variety (characterised by a very delicate taste, in opposition to the stronger aroma of southern Italian oils) or novel varieties that are enriched with natural essences, like lemon, basil, clementine or ginger for example. In other words, Cedroni wanted to achieve a type of cooking that, under a patina of innovation and exoticism, refers to the particular locale where the dish is produced, so that the customers can recognise "where they are actually experiencing it",[147] addressing the importance of "having *terroir* in your cooking style" (Ottenbacher and Harrington 2009: 242). What Cedroni is referring to is not merely to geography but also to the Italian gustatory isotopy that characterises Italian cuisine, constituted by a series of culturally established characteristics that involves the taste, aroma, temperature and consistency of food (Grignaffini 2004: 4).

By using Italian ingredients *in lieu* of foreign ones, Cedroni is operating in a glocal perspective (Robertson 1995 and, in semiotic terms, Lotman 2006 and Cobley 2004) that sees local difference being globalised (Bell and Valentine 1997: 190) and used to "re-enchant" food (Cook and Crang 1996: 132), similarly to the case of Cucina restaurant (see Chapter Five). Cedroni's

146 Clandestino serves different types of bread that are especially designed to complement and enhance the organoleptic properties of the dishes.

147 My translation, from video interview of Cedroni available at http://temi.repubblica.it/espresso-ristoranti-italia-2008/2007/10/12/cinque-campioni-per-sei-domande/?printpage=undefined.

practice is closely intertwined to ideas of "exotic within" (Bell and Valentine 1997: 194), as he sources ingredients that come from small-scale terroirs as in the case of *cicerchie*, legumes traditionally grown in Le Marche, contributing to create an aura of authenticity to his cuisine.
In the high-end culinary field in which Cedroni operates, there is a trend towards "re-territorialization" and references to local identities "because we are dealing with an elite culture that has developed in reaction to world-wide standardization of food" so that "globalization of fine dining, in the sense of one homogenized world *cuisine*, is not embraced by Michelin-starred restaurants" (Lane 2011: 707). At the same time, however, haute cuisine chefs cannot offer food that is only strongly rooted in a specific locale as they also face considerable pressure towards the exotic both from their customers and cultural intermediaries that regulate legitimisation within the culinary field like food critics and, in particular, the inspectors of the Michelin guide.

> Despite chefs' sympathies for the local, the desires of many of their guests for the unusual and exotic, as well as the demands of Michelin inspectors for innovative combinations of taste sensations, cause chefs to combine the global and the local.
>
> (Lane 2011: 712)

In the case of Cedroni's Clandestino, this means that his personal take on Italian culinary traditions is complemented with some exotic touches both in terms of ingredients (e.g. amaranth, wasabi, daikon) and preparations (tataki, shabu shabu) with a particular focus on Japanese cuisine. This use of cooking techniques of non-European origin differentiate Cedroni from the British and German Michelin-starred chefs examined in Lane (2011: 709) where "mostly only the more decorative accompaniments or the spices and flavourings are of global provenance".

7.4b Deconstruction of traditional recipes

Clandestino Milano also features many references to Italian traditional dishes and recipes. However, they are not re-created in their traditional form but deconstructed and transformed through Cedroni's creativity, that is based on a constant experimentation in terms of cooking techniques and culinary methods. Cedroni's style of cooking is often described as deconstruction and in this respect his philosophy is similar to the one of Ferran Adrià or Heston Blumenthal, renowned exponents of this general trend in high-end cuisine (see Parasecoli 2001, De Solier 2010, Myhrvold 2011 and Roosth 2013). The fashion label Moschino is also characterised by an

interest in deconstruction as a creative method, so that the practice of Cedroni echoes the one of the brand, contributing to the coherence of Maison Moschino with the identity of its parent brand.

As observed earlier, the emphasis on local ingredients and traditions constitutes a distinctive trait of high-end cuisine. Here, local identities are valorised as a means to convey authenticity and distinction to food, but they are at the same time transformed according to a contrasting tendency that valorises novelty and exoticism.

> At the same time, too much innovation would make chefs appear inauthentic. Yet, making traditional food without adding a novel element to it would look as though the chef had no idea of his or her own. Thus, in seeking legitimation, just as in creating food, individuals must find some form of balance between the two pressures.
>
> (Leschziner 2010 : 11)

This means that traditional dishes cannot be proposed in haute cuisine in their original and rustic form, but need to be transformed through the creative flair of the chef that can turn everyday dishes into something special through the ennobling touch of the author, similar to Moschino's one discussed in section 7.2.

> The only way in which a minority of chefs with multiple stars manage to retain a few regional dishes in their repertoire is to engage in their radical de- and re-construction and/or infuse them with the principles of *nouvelle cuisine*.
>
> (Lane 2011: 706)

A function of this logic are some of Cedroni's creations at Clandestino Milano like the "costata di manzo in dadi, marinata al miele, giardiniera e maionese gusto cotoletta" (cubes of cutlets marinated in honey, pickled vegetables and cutlet flavoured mayonnaise) and "tiramisù con il pane del giorno prima, gelato al caffè e gelatine di caffè borghetti" (tiramisù with yesterday's bread, coffee ice-cream and coffee liqueur jellies), respectively a reinterpretation of the Milanese cutlet and of Italian tiramisù. Cedroni's relation to tradition is deconstructive and creative, as he does not consider it as a monolithic element whose only outcome is a mere never-ending repetition of established repertoires, but as a starting point that can generate new "modern" traditions (Cedroni 2001: 11), similar in this respect to the philosophy of Ferran Adrià (Adrià et al. 2006).[148]

148 Like his Catalan mentor, Cedroni, does not consider himself as belonging to the tradition of molecular gastronomy but, implements "many of its elements", in line with the Spanish Michelin-starred chefs examined in Ottenbacher and Harrington (2009: 243), to reinterpret traditional dishes.

> The concepts Adrià translates and materializes into food are, by his own admission, amazingly close to those developed within the literary and philosophical movement generally known as deconstruction: the same provocative use of estrangement, intended to make the most familiar structures, classifications, and conceptual systems totally unfamiliar; the same intense effort to subvert any absolute set of assumptions, to relentlessly fray the signifying differences in the canonized and mythicized culinary discourse.
>
> (Parasecoli 2001: 63)

The term deconstruction "has entered the language as a synonym for analysis that exposes mechanisms, procedures, or habits" and "is a mode of philosophical and literary analysis derived from the work of the philosopher Jacques Derrida" but in literature, the notion of deconstruction remains open to different connotations (Culler 2007: i-ii) so that is not possible to describe it "as if it were a method, a system or a settled body of ideas" (Norris 2002: 1). In the culinary field the practice of deconstruction consists in taking apart traditional dishes, manipulating the single constitutive parts and reorganizing them in new forms by playing with the texture, shape and temperature of the ingredients (Parasecoli 2001: 67, De Solier 2010: 163), as Cedroni does.
This mode of deconstruction, in Adrià's as well as Cedroni's cuisine, exposes the "culinary ideologies" upon which tradition is built (De Solier 2010: 163). In other words, as Parasecoli argues, culinary deconstruction challenges established tradition by "soliciting" them (Derrida 1990: 6) so that they can reveal the "hidden mechanisms" that they function upon and "the cultural, even artificial, nature of our culinary canon" they refer to (Parasecoli 2001: 67). Both Adrià and Cedroni want to engage customers in a reflection over cuisine, encouraging them to discover the connections with tradition by stimulating their gustatory memory through the materiality of the dishes proposed (Parasecoli 2001: 67). In this sense, as argued by Buosi (2004: 2), Cedroni's cuisine implies very awake customers that are completely focused on the sensory and intellectual stimulation that they are experiencing at the restaurant, in opposition to the "daydreamer" consumers theorised by Floch (2001: 13-39), that are not completely engaged with what they are experiencing.

7.4c Of /being/ and /seeming/ Italian

In Clandestino, the practice of deconstruction coupled with a fascination for Japanese cuisine and the signature playful attitude of Cedroni results in a series of dishes that speak of his creativity but also of the Italian gastronomic heritage, that he proposes in new forms with the

aim to surprise customers. Cedroni, in line with the conventions of the high-end culinary field he operates in, uses the "incongruity between the appearance of foods (and beverages) and their flavor or aroma [...] as a resourceful tool to give rise to deliver surprise" (Spence 2013: 15), producing dishes that present a complex relationship with the dimensions of /being/ and /seeming/ in terms of Italianicity.

> Forget about sushi! Our courses do quote the Japanese Italian sushi, but it's just about the shape. The essence we put inside this shape is definitely Italian, so you won't taste wasabi or nori seaweed, but extra-virgin olive oil, balsamic vinegar, Italian herbs, tomato, burrata cheese. Our rice is carnaroli Italian variety, our soy sauce is Italian colatura di alici (fish sauce prepared according to the ancient Roman recipe). For all those reasons, we don't call it sushi but SUSCI: not a misspelling, yet the Italian spelling.[149]

Clandestino Milano's cuisine might not seem Italian, but that is because the artifices envisioned by Cedroni aimed to present it as such, in order to surprise the customer with something different from what s/he was expecting. Cedroni's style is highly playful and inventive in its use of camouflage, disguising references to the Italian culinary heritage by adopting a patina of Japaneseness.

However, the 'secret' Italianicity of Clandestino Milano is easily discovered, as the references to that tradition have not been erased. Cedroni's masquerade is one that is intended to be revealed. Verbal cues that connote Italianicity (e.g. *susci* versus sushi) and references to produce (e.g. mozzarella and balsamic vinegar), traditional dishes (e.g. brodetto alla senigalliese, panzanella) and techniques (e.g. curing) that belong to the Italian heritage function to unmask the essence of Cedroni's cooking, which was the intention of the chef all along. Cedroni guides patrons through a path of discovery in his specific version of Italianicity and helps them see through the disguises to recognise that his exoticism hides deep local roots. This also opens up an ulterior level of meaning in his food, aimed at stimulating a reflection regarding Italian traditions, to question what they are and what are their constitutive characteristics.

In this sense, the identity of Clandestino Milano involves a complex relationship with the dimensions of /being/ and /seeming/, that I also examine in relation to its direct competitors, i.e. Gold and Armani/Nobu, two Milanese restaurants that are associated with Italian luxury fashion labels.

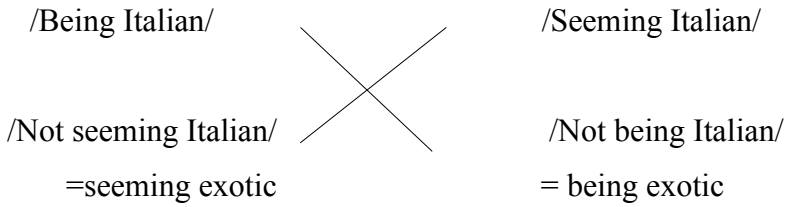
Gold is the restaurant opened in October 2006 by Dolce and Gabbana and proposes a service based on Sicilian cuisine, in line with the identity of the label that is strictly associated with Sicily and its Mediterranean heritage. Whereas Gold explicitly positions itself within the

149 See www.maisonmoschino.com/en/morenocedroni [accessed 12-04-2012].

boundaries of tradition, on the other hand Cedroni's relationship with the gastronomic tradition of his area of provenance is far more complex. Cedroni's style at Clandestino might look more similar to the one that characterises the Armani/Nobu restaurant in Milan, in particular for its references to Japanese cuisine.

Nobu restaurant is described as "essentially Japanese" although "with South American and Peruvian influences"[150] and features profuse use of sushi and sashimi on its menu, which are elements that Cedroni also refers to at Clandestino. Nonetheless, under a patina of exoticism and references to Japanese culture, Clandestino's dishes do not belong to these categories. The food at Clandestino Milano might not seem Italian but underneath the influence of Italian cooking is recognisable, with a particular focus on the region of Le Marche. Whereas Gold and its classic recipes represents the epitome of traditional Italian cooking and Armani/Nobu represents the epitome of exoticism, Clandestino Milano actually represents a creative mix of the two that bears the imaginative stylistic mark of Moreno Cedroni. In this respect, the semiotic notion of the veridictory square enables us to conceptualise this situation more clearly, making explicit their different positions.

The veridictory square is a semiotic tool developed by Greimas that articulates the dimension of /being/ and /seeming/ (see Greimas and Courtés 1986 but also Marsciani and Zinna 1991: 52, Magli 2004: 84 and Hébert 2011: 51) and that I consider here in relation to the opposition /Italian/ versus /Exotic/. In this sense we obtain the following semiotic square:

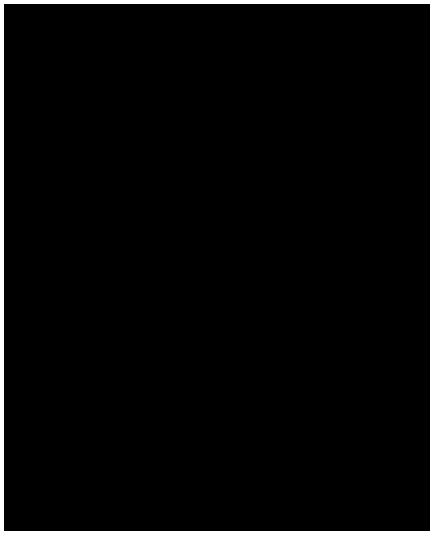


To clarify, I conceptualise the dimension of /seeming/ as related to the 'surface' of the dish, its exterior characteristics in relation to the visual and verbal presentation, whereas I consider the dimension of /being/ as concerning the 'essence' of the dish, that is constituted by references to the Italian gustatory isotopy, Italian traditions and ingredients.

In this respect, we can see how Gold presents dishes that both are and seem Italian while Armani/Nobu is characterised by dishes that neither are nor seem Italian (as in fact they seem and are exotic), whereas Clandestino's position is more complex. Cedroni's susci belongs to the dimension of the 'secret', that concerns /being/ and /not seeming/ (positive deixis of the veridictory square) in regard with Italianicity, whereas on the contrary the 'illusion' of exoticism

150 See http://www.armanilifestyle.com/lifestyle/?language=en&year=&highlight=y&p=place&id=21.

is created by the chef through the encounter of /not-being/ and /seeming/ (negative deixis).[151] Clandestino Milano proposes dishes that do not seem Italian (figures 61 and 62), as they feature raw fish and bear explicit references to exoticism by naming produce that comes from afar (like kombu seaweed or Japanese sake) and by using the word *susci.* However, under the surface, Clandestino's cuisine is strictly intertwined with the Italian gastronomic heritage, particularly the one of the Le Marche region (Benzi and Marchi 2011: 41-48).



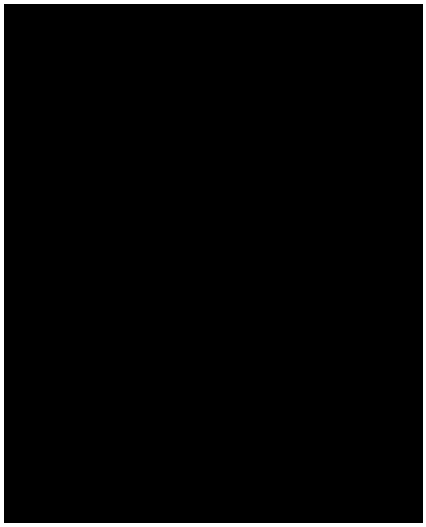


Figure 61 and 62: Two Clandestino's dishes, “La seppia” and “tataki di tonno con conditella”

As observed in section 7.2, the same reflection over the dimension of /being/ and /seeming/ that characterises Cedroni's practice is also present in the work of Moschino, one of several analogies between the chef and the fashion label.

7.5 Conclusions

Both Cedroni and Moschino share a similar attitude towards the media they operate on, i.e. food and fashion, and this particularly happy encounter of kindred spirits contributes to the creation of the specific identity of Clandestino Milano restaurant and, more broadly, Maison Moschino. Both the brand Moschino and Cedroni, in their own specific ways, are characterised by extravagance, irony, playfulness, irreverence and a tendency towards deconstruction as creative

151 On the concept of deixis in the context of the semiotic square see Bronwen and Ringham (2006: 61-62).

methods. The brand Moschino is often described as extravagant, ironic, playful, irreverent and even iconoclastic by the media (Schiro 1994, Stoykov 2010) and academic literature (Boero 2004, Barański and West 2001: 290). These traits are epitomised in some Moschino pieces mentioned earlier like the 'Strawberry Dress'. However, such characteristics are also well suited to describe the work of chef Moreno Cedroni.

The playfulness that characterises Moschino's identity finds its gastronomic counterpart in Cedroni's practice, that plays with the ingredients to create unusual and extravagant pieces that can surprise guests. Let us think for example of the dessert *Sedano rapa croccante con mousse di gianduia, mozzarella, spuma di nutella e zenzero, gelato al pepe di Szechuan* (Crispy celeriac, Mozzarella and Gianduia mousse, Nutella and ginger foam and Sichuan pepper ice-cream) where savoury ingredients are used in a sweet preparation, or at the *Insalata di astice, gelatina di crostacei e zenzero, chele ripiene* (lobster salad, shellfish and ginger jellies with stuffed claws) where the chef reproduces the shape of a fish through different fish preparations (Cedroni 2001: 50-51). Both Moschino and Cedroni's practice responds to the logic of not taking things (i.e. the medium they work on and the industry they are in) too seriously, allowing space for creativity and innovation.

Moreover, both Moschino's and Cedroni's styles can be described as irreverent and iconoclastic as they both aim to create something new and unusual through their work and to start, in a certain sense, new traditions. They also share a common interest in deconstruction as a creative method. Cedroni critically examines the traditions and norms within the gastronomic field, breaking down established dishes to recreate them in unusual and novel ways, and Moschino also employs a similar strategy, that involves a reflection over the essence of garments and their parts in order to create novel arrangements. I argue that Moschino's practice of using of optic imitations of pockets and seams or *trompe-l'oeil* effects to simulate the illusion of accessories over garments, like for example ties or necklaces, responds to this logic.

In this respect, another element of analogy between Moschino and Cedroni is precisely constituted by their reflection on the medium in which they operate. I argue that their work possesses a meta-semiotic vocation similar to the metalinguistic one theorised by Jakobson (2002), as they both focus their attention on the very language they operate in and its conventions. Both Moschino and Cedroni focus on the code they operate in, i.e. fashion and food, as the latter uses his food as a reflective tool to expose and reflect on the nature of gastronomy and Moschino, similarly, uses garments and accessories to do same within the field of fashion.

As discussed above, Cedroni and Moschino have many elements in common and share a similar attitude towards the media they operate in, and Maison Moschino's identity benefits greatly from

this well suited match of kindred spirits in terms of coherence. Within the space of Maison Moschino both fashion and gastronomy are represented and intertwined in a way that truly represents, and is coherent with, the identity of Moschino. Moreover, both Moschino and Cedroni use references to Italy and its culture, elements that are emphasised by Maison Moschino in regard to the gastronomic offerings but also in its spatiality, as observed in the previous chapter. However, those traits of Italianicity are rather different from the ones I identified in regard to Hotel Missoni Edinburgh. Whereas in both cases traits of Italianicity are used as a means to strengthen the association between the hotels and their parent brand, to increase their prestige and reputation and to augment their offerings, appropriating elements that go beyond the ones that characterise the label in order to maximise the brand extension potential of the fashion labels involved, Maison Moschino and Hotel Missoni Edinburgh portray very different versions of Italianicity.

Maison Moschino and Hotel Missoni Edinburgh both capitalise on Italy and Italian culture by employing a strategy of cultural opportunism but, as I discuss in more detail in the next chapter, these hotels do not hold a mere parasitic relationship with Italianicity. I contend that the Missoni and Moschino brand extension practices examined here are in fact also pivotal sites for shaping and mobilising notions of Italian national identity, that are not established once and for all but are, in a semiotic perspective, narrative texts that are constantly and actively reshaped by a variety of players and discourses including the corporate strategies employed by Hotel Missoni Edinburgh and Maison Moschino.

Chapter Eight

Hotel Missoni Edinburgh, Maison Moschino and Italianicity

8.1 Introduction

In the previous chapters I examined how the identity of Hotel Missoni Edinburgh and Maison Moschino strongly coheres with the identity of their respective fashion labels. This is not surprising considering that their very *raison d'etre*, their unique selling point, is constituted by the fact that those places are strictly intertwined with the identity of their parent brands, capitalising on such associations, and that both the projects are the result of careful and meticulous planning aimed precisely at this. It was also observed how the hotels rely on traits of Italianicity to strengthen the association with their parent brand and to emphasise their prestige. In this respect, I contended that Hotel Missoni Edinburgh and Maison Moschino employ strategies of cultural opportunism that see the deployment of characteristic traits that are associated with Italy and its culture as a way to augment their offerings, effectively maximising the brand extension potential of the fashion labels involved.

Both Hotel Missoni Edinburgh and Maison Moschino benefit from the association with Italy. There is a strong argument that brands can benefit from being linked to a national identity especially if, like in the case of the "brand Italia", that is associated with positive traits. Many brands capitalise on their national affiliation to provide differentiation and prestige to their identity and products but national identity can also provide a powerful reserve for brand culture and brand extension.

Hotel Missoni Edinburgh and Maison Moschino conjure up ideas of Italianicity through traits that are quite different, and sometimes even contradictory. Whereas Hotel Missoni Edinburgh endorses in its corporate identity a sense of Italianicity based on narratives of family and

industrial production, on the other hand Maison Moschino is closely intertwined with ideas of creativity and handmade craftsmanship. This is a function of the richness of the Italian identity and the variety of traits of Italianicity it comprises. In this sense, the different portraits of Italianicity created by Hotel Missoni Edinburgh and Maison Moschino reinforce the idea that national identity is not a fixed entity but a conglomerate of different traits, a mutable and fuzzy entity that allows enough diversification for brands to pick and choose the most appropriate characteristics for their ends.

8.2 The importance of being Italian

As discussed in previous chapters, both Hotel Missoni Edinburgh and Maison Moschino refer to traits of Italianicity. But what are the benefits associated with national affiliation, and Italianicity in particular? They provide differentiation, a competitive advantage and act as a reserve for the brands in question. However, is it still relevant to speak about national brands in an industry and commodity culture that is increasingly globalised?

As discussed in Chapters Five and Seven in regard to food, globalisation does not involve the annihilation of local or national differences, because it is precisely through global availability that their distinctiveness is reinforced. The rise of a global market has been accused of causing a general homogenisation of offerings in a variety of areas (from food to fashion). However a lack of diversification is not a necessary consequence of this phenomenon, as an international presence does not mean that brands are not still "heavily imbued with geographically contextualised notions" (Pike 2009: 636), as the cases of Hotel Missoni Edinburgh and Maison Moschino and their parent brands demonstrate. Naisbitt (1996) refers to this as the "global paradox" that sees a growing relevance of the local in a global economy. In this respect, the national affiliation of brands becomes more and more important as a means of differentiation and uniqueness (Papadopoulos and Heslop 1993: 17, Ferraresi 2000: 262) and this is particularly relevant for luxury brands, that are closely intertwined with such values.

> Luxury brands must ... have an international profile and presence, but with a discernible national character. When a Korean women enters a Gucci store in Seoul, it is the expectation that the atmosphere will be evocative of Italy, whether through the sophisticated use of colour, the music or the store fit-out.
>
> (Chevalier and Mazzalovo 2008: xiii)

Brands that aim to make the most of their association with Italy need to 'seduce' people not only through their products but also by exporting its culture (Lombardi et al. 2000: 298). Any "national cultural specificity" represents then, in branding practices, "the 'competitive edge' over other nations" (Aronczyk 2008: 44).

8.2a Differentiation

Differentiation between products is one of the key elements in the modern economy, that Callon et al. (2002: 194) describe as an "economy of qualities" that focuses more and more on the "singularization" of goods. In this perspective, the product has become "a 'bundle of qualities' that allow singularizations and differentiations ad libitum" (Callon et al. 2002: 216), a desirable quality in a world that clearly yearns for singularization in contrast to the homogenisation of commodification (Kopytoff 1986: 80).

Differentiation can be achieved in many ways and, in regard to brands with an international presence, local or national affiliations constitute a powerful tool. As Moor (2007: 123) states, companies emphasise national affiliations because their connotations are considered "useful marketing tools as the brand circulates in other markets", as the cases of Missoni Hotel Edinburgh and Maison Moschino demonstrate. This is not a new phenomenon, as "brands making explicit geographical connections have been evident since at least the nineteenth century as producers sought differentiation and cachet through specific associations with particular places" (Pike 2009: 625). In recent times, an "ever growing use of origin identifiers by companies in marketing their products" (Papadopoulos and Heslop 1993: 10) has been observed, as they evoke "signifiers of place and culture" more and more (Goldman and Papson 2006: 340). Let us think for example to Ikea, that relies on Swedishness as a means of differentiation and a powerful marketing tool.[152]

For certain goods the point of origin is almost a "defining attribute" (Molotch 2002: 677), as with Champagne or Parmigiano Reggiano, products that bear the very name of their terroir. References to a specific locale are a means of differentiation and distinction for brands and products even when their geographical affiliation is not explicitly mentioned, as I have discussed in Chapter Five and Seven in regard to food. But "economic value is extracted from constructions of provenance in a range of consumer fields well beyond those of food and wine",

152 See http://www.ikea.com/ms/en_GB/jobs/swedishness/swedishness_01.html and Hannerz and Löfgren (1994).

like in fashion for example (Smith Maguire 2010: 271). Moreover, "there are many brands such as Gucci (Italian), Louis Vuitton (French), Sony (Japan) and Compaq (USA) where consumers can recognize their origins without much help although we know that they may not be made in the home country of the brand" (Phau and Prendergast 2000: 164). This is the case for both the fashion labels Moschino and Missoni and their brand extensions in the hospitality industry.
However, associations with a locale are often used inaccurately and "all too frequently fill the vacuum of geographical ignorance with questionable, but commercially effective, images of other places and cultures" (Castree 2001: 1521). National identities are "co-ordinated and often largely defined, by 'legends and landscapes', by stories of golden ages, enduring traditions, heroic deeds and dramatic destinies located in ancient or promised home-lands with hallowed sites and scenery" (Daniels 1993: 5). Brands pursue differentiation, and "give the potentially anonymous mass-produced commodity an identity by linking it to an identifiable (if often entirely fictional) producer or inventor or a particular physical place" (Arvidsson 2005: 243-244), sometimes appropriating national connotations that they might have little or no title to claim, as in the case of "pretend Italian brands", defined by Chiaro (2009: 40) as "foreign labels which imitate Italian products" and "use of the same attributes in order to underscore Italianness" that Italian brands employ to convey their national affiliation. However, this is not the case for the fashion labels and hotels examined here.

8.2b A competitive advantage

There is a strong argument that brands can benefit from being associated with a certain locale when that is constituted by entities that possess positive connotations in consumers' perception. This is the case for both Maison Moschino and Hotel Missoni Edinburgh.

> Countries, cities and regions that are lucky or virtuous enough to have acquired a positive reputation find that everything they or their citizens wish to do on the global stage is easier: their nation brand goes before them like a calling card, opening doors, creating trust, generating respect and raising the expectations of quality, competence and integrity.
>
> (Clifton and Simmons 2003: 207)

This is a phenomenon that has been widely studied in business literature, within the country-of-origin effect framework, or COO.[153] Different conceptualizations of the COO effect

153 In marketing studies, this phenomenon is also referred to as product country image or PCI (Al-Sulaiti and Baker

are present, but the phenomenon is generally considered as "the extent to which the place of manufacture influences consumer evaluations and related decisions" (Kabadayi and Lerman 2011: 103), meaning that the positive, or negative, image of a country will transfer to its products. However the issue of the origin of a brand is not straightforward, because many companies have their headquarters in a country but produce elsewhere, which is the norm in the fashion industry. Nonetheless, the country-of-origin "is commonly considered the country that consumers typically associate with a product or brand, regardless of where it was manufactured" (Aiello et al. 2009: 325).

As "the effects of COO on consumer evaluations and behavior appear quite robust" (Kabadayi and Lerman 2011: 103) many brands, like Moschino and Missoni and their brand extensions in the hospitality industry, leverage on the positive associations attributed to their country-of-origin to add value and prestige to their offerings.[154] This strategy is popular in luxury fashion brand marketing, many "brands (especially Italian and French) conventionally use the argument of CoO in their international communication strategies" (Godey et al. 2012: 1461). Jackson (2004: 159) claims that "luxury brands can benefit from an association with national identity" and from "national perceptions...based on the country's heritage, industrial focus and popular conceptions supported by the media and individual's travelling experiences". This convergence is particularly important for brands like Missoni and Moschino because "luxury brands are generally well known to respondents, and their nationalities are clear" (Aiello et al. 2009: 335).

However, what is the nature of the prestige that Hotel Missoni Edinburgh, Maison Moschino and their parent brand can achieve through maximising their Italianicity? "Made in Italy" goods possess a recognised primacy in the fields of fashion, home-furniture and food (Lombardi et al. 2000: 297, Quadrio Curzio and Fortis 2000, Spinelli 2004) and are more generally associated with ideas of aesthetic excellence and quality (IPSOS and Comitato Leonardo 2010, Mainolfi 2010). As IPSOS and Fondazione Intercultura (2008) demonstrates, these are the topics that recur more often in international media, contributing to create and reinforce this myth. In this respect, brands operating in these sectors like Hotel Missoni Edinburgh, Maison Moschino, and their parent brands, can gain a competitive advantage by maximising their Italianicity, capitalising on the reputation and prestige of "Made in Italy". This is a 'virtuous' circle where the positive image of "Made in Italy" enhances the reputation of its members, which are the ones that created that very connotation through their activity in the first place (Moilanen and Rainisto 2009: 162), as demonstrated by the case of Missoni and Moschino, labels that have contributed

1998: 150).

154 However, as Al-Sulaiti and Baker (1998: 173) observe, "the issue of how much influence the country of origin cue provides in product evaluations is not yet decided and therefore opinions appear to differ widely". This is echoed by Godey et al. (2012: 1462), who also observes that academic literature differ in the levels of influence attributed to country-of-origin effect.

to establish the reputation of Italian fashion and that now benefit from the connotations of quality and prestige associated with it. The value of "Made in Italy" is an element of fundamental importance for Italian luxury fashion brands. As respondent A (author's interview) stated while discussing the genesis of Hotel Missoni Edinburgh, Rezidor was looking for a successful lifestyle brand to collaborate with and "it came natural to look towards Italy, as Italy obviously springs to mind when talking about fashion".

> The French do not need the "made in France" connotation, probably because the "made-in-France" element is somehow taken for granted. It was established centuries ago: in the seventeenth century Paris was already a "capital" of fashion. Italian brands, on the other hand, need to promote themselves alongside the national image, which is constructed and reconstructed through an ongoing process.
>
> (Segre Reinach 2010: 205)

In the last few years the value of the "brand Italia" has been questioned, as between 2005 and 2008 Italy's Nation Brand Index has "declined faster...than any other country...apart from China", which has led some to believe that "Italy is, quite simply, going out of fashion", due perhaps to having failed to embrace environmental values for example (Clifton and Simmons 2003: 215).[155] However Italy, despite having gone down from its third position in 2005 in the overall ranking of National Brand Index, is still in the top ten (stable at number seven since 2010) and ranks a lot higher in areas like tourism, food or shopping. The low overall rating is due to other elements and primarily, not unexpectedly, to the judgement over Italian governance (Pike 2011: 297). Elements like the "garbage crisis" in Naples[156] (Picerni 2011: 62) had a negative impact on Italy's reputation but the "brand Italia" seems, at least for now, to be established enough to suspend the negative traits and to perpetuate, especially in certain sectors like fashion, food and design, a very positive image (Lombardi et al. 2000: 300). And those are precisely the elements that Hotel Missoni Edinburgh and Maison Moschino refer to in their spatiality and services, as discussed in Chapters Four, Five, Six and Seven.

> Italy, of course, is one of the most loved and admired nation brands around – despite the generally derided figure of Prime Minister Berlusconi and the presence of many negative elements within the brand: corruption, organised crime and a generally disorganised society. But because the country is effortlessly and almost universally associated with quality of life, impeccable style and cultural riches, Italy will always

155 See also Pike (2011: 297).

156 This is the infamous "emergenza rifiuti" that the Campania region experienced in 2010, among claims of involvement of the *Camorra*, the local organised crime group. Photos of the city of Naples literally submerged by garbage made headlines worldwide and the situation was so critical that the Italian government decided to send in the army to try to control it.

> score very high as a nation brand, at least on the "leisure" side of things.
> (Anholt-GMI 2005: 2)

Moreover, a fall in the National Brand Index does not necessarily mean that Italy has lots its lustre for good, because even when there are changes in the charts those "do not seem to be long-lasting, and an indication that people soon revert to their previous beliefs about the country and its people" (Clifton and Simmons 2003: 211).

> It's clear that Italy's iconic collection of luxury, heritage brands are still considered among the world's most valuable, with demand growing quickly in Chinese and Indian markets.
> (FutureBrand 2012: 24)

The strength of Italy is constituted by immaterial traits and values (IPSOS & Camera di Commercio di Roma 2010) that are very strongly rooted in consumers' mind and that still represent a competitive advantage for brands like Missoni and Moschino and their venture into the hospitality industry. As Snaiderbaur (2009: 64) observes, Italy is "recognised for its culture of quality and a certain aesthetic sense that is in some way connected with an appealing and desirable lifestyle".

> It's a lifestyle that easily seduces those living in harassed, time-pressured British cities. The Italian way of life, sunny and relaxed and with an emphasis on doing things slowly, appears like a paradisiacal dream. It is this aspirational link that makes the "Made in Italy" label so seductive, whether it's attached to a Maserati Quattroporte, an Armani tie or a bottle of San Pellegrino. It's a strong statement of values.
> (Vita 2005: 30)

The valorisation implied by brands that focus on their country-of-origin and its characteristic traits, like Hotel Missoni Edinburgh and Maison Moschino (as discussed in Chapters Four, Five, Six and Seven), could be then defined, in Floch's (2001) terminology, as *utopian*. In opposition to utilitarian values, that focus on how the object is relevant for its practical use, the utopian valorisation involves existential values, where the focus is on the subject that longs for being united to them. Floch (2001) articulated these two categories, existential and utilitarian values, and theorised four types of valorisation: practical, ludic, critical and utopian.[157] In the latter,

157 Floch (2001) devised this model in relation to cars but the four valorisations can involve of any type of goods, including luxury ones. In the practical valorisation, the object is valued only for its utility as a tool, so that for example, as Floch (2001) observes, in a car advertisement the product would be celebrated for the security it can offers to the passenger. On the contrary, the ludic valorisation transcends the practical functions of the object and focuses on characteristics like beauty or the pleasure that the subject can obtain by using the object. For example, in this case a car will be advertised as something that is pleasurable to drive because it is fast or elegant. The critical valorisation, complementary to the practical one, implies that the object is chosen merely for rational reasons, without taking into account 'unessential' characteristics like beauty or speed. The main value here is

complementary to the ludic valorisation, the emphasis is not on the object but on the subject that can, through conjunction with the product, find realization and fulfil his/her symbolic needs. The utopian valorisation implies the pursuit of something that goes beyond the purchase of the object itself, which is represented by the achievement of a certain identity. In this respect, the product merely works as a medium to achieve something more valuable, like status for example (Marrone 2001: 191). The utopian valorisation employed by Hotel Missoni Edinburgh and Maison Moschino, in line with the one of their parent brands, appears to be strictly linked with the creation of a myth about lifestyle, contributing to propose the Italian way of living as desirable to the public. In this respect, Missoni is associated with a certain relaxed, joyful and informal lifestyle, whereas Moschino conveys ideas of playfulness, irony and eccentricity.

8.2c A reserve for brands

National identity is an invaluable reserve for brand culture (Ferraresi 2000: 266), it can nourish it and provide a better communicative impact. Moreover, as the cases of Hotel Missoni Edinburgh and Maison Moschino demonstrate, national identity is a powerful tool when brand extension is involved, particularly when they are in areas unrelated to the core market of the mother brand, like in the case of hotels and restaurants associated with luxury fashion labels. As discussed in the previous chapters, in those cases national affiliation can provide, through forms of cultural opportunism, ulterior elements and narratives that can complement the ones employed by the parent brand and add richness and depth to the brand extension. However, to create a coherent and successful mythology of brands based on national affiliation it is important to examine what the values associated with Italy are, to understand their nature, history and connotations.

If we consider Italy as a narrative text, we observe that under the different discursive manifestations of Italianicity there are a series of recurrent themes and values, according to the generative trajectory theorised by Greimas (Greimas and Courtés 1986, Nöth 1995: 315, Marsciani and Zinna 1991: 33, Magli 2004: 44, Bronwen and Ringham 2006: 93). Underneath the more superficial layers of meaning, stands a deep level of fundamental semantics where values of Italianicity are located. A nation is a complex and extensive text to be examined and to provide an exhaustive mapping of those values transcends the limits and scope of this research. However I will illustrate a few to emphasise that not all of those values are positive and that a lot

represented by economic convenience in the broad sense so that, for example, a car will be purchased not merely because is cheap but because is fuel efficient (Marrone 2001: 173).

of them do not feature in the hotels considered here, as they showcase only a selection of traits of Italianicity that are coherent with their brand identity.

Beyond the narratives of family, creativity and craftsmanship employed by Hotel Missoni Edinburgh and Maison Moschino (see section 8.3), Italy is associated with Mediterraneaness (a trait that constitutes the core of other Italian luxury fashion labels' identity like Dolce and Gabbana and Versace), passion, relaxed lifestyle, art and beauty but also organised crime, corruption and "Assyro-Babylonian bureaucracy" (Settembrini 2001: 20). However, in branding discourses only the positive traits are featured whereas the negative ones are forgotten. Sometimes Italy is also associated with contrasting values, like luxury (Vita 2005) and elegance but also rusticity (Musso and Bergamaschi 2010, Girardelli 2004). Italy has a long history of being considered as placed outside of modernity (Parkins 2004: 258), rooted in tradition and religion, both in literature and tourism discourses (Vestito 2006: 139) but those narratives co-exist alongside the ones celebrating its modern design (Snaiderbaur 2009: 64).

Italianicity is intrinsically characterised by ambiguity and is a conglomerate of different traits that allows enough diversification for Hotel Missoni Edinburgh and Maison Moschino to pick and choose the most appropriate characteristics to create a coherent myth of the brand. In this sense, Hotel Missoni Edinburgh and Maison Moschino conjure up ideas Italianicity through contradictory traits, in line with the identity of their parent brand, but both versions are nonetheless presented as authentic to the public. The hotels' branding strategies, in line with the ones of Missoni and Moschino, portray only the positive traits of national identity, in a circle where these positive images of Italy nourish the one of the brands and vice-versa.

8.3 A tale of two Italies

In the previous chapters, I examined the traits of Italianicity that the different elements within Hotel Missoni Edinburgh and Maison Moschino referred to. Here, I argue how underneath the different traits employed by these hotels lie two very different versions of Italianicity. Whereas Hotel Missoni Edinburgh endorses in its corporate identity a sense of Italianicity based on family, on the other hand Maison Moschino focuses on ideas of creativity. Moreover, in regard to craftsmanship, they convey a sense of Italianicity conjured up through contradictory traits. In these cases, the images of Italy that are portrayed are idealised versions that transcend what the country *is*, to focus instead on what it *could* be or what it *was*, creating narratives where past and present, as well as fiction and reality, are intertwined and confused. Those brands capitalise,

through forms of cultural opportunism, on the presence of certain positive traits associated with Italy and their widespread recognition, referring to a series of stereotypes and images that are deeply rooted in culture and reinforced by a variety of media and discourses like tourism, fashion, entertainment and advertisements. They represent powerful tools to foster and reinforce the labels' identity and reputation, nourishing corporate myths. From this perspective, it is not so relevant if those narratives are, or are not, true to the current Italian situation. The power of such narratives does not rely on their truth but on the fascination for a myth of Italy. In Barthes' (1977: 48) words, "*Italianicity* is not Italy, it is the condensed essence of everything that could be Italian".

If Missoni Hotel Edinburgh and Maison Moschino rely on traits of Italianicity for their identity, however, they also contribute to the construction of ideas of Italianicity. They are not mere parasitic entities that simply capitalise on Italian identity, as these hotels and their parent brands are also active players in its constant re-definition.

8.3a Missoni and the Italian family

As I have discussed in Chapters Four and Five, Hotel Missoni Edinburgh refers to ideas of family both in its spatiality, services and gastronomic offerings. However, those notions refer to a specific kind of family, as they are closely intertwined with myths of Italian family. In this sense, Hotel Missoni Edinburgh capitalises on certain positive traits associated with the Italian family to strengthen the association with the identity of its parent brand and employs strategies of cultural opportunism that see the deployment of characteristic traits that are associated with Italy and its culture as a way to augment its offerings and to maximise the brand extension potential of the fashion label Missoni.

The identity of Missoni is strictly intertwined with ideas of the large Italian cross-generational family and of the Italian family business, elements that characterise its corporate mythology and that are also present, as discussed earlier, within Hotel Missoni Edinburgh. Family occupies a central role in the Italian social fabric and this is widely acknowledged, "everybody knows, the family is a strong feature of Italian society" (Janni and McLean 2003: 124). It is on this association that Missoni and hotel Missoni Edinburgh capitalise, portraying the Missoni family as the 'typical' Italian family, generating constant media interest.

The myth of the Italian family that Missoni refers to is a large close-knit, cross-generational entity that goes beyond the nuclear family (including grandparents, uncles, aunts and cousins).

Ottavio and Rosita Missoni have three children, like their offspring Vittorio, Luca and Angela,[158] supporting the myth of the Italian family as characterised by high number of children (Zontini 2004: 12). However, in reality Italy is characterised by a rather low natality, in line with the Southern family model theorised by Jurado Guerrero and Nardini (1996 : 42).[159] The myth of the large Italian family is a function of 19th-century travel literature, that seems to have mistaken "the noisy presence of children in the streets, the attention they received from parents and adults, and the active role they took in many rural and urban occupations as signs of unusually high fertility" (Perez and Livi-Bacci 1992: 162) and of fascist propaganda.[160]

The myth of the Italian family portrayed by Missoni, which Hotel Missoni Edinburgh refers to, is in opposition to the "Anglo American model based on separation and autonomy" (Janni and McLean 2003: 56). The Missoni mythology is characterised by portraits of an idyllic, tight family unit where members spend a lot of time socialising, often gathered around the table (as shown in the TV documentary *Moda in Italy – Missoni*, broadcasted by RAI 5 in 2012), and this has been incorporated by Hotel Missoni Edinburgh in its services. This trait of Italianicity is popular in the hospitality industry (Girardelli 2004: 323) and also in the food business (Chiaro 2009: 40). However, beyond the stereotype of the Italian close-knit extended family lies a complex political and social situation that is not as idyllic as this image suggests.

As emphasised by Vaiou (1996: 68) "the absence of adequate social infrastructure" means that Italian families have to rely on "complicated networks of mutual assistance, involving friends, neighbours and, predominantly, family whose centrality in the social fabric is a key feature of Southern European life", in opposition to Northern Europe where "the 'protective net' of a welfare state has led to a progressive emancipation *from* [original Italics] the family of all of its members".[161] "The family clearly remains the most important institution in most Italians' lives, if only from a practical point of view" (Cavalli 2001: 129), acting as an informal source of social support (Caltabiano and Morga 2002: 146). In this sense, the close-knit Italian family is more a function of the lack of support by the government in this area (Bimbi 1999) than the result of an idyllic society characterised by an innate social cohesion and intrinsic caring attitude.

The myth of the Italian family presented by Missoni and Hotel Missoni Edinburgh also focuses

158 Vittorio (who has been missing since the 5th of January 2013, alongside his partner and another couple, as his plane disappeared near Los Roques, in Venezuela) has three children Ottavio jr, Giacomo and Marco. Luca has Jennifer, Michelangelo and Madeleine. Angela also has three children, Margherita, Francesco and Teresa.

159 Recently, a survey showed that in Italy there is a rate of only 1.42 child per women, with almost 20% being immigrants (ISTAT 2011). Moreover, significant differences exist between the north and south of the country in this respect, as in the north the natality is even lower, see Ginsborg (2001) and Barbagli and Pisati (1995). Whilst Italian natality has significantly decreased in time, it has never been higher than in the rest of Europe.

160 Fascism implemented a series of policies to encourage natality. However, they did not really succeed in increasing the population, but merely improved the condition of those who already had many children, like rural families for example (Streich 2010: 20). On fascist demographic policy and the "battle for births" see Grazia (1993: 92), Roberts (2006: 174), Quine (1995: 31) and Ipsen (2002) but also Curcio (1938).

161 See also Zontini(2004: 13).

on ideas of a certain 'golden age' of sociality characterised by slow rhythms of life and intrinsic social cohesion, in a sort of ideal community. Frozen in a timeless dimension, these stereotypes of Italian family do not acknowledge the changes that this entity has historically undergone and the differences between geographical areas (Barbagli 1996, Kertzer and Saller 1993, Sgritta 1988, Ginsborg 1998 and 2001) and leave out all its negative connotations. In this sense, the version of Italianicity proposed by Hotel Missoni Edinburgh and its parent brand is selective not only in regard to the traits included but also in respect to how they are portrayed. In fact the Italian family is also associated with a series of negative elements, like amoral familism and clientelism, but also the Mafia.

The term amoral familism was coined by Banfield (1958: 10) in his research on the inhabitants of Chiaromonte, a peasant community in Basilicata, characterised "by the inability of the villagers to act together for their common good or, indeed, for any end transcending the immediate, material interest of the nuclear family". Banfield claimed that this trait was not merely characteristic of that particular village, but also of other areas of Southern Italy. Banfield's ideas have been criticised by many (see the Italian edition of the book, Banfield 1976, but also Cancian 1961, Marselli 1963, Pizzorno 1966, Silverman 1968 and Muraskin 1974) but "the term familism lives on" in literature because, as Ginsborg (2001: 97) claims, "in all probability it struck a resonant chord, not simply as a description of attitudes in the backward and primitive South, but also for Italy as whole". On the other hand, clientelism is "a system of interpersonal relations in which private ties of a kinship, ritual kinship, or friendship type are used inside public structures, with the intent of making public resources serve private ends" (Ginsborg 2001)[162] and it is rather widespread in the public administration in Italy (see Graziano 1979, Tullio-Altan 1986, Musella 2000, Zinn 2001, Piattoni 2005, Roniger and Günes-Ayata 1994, Bull and Newell 2006).

The myth of Italianicity that Hotel Missoni Edinburgh portrays also involves another element associated with the Italian family, i.e. its influence over the national productive system. The Italian productive fabric is characterised by small and medium enterprises (SMEs) that are, in most cases, family businesses. The fashion label Missoni belongs to this model and it is also referred to by Hotel Missoni Edinburgh as its communication strategies focus on the involvement of the Missoni family in the hotel's development, as discussed in Chapter Four, in this sense contributing to connote the latter too, in a broad sense, as a family business.

Many researchers have argued that the success of Italian companies like Missoni is a function of their nature as family business, which guarantees access both to capital and labour (Frigeni and Tousijn 1976, Piore and Sabel 1981, Paci 1982, Blim 1990, Foot 1995 and Yanagisako 2002).[163]

162 Translated from Signorelli (1988: 258).

163 In this respect, Italy is similar to other southern European countries, like Spain (Vaiou 1996: 68). The formation

"Italian fashion companies are mainly privately owned (by a family, or the family of the designer or entrepreneur)" (Varacca Capello and Ravasi 2009: 6) and, as argued by Steele (2003: 2), "the family unit remains an important feature of the Italian fashion system".[164] This situation led to favourable results because "in the fashion industry in particular, the combination of artistic creativity and the tradition of small, flexible, family enterprises was a prime force in molding the industry; from such a structure came a joy in experimentation that led to dynamic and individualistic forms" (Hauffe 1998: 113-114), as the case of Missoni demonstrates. The families behind successful companies also represent an element of fascination for international media, that often choose to cover the Italian economy through their history (Picerni 2011: 91). In this sense, by referring to the family business structure Hotel Missoni Edinburgh not only strengthens the relationship between the hotel and its parent brand Missoni but also, more broadly, with Italian fashion.

8.3b The creativity of Moschino

In opposition to Hotel Missoni Edinburgh, that focuses on the positive values associated with the Italian family (in line with its parent brand), Maison Moschino refers instead to notions of creativity both in its spatiality, services and gastronomic offerings, as discussed in Chapters Six and Seven. However, like in the case of Hotel Missoni Edinburgh, those notions refer to a specific kind of creativity that is closely intertwined with Italy and, more specifically, with myths of Italian inventiveness, in line with the brand identity of fashion label Moschino. In this sense, Maison Moschino capitalises on the positive connotations of Italian creativity to strengthen the association with the identity of its parent brand and employs strategies of cultural opportunism that see the deployment of characteristic traits that are associated with Italy and its culture as a way to foster the prestige of the hotel and to augment its offerings.

The identity of fashion label Moschino is strictly intertwined with ideas of creativity, originality, inventiveness and experimentation with regard to its products and communication, elements that are also present in Maison Moschino. Those are, more generally, distinctive traits that are associated with Italian design. Italian design is characterised by its attention to conjugate aesthetic and functional appeal, often considered as a function of the nation's heritage in terms of "cultural tradition of artistic craftsmanship" (Bürdek 2005: 125) and also of its creativity,

of small firm was facilitated by Italian families even outside of Italy, as many emigrants managed to succeed in the catering business, for example in the UK, as observed by Palmer (1977) and Colpi (1991), by "turning specific family values into economic success" (Zontini 2004: 17).

164 See also Frigeni and Tousijn (1976).

originality and drive for experimentation. “The country seemed to want to preserve in its industrial work the same taste and the quality of inventiveness that had marked its artists and craftsmen in the past” (Sartogo 1982: 15). In this sense, the creativity of Italian design seems to be closely intertwined with the reputation of Italy as a creative country, which is based on the nation's history.

> The idea of Italy as a creative country is quite widespread. The justification for the idea is that Italy gave birth to artists such as Michelangelo and Leonardo, scientists such as Fermi and Marconi, film directors such as Fellini and Strehler, actors such as Mastroianni and Troisi, and so on in various fields of human creative expression, Italy's creativity is as much accounted for by the ability of Italians to cope with difficult situations, by the flexibility in adapting to ambiguous contexts, and by the ability to find imaginative solutions to problems of uncertain definition.
>
> (Krogh et al. 2000: 70-71)

In this respect, Italy's reputation as a land of creativity is a function of its history and heritage, of a series of figures that are considered as the epitome of creativity, and of a certain national character that is summarised in the concept of “arte di arrangiarsi” (i.e. “art of make do”), which is a function of the country's notorious political instability and infamous bureaucracy. Moreover, Italy is also portrayed as a mythical land where creativity springs from familiarity with a socio-cultural context closely intertwined with ideas of culture and beauty. However, creativity cannot be reduced to a incidental byproduct of the presence of architectural landmarks, historical buildings and works of art.

> Creativity has been frequently present in the Italian cultural history, but this is the likely result of a complex range of factors, rather than the mere physical presence of a high number of monuments and artworks.
>
> (Trimarchi 2009: 234)

Moschino, more than other Italian luxury fashion labels, endorses ideas of imaginativeness and capitalises on the cliché of Italian creativity, and is similar in this respect to Maison Moschino that also capitalises on the value and prestige associated with this trait of Italianicity. This is in line with Spinelli's (2004: 3) work, that observes how Italian companies have been particularly successful in capitalising on Italy's reputation as a creative country. In this respect, creativity has been crystallised as a distinctively Italian trait in order to be exploited for business purposes in a variety of areas including fashion, design and gastronomy. If Italian creativity significantly contributes to increase reputation and sales of the brands that are associated with it, it is important not to overestimate its power to augment value. As observed by Lombardi et al. (2000:

296) Italians tend to overestimate their creativity, whereas foreign observers generally tend to attribute a lower degree of creativity to Italian enterprises, with the exception of certain 'virtuous' brands like Moschino.

In this sense, although the values of Italianicity endorsed by Maison Moschino and Hotel Missoni Edinburgh are rather different they both capitalise, like their parent brands, on characteristic traits that are associated with Italy. However, if notions of family and creativity are not mutually exclusive, other elements of Italianicity that Maison Moschino and Hotel Missoni Edinburgh refer to are. With regard to specific forms of know-how the hotels rely in fact on traits that are in contradiction. These different portraits of Italianicity created by Hotel Missoni Edinburgh and Maison Moschino reinforce the idea that national identity is not a fixed entity but a conglomerate of different, and sometimes even contradictory, traits.

8.3c Know-how

Both Hotel Missoni Edinburgh and Maison Moschino feature references to specific forms of know-how involved in fashion-making that are closely intertwined with narratives of the Italian fashion industry, but in contrasting ways. Whereas the spaces of Hotel Missoni Edinburgh showcase references to industrial production, on the other hand Maison Moschino endorses values of hand-made production and craftsmanship.

As discussed in Chapter Four, Hotel Missoni Edinburgh focuses on the widely recognised identification between the Missoni fashion label and the material characteristics of the brands, like its strong association with certain patterns and the important role of knitwear. As discussed earlier, there are many examples of this. In the lobby there are several elements that resemble multicoloured reels of thread (a column and a number of small coffee tables) or rolls of fabric (featured for example in the private dining room as decorative pieces). They feature typically Missoni patterns, therefore reinforcing once again the *Missonification*, i.e. the process of becoming Missoni, of the spaces. More specifically, these elements within Hotel Missoni Edinburgh refer to a type of know-how that is deeply rooted in the technological progress and the industrial development that the north of Italy experienced since the post-war period.

The Missoni company was the product of Ottavio Missoni's expertise in knitwear, gathered through its first business venture, Venjulia, with partner Giorgio Oberweger[165] and the one of his wife Rosita Jelmini, who worked in the family shawl-making business, T&J Vestor. The Missoni

165 The company was particularly renowned for sportswear, and its tracksuits were used by the Italian national team to compete in the 1948 Olympics in London.

company did not originate in handmade craft, but in the creative use of available technology. The very patterns that made the company renowned in the first place, the typical Missoni stripes, were actually the result of the technology employed by the company, that in the 1950s only owned machinery that could produce stripes. The Missonis pushed the technology they had at their disposal to produce fabrics that featured stripes in different colours and directions, creating for example the signature Missoni zig-zag pattern. They ventured into the world of tartan only when they acquired a machine the could work both horizontal and vertical stripes at the same time (Missoni 2011: 109).

The technology used by Missoni was sourced from the surrounding area. Ottavio Missoni, in an interview with Piero Bassetti, admits that they were completely dependent on their context for everything, from dying the materials to the needles (Porcellana 2005). They also recovered some past technologies and techniques that were employed in the area and used them in novel ways, for example reinstating some Jacquard machineries that were used in the Gallarate area for embroidery since the 1920s, but that at the time only a few retired workers still knew how to operate. The Missonis also used to experiment with the materials readily available to them, for example by using a type of multicoloured rayon, that was traditionally used only for shawl-making, in knitwear to create the typical Missoni *fiammati* pattern. The work of Missoni originated in the personal research and experimentation of Ottavio, which was dependent on the particular industrial context that surrounded the Golasecca (Varese) factory. The success of the Missoni company is strictly intertwined with the specific industrial structure of Italy, which revolves around a series of industrial districts.

Industrial districts are "dense concentrations of interdependent small- and medium- sized enterprises (SMEs)[166] in a single sector and in auxiliary industries and services" (Dunford 2006: 27). They are clusters of enterprises that operate in the same sector and they constitute the core of the Italian industrial system.[167] The districts also involve a community of people, companies, institutions and associations that operate in a limited area, so that there are at stake also certain widespread values and knowledges, alongside a series of cultural and social elements (Merlo 2003: 102), as the case of Missoni demonstrates. There are more than one hundred and fifty industrial districts in Italy, mostly located in the North and Centre of Italy (Ricciardi 2010: 137), especially in the fashion industry (Brunetti et al. 2002: 52, Dunford 2006: 34, Cersosimo et al. 2007: 53, Bacci 2004, Merlo 2003) such as Como for silk, Biella for wool and Florence for leather.

166 The Italian industrial system is based on SMEs and micro-enterprises. As observed by Ricciardi (2010: 129), a research by Istat in 2009 stated that 99.4% of Italian companies have less than 50 employees.

167 As explored in Becattini (1989, 1998 and 2003), Brusco (1982), Brusco and Paba (2001), Pyke et al. (1990), Signorini (2000), Viesti (2000), Salsano (2002), Quadrio Curzio and Fortis (2002), Azzariti and Candoni (2007) and Ferraris (2012).

> Consider also the Italian leather fashion cluster, which contains well-known shoe companies such as Ferragamo and Gucci as well as a host of specialized suppliers of footwear components, machinery, molds, design services, and tanned leather. [...] It also consists of several chains of related industries, including those producing different types of leather goods (linked by common inputs and technologies) and different types of footwear (linked by overlapping channels and technologies). [...] The extraordinary strength of the Italian leather fashion cluster can be attributed, at least in part, to the multiple linkages and synergies that participating Italian businesses enjoy.
>
> (Porter 1998: 79)

As the case of Missoni demonstrates, this industrial structure is particularly beneficial for the fashion industry because, as Dunford (2006: 28) observes, "in industries such as textiles, clothing, knitwear, and shoes, fashion/seasonal factors are a stimulus to rapid changes in products: development cycles are short, prototyping is rapid, batches of products are small, the variety of products is great, and costs are spread across a wide range of goods". As emphasised by Steele (2003: 2), "the Italian fashion system is characterised by the vertical integrations of production from fiber to finished item" a structure "that other countries have tried to replicate" but that "remains inimitable". They have greatly contributed to the "economic emancipation of the country" through "the diffusion of a network of enterprises throughout the territory, from the areas specialising in a single product, masters of flexibility and innovation that have been studied for years by the Americans and Japanese, to the creation of true economic groupings with an international reputation and dimension" (Settembrini 2001: 101).[168] Recently, Signorini (2000) demonstrated that to belong to a certain district is convenient for businesses, as they have higher returns than their counterparts that are not located in districts.

In this respect, the spaces of the Hotel Missoni Edinburgh refer to a type of know-how that does not revolve around issues of craftsmanship, transcending the established association between Italy and handmade production. The latter is, on the other hand, precisely the kind of know-how that Maison Moschino refers to. The hotel features a variety of elements that allude to the ateliers' world, like lamps shaped as mannequin or bags, clothes hangers and mirrored walls that, as I discussed in Chapter Seven, are present both in the lobby, restaurant and in the guest rooms. By endorsing ideas of craftsmanship and handmade production of fashion, Maison Moschino capitalises on well established narratives of Italianicity (Steele 2003: 161), but refers to a myth of Italian craftsmanship that hides the reality of how fashion goods, including the ones associated with luxury fashion labels like Moschino, are produced.

168 The ability of the Italian system of districts to compete with new phenomena of worldwide of productions has been debated in recent years. This issues are explored in Cainelli and Zoboli (2004), Quintieri (2006), Cersosimo et al. (2007), Azzariti and Candoni (2007).

> "Craft" is a key term in the promotional rhetoric of virtually every Italian manufacturer, and it is supposed to evoke an unbroken tradition of making things by hand in artisanal workshops as old as the Renaissance.
> (Ross 2004: 210)

Despite the fact that it was fairly recently, in the twentieth century, that Italian fashion gained popularity among consumers and respect in the fashion industry, becoming one of the ideal homelands of fashion (Vaccari 2005: 48), the prestige and reputation of Italian craftsmanship has a long history and was established way before the rise of Italian fashion in the post-war period. Italian textiles have been appreciated since the Middle Age and are renowned for their quality and colours (White 2000). Embroidery also has a long established tradition (Steele 2003: 122, Rocca 2006, Giordani-Aragno 1983) and so has tailoring and accessory production, especially concerning shoes and, more generally, leather goods (Jackson 2003: 161). Many Italian luxury fashion labels were actually born as leather goods workshops, such as Gucci, Prada and Fendi, or shoemakers, like Salvatore Ferragamo. More broadly, craftsmanship is a distinctive trait that defines luxury fashion brands (Berthon et al. 2009: 45, Dubois and Paternault 1995: 75, Fionda and Moore 2009: 349) and, as observed by Chevalier and Mazzalovo (2008: xii), luxury goods are usually associated with "specialists working by hand on individual pieces" for a significant amount of time, which makes these products more expensive, but also more unique, than if they were mass-manufactured (Dubois et al. 2001: 11).

However not all the products that luxury brands produce are characterised by this high level of craftsmanship that Maison Moschino refers to. In this respect Kapferer (2004: 70) distinguishes three levels within the production of luxury brands. The level of the *griffe*, where the products are the result of the unique work of the designer, the level of workshops and the one of streamline mass production. Most of the products associated with modern luxury fashion labels are nowadays mass-manufactured, and not only when brand extension is involved. However "even if the *products* are mass-manufactured, as in the case of a perfume" nonetheless people often "want to believe that the *object* comes directly from the designer's workshop" (Chevalier and Mazzalovo 2008: xii) and consider them as emanations of that very craftsmanship that labels greatly emphasise through corporate communications.

Italian luxury fashion labels, like their French counterparts, have often emphasised their heritage in terms of craftsmanship in their communication, for example producing a series of videos that demonstrate how their products are made. Gucci created a series of videos showcasing the hand-made production of its bags (Jackie and New Bamboo).[169] Similarly, Ferragamo focused on

169 See http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zbrupTKXlKM&feature=relmfu and http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=85XU7SizykE&feature=youtube_gdata_player.

its craftsmanship in leather goods (bag and shoes) and silk production.[170] Fendi, on the other hand, published a series of videos illustrating the handmade creation of a greater variety of products, like sofas and watches, alongside bags.[171] In the majority of the videos of the above mentioned companies the technology involved in many phases of goods production is not significantly featured, as they instead emphasise the craftsmanship of the artisans that create the products by hand. In this respect, the strategies employed by Prada for their production movies is radically different. Whereas other labels focus on the different phases of handmade production involved in their lines, Prada shows phases of production that utilise automated processes, such as plotting.[172] In opposition to this strategy stands Dolce and Gabbana, that posted highly styled videos showcasing the hand-made production of their Miss Sicily bag.[173] This is in line with many accounts "of Made in Italy that romanticizes small, craft-based firms competing against all the odds on the unforgiving field of hardscrabble capitalism" (Ross 2004: 212). One of the distinctive traits of the Italian fashion industry is described as being a "marriage of traditional craftsmanship, innovative design, and modern industrial technology" (Steele 2003: 117), in a situation often described as the artisanal production of industrial goods (Calabrese 2009: 39). Maison Moschino capitalises precisely on those narratives that foster the established association between Italian fashion labels and craftsmanship, perpetuating a myth that contribute to the reputation and prestige of the hotel and to strengthen its association with the luxury Italian fashion industry.

In this sense, images of craftsmanship and artisanal traditions that are so closely intertwined to ideas of Italy function to create and reinforce the corporate mythology of Italian fashion companies like Moschino, but do not represent a complete account of how the goods produced by those brands are actually made. Nowadays many Italian luxury brands produce a significant part of their products abroad (Segre Reinach 2005: 49) mostly in Asia and Northern Africa, but nonetheless "European luxury brands frequently dwell on their 'heritage' for marketing purposes, using a tradition of craftsmanship as a way of seducing consumers and justifying elevated prices" (Tungate 2005: 18). Narratives of Italian craftsmanship are so powerful that they are not only present in the communication of Italian luxury fashion labels and in the spaces associated with them, like in the case of Maison Moschino, but they also feature in discourses of production employed by non-Italian luxury fashion brands like Chanel, Louis Vuitton and Marc Jacobs.

170 See http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JlXdElMOYuI&feature=youtube_gdata_player, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hJ5JiGsw5O4&feature=youtube_gdata_player, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1oaqN4tQBS0&feature=youtube_gdata_player and http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L_EtW7KTT-Y&feature=youtube_gdata_player.

171 See http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x-vqhniLeQU&feature=youtube_gdata_player, http://selleria.fendi.com/heritage/craftmanship/timepieces and http://selleria.fendi.com/heritage/craftmanship/craftmanship-article.

172 See http://www.prada.com/en/production-movies/video.

173 See http://www.dolcegabbana.com/dg/accessories/woman-bags/sicily-bag/.

Italian craftsmanship is so strictly intertwined with connotations of quality and prestige that it can provide additional value to products and also, more broadly, enhance the reputation of any luxury fashion brands.

8.4 Conclusions

As discussed earlier, Italianicity is constructed by Hotel Missoni Edinburgh and Maison Moschino through different and sometimes even contradictory traits, but both versions are nonetheless presented as authentic to the public.

	Hotel Missoni Edinburgh	Maison Moschino
Narratives of Italianicity	Family Industrial production of fashion	Creativity Handmade craftsmanship

This supports conceptualisations of authenticity as an effect of sense, a narrative construction that transcends any anchoring to reality. It is problematic to conceptualise authenticity in relation to its correspondence to an objective real, as Boorstin (1992) does when criticising tourist preferences towards “pseudo-events” instead of the “real” authentic aspects of foreign cultures. Far from being a self-evident concept, authenticity is a culturally determined entity (McIntosh

and Prentice 1999: 593).

> Authenticity cannot be determined simply by retailing the objective material attributes of the artefact. It has to do not only with genuineness and the reliability of face value, but with the interpretation of genuineness and our desire for it.
>
> (Spooner 1986: 200)

Authenticity is not an intrinsic quality of objects, but the result of people's projections and expectations (Bruner 1991, Silver 1993) and of narrative strategies. There is an inherent paradox in authenticity, as it is "seen as the unstageable, the untouched and the real (thing)" (Knudsen and Waade 2010: 22) but nonetheless it can be staged (MacCannel 1973). As observed by Wang (1999: 351) "things appear authentic not because they are inherently authentic but because they are constructed as such in terms of points of view, beliefs, perspectives, or powers". In semiotic terms, authenticity is a textual strategy in the same way truth is (Greimas 1984) conjured up through narratives that support such modality of discourse. As Culler (1981) observes, something needs to be marked as authentic to be able to be perceived as such.

The myths of authentic Italianicity that Missoni Hotel Edinburgh and Maison Moschino convey in their narratives are presented as obvious, but they are actually the result of a selection of traits associated with coherent communicative strategies that work as a "lustral bath of innocence" (Barthes 1977: 51) naturalising connotations of Italianicity. Those myths of authentic Italianicity are in fact constructed entities that hide their nature as social and ideological constructs through an aura of reality (Barthes 1972), translating concepts that are culturally constructed "into self-evident laws of nature thereby reinforcing social stereotypes and making them appear inevitable" (Bronwen and Ringham 2006: 213). This means that Italy and its national identity are, from a semiotic perspective, narrative texts constituted through a variety of discourses and entities, like the ones produced by Hotel Missoni Edinburgh and Maison Moschino and revolving around them, which actively contribute to create and re-shape notions of Italianicity.

Chapter Nine

Conclusions

This thesis gave an insight into the phenomenon of brand extension into the hospitality business by Italian luxury fashion labels by unpacking the relationship that Hotel Missoni Edinburgh and Maison Moschino hold with Italianicity. In this sense, I examined how spaces and services associated with fashion labels can convey meanings beyond the fashion labels' world and in relation to issues of national identity.

In my thesis I have identified, within the spatiality, services and gastronomic offerings of Hotel Missoni Edinburgh and Maison Moschino, references to Italy and its culture through the deployment of a series of traits that are used to connote Italianicity. In so doing, I argued that Hotel Missoni Edinburgh and Maison Moschino employ corporate strategies that are aimed at deploying their Italianicity as a means to strengthen the association with the identity of their parent brands. Moreover, I contended that these hotels employ strategies of cultural opportunism that see the deployment of characteristic traits that are associated with Italy and its culture as a way to augment their offerings, appropriating them to maximise the brand extension potential of their parent brands Missoni and Moschino. Hotel Missoni Edinburgh and Maison Moschino also capitalise, in this respect, on the positive connotations associated with Italy and its lifestyle to increase their prestige and reputation.

However, these hotels employ different traits, sometimes even in contradiction, to conjure up a sense of Italianicity that is coherent with the one that characterises their respective parent brands Missoni and Moschino. Whereas Hotel Missoni Edinburgh endorses in its corporate identity a sense of Italianicity based on narratives of family and industrial production, on the other hand Maison Moschino is closely intertwined with ideas of creativity and handmade craftsmanship. In this sense, the different portraits of Italianicity created by Hotel Missoni Edinburgh and Maison Moschino reinforce the idea that national identity is not a fixed entity but a conglomerate of different traits, a mutable and fuzzy entity that allows enough diversification for brands to pick and choose the most appropriate characteristics for their ends.

Missoni Hotel Edinburgh and Maison Moschino rely on traits of Italianicity for their identity, however, they also contribute to the construction of ideas of Italianicity. Far from being parasitic

entities that simply capitalise on Italian identity, brands are active players in its constant re-definition. For example Missoni and Moschino were, alongside other fashion labels, the creators of the association between Italy and fashion. In this sense, through an exploration of the different versions of Italianicity portrayed by Hotel Missoni Edinburgh and Maison Moschino, this thesis posits Missoni and Moschino brand extension practices as pivotal sites for shaping and mobilising notions of Italian national identity. I consider here Italy as narrative text from a semiotic perspective, acknowledging that it is constituted through a variety of discourses and entities, like the ones produced by Hotel Missoni Edinburgh and Maison Moschino and revolving around them, which actively contribute to negotiate and re-shape notions of Italianicity. National identity appears, then, as a mutable entity that, far from being fixed and established once and for all, is constantly evolving and open to be modified by a variety of players. National identity is not only constructed through discourses of nationalism but also the ones of "nationnes" (Borneman 1992: 352) that feature in a variety of media, narratives and practices. Those are more discreet mechanisms that can actively create nations' identity.

The version of Italianicity portrayed by Hotel Missoni Edinburgh and Maison Moschino, in line with parent brands Missoni and Moschino, contribute to the creation of a sense of national identity and through their communication, products and services allow Italian people to think about themselves, for example in terms of localism[174] or of the North/South divide. Missoni and Moschino refer to the productive and industrial North of Italy, in opposition to brands whose identity is strictly intertwined with Southern stereotypes, such as Versace or Dolce and Gabbana. In this sense, because Missoni and Moschino have a strong international presence (both brands are well established and distributed abroad), they also contribute to foreigners' conceptualisations of Italian national identity.

National identity is not static, but always open to be re-shaped by different entities. Brands also contribute to this process, constructing myths of Italianicity that then circulate worldwide, creating and re-shaping, in an on-going process, powerful images whose influence goes beyond the realm of commodities and into culture. In this sense the products, discourses and narratives associated with luxury fashion labels examined here are pivotal in shaping notions of Italianicity.

In a time where the value of "brand Italia" is under discussion and the prestige of the label "Made in Italy" is under scrutiny for their delocalisation practices, the positive images of Italianicity

174Italians are notorious for often privileging local or regional identities over a national one, this localism, or *campanilismo*, is very strong and widespread (Sarti 2009: vii, Cavalli 2001, Galli 2009: 48 La Palombara 1969, Bellah 1974). This is a function of the fact that Italy is a relatively new country, having being created only in 1861 by politically unifying a series of reigns and territories that had been independent for centuries. Attempts to propose nationalistic sentiments in Italy have been made from above (Graziano 2007, Riall and Patriarca 2012, Perfetti 1977) first in the unification epoch and later in the fascist era but both failed to break the primacy of local identities. This particularism has been accused of causing a lack of sense of national belonging but also a lack of civic spirit (Putnam 1993, Altan 1995, Galli 1992). However, as claimed by Sciolla (1997), those are two different issues as one can have a civic spirit despite not feeling a sense of national belonging.

evoked by Missoni Hotel Edinburgh and Maison Moschino, alongside the ones of their parent brands Missoni and Moschino (and of other Italian luxury fashion labels), contribute to re-shape conceptualisations of Italy, nourishing positive images through myths that increase the value and desirability of Italianicity. Labels do not simply capitalise on ideas of Italianicity that are already present but contribute, in an ongoing process, to re-create them through narratives that emphasise certain values associated with them, that in turn contribute to reinforce the positive image of the brands. However, ideas of national identities are also constructed and reconstructed by different players at different levels of the fashion industry, from designers to wholesalers (Goodrum 2009: 463).

The versions of Italianicity conveyed by the labels examined here are not natural nor obvious, but constructions, by knowing players, that mobilise ideas of what Italianicity *could* be rather than engaging with what it *is* because myths are as powerful as they are vague. Ideas of family, creativity and craftsmanship are "never explicitly formulated" in brand discourses and narratives but simply evoked and alluded to because the "implication is that people already know them" or "they think they know what is meant" (Kress and Leeuwen 2001: 74). In this sense, culture and business appear to be strictly intertwined as "cultural meanings are regularly appropriated for commercial ends" and conversely "the apparently rational calculus of the market is inescapably embedded in a range of cultural processes" (Jackson 2002: 5).

In this respect, the aim of the thesis has been achieved, as it has been argued how elements of nationality can be used to create successful brand extensions in the hospitality industry by luxury fashion labels by examining the cases of Hotel Missoni Edinburgh and Maison Moschino and their relationship with Italianicity. Moreover, all of the objectives identified in Chapter One have been met.

The first objective of this project, i.e. to examine the spaces, services and gastronomic offerings of Hotel Missoni Edinburgh and Maison Moschino to identify the traits of Italianicity featured there, was discussed in Chapters Four, Five, Six and Seven. Chapters Four and Five were dedicated to the analysis of the Hotel Missoni Edinburgh case whereas Chapters Six and Seven addressed the case of Maison Moschino, arguing that the hotels hold a very close relationship with the brand identity of their parent brands and observing how the traits of Italianicity that they employ are consistent with the ones of Missoni and Moschino.

The second objective of the present work, i.e. to compare the traits of Italianicity identified in the two case studies to explore situations of dialogue and contradiction, was achieved in Chapter Eight of this thesis. There, it was argued how Hotel Missoni Edinburgh employs narratives of Italianicity based on family, whereas on the other hand Maison Moschino focuses on ideas of creativity.

Moreover, it was observed how, with regards to craftsmanship, the hotels convey a sense of Italianicity conjured up through contradictory traits. Both Hotel Missoni Edinburgh and Maison Moschino feature references to specific forms of know-how in fashion-making that are closely intertwined with narratives concerning the Italian fashion industry, but in contrasting ways. Whereas Hotel Missoni Edinburgh showcases references to industrial production, on the other hand Maison Moschino endorses values of hand-made production and craftsmanship.

The third objective of this research was to investigate the benefits and opportunities associated with national affiliation in the cases of Hotel Missoni Edinburgh and Maison Moschino, which was achieved in Chapter Eight. There it was argued how both Hotel Missoni Edinburgh and Maison Moschino employed traits of Italianicity as a means to strengthen the association between the hotels and the parent brands and to increase their prestige and reputation. It was also argued how Hotel Missoni Edinburgh and Maison Moschino employed strategies of cultural opportunism that see the deployment of traits associated with Italy and its culture as a way to augment their offerings into areas, like gastronomy, that are removed from the core where they operate, maximising the brand extension potential of their parent brands Missoni and Moschino.

On the other hand the fourth and last objective of this thesis, i.e. to discuss the relationship that the traits of Italianicity identified in the case studies hold with issues of national identity, was discussed in Chapter Eight and Nine, where it was argued how Hotel Missoni Edinburgh and Maison Moschino both capitalise on notions of Italianicity and contribute to reshape and mobilise them.

With regards to the methodology employed in the present study, this has proved to be successful in allowing a thorough analysis of the broad variety of elements that Hotel Missoni Edinburgh and Maison Moschino comprise, i.e. spaces, services, gastronomy and the narratives revolving around them. The ability to employ the same framework of analysis for all the elements taken into account in the present research constitutes the advantage of using semiotic theories over other methodological approaches. Whilst there are a variety of established qualitative research methods that could have been used to examine parts of my data, only semiotic theories can account for all of them and offer tools for their in-depth analysis. The use of semiotic theories both from the structural and interpretive tradition, in a socio-semiotic perspective, has offered a considerable depth of analysis to this research, which has been increased by adopting an interdisciplinary methodology that also utilises tools from other theoretical approaches like cultural studies, marketing, sociology, human geography and critical theory to provide a better understanding of the phenomena under discussion.

The interdisciplinary approach of this research is innovative, in particular for its use of semiotic theories which are not well-known in Anglo-American academia, and in this sense the methodology

devised here could be productively employed in other researches in the area of marketing, branding and retailing to analyse complex phenomena that comprise a variety of elements and whose presence involves different media and platforms.
The methodology devised here does not not only allow to examine the spaces, services and gastronomic offerings of brands but also allows, more generally, to investigate issues of brand identity, brand values and brand culture in their multifaceted aspects, and moreover it is not only suitable to examine the world of luxury fashion labels but can also be applied with regards to brands operating in different market levels and in different sectors.

This thesis examined the phenomenon of brand extension into the hospitality business by Italian luxury fashion labels by unpacking the relationship that Hotel Missoni Edinburgh and Maison Moschino hold with Italianicity. In so doing, a particular type of venture in the hospitality industry was identified, i.e. the *luxury fashion flagship hotel*.
This type of venture into the hospitality industry sees hotels being created as a function of brand extension strategies by luxury fashion labels and involves the display of a very close relationship between the hotels and the identity of their respective parent brands. *Luxury fashion flagship hotels* are the results of meticulous planning aimed precisely at guaranteeing that these hotels strongly cohere with the identity of their respective fashion labels, which is not surprising considering that their very *raison d'etre*, their unique selling point, is constituted by the fact that those places are strictly intertwined with the identity of their parent brands, capitalising on such associations.
Luxury fashion flagship hotels capitalise on their national affiliation to provide differentiation and a competitive advantage to their business, using national identity as an invaluable reserve for brand culture. Hotel Missoni Edinburgh and Maison Moschino relied on the brand identity of Missoni and Moschino to devise their spaces, services and gastronomic offerings but they also capitalised in that respect on traits of Italianicity in order to maximise the brand extension potential of their parent brands, by employing strategies of cultural opportunism that see the deployment of characteristic traits that are associated with their country of origin.
Moreover, *Luxury fashion flagship hotels* present some similarities with luxury fashion flagship stores, as they respond to the same logic. Like the latter, also a *luxury fashion flagship hotel* reinforce “the prestige of the brand through its up-market location” and “serve as a promotional device to showcase the brand in a coherent and closely managed setting” whilst encouraging, at the same time, “brand awareness and interest” (Moore 2000: 272-3). *Luxury fashion flagship hotels*, like luxury fashion flagship stores, are located in limited strategic areas where often their competitors are also present and moreover they offer opportunities of media coverage that can increase brand presence.

Through an exploration of the cases of Hotel Missoni Edinburgh and Maison Moschino, my thesis aims to fill a gap in research as there is a scarcity of studies dedicated to *luxury fashion flagship hotels*. More generally, this thesis aims to help achieving a better understanding of issues regarding business practices and their relation with culture, especially in terms of national identity. In this respect, the contribution to knowledge of this study goes beyond the specific case studies examined here and is not limited to issues of Italianicity as it also contributes to academic debate on how, more broadly, national identity is constructed through a variety of discourses and entities.

Moreover, the thesis also aims to spread knowledge and circulate ideas by drawing on literature that, despite being well established on the Continent, is less well known within Anglo-American academia because it has not been translated into English, like in the case of Marrone (2001 and 2007), Ceriani (2001) and Hammad (2003) for example.

This thesis demonstrated how elements of national identity can be used to create successful brand extension in the hospitality industry and that national identity is an invaluable reserve for brand. This holds a series of implication for marketing, brand management and retailing.

By fully engaging with issues of national identity brands and companies can achieve several benefits, i.e. they can provide differentiation and a competitive advantage to their businesses but also provide opportunities to extend in areas that are rather distant from the core where they operate, by deploying and appropriating traits of national affiliation to augment their offerings, maximising their brand extension potential.

By employing strategies of cultural opportunism that see the deployment of characteristic traits that are associated with their country of origin, brands can capitalise on ulterior elements and narratives that can complement the discourses that they already employ in their marketing, branding, retail and communication strategies, in order to add richness and depth to their brand identity. Elements of national affiliation can provide brands with powerful narratives that can be articulated in their offerings, services and spaces. They can be employed to increase the sensory appeal of brands and to enhance the customer experience by anchoring it to established narratives and myths that involve the socio-cultural dimension.

To create a coherent and successful mythology of brands based on national affiliation it is important to examine what the values associated with countries are, to understand their nature, history and connotations. Brands that are associated with countries that possess a positive reputation, in general or in relation with particular sectors, are going to benefit the most from employing discourses and narratives that refer to elements of national affiliation.

However, the positive connotations of nations are not elements that are established once and for all and the relationship between brands and national identity is not merely a parasitic one, as brands do

not simply capitalise on the latter but are also active players in its constant re-definition. This means that the positive connotations associated with brands can contribute to create positive connotations regarding nations, and in this respect the present research also has implications in terms of nation branding.

In a nation branding perspective, countries can benefit from the association with brands that the public holds in high regard and capitalise on their good reputation to create a virtuous circle where the positive image of brands enhances the reputation of the nation where they come from, and vice-versa. This is possible because as argued earlier national identity is not a static but a composite entity that is constantly re-defined in an on-going process by a variety of players including brands, with their management, branding, retailing, marketing and communication strategies. The discourses, practices, myths and narratives employed by brands can in fact provide powerful elements that can support the positive connotations associated with nations and that can be productively employed in the various media and platforms involved in nation branding.

I will now offer some suggestions about how this thesis can stimulate further research.

As this study does not focus specifically on the issue of reader response with regard to the different versions of Italianicity examined here (see Chapter Three), this element could be examined in future research. As discussed previously, the luxury fashion brands examined here were very cautious in allowing me access to their staff for research purposes and also reluctant to allow me access to their clientele. If more access could be negotiated in this respect, then further research could explore in more detail the perception of Maison Moschino and Hotel Missoni Edinburgh and the logic and the development of the strategies and narratives employed there, allowing the researcher to study the texts constituted by the hotels considering the other two poles theorised by Eco (1990). This will mean to be able to examine the relationship between the *intentio operis* analysed in the present thesis, i.e. what the hotels themselves say in regard to their specific system of signification and their characteristics, in relationship with the *intentio lectoris,* which is the meaning as it created by users of the hotels and depends on their own knowledge, beliefs or desires, and finally with the *intentio auctoris*, i.e. what the creators of the hotels in all of their multifaceted aspects wanted to say through their work.

Moreover, more cases of brand extension into the hospitality industry by Italian luxury fashion labels could be analysed, to explore how and to what extend they capitalise and mobilise notions of Italianicity, examining situations of dialogue and contradiction with the elements identified in the present work, with the aim of creating a complete semiotic mapping of the field.

This research could be extended further by considering cases of brand extension in the hospitality industry by non-Italian luxury fashion brands and exploring the relationship they hold with issues

of national identity.

Further research could focus on the study other spaces associated with luxury fashion brands, like flagship stores, retail spaces and headquarters, with regard to the strategies of national affiliation featured there.

Moreover, further research could investigate fashion brands operating at different market levels and the relationship they hold with issues of national identity and national affiliation through an analysis of their spaces, services, discourses and practices with the aim of identifying situations of dialogue and contradiction between their strategies and the one employed in the luxury fashion industry. Researching fashion brands that do not belong to the luxury segment could provide easier access to the poles theorised by Eco (1990) mentioned above, allowing for the study of the perception and authors of the texts considered, in addition to the analysis of the latter. In fact the limited access encountered in the present research confirmed that the luxury fashion industry is a very difficult area to research, as brands are very cautious in allowing access to outsiders because those are seen as potential threats for the brands, issues that could be potentially more easy to overcome with regards to labels operating at a different market level.

The present study also aims to stimulate further research in the fields of branding, retailing, communication and marketing with regards to exploring the relationship that the discourses and practices they employ hold with with issues of local, regional and national identity.

Appendix 1

Full profile of respondents

Mattia Camorani:
Executive chef at Cucina restaurant. Prior to that, the Italian born chef worked with Giorgio Locatelli in many restaurants, firstly in Zafferano then in Locanda Locatelli and later on in Refettorio, where he worked as head-chef for four years, before starting his collaboration with Rezidor for the Missoni Hotel.

Gillian Cavanagh:
BArch DipArch RIBA ARIAS
Associate with Allan Murray Architects Ltd - 2000 to present day.
Project Architect - Renovation & New Build of 136no Bed Hotel Missoni, Central Edinburgh, completed 2009.

Dale Simpson:
People & Development Manager at Hotel Missoni Edinburgh from March 2009 until January 2013. Currently Operations Manager at Radisson Blu Glasgow hotel. Studied Tourism Mgt at Napier University gaining 1st Class Honours in 2011. Completed Postgrad in Human Resource Mgt from Napier University in June 2003.

Respondent A:
Managerial figure that contributed to Hotel Missoni Edinburgh.

Appendix 2

Profile of Hotel Missoni Edinburgh

Address: 1 George IV Bridge, Edinburgh EH1 1AD

Opened in June 2009

Owner: Mound Property Company

Hotel Management: Rezidor Group

Architect: Allan Murray Architect

Creative directors: Matteo Thun and Rosita Missoni

Internal floor area: 11.720 m^2

Room number: 136 (in 4 categories: Piccolo, Missoni, Maggiore, Grandioso)

Restaurant: Cucina

Executive Chef: Mattia Camorani

Spa: Eve Lom, Natura Bissé and Aromatherapy Associates.

Website: http://www.hotelmissoni.com/hotelmissoni-edinburgh

Appendix 3

Profile of Maison Moschino

Address: Viale Monte Grappa 12, 20124 Milan, Italy.

Opened February 2010

Owner: Allianz Global Investors SGR S.p.A – Fondo RAS Antares

Hotel Management: Hotelphilosophy S.p.A

Architect: Luca Strada Associati

Creative directors: Rossella Jardini and Jo Ann Tan Moschino S.p.A

Internal floor area: 3.200 m^2 (over 4 floors)

Room number: 65 (in 5 categories: Classic, De Luxe, Gallery, Prestige and Junior Suite)

Rooms concept: 16 Dreams

1.La Stanza di Alice- Alice's Room

2. Zzzzzzzzzzzzz (la stanza Ape)

3. La Stanza Petali – Life is a Bed of Roses

4. Attico di Lusso – Luxurious Attic

5. Foresta – the Forest

6. Dormire in un Abito da Sera – Sleeping in a Ballgown

7. Cappuccetto Rosso – Little Red Riding Hood

8. La Stanza dei Dolci – Sweet Room

9. Edera - Ivy

10. Wallpaper
11. Nuvole - Clouds
12. Oro – Gold
13. Blue
14. Metà Camera – Half a Room
15. Il Fiocco – The Ribbon
16. Ombre – Shadows

Restaurant: Clandestino Milano (by Moreno Cedroni)

Executive Chef: Antonio Bufi

Spa: Culti

Website: http://www.maisonmoschino.com

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