
R o c h e s t e r I n s t i t u t e o f T e c h n o l o g y

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of
The College of Imaging Arts and Sciences
In Candidacy for the degree of
Master of Fine Arts

Semiotics and Cross-Cultural Communication

Lingya H. Dubinsky
5/10/94

A p p r o v a l

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Date :

May 10, 1994

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Date :

5-12-94

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2. Drafts
3. Sketch/Development
4. Fall Quarter (research material)
5. Winter Quarter (research material)

J o a n M i r o . 1 8 9 3 - 1 9 7 0

If the interplay of lines and colors does not expose the inner drama of the creator, then it is nothing more than bourgeois entertainment. The forms expressed by an individual who is part of a society must reveal the movement of a soul trying to escape the reality of the present, which is particularly ignoble today, in order to approach new realities, to offer men and women the possibility of rising above the present.

A c k n o w l e d g m e n t

I would like to use this opportunity to thank all my advisers who helped me to complete this project. Special thanks to my dear husband, Mayer Dubinsky who sacrifices a lot in order for me to complete my goal and dream, and my father who also made this possible.

I n t r o d u c t i o n

I have been fortunate to grow up in a multi-cultural environment. This experience has taught me to respect the differences of each culture and to be tolerant. I learned to adjust my behavior and communication skills accordingly. Because of this, I have developed a fascination for global communication.

Today the Information Super Highway brings us even closer than ever. The need for designers to break the cultural barriers and communicate with other cultures has become increasingly important.

Graphic designers use words and images to elicit meanings or messages. The use of semiotic principles to deconstruct designs helps designers to understand the power behind words and images. This enables designers to become more effective communicators.

“Semiotics is the study of the ways in which all these systems of signs function and evolve, relate to meaning, serve and transform their users, can be improved to fulfill new needs and meet new challenges.” (Toronto Semiotic Circle)

I am, therefore, motivated to investigate cross-cultural communication using semiotics for my thesis project.

The study of semiotics was introduced during my first year graphic design seminar. I knew then that I wanted to use semiotics for my thesis project. I began to think about the thesis project while working in New York City during the summer of 1993, I corresponded with Dr. Richard Zakia because I was quite concerned about choosing the right thesis topic for myself. Dr. Zakia specializes in Semiotic principles. He was guest lecturer at the graphic design seminar. I considered writing to him for some inspiration and direction. I also invited Dr. Zakia to be my thesis adviser.

The ideas for my thesis project began to formulate. Once the thesis topic, "A Semiotic Approach to the Design Integration of Word Imagery and Picture for Different Cultures" was decided, I begin to plan the procedure for the thesis project.

The thesis planning started at Fall quarter. I introduced my thesis topic to my chief adviser: Roger Remington. Professor Remington suggested that I needed to shorten the topic and begin the thesis planning and proposal. The procedure includes: Thesis Proposal, documentation of need, project description, mission statement, goals, objectives, processes and strategies, time and implementation plan, evaluation plan, bibliography, glossary of terms, and appendix (Appendix 1.) This helped me tremendously in terms of clarifying my thesis

project. I also began to research information that related to semiotics, visual theories, and cross-cultural communication (Appendix 4.)

The evolution of the thesis topic as well as the thesis itself progressed during three committee meetings throughout the Fall and Winter quarters.

Professor John Ciampa was the third member of this committee. I was aware of his knowledge in multi-media and communication theory.

When I proposed my thesis project idea during the first meeting, the main concern was the topic; it was too ambitious for one year thesis project. It was therefore suggested that I needed to narrow it down and be more realistic in terms of the project. We have decided that I should approach semiotic principles and cross-cultural issues from a graphic designer point of views and create an interactive multi-media application. The purpose of the application would be educational as well as entertaining. My materials and investigation of cross-cultural issues should be incorporated into the application. The presented information should be clear and not overwhelming to the audience. The topic was then altered from “ A Semiotic Approach to the Design of Word Imagery and Pictures for Cross-Culture” to “Semiotics and Cross-Cultural Communication.” (Appendix 5.)

The full development of the applications for the Thesis Show started in the Winter quarter, it was determined that the best presentation for my thesis was an interactive multi-media project allowing the audience to participate and be drawn in by the viewing process. I began the process of developing a prototype of the project in order to show the committee members. I had the prototype of my thesis application by the second thesis meeting. The suggestions and feedback were very helpful in terms of guiding me to complete a successful interactive application (Appendix 3.)

Producing and designing an interactive multi-media project is a difficult task because of the complexity and involving all skills. I started to create sketches for the application (Appendix 2.) I practiced my Hyper language during the creation of the prototype. The disadvantage of presenting the project in an interactive format is the amount of the texts that can be show on the screen. However, the advantage of multi-media project is the sound dimension. All the texts that incorporated my own writing and research ideas, would be recorded into sound tracks. I collected some design examples, and images in order to scan them as part of the visual references. I then organized the project putting everything together according the hierarchy of the project.

The process of creating the interactive application

included the design of Hypercard stack, Hyper scripting, producing the copy for sound tracks, scanning images, and inputting picture and sound resources. I used Hypercard 2.2 and ADDmotionII to produce the project. The whole interactive project divides into four major sections: The Opening, Cross-Cultural Communication, Cross-Cultural Comparison, and Semiotics. The opening stack has the title of the opening, animation, menu, and bibliography. I used Photoshop 2.5 to create the opening image for my application. The concept is to express the theme of my thesis project. I wanted the opening image to trigger the audience's desire for view my project.

The animation is to point out the importance and concept of signs. Neil Diamond is the artist of both music and lyrics. The menu area functions as a navigator that allows viewers to go to other parts of project. Finally, the bibliography card contains the list of books that contributed to my thesis idea.

The cross- culture stack contains cultural issues, information and cross-cultural research. Legibility of the screen text is problematic with especially large amounts of small texts on the computer screen. Therefore, sound became a very important factor. I asked my husband to read the sound tracks for my project because he has a wonderful voice and is a broadcast professional. I began to exam some important factors that contribute to cross-

cultural communication.

After a period of research, I found these factors to be language, image, design, theme, and religious differences. The major aspect of cross-cultural communication is the marketing strategy that compares the differences between universal marketing and local marketing. I incorporated some research materials into this section. My reason was to point out that we need to be aware of the existence of such studies.

The third part of the project uses semiotic principles to compare the works by American and Japanese graphic designers in order to see the differences and similarities between one another. I chose only two cultures because of the limitation of time and the size of the project. However, the end result of this study is beneficial to cross-cultural design and thinking. Semiotics help to analyze the underlying messages of each work. I selected five pairs of design that represented Japan and America. Each pair has a distinguishable theme. The themes are humor, sophistication, androgyny, sensuality, and the exotic. The comparison uses semiotic matrix for deconstructing the designs.

The last section introduces semiotics principles. This stack includes the meaning and the purpose of semiotic, semiotic triad, interpretant matrix, and semiotic operation which are addition, subtraction, substitution

and shifting. I use this section to teach people the fundamental concepts about semiotic principles. my purpose is to use this opportunity to study and apply semiotics from a graphic designer's perspective.

This thesis project caused me a lot of frustration because of the complexity of the topic. However, I am very glad that I have chosen a topic that I care about and have been curious about all my life. I am very happy with the results as well as the products that I produced. I have learned about semiotic principles and practices used to analyze designs according to principles. The cross-cultural investigation satisfied my curiosity about international and global markets. I believe two year at graduate school and this final thesis project has given me a clear direction to the future.

Special thanks to Roger Remington, Dr. Richard Zakia, and John Ciampa who gave me a lot of good suggestions and help during the making of the thesis project.

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G l o s s a r y o f T e r m s

Aesthetics	It is the overall of an image which takes in to consideration all formal, visual principles of color, composition, meaning, and purpose.
Analysis	Step in problem solving process in which designer reviews information and materials, making careful analysis of data, prior to problem definition.
Application	Application refers to the process and form directed to a graphic design image made for a specific purpose. A poster is an application in graphic design.
Art	The quality, production, expression, or realm of what is beautiful or of more than ordinary significance.
Audience	Audience refers to the receivers of the graphic design image. This may be either individuals or groups to which the message is directed.
Closure	A Gestalt principle which means that communication is enhanced with forms that are “closed” or visible as a “closed unit.” This closure may be implied and need not be physically realized.
Communication	

Cognitive	<p>Cognitive refers to the perceptual aspects of form.</p> <p>The purpose of graphic design is to facilitate messages and meaning for a purpose. This is communication.</p>
Composition	<p>The layout or arrangement of elements within a format. It may be either formal (symmetrical) or informal (asymmetrical). An organization methods must be used in determining how the composition works in communicating message.</p>
Concept	<p>The idea which undergirds a design image and provides direction for its development and functioning.</p>
Content	<p>The substance of the message involved in a graphic design image. Content refers to the specific information that is communicated by the form.</p>
Context	<p>The environment in which form is created. It may be positional (left or right), time - oriented (past or present), or sequential in other ways. The consideration given to context is a useful means of seeing conceptual relationships in form development.</p>
Element	<p>The parts, components or variables of form within a format.</p>

Evaluation	The most basic purpose of all graphic design methodology is to develop the knowledge, skills and sensitivity to be able to decide yes or no, in or out in any form or problem - solving situation.
form	A visually perceived existence.
Gestalt	A series of perceptual laws that were identified by several German psychologists in the early 1900's. A working knowledge of these "organizational or grouping" laws allow the graphic designers to create form that takes into allowance the physiological ways that human beings perceive.
Graphic Design	Imagery which, in an ideal sense, exemplifies a balance between aesthetics and information.
High Imagery words	A list of proverbs and images as to the ease with which they arouse visual images.
Implication	Refers to the process by which the form is conceptualized, developed, constructed and refined.
Image Development	Refers to a step in the problem solving process in which the design begins actual work on the project according to a project definition and plan.

Interpretant	The process of interpretation, it refers to the audience in some causes.
Message	The intended communication outcome of meaning to an audience.
Perceptual	Perceptual refers to form which is based on cognitive consideration such as the Gestalt principles.
Pragmatics	Pertaining to the needs of graphic design such as printing, budget, resources, etc.
Process	The method of operations in the production of graphic design.
Psychology	The science of the human brain and any of its aspects, operations, functions.
Representamen	Developing a visual reference (product) according to the designer's intellectual interpretation.
Semiotics	The theory of semiotics describes the process of how people represent and interpret information, and helps identify logical relations of parts that interest in forming meaning. Semiotics is also known as "sign theory."

Statement	A verbal means of making reference to a form message or its components created by a graphic designer.
Theory	A set of generalizations related by a net of deductive thinking and arrived at by stages of discovery, verification and comparison.
Typeface	Typeface refers to an alphabet that exists for visual communication. Helvetica, Universe and Standard are all sans serif typeface.

A p p e n d

1. Thesis Proposal and Plan
2. Drafts
3. Sketch/Development
4. Fall Quarter (research material)
5. Winter Quarter (research material)

T h e s i s P r o p o s a l a n d P l a n



Graphic design utilizes both words and pictures and addresses different cultures. The purpose of this thesis is to investigate the power of words and images and to closely compare some Japanese and American designs using semiotic principles. The end result of this will help designers break the cultural gap and create universal design work.

I will search for visual examples from the two cultures and use semiotic principles to study the meaning behind the words and images. The thesis will include graphic design application such as interactive media and posters.

Rochester Institute of Technology

A Thesis Project Plan Submitted to the Faculty of
The College of Imaging Arts and Science in
Candidacy for the Degree of

Master of Fine Arts

Project Title

Semiotics and
Cross-Cultural
Communication

By Lingya H. Dubinsky

November 11, 1993

Thesis Proposal

Project Title

Designer and Address

**Documentation of Need or Situation
Analysis**
(Including initial assumptions and
importance of study to the designer, to
the discipline, and to the society)

**Problem Statement or Project
Description**
(The problem and its setting, including
audience, context)

Mission Statement

Goals

Objectives
(Including subproblems)

Processes and Strategies
(Methodology for gathering info, for
analyzing info, for generating solutions
and evaluation)

Time and Implementation Plan

Evaluation Plan

Bibliography

Glossary of Terms

Appendix

Project Title

Sign Theory and the Design of
Word Imagery and Pictures for
Cross-Culture Applications

Project Designer

Lingya H. Dubinsky
141 West Squire Dr. #4
Rochester, N Y 14623

Documentation of Need

A designer's ability to integrate word statements and visual images into a single visual reference is essential. The use of sign theory and the realization of the potential power behind words and images can help graphic designers become more effective communicators.

Problem Description

Graphic designers need to know about the art and science of communications due in part to the rapidly advancing computer software available for design layout. Sign theory (semiotics), the study and science of signs provides an important communication tool for the designer. It incorporates many of the codes designers must use to communicate: perceptual codes, aesthetic codes, culture codes, codes of unconscious, and so on. Designers must also become more knowledgeable about the cross-cultural communication in creating meaningful and persuasive signs for various cultures.

Mission Statement

This thesis is a sign theory application that will facilitate the integration of words and images into a unified cross-cultural statement. Till the end, this will make graphic designers more effective in communicating to international markets.

Goals**Objectives****Process and Strategies**

To provide an environment for using graphic design in a cross-culture manner

Given a project, be able to recognize the cultural codes shared by different group of people.

Use three characteristics of semiotics become familiar with various cultural codes.

Given a company, be able to critically examine its international marketing strategies.

Investigate the international companies' success and failure at cross-culture communication.

Given a project, be able to create a design that is focused on global marketing scale.

Use the result and summary of research study in the design.

To examine the typography treatment as part of message making process

Given a body of copy, be able to identify the intended message and discuss the individual functionality of the type.

Identify the purpose of the type in order to select right kind of typeface for the copy.

Given a list of words, be able to arrange them according to their emotional context.

Use typographic variable to arrange the order of the words.

Given a word, be able to translate the letter forms for specific purpose.

Presentation of the letter form: classic and elegant, sculptural letter form or with motion.

To produce applications according to the theory

Given a list of theories, be able to design several visual references that demonstrate the research of the thesis project.

Create actual applications that are publication design and interactive reference tool.

Based on research, be able to develop an interactive application.

Computer graphics will be used to combine words, picture and typography into an appropriate representamen based on pragmatics.

To evaluate the theme of the thesis project

Given the design, be able to measure the percentage of success of the message to its intended audience.

Have people from various cultural backgrounds to critique

Implement a survey to show the effectiveness of the project and information

Conduct a survey by giving out the questionnaires.

Goals**Objectives****Process and Strategies**

To establish the use of sign theory in graphic design

Given a situation, be able to evaluate three distinct relationships that constitute the sign.

Introduce the three terms object, representamen, and interpretant in semiotics

Use the triangle diagram: Object, representamen, interpretant, to show how signs function.

Given a visual reference, be able to recognize the ways in which a visual reference is represented.

Create interpretant matrix to identify iconic, indexical and symbolic elements from a visual reference.

Given a list of semiotic codes, be able to identify several factors which can aid the interpretant in identifying the intended messages.

Identify the intended message according to perceptual codes, aesthetic codes, culture codes, code of unconscious, and so on.

To research and analyze sign theory and visual perception in graphic design

Given the theory, be able to gather information related to visual perception.

Gather examples of visual perception theories that include Gestalt laws and other perceptual principles.

In a literature search, be able to find imagery statements from various disciplines.

Find existing statements from the field of philosophy, design, science, art, and psychology.

To explore the potential of the use of high imagery words or statements to reinforce intended messages

In a research study, be able to find word statements that are high imagery.

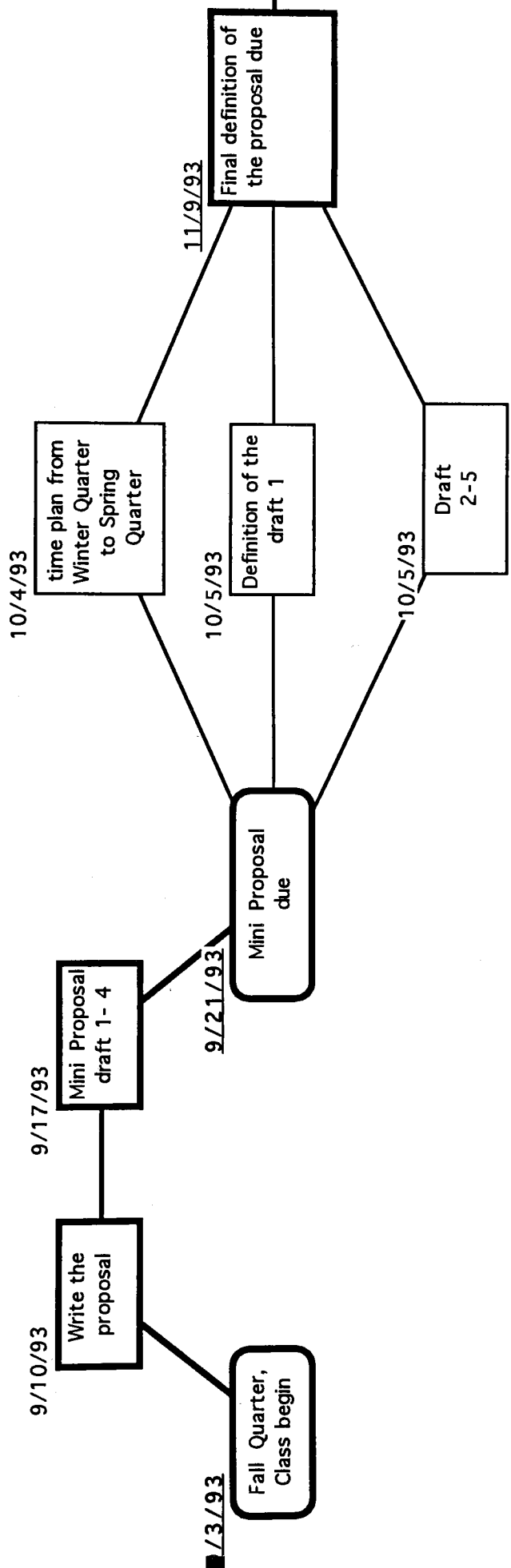
Collect a list of word statements that are high imagery.

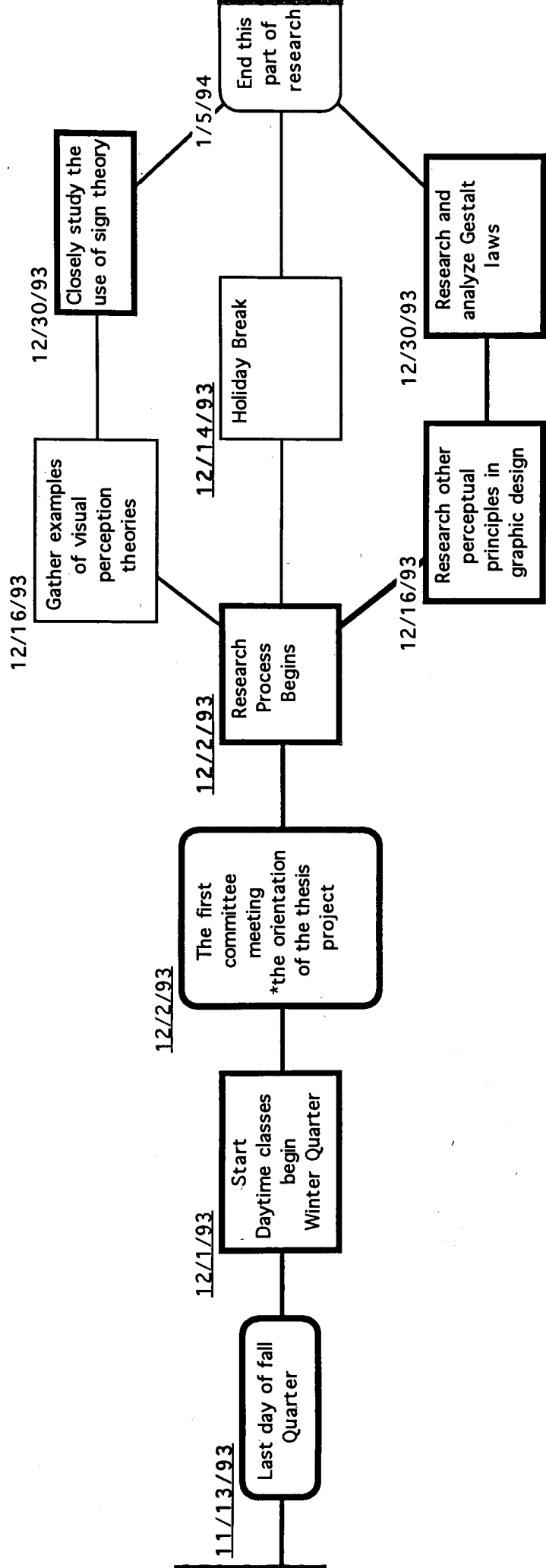
Given a list of high imagery words, be able to create a unifying theme between words and images.

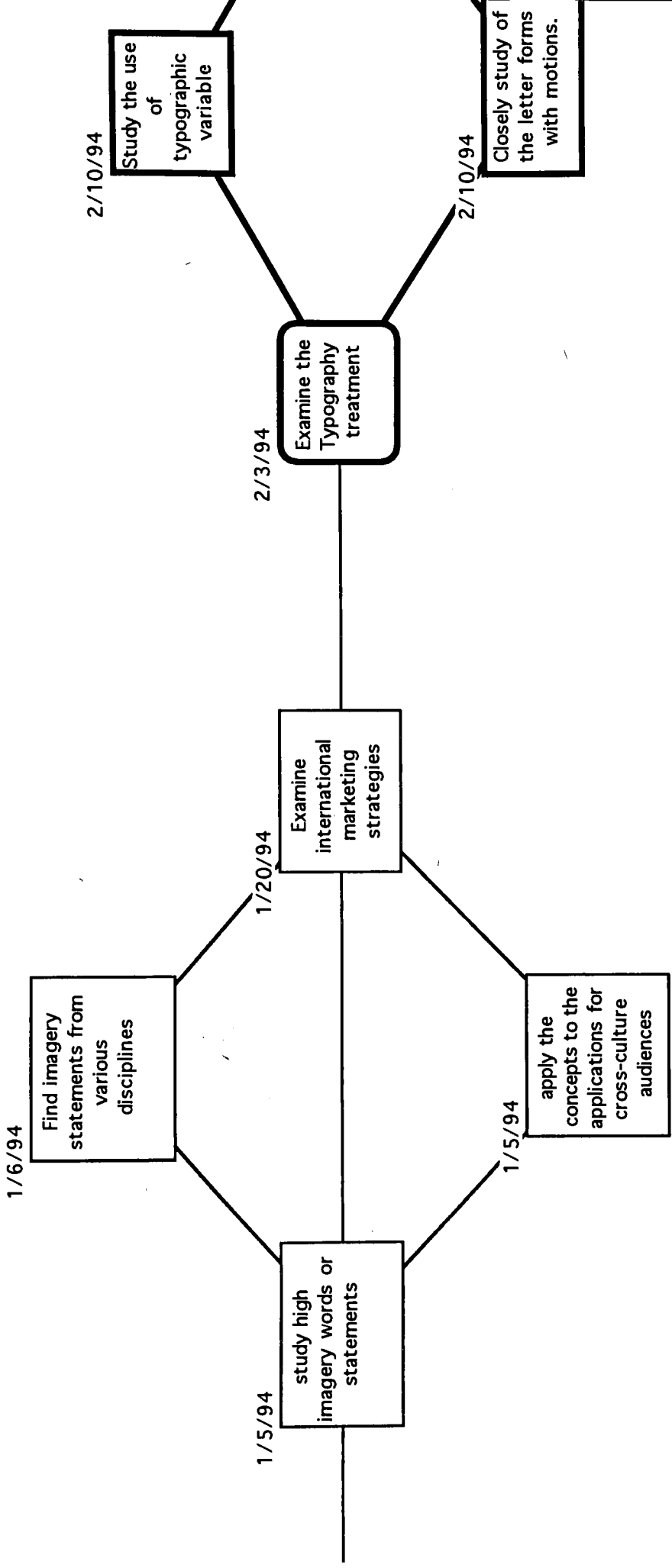
Use both high imagery words and images to unify and emphasize the intended messages.

Time and Implementation Plan
Jingya Dubinsky, Fall 1993

Thesis Title: Sign Theory and the Design of Word Imagery and Picture for Cross - Culture Application







3/9/94

Gether all the materials to start the producion

2/24/94

Create the Publication design

2/23/94

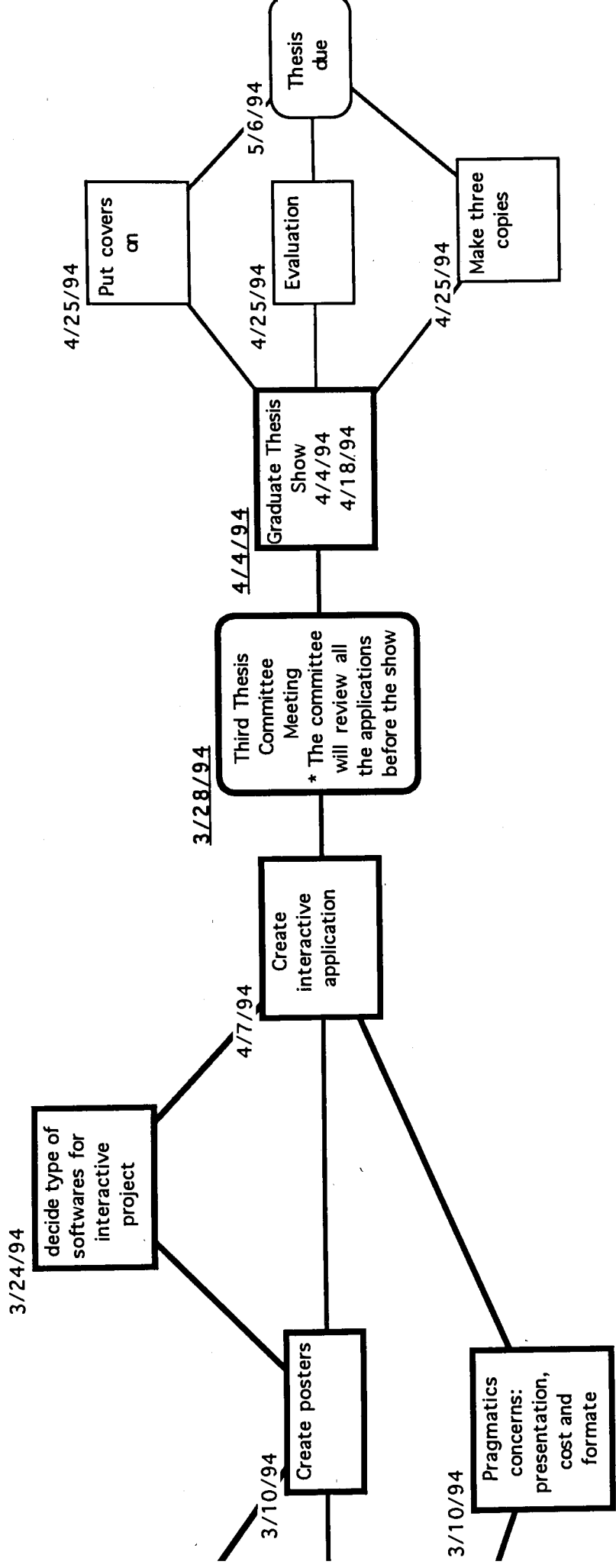
Start to Produce thesis applications

2/23/94

Second Thesis Committee meeting
* The committee will review sketches of typographic study and design.

2/17/94

Study books on typography and use of type



5/21/94

Commencement

Evaluation**Objectives****Evaluation**

Given a situation, be able to evaluate three distinct relationships that constitute the sign.

***Content Analysis**

Given a visual reference, be able to recognize the ways in which a visual reference is represented.

***Content Analysis**

Given a list of semiotic codes, be able to identify several factors which can aid the interpretant in identifying the intended messages.

***Content Analysis**

Given the theory, be able to gather information related to visual perception.

***Unobtrusive Measure**

In a literature search, be able to find imagery statements from various disciplines.

***Unobtrusive Measure**

In a research study, be able to find word statements that are high imagery.

***Semantic Differential**

Given a list of high imagery words, be able to create a unifying theme between words and images.

***Questionnaire**

Given a project, be able to recognize the cultural codes shared by different group of people.

***Interview**

Given a company, be able to critically examine its international marketing strategies.

***Unobtrusive Measure**

Objectives

Evaluation

Given a project, be able to create a design that is focused on global marketing scale. ***Semantic Differential**

Given a body of copy, be able to identify the intended message and discuss the individual functionality of the type. ***Semantic Differential**

Given a list of words, be able to arrange them according to their emotional context. ***Semantic Differential**

Given a word, be able to translate the letter forms for specific purpose. ***Semantic Differential**

Given a list of theories, be able to design several visual references that demonstrate the research of the thesis project. ***Questionnaire**

Based on research, be able to develop an interactive application. ***Interview**

Given the design, be able to measure the percentage of success of the message to its intended audience. ***Semantic Differential**

Implement a survey to show the effectiveness of the project and information ***Questionnaire**

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Glossary of Terms

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Art	The quality, production, expression, or realm of what is beautiful or of more than ordinary significance.
Audience	Audience refers to the receivers of the graphic design image. This may be either individuals or groups to which the message is directed.
Closure	A Gestalt principle which means that communication is enhanced with forms that are "closed" or visible as a "closed unit." This closure may be implied and need not be physically realized.
Cognitive	Cognitive refers to the perceptual aspects of form.
Communication	The purpose of graphic design is to facilitate messages and meaning for a purpose. This is communication.
Composition	The layout or arrangement of elements within a format. It may be either formal (symmetrical) or informal (asymmetrical). An organization methods must be used in determining how the composition works in communicating message.
Concept	The idea which undergirds a design image and provides direction for its development and functioning.
Content	The substance of the message involved in a graphic design image. Content refers to the specific information that is communicated by the form.
Context	The environment in which form is created. It may be positional (left or right), time - oriented (past or present), or sequential in other ways. The consideration given to context is a useful means of seeing conceptual relationships in form development.

Element	The parts, components or variables of form within a format.
Evaluation	The most basic purpose of all graphic design methodology is to develop the knowledge, skills and sensitivity to be able to decide yes or no, in or out in any form or problem - solving situation.
form	A visually perceived existence.
Gestalt	A series of perceptual laws that were identified by several German psychologists in the early 1900's. A working knowledge of these "organizational or grouping" laws allow the graphic designers to create form that takes into allowance the physiological ways that human beings perceive.
Graphic Design	Imagery which, in an ideal sense, exemplifies a balance between aesthetics and information.
High Imagery words	A list of proverbs and images as to the ease with which they arouse visual images.
Image Development	Refers to the process by which the form is conceptualized, developed, constructed and refined.
Implication	Refers to a step in the problem solving process in which the design begins actual work on the project according to a project definition and plan.
Interpretant	The process of interpretation, it refers to the audience in some causes.
Message	The intended communication outcome of meaning to an audience.
Perceptual	Perceptual refers to form which is based on cognitive consideration such as the Gestalt principles.
Pragmatics	Pertaining to the needs of graphic design such as printing, budget, resources, etc.
Process	The method of operations in the production of graphic design.
Psychology	The science of the human brain and any of its aspects, operations, functions.
Representamen	Developing a visual reference (product) according to the designer's intellectual interpretation.

Semiotics	The theory of semiotics describes the process of how people represent and interpret information, and helps identify logical relations of parts that interest in forming meaning. Semiotics is also known as "sign theory."
Statement	A verbal means of making reference to a form message or its components created by a graphic designer.
Theory	A set of generalizations related by a net of deductive thinking and arrived at by stages of discovery, verification and comparison.
Typeface	Typeface refers to an alphabet that exists for visual communication. Helvetica, Universe and Standard are all sans serif typeface.

9/6/93

Graphic Design thesis proposal
Lingya Dubinsky

First Draft.

Thesis Title:

A Semiotic Approach to the Publication of Word Images Relevant to Graphic Design

Criteria for Thesis:

History:

How has semiotics been used in graphic design?

Theory:

Semiotic approach to represent the publication and poster. Developing an *interpretive matrix*

interactive media ↓

Application:

Creation of publication, promotional poster, and interactive media.

Research:

Media that presently on the market.

Artists media.

Collecting relevant word images.

investigating the psychological impact of how word images have effect on people.

Interview people who are relevant to the project.

Critical thinking:

Connecting semiotic theory and methodology to the design, production, promotion of the project.

Innovation:

Combining words and images and using artifacts in order to present the word images in form that represents the beauty, inspiration, insight of the content.

Evaluation:

based on stated objective evaluation that consist of

- a) ~~Semantic~~ *Semantic Differential*
- b) Peer Evaluation
- c) Unobtrusive measure

title: A Semiotic Approach to the Design of Word Imagery and Pictures for Cross-Culture

Mission

Future graphic designers will need to know more about the art and science of communications due in part to the rapidly advancing computer software available for design layout. Semiotics, the study and science of signs (representamen) provides an important communication tool for the designer. It incorporates many of the codes designers must use to communicate; perceptual codes, aesthetic codes, culture codes, codes of unconscious, and so on. Designers must also become more knowledgeable about the use of high-imagery words and typography in creating meaningful and persuasive signs.

SIGN THEORY (SEMIOtics)

goal objective Process

To use semiotic principles in the design of a representamen that unifies pictures, words and typography, and that is meaningful across cultures.

To use semiotics to create an integrated word-picture representamen that communicates effectively across cultures.

A literature search will be undertaken to find high-imagery statements made by people in various disciplines; graphic design, literature, philosophy, art, science.

A generative matrix will be constructed to suggest iconic, indexic and symbolic elements to be used in creating a picture that visually presents the word image.

Typography will be selected, or lettering designed, to echo the word-image statement.

Computer graphics will be used to combine words, pictures and typography into an appropriate representamen based on pragmatics (context in which the representmen will be displayed.)

A TP or UT/P

WIP will be a thesis project

work, sign theory

A my then journal is a STM of S+WP

This will be a...

have a...

9/28/93

Chief Adviser: Roger Remington

Lingya Dubinsky

Project Title: A Semiotic Approach to the design of Word Imagery and pictures for Cross-Culture

Documentation of Need:

A designer's ability to integrate word statements and to organize visual images into a single representamen is very important. ^{Since the} The use of semiotics and realization of the potential power behind word imagery can help graphic designers ~~to~~ become more effective communicators.

visual statement

Problem Description:

^{Effect} ~~Good~~ visual communication depends on the use of words and images. The ability to use them together ~~effectively~~ in a given two dimensional space is a creative challenge. My thesis project will involve the investigation of research (that will support the fact) that some words ^{high} imagery words ^{are} better at arousing visual images than others. This research suggests that designers can use high imagery words or statements to create a powerful supporting visual reference. Word imagery can be enhanced by the choice and design of the typography. This thesis project ^{will} use semiotics to design statements that will unify words, images and typography into a powerful representamen.

Rochester Institute of Technology

Thesis proposal for the Master of Fine Arts Degree

College of Imaging Science

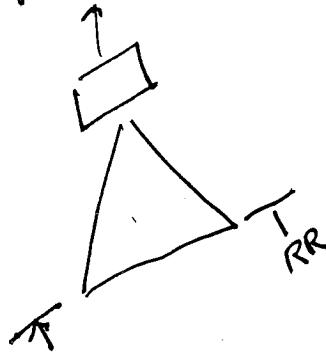
—A Semiotic Approach to the design ~~integration~~ of Word Imagery and Pictures

a) A Semiotic Approach to the design integration of
cross-cultural (statements and of related imagery.)

↳ words + pictures

FOR
DIFFERENT
CULTURES

KISS
KEEP
IT
SIMPLE
STUPID



Lingya Dubinsky

9/14/93

First Draft

Thesis proposal for the Master of Fine Arts Degree

College of Imaging Arts and Science

Rochester Institute of Technology

NET word imagery is

A Semiotic Approach to the design of Word Imagery and Pictures for Different Cultures

The purpose of this thesis is to investigate the power of words to elicit images. Words can be, and have been, researched and studied in terms of their level of abstraction, concreteness and ^{SUBSTITUTED} imagery. Familiar sayings are a rich source of words that have high imagery, i.e., word imagery.

I will search for statements from various cultures that are of high word imagery ^{QUALITY} and use semiotic principles to incorporate them with complementary visual images. Graphic design utilizes both words and pictures and addresses different cultures. Selection and usage of high imagery words can strengthen the design message and reinforce it by creative redundancy.

←D
THE THESIS WILL INCLUDE APPLICATIONS
SUCH AS PUBLICATIONS, TV, POSTERS,
ETC.

Thesis proposal for the Master of Fine Arts Degree

College of Imaging Arts and Science

Rochester Institute of Technology

Semiotic and Cross-Cultural Communication

~~A Semiotic Approach to the design of Word Imagery and Pictures for Cross-Culture~~

Graphic design utilizes both words and pictures and addresses different culture. The purpose of the this thesis is to investigate the power of words ^{and} ~~to elicit~~ images. Words can be, and have been, researched and studied in terms of their level of abstraction, concreteness and suggested imagery. Familiar saying are a rich source of words that have high imagery, i.e, word imagery: word imagery is the use of certain words to elicit images in visual memory. Some words are of high imagery such as Woman, and others of low imagery such as Philosophy. Poets use combination of high imagery to construct the visual images. The understanding of this will help designers to break the cultures' gap and create universal design work.

I will search for ^{visual examples} ~~examples~~ from various cultures that ^{are of high word imagery, and} ~~are of high word imagery, and~~ use semiotic principles to ^{study the} ~~incorporate~~ them with complementary visual images. ^{meaning behind the word + image} Selection and usage of high imagery words can strengthen the design message and reinforce it by creative redundancy.

The thesis will include graphic design applications such as ~~publication, posters and~~ interactive media.

S k e t c h & D e v e l o p m e n t

Thesis Project

The First Thesis meeting

Winter 1993

Lingya Dubinsky/ Graphic Design

The Committee Members: Roger Remington, Richard Zakia, John Ciampa

Committee
STUDY
ANALYSIS
↑
VIS & VERBA
DATABASE

PRESENTATION
CHARTS
POSTER
B.I.V.C
I AM

EXAMINING

I will closely examining and compare contemporary graphic design (1970-1990) in Japan and USA. I think it is very important to study elements: typography, graphic, and images that are in design as a whole in each culture. After the examining and comparing works, I will integrate the characteristic of both Japanese and American design that influences the modern cross-cultural application. The applications may include existing pieces as well as several design that I will create according cross-cultural references.

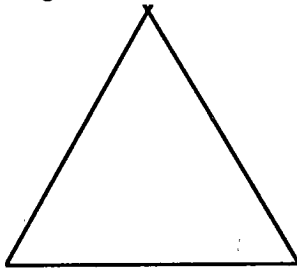
Contemporary Graphic Design(1970 - 1990)

Elements: Typography, Graphics and Images.

Q: What is Signified?

Paradigm of Semiotic theory

Representamen
Signifier



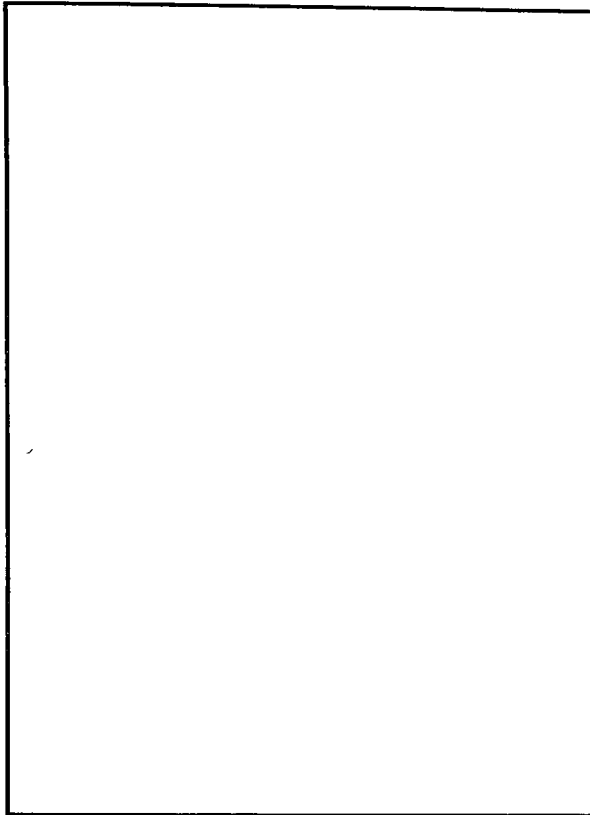
Signify

Interpretant
Audience

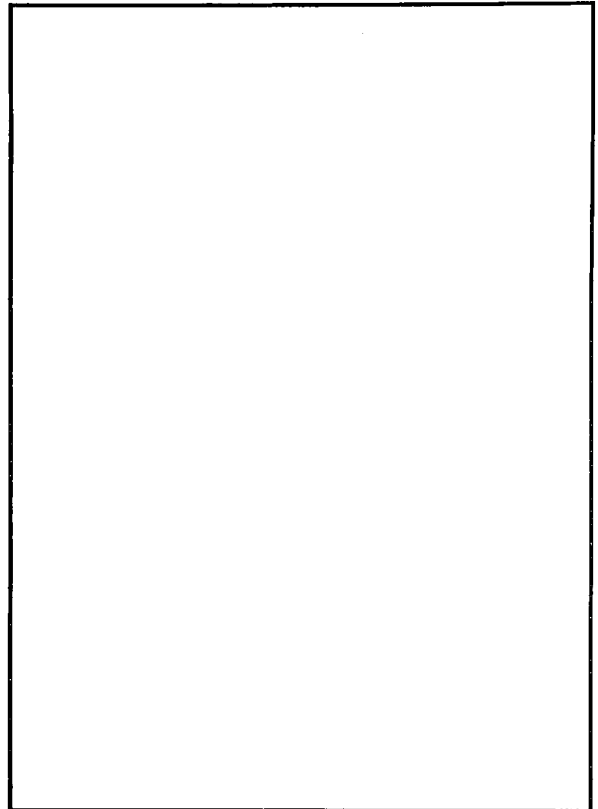
- * Romance
- * Wealth
- * Power
- * Sensuality (relationships)
- * Westernization
- * Easternization

Cross Culture: USA Vs. Japan

USA



Japan



Q: What is being signified in the poster?

A: *POWER.*

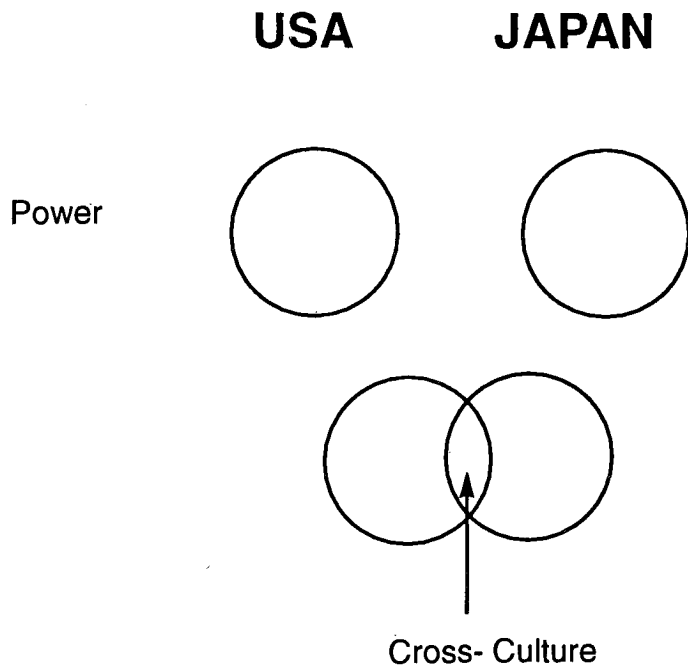
Q: How dose American signify *POWER?* and how dose Japanese signify *POWER?*

	USA	JAPAN
ICONIC		
INDEXIC		
SYMBOLIC		

Generative Matrix

Ex: Automobile Advertising and it signified POWER.

	USA	JAPAN
ICONIC		
INDEXIC		
SYMBOLIC		



Introduction Semiotics Study for cross-Cultural Graphic Design

The Opening of the stack
(Animation)

About Semiotics—
and How to apply
the Sign theory *Baudrillard*

About Cross-cultural
The inside look of—
Cross-cultural application

Images and Typography
Comparison
AS SIMS

Exercise of making your
own Cross-cultural
application

Introduction to the theory
1. What is a sign
2. Semiotics (77/11/13)

Introduction to the
Cross-Cultural application
Visual language

Images of US

Introduction to the theory
~~Exercise~~

Iconic
→

The needs for Cross-cultural
Design and
Understanding Application

Images of Japan

Images of US
Semiotic operation

Indexic
*Arrange semiotics
mean*

Analysis of
Cross-cultural Design
with-Semiotics

Western Typography

Images of Japan

Symbolic-Semiotic
Symbolic
⊕ ⊖ ↺ ↻

Eastern Typography

Eastern Typography

Western Typography

Eastern Typography



Application
Symbolic
Shifting

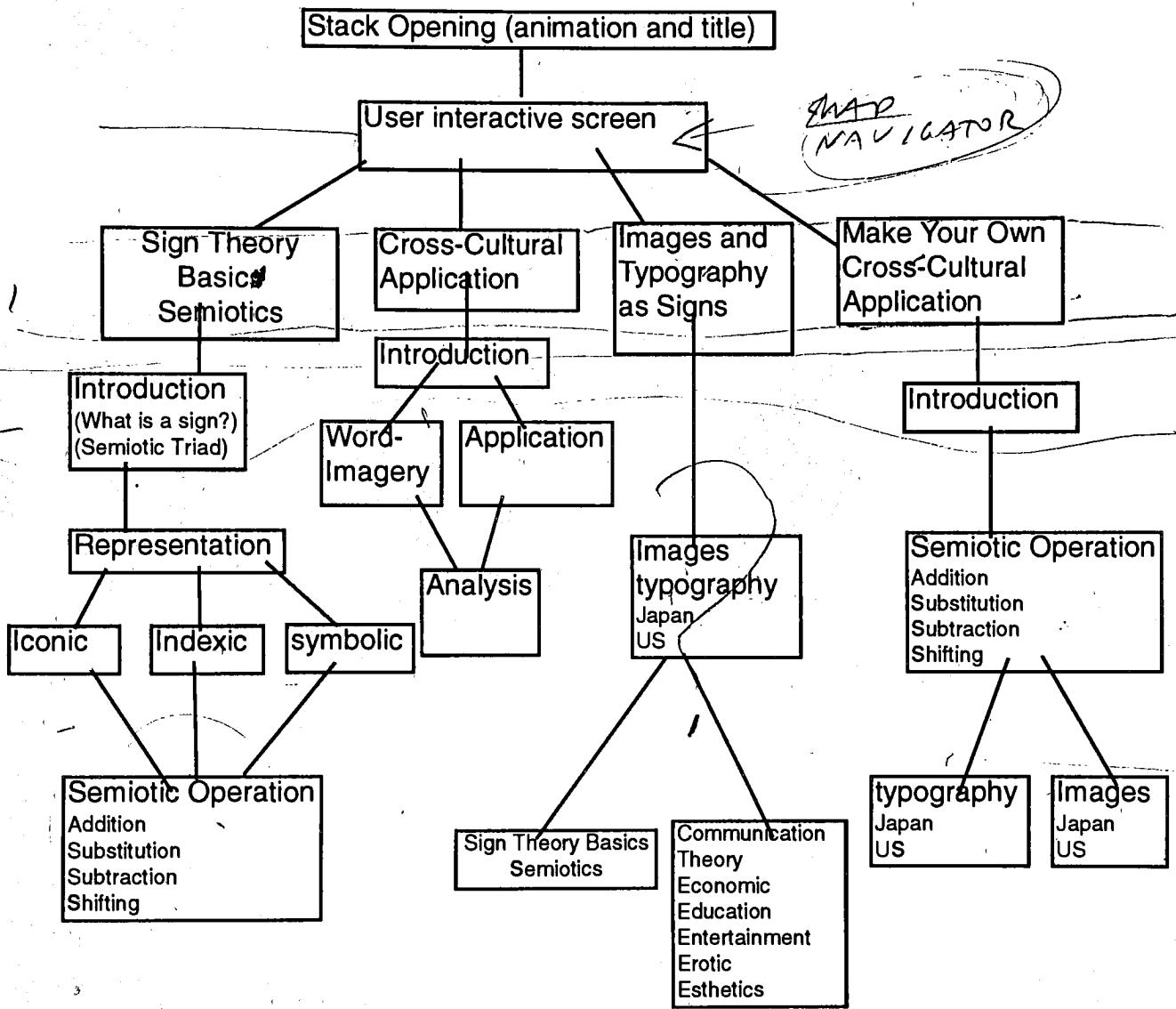
1st draft of interactive application map. 1/12/94

Let your change the
Symbolic semiotics (1/12/94)

"Semiotics Study for cross-cultural Graphic Design"

The Interactive flow chart

"Draft 2" 1/19/94



MAP NAVIGATOR

1
2
3
4

Interactive screen

TITLE

GO STA
GRID
- PINK
- BLUE

7 - 1 - 1 - SEM

GLIC

Symbolic refers to the abstract convention that everyone agrees upon, used to represent object or meaning.

Definition:

Representamen:

Representamen is to develop a visual reference (product) according to the designer's intellectual interpretation.

Interpretant:

Interpretant is the process of interpretation, it refers to the audience in some ~~cases~~.
Cases.

Object:

Object is the product or idea ~~that~~ being represented by the designer.

Iconic:

Iconic refers to likeness.

Indexic:

Indexic refers to imprints or clues that left behind to indicate certain condition or meaning.
more

Symbolic:

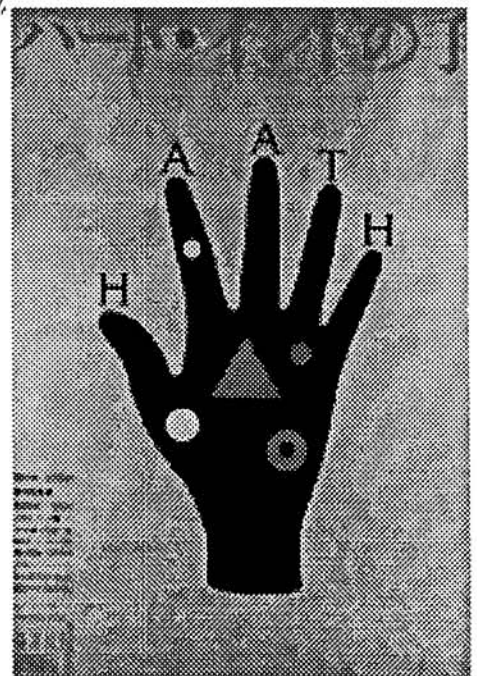
What is a sign?

A sign is a conventional mark, figure, or symbol used as an abbreviation for the word or words it represents.

Examples:

For example, according the three identifiers (three ^{ways} ~~way~~ of sending out messages) - iconic, indexic, and symbolic. In this Japanese exhibition poster, the iconic is the right hand, the indexic is the five fingers pointing up, and the symbolic is the five letters on top of fingers:

H,A,A,T,H.



another. The development of multinational companies and business has increased. As a result,

cross-cultural communication is increasingly important among the people. The difficulty of communication to people of diverse cultures and nations is a creative challenges in marketing today. The only solution to the problems is to closely examining the background of each nation. In this particular study, I focus on two nations: United States of America and Japan, the ^{world's} ~~world~~ most economic influential countries.

*Sound track here!

Language:

Language is the roots of every culture. The western languages (Latin, Greek, Hebrew, etc) are phonetic; they record the sound values. These systems are based on the fewest possible contrasting shapes, usually geometric in origin, all occupying roughly similar spaces. The strong contrasts inherent in their shapes, sizes, and stroke directions have yielded a vigorous calligraphy with strong compositional possibilities.

Interpretant Matrix:

An interpretant matrix is a method ^{used} to analyze a representamen by ^{means of} using a grid system.

The construction of the matrix:

The three identifiers (iconic, indexic, symbolic) are placed in the vertical column of the interpretant matrix. In the horizontal rows are the intended meaning. The descriptors that probe the intended meaning are often more than one.

Assign categories of ^{Various} meanings:

At the following example, The descriptors that probe the intended meaning are *humor, sensual, and exotic*.

Semiotic operation:

Addition, subtraction, substitution and shifting are the four operations to change the meaning (semantic) of a design (syntax).

Cross-Cultural introduction:

Technology shortens the distance between one



The Chinese system and its derivatives are symbolic rather than phonetic, though in Japanese a parallel phonetic system has been added. As in Western alphabets, the characters generally occupy similar spaces, ~~but~~ there are vastly different stroke counts and stroke directions from ~~one~~ ^{each} characteristics have contributed to the development of important calligraphic traditions. The number of characters in these systems is very high and therefore more difficult to learn; contrasts between them must be identified at a more subtle level than in Western writing.

Image:

In the Western world, ^{there exists} a philosophical and social point of view that stressed the importance of the individual rather than the universal. Toward the end of the ththirteenth century the philosophical and social climate in Europe was appropriate for such a development of portraiture ^{with} which emphasis on the experience of reality. Also revival of the concept of fame as an inheritance from antique played its part in the development of the portrait as a real likeness. In the classic periods of Chinese and Japanese art ^{the} portrait was ~~also~~

~~sense~~, considered ~~as~~ a symbol of the social and religious significance of an individual rather than a record of his actual appearance. In the thirteenth century, Japan changed toward a more realistic interpretation of the subject, ~~and~~ ^{for reasons not dissimilar from those that} brought about this radical innovation in European tradition.

Religion:

^{Christian theology dominated}
The West is dominated by the Christian and the ^{while Buddhism theology dominated}
~~east is dominated by the Buddhist.~~ Religion ^{East}

influence on the needs, motives, and underlying drives in consumer behavior. The cultural values and norms ^{are} based religious perspective. It is the foundation force behind all cultures.

Therefore, any marketing idea that contradicts the beliefs and values will annoy and even upset, rather than arouse and please, the viewer.

Theme:

^{Despite}
~~Although we are~~ coming from different background and culture, we can always find a common ground that shared by all humanity. Therefore

are certain values and themes that we all try to express through ~~our~~ communication. They are universally understood. The examples that are created by American designer and Japanese designer try to deliver the message : PEACE.

Design:

Japanese graphic design is now at its peak.

This is largely due to the ~~fact that in order~~ ^{need} to win the increasingly fierce competition in international market. A.M. Cassandre said: "A poster is a visual telegram." ^{designer} Japanese summarize the contents and communicate them immediately.

Japanese posters follow the same principle but ^{give} ~~are~~ a different impression. The elements of design in Japan are the integration of West and East. They understand ^{the need} to keep the uniqueness and sensitivity of their own culture and at the same time learning from other in order to compete and to be accepted ~~by others~~.

Type and Image as a sign:

Typography, graphic elements, and image construct a sign (visual reference: poster). Every

word or image is ~~being~~ ^{being} carefully chosen for ~~cer-~~tain purpose. ~~In order to~~ ^{to} show the intended message. ~~Using~~ ^A semiotic interpretant matrix can analyzing the intended message of each work. As a result, designers can learn from this and become ~~an~~ effective communicators.

Comparison:

Don Weller is the designer, Art director and Artist of this poster. The writer is Dan Gessner.

The Weller Institute for the Cure of Design, Inc., Los Angeles, California, is the agency and the publisher is Galen Gallery. This poster has ^{both} a

comic, and absurd quality that ~~causing amusement~~. Both from stylistic and conceptual point of

view. The ~~iconic is the cats that being humanized~~. ^{The humanized cat suggest the iconic} The expression of the cats is iconic. The

use of colors and the words: Bobcat Sledding is symbolic.

This is a 1982 movie poster entitled WEEKEND SHUFFLE for the Joy Pack Film production company by Japanese designer/illustrator/art director, Masamichi Okawa. All of the characters por

trait ^{with} in a comic or even absurd expression. The iconic is the characters in the poster. The index- ^{used to} is the use of surrealism ~~in poster~~ for intensify

the humor. The symbolic refers to the colors that are bright and comic like.



Jeff Barnes, Chicago graphic designer, ~~who~~ designed a series of poster that asked "What if..." for Kieffer-Nolde, Inc. to create an advertising campaign. The iconic of sophistication is the well dressed female with an elegant gesture.

The Indexic is the placement of the hands and the direct eye contact. The symbolic is the color.



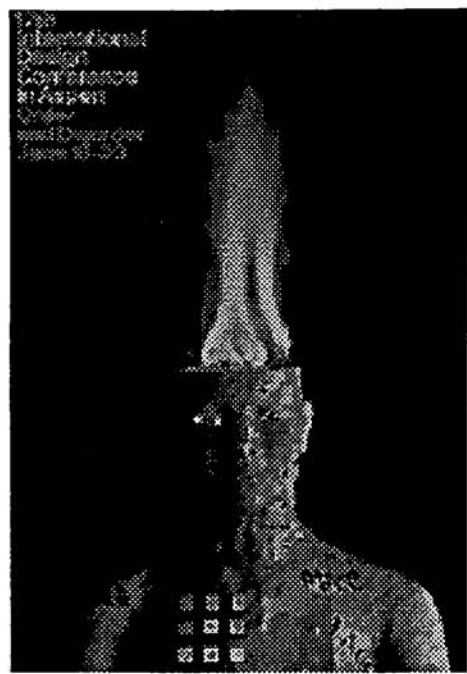
①

The Kimono poster of 1986, designed/art directing by Kuni Kizawa is a good example of showing type of sophistication that Japanese culture appreciates. The Iconic is the female figure who are dressed in the beautiful yet elegant traditional dress: Kimono. the indexic is the way that she looks away instead of direct eye contact. The Japanese calligraphy is symbolic.



②

This particular poster is designed in 1967 for the 17th international Design Conference in Aspen by Robert Miles Runyan. The poster refers to all nationalities and all sex by having androgynous figure that has many different newsprint from all over the world. The iconic is the non sexual reference doll. The indexic is the lighting on the figure. One side is darker than the other. It represents female and male. The symbolic is the colors or each side is represent different sex.



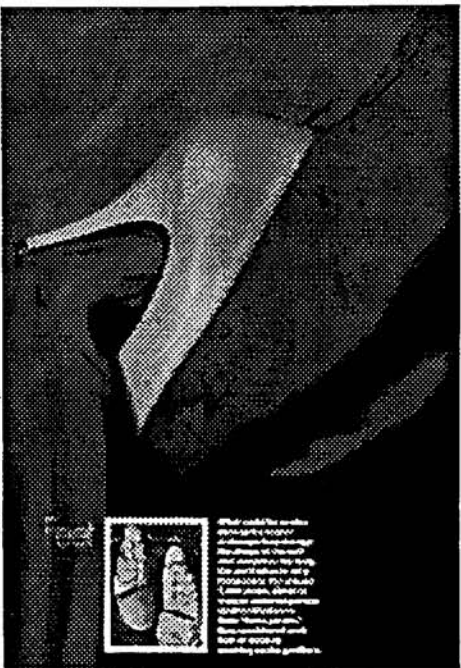
) The Seibu Department Stores in Japan created this poster in 1980 for the Italian Fashion Designers Show in Toyko. The iconic is two human figures both look androgynous. The gesture of the left figure presents the passive and feminine quality, yet the physical appearance shows a lot of male characteristics. The pale skin tone is symbolic.



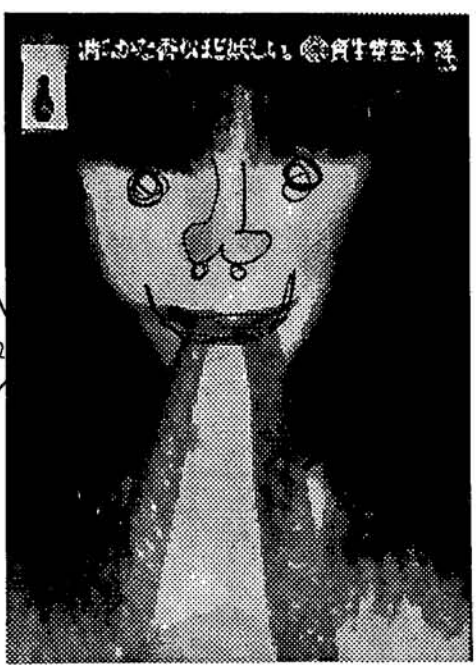
This is one of the ad that won the Gold Award in 1985. The art director / designer is Mary Baumann and Michael O'neal is the photographer. This ad is emphasizing the sensuality of women wearing high heels.

There is here showing
 The undeniable sexiness of ~~the~~ *showing* showing the image of elongated leg with yellow high heel. *the iconic is the leg*

down
 and hell, indexic is the composition of the image: the shoes half showing and half hiding behind the red fabric with strong contrast lighting, and the symbolic is the ~~bright colors~~ *red* ~~red~~ *yellow* insertion.



Shisedo is the largest cosmetic company in Japan. The quality of their advertising is the best. Every image that they advertised is exactly what people in Japan wanted to see. ~~the~~ *are* sensual and mysterious feelings are often emphasized through the endorsement of the products. *here*



This poster is art directed by Makoto Nakamura and designed by Noriaki Yokosuka. It is the promotion poster for a perfume called "Zen". (The iconic is the women who seems so sensuous ~~but~~ *yet* mysterious at the same time. the indexic is the red scarf ~~in her~~ *being put into* mouse. the symbolic is the color red. ~~noticed "red"~~

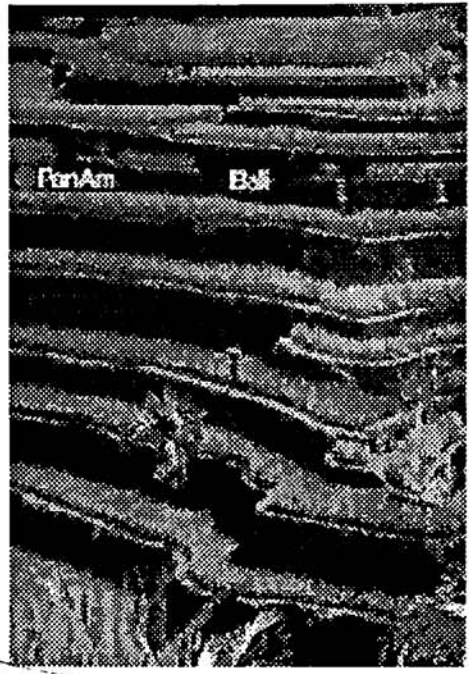
~~can be use the red~~ *noticed "red"* ~~was~~ *noticed "red"* ~~and~~ *noticed "red"* universally understood and frequently used by many cultures. *Step 2*

The Iconic is the yellow high ^{an} heel that emphasizes ^{form} an elongated sensu- through ^{of} the ~~leg~~ profile of the foot. Indexic is the insertion of the yellow high heel into the red fabric. the symbolic is the color red and yellow.

2

perfectly used
 new of show
 is not only the
 over with the

This poster take us to the ~~foreign~~ and exotic land called "Bali." The poster is giving the viewers a very clearly message: flying to Bali by PanAm airline. Ivan Chermayeff and Thomas Geismar designed this promotional poster for Panam air line. The iconic is the image of the ~~foreign~~ ^{rice paddy} country and environment. the indexic is the pattern of the rice faddy and the symbolic is the words ~~PanAm, Bali.~~ ^{To American, this landscape is Exotic Imagery}



Parco is one of the hippest department stores in Japan. They often use ~~foreign~~ faces or landscapes for their posters. The idea is to express the contemporary or modern and cross-cultural environment for Japanese to see. This concept works very well especially with younger generation. The iconic is the American girl. The indexic is the way she dresses suggested The looks of Americana. (The symbolic is the word ~~of the store~~ PARCO.. This image



is exotic to Japanese. Imagining the ~~the posters~~ ^{Impact of the posters} we switched-~~to what?~~

①
 Attention to Mayer Dubinsky
 From: Lingya Dubinsky (2 pages)

Signs

(A song by Neil Daimond)

90 Signs that burn like shooting stars
that flash across the nighttime skies
they reach out in their mystic language
for us to read between the lines. 128
275
447 160
290

Some are born who would defy them,
others still who would deny them. 365

Signs like moments hung suspended,
echoes just beneath the heart. 38
They speak in voices half-remembered
and half-remembered play their part.

Signs that come as we lay sleeping,
left behind for our keeping.

Signs

Sail along... Sail along the
reefs and coves, inside
your soul. Sail along...

Sail along in search of a star
they you can hold,
though we journey far
to where that star
may lead to.

Signs that lwhisper in our dreams
of sailors and of river queens,
of paupers and of men with means,
it all depends on how it reads.

Some are born to never need them,
others still who never read them.

94 - 190
124
201
320
653
967
1039

Introduction



3

Representation

Semiotics Operation

Help

Quitte



and

Sign Theory Basic: Semiotics

Cross-Cultural Applications

Images & Typography as Sign

Make Your Own Cross-Cultural Applications

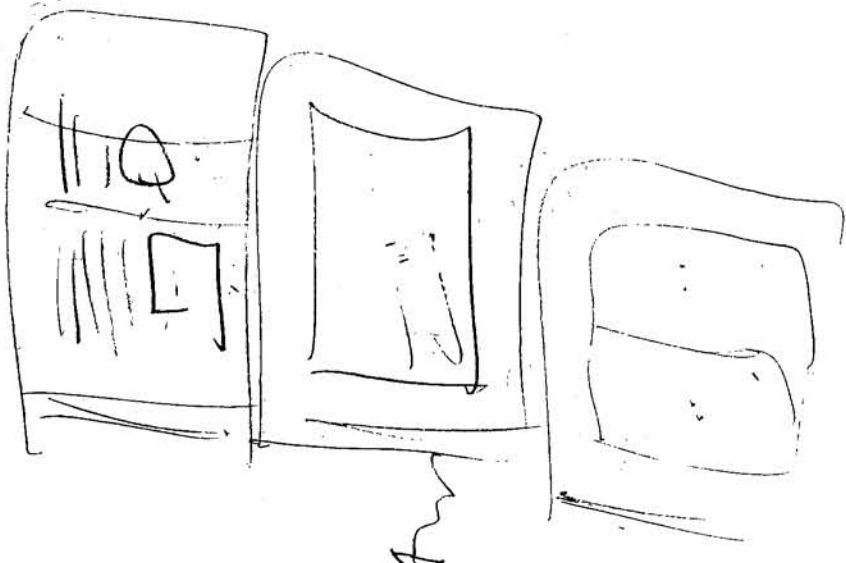
INFRst

MODELS

EXA

ANALYSIS - comp

MAKE YOUR OWN
OR FATE



2

Help

Quit

Representation

Iconic

Indexic

Symbolic

Help

Quite

Quit

Cross-Cultural

S. Comparision

Next

Menu

→ Helmut R. B. I.

→ Hel 18

INTRODUCTION

What is semiotics?

Semiotic

Semiotics is a discipline that provides a structure for studying and analyzing how signs function within a particular environment.

→ Gentucci 12-B

→ change 12

Quit

Menu

CROSS-CULTURE

SEMIBITES

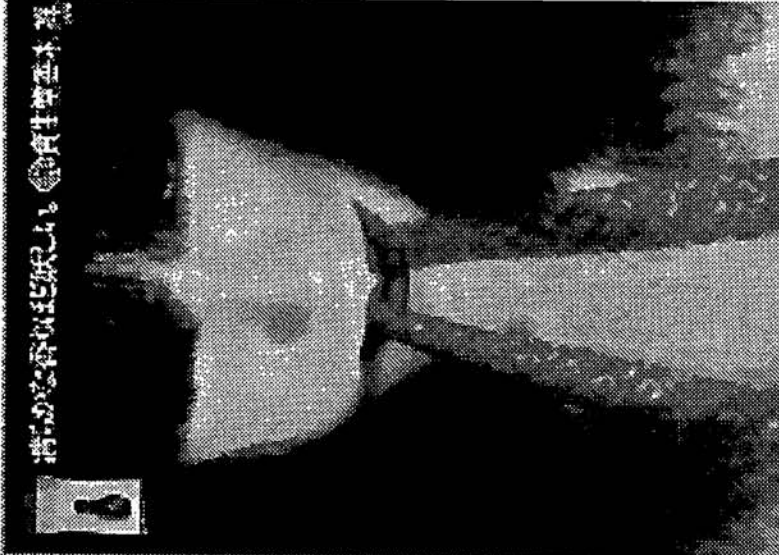
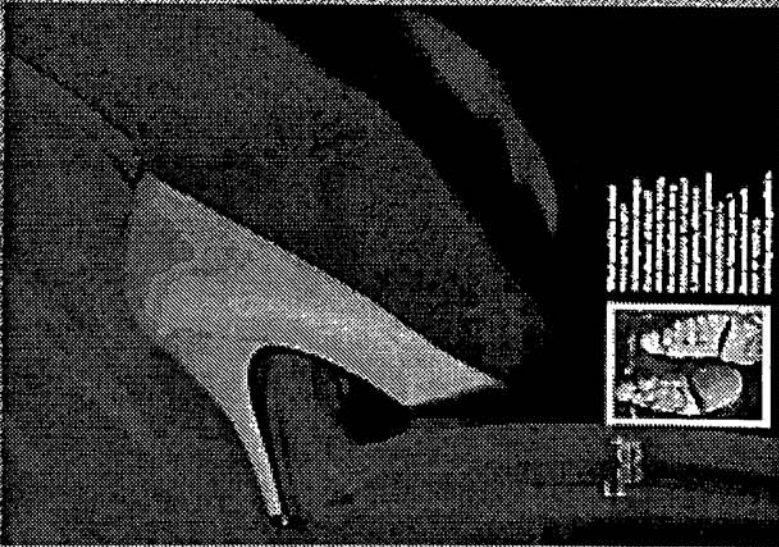
Previous

Next

Bibliography

COMPARISON

Sensuality



情慾之存以足跡已，◎實性愛通本 寫

Audio
Left

Audio
Right

SEMIOTICS

INTRODUCTION

What is semiotics?

Semiotics is a discipline that provides a structure for studying and analyzing how signs function within a particular environment.

Quit

Menu

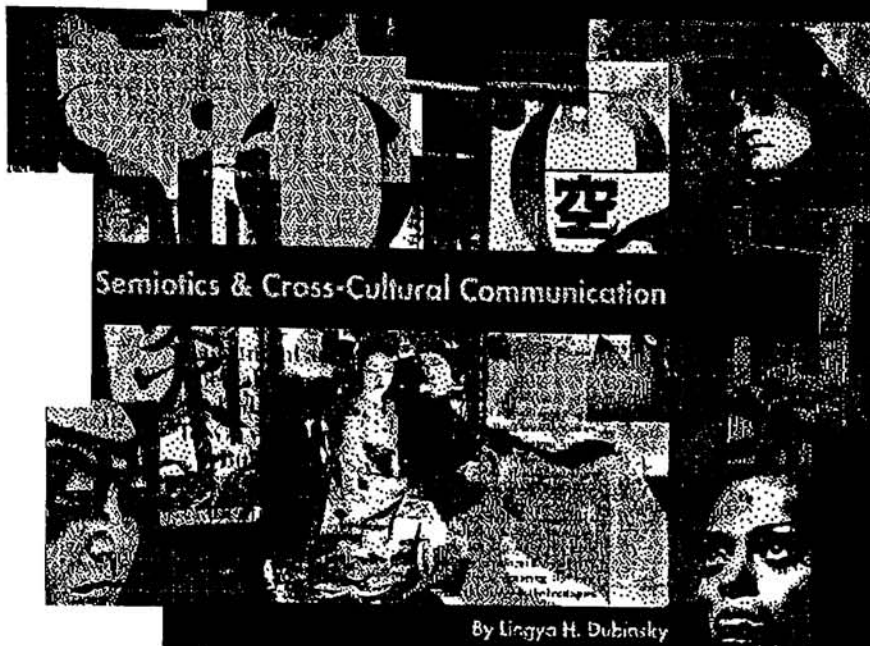
Cross-Culture

Comparison

Previous

Next

Bibliography



Semiotics & Cross-Cultural Communication

By Lingya H. Dubinsky

Semiotics

INTRODUCTION

- What is semiotics ?
- What is a sign ?
- Why Study semiotics ?
- Semiotic Triad
- Example
- Interpretant Matrix
- Assign Categories of Various Meanings
- Semiotic Operation

Cross-Culture

INTRODUCTION

- Cross-Cultural Communication
- Language
- Image
- Design
- Theme
- Religion
- Cross-Cultural Research
- Macroenvironment
- Affecting Factors
- Universal Vs. Localized Research

Comparison

INTRODUCTION

- Type & Image
- Humor
- Sophistication
- Androgynous
- Sensuality
- Exotic



F a l l Q u a r t e r R e s e a r c h

Department of Graphic Design
RIT, College of Imaging Arts and Science

Graduate Theory and Methods Seminar
Professors Zakia, Keough, Remington 11/10/192

1. Deconstructing a Visual Message (Analysis)

Interpretant Matrix

Representation

- a) Iconic (looks like what it represents)
- b) Indexic (points to what it represents)
- c) Symbolic (agreed to what it represents)

Signifiers and what they signify (Ferdinand de Saussure)

Syntax (visual grammar, layout)

Semantics (meaning)

Pragmatics (context, relations between visual/verbal elements)

2. Constructing a Visual Message (Synthesis)

Generative Matrix

What is to be represented (objective, purpose, goal)

Pragmatic implications

Syntagmatic and paradigmatic sign relations

Denotation and connotation

Evaluation

*Vague and nebulous is the beginning of all things,
but not their end.*

Kahlil Gibran

Visual imagery and familiarity ratings for 203 sayings

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Two attributes on which words have been widely scaled are imagery value and familiarity. One reason much memory research has used single words rather than more complex verbal material may be the ready availability of such scaled normative material. The purpose of this study was to provide a list of sentences that have been scaled on visual imagery and familiarity to facilitate the extension of memory research to more complex material. In this study, 203 sayings (e.g., *Haste makes waste*) were rated on 7-point scales for visual imagery (VI) by 51 students and for familiarity (F) by 50 students. The sayings are listed, with their individual means and standard deviations for VI and F. Also reported are the overall mean and standard deviation for VI and F, the correlation between VI and F, reliability data, and comparisons with studies that have scaled single words for VI and F. These ratings should help researchers extend verbal-learning and memory research beyond single words.

Two attributes on which words have been widely scaled are imagery value and familiarity. Normative ratings on these two attributes exist for nouns (e.g., Christian, Bickley, Tarka, & Clayton, 1978; Elms & Thompson, 1976; Paivio*, Yuille, & Madigan, 1968; Rubin, 1980; Stratton, Jacobus, & Brinley, 1975), verbs (e.g., Klee & Legge, 1976; Lippman, 1974), and adjectives (e.g., Berrian, Metzler, Kroll, & Clark-Myers, 1979; Haagen, 1949). A comprehensive recent rating of 2,854 words of all parts of speech is available for imagery and familiarity as well as for several other attributes (Toglia & Battig, 1978).

One reason much memory research has used single words rather than more complex verbal material may be the ready availability of such scaled normative material for words. Unfortunately, similar normative ratings are not available for more complex verbal material such as sentences or prose. Brown's (1976) catalogue of scaled verbal material lists 171 studies rating words, syllables, and letters on such

dimensions as imagery, familiarity, and meaningfulness, but lists only one study rating sentences (Klee & Eysenck, 1973, but that study does not report any scale values for the sentences).

Recently, research interest in verbal memory has been moving away from word lists to more complex material (Craik, 1979). However, because of the lack of scaled norms for sentences, memory researchers have had to scale their own materials. Unfortunately, the methods and results of such scaling are either not reported in enough detail for other studies to use the scaled sentences or do not have general enough applicability for use in other studies (e.g., Holmes & Murray, 1974; Just & Brownell, 1974; Klee & Eysenck, 1973; Marschark & Paivio, 1977; Thorndyke, 1975). The purpose of this study was to provide a list of sentences, consisting of sayings and proverbs, that have been scaled on imagery and familiarity, to facilitate the extension of research from single words to more complex material. Normative data on sentence imagery and familiarity can be used both by researchers interested in the effects of these two attributes and by researchers who want to control for imagery and familiarity while studying the effects of other variables.

EXPERIMENT

METHOD

Materials

Ratings booklets contained 203 sayings and proverbs listed on four pages along with a cover page of instructions. The order of the four pages was counterbalanced, with each of the four pages appearing in each position an equal number of times. Sayings ranged in length from 3 words (e.g., *Haste makes waste*) to 13 words (e.g., *You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make it drink*).

Subjects

The subjects were 101 undergraduate students enrolled in introductory psychology classes. They received course credit for their participation. Of these students, 51 (25 males and 26 females) rated the sayings on imagery, and another 50 (25 males and 25 females) rated the sayings on familiarity.

Procedure

The procedure for obtaining the ratings was similar to that used in studies that have scaled single words for imagery and/or familiarity (cf. Berrian et al., 1979; Paivio et al., 1968; Stratton et al., 1975; Toglia & Battig, 1978). However, the imagery ratings were limited to visual imagery, whereas in many previous studies the words were rated for "mental imagery" or "sensory imagery," which is broader than visual imagery (e.g., Berrian et al., 1979;

Elms & Thompson, 1976; Paivio et al., 1968; Stratton et al., 1975). Most research studies on imagery are concerned with visual imagery and have used the "mental imagery" norms as ratings for "visual imagery."

For the imagery ratings, the subjects were given the following instructions: Proverbs and sayings differ in their capacity to arouse visual images of things or events. Some sayings express ideas that give rise to a mental picture very easily, whereas others are more abstract and may give rise to a mental picture only with difficulty (after a long delay) or not at all.

The purpose of this study is to rate a list of proverbs and images as to the ease or difficulty with which they arouse visual images. Any saying which arouses a mental picture very quickly and easily should be given a high imagery rating; any saying that arouses a mental picture with difficulty or not at all should be given a low imagery rating. For example, the saying, *The more the merrier*, would probably arouse a visual image quite easily for most people — you can picture in your mind's eye a group of people laughing; it would be rated as high imagery. However, the saying, *Discretion is the better part of valor*, would be much more difficult for most people to visualize, because it presents an abstract idea that is hard to picture in your mind's eye; it would be rated as low imagery.

Your ratings will be made on a 7-point scale in which 1 is the low-imagery end of the scale and 7 is the high-imagery end of the scale, as follows:

LOW IMAGERY 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 HIGH IMAGERY

Make your rating of each saying in the blank preceding the saying by writing the number from 1 to 7 that best indicates your judgment of the ease or difficulty with which the saying arouses imagery. The sayings that arouse visual images with the greatest difficulty or not at all should be rated 1; sayings that arouse visual images most readily for you should be rated 7; sayings that are in between in ease or difficulty of imagery should, of course, be rated appropriately between the two extremes (2-6). *Feel free to use the entire range of numbers, from 1 to 7; at the same time, don't be concerned about how often you use a particular number as long as it is your true judgment. Work fairly quickly, but do not be careless in your ratings.*

If necessary, refer back to these instructions when rating the sayings.

The four pages of sayings followed the instruction page. Each saying was preceded by a blank, and the ratings scale contained in the instructions appeared also at the top of each other page.

The subjects worked at a self-paced rate, and most finished within 40 min. Subjects then rated again, on a separate page, 10 sayings randomly selected from the 203, to provide an estimate of reliability of rating.

The procedure for obtaining the familiarity ratings was the same as that for imagery, with subjects rating the sayings on a 7-point scale ranging from low familiarity (1, defined as "sayings that you have never heard or read") to high familiarity (7, defined as "sayings that you have heard or read many times").

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The sayings are presented in alphabetical order in Table 1, with their individual means and standard deviations for imagery and familiarity. Imagery values ranged from a low of 1.59 (*Brevity is the*

Table 2. Quartile ranges for ratings of imagery and familiarity

Quartile	Imagery	Familiarity
Top	5.71-6.82	5.92-6.92
Third	4.89-5.71	4.86-5.92
Second	4.14-4.98	3.34-4.96
Bottom	1.59-4.14	1.22-3.34

Toglia and Battig was 5.59, and the familiarity standard deviation for Toglia and Battig was 1.13.

As can be seen above, all means, both for single words and for the sayings, are above the scale midpoint of 4. Scores on both attributes were negatively skewed, with a high proportion of sayings falling within the range of 4 to 6. Such negative skewness, which has also been found for single words for familiarity (Toglia & Battig, 1978) and for imagery (Paivio et al., 1968), suggests some caution in interpreting correlations involving these two attributes. Table 2 shows quartiles for imagery and familiarity. For imagery, it can be seen that the range 4 to 7 contains the upper three quartiles while 1 to 4 covers only one quartile, and the results are similar for familiarity, although not quite as extreme.

The reliability coefficients, the correlations among the scale values for the 10 repeated sayings, were .994 for imagery and .987 for familiarity. These compare favorably with the reliabilities obtained with single words (e.g., for Paivio et al., 1968, imagery $r = .98$ on 54 repeated nouns; for Berrian et al., 1979, imagery $r = .97$ on 21 repeated adjectives; for Stratton et al., 1975, imagery $r = .92$ and familiarity $r = .90$ on 50 repeated six-letter nouns; for Toglia & Battig, 1978, familiarity $r = .82$ and imagery $r = .92$ on 26 repeated words).

While the reliability coefficients show a high degree of within-group stability, they do not tell us anything about the degree of consistency among individual people on ratings given to any particular saying. To check on this rating consistency, for each of the 10 repeated sayings, a correlation was calculated between the rating given the saying in the list of 203 items and in the list of 10 items. For imagery, the 10 correlations ranged from .79 to .92, with a mean of .87 (only two r s were below .85). For familiarity, the 10 correlations ranged from .64 to .94, with a mean also of .87 (only two r s below .82).

To investigate the relationship between the rated levels of imagery and familiarity and the variability of the ratings, a correlation was calculated between the means and standard deviations of the 203 sayings for each attribute. For familiarity, $r = -.48$, and for imagery, $r = -.66$, showing that there was less variability (more agreement)

the higher the level of familiarity and imagery. This is consistent with research which has found more agreement in ratings for concrete than for abstract verbs (Klee & Legge, 1976, $r = -.61$). The length of sayings, in number of words, was not significantly related either to imagery ($r = .15$) or to familiarity ($r = -.10$).

The Pearson correlation between the 203 imagery and familiarity means was .57, showing a moderate degree of relationship between imagery and familiarity. This is comparable to the correlation between these two attributes for single words found by Toglia and Battig (1978, $r = .56$), and higher than that for nouns only as reported by Stratton et al. (1975, $r = .45$) and by Rubin (1980, $r = .26$).

CONCLUSION

Craik (1979) has recently observed that, "in a sort of Gold Rush of Verbal Learning, investigators are increasingly turning from the humdrum study of nonsense syllables and word lists to the more exciting exploration of sentences, paragraphs, and stories" (p. 64). The availability of normative materials such as those in the present study will help researchers extend verbal-learning research beyond single words by providing more complex verbal material of known scale values on important attributes. In fact, the potential value of such scaled material has already been shown by the use of the scaled sayings in research on memory for sayings by children (Asay, Higbee, & Morgan, Note 1), college students (Higbee & Millard, 1981), and elderly adults (Pratt & Higbee, Note 2).

Notes

This research is based on a paper presented at the meeting of the Western Psychological Association, Honolulu, May 1980. Requests for offprints should be sent to Kenneth L. Higbee, Department of Psychology, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT 84602. Received for publication August 1, 1982.

Reference notes

1. Asay, T., Higbee, K. L., & Morgan, R. *Effect of an imagery mnemonic on children's immediate and delayed recall of sayings*. Paper presented at the meeting of the Rocky Mountain Psychological Association, Albuquerque, April 1982.
2. Pratt, J. D., & Higbee, K. L. *Use of an imagery mnemonic by the elderly in natural settings*. Paper presented at the meeting of the Psychonomic Society, Philadelphia, November 1981.

1. People in different cultures live in different sensory worlds.
2. People of different cultures used different criteria to interpret the other's behavior.
3. The study of culture is the study of people's perceptual apparatus or perceptual code.
4. Proxemics

An Overview

Virtually everything that man is and does is associated with space. Man's sense of space is a synthesis of many (sensory inputs): visual, auditory, kinesthetic, olfactory, and thermal. Not only does each of these constitute a complex system (as for example, the dozen or more different ways of experiencing depth visually), but each is molded and patterned by culture. Hence people reared in different cultures live in different sensory worlds. What is more, they are generally unaware of the degree to which the worlds may differ.

From the study of culture we learn that the patterning of perceptual worlds is a function not only of the specific culture but of the relationship, activity, and emotions present in a given situation. Therefore, when two people of different cultures interact, each uses different criteria to interpret the other's behavior, and each may easily misinterpret the relationship, the activity, or the emotions involved.

The study of culture in the proxemic sense is the study of people's use of their perceptual apparatus in different emotional states during different activities, in different relationships, settings, and contexts. No single research technique is sufficient in scope to investigate this complex multi-dimensional subject. The research technique is, therefore, a function of the particular facet under examination at the time and may call for the involvement of many disciplines.

Proxemics, as I think of it, is more concerned with how than why, and more with form than content. The work is admittedly detailed and is apt at times to be dull and repetitious. To complicate matters, proxemics addresses itself to basic human situations in an area of culture that is

ordinarily hidden from conscious awareness. For this reason, given the deeply interrelated nature of culture, proxemics frequently leads to new insights about specific cultures, as well as to insights into the generalized concept of culture itself. My thinking concerning proxemics is based on the assumption that all culture is ultimately an extension of basic biological processes. While man's extensions, as they evolve, may mask the underlying relationships which maintain the equilibrium of biological systems, the relationships and systems are no less real by virtue of being hidden.

PROXEMICS DEFINED

Proxemics is the study of man's transactions as he perceives and uses intimate, personal, social, and public space¹ in various settings while following out-of-awareness dictates of cultural paradigms. Research over the past several years has demonstrated that different ethnic groups and subcultures have different (proxemic codes). That is, they use their sensory receptors to structure the various proxemic zones differently during interpersonal encounters.

When representatives of different cultures unconsciously act according to their own cultural proxemic patterning, not only misunderstandings, but alienation, can and do occur. Recognition that such wide differences exist among the proxemic patterns of various ethnic groups is a first step toward eliminating this kind of alienation (Hall 1966).

Examining proxemic behavior and pinpointing interferences in the communications processes has, until now, been a slow, somewhat uncertain procedure requiring highly developed observational skills. The potential rewards of such work are worth the time and effort involved. Furthermore, they have prompted the development of systematic observational and recording techniques for training investigators, thus accelerating the accumulation of a body of descriptive and quantifiable data supporting culturally-based proxemic differences. This handbook has four purposes:

(1) To describe the techniques found to be reliable, consistent, and reproducible after over 12 years of developmental research. This research was supported by grants from the National Institute of Mental Health and the Council for Intersocietal Studies of Northwestern University.

(2) To report on the history of this work.²

(3) To describe a procedure that has been worked out in anticipation of a time when there will be computer programs as well as the necessary financial backing to record and analyze the 100 or more variables (see Part Two) that have a bearing on or influence the results in proxemics research.

(4) To discuss briefly some recent frame for observation and analysis that ultimately may be of value in handling the overwhelming complexity of man's social and cultural life.

VALUES OF PROXEMIC STUDY

Any culture characteristically produces a simultaneous array of patterned behavior on several different levels of awareness. It is therefore important to specify which levels of awareness one is dealing with. Proxemic patterns, once learned, are maintained largely outside conscious awareness, and thus have to be investigated without probing the

People in different cultures live in different sensory worlds.
 People of different cultures used different criteria to interpret

W i n t e r Q u a r t e r R e s e a r c h

COMMENTARY

SEMIOTICS, ADVERTISING AND MARKETING

Richard D. Zakia

Mihai Nadin

In the summer of 1986 the first International Conference on Marketing and Semiotics was held at Northwestern University. It was sponsored jointly by J. L. Kellogg Graduate School of Management at Northwestern and the Research Center for Language and Semiotic Studies at Indiana University.

The three-day conference underscored the fact that although the vocabulary for the two disciplines might be different, there was much commonality between Semiotics and Marketing.

Semiotics

Semiotics is a discipline that provides a structure for studying and analyzing how signs function within a particular environment. A sign can be thought of as anything that conveys meaning. Thus words, pictures, music, smell, taste, sound, pain, sculpture, architecture, film, video, dance, mime, gesture, and so on are signs once they are interpreted as such.¹⁰ They can function alone or in concert. Semiotics is not a new discipline; it can be traced back to ancient

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Greek writers, especially Aristotle and later St. Augustine, who distinguished between signs and the things signs represent. Today in the field of marketing one could ask what signs are used to represent which product or service, to which audience they are directed, and with what purpose in mind. Semiotics provides a logic for seeking answers to such questions and for designing a system of appropriate signs.

As the means people use to communicate diversity, the need for a better understanding of how signs are used by humans becomes critical. Advertising is a sign process which develops from the semiosis of marketing.

For a long time, knowing about language meant knowing about communication. Linguists provided us with everything we needed in order to use language to its maximum potential. Once the visual component became important, however, once we learned how to use word and image to enhance our messages, once movement, texture, smell, sounds, and so on became part of our repertory, the need for a generalized science to teach us what to use, and when and how, became urgent. Semiotics is this science. Its object is to understand all the different sign systems people use, advertising being a prime example. It deals with the conditions under which different signs can be interpreted according to a preestablished intention, or with the circumstances under which people assign meanings to signs different from those intended. The main concepts semiotics uses to fulfill this function are sign, sign process, meaning, context, and code.

As the means people use to communicate diversity, the need for a better understanding of how signs are used by humans becomes critical.

If advertisement is the "Town Crier" for marketing, it follows that good marketing should always be established on a sound semiotic basis. Marketing is relevant to advertisement not merely through the way a certain product is presented, but rather through the manner in which the general marketing concept is embodied in various signs through which producers communicate with users. There are some instances when the town crier should be loud, others when the town crier should use a combination of expressive means, and others when silence—a very

controlled silence—can make a well-defined marketing strategy reach its goal. Semiotic awareness allows marketing professionals and advertisers to discover what is required for each circumstance.

Advertising

Advertising is the most sophisticated "Town Crier" man has yet devised. It shouts its message from magazines, newspapers, billboards, radio, and television. It shouts wherever people congregate. Its market is no longer local or national but worldwide. It also speaks in many tongues. The purpose of advertising is to inform and to persuade, to prompt purchases of goods and services, to socialize consumers into a culture of consumption. Advertising is the modern substitute for myth and ritual and, directly or indirectly, it uses semiotics (the science of signs) to invest products with meaning for a culture whose dominant focus is consumption.² In addition to promoting products, advertising serves as an important and interesting historical document, as Marshall McLuhan noted some years back when he made this prophetic statement in his book *Understanding Media*:

*The historians and archaeologists will one day discover that the ads of our times are the richest and most faithful daily reflections that any society ever made of its entire range of activities.*³

Applied Semiotics

Semiotics is a useful tool for discovering the sophistication and richness of ads. By deconstructing an advertisement, we learn how it was constructed and discover its underlying message. And by discovering its message, we also discover the way in which words and pictures work together to reinforce the message, how the alphapictorial (word and picture) components utilize gesture, art, myth, and symbol to give emotional impact."

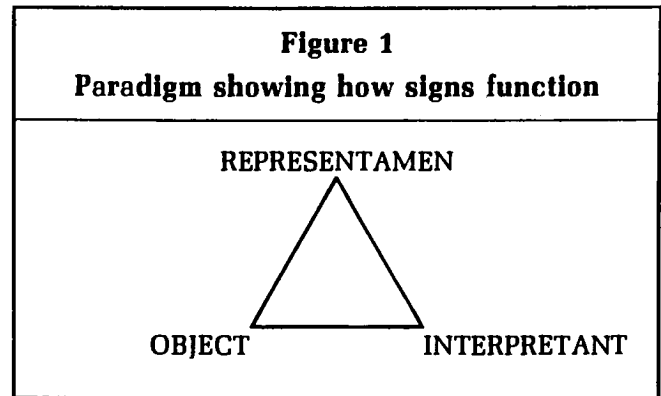
To show how semiotics can be used to analyze an advertisement and how it might be used to educate (educate through advertisement) the general public to the subtlety and strength of advertisements, we have chosen what, at first glance, appears to be a simple and unsophisticated ad. The ad is for *Fidji* perfume and has appeared in women's fashion magazines for several years (Plate 1). Some general observations can be made.

1. Only part of the model's face is shown. Because of this omission of the upper half, the viewer can do an insertion — complete the face in his or her image — and participate in the fantasy.
2. The model is face-to-face with the viewer, but there is no eye contact — or is there?
3. Color is symbolic — ambers and yellows are considered warm, tropical, sensuous colors.
4. Note the unique way in which the model holds the elevated bottle of perfume and the finger-weave she uses to support the bottle.
5. The presence of the snake (serpent is a more romantic term) is obvious. Not obvious are the other things we can attribute to this symbol of the Garden of Eden. They will be revealed later.
6. Note the yellow flower in the upper left corner of the ad. One would have to look far and wide to find such an exotic flower. Could it be out of the Garden of Eden?
7. What might be hidden in the dark abyss to the right of the model's face — if anything? We will never know.

Ads as Mediators

Semiotics has been defined variously as the "knowledge science of signs;"⁷ the "general theory of representation;"⁸ the "theory and practice of mediation;"⁶ and a "general theory of signs in all their forms and manifestations among man and animals, normal and pathological, linguistic or non-linguistic, social or individual."² Since we are concerned here with advertisement, we ask, "How does an ad mediate between the consumer and the product, Fidji perfume?" A paradigm showing how signs function is helpful as a visual reference (Figure 1). At the left leg of the triangle is the *Object* to be represented (Fidji perfume). At the apex is the *Representamen* (advertisement), and on the right the *Interpretant* (consumer). The function of the ad is to mediate between the product to be sold (Fidji perfume) and the consumer. This approach allows us to evaluate three distinct relationships that constitute the *sign*: *Object/Representamen* (How well does the ad represent the product?); *Representamen/Interpretant* (How well does the ad communicate?);

and *Interpretant/Object* (Was the communication significant? i.e., did the product sell?). Here we concern ourselves with only one component of the sign-representation, the first of the three mentioned above.



Semiotic Analysis

We will analyze the Fidji ad to discover how the advertising talent which designed the ad represented Fidji perfume. To do this, we will use another paradigm — an *Interpretant Matrix*⁹ (Figure 2). The alphapictorial components of the Fidji ad will be identified in terms of three characteristics: *iconic*, *indexic*, and *symbolic*. These three terms can be distinguished by using a car as an example. *Iconic* refers to likeness (a car looks like a car); *indexic* refers to imprints left by the car (tire tracks); and *symbolic* is the abstract convention used to represent the car (the logo).

Advertising is the modern substitute for myth and ritual.

The three identifiers — *iconic*, *indexic*, and *symbolic* — are placed in the vertical column of the interpretant matrix. In the horizontal rows are the descriptors that probe the intended meaning (or what we think is the intended meaning) of the various elements that make up the ad.

After carefully and critically studying the Fidji ad, we begin to assign several possible meanings such as *exotic*, *sensual*, *sophisticated*, and *androgynous*. (The list could continue, but these four meanings are adequate for illustration.) We now search the ad and isolate the alphapictorial elements that we feel support the meanings we have assigned. In a way, we are testing our hypothesis that the ad is *exotic*, *sensual*, *sophisticated*, and *androgynous*.

Exotic Fidji

Exotic refers to something strikingly or excitingly different, something foreign. How is the exotic shown in the Fidji ad? We identify as iconic a rather unfamiliar, perhaps foreign, flower to the left of the woman's face. We notice the indexic quality of the word 'Paris,' which refers

Table 1 Exotic	
Iconic	Foreign flower
Indexic	Paris, France Suggested fragrance (snake smells it)
Symbolic	Text in French (Fidji: le parfum des paradis retrouves) Native woman Serpent (Garden of Eden) "Phallic" neck and flower

to a familiar yet foreign country and the fantasies it evokes. The fragrance of Fidji is also indexic and can be inferred by the head of the snake that appears to be attracted by the smell. As for the symbolic aspect, the text in the upper right is in French; the model's color and face (partial view) suggest she is Fidjian; and the snake (serpent), of course, relates to the Garden of Eden. We also note the strange flower to the left. These observations can now be abbreviated and put into the matrix.

Sensual Fidji

Next we search out the alphapictorial com-

ponents that suggest the ad (perfume) is sensual. Iconically, there are the partially opened and inviting lips, the long flowing neck line, and the long, loose hair. Indexically, a long feminine finger points to Fidji. Symbolically, there are the unusual interlacing or interlocking of the fingers, which is obviously staged, the warm red, amber, and yellow of the ad, and, of course,

Table 2 Sensual	
Iconic	Partially opened lips Long flowing neck line Long loose hair
Indexic	Feminine finger pointing
Symbolic	Interlocking fingers Warm red, amber, yellow colors Curving, coiled serpent

the curving and coiled serpent. Again, we put these into our matrix.

The interlocking fingers are similar to those in the famous classical painting *Primavera* (Allegory of Spring) completed in 1478 by Sandro Botticelli. The original of this popular painting which is almost the size of a billboard, is in the Uffizi Gallery in Florence. To its left are the Three Graces in lacy transparent gowns positioned in a rhythmic stance with arms upraised and fingers intertwined. The meaning of this finger gesture is elusive and has been the subject of much study and speculation. The original

Figure 2
An interpretant matrix

Object of Advertisement	Meaning ₁	Meaning ₂	Meaning ₃	Meaning ₄
Iconic				
Indexic				
Symbolic				

painting of *Primavera* and its countless reproductions have been seen worldwide by millions of people over the years. The use of art in advertising, directly or indirectly, completely or partially, greatly enhances the stature of any advertisement and, by association, the product advertised. John Berger has written:

Any work of art "quoted" by publicity serves two purposes. Art is a sign of affluence; it belongs to the good life; it is part of the furnishings which the world gives to the rich and the beautiful.'

Sophisticated Fidji

The third meaning assigned to the Fidji ad is *sophistication*. *Iconically*, the model's face is elevated and we feel that she may be looking down at us as she holds a rather fancy bottle which is laced and sealed to protect its contents. *Indexically*, there are the Paris address on the bottle and the French spelling of the distant Fiji Island. The placement of the ad in magazines

Table 3

Sophisticated

Iconic	Elevated face Fancy bottle laced and sealed
Indexic	Paris address Fidji (The Fiji Islands) Placement of ad in <i>Vogue</i>
Symbolic	Rich warm colors in the ad Serpent as danger and risk (take a chance) Finger language

such as *Vogue* is also an important factor. *Symbolically*, the golden glow of the bottle and the overall warm colors in the ad suggest richness and warmth. The serpent appears poised as a pet or as a signal for danger and risk. And, of course, we have the rather sophisticated, staged finger language which broadcasts the promise of Fidji.

We now test the hypothesis that the ad has both female and male pictorial components that suggest it is *androgynous*. *Iconically*, the model's smooth face, extended neck, and slender fingers are very feminine. The flat chest and rather broad shoulders that extend beyond the ad are

very masculine. *Indexically*, the ad is seen as a unity even though it is split down the middle — the left side with very light colors while the right side is dark and heavy. *Symbolically*, the yellow flower in the upper left has both male and female attributes. And the interwoven fingers which form an altar on which the perfume rests suggest both male and female genitalia.

Table 4

Androgynous

Iconic	Female: face, neck, fingers Male: flat chest, broad shoulders
Indexic	Ad is half light colored (female) and half dark (male)
Symbolic	Yellow flower and fingers: male/female forms

(To test further the hypothesis that the ad is androgynous, we informally had a number of people smell the fragrance of Fidji and tell us if it has a feminine or masculine fragrance. Most pondered the question after testing the fragrance and then, a bit puzzled, said it was somewhere in between.)

Through the use of a logical, analytical paradigm such as the interpretant matrix, we now have supporting alphapictorial evidence of how the ad was constructed to represent the Fidji perfume as exotic, sensual, sophisticated, and androgynous. By deconstructing this ad, we have "constructed" its meaning, the meaning to be communicated to the interpreters (the audience). We are but two interpreters, and what we have presented is what we perceive to be the message of the Fidji ad.

Managerial Implications

Management is exercised today through various forms of communication which convey goals, methods for achieving these goals, and the global strategy pursued. Managers must translate management requirements into the language of those who will implement them. Natural language, while still the dominant communication means, can be supplemented by visual representations (diagrams, charts, pictures) and by all kinds of explanatory methods (videotapes, interactive

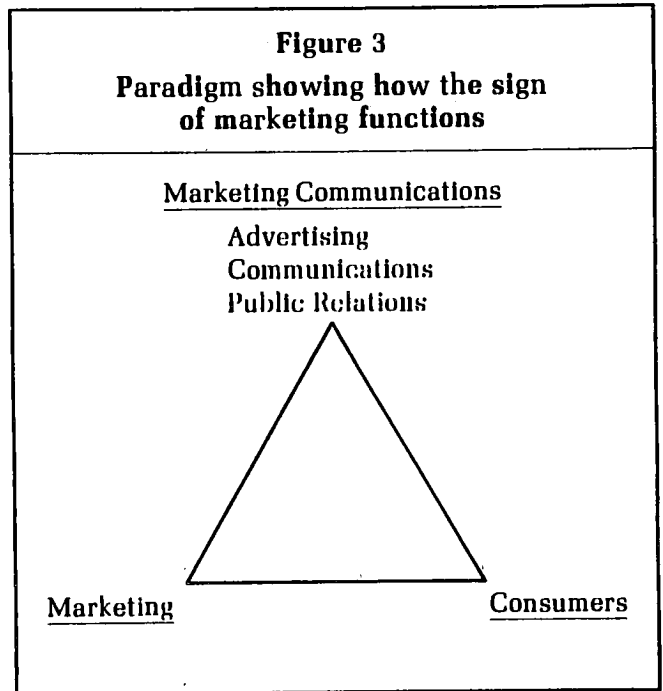
graphics, slides, demonstrations). Aware of it or not, managers use semiotics in the process of defining their goals, of conveying them, and of evaluating the success of the strategy used. An important component of management is the need to project a homogenous image in which product, service, advertisement, and public relations are approached not independently but in their interrelation. Especially when we deal with conglomerates, the problem of maintaining a homogenous identity requires the participation of professionals who can advise on particular methods management can use to ensure uniformity, appropriateness of methods, and consistency in representing the company.

The function of the ad is to mediate between the product to be sold and the consumer.

The need to deal with complexity in a very competitive marketplace is reflected in the need to devise a corporate language accepted by managers and implemented in their activity. Several major companies in the United States and abroad have recognized their need for a long-term semiotic strategy. Consequently, they have gone beyond the "logo and stationery" approach, usually satisfied by a design studio, and have adapted what can be called a corporate language especially devised for their particular needs. This language includes graphics, problem-solving strategies, corporate communication, public relations and management style, which all together comprise a semiotic strategy. The main managerial implications of such a decision

are reflected in the need to make it a component of the entire management activity.

The relationship between marketing management, communications, and the consumer population is illustrated in Figure 3. It shows the unity between marketing (part of the global corporate activity as defined by management and implemented by marketing professionals) and the representation of marketing goals in advertising, corporate communication, and public relations. The sign of marketing is constituted at a higher level than the signs used in advertising. The sign of marketing can help in defining short- and long-term marketing strategy.



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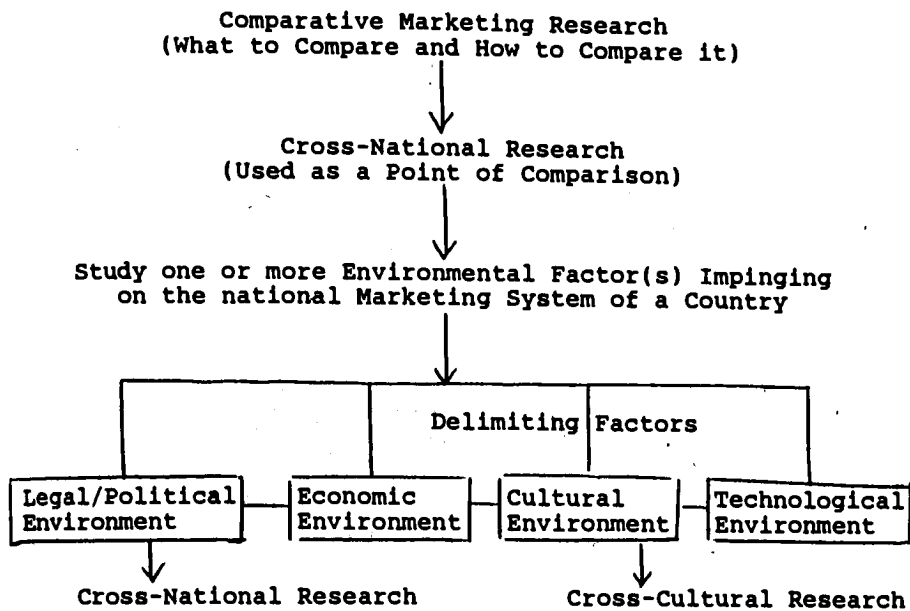
Cross-Cultural and Cross-National Advertising Practices in Unlike Environments

Cross-cultural and cross-national marketing is a fertile area for research and analysis. Various analytical approaches to the solution of marketing problems that are simply taken for granted in the domestic market may involve major operational changes and adaptations in international markets. As a result, cross-cultural/cross-national consumer behavior research has attracted an increasing interest among marketing researchers, with regard to the development of managerial strategies of multinational companies as well as to the establishment of the universality of theoretical constructs and findings (Van Raaij, 1978).

The difficulty of communication to people of diverse cultures and nations is one of the greatest creative challenges in marketing/advertising today. Cultural and national differences frequently occur together, but they can also occur independently of each other. Cultural differences can be found within nations themselves and may result from a diversity of languages or cultural values. Populations in different nations may or may not have different cultures. However, even culturally identical cross-national groups would be at least subject to different laws and varying stages of socioeconomic and technological development and thus experience national differences.

Cultural groups present a challenge to marketing decision makers owing to the role culture plays in providing behavioral norms and values and in socializing the consumer. Cultural values and norms are a key influence on the needs, motives and underlying drives in consumer behavior. Hence, there is a need to understand how culture functions in each society. The marketer must learn how consumer behavior in different societies is motivated and what special demands it places on the development of marketing programs in different cultural environments. Different cultures have different norms and values, and the mode of communication (advertising) must be adapted to such conditions. Moreover, the

Figure 4.1
A Conceptual Framework for Cross-Cultural Research

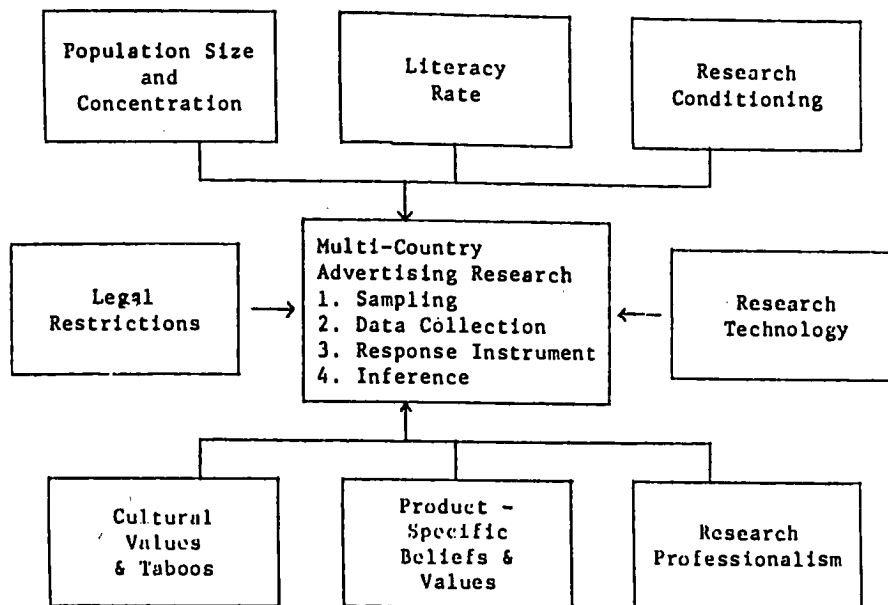


ton-Lancaster, United Kingdom, provides valuable information on how culture permeates the institutions of a society and consumer buying behavior.

A study conducted by R. T. Green and E. Langeard (1975) sought to present a comparative profile of samples of consumers in France and the United States along several dimensions of consumption behavior, and to compare profiles of consumers identified as innovators. This study focused on the consumption of grocery products and retail services. Respondents provided information on sources of information used, willingness to try new products and services, media habits, organizational membership, and selected demographic characteristics. It was concluded that most of the differences observed could be attributed to social and environmental differences between the two countries.

A study by J. Munson and S. McIntyre (1977) investigated the ability of the Rokeach Value Survey to distinguish cultural differences in personal value structures within three different cultures. In addition to providing measurements of self-values, the subjects evaluated the average American stereotypes held within each culture. An analysis of the data disclosed significant differences in the self-values held by people from the three cultures. It also revealed that the stereotype held of an average American's personal values differed significantly across the three cultures.

Figure 4.2
Factors Affecting Cross-National Advertising Research

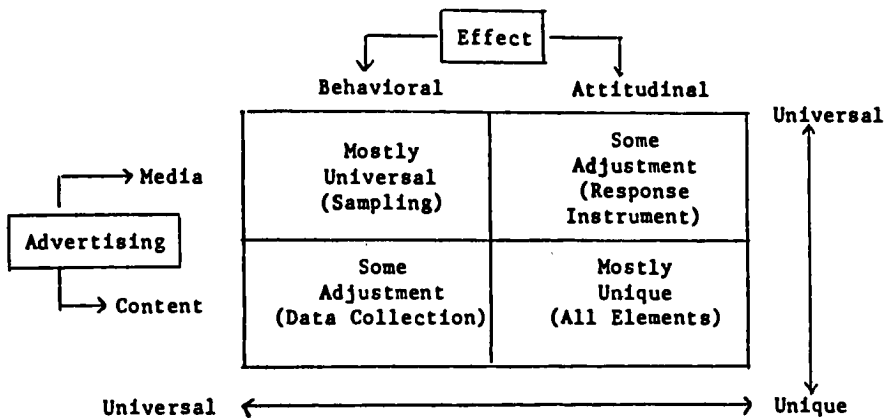


Source: Jagdish N. Sheth, "Should Multi-Country Advertising Research Be Universal or Unique?," in *It Won't Work Here*, AMA/ESOMAR Conference (New York: March 11-14, 1979), p. 5. Published by the American Marketing Association.

CROSS-CULTURAL ADVERTISING RESEARCH

Cross-cultural advertising research requires study of the major elements of the research methodology and necessary adjustments to suit everything to the local marketing environment. This kind of approach will create effective advertising strategies in overseas markets. To this end, four major elements of the research methodology must be examined, namely: sampling plan, data collection procedures, response instrument, and inference. Cross-national factors might require making certain adjustments of these four elements from country to country. Figure 4.2 shows the most important environmental factors affecting cross-cultural or multicountry advertising research which, in turn, have an impact on cross-national advertising programs and strategies (Sheth, 1979). All disciplines should take a more coordinated approach to multicountry advertising research before study findings can be available in a format that can be applied to marketing by the general advertising practitioner. B. Mallen (1973) has pointed out that many of the studies undertaken in this area of investigation do not qualify as cross-cultural marketing (advertising) research. Most of the research in the area is too narrow in scope, lacks a theoretical framework, makes use of invalid

Figure 4.4
Strategies for Universal Versus Localized Multicountry Advertising Research



Source: Jagdish N. Sheth, "Should Multi-Country Advertising Research Be Universal or Unique?," in *It Won't Work Here*, AMA/ESOMAR Conference (New York: March 11-14, 1979), p. 7. Published by the American Marketing Association.

on which type of advertising research can be used universally and which type will necessitate some modifications in a cross-cultural or cross-national setting (see Figure 4.4). Four types of cross-national advertising strategies can be used: behavioral measures of advertising media, attitudinal measures of advertising media, behavioral measures of advertising content, and attitudinal measures of advertising content (Sheth, 1979, pp. 8-9).

In recent years, international marketers attempting to compare two or more cultures/nations have had to deal with the fact that marketing functions in one are completely absent or unnecessary in the other. Traditionally, cross-cultural analyses have centered on the identification and analysis of common factors and differences in marketing systems, cultures, and other cultural-enduring attributes among various cultural settings (Wind, 1967; Douglas and Dubois, 1977). However, comparisons of cross-cultural/national consumer studies usually leave much to be desired. The secondary data available usually are not directly comparable, and in certain cases, they do not even use the same data base. In addition, cultural differences are often confused with other factors since cultural standards and norms in the two countries being compared, in most cases, are different enough to make the cross-cultural studies of little value (Goldman, 1967). Thus, the reported differences may be due to cultural background or other factors such as the political system. Despite the difficulties involved in cross-cultural/national research, there seems to be an increased demand from marketing scholars and businesspeople as well as public policy makers who want to know the results

of such comparisons, as imperfect as they may be for orderly decision-making purposes (Sethi, 1971; Boddewyn, 1981).

ADVERTISING AND CULTURAL IDENTITY

Communicating to people in diverse cultures represents one of the great creative challenges in advertising. In moving from one culture to another, communication is more difficult because cultural factors largely determine the ways various phenomena will be perceived. If the perceptual framework is different, perception of the message itself will differ. Apparently, in firms where managers feel cultural differences are important, these attitudes have been reflected in advertising policies and practices (Keegan, 1969). For instance, in Canada along with a growth of nationalistic feelings, there is evidence of an increase in product promotional appeals using local themes (Mallen and Litvak, 1968, p. 26).

In both international and domestic marketing and advertising, the advertiser must learn about the audience, define the market segments as precisely as possible, and study backgrounds and motivational influences in detail before beginning an advertising campaign. Most international advertising blunders occur when the foreign culture and its social norms are misunderstood. This can take many forms, ranging from blatant rejection of existing customs and tastes to innocent insensitivity to the environment (Ricks, Arpan, and Fu, 1974, p. 49). That is why advertisements that fail to reflect the local life-style are often unsuccessful. Advertising in foreign markets presents problems different from those found in North America. Specifically, these problems revolve around (1) the degree of standardization of advertising that is possible in the various markets, (2) the difference in media availability, (3) government restraints on certain advertising practices, and (4) different socioeconomic and cultural characteristics of consumers. Environmental factors utilized in formulating cross-cultural advertising strategies are listed in Table 4.2.

In recent years, international marketers have become accustomed to the problems of adapting from one culture to another. Knowledge of cultural diversity must cover the total promotional project. Erik Elinder (1965) argued that, at least in Europe, advertising campaigns tailored to a single market should be abandoned in favor of more commonality of theme, slogan, copy, and layout. Within the Common Market, national traits and traditional characteristics are merging; "millions of Europeans are living under largely similar conditions although they read and speak different languages" (Elinder, 1965). There is disagreement, however, about the effectiveness of such striving for homogeneity in international advertising. Even the Common Market countries have diverse local customs, regulations, cultures, and especially media structures. Language sometimes presents difficulty. For instance, it is not enough for advertising strategists to be concerned about differences among nations when subcultures within a country require attention as well (Dunn and Yorke, 1974, p. 57). Today in Turkey, a number of different contrasting eating patterns exist. The youth

Missing Page


tiveness of Canadian themes (Robertson, 1975). For this reason, cultural diversity requires that the advertising strategist be constantly alert to cultural variation because it constitutes one of the greatest creative challenges in international marketing.

Literal translations are not always enough because every language contains nuances and idiomatic differences. This may even pose a problem where the same language is used in different countries. For example, the word for "cookie" is biscuit in England. Therefore, at the present time any generalization about the possible standardization of advertising strategy is probably too simplistic. However, in the future national differences may decrease and life-styles may be standardized, thereby creating a favorable environment for uniform advertising strategies across national boundaries.

COMMUNICATING WITH FOREIGN CUSTOMERS

Most advertising and marketing executives have been remiss in analyzing a foreign country's culture when they are planning an advertising campaign. For instance, labor-saving appeals proved fruitless for an appliance marketer in South Africa, where the majority of household jobs can be performed by relatively cheap labor. Promising a German housewife that she does not have to scrub the floor if she uses a one-step wax application may prove dangerous, because such ease may give her guilt feelings. In many countries, large numbers of consumers object to any artificial substance (synthetic foods, detergents, and so forth). Advertisers need to be especially careful about the style they use to communicate to a foreign culture. Among the danger areas are hard-sell advertising, religious taboos, and sexual approaches (Dichter, 1970).

Advertising must be culturally based. That is why foreign advertising approaches are sometimes different from those of the United States. In the United States advertising is thought of in terms of "concept" and "execution," and advertising agencies as well as companies give more weight to the "concept." If the concept is right and the execution is wrong, the problem can be correct. Serious problems arise when the concept is wrong (Fields, 1980, p. 18).

 In Japan, without actually defining "concept," the advertising agencies have had considerable success in testing advertising concepts. The scientific approach works in the United States because the process is logically derived within the Western system and therefore understood. The Japanese system places more importance on style, however. One can argue that a combination of Western logic and Japanese sense of style can be a powerful combination in creating effective advertising in Japan (Fields, 1980, p. 19).

Japanese television commercials are generally very emotional. They use more entertainment and music than Western commercials, and often feature well-known singers or movie stars. Commercials in Japan do not emphasize the brand name; the product is shown in the ending shot only. The Japanese do not talk about the price of the product. Japanese producers feel that after the audience

has become interested, it will want to purchase the product and will discover the price at that time (Fields, 1980).

Advertising in Lebanon is subdued. Generally, the actors used in commercials are dressed conservatively, and the message is delivered clearly, with the emphasis on visual explanation. A woman with blond hair will add interest to a commercial. A rarity like blond hair will attract Arab men's attention and hopefully will sustain their attention throughout the commercial. A message based on the "me" concept is advantageous, since material goods and wealth are so important to Arab men. Issues that violate the basic concepts of their religion should be avoided at all costs. Religion is very important in the lives of Arab people. Therefore, any advertisement that contradicts their beliefs and values will annoy and upset, rather than arouse and please, the viewer.

ADVERTISING STRATEGIES USED IN DIVERSE CULTURES

The obstacles to effective advertising are similar in domestic and international markets, but they became magnified in world markets with their heterogeneous buyers. Thus, the task of identifying and assessing the aggregate characteristics and behavior of markets and of buyers is more complex for world markets than for a single domestic market. For this reason creativity and versatility are key concepts in developing a creative strategy for an international advertising campaign. Generally, advertising functions as a communication medium. As such, it must provide the flexibility required to communicate effectively in situations that can change from country to country, from time to time, from product to product, and from culture to culture.

The creative strategy must also be firmly grounded in market analysis which will provide clues to the market's homogeneity or degree of segmentation. Among decisions of strategy is that of whether to use a single international campaign or a series of individual campaigns tailored to meet market variations. Questions of frequency of advertising, volume of advertising, and media usage are also based on analysis of market information. Hence, one should create advertising copy with a view toward adapting it to all different sizes and shapes. A truly general-purpose showcard can be blown up photographically to one size for Canada or reduced to a much smaller size to suit the tiny shops of Turkey and the United Kingdom. If a newspaper advertisement is used, with column widths varying considerably around the world, enough space should be left on either side to allow for cropping without cutting off the copy or product.

A creative campaign for identical products in two or more countries will often be changed when product usage between countries differs. For example, English Canadian commercials gear their sales pitch to housewives with children, for English-speaking families on both sides of the border tend to serve soups mostly to children. In contrast, French Canadian television commercials recognize the French use of soup as an adult dinner item and thus concentrate on that usage.