

**“REVEALING NEW STORIES AND
REVIVING FORGOTTEN TALES”:
Representations of Finnishness on the English-language
websites of Finnish design companies**

Master's thesis
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English
November 2012

JYVÄSKYLÄN YLIOPISTO

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|---|--|
| Tiedekunta - Faculty Humanistinen tiedekunta | Laitos - Department Kielten laitos |
| Tekijä - Author Hannele Palviainen | |
| Työn nimi - Title "Revealing new stories and reviving forgotten tales": Representations of Finnishness on the English-language websites of Finnish design companies | |
| Oppiaine - Subject Englannin kieli | Työn laji - Level Pro gradu -tutkielma |
| Aika - Month and year Marraskuu 2012 | Sivumäärä - Number of pages 151 sivua |
| <p>Tiivistelmä - Abstract</p> <p>Kansainvälistyvässä maailmassa yritysten on tärkeää löytää omat myyntivalttinsa, ja tuotteen alkuperämaalla on tässä usein suuri merkitys. Suomalainen design on jo pitkään menestynyt maailmalla, ja kotimaassakin se mielletään vahvasti osaksi suomalaista identiteettiä, mutta kuinka suuri rooli suomalaisuudella todellisuudessa on designyritysten imagoissa?</p> <p>Tässä tutkimuksessa selvitetään, kuinka suomalaisuutta representoidaan kuuden suomalaisen designyrityksen (Fiskars, Iittala, Kalevala Koru, Lumi Accessories, Minna Parikka, Tonfisk Design) englanninkielisillä verkkosivuilla, kuinka suomalaisuus vaikuttaa näiden yritysten imagoihin, ja eroavatko yritykset tässä suhteessa toisistaan. Tutkimuksen teoreettisena viitekehystenä toimii diskurssianalyysi, erityisesti multimodaalinen diskurssianalyysi, ja representaatioiden paikantamisessa ja analyysissä hyödynnetään kolmea moodia: tekstiä, kuvia ja värejä.</p> <p>Tutkimus osoitti, että kaikkia kolmea moodia hyödynnettiin, mutta ylivoimaisesti suosituin oli teksti, ja vain harva yritys käytti niistä jokaista. Joukossa oli myös yksi yritys, joka ei juuri viitannut suomalaiseen alkuperäänsä. Representaatiot kuvasivat suomalaisuutta monesta näkökulmasta, ja esiin nousi neljä toistuvaa teemaa: luonto, historia, nimistö sekä värit sininen ja valkoinen. Moninaisista viittauksista huolimatta suomalaisuus ei kaiken kaikkiaan vaikuttanut olevan yritysten imagojen pääosassa, vaikka se olisikin luettu osaksi imagoa. Joillekin se oli kuitenkin keskeinen osa identiteettiä. Suomalaisuutta tarkempää monelle yritykselle vaikuttikin olevan yrityksen kuuluminen suomalaisen designin viitekehukseen.</p> | |
| Asiasanat - Keywords Multimodal discourse analysis, country-of-origin effect, Finnish design, Finnishness, representation | |
| Säilytyspaikka - Depository Kielten laitos | |
| Muita tietoja - Additional information | |

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1 INTRODUCTION

In November 2009, the City of Helsinki was appointed as World Design Capital 2012. It is only the third city to hold the title in the World Design Capital project which highlights “the impact of design on quality of life” and “design as an effective tool for social, cultural and economic development”. (World Design Capital 2009.) At the moment of writing this introduction, Helsinki’s year as the World Design Capital has almost reached its end, and although it has been criticised for being remote from the lives of average citizens, the title has nevertheless made others look at Finland and its design heritage more closely: within the first six months the international media had written over 6,000 articles on Helsinki and Finnish design (Vedenpää 2012).

Through the designation Finland has therefore received a considerable amount of attention in foreign media, and it is likely that most of it has been positive. And in the era of globalisation, visibility and favourable opinions can be an important advantage. In a time when companies from different countries manufacture and offer similar products and commodities, and people can travel, work and study almost anywhere in the world, the country and its image may well be the determining factor in many decisions. As Bilkey (1993: xix) already pointed out two decades ago, “[t]he “Made-in” notion is a matter of tremendous importance in international marketing strategy, public policy making, and research. It is relevant at all levels (the product, the firm, the sector, the country, and internationally), for products as well as commodities [...], services, and any other offering”. If that was the case twenty years ago, it is easy to understand that these days the country of origin is even more significant on many levels, and a positive country image could be a country’s key to success.

Finland, a faraway country in many people’s eyes and therefore often unfamiliar, has a significant advantage in being considered Nordic:

Nowadays, brands from a Nordic country of origin are of great importance for consumers in world markets due to the general perception of 'Nordic' as a favourable brand attribute. Even though some markets are not necessarily very aware of Scandinavia, they are still attracted and relate to its core values. In fact, the increasing demand throughout the world for well-known Nordic brands such as Bang & Olufsen, Voss and Lego is largely because they are seen by consumers as symbols of good design, functionality and superior quality. (Roncha 2008: 23; also see Ryan 2008)

This in itself gives Finland some leeway in terms of international business. However, Nordic is a characteristic – or, as described by Roncha above, a brand attribute – that can refer to several countries besides Finland, in which case it is quite plain that being Nordic is not enough. Therefore Finland has to take advantage of the one characteristic that no one else can claim to represent: Finnishness. This is also where country branding becomes involved – in creating a strong, positive image for Finland – and why it has been such a conversed topic in the past few years (see e.g. Viitanen 2009).

There is one field of business in which Finland already distinguished itself decades ago by simply being Finnish, and that field is design. Finnish design is a concept that is well known both in Finland and abroad, and it is also a concept that is appreciated and valued; in this field, Finland is an international success story. As will be seen later in section 2.2, the attraction of Finnish design in the mid-20th century lay in it being uniquely Finnish. But what of the situation today, some sixty years later? As Kalha (2005: 78, my translation) reflects, “[t]he “Finnishness” of design is a process in which intertwining discourses, manners of speaking, images and associations of Finnishness and cultural status are being produced”. In other words, the Finnishness of Finnish design is not something that simply exists – it is a conscious process and the sense of Finnishness its product. As a native Finn, I had never thought to question the Finnishness of Finnish design. I simply accepted it as it was, in other words, as I saw it: Finnish and thus a source of pride because of its success. However, when searching for the right angle for my thesis, I began to wonder if Finnishness itself had anything to do with the Finnish design of today. I had always strongly associated Kalevala Jewelry with Finland and Finnishness, and

I had equally long viewed Fiskars as an essentially Finnish company, but there was one notable difference between the two of them when I came to think of it: while I had always been conscious of (and also interested in) how Kalevala Jewelry's designs were based on Finnish elements, I could not think of anything that was particularly Finnish in the case of Fiskars.

In this thesis I study the English-language websites of Finnish international companies from the field of design. I have selected six Finnish design companies to be examined in closer detail. Fiskars and its subsidiary Iittala manufacture scissors, gardening tools and kitchenware, among other things; Tonfisk Design produces tableware; Kalevala Jewelry, as the name of the company already suggests, creates jewellery; Lumi Accessories has a collection of bags and small leather goods; and Minna Parikka mainly concentrates on shoes but also pairs them with some accessories.

The research questions of the study are as follows:

1. How is the Finnish origin of the companies represented? In what forms and modes and to what extent is it represented?
2. How does Finnishness contribute to the overall image of the companies?
3. Are there differences between companies in terms of representing Finnishness? If so, what could be the possible reason(s)?

A further clarification of these questions will be presented later in chapter 4.

To begin with, I will provide some background information on the larger context in which this study takes place. For the basis of the analysis I will use theories on discourse analysis, in particular multimodal discourse analysis. The starting point of the study is a discourse of Finnishness, more specifically the kind that could be considered "typically Finnish". Using three different modes - images, colours and text - I will locate representations of Finnishness and

then analyse them in terms of content; in other words, I will interpret what themes or subjects they represent. After analysing the representations, I will examine how they relate to the image of the companies. To conclude the study, I will compare the results, note if there are any differences between companies and discuss the possible reasons for this.

To sum up briefly the contents of the following chapters, chapter 2 introduces the context of the study, explaining what Finnishness is, how Finnish design has become as important as it is today, and what sort of a relationship countries, images and brands have with each other. In chapter 3 I will present the theoretical framework, methodology and the central concepts. Chapter 4 concentrates on the data of this thesis and describes the companies as well as how the analysis of the websites was carried out in practice. This chapter also clarifies the research questions. In chapter 5, which is the analysis chapter of the thesis, I will present the findings and examine them in more detail. Chapter 6 discusses the findings and their meaning in a larger scale. The last and seventh chapter concludes the study, recapitulates the findings and suggests further ideas for research.

2 BACKGROUND

This study relies on several theories and analytical frameworks, which will be presented later in chapter 3. One of these is discourse analysis, a field of study which combines “the micro level of language use as well as the macro level of the event and, in a larger scale, the society” (Pietikäinen and Mäntynen 2009: 19–20, my translation). In other words, context is significant in the analysis of discourse, and Blommaert (2005: 40) even proclaims that “we cannot do without context, that we absolutely need it in any kind of analysis”. Therefore it is especially important to have some knowledge of the circumstances surrounding and affecting the subject of this thesis. (For further discussion on context, see Blommaert 2005: 39–67, Pietikäinen and Mäntynen 2009: 28–37.)

My analysis of Finnish design companies’ websites takes place in the context of Finnishness, Finnish design and country images. In this chapter I will give a brief overview on these matters and provide some insight into their importance with regard to the thesis.

2.1 Finnish national identity

National identity has been defined in different ways by different authors. For instance, Billig (1995) describes it as banal, everyday, mundane. In his point of view, national identity is reproduced and represented all the time in various situations and contexts, and “[c]umulatively, such flaggings provide daily, unmindful reminders of nationhood in the contemporary, established nation state” (Billig 1995: 174). Thus, because of this banality, people are also relatively unaware of these reproductions and representations of national identity. Häkli (2005: 24), on the other hand, believes in similarities – “what ‘we’ have in common” – and differences – “how ‘we’ differ from ‘others’”. As for the Finnish national identity, or Finnishness, Anttila (1993: 108, my translation) states that it is “an imagined reality [and] a social representation [...], people’s interpretation of the world”. Nevertheless, what most authors seem to agree upon is the point

of view Anttila advocates: that national identity is created within the society and by the society. National identity does not simply exist; it is always produced in a certain context through imagery and symbols, speech and texts, from which it transforms into institutions and everyday conventions (Keränen 1998: 8-9). In addition to that, national identity can also be considered as stories (Hinchman and Hinchman 1997: xv-xx, as quoted by Jokinen and Saaristo 2000: 40). As with national identity in general, these stories are also brought into existence by the same people who tell them. The stories tell the history of the nation and describe its features, and the stories also take place in certain time and place. However, they do not necessarily depict the real world per se; instead, the stories have been modified, "reorganised and simplified". (Hinchman and Hinchman 1997: xv-xx, as quoted by Jokinen and Saaristo 2000: 40, my translation; Jokinen and Saaristo 2000: 41; also see Jokinen and Saaristo 2000: 45.)

The Finnish national identity is relatively young, as it was born as late as in the 19th century (Jokinen and Saaristo 2000: 18). As pointed out above, national identities do not naturally exist, they have to be created, and the same applies to Finnishness as well. Its creation is a historical process, during which different kinds of phenomena and objects, for example, have been labelled as typically and genuinely Finnish (Anttila 1993: 108). The Finnish identity could also be described as a product of modernisation, since the formation of a common culture that would bind people together was a prerequisite for industrialisation (ibid.). This was attained through "establishing their attributes, items, common practices and the nature surrounding them as Finnish" (Anttila 1993: 108, my translation).

According to Raento (2005: 7-8), the experience of Finnishness, being a Finn, is different for every individual. It depends on the person's "age, sex, citizenship, ethnic, racial, or linguistic background, socio-economic class, daily environment and social contacts, and personal life experiences". Therefore it cannot be said

that every Finn would share exactly the same Finnish national identity; instead, it is unique for each and every one of us. In addition to that, the importance of being Finnish also varies between individuals (Jokinen and Saaristo 2000: 26-27). However, there are some features of Finnishness which are recognized by every member of the nation, and they help people to connect and understand each other (Anttila 1993: 131). Indeed, Korhonen (1993: 11) quotes a survey according to which the same values and representations of Finnishness are more or less shared by every Finn regardless of their age or life situation. In addition to that, a common history seems to bind Finns together, and historical events evoke strong feelings even in the minds of the younger generations (Oinonen, Blom and Melin 2005: 18). This is what Oinonen et al. (ibid., my translation) describe as the “collective memory” of Finnishness. It also goes hand in hand with Jokinen and Saaristo’s (2000: 45) notion of Finns themselves believing that the Finnish national identity or at least some of its main features have remained unchanged during all of its existence. After many years of research, it would be unwise not to acknowledge that much of the Finnish past still affects the present-day national identity (Knuutila 2005: 22).

As already mentioned above, symbols are an essential part of any national identity:

For almost every country and nationality a specific language of signs has been developed; different kinds of symbols that have either coincidental or more concrete roots. They are used to refer to a special national characteristic or a feat of that specific nation, phenomena, historical events, myths, beliefs, etc. Some of the symbols have been intentionally constructed to serve a certain purpose, such as national flags and coats of arms, but others have been born by a complete accident. Such are, for example, certain concrete events, people, objects, animals, plants – almost any kind of phenomena. As a rule, there is usually no verbal communication involved; instead, the information is transmitted visually or auditorily. Because of this, the details and meanings of these symbols can only be understood by individuals grown within that symbolic language system. This is why national symbols unite the people of a particular nation. (Vainio and Savolainen 2006: 83, my translation)

As explained here, national symbols can be constructed or they can be born quite accidentally. However, it could be argued that the most prominent symbols are usually created, and the creator is most often the “nationalistic

intelligentsia” (Kaunismaa 1995: 3–4, as quoted by Jokinen and Saaristo 2000: 30, my translation). The same applies to the symbols of the Finnish national identity, as most of them were generated in the 19th century, at the time of the national awakening (Jokinen and Saaristo 2000: 18). For example, *Kalevala*, the national epic of Finland, was in the beginning nothing but a collection of folklore, but when it was compiled and published in Finnish, it received a status almost similar to Homer’s *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* in the minds of the Finns (see, for example, Asplund and Mettomäki 2000). Nowadays, it is one of the most important symbols of Finnishness. It is also the same with the national colours of Finland, blue and white. Nowhere was it ever implied that they are Finland’s national colours, until it was agreed that it should be so (Jokinen and Saaristo 2000: 26). The symbolic meaning of the colours – the blue of lakes and the white of snow – has also been created and agreed upon by Finns themselves (see e.g. Klinge 1999: 7–72). Not surprisingly, these are also the same colours that appear on the Finnish flag.

National symbols can be newly created or as old as the nation itself, but people are not always aware of their existence, as they have often become deeply embedded into national identities. However, now that the world is rapidly becoming smaller through globalisation, and individuality is gaining ground from communality, national symbols have been raised into awareness as national identities are once again being discussed (Halonen and Aro 2005: 7). As Halonen and Aro (*ibid.*, my translation) put it, “[l]ocal and national phenomena and attributes as well as our roots and past have become important, which is why new knowledge is also wanted”.

In general, it can be said that the symbols of Finnishness combine the Finnish identity and culture in a compact form (Halonen and Aro 2005: 8). The symbols refer to “what is familiar and important to us: our mentality and culture, patriotism, Europeanness, emotions, beliefs, events of the past, things that are homely and ordinary” (*ibid.*, my translation). They tell the story of Finns, of

who and what they are, and bring them together as a nation (Halonen and Aro 2005: 8).

These days Finnishness is not just an identity or something that is shared by the Finns – it has also become a useful tool for marketing. The value of Finnishness has rapidly increased from its earliest years of unifying the nation to actually making the country more appreciated in the outside world. Also, not only are Finnish national symbols important to the people and their national identity, but they have also been adopted into marketing. During the past decade, such symbols of Finnishness as nature, lakes, sauna, and the colours blue and white have been used in Finnish advertising (Heinonen 2005: 182). The use of national symbols has not been limited to domestic markets only: they have also become central elements for companies trying to build successful international brands (ibid.). In this context the symbols represent Finland and everything it has to offer, and it can create certain mental associations in the minds of potential customers. The associations can be both positive and negative, although marketers naturally aim at positive reactions. The use of nationality and its values as a marketing tool is the central idea in what is called the country-of-origin effect, which will be discussed below in section 2.3.

2.2 Finnish design

In the globalising world where trade is no longer limited by boundaries, countries use every means possible to differentiate themselves from their competitors; they have to find out what makes them special and desirable. For Finland, one of the most important characteristics is design:

Finland, for example, was renowned for its tradition of design. Architects and designers such as Alvar Aalto (1898–1976), Eliel Saarinen (1873–1950) and Eero Saarinen (1910–1961) had given Finland a worldwide reputation for excellence and innovation in design. Product designers, such as Aino Aalto (1894–1949), also enjoyed international reputations. Hence, as Finland considered how to present itself to the world market, it had important and highly relevant assets upon which it could draw. Design – in the broad sense not only of appearance

but also of functionality – had already become a critical factor in distinguishing one product from another. (Ryan 2008: 16)

In the 1940s, Finnish design as a concept did not even exist yet. In fact, it was not until the 1950s and the international success of Finnish design and industrial art that the word *design* was even adopted into everyday Finnish. (Kalha 1997: 61, 146–147.) Nevertheless, in spite of its rather short history, Finnish design is nowadays one of Finland’s national symbols and a part of the Finnish national identity, and it is also one of the main things the country is known for abroad.

Finnish design can be described with many different attributes. For example, Kaj Franck’s designs have often been seen as essentially Finnish, the archetypes of Finnish design:

He thought that in order to be designated good and beautiful, an object had to be durable, robust, easy to clean, functional, do justice to the materials used for it, and be indispensable. By removing everything excessive from his designs and leaving only the essential, he created a design philosophy, which has become the backbone of Finnish design. (STRAIGHTFORWARD n.d.)

Indeed, this description seems to incorporate all the features that have most often been connected with Finnish design: quality, practicality, functionality, simplicity and usability (Gura n.d.; VisitFinland n.d.). The list of the most typical features could be continued with modernism, minimalism, timelessness and use of clear lines, which are often used to describe Finnish design as well (Gura n.d.; VisitFinland n.d.; Visit Helsinki n.d.). In addition to that, history is considered to affect Finnish design. As Plagens (1998: 72) points out, “[f]or 600 years, Finland was under the thumb of either Sweden or Russia; it didn't gain independence until 1917. Maybe that's why, of all the brands of modern Scandinavian design, Finland's is the most fiercely rooted in its own folk culture and indigenous materials”. The agricultural history of Finland has also been used to explain the practicality and functionality of Finnish design (VisitFinland n.d.). As can be seen above, Plagens has also mentioned “indigenous materials” as an important attribute. Indeed, nature and natural materials still continue to

affect Finnish design. Finnish design is known for its “ecoconsciousness” (Plagens 1998: 72), and as Gura (n.d.) notes in her brief overview on the history of Finnish design, “[l]acking natural resources such as gold, gems or exotic woods, [Finns] worked with what they had”. And indeed, even today Finnish designers “use mass-production techniques without abandoning the appeal of natural materials or organic forms” (Gura n.d.).

Design products made in Finland have often been labelled as Scandinavian design, and there certainly are similarities between Finnish and Scandinavian design. Roncha (2008: 23–24) has instead opted to use the term Nordic design and describes it in the following manner:

What is broadly identified with Nordic design is ergonomics, the use of natural and appropriate materials and the mix between simplicity and an edgy modernism, with a clear emphasis on innovation. This design heritage has been associated with purity and simplicity and with the democratic principles of Scandinavian design, as we can easily recognise in the massive retail concept brand IKEA. With this in mind, one of the most successful aspects of Scandinavian brands is the democratisation of luxury / design yet functional products with social and worldwide awareness, said to be one of the most prominent aspects of these brands, along with the emphasis on both innovation and quality of the material. (Roncha 2008: 23–24)

This definition by Roncha is in line with that of Fiell and Fiell. According to them (n.d.2), Scandinavian design represents what are called “values of Good Design – durability, integrity, affordability, practicality, sustainability”, and it offers “simple but beautiful wares for everyday domestic use” for everyone despite their social status or wealth. This is why Scandinavian design can be said to mostly create “products for the home” (Fiell and Fiell n.d.1). In addition to that, the designs are innovative as well, but seeing as some classic products have retained their original form and popularity throughout the years, it can be said that the designs are not just innovative but also long-lasting. In accordance with the values of modernism, simplicity is also one of the main attributes of Scandinavian design, and nature affects the form and shape of the items. (Fiell and Fiell n.d.1.) As Fiell and Fiell (n.d.3) summarise it, Scandinavian design

“harmonize[s] poetry and practicality so as to satisfy both the heart and the head”.

The close link between Finnish and Scandinavian design is not a natural one, since Finland is not actually a part of Scandinavia (Wikipedia 2012c). The relationship between the two is due to a conscious historical process, during which Finland was aligned with Denmark, Sweden and Norway – the “other” Scandinavian countries. According to Kalha (2005: 83), after the Second World War, Finland was often considered a member of the Eastern Bloc in the outside world. For a country that was desperately trying to internationalise, this would not do. Therefore the decision was made to show that Finland was as western a country as could be hoped for, which led to “the attempt to integrate into the western culture and economy” (Kalha 2005: 83). This was attained with the help of design. At first, Finnish design was compared with those of the other Nordic countries, but soon it was seen as a part of the common framework, Scandinavian design (Kalha 1997: 31–32). This seemed to be an effective method, as Finland had finally managed to leap over the Iron Curtain and was not only perceived as Scandinavian but also appreciated in the western front as a country of design (Kalha 2005: 83). As an American journalist put it in 1955, “[t]here was a time when Finns were throwing home-made grenades to stop the advancing Russian tanks. These days they use glass, textiles and ceramics as ‘weapons’ in order to oppose the creeping communism that constantly threatens their independence” (Kalha 2005: 83, my translation).

For Finland, the “common cultural front” (Kalha 1997: 272, my translation) of the 1950s was a conscious process with which it was easier to gain commercial ground in foreign countries, but the country soon found out that its attractiveness did not lie in being Scandinavian but being genuinely and uniquely Finnish (ibid.: 65). This way of thinking has been deeply integrated into Finnish design throughout the years. For example, in the 1950s, Finnishness was considered a “cultural value that was to be protected from foreign

influences” (ibid.: 190, my translation). More importantly, the uniqueness of Finnish design has for a long time been explained with “Finnish nature, climate, landscape and national character” (ibid.: 31, my translation). However, Kalha (ibid.: 269, my translation) also points out that in the 1950s it was not important whether or not the inspiration for the designs was actually “drawn from a national source” as long as it was effective.

Therefore, even though Finland was aligned with Scandinavian countries and was thus considered to represent Scandinavian design, Finnish design was actually never identical with Scandinavian design (Kalha 1997: 272).

Nevertheless, its effect on Finnish design cannot be denied. For instance, the concept of beautiful everyday objects was adopted straight from Sweden (Kalha 1997: 81). In addition to that, thanks to the example of and being compared with countries like Denmark and Sweden, Finnish design found its international audience (Kalha 1997: 61).

Today, as already noted at the beginning of this section, Finnish design is considered one of the Finnish national symbols (see e.g. Kalha 2005). Similar to other symbols, it is also a created construction. As Kalha (2005: 78) puts it, “[t]he “Finnishness” of design is a process in which intertwining discourses, manners of speaking, images and associations of Finnishness and cultural status are being produced”. Therefore the Finnishness of Finnish design is still constantly recreated and reproduced, and it is also done with the help of those very representations that I am studying in this thesis.

2.3 Country-of-origin effect

We are used to the fact that products and objects around us have their own image, whether we think about it consciously or not. The clothes we wear represent affordable fashion or proclaim the wearers’ good taste. The cars we drive send a message about our environmental-friendly attitude, our concern

for our families' safety or the state of our finances. Even hair colour often has a meaning, an image, of its own: blonds are carefree and silly, redheads are feisty and adventurous. And those with black hair? Rebellious and moody, of course.

These instances are only one point of view, and ten different people might give ten quite different answers when asked to share their perceptions. Nevertheless, the different images exist in people's minds, and not only is it products and objects that are laden with them – the same applies to cities, regions and countries as well:

Whether positive or negative, focused or diffuse, held widely or by only a few, developed deliberately or by default, and formed from education, the media, travel, immigration, product purchases, business experience or any combination of sources, *every place has an image*. (Papadopoulos and Heslop 2002: 295)

According to Kotler (1997: 607) “[i]mage is the set of beliefs, ideas, and impressions that a person holds regarding an object”. Therefore a country's image is a combination of the beliefs, ideas and impressions that people have about that particular country. It is also a highly complex structure and “a product of [the country's] culture, which includes economic, political, and education systems, religion and social structure” (Jaffe and Nebenzahl 2001: 69). Also, the images that people hold about different countries are often simplifications due to people's need to categorise an enormous amount of information and put it into a more compact form (Kotler and Gertner 2002: 250–251).

Even if a person had never visited a certain country, he would have formed some kind of a mental image of it, whether or not the image actually corresponds to reality. Of course, this type of labelling is not a recent development; as Papadopoulos (1993: 9) notes, “[place-of-origin] has played a significant role throughout history in enabling people to identify, classify, assess, think of, and act upon phenomena and objects”. What is more recent, however, is the purposeful, even methodical, shaping and use of these images in trying to promote tourism, attract investments or make the country appear

more favourable on a general level. As the views and opinions of countries exist in people's minds in any case, it is only natural as well as useful, if not even necessary, to try and steer them into a more positive direction (Papadopoulos and Heslop 2002: 309). However, it should be remembered that in people's minds "the image *represents* the object, or even *is* the object" (Jaffe and Nebenzahl 2001: 13). In other words, perception is what matters. The problem with country images in this context is that the perceived image can be highly stereotypical and also negative. Stereotypes are slow to form but also slow to change, which therefore makes country images difficult to change as well. (Papadopoulos and Heslop 2002: 295–296.)

The creation and promotion of more positive country images is often referred to as place, nation or country branding (for a brief introduction to the subject, see e.g. Teslik 2007). Finland has been rather late to begin reforming its country image (or brand, as it is most often referred to): a Country Brand Delegation was appointed only a few years ago in 2008 (Country Brand Delegation 2010: 19). However, it should be noted that similar work was done even before the country became independent – it only took the form of creating a unifying identity for the Finnish people as a nation (Country Brand Delegation 2010: 297). This was discussed in more detail in section 2.1. Neither is it a new development that the image of Finland has been examined and efforts have been made in order to improve it: this has been taking place since the 1960s (Country Brand Delegation 2010: 297–311). Even worldwide nation branding is a centuries-old practice, although it has not been called or considered as branding (for a more in-depth discussion, see Olins 2002). Treating the country image as a unique and modifiable brand, on the other hand, and thus capable of creating more profit, attracting foreign investments and making Finland into a popular tourist destination, has emerged at the same time with branding theories at the end of the 20th century (Country Brand Delegation 2010: 297).

Papadopoulos and Heslop (1993: xxii) affirm that “[t]he power of country images is well known to the tens of thousands of sellers who use it, whether as a friendly introduction, a reference point, or a unique selling proposition, to enhance their products’ chances of success”. A positive country image can therefore be an important asset in creating competitive advantage for countries in the era of globalisation. This is also important to products and their images. A product’s image is often a combination of several characteristics, and one of these characteristics is the product’s country of origin (Papadopoulos and Heslop 1993: xxi). According to Jaffe and Nebenzahl (2001: 18) “a country name is a symbol that joins together a broader range of products and services, which, despite their diversity, have some common desirable or undesirable attributes”. Similarly, Kotler and Gertner (2002: 250) state that “[c]ountry names amount to brands and help consumers evaluate products and make purchasing decisions. They are responsible for associations that may add to or subtract from the perceived value of a product”. Simply put, depending on the attributes connected with a country, the country image can create positive or negative opinions on products known to originate from that country. This is especially important since “[p]eople’s attitudes and actions toward an object are highly conditioned by that object’s image” (Kotler 1997: 607). If a country is connected with a product and thus evokes positive or negative feelings towards the product, the country in question will consequently have an effect in people’s buying behaviour as well. Therefore, if a country is considered rural and its technological level low, it is unlikely that electronic equipment manufactured in that country would be considered reliable. The same phenomenon would apply to travelling to, studying in or working in a certain country (see e.g. Kotler and Gertner 2002: 250). For example, if a country is known for its high level of education, it is more likely for its people to receive a warm welcome in foreign labour markets, and the country would also be more attractive to students from other countries. As Papadopoulos and Heslop (2002: 298) point out, “[n]ational and other place images are powerful stereotypes that influence behaviour in all types of target markets”.

Jaffe and Nebenzahl (2001: 26–27) argue that in assessing product images there are several country factors that should be considered in terms of the product's origin: where the product was designed, where it was manufactured as a finished product, where its parts originated from, where it was assembled, and even where the consumer of the product is from. These are parts of the manufacturing process and can supposedly be traced. In addition to these there is a sixth factor: the country of origin. This is “[t]he country which a consumer associates with a certain product or brand as being its source, regardless of where the product is actually produced”. Thus country of origin does not necessarily correspond to the manufacturing country, which is often the case in the modern trend of outsourcing. (Jaffe and Nebenzahl 2001: 26–27.)

All of these product image factors can potentially influence how consumers view certain products (Jaffe and Nebenzahl 2001: 28). With regard to this thesis, only two of them would be relevant: the country of design and the country of origin. As all companies selected for analysis are labelled as Finnish design companies, the country of design is most definitely important and without a doubt affects people's opinions on both the companies and their products. Finnish design products do benefit greatly from their country of design: Finnish design itself has a long history but also an important connection with Scandinavian design, which is recognised and appreciated worldwide (see section 2.2 above for more information). However, Finland as the country of origin has other advantages besides its history in design. As explained above, the country of origin is a matter of perception; that is to say, products (or brands) are associated with a certain country, in this case Finland. Finland has its own image in the minds of both its inhabitants and foreigners, which in turn can affect the image of Finnish companies as well as their products. For example, Finland's best-known brand Nokia has long stood for reliability and functionality, and if people connect these two characteristics with Finnishness in general, they can be considered to apply to other products from Finland as

well (Ryan 2008: 17). The Finnish nature and its purity, lakes and forests add another dimension to the image, and there is also a certain exotic appeal to the country of the midnight sun and the months-long winter. These are only a few examples of characteristics that could be associated with Finland and, via the country-of-origin effect, Finnish products. Therefore, as I will focus on the type of Finnishness which does not include characteristics of Finnish design per se, the country of design is not part of the framework, and the country of origin is the more important factor here – hence the decision to study representations of Finnishness, not representations of Finnish design.

Obviously the country of origin alone does not necessarily persuade a consumer to buy a product. The decision to buy could just as well be made based on advertisements, a friend's recommendation, old habit that has been adopted from parents and has never been questioned, or simply because the product looks nice or is the cheapest one available. Some consumers might never think about products' country of origin. However, the country of origin does play an important part in customer perceptions. Italians love good food, therefore Italian mozzarella must taste better than mozzarella from any other country. Scandinavians drive their cars through snow and ice for half of the year, therefore tyres from Scandinavia must keep drivers safe better than tyres from any other country. And how many Finns continuously buy Finnish dairy products and meat simply because they are Finnish and therefore must be the purest and most reliable choice available?

3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

“Discourse is a difficult concept” (Fairclough 1992: 3). Such it has been, still is, and, without a doubt, continues to be. However, as Pietikäinen and Mäntynen (2009: 26) point out, it is not always necessary to find a definition and hold on to it indefinitely. As long as there is a solid explanation and valid reasons for doing so, it is possible to redefine discourse every time the need arises and thus have a suitable definition for different contexts. Also, due to the variety of definitions one cannot always choose one that would fit perfectly. (Pietikäinen and Mäntynen 2009: 26.) Therefore, seeing as it has been nearly impossible to find one single theory for this thesis, I have opted to combine theories from different researchers and various sources in order to create a foundation for my analysis.

Multimodal discourse analysis is the basis of this study because of the multimodal nature of websites. Especially important is the theory of multimodality by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001), and definitions of and theories on different modes (images, language, colours) will be used to support the analysis; after all, it is images, language and colours that I focus on in order to locate the elements of Finnishness on the websites. The modes in turn are utilised on the websites to represent Finnishness, and thus representation, a concept familiar to discourse analysts, will be especially useful throughout the thesis. It should, however, be noted that this study does not attempt to explain the production side of discourse but instead focuses on the interpretation (see Fairclough 1992: 62 onwards; also see section 3.1 below). Seeing that interpretation takes place on individual level and that identifying elements of nationality is often easiest for a native, the analysis is largely based on my personal experiences and knowledge as a member of Finnish culture and society. In addition to that, as the aim of this study is to describe the phenomenon of utilising nationality or country of origin in an international context – in this case, the phenomenon of Finnishness on the English-language (thus international) websites of Finnish design companies – I will not attempt to

explain the reasons behind choices; I merely present the situation as I see it. Nevertheless, as Fairclough (1992: 199) argues, interpretation and description always go hand in hand: “one is inevitably interpreting all the time, and there is no phase of analysis which is pure description”. Therefore the theoretical and methodological framework will provide me the necessary tools to better understand what it is that I am studying here.

3.1 Discourse analysis

There is no simple answer to what discourse is. It has been studied widely by many researchers over the years, which has resulted in a plethora of descriptions and also several branches (see e.g. Fairclough 1992: 12–61). Because of this, it is not possible to define discourse in a way that would cover its every aspect. (Pietikäinen and Mäntynen 2009: 22–26.) However, most researchers seem to recognise the different definitions as supporting and complementing, not contradicting, each other.

Depending on the school, discourse is understood to encompass different things. Some consider discourse from a purely linguistic point of view and thus see it as consisting of both written and spoken language, including not only words but also aspects such as structure and interaction. Others view discourse as a typical way of communicating in different social situations, for example restaurant discourse or courtroom discourse. There is also a social point of view, according to which discourse not only represents but also constructs reality. It is possible for several discourses to exist that describe the same phenomenon from different points of view, and sometimes it happens at the expense of other possible choices. An example of this would be a discourse of outsourcing that emphasises the benefits (cheaper labour force, more effective production) but disregards the downsides (loss of jobs in home country, human rights issues) of it. (Fairclough 1992: 3–4; see also Pietikäinen and Mäntynen 2009: 22–28.) To add one more definition, it is also said that discourse creates

meaning. Blommaert (2005: 2) describes discourse as “a general mode of semiosis, i.e. meaningful symbolic behaviour”. In his view, meanings that people perceive in their environment (e.g. Paris is the city of love, meat is murder) would not exist without discourse (Blommaert 2005: 4).

Nowadays the general consensus seems to be that discourse analysis often – but not always – joins together both linguistic and social aspects (see e.g. Fairclough 1992 or 2003, Pietikäinen and Mäntynen 2009). Fairclough (1992: 4, emphasis added) suggests a three-dimensional approach, in which “[a]ny discursive ‘event’ (i.e. any instance of discourse) is seen as being simultaneously a piece of *text*, an instance of *discursive practice*, and an instance of *social practice*”. In this approach, the textual angle refers to the traditional analysis of texts (or linguistic analysis); discursive practice to the actual production and interpretation of the event in question; and social practice to the prevailing circumstances surrounding the event, how the circumstances possibly affect the event, and also the constructive power of discourse in general (as explained at the beginning of this section). Thus “[d]iscourse is a practice not just of representing the world, but of signifying the world, constituting and constructing the world in meaning” (Fairclough 1992: 64). Through different linguistic and discursive choices, people are, in essence, building and rebuilding this world to their liking (Pietikäinen and Mäntynen 2009: 15–22).

Following the ideas of Fairclough (1992: 64), then, discourse can and does have a role in constructing identities, relationships and ideologies. In the context of this study, for example, with the help of discourse it would be possible to create identities for Finnish design companies. Relationship-wise discourse could be utilised to build a sentimental connection between potential buyers and the company and its products. And ideologically speaking, discourse could also be used to promote nationalism. My interest lies more in this socially constructive role of discourse than in the traditional analysis of language, although language and word choices do play an important role on websites. This is why linguistic

analysis cannot be left out altogether, and in section 3.4 below I will explain which linguistic elements I will utilise in the analysis.

As already hinted at above, many researchers make a distinction between *discourse* and *discourses*. According to Pietikäinen and Mäntynen (2009: 27) the former, more abstract *discourse*, is the theoretical definition, which has been explained above in some detail. A *discourse*, on the other hand, refers to what they describe as "ways of meaning-making and describing things, phenomena and events from a certain point of view in a certain manner, which are relatively strong historically speaking and used and recognised in different interactive situations" (Pietikäinen and Mäntynen 2009: 27, my translation). Fairclough's (2003: 124) view on discourses is that they represent the material, mental and social world. As the plural form already suggests, these worlds might be represented differently by several different discourses. This is due to people who create the discourses: their different standings in the world, their identities, and how they relate themselves to other people. Fairclough points out that the representations created by discourses are not necessarily realistic (as far as any representation of the world can be realistic): "they are also projective, imaginaries, representing possible worlds which are different from the actual world, and tied in to projects to change the world in particular directions". Thus discourses represent the world not only as people see it but also as people would like to see it. (Fairclough 2003: 124.) Also, Fairclough (1995: 41) notes that they often "raise[] questions of truth, bias and manipulation"; as discourses are created by people, they represent the people's agendas as well.

To put it in simple terms, discourse can be utilised to represent the world in different ways from various perspectives:

The focus, then, is upon how events, situations, relationships, people, and so forth are represented in texts. A basic assumption is that [...] texts do not merely 'mirror realities' as is sometimes naively assumed; they constitute versions of reality in ways which depend on the social positions and interests and objectives

of those who produce them. They do so through choices which are made at various levels in the process of producing texts. (Fairclough 1995: 103-104)

Stuart Hall (1997b: 15) defines representation as “using language to say something meaningful about, or to represent, the world meaningfully, to other people”. He also calls it “one of the central practices which produce culture” (1997a: 1). Hall (1997a: 1) explains that culture consists of shared meanings, the values and ideas that members of the same culture recognise and can relate to, and language (in a wider sense than just written or spoken language) is the primary tool with which these shared meanings are created. This in turn can be done because language is a “representational system” (Hall 1997a: 1):

In language, we use signs and symbols – whether they are sounds, written words, electronically produced images, musical notes, even objects – to stand for or represent to other people our concepts, ideas and feelings. Language is one of the ‘media’ through which thoughts, ideas and feelings are represented in a culture. Representation through language is therefore central to the processes by which meaning is produced. (Hall 1997a: 1)

Meanings do not simply exist but instead are created with the help of signs that represent whatever it is that people wish to communicate (Hall 1997a: 5). For example, the colour red can represent different things and thus have different meanings depending on the situation and context. It can represent emotions such as anger, embarrassment and love; warn people of danger or command them to stop; convey a sense of power and energy; or reveal people’s political stance, just to give a few examples. However, in order for these representations and their meanings to be understood, the sender and the receiver of the message must be able to understand each other; they must “speak the same language”, as Hall (1997a: 4) puts it. They must have the same frame of reference, at least to some extent, so that meanings are understood in the way that was intended. This is the requirement for any successful communication.

Hall (1997b: 24-26) introduces three approaches to representation: the reflective, the intentional and the constructionist. In the first, the reflective, approach language (again in the broader sense of the word) reflects the world as it is. The meaning already exists in the object itself, and language merely brings it forth.

According to the intentional approach, on the other hand, it is the speaker that gives meaning to objects – “[w]ords mean what the author intends they should mean” (Hall 1997b: 25). The third and last one, the constructionist approach, is the most significant (Hall 1997b: 15). It states that meanings are not fixed or somehow preprogrammed but instead people create, construct, them through different representational systems: “[i]t is social actors who use the conceptual systems of their culture and the linguistic and other representational systems to construct meaning, to make the world meaningful and to communicate about that world meaningfully to others” (Hall 1997b: 25). The colour red, for instance, can mean different things in different situations, as was already pointed out above. To continue with this example, hearts in Valentine’s Day cards are red, and we see them as symbols of love because they have been given that meaning in our culture. The colour has been chosen arbitrarily, though it may well have a long history and roots in representing something else (e.g. passion or blood), as has been the shape of the sign itself; neither heart nor red would not in any way express love without people having given them those meanings in the first place. And indeed, Valentine’s Day itself is a cultural creation as is its meaning: a day to celebrate friendship and love.

It should, however, be noted that since meanings are created by people within cultures, “[t]hey can never be finally fixed but are always subject to change, both from one cultural context and from one period to another. There is thus no single, unchanging, universal ‘true meaning’” (Hall 1997b: 32). In addition to that, because meanings are constructed, they also have to be interpreted, and interpretations do not always correspond with the intended meaning (Hall 1997b: 32). This is especially true for cross-cultural communication: members of the same culture share roughly the same meanings, and seeing as meanings can vary between cultures (e.g. white stands for purity and joy in the West but represents sorrow in the East), they are not necessarily understood similarly in different cultures.

Representation is also “closely tied up with both identity and knowledge. Indeed, it is difficult to know what ‘being English’, or indeed French, German, South African or Japanese, *means* outside of all the ways in which our ideas and images of national identity or national cultures have been represented” (Hall 1997a: 5). This also holds true for Finnishness: it is similarly represented, and these representations form Finnishness and how people understand “being Finnish”. The representations can have different points of view, and they can emphasise different things by including some aspects and omitting others.

As already mentioned earlier in this section, it is possible that several discourses can share the same subject. In the case of this study, that subject is Finnishness, and I will utilise a specific discourse of Finnishness as a framework for the analysis (later in this study referred to as *the* discourse of Finnishness for the sake of clarity). This discourse is best described as ‘typically or essentially Finnish’. Naturally, the concept of Finnishness is most likely viewed differently by different people according to their personal histories and social environments – after all, no one can claim that all members of a nation are the same – but this particular discourse is one which is more or less shared by Finns at least emotionally. It has to do with the features most Finns recognise as Finnish, such as the elements of Finland and Finnishness which are shared with foreigners when they wish to be told something about Finland; and the imagery and symbolism, both old and new, nationwide accepted as Finnish. It also includes some aspects that are not necessarily obvious, such as peace and quiet or the Finnish love of their own space.

In this study I will examine how this particular discourse of Finnishness is represented on the six design companies’ websites. To do so, I will locate the elements – the representations – of Finnishness on the websites by utilising my own knowledge and personal experience of Finnishness and Finnish culture, information provided by previous studies (as presented in chapter 2) and

theories on modes typically used to create representations.

As Fairclough (1992: 74) points out, “discourse analysis is in fact a multidisciplinary activity”. Pietikäinen and Mäntynen (2009: 7) agree and add that the field also changes constantly. Therefore researchers need to keep an open mind as well and adapt to the ever shifting area of study as need be. In addition to that, contrary to the earliest definitions of discourse, it is not all about language: discourse analysis is also about “examining the composition of the society, and power relations, institutions and actors. [...] Because of this [...], a discourse scholar also needs to have knowledge on subjects outside the scope of language or society alone” (Pietikäinen and Mäntynen 2009: 21, my translation). In analysing this particular discourse of Finnishness it is necessary to combine and draw inspiration from theories and ideas from different fields and areas of expertise: discourse and discourse analysis, multimodal discourse analysis, visual communication, national identities, branding and images, the history of Finnish design, symbolism, and also my own personal knowledge and experience of what it is to be a Finn.

It should also be noted that speaking about *language* as the target of discourse analysis is somewhat misleading. Language is usually divided into written and spoken forms, such as letters or conversations. Also, language can at the same time be seen as a threefold way of communicating, representing the world, and creating identities and relationships (Pietikäinen and Mäntynen 2009: 68). In Hallidayan terms, these three functions of language are textual, ideational and interpersonal, respectively (see e.g. Halliday and Matthiessen 2004). Fairclough (1995: 55) also suggests that language “reproduce[s] and maintain[s] existing social identities, relations and systems of knowledge and belief”, which in turn are realised as identities, relationships and representations. However, language is not the only choice available when wanting to express something: also music, images, colours and gestures, among other things, can be used to convey messages and, indeed, represent the world and create identities and

relationships, for that matter. Fairclough (1992: 4) suggests that discourse could take into account not only written and spoken language but also “other symbolic forms” such as images. Similarly, Blommaert (2005: 3) argues that “[w]hat is traditionally understood by language is but one manifestation of it” and that the visual is often as important as the textual. These days “semiotic modes other than language are treated as fully capable of serving for representation *and* for communication” (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2001: 46). More often than not, these “other” means of communication appear together in different combinations rather than alone. This is called multimodality and their study multimodal discourse analysis.

3.2 Multimodal discourse analysis

Traditionally, language has been the most important manifestation of discourse, at least according to linguists. However, as researchers have pointed out (see e.g. Ventola, Charles and Kaltenbacher 2004: 1-2, Kress and Van Leeuwen 2001), these days discourse analysis cannot be done by analysing language alone, omitting all other modes that can be used to convey meaning and to communicate with. Thanks to the rising of new communication technologies such as the Internet, multimodality – the use of several different modes – has become a new, interesting and also an increasingly important field of study (Ventola, Charles and Kaltenbacher 2004: 1-2). However, despite the vast interest and many questions that multimodality has raised in the past years, it is by no means a new phenomenon in the history of mankind. In fact, it is “as old as representation itself and crucial to an understanding of almost all forms of communication”, as Stöckl (2004: 9) puts it. He even goes as far as to suggest that monomodality has always been the odd one out and multimodality, in fact, the norm (2004: 10).

Websites are multimodal by nature. Bateman (2008: 1) refers to them as “multimodal document[s]”, in which “a variety of visually-based modes are

deployed simultaneously in order to fulfill an orchestrated collection of interwoven communicative goals". Simply put, websites combine several modes in a planned and purposeful manner in order to convey different messages to their readers. Therefore multimodal discourse analysis plays an important role in examining the six design companies' websites of this study. In this section I will explain what multimodality and modes are and how they contribute to this thesis.

Ventola et al. (2004: 1-2) define multimodality as "the interdependence of semiotic resources in text". In other words, their description focuses on the relationship between all the meaning-making elements in a text, which reinforces the concept of no mode being an island – so to speak. The idea of interrelatedness of modes is also supported by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001: 20), according to whom multimodality is "the use of several semiotic modes in the design of a semiotic product or event, together with the particular way in which these modes are combined". Similarly, Stöckl (2004: 9) states that "multimodal refers to communicative artefacts and processes which combine various sign systems (modes) and whose production and reception calls upon the communicators to semantically and formally interrelate all sign repertoires present". Based on Stöckl's and Kress and Van Leeuwen's descriptions, the combination of modes is meaningful in conveying messages, and Stöckl also emphasises the role of people in creating and interpreting these messages.

As the name already suggests, multimodality refers to the use of more than just one single mode. Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001: 21) describe modes as "semiotic resources which allow the simultaneous realisation of discourses and types of (inter)action". In other words, modes are used to communicate something in a certain manner. They are not bound to certain types of messages or tasks, which makes it possible for several of them to convey the same message (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2001: 1-3). In addition to that, as Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001: 21-22) point out, modes can be combined endlessly,

although one mode may be more suitable for a certain communicative purpose than another:

[W]e doubt that language is the most effective mode in all circumstances, both because colour as a mode – to take an example – may be able to realise discursive meanings which writing or speech could not, and because some meanings may be more readily ‘received’ in one mode rather than another. (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2001: 29-30)

Therefore Finnishness can also be expressed through more than just one mode, and it can also be expressed with different modes in different situations.

According to Stöckl (2004: 11) modes fall into five categories named after the senses used to perceive signs, and it is also possible for some modes to belong to more than one category; for example, music can be both visual (reading sheet music) or auditory (listening to music), and sometimes it can even be tactile (deaf people sensing the beat of the drums). Websites mostly consist of visual modes such as writing, layout and colour, although auditory modes, most often music, are not uncommon either. However, in this study I will focus on the most prominent sensory category of websites: the visual. The modes I have selected appear on almost every website, and they have been chosen on the basis of their usefulness in expressing and conveying aspects of nationality: images, language (in the form of writing) and colours. Although Stöckl (2004: 12-15) does not consider colour a mode in itself – a core mode, to use his term – but rather a sub-mode of images and language (in the form of font colours), I have opted to follow the example of Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001: 57-59, 2006: 225-238) and view it as a mode capable of meaning-making on its own. These three modes will be introduced separately in sections 3.3, 3.4 and 3.5.

In this study modes serve as a framework for analysing the content – what the modes help to express. I will not analyse the roles of the three modes per se; instead, I will find the analysable content that has been expressed via these modes, thus using the modes as a sort of route to my destination. Nevertheless,

I will note to what extent each mode is utilised in conveying the sense of Finnishness in order to see whether there is an underlying pattern to it.

3.2.1 The four strata of multimodal discourse

At the heart of multimodal discourse and communication lies meaning-making. Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001: 4) have identified “four domains of practice in which meanings are dominantly made[:] discourse, design, production and distribution”. These four “strata” (ibid.), as the authors call them, also form the basis of their theory of multimodal discourse. I will now briefly describe what each of these strata mean and to what extent they are relevant with regard to my thesis. (For a more thorough description of the four strata, their aspects and potential in different contexts, see Kress and Van Leeuwen 2001.)

The first of the four, discourse, is a concept that was already introduced in section 3.1. It is a “socially constructed knowledge[] of (some aspect of) reality” (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2001: 4). Discourses, regardless of their subjects, are always created in a certain type of social environment, or a context, and they represent the ideas, thoughts and beliefs of the people within that context. As discourses are constructed by people, they often serve people’s interests as well. Therefore it is quite possible that two discourses exist which share the same subject but are nevertheless quite distinct from each other or even contradictory. (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2001: 4–5.) In addition to that, discourses can be realised in more than just one mode (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2001: 24); hence the term multimodal discourse.

With regard to the present study, discourse will serve as a framework for the analysis (see section 3.1 above). The discourse of Finnishness is the starting point of this thesis, and it also affects me, the writer of the thesis, in fundamental ways, as I have grown up and lived surrounded by it my entire life. Without having knowledge and a deeper understanding of this particular

discourse, the point of view of this study would be different; I might, for example, view the discourse of Finnishness through the eyes of a foreigner or an expatriate, whereas now I examine it as a native. In other words, I draw on my own heritage and knowledge of what is typically Finnish, and I use that knowledge to locate the different features and aspects of Finnishness.

The second of the four strata is design, “the conceptual side of expression, and the expression side of conception” (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2001: 5). Design itself does not yet express anything concrete or final, but it does tell what is to be expressed, with which modes and in which order. Design is the outline, the frame around which the discourse can be realised. It also takes into account which mode(s) would serve best in a certain communicative situation and deliver the intended message most effectively. (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2001: 5–6, 31.) For instance, a web page design could specify the location of images and text, what type of images they should be from size to content, the rough content of texts on the page, where to add hyperlinks to other pages on the same website (or even some other website), and so on. The actual web page would then be built on the basis of this scheme.

I have chosen not to focus heavily on this aspect of multimodal discourse. Of course, each of the selected company websites most likely has a particular design on the basis of which they have been created. Even Finnishness could be a special part of the design. Nevertheless, it is not relevant to apply the concept in every part of this study, as I am more interested in the outcome, not the plan or the motives behind the choice of modes. However, should it seem useful to consider the design aspect in some parts of the thesis, I will do so, but only briefly.

The third aspect that Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001: 6–7) have identified is production. As the name already suggests, it refers to the material side of multimodal discourse – the abstract design transforming into a concrete

product. Because it is possible to make choices between materials that will be used, production also creates another layer of meaning with its material aspect (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2001: 21, 121–122). Consider, for example, a design of a pair of high-heeled shoes. When the design is realised, manufactured, the materials they are made of convey a message to those who wear the shoes, see or feel them. For instance, black leather creates the image of a classic, sophisticated style. The message can also lie in the details: should the soles of the high-heeled shoes be bright, shiny red, fashion enthusiasts would recognise the shoes as – or, in case of a copy, at least make a mental connection to – Louboutins; red soles are the trademark of Christian Louboutin, father of the high-end luxury brand.

In addition to discourse, this stratum is of great importance with regard to my thesis. It is production that can be seen on the websites, in the colours and images as well as texts. Although design may have already defined that images will be used for a certain purpose, it is only at the production stage that they become visible. Thus it is the outcome of the production stage of multimodal discourse that I will be analysing in this study.

The fourth and last stratum is distribution. Again, the concept is fairly straightforward: delivering the end product, the message or meaning, to the user (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2001: 7–8). In addition to the actual process of distribution, Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001: 87) describe the stratum as “re-coding” and also “re-production”. The last description, “re-production”, is especially true in the case of websites: each time a website is opened, it is produced to its viewer – again, and again, and again. The authors (2001: 87) also point out that despite its seemingly simple task distribution can add its own layer of meaning as well, as can all the other strata. For instance, one can attend an open-air concert, listen to the same concert – live or recorded – on the radio, or watch it on TV, again live or recorded. In each case, the experience would be different, and thus new meanings would also be created.

The media of distribution in the context of this study are computers and the internet, more specifically websites. It could be argued that once a website has been designed and produced, its form always stays the same. It should, however, be noted that a website may look different when using different web browsers or when viewed with different-sized displays. For example, the layout may be slightly altered, and colours can also have a different shade. Thus the website would, in fact, be different from the original. Nevertheless, the message, or the content, still remains the same. This is the main reason why I will not concentrate on the distribution side of multimodality: it is the content that is important for the analysis, not the medium with which the message is delivered. However, I do not deny the role that distribution plays with regard to this study; after all, if the websites were not distributed to me via the Internet to the computer that I use, this study would not exist at all, nor would there be any purpose in analysing the use of Finnishness on the web pages if they were not visible to a larger audience.

To summarise, the four strata – discourse, design, production and distribution – are the meaning-makers in every communicative situation. Each adds its own layer of meaning, and they are all equally important. In my thesis, I have chosen to mainly focus on the third stratum, production. Production brings to existence whatever it is that is being expressed, and it is at this stage that the representations of Finnishness are realised. In the following three sections I will now introduce the exact modes in which the representations come to life.

3.3 Images

Images are often examined in semiotics, the study of meanings. In this area of research, the focus is on signs and what they mean. I will not place much emphasis on semantics in this study although what I do regarding images is, in essence, pure semantics: analysing and interpreting what the images on the

companies' websites mean. However, some basic concepts regarding signs are useful and will be used later in analysing images.

Signs – or, in the case of this study, images – can be iconic, indexical or symbolic. An iconic sign represents an actual object in the real world. An example of this could be a photo of a tiger in an encyclopedia or even a child's drawing of a tiger. An indexical sign "is actually caused by its object and serves as a physical trace pointing to the object's existence". For example, smoke indicates that there is a fire somewhere close, even if the person seeing the smoke did not see the fire itself. A symbolic sign, as opposed to an iconic sign, does not look like its object, but only represents it because of common agreement. Such is, for example, the universally used peace sign, which has been modelled after semaphore signals. (Peirce 1991, as quoted by Messaris 1997: viii-ix.) Of these three features, iconicity and indexicality are characteristics that no other modes but images have (Messaris 1997: xvii).

As explained above in section 3.2, images are classified as a visual mode. Each mode has its own characteristics, and modes often complement each other in different communicative situations. Compared with other modes, however, images have one advantage over others: they convey messages and meanings far more quickly than any other mode (Stöckl 2004: 17). Stöckl (2004: 17) explains that this is due to images being "based on simultaneous and holistic gestalt-perception". Imagine, for example, trying to describe someone how a landscape changes in winter. Which would be quicker for the listener to truly grasp the difference: to see it in a photo or to hear it in words? Images also attract more attention than words. According to Stöckl (2004: 17) this can be explained by images' close resemblance to the actual world. I would also suggest that images attract the eye due to their colours and content as well as the disruption an image makes in a page otherwise filled with text.

Images, therefore, are capable of delivering a message quickly and capturing the reader's attention. Stöckl (2004: 17) adds one more characteristic to images: they are also able to "directly tap into the emotions". This view is supported by Messaris (1997: xiii):

When we look at the real world that surrounds us, the sights we see do not register in our brains as neutral, value-free data. Rather, each visual feature, from the smallest nuances of people's facial expressions to the overall physical appearance of people and places, can come with a wealth of emotional associations. These associations stem from the unique experiences of each individual in addition to the common, shared influence of culture and, to some extent, biology. So, the fact that images can reproduce the appearance of reality (or selected aspects of that appearance) also means that they can call forth a variety of "preprogrammed" emotional responses." (Messaris 1997: xiii)

Thus nothing we see is ever meaning-free, and whether an image depicts a person, a scene, a place or an object, it can create an emotional response (Messaris 1997: xxi-xxii). For instance, in 2011 a Finnish television channel was showing an advertisement for Gainomax, a recovery drink (YouTube 2012). The narrator of the ad was a cute little monkey, and in short, the ad suggested that people should rather drink Gainomax than eat a banana after exercising, because monkeys eat bananas and would die if people ate their food. This is a prime example of an advertisement that plays on emotions. It does not necessarily mean that people would stop eating bananas or switch to Gainomax, but the ad does create a response and stays in the viewers' minds.

To sum up, images have several roles: they bring out emotions, represent the world around us, convey messages swiftly and attract the viewers' attention. Thanks to what they can achieve, images are extremely useful and even necessary in effective advertising. However, the use of images is not altogether unproblematic. For one thing, considering the matter from an international perspective, it is quite possible – if not likely – that people from another culture will not interpret and understand the symbols and imagery as a native of that culture would. As Messaris (1997: 93) notes, "[o]n one hand, a viewer might correctly perceive the contents of an image (people, objects, places) but misinterpret the intended cultural implications of those contents; on the other

hand, a viewer might be aware of the cultural implications but unresponsive to the values behind them." (For further discussion on cross-cultural advertising, see Messaris 1997: 90–125.) However, Messaris (1997: xvi) also argues somewhat inconsistently that utilising images in international advertising is largely based on images' ability to transcend cultural differences. In my opinion the truth seems to lie between these two points of view: images make cross-cultural advertising easier, but it should always be borne in mind that the message is not necessarily understood as intended. This also applies to marketing in domestic contexts. As Messaris (1997: xiii) notes, creating mental associations based on what we see takes place on individual, cultural and biological levels. Absorbing and understanding images or any visual cues depends on several factors: "our culture, our history, the context in which we are looking, what we already know about the world, what our own tastes, interests and habits predispose us to see, and so on" (Schirato and Webb 2004: 1–2). Therefore the response to images is never absolutely certain.

Secondly, Stöckl (2004: 18) suggests that images incorporate more information than words and are especially useful in depicting objects as they appear in the real world, but in my opinion images are not omnipotent in this either.

Consider an online shop selling clothes and a potential customer wishing to buy a dress to wear during the hottest summer in a decade. Without images, the customer would have to rely on her imagination to "see" the dress, even if every single one of them had been described from their cut to their colour. Without text accompanying the images, the customer would not have any information on the material, the thickness of the fabric or even the measurements of different dress sizes.

Despite these lacks in their meaning-making capability, the use of images in advertising, websites, magazines or any other place is completely justified. As explained above, in multimodality modes support and complement each other.

What text cannot possibly depict, images can bring to life, and what the image cannot possibly show, text can explain.

3.4 Textual elements

As explained already in section 3.2, language is one of the three modes I will concentrate on in my research. Although I will not do a thorough analysis of texts as such, text analysis as a theory serves as a useful foundation for examining the textual elements on the company websites.

Fairclough (1992: 75) divides text analysis into seven levels: vocabulary, grammar, cohesion, text structure, force (or speech acts), coherence and intertextuality. With regard to expressing Finnishness, only vocabulary is relevant here; after all, “[t]he most obvious distinguishing features of a discourse are likely to be features of vocabulary – discourses ‘word’ or ‘lexicalize’ the world in particular ways” (Fairclough 2003: 129). Thus it is wholly justified to focus on word choices for the most part. (Also, it could be argued that the same applies to images and colours as well, only words are replaced by certain colours or symbols associated with Finnishness.) In grammatical terms (see e.g. Quirk and Greenbaum 1973, Downing and Locke 2006), the individual words I will be examining will most likely fall under the categories of nouns and adjectives – words that name, refer to and characterise objects. The focus will therefore be on words that are utilised to describe products. I will also take sentences, phrases and clauses into account when their topics are relevant; that is to say, when the topics cover some aspect(s) of Finnishness.

In terms of multimodality, writing has its own merits compared with other modes of expression. Traditional advertising relies for the most part on moving images (video), speech and music, but websites mainly consist of still images and writing. Whereas images can portrait objects accurately and show what

they look like, writing can add to that information by presenting the facts. Consider an image, a photo, of a pale blue flower vase. The reader is able to see with his own eyes the colour and shape of the vase, but that is the extent of it. Accompany the image with an explanatory text, and the person knows significantly more of the vase than with the image alone: what it is made of (e.g. glass instead of plastic), what size the vase is, who designed it, how much does it usually cost, how it has been made (e.g. hand-blown by an artisan or mass-produced in a factory), and so on. Simply put, writing conveys the type of information that images do not or cannot share. In addition to that, writing “has its strength in the depiction of events and states-of-affairs in time”, and it “can [also] be based on and evoke mental imagery” (Stöckl 2004: 18, 24).

3.5 Colours

There is some debate over whether or not colour can be classified as a mode and thus capable of conveying meaning on its own. Stöckl (2004: 12–15) sees colour as a sub-mode of images and language (as font colours). However, in the opinion of Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001: 57–59, 2006: 225–238), colour is a mode in itself. I have chosen to follow their example and therefore I include colour as a part of the framework for my analysis.

Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006: 227) argue that throughout the ages colours have been used to create meanings. They point out, however, that there has never really been a unified system for it; instead, the meanings of colours have varied and still vary from one situation to another. Colours are also culturally bound, and therefore their meanings and uses are sometimes different in different cultures:

Even though we regard mode as an abstract organisation, it is the abstract organisation of a specific material drawn into semiosis in a culture through practices of producing dyes (and other colouring technologies) in colours recognised as relevant and meaningful in that culture. (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2001: 27)

In essence, Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001: 58) treat colours as signifiers, not as fixed signs:

Rather we see colour as a signifier (in the way in which we see all semiotic resources as signifiers at the point of sign-making), which is drawn into sign-making, and is given its signified by the maker of the sign in the context of specific discourses in which and through which the sign-making happens. (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2001: 58)

Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001: 58–59) note that the meaning of a colour in any situation depends on a number of things: the person giving the colour its meaning, the cultural context in which the meaning is created, the history of the colour as well as the culture, the discourse that the colour is realising, and so on and so forth. Consider the colour white for a simple example. In Western countries brides traditionally wear white on their wedding day, which is often considered the happiest day of their lives. In contrast, in some Eastern cultures white is considered a colour of sorrow and mourning. In the West, on the other hand, mourning is symbolised with black.

Colours can be utilised for several communicative purposes. For instance, they can express topographical differences on a map, convey a feeling of serenity or energy, unify parts as a whole or warn people of danger. They can also be used to signify ideas, places, people and objects. (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006: 229–230.) Thus colours can for their part “articulate aspects of [discourses]” (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2001: 25). In my analysis, I focus on two colours, blue and white. The choice is rather obvious: blue and white are the colours of the Finnish flag, and as the popular song by Jukka Kuoppamäki describes it, they are also the colours of the sky, lakes, snow, summer nights, clouds and, perhaps above all, freedom. In this context, blue and white are the colours of Finnishness, Finland and Finns. Alone, the colours might mean something else (although in Finland it is likely that blue would still be connected with lakes and white with snow), but their combination is easily recognised and instantly interpreted as Finnish.

4 THE PRESENT STUDY

In this chapter I will expand the research questions already presented above in chapter 1. In addition to that, I will briefly introduce the six design companies selected for this study and explain how the data will be analysed.

4.1 Research questions

The questions I shall attempt to answer in this study are:

1. How is the Finnish origin of the companies represented? In what forms and modes and to what extent is it represented?
2. How does Finnishness contribute to the overall image of the companies?
3. Are there differences between companies in terms of representing Finnishness? If so, what could be the possible reason(s)?

The first question deals with the representations of Finnishness on the companies' websites. I will locate and identify the ways in which the Finnish origin of the companies is manifested, paying special attention to the amount of Finnishness and the modes in which Finnishness is represented.

In the second research question the focus is on the effect of Finnishness on the companies' image. Is there enough Finnishness to actually have an effect? If so, what is its function? Is Finnishness an essential part of the company image?

Lastly, the third question revolves around the differences in utilising the country-of-origin effect. Do companies use it differently, is there a pattern to it, and why do or do not companies show and make good use of their origin?

For the sake of clarity, the first research question will be covered in chapter 5, and the second and third research questions will be discussed in chapter 6.

4.2 Data

In this section the focus is on the data of the present study. In section 4.2.1 I will present and give some background information on the six design companies selected for the thesis: Fiskars, Iittala, Kalevala Jewelry, Lumi Accessories, Minna Parikka and Tonfisk Design. The websites of these companies act as the data of this study. How I will be analysing them is explained in more detail in section 4.2.2.

4.2.1 Target companies

The six companies selected for the present study were chosen with the help of several criteria. First of all, to be suitable in terms of the topic of the study, the companies had to be of Finnish origin and represent the field of design. They also had to be fully internationalised or at least establishing a firmer hold on markets outside Finland. It did not matter whether the company had been exporting goods for two years or twenty years; they simply needed to have an international clientele. It did, however, matter where the products were exported: they had to be shipped further than to the neighbouring countries, that is to say, Scandinavia, Russia or the Baltic states. The companies also needed to have English-language websites for the benefit of international customers. In addition to that, the companies were selected to represent two different industries: fashion and home. It was also a conscious choice from the very beginning not to select such traditional, large and successful Finnish companies as Nokia, UPM-Kymmene or Wärtsilä as objects of the analysis. Obviously some companies of this study, for instance Fiskars and Iittala, are internationally well-known and successful, but there are also some newcomers such as Tonfisk Design and Minna Parikka that are smaller in terms of both size and resources. Last but not least, I also have a personal interest in Finnish design and handicrafts, which first led me to the subject in question.

In this section I will provide a brief description of all the six companies selected for the present study. It has proven quite difficult to obtain similar information on all of the companies, which has resulted in slightly different descriptions. Nevertheless, each company description will include the following: the main products of the company; the countries or regions to which the products are exported; and the size of the company, in terms of employees and/or net sales.

Fiskars

The name *Fiskars* can refer to three things: Fiskars, the internationally known and trusted brand; the Fiskars Corporation, which has subsidiaries and holdings on different companies; or Fiskars Brands, the largest holding of the Fiskars Corporation and the manufacturer of the products which carry the name *Fiskars* (Wikipedia 2012a). My analysis will be limited to Fiskars; in other words, I only discuss the contents of the website that carries the same name, therefore excluding all other brands and companies that are owned by the Fiskars Corporation.

Fiskars was founded in 1649, which makes it the oldest company in Finland. The company offers different kinds of products to be used at home, in the garden and outdoors. (Fiskars 2012b.) However, scissors are without a doubt Fiskars's best-known products, especially the orange-handled scissors; in fact, the orange scissors are so popular that even their colour is a registered trademark these days (Fiskars n.d.2).

The company exports products all over the world, from north to south and from east to west (see e.g. Fiskars n.d.3). Unfortunately the actual figures for the Fiskars brand alone could not be found; however, in 2011, the Fiskars Corporation reached net sales of over 740 million euros and employed approximately 3,500 people (Fiskars n.d.1). The corporation is also listed at the Helsinki Stock Exchange (Fiskars n.d.2).

Iittala

The history of Iittala, or Iittala Group, began in 1881 when their first glass factory was founded in the village of Iittala. However, the company was not actually known as a homeware manufacturer until the 1920s and 30s when the decision was made to concentrate more on products for domestic use.

(Wikipedia 2012b.) Nowadays Iittala produces different types of tableware, glassware, cookware and also decorative objects for the home (Iittala n.d.1).

In addition to selling their products in several stores and department stores in 62 countries all around the world, Iittala also has special Iittala stores in six European countries and in Japan which sell its products alone (Iittala n.d.2). As for its size, in 2010 the company had a little over 800 employees and net sales of approximately 151 million euros (Kauppalehti n.d.1). Iittala has also been a subsidiary of the Fiskars Corporation since the year 2007 (Fiskars n.d.1).

Kalevala Jewelry

The history of Kalevala Jewelry, Finland's biggest jewellery company, began in 1935. The company was officially established in 1937, and it has been owned by the Kalevala Women's Association from the very beginning (Kalevalaisten Naisten Liitto n.d.1; Kalevala Koru n.d.2, 2011b). Together with its subsidiary Lapponia Jewelry, it also forms one of Europe's biggest jewellery groups. The company manufactures its traditional and modern jewellery in Finland and uses as much Finnish materials as possible. (Kalevala Koru 2011b.) In 2011 Kalevala Koru also decided to switch to using recycled gold (Kalevala Koru 2011a).

Today, Kalevala Jewelry's products are sold in 11 countries as far as in the United States and Australia (Kalevala Koru n.d.1). The company had net sales

of almost 19 million euros and employed 163 people in the year 2011 (Kauppalehti n.d.2).

Lumi Accessories

Lumi Accessories is a newcomer in the field of design. It was founded in New York in 2000 by two designers, one from Finland and the other from France. Since then the company has transformed its original idea, white felt products, into a whole range of leather bags and accessories. (Lumi Accessories 2010a.) The company also strives for sustainability and is a member of the advisory board of the NICE – Nordic Initiative, Clean and Ethical – project, an endeavour of the Nordic fashion industry that addresses the ethical and environmental issues of fashion (Lumi Accessories 2012a).

The products can be found in over 25 countries on three continents (Lumi Accessories 2012b). In 2011 the net sales of Lumi Accessories stood at 856,000 euros (Kauppalehti n.d.3).

Minna Parikka

Of all the companies in the present study, Minna Parikka is clearly the youngest – it was established as late as in 2005. The company carries the name of its creator, a woman who has wanted to design shoes ever since she was 15 years old. (Minna Parikka 2012d). Naturally, the main products of Minna Parikka are shoes, but the company manufactures some leather accessories as well (Minna Parikka 2012b). In a previous collection Minna Parikka also created fetish masks from shoe parts (Minna Parikka 2012a.)

Minna Parikka's products are sold in 16 countries in Europe, the Middle East and Asia (Minna Parikka 2012e). In 2011, the company employed only five

people, and its net sales were close to 800,000 euros (Kauppalehti n.d.4, Työ- ja elinkeinoministeriö 2012).

Tonfisk Design

Founded in 1999, Tonfisk Design is a relatively young company (Tonfisk Design 2010f). Since its official launch in the year 2000 the company “has received both widespread publicity, enjoyed considerable recognition as a prominent Finnish design brand, and has been invited to participate in several design exhibitions in Finland and abroad” (Tonfisk Design 2010a). Tonfisk Design focuses mainly on tableware, but they also manufacture products for decorating (Tonfisk Design 2010c).

Tonfisk Design exports products to 35 different countries (Tonfisk Design 2010b, 2010d, 2010e), which is quite astonishing considering the size of the company: in the year 2010, the net sales of Tonfisk Design were 264,000 euros, and the company only employed four people (Taloussanomat n.d.).

4.2.2 Analysing the data

According to Fairclough (1992: 71), it is important to know the settings when analysing discourse. Obviously there are several things to consider here with regard to websites of Finnish design companies, but at least these angles should be kept in mind:

- 1) Websites can be seen as a form of advertising and promoting both companies and their products. Thus the sites have been planned and built accordingly, and their purpose is to attract potential buyers and create profit for companies. This also means that websites often (if not always) refrain from mentioning anything that could possibly harm their sales. Therefore they try to show everything in as

positive a light as possible; in other words, word choices and how things are represented play a crucial role here.

2) Besides acting as advertisements, websites have other purposes as well. For instance, they offer plenty of information on both products (e.g. materials or ingredients, colour options, dimensions) and companies themselves (e.g. values, history, annual reports). Websites can also incorporate online shops and function as customer service points.

3) For the past few years, branding Finland has been of interest especially on governmental, economical and commercial levels (see e.g. Country Brand Delegation 2010). As already seen above in section 2.3, country images are important in terms of country branding. Therefore it should be taken into account that the companies of this study may have chosen to utilise the country brand hype: by labelling their products and themselves as Finnish, they essentially connect themselves with the country brand of Finland and everything it entails.

4) Seeing as the websites are written in English, it seems safe to say that the target audience is international (but not strictly foreign, since not all the companies in this study have a separate Finnish-language website for domestic, Finnish-speaking customers). The companies have a relatively stable foothold in Finnish markets, but in the context of international business competition is intense, and companies have to find a way to stand out from other companies operating in the same industries. For Finnish design companies, Finnishness and Finland's long history in design could be their key to success (for more information, see chapter 2).

To continue, Fairclough (1992: 71) notes that “[a]nalysis of a particular discourse as a piece of discursive practice focuses upon processes of text production, distribution and consumption. All of these processes are social and

require reference to the particular economic, political and institutional settings within which discourse is generated". As this thesis concentrates on the point of view of the website user, only text consumption is of interest here. Fairclough (1992: 71) explains that consumption of texts requires interpreting them, which in turn is affected and guided by "internalized social structures and conventions"; in other words, the reader/interpreter uses his existing mental resources in finding and understanding meanings on texts. As the writer of this study, I therefore interpret the text – in this case, the websites – from my own starting points. I am a Finn, which gives me an insider's advantage in locating and understanding aspects of Finnishness. Therefore it is likely that I will notice things that foreigners might not necessarily register. Also, as a student majoring in English, I might have a better understanding of nuances within texts than someone whose level of English is not as high. These are my personal resources, and by combining them with the theoretical framework, it is possible to construct a comprehensive account on how the Finnishness of Finnish design companies is represented on their websites.

As was already explained in chapter 3 above, I concentrate on three modes in my analysis: images, textual elements, and colours. The representations of Finnishness that I analyse will therefore be manifested in these three modes. They are the most useful ones in terms of expressing nationality, and as these modes can be found on almost any website, it is also a justified choice in terms of studying websites. I will locate the representations and analyse their content with the help of the theoretical framework and my own cultural knowledge as a Finn. As already mentioned in section 3.5, I will only take into account the colours blue and white because of their status as Finland's national colours. As for images, I will take into account smaller details as well as their content in general (e.g. single objects, symbols and sceneries that can be considered Finnish). In the case of textual elements, I will use a similar approach: I will pay attention to single words but also longer pieces of text such as phrases, sentences and even entire paragraphs. I doubt, however, that there will be

many individual words that would be able to convey the sense of Finnishness as easily as longer descriptions can. Nevertheless, in analysing texts I will pay attention to the content and themes, how products have been named and how they are described (i.e. vocabulary), and other linguistic and textual aspects such as symbols and metaphors.

According to Papadopoulos (1993: 16) the amount and explicitness of country-of-origin cues varies but is always present:

[P]roduct origin information is provided to consumers through hundreds of thousands of brand and company names, promotional messages, product labels, and other means, whether directly or through symbolism. In short, the images of countries and their relationships with products are an integral part of daily life. (Papadopoulos 1993: 16)

Finnishness or the Finnish origin of the companies and their products could easily be expressed implicitly or explicitly, in small or great amounts, in writing or through images, and so on. I have chosen to focus on the more or less explicit cues. I will, of course, pick the most obvious examples, such as the colours blue and white, but at the same time I will also use my own judgment of what is important with regard to the analysis itself. For instance, it is not particularly useful to note if some of the companies' products happen to be blue or white. Therefore I will only analyse those elements that I interpret as referring to the Finnishness and the Finnish roots of the companies, for instance an image of a lake, a snowman or birches in full leaf, or a mention of sauna or Father Christmas. In addition to that, it is hardly worthwhile to include the word Finland in the analysis if it refers exclusively to the location of the retailers of the companies' products, for example. I have therefore decided to exclude the more general mentions of Finland from the analysis. These instances serve no other purpose than to make a distinction between Finland and any other country in the context of events, projects, etc.; in other words, the country plays only a minor part and could be any country in the world, and it also does not offer any particular representation of Finnishness. To clarify my point, I present

here a few examples of the type of cases that I exclude from the analysis (emphasis added):

The Fashion Stock Sales in *Finland* are organized by Lumi. (Lumi Accessories 2011a)

Lumi produced a co-branded corporate gift for the *Finnish* advertising agency Työmaa. (Lumi Accessories 2011b)

Lumi Accessories Oy has won the Kultainen Vaatepuu-award. Kultainen Vaatepuu (the Golden Cloth Hanger) is the highest fashion award in *Finland*. (Lumi Accessories 2011c)

In addition to that, as the websites are examined from the point of view of the consumer, I have chosen to exclude corporate websites; in other words, if the company clearly has two different sites designed for different audiences, I have only analysed the one directed at (potential) customers. I have also decided not to include separate online shops in my analysis, unless the entire website functions as both a shop and an information-providing site or information on products can only be found on the online shop pages. In the case of Fiskars there are also five different country-specific sites and a separate international website that are in English. As the purpose of this study is not to map the differences between websites directed at different countries (and thus different audiences as well), I have opted to concentrate on the international website and leave out the country-specific sites.

5 FINNISHNESS ON THE WEBSITES

In this chapter I focus on the analysis of the six design companies' websites. The main point of view is how the companies' Finnish roots are represented on the web pages through texts, colours and images; therefore, this chapter will answer the first research question. For the sake of clarity, each company has its own subsection, and the results will be discussed and compared in chapter 6.

In order to make the analysis more systematic and easier to follow, I have opted to refer to the examples with running numbers. The exact references for the examples, including all the necessary details, can be located with corresponding numbers in the bibliography under primary sources.

5.1 Fiskars

On the international website of Fiskars, Finnishness pops up here and there but not in a very consistent or typical manner. The most obvious place where one might assume to locate mentions of Finland is on those pages that deal with the history of the company; after all, "[e]stablished in 1649, Fiskars is the oldest company in Finland" (1). And indeed, the Heritage page offers a brief overview on the history of Fiskars from the year of its establishment to the year 2009, the company's 360th birthday, with close ties to the history of Finnish industrialism. The timeline begins with the founding of the first ironworks and how "[t]he large tracts of forestland in the Pohja region along with its unharnessed water power and good water routes made it an ideal centre for the Finnish iron industry" (2). Already Finnishness is strongly present in the form of nature: forests, wild waters and rivers. Also, there is a reference to Finnish industrialism, thus a piece of Finnish history. The story continues with accounts on how Fiskars shifted its attention from iron to copper and then back to processing iron under a new owner, expanded the production range and created new innovations, became a limited company and listed at the Helsinki Stock Exchange even before Finland became independent, and then slowly

grew through the recession to become the successful company that it is today (3). All the while, the more general and also industrial history of Finland is not forgotten, as the following examples show:

(4) When the ironworks were founded in Fiskars, Finland was under Swedish rule [...]

(5) With the 1832 founding in Fiskars of Finland's first cutlery mill the production range increased from knives to include forks and scissors. In 1837 Fiskars saw another first in Finland, when its machine workshop was founded in the village. In the 1830s, Finland's first steam engine was manufactured at the workshop. The Fiskars tradition of implementing reform and innovation has its roots in this period. Many social reforms also took place during Julin's ownership, during which the ironworks village got its own school and hospital. Farming in the village was greatly improved. Fiskars had a significant influence on the development of Finnish agriculture [...]

(6) The Finnish economy suffered from the great stock market crash of 1929 and this slowed down expansion at Fiskars. In Finland, the effects of the crash were felt into the mid 1930s.

Here, Fiskars is, in essence, building itself a historical story, a background, with the help of a narrative. The story and these examples portray not only the history of Fiskars but also the social, agricultural and industrial development of the country. In other words, Fiskars is using the story to form a link between the company and its home country and even creating a sense of patriotic pride at the same time. As can be seen above in examples 2 and 5, the company has been the source of many firsts in Finland: centre of iron manufacturing, the first cutlery mill, the first steam engine, and so on. Furthermore, the company has been progressive in its social activities (5): not only did the village of Fiskars benefit from the company but also agriculture was improved throughout the country. Also, Fiskars has seen the Swedish rule (4), the Great Depression (6), and many other events that were – and still are – important in terms of Finnish history. Therefore, although the focus of the corporate story is mainly on Fiskars and the stages of its development, Finnish history is an underlying current, a presence. As Fiskars developed, so did Finland, and both the company and the country have gradually grown into the success stories that they are today.

Despite the seemingly close connection that Fiskars has with its Finnish roots, Finnishness is not a dominant element on the company's website as a whole; in fact, it is rather difficult to locate at all. Most of the representations appear in small and not very conspicuous images: the snowy village of Fiskars (7); a summery Katajanokka Park in Helsinki with two iconic landmarks, Uspenski Cathedral and Helsinki Cathedral (8); a man pushing a woman on a snow sledge in the middle of a snowy yard (9); a man looking at serene blue lake scenery at nightfall (10); a woman cutting hay on a field with a forest on the background (11); a man splitting wood in the light of a campfire (12); and, naturally, people shovelling snow (13). Nevertheless, even in their rather insignificant role these images depict Finnish urban scenery, nature and (stereo)typical activities. Helsinki, the country's capital, is portrayed in the photo of Katajanokka Park (8), and the two cathedrals are most likely recognised by anyone who has ever visited the city or seen it in pictures. It is therefore also a touristy image. The images of nature are also fairly explicit. Snow, whether covering tree branches or being shovelled (9, 13), is a highly typical Finnish element and a representation of winter, another symbol of Finnishness. The lake scenery (10) is also a clear reference to Finnishness – Finland is not called the Land of a Thousand Lakes for nothing. And the image with hay, field and forest (11) depicts one of the most recurring landscapes in the Finnish countryside. The last two images (12, 13), on the other hand, show some typically Finnish activities. As some houses and saunas are still warmed with wood, fireplaces are relatively common, and almost every summer cottage needs wood for cooking, heating the sauna or warming the cottage itself, woodcutting (12) is a familiar task for people living in towns and villages as well as in the less inhabited countryside. And seeing as many regions in Finland experience light or heavy snowfall for nearly half of the year, shovelling snow (13) is an everyday task for many people, which makes it a very typical – and also necessary – Finnish pastime.

There are also four recurring images that symbolise each of the Finnish seasons at their best: snowy tree branches for winter (14), green blades of grass for spring (15), ripe strawberries for summer (16), and yellow, orange and red foliage for autumn (17). And seeing as “[i]n Finland everyone is a gardener” (18), it is only natural that there are photographs of people in their favourite gardening activities – pruning (19), raking (20), cultivating (21) and planting (22) – and also dealing with the less enjoyable parts of it, such as cleaning the gutters (23). All these images of nature or activities related to nature are not surprising; after all, they appear on Fiskars’ Garden section. They emphasise the role of Fiskars as the maker of tools that make it easier to deal with nature, but at the same time they also depict Finnish nature and activities that are typical for Finns. In a way they also depict the close relationship that Finns have with nature. However, in my opinion this follows the same style as the corporate story of Fiskars: the company is highlighted while Finnishness functions merely as a subplot. It is the tools and the activities that are in the limelight, not nature.

In the entire website only one other representation of Finnishness can be found: Moomins (24). As Moomins are the most famous characters of Finnish children’s literature and comic strips (both in Finland and abroad), it is not surprising to see them transformed into design products either, especially since Fiskars is hardly the first company to feature Moomins in its merchandise: for instance, Kalevala Koru had a Moomin product family some years ago, Arabia’s Moomin tableware is hugely popular, and the Finnish textile company Finlayson sells Moomin towels even today. With their carefree attitude, simple life, memorable thoughts and views on life, and different personalities that enable people to relate to them, the characters have become a favourite among adults as well. Moomins also remind younger generations of their childhood, and if a person was asked which Moomin character he or she is, that person would most likely be able to answer the question without having to think about it for very long. Even Tarja Halonen, the former president of Finland, was

humorously referred to as Moominmamma according to the calm, patient, handbag-carrying mother figure of the books. All in all, Moomins “amount to semiofficial national symbols” (Marten 2010). On the website of Fiskars, Moomins decorate some of the company’s scissors. For each pair the company has also decided to include storylines of Moomin stories and, according to the specific character that is portrayed, the company also explains who is who (see e.g. examples 25 and 26). This way, the company can introduce a piece of Finnish literature to international audiences, emphasise its Finnishness and also entice those customers who are already familiar with Moomins. Although there is nothing specifically Finnish about Moomins themselves, they have become one of the nations’ most loved characters and thus can be considered to represent Finnishness.

5.2 Iittala

On the very first page of the Iittala website the visitor stumbles upon Finnishness immediately. The company, launching its new Sarjaton collection, has dedicated its entire home page to the newest product family, which expresses the company’s Finnish roots on many different levels from names to the designs themselves, as can be seen in these examples:

(27) This is Sarjaton. Meaning 'no series' in Finnish, it's a range that redefines the freedom of flexibility.

(28) Sarjaton is born from the collaboration and concept development of six talented designers from fashion, product, graphic and digital design that share the same vision to interpret Finnish traditions in a modern way.

(29) Alongside the patterns of 'Letti' and 'Metsä', Musuta also designed the fish for the bottom stamp on each piece from the range. Symbolic of the ancient Finnish saying 'there's no point in going fishing further than the sea' it reinforces Sarjaton's celebration of simple living and having all we need right here.

(30) Sarjaton has been strongly influenced and shaped by Finnish traditions, with the concept and design for the range firmly rooted in folklore and artisan rituals.

(31) Embossed patterns based on traditional basket braids, embroidery motifs and the forest that covers half of Finland, deliver a handcrafted feeling that invites you to touch. While modern life has made us crave for an authentic

feeling, the Sarjaton collection takes us back to the way things were made before. The real way.

(32) From 'Metsä' meaning forest, 'Letti' meaning braid, to 'Tikki' meaning stitch, each Sarjaton pattern has been crafted to embrace imperfection and create individuality.

(33) Look out for the Sarjaton fish. The great number of fresh water lakes keeps fish happy and Finns full. Try to catch one hidden in our design.

To begin with, both the series and individual products have Finnish names, which emphasises the products' and also the company's Finnishness. The names have been translated (27, 32) for the benefit of the international customers, which in fact reinforces the sense of Finnishness as it is made clear that the words have actual meanings instead of being nonsensical. Besides their names, the products' designs have roots in Finnishness as well, as examples 30 and 31 show. The entire series "has been strongly influenced and shaped by Finnish traditions, with the concept and design for the range firmly rooted in folklore and artisan rituals" (30), and the individual products are "based on traditional basket braids, embroidery motifs and the forest that covers half of Finland" (31). Although nature – "the forest that covers half of Finland" – is also mentioned as a source of inspiration, the main focus is clearly on Finnish traditions and artisanal skills.

Indeed, the unifying element of the Sarjaton collection is Finnish traditions. As the examples above show, the collection has been designed to bring a sense of Finnish traditions into the modern-day life. It was the designers' objective to "interpret Finnish traditions in a modern way" (28), and as was already discussed, the products imitate traditional patterns and have been inspired by traditional ways of making things. There is also a longing for traditions and the good old days in examples 29 and 31. Example 31 speaks of "the way things were made before" as the "real way", insinuating that people have somehow lost their connection to their past, forgotten where they came from. The idea is supported by the description of Sarjaton as "celebration of simple living and having all we need right here" (29). This echoes the Finnish philosophy of simplicity: simple life, appreciating what one has, making do. These days

people might disregard the concept and consider it old-fashioned, but it is nevertheless an essentially Finnish, deeply rooted attitude which probably stems from the history of a country that not so long ago relied on agriculture alone.

In the examples above there is one more representation of Finnishness depicted in examples 29 and 33: fish. Closely related to nature and agriculture, fish is possibly the most Finnish of all foodstuffs. Since fish is readily available in Finland, it has long been an important sustenance; as already stated above in example 33, “[t]he great number of fresh water lakes keeps fish happy and Finns full”. It can also be considered to symbolise lakes and the sea and therefore Finland, the Land of a Thousand Lakes, as well. As the unifying sign of the Sarjaton collection, the fish also symbolises “the ancient Finnish saying ‘there’s no point in going fishing further than the sea’” (29). This is a representation on three levels. First, there is the fish. Second, the fish symbolises the saying which is a typically Finnish proverb. And third, the meaning of the proverb is that one should recognise and appreciate what is in front of them instead of laboriously trying to seek something else, which is essentially part of the same philosophy of simplicity that was already discussed above.

As with company websites in general, Iittala’s main focus is also on its products. What first attracts one’s attention is how the products have been named. True to its roots, Iittala has opted to keep the Finnish names in their original form even on their international website. As already seen in the case of Sarjaton above, this highlights the company’s origin and represents Finnishness. For the most part, the products with proper nouns carry the names of their designers; such are, for instance, the Alvar Aalto Collection (34), Sarpaneva (35) and Tapio (36). Utilising the names of famous Finnish designers also adds a new dimension to the products’ Finnishness. Two of the products have also been given traditional Finnish names without any clear indication to their origin, namely Aarne (37) and Lempi (38). It should, however, be noted

that if one spends some extra time surfing on the website and happens to take a closer look at the Mylittala section, Lempi, which is both a woman's name and a common noun, has indeed been translated: "[m]eaning 'favourite' in Finnish, Lempi has been created for any occasion, informal or spectacular" (39).

However, there are others with only a common noun as their name, such as *Allas* 'pool' (40), *Kartio* 'cone' (41), *Kastehelmi* 'dewdrop' (42), *Kivi* 'stone' (43), *Korento* 'dragonfly' (44), *Nappula* 'button' (45), *Taika* 'magic' (46), *Teema* 'theme' (47) and *Vitriini* 'showcase' (48). For some of these names a translation has been provided in the product descriptions, most likely for the benefit of the international clientele who would be curious about the exotic names and what they mean:

(49) The Finnish name 'dewdrop' refers to the circles of bubbles in the pressed glass.

(50) Finnish for 'dragonfly,' Haapaniemi portrays Korento using a powerful flower pattern that reminds us of a hot summer day.

(51) 'Magic' in Finnish, Taika lets you choose from a variety of bold and enchanting pieces.

Others, however, have not been explained in any particular way. Only if the reader has a basic understanding of Finnish he might be able to detect that an indirect explanation has been given in some cases. For instance, the *Vitriini* 'showcase' glass boxes can be used "to *showcase* your mood or personality" (52, emphasis added), and the *Kartio* 'cone' product family "captures the perfect balance between the material and *the geometric form*" (53, emphasis added). Also, as added curiosity, Iittala has two special cases in terms of product naming. First, Maribowl (54), or Mariskooli in Finnish, has a name which has only been translated partly. This is most likely out of respect, since it was the founder of Marimekko, after all, who made this classic item famous in the first place (55). The name also emphasises the Finnishness by linking the product (and, via the product, the entire company as well) to Marimekko which is another well-known Finnish design company. Second, some glass birds from the Birds by Toikka collection - named after the designer Oiva Toikka - have Finnish or at least Finnish-sounding names: Tiiri (56), Fiskariina (57), Uhuu (58),

Hiplu (59) and Kuulas (60). Curiously enough, only *Kuulas* 'clear' (60) is an actual Finnish word – the others merely sound like Finnish. However, despite them not being real words, they still have underlying meanings that a Finn would understand based on his knowledge of the Finnish language. Tiiri (56) closely resembles the name of another bird species, *tiira* 'tern'. Fiskariina (57) simulates a woman's name with the ending *-iina*; for instance, the names Katariina, Vilhelmiina and Pauliina all share the same ending. Uhuu (58), on the other hand, is onomatopoeic and also a reference to the object itself. In Finland, *huhuu* is the sound of an owl hooting, and Uhuu is indeed a glass owl. And the explanation for Hiplu (59) is twofold: the name is quite close to the word *tiplu* meaning 'spot', which is exactly what the glass bird is decorated with – several little spots.

The Finnish roots of Iittala have had an effect on not only the names of products but also their appearance. Nature is strongly present in the designs of certain products as a clearly visible form or pattern and also as an inspiration. The glass birds of Oiva Toikka are the perfect example of the realistic forms, as they have been created to look like their namesakes, and in the Birds by Toikka collection one sees such typically Finnish birds as Magpie (61), Bullfinch (62), Willow Grouse (63), Capercaillie (64), Curlew (65) and Whooper Swan which coincidentally is also the national bird of Finland (66). Similarly, the Korento and Taika product families have patterns straight out of the Finnish nature: Korento portrays dragonflies and flowers in full bloom (67), and Taika depicts a magical forest scene with its apple trees, foxes and owls (68). The birds, dragonflies, flowers, apple trees, foxes, owls – all of these are parts of the Finnish nature, although they are not quite as obvious examples when compared with, for instance, snow or lakes. They build a slightly different image of Finland and its nature, suggesting that there is more to the country than eternal winter and snowy landscapes; they create an image of versatility. It is also stated that "Haapaniemi portrays Korento using a powerful flower pattern that reminds us of a hot summer day. He captures the intensity of the

short but sweet northern summer“ (69). These two clauses also provide an example of the versatility of the Finnish nature, and there is a clear contrast to the cold, harsh winters of the north often connected with Finland, implicating that there is more to the country than just ice and snow. In addition to that, the noun phrase “the intensity of the short but sweet northern summer” can be considered to refer to the enthusiastic attitude that Finns have towards summer: as it does not last very long, people always try to make the most out of it. Thus, it can refer not only to the season itself which turns from barrenness to lushness in a relatively short time but also the manner in which people enjoy it.

The theme of Finnish nature continues in other products as well, only it is not quite as obvious as in the above-mentioned examples – one cannot simply look at a product and instantly see the connection. Instead, it can be found in the product descriptions, as the following examples show:

(70) Echoing rings of water [...]

(71) The undulating forms of the objects in the Aalto collection are like the Finnish landscape with its thousands of lakes – beautiful, alive and untamed.

(72) The Finnish name ‘dewdrop’ refers to the circles of bubbles in the pressed glass. Inspired by Finnish nature, the dewdrops glisten like a string of pearls on grass in the morning sun.

(73) Inspired by the melting ice in Lapland [...]

(74) Fire votive is a small Finnish winter story with its glowing snow lanterns. [...] Eager to recreate the ice lanterns, which adorn Finnish houses in winter [...]

(75) Kaasa is a modern fireplace inspired by an ancient beacon. ‘Kaasa’ which once was an important seamark for Finnish sailors [...]

Here, the representations of Finnish nature are more traditional: water (70, 71 72), lakes (71), ice (73), snow (74). Examples 71 and 72 also have a descriptive, almost mood-creating approach to nature and Finnishness. Example 71 utilises a simile to describe the Aalto products: their “undulating forms [...] are like the Finnish landscape with its thousands of lakes – beautiful, alive and untamed”. This creates an image of wilderness, roughness, untouched nature. Similarly, in example 72 the Kastehelmi products with their dewdrop-inspired pattern

“glisten like a string of pearls on grass in the morning sun”. Compared with the previous example, the mood here is completely different: it evokes a sense of bright colours, lightness and serenity. I interpret this as another case of versatility in Finnish nature. Examples 74 and 75 also introduce some cultural elements. Lanterns made of snow or ice (74) are quite common in winter when everything is covered in snow and natural decoration is sparse. Therefore people take what they have and transform it into decorations. Also, besides adorning people’s front yards, the lanterns bring some light into the dark winter nights. Light is the dominant element in example 75 as well which describes the ancient seamarks, *kaasas*, guiding sailors. It is also a part of Finnish seafaring history.

As with Fiskars in the previous section, Moomins (76) feature also on Iittala’s products. The Moomin glasses have drawn inspiration from different Moomin stories, some of which have been explained in more detail (see e.g. example 77). A cornerstone of Finnish children’s literature, Moomins are loved by children and adults alike, and thanks to Iittala providing these snippets of the stories, some visitors might get their first touch of Finnish literature and at the same time learn more about the Finnish culture. After all, “[a]ll sorts of exciting things happen around Moominvalley. In addition to the Moomins, the valley is inhabited by mymbles, hemulens, fillyjonks and all kinds of small toffles and whompers” (78).

The Iittala website has a section called Myiittala, which is the company’s international community for Iittala-loving customers. Among its many other functions, this section also contains a blog, Thoughts and Senses, written by a Finnish food blogger (79) and mostly consisting of recipes and photos of Iittala products in different food, decoration and other home-related contexts. However, the blog also gives an insight into Finnishness. First of all, there are images of nature which depict different aspects of the four seasons and are as Finnish as it gets: daisies and other meadow flowers (80); fresh strawberries

(81); a sea and archipelago scenery (82); autumn leaves covering the ground right next to an old barn wall (83); a misty autumn field with an old barn (84); snow-covered fields in wintertime and a wooden sleigh with a white, furry skin, shingle basket, ice skates and a woollen rug (85); and frost flowers on a window (86). These images, the objects in them and the sceneries they portray, recreate Finnishness in a rather typical – even stereotypical – manner: different seasons are depicted with typical elements of each of them. In addition to the photos, there are also pieces of text, stories and narratives that reveal aspects about the Finnish lifestyle and construct Finnishness from different angles. To begin with, Finland is a nation of coffee drinkers, which becomes obvious in the example below:

(87) The most of us choose the bliss of coffee to get us up in the mornings and it is to be said, the lovely smell of freshly grind coffee is hard to beat. The Nordic countries and The Netherlands make the top six coffee consuming countries of the world.

Coffee is what keeps Finns moving, and as seen in example 87, it is not simply a necessity for waking up: “the bliss of coffee” and its “lovely smell” is also something to be enjoyed, especially when mornings are cold and dark.

Winter and its turning into spring features on several blog posts:

(88) I used to regard February a month that could easily be erased from the calendar. It’s dark, cold and though it is shortest of them all it seems very long.

(89) Though warm spring days might already have hit the Central Europe Finland is still enjoying beautiful winter weather with lots of snow. What is typical for this time of the year are the bright, exquisite days when at least half of the population is out enjoying the sun after the long winter.

(90) I don’t know many things that are better than mornings. Especially now, when the spring is on the doorstep and even us in the Northern hemisphere are getting to enjoy more of daylight.

These snippets give a rather accurate picture of what midwinter and late winter are like in Finland, but, to some extent, they also describe the Finnish mentality. Most Finns would agree with the writer’s thoughts in example 88. The “dark, cold” February is perhaps the gloomiest of winter months: snow has been on

the ground for weeks, the month often brings the worst frosts, and it feels as though spring will never come. But when it is over and “spring is on the doorstep” (90), people tend to feel happier, and the world seems a better place. Even if there is still snow – and there usually is – there is a general feeling of hope, because people know that winter will soon be over. And what brings people hope and in general lifts their spirits is, of course, sunshine and daylight (89, 90).

As a rule people tend to appreciate and enthuse over the warm months and the sunshine they offer, as was already pointed out earlier in this section. One of the biggest celebratory events in Finland occurs when the amount of daylight is at its highest. Midsummer is depicted on the website in the following manner:

(91) For the Finns summer starts at Midsummer. That’s when most of the people start their summer vacations and they leave the cities to celebrate at their summer cottages with their friends and family.

(92) Midsummer is all about spending good times together with great food and drink. My family celebrates it on the Gulf of Finland and year after year we carry the old dinner table on the rock beach for the Midsummer dinner. Traditionally we have different kinds of fish and of course the very first batch of new potatoes from our own garden.

These two pieces of text represent Finnishness through several cultural features such as celebration, food and customs. Despite being such an important holiday, for many Finns midsummer is all about simplicity. Spending time with family and friends, the joy (and relief) of having a holiday, staying at a summer cottage where there might not be either running water or electricity (91) – it is all very simple. Even the food is simple and yet delicious, as described in example 92. It is also interesting to note how the story of Finnish Midsummer is being built from a personal point of view – a point of view of a Finn (92). This increases not only the sense of Finnishness but also the sense of ordinariness and tradition.

In addition to the blog, the Myiittala section also has its very own Vintage Corner in which website visitors can immerse themselves in the history of and

stories behind Iittala's products and designers. Like the Thoughts and Senses blog discussed above, this one also serves several purposes: not only do Iittala aficionados get to read more about their favourite company but they also inevitably learn things about Finland. Similar to Fiskars, the history of Iittala coincides with historical events of the country, some of which are described in the Vintage Corner. For instance, when Aino Aalto designed her now famous glassware for a competition, "[r]apid urban development and the subsequent increase in the number of small apartments created new demands for the design of household goods; functionality and ease of care became the most important priorities. The abolition of Prohibition (1919–1932) also contributed to the need for new collections" (93). Similarly, changes in the society inspired another classic, as the following example shows:

(94) The cream bottle was a new invention in the 1950s, it was Franck's answer to changing needs. The cream bottle and its cork stopper go back to those days when milk and cream were still sold from the churn and people brought home their purchases in glass bottles or their own containers. The cream bottle was dimensioned to fit in the gap between people's double windows, where the cream could be kept cool in the days before refrigerators became a common household appliance.

Examples 93 and 94 clearly show how the story of Iittala, which is being built all around the website, is combined with the story of Finnish society. Similar to Fiskars, the company makes itself a part of significant societal changes. This adds to the company's Finnishness, increases its connection to its home country and also enhances its importance as a representative of Finland. Another example of this is Iittala's participation in Finnish airline history when the company cooperated with Finland's flag carrier Finnair:

(95) Ultima Thule made history with Finnair in 1969 when the range was used on the airline's first flights between Helsinki and New York. Change was very much in the air that year, with the completion of a new terminal at Helsinki Airport the same year and the introduction of new uniforms for Finnair's cabin staff and new aircraft for the intercontinental service. Wirkkala's Ultima Thule glassware was used in first class on the new planes for a number of years.

Connecting Iittala with Finnair, a national symbol in itself, is another way of highlighting the company's Finnishness and its presence in people's lives,

especially in times of change. There is also a hint of luxury: while the Aino Aalto glassware (93) and the cream bottle (94) in the examples above featured in the lives of ordinary people, Ultima Thule glasses (95) were used in first class on intercontinental flights which supposedly were something that the average Finn could not afford in those days.

There is also an array of product names in Finnish in the Vintage Corner that do not appear anywhere else on the website. Some of these common nouns are translated, others are not. For instance, the Maribowl was originally named *Onni* 'happiness' (96). Other non-translated product names are *Silmu* 'bud' (97), *Tähti* 'star' (98), *Sieppo* 'flycatcher' (99), *Ulpukka* 'yellow water lily' (100), *Hilla* 'cloudberry' (101), *Helminauha* 'string of pearls' (102), *Huntu* 'veil' (103), and *Munankuori* 'eggshell' (104), just to give a few examples. Not surprisingly, most of the names have something to do with nature. And, like many Iittala products manufactured today, those that are not in production any more were also inspired by the Finnish nature, as can be seen in the following examples:

(105) The [Arkipelago] design was inspired by the seascapes of Finland's islands and skerries [...]

(106) Stellar's rough surfaces reflected the wild nature of the Finnish wilderness and arctic ice in a way typical of many other Wirkkala designs.

(107) [The Kuusi candleholders] proved popular, thanks to the design's affinity with forest scenes and the beauty of the forest in winter [...]

(108) [...] Mikko Karppanen's Ice Cube (8) (1995-1996) proved a very distinctive design and one that became popular internationally, with its visual links to Finland's winter landscapes.

These are very similar to examples 70 to 75 above. The inspiration for the products has been drawn from nature, and the representations are fairly typical: "the seascapes of Finland's islands and skerries" (105), "the wild nature of the Finnish wilderness and arctic ice" (106), "forest scenes and the beauty of the forest in winter" (107), and "Finland's winter landscapes" (108). By referring to representations of Finnish nature and landscapes, these complex noun phrases

create an image of Finland as a somewhat rugged country – almost as if Finland was inhabited by nature instead of people.

An interesting representation of Finnishness is the Aalto vase, which not only looks “like the Finnish landscape with its thousands of lakes” (71) but also used to be created with the help of nature by using moulds made of alder (109). Even today, special editions are manufactured in the traditional way from time to time (ibid.). As described on the website, “[t]he beautiful wavy surface produced with a wooden mould complements the shape of the Aalto vase perfectly and transports anyone looking at one or holding one back to the Finnish landscape from which it originated” (110). Thus, even the company itself views the object as a representation of Finnish nature and expects that the product conjures up an image of Finnish lake scenery in the eyes of its beholders.

Iittala’s press releases are not disappointing either in representing the company’s Finnish roots. During the past six years that are covered by the archive, Finnishness has been visible in small details and broader lines as well. Finnish product names pop up here and there, and as with the names on the rest of the website, some of them are given translations whereas others are not. Nature, of course, is depicted as well, as the examples below show:

(111) For Finns, the blueness of water often symbolises summer.

(112) For Finns, blue conjures up visions of the seasons and the interplay between water and ice, Finland’s thousands of lakes, and the deep blue of the northern sky.

(113) The four seasons and the unique quality of the light in the North have always been important sources of inspiration for Iittala’s designers. The long, dark Northern winter, in particular, has challenged designers to incorporate light into their creations [...]

(114) While the owls and foxes in the Taika world live in a snowy winter landscape, the Satumetsä design brings a breathe [sic] of summer. Fantasy and the forest continue to be strong sources of inspiration for Haapaniemi. He is particularly fascinated with the changing seasons and how they are reflected in Finland’s forests.

Here, the colour blue has symbolic meaning. Water, ice, lakes and the sky (112) are quite obvious, and in a way, so is summer (111): lakes are never as blue as they are in summertime. Blue in itself is a symbol of Finnishness thanks to the Finnish flag, but as seen in these examples, it can have another layer of meaning as well. To continue, in examples 113 and 114 there are three themes that can also be found elsewhere on Iittala's website: the four seasons, seasons changing, and light. Finland experiences the changing of the seasons fully. There are clear differences between them, and up to 60 degrees' difference in temperature between summer and winter. Light is also closely connected with seasons: during the months of summer, it never gets fully dark, and in the "long, dark Northern winter" (113) darkness prevails. These themes are representations of the Finnish nature and they also underline nature's versatility. From light to dark, hot to cold, Finland is a land of opposites, and depending on when one is here, the image one gets might be completely different than what it would be during some other season.

The press releases, though mostly revolving around the company's products, also manage to incorporate bits of the Finnish mentality:

(115) [Toikka's] vase (220 mm) included in the collection has now been launched in a new ultramarine version to celebrate the 90 years of Finnish independence. The new vase further inspired Oiva Toikka to design a solid blue bird, Summer Stint, for the festive year. It is easy to equate the tiny bird with the history of the small and feisty Finland, as it travels through its years of independence.

(116) At the same time, [Sarjaton] reflects an even more distant heritage: the core of Finnish folk tradition, which forms the roots of Finnish design. Finland's history and modest living circumstances can be seen in folk tradition as they can in the design heritage: utensils may have simple shapes, but they are most certainly created by skilled craftsmen and women.

In example 115 the focus is on Finland's independence. "[T]he small and feisty Finland" is compared to a "tiny bird" that is blue, the colour of Finnishness. It is true that despite its small size Finland has also been feisty "through its years of independence" (115) in finding its place in the world, both decades ago and even today. In this sense, the glass bird can be considered to symbolise the determination that is often described as one of the main characteristics of Finns.

Example 116 features simplicity, which was already discussed at the beginning of this section. The discussion is continued here by stating that simplicity lies at “the core of Finnish folk tradition” and that simplicity, so typical of Finnish design, has its roots in “Finland’s history and modest living circumstances”. Thus, simplicity is an essentially Finnish characteristic and a product of historical development, but simple does not necessarily mean poor, as even the simplest objects “are most certainly created by skilled craftsmen and women” (116).

5.3 Kalevala Jewelry

To anyone familiar with the Finnish culture, Kalevala Jewelry is easy to recognise as a company from Finland. The name of the company (117) derives – quite obviously – from Kalevala, the national epic of Finland, and it can also be considered to represent the historical roots of the company’s jewellery designs. Also the colour scheme of the company’s website (118) is a representation of Finnishness in itself: not only is the company logo blue and white, but the entire website presents a colour combination of white and different shades of blue, thus reflecting the colours of the Finnish flag.

In addition to its name, Kalevala Jewelry is true to its Finnish roots on other corporate levels as well. First of all, ever since the company was established its ownership has been in the hands of Finnish Kalevala Women’s Association (119), “some 4000 women devoted to preserve and advance our national cultural heritage” (120). Even the way Kalevala Jewelry was born reflects Finnishness: it was a Finnish writer (121) who suggested that jewellery be manufactured and sold – the jewellery “made on the basis of archeological jewelry from the National Museum of Finland” (122), in other words Finnish historical jewellery, and the revenue from sales used to build a statue to Finnish women (123). Today, the company’s corporate functions are located in Helsinki,

and it also “manufactures all its jewelry in Finland and favors materials that have originated in Finland” (124). The company also has its own foundation, Kalevala Koru Cultural Foundation, which “grants awards to support and promote Finnish culture” (125).

The products of Kalevala Jewelry have a deep connection with the Finnish culture and history as well. The company itself states that “[its] designs are rooted in Finnish culture, simultaneously revealing new stories and reviving forgotten tales” (126). As already mentioned above, Kalevala Jewelry’s very first pieces of jewellery were made to imitate Finnish historical jewellery. Although the company has since moved towards more modern jewellery, some older designs are still in production, and “[e]ven the most modern Kalevala Koru pieces have strong roots in Finnish culture, which for centuries has combined the influences of east and west” (127). This description is actually quite surprising: unlike one might think, the focus is not on Finland being a Nordic country but on Finland’s standing as a sort of melting pot of influences from east and west. Nevertheless, it is a valid choice that has roots in Finnish history: seeing as Finland has been under both Russian and Swedish rule on several occasions, the country is bound to have been influenced by Russia in the east, Sweden in the west, and also other cultures that for their part have had an effect on Finland’s two neighbours.

In addition to recreating historical ornaments, the older pieces – including out-of-production jewellery – of Kalevala Jewelry have been inspired by Finnish mythology. One of Kalevala Jewelry’s designers “has delved into old mythology and symbolism while never forgetting the present day” (128), and a design of hers, Bear, does indeed represent the Finnish mythology at its best, as example 129 proves:

(129) The bear was the strongest of the characters. It was told how the bear was the son of Hongatar, how the mother of woodlands had given birth to him "up in the heavens, on the shoulders of the Plough". The bear was treated with great respect and fear, after all it was a half human and half forest being. And also because he who bore the sign of the bear held sway over both people and nature.

In this example the mythological origin of the bear is described; it goes back to the old Finnish pagan religion of the pre-Christian era. It is also noteworthy that even – and especially – in those days, nature was an important element of everyday life, and it is most likely the reason why nature is such an important representation of Finnishness in the modern-day Finland as well. Bear also continues to be a highly respected and feared animal. Though it may have lost its original meaning, it still symbolises something these days: as the king of forests, bear stands for strength and power.

Similar examples of Finnish mythology and folklore can be found behind several other pieces of jewellery as well, as the following examples show:

(130) Vellamo is known in Finnish folklore as the goddess of the sea and the wife of Ahti. In Kalevala she is the mistress of the deep. It is told that this water nymph has a long hair coming down to her waist. [...] According to the beliefs, Vellamo appears first and foremost to men and if caught by a fisherman, Vellamo might try to seduce the man to become his wife.

(131) In ancient times, animals were endowed with powers that people lacked – the gods were thought to speak through animals. Birds in particular were considered a messenger of the gods, so the bird motif was widely used in ancient jewelry. The earliest origins of bird jewelry are difficult to trace, but in Finnish jewelry traditions, the bird has always symbolized health, wealth and success. Because waterfowl were a symbol of fertility, webbed feet were a common motif in women's jewelry.

Examples 130 and 131 follow in the footsteps of example 129 above: they both outline mythological origins of the company's jewellery motifs. These instances of ancient folklore describe how people once saw and organised the world around them, thus they are building a historical story of Finns and Finland. It is also noteworthy here, as it was in example 129, that both examples describe nature: the sea (130) and birds (131). The sea is a typically Finnish element, but a bird or even a waterfowl, despite its ancient symbolism, is not. However, as stated in example 131, "in Finnish jewelry traditions, the bird has always symbolized health, wealth and success", which makes it a representation of Finnishness in this sense as well. Furthermore, not only do the pieces of text depict the mythological stories but they also demonstrate how nature was

respected in Finland. People might have felt somewhat apprehensive towards it, as seen in example 130 which I believe refers to both the dangers of waterways and also marrying a goddess, a daunting thought in itself. However, nature was also a source of hope, as can be seen in example 131 in which waterfowl, thanks to its symbolic meaning, was believed to increase the possibility of having children in times when healthy offspring was not a given.

In addition to mythology and folklore, the jewellery descriptions also inform website visitors about other aspects of Finnish life. Some of them tell stories about life as it was in the old days, an example of which is below:

(132) In bygone times, traditional handicrafts were learnt through the use of a traditional Finnish sheath knife. These crafts were often associated with hunting, building or daily chores to make life easier. A knife also signified power and strength. Learning how [sic] to use a knife skillfully called for strength of mind. An impressive knife is proof of its maker's skill and relentless work – Finnish 'sisu' or sheer grit and determination.

In this example, the focus is on everyday life of ordinary Finns in the old days, "bygone times". The only clear symbol of Finnishness is *sisu*, the Finnish idea of perseverance to the point of stubbornness and one of the words most often used to describe the gritty nation. However, the sheath knife is not altogether meaningless either. It has been an important tool for everyday tasks and therefore a necessary means of survival for Finns. Using it skilfully has been a source of pride, and knife makers have been respected members of the community. Therefore it could be said that a sheath knife, despite the ordinary and sometimes simple tasks it has been used for, has held special meaning in the "bygone times" that Kalevala Jewelry portrays in example 132. However, I believe that the meaning of a sheath knife has not been lost to time as even today it is a common practice to give a sheath knife made by the best artisans as a gift, especially on special days such as birthdays, graduations, award ceremonies and so on.

Some jewellery descriptions of Kalevala Jewelry represent Finnishness from the point of view of what some might call high culture, poetry and music:

(133) "By the Fountain" (Lähteellä) is one of the best-loved poems of Johan Ludvig Runeberg (1804–1877), the national poet of Finland. Its delicate imagery of Finnish nature in its summer splendour has also been set to music. "Oh fountain lovely, near thy side, into thy depths I gaze, as clouds above cast shadowy forms across thy limpid face."

(134) Heavy rock and metal fans know this: the music must have the sound of the ancient pounding of the blacksmith's hammer. It is about being enthusiastic about what you do and diving into the moment. Kalevala Jewelry introduces the "Iron behind border" jewelry series that makes no compromises. The design of this jewelry is based on the Finnish "Rautaa rajan taa" ("Iron behind border") music documentary which investigates the keys to the success of metal music in Finland.

These two examples represent the Finnish culture from opposite ends: culture familiar to only some Finns (133) and culture familiar to most Finns (134). Today, a small majority would be able to mention even one Finnish poet or poem, whereas the majority of Finns would know at least one, most likely several, Finnish heavy metal bands. However, both are important representations of the Finnish culture and therefore Finnishness. Example 133 quotes a poem by Finland's national poet Johan Ludvig Runeberg. One of the major Finnish writers and also the lyricist of the country's national anthem, Runeberg can be considered a symbol of Finnishness, though not everyone might see him as such. His poem with "[i]ts delicate imagery of Finnish nature in its summer splendour" is also a perfect representation of Finnish summer conveying a feeling of lightness and airiness. Example 134, however, is the complete opposite of this. Whereas the quote in example 133 creates an air of serenity, peacefulness and idleness, example 134 is full of "ancient pounding of the blacksmith's hammer", "diving into the moment" and "mak[ing] no compromises" – dark, heavy, full of determination. As the text already states, metal music is hugely popular in Finland and also one of the things Finland is best known for in many countries. As with Moomins, there is nothing particularly Finnish about the music itself, although some claim that it reflects the melancholic mood often connected with Finns. Nevertheless, metal music has become one of the more modern symbols of Finnishness thanks to its status as Finns' favourite music genre.

The product descriptions even act as brief lessons on religion in Finland. Examples 129, 130 and 131 already gave a small glimpse of the old pagan religion, and examples 135 and 136 below provide a description of early Christianity in Finland:

(135) It is generally considered that ecclesiastical activities began in Finland in 1155, when Bishop Henry and King Erik of Sweden made the first crusade to Finland. Jewellery marking the 850th anniversary of the church in Finland features the date engraved in Roman numerals. The motif for the jewellery comes from the consecration cross that the bishop drew in holy oil on the walls of old churches to signify their consecration and the twelve apostles. The church cross is a well-known motif appearing in many murals in mediaeval Finnish churches.

(136) The string of filigreed balls was found with three silver cross pendants in Halikko, in southwestern Finland. The valuable find was buried in an earthenware jar during the conversion of Finland to Christianity, about 800 years ago. The jewelry may have been hidden by a priest who wanted to protect it from pagan Finns, or just as well by church robbers who were hiding their booty – no one knows for sure. In any case, the buried treasure speaks of the unrest and troubled times at the start of the new era in Finland.

These examples have no concrete Finnish symbolism behind them, but they do present a piece of history by explaining the origin of Christianity in Finland. First of all, the religion came from Sweden (135), as did many other influences and developments in Finnish history. Needless to say, Finns were not very happy about their new religion – there was “unrest and troubled times at the start of the new era in Finland” (136). With the religious jewellery motifs originating from those times, described in both example 135 and example 136, the company creates a link between happenings from hundreds of years ago and today, thus adding another piece to the historical story of Finland which is being built by not only Kalevala Jewelry but also other companies of this study (see e.g. examples 94, 95, 115 and 116 of Iittala above).

In the examples above the jewellery designs are historical as well, but even the more modern pieces have drawn inspiration from important events of Finnish history, as the example below shows:

(137) On 1 June 1906, the Finnish Estates accepted a new Parliament Act and Election Act. On that day, Finland, which was still a Grand Duchy of Russia, established the world's most modern Parliament, which ensured universal and equal suffrage. The Dream jewelry collection celebrates the centennial of equality

pioneers. [...] With subtle powerfulness, Dream tells a story of individual courage that, when amassed, can change the world.

Not only was “universal and equal suffrage” an important development in the history of Finland but it was also notable in terms of world history, as Finland was the first nation in the world to give both men and women equal right to vote and run for offices as well. What makes it more remarkable is the fact that Finland was not even an independent country at that point. Thus, there is a hint of patriotic pride mixed in the more general history, as seen in the description of “the world's most modern Parliament” and “individual courage that, when amassed, can change the world”.

Several of the Kalevala Jewelry designers mention nature as a source of inspiration:

(138) Terhi, a passionate gardener, draws themes for her jewelry from the world of plants and the natural environment. Even the snowcrystal idea came from a beautiful ice crystal in a window, because in Koivisto’s eyes, the frozen crystals seemed like silver with a matt surface.

(139) The collection was inspired by a walk in the forest. The shapes of old pine stumps fascinated Räsänen, so he photographed and drew sketches of them. To him, every individual stump had a story of its own, so he worked to capture the rugged forms and the ancient, dignified air of the old tree stumps in his jewelry design.

The examples above introduce concrete symbols of Finnish nature. These are all highly typical, even archetypal, representations of Finnishness: ice and snow (138), forests and trees (139). In addition to that, these pieces of text explain how inspiration for nature-themed pieces is born. Here, it is described as a process which is saturated with nature. As examples 138 and 139 explain it, it is both the broader context and the smaller details of nature that affect the designers. The broader contexts in these two examples are “the world of plants and the natural environment” (138) and “a walk in the forest” (139). In other words, nature functions as a pool of inspiration. The individual ideas, on the other hand, are what I referred to as smaller details. In example 138 the smaller detail, the source of the actual jewellery motif, is “a beautiful ice crystal in a window”.

Similarly, in example 139 “[t]he shapes of old pine stumps” are the smaller details within a broader context which have then been transformed into pieces of jewellery. Thus, nature is what first presents the idea but also what is visible in the finished product.

Nature is also a significant element in the jewellery designs in both their forms and their stories: not only do the designs represent Finnish elements but they also give some insight into the culture. For instance, the Lily of the Valley (140) products look like the flower, but the product description also educates the reader by stating that lily of the valley is “Finland’s national flower” (141) and explaining that the flower “thrives in verdant woodlands, filling the spring air with its sweet scent and stirring anticipation of the approaching summer” (142). Here, the flower is a symbol of Finnishness and also a symbol of summer, another important element for Finns. There is also a cultural reference to the eagerness with which summer is awaited every year, the same phenomenon that was already seen in the analysis of Iittala’s website. Similarly, Snow Flower and Bird of Hattula look like a flower and a bird, and they also have very similar references to the much-awaited changing of the seasons in their descriptions, as can be seen below:

(143) The snow flower springs up from under the snow and ice to celebrate the diversity of nature, creating light and beauty around it.

(144) The northern peoples had a special relationship with waterfowl, which symbolised fertility. For the population of the north, the return of birds in the spring signified summer, the start of a new year. When the waterfowl returned, people knew that nature was [sic] emerging from its winter sleep.

Both examples paint a picture of nature’s rebirth, so to speak: the flower “spring[ing] up from under the snow and ice” (143) and nature “emerging from its winter sleep” (144). Each year, the coming of spring seems nothing short of a miracle for Finns, and as a celebration of nature’s diversity and an object of beauty, the snow flower of example 143 above depicts those feelings perfectly. Also, the snow flower and the waterfowl are both strong representations of seasons changing, as flowers blooming in the middle of snowy patches and

migratory birds returning from the south are sure signs of spring. Though there are no clear symbols of Finnishness, these instances incorporate something of the Finnish mentality, highlight the versatility of the Finnish nature, and also recreate the story of Finnish nature. Therefore they can be considered representations of Finnishness.

Curiously enough, nearly all references to nature (excluding animals) revolve around winter or summer, almost never mentioning spring or autumn. Such is the case with Lily of the Valley (142), Bird of Hattula (144) and Snow Flower (143) above. This might very well be due to the fact that for Finns winter and summer are the most notable of the four seasons. Summer, as short as it is, must be enjoyed to the fullest, and winter, several months long at the worst, is a dominant season that always seems to last forever. Also, these two seasons are the exact opposites: one short and warm, the other long and cold. The theme continues in the description of Polaris below:

(145) The gold and white gold in the Polaris collection designed by Kirsti Doukas forms a dialogue between the Finnish winter and summer. Diamonds sparkling in the white gold bring to mind the snow crystals and ice glistening in the snow crust. Red garnets in the gold jewellery exude the warmth of the short Northern summer.

In this example the sense of the two seasons being opposites is reinforced with the collection that “forms a dialogue between the Finnish winter and summer”. The juxtaposition and the differences between the seasons are described with the help of the materials used in the pieces of jewellery. Here, diamonds and white gold represent winter, “the snow crystals and ice glistening in the snow crust”. Yellow gold and garnets, on the other hand, represent and “exude the warmth of the short Northern summer”.

A more or less obvious representation of Finnishness is how the jewellery has been named. Most of the pieces seem to have been given direct translations but some have retained their original Finnish names either partly or completely. Examples of the partly translated names are Jewelry from Uskela (146), Teljä

Maiden (147) and Suotniemi Brooch (148). The names of the places where the original, historical pieces of jewellery were found have been left as they are, and only the common nouns have been translated. Some names with common nouns, however, have not been translated, such as *Ainoa* ‘the only one’ (149), *Tervas* ‘pitch’ (150) and *Metsäpirtti* ‘forest cabin’ (151). There are also some products which have been given traditional Finnish names: Elli (152), Anna (153) and Vellamo (154) for women, Jussi (155) and Väinö (156) for men, and even Iku-Turso (157) for the mythological beast from Kalevala. As with the products of other companies of the study, the names increase the sense of Finnishness. But unlike other companies, Kalevala Jewelry has not provided any explanation for the non-translated names except for Tervas (158). Also, the original place names in the names of some pieces of jewellery have not been explained in every case. However, they add a touch of exoticism, and seeing as some products have been given an explanation such as “[t]he string of filigreed balls was found with three silver cross pendants in Halikko, in southwestern Finland” (159), people might be able to deduce that the strange words in similar contexts are, in fact, Finnish place names.

5.4 Lumi Accessories

What first strikes a person who enters the Lumi Accessories website is the name of the company (160). As the company originates from a country of ice and snow, it is only natural that snow would have been chosen to represent their business in what is probably its most visible part – the name. Lumi, which is Finnish for snow, is not only a tribute to the company’s country of origin but also a logical choice. As explained on the website, the first products of Lumi Accessories were white felt hats and bags; hence the name Lumi after the snow white material, which was also made in Finland (161). For those who do not speak Finnish, the name has also been translated: “[t]he designers decided to call the products LUMI, the Finnish word for snow” (162).

Another representation of Finnishness can also be found on the Lumi Accessories home page. The large images portraying the company's products have a pale blue background with snow white frames, and also the name of the company is written in blue (163). These two colours are some of the most obvious signs of Finnishness in any context. The same applies to the company's SS12 (i.e. Spring/Summer 2012 collection) lookbook which – by no means coincidentally – presents the same images as the home page (164).

The company embraces its Finnishness in two other lookbooks' photos as well: Spring/Summer 2007 and Fall/Winter 2011, the latter of which also carries the name Finnish Royalty Collection (165). The older collection, Spring/Summer 2007, presents an idyllic, almost national romantic view of the Finnish summer and countryside as a backdrop: planks greyed with age (166), rickety barn walls (167), green grass (168), and a blue sky with fair weather clouds (169). The newer, Fall/Winter 2011, collection focuses on a more sinister and dramatic look, and in these images the company has used props that could be called old-fashioned and, again, national romantic: a fur coat and hat (170), a sheath knife (171), an old log (172), and what I believe is a reindeer skin (173). Thus, despite the clear difference in their moods which most likely reflects the collections' respective seasons, both collections rely on the national romantic view on Finnishness; something that is typical of old, mid-20th century Finnish films. As a curiosity I would also add the 19th century, almost Aleksis Kivi-esque male models and their clothes (174), which only seems to add to the image of old-fashionedness.

Lumi Accessories also draws inspiration for designs from its Finnish roots. At least in three consecutive collections – Fall/Winter 2011, Spring/Summer 2012 and Fall/Winter 2012 – the company has named Finnish nature and scenery as a source of inspiration:

(175) The Fall/Winter 2011 collection was designed during the snowiest year in Finland's capital Helsinki in over a hundred years. The contrast of an urban environment and the snow-white landscapes brought the collection strong

influences from Finland's ethnic heritage, but also a distinct look of the nostalgic upper-class grace of Helsinki's prestigious neighborhoods.

(176) The Lumi Spring/Summer 2012 collection was designed during a long, hot summer at the Finnish archipelago, sitting by the beach on large rocks, breathing the fresh air and looking at the endless sea. These tranquil moments inspired a new direction for the collection [...]

(177) Lumi's Fall/Winter 2012 collection was inspired by Nordic nature's wintery treasures: snow, wood, moss, mystic skyline, Baltic sea's [sic] tranquil waves and colorful houses' rooftop tiles. New bold leather colors from bright orange to fresh grass green are complemented with new Lumi signature Finnish flag's blue lining. [...] These intriguing prints capture the magic moments of Finnish nature during cold months [...]

The exact representations of nature that are mentioned here reflect the respective seasons of each collection. There is snow for the Fall/Winter 2011 collection (175); hot weather, beach, sea, fresh air and the archipelago for the Spring/Summer 2012 collection (176); and "Nordic nature's wintery treasures" such as "snow, wood, moss, mystic skyline, Baltic sea's [sic] tranquil waves" for the Fall/Winter 2012 collection (177). Also the images accompanying the Spring/Summer 2012 and Fall/Winter 2012 examples above represent elements of the Finnish nature: a rock beach by the sea (178) and rock partly covered with moss (179). As already seen in the previous sections, these are fairly typical representations of Finnishness. There are, however, other influences present as well. First of all, the company describes the colour of their bags' lining as "Finnish flag's blue" (177). Thus, not only the colour but also every Lumi bag is a small representation of Finnishness. In addition to that, example 175 mentions the "urban environment" and "Helsinki's prestigious neighborhoods" as a contrast to the natural elements introduced above; in other words, the urban landscape should not be forgotten either, even though nature often attracts more attention. The contrast between the urban and the rural is further underlined in stating that the collection was "designed during the snowiest year in Finland's capital Helsinki in over a hundred years". On the other hand, snow could also be seen as a unifying element: even the urban areas have their fair share of nature despite the fact that cities are rarely considered typical instances of Finnishness (compared with Paris and France, for instance). Also

noteworthy is the fact that all the examples here, 175 to 179, seem to focus on the coast instead of the interior of the country.

An interesting reference to Lumi Accessories' Finnish origin can be found on the company information page. In the paragraphs where the two designers' professional histories are covered, it is mentioned that the Finnish half of the designer duo has also made designs for Nokia, Finland's flagship company (180). Although she has not participated in the design of cellphones but cellphone cases, it would seem that working for Nokia is considered prestigious enough to create some extra value for her current designs as well.

In addition to naming the company itself, Lumi Accessories has also used Finnish in naming their products. Although their most popular products, the Supermarket Bags, have been named more internationally, some of the other bags and accessories have been given quite ordinary Finnish women's and men's names: Sini (181), Ilona (182), Ilari (183) and Jukka (184), just to give a few examples. Interestingly enough, some of them also have a double meaning with references to nature, such as *Tuuli* 'wind' (185) and *Aamu* 'morning' (186). No particular explanation has been provided to explain the international customers that the names are Finnish except for one men's bag, Tomi, which "[l]ike many Finnish boys named Tomi [...] looks sweet and innocent" (187).

5.5 Minna Parikka

The name is often the most visible part of a company, and as has been seen in the previous examples, it also often reflects the companies' nationality. It is the same with Minna Parikka: the company carries the name of its Finnish founder (188), the designer herself. This is an obvious representation of Finnishness, and it would seem that it is also one of the few in the case of this company.

From the group of companies chosen for the present study, Minna Parikka has without a doubt the most international website in terms of expressing nationality. In fact, the only time Finland is mentioned in any way is the remark of Minna Parikka earning “her very own first class postage stamp in Finland” (189). There are also two references to Finland in the form of Helsinki (190), which is mentioned as the home place of the designer herself (191). With the addition of the company name, no other signs of Finnishness can be found on the website.

5.6 Tonfisk Design

Looking at the company’s home page, the first impression of Tonfisk Design is that it does not hide its Finnish heritage – on the contrary. First of all, the colour scheme of the company’s website is rather Finnish: blue and white, the colours of the Finnish flag (192). Complementing the colours of Finnishness and increasing the sense of Finnishness are two pieces of text in the corners of the home page (and, in fact, all other pages as well): the upper left corner with the text “tonfisk® DESIGN SUOMI FINLAND” (193) and the lower right corner with the watermark “MADE IN TURKU FINLAND” (194). The company’s Finnishness is also indicated in the introductory text:

(195) 10 years of Finnish Design
 Since the year 2000 Tonfisk Design’s products have become a mark of Finnish and Scandinavian Design [...]

Although the company name is not Finnish but a mixture of Swedish (*tonfisk* ‘tuna’) and the more international word *design*, it could be argued that this, too, might be a representation of Finnishness, seeing as Swedish is the other official language of Finland.

It is not only the home page that underlines the Finnish roots of Tonfisk Design – Finnishness is present almost everywhere on the company’s website in one form or another. For example, the brief introduction to Tonfisk Design on The

Company page tells the reader that in its early years the company resided “on the appropriately named Lemuntie (Stinky Road) in Helsinki” (196) and that their objective is still the same: “to become one of Scandinavia and Finland’s best known design brands” (197). Even the company name “was chosen late one Finnish winter night [...] to fit the values of the company – innovative, personal, Finnish” (198). Thus, Finnishness is part of the company’s history and its future and also one of its values. Nevertheless, the most distinct and possibly the strangest way of highlighting the company’s Finnish heritage can be found in the same company section under Facts on Finland (199). As opposed to many other company websites, Tonfisk Design has given Finland a page of its own on which they have listed numerous facts about the country. The facts may be correct, and supposedly they are, but their choice of facts is more or less unorthodox. Of course, there are the usual things one would expect to find on a page like this, such as the total area in square kilometres, mean temperature, number of population, the percentage of Finnish speakers, and the amount of lakes (“You have heard about Finland as the land of the thousand lakes, but did you know there are actually over 188.000 lakes with 98.000 islands?”) (200). The unusual facts, however, are unorthodox indeed, as the examples below prove:

(201) 6.832 Finns are in prison and 2.790 would still fit in, so do behave!

(202) Murders in Finland / year ~155

(203) Beer drank by Finns / year 404.193.000 l

(204) Not all Finnish animals are domestic, and certainly not the moose. These are wild animals we like to kill. The Baltic Herring is the most catch [sic] fish in our waters. It is delicious in all forms except as "Tomato Baltic Herring" (Tomaatti Silakka [sic] / Tomat Strömming) which is a common torture method in Finnish schools.

The first two of them, examples 201 and 202, depict some less desirable aspects. On the whole, the number of imprisoned Finns (201) is nevertheless quite low compared to some other countries, and so is the number of murders (202). Also, every country in the world has its own inmates and murder victims. From this point of view, it could even be considered as a positive side of Finland: the country is a rather safe place to live by all standards. The drinking habits of the

nation, however, have often been discussed even in the international media, the latest example of which is the advertisement named “Monsters” by a Finnish non-profit organisation that depicted alcoholic parents appearing as monsters in the eyes of their children (see e.g. Yle 2012). The amount of beer that Finns consume (203) could be seen as highlighting this problem. The last of the three examples above, example 204, focuses on hunting and fishing – on “wild animals we like to kill”. The centre of attention is the herring. “[T]he most catch [sic] fish in our waters”, the writer of the facts seems to enjoy eating it, except when it takes the form of “Tomato Baltic Herring [...] a common torture method in Finnish schools”. Obviously, the writer does not mean this literally, but there is a grain of truth in it: all school children have at least one dish that they have absolutely learned to hate in school. Some schools require that pupils eat or at least taste everything on their plates, and this has resulted in life-long hatred towards some typical dishes served at school lunch. Apparently, tomato herring is that dish for the writer of the facts.

It should be kept in mind that Tonfisk Design does not seem to take itself too seriously. This was already visible in the way the company described its first premises on “Stinky Road” (196). Also, the reader is warned beforehand of the nature of such facts as described above: on the same page it is stated that they are “fun to know absolutely useless trivia”. Nevertheless, it is difficult to say what kind of an effect the facts would have on a foreigner who did not know much about Finland to begin with, because some of them are not particularly flattering, and the usual facts (languages, population, etc.) are rather neutral by nature. A somewhat similar approach to the company’s origin can be found on the FAQ (i.e. Frequently Asked Questions) page as well. In this section the question “Where is Tonfisk from?” is given a rather stereotypical answer: “Tonfisk is from Finland, the land of a [sic] 188,000 lakes, of Kimi Räikkönen, Nokia mobiles and biggest of all, Santa Claus” (205). The reasoning behind the answer is fairly simple, seeing as many foreigners are familiar with these aspects of Finland. A combination of traditional (lakes and Father Christmas)

and more modern (Nokia mobile phones and Kimi Räikkönen, the Formula 1 driver) symbols, it is likely that at least one of them will be recognised by almost any website visitor. Although it is slightly difficult to say how Nokia stands in the appreciation scale these days, these positive representations of Finnishness can, via the country-of-origin effect, make potential customers see Tonfisk Design's products in a more positive light as well.

As has already been discussed in the previous sections above, most companies have opted to retain Finnish product names even on their international websites, and Tonfisk Design follows the same style. Eight out of their 18 product families have Finnish names: Nokka (206), Maku (207), Oma (208), Kiikku (209), Kinos (210), Kasvu (211), Kulma (212) and Sula (213). Only four of them have been given direct translations. Maku is “[n]amed after the Finnish word for 'taste'” (214); Kinos “is a set of sushi plates which bring the beauty of Finnish winter to you (KINOS meaning ‘snowdrift’ in Finnish)” (215); Kulma “is the Finnish word for 'angle' or 'corner'” (216); and Sula “is pronounced 'sue-la' and means 'melted' in Finnish” (217). As for the other four products, the names of three of them have been indirectly explained, though not translated: the products have been named based on their appearances. The name *Nokka* ‘spout’ (218) is a description of the products themselves which have specially designed spouts. *Kiikku* ‘swing’ (219), on the other hand, is a wooden ladder with hanging and swinging flower pots, and *Kasvu* ‘growth’ (220) is “an extendable vase” whose height can be altered when necessary. In addition to the examples mentioned here, one small piece of text has been translated. In the FAQ section there is a question regarding the meaning of the word *Suomi*, which has been answered “Suomi means Finland in Finnish” (221). On the same page the company also emphasises its Finnishness by stating that “[t]he products are truly Finnish and all the products are handmade in [the company's] own workshop in Turku” (222).

If the names of the products are typically Finnish, so are some of the product descriptions. There are two very obvious representations in Warm and Kinoss products:

(223) We call it a Latte mug, but it is really just a Great Big Mug. A favourite with the hardcore WARM users. Its size means you don't continually have to be filling up and it is lovely for warming up both hands on a cold Finnish winter morning.

(224) KINOS is a set of sushi plates which bring the beauty of Finnish winter to you (KINOS meaning 'snowdrift' in Finnish). Each plate's final contours have developed during their firing. Just as in the heat of Finnish sauna, stress and tensions recede and a more relaxed form emerges.

These instances highlight some prominent elements of Finnishness. Example 223 describes Finns' love for hot beverages, especially coffee and preferably in as large a mug as possible. It also mentions cold winter mornings, another thing that is typically Finnish. In example 224 "the beauty of Finnish winter" is attached to the appearance of the product that looks like a snowdrift. There is also a description of the sauna and its healing, relaxing, stress-relieving power. Obviously, the sauna is one of the most typical symbols of Finnishness, but it is also interesting to notice how both examples create a contrast between warm and cold. For a Finn, however, it is reality: during the cold winter months, the best things to keep one warm are hot drinks and sauna. The only things missing from the list are woollen socks and a fireplace.

6 DISCUSSION

In the previous chapter the websites of six Finnish design companies were examined in detail to find out how these companies represent their Finnish roots; to what extent and with which modes their Finnishness was represented, and also the manner in which the companies' Finnish origin was represented.

To sum up the findings, Fiskars mainly represents its Finnish origin through images which for the most part revolve around nature. Some textual elements are also used when the company history and Moomin products are described. Nevertheless, most of the representations of Finnishness are in the form of images. The themes that the two modes cover are nature, activities related to nature, history and Moomins, but as a whole the website does not contain many instances of representing Finnishness.

On the website of Iittala Finnishness features in the company's products and in the Myiittala section. It is represented in product names, on some products' forms and designs as well as in product descriptions, and in the Myiittala pages there are examples of Finnishness in certain images but it is especially visible in pieces of text. The representations incorporate traditions, nature, language, Moomins, everyday life, food culture, history, society, values and holidays. All in all, Finnishness is quite visible on Iittala's website, especially in textual form.

In the case of Kalevala Jewelry, the colour scheme and the name of the company represent its Finnish roots throughout the website. The company's Finnish origin is clearly visible in its history, and the products are also firmly rooted in Finnishness from inspiration to actual shape. There are only few images (in the form of product pictures) but plenty of textual elements presenting Finnish mythology and folklore, history, music, poetry, religion and nature. Some product names are also in Finnish. In other words, Kalevala Jewelry's Finnish roots are represented quite well.

Lumi Accessories represents its Finnish origin mainly through its lookbooks' photos and descriptions. The images have a national romantic point of view with elements of a typical Finnish countryside summer and old-fashioned accessories. The texts, on the other hand, focus on how inspiration has been drawn from nature and urban landscape. In addition to these, the company's Finnish roots are visible in its name and how it originated as well as in some of the product names. Finnishness is therefore rather well presented in the lookbooks but not so much elsewhere on the website.

On the website of Minna Parikka there are only four instances that could be considered to represent Finnishness: the name of the company, one mention of Finland and two references to Helsinki. Compared with other companies of this study, these barely count as representations of Finnishness. Therefore it is quite safe to say that Minna Parikka does not highlight its Finnish origin in any particular manner.

Finnishness is present on every single page of Tonfisk Design's website in the form of the blue-and-white colour scheme and the words "tonfisk® DESIGN SUOMI FINLAND" and "MADE IN TURKU FINLAND". There are no images at all that would represent Finnishness; instead, the company relies on the colour scheme and textual elements. The company's rather unorthodox facts on Finland and Finnish product names are the most visible representations, but there are a few other instances as well, which mention cold winters, warming coffee and sauna. All in all, Finnishness is rather well represented on the website of Tonfisk Design, especially since the website is quite compact in size.

To recapitulate, five of the six companies selected for this study highlighted their Finnish roots in one way or another, and there did not seem to be a consistent manner of using any particular mode in representing Finnishness. Some of the companies used colours to represent their Finnish origin, but others did not. Nevertheless, when utilised, the colours blue and white were in a

visible role even to the extent of appearing on every single page of the website as a unifying colour scheme. Most of the companies used images and text to underline their Finnishness, but the ratio of images to text varied between them. There was even one company (Tonfisk Design) that did not use images at all in representing its Finnish roots. However, it seems safe to say that as a whole, textual elements were more popular than images. Single Finnish words – both common and proper nouns – were used in product names and also in company names. This is quite natural as most of the products would have a Finnish name in Finland as well, and in retaining the Finnish names companies can make themselves appear more Finnish. As for company names, it would not be very rational to change them (although Kalevala Jewelry did translate the latter part of its name, the word *koru* ‘jewellery’). Nevertheless, it is obvious that the more complex constructions such as stories and descriptions were the most important textual elements in representing Finnishness. They were utilised in describing products: what they looked like, how the products came to be and what the inspiration behind them was. Some of the texts also provided information on the companies themselves, especially their history. In addition to that, there were plenty of textual elements focused on Finland and its history, nature, traditions and culture. All this makes sense because as was seen in section 3.4 earlier, writing “has its strength in the depiction of events and states-of-affairs in time”, and it “can [also] be based on and evoke mental imagery” (Stöckl 2004: 18, 24). It is nevertheless surprising that there were not more images utilised in representing Finnishness, especially since they can serve so many purposes; for instance, they can bring out emotions, convey messages swiftly and attract attention (see section 3.3 for more details).

Despite the fact that there were clear differences between companies, there were some themes that appeared multiple times on the companies’ websites: nature, history, the colours blue and white, and words in Finnish. In one form or another, there were elements of the Finnish nature present on every website except that of Minna Parikka. This suggests that nature is a highly important

symbol of Finnishness, and judging by the forms in which it was represented, the most significant elements of the Finnish nature are the seasons (especially winter and summer, the changing of the seasons in general, and versatility of the Finnish nature), waterways (especially the sea and lakes), snow and ice, forests, and different animals. There was also a clear tendency to depict the landscape as open and serene but also as wild and untamed. As for history, there were several examples of more general history of the country, religion in different times, social and industrial developments, and traditions and traditional lifestyle or “life in the old days”. This, I believe, is not so much a recognisable symbol (that is to say, a symbol that foreigners would instantly interpret as Finnish) compared to others but rather a way to construct the story of Finland and Finnishness. The colour combination of blue and white, on the other hand, is an obvious symbol of Finnishness, as are any nations’ colours. The colours functioned as a dominant colour scheme on the entire website or only appeared in smaller details such as the company logo. In one case it was also stated that blue has symbolic meaning for Finns. Last but not least, there were Finnish product names: common nouns, proper nouns, and combinations of the two in which the common noun had been translated. In some cases the meanings of the names had been either translated or clarified, but in others there was no explanation whatsoever. Again, I do not interpret these as actual symbols; instead, I see the Finnish words as an easy way to increase the sense of Finnishness and exoticness as well.

All in all, the different representations form their own image of Finland and Finnishness. The kind of Finnishness the companies promote is clearly centred around two main themes, nature and history, and this seems to be in line with how Finns see themselves. Finns are people who love and respect nature, and they also appreciate the changing of the seasons despite the constant grumbling about the amount of snow and too many minus degrees. As a matter of fact, this is something that Finns are proud of: they might have such a cold weather that cars will not start and so much snow that one can barely walk outside, but

everything still goes on normally – Finns are survivors by nature. Finns are equally proud of their history, especially the moments that highlight the perseverance, *sisu*, of the nation; in essence, Finland may be a small country, but it is definitely big in spirit. Also, as explained in section 2.3, the images that people have about countries are often simplifications due to people's need to categorise an enormous amount of information and put it into a more compact form (Kotler and Gertner 2002: 250–251). Therefore it only makes sense that the country images that are promoted are simple as well, focusing on few themes only, especially in the context of websites in which the country image is not the main subject. This idea is supported by the fact that there were only four main themes of which two, nature and history, received more attention than others. Furthermore, after taking another look at the background sections at the beginning of this study, the recurrence of these four themes should not be surprising. After all, history and folk culture have been named as inspirations for Finnish design (see section 2.2), and, as already stated in section 2.1, during the past decade such symbols of Finnishness as nature, lakes, sauna, and the colours blue and white have been used in Finnish advertising (Heinonen 2005: 182). But most importantly, the use of national symbols has not been limited to domestic markets only: they have also become central elements for companies trying to build successful international brands (*ibid.*).

What do the amount and manifestations of Finnishness mean, then? How does Finnishness contribute to the image of these companies? To begin with the easiest one, Finnishness does not play any significant role for Minna Parikka. On the company's website Finnishness is clearly not highlighted; in fact, it is barely mentioned. This is most likely due to a clash between the company and country images. It would seem that in the case of Minna Parikka the company's image does not include Finnishness, and therefore the country of origin is not considered an advantage and is consequently not emphasised. Without clear references to the country of origin the company does not benefit from the country-of-origin effect, but neither does the home country project any negative

or unwanted elements onto the company or its brand. Thus, if Finnishness does not have anything to offer to the company or its brand, it is only logical not to utilise or even mention it.

As for the rest of the companies, the answer is not quite as straightforward. As was already seen above, Fiskars has not included many Finnish elements on its website, and even the ones I located are relatively insignificant as a whole; for instance, images that could be considered to represent Finnishness often feature a person using one of Fiskars' products, and some of them almost seem like a side note – small images on the side of the page which need to be clicked in order to actually see any details. Also, even though the history of Fiskars is connected with the history of industrialism in Finland on the company's website, the focus is still clearly on Fiskars, as was already pointed out in section 5.1. On the company's website it is stated that Fiskars is “very much grounded in its long tradition and heritage for design” (Fiskars 2012c) and also “celebrated for a history of products accommodating the strict Finnish standards for quality and design” (Fiskars 2012a). Based on the findings this is without a doubt true: while being a very old Finnish company, Fiskars does not really emphasise its Finnishness in any way besides their long history and especially their long history in design. For Fiskars, being Finnish is essentially being a Finnish design company and not so much a Finnish company. Thus, Finnishness itself does not seem to play an important role in the image of Fiskars.

Compared with that of Fiskars, the website of Iittala is notably different in terms of representing Finnishness. It is clearly visible in images depicting Finnish elements, both as an inspiration and as a form in products' designs, how the products have been named, the company's history – in other words, Finnishness is represented in many different ways on Iittala's website. It is therefore rather obvious that Finnishness is a big part of the company's image. It seems to be portrayed as a characteristic that is a natural part of the image

instead of something that has been carefully constructed. Consider, for instance, how the designers were inspired by the nature and thus designed their products to imitate whatever it was that has caught their eye; thus, the products represented Finnish nature even at the moment of their creation and not only later when it was stated that they represent nature. Or, how certain products, such as the cream bottle and Aino Aalto glassware, featured in the lives of ordinary Finns and were born out of need to simplify everyday living. Also, especially in the Thoughts and Senses blog, the products of Iittala are seen in everyday settings that could be found in any (Finnish) home. These kinds of constructions create the feeling that Finnishness is not just something that has been attached to the image as an afterthought; instead, it is described as an inherent characteristic of the company and therefore making the company appear Finnish – perhaps even more Finnish than it is. Nevertheless, whether constructed on purpose or simply stating facts, the representations on the website of Iittala do create a sense of a company that is Finnish by nature. As I interpret it, this is as integral a part of the company as everything else, something inseparable that the company image would not survive without. Finnishness is, essentially, a part of Iittala's identity and thus reflected in everything the company does and is. I do not, however, see that Finnishness would bring any extra value to the image other than the obvious connection to Finnish design and its respected status via emphasising the company's Finnish origin (and thus utilising the country-of-origin effect). Therefore I suggest that for Iittala Finnish design is more important than Finnishness but, compared to Fiskars, design and Finnishness are also so closely intertwined in the company's image that it is difficult to separate them from each other.

To continue, Kalevala Jewelry is similar to Iittala in the sense that they both highlight their Finnish roots very strongly, but Finnishness is perhaps even more emphasised in the case of Kalevala Jewelry. As seen above in section 5.3, Finnishness features in the company's products, its history and the colour scheme of the website, for instance. Even the way the company was born

resonates with Finnishness, but it is best seen in product descriptions such as those presented in examples 129 and 133. These descriptions deftly combine nature, history and culture into stories of Finnishness that both appeal to Finns and create a sense of Finnishness and exoticness for foreigners. They also give a deeper meaning for products, making them representatives of those stories and thus also representatives of Finnishness instead of just pretty little adornments. This brings to mind Iittala and the feeling of Finnishness as an inherent quality. There are two important differences in the representations, however. First of all, although Finnish design is mentioned on Kalevala Jewelry's website as well, it is not given similar emphasis. Kalevala Jewelry relies on its own design history instead of the more general category of Finnish design. And second, Kalevala Jewelry is more historically oriented. While Iittala might seem more modern and fresh in its overall approach, Kalevala Jewelry embraces its historical origin and is not afraid to show it. The Finnishness of Kalevala Jewelry is also more traditional in the historical sense of the word, as the examples depicting mythology, life in the old days, traditions and nature show. All in all, in the case of Kalevala Jewelry, Finnishness is not simply an essential part of the image but the most important element of it because Finnishness is the starting point of everything the company is and does – it is, in essence, the core of its identity.

Lumi Accessories, on the other hand, lies somewhere between the opposite ends of the representation scale. Looking at the entire website, it seems that the Finnishness is not an important element as a whole. However, when Finnishness is represented, it is represented in an explicit and unapologetic manner – as if there was no question of leaving Finnishness out. As already discussed in section 5.4, nearly all instances of Finnishness can be found in the company's lookbooks in which the newest collections are exhibited. Unlike those of Iittala and Kalevala Jewelry, the products of Lumi Accessories do not ooze Finnishness. Instead, Finnishness is clearly visible in props, backgrounds, themes, inspiration and even some models of the lookbooks. However, as for its

contribution to the company image, it would seem that Finnishness is a part of the image but not a part that is actively highlighted or promoted. It plays a much bigger role in the image of Lumi Accessories than in the image of Minna Parikka, but compared to Iittala and Kalevala Koru, the amount of Finnishness is clearly smaller on the website of Lumi Accessories. Also, it appears that the brand has not been built around Finnishness either, even though the company's birth and name are both directly related to it. If removed from the website altogether, it would not make a real difference to the image of Lumi Accessories, which is why I feel comfortable stating that Finnishness, although a part of it, is not an essential element in the company's image.

Last but not least, Tonfisk Design has its own unique way of representing its Finnish origin; it is similar to yet very different from the other companies of this study. Although Finnishness is visible on every page of the website in the colour scheme and the words "tonfisk® DESIGN SUOMI FINLAND" and "MADE IN TURKU FINLAND", elsewhere it is mainly appears in smaller, almost insignificant details. Take, for instance, Finnish product names and the mentions such as "Lemuntie (Stinky Road)" and the company name that was "chosen late one Finnish winter night". Of course these are representations of Finnishness, that is certain, but they are only small ones. There are, on the whole, not that many recurring themes, narratives or detailed descriptions. In fact, the only larger whole on the website in terms of Finnishness is the Facts on Finland section, and even that reads as half humour, half fact book – it does not truly depict Finland or offer any value for the company. Nevertheless, there is no denying that even though the amount of Finnishness and the manner in which it is represented are not altogether convincing, the website does convey a feeling of Finnishness. It seems, however, that Finnishness is not very important for Tonfisk Design in the same way as it was unimportant for Fiskars. For the most part, the Finnishness that is represented on Tonfisk Design's website is more of an interjection instead of a well-thought-out expression, and at some points, it even resembles a comic relief. Based on my findings, I would therefore

conclude that the image of Tonfisk Design is founded on it being a Finnish design company, but the company's heritage, its Finnishness, is not forgotten either. This is supported by the fact that even though the co-founder of the company is an Irishman, Ireland or Irishness are not mentioned on the website – only Finland and Finnishness. Thus, I suggest that Finnishness does not play a major role in the company's image, but it is nevertheless an important part of its identity.

In brief, it seems that the role of Finnishness in the companies' image varies greatly, even if the companies represent a field in which the word "Finnish" can have a significant effect. There does not seem to be a clear pattern to it, nor can anything be deduced from the age of the company; after all, Fiskars did not place any particular importance on its Finnish heritage despite the fact that it is the oldest company in Finland, and neither did Minna Parikka, the youngest company of this study. Company size does not seem to be a crucial factor either. There are also cases in which Finnishness is clearly a part of the companies' identity. Therefore, to be quite honest, it is quite difficult to say what role Finnishness plays as a whole. It would seem that it is present in one form or another in most websites of the companies of this study, but there is no clear conclusion to be drawn from this. However, I do feel comfortable stating that in each case the representations of Finnishness highlight the companies' origin and emphasise their Finnishness, which clearly places them within the more concrete, well known, internationally respected framework of Finnish design.

Why are there such differences, then? One possible answer lies in a theory by Jaffe and Nebenzahl (2001: 95–121) according to which a positive country image does not necessarily have a positive effect on all products originating from the same country. The country image should be used in promoting product sales when there is a "favourable product-country match", in other words when "the perceived strengths of a country (positive country image) consist of important

products features or benefits for the particular product category” (Jaffe and Nebenzahl 2001: 113). Therefore, if companies feel that Finnishness does not bring them or their products any extra value, they might not utilise it as a selling point. Similarly, if companies feel that Finnishness is something that will make their products appear better and more desirable than other companies’ products, it is likely that they will make good use of their country of origin. In light of my findings, I believe that this explains why some companies have decided not to highlight Finnishness, as I already pointed out earlier in this chapter in the case of Minna Parikka. However, when it comes to those companies that do utilise Finnishness, I do not believe that Jaffe and Nebenzahl’s theory is an adequate explanation. Obviously, for Kalevala Koru, Finnishness forms the basis of its identity, in which case it is only natural that representations of Finnishness can be found everywhere on the website. But as was seen in chapter 5, there are many different types of representations of Finnishness on other companies’ websites as well. How many of those representations are actually “perceived strengths” of Finland? Based on the findings of this study as well as my own experience, only the Finnish nature would fulfil that criterion, and seeing as the major theme of the official travel site of Finland is nature, this is a valid thought (VisitFinland 2012). However, even then I would not classify Finnish nature as an important product feature or benefit; after all, it does not make a real difference whether a tiered glass was inspired by rings of water or by something else entirely. Also, if the rest of the representations are not actual strengths and therefore selling points, what is their purpose? After all, apart from Kalevala Jewelry, I do not see that Finnishness in itself would bring any extra value to any of the companies, although it does add a touch of exoticism to the companies and their products. I would suggest that their benefit is twofold. First, by reminding the website visitors – or (potential) customers, as they in this context would most likely be – of the companies’ Finnish origin with the help of various representations, the companies differentiate themselves and their products from similar companies and products from other countries. And second, by labelling themselves as

Finnish, the companies are inevitably linking themselves to Finnish design, which, considering the appreciated status of Finnish design, probably gives them an edge in today's international and increasingly competitive markets. Also, as pointed out in section 2.3, the country of origin can have a significant effect in people's buying behaviour and decision-making. Therefore it is also possible that Finnishness on the websites of this study serves merely as a reminder that the companies and their products are indeed Finnish, and therefore the companies could be simply taking advantage of Finland's positive attributes.

One might ask why Finnish design as a representation of Finnishness has been left out of the analysis; after all, it has proven important in the context of this study, and as pointed out in chapter 2, design is highly important for Finland and Finnish design a familiar concept in many countries. This was a deliberate choice on my part. After the initial glance at the websites, I concluded that focusing on both Finnish design and other elements of Finnishness would result in too much data for one thesis alone. In addition to that, Finnish design is perhaps too well known in the context of this study whereas Finnishness as a value-adding characteristic is a less-examined topic and would better provide some new insight into the matter. Also, seeing as branding Finland has been under discussion for some years now, it made sense to focus on how the companies' nationality was represented on their international websites. Therefore I made the necessary decision to exclude Finnish design from the analysis so that it would be possible to offer a more comprehensive account of the other elements of Finnishness found on the companies' websites. However, while the companies selected for the present study seem to express their Finnishness in different manners, there is no denying that what binds them together is their background in design – in fact, it binds them together to the point of Finnish design being highlighted more than Finnishness itself. Whether old or young, firmly rooted in their Finnish origin or ignoring it for the most part, the companies clearly represent Finnish design. In their studies of the

country-of-origin effect, Jaffe and Nebenzahl (2001: 111) have observed that “[i]n another category are those products whose country image is strong, but whose brand image is weak. [...] In essence, these brands try to piggyback on a strong country image by emphasizing the made-in cue”. This is without a doubt true, and, as already stated above, I believe the same principle also applies to Finnish design companies at least to some extent: by emphasising their origin and especially their status as Finnish design companies, the companies are using Finnish design to their advantage, since it is so well known abroad and has such a prestigious history. Nevertheless, I believe that by focusing on Finnishness in general I have succeeded in providing information that would not have been available if I had studied representations of Finnish design, and this makes the study worthwhile.

7 CONCLUSION

As mentioned in section 2.3, the country of origin is but one element on the basis of which consumers make buying decisions. However, it has a significant advantage in that it is able to incorporate many benefits and attributes which potential buyers might view as valuable and desirable, even necessary, in the products they buy. Messaris (1997: 113) has observed that “[w]hen country of origin is an asset, ads are likely to feature it”. In light of this study, it would appear that the same principle applies to company websites as well: when the country of origin is considered to evoke positive feelings and/or create some extra value for products and consequently more profit for companies, it is included as an important element on the websites. For instance, in the case of Kalevala Jewelry it seemed that no matter where one looked, there was always at least one representation of Finnishness. The website of Minna Parikka, on the other hand, barely even mentioned Finland, let alone had more implicit references to its Finnish roots.

The purpose of this thesis was to find out how the Finnish roots of Finnish design companies are represented and how Finnishness contributes to the companies’ image. I began by studying the context – Finnish national identity, Finnish design and the country-of-origin effect – after which I set out to find suitable theories for the thesis. As there were so many matters to consider in the context of this study, it was impossible to find one single theory that would have suited it well. It was therefore necessary to compile a suitable framework for the analysis from several different sources. Theories of discourse analysis, especially multimodal discourse analysis, functioned as the theoretical background, and three different modes and my knowledge of the Finnish culture served as tools to locate and analyse the representations of Finnishness. As a whole, there were plenty of them. However, there were also many differences between companies, some clear and other more subtle: the amount of representations, the content of the representations, the modes that were used, the manner in which things were represented, and so on. Besides some

recurring themes, there was no clear pattern to be detected. Initially I expected to come to the conclusion that Finnishness is strongly present and plays an important role in the image of the companies, but it soon became obvious that this was not the case. Even within the rather random selection of six companies, there was one company that represented Finnishness so little that it was almost nonexistent, and for another company Finnishness lay at the core of its identity and was also the most important part of its image. All in all, Finnishness did not contribute to the companies' image as heavily as I had expected. It was obvious, however, that Finnish design was important for the companies, sometimes even more important than Finnishness itself. Therefore I concluded that whether or not Finnishness played a significant role in the image, it nevertheless created a connection between the companies of this study and the larger framework of Finnish design, thus acting as a reminder of the companies' Finnish roots and inevitably enabling them to piggyback on the prestigious status of Finnish design.

As explained in section 3.1, representations are ways of creating and recreating, organising and reorganising the world. The six design companies of this study are only a small sample of all the design companies of the country, and only a drop in the ocean in the scope of Finnish companies. Therefore, as this is a qualitative study, the results presented here cannot be applied as such to either design companies or companies from other industries. Nevertheless, I believe that I have been able to bring new insight into this complex phenomenon, and I hope that this thesis will inspire people to investigate the matter further. One possible idea for future research would be to examine the same topic from a corporate point of view instead of a more consumer-oriented one as I have done here. Has it been a conscious decision to utilise or not utilise Finnishness as a selling point? Why do or do not companies utilise it? Has it been to the companies' advantage? Another interesting perspective would be how non-Finns understand and interpret the references to the companies' Finnish roots and whether or not their interpretations match the intended messages or Finns'

interpretations of the same references. This would be especially helpful in terms of international marketing and could perhaps lead to a more efficient way of utilising the country-of-origin effect in this context. Also, shifting the perspective from design companies to other industries (in which there is not such a large framework as Finnish design affecting companies) might yield different results. In addition to these, considering that branding Finland has been a much-discussed topic in the past few years, it would be interesting to examine whether or not Finnish (design) companies' websites are consistent with the image of Finland that is being projected to the outside world and if the image seen on the websites has, in fact, improved the image of Finland in the eyes of foreigners.

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