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REPRESENTATION AND IDEOLOGY

Reading advertisements, with special  
reference to selected British magazine  
advertisements, 1956-1964

Allan J. Parsons

Submitted to the Council for National Academic Awards in  
fulfillment for the degree of Master of Philosophy

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## Representation and Ideology

Allan J. Parsons

### Abstract

It is argued that advertisements constitute a semiotic social resource. A communicative practice is realised using this resource which is part of the commercial function of advertising. However, this communicative practice is shown to be a limited meaning production.

Advertising is theorised as a discursive social practice in which a communicative practice has become dominant. The discursive practice works ideologically, not simply communicatively or commercially.

The ideological operation is understood as the address of social subjects in local historical situations. Advertisements present a unified position from which the text can be understood as communicative. That position is imbricated with representations constituted by the text, as the other of the ego

The ego is imbricated with an order of discourse, which is a field of unevenly developed discursive practices. Through the overdetermination of the text in discursive social practice, the imbrications are hierarchised to construct representations of the 'real'. The 'real' is socially constituted. It is not a simple ontological priority.

The institutional intentionality of marketing practice authorises the communicative practice. Thus, the authorised practice is enacted and resisted, or deconstructed, through a series of readings of advertisements from British magazines between 1956 and 1964. That period is considered to be one in which advertising was consolidated, both in corporate strategies and technologically in the public media. The deconstructive reading reinstates the discursive productions marginalised by the communicative practice.

Advertisements are not simply reciprocal conversations freely developed between ego and other. Advertising as discourse is developed in the context of economic corporations' strategies.

Advertisements encode, reiterate and constitute social subjects, through overdetermination, in relations of power. Ideologically, when formed as a communicative practice, advertisements join social subjects with an hegemonised order of power relations, which are realised in an extended social order in whose 'real' economic institutions are dominant.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

This Introduction is taken up by, first, an outline of the object of study and the overall aim of the thesis, second, a summary account of the conditions of existence of that object of study and the material forms in which it is realised and, third, an outline of the structure and contents of chapters 2, 3 and 4.

The term advertising may be recognised to have a composite character. In one sense, it may be taken to refer to the entire institutional site wherein specific textual constructions, advertisements, are produced as part of overall, planned marketing strategies. Those strategies aim to distribute and to sell commodities in the form of goods and services, while researching how those commodities may be shaped into phenomena that might be desired. In a second sense, advertising may be taken to refer to the way certain texts are conventionally recognised. They are recognised to operate as advertising certain products, by way of commanding the inscribed addressees both to look at and to buy the represented commodities. Alternatively, advertising may be taken to refer to the set of textual constructs themselves, as if they constituted a formal unity, as a genre in the media of mass communication for example. Finally, advertising may be taken to refer to an underlying system of values and ideas, a cultural system or a meaning system, which can be deciphered from the set of textual constructs.

The object of study is the advertisement as an institutional resource and advertisements as the material

means of realisation of that institution. The advertisement is not theorised as a primarily formal unity. The term advertisement is to be recognised in this thesis as referring both to a conventionally recognised form and to a theoretically reconstructed object of study, a social and institutional resource.

It is argued that if advertisements are that which, when presented to a reader, only point to a product persuasively, and thereby recommend purchase, then what are called commonly advertisements are more properly texts of a greater complexity. As complex texts they contain, nevertheless, the possibility of being construed as advertisements in that strict sense of being persuasive indicators, given the so-called targetted reader constructed by marketing practices.

It is the aim of marketing and advertising practitioners to construct presentations which can be read as advertisements in the narrow sense. Such an intention is realised if the reader construes textual presentations from the position of the consumer. The consumer becomes the inscribed reader position which secures the realisation of that marketing intention.

What are discussed in this thesis, then, are the relationships between the narrowly conceived advertisement and the wider field of textuality upon which such texts draw. Furthermore, there is an explicit refusal to realise simply the intention encoded in marketing practitioners' practice. Reading as a consumer is constructed as a possibility while that possibility is resisted actively. The 'meaning' of advertisements, previously understood largely



in terms of the realisation of marketing aims, becomes opened to other possible principles of production.

If the object of study is defined as advertisements, then advertisements are to be understood as both the dominant text and the field of textuality in which those texts are inscribed and through which they are realised. As a field of textuality, advertisements constitute an institutional, social resource. Such a resource is overdetermined (I) in relation to the extended institutional order in which it, in turn, is inscribed. The contextualising institutional order to which advertisements belong is to be understood, first, in terms of the dominance of advertising and marketing over their product and, second, in terms of the more complex order of the social totality in which advertising and marketing are inscribed as forms of economic practice.

It is the institutional, social resource constituted by advertisements that is focused. Advertisements are deemed to have a relative independence, in terms of their institutional operation, from the contexts in which they are overdetermined. Yet those contexts are inscribed in the mode of operation of advertisements, as part of that to which the institutional operation may make reference, may take for granted and may rework. Advertisements are theorised as one constitutive social institution within an extended institutional order. Thus, while the mode of operation of advertisements cannot be explained wholly by reducing them to their contextual determinants, neither can they be considered to be fully autonomous domain. Reading advertisements comes to be understood as a relatively autonomous, but

overdetermined, practice which exploits and utilises the textual resource which advertisements constitute.

Advertisements become the dominant texts in a field of textuality. They do so through the enactment of a given practice of reading which encodes the aim of realising a mode of intentionality constructed in marketing practice. It is argued that reading advertisements as a consumer constitutes a communicative practice. It is argued further that if the form of that practice is not resisted it will tend to operate as a means of securing the hegemonised (2) institutional order of the social totality by which it is contextualised. It will tend to do so, first, in realising the more immediate ends of marketing practitioners, through instituting a given communicative practice in which commercial processes and commercial relationships are registered and foregrounded. Commercialised social relations become discursively legitimated. Second, less immediately but no less importantly, a contribution is made to securing the dominance of economic institutions in the extended order of the social totality. This is achieved by strengthening, reworking and extending the discursive institutions through which commercial relationships may be understood to pervade the entirety of the social.

Advertisements as conceived here relate the more concrete phenomena of daily reiterated social practices to the more abstract but no less symbolically and materially instituted phenomena by means of which extended social order is maintained and secured. Reading advertisements as a consumer is one small part of a much more complex network of

of institutional practices which secure an hegemonised order. Reading advertisements deconstructively (3), the aim of this thesis, operates as a means of resisting that tendential drift toward legitimising, or giving consent, to an hegemonised order.

Reading advertisements deconstructively is a strategy of resistance, but it is a very limited strategy. It is not designed to achieve the overturning of the entire extended institutional order of a social totality at one stroke. Total social revolution is deferred in favour of a tactic of resisting hegemonisation by enacting deconstructions, in place, of the constituent institutional practices by means of which hegemonic order is realised. In terms of advertisements, this resistance may be understood as a reworking of a field of textuality by another discursive practice in which is enacted a deconstructive reading of the social institution constituted by advertisements.

In that reworking the communicative practice which is authorised by marketing practitioners, and the representational structures it permits, is shown to be a limited and interested use of social resources. Such a communicative practice allows a certain punctuation and closure of discourse. Deconstruction reopens communicative practice to discursive practice, and questions the authority of marketing to impose limitations upon discourse.

A complex theorisation of advertisements is constructed. The theorisation is complex in order, first, to take account of marketing and advertising practitioners' problematics and the inscriptions they mark out in the field of textuality which advertisements constitute. Second,

the theorisation is designed to take account of the issues raised and the frameworks introduced and developed by the critics of advertising, both as an institutionalised practice and as a discursive practice in which a communicative practice is inscribed. Third, the theorisation is constructed so as to remain consistent to the concept of meaning as production. Adhering to the principle that meaning is a discursive social product makes necessary the concept of deconstruction, both in its more negative sense of resistance to dominant meanings and its more positive sense of inaugurating novel meaning productions from existing structures.

The complexity is necessary in order to attend to these issues which relate to the more obvious functions and the less obvious operations which advertisements can perform. The deconstructive reading practice aims to show the discursive articulation of a communicative practice, which is part of a pragmatic function, and its overdetermined ideological operation.

The preceding discussion concerns the general, theoretical conception of the object of study and the overall aims of the thesis. A less abstract characterisation of advertisements is possible, given that the institutional resource which is the theoretical object of study is realised in material forms that are recognisable in the phenomenal worlds of daily reiterated social practice. Are not advertisements, as the dominant texts in a field of textuality, distributed in a certain place? Are they not produced for given audiences who consider them relevant during a specific time

of reading in a given historical period? Are they not produced in definite material media forms?

The advertisements selected for study in this thesis are taken from magazines printed in Britain between the years of 1956 and 1964. The place, the medium and the period are understood as contextualising factors and as conditions of existence for the communicative practice of advertising and the discursive domain in which it is inscribed. A brief sketch of these factors and conditions is therefore set out in this introduction.

The industrial conditions for modern advertising emerged in the 1920's, in the United States in the first instance (4). In the United Kingdom, as indeed in the United States itself, the dramatic expansion of advertising did not begin until the early 1950's (5). By that time in the United Kingdom, the Conservative Party had gained a majority in Parliament, a majority which they increased in 1955 (6). The post-war dominance of socialist policies was being revised. Socialist government was deemed to produce 'austerity', while Conservative government led to 'affluence'. Many signs were adduced as confirmation of this political wisdom, for example, the end of rationing restrictions and those on hire purchase, the lifting of import restrictions, the boom in house building, and the greater availability of consumer artefacts (7).

All of these improvements were deemed to be taking place in the context of a 'managerial revolution' in which the very structures of industrial organisation were being

reformed (8). The repercussions of this industrial reorganisation were, in turn, held to have significance in terms of the social structure more generally. Older class-based antagonisms were assumed to be out-dated. They were being replaced by other kinds of social distinctions. The connection between ownership and control of industrial organisations was deemed to be severed (9). The new corporations signalled the introduction of a more egalitarian distribution of wealth, income, decision-making, and life-chances.

In 1956 the Suez crisis shook the confidence of Conservative politicians, as indeed it did that of the British public (10). Suez came to symbolise that Britain would no longer find it easy to realise her political will in the recently reformed political-economic world order. The signs taken to signify social amelioration hence-forth had to be considered against the counterweight of arguments which sought to show that Britain was in the process of a prolonged decline (11), relative to other industrialised nations. Britain, having lost an Empire, was now recognised to be firmly under the dominance politically, economically and militarily of the United States.

The political desire of the United States to construct a world economic order over which it might preside (12), began to make itself visible inside the European nations, and especially Britain. Advertising and the emergence of a newly articulated system of media of mass communication are but two elements of the capitalist system which emerged in the post-1945 period (13). This system was dominated by the corporate organisations of the United States (14).

The tendency for corporate enterprises, in the post-1945 period, has been to move towards becoming conglomerates, on the one hand, and to move towards becoming multinational, on the other hand. Both strategies serve to stabilize the fortunes of large scale industrial enterprises. The former makes the corporate body less vulnerable to fluctuations in single markets by spreading interest among diverse and unrelated fields of production. The latter allows corporate bodies to be freed relatively from national government constraints. This allows them to pursue more wholeheartedly corporate interests, to the detriment of the national interest which otherwise they might have served in addition. The latter strategy is a significant factor in the constitution of a world market.

Corporate industrial organisations, then, assumed a greater stability than had been possible for those small firms whose competition had previously been the norm (15). That greater stability is also encoded in the higher level of manufacturing potential which larger industrial units permitted. To a large extent, the technological problems of production had been solved satisfactorily.

Given the greater degree of corporate stability and the higher levels of production which were possible, corporate strategists' major problem became that of constructing and maximising markets for their products (16). Corporations began to develop marketing strategies which involved the use of advertising campaigns. Marketing and advertising organisations began to assume a certain institutional autonomy from the corporations they served,

while remaining very dependent upon those very corporations (17).

The emergence of marketing as a business practice led to the construction of the figure of the consumer. S/he was constituted as a complex social phenomenon (18). S/he is, at once, the object of research for marketing, the posited site of desires. S/he is one of the criteria which determine the design of manufactured goods. S/he is the inscribed addressee of advertisements. S/he becomes the customer who buys the designed, manufactured and advertised products. S/he becomes the person who enjoys or uses the product and establishes particular patterns of consumption behaviour to renew or to replace those pleasures and utilities.

Depending upon whether it is a practitioner or a critic of advertising who defines its role, advertising may either be understood as a functional element in an on-going economic system or an element of an ideology of consumption. In the former perspective, consumption is a more or less natural expression of human need, desire and aspiration. In the latter perspective, given that there is no fixed nature which may be adduced to support a naturalist view of consumption, both desires and consumption patterns are socially constructed.

The ideological character of advertising consists in its intervention into the social construction of desire and forms of behaviour. Its characteristic limitation is that it encodes a set of market-based expectations. As such, it would tend to act in the interests of those social forces and groups who benefit most from the workings of the market.



The ideology of consumption to which advertising is bound, presupposes that distribution through the market, if not equitable, should nevertheless be accepted as encoding a certain natural justice and inevitability. This belief in the function of the market operates alongside the recognition that corporate organisations can instill an order into the market which serves as its environment and that advertising can be used to stimulate and construct markets. While this is a long way short of a total control, corporate organisations nevertheless order markets to a significant degree.

It is in the context of operating strategically in determinate market-places that advertising began to take up a more coherent role in the 1950's in Western societies. Improved techniques in both qualitative and quantitative research were complemented by the emergence of a new articulation of the media of mass communication.

Advertising had been an important factor in the economy of newspaper and magazine production since the 19th century (19). It has taken on a much increased significance for all media forms, however, since 1945. Since the mid-1950's, with the introduction of commercial television, the media of mass communication have become an increasingly interrelated and self-referential system. That system has centred effectively upon television as the dominant form (20). The printed media, during the period in which television achieved dominance were forced to undergo structural changes, both in terms of institutional ownership and control and in terms of subject-matter and contents (21).

Television tended to compete most aggressively with those newspapers and magazines which addressed a large, relatively undifferentiated, 'popular' audience (22). In doing so, television did not affect significantly the readership of the so-called quality newspapers, ie. the Observer, Sunday Times, Daily Telegraph, Times, etc...

In the series of changes by means of which the printed media were transformed from the mid-1950's onwards, advertising had a significant part to play. It became a system of subsidy for printed media and became one major criterion in deciding which printed products were commercially viable (23). This effectivity of advertising was indirect but tended to act in a relatively systematic way. It works in the context of a television-centred media system in which commercial channels play an important role. Advertising serves as a system of finance for half of what is broadcast on television (24). In conditions of competition between licence-financed and advertising-financed television networks, a stress upon audience size as one criterion for successful programming has developed. The programme formulae developed on commercial television were perceived to guarantee the regular delivery of large audiences for advertisers on the commercial channel. Printed media began either to refer to these programmes or to adopt and adapt their strategies of presentation (25).

Television standards and criteria came to operate as determinants on other media, notably print. Advertisers continued to refine their interest in audience size and audience constitution. Magazines, as part of a system of

media products, were designed in accord with marketing categories, criteria and goals. This begins to exert an influence on the forms of presentation used. The 'visual', as a complex configuration in print of the photographic, the graphic, design, colour and layout begins to be the dominant articulation. This configuration displaces the previously dominant mode, of the typographic overcoded by the literary.

The women's magazine market was not so immediately affected by television competition, paradoxically because women, although constituting a large 'mass' market, were considered to constitute a specialised audience. In the long term, however, even women's magazines have declined as a result of television competition.

In the short term, one of the changes occurring to the women's magazine market was that it was becoming more diversified. Younger women were being addressed in new terms. Advertisers were interested in drawing out the resources of a newly formed youth market, whose cash budget was largely uncommitted to the household, for example (26).

In general, the structure of the magazine market shifted in the direction of fragmentation. The degree of audience specification which magazines could achieve was far greater than that which was possible for television (27).

The advertisements analysed in chapter 4 are all taken from magazines during that period when commercial television began to be broadcast and during which a television-centred system of media was being established. The years covered are those in which Britain seemed to be enjoy-

ing prosperity, and in which marketing and advertising began to play a coherent role in industrial production. 1964 is taken to symbolise an ending to a particular, if short-lived, period in Britain's history.

"... the period 1962-64 seems to us to mark a watershed in British history. Up until then Britain could regard herself as a prosperous world power which could afford to take things easy after the hardships of war and its aftermath. She had a stable two-party system a stable social system and political institutions and even the transformation of her Empire into Commonwealth had been achieved with commendable continuity. But after 1964 things were never quite the same again. Her economic stability began to disappear as economic crisis followed economic crisis and budget followed budget; her two-party political system came under ever-increasing attack, and since then faith in nearly all her institutions ... has been steadily undermined ... In fact since 1964 political life in Britain has become almost, it seems, disoriented." (28)

The magazines from which advertisements have been taken are Advertiser's Weekly, Encounter, Honey, Man About Town, Sunday Times Colour Magazine, Town and Woman. Advertiser's Weekly was the major journal read by advertising practitioners in the 1950's and early 1960's, along with World's Press News. It addressed a predominantly masculine audience of senior advertising executives (29). Encounter, was, and continues to be on a small scale, a review periodical addressing a mixture of literary and political themes. Although not an academic journal, it treated, in the early 1960's, cultural issues seriously from a marginally left-of-centre position (30). Honey was one of the more successful women's journals which addressed the emergent youth market (31). Through its pages

a certain independence was proposed for young women in contrast to the images of wife and mother dominant in *Woman*, for example. *Woman* and *Woman's Own* were the largest selling magazines in the women's weekly market during the 1950's and early 1960's (32). *Man About Town* was a trade journal aimed at the tailoring trade. It was this magazine that Clive Labovitch and Michael Heseltine revamped to form *Town* (33). The transformation of *Man About Town* to *Town* is indicative of the shift taking place in magazine publishing. This is constituted as a shift away from the typographical and the literary to the graphic and the photographic. The *Sunday Times Colour Magazine* similarly exhibits this tendency. In it, however, advertising holds prominent position, on a par with editorial content and eventually overtaking the editorial (34).

Advertisements taken from these above-named magazines are read, in Chapter 4, in terms of their constituting a discursive practice in which a communicative practice, authorised by marketing practitioners, is dominant.

The path towards these analytical readings begins in Chapter 2 with a consideration, in section 2.1, of the way in which advertising is thought of by practitioners of marketing and advertising. In the 1950's in Britain the emerging institutional dominance of marketing over advertising is registered in the professionals' discourse. This is followed, in section 2.2, by a consideration of the critical viewpoints upon advertising. Those critics who deal with advertising as a whole are distinguished from those who concentrate upon the advertisements as textual constructs.

Emphasis is laid upon those who read advertisements. Varieties of reading are distinguished from one another, i.e. the taxonomic or classificatory, the interpretative and deconstructive.

In sections 2.21 and 2.22, two critical reading positions are focused, that of Judith Williamson and that of Trevor Pateman. The placing of these two very different positions on reading advertisements side by side is used as a contrastive device which brings out those features that an analytical study of advertisements needs to concern itself. These features can be named the problem of reading as meaning production, the (re-)constitution of the subject through reading, the contextual determination of reading, the problem of the (structural) unconscious and the problem of ideology. In Chapter 3, then, these issues are situated in the context of a theoretical apparatus.

The theoretical chapter is in three parts. It moves from a consideration of the general concept of social practice and production in section 3.1 through a discussion of the concepts of ideology and hegemony in 3.2 towards its destination in a discussion of the concepts of textuality, discursive social practice and the strategy of deconstruction in 3.3.

In Chapter 4, the dominant communicative practice which advertising is recognised to constitute is enacted. This is achieved in three analytically distinct aspects. In 4.1, suture is shown to concern the positioning of a place of unification and coherence for the reception of a text. In 4.2 are set out the series of representational imbrications by means of which a communication is realised

between the posited ego of suture and the other of the text. In 4.3, overdetermination is shown to concern the constitution of a 'real' order of things through the sequencing and patterning of representational imbrications. Finally, in 4.4, a deconstructive reading is pursued which unpicks the discursive closures of the dominant communicative practice, restoring discursive productivity marginalised by that domination.

NOTES TO 1

1. Overdetermined; This is, initially, a Freudian term which was reworked by Lacan and borrowed by Althusser. It is used to refer to the processes of (a) multiple determination of a phenomenon by a number of 'causes', none of which is the 'essential' one, and (2) the location of a phenomenon in a complex system which both constitutes the conditions of existence of the phenomenon and constrains its possible development. The two major senses are, then, multiple determination (as distinct from single cause) and conditions of existence/enablement/constraint within a complex system.
2. Hegemonised: This term is taken to refer to an order secured through consent, but implying a form of generalised consent which exists in a tension with alternative conceptions of possible order. An hegemonised order is a dominant order which acts to contain other orders with which it may be in conflict. Potential conflicts are managed in such a way so as not to permit outright opposition to be formulated as such. Potential modes of opposition are domesticated or submerged.
3. Deconstructively: Briefly, to act deconstructively implies a preparedness to act strategically to resist the dominant order instituted through the reiteration of given social practices, whether of a discursive mode or of a nondiscursive mode. Deconstruction proceeds by rendering into discourse and refocusing what may have been taken for granted or may have seemed obvious beyond questioning in a given form of social practice. The constructedness of the practice is put through a thorough examination, in terms of how its constituent elements are articulated. Finally a new ordering is instituted (which itself may be re-examined and deconstructed further).
4. For details of the emergence of advertising and for its more fruitful realisation in the 1950's, see Ewen, S. Captains of Consciousness. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1976.

Wilkinson indicates that American historians focus upon the 1920's as the period when a consumer society was firmly established in the U.S.A.

See Wilkinson, R. Selling strategies. Times Higher Education Supplement, 18.4.1986.



5. For condensed histories of advertising in relation to economic developments see Dyer, G. Advertising as Communication. London: Methuen, 1982, especially chapters 1, 2 and 3.  
  
See also Williams, R. Advertising: the magic system. (In Problems in Materialism and Culture. Verso, 1980. p. 170-195).  
  
And see Packard, V. Hidden Persuaders. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1960.
6. In the 1955 election the Conservatives won an overall majority of 60 seats, increasing the majority they had from the 1951 election. The turnout of voters declined significantly between 1951 and 1956, falling from 82.5% to 76.7%. Those who voted asserted a certain contentment with the Conservatives. Macmillan continued to secure for the Conservatives a positive image in the electoral stakes. The new found prosperity and affluence seemed to point to there being no positive reason to turn to the Labour Party to form a Government.  
  
See Sked, A. and Cook, C. Post-war Britain: a Political History. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1979 p. 114-179.
7. See Marwick, A. British Society Since 1945. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1982. p. 121.  
  
See also Nevett, T.R. Advertising in Britain: a History. London: Heinemann, 1982. p.178.
8. It was being argued at the time that two crucial dimensions of inequality, that deriving from the accumulated wealth of private property and that deriving from having control over bureaucratic organisations, no longer coincided. Public and private control were deemed no longer to be identical. See Westergaard, J. Sociology: the myth of classlessness. (In Ideology in social science; edited by R. Blackburn. Fontana, 1972. p. 119-163).
9. See Westergaard, J. op. cit., p. 121.
10. See Skidelsky, R. Lessons of Suez (In The Age of Affluence 1951-1964; edited by V. Bogdanor and R. Skidelsky. Macmillan, 1970. p. 168-191).  
  
See also Sked, A. and Cook, C., op. cit. p. 153:

"The Suez affair was also unhelpful insofar as it served to underline Great Britain's dependence on America. Britain had in fact served notice to the world that she was no longer a great power. This should perhaps have been apparent beforehand, but it was still fairly easily overlooked and until 1956 Britain was still able to live off much of the political credit she had accumulated during the war. After 1956, however, this was simply no longer possible."

11. For a characterisation of Britain's long-term industrial decline, see Gamble, A. Britain In Decline. London: Macmillan, 1981. See especially Part I: Decline, p.3-38.
12. For a brief sketch of the initiatives taken by the U.S. government, both domestically and internationally, to establish a more stable capitalist economic system, see Weisskopf, T. The current economic crisis in historical perspective. Socialist Review, vol. II (3) May-June 1981, p. 9-54.
13. Nevett points to the undercapitalisation of many British advertising agencies which led to their being taken over by U.S. agencies who were generally larger and had more substantial finances behind them. The business imperative to sell out to U.S. agencies was matched by the need to appeal to the greater practical expertise of U.S. agencies in marketing and advertising.

"The American invaders brought with them a new kind of expertise. While Britain's manufacturers had been struggling through the years of rationing to satisfy a restricted demand, and their agencies had busied themselves with advertising that was not actually intended to sell techniques of marketing and promotion had been tested and defined in the United States. Companies and agencies were reorganized. A new marketing vocabulary emerged. And a new school of researchers, headed by Dichter, Chested and their followers, claimed to hold the key to human motivation."

Nevett, T.R. op. cit., p. 194.

The U.S. agencies simply had more to offer to companies faced with the difficulties of fighting off competition from foreign manufacturers exporting into the British home market.

14. This, as Harris points out, was written into the Bretton Woods agreement which was signed in July 1944.
- "Washington, from its position of unrivalled strength, was concerned once and for all to prise open Europe and its empires to American exports. The interwar depression in the States need not happen again if external markets for U.S. manufactured goods could be found and kept. It was this which underlay the creation of a new financial order, formulated at Bretton Woods in July 1944, and a new set of institutions to embody this order - the International Monetary Fund, and what became known later as the World Bank and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade."
- Harris, N. Of Bread and Guns. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1983. p. 36-37.
15. See Dyer, G. Advertising as Communication. London: Methuen, p. 39-54.
16. See Ewen, S. op cit.  
See also Packard, V. The Hidden Persuaders. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1960. p. 22-23:
- "In the early fifties... Production now became a relatively secondary concern. Executive planners changed from being maker-minded to market-minded."
- Packard, V. op. cit., p.23.
17. See Nevett, T.R. op. cit. p. 194. Nevett points to the boom in advertising agencies in the 1950's and to the vulnerability of agencies to changed economic circumstances by the mid- 1960's. Agencies began to reduce their staffing levels.
18. On 'consumers', see Williams, R. Advertising: the magic system (In Problems in Materialism and Culture. Verso, 1980. p. 170-195). p. 187.  
See also Galbraith, J.K. The Affluent Society Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1962. p. 121-130.
- The two basic propositions of the theory of consumer demand are characterised by Galbraith as, first, "that the urgency of wants does not diminish appreciably as more of them are satisfied" and, second, "When man has satisfied his physical needs, then psychologically grounded desires take over."  
Galbraith, J.K. op cit., p. 124.

Rather more negatively, Harris perceives the personal to be fully invaded by the imperatives of the world economic market through the idea of consumption.

"But the world will not leave to itself the secret corner of 'the personal'. It returns to structure it with the fantasies that sell goods.... The personal becomes reduced to consumption. An inhuman public existence does the producing, and the role of 'human beings' is simply to consume...."

Harris, N. op. cit., p. 13.

19. See Curran, J. Capitalism and control of the press, 1800-1975 (In Mass Communication and Society; edited by J. Curran et al .. Arnold, 1979. p. 195-230).

20. See Gouldner, A. The Dialectic of Ideology and Technology. London: Macmillan, 1976.

"The communication breakthrough in the twentieth century begins with the spread of the radio and the cinema and is now coming to a culmination in the spread of television. The worldwide diffusion of television marks the end of one and the beginning of a new stage in the communications revolution - the development of a computerised mass information system".

Gouldner, A. op.cit., p. 168.

21. See Tunstall, J. The Media in Britain. London: Constable, 1983.

Commercial television affects the press in terms of competition for advertising revenue. In terms of programme content, those formula-produced television series which aim to attract large audience to hand over to advertisers become points of reference which may be cited by newspapers and magazines in order to boost sales. The two largest selling magazines in Britain, the Radio Times and TV Times, are the official programme guides of BBC and ITV.

22. See Curran, J. The impact of advertising on the British mass media. Media, Culture and Society, 3(1) 1981, p. 43-69.

In terms of newspapers,

"The papers most vulnerable to [television's] competition were those which neither offered better coverage of the mass market than TV nor offered coverage of differentiated markets that

TV failed to provide."

Curran, J. op. cit., p. 49.

In terms of magazines,

"The publications that suffered most were general magazines which provided a broad, undifferentiated coverage of the market, comparable to that of commercial TV, yet lacked the specialised editorial content of the sort that generated linked advertising."

Curran, J. op. cit., p. 50.

In this class of magazine were Picture Post, Illustrated and Everybody's. The readership of these magazines had in any case been artificially boosted by the restrictions placed upon newspapers in terms of the rationing of newsprint. Easing of controls on newspapers contributed to the decline of these magazines.

23. See Curran, J. Capitalism and the control of the press (In Mass Communication and Society; edited by J. Curran et al... Arnold, 1977. p. 195-230).
24. See Tunstall, J. op. cit., p. 37.
25. See Tunstall, J. op. cit., p. 39-40.
26. See Tunstall, J. op. cit., p. 88-94.

The rise of women's magazines began in the late 1930's. Sales increased throughout the 1940's and 1950's when Woman and Woman's Own dominated the women's weekly market. The decline began in the 1960's and was accompanied by a fragmentation of the women's market, along the lines of social class, income, age and attitudes.

Attitudes, in the broadest category, tend to be divided between the 'traditional' housewife and varieties of 'new' woman.

27. See Tunstall, J. op. cit., p. 91-92:  
  
"most magazines have had to seek out specialised and segmented markets".
28. Sked, A. and Cook, C. op. cit., p. 10-11.
29. For more details of the audience of Advertiser's Weekly, see The Readership of Advertiser's Weekly: a survey. London: Research Services Ltd, 1964.

30. Encounter is one of a group of 'journals of opinion' which have been in decline at least since the 1960's. This is considered to be as a result of the enlarged political, arts and magazine coverage of the Sunday Times, Observer and Telegraph newspapers. Such journals became an uncompetitive buy.
- See Tunstall, J. op. cit., p. 105.
31. For a characterisation of Honey, see White, C. Women's Magazines, 1693-1968. London: Michael Joseph, 1970. p. 171-172.
- " [Honey] was brought out after surveys by Mark Abrams had demonstrated the potential spending power of a growing teenage market, and it was initially intended as a magazine of general guidance for younger women..."
- White, C. op. cit., p. 172.
- Between 1961 and 1964 the circulation of Honey increased from 104,200 to 190,100. See White, C. op. cit., Appendix V.
- Trevor Millum also gives a brief sketch of Honey and characterises its readership. See Millum, T. Images of Woman. London: Chatto and Windus, 1975. p. 104-111.
32. See White, C. op. cit.
- Woman sustained sales of over 3 million copies per week between 1956 and 1964, falling from about 3.4 million to just over 3 million. See White, C. op. cit., Appendix IV.
- Again Millum gives a brief characterisation of the magazine Woman and an analysis of its readership in traditional marketing categories. Millum, T. op. cit., p. 104-111.
- Woman was in a position to exploit a situation in which,
- "advertisers with goods to sell, magazine publishers with plentiful paper, and housewives tasting unfamiliar affluence, all participated in a great consumer boom. W.D. McClelland has also pointed out that in the late 1950's many young housewives had little experience of choosing non-rationed goods and eagerly sought out the advice offered by the magazines and their advertisers."
- Tunstall, J. op. cit., p. 93.

33. See Collins, C. Town and Tom Wolsey (In British Photography 1955-1965: the Master Craftsmen in print. London: The Photographers' Gallery, 1983. p. 10-13).

"'A publishing landmark!' That well worn PR slogan which often signifies nothing very much, would really have meant something had it been used in 1960 to describe the acquisition by two young Oxford graduates of an unremarkable tailoring trade quarterly. For Michael Heseltine and Clive Labovitch transformed Man About Town into a sleek monthly men's magazine which was to influence a whole generation of designers, art directors and photographers."

Collins, J. op. cit., p.10.

Collins also points to the reciprocal influence between magazine page-layout design and advertising design, and to the dominance which advertising began to assume in the production of such magazines. She quotes Tom Wolsey who states that,

"It all became so laid down, if you didn't get enough ads you lost 16 pages of colour; editorial became the tail of the dog. Advertising was what it was all about."

Collins, J. op. cit., p. 13.

34. For a discussion of the relations between advertising and editorial see Rand, M. The Sunday Times Magazine. (An interview by C. Osman). Creative Camera, nos. 211 and 212, July/August 1982, p. 616-620.

See also interview with James Danziger in the same issue of Creative Camera on the topic of the Sunday Times Magazine.

CHAPTER 2

PROponents AND CRITICS  
OF ADVERTISING



## 2.1 PROPONENT PRACTITIONERS

Proponents of advertising and marketing would prefer that the field of textuality constituted by advertisements be construed predominantly, if not wholly, from the position of the consumer in terms of the product advertised. Even while advertisements may not define a single meaning for a product, the productivity of the advertisement ought, from the proponent practitioners' viewpoint, to be limited to constructing a particular subject address. That inscribed position serves as a principle of coherence from which a product as theme can be perceived and construed. The relevance of product to subject can be understood at that juncture.

While the critics of advertising seek to establish that there is more to the operation of an advertisement, through analysis or interpretation, the proponents seek to limit the understanding of advertisements to the realisation of a particular inscribed intentionality. It is the institutional intentionality of advertising and marketing which the practitioners seek readers to prefer in the processes of reading advertisements. The realisation of the subject-address and the intentionality gives a particular direction to the reading and allows a determinate construal of the field of textuality of advertisements.

The proponent practitioners are concerned to define their project in relatively immediate terms. They consider that it is not their concern to discuss the other potential modes of effectivity of advertisements. Thus, advertisements

are designed as part of the project of selling products or services. This is taken as a principal horizon which serves to limit the interest which practitioners have in advertisements as textual constructs. The practitioners recognise that advertising and advertisements may have unintended consequences, in the institutional sense, which are of a political and cultural character. While they may recognise that possibility, they do not encode explicitly political and cultural programmes into their project, which they conceive to be determined economically. There remain, nonetheless, implicit political and cultural horizons encoded in that conception of 'economics'.

In the 1950's in the United States as well as, slightly later, in the United Kingdom, a change in the self-conceptions of marketing and advertising practices can be recognised to have taken place. That change received one of its major public expositions by way of Vance Packard's 'The Hidden Persuaders' (1). This book is not included amongst those texts which are critical of advertising because Packard assumes a relatively uncritical view of advertising in general. He urges caution only in respect of what he calls the 'depth approach' (2). Thus, he states that,

"Since our concern here is with the breed of persuaders known in the trade as the 'depth boys', much of the book is describing their subterranean operations. For that reason I should add the obvious: a great many advertising men, publicists, fund raisers, personnel experts, and political leaders, in fact numerically a majority, still do a straight forward

job and accept us as rational citizens (whether we are or not). They fill an important and constructive role in our society. Advertising, for example, not only plays a vital role in promoting our economic growth but is a colourful, diverting aspect of American life; and many of the creations of ad men are tasteful, honest works of artistry." (3)

What Packard's book indexes is both a change in the institutional relationships between advertising and marketing and the introduction, through marketing, of a number of new research techniques which materially affected how advertisements were designed. In effect, in the 1950's, initially in the United States but soon afterwards in the United Kingdom, the research interests of marketing began to achieve dominance over the rather less planned activities which had constituted advertising hitherto. Henceforth advertisements became a more coherent part of corporate strategy, on the one hand, and of an ideology of consumption, on the other hand. Marketing practices served as the means of securing these relationships.

The struggle for dominance between marketing and advertising in the 1950's can be witnessed in the pages of the trade journals, of which 'Advertiser's Weekly' and 'World's Press News' were prominent. Increasingly, marketing came to be asserted as the basis upon which advertising could be constructed. This view was expressed with varying degrees of vehemence. For example B. Cathles asserts polemically that,

"... advertising is the servant of marketing ... marketing is - or should be - the basis of the whole business of selling. Advertising should be its tool." (4)

The form of Cathles argument indicates that the relationship was by no means secured. Brunning, on the contrary, indicates that a more settled pattern has developed.

"In recent years many of the more progressive members of the advertising agency world have changed their thinking. No longer is it sufficient to concentrate on the production of good advertisements. Marketing is now to the fore ... Advertising is only a part of the total selling operation." (5)

Historically, the practice of advertising had been the major institutional site out of which marketing had emerged. From the 1950's onwards, advertising was becoming only a part of a larger programme. In the 1950's this relationship had not been finally settled.

Marketing itself, in the 1950's, was undergoing a process of change. A more traditional conception of markets was being supplemented by a more complex characterisation of the consumer. Thus,

"the classical description of the market in terms of age, class, and sex is supplemented by the provision of a picture of these groups as personalities. Motivation research can show how they feel and what they think of a product." (6)

A division of labour was considered to follow in which older and newer marketing practices shared responsibility with advertising for the realisation of the more "total selling operation" (7). The sharing of tasks was seen by one proponent to be distributed as follows.

"Essentially the creative artist's problem is that of communication with the public. Classical market research is essential to find out with whom communication has to be established: motivation research is essential to find out what to communicate." (8)

Marketing becomes understood as,

"...the science of product creation, design, packaging, promotion and sale. When properly applied it starts with the consumer, ascertaining his requirements and desires. Then it shapes the product and sets the production line in motion." (9)

It is set to "take its place alongside finance and production as one of the big three of business" (10), a development which has been in progress, beginning in the United States, since the 1940's (11).

The development of marketing in the direction of motivation research, is crucial to the process of subordination of advertising to marketing.

Kelvin considers that motivation research acts as a bridge between the terms of traditional market research and the 'intuitive ability' of the 'creative artist' (12).

"...motivation research...[investigates] in detail the consumer as a human being in relation to the product." (13)

The task of the 'creative artist' becomes that of encoding in an appealing way the material produced and uncovered during these investigations. It is this specific coordination of research with gradually improving techniques of presentation that makes advertisements into more complex artefacts which deserve a close scrutiny, especially in that moment of transition constituted in the late 1950's. That complexity can be located in presentation, content and function. Marketing began to conceive the relation between

the system of economy and the processes of subjective behaviour in a more methodical and more sophisticated way.

Advertising becomes a vehicle by means of which a market-based understanding of social and economic processes can be imbricated with the opinions and practices of local modes of behaviour. Advertisements begin to operate as elements of a "system of market control" (14).

The direction in which marketing moved i.e. towards a 'psychological' understanding of motivation, nevertheless causes some difficulties in establishing the boundaries of marketing. Is it the social subject who is under investigation, in as far as the consumer is a social subject, or is it the consumer who is under investigation, in as far as the social subject acts, at times, as a consumer? The problem is to define specifically consumption behaviour. This is doubly difficult in as much as consumption behaviour is interwoven with other forms of behaviour. There is a theoretical labour, in other words, implicit to market research which defines in what consumption behaviour and the consumer consist. In the years since the 1950's the conception of those 'objects' of research have been modified. In 1956, for example, it is clear to Harry Henry that,

"Motivation research uses psychological techniques - not because it is itself a branch of psychology, but because these techniques provide the only way of 'getting below the surface' ... constructive and useful Motivation Research is only concerned with getting sufficiently below the surface to do the necessary job - there is no need to plumb right down to the depths of the human soul!" (15)

Such modest limitations, which state that marketing is not and cannot be a social science, have been exceeded. The problem for marketing is that,

"...a full understanding of consumption decisions in these geographical areas (North America, Japan, Australia, Europe) would require the study of a person's entire lifetime of experiences. Also, in the broadest sense, consumer behavior and human behavior would be nearly identical fields of study because the consumption of economic goods pervades almost every activity in which humans are involved." (16)

Given such a perspective it becomes possible to construct a world in which,

"National characteristics exist - who can deny it - but they are negligible compared with the similarities between people of different nationality, especially in their role of consumer." (17)

For marketing, then, consumers are everywhere and are, basically, identical. Cultural variations are negligible, given this fundamental identity.

Consumers are everywhere and consumers are sovereign. Thus, even Harry Henry himself, is not above making hyperbolic statements in relation to both consumption behaviour and consumers. He considers that,

"A revolution is today changing the policy and the productive pattern of British industry, and is transforming the shape of its future. The revolution has arisen out of the development of what may be called consumer sovereignty - consumer democracy, if you prefer - whereby the choice of what goods shall enter into final consumption is no longer the prerogative of the manufacturer who makes them or the retailer who sells them. Instead it is vested firmly in the final consumer, whose decision to buy or not to buy reflects back along the manufacturing and distributive chain with a speed unparalleled in history." (18)

The argument is a tautology, based on the ambiguous use of the term consumer and the total identification of consumer and social subject. The previously cited major problem for marketing can be recognised again at this juncture: how is the consumer to be defined? Even within marketing discourse it is recognised that the consumer stands for more than one function. In an article in 'Printer's Ink' it is argued that,

"As a practical business function, marketing is the total procedure of creating customers efficiently.... Because a market does not exist until a customer is created i.e. until consumer demand is developed and fulfilled. Profits result from creating customers efficiently." (19)

It can be deduced from this statement that marketing is set two orders of problem. The first is that of creating consumers and the second is that of creating customers. That "consumer demand" has to be developed is not dwelt upon at length in the published texts of marketing practitioners in the 1950's. They would prefer to discuss the 'fulfillment' of an assured demand.

The problem for marketing is that social subjects are not simply consumers. The desires of social subjects are not simply those of consumer demand. Social subjects have to be constituted as consumers. They have to learn patterns of consumer behaviour as Block and Roering indicate (20). Social subjects learn complex patterns of behaviour which may involve consumption behaviour but in which consumption aspect is not prioritised. The role of marketing becomes that of making social subjects recognise the consumption aspect of their behaviour and, consequently, to



modify that behaviour, in ways prescribed by marketing through advertisements.

There is some indication that marketing practitioners have achieved some success in disseminating their conception of consumption behaviour and the consumer. For example, Raymond Williams can claim that by 1960 in Britain, "it is as consumers that the majority of people are seen" (21). He argues that the term consumer has become "a way of describing the ordinary member of capitalist society in a main part of his economic capacity" (22).

The implicit political and cultural horizons of marketing, which are relayed through a specific conception of economic social practice, concern the re-definition of social practices in terms of their economic aspect. People, living in historical, social conjunctures and in determinate local situations have to be informed of how it is possible, and indeed beneficial, for them to consider themselves as consumers. This involves a reinterpretation of the terms used by those people to conceptualise and organise their behaviour, to the extent that they formalise it.

For marketing to begin to be effective at the level of buying and selling, in the way in which the practitioners require, people must be made to see the relevance of consumption behaviour, and their own role as consumer, to their own existence, which is constituted through strategic interaction. That relationship is not obvious and cannot be taken for granted, as marketing practitioners might wish.

How people are to be educated and informed in their role as consumers is, and always has been, a major problem for marketing. It is a problem upon which advertisements can and do operate. Advertisements are necessarily instructional. Otherwise they cannot be effective either culturally, in the sense examined in the analyses in terms of ideology, or in the sense the practitioners intend, i.e. economically and commercially.

The implication is that consumption behaviour is not simply buying commodities, nor is it simply reading advertisements in order to decipher what product is being presented and what 'values' is that product being given. Consumption behaviour involves inter-relating both of those modes of action, in making one reason in the context of the other.

But consumption behaviour is more than these two actions. It implies also the pleasure or enjoyment of reading the advertisement and the enjoyment of the product or service itself. It involves constructing a coherent character as consumer which inter-relates action, enjoyment and reasoning in a reiterative system. It is that reiterative system which marketing seeks to gain access through research both of a more traditional kind and of a more motivational or 'psychological' kind.

Products are constructed in accord with the findings of research. The object of research, i.e. the consumer, is encoded, both as addressee and as the one who will derive pleasure, in the forms of the commodity. The consumer, then

is an institutionalised intentionality inscribed, through marketing, in the product. That intentionality can be realised by social subjects in as far as they are constituted, and allow themselves to be constituted as the consumer. That intentionality can be reiterated, and altered, by advertisements.

Marketing practitioners would prefer to convey of advertisements as formulae, such as in Tandy's characterisation:

"The function of the advertising man is to produce a formula, made up of many component parts, which will sell his client's goods." (23)

But this response to the advertisement, i.e. in terms of buying a product condenses the more complex set of processes set out above. Social subjects have to learn that buying is a suitable response to an advertisement. That is one component of consumption behaviour, i.e. to recognise specific presentations as advertisements, to decode them and to respond by buying the product shown. Buying is the response which is considered relevant by marketing practitioners.

Marketing is engaged in how to construct that response and how to lend it social validity. Reading advertisements is not a sufficient response for marketing practitioners, since "the consumer still has to be induced to purchase" (24). In the context of this particular problem one of the main functions of advertising can be seen as being "to get the consumer into the shop" (25). In other words,

"Having decided who the advertising should be primarily addressed to, the planner must next consider what sort of appeals are most likely to influence those people in favour of the product - and persuade them to buy it." (26)

Reading advertisements is to take place in a particular practical context, that of the constitution of consumption behaviour. Consumption behaviour, in turn, is a complex set of processes, which cannot be restricted to buying a product. However, the restricted understanding of consumption behaviour, in terms of buying seems to have a wide currency. In 1982, Philip Kleinman can argue that,

"...it is pointed out that the usual purpose of advertising, at least from the client's point of view, is not to edify the public, but to sell it something. An ad of small artistic merit which shifted a lot of widgets would be a better ad than a minor graphic or filmic masterpiece which sold none." (27)

The perfunctory view of advertisements, that they are formulae which can sell products and as such are strictly an "economic phenomenon" (28) is contested here on the basis that consumption behaviour is not and cannot be simply economic. Advertisements, therefore, in intervening into consumption behaviour are not simply economic phenomenon. Specific, consumption-based, responses to advertisements are complex and have to be learned. That specific response can always be re-worked by understandings and modes of projective behaviour other than consumption.

It is to critical responses to advertising and advertisements that the thesis now turns. To read advertisements as a consumer is to construe them within the horizons of a project of consumption behaviour. Marketing practices dominate the popular understanding of consumption. Such

practices would seek to emphasize the 'economic' character of consumption. Yet even in marketing discourse, albeit implicitly, it became obvious that consumption behaviour is never simply economic. Consumption behaviour consists of a complex set of competences in which reading advertisements, as a cultural achievement, is joined in specific ways to commercial exchanges. An ideology of consumption is articulated through constructing the inscribed intentionality of marketing in advertisements.

To read advertisements as an analyst and as a critic, is to problematise the inscription of advertisements in a context of consumption behaviour and to problematise the specific understanding of consumption realised in and through marketing. Reading advertisements, for example, becomes an end in itself, which already undermines the marketing-dominated concept of reading, i.e. as a prelude to buying.

NOTES TO 2.1

1. Packard, V. The Hidden Persuaders. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1960.
2. Packard, V. op. cit., p. 11.
3. Packard, V. op. cit., p. 15.
4. Cathles, B. Oh, what a marketing muddle we're in. Advertiser's Weekly, 17 June 1960.
5. Brunning, C. Planning - the new concept. Advertiser's Weekly, 30 May 1958.
6. Kelvin, R.P. The psychologist and the creative man. Advertiser's Weekly, 13 June 1958.
7. The advertisement is deemed to constitute one element of that "total selling operation" by contributing to the construction of a "demand image" which, it is said,  
  
"...sets off the psychological trigger of a purchase and compels the consumer to become a customer."  
  
See Printer's Ink, 10 January 1958, p. 33.
8. Kelvin, R.P. op. cit..
9. Cathles, B. op. cit..
10. See Printer's Ink, 3 January 1958, p. 29.
11. See, for example,  
  
"One of the most outstanding developments in American business methods over the past decade has been the emergence of the new concept of comprehensive or integrated marketing. The new approach to the basic business process of making and selling goods starts with the customers wants and needs. When these have been discovered, it appraises the situation to see if such products or services can be produced, distributed and profitably sold in the form in which they have been demanded."  
  
Integrated marketing. Advertiser's Weekly, 1958.  
  
"More companies are using more market research in more ways (in the U.S.A. in 1958 than in 1953, the time of the last survey)."  
  
Printer's Ink, 14 February 1958, p. 8.

12. See Kelvin, R.P. op. cit..
13. See Kelvin, R.P. op. cit..
14. "Modern advertising, that is to say, belongs to the system of market control which, at its full development, includes the growth of tariffs and privileged areas, cartel quotas, trade campaigns, price-fixing by manufacturers, and that form of economic imperialism which assured certain markets overseas by political control of their territories."
- Williams, R. Advertising: the magic system (In Problems in Materialism and Culture. Verso, 1980.)p. 178 .
15. Henry, H. Motivation research. Advertiser's Review, no. 6 1956, p. 15.
16. Block, C.E. and Roering, K.J. Essentials of Consumer Behaviour. Hinsdale, Ill.: Dryden Press, 1979. p. 6.
17. Block, C.E. and Roering, K.J. op. cit., p. 6.
18. Henry, H. Make what you can sell. Advertiser's Weekly, 30 October 1959, p. 21.
19. Printer's Ink, 10 January 1958, p. 33.
20. See Block, C.E. and Roering, K.J. op. cit..
21. Williams, R. op. cit., p. 187.
22. Williams, R. loc. cit..
23. Tandy, J. Presenting the product. Advertiser's Weekly, 5 July 1957.
24. Brunning, C. op. cit..
25. Brunning, C. op. cit..
26. Ellefson, O. The campaign plan. Advertiser's Weekly, 6 July 1956, p. 20.
27. Kleinman, P. Some ads win awards ... The Guardian, 20 May 1982, p. 18.

The distinction between considering advertisements as a functional, economic phenomenon and considering them as having potentially some 'artistic' merit in themselves is one which pertains to the division of labour between the practitioners of marketing and the practitioners of advertising. The former group tend to favour a self-description

which stresses their interest and engagement in quantitative methods of research, objective standards, statistical criteria, all of which is articulated in a pseudo-social scientific mode of discourse. The latter group emphasize their having 'insight' which evades quantification. They emphasize their qualitative, individualistic, intuitive and creative approach to those phenomena which research treats as 'data'.

28. "[Walter Taplin] wanted to consider advertising as an "economic phenomenon" and in doing so would confine his investigations to the field indicated by the definition of economics as the "application of scarce means to alternative ends". In economic jargon advertising was a service which arouses intentionally subjective feelings within the readers of the advertisement. The fundamentals of advertising were human wants, in all of which social elements are involved.... From this came the importance of considering motivation in human wants."

Taplin speaks to the Creative Circle. Advertiser's Weekly, 30 November 1956.



## 2.2 CRITICAL PRACTITIONERS

Critical interest in the modern form of advertising, as a conjunctureally determined and qualitatively novel form of social practice, begins in the 1950's, alongside the rise of advertising itself. This critical interest develops in the context of the United States and Western, European nations.

Critical approaches can be divided into two major categories, those which concern themselves with the cultural form of advertising in general in its relation to the capitalist economy and those which concern themselves with an analysis of advertisements in their concrete specificity.

Writers who concern themselves with advertising tend to take a number of critical positions, which may be inter-related explicitly or implicitly in any particular text. What is at stake is a politics of critical interpretation. Advertising can be criticised, for example, from a socialist position. It is criticised for being one element of a capitalist economy. This approach focuses upon the kind of economic production of which advertising is but one part, i.e. production for profit, on the one hand, and for private consumption of products, on the other hand (1). If a socialist position names the broad area of critical appraisal, this position contains a number of significant variants. The socialist critical position can be academicised, for example, towards marxism (2), towards feminism (3) or towards a combination of marxism and

feminism (4). Alternatively, the socialist position can be academicised in a liberal direction, towards some variant of economic discourse or anthropological discourse, in which are constructed anthropologically informed theories of consumption behaviour (5).

Critical analyses, either of the institutional site of advertising generally or of advertisements specifically, draw upon one or other of the available political perspectives of interpretation in order to give cohesion and direction to their surface discourse. Thus, a great deal of recent work whose focus of attention has been the semiosis of advertisement texts tend to rely upon some kind of marxism and/or feminism in order to theorise the inter-relatedness of text and context. These adduced theoretical frameworks permit a certain understanding of how the semiosis of advertisements operates in the social, to constitute and to intervene (6).

Occasionally, the links between surface analysis and the theoretical resources which are drawn upon are set out clearly in the critical text. For example, Victor Burgin, in a series of articles in which advertisements are used as illustrations (7), sets out clearly the marxian, semiological and psychoanalytic premises from which he begins. Judith Williamson, but all too briefly, performs a similar process of framing using the theoretical discourses cited by Burgin, to which she adds a certain feminism (8). Janice Winship makes an effort to set out the feminist and marxist presuppositions which ground her analyses (9).

In recent years, the complexity of theoretical apparatuses and theoretical presuppositions has become so dense that an elaboration of the critical positioning in respect of the object of study, which itself requires explicit definition, has become a necessity. Section 3 of this thesis sets out the preconstructed theoretical grounding by which the analyses enacted in Section 4 are premised.

Both the general approach and the specific approach to advertising and advertisements have some relevance to the current study, although those texts which focus textual analysis are of more immediate interest, since the stress is upon the specificity of advertisements in their being read. The institutional site is no more than characterised in outline.

However, one major theoretical concern is to show the context at work within the text, to adopt a Derridean formulation (10). Texts are not considered to constitute an essential interiority, whether formally or semantically, to which an exterior can be opposed simply. Text and context are interwoven. They re-mark one another. They are not separated, parallel levels. The text is already complex, articulating its own contexts, a notion encoded in the use of the depiction of advertisements as semiotic resources for textual practices. Contexts can be generated from given semiotic resources. The social is conceived as that complication and intrication of texts and contexts to constitute systems of, materially dense, differentiation. The density itself may account for the impression of sub-

stantiality which may overcode concepts of the social.

To develop this theoretical point, about text and context, a little more clearly, the relationships constituted through reading, by and for a social subject, are 'real' enough. It is important not to oppose social relations constituted through reading, as a mode of material, social practice, to other social relations which are somehow more 'real'. The theoretical difficulty is to construct a satisfactory conception of the relationships between social relations constituted through reading and other forms of social relations. Thus, for example, the point made by Williamson requires a careful interpretation if it is not to be understood as articulating an opposition between a 'real' and an 'epiphenomenal'.

"It is important to outline the social and economic relations in which advertising as an apparatus functions, before going on to discuss the way they are misrepresented, excluded, or obscured within advertisements, because it is these real relations which have to be changed - not advertisements" (11).

Goffman constructs an approach to reading advertisements which is of interest in as far as it allows for that multiple reference, first, to relations established in reading, second, to relations established in local historical situations, and, third, to relations established through the structural articulation of a social system. If Goffman is open to criticism, from the position adopted in this thesis, it is that he seems to prioritise, on occasion, those situations defined as "arrangements in which persons are physically present to one another" (12).

The perspective taken up here is that reading reiterates or re-marks in practice all those modes of relationship cited above. The subject is (re-)constituted in reading relations through suture, local historical situations through deixis and performativity, and structural relations through overdeterminations. Physical proximity plays a necessary part in the constitution of these relations, but all modes of relationship co-determine one another, in conjuncturally specific forms.

In short, the contexts of local historical situation and of overdetermining structural relations are at work within the advertisement texts. It is through a reading of their semiotic resources that such modes of social relationship, discursive, local and structural and realised and are interwoven.

Goffman provides useful insights by way of the notions of framing and display. What remains problematic is whether his concept of communication does not prefer the face-to-face interaction as the ideal mode of interaction. His stress upon what he calls "small behaviours" (13) may be used to construe a certain understanding of reading. Small behaviours are considered to constitute displays. Displays serve as spatial metaphors by means of which features of the structural organisations of the social are depicted microecologically. It is those displays of small behaviours which, Goffman argues, are reiterated photographically.

Such displays, as Goffman insists, are not simply representational of social structure. They may be compen-

satory (14). They can be used to intervene in local situations upon social structures. They are in Goffman's term, symptomatic rather than simply portraits (15). A similar point, it must be insisted, holds true for the photographic reiteration of local situations. They do not simply provide portraits. They intervene to modify - iteration alters, to cite Derrida again (16).

The local historical situation, in which physical proximity figures largely, is no more 'real' than the relations constituted discursively through reading nor the relations constituted through the overdetermination of any given social practice, in its local and discursive forms. Reading advertisements is but one concrete instance of these processes of realisation.

In terms of theoretical orientation, Goffman makes a telling intervention. His central argument in relation to advertising is as follows.

"I want to argue now that the job the advertiser has of dramatising the value of his product is not unlike the job a society has of infusing its social situations with ceremonial and with ritual signs facilitating the orientation of participants to one another. Both must use the limited "visual" resources available in social situations to tell a story; both must transform otherwise opaque goings-on into easily readable form. And both rely on the same basic devices: intention displays, microecological mapping of social structure, approved typifications, and the gestural externalization of what can be taken to be inner response." (17).

Goffman also makes a crucial observation in relation to the qualitative/quantitative distinction, in the analysis of image structures and display structures. He states that,

"Whereas in traditional methods the differences between items that are to be counted as instances of the same thing are an embarrassment, and are so in the degree of their difference, in pictorial pattern analysis the opposite is the case, the casting together of these apparent differences being what the analysis is all about." (18)

Goffman highlights a major problem for certain kinds of 'content' analysis. It is with such an area of difficulty that Trevor Millum's book 'Images of Woman' struggles.

While 'Images of Woman' deals precisely with the area of concern of this thesis, reading advertisements, it is not used to any great extent. This is due to a difference in the conception of how the project of analysing advertisements may be pursued.

It is considered that reading can be construed as classification, as interpretation, or, in a radicalisation of these two conceptions as a production. It is the adoption of any one of these horizons which determines how the concept of analysis is understood.

Millum, for example, endeavours to incorporate in his study, first, a more traditional content analysis, which stresses the quantitative assessments of elements that are to be counted as the same. This approach is in difficulty when arguing that specific material presentations which are different are nevertheless to be counted as articulating an identical content. Second, Millum seeks to incorporate the more qualitative concerns of, on the one hand, semiological analysis and, on the other hand, art history (19). Content analysis, Barthesian semiology and Panofskian iconographic

analysis make uneasy partners in this analytical deal.

The crucial difficulty concerns the character of the productivity of texts when being read. The overall tendency of Millum's method is to prefer a classificatory conception of production, wherein texts either denote or connote preconstructed meanings or contents (20). Millum seeks to provide a rigorous and complete classification of the forms and contents which advertisements articulate (21). Panofskian iconographics might conceivably be forced into this scheme. However, the case of Barthesian semiology is more problematic.

Semiological analyses tend to focus the moment of productivity of reading itself. In that moment, semiotic elements enter into the structuration of the reading, in a conjunction with the reading subject. While that moment of construction may instance already constructed meanings, new meanings may be produced and, in a complex passage of reading, those new meanings may cause novel signifying configurations to be recognised.

A system of classification of preconstructed signifying elements and meanings will be constitutionally unable to deal with the novel configurations which arise. Millum's aim is to establish an objective restatement, in terms of a classification of forms and contents, of advertisements. The aim inscribed in this thesis is to understand the productivity of advertisements as texts. They do not simply articulate already fixed forms and meanings. Advertisements innovate. It is the limited character of that innovation which is of interest here. It constitutes an



important part of what will be defined as the ideological productivity of advertisements.

Analysis in the form of reading as classification or objective restatement can be distinguished from reading as interpretation. Interpretation encodes a certain conception of reading as extending or making more 'full', the previously given understanding. In this thesis, which follows recent semiological theorisations, interpretation is radicalised towards a concept of production. Reading as production can be distinguished into a moment of construction, of already grasped and of novel configurations from pre-constructed semiotic resources, and a moment of deconstruction. The distinction between construction and deconstruction is at the level of strategy. The relation between construction and deconstruction is that of an edge. They border one another. Both use semiotic coding conventions and institutional, discursive intentionalities, but they use them to different ends.

The total comprehension, as classificatory scheme, of advertisements is not attempted. What this thesis seeks to understand is the moment of productivity of advertisements in being read, and to grasp that productivity as ideological in character.

What is required, then, is a conception of the different kinds of determinations by means of which different readings are produced. This will include the structural elements of presentations and the citational structure in relation to preconstructed meaning formations, but cannot be limited to them. Millum's analytical approach implies

an idealised historical distance. If pursued in a certain direction, through that ideal, it could become a study of the fixed range of formal elements which articulate the fixed range of preconstructed elements during a given period in a given place. It is not adequate, however, as a methodological strategy for understanding how those meanings may be reiterated and altered in a practice of reading. It may not serve as a means by which to understand how advertisements operate ideologically in the social. In this thesis, their operation in and through reading practice is crucial.

How, then, are those factors of determination of reading to be theorised, without falling into the temptation of constructing a wholly external contextual account of advertising in which a functional conception is adopted that reduces advertisements to the operation of the institutionalised site of the advertising agency and which collapses advertising into marketing. To have a functional perspective upon advertising, as a total institutional site, is not necessarily to have a coherent view of the discursive operations of advertisements in relation to the realisation or otherwise of that institutional intentionality in discourse.

Advertisements, in being part of the total institution of advertising, do concern consumption. However, as Myers perceives, an analysis of advertisements as part of a theory of consumption, on the one hand, and as part of a theory of social communication, on the other hand, need not be polarised.

"A theory of consumption would be enriched by incorporation into a broader theory of social communications. This would mean getting out of the ghetto of 'cultural' as opposed to 'economic' analysis and the polarities of production/consumption or encoding/decoding. The role of advertising cannot be inferred simply from a knowledge of economic interests nor deduced from structuralist or language-based theories." (22)

If consumption behaviour, from one perspective, can be understood as one of Goffman's 'small behaviours', instances of that mode of behaviour can be understood both in terms of display, in Goffman's sense of providing spatial metaphors for social structures, and in terms of sense making. Thus, consumption as behaviour can be understood in the following way.

"If it is said that the essential function of language is its capacity for poetry, we shall assume that the essential function of consumption is its capacity to make sense. Forget the idea of consumer irrationality. Forget that commodities are good for eating, clothing and shelter; forget their usefulness and try instead the idea that commodities are good for thinking..." (23)

Reading advertisements can be considered to be part of consumption behaviour. It reiterates, alters and extends consumption behaviour. The point made by Douglas and Isherwood, in the last cited passage, is considered of crucial importance by Kline and Leiss (24) for an understanding of advertising and consumption behaviour. They consider that,

"The idea of the symbolic constitution of utility is indispensable for a critique of consumer behaviour in an industrially advanced society." (25)

One of the ambiguities of the term consumption can be perceived in this context, i.e. between consumption as a form of economic behaviour, in a narrow financial sense, and consumption as a form of cultural behaviour, as a practice of reading. Myers, again, is keen to this difference,

"It is important to make the distinction between the ability of an audience to comprehend or decode an advertisement in terms of its product message, and the possibility that the audience will react or respond to it by buying the product. Agency consumer research is geared to understanding the relationship between advertisement comprehension and purchase." (26)

Advertising as comprehension is focused in this thesis. Reading is construed in terms of decoding and in terms of enacting a practice. This is the limited strategic project which determines how the term advertising is being understood here. Again it is this strategy which differs from those other projects which contextualise advertising. For example, Pateman theorises advertising in the following context.

"What I am sketching out in this essay belongs to a wider endeavour by many theorists to re-think the theory of the (formal) organization of texts and images in terms of a theory of the active comprehension of text and images in context, and thereby to complement theories of formal systems (linguistics, semiology) with a general theory of communication, itself a part of a general theory of action." (27)

Kline and Leiss, alternatively, construe their study to be part of a larger project as follows,

"Our study of advertising is intended to lay the basis in part, for new approaches to a theory of social change. In the social science models that celebrate the "consumer society", general increases in consumption levels - understood as increased access to

commodities - are regarded as prima facie evidence of social progress. Needless to say, we do not accept this view..." (28)

While Kline and Leiss are critical of those who propose the simple benefits of higher levels of consumption, and the consequent higher levels of marketing activity such as advertising, they reject what they conceive to be the central theme of radical critiques of consumer society and consumer culture. They consider this to be economic deterministic conception of advertising, and culture generally, and a theory of ideology based on the concepts of commodity fetishism and false consciousness.

Kline and Leiss situate their debate in the context of one about the character of 'consumer society'. The construction of the so-called consumer society has proceeded gradually. The construction of a 'mass' audience, from the heterogeneous groupings of modern social formations, for consumption as both an economic and cultural form has proceeded unevenly.

Ewen (29) charts the pre-history of modern advertising in the United States. He considers it to begin in the 1920's and 1930's, as do many American historians (30). He situates the post-second world war development of advertising in the United States and in other Western, capitalist countries in the context of a complex field of strategies and social conflicts. The contours of those strategies and conflicts could be discerned first in the 1920's. Consumerism, of which advertising is a major part, did not have, at first, the kind of "passively accepted legitimacy" (31) which it has achieved since the 1950's.

Ewen locates advertising as one element of a change of strategy on the part of industrial managers in the 1920's. It is implicated closely with the novel possibilities which a system of mass production permitted. The strategy involves the institution of a mass consumer market. This, Ewen argues, had two functions. It could serve as a device to overcome resistance to capitalism, as a system of production and as a social system, and it could serve as an outlet which sustained the continued production of commodities by certain means. The strategy, according to Ewen, was ideologically motivated and of a more functional character at one and the same time.

The strong version of this thesis, of the ideological character of advertising in the 1920's and 1930's has been challenged. Advertising it is argued, because addressing initially a highly restricted audience, could not have served to incorporate ideologically a resistant working class to a dominant social order (32). However, this does not invalidate some weaker and modified version of the ideological character of advertising from being constructed in relation to its operation in the post-1945 period (33).

Ewen argues that advertising, in its most grandiose conceptions, was perceived as a tool of social order which sought to nullify the custom of ages and to break down and redefine individual habits (34). It was to superimpose new conceptions of individual attainment and community desire, while parrying anticorporate sentiment.

While this was the explicit social aim of industrial leaders, Ewen indicates that these imperatives were constrained

by the strictures of economic possibility. Hence, in the 1920's the consumer ethic could be addressed only to a small proportion of the American populace. Many sectors were ignored, especially those who were the poorest, a distinction which articulates cultural, racial and gender implications.

Thus, the development of an ideology of consumption responded both to the issue of social control and to the need for commodity distribution. As such, as Ewen clearly states, its development exhibited historically and structurally constrained limits and possibilities.

It was not until the period of the post-1945 economic boom that the social policies, first mooted in the 1920's, began to make significant in-roads into the everyday realities of American, and other Western, societies. At that juncture, consumerism could be articulated more closely to the securing of a specific form of social order.

For Ewen, then, the ideological importance of advertising is as part of an immense cultural mobilisation, orchestrated by state intervention, which sought to establish the legitimacy of consumer-oriented, market-based, social democracy. That process of mobilisation began to incorporate elements of oppositional discourses and politics, such as feminism, socialism, syndicalism, and anarchism. They were used as material resources from which was constructed the affirmative vision of social democracy. Such incorporation encoded oppositional forms, as subjected to an ideological process of resolution which served as part of the complex articulation of an hegemonised social order. Advertisements

served as an apparatus whereby such incorporation could be achieved discursively while being distributed widely.

That dominant ideological articulation attested social amelioration by way of the market and the satisfaction to be achieved by way of market-based expectations. From the late 1960's, Ewen argues, that hegemonised order, which is dominated by a collusion of state and corporate forms, was beginning to be challenged severely. Social tensions began to be pursued through strategies of open conflict in the United States. The major agents of such challenges were the black movement, the student movement, the New Left and a re-vitalised feminism.

That pattern of conflicts has been reiterated in other Western, capitalist countries, to some extent, although the specificity of the conflicts has been inflected by the colonial heritages which such nations possess. In the context of the United Kingdom challenges to the hegemonised social order are rendered yet more complex in as far as the United Kingdom finds itself in a relation of subordination to the United States. State and corporate dominance in the United Kingdom finds many of its determinants in policy-making decisions carried out effectively outside the bounds of the nation as such.

In relation to critical challenges to advertising itself, these have been articulated most cogently through the marxian discourses of the new left, and the new new left, and the various discourses of feminism. Most recently, challenges are being formulated more forcefully upon the



grounds of ethnicity. The United Kingdom increasingly is perceived as 'multicultural' (35).

The concerns of a marxisant socialism and feminism can be perceived, whether together or separately, in critical works produced since the early 1960's, in the United Kingdom and in other European countries (36). The debate on advertising has tended in recent years to articulate a series of interrelated issues. These focus on language and representation, ideology, the constitution of social subjects, the character of the social order to which advertising belongs i.e. an hegemonised order, and the kinds of social control which such an order exhibits.

The inter-related themes of language, discourse, representation and ideology have tended to occur in the context of explicit feminist critiques of advertising. Janice Winship's text, 'Advertising in Women's Magazines' (37), is an example of this strand. She argues that,

"Ads as a means of representation and signification of 'woman' therefore construct an ideology of femininity anew but in a mode which is determined by and relates to the material position of women 'outside' the ad, i.e. within the discursive and non-discursive practices of patriarchal relations of capitalist society. Insofar as the ads interpellate us as feminine subject(s) they are reciprocally 'effective' in establishing the particular modes through which we inhabit our economic and political place." (38)

Other variants of feminist theorisations of advertising, and of other systems of constitution and representation, have drawn upon a Lacanian conception of the social subject. This can be perceived clearly in Judith Williamson's 'Decoding Advertisements' (39).

The use of Lacanian concepts, however, is not limited to specifically feminist critiques. Victor Burgin articulates a Lacanian psychoanalytic perspective to semiology, which in itself is a Lacanian direction, and to marxian discourse. This articulation can be perceived to develop, from an initial positioning in the terrain of conceptual and minimalist art practice, through a sustained consideration of photography. 'Photography, phantasy, function' (40) sets out the clearest exposition of his adaptation of the concept of suture, for the project of analysing photographically articulated discourse.

The current study begins from that ground constructed by those challenges to advertising. The issues of representation, language, ideology, social order and the subject articulate the domain of what is understood to be referred to by the terms advertising and advertisements.

It is proposed at this juncture to discuss two theoretical positions on reading advertisements in some detail. This is done in order to demonstrate what is at stake in pursuing a particular analytical strategy, i.e. that of deconstruction. This direction of analysis is to be distinguished from analysis as classification and analysis as interpretation. Deconstructive analysis does indeed incorporate a moment of interpretative (re-)construction, but rearticulates that construction, admitting other interests, desires and reasonings than what is construed as the inscribed intentionality.

The texts selected for more detailed discussion are 'Decoding Advertisements' by Judith Williamson (41) and 'How to do things with images?' and 'How is understanding an advertisement possible?' by Trevor Pateman (42). They constitute two very different approaches to advertisements. The aim of considering them is not to unify them but to use their conjunction as a principle of theoretical production. Each approach entails a very different order of presupposition. In their conjunction, a set of problematical issues become apparent for a study which endeavours to theorise advertising and advertisements as a discursive social practice and a textual resource.

The conjunction of Judith Williamson's approach and Trevor Pateman's approach highlights reading as productivity while indicating that a number of strategic decisions remain. Williamson is shown to articulate a deconstructive position but only occasionally. Her method posits, but holds in check a great deal of what becomes necessary for an analytical reading which deconstructs. Pateman is shown as bringing to attention the categories of determinants by means of which an intersubjectively acknowledged, inscribed intentionality can be realised by a reader of that inscription. The strategy of constructive interpretation is defined, and in that sense serves as a useful analytical tool for a possible deconstructive rearticulation.

Through the conjunction of Judith Williamson's and Trevor Pateman's texts, a number of problematical issues emerge to which Section 3 is addressed. This provides an

aperture through which the selected advertisements are approached analytically, i.e. by way of the concept of suture itself, as an opening for entry, and a division which joins all the same.

NOTES TO 2.2

1. See Williams, R. Advertising: the magic system (In Problems in Materialism and Culture. London: Verso, 1980. p. 188.)
2. See, for example, Ewen, S. Captains of Consciousness. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1976.
3. See, for example, Winship, J. Advertising in Women's Magazines: 1956-74. Birmingham: Univ. of Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, 1980.

Trevor Millum seeks also to make some contribution toward a feminist understanding of advertising images. Millum, T. Images of Woman. London: Chatto and Windus, 1975.

4. Both Judith Williamson and Janice Winship aim to align their feminist discourse to a (post-Althusserian) marxian discourse.

See Winship, J. op. cit. and Williamson, J. Decoding Advertisements. London: Marion Boyars, 1978.

5. See Douglas, M. and Isherwood, B. World of Goods: towards an Anthropology of Consumption. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1980.

6. This style of theorisation begins with Barthes, whose theory of semiology is articulated to a marxian discourse in its earlier manifestations. His semiology, initially, was intended to contribute to an understanding of ideology. See Barthes, R. Elements of Semiology. New York: Hill and Wang, 1968.

Barthes, R. Mythologies. St. Albans: Paladin, 1973.

Barthes, R. Rhetoric of the image (In Image-Music-text. Fontana, 1977. p. 32-51).

7. Burgin, V. Photography, phantasy, function. Screen, 21(1) 1980, p. 43-80.

Burgin, V. Seeing sense (In Language, Image and the Media; edited by P. Waiton and H. Davis. Blackwell, 1983. p. 226-244).

Burgin, V. Socialist formalism. Studio International, 191 March-April 1976, p. 146-154.

8. Williamson, J. op. cit.
9. Winship, J. op. cit.
10. See Derrida, J. Limited Inc abc... Glyph, 2  
1977, p. 162-254.  
  
See also Derrida, J. Signature, event, context  
(In Margins of Philosophy. Harvester, 1982.  
p.307-330).
11. Williamson, J. History that photographs mislaid  
(In Photography/Politics: One; edited by  
T. Dennet and J. Spence. Photography Workshop,  
1979. p. 51-69). p.57.
12. Goffman, E. Gender Advertisements. London:  
Macmillan, 1979. p. 27.
13. Goffman, E. op. cit., p. 24.
14. Goffman, E. op. cit., p. 8.
15. Goffman, E. op. cit., p. 8.
16. See Derrida, J. Limited Inc abc... Glyph, 2  
1977, p. 183-191.
17. Goffman, E. op. cit., p. 27.
18. Goffman, E. op. cit., p. 25.
19. See Millum, T. op. cit., p. 13-38.
20. Millum, T. op. cit., p. 80-82.
21. Millum, T. op. cit., p. 82-102.
22. Myers, K. Understanding advertisers (In  
Language, Image and the Media; edited by  
P. Walton and H. Davis. Blackwell, 1983.  
P. 205-223). p. 222.
23. Douglas, M. and Isherwood, B. op. cit., p. 62.
24. Kline, S. and Leiss, W. Advertising, needs and  
"commodity fetishism". Canadian Journal of  
Political and Social Theory, 2(1) 1978, p. 5-30.
25. Kline, S. and Leiss, W. op. cit., p. 12.
26. Myers, K. op. cit., p. 206.
27. Pateman, T. How is understanding an advertise-  
ment possible? (In Language, Image and the Media;  
edited by P. Walton and H. Davis. Blackwell,  
1983. p. 187-204).. p. 187-188.

28. Kline, S. and Leiss, W. op. cit., p. 5.
29. Ewen, S. op. cit.
30. Wilkinson, R. Selling strategies. Times Higher Educational Supplement, 18 April 1986.
31. Ewen, S. op. cit., p. 187.
32. See Wilkinson, R. op. cit.:
- "Marchand believes, indeed, that advertisers (in the 1920's) neglected the poorest 30 to 65 per cent of the population - an estimate which presumably challenges the radical notion that advertising anaesthetized the American working class."
- See also Schudson, M. Criticizing the critics of advertising. Media, Culture and Society, vol. 3(1) 1981, p. 10.
33. That is, that it may serve to address and to cohere a middle class while only being extended gradually and grudgingly to working class groupings. Therefore, it can only break up working class political and ideological cohesion, and accompanying cultural practices, to a very limited extent.
34. Ewen, S. op. cit., p. 18-19.
35. See the wealth of U.S. - influenced material being produced on this topic in the last few years.
36. See, for example, Raymond Williams' Advertising: the magic system, Roland Barthes' Rhetoric of the image, John Berger's Ways of seeing, Trevor Millum's Images of woman, Judith Williamson's, Decoding Advertisements and Janice Winship's Advertising in women's magazines.
37. Winship, J. Advertising in women's Magazines: 1956-74. Birmingham: Univ. of Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, 1980.
38. Winship, J. op. cit., p. 6.
39. Williamson, J. Decoding Advertisements. London: Marion Boyars, 1978.
40. Burgin, V. Photography, phantasy, function. Screen, 21(1) 1980, p. 43-80.
41. Williamson, J. op. cit.

42. Pateman, T. How is understanding an advertisement possible? (In Language, image and the media; edited by P. Walton and H. Davis. Blackwell, 1983. p. 187-204).

Pateman, T. How to do things with images: an essay on the pragmatics of advertising. Theory and Society, vol. 9 1980, p. 603-622.



## 2.21 DECODING ADVERTISEMENTS

Decoding Advertisements is perhaps the most difficult text to read, from the position taken up in this thesis, given that it approaches so closely in places what is required of a deconstructive reading of advertisements. However, crucial methodological steps taken in the text of Decoding Advertisements prevent that objective, of deconstruction, from being realised. The text is taken to constitute overall a method of reading advertisements interpretatively, as a critic, even though at certain points the text seems to suggest the possibility of doing more than that.

The metaphor which structures the text of Decoding Advertisements is to liken the advertisement to the dream, that is, the dream as in a Freudian conception. The advertisement is understood as a set of manifest elements organised into a cohesive whole. The work of analytical interpretation is to take those elements and to resolve what are the other latent senses which they articulate. This work of interpretation undoes that previous work which has already gone into constructing a seemingly coherent whole, the manifest dream or the manifest advertisement. Thus the analytical interpretation lays bare the real, but latent, contents of the dream and advertisement, as distinct from the more illusory senses and coherence presented manifestly.

On the basis of this organising metaphor, the text of Decoding Advertisements is divided into two parts. The first concerns the overt presentational forms and devices.

The second concerns the latent contents which are ordered, articulated, and manipulated through the structure of the presented forms and devices.

Accordingly, advertisements, in presenting a whole whose sense is illusory, are interpreted in terms of the "referent systems" (1) they draw upon as a resource. Such referent systems are considered to be ideological. They are exterior to the advertisements and they pre-exist the advertisements. The advertisements simply refer to them. Referent systems provide the "basic 'meaning' material" (2) for advertisements. Referent systems draw their significance from areas outside of advertising.

The topic of Part I of Decoding Advertisements is the way in which the structure of the advertisement orders the references made to such meaning material. However in the text it is hoped that,

"it will be made clear that this process of meaning, the work of the signifiers, is as much a part of ideology and social convention as the more obvious signifieds". (3)

Significantly advertisements may order and make reference to pre-existing meaning material but they may not be characterised as creating meaning. They cite and they re-order but they do not create:

"the advertisement does not create meaning initially". (4)

This is the major account of the way in which advertisements articulate meanings in Decoding Advertisements. They refer to basic meaning material. Such material is ordered into distinct referent systems. Referent systems are ideological:

"A system of meaning must already exist ... and this system is exterior to the ad - which simply refers to it...'Referent Systems': the subject of Part II ... are clearly ideological systems" (5)

Advertisements become ideological because they depend upon reference to the meanings which constitute referent systems, which are "clearly ideological systems". The work of advertisements is to refer and to re-order, not to create, meanings and ideology. Part I of Decoding Advertisements, "an investigation of signifiers and their systems in ads" (6), examines the work of advertisements in terms of structures of reference and citation and in terms of the organisation of such structural devices into manifest presentational wholes.

While this is the major account of meaning in Decoding Advertisements, the one which structures the text, it is not the only one. A tension is set up between the structuring account and the other accounts of meaning which are implicit to the text. To simplify, the arena of conflict is between, on the one hand, an account of meaning primarily in terms of reference to pre-existing, exterior systems of meaning material and, on the other hand, accounts of meaning which focus the production of meaning, in the advertisement itself for example. This conflict can be realised as a difference between two concepts of the object of study itself, the advertisement. This may be characterised as a difference between a concept of the advertisement as a formal entity and a concept of the advertisement which prioritises its symbolic, social and institutional mode of operation. This issue becomes recognisable as the text of Decoding Advertisements unfolds. The potential conflict

can be realised in Decoding Advertisements in relation to the use made of three theoretical apparatuses therein. They are, first, a semiological vocabulary to depict the advertisement and its (formal) workings (i.e. signifier, signified, sign, signification, reference); second, an Althusserian-derived account of ideology (i.e. ideology constitutes individuals as subjects in an imaginary relation to their real conditions of existence); third, a Lacanian-derived account of the subject (i.e. the reader of the advertisement is reconstituted as subject through an engagement with the advertisement).

The major criticism of Decoding Advertisements, from the position taken in this thesis, could be stated as follows. The advertisement in that text tends to be conceived predominantly as an evacuated, formal space. Its working is conceived in terms of formal manipulations. Meanings, ideology and the subject are exteriorised from that space. This makes it difficult to account for the operation of advertisements in re-constituting concrete individuals as subjects, in the first instance, and constituting subjects for ideology, in the second instance. While that formal conception predominates, it is in conflict with the actual procedures recommended in Chapter 2 for analysing advertisements. In that chapter, the object of study is a space more complex than a simply formal one. The use of Althusserian and Lacanian concepts implies that the advertisement is an institutional space, in and through which subjects and objects are constituted. Furthermore, the use of semiological concepts, especially in as far as they are semiological con-

cepts reworked by Lacan, conflicts with the notion of reference to pre-existing meaning material as an account of meaning. Semiological concepts, as reworked by Lacan, emphasize the production not only of signification but also of meaning through discourse, and hence consequently the production of the subject through discourse. In the metaphorical method of Decoding Advertisements, advertisements become likened to discourse, through the Lacanian reworking of a model inaugurated by Freud. While a resolution of these perspectives on meaning might be possible, for example one which incorporates a concept of the preconstructed as that which is called upon through the productions of signification and meaning, no explicit attempt is made in Decoding Advertisements to do so. As such, the text remains to be developed.

The conflict becomes evident even from the choice of a model for conceiving the advertisement, i.e. Freud's conception of the dream. The term 'advertising work' (7) is chosen deliberately as the title for Part I because of Freud's insistence upon the operation of the elements of the dream. The implications of the stress upon work and operation, however, within the dream and correlatively within the advertisement are not followed through. The work of the signifiers is treated as a formal play and, as such, relatively unimportant. Thus, for example, the use of colour in advertisements is dismissed as "simply a technique" (8). Furthermore,

"The use of colour is not significant in itself; it is the significance of the correlation it makes that forms the basis of my theory." (9)

The signifiers are considered but only in as far as they stand for correlated signifieds. It is the signifieds which are considered to be important. The signifieds are organised as referent systems, the text asserts. This statement of principle brings to attention the first theoretical apparatus mentioned above, semiology, and the attendant problems of using that framework.

Semiological accounts of meaning are constructed in order to emphasize the production of significations through the operation of codes in specific presentations. Some strict versions of semiology, such as Umberto Eco's Theory of Semiotics, stress the autonomy of such production with respect to any given decoder. Eco prioritises coding and sign-production above the recognising of fully constituted signs. Such an approach stresses the constitutive role of signification, i.e. not only in constituting signs but in inaugurating novel coding practices. This approach is not over-anxious to stress the pre-existence of signifieds, and is willing only to discuss signification, not any more broadly conceived notion of meaning. It is an approach more concerned to stress that when a given coding practice has been evoked and is being used signs can be generated from the presented material. Both new signifying forms (or signifying functions) and signifieds can be generated. This is counter to the assumptions stated in *Decoding Advertisements*.

Furthermore, such extreme forms of semiological theory proceed without explicit reliance upon a concept of the subject. (10) The text of *Decoding Advertisements*, however, seeks to conjoin a semiological account of the sign and a more pragmaticist account of the sign:

"A sign is something which stands to somebody for something else, in some respect or capacity" (11)

In some forms of semiological theory, but not all, the concept of the subject is treated with suspicion and avoided if at all possible. The productivity of signification is elaborated without reference to the subject. The problem of meaning, i.e. meaning for a subject, tends to be put in reserve as beyond the boundaries of semiological theory which concerns itself with signification more properly.

Those semiological theories which do attempt to incorporate a concept of the subject, for example those of Lacan, Kristeva and Derrida, in turn render the assumptions of strict signification-based semiology problematic. It is precisely the Lacanian semiology which is selected to elaborate the work of advertisements in Decoding Advertisements.

The Lacanian semiology raises problems for the referential model, as set out on p. 19, which structures the text because that particular theoretical practice refuses explicitly to reduce discourse to being a process of formal manipulation. Nor, for that matter, is the Lacanian semiology pragmaticist in design. Lacanian semiology seeks to discuss discourse in its symbolic function, i.e. in its role of constituting a subject and its objects. (12)

Indeed, in practice the text of Decoding Advertisements moves a certain distance beyond its own stated structure when the Lacanian semiology is used to develop the understanding of advertisements. Four of the sections of Chapter 2 set out to describe,

"firstly, how we create the meaning of a product in an advertisement; secondly, how we take meaning from the product; thirdly, how we are created by the advertisement; and fourthly, how we create ourselves in the advertisement." (13)

This scheme implies a different conceptualisation of the advertisement than that set out in Chapter I, where it is defined primarily as an empty, formal space. The space the advertisement occupies now is considerably more complex (i.e. "we create ourselves in the advertisement").

Once more, however, the features of the advertisement itself are projected onto an exteriority which conflicts with the implications of the notions of how we are created by the advertisement/how we create ourselves in the advertisement. Thus, it is stated that,

"Every ad necessarily assumes a particular spectator: it projects into the space out in front of it an imaginary person composed in terms of the relationship between the elements within the ad. You move into this space as you look at the ad, and in doing so 'become' the spectator." (14)

What is at stake here can be theorised through the concept of suture. (15) The overall implication is that the advertisement is more than a formal unity. The subject, already constituted in the symbolic, approaches the space of the advertisement and becomes sutured in the signifying chain which the advertisement presents. The subject thereby becomes deconstituted and reconstituted in the symbolic through the institutional space of the advertisement. The subject becomes part of a production of signification and of meaning. Thus, to rephrase the above quoted passage, 'you' become not so much the (exterior) spectator of the advertisement as the advertisement itself, given that the



advertisement is conceived as a material, institutional site in and of the symbolic and the advertisement is conceived to constitute a discursive chain.

The concepts of the symbolic, discourse (which is not used explicitly), and the subject remain difficult in the text of *Decoding Advertisements*. For example, it is not stated clearly enough that the subject is not the concrete, 'skinbound biological individual'. (16) Individualism and egotism are misrecognitions of the subject. The concrete individual is, more properly, a collectivity of subjects which do not constitute a unity. These recognitions are suggested in *Decoding Advertisements* through the discussion of Lacanian concepts, but they exist in an uneasy relationship to an earlier definition in which it is stated that the term 'subject' is used,

"to mean an individual who feels that he or she is an agent, acting out freely the dictates of a coherent ego" (17).

The statement is ambiguous. It may be recognised to incorporate a critical assertion, to the effect that ego and individual are fictions, such as is stated clearly subsequently,

"Part of the myth of individualism is the idea of a consistent identity" (18)

They are fictions, however, which operate as misrecognitions in the field of the symbolic and hence the social. The definition on p. 40 of *Decoding Advertisements* does not distinguish clearly enough the concept of the subject, as a field of relationships, from the notion of the individual, as a biological entity, on the one hand, and as a motivated

misrecognition, on the other hand. The third site of difficulty for the text of Decoding Advertisements emerges in relation to the use of these concepts, of subject and individual.

The relation between the concept of the subject and the notion of the individual is considered through the lens of an Althusserian discussion of ideology. In that discussion, the subject is defined in the following terms.

"The relationship between 'ideology' and 'subject' is one of simultaneous interdependence. Thus when I refer to ideology, this also means the creation of a subject; and when I speak of the subject, this naturally involves his 'having' an ideology, as well as being created by it." (19)

This must be taken as a reiteration, in other words, of Althusser's argument to the effect that "Ideology Interpellates Individuals as Subjects" (20).

"I say: the category of the subject is constitutive of all ideology, but at the same time and immediately I add that the category of the subject is only constitutive of all ideology insofar as all ideology has the function (which defines it) of 'constituting' concrete individuals as subjects. In the interaction of this double constitution exists the functioning of all ideology, ideology being nothing but its functioning in the material forms of existence of that functioning." (21)

The value of this scheme is that it stresses the material existence of ideology. Through its formulation advertisements may be recognised as one of the material forms of existence of the functioning of ideology. It is the material existence and operation of advertisements that Decoding Advertisements approaches so closely yet exteriorises onto the subject and onto referent systems. The advertisement

becomes conceived as a formal space and not a material and institutional space through which ideological operations are realised.

The third site of difficulty for the text of *Decoding Advertisements* exists as a conflict between different ways of conceiving ideology. The account of ideology constructed in Chapter 2 is primarily in terms of the interdependence of the concepts of subject and ideology in the tradition initiated by Althusser. In one sense, given this account, the term ideology does not have a pejorative use:

"This is not pejorative: ideology may be 'good' or 'bad'. But we must undo its transparency before we can even begin to decide what we think of it." (22)

Ideology constitutes subjects for good or ill. Advertisements, however, have been designated as ideology previously because they refer to systems of values, called referent systems. Referent systems are ideological and hence so are advertisements, in referring to them. (23)

In yet another place in the text advertisements are said to,

"obscure and avoid the real issues of society, those relating to work: to jobs, and wages and who works for whom. They create systems of social differentiation which are a veneer on the basic class structure of our society." (24)

In saying this, is not a concept of ideology invoked which does imply a pejorative use? This construal of the operation of advertisements, in terms of a veneer, develops a point made in the Introduction:

"The fundamental differences in our society are still class differences, but use of manufactured goods as a means of creating classes or groups forms an overlay on them. This overlay is ideology..." (25)

Hence, advertisements are ideology in the following senses. First, advertisements obscure and avoid the real issues of society by creating an overlay or a veneer on them. That overlay is ideology. Second, advertisements refer to referent systems which are ideological systems. Advertisements become ideological because they re-order those established senses. Third, advertisements constitute subjects in an imaginary relation to their real conditions of existence.

The difficulty is not that these three senses cannot possibly be resolved but that an account of how they are to be resolved is lacking in *Decoding Advertisements*. It is into that 'lack' that readers of that text are drawn and sutured into its discourse. What becomes obvious through that suture is that the use of the term ideology slips between being neutral and being pejorative and is for that reason difficult. It is a different proposition to assert that all (social) subjects are (necessarily) constituted in an imaginary relation to their real conditions of existence than it is to assert that such an imaginary relationship operates as a process of mystification.

It is implicit to the marxian, critical, sense of ideology that the process of mystification operates in the social to secure the dominance of certain social groups and classes in a definite social order. Such domination, of one part of a society by another, becomes the object of

critical attention. It requires the intervention of another form of consciousness, for example the revolutionary class consciousness of the proletariat, to overcome that form of consciousness imposed as ideology by the bourgeoisie. Althusser attempts to rework the concept of consciousness and ideology in terms other than that of ideas. In stressing the material existence and operation of ideology he is following Gramsci. In building his case, however, Althusser overstretches the concept of ideology. Ideology becomes a necessary part of any society. The critical and more restricted sense of more traditional marxian accounts becomes weakened. It is that problem of overgeneralisation which troubles the text of Decoding Advertisements.

There are many problems raised by any use of the term ideology. The assumption of a revolutionary truth implicit to the marxian concept, the positing of a true consciousness so to speak, itself raises problems. Is not the assumption of truth unwarranted? How is such a true consciousness possible given the generalised process of mystification? (26) Is ideology to be used as a synonym for 'bourgeois ideology'? (27)

Any use of the term ideology, then, requires explicitly stated qualifications. The text of Decoding Advertisements introduces and sets the problem of how to conceptualise the advertisement as a complex institutional space whose operation may be characterised as ideological. What is required now is a development of that theoretical position.

NOTES TO 2.21

1. Williamson, J. Decoding Advertisements. London: Marion Boyars, 1978. p. 19.
2. Williamson, J. op. cit. p. 19.
3. Williamson, J. op. cit. p. 19.
4. Williamson, J. op. cit. p. 19.
5. Williamson, J. op. cit. p. 19.
6. Williamson, J. op. cit. p. 19.
7. Williamson, J. op. cit. p. 19.
8. Williamson, J. op. cit. p. 24.
9. Williamson, J. op. cit. p. 24.
10. For a discussion of the place of a concept of the subject in a theoretical apparatus such as Eco's, see Eco, U. Theory of Semiotics. Bloomington, (Ind.): Indiana Univ. P., 1979 p. 314-318.
11. C.S. Peirce quoted in Williamson, J. op. cit. p. 20.
12. For a discussion of how discourse is to be understood in its symbolic function, see Lacan, J. the Function and field of speech and language in psychoanalysis (In Ecrits. Tavistock, 1977. p. 30-113).
13. Williamson, J. op. cit. p. 41.
14. Williamson, J. op. cit. p. 51.
15. For a discussion of the concept of suture, see Heath, S. Notes on suture. Screen, vol. 18(4) Winter 1977-78, p. 48-76.
16. For a discussion of the distinctions to be made between the 'skinbound biological individual', the psychic self, and the social role, see Wilden, A. System and Structure. 2nd edition, Tavistock, 1980. p. 220-225.
17. Williamson, J. op. cit. p. 40.
18. Williamson, J. op. cit. p. 54.
19. Williamson, J. op. cit. p. 41.

20. This is the title of a sub-section of Althusser, L. Ideology and ideological state apparatuses: (notes towards an investigation) (In Lenin and Philosophy and other Essays. 2nd edition, New Left Books, 1977). p. 160 .
21. Althusser, L. op. cit. p. 161.
22. Williamson, J. op. cit. p. 61.
23. See the account on p. 19 of Decoding Advertisements.
24. Williamson, J. op. cit. p. 47.
25. Williamson, J. op. cit. P. 13.
26. See, for example, Foucault's objections to the use of the notion of ideology. Foucault, M. Truth and power: An interview with Alessandro Fontana and Pascale Pasquino (In Power/knowledge; edited by C. Gordon. Harvester, 1980. p. 109-133). p. 118, esp..
27. As, for example, Judith Williamson does to some extent in History that photographs mislaid (In Photography/politics: I; edited by T. Dennett and J. Spence. Photography Workshop, 1979. p. 51-79).

## 2.22 THE PRAGMATICS OF ADVERTISING

Judith Williamson, in *Decoding Advertisements*, brings to attention several important elements which contribute to an understanding of how advertisements might be said to operate as a discursive space and as a social, institutional resource. The issue of meaning production is raised, in relation to theories of semiology; the issue of the constitution of the subject through reading is raised, in relation to psychoanalytically informed semiological theories; the issue of the ideological interpellation of subjects through reading is raised, in relation to marxian theories informed by both semiology and psychoanalysis. Furthermore, a conception of reading advertisements which indicates that they may constitute an institutional, discursive practice is raised, even if it does need developing.

Trevor Pateman, in two essays on advertisements (1), takes a step towards providing a development of the ground opened up in *Decoding Advertisements*. In relation to semiological theories of meaning production, he raises the issue of the relationship between syntactic and semantic determinants, on the one hand, and what he calls pragmatic determinants, on the other hand. The general issue is one that concerns the contextual determinations of meaning production from utterances, discourses or presentations. The issue of practice, or as Pateman terms it activity type (2), is also raised. Reading advertisements is conceived to constitute a particular activity type, a concept which



encodes some of the features of what is being theorised in this thesis as discursive social practice.

The general import of the points which Pateman raises is not rejected. What is disputed, however, is whether the theoretical apparatuses drawn upon in the two essays are capable of giving access to the kinds of recognitions sought in this thesis. Specifically, it is considered that Anglo-American philosophy of language finds it difficult to respond to problems of the order of ideology and to problems of the order of the unconscious (3). The concepts of performative act, pragmatic knowledge, and intention and the account of meaning production constructed from them are considered to rely too much upon the conscious ego of the rational agent to allow the issues which concern this thesis to be stated (4). Similarly, the reciprocal recognition and exchange of conscious intentions between associated rational speakers and hearers is considered not to provide a suitable or adequate theoretical basis for conceiving the kinds of 'communication' processes being enacted through reading advertisements. Advertisements are not elements in a conversation, and this is not for the reason that they are not spoken.

The perspectives to which these two problems, of ideology and the unconscious, give rise do not permit the concept of intention, especially in the form of the self-conscious intention of the rational agent, either to anchor meaning production or to anchor action. It is sought in this thesis to understand intention more in the form of a,

relatively dispersed, discursive and institutional intentionality, rather than in the form of a fully-coherent, self-conscious rational intention. Acts, or modes of action, may not be conceived, consequently, to be derived solely or fully from the forms of intention of rational egos. Actions become conceivable as enactments of discursive and other kinds of institutional practices, and the modes of intentionality that such practices permit. Enactments are not simply conventional or rule bound. They are strategic.

(5) New grounds and premises for institutional and discursive practices may be constituted through strategic enactments.

Discursive and institutional forms of intentionality, or predispositions, may indeed take self-conscious forms. Intentionality, however, is not essentially self-conscious nor is it essentially undivided (6). Intentionality is constituted through the enactment of social practices by subjects, whether in a discursive or a nondiscursive mode (7). The self-conscious awareness of that enactment, and the intentionality entailed for subjects, may take different forms. Differences of awareness may give rise to different reasons being given for the enactment, and to different interests being formulated and constituted. As has been stated, problems of the order of ideology and of the order of the unconscious arise when these recognitions are made explicit.

Pateman's accounts of reading advertisements introduce important elements for an understanding of reading advertisements as a discursive social practice. While

his solutions are not accepted as they stand, his texts are shown to lead to the threshold of the theorisation of reading advertisements proposed in this thesis.

Central to both of Pateman's accounts is a process of recognising correctly or identifying. In the first account, the process takes the form of identifying the primary speech act performed. This identification determines the referential content of the utterance or presentation. Furthermore, it guides the working out of the implications generated by what is uttered or presented and permits a construction of the relationships between what is implied and what is stated explicitly.

In the second account, the concept of speech act has been reassessed and replaced (8). The function which that concept fulfilled is now taken by activity type (9). Utterances or presentations are identified as belonging to certain activity types. That identification takes place as a process of anticipation. It is a projective activity. It proceeds as an active anticipation using certain minimal cues to decide what is the situation being constructed (10). Reading advertisements, as enacting an instance of advertising, is one such form of anticipatory activity.

Once an utterance or presentation has been identified as being of a particular activity type, for example a given presentation is identified as an instance of advertising, a certain pragmatic knowledge is implied. In the case of advertising, the minimal knowledge required as to its point or purpose is that an advertisement is for some product.

The product, therefore, becomes the structuring principle of the discourse uttered or presented (11).

The ascription of an utterance or presentation to an activity type is crucial to all of the subsequent acts of recognition performed by the knowledgeable agent upon the discourse. It is that decision, as to what activity type the discourse belongs and therefore what situation is being enacted, which permits a knowledgeable agent to decide what is the purpose of the utterance and hence to select from what is uttered or presented that which is topical or thematic. To return to the case of advertising, the product is the theme. That ascriptive decision, furthermore, permits the knowledgeable reader to construe the relevance of the remaining elements of the discourse to the topic or theme.

It is important to both of Pateman's accounts that the decision as to what activity type is being enacted be recognised as a form of pragmatic knowledge. It is realised as a set of pragmatic implications from a given discourse. This is a major element in realising the objective of the two essays. That objective is to show that accounts of meaning production which begin from a consideration of syntactic structures and semantic systems are inadequate in that they fail to acknowledge the pragmatic features of the situation which determine how those structures will be recognised and be worked upon. Examples of such a method, which begins from syntax and semantics, are structuralist analyses and semiological analyses. Pateman argues, in a

general sense, for a greater recognition of the importance of contextual determinants upon meaning production. The conception of activity type is designed to focus the importance of pragmatic knowledge, concerning the contexts in which utterances operate, for meaning production. Such a concept also stresses the operational aspect of utterances, i.e. they work in given situations, over and above their representational function. He contends that "knowledge about the relations which standardly exist between "signs and their users", utterances and their utterers" (12) plays an important part in determining how a given utterance may operate and may represent in a particular context.

The theoretical issue being developed through the two essays is consequent upon the recognition that advertisements are not so much instances of language, and hence open to a systematic analysis, as instances of discourse, and hence open to a more pragmatically sensitive analysis (13). Systematic analysis is of a less probabilistic character than is the analysis of pragmatic implication, which focusses the conditions of possibility of the uttered discourse. In Pateman's terms,

"pragmatic implications of an utterance are worked out by hearers on the basis not only of linguistic knowledge, but on the basis of assumptions they make about the speakers intentions, the principles (e.g. relevance) governing the conversation, activity type, point or purpose, and so on." (14)

This reiterates a point made in How to do things with images, wherein it is argued that,

"All syntaxes and semantics are pragmatically modified, or, more precisely, have a pragmatic component." (15)

From the position adopted in this thesis, there can be little difficulty in accepting the general point constructed in these two essays, i.e. that contextual components cannot be reduced to an exteriority or a secondary status in relation to syntactic and semantic features when discussing the determinants of meaning production. Meaning production depends in a crucial sense upon pragmatic decisions as to what is the situation, the explicit intentionalities encoded in the utterance, etc.. What proves difficult to accept is that the theoretical apparatuses adduced in those two essays are the only, or even the most adequate, to enable the issue to be stated.

In the first essay, Pateman seems to be preferring Anglo-American philosophy of language to Franco-Italian semiotics (16). It would be misleading, however, to consider that How to do things with images constructs a comparison between two theoretical schemes. Rather, Pateman seems to be exploring the possibility of using some concepts derived from philosophy of language to construct an understanding of what have become known as "images" (17). Advertisements are used as an example or a case of images (18). Images have served as a knotty problem for certain forms of philosophical discourse.

Little consideration is given to Franco-Italian semiotics other than to contrast one essay on an advertisement image by Roland Barthes to a collectively established

tradition whose major figures are L. Wittgenstein, J.L. Austin, J.R. Searle, H.P. Grice, and which is supplemented by Chomskyan and neo-Chomskyan linguistics (19). It is hardly surprising that Franco-Italian semiotics is found wanting (20). Certain early versions of semiological theory may indeed have paid too little attention to the pragmatic features of the situation in which utterances are performed or enacted. The choice of so specific a text does not invalidate the entirety of Franco-Italian semiotics. For example, later semiological theories, which incorporate a psychoanalytic-derived component, could be shown to encode a recognition of the importance of context, albeit a very different notion of context to that of philosophy of language. Those later semiological theories shift their attention away from the *énoncé*, what is uttered, towards *énonciation*, the act of uttering. Metz characterises this mode of attention in the following terms,

"consideration of *énonciation* involves not only the social and psychological, i.e. non-linguistic context of *énoncés*, but also features of langue itself, ways the latter structures the possibility of *énonciation*... The relation between *énonciation* and *énoncé* is the relation between the speaker, his context and what he says; that is, the question of the subject's place in language." (21)

Nor, indeed, can Franco-Italian theorisations which are informed by semiology be reduced to the horizons of a formalistic semiotics.

Even if a more representative sample of Franco-Italian theories were to be considered it would still prove difficult to construct a simple comparison such that they

might be preferred clearly to philosophy of language. This also presupposes that the institutional space for such a, presumed to be neutral, comparison exists and that the institutional space does not already encode a structure of preference toward the one or the other. Derrida points to some of the difficulties of finding an institutional site for a debate between the discourse of Anglo-American philosophy of language and that of certain forms of French-language philosophy. In responding to Searle's essay, Reiterating the differences: a reply to Derrida (22), Derrida indicates that Searle's uses of the adverbs evidently and obviously had aroused his suspicions. He, rather disingenuously, remarks that,

"I would have liked to quiet my suspicions in order to enjoy such condour unreservedly."  
(23)

More significantly, he continues,

"Loyalty and the absence of simulation are so rare in French-language polemics, which are characterised by the use of elision, ellipsis, self-censorship and a strategy that is both artful and indirect." (24)

What arises is an incomensurability of argumentational strategies, even while the confrontations take place, which leads one side to attest that the confrontation never quite takes place (25).

It would seem that what Derrida seeks to provoke, with his artful and indirect strategy, is an impatience which releases moral indignation and moral censure in order to demonstrate that certain philosophical traditions encode metaphysical premises which are fundamentally moralistic (26). His strategy is to draw out those presuppositions by



forcing the hand of those philosophical discourses such that their evaluative decrees become explicit.

Searle is not the only 'opponent' to have objected vehemently to Derrida's prose and procedures. Foucault, for example, who is hardly a philosopher of language in the Anglo-American tradition, reacts irritatedly to what he calls the "'textualisation' of discursive practices" (27), which he alleges may be found in Derrida's work. He defines that process as,

"the reduction of discursive practices to textual traces; the elision of the events produced therein and the retention only of marks for a reading; the invention of voices behind texts to avoid having to analyse the modes of implication of the subject in discourses; the assigning of the originary as said and unsaid in the text to avoid replacing discursive practices in the field of transformations where they are carried out." (28)

Such procedures constitute, according to Foucault, a "historically well-defined little pedagogy" (29).

What is difficult to assess is at what point does an impatience with the texts of Derrida become a valid response. For while Derrida may pay a great deal of explicit attention to the principle of contextual determination (30), does he at any point discuss clearly how determinate contexts have intervened to arrest and fix discursive procedures at given concrete, historical conjunctures. Does he, consequently, discuss how certain forms of discourse, when located in distinct institutions, operate differently even while partaking of an identical set of procedures. Derrida may be unsuccessful in realising, through artful and indirect argumentation, some very important aspects of contextual determination.

Thus, for example, Derrida tends very often in practice to restrict the content he considers relevant to other texts (31). He tends to construct a homogeneous world in which "all metaphysicians" (32) may be likened to one another. Thus,

"All metaphysicians, from Plato to Rousseau, Descartes to Husserl, have proceed in this way..." (33)

The context here is discursive strategy and the 'doing' is constructing arguments. Foucault's criticism seems to have some validity, i.e. that differently located discursive practices, constructed with different objectives and enacted in distinct institutionalised situations are being reduced to an identical textual procedure. Derrida emphasises one context excessively, i.e. the metaphysical presuppositions drawn upon by constructed discourses, the system of entailments thereby introduced into the discourse, and hence the prestructuring of the text as metaphysical. In proceeding thus, does not Derrida construct the very structure he claims to discover (34)?

Thus, while there remain serious problems with Foucault's 'archaeology', of which Derrida is an astute critic (35), it may be more productive in the long run. For even while Derrida criticises Foucault for relying on an extra-textual, morally authentic, privileged position, Derrida himself still requires the textual space for an authentic mode of utterance, a kind of privileged statement his strategy sets out to question (36). Foucault's position may be more productive, then, in that his practice permits a greater attention to be paid to the "particular institutionalisations of a theoretical discourse" (37).

Derrida is conscious that the deconstruction of theoretical discourses need not necessarily have an immediate political effect at the level of the institutional order of the social. His position is that excessive haste to achieve political results should not place limitations upon theoretical deconstruction. The deconstruction of metaphysical presuppositions is not in itself a sufficient critique of current institutions (38).

Derrida's approach may permit a relatively abstract account of processes of legitimation and authorisation in discourse. Foucault, alternatively, gives access not only to the constitution of the subject in textual discursive spaces but also provides accounts of the relationships between such discursive practices and the more complex institutional domains in which discursive practices operate and, to a limited extent, determine. These accounts may be faulted in terms of what they presuppose but they are undoubtedly useful. The archaeology of knowledge (39), for example, concerns itself with the constitution of discursive formations as sets of inter-related statements. Discursive practices are constituted through the use of these statements, by legitimated subjects, to act upon and to act in a given institutional domain. The birth of the clinic and Discipline and punish (40) document changes of strategy which are at once discursively and nondiscursively institutional.

Foucault works towards a theorisation of the imbrication of certain discourses, those which claim to produce knowledge, in fields of strategies. Such discourses take up a role in the construction and maintenance of relationships of power both within specific institutional

spaces and in the extended institutional order of the social formation by which the specific institution is contextualised (41). Foucault, in concentrating closely upon this field of relationships, is sensitive in his writing to the historical limits of certain regimes of 'truthful' discourse . He is acute in discussing the relationships between specific forms of discourse and the concrete institutional and social conjunctures in which they operate.

It is important to note, then, that while Foucault and Derrida engage in a polemic to expose one another's shortcomings, i.e. Derrida's 'textualisation' of discursive practices and Foucault's presupposition of a 'metaphysical moralism', they are both keenly aware of the notion of contextual determination in respect of discourses. Furthermore, they both point to what might be recognised as one of the major weaknesses of speech act theory, Anglo-American philosophy of language and pragmatics, which is to say the inability of these theoretical apparatuses to reply to problems related to ideology and the unconscious.

Other examples of Franco-Italian theories could be cited, such as those of Bourdieu, Pecheux, Gramsci, and, to a limited extent, Eco which encoded a recognition of the principle of contextual determination. It may be recognised also that these varieties of theory develop more articulated conceptualisations of context than has been attempted so far from within the tradition of philosophy of language (42).

The characteristic limitations of Anglo-American philosophy of language, then, would not be solved at a

stroke by adopting Derrida's position or Foucault's position. The different ways of conceiving problems and objects of study employed by these two writers, however, might suggest paths round the over-reliance, found in philosophy of language, upon the conscious, rational ego as the one who speaks and acts on the basis of conscious intentions. The difficulties which arise for philosophy of language in relation to those acts which were not recognised immediately, either by speaker or hearer, but were subsequently recovered and recognised to have unintended consequences might begin, at least, to be formulated more explicitly (43). The concepts of intention, speaker, context, situation, pragmatic knowledge, performative act, and illocutionary force (44) might lose their simplicity when thought through a Foucauldian or Derridean theoretical approach, but they might gain consequently in rigour and clarity.

While Pateman's general point about contextual determination has validity, then, it is not obvious that the limitations imposed through the presuppositions implicit to philosophy of language, which he draws into his essays, have been overcome. It is to be granted that Pateman does begin to tackle some of those presuppositions in the second essay, How is understanding an advertisement possible? For example, he tackles the assumption of immediacy and the assumption of pure reciprocity. In the first essay, the position taken is that,

"I only wish to point out that advertiser and consumer are locked together in a dialectical argument, possessing its own rhetorical style, and governed by the co-

operative principle of conversation. There are right and wrong ways of doing things with advertising images. The criteria are to be found not only in the rhetoric of the image, but in what we might now decide to call the pragmatics of advertising." (45)

In the second essay, however, this view has been modified to accommodate a recognition of "the anonymous and non-reciprocal character of the communication" (46) process in which advertisements partake. It is to be recognised that advertisements are relatively decontextualised as discourse. They are open, therefore, to different reading strategies. The concept of strategy replaces that of rule.

The concept of strategy remains ambiguous in Pateman's conceptualisation of the 'communication' process. First, it may be seen to be reducible to the notion of game strategy. In a game, strategy is worked out within the rules. the concept of strategy required in relation to reading advertisements may not be so easily conceived. There are no simply fixed rules for reading advertisements which may be consulted by the participants. Such an order is not guaranteed. Second, "strategic action" (47) might be conceived as being an inferior form of action. It is not clear whether "communicative action" (48), a term borrowed from Habermas, is being proposed as communication proper, so to speak, while strategic action is that mode of action which can only aspire to such fullness and properness (49). It is important, as far as the position taken in this thesis is concerned, not to make strategic action internal to a fully regulated, autonomous game, nor to make it inferior to a higher form of action. Pure reciprocity,

such as it is possible, must itself be recognised as strategic in character.

Reading advertisements is not, then, to be conceived as a process of extraction by readers, i.e. as consumers, of what has been put in as content by advertisers. Reading advertisements is not a 'communication' process in that sense (50). Consumers and advertisers may not be conceived as if they were rational individuals engaged in a cooperative conversation. First, because the intentionality of advertisers is not constituted as the conscious intention of an individual. It is constituted in and through a mode of practice. Its intentionality is of an institutional and not an individual or a conscious order. Second, because readers are not all constituted equally as consumers.

Through the institutional practice of advertising certain effects are sought in readers, as Pateman indicates. But this is not simply "manipulation" (51). Readers are aware of the effects desired when they constitute a textual presentation as an advertisement. Readers, however, do not all know of those desired effects to the same degree or care to adhere to them to the same degree. Readers are not all equally consumers from two inter-linked perspectives. First, they do not all have equal linguistic and semiotic skills as subjective resources to realise the effects sought by advertising, and consequently to dis-implicate themselves from those effects. Second, they do not have equally the material economic and financial resources which advertisers seek to mobilise through spending on represented products and which, conversely, would make them as readers interested in reading texts as if they were advertisements.

In short, there is no guarantee that the advertisement will be read properly, such as the guarantee provided by the cooperative principle of conversation cited by Pateman. There is no guarantee that the reader will identify with the inscribed addressee, the consumer. To read advertisements properly would be to realise the institutional intentionality of marketing and advertising through an equally institutional practice of reading. Advertisements may have unintended consequences.

In Pateman's earlier account, the reader is unambiguously identified with the consumer:

"advertiser and consumer are locked together in a dialectical argument" (52)

"the implications worked out by the consumer" (53)

In the later account, the two terms are more dissociated:

"there is little readers can do to reduce their uncertainty about the implications of an advertisement" (54)

"Advertisers get consumers to do their dirty ideological work for them...if the consumers refused to play the game advertisers would have to change direction" (55)

When it is clearly acknowledged that the reader is not necessarily the consumer, the relevance of Pateman's accounts for this thesis becomes more conspicuous. What may be derived from those two essays is an understanding of how a reader may identify with a subject position inscribed in the advertisement as textual construction and as institutional resource. The reader becomes sutured into a textually articulated discourse. To identify with the inscribed position is to accept the authority of the



advertisement. The reader is not bound to accept the authority or legitimacy of the inscribed intentionality, an intentionality which is of a discursively institutional character.

It is for that inscribed subject position that the product is the theme of the discourse. Identifying with the consumer, as inscribed subject position, is correlated to the identification of the discourse, as belonging to a particular kind of practice and therefore to be elaborated according to particular strategies (i.e. not rules) and procedures.

Pateman's theorisation becomes an account of what might be called the secondary revisions required in order to make of particular presentations a centred, thematic discourse, i.e. a rational discourse for a conscious ego. The topic of that discourse is the product. That rational discourse is to be constructed from the set of textual elements which are the instituted resources of the presentation. The question of the image structure is also dealt with succinctly by Pateman's approach, in that graphic and pictorial elements are to be construed as contributing to a rational, thematic discourse.

While Pateman's accounts focus upon the rational ego as the means by which the institutional intentionality of marketing and advertising is realised discursively, the object of study in this thesis is the constitution of the consumer as discursive subject. Furthermore, the aim inscribed in this thesis is to resist the simple realisation

of that intentionality. This is where the differences between Pateman's essays and the current thesis may be located.

The "denial of responsibility" (56) which is available as a strategy to advertising practitioners, i.e. to deny that any particular interpretation was intended, is responded to by a second strategy. In that strategy the symbolic resources which are distributed throughout the presentations are recognised. The possibilities of their being formed into one or a number of narrativised, pictorialised, or dramatised wholes is similarly recognised. Those variously rationalised wholes are consequently re-read, this time deconstructively. This second reading involves a structured play with the different contexts which can be adduced, and which can be generated from the presentations.

Pateman's two essays are important for opening up a debate concerning the character of the contextual determinants of meaning production and for introducing a notion of enacting a particular activity type. What needs to be drawn out more explicitly, however, are the elements of the notion "socially constituted" (57) which is embedded in the definition that Pateman cites of activity type. Simply stated, it is sought in this thesis to construct a recognition of how regularised social practices, such as the discursive social practice of reading advertisements, are overdetermined in an extended institutional order. The notions of activity type and language game, or even strategic action as used by Pateman, (58) presume too great a degree of autonomy for practices. Social practices are not fully autonomised games. Their strategic possibilities are con-

ditional both in respect of the constituted interiority of the practice and the exteriorities which they re-mark (59) and which serve as the conditions of existence of the practice. The concept of social practice permits a recognition of a degree of autonomisation and regularisation for practices, but it also encodes a conceptualisation of the constraints imposed upon partially autonomised practices.

The orientation taken up in this thesis, to consider reading advertisements as a form of discursive social practice, gives rise to problems concerning the subject of discursive social practice, the interpellation of that subject by and for ideology, and the constitution of what might be termed an 'unconscious', as a resistant residue. Decoding Advertisements engaged with these problems from one perspective, employing semiology, marxian discourse, and semiologically-influenced psychoanalytic theory. How to do things with images and How is understanding an advertisement possible? tackle related issues, employing philosophy of language, some semiology, pragmatics and linguistics. The means by which these latter two essays approach reading advertisements may not be pursued directly in this thesis. The concepts of communication, intention, activity type and pragmatic knowledge are all critically re-assessed in the light of theoretical frameworks associated with Foucault and Derrida, amongst others. Nevertheless, the issues raised in those two essays are pursued indirectly, through a concern for contextual determination and the enactment of regularised social practices. It is to an explicit theoretical elaboration of this field of problems that the thesis now turns.

NOTES TO 2.22

1. Pateman, T. How to do things with images: an essay on the pragmatics of advertising. Theory and Society, vol. 9 1980, p. 603-622.  
This is referred to in these notes as Pateman, T. (1980a).  
  
Pateman, T. How is understanding an advertisement possible? (In Language, image, media; edited by H.H. Davis and P. Walton. Blackwell, 1983. p. 187-204).  
This is referred to in these notes as Pateman, T. (1983).  
  
The first essay may also be found in Pateman, T. Language, truth and politics. 2nd edition, Lewes, Sussex: Jean Stroud, 1980 p. 215-237.  
This book is referred to in these notes as Pateman, T. (1980b).
2. This concept is introduced by Pateman in the second of the cited essays. See Pateman, T. (1983), p. 189.
3. The unconscious: while not a thoroughly Freudian concept, this term bears the mark of a Freudian heritage from which it has been exised. The unconscious as used herein is a semiological concept first and foremost.
4. See Derrida, J. Limited Inc abc... Glyph, 2 1977, p. 162-254.  
In this long essay Derrida discusses the characteristic limitations of philosophy of language in terms such as the following:  
  
"...at the "origin" of every speech act, there can only be Societies which are (more or less) anonymous, with limited responsibility or liability \*Sar1 - a multitude of instances, if not of "subjects", of meanings highly vulnerable to parasitism - all phenomena that the "conscious ego" of the speaker and the hearer (the ultimate instances of speech act theory) is incapable of incorporating as such and which, to tell the truth, it does everything to exclude."  
Limited Inc abc..., p. 216.  
  
\*Sar1 is an acronym for Société à responsabilité limitée.

5. This is not the concept of strategy used in Pateman's essays, in the form of strategic action, a term derived from Habermas. The concept of strategic action seems to imply a sense of manipulation. It also seems to be implied that such "manipulation" is inferior to communicative action. Furthermore, the definition of strategic action presupposes speakers and hearers in an ideal speech situation:

"...strategic action (manipulation) is defined in terms of intention to achieve an effect where the successful achievement of the effect is partly dependent on the hearer's non-recognition of the intention to achieve that effect..."  
Pateman, T. (1983), p. 200-201.

Strategic action, in this thesis, is not simply distorted or defective communicative action. Such a possibility as communicative action must itself be conceived as strategic in character.

6. Intention is not being discarded simply. The simplicity of intentionality is being put in question, in the manner in which Derrida conceives the notion of iterability:

"What is limited by iterability is not intentionality in general, but its character as being conscious or present to itself (actualised, fulfilled, and adequate), the simplicity of its features, its undividedness"  
Limited Inc abc..., p. 249.

7. This distinction between discursive and nondiscursive is developed in the theoretical section, Section 3.

8. See Pateman, T. (1980b), p. 237.

"To say, as I do, that 'advertising is to be thought of as a class of speech act' is pretty implausible. For Searle, speech acts are the minimal units of linguistic communication, whereas an advertisement is plainly not a minimal unit - it may be made up of speech acts, but it is not itself one."

See also note 12 of Pateman, T. (1983), p. 203.

9. Pateman takes the concept from Levinson, whom he quotes as follows:

"I take the notion of an activity type to refer to a fuzzy category whose focal members are goal-defined, socially constituted, bounded events with constraints on participants,

setting, and so on, but above all on the kinds of allowable contributions. Paradigm examples would be teaching, a job interview, a jural interrogation, a football game, a task in a workshop, a dinner party, and so on." Pateman, T. (1983), p. 193.

Pateman adds advertising to the list constructed by Levinson.

10. Pateman, T. (1983), p. 188.
11. Pateman, T. (1983), p. 192.
12. Pateman, T. (1980a), p. 606.
13. Pateman, T. (1983), p. 187.
14. Pateman, T. (1983), p. 199.
15. Pateman, T. (1980a), p. 611.
16. See Pateman, T. (1980a), p. 603.  
  
"Undertaking the wholesale transfer of concepts and theories from philosophy of language permits an analysis of images at least as interesting and probably more precise or intersubjectively verifiable than the image analysis which has come out of recent Franco-Italian semiology and semiotics."
17. Pateman, T. (1980a), p. 603.
18. Pateman, T. (1980a), p. 603.
19. Pateman, T. (1980a), p. 603.
20. In a footnote to How is understanding an advertisement possible?, Pateman acknowledges that even Barthes himself was aware of the notion of contextual, 'pragmatic' determination, even if his earlier essay, Rhetoric of the image, was not concerned to stress those features of meaning production.
21. Metz, C. The imaginary signifier. Screen, vol. 16(2) Summer 1975. p. 14-15, note 2.
22. Searle, J. Reiterating the differences: a reply to Derrida. Glyph, 1 1977, p. 198-208.
23. Derrida, J. op. cit., p. 176.
24. Derrida, J. loc. cit.

25. See Derrida, J. op. cit., p. 174-176.
26. See Derrida, J. op. cit., p. 173.
27. Foucault, M. My body, this paper, this fire. Oxford Literary Review, 4(1) Autumn 1979, p. 27.
28. Foucault, M. op. cit., p. 27.
29. Foucault, M. op. cit., p. 27.
30. For example, see Derrida, J. op. cit., p. 220.

"the import of context can never be dissociated from the analysis of a text, and that despite or because of this a context is always transformative-transformable, exporative-exportable."

"Every sign, linguistic or non-linguistic, spoken or written (in the current sense of this opposition), in a small or a large unit, can...break with every given context, engendering an infinity of new contexts in a manner which is absolutely illimitable. This does not imply that the mark is valid outside of a context, but on the contrary that there are only contexts without any center or anchoring."

and Derrida, J. op. cit., p. 198.

"To treat context as a factor from which one can abstract for the sake of refining one's analysis, is to commit oneself to a description that cannot but miss the very contents and object it claims to isolate, for they are intrinsically determined by context. The method itself, as well as considerations of clarity should have excluded such an abstraction. Context is always, and always has been, at work within the place, and not only around it."

31. For example, see Derrida, J. op. cit., p. 173, where it is asserted that the authors of the 'reply to Derrida', Searle + n, seemed not to be aware of "the other texts that form the context of Sec and endow it with a certain meaning." (Derrida, J. op. cit., p. 173.) Sec refers to Derrida's essay 'Signature event context' which can be found in Margins of philosophy. Brighton: Harvester Press, 1982. p. 307-330.
32. Derrida, J. Limited Inc abc..., p. 236.
33. Derrida, J. Limited Inc abc..., p. 236.

34. The issue is stated clearly by David Wood:

"Does not the deconstruction of the history of philosophy of presence already posit as a history, as a series of expressions of the same theme. Does it not, in other words, at the very moment at which it discovers the pervasiveness of presence, thereby making 'presence' present, display it as a unity of the series of its appearances. Derrida's list goes on like this:

"...(presence of the thing to the sight as eidos, presence as substance/essence/existence (ousia), temporal presence as point (stigma) of the now or of the moment (nun), the self-presence of the cogito, consciousness, subjectivity, the co-presence of the other and of the self, intersubjectivity as the intentional phenomenon of the ego, and so forth" ...the condition of the unity of the list is surely the way in which each of its elements exemplifies the essence of presence."

Wood, D. Derrida and the paradox of reflection. Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology, vol. II(3) October 1980, p. 230-231.

35. It is not possible, for example, for Foucault to write the history of a silence as if from an authentic position of interiority. See Bennington, G.P. Cogito incognito: Foucault's 'My body, this paper, this fire'. Oxford Literary Review, 4(I) Autumn 1979, p. 7.

See also Derrida, J. Limited Inc abc..., p. 173.

"Signature event context analyses the metaphysical premises of Anglo-Saxon - and fundamentally moralistic - theory of the performative, of speech acts or discursive events. In France, it seems to me that these premises underlie the hermeneutics of Ricoeur and the archaeology of Foucault."

36. See Wood, D. Style and strategy: Heidegger and Derrida. Monist, vol. 63 1980, p. 506:

"Finally, self-reflection, or perhaps better, self-commentary. This includes all those remarks in which Derrida explicitly explains the problems of his kind of texts, the need for strategy, the risks of sterility, the debts he has to other thinkers, etc.. What is so important about them is that they seem to themselves occupy a privileged position in his texts, of being meant LITERALLY,



SERIOUSLY, even URGENT, and yet they are part of, and necessary parts of texts that question the very possibility of such a privilege of the serious and the literal."

37. Culler, J. On deconstruction. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1983, p. 159.
38. See Culler, J. op. cit., p. 156-179. The title of this section is 'Institutions and inversions'.
39. Foucault, M. Archaeology of knowledge. London: Tavistock, 1972.
40. Foucault, M. The birth of the clinic: an archaeology of medical perception. London: Tavistock, 1973.  
Foucault, M. Discipline and punish: the birth of the prison. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1977.
41. See Foucault, M. Discipline and punish, p. 27-28.

"Perhaps, too, we should abandon a whole tradition that allows us to imagine that knowledge can exist only where the power relations are suspended and that knowledge can develop only outside its injunctions, its demands and its interests."

"We should admit rather that power produces knowledge...; that power and knowledge directly imply one another; that there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations. These 'power-knowledge relations' are to be analysed, therefore, not on the basis of a subject of knowledge who is or is not free in relation to the power system, but, on the contrary, the subject who knows, the objects to be known and the modalities of knowledge must be regarded as so many effects of these fundamental implications of power-knowledge and their historical transformations."

42. Unless, by some perverse overturning, Habermas were to be included in that tradition. See Rasmussen, D.M. Communicative action and philosophy: reflections on Habermas' 'Theorie des kommunikativen handelns'. Philosophy and Social Criticism, vol. 9(1) 1982, p. 2-28.
43. See Derrida, J. Limited Inc abc..., p. 216. This passage is quoted in note 4 above.

See also Graham, K. Illocution and ideology: (how to do more things with words than you realise)

(In Issues in marxist philosophy. Vol. 4, Social and political philosophy; edited by J. Mepham and D.H. Ruben. Brighton: Harvester, 1981. p. 153-192).

Note especially:

"Skinner himself argues thus: recovery of illocutionary force is a necessary stage in the explanation of utterance and other acts; illocutionary force is defined by the speaker's intentions; what someone can meaningfully intend depends on what he believes; therefore, there is a necessary stage in the explanation of such actions which must make reference to the agent's beliefs... But the conclusion will no longer follow if, as I have suggested, the link between illocution and intention is broken. On the contrary, if illocutionary redescription is a necessary stage in the explanation of action, and if some illocutionary redescriptions do not depend on the agent's intentions, then there will be a necessary stage in the explanation of some action which does not rest on the agent's intentions. And then it further follows that if the reason we must pay attention to the agent's beliefs is that they place a constraint on what he can intend, then there will be a stage in the explanation of some action which does not require attention to the agent's beliefs, even though it is a stage at which what he is doing is in question." Graham, K. op. cit., p. 162-163.

44. Keith Graham argues to the effect that there is not a definitional link between intention and illocutionary force. Illocutionary force cannot be explained by reference to intention alone. The notion of illocutionary force is derived from Austin's categorisation of linguistic acts into locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary. Austin uses the notion of illocutionary force to establish that when a discourse is uttered something is not only said but also done. Uttering discourse is conceived as a form of doing. Strawson develops the concept, but Graham approaches it through the work of the historian Quentin Skinner. He uses the notion to locate texts in their historical contexts, by trying to establish what was their illocutionary force, given what was possible in terms of their operation as 'meaningful', as both saying and doing.
45. Pateman, T. (1980a), p. 621.
46. Pateman, T. (1983), p. 200.

47. Pateman, T. (1983), p. 200.
48. Pateman, T. (1983), p. 200.
49. See the definition of strategic action cited in note 5 above.
50. See Derrida, J. *Limited Inc abc...*, p. 220.
51. Pateman, T. (1983), p. 200.
52. Pateman, T. (1980a), p. 621.
53. Pateman, T. (1980a), p. 620.
54. Pateman, T. (1983), p. 200.
55. Pateman, T. (1983), p. 200.
56. Pateman, T. (1983), p. 200.
57. Pateman, T. (1983), p. 189.
58. For activity type, see Pateman, T. (1983), p. 189.  
For language game, see Pateman, T. (1980b), p. 237.  
For strategic action, see Pateman, T. (1983), p. 200.
59. Re-mark: this is a concept taken from Derrida.
- "What is announced here, as I tried to indicate in "la double seance" (double science, double sense, double scene), is again the operation of the double mark or the re-mark. The concept of matter must be marked twice...: in the deconstructed field - that is the phase of overturning - and in the deconstructing text outside the oppositions in which it has been caught (matter/spirit, matter/ideality, matter/form, etc.) By means of the interval between the two marks, one can operate both an overturning deconstruction and a positively displacing, transgressive, deconstruction."  
Derrida, J. Positions. Chicago : University of Chicago Press, 1981. p. 65-66.

## CHAPTER 3

### THEORY

### 3.1 PRACTICE AND PRODUCTION

A number of features may be recognised to have emerged as important in relation to understanding the advertisement as an institutional, discursive resource and reading advertisements as the enactment of a relatively regularised discursive social practice. These may be named as follows: the concept of meaning as the discursive production of readings; the constitution of the subject, in its intersubjective and its object relations, through reading; the interpellation of constituted subjects by and for ideology; the contextual determination of meaning production from utterances or presentations; the enactment of discursive meaning production as a (relatively) regularised activity or, in the term preferred herein, practice.

Furthermore, a number of specific difficulties have been seen to arise in relation to these important features. These may be sketched in the following way. The character of the discursive space of reading advertisements needed to be settled more precisely, otherwise it might tend to be conceived as a formal space. The character of the subject needed to be distinguished more clearly from what it is not, i.e. the subject is not an essential unity centred upon (individual) consciousness, the biological body, or the rational identity as ego. A problematic featuring the subject, not the individual, raises difficulties in relation to the character of intentionality. If intentionality is recognised to be institutionally and discursively dispersed,

the problem arises of a certain unconscious, for want of a better term. Individual and conscious intentionality may be recognised as specific forms of institutional and discursive resource, but they are not conceived as origins. The concept of ideology, in relation to consciousness and intentionality, raises a series of interlocking problems. These concern the social, institutional and discursive character of ideology, and the conditions of existence and the mode of existence of ideological processes. The problem of context becomes entangled with those which concern both ideology and practice. Utterances and presentations are to be understood in the context of specific forms of discursive practice which are themselves imbricated in an ideologically overdetermined order of practices, both discursive and nondiscursive in mode, a distinction which is elaborated presently.

If utterances tend to be understood in conventionally constituted relevant contexts, the practice of reading developed in this thesis tends to complicate matters by introducing contexts which are relatively irrelevant, by conventional standards. In that shift of relevance and context, the relatively regularised practice, is, first, recognised as non-unitary. Its stability is not guaranteed. Second, it becomes open to a production which transgresses conventionally constituted order. It is an important theoretical point that this shift is achieved through use of the elements of the textual presentations and the social, textually articulated, resource which such presentations constitute. New contexts can be generated from the elements of the text itself.

Again, a certain unconscious is recognised, as the possibility of alternative order and productivity, in relation to the conventionally constituted dominant order. Order itself, in relation to both ideology and practice becomes a difficult concept when considering the relationships between such effects of dominance and subordination. Similarly, the concept of a totality, of explicitly and implicitly recognised elements, phenomena and processes, becomes problematic. The ideal of the total context (1) might be seen to remain, whereby it is imagined that an utterance or presentation may be understood ultimately or comprehended fully. While a concept of totality does operate in this thesis, it is not one which carries with it the implication of ultimacy, an issue which is discussed in what follows.

The position taken is that there is no ultimate context by means of which an utterance or presentation may be finally resolved. There are only contexts which are indeed illimitable(2). Yet there are definite regimes whereby meanings have become stabilised, if not fixed, such that they seem not to be part of a system of production. They seem to be simple correlates, fixed such that a number of manifest elements are united by and to an essential identity.

It is to a theoretical resolution of the range of problems set out above and to other implicit problems generated, given the general principle sketched, to which attention is turned now. First, a precaution should be stated

concerning the status of theory as conceived in this thesis. The tenor of how theory is understood is derived from Foucault who states that,

"The role for theory today seems to me to be just this: not to formulate the global systematic theory which holds everything in place, but to analyse the specificity of mechanisms of power, to locate the connections and extensions, to build little by little a strategic knowledge." (3)

The theorisation constructed is not synthetic. It is strategic and interventionist in character. A working knowledge of advertisements is articulated, a knowledge constructed in and through discursive practice. Advertisements are worked, or marked (4), conventionally and reworked, or re-marked, deconstructively (5). Advertisements are not classified, as if from a position of transcendence or of total comprehension. What follows, then, is an outline of the theoretical apparatuses and the elements derived from them which constitute the strategic knowledge constructed in this thesis. This is followed in section 4 by a development of that conceptual framework in practice through a series of readings of advertisements.

Foucault and Derrida have been introduced in relation to a consideration of the principle of the contextual determination of meaning production from utterances or presentations. They also recognise that discourses do more than simply represent objects and communicate intentions (6).

Both of these writers participated in the constit-



ution of a theoretical conjuncture in Paris in the late-1960's which drew together elements from so-called structural analyses, linguistics, semiology, marxian discourse and psychoanalytic discourse. That conjuncture may be considered to have been dominated by the production of a seemingly coherent alliance between linguistics, marxism and psychoanalysis, these theoretical practices in turn being represented by Saussure, Althusser and Lacan respectively (7).

It is characteristic of Foucault and Derrida to mark out a critical distance between their own discursive practices and those of philosophy, psychoanalysis, marxism, linguistics and semiology. They both establish a cautious distance from marxist discourse especially. Foucault seeks to avoid the more rigidly deterministic formulations of certain kinds of marxist discourse where they theorise social order. While he is critical of certain marxist formulations, concerning, for example, the concepts of ideology, political power and political repression (8), he does concern himself with issues that are recognisably similar to those which are thematised in marxist discourse. The manner in which Derrida portrays the relation between his writings and marxist discourse is even more cautious than Foucault's. There is no easily grasped series of implications between Derridean and marxist discursive practice. Themes are articulated in very different ways in each discourse.

Houdebine, in an interview with Derrida (9), tries to make the relationships between the Derridean text

and marxist discourse more explicit. It is an opportunity which Derrida declines (10), insisting upon the limited character of the theoretical work he undertakes (11).

The major point of articulation which Derrida concedes between his own work and marxism is a mutual concern to overturn the tenets of a metaphysical concept of history, as the linear or circular history of meaning (12). Derrida cites the work of Althusser as contributing to a critique of that metaphysical concept, through his critical analysis of the notion of an expressive totality (13). There is not, then, a single history, aligned to a system of teleological and eschatological implications, but only stratified, differentiated, and contradictory practical series (14).

In relation to the way in which the problem of meaning production from advertisements has been introduced above, the relevance of the Derridean and the Althusserian interventions concerns the character of the historical contexts, as a field of differentiated historicities, and the social contexts, as a field of differentiated modes of practice, which determine the meaning production. The theory being constructed here differs from that of Althusser, but there is a sufficient debt to justify a brief sketch of those aspects of Althusser's theorisation from which the current one has developed. The focus of the current theory may be characterised as distinctly post-Althusserian.

The historical ceases to be conceived as the unfolding of a singular process of development of progressively higher meanings. Similarly, the social becomes con-

ceivable through a theory of practice. This latter concept, of practice, arises in relation to Althusser's critique of both humanism and historicism (15). The social is not conceived in the form of a society, as a monolithic structure, nor in the form of interaction, between individuals or human beings, nor in the form of communication, of intentions between the rational egos of human beings. The social is conceived upon the basis of the conjunctural articulation of specific, differentiated modes of practice which are unevenly developed (16).

The concept of an expressive totality and the concept of a linear, or circular, history are criticised by Althusser. Neither society nor history may be theorised using an essentialist logic and mode of explanation (17). Nevertheless, some concept of structure and of totality remains. It is in thinking through these concepts in a critical discourse that Althusser can be recognised to construct elements which are useful in the context of this thesis. These theoretical elements are reworked to a small extent, but Althusser may be said to contribute the following concepts: structural causality, overdetermination, complex totality, conjuncture, structure in dominance and practice/production - to name the most prominent.

According to Althusser, while the social may constitute a totality, this is not a totality which is centred on nor derived from an essence. All of the elements of a complex social totality exist in relationships of overdetermination, taken to refer to the effects which the

constituent practices of a complex totality have upon that totality, and conversely the effects which the structuring totality reiterates upon those practices. Those practices themselves are never simple expressions of an essence, but are realised through specific forms of antagonisms, struggles and contradictions. The complex totality constitutes the conditions of existence for any given practice, while it overdetermines the forms which the struggles and outright contradictions within those practices take (19).

Practices may be understood as processes of production and transformation (20). Through practice specific forms of 'raw material' are worked into distinct social products. The characteristic feature of practice is that it implies productive work. Through productive work, subjects are constituted as social, both in relation to one another in intersubjectivity and in relation to determinate, objectifiable projects. Work implies the constitution of desire and the structure of deferral through which it is realised in relation to the achievement of specified, desired goals. The specificity of work can be glimpsed in Rossi-Landi's characterisation:

"Activity is expenditure without a product;  
work aims at something" (21)

In complex social formations, productive work is always a re-working of already constructed social products. Work is a non-originary concept. Through work, as structures and processes of iteration and alteration, the reproduced product is transformable. The issue of control over

social transformation and social reproduction is developed in the discussion of ideology and hegemony set out in what follows. Similarly the notion of desire is developed in the discussion of the category of the subject below.

Althusser specifies four dominant categories of practice (22). This scheme is not adhered to strictly in what follows, as is shown presently. Social products are not the result of simple causes but are produced, and hence are explicable, only in and through a system of complex structural causality. Products are in no sense simple expressions of an essence, whether that essence be conceived in humanist, historicist or idealist terms. Social products are the outcomes of material social practices as processes of transformation.

Finally, in relation to Althusser's theoretical contribution, while a social totality may not be said to have an essence or a centre, it does have a dominant element and a direction of determination. At any given conjuncture - a concept which refers to the balance of social forces and the state of overdetermination of social processes and struggles at a specific moment - one particular element may dominate the complex social totality (23). The development and articulation of the material forces and relations of production determines which of any of the elements of the social totality dominates at any given conjuncture (24).

The dominant element achieves a degree of relative autonomy, in that it is not the result of strict determination. But that relative autonomy is overdetermined in relation to the complex relationships of the totality (25).

It is this general theorisation which prepares the ground for Althusser's intervention into the theory of ideology. The topic of ideology is discussed after two points of difference have been stated in relation to Althusser's position. These points are, first, the introduction of a concept of symbolic production, in order to counter a possible, residual economism in Althusser's formulations (26), and, second, the introduction of the notion of cultural production, in order to reserve for the concept of the ideological a more specific use.

In respect of Althusser's conception of practice and production, it is considered theoretically necessary to introduce a concept of symbolic production from which specifically economic, political, ideological and theoretical production may be distinguished. Symbolic production, in relation to the other mentioned, is relatively undifferentiated. In the symbolic, economic, political and other practical, social functions tend to be performed at one and the same time.

It is necessary to introduce this concept in order to prevent Althusser's conception of the materiality of production, as a determining moment, becoming economic, and hence the concept of overdetermination becoming a theorisation of economic determinism in another guise (27). It is necessary theoretically to assert that the structure in dominance is (over-) determined by the material relations and forces of production, i.e. that there is a direction of determination even in conditions of overdetermination, but it is equally necessary to state that these are not

essentially economic in form. Economic, as a term, would have to be disengaged from the mercantile assumptions which define economic rationality as, "the maximisation of individual or group profit in competition in a society reduced to a mere market (of goods, power, values, etc.)." (28).

The specifically economic, in the modern, market sense, is to be differentiated from the more general economy of material, symbolic production. The concept of the symbolic is derived from a certain tradition of anthropological discourse. It has been reworked in the context of psychoanalytic discourse by Lacan and consequently finds its way into certain later-semiological theories of language and discursivity (29).

In the theorisation being constructed in this thesis, the concept of the symbolic is being related to the materialist premises encoded in marxian discourse. In such marxian discourses, the materiality and the importance of social relations are stressed, in contradistinction to those conceptions of the social and the subjective which emphasize substantive and essentialist definitions of phenomena. The concept of the symbolic is taken to refer to that moment in practice through which social relationships and social products are constituted. Social relationships are understood as a form of social product. This has repercussions for both a theory of practice/production and a theory of the subject.

The symbolic is taken to refer to the moment of self-grounding of practice (30), wherein, first, the social is constituted as a field of relationships between subjects, second, as a field of constituted objects which have been produced and may enter into specific social strategies, and, third, as a sub-system within but relatively autonomous with respect of a contextualising eco-system, however it is conceived culturally. Symbolic production, as the triple labour alluded to above, provides the grounding, which is enacted through practice, for 'communication', 'intentionality' and meaning production through, for example, discourse. It does so by constituting the social and symbolic relations which serve as the practical grounding for these more differentiated phenomena of inter-subjectivity.

It should be noted that while symbolic production is conceived of as relatively undifferentiated, in that a number of different social functions can be performed at one and the same time, it is not unmarked by distinctions (31). Markings of race, gender and generation can be considered as symbolic productions (32). It is the relatively unarticulated distinctions of the symbolic which are re-marked (33) in the more complex differentiating systems of industrialised social formations. Thus, racial, gender and generational markings are re-worked, in an overdetermined way, by, for example, class, national and other more local institutional status markings.

These re-markings are not reflectively constituted. While they reiterate the markings of the symbolic, they alter



them (34). Such re-markings are a constitutive element of what is termed here the pragmaticisation of practice and productive work. The other major features of pragmaticisation can be set out as follows.

First, there are the processes of autonomisation and individuation of social subjects. Through these processes are constituted ego-based imaginary identities which can enter into consciously reasoned association with one another to form specific interest groupings.

Second, productive work comes to be organised in relation to the goals negotiated between those competing and cooperating interest groupings who are engaged in realising specific projects. The defining of pragmatic ends, which are objectifiably realisable and which are worked towards in daily reiterated practice, produces a set of concrete procedures whereby tasks may be recognised to contribute, properly or improperly, to the goals specified.

Third, such regularisation of productive work allows the construction of separate institutions, limited in their social projection.

In concrete social practice, symbolic and pragmatic overdetermine one another. Neither can be characterised as a simple essence. Both are complex. The pragmatic is realised as a sub-system of the symbolic, through which the symbolic can be extended.

The pragmatic can be characterised as that domain in which social differentiation increasingly takes the form of an economisation of productive practice around established,

quantifiable objects and procedures. This economisation, in turn, is commercialised in terms of daily reiterated practice and the functioning of institutions. The commercial system is dominated by the system of capital, which constitutes relationships of power. This operates in terms of the institutional dominance of the economic in the extended order of the social formation and in terms of relations between institutionally situated social subjects.

The concept of pragmaticisation, leads to those of ideology and hegemony, wherein class relationships are recognised to be specific relationships of power which overdetermine how social practices are enacted.

The theorisation of practice adopted here is that it is self-grounding and relatively autonomous in relation to the series of its ecological environments. The form of practice is constrained environmentally but it is not essentially determined by environmental factors. This is a non-naturalistic conception of the determination of practice. Similarly, the theorisation of the subject adopted is not essentialist or substantivist. The subject of social practice is constituted in and through social relationships, themselves constituted as a product, or an outcome, of practice. This is not to deny the processes of autonomisation and individualisation by means of which social subjects are overdetermined.

Social subjects may indeed become formed as 'individuals', capable of acting on what they perceive to be their own reasons and interests. Nevertheless, this formation of reason and interest, it is argued, is constituted

in and through symbolic and more pragmaticised modes of practice. Before proceeding to a sketch of those more pragmaticised forms of practice, a brief characterisation of the category of the subject is called for.

The subject is theorised as being produced, as inherently social, in and through the processes of differentiation of practice. The subject is constituted as a relatively autonomous sub-system, in differential relation to the Other, to use a Lacanian formulation (35), which is the environment(s) in which the subject is formed. The subject is constituted in and through a field of intersubjective relations. This is constituted through what Lacan terms the processes of 'separation' and 'alienation' (36).

The distinction between subject and Other is produced as a result of the formation of the unconscious. The unconscious is conceived as an active break and as a process of tracing. The unconscious is the medium through which the subject is formed and is that which separates the subject from the Other.

The Other, as conceived here, differs in detail from that specified by Lacan. The Other is not defined in terms of Language (37). The Other is not univocal. The stress which Lacan places upon the Other as the domain of the symbolic is retained. However, the symbolic is recognised to be overdetermined by more pragmaticised forms of practice.

The Other is conceived of as that system of heterogeneous practices to which the subject belongs, as sub-system, yet from which the subject is distinguishable,

through the formation of the unconscious. The Other, then, is the domain of symbolic processes and practices which are always, in modern, industrialised social formations, overdetermined by pragmaticised institutional forms.

The constitution of desire in and through the unconscious, then, is not simply structured as a Language, to paraphrase Lacan (38). Desire is formed, through the unconscious, as the reiteration of structures of preference - relations and power-relations in the Other. The unconscious is not so much the discourse of the Other (39) as the reiterated transformation of the (overdetermined) practices - discursive or otherwise - of the Other. The Other is that complex series of environments which structures the unconscious and the possibilities for intersubjective recognition. Neither the unconscious nor the Other are concepts which encode a notion of origin.

Desire, then, does not simply reflect the structures of preference and power of the Other, but reiterates them through the separation and re-working of the unconscious. Given this perspective, it can be recognised that,

"The history of the individual as subject  
in and for a given social formation is  
never finished." (40)

Even if desire is characterised as the desire of the Other, as in Lacan (41), the Other is conceived as a differentiated and conflict-laden domain of preference- and power-relations. While desire may be denied a simple structure, nevertheless, it is constituted in relation to the Other, as the realisation of the processes of the (structural) unconscious.

The unconscious, then, is the name given to the active break with the environments of the Other, to found a relatively autonomous sub-system, which, in turn, allows the possibility of forming a subject. The subject is conceived as a moving principle in a field of intersubjectivity. The subject is constituted, with the unconscious, as a network of traces. The field of intersubjectivity is sustained through structures of recognition and desire.

The separation in which is formed the subject and unconscious serves as the medium through which emerges the ego. The ego is formed as the imaginary coherence of a set of identifications through which the subject passes as a moving principle. The process of ego-formation Lacan terms alienation, completing, with separation, the constitution of the subject (42). The process of suture names the passage over points of identification and the unification of that passage as a definite structural formation, an achieved unity.

The ego is misrecognised as a stable identity, as the origin and destination of reason and interest. The ego is, more properly, a representation upon which an imaginary identification is based. The processes of identifying, unifying and cohering, i.e. those of suture, remain unacknowledged. The ego is a complex product which is misrecognised as a simple origin.

Suture, then, is the process of joining a subject, as moving principle, to determinate practices of representation, of which the discursive practice of advertising is

being taken as example. Such practices are overdetermined as symbolic and pragmatic. The most highly differentiated forms of practices of representation, and consequently of communication as will be discussed presently, are discursive or signifying practices. They encode the possibility of reflexivity in the practice of representation itself, and hence the possibility of re-working the processes of suture. Suture takes place as a limited re-structuring of the subject.

Discursive practices of representation, such as advertising, are overdetermined in relation to the social formation in which they are situated. They suture the ego in specific structurations. They engage the subject, as a moving principle, and the structural unconscious. Through the structural unconscious are engaged the overdetermined desires of the subject, which are, in turn, constituted in relation to the Other, in which the extended institutional order of the social formation is dominant.

Reading, therefore, takes place as a complex labour which goes beyond the ego-based, pragmatically situated, processes of reasoning and calculation. Reading implies the movement of the subject through the processes of suture, but also of the formation of desires through that same movement. Reading is determined by the structures of the text, the form of the suture, the prior constitution of the subject, the structures of the unconscious and the structures of the Other in relation to which desire is constituted. Reading is at once a symbolic and pragmatic practice. The topic of

reading is pursued later, in relation to the concept of textuality. At present, it is to be noted that in articulating specific forms of suture with specific structures of the unconscious, texts may mobilise ideological interventions into the extended institutional order of a given social formation. They do so by providing textual constructs which represent the subject for him/her self. The subject is sutured to a determinate practice of representation and communication by means of which specific forms of imbrication are constructed. The subject is imbricated to determinate situated worlds, which come to operate as real in the context of the overdetermined order of a social formation. In that way, certain relationships of power, symbolic, pragmatic and ideological, are (re-)constituted and confirmed.

Having briefly sketched the category of the subject, it remains now to conclude the discussion of Althusser's theoretical contribution.

Althusser's categories may be related to this conception of the symbolic by arguing that the kinds of practice he specifies, i.e. economic political, ideological and theoretical, are constituted through processes of differentiation realised as symbolic production. They thus emerge as specific, relatively autonomised and relatively distinct, domains of practice. They become relatively self-sufficient regions of practice which encode explicitly formulated aims and regularised procedures. In modern, industrialised social formations, they become separated from one another as institutionalised functions (43).

It is argued that the categories specified by Althusser can be taken as pragmaticised forms of social practice. The pragmatic forming of practice is dominated by reasoning and behaviour constituted as instrumental and utilitarian. These forms rework symbolic practice. In this moment, of the pragmatic, the production of social relationships is not recognised to be coeval with the production of more objectified social products. Pragmatic forms of practice tend to stress the objective forms of social product over the intersubjective. Not all forms of pragmatic practice do this to an equal extent.

Economic practice, that is in its pragmatic sense, may be distinguished from political practice and from cultural practice - this last term is justified presently - in terms of their objective products and the ways in which intersubjective social relationships are perceived and developed. The most extreme forms of objectification occur in economic practice. It is this form of objectification which has become dominant institutionally in modern, industrialised social formations.

As has been noted, the term cultural practice has been substituted for ideological and theoretical practice in the scheme derived from Althusser. This becomes necessary theoretically in order to reserve for the concept of the ideological a more specific role. The major forms of pragmatic practice are considered to be economic production, political production and cultural production (44).



The choice of the term cultural indicates that certain pragmatic projects may be conceived whose primary pragmatic purpose is to construct products whose focus is intersubjective social meanings and intentionalities. They are made possible through the intersubjectivity constituted in the symbolic and the patterns of association by means of which these are reworked in the pragmatic. While that cultural production may operate, in the conditions of existence of a complex totality, in a manner which may be characterised as ideological, it is important to concede that ideological aims need not be foregrounded pragmatically. The distinction is one between ideological effectivity (45) and ideological aim or purpose. It becomes important to be able to distinguish between forms of cultural practice, some of which encode ideological aims explicitly while others do not. It may be shown subsequently that all forms do indeed have an ideological component, even if this is not foregrounded.

What is being suggested here is the material and operational character of the ideological. Ideology is not being thought through using an essentialist conceptualisation. Thus, for example, forms of cultural practice are not essentially ideological, even while it may be shown that in all forms and to some extent they do operate ideologically.

NOTES TO 3.1

1. See Derrida, J. Signature event context (In Margins of Philosophy. Univ. of Chicago Press, 1982. p. 307-330). esp. p. 321-322.
2. See Derrida, J. Limited Inc abc... Glyph, 2 1977, p. 220.
3. Foucault, M. Power and strategies (In Power/knowledge; edited by C. Gordon. Harvester, 1980 p. 134-145). p. 145.
4. For the terms marked and re-marked, see Derrida, J. Positions. Univ. of Chicago Press, 1981. p. 59-60 and p. 65-67.
5. "Deconstruction does not consist in passing from one concept to another, but in overturning and displacing a conceptual order, as well as the nonconceptual order to which the conceptual order is articulated."  
Derrida, J. Signature event context (In Margins of philosophy. Univ. of Chicago Press, 1982. p. 307-330). p. 329.
6. For example,  
"A progressive politics does not consider that discourses are the result of mute processes or the expression of a silent consciousness; but rather that - whether as science, literature or religious statements, or as political discourses - they form a practice which is articulated upon the other practices."  
Foucault, M. Politics and the study of discourse. Ideology and Consciousness, no. 3 Spring 1978. p. 24.
7. "To intervene in Marxism on the question of ideology, interrogating its relationship to psychoanalysis and linguistics, is ipso facto to touch on the kind of 'Triple Alliance' in theory concluded, in France at least, between the names of Althusser, Lacan and Saussure during the 1960's. As you will no doubt be aware, today more than ever, the future of this 'Triple Alliance' is highly problematic, and the parties to it have become the object of a real theoretical and political shake-up, in which everything is reopened to question."  
Pecheux, M. The French political winter: beginning of a rectification (In Language, semantics and ideology. Macmillan, 1982. p. 211-220). p. 211.

8. In response to the suggestion that,  
 "Marxist phenomenology and a certain kind of Marxism have clearly acted as a screen and an obstacle; there are two further concepts which continue today to act as a screen and an obstacle, ideology on the one hand and repression on the other."
- Foucault argues that the notion of ideology seems difficult to use for three reasons. First, it stands in a virtual opposition to something that counts as truth; second, it refers to something of the order of a subject; third, it stands in a secondary position to something infrastructural or basic.
- Foucault rejects certain formulations which have arisen in context of the Marxist conception of ideology and the Freudian conception of repression for his theorisation of power and sexuality.
- Foucault, M. Truth and power: interview with Alessandro Fontana and Pascale Pasquino (In Power/knowledge; edited by C. Gordon. Harvester, 1980. p. 108-133).p. 177
- See also Foucault, M. The history of sexuality. Volume I: an introduction. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1981. p. 92-96.
9. Derrida, J. Positions: interview with Jean-Louis Houdebine and Guy Scarpetta (In Positions. Univ. of Chicago Press, 1981. p. 37-96). esp. p. 60-62.
10. "I persist in believing that there is no theoretical or political benefit to be derived from precipitating contacts or articulations, as long as their conditions have not been rigorously elucidated. Eventually such precipitation will have the effect only of dogmatism, confusion or opportunism. To impose this prudence upon oneself is to take seriously the difficulty, and also the heterogeneity, of the Marxist text, the decisive importance of its historical stakes."  
 Derrida, J. Positions. Univ. of Chicago Press, 1981. p. 62.
11. See Derrida, J. Positions. Univ. of Chicago Press, 1981. p. 63.
12. See Derrida, J. Positions. Univ. of Chicago Press, 1981. p. 56-60.
13. "Althusser's entire, and necessary, critique of the "Hegelian" concept of history and of the notion of an expressive totality, etc., aims at showing that there is not one single history, a general

history, but rather histories different in they type, rythm, mode of inscription - inter-vallic, differentiated histories."

Derrida, J. Positions. Univ. of Chicago Press, 1981. p. 57-58.

14. See Derrida, J. Positions. Univ. of Chicago Press, 1981. p. 57-57.

15. For a critique of humanism, see Althusser, L. Marxism and humanism (In For Marx. 2nd ed., New Left Books, 1977. p. 219-247).

For a critique of historicism, see Althusser, L. and Balibar, E. Reading Capital. 2nd ed., New Left Books, 1977. See especially Chapter 5, Marxism is not a historicism, p. 119-144.

16. See Althusser, L. On the materialist dialectic (In For Marx. 2nd. ed., New Left Books, 1977. p. 162-218).

17. See Wickham, G. Power and power analysis: beyond Foucault? Economy and Society, vol. 12(4) November 1983, p. 468-498.

"By 'non-essentialist analysis' I mean analysis which does not understand its object in terms of an all important essence (like the economy, the state or the creative individual)... its specificity, its particular conditions of existence, without reference to an eternal, external essence."

Wickham, G. op. cit., p. 468.

18. See Althusser, L. On the materialist dialectic (In For Marx. 2nd. ed., New Left Books, 1977. p. 162-218). p. 209.

"...we must admit that contradiction can no longer be univocal (categories can no longer have a role and a meaning fixed once and for all) since it reflects in itself, in its very essence, its relation to the unevenness of the complex whole... .. it reveals itself as determined by the structured complexity that assigns it to its role, as - if you will forgive me the astounding expression - complexly-structurally-unevenly-determined. I must admit, I preferred a shorter term: over-determined."

19. See Althusser, L. On the materialist dialectic (In For Marx. 2nd. ed., New Left Books, 1977. p. 162-218). esp. p. 209-214.

20. See Althusser, L. For Marx, p. 253.

21. Rossi -Landi, F. Linguistics and economics.  
The Hague: Mouton, 1977. p. 37.
- For further aspects of the concept of work see  
Rossi-Landi, F. op. cit., p. 34-54.
22. See Althusser, L. For Marx, p. 253.
23. See Althusser, L. On the materialist dialectic  
(In For Marx. 2nd. ed., New Left Books, 1977.  
p. 162-218). p. 217.  
"...a theoretical result that might be expressed  
schematically in the following form: The specific  
difference of Marxist contradiction is its  
'unevenness', or 'overdetermination', which  
reflects in it its conditions of existence, that  
is, the specific structure of unevenness (in  
dominance) of the ever-pre-given complex whole  
which is its existence. Thus understood, con-  
tradiction is the motor of all development. Dis-  
placement and condensation, with their basis in  
overdetermination, explain by their dominance  
the phases (non-antagonistic, antagonistic, and  
explosive) which constitute the existence of the  
complex process, that is, 'of the development  
of things. "
24. See Althusser, L. Contradiction and overdetermin-  
ation (In For Marx. 2nd. ed., New Left Books,  
1977. p. 87-128). esp. p. 112-116.
25. See Althusser, L. For Marx, p. 255.
26. Althusser himself criticises economistic theorisat-  
ions, see Althusser, L. On the materialist  
dialectic (In For Marx. 2nd ed., New Left Books,  
1977. p. 162-218). p. 213 esp.
27. See Godelier, M. Anthropology and economics (In  
Marxist perspectives in anthropology. Cambridge  
Univ. Press, 1977. p. 15-62). See esp. p. 42  
where Godelier posits,  
"...vulgar materialism, 'economism', which  
reduces all social relations to the status of an  
epiphenomenon associated with economic relations  
which are themselves reduced to a technique of  
adaptation to the natural and biological environ-  
ment."
- Godelier distinguishes formalist, substantivist  
and Marxist conceptions of the economic.  
In the context of the Marxist theory of ideology,  
it is Gramsci who initiates a critique of economism.  
See Mouffe, C. Hegemony and ideology in Gramsci

- (In Gramsci and Marxist theory; edited by C. Mouffe. Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979. p. 168-204).
28. Godelier, M. op. cit., p. 19.
29. For the concept of the symbolic and cognate terms, e.g. symbolic function, symbolic order, symbolic power and symbolic violence, see Mauss, M. The gift: forms and functions of exchange in archaic societies. London: Cohen and West, 1966.  
Lacan, J. The function and field of speech and Language in psychoanalysis (In Ecrits. Tavistock. 1977. p. 30-113).
- Levi-Strauss, C. The effectiveness of symbols (In Structural anthropology. Penguin, 1972. p. 186-205).
- Wilden, A. System and structure. 2nd ed., Tavistock, 1980. See esp. Chapter IX, Nature and culture.
- Bourdieu, P. Outline of a theory of practice. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1977.
- Bourdieu, P. Symbolic power (In Two Bourdieu texts. Birmingham: Univ. of Birmingham Centre of Contemporary Cultural Studies, 1977. p. 1-7).
30. "The symbolic presents itself as a double movement within the subject: man makes an object of his actions, but only to restore to this action in due time its place as a grounding. In this equivocation, operating at every instant, lies the whole process of a function in which action and knowledge alternate."  
Lacan, J. Ecrits. Tavistock, 1977. p. 73.  
See also Bourdieu's concept of the dialectic of objectification and embodiment and his theorisation of the institution in this context. Bourdieu, P. Men and machines (In Advances in social theory and methodology; edited by K. Knorr-Cetina and A.V. Cicourel. Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981. p. 304-317).
31. As Wilden points out, the phenomena of the symbolic as a kind of production may not act as signs of things, but they may nevertheless operate as an element in exchange and the reproduction of practice as a sign of a relation.  
See Wilden, A. System and structure. 2nd. ed., Tavistock, 1980. p. 252-253.
32. See Fontaine, J.S. La Sex and age as principles of social differentiation. New York; London: Academic Press, 1978.
33. To use here again a Derrida derived concept.  
See Derrida, J. Positions. Univ. of Chicago Press, 1981. p. 65-68.

See also Derrida, J. Limited Inc abc... Glyph, 2 1977. p. 183-191.

34. It is Derrida's contention that iteration alters. This reiterates the concept of practice adopted here in that the production of practice transforms. Derrida uses the concept of the functional structure of the mark to produce a theorisation of the graphics of iteration which underlines his concept of text and textuality. See Derrida, J. Limited Inc abc... Glyph 2, 1977 p. 183-186.

On the notion of differentiation as applied to social development, see Rasmussen, D.M. Communicative action and philosophy: reflections on Habermas' Theorie des kommunikativen Handelns. Philosophy and social criticism, vol. 9(1) 1982, p. 2-28. See esp. p. 13, where Rasmussen discusses Habermas' fondness for a differentiated world view:

"In the long run, in the course of social development, society can be said to have developed along lines of progressive differentiation. For Habermas, who takes this view, this means that the social system becomes ever more differentiated, while, at the same time, the Lebenswelt becomes ever more rationalised. Equally the social system and the Lebenswelt become ever more differentiated from one another. The growing complexity of the social system gives impetus to the rationalisation of the Lebenswelt. Each new system development can present further life possibilities."

For Habermas, the Lebenswelt is associated with material reproduction, in the form of culture, society and personality.

35. See Lacan, J. Ecrits: a selection. London: Tavistock, 1977. p. 139-140.
36. See Lacan, J. The Four fundamental concepts of psychoanalysis. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1979. p. 203-229.
37. It is effectively defined as such in Lacan, J. The function and field of speech and language in psychoanalysis (In Ecrits: a selection. Tavistock, 1977. p. 30-113).
38. See Lacan, J. The Four fundamental concepts of psychoanalysis. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1979. p. 20.
39. See Lacan, J. Ecrits: a selection. London: Tavistock, 1977. p. 172.

40. Heath, S. Difference. Screen, vol. 19(3) Autumn 1978, p. 107.
41. Lacan, J. The Four fundamental concepts of psychoanalysis Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1979. p. 235.
42. See Lacan, J. Ecrits: a selection. London: Tavistock, 1977. p. 42-43.  
See also Lacan, J. The Four fundamental concepts of psychoanalysis. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1979. p. 203-215.
43. See N. Garnham and R. Williams' summary of Bourdieu's contribution to the sociology of culture, Garnham, N. and Williams, R. Pierre Bourdieu and the sociology of culture: an introduction. Media, Culture and Society, vol. 2 1980, p. 209-223. See esp. p. 215-216:

"Bourdieu is working with a model of historical development. He argues that...in pre-industrial, so-called primitive social formations characterised by limited spatial extension, limited division of labour and simple reproduction, the material and symbolic, the mode of production and the mode of domination, cannot be separated."  
(p. 215)

Subsequently, he argues, power becomes objectified in institutions such as the church or the market. Writing, in this theoretical context, comes to be conceived as one of the instruments of the objectification of power relations. The growth of an autonomous economic sphere leads to the development of a relatively autonomous symbolic sphere and to the conditions, eventually, of class struggle, which are realised, in part, as a struggle between orthodox and heterodox symbolic systems.

44. This categorisation is used by Colin Sumner in Reading ideologies:

"Social practices can be, and often are, usefully dealt with in three different types: economic, political and cultural. The criterion of the classification is rarely made clear. I would like to continue this trichotomy on the basis of the criterion of the produce of the practices. Thus, economic practices are distinguished from others by the fact that they result in use values...; political practices are distinguished by the fact that they result in forms of institutionalised social power; and cultural practices are distinguished by the fact that they result in the



expression of forms of signification (or ideologies)."

Sumner, C. Reading ideologies. London: Academic Press, 1979. p. 212.

It is not accepted in this thesis that forms of signification are simply equivalent to ideologies. Neither does Colin Sumner accept such an identification fully as can be gathered from other parts of the book.

Sumner explains that,

"In most societies, cultural practice means art, music, science, the dissemination of news, ritual, the dissemination of beliefs, literature, drama, dance..."

Sumner, C. op. cit., p. 213.

It is argued here that none of these are in any simple sense ideological, while all of them may come to operate ideologically.

Poulantzas also uses the notion of culture in relation to ideology:

"...if we abandon the conception of ideology as a conceptual system (in the strict sense of both of these terms) we can say that it encompasses what is often described as the 'culture' of a formation: provided, of course, that we do not fall into the mistake of ethnological culturalism which generally uses this term to cover a 'social formation' in its ensemble. As Gramsci clearly realised, ideology encompasses not merely scattered elements of knowledge, notions, etc., but also the whole process of symbolisation, of mythical transposition, of 'taste', 'style', 'fashion', i.e. of the 'way of life' in general."

Poulantzas, N. Political power and social classes. London: Verso, 1980. p. 208.

Finally, in relation to the use of the term culture, Goran Therborn acknowledges that,

"the concept of culture may be useful alongside a broad definition of ideology. It may, for instance, be employed either as a short-hand for the ensemble of everyday activities and ideologies of a particular group or class, or as a more general, inclusive concept for ideology, science and art and, possibly, other practices studied from the point of view of their production of meaning."

Therborn, G. The ideology of power and the power of ideology. London: Verso, 1980. p. 6.

45. The term effectivity is used by Althusser. See, for example, Althusser, L. Appendix to Contradiction and overdetermination (In For Marx. 2nd ed, London: New Left Books, 1977. p. 87-128). esp. p. 117.

"Engels has just shown that the superstructures, far from being pure epiphenomena of the economy, have their own effectivity... But this poses the question as to how, under these conditions, we should think the unity of this real, but relative effectivity of the superstructures - and of the determinant principle 'in the last instance' of the economy? How should we think the relation between these distinct effectivities?"

See also Althusser, L. For Marx, p. 250-251, for a definition of effectivity.

### 3.2. IDEOLOGY AND HEGEMONY

What roles are being reserved for ideology and the ideological, then, given the uses and distinctions set out above?

The conception of the ideological is pursued in the following terms. To recap briefly, symbolic, material production, as the self-grounding production of relationships and differences, becomes overdetermined by specifically delimited pragmatic projects. While the development of the precise form of the material productive capacity encodes a directional determination upon the social formation, this determination is not to be interpreted as a linear causality, an essentialist logic of development, or an economic determinism, economic taken at this point in its instrumental and utilitarian senses. The material productive capacity of a social formation is at once symbolic and pragmatic, each instance modifying the other, producing intersubjective social relations, interpersonal associations, social purposes, social projects and objectified constructs.

It is through the institutional separations that occur in the pragmatic that specifically economic projects have achieved dominance. In modern, industrialised social formations, the purposes and projects of pragmatic, economic practice are accorded preference. This dominance and this preference are realised through the extended intersubjective social relationships (1) which are constituted in and through the complex totality of the social formation. Furthermore, it is in relation to that region of pragmatic, economic

practice that social relationships in the form of class relationships begin to be constituted. The specifically economic form of class relationships itself comes to be overdetermined in the social totality. Class relationships, however, exert a complex determination upon symbolic and pragmatic forms of social production (2).

The constitution of social classes, as intersubjective groupings, politically and economically pragmatic associations, and as a pervasive, determinate kind of social relationship produced in and through prolonged social practice, is taken to be correlative with the development of a particular formation of the ideological (3). It is that specific form of the ideological, constituted in and through the development and the reiteration of a certain overdetermined system of production which is relevant.

The constitution of a particular kind of social order, an order dominated by a particular system of pragmatic, economic production, and the constitution of a particular kind of intersubjective social relationship are taken to be the referential horizons of the concept of the ideological. The ideological is not taken to be a structural level of any social formation whatsoever. The specificity of the use of the term ideological pertains to the operation of certain forms of social practice in an industrialised and, as is discussed presently, hegemonised social order. What is of especial interest is the operation of particular kinds of discursive social practices as ideological, either to sustain and reiterate an hegemonised order or to resist and subvert

it (4). Discursive social practice, as is discussed below, may be used to constitute extended social relationships (5) and hence to permit ideological interventions into the local forms wherein is constituted social order.

Four theoretical points concerning the concept of the ideological should be stated clearly at this juncture. First, the moment of the ideological which is of relevance here concerns the constitution of extended social relations as class relations. These may be understood as complex social relations and domains of intersubjectivities constituted in the prolonged operation of the social totality. In this instance, local historical dispositions are engaged, more or less successfully, by and with structural positions determined by the operation of the social as a complex system (6). Class relations overdetermine and come to predominate over other forms of symbolically and pragmatically constituted social relationship.

Second, while specific forms of practice, whether discursive or non-discursive in mode - a distinction discussed in what follows - may operate ideologically in a complex totality, they may not be reduced to the consciousness, utterances or actions of the class agents in whose interests those practices operate overall. This is to propose a non-class reductionist and a non-economic reductionist conception of the ideological. The class membership of any given utterer or agent does not in any simple sense determine the ideological import of the utterance or action. Practices which are ideological do not reflect in any

simple manner the class consciousness or the class interests of constituted social subjects (7).

Third, any form of practice, in whatever mode, may come to operate ideologically. The concept of the ideological operates in a processual and systematic theorisation of the constitution of social order. The ideological is not simply a level in the social formation. Hence, the ideological is not epiphenomenal to a more 'real' basis, or to an ontologically prior ground (8). The ideological, as is the case with the other categories mentioned which constitute the complexity of the social, has a material existence and is realised in and through the reiterated practices of that social totality (9).

Fourth, the ideological, in not being epiphenomenal but material and practical, does not constitute a domain of representations, in any simple sense of this term, which are false or inadequately mimetic. The ideological is not opposed to the true, or to true knowledge (10). The ideological is taken to refer to the constitution of subjects for an extended social order, in whose hegemonised order specific regimes of discursive practice may be accorded the status of articulating socially validated truths. Particular groups may use such discursive forms in order to make ideological interventions in the social, while claiming for those utterances a certain truth. The constitution of truthful statements becomes a matter of the interrelationship between utterance, discursive formation, situation and strategic purpose. Truth is never simple or pre-social, nor is it simply guaranteed by a system or a method.

Class relationships may refer in one strong sense to differences articulated in and through pragmatic, economic practice, but they may not be treated as essentially determined by economic relations (11). The formation of social classes is overdetermined by pragmatically political and cultural forms of practice, through which economic relations are reiterated, and in being reiterated are both transformed and become relatively autonomous. Class, therefore, while encoding a strong sense of material, economic interest and of economic power relations through extended social relationships, is overdetermined by political forms of power relations and cultural forms of authority. Economic wealth, political power and cultural authority are all components of the concept of class relationships.

Economic, material wealth is a dominant pragmatic form of power, but it is not an essence. Power, in any case, is defined relationally (12). The political organization of the state, it follows, does not simply encode reflectively economic relationships. Political relationships reconstrue relationships of economic power, even while they cannot simply overturn them. Political 'rights' and 'freedoms', for example, are not simply reflections of economic positions. The categories of the juridical, political and cultural apparatuses are relatively autonomous in respect of economic ones, and hence are transformable by means other than those based on economic interest alone (13).

The economy is not an essence of power relations and neither is the state (14). Both of these institutional

orders, however, overdetermine the more localised power relations of the social (15). The state cannot be considered as a simple class instrument, but neither may it be considered as a neutral or representative administrative institution. Power relations are not derived from a centre which extends its influence over all aspects of the social totality (16). Social hegemonies arise through the articulation of more local powers, overdetermined in the operation of a social system. Neither local historicity nor systematic operation may be designated as the origin of power. The system itself is not homogeneous. The overall order of the system is changed through the disarticulations and rearticulations of power relations, within the limits of possibility of the system (17).

The concept of hegemony, and the processes whereby hegemonisation is achieved, becomes relevant as a means of characterising relatively stabilised social formations, wherein ideological and class conflicts have not ceased but are managed, contained and domesticated (18). The concept of a dominant ideology (19), in conditions of hegemonisation, is not to be thought of as a centralised ideological formation which addresses and adumbrates all social subjects in a social formation (20). The dominant ideology comes to stand for the characteristic means by which ideological tensions and conflicts are resolved and managed such that they operate, overall, as one means of securing the hegemonised order. The dominant ideology does not come to replace wholly other ideological forms, but works to contain, marginalise and otherwise disperse the effectivity of subordinated and



resistant ideologies in the social. The dominant ideology is not a central core of ideas and values which command universal adherence throughout the social (21), nor indeed may ideological incorporation be considered as the major means by which a social formation is made unified - but never unitary - and social subjects constituted for that order (22).

What is of interest in this thesis is the way in which certain discursive social practices, such as reading advertisements, which utilise particular forms of textual resource, may operate as a constituent element of the dominant ideological formation. They become so by affirming an adherence to the hegemonised order of the social totality for the social subjects constituted through reading and hence constituted in extended social relations. The issue is approached in the following way.

In determinate conditions of industrial production, the objective products of practice, having been divided in social perception from the coeval production of relationships, become alienable from the specific practice of which they are an outcome. The products become economised instrumentally and can be expropriated from local historical situations. They may be relocated as elements in the extended social relationships which are dominated by the institutional forms of specific markets. Symbolically constituted marks or distinctions and locally pragmatic divisions may be further re-marked in terms of market values. Market values tend to become substantivised in the form of capital. The

money form, itself only a general equivalent of exchange and hence still a relational concept, is overdetermined by formations of capital accumulation, which exert relationships of power over determinate markets (23).

Those social classes in a structurally determined position to expropriate the symbolically and pragmatically marked product and to accumulate such products in the form of alienated private wealth and in the form of capital become the dominant intersubjective economic group. Such intersubjectivity is constituted in the form of extended social relationships. Such groups acquire the power to re-locate social products in the social. They are thereby enabled to make interventions which are ideological in character in the social.

That dominant class itself may be sustained significantly by a system of extended economic relations realised through market mechanisms. However, class cohesion may be made more explicit and comprehensible to the members of that class by the articulation of political strategies and cultural strategies. Class cohesion may be constituted in part through discursive means. Discourses may operate to clarify and to put a rationalised order into the material, economic interests of determinate classes. This allows the construction of strategies which are at once economic, political and cultural and which serve to secure the dominance of that class, through the articulation of differentially located power relations.

Discourse may operate to constitute subjects for a determinate class, in terms of constituting a clear formulation of the interests of that class, but it may also operate to intervene in the ideological strategies of other classes (24). What is at stake here is struggle over, first, the intersubjective meanings of the symbolic, second, the pragmatic constitution of instrumental utilities and, third, the formulation of strategies for securing or subverting political power in an hegemonised order.

Thus, ideological interventions may be made through the two dominant modes of public discourse, i.e. the bureaucratised production of official government and legal discourse and the institutionalised production of the discursive forms textually articulated in the media of 'mass' communication. While official and mass communication discourses may not be considered as simple expressions of class interests and class consciousness, they can and do operate to secure hegemonised social order by developing the material realisation of extended social relations (25). Subordinated classes are not hindered simply by unequal access to those institutions wherein official and other public discourses are produced but also by the institutional modes of intentionality of which those agencies are capable. Such agencies are overdetermined in relation to the complex social totality. They are not agencies whereby information, pure and simple, may be constructed and disseminated.

Institutional agencies such as, for example, those which constitute the media of mass communication cannot be

considered to be wholly dependent upon or subordinate to official institutions and discourses. They may permit the construction of counter-hegemonic discursive strategies. However, it is argued that their overall institutional mode of operation and their ideological effectivity is to affirm and to secure the hegemonised social order (26).

Given the conditions of a relatively stable hegemonised order, the media of mass communication become one important means whereby dominant class groupings may intervene in the symbolically and pragmatically constituted local historicities of practice (27). The social subjects constituted in local historicities may be interpellated by and for the ideological formation of hegemonised social order.

It is argued ~~that~~ advertisements are one constituent element of the media of mass communication, one which is a prominent media form. Through the dominance of the media of mass communication in the public awareness of discourse, advertisements receive a disproportionate amount of public attention, given their relative unimportance and even if that mode of attention is relatively distracted.

This is the general theoretical framework in which advertisements are being considered. At this juncture a more precise theorisation of their material textual and discursive characteristics becomes appropriate. Before moving onto this topic, it should be stated that it is assumed that the complex social reality which is constituted as class dominance may not be conceived in the form of a repressive

apparatus, nor is the hegemonised order every wholly secured (28). It is therefore a possible and a valid project to pursue a deconstructive reading of one of the means by which that dominance is secured (29), as part of a project of refusing to assent to that hegemonised order. It is to be acknowledged constantly that such a project is a very limited project of resistance, not to repression but to hegemonisation. Its mode of intentionality is not essentially constituted, but is discursive and strategic.

NOTES FOR 3.2

1. See Smith, D.E. Textually mediated social organisation. International Social Science Journal, vol. 36(1) 1984, p. 59-75.  
The phrase 'extended social relations' is used on p. 70 of the above cited article. This is a useful introductory article for understanding the relations between discourse and ideology, an issue developed presently.
2. "In a class society, all the products of a given agent, by an essential overdetermination, speak inseparably and simultaneously of his class - or, more precisely, his position in the social structure and his rising and falling trajectory - and of his (or her) body - or, more precisely, all the properties, always socially qualified, of which he or she is the bearer - sexual properties of course, but also physical properties, praised, like strength or beauty, or stigmatised."  
Bourdieu, P. Outline of a theory of practice. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1977. p. 87.
3. This is to accept certain limits upon the concept of ideology, such as those suggested by Larrain. The limits are intended to prevent an over-generalised use of the term and hence a lessening of its critical value.  
  
"There is no need for a class system for (myth) to exist. Myth exists largely in primitive classless societies with very simple social relations. Ideology on the contrary, emerges when the complexity of social relations has produced a system of classes."  
"...Godelier universalizes ideology to the point that it represents all forms of consciousness accompanying social relations."  
Larrain, J. The concept of ideology. London: Hutchinson, 1979. p. 153.  
  
The theory of ideology being constructed needs to take account of the following series of inter-related issues: ideology and truth/epistemology; ideology and ontology; ideology and power; ideology and interest; ideology and economy; ideology and the state; ideology and class; ideology and overdetermination; ideology and hegemony; ideology and dominance/resistance; ideology and consciousness; ideology and discourse.
4. "Every use of discourse is at once a judgement about its relation to dominant forms of power and either an assent or a resistance to this relation."

Frow, J. Discourse and power. Economy and Society, Vol. 14(2) May 1985, p. 204.

5. See Smith, D.E. Textually mediated social organisation. International Social Science Journal, vol. 36(1) 1984, p. 64:

"Discourse itself is a textually mediated social organisation. Notions such as that of intertextuality direct us to an investigation of the ways in which a given text depends on others. In recognising how texts function as constituents of social relations or social courses of action, however, our interest is less in tracing back to the determinations of its meaning structure through a given text than in explicating discourse as an active social process. Thus investigation cannot be confined to the text alone, but must take into account the social processes, including sequences of talk which are integral parts of the discursive process."

Smith argues that discourse interrelates and effects a movement between "the locally historic" and the distinct historicity of document time in relation to the institutional order in which such documents are founded and produced. In so acting, "discourse develops the ideological currency of society". Finally, "Ideological practices bind the local to the discursive through the interpretative circles whereby local instances index the text". All quotations are from Smith, D.E. op. cit., p. 64.

6. The distinction between the local and the structural, on the one hand, and between the local and the discursive, on the other hand, have been made by a number of writers in different theoretical vocabularies. Habermas, for example, has distinguished between 'action' and 'discourse'. 'Action' refers to everyday contexts of social interaction, in which information is acquired through sensory experience and exchanged through ordinary language. 'Discourse', on the other hand, designates a realm of communication which is abstracted from the contexts of everyday life. See Thompson, J.B. Universal pragmatics (In Habermas: critical debates; edited by J.B. Thompson and D. Held. Macmillan, 1982. p. 116-133). esp. p. 119.

Elsewhere Habermas distinguishes the Lebenswelt from the social system. Lebenswelt provides the context for the objective, subjective, and social worlds of linguistic usage. Habermas equates the concept of Lebenswelt with that of material reproduction. See Rasmussen, D.M. Communicative action and philosophy: reflections on Habermas' Theorie des kommunikativen Handelns. Philosophy and Social Criticism, vol. 9(1) 1982, p. 2-28.

A similar distinction is common in sociological discourse, between micro- and macro-sociological perspectives. Some recent theorisations have endeavoured to find ways of inter-relating the two theoretical contexts. See Advances in social theory and methodology; edited by K. Knorr-Cetina and A.V. Cicourel. Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981.

Foucault and Bourdieu can be counted amongst those who endeavour to construct a theorisation sensitive to both micro-processes and macro-systems. Foucault adopts a perspective of the 'micro-physics of power'. Power, he argues, is not to be identified with the state. Power emerges in specific alignments of micro-powers, which may be disarticulated and rearticulated. See Advances in social theory and methodology, p. 22-23. See also Foucault, M. The history of sexuality. Vol. 1: an introduction. Penguin, 1981. p. 92-96. Bourdieu develops the concept of habitus to deal with the local constitution of dispositions which may be articulated to the structural which are constituted as the institutional order of the social system. Thus, as Garnham and Williams explicate,

"the habitus is a family, group and especially class phenomenon, a logic derived from a common set of material conditions of existence to regulate the practice of a set of individuals in common response to those conditions. Indeed Bourdieu's definition of class is based on the habitus." Garnham, N. and Williams, R. Pierre Bourdieu and the sociology of culture: an introduction. Media, Culture and Society, vol. 2 1980, p. 213.

Bourdieu explains that social practice takes place as the more or less successful encounter between (structural) positions and the dispositions constituted in the habitus, or in other words, as the interaction between objectified, instituted history and internalised, embodied history. See Bourdieu, P. Men and machines (In Advances in social theory and methodology; edited by K. Knorr-Cetina and A.V. Cicourel. Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981. p. 304-317). esp. p. 313.

7. The ideological cannot be deduced from,

"the structure of economic forces or, directly, from the class positions of the real subjects of utterance"

Furthermore, the concrete subject is not to be considered as the origin of the utterance. See Frow, J. Discourse and power. Economy and Society, vol. 14(2) May 1985, p. 203.



8. Frow argues that the theory of ideology should not be,
- "an ontology of discourse, deriving its effects of meaning from formal structure, but rather theorise the multiple and variable limits within which relations of power and knowledge are produced."
- Frow, J. op. cit., p. 203.
- In this context, Frow argues that,
- "There can... be no absolute ontological distinction (of the order 'material/immaterial' or 'real/symbolic') between systems whose complex intrication constitutes the social structure."
- Frow, J. op. cit., p. 202.
- Frow uses the concept of "an overdetermined series of semiotic formations" to displace the notion of ontological dichotomy, i.e. between a real and an epiphenomenal. See Frow, J. op. cit., p. 202.
9. The theme of the materiality of the ideological is both Gramscian and Althusserian. See Mouffe, C. Hegemony and ideology in Gramsci (In Gramsci and Marxist theory; edited by C. Mouffe. Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979. p. 168-204). esp. p. 199. See also Althusser, L. Ideology and ideological state apparatuses (In Lenin and philosophy. 2nd. ed., London: New Left Books, 1977. p. 121-173). esp. p. 155, Thesis II: Ideology has a material existence.
10. As has already been mentioned, Foucault points to this as one of the shortcomings of the marxian concept of ideology, i.e. that it presupposes some idealised notion of truth. See Foucault, M. Truth and power (In Power/knowledge; edited by C. Gordon. Harvester, 1980. p. 134-145). esp. p. 118. Frow reiterates Foucault's assertion by stating that a theory of ideology ought not,
- "to assert a relationship of truth to falsity (and so its own mastery over error) but concern rather the production and the conditions of production of categories and entities within the field of discourse."
- Frow, J. Discourse and power. Economy and Society, vol. 14(2) May 1985, p. 203.
11. "It can in fact be stated that Marx's analyses of social classes never refer simply to the economic structure (relations of production) but always to the ensemble of the structures of a mode of pro-

duction and social formation, and to the relations which are maintained there by the different levels. Let us anticipate and say that everything happens as if social classes were the result of an ensemble of structures and of their relations, firstly at the economic level, secondly at the political level and thirdly at the ideological level. A social class can be identified either at the economic level, at the political level, or at the ideological level, and can thus be related with regard to a particular instance. Yet to define a class as such and to grasp it in its concept, we must refer to the ensemble of levels of which it is the effect." Poulantzas, N. Political power and social classes. London: Verso, 1978. p. 63-64.

12. A number of marxian and radical political theories encode relational conceptions of power. Foucault develops a novel concept of power as relational. See Philp, M. Foucault on power: a problem in radical translation. Political Theory, Vol. II(1) February 1983, p. 29-52.
13. This is still a marxian view of political power and the state. It is not functionalist, however. In no sense is it a liberal-democratic, on the one hand, or liberal-pluralist, on the other hand, conception. Account is taken of Foucault's objections to certain forms of marxism.
14. In Rasmussen's terms, as he explicates Habermas' position, economy and state operate as dominant sub-systems in the social. Thus, Rasmussen states that,
 

"The great problem in Habermas' view is that the modern sub-systems, economy and state, interfere in the process of the symbolic reproduction of daily life. They act functionally. This means that the processes of mediation between system and Lebenswelt are perceived under imperatives of money and power in functional terms exclusive of communication interaction."

Rasmussen, D.M. Communicative action and philosophy: reflections on Habermas' Theorie des kommunikativen Handelns. Philosophy and Social Criticism, Vol. 9(1) 1982, p.16
15. See Bourdieu, P. Outline of a theory of practice. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1977. esp. Chapter 2, Structures and the habitus.
16. See Foucault, M. History of sexuality. Vol. I : an introduction. Penguin, 1981. p. 92.

17. "power relations exist only in specific sites formed by an intersection of practices around specific policies; there is no one unified site or sites of power relations such as the social or the state and all such categories must be defined as specific groupings of practices which are repeated or represented in specific sites; strategies, tactics, techniques and technologies of power relations do not exist in or operate as meta-sites of power, incorporating smaller sites - they repeat the smaller sites within their boundaries and the smaller sites repeat them, or aspects of them, within them;"
- Wickham, G. Power and power analysis : beyond Foucault? Economy and Society, vol. 12 1983, p. 493. Some objection might be made to the use of the notions of repeating and representing. The concepts of reiterating and altering might be of more value in this context.

18. Instances of the use of the term hegemony are manifold, for example,

"Gramsci states that the supremacy of a social group may manifest itself in two forms: 'domination', which is realised through the coercive organs of the state, and intellectual and moral leadership, which is objectified in and exercised through the institutions of civil society, the ensemble of educational, religious and associational institutions. This latter form of supremacy constitutes hegemony...

... Hegemony is therefore the predominance obtained by consent rather than force of one class or group over other classes..."

Femia, J. Hegemony and consciousness in the thought of Antonio Gramsci. Political Studies, vol. 23(1) 1975, p. 30-31.

This is not the place to discuss the development of Gramsci's own understanding and use of the term hegemony. For that, see Femia, J. Gramsci's patrimony. British Journal of Political Science, vol. 13 1983, p. 327-364. esp. p. 346-352. Femia points out that the term had currency in Marxist discourse before Gramsci's development of it.

"Hegemony...signifies the control of social life (by a group or a class) through cultural, as opposed to physical means."

Femia, J. (1983), p. 346.

The implications for Marxist, socialist strategy of the concept of hegemony are that a 'war of position' is favoured, which features gradual subversion of

existing institutions, rather than a 'war of movement', i.e. direct frontal attack upon the governing apparatuses. A war of movement can be attempted and be successful only in very specific circumstances. See Femia, J. (1983), p. 350.

"Any definition of hegemony is complicated by the use of the word in two diametrically opposed senses: first, to mean domination, as in 'hegemonisation'; and secondly, to mean leadership, implying some notion of consent."

A Dictionary of Marxist thought; T. Bottomore... et al, editors. Oxford: Blackwell, 1983. p. 201.

See also Mouffe, C. Hegemony and ideology in Gramsci (In Gramsci and Marxist theory; edited by C. Mouffe. Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979. p. 168-204). This article may also be found in Culture, ideology and social process: a reader; edited by T. Bennett... et al. London: Batsford, 1981. p. 219-234.

See also Buci-Glucksmann, C. Gramsci and the state. Lawrence and Wishart, 1980. esp. Chapter 2, State, class and apparatus of hegemony.

See also Williams, R. Marxism and literature. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1977. esp. Part 2 Chapter 6, p. 108-114.

See also Hall, S... et al Politics and ideology: Gramsci (In Working Papers in Cultural Studies 10: on ideology. Birmingham: Univ. of Birmingham, Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, 1977. p. 45-76).

"Hegemony is a fragile and difficult process of containment."

Frow, J. Discourse and power. Economy and Society, vol. 14(2) May 1985, p. 205.

The notion of the 'domestication' of conflict is dealt with in Femia, J. Hegemony and consciousness in the thought of Antonio Gramsci. Political Studies, vol. 23(1) 1975, p. 47-48.

19. "We can thus determine the precise meaning of the relation between dominant ideology and politically dominant class in class-divided societies. In these societies the original function of ideology is overdetermined by the class relations in which the structures distribute their agents. The correspondence between the dominant ideology and the politically dominant class is not due (any more than the specific internal coherence of the ideology is) to some kind of historico-genetic relation."  
Poulantzas, N. Political power and social classes. London: Verso, 1978. p. 209.
20. See on this point Abercrombie, N., Hill, S. and Turner, B.S. The dominant ideology thesis. London: Allen and Unwin, 1980.

21. See Abercrombie, N., Hill, S. and Turner, B.S. The Dominant ideology thesis.
22. "In the Dominant Ideology Thesis, we noted the paradox that in late capitalism the ideological apparatus is greatly extended, while the economic and political subordination of people makes ideological incorporation increasingly redundant. There are two reasons why we believe that ideological variation increases with the development of late capitalism: (1) 'dull compulsion' in everyday life is adequate for the subordination of the worker, and, (2) there is no economic requirement for a dominant ideology. In short, capitalism can 'tolerate' contingency better than any other mode of production."  
Abercrombie, N., Hill, S. and Turner, B.S. Determinacy and indeterminacy in the theory of ideology. New Left Review, no. 142 Nov. - Dec. 1983, p. 65.
23. See Wilden, A. System and structure. 2nd ed. Tavistock, 1980. p. 390-394.
24. See Smith, D.E. Textually mediated social organisation. International Social Science Journal, vol. 36(1) 1984, p. 66.  
Smith indicates that the ruling apparatus makes use of ideological processes of inscription.
25. See Smith, D.E. Textually mediated social organisation, p. 63.
26. See Frow, J. Discourse and power, p. 204. Frow argues that ideology should be considered as a state of discourse in relation to the class struggle. Ideology would be thought through as a differential relation to power.
27. Although, as has been indicated, Abercrombie, Hill and Turner argue that ideological incorporation becomes less necessary in the conditions of late capitalism.
28. Foucault argues convincingly against the concept of repression, both in the context of marxist theory and in the context of psychoanalytic theory. See Power/knowledge, p. 118.  
On the ceaselessness of ideological struggle even under hegemonised conditions, see Hall, S. .. et al Politics and ideology: Gramsci (In Working Papers in Cultural Studies 10: on ideology. Birmingham: Univ. of Birmingham, Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, 1977). esp. p. 68:

"For Gramsci, there is no state or moment of "hegemony" which is not contested; none which is not the result of the ruling class alliance mastering the class struggle; no "hegemony" which does not have to be won, secured, constantly defended."

29. As part of a 'war of position', in Gramsci's terms, which becomes a practical deconstruction, in Derrida's terms.  
See Femia, J. Hegemony and consciousness in the thought of Antonio Gramsci, p. 34.  
See Derrida, J. Positions.

### 3.3 DISCURSIVE PRACTICE, TEXTUALITY AND DECONSTRUCTION

There is no single, simple, hard and fast distinction between discursive practice and nondiscursive practice. They are distinguished theoretically and analytically on the grounds of a number of intersecting criteria. For example, they employ different degrees of semiotic articulation. Discursive practices tend to be more digitalised and to engage multiple articulation of significant elements as a principle of production. They employ, characteristically, different ranges of material semiosis and hence have distinct kinds of material effectivity in the social. They can be differentiated on the grounds of the distinct kinds of social action they make possible.

In concrete instances of social practice, discursive and nondiscursive modes are interwoven. In both modes, social relations are produced, as are more objectified social products. Both modes may be pragmaticised, to serve explicit institutional ends. Thus, the social products of both modes can be understood as symbols, in constituting relations of intersubjectivity, as signs, conveying and producing 'meanings', as utilities, active elements of production serving specific pragmaticised purposes, or commodities, produced for generalised exchange and exchanged for profit. Symbols are characteristically overdetermined as signs and utilities. The latter, given the current social conjuncture, are regularly overdetermined as commodities. It is in the articulation of these moments of overdetermination that ideological interventions become possible.

One crucial distinction between discursive and nondiscursive practices is the degree to which discursive practices can be made to reiterate and hence to 're-think' for a subject other social practices, of whatever mode. Discursive practices tend to be more reflexive in character and that reflexivity can be extended in practice. It is the reflexivity of discursive practices which grounds the possibility for deconstructive reading practices, which are discussed presently.

Discursive practices, then, do not simply construct representations of other social practices. Discursive practices reiterate the elements of other social practices and, in registering them in a reflexive order, submit them to possible alteration, both intentional and unintended. Discursive practices are not self-enclosed interiorities. They do not represent in the sense of being epiphenomenal to an ontologically prior 'real'. Like all social practice, discursive practice is self-grounding, but sub-tended in an overdetermining field of relationships to its contextualising environment.

It has been argued that discursive practices do not simply or necessarily construct representations, whether of other social practices or of some objectively 'real' ground. Yet it is obvious that determinate textual presentations can be made to represent and, in representing, to communicate. Textual presentations can be constructed using different reading methods enacted according to the strategies of distinct discursive practices.

What is of interest here are the ways in which advertisements, understood as textual presentations, are made



to constitute a communicative practice in which representations are constructed, as meanings, for a subject. The initial moment of such a reading method is the already mentioned process of suture. Through suture, textual elements are taken to constitute representations for a subject of him/her self. The set of representations are unified and cohered as an ego. This is the initial structuration of the subject in and for a reading of a given textual presentation.

Suture constitutes the initial punctuation of a textual presentation. It positions the subject in relation to the signifying structures of the text, for further meaning - production.

Further meaning production is determined by the interaction between the signifying structures of the textual presentation and the already constituted structuration of the subject, his/her ego and his/her unconscious desire. Through that interaction, imbrications are constituted for the ego. Suture is a relatively abstract and text-based concept. Imbrication implies an overdetermined interaction. In imbrication specific representations, communications and expressions are formed for the ego, whose structuration is resolved through the processes of suture and imbrication.

In imbrication, the processes of the Other, through which both subject and text are formed, are recognised, or misrecognised to follow Lacan's terminology (1), in the form of identified ego and other. Hence, communications can be perceived to emit from a specified other ego, while representations of specified objects and ideas are constructed. Textual presentations can be understood as expressions emanating from the other ego.

In this way, distinct communication practices are constituted. Communication need not necessarily be conducted between two equal egos but the model of the dialogic conversation between equals has come to dominate concepts of communication. Communication is perceived as reciprocal exchange (2).

In its most extreme form, as dialogue, communication takes place as a set of movements between the sutured ego and a specular double constituted through the interaction of material semiosis of the text and the reading subject. Communication takes place between the ego and his/her converse (3). The ego is imbricated, first, in the conversational structure and, second, in the situation of conversation. Imbrication names these processes of situating and positioning.

Through suture and imbrication, then, the material semiosis of textual presentations can be disambiguated as communication practices. The concept of overdetermination, in the context of suture and imbrication, indicates the further overcodings generated from the elements of the situation of communication, whether dialogic or otherwise. Given communications are determined in generated situations, but those situations, in turn, are constituted of institutional elements which generate contexts that overdetermine both situation and communication.

Institutional contexts, implying ideological conflicts and hegemonised order, overdetermine the specificity of any communication. Reading takes place as a negotiated interaction between reading subject and textual presentation.

The dominant means of disambiguating this complex process is enacted in the names given here, as suture, imbrication and overdetermination to constitute specific regimes of communication and representation. This takes place as the constitution of a double specular or imaginary communication and representation process, for an ego. The overdetermination of the subject and text, in relation to the Other, is (mis-)recognised in the form of the overdetermination of the communication for an ego, in an already hegemonised institutional order.

What remains, as discussed below, is to deconstruct communication and representation practices in terms of the discursive practices they cause to be misrecognised.

Discursive practices produce and depend upon a complex and heterogeneous field of material semiosis. Such a field is termed here textuality. Textuality is not understood here in a formalistic sense, such as that suggested by Said,

"Textuality" is the somewhat mystical and disinfected subject matter of literary theory.

Textuality has therefore become the exact antithesis and displacement of what might be called history. Textuality is considered to take place, yes, but by the same token it does not take place anywhere or anytime in particular. It is produced, but by no one and at no time. It can be read and interpreted, although reading and interpreting are routinely understood to occur in the form of misreading and misinterpreting." (4)

Textuality is the name given to the material semiotic resources which are the productive elements out of which discursive practices are generated. Discursive practices exploit the resources of textuality, in order to reduce the promethean ambiguity of their potential productivity and to place semiotic

elements in particular discursive formations (5). Discursive practices give strategic direction, in terms of possible procedures, for the use of the semiotic elements.

Textuality as a concept displaces those of language, meaning and communication, and the conceptual framework to which these latter concepts belong. Textuality is constructed to evince the social character of discursive practice and material semiosis.

The concept of textuality is intended to stress the production of meanings for a subject through the active constructing of semiotic structures. Textuality stresses the constitution of the subject, rather than assuming the pre-constructed status of the ego. Suture, imbrication and overdetermination are the analytical moments through which the constitution of the subject in discursive practice is misrecognised through the forms of the ego specific to communication and representation practices.

By using the concept of textuality, the theory that language is a system which is used to construct expressions or statements that serve as representations is not replaced simply by another which argues that language, as discourse, is a way to do things, amongst which to represent is but one small part. Such a pragmaticist theory assumes that the ego who performs such acts, of speech or of discourse, is already constituted. The concepts of textuality and discursive practice, alternatively, encode a conception of the formation and unification of the ego, through suture.

Textuality, then, is constituted by the set of semiotic elements, textual presentations, frames and situations

in which are interwoven elements from distinct semiotic systems. Verbal semiosis is one important, but not the essential form of such signifying systems.

Reading a textual presentation, such as the advertisements in Section 4, need not follow the dominant means of disambiguation and meaning production. Hence, advertisements need not be read as if they constituted a communication practice whose situation of communication is consumption behaviour, a form of behaviour which is punctuated by frequent commercial exchange.

The space for ideological operation opens here. While the ego-based calculation of the consumer concerning the product is based upon the pleasure and the use it might give and hence on the calculation of a certain form of meaningfulness, the calculations of the advertiser, marketer and producer of the product are more firmly focused upon the commercial and economic aspect of the transaction. The character of the product as, at once, symbolic, signficatory, utilitarian and commodity comes into play. What is important is how the complex character of the product is permitted to be recognised. In sum, could there not be some difficulty and discrepancy in resolving the advertiser's, marketer's and producer's overt statements to the effect that they are interested in satisfying the consumer's needs, wants, desires, etc., and the calculations of the exchange value of the product. No simple 'exploitation', can be deemed to be taking place. No simple 'expropriation' is taking place. Yet both the (misrecognised) communicative exchange between advertisement

and consumer and seller and buyer are complex moments in which social order is reiterated and reproduced ideologically. In short, reading an advertisement cannot be a moment of simple communicative exchange.

The potential of the textuality constituted by advertisements, alternatively, can be exploited by adopting a reflexive reading practice which reinstates recognitions of the processes of discursive practice in which communication practices are inscribed.

This is to recognise that for readers the textual presentations constituted by advertisements are relatively open semiotic constructs. They must be worked by specific labours of reading in order to close down their indeterminacy.

Suture, imbrication and overdetermination name the processes by which communication practices are disambiguated. However, such communication practices may be met by a deconstructive response which reasserts discursive production over communication.

It is important to recognise that a deconstructive response is itself situated, contextualised, and overdetermined. It is not a universalised response. It partakes of that field of textuality out of which communication practices are produced.

Deconstruction, then, refocuses discursive practice, over and above communicative practice and textuality over and above (formalistically conceived) text. The term deconstruction is used with three major reservations. First, there is the strongly Derridean tone which the term has acquired. The deconstructive reading practice enacted here is not simply

or wholly Derridean. It is not treating advertisements as exhibiting the structuring presuppositions of Western metaphysics. It is the refusal to follow through the more local institutional intentions of marketing practice and a refusal to treat those intentions as authoritative. Second, the deconstructive practice developed here is deconstructionist in the sense which has taken hold in U.S. literary theory. It is not a new method for re-reading an established canon of texts. It stands on the borders of academic canonisation. The deconstructive practice enacted here is a specific response to a given set of texts which are taken to substantiate a determinate communicative and representation practice. That communicative practice is conceived to be part of more complex patterns of consumption behaviour, forms of behaviour which are overdetermined in relation to pragmaticised commerce.

Third, and finally, the deconstructive reading enacted here is not an end in itself. There is a sense in which deconstruction does lead to further deconstruction and hence to the destruction of meaningfulness itself. However, it is recognised that the deconstructive reading practice enacted here is motivated and situated. Its horizons are not universal, but formed, through the unconscious in relation to the determining structures of the Other, i.e. the power-relations of a determinate social formation.

Thus, the deconstruction enacted here can be but one part of a larger strategic project, which concerns other modes of criticism, opposition and resistance in other institutional sites. The practice enacted here is the deconstruction of the institutional practice of reading advertise-

ments as a communicative and representation practice determined in the context of consumption behaviour. This practice is pursued in order to understand the institutions whereby a given hegemonised order is reiterated reproductively and hence sustains itself as an order.

Deconstruction is a strategic action upon texts. It is not a unitary, regulated method. It is governed by the aim of instituting a novel yet critical discursive practice which rearticulates the communicative practice constituted, in the example used here, by a given set of advertisements.

While that strategic intervention exploits the reflexive potentiality of certain forms of semiosis, the deconstructive reading practice cannot determine wholly its own meaning-production. In turn, that deconstruction becomes overdetermined in the social. The internalised self-understanding which the deconstructive practice encodes does not constitute a moment of final self-evidence.

The novel practice is posed as a relation to other practices. It operates critically by articulating certain possibilities of reflexivity. As such, deconstructive reading practice is without an 'originary centre', either as self-authorising or as objectively caused. It is constituted in and through its critical relations and differences to other modes of discursive practice. While it may be said to be grounded in other discursive practices, deconstructive practice encodes its own self-grounding as an active break of differencing.



While deconstruction may not be characterised as a unitary method, it may, in being enacted, consist of a series of articulated movements whose overall aim, as has been stated, is the instituting of a 'novel' discursive practice which nevertheless subsists in a critical relation to established discursive practices. Hence, deconstruction may involve the making explicit of the presuppositions of a given discourse and the conceptual framework by which they are organised. It may involve making explicit the implicature of a discourse (6). It may involve recognising what kind of 'activity type' (7) a discourse conventionally or normally constitutes. But, more importantly, it does imply the development of the existing discourse in order to constitute a 'novel' 'activity type'. The aim is to constitute the possibility for a 'novel' mode of social 'action' and hence 'novel' social acts. Deconstruction, then, refers to the development and extension, through differencing, of the conditions of possibility for 'action'. Such development is necessarily, of course, of a limited character.

To read advertisements deconstructively, then, is to develop them critically. It is not to realise their fundamental 'truth' or to show the established 'knowledge' to which they give rise or which they disguise. It is to read advertisements strategically. That strategic reading constitutes an active intervention into advertisements. The intervention is not to be assumed to constitute a proper or correct method. Intervention is neither 'reflectively' nor 'expressively' correct simply. The aim is to set in motion 'novel' yet critical ways of using advertisements, of enact-

ing them through reading, 'beyond' what has become normal or conventional, or which has become authorised by specific institutional organisations.

Deconstruction seeks to constitute a 'novel' discursive practice but does not seek to claim for that practice the prestige of being the mode of discourse, and the only one, through which proper 'knowledge' (i.e. of advertisements) may be produced. Deconstruction is a preparedness to act strategically. It renders problematic the relations between discourses and the relations between discourses and 'objects' of discourse. Deconstruction is a readiness to suspect any discourse assumed to provide certain knowledge. In mistrusting certainty, the character of knowledge itself is recognised to have a strategic purposiveness.

Even while the terms 'suspicion' and 'mistrust' have been used, deconstruction is not a programme of universal doubting. It is not a form of scepticism. Furthermore, in stressing the critical as relatedness and difference, deconstruction is not utopian in its conception of 'otherness'. Otherness is conceived as that difference which may be recognised through relationship. It is not posed as an absolute exteriority (to an essential interiority).

To read deconstructively is to read critically. The concept of the critical is developed as calculated, or strategic, resistance. It is a resistance to assuming as authoritative the inscribed reader position(s) and communicative structures which the advertisement gives rise conventionally. The critical moment as deconstruction is not the positing of an exterior, radical alteriority (assumed to be) in opposition to the inscribed reader constructed conventionally through an enactment

of a reading. Deconstructing implies negotiation with the inscribed reader position(s), prior to dismantling or dispersing it/them as a means of developing the discourse.

In admitting itself to be a strategic project of resistance, which proceeds through motivated actions, deconstruction may not be considered simply as negative. Deconstruction is not nihilist. While constituted through motivated actions, motivation which may be 'unconscious' in form, deconstruction is not voluntarist. Nor does it rely upon a devolving of will onto desire simply. The 'subject' of deconstruction is not centred upon either a conscious nor an unconscious cogito. The 'subject' of deconstructive action exhibits only a discursive intentionality. Such an intentionality is dispersed throughout any mode of discourse.

Furthermore, given the dispersion of intentionality throughout discourse, 'action' as a concept may not be limited to being the sole 'property' of 'subjects'. Advertisements, as textual constructs, in articulating a discursive space throughout which is dispersed intentionality, may be said to act upon readers to re-constitute them as 'subjects', on the basis, it goes without saying, of their already-constituted status as discursively and practically skilful 'agents' capable of enacting a reading. 'Actions' do not 'originate' in subjects' essential intentions nor unconscious desires. Actions are made possible by social practices, whether discursive or nondiscursive.

The concept of action, in the context of a deconstructive project, takes the form of an attempt to break with

the dominant determinate context. Such an act seeks to re-negotiate its status, to become relatively determining, while admitting to its having been determined. A deconstructive act remains within contextual determination in general, yet seeks to break with any determinate contextual horizon which imposes an authoritative closure upon the discourse.

In the case of advertisements, that dominant determinate context is that of marketing, in its institutional dominance over advertising.

A deconstructive reading of advertisements interweaves a concern for the material specificity of advertisements' textuality, first with a concern for the communicative practice of reading advertisements performatively as a consumer, and, second, a concern for the field of strategic ideological action by which that practice is overdetermined.

In the case of advertisements, a deconstructive reading practice implies that the reader of the inscription may actively refuse to accept the dominant performance of understanding advertisements as being located as communications in the context of consumption behaviour. Advertisements may be refused the status of a directive in that context, a directive both to look and to buy. The programme of expectations, which constitute consumption behaviour may be refused.

A questioning of the constitution of market-based expectations is arrived at, alongside the questioning of the coherence of specific markets. What are re-focused in the proposed deconstructive reading, then, are the relationships between ego, subject, unconscious, and Other, especially the

relationships between the desire of the unconscious and the power-relations of the field of the Other. Desire operates as the transmuted iteration of power-relations, which structure both subject and the imaginary identities and representations of the ego.

Deconstruction, then, reworks the processes of suture, imbrication and overdetermination. The project of deconstruction itself, while altering structures of suture and imbrication, cannot itself deny its own overdetermined status. It can but register the possibility of instituting a counter-hegemonic discursive strategy in the fields of ideological struggle. To increase its effectivity, it requires to be reiterated and amplified by other kinds and levels of ideological political and economic strategies.

To read advertisements deconstructively is to challenge the ways in which dominant marketing practices inscribe institutional forms of communication, intentionality and desire, through the subject and the unconscious, in and upon the formation of the ego as consumer. Market-based expectations and desires, in this process, reiterate forms which contribute to the maintenance of a specific hegemonised social order. Deconstruction challenges that ideological operation.

NOTES FOR 3.3

1. See Lacan, J. Ecrits: a selection. London: Tavistock, 1977. p. 15-21.  
Lacan uses the term *meconnaissance*.
2. See Grossberg, L. The Ideology of communication: post-structuralism and the limits of communication Man and world, vol. 15 1982. p. 83-101.  
  
"By producing communication as a relation in which each individual is the mirror of the conversed subjectivity of the other, it masks the institutions and relations of power within which communication is produced..."  
  
"Furthermore, increasingly, dialogic communication masks real relations of power, etc., determined by nondialogic communicative practices, such as mass communication."  
  
Both quotes, Grossberg, L. op. cit., p. 99.
3. "The claim that communication positions the other as a conversed subject says that the other is articulated in the same relationship to the signifying chain as the self; the other is the mirror image of the self and vice versa. This "double specular" structure (an imaginary structure) structures the signifying chain and closes off the space within which the signifiers can move. The space of communicative practices is elliptical; its closedness is defined by its having two equal centres so that neither is an absolute authority or both are."  
  
Grossberg, L. op. cit., p. 98.
4. Said, E. The World, the text and the critic. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard U.P., 1983. p. 3-4.
5. See Foucault, M. The archaeology of knowledge. London, Tavistock, 1972. p. 31-39.  
  
See also Pechaux, M. Language, semantics and ideology. London: Macmillan, 1982.
6. See Grice, H.P. Logic and conversation (In Syntax and semantics. Vol. 3: Speech acts; edited by P. Cole and J.L. Morgan. New York; London: Academic Press, 1975. p. 41-58).

7. See Pateman, T. How is understanding an advertisement possible? (In Language, image and the media; edited by P. Walton and H. Davis. Blackwell, 1983. p. 205-223). p. 192.

CHAPTER 4

READING ADVERTISEMENTS



#### 4.1 TEXTUALITY 1 : SUTURE

The first four advertisement presentations are being read in relation to the concept of suture. Suture may be taken to signify one means whereby the field of productivity of textuality is given direction and becomes relatively closed down. Suture is a means of reducing the indeterminacy of textuality.

Suture concerns the relationships between the inscribed reader positions, in the structures of the text, and the already positioned reader of the inscription. The reader of the inscription is already constituted through the relationships of the symbolic. Those relationships are enacted strategically in and through the heterogeneous domains of social practice. The overdetermination of symbolic structuration is pursued in subsequent sections.

The concept of suture carries with it the implication that neither text nor reading subject are 'complete' in themselves. In Heath's words,

"the image is never complete in itself (if it were, there would be no place for a viewer, hence, finally, no place for any image) and its limit is its address (the limit where it enters the chain, completes with the subject it thus entertains)." (1)

The context of Heath's discussion is the endeavour to establish an analysis of cinema as discourse. He argues that one important moment of discourse, whether cinematic or otherwise, is realised as,

"the production at every moment through (the text) of a subject address, the specification of the play of incompleteness-completion. What suture can serve to name is this specification, variously articulated but always a function of representation (the play for a subject, its taking place)." (2)

Heath is evoking an explicitly Lacanian view of the constitution of the subject. That subject, in Lacan's terms, is already in and of the symbolic. Cinema, and indeed photography, are not of the mirror phase (3). The moments of cinematographic and photographic subject address are 'after' the symbolic (4).

To generalise Heath's argument, any textual presentation, regardless of the semiotic material by means of which it is articulated, constitutes a multiple play in and of the symbolic. The subject is positioned multiply by the textual structures. The suturing function constitutes a junction between this symbolic multiplicity and an imaginary unity or coherence (5), focused, as a point of introjection and projection, upon the ego.

Suture, in one of its aspects, closes discourse around imaginary structures in the form of fixities and identities. Hence, suture closes, to some degree, the subject as reader or as spectator. This moment of closure may be considered as the constitution of the ego, as imaginary structure, from the systems and processes of the symbolic. The constituted ego, consequently, may be overdetermined in and through the complex processes of determinate discursive and nondiscursive social practices. It is important theoretically to recognise that,

"The ego is not to be confused with the subject: it is the fixed point of imaginary projection and identification." (6)

The subject, as distinct from the ego, is a moving function. The subject is formed at one and the same time as the unconscious, in Lacanian terms. The unconscious is "forged on the trace of what operates to constitute the subject" (7), while,

"The trace is the erasure of selfhood, of one's own presence, and is constituted by the threat or anguish of its irremediable disappearance. An unerasable trace is not a trace, it is a full presence, an immobile and uncorruptable substance..." (8)

The unconscious is defined as the active break, as trace, between the subject and the Other (9). The Other,

"is the locus in which is situated the chain of the signifier that governs whatever may be made present of the subject - it is the field of that living being in which the subject has to appear." (10)

It is this perspective which permits the formulation of Lacan's major tenets, i.e. that the unconscious is the discourse of the Other, that the unconscious is structured as a language, and that the desire of the subject, as a moving function, is the desire of the Other (11). As Heath interprets Lacan,

"The Other is the domain of the symbolic 'as locus of the signifying cause of the subject', distribution-circulation of signifiers within which the subject is produced - 'the locus from which the question of its existence may be posed it.'" (12)

Lacan's concept of the Other is construed herein in terms of the self-grounding, reiterated production of social practice. Subjects, as loci of relations and as out-

comes of practice, are conceived in terms of the symbolic as the domain of social production in general. They are not conceived primarily in terms of 'language', if that term is taken to mean a domain of verbal events determined by a univocal linguistic system. The relation of subject to practice is construed as a differentiation, as active difference, a conception not wholly dissimilar to the way in which Lacan poses the relationship between subject and Other (13).

It is important to recognise that suture may be extended to the entering into and registering of the subject in any form of social practice. The specificity of discursive forms of suture may be recognised to be one instance of a wider range of processes. In the following readings, it is the processes whereby subjects are sutured into a specific form of (overdetermined) discursive practice which are under discussion. This discussion does not take the form of proposing how subjects are sutured into 'language', as if to some absolute, unitary system which organises and determines discursive events. Subjects are recognised to be sutured into heterogeneous and conflict-laden fields of discursive practice.

For Lacan and those who follow him, the principle devices of suture are spoken (14). Verbal, spoken devices are, however, only instances of suture. Other devices, using other semiotic materials, may be instanced. Heath discusses the use of the concept of suture in the context of cinematography, while Burgin extends it to photography. According to Burgin,

"The primary suturing instance of the discourse of still photography takes the form of an identification of the subject with the camera position. As already observed, the look from this position will shift between the poles of voyeurism and narcissism: in the former instance subjecting the other-as-object to an inquisitive and controlling surveillance in which seeing is dissociated from being-seen; and in the latter effecting a dual identification with both the camera and the individual depicted. Identification here is rarely the simple matter of like 'identifying with' like implied in an everyday use of the term; it is more often a matter of the selective incorporation of attributes.." (15)

In plates 1 to 4, two indices of suture may be considered to be dominant. One is the imaginary self-possession as 'I' of the subject in written discourse (16), writing understood in the traditional sense here and not the Derridean, which is discussed presently. The second is the identification with the camera position and the identification with the character photographed, as instanced by Burgin in the above-cited passage. Alongside the dominant systems of suture may be noted a series of partial devices, such as illustration, typographic variation, graphic devices, and effects of layout design. They may be taken to operate in the overdetermining contexts of photographically articulated structures, on the one hand, and verbal textual structures, on the other hand. These elementary devices serve as the basis for more complex suturing effects.

Plate 1 uses the most readily recognisable instances of suture, which are the two already mentioned. If the subject, as the reader of the inscription, identifies, first, with the camera position and, second, with the photographically captured character, it becomes evident, by the structur-

ing device of the returned look of the character, that 'I' who read and 'she' who is inscribed are, for the purposes of coherence, to become identical or undivided.

In this movement of the subject, a suture may be realised in and through the photographic textual devices. The photographed character acts as a stand-in for the reader of the inscription may be entered into the chain of the signifiers constituted photographically as well as typographically and through effects of layout. This circulation or movement of the subject begins, as a reading, at the top of the textual frame of plate 1. There emerge a number of possible chains of signifiers. They may be limited, for example, to the photographically constructed chain. The chain of signifying elements may be extended into the other semiotic materials, wherein second order processes of suture may be recognised to occur. Thus, to summarise,

"Suture names the relation of the subject to the chain of its discourse: we shall see that it figures there as the element which is lacking, in the form of a stand-in. For while there is a lacking, it is not purely and simply absent. Suture, by extension - the general relation of lack of which it is an element, inasmuch as it implies position of a taking-the place-of." (17)

Suture, as a concept, is restricted to that taking the place of the stand-in and movement of the subject through the chain of signifiers. While this may be achieved across a range of distinct semiotic material, suture is considered as the formation of the ego, as imaginary identity. The concept of suture is not used to cover the development of ego-based discursive processes, which are realised in the form of overdetermined discursive social practices.

In plate 1, then, the photographically sutured 'I', wherein I see her and she sees me and we are considered not just to be in one another's presence but to be one's self-presence, can be joined to the verbally articulated discourse. This is achieved by the cohering of photographic self-presence to the imaginary self-presence of the verbal 'I'. In effect, the photographic 'I' is sutured to the linguistic stand-in. The reader of the inscription becomes the imaginary identity in the phrase 'So I thought about it'.

Two points of theoretical importance ought to be made at this juncture. First, in Heath's words,

"the subject of the enounced and the subject of the enunciation never wholly come together, are always in the distances of the symbolic..." (18)

'I' who read, who engage with and am moved by the textual structures, am inscribed photographically and verbally.

'I' am overdetermined typographically and by layout design.

'I' may be made coherent. But that cohering, or suturing, is produced through the divisions and articulations of the different stand-ins. Hence,

"The stake is clear: the 'I' is a division but joins all the same, the stand-in is the lack in the structure but nevertheless, simultaneously, the possibility of a coherence, of the filling in. At the end of the suturing function is the ego, the me: 'it's me!'.." (19)

This leads to the second point, which is that the subject is positioned in the textual structure a multiplicity of times. The subject is advanced through that positioning. The subject is not necessarily or essentially

unified or coherent. It is the processes of suture which produce cohesion and continuity as an outcome. Such process may be taken as the constitution of an ego, as has been posited already. The ego, in turn, may serve as a principle of further production, through the overdetermined production of discursive social practices. This revised production might be termed the production of 'empirical' discourses, as those which presuppose the unity of the ego and the substantial existence of that coherent ego.

However, it is important to recognise that,

"there is no ego without a subject, terrain of its necessity and its hold: function of the symbolic, suture is towards the imaginary, the moment of junction - standing-in, a taking place, a something, a some one there." (20)

Hence, while it may be assumed that any reader approaches the textual presentation as a coherent ego, and only as a coherent ego, it should be recognised that the ego is constituted through the multiple traces of the subject. It is through the modes of appearance of the subject, as moving function, in the textual structure that specific forms of the ego are realised. The ego, in other words, is modified in the structuration of the subject by the text.

Reading, therefore is being conceived on the basis of difference and production, not identity and simple re-cognition. To signify this double movement of the subject in and out of the text, Derrida's concept of "differance" can be coined:

"Differance is... the formation of form. But it is on the other hand the being imprinted of the imprint." (21)



Or, indeed, Derrida's concept of the trace may be used:

"The trace is the differance which opens appearance and signification" (12)

In sum, the subject, as a moving function realised in and through the processes of reading, is reconstituted through the addresses of the textual structures. That reconstitution has effect upon the ego, as a form or appearance and as a principle of further production, of signification and of meaning. The ego comes to limit both production and recognition while it seals suture. The ego is not a simple origin or foundation for meaning production in general.

Thus far, the photographic look, as an admixture of two contrary currents (23), and the verbal-typographic address have been instanced as devices by means of which suture can be realised. The series of subject positions to be made coherent can now be scrutinised more closely. What are the openings, as stand-ins, which are to be found in, for example, plate 1?

First, there is the returned look of the photographed character. Second, there is the linguistic-typographic character of the 'I' in the phrase 'So I thought about it'. Third, there is the modified typographic 'I' of the sentence fragment 'I was waiting for my train..'

The past tenses of the verbs, 'thought' and 'was waiting', establish the structure of a narrative. They construct a present moment, for 'I', as a lack or opening into which the reader of the inscription may enter. That present moment, an imaginary moment of self-presence or

immediacy, is constructed as a relation to those two pasts already mentioned, i.e. the instance of 'So I thought about it', which is typographically marked by capitalisation, and the instance of 'I was waiting for my train...', which is typographically marked by italicisation.

That present moment, it is to be stressed, is not a plenitude. It is a coherence produced as a series of traces. It exists in and through its relationships to distinct pasts. It is not a conscious or unconscious self-presence or an empirical presence. This is an issue upon which Derrida is emphatic:

"The conscious text is thus not a transcription, because there is no text present elsewhere as an unconscious one to be transposed or transported. For the value of presence can also dangerously affect the concept of the unconscious. There is then no unconscious truth to be rediscovered by virtue of having been written elsewhere. There is no text written and present elsewhere which would then be subjected, without being changed in the process, to an operation and a temporalisation... which would be external to it, floating on its surface. There is no present text in general, and there is not even a past present text, a text which is past as having been present. The text is not conceivable in an ordinary or modified form of presence. The unconscious text is already a weave of pure traces, differences in which meaning and force are united - a text nowhere present, consisting of archives which are always ready transcriptions. ... Everything begins with reproduction. Always already:..."  
(24)

The constructed present is not a plenitude and neither does it transcribe a past present nor an unconscious present.

In the context of a narrative structure, itself an instance of a complex suture, the photographic presentation in plate 1 is registered both as a moment of suture for an imaginary visualised coherence and as an element of

that structure. It becomes that moment when 'I was waiting for my train..', when 'I thought: That other girl at the linen counter. On a 'bottom drawer' expedition, I bet - like me...'

Again, given the structure of a narration, the typographic element of the verbal signifying chain begins to play out its role in distinguishing sequences of events. One sequence cohered by capitalisation is distinguished from another cohered by italicisation, while both are distinguished from a third typeface which builds a link between the proper name, Westminster, and the time of the italicised narration. The distinct times of the different sequences are fused by the finalising, underlined presence of the proper name. Typographic features, therefore, both articulate and carry forward the narration.

The proper name is but one of the destinations of the narrative. The accompanying underlining and the coat of arms, which serves as a grammatical full stop and as a narrative conclusion, reiterate the value of finality. Typographic, graphic, syntactic and semantic features are interwoven in that complex signifier, the name plus the shield. The other destination is the photographed 'girl', she-I, the girl who was on a bottom drawer expedition, the girl who now has a cheque book.

For even while the photograph illustrates only one moment of the narration, that point at the train station, the image of the girl is that which has been fixed and is reiterated throughout the verbal text. The photographed image is not only illustrative in function. The photograph fixes the look that remains and that sutures.

All of the instances of the girl cited above can be considered to be distinct. The processes of suture unify them and make them continuous. In effect, the two destinations themselves, Westminster and the girl, even though constructed in distinct semiotic materials, become unified, in the interweaving of photographic suture and narrative suture.

Through the figure of the now, realised as the presence of the narrative conclusion in Westminster and the photographically overdetermined imaginary coherence of the girl, a pact is sealed between the reader of the inscription and the inscribed reader. All that is required of the reader of the inscription to assent to this pact is that 'she-I' give a nod, along the lines of the deictic 'This is 1961': Yes, yes, yes.

It is that assent, as a further opening, which is carried forward into the small print of the social contract which is emerging. Having sealed and secured an imaginary identity, it is you, as reader of the inscription and as imaginary plenitude, who are invited to act upon that identity:

"Ask your nearest Westminster Bank branch (address in Telephone Directory) to give you a copy of the booklet 'On Using Your Bank'..."

Again, typographic style unifies this intervention, this time through the use of small print and a typeface without serifs. The bank, Westminster, becomes yours. The bank, in some sense 'belongs' to you, or becomes part of you. You and the bank are unified.

The series of elements, which are divisions but which unify all the same, suture the subject. You, I, she, and the bank are wed, having emerged successfully from our 'bottom drawer' period. Suture is a marriage and marriage itself is a complex, ritualised process of suture. A double reiteration is established and may be repeated indefinitely. It is that reiteration and repetition which constitute the appearance of an identity. The advertisement sutures the subject, analogously to the way in which marriage sutures the girl, i.e. to her husband, to the woman she is to become, to the social roles she is to make her own.

Suture operates as a series of apertures. Stand-ins are constructed and presented. They join the reader of the inscription to the inscribed positions. Furthermore, they partake as an element in a process of double marking. Social practices are re-marked discursively. Having been re-marked, they are re-registered in the practices themselves. The practices are developed through such differentiations and reappropriations. In plate 1, for example, advertisement and marriage re-mark one another, constituting a trace, one which may be rendered stable in the image of a reflection, which itself may be divided into a real and an epiphenomenal part. An ontological distinction is introduced into a social process.

Suture opens, joins, coheres and advances, but it also closes. A process, a movement, a relationship are taken to be an imaginary plenitude. An ego is constituted, as a "point without dimension, desire or unconscious" (25).

This, in the example of plate 1, constitutes a moment of certitude, marked by the conclusivity of the Westminster, in the face of uncertainty, marked by the photographed character.

Both plates 1 and 2 construct pictorially the presence of doubt, and hence contain a certain limited contradictoriness. The presentation and the unification of such a contradictoriness, as Burgin notes (26), may be more easily conveyed photographically than by a verbal signifier. Photography constitutes a less articulated system of signifying elements than the linguistic and text-linguistic. It is difficult to construct photographically exclusive logical relations, such as implication, disjunction and contradiction. Pictorial means tend to be too inclusive. Thus, a logical contradiction will tend both to be presented and to be mediated. Hence, in plate 2 especially, the hesitation of doubt takes place alongside the imaginary plenitudes of knowledge, on the one hand, and pleasure, on the other hand.

That doubling of doubt and knowledge, hesitation and certitude, lack and plenitude, is achieved in plate 2 through the relay of the verbal text (27). The reader of the inscription is engaged through a photographed doubt but is returned, via the chain of the verbal and graphically modified text, to a second marking of the photograph, this time in terms of knowledge and pleasure.

Plate 1 and plate 2 can be distinguished, as moments of suture, on the following grounds. In plate 1, a narrative structure prevails. In plate 2, a pictorial and

a submerged dramatic structure (the structure of the picture as a dramatic scene) predominate. The two plates can also be distinguished on the grounds of the genderisation of doubt or hesitation. Two distinct sutures are constructed, one upon masculine doubt and the other on feminine doubt.

Masculinisation and feminisation as suture are achieved pictorially, dramatically and verbally. Distinct hand gestures, distinct facial expressions, distinct verbal patterns, distinct thought patterns, distinct problems, and distinct destinations are constructed. He strikes a pose, reminiscent of Rodin's thinker. He ponders. She is caught in an exposed, uncomposed moment of tension. His is a private interiority, while hers is an uncomfortable exteriority. She bites her glove. She worries. She compares herself unfavourably to others. He thinks about the meanings of a proper name. She thinks about herself.

Both, as is developed in later sections, think about products and services, but use very different modalities of 'thought', i.e. they have very different degrees of access to different discursive resources.

Plate 2 constructs a scene and a character with which to identify from the aperture of the camera. The look from the camera, this time, is not returned. A suture and a distinction are made. 'He' inscribed and 'I' who read the inscription are divided from one another, yet in that division of the symbolic 'we' are nevertheless joined.

A structurally similar conjunction/disjunction is proposed between 'Sack' and 'Dry' as that which pertains

between 'he' and 'I'. Sack and Dry are united in a proper name, yet they are, in another sense, opposites.

The inscribed reader is situated in that disturbance, i.e. of unity by division and of continuity by articulation. The words are repeated over and over, as if in so doing they might reveal their relation: 'Sack? Sack? Dry Sack?'. The words articulate in an incoherent manner an underlying, and bracketted question: '(A medium sherry with a dry-sounding name: why?)'. Dry or medium, a single sherry cannot be both. The problem for the reader of the inscription becomes: If 'Dry Sack' is the answer, what is the question?

It is to that question, of what is the question, to which the small print of the verbal text is addressed. 'We'll explain...', the text intervenes. It intervenes not only to propose a solution to the question of '(A medium sherry with a dry-sounding name: why?)', but to explain what is at stake through that explicit question.

Two kinds of problem frame the question: the problem of knowledge, on the one hand, and of pleasure, on the other hand. The reader of the inscription is sutured as an imaginary identity which is however divided between two domains of sense, intellectual sense and aesthetic sense. Knowledge or Beauty? Knowledge and Beauty. Dry or Sack? Dry and Sack. 'We'll explain... and save you the trouble of poring over a huge Elizabethan dictionary. Sack was a sweet fortified Spanish wine very popular in the 16th century.' 'We'll explain...' both what he is doing and what is the question over which he labours.



How can an imaginary identity be divided? How can he be like me and yet not be me? How can the name of the sherry be explained? How can the ephemeral character of experience be related to the certitude which is provided by knowledge? This series of questions are contained and joined by the conjunction of the two terms, Dry and Sack. Plate 2 conducts a highly sophisticated play upon the stand-in, which divides yet joins all the same. Its character is foregrounded in the play of non reciprocal exchanges which take place through the text. From the very first opening in the photograph, he and I are joined but off-set from one another. He fails to return the look of the camera, creating a lack into which the reader of the inscription enters and pursues an interrogation.

The reader of the inscription interrogates his interrogation. The inscribed character utters to himself, for he does not recognise the I who looks upon him, 'Sack? Sack? Dry Sack?'. The reader of the inscription hesitates: What is it that he wants in what he says?

Heath construes this movement of reading in the following way, rewriting Lacan,

"Effect of the signifier under which it slides, the subject comes back on - 'attacks' - the intervals of the signifying chain, takes up the desire of the Other: what does it want in what it says?" (28)

The reader of the inscription and the inscribed figure are related through the domain of the Other, articulated by the signifiers, Dry and Sack.

The subject is sutured as an ego with a masculine inflection, an ego which is prepared to pursue a further

interrogation of the text. This interrogation is developed using epistemological and aesthetic modes of discourse, with their structuring presuppositions, as is discussed presently in relation to plate 6. There, the sutured subject is developed as a man of reason and a man of taste. Reason and taste themselves are re-worked through the overdeterminations of discourses, an issue which is discussed in relation to plates 9 to 12.

'Dry Sack' exhibits the structure of a stand-in, as a process of tracing back and forth which can serve to suture an imaginary identity and which can cohere an ego formation. Plates 1 and 2 exhibit two distinct strategies for effecting suture. Plate 2 is the more complex. To contrast plates 1 and 2 also allows an indication that the ego formation is already marked or inflected in terms of gender traits, and indeed age traits. 'Girl' and 'man' are identities which cohere two distinguishable processes, of ageing or maturing, and genderisation. In short, while an imaginary identity is constituted, it is already marked in terms of potential development, a point taken up when secondary revisions, imbrications, overdeterminations and deconstructions are pursued in the following sections. That is to say, the imaginary identity already re-marks complex social constructions. The ego, even while imaginary, a category which does not imply a specific ontological status, is never simple.

Plates 1 and 2 can be recognised to construct two distinct fabrics of traces. Suture names a set of processes. First, suture covers the provision of apertures,

by way of stand-ins. The stand-in divides, in the symbolic, yet joins in the imaginary. Second, through suture, the subject is re-entered at different points throughout the text. The subject enters the system of signifiers and is circulated and advanced. Finally, suture names that moment of cohering, unifying and closing.

Plates 1 and 2 instance two different strategies whereby such finalisation or totalisation can be achieved. In plate 1, narrative structure prevails. The narrative structure re-works the photographic structure. Plate 2 instances both a pictorial finalisation and a dramatic structure. Both of these latter instances construe a closure around a scene. The picture opens and closes the dramatic sequence, the posing and resolving of a question. The dramatic enactment is pursued as a passage through an explanation. That explanation returns the subject to the pictorial structure. In doing so, however, the subject is altered and enters the picture at a different point, by way of the 'Dry Sack' rather than the male character. As a drama, the picture can be recognised to cohere a process of interrogation, from dissatisfaction or displeasure to the imaginary plenitude of enjoyment. As a pictorial structure only, as in the initial instance, the picture shows only a questioning whose boundaries are ill-defined.

Suture, then, is the founding of an ego. It is constituted as a fabric of textual traces, to-ing and fro-ing (29). They create an appearance which when fixed assumes the role of an identity. Upon the constitution of that ego, the reader of the inscription may approach once

more the textual presentation, to re-mark it. The textual apparatus is reopened to secondary revisions, imbrications, and overdeterminations. Through those subsequent processes, discursive practices, as distinct regions or regimes of strategic interaction, are cut out from one another and are inter-related to one another.

Suture is a textual grounding. This textual grounding may be discussed in terms of Derrida's conception of writing, a concept and a practice which is to be distinguished from traditional uses of the term. A system of writing, for Derrida, constitutes a "multiplicity of layered surfaces" (30), in which,

"The subject of writing is a system of relations between strata:... Within that scene, on that stage, the punctual simplicity of the classical subject is not to be found. In order to describe the structure, it is not enough to recall that one always writes for someone; and the oppositions sender-receiver, code-message, etc., remain extremely coarse instruments. We would search the "public" in vain for the first reader: i.e., the first author of a work. And the "sociology of literature" is blind to the war and the ruses perpetuated by the author who reads and by the first reader who dictates, for at stake here is the origin of the work itself. The sociality of writing as drama requires an entirely different discipline." (31)

Derrida's conception of the apparatus of writing encompasses and puts into difficulties the traditional oppositions between text and reader, author and text, and author and reader. It undermines any simple notions of expression, intention, and communication which rely upon those oppositions. Through the structure of the re-mark, the practical density of the social may be recognised, as an ever-pre-given complexity which lacks simple origin,

trajectory and destination and which lacks a simple ground. In being elements of a system of writing, in the sense sketched above, the structures of advertisements re-mark and alter and extend the structures of the social. The social becomes more differentiated. Advertisements do not reflect the structures of the social.

To return to the selected advertisements, plate 3 evinces a similar structure to plates 1 and 2, in terms of a division between semiotic materials. Yet it is less complex and, as is discussed below, is less compelling. It is still possible to realise a process of suture in plate 3. It divides yet joins the reader of the inscription, the coated male figures of the illustration, the 'knowledgeable people' of the typographic text, and the name and label of 'Holland and Sherry' cloth.

The aim of the presentation can still be construed as a suture, one which is intended to be insistent, an intention inscribed in the use of a gnomic aorist in combination with typographic and graphic modifications and in relation to an illustrative structure. Plate 3, however, lacks the density of positions which both plates 1 and 2 provide. Plate 3 requires more work, and a greater investment, of supplementation on the part of the reader of the inscription. This is a work 'he' may not be willing to carry out. Plate 3, as a result, holds less compulsion for the reader of the inscription.

There is a lack of compulsion, first, because of the perspectival distancing of the illustration, a distance confused by the cropping of the illustration suggesting

the proximity of the larger male figure. The reader of the inscription, while implied by the structure of the illustration, is relatively disengaged. Possibly 'he' is an outsider or possibly 'he' is an inferior. Second, the generalised form of the verbal presentation implies the reader of the inscription through the distancing of proverbial, common wisdom, to which (apparently) all have equal access.

The suture is distant and slight. The constitution of textual traces is sparse. This points up the distinction between illustration and photograph as suturing devices. The illustration is composed of discrete elements organised in a pictorial frame. The selectivity and the sparsity of the illustration in plate 3 can be contrasted with the density and inclusivity of the photograph in plate 2. The photograph unifies and makes continuous, even while it permits articulations in terms of selection, emphasis, focus, highlight, foregrounding, color, tone and characterisation.

Plate 3 digitalises and generalises its address. The subject address is relatively abstract. It is not that the textual construction is splintered or fragmented. The sequence of elements is clearly laid out. The discreteness of the elements, however, fails to locate the reader of the inscription in a textual density that could be construed as a personal, individual address. Here is a social space indeed, but one in which superiors are being presented. The suture operates here to join the reader of the inscription with 'his' superiors. The stand-in

becomes a model, which signifies that which is to be emulated, or indeed served.

Plates 2 and 3 can be distinguished on four fronts. First, they can be distinguished technologically. Photography replaces illustration. New typographic designs are incorporated. More sophisticated relationships between typographic image and photographic image mean that new interrelationships between photographically and typographically articulated discourse develop. This novel discursive textual format is conveyed by new printing techniques on higher quality paper. Second, they can be distinguished strategically. Plate 3 posits social amelioration as a relatively simple process of achieving the status of one's superiors. The reader of the inscription is to become that other. A system of cultural paternalism is invoked, into whose ranks one, as reader, is recruited. The process of becoming other is rather different in plate 2. The inferiority of the reader of the inscription is not underscored. A suture of greater density and of greater complexity engages the reader of the inscription in a more gradual elevation. Social superiors are never simply those others up there. Social betterment implies a process of drawing out of oneself those parts which are superior.

The third and fourth distinctions are intertwined, and bring to attention points developed through the discussion of imbrication in the following section. Third, then, plates 2 and 3 can be distinguished in terms of the character of the product which serves as one element of the sutured identity. The product in plate 2 is a final product

ready for individual consumption. Plate 3 constitutes a suture which encodes not a final product but a prepared material, one which requires a further labour by means of which to transform it into a finalised product, for example a suit or a coat for men. The suture in plate 2 encodes branded products. The label in plate 3 is only one element or ingredient of the brand name which could be placed on a final product. Branding, as a system of naming, may be recognised to intervene in systems of production in a qualitatively novel way, influencing perceptions of what is produced and by whom. A greater stress falls upon final products, made by (brand-)named corporations, whose images become important elements in the social construction of identities as stand-ins or representations.

This leads to the fourth distinction. This concerns the difference in the characters of the addressees and their consumption behaviour between plate 2 and plate 3. In plate 3 the consumer is expected to re-work the labelled material commodity. Consumption involves a labour of transformation, the production of a qualitatively different commodity. In plate 2 the consumer enjoys the product.

Two kinds of 'use' are distinguished. The one in plate 3 implies active labour, while the other in plate 2 implies a relatively passive indulgence. This later use produces pleasure in the constituted addressee, a pleasure proposed as being analogous to the production of knowledge, or rather the intuited perception of knowledge. This indicates a difference between the character of the vehicles in which the respective advertisements appear.



The seven years which elapsed between the production of plate 3 (1957) and plate 2 (1964) mark technological and strategic changes in terms of the complexity of subject of address and of suture. During that time the magazine which serves as the vehicle for the advertisements itself undergoes a character change. Plates 2 and 3 stand in different relationships to the imaginary masculine identities they seek to construct and address. Plate 3 addresses from the vantage point of a trade journal for the tailoring industry. Plate 2 addresses from the position of that magazine revamped to address an economically, politically and culturally situated social grouping, a professional class or class-fraction.

The addressees of plate 2 are required to labour less arduously, both in relation to constituting the sutured identity which requires less investment and in terms of consuming the product which requires less active labour. Plate 2 addresses a position which is considered to have been already achieved by any actual reader and hence to reflect that position. The apertures in plate 3 leave much to be achieved on the part of any actual reader both in relation to the product and the social identity. In plate 2 the addressee is not expected to alienate himself in the form of an other. The other reflects himself, an other to which he is joined.

These are points which can be developed in the discussion of imbrication. The concept of suture is designed to focus the formation and constitution of the ego as representation, a representation which enters into the productions of specific discursive and communication practices.

Both plate 2 and plate 3 inflect the ego in a masculine direction. The concept of the masculine is theorised as an imaginary coherence which re-marks and covers over complex social processes of production, transformation and differentiation. The constitution of representations of masculinity, as stand-ins and as instances of sutured identities, serves as the basis for the perception of a division between the possibilities for masculine social production and feminine social production, both in terms of symbolic and pragmatic production. This similarly introduces the issue of the discursive imbrication of specific representations of masculinity and femininity in given social practices, discursively reiterated in advertisements texts. Before proceeding onto the topics discussed under the heading of imbrication, however, one last plate is discussed to bring out certain other features of suture.

Plate 4 posits further symbolic marks, marks which may be pragmaticised through the discursive imbrication of specific forms of suture. Again it is to be insisted that these marks have the structure of re-marks. They re-mark complex social processes. The re-marks are themselves social products which cannot be treated as if they reflected epiphenomenally some prior ontological ground, a simple real.

Ethnicity, both in terms of a racial theorisation and in terms of a situational national and regional interpretation, and class may be recognised to function as sutures alongside gender and age, as for example in plate 4.

Plate 4 uses similar semiotic material to plates 1 and 2. Structurally, a photographic text is placed above a number of typographically distinguishable verbal texts. As in plate 2, the photographed characters do not return the look of the camera position. The reader is joined but distinguished. They and I are not simply identical.

The photographed characters are named as 'foreigners'. Again they are distanced from the reader of the inscription. That distance however is negotiated. 'Foreigners are people'. They are people 'too!', that is, like 'we' are. The reader group, however surprising this may seem, are like the photographed group. The photographed group, no matter how primitive and unsophisticated they appear, are a literate people. As such they are therefore like us, they are people, too.

The suture of photograph and caption works as a negative identification. They, foreigners are not us. However, they are people, like us. The small point constructs from that opposite, the not us, a more positive identification.

Thus, 'we' are identified with S.C. Peacock. "S.C. Peacock advertisements appear in pretty well every country in the world. We've even made forays behind the Iron Curtain." We, again, are distinguished from another of our 'opposite numbers'. While we are not the photographed 'primitives' or 'savages', however noble they are, still we are not locked behind an Iron Curtain, wherein remains a 'barbarous' culture and society of an other kind. Similarly, just as the photographed 'savages' are people,

so are those behind the Iron Curtain: 'We found people there - real people!'. That is, not the false people, the proletariat, of communist propaganda but real people, i.e. like us!

Such real people may exist in what appears to us as 'barbarous' societies, but such barbarity is characterised as quaint, living, as they are named, in 'furrin parts'. That is, they pose no real threat. They are simply antiquated and perhaps a little misguided. Their threat can be domesticated.

The suture is developed from, first, an ambiguous connectedness with, to second, a negative identification with, to, third, a positive superiority over our 'opposites', those who are not us. We, in our superior position, are able to construct a 'genuine understanding of the special interests of real local people'. Real people live in local situations, in determinate communities, as do we. We, nevertheless, are able to transcend that locality. It is that which distinguishes us from them, and makes us superior.

Superior and transcendent, we can modulate our messages and actions. 'An advertisement originally written for Nellie of Scunthorpe simply won't adapt for Ali of Cairo or Pablo of Rio.' While Nellie is like us, in being a real person living in the nation in which we live, the sentence construction nevertheless suggests an other status. She is approximated to Ali of Cairo and Pablo of Rio and becomes subject therein to our condescension. Scunthorpe, Cairo and Rio de Janeiro evoke a collective otherness, united in their not being London, or Paris or New York.

While one implication is to suggest a common 'Englishness' between 'S.C. Peacock' and 'Nellie of Scunthorpe' another effect is to institute a clear distinction between we and those we address. Those we address are inferiors. The character of that inferiority is ethnic, whether as racial difference between nations and continents or as regional difference between parts of a nation, capital and provincial.

The specification of 'Nellie of Scunthorpe' indeed secures the negative aspect of the suture. We are not 'primitives' or 'savages'. We are not of African, Middle Eastern or Latin American cultures. We are not communists. We are not women. We are not from the industrialised provinces. We transcend such local situations, as indeed we transcend situatedness itself. We, S.C. Peacock, may have offices in London, Manchester, Liverpool, Birmingham, Halifax and any number of other places covered by our 'overseas division', but we are not of any one of those places.

The issues raised here introduce those discussed in sections on imbrication and overdetermination, which concern the structuration of the subject in ideological formations in relation to an hegemonised institutional order. The suture constructed here, for advertisers and for those seeking to identify their needs with advertisers, is one of superior, transcendent, masculine identity. In plate 4, an opposite embodiment is shown. No positive representation is photographed. The sutured identity exists

as an immanence constructed through the photographic and verbal texts.

Plate 4 focuses the issues of race, ethnicity, regional identity, cultural situatedness, political systems of government, social class and gender. It does so by photographing and enumerating those others who are not the constructed addressee, the imaginary ego for whom the suture works.

For such issues to be so close to the surface of the presentation is uncharacteristic of the majority of advertisements shown to a general public. As will become progressively more clear through the remaining analyses, the categories of masculine and feminine are the dominant suture-figures. These two categories are used to contain other systems of differentiation which may be re-marked by the advertisement.

In as far as plate 4 is addressed to a restricted audience of advertising and marketing professionals, and those interested in hiring their services, it stresses themes which might otherwise have to be omitted or suppressed. It would be unwise to address a more general public in terms which provoked in them a sense of ethnic inferiority, racial inferiority, class inferiority or gender inferiority. However, as a communication between superiors, constituted as an imaginary exchange between converse egos, such risks can be taken.

Sutures characteristically employ a positive

identification in commercial public discourse. Plate 4 risks a negative identification and risks themes surfacing which trouble the simplicity of the category of the masculine and the feminine. This recognition serves as a backdrop to the discussion of imbrication which follows.

NOTES TO 4.1

1. Heath, S. Notes on suture. Screen, vol. 18(4) Winter 1977-78, p. 63.
2. Heath, S. op. cit., p. 63-64.
3. See Lacan, J. The mirror stage as formative of the function of the I as revealed in psychoanalytic experience (In Ecrits. Tavistock, 1977. p. 1-7).
4. See Heath, S. op. cit., p. 60.  

"cinema is not the mirror-phase, which any spectator-subject of a film has already accomplished (as against the little infant who can come to the film but not come as its spectator), being always already in reading. In this sense, the moment of the (cinematic) image... is not 'before' but 'after' the symbolic."
5. See Heath, S. op. cit., p. 59-60.  

"What is in question is a complex and multiple play of symbolic and imaginary, the production of the spectator as subject in the film in that play: it is not the subject's imaginary, as Oudart at times appears to state, which sutures the discourse; rather the suturing function includes the spectator as part of an imaginary production."
6. Heath, S. op. cit., p. 56.
7. Heath, S. op. cit., p. 49.
8. Derrida, J. Freud and the scene of writing (In Writing and difference. Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981. p. 196-231) p. 230.
9. See Heath, S. op. cit., p. 49.  

See also Lacan, J. The Four fundamental concepts of psychoanalysis. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1979. p. 203-215.
10. Lacan, J. op. cit., p. 203.
11. Lacan, J. op. cit., p. 203-215.
12. Heath, S. op. cit., P. 50.
13. For a discussion of the way in which the Lacanian subject and Other is modified in this thesis, see section 3.1 Practice and production.



14. See, for example, J.A. Miller cited in Heath, S. op. cit., p. 55.
15. Burgin, V. Photography, fantasy, function. Screen, vol. 21(1) 1980, p. 53.
16. "To instance suture, Miller points at once as though to its immediate index, to the 'I' of an utterance: the utterance states a place of the subject at the same moment that it splits from that place by the very fact of the place of the utterance itself, the place from which the statement is made; the subject of the enounced and the subject of the enunciation never fully come together, are always in the distances of the symbolic...'  
Heath, S. op. cit., p. 55.
17. Heath, S. op cit., P. 55. quoting J.A. Miller's 'Logic of the signifier'.
18. Heath, S. op. cit., p. 55.
19. Heath, S. op. cit., p. 56.
20. Heath, S. op. cit., P. 56.
21. Derrida, J. Of grammatology. Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976. p. 63.
22. Derrida, J. Of grammatology. Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976. p. 65.
23. "When I say that 'I see' the film, I mean thereby a unique mixture of two contrary currents: the film is what I receive, and it is also what I release, since it does not pre-exist my entering the auditorium and I only need close my eyes to suppress it. Releasing it, I am the projector, receiving it, I am the screen; in both these figures together, I am the camera, pointed yet recording. Thus, the constitution of the signifier in the cinema depends on a series of mirror-effects organised in a chain."  
Metz, C. The imaginary signifier. Screen, vol. 16(2) Summer 1975. p. 14-76.
24. Derrida, J. Freud and the scene of writing (In Writing and difference. Routledge and Kegan Paul 1981. p. 196-231). p. 210.
25. Heath, S. op. cit., p. 56.
26. See Burgin, V. op. cit., p. 60-62.

27. Relay is a term used by Barthes to denote one kind of relationship pertaining between pictorial, photographic and verbal textual structures. See Barthes, R. Rhetoric of the image (In Image-music-text. Glasgow: Fontana/Collins, 1977. p. 32-51).
- See also Burgin, V. op. cit., p. 61-62.
28. Heath, S. op. cit., p. 53.
- See Also Lacan, J. The Four fundamental concepts of psychoanalysis. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1979. p. 214.
29. See Spivak, G.C. Revolutions that as yet have no model: Derrida's Limited Inc. Diacritics, vol 10 (4) 1980. p. 38.
30. Derrida, J. Freud and the scene of writing (In Writing and difference. Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981. p. 196-231). p. 227.
31. Derrida, J. Loc. cit.

## 4.2 TEXTUALITY 2: IMBRICATION

Suture concerns the positing and positioning of a unified 'one' as the inscribed reader. Imbrication concerns the relations between that inscribed 'one' and the other constructed by the textual presentation. Suture and imbrication together, then, name the processes of constructing a position to whom the other constituted by the text may 'communicate' or 'speak'. In imbrication, a specular or imaginary other is constructed, for the addressee, as 'utterer' of the discourse. The other is embedded in a specular scene.

A communicative practice takes place as the disambiguation of the posited addressee's imbrication with a set of others constructed through the specular scene. The reader who unfolds these sutures and imbrications, as distinct from the inscribed addressee, may invest those scenes and imbrications with significance. This occurs to the extent that s/he identifies her/himself with the sutured 'one'.

Since the ego is already constructed on the basis of a representation, the text may constitute an intervention into the constitution of the subject by constructing a specular presentation onto which the ego may be displaced or transposed. Access to the real of experience, mediated by the ego, is by way of such imaginary or specular constructions. These may be misrecognised as the real itself and treated as entities. Alternatively, they may be understood as objectifications of the symbolic processes whereby the subject is sustained in relationship to the Other.

So far, reading advertisements has been discussed in terms of suture, as the formation of an ego. The ego is formed as an imaginary unity. It should be recognised that,

"This is not to say, however, that any and every spectator - and, for instance, man or woman, of this class or that - will be completely and equally in the given construction." (1)

Sutures can be more or less successful in practice, depending upon the relationships between the already constituted intersubjective positions and ego formations of the reader who approaches the advertisement. The constructed reader or spectator is never simply identical with the reading or spectating individual. The constructed reader or spectator may, if the suture has worked, operate as a "'double specular' structure" (2) which serves as a principle of punctuation for the possible meaning - production. Thus, that constructed position may serve to permit a given set of statements and semiotic constructs to be formed as a communicative practice. It operates to close down potential meaning - production around a structure of communication which may be perceived to be dialogic in character (3).

As such, particular advertisements depend upon the hermenentic skills of determinate readers to construct given textual elements in the form of sutures, and hence consequently to construct the communicative intent of the advertisement. The communicative character of the advertisement may be perceived to unfold as the construction of the

imbrication of the reader or spectator into, first, the structure of a communicative practice and, second, the situation of communication. The discursive character of advertising, therefore, is not recognised as one element of a complex corporate strategic intervention into the social, but as the unfolding of a communication or, at the extreme, of a dialogic conversation.

Imbrication, then, concerns the negotiation between determinate readers and the invited spaces constituted by advertisements. Access to those spaces is by way of the constructed openings of suture. Not all social subjects have equal access to those openings or imaginary communicative spaces.

Plate 5, for example, constitutes a highly restricted space for suture and for imbrication. The suture is available to those who identify themselves in and through 'the word'. The word-image presented, 'LITERATI', is again predominantly a masculine category. But this is not conclusive. The aim of the advertisement is to 'prove' the identity of 'guinness' and 'literati'. The word 'guinness' can be substituted for the word 'literati'.

The central section of the advertisement demonstrates that proof. The tone of mockery is already a borrowing which the embedding of the name of James Joyce in the word 'rejoyce' confirms.

The suture is primarily constructed through the literary word. But the suture develops into a communicative and representational imbrication through the use of

typographic and photographic intervention. The constructed suture is imbricated, in one sense, onto a critical aesthetic discourse, and in another sense, a representational practice, one which has come to dominate conceptions of perception.

The former imbrication, through citation of the name of Joyce and the typographic and literary experimentation he is taken to stand for, leads to discussions of literary modernism. In such discussions, the concepts and conventions of realism and representationalism are prominent.

Finnegans Wake can be taken to signify the end of "the age of Modernism" (4). This term can be used to name,

"a movement in literature which rejected the late 19th century concept of Liberal Man and presented (as in Ernest Hemingway and D.H. Lawrence) Natural Man, and (in Eliot, Joyce and, later, Evelyn Waugh and Graham Greene) Imperfect Man" (5)

In these moves, literary style became "sparse, ironic, experimental" (6), all of which the advertisement itself mimics. The advertisement cannot be said to partake in this style since it attempts to graft it onto a photographic realism.

The word 'guinness' is taken to refer to the photographed glass of guinness which ironically represents the presumed, 'real', glass of guinness. In this direction, which is the latter imbrication mentioned above, the sutured ego is led in the direction of a different scene, one which is not primarily literary in mode. The imbrication points towards the glass of guinness, on the table-top or bar-top, in the public house.

This again reiterates the literary constructions of Ulysses and Finnegans Wake, but reduces them to a simple referential realism. Realism moves towards that which can be perceived by the ego, an ego under challenge in the movement of modernist literary styles. In this imbrication of ego and other, the other who 'speaks' is the glass of guinness itself. It speaks of its own qualities and its posited effectivity upon a subject, as a constructive influence which improves the inscribed addressee.

If the presentation is to remain an advertisement, one of the two imbrications must dominate the other, an issue developed in the section on overdetermination. If the imbrication onto the critical aesthetic discourse of literary modernism asserts itself, this might lead to

"The "breakdown of the object" which comes, Beckett asserts, to the same thing as "the breakdown of the subject" is embraced as the essence of the modern." (7)

It is precisely this breakdown which the realist imbrication intervenes to arrest. Guinness steps in to 'save' the disimbricating literati, to secure him, rather than her, with an imaginary identity constructed in a 'communicative' exchange with a glass of guinness which speaks through its text-ure.

In the movement of the modernist imbrication, the posited identity of ego-other-literati-photographed glass of guinness - the name 'Guinness' - the name 'Joyce' - the status 'classic'-the represented 'real glass of guinness' might be undone. In the movement of a realist imbrication, the photograph stabilises the presentation, by

pointing to a definite, objective reality. The placing of the 'guinness' in a position of caption under the photograph anchors the words to the photograph. The categorising of the texture as classic solidifies further the drift to realism.

The advertisement seeks to remain within the boundaries of a more 'classic' style of textual construction while flirting with the possibilities of a more experimental practice. Thus, while the material density of 'the word' or 'literary style' is used to construct a suture, a more conventional representational style is used to construct the dominating imbrication, i.e. towards a perception of the 'real' by the ego. The cultural authority of James Joyce and related critical aesthetic discourses are used to construct a simple reference to a perceptible product. Such reference, from such authorities, is intended to serve as a recommendation. The issues of authorisation and reality are also entered into in section 4.3 on overdetermination.

Rejection of such naivety at the level of pictorial and graphic structures, of course, can be recognised as one of the features of advertisements during 1956 to 1964. Plate 5 was aimed, by being placed in Encounter in 1964, at an audience whose sensibilities were more attuned to the literary manipulation of typographic presentations. Plate 6, however, by being placed in the Sunday Times Colour Magazine also in 1964, was aimed at an audience whose visual, pictorial and graphic repertoires were becoming more sophisticated.



Plate 6 indulges in a play with pictorial styles. The advertisement reiterates certain painting styles, and in doing so engages specific critical debates concerning modernist and avant-garde stances. For, as the male character of the left attests, this advertisement concerns very much stances.

The suture in plate 6 is more overtly masculine. Two male figures are presented. A difference of age is constructed. The age difference is set alongside a difference in styles of painting. Finally, to these differences is added a third, between cream sherry and dry sherry. A complex series of substitutions and interactions takes place between these elementary systems, men, painting and sherry.

The premise from which the suture is developed is that in the case of older men, cream sheries and a certain painting style matters are more stable and conclusive. There is a critical concensus about their status. The imbrications concern how the experience of men is conceived, how certain painting styles are conceived and how certain sheries are perceived.

Older men, on the basis of long experience, become connoisseurs. They 'know what they like'. They collect and possess what they know and like. A certain style of painting and a certain kind of sherry fall into the category of collector's item. They are established, like the men themselves.

The situations of other men, who may be younger, other styles of painting, which may be more recent, and

other kinds of sherry, which may be less established, is more volatile. For them, 'the picture is still confused'. This metaphoric association between picture as situation and picture as painting serves as the structuring link between overall argument and its means of realisation.

The painting on the left becomes a clear picture. What it represents is obvious. It shows a valued object and in itself is an object of value: a clear representation of a culturally valuable object and experience. It is unclear, in the picture on the right, what it is to which the inscribed spectator is to respond. Colour, design and texture may become apparent as objects of attention in themselves but there is no recognisable 'thing' or 'topic' represented. It becomes difficult to construct a consensus concerning what is represented and hence whether or how that representation is to be valued.

While the paintings carry the argument to some extent, it is returned to the sherry. The qualities of Harvey's Bristol Dry, like the qualities of the painting on the right may be imperceptible, given certain dominant assumptions. What guarantees the quality and value of Harvey's Bristol Dry is that it is the product of 'the same skill and care' as that which goes into Harvey's Bristol Cream.

Thus, a complex tissue of argumentation which begins with an identification of a cream sherry and an older man, passes through a distinction between older and younger men and from thence to a comparison of painting

style, returns to a dry sherry.

The advertisement institutes the dry sherry alongside the cream sherry through a complex series of substitutions and shifts. The textual whole is encoded in a photographic image which itself favours the painting on the left hand side. The photographs imbricate the sutured ego into two scenes of connoisseurship.

The closure the advertisements serve to secure emerges as a communicative structure between inscribed ego and the other of the represented connoisseur on the left. He communicates his knowledge, pleasure and pride of ownership. To that pictorially constructed 'conversation' is added a further one which seals the content of the message. The abstract voice authorises the preference, while attaching itself to the small bottle in the right hand corner. The named bottle, 'Harvey's Bristol Cream', speaks its own recommendation. It authorises itself and seals its own identity. That authority, in a reductive play upon the term 'critical', is named that which is 'beyond criticism'. The sutured ego is imbricated to the 'beyond' of absolute authority and absolute self-identity.

The advertisement seeks to pursue only as far as that which is collected, the value and meaning of pictorial styles where the advertisement seeks to draw a limit, and where the advertisement may become as confused as the picture it denigrates, is in admitting and engaging the critical debates which surround the phenomena of Pop Art, Abstract Expressionism and painterly abstraction.

The advertisement seeks to identify the connoisseur with the Pop Art painting before which he stands. The relationship with the painting in the scene on the right becomes difficult to understand when it is recognised that Pop artists sought to displace what the advertisement seeks to valorise.

"The younger Pop artists in America felt that Abstract Expressionism was an elite art, to which only a tiny class, mainly of painters and poets could respond. At the same time it had come to be greedily collected by the middle class and the establishment art world, and its protagonists found themselves compelled to stress how 'difficult' this art was by emphasising its moral extremism and its radical form." (8)

The painting on the right owes more to this establishment-valorised expressionism than does that on the left. The advertisement works to recourate Pop Art for establishment connoisseurship. This constitutes a reversal of previous critical appraisal during that period in the late 1950's when Pop Artists such as Jasper Johns and Robert Rauschenberg sought to overturn the hegemony of Abstract Expressionism. These artists presented images and motifs of "apparently wilful banality" (9) which were

"rendered with deadpan flatness, (that) could only prove disquieting to criticism that had articulated its values on the experience of abstract painting." (10)

The advertisement seeks to constitute an imaginary communication from a specular connoisseur which excludes the political machinations whereby certain painting styles achieve hegemony and are actively subverted by other styles.

The situation is all the more confusing given that Pop Art seeks to rework elements of Avant-Garde practice, whose critical aesthetic was aligned to a political project. The imaginary scene of the connoisseur's communication serves to arrest the recognition of the relations between Abstract Expressionism, on the one hand, and Avant Garde practices, on the other hand.

Thus, the advertisement constitutes an imbrication onto an imaginary scene, in which Pop Art is reiterated and registered in a discourse of class-based connoisseurship. The figure of the connoisseur unites masculinity, knowledge, pleasure and private ownership. This constitutes a moment of domestication of Pop Art, a process already begun in the pages of the Sunday Times Colour Magazine in the issues of 26 January 1964, in an article entitled 'Pop Art: way out or way in?', and the issue of 26 April 1964, in an article entitled 'America on target', a reference to Jasper Johns' choice of imagery.

In another context, Pop Art has been taken to mark the initiation of a period of postmodernism (11). Avant Garde and modernism are taken to be the major cultural forms of expression of the 20th century. Avant garde practice is distinguished by its sense of negativity, sometimes hysterically asserted (12). Postmodernism, then, while evoking aspects of the Avant Garde was in no position to emulate its project of aesthetic and political negation. Furthermore,

"At the same time it goes without saying that the postmodernist revolt against the institution art in the United States was up against bigger odds than futurism, dadaism or surrealism were in their time. The earlier avant-garde was confronted with the culture industry in its stage of inception while postmodernism had to face a technologically and economically fully developed media culture which had mastered the high art of integrating, diffusing, and marketing even the most serious challenges."  
(13)

In the advertisement, the challenge has been mastered. Imbrication, then, not only constructs a specular scene, but that scene operates as a means of stabilising the presentation by cutting off that historical dimension by means of which the logic of the argument would be disrupted.

Plate 7 continues the programme of domesticating potential disruption. The imbrication onto an imaginary scene is presented as if the scene itself represented a dream. The dream is the scene through which may be perceived the emergence of an unconscious desire.

The paradoxes of the dream and the paradoxes of fetishism, in the Freudian sense, can be inter-related with the paradoxes of fetishism in the marxian sense through plate 7. For a woman to dream that she was an artist carried within it the implication that 'I dreamed I was a man', for it is men who are artists.

"As femininity was to be lived out in the fulfillment of socially ordained domestic and reproductive roles, a profound contradiction was established between the identities of artist and of woman" (14)

The ambivalence of the situation, that 'I', a woman, dreamed that 'I' was a man is constructed pictorially.

The woman bears the symbols of masculinity: artist's palette, painter's brush, artist's beret and artist's cravatte. She is both model and painter. Facial features, hair length and style, bodily form, skirt and breasts covered by a 'maidenform bra' betray the woman's feminine status. The role of the 'maidenform bra' is that of dream symbol, i.e. Cymbal, which provokes in the woman the recognition of her desire for a man, and her desire to be a man.

The 'maidenform bra' both accentuates and conceals the breasts. It gives them a particular form, a form which phallicises them, while making them 'invisible' to the perceiver. The 'maidenform bra', paradoxically, restores the phallus to the woman. It makes of woman both the perceiver and the possessor of the object of desire. She becomes that image which serves as,

"the spectacle on to which men project their own narcissistic fantasies" (15)

The 'maidenform bra' returns the look to man in which he may recognise himself. In the dream, the woman recognises this structure of narcissistic vision of the man. The 'maidenform bra' becomes a way for the woman to intervene in the narcissistic vision of the man. In this way the woman 'controls' or 'directs' the phallic vision of the man. The 'maidenform bra' serves as a fetish, and in doing so acts as an object in the constitution of masculine sexual desire.

"Fetishism, Freud first pointed out, involves displacing the sight of woman's imaginary castration onto a variety of reassuring but often surprising objects - shoes, corsets, rubber goods, belts, knickers, etc. - which serve as signs for the lost penis but have no direct connection with

it. For the fetishist, the sign itself is the subject of his fantasy - whatever actual fetish objects or else pictures or descriptions of them - and in every case it is the sign of the phallus. It is man's narcissistic fear of losing his own phallus, his most precious possession, which causes shock at the sight of the female genitals and the fetishistic attempt to disguise or divert attention from them." (16)

The imbrication with an imaginary dream scene in plate 7 proposes a work upon the body for the woman in which a phallic-dominated conception of woman, as stand-in for the phallus in a structure of narcissistic vision, and of sexuality becomes necessary to gain the power which the woman desires. This diverts attention from an other, perhaps more valid, work in terms of which power may be struggled for and gained.

"The work to be done is that of deconstruction. The 'otherness' of woman as negative of man and the repression of woman in our culture is not without radical possibilities for challenging the oppressiveness of patriarchal systems for both men and women...

'In art practice, women can engage in work to expose these ideological constructions by questioning the traditional institutions of artist and art, by analysing the meanings which representations of woman signify and by alerting the spectator to the ideological work of art, the effect of artistic practices and representations.'" (17)

The strategy recommended in the advertisement is that, for 12 shillings and 11 pence, a commodity can be purchased which will serve as a fetish in which a certain form of masculine vision can find its look returned to form a narcissistic structure. Sexual relations between 'man' and 'woman' are commodified in one direction, a process whereby relations between constituted persons are misrecognised as the relation between things, and fetishised



in another direction. The position of woman is in this juncture. Her work is to construct a mode of objectification, using commodities to create a desirable body. A woman's work is primarily sexual in character, given that sexuality is defined in phallic terms.

The imbrication of plate 7 arrests an other potential kind of work, such as that pursued by feminist artists who, equally as the woman in plate 7, desire power, but do not desire the position shown in that advertisement. Thus,

"Recent feminist artists... have tried to work collectively to establish a sympathetic environment and a critical forum where work can be developed and understood on its own terms. They have revived the use of specifically 'feminine' craft techniques (e.g. needlework as opposed to oxyacetylene welding); and have attempted to work out of experiences such as those of female sexuality or domesticity, conventionally considered too unorthodox, private or trivial for creative material.

In this they are of course drawing, if indirectly, on precedents provided by futurism, Dada, Surrealism, Pop, conceptual and performance work and on another 'avant-gardes' which have challenged conventional notions of what is proper to art - although the point here is less the nature of the influences than the uses to which they may be put." (18)

Plate 7, then, sutures a woman and imbricates woman as the opposite other, the negative, of man. The figure of woman is pursued, as an overdetermined social product in the discussions of plates 11 and 12.

Plate 8 returns the discussion of imbrication to the figure of man, in all his imaginary or specular plenitude. The figure presented is the 'gentleman'. The gentleman reflects and elevates the sutured ego. He stands

over his possessions, master of all he surveys. He is master over animal nature, his obedient German shepherd, and over technological invention, his veteran Bentley.

He is a hero:

"the English would tend to portray the hero as controlled, courteous, reluctant to show emotion, honest and straight forward..." (19)

The lack of emotion is crucial.

"A real gentleman, though, even if he loses everything he owns, must show no emotion..." (20)

It indicates the completeness, and the imaginariness, of his control, his fixing in and through an image such as that shown in plate 8.

The figure of the gentleman constitutes the cultural imbrication of the sutured ego as the 'gentleman' of 'good taste' who also has 'the money to indulge' that taste. The figure is imbricated as thoroughly 'English'.

"Any examination of the English socio-cultural history of the last 200 years has to come to terms with the pervasive concept of the 'gentleman', one which even today, if from a subterranean position, can exert a potent influence on English responses to issues".

"Though inextricably associated with the ruling class, the term has never become synonymous with membership of it. Equally inextricably it is bound up with a vision of national identity and destiny..." (21)

To complete the characterisation of the figure of the man, his taste and his financial wealth are complemented by his reason.

"Two images of man vied with each other: on the one hand we find a stress on reason, on the other a stress on sentiment. While the Cartesians, upholding the ideals of reason, demanded that knowledge exhibit its credentials, the adherents of sentiment wanted intuitive

certainty, an innate sense of what is right which cannot and need not give account of itself. Such innate good sense was called taste." (22).

The man possesses "innate good sense", which can be adduced from his very appearance. The hair length and style, the clothing and the physique all attest to his status, as gentleman.

"The clothing system in particular replicates for Western society the functions of the so-called totemism. A sumptuary materialization of the principal coordinates of person and occasion, it becomes a vast scheme of communication - such as to serve as a language of everyday life among those who may well have no prior intercourse of acquaintance. "Mere appearance" must be one of the most important forms of symbolic statement in Western civilization. For it is by appearances that civilization turns the basic contradiction of its construction into a miracle of existence: a cohesive society of perfect strangers." (23)

In other words, "only superficial people fail to judge by appearances" (24).

The stress upon appearance was being developed actively by marketing practitioners from the 1950's onwards. Style in men's dress was receiving a renewed and qualitatively different kind of attention, as the pages of Advertiser's Weekly in the late 1950's attest. Appearance could now be used to articulate political opinion and concepts. Thus, in plate 8, is presented 'Drummond's Freedom Suitings'. The suit reflects freedom and constitutes a position from which the wearer may act freely, being constituted as a man who is in control. The wearer is constituted as a Free Individual, such as he of Conservative Party ideology.

"We Conservatives would lead the nation through the present dark hours to a form of society centred upon the importance, the dignity and the ultimate value of the individual human being. Wherever modern life tends to dwarf the individual in comparison with the economic, political or social unit, the need is to humanize organization, not to organise humanity. Today we insist on individual liberty not in order to proclaim anarchy, but because we fear to see freedom crushed out and human personality forgotten altogether. An individual is an end in himself and the final justification of Government is that it makes possible the fullest development of personality and enables all men and women to lead their own lives in their own way within the limits of law and social justice." (25)

The themes of individual liberty and property ownership have remained central to Conservative Party ideology. Ownership is deemed to give people a stake and a new independence. Property is the basis of freedom.

"What I am desperately trying to do is create one nation with everyone being a man of property, or having the opportunity to be a man of property." (26)

The close interweaving of these two themes is crucial to bourgeois ideology in general.

"Bourgeois society sees itself as an instrumental group which accumulates social wealth only by way of private wealth; that is to say, it guarantees economic growth and general welfare by way of competition between private individuals acting strategically." (27)

Thus, in plate 8 a cultural imbrication, a man of taste and reason, is collocated with a politically Conservative and an economically and ideologically bourgeois individual. Moreover, as plate 8 might be taken to indicate, in relation to plate 4,

"The suspicion of black pupils that when "man" to talked about it does not mean black man has not been removed." (28)

Hence, given the high status of the figure of man as presented in plate 8, it might be conceived that,

"the British educational institution is designed to prove that black children, like all working-class children, cannot succeed." (29)

It is equally obvious that plate 8 does not constitute a dominant ideological representation in the sense of being equally effective upon all classes, ethnic groups and gender groups. Plate 8, in being presented in the context of Town magazine constitutes an imbrication primarily for those men who consider themselves to belong to the instrumental group which constitutes bourgeois society.

The presentation of a number of distinct imbrications at once, e.g. cultural, political, ethnic, economic and ideological, raises the problem of overdetermination. How are these distinct imbrications kept under control through the categories of man and woman, the primary differentiating system of the public discourse of display advertising? How is it that the complex text operates specifically as an advertisement whose topic is the purchasable commodity?

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### 4.3 TEXTUALITY 3: OVERDETERMINATION

Suture concerns the construction of a unified 'one'. The structures of imbrication concern the projective, communicative relations between that 'one' and the other constituted by the text. In imbrication, it is recognised that both ego and other are inscribed in the text. The concept of communicative practice refers to the construction of relationships between ego and other is inscribed.

A communicative practice can be enacted irrespective of the degree of conscious identification with the sutured 'one', the inscribed ego position, by the reader of the inscription. Thus, discursive practice concerns the relationships between inscribed ego and the reader of the inscription. These discursive relationships take the form of the possibility of an identification with or a denial of the inscribed ego, and the possibility of the introjection and re-projection of that identification or denial. This space of possibility is also that of critical relationships, and, as is discussed in 4.4, of deconstructive relationships. Identification and denial are pre-critical. They are the material out of which the critical emerges.

Deconstruction raises the question of the limits of the critical as interpretative or hermenentic re-working of identification/denial. Deconstruction questions the authority and finality of critical definitions.

The effectivity of a text upon a reading subject depends upon the degree of introjection and re-projection



of the field of the other, constituted by the text, by the subject. The subject gains access to that field of the other by way of the unified, inscribed ego of suture. The inscribed ego is engaged upon or with a series of imbrications. These imbrications take the form of a set of representations which may serve as substitutions by means of which the ego is displaced through the meaning-production of the text.

Overdetermination, then, concerns the density of movement, through substitution and displacement, of the inscribed ego in communicating with the field of the other. Through the material, semiotic density of overdetermined imbrications is formed an order of representations. The ordered sequence of representations constitutes, in its density and movement, effects of the 'real'. In overdetermination, then, a determinate 'real' order of things and of persons is constructed.

The question of the real can be divided analytically into the relationships between ego and opposite or objective other and ego and other egos or converse egos. The effect of the real is constituted through two developments of communicative practice. In the first, that of a referential realism, that which is constituted in overdetermined imbrication posits and indicates a domain of objective material existents. Imbrications in this direction represent for the ego and to the ego what exists as objectification.

In the second development, conversational communication is taken to found the associational relationships

between ego, as self, and other ego. In this way an order of constituted persons is recognised. In overdetermination, communicative exchange unfolds as the recognition of signs of inequality and of a struggle for power. In overdetermination, this struggle is characteristically resolved as a hegemonisation of relationships between ego-based individuals.

Hence, 'natural' or 'objective' order and 'social' or 'associational' order are the two determinate effects of the real constituted in overdetermination. Both are ego-based processes. They are also moments by which the ego is secured. The degree of effectivity of a text upon a reading subject, then, depends upon the extent of (positive) commitment and (hegemonised or rationalised) committedness of the subject, as preconstituted ego-formation prior to engagement with the text, to the interrelated orders of the real.

This engagement of text and subject, then, is mediated by determinate communicative practices which limit the possible productivity of the discursive institutional resources of the text, i.e. the intertextuality of concrete texts. Intersubjective resources and hermeneutic skills are embedded in and upon discursive institutional resources. Text and subject interpenetrate one another. Communicative practices intervene to posit imbrications in whose overdetermination, are constructed specific orders of the real.

The power relations enacted through any given text depends upon whether, and how, it can construct the subject as ego committed to the orders of the real constituted through the discursive production. In any given

instance, other than an act of pure faith, if such is possible, the relationships between reading subject and orders of the real is more than likely to be one of a degree of committedness. Committedness encodes a grain of difference with or resistance to commitment.

Thus, under the heading of overdetermination the construction of orders of the real are discussed. This can but remain a contribution to the analysis of situations in which reading subjects engage with texts. In those engagements, subjects enact their commitment or their hesitant or resistant committedness to the posited realities.

As will be recognised, the possibility for deconstruction arises in relation to the question of commitment and resistance to the 'real' order of things and to the 'real' order of persons. Simple representational realism, of the objectified other, and immediate acceptance of authorised intentionality, of the converse other, are both put in question in the movement of deconstruction.

In plate 9, the suture is masculinised and the imbrication is with a doubled masculine other in a split specular scene. The centre stage is dominated by productivity. The right hand of the imbrication, 'working hard', presents the double labour of producing objectified products that are the result of a man's labour, and in doing so reiterating the masculinity of the ego-form. The left hand of the imbrication, 'hard working', presents the underside of the 'success' posited on the right. A willingness to work, the characteristic of being 'hard working' is frustrated by the difficulty of getting into the position,

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the frame, of production. Here it is 'hard working', it is difficult to get any work done.

While plate 9 reiterates the man of plate 8, he is not quite the gentleman, of control and of completeness, shown in plate 8. In plate 9, he still labours to complete himself. He works to produce objectified products and him-self. He is engaged in a symbolic production, re-producing the form of his masculinised ego, and in a more pragmaticised labour, producing and editing written documents. While he writes, he is engaged in

".. phonetic writing, the medium of the great metaphysical, scientific, technical, and economic adventure of the West.." (1)

The presented labour, one which the reading of the advertisement itself extends, is multiple. How, in reading the advertisement, is a pragmatic suggestion to be extracted and defined from the construction of a complex imbricated scene?

While there are a number of distinguishable labours being evoked through the imbrication, a hegemonised concept of production is being asserted. Such a concept features the factors of (clock) time and money. In a simplified formula, the more time spent working, the more money is 'made'. To waste time not working is to waste money.

The pragmatic suggestion is that 'time spent on travelling need not be wasted'. The man, as employee, may be doing productive work while travelling. Already the form of the masculine suture is overdetermined in imbrication. He is situated and defined in the context of a division

of labour, both mental/manual, and management/worker. This works as a class overdetermination of a symbolic production, a middle-class man, but not aristocratic indeed, as the man in plate 8 pretends.

The imbrication entails a history, an education for mental labour and management skills. Middle class man is sustained by an education in the liberal humanities. Thus,

"A graduate from an Oxbridge Arts degree is expected to have acquired four intellectual attributes which will be used through his or her life. They are: a knowledge of what is meant by scholarship; an ability to think with a disciplined mind understanding the relationship between theory and evidence; the ability to write; and a general grounding in the origins and development of European thought and civilisation." (2)

It is this traditional liberal humanist education which is challenged in deconstructive reading practices, as is pursued in the following section 4.4.

"Presumably one cannot deconstruct meaning until one has learned to construct it; certainly all the major deconstructionists are men and women who have passed through the pathways of a traditional liberal humanist education. Their work derives much of its force and energy from their inwardness and familiarity with the values and assumptions they call into question." (3)

In 1964, when plate 9 was issued, and in the context of Town magazine, which addressed those who already considered themselves masculine and a part of the middle classes, such liberal humanism could be evoked as the background to the pragmatic overdetermination by business practice. Plate 9 evinces a particular construction whose deconstruction did not begin to be seriously attempted until the 1970's.

"The critical deconstruction of enlightenment rationalism and logocentrism by theoreticians of culture, the decentring of traditional notions of identity, the fight of women and gays for a legitimate social and sexual identity outside of the parameters of male, heterosexual vision, the search for alternatives in our relationships with nature, including the nature of our own bodies - all these phenomena ... are key to the culture of the 1970's..." (4)

Liberal humanist education gives access to high-status knowledge, whose dominant characteristics might be summarised, in an oversimplified way, as follows

"These are literacy, or an emphasis on written as opposed to oral presentation; individualism (or avoidance of group work or co-operativeness), which focuses on how academic work is assessed and is a characteristic of both the 'process' of knowing and the way the 'product' is presented; abstractness of the knowledge and its structuring and compartmentalizing independently of the knowledge of the learner; finally and linked to the former is what I have called the unrelatedness of academic curricula, which refers to the extent to which they are 'at odds' with daily life and common experience." (5)

It is this form of knowledge at whose head stands philosophy. Philosophy penetrates behind appearances, while explaining them in the light of first principles. Philosophy takes nothing for granted and is fully intellectual.

"Philosophy aims at changing men's lives by revealing the truth about things, which is very different from what is commonly thought."  
(6)

In elaborating this discourse centred upon truth, philosophy and other modes of Western discourse, fall prey to ethnocentrism, logocentrism, phallocentrism and egocentrism (7).

Business knowledge degrades high-status knowledge, yet calls upon the forms of high-status knowledge. The imbrication of plate 9 retains writing, the individual, the man. Writing, however, is overdetermined as work, and as work it is part of a generalised economy.

"The field of political economy, constructed exclusively on the two values of exchange and use, falls to pieces and must be entirely reanalyzed in the form of a Generalized Political Economy, which will imply the production of symbolic exchange value as the same thing and in the same movement as the production of material goods and of economic exchange value. The analysis of the production of symbols and culture is not thus posed as external, ulterior, or "superstructural" in relation to material production; it is posed as a revolution of political economy itself, generalized by the theoretical and practical intervention of symbolic exchange value." (8)

The conditions of a generalised political economy make a simple class analysis, in terms of two clearly defined opposing classes, difficult to sustain. Since the early 1950's the changing forms of capitalist economic formations have, by some theorists, been posited as having the effect of eroding the class structure of Western societies. Hence, it was asserted that,

"the old sources of tension and class conflict are being progressively eliminated and rendered irrelevant; that the structure of contemporary western societies is being recast in a mould of middle-class conditions and styles of life that these developments signal the 'end of ideology'." (9)

While plate 9, then, ought to serve as a possible imbrication for all adult males in Britain, in fact it remains situated in a small circulation magazine. Plate 9 imbricates the inscribed reader with a situation in which, it is presumed, that,



"the substantive inequalities of earlier capitalism are both diminishing and losing their former significance... for these and other reasons, radical dissent is progressively weakened as new patterns of living and aspiration negate or cut across the older class-bound horizons and loyalties." (10)

Given this situation, it is further supposed that

"In so far as power remains concentrated, it no longer derives from the accumulation of private property, but from control over bureaucratic organisations of diverse kinds - public at least as much as private - in which authority is divorced from wealth. Thus two dimensions of inequality no longer coincide." (11)

The imbrication of plate 9 substantiates this novel, presumed, non-coincidence of authority and wealth. The power derived from wealth is challenged by that derived from the technologised pragmaticisation of knowledge. Working hard, then, is a means of wresting control and gaining authority in and over the power derived from wealth.

The pragmatic recommendation may be that travelling by train allows time not to be wasted, but the purpose of not wasting time is to engage in a multiple, overdetermined labour. The obvious product is objectified artefacts, in this case written documents. Equally, the form of the masculinised ego is re-produced, as are class distinctions, even if these are no longer simple.

Control and high-status, both in 'knowledge' and in 'business', accrue to the masculine ego. The masculine ego is not a simple symbolic form. It is constituted through that overdetermination. It is re-produced through the overdetermined labour of business practice, whose scene is the site of imbrication in plate 9.

Social production in general, then, is overdetermined by this complex category of the masculine, as that which stands in the place of and represents the high-status. Plate 9 imbricates the inscribed reader in one of the scenes of the man's work.

Plate 10, in contrast, imbricates the inscribed reader, the sutured feminine ego-formation, with a scene of feminine production. The scene is again, like plate 7, constructed as if it were a dream, to reinforce the more imaginary labours in which the category of the feminine pursues its identification.

Like an architectural construction, "it's the foundation that matters". If the foundation is secure, the building stands. So it is with the construction of a woman. A woman is a woman's body, there is no question of the site of production. Plate 10 makes it plain that a woman's body is a construction site. Steel girders are like 'pantie-girdles'. They are the framework upon which can be hung facades.

It's the foundation, or it's the fundament, that matters. The woman's buttocks are to be re-made by the 'Liberty Beatnix'.

"The female body has become industrialised; a woman must buy the means to paint on (make-up) and sculpt (underwear/clothes) a look of femininity, a look which is the guarantee of visibility in sexist society for each individual woman. Advertisements sell the means of production of the look, sealing it in a given image of female desirability, attainable by means of lip sticks, bras, scents and so on... Magazines provide the know-how, techniques and expertise, sealing the association of woman and sexuality

in the minds of women themselves. It is almost as though woman herself were a factory, feeding in the means of production, painting on the mask and emerging transformed with value added in the process, a commodity ready for consumption." (12)

The woman is imbricated with an industrial society but her labour is lowly, fundamental.

"women's contribution to the modern world can be measured according to their sex appeal." (13)

Woman becomes the image of the desirable as the beautiful. This desirability, however, as has been indicated in plate 7, takes the form of representing the phallus for a certain masculinised vision. Woman is powerful only in as far as she constructs an appeal to a certain phallicised mode of perception. This appeal is constituted, first, by a movement of neutralisation. The girdle covers the woman's body and makes of it a screen for projection. Second, the body is granted, through projection, the status of the phallus. The girdle serves as an element in a possible pragmatic strategy for acquiring the insignia of phallic power.

Woman's productivity is overdetermined as relatively low-status and as, therefore, rendering the feminine ego relatively powerless. The imbrication in plate 10 indicates where she might maximise her productive opportunities, but this speaks simultaneously of her overdetermined lack of self-determination. Her products, and especially her body as product, are overdetermined, as Bourdieu states,

"In a class society, all the products of a given agent, by an essential overdetermination, speak inseparably and simultaneously of his class - or, more precisely, his position in the social structure and his rising or falling trajectory - and of his (or her) body - or, more

precisely, all the properties, always socially qualified, of which he or she is the bearer - sexual properties of course, but also physical properties, praised, like strength or beauty, or stigmatized." (14)

This overdetermined position is hegemonised in the advertisement scene in the direction of the purchasable commodity, the 'Liberty Beatnix'. Thus, the complex determinations upon social trajectory are made simple,

"We are made to feel that we can rise or fall through what we are able to buy..." (15)

Woman's labour, upon an image construction is overdetermined as an economic labour. It is perceived as a labour upon sexuality as such. Yet this sexuality, the presumed essence of desire, is interwoven with commodities. Again, woman's labour, as evidenced in plate 7, engages sexual fetishism, or a phallicised sexuality, and commodity fetishism, as the representation of social relations in the form of relations between things, an economic system overdetermined by the generalised object of exchange, money.

Thus, plate 10 imbricates the sutured feminine ego with a representation through which her sexual/economic labour may be performed.

"We exist as individuals in relation to and in the relations of language, the systems of meaning and representation in which, precisely, we find ourselves... Sexual relations are relations through language, not to a given other sex; the body is not a direct immediacy, it is tressed, marked out, intrinsically involved with meanings. Of course, we can shake our heads, appeal to the fact that we know the direct experience of the body, two bodies in love, making love. Yet 'direct experience', 'the body' and so on are themselves specific constructions, specific notions; the appeal to which is never natural

but always part of a particular system, a particular representation - and with particular social effects." (16)

Plate 10, then, hegemonises woman's labour by reducing it to a sexual labour. The aim of that labour is to construct an image or representation for a particular phallicised perception of the body. The advertisement imbricates the sutured feminine ego with that scene of labour. It intervenes to assert the value of the 'Liberty Beatnix' in the construction of the desired image. In doing so, the image which was fetishised becomes commodified. The image becomes overdetermined by the economic system with its articulations of class.

Woman, therefore, remains at the bottom of a complex system of differentials. The specular other of plate 10 claims a certain liberty, a 'beatnick' liberation. This points to an overdetermination in the system of marketing and advertising itself. Both plates 7 and 10 are strongly influenced by American advertising strategies and techniques, if not actually produced in New York by an American agency. These two plates appear in the context of Honey magazine. Both advertisements appeal to the newly constructed youth market.

The liberation hinted at, and situated in the first instance in the context of American society, is 'sexual'. The liberation is not from the phallicised, masculine dominated sexuality but from a sexuality which was, in a relatively immediate sense, reproductive in its aim. Sexuality was wrested from reproduction, for sexual pleasure. This form of sexuality, as plates 7 and 10 show, remains phallogentric.

Plate 11, on the contrary, imbricates woman in the system of sexuality for reproduction. Woman's production is presented as a functional institution.

"Woman's function is reproduction. Sexually, she is man's object and falls under his order and authority. In herself, she is outside of the sexual, has no specific sexual being, is untouched by sexual feeling. Yet the reality is troublesome, disturbing, slips out of true with this given creed. What is to be done with this contradiction? How is a sexual being of women to be acknowledged nevertheless while sustaining the image of its non-existence? The answer lies in its recognition as disorder... .. if possessed by sexuality woman is close to danger, violently overtaken, liable to fits and spasms, is in the realm of hysteria - for it is as this that hysteria now operates: as the sexual representation of women." (17)

Plate 11 imbricates the sutured ego with the scene of woman as wife, the wedding ring, and mother, the infant. This is woman's non-hysterical role, a sexual function in a phallicised sexuality, which is overdetermined by a general economy.

Plate 11 imbricates the woman, through the specular other, in the family and the home. The domestic environment serves as one of the principal sites for symbolic (re-) production. In modern, industrialised societies kinship relations and differentiations are overdetermined by political economic relations, dominated by the capitalist money system. Institutional social relations are overdetermined by the economic in the extended order constituted in modern social formations. Thus, economic relations are elevated to a position of dominance. It serves as the site from which symbolic differentiations are projected and in which they are coded and objectified. Thus,

"In bourgeois society, material production is the dominant locus of symbolic production; in primitive society it is the set of social (kinship) relations." (18)

This leads to a situation in which,

"money is to the West what kinship is to the Rest. It is the nexus that assimilates every other relation to standing in production." (19)

Woman's sexual (re-) production becomes a relatively lowly practice. The family no longer serves as the dominant site for the generation of dominant categories. The categories constructed through family practice are overdetermined in relation to the economy. Woman is offered commodities which pertain to her productions, cared-for-babies, and cared-for-homes. The symbolism into which the ego is imbricated in plate 11 is not kinship solely or predominantly, it is an economic symbolism pertaining to material (maternal) productivity.

"...the economy, as dominant institutional locus... throws a classification across the entire cultural superstructure, ordering the distinction of other sector by the oppositions of its own." (20)

In this way, social relations become , first, pragmaticised and, second, commodified. It is therefore a simple project to insert a further commodity form into an already pragmaticised and commodified field of relationships, such as family relations have become. 'Johnson's Baby Powder', 'Johnson's Baby Lotion', 'Johnson's Baby Cream', and 'Johnson's Baby Soap' can be instituted in the production of cared-for-babies. All of these items can be taken as representatives of the symbolic token, a token which has become an entity and a commodity.

"In our culture, money does not represent a relation between people as does the 'symbolic object'. As the valorization of an ENTITY, money under capitalism represents Imaginary relations between things and the 'things' it represents are the 'clear and distinct' people who are exchanged - as alienated objects - in the system. Money isn't simply 'like' the solipsistic, schizoid entities we call 'individuals'. It is their general equivalent of exchange. In our society, people represent labor time, and labor time - whether energy or organization - is money. This point is obvious, but it nevertheless has to be made: if money can rent people, then money is people."  
(21)

Thus, Plate 11 seems to imbricate the feminine ego in a symbolic exchange in which all signifiers are signs of a relation. However, given the economic overdetermination of social relations and symbolic exchange, it can be perceived that all signifiers operate in an imaginary, pragmaticised exchange. They have become signs, not of relations, but of things. These things in turn exist under the determination of the generalised object of exchange, money. Plate 11 imbricates woman, not in the locus of symbolic exchange and kinship relations, but in the domain of commercial exchange. It imbricates her, in an overdetermined way, with a very lowly position in the system of generalised political economy.



NOTES TO 4.3

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#### 4.4 TEXTUALITY 4: DECONSTRUCTION

In this section, while sutures, imbrications and overdeterminations are recognised, the seeming inevitability of their trajectory is refused. Critical reading relations are interposed. The potential conflicts which the texts may articulate, when read according to different discursive practices, are set out. Inscribed authorisations are challenged, while a critical orthodoxy is similarly refused. Authority, it is recognised, is not a matter of simple decision but of overdetermined practice. Authority is established in and through prolonged struggles for power in the social. Power itself is a relational and differential concept.

In plate 12, a masculine suture is imbricated with a specular scene indicating colonial man. His imperial standing becomes his imperious quality. Imperial power seems to emanate from an essence, becoming embedded in his self and his material possessions.

The suture is imbricated in terms of gender, race and class. All of these are facets of his imperial position. If the characteristic overdetermination is refused, i.e. that which assimilates Cusson's Imperial Leather to the essential quality of imperial man, the communication from the specular other can be constructed in the following terms.

First, racially, he is a member of the superior white race,

"characterised by an "energetic intelligence" that sustained their love of freedom, order and honour." (1)

The white race are superior both to the Blacks and the Yellows.

"Lowest rank was allocated to the Blacks, beings dominated by animal passion and equipped with very limited intellectual and moral capacities. Next came the Yellows, a breed devoted to the achievement of material satisfaction, but otherwise typified by their apathetic acceptance of mediocrity in all things." (2)

Thus, the superiority encoded as 'fame' and 'promise' and 'good taste' in plate 12 implies a certain racism if it is to be imbricated as imperial. But racism has never been a simple phenomenon. Racial difference is overdetermined in relation to political and economic interest.

"Fanon accused (Mannoni) of understating the historical depth and incidence of racism in European culture and above all, castigated him for his blindness to the economic and political interests which were sustained by colonial racism." (3)

While the inscribed ego is imbricated with an imperial scene, this scene was already, by 1957 when the advertisement was printed, a reference to an historical past. Plate 12 mythologies reference to an historical figure. It does so in terms of his projected fame, promise and good taste. The imbrication sits awkwardly in relation to the breakdown of the Empire, the formation of the Commonwealth, and the irruption of Commonwealth 'immigrants' in the homeland, the heart of the (old) Empire.

"By the massive immigration to our country in the past twenty years (since 1945) more than a million people of a dozen nationalities have erupted in our midst. It was never planned,

and was scarcely understood until it had already happened. Some came by right of political asylum like the Poles, Hungarians or the wretched Anglo-Egyptians after Suez; some by holding a Commonwealth passport - the West Indians, Africans, Maltese, Cypriots and Asian groups. Some, like the massive Irish contingent, the Australians (60,000 of them!), New Zealanders and Canadians, were scarcely considered as immigrants at all." (4)

In these conditions, racial difference overdetermined by the system of imperial rule re-emerged in the old Empire's heart as a 'colour bar', a bar which serves to divide and exclude.

"Apologists for coloured immigration tend to adopt a high moral tone. They talk about the historical debt this country owes to places which remained Imperial slums while Britain exploited agricultural and mineral resources. This type of patronising ally is bitterly resented by many immigrants... Yet despite all the pious talk about a multi-racial society (the coloured immigrants) are not being treated as equal and useful members of society. The colour bar in Britain has a discreet and evasive quality, and while immigrants are tolerated they are certainly not accepted." (5)

In 1957, then, to a small masculine audience, it remained possible to imbricate 'good taste' and future prospects ('promise') with Imperialism. By 1964, however, it was more opportune to imbricate man, the individual, with 'internationalism'. The concept of 'internationalism' displaces that of 'imperialism', a displacement greatly encouraged, if not promoted, by the United States who were eager to break down the European nations' Colonial trading systems.

By 1964, some of the more negative discursive productions, cited in relation to plate 12, had entered into the representation of 'man' himself. No longer could

imperial man serve as a positive identification in a world marked by the distinctions between purportedly equal 'nations' in a newly formulated internationalism.

Indeed, by 1964 'man' can be wholly displaced as figure. In plate 13, he is imbricated with a car. The car embodies the man and vice versa. The technological representation of man, suggested as one possible displacement in plate 8, is completed. The identity of car and man can be taken for granted so much so that there is no need to show the bodily figure of the man.

A dialogue takes place between the sutured ego and the specular other, i.e. the car. The car speaks in many languages, allowing the sutured ego to converse with others from many different nations. The car translates the man himself, as well as translating for the man.

Plate 13 deconstructs, to a limited extent, plate 12. Man is reconstructed in the specular scene of a restructured world capitalist order as a technological figure. He may still be an individualist but the overdetermined character of his individuality has shifted. Man is now situated, in plate 13, in a world order in which America is hegemonic, but is not an Imperial power in the sense of the older European empires. This new articulation was designed to,

"avoid the systemic international economic problems of the interwar periods of crisis. The reforms that led to the capital labor accord, Keynesian demand management and the protective state were aimed at the most serious economic problem of the Great Depression: inadequate aggregate demand." (6)

The new, technological man takes his place in the formation of 'late capitalism', as part of the capitalist world economy which is,

"an articulated system of capitalist semi-capitalist and pre-capitalist relations of production linked to each other by capitalist relations of exchange and dominated by the capitalist world market." (7)

Under such conditions, the position of technological man is secured as part of the 'First World', to which second and third class nations are subordinated. The 'First World', which is also the 'Free World', is united in its opposition to the Communist Bloc.

If plate 13 consolidates the new position of man in late capitalism, plates 14 and 15 can be used to continue the deconstruction of the older and the newer figures of man.

Plate 14, from 1958, addresses the audience of advertising practitioners, an audience which is 82% masculine in identification (8). It is unambiguously presented in plate 14 that the role designated for woman is one of subordination. This subordination may no longer be so visibly enforced. Women's political project, however, is still subverted. The subversion is not by the physical force which remains as a resource for legal-juridical authority. The subversion takes place as a reconstituting of woman in the role of domestic consumer. Woman's education, in terms of her reading and cultural practices more generally, is to be refocused upon those meaning productions available through advertisements and commodity purchasing.

Again, the imperial figure of man serves as the imaginary authority on whose behalf the force of constraint is exercised. Advertisements are conceived to remodel constraint and to present constraint as liberation. Women, having gained access to the domain of the public are to be constrained in terms of how they may develop that public role. Women are to be re-hegemonised in the domestic, through the discursive representations made possible by the public media. Advertisements are to partake in this re-hegemonisation of women, as subject to private property and patriarchy.

"Underneath the growth of privacy, then, was a possessive, self-protective individualism rooted in a system of competitive private property. This integration of the patriarchal family system with a system of private property was the fundamental grounding of the private; a sphere that did not routinely have to give an accounting of itself, either by providing information about its conduct or justification for it. Private property and patriarchy were indirectly the grounding of the public...  
... two major interests are encompassed in this enclave of the private (property and patriarchy)" (9)

Women are to be re-privatised, and in becoming so both politically subjected and economically subjected. They are to be economically subjected to the point of being commodified.

The critique of the private, a domain which over-determines the public, constraining how statements made in public may be understood, interrelates two strands. The first is that which seeks to subvert the power of wealth in the form of private property, i.e. socialism. The second is that which seeks to subvert the power of masculinity in controlling both private and public domains of social existence, i.e. feminism.



Thus, plate 13 re-hegemonises man in an internationalist form, but seeks to imbricate man in a scene devoid of socialist ideology and feminist ideology. Man inhabits a technologically produced environment, freed from political constraints, in a Free World. Plate 14 hegemonises the threat of feminism and a potential socialism. Plate 15 'arrests' a criminal, a criminal who may harbour both homosexuality and communism.

Plate 15 constructs a masculine suture, but imbricates, in a confusing way, the ego with both the figure of authority and the figure of error.

One man, the arrested one on the left, depends upon the other, who strides forth purposefully looking ahead to where he is going and failing to return the look of his charge. The sutured ego is imbricated with two masculine figures who represent the duality of a single figure, the impossibility of the figure of man. That impossibility takes on a modern character in plate 15. It is both political and sexual at once.

In the climate of a bipolar world, divided between bourgeois individualist liberalism and Marxism-Leninism (10), a man cannot be both. Similarly, a man cannot be both homosexual and heterosexual.

"the choices for men are: fetishism, acknowledged or denied homosexuality, or 'manhood', which is itself a makeshift resolution of the other possibilities, all of which are contained within it."  
(11)

Given all of these constraints, what emerges, in all his glorious infamy, is the figure of the spy. He, who sees what he should not see and sells what he should not sell to

those who should not know, is captured in plate 15. Plate 15 undertakes a prodigious labour of containment.

First, it shows what cannot be shown: male homosexuality. Yet it denies that the relationship is erotic. The engagement of the two men, or the divided man, is one of law enforcement not homosexual attachment. The homo-erotic character of the man on the left's look is denied by the figure of authority on the right.

"as Julian Mitchell's recent play Another Country communicates quite beautifully, homosexuality, however commonly practised it may have been especially in public school and Oxbridge circles, was in the 1930's officially unacceptable, requiring a duplicity for those who wished to succeed in "respectable" careers." (12)

A sexual activity is criminalised, and the criminal apprehended. The criminal figure in plate 15 plays upon an historical association, between homosexuality and espionage.

"The language of subversion, espionage and homosexuality became a unique blend: its images were directly or indirectly suggestive of all or any of these activities. How natural, how inevitable, it was that some of these young men should go into literature and the arts, some into espionage and subversion and some into both." (13)

Thus, plate 15 presents a paranoid figure of containment, on the one hand:

"It should be noted, however, that paranoia is defined in psychoanalysis, whatever the variations in its delusional modes, as a defence against homosexuality." (14)

On the other hand, it acts as a defence, by capturing the spy, against international communism.

"The free world faces the mounting challenge of international Communism backed by Soviet power.... The aim of the Soviet bloc is to weaken and disrupt the free world. Its instruments are military, political and economic: and its activities are world-wide. To meet this challenge, the free world must organise its resources - moral, military, political, and economic - and be ready to deploy them wherever the situation demands." (15)

In the free world, the sanctity of the individual is protected from subordination to the State. The free world, having defeated the fascist aberration and the tendency toward imperialist acquisition, must defend itself against communist totalitarianism (16).

Thus, plate 15 engages with a political philosophy which prioritises the concepts of individual and private property, such as the self-developmental tradition which begins,

"not from what is good for society or "all mankind" but from the individual and his need for an anchor in the physical world to enable him to impose his will upon it so as to express himself as a free and independent being. The first tradition accepts the individual as given, and justifies private property in terms of its efficiency in providing for his wants and his welfare. The second considers the individual as an end to be achieved, and justifies property as the means by which he forms himself in relation to other selves and the world of things."  
(17)

The figure of man coheres and centres the system of representation and communication which advertisements construct, if read from the position of consumer. That position permits the inscribed intentionality to be registered as the overdetermining frame. This allows the complex textual construct to be read as a pragmatic communication about a represented commodity in a specular, reflective, scene.

A deconstructive reading of this figure of coherence and centering proceeds from the displacement of man from centre of Empire to centre of nation, a nation overdetermined in relation to American hegemony and multinational corporations and in opposition to Communist totalitarianism.

Thus, man as self, as individual and as centre must be recognised as an imaginary identification in whose figure can also be recognised the determinate others whom he seeks to deny self-determining existence. Their realities are hegemonised according to the orders of the real of the individual as man.

There are the racially other, the other in terms of gender, the other in terms of sexual preference, the other in terms of those without private property, and the other in terms of political-ideological adherence. All of these figures are 'contained' or 'arrested' by the figure of man. None is allowed to speak save in those terms which express an overdetermined, qualified, and hegemonised allegiance to that system of economy which is misrecognised through the posited attributes and possessions of the man.

Advertisements permit the construction of complex texts which seem to represent social subjects to themselves and to one another as if there were differences of gender and taste only to distinguish them. Thus, in plate 15, it is taste preference alone which separates the men: 'Layton' is differed from 'Carnet'.

Deconstruction must point the way to the other sides of the man's calm certitude, to the senses of betrayal,

anger and confusion which are embedded in processes of hegemonisation. The scrutiny which the man on the left in plate 15 places upon the figure of the law must be taken not as a sign of guilty admiration but of disbelief, leading to the disimbrication from that representation and a deconstruction of that hegemonised order of the real. That representation is not simply denied, leading to its invigorated return, but critically appraised, not as an essence but as a set of relations to determinate others over whom power is exercised.

Deconstruction is not identification with the repressed or the oppressed. It is a work upon the construction of the 'real', 'authority' and 'power relations' through processes of hegemonisation in and overdetermined social order. Thus, the representation in plate 15 is not denied. It is treated as a complex construction whose elements engage systems in the reiterated reproduction of the real. A scrutiny of the constructedness of that figure must be reiterated by a work upon those institutional organisations which sustain the elements of the construction as reproducible.

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5. Thomas, A. Equal status not being granted. Scotsman, 3 August 1965.
6. Weisskopf, T. The current economic crisis in historical perspective. Socialist Review, 11(3) May-June 1981, p. 19.
7. Mandel, E. Late capitalism. London:Verso, 1978. p. 48-49.
8. See The readership of Advertiser's Weekly: a survey. London: Research Services Ltd., 1964.
9. Gouldner, A. The dialectic of ideology and technology. London: Macmillan, 1976. p. 103.
10. See Hegedus, A. Going beyond bloc ideology. END, no. 22-23 Summer 1986, p. 24-26.
11. Mitchell, J. Feminism and psychoanalysis. Harmondsworth: Penguin, p. 86.
12. Morris, J. Sex, subversion and spying. Times Higher Educational Supplement, 3 February 1984.
13. Morris, J. loc. cit..
14. Laplanche, J. and Pontalis, J.-B. The language of psychoanalysis. London: Hogarth Press, 1983. p. 297.
15. Text of N.A.T.O. Conference communique. Scotsman, 20 December 1957.
16. See Hegedus, op. cit., p. 24.
17. Perkin, H. The decomposition of capital. Times Literary Supplement, 18 January 1985.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

## 5. CONCLUSION

The theory constructed and worked in sections 3 and 4 militates against authoritative closures. What is stated here must be taken as a provisional punctuation. The thesis set out to show that a particular group of texts, while misrecognised as simply a communicative practice, can still operate as a discursive practice. The discursive practice interrelates communication, representation, commerce and ideology, while admitting the possibility of a deconstruction of any determinate meaning production.

Advertisements, because they are overdetermined, cannot be simply communicate. They are not elements in a dialogical conversation. Similar to other discourses in the media of mass communication they are non-reciprocal in character. While advertising as discourse is developed primarily in the context of economic institutions' strategies, when presented to a public they are relatively indeterminate. Meaning production is disambiguated and closed down through the realisation of a communicative practice. There is no necessity, however, for any actual social subject to identify with and to introject the ego position which is crucial to the unfolding of that communicative practice. This remains the case even while that social subject has the hermeneutic skills to recognise the invited space for suture.

By resisting the overdetermining authority of marketing practice over advertisements, which guarantees the production of the communicative practice, and by



holding in reserve the dominance of economic institutions which guarantee the authority of marketing, other discursive productions become possible. Nevertheless, advertisements are constructed in such a way as to make a communicative practice seem most obvious. The increasing use of photographic structures in the period focused can be understood as a recognition on the part of advertising practitioners of the effectiveness of constituting sutures and imbrications through photographs. The posited ego and other constituted through photography invites introjection insistently.

Thus, while advertisements can and do communicate and represent, those functions are constituted only in and through the operation of an overdetermined discursive social practice. The 'other' constituted in imbrication and the 'real' constituted in overdetermination must be recognised as specular or imaginary representations. As such they intervene in the constitution of the socially real, access to which is only ever through structures of representation overdetermined in social practice.

Advertising, then, cannot communicate simply or directly with locally situated social subjects. They must be imbricated with the order of discourse and, through discourse, to the extended institutional order of the social. Advertising is not, then, a simple response to what locally situated social subjects call for. Through advertising, social subjects are reconstituted, as are their desires.

They are reconstituted in the place of consumers, whose desires may be met by commodified forms of social product. In this way, the strategic actions of social subjects in locally situated histories are interpreted as forms of consumption behaviour. Consumption behaviour, however, is not a simple real which is perceived and represented. It is constructed in and through marketing practice.

The ideological movement of marketing dominated advertising is two-fold. First, the underlying sameness of consumption behaviour is posited as a global phenomenon. For example, it is argued that,

"Advertising is going global to meet the needs of an increasingly international market place... Global advertising hastens the day when people around the world will drink the same soft drinks, ride in the same cars, and soothe their throats with the same cough drops," (1)

Second, differences are reintroduced through the increasing fragmentation of the consumer market. However, such differences are understood as distinctions between kinds of consumer preference. They do not admit forms of cultural conduct which are irreducible to the terms of consumption. Whether or not marketing practitioners recognise it, there is a movement towards reducing forms of culturally constituted behaviour to being considered variations on the fundamental reality of consumption.

To read advertisements as a communicative practice reduces them to being effective within the horizon of readily commercialised consumption behaviour. It is to misrecognise their constitutive effectivity.

The analysis of advertisements is designed to show the complex operation of discourse, especially public discourses presented in the mass media such as advertising. Such discourses are not simply communicative, if communication is modelled on the dialogic conversation between equal individuals. Rather, it is suggested that conversational discourse might be better understood if considered in the light of non-reciprocal discursive practices such as advertising. The way in which discursive practices constitute social relations and operate ideologically in realising or resisting power relations, may become more readily recognisable.

It is important to understand the character of public 'speech', since the issue of how public speech is constrained is crucial to political conceptions of the social, such as those which focus parliamentary democracy and which seek to found political democracy on the basis of the workings of economic markets: The issue of the ideological constitution of individuals in 'free speech'. Discourse, as has been argued, is always overdetermined and constrained. Discursive resources, in semiotic form, cannot be considered a neutral vehicle which may be used freely and equally by any social subject.

Advertising, as discourse, reiterates and hegemonises power relations. That is the character of its overdetermined commercial, public, performance if realised as a communicative practice solely. The thesis has sought to introduce a mode of analysis through which that operation is clearly demonstrated and, to a limited extent, reopened deconstructively. It is to be insisted, however, that

deconstruction of one institutional site for securing hegemonised order is not, in itself, enough. It is effective, as deconstruction, only if its strategic project is reiterated and extended in prolonged social practice, in a whole series of institutional modes and sites. This text remains a contribution to resistance rather than the conclusion of struggle.

NOTES TO 5.

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2. Williams and Humbert Dry Sack. Town, October 1964.
3. Holland and Sherry Cloth. Man About Town, Autumn 1957.
4. S.C. Peacock Ltd. Advertiser's Weekly, (1956).
5. Guinness. Encounter, October 1964
6. Harvey's Bristol Dry. Sunday Times Colour Magazine, 21 June 1964.
7. Cymbal. Honey, November 1961.
8. Drummond's Freedom Suitings. Town, October 1964.
9. British Railways. Town, June 1964.
10. Liberty Beatnix. Honey, May 1961.
11. Johnson's Baby Care. Woman, 10 August 1957.
12. Cusson's Imperial Leather. Man About Town, Spring 1957.
13. Rover 2000. Town, November 1964.
14. Crane Publicity Ltd. Advertiser's Weekly, May 1958.
15. Junex of Sweden. Town, October 1964.

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