

UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

GRADUATE COLLEGE

AN ANALYSIS OF JAPANESE TV COMMERCIALS
THAT FEATURE FOREIGN CELEBRITIES:
A CONTENT ANALYTIC AND INTERVIEW APPROACH

A Dissertation

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

By

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Norman, Oklahoma

2005

UMI Number: 3152839



UMI Microform 3152839

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AN ANALYSIS OF JAPANESE TV COMMERCIALS THAT FEATURE FOREIGN
CELEBRITIES: A CONTENT ANALYTIC AND INTERVIEW APPROACH

A Dissertation APPROVED FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION

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Acknowledgments

I want to extend gratitude to all of my committee members, Dr. Kramer, Dr. O'Hair, Dr. Wieder, Dr. Sandel, and Dr. Hobbs, for their supportiveness and worthy feedback. I especially thank my chair, Dr. Kramer, for his helpful advice and constant support. I also thank my family, especially my parents and my grandmother, for their continuous support, and I want to dedicate this dissertation to them. My parents' encouragement helped me finish my degree, and to them, I am thankful to be your daughter.

I also wish to dedicate this dissertation to my late grandfather, , who always loved me but couldn't see me graduated.

Thank you also, to all of my friends in the US and Japan. Your friendship meant a lot to me, thank you for all you have done.

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Glossary

Artificial light. Electric light.

Close shot. A shot showing from approximately above the subject's shoulder to the top of the head.

Close-up. A shot focusing on a very close view of the subject.

Dissolve. A transition in which one shot merges into the following shot.

Establishing shot. The shot that appears at the beginning and establishes the scene. Also called a master shot.

Eye-level shot. A shot in which the camera is at an angle between low- and high-angle shots.

Fade-in. A transition in which the image gradually appears from a blank screen.

Fade-out. A transition in which one shot gradually disappears until the screen is black.

Frame. One image in a film, in which the scene does not change.

High-angle shot. A shot in which the camera is located at the top of the scene and looks down on the subject(s).

Jump cut. A transition in which the change from one shot to the next is discontinuous.

Long shot. A shot that shows the full body of the subject(s).

Low-angle shot. A shot in which the camera is located at the bottom of the scene and looks up the subject(s).

Medium shot. A shot that shows the subject(s) from approximately above the waist to the top of the head.

Natural light. Usually sunlight.

Pan. A shot in which the camera is in a fixed position, but turns and can follow the movement of the subject(s) from left-to-right or right-to-left.

Pan down. A shot in which the camera at the top of a shot and turns downward.

Pan up. A shot in which the camera is at the bottom of a shot and turns upward.

Point of view. The view from which the camera takes a shot.

Superimposition. The appearance of one image on top of another image.

Track. A shot in which the camera moves closer to the subject(s).

Truck. A shot in which the camera moves, following the movement of the subject(s).

Wipe. A transition in which one shot is switched to the next shot by a moving line or edge.

Zoom. A shot which gets closer, or moves away from, a central point of the scene.

Abstract

In this dissertation, by examining the meaning of Western celebrities in Japanese television commercials, I have proven the existence of a one-way flow of information between the US and Japan. In Japan, many television commercials have celebrities, not only Japanese but also Western celebrities.

I utilized three methodologies: semiology, content analysis, and interview. First, I analyzed 11 Japanese commercials by semiology. This semiological analysis reveals the significance of having Western celebrities in Japanese TV commercials. Second, I collected 6,424 Japanese commercials, randomly selected 25% of them, or 1,606 commercials, and examined the tendency of utilizing foreigners and Western celebrities in them.

The results showed a very high rate of European language penetration into Japanese commercials. Almost half of the commercials had either Japanese or Western celebrities, which showed the dependence of Japanese commercials on having celebrities. In terms of background, foreigners appeared to be structurally associated with urban, rather than rural, environments. Third, interviews were conducted with professionals including ad agents and professors. The total number of interviewees was 43. According to these interviews, the main reason for Japanese television commercials to have Western celebrities seems to be the Western celebrities' popularity. Interviews also indicate a Japanese inferiority complex toward the West and especially Caucasians.

Overall, though Japan and the US are almost the same economically, the information flow is almost always one-way, from the US to Japan. In Japan, Western celebrities, Hollywood movies, and other American television programs, music, and magazines have all penetrated into Japanese society. On the other hand, the American audience does not know much about Japanese culture, except for some cartoons and animated characters. There are almost no Japanese celebrities seen in American television commercials, and few Japanese movies are available in theaters. Therefore, the US is a rather closed country in terms of media, though it is an open country in terms of interpersonal acceptance. On the other hand, Japan is a closed country in terms of interpersonal acceptance, but a rather open country in terms of media.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Japan and the US are considered to be two of the most technologically advanced countries in the world. Nevertheless, while American culture has penetrated deeply into Japanese society, the other direction of flow—the penetration of Japanese culture into American society—is not very strong. In this sense, the information flow is almost always one-way from America to Japan. This study attempts to search for the evidence of this one-way flow of information between the US and Japan by examining the appeal of Western celebrities in Japanese television (TV) commercials. It bases its analysis upon data drawn from interview and content analytic approaches.

Advertisements, in many forms, dominate the media and create trends (Potter, 1958). Today, all economically developed countries have marketing and public relations sectors that spend a huge amount of money on advertising. For example, Japan spent 542.6 million dollars for advertisements in 1995. The percentage of this advertising money in terms of Japan's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was 1.12 %. In comparison, in the same year, the US spent 2.2 % of its GDP, which totaled 1,500 million dollars (Yamaoki, 1997). In 2000, Japan's business industry spent 2,079.3 billion yen (approximately 1,733 million dollars when calculated at the rate of one dollar for 120 yen) for television advertising (Video Research Ltd., 2001a).

Advertisements have different societal and economic implications depending on their contexts. Firstly, they significantly affect the economy. Hence, there are strong and valued reasons which justify a company's expansive advertising budget. Advertising creates competition between companies, lowers or increases prices, and reduces the

money required for distributive expenses. Moreover, advertisements also have a cultural and societal impact. Advertisements have the ability to spread information about various products, to provide a form of entertainment, to create “hot” or desired product demand, to establish trends, and even to assist in creating cultural tendencies (Kobayashi, 1996).

Advertisements have both negative and positive aspects. Manabe’s (1983) study illustrated this fact by examining the effects, influence, and functions of advertisements. Positive aspects of advertisements include: stimulating economic growth, providing useful information for everyday life, functioning as a pillar of popular culture, and offering a variety of lifestyle changes. Negative aspects of advertisements include: excessive commercial budgeting, the establishment of monopolies by various companies, and increases in information pollution. Yet, there is no doubt that advertising is an essential element in the economy, and it is also a vital force in the creation of culture.

Advertisements have many functions. These are embodied in their ability to sell products, services, and ideas; to provide information; to create demand; and to persuade consumers (Kobayashi, 1996). In addition, advertisements can control and determine an individual’s desire to consume, own, or purchase certain products. Commercials may even influence one’s thoughts about life (Kashiwagi, 1986). Sudo (1997) claims that consumption symbolizes an individual’s wealth and status. In today’s consumer-oriented society, people are not being forced to buy or use these products; rather, they are persuaded to follow these advertising trends, and by consuming, people create their own identities.

Further, commercials offer society new lifestyle choices (Kato, 1981). For example, a company selling whiskey does not only reveal its own bottle and brand.

Rather, the commercial presents an elegant room, filled with certain kinds of furniture, carpeting, and lighting, and the whiskey is displayed within that atmosphere. The company is selling an image and creating a new standard for the whiskey connoisseur. The advertisement produces a social condition – a seductive lifestyle – which it claims to behoove the individual intelligent enough to purchase its product. The company sells the image and the whiskey, as well. These aspects of advertising are integrated as accepted ideas within society. We read the world culturally as it is structured by advertisements, adopt that new world, and change the old world. Overall, advertising is a very powerful means of creating a consumptive society supported by large-scale production of products. Advertisements today provide information about products while stimulating people to adopt new conceptions of these products and their consumption.

It may be possible to mentally resist the claims that sponsors present in advertisements; however, it is difficult to ignore the image-centered claims that consumers receive from these commercial characters, their behaviors, and their lifestyles (Dyer, 1982). Advertisements do not show complete falsehoods; rather, they reveal a symbolized reality (Kashiwagi, 1986). The “reality” that an advertisement portrays is actually a value or an ideal that the advertising sponsors hopes will entrance and excite consumers. Sponsors want society to believe in and accept their version of the truth (Dyer, 1982).

Advertisers need to create distinct images for their products. They are limited only by their budgets and imaginations. The most critical choice a company faces involves the selection of a spokesperson, one who fits the image of the product and the company. Often times, a celebrity will be chosen to represent the product, and advertisers

attempt to borrow on that individual's fame and popularity; the "image," which is not merely a picture but an overall idealized lifestyle – one that may not exist empirically anywhere not even for the actual star. They hope the celebrity's image and status will be transferred, by association, to their product and will result in increased sales revenue for the company.

Advertisers are searching for the right "fit" between their product and a particular celebrity/image. Moviemakers producing an action film would probably never ask Rowan Atkinson, a comedian commonly known as "Mr. Bean," to be in their films because his persona does not match that of an action hero. There are systems that show screen personas of stars, and there are certain celebrities that audiences are comfortable seeing in particular roles. This is because there are rules that govern semiotic systems. Atkinson's role as "Mr. Bean" character makes it difficult for the audience to see him as an action hero. Consequently, he is considered to be a "wrong" persona for an action hero.

Thus, for example, if an advertiser wanted to promote a perfume for teenagers, it might hire Britney Spears, a teen singing icon, because of her appeal to that target audience. The perfume by itself has no meaning; it is just a scent. Advertisers need to give a personality to this new product. Thus, they select Britney Spears for their perfume. Teenagers love Britney, hence the assumption that they will also love this new fragrance.

What happens in such an advertisement is a transference of an image from the system of the celebrity to the system of the product. "The images" includes, by synchdotal mechanism, the entire system via implication. Britney Spears is not Barbara Streisand. Streisand is part of implied, by negation, system. Here, image-borrowing is

occurring from one system to another. This is how characters are used in advertisements. This is the work of advertising. Advertising links the two systems: the star and the product system. There are two systems at work. Firstly, there is a celebrity system. Each celebrity has meaning by virtue of binary opposition – they have a semantic “place” Advertisers assume the audience is familiar with celebrities representing their product. Secondly, there is a product system, and the celebrity gives meaning to the product. These two systems do not inherently make sense together. However, in the structure of advertisements, the audience correlates these two systems. When a popular female celebrity holds a bottle of perfume next to her face, her face becomes objectified and correlates with the perfume in the audience’s minds; images are virtual, not actual. By association, the meaning and significance of her celebrity status is transferred to the perfume. This is called an objective correlative. Her face and the perfume correlate in space; consequently, they exist in space together. Advertising transfers the meaning from the star system to the product system. The meaning is stolen or borrowed. It is a form of larceny in that there is no truly natural or logical connection, yet it comes to seem natural – it is magic identification which is not logical but created via advertising work – advertising magic which has little to do with logic or nature. Magic is not natural – it is a cultural act that produces artifacts. “Image” is artifact.

Thus, it is critical for advertisers to choose a celebrity who best gives the meaning they want the product to have. They also differentiate their particular product or service from its competition. A celebrity spokesperson provides that unique characterization. Thus, the celebrity system is associated with the product system by the process of ad work. There is an artificial connection created between the two. For example, there is a

Japanese commercial advertising a Nissan family car; this commercial has Rowan Atkinson as its spokesperson. His image is that of a funny, likeable, and harmless person. Though he has portrayed other roles than Mr. Bean, such as Edmund in *Blackadder*, Atkinson is primarily known to Japanese viewers for this characterization. Consequently, he is an appropriate spokesperson within the context of selling a family car, yet he might be considered inappropriate to hawk a brand of beer or other alcoholic beverage. Such drinks are often associated with wild or rambunctious behavior and with adult preferences and tastes. Mr. Bean does not possess those attributes or appeal to those sensibilities. Nissan wants their car to have the meaning of being fun, safe, and harmless.

Similarly, the actor, Pierce Brosnan may not be shown in a jeans advertisement because he embodies the image of the James Bond character, and such an elegant spy would never lower his fashion standards to include denim in his wardrobe. Depending on the type of image the advertiser wants to achieve in a commercial, it will select different celebrities. An entire star system is thus implied and exploited. Prior to advertising work, there is no logical, natural, or empirical relationship between a celebrity and a product. In the example mentioned previously, no logical relationship exists between Mr. Bean and a family car. However, the advertisements make sense because they create a feeling or emotion in the consumers' minds.

Advertisements in Japan and the United States

The process of assigning products meaning is basically the same in the United States and Japan. However, the results sought differ in accord with differing cultural values. The advertisements in both countries are similar in the sense that both attempt to associate celebrities with products. However, a difference is revealed in the way each

country's advertisements depict different races. The two star systems are different. Even among Japanese, the Japanese star system is seen as culture bound which the U.S. star system is seen as global – as trans-cultural - a judgment which indicates or reflect the cultural dominance of the U.S. culture industry globally. In Japan, even though it is a relatively homogenous society in terms of social make up, one can see many Caucasians in its advertisements. Westerners are depicted even for Japanese products. On the other hand, one does not see many Japanese or other Asians depicted in American TV commercials, especially not as personalities. The one exception has been very rare appearance of Jackie Chan. In a Japanese car advertisement, there are no Japanese or other Asians driving the car. Instead, the advertisers rely on American actors, which may be an attempt to disassociate the car from its Japanese origin.

In Japan, there is a positive connotation for Westerners and Western products. For instance, Toyota just announced in May 2004 that it will market its Lexus line for the first time in Japan (Kageyama, 2004). Toyota marketing spokespersons anticipate very low sales, at least initially, due to the fact that Japanese consumers prefer European maker for luxury cars, such as Mercedes, Benz and BMW. Asians in the US, however, do not have a similar foreign prestige. This may indicate a different kind of prejudice in the US from Japan. Japanese tend to have a favorite prejudice toward Western Caucasian while U.S. citizens tend to have a prejudice against Asians. However, the views toward Asians in the US may have a gender difference. In the West, Asian women tend to be seen as exotic and pretty but without personal identity, while Asian men are not considered to be very masculine. As a result, there are no Asian spokespersons in American commercials.

Though the strategies of commercials are basically the same in the US and Japan, each country demonstrates an important difference in terms of racism. The use of celebrities is one advertising tactic employed by both U.S. and Japanese companies. When advertisers attempt to make commercials with celebrities, they do not intend to make these celebrities more popular. The advertisers merely wish to borrow the images of these celebrities and trade on their celebrity status. Popular culture provides a hierarchy of sorts for these stars and their images are related to their fame quotient. This celebrity system already exists before the commercial is made.

CHAPTER 2

Advertisements in Japan

History of Advertising in Japan

Long before Japan had TV commercials, advertisements could be found in newspapers and magazines. As far back as the *Edo* era (ca. 1586-1911), playwrights had a role similar to that of today's copywriters. Therefore, advertisements are not new to Japan (Kato, 1981). This section will primarily focus on the period after 1945 in its analysis of Japan's advertising history. In Japan, from 1945 to 1960, advertisements attempted to express and provide a purpose in life for the Japanese people, following their loss in WWII. The themes of commercials in this time period emphasized peace, America, and a wealthy lifestyle. The US was portrayed as the ultimate symbol and goal for the Japanese to emulate. The US represented wealth, rationality, and modernization, and such images were reflected in Japanese advertising (Sudo, 1997). Copywriting in this period included "*America konomino kesyohin* (Cosmetics America likes)," "*Oubei de ichiban ninkino aru funryushiki* (The most popular laundry machine in Europe and America)," and "*Seikatsuwo yutakani suru katei denka* (Home electronics that make your life richer)." Hence, during the post-war period, product advertising reinforced the desired themes connected with concepts of America. The loss of WWII left the Japanese in very poor living conditions. Thus, the wealthy lives of American citizens became the dream of the Japanese people.

The radio stations began broadcasting in 1925 (Nakamine, 2002), and domestic television stations in early 1950s in Japan (Shimamura & Ishizaki, 1997). The late 1960s was called the era of the three "Cs" - car, cooler, and colored TV -, and by 1968, over a

million television sets had been sold in Japan (Union, 2002). The themes expressed in advertising in this era supported economic growth and included such favorites as “*Faito de ikou. Ripobitan D* (Go with guts. *Ripobitan D* drink),” and “*Ookii kotoha ii kotoda* (Bigger is better).” Commercials placed emphasis on the image of a particular product or company rather than on describing the product itself. However, after the oil shock of 1973, the rate of economic growth slowed, and people began paying more attention to developing a simple life and seeking harmony with nature rather than focusing only on economic growth and consumerism. Consequently, the themes of advertisements following this period included respect for human beings, a balanced relationship with nature, comfort, safety, and restrained economy (Sudo, 1997). The copywriting also reflected similar themes; e.g., “*Kangaete mireba ningen mo shizen no ichibu nanoda* (If you think about it, humans are also a part of nature),” and “*Gasorin setsuyaku jidaiga yatte kimashita* (Here comes the era when we save gasoline).” Noda (1979) explains that, from 1970 to 1976, a recognition of environmental problems and the effects of pollution came to the forefront, and Japanese consumers reduced their spending in an effort. Another characteristic of this era involved the filming of drama-like commercials – advertising segments which followed a story line or plot.

In the 1970s, Japan became a big market for color TVs, air conditioners, and products from foreign countries. Sudo (1997) highlights the Japanese people’s increasing demand for products and the many marketing opportunities. Companies attempted to establish certain market brands with the intention of segmenting consumer purchasing into those created categories. Hagiwara (1994) mentioned that many commercials emphasized function or the price of a product in the 1960s. Consumers became focused

on the design or packaging of a product and the performance of the product became secondary to its commercial appeal. The use of foreign celebrities in commercials also became popular in Japan during the first half of the 1970s.¹

Individuals were no longer presented with just a product but rather an overall image or package that included the spokesperson and his or her fame in its appeal. The face is a synecdoche of a larger semantic universe. Synecdoche is an “important subcategory in which part stands for the whole or whole for a part” (Berger, 1991, p. 23). In the car commercial starring Atkinson mentioned above, Atkinson’s face is a synecdoche for the whole “*Mr. Bean*” world and works well for the car commercial. If consumers buy the car, they will become part of Mr. Bean’s innocent and carefree world. The product bridges their association with Mr. Bean’s light-hearted world and the product. They must purchase the car, however, to gain the bridge to that world. Such advertising techniques create a society in which people’s values depended upon what and how much they are able to consume. This segmentation of the market results in elevated levels of both production and consumption.

One significant development which occurred in the 1980s involved professionals and academics’ interest in new media technology, such as cable television. Many TV commercials became quite popular. Catch phrases were repeated and established as part of Japan’s everyday vernacular. However, while there were increasing numbers of impressive commercials being made, scholars noticed that greater attention was given to the celebrity and image or mood by commercial produces than to the product itself. In order to facilitate analysis and discern the impact of Japanese commercials, scholars

sought new research approaches; hence, semiology was first used for the analysis of advertisements (Shimamura & Ishizaki, 1997).

Academic Interest in Advertisement Analysis

As the themes of advertising changed, so, too, did the techniques used to analyze them. In the 1950s, academic books about advertising and theories in the field were first published (Shimakura & Ishizaki, 1997). Scholars attempted to understand the meaning of media as it applied to the Japanese people. Therefore, the topics of media analysis concerned the meaning and definition of “news” and the way the news field had been established rather than centering on theory construction. Publications describing advertisement management began to appear in the 1960s, and this heralded a significant change in advertising analysis. Initially, companies only wanted to understand what type of commercials would catch consumers’ eyes. Now interest in the copywriting of expression in advertisements rose as people paid more attention to advertising and marketing (Shimamura & Ishizaki, 1997).

In the 1970s, scholars attempted to summarize and integrate existing knowledge about media analysis. This tendency resulted in the publication of various dictionaries about advertising, advertising expressions, and advertising terms. The segmentation of the advertisement medium also progressed during this time, and the analysis of the medium expended from the marketing communication to the management level, including public relations, corporate identity, and corporate communication (Shimamura & Ishizaki, 1997).

Japanese Television Commercials with Foreigners

Foreignness

Foreign elements. Sato (1997) estimated that in Tokyo and its surrounding areas, 2,600 different kinds of commercials and 100, 000 total commercials are shown per month. One of the biggest problems with this magnitude of advertisements is the audience's inability to distinguish each advertisement through all the clutter. Thus, it is critical to have a "catchy" commercial in order to capture the audience's attention and stimulate them to buy. In order to persuade the audience to purchase a product from one particular company, that company must strive to differentiate itself from its competitors by finding an object, a face, or an image with which the audience can associate. An objective correlative is needed. If an object is truly and inherently unique, it does not have a problem distinguishing itself from the clutter of all the other advertisements. For example, there are many cars, such as Ford, Nissan, and Toyota, and they are highlighted in a multitude of advertisements. In contrast, the audience never sees an advertisement for Rolls Royce. Due to their inherent uniqueness, they do not have to create an advertisement. These cars do not need to create an image because they themselves are the image.

The reliance on or inclusion of a foreign element or person in Japanese commercials seems to be a useful and effective advertising gimmick. Yasutake (1983) explained that foreign elements are used because they are eye-catching and help consumers to distinguish one commercial and its product from another. Shiga (1990) asserts that one reason for the many non-Asian elements in Japanese commercials is the Japanese fondness for foreignness. Hagiwara's (1994) study supported the claim that

foreignness is often routinely depicted in Japanese TV commercials, and advertising companies (executives) tend to present these foreign celebrities in characters or roles which are appealing to Japanese audiences.

Hagiwara (1994) stated commercials often use stereotypes of foreigners or of foreign scenery to stimulate sales. He cites an automobile commercial as an example, explaining that by showing the larger scale car traveling down a foreign, and typically wider, road than is found in Japan, consumers are inclined to fantasize about driving the vehicle themselves. A fashion commercial employing a foreigner with a non-Japanese look (*nihonjin banare shita*) seeks to emphasize luxury and sophistication. Accordingly, these foreign element commercials have a tendency to use Caucasians or locations in Europe or America specifically for their exotic appeal. By relying on foreign scenery or foreign elements, advertisers can control the image of the products and of their companies by connecting them with a specific culture. Consumers cannot see “culture” itself; instead they see an image or a physical representation of a culture. For example, ancient Egypt and its civilizations no longer exist and cannot be accurately recorded and photographed, but symbols of that culture, such as the pyramids, can be captured and used by advertisers to promote that particular image and milieu for their product. These components are the synecdoche, a part representing the whole.

As a result of the apparent desirability of foreignness, Japanese commercials rely on these elements extensively. Yasutake’s (1983) study revealed that 542 (46.2 %) of 1,171 commercials analyzed contained foreign elements; these included foreign celebrities, scenery, words (or phrases), and messages. Subsequently, The Forum for Citizens Television and Media (FCT) or *Shimin no media fooramu* (1991) examined

1,191 commercials and noted that if a foreign commercial was defined as using either a non-Japanese person or foreign scenery, then 29 % of the commercials analyzed would be categorized as such. The disparate percentages found in these two studies do not reflect a decrease in Japanese use of foreigners; rather, the difference can be explained as a result of the different analysis foci used. Yasutake's (1983) study counted foreign words and phrases and included these elements of foreignness; while FCT's (1991) analysis did not include these in its tracking.

In a more recent study, Hagiwara (1994) analyzed the extent to which advertising involved foreignness, which was represented as foreigners, foreign scenery, words, voiceovers, or background music, in 4,010 commercials. He found 599 commercials (15.0 %) utilized foreigners, 532 commercials (15.3 %) employed foreign scenery, 2,324 commercials (57.9 %) included foreign words (e.g., product names or company names), 686 commercials (17.1 %) relied on foreign voiceovers, and 363 commercials (9.0 %) played foreign background music. Comparing Japanese and non-Japanese products, these foreign elements were shown in 16.1 % of commercials for Japanese products compared to 44 % of foreign products. Thus, commercials for non-Japanese products attempt to present their endorsements in ways that emphasize the foreignness of those products. Further, when foreign scenery is the setting for a commercial, it is usually accompanied by a non-Japanese individual (Manabe, 1994). The most common types of commercials portraying a great deal of foreign components were found to be those for transportation vehicles (45.7 % of which had foreign elements) and for clothing (45.2 % of which included foreign components). WuDunn (1995) mentioned that despite a reluctance to buy American cars or other Western products, the Japanese people still admire and are

fascinated by the West. Thus, foreignness is represented in a significant proportion of advertising.

In terms of countries depicted in commercials, Manabe's (1994) study, conducted in 1979, revealed that Japan used American images most often among all other foreign countries. He found that the number of American images depicted in Japanese commercials was greater than the sum of all other countries' images used in commercials. Japanese commercials also employed a significant number of European elements.

Yasutake's (1983) study found that more than two thirds of all foreign elements are either from America or Europe and that commercials dealing with other countries are few.

Thus, it seems that America and Europe are frequently employed in Japanese commercials. Hagiwara, in his 1994 research, found that the scenery used most often in Japanese commercials was North America (30.1 %) (i.e., America for 43 commercials and Canada for four), and Europe (32.9 %). The percentage for other areas was much lower: Asia (12.4 %) and all others (24.6 %). More than half of the scenery or locations used in those commercials were from Europe or America. Scenery in some of the commercials could not be identified as having been filmed in Europe or America yet appeared to be including these scenes in Hagiwara's percentages would result in greater than 70 % of the commercials containing foreign elements.

Foreigners. Clearly, foreigners are often used as messengers for advertisements (Kobayashi, 1983), and the ratio of foreigners in TV commercials is much higher than the actual ratio of this group that reside in Japan. Holmberg (1986) concurs that Japanese TV commercials use a great number of foreign images. In September 2001, the Japanese population was 125.75 million, while the number of foreigners living in Japan was 1.36

million. Foreigners constituted only 1.08 % of the Japanese population (Soumusyo toukeikyoku [Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, Statistics Bureau], 2002). However, the number of foreigners in TV commercials is much higher. Hiyoshi's (1997) study examined 8,074 TV commercials and found that 1,449 of those (17.9 %) involved foreigners. A total of 4,004 foreign individuals appeared in these commercials. However, when a group or mass of people were shown, it was counted as only one person rather than increasing the total by each particular individual. Had he counted every individual separately from these crowd scenes, Hiyoshi would have found the number of foreigners in the commercials to be significantly higher. Yasutake (1983) also examined 1,171 commercials and found 16.9 % of them included foreigners.

Ramaprasad's and Hasegawa's (1990) study likewise revealed that Japanese commercials often use non-Japanese actors and spokespeople, and rely particularly on Western individuals. They found that 65 commercials (15.9 %) out of 410 used non-Japanese adult males, and 64 commercials (15.6 %) used non-Japanese adult females, though they did not specify the nationalities of those non-Japanese people. Haarmann (1989) examined 1,055 commercials and found 24.8 % of them used foreigners. Blonde Caucasians were seen on commercials most, followed by a mixture of Whites and Asians. There were few Blacks shown in Japanese commercials, and those who did appear were either athletes or musicians (Hiyoshi, 1997).

FCT (1988) examined 134 alcohol and 203 soft drink Japanese commercials and found that 53 alcohol commercials (39.6 %) had Caucasians in the commercials, 43 alcohol commercials (32.1 %) were shot in foreign countries, and 64 soft drink

commercials (30.9 %) employed foreign sceneries. Another FCT (1991) study revealed that 636 out of 2,119 commercials (29 %) had foreign elements, and 392 commercials (71 %) of those 636 commercials used either American or European sceneries, especially American sceneries (193 commercials or 35 %). Yamaki (1994) examined various countries' commercials and found that the number of foreigners in the Japanese TV commercials was 24 %. This rate was much higher than that of other countries: 2.7 % in Korea; 8.7 % in Taiwan; 8.0 % in India; and 9.0 % in China.

Hiyoshi's (1997) study found that among the 1,449 commercials in which foreigners held court, Whites appeared in 57.8 % of the commercials, non-Japanese Asians in 24.9 %, Blacks in 9.0 %, and others in 5.8 %. In Alexander's (1991) study, Whites appeared in 84 % of the TV commercials using foreigners, while Blacks appeared in 6 % and non-Japanese Asians in 5 %. Alexander's (1991) study revealed a much higher rate of white foreigners (84 %) used in the commercials compared to the rate of Whites (57.8 %) found in Hiyoshi's (1997) study. Alexander's research also showed a much lower rate of non-Japanese Asians (5 %) being used in the commercials compared to Hiyoshi's study, which found 24.9% of non-Japanese Asians. These differences could possibly be attributed to the six year time span separating the two studies or to an inability to differentiate Japanese from non-Japanese Asians. In either case, striking similarity in both involves the frequent appearances of Whites in commercials with foreigners.

Hagiwara's (1994) study found 599 out of 4,010 TV commercials (17.9 %) used foreigners; the race of the foreigners in those commercials included: Whites (78.0 %), Asian/Middle Easterners (9.3 %), Blacks (3.2 %), and combination of races (8.3 %).

Similar to Manabe's (1994) study, Hagiwara also found that the commercials with foreigners usually did not include Japanese persons (80 %) nor did anyone in the commercials speak Japanese (84.6 %). Iwao (1984) examined 515 magazine advertisements and 721 TV commercials and focused on the way each medium employed its foreign characters. The results showed that more than 90 % of characters in Japanese TV commercials and magazine advertisements were either Japanese or Whites, though the rates of both races were different for each medium. Japanese were seen in 42.9 % of magazine advertisements, while Whites were seen in 44.9 %. In the TV commercials analyzed, 69.8 % of characters were Japanese and 27.8 % were Whites. Here, such foreignness is used to symbolize prestige and quality even for Japanese products. Further, in order to achieve this desired foreignness, many Japanese advertising companies employ white models (*Dentsu Incorporated*, 1978). Alexander (1991) states that as Japanese are black-eyed and black-haired, blue-eyed blondes are presented as the most popular ideals. As a consequence, Japanese advertisements often have blue-eyed and blonde-haired people to associate the Japanese products with the West. These foreign models are exceedingly popular and are paid 50 % more than their Japanese counterparts (WuDunn, 1995).

Iwao (1984) examined whether commercials showed the characters or the products as their main focus or whether both were given equal billing. Iwao defined "focus" as the main attention grabber in each commercial. Though Iwao did not elaborate on this definition, it seems apparent that if a commercial's focus is on a product, then the camera will show mainly that product on the screen. If it is the characters that stand out in a commercial, and if the camera shows them up and close, then they are the primary

focus of the commercial, rather than the product. The result showed that almost half of the magazine advertisements using Japanese models (43.7 %) focused on characters as compared to the products. However, 80 % of the magazine advertisements using white actors either focused mainly on characters or gave equal attention to both the character portrayed and the products. For TV commercials using Japanese actors, 64.1 % focused equally on the characters and products, and only 27.9 % of them focused on the characters. For commercials with white actors, almost half (48.2 %) focused equally on the characters and products, and 55.4 % of commercials focused mainly on the characters. Thus, when the advertisements employed Whites, they were treated as the main focus in the advertisements rather than the product (Iwao, 1984). Thus, white actors are a powerful force in the Japanese advertising industry.

Celebrities in Japanese TV commercials

Typically, celebrities are defined as those individuals who are recognizable to the public and who receive high salaries for starring in advertisements (Koizumi, 1999). Advertisements with both Japanese and non-Japanese celebrities are quite popular in Japan. *Nikkei Ryutsu Shimbun* (Japan Economic Distribution Newspaper) (1996, as cited in Watanabe, 1997) conducted a survey of advertising department heads and asked them to pick the “hot” commercials of 1996. The top five commercials all included celebrities. According to Okuno (1997), the 1996 Commercial Festival hosted by the All Japan Radio & Television Commercial Confederation (ACC) granted prizes to 32 commercials received prizes, 16 of which starred celebrities, though the ACC did not record the nationalities of these stars. FCT’s (1988) study found that 80 of 134 alcohol commercials (59.7 %) and 79 of 207 soft drink commercials (38.2 %) used either celebrities or

characters. The characters were either created specifically for the commercials or were well-known from other TV programs, movies, or publications. Koizumi (1999) searched 281 TV commercials and found 54 % of them relied on celebrity sponsorship.

The use of celebrities in advertising is not solely a Japanese strategy. Many commercials with celebrities can also be seen in the US. According to Agrawal and Kamakura (1995), as much as 20 % of all television commercials in the US feature a celebrity (“E. F. Hutton’s spokesman”, 1986; Sherman, 1985). A great deal of research in the US has found that commercials with celebrities are perceived to be more believable (Kamins, Brand, Hoeke, & Moe, 1989), to enhance message recall (Friedman & Friedman, 1979), and to help the audience recognize brand names (Petty, Caccipio, & Schumann, 1983). Overall, celebrity endorsements seem to motivate customers to select the endorsed brands (Heath, McCarthy, & Mothersbauch, 1994; Kahle & Homer, 1985; Kamins et al., 1989; Ohnian, 1991).

Celebrity endorsements are perceived quite differently in the United States. In the US, it is commonly believed that Western celebrities who star in TV commercials do so simply for the financial gains and/or due to the lack of other acting roles. They are viewed negatively for abandoning their “true” craft and profession. In contrast, actors who star in advertisements in Japan are considered to be at the top of their field. Their celebrity status is made “official” by their appearing in such venues, and popular opinion is very favorable towards these celebrities. Rick Hersh, the head of worldwide endorsements for the William Morris agency, stated in an interview that celebrity endorsements enhance box office appeal in Japan, but often times did not achieve the same result in America (Sutton et al., 1998). Actors are proud to star in commercials in

Japan; the same cannot be said for celebrities in the US. Many American audiences view celebrity endorsements as a means of “selling out” or succumbing to the pull of the almighty dollar.

In Japan, the first decade of TV commercials, 1953-1963, enlisted celebrities who were known solely for their sponsorship of the marketable products. They became famous for their commercial roles and were, in the truest sense of the word, “commercial” celebrities. These actors were representatives of their various companies. They did not perform in other roles or capacities, and their responsibilities were to explain the products and relate to the audiences (Ogawa, 1981). Thus, it was important for them to be seen as trustworthy and respectable. The public recognized these celebrities through their commercial appearances. Soon after, however, the TV medium began to introduce celebrities taken from popular TV programs into the commercial market. One TV drama entitled *Himana-shi Tobidasu* (Mr. Himana Runs Out), which was broadcast from 1955 to 1962, often showed a drug store which shared its name with a sponsor of the program. The protagonist in this series also starred in TV commercials for that sponsor. Here, the TV program created the celebrity, who was then shown on a related TV commercial. This may have been the starting point for the overlapping of commercial and TV celebrities (Ogawa, 1981).

A celebrity’s popularity and his or her presence on TV is strongly connected in Japan today. A study by the *Nippon Housou Kyokai* (Japan Broadcasting Corporation), or as it is better known, the NHK, indicated that how often celebrities appeared in commercials was strongly affected by their number of appearances on various TV programs (cited in Saito & Endo, 1999; Terui, 2001). Nagahara’s (1981) study found

that, for Japanese celebrities, there is a positive correlation between the number of TV dramas and commercials an actor stars in and that celebrity's popularity. Moreover, celebrities can increase their popularity ratings by appearing in multiple TV commercials. Many songs which accompany the TV commercials are on the pop charts, and celebrities shown on popular TV commercials will tend to star in popular TV dramas and vice versa. Some celebrities debut in commercials, and others, whose stars may have fallen, attempt to revive their flagging careers by appearing in commercials (Sato, 1997). Western celebrities follow a somewhat different path to stardom in Japan. Their movies come to Japan and become hugely popular. After that, Japanese audiences remember these celebrities' faces, even though they do not appear on Japanese TV programs.

A Japanese research company, Video Research Ltd. (2001b), lists and ranks the ten most popular people appearing in Japanese commercials. It features information about these celebrities, and its records date since 1973. The fact that Japan keeps such ranking information indicates the importance of celebrities appearing in commercials. Video Research Ltd. (1998) would analyze the TV commercials for each year, and one of its survey questions concerned the audience's opinion on impressive elements within the commercials. Forty-eight percent of the respondents considered "celebrities and characters" to be a significant and impressive factor. Thus commercials with celebrities seem to appeal to Japanese audiences. According to *JAAA* (Japan Advertising Agencies Association) *Reports* (1994, as cited in Okuno, 1997), consumers do not want to see commercials with only information about the product but feel that it is necessary to have interesting or funny elements in the commercials, as well. The inclusion of celebrity spokespeople is one way to achieve this widely held requirement.

Advantages to Having Celebrities Appear in Advertisements in Japan

It has become quite typical for companies to hire big celebrities in order to raise their profits (Sato, 1997). Because one of the primary purposes of a commercial is to convey the company's message to the audience and to create consumer interest and recognition, this advertising ploy is understandable (Sato, 1997). It is important to capture the consumer's attention (Kojima, 1993). Commercials with celebrities are very good at achieving this goal. Japanese commercials usually last for only 15 seconds, thus it is critical to have a strong factor which quickly attracts attention. Celebrities provide that crucial impact (Asahina, 1997). Their involvement also seems to enhance consumer association with the products (Kondo & Kaji, 1975; Nomura, 1997). People remember the celebrities, and the companies are able to sell the products by using them in a variety of advertising media (Kondo & Kaji, 1975). By utilizing a celebrity's image, the endorsed product strengthens its hold on the market place and expands and improves its reputation (Nomura, 1997).

Commercials should also instruct the audience as to why a particular product is superior to its competition. Many products, such as food and drink, are difficult to differentiate by taste alone (Sato, 1997). Commercials which include celebrities are effective in developing a brand's image in the consumer's minds. The commercial establishes the product's image and a standard is set by which other products can be judged (Sato, 1997). Thus, celebrities serve as a signal to differentiate one product from another (Asahina, 1997; Kojima, 1993; Sato, 1997), and they raise interest in a particular product (Kojima, 1993).

Commercials with celebrities are convincing and powerful (Okuno, 1997). The multitude of Japanese commercials featuring celebrities reflects the strong persuasive power and popularity of this type of advertising (Kondo & Kaji, 1975). Ichikawa (2002) mentions that respect for and admiration of celebrities are two psychological explanations for the popularity of these commercials. Praise from a celebrity seems to be highly effective in persuading consumers (Okuno, 1997). A celebrity's trustworthiness is also used to convince consumers about the product's function and necessity (Kojima, 1993). It is important to convey the company's message to the audience through the celebrity rather than through the company itself. This leads an air of objectivity and sincerity to the company's advertising (Okuno, 1997). Japanese advertisers do not want to be too pushy in selling their products. Thus, with the celebrity's help, the advertisements are aware of a soft sell. A celebrity's opinion serves much as a third party's opinion would, and the advertising does not come across as forced or canned (Nomura, 1997). The use of celebrities has also been found to enhance the audience's perception of a product as being one of "high-quality," and this is especially true for Japanese consumers who are captivated by the suggestions of their favorite American stars ("Madonna in Japan," 1986).

The sense of camaraderie the audience feels toward a celebrity is another popular reason for including a star name in Japanese advertisements (Ichikawa, 2002; Okuno, 1997). Ichikawa (2002) mentioned that, in the past, the strongest reason to employ celebrities was the level of admiration and respect directed toward them. They were considered to be beyond the realm of everyday people, and their lofty statuses were persuasive. Although this is still an effective strategy, the push now seems to center upon

the perceived friendliness of the celebrity. Kojima (1993) stated that a celebrity's friendliness and connection with the consumer establishes a positive view of the product and/or brand represented.

It is often difficult for the creator of a commercial to explain to the product sponsors the exact intent or purpose of a particular ad campaign. It is rather easy, however, to discuss which celebrity the commercial will employ. Celebrities are the common denominator which both the sponsors and creators of commercial can understand. Thus, utilizing celebrities is an aid to convince the clients and bring them on board (Nomura, 1997). It is also easier for the ad sponsors to familiarize themselves with the commercial's concept or theme when a celebrity is involved (Asahina, 1997).

It may also be that advertisements featuring celebrities stimulate sales clerks and retailers to increase their efforts at selling those products (Okuno, 1997). Celebrities are a common and enjoyable topic to many people, and are often more appealing than the product itself (Kondo & Kaji, 1975). In addition, consumers are made aware of the product through the celebrity's pitch, and hopefully sales will follow (Okuno, 1997). Furthermore, the audience believes in the product based on the celebrity's recommendation (Konishi, 2002), and they likewise favor the marketed item.

Disadvantages to Having Celebrities Appear in Advertisements in Japan

It is assumed that the celebrity's representation creates a strong association with the product in the consumer's mind. Sometimes, however, the impact of the celebrity is stronger than that of the product, and consumers tend to only remember the celebrity (Kondo & Kaji, 1975; Nomura, 1997; Sato, 1997). In other words, the celebrity advertisement achieves high recognition for the star, but low recognition of the product

(Kondo & Kaji, 1975). The audience may not pay attention to the function or quality of the product represented (Nomura, 1997) and may not even concern itself with the price of the merchandise. If the commercial's main focus centers solely on its celebrity, the public faces a challenging obstacle to its retention and knowledge of the product (Asahina, 1997).

Moreover, if one celebrity appears in several different commercials, the audience becomes confused and may have difficulty recognizing the commercials and their products (Sato, 1997). Popular celebrities can usually be seen in more than one commercial at any given time. When the same celebrities appear in multiple commercials, the messages do not reach the audience in their intended manner, and it becomes difficult to distinguish among the products (Asahina, 1997). Consequently, the audience remembers that a celebrity is in a commercial but does not remember what type of product he or she is endorsing. Furthermore, the popularity of commercials depends upon the popularity of the celebrities involved; when celebrities are in trouble (e.g. arrested for drug abuse) or if their popularity wanes, the images of the products represented are also diminished (Nomura, 1997; Sato, 1997). Therefore, the image of the celebrity is always tied to the image of the product. In addition, extremely popular celebrities and their respective roles create narrow images of those actors in consumers' minds. A celebrity with a successful hit drama is restricted somewhat by the image of that specific role, and the star with the chart-topping hit song is forever associated with that sound. Thus, a gap may exist between the images of products and companies and the celebrities representing them (Kondo & Kaji, 1975). As mentioned previously, Pierce Brosnan would not be the most likely choice to endorse blue jeans. The casualness of the

product contradicts his stylish image as the British spy James Bond. It would seem to be a poor fit of product to spokesman.

Celebrities are generally popular for only a brief time, and because of the short duration of their fame, the products they endorse have a “shelf-life” as well (Nomura, 1997). The majority of the products do not remain in the market for an extended period of time. Brands are constantly changing. For example, choices of green tea bottles are continuously changing. In Japan, commercials depend upon the high popularity of their stars. The fleeting nature of fame creates a number of restrictions (Kondo & Kaji, 1975). If advertisements must have the most popular celebrity at all times, there will be a revolving door of celebrity spokespeople for any given product. Advertisers are unable to build brand recognition around a specific celebrity, despite the desires of their product companies to offer their merchandise to the public for periods of time which may exceed that celebrity’s time in the spotlight. There are both pros and cons concerning the use of celebrities. Yet, in advertising, there are many commercials and print advertisements with celebrities in the Japanese media, and so far, the advantages appear to outweigh the disadvantages.

Western Celebrities in the Japanese Television Commercials

History of Japanese TV Commercials with Western Celebrities

Western celebrities appear to have a strong appeal for the Japanese audience. The first foreign celebrity seen in TV commercials was Trio Los Panchos (a Puerto Rican trio) in 1961 (Mukai, 1983). Celebrities such as Michael Connors, Silvie Vartan, Twiggy, and Andy Williams starred in Japanese TV commercials soon after that time. Japanese advertisers began to use foreign celebrities more frequently in the 1970s. Charles

Bronson's *Mandam* commercial was the first big success story of an American spokesman for a Japanese product and became the inspiration for companies hiring Western celebrities in future advertisements (Hagiwara, 1994; Mukai, 1983). *Mandam* included products, such as hair and skin care products for men and cologne. So great was the success of Bronson's advertising campaign that the company legally changed its name from *Tancho* Inc. to *Mandam*. Advertisers and consumers recognized the impact of these Western figures. The success of having Charles Bronson was an inspiration for companies to hire many more Western celebrities, and it led to consumers recognizing the impact of U.S. stars. Since then, foreign celebrities have been used to introduce unfamiliar products (Tanzer, 1986).

Catherine Deneuve, Audrey Hepburn, Steve McQueen, and Alain Delon appeared in Japanese commercials in 1971 (Mukai, 1983). Shiga (1990) explained that, in the early 1970s, many foreign celebrities and foreign words were used in commercials (Kawakami, 1972; Shiga, 1990), and this helped to introduce unfamiliar products to the Japanese audience (Tanzer, 1986). Other famous actors and sports stars, such as Laurence Olivier, Henry Fonda, Gregory Peck, Peter Sellers, Jimmy Connors, Joe Namath, and Brigitte Bardot were also shown in Japanese commercials in the 1970s (Mukai, 1983). The main reason for using Western celebrities at that time was the dearth of new Japanese celebrities to endorse products. The majority of established Japanese stars had already been used in commercials, and a new trend was needed (Kawakami, 1972; Shiga, 1990). In addition, it became possible to pay higher salaries for the use of the Western celebrities because of an expanded market (Mukai, 1983). The advertising designers used these Western celebrities because of the enormous impact their commercials created. The

international celebrities and their glamorous images became powerful associations between themselves and the Japanese products. At the beginning of 1980s when Mukai wrote the book, *Nijiwo tsukuru otokotachi: Komaasharu no 30 nen* (Men who made a rainbow: The three decades of commercials), 12 famous movie stars, including Orson Welles and Sophia Loren and more than six professional golfers or models were seen in Japanese commercials. In excess of 12 other celebrities were also contacted by advertisement agencies to make commercials in Japan (Mukai).

Western celebrities continue to be popular even today. While the U.S. market imports many TV sets and VCRs made in Japan, pop culture's trade flows in the opposite direction from the US to Japan (Tanzer, 1986). During the 1980s, at least 30 Western celebrities appeared in Japanese advertisements. Sekigahara (1988) claimed that Japanese advertising had been increasing its use of Western celebrities both on television and in magazines at that time.

The number of advertisements that feature foreigners is probably highest in fashion or youth oriented magazines. However, other types of publications also portray foreigners. *Shukan Asahi* (Weekly Asahi), a Japanese news magazine, and *Katei Gaho* (House Pictorial/graphic magazine), a ladies magazine targeted especially to housewives with families, both utilize foreigners in their advertisements. Mueller (1992) gathered a total of 202 advertisements from these two publications: 93 advertisements from 1978 (42 from *Shukan Asahi* and 51 from *Katei Gaho*) and 109 advertisements from 1988 (58 from *Shukan Asahi* and 41 from *Katei Gaho*). She found eight advertisements (8.6 %) with Western models and two advertisements (2.2 %) with Western celebrities in 1978, and 13 advertisements (11.9 %) with Western models and one advertisement (0.9 %) with

a Western celebrity in 1988. These numbers are lower than the result of Iwao's (1984) study. Iwao examined the 30 most widely circulated magazines for the time frame of one week in August, 1981, and the list of magazines included several fashion and young adult publications. She found that almost half of the total magazine advertisements (44.9 %) featured Whites. The apparent discrepancy between her study and Mueller's (1992) may arise from the fact that *Shukan Asahi* and *Katei Gaho* are not targeted to young people. Hence, if this were an analysis of fashion magazines or young people's magazines, the numbers would be higher.

Today, there are still many Hollywood stars who appear in Japanese TV commercials. Some of the most notable celebrities include: Woody Allen for a department store chain, Pierce Brosnan for women's cosmetics, Mariah Carey for cosmetics, Leonardo DiCaprio for a credit card and a car, Celine Dion for an English school, Harrison Ford for a beer, Jodie Foster for cosmetics, Madonna for electronics, Paul Newman for coffee and a car, Brad Pitt for jeans and a car, Mickey Rourke for cigarettes, Meg Ryan for tea, Arnold Schwarzenegger for a vitamin drink and a beer, Charlie Sheen for cigarettes, Brooke Shields for coffee, Sylvester Stallone for ham and beer, Bruce Willis for diamonds and oil, and some sports figures, such as Scottie Pippen for a car and Tiger Woods for coffee ("Ad-shy stars," 1992; Alexander, 1991; Fields, 1989; "Image of the week," 1997). Commercials involving these Hollywood figures tend to follow a standardized format. The celebrity is shown in a rapid series of shots meant to showcase the product or company being advertised. The commercials are generally set with accompanying pop music and a simple product tag line ("Japanese advertisements: Leo-san," 1998). Usually, no connection exists between the celebrities depicted and the

products they are selling. Fannin (1996) presented an example of a typical coffee commercial: it starred Brooke Shields and showed her sipping coffee, following her acting class. No logical relationship or connection exists between Brooke Shields and the coffee being sold. As seen in this example, commercials often make casual connections between products and Western celebrities (“Madonna in Japan,” 1986).

Studies about Western Celebrities in Japanese Advertisements

Koizumi (1999) mentioned that there had been only a few studies done to research the effects of celebrity usage on the creation of new brands after 1965. One study which did examine this phenomenon was conducted by Iwao (1985). Her study attempted to reveal how the receivers of a message react to TV commercials with Japanese or foreign models. She examined commercials for six products (wigs, whiskey, clothing, watches, shampoos, and cosmetics), and each product had two versions of its commercial - one version utilized Japanese models, while the other showed foreign models. All of the models involved were celebrities. Iwao’s study featured the following Western celebrities: Troy Donahue, Tatum O’Neal, Ali MacGraw, Tom Weiskope (golfer), Alain Delon (French actor), and Brooke Shields.

Each of the six products was evaluated in 14 different categories, with all of the questions pertaining to the respondents’ opinions of the commercials. The 14 factors were: luxuriousness, trustworthiness of the product, high quality, friendliness, coolness, urbanism, ease of product understanding, elegance, likeability, enjoyableness, impressiveness, high-class sensibility, trustworthiness of characters, and desire to purchase the product. There were 60 college respondents surveyed, and the questionnaire

examined if there were differences in perception depending upon the race of the models used in the promotions.

There was a total of 84 factors (six products multiplied by 14 evaluation factors), and the results revealed that the racial differences of the models did in fact create significant perceptual differences for almost half of the examined factors. Out of 41 factors which indicated significant differences, foreign models received higher evaluations for 37 factors, and Japanese models got higher evaluations for only four factors. Among those factors that made significant differences, especially the factor of luxurious/ordinary, there were significant differences for all the six products (t is 3.84 for wigs, 10.05 for whiskey, 9.32 for clothes, 5.51 for watches, 3.12 for shampoos, and 2.70 for cosmetics, and all of them were significant at $p < .02$) between Japanese and foreign models. The respondents perceived the commercials with foreign models to be more luxurious than those with Japanese models (Iwao, 1985).

Commercials containing foreign characters received higher overall evaluations for four of the six products. Thus, when advertisers want to convince consumers of the “fine quality” of a product, they would be advised to use the foreign characters. Iwao (1985) explained this preference for foreign details as a byproduct of Japan’s admiration for European/American cultures. Japanese people may feel their lifestyle is inferior to that of other foreign lifestyles, and if that is the case, it would be prudent to rely on foreign models or characters in all situations. The question of which country, whether Japan or another, manufactured the product becomes moot. Japanese prefer to have all products represented with some foreign components included in the commercials. Foreign models pictured in endorsements serve to distinguish use of a product in an idealized scenario

from the too familiar reality of everyday life in Japan (Iwao, 1985). Thus, when advertisements include foreign models or characters, the audience's imagination is expanded and stimulated.

Iwao's (1985) study used two different commercials for the same or similar products. The main focus of her research involved the race of the models hired to represent the products and the subsequent appeal of the commercials. The commercials featuring similar rather than identical products had small variations in content. Thus Iwao decided to continue her research in order to eliminate these disparate variables. She examined two pictures of the products with two different models. One model was Japanese, and one model was white race, but all other elements within the photographs remained constant. These included the background, the positioning of the product, the posture of models, and their clothing. Iwao did not describe whether the models were celebrities or not; most likely, they were ordinary people rather than famous individuals. She asked the respondents about eight kinds of products: whisky, orange juice, beer, tomato juice, pouched instant curry sauce, Japanese *shochu* (liquor), *sake*, and instant *miso* soup. There were 15 factors to evaluate all the eight products: appetizing, being elegant, rich in taste, urban, stylish, cool, fresh, paltry, appealing, targeting for young, high quality, stimulating the usage of the product as a gift, eagerness to try, trustworthy, and being attractive.

The results showed that advertisements with the foreign (non-Japanese) models were evaluated significantly higher for curry, *miso* soup, whiskey, and Japanese *shochu* for $p < .05$. There was only one product that received significantly higher evaluation for the Japanese model, and it was *sake* for $p < .01$. There was no significant difference

depending on the race of the models for beer, orange juice and tomato juice (Iwao, 1985). The curry sauce and *miso* soup had the most differences for evaluation factors. The curry sauce had significant differences in the factors of being elegant, rich in taste, fresh, urban, stylish, and cool for $p < .05$. The *miso* soup had significant differences in the factors of being elegant, urban, stylish, cool, stimulating the usage of the product as a gift, and eagerness to try, also for $p < .05$. It seems like foreign models received higher evaluations because advertisements with Whites look or feel cool. Among eight factors, the perceptions of rich in taste were significantly higher for white models advertising whiskey, curry sauce, *sake*, and orange juice. The factor of stylish is also significantly higher for white models in advertisements for whiskey, Japanese *shochu*, curry sauce, and *miso* soup. These eight products were evaluated on 15 factors each, for a total of 120 factors. The foreign models received significantly higher evaluations for 16 factors, and only two factors received higher evaluations for the Japanese models. Even though the only difference in the two kinds of pictures was the race of the model, Japanese respondents still perceived the quality of the product in an advertisement starring Whites to be better than the one in the advertisement with the Japanese models. The only evaluation factor for which Japanese models received higher scores was in the friendly/not friendly category. Thus, foreign models convey an image of luxuriousness and coolness, while Japanese models present an image of friendliness.

The evaluation responses for the curry sauce and *miso* soup differed based on the race of the model, and foreign models received higher evaluations. Furthermore, there are more interesting insights for this result. When the races of the models were compared for advertisements of these two items, evaluation scores for foreign models were

significantly higher. However, when overall evaluation scores were compared among all the products, the scores for these two items were lower than other items. That means, if one compared the racial differences, foreign models received significantly higher evaluations for curry sauce and *miso* soup; yet, the overall evaluation scores for these items were lower than for the other items.

Iwao (1985) further investigated and found that, the products which received overall higher evaluation scores related more to the lifestyle in foreign countries. She explained this result because the respondents may prefer something foreign, and give low evaluations to Japanese products. If Japanese models advertise *miso* soup, it looks too Japanese; hence the respondents gave lower evaluation scores for the advertisement with Japanese models than for the one with foreigners, though there is no strong connection between *miso* soup and foreigners. The fact that the advertisement with foreigners for *miso* soup received higher evaluation scores might indicate that foreign models neutralized perceptions of *miso* soup as too Japanese-like. Japanese tend to think of Japanese culture as special and closed from other cultures, yet they tend to avoid that specialness or self-containment. A *miso* soup advertisement with a Japanese model is an example of what Japanese do not want to see, because it is too Japanese (Iwao, 1985).

Manabe (1983) revealed that when singers, actors/actresses, or sports celebrities were shown on commercials, 69.5 % of the respondents thought it was very effective. If the advertisements used foreigners or foreign scenery, 39.7 % of the respondents thought it was very effective, and 50.5 % recorded favorable responses to the commercials. Thus, in commercial segments which include celebrities, 38.4 % of those surveyed appreciate that marketing style. Furthermore, Japanese audiences perceive Western celebrities to be

dignified and sophisticated and easily transfer their admiration of these models over to the endorsed products. Manabe (1994) analyzed this effect and rather non-Japanese celebrity commercials on the basis of ten descriptive factors: friendly, high-class, exciting, slow moving, old fashioned, showy, mundane, ordinary, refined, and cheerful. Participants were asked, via the above list of adjectives, to classify their opinions of the commercials. The results showed that the respondents regarded these commercials as showy, cheerful, contemporary, exciting, and refined. Thus, Japanese advertisers employ foreign elements in order to engage the Japanese audience and encourage consumer's positive feelings towards the products being advertised.

Compared to the total number of non-Japanese models used in that country's advertising, the number of foreign celebrities involved is relatively small. Hagiwara's (1994) study revealed that 72.1 % of the foreigners used in the commercials had a non-celebrity status. As for the demographics of the celebrity group, 16.2 % were actors, actresses, singers, or business persons; 4.8 % were sports celebrities, and 5.8 % were renowned in other arenas, such as academia. Though the total number of celebrities seen in commercials was low, the impact of Western celebrities may be much greater than that of other non-famous foreigners. Thus, advertising does not need to show so many celebrities in commercials. As Yasutake (1983) observed, if the reliance on foreign components in Japanese commercials is too great, the novelty and uniqueness of that medium will become obsolete and its effectiveness diminished.

Japanese Reasons to Use Western Celebrities

There are several reasons for Japanese TV commercials to utilize Western celebrities. In an interview with Fannin (1996), Masato Omiya, a marketing specialist and

regional sales manager for the corporate giant *Kowa Pharmaceutical*, states that a primary reason is the “foreigners’ watchability” (p. 18). Omiya explains that Japan was a tightly closed country and maintained its one race, culture, and language until the 19th century. Although the number of foreigners there today has increased dramatically, it is still a rather rare occurrence to meet a non-Japanese in many parts of Japan, with the exceptions of Tokyo and Okinawa (Fannin, 1996). Thus, using foreigners and foreign scenery in the commercials catches the consumer’s eye, and companies attempt to gain popularity by showcasing ultra-famous foreign celebrities (Hagiwara, 1994). Though his study was concerned, not only with the impact of including Western celebrities but of Japanese celebrities, Ohmura (1999) suggests that all celebrity endorsements actually serve to de-emphasize, rather than emphasize, the advertised products. The focus shifts to the celebrity and to his or her persona and away from the merchandise. His study examined 91 commercials, and Ohmura discovered that celebrity-led advertisements utilized voiceovers, subdued or natural scenery/clothing, and/or slow background music to a much larger degree than did non-celebrity commercials. The increased use of such devices is an attempt by advertisers to emphasize dignity. Japanese marketing research has found that when endorsements are advertised by celebrities, consumers are more likely to remember the commercials, and “in a sense the celebrity is the message. Japanese advertising emphasizes style and mood rather than substance and reality” (Tanzer, 1986, p. 88).

In an interview with Fannin (1996), Omiya provides other explanations for Japan’s plethora of Western celebrity dominated commercials. He asserts that the Japanese people tend to consider all things America as being bigger and better. By using

foreigners in their advertisements, the company executives hope to make products appealing to Japanese consumers. In addition, American films are typically better received and significantly more popular and profitable than Japanese movies. Japanese audiences constitute a large part of Hollywood's success; hence the selection of a Western celebrity to star in a company's advertising becomes very important (Tanzer, 1986). As the vice president of McCann-Erickson suggests, if unknown people are used to endorse products, advertisements will be less successful. More than half of all TV commercials in Japan use spokespeople who are easily recognizable to the public; this ratio is much higher than what is typical of advertising in the US.

Nagahara (1981) mentioned that companies must choose celebrities who fit their targeted markets. His research illustrated a connection between audience's approval of the celebrities used in product advertisements with the types of goods being endorsed. Consumers expect to see certain stars and celebrities representing specific brands or types of merchandise. Audience approval was highest for food product and restaurant commercials when these companies were represented by movie and TV celebrities, preferably by the newest and "hottest" stars of the moment, or by exceedingly cheerful, comedian-type actors/actresses. For expensive and/or technology related product commercials, such as for electronics or computers, consumers responded most favorably to those advertisements which featured celebrities in a professional or specialist capacity. The foreign celebrity/model's ability to evoke a sense of trust and security in the viewer's mind was critical to the advertising success for these types of products. Commercials were also best received when presented by older, well-established celebrities. In all of the

reviewed commercials, a celebrity's projection of friendliness and optimism was associated with a positive consumer evaluation.

Advertising preferences are also influenced by the ages and occupations of the audience members. Nagahara (1981) found that office workers in their 20s appreciated distinguished, sincere celebrities, while blue collar workers seemed to prefer comedians and more youthful celebrities. Consumers interested in designer products appeared to favor commercials featuring celebrities of a higher socioeconomic status, while consumers who were unconcerned with brand names and logos responded more positively to solicitations from "down to earth" actors.

One purpose of hiring celebrities to star in commercials is the subsequent rise in publicity for the companies who are advertising. Often times, the featured star also experiences an increase in popularity due to his or her involvement in these commercial spots. Hiring celebrity spokespeople is a powerful advertising strategy, which typically results in an effective commercial. The advertising industry is well aware of the effectiveness of using an instantly recognizable star in a Japanese market, where advertising spots last a mere 15 seconds, rather than the 30 seconds commonly seen in the US (Tanzer, 1986). Japanese advertisements do include some 30-second commercials, but these are not the norm. Yamaoki (1997) explained that Japanese television companies sell both time sales and spot sales. Time sales refer to those commercials that are shown within a TV series "broadcast." Usually, these commercials may run for the extended 30-second time frame. Spot sales refer to 15-second commercials that are played between programs. Thus, what Tanzer (1986) claims describes only spot sales, not all Japanese commercials.

However, Tanzer may have been misled by the fact that the number of spot sales in Japan may be higher than that in the US. There are approximately five-to-ten minute intervals between television programs in Japan; the time between programs seems much shorter in the US. Japanese commercials need the fastest, strongest impact possible within this short time frame. Thus, a primary benefit of having Western celebrities in Japanese commercials is that the stars imbue their products with “a certain international cachet” (Tanzer, 1986, p. 88). They are instantly recognizable, and the audience can focus on the product since the celebrity’s face and persona are so rapidly perceived and processed in a 15-second commercial. Companies attempt to increase their popularity and sales by using popular foreign celebrities (Hagiwara, 1994). For example, three months after Mitsubishi’s VCR advertisement starring Madonna debuted, the company’s sales doubled (“Madonna in Japan,” 1998). Businesses are also concerned about their image and that their products are associated with the “right” celebrities (Nagahara, 1981). Nagahara mentions that the selection of celebrities for advertisements depends partly upon the extent of the star’s popularity and fame.

Omiya, in her interview with Fannin (1996), illustrates a significant difference between the advertising promotions used for Western versus Japanese celebrities. Western stars, who are featured in Japanese commercials, receive additional publicity through the wide-spread use of poster displays and other marketing tie ins. Japanese celebrities are not afforded this same market saturation. In an industry where both public attention and popularity are fleeting, Western stars have a definite advantage over their Japanese counterparts. Differences in television programming schedules in the US and Japan also play a large role in the success/approval ratings of Western celebrities in

Japan. Unlike the weekly television programs shown in the US, Japanese dramas are short lived and sporadically filmed. A program may last for only a three month run. Others, such as *Kita no kuni kara* (From a North Country), had a year long run in 1981 to 1982 and was then broadcast as a special television event. Series are not shown in sequence year to year in Japan. Shows are hugely popular but are just as quickly replaced and filled with new shows and new celebrities. Thus, there is a rapid turn-over in the popularity and appeal of Japanese entertainers. Their vehicles to fame are more capricious than are those for Western television celebrities. Western celebrities, who are continuously seen in films and television specials, hold great appeal for Japanese advertisers due to the somewhat prolonged periods of their stardom.

The admiration for Westerners by Japanese may also derive from the Japanese experience with the West. In the late 19th century, Japan opened the country to the outside world through the *Meiji* Restoration. Furthermore, Japan attempted to follow Western culture, as it was considered to be superior to and more advanced than its own culture. In that era, Japan experienced the phenomenon called *Bunmei kaika* (Civilization and Enlightenment) through its attempt to imitate Western clothing and culture. Rosenberg (1986) explains that Japan's thirst for all things Western stems from the country's complex with the West. This complex manifests itself in the form of obsessive fascination with Western consumerism and habits. Kitahara (1983) attributes this complex to Japan's loss of World War II, and the common habit of a defeated country to identify with its victor. After World War II, American culture permeated Japan, and Japanese encounters with the seemingly wealthy, new, and advanced American culture instilled an admiration of the West into Japanese minds. In an interview with Tanzer

(1986), Akio Nakamura, a manager of the *Dentsu* advertising agency creative department, mentioned that the easiest way to depict such a Western way of life is by using foreign personalities. The Japanese attention to and reverence for Western celebrities can be also attributed to a traditional Confucian admiration for people who have talent (“Western stars shine in East,” 1989).²

Reasons for Western Celebrities to Star in Japanese Television Commercials

From the Western celebrity’s side, there are several reasons for starring in Japanese commercials. One of the most compelling seems to be the significant financial rewards involved (“Japanese advertisements: Leo-san,” 1998; Shiga, 1990; Tanzer, 1986). For their roles in Japanese advertisements, most celebrities earn from 20,000 U.S. dollars to two million dollars (Tanzer, 1986; “Western stars shine in East,” 1989). Sutton et al. (1998) indicated that Japanese advertising companies have, in the past, paid celebrities one million dollars for as little as one day’s work. For example, Leonardo DiCaprio earned four million dollars for two days work in Los Angeles to shoot a Japanese credit card company commercial (“Japanese advertisements: Leo-san,” 1998). Madonna earned 650, 000 dollars to advertise a videocassette recorder on for *Mitsubishi Electric*. She merely allowed the company to use a part of her tour video (“Madonna in Japan,” 1986). Actress Faye Dunaway got 900,000 dollars for uttering only six words to advertise a Tokyo department store (“Madonna in Japan,” 1986). The listing of outrageous salaries for high-profile, Western celebrities is extensive and exhausting. Suffice it to say, American figures are generously paid for the use of their fame face, and persona in the Japanese commercial market.

Japan's weakened economy forced the companies to cut many stars' salaries (Sutton et al., 1998) and the work-pay-ratio was soon changed ("Japanese advertisements: Leo-san," 1998). Most celebrities now get between 500,000 and 600,000 dollars. However, high profile stars like Brad Pitt, Leonardo DiCaprio, and Tiger Woods can earn twice that amount (Sutton et al., 1998). In an interview with Sutton et al. (1998), Koichi Sonoda, a *Dentsu* advertising agent, mentioned that he had fewer numbers of foreign celebrities involved in ongoing projects that year than they had been in the previous one. However, even though the salaries for the celebrities have been reduced, the companies are still willing to pay handsomely on such stars in the hopes of creating catchy commercials.

Western celebrities can appear in Japanese commercials without the fear of reprisals or recriminations for such work. Their reputations are protected by a contract which prohibits the broadcasting of their Japanese endorsements outside of Japan (Alexander, 1992; "Japanese advertisements: Leo-san," 1998; Shiga, 1990). Farrah Fawcett, one of the *Charlie's angels'* actresses, sued one of the largest Japanese advertising agencies for releasing her Japanese commercial for Camellia diamonds to the CBS network in the 1970s, and the agency was forced to pay an undisclosed amount of money (Kilburn, 1991, 1998). As discussed previously, commercials are considered to be an inferior and embarrassing source of revenue for actors in America. Japan values and approves of advertising roles for its stars and celebrities. The discrepancy in opinion concerning commercial spots is quite significant between the two countries; thus, Western stars rely heavily on this confidentiality clause. Arnold Schwarzenegger's commercial for the Japanese health drink (*Alinamin-V*) is a prime example of the image

controversy inherent in a Western celebrity's decision to endorse Japanese products. Although he was paid one million dollars for his participation, Schwarzenegger appeared naked, and his body was covered in gold paint. His quote to a reporter, regarding this incident in 1991, is revealing. "It's the kind of thing that if I did it in America my career would be finished overnight" (Alexander, 1992, p. 49). Consequently, as Tanzer (1986) mentioned, the only negative concerns celebrities have regarding Japanese promotional spots involves the possible damage to their images and careers in the US.

Since then, stars have felt safe and comfortable being in Japanese advertisements ("Japanese advertisements: Leo-san," 1998). N. Utsubo (personal communication, October 18, 2001) in one of the Japanese advertisement periodicals, *Koukoku Hihyou* (Advertisement Critique), mentioned that due to strict copyright control, advertisers cannot feature issues with foreign celebrities. This may indicate a restriction for the Japanese advertising companies. Advertisers are not allowed to mention Western celebrities anywhere in their publication, despite the fact that the Japanese can view such celebrities anytime on their TVs. Yasutake (1983) mentioned that some people questions whether or not the large expense of hiring and filming celebrities are beneficial. Nevertheless, advertising agencies cannot ignore the fact that young people like foreign celebrities and elements in their commercial viewing.

There are additional reasons for Western celebrities to represent products in Japanese TV commercials. The Japanese movie market is considered to be a significant one for these celebrities (Shiga, 1990). Thus, appearing in Japanese commercials is a good promotional technique to promote their names and movies. In addition being seen in the Japanese TV commercials provides exposure in a market where they would not

normally be seen otherwise (Tanzer, 1986). In Japan, Western celebrities do not participate in talk shows; thus, they can only be seen on the movie screen and Japanese advertisements. Consequently, the advertisements work well as promotional videos. Rick Hersch, the William Morris agent who made Schwarzenegger's deal, mentioned in an interview with La Franco (1998), that it was not only about the money, but also about the image management.

CHAPTER 3

Research Methodology

Semiology/semiotics

Berger (1991) claimed that “Semiology – the science of signs – is primarily concerned with how meaning is generated in ‘texts’ (films, television programs, and other words of art). It deals with what signs are and how they function” (p.3). Thus, I have chosen to employ this methodology as it offers the perfect venue to analyze the meaning of Western celebrities in Japanese TV commercials. The terms semiology and semiotics, or, as Berger (1991) coined it, “semiology (also sometimes called semiotics)” (p. 3), are often used as synonyms. In contemporary times, the trend of Locke, Peirce, and Morris is referred to as semiotics; the trend from Saussure to Barthes is termed semiology (Hamashima, Takeuchi, & Ishikawa, 1997; Nöth, 1990). For the purpose of this dissertation, the verbiage used by the original authors of the books or articles referenced will be applied. When citing Japanese works, I will use the term semiology, although the two phrases are used interchangeably in the Japanese language. Semiology is concerned with how meaning is created and conveyed in texts (Sperber & Wilson, 1986). The word “semiotics” derives from a medical term used in ancient Greece to explain the process of diagnosing a patient’s disease by observing the symptoms he or she presented. That is, doctors examined and assessed the outward manifestations of the disease and used those visible clues to hypothesize about the internal workings of the body – aspects that they were unable to view firsthand (Nöth, 1990). First, Peirce’s semiotics and Saussure’s semiology are briefly explained, and then Barthes’ semiology is accounted for as the central criterion employed in this dissertation.

Semiotics by Peirce. Peirce's semiotics makes a distinction between an idea and a sign (Hoops, 1991, p. 7). An idea may develop in a person's mind, and its meaning is easily recognized and known. The meaning of a sign, however, is not immediately obvious. A sign has significance only when it is interpreted by a thought or action, "[thus] the meaning of every thought is established by a triadic relation, an *interpretation* of the thought as a *sign* of a determining *object*" (Hoops, 1991, p.7). Peirce called this triadic relationship of sign *semiosis* (Nöth, 1990). Three components of semiosis were identified: a sign or *representamen*, an interpretation or *interpretant*, and the *object*. None of these three elements exist independently. All must be present for the sign to have relevance (Deledalle, 2000). The representamen holds meaning for an individual. It is directed toward something and stimulates a meaning, or interpretant, in his or her mind. The sign stands for the object (Nöth, 1990). For example, when a person uses the word "parents," the word itself is a sign or a representamen. Yet the speaker may think of his or her own parents when using this word. The parents, those individuals who form the basis of the experiences represented in the use of the sign, serve as the object. The interpretant is the impact that the word "parents" has on the mind of the individual speaker.

Semiology by Saussure. Saussure stated that "*a science that studies the life of signs within society* is conceivable; it would be a part of social psychology and consequently of general psychology" (Saussure, 1966, p.16). He called his area of expertise semiology. Saussure felt that linguistics could be a model for this new field of study (Culler, 1986). Linguistics is a part of semiology, in that the laws that semiology adheres to can also be applied to linguistics (Saussure, 1966).

In Saussure's semiology, he divided a sign into two parts: a sound-image, or a *signifier*; and a concept, or a *signified* (Saussure, 1966). For example, the word *arbor* means tree in French. The sound-image "arbor" is a signifier and what the sound of "arbor" refers to, a tree, is a signified. Hearing or seeing the word "arbor" stimulates a person's mind to envision a tree (provided that the word "arbor" is known); hence, words and concepts are practically inseparable. Saussure divided them only for analytical purposes. He further mentioned that the relationship between a signifier and a signified is arbitrary. If one does not know the word "arbor," he or she does not understand the meaning of the word. As *ki* in Japanese also means tree, there are many arbitrary combinations between the signifier and the signified to mean tree. This is because a natural relationship does not exist between a word, such as "tree," and its concept. Human beings invented the alphabets, gave order to nature, and determined a combination of letters t, r, and e to indicate a concept of a tree, in order that a distinction between trees and other plants could be made. Though the sounds and combinations of words are different, "tree," "ki," and "arbor" all mean the same thing.

Another interesting aspect of the relationship between a signifier and a signified is that it may change throughout time. Following the Russian Revolution, the symbol used by the Russian royal family – once an emblem of power and status – became known as a badge of lawlessness and terror. Thus, a relationship between the sound-image of an object and the concept of the object is not natural, but arbitrary and its meaning may fluctuate over time.

In addition to identifying the arbitrary connection in a sign system between a signifier and a signified, Saussure illuminated the concepts of *la langue* and *parole*, and

synchronic or diachronic analyses for linguistics. *La langue* refers to a system that governs and rules the usage of language. *Parole* refers to actual speech. Saussure (1966) also emphasized analyses as being synchronic or diachronic in character. A diachronic analysis examines a historical chain of events, while a synchronic analysis pays attention to paired opposites within a text during a certain time period. In other words, a diachronic study of language is interested in the change of language over time, while a synchronic study of language examines the linguistic system within a particular time.

An excellent example of diachronic analysis is Propp's (1968) research that classifies heroic stories into various functions. Propp identifies certain patterns in heroic stories and categorizes them into various stages or functions through a chain of events, including the hero's departure from home, the struggle between hero and villain, and the hero's subsequent return. As a tool to examine and explain the role of the hero within a text, Propp's stages are extremely adaptable and functional.

A synchronic analysis is a search for the oppositional relationships within one story. This technique is based upon Saussure's (1966) work which emphasized such relationships. He purported that a concept does not have meaning in and of itself; rather it must always be viewed in relation to another concept, primarily with regard to the opposing relationship between the two. Thus, one's conception of the term, "rich," is meaningless unless a conception of "poor" also exists within one's framework of reference. In various stories, oppositional relationships, such as "good and evil," or "victory and defeat," are often employed. A synchronic analysis focuses on these relationships and their inherent dichotomy.

Furthermore, though Saussure claims an arbitrary relationship between the signified and the signifier, he realizes it could, at times, be natural, such as the relationship between a photograph and its signified concept. For example, a photograph of an apple represents the concept of the apple, or the signified; a natural relationship does exist. Saussure (1966) called this the iconic, or motivated, sign. Even when one views a photograph of an animal that he or she has never seen before, the photograph still signifies the concept of an animal. On the other hand, when there is not a natural relationship between the signifier and the signified, the sign is arbitrary or unmotivated. In the previous example, although the picture of the apple and the concept of the apple have a natural relationship, the word “apple,” or the signifier, and the concept of apple, or the signified, do not have a natural connection. Rather, the relationship between word and concept is dependent upon convention, and this is regarded as the arbitrary or unmotivated sign. If an individual does not know the word “tree,” then the written word appears merely as a sort of drawing to that person and cannot be understood to signify the concept of tree.

Despite the sometimes arbitrary nature of the signifier to the signified, the relationship between the two must still be learned and understood. This implies that there are certain structured associations, or codes, which help people interpret signs (Sperber & Wilson, 1986, p. 8). Codes exist in every society and culture and are taught to those within the group. “These codes, or ‘secret structures’ in our minds, affect the way we interpret signs and symbols found in the media and the way we live” (Berger, 1991, p. 23). In a sense, we all use semiology in everyday life, even if we are unfamiliar with that

term. As we mature, we are socialized into society and learn to associate meanings with phenomena.

Semiology by Barthes. Though Saussure confined his semiological analysis to the field of linguistics, Barthes extended it to all cultural forms. According to Barthes (1972), “semiology is a science of forms, since it studies significations apart from their content” (p. 111). He asserted that semiology could be applied, not only to an analysis of language, but also to analyses of facial expressions, body language, art, myth, and religion. He includes folklore (or legends), mass media and its expressions, architecture, theatrical performances, and even television programs within this wide array of areas compatible to semiological interpretation. In other words, all cultural forms created by human beings and even aspects of nature itself are for semiotic analysis and study (Berger, 1991; Hamashima, Takeuchi, & Ishikawa, 1997).

Barthes proposed a new academic discipline, “a neo-Saussurean inspiration, which he originally called *trans-linguistique*” (Harries, 2001, p. 133). Barthes instituted a sign system consisting of a signifier and a signified, and furthermore, he posited a relationship whereby a language system underlies a myth system. “Myth is a peculiar system, in that it is constructed from a semiological chain which existed before it: it is a *second-order semiological* system. That which is a sign (namely the associative total of a concept and an image) in the first system, becomes a mere signifier in the second” (Barthes, 1972, p. 114). This second-order semiological system of language and myth is known as denotation and connotation.

Denotation and connotation refer to the first and second levels of meaning shown in a sign. “The term *denotation* refers to the literal meaning of a sign; to what is

‘objectively’ present and easily recognized or identified. The term *connotation* is used to refer ‘to meanings which lie beyond denotation but are dependent on it’” (Dingera, 1994, p. 15). For example, the word “rose” represents a type of flower. The combination of alphabet letters, r, o, s, and e, is the signifier. The word “rose” signifies a specific flower in an individual’s mind; this image is the signified. The signifier and the signified form the sign within the language system. This is the denotation. The sign in denotation becomes the signifier, and, in the example of “rose,” it signifies passion or love in the second system. These multiple “rose” meanings are the signs in the myth system, or connotation. The myth system recognizes culturally learned and implied meanings, and therefore, the sign in the myth system is myth or connotation.

Barthes would agree with Saussure’s distinguishing between the iconic and arbitrary signs. He acknowledged that some signs do have natural relationships between the signifiers and the signified (Fiske & Hartley, 1978). However, Barthes would argue that a natural relationship between the signifier and the signified can be seen only through the sign in the language system. When the sign is considered in the myth system, there will never be a natural relationship between a signifier and a signified. A photograph of New York and the concept of New York have a natural relationship in the language system. In the myth system, however, the sign becomes the signifier, and New York represents the technology, energy, and loneliness in an urban city. Whatever the phenomenon, one’s mind sees a meaning beyond the literal denotation. In other words, a phenomenon always comes with an interpretation that is culturally learned.

In sum, Saussure argues that a sign is composed of two parts: the signified and the signifier, and that a sign is either iconic or arbitrary. Barthes insists, however, that the

sign, which has a natural relationship between the signifier and the signified, only occurs in the language system and not in the system of myth. Although Saussure (1966) is also interested in meaning in *Course in general linguistics*, he emphasizes the synchronic dimension of language. Consequently, all the relationships between the signifiers and the signified in the myth system are arbitrary. Overall, Barthes' semiotics enables us to search for the perceived meanings of various phenomena. This dissertation will explore the content of Japanese commercials that feature Western celebrities and will apply Barthes' semiology to examine the signs in the language and myth systems included within these advertisements.

Scholars began applying semiotics or semiology to describe and analyze the structure and meaning in advertisements in the late 1970s and early 1980s (e.g., Barthes, 1977; Bachand, 1988; Chapman & Egger, 1983; Cleveland, 1986; Klopfer, 1987; Langholz-Leymore, 1975; Leiss, Kline, & Jhally, 1990; McQuarrie, 1989; Mick, 1986, 1987, 1988a, 1988b; Mick & Politi, 1989; Nöth, 1987a, 1987b; Umiker-Sebeok, 1987; Vestergaard & Schroder, 1985; Williamson, 1978). In Japan, people started to apply semiology in order to figure out the meanings of advertisements in the 1980s. The analysis of advertisements had previously been examined from many fields, including sociology, psychology, and social psychology; however in the 1980s, semiology was added to those perspectives, and the semiological analysis of advertisements became an established form of media analysis (Shimamura & Ishizaki, 1997).

Commercial Techniques

An advertising message can be viewed as a text, composed of verbal and pictorial signs. To understand the intent of the advertisement as a whole, one must investigate the verbal and pictorial signs within the advertisement and decipher their meanings and implications. The combination of verbal and pictorial signs and the relationship forged between them creates another layer of significance and interest (Dingena, 1994). The pictorial signs within an advertisement include the layout, the use of color, the depiction of the product, the person(s) using the product, and the circumstances in which the product is being used. The headlines, text, slogan, and product price all comprise the verbal signs of the advertisement. Other factors which contribute to an advertisement's effect upon the consumer include the use of lighting, space, shot angles, and special effects (Berger, 1987). These elements of visual production can be considered themselves as signifiers, and their meaning and import to the message becomes the signified. A close-up shot, for instance, creates a level of intimacy between the viewer and the person portrayed in the advertisement; a pan-down shot establishes the power, control, and authority of a person, and fade-out shots indicate the end of the message or story (Berger, 1991). Kashiwagi (1986) noted that images and sounds in a TV commercial assist in supplying the message. Because of their ability to convey additional information, camera shots and presentation techniques play a pivotal role in the assessment and strength of a commercial's appeal. Hence, it is necessary to have a deeper understanding of these filming elements, and I will examine them in greater detail below.

Camera shots. The cinematic community shares several communication styles with art, entertainment, essay, myth, propaganda, and advertising (Baddeley, 1970).

Thus, the process of making a TV commercial is quite similar to that of producing a film. DeNitto's (1985) explanations of the various shot techniques used for creating a film are particularly helpful here. The main characteristics of a shot include content, distance, angle, duration, and camera movement. First, content refers to a portion of reality displayed in a single shot. The initial shot, which sets the scene in a film, is the establishing (or master) shot. The master shot evokes the mood of the piece and establishes the locale and environment to be shown.

A subjective shot shows a scene from a character's point of view, rather than from an observer's viewpoint (DeNitto, 1985). A subjective shot offers a magic process of identity replacement. The audience is forced to feel and experience the same sensations as the projecting character. Accordingly, the viewers will then be able to identify with the emotions and circumstances of the lead actor. The audience becomes part of the story. A reaction shot, on the other hand, reveals exactly that - the reactions of a person or persons to the preceding shot (DeNitto, 1985). It is through this shot that the audience learns what is happening in the film.

Second, the distance between the camera and the subject to be photographed is divided into three categories: long, medium, and close (and/or close-up) shots. In a long shot, a camera reveals the full figure of a person. If a character is shown from the waistline and above, the director has employed a medium shot. In a close shot, the audience can only see the area from the character's shoulders to the top of his or her head. A similar type of shot is the close-up, which refers to filming only a specific part of a person's head or body, such as the eyes or lips (DeNitto, 1985).

Selecting the distance of the camera and then alternating between shots requires considerable planning (Baddeley, 1970). The degree of variance must be within certain limits, and all changes should be plausible and motivated by an apparent stimulus within the piece. This interspersing of shot types creates the dynamic within a film. Moving from long to close shots indicates the authority of the main character being photographed. Conversely, switching from close to long shots creates the opposite power structure.

Third, the angle designates where a camera is pointed and is divided into three categories of low, eye-level, and high (DeNitto, 1985). In a low-angle shot, the camera is positioned below the subject. The resulting image serves to intensify whatever is occurring on screen. A low-angle shot may stimulate apprehension or concern in a viewer's mind; it can also serve to aggrandize a character. Eye-level angle indicates that the camera is neither above nor below the subject. This angle creates a neutral relationship between the camera (which represents the viewer's eyes) and subject. When the camera is at a high-angle, the shot looks down at the subject from above. This angle establishes the power or dominance of the camera (viewer) over the subject.

Fourth, duration refers to the amount of time a camera shows one shot or to the length of lingering, and it is categorized either as brief or lengthy. Duration creates rhythm in a film. If a brief shot is utilized continuously, it imparts a feeling of excitement and a sense that events are occurring at rapid speed. A lengthy shot is used when the director hopes to synchronize the audience's feelings and point of view with those of the character (camera). The longer the screen leaves a camera on one person or one object, the longer the audience has to focus on that image. Lingering exaggerates and magnifies whichever emotion that an advertisement is trying to elicit from its audience.

Fifth, camera movement refers to movement within a shot and is divided into slow, accelerated (or faster), and reverse motion. In slow motion, images appear to lag behind reality; they appear to move at rapid speed in an accelerated motion; and, in reverse motion, images appear to move backwards (DeNitto, 1985). Slow motion allows the audience to see the details of an action that would not be possible in real or ordinary time. It also dramatizes the action/motion. Additionally, slow motion causes the audience to pay close attention to a particular part or sequence of the advertisement. Accelerated, or faster, motion is used to emphasize routine, mystery, or terror in a film.

There are also various ways of transitioning from one shot to another, which are called cuts. A *jump cut* is the transition from one shot to a totally different shot. No linkage exists between these two. Another method of transitioning is known as *dissolving*. The image of one shot is blended into the following one causing the first image to become imperceptible. This differs from a *fade out*, where the camera shifts steadily from one shot, to a blank screen, and then fades into the next shot (DeNitto, 1985). A jump cut indicates a change of a scene in a film. Dissolving usually shows a shift of time and setting in a film, but there is generally a connection before and after the dissolving shots. Fading-out is employed to connect the sequence of the screen shots.

Presentation of a film. The presentation of a film involves elements such as sound, lighting, color, place settings, and costumes (DeNitto, 1985). First, sound has a tremendous impact on a film. It is divided into three categories: spoken words, natural sounds, and music. Music, especially background music, is effective when shifting from one shot to the next, at evoking a mood or atmosphere, at strengthening a specific scene, and/or when remarking on an action or character.

Lighting also has a significant influence on a film (DeNitto, 1985). Generally, there are two types of lighting which are most commonly used: natural (sunlight) and artificial (electrical). The concerns for electrical lights center mainly on their intensity and direction. The key light is the main source of lighting in a shot, and the fill light casts additional reflection for a softening effect. Two different kinds of illumination are used: high-key lighting, for bright and lively shots, and low-key lighting, for veiled and mysterious shots. Color is also crucial to a shot. Bright colors stand out from their surroundings, especially when the background is dull or non-descript. Colors also have psychological connotations. Red, for instance, is often associated with passion and violence (DeNitto, 1985).

The place setting in a shot indicates the time and location of the action, movie, or scene. Setting also attempts to create the world and circumstances of the participants in a film. Costumes are very important in establishing a genuine atmosphere in a film, especially when the setting is a non-contemporary one. In some contexts, costumes may have symbolic meaning, as well. For example, in Western culture, white clothing typically represents goodness, while darker colors are associated with evil (DeNitto, 1985). The combined effect of camera shots and presentation techniques strongly influence the final film product. The same methods are also used to create advertisements.

Elsereine Cosmetic Commercial with Pierce Brosnan

Commercial is presented here to illustrate how the filming aspects described above function in and have impact on a semiological analysis. This particular commercial was recorded in January 1997 and it represented the *Eruseraan (Elsereine)* cosmetics

company and starred Hollywood actor Pierce Brosnan. The director used the camera throughout the commercial to function as a substitute for the audience's viewpoint.

In the first shot, the camera is inside a mansion, and it shoots the second floor with a downward panning shot. One can see the logo of the product, *elsereine*, in red italic letters which are superimposed in the center of the screen. The camera slowly turns to reveal the first floor; it moves around gradually, and the audience's view of the stairwell and railing diminish as they are led to the ground floor. A large, elaborate chandelier is seen suspended from the ceiling. This establishing shot sets the atmosphere of the commercial to be one of elegance and sophistication. The electrical lighting casts a golden-colored haze throughout the mansion. The rich, golden color suffuses every scene of the commercial. The audience sees someone enter through a doorway, which is situated on the left side of the first floor.

In the second shot, the camera shows a close shot of Pierce Brosnan, revealing the actor from his shoulders up, at a low angle. He wears a dark gray suit and a red tie. He looks to the viewer's left side, closes his eyes, and moves his head to the right side of the screen. He walks to the right side of the screen and walks off camera. In this shot, the camera does not move, and the commercial has a jump cut from the first to the second shot. In this commercial, all the shots transition from one to another by jump cuts. In the third shot, the camera shows a medium shot of Brosnan from the waist up, at a low angle. As the camera moves from the right to the left, Brosnan slightly moves his head in the same direction and looks upwards.

In the fourth shot, Brosnan is shown descending the mansion's staircase from the second to the first floor, with the camera shooting from a low angle on the first floor. In

this shot, he wears a black tuxedo and has a blue-gray colored scarf in his hands. His hands are close to each other initially and then spread open as he pulls on the scarf. Here, the background colors are beige in tone. Throughout the commercial, the audience can hear Brosnan's voice, but they never see his mouth moving on the screen. His words are heard in a voice over. It is as if he was thinking aloud, and the audience is privy to his innermost thoughts. In the fourth and fifth shots, the audience hears Brosnan's voice saying, "As if yesterday, I remember her beauty." He speaks this phrase in English, but the translation is shown at the bottom of the screen in Japanese subtitles.

The fifth shot is a medium shot of Brosnan, from a low angle, again in the gray suit. As the camera pans from left to right, he slightly tilts his head and looks upwards. Here, he states, in English, "her lovely complexion," and the screen shows the Japanese subtitles. A shadow of a person with the mouth moving is revealed in the following sixth shot, and, although the audience cannot see or hear what is being said, it is assumed to be Brosnan who is talking. Brosnan is inside a room, and the audience can see sunlight filtering in through a white curtain. From the fifth to the sixth shots, he says "But I found her again," and there are Japanese subtitles, although the translation differs slightly from his spoken words. The text reads, "Can I see her again?"

In the seventh shot, Brosnan is still wearing the gray suit. He looks at the left side of the screen, then slightly right and forward, as the camera moves from right to left. At the beginning of this shot, a light shines directly down upon him, forming a halo effect around his head. In the next shot, the camera shows a table arranged with a sample of cosmetics on top of it, and, as the camera moves, the audience sees Brosnan's hands gripping the edge of the table. His body and face are shown, as well. The camera shots

alternate from medium, to close, to close-up of Brosnan. He says, “Forever beautiful,” and there are Japanese subtitles printed at the bottom of the screen. He gives a smile and says, “elsereine.” The elsereine logo is shown in red italics at the lower left side of the screen. This is the same logo that was used in the first shot. Below the logo, it says “*Eruseraan kesyouhin*” (elsereine cosmetics) in Japanese. A flower arrangement is shown behind Brosnan. Opera music is playing and can actually be heard throughout the entire commercial.

Semiology of Advertising by Williamson

Williamson (1978) employed Barthes’ semiology to examine cultural forms. She analyzed numerous magazine advertisements, and I will follow her lead and methodology. Thus, it is vital to examine her arguments and the support she gave for the semiological process. She conducted an analysis of a Chanel No.5 perfume advertisement that was featured in a magazine. This ad showcased a famous French actress Catherine Deneuve. She was shown in a close-up view, with a large bottle of the perfume positioned in front of her.

The bottle of Chanel No. 5 and Ms. Deneuve’s face do not share a direct connection, but a linkage does exist in terms of the implied meanings of both. The perfume has significance because it is related to Deneuve. Williamson (1978) declared,

The ad is using another already existing mythological language or sign system, and appropriating a relationship that exists in that system between signifier (Catherine Deneuve) and signified (glamour, beauty) to speak of its product in terms of the same relationship; so that the perfume can be substituted for

Catherine Deneuve's face and can also be made to signify glamour and beauty. (p. 25)

If Deneuve were not a celebrity, known worldwide for her beauty and sophistication, there would be no relevance to the conjoining of her face and the image of the perfume.

The advertisers relied on a celebrity icon, and this merchandising technique is extremely popular and effective. Here, Deneuve's face represents a whole French-ness in the advertisement. When a part, such as something or someone, can represent for a whole world, such as French-ness, the part serves as a synecdoche. In other words, in this ad, Deneuve represents a whole French-ness; therefore, Deneuve is a synecdoche for French-ness.

In another advertisement, they might have chosen to employ the Eiffel tower – a classic, unmistakable symbol for all things French. Thus, the images used in advertisements tend to be stereotypical ones. The advertising executives rely on this very economical way of condensing and relating an entire culture or locale to a few simple images.

Williamson (1978) stated that the signs had value when the receivers of the message recognize the meaning of the signs; the meaning lies in the transaction. In the Brosnan's cosmetics commercial, for example, there are two systems: a system of celebrities and a product system. When the audience witnesses the connection between the celebrity and the cosmetics products, the signs (cosmetics) then have meaning for those viewers. In other words, the meaning is created by the process of transference. Brosnan's elegance and class imbue the cosmetics – and those who use them - with those same characteristics.

There are two transactions occurring within the Elseriene commercial: one is the semiological transaction, and the other is an economic transaction. In the semiological transaction, the phantom woman whom Brosnan is describing becomes transferred to every female audience member as though they were one and the same person. Her silhouette can be filled by any and every woman who purchases the product. The cosmetics offer a magical reality and provide the only way for everyday, TV-watching women to associate with 007, Brosnan's famous on-screen character, and the world of romance and intrigue that he represents. In the economic transaction, a value and worth are transferred to the product, and the audience members receive this value by purchasing the merchandise.

A commercial's value is not realized until its viewers recognize the meaning of the advertisement itself (Williamson, 1978). In the example mentioned previously of Brosnan's commercial, there are multiple meanings and connotations associated with his face, and the value of the advertisement is created by transferring those understood attributes to the product. Brosnan's face is a synecdoche which stands for the entire 007 Hollywood-movie-world, and the audience is aware of that glamorous history and personage revealed in his countenance. Advertisements have value when the exchange of meaning from celebrity to product occurs. By the same token, commercials also have an added function of differentiating and distinguishing consumers from one another by the items they purchase and use. Consumers' identities become intertwined with their possessions, and their feelings of self-worth and prestige are then connected to the marketing/materialistic arena. The consumers' identities become dependent upon their consumptive patterns.

Williamson (1978) referred to this dynamic as a totemism that divides people by a certain attribute: in this case, whether or not they own a specific product. Totem provides a collectivistic identity. For example, when a lady uses a Chanel product, she is transformed into a Chanel woman and becomes a member of the Chanel tribe. The product works as a totem, and viewers become categorized by whether or not they use the marketed product. According to the elserine commercial, the female viewers can interact with Brosnan (or another similarly gallant gentleman) only after they have purchased and applied the proffered cosmetics. Women in the elserine clan have the attributes necessary to attract and entice a man of Brosnan's stature. The totem of elserine is applied to its brand name recognition.

Thus, advertisements categorize consumers, but they must also satisfy the consumer's desire to be recognized as someone who is unique and special – as someone distinct from the majority of average buyers. Advertising messages are aimed at all consumers, yet they must appear to be directed to meet the specific needs of each individual viewer. They must provide assurances that, by using the item(s) in question, the consumer will stand out from his or her contemporaries. Commercial messages supply the appellation needed to convince every consumer that he or she is a distinctive individual. While totem works as a collectivistic identifier, appellation works more as an individualistic identity. It is a communicative process whereby advertisements are designed to make each consumer believe that the commercial is speaking directly to him or her as an individual.

An advertiser's message and approach delineate the consumer's positive qualities and virtues. If the commercial includes a statement, such as, "Hey you, beautiful," every

consumer who hears that phrase applies the “you” to him or herself. An advertisement’s appellative nature allows a relationship and sense of intimacy to develop within the consumer. When Brosnan intones, “her beauty,” in the commercial, it acknowledges the entirety of the female audience; nevertheless, each member perceives Brosnan’s message as a personal conversation between the actor and herself.

The *elsereine* commercial suggests that Brosnan will find “you” when “you” buy his product. The way Brosnan speaks in the commercial identifies the lady as his lover. His tone is seductive and warm. She is the implied receiver and viewer of Brosnan’s message, thus the audience is also a recipient of his affections, or will be, contingent upon a purchase of his preferred cosmetics line. In advertising, totem and appellation work together to persuade the customer to select the presented item. Totem provides the consumer with a collectivistic identity, while appellation offers individuality and personal enticement. Both function to increase consumer spending.

Semiological Analysis of Brosnan’s Commercial

In this example of Brosnan’s advertisement, all of the explanations mentioned above are signs in the language system and/or signifiers in the secondary myth system. However, each expression also has a meaning as a signified within the myth system. The logo of the product, *elsereine*, which is stylishly depicted in the first shot, reinforces the viewer’s perception of the mansion as an elegant and cultured residence. The decorative script matches the atmosphere of Brosnan’s home. The logo is positioned at the center of the screen, which serves to connect the product with the mansion and all of the luxury and sophistication which it implies.

The use of warm, golden lighting accentuates the mansion and product's air of refinement. The lighting selections are used to increase the commercial's appeal and veracity, but they also indicate a break in time. One senses that Brosnan is remembering his love and a moment shared during their courtship. The sunlit tone, bright and fresh, suggests that Brosnan is in the present time. He is shown wearing his gray suit, in contrast to his later appearance in the tuxedo. The shot of Brosnan in formal evening attire is set against a pale beige-colored wall. This is a muted version of the gold and signifies the passage of time with its soft, slightly yellowed appearance. Time has dimmed the once vivid image. Brosnan's recollections are shown in a haze of romance. He utters, "as if yesterday, I remember her beauty." Thus, this commercial depicts a tale in which Brosnan's character enters the mansion and relives his past.

Brosnan's appearance in the tuxedo is accompanied by a subtle inference that there is a beautiful lady standing in front of him. Her elegant dress compares with his own attire, and the understanding is that they are about to leave for an evening out. A magnificent ball awaits their arrival. "Her beauty" represents the gorgeous woman in the commercial and applies as well to the female audience members who are viewing the advertisement. Brosnan describes "her lovely complexion," and this comment reinforces the audience's belief in the ingénue's beauty and in the possibility of their own loveliness, as well. Brosnan's partner achieves her radiant appearance by using the *elsereine products*. Therefore, the commercial viewers must do the same. They will share her "lovely complexion" and attract men of Brosnan's power and stature. This double entendre illuminates the way in which a celebrity system and a product system work together in a synchronic analysis.

In the sixth shot, the screen reveals the shadow of a person, and it may be Brosnan talking to his girlfriend in the past. A hazy, indirect focus is used, and this enhances the romantic atmosphere of the shot. Brosnan says “But I found her again.” Thus, they were once separated but have been reunited. He has found his love. In Japanese, this translates as, “Can I see her again?” The hazy focus used here is in obvious contrast to the rest of the commercial’s shots which are clear and sharp in their image capturing. In the sixth shot, “she” is the lady and the product, and furthermore, “she” is transferred to the audience and the product. In order to see “her,” in other words, to get her beauty, the audience needs to have the product.

Furthermore, when Brosnan says “forever beautiful,” the lady is forever beautiful in his mind, and the product makes her forever beautiful; in turn, the product also makes the audience, or implied viewer/consumer, forever beautiful. Brosnan pauses between the lines “forever beautiful” and “elsereine” because to say those lines concurrently, e.g. “forever beautiful, elsereine,” would indicate that elsereine only is the connotation for beauty. As the advertisers wish the commercial to convey to the audience that each one of them is also “forever beautiful” and that this beauty is achieved by using the product, elsereine, they instructed Brosnan to interject the dramatic pause.

Overall, I conducted a semiological analysis of 10 Japanese television commercials which featured Western celebrities, and one commercial with a Japanese celebrity in this dissertation. In addition, I have included a simple demographic analysis of more than 1500 commercials to aid in and support my discussion.

Aristotle's Ethos, Logos, and Pathos

In addition to Williamson's (1978) argument, Aristotle's (1926/1991) ideas of ethos, logos, and pathos are utilized and briefly discussed in this section. The appeals presented by Western celebrities persuade Japanese audiences in Japanese commercials. Aristotle (1926/1991) defines rhetoric as "the faculty of discovering the possible means of persuasion in reference to any subject whatsoever" (p. 15). In order to be an effective speaker, then, one needs to use speech that incorporates persuasive messages, and the three types of proof one may use are ethos, pathos, and logos; or respectively, ethical, pathetic, or experimental/emotional, and logical appeals. An advertisement's purpose is to persuade, and it is important to understand ethical, pathetic, and logical appeals in TV commercials.

Ethos is "reasoning from the merits and character of the speaker" (Johnston, 1994, p. 31); therefore it is an ethical appeal or source credibility, which can be seen in commercials. Pathos is "reasoning from passion and emotions" (Johnston). In other words, Pathos is the emotional appeal in commercials. Logos is "reasoning from content or logic" (Johnston). Logos, then, is the element of logical reasoning, which is not often seen in commercials. Almost all TV commercials have elements of pathos and ethos. These three types of appeals are utilized to create persuasive messages. Employing semiology and Aristotle's ideas of ethos, pathos, and logos helps me analyze and reveal the message and power of Western celebrities in Japanese TV commercials. In addition to this, I interviewed advertising professionals to yield deeper understanding of this phenomenon. In the following section, I explain the methodology of my interview approach.

Interviews

An interview is variable in the sense that it reveals a participant's beliefs, attitudes, knowledge, and values (Gorden, 1980). It may also provide a deeper understanding of a participant's opinions. There are multiple advantages to using the interview method as opposed to relying on a questionnaire. First, interview respondents can supply more accurate and complete answers to researchers than may be gathered through a questionnaire study. Second, by conducting interviews, researchers can clarify the interpretations of questions. Questions in questionnaires are sometimes abstract and vague, but in an interview, there is less chance for respondents to have misunderstandings.

Third, the interview method allows greater flexibility. If a respondent does not understand a particular question, the researcher can guide the interviewee and offer assistance and additional information. Additionally, when a respondent gives a general answer, the interviewer can ask more detailed questions in order to better understand the respondent's answer. Fourth, interviews provide researchers with control over the interview situation. When completing a questionnaire, participants can skip a question to go to the next one. In an interview, however, the interviewer asks the questions in a particular order. Thus, interviewees do not skip questions, and the researcher can make sure they answer the questions accordingly. Fifth, an interview provides the researcher the opportunity to evaluate the validity of information given by the respondents, because verbal and/or nonverbal language may tell a researcher if the respondents honestly mean what they say (Gorden, 1980).

Interviews do not follow a mere question and answer format. Interview situations involve social roles and interactional goals taking place in certain social situations (Briggs, 1986). The roles and goals defined by a researcher and a respondent for a particular interview have importance for the success of the interview, as does the situation in which the interview occurs. All of these components define the norms of an interview situation.

In an interview, interviewers introduce themselves and show their credentials to the respondents. In a typical interview format, researchers briefly explain the study, tell interviewees that their identities are kept confidential, and assure them that their answers will only be used for analytical purposes. The interviewers also ask for the respondents' permission to record the conversation. According to Weisberg and Bowen (1977), the authors consider recording an interview to be one of the guidelines. Recording an interview allows a researcher to go back and review the responses of the participants. Recording also lessens the chance for errors caused by an interviewer's interpretation. After explaining the previously stated steps to the respondent, the interviewer asks if the interviewee has any questions. All interview questions should follow a previously established template for the duration of the study. Weisberg and Bowen (1977) mentioned that "the interview is meant to be a standardized instrument" (p. 62). In previous studies using this particular interview technique, researchers usually interviewed only one person. None of the studies interviewed more than five people. By interviewing more than 15 persons, this research is distinctive from previous studies.

Procedure

Video Analysis

The total number of commercials recorded in all 183 hours was 6,424. This number excludes commercials for CDs, concerts, and entertainment events as these commercials are designed to promote the specific singer, group and/or events, and therefore, the celebrity's or group's nationality and ethnic background is simply a matter of fact and not applicable to this study as a marketing demographic choice. In addition, this number excludes the advertisements for TV programs such as "the following show is ..." or "... will be shown on next Monday at 7 pm." I randomly selected 20 % of all the commercials or 1,285 commercials to analyze in this study. Additionally, after analysis was conducted, another 321 commercials (5 %) were added to make the total number of 1,606 (25 %) commercials in order to check for potentially changing results. As explained in detail later on, the data was analyzed in terms of date, European language used, character(s), and setting for all commercials. For commercials with foreigners, sex and age were also analyzed. All of these categories were examined as to whether or not the sample sizes (20 % or 25 % of the total number) affected the result. Differences in the results of these two sample sizes were non-significant, and therefore, 25 % of the total, or 1,606 commercials, were analyzed for the final results in this survey.

Seasons and sweeps also affect how much the sample represents the entire population. In this survey, I checked whether the result change depending on seasons and sweeps. The sweeps period during the time of this survey was carefully examined, and there may be a tendency to show certain types of shows on certain days of the week. I checked the 30 highest Neilson-rated shows from 1999 to 2001 (Video Research Ltd.,

1999, 2000 & 2001c) in Japan. Although it varies according to type of show and day aired, *Kouhaku utagassen* (a song competition between teams of women and teams of men) shown on NHK, was in the Neilson list of top ten shows for three consecutive years. Other shows include TV dramas, a song program, movies such as *Titanic* or *Princess Mononoke*, one-time special program events, and sports programs, such as soccer or baseball. Due to the fact that the Sydney Olympics were held in 2000, some Olympic related programs earned high ratings that year. Because the data in this dissertation is randomly selected from a diverse variety of weekdays, the results are more readily generalizable, and I believe the sample from this study can be generalized to the entire population of Japanese TV commercials.

I asked two residents of Japan to record prime time TV from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. for 2 days a month. This was not a strict rule, and if they forgot to record anything, I asked them to do so some other time. One resident was a female in her early twenties in the Tokyo area, Tokyo being the largest city in Japan and located in the eastern part of the main island. The other resident was a male in his late twenties in the Osaka area, the second largest city in Japan and located west of the main island. The dates and TV channels recorded were chosen randomly by each resident. However, because one channel, NHK, does not show any commercials, the residents were instructed not to videotape this channel.

Though the number of households with cable TV is growing, it is still below 30 % (Hokkaido *Sougoh Tsushinkyoku* [Hokkaido Bureau of Telecommunications], 2003). Out of 47 million total households in Japan, 20.0 % of households had cable TV in 1999, 21.8 % in 2000, and 27.1 % or 13 million households in 2001. Neither Tokyo nor Osaka

residents in this study had cable television, thus the maximum number of available channels which air commercials were five for both the Tokyo and the Osaka areas. All of the channels are shown nationwide except for one Osaka local channel.

The videos were recorded from August 1999 to May 2001. In the Tokyo area, tapes were recorded on two days in October, and four days each in November and December of 1999; four days in January and two days each in February and March of 2000; and two days in February, one day in April, and three days in May of 2001. In the Osaka area, TV programs were recorded on two days each in August, September, October, November and December of 1999; two days each in January, February, March, August, September and October of 2000; one day each in April, June and November of 2000; three days each in July and December of 2000; and two days each in February, March and April of 2001. The total number of days on which recordings were made were 24 days or 72 hours from Tokyo, and 37 days or 111 hours from Osaka, for a total of 61 days or 183 hours (see Table 1). The total possible recording days for these months were 272 days for the Tokyo area, and 580 days in Osaka. Accordingly, these are 8.82 % and 6.38% of the total possible recording days from the Tokyo and Osaka areas respectively.³

Out of the total 1606 commercials, 746 commercials were randomly selected from 1999, 550 commercials from 2000, and 310 commercials from 2001. In terms of which day is recorded, there are 250 Sundays randomly chosen, 266 Mondays, 125 Tuesdays, 310 Wednesdays, 173 Thursdays, 184 Fridays, and 298 Saturdays; the detail of recorded days and areas appears in Table 2.

This study is a simple demographic analysis. No trained coders were used for this analysis. Inter-coder reliability was checked in the categories of usage of European

languages, and setting. Setting, or background, is further examined in terms of a commercial's filmed location (i.e., Japan or foreign countries), and whether a background is rural or urban. In addition, for the commercials with foreigners, intercoder reliability was checked for age and sex of foreigners. The result of intercoder reliability checking revealed that the coding was consistent. Intercoder reliability was checked in 160 commercials, or 10% of those that were analyzed. Coding was done by myself and two other coders, and I was the primary coder. The original intercoder reliability was 70.8 %, and after a discussion of categories, intercoder reliability rose to 83.5 %.

Each commercial was analyzed across several categories. First, I recorded the date of each taping. Second, I divided the usage of European languages in the commercials, including English, French, German, and Italian, into the following categories: written words, spoken language, both written and spoken language, and no European languages involved. This distinction was sometimes difficult to judge. Suppose a type of a product was labeled "fresh orange juice," and that label was written in English on the package of the product. However, when a Japanese character in the commercial for this product said the name with a Japanese accent, native English speakers may not have recognized the word. Though the product name said with a Japanese accent does not sound like English words to native English speakers, it is actually an English word and is recognized as such by Japanese. Therefore, even though words or sentences might have been spoken with a Japanese accent, they were categorized as spoken European words. At other times, the screen might show a word, for example, , which is the Japanese way of writing the word "vitamin." If a character in a commercial said the

word, “vitamin,” the commercial was categorized as having a spoken European word but no written European word.

Third, characters were categorized into the divisions based on celebrity status. If the characters were celebrities, they were further categorized by ethnicity and fame genre (sports/nonsports). If they were not celebrities, then, they were categorized by what kind of characters they portray in the commercials.

- (a) No people
- (b) Things like robots or vegetables
- (c) Well known cartoon characters
- (d) Unknown animation characters
- (e) Non-celebrity Japanese people
- (f) Japanese sports celebrities
- (g) Other Japanese celebrities
- (h) Black non-celebrity foreigners
- (i) White non-celebrity foreigners
- (j) Black and white non-celebrity foreigners
- (k) Other non-celebrity foreigners
- (l) Western sports celebrities
- (m) Other Western celebrities
- (n) Non-celebrity people (both Japanese and foreigners)
- (o) Japanese celebrities and foreign non-celebrity people
- (p) Western celebrities and Japanese non-celebrity people
- (q) Indeterminate

Celebrity appearance was defined in the following way: as long as a face of a celebrity is shown in even one shot of a commercial, it is categorized as “having a celebrity.” For example, there are five different versions of a commercial for the same product, a can of coffee, and they have different characters in each version. However, all of the versions show the same celebrity in one shot or in the corner of one shot. By doing so, the audience recognizes that the different versions of the commercial all endorse the same product. Here, the celebrity is a character who represents the *image* of the product/company. Japanese commercials employ particular kinds of celebrities who are called “image-characters.”

The recognition of Western celebrities is based on whether or not the actors were recognizable to me. If I suspected that a person was a Western celebrity, I asked a friend in the US for verification. Therefore, the Western celebrities were those who were recognizable to my friend and me. For the Japanese celebrities, I only recognized some of them. Consequently, I asked one of my friends in Japan to watch the commercials and tell me if they were celebrities. The Japanese celebrities were those who were recognizable to my friend and I.

If I happened to see the same commercial more than once, I counted each one individually since the aim was to examine the commercials’ exposure to the audience. This study does not examine viewers’ reactions. For that reason, this is not an effect study. Rather, I paid attention to the sender’s point of view and examined the commercial messages.

Fourth, the background of commercials is divided into: Japan, foreign countries, animation, both Japan and foreign countries, others, and indeterminate. Fifth, the

background was also categorized as rural, urban, both, or indeterminate. The rural background refers to countryside, traditional houses, and nature. On the other hand, the urban background includes offices or Western-style houses.

Sixth, when the commercials included foreigners, the gender of foreigners was divided into male, female, and both. Commercials including foreigners were also categorized according to their age. The categories were: young, middle-aged, old, and mixed (e.g., young and old people) (see Table 3).

Pertaining to the Sample

Six thousand, four hundred, and twenty-four television commercials were video taped by two individuals other than myself. At the convenience of the recorders, the advertisements were taped during August 1999 and May 2001. They were taken from actual broadcasts and selected without any constraints from me (somewhat randomly) and at the convenience of the recorders who were acting at my request. The recorders had no prior knowledge of the purpose or methods to be applied to the content of the sample, thus making it, in that sense, a blind selection. Nor did they merely record what they themselves would typically watch, but did as I requested and recorded as large a sample as they could realistically provide.

Given the primary law of probability, the larger a sample is of an actual, determinable and finite population, the more likely it is that averages taken from the sample will tend toward the actual mean for the entire population. As a sample approaches saturation or the literal observation of every subject-unit in a population is approached, the need for randomness in the sample diminishes dramatically. Under such conditions, the epistemic power of actual observation trumps statistical inference, in fact

rendering it unnecessary. As this is rarely the case in most research, which draws inferences from minute samples of vastly larger populations, random sampling is vital. For instance, most published social science research has sample sizes of 500 or less and typically of very limited diversity, such as the ubiquitous 18 to 21 year old undergraduate sample from an American university. Yet inferences are claimed to be generalizable to a contemporary population of over 6 billion human beings. The sheer numerical leap, let alone the tremendous diversity present in such a population, strains the credulity of such extrapolations. A sample of 500 individuals constitutes a miniscule $8.3 \times 10^{-6} \%$. In other words, a sample size of 500 individuals represents only .0000083 of one percent of the contemporaneous population, let alone trying to generalize to all people and their behaviors across generations. If the sample size increases to 20,000, which is far greater than most published social science studies that claim universal (scientific) generalizability, that represents only .0003 of one percent of the actual contemporaneous population.

In the case of the sample in this study, several things can be said. First, as compared with most published studies concerning the effects of mass media on audience members, this study has a much larger sample size. Also, insofar as it is an actual fact that many published analyses of broadcasts are derived from marketing research, which is collected and then given or sold to academic researchers by firms, such as Frank N. Magid and Associates, Arbitron, and A. C. Neilson companies, their derived results lack generalizability compared with this study. This is the case because the data gathered by commercial marketing firms has a powerful researcher effect on the behavior of the entity

under study. Here, broadcasters' programming and scheduling are known as "sweep week."

This study is more representative of actual broadcasts than are suppositions made about theoretical broadcasts in that the analysis did not alter the behavior of the broadcasters (their programming and scheduling). Regardless of the widely known manipulation called "sweeps week," and also the relatively (compared with this study) very small number of households actually measured by commercial ratings companies, the results of their data collection are widely relied upon to set advertising rates and to render generalized suppositions by academic researchers who borrow or purchase their data. In the case of this dissertation, the data are not comprised of such contrived behavior (lining up a programming schedule specifically for, and to coincide with, the research being conducted). Also, the sample size in this study, as compared with the knowable population in question, is far greater than in nearly all published academic and commercial research based on supposition concerning the universe under question (usually derived in a purely statistical fashion).

Second, as this sample is taken from an empirically, actually knowable and fixed population, its generalizability is also better understood. This population is knowable because, unlike a statistically derived supposition of say the number of autistic children in the entire world or the supposed number of thirteen year old black girls in a national audience for a specific television show, the advertisements in question are strictly scheduled and literally countable.

Therefore, the universe this study seeks to explore is definable and empirically knowable, not statistically derived. The specific number of broadcasts of advertisements

in a given period of time is knowable, not merely hypothetical or inferred from a small sample. Thus, in this study, the actual universe, not a sample thereof, is in the driver's seat. The number of times a particular ad is shown is not a statistically derived supposition but an actual number. Thus, the number of exposures of its content is also knowable.

As a consequence, the power of the sample can be very clearly understood. The known population explored in this research is a finite number of redundant advertising broadcasts. Consequently, it is much easier to gauge the representativeness of this sample than is the case in studies that hypothesize the actual from a virtual sample. In other words, the likelihood that one can accurately infer from this data set to a highly definable population of advertising activity on Japanese television is much greater than many studies that attempt to infer from the typical convenience sample of a few hundred contemporaneous subject-units to the overall population of human beings over time and across age groups and cultures.

This is so for three reasons: A) because of the law of sample size and its logical relationship to the tendency toward the mean. The sample used in this study is an empirically known proportion of the larger universe it purports to represent. The percentage of the known universe this sample represents is 8.82 percent and 6.38 percent in Tokyo and Osaka areas respectively. This is much higher percentage than is found in the vast majority of published research. In fact, in most studies, the characteristics of the larger population are usually derived from the sample as a hypothetical value, rather than the other way around. Thus, the representativeness of the sample is conjecture and not empirically known. In this study, the epistemic priority is given to the actual value over a

virtually derived one; B)because the knowable proportion that this sample represents is much more clearly known than can be found in the vast majority of published research; and C)because of our confidence in the generalizability of the inferences drawn from the data in this study, based on the actually, knowable lack of variability (the redundancy) in the population of advertisements. By comparison, the variance within a population of scheduled advertisements and the variance in behavior within the overall population of human beings are vastly different. The number of different types of ads on Japanese television is highly and exactly redundant and demonstratable, actually finite, whereas such claims being presumed of characteristics hypothesized in the overall human population is based on conjecture.

This study, in short, has much greater control and knowledge of the actual universe of events in question than other published studies supported by a reduced knowledge of the actual universe. The relationship of sample to universe is clear. In most studies, knowledge of the universe is derived from small samples yielding hypothetical claims of greater or lesser statistical likelihood. In this study, the overall universe is knowable, which allows us to better evaluate the representativeness of the sample. This explains my confidence that inferences drawn from this sample are closer to deduction than induction and are therefore more trustworthy and meaningful. This is based on the sample size and its relationship to the actual, empirically knowable universe of Japanese advertising and its internal uniformity (redundancy). Such claims can be generalized to the universe of Japanese commercial broadcasts.

What is to be discovered is the frequency of certain advertising content elements, and, in conjunction with interview data, some suppositions are to be made about the

presumed effectiveness of the contents and, therefore, the motivation for continually (over decades) making and broadcasting such contents. Because the actual (not a suppositional) universe of advertising on Japanese television is finitely and definably knowable and is given in actual numbers of ads shown, we can clearly understand the generalizability of any claims derived from said sample.

The size of this sample, combined with the measurable redundancy of airings and uniformity of subject-units, makes predictions derived from this sample highly likely, especially when compared with most published research samples of various other, less knowable and less uniform, universes. In other words, studies which attempt to extrapolate from, for instance, averages attained from a few hundred individuals from a very narrow group to over six billion contemporaneous humans from vastly different demographic and cultural backgrounds, and even beyond to all humans who have existed and will exist, are much less robust than this study. This is because, according to the law of averages, most published studies draw inferences from much smaller samples of much more diverse populations than those drawn in this sample. This is strictly a fact pertaining to sample size compared with actual (known) population size and contents, and the comparative lack of variability, or to put it another way, the known redundancy, of subject-units. Re-showing the same ad presents far greater redundancy than comparing two different people, because it is literally the same ad versus two different people even if they come from the “same group,” as defined by some set of parameters that are contingent and not definitive.

Having said this, the sample in this study was not scientifically random, but given the finite and knowable universe about which this study pertains, and its proportional size

vis-à-vis the known universe, it is still safe to generalize to that universe. Under advisement of the dissertation committee, a sample of convenience will form the core of this study.

This makes sense, once again, due to two facts. One, the actual universe in question is knowable, and two, it is comprised of a knowable level of internal redundancy. The universe is very uniform. The universe of advertising broadcasts in Japan is highly structured and redundant and is therefore highly predictable. This is also the case with regard to internal repetition of subject units. Therefore, under the guidance of the research committee, the sample for this dissertation will be taken from the overall data set of 6,424 videotaped ads, which constitutes 8.82 % and 6.38 % of all televised ads aired during the sample period (contemporaneous population) in Tokyo and Osaka, respectively. Using a table of random serial selection, ads will be selected from the data set. These ads will then be measured according to the frequency of content characteristics, as defined in Table 3, such as the race of the people in the ads, the nature of the background, and so forth.

Effects of contents upon the audience are not measured in this study, although that is a goal for future research. Instead, it is presumed that these contents “work,” meaning that they demonstrably (by sales data) and repeatedly encourage people to alter their purchasing behavior. This assumption is based upon the logic of supply and demand, and it is supported by actual (empirical) sales trends. Television is a costly enterprise. Ads that fail to move and sell products are quickly abandoned. This is not to say that some hypothetical content might not work better, but only, that in the world of economic actualities, the redundant use of certain racial themes indicates their actual success as

selling messages. Thus, confronted with the reality that advertising works, we are exploring herein why racial coding within Japanese television ads works as it does based on the expert opinions of those who make their livings producing and placing such messages.

Interviews

I sent letters to Japanese advertising agencies and requested interviews with their presidents and owners. In the spring of 2002, I also corresponded via e-mail with professors who specialized in Japanese media, particularly those with an emphasis on Japanese advertisements containing foreign elements. My letterhead contained the University of Oklahoma logo, and I used this to afford myself some level of credibility. It is very uncommon to grant interviews, even for analytical purposes, in Japan. I hoped that by revealing my background and my scholarly intentions, the potential interviewees would be more inclined to grant me an audience and to trust that I would honestly and accurately record their statements and views.

In an attempt to establish a sense of trust and rapport with the recipients of my letters, I identified myself as a doctoral candidate and explained the purpose of my study. I asked for interviews, via telephone if they so preferred. I assured them that their contributions and testimonies would be kept confidential and that all participants' names would remain anonymous.

As Briggs (1986) mentioned, the roles and goals defined by a researcher and a respondent for a particular interview have importance for the success of the interview, as does the situation in which the interview occurs. All of these components define the norms of an interview situation. In Japan, it is customary to inquire about an individual's

background before beginning a conversation. The Japanese language requires modesty and respect when addressing someone older than one's self. The language actually differs, and it would be highly improper to use one type of communication when another is mandated by the circumstances of the people involved. It would be difficult to have a dialogue without knowing the age, gender, and history of the people involved in the conversation. In a business situation, however, the norm is for individuals to utilize the respect language to those whom are higher in status, and the respect language is also used, regardless of age discrepancies, when the situation involves a client-customer or agent-guest relationship. Consequently, I employed the respect language when addressing all the interviewees, and they responded to me in turn.

Initially, eight people replied to my request for an interview. I contacted them and set up appointments to occur upon my return to Japan. Almost all of the interviews were conducted face-to-face. I went to their places of business, and the interviews were held inside the company buildings. Most of the participants were directors or assistant managers within their corporations. The interview drill involved my introducing myself to a secretary or receptionist and then being asked to wait. The interviewee would appear, and we would go either to an office designed for small meetings or to a café for employees and visitors. Thus, sometimes other people were around when the interviews were conducted. After I sat down, I would re-introduce myself, explain my identity and the purpose of the study one more time, and then ask for permission to audio-record the conversations. Many interviews lasted from 45 minutes to an hour and a half. After the interviews, I transcribed them, and attempted to find a common denominator to explain

the meaning of Western celebrities in Japanese commercials. Then, I translated the main ideas into English.

After an interview was completed, I would ask the participant to introduce me to my next subject. In this way, the new interviewee and I would become acquainted through a familiar intermediary, and our interview then seemed to proceed with a comfortable ease and feeling of camaraderie. Establishing a human connection is much more important in Japan than it is in the US, particularly if one has requested a favor, such as being granted the right to interview the person in question. This chain method approach worked well for my study. A friend of mine also introduced me to some people who were involved in making commercials. Consequently, my group of interviewees was comprised of professional individuals who worked for an advertising agency, a research company, an art production company, and as professors at a university.

All the interviews were conducted between May and July of 2002. All of the participants were Japanese, with the exception of one individual who was employed by a Japanese advertising agency. On occasion, more than one individual was interviewed at a time, or I went to the same company on multiple days to interview different people. The number of face-to-face interviews held was 21. In addition, due to their personal preferences and time constraints, I conducted telephone interviews with two participants. Four individuals chose to have interviews via e-mail. I emailed my questions to them; they replied with their answers; I contacted them again to clarify any confusing or vague parts. We corresponded by e-mail back and forth a few times.

Sixteen participants preferred questionnaire-type formats rather than interviews. I sent them their questionnaires via e-mail and then received one e-mail response from

each of them. That was the sum total of our correspondence. I did not request any further information from them. Combining all formats, the total number of people who answered my questions was 43. Almost all the face-to-face interviews were held in Tokyo, as that city is home to many Japanese advertising agencies. The interviewees' identities were modified in the analysis section in order to maintain confidentiality.

There are four main questions in my study. They are:

1. Why do you think Western celebrities appeal to Japanese audiences?
2. What is the appeal of Western celebrities selling products in Japanese TV commercials?
3. Why do you believe that the same celebrities who readily make commercials in Japan will try to avoid association with commercial products and services in their home countries?
4. What is the significance of having Western celebrities in Japanese TV commercials?

I chose to limit the initial number of questions asked so as to encourage more elaborate and expansive answers from the participants. Using these four questions as my guide, I then followed up with additional inquiries depending upon the interviewees' answers to the aforementioned questions. In this way, I was able to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomena. Whenever I had questions about the interviewees' responses, I delved further and requested clarification of their answers. As is often the case in an interview situation, I did receive a few answers which I had not anticipated. The order of questioning was sometimes changed due to the flow of the conversation. In this way, I attempted to learn the respondents' general ideas about having Western celebrities in

Japanese commercials. By combining content analysis, interviews, and semiological analysis, I intend to uncover the perspective of professional people to this phenomenon and use this information to expand academic interest in this area.

CHAPTER 4

Semiological Analysis

In this section, I utilize semiology to examine 11 commercials, 10 featuring Western celebrities, and one featuring a Japanese celebrity. I chose these commercials because I believe they clearly show the valuation attached to Western celebrities in Japanese TV commercials.

A Shampoo Commercial with Catherine Zeta-Jones

Description. It is a *Lux Superrich* shampoo commercial that consists of 13 shots. The soft Western music, sung in English, can be heard throughout this commercial, which appears to be set in a party or ceremony inside a building. In the 1st shot, Jones in a black formal dress is walking down a red carpet. She is surrounded by guests, and camera flashes indicate paparazzi taking photos of her. All guests are also wearing formal black, or dark-colored, clothes. This opening scene is a long shot from her left side, and the camera shows both her and the other people in one shot. The camera zooms into her slightly, leaving the shot still long, and all of the guests and Jones are visible in this scene.

The 1st shot fades out, and the 2nd shot, a close shot of Jones, fades in. She first looks from her left to her right sides, then looks forward. Yet, her eyes do not directly look into the camera. Rather, she looks down, and her smile when she looks down indicates she notices something there. In this shot, her name is shown in Japanese on the bottom right-hand corner of the screen. Then, the screen changes to the 3rd shot by a jump cut. A little Caucasian girl with long black hair is on the screen; she is wearing a pink dress and holding a bouquet of pink flowers in her hands. The camera zooms slowly from

a long to a close shot of this girl. Here, the female voiceover says “*Kodomono kamiha soredakede utsukushii*” (Children’s hair is simply beautiful by itself).

The transition from the 3rd to the 4th shot is also a jump cut. The camera captures Jones and the little girl from the side. Here, they are shown at the same eye-level with each other; thus, Jones is bending her knees in this shot. In addition, the background is not clear anymore, because the camera is focused on the girl and Jones. Jones runs her hand from the top of the girl’s hair to her shoulder. The male voiceover on this shot says “*Riyu ha amino ripiddo*” (Because of an amino lipid). The 4th shot fades out and the 5th shot fades in. The camera zooms to Jones’ hand on the girl’s hair. Then, the camera zooms closer to the girl’s hair. The 5th shot fades out and the 6th shot fades in. The screen shows the white bottle of the product on pale gold, satin fabric, which appears to ripple like waves.

The 6th shot fades out and the 7th shot fades in. The camera shoots Jones from a slight sideways perspective. On the screen, the phrase “*Amino ripiddo (Amino san + saibou kan shishitsu)*” (An amino lipid [An amino acid + lipid]), and polka-dot-like forms resembling soap bubbles are seen on the screen. The bubbles fade out, and Jones touches her own hair from the top to the shoulder, leaning her head slightly to the right, and she closes and opens her eyes. The 7th shot fades out and the 8th shot fades in. It is a long shot, and Jones is in the crowd of guests in the ceremony or party seen in the 1st shot. She does not look toward her front, but slightly sideways. Here, the screen shows “Song by John O’Banion” written in English on the bottom right-hand corner of the screen.

The 8th shot fades into the 9th shot, in which the camera frames a woman in a room. The lighting and curtains in this room give it a luxurious look. She has black hair and is shown from the back; the viewer cannot see her face. She is holding her right hand behind her head, at the base of her neck, beneath her long hair. She then pulls her hand from her neck upwards, sliding it through her long hair and lifting it. Though she never shows her face, she wears the same black sheer top that Jones is wearing. Thus, she is assumed to be Jones. The voiceover says “*Rakkusu supaa ricchi ha mou ichido amino ripiddo wo anatano kamini oginatte marude baajin no jyoutai ni*” (Lux superrich supplements your hair with an amino lipid to make it like virgin hair again). The camera gives a close-up shot of Jones from the side; she turns toward the camera, and her eyes do not look to the front, but to her left side. The voiceover continues, “*soreha marude mirukuno shinayakasa*” (that will be as delicate as milk).

The shot transitions from the 9th to the 10th by a jump cut. Jones holds the bouquet the little girl apparently gave her, though the girl is not visible anymore among the guests. The camera shoots Jones from an angle slightly to her left, in close-up. The shot switches from the 10th to the 11th shot by a jump cut. The camera shows the products on the same pale gold, satin fabric shown in the 6th shot. The screen in the 11th shot shows different sizes of the product, and the name of the product, “lux superrich,” is shown on the bottom of the screen.

The camera then switches to the 12th shot by a jump cut. There is a close-up shot of Jones, who looks into the camera and says “lux superrich,” and the phrase “Lux Superrich” and the product appear on the screen. Here, the camera shows only Jones’ upper body in this shot. After she says the product name, she tilts her head slightly

sideways. The 12th shot fades out while the 13th shot fades in, and the screen shows the company's name *Nippon Reeba* (Japan Lever), while the voiceover says this phrase. The screen also shows the phrase "Your best partner" in English under "*Nippon Reeba*," and displays the address for the company's Web page.

Semiological analysis. In this commercial, the little girl has an important role. As the voiceover in the 3rd shot says "children's hair is simply beautiful by itself," the beauty of the girl's hair is recognized. The girl is seen as young and innocent—that is, virginal—and her inner purity shines from her face and hair. The girl's purity, shown by her hair, is transferred from the girl to the product. In the later shot of her, the girl's beauty and purity are identified with Jones in several ways. The color of bouquet the girl holds, pink, is the same as that of her dress. She gives the bouquet to Jones in the 4th shot when they are together. Jones bends her knee, and therefore, the level of her eyes and head are the same as the little girl's in the 4th shot. As a result, the girl's hair is easily identified with Jones' hair. Jones becomes young via the magic of the product (Williamson , 1972).

Here, the girl's innocent beauty and purity are transferred to Jones. When Jones receives the bouquet from the girl, she also gets the beauty, purity, and youth of the girl. The virgin-like hair also transfers from the girl to Jones. The purity of Jones' hair is also expressed by the voiceover saying "Lux superrich makes your hair like a virgin's." In the 10th shot, Jones is holding her pink bouquet in the crowd. Here, the transfer of the beauty of virginal hair and purity from the girl to Jones is complete. The magic of the product is conveyed through its promise to the audience to receive the girl's beauty and purity, and Jones' elegance, by purchasing the product. When the voiceover suggests this product makes one's hair virginal, it implies the product restores not only the hair but also one's

body to a virginal condition. The meaning of those elements transfers to the product. Not only the girl's beauty and purity, but also virginity transfer from the girl to Jones.

This possession of beauty, purity and virginity is transferred from the girl to Jones, and from Jones to everybody, but only upon purchase. The commercial appears to promise that using this product will have the same effect as with Jones, who received the beauty, purity and virginity from the girl. When the screen shows a woman from her back in the 9th shot, the voiceover says the product makes "your" hair like a virgin's. Because the screen shows a woman from the back, the audience cannot see her face and determine who she is. In other words, she could be anybody, including "you," individually, in the audience. The woman showing her back represents every single audience member. Consequently, using this product makes *your* hair like a virgin's. As Williamson (1978) mentioned, this is appellation, in which a commercial aims at convincing each individual that he or she is a special person.

Color has an important role in this commercial. In the 6th shot, the product is shown on the top of golden satin fabric. Then, the screen fades out and fades into the 7th shot to show a woman from the back. Here, the pale gold color of the fabric in the 6th shot changes to the lights in the 7th shot, and both shots share the same atmosphere. Thus, those three elements of product, gold-color fabric, and a woman showing her back, are identified.

The meanings described above lie in the transaction from a system of celebrities, represented by Jones, to a system of products—in this commercial, a shampoo. The audience differentiates this product from others not by its uniqueness, but through its representation by a celebrity. Jones shows herself as a strong and elegant woman in the

movies, *The Mask of Zorro* (1998) and *The Entrapment* (1999), which made her famous in the United States, and was her breakout role for the Japanese audience. In the commercial, her movie persona is transferred to the image of the product. The commercials for this survey were collected between 1999 and 2001; therefore, her image in this commercial must be taken from that movie. The commercial implies that in order to have Jones' elegance, the audience needs to purchase the product so that they can belong to the lux superrich tribe and share that elegance. The sense of luxury is expressed by the product's name, and is also expressed by Jones. This connection of Jones' elegance and luxury with the product promises the quality of the product.

Jones' high status as a celebrity is transferred to the image of the product must be high quality to the viewer because it is something a renowned celebrity such as Jones uses. Though a shampoo is a rather inexpensive product, the fact that Jones is advertising the product distinguishes it as a luxurious one among all the shampoos. Jones presents herself as a synecdoche to express the world of the elegance shown in her movies, and the audience sees her elegance in the product. Consequently, the commercial for this product appears to promise her elegance to each viewer. Therefore, there is a semiological transaction in the sense that each viewer is promised to have Jones' elegance when they use the product. In terms of economical transaction, value is transferred to the product, and the audience gets the value when they purchase and use the product. Only by using this product do consumers become members of an elegant and sophisticated group, which Jones signifies.

Thus, the difference does not truly exist in the product itself; but rather, in celebrities. For example, Jones is not Meg Ryan, who has a more friendly, down-to-earth

image as an actress. Jones has a more elegant and sophisticated image compared to Ryan. What Jones represents is transferred to the product. In other words, Jones as a symbol of elegance, and the product, are connected in the audience's mind, and the product expresses what Jones signifies: it is for elegant and sophisticated consumers, and not as suitable for ordinary, down-to-earth consumers.

Furthermore, if one considers things that are not characteristic of Jones, those elements indicate what is not characteristic of the product. She is not elderly, not overweight, and not anonymous. Instead, she is a young and famous woman, and she is physically attractive. Thus, this product is for women who want to be young, luxurious and attractive. These binary oppositions help the audience distinguish this product from others.

In this commercial, the beauty of the girl transfers to Jones, and it serves as an appeal of pathos. There is no logical connection between the beauty of the girl and Jones and the product, yet, the beauty of the girl and of Jones transferring to the audience makes sense to the audience as a passionate appeal. In addition, the girl's purity and virginity pass on to Jones, which also works as pathos. Jones' beauty and elegance further serve as an ethical appeal in terms of source credibility because she is a well-known beautiful celebrity from the movies, *The Mask of Zorro* and *The Entrapment*, which portrayed her as a beautiful and elegant lady. The audience believes that the product will give them the beauty and elegance of Jones, though only when they purchase the product and use it. Furthermore, her reputation as a famous celebrity is easily associated with her high socioeconomic status, which in turn further connects to the image of high product

quality in the audience's mind. Therefore, even though the commercial does not have any solid logical appeals in it, it has appeals of pathos and ethos.

Overall, the pathos portrayed in this commercial can be considered as: a) the beauty, b) the purity, and c) virginity of the girl and Jones. Ethos, or source credibility, in this commercial is exemplified by: a) Jones' beauty and b) elegance, and by c) the high quality of the product, as conveyed by Jones' popularity and high socioeconomic status. There is no logos shown in this commercial, because there is no logical relationship between Jones and the product, the shampoo (see Table 4).

A Car Commercial with Anthony Hopkins

Description. This is a commercial for Honda Clio's *Avancier* car model, starring Anthony Hopkins, and it consists of ten shots. A French-sounding, contemporary type of music can be heard throughout the commercial. The commercial is not set in bright sunlight, though it begins outside. Rather, it looks as if it was shot in late afternoon or at dusk, just before nightfall. Hence, the tone of the screen throughout the commercial is somewhat dusky. In the 1st shot, Hopkins is looking away from the camera downward and to his left, and then he turns until he is almost facing the camera. The change from the 1st shot to the 2nd shot is a jump cut. A silver-colored car is shown on the screen. Behind the car, the audience can see statues that look as if they are from the era of the Roman Empire, and what appears to be a museum or castle. The car is facing the left side of the screen, the rear of the car on the right, and the audience can see the left side of the car from its side. Two women are shown on the screen; one is standing behind the car, resting her elbows and forearms on the top of the car. The other woman is in front of the car near the rear, and she walks from the right to the left side of the screen as she moves

from the back to the front of the car. She has long blonde hair that reaches the middle of her back, and is wearing a knee-length black dress with a jacket.

The 2nd shot dissolves to the 3rd shot. A close-up of Hopkins, dimly lit, is shown in which he is walking toward the screen through an arch. Two persons can be seen behind him. Only their arms are shown as they walk on either side of Hopkins, thus, the audience cannot tell if they are women or men. With his focus directly toward the camera, Hopkins says, “Let’s have a thrilling time” in English as he passes through the arch. The screen shows the Japanese subtitle for this phrase, “*Otanoshinimo hajimarida,*” at the bottom. The camera zooms into Hopkins slightly, to intensify his presence and message.

The 3rd shot dissolves to the 4th shot, in which Hopkins and the two women walk toward the front of the set, looking at the car in front of them. Now, the audience knows that the two persons beside him are the same women who appeared in the 3rd shot. The camera shows them from a long shot. Hopkins is wearing a black jacket and a navy blue-colored polo shirt. The two women beside him also are wearing black jackets, and one of them has a thin bordering white line on the jacket.

The 4th shot fades out and the 5th shot fades in. The camera is inside the car, shooting from the dashboard to the rear of the car, and showing the two women in the beige-colored back seat of the car. They are not wearing the jackets in this shot, only sleeveless dresses. One of them wears her hair tied back, and the other’s hair is down. The woman on the left is sitting almost sideways, facing the woman on the right, who is also turned to face the center. They look downwards first, and then make eye contact with sideways glances. The 5th shot changes to the 6th shot by a jump cut in which the camera

changes angles to shoot toward the front of the car. The camera shows the rearview mirror, in which one of the women can be seen. From this angle, the rearview mirror is shown reflecting her eyes, which are first seen looking down, then glancing sideways into the mirror. Then, the camera pans to focus on Hopkins, and the rearview mirror reflects his eyes.

The 6th shot fades out and the 7th shot fades in. In the 7th shot, the camera shows Hopkins from the side. He is driving the car, and he grasps and moves the gearshift of the car. The male voiceover says, “*Yokubarimo wagamamamo tadashii*” (It is right to be greedy or selfish). Immediately afterwards, the screen also shows the phrase “*Egoisuto no shikaku*” (Qualification to be an egoist), as it fades into the left side of the screen while Hopkins is in the driver’s seat. The 7th shot fades out and the 8th shot fades in. The camera is aimed at the front of the car, which looks as if it is parked outside.

The 8th shot fades out and the 9th shot fades in. The car is driving around a fountain in a garden of the castle-like building shown in the 1st shot. The car is on a cobblestone road that looks wet, though it is difficult to tell because of the dim lighting. The camera shows the car from its back, and the car is moving from right to left on the screen, with the fountain on the left side of the screen. From the 8th to the 9th shots, the voiceover says “*Fou doa, kurabu dekki, Honda Abanshia tanjyo*” (Four door, club deck, Honda avancier is born). The transition from the 9th shot to the 10th shot is a jump cut. The screen shows the word “avancier,” and the phrase “Honda Clio,” with the H-shaped logo of Honda. The word “Clio” shines as if a light emanates from the letter “H.”

Semiological analysis. A main theme of the commercial is wildness of character or being a “bad boy.” When the voiceover says, “It is right to be greedy and selfish,”

characteristics that are usually recognized as negative are justified. The ideology in this commercial is a social Darwinist notion of characteristics necessary for human success. In addition, when the screen shows “Qualification to be an egoist,” this implies that it is acceptable to be an egoist. Each of the phrases express the “coolness” of a man who drives an *avancier*. This characteristic is also shown in the characters’ ways of dressing. Hopkins’ attire is not entirely formal because he is wearing a navy-blue polo shirt underneath the black jacket. Yet, two formally dressed women accompany him. Thus, they may be going to some sort of event that is semi-formal. This creates a bit of casual atmosphere in the commercial: the car is not junk, nor is it an extremely elegant car, such as a Rolls Royce. Rather, the *avancier* is somewhat casual, but retains elements of elegance. Hopkins’ clothes in the commercial may also connect with an attitude toward life, as the clothes convey a sense that he is not too serious, and is having fun. The commercial matches this image with the voiceover saying “It is right to be greedy and selfish.” In so doing, it legitimates the purchase, and the acceptability of spoiling oneself with such a purchase. The audience receives the message, and desires such a life.

Wildness is also expressed by Hopkins’ comment “Let’s have a thrilling time,” in the 3rd shot. A “thrilling time” is provided by driving this car, and also by being with the two women. Therefore, these two “thrilling times” are identified. Driving this car promises the viewer an opportunity of being with two beautiful women. Access to two beautiful, young, and sexy women is identical to access to the Honda car. The sight of one man, Hopkins, with two women, instead of one man with one woman, signifies sexual power with more than one woman. The commercial sends a message to the

audience that when a male consumer owns this car, he may be able to have beautiful women—not just one, but two or more.

Elements of some secrecy also raise the impression of wildness. Secrecy is conveyed through eye contact between Hopkins and one woman, as well as between the women. This may indicate that they share secrets with each other. The audience feels as if they are sharing those secrets by watching their eye contact on a TV screen. Secrecy goes with the wildness that this commercial attempts to express.

The distance between the two women while seated in the car also has meaning. When the two women look at each other in the back seat of Hopkins' car, there is a space between them. They may share a secret, or they may compete for Hopkins' love. Thus, the space between the two women is where Hopkins belongs. Moreover, the space between them in the back seat of the car also shows the amount of space in the car. It is not a tiny, cramped car, but instead, a roomy, comfortable and luxurious car. It conveys an ideology that a movie star and powerful man such as Hopkins, and beautiful sexy women, do not travel in a junky car. The car owner's wealth, privilege, status, power, and access to beauty seem all to be identical.

By using a European castle, the commercial creates an atmosphere of luxury, conveying the notion that the car belongs to such a luxurious setting. The fountain seen in the 9th shot also signifies wealth, and the classy taste of the castle's owner. Japanese consumers know of many expensive European brand names, such as Chanel and Gucci, and as a result, Europe has an image of luxury for the Japanese audience. In the commercial, this image is transferred to the image of the car. This sense of luxury is increased by Hopkins' presence in this commercial. He is not young, but he is a powerful

man. Therefore, an older man with power should like the car. In this commercial, Hopkins' sophisticated image from the movies *The Silence of the Lambs* (1991), *Howards End* (1992), *Remains of the Day* (1993), and others, transfers to the product. His sophisticated image gives the same atmosphere to the product. The audience gets the meaning of the car when they transfer the meaning from Hopkins to the car, as his sophistication is a promise of the car's high quality. The car is not an ordinary one, for ordinary people, when the image of Hopkins is connected to the car, and his sophistication is transferred to the product. Hopkins played an intelligent, sophisticated person who is also a serial killer in *The Silence of the Lambs*. This demonstrated character is easily connected to intelligence and wildness, for which Hopkins serves as a synecdoche.

In addition, Hopkins has a serious look, yet he portrays a character in the commercial who enjoys his life in a wild and playful way, and therefore, this commercial utilizes an interesting contrast in Hopkins' character. This character transfers to the product, making the audience believe that having this car will give a "cool" life to the purchaser. Thus, they need to have this car and join the avancier tribe. Furthermore, the commercial tells each man in the audience individually as an appellation, that *you* will be as cool as Hopkins is, when you own this car.

One of the binary oppositions Hopkins expresses in this commercial is that he is not a very young person, such as Brad Pitt. Therefore, the target consumers are considered to be the middle-aged group, who may have more savings. Hopkins is not a cheerful, comedic type of character, such as Robin Williams. With Hopkins' more serious character, this car has an image of luxury and sophistication, and therefore, it may

be used for a serious occasion. Furthermore, Hopkins is not an ordinary man, but a very famous actor, with an image of having a high socioeconomic status. Thus, this car has the image that it is chosen by those who are in the high socioeconomic stratum.

Hopkins' egotistic wildness has a strong impact upon the audience as an appeal of pathos. There is no logical or ethical relationship between him and wildness, or in turn, between him and the product. But there is a structural relationship. He as a character, Hannibal Lecter, becomes an objective correlative. Lecter's appearance in the ad and the transfer of danger intrigue the audience's mind because they connect him to his character, Lecter, who represents wildness. Because of this character, it is also convincing for the audience when Hopkins says, "let's have a thrilling time," with two beautiful women. Thus, wildness, having a thrilling time, and being with beautiful women can appeal to the audience as pathos.

Furthermore, the audience may see the connection between Hopkins' status as a famous celebrity and being with beautiful women, as this belongs to ethos or an appeal of source credibility. A famous, and therefore wealthy, celebrity can be associated with being with beautiful women, as if beautiful women are the natural possessions of a wealthy man. As a consumer, you may not have the women but you can have the car and by possessing the car you become masculine, dangerous, and intriguing. In addition, Hopkins can have a thrilling time, not only because he portrays the character of Lecter and therefore, his character connects to the notion of "thrill," but also because he is with two beautiful women who can give him a thrill. In that sense, wildness, having a thrilling time, and being with beautiful women can be considered as carrying appeals of both pathos and ethos.

Also, Hopkins' character, Lecter, represents sophistication as well as wildness; yet, Hopkins' sophistication is not limited to this movie but is expressed in various movies. As a consequence, an appeal of ethos, or, sophistication, is strongly shown in this commercial by using Hopkins. Moreover, luxury expressed by the European style of castle is easily associated with Hopkins' luxurious lifestyle, and this also serves as an ethical appeal derived from Hopkins' image and fame. This commercial does not contain any strong logos, as there is no sound logical connection between Hopkins and the product.

Therefore, elements of pathos and ethos are incorporated into this commercial. Pathos includes: a) wildness by being an egoist, b) having a thrilling time by driving the car, and c) being with two beautiful women. The ethos expressed by Hopkins' character is: a) wildness, b) having thrilling time, c) being with beautiful women, d) luxury expressed by the European style of castle, and e) his sophistication. There is no logical connection in this commercial, and therefore there is no logos (see Table 5).

A Green Tea Commercial with Meg Ryan

Description. This commercial has eight shots in total. It is for the green tea named *Tanpopo-cha* (dandelion tea), from Suntory. This commercial is shown as taking place on a sunny winter day. The transitions from one shot to another are accomplished entirely through jump cuts. In the 1st shot, the camera shows a traditional Japanese house from a high angle. The camera zooms in slightly, from a very long shot to a long shot. This house has a tiled roof, and its floor is covered with *tatami* (rush plant) mats. The house has no doors, but has sliding paper screens instead. There is a wood veranda on side of the house. Music played on an ocarina⁴ is heard in the background. A middle-aged

Japanese woman wearing a *kimono* is putting wet laundry on a drying pole in a garden in the backyard. She bends over and takes a cloth from the laundry basket on the ground. A large piece of fabric, resembling a kimono, is on the drying pole. Meg Ryan is on the veranda, wearing a red shirt, blue jeans, and Japanese clogs. There is a bottle next to her, though it is difficult to tell what kind of drink it is. Here, the camera has such a long shot that the audience can only tell she is holding some papers in her hands.

In the 2nd shot, the screen shows an airmail letter. Although the writing on the letter is difficult to read on the screen, it looks as if it is written in English. The Japanese woman cannot be seen on-screen, but her voice is heard as she asks Ryan, “*Hoomu shikku to chauka?*” (Aren’t you homesick?). In the 3rd shot, Ryan is holding the letter in her hands, and the camera shows her from the front. A *shoji* (paper sliding screen) can be seen to the right side of Ryan. Then, in the 4th shot, the Japanese woman is shown folding the laundry. The Japanese woman and Ryan are shown together here, from the front.

In the 5th shot, Ryan puts her right hand on her chest, and says in Japanese, “*Daijyoubu watashi tanpopo dakara*” (No, I’m fine because I’m a dandelion), with a smile. The 6th shot shows the Japanese woman coming closer to Ryan and sitting down next to her. Then the Japanese woman says, “*Anta nipponjin mitai yanaa*” (You are like a Japanese person). The wood pole between the *shoji* can be seen between the two women. The camera shows Ryan from her right side in the 7th shot, and she drinks green tea from a bottle, the Japanese woman is seen behind her.

In the final shot, the camera shows a long shot of Ryan and the Japanese woman. They are on the right side of the screen, sitting next to each other on the veranda. The Japanese woman leans her upper body slightly toward Ryan. In this last shot, a female

voiceover says “*Tanpopo cha, hairimashita*” (We have a bottle of dandelion tea), and this phrase is shown on the screen. The two types of products, one a can and the other a larger bottle, fade in on the left side of the screen, appearing side-by-side. The screen shows the products’ names, “*Santorii: zoku Nohohon-cha*” (Suntory: Continuing series of *Nohohon* tea). To the side of the product names, the viewer can see the phrase “*Nonda atoha risaikuru*” (Recycle after you drink) in very small script.

Semiological analysis. Ryan and the Japanese woman are shown in contrast to each other as new and old, a contrast that is evident in several aspects. First, there is the age difference between the older Japanese woman and the younger Ryan. Second, the Japanese woman is wearing a kimono, which is traditional dress for the Japanese, and Ryan is wearing jeans, more common among the younger generation. Third, when the Japanese woman comes closer to Ryan and sits next to her in the 6th shot, the pole of the sliding door behind them separates them, reinforcing their difference. This border between the Japanese woman, who appears to be around 60 years old, and Ryan, who is in her late 30s at the time of shooting this commercial, signifies the difference between old and new. Because the bottle of drink is next to Ryan, the audience knows that the drink belongs to the new side of the dichotomy, rather than to the old side. Thus, the tea is new, though it is shown in a traditional old Japanese house. The traditional house in which Ryan is staying emphasizes the impression that green tea belongs to Japanese culture. Furthermore, the product is green tea, which is a traditional drink, yet it is new because the concept of “dandelion” tea, which has never been heard before as a name for green tea, has been added. In these ways, the tea is portrayed as something both new and old.

The separation of new and old disappears at the end, as the two appear to merge. The screen shows Ryan and the Japanese woman next to each other in the last shot. The audience can see the sliding door behind the Japanese woman that divided Ryan and the Japanese woman in the 6th shot. However, it does not divide them completely in the 8th shot, because the Japanese woman's body hides the audience's view of the end of the sliding door. Thus, these two persons appear to blend into each other. In other words, the two cultures, Japanese and American, and likewise the new and old generations, blend together, as they both belong to the same realm spanned by the tea. After Ryan drinks the tea, the border between her and the Japanese woman disappears. Thus, drinking this tea seems to ease cultural differences between them.

The commercial sends a message to the audience that it is good for the young to drink green tea, which was considered to be traditional, and therefore, only for old people. However, this commercial shows a pleasant, intimate feeling about drinking green tea: it makes consumers feel good, relaxed, and at home. The Japanese woman in this commercial is a warm and nice lady; she signifies a traditional Japanese good mother figure. Thus, she emphasizes the warm atmosphere in this commercial, and in turn, the commercial gives a warm feeling for the product.

In addition, the drink is a key factor in Ryan's ability to stay in Japan and not become homesick. This is emphasized by Ryan's clothing; although she is wearing Western jeans and a shirt, she also wears Japanese clogs as her shoes, and as a result, Ryan herself also symbolizes the blend of old and new cultures. What is shown in this commercial is an ideology of the fusion of old, or Japanese, and new, or American. Here, Ryan signifies America, newness, and youth. Young Americans such as Ryan drink green

tea, therefore, it is acceptable for young Japanese to drink green tea. Ryan represents America, the West, and modernity, and in conjunction with that image, the drink itself also has an image of modernity. Though it used to be a drink for old people, it is now acceptable, and can even look modern, to drink green tea. Furthermore, Americans do not regularly drink green tea. When Ryan drinks green tea, it conveys an impression of the international. In other words, the company looks more international, and appears to do business all over the world.

Hence, not only the images of new and old, but also the fusion of West and East are represented. When Ryan says, “I’m not homesick because I’m a dandelion,” it does not make literal sense, yet it makes a point by telling the audience that Ryan has the spirit of the Japanese. Her claim of being a dandelion is reinforced by her blonde hair, as its color reminds the viewer of a dandelion. In addition, this simple yellow flower exhibits warmth, which is also the image conveyed by Ryan. Ryan is drinking a Japanese dandelion tea that makes her homesickness go away. A positive sense of the blend of East and West, made possible by drinking this tea, is given.

Furthermore, tanpopo-cha is a part of the nohohon-cha product line. The word, nohohon, literally means “leading an easy or carefree life”. Thus, being a dandelion and having an easy life are connected. By drinking dandelion tea, the audience can also live an easy and comfortable life. This notion implies a simple, slow, and serene life, a good traditional kind of time. The sense that young Ryan enjoys having a more peaceful, older lifestyle is emphasized in this commercial. When she says she is a dandelion, it means she enjoys her easy life by drinking the dandelion tea in Japan.

Additional elements also contribute to an image of warmth in this commercial. The image of “dandelion” tea is warm, and may remind Ryan’s character of her home. The music of the ocarina also creates a soft and warm atmosphere, matching with an image of home and comfort. The names of the tea, tanpopo-cha and nohohon-cha, offer a warm and soft atmosphere, which may suggest a sense of nostalgia by bringing back good memories. This tea does not belong in a cold environment such as an office or skyscraper, but rather, in a warm atmosphere. This is also emphasized by the fact that the conversation between Ryan and the Japanese woman is relaxed; it implies that they are building a good friendship, and the dialect the Japanese woman speaks sounds very soft. Therefore, their warm relationship is directly connected to the concept of “nohohon.”

The products’ packaging is symbolic of Ryan’s and the Japanese woman’s relationship. When the two are shown on the right side in the last shot, the two kinds of products, a can of nohohon-cha and a bottle of the same, are seen on the left side. The relationship between the Japanese woman and Ryan is the same as the relationship between the can and the bottle, which look different but are actually the same product. In the same way, the Japanese woman and Ryan look different, yet they are the same. They both belong to the same clan, having things in common though they may look different and think in different ways.

By combining a totally Japanese (or Asian) product of tea with a Western star, it raises curiosity in the audience members’ minds, inspiring them to watch this commercial. This is one of the distinctive elements. It is strange to see this combination, yet, its peculiarity may enable the commercial to gain many peoples’ attention. Currently, tea market in Japan is extremely competitive. There were 157 kinds of bottled tea⁵

available in May, 2002 (Kero, 2002), and many Japanese celebrities are utilized for a variety of tea commercials. In such a highly competitive environment, clients and advertisement creators need to have a distinctive element in a commercial to make the audience remember their product among the many. Having Ryan in the commercial creates such an outstanding difference for the product.

In movies such as *Sleepless in Seattle* (1993), *French Kiss* (1995), *Addicted to Love* (1997), and *You've Got Mail* (1998), Ryan portrays a cute woman, and this cuteness is associated with personal warmth and a loveable personality. Her warmth is transferred to the product in the commercial, and the product itself becomes something loveable. Furthermore, the facts that she is a famous Western celebrity, and that she is a foreigner, have an impact in this commercial. The green tea appears to be more international, and with the commercial's use of a young foreigner, it sends a message that everyone, including young people, will love the product. By using Ryan, this product is attached to her warmth and simple beauty. Here, the system of celebrities, which Ryan signifies, is transferred to the system of the products. The audience feels the warm atmosphere of the product when they connect Ryan to the product in their minds. Ryan is a synecdoche of cuteness in the audience's minds, and members of the audience will want to share her cuteness.

The binary oppositions which can be found by asking "what is not characteristic of Ryan" define this product and its targeted audience group. Ryan is characterized as a cute dandelion, not a rose or an orchid, and these characteristics match her roles in her movies. She stands for a simple beauty, neither old nor sophisticated. Drinking this green tea offers a simple and warm pleasure, and the image of a dandelion has this effect on the

audience as well. On the other hand, if Elizabeth Taylor were in the same commercial representing this green tea, the product would have images of elegance and sophistication, and the targeted audience might be considered to be older people. Ryan's image is not high elegance or beauty, but instead, a "girl next door" kind of cuteness, and with this image, the green tea is represented as something close to the audience.

This commercial effectively employs a comparison of youth and age, as Ryan and an elderly Japanese woman represent respectively, and this comparison works as an appeal of pathos in the audiences. The contrast of young and old further connects to the distinction of new/modern and old/traditional, which young Ryan and the elderly Japanese woman portray. Having an American lady, Ryan, and the Japanese woman also reminds the audience of the comparison between East and West. All of these aspects serve as appeals of pathos. Ryan's friendly character that she plays in various movies connects her to a friendly persona in this commercial. It further portrays the product as having the image of nice and casual. Thus, the aspect of friendliness works as the source credibility of Ryan, which is an appeal of ethos. Furthermore, the fact that Ryan drinks green tea in this commercial makes the product look like it has high quality because even one of the biggest Western celebrities, Ryan, drinks this tea. Thus, the high quality of the product is derived from Ryan's status, and this adequately shows her source credibility as product ethos. Again, this commercial does not make any significant use of logos because there is no apparent logical relationship between the product and Ryan. What it says is that some "old" traditions like green tea are still valuable and that even big Western stars may have something to learn from traditional Japan. Thus, young Japanese who may think green tea is only for their grandmothers can now see that it is for young people like

themselves. In sum, the pathos shown in this commercial can be described as: a) youth, which is contrasted with old, revealed in the contrast of Ryan and an elderly Japanese woman, b) new (or modern), and c) West. Ethos expressed by Ryan is: a) friendliness and, b) the good quality of the product, indicated by the fact that even one of the biggest Western celebrities, Ryan, drinks this green tea (see Table 6).

A Car Commercial with Jennifer Lopez

Description. This commercial consists of 18 shots. The car is a *Legacy B4* by Subaru. The commercial is in an urban setting, and all the shots have a bluish color, making it difficult to tell the time or the season in which the commercial is set. However, the green trees seen in the background of one shot may indicate the commercial was not produced during the winter. Lopez's voice is used for voiceovers, however, her mouth does not move while they are being heard—the audience can only hear her voice. In the 1st shot, the phrase “3 keys Legacy SUBARU” appears on the screen, and Lopez's voice is heard saying the phrase aloud. One of her songs, *Ain't it Funny*, can be heard as background music. Three cars are seen on the screen behind the words; two appear at the top, and one at the bottom, of the screen. A picture of the car with a yellowish color in the top left corner of the screen moves behind the picture of the car with a bluish color on the bottom. Then, a picture of the car with a blue color on the top right corner also moves behind the picture of the car on the bottom. At the end, the picture on the bottom enlarges to fill the screen, becoming the only car that can be seen on the screen.

The 1st shot dissolves into the 2nd, a close-up of the car that runs from the right to the left of the screen. The transition from the 2nd to the 3rd shot is a jump cut. The screen shows a man with a pair of glasses driving the car. This shot may be taken during

daytime in the spring, because green trees can be seen through the car window. The 3rd shot fades out and the 4th shot fades in. Lopez's voice says "He is the man," pausing, and the screen shows a Japanese translation as "*Sono otokoha*" on a black-colored background. The 4th shot fades out and the 5th shot fades in. Two men are in a spacious office, and one man is standing, facing the screen, talking to another man who is seated on chair in front of him. The man who is standing seems to be the same person who was driving the car. He says "I want this," and though he continues to speak, it is difficult to hear what he says because the voice is getting lower and fading away. Here, it seems as if he is trying to convince the seated man, who appears to be his superior, of something. The camera moves from the right to the left of the screen. Big windows, with two vertical lines across them, can be seen as a background. There are skyscrapers behind the windows. The color of the screen is bluish.

The 5th shot dissolves into the 6th shot, and the screen shows the face of Lopez turned upward and toward her right. A shadowy, triangular shape can be seen in the left corner of the screen. The 6th shot changes to the 7th shot by a jump cut. Lopez is looking toward the left side of the screen, and continuing her earlier statement, her voice adds "with the key," pausing again. The screen here shows "*kagiwo motte ita*" in Japanese as a translation. The background is black in color. The 7th shot dissolves into the 8th shot, and the screen shows the blue car. As the camera moves from the center to the right, it traverses around the car, showing the car from the left top to the right side. The 8th shot dissolves to the 9th shot, and the man is standing in the office and looking outside; it appears to be dusk. The screen shows the words, "Ain't it Funny," on the bottom right corner of the screen, which is the title of Lopez's song, used for this commercial. Then,

the 9th shot dissolves into the 10th shot, which shows a close-up of Lopez, who has a faintly troubled look on her face. She is looking slightly toward her upper-right side. The camera moves from the right to the left side of the screen. The 9th shot changes to the 10th shot by a jump cut. The screen shows the man's back in the office without a light as he looks out the window. Through the window, the skyscrapers can be seen in the dawn.

The 10th shot dissolves into the 11th shot, and the screen shows Lopez's face from a slightly sideways angle. She closes her eyes and then opens them. When she opens her eyes, she faces front and then looks toward at her right. The 11th shot dissolves into the 12th shot, in which the screen shows the back of the car, and the camera moves downward from the upper left to the lower left side of the screen. The 12th shot dissolves into the 13th shot, and Lopez's voice completes her statement by adding "to accelerate his heart," and the translation "*tamashii mademo kasoku saseru*" is seen on a black background. The 13th shot dissolves into the 14th shot, and a man, presumably the one seen earlier, is leaving the building. Glass walls divided by two tall, wide white lines or columns can be seen.

The transition from the 14th to the 15th shots is a jump cut. A male voiceover says, "*Sono otoko. Regashi. B4*" (That man. Legacy. B4), and the phrase is shown on the left top side of the screen. The 16th shot changes to the 17th shot by a jump cut. The car is in the center of the screen, and Lopez is standing to the right of the car, while the man is standing to the left. The transition from the 16th to the 17th shots is a jump cut. Lopez is smiling, and her voiceover says "Perfect new." The screen shows the same phrase. The 17th shot changes to the 18th shot by a jump cut. The screen shows the logo of Subaru,

with the phrase “Subaru. Driving Emotion” below the logo. A male voiceover says “Subaru.”

Semiological analysis. This car is shown as if the man’s ownership is a determined fact in this commercial. In the 15th shot, the screen shows “That man. Legacy. B4.” Three words—man, Legacy, and B4—are connected by the expression; in this explicit connection, the phrase implies that he owns the car. In addition, Lopez is identified with the car that he wants. The phrase “He is the man with the key to accelerate his heart” implies having the car gives him excitement, and so does Lopez. Only upon his purchase of the car, can he be with a beautiful woman such as Lopez. In other words, having this car promises purchasers to have a woman such as Lopez.

The man not only has the key for the car, but he himself is a key for being as powerful as the car in the commercial. At the same time, the key to the car gives him greater power. In the 5th shot, he seems to be attempting to convince a superior to do something. At first, some separated windows can be seen. However, as the camera moves from the left to the right side of the screen, the border of one window disappears. This dissolution of the boundary indicates his increasing power, as if he can make the differences between himself and his boss disappear, and make the boss do what he wants. The audience knows that he will convince his boss, because he has or is the key for the powerful car, which in turn gives him the key to becoming the boss in the future.

When Lopez says “to accelerate his heart,” the subtitle shown on the screen in the Japanese translation literally means “to even accelerate his soul.” This sentence implies that being with her makes the man’s life much more exciting. He must have a key for such a life by owning the car, so that he can get a wonderful woman such as Lopez. In

addition, Lopez says “Perfect new.” The car is new, but the phrase may imply her relationship with him. It is something she has not had before, and this car can provide that wonderful relationship. Thus, if men buy this car, it will give the purchaser the perfect new life: with both the new car, and a woman such as Lopez. A man must belong to the B4 car tribe in order to be with her. He can be with Lopez or someone like her only if he purchases the car and belongs to the Legacy B4 tribe, because the car is the key to having Lopez. At the same time, the commercial sends a message to each member of the audience that especially *you* are the best qualified to own the car and Lopez, as the appellation. The man’s face is never shown as close-up as Lopez’s, though the audience can tell what he looks like. Therefore, the audience can personalize the man in the commercial; they can become him in the process of appellation.

The urban atmosphere is expressed in several ways in the commercial. First, Lopez and the man wear a suit and a dress, indicating that they are business professionals. Second, the color of the car in the 1st shot is blue. This bluish color is consistently shown throughout the commercial. The man’s office is bluish, and so is the background in the 9th shot, in which only Lopez can be seen on the screen. The blue corresponds with the atmosphere of urban-ness, connecting the car, the important office, and Lopez with each other. Third, the skyscrapers, offices and roads are all geometrical, which also associates with urban-ness. Cities are exciting places to young people, such as Lopez or the man. All of these elements show excitement and power reflected in the urban-ness, important to the upwardly-mobile professionals this commercial targets.

The car is also portrayed as an urban creation. In the 14th shot, the man is leaving the building. Two lines of walls can be seen in front of him. Between those lines of walls,

skyscrapers behind big windows can be seen. Later in the 16th shot, the man is standing on the right side of the car, while Lopez is standing on the left side of the car. Their positions are similar to the contrast of the two lines of walls and skyscrapers in the 14th shot. The man and Lopez can be associated with the two wide, white lines on the walls, while the car can be identified with the glass walls between those lines, and in turn, the skyscrapers behind the windows. Consequently, the car signifies the skyscrapers, or their urban-ness and coolness. Because Lopez and the man are together with the car in this shot, they also belong to something urban.

The car itself provokes a strong feeling. At the end, the screen shows the phrase “Subaru. Driving Emotion.” Thus, driving this car means driving emotion. When one drives the car, the driver does not only move the car, but also emotion. This indicates a strong passion coming with this car. In addition, three cars on the 1st shot are connected by the words “3 keys.” There are three different keys for three different cars. According to *Sankei* newspaper (2001), the car manufacturer Subaru developed an advertising tactic in which three different kinds of TV commercials have Lopez as a spokesperson for three kinds of Legacy cars: the B4, the touring wagon, and the *Lancaster*. The three keys symbolize three different types of cars, and Lopez binds them together to send a message to the audience that driving any of Subaru’s vehicles gives the driver excitement. Moreover, because there are three different cars and commercials, the audience becomes curious to see all three commercials. Furthermore, the three vehicles are also connected by Lopez herself; in other words, though the vehicles are different, all Subaru cars provide an exciting life to purchasers.

When Lopez filmed *Selena* (1997), she gained her greatest stardom as a singer, and she has been portrayed as a sex symbol. She is a new star who is an exciting, youthful, and sexy woman. Her strength, elegance, and power as a singer, and her status as a sex symbol, appeal to the younger generation—especially to young men. These images are transferred to a system of product, the car, in this commercial. The man with a key in this commercial owns the car and Lopez. This makes the audience want to obtain the car themselves.

Lopez is not Britney Spears, who is the idol of many teenagers, thus, this car is not for teenagers. A beautiful, mature woman such as Lopez appeals to men in their 20s and 30s who are rising professionals. The man, the owner of the car in this commercial, is not a clerk or a waiter at a coffee shop. Instead, he is a confident, successful businessman. Owning this car promises the purchasers that they can have a beautiful woman such as Lopez, and success in business. Consequently, *you* (the individual viewer) are not someone who will fail to gain a beautiful woman's love, and who will have an unsatisfactory job. Instead, having the car promises access to both women and career success.

Pathos is shown in several ways in this commercial. First, this commercial sends a message that the audience can possess a beautiful woman via the purchase of the product. This provides an appeal of pathos to the audience. Second, a man, the owner of the car, gains the power of promotion in his business when he has the key (i.e., purchases the car). Thus, having the key, or purchasing the car, and succeeding in his business are identified in the audience's mind, and this also serves as an appeal of pathos. Third, the urban setting in this commercial conveyed by skyscrapers and the bluish background provides a

sense of power, because industrialized people do not think of career success and power when they see a rural setting. Background in the commercial also works as an appeal of pathos. Fourth, as the commercial describes, the car provides a “Perfectly new” life, which implies a totally different and better relationship between the man and Lopez, though only upon the purchase of the product. It does not make much logical sense, yet, it makes sense to the audience as an appeal of pathos. In terms of ethos, Lopez displays her elegance and strength in this commercial, as the media portrays her. Those characteristics transfer their meanings to the product. Here, Lopez and the car are identified, and because Lopez is an elegant, young, and strong lady, these characteristics transfer to the product via the structural composition of the advertising text.

Overall, the pathos is shown in this commercial by: a) possession of a beautiful woman such as Lopez via purchase of this car, b) the power or success in business gained by him because he purchases the key for having such a life, (c) urban-ness conveyed by skyscrapers and the bluish background. The urban setting provides a sense of power, because people do not think of career success and power when they see a rural setting, and d) the newness of the relationship that the car provides. The ethos in this commercial is indicated by the elegance and strength of Lopez (see Table 7).

A Cosmetics Commercial with Madonna

Description. This commercial is for Max Factor cosmetics, and consists of 17 shots. It seems as if the setting is a Madonna concert, both backstage and on. All the shots have a golden tone. In the first shot, Madonna is having makeup applied. The camera shoots from her chest to the top of her head, and she appears to be preparing go onstage for her concert. Here, the camera occupies the viewpoint of a mirror in front of Madonna

in her dressing room, and she faces the screen. Two other women can be seen on the screen, one applying makeup to Madonna, and the other is setting Madonna's hair. Madonna is wearing a wide-open, square necked black top and a necklace with a big pendant. She is lifting her chin slightly up. Her hair is reddish brown and medium-length, around her shoulders. There is a woman with blonde hair on Madonna's right. Only the back of her head can be seen, and therefore, the audience cannot see the woman's face in this shot. She rubs the left side of Madonna's chin with a cotton ball. Another person touches Madonna's hair on her left side.

The change from the 1st to the 2nd shots is a jump cut. The screen shows a close-up of Madonna. She is in the same position as in the 1st shot and is looking slightly upwards to her side. From the 1st to the 2nd shots, she says, "Can you reinvent me one more time, Sara?" in English, and the translation of her sentence, "*Sara, atarashii watashi wo tsukutte,*" is shown on the bottom of the screen. On the upper left corner of the screen, "*Jimaku: Toda Natsuko*" (Subtitles: Natsuko Toda), is also shown. Madonna closes her eyes, opens them, and then again faces upward. The woman on Madonna's right side strokes her hair from the top to the bottom as she attempts to fix Madonna's hairstyle.

In the 3rd shot, Sara, the woman who is putting a makeup on Madonna, replies to Madonna's question with the statement "Of course I can," and the screen shows the translation as "*Makasete.*" Here, Sara moves her head to face the TV screen, and the audience can see she is wearing a pair of frameless glasses; Madonna looks down in this shot. This 3rd shot fades out and the 4th shot fades in. The screen shows the stage framed by lights across the top and both sides. Madonna's darkened silhouette appears at the

center of the stage as the spotlight aims at toward her from below. The camera dissolves from the 4th to the 5th shots, and dissolves through each shot transition thereafter. The camera zooms in on Madonna in the 5th shot. It seems as if she is on top of a moving circle, and the camera focus on her as the stage revolves, turning her from left to right. She appears to be wearing a gold-colored dress. From the 5th shot, up-tempo background music without vocals can be heard.

The camera zooms closer to Madonna in the 6th shot. At this point, the audience can see her upper body. The camera shoots her facing the right side of the screen. She raises and bends her arms, holding her palms vertically. The camera shows a close-up of Madonna's face in the 7th shot, encompasses her upper body in the 8th, focuses on her face in the 9th, includes her upper body in the 10th, and again concentrates on her face in the 11th. The 7th to 11th shots each last less than a second, and each shot dissolves into the following shot as Madonna moves her hands up and down.

The camera zooms out from the 11th shot, and in the 12th, the camera shows Madonna's entire body. In the 13th shot, the camera shows her upper body, and she moves her hands to the front. In the 14th shot, she blows small paper pieces or confetti upward from her hands. A male voiceover says "*1999 nen no rasuto siin ni*" (For the last moment of 1999). The cosmetic products can be seen on the screen in the 15th shot. The camera moves from left to right, and two bottles of products are shown at the very front of the screen. As the camera moves, the audience can see lipsticks and compacts behind the two bottles. The male voiceover continues, saying "*Gentei hatsubai no mireniamu corekusyon*" (We have a limited edition of a millennium collection). The names of the products are shown on the right top corner of the screen.

In the 16th shot, Madonna is seen on the screen facing left. Madonna is again moving as if she is on a rotating, circular stage. She moves her arms up and down, with her palms facing up and down. The screen shows two words, “Gold Dust,” with gold color on the bottom of the screen. The same male voiceover says “*Gourudo dasuto caraa wo happyou shimasu*” (We now present the new gold dust color). Finally in the 17th shot, the screen shows “make-up by Max Factor” in gold-colored letters on a black background. A female voiceover says “Max factor.”

Semiological analysis. The color gold is utilized throughout the commercial in order to identify the product and the commercial. All the shots appears to be made under a golden light, and Madonna’s clothes appear golden in color. In addition, when Madonna stands alone in the spotlight on the stage, she is identified with the products because the product containers have also gold coloring. The products are displayed on the screen standing in a way similar to the way Madonna stands.

Gold-colored confetti falls on top of Madonna and on the products, helping to identify her with the products in the minds of audience members. Furthermore, Madonna holds confetti in the 14th shot, and these paper pieces may signify her beauty, achievements, and strength she holds. When she blows the confetti upward to fall on top of herself and the products, her features also transfer to the products. Because using this product reinvents her, promising her beauty, achievements and strength, all of these elements transfer to consumers when Madonna blows away the confetti.

In order to have these elements, the audience needs to belong to the Max Factor tribe. At the same time, the commercial sends a message to each audience member that *you* will be reinvented to be as beautiful as Madonna, when you use a Max Factor

product. Furthermore, Madonna asks Sara, the makeup artist, to reinvent her one more time. The word “reinvention” is a strong word to describe the creation of Madonna’s new look. When Madonna says “reinvent me one more time,” the audience can expect to see not a familiar look, but a completely different look on Madonna. This message is convincing because Madonna is famous for having a long career by changing her image many times. Thus, reinventing herself is something she has been achieving throughout her career. The ability to achieve a totally different look is, then, given to each audience member by using these products. Max Factor promises a look to the consumers that is not just different, but the look of a totally distinctive world. This sends a message to the audience that these products are new, and distinguished from other products.

In addition, the platform on which Madonna stands rotates, so that the camera shoots her from different angles, as a mirror-ball spins and casts changing lights one after another. In the same way, the camera shoots Madonna from different angles, yet those shots all show the same woman, Madonna. Therefore, it gives a message that using the products provides the purchasers a different look every time they wear them, even though they are the same person.

The system of celebrities represented by Madonna, and the system of products, cosmetics, relate to each other in this commercial. Her reputation as a diva, a strong woman, and a sex symbol transfers to the products and sends a message to the audience that using the products gives them beauty and strength. The gold color is obviously related to gold, a metal associated with high value, and reference to that precious metal further implies Madonna’s value as a star. Furthermore, it emphasizes the value of the products, which are described as gold dust—that is, something related to gold.

The color associated with Madonna here is not white, which signifies purity. Instead, her color is gold, which is closely related to her gorgeousness. Thus, her endorsed products in this commercial give purchasers a totally different gorgeous look, not a purified look. Madonna is not Enya, who sings a rather relaxing, new-age type of music. Instead of calming the audience down, Madonna can give them exciting lives.

The strong pathos shown in this commercial is the high quality of the product, which is effectively shown with the color gold. Because gold is a precious metal, it has an image of being expensive and of high quality, and this color is used as the product's color. Therefore, the color gold is easily identified with the product, and consequently, the product has the image of what gold has, i.e., high quality and luxury.

Furthermore, ethos in this commercial appears in the relationship between Madonna and gold. Because she is a well-known singer with a prestigious reputation, the color, gold, is easily associated with her. The fact that gold color is used as a background throughout this commercial with Madonna helps identify her with gold. She is the “material girl” and inter-textually signifies youthful success. In addition, Madonna is also known for changing her images throughout her career. Consequently, when she asks her makeup artist to reinvent her one more time, the audience could assume that she would get a totally different and better look. In turn, the commercial sends a message to the audience that they will have a better look only by using this product. Thus, another ethical appeal shown in this commercial is reinvention of the look based on Madonna's reputation for changing her images. One more ethical aspect which is shown by the association with Madonna in this commercial is her beauty and strength. She has fame for being a strong and beautiful woman, and this image transfers to the product. Thus, the

audience would believe that only strong and beautiful women could use the product, or, using the product promises the audience that they will be strong and beautiful. Overall, the pathos is shown in this commercial via gold, signifying the product's color and also the value of the product being like that of a precious metal. Ethos in this commercial is shown as: a) gold, which connects to the image of Madonna as a well-known singer; b) reinvention of the look, or, a totally different and better look; c) Madonna's strength; and d) Madonna's beauty (see Table 8).

A Coffee Commercial with Tiger Woods

Description. This is a commercial by Asahi for *Wonda* coffee, starring Tiger Woods. It consists of 24 shots, and the commercial is filmed in sunlight, among a natural setting. Throughout the commercial, music with vocals repeating the product name, "wonda, wonda, wonda..." can be heard. In the 1st shot, the screen shows a seashore, where a man is standing in a wild area with some grasses, facing the sea. Here, the man's back is to the screen. It is a long shot, and the screen shows the phrase "*Asahi inryou*" (Asahi drinks), on the top left of the screen; therefore, the audience can tell this commercial is for a drink.

In the 2nd shot, the camera shows a long shot of a desert island from above. Almost all of the land is green, and there are some parts with white areas like sand traps. In the 3rd shot, Woods, wearing a red shirt and a black Nike hat, drinks from a can of the coffee, and the camera pans from left to right. There are white clouds on the left side of the screen. Above the clouds, the words appear: "*Umasa, kireaji, wandafuru*" (Taste, spirit, wonderful). In the 4th shot, Woods' upper body is shown on the right side of the screen, and he is looking slightly toward his right.

In the 5th shot, a pole with a flag, on which the word “wonda” printed in red, can be seen in the center of the screen; the flag is blowing in the wind. The audience can see a high wave in the background. The 6th shot shows the wave, as if for surfing, on the sea. The camera shoots Woods from behind his back as he swings in preparation toward the wave. In the 7th shot, the camera shoots Woods from his right front. He swings the club toward the wave, and a ball flies away.

The 8th shot shows the ball going into the water parallel to and inside the curve at the front of the wave. In the 9th shot, the ball skips along the wave, touching the surface of the wave at several points, one after another. In the 10th shot, the screen shows a close-up of Woods, observing the path of the ball. The 11th shot shows the ball going through the wave. In the 12th shot, the ball emerges from the wave and goes to the right side of the screen. After the ball disappears from the screen, all that can be seen is water, as if the camera is fully immersed. In the 13th shot, the camera shoots the wave from above, and the ball is shown going under the wave. Then, the camera shoots the wave in the 14th shot.

In the 15th shot, the camera shows a close-up of Woods, and he says “Go,” while clenching his fist and moving his bent right arm in a downward motion at his side. In the 16th shot, the screen shows two board-like rectangles superimposed on a wave. One is moving from top to bottom and the other from right to left; these two rectangles move to overlap one another. The one at the top is black; it has two lines of text, the top line reading “Relax and enjoy,” and the bottom reading “Selected beans.” The rectangle coming from the side is red, and the printed name “wonda” on it. When the two rectangles overlap each other, the word “wonda” on one rectangle comes between the two lines on the other rectangle, filling the space. The sea wave can be seen in the background.

The ball comes from the front of screen as if appearing in front of the viewer's eyes, and hits the rectangles. When the ball hits the rectangular boards, they dissolve and disappear.

In the 17th shot, the ball again goes into the wave. The 18th shot shows the ball rising on top of the wave; it appears to be rising up on the top of one. The 19th shot shows the pole and flag on the screen. In the 20th shot, Woods says "Yes." In the 21st shot, the camera shows a long shot of the island with the flagpole. The audience can see the wave behind the flagpole and island.

In the 22nd shot, the camera zooms in on the pole, and the ball hits the flagpole and drops into a hole at its base. In the 23rd shot, nine cans of coffee can be seen on the screen, and the audience can see the phrase "*Shin sedai koohii wanda*" (A coffee for a new generation. Wonda), on the top-right corner of the screen. Below the words, the audience can see the island and sea waves behind Woods. Finally, on the 24th shot, Woods' face is shown on the right side of the screen; he holds the product in his hand and says "It's wonderful wonda." The words "*Asahi inryou*" (Asahi drinks) can be seen on the right bottom corner of the screen.

Semiological analysis. The connection of Woods and golf is utilized throughout the commercial. Woods is a well-known golfer who is considered to be a wonderful player. Obviously the product's name, "wonda," is related to the word "wonderful," as Woods says in the commercial's 24th shot, "It's wonderful wonda." Thus, wonderful and wonda are identical in the consumers' minds. This can also be seen in the 16th shot when the ball hits the board with the word "wonda." Here, the ball, which represents Woods, and the board with "wonda," are connected. The board and the ball appear to merge into each other as they dissolve into the water. Thus, Woods and the product are also identical.

Woods' wonderfulness is also emphasized in the 22nd shot by showing that he gets a hole-in-one. Because he is a wonderful golfer, it is natural that he gets a hole-in-one on the screen. It re-emphasizes his wonderfulness and, in turn, the greatness of the product. If Woods were not a famous golfer, there would be no meaning reflected by his shooting a ball in this commercial. The background music also repeats the word "wonda," and this emphasizes the product, helping the audience remember its name easily.

The peculiarity of Woods playing golf on an island, instead of an ordinary golf course, gives a strong impact to the audience. The ball moves across the surface of the water much like the professional surfers do. Thus, it can be said that the commercial combines elements of both surfing and golf. Golf is not a very wild sport; rather, it is considered a sophisticated sport. Surfing, on the other hand, is considered to be a wild sport. This combination transfers to the image of the product, and implies that this coffee is for anyone, whether they are wild or sophisticated.

The audience sees the connection between Woods and wonderfulness, and in turn, the wonderfulness of the product, wonda. In order to gain his wonderfulness, the audience is required to have the product and belong to the wonda tribe. At the same time, this product is made especially for each member of the audience, because Woods is talking directly to the consumers when he says "It's wonderful wonda."

Woods' success as a golfer convinces the purchaser of the wonderfulness of the product. Woods' Nike hat and red shirt are his trademark, and because he wears them in the commercial, he looks as if he is actually playing golf in a tournament. In this commercial, the sea wave is an obstacle for him to overcome, yet he dominates the wave

and succeeds. This emphasizes his strength, and in turn conveys strength as a characteristic of the product. When Woods says “Go” to the ball in the 15th shot, his obvious intent is for the ball to get to the hole, while the underlying message is to consumers — who are to “go” and get the product. Because Woods is a very successful golfer, the audience is sure that he can make a hole-in-one; at the same time, he can make the consumers go and get a product.

The repeatedly sung phrase, “wonda, wonda, wonda...” remains in the audience’s mind, and obviously connects to the product’s name, *Wonda*. The word, wonda, is associated easily with the word, wonderful. Thus, the commercial sends a message to the audience that Wonda is wonderful. As Woods says, “it’s wonderful wonda,” and the turn of phrase works as pathos in this commercial. In terms of source credibility, Woods is an excellent and sophisticated golfer who signifies youthful success, and these elements serves as ethos expressed in the commercial.

His fame as an exciting golfer makes the messages convincing; he is widely recognizable, as compared to an ordinary, non-famous golfer. Wonda is not *Boss*, which is the name of another popular coffee brand. “Boss” has the image of a wild and bad boy, which is represented by the famous spokesperson for boss, Eikichi Yazawa, a Japanese rock’n-roll singer. While Wonda is connected to an image of active sophistication, Boss is connected to savage wildness. Thus, having Woods in the commercial emphasizes the connection of active sophistication to the product in the purchasers’ minds. Overall, pathos expressed in this commercial is the wonderfulness of the product, and ethos shown in this commercial includes: a) Tiger Woods’ excellence and b) his sophistication (see Table 9).

English School Commercial with Ewan McGregor

Description. This commercial is for *AEON* English school, and it consists of nine shots. The commercial is set both during night and daytime, and all of the shot transitions are jump cut, except from the 2nd to the 3rd, and 8th to 9th, shots. In the 1st shot, the camera is located outside a car shooting the front windshield. Ewan McGregor is in the car, sitting in the driver's seat, crying. It is night, and raining, so the car's wipers are moving. Here, he wears dark-colored clothes, though it is difficult to see details because the lighting is dim. As the camera moves to zoom in on McGregor, he says "I love you."

In the 2nd shot, a park in sunlight can be seen. There is a bench far away and green trees are seen on the right side of the screen. The audience can see one person sitting on the bench, and another person is walking toward her or him. Because the camera does not focus on them, their figures are rather vague in this shot. Two lines of a sentence, "I love" and "you," can be seen on the right side of the screen.

The 2nd shot dissolves into the 3rd shot, and McGregor's face appears on the screen on the left side. The sentence "I love you" can still be seen on the right side of the screen. There are two people standing behind him, in shadow and slightly out-of-focus, making it difficult to tell what they look like. McGregor's voice says "I love you," though his mouth is not moving in this shot. The camera shows a close-up of McGregor's face on the left side of the screen. He wears a light-blue shirt in this shot.

In the 4th shot, the camera shows a long shot of a busy street in daytime; cars are seen passing by. It looks as if this is outside of the park, because there are green trees at the back of the screen. At first, McGregor walks on the opposite side of street from the audience. Here, he wears a white shirt, brown leather jacket, and jeans. Because food

booths are in front of him, the audience can see only the top of his head. McGregor walks toward the right side of the screen, into a space without food booths, allowing the audience to see his whole body. It still looks like the park is behind him, because the audience can see the green color. He screams “I love you,” as if to someone across the street, in the place of the camera.

In the 5th shot, the camera shoots him inside the car on the rainy night, as it did in the 1st shot. McGregor brushes his hair back with his right hand, and turns his head to his left. The 6th shot is the same as the 4th shot, and he screams the words “I,” “Love,” “You,” even louder. The 7th shot shows an empty bench in heavy rain. There are hydrangea bushes on the left and right bottom corners of the screen. In the 8th shot, the camera shoots a close-up of McGregor’s face. It appears to be a sunny day, and fencing of some sort can be seen behind him, though the shape is not clearly shown. Shot from the front, McGregor looks down, faces up, looks toward the right side of the screen, and smiles. Again, he wears a brown leather jacket over a white shirt with some red on it. He says, “because I love you,” and the screen shows “*Kotoba niha taion ga aru*” (approximately, “Language gets your hearts”) in the center of the screen. The screen dissolves into the 9th shot, showing, “REAL communication” in the top center of the screen on a black background. Below these words in another line, the audience can see the words “*Eikaiwa AEON*” (English school AEON).

Semiological analysis. McGregor keeps saying “I love you” until the end. He even shouts “I love you” across the street in the 4th and the 6th shots, as if someone he loves is on the other side of the street. This shows his passion and the depth of his love. These elements may also indicate there are some obstacles to this love; for example, he is

crying in the car as it rains in the 1st shot, and the cars on the busy street prevent him from crossing the street in the 4th shot. Because the object of McGregor's love, presumably a woman, is on the opposite side of the street from him, the street appears as a barrier between them and demonstrates that their love has some problems. Despite these obstacles, it appears he may stay with her happily, because later in the 8th shot, he smiles and laughs. When he walks behind the food booths across the street in the 4th shot, the booths block the view so that only a part of his head can be seen. However, as McGregor walks toward his left (or the right side of the screen), the audience gradually sees his whole body. Thus, it may indicate that though he had problems with his love relationship, he can clear up those problems and be with the one he loves.

The background scenery changes depending on McGregor's mood. It rains when he cries in the 1st and the 5th shots, and the road and traffic separate him from his love in the 4th and the 6th shots. These scenes are rather cold in tone, as if they connect to his feelings. On the other hand, he smiles in the 8th shot. Thus, it is easy to tell he is happy at this moment. In contrast to his tears in the 1st and 5th shots, his smile in the last shot indicates he is finding his love.

McGregor cries, smiles and shouts at her from across the street, as he says in the 5th shot, "Because I love you." His actions are motivated by his love for her, and it is very important for him to tell her "I love you." Though this commercial only uses the sentence "I love you," it tells the importance of language. The sentence "*Kotoba niha taion ga aru*" (Language gets your hearts), shown in the 8th shot, further emphasizes the importance of language. Language is not simply words, but the way to exchange hearts, or caring, with someone.

At the end, the voiceover says “Real communication. AEON.” Therefore, in order to have “real” communication, one needs to join AEON. The ability to speak in English is a way to have real communication. Unless one goes to the AEON English school, that person cannot communicate as well with someone who inhibit a true friendship or deeper relationship. Attending the AEON English school is not only the way to communicate, but also the way to have communication with others that is genuine.

In addition, audience members need to belong to the AEON tribe in order to meet a person like McGregor. Applying to this school promises that one will be loved by someone wonderful like him. In order to gain the love of someone like that, one needs to belong to the AEON tribe. If the audience belongs to this English school, they can have a relationship with a sophisticated person like McGregor. At the same time, the commercial sends the message that the person to whom he is shouting “I love you” is *you*, the individual viewer. Because the screen never shows who the person is, any member of the audience can be the one who is loved. The one at whom someone like McGregor smiles can be you in the audience if, and only if, you join an AEON English school.

The movie, *Star Wars: Episode I – The Phantom Menace* (1999), made McGregor very famous. The decent and noble image of the character he played in the movie, Obi-Wan Kenobi, transfers to the image of the school. The commercial did not use a funny comedian or a wild rock star, but rather, a humble and dignified man such as the young Obi-Wan Kenobi portrayed by McGregor. His image connects to the sophistication that the school can provide to the students. Thus, belonging to the AEON tribe or joining the school promises McGregor’s sophistication to AEON school students.

The audience can be with, and want to be with, a person such as McGregor, compared to a person such as Mr. Beans or Sylvester Stallone. McGregor offers an image of gentle, kind sophistication, while Mr. Beans has an image as a funny but not intelligent person, and Stallone suggests a macho man who is not a kind gentleman. In addition, McGregor keeps saying, “I love you”—not “I hate you”—because the statement “I love you” has positive connotations. Moreover, “I hate you” does not fit in this situation, because he is in love with someone, and the person with whom he is crazy in love must be *you*, individually, in the audience. In order to entice the audience to join the AEON tribe, the sentence used should have a positive connotation. Also, in order to enhance the positive connotation, soft images are conveyed by the background sceneries: a park and an ordinary street, not skyscrapers or offices.

In this commercial, McGregor keeps saying the phrase “I love you.” It seems he is in love with someone in the audience because he looks into the camera. Every Japanese recognizes the phrase “I love you,” but how about other things he might say? Every Japanese recognizes the phrase “I love you,” but how about other things he might say? Could you understand him? The commercial sends a message to the audience that maybe *you* should learn English, and once they join AEON English school, they will be loved very passionately from a man like McGregor. As a result, love and passion work as pathos in this commercial. McGregor has the image of a noble and sincere man, derived from the movies, *Star Wars: Episode 1 – The Phantom Menace* (1999) and *Moulin Rouge* (2001). Thus, one can obtain the love of a man like McGregor with nobleness and sincerity by joining AEON English school, and the commercial further implies that learning English is a noble and sincere act. Here, nobleness and sincerity serve as ethos.

In sum, the pathos described in this commercial is: a) love, and b) passion. Ethos in this commercial is: a) nobleness and b) sincerity (see Table 10).

A Car Commercial with Leonardo DiCaprio

Description. This is a commercial for *Wagon R* by Suzuki, starring Leonardo DiCaprio, and it consists of 12 shots. The 1st shot shows five people: DiCaprio, two Caucasian males, and two Caucasian females, all walking, and the camera shoots them from a lower angle. They all appear to be in their 20s. DiCaprio is in front of the four other characters. DiCaprio wears a white T-shirt, khaki pants, and a black leather jacket. A white roof can be seen in the background; it appears they are inside a parking garage on a sunny day. In the 2nd shot, the camera shows DiCaprio's face from the chin to the top of his head from his left side. Next, in the 3rd shot, a parked car with bluish-purple color is shown, and DiCaprio can be seen walking from the front of the car to rear. The 4th shot shoots a close-up of DiCaprio inside the car, sitting in the driver's seat, and he says in Japanese "*Yo no naka*" (The world, or public).

In the 5th shot, the camera shoots all five people outside of the car; two are standing near the back of the car, one on the left side, another on the right side, and DiCaprio is in front of the car. They all say in Japanese, "*Dondon*" (More and more), and this word can be seen in more than five places on the upper side of the screen. In the 6th shot, DiCaprio says "Wagon R," while holding his thumb and index finger up, as if making the shape of a letter "L". The 7th shot shoots the car driving inside a parking garage, going down an incline, and the driver is not visible. In the 8th shot, the screen shows "*Yo no naka*" (The world), "*dondon*" (more and more), and "Wagon R" in three lines on the screen. Then, one after another, cars begin coming out of the exit of the

parking garage; they are all the same. A male voiceover says the words shown onscreen. The 9th shot shows DiCaprio in the car, saying “I love No. 1,” while holding his index finger erect.

In the 10th shot, the camera shoots the moving car from the front left to the right side of the car. The audience can see skyscrapers in the background. In the 11th shot, the camera shoots the car from the side, and the background appears to be small shops. The screen shows “*Hashiri to anzen no shikkari chengi*” (Total change of running and safety) on top of the screen, a second line says “SUZUKI,” and a third line says “*Shin Wagon R*” (New Wagon R). The 12th shot shows the sentence “*Kei nanbaa 1 no shea*” (The most sold compact car brand) at the top of the screen, while the center of the screen shows the Suzuki logo flipping back and forth sideways, and the lower part of the screen shows the word “SUZUKI.”

Semiological analysis. DiCaprio says, “I love No. 1,” and the fact he rides in this car implies that it has the best, or No. 1, quality appropriate for a big star such as he is. In addition, he and his friends say, “*Yo no naka*” (The world), “*Dondon*” (More and more), and “Wagon R.” Thus, it suggests that more and more people in the world have this car. In the 8th shot, the same car comes out from the parking garage over and over. That is, it appears, everyone has the same car, and this matches with the comments, “the world,” “more and more,” and “Wagon R.” Because DiCaprio, a worldwide celebrity, says “the world,” it appears to mean not just public or the narrow sense of the world, but the actual entire world. This promises the car’s popularity and quality.

When he and his friends say, “*dondon*” (More and more), some raise their arms up and down, moving movement as if telling someone or something, “Go, go,” and

DiCaprio bends his arm and moves it up and down as well. One of his male friends moves his hips back and forth, which could be interpreted as sexual movements. These movements show casualness, which is consistent with the characters' manner of dress. In this commercial, all of them, including DiCaprio, wear casual clothes, and most have a soft color, such as beige or khaki. This implies that this car is made especially for casual occasions. The soft color of their clothing also contrasts with the bright bluish-purple color of the car, and the car's color makes it stand out in crowds. DiCaprio appears to be with his friends for a holiday, because he wears casual clothes, and he has fun by having this car. The casual feeling is reinforced by the intimacy of the scenery. The commercial is shot in a parking garage and near shops downtown, as opposed to a larger, colder environment such as office buildings or skyscrapers would provide. Skyscrapers can be seen far away as a distant background in the 10th shot, while the downtown shops are immediately behind the car in the 11th shot. This indicates the car is more attached to a casual occasion, and is not necessarily just for business or urban life. The fact that all characters wear casual clothes reemphasizes that this car is good for holidays, which are relaxing occasions. In order to have fun with DiCaprio such as his friends do, the audience needs to have this car and belong to the Wagon R tribe.

DiCaprio's characters from *William Shakespeare's Romeo & Juliet* (1996), *Titanic* (1997), and *The Man in the Iron Mask* (1998), show his talent in various roles. He can be a playful kid, a serious man, or a passionate lover. First, these roles portray his acting skill. His reputation as a "good" actor appears to promise the good quality of the car. Second, no matter what kind of role he plays, he is known for looking "cool." His coolness, then, connects to the coolness of the product. In this commercial, the playful

side of his character is utilized, and it creates an atmosphere of great, casual fun for the product. This implies the target audience of this car is young people, not older people who could afford more expensive cars.

DiCaprio is a young star who has an image of a mischievous boy, not a very elegant star such as Pierce Brosnan. Though DiCaprio plays a king in *The Man in the Iron Mask* (1998), he also plays a common person in *Titanic* (1997). On the other hand, Brosnan, older and more polished, may not play an ordinary person in commercials, because it would not match the image of his James Bond character. Furthermore, DiCaprio says “I love No. 1” in this commercial, not “No. 2,” but “No. 1.” Therefore, this car has the best quality of its kind, not a shoddy or second-hand quality, even though it is not an elegant or sophisticated car. Consequently, this car commercial appears to target ordinary young people, while Brosnan would be best to utilize for a commercial for an upscale, expensive car.

DiCaprio says, “I love No.1,” and this phrase promises the best quality of the car. In addition, popularity of this car is promised when DiCaprio says “the world” and “more and more,” as there will be more and more of this product, Wagon R, in the world. Thus, these elements are pathos. However, if DiCaprio were not a popular celebrity, phrases such as “I love No.1,” “the world,” and “more and more” do not sound strongly convincing. In this sense, these elements of pathos also serve as ethos. Furthermore, because DiCaprio and his friends all wear casual clothes, and this car is driving through the downtown entertainment district, not through the dull skyscrapers and modern offices of the business district, this car gets the image of use for a casual occasion as another pathos element. Overall, the pathos and the ethos shown in this commercial are: a) the

best quality, because of the word “No.1,” and because such a big star endorses this car, and b) popularity, because DiCaprio says, “the world” and “more and more,” and (c) casualness. Ethos in this commercial is the high quality of the car (see Table 11).

A Car Commercial with Kevin Costner

Description. This is a Subaru *Lancaster* car commercial starring Kevin Costner, and it consists of six shots. This commercial is shot on a warm, sunny winter day, not severe winter or a hot day. This commercial uses the dissolving technique to change from shot to another, and music that sounds French can be heard throughout. In the 1st shot, the screen shows the sentence “*Rankasutaa uiikuendo hajimaru*” (Lancaster weekend starting) on the screen. Costner is inside a bookstore in the second floor of a building. The phrase “770 Bookstores 770” is written in gold on a black board. The number “770” may indicate the address of the bookstore. The windows in the second floor are wide open, and the audience can see Costner standing inside the bookstore and reading a book. He is wearing a beige-brown classic jacket with white pants. The camera moves downward from the second to show the first floor, and after that, the camera moves further to show a silver-colored car parked in front of the bookstore. At the camera moves down to show the whole body of the car, the Japanese script for “Lancaster weekend starting” dissolves and disappears. The camera then zooms out to show the whole body of the car.

In the 2nd shot, the car is seen driving, then driving in an off-road setting in the 3rd shot. In both shots, the driver cannot be seen. The screen shows “Boxer + 4WD,” and under this line, it shows “*200mm no saitei chijyoukou*” (200mm minimum clearance). A male voiceover says “*Arayuru michide hashiri takumashiku*” (Runs on every kind of

road). The 4th shot shows Costner sitting on a tree limb with his knees bent, reading a book, though exactly where he sits is not recognizable in this shot. In the 5th shot, the camera shows a big tree with several limbs. The audience can now tell Costner is sitting on one of the limbs. The car can be seen near the bottom of the tree. Here, the word “Legacy LANCASTER” is seen in the center of the screen, and the tree, Costner, and the car can also be seen on the screen. In the 6th and last shot, the word “Legacy *rankasutaa feaa*” (Legacy Lancaster event) appears at the top of the screen, and “SUBARU” at the bottom, on a black background. From the 5th to the 6th shot, the male voiceover says “*Regashii rankasutaa shin toujyou. Syumatsu ha Subaru he*” (Now, we have a new Legacy Lancaster. Go to Subaru on the weekend).

Semiological analysis. In addition to the obvious meaning of a sale event for this vehicle starting on the weekend, there is a deeper underlying meaning to purchasing a Subaru Lancaster: an audience member can have a “Lancaster weekend” every weekend, because the weekend itself shares the name of the car. The weekend which has the name of the car sounds as if it is a national holiday. Because people buy certain things for a particular holiday, such as eggs for Easter, the audience needs to have a Lancaster to have Lancaster weekends. If someone does not have it yet, that person needs to get it to have Lancaster weekends.

When the screen shows the sentence “Lancaster weekend starting” in the 1st shot, it must be only a “Lancaster” weekend, and not any other weekend such as a “*Lexus* weekend.” Lexus may connect more with luxury and a higher socioeconomic class, while Lancaster implies instead an ordinary, relaxing time. For having an enjoyable weekend, one must have a Lancaster car. The weekend which has the name of the car sounds as if it

is a national holiday. Because people buy certain things for a particular holiday, such as eggs for Easter, the audience needs to have a Lancaster to have Lancaster weekends. If someone does not have it yet, that person needs to get it to have Lancaster weekends. A Lancaster weekend could be an enjoyable weekend with the Lancaster, when *you* in the audience purchase the car and belong to the Lancaster tribe. The commercial tells the audience that only upon purchase can the audience gain the relaxing weekend Costner has. Thus, they need to belong to the Lancaster tribe to have a relaxing time. At the same time, the commercial sends a message of appellation to each audience member that this car is especially prepared for *you* to have a relaxing weekend.

In addition, the audience needs to go to Subaru on the weekend. When the male voiceover says “Go to Subaru on the weekend,” though it does not specify which weekend, it sounds as if the audience needs to go to Subaru as soon as possible; going to Subaru cannot wait. The commercial does not ask you to go to Subaru. Instead, it is presented as a fact that the audience will go to Subaru on the weekend. Thus, the audience feels unconsciously obligated to visit Subaru dealers.

Furthermore, another line shown on the screen, “Runs on every kind of road” in the 3rd shot, indicates this car can be used for any type of road, either on city streets just to stop by a bookstore downtown, or out in the countryside on rougher roads. The commercial sends a message to the audience that they can use this car for weekdays in the city, and have a relaxed weekend by going out of town to enjoy wild nature. Thus, the car adjusts to its owner’s needs and can be used anywhere. In addition, Costner creates a gentle, calm, and sophisticated image for this car. His classy beige-brown jacket underscores those images. It is not black, red, or another strong color, but a subdued

beige. Therefore, it creates gentle and warm images. Moreover, he is shown sitting among the limbs of a tree in the 4th shot, and this helps identify Costner and the tree. Therefore, the image of the big tree, which is warm and gentle, also transfers to Costner, and in turn, to the car.

Fourth, Costner has become very famous for his roles in *Field of Dreams* (1989), *Dances with Wolves* (1990), and *The Bodyguard* (1992), and his characters show him as a sincere and honest man. His persona in the commercial, that of a man having a relaxing and peaceful time in nature, connects to his role in the world of *Dances with Wolves*. His image in that character transfers to the car, and it makes the car look as if it is for someone with honesty, sincerity, and humility. In addition, this car promises purchasers they will have a good time by going to the countryside, reading books while comfortable sitting on a tree, or stopping by a bookstore downtown.

In this commercial, Costner is portrayed as an older, mature man; he has a more serious look than a younger star such as Leonardo DiCaprio. DiCaprio would not solemnly waste his time in a bookstore, yet Costner may enjoy his relaxing time in it. Costner enjoys relaxing by going to a bookstore and to the countryside, instead of going shopping or to a bar. His image connects to warm, gentle, and natural images of the car instead of to urban and cold images. Costner is older than DiCaprio, and therefore, Costner has an image of being more rational and mature, while DiCaprio is associated with the image of fun and excitement.

In this commercial, Costner is reading a book in a bookstore and then enjoys his weekend in nature by driving down a rough road to go to the countryside. These factors work as pathos, showing the sophisticated, natural, and warm image of *Lancastercars*.

There are no apparent logical connections between the car and these images; however, because Costner is reading a book and spending his weekend in nature in the commercial, images of sophistication, nature, and warmth attach to the car and convince the audience of the legitimacy of those images. Furthermore, Costner usually plays an honest, sincere, and/or humble man in various movies, and these images associate his positive images to the car as ethos element. Overall, the ethos expressed in this commercial is: a) the honesty, b) sincerity, and c) humility of Costner, and the pathos shown in this commercial is: a) sophistication and b) a natural and c) warm image (see Table 12).

A Jeans Commercial with Brad Pitt

Description. This commercial, starring Brad Pitt, is for two types of jeans, 503s and 505s from Edwin, a Japanese jeans company. This commercial consists of ten shots. The screen is divided into two parts, left and right, throughout the commercial, and each division works as an independent screen. Pitt is seen in both sides, though he moves differently in each screen. Thus, in the following section of description of this commercial, (L) and (R) stand for the left and the right sides of the screen, or for Pitt on the left side and on the right side, respectively. Those distinctions will be indicated at the beginning of each description. All the changes from one shot to another utilize a jump cut. In this commercial, Pitt is inside a cheap and old apartment. The commercial looks as if it is set on a sunny summer day, and contemporary music without vocals can be heard throughout it.

In the 1st shot, (R) a pocket on the back of a pair of jeans is shown, and (L) also shows the back pocket of a pair of jeans, yet, how the camera films these two pockets is slightly different. Though a person appears to be wearing the jeans, each pocket almost

fills each half of the screen. The company logo is shown in black letters, “EDWIN,” on a small red rectangle, in the top left corner of the screen. In the 2nd shot, both sides of the screen show the inside of a room with a greenish tone all over; it looks as if it is an old room with dim lighting. Pitt (R) wears jeans and a gray-colored T-shirt, and is shown walking toward a refrigerator. The audience only sees his back. He opens the refrigerator with his left hand. Simultaneously, Pitt (L) wears jeans and a red-colored T-shirt while walking toward a refrigerator. The audience again only sees his back. He opens the refrigerator with his right hand.

In the 3rd shot, the (R) screen shows one of Pitt’s feet wearing a white sock and a black shoe. The camera moves from his toe to his knee; and the (L) screen shows his derriere. In the 4th shot, both images of Pitt open the refrigerator and take out a bottle of juice. After that, Pitt (R) grasps the bottle with his right hand and smells the open top. He grimaces and does not drink the juice; while (L) he grasps the bottle with his left hand and drinks juice from the bottle. In the 5th shot, both of them close the refrigerator and come toward the screen.

The 6th shot is taken in a bathroom; it is not a very fancy bathroom, but an ordinary small one. In this shot, the sun comes into the room, and therefore the audience can tell the shot is, or appears to be, set during the daytime. In (R), the screen shows Pitt from the back. He gets closer to the bathroom sink, grasps a cup with his right hand, and looks to his left as if he sees someone on that side. In (L), the screen shows his back in front of the bathroom sink. He is brushing his teeth with his right hand, looking slightly toward his right, and then he turns away from the sink, faces the screen, and comes closer

to the screen. Yet, the mirror shows a frontal view of Pitt brushing his teeth even after he turns around. Pitt in the mirror looks toward his right.

The camera shoots Pitt in the kitchen from the side in the 7th shot, and the room also has a greenish color as it did in the 2nd shot. The two images of Pitt are shown with their backs to each other; the audience sees each from the side. He (R) cleans dishes, and he receives a plate with his right hand from Pitt (L). Pitt (R) drains the water from the plate. Pitt (L) breaks eggs with his right hand and puts them into a saucepan to cook, and he hands a plate to Pitt (R) using his left hand.

In the 8th shot, both images lie down and the camera shoots the Pitts from above: Pitt's face (R) is seen on the screen. The camera moves from his waist to his head. He says "Go maru san" (Five oh three, or 503); simultaneously (L) his feet are seen on the screen. The camera moves from his waist to his feet. In the 9th shot, (R) his feet are seen, and the camera moves from his waist to the feet. Simultaneously (L) his face is seen, and the camera moves from his waist to his head. He says "Go maru go" (Five oh five, or 505). Finally, in the 10th shot, both of them show their faces, put on big headphones, and say "Edwin." Throughout this commercial, Pitt says only a few words: the type of jeans, 503 and 505, and the company's name, Edwin.

Semiological analysis. Pitt (L) and Pitt (R) are not exactly the same. One wears a red T-shirt, and the other wears a gray T-shirt. In addition, their movements are slightly different, yet they seem to have things in common. Both of them appear to be feeling at ease, and they live in very ordinary, old, not modern, apartments. Therefore, it creates warm, casual, and ordinary images for Pitt, not cold and formal images. Pitt (R) and Pitt

(L) both wear casual T-shirts and jeans, not formal ties or jackets. Therefore, it is implied that these jeans are for casual occasions.

In this commercial, Pitt (R) and Pitt (L) never had eye contact, but they are each seen checking the other side, as if each one is curious about the other. In the 7th shot, Pitt (L) gives a plate to Pitt (R). This is the only time the two of them ever achieved contact. This implies that though they belong to different places, they still have some connection. At the end, both show their faces and say the same word, “Edwin.” Thus, even though Pitt (R) and Pitt (L) appear to have different lives, both are connected by Edwin jeans. This may relate to many people’s lifestyles in Japan. People do not usually pay much attention to other people’s lives, yet they still care about each other and have a connection. Wearing Edwin jeans gives the consumers both independent yet collectivistic identity.

The commercial conveys a message to the purchasers that only upon the purchase of 503 and/or 505 jeans, and thus belonging to the 503 or 505 tribe as a part of collectivistic identity, they can have easy and relaxing lives just as Pitt (R) and Pitt (L) have. An easy life is expressed in several ways. The refrigerator looks old, and the bathroom looks very simple. When (R) Pitt washes dishes, there are pots and pans on the side. It emphasizes the image of an older, inexpensive American apartment. The place is not a highly modern, clean, or fancy apartment. Rather, it looks older and rather casual. There is no advanced technology such as a computer in this room, which would destroy the atmosphere of the room, and the image being established for the jeans. This matches with the image of the jeans, and the taste of someone who wears them. It may emphasize the authenticity of jeans as related to “good old America.” In addition, because many Japanese belong to one ethnic group, Japanese display greater homogeneity than multi-

ethnic Americans, yet each one of them has her or his own life. The commercial sends a message that a pair of jeans is for everybody, yet, it is especially for *you* in the audience, as an appellation.

Pitt's characters from various movies, such as *Thelma & Louise* (1991), *The Legend of the Fall* (1994), *Interview with the Vampire* (1994), *Seven* (1995), *Seven Years in Tibet* (1997), and *Meet Joe Black* (1998), portray a sometimes-casual, and also sometimes-decent young man. In the cowboy-like look he had in *Thelma & Louise* (1991), the audience was impressed by his sexy rear. The image he created in the movie, not of a rich or urban man, but of a casual sexy young man living at ease, transfers to his image in this commercial.

Pitt is not Pierce Brosnan. Brosnan has more sophisticated image, and many audience members would assume he probably would not wear jeans. Instead, Pitt has an image of a wild cowboy. In addition, Pitt is not an ugly old man, but a young attractive person. Thus, Edwin jeans are targeted for a good-looking, sexy, nice man. Hence, by purchasing these jeans and wearing them, the commercial sends a message to the audience that they can be as cool as Pitt. Furthermore, Pitt is living in an ordinary apartment, not in a clean, modern apartment. Therefore, this fits the image of jeans and wildness. In this commercial, Pitt may be contrasted to Takuya Kimura who is one of the most famous young Japanese male celebrity, and who starred in a commercial for Levi's jeans during the time of this survey. While Kimura's commercial, which will be analyzed in detail shortly, emphasizes urban-ness, Pitt's commercial focuses the viewer's mind on the old America and being at ease. In addition, Pitt can express the authenticity of jeans in the commercial. Edwin is a Japanese company and needs to show authenticity by

having some elements of authenticity. Having Pitt adds the image of authenticity to Edwin's jeans because he is American. On the other hand, Kimura's commercial may not need to have an American spokesperson because Levi is a famous, authentic, American jeans brand.

The pathos shown in this commercial can be stated as the simple life and casualness that Pitt presumably has. It is not a life surrounded by technology and urban furniture. Instead, his life appears rather simple and casual. When the commercial shows his kind of life with jeans, the product also gets the image of a simple, casual lifestyle, not that of an upscale or luxury-oriented world. This appeal to leisure is an appeal of pathos. At the same time, because Pitt is a very famous celebrity from the US, the jeans, which originate in the US, are associated with authentic images when the commercial shows him in them. In addition, Pitt is known as a "cool" celebrity, and this coolness is transferred to the image of the product. The pathos shown in this commercial, therefore, is: a) a simple life, and b) casualness; while the ethos in this commercial is a) authenticity and b) coolness (see Table 13).

A Jeans Commercial with Takuya Kimura

Description. This commercial for Levi's jeans stars Takuya Kimura, and it has 39 shots. Though most other commercials shown in Japan seem to last only 15 to 30 seconds each, this commercial lasts 60 seconds. A techno type of music without vocals can be heard throughout the commercial. The commercial is taken in a room painted all in blue. The changes from one shot to the next are very quick, and within a shot, the afterimage of Kimura's movement is often used. The 1st shot shows the blue-painted room, and Kimura seems to appear from behind a wall far back, as if a wall or door is located in that spot.

This is a very long shot. He wears a black T-shirt and blue jeans. Then, the screen changes to the 2nd shot by a jump cut, and he is now in the center of the screen. Here, it looks as if he teleports from one spot to another several times. During this scene, he progresses from far away to the center of the room by jumping from place to place rapidly, though he himself is not doing the moving. His posture looks as if he is on a skateboard; that is, his knees are somewhere bent, his feet spaced a few inches apart, and he is slightly bent at the waist. He is looking toward the camera. At last, in the 2nd shot, he moves from the middle to the very front of the screen, again appearing to move from one place to another without trying.

The 2nd shot dissolves into the 3rd shot, showing Kimura's upper body on the right side of the screen. He faces sideways, then turns to face the front; at the end of the shot, the camera zooms in on him. The 3rd shot dissolves into the 4th shot, and in the 4th shot, his upper body is seen, and he looks toward his right side and then turns his head around to face front. He puts his right hand into his right back pocket. The transition from the 4th to the 5th shot is a jump cut. The camera shoots a close-up of Kimura from the back, and he turns his head around. The audience can only see the side of his shoulder and his right eye. He turns his head further, and the audience can see both eyes. Then, the screen moves to the 6th from the 5th shot by a jump cut. He puts his hand into the pocket of the jeans, and the camera shoots a close-up of his hand and the pocket. Next, the camera moves and shoots a close-up of his waist to his foot from his right side, then moves along the side of the foot to the front to show Kimura's toe. The screen changes to the 7th shot by a jump cut, and the camera shows his whole body from the back. He stands and puts his hands in his back pockets, and then he turns his head around to face backwards.

A jump cut transitions from the 7th to the 8th shot. The camera shoots Kimura's whole body from the front; he looks slightly toward his right side and puts his hands on his waist. Then, the screen changes to the 9th shot by a jump cut, and in the 9th, the camera shoots him from a low angle between his legs towards his crotch. The screen then changes to the 10th shot by a jump cut, and the camera shows Kimura's upper body from his waist. He faces sideways, and turns his body clockwise. The 10th shot dissolves into the 11th shot, and in the 11th shot, he appears on the right side of the screen and imitates a "moon walk," which is a backward-walking popular dance done by Michael Jackson. Then, Kimura opens his legs and bends his knees. The screen changes from the 11th to the 12th shot by a jump cut. He opens his legs and his hands, strokes the inside of his legs from his crotch to his knees with his hands, and bends his knees. In another shot directed toward his crotch, the camera shoots him from a low angle between his legs. The 12th shot dissolves into the 13th shot, and this shot appears to be identical to the 12th shot, but taken from the back. His rear is seen from the back on the screen, and he opens and touches his thighs, and bends his knees.

Then, the screen transits to the 14th shot by a jump cut. It shows a very close-up view of Levi's red logo, which is on the side of the jeans. Kimura bends his knees and stretches them in the 14th shot. The 14th shot dissolves into the 15th shot, and this shot looks as if it is a continuous shot of the 12th and 13th shots in the sense that the 15th shot is a frontal shot of him opening his legs, bending his knees, and touching his hands to his thighs near his crotch. Then the 15th shot dissolves into the 16th shot, and the camera shoots his upper body from the front. The transitions from the 16th to 24th shots are all jump cuts. The 17th shot shows him from a low angle, and he raises his right leg and

bends its knee. The 18th shot shoots him from front, and he raises his leg vertically 180 degrees. He faces the front, and then the left side, of the screen. The 19th shot is a close-up of his eyes, and the screen color changes from a monotone of bluish color to real-world colors, and Kimura raises his left eyebrow.

From the 20th to 25th shots, Kimura is shown attempting a back flip. The camera shoots him from a low angle between his legs, facing toward his crotch, in the 20th shot, and he raises his arms. The camera shoots him from the back in the 21st shot, and he bends his upper body. The camera is shooting near the floor. Because he bends his upper body, one leg can also be seen on the screen. In the 22nd shot, the screen shows his hands on the ground; most of his body cannot be seen. The camera zooms out slightly, and his leg can be seen behind. The camera pans from his ankle to his knee. The camera shoots Kimura's whole body from the side in the 23rd shot from a medium distance. He is shown touching his hands on the floor, and opening his legs to 180 degree apart above the floor. The 24th shot shoots him from above, and the screen shows his body, hands, and legs. The screen dissolves from the 24th to the 25th shot. In the 25th shot, Kimura is shown from the front as he finishes the back flip and stands upright.

The 25th shot dissolves to the 26th shot, and it zooms in on Kimura's crotch, then zooms out to show his crotch and his knees. The screen changes to the 27th shot by a jump cut. He opens his legs 180 degrees sideways and sits on the floor, and the camera zooms out to show his whole body. The camera zooms further out from Kimura, and he reaches to the front with his left hand. The 27th shot dissolves into the 28th shot, and the camera zooms in to show a close-up of his face, then he lies down on his back at the right side of the screen. The 28th shot dissolves into the 29th shot, and the camera shoots

Kimura from sideways, as he lies on the floor. He raises his legs 90 degrees from the floor. The 29th shot dissolves to the 30th shot, and this shot is taken from his front with his head away from the camera, and because he bends his upper body as he prepares to leap off the floor, the screen also shows his rear. The camera appears to be filming his flip from the front. He raises his legs as he prepares for the flip, jumps, and stands straight, facing the front, closer to the screen. Thus, he is seen moving from slightly far away, to very close to the screen, when he jumps. The transition from the 30th to the 31st shot is a jump cut. Kimura's face is shown close-up on the left side of the screen. He sticks his tongue out, faces his left, and moves to the right corner of the screen. When he faces left, he closes his eyes.

It is a jump cut from the 31st to the 32nd shot. Kimura is seen in the right corner of the screen, and three Caucasian women can also be seen on the screen. One woman stands on the right side of the screen. She wears a white top and dark-colored jeans. Another one, wearing a white top and blue-colored jeans, stands on the left side of the screen. She raises her leg and bends her knee. Another one lies facedown on the floor, and the audience can only see her black top. Kimura changes his position very quickly from the right corner to the center of the screen. Again, he does not move his body at all; he appears to teleport from one place to another, and the audience sees several afterimages of Kimura on the screen.

The 32nd shot dissolves into the 33rd shot, and the camera shoots a close-up of the back of the woman who is lying down sideways in the 33rd shot. Here, Kimura's upper body is seen behind her. The 33rd shot changes to the 34th shot by a jump cut, and the woman raises her upper body and looks upward in the 34th shot. The screen again

changes to the 35th shot by a jump cut. The bluish color, which is assumed to be the color of jeans, is viewed all over the screen, and after that, the face and blonde hair of the woman lying on the floor is seen. Then, the color of jeans is seen again for a whole screen; it seems as if someone passes in front of the lying woman so close to the camera that the audience can only see a blur of blue. The 35th shot dissolves into the 36 shot, and in this shot, one of the women with a white tank-top splits her legs 180 degrees apart vertically while she bends her upper body downward and touches her hands to the floor. Here, the camera shows her as a long shot. A blue color, which is assumed to be Kimura's jeans, is seen on the left side of the screen.

The 36th shot dissolves to the 37th shot, and the camera shows a close-up of one woman with dark hair, who was shown standing on the left side of the screen in the 32nd shot. The 37th shot changes to the 38th shot by a jump cut. Kimura's face is seen on the left side of the screen, and he looks to the left side of the screen. Then, he smiles and looks toward his front. Two women are seen behind him, one to the right and the other to the left side of him, though those two women are out of focus, and their figures are vague. The 38th shot dissolves to the 39th shot, and the word "freetomove" is seen in the center of the screen first. Kimura's silhouette can be seen from the back behind this word, though his figure is also vague. The word grows bigger and then smaller. As the word is getting even smaller, the audience can see the word "Levi's" on the top of a red line that appears to split slightly into two at the bottom appearing in the right corner of the screen. Below the word "freetomove," the words "Engineered jeans" can be seen. A male voiceover says "Levi's." Here, as the word, "Levi's," appears on the screen, the word "freetomove" dissolves, and the silhouette of Kimura also dissolves.

Semiological analysis. While Pitt's commercial emphasizes a natural, rather country-style taste for jeans, Kimura's commercial emphasizes coolness or urban-ness. The blue-colored walls and techno type of music both work together to create the urban atmosphere in this commercial. This commercial also attempts to show the sexiness of Kimura. Though women are usually used for showing sexiness, Kimura's sex appeal is first indicated by him opening his legs and touching his thighs on the 12th shot. The coolness and sexiness Kimura shows in this commercial turn into the images of the product, jeans. Because he looks cool and sexy, the audience, especially males, may think that when they wear these jeans, they will also look cool and sexy. In order to have Kimura's coolness and sexiness, the audience needs to buy the product and belong to a Levi's tribe. At the same time, the man in the 39th shot can be anyone, because the shot does not show him clearly. Thus, it can be any member of the audience. In this sense, the commercial sends a message to each audience member, as an appellation, that this product is especially for *you*.

The three women shown in this commercial imply that a man wearing these jeans can attract many beautiful women. Here, the man appeared to be proud of himself for attracting the three beautiful women. It is not he alone, but also his jeans, that attract women. Hence, the audience needs to have the product in order to be with such beautiful women. Here, all women in this commercial are Caucasian, and this both emphasizes the authenticity of jeans and shows Japanese admiration of Caucasians. The message from this commercial tells the audience that even Caucasian women are attracted to Kimura, and implying by appellation, to any Japanese man when he wears Levi's jeans.

There are not many words spoken or shown in this commercial. The only lines in this commercial are “freetomove” and “Engineered jeans,” and the male voiceover says only the word “Levi’s.” Therefore, those few words have a strong impact in the audience’s mind. One of them, “freetomove,” tells the audience that it is possible for them not only to move easily and comfortably with these jeans, but also to have free will to do whatever they want. The words may imply a man has the freedom to choose a woman he likes, or even to be with one woman after another. Having these jeans promises customers to have a relationship with any woman freely. This hints that a wild relationship can be obtained by wearing these jeans. Another phrase, “Engineered jeans,” gives the impression to the audience that the jeans are carefully made in every detail, as all engineered products are made with precision. Moreover, there is only one voiceover in this commercial, and he says “Levi’s.” Thus, all the coolness, sexiness, and wildness in the commercial are connected to the product.

Kimura is one of the most popular singers among his group, SMAP, and one of the most famous young actors in Japan. His name has been appearing as a most favored celebrity in Japan in many surveys for over a decade, and his popularity is significant in Japan. He was the second-most frequently seen celebrity in TV commercials during April to September in 2000 (Video Research Ltd., 2001d). Therefore, his popularity helps promote a good image for the product, when the audience sees his face in the commercial. His “cool” image gives a certain impression to the audience: the coolness of the product.

Kimura is not an old, ugly man, but a young attractive person. He is not portrayed as nerdy or un-cool, but as a vital, handsome, and sexy Japanese male. These elements converge to portray coolness and, in turn, the coolness of the product, jeans. Therefore,

Levi jeans are cool, and they are not for old men or obese people, but for cool guys like Kimura. He is not an anonymous person, but quite a popular celebrity in Japan, and these jeans are chosen by such a big celebrity. Kimura is not Pitt, who shows the casual yet authentic image of jeans in the Edwin jeans' commercial. Rather, Kimura emphasizes his own, and thus jeans', coolness in this commercial.

Compared to Pitt's commercial, this one emphasizes an urban and techno atmosphere, and as a consequence, the product is disassociated with different images from Pitt's commercials. While the jeans in Pitt's commercial conveys a simple and casual image, the product in Kimura's commercial is associated with an urban, and therefore cool lifestyle, and this serves as pathos in this commercial. Furthermore, Kimura is portrayed as a sexy and cool guy in this commercial, and these impressions are linked to the jeans as ethical image via structural properties. Overall, the pathos shown in this commercial, therefore, is: a) coolness and b) urban-ness. The ethos expressed by Kimura is: a) coolness and b) sexiness (see Table 14).

Mythological Explanations for Using Western Celebrities in Japanese TV Commercials

Here, I consider the mythology of commercials in a different way. There is a big lie and a little lie in terms of how much people are fooled by advertisements (Williamson, 1978). If one sees a macho man for a ham commercial, his big muscles are mythologized in the commercial; however, the audience does not take this very seriously because they know the relationship between the man and ham is a myth. The image of the man is easily turned into mythology. On the other hand, a bigger lie is something which does not appear to be myth. For example, science portrays itself as being the truth. Thus, when it is co-opted and mythologized, it becomes a big lie. When scientism (i.e., not science, but

the ideology of scientific truth) is used in a commercial, it looks true to the audience; they are easily fooled by scientism. If a commercial for a car shows a graph or chart to show how much one car can resist damage compared to other cars, it looks scientific. When commercial creators, in other words, myth-makers, take that language and use it for mythological purposes, the audience is much more fooled. This is a bigger lie, because the audience trusts scientism.

A commercial for a medicine looks pseudo-scientific, and the commercial uses imaginary science to sell the product. What the commercial creators did is not real science; rather, they used scientism as a prop. Because science resists being mythologized, when it is co-opted it is more difficult than anything else to resist; it becomes powerful rhetoric. That is the reason a commercial for medicine uses scientific images—they are convincing. Here, scientism is used as a rhetorical tool. As Barthes (1972) said, myth is stolen language. Myth-makers steal scientific imagery to create a commercial, thus using scientism as a powerful tool to convince the audience. The more something resists, the more powerful and true it appears when it is finally stolen.

For instance, suppose a commercial for an upset-stomach medicine shows a chart telling how fast it dissolves compared to other medicines. It could just say “this medicine works,” but instead, the commercial creators included the chart in order to give a sense of scientific foundation. When this chart is mythologized in the audience’s mind, it becomes a second-order sign; in Barthes’ (1972) term, myth. The audience no longer looks at the actual content of the commercial. For the audience, the content becomes a content of scientism itself. The notion of validity implied by a chart is stolen to make the commercial look scientific. Commercial creators put the chart in the commercial for the

purpose of selling the credibility of science. The content of the chart no longer matters; instead, it comes to represent science itself. Science, by its nature, is meant to demythologize and explain things scientifically. Then, when it becomes stolen, the message is strongly convincing. The things that resist the most at first become the most co-opted. According to Barthes, they become extremely powerful rhetoric because they resist. This is what happened when Michael Jackson bought the copyright of the Beatles' song, *Revolution*, and sold it to Nike (Not Bored, 2001). Nike wanted to have this song, because using it would be very convincing. The reason it is convincing is because the song is not about Nike's products. Therefore, when the song is used in Nike's commercial, a product looks more artistic.

The same thing can be said of celebrities. Western celebrities are not expected to be in commercials; therefore, when they appear in commercials, it is very convincing. If the audience does not see Western celebrities often except in art forms such as movies, when they then appear on TV commercials, Western celebrities bring a special level of credibility. As when science resists being exploited by myth and becomes more powerfully convincing in its exploitation, when celebrities resist such exploitation, they too become part of the powerful rhetoric of the myth. This is how scarcity works. It resists being exploited by myth, then when it finally is exploited, it creates a powerful myth. There is less chance to see Western celebrities on TV compared to Japanese celebrities, and people do not expect to see them in commercials, because they are big stars. Consequently, when they appear on TV commercials, they have a high credibility due to the power of myth. Although the power of Western celebrities seems to be reducing, their presence in the commercials still shows their power of global recognition

compared to Japanese celebrities. In this sense, their scarcity value still works to enhance source credibility.

Conclusion

As these semiological analyses reveal, Western celebrities' faces have significant value to Japanese audience members. Japanese recognize many Western celebrities, and celebrity appearances provide credibility for a company or product in a commercial. Moreover, because many Hollywood movies are available in Japan, the audience is well aware of how a certain celebrity's image is associated with his or her character in a particular movie. This association helps the audience identify a celebrity with a movie's character in a commercial.

For example, when Jones starred in the *Lux Superrich* shampoo commercial, the entire structure of the commercial content, including Jones' face, her clothing, and background, is an extension of her character in *The Mask of Zorro* (1998). Here, cinema text and ad text correspond to each other, and the cinema system is extended into the commercial system. That is why the audience understands the message from her commercial. When Jones appears in the shampoo commercial, her beauty and elegance become objectified and correlate with the product in the viewers' minds. To the audience, her beauty and elegance correlate, and consequently, exist together. She is a synecdoche of the elegance and beauty shown in the world of *The Mask of Zorro*. Because the Japanese audience knows who she is and how the commercial relates to the product, the commercial makes sense to the audience. If her face was not popular, and her movie was not well known to the Japanese audience, this commercial would not make any sense.

In other words, because her face is widely recognizable to the Japanese audience, this commercial can make sense. When Japanese TV commercials utilize Western celebrities, their faces are intended to be a surprise to Japanese viewers. In order for them to be surprising, their faces must be widely recognized before a commercial is shown on TV. An unknown person's face will not have the same effect as a famous Western celebrity's will. This shows a one-way flow of information from the US to Japan in terms of media, because the Japanese audience knows many Western celebrities and Hollywood movies, but the American audience members rarely recognize Japanese celebrities or movies.

These analyses are not subjective. Semiotics is a structural analytic technique that one can empirically apply to commercials and which can be replicated. This includes the identification of binary oppositions that work within a text to create meaning. Suppose a certain type of shape or symbol means a church, or peace, in a famous artist's drawing. When people do not know semiotics or a certain culture, they could misinterpret the meaning of the symbol. However, if they are familiar with semiotics and the specific cultural contexts, they should be able to identify the same meanings in commercials. Structural connections and elements create meaning; this is the reason certain music sounds frightening to audience members, and when a character on the screen is backing up, people can tell that he or she sees something frightening. These are structural elements that are not subjective. Thus, semiotics has a universal interpretation. The Japanese recognize Jones' character in a commercial related to her movie, *The Mask of Zorro*, because the Japanese audience has watched the movie. Her face, clothing and

background were not randomly chosen, but carefully structured by the commercial's creators to send a message to the audience.

The language a celebrity speaks in a commercial is also carefully chosen. In general, a celebrity speaking Japanese relates better to the Japanese audience. Thus, when a celebrity speaks Japanese, the audience feels a closer connection to the celebrity, while one who speaks English displays a distance from the audience. For example, in Ryan's commercial, it sounds cute rather than silly when she says "I'm fine because I'm a dandelion" in Japanese. She seems to be an international student in Japan, staying with her host family, and speaking in Japanese might suggest her effort to learn Japanese. This creates a closer connection between her and the audience, and the audience has a favorable feeling toward her. On the other hand, in Hopkins' commercial, he speaks English, and it makes the audience think of him as if they were watching the movie, *The Silence of the Lambs* (1991). It helps identify Hopkins with his character, Hannibal Lecter, and emphasizes his cool and wild image. In addition, Hopkins portrays a serial killer in the movie, and the audience does not want to feel close to him. Hopkins speaks English for a desired effect in this commercial. Thus, the language a character speaks in a commercial also reveals the connection between a celebrity, and the character she or he portrays in films.

Overall, semiological analysis revealed a one-way flow of information from the US to Japan. In the following chapter, the demographic analysis of Japanese TV commercials, and interviews with media professionals including ad agents and professors, examine the penetration of the West into Japan.

CHAPTER 5: RESULT

Demographic Analysis

The results showed that among 1,606 commercials, written European words were used in 671 (41.8 %) of the commercials, spoken European words in 95 (5.9 %), and both written and spoken European words in 604 (37.6 %) of the commercials. In sum, 1,370 (85.3 %) of the commercials either used spoken or written European words or used both types of words. Only 236 (14.7 %) commercials did not use any spoken or written European language words (see Table 15). This high rate of having European words in Japanese commercials indicates the penetration of European languages into Japanese culture in general and specifically. I had the impression that all products, including cars, electronics, drinks, foods, and many others, utilize European languages in commercials to some degree. The influence of European words can be seen in many products in Japan.

When focusing on the frequency with which celebrities appeared in the commercials, the results showed that 753 (46.8 %) commercials contained Japanese celebrities, while 48 (3.0 %) of the commercials had Western celebrities including Penelope Cruz, Cameron Diaz, Leonardo DiCaprio, Jennifer Lopez, Meg Ryan, Wynona Ryder, Arnold Schwarzenegger, Bruce Willis, Tiger Woods, and Catherine Zeta-Jones. There were 5 (0.3 %) commercials starring both Japanese and Western celebrities, and the above frequencies of commercials with Japanese or Western celebrities both include those 5 commercials. In other words, those commercials were counted twice. Furthermore, the category of commercials with Japanese celebrities also included 12 (0.7 %) commercials that had non-Japanese stars who were popular only in Japan. For example, some celebrities in this group may have had Japanese citizenship, yet they were

not Asian. This category also included non-Japanese Asians who came to Japan to be active in Japanese media. The overall results showed a very high rate of employing celebrities in Japanese commercials. Almost half of all the commercials surveyed had either a Western or a Japanese celebrity, or both (see Table 16). Therefore, using celebrities is a popular technique for making commercials in Japan.

In terms of non-celebrity foreigners, the survey results showed a total of 284 (17.7 % of the overall total) commercials with foreigners. This number excludes the number of commercials with Western celebrities. Whites appeared in 109 (38.3 %) commercials out of 284 commercials with foreigners. There are no commercials starring only Blacks, though 6 (2.1 %) commercials showed both Blacks and Whites. Some commercials showed both Japanese and foreigners: 48 (16.9 %) commercials showed both Japanese and foreign non-celebrities, and 44 (15.5 %) commercials showed Japanese celebrities and foreign non-celebrities, though the survey does not specify the racial ratio of foreign non-celebrities. Eighteen (8.0 %) commercials did show races or nationalities other than Whites, Blacks, or Japanese, such as non-Japanese Asians, Arabs, or Indians (see Table 17).

Backgrounds may have indicated Japan, foreign countries, both Japan and foreign countries, animation, other places, or indeterminate. Japan was used as a background in 846 (52.6 %) commercials, foreign countries in 252 (15.7 %) commercials, and both Japan and foreign countries in 14 (0.9 %) commercials. Animation, or animation-related scenery were shown in 45 (2.8 %) commercials, and other backgrounds, such as showing only the product, only a character's face, or a one-color background were used in 449 (28.0 %) commercials (see Table 18).

Furthermore, the type of background was divided into rural, urban, both, or indeterminate. While the first background assessment considers actual background, the second background assessment checks the impression of the background. Therefore, the latter considers the image received from each commercial. Of the total 1,606 commercials, there were 453 (28.2 %) commercials having a rural background, 1,061 (66.1 %) commercials having an urban background, and 92 (5.7 %) commercials showing both rural and urban backgrounds in the same commercial (see Table 19).

Among the 284 commercials with non-celebrity foreigners, sex and approximate age were examined. It was found that 66 (23.2 %) commercials had a male character, 59 (20.8 %) had a female, and 99 (34.9 %) had both males and females. There does not appear to be any special numerical difference in terms of sex (see Table 20). For the approximate age of foreigners, 139 (48.9 %) commercials contained only young people, 20 (7.0 %) included only the middle-aged, 3 (1.1 %) showed only the elderly, and 65 (22.9 %) had mixed generation groups, such as young and old or middle-aged and old (see Table 21). With over 62 percent of the commercials showing only young people compared to only 8.9 % which exclusively showed older people, a marked tendency to favor using young people is clearly revealed.

One more category, the type of product being endorsed, was added to this study in order to examine the trends for using foreigners in commercials. Among the 284 commercials with foreigners, there were 67 (23.6 %) automobile commercials, 28 (9.9 %) food commercials, 28 (9.9 %) commercials for shampoo, 27 (9.5 %) drink commercials other than coffee or alcohol, 20 (7.0 %) commercials for coffee, 16 (5.6 %) company advertisements, 11 (3.9 %) electronic commercials, and less than 10 commercials each

for all remaining products (see Table 22). When automobile company endorsements and automobile-related commercials such as ones for child car seats were included, a total of 71 (25.0 %) automobile commercials used a foreign face. Thus, there was a strong association between the appearance of a foreigner and automobile product advertising.

When focusing only on the relationship between Western celebrities and the products they endorse, there were 12 (25.0 % of the commercials with Western celebrities) shampoo, 7 car, and 6 coffee commercials (see Table 23). The high rate of shampoo commercials reflects the fact that Catherine Zeta-Jones starred in a few different commercials, all for the same shampoo, during the time of this survey; the commercials for that product were repeatedly shown during the time of data collection.

In terms of background and foreigners, 29 (60.4% of the commercials with Western celebrities) commercials portrayed foreign scenery as a background when Western celebrities were used, and 112 (39.4% of commercials with foreigners) commercials showed a foreign country as a background when non-celebrity foreigners were used. Only 17 (6.0% of commercials with foreigners) showed foreigners with a Japanese background. In the case of commercials with Japanese, 70 (5.1 %) commercials showed foreign scenery as a background while 475 (34.4 %) had a Japanese background (see Table 24). Thus, when a foreigner was in a commercial, the association of foreigner and foreign countries was reinforced through the use of a foreign background.

Whether a background was urban or rural was examined for the commercials with foreigners. Among such commercials, 100 (35.2 %) with non-celebrity foreigners and 28 (58.3 %) with Western celebrities had an urban background, while 30 (13.4 %) with non-celebrity foreigners and 10 (20.8 %) with Western celebrities had a rural background.

Compared to commercials with Japanese people, 398 (28.8 %) commercials had an urban background, and 100 (7.2 %) commercials had a rural background (see Table 25). Thus, close to half of the commercials with non-celebrity foreigners had an urban background, and this may indicate that foreigners were associated with urban-ness.

The demographic analysis revealed the penetration of the West into Japan, especially in terms of language use and human characters. European languages are quite frequently used in Japanese commercials. The number of foreigners, especially Caucasians in Japanese commercials is much higher than the actual rate of foreigners living in Japan. The fact that one of the thousands of Japanese commercials in this survey feature Blacks alone but only as accompanied by Whites, may indicate a Japanese prejudice against Blacks.

In this survey, nearly half of the commercials had either Japanese or Western celebrities, showing the dependence of Japanese commercials on celebrities. Although there are fewer commercials with Western celebrities than with Japanese celebrities, I believe commercials with Western celebrities have a strong appeal due to their global recognition. With many Western celebrities in Japanese commercials but no Japanese celebrities in the U.S. commercials demonstrates the dominance of Hollywood movies and Western culture. As semiological analyses reveal, Hollywood stars are presented in ads as characters they have portrayed in movies. The meanings of these characters are structurally transferred to Japanese products.

Interviews

The interview originally had four questions: (1) Why do you think Western celebrities appeal to Japanese audiences?, (2) What is the appeal of Western celebrities

selling products in Japanese TV commercials?, (3) Why do you believe that the same celebrities who readily make commercials in Japan will try to avoid association with commercial products and services in their home countries?, and (4) What is the significance of having Western celebrities in Japanese commercials? However, questions (1), (2), and (4) actually asked the same thing regarding the meaning of Western celebrities in Japanese commercials, though they were divided for checking validity in this survey. Thus, this survey was considered to have two primary questions about the meaning of Western celebrities in Japanese commercials and the reasons why they appear in Japanese commercials.

There were 43 participants. These included 21 face-to-face interviews, 2 phone interviews, 4 e-mail interviews, and 16 written responses to an open-ended questionnaire. The first three formats allowed the researcher to gather clarifying feedback. All the interviews, except for one English-speaking agent, were conducted in Japanese. Interviewees were addressed as an agent, a professor, or a researcher depending on occupational titles. In the report all interviewees are referred to using anonymous names such as “Agent A,” “Researcher B,” and so on.

In the section reporting interview data, all comments in Japanese were translated by me into English. At the beginning, it is necessary to clarify the identifier, “foreign celebrities.” When interviewees shared their thoughts about Western celebrities with me, interviewees usually referred to Western celebrities as *gaijin sutaa*, or “foreign stars.” The literal translation of “Western celebrities” in Japanese is *seiyojin sutaa*, but it is not a commonly used phrase. Instead, the phrase, *gaijin sutaa*, is usually used to refer to the big Hollywood or European stars, but not to other celebrities such as Indian or non-

Japanese Asian stars. This linguistic fact indicates how Japanese distinguish and esteem Western celebrities from other racial and ethnic groups. In the same way, when a Japanese mentions *gaijin*, or foreigner, they usually are referring to a White or Black person, who looks very different from Japanese. Though Arabs and Indians look completely different from Japanese, many people think of *gaijin* as White or Black. Thus, in the following sections, “foreign” and “Western” celebrities can be considered synonyms. The term, “foreigners” means White and Black people unless further distinction is specified. Before the results of interviews are discussed, the change of view toward the West is briefly introduced in the following *History of Japan’s West* section in order to examine the influence of West to Japan.

History of Japan’s West

The influence in Japanese culture from the West started much earlier than WWII during the Edo (ca. 1586-1911) period after initial contact with Portuguese and Dutch traders. Japanese rulers closed the country from 1639-1858, a period of 220 years. During that time, people from the Netherlands were the only ones allowed to do business with the Japanese, and only in the far western city of Nagasaki. An American naval officer, Commodore Perry, arrived in Edo Bay in Japan in 1853 and forced Japan to open the country. This event ended “Japan’s seclusion policy” (Varley, 2000, p.236), and Japan concluded “the unequal treaty provisions” (Varley, 2000, p.235) with America in January and Britain in August in the following year of 1854 (Yamanouchi, 2003). Japan further concluded a treaty with the Netherlands, Russia, and France in the next 3 years. Meanwhile, this rapid change caused panic among the common people of Japan and great concern among the leaders surrounding the shogunate and the *shogun* himself.

Eventually, the shogun weakened his power, and the last shogun of the Edo period renounced his authority to the Emperor in 1867. The Edo era ended with the “Meiji Restoration” in 1868.

Until then, foreign traders were called *Nanban* (Southern Barbarians). As this word implies, foreigners were considered to be barbarians whose looks were negatively evaluated. However, everything changed after the Meiji Restoration. Japan opened itself, and since then, Japanese have appreciated Western things and followed their systems. During the Meiji era, Japan became Westernized; this is called *Bunmei Kaika*, which is usually translated as “Civilization and Enlightenment” or “Westernization,” but the literal translation actually means “Blooming of Culture.” The West was considered to be a significant stimulation in making Japanese culture “civilized” and “better.” One of the great Japanese authors in the 1900s, Jun’ichiro Tanizaki, was fascinated by the West and rejected Japanese things (Kramer, 2003), though he realized he could not and might not want to be a Caucasian later in his life. Yet, one of his books, *A Fool’s Love*, described a half-Japanese and half-Caucasian woman, which may show his inferiority complex toward Caucasians. Arinori Mori (the first Minister of Education in Japan), while he was a student in England, was personally convinced by Herbert Spencer that white Europeans, especially Englishmen, were the superior human beings, and Mori “embraced Westernization with gusto” (Kramer, 2003, p. 12). Consequently, Mori advised young Japanese fellows studying in the United States to marry American women, and even to abandon the Japanese language.

Japanese accept so-called double consciousness (Du Bois, 1903/1961). According to Du Bois, when people accept the criteria or standards of another group, they have

double consciousness. For instance, Blacks have been taught that Whites are beautiful and, therefore, needed to accept themselves as “ugly.” In the same way, there was a time when Japanese accepted Western societies as superior and Japanese society as inferior, and Caucasians as beautiful and themselves as ugly. This double consciousness created the Japanese inferiority complex toward the West and its people, which was reinforced by defeat in WWII.

During my interview with Agent M, he explained that Japanese admiration of the West is “because the Japanese were defeated by Westerners in WWII. We think unconsciously that they are strong or have admiration for their advanced technology.” This belief in the technological superiority of the West was evinced in the result of this study. There were 100 (35.2 %) commercials with non-celebrity foreigners and 28 (58.3 %) commercials with Western celebrities that were considered to have urban backgrounds, while only 398 (28.8 %) commercials with Japanese had urban backgrounds. Though Japan is one of the most technologically advanced and powerful countries in the world today, the higher rate of foreigners with urban backgrounds may indicate that Japanese still think that the West is technologically superior, richer, and more “developed.”

For example, automobiles, products of advanced technology and luxury, are often associated with foreigners in advertisements. Among the 284 commercials with foreigners there were 67 (23.6 %) automobile commercials, or 71 (25 %) when commercials for other automotive related products such as child seats were included in the count. Thus, one out of four commercials with foreigners was used for automobiles and automotive products. Though this study did not examine whether commercials for

more expensive products were likely to use foreigners, foreigners were associated with the image of technologically advanced and luxurious products within commercials.

On the other hand, Japanese tend to regard their own country as a small country, where people exhibit *Shimaguni Konjyo*. The literal translation for this phrase is “the nature of an islander.” This describes the characteristics that are seen in residents of an island. It usually implies a narrow outlook, being narrow-minded and picky about small things (*Daijirin kokugo jiten* [*Daijirin* Japanese dictionary], 1999). Agents P, BB, and CC all mentioned this tendency as a Japanese characteristic. This mindset helps to explain why Japanese admire the West as a bigger place with more sophistication and complexity. Therefore, Japanese see the West with positive connotations, such as open-mindedness and not caring as much about small petty things.

The image of a technologically advanced and luxurious West is further conveyed by the image of Westerners. Agent P said:

Agent P: If there are new luxurious cosmetics, the company thinks about hiring a White woman first. If the products are everyday-use types of things, we may hire a Japanese. When products are expensive or the target is limited, we think about hiring foreigners.

Researcher: Do foreigners use expensive products?

Agent P: That’s how people think.

The image of wealth and being rich is good or at least better than being poor. Products are sold as synecdoche of wealth, happiness, and success when commercials have foreigners.

The Global Appeal of Hollywood Movies and Western Music

Not only does the West have an image of technological superiority but it also has a strong influence via Western movies and music which can be seen in Japan after WWII. McDonald (1989) mentioned that “The Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers

(SCAP) had replaced the wartime government's guidelines with equally strict ones of its own. This time, the 'positive' attitude meant playing democratic values and banishing themes and values associated with the 'nationalism' of the past" (p.111). Stronach (1989) further described the strong influence of American programs on Japanese TV from the late 1950s to early 1960s, as only nine American series were shown on Japanese TV in 1956, but the number increased up to 45 in 1960 and 54 in 1963-1964.

Today, the top 50 box office sales leaders in the history of Japanese cinema include 41 Hollywood films and only nine Japanese movies (*Pasokon 4nensei*, 2001). Until late 2001, *Titanic* was the single largest box office movie of all time in Japan. The Japanese movie, *Spirited Away*, overtook that record in 2002 (*Toho* web site, 2001). The world's highest box office movie at the time of the survey, *Titanic*, had 600.8 million dollars box office in the US, 1234.6 million dollars overseas, and overall, 1,835.4 million dollars box office worldwide. At the time of this writing, December, 2004, the second highest box office movie, *The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King*, had 377.0 million dollars box office in the US, 752.2 million overseas, and 1129.2 million worldwide (Worldwide Boxoffice, 2004).

The popularity of Western music is also very strong worldwide. CD album sales for the top 50 hit songs included 11 albums in English, including Christina Milian, Mest, and a collection of various artists for movie songs or love songs in March 2002 in Japan (Oricon, 2002). According to Radio Express (2004a), the top 40 hits worldwide in February 2004 were all Western songs. For the categories including urban, soul, R & B, and hip hop, the top 20 songs in the week of February 28, 2004, were also all Western songs (Radio Express, 2004b). However, no Japanese songs are on hit-charts in the

United States. This lack of information symmetry, this one-way flow of information can be described as American imperialism. In the next section, the meaning of Western celebrities in Japanese TV commercials will be discussed, and the dominance of the West is also seen in advertisement field.

The Meaning of Western Celebrities in Japanese TV Commercials

Commercials with Celebrities

Why commercials with celebrities are popular in Japan. Before discussing the meaning of “Western” celebrities in Japanese commercials, it is important to explain why commercials with celebrities are popular in Japan. Many commercials examined in this study have celebrities: 753 (46.8 %) of the commercials recorded have Japanese celebrities, and 48 (3.0 %) have Western celebrities. Regarding the use of celebrities, some interviewees considered the main reason to be the time limitation that Japanese commercials face. Japanese commercials usually run only 15 to 30 seconds, while commercials are usually 60 seconds in the US. Japanese commercials need to make a strong appeal in a very short time, and using celebrities is believed to create the strongest appeal quickly. Agent P mentioned, “The information that can be sent in 15 seconds is limited. What can be left as a symbol in a commercial is important. A symbol such as a famous celebrity using a product, conveys the message to the audience rapidly.” Thus, the message is the appeal.

Agent O suggested that “the main purpose is to determine what message to send in a 15 or 30 second commercial. . . . Using celebrities is the easiest way to transmit the message and appeal to the audience.” In order to create an appealing image for a product, marketing rhetoric demands that distinctive elements be designed into the commercial.

Celebrities and foreigners both belong to these distinctive elements. For the audience to remember a product in a time span as short as 15 seconds, a commercial requires a special element that differentiates it from other commercials to get the audience's attention.

This differentiation is a crucial part of commercials. For instance, there are no commercials for Rolls-Royce or Lamborghini because those cars already have great distinction from other cars; therefore they do not need to advertise in commercials to appeal to potential consumers. If a product has significance in itself, it does not need help from other elements. Most advertising dollars/yen are spent on products that are actually very redundant if not identical such as soap and shampoo. In a similar way, some products are advertised in commercials, but they do not need characters to make a distinction in the audience's mind. Agent B said, "Commercials for Benz or BMW do not have any human beings. Commercials for those cars focus simply on the characteristics of the cars, or at least the commercials do not focus solely on human beings or make human characters a main focus. Cars are the protagonists in such commercials." However, when a car lacks distinctive points, it requires a distinction from others by highlighting some differences. Researcher A further stated:

Some types of commercials . . . don't focus solely on trying to completely differentiate each product; rather the tactic is to create a certain image for each product. Instead of telling the audience how each product is original, it is fine if the audience or consumers are simply aware of the product. It is not a recognition of total difference.

What Researcher A meant by creating a certain image for each product is to associate the image with a product by emphasizing small differences.

Presenting a different character in a commercial is one way to create a distinction.

When different characters, A, B, and C, star in commercials for products #1, 2, and 3 respectively, the audience associates character A with product 1, B with 2, and C with 3. Because characters A, B, and C are different the audience believes products 1, 2, and 3 also differ from one another. What the audience sees is a distinction among characters A, B, and C that transfers to a believed difference among products 1, 2, and 3 in the audience's mind. In other words, the differences do not lie in the products themselves but in the characters. If character A, B, or C is famous, she or he is instantly recognizable and easily remembered by the audience. Consequently, using different celebrities to endorse different products is considered to be an easy way to make a meaningful distinction. Thus, when a product does not have obvious differences from others, it needs help from other elements. Associating products with celebrities is one way to create those distinctive elements. A product and celebrity are associated with each other in the ad. The audience member takes in an already completed text. By using celebrities, the commercial has the effect of raising the image of the product as well as the company. As Agent O mentioned, "When a celebrity who has a clean, fresh image appears in a commercial for detergent, she or he fits the image of the product and it raises the image of the product and the company." Here, the celebrity in the detergent commercial not only fits the image of the commercial but also becomes the product in the minds of the audience. This is a magical, pre-rational process of identifying the product with the celebrity.

Consequently, choosing a celebrity to star in a commercial is a critical matter for making a commercial. Agent U points out that "there is a competition for choosing celebrities." Agent E suggested that "by choosing which celebrity to be in an ad, you can

sometimes win [the competition to get the right to make the commercial].” Thus, as Agent E said “A commercial would be more likely to be successful by having a celebrity in it rather than competing with a creative idea for commercials.” In addition, Agent R stated, “a commercial with celebrities is the rule of thumb for making successful commercials.” This indicates that Japanese commercials strongly rely on celebrities and why they do so.

Moreover, people talk about which celebrities are employed in TV commercials in Japan. Japan is a rather homogenous society in terms of ethnic diversity and media penetration, and it seems that many people share the same information. Agent G mentioned, “One newspaper publishes ten million copies. No other countries has [such a large number of subscriptions for one newspaper].” As Agent G explained, one Japanese newspaper, the *Yomiuri*, has the biggest subscription rate in Japan, and the subscription number for the newspaper has been over ten million copies since 1994 (Yomiuri Marketing Book, 2004). People subscribe to it in every prefecture of Japan, and as one copy is assumed to be read by 2.8 people, this makes the total estimated readers of the newspaper 28 million. The Japanese population in 2003 was 127.57 million (Statistics Bureau, 2004a); thus, more than one out of five persons may read the same newspaper and share the same information. In such a situation, what becomes a hot topic may be the same or similar all over Japan at the same time. Because many people share the same information, if one does not know about one news, she or he may feel obligated to know and not be isolated from information that other people already know. When a celebrity is hired to star in a commercial, the general newspapers and magazines publicize it—not just the publications focused on the media itself, such as *Variety* in the US. Other media

often covers as news which celebrities endorse what products in which TV commercials. Many people read that information and talk about it. Knowing and being able to talk about such information with other people is a way to follow the trend and to maintain a community.

However, when a commercial wants to send these messages with celebrities, not only must their names be widely known to the public for their high living standards but their faces must also be instantly recognizable to the public. Thus, celebrities must have high name recognition and be easily recognized. Though Bill Gates may have truly impressive name recognition with the public as one of the richest men in the world his face is not as instantly recognizable to the public as some Hollywood stars such as Brad Pitt and Leonardo DiCaprio. Therefore, in terms of conveying a message, Pitt or DiCaprio may be more powerful than Gates.

In sum, the fact that Japanese commercials are as short as 10 seconds requires advertisers to find means of heightening instant appeal. Using celebrities seems to be the easiest way to create a memorable distinction for the product.

Branding. Advertising budgets are used mainly for two reasons: one is for creating brand awareness, and the other for maintaining brand awareness and market share. For example, Coca-Cola ® is a long-established brand, and commercials for Coca-Cola or “Coke” as it is more commonly known, aim at maintaining the brand. However, commercials for many Japanese products are made to fight for creating brand awareness rather than for maintaining the brand. These products are not expected to last very long in the market. Instead, their commercials are intended to make the audience aware of the brand and generate sales until it fades. Consequently, there are many weak brands in

Japan, and their commercials simply aim at creating brand awareness. As a result, one after another, new products are constantly hitting the Japanese “market.”

Here, a binary opposition of new and old can be seen in the Japanese market. “Old” is associated with obsolete and bad, while “new” is associated with the cutting edge and good. Japan is a very materialistic and consumer-oriented society. In the following section some interviewees use the words “different world,” in which “world” means the place where people of similar socioeconomic status belong together. This may reflect the materialistic values of the Japanese people in the sense that people judge each other by what they have. Thus, it seems that many Japanese believe when others belong to a similar socioeconomic status, they belong to the same world. In other words, the word “world” consists of those who have a similar socioeconomic status. Each group is like a tribe and the products signify membership as totems. It is not however the only criterion for membership; there are differences of race, language, culture, nationality and others. Nevertheless, Japanese consider people to be grouped into similar “worlds” based upon their socioeconomic statuses rather than other criterion such as race or language.

In Japan, new products come out one after another, and the audience buys those products one after another but their popularity fades quickly. The Japanese consumer expects constant novelty in the market place. The majority of consumers who are attracted to such new products tend to be in the younger demographics. Though this study did not examine the characters’ age in all commercials, it is examined for commercials with foreigners. It was found that close to a half of them utilized young (139 or 48.9 % of commercials with foreigners), not middle-aged or older, foreigners. Because of this desire to have new and/or limited products, Japanese commercials often include

comments such as “available only for this summer” or “new,” and stimulate consumers to own such “limited” or “new” products. Agent P said, “If a new product is a little bit different from the previous ones, people want to get it. Japanese like something different. Manufacturers think if consumers buy a product just once, that’s enough. Then what manufacturers need to do is to come up with something new or different for a new product, and let consumers buy it again.” A new product is not necessarily entirely different from previous ones. New ones can merely have a different product name, different packaging, or a slightly new ingredient.

According to Agent N, another reason for constantly having new products is, “Japanese don’t think deeply or in a complicated way. They easily get excited and lose interest.” Consequently, manufacturers need to get the attention of consumers who constantly crave new products. Rifkin (1987) mentioned that “The Japanese viewed change as a rapid and accelerating force,” and “they are future-oriented rather than past-oriented” (p. 137). This is especially true in the modern post-Meiji era. Change is regarded as a positive force that contributes to society’s development. Japanese tend to accept and/or even encourage rapid change of one product for another. This rapid product change could be related to the urban perception of time in Japan. One’s perception of time is used as a means of differentiating between urban and rural lifestyles. In an urban lifestyle the perception of time can be associated with certain levels of anxiety due to a sense of life speeding by. Commercials tell the audience that “you have to hurry to get a new product; otherwise, it will be gone,” and Japanese consumers follow that belief.

Such a rapid tempo in Japan is also indicated by Levine and Wolff (1995). They

examined the pace of life in terms of walking speeds, the time it takes a postal clerk to sell a stamp, and clock accuracy in several cities around the world. Japan's clocks were the most accurate ones among 6 countries. Levine (1997) further argued that among the 31 countries he examined, Japan was ranked fourth for having the fastest pace of life. The only ones faster were Switzerland, Ireland, and Germany. Levine continued to mention that the first three countries were ahead of Japan only by narrow margins, and he concluded that "There is, in fact, considerable evidence that Japan may be the fastest country of all" (p. 133). Consequently, the Japanese market contains many weak brands due to the rapid change from one product to another. Many products only have short shelf lives. Therefore, it is important to choose a celebrity with whom the audience instantly associates.

Appeal

The strongest reason for having Western celebrities in Japanese TV commercials appears to be the appeal they have on the audience. Using Western celebrities in Japanese commercials makes three different impacts on the viewers. The first impact is the scarcity value as a surprising and, therefore, eye-catching element in a commercial. They are not seen on TV screens so often compared to many Japanese celebrities. The second impact is tied to Western celebrities' images as global stars, which is associated with security and trustworthiness for both the products and the companies. Security for the products and the companies means trust in the products and services, and the belief of the audience that a "big" company is more reliable. The third impact is that having celebrities in a commercial becomes "a lot to talk about" for the audience.

Scarcity value. As mentioned above, one of the main reasons for having Western

celebrities in Japanese commercials is the appeal they have due to their scarcity value. In order for the audience to remember commercials, the advertisers need to generate a strong impact in a very short time, such as 15 or 30 seconds. Japanese celebrities are often seen on TV in various TV programs, including documentaries, dramas, quiz shows, and other kinds of entertainment shows in Japan. If the Japanese celebrities used are some of the most popular ones, the audience can literally see them almost every day on TV.

In contrast, the frequency of seeing Western celebrities is much less, though the chance to see them on TV is not zero. They often come to Japan to promote their movies, and Japanese TV entertainment news shows stories about their movies and their interviews from time-to-time. Western movies are often shown during prime viewing hours on TV. In addition, some TV channels, such as *Nippon Housou Kyoukai* (Japan Broadcasting Association), well known as NHK, show American dramas at midnight. Hence, Japanese audiences are exposed to Western celebrities.

In addition, the Japanese audience's opportunities for exposure to Western celebrities may increase depending on the availability of cable. When someone has cable, she or he has a higher chance of seeing American dramas or news. For example, when one has Skyperfect TV service, one of the cable companies, she or he can watch 16 basic channels. However, the cable penetration of the TV market in Japanese households in 2001 was 13 million, which was only 27.1 % of the overall number of households the year data for this survey was collected.

Penetration rate differed depending on prefecture, and the rate of cable penetration may be higher in major cities. In the *Kanto* metropolitan area, located in

central Japan (which usually includes Tokyo, Saitama, Kanagawa, Chiba, and Gunma Prefectures), the penetration rate cable TV in these prefectures in 2003 was 46.0 %, 44.3 %, 45.1 %, 45.0 %, and 7.9 % of overall households, respectively (*Soumusyo jyoho tsushin-kyoku* [Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications. Information & Communications. Statistics & Database], 2004). In addition, the *Kansai* metropolitan area, on the west side of Japan (which usually includes Osaka and Hyogo Prefectures), had a cable TV penetration rate in 2003 of 48.6 % and 10.3 % of overall households, respectively. Therefore, the metropolitan areas generally had a high penetration rate of cable TV in households. The population for Tokyo prefecture in 2000 was approximately 12 million (*Soumusyo toukeikyoku* [Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, Statistics Bureau], 2004a), which constituted close to 10 % of overall population, 126 million (*Soumusyo toukeikyoku* [Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, Statistics Bureau], 2004b), and Tokyo prefecture had a cable TV penetration rate of 46 % of overall households. Thus, people might conclude that the penetration rate of having cable in Japan was high. However, the overall penetration rate of cable TV was still only one-third (33.6 %) of Japanese households in 2003 (*Soumusyo jyoho tsushin toukei deita beisu* [Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications. Information & Communications. Statistics & Database], 2004), and therefore, the penetration rate of cable was not yet very high in Japan.

Furthermore, dish TV is increasing in popularity, although its penetration rate shows a tendency similar to that of cable TV, which is not very popular. Dish TV is divided into Broadcasting Satellite (BS) and Communication Satellite (CS). BS and CS utilize different satellites, and CS usually had less regenerating power. Yet, there are no

more significant differences nowadays because of advanced technology (The Association for Promotion of Satellite Broadcasting, 2003). The penetration rate of BS is 4.2 % of all households in Japan as of February of 2003, though it is 8.1 % among those who have a TV in their household (*Eisei Terebi Koukoku Kyougikai* [CS-TV Advertising Bureau], 2003). The penetration rate of CS is 16.7 % of all households in Japan as of March of 2003 (*BS Dejitaru Housou Suishin Kyoukai* [The Association for Promotion of the Satellite Broadcasting], 2003).

Therefore, Western celebrities get attention as a result of their scarcity value. A chance to see Western celebrities occurs mostly through movies, because they do not show themselves on TV every day like Japanese celebrities. Consequently, it can be said that the opportunity to see Western celebrities on TV is not as great as that of seeing Japanese celebrities. As a result, when Western celebrities are shown on TV commercials, they can get more attention than Japanese celebrities. Agent O mentioned:

Some celebrities are seen in many commercials. If one thinks it is not enough to have an appeal by using Japanese celebrities, he or she may want to have foreign celebrities whom the audience does not usually see on the screen and who will have a strong appeal when they show up in commercials. The difference between Japanese and foreign celebrities is a result of the frequency that the audience sees them on TV. The audience sees foreign celebrities usually only on movie screens. Having them in commercials gives a distinctive element in a good way.

Western celebrities have a stronger element of surprise due to their scarcity value compared to most Japanese celebrities who can often be seen in commercials. Agent K stated, “In most cases, the audience simply wants to see someone whom they never see on a TV commercial.” Using a Western celebrity is considered a way to create an appeal and convey a message to the audience. Scarcity value associates to a sense of astonishment in the audience’s mind, generating a response such as, “Oh, I can’t believe

she or he is in a commercial!” This novelty, in turn, creates an appeal in the commercial.

The appeal Western celebrities have is strengthened by contrast to their Japanese counterparts. Japanese celebrities often endorse products in many commercials. Close to half of all commercials, or 753 (46.8 %), in this survey had Japanese celebrities. In addition, one Japanese celebrity may show her or his face in more than one commercial. As a consequence of over exposure to such a celebrity, appeal may be weakened. On the other hand, Western celebrities are not seen in many commercials at once. Agent E explained:

Japan demands celebrities to be in ads, and one celebrity can show up in five, six, or seven commercials at once. On the other hand, foreign celebrities don't do three commercials at once, and as a result, their publicity value rises.

Professor B also elaborated on the scarcity of foreign celebrities because they do not appear in commercials compared to Japanese celebrities:

[Western celebrities] usually do not appear in TV commercials; therefore, when they appear in commercials, the appeal and the authority of celebrities is welcomed by the audience. There are many Japanese celebrities who have appeared in commercials. Compared to them, foreign celebrities have a scarcity value. Foreign celebrities do not appear in many commercials at once. It offers an advantage compared to having the same Japanese celebrity appear in many commercials.

Thus, Japanese celebrities appear in many different commercials, and, as a result, it is difficult for the audience to differentiate products. On the other hand, Western celebrities do not endorse more than one product at once, and this helps the audience's recognition of the product. Clearly, scarcity value of Western celebrities makes it easier for the audience to remember the product.

According to Agent E, one reason why Western celebrities are not used much is, “Foreign celebrities are expensive to hire, so different companies try not to hire the same

foreign celebrity. Instead, they search for a new celebrity.” Because Western celebrities are expensive to hire, it is not worth paying a great deal of money to hire the same celebrity to advertise a similar product from a different company. Instead, they would rather look for a new celebrity. Therefore, Western celebrities are especially desirable due to their scarcity value. They are scarce because they are expensive, and they are expensive because they are scarce. Agent E stated that companies want to avoid confusing each celebrity in the audience’s mind as part of their advertising strategy.

However, this “scarcity value” is a tricky issue. Western celebrities are seen scarcely in Japanese TV commercials, but their faces are not scarce at all. The Japanese audience sees their faces on movie screens, and in videos and magazines, and in this sense, their faces are widely recognizable. In other words, Western celebrities’ scarcity in commercials is valuable and meaningful based on their high popularity. If scarcity value only depended on the frequency of appearance in Japanese commercials, then stars from India, Thailand, or Malaysia would have a much higher scarcity value than Western celebrities. The Japanese audience does not see those celebrities in commercials, because they are not popular in Japan, and using their faces would not mean anything to the audience.

Global recognition. In addition to the appeal due to scarcity, there is another kind of appeal, which is based on the global recognition of stars. Western celebrities’ worldwide recognition is associated with the image of “big” companies, and it is further associated with the image of security and trustworthiness in audience members’ minds. People trust the products and services of large companies more than small (less successful) ones. Agent E said:

In Japan, you have to compete in a very short period of time. Japanese commercials attempt to raise the recognition of a product because within a very short period of time, one after another will be presented. American celebrities are bigger stars [than Japanese stars] and have a strong atmosphere, or aura; [this gives them power to] convey the message to the audience. In the process, the audience may memorize the product's name, too.

Thus, the audience feels secure and trusting of the companies and products when big-name celebrities endorse the products. Here, as Agent F says, "Having foreign celebrities also helps raise the image of the company. The audience sees an association between 'big' celebrities and 'big' companies; in other words, big celebrities are considered to advertise only for big companies." Consequently, the audience thinks, "because big Western celebrities endorse the products, a company must be big." Agent F said:

By using a celebrity, a commercial associates an image to a product. When a nonfamous company uses a famous celebrity, the image of being 'first-rate' that the celebrity has can be identified with the company. The notion of 'first-rate' is associated with the feeling of security. It associates with the security of the product or the company. This is a big part of having foreign celebrities. A sense of security regarding a product or a company can be expressed by foreign celebrities.

Agent F and I continued the conversation as follows:

Researcher: Is there any difference between Japanese and Western celebrities in terms of showing the notion of security?

Agent F: It can be expressed by Japanese celebrities [and so by Western celebrities], but in the case of foreigners, the image of first-rate status or global reach can also be expressed [in addition to the notion of security].

In the text, big celebrities are used as synonymous signs for big companies; in turn, those stars are associated with security and trustworthiness of a company. Japanese celebrities may be able to show the image of security, but because Western celebrities are considered to be bigger stars they can show a higher sense of security. About this issue, Agent C stated:

We want to attract attention when the audience sees several hundred

commercials every day. And a company also wants to raise its image. Japanese celebrities can do that job, but when a commercial has a foreign celebrity, consumers feel more secure about the company because the commercial shows big foreign celebrities. . . .

The semiotic process of juxtaposing a star's face with a company's products and/or logo is how a company achieves identifying its own product with a famous celebrity within the ad. The motive of the advertisement is to try to make consumers feel confident in the product because it is from a "big" company/star. Here, the star and the company are identical. The star is the representative of the company. She or he creates a public image for the company.

Furthermore, when a Western celebrity is endorsing a product, it looks luxurious and of better quality. In addition, the company's image is elevated because the image of Western celebrities is associated with high income. To the Japanese audience, stars do not need to worry about money in everyday life. Their image of security associates to the image of the company itself and makes the company look secure. Their fame as global stars and their high name recognition are easily associated with the images of the high security of the company and the best quality of the product in the audience's mind. Thus, when a big celebrity endorses a product, the company/product also looks high quality and trustworthy. The audience cares about these elements not only for those companies which the audience puts a high importance on security, such as banks and/or insurance companies, but also for many other types of companies which produce various products, such as shampoo, cosmetics, or electronics.

When I asked Agent C if the meaning of having celebrities is the same for Japanese and Western celebrities, Agent C agreed and also consented to my following question of whether or not the meaning is stronger for Western celebrities:

That's what the companies think. Minor, second-ranked companies want to look bigger, like international, globally important ones. They can avoid having a minor image when a commercial has foreign celebrities. By using foreign celebrities, the image of a company changes from small to first-rate, because we have admiration for big and/or foreign celebrities. Foreign stars are associated with an image of first-rate [status]. When you want to create an image of foreign or global, you use foreign celebrities.

As Agent C commented, the image of being a “big” star is closely related to the concept of global importance. The concept of global importance or recognition was repeatedly mentioned by interviewees. Many interviewees related Western celebrities to the concept of global. When Western celebrities are portrayed in commercials, the products or the companies they endorse are recognized as international products and companies; i.e., global, instead of domestic, meaning small and local.

Hollywood stars are the icon for world fame. Having fame as Hollywood stars means they are stars not only in the US but also all over the world. As Agent A said, “Being famous in the US is being famous throughout the world.” Agent Y also mentioned that Hollywood stars “are active worldwide and have high recognition.” American stars, and especially Hollywood stars, are a synonymous sign for fame around the world, and their images make products look more “internationally” accepted. Therefore, when companies want to show consumers that their companies are big and well-known globally, they hire Western celebrities. As Agent E commented:

The power of being a symbol is very different between those who are domestic stars and those who are known worldwide. Those who are known worldwide have more status. This difference of status as a symbol is derived from their worldwide recognition and popularity.

Compared to Japanese celebrities who are only domestic stars, Western celebrities, especially Hollywood stars, are recognized as “globally” important stars, not simply “American” stars. Thus, having Western celebrities in commercials is considered to make

companies look bigger and better.

In sum, the image of big stars is employed as iconic signs for many meanings and values such as beauty, fame, wealth, and global recognition. As such, that is as iconic signs, they are useful to connote global business, security and trustworthiness. Big-name celebrities are associated with companies. It is hoped that the companies will appear as important and large in gravitas, and the audience believes that big stars choose and use products of the best quality. Consumers believe “big is better.” These images give a feeling of security for the audience about a product. As a result of this belief, the product looks trustworthy because big stars use it. Consumers literally see them use the products and endorse their quality. A small company may not be able to afford hiring an extremely big star, yet, it may put an effort into having the best celebrity they can afford to make it appear more important.

A lot to talk about. Moreover, Agent O mentioned that “Though foreign celebrities are expensive to hire, using them provides people with a lot to talk about.” Though the literal translation of Agent O’s comment is, “providing people a lot to talk about,” from the advertiser’s point of view, the goal is not “providing” what to talk about in general but “setting” an agenda such that people talk about a commercial. The focus of the talk is advertisements, products, and celebrities. What can be seen in such talk is magic identification. As Gebser (1949/1985) mentioned, “It is a world of pure but meaningful accident; a world in which all things and persons are interrelated, but the not-yet-centered ego is dispersed over the world of phenomena” (p. 46). In other words, the three elements of ads, products, and celebrities are identical in the audience’s mind. It is magic because there are no logical relationships; nevertheless, when people talk about

commercials, those three elements become interchangeable.

A company makes a commercial utilizing a celebrity so that the audience will talk about the commercial. Confirming this, Agent D stated, “If a company hires a big celebrity, it gives people a lot to talk about, and the media, such as TV programs or magazines, pick this up as ‘news.’ Then, the company can expect to get publicity out of it because that celebrity is in the company’s commercial.” In this sense, a commercial sets the agenda and the topic for the audience, and the media that talk about a commercial as news or as of public interest, make money from the same ads. The media which makes big yen off the ads further promotes the ads via meta-advertising on shows. The commercial media are thus promoting commercialism itself. They are trying to make ads part of daily conversation. This is done by reinforcing the ad message by talking about the ad in TV shows, magazine articles, disc jockeys on the radio, newspapers, etc. Ad actors become famous and are plugged by the media. They have taught Japanese that ad texts are worthy of conversation, TV, newspaper, radio, and magazine space, and time to talk about ads is normal, as if they were an art form or news. People are thus co-opted into a meta-advertising discourse by shows and articles in the commercial media. This is hyper commercialism whereby the media talk about, and therefore advertise, advertisements themselves. Hence it is a meta-advertising discourse. Japan’s media and human ecology is thus hyper-commodified.

Advertisements (TV commercials) have their own culture in Japan. Koizumi’s (2001) survey revealed that one of the important functions of advertisements is creating trends and culture. However, advertisements not only “create” trends and culture but also “have” their own culture. As Sanoyama (2002) claims, many products do not have their

own originality, and because of that, the advertisements themselves need to appeal on their own strength. Here, a main theme in an advertisement is no longer a product but the advertisement itself.

In Japan, there are various surveys of the most popular commercial in a given month or year (Video Research Ltd., 2004a, 2004b), or Tokyo Kikaku (2004a) which has data on the most favorable celebrities in TV commercials in August, 2004. Tokyo Kikaku (2004b) also has a TV program named *CM Index* which provides information about the hottest, most popular recent commercials. There are books specifically examining about the commercials such as Shimamura's (1998) *Koukoku-no hiroine-tachi* (The protagonists in commercials). The audience's exposure to the stars of popular commercials is not limited to the commercials themselves. Many of these commercial stars also make guest appearances on various TV shows such as quiz shows, something which is not seen in American TV programs. Even the most popular commercial stars never appear in other TV programs in the US.

Furthermore, using Western celebrities in Japanese TV commercials promises not only publicity but also achieves a higher rank in commercial surveys, which companies desire. Agent M stated:

Having foreign celebrities can simply give people a lot to talk about. Of course, clients want to sell products, but they also want to be in a higher rank in the surveys about commercials that are taken every month. Clients want to have a unique symbol so that people refer to that commercial as, "Oh, THAT commercial." However, the audience sometimes does not remember which company's commercial they have seen. So, I don't know if it's worth paying that much for clients, but having foreign celebrities definitely provides people a lot to talk about.

Rankings in such commercial surveys are important to advertisers, and celebrities can be an asset in gaining higher rankings. Thus, putting celebrities in commercials is regarded

as having many advantages in Japan. This is particularly true because many brands are expected to be short-term brands, and creators of commercials only need a short-term appeal. For this reason, having celebrities is an easy and effective way to make a commercial in Japan.

Weak Appeal

Scarcity value. Though Western celebrities are considered to have strong appeals such as scarcity value, global recognition, status, and trustworthiness, some interviewees pointed out that Western celebrities do not have as strong an appeal in terms of scarcity value on the audience as they once did. Many Western celebrities can be seen on TV commercials nowadays; as a result, there are few of them the audience would be surprised to see. As previously mentioned, one of the main reasons for Western celebrities to be employed in Japanese TV commercials was because opportunities for Japanese audiences to see Western celebrities were fewer than the opportunities to see Japanese celebrities. Therefore, there is a novelty factor when the audience sees Western celebrities in TV commercials. However, as Agent C said, “Foreign celebrities do not have a strong appeal right now because Japanese have become used to seeing them.” Similarly, Agent A stated, “I doubt if foreign celebrities appeal to Japanese now. Yes, there was a time that having foreign celebrities [in the commercials] was a surprise for Japanese audiences. But so many foreign celebrities had been used in commercials that they became just another star [and the audience becomes used to seeing those celebrities and is not surprised to see them anymore].” Agent Z also stated, “there are many fewer celebrities whom Japanese are surprised to see and would think, ‘Oh, I can’t believe she or he agreed to be in a commercial’.” Overall, it seems that the audience has become used

to seeing Western celebrities; consequently, they are not considered to be big stars whom the audience cannot imagine seeing on TV commercials.

As a result, the scarcity value of Western celebrities is reduced. A commercial must use an unexpected celebrity if the aim of the commercial is to have a scarcity value and thereby surprise the audience into remembering the product. It is critical to have distinctive elements in a commercial to attract the audiences' attention. Having Western celebrities used to be regarded as having scarcity value in the past. However, Japanese have become used to watching Western celebrities, and celebrities are not considered to have scarcity value in commercials anymore. Only having Western celebrities may no longer be considered to be a big impressive element for audiences. Many commercials now need more than simply a Western celebrity. Consequently, there may be fewer commercials with Western celebrities nowadays, and therefore, Western celebrities' appeal as a surprising element is weakened or lost.

Furthermore, even though Western celebrities were once considered to be from a very different world, nowadays Japanese feel closer to them than before. They still have name value, but the audience does not seem to have the same sense of distance from the stars' "totally different world" as they once did. Agent Z said:

Foreign celebrities were considered to be those who had name value all over the world and to be admired because they existed in a different world [unknown to the audience]. But this old image is changing and we feel closer to foreign celebrities. We can get their information easily, and we can enjoy their movies almost at the same time [as their own countries' people]. I don't think foreigners have so much appeal right now.

Thus, the distance the audience feels from Western celebrities is shortened, and the appeal of the "big" star who is from a totally different world is weakened.

No difference. Some interviewees mentioned that not only did they feel that the

impact of Western celebrities had been weakened, but that there were no longer any big differences in appeal between Japanese and Western celebrities, especially in terms of scarcity value or as a surprising element. Confirming this, Agent O said:

There aren't any essential differences between Japanese and Western celebrities. . . The audience gets used to [seeing many Western celebrities]. If the audience becomes used to seeing them, there won't be any appeal. When a commercial uses foreign celebrities, the company employs them because they can't be seen often on TV. For example, a Japanese celebrity, Ken Takakura, hadn't appeared in TV commercials before. Thus, there was an appeal when he appeared in commercials. Therefore, if you use a celebrity who doesn't appear on TV very much, the appeal will be the same for Japanese and foreign celebrities. . . . We no longer think, 'if we use foreign celebrities, we can send a different message.'

I believe "appeal" in Agent O's comment means an appeal of scarcity value, not other kinds of appeal, such as the expression of global recognition.

Agent O's quote, "we no longer think, 'if we use foreign celebrities, we can send a different message'," could be regarded as a defensive comment and reflective of the inferiority complex in Japanese towards the West, because there are differences in the messages between when commercials utilize Japanese and when they use foreigners. However, what Agent O meant to say could be that when they utilized Western celebrities, they did not regard those commercials as giving a different appeal as much as before in terms of scarcity value. Though several agents mentioned no difference between Japanese and Western celebrities, it does not make sense to say that there is absolutely no fundamental difference of appeal between foreign and domestic celebrities. What the interviewees may be trying to say here is that there is no "big" difference in scarcity value between Japanese and Western celebrities when they appear in TV commercials as compared to the past. When a celebrity who does not show up often on TV screens, stars in a commercial, her or his appeal in scarcity value is very high for both

Japanese and Western celebrities.

This defensiveness about utilizing Western celebrities can also be seen in some interviewees' comments. Agent K asserted that the reason for hiring Western celebrities in Japanese commercials is “simply because of surprise, rather than that they help sell products.” However, some other interviewees mentioned that the scarcity value of Western celebrities, who add surprise to commercials, is one way to help sell products. Therefore, the element of surprise, and help with selling products, cannot be separated.

Agent J also declared a reason to use Western celebrities:

[It is because of] getting attention for the commercial itself rather than helping to sell products. The evaluation for the commercial and that for the product are not the same. So, I'm not sure about how having Western celebrities helps sell products, but their commercials are useful for raising the recognition of the commercials or getting attention.

Agent J's comment separated the commercial from the product, which is actually impossible, because this attempts to separate the perception of a product from its image.

Agent C also declared:

When a celebrity is in a commercial, the audience remembers “Oh, THAT commercial starring him/her.” If the audience remembers the commercial in that way, the commercial is successful to some degree. The recognition of the commercial rises, but it does not necessarily connect to the sale. This can happen to any commercial, not only to commercials with celebrities.

If using Western celebrities may not connect to sales, as Agent C claims, the reasons for Japanese ad agencies to hire these celebrities for Japanese commercials cannot be explained. When ad agencies make commercials, they initially hope their commercial will be a direct catalyst for a sale. Therefore, it does not make sense to say that it is acceptable for a commercial not to connect to the sale. These comments indicate a defensiveness among the interviewees, in the sense that ad agents do not want to admit

that using Western celebrities makes a positive difference in sales; that they work.

Western celebrities' fame from globally popular movies does appeal to the Japanese audience, even if the power of Western celebrities has decreased. In addition, some ad agents may try to claim to be free of any inferiority complex against Westerners, especially Caucasians, but their comments portray a bit of a complex.

Bubble burst. One possible reason for having fewer numbers of commercials with Western celebrities is Japan's economic condition. After the highly inflated economy of the 1980s burst in 1990, not many companies could afford to hire Western celebrities after the mid 1990s.

Hutchison (in McNulty, 1997) talked about his co-authored book, *The Political Economy of Japanese Monetary Policy*, and mentioned:

Basically, Japan went from an economy that was enjoying above peak level growth in the last half of the 1980s, with soaring real estate and stock prices and major overseas expansion of banking operations, to a 60 percent decline of asset prices within about two years.

Hutchison continued to state that "It's a decline that rivals that Great Depression, and they've been working through it ever since" (McNulty). Therefore, Japan enjoyed the bubble boost until the end of the 1980s, but in 2004 it is still recovering from the damage of the collapse.

As a consequence, Agent P declared, "We don't have so many foreign celebrities [in commercials] anymore. That's because we don't have much money compared to the bubble economy period." Thus, it may be true that we have fewer commercials with Western celebrities because the Japanese economic bubble affected that. Agent F also commented on this issue:

Agent F: During the bubble economy period, whatever we made, we could sell

it. [However, the situation is different right now.] I think the budget for making a commercial is tighter now.

Researcher: If the budget were the same, do you think people may still ask many Western celebrities [to sell their products]?

Agent F: Maybe. But foreigners demand the same amount [of money] even now. We used to pay a great deal of money to them. [On the other hand] because of the current economic situation, Japanese celebrities accept a lower salary even if they don't want to. So, I doubt the [value of the] effect of foreign celebrities compared to the amount [of money we have to pay to get them].

Researcher: Is the meaning of celebrities during the bubble economy period and right now different?

Agent F: There is no big difference of meaning, but because of the Japanese economic condition, [we can't use as many Western celebrities as before].

According to my interviews, there is a common recognition that due to the Japanese economic condition, there are fewer Western celebrities used in commercials. If the bubble burst had not occurred in Japan, many commercials might still employ Western celebrities. However, economic deflation might not be the only reason for having fewer Western celebrities in Japanese TV commercials. Both the deflation and the growing familiarity of Western celebrities in TV commercials may have reduced their value.

Overall, as Agent G stated, "We do not use foreign celebrities as much as before. The power of Western celebrities is down now. We [once] paid the amount that foreign celebrities required. But now, we [often] do not think it is worth paying." There is no data available to prove that there are currently fewer Western celebrities used in Japanese commercials compared to before. However, it can be said, with these considerations in mind, some interviewees doubt if Western celebrities are worth such high salaries. They claim that the power Western celebrities once held has decreased.

They still have an appeal

Though the distance the Japanese feels between themselves and Western celebrities has lessened as compared to in the past, Western celebrities or foreigners still have other

forms of appeal such as showing global recognition compared to Japanese celebrities, and therefore, a product looks like it is of higher quality when a commercial has a Western celebrity. Japanese celebrities can show some global recognition, security, and trustworthiness, but Western celebrities seem to be associated with a higher level of all of these elements in the audience's mind, and this makes sense as Hollywood stars are in fact better known worldwide. Therefore, though Takakura might have an appeal as a surprising element when he first appears in a commercial because he had not been shown in TV commercials before, as Agent O mentioned previously, he does not have the appeal of being a global star like a Western celebrity. In that sense, Western celebrities still have a different appeal by expressing global recognition or global importance better than Japanese celebrities can.

This difference can be seen in the comparison of two TV commercials in 2001: one for the Levi's brand of jeans starring one of the most popular young Japanese celebrities, Takuya Kimura; and the other for the Japanese Edwin brand of jeans starring the Hollywood celebrity Brad Pitt. Kimura has been one of the most popular young celebrities in Japan. His name was ranked 6th in 1999 and 4th in 2000 for the survey of favorite celebrities held by NHK (NHK, 2000), and 10th in both 2002 and 2003 (NHK, 2003b). He was also chosen by women as the second most favorite celebrity in 2003 in the survey held by Sato Ad and Research (2003). Another research institute, Macromill (2003), also named him the 3rd most favorite male celebrity, and in the same year, the most favorable male celebrity chosen was the singer group called SMAP, which includes Kimura and four other men.

For a general reference, each pair of Levi's jeans costs a Japanese purchaser

around 8,900 to 13, 000 yen (approximately \$ 71 to \$ 104 in 2001, as 124.96 yen is calculated for a dollar), while Edwin jeans cost around 5,900 to 12,800 yen (approximately \$ 47 to \$ 102 in 2001). Levi's jeans are generally more expensive than Edwin jeans. The overall sales for Edwin in Japan was higher than for Levi's in 2001: Edwin had sales totaling 32,000 million yen, while Levi's sales totaled 23,097 million yen (*Yano Keizai Kenkyujyo* [Yano Research Institute], 2002). Thus, Edwin was more popular than Levi's jeans in Japan, though it is difficult to contribute this difference only to the effect of two commercials because the difference of sales could be affected by many other reasons. Nevertheless, the different appeal of these two commercials may contribute to this difference. Pitt represented the cheaper brand of jeans.

Regarding these commercials, some interviewees discussed how the image presented by the commercials differed depending on each celebrity. In terms of global recognition, Agent P said, "There may be a difference of 'status.' Kimura is someone who is close and cool. Brad Pitt is cool all over the world." Agent K added, "Kimura is someone who is friendly, and Pitt is someone who belongs to a different world but is very cool." When Agent K made a comment about Pitt belonging to a different world, this meant that Pitt is considered to be in a much higher socioeconomic status level and have name recognition on a global level, and therefore, he belongs to a different world than Kimura. In sum, it seems to be the audience's perception that though both Kimura and Pitt are considered to be "cool," Pitt is a bigger world star, while Kimura is a big, yet, domestic star.

There are some additional differences between Kimura and Pitt in terms of their scarcity value. Though Western celebrities' scarcity value is decreased, sometimes they

can have a stronger impact in terms of a surprising element compared to most of the Japanese celebrities. Kimura is frequently seen on TV including not only TV commercials but also many other venues in Japan, while Pitt is not shown as frequently as Kimura on the Japanese TV screen. In that sense, Pitt has a greater scarcity value in terms of frequency to be seen in commercials. Even though the scarcity value of Western celebrities has declined, they still have more scarcity value compared to many Japanese celebrities who can often be seen on TV commercials. Agent O said, “When Japanese commercials have either Japanese or foreign celebrities, messages are basically the same. Pitt was also hired for appeal, [as was Kimura]. But, because Kimura is in many commercials, his appeal [of scarcity value] may be lower [than Pitt].” In addition, Agent K stated, “Even though a company [may] want to use Kimura, other companies have already used him, so he has some already-existing images. The company would rather utilize someone whom the audience knows but who does not have already-existing images in Japan.” Thus, Kimura has already become thoroughly associated in the minds of the audience members with the products he has previously endorsed because he was in many commercials.

While Kimura is in many commercials for many products, Pitt does not advertise products in many commercials. As a result, Pitt more easily associates to the product in the audience’s mind. On the other hand, the commercials with Kimura are confusing due to the fact that he endorses many products; hence he cannot be associated with one particular product by the audience. In this sense, Pitt has a stronger appeal because of his scarcity value in commercials.

In addition, Pitt can express a concept that Kimura cannot display in a jeans

commercial. They are different from each other and they cannot become the same. As Agent F said, “Pitt is cool, and the authenticity [of the jeans] can be expressed.” Hence, as a U.S. celebrity, Pitt is more than just cool; he also represents the genuineness of jeans as an original U.S. creation. Pitt played a cowboy in *Thelma & Louise* (1991) which made him very famous, and the blue jeans he wore in the movie are associated with American cowboys (the working class). Consequently, Pitt, not Kimura, can offer an image of authenticity in the commercial. If one were selling *kimonos*, she or he would use Kimura not Pitt to express authenticity. In addition, though Kimura is a very popular celebrity in Japan, he is not as rich or famous as Pitt. This difference of status Pitt can express associates to the global recognition of the company and the image of a widely known product. In addition, Edwin jeans are generally cheaper than Levi jeans, as mentioned previously. However, when Pitt endorses jeans, they appear to have better quality because a globally important star like Pitt uses the best product, not a low quality one.

In a commercial with Pitt a product looks American; and in the case of a pair of jeans, the product looks more authentic because the product was originally from the US. In order to associate authenticity to a Japanese product, Pitt is used for the Japanese Edwin jeans company advertisement. On the other hand, the Levi’s commercial has Kimura to represent coolness and a sense of familiarity because the consumers already know that Levi’s is an authentic American brand; therefore, the Levi’s commercial does not need to reinforce its American-ness. In addition, Kimura may have a stronger appeal because the audience feels closer to him. Consequently, in terms of star appeal, the two celebrities do not seem to have a big difference. In response to either, the audience may

want to have that kind of life or want to be like them. Thus, Kimura and Pitt may have the same message as “a cool guy;” however, each offers added values through different images for the product. These two commercials are also discussed in the semiological analysis section to examine how each commercial sends different messages.

“Cool”ness and the Hottest Topic

Today, there seems to be less perception of a significant difference between using Japanese or Western celebrities in terms of scarcity value. Some interviewees mentioned the coolness of the celebrity as the most important criterion for using the celebrity in commercials. The word “cool” can be regarded as looking “hot,” having a nice attitude for life, and/or having a distinctive personality. WorldNet Dictionary (Hyperdictionary, 2003) defines cool as being “fashionable” or “attractive,” and the Collins English Dictionary (2003) defines it as “(informal) sophisticated or elegant, in an unruffled way.” Western celebrities are considered to have all of these elements: fashionable, attractive, sophisticated and elegant. Agent H claimed:

There is not so much difference between Japanese or foreigners. . . . The matter is simply whether or not they are cool. That’s the only concern. So, the audience does not think it’s cool when commercials simply have foreigners. Japanese no longer think that whenever commercials show foreigners, they look cool.

The main criterion for choosing which celebrity to use in a commercial depends on a perception of how cool they are in the eyes of the Japanese audience. Only using Western celebrities is not perceived as cool or good anymore. As Agent G said, “We realize how stupid it is to use celebrities just because they are famous right now.” He suggested that if the commercial only shows a celebrity because she or he is famous, yet fails to explain the quality of the product, “the commercial has a stupid image. The audience is not that stupid now.” Along these lines, Professor B said “It depends on how much attention the

celebrity can get. We choose someone who is the hottest topic. It only depends on whether or not they are popular.” Thus, the main criterion for whom to hire for a commercial seems to be the matter of hot- or cool-ness.

Therefore, the celebrity who is the hottest topic in the media and looks cool has the highest chance to be used in Japanese TV commercials. As a consequence, though advertisers are being more cautious about hiring Western celebrities, Japanese can still see many Western celebrities in TV commercials as long as the celebrities are considered “hot.” Overall then, advertisers seem to perceive as the main difference in the degree of appeal a Japanese “big star” may have compared to a big Western celebrity, to be whether or not one celebrity is more “hot” than others.

Admiration of the West/Whites

As previously mentioned, the Japanese people have a long history of admiration toward the West since the Meiji Restoration. In this survey, there are not only Western celebrities but also many Western non-celebrities used in Japanese TV commercials. In this and the following sections, the view toward the West and Whites is examined. These views seem to associate the Japanese’ inferiority complex towards the West with the use of Caucasians in ads. First, the frequent use of European languages in Japanese commercials may indicate how Japanese admire the West. In this survey, 1370 (85.3 %) commercials have either spoken and/or written European words. Only 14.7 % of all the commercials surveyed did not utilize any European languages. European words are used almost everywhere, such as in products’ and companies’ names as well as in common usage. About companies’ names, Professor A said, “We have more companies for which the name is written in the [Latin] alphabet. We write SONY, not , in Japanese.” The

reason may be explained partially by Professor B's comment:

When a company name is written in Latin letters, it can appeal to foreigners. If one said "Toyo Sash," everyone will know the company [produces] window sashes. But when one hears "Tostem,"⁶ no one knows what kind of company it is. You cannot specify their jobs; but at the same time, the company can do [business in] many different things other than sashes. In addition, companies [with names that use Latin letters] can have their businesses not only in Japan but also in foreign countries.

When Professor B said a company name "can appeal to foreigners" it could sound strange to the Japanese audience. What Professor B meant could be that the company has the image of doing the business worldwide and, therefore, has foreign customers, instead of only dealing with domestic business. Thus, the Latin alphabet is treated as a symbol of exotic-ness and power: a company with a name in the "English" alphabet is perceived as being able to be a worldwide enterprise. Thus, the Latin alphabet, especially English words, is associated with the concept of globalism. When European words are used for companies' names they look like they can compete and be successful at the international level, instead of being only a domestic business.

In addition, the West is portrayed as something "better" while Japan is shown as "inferior" in Japanese commercials. Agent B said:

Since the Meiji era, we traditionally have an image of the West as advanced, modern, up-to-date, and fashionable. Ever since Japan Westernized in the Meiji era, Japan has adopted Western, especially European, systems. We think something foreign is good. After WWII, our education has been strongly influenced by America. We are indirectly under American rules.

The influence after WWII is also mentioned by Agent X:

When we lost everything in WWII, [everything related to] America looked [great and] bright in our eyes. We became crazy about [watching] American home dramas and movies, [and the wealthy lifestyles shown in them]. We followed their lifestyles and eating habits and traveled overseas in the 1970s. We were taught what a wealthy and wonderful life they had and their "correctness" [in all affairs]. Unconsciously we think they are superior. We are brainwashed.

According to this unconscious belief, Japanese often think Western things are better than their Japanese counterparts. Agent P also stated:

We think foreign things are good and cool. When I was little, advertisements all used foreigners, not only famous celebrities but also non-celebrity foreigners. . . We only saw foreigners who were good singers or beautiful people [on commercials]. I think if the audience sees different kinds of people, they are surprised to see them. The audience is brainwashed by the images from commercials and movies. We use foreigners in order to [make the commercials] look fashionable or cool. We only see those people.

When Agent P said “we only saw foreigners who were good singers or beautiful people,” what he meant could be, “I only remember seeing those people [on TV],” because there were GIs and other ordinary foreigners in Japan in the 1940s to 50s, and they were not necessarily good singers or beautiful people⁷. According to a previous comment made by Agent P, perhaps those good singers and beautiful people had such a strong impact on the audience that the audience only remembered those good foreign singers and beautiful foreigners rather than the ordinary people. This suggests that Japanese pay attention even to unknown, non-celebrity Westerners in commercials and think all Western people are like the ones on the TV commercials. Overall, the West is portrayed as a powerful, superior culture over Japan.

Having a lot of foreigners, especially Whites, in commercials may reflect the inferiority complex that Japanese have towards Westerners. In addition, even when commercials portray foreigners who are Black, Whites are also always within the commercials viewed in this study. Thus, even though Japanese have an inferiority complex regarding the West, it differs in comparison to Whites and non-Whites. Those whom the Japanese admire most seem to be mainly the Whites. Copywriter A made a comment that “We have an inferiority complex towards the West. We don’t have that as

much as before, yet we still have a complex regarding the lifestyle and look of Westerners subconsciously. We think Westerners are cool, and Japanese are not.” Agent N further said, “We have an inferiority complex regarding their (Westerners’) look. We subconsciously have an [inferiority] complex when we compare Asian and European ethnicities.” Because of the Japanese’ inferiority complex, Westerners may be associated with positive images such as being fashionable and cool. Furthermore, it seems that whenever the Japanese hear the word, “Westerners” or “foreigners,” they imagine Whites. Agent A said, “If we say foreign models, they are usually White models. . . We have a strong sense that *gaijin* [foreigners] equals Whites.”

Moreover, Agent U stated the reason for having mostly Whites in Japanese TV commercials is “definitely because of the admiration toward Westerners. I think we have stereotypes that Caucasians that are cool. We want to use the image derived from that.” Agent R also mentioned, “in the bottom of our hearts, we think white Anglo-Saxons, WASP, is right. We think Whites are all cool.” In their comments, Whites are utilized as “cool and right” people, and this is indicated of the Japanese inferiority complex. Whites are used as synonyms for foreigners in Japanese people’s minds, as indicated by the following comments by Agent J:

Using foreigners gives an impression which is distant from the everyday world. For instance, if commercials have Asians for an underwear commercial, it is too real. But if foreigners are employed, Japanese do not feel indecent. Foreigners, or, in short, Whites, do not look indecent for Japanese. Japanese are shy to see Asians in underwear commercials. It is an advantage to have foreigners, whose image is away from everyday life, in commercials.

Agent J used the terms, “foreigners” and “Whites” as if they were synonyms in this comment. This indicates the strong sense in the Japanese mind that foreigners are Whites,

and Whites have positive connotations. This is indicated when Agent J declared that using a Japanese person in an underwear commercial is “too real,” because, to the Japanese audience, it would be akin to being exposed in public. Hence, if a commercial utilizes a Japanese or a non-Japanese Asian, it is rather embarrassing to see her or him in underwear because the audience feels close to her or him. In addition, there will not be so much feeling of admiration provoked in the audience’s mind when such commercials have Japanese. On the other hand, due to the greater sense of distance and admiration felt by Japanese, they think it is acceptable to have Whites in underwear commercials.

Thus, Whites are considered to be different, but at the same time gain admiration from Japanese. Agent X mentioned that Japanese have an “inferiority complex toward Anglo-Saxons. It is a complex related to their look: their skin color, high noses, long legs and arms, blonde hair, and nice fashions. This is everything Japanese don’t have. It is a reflection of the Japanese complex; as a result, Anglo-Saxons are admired.” Agent A also said, “The bottom line of having foreigners in Japanese commercials is that the Japanese have an [inferiority] complex toward foreigners.” In sum, having mainly Whites in Japanese TV commercials indicates what many Japanese writers, scholars, and politician have called an “inferiority complex.”

Professor A explained another aspect of the admiration for Whites that many Japanese have in the following conversation:

Professor A: Who to use [in commercials] depends on the Japanese discrimination. We rank foreigners [depending on ethnicity].

Researcher: Whites are of higher rank?

Professor A: Yes.

Researcher: And those who come below are other people, such as Arabs?

Professor A: Yes. We think Americans equal Whites. We tend to accept what Americans value; therefore, we have a strong discrimination against other people, such as Arabs.

According to these interviews and the contents of ads, there seems to be a different view

toward Whites and non-Whites. Whites are utilized to represent positive images such as fashionableness. Agent P stated:

Japanese usually hire Whites for commercials with foreigners. They have blonde hair, and they look cool or beautiful. Western celebrities are seen as an extension of those ordinary foreigners. When those foreigners hold a product, they look fashionable. And foreigners' fashionableness transfers to the fashionableness of the product. Recently some Japanese are seen as cool, but we still think something from foreign countries is better. This way of thinking is reflected even in the view toward other people. Chinese or Taiwanese things are not considered to be foreign because it is difficult to distinguish Japanese from Chinese or Taiwanese.

Though Agent P stated Whites "look cool and beautiful," they are not beautiful by nature.

These opinions also show the Japanese inferiority complex regarding Whites. Agent P went on:

I think it is important to have an attribute like blonde hair or a sharp nose. This is my personal opinion, but they do look beautiful. Anglo-Saxons also have a good body balance. Japanese wear Western types of clothes, so we compare ourselves with Westerners who wear the same type of clothes as we do but who [still] look very different. Foreigners wearing *kimonos* do not look so beautiful. They simply have a different body balance.

Thus, blonde hair or pale skin color is an important attribute in a commercial. Japanese objectify Caucasians and pay attention to their bodies. In other words, Caucasians are fetishized in Japanese people's minds. Their skin, eye, hair color, and bodies come to stand for cool, progressive fashion.

Whites who look obviously different from Japanese yet who also receive admiration from Japanese are used to represent human beings in general or as neutral human beings for whom Japanese do not have any negative feelings. Agent A indicated that "One reason for using foreigners is to 'kill the personality' of the characters. The other reason is the view toward their lifestyles. Having foreigners in commercials sends an image of the admirable lifestyles of foreigners to the audience." The literal translation

of Agent A's comment about the reason for using foreigners in commercials would be "killing personality," but it is rather a generalization of all human beings represented by using foreigners, especially Whites who do not hold any negative meanings for Japanese. Non-celebrity Whites become mannequins for modeling clothes, drinks, cars, and other markers of class and lifestyle. Whites, then, are used as though they represent all human beings whom Japanese admire.

Nevertheless, some interviewees seemed to feel it is odd to see foreigners in the Japanese media all the time. Agent J said, "When I saw a white boy in a catalog for children's clothes, I felt strange. There was no necessary association between a character and a product. We are Japanese; we live in Japan. Why do we use a White boy? I don't understand that." Thus, some people may feel strange with such advertising, but admiration of Whites in Japanese TV commercials seems to be obvious.

The View Toward Blacks

While Whites are associated with positive images in Japanese TV commercials, Japanese are reluctant to use Blacks in commercials. There are no commercials starring only non-celebrity Blacks, though there are some non-White sports celebrities, such as Tiger Woods, found in this survey. In addition, the result of this study's content analysis showed that when commercials had ordinary Black foreigners, they always showed both Blacks and Whites, however no commercials showed Blacks alone. This indicates a sensitivity toward solely using Blacks in Japanese commercials.

Agent A said, "We have a special reason for using Blacks.... I saw an underwear commercial using a Black person, and it looked strange." When Agent A said it was "strange" to see a Black person in an underwear commercial, this may imply that

foreigners are considered to be a synonym for Whites, but not Blacks. In addition, Agent B talked about how Japanese commercials are sensitive about using minorities. Agent B said:

For using minorities, we need a reason to use them. If the audience doesn't see why a commercial uses that person, some people may take it as racist. We see Whites as superior; therefore, it is OK to make fun of them. But when we see someone as inferior, we think it is discrimination if we make fun of them. For instance, the symbol of the drink company, CALPIS, changed its logo almost 10 years ago. The old logo was inspired by an idea of a 'black' person drinking 'white' CALPIS, but some started to say that this was an expression of racism. So, the company changed its logo for a more ordinary one.

Thus, Japanese see a need to be careful about how Blacks are used in commercials. Yet, one interviewee mentioned a sense of coolness associated with Black people. Agent H said:

Researcher: Japanese admire Whites, but not Blacks?

Agent H: Generally speaking, I think that is right, but Blacks are also cool. Many people think Blacks are cool.

Though Agent H stated that many people think of Blacks as cool, Japanese people might also hold some racist attitudes when Blacks are used in TV commercials, which is indicated by Japanese advertisers' reluctance to use Blacks.

The View Toward Non-Westerners

Using foreigners in commercials generates an element of the exotic, or a distinctive element. As Agent G said, "In order to differentiate products, commercials sometimes use foreigners." Nevertheless, foreigners mean Westerners in Japan, and non-Western people are used much less frequently in Japanese commercials.

Non-Western foreign celebrities. Here, the view toward non-Western foreign celebrities is examined. Though Japanese commercials employ many Japanese and some Western celebrities, they do not show celebrities other than Japanese or Western

celebrities. There are a few non-Japanese, non-Western celebrities starring in Japanese TV commercials, but they are mostly active in Japan. For example, movies are very popular in India. There are 800 movies made per year in India, and it has had the world's largest number of movies made per year for more than ten years. There are 9,000 movie theaters in India, and 23 million people go to a theater every day (Fuji TV, 2003). Yet, even though India creates so many movies each year, those stars do not appear in Japanese TV commercials. The reason, Agent H declares, is "there is no point in using them because there are no famous Indian stars in Japan." Agent N explains further:

Agent N: We don't know Indian celebrities. We get an image of celebrities from other media. The most shown movies in Japan are Hollywood movies.

Researcher: We don't show many Arabic or Indian movies in Japan, and therefore, they don't have appeal?

Agent N: Yes, the appeal is weak.

Japanese commercials have mainly Western celebrities when commercials have "foreign" celebrities due to Japan's lack of exposure to non-Western or non-Hollywood media.

Furthermore, Hollywood and Asian stars are viewed differently in the Japanese audience's mind. Even though many Japanese dramas are shown in other Asian countries, such as Taiwan and Hong Kong, and some Japanese celebrities are very popular in those countries and can be considered international stars, they are only "Asian stars," not "globally" important stars like Hollywood stars. Interestingly, when the Japanese actress Ryoko Hirose starred in the movie *WASABI*⁸ (2002), which was a collaboration between French and Japanese filmmakers, an article described this effort as *sekai shinshutsu* (entering the world) (Yomiuri online, 2003). Meanwhile, when another Japanese actress, Yumi Adachi, started selling her image in Taiwan, another article described this incident as *ajia shinshutsu* (entering Asia) (Sankei Sports, 2003). Both of them did something in

foreign countries; nevertheless, one was described as entering the world, while the other was seen as only entering Asia. This indicates the Japanese way of thinking that America and Europe are synonyms for “the world,” while Asian countries are not. This has to do with mental distance including race symbolically manifested as exoticism. Other Asians are seen as regional, as racially and culturally “closer” than Caucasians and Blacks. Asian stars do not have as high a value as Hollywood stars. Agent O elaborated on this:

Agent O: Asians will be popular from now on, but the appeal is still weak. There aren't many theaters [in Japan] showing Asian movies. It may be a Japanese characteristic to think of Whites or those kinds of people as stars.. . .

Researcher: Is the admiration for Asians lower than for Hollywood stars?

Agent O: Yes, if I talk frankly, maybe the admiration for Asians is lower than that for Westerners. We may have more admiration for Hollywood stars or for their race.

Thus, whenever the audience hears the words “foreign star,” they usually think of Western celebrities, not other countries' stars. This indicates Japan is a Hollywood-centered market and Japanese thinking is Western-centric, or even more specifically, America-centric. White Westerners as icons generate privileged feelings.

Non-celebrity, non-Western foreigners. Likewise, it is rare to see non-celebrity foreigners other than Westerners, such as Arabs or Indians, in Japanese commercials.

This is because Japanese companies need to have a specific reason to employ them.

Agent B said, “If a product is from that country, we may use a foreigner [from that country]. For example, if a new Arabic airline starts a flight to Japan and wants to have a commercial about it, we may pick an Arabic lady to appear as a flight attendant in the commercial.” Agent P also stated, “We have some discrimination against non-Whites.

When a commercial uses an Arab or an African we use a simple association, such as ‘curry and Indians.’ In the case of using Whites, we use them for a more broad and cool

image.” Therefore, when a Japanese commercial uses non-Whites they often seem to connote a negative stereotype. Therefore, Japanese only utilize non-Western foreigners for their stereotypical images, such as “curry and Indian” previously mentioned. More importantly, foreigners’ value in commercials varies according to their perceived ranking, with Whites receiving the highest status.

Reasons for Creators to Use/Not Use Western Celebrities

Advantages to Utilize Celebrities for Creators and Clients

Creators of Japanese TV commercials have complex feelings relating to the use of celebrities. There are both pros and cons related to their use. According to Agent M, before any client asks an advertising agency to make a commercial, clients usually sponsor a competition during which several ad agencies compete for the advertising contract. During this competition, each agency presents a prototype commercial, which is made from a number of scenes taken from various movies or TV shows to give clients a feel for the commercial they are proposing. The winner of the competition wins the advertising contract from the client. However, if an agency can claim to have a popular celebrity willing to appear in their commercial then this may be all the advertising agency needs to win the contract. Agent E said, “When Norika Fujiwara, a Japanese actress, was at the peak of her career, people said that if you got her to be in the ad, that’s all you needed, and you won.”

The perceived benefits of using celebrities exist for clients as well. According to Agent A, this is because “instead of giving a long explanation such as ‘we want to have a particular theme in this commercial using these visuals and so on and so forth,’ it is easier for the clients to tell their bosses that ‘we will have this celebrity in the commercial’.”

Agent R adds, “Clients feel safe when a commercial has a celebrity.” Therefore, when a celebrity is involved in a commercial, clients feel more secure about its effectiveness and, in turn, expect positive results for their products, services and ultimately their companies.

Because it is commonly believed that advertising which features a celebrity will produce better sales, these commercials can also help wholesalers and manufacturers overcome the obstacle of convincing retailers to stock their product. Agent M said,

It is easy to convince store managers to stock a particular product if we tell them a specific celebrity will appear in a new commercial. If manufacturers can get their products into retail stores then the products can be sold well. However, merely getting the product placed in stores can be difficult.

In this sense, it appears as if these advertising campaigns often address retailers as the primary audience with the end consumers merely being the secondary target. Thus, a significant obstacle of getting a product into a retail environment can actually be facilitated by featuring a celebrity in the advertising campaign.

Reluctance for Creators to Use Western Celebrities

Although there are some advantages in using Western or foreign celebrities, advertisers prefer not to use them if it can be avoided. Agent G said, “Creators do not want to use [foreign celebrities]. Creators want to compete with other commercials through their own ideas, [not with the help of celebrities].” In other words, creators prefer to win a contract based on the quality of their ideas rather than depending on the popularity of a given celebrity. Agent P also stated, “Creators think ‘we don’t need to use them every time.’ Creators don’t want to use them. They prefer to make commercials with original ideas.” Agent M further mentioned,

We don’t want to use foreign celebrities if it is possible not to do so. The commercials with celebrities provide people with something to talk about, but they are expensive to hire. Besides, creators think the audience regards

commercials with foreign celebrities as easily-made and cheesy. Commercials are supposed to be based on creative ideas and sell the product based on those ideas. However, when they use Hollywood celebrities, the celebrity's persona becomes [the only] idea. Commercials such as these can't contain many original ideas.

In sum, as Agent M said, "Creators do not think it is a good idea to use celebrities."

Instead, advertisers prefer to use more creative means of advertising a product. Here, Agent M's comment implies that creators strive against using celebrities because they feel their creativity is subverted by the mere presence of the celebrity.

Despite this, clients often request advertisers use a celebrity; in fact, Agent P said, "It happens quite often." Agent M stated:

We are in a war where a product can't stay on the shelf for long, and [creators] think they can't win the war if they don't use foreign celebrities. Therefore, even though it is not believed to be a good idea to use foreign celebrities, we often use them despite our great reluctance.

Therefore, even though creators do not want to use a celebrity, at times they feel forced to do so. Agent F explained, "Japanese commercials rely on celebrities and creators know that. Although they question its appropriateness and effectiveness they find it difficult to get around it."

Although advertisers want to rely on their own creativity, they are often coerced by the clients demand for foreign celebrities. Researcher A elaborated the reasoning as follows:

If a celebrity has too strong an appeal in a commercial, it cannot contain the element of explanation. On the other hand, if the explanation element is too strong, the audience thinks, "don't say such complicated stuff." Then, what is the meaning of the commercial? It is a pain in a butt [for advertisers and sponsors]. It seems to be necessary to have a celebrity, and when creators want to send a message to the audience without using a celebrity, the audience does not recognize the commercial and the advertiser is blamed.

Therefore, even though advertisers prefer not to use celebrities when possible, it is often

very difficult not to use them because of the clients' perception that celebrities are such an effective marketing tool.

To complicate matters it can often be more difficult to contact Western celebrities. Japanese celebrities all belong to a particular representative agency, which makes it easy to contact a specific individual. Most Western celebrities however do not belong to any definitive agency. Consequently, it can often be difficult to determine which person to contact when trying to recruit a specific individual. Agent E explains:

The procedure is easier to contact Japanese celebrities, and they are cheaper to hire. For Hollywood stars, there are three or four intermediate people involved making the process more complicated. If a foreign celebrity personally accepts an offer for being in a commercial and the company is later forced to cancel its offer, the company must pay a cancellation fee.

On the other hand, Agent E continued, for a Japanese celebrity, the advertisers are not required to pay a cancellation fee unless their schedule has already been set.

Thus for Western celebrities, the advertiser is obligated to pay a cancellation fee when the production of a commercial is terminated despite the fact that the Western celebrity has merely agreed to appear in a commercial. Advertisers using Japanese celebrities, however, are not required to do this as long as they have not actually signed a contract. In sum, using Western celebrities has some advantages, which cannot be ignored despite the complications involved. The celebrities' fame and appeal in commercials are strong enough to generate a desire in advertisers to employ them.

"Effective" Commercials

Advertisers have a number of reasons for using or not using Western celebrities. To complicate matters, some agents stated that there is discrepancy between reality and the claim that commercials featuring Western celebrities are not the most effective

commercials for the Japanese audience. It seems that the popularity of a Western celebrity does not always correlate with positive results.

According to a survey conducted by one company, commercials featuring Western celebrities were not effective. This survey evaluated attributes such as product interests, comprehension of content, likeability, celebrity character appeal, background scenery, and so on. Researcher A said:

For Japanese commercials, there was a high correlation between recognition of celebrities and favorableness of commercials when we examined those elements on the survey. In Japan, celebrities work well in commercials. However, Western celebrities do not work as well as the most popular Japanese celebrities. Even for the most famous Western celebrities, the scores for “inspiration for the interest in buying a product” and “understanding of the product” were low. The scores for commercials with foreigners in “the easiness of understanding about a product,” “the power of convincing,” “interest in a product,” and “the provocation to buy a product” were more than 3 % lower than the overall average.

Thus, their research indicates that commercials with Western celebrities or non-celebrity foreigners are not the most effective commercials on the Japanese audience.

One reason for this may be that, in the mind of the Japanese audience, foreigners are not associated with the Japanese cultural notion of friendliness. Researcher B explained that, “In commercials, friendliness and ease in understanding the content of the commercial are the two most important things.” Yet, commercials with foreigners do not work well. Researcher A speculated this was because “they don’t look friendly.” The concept of friendliness in Researcher A’s comment can also be considered familiarity. Even though there are foreigners living in Japan, people do not see them very often in their everyday lives. In the case of Western celebrities, they are considered to be from a different world. Consequently, the audience does not relate to them. This in turn takes away from the Japanese cultural concept of friendliness. Thus, the audience has a sense

of distance or alienation to foreigners. The reasoning behind using foreign celebrities in Japanese commercials is not to appeal to cultural sensibilities relating to friendliness but merely to catch viewers' attention as a distinctive element.

Researcher A declared:

Foreigners have a handicap in terms of name recognition, friendliness, and realistic image [or an image familiar to Japanese people, who do not see many foreigners in everyday life] when compared to Japanese celebrities. As a result, they did not do well in the survey. Generally speaking, we feel less friendliness from foreigners.

Although, neither Western celebrities nor foreigners score highly on many elements in the survey, they are still frequently employed in commercials. This discrepancy between the survey result and the reality of using Western celebrities is explained by Researcher B:

[Our survey] is intended to determine the problems [in each commercial] but it is not meant to solve them. In other words, our survey on commercials can determine which part of each commercial is impressive to the audience, such as, "this commercial has a nice background" or "that commercial is funny," but it doesn't provide the answer for what advertisers can do in the future to make a more effective commercial.

The survey of commercial favorability offers analysis on the popularity and marketability of specific celebrities, about which kinds of commercials people mention in conversation, and how each component of a commercial is evaluated by audiences. Researcher A and B state; however, it is difficult to draw a conclusion from the survey relating to the types of commercial that "will be" popular in the future. Featuring particular celebrities in a commercial does not guarantee the success of a commercial. Researcher A further stated that, "Advertisers don't refer to such data when making a new commercial. This data is merely used after the fact for the purpose of comparing the success of the commercials. It is not used to generate new ideas for making a [successful] commercial." Therefore,

Researcher B added, “We are not good at creating new, popular commercials from this data. Creators need to choose which data is important. This is the difference between the survey and reality.” Therefore, the survey is used solely for analyzing commercials after the fact and not suitable for using to direct the making of future commercials.

Although foreigners are not strongly associated with friendliness, Western celebrities can be used to capture the audiences’ attention and are often associated with the image of luxury and global recognition. Consequently, advertisers continue to feature Western celebrities to bolster those images. Though commercials with foreigners and Western celebrities do not score high with audiences on surveys, it does not necessarily imply that these commercials are not effective in grabbing audience attention. Getting attention appears to be the primary reasoning behind using Western celebrities in commercials. Because the marketplace is saturated with such a vast amount of advertising, grabbing the audiences’ attention is considered crucial in creating a commercial, which produces effective product recognition.

Furthermore, a commercial that receives a higher score in the survey of commercial favorableness does not always translate into the most effective commercial. Researchers A and B both mentioned “You know, the commercial of *Faito ippatsu* [Fight, a shot; or a shot with fighting spirit] is a very successful commercial, but the image for this commercial very low because people think it is boorish.” *Faito ippatsu* is a phrase that has been used for the commercial of a nutrition drink. Even though the characters in the commercials change through time, this phrase is always used in this product’s commercial. Repetition of catchy phrases creates strong associations between products and companies in the audience's mind and causes them to retain product

information more effectively over time. Researcher B continued:

This commercial is said to have become a mere form, however it has been one of the most successful commercials. That is why this commercial has been such a winner. The product can immediately be associated with the company. That is the most important concept. The recognition level and likeability are high for this commercial despite the fact that there are no new elements and people do not think this commercial is in good taste.

This commercial is successful in that it has endured the test of time. Nevertheless, the commercial survey shows low scores for some of its elements. Thus, the success of commercials and being in a higher rank in a commercial survey do not always correlate with each other. Despite low scores on this survey, the successes of some commercials are obvious because they continue to use the same phrase in their commercials.

Overall, having foreigners or Western celebrities does not necessarily correlate with the success of a commercial as defined by the commercial survey. Having foreigners in a Japanese commercial, on the other hand, can be considered as catching the audience's attention. In addition, featuring Western celebrities seem to be associated with the notion of luxury and global recognition. Furthermore, the success of commercials is not solely based on retail sales. Creating a buzz or causing the general public to talking about the commercial or the products featured in the commercial can be considered as a "successful" commercial.

Reasons for Western Celebrities to Be in Japanese Commercials

While the first question examined the meaning of Western celebrities in Japanese commercials from the advertisers' point of view, the second main interview question asked for reasons from the perspectives of Western celebrities as to why they might agree to appear in Japanese commercials. Many interviewees said their primary motivation for appearing in Japanese commercials was financial rewards.

Agents I, J, L, Q, P, S and C all asserted, “Because of money. That’s it.” Some interviewees further mentioned that Western celebrities had no reservations about starring in Japanese TV commercials because they knew people from their own countries would never know about it. For instance, Agent P said, “They think people in their countries will not find out that they are in Japanese advertisements.” Agent F also mentioned, “They said it is okay to appear in a commercial for a short period of time if it is aired in such a way that their fans [at home] will not see it.” Thus, Western celebrities are comfortable about appearing in Japanese commercials because they believe this information will not be released in their own country.

Some interviewees further mentioned Western celebrities’ willingness to appear in Japanese TV commercials to be the greediness of celebrities. Agent G said, “The more money you have, the more eager you are to have more.” Agent E also said, “Rich people get more and more greedy. It is a chain reaction of money creating money. Besides, they can spend money for many reasons including donations.” Agent C claimed, “They earn so much money for one movie. Still they want to have more money. It’s an easy way to earn money by appearing in Japanese TV commercials.” Therefore, even though Western celebrities earn so much money for being in many movies, some interviewees believe celebrities still want to have more money.

To the interviewees, money appears to be the main motivation for Western celebrities’ willingness to appear in Japanese commercials. However, one major concern Western celebrities may have is information leaking back to fans in their own country. Agent A stated, “If that information does not leak, they don’t care.” Therefore, if the fact that Western celebrities appear in Japanese commercials is not revealed to fans in their

home country, they may not mind starring in Japanese commercials.

As previously mentioned in the *Literature Review* section, Farrah Fawcett, who is best known for her starring role in *Charlie's Angels*, sued a Japanese ad agency for releasing her commercial to CBS ("Japanese advertisements: Leo-san," 1998). The agency was forced to pay an undisclosed amount of money as a result of the suit (Kilburn, 1991, 1998). Since then, Western celebrities always include a clause in their contracts against showing their commercials outside of Japan. With this legal protection, Western celebrities feel safe being in Japanese TV commercials.

Even though globalization of the world's media makes the distance between countries virtually non-existent, the American media generally does not report on Western celebrities appearing in Japanese commercials. Consequently, Western celebrities believe their appearance on Japanese commercials can be a kept secret. Agent R said, "They look down on Japan. Japan is a different culture from theirs. The information [of being in an advertisement] will never be leaked. Because they star in a commercial in a very different world, it is okay [and they do not care so much]."

When Western celebrities state they do not care very much about starring in Japanese TV commercials, some agents claimed that is because of the distance between Japan and their own countries. Agent V asserted, "They don't mind doing commercials in a small and rather closed country like Japan. It will not be something about which the people [from their home countries] will talk. Besides, the money is good." Agent W also declared:

These commercials are only shown in one small, far-eastern country. Celebrities can hide their role in these commercials from the American media. It is like a part-time job for them. In this way, celebrities can keep their pride as a Hollywood star.

Professor B further claimed,

Their own people do not know about it. Everyone wants to have money. If they do that (star in a commercial) in their own countries, they may have a bad image. However, they do not have any reservations about being in commercials in a place where no one (i.e., their own people) will see it.

Agent O expressed a similar reason as to why Western celebrities appear in Japanese TV commercials:

The first reason is money. I think a salary in Japan is very high compared to other countries. Being in an ad makes them look cheap [in their own countries], but in a different country and culture like Japan, maybe it is okay [to star in a commercial] if you think about the salary.

Therefore, Western celebrities are attracted by the money and comforted by the thought that their appearance in Japanese TV commercials will not be revealed to their fans at home due to the distance between Japan their home country.

Another advantage gained by Western celebrities when they appear in Japanese commercials is related to time constraints. Agent N said, “For movies, you are tied up for six months or more to get paid. It only takes a week [for filming] to get one million U.S. dollars for a commercial.” Agent P also stated, “If they (Western celebrities) do not mind showing up in a commercial, it is a good deal they can earn as much as three million U.S. dollars for what could be less than a day of shooting.” Agent M further remarked, “They may think it’s a good part time job if they can earn three million U.S. dollars by agreeing to two-year contract for shooting only a few commercials. A manager or coordinator may suggest particular foreign celebrities for advertisements, so it’s up to him or her to get that celebrity. Maybe some celebrities like Japan and appear on TV commercials for that reason. Otherwise, the reason is always about earning money.” Thus, being in a Japanese TV commercial is considered to be a good deal by

some Western celebrities.

Some Western celebrities may also enjoy appearing in Japanese commercials. As Agent U said, “Japan is far away, and they may just want to show a different side of themselves.” Similarly, Agent A stated, “It is fun to play a role that they usually don’t get to do. They may enjoy being in a Japanese TV commercial.” Agent M further claimed, “They may want to play with Japanese commercials. They may also be curious about Japanese commercials. They may feel like doing a favor.” Thus, the interviewees believe some celebrities might enjoy starring in Japanese commercials.

Furthermore, not only do Western celebrities sometimes enjoy being in Japanese commercials, but also they know being in a commercial works positively in Japan. Agent H stated, “In addition to the fact that celebrities can get a great amount of money, they know that starring in a commercial is effective in Japan. A manager or someone else is making sure of that. Being in a commercial is evidence of being popular in Japan, so celebrities are glad to appear in [Japanese] commercials.” Being in a commercial helps raise celebrities’ popularity and publicity; hence starring in a commercial boosts celebrities’ movie careers in Japan.

Agent T declared, “Though they look cheap in their own countries if they appear in a TV commercial, it’s a different story here in Japan. They raise their publicity, and being in a commercial is associated to a movie hit.” Researcher B also mentioned a similar point: “It’s better to show up in a commercial in Japan. If they do something funny, they become even more popular. Then, many people go to see their movies, and the movies will be huge hits” Similarly, Agent B asserted, “Celebrities can earn money and advertise movies. It has synergy. A movie-distributing company may suggest

celebrities appear in a [Japanese] commercial. Then, movies get [even] more popular. Celebrities can earn money and get their movies advertised.” Thus, there are many advantages to starring in Japanese TV commercials.

However, one interviewee believes celebrities do not know or care whether “starring in commercials in Japan works positively,” as the following conversation reveals:

Researcher: In Japan, being in a commercial works as an advantage for them. If a Japanese person explains that to Western celebrities, does it work? Does it convince celebrities to be in ads?

Agent C: I don’t think so. Celebrities don’t think that being in Japanese commercials has a [special] meaning. They don’t think that their popularity will rise if they appear on TV commercials. I think the biggest reason for them appearing in a Japanese commercial is money. ...

Researcher: But they can advertise movies by being in a commercial.

Agent C: Yes, it is a partial reason, but I think a celebrity doesn’t consider so much, “if I appear in a Japanese TV commercial, I can advertise the movie.” ... Celebrities are concerned mostly about their images. The primary reason [they appear] is money. [Otherwise,] they care more about “I don’t want to damage my image,” rather than “I want to raise my image.”

Thus, according to Agent C, Western celebrities do not care so much about advantages of being in Japanese TV commercials. In sum, it is difficult to draw strong conclusions about how Western celebrities regard starring in Japanese commercials; yet it seems that the biggest reason is money.

Western Celebrities Who Never Appear in Japanese Commercials

Though the audience can see many Western celebrities in Japanese TV commercials, some Western celebrities seem never to appear in a commercial. Agent C stated:

There are some people who never appear in commercials. Those who put importance on their image don’t appear on [Japanese] TV commercials. I think the primary reason for those who appear on TV commercials is earning money. If

a Japanese person wonders “why doesn’t [a particular actor] appear on TV commercials?,” that actor has probably received offers for appearing on Japanese TV commercials for a couple of years, yet she or he has refused the offer.

However, one agent declared that if we paid a limitless amount of money to Western celebrities, anyone would star in TV commercials. Agent N asserted, “The reason [for Western celebrities to appear in commercials] is simply money. Some don’t star in a commercial, but if we paid a limitless amount of money, everyone would endorse a product in a commercial.”

Whether or not it is true, some Western celebrities seem to select the kind of commercials in which to appear. Agent T mentioned a celebrity who accepted an offer for starring in an education-related TV commercial but refused other offers, probably because they were not education-related commercials. When asked if celebrities select particular kinds of commercials, Agent E responded, “I think so. Even if the salary is not that good, if they like a product, they may accept the offer.” Therefore, though many Western celebrities can be seen in Japanese TV commercials, some may choose not to endorse a certain kind of product.

Conclusion

This study found several reasons to utilize Western celebrities in Japanese TV commercials. First, many interviewees mentioned the scarcity value of Western celebrities as a main reasons to have them in Japanese TV commercials. Though many ad agents mentioned the scarcity value of Western celebrities, an unspoken assumption in their comments is that those celebrities are already popular before they appear in commercials. Otherwise, their scarcity does not have any “value.” In this sense, the most important reason for Japanese commercials to have Western celebrities is because they

are popular. Second, global recognition of Western celebrities raises the products' and companies' images in audience members' minds. Third, having Western celebrities sets an agenda for the audience to talk about commercials and celebrities. In sum, all three reasons for having Western celebrities relate to the celebrities' high popularity in Japan.

Yet, the value of Western celebrities seems to have decreased. They have less scarcity value than before, and are no longer as novel to the Japanese audience as they once were, in comparison to Japanese celebrities. In addition, Japan's economic bubble burst in 1990 making it harder for Japanese ad agencies to afford hiring Western celebrities. Nevertheless, Japanese TV commercials still utilize Western celebrities. Thus, though their value is reduced, and Japanese advertisers have less money to spend on celebrities, Western celebrities still offer some advantages by appearing in Japanese TV commercials, due to their popularity.

Furthermore, in utilizing Western celebrities, ad agents attempt to differentiate products in viewers' minds. Agent K asserted, "For instance, there are 20 or 30 companies that make *pachinko* machines⁹. Suppose one company's commercial uses a Japanese celebrity. Then another company decides to employ a Western celebrity, because the company wants to have a different image for its commercial. This is the starting point [for making a commercial]." Here, an ad agent describes choosing Western celebrities for their distinctiveness, rather than utilizing them for attributes such as high quality, security, and trustworthiness.

From the ad agents' point of view, they want to use their own ideas to create commercials, nevertheless it is sometimes difficult to do so because client companies want to have a celebrity. Ad agents may not believe in the power of having a Western

celebrity in a commercial as much as their clients. Yet, companies may still have a stronger belief in Western celebrities, in the sense that they can show the companies' security and trustworthiness. Japanese commercials continue to rely on celebrities as spokespersons today, and it seems easier to show companies' security and trustworthiness, or a product's high quality, when commercials have celebrities. Consequently, ad agents have complex feelings about utilizing Western celebrities.

Overall, the main reason for utilizing Western celebrities in Japanese TV commercials is to differentiate products and companies from others. Another important reason is to give an image of security and trustworthiness to the product or company. Though ad agents are reluctant to utilize them, Western celebrities can still provide some benefits by appearing in commercials. This survey reveals the meaning of Western celebrities in Japanese TV commercials.

CHAPTER 6

Discussion

This study is an attempt to search for proof of a one-way flow of information between the US and Japan. Semiological analysis reveals the significance of Western celebrities in Japanese TV commercials. For instance, when Catherine Zeta-Jones starred in the shampoo commercial, her beauty and purity were identified with the girl in the commercial, and transferred to the audience only upon the purchase. Jones portrays an elegant lady in the commercial, which was obviously taken from the movie, *The Mask of Zorro*. This image was transferred from her movie character to the commercial. Her face was recognizable before the commercial was shown, because her face was already famous, and her face was the reason for Japanese marketer to utilize her. The audience associates her with elegance, which would be impossible if she was not a famous Hollywood star, or if the movie was not well known in Japan. Therefore, aspects of her image revealed by semiological analysis objectively show her significance in the commercial.

Content analysis also shows Western culture's high penetration into Japan. Cultural imperialism of the US over Japan is revealed in various ways. First, European languages were used in more than 85% of the overall sample in this study. Second, there was a much higher rate of foreigners, especially Caucasians, appearing in commercials than the actual rate of foreigners living in Japan. Third, the higher rate of urban background used in commercials with foreigners may indicate a subconscious assumption by the Japanese audience that the West is technologically advanced.

I found several reasons for using Western celebrities in Japanese TV commercials by analyzing the interviews with advertising professionals, including ad agents. Those reasons are: (a) scarcity value, (b) global recognition and (c) setting an agenda by giving people things to talk about. Here, scarcity value only becomes valuable based on the assumption that Western celebrities are already popular, and have global recognition, before they appear in commercials. Because of their global recognition, people talk about those ads. In this sense, all three reasons are related to the celebrities' popularity. Even though creators of commercials are often reluctant to use Western celebrities in commercials, they cannot ignore the value of celebrities.

The reason for having Caucasians in Japanese commercials is due to Japan's admiration of the West, which began after the Meiji Restoration (1868), and was reinforced by Japan's loss in WWII. Since then, the West has been associated with positive meanings. While commercial creators need a special reason to utilize Blacks or non-Western actors, there is no special reason needed to utilize Caucasians other than getting the audience's attention. Japan's inferiority complex toward the West and Caucasians helps to explain why Japanese commercials include many Whites.

In sum, intertextuality is a key to understanding why Western celebrities' faces work in Japanese commercials. Western celebrities are already well known before they appear in commercials, and their images are adapted from the movies into characters in commercials. Because they are famous, this intertextuality works. In other words, there is a one-way flow of cinema from the US to Japan, and this makes it possible for the commercials to have Western celebrities and convey meaning, such as elegance in Jones' *Lux Superrich* commercial.

On the other hand, Japanese movies are seldom shown in the US, and Japanese celebrities are not widely recognizable to the American audience. As a consequence, the characters Japanese celebrities portray in movies cannot be extended to TV commercials in the US, because their faces do not mean anything to the American audience. Brad Pitt's face used as an objective correlative is not a subjective "feeling" but an objective thing with a conventional connotation that is recognizable among American, as well as Japanese, audience members. Therefore, I conclude that there is one-way flow of information from the US to Japan in terms of media.

Comparison of Japanese and American Hollywood Celebrities in TV Commercials

Art and pop culture. As seen above, Japanese TV commercials often have Western celebrities, and the celebrities are attached to positive meanings, while American TV commercials usually do not have Japanese celebrities. One reason for American celebrities to appear not as often as in their own country's commercials may be that the distinction between art and pop culture in the US is clear and strict. American celebrities prefer to do dramatic art, and refuse to do pop culture work, such as starring in TV commercials, in their home country. Appearing in Japanese commercials could be against their standards for being a dramatic artist, and might hurt their images. Perhaps, from the perspective of Western celebrities, as they earn a lot of money for making movies, being in a commercial can be regarded as "selling out," devaluing their images. Therefore, when Michael Jackson, for example, bought the copyright of The Beatles' *Revolution*, then sold the rights to the Nike corporation for making a commercial, many fans were offended by the decision (*Not Bored*, 2001). This incident shows that the audience thinks using a Beatles song, which is considered to be art, for an advertisement of a

commodity—regarded as pop culture—is wrong.

In addition, American Hollywood celebrities do not want to appear in commercials because endorsing a product associates them with a specific company, and they may not want to be associated with a company that closely. As a consequence, and as Agent H asserted, “In the US, appearing in commercials is not for someone who has the highest popularity.” However, someone with high popularity is expected to be seen in a commercial in Japan. As a consequence, the audience can see many celebrities with the highest popularity in Japan, while this is not true in the United States.

Nevertheless, even in Japan, traditional artists such as *Noh*, *Kabuki* dance actors, and *Sumo* wrestlers, limit their exposure on TV. Agent B said:

Noh or Kabuki actors refrain from appearing in commercials. The Sumo association also does not easily give permission to [amateur] Sumo wrestlers to appear on TV commercials. There is a certain image for sports as an art, and the association doesn’t want to ruin that image.

When asked why Sumo wrestlers do not appear in commercials, Professor B stated “It’s a decision by Sumo association.” He added, “The rules are not very strict now, and maybe Sumo wrestlers can star in commercials if they get permission from the association, but they still do not appear as much as soccer or baseball players appear in commercials.” He added that the Japanese do not have a strong cultural value about restraining sports celebrities’ appearance on TV. Some sports from outside Japan, such as baseball or soccer, do not have strict prohibitions against players being in commercials. Japanese viewers do not think athletes should earn money only by their professional roles, and by no other means. On the other hand, this cultural value seems to be applicable for traditional Japanese activities, such as *Noh* or *Kabuki*, in the sense that they do not allow their artists to appear in commercials. When *Noh* or *Kabuki* actors, or Sumo wrestlers,

appear on TV commercials, it may have a meaning similar to that of Hollywood stars appearing in American TV commercials. As a pop culture artist Andy Warhol suggested, it appears that art is becoming commodified. With that possibility, starring in commercials is something Japanese traditional artists prefer to avoid.

Furthermore, Agent G asserted, “There is always supply and demand, and there is no demand for having celebrities in commercials [in the US]. It doesn’t mean the same thing to use celebrities in American commercials.” He added, “Americans are suspicious about spending so much money to use a celebrity in a commercial.” Thus, in the United States, there is not the same interest in using Hollywood celebrities. However, some Western celebrities started appearing in their own countries’ commercials recently, including Britney Spears, Sharon Stone, Halle Berry, Sting, Tiger Woods, and Catherine Zeta-Jones. Furthermore, athletes advertising sporting goods such as shoes, or models endorsing cosmetics, are considered quite acceptable. Thus, celebrities’ views toward appearing in commercials may have changed, or the audience may find it more acceptable to see celebrities in commercials than in the past. For the audience, having celebrities in commercials may not be seen so strongly anymore as selling out. Instead, the audience may be coming to enjoy watching them, and celebrities may be beginning to enjoy starring in commercials. Or, the borderline between art and pop culture is loosening in the US. Therefore, art is becoming commodity, even in the US.

In Japan, the borderline between art and pop culture is vague. That is why, in Japan, being in TV commercials is considered evidence of popularity. Some Japanese celebrities, however, do not appear in commercials. For example, Kiyoshi Atsumi, a famous Japanese actor who stars in the world’s longest series of movies—the 48-film

Otoko-ha Tsuraiyo (Life is Tough for Guys) series, has never appeared in TV commercials in his life. He might think starring in a commercial would ruin the image of his character in his movies. Nevertheless, many celebrities do not mind starring in commercials in Japan. Rather, many of them want to be in commercials, because being in commercials helps build popularity.

Reasons for American TV commercials not to have Japanese celebrities. Though Japanese TV commercials have Western celebrities, American TV commercials do not have Japanese celebrities. One possible reason is that America is a place with many diverse groups. Consequently, if a commercial stars a character with a certain race or ethnicity, it limits the targeted audience. Commercials are made depending on a target audience, often needing to aim at a specific ethnic group or other population. The researcher and Agent H had the following conversation:

Researcher: American commercials don't use Japanese celebrities. Is that because they don't attract attention?

Agent H: No, I don't think that's the reason. America is a country in which many minorities are gathered, so the target of commercials sometimes is a minority.

Researcher: Does the target depend on the rate of each ethnicity's population?

Agent H: Yes. The commercials aim at the target audience, where the clients want to send the message to the maximum [number of people].

Therefore, characters in American commercials are chosen depending on the characteristics of the target audience, rather than, as in Japan, solely for the purpose of getting attention for the product. Japanese commercials use Westerners even in commercials for Japanese products. On the other hand, if an American commercial stars a Japanese person, it implies the target customers are minorities in the US. Thus, in the US, who to show in a commercial depends on the target. America is a diversified society; therefore, commercials need to aim at a specific group. However, Japan is a much more

homogenized society than America, in terms of ethnic diversity. Thus, having a different race works well for attracting attention in Japan. In addition, because of the Japanese fetish regarding Caucasians, Japanese commercials tend to employ mostly Caucasians.

If the purposes of Japanese and American commercials were identical (viz., raising recognition and selling a product), Japanese celebrities who are active in U.S. professional baseball, such as Ichiro Suzuki or Hideo Nomo, might have a strong appeal for the American audience. Nevertheless, they rarely appear in American commercials. It seems that American TV commercials usually do not have non-American celebrities to endorse products. The exception would be some basketball players, such as Yao Ming from China, and Eduardo Najera from Mexico. These players are active in the US. If Ming or Najera only played in their home countries, no Americans would know about them. However, even though Nomo and Suzuki also play in the US, American TV commercials do not utilize them. This may be because of baseball's lesser popularity in the US compared to basketball, or, American media simply do not have a strong interest in non-American celebrities.

While Japanese celebrities who perform actively in Japan have low popularity in the US, American athletes keep their high popularity in countries where they do not play. Michael Jordan and Scottie Pippin appear in Japanese commercials, even though they do not usually play in Japan. This is shown in the survey results of Japanese TV commercials, as 12 commercials (0.7 %) were found to have Western sports celebrities. Not only are American athletes popular in Japan, but even Kim Jong II, a leader from a rather closed country, North Korea, has a passion for American basketball. He received a ball signed by Michael Jordan from the U.S. Secretary of State, Madaleine Albright,

during her visit to North Korea in 2000 (*ChinaNow*, 2003). This indicates the international popularity of American athletes.

Although Japan and the US are almost in the same position economically, the information flow between the two cultures is usually one-way, from the US to Japan. In Japan, many Hollywood pictures are available to the Japanese population. The 20 top-selling movies at the box office in 2001 in Japan included seven Japanese, and 13 Hollywood movies (Tsutaya, 2002). In 2002, the 20 movies with the greatest sales included five Japanese movies, 13 from Hollywood, and three others: one movie from Hong Kong, *Shaolin Soccer*¹⁰ (2004), one German, English and American collaboration, *Resident Evil* (2001), and one collaboration of New Zealand and American producers, *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring* (Tsutaya, 2003). In 2003, the 20 movies with the greatest sales included six Japanese movies, eleven from Hollywood, and three others: a collaboration each from China and Hong Kong, *Hero* (2002), America and New Zealand, *The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers* (2002), and France, Germany, Poland, and England, *The Pianist* (2002) (Tsutaya, 2004).

Not only Hollywood movies, but movies from other countries, such as France, Germany, Italy, Korea, Hong Kong, and China, are available in Japan. The number of theaters showing these movies, however, is limited compared to the number of theaters showing Hollywood movies. In addition, one can watch many American dramas in Japan, such as *ER*, *Ally McBeal*, *Roswell*, *Dharma & Greg*, *Charmed*, and *The Sopranos* (TV Groove, 2002). Japanese viewers can see American dramas on at least 13 television channels, including cable. If the number of channels showing American movies was included, the total availability would be much higher, because almost every channel

shows American movies occasionally. One cable broadcaster, Super Channel, only shows foreign dramas. In Japan, one is able to view a variety of American network programming as well. Talk shows, such as *Late Night with Conan O'Brien*, and *The Tonight Show* are rebroadcast, as are women's programs, such as *Martha Stewart Living*. Cartoon networks and news channels such as *CNN International*, are also aired in Japan (TV Groove, 2002).

Furthermore, Japan offers its versions of various American magazines, such as *Playboy*, *Time*, and *Cosmopolitan*. In terms of clothing and merchandise, the Japanese wear T-shirts, sneakers, and jeans, all of which are American imports. In advertisements, as mentioned previously, one sees many Caucasians and Western celebrities in Japanese television commercials. Many Japanese, particularly those of the younger generation, are aware of and familiar with Western celebrities and their lifestyles.

However, the reverse of this information and merchandizing flow does not occur. The 100 highest-selling box office movies in 2002 and 2003 in the US were all American movies (Yarusou, 2003, 2004). There are only a limited number of Japanese movies shown in American theaters. A few, such as *Brother* (2001), directed by Takeshi Kitano, have had American releases. Some animated films, such as *Princess Mononoke* (1999) and *Spirited Away* (2002), both of which were directed by Hayao Miyazaki, have played well to American audiences. Generally speaking, though, it is difficult to find Japanese movies playing in American theaters—except *Pokémon* films.

Americans prefer remakes, rather than watching original foreign movies with subtitles or dubbing. For instance, the movie, *Shall We Dance?* (2004), is a remake of the original Japanese movie, *Shall We Dansu?*¹¹ (1996), directed by Masayuki Suo. The

original movie swept the 1997 Japanese Academy Awards for all 13 categories, including best picture, directing, writing, actor and actress in a leading role, actor and actress in a supporting role, music, cinematography, art direction, sound editing, film editing, and lighting. The movie also won the award for Best Foreign Language Film in 1997 from the National Board of Review Awards in the US¹². However, even when the original movie is famous in its original form, the U.S. audience does not know about this fact, and still prefers a remake.

In the US, the 50 top-selling compact disc albums do not include any Japanese artists, and almost no Japanese television programs can be seen in the US, with the exceptions of the *Iron Chef* and various cartoons. There were no Japanese albums on the top 100 album chart (Billboard, 2002a) and no Japanese songs on the top-50 single chart on November 2, 2002 (Billboard, 2002b). Many popular singers are Americans, or at least sing in English. Celine Dion did not become popular until she sang her songs in English. There are no American versions of Japanese magazines. In addition, Americans do not wear Japanese clothing, other than *kimonos*, which are worn for sleeping rather than as outerwear. However, almost all Japanese, except some elderly, wear American clothes such as T-shirt and jeans. Furthermore, most Americans are not familiar with Japanese celebrities.

In the US, for two consecutive weekends, October 18-20 and October 25-27 in 2002, the top-grossing box office film was an American remake of the Japanese film *Ringu* (1998), titled *The Ring* (2002; Yahoo Movies, 2002). An American production company chose to create a new version of *Ringu*, instead of releasing it with English subtitles or dubbed voices. Japanese audiences, rather than taking offense with the

remaking of this movie, are excited and interested in the American version of *The Ring*.

In Japan, controversy centered on the releases of the Disney animated movies, *The Lion King* (1994) and *Atlantis: The Lost Empire* (2001). *The Lion King* was claimed to be a knockoff of the Japanese television program *Kimba the White Lion* (1965-1966), which was produced and directed by Osamu Tezuka, who passed away in 1989. He was not alive to defend his work against Disney's production, and his family chose not to sue for copyright infringement, stating that they were honored to have Tezuka's work copied (Ohara, 2002). *Atlantis: The Lost Empire* received similar criticism in Japan due to its content and characters resembling those of *Nadia: The Secret of Blue Water*, a Japanese animated series shown in 1990-1991 (Hairston, 2001; Jones, 2001). No legal action was pursued against Disney in this situation, either.

Overall, while the Japanese admiration of Westerners can be seen in this survey, Westerners may not have a complex regarding Japanese. Instead, Westerners only admire a part of Japanese culture, such as the artistic aspects of Japanese culture. They admire Japanese products, especially electronics and animation-related productions. Nevertheless, aside from cartoons, the US sometimes rejects Japanese products of pop culture. For example, the singing duo known as Pink Lady were very popular at the beginning of the 1970s in Japan. They came to the US and started in the TV show, *Pink Lady and Jeff*, which was cancelled after only a six-week run (Ingram, 2003). This is one example of Japanese pop culture that tried to find a way into the States, but did not succeed.

Despite the similar economic conditions between the United States and Japan, the information flow in advertising is almost entirely one-way, with Japan on the receiving

end. These differences may reflect the admiration the Japanese have for American culture; ultimately, however, such differences indicate America's power. The United States dominates not only Japanese media, but media worldwide. Schiller (1993) observes that "people everywhere are consumers of (mostly) American images, sounds, ideas, products and services" (p.115). Furthermore, Averill (1996) also described the unequal cultural flow between America and the rest of the world, as "American popular culture, I maintain, retains a somewhat privileged position in the not-so-free flow of images and signifiers. Despite a relative decline in America's preeminence, the United States is still a senior partner in the bloc of capitalist countries promoting transnational capitalism" (p. 207). Cheng (1998) examined a World Trade Organization Conference held in Singapore in 1996. This analyses show that Western developed countries were likely to be treated as news more than other developing countries.

It seems that America tends to pay less attention to foreign countries than vice versa. Bagdikian (2004) claimed that this leads to Americans having a disadvantage when it comes to understanding foreign policy. One reason may be because the US has fewer foreign correspondents than Japan and major Western nations such as Britain, Germany, and France. Overall, the United States is a rather closed country in terms of media, however, it is an open country in terms of interpersonal acceptance, which opens the door to many internationals. On the other hand, Japan is a more open country compared to the US in terms of media, though Japan is a rather closed country in terms of interpersonal acceptance.

Limitations of the Study

Difficulty making a general statement. Though I attempted to obtain a general

statement about the meaning of Western celebrities in Japanese commercials, some interviewees asserted it was difficult to make an overarching statement about using Western celebrities. They declared they could talk about what each commercial intended to express, but it was difficult to generalize the meaning of Western celebrities as a whole. The decision of whom to hire in each commercial depends on the product, and on who is hired in a similar product's commercial. Agent T mentioned, "For example, the car, Legacy, competes with Borbo. Borbo is a family car, and its commercial always uses foreigners. So, the commercial for Legacy may have someone who is not family-oriented but who looks like a cool type of person." Likewise, if one commercial has a Japanese celebrity, a creator for another commercial of a similar product may use a Western celebrity to make a distinction. Thus, it is difficult to identify a broad cultural significance to Japanese society of using Western celebrities in Japanese commercials. It is, therefore, important to compare the commercials of similar products that utilize different celebrities, and examine how each commercial sends a distinct message.

Vagueness of the interview question/category. The second survey question, "What is the appeal of Western celebrities that helps sell products in Japanese TV commercials?," apparently was confusing, because some agents asserted that the purpose of commercials was not solely to sell products. It appeared as if the assumption was that selling products was the sole purpose for judging a successful commercial.

In addition to the questionable validity of the interview question, there is an ambiguity in the categorization of the background in a commercial. The background is simply divided into either rural or urban. Wild nature, some natural types of scenery (e.g., a flower shop), and traditional Japanese houses, are all categorized as having the "rural"

background. Such scenes, though meant to convey a sense of warmth, may not give the same warm impression to the audience. Furthermore, all urban backgrounds, including offices, buildings in a Western style, and computer graphics, were categorized as urban background. Again, the impressions an audience gains from a Western type of house and from computer graphics, may not belong to the same category. For example, a commercial showing a Western-style house instead of a traditional Japanese house may try to convey a warm atmosphere for the house, and the audience's impression of the commercial may be closer to the impression formed by a commercial that shows a flower shop with a rural background. Thus, categorization of the background may need to include the sense that each commercial attempts to create: warmness or coolness.

Furthermore, this study categorized all Asians, including those who wear traditional Chinese clothes, into Japanese when characters do not speak in a commercial, because it is often difficult to distinguish Japanese from non-Japanese unless the characters speak out-loud. However, I should have categorized non-Japanese Asians as Chinese when characters wear traditional Chinese clothes, because I found a much higher number of commercials with Asians than before, perhaps because of the extended green tea market.

In addition, as mentioned previously, Agent O commented, "Asians will be popular from now on, but the appeal is still weak." He was right about Asian stars' increasing recognition. One Korean drama, *Fuyu-no Sonata* (Sonata in Winter), became very popular in Japan in 2002 to 2003, and overall sales including CDs and DVDs were 50 million yen (approximately 416 thousand dollars, calculated as 120 yen to the dollar) in early 2004 (*JoongAng Ilbo* [Central Daily], 2004). Furthermore, Nihon TV bought the

rights in 2004 to show a Korean drama, *Pari-no Koibito* (Sweetheart in Paris), for 70 million yen (approximately 583 thousand dollars, calculated as 120 yen to the dollar), which was the highest price ever for the copyright of a Korean drama (*Nikkan Sports*, 2004). When NHK obtained the right to show *Fuyu-no Sonata* (Sonata in Winter) a year prior in 2003, they were estimated to pay 20 million yen (approximately 166 thousand dollars, calculated as 120 yen to the dollar). In a year, the price for a copyright rose more than three times. This shows the increasing popularity of Korean dramas in Japan. Therefore, it is possible that Japanese TV commercials in the future will have an increased number of Asian stars.

Future Research

There are several suggestions for future research. First, as mentioned in the *Limitation of the Study* section, there are some weaknesses in the validity of questions. One problem is the difficulty in generalizing the tendency of commercials with all Western celebrities. In future research, alternative methods, such as asking about each specific commercial, should be taken.

Second, though this survey focuses on the appeal of celebrities, there are additional elements that affect the appeal, such as the frequency with which a commercial is shown. If one commercial is shown repeatedly, the audience may remember the commercial even if it does not have a celebrity in it. Not only the appeal, but also the frequency with which a commercial appears on TV, affects the impression commercials have on the audience. Agent G answered my question of what makes consumers choose a product by saying “One thing is how often and what time the commercial can be seen when the target audience is watching TV, and thinks, ‘Oh, Kimura (the Japanese

celebrity) was using this product.’ That can be a clue for the final decision.” Thus, the frequency of showing each commercial and its appeal may be significantly correlated. This element should be examined in the future.

Third, it is important to examine how Japanese TV commercials portray ordinary Asians and Asian stars, the differences between Asians portrayed, and also the frequency of Asian elements in Japanese commercials, in future research, as Japanese TV commercials may have more Asians in the future.

Fourth, the tapes were recorded from 1999 to 2001, which was a period that included two globally important athletic events. The Sydney Olympics were held in 2000, and the soccer World Cup was held in Japan and Korea in 2002. It is possible, due to the importance of athletic celebrities in Japan, that having these events during the study period affected the number and kind of celebrities found in this survey. If the same type of survey were to be conducted a few years later, it might provide a different result. The fact that the soccer World Cup was held in Japan and Korea might explain the sudden curiosity of Japanese people about Korea, and this might explain the recent rise in popularity of Korean dramas in Japan. Number of Japanese traveled to Korea to see World Cup matches there and many Koreans come to Japan for the same reason.

Fifth, this research is concentrated on the messages of commercials, rather than on the audience’s reaction to commercials. In the future, attention needs to be paid to the audience’s response to commercials. Some agents asserted that younger Japanese people no longer have an inferiority complex regarding Caucasians. Thus, there may be a generation gap in terms of people’s views toward Westerners. Researcher A declared, “The result [of our survey] may be different if one sees the result depending on the age

group. But when commercials want to have a wide range of targets, or the target is the older generation, commercials work better when they have famous Japanese celebrities.” Thus, there may be generational differences in terms of audience members’ views toward commercials.

One indication of generational differences can be seen in greater acceptance of dyeing hair among the younger generation. Dyeing one’s hair blonde was once a sign of being a young ruffian, or delinquent; this may be because “whores dyed their hair during WWII. People looked down on them because they sold their souls [to the enemy]” (Agent B). Hence, in the past, blonde hair symbolized resistance to authority for many youth. Yet, in the middle of the 1990s, Japan’s most popular female singer, Namie Amuro, started dyeing her hair blonde and brown. Mr. Eiji Nagaya, the director of the Japanese hair dyeing association, mentioned that Amuro led the trend of dyeing hair in Japan (*The Nishinippon* [West side of Japan] web, 2001).

Currently, young Japanese do not think dyeing their hair is imitating Caucasians. Agent H asserted, “[They] dye their hair blonde, and the old people think they are imitating Whites. But youth don’t think like that. It is simply because it gets more attention or looks cooler.” Thus, dyeing hair may not be proof of admiration of Caucasians. Some Caucasians want to have straight or black hair like Asians have; this is not because they want to be Asians but because like the look of straight hair. It appears to be similar for Japanese: young people simply want to try different colors of hair as a fashion.

In addition, though women want to add volume to their hair in the US, this is not popular in Japan; instead, Japanese women want to have hair with less volume. They

believe black hair looks “heavy.” Having hair with a non-black color, such as brown, is thought to make people’s hair look “lighter” (i.e., less heavy); this is one of the main reasons many young people dye their hair. Articles in Japanese fashion magazines often talk about how to make one’s hair look less heavy. Hence, dyeing hair does not necessarily mean that the Japanese want to look like Caucasians. Agent N mentioned that young people do not have an inferiority complex regarding Caucasians anymore, and foreigners “are cool. That’s all. They don’t have a complex or admiration [of Whites and/or the West] so much.” Thus, in the future, it may be important to take into consideration the influence of generational differences on views of Caucasians or foreigners.

For examining generational differences, there are differences not only between young and older generations. Rather, it seems there are three generational groups of target audiences: young people who do not have an inferiority complex regarding Westerners, adults who may have an inferiority complex, and the older generation, who are not familiar with many Western celebrities. The older generation may not know of many Western celebrities, and therefore, as Agent M asserted, “When we use foreign celebrities, usually the target is limited to adults, for example, commercials of cars or a can of coffee.” Thus, it is important for future research to examine generational differences.

Sixth, there may be regional differences in commercials between cities located in the East and the West side of Japan, Tokyo and Osaka. I received an impression that Osaka has many funny commercials, while commercials from Tokyo have many cool, even cold, types of commercials. The differences of content and image in both areas can

be examined in the future.

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Footnotes

¹ The words “foreign celebrities” and “Western celebrities” are used interchangeably in this dissertation because both foreign and Western celebrities usually refer to the same people in Japanese. The usage of these two words follows the example set by the author of the original article. When I reference these, I consistently refer to them as “Western celebrities.”

² I believe that admiration for people with talent is not found only in Confucianism but also in other religions.

³ The calculation is based on which month each resident recorded commercials. For example, a Tokyo resident recorded some days in March and an Osaka resident recorded some days in March and April, the possible days are 30 for Tokyo and 61 for Osaka.

⁴ An instrument made with clay or ceramic, which is played by blowing through one end.

⁵ This number includes green tea, other Chinese teas, and 26 varieties of British tea.

⁶ Toyo sash changed its company name to TOSTEM, which is a fake abbreviation of “Total system,” in 1992. This may be the result of its desire not to be limited to the production of window sashes in consumers’ minds.

⁷ Agent P is in his early 30s, and therefore was born in the late 1960s to early 1970s. Therefore, I believe he may never have seen GIs with his own eyes.

⁸ This is a Japanese word meaning horseradish

⁹ Pachinko is a type of game machine played by adults for gambling purposes.

¹⁰ Though this movie was released in the US in 2004, it was shown in Japan in 2002.

¹¹ The title was written as “*Shall We* ?” in which “*Shall We*” was written in English, and “*Dansu*” was written in Japanese (pronounced as “dance”).

¹² The movie was disqualified from the Oscar award nominations for 1997, because it had been shown on TV in Japan prior to its American theater release.

Table 1

Recorded number of days in Tokyo and Osaka

	Tokyo	Osaka
1999		
August		2
September		2
October	2	2
November	4	2
December	4	2
2000		
January	4	2
February	2	2
March	2	2
April		1
June		1
July		3
August		2
September		
October		2
November		1
December		3
2001		
February	2	2
March		2
April	1	2
May	3	
Total	24days (72 hours)	37 days (111 hours)

Table 2

Recorded days for Tokyo and Osaka

	Tokyo			Total		Osaka			Total
	1999	2000	2001			1999	2000	2001	
Monday	1	2	3	5		1	4	1	6
Tuesdays	1	1		2		1	4		5
Wednesdays	3	1		4		2	1	3	6
Thursdays	2	1		3		2	3	1	6
Fridays	1	1	1	3		2	1		3
Saturdays		2	1	3		2	5	1	8
Sundays	2		1	3			3		3
Total				24					37

Table 3

Categories

1. Date
2. Usage of European languages (English, French, German, and Italian) in the commercials
 - a. Written words
 - b. Spoken words
 - c. Both written and spoken language
 - d. No European languages involved
3. Characters
 - a. No people
 - b. Things like robots or vegetables
 - c. Well known cartoon characters
 - d. Unknown animation characters
 - e. Japanese non-celebrity people
 - f. Japanese sports celebrities
 - g. Other Japanese celebrities
 - h. Black non-celebrity foreigners
 - i. White non-celebrity foreigners
 - j. Black and White non-celebrity foreigners
 - k. Other non-celebrity foreigners
 - l. Western sports celebrities
 - m. Other Western celebrities
 - n. Non-celebrity people (Both Japanese and foreigners)
 - o. Japanese celebrities and foreign non-celebrity people
 - p. Western celebrities and Japanese non-celebrity people
 - q. Indeterminate
4. Background
 - a. Japan
 - b. Foreign countries
 - c. Animation
 - d. Indeterminate
 - e. Both
 - f. Others
5. Background
 - a. Rural
 - b. Urban
 - c. Indeterminate
 - d. Both
 - e. Unknown
6. Gender for foreigners
 - a. Male
 - b. Female
 - c. Include both

7. Age for foreigners
 - a. Young
 - b. Middle-aged
 - c. Old
 - d. Mix (e.g., young and middle-aged persons)

Table 4

Appeals in the commercial with Catharine Zeta-Jones

Logos	Ethos	Pathos
	Beauty	Beauty
	Elegance	Purity
	High quality	Virginity

Table 5

Appeals in the commercial with Anthony Hopkins

Logos	Ethos	Pathos
	Sophistication	
	Luxury	
	Wildness	Wildness
	Thrilling time	Thrilling time
	Being with beautiful women	Being with beautiful women

Table 6

Appeals in the commercial with Meg Ryan

Logos	Ethos	Pathos
	Friendliness	Youth
	High quality	Modernity
		West

Table 7

Appeals in the commercial with Jennifer Lopez

Logos	Ethos	Pathos
	Elegance	Possession of a beautiful woman
	Strength	Success in business
		Urban-ness
		New-ness

Table 8

Appeals in the commercial with Madonna

Logos	Ethos	Pathos
	Gold (well-known singer)	Gold (high quality)
	Reinvention	
	Beauty	
	Strength	

Table 9

Appeals in the commercial with Tiger Woods

Logos	Ethos	Pathos
	Excellence	Wonderfulness
	Sophistication	

Table 10

Appeals in the commercial with Ewan McGregor

Logos	Ethos	Pathos
	Nobleness	Love
	Sincerity	Passion

Table 11

Appeals in the commercial with Leonardo DiCaprio

Logos	Ethos	Pathos
	Best quality	Best quality
	Popularity	Popularity
		Casualness

Table 12

Appeals in the commercial with Kevin Costner

Logos	Ethos	Pathos
	Honesty	Sophistication
	Sincerity	Natural
	Humility	Warm

Table 13

Appeals in the commercial with Brad Pitt

Logos	Ethos	Pathos
	Authenticity	Simple life
	Coolness	Casualness
		Coolness

Table 14

Appeals in the commercial with Takuya Kimura

Logos	Ethos	Pathos
	Coolness	Coolness
	Sexiness	Urban-ness

Table 15

Usage of European languages

	<i>n (%)</i>
Written words	671 (41.8 %)
Spoken words	95 (5.9 %)
Both written and spoken words	604 (37.6 %)
None	236 (14.7 %)

Table 16

Characters in Commercials

	<i>n</i> (%)
Japanese celebrities	753 (46.8 %)
Non-Japanese stars who were popular only in Japan	12 (0.7 %)
Western celebrities	48 (3.0 %)
Both Japanese and Western celebrities	5 (0.3 %)

Table 17

Race or nationalities of a character in Japanese commercials with foreigners

Race or nationalities	<i>n</i> (%)
Whites	109 (38.3 %)
Blacks	0
Whites and Blacks	6 (2.1 %)
Japanese celebrities and foreigners	44 (15.5 %)
Japanese and foreign non-celebrity people	48 (16.9 %)
Races or nationalities other than Whites, Blacks, or Japanese	18 (7.0 %)
Total	284

Table 18

Background

	<i>n</i> (%)
Japan	846 (52.6 %)
Foreign countries	252 (15.7 %)
Both Japan and foreign countries	14 (0.9 %)
Animation	45 (2.8 %)
Others	449 (28.0 %)

Table 19

Background (Urban or rural)

	<i>n (%)</i>
Rural	453 (28.2 %)
Urban	1,061 (66.1 %)
Both rural and urban	92 (5.7 %)

Table 20

Sex for commercials with foreigners

	<i>n</i> (%)
Male	66 (23.2 %)
Female	59 (20.8 %)
Both males and females	99 (34.9 %)

Table 21

Age for commercials with foreigners

	<i>n (%)</i>
Young	139 (48.9 %)
Middle-aged	20 (7.1 %)
Elderly	3 (1.1%)
Mixed generation group	65 (22.9 %)

Table 22

Product being endorsed for commercials with foreigners

Category	<i>n</i> (%)
Automobile	67 (23.6 %)
Foods	28 (9.9 %)
Shampoo	28 (9.9 %)
Drink (exclude coffee and alcohol)	27 (9.5 %)
Coffee	20 (7.0 %)
Company ads	16 (5.6 %)
Electronics	11 (3.9 %)
Others	87 (30. 6 %)

Table 23

Product being endorsed for commercials with Western celebrities

Category	<i>n</i> (%)
Shampoo	12 (25.0 %)
Car	7 (14.6 %)
Coffee	6 (12.5 %)
Others	23 (47.9 %)

Table 24

Background for commercials with foreigners or Japanese

Characters Background	Japanese	Foreigners	Western celebrities
Japan	475 (34.4 %)	17 (6.0 %)	
Foreign countries	70 (5.1 %)	112 (39.4 %)	29 (60. 4 %)

Table 25

Background (rural or urban) for commercials with foreigners or Japanese

	Japanese	Foreigners	Western celebrities
Rural	141 (18.7 %)	30 (13.4 %)	
Urban	398 (28.8 %)	100 (35.2 %)	28 (58.3 %)