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UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

GRADUATE COLLEGE

COLONIZING CONSUMER CULTURE:
A SEMIOTIC ANALYSIS OF THE KOREAN ADVERTISING

A Dissertation

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

By

SOOBUM LEE
Norman, Oklahoma
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**COLONIZING CONSUMER CULTURE:
A SEMIOTIC ANALYSIS OF THE KOREAN ADVERTISING**

**A Dissertation APPROVED FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION**

BY

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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to articulate the relationships between the cultural forms of advertising in Korea and the underlying ideological message. Specifically, this study interprets the structure and content of individual advertisements. This study employs a semiotic method as an analytical framework. Because semiotics makes it possible to connect the underlying meaning of an advertisement with its function within a culture.

The overall form of this research may be divided into two sections: The first section of this study deals with the theoretical foundations for analyzing ads, including (a) advertising as a consumer culture, and (b) Gebser's notion of plus-mutation. The second section analyzes Korean advertisements appearing in various magazines and TV based on the theoretical foundations of the first section.

This study attempts to interpret the ideological structure as it appears in Korean advertisements with a close attention to English expressions appearing in these ads. Such expressions comprise indications of Westernization. In addition, Korean ads work by using English as a "systematically distorted communication" using the magical structure of consciousness.

Jeans ads provide an excellent example of how Western consumer culture has influenced Korean advertising and raise the issue of cultural colonization. Essentially, jeans retain traces of their Americanness wherever they are sold. In this sense, the worldwide proliferation of

American cultural commodities suggests a new aspect of cultural homogenization.

Korean Nike ads attempt to create magical and mythic structures using the image of Michael Jordan in order to persuade customers. The mythic process of shifting the signified to the status of signifier in Nike ads makes them the form of the perfect meta-structure of mythology. For Koreans, however, the Nike ad serves as the simulation of the real world because this ad creates the (hyper)real world of a utopia.

In conclusion, such an analysis makes clear that the uniqueness of Korean advertising is not displaced by its future configurations, but rather integrated into the new consumer culture. That is, Korean culture creates its own uniqueness by combining Western and traditional components. Therefore, this study contributes to the area of investigation using a semiotic approach on the basis of a Gebserian perspective.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

During the late 19th century, the British, the Russians, and the Americans made insistent demands for commercial relations with Korea. They knocked on Korea's door and requested trade, but were refused. In this century, Korea was poor country after the Japanese colonial authorities stripped it bare of resources to provide for their war effort, and what few industrial facilities it had left were razed to the ground during the Korean War. Thus, when Park Chung Hee came to power in 1961, his choice of new directions in economic policy was affected by international power relations. A scarcity of raw materials and capital had increased Korea's dependency on foreign funds and created a dependency on foreign technology. As a result of its new economic policy, Korea was drawn deeply into the international capitalist system.

The Korean economic "miracle" brought about many changes of lifestyle. Specifically, Korean interest in culture and entertainment increased during the latter half of the 1970s, with increased sales of television sets as people enjoyed higher incomes. In the 1980s, housewives, aided by modern electronic home appliances, including washing machines and vacuum cleaners, had more time to spend on leisure activities. Their interest began to shift from doing housekeeping chores to spending spare time on themselves. In the latter half of the 1980s, the lifestyle of the Korean

people began to change even more, with more people driving their own cars (the so-called “my car” phenomenon) and spending more time outdoors and traveling both in the country and overseas, rather than staying indoors watching TV. At the same time, Koreans began to be interested in Westernized consumer cultural productions (for instance, American style pop music, fast food, Disney style theme parks, fashion, sports, beauty pageants, and so on). Hart (1990) argues that

the most obvious sign of modern success is the list of possessions for which the middle class of Korea strives. Home-ownership, private cars, video-equipment of every description, imported stereos, expensive and ostentatious furniture, Western liquor, and all other material goods that are taken to be signs of modern success which tell the world that the new middle-class worker has achieved an individualized victory. (p. 45)

The rise of consumer culture in Korea is clear evidence of the deep impact of elements of a modern (or postmodern) consciousness. In general, Koreans attempt to acquire elements of both the ways of the old Confucian value (for example, good education being the way to success) and the new Western lifestyle.

This is a study of cultural phenomena (such as Western lifestyle) as an output of capitalism. More specifically, this study explores how these cultural phenomena are brought about, and what the consequences are for the people who experience them. A major concept of this study is that consumer culture has become a general phenomenon in the modern (or postmodern) world. The focus of this study is the logic of the consumer

culture produced by the capitalist system via the analysis of Korean advertisements. Though this topic will be covered more thoroughly in the next chapter, I define consumer culture as a kind of culture in which everything is subordinated to consumption. Essentially, consumer cultural production identifies happiness with material acquisition and materializes every aspect of human life. Its members have risen up in the world and society, not to serve, not to improve morally, but to acquire and possess material products as individuals. It is these possessions that both separate them from and link them to the rest of society.

The Purpose of the Study

Advertising represents both a marketing tool and a cultural artifact. In order to understand the cultural aspects of advertising, however, we must move beyond the surface messages of products and services for sale to explore their deeper, underlying meanings. In other words, we must search out the cultural stories and mythologies from which advertising's creative people draw as they solve advertising and marketing problems. As Parenti (1986) has noted, "Advertising is used to promote a consumer ideology and to help facilitate the growth of consumer culture. Advertising exists not so much to promote goods but to foster a consumptive way of life" (p. 63). Consequently, advertising diffuses its cultural meanings through the belief systems of a given society. In this sense, advertising is the most prolific vehicle for transmitting Western consumer culture.

Generally speaking, Western consumer culture implies the Americanization of various aspects (e.g., social, cultural, and economic) of developing countries, and this is certainly true in Korea. In the context of

cultural imperialism,¹ we can best understand consumer culture as the practices of consumption. These practices involve some signifying practices

¹ The issue of cultural imperialism has emerged from the international communication literature. In the context of cultural imperialism, cross-cultural comparative methods have been used to suggest that Western societies are sending more news and film media to Third World nations than they receive from them. That is, the mass media of the United States spread capitalist ideology and thus indoctrinate people in Third world nations. In this sense, the issue of cultural flow may be divided into three major approaches: (a) cultural diffusions, (b) Neo-Marxist, and (c) liberalist.

The first approach, that of cultural diffusions, as reflected in the works of Ithel de Sola Pool (1977) and Williams Read (1976), takes the view that cultural flow should be free and unrestricted from a laissez-faire point of view. For example, Read (1976) claims that the global flow of commercial mass media is a result of American merchants' abilities to sell their media commodities to foreign markets. With this approach, the existing pattern of unequal cultural flow can then be explained in terms of market forces. Here, the purely economic expansion of seeking maximum profits by the United States is the main cause of cultural domination at a global level. This free flow of information results in an unbalanced one-way flow of culture at this particular level.

The second approach takes the Neo-Marxist view that the unbalanced flow of culture and media merely represents another sophisticated form of imperialism under the world capitalist system. In general, this approach focuses on the articulation of the cultural sphere to economic relations. Here, cultural imperialism, which is well discussed in Schiller (1976), is seen to develop in a world system containing a single market. In other words, this approach attempts to account for the international mechanism of a world system that brings developing countries within the common cultural hegemony of Western imperialism. Moreover, the logic of cultural imperialism is deeply rooted in dependency theory, which asserts that core nations tend to keep periphery nations perpetually dependent on core media to maintain a dominant cultural hegemony. In this sense,

(e.g., advertising) but also other practices (e.g., shopping). Thus Janus (1981) suggests that consumer culture does not merely promote consumption in developing countries but also promotes a Western ideology which reflects the logic and interests of transnational corporations. In this sense, Western consumer culture has spread to Third World countries because of Western commercial pressures.

Advertising is, historically speaking, closely related to political and economic power. Advertising itself reflects cultural values and power; that is, it expresses an ideology. Because advertising is pervasive in everyday life in the West, and because it has become so also in Korea, it has become one of the most powerful institutions for the hegemonic process² toward

the unit of analysis in explaining unequal change is that of a world system, as noted by Schiller (1989), who admits that ruling classes comprise an ideologically-supportive informational structure based on the modern world system's core.

The third and final approach, that of liberalist cultural domination, takes a middle position between the above two diffusion and Neo-Marxist approaches. According to this approach, the American model was initially incorporated into the broadcasting systems of Third World nations. Typically, economic and technological conditions of most developing countries are not sufficient to produce indigenous programming. Consequently, these countries tend to look for less expensive programming to fill air time. This was the conclusion of Tunstall's (1977) and Lee's (1979) separate attempts to seek the main causes of the imbalanced flow of programming; that is, United States currently enjoys an advantageous position in the combined programming, production, and distribution of media within the world's present broadcasting systems.

² The term of hegemony is defined as political rule or domination. Marxism extended the definition of rule or domination to relations between social classes. Gramsci (1971) distinguished between force and consent, two ways in which the

Westernization. Actually, this consumer culture is largely embedded in the underlying assumptions behind advertisements, which are considered as a “taken-for-granted” reality by receptive audiences in Korea.

The purpose of this research is to articulate the relationships between the cultural forms of advertising in Korea and the underlying ideological message. Specifically, this study interprets the structure and content of individual advertisements. Semiotics is a method by which advertisements can be analyzed as complex linguistic and ideological structures. This study, therefore, employs a semiotic method as an analytical framework.

In general, semiotics comprises the study of underlying mechanisms by which signs convey meaning in everyday life. Such a methodology can be applied to anything seen as signifying something, as in the case of Korean ads. More importantly, semiotics also focuses on how signs convey meanings within specific contexts. Therefore, semiotics makes it possible to connect the underlying meaning of an advertisement with a culture. In this sense, semiotics may be used in attempts to describe, in precise terms, exactly how an advertisement creates hidden meanings in its messages.

ruling class exercises power and maintains social control. The Gramscian notion of hegemony critically involves the ruling class' domination through ideology, through the shaping of popular consent. Ideology becomes hegemonic when it is widely accepted, bringing people to consent to the institutions, such as the police, military, and prisons. He also defined hegemony as a process, saying hegemony is not universal and given to continuing the relations of forces favorable to this tendency (Williams, 1977, pp. 108-112).

Gebser's (1985) notion of structures of consciousness provides a useful outline of the cultural logic on which people base their experience. In other words, structures of consciousness can be regarded as modes of awareness through which people interpret what is going on in the world. Because a Gebserian perspective encompasses all understanding, his notion of structures of consciousness is a powerful tool in the explanation of the cultural experience. Simply put, advertising (as a cultural experience) appeals to magical, mythical and mental consciousness, and these are fundamental Gebserian structures. Thus, Gebser's notion of structures of consciousness is the basic theoretical construct used in the interpretation of Korean ads. In summary, this study attempts to contribute to the area of investigation using a semiotic approach on the basis of a Gebserian perspective.

Research Questions

In order to achieve the above research objective, it is necessary to formulate the following research questions. Basically, this study focuses on the meaning of the dominant ideology in Korean advertising and then attempts to relate it to the issue of colonization.³

RQ 1: How has Korean advertising worked as a “systematically distorted communication” in the decision-making process?

³ The issue of colonization is related to the cultural transmission from the Western nations to their colonies. Generally, this pattern of world cultural transfer was based on the primary fact of economic imperialism and domination and resulting dependency between a Western culture and the periphery.

RQ 2: How has Western consumer culture as a dominant ideology influenced Korean advertising?

RQ 3: What is the meaning of being a consumer in relation to cultural colonization?

Theoretical Foundation

Advertising and Consciousness in a Consumer Society. In general, advertising constitutes an integral part of modern culture. In this light, advertising thus becomes significant because individuals depend on it for meanings -- i.e., as a source of social information embedded in commodities that mediate interpersonal relations and personal identity. Advertising should therefore be conceived of as an important institution in consumer society because it produces patterned systems of meaning which play a key role in social reproduction.

Essentially, the marketplace should be seen as a cultural system, and not just as a mechanism for moving commodities. It is cultural symbolism and images that provide crucial insights into the nature and functions of advertising. Leiss, Kline, and Jhally (1990) analyze the persuasive form of modern advertising emphasizing how cultural forms of social communication create meanings. These meanings, expressed through non-discursive visual imagery, come subtly to shape consciousness and behavior by sanctioning some forms of thought and behavior while delegitimizing others. For instance, through its images, advertising conveys positive presentations of assertive "masculine" and "feminine" behavior and images of well-groomed and well-fashioned men and women. Thus, advertising presents images of proper and improper behavior and

role models for men and women alike. In this sense, advertising creates fashion (a sense of style) and offers information about how a particular commodity should be consumed to generate a specific image.

Advertising thus plays a key role in the transition to a new culture where images play a more important part than linguistic discourse. While verbal imagery is discursive, visual imagery is non-discursive, emotional, associative, iconic, and fictive. Consequently, Leiss, Kline, and Jhally (1990) suggest that advertising is a form of social communication which promotes non-communication, or what Habermas (1989) refers to as “systematically distorted communication.” These distortions are seen to result from techniques which are nonrational, nonlogical, and imagistic, and which affect the viewer unconsciously. In effect, advertising promotes “commodity fetishism”⁴ and a fetishized consciousness.⁵ As Baudrillard (1988a) observes,

Everywhere around us today we can witness the fantastic consciousness of consumption and affluence, created by the multiplication of objects, services and material goods. This constitutes a fundamental mutation in the ecology of the human species. (p. 29)

Thus, Baudrillard emphasizes that the proliferation, profusion, and excrescence of the commodity-form (both service and material goods) do not

⁴ Commodity fetishism refers to the process of mystifying material goods of consumption by turning use-value (i.e., need) to exchange-value (i.e., a form of commodity).

simply represent an alteration in the fabric of society. Commodities are no longer just objects but become simulated objects (i.e., they become the advertising image). In a consumer society, what were once human relations are now mediated by the inanimate (yet animated) articulation of objects.

As Leiss, Kline, and Jhally (1990) emphasize, “The misrepresentation about production and consumption in a market economy is embodied in material objects themselves” (p. 322). The commodity-form is “a unity of what is revealed and what is concealed in the processes of production and consumption. Goods reveal or show to our senses their capacities to be satisfiers or stimulators of particular wants and communicators of behavioral codes” (p. 324). Marx announced this social mutation more than a century ago, and with the same sense of urgency. What Marx (1859/1970) described as the “fetishism of the commodity” is precisely the capitalist social process, where human interactions were replaced by the object’s exchanges and circulations. In other words, consumption was a necessary counter-moment in the stage of industrial production.

Consumer culture emitted the commodity in an object-advertising system, one that literally gave voice to the commodity. In other words, advertising incorporates the understanding of consumer preferences into the physical and symbolic characteristics of the product, though the elaborated marketing strategies. But the shift of focus from production to

⁵ A fetishized consciousness refers to the awareness of obtaining wealth, and associating products with desire in the superstructural level.

reproduction was not simply a consequence of a linguistic (or theoretical) turn: it was the product of an intellectual history.

As Fowles (1996) states, advertising imagery constitutes the iconography⁶ of consumer culture in the greater sense. Referring to the artistic style that Erving Goffman (1979) called “commercial realism” (p. 15) and Michael Schudson (1986) labeled “capitalist realism” (p. 210), Roland Marchand (1985) comments, “Like the paintings and murals of Socialist Realism, the illustrations in American advertising portrayed the ideal and aspiration of the system more accurately than its reality. They dramatized the American dream” (p. xviii).

Communication and Signification. The notion that communication is primarily concerned with meaning (as well as with the relationship between sign and reference) comprises the fundamental idea of semiotics. Leeds-Hurwitz (1993) also suggests that culture and communication are essential to an understanding of semiotics. The operating principle of semiotics is to classify communication patterns in terms of system and code, while later subsuming a given code under a designated relationship of signification. (Communication is possible without signification but signification presupposes communication.) Signification and communication are thus considered as two conceptual channels through which we can approach the cultural and ideological aspects of advertising.

⁶ Iconography consists of the smallest unit of sign (or image) in the mass media (including TV and computer screens). Iconography has connotative powers beyond the visual imagery. Dress-codes, for instance, reflect more than the historical period.

As Nöth (1995) states,

Both communication and signification are described as parts of the semiotic field in this tradition. The two areas of research are discussed as semiotics of communication and of signification. While semiotics of communication studies only intentional semiosis, semiotics of signification includes processes of observation and diagnosis. (p. 172)

The major Cartesian assumption of signification is the content/form division. This assumption has long been a common obstacle to understanding the cultural aspect of advertising, because the dualistic dichotomy has led to the development of the two-valued cultural dimensions (such as high and low context). In other words, this dualistic dichotomy is too oversimplified to apply to the specific cultural context. According to Descartes, the dualistic substances of mind and matter are realities which exist on their own (behind the inconstancy and diversity of phenomena), where we are able to see them through our clear and distinct consciousness. In semiotics, a clear and distinct consciousness corresponds to the signification of sign and language, and is believed (in Derrida's terms) to be the process of transparent standing for objects. This view of signification thus constitutes the phonocentrism (the voice of being) which mistakes mere concepts for substance⁷ (Kim, 1991).

⁷ Kim (1991) summarizes the problems of substance (e.g., the facts in positivism) as follows: The first problem lies in the fact that substance is not reality, but only signified (meaning) created in the signification of signs. Substances, therefore, become a fiction projected by non-present signifiers. In other words, substances

More specifically, as Saussure (1959) explained, language is a phenomenon of structural relations and difference, as is also true of the phenomenon of communication. Meaning is created both diachronically and synchronically by the structural mechanism. In Saussure's view, language is a mechanism that determines how we decide what constitutes an object in the first place. Language does not name an already organized and coherent reality; rather, the role of language is powerful in constructing reality. When Saussure (1959) insisted that the relation between a word and its meaning is constructed, he directed us to the cultural and social dimensions of language. Therefore, the way in which language generates meaning is important.

are constructed both by the confusion of concepts with objects and by illusion. Consequently, due to the fictitious character of substance, culture then becomes the metaphysics of presence (i.e., logocentrism).

Second, the substantialists cannot escape from an oppositional view of the world, because the world itself is considered as being composed of binary sets of substance (e.g., good and bad). In binary opposition, however, antonyms alone can be found. Derrida (1967/1976) argued that all oppositions are really forms of logocentrism, which Barthes (1983) has defined as the ideological mechanisms of normalization and control of language. Thus, such oppositions are never true opposition. In this context, Sarup (1989) regards logocentrism as "a belief in some ultimate word, presence, essence, truth or reality which will act as the foundation of all our thought, language and experience" (p. 40).

Finally, if we stick to substances, we are ultimately unable to capture the dynamics of signification and communication which create and produce power. They are regarded as the mechanistic process of representing existing substance. We are then subjected to this "transcendental signified" (Derrida, 1981, pp. 19-20), with alienation being the final result of the Cartesian metaphysics of presence.

The Nietzschean understanding of language becomes a domain in which human reality is constructed. Knowledge is more than cognitive process and relations between knower and that which is destined to be known. It is language itself that creates knowledge by virtue of the topological structure of human reality. Language does not express thoughts. Both human beings themselves and their relations of power are understood within the textual perspective as linguistic entities.

This brings us to the discussion of language and Nihilism. The deconstruction of substance is one alternative to a Cartesian paradigm. Deconstruction (a term borrowed from Derrida) explains a given culture as based on an onto-theological presence. Saussure and Derrida, however, have replaced presence with a formal relation of differences in language. In this light, deconstructionism ignores the dynamics of communication that both produce and reproduce deep level signifieds. For Derrida (1967/1976), signification does not stand for presence, but rather for the “freeplay of differences.”

In the postmodern view of culture, meaning is encapsulated in an immense post-Saussurean world of self-referencing signifiers. These signifiers make sense only because they define some difference with other signifiers. Gottdiener (1995) suggests that “meaning is not produced through the freeplay of signifiers alone. Rather, signification is constrained by the forces of power in society, or what the early Barthes referred to as the logotechniques of symbolic control” (p. 30). According to Baudrillard (1988a), signifieds no longer exist. Today, the signifiers themselves are solely created by differences within the system of signification, while deep level

signifieds have disappeared altogether. Moreover, in postmodern society, representational space (i.e., a picture drawn of an object by hand) has moved into simulated space (i.e., an image reproduced by a photocopier).⁸ Baudrillard (1990a) claims that “simulation⁹ neutralizes the poles (e.g., referent/sign) that organize perspectival space of the real” (p. 155).

Outline of the Study

This dissertation consists of seven chapters, including the introductory chapter. The overall form of this study may be divided into two sections: The first section deals with the theoretical issue and its related

⁸ For Jameson (1984), Western subjectivity has become wedged between a past which has abandoned it and a non-existent, since one of the features of postmodern hyperspace is that we are already living a mirage of its possibilities. The first world subject, Jameson believes, can experience either a profound pain and anxiety, or an exhilaration in its disconnection from history. It is a Lacanian world, where signifiers are severed from their signifieds, inducing in the once-centered first-world subject a sense that all meanings have been set free, along with a kind of cultural amnesia. As Jameson expresses it,

This latest mutation in space -- postmodern hyperspace -- has finally succeeded in transcending the individual human body to locate itself, to arrange its immediate surroundings perceptually, and cognitively to map its position in an external world. (p. 83)

This postmodern hyperspace is a world where all perceptual space is cluttered by the rationality of technology and by perpetual images of the simulacrum, where happiness is euphoric and dependent upon a schizophrenic affect constantly cracking in the shadows of what must be considered the postmodern sublime. For Jameson (1984), the horror of what we now face is “the limits of figuration and the incapacity of the human mind to give representation to such enormous forces” (p. 77).

⁹ See Footnote 4, Chapter 2, p. 41.

methodological principles, while the second section involves application of the above theoretical arguments to the analysis of specific Korean ads. The following is a brief outline of the present study.

The second chapter introduces the literature that discusses advertising as a consumer culture. This chapter closely examines some of these contributions while arguing that studies of this nature should be developed within the framework of critical studies of mass communication. To this end, the literature of advertising as a consumer culture is organized into such categories as the Frankfurt school, cultural studies, structuralism, political economy, and postmodernism.

The third chapter examines a brief history of advertising in Korea, the role of transnational advertising agencies in Korea, and the major studies of Korean advertising.

The fourth chapter deals with the basic principles of semiotics as a method. Semiotics provides us with methods of analyzing texts in cultures. In particular, semiotics provides us with more refined ways of interpreting the messages of advertisements. This chapter explains that semiotics represents a useful tool for describing how advertising first produces meaning and then creates hidden structure.

The fifth chapter examines the meaning of advertising by applying Gebser's theory of "plus mutation" and structures of consciousness. Gebser's notion of structures of consciousness is the theoretical base for this study. According to Gebser (1985), five structures of consciousness exist: (a) archaic, (b) magic-vital, (c) mythical, (d) mental-rational, and (e) integral. This chapter tries to explain variations in the different

consciousness structures simultaneously at work in the texts of Korean advertising.

The sixth chapter applies the ideas developed in the preceding chapters to analyze advertisements encountered in Korean mass media, including television and magazines ads. This chapter attempts to use the semiotic approach to analyze the Korean ads from a Gebserian perspective. This chapter can be broken down into three basic parts. The first part analyzes English expressions in Korean ads using Gebserian and postmodernism perspectives. The second part explores the jean culture as a Western consumer ideology in relation to the issue of cultural colonization. The final part interprets the meaning of being a consumer as revealed in Korean ads for Nike.

The final chapter provides a general summary and conclusion. This chapter also deals with limitations of the study and provides suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Meta-Theoretical Framework:

Critical Perspective in Communication Studies

This section aims to help clarify the major arguments about the concept of consumer culture. Much communication research has borrowed from other social sciences. The term critical perspective refers to a set of interdisciplinary approaches that draw upon fields as diverse as sociology, economics, semiotics, political philosophy, literary studies, psychology, and history. In this sense, a critical perspective comprises a variety of approaches with differing focus of attention, such as the Frankfurt School, cultural studies, structuralism, and political-economy approaches (Garnham, 1979; Hall, 1980; Curran et al., 1982; Meehan, 1986; Stevenson, 1995; Mosco, 1996). In addition, postmodernism, which has been considered a critical perspective, is also discussed. A critical perspective provides a meta-theoretical framework for this review of literature about advertising as a consumer culture.

Basically, a critical perspective is initially formed by multidisciplinary research and then combined with an attempt to construct a systematic, comprehensive social theory that can confront the key social and political problems to be addressed. That is, it provides a critique of and alternatives to traditional social theory, philosophy, and science. A critical

perspective is both a social theory which aims to describe and critique the current form of social organization and an historical theory concerned with socio-historical change and development. Although several varieties of critical theory exist, Littlejohn (1992) presents a summary of the essential characteristics of a critical perspective:

Critical social scientists believe it necessary to understand the lived experience of real people in context. . . . Critical approaches examine social conditions in an attempt to bring often hidden structures to light. . . . [Also,] critical social science makes a conscious attempt to fuse theory and action. (p. 238)

A critical perspective, thus, is a point of view from which all aspects of contemporary forms of communication are observed, interpreted, and critiqued. It is an historical perspective from which communication phenomena are examined at the point of their insertion into the social order and in connection with ideological, cultural, economic, and social factors, with an emphasis on relations of power.

The current rise of critical perspectives in social science represents, in part, a reaction against functional and positivistic models of society. Positivists sought to explain social institutions in terms of their cohesive functions within an inter-connected socio-cultural system. Positivism did not, however, account for social conflict; critical perspectives, on the other hand, offer useful insights into various contradictions and sources of conflict within society. In this sense, critical perspectives are primarily based on the work of Marx and Engels (1888), who challenged the dominant order of society. For example, in the "Communist Manifesto," Marx and

Engels (1888) interpreted the rise of industrial capitalism and the bourgeoisie as a revolutionary force that dramatically swept away the remnants of the old feudal order. They pointed out that the means of production in a society determines the very nature of that society. Until recently, Marxism has served as the theoretical foundation of all critical perspectives. (For a brief description of a variety of current theoretical developments see Appendix A.)

Advertising as a Consumer Culture

Recent studies of advertising have begun to develop a more adequate critical approach. The literature on advertising as a consumer culture within a critical studies approach, however, has traditionally been in the domain of such fields as cultural studies, semiotics and structuralism, political economy, and postmodernism. This section examines some of these contributions while arguing that the study of advertising as a consumer culture should be developed within the framework of critical studies of mass communication. In addition, this section also deals with how the recent literature on advertising provides useful contributions to this task.

Several studies have explored how advertising and the mass media have contributed to the development and reproduction of an undemocratic social order by concentrating enormous economic and cultural power in the hands of a few corporations and individuals. To this end, several recent works on advertising take an explicitly critical sociological orientation toward advertising as a means of reproducing the existing capitalist society (Leiss et al., 1990; Mattelart, 1991; Schudson, 1986). These writers argue that

not only does advertising carry out crucial economic functions in managing consumer demand and in aiding capital accumulation, it also helps produce the sort of ideological ambiance required by consumer society. Moreover, some of this literature supplies illuminating background on the history of advertising and consumer society, as well as providing sociological analysis, cultural and ideological critique, and political proposals to regulate or curtail advertising in contemporary capitalist societies.

The Frankfurt School. Advertising as a producer of consumer culture was a primary focus of a group of thinkers known as the Frankfurt School. They developed one of the first systematic critical perspectives on advertising, fashion, and the consumer society. Horkheimer and Adorno (1944/1972) analyzed the way that mass culture and communication produce consumers for the “culture industries.” They argued that the same commodity logic and instrumental rationality manifest in the sphere of production is noticeable in the sphere of consumption. Their experiences in Europe during the rise of Nazism sensitized them to the danger that the manipulative techniques of advertising and propaganda in the consumer society could be used to usher in some version of fascism in the political sphere (Kellner, 1990b). Marcuse (1964) also argued that consumer culture produced “false needs” that induced individuals to buy into a consumer lifestyle.

In discussing the culture industry’s contribution to the reproduction of monopoly capitalism, Adorno and Horkheimer (1944/1972) gave special attention to advertising as a form of consumer culture. They claimed that

the triumph of advertising was that “consumers feel compelled to buy and use its products even though they see through them” (pp. 159-160).

Originally, advertising performed the social service of informing the buyer about the market. Later, however, the enormous costs of advertising made competition for markets impossible and guaranteed the holding of power in the same hands. In other words, the victory of advertising was so complete that advertising was not necessary for people to get to know the goods. For example, brandname pharmaceuticals are more expensive than the generic equivalent because the branded products spent a great deal of money on advertising. Thus, the branded drugs are often grossly overpriced, and advertising for them makes misleading claims about their effectiveness over drugs lacking trademarks. Basically, there is not any difference between the brandname and generic pharmaceuticals. From this perspective, advertising exists to maintain industrial power and to subsidize ideological media. Consequently, according to Adorno and Horkheimer (1972), advertising became a symbol of power: “advertising for its own sake [is] a pure representation of social power” (p. 161).

According to Habermas (1989), the invasion of the public sphere by the techniques of advertising has taken liberal democracy from a form of publicity which appeals to the use of reason to another form which resorts to emotion, manipulation, and irrationality. In this process, capital was eventually able to colonize the public sphere and to replace a public of rational citizens who discussed political and social affairs of common interest with “atomized” consumers who passively viewed the spectacles of mass culture in the privatized spaces of their homes.

Haug (1986) continues the German tradition pioneered by the Frankfurt School by examining advertising as a key element within capitalist dynamics and social structure. As Haug (1986) explains, his task “was to derive the phenomena of commodity aesthetics from their economic basis and to develop and present them within their systematic connections” (p. 8). In an effort to expand Marx’s critique of capitalism, Haug develops Marx’s concept of “secondary exploitation,” showing how citizens of contemporary capitalism are not only exploited in the production process, but are also exploited in the process of consumption.

Specifically, Haug (1986) argues that advertisers have aestheticized commodities so that these objects themselves now stimulate desire. The “commodity aesthetics” shapes the values, perceptions, and consumer behavior of individuals in contemporary capitalist societies. He defines “commodity aesthetics” as “a complex which springs from the commodity form of the products and which is functionally determined by exchange-value” (p. 7). This shaping integrates such commodities into the lifestyles of consumer culture. Consequently, the concept of commodity aesthetics emerges within “the problem of realization” (i.e., capital accumulation, the realization of surplus value) and the tension between “use-value” and “exchange-value.” In addition, the concept also describes the ways that aesthetics are integrated into the overall production, distribution, and marketing of commodities. Specifically, commodity aesthetics refers to “a beauty developed in the service of the realization of exchange value, whereby commodities are designed to stimulate in the onlooker the desire to possess and the impulse to buy” (Haug, 1986, p. 8). In other words, commodity

aesthetics employs aesthetics to sell products and to sell consumer culture. Haug suggests that advertisers have learned to exploit human sexuality, through their use of design in objects and advertising, to keep the consumer culture operating. In general, commodity aesthetics involves the promise of happiness engineered by advertisers through the consumption of images appealing to human needs and sensuality.

Haug (1986) emphasizes the importance of both image and appearance in contemporary society, and reveals how they are connected to the capitalist political economy. Haug's critique, thus, is grounded in an analysis of the ways that the capitalist economy uses advertising to maximize profit. This focus on the fundamental processes of capitalist production distinguishes his work from such analyses as Vance Packard's Hidden Persuaders (1957), a book that criticizes mere "appearances" and "techniques" of advertising when they obscure their relation to normal capitalism. Against such general critiques which associate advertising with manipulation (as well as the production of false consciousness), Haug claims that "manipulation could only be effective if it somehow latched on to the objective interests of those being manipulated" (p. 6). Advertising itself, he argues, creates these objective interests. Indeed, Haug attempts to demonstrate the ways in which advertising distorts inherent needs for sensual gratification, human interaction, and a sense of self-worth by evoking dubious role/gender models, anxieties, and fantasies. The major strength of Haug's analysis of advertising viewed within the process of capitalist society lies in its wealth of concrete detail concerning how advertising actually operates as a manufacturer of fantasies.

Cultural studies. Various European and American cultural theorists saw the emergence of consumer society as a distant form of contemporary capitalism. They saw that such entities as mass culture, advertising, bureaucracy, and the mechanization of labor were providing new forms of social control.

Ewen (1976), in Captains of Consciousness: Advertising and the Social Roots of the Consumer Culture, describes the role of advertising plays in consumer society. Ewen views advertising as part of a conscious plan to buy off resistance to capitalism in the 1920s and to create a docile social order beyond the workplace. He criticizes in detail the political ideology of consumption, while also analyzing the changing modes of the family in this century.

Consumerism was a world view, a philosophy of life. But it was not a world view which functioned purely in the economic realm -- selling of goods. While it served to stimulate consumption among those who had the wherewithal and desire to consume, it also tried to provide a conception of the good life for those who did not; it aimed at those who were despairing of the possibility of well-being in their immediate industrial environment. (pp. 108-109)

Consumption is promoted by advertising as a vehicle for achieving both a higher standard of living and happiness itself. In other words, consumption is no longer just a means to life, but a meaning for life.¹

¹ In recent years, Ewen's pioneering work has been criticized on many grounds. Michael Schudson (1986), for instance, provides three substantial critiques of Ewen: First, Ewen's evidence does not support his claim that the captains of

Raymond Williams (1980), in his well-known essay, "Advertising: the Magic System," observed that one might begin a history of advertising at a very early period:

It is customary to begin even the shortest account of the history of advertising by recalling the three thousand year old papyrus from Thebes, offering a reward for a runaway, slave, and to go on to such recollections as the crier in the streets of Athens, the paintings of gladiators, with sentences urging attendance at their combats. in ruined Pompeii, and the flybills on the pillars of the Forum in Rome.
(p. 170)

One would begin this way, however, only if one accepted the view that advertising is simply "the processes of taking or giving notice of something." Williams, in contrast, argues that the task of the historian of advertising lies in tracing the development of the art of advertising

from processes of specific attention and information to an institutionalized system of commercial information and persuasion; to relate this to changes in society and in the economy; and to trace

consciousness were businessmen who strove to orchestrate the capitalist system around their own interests. Second, Schudson argues that ads for consumer goods were unlikely to be read by the working class, which capitalists supposedly were trying to control. Third, recent research has shown that the working class did not share in the prosperity of the 1920s. Schudson reasons that this would have led workers either to work harder (in an attempt to attain middle-class affluence) or to engage in political activism (as a result of their inherent frustration).

changes in method in the context of changing organizations and intentions. (p. 170)

Williams' highly critical and, in the context of his other works, somewhat surprising perspective on advertising as an institution, is frequently quoted in scholarly studies of advertising as an archetypal example of the critical perspective. While Williams certainly was one of the most articulate (and prolific) scholars of the cultural studies perspective, his prescription for a history of advertising nevertheless has a much more general value, in that it calls for an integration of analyses of advertising content with historical and social analysis.

In his own analysis of advertising, Williams chose to focus on the period just before the industrial revolution to the present. This time period is especially relevant as it represents the transitional period from pre-industrial social formations to mass consumption capitalism in Great Britain. This transitional period also marks the period of the most dramatic changes in advertising content. Because Korea now resides in the later stages of transforming itself into a mass consuming, post-industrial capitalist economy, this period is also relevant to the present study.

In general, advertising before the twentieth century remained local, and more oriented towards providing information or drawing attention than towards actually persuading consumers to buy products. In England, for example, Williams (1980) traces the first organized attempts at advertising to the seventeenth century, when newspapers first appeared on the scene. Most of these early advertisements appeared in the form of what

we now would call “classified ads.” In some advertisements, however, endorsements by physicians or other respected public figures began appearing in the middle of the seventeenth century. These first promotional activities typically oriented themselves towards the selling of medicines, such as occurred in the case of a brand of toothpaste advertised as a preventive for toothaches.

Williams (1980) recognizes advertising as a major form of modern social communication, which has become involved with the inculcation of social and personal values. He notes that modern capitalism provides social and personal meaning through the consumption of goods and he believes that social significance is conferred on goods by advertising. Culture is that dimension of social activity providing for what Williams called a structure of feeling. This concept of the structure of feeling therefore represented a mechanism that made recognizable and allowed a reflection upon a group’s cultural identity and its collective consciousness. Williamson (1978) also reads the nature of advertising as a consumer culture in the same way: Advertising “has a function, which is to sell things to us. But it has another function, which I believe in many ways replaces that traditionally fulfilled by art or religion. It creates structures of meaning” (pp. 11-12).

Similarly, many recent studies of advertising as a consumer culture require the conceptualizing of advertising as part of the contemporary form of capitalist society. Aspects of historical perspectives on advertising within the context of capitalism may be found within the field of cultural studies (Ewen, 1976, 1988; Ewen & Ewen 1982; Fox & Lears, 1983; Lears, 1983; Leiss et al., 1990). Ewen (1976), for example, traces the origins of advertising in the

first decades of the twentieth century to an attempt to manage consumer demand and better meet the exigencies of mass production. Individuals had to be taught to purchase goods which they had formerly produced themselves, and that it was morally acceptable to pursue gratification and pleasure through consumption.

Specifically, Ewen (1976) argues that in the current state of advertising consumerism no longer represents a changing, capitalist social order; instead it has become an idiom of daily life with a matter-of-fact status within American culture. For instance, Ewen and Ewen (1982) trace the emergence of the consumer society through the rise of mass images and new advertising, fashion, and entertainment industries. They explore some of the ways in which desire was channeled into consumption (and later into further desire) for ever-new and ever-more consumer goods. In this sense, the mass media and popular culture play a role in providing a context within which advertising and promotional images can circulate. These promotional images are seen to have created a vision of America which drew immigrants to the promised land in the early years of this century.

Following this line of inquiry, Fox and Lears (1983) examine how capitalism develops a culture appropriate for a society organized around the principle of profit maximization via the production and consumption of commodities. Drawing on the work of historians, they describe how facets of the cultural sphere, including advertising, go through the historical process of commodification. Mosco (1996) defines commodification as “the process of turning use values into exchange values, of transforming

products whose value is determined by their ability to meet individual and social needs into products whose value is set by what they can bring in the marketplace" (pp. 143-144). These commodified facets of the cultural sphere then become structured to form the consumer culture which is "an ethic, a standard of living and a power structure" that ultimately provide a "set of sanctions for the elite control of that society" (Fox & Lears, 1983, p. xii). In summary, Fox and Lears (1983) describe how "consumption became a cultural ideal, a hegemonic way of seeing in twentieth-century America" (p. x). Berman (1981) also suggests that advertising mirrors an idealized way of life in twentieth-century America.

Lears (1983) argues that capitalism eroded the symbolic structures outside the self and that the ideal of individualism acquired a new therapeutic ethos -- "An ethos characterized by an almost obsessive concern with psychic and physical health defined in sweeping terms" (p. 4). National advertising, by presenting sensually appealing images of commodities communicated the promise of self-realization through commodity consumption and propelled the transformation to a culture of consumption and a new form of capitalist hegemony. Lears (1983) asserts that "a web of connections joined national advertising, the therapeutic ethos, and the forms of mass entertainment" (p. 28). A major contribution of his analysis, as Harms and Kellner (1991) noted, lies in the documentation of how the therapeutic ethos linked advertising and commodity consumption to a concern with identity and image.

In surveying this literature, it should be noted that Schudson (1986) claims that advertising cannot be proven to be a major force in creating a

consumer culture; instead, modern advertising and consumer culture are themselves products of changes in a larger set of social events:

Twentieth-century advertising and twentieth-century consumer culture have roots in the changing nature of the market in the late nineteenth century which developed along with changes in modes of transportation and communication, urban growth, and a cultural climate for and social fact of social and geographic mobility. (p. 176)

Nevertheless, based on the major studies into the origins of twentieth century consumer culture, it appears that advertising has emerged as a crucial part of advanced capitalism (Ewen, 1976, 1988; Parenti, 1986). Most of these studies agree that advertising is used to promote consumer ideology and to help create a consumer culture.

Structuralism. The assumptions of structuralism insist that everything in culture is structured and surface understandings are possible only because of the structured nature of cultural phenomena. Applying this principle, Williamson (1978) claims that the structures of advertisements explain the ideological effects that advertising has upon the minds of its viewers at the unconscious level. As Fiske (1987) asserts, at the base of structuralism lies the notion that reality can be made sense of only through language or other highly structured cultural meaning systems.

To uncover this taken-for-granted reality, semiotics, one of the structural approaches, offers helpful methodological guidelines. Generally speaking, semiotics is the study of how signs create meaning within everyday life. Not all signwork is, however, immediate and visible. In fact, making semiotic work visible in terms of everyday objects requires an

articulation of close, cultural descriptions using the tools of semiotics. Such articulation should serve to clarify the polysemic nature of communication. Numerous critical analyses of advertising employing semiotics -- such as Goffman's Gender Advertisements (1979), Williamson's Decoding Advertisements: Ideology and Meaning in Advertising (1978), and Leymore's Hidden Myth (1975) -- have examined the structure of advertisements for their ideological impact. Such studies attempt to articulate the underlying structure that explains how advertising persuades or manipulates consumers.

Leymore (1975) identifies the structuralist method almost exclusively with Lévi-Strauss and his analysis of myth. Following this type of analysis, she goes on to develop the view that the meaning of advertisements and their effectiveness as a means of persuasion can be understood by tracing their superficial system of appearances down to a deep structure of underlying rules. In particular, she seeks to classify the surface manifestations of advertisements into a system of binary oppositions, for it is at this level that the message is registered in the consumer's mind.

Williamson (1978) provides a basis for ideological analysis of the manner in which the audience derives meaning from commercial messages through analyzing over a hundred examples. She also offers a critical understanding of consumer culture, and of the role of women in the ideological configurations that sustain it. Williamson takes the position that the articulation of self/society is mediated by consumer imagery. She argues that meaning is created through the audience, rather than meaning being directed at audiences. Williamson notes that the

transference of meaning from one sign to another is very rarely made explicit in modern advertising by the content of the advertisement itself. As an example, the meaning of “Catherine Deneuve” (herself a sign meaning French chic) is transferred to the product. This transfer of significance is not completed within the ad: nowhere is it stated that “Chanel No. 5” is like “Catherine Deneuve”; we must make the connection ourselves (Williamson, 1978, pp. 25-26). This meaning does not exist until we complete the transfer. Consequently, the actual transference requires the active participation of the viewer.

According to Williamson (1978), the advertisement alone does not manipulate the audience, but merely invites their participation in the personal construction of meaning. The advertisement invites us to make that transfer of meaning to the commodity itself. For this to be accomplished, we must already know what the sign stands for, as well as what it means in everyday life. These systems of meaning from which we draw the tools to complete the transfer are referred to by Williamson as referent systems. Chapman and Egger (1983) consider the referent system as a general theme resulting from the collective meanings of the various signifiers. This referent system constitutes the body of knowledge from which both advertisers and audiences draw their materials. The mass media consequently play an important role as mediator. For the audience properly to “decode” the message (transfer meaning), advertisers must draw their materials from the social knowledge of the audience and then transform this material into messages (“encode”). Finally, the advertisers must also, while shaping the content, develop appropriate formats in order

for the process of communication from one audience to another to be completed (Hall, 1980). Hall (1980) claims that producers of cultural products encode meanings into specific texts that support and establish the dominant ideology. In the case of advertising, the audience accepts the preferred meaning of such a message as “buy this product.”

Goffman (1979) discusses similar issues, although he does not frame them in the same way. Instead, he asks another question: Why do most advertisements not look strange to us? Goffman believes that, when looked at carefully, they are very strange creations, particularly with regard to their portrayals of gender relations. He demonstrates that, in advertisements, men tend to take on the roles of parents, while women are treated largely as children, which leads to the question, if grown women are largely treated as children in advertisements, why does this not look strange to us? The answer lies in the fact that, during our daily interactions, we are constantly defining what it means to be male and female in this particular society. Through the way we dress, the way we behave, and the structure of our interactions, in displaying such things as body posture and ceremonial activities (opening doors, giving up seats, and so on), we are communicating ideas about gender through culturally conventionalized routines of behavior. These displays, or rituals of gender behavior, help us to interpret social reality, and thus provide guides to perception.

Advertising borrows heavily from these conventionalized portrayals of gender, and this is the reason why, according to Goffman (1979), most advertisements do not look strange to us, since they are an extremely

concentrated reflection of one aspect of our social lives -- the realm of gender displays. That is, advertisements do not necessarily portray actual men and women but represent the ways we think they behave. Advertisers largely do not create the images they depict out of nothing but draw upon the same corpus of displays that we all use to make sense of social life.

Leiss, Kline, and Jhally (1990) also examine the structure and content of advertisements and their social and cultural impact through the use of semiotics (or semiology). Their study reveals that advertisers utilize different codes and strategies to appeal to different audiences and genders. For example, "beauty," "family relations," and "romance" represent codes used to address female audiences, while "ruggedness" and "fraternity" represent codes used to address male audiences. Thus, structuralism, and in particular semiotic analysis, has been used to define various formulations of a theory of ideology in advertising.

Political Economy. The political economy approach began with the production side of the communication process by examining the infrastructural and ideological power within the media industry. Jhally (1987) and Leiss, Kline, and Jhally (1990) address the problem of linking media analysis to political economy theory and attempt to explain how advertising and mass communications exercise their power in contemporary capitalist society. More specifically, Leiss, Kline, and Jhally (1990) provide insights into how commodities mediate social relations by focusing attention on the cultural impact of advertising. The authors describe the origins of the consumer culture and the transition from industrial to consumer society. They discuss how, during this process,

mass media and advertising agencies have evolved hand-in-hand into the modern advertising industry, which constitutes a central institution of the market economy. The notion of commodification is useful in explaining this transformation. From the political economy perspective, the idea of commodification implies that anything can be subjected to the capitalist mechanisms of production and consumption.

According to Leiss, Kline, and Jhally (1990), individuals define themselves in the consumer society as consumers to gain fundamental modes of gratification (such as happiness and pleasure) from consumption. Hence, marketers and advertisers generate systems of meaning, prestige, and identity by associating their products with certain life-styles, symbolic values, and pleasures. For instance, advertisers create a paramount atmosphere in their ads to associate products with prestigious images. In the consumer society, commodities are important adjuncts to interpersonal relations because they communicate social information to others. Lee (1993) also argues that one of the most significant developments in the commodity-form over recent years is the transition in production from material to experiential commodities.

Marxist scholars generally agree that advertising constitutes the “principal weapon” in capitalist efforts to stimulate demand. Baran and Sweezy (1966) argue that only in monopoly capitalism does too much production become an economic problem: In a rational, socialist system, too much production in one realm would simply mean that productive forces would be reorganized to meet another need, or that prices would be lowered to allow more consumers to purchase the overabundant products. In

capitalism, however, the overproduction of goods that people do not consume is a crisis. This is because without consumption, no profits (and no further investments for that matter) would be realized in production which, ultimately, would lead to a stagnant economy. To offset this effect, advertising ensures that overproduction will not meet with the kinds of ruinous parsimony that could destroy a market economy. Thus, from this perspective, for capitalism to exist at all, advertising first must create a given demand.

Simply put, advertising's primary concern is selling things. As seen in the above-mentioned changes in the form of advertisements over the last hundred years, marketing strategies have evolved to a stage in which selling things requires that advertisements continuously construct and reconstruct the relationship between people and these things. For Jhally (1987), this is an extremely important social function; he argues that the relationship between people and things is not a "superficial or optional feature of life" but rather, through "objectification," is the process by which we "objectify ourselves and our lives in the materiality of the concrete world." This activity by which we take things that are outside of us and make them into a part of our daily existence "lies at the basis of what we can call a distinctive human experience, the mediation of human needs through objects" (p. 2). Jhally regards advertising as the primary discourse mediating the relationship between people and things in capitalist societies. In this sense, advertising thus exerts a tremendous power in its potential to shape the very core of human experience.

More generally, Williams (1980) argues that modern capitalism provides “social and personal meanings” through the consumption of goods “which in a different cultural pattern might be more directly available” (p. 185). On this point, Jhally (1987) seems to be in agreement with Williams (1980), who sees this awesome and awful advertising potential as a sure sign of impending social failure. Although compelling, Williams’ critique does not, however, offer much in the way of a “blueprint” for an analysis of a specific phenomenon such as the worldwide consumption of commodities.

Jhally finds useful the notion of fetishism advanced by Marx (1906/1976):

The commodity-form . . . [has] absolutely no connection with the physical nature of the commodity and the material relations arising out of this. It is nothing but the definite social relation between men which assumes here, for them, the fantastic form of a relation between things. . . . I call this the fetishism which attaches itself to the products of labor as soon as they are produced as commodities, and therefore inseparable from the production of commodities. (p. 165)

Jhally (1987) takes as his starting point the analysis of the commodity in Marx’s Capital (1906) while applying the categories of exchange value, use value, surplus value, and commodity fetishism to studies of advertising. He attempts to demonstrate how traditional Marxian economic categories and analyses can be used productively to analyze advertising, and how these analyses can be combined with semiological analyses of codes and the production of meaning.

Essentially, Jhally (1987) tries to bring concerns for both production and consumption into an innovative and insightful rethinking of advertising. His primary argument stems from the fact that the late-twentieth century capitalist mode of production and the image-making symbolic codes that seem to govern consumption are integral to the eventual form and social impact of advertising in its current manifestation. Many critical theorists have made important contributions in critiquing symbolic code. Nevertheless, for a critique of modes of production, Jhally eventually returns to Marx. He thus begins his analysis by describing the relationship of advertising to the modes of production with the question of the amount and kinds of information provided through advertisements.

From this perspective, Jhally (1987) then points out that studies of the amount of information contained in advertisements have already been done, but that those studies have invariably focused on information about the performance features of any product; this, however, represents only a small part of the total information that might be presented about a commodity. Specifically, Jhally (1987) argues that information on the relations of production of any object is almost never provided in advertisements.

Arriaga (1984) also suggests that Marxists still believe that labor is the ultimate source of all value, and that the capitalist realizes his profit in the surplus value produced by the worker, but only when he sells the product which the worker has made. Advertising is therefore seen as having the function of speeding up circulation, the process by which

surplus value is created; it has no value in itself, but it is necessary for the realization of the value already created elsewhere and hence for the reproduction of capital.

In general, the political economy approach provides much useful analysis of how advertising produces consumer culture, as well as how the consumer culture reproduces itself. Nevertheless, while Jhally's use of Marxian categories to analyze advertising as an institution is often illuminating, he sometimes resorts to a rather vulgar Marxism, as when he insists on interpreting media communication simply in terms of the exchange value and use value produced by capital, rather than analyzing the interactions between media content, forms, institutions, social and political environments, and the uses of the media by the audience. Moreover, while he provides a critical political economy framework for analyzing the social and economic functions of advertising, he is less successful in analyzing how audiences themselves decode the ads, as well as exactly what specific meanings and effects are produced by the interaction between ads and audiences themselves.

Postmodernism. Jameson (1984) regards postmodernism as the culture of consumer society, the post-World War II stage of late capitalism. Jameson's concept of postmodern culture is strongly influenced by Baudrillard's work. Baudrillard (1981) begins developing his theory of the media in his essay, "Requiem for the Media." In this work, Baudrillard attacks Marx's economic reductionism, with its alleged inability to conceptualize language, sign, and communication. He criticizes the Frankfurt school notion that the mass media possess some intrinsic

liberating potential which is blocked or suppressed by the ruling class. He also notes how the "TV object was becoming the center of the household and was serving an essential proof function that the owner was a member of the consumer society" (p. 53). That is, television is first a product sold by a manufacturer to an individual; after this, "the demand is divided between that of an object (a product of images) and that of images themselves (as vehicles of meaning)" (p. 53).

According to Kellner (1989b), the main thesis of Baudrillard's postmodern theory concerns the production and proliferation of signs which have created a society of simulations governed by implosion² and hyperreality.³ Simulation⁴ and simulacrum⁵ are two major concepts in his

² Baudrillard (1980) defines the concept of implosion as "[the] defusing of polarities, the short-circuiting of the poles of every differential system of meaning, the obliteration of distinctions and oppositions between terms, including the distinction between the medium and the real" (p. 142). Thus, implosion is deeply related to the process of defusing meaning.

³ As Baudrillard (1983a) notes, "Today it is quotidian reality in its entirety -- political, social, historical and economic -- that from now on incorporates the simulacry dimension of hyperrealism" (p. 147). Hyperreality is the end-result of a historical simulation process.

⁴ Baudrillard's notion of simulation is based on McLuhan's formula, "the medium is the message." As Baudrillard (1983a) notes, "Simulation is characterized by a precession of the model, of all models around the merest fact - models come first, and the orbital (like the bomb) circulation constitutes the genuine magnetic field of events" (p. 32). The model is the medium, and it becomes the message. As he (1983a) defines it, "Simulation is no longer that of a territory, a referential being or a substance. It is the generation by models of a real without origins or reality" (p.

theory. Baudrillard (1983a; 1988a; 1994) uses these two concepts to assert the power of the mass media to produce a simulated model of the world as reality. In an era of simulation, social reproduction (such as information-processing and mass-mediated communication) replaces production as the major principle of society.

Baudrillard (1983a; 1983b) interprets modernity as a process of explosion of commodification, mechanization, technology, and market relations. The postmodern condition is the proliferation of signs, generated by the technological developments associated with the information explosion. As a result, television is a central factor in this information explosion. The explosion has served as a symbol of industrial capitalism and Western societies. The implosion would suggest some sort of reversal, a contracting movement, a radical change in the dynamics of an industrial order, the end of modernity.

The term implosion was first introduced by McLuhan (1964), who described it in the following way:

After three thousand years of explosion, by means of fragmentary and mechanical technologies, the Western world is imploding.

2). In this sense, postmodern society is in an era of simulation dominated by signs, codes, and models.

⁵ Baudrillard (1983a) distinguishes the three orders of appearance since the Renaissance, with reference to the laws organizing their respective configurations: The first order of simulacrum is based on the natural law of value; the second order is based on the commercial law of value, and the third on the structural law of value. While production is the dominant scheme of the industrial era, simulation is the reigning scheme of the current phase (Chang, 1986).

During the mechanical ages we had extended our bodies in space. Today, after more than a century of electric technology, we have extended our central nervous system itself in a global embrace, abolishing both time and space as far as our planet is concerned. (p. 19)

McLuhan (1964) views this implosion as abolishing fragmentation and bringing in the era of the global village. Baudrillard (1983a; 1983b), however, reads this concept differently. He sees it as increasing fragmentation, abolishing meaning, and reality itself, establishing a state of absolute non-communication (no-feedback) where the media (one way only) saturates the environment with seductive images and spectacles. In this sense, Baudrillard (1983a) regards postmodernity as the simultaneous creation of implosion and simulation. He claims that contemporary culture is TV culture -- i.e., endless simulations in which reality simply disappears. Television, therefore, is the instrument of new postmodernity since TV is the machine of simulation. Televised consumer culture is thus an important constituent of postmodernity. Baudrillard (1981) asserts that television represents a technical and cultural code which systematizes non-communication; the mass media "fabricate non-communication" (p. 169), they "are what always prevents response, making all processes of exchange impossible" (p. 170), and they are a form of absolute non-communication. Mass media, Baudrillard declares, thus create an illusive order without regard to the desire to democratize.

Baudrillard (1981) argues, building on Thorstein Veblen's (1899) analysis of conspicuous consumption, that individuals seek various

commodities as signs of social prestige, position, and success. For Baudrillard, these commodities form a system of hierarchically organized goods and services, which serve as signs pointing to one's standing within the system. As Harms and Kellner (1991) point out, Baudrillard's analysis of "sign value" provides a superior framework to Haug's notion of "aesthetic illusion" in various ways. These include analyzing why people seek various products, what actual gratifications they derive, and what social functions consumption actually serves.

By distinguishing between use, exchange and sign value, Baudrillard (1988a) adds an important dimension to sociological analyses of consumption by pointing to the element of prestige and hierarchy in the game of consumption. Moreover, he (1988a) stresses how the uses, wants, needs, and sign values of commodities are all socially constructed. They are part of a larger system of production and consumption and serve to integrate individuals into the consumer society. To this end, the "real" social practices and values (rather than mere illusions such as prestige and power) induce individuals to play the game of conspicuous consumption. Baudrillard's analysis thus provides a powerful antidote to mainstream economics by arguing that the dimension of economic success is socially constructed to bind individuals to a preference or taste for specific products (for example, it binds a medical doctor to a Mercedes). Capitalism molds the very desires and forms of consumption that ultimately motivate people to consume.

Indeed, Baudrillard increasingly erases political economy from his theory and instead provides a different vision of society. This trend appears

especially in his later writings, in which signs proliferate and come to determine the course of social development. Baudrillard's recent work on advertising previously examined in this chapter converge on the increasingly-important role of image in consumption and social life. In addition, Baudrillard (1988a) also provides one of the most detailed explorations of the life of signs and images in contemporary capitalist societies. The proliferation of signs and images is itself a function of the current stage of capitalist development. This may be explained by contemporary capitalism using new technologies as a crucial source of capital realization, which provides new ways to sell commodities, to produce consumer selves, and also to produce a new form of capitalism. In this configuration, new technologies are synthesized with a restructuring of capitalist society itself (with its so-called "techno-capital") in a multi-national, world-capitalist system (Kellner, 1989b).

The post-structuralist critique of representation, especially the work of Derrida and Foucault relating to power, has been profound, since it rediscovers energy (desire), force (difference), and power within the terms of the language paradigm. It becomes crucial here to focus on the work of Nietzsche because, in his cynicism, he found the pure desire for power to be at the center of Western experience. Baudrillard's style and impact, especially, are like that of the Nietzsche of the The Gay Science.

Nietzsche foresaw that the forces of Enlightenment thought and the development of the bourgeois individual would disenchant human existence in a paradigm shift which, he warned, would constitute nihilism. In this nihilistic, new-world order, which we are just now beginning to

realize fully, our cosmological relation to divinity and myth would be replaced by our status as individual consumers caught within market relations (late-capitalist code). It is for this reason that, in The Gay Science, the Madman goes to the marketplace to proclaim that “God is dead.”

The correlation between Nietzsche and Baudrillard is well developed in the work of Kroker (1992), which clearly depicts postmodern nihilism as the trajectory of Western consciousness. In postmodern nihilism, driven by the power of the dollar sign and the image-commodity, consumption becomes the very purpose of life. Consequently, our postmodern culture becomes saturated with commodity signification (e.g., clothes as signs of wealth, soft drinks as signs of youth, cars as signs of status). In this pervasive consumer culture, we want to signify our status. This postmodern consumer culture is replaced by meaningless computerized (or mass mediated) sign. According to Kroker (1992),

For Nietzsche, what powered this fantastic reduction of society to the logic of the sign, what precipitated the implosion of the real into the semiology of perspectival illusion, was this: the sign is power on its down side, on its side of reversal, cancellation, and disaccumulation.
(p. 33)

From this perspective, reality implodes in the (nihilistic) logic of the technologically induced sign.

In retrospect, the effects of this technological and media “processing” of the “real” have been called vertiginous by Fredric Jameson (1984). This

processing creates hyperreal⁶ culture as a copy of re-processed images and texts from the past. As a result, the speed at which history and culture are re-duplicated leaves us with no grounding, no reference point, no origin for judging what is real, and no finite or objective perspective. We are left with simulacra. In these simulacra, the present suffers from a colonization of images and texts of the past. Without an origin of difference, we tend to experience an implosion of the sense of history wherein the past and present are undifferentiated. A cultural schizophrenia results which is acquired from the endless flow of signs and reproduced images that eventually leads to a loss of stable meaning.

Thus we can read simulacra as communication strategies which erase differences through the processing of cultural texts (e.g., information, mass media, advertising) for consumption in the late-capitalist consumer culture. For example, through the power of mass media (mis)representation and simulated consensus (opinion polls, testimonial commercials, etc.), a gap no longer appears between what people want and what is promised because advertising has changed what they want (Norris, 1990).

In this world of hyperreality, referentiality is suspended, as we can no longer distinguish model from reality or simulation from its source. In other words, when signs refer only to other signs, seduction, which deals only with appearances, is an operative model for reality. From Baudrillard's point of view, the advantage of the object (e.g., woman, body)

⁶ The hyper signifies more real than real. Hyperreal refers to the generation by models of a real without origin.

lies in the fact that it always exists solely as it is defined by the code of commodity culture. The object-image simultaneously becomes commodity and currency, as well as circulating within the self-referential operations of the consumer code. In this way, postmodern society increasingly reveals the degree to which commodity is no longer the material use of object. Baudrillard (1988a) privileges the logic of the object that operates by seduction with indifference to our individual desire: "The object is without desire, it is that which escapes desire and belongs to the order of destiny" (p. 52).

Whereas Baudrillard (1990a) proposes the alternative of resistance-as-object as the line of political resistance most appropriate to the simulacrum, Deleuze and Guattari (1983) propose the "schizoid" subject. Here, the "schizophrenic" response to "subjectivity" is a rhizomatic (or diffuse) resistance that subsumes the subject/object dichotomy. The connection of the sign to the object (routed through desire) can be broken through a rhizomatic operation of the subject as the Body without Organs.

In postmodernity, however, this force tends to lean toward that of becoming-consumer. In our consumer culture, desire appears everywhere as simulation. The terrorism of simulacra is the destiny of desire as circulated code, where the sign/image replaces the object (its referent) in this coding. In other words, the image is commodity; we, then, represent sites that process the coded messages of (empty) consumption. Baudrillard (1988a) and Deleuze and Guattari (1983) all assume that only the dissolution of the representational subject would provide a vantage point on reality.

CHAPTER THREE

A BRIEF HISTORY OF ADVERTISING IN KOREA

Korean advertising is, in some sense, probably as old as Korean national history. The history of advertising as a modern industry, however, is relatively short. It was not until the last decades of Yi dynasty that Korea awoke to the need to “enlighten” its people, which meant to modernize the country. In this process, the government published Korea’s first modern newspaper, the Hansong Sunbo, in 1883 (Lee, 1982). The government also attempted publishing a weekly newspaper, Hansong Chubo, in 1886. The first ad was published in Hansong Chubo in that same year for a general-goods trade company owned by a German merchant. As Shin (1996) states,

Research by Professor Lee Kwang-Rin, a noted scholar on modern Korean history and another study by Professor Yu Jae-Cheon, Sogang University, proved that the advertisement placed by Edward Meyer & Company, known as the Sechang Yanghaeng in Korean, a German trading firm active in Korea, indeed was the first modern Korean newspaper advertisement. This ad, appearing on the 15th and 16th pages of the Hansong Chubo on February 22, 1886, was entirely in Chinese characters. It was a narrative statement of what Edward Meyer & Company imported to and exported from Korea.

(p. 40)

The next important development was the publication of the Tongnip Shinmun (i.e., Independent Newspaper) in 1896. In addition, the newspaper Hwangsong Shinmun also emerged two years later. The Tongnip Shinmun printed 300 copies of four tabloid pages three times a week. Overall, the role of these papers in the early period was that of both social reformer and innovator (Lee, 1982). By 1910, there were so many ads in these papers that over 50% of the total space per issue was taken up by advertisements, predominantly for pharmaceutical products, books, and schools. In addition to these advertisements, mail-order businesses also began advertising as well (Shin, 1996, p. 42). In comparison with the Tongnip Shinmun, new trends emerged regarding the original ad content in the Hwangsong Shinmun. The amount of advertising also increased dramatically.

Korean newspapers, along with Korea itself, suffered during the Japanese colonial rule (1910–1945). During this period, Japan tried to replace Korean culture with a Japanese one under the ideology of Japanese imperialism. Although Japanese authorities approved publication of a few Korean newspapers, they nevertheless controlled all areas of Korean mass media with strong censorship. Newspapers ceased to promote the process of homogenization, and assumed the role of propaganda machines. Western-style advertising rates (with frequency and volume discount), were replaced by selective rates depending on what prevailed in Japan in those days (Shin, 1996, p. 42). Advertising also played an important role in the Japanese propaganda machine -- that is, most newspapers depended on Japanese commercial ads. Generally speaking, such advertising resembled speech-like texts during this period -- in other words, the advertising of this period

remained relatively unsophisticated. More importantly, all advertising which appeared in the newspaper during this period was from Western and Japanese advertisers.

Following the nationwide uprising against Japanese colonial rule in 1919, Japan switched to what is now referred to as the “cultural policy.” Under this policy, two Korean-language newspapers were given permission to publish in Seoul -- the Chosun Ilbo and the Dong-A Ilbo -- which naturally became media for advertising (Shin, 1996, p. 43). The Chosun Ilbo and the Dong-A Ilbo have become the most respected and longest surviving newspapers in Korea. Regarding advertising volume in this period, reliance on Japanese ads became very important (see Table 1). As Shin (1996) writes:

By 1925, Japanese advertising exceeded 50% in the total space of these two vernacular dailies, reaching around 65% by 1935. Advertising revenue varied from 31% to 45% of the total income of the Dong-A Ilbo between 1920 and 1940. In terms of types of advertisements, and taking 1927 as an example, pharmaceutical products represented around 17%, followed by 16% for cosmetics, 9% for foods, 8% for miscellaneous products, 7% for machines and 5% for books and garments respectively. (p. 43)

Since Korea became free of Japanese colonization in 1945, it has maintained close ties with the United States for security and economic reasons. Consequently, it was natural for the Korean mass media to adopt the press system of the United States as a role model. For instance, in 1956, Korea witnessed the birth its own commercial television station along with

television commercials. This station was better known as RCA-TV, since all of its equipment and assistance came from the RCA corporation. The station caught fire and burned down three years later (Shin, 1996, p. 45).

In 1964, television commercials began to air on the government-owned KBS-TV. Later that same year, TBC radio and television were born as private stations. In addition, two Americans set up a small advertising agency in Seoul during this period (Shin, 1996, p. 47). In retrospect, the year 1968 marks a milestone in the development of Korean advertising. In that year Coca-Cola entered the Korean market, followed closely by its rival, Pepsi. The introduction of these two transnational brands marked a turning point for Westernization of Korean advertising: an era of advertising agency services soon began. In 1969, the ad agency Manbosa was born, whose major client was Coca-Cola (Shin, 1996, p. 47).

The growth of the advertising industry resembled the overall pattern of industrial growth in Korea. Since the 1960s, Korea's economy has been one of the fastest growing in the world; the modern advertising industry in Korea has also been spurred on by this economic development. Expenditures on advertising increased dramatically, especially in the 1980s.

During this period, national-newspaper ads occupied roughly one-third of total newspaper space. In addition, total advertising volume has increased steadily, even during economically difficult periods. Finally, the newspaper industry has also been quite competitive in its own advertising. Furthermore, it has been necessary for the major Korean newspapers to increase advertising revenues in order to meet the costs associated with

page increases. In this sense, advertising is crucial to the maintenance of the infra-structure of the newspaper industry.

As a result of the 1980 media restructuring in Korea, all the nation's broadcasting systems¹ were put under control of the Korea Broadcasting System (KBS). In addition, the Korean government has also erected an entry barrier to the field of broadcast advertising. For a while, however, by law, all advertising on the broadcast media had to go through the government via a single go-between organization, namely, the Korea Broadcasting Advertising Corporation (KOBACO). KOBACO, a government agency, was established in 1981 with exclusive sales rights for all radio and TV stations. Basically, KOBACO accredits advertising agencies desiring access to television, and receives a 20 percent commission on all TV commercials. To date, KOBACO's revenue comes from the commission fee paid by the broadcasting stations for the sales/service of all its advertisers. The organization's activities are under the supervision of the Minister of Culture and Information (Richstad & Oh, 1988).

KOBACO controls also exist on advertising content. The Korean Broadcast Advertising Review Council (under KOBACO) previews all advertisements destined for broadcast media. In this sense, all orders for broadcast advertising are handled through KOBACO. As a result, orders are placed either directly to KOBACO or through advertising agencies

¹ Korean broadcasting consists of three national TV networks: the Korea Broadcasting System (KBS, public-owned), the Munwha Broadcasting Company (MBC, privately-owned), and the Seoul Broadcasting System (SBS, privately-owned).

(Richstad & Oh, 1988). Aside from sponsoring KOBACO, government involvement, however, is limited. The Ministries of Culture and Health do review advertising and control the cultural content of advertising, along with some messages in foods and drug ads in the interest of public safety. Nevertheless, advertising regulations in Korea are not strict in the light of the substantive structure of its law (Baudot, 1989).

In the past decade, Korea's advertising expenditures have grown dramatically from a little over US \$1 Billion in 1986 to US \$6.6 Billion in 1995 (Advertising Annual, 1996). As shown in Table 2, Korea's total advertising expenditures in 1968 were a meager US \$32.7 million (this figure was US \$452 million in 1979). Although advertising agencies did exist before 1968, the use of agency services at that time were the exception rather than the rule. Developments in the late 1960s through the mid-1970s, however, exerted a tremendous impact on the agency business as the two soft-drink giants, Coke and Pepsi, found their way into Korea in 1968. Despite tight militaristic control, the economy kept growing. For example, the GNP leaped from US \$60.3 billion in 1980 to US \$133.4 billion by the end of this period. Moreover, total expenditures during the 1980–1987 period tripled from US \$417 million to US \$1.23 billion.

As can be seen in Table 3, television increased in growth by 25.1%, followed by 20.4% for newspapers, 16.7% for radio and 13.1% for magazines (other media had a 23.1% growth). This increase in television advertising was largely due to revised Korean law, which now permits 10% of the total-sponsored program time for advertising in addition to "spots" during station breaks. This ceiling then held at 8% until the fall of 1994.

As shown in Table 4, top agencies enjoyed a fantastic year in 1995. Their total billings grew to 2,358 billion won from 1,778 billion won, thus recording a whopping 32.6% increase. Among the top ten, Diamond had the highest growth, at 83.2%, and edged up from No. 4 to DMB&B, which rebounded back into the top ten in 1995.

Korea's leading agencies have now set their sights on global expansion. At this point, one unusual factor may give them a better chance of success than Japanese agencies, who have been struggling overseas for over a decade: Each of Korea's major agencies constitutes a subsidiary of one of Korea's industrial conglomerates, whose own ambitions will fuel their agency's growth. Take, for example, Samsung's house agency, Cheil Communications, which has been the number one ranked agency in Korea, whose billings will top US \$1 Billion (Advertising Annual, 1996). All of its international growth will come via Samsung. As a result, Cheil already has offices in Tokyo, New York, San Jose, London, Beijing, Moscow, Hong Kong, Vienna, Barcelona, and Miami, as well as affiliations with Bozell, Saatchi & Saatchi, DMB&B, Y&R, and McCann-Erickson in various countries. In addition, many of Samsung's current representative offices will become full-service agencies.

The second-ranked LG Ad (owned by Lucky Goldstar) agency billings amounted to US \$538 million in 1995, with half of its expenses coming from international advertising. The third-ranked Hyundai subsidiary, Diamond Advertising (US \$400 million billings, 1995), with branches in LA and Frankfurt, is also making plans for San Jose and Beijing, while the fourth-ranked Lotte subsidiary, Daehong Advertising (US \$310 million, 1995), has

opened in Beijing, where China's first Lotteria fast-food outlet has now opened. Finally, the fifth-ranked Korad Ogilvy & Mather (US \$247 million, 1995), a subsidiary of the Haitai Group, also comprises the main agency for Daewoo (Ogilvy holds 30%) (Advertising Annual, 1996).

In this context, advertising text has generally reflected cultural trends. Korean advertising has thus played an important role in the nation's market for consumer goods, especially in drawing from fundamental traits and symbols of Korean culture. At the same time, the global expansion of transnational advertising agencies reflected their important role in the world system marketing of their products. Korean advertising has, to a large extent, therefore integrated itself into the world system of advertising.

Transnational Advertising Agencies in Korea

The role of transnational advertising agencies on a global level is constantly increasing. The message of these transnationals are penetrating into the hearts of Koreans. In the early 1980's, Korea represented a tiny advertising market -- worth no more than US \$500 million in 1982. Today, this market is worth over US \$7 billion at current prices, and still growing strongly. This increasing affluence has created new domestic markets, not only for Korean manufacturers, but also for those from abroad. For example, Unilever, Nestle, Coca-Cola, Mars, Kimberly Clark, Ford, and Philips represent a mere handful of the international marketers currently targeting the Korean market.

Such multinational advertising agencies, however, initially began to find footholds in Korea in the early 1980's. Sinclair (1987) points out that the

market share of American transnational advertising agencies had experienced a fivefold increase in the amount of overseas business during the last thirty years. Joint ventures, however, date from 1988, when foreign investment in the Korean advertising industry was first allowed. The Korean advertising industry, after allowing direct investment of transnational advertising agencies, was likely to be influenced by the international power game. Until a few years ago, it was considered sufficient to affiliate with a major Korean agency, and perhaps base a representative in the United States. But the speed of change now creates a new agenda, which certain Korean agencies must fulfill if they are truly to serve their Western clients.

From the point of view of dependency theory, the advertising of goods and services is primarily intended to increase both demand for and consumption of consumer goods manufactured within industrialized countries. Hamelink (1983) provides a good example of arguments about the effects of transnational advertising in the Third World. Tomlinson (1991) summarizes and critiques Hamelink's argument:

Among Hamelink's objections to the advertising practices of the transnational corporations are (a) that they aim to exploit economically; (b) that they deliberately deceive and manipulate their audience in the Third World; and (c) that they introduce commodities which are undesirable in themselves and in the process suppress better traditional products. There is an element of truth in all these charges, but there is also a danger, in pressing them incautiously, of

sliding towards the paternalist position of the critique of false consciousness or, worse, of a romanticised anti-modernism. (p. 115)

The number of transnational advertising agencies in Third World countries plays an important role in both the commercialization and the Westernization of mass culture. Tunstall (1977) claims that transnational agencies “play a decisive part in swinging entire national media systems towards commercial, and away from traditional political patterns” (p. 289). In other words, transnational advertising conveys a certain ideology that reflects Western society. Consequently, transnational advertising produces (or reproduces) a Western ideology which can be distinguished from the traditional Korean-value system.

Essentially, the liberalization of the Korean advertising industry was initially stimulated by two factors: (a) the U.S. trade policy emphasizing globalization of its service sectors, and (b) the growth of the Korean advertising market itself. As far as advertising expenditures are concerned, Korea has long comprised the second largest market in Asia, and recently became the eighth largest market in the world (See Table 5 and 6). In 1987, the Korean government decided to open its advertising market on a multinational basis. This decision represented a reaction to pressure applied by the American government in demanding an open-foreigner market. Subsequently, the full opening of the Korean advertising market thus provided opportunities for multinational advertisers and agencies eager to compete in the Korean market. As a result, most transnational advertising agencies then entered the Korean market by purchasing existing local agencies already operating within specific targeted markets.

The growth of advertising in Third World countries has been associated historically with the arrival of U.S. transnational agencies. U.S. agencies penetrated the Korean market through three basic approaches (see Table 7). According to Kim (1994), the first approach involved purchasing equity in an existing Korean agency. Such an approach was made possible to benefit U.S. agencies on the basis of both their best, strongest transnational corporations and to allow clients to maintain management control. The second approach involved establishing a new agency as a joint venture with a Korean partner. The third method involved affiliate relationships (conducted without any equity involvement whatsoever) with transnational advertising agencies within the Korean agencies. It should be noted that some agencies choose this strategy when they needed additional time to research the market.

As seen in the above three approaches, the examination of market share occupied by foreign advertising agencies is important to those who evaluate their activities within the overall market. Although the present market share of foreign agencies has been small, the six major foreign agencies currently residing in Korea are rapidly growing. At present, McCann-Erickson shows the fastest growth, followed by J. Walter Thompson and Cheil Bozell.

The success of advertising agencies also depends on how stable their clients are within the market itself. In this case, the major transnational advertising agencies in Korea gain their clients either through international networks or from existing Korean agencies within the domestic market. For example, J. Walter Thompson's and McCann-

Erickson's clients have a greater likelihood of being transnational. In general, however, Korean companies possess the majority ownership of agencies (as in the cases of Cheil Bozell, DYR Korea, and DDK). Here, clients usually turn to Korean advertisers, since they come provided for through their large-parent companies (see Table 8).

In addition, the newly-formed agency, Diamond-Bates (which looks after both Saatchi & Saatchi and Bates clients in Korea), will work only for foreign clients under an agreement with Diamond that allows it management control. In addition, Ogilvy & Mather hope to achieve the same goal in a similar way by forming Ogilvy & Mather Seoul, a further partnership with Korad to service their international clients. Secondary agencies are, of course, difficult to form in Korea, where the partner constitutes part of one of the chaebol-regulations, to which exceptions have been made. In short, these agencies seek to prevent big-business groups from either increasing their number of subsidiaries, or having more than one company in any business field.

Other agencies, however, show a less-well-advanced tendency on the path to control. For example, Lintas, who closed up shop in Korea three years ago, now shares a non-equity affiliation with Oricom. Cheil Bozell operates very much as a Cheil-Communications subsidiary, mainly handling smaller pieces of Samsung-group business, along with Chrysler for Bozell. Moreover, the billings of these foreign-joint ventures can be deceptive. For example, over eighty percent of Korad Ogilvy & Mather's billings come from Ogilvy's Korean partner's clients -- mainly the Daewoo and Haitai business groups. For many Western agencies, the billings from

their aligned clients still remain insufficient to support an independent agency.

The establishment of transnational advertising agencies within the Korean market has caused many client transfers between agencies, thus causing most transnational advertisers to migrate from local agencies. This process will probably continue until the Korean economy as a whole finally becomes completely liberalized. Since the Korean economy had not previously been open to foreign companies, most transnational corporations (as noted above) have entered the market through joint ventures with Korean companies.

The structure of foreign-agency employment currently operating in Korea also provides a good example of its international division of labor. Through an unequal distribution of power between both local-advertising personnel and expatriates, the transnationals constantly perpetuate global inequalities among their employees. As a result, they then reproduce a dependency on local advertising industry within developing countries. Fejes (1980) suggests that this management structure in the Latin American market has resulted in the reshaping of business styles in the Western image. In particular, the advertising industry in Latin America is in the hands of the American transnational agencies.

The above analysis of the Korean advertising industry reveals that the process of market liberalization was accomplished in the context of Korea's economical, military, and political dependence on the United States. In Korea, both the local and the large in-house agencies formed alliances with transnational advertising agencies to dominate the industry.

Although the market share of transnational advertising agencies currently remains small, the effects of their functions in Korea are nevertheless quite visible in various areas (Kim, 1994). For instance, the penetration of transnationals into the local market creates the dual structure of the industry (in terms of the unequal, international division of labor in the current employment structure), as contrasted with recent changes in advertising regulations. It should be noted that this dual structure has accurately been predicted by the basic arguments of cultural imperialism and dependency theory formulated exclusively for this study.

Specifically, the role of transnational advertising agencies in achieving the cultural changes is of fundamental importance. When American cultural productions (such as Coca-Cola, Disney, and McDonald's) expanded into the Korean market, they were accompanied by the heavy promotion strategies of transnational advertising agencies. Mattelart (1991) also suggests that the global agencies have contributed to change the lifestyles (including consumption patterns) in the Third World countries: "In the construction of transnational space, one thing is clear: the idea of lifestyles is forging ahead among those who identity the strategies of segmentation in a pan-European context" (pp. 167-168). From this point of view, it is evident that the transnational advertising agencies play an important role in achieving cultural changes and lifestyles among local groups of people. In conclusion, the impact of transnational advertising agencies is best understood in the broad context of the global capitalist system.

The Major Studies of Korean Advertising

Chung (1990) explores how and to what extent Korean women's magazine advertisements have been transnationalized. The theoretical grounding of her study is the concept of cultural imperialism. According to this study, there are two positions in describing the function of advertising in a society. The first position states that advertising reflects existing values and lifestyles, while the other states that advertising creates new values and lifestyles, which arouses people's desires for advertised products. The concept of cultural imperialism implies that advertising plays a role as a molder of culture in the sense that internationally imported (or imitated) ads will influence values and lifestyles. More specifically, Chung's study analyzes traditional Korean consumer ideology and Western consumer ideology embedded in ads by using both quantitative and qualitative methods to separate content from form. The major finding of this study is that the Korean form of ads was Westernized over time -- for example, ads became more Westernized after adoption of foreign brandnames than before -- whereas the content was predominantly Western throughout the period under study.

Kim (1994) examines the impact of transnational advertising agencies in Korea. Her study is based on the political economic approach, which focuses on the effects of the logic of capital on the advertising industry within the context of global capitalism. The political economic approach leads her to explore the specific historical factors involved in the development of transnational advertising agencies in the Korean advertising industry. In particular, this study investigates the dynamic and

dialectic relationships between internal factors (local advertising agencies, the Korean government) and external factors (transnational advertising agencies). Evans (1979) also points out that an alliance (including the multinationals, the state, and the local industrial bourgeoisie) provides a necessary condition for dependent capitalist development. Within this framework, the liberalization of the Korean advertising industry was stimulated by two major factors: the U.S. trade policy for globalization of its service sectors and the growth of the Korean advertising market itself. Finally, Kim's study supports the idea that the number of transnational advertising agencies in the third world countries plays an important role in the commercialization and Westernization of mass culture.

Recently, Lee (1996) attempts to interpret how cigarette advertising promotes hidden meanings in its messages. In general, cigarette advertising is rapidly becoming globalized, thus presenting its highly commercialized images and slogans to many people throughout the world. Lee applies semiotic analysis to cigarettes advertisements in Korean magazines; specifically, his study employs both Leymore's notion of Exhaustive Common Denominator and Williamson's ideological process in advertising to conceptualize the mythical function of cigarette advertising in Korea. Lee concludes that cigarettes cannot signify either luxury or freshness (or any other gorgeous images) because cigarette advertising is simply pure representation in itself. Consequently, the ideological dimension of advertising is crucially important to the study of cigarette advertising's role in promoting smoking.

Table 1

Ad Volume Comparison of the Dong-A Ilbo and the Chosun Ilbo under Japanese Imperialism

| Year | The Dong-A Ilbo | | The Chosun Ilbo | |
|------|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| | Ads Placed from Japan | Ads Placed within Korea | Ads Placed from Japan | Ads Placed within Korea |
| 1931 | 63.8% | 36.2% | 48.0% | 42.0% |
| 1933 | 58.0% | 42.0% | 47.1% | 52.9% |
| 1937 | 50.7% | 49.3% | 63.3% | 36.7% |

Source: Shin, 1997, p. 24.

Table 2

Trends of Advertising Expenditures

| Year | Advertising Expenditures | | | US \$1.00= Korean Won |
|------|--------------------------|---------------|-------------|--------------------------|
| | Billion Won | Million US \$ | Growth Rate | |
| 1968 | 9.2 | 32.7 | - | 281.50 |
| 1970 | 12.7 | 40.1 | 38.0 | 316.65 |
| 1972 | 19.0 | 47.6 | 49.6 | 398.90 |
| 1974 | 33.0 | 682.2 | 73.7 | 484.00 |
| 1976 | 93.5 | 193.2 | 183.3 | 484.00 |
| 1977 | 120.3 | 248.6 | 28.6 | 484.00 |
| 1979 | 218.6 | 451.7 | 81.7 | 484.00 |
| 1980 | 275.3 | 417.2 | 25.9 | 659.90 |
| 1981 | 318.4 | 454.5 | 15.7 | 700.50 |
| 1982 | 46.3 | 569.3 | 33.9 | 748.80 |
| 1983 | 565.3 | 710.6 | 32.6 | 795.50 |
| 1984 | 683.3 | 825.8 | 20.9 | 827.40 |
| 1985 | 739.3 | 830.5 | 8.2 | 890.20 |
| 1986 | 818.5 | 950.2 | 10.7 | 861.40 |
| 1987 | 972.4 | 1,227.3 | 18.8 | 792.30 |
| 1988 | 1,278.5 | 1,868.9 | 31.5 | 684.10 |
| 1989 | 1,564.6 | 2,302.2 | 22.4 | 679.60 |
| 1990 | 2,000.1 | 2,791.9 | 27.8 | 716.40 |
| 1991 | 2,395.4 | 3,148.5 | 19.8 | 760.80 |
| 1992 | 2,815.9 | 3,571.7 | 21.7 | 788.40 |
| 1993 | 3,228.7 | 4,022.2 | 14.7 | 808.10 |
| 1994 | 4,028.4 | 5,107.6 | 24.8 | 788.70 |

Source: Advertising Yearbook, 1996, p. 25 (for 1968-1979); p. 29 (for 1980-1987);
p. 36 (for 1988-1994).

Table 3

Advertising Expenditures by Media, 1993-1995 (Billiion Won)

| | Newspaper | magazine | Radio | T V | CATV | Other | Total |
|----------|--------------------|-----------------|-----------------|--------------------|----------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| 1993 | 1,332.7 (41.3%) | 124.0 (3.8%) | 137.1 (4.2%) | 896.8 (27.8%) | - | 738.2 (22.9%) | 3,228.7 (100%) |
| 1994 | 1,778.8 (44.1%) | 155.7 (3.9%) | 148.6 (3.7%) | 1,041.9 (25.8%) | - | 905.4 (22.5%) | 4,028.4 (100%) |
| 1995 | 2,141.1 (43.3%) | 176.1 (3.6%) | 173.4 (3.5%) | 1,302.3 (26.3%) | 48.6 (1.0%) | 1,105.7 (22.4%) | 4,947.3 (100%) |
| 94/95(%) | +20.4 | +13.1 | +16.7 | +25.1 | - | +23.1 | +22.8 |

Source: Shin, 1996, p. 53.

Table 4

Billings of Top Ten Agencies in Korea, 1991-1995 (Billion Won)

| Agencies | 1991 | 1992 | 1993 | 1994 | 1995 |
|---------------------------|-------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Cheil | 217.4 | 279.0 | 329.7 | 460.4 | 624.5 |
| LG Ad | 133.8 | 170.1 | 205.6 | 306.5 | 430.7 |
| DaeHong | 128.1 | 153.9 | 127.3 | 204.2 | 248.2 |
| Oricom | 108.0 | 126.4 | 126.7 | 149.6 | 164.4 |
| Koread Ogilvy & Mather | 95.8 | 116.7 | 128.8 | 152.0 | 197.4 |
| DongBang | 66.7 | 80.1 | 84.2 | 101.5 | 113.0 |
| MBC Adcom | n/a | 66.7 | 67.0 | 81.7 | 96.2 |
| Diamond | 82.1 | 128.8 | 116.2 | 174.6 | 319.3 |
| Hancom | 85.2 | 92.4 | 99.5 | 96.1 | 106.9 |
| Seoul DMB&B | 40.2 | 48.4 | 42.0 | - | 58.2 |
| Cheil Bozell | | | | 52.1 | |
| Total | 957.3 | 1,262.5 | 1,372.0 | 1,778.7 | 2,358.8 |

Source: Shin, 1996, p. 56.

Table 5

1993 Total Advertising Expenditures in Top Ten Countries

| Country | Amount (in U.S. million \$) |
|----------------|-----------------------------|
| United States | 84,872.0 |
| Japan | 34,003.3 |
| Germany | 15,984.9 |
| United Kingdom | 14,119.0 |
| Italy | 8,811.9 |
| France | 8,573.9 |
| Spain | 8,029.3 |
| Korea | 4,688.3 |
| Australia | 3,651.1 |
| Taiwan | 3,215.1 |

Source: International Advertising Association Worldwide Summary, 1994;

Mueller, 1996, p. 11.

Table 6

Asia Countries' Advertising Spending in 1995 (U.S. million \$)

| Country | Newspaper | Magazine | TV | Radio | Estimate |
|-----------|-----------|----------|--------|-------|----------|
| Japan | 9,767 | 2,964 | 13,259 | 1,888 | 35,151 |
| Korea | 1,536 | 193 | 1,067 | 185 | 6,237 |
| Taiwan | 1,102 | 173 | 901 | 108 | 4,019 |
| China | 405 | 43 | 514 | 50 | 4,394 |
| Hong Kong | 374 | 141 | 560 | 73 | 2,097 |

Source: Mueller, 1996, pp. 314-315.

Table 7

Transnational Advertising Agencies' Form of Investment and Their Partners

| Type of Relationship | Foreign Agencies | Korean Agencies | Title of New Agencies | Year of Establishment |
|--------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| Foreign-Owned Agencies | McCann-Erickson (51%) | Creworld | McCann-Erickson (Korea) | 1990 |
| | J. Walter Thompson (100%) | Business world Services | J. Walter Thompson, Korea | 1989 |
| | Ogilvy & Mather (30%) | Korad, Int'l | Korad, Ogilvy & Mather | 1989 |
| | DMB&B (40%) | Seoul Ad. Diamond | Seoul DMB&B | 1990 |
| | Bates (40%) | | Diamond Bates Korea | 1996 |
| Joint Ventures of U.S. and Korean Agencies | Bozell (30%) | Cheil Com. | Cheil Bozell | 1989 |
| | Dentsu, Young & Rubicam (49%) | Oricom | DYR Korea | 1989 |
| | DDB Needham (24.5%) | Daehong | DDK | 1990 |
| | DIK (24.5%) | | | |
| Affiliations of Associations | Leo Burnett (50%) | Sonyon | Leo Burnett Sonyon | 1991 |
| | BBDO | LGAd | LGAd | 1985 |
| | Lintas | Oricom | Oricom | 1996 |
| | Grey | Geoson | Geoson Grey | 1990 |

Source: Advertising Age, April, 15, 1996; Kim, 1994, p. 138.

Table 8

The Major Clients of Transnational Advertising Agencies in Korea

| Agency | Domestic Advertisers/ Brands | Transnational advertisers/ Brands | Percent of Transnational Advertisers of Total Billings |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
| McCann | Chosun Hotel, Kolon | Coca-Cola, Nestle, Johnson & Johnson, McDonald, UPS | 80-90% |
| JWT Korea | Youngone | Northwest Airlines, Philips, Diners Club, Citibank, Benetton | 95% |
| Cheil Bozell | Chosun Beer, Samsung Electronics | Chrysler, Dial, Prudential Insurance, Fila, Federal Express | 4% |
| DDK | Lotte Hotel, Lotte World, Crown Beer | Pepsi, Michelin Tire | 50% |
| DYR Korea | Namyang Aloe | Korea Shell, | 23% |
| Leo Burnett Sonyon | - | Philip Morris, Kellogg | 95% |

Source: Kim, 1994, p. 144.

CHAPTER FOUR

METHOD

Semiotics as a Theory and Method

Generally speaking, semiotics is a good tool to ascertain a hidden structure of a sign system. It proves quite useful in a given attempt to describe precisely how Korean advertising (as a consumer culture) creates hidden meaning in its message, because semiotics focuses on how meaning is created, rather than what the particular meaning is. In this light, this chapter is divided into two basic sections: The first section deals with the principles of semiotics (as a method), while the second section introduces data collection and analysis technique.

Semiotics has both theoretical and methodological implications. Theoretically, semiotics has emerged from the study of language problems and the structure of language itself. Early structuralist studies attempted to uncover the internal relationships which gave different languages their interrelated form and function. Later semiotic work took a broader view, attempting to lay down the basis for a science of signs which would include not only languages, but also any other signifying systems. Although semiotics is based on language, language is but one among many sign systems of varying degrees of applicability. As Fiske and Hartley (1988) state, such media as television and film are regarded by some semioticians as existing as separate languages. In order to understand why semiotics

(or semiology) is a good tool for the study of advertising, it thus becomes necessary to consider some of the major studies undertaken using this perspective. These studies then provide an introduction to the basic tenets of semiotics.

Early in this century, the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure established the field of semiotics. Another key figure in the early development of semiotic theory was the American philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce. Significant treatises on the subject have since been contributed by such major theorists as Roland Barthes, Umberto Eco, Christian Metz, Julia Kristeva, Algirdas Greimas and Roman Jakobson. As a theoretical paradigm, semiotics is difficult to disentangle from structuralism, whose major exponents include Claude Lévi-Strauss, in the field of anthropology, and Jacques Lacan, in the field of psychology. More contemporary semiotic theory is also sometimes allied with a Marxist approach, which tends to stress the role of ideology in creating meaning (see, for example, Nöth, 1995).

The term semiotics was first coined by Peirce, although his works on semiotics did not become widely known until the 1930s. Peirce established an independent discipline devoted exclusively to the study of signs. More specifically, Peirce was interested in an analysis of the sign and how it is that a sign functions as a sign on a particular semiosis. Peirce (1931-1958) argued that we call sign-referent links are of three kinds: (a) iconic, based on the mode of representation; (b) indexical, based on natural relations between expression and content; (c) arbitrary, based on cultural knowledge.

Later, Saussure (1913/1959) applied the term “semiology” to what he described as the science of signs in society.

Saussure (1959), however, came to semiotic analysis from a standpoint very different from Peirce’s. The Saussurean approach to signs emphasizes the underlying structure of a sign system. This underlying structure consists in a set of rules which link together the two parts of each sign: the signifier and the signified. Saussure’s famous distinction between *langue* (the whole language system) and *parole* (individual utterances) enabled Saussure to concentrate his linguistic inquiry on the underlying structure of language (i.e., *langue*) and to suspend the consideration of the individual speakers of a language and their behavior in producing *parole*. Table 9 provides a comparison of Saussurean semiology and Peircean semiotics in terms of their different theoretical, methodological, ontological, and epistemological premises.

According to Jensen (1995),

Peirce proposed to examine the conditions of knowledge as part of a general logic of inquiry, preparing not merely a theory of signification or communication, but a theory of science as part of a general epistemology. Peirce’s semiotics is reflexive, implying a conceptualization of the very subject who thinks through signs. Semiology, by contrast, was founded on two alternative assumptions: first, that verbal language is the model for other systems of signification and for thinking in general, and, second, that the empirical ego or subject can be presupposed as an agent centered in verbal language. (p. 13)

Saussure (1959) argued that the relationship between the signifier and the signified in language was both entirely conventional and completely arbitrary. This argument lends itself to the realization that such relationships are properties of the sign system; they are not determined by anything external to the system. As a result of Saussure's influence, contemporary semiotics now draws heavily on linguistic concepts; indeed, Saussure delineated linguistics as a branch of semiotics, although Barthes (1972) treated semiotics as a separate branch of linguistics.

In general, semiotics deals with a system of signs. As stated by Leiss, Kline, and Jhally (1990), "A sign within a system of meaning may be separated into two components: the signifier and the signified. The signifier is the material vehicle of meaning; the signified actually is the meaning" (p. 200). In Saussure's view, an analogy may be drawn between the operation of language and the operation of all other systems that generate meaning, that is, one may see them all as signifying systems. In other words, language is a signifying system that is closely ordered and structured, and thus can be examined. Lévi-Strauss (1963; 1969) adopted Saussure's model to decode the myth, symbolic system, and the customary practices of primitive society. Barthes (1972; 1977) also applied it to the analysis of the codes and conventions employed in the films, sports, and eating habits of Western societies.

Barthes (1977), however, argued that all images are polysemic, that is, images suggest many possible signifieds with the same signifiers. Barthes (1972) analyzed the structure of all cultural complexes by treating them as systems of signs which either express and/or convey meaning; he

thus became one of the first investigators to study advertising from this more generalized perspective. For Barthes, advertising is a process of myth-making wherein appropriation is primarily the act of masking the contingent nature of meaning. As Hay (1989) notes, "Myth is a process of sign-appropriation that tends to empower those constructing myths and to subjugate those who consume them" (p. 144).

Barthes (1972) essentially regarded advertising as a clear, purposeful form of signification. More importantly, he devoted much of his work to the distinction between denotation and connotation in the texts he examined. Here, denotation comprises the first order of signification; connotation comprises a second order of signification that uses the first sign and denotation as its signifier, which in turn attaches another meaning to the signifier (Seiter, 1987). At the connotative level, these signs become more polysemic. Manning and Cullum-Swan (1994) provide the following example:

Denotative meaning is seen in connections between a grade and a level of school performance. We read one as the other: 4.0 = excellent; 3.5 = very good, and so on. A connotation is created when "honors" are conferred on those scoring above a given GPA level. This status becomes "mythical" if the label "honors" is taken to indicate knowledge. (p. 466)

In this sense, the connotative and mythical level of interpretation, as Barthes (1972) states, results from belief-based connections. Simply put, connotation is related to cultural meaning and myth-making: it is thus an ideological function.

Eco's (1976) conception of sign is adapted from the work of Peirce, who emphasized context and concrete instances of communication. Eco's theory of settings represents an attempt to study phenomena as independent objects, images, and experiences that arise outside of the sign system, but ultimately function as signs within the cultural arena. Culture is a reference point--a means by which one comes to believe in the reality of the expression (Eco, 1976). He applies this method to analyze Superman comic strips and James Bond novels. For example, Eco analyzes the narrative structure of the James Bond novels in terms of a series of oppositions: Bond vs. villain; West vs. Soviet Union; Anglo-Saxon vs. other ethnic groups; chance vs. planning; loyalty vs. disloyalty. In other words, Eco shows that the basis for all the Bond novels is closely linked to a series of oppositions. These binary oppositions are a basic means by which we find meaning. Thus Eco clarifies how the textual oppositions are part of a wider ideological discourse -- the so-called "ideology of the Cold War" (Woollacott, 1982, p. 96).

Structuralism became a dominant intellectual paradigm in the 1960s. Soon after, a new paradigm was introduced under the designation of post-structuralism. The post-structuralist wave of semiological theory was influenced by Lacan (1968), who saw all meaning as being produced by texts themselves. Whereas Lacan (1968) was concerned with how language establishes the forms in which universal unconscious processes are worked out at the level of the individual subject, Lévi-Strauss (1963) looked for the deep structure of the unconscious. Lévi-Strauss (1963) considered all culture to be structured like a language. Moreover, he argued that the paradigmatic terms of language and the

syntagmatic relations between them were formed on the system of differences, which he took to be structured in binary oppositions. In contrast, Derrida (1976) has refused to identify the structure of language with the binary principle. For him, “the structure of language means the structure of signification, because language is a system of signification” (Seung, 1982, p. 127). Derrida has correspondingly produced texts exposing the alleged hidden metaphysical underpinnings of other texts, basing his idea on deconstruct logocentrism (Jackson, 1991). Since the mid-1980s some semioticians have retained a structuralist concern with the specific signifying practices of the makers and users of media texts (Fiske, 1990; Jensen, 1995). Actually, they are influenced by post-structuralism (including psychoanalysis of Lacan, and deconstructionism of Derrida).

Data Collection

This study attempts to interpret the cultural phenomenon of advertisements in contemporary Korea. Thus, the data collected were the most recent available. At first, this study analyzed TV commercials selected from major networks in Korea. To this end, only commercials shown immediately before and after the prime time national network programs during June and July 1996 were taped. In addition, this study also used both the 1994 and the 1995 Creative Annual of Korea for examples of earlier TV commercials.

To complete the study, Korean magazine ads were also analyzed. All the issues of the popular magazine called TV Journal published in 1995 were examined. Furthermore, this study used both the 1994 and the 1995 Creative Annual of Korea for examples of earlier print ads. Finally, in order

to analyze the most recent examples, data were gathered from selective issues of nationally-distributed consumer magazines published in March 1997. The magazines represent different types of periodicals: general editorial (Monthly Shin Dong-A), news (Shi-Sa Journal), business (The Weekly Economist), movies (Cine 21), TV (TV Journal), advertising (Monthly Advertising), fashion (Vogue Korea), women's (Monthly Housewife's Magazine), car (Car Life), soccer (Monthly Magazine Soccer Journal), baseball (Monthly Baseball Korea), and current affairs (Weekly Cho-Sun).

These periodicals were selected because they met the following criteria: current popularity in their classes, a wide spectrum of editorial coverage, audiences, and varied advertisements. In addition, these magazines were selected from different categories to ensure that the selection covers a wide audience and represents the entire market.

For the semiotic analysis of Korean ads, this study selected all exemplars of three categories: English expression ads, jeans ads, and Nike ads. The reason for this selection is that these three distinct categories of ads are useful to answer the above research questions.

Data Analysis Framework

Semiotics allows us to recognize the conventional and arbitrary relationship of the signifier to the signified within a system of signs. This approach also allows us to describe the process of connotation as well as the nature of signs themselves. Eco (1976) observes that "semiotics is in principle studying everything which can be used in order to lie. If something cannot be used to tell a lie, conversely it cannot be used to tell the

truth: it cannot in fact be used to tell at all" (p. 7). Following Eco's work, Seiter (1987) defines semiotics as the study of everything that can be used for communication.

Initially, Saussure defined this way in which signs can be organized into codes; a set of signs from which the one to be used is chosen. "The set of shapes for road signs," as an example, forms a paradigm, as does the set of symbols that may be found within each shape (Fiske, 1990, p. 56). Saussure further used the term "syntagm" to refer to the orderly combination of interacting signs within a meaningful text. From these primary distinctions evolve two forms of structural relationship: paradigmatic, a relationship of choice, and syntagmatic, a relationship of combination. Hence, syntagmatic analysis gives an overview of a media text as a narrative sequence or as a sequence of signs, while paradigmatic analysis studies patterns other than those classed as sequential, within that media text (such as films and TV news).

In short, syntagmatic analysis tells us what happens in text, while pragmatic analysis tells what a text means. When we attempt to decode television commercials, syntagmatic analysis would involve an analysis of how each shot, scene or sequence related to the others. On the other hand, paradigmatic analysis involves the study of paradigmatic categories (such as binary oppositions) in the text.

Semiotic analysis further proposes a terminological distinction between two different types of meaning: denotation is the term used when dealing with the first order of signification generated by the signifier and the signified; connotation, on the other hand, refers to the second order of

signification. Barthes (1977) likens denotation to the mechanical reproduction on film of the object at which the camera is pointing. He compares connotation, on the other hand, to the individualized aspect of the process -- the selection of what to include in the frame, the use of focus, camera angle, lighting, and so forth. Basically, denotation becomes the term for what is being photographed, while connotation refers to how it is being captured on film (Fiske, 1990).

Table 10 presents a framework for the decoding of a specific ad.¹ In general, signs in advertising are often metaphors or metonyms. Metaphor is the term used when an unfamiliar concept is expressed in terms of a familiar concept. Metonymy, on the other hand, is the term used to describe the invocation of an object or idea using an associative detail. The semiotic analysis in this study examines both manifest and latent meanings in

¹ Chapman (1986) provides a practical process for systematically decoding ads:

The first step in the decoding process allows for a conceptual separation of what is seen in the ad from the distinctly different step of acknowledging what the things seen mean. . . . The second step is to reconsider each signifier and ask what it means. Many of the signifiers evoke meanings that are inflexions on the same theme. . . . The collective meanings of the various signifiers are usually consonant around a general theme. This is the referent system out of which each element of the ad both takes and reflects its meaning. . . . The signs of advertising are therefore motivated and make promises to their audiences. . . . The shortest route to uncovering the problems which the promises of ads seek to relieve is to invert each promise and consider its opposite. . . . The final aspect to this framework is the part played by myth. (pp. 73-76)

After the first three steps of the decoding process, the next step is to consider their likely reception by audiences as motivated signs.

Korean advertisements. These Korean ads can be broken down into smaller units, such as specific words, images, and sounds. In this study, the framework for decoding these advertisement is presented as follows: (a) signifiers: the visual image, (b) binary opposition: the balance in cognition of signs against their opposites, (c) referent system: the proffering of products in a given social situation, (d) promise: positive aspects of the product, (e) problem: negative aspects of the product (f) myth: the role of the product expressed as a metaphor, and (g) ECD: the reduction of signifying surface presentations to binary opposition (i.e., the combination of steps (d), (e), and (b)).

In addition, Berger (1984) emphasizes the importance of color in understanding the various aspects of the visual sign:

Different colors tend to generate different emotions. Red suggests passion, danger, heat, and related emotions; blue is seen as cool and serene, ethereal. Violet is associated with royalty and richness. There is, however, no natural connection between a color and the feelings that color engenders. Thus, for example, in the western world we wear black when we mourn, but in other cultures white is worn. (p. 33)

In this light, context and cultural associations are important in the structural basis of the ad.

Table 9

Comparison of Semiotics and Semiology

| Point of comparison | Semiotic (Peirce) | Semiology (Saussure) |
|---------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Aims at a general theory of signs | Philosophical, normative, but observational | A descriptive, generalized linguistics |
| 2. Frequent subject matter domains | Logic, mathematics, sciences, colloquial English (logic-centered) | Natural languages, literature, legends, myths (language-centered) |
| 3. Signs are relations, not 'things' | A sign is a triadic relation of sign, object, and interpretant | A sign is a dyadic relation between signifier and signified |
| 4. Linguistic signs are arbitrary | But also include natural signs - icons and indexes | But appear necessary for speakers of the language |
| 5. Ontology of objects of signs | Existence presupposed by signs | Not given but determined by the linguistic relations |
| 6. Epistemology of empirical ego or subject | Included in semiotic analysis | Presupposed by but not included in semiological analysis |

Source: Singer, 1984, p. 42; Jensen, 1995, p. 13.

Table 10

Framework for decoding advertisements

| | | |
|----------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Problem | In product negative qualities or associations in product as seen by consumer. | In users or product negative qualities or associations in or of users or potential users of product (popular views about smokers or smokers of certain brands: common personal worries or anxieties). |
| Promises | positive aspects of product. | positive aspects of user of product and the product's part in attaining these. |
| Myths | the role of the product expressed as a metaphor for a cultural myth. | the essence of the sort of person who uses the product, their basic qualities, needs and place in the world: as such, a mythical portrait. |

Source: Chapman and Egger, 1983, p. 169; Chapman, 1986, p. 73.

CHAPTER FIVE

GEBSERIAN STRUCTURES OF CONSCIOUSNESS IN ADVERTISING

Gebser's notion of structures of consciousness provides us with a useful tool for the interpretation of Korean advertising. This is important because advertising (as a consumer culture) is an access to understanding human consciousness. In this sense, the Gebserian notion of structures of consciousness is the theoretical basis for this study. More specifically, structures of consciousness can be regarded as modes of awareness through which people interpret what is going on in the world. Because a Gebserian perspective encompasses all understanding, his notion of structures of consciousness is a powerful tool in the explanation of the cultural experience. Simply put, advertising (as a cultural experience) appeals to magical, mythical and mental consciousness, and these are fundamental Gebserian structures.

According to Gebser (1985), the historical unfolding of human consciousness proceeded in identifiable patterns, or structures which can be looked upon as mutations (i.e., results of a process of change in the superstructural level). At least five structures of consciousness exist: (1) archaic, (2) magic-vital, (3) mythical, (4) mental-rational, and (5) integral (see Table 11). Basically, the archaic structure of consciousness was the first to evolve out of the origin (i.e. starting point). In this study, the archaic structure is not examined, because we have no direct evidence left from the

archaic structure in the analysis of advertising as a cultural experience. Perspectival consciousness is the predominant structure in a (late)modern world, while both magic and mythic structures still function in their own way. As Kramer and Mickunas (1992) note,

Gebser's work demonstrates correlations among very diverse domains of cultural creations, from poetry through science. The correlations led Gebser to the conclusion that, despite various proclamations of the end of the Western world, there is evidence of an emergent and different mode of perceiving -- the integral. (p. xi)

Even though the previous value derived from deficient consciousness¹ does not serve as a primary factor in the new consciousness structure, this does not mean that the deficient consciousness structure disappears. According to Gebser (1949/1985), it is subsumed rather than being destroyed. This phenomenon is, in Gebser's terminology, "plus-mutation."²

¹ Each structure of consciousness can have a deficient mode. Deficient consciousness refers to the lack of psyche. That is, deficient consciousness implies the transition from the old to new consciousness mutation. For instance, the rational consciousness is the deficient mode of the mental structure of consciousness. In other words, the exercise of reason turns the mental consciousness into its deficient mode, the rational consciousness.

² The process of "plus mutation" is an alternative to the Darwinian notion of "minus-mutation" which refers to deterministic, linear, and biological changes from deficient species to stronger ones for survival. As Gebser (1985) notes, "[mutation] best describes the discontinuous nature of events that occur in consciousness following the primordial leap of origin. Moreover, it allows us to maintain the very necessary detachment from such concepts as progress, evolution, and development" (p. 38). Plus-mutation describes a process of enrichment. In this

Accordingly, Gebser (1985) emphasizes that “consciousness structure . . . unfolds toward overdetermination [i.e., as determined by more than one structure]: toward structural enrichment and dimensional increment³; it is intensifying and inductive -- [this is] plus-mutation” (p. 38).

Post-industrial society is a process of dimensional incrementation. In pre-industrial society, magic or mythic consciousness is the predominant structure of consciousness. On the other hand, post-industrial society has integrated previous structures. For instance, technology is not only an output of perspectival structure, but also a manifestation of magical structure. Hidden potentialities are integrated into a new awareness. As a consequence, all hidden potentialities become transparent and ever-present. That is, the origin is ever-present. In short, Gebser (1985) viewed the possibility of consciousness being the co-initiator of the different mutations or structural changes. The structure of consciousness makes it possible to reintegrate the projection. However, Gebser rejected an evolutionary model (such as Darwinism and Marxism) for the unfolding of human consciousness. This chapter attempts to articulate the different consciousness structures for the analysis of Korean ads. Korean ads contain all of these structures, although one structure is seen as

³ The unfolding of consciousness in history was accompanied by a progressive dimensionality. For example, the archaic structure of consciousness is zero-dimensional, since it is virtually identical with the origin. The magical structure is one-dimensional or unitary. The mythic structure is two-dimensional or polar, and the mental-rational structure is three-dimensional or dual. By contrast, the integral structure of consciousness is four-dimensional since it presentiates all other structures (Gebser, 1985, see Table 11).

predominant in each example and as explaining a cultural uniqueness. Indeed, Gebser's notion of consciousness structures is important because advertising is not limited to selling product, but sells us our values and beliefs. In this sense, an understanding of how consciousness is expressed in Korean ads is useful for the study of consumer culture in Korea. Using Gebser's notion of consciousness structures, we can begin to interpret Korean ads as a uniquely perspectival expression.

Magic Structure

Gebser (1985) argues that a primitive sense of self-consciousness first appears in the magic structure of consciousness. The magic experience is impelled by emotions in the newly-awakened and still primitive feeling of separation from nature. Thus, the magic structure is univalent and one-dimensional (Gebser 1985). According to Kramer (1997), this structure becomes manifested in a world where no difference exists, i.e., there is no separation between the signifier and the signified -- no consciousness of space or time, whether semantic or physical. Magic communication is idoloc (Kramer, 1997), with incantation being a magical speech. Writing, which is a form of dissociation from bodily limitations and action, is a sign of an emergent mythic world. In the magic world, however, words and deeds are identical. When writing emerges it does so in the form of highly-motivated, pictographic images which are purely emotional, and not analytical: a picture "of a thing" and the thing "depicted," are the same. In other words, if writing exists at all, it is as magic spell. Consequently, there is no such thing as magical representation. Moreover, in the magic world there is no "figural" ambivalence. Bivalent two-dimensionality is

characteristic of the mythic structure of consciousness (discussed below), and not of the magic world. As Mickunas (1994) notes:

The very term magic unfolds into European terms such as “to make,” Germanic “Macht” (power), and “moegen” (to want), and “machine.” In this sense, magic awareness tacitly integrates vital interests, technical production, rhetoric, and theatre. . . . Rhetoric, on the other hand, is not only a transparent attempt to convince, but more fundamentally an incantation that identifies the addressee with the slogans, sayings, promises, and images of stars in advertisements, as well as identifying with the power of an office holder, a nation, or a flag. . . . This consciousness is one dimensional in the sense of identity of one power, one event, with another. Thus, in its own context magic integrates other modes of consciousness. (p. 9)

Fowles (1996) claims that advertising, as a consumer culture, is based on earlier belief systems, and resembles in important ways at least two of them, those of magic and of religion. Magic, found among primitive peoples, is premised on the conviction that people dwell in a world infused with living, amorphous spirit. This conviction also includes the belief that certain special individuals can at moments intercede in the spirit world. Such intercession, which may occur with the aid of special objects or rituals, can cause one thing to happen rather than another. “The belief system of magic,” Fowles notes, “was partially superseded by the formalized belief system of religion, where usually a single godhead was established, a lore written down, and worshipful practices codified” (p. 97).

The process of stylization apparent in advertising is parallel to the magic structure of consciousness. As Jhally (1989) writes, "The world of goods in industrial society offers no meaning, its meaning having been emptied out of them. The function of advertising is to refill the emptied commodity with meaning" (p. 221). Barthes (1972) also argues that the mythical signifier is already a sign that is emptied of its original content and filled with new content. In this process, the mythic dimension of advertising distorts the manifest meaning given by the linguistic sign. As Jhally (1989) points out,

Indeed, the meaning of advertising would make no sense if objects already had an established meaning. The power of advertising depends upon the initial emptying out. Only then can advertising refill this empty void with its own meaning. Its power comes from the fact that it works its magic on a blank slate. (p. 221)

Jhally (1987) regards the consumer commodities in advertising as tribal fetishes. Originally, these fetishes were thought to magically enhance an individual's power over others and/or the spirit world, and, even now, Williamson (1978) asserts that "all consumer products offer magic, and all advertisements are spells" (p. 141). In other words, when products are animated, the residual belief that objects can live is being demonstrated. This belief also holds true for those products which are not explicitly claimed to work like magic, but for which the connection is often implied (Fowles, 1996). From a Gebserian point of view, advertising (as magic) is expressed by a form of totemism.

The dimension of the magical consciousness has far-reaching implications which help explain how advertising works. Not only are products advertised as giving one the power to control nature, but there is a totemic dimension of magical consciousness which is greatly exploited in advertising. In the magical mode of consciousness, as Kramer (1989) explains, if one can create the phenomenon about which one is anxious, it may be assumed that one can control it. For this reason, “primitive” human beings, for example, would draw pictures of a threatening animal on a cave wall; through the process of “creating” the animal, the “magic” user gains power over it. According to Kramer (1989), advertisements, like the prehistoric representations on the walls of the cave, also graphically “create” (or depict) headaches, stomachaches, fears, anxieties, joy, and so on, and thereby give the impression that the associated product can control the phenomenon.

In a case of Korean ads, a beautiful lady who wants to have a full bosom may be shown wearing a particular brassiere. At this point, the magical product “La Vora Magic Form Bra” appears on the screen (see Ad 1). After she wears this magical bra, the beautiful lady gains power. In the same way, many medicine advertisements use this magical power to propagate their product.

Rhetorically speaking, advertising frequently sets for itself the magical goal of association. Many Korean ads attempt to link the product with a particular value, idea, belief, or self-concept which we find attractive. This is identification of the product with the consumer’s desire. By associating the product with such values, advertising can escape the

difficulties of logical argument. For example, the logical argument connecting a specific brand of computer to the notion of efficiency is avoided. Instead it offers a magical connection which, through the power of repetition, solidifies in the mind of the consumer. The totemic value of certain national brands as signifiers of given qualities -- Samsung TV as the "spirit of the World's Best," or ZEC as "the pride of Korean crackers" -- stands as testimony to the power of associational advertising rhetoric, even though these slogans are absolutely senseless. In the magical consciousness, there is no personal identity. To establish Korean group-ego, these ads employ the magical word "pride" or "best." Thus, the totemic function of Samsung TV ad is associated with the magical and pre-rational structure of consciousness.

Actually, the Samsung TV ad attempts to persuade audiences it is "the World's Best" (see Ad 2) by deliberately constructing a Korean national and chauvinistic identity while magically inducing its audience to connect with it. From a traditional point of view, Korea's use of color is clearly distinguished from that of other countries. In many cultures, pale colors reflect nothing strong or positive; often they are taken to have a negative meaning. Korean aesthetics, however, are quite different: the heavens, rivers, and other objects of nature are rarely painted in strong colors; light or pale colors have an attraction of their own. The magical effect of these colors seem to reflect the unique Korean culture. The Samsung TV ad provides a good example of the use of a traditional Korean color (jade green) in the manifestation of Koryo celadon, a type of fine ceramics. We experience magically and pre-rationally the expression "World's Best" (at

the top of this ad) with Koryo celadon (at the bottom of this ad). In the ad, there is no symbolic distance between the image of Koryo celadon and Samsung TV. As a result, Samsung TV assumes power magically, without reason, because Koryo celadon is the best ceramic in the world. In terms of Korean identity, it exists in the manifestation of Koryo celadon. This identity is defined in the context of the magic of a Korean masterpiece. In essence, therefore, this ad emphasizes the totemic value of the Korean brand (see Table 12).

Mythic Structure

According to Gebser, the mythic structure advances humankind to a form of perception most centrally grounded in the imagination. The mythic unperspectival world is thus bivalent and two-dimensional. Here, the separation between the literal and the figural becomes a necessary condition for reflective thought, critique, and taking a discursive position. Moreover, mythic communication is am-bi-valent, and also symbolic (Kramer 1997). For example, various polarities, such as message/intent, body/mind, and primary/secondary may begin to emerge whereby myths are written with metaphors. Accordingly, language and speech begin to exist as a second order metaphor estranged from the native origin, and the identity of the signifier and the signified begins to weaken.

According to Kramer and Lee (in press), symbolic communication presupposes a nascent separation between the literal and the figural which enables one phenomenon to “stand in for” another. This “substitution” is not, however, totally arbitrary, and thus not totally dissociated. In other words, metaphors can seem inappropriate. For example, drama emerges in

the mythic world as the unifying ritual splits into the play and the audience, i.e., theatrical distance emerges. If, however, the audience cannot emotionally identify with the characters, then the overall “magic” of the theater fails. At this point, complete “objectifying” dissociation requires a third dimension.

Kramer and Mickunas (1992) suggest that mythic structure has very little to do with storytelling and fables, although stories and fables usually manifest the ways, images, sayings, and human relations in which the mythological structure appears (p. xix). Mickunas (1994) provides an essence of mythic consciousness:

The appearance of sky is the appearance of its polar aspect, the earth, the appearance of love is also the appearance of hate, the appearance of high demands the polar presence of the low -- one is never given without the other, and one may replace the other. Thus gods and demons may exchange their positions through various deeds.

Demons may become good and thus may rise to the heights, while gods may become corrupt and sink to the low region. While this movement comprises a rhythmic, and indeed dancing and oral mode of awareness, such an awareness is temporic in a cyclical sense.

(p. 10)

Gebser (1985) argues that myths are usually expressed by the psyche and its polar arrangement of dynamically interchanging images, among which oral imagery predominates. Consequently, just as the magic structure emphasizes emotion, so the mythical involves imagination. Gebser (1985) declares that “the mythic structure, whose unperspectival two-

dimensionality has a latent predisposition to perspectivity, has an imaginary consciousness, reflected in the imagistic nature of myth and responsive to the soul and sky of the ancient cosmos" (p. 67). Thus advertising as a myth-making process finally has an imaginary consciousness with which to create a dream world.

The theoretical and conceptual framework for the study of advertising as myth can be traced back to such influential scholars as Eliade, Lévi-Strauss, Barthes, Gebser, and Leymore. The first element of myth is its deep association with cultural issues. Eliade (1963), for instance, defined myth as "an extremely complex cultural reality, which can be approached and interpreted from various and complementary viewpoints" (p. 5). He regarded myths as inextricably tied to a culture that privileges them as group expressions. That is, myths must be judged as cultural values. As Vernant (1980) notes, a concern with the forms of society should characterize an analysis of myth in culture, while a definition of myth should emphasize its narrative form. Kirk (1975) defined myth as "a story, a narrative with a dramatic structure and a climax" (p. 27). This is supported by Lévi-Strauss, who recognized myth as a narrative in his structural approach to myth in general. Furthermore, Lévi-Strauss (1963), pointed out that the distinctive character of myth does not lie in style or syntax, but in the story which is told. Thus, myth is a cultural narrative.

The second element of myth is related to its symbolic form. Myth was recognized as a central symbolic act of cultures when Freud emphasized the importance of symbols in myth. Freud (1964) considered dreams to be the raw material of myths: "In the manifest content of dreams we very often

find pictures and situations recalling familiar themes in fairy tales, legends and myths. The interpretation of such dreams thus throws a light on the original interests which created these themes" (p. 25).

Lévi-Strauss (1963), writing in a different tradition, studied myth as a symbolic form. He claimed that myth was composed of "gross constituent units" which combine in recognizable structural patterns to produce the meaning of myth (p. 211). At the heart of myth were binary, polarized metaphors, he asserted, and "the purpose of myth is to provide a logical model capable of overcoming a contradiction" posed by such metaphors (p. 229). Consequently, the symbolic dimension is essential to myth's power. Such symbols provide myth with the tension and electricity of such polar terms as good/evil and peace/war.

The basic assumption of recent studies is the idea that advertising constitutes a type of symbolism. Advertising symbols represent structures of meaning; they involve the manipulation of images to create a message. Recent studies of advertising have adopted the methodology of structuralism as a means of analyzing advertisements as ideological forms. By applying the principles of structuralism (namely semiotics) to the coded messages contained advertising, it is possible to uncover such messages' hidden meanings. Leymore (1975) studied modern advertising using the same type of structural analysis that anthropologists use to study the systems of myth. Just as Lévi-Strauss (1963) argued that the purpose of myth is to provide a model of thought capable of overcoming contradiction generated by society or human condition, Leymore's use of Exhaustive

Common Denominators involved the reduction of signifying surface presentations to binary opposite substructures (e.g., masculine/feminine).

While Leymore’s approach is borrowed from Levi-Strauss, Williamson (1978) borrows mostly from Barthes. Barthes (1972) regarded myth as a type of speech consisting of an oral, written, or representative discourse. In a semiotic (or semiological) system, a sign is very important, since it represents the underlying correlation which unites the signifier and signified, thus giving it a certain meaning. When this semiological pattern operates in myth-making, myth is turned into a second order-semiological system. As noted above, Barthes (1972) summarized the principle this way: “That which is a sign in the first system becomes a mere signifier in the second” (p. 114). Moreover, Barthes showed how the formal system of the first signification shifts when carried onto the second level of signification in myth (see Figure 1). Myth is not just any abstract message, but a message directly produced by a definite signifying mechanism.

Figure 1
Semiotic System of a Mythic Structure

| | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|------------------|
| Linguistic Signifier | Linguistic Signified | |
| Linguistic Sign | | |
| Mythic Signifier | | Mythic Signified |
| Mythic Sign | | |

Source: Barthes, 1972, p. 115.

In Barthes' discussion, the signifier-signified distinction is conjoined with a distinction between manifest and latent meaning; this produces a structuralist conception of ideology. For example, advertising has the selling function as a manifest meaning. Advertising also serves the interests of those in power as a latent meaning. Williamson (1978) explains the ideological process by which goods are given meaning in advertising. She explores how advertising transforms the practical use value of products into the symbolic exchange value of commodities. Williamson points out that the meaning of one sign is transferred to another. She refers to the system of meaning as the referent system. As shown in Ad 3, Marlboro cigarettes are placed in apposition to desired values (such as power), as well as moods of situations (such as free), which are located within certain social settings (such as wide open space). These social settings are denoted as referent systems (Chapman & Egger, 1983, p. 172). In this context, mass media play an important role of mediator; McLuhan (1960) argued that a language (or medium) may be called a macro-myth, a single myth being an image, photograph, or still shot of a macro-myth in action. McLuhan (1960) noted that "a kind of mythmaking process is often associated with Madison Avenue advertising agencies" (p. 290). Viewed in this context, advertising can be seen as a crucial medium for the myth-making process.

The Marlboro ad provides an example of advertising as a myth-making process. The Marlboro ad draws an image of the traditional cowboy, hard at work and caring for animals, suggesting that smoking is a

justifiable activity, metonymically equivalent to other positive social activities. This image provides a symbolic construct which attempts to suppress and camouflage contradictions between the heavy work of the cowboy and the light cigarette, as illustrated by the contrast between the ad's natural scene and its artificial product (see Ad 3).

As shown in Table 13, the main components of the Marlboro ad are the conjunction of nature, the cowboy, the horse, and the cigarette. This system associates the Marlboro cigarette with such concepts as masculinity, power, rugged individualism, and nature. That is, cigarettes represent something tough, organic, natural, and healthy. Therefore, vital men smoke. Hence, the Marlboro ad is no different than the image of the American West. The difference, however, lies in the function within which the cowboy images are embedded. Readers in the West can regard this ad as a totemism of America by seeing that the cowboy opened up a new Western world. As Chapman (1986) observes, "To many Americans, school history lessons may have positioned cowboys essentially as symbols of times past, of an aspect of their country's folk history when innocence preceded decadence and the moral uncertainty of twentieth-century life" (p. 101). On the other hand, readers in Korea can interpret the Marlboro man as a myth of America by understanding the image of cowboy as a hero of American cultural productions such as movies and novels. In this sense, the Philip Morris Corporation is attempting to sell the dream of an American cultural experience.

Perspectival Structure

Gebser (1985) notes that the mythical consciousness does not retain its polarizing and psychic character indefinitely; it undergoes a mutation that leads to the preeminence of a perspectival structure of consciousness which consists of various radically fixed aspects. First, it is dualistic, with preeminence given to the function called mind over matter. Second, a mind is not regarded as an entity, but a function of directness, orientation, and finally of linearity. Third, the orientation originates with a center called the ego -- at least in the modern configuration -- with a propensity to lend it a spatial position from which perspectives become constituted toward the "object." The technological society is the good example of the transformation from psychic to mental consciousness. This consciousness emerged full-force in the Renaissance when space was totally perspectivized. As Gebser (1985) stated, "The perspectival structure as fully realized by Leonardo da Vinci is of fundamental importance not only to our scientific-technological but also artistic understanding of the world" (p. 3).

The fundamental fragmentation of reality⁴ occurs with the introduction of the perspectival structure. The perspectival structure is characteristically dualistic (i.e., subject : object), and quantifies space and time. Modernity is essentially perspectival. Nevertheless, the magical and mythical modes of being are not extinct, but rather continue to coexist. The perspectival world is predominantly trivalent and three-dimensional.

⁴ The fragmentation of reality implies the transformation from psychic to mental. The fundamental fragmentation of reality forced the hand of relativism. According to relativism, reality is socially produced and is therefore defective since it is

Perspectival consciousness presents "depth space," which is empty and in-between things. Its mode of communication is signalic-codal. Here, the signifier and signified become accidentally associated (or more properly, dissociated). Language becomes completely arbitrary, as does social identity, in that dissociated analysis displaces emotional attachment. As a result, communication is enhanced by codal processing, as in the computer language of "0, 1." Afterwards, the arbitrary, perspectival world becomes characterized by a kind of freedom from community commitments and traditional parameters. Also made possible by the perspectival structure is the exploration, mapping, codification (as in Newtonian physics), and colonization of space.

In summary, the perspectival structure of consciousness and communication is characteristically dualistic, visual, perspectival, and quantifies space and time. Language in the mental-rational dimension is propositional. Sight and vision replace the importance of sounded communication, while the written word carries the meaning forward from a beginning point, from left (mythic) to right (mental), toward an end. Words themselves become representational. By contrast, in the magical-mythic dimensions, the presence of the sounded image is that experience.

Advertising as a form of persuasion is a manifestation of perspectival consciousness. The perspectival structure in general, and advertising rhetoric in particular, has long embraced science. In post-industrial society, the advertisement which could draw upon the support of science

distorted by social interests. Since reality is thus distorted, there is no independent standard of truth.

had a distinct advantage. Granted, this is not possible for every product -- e.g., the makers of clothing, perfumes, furniture, flatware, glassware, and many other products have often found it difficult to promote their wares from a technological angle. Yet a host of other products can employ some sort of technologically-based argument in their advertising, and advertisers have not hesitated to do so. Such products include medicines, packaged foods, cars, and so on. An Ace bed commercial provides a striking example. In this ad, the Korean audience may find it difficult to understand how anyone could believe such preposterous, indeed contradictory, claims implicit in the product's slogan, "A bed is not furniture but science" (see Ad 4). The explanation lies, perhaps, in the magical term "science." From this, we can see how the meaning of science functions as a rhetorical device in this bed ad. The use of the word "science" attempts to suggest that this ad relies upon rational persuasion.

Overall, advertisers found the lure of scientific trappings hard to resist. In addition to providing a basis for determining rationality, science, when employed as a technology for doing things, provides another valuable benefit for a society caught up in the sweep of rapidly accelerating progress. This embrace of science leads to an emphasis on efficiency, a powerful theme which significantly affected Korean ads. Advertisements of the post-industrial era employed numerous devices to drape their goods in the borrowed glory of science. They gave their products brand names based upon chemical compounds, such as "H₂O CARE," and "MEERO HYDRO," a skin cream. Moreover, brand names borrowed from high technology in other ways; for example, "SOLAR SENSOR," a facial cosmetic.

Manufacturers also sometimes employed a personality with a learned, medical or scientific title to enhance the brand's credibility; for example, a dentist would introduce a particular brand of chewing gum (see Ad 5), even though, basically, chewing gum is bad for teeth.

Integral Structure

Like Gadamer (1975), Gebser (1985) considered the investigation of language as a source of insight. However, where Gadamer did not accept the possibility of aperspectivity, Gebser proposed an emerging consciousness structure which is at once integral and holistic (Kramer, 1989, p. 577). From this point of view, aperspectivity assumes no "standpoint" of viewpoint. The new mutation has no "place" outside of the other modes of consciousness, but rather disrupts the rigid categorical systematization of spatial consciousness (i.e., positivistic methodological absolutism). This disruption also appears across all disciplines. Gebser used the term *systase*, Greek for "put together" or "connection," to indicate a merging toward wholeness. *Systase* as a process depicts an actualizing of the convergence of partials into wholeness. While *systase* is not systematic, neither does it deny systems but instead encompasses them. In the process, all acategorical aspects of time⁵ that cannot be reduced to categorical systems are encompassed along with the systems. An example of this is the Einsteinian presentation of energy and mass/matter as transitional forms of mutable phenomena that can be expressed through *systase*.

⁵ Acategorical aspects of time means that we are freed from linear temporality. In this context, alpa prefix (a) means to free.

Kramer (1989) explains that the integral consciousness is increasingly becoming predominant in every domain. This comprises the explicit presence of what has been considered latent or implicit in all the other modes of awareness. Simply put, we can trace in each phenomenon the “transparent” commonalties precisely because the phenomenon occurs differently from others. Here Gebser’s understanding of the integral, which is manifested basically by transparency, requires meticulous articulation: it should be made clear that transparency does not mean seeing things through some mystical vision. Instead it means that we are able to see one structure of consciousness through another.

In this light, time is no longer seen as linear, but is experienced as concrete, that is, in total all at once. A new freedom regarding time is realized by being conscious of the process foundations that give rise to the different experiences of time. The experience of time in integral consciousness gives birth to a reality in which one is no longer ruled by its constraints. Gebser (1985) refers to the altered phenomenological view of time absorbed into being -- that is, time is being and being is time -- described by Martin Heidegger (1962) as further demonstration of the integral structure of consciousness. Because of the transparency of the integral experience, with all other structures of consciousness still present, a holistic experience of reality is achieved.

In the integral period, all things, all previous structures, are returning to the origin. During the return, however, a variation occurs in that the origin perceives reality in truth. In other words, the origin reclaims what was projected onto reality in the previous structures,

integrating it into a holistic view of reality. Reality is now seen as a whole and not from the individual viewpoints of the previous structures. In this way the divisions of reality that occurred in the earlier structures are dissolved into a diaphanous and transparent whole. As Mickunas (1994) notes:

Each consciousness structure may integrate other modes, then during an age of mutation, one may be tempted to select any one of them as preeminent and exclusive. This temptation is the more prevalent when humans are faced with a disintegrating and fragmenting mode of awareness. One seeks for any integrating mode and falls prey to an exclusive emphasis on one consciousness structure. (p. 17)

From the above representations, we can apply propositional language as an integral part of rhetoric to the analysis of ads. Magic (or myth) also proves integral, so that the propositional language appearing in advertising, for example, is not designed just to give us facts, but to also change our minds about buying another product. Accordingly, the factual propositions carry the magical weight of enchantment. This propositional language leads to the integral domain of communication, which is inherently nonlinear and thus cannot be understood in terms of spatial location. Language as a basic form of expression reflects the mutational changes that visibly accompany the shift in consciousness. In this sense, the integral-time dimension also remains free of seriality.

In summary, when we interpret Korean ads, we can recognize the co-existence of mythic, magical, and perspectival consciousness structures.

The visual dimension of each ad performs in conjunction with mental-rational consciousness structure to give a perspectival structure. The magical (or mythic) awareness, however, is the most widespread in Korean ads. The magical structure facilitates the sensual constituents of nonlinear and irrational montage. Myth and magic help us express impulses toward the cultural experience. In the same way, the predominance of the magical or mythic structures does not mean that other structures are completely excluded. The integrating mode of analysis thus provides a method for assessing the ways in which a particular structure situates the factors from other structures.

Table 11

The Summary of Gebser's Consciousness Structure

| Structure | Perspectivity | Sign | Essence | Degree |
|-----------|------------------|----------|-------------------------------|----------------|
| Archaic | None | None | Identity (Integrality) | Deep sleep |
| Magic | Pre-perspectival | Point | Unity (Oneness) | Sleep |
| Mythical | Unperspectival | Circle | Polarity (Ambivalence) | Dream |
| Mental | Perspectival | Triangle | Duality (Opposition) | Wakefulness |
| Integral | Aperspectival | Sphere | Diaphaneity (Transparency) | (Transparency) |

Source: Gebser, 1985, pp. 117-121.

Table 12

Samsung TV

| | |
|--------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| Signifiers | Samsung TV; the World's Best; masterpiece; compact TV |
| Referent systems | high technology; good quality; Korean brand |
| Binary oppositions | Korea : world; high quality : low quality |
| Promises | best; masterpiece; power |
| Problem | contradiction between modernism and postmodernism |
| Myths | product as a totemic value of Korean brand |
| ECD | Samsung TV : others = winners : losers |

Table 13

Marlboro

| | |
|--------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| Signifiers | Marlboro lights; cowboy; horse; river |
| Referent systems | free life of the cowboy; nature |
| Binary oppositions | free : trapped; nature : urban |
| Promises | freedom; independence; power |
| Problem | trapped in urban artifice |
| Myths | product as restorer of freedom; product as a symbol of America |
| ECD | Marlboro smokers : others ≈ winners : losers |

Table 14

Ace Bed

| | |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| Signifiers | Ace bed; scientific test; comfortable furniture for waist |
| Referent systems | efficiency; technology; rationality |
| Binary oppositions | comfort : pain; science : furniture |
| Promises | feeling comfort |
| Problem | bed is just furniture |
| Myth | product as a result of science |
| ECD | Ace bed : others = winners : losers |

CHAPTER SIX

A SEMIOTIC ANALYSIS OF ADVERTISING IN KOREA

The Postmodern Encoding of English Expressions

Several researchers have been interested in the language used by those in advertising. Language provides the primary means for interpreting social reality in everyday life. Classical rhetoric, as well as modern rhetoric, can be seen as the study of advertising, which is made possible through the use of language. In general, language encodes the external world into internalized images, and serves as a retrieval system. Through this retrieval system, our pictures of the world are rendered to others, while their images are rendered to us. That is, communication exists only within the context of shared life situations and experiences. Similarly, advertising makes use of language to help form a collective identity by situating a given ad within shared experiences. As a result, advertising by the mass media not only provides similar images to everyone, but it provides these images publicly, and often simultaneously, for everyone, thereby creating a shared sense of timing and experience as well.

To this end, learning foreign languages has become an obsession among many Koreans as a vast globalization campaign sweeps the nation. In this process, English becomes increasingly vital in all areas of cultural activities, with advertising being no exception. Advertisements employing

English in the following manner abound: “Hole in one from Seoul to London,” “Gimme a break 30 min. rest thank you,” “Local touch, global brand,” and “Tank brains.” In Korean ads, English-written expressions are used in four different places. The first place is in the producer’s name (i.e., company name such as SAMSUNG, HYUNDAI). The second place is when the brand name appears. Thirdly, an English expression is also used as a catch phrase for, or explanation of, products. Finally, English is sometimes found in the copy text. These four components are not mutually exclusive; one advertisement might have all four, while others might just have one or two of them.

In Korea, many brand names are usually written in both English and Korean. Even when products are imported, or brand names represent a foreign country, this is usually the case. Brand names, as the indicator of linguistic influence, make up the most common form of commercial expression. Consequently, the method of expressing brand names most widely used was Korean language inscriptions until 1990. More recently, however, a Korean language brand name is not a major part of some ads. Beer advertisements provide a good example: Most beers use an alphabetical name for their product (i.e., NEX, HEIT, CASS). These three brands spent 17.96 billion won (roughly \$ 22 million) on advertising during the first four months of 1995. This was up 40 percent from the same period in 1994 (Kal, 1995, p. 26). For instance, the Oriental Brewery Company is intensifying its efforts to improve the brand recognition of NEX, using such promotional events as college festive activities and taste tests. It does not matter that NEX makes no sense in either English or Korean.

The NEX product uses a gold color which connotes real beer and royalty (see Ad 6). The ad says, “Youthful beer, my feeling is NEX” in Korean. Obviously the good looking guy in this ad is viewed as being vital and youthful (see Table 15). Basically, this ad tries to show the world of youth and freshness with emphasis on NEX as a brand-name. The association of the handsome model with an English brand name may invite us to see a connection with Generation X. Semiotically speaking, the collective meanings (such as youth) of the various signifiers (clean and smooth beer, NEX, and the young handsome guy) are consonant around a general theme. In this context, vigor as an actual form of youth can be the referent system. In this ad, Generation X makes promises to their audiences. This signification drives the process of cannibalizing signs and images.

As can be seen in Ad 6, although NEX, as an alphabetical expression, cannot mean either luxury or freshness, yet beer advertising constitutes a representation in and of itself. From Haug’s point of view, advertisers engineered the promise of something new (or happiness) through the consumption of images appealing to human needs and sensuality. However, in a postmodern world, beer advertisers cannot deliver on their promise of something new. Our experience of reality is that of an imaginary and subjective construct. Consequently, postmodernism perceives surface without depth, sign without referent, and appearance without reality. That is, appearance becomes reality, in which the “real” is replaced by the image that serves as the “real.” As Cross (1996) asserts:

Seemingly the language of advertising has no depth, offering a hyped-up surface to be seen that supplants logic and even language itself as images spread and assault linearity. Yet it draws us in with disjunctions of wordplay and image to reach subliminally into dimensions of the forbidden, training us to new attachments. This public sign system, in making meaning for products, has created a new world view, offering utopia in a narrative of going out to buy, a simulacrum of the world that drives us to products as substitutes for experience. (p. 2)

As has been noted in the previous chapter, Fowles (1996) claims that advertising is based on earlier belief systems, at least two of which it resembles in important ways -- those of religion and magic. This dimension of the magical consciousness structure has far-reaching implications which could help explain how advertising works. Not only are products advertised as giving one the power to control nature, but also as a totemic dimension of magical consciousness to be greatly exploited. For example, a young man may drink NEX beer; by the process of "creating" the youth, the "magic" beer thus gains youth. To this end, advertisements also graphically "create" youthful beer. In this process, NEX, as an English expression, performs an important role in creating a "magic" beer. This is all the more powerful because the meaning of NEX seems to suggest the next (or X) generation for Koreans. Cannon (1994) argues that today's young generation -- the so-called Generation X-- have developed a distinctive set of values in response to the changed circumstances of their lives, and that these values will come to shape their own consumer culture. He identifies a

number of processes as especially influential in shaping the values of this generation, including invasive media, worldwide consumer products, accessible communications and computer tools, and global issues.¹ In the same way that these advertisements suggest that they give the beer drinker youth, such advertisements also give the impression that the associated product can control the natural phenomenon (such as aging, hair loss, and tooth decay).

In general, beer ads use male models like the NEX ad does. From ancient times, Korean women have been encouraged to produce male children. In the past, prosperity was judged by the number of male offspring, and social institutions did much to encourage such beliefs. This idea of son preference is rooted deeply in the Confucian patriarchal system. It was the woman's duty to produce a male heir to ensure the continuance of her husband's bloodline and to perform important ancestral rites. Furthermore, having an alcoholic drink (including beer) in public remains socially unacceptable for females in Korea and so a female model would not

¹ More specifically, Cannon (1994) writes:

Invasive media has been used to promote brand names such as Benetton, Haagen Dazs, Nike, Esprit and Windows which are now part of the everyday language of Generation X around the planet. Described by some as the first global generation, they are joined together not by a common ideology but rather a sophisticated knowledge of consumer products. This is true for individuals in all tiers of the educational and socio-economic ladder. Research shows that young people who drop out of school with little grasp of mathematics or history have in fact detailed stores of information on computer gear, fashion products, and recreational equipment. (p. 2)

be persuasive in a beer ad according to the traditional Korean cultural value system. Thus the preference for a male model in this beer ad reflects the Confucian tradition in Korea.

In Korean advertising, the so-called “catch phrase,” or slogan, of a product did not contain foreign languages until 1990. The reason behind this was that Korean catch-phrases helped consumers remember the slogan more easily. The catch phrases in a postmodern era, however, perform a crucial role in the image-making elements of such advertisements. In this sense, English plays an important function as a carrier in the process of Westernization. The catch phrase “Anytime, anywhere, anybeep-bi (beeper)” provides a prime example of the thirst Koreans have for Western products. This thirst is expressed in a variety of ways. For instance, Korean manufactures prefer English slogans because they are supposed to give prestige to the product. According to Baudrillard (1981), consumers have a sense of code of consumption whereby certain objects (such as cars and clothes) signify a relative standing in the hierarchy of consumption. As a result, certain objects that have more prestigious signification, are desired, and therefore provide certain social gratifications. In Korean cultural production, English expressions give a prestigious signification.

The English catch phrase mentioned above (“Anytime, anywhere, anybeep-bi (beeper)”) evokes foreignness. O’Barr (1994) claims that the language used in this manner, often strange to the native speaker, is not English but an appropriation of English. This is not an advertisement whose intended audience will balk at the unusual

expressions or find the strange uses of words or phrases out of place.
(pp. 176-179)

Consequently, this is an ad for Korean speakers for whom English words and phrases connote other cultural attributes. In a broader sense, the ideology working here represents the process of “Westernization” itself.

In this ad, “anytime” as an alphabetical expression with a wall clock represents time, while “anywhere” with a compass represents space. In addition, the background of “anytime” is visible through the shape of a particular world such as cosmos, while the background of “anywhere” is visible through a presentation of a particular context of map. Actually, this ad constitutes the coexistence of time, and space (see Ad 7). According to a structuralist reading, the form and content of this beeper ad create an exotic atmosphere because Western-ness implies high-quality: A beeper is a result of Western high technology. This confirms the observations of Jameson (1984), who traces the characteristics of postmodernism (the cultural logic of late capitalism) and notes that the global spread and penetration of multinational capital, with its displacement of productive technology by reproductive technology (such as mass media, computers, and beepers), has been so thorough that no geographical or critical distance from it can be established.

As an example of the signification process, beepers (commonly called beep-bi for the beeping sound they make) are gaining popularity in Korea. These beepers were first introduced in 1984, with the number of subscribers to paging services having increased 100 percent every year (Yonhap, 1995, p.

11). The younger generation in Korea contributed significantly to the expansion of subscriptions.

Finally, an advertisement for Ralph Lauren provides an excellent example of an English expression giving a prestigious signification (see Ad 8). This example is somewhat different from the previous two.

Paradoxically, there is no illustration of or about the product; there is nothing spectacular as far as the visuals are concerned. Printed on the background are three components: a headline, a major body copy, and a bottom line giving the symbol and the name of the company. The English-language product name, the Polo Chino, and the English phrase “How a tradition becomes,” appear in the headline. In essence, these words and phrases evoke foreignness. The major body copy clearly breaks down into three sections:

1. lines 1-3; in this section the introductory function is dominant.
2. lines 4-11; in this section the informational function is dominant.
3. lines 12-14; in this section the poetic function is dominant.

In summary, the first section begins the story which has been stated in the headline. In the second section items of information about this product are supplied. Finally, this ad uses direct expressions such as “works so well” and “looks so good” to invite consumers to the Polo community.

In general, product identity is expressed in the names, symbols, logos, and colors which the organization uses to distinguish itself, its brands, and its constituent companies. The Ralph Lauren ad uses the logo of their product as a form of product identity. This logo is very similar to the “Stars and Stripes,” which symbolizes America to connote the exotic. At

this level, this logo serves the same purpose as religious symbolism or national flags: they represent consistent standards of quality and therefore encourage consumer loyalty. Obviously, the ad is saying to be successful and prestigious, wear Polo Chino made by Ralph Lauren. In this light, the English copy and logo associate products with prestigious images.

English appears often in commercials because of the emotional appeals it carries. In addition to its implications of economic wealth, growth, and national development that most Koreans associate with the West, the mastery of the English language is commonly taken as a sign of higher education. College education is in turn associated with good jobs, upper and middle class status, and the lifestyle that goes with them. Parameswaran (1997) also suggests that the English language contributed to the creation of an imagined community and played a critical role in maintaining the upper-class hegemony of the community. For Koreans, thus, English conjures forth exotic images, notions of economic prosperity, aristocratic appeal, and portraits of a modern life. Rarely, however, does it serve as a vehicle for logical thought or specific knowledge.

Significantly, the ability of Koreans to see English as a sign of fashion and style while holding little regard for its meaning now shows itself throughout Korea. The younger generation, especially, frequently wear sport clothing or products featuring English words, the meaning of which is often obscure. As Cross (1996) writes, "Advertising employs a kind of linguistic vandalism to create its spurious surface of language games, appropriating words for use in a realm somewhere between truth and

falsehood, and motivating the signifiers to serve its own purposes -- motivating the customer" (p. 2).

In the abstract sense, the use of English in Korean advertising dissociates consumption as a way of life from traditional (and alternative) ideas about life that are in opposition to this postmodern social ritual. Traditional ethics and morals (whether Confucian or some other kind) frown upon the extent and manner of ostentatious consumption, narcissism, and materialism currently presented in Korean ads. Like ubiquitous magic or myth, English words are coded and recoded by advertising to persuade the customer. At the same time, the use of English helps to defuse such opposition because English associates products with positive images.

Re-Reading Jean Culture

Fashion is a dramatic example of the production of items for display and the display of these images for mass consumption. Jeans now play a functional role in practically any ensemble of clothing, as well as in the fashion system itself. Jeans, as a primary symbol of American cultural production, have become more widespread in Korea over the past three years, and no less than 20 new brands (both local and foreign) have entered the Korean market. Accordingly, jean advertising is becoming increasingly globalized, consisting of ongoing campaigns for leading world brands: for example, Lee, Levi's, Indigo Bank, Nix, Guess, and Calvin Klein are no longer alien to the Korean people. The so-called "Jean culture" is a combination of economic, social, and cultural factors that brings in the Korean youth generation as consumers. The rise of the Jean culture as a

symbol of freedom thus corresponds to the rise of the teenager as a phenomenon born of postwar affluence and subsequent shake-ups of the accepted social order (Cho, 1996, p. 23).

Historically speaking, jeans originally began as workwear. It was only in the 1950s that the transformation of jeans from workwear to a symbol of youth took place (Cho, 1996, p. 23). Jeans have now become a unisex symbol of the so-called “youth revolt” against a given society. As a consequence, jeans have come to be accepted as casual wear. In Korea, the introduction of jeans in the 1970s was also initially associated with rebellion. In the 1980s with Korea’s economic expansion, however, the concept of designer jeans was introduced, especially with the advent of Guess jeans in 1982. The majority of customers in those days consisted of female college students. Now, however, the character of the market has changed enormously, with influences harking back to the old (but still new) concept of the rise of the teenager, which now represents the target consumer (Cho, 1996, p. 23).

An example of brand-name jean popularity, Nix jeans are not imports, as is commonly believed. Nevertheless, Nix jeans, which are mostly straight-legged and slim-fitting, naturally benefit from the image of hip, inner-city London that this combination conjures up. Consequently, black-and-white advertising of the Nix label features men with close-cropped hair and a bit of stubble, while sometimes the jeans themselves are not even shown at all. The success of Nix is quite significant in a market dominated by foreign names, and all the more so considering that it was launched only in February of 1994 (Cho, 1996, p. 24). The problem for the

Korean seller remains, however, that Western (or American) brand names are intended for Americans only, and not for Koreans. For instance, as can be seen Ad 11, the meaning of American flag is composed of alien associations: the “Stars and Stripes” denotes the USA and connotes patriotism.

Jeans ads vary widely in the stylistic strategies used to compete in terms of sign values. For example, Bobson is a Korean brand that is soft and easy to wear. Furthermore, its ad says that those who wear a specific brand jean (such as Bobson), are beautiful, soft, and youthful. Actually, Bobson jeans maintain a harsher focus and color (see Ad 9). The ads employ black and white images which represent a parodic modality (i.e., a flashback). In postmodernism, a parodic modality culls from already existing images (such as black and white images) and reinvents them as a flashback effect. Thus Bobson jeans are portrayed as a flashback effect. Such expression promises warm feelings that link past, and present.

Moreover, the pretty woman in this particular ad is portrayed as being sexy. In essence, this ad focuses on her sexy pose and wet hair, thus employing sexually-appealing poses to signify their soft-jeans look. Goffman (1979) points out that every culture has its accepted routine forms for communicating gender identity. Even though many women today will recognize sexist and stereotypical portrayals in mediated messages, most women expect to see these portrayals in the ads to which they are exposed.

Positioning is complemented by developing a brand image (Combs & Nimmo, 1993). That is, product (Bobson jean) has a personality (sexy jean). In the same way, advertising for another domestic brand, Basic, is also

also found to be structured by sex-appeal formulas in making its own sign values. Sexual lust as a sign value is displaced to commodities in the capitalist system in order to sell products. Consequently, it is through the operation of a symbolic code or the logic of signs that commodities are given meaning. The phenomenon of branding in advertising -- whereby an aura of associations is attached to a product (e.g., sexuality to jeans) -- is an important site of the operation of this code. To the specific brand name of clothes, for instance, are attributed symbolic meanings that reflect the wearer's social status.

In another Korean jeans ad, the Korean term "fantasy experience" in the copy text of this ad indicates that this woman may be too liberated to be sexually desirable (see Ad 10). This ad uses words such as "open," "experience," and "fantasy," all of which have sexual connotations. Indeed, it is fashionable to be liberated and, by association, to wear Basic jeans. In pandering to our base desires, this jeans ad produces the commodified image of the female model. For example, the sexy model herein shares one quality (as accentuated by the combined copy of the product, the rhetoric of the model, and the pose chosen) with Basic jeans -- that is, slimness. As seen in Ad 10, "Basic by G.V. Jeans" employs a red color intended to connote passion or sexual desire. The Basic jeans ad can be visually attached to virtually any commodity (reflecting an economic logic of exchange-value) in order to lend the commodity value. As a result, when sexy women appear in this ad, the relationship does not appear to be arbitrary. In short, the sexuality of women is a general exchange-value of sexuality which can be loaned out -- in this case to contribute to the overall value of the jeans.

In general, the sexual connection is much easier to set up for men than for women. At this point, the use of magical structures of consciousness in advertising has led to a vast feminization of Korean culture. We are all put into the classic role of the female: manipulable, submissive, seeing ourselves as objects. This "feminization of sexuality" is clearly seen in the Basic jeans ad, which promises that women will want whatever is being offered them. Male readers, on the other hand, can finally relax, thereby first leaving the courting to the product, and the ensuing seduction to the sexy woman. Basically, men exhibit minimal criteria for sexual desire; for example, a woman is desirable if she looks young, wet, and healthy. In this ad, a female model looks youthful, healthy, slim, and desirable. As Kramer (1994) states:

The mass consumption of such material magic (technologically facilitated identification) exposes a vast uniformity of impulse and motive. Identification and solitary interaction (with images) manifest the prerational power of seduction -- the seduction of power. This is the essential force of the hyperreal videocentric prejudice (machine magic). The Other is first split into subjective mind (independent will) and behavioral object and then the subjective fragment is denied existence. This facilitates the denial of the Other's feelings and one's own responsibility vis-a-vis those feelings. Since only visual (behavioral/material) phenomena are granted the status of reality, ethics are avoided. (p. 94)

In contrast, such jeans brands as Marlboro Classics, Lee, Levi's, and Indigo Bank create the mythology of "Americanness." In these ads, the

association with the myth of the cowboy remains strong. For example, as shown in Table 16, the Lee jeans ad uses the symbol of the “Stars and Stripes,” as well as such English words as “Real Jeans,” and “The jeans that built America.” This provides an excellent example of the use of American brand names, coupled with the English expression of its catch phrase. The Caucasian models themselves also give this product meaning. That is, the formal design of this ad employs a very “Americanized” style. Semiotically speaking, the main color of this ad employs a blue tint, which signifies the concept of “freedom.” This color produces an image of America as a land of freedom. Moreover, the combination of the background (New York City) with the “Stars and Stripes” in this ad shows America ultimately connotes the image of exotic openness (see Ad 11). Thus the hidden meaning of this ad is not only the familiar themes of freedom and naturalness, and toughness, progress and development, but above all, that of “Americanness.” This ad justifies the fabricating of links between American values and the popular consciousness of other nationalities. As a result, jeans ads are a symbol of America itself. Even more significantly, there is no difference between the real American jean ads and the Westernized Korean jeans ads in terms of their specific content.

At this point, the question must be asked, why do Korean ads use Caucasians as models for jeans and how does it work? The answer seems to be quite simple: Takagi (1996), for example, has been interested in the above question in her analysis of Japanese advertisements:

“Why are Caucasians used in Japanese advertisements?” requires hermeneutic analysis of “Caucasian” and “Western-ness”

accompanied by a series of why questions. The reason for the usage of Caucasians in Japanese ads is simply because they sell products. This answer leads to another question, “why do they sell products?” The answer for this question is that they are preferable referents for products, which means they have desirable images and meanings which products can steal. These desirable meanings of Caucasians are manifested in how they appear in Japanese ads. (p. 68)

In this sense, Caucasian models provide preferable referents in Korean ads. In order to lend a sense of Western-ness, many Korean productions utilize Caucasian models. Consequently, the presence of Caucasian models (such as those presented in the Lee jeans ad) may be seen as an indicator of “Westernization.” Furthermore, the American label may also be viewed as a symbol of prestige and quality in Korea.

Indigo Bank has adopted cheerfully nostalgic recollections of Western cultural memories of the 1950s. The association of Western peoples with the image of Marilyn Monroe, and Coca-Cola is made in the semiotics of this advertisement (see Ad 12). The people might have been Korean, but they are not. This use of Westerners to signify an alternative to the expectations and conventions of Korean society is recurrent. It is repeated in the discourse of advertising as well as in the direct imports of Western, especially American, cultural productions such as Coke, Hardrock Café, movies, music, and jeans. Western society also provides an important model for enjoying the good life.

The English-language product name, Indigo Bank, and the English phrase “Fifties Jeans Multi Shop,” appear in this advertisement. Like the

Western people, these words and phrases evoke real Western-ness.

Apparently, this ad shows a popular Norman Rockwell painting. However, this is not a real Rockwell work: it is a hyperreal imitation. As seen in this ad, the image of Western people in the fifties is also hyperreal. Simply put, there is no authentic reality for us to experience.

Again, the analysis of Jameson (1984) seems confirmed when he argues that the dominant mode of cultural production (such as nostalgia in the Indigo jeans ad) has fallen into a depthless, blank pastiche of the surfaces of previous forms. History has been effaced. The subject can no longer locate itself in time and space. Since the production of meaning requires the sign to connect the present to the past or the future, the disappearance of temporal structure in culture leads to a breakdown in the chain of signification.

Given the above situation, Fiske (1989a) interprets the jeans culture as symbolizing the Western frontier. To be sure, Western frontier culture represents a unique and definitive moment in American history. Accordingly, jeans have also been seen as a uniquely American clothing, possibly constituting America's only contribution to the international fashion industry. Despite the easy exportability of the American myth (and its ready incorporability into the popular culture of other nations), jeans will always retain their Americanness: "... jeans have been taken into the popular culture of practically every country in the world and, whatever their local meanings, they always bear traces of their Americanness" (p. 4). In addition, Rutherford (1994) also emphasizes the meaning of popular culture as a part of shared symbols:

[Ad] agencies worked to repeat and refashion songs, styles, and stars from the entertainment industries. Another way agencies contribute to the global Superculture is by associating clusters of meanings with particular products. No less than Hollywood, Madison Avenue and its cousins across the world are dream factories, which fashion images that enter the realm of popular culture as part of the shared repertoire of symbols and clichés. (p. 162)

Indeed, the jeans culture retains traces of its Americanness, whether existing worldwide, or as a local brand. In this light, the worldwide proliferation of American cultural commodities (such as the jeans culture) finally creates the impression of a new aspect of cultural homogenization. This also provides an excellent example of how Western consumer culture (as a dominant ideology) has influenced Korean advertising to the point of raising the issue of “colonization.”

The New Logic of Hypersignification: The Case of Nike Ads in Korea

In the postmodern era, the condition of visual overload has meant that human existence is now dominated by simulated sign models (i.e., mass mediated images) which define everyday life. This postmodern sign model has frequently been captured in Nike ads. In the Nike ads, the sign is no longer negotiated through the physical realm; rather, it becomes defined as the product of hyperreality of our own significant interactions as documented by the cybernetic circuits of media simulations. In this process, the image of Michael Jordan plays a crucial role of a powerful commodity-sign to the Korean readers. That is, Jordan is a simulated model of American authenticity. He is a simulated model because a mass mediated

image of Jordan is not the real Jordan. The real world of televised sport is no more authentic than the synthetic world of televised entertainment.

In the above sense, we can now interpret Michael Jordan as a postmodern myth of an American. Consequently, postmodern sports have resulted in Jordan having a promotional impact on cultural settings with which he is not associated. As an example, in a Gatorade ad, the image of Jordan can be seen in his smiling facial expression. His signature, in the bottom of ad, is to be credited for this product (see Ad 13). Essentially, Jordan is not a mere basketball player, but rather an icon of a (post)modern hero. According to Haug (1986),² the exchange-value drives a concern (with the appearance of commodities) that culminates in “the technocracy of sensuality” involving “the domination over people that is affected through their fascination with technically produced artificial appearances” (p. 45). This process thus “turns the sensual being . . . into a dependent variable of the capital valorization process” (Haug 1986, p. 80). In summary, such a selling commodity as the image of Jordan requires a promise of use-value (“Drink Gatorade”) that involves images that appeal to consumer’s senses and needs (“Being like Mike”).

At this point, the exchange in commodities becomes transformed into a consumption not of the object itself, but rather of signs. The predominance of consumer codes (such as Jordan’s image) has resulted in the commodity

² A central part of Haug’s (1986) historical critique of capitalism and analysis of manipulation involves the “molding of sensuality.” In addition, this critique also involves “how human need and instinct structures are altered under the impact of a continually changing prospect of satisfaction offered by commodities” (p. 45).

itself becoming a sign. Baudrillard (1988a) explains the logic of the sign in relation to the notion of use-value fetishism:

Use-value fetishism³ is indeed more profound, more mysterious than the fetishism of exchange-value. The mystery of the commodity and exchange-value can be unmasked . . . and raised to consciousness as a social relation. But value in the case of use-value is enveloped in total mystery, for it is grounded anthropologically in the (self-) evidence of a naturalness, an unsurpassable original reference. . . . Here mystery and cunning are at their most profound and tenacious. (p. 72)

The above explanation thus describes the environment in which hyper-commodities (i.e., mass mediated commodity) begin to show themselves. Once having appeared, these new-objects of hyper-commodities may then be viewed as “transparent” (i.e., nothing is hidden). In other words, the new-object of consumption is no longer simply the reflection of a subject’s narcissistic desire. Thus, such hyper-commodities often remain absent from the context of a given presentation.

As a result, a person who is paralyzed in both legs can endorse a sports shoe (Nike), since the function of hyper-commodities now merely serves to occasion the celebration of capitalism and the overall spectacle of capital. Baudrillard (1983a) emphasizes this point: “Propaganda and advertising fuse in the same marketing and merchandising of objects and ideologies. This convergence of language between the economic and the

³ The original notion of fetishism was assigned by Marx to the process of mystifying material objects of consumption by investing them with human qualities.

political is furthermore what marks a society such as ours, where political economy is fully realized" (p. 125).

One such example of Baudrillard's realization of the political economy remains embedded in how the particular notion of style transcends the realm of aesthetics in merging with a current, political economy. Actually, advertisers attempt to create symbolic meaning (sign-value) beyond use-value or exchange-value. Following this trend, both style and look then become the new referent of politics. Wernick (1984) offers the following explanation:

Sign and commodity have fused, giving rise to a new form of object (the sign-commodity) and a new order of domination (the ensemble of institutions and discourses which make up consumer culture), neither of which operate any longer according to the dictates of a strictly capitalist (i.e., economic) logic. (p. 20)

Accordingly, the new-object of advertising, representation, and speculation then becomes an absent presence.⁴ At this point, such expressions need not be structured discourses, but mere "bits" of information. Examples of such "bits" include statements by Nike ("Just do it!") and Coke ("Coke is it!"). Such statements serve to make each product no longer an object of consumption (i.e., consummation of a material form), nor even of name brands (an index of one's cultural capital), but rather

⁴ For example, a computer advertised in a college newspaper is depicted to inform the student that it is on sale. This production of the computer as image occurs at the level of presentation. In this context, the photographic image or drawing of a computer is not real computer. That is the process of an absent presence.

make each product atmospheres of objects, as faint reminders of potential energy, and also as a constant reminder of the political economy as a whole.

Actually, Jordan's hyperreal existence is graphically captured in a caricature that appeared as a part of this Nike ad. His image serves as a significant figure within the postmodern culture. This ad provides an example of how the distinction between the real and the caricatured Jordan has imploded in the age of simulation. In other words, the function of caricatured Jordan's image is transformed as marketing practices rely on the cybernetic circuits of media simulations. With regard to this ad, two American superstars both meet and agree on one point: Nike top-star sales. This ad says that "An excellent chance is provided by Nike: Nike top star sale" in Korean. In this sense, this text emphasizes the sale itself. Moreover, the product (i.e., Nike) signifies a special breed of man being designated by his brand choice. This contrived world thus represents a promise signified and shared by the American dream (see Ad 14). That is, buying Nike shoes made one distinctive, successful, and something just like Mike. In summary, Jordan's hyperreal sign has restructured his entire image (see Table 17). As Kramer (1989) states:

Due to the fictive nature of the primary semiotic system, it is less probable that conflict between the real product and its image will surface. This is so because under scrutiny one does not compare two realities so valued, but rather, the shift in the linguistic system that occurs in the phenomenon of myth, makes the association noncombative. The borrowed or stolen image cannot conflict with the real product because it is at a different level linguistically. (p. 484)

Moreover, as the Nike product (shoes) has assumed its present image, it also shifted its (e.g., the shoes) semiotic status from being a signified to that of being a signifier. This signification process is associated with the opportunity for what Barthes calls the “alibi.” As Barthes (1979) asserts:

Finally, rhetoric as a whole will no doubt prove to be the domain of these creative transgressions; if we remember Jakobson’s distinction, we shall understand that any metaphoric series is a syntagmatized paradigm, and any metonymy is a system which is frozen and absorbed in a system; in metaphor, selection becomes contiguity, and in metonymy, contiguity becomes a field to select from. It therefore seems that it is always on the frontiers of the two planes that creation has a chance to occur. (p. 88)

Consequently, it is important to apply Jakobson’s linguistic designation between metaphorical and metonymic dimensions of signification, particularly because both modes are exploited in advertising’s associative function.

Accordingly, the hyperreal image of Jordan in fact performs preferable referents in Korean ads. In other words, this referent system (consisting of an NBA star) supplies the desired feelings, moods, and attributes to the products. In addition, it is also necessary to construct this emotive function in the ads themselves. This transference of the image of the NBA star to a certain desire (such as the realization of the American dream) has simply been referred as to “magic” (Kramer, 1989). In general, advertisements can lead us on to want to know more about the product. To

achieve this kind of goal, advertising employs fragmented, spatial, non-linear, and imagistic rhetorical tactics. When speaking in Gebserian terms, this overall method appears like magic and/or myth, which could prove an alternative to rational and linear sales persuasion, since all of these techniques ultimately seek the same single goal: to persuade people to buy the product of interest. Consequently, in order to persuade customers, the Nike ad attempts to create magical and mythic structures by employing the hyperreal image of Jordan.

According to postmodernism, sign consumption is an integral part of the society of a given spectacle,⁵ thus representing a new, historical stage in the process of (hyper)signification. That is, advertising creates a seeming world. These worlds are simulated products -- they have no fixed origins, they do not refer to a prior reality, and they have no known sources of authority. From a Gebserian point of view, advertising originates myths, a new world, and a new historical stage. This current stage does not, however merely represent an extension of earlier stages, but rather represents an integral dimension, thus requiring new, analytical concepts, such as the logic of (hyper)signification. In this new world, everything is a copy, or a copy of a copy, where what is fake seems more real than the real.

Advertising too operates in this mode. As Goldman and Papson (1996) put it:

⁵ Spectacle is a term which unifies and explains a great diversity of apparent phenomena. Essentially, the spectacle is not just a collection of images, but a social relations mediated by images. Mass media society is an excellent example of the society of a given spectacle (see Debord, 1990).

Advertisers in the 1980s introduced two fundamental changes in the way they framed photographic images. First, advertisers now commonly included shots that we call “denotative dangles.” These close-up shots of signifiers emphasize the detailed contours of material objects and human gestures in “the directly-experienced social reality.” Stringing together closeup shots of objects and gestures telescopes these things into hypersignifiers. A second change incorporates violations of graphic conventions about centering images. In the new realism faces and objects are dispersed asymmetrically along the edges of the screen, or sometimes the primary signifier on screen consists of an oversized and off-center body part or object. The new realism materially decenters human subjects within the frame of the screen. (p. 67)

The Nike television ad then provides a good example of this. In the first frame of this ad, we cannot find any center (i.e., the technique of decentering is used). Hypersignification and photographic decentering depend on the abstraction of body parts from the human subject (see Ad 15). Actually, this commercial tends to emphasize the foot as a metonymic of the body. Metaphor in semiotics is not just a literary device, but a fundamental part of the way of humans communicate. Thus an image of the foot in this ad can function metaphorically as a physical symbol.

A syntagmatic analysis of advertisements usually involves studying it as a narrative sequence. In other words, semiotic narratology becomes concerned with narrative in any mode -- literary or non-literary, verbal or visual -- but also tends to focus on minimal narrative units as well as the

grammar of the plot (see Berger, 1982, pp. 24-29). In this sense, a syntagmatic analysis would involve an analysis of how each shot, scene or sequence related to the others. Metz (1974/1991) provides elaborate syntagmatic categories for narrative sequences. According to semiotic narratology, this Nike ad uses the episodic sequence, particularly because this ad organizes the discontinuity of shots. More specifically, this whole text consists of a medium shot, a close up and, finally, a full shot.

This evidence therefore indicates that the Nike ad exhibits a postmodernist tendency that deconstructs the general narrative sequence. Furthermore, this ad also attempts to express the essence of high technology with the fabricated image of Nike. This is supported by the fact that postmodernism is fascinated by the semantic technology.

In the above situation, advertising as a reinforcement or initiation of the buying decision occurs at the level of the individual consumer. This becomes evident by the labels on products which proclaim, "As seen on the famous sports star, Chan Ho Park,⁶ who is a valuable player for the LA Dodgers -- he wears a specific product on TV!" Consumers perceive such a notice as proof of the product's intrinsic value. In the fourth frame of this commercial, Nike uses the icon of a Korean sports star to persuade customers. In another, recent ad, the text provided implies that you will obtain a victory (such as that which occurred for Chan Ho Park) and you

⁶ Chan Ho Park is a baseball pitcher now playing for LA Dodgers. Park already has a couple of wins to his credit. He has also a fan club in the City of Los Angeles' Korean community that fills Dodgers Stadium every time Park takes the mound.

will also thereby enter the professional league (i.e., baseball) by wearing Nike (see Ad 16).

In a semiotic reading, the collective meaning (winning) of the various signifiers is usually consonant around a general theme (the Nike world). Hard working is the referent system out of which each element of the ad reflects its meaning. The signs of advertising are therefore motivated and make promises to their audiences. The final aspect to this signification is related to the making myth (the success of Major League). Nike's sign strategy ("Just Do It") also appears in this ad.

Ultimately, the difference between Park's ad and Jordan's ad lies in the hidden sense of Jordan's world clearly being exotic. Nevertheless, Park's commercial did outline a scenario similar to that of the Jordan ads. In this process of hypersignification, the hyperreal image of such postmodern sport stars (either Jordan or Park) is associated with a promotional strategy. In this way, the image of the sports star therefore plays a crucial role in the overall success of Nike's Post-fordist production.⁷ As Goldman and Papson (1996) note, "Since 1989 Nike has been the leader in market share . . . Their imagery has dominated this market since the days when Michael Jordan teamed with Mars Blackman and the Bo Knows series was in its prime" (p. 38).

⁷ According to Lury (1996), Post-fordist production is "increasing organized in terms of what is called flexible specialization, that is, it is flexibly organized for specialized rather than mass production via the use of technology and multiskilling and decentralized through the use of communication media. There is an expansion of production globally. The service sector is increasing important" (p. 94).

In postmodernist's view, Baudrillard (1988a) asserts that Disneyland creates for us the comforting, yet mythical, belief that the simulacra on its outside represents the real: "Disneyland is presented as imaginary in order to make us believe that the rest is real, when in fact all of Los Angeles and the America surrounding it are no longer real, but of the order of the hyperreal and simulation" (p. 172). From this vantage point, Nike ads, like Disneyland, serve as microcosms of America and of the Western world. That these ads are all totally emptied of all reality serves precisely as their (hyper)reality for Koreans. That is, the simulation of utopia (like Major League) -- advertising the image that doubles as a sign of power -- is realized within a purely artificial society of appearance without depth. In this sense, Koreans can see Nike ads as a simulation of the real world.

Table 15

Nex

| | |
|--------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| Signifiers | clean & smooth beer; Nex; young handsome guy |
| Referent systems | vigorousness |
| Binary oppositions | clean : dirty ; young : old |
| Promises | generation X |
| Problem | this product is for the younger generation |
| Myth | product as a freshness |
| ECD | Nex : others ≈ winners : losers |

Table 16

Lee

| | |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
| Signifiers | the Stars and Stripes; Real Jeans; the jeans that built America |
| Referent systems | naturalness; joy |
| Binary oppositions | American : non-American; freedom : restriction |
| Promises | freedom; progress; Americanness |
| Problem | this product is for American |
| Myth | product as a myth of America |
| ECD | Lee : others ≈ winners : losers |

Table 17

Nike

| | |
|--------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| Signifiers | Nike top star sale; Michael Jordan; Charles Barkley |
| Referent systems | jumping; dunk; basketball |
| Binary oppositions | real Jordan : hyperreal Jordan; American star : Korean star |
| Promises | good player; American dream |
| Problem | this product is for American |
| Myth | product as an icon of American sport star |
| ECD | Nike : others = winners : losers |

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

This study has attempted to interpret the underlying ideological structure of Korean advertisements. Consciously or unconsciously, Korean cultural production has been influenced by the West, which appears in specific forms such as cultural artifacts in general and advertisements in particular. Since ideology is hidden deep in our own consciousness, we seldom realize that we are affected by it and thus consider what we see as being completely real. It is, then, this ideological power that makes us misperceive our reality.

The research questions in this study were formulated to reveal the relationships between the cultural forms of advertising in Korea and the underlying ideological message. Specifically, this study has analyzed the structure and content of individual advertisements.

The first research question was the following: How has Korean advertising worked as a “systematically distorted communication” in the decision-making process? As Habermas (1989) states, “systematically distorted communication” results from techniques which are nonrational, nonlogical, and imagistic, and which affect the viewer unconsciously.

To answer this question, this study analyzed English expressions in Korean ads using Gebserian and postmodern perspectives. The direct use of English expressions in Korean advertisements has been examined to

explicate the hidden presence of Western ideology. Such expressions comprise indications of Westernization. Our experience of reality, however, is that of an imaginary and subjective construct. For instance, as an English expression, “NEX” cannot mean either luxury or freshness, but beer advertising merely constitutes a representation itself. That is, without the new meaning of an English expression, the new beer brand is simply self-referential. Here, the Latin alphabet is deliberately used to create good images: The ensuing advertisements are thus made, not to sell products *per se*, but rather to sell good images of the products, so as to sell, in turn, products. We are forced to consume not only products themselves, but also images of products prior to consuming the products.

This ad also provides an example of the totemic dimension of magical consciousness. A young man may drink NEX beer; by the process of “creating” the youth, the “magic” beer thus gains youth. To this end, advertisements graphically create youthful beer. In this process, NEX, as an English expression, performs an important role in creating a “magic” beer. More importantly, the hidden meaning of NEX is its suggestion of Generation X, the new generation who try to shape their own consumer culture. Thus this ad operates as a “systematically distorted communication” using the magical structure of consciousness.

The second research question was the following: How has Western consumer culture as a dominant ideology influenced Korean advertising?

To answer this question, this study explored the jean culture as a Western consumer ideology in relation to the issue of colonization. Jeans, whether existing worldwide or as a domestic brand, retain traces of their

Americanness, thus evidencing the influence of Western consumer culture. Ads for jeans justify the fabrication of links between American values and the popular consciousness of other nations. This provides an excellent example of how Western consumer culture has influenced Korean advertising and raises the issue of cultural colonization. In this light, the worldwide proliferation of American cultural commodities (such as the jean culture) produces the impression of cultural homogenization.

The final research question was the following: What is the meaning of being a consumer in relation to cultural colonization?

To answer this question, this study interpreted the meaning of being a consumer in Korea through examining Nike ads. Generally, ads lead us on to want to know more about the product. To this end, advertising uses a fragmented, spatial, non-linear, imagistic rhetoric. In other words, this non-linear rhetoric does not lead us to want to know more about a product, as linear persuasion would, but rather leads us to consume the image without asking questions about the product itself. In Gebserian terms, this seems like magic and/or myth, which could be an alternative to rational, linear sales persuasion. In order to persuade customers, the Nike ad attempts to create magical and mythic structures using the image of Michael Jordan. The mythic process of shifting the signified to the status of signifier in Nike ads makes the form of the perfect meta-structure of mythology. Moreover, it becomes clear that sign consumption is an integral part of the society of a given spectacle, thus representing a new, historical stage in the process of (hyper)signification. Obviously, this Nike ad creates a seeming world using the image of sports star. Consequently, such a selling

commodity as the image of Jordan requires a promise of use-value involving images that appeal to consumers' senses and needs. For Koreans, however, the Nike ad served as the simulation of the real world because this ad created the (hyper)real world of a utopia (such as the NBA and Major League).

In conclusion, a postmodern and Gebserian encoding such as presented in this study provides useful approaches to uncovering such a hidden values. Such an analysis makes clear that the uniqueness of Korean advertising is not displaced by its future configurations (Westernization), but rather integrated into the new consumer culture. The breakdown of traditional structures and modes of thought, as well as the emergence of their replacements, are not linear processes. The current perspectival world is dependent on ever-present past structures such as the various structures of magic and myth. Magic and myth structures are blindly presupposed. From this point of view, all modern Western(ized) advertising is the consumer culture's version of mythology. As Leymore (1975) notes:

No society exists without some form of myth. Once this is realized, it is not very surprising that a society which is based on the economy of mass production and mass consumption will evolve its own myth in the form of the commercial. Like myth it touches upon every facet of life, and as a myth it makes use of the fabulous in its application to the mundane. (p. 156)

Myth and magic help us express impulses toward the cultural experience. In the same way, the predominance of the magical (or mythic) structures does not mean that other structures are completely excluded.

Gebserian analysis offers a method for accessing the ways in which a particular structure situates the factors from other structures. For example, Mickunas (1994) asserts that

magic and myth integrate rationality, yet if one were to shift to rational mode of awareness and its ways of integrating, one would be able to appreciate the limits of the other modes, and thus would not fall prey completely to the direct, lived solicitations of the other modes of awareness. (p. 17)

Korean ads in fact employ all of these different structures of consciousness at different times; this study, however, has focused on a specific structure of consciousness in examining each example the better to reveal certain cultural factors implicit in each. Therefore, the Gebserian notion of structures of consciousness provides a useful tool for the interpretation of Korean advertising.

Essentially, advertising does not simply create the desire for consumption of material goods. As we have seen, the desire for such consumption arises from the importance of material goods in modern life and social relations. Consequently, ads play a role in both channeling and legitimizing people's choices within the context of a consumer culture. Advertising points out to people how obtaining the right object may considerably enhance a reputation or signify membership of a social group. Moreover, advertising also helps shape new cultural images, thus suggesting and defining middle class expectations. Finally, the most apparent and consistent message of advertising is not about the specific

goods and products it purports to peddle; it is rather the message that consumption is an important ritual in postmodern society.

The above-mentioned crafting of new cultural images takes place in two ways, each of which will be explored in turn. First, a central feature of advertising in Korea is to promote change by making it appear normal; the context of the ads is as important as the primary messages themselves. In other words, advertising, in part, assembles a make-believe world for people, bombards them with this world vision, and then demonstrates that this new life and the real life consumption are inseparable.

The second method of crafting new cultural images through advertising in Korea uses foreign language and images to entice people into joining into a material consumer culture. Advertisers evoke exotic and seductive notions of Western culture. At the same time, such foreign imagery dissociates the messages and values from traditional beliefs which underlie many advertisements by avoiding traditional values and images. By encoding social reality through a foreign language and then serving as the tool by which people decode that same reality, advertising thus transforms the process of change into a form of “guided discovery.”

Basically, rapid economic and social change has eroded the old social structure in Korea. Korean society, however, can be seen as, in many respects, still emerging from its Confucian inheritance which placed a premium on family, hierarchy, and social harmony. The old (Confucian) values frequently clash with contemporary aspirations for Western (individualistic) culture, resulting in the paradox that, while the new Korean middle class prefers Westernized expression (or production), their

own values often remain rooted in notions of hierarchy and the privileges that come from personal connections. Thus, Korean culture is not displaced by Western consumer culture but integrated into the new consumer culture and its own mythic (or magical) structure. The NEX ad, for instance, integrates an old Confucian value (male model preference) together with a new Western value (English expression). That is, Korean culture creates own uniqueness by combining Western and traditional components. From the political economy perspective, advertising teaches us the ways of showing manifest power, and creates the logic of power. There is no difference between showing and doing. Advertising produces us as consumers. Indeed, the mass media promote consumption through advertising their own brand of consumption rhetoric.

This study has two primary limitations. First, it remains heavily dependent on the skill of the researcher; that is, little opportunity exists to establish reliability within the field of semiotic methodology. As Leiss, Kline, and Jhally (1990) note,

In the hands of someone like Barthes or Williamson, it is a creative tool that allows one to reach the deeper levels of meaning-construction in ads. A less skillful practitioner, however, can do little more than state the obvious in a complex and often pretentious manner. (p. 214)

Nevertheless, semiotics is useful in describing how the text of Korean ads produces meaning. Semiotics cannot, however, explain how to change a sign system.

More specifically, some semiotic analysis has been criticized as nothing more than a formalistic approach. In contrast, poststructuralists (or postmodernists) reject the rule-like assumptions of semiotics. According to their view, language is not a separate, impersonal system, as in semiotics, but a system articulated within a given culture. In other words, they are critical of semiotic analyses that have been focused on formal systems rather than on processes of use and production. Furthermore, semiotics cannot be applied with equal success to all kinds of ads. Most studies do not take a random sample of ads and then apply the semiotic method to them.

A second limitation of the study is that it did not deal directly with perception of the advertising by readers or viewers. Thus, it only examined the contents of advertising messages, mainly in magazine and TV ads. Finally, this study could not discuss the influence of Japanese power in the Korean advertising industry. Although the Korean people still have an unfavorable image of Japan because of its brutal military invasion during World War II, Japanese cultural productions (including cartoons, pop-music, and advertising) are very popular among the younger generation.

The interpretation provided by this semiotic analysis suggests several areas of additional investigation in the future. First of all, the diverse ad formats (including audio and video) and production techniques (for example, long shot, close-up, and so on) need additional research for the analysis of television commercials. This study, however, analyzed only the visual component of each individual ad. Future research needs to look at

ads scene by scene or frame by frame for a complete understanding of a specific Korean ad.

The research covered in this study also needs to be extended. More conclusive findings can be arrived at by studying many more ads from various media. Investigations could also be extended to other countries with divergent historical traditions within the context of consumer culture. At present, most advertising research is conducted within the United States; thus the greatest potential contributions of this study lie in its semiotic approach to the specific analysis of Korean ads.

Nevertheless, the preliminary findings of this study contribute to the area of investigation by using a semiotic approach on the basis of postmodern and Gebserian perspectives. This use of semiotics can help to make us aware of what we take for granted in representing the world, reminding us that sign systems are involved in the construction of meaning. Indeed, semiotics makes it possible to connect the meaning construction of an advertisement with the Gebserian notion of structures of consciousness.

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Appendix A

Critical Perspective in Communication Studies

The Frankfurt school. From a humanistic Marxist perspective, members of the Frankfurt school, such as Horkheimer, Marcuse, Adorno, and Habermas, have maintained that the liberating and emancipatory potential of high culture is being debased and neutralized in the mass culture offered by mass media. The Frankfurt theorists are concerned with the apparent failure of the revolutionary social change predicted by Marx and for the explanation of this failure they looked to the capacity of the superstructure, such as mass media, to subvert historical process of economic change. This perspective can be represented as combining a media-centered view with one of class domination. Metaphysically speaking, this perspective also assumes that it is necessary to realize an analysis of public sphere as well as of subjective communication the better to understand human existence. In other words, communication is the central element of critical rationality.

Cultural studies. Cultural studies has its roots in a Marxist interpretation of society. Specifically, British cultural studies analyze the media with a paradigm that illuminates the consistent relationship between signs or cultural codes, not between words and real-world referents. Cultural studies is aided by the political predisposition toward alternative explanations of society and the mood for change. Raymond Williams emphasizes the cultural component in cultural studies, while Stuart Hall has concentrated on the importance of ideology. Hall's

consideration of media studies provides a useful insight for the application of Marxism, including French structuralism, to the study of social practice.

Structuralism. In its structuralist approach, the critical perspective examines communication phenomena as a structural effect. In other words, structuralism explores ideology as unconscious structures rather than the subjects' cultural experience. It draws upon ideas found in linguistics, anthropology, and semiotics. Its major goal is the study of systems of signification and representation. The theoretical work of the radical structuralist thinkers, Polulantz and Althusser, has contributed to the grounding of this approach, directing attention to the ways in which the relationships of capitalism have to be legitimately reproduced. Althusser (1971) maintains that the mass media, together with schools and churches, form an "ideological apparatus." In this sense, the mass media create and disseminate the ideology, the set of ideas, and values.

Political economy. Political economy approaches to the mass media focus on the political implications of the media's economic structure. This perspective refers to mass media as the economic structure of the media organization, regards ownership as the most influential form of control, and draws the conclusion that a profit-seeking industry produces a system-maintaining role. That is to say, the mass media are controlled by economic processes and structures. Garnham (1979) observes that not every media organization in the capitalist system is capitalist in orientation. Herman and Chomsky (1988) have suggested that a propaganda framework exists in which the main factor of media work is the political implications for U.S. interests. This propaganda framework can be applied to the coverage of two

groups which are in conflict. When situations arise in which the established group uses more institutionalized violence, the mass media pursue a policy of benign neglect.

Postmodernism. Postmodernism is a particular cultural experience, a “cultural logic” which is itself the product of a particular shift in social and economic structures. As Frederic Jameson (1984) states, postmodernism is the cultural logic of late capitalism. Other scholars categorize this postmodern form as the post-industrial society, the information society, or post-Fordism, rather than late capitalism. The major point is that a fundamental transformation occurred in the economic structure of postmodern societies, which has caused these cultural changes. Grossberg (1984) considered relevant to this definition postmodernism’s emphasis on the notion of power.

Appendix B

AD 1

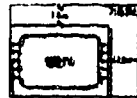




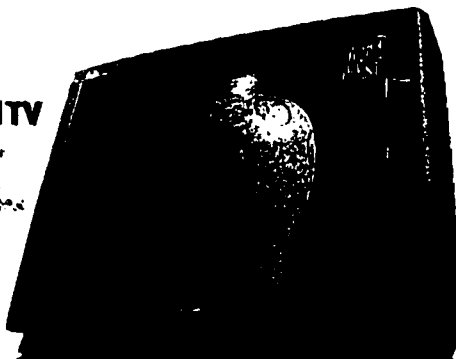
이 TV 디자인의 세계적 추이는 컴퓨터-
집단반도체의 고도집약기술로 해냈다

21인치 공백 높을 수 있는 29인치 TV

공백을 10cm 이상 높일 수 있는 29인치 TV가 나왔습니다. 이 TV는 화면이 21인치로 낮아져서 화면 상단에 공백이 생기는데, 이 공백을 10cm 이상 높일 수 있습니다. 이는 화면 상단에 공백이 생기는데, 이 공백을 10cm 이상 높일 수 있습니다. 이는 화면 상단에 공백이 생기는데, 이 공백을 10cm 이상 높일 수 있습니다.



각종 세로 화면의 확대와 축소
공백을 10cm 이상 높일 수 있는 29인치 TV가 나왔습니다. 이는 화면 상단에 공백이 생기는데, 이 공백을 10cm 이상 높일 수 있습니다.



세계최고의 음도강화력 하이오닉스

세계최고의 음도강화력 하이오닉스. 이는 화면 상단에 공백이 생기는데, 이 공백을 10cm 이상 높일 수 있습니다. 이는 화면 상단에 공백이 생기는데, 이 공백을 10cm 이상 높일 수 있습니다.

국내최초 중형 대형유리화

국내최초 중형 대형유리화. 이는 화면 상단에 공백이 생기는데, 이 공백을 10cm 이상 높일 수 있습니다. 이는 화면 상단에 공백이 생기는데, 이 공백을 10cm 이상 높일 수 있습니다.

신제품 29인치 하이오닉스 TV
가격: 1,200,000원 ~ 1,400,000원

디자인명품

이 TV는 화면이 21인치로 낮아져서 화면 상단에 공백이 생기는데, 이 공백을 10cm 이상 높일 수 있습니다. 이는 화면 상단에 공백이 생기는데, 이 공백을 10cm 이상 높일 수 있습니다.

화질명품

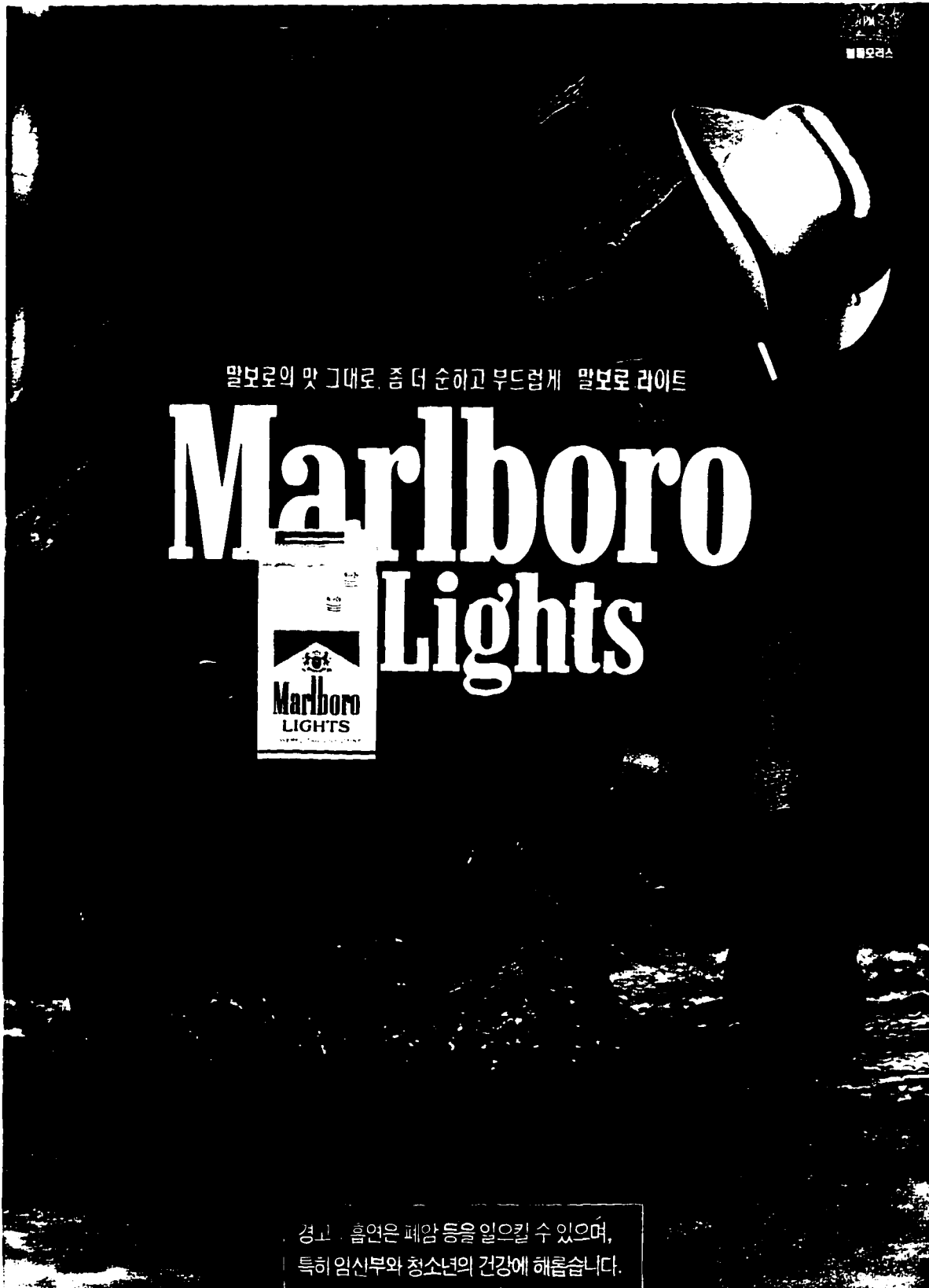
이 TV는 화면이 21인치로 낮아져서 화면 상단에 공백이 생기는데, 이 공백을 10cm 이상 높일 수 있습니다. 이는 화면 상단에 공백이 생기는데, 이 공백을 10cm 이상 높일 수 있습니다.

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삼성 TV 名品





말보로의 맛 그대로. 좀 더 순하고 부드럽게 말보로 라이트

Marlboro Lights

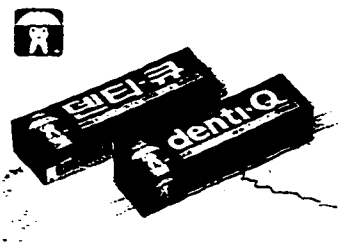


경고: 흡연은 폐암 등을 일으킬 수 있으며,
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AD 4



AD 5



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AD 7

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RALPH LAUREN

AD 9

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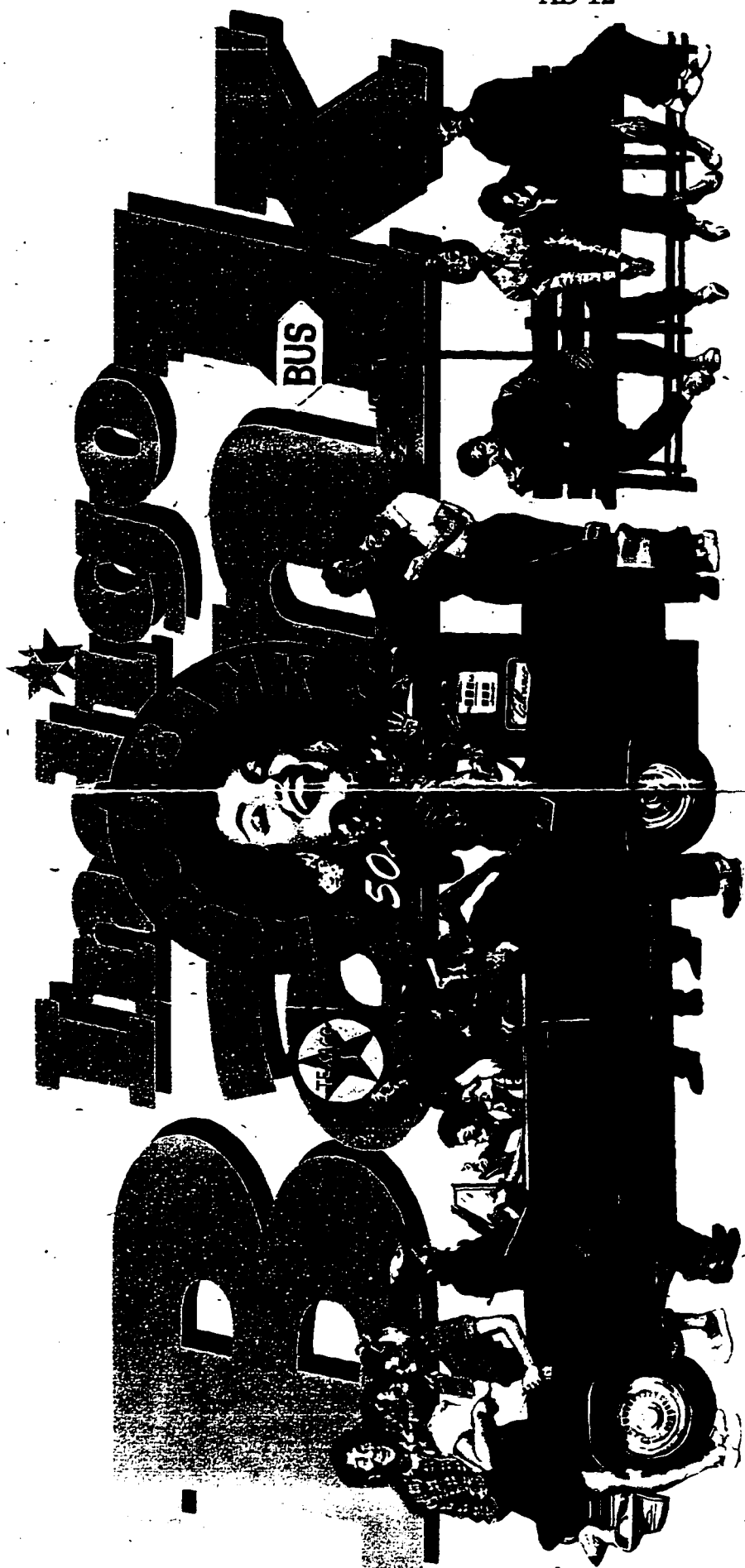
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AD 11





1950년, 미국 /

미릴린더로, 제임스 딘, 엘비스 프레슬리, 코크 리언들 ...

1995년, 세계 파수꾼 /

도노반, 비츠, 지오네니, 보너벤치, 데미시...

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2F AM ROCK



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3F MOVIE & MUSIC



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4F MAD ROCK-COFF



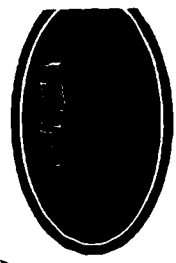
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인디고뱅크 OPEN 기념

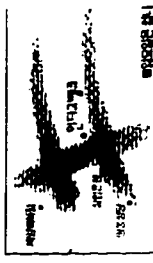
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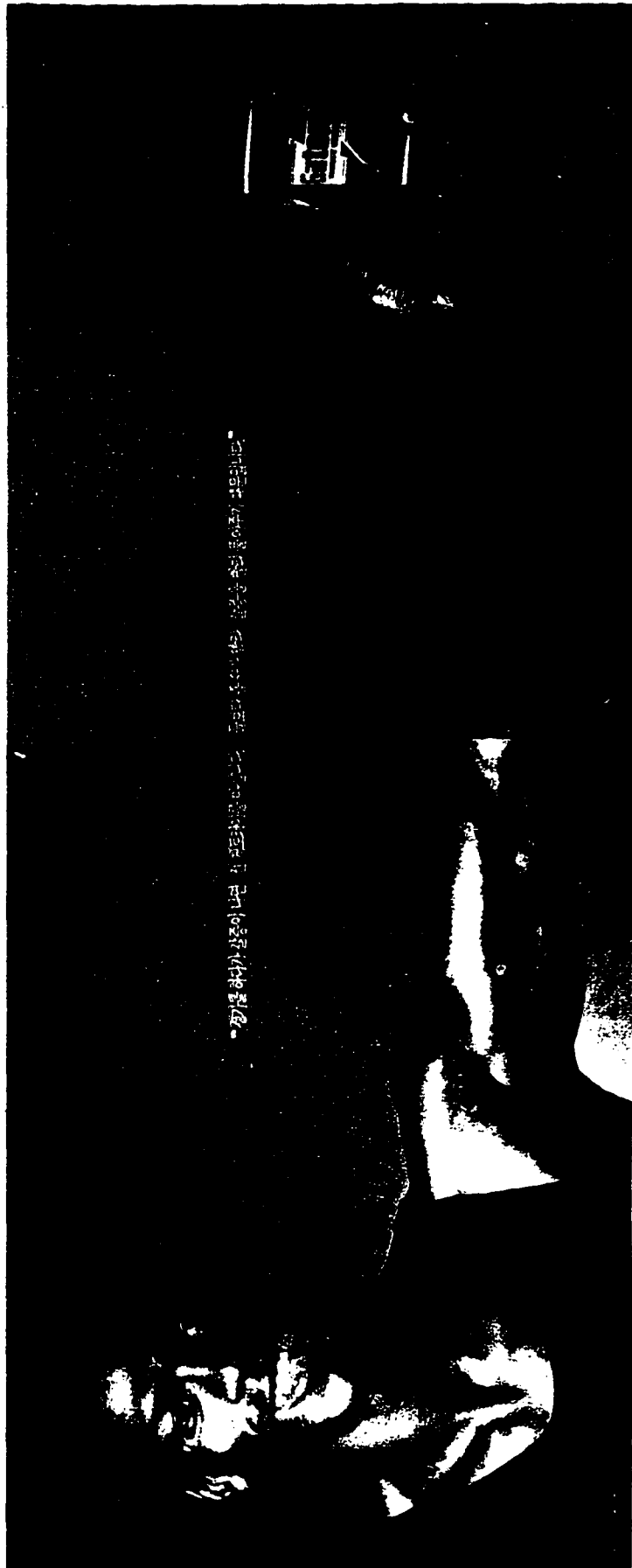


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