FIGURING (Indian) ADS IN TRANSLOCAL SPACES
Towards a Transnational Anthropology of Advertising

Michael M.J. Fischer (Rice Univ.)
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I

Traveling Theories: positioning, loading, semantic networks, cultural hermeneutics

> advertising has spoken in a broad variety of dialects
> --Kirk Varnedoe, 1991: 231

> . . . Indian advertising takes its values from Indian culture, not Western culture. . . . We are in the idea business, not the client business. . . . [In the fourth phase] communication had to become intriguing before it was informative . . . one needs to pitch at the right level of difficulty if one is to intrigue and involve the audience -- Alyque Padamsee, 1990

> Advertising (and within advertising, fashion) is now the master discourse: its logic unites and governs all forms of sign production . . . art has begun to serve as the research and development department for the information industries. Discoveries in art are quickly put to use in public relations, sales and entertainment . . . -- Richard Bolton, 1987

> New product introduction is no longer event by event, but now is [like] a continuous process production line --Mukund Mahajan, 1991

This paper surveys several complementary styles of analysis which seek to read the rapidly changing advertising industry in India, and read from it and them both about the nature of social change in India, and also about visual figuration in contemporary consciousness more generally. These styles of analysis (and/or "data sets") include (1) business marketing case books and advertising professional magazines (official advertising discourse); (2) interviews and discussions with ad agency professionals (informal advertising discourse: corridor talk); (3) cross-readings between art criticism, behavioral psychology, and advertising (the construction of popular culture); (4) anthropologists' analyses (functionalist, semiotic, and hermeneutic "explanations").[1] Particular attention is paid to the interplay of print and visual media, to domestic class and national-international cultural agons, and to the shifts from localizing cultural modernisms/nationalisms (differentiation, essentialism) to transnational culture and the repositionings worked by the processes of postmodernity.

Although "inconsistently pursued" in this draft, the question arises whether it would be possible to write, construct, or deploy, an article on advertising using the concrete logic of, say, Indian (or

Bengali, Gujurati, Tamil, Hindi, or English language) ad campaigns with their "personas", stylistic attributes and cultural resonnances in the way notes compose a score, or as Levi-Strauss would have liked us to read his *Mythologiques*? The point behind this question (whether or not later drafts actually pursue such a design) is not to produce a structuralist deployment -- though clearly the advertising guild's ideas about "positioning" would lend themselves easily to endless charts of that variety -- but rather to showcase the cultural discourses of Indian commercial life instead of overshadowing them through functionalist or semiotic distancings that only talk about the Foucaultian disciplining that advertising might exercise, and that eviscerate (disembowel, mistake the disgestive tract for the food) the actual play of culture involved in the advertising circuits and their resonnances elsewhere in society. It is this idea then that begs indulgence for the flat footed, and often inelegant, citation of details of ad campaigns; that begs the reader to think these elements into a more musical potential orchestration.

[What I have in mind was gestured at in a slightly different manner in a trial piece on Iranian revolutionary art (Fischer and Abedi 1990: ch. 6): on the interweaving of traditional Persian art styles, the third world revolutionary art tradition stemming from Bolshevik poster art -- not merely socialist realism, but more importantly constructivism -- and various fusions including the incorporation of contemporary "heavy metal" and psychodelic art -- in order to interrogate the various registers of the local and global that are expressed through styles of hybridization. A shift, it was argued, is registered in this visual medium away from harmonious and incorporative cultural *condensations* or *con-fusions*[2] that operate, as Victor Turner perhaps most eloquently argued, in effective ritual processes; and also away from the analytical dialectics of *counter-textual* [3] interpretations of print and disciplined dialogues or disputations which served as the elite media of the major world religions in the ages of transition from bureaucratic agrarian empires to industrial labor forces; a shift towards *dissemination* structures, to adapt Derridean terms, or *figural blocking together* of heterotopic spaces, to adapt Lyotard's terms,[4] that juxtapose in a tension different realms of meaning, and thereby expose social conflicts and unresolved processes of cultural redefinition. The question in the present paper is whether advertising can be read as figural in this sense of blocking together compressed icons of cultural meaning from opposed, contending and incommensurable cultural and social universes; blocking together disparate, multilayered, abbreviated, fragmented, and highly allusive and elusive visual and verbal (and sonic) cues; whether advertising can be read as an access to contemporary change that it is helping to mould as well as reflect.]

Regarding the elegant paranoias of Foucaultian (or Frankfurt School culture industry) suspicion, it is perhaps well to remind ourself of the ad put out by the American Association of Advertising Agencies (which hangs on the wall of Alyque Padamsee's Lintas executive office in Bombay): it is a picture of Moses and the ten commandments with the legend, "However Powerful a Message Is, Some People May Not Buy It," and then down below, of course, the slogan of the ideology of the marketplace, "Advertising, Another Word for Freedom of Choice." To interrogate this ad is perhaps to lay out several dimensions of the problematic of advertising, neither overestimating the power of advertisers to manipulate consciousness (certainly a warning to individual "creatives" not

to take themselves too seriously), nor on the other hand to overestimate the degree of freedom from the cultural circuits which focus and direct the attention of individuals on preconscious, subconscious, and conscious levels. As one New York creative put it, "It's not that I'm striving to be immortal -- you know, how some people want their work to go on after them. But doing commercials is a way of spreading yourself around. . . and who knows, maybe a phrase I write might become a part of the English language -- it's happened"(Hirota 1988: 284). Hirota describes the feelings creatives have of walking about and feeling the "vibes" of their work on billboards, tv screens and in the lanquage people speak, of entering and modulating the flow of popular culture: "Advertising allows creatives to enter in a circular way the lives of those who see and hear their products. Creatives pride themselves on skillfully gleaning the raw stuff of their advertisements from the social life around them; at the same time they want to "touch" the lives of members of mass audiences through their symbolic products" (ibid, 285).

Transverse to this dimension of advertising's participation in and modification of the circuits of local popular culture, there is also the global, transnational dimension of an American advertising guild poster hanging in the executive office of one of the largest of Indian advertising firms. The circuit of the flow of items of the commercial imaginary from America to India is obvious; slowly there will emerge an ever stronger reverse flow as well, as the language of commerce in the West becomes "decolonized". The initial place to watch this happening, vis-a-vis inputs from India, is in the print and video media directed to Indians living abroad, in the pages of magazines, on Indian grocery store notice boards, on Hindi music radio programs directed as American resident NRIs (Non-Resident Indians), and such fusion music as the "Patel Convenience Store Rap".

In any case, the evolution of advertising in India has a history, one that both parallels and participates in the history of advertising in Europe and America. It is this history of changes in the strategies and modalities of advertising which is an important, albeit as yet poorly explored, component of the changing nature of twentieth century consciousness. Inherent in the nature of advertising is a drive towards change, towards novelty, towards renewing people's interest and attention; as populations learn the gimmicks of earlier styles of advertising, new ones need devising to keep up with the increasing popular literacy and sophistication in media disseminated culture. Styles of advertising are pioneered in "high art" as well as now by computer graphics. Circuits of advertising are pioneered by museums and corporation sponsorships outside the market place; and these new insitutional connections rework the bourgeois "divisions" between the aesthetic, the economic, and the civic-political spheres. New communication devices rework the divisions between the private and public, fantasy and reason, the subconscious and the conscious, the visual and the verbal, synthetic comprehension through montage/allusion/synecdoche and analytic evaluation through careful comparison and testing. And so, we need to take a quick trip into the histories of advertising.

* * *

Historical Phases and Institutional Circuits

As advertising shifts from product to personality to play, we have the opportunity to read three different sets of cultural discourse. Advertising begins its colonization initially on behalf of new forms of commodification and then later on behalf of the new information society by first informing target populations about products, their benefits and uses. Advertising copy in the initial phase -- call it "pre-modernist" -- often tends to be "realist" in form with print copy foregrounded along with images that have a diagrammatic simplicity. The content of the ads in this phase provide information about the product, persuade readers that the product is beneficial, and induct users into new behaviors, styles, status markers, and ways of life: it is a technology of modernization. Soaps and tires might serve as mnemonics of this phase: the induction into modern styles of cleanliness and modern modes of transportation, that is , into the discourses of hygiene and upwardly mobile appearances with their profliferating products of personal care, and into the world of mobility, travel, cosmopolitan interaction, speed, and fantasies of changing places.

In India this phase was still strong fifteen years ago. Sridhar Kshirsagar, now one of India's most experimental soap opera script writers -- a form whose very name plays upon the connections between commerce and entertainment, between intrigue and emotion, between social relations and strategies of control -- remembers making fertilizer films aimed for "bench mark" farmers (those who had at least five acres of land). Advertising films in those days focussed on "slice of life" tactics ("the happy family is one that drinks Bon Vita"; how to use a detergent cake to have brighter, cleaner clothes), rather than "life style" tactics (encouraging a field of expenditure rather than teaching the benefits of a single product). Fertilizer ads taught farmers how to use and obtain inputs for better crops.

In Europe and the U.S. this style and phase predominanted in the 1930s -- not the earliest experimental period of advertising which was a modernist phase, but rather the first mass marketing period of the Depression and of the discovery of mass propaganda (by fascism, by communism, and by welfare state democracy alike) -- that is, a period of expanding the reach of advertising to mass markets, of broadening the markets for packaged commodities beyond the bourgeois classes, and therefore of populist rhetoric, including the devices of the tabloid (brash, direct headlines, decontextualized images), the comic book (serial story line drawings), and realist photography (documentary-informational style). This style of advertising has not disappeared in Europe and America, but it remains more obvious in India where much advertising still has the look of 1930s and 1950s American advertising, perhaps because the functional phase of this kind of advertising is still expansive in India as rural folk and urban dwellers with little discretionary income, new both to the fantasy world of commodification and to deciphering the play of advertising copy, are still being incorporated into the circuits of class and fashion segmented urban consumerism. (The distinctive style of flat-colored or black and white realist drawings, like pre-photographic mail-order catalogue or encyclopedia drawings, seems distinctive of America-derived advertising; this style seems to have been less important in Europe.)

The modernist phase of advertising, Kirk Varnedoe reminds us (1991), begins perhaps in the

nineteenth century with the interplay of posters and such painters as George Seurat and Van Gogh, but certainly takes off in the early twentieth century inteplay between such artists as Picasso, Duchamp, Schwitters, and Max Ernst and advertisers who attempted to dramatize their commodities by not merely making them memorable or desirable, but by arresting the gaze so as to alter and reconsider the form of things: strategies of display, context, and scale are manipulated in ways that shifts representation from the mimetic to the conceptual. Cubist, surrealist, montage, found art (readymades) styles are incorporated in advertising. Forms and objects are given personality: the RCA dog, Nipper (introduced in 1902), Mr. Peanut (1916), and Bibendum (the Michellin tire man introduced in the 1890s, and mascot of the 1991 High-Low Modern Popular Culture Show at the New York Museum of Modern Art). These personifications are used to expand the market, not just sell the specific product: Michellin sponsored rallies and prizes and other activities. Persons learn to identify with the life styles represented by the personifications or the concepts evoked by the plays of form and context that advertising stages, and gradually we are in the world not of product benefit but of psychology, of desire and fantasy, of creating personas and subjectivities through the props of commodities.

It is in this phase that advertising begins to expand technologies of rationalism into the realms of psychology and fantasy: mathematical psychology, perceptual mapping, geometries of the mind become the technologizing language for factoranalysis, multidimensional scaling and other research techniques to guess how consumption can be expanded segmented, targeted, shifted, bonded, seduced and disciplined. In India, this phase, at minimum, gives us access to the history of the changes from the preindustrial to the industrial modes of production that India has been undergoing in its controlled semi-socialist postcolonial economy. It might also give us access to the cultural diarheses and conflicts that are constituting modern India.

There is thirdly a phase of advertising that one might dub "postmodernist" that is part of the constituting of an emergent electronic information society. Mark Poster (1990), drawing on Baudrillard, argues that the television ad exemplifies this new phase most clearly, one which works through a new communicative style and constitutes a new post bourgeois mode of subjectivity. Unlike speech which constitutes subjects as members of a community, and unlike print which constitutes subjects as rational, autonomous egos who in isolation make logical judgments, electronically mediated language invites recipients to play with multiple possible self-constitutions, replacing both community discipline and the referentiality of rational discourse facilitated by writing and printing. Electronic media simulate contexts and ventriloquize audiences: it's invented models of reality not only contest the distinction between real and fictional but have no real referents. People neither believe ads nor are they manipulated irrationally by ads, but rather people understand that ads construct a hyperrreality in which signifiers are set in play: the commodity object in a TV ad is not the commodity one takes home from the store: the former is magical, desirable, exciting, an access to otherworlds, while the latter is prosaic and forgettable. Like other postmodernist forms, such communicative forms can extend domination and at the same time provide a new level of freedom by deconstructing all discourses.

Perhaps the most developed arena for such advertising to date is in France, where advertising

awards and museum shows of advertising campaigns valorize the self-referential artistic and conceptual play of this kind of advertising. Such ads have attracted attention as well in the U.S. (e.g. the Acura Infinity automobile ad which, playing off Zen mysteries of nothingness, never shows the product) and are increasingly being incorporated into the repetoire of Indian ads. Thus, for instance, the ad campaign (designed by Satish Sud Graphics) for L'Affaire, an upscale sari salon, has visuals showing neither a woman nor a sari. Rather the visuals identityf nature patterns that saris appropriate -- yellow bamboo stands; or gree leaves diffused with brown twigs and sunlight -- and the copy is a quote from Rajneesh's "Notes of a Madman". Or again, New Sweetex Light has a four ad campaign (created by Trikaya Grey) in which across the image of a woman is the teaser, "Guess her weight and you'll gain alot" which attempts to get the reader to focus on the fattening effects of sugar, and which extends a previous ad campaign, "Can you spot the chocolate cake in the picture?"

There is in this schematic shift in styles of advertising a byplay not only with the history of modernist art forms, but also a byplay with changing fads in behavioral psychology. In the 1920s J.B. Watson, a behavioral psychologist became Vice President of J. Walter Thompson, and advertising psychology shifted from considering the consumer as a rational person to be appealed to in terms of logical calculi, to rather considering the consumer as irrational, desire-driven, and advertising as the rational exploitation of this irrationality; in the 1950s indirection became the psychological watchword, either through the irreverent humor and play with paradox that has come to be called "creativity" in the advertising industry (after which advertising designers are called "creatives"), or through motivational research ("MR") that attempts to chart desires and manipulate the symbolism of sexuality.

The 1960s were a crucial turning in the shift from emphasis on the printed message to the visual, and to the style of verbal gaming and visual conceptual play. Janice Hirota (1988) suggests three sets of factors in this shift. First, in part, it was the result of elevating illustrators from subordination to writers, and instead experimenting with art-designer/copy-writer collaborative teams to generate ideas. (Doyle, Dane, Bernbach is credited by the industry with pioneering this hybridization. Such experimentation was in turn made possible by the affluence of the 1960s. Enough money was coming into agencies to give freedom to agencies to reject staid or restrictive customers. Creatives expressed their freedom in their own dress, rejecting the business suit in favor of free form costuming; and their folklore is filled with tales of being able to override their accountants' pure mercenary approach to customers, being able to not be simply subservient to clients, and thus being able to even reject clients who would restrict their freedom to experiment with ideas and techniques.)

Second, Hirota says, it was also in part the result of a demographic and cultural shift: "Advertsing moved from the control of stodgy middle-class WASPS producing genteel, dull ads" to "street smart Jewish writers and Italian art directors from Brooklyn." (There was a similar shift in Britain from Oxbridge trained advertisers to art-school "street kids". Chris Baker, the Managing Director of Lintas, Bangkok, suggests that employment of creatives is market driven, that

as the class composition of markets change, it is most effective to have creatives who come from the same class and cultural backgrounds as the consumers. He argues that even in so-called global marketing of multinational brands, advertising depends heavily on local knowledge. In Asian offices of multinational advertising firms such as Lintas, although capital may be American or European or Japanese, creatives are largely local.[5] In Thailand the shift to local talent occurred in a three year period in the mid-1980s. His office employs just under two hundred people, only two or three of whom are fluent English speakers. While the monolingual Thai environment is different from that of India, where as we shall see language is a major advertising issue, and where many creatives' first language and literacy is English, nonetheless the staffing is entirely Indian, and the question would be whether shifts in employment of creatives will follow in class composition shifts in the target markets. Such shifts are likely to increasingly play upon the visual, as markets shift away from the highly literacy-oriented cultural elites.) Mobility and popular cultural awareness became tools of the trade in 1960s U.S. advertising: on the one hand, small town backgrounds and values were used to legitimate claims to cultural sensibility vis-a-vis the mass market, while on the other hand, it was movement away from such backgrounds figured in knowledge of urban, Hollywood, sports, fashion, and rock music, popular culture that tapped into aspirations and current preoccupations of the mass market. The advertising agency workplace, says Hirota, became a "forum for the systematic and ongoing assessment of popular culture, a locale that distills taken-for-granted general knowledge into an occupational virtue." The world of advertising, she notes, is highly self-reflexive and self-referential, intensely aware of work of other agencies, and with a great premium on knowing "what's happening", watching TV, movies, music, sports, fashion, etc. In interviewing potential trainees, one creative told her, "I ask a lot of trivia questions to see if he has that awareness, like whether he recognizes lines from rock songs, and knows who made them."

Chris Baker sums it up this way: (1) "Advertising uses artifacts of other kinds of popular culture; what advertising does differently from other kinds of popular culture is compression;" and (2) "Ads take something new or something that appeals to one segment of society and spreads it rapidly."[6] We shall return to the notion of compression and the allied notion of "loading" in section III and elsewhere: compression is a process that is, of course, enforced by economics -- the need to compress ads into shorter and shorter television spots (20 seconds is now the average Indian TV spot with a range of 10 to 60 seconds), billboards, and efficient print media images -- but which is primarily interesting for its synoptic cognitive and emotional mechanisms, that abstract, summarize, hint, cue, and condense. As Stuart Alter, a vice-president at McCann Erickson puts it (1991), "advertising works through components: by assembling selling points, and impressions piece by piece until they establish an overwhelming net impression," and more pointedly, "the real assembly . . . is in the details at the micro-level -- even if people doe not understand an ad . . . they still understand its components;" advertising is "an instrument of summary and efficiency."

Third, the impact of television (reinforced in the late 1980s by direct satellite transmission[7]) consolidated the dominance of the visual, and accelerated the speed of perceptual integration of disjunctive bits of information.

All three of these factors, as do more direct material factors,[8] turn advertising into a machine

of recombinant cultural fragmentation -- a feature of contemporary culture that has increasingly been identified as a defining characteristic of so-called postmodernity.

> Advertising not only reflects and refracts the world, it also fragments it. The pervasive symbols that advertising projects are marked by wholly disperate kinds of images unconnected either to each other or indeed to the product they feature. One has, for example, babies in tire advertisements, a mock fashion show in Russia and hamburgers, Geraldine Ferraro and soft drinks, helicopter pilots and cigarettes, cars and 1960s rock music, hotels and Degas paintings. In this sense, advertisements both symbolize and encapsulate a kind of fragmentation of consciousness widely noticeable in our society. (Hirota 1988: 231).

Or again:

> In their own attempts to succeed, as evident in their promiscuous affectivity, creatives transform their cultural sensibilities into a well-honed pragmatic altertness. However unwittingly, they become carriers of a kind of fragmented consciousness emerging directly out of their work experiences in their bureaucratic milieux that both creates and infuses the vocabularies they produce. The stories that they fashion draw together various, often disparate, bits and pieces of our culture and society and present them to the mass public as coherent wholes: one gets linked together, then, interesting lives and credit cards, tigers and gasoline, Cliff Robertson and telephone companies,"Mother Nature" and butter, stretch limousines and mustard, break dancing and fast food, strip tease and shaving cream, one-eyed men and shirts, tigers and breakfast cereals, foxes and cars, bulls and malt liquor, O. J. Simpson and car rental companies, women's lib and cigarettes. In this sense, advertisements embody the bureaucratic processes of their own production . . . (ibid: 277).

It is not surprising in this context that many of the creatives in the Bombay advertising industry should be heavily involved in both amateur and professional theater and the film industry. Alyque Padamsee is perhaps as involved in producing plays as in producing advertising, and many of he actors he directs are themselves creatives in other agencies.

But as Max Weber, would have forseen, this recombinant characteristic of advertising (as product, as work environment, as sensibility of producers and consumers) lends itself "readymade" to rationalizing in ever more sophisticated ways the cultural circuits between marketing, high art, museums, department stores and business corporations. Deborah Silverman and Richard Bolton are but two critics who have provided details of how the Museum of Modern Art, Bloomingdales Department Store, and the Republican power elite reinforce one another, of how Richard Avedon (or Robert Mapplethorpe)'s artistic and advertising careers are synergistically part of the same mechanism that makes of art "a research and development department" of the information, public relations, sales and entertainment industries.

A rough correlation might also be made between the shift from product to personality to play and the ways in which politics and politicians are marketed, and their master narratives constructed through the media:[9]

product -->	personality -->	play
pre-modern	modernist	postmodernist
creating mass media politics	1960s politics around personalities (JFK)	1980s "sound bite" politics Reagan TV syntax[10]
Gandhi: himself a journalist, generating events for print media	MGR and Tamil movie industry as political vehicle	? 1990s India

* * *

Class Differences and Cultural Registers: from Television to Hoardings

In tracing out these institutional circuits and sociological transformations, one should not, however, lose sight of the cultural registers that are brought into play. It is these differential "dialects of advertising" that provide the most sensitive access to the grounds, aspirations, and vehicles of change that ordinary people use to reshape the worlds in which they live, use to interpret for their own purposes the material put out by Madison Avenue or the Bombay industry.

This is perhaps also the place to note that while television is the most rapidly growing sector of advertising in India (ads having generated only 4 crores rupees in 1981, but now worth well over 2.5 billion rupees and rapidly climbing), and the most sophisticated, with software graphics programs being developed and modified locally from ones bought abroad, press advertising in nineteen languages still accounts for the majority of advertising spending. (Total advertising revenues are estimated to have risen from 2.5 billion rupees in 1980 to 12.5 billion in 1990.) There are some 24,000 newspapers and periodicals produced in India, of which 300 have half the total circulation. English language titles have 23% of circulation with 56% of advertising spending and 35% of advertising space; Hindi language titles have 25% of circulation with 15% of advertising spending and 28% of advertising space; other language print media are expanding. (Chris Baker notes that if you read back in the Indian newspapers of the 1880s you will be struck by how much advertising there was in the print medium: what is new is the particular kind of advertising that appeals to mass consumption and its political implications: hence the interest of the question mark in the above chart.)

Television advertising, because it now (since 1985 there has been rapid extension[11]) covers over 80% of the country, has caused a vigorous debate and concern over whether its advertising will generate political polarization, with the rural poor being made increasingly jealous of the urban, affluent life styles protrayed in the ads (see section three beolow). Costs of TV ads currently (1991) run 100,000 rupees per ten seconds for the Hindi film slot, and about 85,000 rupees for prime time serials. Serials generate twenty lakhs rupees per episode in advertising revenue; telefilms half that. (The highest priced ads to date have been the slots for the serial epics of the

Mahabharata and Ramayana; otherwise feature films command the highest ad prices.) Video advertising is also a growing field: again a technology that has spread rapidly in the second half of the 1980s, there are now over two million video reviever owners and over a hundred thousand video cassette libraries (contrast only 6000 cinema houses nation wide!). Initially ads were tacked onto the front and back of video movies, but as pirate dubbers simply removed these ads, now advertisers have taken torunning ads on parallel tracks at the bottom of the picture.

And, of course, not least, are the huge hoardings or billboards that turn walls and cities into outsized technicolor stages. The painter, M.F. Husain, drew attention to the power of these hoardings (which as a young man he helped paint) in a wonderful photographic exhibit on Madras called, "The Culture of the Streets," which premiered at the Tate Gallery in London. There is a style in many of these billboards, especially those advertising movies, that contains an alternative register of popular materialism, color consciousness, and politics that constrasts with the slick middle class advertising of television and the glossy up-scale end of the print media. The colors for instance are from home made paints from powders; but more importantly they are done in dazzling day glow colors, with faces in greens and blues, and often with several colors to a face. Some of the color scheming plays off traditional religous color codings. "Color in India," M.F. Husain is quoted as saying in the introduction to a book of his drawings (Herwitz 1988), is not light but a symbol of certain emotions [or deities] . . . a certain mood . . . if you find a piece of stone and you apply orange color to it, you don't have to make an eye and nose . . . the villager will think it is the god Hanuman . . ." Herwitz goes on to paraphrase his understanding of Husain:

> This differs from color in the West, which tends to open up pictoral space to the world of which it is a part, bathing it in local light. The employment of color as an opening medium is fundamentally foreign to the Indian conception, not only because in India natural light is so hard and brilliant that it seems to naturally enclose a space, but even more because Indian paintinags do not open perspectively to the world. They establish melodramic or symbolic worlds. In the Indian miniature paintings, for example, color is employed both musically and symbolically. Delicate and poetic rhythms are set up in the miniature through combinations of color, theme, and pictorally placed details. What the miniature does not do is establish perspective. Color does not open its space to the world. Rather it articulates space as mood and suggests emotion. (Herwitz 1988: 22).

Among M.F. Husain's favorite pictures from the show are one that puts together the Eiffel Tower and a Ganesh in blue, another in which the idea of a huge figure extending above the billboard frame is especially well done, and one showing graffitti over a poster, including a cartoon of corruption: a bag of money being handed to a politician under the table together with a picture of a graveyard. More is going on here than just Leger's enthusiasm early in the century in France for the way in which billboards repainted the city or intervened in the countryside as a critique of nature viewed in paintings as literary pastorals.

As Srivatsan shows (1991), there are market, class, and gender registers that hoardings perhaps illustrate more clearly than other media of advertising. First of all, hand-painted hoardings are under continual pressure from print technology. For the time being, hand-painted

posters have a comparative advantage in being much brighter, using colors that you cannot easily produce in the printing technology, using paints that fade less quickly in the sunlight than printers' ink, being able to produce large posters with more hidden seams between sections of the pictures, being able to accentuate expressions. Advertisements larger than eight by fifteen feet, and where the number of copies is small are economically more feasible to produce by hand than by print; as print technology advances, painters try to keep ahead by innovating with sequins, luminous paint, and above all by modifying body shape, skin tone, expression, clothing, and props to encode the class and gender language of themselves and their fellow class audiences: this is both a language of social markers and a language of desire. Culturally, hoardings painters are from the rural migrant and working class origins of their audiences and perform a translation of middle class imagery and desire into that of the streets. Among these translations are class and gender codings. Movie actresses (e.g. Sridevi) are accentuated as painted objects to be desired by passing male viewers, they are made up to look more and more like Liz Taylor or Madonna, and they contrast with TV heroines (e.g. Sita) who are visually constructed as beatifications of the Hindu wife, toned down in sexuality for family viewing:

> My experience of Srivedi includes the bemused and sometimes angry resignation with which some of my women friends accept their exclusion from this private erotic relationship of their men friends in which they have no place -- and the enduring optimism of others who gamely try to match size, shape and color, to live up to Her image . . . .male desire while still to a large extent defining the Sita image, is itself reappropriated in this instance in some measure so that it (male desire) is acceptable to the women and the children who watch the serial regularly. (Srivatsan 1991: 13).

Male movie heroes are like outsized agitprop figures, projecting the kinds of rebellious, independence, and mastery that lower class males fantasize about having in a world that generally denies them such control, and makes them literally fight for what control they can exercise in gang feuds kept tense by politicians' competitions for vote banks, and by confrontations with police:

> Amitabh Bachhan thirty feet high glowers down at me, knife in hand, challenging me to take on the world . . . I am constituted through my exprience of aloneness. (ibid: 17)

Srivatsan notes that in advertizing targeted for the upper classes, Hindu markers are toned down, they can be more implicit; while in visuals targeted for slum dwellers communal markers are inescapable. The role of Muslims becomes interesting here, as has often been noted in commentaries on commercial films: Muslims are significantly underrepresented in the middle class, and form a much larger percentage of repeat movie goers than their general percentage in the population (a function of movies as relatively cheap entertainment). Commercial movies depend upon Muslim audiences, and their representation in films is the subject of much subtle indirection.

Hoardings are fascinating as a potent reminder of class dimensions in advertising, and not only in terms of visual markers and codes, but also between artisanry and industrialization:

> In one dimension, technology battles with the local skill of the painters in a constant struggle for dominance, and control over the image, and this struggle overlaps and is

> intermeshed with the struggle between capital and labour. The pressure technology exerts on the painters forces them to match and better the mechanically reproduced image . . . It is tempting to see a response of the artists to this pressure in the shifting of the scene of the battle to translation. (Srivatsan 1991: 17).

Finally, although the most dramatic hoardings may be movie ads, and secondly the gigantic cut outs of politicians during election campaigns, many other commodities are sold through hoardings. In Indonesia, Chris Baker notes, during the eight years when television advertising was banned, many female products were advertised on hoardings in movie poster style. But in India too, hoardings are an important part of the visual commercial environment, and their styles can be quite dramatic in a number of different registers. Kirin Nagarkar draws attention to a series of hoardings campaigns that illuminate another dimension of class, ethnicity, and cultural reference: namely, the experimentation in the late 1980s by advertisers with "Hinglish" (Hindi-English) or the effort to use in ads the kinds of mixed or creolized language that middle class Indians actually speak (1991).

Nagarkar is wary of this use of creolized language as a mechanism of class domination by English speakers mocking and putting in their place others whose English may mark a less cosmopolitan class position. His fear is discounted by Mukund Mahajan, of Mudra Communications, an astute compiler of marketing data, and analyst of the ways in which advertising closely mirrors markets and in fact can create markets by bringing together entrepreneurs, products, and targeted "market niches" of consumers (i.e. the "mirroring" is not a passive reflection but an active practice of matching.) It is an interesting debate that can open up the multiple ways in which culturally marked languages can operate. The disagreement between Nagarkar and Mahajan is most interestingly joined over the Binnie's potato chips ad which proved a sensational success, the Matto tomato drink, Go Cool ice cream, and the Amul butter billboards.

A reminder about the failure rates of new food products might help provide a cautionary context. There seem to be no figures on the failure rates in India, but in Japan only 10% of the 3500 to 4000 new food products introduced each year succeed; in the U.S. 12,500 products are introduced each year, and 30% succeed (Moeran 1991: 2). Binnie's potato chips is an example of a food product which is hard to establish as a brand in an Indian market where 80% of chips are unbranded and sold in clear cellophane bags at Rs. 1.50-2. Binnies priced at Rs. 5-7 managed to secure a 40% market share within two months. The ad campaign is described by Nagarkar:

> A teaser campaign which was plastered on hoardings across Bombay city said: Humko yeh nahi mangta, humko woh nahin mangta, to Bombay ko kya mangta. Translated into English, the words mean: we don't want this, we don't want that. Then what does Bombay want? The answer said: Bombay wants Binnie potato chips. The response to these campaings was little short of staggering. For instance, "the day-after recall" for Binnie chips was an unbelievable 97%"

The Hindi used in this campaign, Nagarkar says, is a put down of Goan and Parsi usages. Not so, says Mahajan: the target audience is those who have been educated in English medium who speak Hindi but cannot read Devanagari script. So the Hindi is transliterated in Roman letters for them. It is

targeted to teenagers, addressing them in their own language. One piece of evidence that this is not a play upon Bombay ethnic dialects -- but is received as transliterated Hindi -- is the fact that the campaign was first introduced in Delhi. Indeed one of the linguistic developments of India at the moment is the introduction in the press of Hindi in English transliteration; it used to be that Hindi repartee of politicians would be translated in the newspapers, whereas now it is just transliterated.

The Mato tomato drink campaign is equally interesting. Nagarkar evokes the moment (perhaps most sensitive to the "bastardizing" of his own native Marathi:

> After the monsoons, as the weather began to hot up, Bombay witnessed a blitz of advertising from a new soft drink called "matto". Divided into four panels, the over all headline for the press ad gushed: "Suddenly everyone's talking about!" A Goanese gentleman in a red bow, frilled shirt and black jacket held up a paper pack of 'matto and said in a mix of Konkani and English, "av tuka sangta, I have witched over to drinking only this". (I am telling you, I have switched over to drinking only this). A Parsi young thing opined in Parsi-Gujarati and English in the next panel, "After one sip, aimne kayu, it's sharp and sweet -- just like me!: (After one sip, I said, it's sharp and sweet, just like me!) A third panel had a gleeful Maharashtrian woman bastardising a Marathi verb and idiom, "When I serve such a unique drink na, it'll really kapofy Mrs Phadke's nose!" (When I serve such a unique drink, it will cut Mrs Phadke's nose. Translated a little less literally it means, serving such a drink will put Mrs Phadke in her place). The last panel with a pack shot mixed Hindi with English, "Chatpata taste ka wonder". (A rough translation would read: A drink with a wonderful pungent and volatile taste.) The copy at the bottom was brief: "'matto. An ethnic sensation goes hep! A chatpata new drink of ripe, juicy, red tomatoes. With a dash of masala to tickle your tongue. Try it."

Again Nagarkar is concerned that this is a put down of these four marginal groups' Hindi: a Goan stereotypically identified by dress and guitar, a Parsi, a Saraswati (coastal upper caste) Maharastran, and a Koli (fisherman caste) sophisticated woman (identified by her special nose ring). Mahajan, however, counters that these four groups in fact constitute 80% of the consumers of tomato juice; that tomato juice is culturally marked as an Anglicized product which is why these four Anglophilic groups are such good consumers of it; that again this is a case of advertising mirroring the market.

If the ads for 'Matto and Binnie's play upon the styles of Hindi used by teenagers and ethnics,[12] another usage of Hinglish is to locate puns that work off meanings in two languages. A simple example is Go Cool Ice Cream: Go cool plays off the name of the city, Gokul, in which the god Krisna lived, Krisna, being a cowherd, and thus associated with dairy products as well as with erotic playfulness and the good life. Nagarkar finds many of such puns forced, pointing out that in Amul butter hoardings, the pun is created by fracturing the languages, then identified for the viewer, lest s/he miss it by using a different color to highlight it, and then a further attempt has to be made to make sure it is comprehensible. But, rebuts Mahajan, while puns may fail, in fact the Amul hoardings, created by Bharat Dabholkar (a playwright and managing director of de Cuna agency),

provide great amusement to many who take the time to drive around to check out the latest ad. Three examples:

- A cartoon of Benzair Bhutto in the kitchen speading (Amul) butter on a slice of bread under the slogan "Return to Pak Shastra." It is a three-fold pun: a return to domesticity for Benazir (she had just been dismissed from the prime ministership); a return to the shastra (the rules of proper behavior); a return to a clean/pure (*pak*) Pak-istan/ shastra;
- A maharaja and three harem girls, with the slogan, "I vow never to eat anything but Amul . . . It's *Maha* popular in *Bharat*." *Maha* (great) at the time was teentalk, but also this ad ran during the television serial of the Mahabharata.
- At the time (fall 1990) of British Prime Minister Thatcher's resignation in favor of John Major, the hoarding teased: "There will be no Major changes in Thatcher's Britain."

The use of creolizations and different styles of Hindi is a complex and shifting arena: cinema Hindi, soap opera Hindi, and journalist Hindi some would see as quite separate styles. Even vernacular TV in Marathi or Gujurati or other languages tend to use classical forms of the language which are different from the spoken forms. These issues are not unique to India: 50% of Philippine ads are crafted in a mixture of Tagalog and English, crafted so that monolinguals in either can get enough to understand the ad. In Singapore, where the spoken language is a mix of Chinese dialects, Malay and the odd English word, television uses only BBC English or Mandarine Chinese, neither of which are the spoken language. The shifts in language mix are a medium, Arjun Appadurai suggests, in which a new Indian nationhood is being forged: "I consume, therefore I am an Indian;" products become inserted into narratives, and these narratives are slowly being delinked from caste or regional markings; consumption creates new class taste cultures, new categories of social differentiation.

In the following sections we will look at four ways advertising creatives and social scientists think about the expanding Indian market, suddenly opened from the restrictions of the socialist economy of the Nehru and Indira Gandhi years. It is a volatile market, where the introduction of one product need not cut into the market of already established ones because of the growing demand and multiple niches that can be carved out;[13] where new brand leaders can be created by forging new markets;[14] and where advertising sees itself as creating new attitudes, creating a new middle class, creating a new India.[15] We begin with the logics of how advertising positions commodities and the cultural codes drawn upon but also created in the process; then we turn to the subliminal, figural, mechanisms that seem to operate outside and within conscious cognition; then we turn to the cultural wit and play of advertising jouissance; and finally we turn to the cultural agons that construct and deconstruct the newly emergent Indian nation.

II

Geometries of the Mind: a structuralist substrate

The consumer's mind is regarded as a geometric perceptual space
--Subroto Sengupta

Alyque Padamsee, the creatives director of Lintas (and the actor who played Jinnah in Attenborough's film "Gandhi") in a recent interview in A & M (Advertising and Marketing), a New Delhi based magazine, sketches out a series of phases of thinking about advertising that he and Lintas have passed through: originally as a novice working for J.W. Thompson, he had thought of advertising as merley snappy headlines and pretty pictures (information and illustration); then when he joined Lintas (originally a division of Lever Brothers), the advertising culture was one of appealing to logic, or what in today's lingo might be called product benefits (persuasion and consumer rationality). A third phase, as he became head of Lintas' film group, and was joined by Shyam Benegal (who later joined Blaze Advertising, and from that base became one of India's most important independent film makers), Kabir Bedi (who later became a well known film actor), and

Sumantro Ghosal, creative joy was stressed. A fourth phase then was the stress on communication needing to be intriguing, needing to provide the reader with a slight challenge, to involve his or her active participation in deciphering the message. This sequence is not unlike that sketched by Dobkin for France, or Varnedoe for the U.S. as consumers became more literate and sophisticated about advertising.

But although various tactics of indirection -- be they symbolism, subliminal psychological play on desire, or communicative self-referential punning and intrigue -- add spice and form to advertising, a great deal of basic work is still devoted to strategies of rational calculation about the perceptual universe of consumers, and the semiotics of the marketplace, what is now called "positioning". Table 1, for instance, provides a list of nine of Lintas' best known ad camaigns, abstracted from the presentation book "Lintas: India." Three books of case studies on the Indian market also work off of positioning: Subhash C. Mehta's *Indian Consumers: Studies and Cases for Marketing Decisions* (1972), Subroto Sengupta's 1976 *Cases in Advertising and Communication Management in India*, and the recent *Brand Positioning: Strategies for Competitive Advantage* (1990) by Subroto Sengupta.

What is worth noting about Table 1 (the Lintas ad campagins) is first of all the way in which the presentation book format works: it is set up in terms of positioning calculi with separate analyses of marketing problem, marketing strategy, and advertising strategy. For a more detailed accounting of the tactics of positioning, it is helpful to turn to Sengupta's book. But it is worth noting in the meantime, that the Lintas campaigns involve various kinds of incongruencies that make you stop and analyze, object, focus on parts of the copy, even reject the advertising while paying attention to the product and its potentials. Thus in the Motorola ads, there is an intential gap between image and text that makes you stop and smile even if only at the "naivete" of the ad: in the picture of father and sons the picture is not quite apt to the query if taken seriously in the Indian context: this clean, well-fed, and well-dressed family is not "more concerned about their immediate survival"; again, in the picture of the old fisherman, he is not a relevant user of advanced microconductor detectors ("people like this man") and yet of course iconically his image can represent fishermen, and metanymically this icon does represent those fishermen who can use microconductor detectors but whose own pictures might not be as iconically effective. For me, the old fisherman ad is all the more effective because the disjuncture or incongruity between image and text raises social issues: there are many such fishmen with little access to fancy technology: the need for modernization is stated thereby urgently through a figuration of lack, and a social context is evoked for entrepreneurial policy (e.g. vis-a-vis import tariffs on technological goods), even if implementation of such social policy considerations is immediately dismissed cynically as unlikely to be addressed or if addressed only as a space for corruption, nonetheless, a place holder for its possibility is signalled).

Such a play of metanymic icons in a syntax of disjunction, incongruity, lack, and reading against the explicit signals an advertising style of participatory intrigue attempting to involve readers and audiences in more and more active ways, albeit preliminary and low level here. The almost rebus-like iconic use of the bulldog in the Shriram Honda generator ads operates similarly,

Table 1. Nine Lintas Ad Campaigns

1. Brand: Motorola
   Image Problems: American multinationals viewed with suspicion
   Advertising strategy: position Morotrola as "India Friendly"
   Ad format: scenes with a photo image to left; a two line question to the right, and under a line is a long copy answer, ending in tag line, e.g.:
   "So that high tech isn't just relevant to Star Wars and Space Research"
   & the logo: INDIA -- together we'll make technology work
   Motorola

   Example 1: photo of Father and 3 sons, all clean, well-fed, well-dressed
   "Of what use is radio communications technology to a family that's more concerned about their immediate survival?
   [long copy answer] Communication links are important during earthquakes, etc., for relief work

   Example 2: photo of old fisherman in *longi*, poling a canoe
   Of what use is an advanced microconductor to a man who counts on the sea gods?
   [long copy answer] detectors help locate fish so "people like this man net a bigger, more profitable catch"

2. Brand: HCL
   Marketing problem: all brands of EPABX are me too products
   Advertising strategy: position HCL EPABX range as the trustworthy one

3. Brand: Mastercard
   Marketing problem: credit cards are felt to be only for top management
   Advertising strategy: position credit cards as better than cash for everyone
   Ad format: copy to the right in two sizes of print: in large print: images of rows of credit cards to the right
   "Credit Cards for Shirts, Ties, and Shoe String Budgets"
   with more detailed copy in btween the large print

4. Brand: Lloyd Platinum
   Marketing problem: high dependency on government
   Advertising strategy: launch top of the line airconditioner;
   position as Rolls Royce of window airconditioners
   Ad format: photo of Rolls Royce on left copy on right

5. Brand: Monte Carlo
   Marketing problem: increasing competition
   Marketing strategy: relaunch as designer knitwear
   Advertising strategy: add image (and thus value), top-of-the line
   picture: blue alpine trees shade into blue fabric weave

6. Brand: Power Apparel
   Marketing problem: seen as serious sports' gear, not as fashionable or trendy
   Marketing strategy: position as fashionable and trendy for peole who are body conscious and want to look good
   Ad Format: pictures of young people dressed in Power Apparel lounging with basket ball or bicycle; red cursive signature on angle, Bodyline, above brand name, Power Apparel

7. Brand: Shriram Honda
   Marketing Problem: low unit sales growth, high saturation in existing markets
   Marketing Strategy: shift to new target segment
   Advertising strategy: position as only domestic generator set, use image of powerful bulldog
   Ad Format: pictures to left: copy to right: and bad things can happen when you have power cuts
   bulldog back to camera, with head turned towards you
   small image of the generator to bottom right
   skeletal street dog [2 stroke varieties] vs "4 stroke" bulldog
   bulldog kissing a baby ["friendly"]
   lad studying at plain wood desk wearing Gandhi style spectacles [Lincoln studying by candlelight motif: here generator to keep lights on]

8. Brand: Department of Tourism (DOT)
   Marketing problem: to promote tourism
   Format:
      English language variants: *photographic* imagery of scenery
         copy hortatory about (a) education; (b) seeing the world within India; (c) discovery of self; (d) sounds, smells, variety of India
      Hindi language variants: *flat pictoral* imagery of romantic scenes with etherialized (clouds or haze/halo-like) borders: (a) tree trunks of deciduous trees; (b) palace with minarets and domes; (c) twirling Rajasthani women in red saris from above; (d) passengers on a canoe on a lake with deciduous trees turning color
      no copy, only the place and date of the picture

9. Brand: DOT
   Objective: to show tourism is positive for the economy and that every tourist is a friend.
   Ad Format: picture with slogan, then longer copy, and at bottom: "India: A Passage to Yourself"

   (a) Picture in sepia of Gandhi on the salt march
      "One of the most widely travelled Indians is better known as the Father of the Nation"
      copy: Travel broadens the mind. It is learning made fun . . .
   (b) Picture of the Taj Mahal against a dark blue sky
      "To over 60 million Indians, this is a Picture of Bread and Butter"
      copy: about the employment in the tourism industry
      sidebar to bottom right: Tourism Benefits You; signature: Dept. of Tourism, Gvt of India.
   (c) Picture of a camel on a dune
      "Beneath this sandscape, you'll find Millions of Dollars, Pounds and Yen."
   (d) Picture of the Taj Mahal in red hues, with caption in dollar bill print style:
      "Another view of the Reserve Bank of India" [no other copy]

especially the "four stroke bulldog" and the "friendly" baby-kissing bulldog machinery.

The Department of Tourism ads are also of interest in this regard. Note first of all, the difference in positioning in the English versus the Hindi language ads, both in their visual styles and in the use/non use of copy. Note further the self-reflexive irony of the campaign to remind people that tourism is a key industry, especially the two Taj Mahal ads. There are two intersecting negatives that are exposed by the positive: the first is the realist discourse that devalues the usual use of the Taj Mahal to sentimentalize Indian heritage and exposes the economic; the other is the tutelary discourse that attempts to discipline Indians not to express indifference or hostility to those who supply tourist income or to the sites of tourism. These sorts of ads continued in 1989-90: there was a for ad campaign in various language publications directed against the complaints of foreigners ("Eve teasing", taxi overcharging, and taking tourists to shops because the guide gets a commission) under the slogan, "Don't kill the goose that lays the golden egg." More important was the campaign to preserve tourist sites under the pressure of domestic tourists ignorant of their responsibility to the enviornment. The 1989 tourism figures were 1.5 million foreign tourists, but 14 million Indian tourists; and 1991 was to be a major year of tourism expansion for both, "india Tourism Year" at home, and "Visit India Year" abroad. The campaign consisted of six ads "Keep India Beautiful" in eight languages in magazines, posters at rail and bus stations, five 30 second television ads, and a comic strip in major children's magazines, book labels, school schedules, stickers and puzzles. The comic strip, "Four for Bharat" illustrated detective children investigating tourist offenses and reporting them (modelled after Enid Blyton's "Famous Five"). The ad Keep India Beautiful campaign used split headlines and visuals: e.g., "It was a labor of love" with the visual of a temple carving, juxtaposed to "Betrayed by Lovers" with a visual of a graffiti carved wall; or "The birds flew in from Siberia" with a visual of flying geese, juxtaposed to "The animals came by car" with a visual of people sitting around and littering the environment.

Another well-known Lintas campaign uses the housewife Lalitaji as a spokesperson for Surf detergent. Modelled on the popular soap opera character Rajini (a housewife who battles for consumer rights and against bureaucratic red tape), Lalitaji is played by Kavita Choudhury; retailers and salesmen touch her feet and light lamps when she appears in public. Padamsee claims that the Lalitaji character is based on his mother: "a Gujarati housewife, who sought value for money." More credible is his observation that some 20% of viewers actively dislike Lalitaji, espectially her tone of authority when she says, "bhai shaib" to the male voice over (as in "you idiot, don't you understand"); yet these same viewers listen to her in the mode of disliking an aunt who always scolds but whom you miss when she doesn't turn up. Again the psychology is to draw on the implicit circuits of communication, in this case an emotional resistance to what nonetheless is regarded to be legitimate authority, crossing male and female variants of wielding authority. But in addition, there are also cultural resonnances that are invoked for at least some audiences: the line *Surf ki khariddari mein hisamajdari* (there is more rationality, *samajdari*, in buying laundry detergent, than in buying cigarettes, cosmetics, beer, soft drinks, fashion apparel, etc.) plays off of, says Padamsee, was adapted from, slogans used in electioneering in Bihar.

If intrigue, challenge and involvement are basic elements of the advertising syntax, positioning depends as well on working out the kinds of discriminations and oppositions that structure consumers' perceptual mental spaces. Thus, Sengupta points out in his systematic how to manual drawing on cases from both the American and Indian worlds of advertising, Maggi instant noodles (launched in 1982 in India by Food Specialties, the local outlet for Nestle) is better positioned in rice and bread eating India as an instant snack (against papadams, pakoras and sandwiches) while in noodle eating Malaysia it works better as a meal. Two of the most famous ads in American advertising make the ideas of positioning very clear: one demonstrates that one can discover holes or vacant positions in a market structure as did Miller Lite, the other that one can change the personality of a product by repositioning as did Marlboro. The Miller Lite success story in 1975 followed on the failure of two earlier lite beers in 1968 and 1970 that failed despite high success trials among heavy beer drinkers. (Heavy beer drinkers are the 30% of consumers who account for 80% of sales.) The problem was that the ads pitched to women and the idea of keeping to a diet. Heavy beer drinkers do not care about diets, but are moved rather by the idea that with one third less calories they can drink a third more beers. Ads that pitched to a masculine image plus the idea of being less filling (rather than less fattening) made Miller Lite a big success. Marlboro, it may be hard to remember, was originally marketed as a woman's cigarette, complete with a red tip to mask lipstick, but held only .25% of the market share (in 1954 there were six filter cigarettes in the U.S. jointly holding 10% of the market). Leo Burnett did marketing studies for Philip Morris, and with a change in the blend to make it more aromatic, a change in the pack design, Marlboro was relaunched in 1955 with the cowboy image to become the largest selling cigarette in the world, with the still running slogans, "You get a lot to like in Marlboro's -- Filter, Flavor, Flip-Top Box", "Come to where the flavor is, Come to Marlboro Country." Marlboro is enough of an icon itself now that a take-off Tamil-language billboard campaign in Madras vaunted "Governor Bidis" with the Marlboro man imagery, done in that characteristic Madras cinema billboard style with a cowboy on horse rising above the billboard's top as if coming from over the horizon.

Wills Filter did something similar in 1963: gambling that filter cigarettes would become an increasingly important part of the Indian market (today they hold a fifty percent share), Imperial Tobacco Company (ITC) and J. Walter Thompson modified the blend to make this filter cigarette both more flavorful and smoother, and launched an ad campaign against a picture of a young couple with the slogan "made for each other": i.e., the filter and the tobacco are matched for each other, as this ideal young man and woman.

Sananda magazine, like Miller Lite, was launched after locating a vacant position in the market structure, in this case among Bengali magazines. Ananda Bazaar Group and the Clarion agency noted that although there was a large female readership of Bengali language magazines, there was only one magazine devoted to women. So, targeting the educated, young, middle and upper class women --pricing it at Rs. 5 as one among many ways of positioning upscale against the Rs. 3.50 *Sukanya* magazine -- they planned for an initial 30,000 copy run, printing 75,000 copies for the inaugural issue which sold out in three hours. A six ad campaign was run in the print media and in Television commercials to consolidate the "personality" of the magazine. Each ad was headlined: "I

am Sananda" and had a picture of her family life ("Meet my impossible family"), her business persona seated at her desk in an office ("I work shoulder to shoulder with my husband"), and her exercising ("If I can't look after myself. . ."). Among the positioning features -- price, styling, content -- was the choice of editor: Aparna Sen, the actress-director (of 36 Chowringhee Lane fame).

Positioning not only exploits market segments, but it employs a logic of emotional bonding, and of the authority types analyzed by Weber -- traditional, rational, charismatic. One can create personalities for commodities and/or brands and or companies; one can play with various combinations. The 100 cc motorcycle market in India is a neat example of symbolic and self concept differentiation, as well as market research experiments: TVS-Suzuki, Hero-Honda, Bajaj-Kawasaki, Escorts-Yamaha are all made with Japanese collaboration. Students of the Indian Institute of Management, Calcutta, adapted Naresh Malhotra's methodology, developed for measuring self-concepts, product-concepts, and person-concepts in the U.S. regarding automobiles, to 15 owners of Hero-Hondas, 15 owners of Escorts-Yamaha, and 10 owners of TVS-Suzukis, all aged 18-40, well educated, males. TVS-Suzuki is the least sturdy and least fast of the three, and owners see themselves as laid back, colorful, mature individuals enjoying relaxed, youthful, but simple and uncomplicated cycles. Escorts-Yamaha owners see themselves as dominating, tough, sociable, opinion leaders, flashy, vain, and enjoy bikes that are said to be powerful, stylish, speedy, although low on mileage and economy. Hero-Hondas are the most economical of the bikes, and the owners see themselves as rational, complex, and see themselves and their bikes as in between the vanity and laid-backness of the other two.

A similar profile of jeans -- Levi's, Wranglers, and Avis -- among MBA students reveals that Levi wearers are the urban cowboys (aggressive, irresistable, macho, extrovert), Wrangler wearers see themselves as urban sophisticates (yuppie, ambitious, trendy), and Avis wearers style themselves after the Hindi actor Chunkey Pandey as romantics (street smart, romantic, heroic, enjoying stunt values).

Cigarettes (like sportswear) are an evolving field of segmented markets that require companies to position different of their own brands so that they will not cannibalize one another. Imperial Tobocco Company (ITC)'s premier cigarette, Gold Flake, long associated with the best things in life (*khandari* surroundings, Persian carpets and marble pillars, chauffer-driven Bentleys, spotless white 'addi' *kurtas* and perfectly creased folds of Shatipuri *dhotis*) saw its sales drop almost by half in the 1960s with the introduction of ITC's own filter tipped brands (Regent, Wills, India Kings). There is a whole sociology sketched out in the product differentiation and marketing symbolisms deployed in the ITC family of cigarettes. Gold Flake itself was redeployed as the best non-filter cigarette ("Quality that has stood the test of time") and priced high, initally just below the premier filter cigarette, Gold Flake Filter Kings, which now became the longer-term growth cigarette, as the filter segment of the market began to grow into the major half, pitched to well-established men in the thirty-plus age group: university educated, senior officers in government and industry, who project an air of exclusiveness and quality, contemporary with a

sense of the past, the *khandani* touch ("for the gracious people"). Research was conducted in 1984 and 1987 on both actual user profiles and subjective views of how Gold Flake Filter King smokers saw the"GFFK man" which latter views tend toward aspirations, fantasizing about desires. Research into the fantasies and desires help construct story lines that future ads can project, and expect to draw both on recognition (established associations with the brand) and desire (idealized self-concept). While Gold Flake Filters are pitched towards traditional Indian values, Wills Filters are pitched towards a more Westernized persona; interestingly, "togetherness" is associated with Wills while Gold Flake Filter is associated with a more individualistic, self-contained, and cultured personality. Neveau riche versus established? The ITC brands position themselves against one another, but also against competitor companies. Thus in the king-sized filters, ITC goes for the elegance of aristocratic culture, while Four Square Kings goes for the outdoors sporty "high-flying life style" associated with yachting.

Toilet soaps, laundry detergents, tooth pastes, shampoos are all markets which not only reflect the impact of propaganda about new ideas of cleanliness, appearance, sanitation, hygiene, but which also might well be exploited for their cultural descriptions and sociological taxonomies. Their histories are also revealing of the development of entrepreneurship in India. Laundry detergents for instance were introduced in the early 1950s: Det was first (a product of Swastik Oil Mills of the Sarabhai Group), then Surf (Hindustan Lever) and TOMCO's Magic. They were all priced high in relation to other laundry soaps, yet sales went up nine fold between 1956 and 1966. Because of their high price, they were not only restricted to upper income consumers, but their use was also restricted to finer quality items. Pran Choudhury, the marketing director for Swastik Oil, launched Sway, a cheaper formula, not with a lower price but with a give away inducement of a plastic bucket for buying large quantities, and thereby demonstrated that there was a price-quality elasticity in the laundry detergent market. Many consumers now bought Sway for less fine clothes while buying Surf or Det for finer clothes. A Gujurati chemist, Karsonbhai Patel, exploited the lesson in 1975, marketing Nirma, first as a powder and then as a tablet in 1986. Nirma is an inferior but cheaper brand, and by 1988 sold 176,000 tonnes (vs Surf's 24,000), and took 33.40% of the market share in detergent tablets (overtaking the previous market leader, Rin's 23.5%). The cultural and social resonnances in this briefly told tale involve not only class separation among consumers, but a microcosmic reflection of the Gujurati-Bengali entrepreneurial history of the private sector: Sarabhai, Choudhury, Patel; merchant-industrialist, clerical-professional, technocrat-small business entrepreneur.

III

Im*media*tions and Discipline: non-verbal pragmatics

> There is no creative writing that matches the complexities and experiental realities of India. India is a country of repressed sexuality where every nuance of guesture can contain explosive worlds, but which no one talks about, not even husbands and wives. . . . poster painters -- that's the real gut level . . .
>
> -- Prahlad Kakar, 28 November 1990

> Imagination in advertising requires that you can show that 1 + 1 = 11, not 2. Too often agencies and decision makers are dominated by MBAs and accountants who are trained only that one plus one equals two, and can't evaluate ads. -- Prahlad Kakar, 29 August 1990.

If the various notions of positioning provide a way to map perceptual space, market niches, and cultural semiotics -- both for purposes of strategizing with new products, and for our purposes of revealing cultural and social differentiations -- there are also more subtle technologies of advertising. The government is worried about the effects of advertising on urban-rural polarization, and wants to regulate advertising. It fears that the constant barrage of consumer advertising about goods that are out of the reach of rural folk will contribute to social unrest. Government however neither has the technical expertise to regulate, nor is its understanding of the dynamics of advertising adequate. Alyque Padamsee points out that Indonesia atttempted to ban television consumer advertising for eight years, until it recognized that advertising was not a causal factor in social unrest. Mrs Gandhi, somewhat cautiously, supported the idea of advertising as a motivational spur: keeping up with the Jones is a way of motivating workers to redouble their efforts. Government proposals for further regulation than what already exists want to ban ostentatious display of wealth, foreign goods and models, sex and violence; these proposals also call for rules that would limit ads to saying what the product is, what it does, what it costs, with no suround, no life style, no aspiration, no projection of why a product is used. To try to implement such rules would either kill advertising and with it, the lubricant effect on market expansion; or alternatively such rules would encourage the unfettered use of subliminal autosuggestion, which the government does not have the expertise to recognize and could not control.

For instance, the use of the color red to echo violence. Prahlad Kakar uses the example of the following sequence: shooting a watermellon (spraying red juice), a woman's red lips saying "wow", red nail polished fingers, a woman's hand picking up a telephone. None of these shots is inherently violent or objectionable. But the sequence as a whole glorifies violence, with an analogy between

the watermelon and a head being fairly obvious. Or take another kind of example: the use of children to blackmail parents. Kakar uses the ads for the soft drink Rasna as an example: the ads have kids saying, "I love my parents, I love my Rasna." If real life parents tell their kids to have orange juice instead, the response of the child will be, "You don't love me." Or a third example, the Tata Tea commercial, which is basic and primitive: there are five hundred guys and one girl, the girl is in red, the guys are in greys and blues in a smoky bistro-like aura: she promises only freshness, they want satisfaction. (Another Tata Tea ad modifies Hindi film star Amitav Bachchan's song "Juma juma didi" [gimme gimme a kiss"] to "juma juma freshness" at which a girl jumps out of a tea garden. "Freshness" was a key word for ads at the time, and worked for Tata Tea until Taza ["freshness"] Tea began making in roads: see fn 14, and also fn 15 on Double Diamond Tea's use of the word "freshness".)

Only the advertising industry itself, says Kakar, ahs the knowledge to self-regulate these sorts of tactics. The difference in government approval process in England and India is telling. In India, says Kakar, a bureaucrat gets a "story boat" script proposal, gives conditional approval, then you shoot it, and he may still turn it down, with arbitrary reasons nowhere written down. E.g., he may object to winking as sexually suggestive, and then apply this objection to a little girl. In England, the industry polices itself: a board of professionals know what innuendo, allusion, and technique is, and is hard nosed and direct. There you must use the real product (you may enhance it photographically, but not use false paint); you may not use children aggressively (by zooming in suddenly or thrusting the product into the famera); you can only talk about the product properties, not the packaging. In the process of reviewing scripts before production, all sorts of technical possibilities are noted frame by frame with warnings against misuse. You may not push a package of cereal at the camera/viewer because that is an "irrational" aggressive abuse of the senses, as opposed to a rational sell (this cereal has such and such nutritional value).

The concept of "loading" is the convenient handle that the industry uses to analyse the multiple levels on which advertising works. Much more information can be put into an ad than can be received at one time: ads, of course, are watched over and over, they depend upon repetition. Secondary levels can convey messages that are not immediately available to consciousness: through backdrops, lighting, subcasting, and subliminal kaleidoscopic tactics. Indeed there is considerable learning back and forth in such tactics between film and advertising. The blockbuster film, *Sholay*, says Kakar, is masterful in precisely this way of loading.

This is an arena for research, like cultural hermeneutics (section V), which might repay further attention in at least four dimensions. First, formal visual techniques: one might want to investigate suggestions such as those on color, cited above, from M.F. Husain and Daniel Herwitz, or also M.F. Husain's thoughts on body form, which he said he gleaned in part from studying Indian art back to the Gupta period:

> In the East the human form is an entirely different structure . . . the way a woman walks in the village there are three breaks . . . from the feet, the hips, the shoulder . . . the walk of the European is erect and archaic.

But second, more generally, one would want to explore suggestions such as Lyotard's, drawing on an anti-Lacanian reading of Freud, that visual figuration operates with an entirely different grammar or syntax than do verbal or linguistic forms. Lacan sees the unconscious (and its visual figurations) as structred like language, meaning that there is a process of deferring, substitution that reroutes the "death drive" or closure into more life-giving ("erotic") substitutions and deferments of the end. Lyotard susggests that this is too simple a model, and that the visual provides a quite different dynamic. third, one would want to know the degree to which older artistic styles as well as new international styles call up still vital cultural and emotional resonnances. And fourthly, one would want to chart the ways in which audiences are being taught new artistic repetoires, and new narratives. Srivatsan points to the fact that visual learning tends to be tacit: one learns by doing/seeing, audience repetoires exapnd through exposure, rather than analytic reflection. Chris Baker notes that focus groups demonstrate that differently situated groups will relate to visually loaded ads in different ways: often playful ads are received by audiences initally only on their most literal level, missing the playful references, but young people want to be entertained in just such playful ways as if saying, 'we know the medium, let us see what you can do'; moreover poor people whose budgets would allow only a bicycle may respond to automobile ads by enjoing the entertainment values, and screening out (having no recall) the model or brand names.

An interesting pair of debates is indicative here. I asked G.P. Sippy, the producer of many of the past two decades commercial cinema box office hits, what he thought of Sridhar Kshirsagar's experimental serial, *Manzel*. He had liked Kshirsagar's earlier *Khandaan*. Not surprisingly, he thought *Manzel* "silly, meaningless" (it requires audiences to keep track of many characters, and to constantly question the narration): it is Kshirsagar's effort to privde the kind of experimentation that, say, *Hill Street Blues*, is thought to have introduced to American television: building upon a television literacy to a faster pace, less simply narrated, and with shots that do not simply frame single conversations, and above all attempting to introduce in the case of *Manzel*, a more philosophical play with language and enigma. Responding to complaints about the complexity of the story, Kshirsagar used episode twelve to go back over th story and explain, and catch people up. Sippy: "this episode was talk, talk, talk, to try to explain. If you have to explain, you are lost: you can't explain, it's an audio-visiual medium." But Sippy, through his granddaughter, is involved in his own experimentations, in which shee too is trying to change audience expectations that often are used as excuses not to innovate too fast.

Sheena Sippy did the poster photography for the 1991 film *Pathar kee Phool*, stunning pieces that to an American eye recall old Broadway ala Singing in the Rain and Charlie Chaplin. Delighted that I liked a sepia shot of a "Chaplin-like" Raj Kapoor, she told me that it is from a sequence in the movie where the lyrics are a string of references to popular songs back to Raj Kapoor, and that there was a big debate on about whether to do the scene in the movie in black and white or sepia. The fear of the director, her father Ramesh Sippy, was that the audience would think the color of the film had washed out, that the print was flawed. At the same time, Sheena was experimenting with anew style of poster and film song cassette cover design. She wanted to try something different, and feeling the posters had become overcrowded with images, she went in the spare direction: an empty

frame with a single central image, and a simple question in typeface. Her father warned one should not be too experimental with mass audiences, but the post was a big success.

Around this time, the poster campaign for Ramgopal Varma's film *Shiva* (with powerful music by Ilaiya Raaja) also had a strak modernist style that broke with the usual movie posters. Ilaiya Raaja, of course, the phenomenal Tamil composer who is now the most prolific of screen composers as well, raises the issue of "fusion" sound track innovation. Ilaiya Raaja is one of India's most successful innovators in bringing together Western and Eastern music traditions, modern synthesizers and traditional instruments, and thus presumably all the emotional tonalities that these can evoke.

In terms of new narratives, "loading" involves not only compression (e.g. the Tata Tea ad which is an allusion to or compression of a Hindi film idea), nor only resonnnances to multiple cultural references,[16] but also to the introduction of new key words (like "freshness") and themes. In Japan, Moeran notes, ads at one point were built around keywords that stressed Japan's movement from traditional or feudal society to modernity, then ads stressed the movement from rural to urban, and then they stressed the international. The rural-urban theme was carried by the key word "city" as in Hondo naming its car "City"; the international theme was carried by the key words "knowledge" and "information". So too in India, new frames for ordering past-present-future are signalled in "freshness," in the aspirations of women, in the use of creolized or hybridized language, etc.

IV

Macro-micro-scoping, Stories & Wit: semantic networks

> the advertising concept is not necessarily located in the product or in ourselves. [. . . Advertising is the] astute juxtaposition of contradictory and stylized concepts which activate an area of meaning akin to the interface of two semantic networks. --Caludia Dobkin
>
> September is indeed the month of falling leaves and controversial billboards In 1981 there was Myriam who removed her top, then her bottom in large quadrichrome format all over Paris walls. In 1983 an advertiser laid out his eggs . . . 2800 fetuses wearing Wrangler jeans invaded Parisian and regional billboards. This new advertising star was to join the sprightly Wrangler skeleton which had been frolicking on walls for five months. --ibid.
>
> And who knows, maybe a phrase I write might become a part of the English language -- it's happened. --creative quoted by Hirota

If *positioning* is a way of mapping the market, perceptual universes, and cultural categories, and if *loading* is a way of mapping the subliminal and multilevel messages that advertising utilizes and that audiences receive synthetically, semantic networks and artistic styles are ways of engaging readers into participating in games that require them to stop and pay attention analytically. These can be as simple as changing the scale of objects, miniaturizing or giganticizing; or they can involve more complex narrative and semantic strategies. Alyque Padamsee in a magazine interview identified different ad agencies as having different strengths: he said he admired da Cuna for its proposition-oriented ads, Everest for having an Indian touch, Trikaya for creative styling, and the Calcutta based Response for innovativeness. Sengupta too attempts to identify the distinctive strategies of different agencies by allowing directors to lay out their philosophies of positioning. Of these the most interesting is perhaps Ravi Gupta, the managing director of Trikaya Grey, who articulated both a philosophy of looking for a distinctive product benefit (the extra wide tires of Spectra) which then could be enhanced (rename the produce Spectra-wide, and use photography to reinforce the point), and the

use of non-verbal techniques (the moulded luggage Aristocrat uses an ad which pictures a coolie carrying a moulded suitcase). He notes, "Would the Aristocrat 'Coolie' campaign have been a success if the advertising sign off had been 'Luggage for the train traveller?' Absolutely not. One does not want to be reminded of one's real status in life. . . What is important is for advertising to talk to the consumer in a manner which gets the target to emote with the brand." (215). But while ad agencies may have different philosophies, strategies and relative strengths, it would be nice to be able to analyze a bit further the elements that have gone into advertising dialects at different points.

Little if any work for instance seems to have been done on artistic styles in Indian advertising, although the work of Judith Gutman on early Indian photography, of Patricia Uberoi on calendar art and on the use of woman as figure, and comments of M.F. Husain on perception of color in India provide suggestive starting points. For the U.S. and France, useful accounts include Kirk Varnedoe's historical sketch of the interaction between modernist art and advertising, Dobkin's account of post World War II advertising in France, and Hirota's ethnography of creatives on Madison Avenue. These latter provide some beginnings in analyzing the verbal and visual syntax that must periodically be changed to renew the interest in advertising over time.

Varnedoe's argument has already been invoked in the introductory section above, but one line of his argument bears further attention: the observation that advertising in Europe grew out of an intereaction with modernist painting, that in the 1920s and 1930s with the depression, mass politics, and the expansion of mass production and mass marketing, there was a turn to realist styles -- stressing legibility and reducing possibilities of ambiguity -- and then in the 1950s there was a return gradually to modernist styles (which in America had quietly been nutured by M.F. Agha at Conde Nast, and Alex Brodovitch at Harper's). Along with these stylistic shifts were also shifts in the psychological theories invoked by advertisers to guide and justify their strategies: in the 1920s the psychology of William James and Wilhelm Wundt suggested that appeal to the masses be based on suggestibility, that advertising might be rational, but consumers were not. Varnedoe traces the shifts in the 1950s when advertising discovered (in part through the dramatic failure of the 1957-58 Edsel campaign, and the competition of the 1958 Peugot and 1959 VW ads) that it could no longer assume a single mass market, but that it had to deal with a pluralized market. The Peugot ads positioned themselves in contrast to the sugary Detroit ads, and the VW ads (designed by Doyle Dane Bernbach) pitched to self-depreciatory humor. While some post war art could play with the forms of product packaging like the large automobile fins which Richard Hamilton eroticized, Varnedoe points out that the Pop Art of the 1960s can be read as already nostalgic for the commercial culture of bygone decades and childhood memory. Warhol's blow ups and parodic ambiguation of consumer/art imagery replays this nostalgia. Varnedoe is also good in tracing how much of the modernist play with puns and other conceptual transpositions -- steming back to Picasso, Ernst, Schwitters, the Futurists, and the Constructivists -- obviously foreshadows postmodernist syntax characteristic of the 1960s and later. Picasso plays off shop windows, and it was designers of such department store displays, not just high culture art, that pioneered risque contrasts and puns as effective attention grabbers. Cubists tended to play with private consumption, while the futurists and Russian modernists focussed on the mass market. And Leger

made fun of campaigns to ban or restrict billboards, revelling in the shocks and contrasts provided by introducing new visual elements into the environment: he delighted in the new era of light and color provided by this cultural environment, and also in the destruction of sentimental literary concepts of pastoralism that had dominated nineteenth century paintings of nature. But while the contemporary commercial syntax ("postmodernist") grows out of these early twentieth century experiments ("modernist"), as Dobkin shows, there is a difference when the referent all but disappears and the accent is the involvement of the audience rather than focusing on the product, its benefits, or its form. The distinction becomes even clearer when the resigister of postcolonial nationalism versus postmodern or post-postcolonialism is introducted as in Nag's comments on advertising in Bengal and Appiah's comments on art in West Africa (see next section).

While Varnedoe really only takes us up to the decade of the 1960s, Hirota fills in the pivotal role of the 1960s. Hirota points to the 1960s as an important turning point organizationally, conceptually, sociologically, and in terms of budgetary freedom. Advertising, she says, moved from the control of stodgy middle class WASPS producing genteel, dull ads, to street smart Jewish writers and Italian art directors from Brooklyn. Collaborative teamwork between art directors with visual expertise and copywriters with verbal expertise was pioneered, according to industry folklore, at Doyle, Dane, Bernbach in the 1960s. Previously, writers had been valorized as the creative force, and artists treated as mere illustrators; but now they worked together. William Bernbach is credited with popularizing the idea of "creativity", that ads work through humor and conceptual involvment of the audience in decoding, a theory that competed with the MR (motivational research) boys championed by Dr. Ernest Dichter (charting desires, stressing the use of "SA" sex appeal). Doyle, Dane, Bernbach designed the campaign for Ohrbach's department store which pioneered the use of irreverent humor, making fun of other ads, as well as using visual and verbal gimmicks. Television's impact in the 1960s further consolidated the increasing importance of the visual. Varnedoe reminds us that the priviledging of the photography and the TV image over text was bewailed by some as irrational "imagism": it was the time of not only of such widely read books as McLuhan's *Mechanical Bride* and Roland Barthes *Mythologies*, but of a fear of brainwashing (literally the fear of how prisoners in the Korean War might be brainwashed, and more generally fear of subliminal psychological manipulation by Madison Avenue, both fears that stemmed from the psychological warfare research sponsored during World War II) expressed in America as fear of the destruction of "American values" and in Europe as fear of "Americanization."

Claudia Dobkin adds a few more elements to the recent history of advertising, albeit with a French focus. France is distinctive in the public attention paid to advertising, shown in the series of shows on advertising held, for instance, in the George Pompidou Centre over the past years. Dobkin focuses on post-war France viewing much of what Varnedoe has to say as prehistory of modern advertising. More than Varnedoe she provides a case book of advertising syntax. France, she points out, spends less on advertising as a percentage of GNP than Ireland or Egypt, and in relation to population, France is sixteenth after Bermuda and far behind Finland. But in absolute figures, France is fifth after the U.S., Japan, the U.K., and Germany. In 1986 the press (57%) and

billboards (14%) still overshadowed money spent on advertising in the electronic media (television, 17%, radio 10%, cinema, 2%).

It is Dobkin's analysis of eight billboard campaigns (plus 62 press and cinema ad campaigns) in France that perhaps most clearly articulate the strategms of "postmodernist" advertising as a play of semantic networks. She illustrates in turn with these eight campaigns: self-referential double-referent engactments; non-mimetic and non-iconic visual syntax; ads directed at the consumption of the text; multiple levels of semantic codes feeding back and reinforcing one another; tropes of circuitry and mirroring of text and image; transgressive hints and magical rhymes; minimalist essentialism; and self-valorizing. Dobkins own subtitles engage in the verbal gaming that the ads encourage:

(1) Avenir Publicite. The campaign "Myriam kept her promise" provides Dobkin with a key example of the way that although ads often tend toward self-referentiality, they do not seek to resist or surpass the reader as does much art and literature. It is moreover, historically, a campaign that "probably did more for the advertising industry than for her product": it involved the French public further into the active spectator sport of advertising appreciation. The striptease pun (*la pub* = nudes, publicite) was a strip or series of billboards, in which Myriam stripped, thereby "unveiling the 'secret' of an advertising medium . . . where the message is no other than playing according to the creative rules imposed in order to reach the objective, the product name," "Avenir keeps its promises." This 1981 award winning campaign for Avenir (done by CLM/BBDO, the Prix Affice awarded on the two criteria of creative achievement and high recognition scores for the product) paralleled the similar "la force tranquille" ads for Mitterand's political campaign, designed by Jacques Seguela. The strip was sustained over four days: the first day Myriam faces us in a bikini with the text behind the horzion, "Le 2 Sept, J'Enleve le haut." Two days later, Myriam faces us in the same posture but topless, and the text moves closer, merging with the horizon, "Le 4 Sept, J'Enleve le Bas." Two days later she is nude with her back turned, and the text says, "Avenir l'Afficeur Qui Tient Ses Promesses." Dobkin: "Her unveiling was humor, intelligence, and even emotion: an exchange. Her teasing was fascination, provocation, and suspense: a game."

(2) Wrangler: The Ultimate AD-venture. If Myriam enacts the gaming of advertising, the Wrangler campaign of September 1983 is a much more sophisticated example of semantic play., showing that ads need not tie themselves to icons or mimesis. Unlike its major competitors, Buffalo, Lois, and Levis, whose ads evoke cliches of sex or and the American West (as dimensions of individualism) Wrangler

> proposes the quintessential adventure, close to the oneiric dimension . . . not only are they fit/cut (taille) for adventure, but for (the dream of) adventure of life, represented by the fetus, and of death by the skeleton, whose adventures we can barely imagine. By evoking the two poles of existence, Wangler's concept is life oriented. It speaks for the notions of authentic beginnings and durability -- western to the end. "Warngler.", (the word sufficient in itself to warrant punctuation, as if it were an order or a statement), the individual -- not the

garment -- stands alone among others . . ."

The absence of details allows speculation about what the fetus will do, what the skeleton did in life. A cowboy or a sylph, says Dobkin, would be too reductive, would not allow for all adventures, all forms of life. The fetus is not an icon, it does not directly represent the wearer but rather the idea of possibilities of life, its relation to the jeans is one of contained/container, evoking notions of wholesness, strength, durability; its relation to the jeans is one of contiguity, of two elements mutually creating a new entity. The ad and its slogan, "Wrangler. Taille pour l'aventure." is (like the Myriam ad) self-referential to the ad, to the possibilities of life, to the jeans (adventures of the self, fit/cut/tailored with Wranglers. (Again this was a Prix Affiche award winner for the agency Dupuy-Compton.)

Dobkin strengthens the observation about the decay of cliched uses of the Western myth in a contrast between Busch beer and Jack Daniels. Although she does not provide any reception data, the difference in modalities of framing and number of references is instructive. Busch's billboards in 1982-84 straightforwardly read, "Decourez la biere des hommes de l'ouest" and "Il etait une soif dans l'ouest. Busch la biere des hommes de l'ouest." Jack Daniels had a 30 second cinema commercial showing an older American at work in a disillery and telling in English with French subtitles that the methods of his ancesters were being used unchanged. The evocation here is that of foreign films, another American film.

(3) Danonne: Les mots et les choses. In this campaign by Dupuy-Compton, yogurt is positioned as high cuisine, pictured together with salmon, asparagus, fish, refined good taste and health; but the play of the ad has to do with language, the language of a gourmet, references to high literature, the long poetry-like text, such that "the advertisement itself is consumed when the readers understand the play on words." Indeed the text which begins, "Le gai manger -- " (after, of course, Nietzsche's *Le gai savoir*); proceeding, "Ne pas manger pour manager, Mais manger pour le plaisir, Manger pour la forme, La bonne humeur . . .; ends with the pun, "Danone au lait entier: n des palisirs de langue francaise."

(4) The1984 ad campaign for Credit Agricole Mutuel L'Ile de France, with the feet of a woman walking a duck on a leash ("Paris prend l'air au Credit Agriocle"), or a the feet of a man with a rabbit on a leash ("Paris respire au Credit Agricole") is used by Dobkin to show the technique of ads that tap many semantic networks each of which leading to equivalent interpretations and thus reinforcing one another: intimate living together and mutual advantage of country and city or two kinds of species or lifestyles; breathing and banking.

(5) The Darty ads, which are among the most quoted and rememberd by the French public also rely upon a multiplicity of semantic networks, this time reinforced by the mirroring of text and image, and by the notions of circuits. Darty is the store that introduced the idea of service for products bought. The circularity and multiple possibilities imaged in the ads mirror the consumption circuits of Darty itself: "Darty counters the unidimentionality of most consumer siturations where once outside the store the consumer is out of that world. Darty keeps their consumers within by providing SAV (le service apres vente) and reminders of constant

availability." One of the ads is a play upon the logo (a circle inscribed in a square with the Darty name as a kind of eyeball: two circles inscribed in squares with cross-eyed eyeballs serve as eyes to a Darty logo as nose in an abstract face. Each eye could turn to any direction: the only logical place to turn "pour le choix/pix/SAV" [is Darty]; it is a matter of focus. Another ad shows Rodin's Penseur who thinks and watches for the best deal ("Plus j'y pense; Plus je me demande; Comment on peut; Acheter sans comparer!" Other ads show a glass filled with Darty logs like ice cubes (Contre la fievre des prix . . . Le remedie: les prix Darty;" or a spoon with a Darty logo like a pill ("Contre l'insuffisance du choix"); or an ambulance-like service truck ("En cas d'Urgence"). And appropo of India, there's a Darty ad with a four armed Saraswati-like goddess ("Je suis mois ethcace.").

(6) The Saint Boursin ads again are a postmodern strategy for what Sengupta might have analyzed as a problem in repositioning. An industrial product (rather than a frommage du terroir), relatively expensive, and strong tasting, St Boursin positions itself outside the sphere of traditional cheeses, both visually and with the rhyme, "Du pain, du vin, du . . . (Boursin)." Visually there is a sensuous, but elegantly dressed woman, being given communion by a black gloved, disguised male hand (black gloved as in sadist, black mass imagery), a slighly kinky transgressive play on the two cardinal sins of luxury and gluttony. The rhyming slogan has held strong since 1968, and works much like the famous Dubonnet campaign: Dubo - Dubon - Dubonnet, the reader stopping at each adjective, each on a different billboard panel with a different color, until coming to the brand name. Boursin uses a comic strip, serial format: "Je vais mal" ("pain, vin, pas de Boursin" -- in black and white), and a few Metro stops further, "Je vais bien" (addition of Boursin in color).

(7) The 1982 Club Mediterranee ads (done by Synergie and winner of the prix affiche) provide another strategy: these are never shown on television, but only on billboards, they do not show what life at a Club Med is like, but an essentialized moment. They are simple, minimalist: a photograph of a beautiful place, anonymous (maybe Spain or maybe Morocco or maybe Greece; any of a number of ski resorts): alocal, atemporal, a "Morocco without Moroccans, a kibbutz without work, a climate without inclemences, one travels for miles without much changing". They invite us to rediscover how to "Aimer, Joyer, Dormir, Manger, Rever, Boire, Respirer, Decouvrir, Ecouter." The summer campaign shows us people just like us, facing us; while the winter campaign shows us people unlike us, with their backs to us, who have broken away for a vacation (as we as yet have not done). Jet setters see a piece of petit France; working people see an icon of individual experience, of the jet set world. The name Club Med appears only as a caption: the product is so well positioned that it is sufficient to say "j' etais au club".

(8) The Metro itself has used advertising not to get more riders, but to valorize the Metro as full of intimate signs of Parisian life: the 1981 campaign shows all the destinations, the network of trains, the ticket system, and is located on posters, clothing, objects, and uses references to olden times as well as modern places.

French advertising, Dobkin notes, is no longer instrumental: "it is free art which turns all

critiques into *depits amoureaux*" (Dobkin 19886: 163). Moreover, it does not only turn products into story heros, as Hirota emphasizes for American ads in the 1960s, but also turn its fans and readers into popular heros. Ads might use Latin texts and tags to flatter their readers, and to present an icon of durability or original roots: e.g. Kanterbrau's full page ad of Latin text describing their brewing tradition; or Marazzi's use of the tags "ad vitam aeternam", "nee plus ultra", "o mirabile visu". The Freetime hamburger ads manage to poke gentle fun at the French while at the same time breaking out of teenager or class specific advertising, and also domesticating an invasive foreign commodity: a man in white tux and white gloves eats a clean Freetime hamburger (with paper ring to keep the ingredients and drips in place), while another man dripping ketchup and grease walks out muttering, "My tailor is rich" (a play on a sentence from the Assimil method for learning English). As Dobkin reminds, "A show, desire and humor may all contribute to the successful impact of an advertisement but are not sufficient conditions. What is essential is the creation of a cohesive network of parallel readings which complement and reinforce each other for the involved reader." (Dobkin 1988: 154).

[A new generation is now ensconced in New York: Goldsmith/Jeffrey ($30 million in annual billings, four year old firm), Deutsch (105 employees, $100 million in annual billings three quarters from TV, 22 years old but now run by a second generation), Omon (14 employees, started in 1989 in New York, an outpost of an Australian firm; Toyota and Philip Morris accounts), Kirshenbaum and Bond (started in 1987, $45million annual billings, "Dress British, Think Yiddish" for St. Laurie), and Buckley DeCercio Cavalier (founded in 1988). Scrambling during the current recession for reduced advertising spending, they seem to make their fortunes on humor, but there seems to be less polish associated with these ad campaigns than what Dobkin describes for the award winning French campaigns. These are the high riders and they too revel in being able to turn away unadventurous clients who want to dictate their own ads.]

V

Cultural semioses: cultural hermeneutics

> It is this consumption-driven national imaginaire, itself full of ironies and tensions, that we seek to explore . . .
>
> -- Arjun Appadurai & Carol A. Breckenridge

> Here I shall explore a historically specific form of modernity that produces Tradition by making a Fashion of it and in the process engenders the discourse of modernity. -- Dulali Nag

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> Here I shall explore a historically specific form of modernity that produces Tradition by making a Fashion of it and in the process engenders the discourse of modernity. -- Dulali Nag

We have been reading ads with attention to the narratives and discourses they are inserted into or create, asking if these can provide us with tools for exploring questions of how Indians are redefining class structure, national and subnational solidarities, senses of personhood and creation of new public arenas. Advertising, it has been suggested by the discourses surveyed above, operates in two major sites of cultural agon: the creation of new (national and international) consumer communities, and the contestation among (cultural, generational, class, gendered) groups through their differential use and construal of commodities. There is a dialectic between transnational flows of culture, redefinitions of national identity, and the transformation of local identities, none of which can be understood independently apart from their relationships to the other two. Two articles -- by Appadurai and Breckenridge, and by Nag -- may serve as preliminary complementary exemplars of anthropological mappings of these cultural agons.

Appadurai and Breckenridge are interested in the ways in which a new national consumer community in India is not only being created, but is constituitive of an emerging nation-state with a new internal class hierarchy based on income, life style, and consumption, rather than on caste or postion in the relations of production. Advertising serves them as a key example in a larger theory of class which they would locate in the market dynamics of consumption rather than as in the political economies of earlier phases of capitalism on the market dynamics of production. The market and the state become for them the key forces, with the state, and its concern to service a huge affluent middle class, pursuing a "project" (conscious design through the planning mechanisms of the state, but also "project" in the sense of "future-orientation" rather than reflection of past cultural patterns or mere current social needs) of nation building.

There is an obvious danger here. Appadurai and Breckenridge themselves may avoid the danger, but one must be on guard against an over reliance on the intentional self-fulfilling narrative being promoted by the advertising guild that celebrates the 150-200 million persons[17] who compose one of the world's largest national middle classes, hungry for consumer goods, as India relaxes its socialist controls on consumption and makes India a dynamically expanding market. The advertsing produced for this class is aspiration and future oriented, projecting, fostering, and supporting

changes in family, roles of women, new consumer categories such as the "teenager", and new labor-technology relations. Advertising creatives, themselves point out that they promote images of the nuclear family with one child, images of working professional women who are in charge of business decision-making as well as family, emotional relations, and fashion, and who rely on labor saving appliances. Nor is it only the role of women that is undergoing re-image-imaging: husbands too are separated from larger family structures, children and teenagers are constituted as powerful consumers with distinctive desires and legitimate needs. Little of the current reality of middle classes still dependent upon servants, the caste structure, and extended family is shown in ads, nor is the urban diversity amidst which the middle class lives; these elements could be said to be just "off screen", very much in every Indian's awareness, but not focal for the aspiration projections of ads and their glamorized and santized life styles. Focussing on the ads without their "beyond the frame" contexts can mislead: one should not mistake the ideology of national consumer community being energetically promoted by advertising targeted to this class as a simple reflection of Indian reality, whether of this class or of Indian society at large.

Dulali Nag's analysis of Bengali language ads provides a helpful counterpoint to this danger, by deconstructing or questioning the tendancy in much work on the third world -- be it India, Africa, or now Eastern Europe -- to priviledge the ways market mechanisms and the state constitue consumer communities and modes of citzenry, as the risk of forever postponing or overshadowing the cultural analysis of differential local discourses. If Appadurai and Breckenridge focus attention on the cultural agon of the national-transnational (i.e. the project of nation-state building with its national consumer market construction enmeshed in a global marketing nexus), Nag focusses on the complementary cultural agon of differential taste cultures and consumer classes defined both by generational experience and by a shift from nationalist discourses to postnationalist (or postmodernist) ones.

In the following comments, while I will try to sharpen the contrasts between these two focal approaches so as to highlight the necessity of their complementarity, I do not intend thereby to dismiss or deny the importance of the market and the state processes of nation building and consumer community construction, but rather to elicit further the two kinds of cultural questions raised repeatedly in the above sections of this paper: how new classes and strata are culturally marked in differential advertising; and how historical references go into the construction of an Indian cultural specificity in ads and visual media. Thus, the Appadurai and Breckenridge article looks at tourism ads, the 1986 "Discover India, Discover Yourself" campaign, which it reads as an elitist disciplining mechanism to create and socialize a new national community of consumption, and especially as a way of turning those who do not have the money to actually buy into tourism to at least becoming willing spectator-participants in a newly crated world that is largely a similacrum of worlds and perspectives aped from abroad. The Nag article looks at Bengali language sari ads and finds a differentiation between those which draw upon and reinforce thetaste culture of older generation nationalists, and those which draw upon and reinforce the new emerging taste culture of a younger generation of professionals in Calcutta who are no longer predominantly Bengali but are from all over India.

Appadurai and Breckenridge's analysis of the 1986 "Discover India, Discover Yourself" ad campaign designed by the Bombay Rediffusion agency for the Indian Tourism Development Corporation, is part of the genre of writing about advertising -- dating back to Vance Packard, whom they invoke, and earlier -- that is cautionary about advertising as a manipulation of people, conceived almost as if passive masses, by powerful commercial and state forces. Advertising in India is described as hermetically elitist, produced by cosmopolitan English-speakers, who "do not particularly seem to care about reaching down to the languages, concerns , tastes and idioms of the working classes."[18] Appadurai and Breckenridge interpret two sets of images in the "Discover India, Discover Yourself" campaign -- the "domesticated exotic" and the nature images -- as the erasure of Indian artistic, cultural, and historical memory and the imposition of a similacrum new reality derived from perspectives that tie a new Indian community of consumption into a world market centered abroad.

There is an important and interesting question here: the degree to which displacements of European discourses rework Indian markers of identity creating a new hybridized Indian discourse of identity which enforces two sets of hierarchy: subordinating the non-middle classes to a middle class defined Indian national community of consumption, and subordinating Indian taste cultures to a global fashion industrial system. New "Western" images of nature and of solitude, they suggest, are being introduced into an artistic vocabulary in a way that did not exist previously. At the same time, traditional Indian cultural resources are being appropriated and redeployed: one can only understand Indian advertsing, they suggest, through an appreciation of culturally deep thematics of bodily vitality and substances rooted in the Hindu ritual code, of prosperity as an auspicious state confirmed by expenditure (auspiciousness as the this-worldly principle or the caste system complementary to the purity-karma principle of caste ranking), and of the priviledging of social types and collectivities over individualism in Indian thought.

These suggestions, important as they are for drawing attention to questions about appropriations and displacements, are unfortunately as yet poorly supported with ethnographic detailed readings. The readings provided are curiously harsh about Indian advertising creatives and curiously stereotypic and essentialistic about the traditional Indian cultural resources said to be appropriated and redeployed. ("Curiously" because Appadurai has been a leading voice calling for an overthrow of the now fossilized tendancy to view India as merely a caste-ridden, village-communal, Homo-hierarchical society.) For instance, while noting that images of hotels packaged as "palace accomodation" are composed by putting exoticized visions of Indian pasts together with European luxury, they object to images that include horses, references to a Greek shipping magnate, and an Egyptian exhibit at a Hyderabad museum as foreign:

> In one double page colored ad, a pen and ink equestrian image leaps across the page. The horse is not indigenous to India nor can it easily reproduce itself there. It was brought from Outside, and it was brought by Outsiders (usually Arabs and Portuguese) who came across the forbidden seas. In another double page spread, the Outside is again the referent. In this text . . . an elusive reference is made (in bold letters) to

> Theodore Papadarakis, the Greek shipping tycoon; and in the photograph the Egyptian exhibit at Hyderabad's unique Salar Jang Museum is prominent. What bearing do horses, pharaohs and Greek shipping tycoons have on the invitation to "Discover India"? . . . **In a complex conspiracy** [emphasis added], the ad agency . . . has shifted attention . . . to . . . the India that is not diminished by its colonial past and its presumed civilizational origins (in Egypt and Greece). (p. 7).

This is a richly interesting, if peculiar, passage: one wonders first of all at the implied vision of an essentialist India which is sharply bounded by "forbidden waters" (the Brahminical taboo system and purity code that tried to keep people localized and locked into position), one that moreover is archaic, existing before the Portuguese and Arabs imported horses (well over three hundred years ago). Horses, of course, were imported also from the north, from Afghanistan and Bukhara, and one wonders what court life in India would have looked like without horses; should one now take white out to all those horses in Indian miniature painting? The capitalized "Outside" and the description "conspiracy" speak loudly in Edward Saidian and (American) Foucaultian idiom, but again the historically minded person must wonder at the implied objection on the one hand to having exhibits in India about the Other (why is it any worse for Indians as part of tourism, to go to Hyderabad to see Egyptian objects than for Americans to go to New York to see Egyptian objects? -- Indians should remain in a traditional-local mind set without contamination of other cultures?), and on the other hand at the implied denial that there has been trade and cultural interaction since ancient times between India and Greece and Egypt? To turn all such elements into a story of colonialism -- Egypt and Greece it is asserted are part only of the modern reinvention of a notion called Europe, which now is being imposed upon India as a colonial construction with "its presumed civilizational origins (in Eygpt and Greece)" -- seems a bit heavy handed, and self-defeating for an India which has always been on the world stage.

The readings of the nature imagery by Appadurai and Breckenridge also have this curious essentialist animus. Nature imagery they assert is foreign to Indian cultural tradition (so much for the elaborate flower designs that often frame miniatures and manuscript pages, the poetic tradition of Persian poetry that speaks of paradise as a garden, the imagery of Persian style carpets, and the lush nature framed Krishna love scenes):

> In general, landscapes, landscape scenes and horizons do not figure prominently in the discursive world of Indian poetics and narrative, nor are they to be seen in pictoral representations in Indian art. . . . What this set of tourism ads does, along with many others of its kind, is to purge the Indian landscape of history, difference and conflict, and substitute for it an idea of solitude, leisure and refined self-discovery. (p. 8-9)

"Solitude" they go on to say, "like the scenic landscape, is not a standard way to represent the Indian self. Solitary encounters are discouraged at home and in public" (ibid., 8). (So much again for Persian poetry and its Urdu and Hindi film song derivatives. Perhaps to the Hindu imagination, the whole Mughal Period is part of the foreign Other, but what of the Hindu traditions of renunciation and bakhti, which depend on solitary encounters? Recall as well, from section II above, Srivatsan's

observation about male heroes on the hoardings: "Amitabh Bachhan thirty feet high . . . challenging me to take on the world . . . I am constituted through my experience of aloneness . . ."). What is at issue here is not the insight that decontextualization as an artistic technique might not be a vehicle for creating a new ethos and sensibility -- compare the use of this sort of technique in the French Club Med ads discussed by Dobkin (in section IV above). Nor is it unimportant to note, as Appadurai and Breckenridge do, that the "Discover India, Discover Yourself" campaign was modelled on a 1967 U.S. campaign, and the 1970 Discover Japan campaign analyzed by Marilyn Ivy. The problem is rather the implicit and explicit generalizations about Indian culture and self seem to be forced into the demands of an ideological argument that depends upon a binary logic of essentialized Indian and essentialized Other. Indeed Appadurai and Breckenridge hazard further assertions about three concerns that are distinctively Indian and that advertising manipulates:

> (1) bodily vitality and nutritional balance; (2) prosperity as an auspicious state, to be confirmed by expenditure; and (3) the importance of collectives and social "types" over "naturalistic" ("real") individuals as models of agency in the world of consumption (p. 10).

The level of generality in which these three are named and discussed make them little different from parallel concerns of Europeans and Americans; what is needed is a specification of how ads actually invoke traditional notions -- this is most obvious perhaps in printed ads for aryeuvedic medicines, and least obvious in television ads for soaps. It is precisely the level of cultural specificity at which something useful might be said and internally contested that a functionalist discourse about the disciplining of the masses into an elite controlled system of mass education fails to be able to bring into view.

A reminder of the theoretical debate between Edward Said and Homi Bhabha might be of use here. A mechanical Saidian binary and functionalist explanation of advertising as the "lubricant of a capitalist aesthetic" and the constitution of new non-intimate, non-kinship based communities of consumption, done by anglophones who are little interested in reaching out to classes other than their own reads recent tourism ad campaigns as variants on orientalist imagery, and attributes to traditional India some vague but essentialist differences from equally essentialist "the West". What remains interesting in this reading is the identifications of "displacements" of fantasy objects from Western discourse into Indian discourse, which are said to be "ironies and tensions", though unlike Bhabha style readings, these ironies in a Saidian binary discourse seem to be evident only to the analysts' distanced gaze, not inherent in the discourse, not inherent in the imagery itself, nor in the anxieties and split consciousness of Indian advertisers and tourists. Bhabha's initiative is to point out the rhetorical tropes of psychodynamic ambivalence within a discourse that all parties to the discourse become implicated in, both colonizer and colonized, both transnational and national, both hegemonic and subordinated class positionings, nor is it necessary that these be only binarized positionings. This is done by pointing out the instabilities in the language or imagery used by the discourse that allows it to partially escape the intentionality of control by the speaker, that implicates the speaker in a series of further moves and repositionings in relation to interlocutors who hold agonistic positions of (partial) power. Were the images of nature, solitude, body,

auspiciousness, and social types set within such a more labile understanding, the cultural agons of identity, class, nation, and transnational formation could come into view. It is after all, these agons, these shifts in the employment and play of cultural valences that Appadurai and Breckenridge presumably wish to elicit and bring to view. To invoke cliches of bodily vitality, auspiciousness, and social type, quite apart from providing underdeveloped access to cultural differentiation from the same functional processes in Europe, reinforces precisely those elements of traditionalized reifications that Appadurai has been trying to dissuade people from stereotyping India by. To make these elements work requires cultural specification, ethnographic elaboration, demonstration, and dis-play. In that process the stereotypes will almost surely break down. A case in point is a recent analysis (Cohen 1991) of the new gerontology literature in India which points out that this literature invokes a highly romanticized narrative of the need to provide for old people in a society where the family used to take care of its old but no longer does so, a narrative lament about modernization and nostalgia for the joint family. This narrative, suggests Cohen, is one sided about the traditional reality of India, and represses the gerontophobic sides of traditional India: the many places in Sanskrit, Purana and later literatures which stress the isolation and devastations of growing old and the stresses between the generations (e.g., the "old aunt" as a figuration of family stress in Bengali and North Indian literature such as Banerji's *Pather Panchali* or Premchand's *Burhi Kaki*; or the "old mother" as Ghor Kali, end of the world, figuration of tension between old mother and daughter-in-law), the therapies of attempting to avoid old age (Rasayana), the Buddhist soteriological use of the figure of the old person, and above all the reality of institutions of charity for widows and beggars in places like Benares that operated under the ideological sign of communities for those who withdraw from society (an ethos of *sanyasa*) in dealing with abandoment and disengagement.

Dulali Nag's article illustrates some of the cultural registers, and degree of specification required to make the kind of argument Appadurai and Breckenridge suggest work. Nag investigates Bengali language advertising -- already allowing a less Anglo-centric appproach, and problematizing the Appadurai and Breckenridge seeming stress on the directness of the tie between the global and the local, between the English speaking middle class and the rest -- and shows through a culturally inquisitive hermeneutic set of readings how generation and class, as well as modernist versus postmodernist differentials have been weaving new patterns of cultural understanding within India over the past century, and raising a series of interesting questions about the status of the multilingual reality in which most urban Indians operate and construct their cultural world.

One of the most important contributions anthropologists can make to the study of advertising is the bringing to consciousness of the variety of levels of cultural resonnance that are registered in, and contribute to the efficacy of, advertising. In so doing, anthropology throws light on the emergent postmodern era as distinct from the modernist and postcolonial eras. Anthony Appiah has made this distinction in the case of West African art, noting how archaic today the various

nationalist discourses of Africa in the post-independence period now seem, and how intellectuals in Africa have been shifting to a continental discourse, inflected of course by their particular local situtations, but focussing on the patterns of bilingualism, biculturalism, global structuing, inequalities, and power relations at all levels from village to urban, national to regional, capital to metropole, and Africa-wide to intercontinental.

Dulali Nag's work on Bengali advertising makes a similar point by contrasting the ads for Tantuja (the West Bengal state handicraft agency) versus the ads for the boutique world of Ananda

(both the shop and the associated film magazine, *Anandalok*). Two different taste cultures are enacted, one appealing to older middle class Bengali women, the other to younger professionals. But it is not merely a class or generation difference: it is also a different relation to nostalgia, to the tradition defined by nationalist modernism. This is clear first of all in language, then in visuals and copy.

Bengali itself, Nag reminds us, only formed into a unified grammar and script in the 19th century. Many words were borrowed from English. It is still a nationalist accomplishment to write Bengali well, that is, without English admixtures, which in turn she reminds us, is an erasure of the history of colonialism, and of the process of the formation of the language. Bengali as a tradition, then, is a modern cultural formation, one associated with cultivation, good breeding, bhadralok (being gentlefolk). Interestingly, there are still no Bengali words for "fashion" or "style", which English words are simply transliterated into Bengali. this kind of formation is replicated and illustrated in the ads for Tantuja.

In the three examples provided by Nag, insightful observations bring into view for non-Bengali English speakers: features of art form, of ideology formation, and of the modernist literary canon. Thus in the first ad, two visual icons appear -- the profile of Rabindranath Thakur familiar from middle class home, office and shop walls; and a stylized Bengali woman done in the style of modernist painter Jamini Ray, in turn redeemed from premodern Kalighat scroll paintings. The poetry from Rabindranath defines the movement of traditionalizing and idealizing nostalgia, as well as describing a sexualized dilemma. It is the story of a clerk unable to go through with an arranged marriage, using as an excuse an unwillingness to subject the bride to the sordidness of his life. Instead he preserves in his mind her unsullied beauty. As the ad copy puts it, "To be dressed in a Dhaki sari is to become an eternal fantasy." Nostalgia is, of course, prescisely a trope constructing an idealized past which never existed and which is always in danger of being undone by invasions of evidence of real pasts which contradict the idealizations.

In the other two examples, urbanite positionings vis-a-vis the nostalgic village are enacted. The one cites the poet Satyendranath Datta's views of villages from a passing palanquin (distanced, hierarchized relation to the rural pastoral) and the sari ad referring to the romantization of handloomed cloth says, "the village is still there." The other example is a folk-style drawing of women at a Durga puja with lines from Rabindranath's prose about such a puja -- village woman as nurturing.

The discourse, Nag points out, is one of consturcting a modernist sense of tradition, a style of nationalism, an essentializing and purifying rhetoric, that suppresses colonial traces, and elevates a particular taste culture full of Sanskritizations (*Tantuja*, itself, is Sanskrit) and a Bengali literary and artistic canon, as well as a pure Bengali language. This nationalist tradition goes with handloom craft production as a resistance gesture against foreign British textiles associated with Bengali as well as Gandhian nationalism.

Anandalok saris operate in a different world: the Calcutta professional class is no longer Bengali dominated. Styles come from all over India, women can dress in alternative ways (churidar-kurta versus sari), presenting alternative selves, with alternative ornamentation

(color schemes from the south, folk materials from all over). Boutiques invest in new designs. It is an age of fashion and style, and words that have no Bengali equivalents. The ads are photos of actresses modelling alternative selves, with copy that "hyperpoeticizes" the sari analogically as music, royality, and ritual, and that pays attention to new designs as a matter of rapidly chaning fashion.

What finally I find so compelling about Nag's article is its ability to read cultural references that in the ordinary accounts of advertising remain unseen and unheard in the cynical attributions of omnipotence to a capitalist functionality.

Obviously there is much more to be read in Indian ads, both in terms of culture history, and also in terms of contemporary appropriations of "realism" and contemporary manipulations of exotics pasts or others. Is there something to be learned from historical traditions of art forms in India, such as traced by Judith Gutman for Indian photography, M.F. Husain's off the cuff comments on use of color, or Patricia Uberoi's work on calendar art? Are there legacies in/for advertising?

Gutman chronicles the way in which early Indian photography was manipulated to appeal to issues within traditional art forms, but then how eventually photography helped change the earlier art styles. The question would be: (a) is there anything left of these earlier artistic forms, and more to the point (b) if one played on these older forms, would there be any resonnance among Indian audiences? Painted photographs, multiple axes of sight, flattened light, objects that upstage posed figures, tensions between inner consciousness and tangible reality (e.g. difference in body expression from demeanor of the eyes), or play of dead animals who seem filled with life -- all these have modern art analogues, but do they also have historical resonnances? Could one play with them to create a commentary on Indian history? M.F. Husain claims that color in India is not light but a symbol of emotions or deities, and hence is used in flatter ways. Calendar art is dominated by the 19th century hybrid style that Ravi Varma learned from conservative English oil painters; could this hybridity be played with to open up strata of Indian culture? Or more to the point, there is a range of celebrations of the figure of women in calendar art that is denied in more legitimate art forms: Uberoi finds in calendar art resistance against dominant patriarchal ideologies, positive roles of female power, and other openings that might be combined in a new modern vernacular. Some of these elements we saw put to use in the different ads run by the Department of Tourism in Hindi versus in English.

VI

Advertising as a Register of Culture for Anthropology?

I am fascinated by the fact that all the elements of postmodern theory -- from the substrate of structuralism to the fragmentation of subjectivity -- are independently theorized in the corridor and shop floor chatter of advertising creatives. It confirms Poster's observation about the

information mode of production, and serves as a possible ground for evaluating abstract anthropological theory borrowed from other disciplines. But the real question would be whether the freewheeling recombinant fragmentation of culture that advertising spins could be used to construct an ethics of the other in the manner of an Emanuel Levinas, or a charting of styles ala Dick Hebdige's Subcultures work, but now on a larger scale and without the crutch of resistance theory, perhaps more like a Gramscian investigation into the various competing strata and interests of society that vye for a place in the larger hegemonic, or alternatively position themselves for longer term engagements. Can a study of advertising, an industry that works globally -- J.W. Thompson and Lintas, to mention just two of the largest, are both important in India and internationally; smaller production firms send to Germany for special processesing, they buy American software for computer graphics work -- as well as locally be a fruitful place to learn how the emergent worlds of culture -- both in the sense of new cultural strata of the late twentieth century, but also processes like the commercialization of museums -- articulate and become articulate? To what degree is art the research and development department of the state and the large corporations?

These questions pose tasks, of course, that commercial folk cannot do: they constitute the work of redemption, of remaking culturally rich objects out of contemporary life, objects that can turn ethnographic collection into cultural critique. This is the work of anthropology, and perhaps that work can learn in its forms, as well as its content, from the postmodern, recombinant world of advertising. One thinks, for instance, on a simple level, of the lovely parodic film, *Island of Flowers* (1989) made in Puerto Alege, Brazil, by a cinema collective formed by advertising people, who using "found footage" spiced together a fast paced 13 minute film that presents a huge amount of information (documentary, pedagocical, encyclopedic, commericial) while making fun of the tutelary and ideological voice overs of television, educators', and politicians' normal commentary and use of such information.

Footnotes

1. The first draft of this paper was prepared for a Social Science Research Council seminar on "Advertising, Consumption and the New Middle Class in India, organized by Arjun Appadurai and Carol Breckenridge and held in Monterey, California, on April 17-20, 1991. The present second draft owes much to the participants in those discussions, as should be evident in the many citations to them in the paper. In particular, I am grateful to Arjun Appadurai and Carol Breckenridge, not only for involving me in this event and for organizing it, but for encouraging me to think about advertising in India, for giving me introductions to people in India, for putting up with various ill formed initial formulations, and above all for allowing me to contest -- and hopefully contribute to the clarification of -- some of their own preliminary formulations as a vehicle for my efforts. That I critique(d) their draft paper in mine is intended both as a tribute -- an exercise that I would have mine seen to complement and build upon -- as well as an acknowledgment that their draft is an agenda setting paper for challenging us all to think through the nature of the new consumer society in India, its contribution to the project of creating a new Indian nation, and its possibilities as an exemplar in working out a theory of class based on the dynamics of consumption rather than production.
2. Condensation is an incorporative process that absorbs meanings into ever denser allegorical structures, even if pursued through a polarization of meaning between emotional-bodily and cognitive-moral semantic fields that are con-fused, fused together, in the liminal period of ritual processes.
3. Counter-texts refers to the philosophical reductions of dialectical arguments as pursued in the debate and hermeneutic traditions of Greece, India, the rabbis, Islam, etc., whereby arenas of argumentation are "mapped out" and made available for informed ethical judgment and struggle.
4. "Dissemination structures" refers to the superimposing in one image two or more different cultural fields that hold their differences in tension, and that generate ramifying meanings in different semantic fields. Thus, while some revolutionary posters, seem to be able to combine the revolutionary tradition's iconography with verses from the Qur'an, it is not at all clear that this combination works in the manner of "condensation" or "con-fusion", but rather their terms of reference remain open to question and definition, and indeed bloody armed struggle. This is not to say that a socialist Islam is not possible, but rather that the contemporary struggles are conflicts, not ritual processes, that their truth is established, as Lyotard might say, in their singular events or applications, in their heterotopic juxtapositions, in the blocking together of disparate realms.
5. Baker notes that globally marketed brands ironically market the idea of particular national identities: Coke, Pepsi, Marlboro, Perrier, Sony, BMW, Volvo, Gucci. The actual advertising campaigns of multinationals are not unified in all localities: Coke perhaps is the closest (though the slogan "the real thing", for instance, does not mean anything in Japanese, and so another slogan, "I feel coke," is used), or British Airways (Saatchi) which targets essentially the same business class across the globe. Coke (using both McCann-Erickson and Lintas) brings together

creatives from fifteen countries to discuss issues in their different markets; they then generate ads for a series of different situations, such as coke with food, coke with . . . ; the local country manager selects from among these, and in some cases, as in Thailand, Coke has locally designed culturally densely plotted ads (see fn. 16). Other global corporations such as the soap giants -- Proctor and Gamble, Colgate, Unilever, now being followed by the Japanese Kao, and Lion -- may losely design principles and ideas for advertising, but the actual campaigns depend upon local actors, languages, and materials. Colgate, for instance, in recent years abandoned its pitch through fake dentist testimonials, and decided to focus on kids; still, the ads in the U.S. play off the Karate Kid film, while in Thailand a gang of singing hill tribe children is used, and in Britain the ads are streetwise and punk.

The one significant difference in Japanese corporate advertising that bears attention is their fine-tuning of *products* to local markets, but using essentially the same ad campaigns across markets. Europe, Baker points out, is experimenting with Europe wide ad campaigns (with quite variable success and considerable resistance), and although Asian companies are watching these experiments closely, with the launch of AsiaSat and the technological efficiency of Asia wide transmission, Asia-wide advertising "is likely to be another area in which Asia proves to be more fast and flexible than Europe." (Baker 1991: 3).

Mani Ayer points to already the use of a pan-Asiatic face in the international market linked cosmetics market.

6. He provides a Thai example of the use of teenage love/sex, in a way that could not have happened even a year ago, but is now disseminated on TV. A perfume ad uses a party scene in which a girl drops a hankerchief and a boy picks it up and hands it to her: the play of their eyes is exquisite; they are about 13. Another ad for shampoo show a seventeen year old girl having a row with her boyfriend, in which she cuts off her hair. Both ads are beautifully executed.
7. Japan has relied on direct satellite transmission rather than on the ground transmission stations. Japanese small dish receivers are becoming so cheap that soon in India it will be well within the means of middle class consumers to have such dishes and to receive transmissions that bypass the efforts of the Indian government at regulation. Doordarshan, the Indian state television, will become subject to competition from stations being set up in Hong Kong and Singapore which will have twenty four hour multiple channel offerings. (Ironically, in 1991 the Japanese were worried by their dependence on failure-prone U.S. and European rockets to launch satellites to keep their system working; the system threatened to break down because of several failed launches. NYT 21 May 1991.)
8. Chris Baker put it neatly: the "sinews of agency networks" are made up of knowledge, people, and capital. Knowledge is freely available: anyone can analyze an ad and reproduce it. People, the creatives, are highly mobile, movement between agencies is frequent. Capital: particularly in the last five years, there has been rash of buying and selling of agencies.
9. Thanks to Chris Baker for this observation and charting.
10. See Kathleen Jamieson (1988).
11. Imported TVs were allowed in 1982 for the ASIAD games; transmitters increased from 35 to

100. In 1985 there was a push to cover the country with transmitters (today there are over 400) in time for the upcoming national election campaigns. There was speculation at the time as to whether the ruling Congress Party could thereby use this medium to consolidate its slipping popularity; in the event this proved not to be the case, and it was even suggested that Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi contributed to his defeat by overexposure on TV, reminding people why they were disaffected.

12. Ethnicity can be targeted in other ways as well, of course. The Rasna drink flavor called "Shahi Gulab" (rose water) is primarily targeted for Muslims, who are the main consumers of rose water. The main competitor is another rose water drink called Ruh of Zar. The Shahi Gulab ad uses a character named Iftekhar wearing Muslim garb. A new ad uses a Hindu actor, but one well known for playing a Muslim character in popular soap opera. By contrast, ethicity can operate as mere "local color" as in the Rin detergent ads. One ad uses an egg seller. Egg sellers tend to be Muslims who deliver eggs in Bombay on bicycles. The ad wants to use a simile of whiteness: white like the eggs, and white like a Muslim's kurta-shirt. In the north, Rin ads use the simile "basmati white", basmati being the top quality long-grained rice.
13. Nirma, for instance, the lower priced laundry detergent, did not cut into Surf sales which remained at a steady tonnage sales level; if anything it replaced laundry bar soap which it now also undersells. The powdered drink Rasna, originally thought of in terms of operating in the Rs. 10 million squash market, did not displace squash, but created a different market, replacing water (it sells at 60 pisa a glass, or Rs 30 for a box of the powder). [The story of Rasna, however, is more complicated: it struggled for ten years before establishing a secure niche.] Titan watches is growing at 120% per annum (the general watch market is growing at 9%): an Indian made quartz watch, it supplements the older mechanical hand-wound watches, and seems to be replacing smuggled quarts watchs (S. A. Ayer of Ogilvey and Mather, Bombay, estimates the smuggled watch market has declined by half from five million in 1988-89 to 2.6 million in 1990-91. There are now 150 national brands of ready-made garments, with sales volume increasing almost three times since 1985 (Rs. 2.5 billion or $125 million in 1985; Rs. 6 billion or $300 million in 1990). During the 1980s, television sales increased twenty fold, automobiles six fold, detergents six fold, scooters five fold, luxury bath soaps four fold. Beer sales are increasing at 12% per year, (over 500 million bottles annually).
14. E.g.: Dunlop tire displaced by MRF and Modi; Lipton and Brook Bond Tea invaded by Tata Tea which now in turn is challenged by Taza;.
15. Ashis Chakravarty cites the Lakme cosmetics and Double Diamond Tea ads as directly challenging entrenched attitudes about women, and supporting an attitudinal change from self-sacrifice to self-indulgence and independence. Lakme cosmetics (adapting a French ad campaign) attacks parental disapproval of teenage daughters' use of cosmetics in a campaign with ads under such titles as "Does make-up label you fast, loose, or that type?" (with a visual of a woman wearing a carnival mask, lipstick, outlined eyebrows, and pulled back hair), "Is it bad to look good?"; "Is make up right only after marriage?". Double Diamond Tea waged a very

successful campaign, "Happily it isn't the same today" contrasting with there was a times when "femininity meant . . . " or " intelligence in women meant . . . " or "being a housewife meant . . . ", e.g. : (a) "There was a time, not long ago when the only world a woman knew lay between her kitchen and doorstep, and the only news she ever heard was neighborhood gossip" (with a visual of a woman bank teller); (b) "For a woman creation only meant bearing heirs for the clan of her husband" (visual: woman painter). The tag line: "Double Diamond -- taste and strength as fresh as your thinking."

Not only is a new set of roles for women being fostered by advertising, but also for children, teenagers, and husband. Mukund Mahajan quips: a new middle class is being created in which to live happily together is to buy products for one another.

16. For instance this Coke ad trial, done in Thailand, which initially Chris Baker suggested, "You wouldn't understand either the copy even if translated or the visuals", just not translatable because of the multiple cultural references and allusions. Coke executives brought in from America did not understand, but Thai kids understood perfectly. But, of course the ad can be translated as he proceeded to demonstrate despite himself when asked to describe it in detail: it starts with a challenge to kids, "How do you feel about Thailand?", followed by a song done by two top Thai rock stars engaging in a line by line exchange. One is a well known singer from the country, the other is known for his Westernized style. The references they exchange are to other songs. The ad ends with the question, "What will you do for your country?" The visuals are of a group of kids on a train, looking out and seeing things: plates of glass standing in the fields that reflect items such as paper clips: a girl unbends and bends a paper clip -- its a game and refers to design, making, and constructing. The density of the references in the ad make it richly resonnant.

17. There are various ways of estimating: the National Council for Applied Economic Research (NCAER) estimates 190 million, using a minimum salary of Rs. 1200/month; the Economist estimates 125 million, by multiplying the number of TV sets by the average family size of 5; Business India uses a figure of 150 million by using small families with monthly incomes of Rs. 1500; the Center for Monitoring the Indian Economy multiplies the number of workers in the organized sector by average family size of 5, and estimages 150 million. (Das 1991:4).

This class and disposable income begins to expand in the early seventies; the Rajiv Gandhi opening of the market in the 1980s accelerated the expansion. The statistics seem to indicate a turning point around 1967: the proportion of persons below the poverty line rose to 55% in that year and then began to decline; 1967 was also the year budget share of food peaked, and then began to decline, with a quite noticeable decline after 1975; budget share of cloth and footwear increased during the 1970s and then stabilized; budget share of rent, taxes, fuel, and power seems now also to be declining. (S.L. Rao 1991.)

Nor is the consumer class only urban. The rural market now consumes 60% of the radios, bicycles, mopeds, black and white televisions, mechanical wristwatches, cassette recorders; 21-30% of moulded suitcases, cold creams, toothpaste; 10-20 % of color televisions, mixers,

refrigerators, gas stoves (S.L. Rao 1991; S.A. Ayer 1991).

Still, of course, an estimated 300 million persons are outside the consumer market.

18. This, of course, is disputed. Ashis Chakravarty (Rediffusion): many creatives are Hindi or other non-English language speakers who have little English, and whose work has to be back translated into English for clients. Moreover, Hindi film concepts require a nuanced use of Hindi. Mani Ayer (Ogilvy and Mather) agrees, and points out that many clients are also not English speakers.

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