Mediating modernism: the expert discourse on art and advertising in the 1920s

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MEDIATING MODERNISM:
THE EXPERT DISCOURSE
ON ART AND ADVERTISING IN THE 1920S

by

Don E. McComb

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the
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For my family
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I am grateful for the time and effort of my committee members, especially the commitment of my advisor, Professor Hanno Hardt. This dissertation was completed largely due to Professor Hardt's unfaltering support and friendship. In this way, it embodies the essence of what I have come to value most from my years at the University of Iowa: that the quality of the learning environment is determined by the relations between students and faculty. Indeed, the university should act as a buffer, where students can take risks, make mistakes and explore ideas that have no immediate application in the commercial sphere. My professors provided this kind of experience for me in an atmosphere that nurtured both students and ideas. In respect for their generosity, I hope that I someday can make a similar contribution.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Art and Advertising in the 1920s

The 1920s represent a time of experimentation with expression in the visual arts. American advertising also experimented with visual approaches during the same period. Many of the forms of visual expression familiar today had their origins in the social conditions of the early part of this century. The 1920s were a time when art worlds mingled; some artists rejected the growing field of commercial art, while others used advertising to present their new visual concepts to the public. It was an explosive period of experimentation with new forms and revival of old styles.

Modern art movements of the 1920s gave graphic artists new forms of visual expression. In contradiction to the classical traditions which ideally viewed typography as a servant to the written word, Modern movements exploited the expressive potential of art, and used typography to call attention to itself. Everything was fair game as designers experimented with primitive, classical and expressionistic forms to communicate a vision of the future.

It was a time when technology and the economy allowed for expansion of mass circulation magazines and newspapers,
and with them, an explosion of national advertising. Advertisers seized upon art and illustration to distinguish their products in a competitive consumer market. New approaches in graphic design influenced by Modern art aided advertisers in product differentiation and breathed new life into old advertising formulas. Modern art was also thought to appeal to the emotional side of consumers who no longer were persuaded by rational, "reason-why" copy. Furthermore, new printing techniques in halftone reproduction and color separation offered new possibilities in graphic design and image reproduction.

The visual content of advertisements reveals the cultural distinctions and divisions that mark contemporary culture. Research by William Leiss (1986), indicates that the 1920s was a transitional period in the development of advertising's communicative formats. During the 1920s advertisements show a marked shift from informational to symbolic presentation, that is to say, a shift from utilitarian representations of products to symbolic associations of products and persons in the world of human social interaction.

New technologies and experimentation with visual expression in art and graphic design contributed to the rupture in the traditional, rational-oriented product information advertising formats. Symbolic representations
blurred the difference between the animate and the inanimate. Consumers were promised not only the products, but the aura that accompanied them. Likewise, testimonials gave a voice to the products and associated the products with the attributes of the users. The symbolic visual elements of advertisements promised transformation of class, culture and social status.

The language of advertising is the language of dreams, it offers an escape from the constraints of industrial society. Advertisements incorporate the language of the unconscious in order to transcend everyday life. In this way, the language of advertisements masks the aspects of social control bound up in technology and monopoly capitalism. Advertisements create a system that claims to solve the contradictions of consumer culture.

The image, the commercial, reaches out to sell more than a service or a product; it sells a way of understanding the world. The basic premise is that in a corporate, industrial world, it is the agencies of communication that provide the mechanisms for social order. The notion appeals to the businessman's desire for effective management. For the rest of us, as mobile, often isolated individuals in an industrial consumer society, it promises that which is increasingly elusive: kinship and community (Ewen 1982, 42).

Advertising fuels the progress and expansion of consumer culture by linking ancient mythical notions of utopia with what is in reality an unknown future of industrial capitalism. In a sense, it also serves as well to initiate
the public into the terms of modernity. In part this language of modernity seeks to cut itself off from history and nature. The power of creation, reproduction and maintenance of culture is attributed to industry. The individual is an active agent in the production of culture only in the role of consumer. Advertisements show the individual how to fit into a ready-made industrial society. In this sense, advertising is the language of transformation—a language which resolves the contradictions brought on by industrial capitalism, provides for the demands for a richer life, but does not question the domination of the productive processes by corporate monopolies.

The meaning and significance of art can be determined three ways; by tradition, by the market or by authoritarian structures. In modern times, the traditional basis of significance of art and its use has been eclipsed by the expanding commodification of art within the market system. Art has come to be defined as art, in part, because of its distance from everyday life. The value of art, in the market system, is related to its rarity or its association with the individual genius of its creator or author. Operating in an autonomous sphere, apart from the material conditions of everyday life, art can be viewed as an academic practice, a product of rarified aesthetic codes. Each of these views of art can be accommodated within a view of art as a social
process. That is to say, as a social process art can be located within particular social moments and material conditions subject to historical inquiry. Likewise, aesthetic codes can be seen as socially created.

The meaning of art is often arbitrary and ambiguous. Separated from their origins, particular images can be appropriated for multiple uses and can be associated with multiple meanings. As such the meaning of art can claim to transcend material conditions and aid in the transformation of objects within symbolic systems. One purpose of art is to make the ordinary strange, to defamiliarize everyday objects, to wrench them out of their familiar context and thrust them into the foreground of our consideration. The slippage between the objective aspects of visual images and their socially created meanings is an interesting problem in the field of mass communication.

My interest in Modernistic art came as an attempt to make sense of the early twentieth-century works of the avant-garde. Despite the apparent anarchy in the works of the period, I sought to find patterns in the use and arrangement of images. On the one hand, the works seemed to be open to many interpretations, e.g. revolt against the classical notion of central perspective, horizontal and vertical axis and symmetrical composition. On the other hand, within a
context of social production, the works could be subjected to questions of intent and their influences analyzed.

The Modernists' experiments with combinations of abstract images was more than an attempt at childish anarchy. They questioned the dominant rationality of authoritarian structures as well as the notions of truth, representation and art itself. In the sense that the works were representational, they mirrored the blurring of meanings and the collision of the past and the present. Their expressive nature focused not on the technical skill of the artists, but rather on their unique perspectives and visions. The results were shocking; meant to provoke as well as condition viewers to the turbulence of the times. This was a period when art and artists interacted with political realities. Among the Modernists, the avant-garde was committed to substantial social change. Their intentions were often politically explicit.

But despite the political intentions of the avant-garde and the revolutionary potential of its works, its success is difficult to measure. Certainly the avant-garde caused no major rupture in the social matrix of the 1920s. The avant-garde did affect the character of the art world, and many of its ideas and experiences found their way into more mainstream literature and graphic design—but usually only after been filtered, diluted and coopted by the dominant
culture. Somehow, the radical anti-monopoly capitalism ideology that inspired the work of the avant-garde was neutralized when its works were transformed into popular forms. That avant-garde works could be incorporated into advertisements and function to promote the dominant culture they were intended to criticize is an indication of the power of advertising.

To begin to understand the relations between art and advertising in the 1920s, it is necessary to explore the concepts that frame the discussion of art and modernity. In doing so, I intend to raise the following questions: what are the relations between advertising and consumerism; what is the nature of art in modernity; and how is the political nature of the avant-garde transformed in service to commerce?

Modernity

In the discussion of social theory and cultural history there is a tendency to construct a Zeitgeist or cultural milieu in which to frame problems. Discussions of modernity generally assume that totalities of human experiences exist, and that the problem of modernity is the loss of those totalities and the struggle to reconstruct them.

Much of the discussion of modernity is characterized by the reconciliation of mankind's fall from grace and the inability to come to terms with the social reality that
surrounds us. As Peter Bürger notes in *Theory of the Avant-Garde*,

The more bourgeois society merges into a single context of functioning in the monopolistic phase of its development, the less it allows one to make individual experiences that could be mediated, and in turn could lead to a meaningful praxis (Bürger 1984, xliii).

Traces of the conditions we commonly refer to as modernity are ever receding into the past. I use the term "modernity" to refer to the historical period from the very late eighteenth century up through the early-middle twentieth century. Taking Marshal Berman's (1982) definition, I use "modernization" to mean industrialization, technology and material conditions necessary for its implementation. Modernity is also used as the Zeitgeist of the modern period, the general conditions and social processes that contribute to the transformation of values and consciousness necessary to maintains its dominant role in society. "Modern, "Modernistic" and "Modernism" are all used specifically to refer to artworks of the early twentieth century.

The rise of advertising and consumerism was part of the broader changes in the character of society and cultural practices from the late nineteenth century. As a symbolic system, advertising helped to constitute the possibility for change particularly by diverting attention from, or even eclipsing, critical alternative discourses. It shaped and redefined the arena of activity in which the public could
exercise its freedom--in this case, within the structure of the commercial marketplace of goods and services.

The discussion of modernization is framed within a history of social life coming to be ordered around the mechanical, economic and social demands of industrialization and market economy. As opposed to earlier times, when what there was of economic life was organized to support social life (agrarian cultures and feudalism), in modernity, social life was increasingly organized to support economic life. Trade-offs included the development of the private sphere; previously a reserve of the elite, rich and powerful.

Art, Autonomy and the Avant-Garde

Ever since Romanticism, we have expected art to reveal and subvert domination, and to expand the human spirit. Peter Bürger puts forth a social theory that seeks to locate the production and reception of art within the arena of "life praxis." Bürger establishes the preconditions for the autonomy of art and the theory for the "institution of art" which he says exists outside of life praxis. Bürger criticizes other theories of the avant-garde which have attempted to establish causal links between individual works and social history. In response, he formulates a theory that the social status of art in bourgeois society provides the connection between the individual art work and history.
As the production of art became increasingly separate from life praxis, the individual develops a consciousness that focuses on the uniqueness of the artist's activities. At this level, the autonomous nature of the production of art becomes less ambiguous, manifesting itself in the form of an institution. As an institution, the function of art is removed from life praxis as is the case of Aestheticism, or becomes the mere affirmation of the institution. Bürger summarizes,

The autonomy of art is a category of bourgeois society. It permits the description of art's detachment from the context of practical life as a historical development. In the strict meaning of the term, 'autonomy' is thus an ideological category that joins an element of truth (the apartness of art from the praxis of life) and an element of untruth (the hypostatization of this fact, which is the result of historical development as the 'essence' of art) (Bürger 1984, 46).

The autonomous nature of the institution of art at the beginning of the century, then, is the precondition for the emergence of the avant-garde. And for Bürger, the turning point from Aestheticism to the avant-garde is determined by the extent to which art comprehended the mode in which it functioned in bourgeois society--its comprehension of its own social status. This approach gets to the heart of the relationship between art and social praxis. It moves the focus of art's role and function from reception to production. As a commodity, the form and content of a work
can only have a political tendency. But as a process of production, art has a political immediacy.

The reintegration of art and social practice which distinguishes the avant-garde within Modernism must focus on production. The autonomy of aesthetics and the institution of art can be ruptured by revolutionary form and content only if art can also demonstrate the process of its own political practice.

Statement of the Research Problem

This understanding of art and modernity informs my inquiry of the relations of art, advertising and culture. From this come several questions. The first is descriptive: How did advertising as a practice come to define and appropriate art in the 1920s? The second is more analytical: How did advertising as an institution serve to incorporate Modernistic and avant-garde forms of expression into American culture? The third is theoretical: Specifically, how does advertising manage to transform the meaning of avant-garde works of art from a site of ideological struggle to the affirmation of the dominant social system?

Discussion of Literature

These are questions that remain largely unaddressed by the literature on art, advertising and American culture. Most of the advertising literature focuses primarily on great
men and great advertisements. Early histories of American advertising, James Playsted Wood (1958) and Frank Presbrey (1929), are insider views, and thus limited by their anecdotal perspective. Stephen Fox (1984) discusses early advertising, focusing on the major personalities in the industry, but as Vincent Norris notes, most of the advertising literature fails to "recognize the existence of premarket societies, the rise of capitalism, the Industrial Revolution's impact on society, the fundamental difference between retail and national advertising, and the nature of advertising as an economic institution" (Norris 1989, 100).


The visual aspects of advertising are explored in a historical context, albeit briefly, in Boorstin (1987) and Ewen (1988). An ideological discussion of advertising art is
the focus of Berger (1972) and Walker (1983), while the visual content of advertisements during the 1920s is analyzed in Marchand (1985) and Leiss (1986, 1990). A semiotic approach is applied to contemporary advertising in Williamson (1978).

Cultural histories of American mass media include Warren Susman (1973) and Daniel Czitrom (1982). James Carey offers what are perhaps the most thoroughly integrated theories of American media, culture and history in his collection of essays (1989b). Finally, T.J. Jackson Lears (1984) develops a cultural history of the role of art in advertising, including the 1920s.

Even within these critical discussions, the relations of art, advertising and culture are left relatively unexplored, although there are fragments that I have attempted to weave together to inform this study. These works have informed and inspired my research, but either they have not focused specifically on the 1920s, or they have not dealt with the problematic as I have formulated it.

As Stuart Ewen (1988) found, the marriage of art and commerce can be found in the creation of special departments within advertising agencies since the 1920s. For Ewen, the relations between art, advertising and culture exist in the practice of making products and packaging less ugly. By designing products to be more beautiful, they became worthy
of placement in a more artistic setting. Ewen's emphasis on the stylizing of products takes the resulting styles as a given—as the starting point of his critique—rather than exploring the process of how the styles came to be, their indebtedness to the art world and the nature of their transformation to commodity forms.

Other studies, which focus on the content of advertisements in the 1920s (Marchand 1985 and Leiss 1986, 1990) recognize the influence of Modernism and the avant-garde, but analyze their use in relation to other categories and styles of advertisements. Moreover, as a text book, Leiss (1986, 1990) discusses many of the sources listed here, but as a survey of advertising content over the period of the entire twentieth-century, it cannot focus its spotlight on any specific discourse for a prolonged discussion. According to Leiss, "In the 1920s, the advertising business discovered art; more precisely, advertisers discovered the significance of aesthetics and how to harness the human desire for expression" (Leiss 1990, 80-1). However, unlike European designers who addressed the social implications of technology and design, Leiss says their American counterparts were concerned with making products visually interesting and appealing to increase sales (Leiss 1990, 83).

While Leiss' observations are true to the time, they ignore the struggle for dominance among styles and designs
that had their origins outside of the advertising world. One place to start exploring this struggle is within the advertising world itself. The advertising trade publications of the time comprise a discourse that reveals attempts to control, resist and accommodate new art forms and practices within the advertising world. Within this discourse, one can begin to recover lost voices that played an active role in the process of incorporating works and practices of Modernism and the avant-garde.

The methods of inquiry for the analysis of the advertising discourse come largely from sociology, which focuses on aspects of production and the processes embodied therein. By focusing on the process instead of on the individual artists or art works, one can detect elements of control, resistance and accommodation in a field of shifting technologies, materials, forms and practices. As a result, one can see that the conventions that regulate these processes are not inherent, but are located within specific social conditions and are subject to historical inquiry. Indeed the purpose of some conventions is to ensure that persons involved in the production process can be interchangeable without effecting the final work—a condition demanded by the high turnover rate in the advertising world. Such as it is, this approach can reveal a multiplicity of social factors implicated at every stage of artistic
production, whether or not the content of the work is directly affected.

Moreover, the sociology of art and culture provides us with a framework for analyzing distinctions between fine art and commercial art, and between Modernism and other forms of art. It can also reveal the ideological nature of art, since as a process, the organization of art depends on the social perception of art itself. As such, perception depends on the development and maintenance of a system of social signals that identifies where, when, how and what is to be regarded as art. Like the art world, the advertising world actively maintains such as system, which is subject to a combination of aesthetic and extra-aesthetic constraints.

Using qualitative approaches, this study discusses and analyzes the discourse on art in advertising during the period and attempts to distinguish among emergent, residual and incorporated moments in the cultural struggle for dominance in the advertising tableaux. By analyzing the discourse on advertising art in the trade publications *Printers' Ink* and *Printers' Ink Monthly*, I intend to study the social and cultural processes within which the symbolic forms of art are employed and deployed in the advertising world. My ultimate goal is to determine to what extent and in what contexts the meanings mobilized by these symbolic
forms tend to establish and sustain dominant relations of an emerging consumer culture in the 1920s

Summary

Advertisements are imbedded in a historical context that can be described in social, political and cultural terms. Too often advertisements have been viewed on their own terms, as an end to themselves. This study explores and analyzes two trade journals of the 1920s, Printers' Ink and Printers' Ink Monthly, which serve as a means for producing and distributing a discourse (albeit culinary) about advertising and advertisements. Focusing on the mediation between the advertising institution and the social and cultural spheres, specific questions arise as to the social models used to guide and control the activities of graphic design and production. This study attempts to frame the analysis of the advertising discourse within the struggle and controversy of the period. Generalizability of the conclusions to other periods will not be immediate, although it is assumed that similar problems of representation and mediation are common to all advanced societies, although they may be expressed in different forms.

By in large, the literature under consideration has several sources, which have been shaped by divergent institutions--academic, industrial (trades) and popular. The academic discourse about advertising and culture stands apart
mainly due to its indifference to public expectations. The trade publications are shaped by certain institutional needs that are more narrow than the popular discourse, which is mainly shaped by the needs of the new mass media. Even though the industry discourse on advertising is producer-based, it nonetheless lacks an objective base from which to engage in criticism. Normative judgement about advertising practices or values are shaped by the institution itself to serve its own needs for legitimacy. The industry's view of itself takes on the form of critical appreciation—the subjective, yet authoritarian air of the staff writer-come industry expert. Criticism of specific advertisements or campaigns takes on the air of a self-policing action serving the institutional need to promote its own virtuosity.

The discussion and analysis of the discourse in the advertising trades is foregrounded by several other discussions about advertising, social conditions and culture. The first step toward analyzing the discourse on advertising art is to engage the literature on the social theories of advertising; to explore the nature of advertising as information, as ideology and as an economic and cultural institution.
CHAPTER II
ADVERTISING AND SOCIAL THEORY

The discussion and analysis of the discourse in the advertising trades in the 1920s is foregrounded by a discussion of the social theories of advertising. Specifically, I will historically locate specific debates about the purpose of advertising, the dominant contours of the debate, its assumptions, strategies and metaphors. To preview, I will discuss advertising as information, advertising as ideology, advertising as an institution and advertising as market control

Advertising's role as a contributor to the shape and transformation of material practices, social conditions and cultural values in contemporary culture can be described and analyzed under the rubric of social communication. As a metaphor, social communication accounts for advertising's influence as an institution, as a creator and distributor of social (albeit commercial) information and as a drama of culturally significant relations between people, products and everyday life.

The cultural history of an epoch is inconceivable without considering the centrality of social communication, its position in the process of culture, and its impact on the relationship between individuals and media institutions, whose form and
substance shape the cultural and political discourse of society (Hardt 1992, 7).

Advertising is the source of a powerful and privileged discourse in modern culture. It is often taken for granted, when instead it should be taken to pieces. Advertising histories are most often descriptive personal accounts and romantic ramblings of former advertising executives. These reminiscences generally characterize advertising as an end to itself—that is that advertising has brought us more and better advertising. To read these celebrations of the industry, one is asked to believe that it was advertising that made possible the swift, economical and prophetic growth of the automobile industry, rather than the converse. Other more serious studies look at the industry only in terms of sales associated with specific campaigns. But none of these approaches considers the wider influence of advertising as social communication. For not only is advertising the major source of revenue for the development and expansion of media institutions and technologies—the fundamental architecture that houses almost all our forms of popular cultural—it is a pervasive and persuasive form of communication that requires our attention to elements that are entirely unrelated to the immediate sales of specific products and services. Advertising is not only about commodities, it is also about the commodification of everyday life, public and private.
Advertising as Information

The dominant model of advertising, both in the industry and in American mass communication research is to view advertising as information. Advertising as information is primarily concerned with the accuracy of advertising messages. The information model is interested in the transmission of messages, rather than in the creation of meaning. The transmission view, as defined by James Carey (1989b), is based on a linear model of communication concerned particularly with the movement of messages across space. Carey contrasts this with a ritual view of communication, which is based on the creation and maintenance of meaning in time. The ritual view more appropriately accommodates other models that will be discussed later.

The information model is ahistorical and atheoretical, posing a rather unproblematic view of advertising and society. But that is not to say that the model itself is without a specific history. Under the information model, advertising messages are taken as a given, and evaluated in relation to their ability to transmit information clearly. That is to say, truth and accuracy are the criteria for the evaluation of advertising messages. Matters of representation tend to be perceived as either black or white. The truthfulness of advertising messages and images is
evaluated by how accurately the given advertisement represents the actual product or service being advertised.

Communication research that employs the information model can be fall into two main categories: comparative studies and impact studies. The first compares the differences and similarities between the actual product and its portrayal in advertisements. Representations of the product and product claims are scrutinized to determine if they accurately match up to "reality." Impact studies take an experimental approach to the influence of advertising on audiences. "What are the impacts of particular messages, under particular conditions, from particular senders, for particular receivers?" Impact studies aim to help predict target audience responses to various messages in particular media.

Because media institutions tend to fund this approach to research, little is made of the role of the institutions in the production of advertising messages. Technology also is viewed as neutral to the information process.

Advertising is not just a business expenditure undertaken in the hope of moving some merchandise off the store shelves, but is rather an integral part of modern culture. Its creations appropriate and transform a vast range of symbols and ideas; its unsurpassed communicative powers recycle cultural models and references back through the networks of social interactions. This venture is unified by the discourse through and about objects, which bonds together images of persons, products and well-being (Leiss 1986, 7).
Historically, the growth of advertising has been related to the growth in the industrial economy, but it has not been determined whether advertising was solely a cause or an effect of industrial growth. That is because it is difficult to distinguish the effects of advertising from other factors. There is no doubt that advertising is an added cost of doing business. It is claimed that advertising is capable of creating economies of scale that lead to lower per capita production costs. But it is doubtful that advertising actually decreases product costs to consumers. The purpose of most advertising is to attract consumers away from competitive brands of similar products. (This argument is put forth in Michael Schudson's discussion of tobacco, 1984, Chapter 6). In this sense, the expense of advertising offers little benefit to the consumer. Ultimately, the sale of any product or service is calculated to benefit the seller and producer more than the consumer, regardless of whether producers are viewed as pursuing profit by creating demand or by seeking to satisfy existing consumer needs. Indeed, advertising as information actually distorts any notions of democratic forms of information flow. Advertising's bias is always toward benefiting the producer. In this sense, advertising disrupts any possibility of a more uniform distribution of information to consumers.
Critics argue that advertising not only includes biased information, it is, also on the whole, insufficient information to be the basis of choice among products. This argument of course supposes that in a democratic society all ideas should be openly debated, taking into account all possible objective information as well as views and opinions. In a capitalist society, one has to wonder who would sponsor such a forum, and whether it could perform its function without distracting from other more important issues--indeed, whether it could address head on the crucial issues of who decides what is produced, how much is produced and where it is produced?

Proponents of the information model of advertising tend to characterize consumers and the marketplace itself as ultimately rational. According to liberal economic theory, advertising provides necessary information about the market, which operates by bringing together people's needs with suitable products. Marketing discovers consumer needs and designs products to meet them. Advertisements communicate the availability and desirability of those products. In this sense, advertising overcomes the disadvantages of the specialization of labor, through which workers become unfamiliar with the characteristics of mass-produced goods. (Leiss 1986, 31).
Advertising provides information that helps consumers participate effectively and efficiently in a marketplace that would otherwise be beyond an individual's comprehension. Therefore, the social benefit of advertising is that it offers a more organized flow of communication about goods and market conditions. This argument has its historical roots in the generalized conditions that accompany the growth of national markets. As the production of goods is centralized, local and regional economies are displaced, as are the traditional ways of knowing about products and how they are produced. Advertising steps in to provide the necessary information about unfamiliar mass-produced goods that come from afar. In this sense, advertising heralds news of new products and their uses, while addressing new distribution problems brought on by centralization. But for producers, it is also a central strategy for maintaining and increasing market control.

A more likely contributor to lower consumer costs is explained by Vince Norris (in Hovland and Wilcox 1989). In the late nineteenth century, wholesalers fulfilled the role of matching a limited number of manufacturers with a much larger number of retailers who sold their goods to consumers. This position also gave wholesalers a larger profit margin, because they could shop around for the lowest price for generic goods, thus driving down profits for manufacturers.
To better their position, manufacturers developed branded products to distinguish them from similar goods produced by other manufacturers, and used advertising to appeal directly to consumers. Demand for branded goods forced wholesalers to pay the manufacturer's set price in order to fill specific orders from retailers. This shifted more power to the producers while giving consumers a false sense of autonomy in choosing among various branded products. Uneeda Biscuit's campaign against the generic cracker barrel is well documented (Brewer 1922).

Michael Schudson (1984) disagrees that advertising serves to create new needs among consumers. Schudson argues that advertising can accelerate trends in consumption, but it does so mainly by providing new ways to satisfy old or existing needs. His study of tobacco consumption from 1918 to 1940 shows that the success of the cigarette industry had less to do with advertising than with the suitability of the cigarette to modern living conditions (Schudson 1984, Ch. 6). Schudson's study of the "dubious impact" of advertising, suggests that advertising is not capable of reliably steering consumers in one direction or another. He concludes by suggesting that advertising be viewed as an art form. Indeed, he proclaims advertising to be a form of "Capitalist Realism," the official art of capitalist society (Schudson 1984, Ch. 7).
Classical economic theorists believe that consumption is more directly tied to economic factors other than advertising. They argue that affluence is the main factor that influences how much a society consumes, and that trends in consumption mirror fluctuation in the per capita gross national product over time. None of this addresses what might be advertising's more powerful influence: the ability to appropriate and transform cultural forms and meanings.

Advertising as ideology assumes that advertising contributes to forms of social control that are both real and imagined. Although aspects of social control are more obvious in other views, advertising as information is also ideological in nature. By not addressing advertising as a social institution or symbolic aspects of advertising messages, advertising as information is itself ideological. The preferred reading of advertising is as consumer information. But advertising addresses both production and consumption. Advertising's purpose is to create consumer demand to solve the problem of overproduction. In this context, advertisements "simultaneously persuade workers that the satisfactions not available in the workplace were available in consumption; thought they could not control the conditions under which they labored, they could buy consumer goods and thus control in some measure their personal lives" (Leiss 1986, 28). According to Raymond Williams, the
fundamental choice in modern society is whether we see ourselves primarily as producers or as consumers, and that advertising's primary function is to obscure that choice. (Williams 1980, 186).

For David Potter (People of Plenty, 1954), advertising, like other social institutions, is a very powerful source of socialization in modern society. However unlike schools and churches, advertising has little social accountability for its actions.

Advertising as Ideology

The primary function of advertising is, we are told, to introduce a wide range of consumer goods to the public and thus to support the free market economy, but this is clearly not its only role; over the years it has become more and more involved in the manipulation of social values and attitudes, and less concerned with the communication of essential information about goods and services. In this respect it could be argued that advertising nowadays fulfills a function traditionally met by art or religion. . . . providing people with simple stories and explanations in which values and ideals are conveyed and through which people can organize their thoughts and experiences and come to make sense of the world they live in (Dyer 1982, 2).

The necessity of advertising is supported by arguments that advertisements supply information that helps consumers make wise and rational consumer choices. Indeed much local advertising does fulfill this function. Furthermore, it is argued that while advertising does spur desire, the outcome is unpredictable and far from exercising any aspects of social control. Many advertising campaigns fail to attract
customers, and those that do only benefit society as a whole by stimulating production, creating employment and prosperity.

But who really benefits from advertising? Criticisms of advertising go beyond truthfulness in advertising. More sophisticated criticisms generally focus on three points; false needs, social benefit and added costs. Most advertising is not necessary information about the availability of goods and services. Rather it is an irrational system that appeals to emotions and anti-social feelings. Secondly, it emphasizes private acquisition of material goods and diverts attention and funds from more socially useful programs. Finally, advertising expenses are added into overall product costs. Advertising's main purpose is to gain or maintain market control, which studies show generally leads to higher prices and profits.

Much of the analysis of the defenses and criticisms of advertising have to do with the view of the audience. Defenders of advertising prefer to view the audience as active users of goods and services, while critics tend to cast the audience as passive consumers of commodities. Of crucial importance to the discussion of the pros and cons of advertising is the relative distance between the public and the site of decisions regarding production.
If advertising begets prosperity, then it is clear that the flow of mass-produced goods and commodities requires an audience ready to consume. It is quite unproblematic to suggest that the material goods themselves are enough to assure their quick and complete consumption. Rather, it would seem that at the least, a general consumer ideology must exist that is in tune with (or at least presents little resistance to) acquisition of material goods as an appropriate if not privileged behavior. Also when the specific goods alone are not enough to assure their consumption, products are associated with other values and rewards. Alas, advertising must contain more than mere product information. It must contain elements of persuasion, recasting products in fictional surroundings and associating them with desirable attributes—creating desires that did not previously exist. But advertisements must also assume, if not actually portray, aspects that are not so directly connected to selling. They must also present a way of life grounded in consumption. As Gillian Dyer says in Advertising as Communication, "Our desires are aroused and shaped by the demands of the system of production, not by the needs of society or of the individual" (Dyer 1982, 6).

For Dyer, information about commodities is valuable, but advertisements are unreliable sources of information because they come from biased or interested quarters. Moreover, the
fact that most mass media are subsidized by advertisers has
the effect of "restraining proper professional commodity
'reviews.' . . . In fact, advertising not only provides
deficient and suspect information; in addition its
development in the media has indirectly led to the
suppression of other channels of information about
commodities" (Dyer 1982, 6). The industry's move from
product information to persuasion and finally to appeals to
emotional insecurity are evidence that advertisers cannot
rely on rational argument to sell their goods and services in
sufficient quantities.

In an economic context, advertising is not a by-product
of modern marketing and the growth of the mass media.
Rather, advertising renders the commercial media and its
audiences subservient to its needs.

The media convert audiences into markets, and
because they exist through 'selling' audiences to
advertisers, they generally preclude the services
that the media could perform such as providing
adequate consumer information to the public (Dyer
1982, 10).

Advertisements are the product of both deliberate and
unconscious aspects of the creative process. That is to say,
the production of advertisements is a strategic process that
produces meaning at several levels including, agencies,
clients and audiences. The elements of advertisements--
language, images, ideas and values--are all drawn from a
shared cultural frame of reference. Advertising draws on
shared meanings from culture and feeds back selected 'realities' into the culture.

There is no doubt that the selected realities portrayed in and by advertisements tend to be in service to the acquisition of capital. That is not to say that is their only role or purpose. But as ideology, advertising's purpose is to support the dominant power structure of capitalism and consumer society. The fact that the creators of advertisements tend to belong to a subculture that is largely urban, if not metropolitan, upper class is important but not definitive of the tendencies of advertising to be seen as "the arbiter and judge of taste and the messenger for the 'good life'" (Dyer 1982, 13).

However, according to Roland Marchand, most advertising men occupied a class position and displayed cultural tastes that distanced them from popular conditions and values.

Not only were they likely to portray the world they knew, rather than the world experienced by typical citizens, but also they sometimes allowed their cultural preferences to influence their depiction of society. Their "elite provincialism" and their tendency to create ads that satisfied their own tastes further distorted social reality (Marchand 1986, xvii).

Marchand claims that advertisers also communicated broader assumptions about social values. As such, these implicit value statements usually carried an ideological bias toward "system reinforcement." He continues, "Manufacturers and ad agency leaders recognized their stake in the
contemporary configuration of economic and social institutions, and thus found little reason to portray realities that might bring the system into question" (Marchand 1986, xviii).

Advertising's economic function is clear. What is also clear is that advertising as social communication has an ideological function in society. Advertisements advance and perpetuate the ideas and values that are indispensable to the economic system they support. Therefore, they have an ideological function as well as an economic function.

Advertising as Institution

In his article, "Advertising: An Institutional Approach" (1989), Carey discusses the relationship of advertising to the character of market structure. Carey approaches advertising as part and parcel of the Western industrial world, dependent on the growth and expansion of industry. "The last 200 years have seen the growth of ideas and institutions which favor the development of an economic system in which advertising becomes a part of the very logic by which commerce is carried on" (1989, 11). In this light, Carey casts advertising both as dependent on the practices of industrial economy and as contributing to the consciousness that furthers those practices. Understanding advertising as an institution requires that one be aware of the implicit assumptions about the nature of man, society and the economic
and political order--assumptions not discussed in most advertising histories or textbooks.

Carey's thesis is that advertising is an institution primarily designed to provide information on economic goods and services, but which, under the impact of modern conditions, finds broader, noneconomic applications. Carey writes,

And one of the powerful ways society reveals itself is through the institutions it creates for accomplishing tasks, for meeting problems, and through the values and beliefs it actualizes in those institutions (Carey 1989a, 12).

Carey's purpose is to show the nature, origin and dominant value-belief system of what might be called consumer culture, but which he describes as a society in which advertising has become a central part of the operation of the industrial order. Moreover, as advertising becomes more central to the operation of the economic order, it plays an ideological role in the growth and maintenance of the dominant value-belief system of a society (Carey 1989a, 13).

Advertising as Economic Order

Carey suggests two functions for advertising. First, advertising acts as an agency of social control providing norms of behavior appropriate to current economic conditions. Second, advertising still represents the expression of property rights held by firms in goods and services.
One can trace the development of modern advertising to the changing nature of markets brought on by increased mass production. In earlier markets--ones that were purely competitive--marketing activity was limited to the act of selling. In this case, advertising consisted of information that functioned to facilitate the exchange of property by bringing together buyer and seller. For Carey, mass production signals a critical change in the character of the market, and in the nature of advertising or market information. According to Carey, mass production generally means centralized production and decentralized distribution. As centralized production and the development of brand name products increased market control for certain producers, the interpersonal relationships of the marketplace were displaced by relationships that were mediated by mass communication facilities. He writes,

> It is here that we see advertising develop in its modern form because, as markets lost their formal organization, the function of supplying market information was placed more and more in the hands of fewer and fewer participants in the market. Markets still existed for the exercise of property rights except that advertising increasingly became the instrument by which property rights were expressed (Carey 1989a, 22).

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together buyer and seller. For Carey, mass production signals a critical change in the nature of the market, and in the character of advertising or market information.

The mass marketing of goods to unknown buyers also introduces overt use of persuasion--beyond the provision of information alone--with the intent to cause a shift in the attitudes or behavior in a specific direction. Use of persuasion not only signals the manipulation of market information with the intent of increasing market control, it also is evidence of the introduction of noneconomic information.

While advertising continues to serve its institutional function by making available information that facilitates the free choice of consumers, the source of that information is no longer the market itself, but special interests within the market. Theoretically, at this point advertising moves from representing not only an expression of property rights but begins to function also as an agency of social control, reflecting and projecting norms of behavior in the context of current social and economic conditions.

The changed nature of markets and the changing conception of the consumer has modified the behavior of business in relation to markets and consumers. Man is increasingly defined, using Ernst Cassirer's terminology, not as animal rationale, but as animal symbolicum. This is not to say man has been totally divested of reason, but instead, that he is seen to operate in a psychological field wherein he reacts to his entire
cultural environment rather than individual economic stimuli (Carey 1989a, 23-4).

What is clear from Carey's article is that in consumer culture, the task of marketing has gone from that of merely selling to that of creating markets and products and the mutual adaptation of the product for the customer and for the market. While advertising has gone from face-to-face exchange of information from the market itself, to mass mediated information supplied by special interests in the market. "The character of advertising is dependent upon the character of the market structure and the values and beliefs which support that structure" (Carey 1989a, 24).

Advertising as Ritual Order

Despite the dominance of economic themes in Carey's discussion of advertising, he suggests that there is an alternative to looking at society as an economic order.

When we think of society, we are almost always coerced by our traditions into seeing it as a network of power, administrative, decision, and control--as a political order. Alternatively, we have seen society essentially as relations of property, production and trade--an economic order. But social life is more than power and trade, it also includes the sharing of aesthetic experience, religious ideas, personal values and sentiments, and intellectual notions--a ritual order (Carey 1989b, 34).

From this it is fair to conclude that values and beliefs reflected and projected in advertisements are those of the market and to a large extent can be only those of the market. That is to say that the characteristics of the market, while
they do not entirely determine the characteristics of advertising, they do impose a limit in the range of beliefs and values that can be represented in advertisements. As suggested by a more dynamic base superstructure model, the values represented in advertisements do not only reflect the values of the market, but they also actively constitute and reshape those values.

The relationship of advertising and culture can be further unpacked by studying Carey's discussion of "A Cultural Approach to Communication" (1989), in which he compares and contrasts transmission and ritual views of communication.

The transmission view of communication is the most common in industrial cultures. A transmission view sees communication "as a process whereby messages are transmitted and distributed in space for the control of distance and people" (Carey 1989b, 15). This is the view of communication as a weapon for conquering the opposition and for converting the innocent. Privileging message over process, the transmission view sees communication technology as neutral; a tool of the marketplace and of modernization. Its goal is the efficient transmission of information accompanied by predictable attitude change. By contrast, a ritual view of communication "is directed not toward the extension of messages in space, but toward the maintenance of society in
time; not the act of imparting information but the representation of shared beliefs" (Carey 1989b, 18). He continues,

This projection of community ideals and their embodiment in material form--dance, plays, architecture, news stories, strings of speech--creates an artificial though nonetheless real symbolic order that operates to provide not information but confirmation, not to alter attitudes or change minds but to represent an underlying order of things, not to perform functions but to manifest an ongoing and fragile social process (Carey 1989b, 19).

The significance of the ritual view, and of a cultural approach to communication, is that it allows us to address advertising as an invented cultural form that expresses the nature of property in noneconomic terms. To paraphrase, under a ritual view, advertising is not information but drama. It does not describe the world but portrays an arena of dramatic forces and action; it exists solely in historical time; and it invites our participation on the basis of our assuming, often vicariously, social roles within it (Carey 1989b, 21).

What is usually misunderstood is that there are few communication messages or processes that are entirely of one but not of the other. Indeed the primary description of a given communication process can be either transmission or ritual, but it is rarely possible to completely exclude the contrasting view. As Carey notes, neither necessarily denies what the other affirms. As descriptive metaphors, each has
its own history of use in Western thought, and each can be applied to the same communication process. So when a student asks which form of communication is an advertisement, the answer is neither. Because these views do not change the form or content of a communication message or act, rather they allow us to address different aspects of the same phenomena, the aspects of time and space.

For Carey, these contrasting views of communication also link with the contrasting views of the nature of language, thought, and symbolism.

The transmission view of communication leads to an emphasis on language as an instrument of practical action and discursive reasoning, of thought as essentially conceptual and individual or reflective, and of symbolism as being preeminently analytic. A ritual view of communication, on the other hand, sees language as an instrument of dramatic action, of thought as essentially situational and social, and symbolism as fundamentally fiduciary (Carey 1989b, 35).

In this, Carey provides an insight in the connection between advertising, art and cultural practices. Advertising art, although symbolic, constitutes images of the world that influence our real expectations in everyday life. As Carey writes, "We first produce the world by symbolic work and then take up residence in the world we have produced" (Carey 1989b, 30). In this way, advertising attempts to construct, maintain, repair and transform reality.
Advertising as Market Control

Advertising as a process of giving notice is as old as human society. Recalling the apostle, the town crier, the patent medicine salesman or the hand-printed broadside as a means of spreading information is merely romanticizing the past. As Raymond Williams writes, the real business of the advertising historian is more difficult.

To trace the development from processes of specific attention and information to an institutionalized system of commercial information and persuasion; to relate this to changes in society and in the economy; and to trace changes in method in the context of changing organizations and intentions (Williams 1980, 170).

The growing importance of modern advertising in the past 200 years is much greater than the million-fold increase in circulation of specific notices. Since the Civil War, advertising has developed from the mere act of spreading the word via announcements from merchants and shopkeepers to the process of organizing information, audiences and attention, i.e. market control--a major part of capitalist business. Indeed, advertising revenues were, as they are today, a major source of financing for the development and expansion of the modern publishing industry and broadcasting systems.

But advertising is anything but a benign financier. As its role has evolved beyond that of seller of goods and services, advertising has become an edifier of personal and social values. Advertising messages speak of more than the
world of mass-produced goods. They forge new relationships and associations among goods, individuals, social values and political conditions--contributing largely to the transformation of culture. Presently, its images are pervasive, comprising more than half the content of most newspapers and magazines. And it employs one of the largest organized bodies of artists and writers (including their managers and advisers) in the whole society (Williams 1980).

Williams argues that the majority of goods produced during the early stages of the industrial revolution were sold without advertising. What advertising there was consisted mostly of local shopkeepers drawing attention to the quality and competitive pricing of items they stocked. He maintains that "large scale advertising and the brand-naming of goods were necessary only at the margin, or in genuinely new things" (Williams, 1980, 177). This comparatively simple phase of competition lasted until the 1880s and into the 1890s, when signs of the formation of modern advertising began to appear corresponding with evidence of certain characteristics of the new corporate (monopoly) capitalism.

The Great [International] Depression which in general dominated the period from 1875 to the middle of 1890s (though broken by occasional recoveries and local strengths) marked the turning point between two modes of industrial organization and two basically different approaches to distribution. After the Depression, and its big falls in prices, there was a more general and
growing fear of productive capacity, a marked
tendency to reorganize ownership into larger units
and combines, and a growing desire, by different
methods, to organize and where possible control the
market. Among the means of achieving the latter
purposes, advertising on a new scale, and applied
to an increasing range of products, took an
important place (Williams 1980, 177-8).

Modern advertising takes its origins from the late
nineteenth century when classical liberalism ceased to be
compatible with commercial ideals and the reorganization of
the market. Williams (1980) finds it ironic that the same
liberalism that had produced the idea of a free press and a
general social policy of public education and enlightenment
was eclipsed in practice by the shadow of the new economic
needs.

What was then called advertising was directly
comparable in method and scale. It was specific
and local, and though it was often absurd . . . it
remained a secondary and subordinate activity at
the critical point where commercial pressure
interacted with free public communication. . . .
From the 1890s advertising began to be a major
factor in newspaper publishing, and from the same
period control began to pass from families and
small firms to the new corporations. Ever since
that time, and with mounting pressure in each
decade, the old institutions of commercial
liberalism have been beaten back by the
corporations. These sought not so much to supply
the market as to organize it (Williams 1980, 191).

Modern advertising's antecedent forms and practices in
no way directly caused the reorganization of the market and
the diminishing of classical liberalism. Indeed, modern
advertising holds strongly to the ideals of liberalism, as is
evidenced by its portrayal in most advertising histories and
textbooks. Rather, modern advertising practices contributed to a generally rational and widespread reorganization of the market that over time allowed control of the means of production and distribution to remain in minority hands. In this it is not alone. One only need think of the newspaper industry since the turn of the century. Market reorganization contributed to—in both the short and long term—a shrinking number and variety of newspapers during a period of expanding readership and the increasing role and importance of public opinion (Williams 1980,191).

But despite these resulting contradictory market practices, liberalism as an idea has held strong in the minds of Americans. Liberal ideas and priorities such as local ownership and public service were assumed for the broadcast industries—so much so that they were protected by the state. But the conditions of the resulting crisis should be obvious. Liberal practices have been overshadowed as commercial priorities have expanded, yet, liberal ideas have maintained their firm position in our capitalist mindset—to the point where we have difficulty understanding or accepting the deep contradictions in ideology and practice. These contradictions lead Williams to this central criticism.

Advertising is the consequence of a social failure to find means of public information and decision over a wide range of everyday economic life. . . . It is the result of allowing the control of the means of production and distribution to remain in minority hands. . . . The most evident
contradiction of late capitalism is between the controlling minority and a widely expectant majority (Williams 1980, 193).

Classical liberalism was no longer able to address the problem of democratic decision making after the international depression and resulting reorganization of the market. The failure on the part of society to develop structures that would enable the public to know about and make decisions about political and economic life allowed control of the means of production and distribution to remain in minority hands. According to Williams, one of the consequences of this was the emergence and elaboration of a social and cultural form—advertising—which responded to the gap between expectations of the public for control and the actual control exercised by the captains of industry through a sort of organized fantasy.

In economic terms this fantasy operates to project the production decisions of the major corporations as 'your' choice, the 'consumer's' selection of priorities, methods and style. . . . What was once the local absurdity of puffing is now a system of mimed celebration of other people's decisions (Williams 1980, 193).

For Williams, modern advertising is a child of the system of market control and reorganization that came following the international depressions of the late 1800s. Modern advertising emerged during this time as the response to fundamental changes in the economy and as the result of radical changes in the organization of the advertising industry itself.
Summary

Modern advertising has little in common with previous forms of announcements. Rather, modern advertising developed to support and sustain bourgeois society. Like bourgeois society, which did not develop on the foundation of the feudal system, modern advertising is the starting point of a new movement. This is not to say that bourgeois society contains no vestiges of antecedent conditions. But as the productive forces of the old world were transformed under bourgeois society, alternatives appear only as vanishing moments. Therefore, the transformation of modern bourgeois society was not due to technology alone. Consumer culture requires more than changes in material conditions. Indeed, transformation is possible only in terms of the ways in which knowledge and culture were monopolized by certain groups (Carey 1989b, 152).

Advertising's economic function is clear. What is also clear is that advertising as social communication has an ideological function in society. Advertisements advance and perpetuate the ideas and values that are indispensable to the economic system they support. Advertising as ideology assumes that advertising contributes to forms of social control that are both real and imagined. The values represented in advertisements do not only reflect the values
of the market, but they also actively constitute and reshape those values.

The significance of a cultural approach to advertising is that it allows us to address advertising as an invented cultural form that expresses the nature of property in noneconomic terms. Advertising art, although symbolic, constitutes images of the world that influence our real expectations in everyday life. The next step is to explore the role that art played in the development of modern advertising and the reorganization of the market.
CHAPTER III
FRAMEWORK FOR THE STUDY OF ADVERTISING AS ART

The general discussion of advertising and social theory historically located the changing nature of advertising in relation to specific material conditions. The discussion of advertising as ideology revealed the relevance of symbolic information to the need for market control. But, what role did art play in the development of modern advertising and the reorganization of the market? This can be answered in part by exploring the conditions prior to the 1920s, where one finds conflicting approaches to advertising art, text and notions of human nature. In this chapter I will discuss the changing nature of market society and its relation to advertising strategies and advertising content. I will explore how symbolic associations and emotional appeals came to coexist with more literal and text oriented approaches to national advertising. The result is that advertising came to be seen as an "economy of symbolism."

Towards a Cultural History

It is clear that advertising is a privileged discourse, that it constitutes a pervasive world of products and images that feeds into our sense of culture. But what is the
relation between advertising and American culture? T.J. Jackson Lears (1984) writes that the relationship between the imaginary realm of advertisements and American culture is unclear because the sociology and historiography of advertising have remained underdeveloped. Advertising has been presented as either a democratic expression of abundance or as a corporate conspiracy to exploit consumers (Lears 1984, 350).

Lears also views advertising as a significant cultural force that reinforced the development of new media technologies and new ways of life. Lears writes that the development of what is called modern advertising took place during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. These in essence were its formative years. Advertising was a product of and a contributor to the concentration of economic power in a market-industrial society. Furthermore, advertising contributed to the legitimation of changes in social relationships that accompanied changes in the material conditions. Despite the broad spectrum of advertising images and settings for products, all advertisements have a common message. They are an expression of concentrated economic power.

Creative Confusion

Investigation into advertising history reveals that the purpose of advertising is not as clear cut as the assumption
that advertising created needs. Studies that look at advertising as the production of meaning have discovered that advertisements not only contradict one another over time, many are themselves constructed with internal contradictions. These studies conclude that advertising's real purpose is to muddle meanings, to blur distinctions between nature and culture, between the sacred and the profane. The problem with advertising, from this perspective Lears writes, is not that it 'created needs' but that it created confusion. And confusion only deepened as advertisers shuffle and reshuffled the clusters of attributes--economy, efficiency, liveliness, escape--they assigned to products, searching for the right combination that would increase market share and maximize profits. . . . The mass marketing of commodities served to create a world of meanings characterized by evanescence and arbitrariness (Lears 1984, 352).

Lears suggests that looking at advertising as art may be a fruitful way to characterize the epistemological status of such an ephemeral code of meanings. Indeed, others like Schudson (1984), have portrayed advertising as the official art of twentieth century capitalism. Coining the phrase "capitalist realism," Schudson claims that American advertising promotes an ideal vision of life. Unlike "social realism," however, American advertising has welcomed if not sought novel forms of expression. But this is not to say that unlike the art world, the advertising world does not actively monitor its own set of acceptable aesthetic conventions.
One does not need to embrace a mechanistic notion of manipulation to acknowledge that the vision promoted by advertising exerts subtle influences on everyday life. Through its omissions as well as its idealizations, the symbolic code of advertising helps to set the boundaries of social acceptability and to shape the character of permissible rebellion (Lears 1984, 353).

As bureaucratic aspects of institutions expand, work becomes more specialized, while at the same time more interdependent. In the context of cooperation, social relations become more significant and more subtle. Advertising agencies were no different. Their expanding services required both specialization and cooperation. As a modern patron of the commercial arts, advertising agencies demanded that creative efforts, though highly valued, were sublimated by institutional needs. In an industry that demanded personality and individuality, creative expression had to submit to the spirit of the organization. As Lears describes the situation, "creative fires were banked by bureaucratic demands." The tension of this necessary contradiction is witnessed by the nomadic tendencies of admen. By the 1920s the advertising world experienced an annual turnover of 37 percent (Lears 1984, 358-9).

Articles in the trade press argued in favor of more freedom for copywriters, but suggestions that writers should sign their copy did not prevail. The ego of writers could not be exercised at the expense of the image of the institution. Despite the collaborative effort required to
bring it into being, an advertisement had to speak with a single voice. Writers drawing attention to their own work tended toward a testimonial. Individual authorship of particular advertisements could undermine consumer confidence and severely limit the range of a copywriter's services to other clients and to the organization.

For Lears the emergence of a separate consumer oriented culture resulted in a loosening of the repressive aspects of a culture that was entirely producer-oriented. Consumer culture was more fluid and permissive, but these changes did not transpire without resistance. While the new bureaucratic rationality reigned in certain aspects of management as well as that of worker consciousness, the accompanying permissiveness of consumer culture allowed people to recover suppressed aspects of their spiritual side—-but more often than not in the form of secular diversion rather than in traditional forms of religious ritual.

Exploration of the irrational (dreams, magic and the unconscious) was a subject that fascinated both philosophers and the masses alike. This new openness to the nonrational and a growing concept of a malleable public encouraged both the production and reception of more fantastic imagery in advertisements. The use of symbolic content was less literal and therefore more easily manipulated to serve the
requirements of the market. But for Lears, this assemblage of fantastic images around products had no larger purpose.

Use of fantasy provided no coherent symbolic order, only shifting clusters of attributes attached to commodities. Devaluing the deepest uses of fantasy, advertisements impoverished the symbolic resources of the wider culture (Lears 1984, 389).

The increasing use of visual images, literal and otherwise, in advertisements was part of the growing spectrum of services offered by advertising agencies after the turn of the century. Other services included choosing appropriate media and providing marketing information to manufacturers. These were major undertakings for the developing agencies and there was much discussion about separate billings for these services. But competition and the practitioners' own confidence in a expanding demand for their services kept their revenues for the most part at the industry standard of 15 percent of the space purchased—a percentage established in earlier times when admen served only as space brokers.

Progressive Ideology

The advertising industry was organized to sell more than just products. Often criticized for manipulating appearances instead of making real things, advertising executives spent considerable time talking among themselves in the trade press about their own image and importance. The information model of advertising helped the profession address issues of truth and accuracy in their messages. But the legend of P.T.
Barnum cast a shadow on the industry long associated with hucksterism. Short of mounting the pulpit to convert the public to the benefits of advertising, executives often sought to portray themselves as educators. One of the most common arguments for the benefits of advertising was that it made the public want better products. If that wasn't enough, advertising also claimed to actually improve the quality and dependability of goods and services. That is to say that publication and circulation of the fantastic descriptions and often hyperbolic promises made in particular advertisements actually gave those advertisers a goal to live up to. Any exaggeration in the portrayal of goods and services on the part of the copywriter or illustrator was not a disservice to the public. Rather, it was a vision of what a particular business could be, even if the client himself didn't realize it yet.

This visionary insight into the future was central to what Lears calls the "deterministic framework of progressive ideology" of the advertising industry. "Advertising men were moved by generous impulses as well as hubris. They believed they were part of the modernizing vanguard, representing the best-educated and wealthiest sectors of the population, bringing cleanliness, health and prosperity to a grateful nation" (Lears 1984, 363). Their confidence in a progressive ideology readied them to point to the most obvious commercial
successes while their pragmatic blinders allowed them to dismiss the failure of other ventures as an inability to keep up with the times. Framing both growth and decline as inevitable, advertising could gaze upon all aspects of culture and declare it as progress.

For the adman, slumping sales had no larger economic determinate. Rather, it was a case where the public needed a lesson on how to consume. In the 1920s, sales on the installment plan went a long way to fuel growth in sales and productivity. High levels of consumption one year helped to establish a standard of living for the next.

The 1920 census confirmed that a majority of Americans now lived in non-rural areas. Most branded goods were touted for their predictable quality and purity at the expense of the rural tradition. Even farmers were sold the benefits of processed foods and manufactured clothing, which freed them to be more productive, but eroded more traditional cultural practices. Messages of health, uniformity and standardization in essence were the gospel of the dominant urban culture.

Lears sees the Truth-in-Advertising movement as part of a broader yet unorganized series of steps taken under the banner of Progressivism to address a perceived state of general moral decay in the early part of the century. But in
actuality, Lears claims, such movements only helped to streamline business values to meet a new corporate society.

In its WASP narrowness, its evangelical fervor, and its tendency to legitimize corporate power, the Truth-in-Advertising movement paralleled other items on the agenda of bourgeois self-renewal: the imperialist crusade; the establishment of federal regulatory agencies; the efforts to create a separate vocational track for working-class students in public schools. However various the motives behind them, these developments accommodate WASP elites toward a more managerial social outlook while they purged fears of moral decay (Lears 1984, 367).

In this, Lears shares some of the same suspicions that drive Ewen's (1976) main arguments.

The regulation (or in reality, the self-policing) of truth in advertising was narrowly limited to statements of fact. While this elevated the moral climate of acceptance of advertising as information, it also signaled the development of more sophisticated approaches to styles of illustration and persuasion. The result was that moral issues would not disappear from the advertising agenda but would instead become more complex. Along with technological developments in illustration, photography and color reproduction, and an impending economic explosion pent-up by World War I accumulated as the preconditions to radical changes in the appearance of advertising tableaux in the 1920s.

Symbolic associations and emotional appeals have always coexisted with more literal and text oriented approaches to national advertising. Manufacturer trademarks and brand-name
packaging have tended toward universally understood illustrations symbolizing health, strength, beauty and purity. That a majority of early nationally advertised products tended to be patent medicines of questionable quality troubled the advertising industry at the turn of the century.

American newspapers restricted large type and multi-column displays until 1895 when the ban on illustrations was finally lifted. Also, beginning in the 1880s advertising agencies transferred their loyalty from newspapers to the advertisers. Prior to this, in the early stages of the Industrial Revolution, advertisements were a relatively straightforward means of announcement of economic information aimed at bringing together buyer and seller.

The lifting of these restrictions in the American press coincided with an explosion in the mass production of new decorative display type faces. With so many new visual possibilities facing advertisers and printers alike, traditional rules of classical restraint were largely unheeded. The result was a spectacular celebration of the extreme ornamentation of Victorian culture and an attack on the vulgarity of the undisciplined display. By 1890, certain parts of the advertising industry sought to distance themselves from the sensational tactics. Shortly after the turn of the century, the new class of advertising
professionals seized upon a formula to help assert a no-frills approach—"salesmanship-in-print." The approach was coined in 1904 by copywriter John E. Kennedy, and popularized in the form of "reason-why" copy by Albert Lasker and Claude Thomas. This resurgence of a factual approach to advertising openly saw advertising as business rather than as literature. But their faith in the informative purpose of advertising was only one of several competing ideologies. The persuasive art of advertising, replete with slogans, jingles and ample illustrations held its own as an approach designed to catch the attention of a distracted public. As Lears writes, "The advertiser's task was not merely to construct product-oriented arguments but to 'unbutton conventionalities' and 'sway impulses': to turn emotion into money." In a period when economic growth was still fed by a proliferation of branded goods, product differentiation posed the biggest problem for advertisers and their clients. As product differentiation became more difficult, reason-why copy became less reasonable (Lears 1984, 369-70).

From Customers to Consumers

By the 1920s, once-conflicting strategies had merged, encompassing an array of eclectic approaches. The results were that one can find product-oriented advertisements that were not informational, and largely visual advertisements that were praised for their appeal to intelligence. What
accommodated this eclectic approach to advertising was not a changing field of goods, but a shift from focusing on the product to developing a sensitivity to the audience. This shift is marked by a change in the use of language in the advertising trade journals. By the early 1900s, audiences were referred to as consumers rather than as customers. Customers were individuals known to retailers and shop keepers who participated in a face-to-face exchange of goods, money and information. Whereas consumers were remote and impersonal; an unknown mass with whom national advertisers communicated indirectly using one message to reach hundreds of thousands. Perceptions of whether this unknown mass was rational or irrational varied according to the dominant views of society put forth at different moments. A rational public and an irrational mass made no difference to the adman. In the mediated marketplace of advertisements, modern consumers could engage in a pragmatic search for economical solutions to their needs or they could indulge their primal desires and attempt to recover their irrationality. The various and contrasting advertising strategies were unified by an industry that assimilated competing theories of human nature to serve the needs of corporate capitalism.

The change from customer to consumer required more than a shift in advertising's attention from products to audiences. Customers needed to be transformed as well, they
needed to be taught how to be consumers. The advertising-as-
education model on one hand was based on a rational
individual making knowledgeable choices. In this way it was
based on an advertising as information model, i.e. better
information for better choices. On the other hand, notions
of a consumer as an individual is in reality an emotional
appeal to the consumer's ability to express himself by making
choices in the marketplace. This personal appeal to the
consumer as a unique individual, in essence, masks the fact
that he is part of the mass. When the industry claims that
advertising "has educated the consumer into being a
connoisseur," adding, "When the consumer buys, he asserts his
individuality," it is with the awareness that advertisers
must educate the public to adapt to the role that it has
constructed for them. What advertising was really up to was
creating the illusion of rational choice. Unlike the notion
of "rational economic man," consumers expressed themselves
through consumer choices (Lears 1984, 378).

Most national advertising images represented people of
means and material conditions well beyond that of the average
family in the 1920s. The homogeneity of the images was in
sharp contrast to the economic realities, characterized by
the inequity of wealth. In the 1920s, the richest one
percent of Americans held more than 40 percent of the wealth,
a record in the entire history of the United States. To the
advertising industry, these fantastic scenes of American life were not misleading, they had simply been "touched by the wizardry of the clever artist" (Johnson 1930, 89).

Economy of Symbolism

The kind of idealism projected by the industry in these upscale visions was not to be taken too literally. The industry realized that it was no longer selling products, but whatever ethereal qualities they could associate with them. Already in 1901, Printers' Ink reported that advertising had created an "economy of symbolism" (Collins 1901, 3-4). The notion that a product could be subordinated to its symbolic attributes played upon theories of a malleable public. Design strategies followed the belief that settings could provide products with a symbolic context in which to resonate with meaning and significance. The drama unfolding within the advertisements invited consumers to take part. The experiences played out within the advertisements could be transformative or self affirming, depending on the disposition of the audience. In most cases the particular product or brand could be interchangeable.

Visual strategies that incorporated fantasy and surrealism developed alongside approaches that stressed realism. Techniques that lent contrast to design were the key, both in internal composition and in relation to other approaches. True to their origin, Modernistic influences,
including surreal images, distorted figures and nonrepresentational modes were first incorporated for upscale imported products. Soon, however, they were used to lend a touch of dynamism and a sense of the colossal to everyday objects, freeing them from their static existence. Photographic techniques were enlisted by both realism and Modernistic movements.

**Changing Relations in Industrial Society**

Pre-industrial society, with the exception of slavery, was never feudalistic in America. Common patterns of commerce were for the most part localized. Relations to products and the modes of production were such that people knew how most everything they consumed was produced and usually who produced it. The world of objects was familiar, and people had daily contact with the persons and practices that produced the goods necessary to fulfill their needs. This is not to say that goods prior to industrialization did not serve as markers of social status. What distinguishes pre-industrial times from later periods is that the social meaning of goods was the byproduct of direct knowledge of the sources of goods and raw materials used, and of the face-to-face interaction with the producers, skills and tools of the various trades.

Moreover, social relations in pre-industrial times were more direct. Contact with social authority occurred through
direct contact or through personal intermediaries. What
distinguishes pre-industrial times from modern times is that
personal contacts in many cases have come to be supplanted by
interactions mediated by technologies.

With the coming of a market-industrial society most
goods were made from familiar materials, but they were
produced in settings that were no longer familiar.
Transportation and distribution routes were regional, linking
larger towns and cities where the concentration of
populations formed to support the growing demands of
industries and commerce. Rural America was less effected by
these changes to the market-industrial society. Unlike the
cities where workplace, domicile and commerce were separated,
farmers tended to maintain pre-industrial practices and
relations. We can begin to see the origin of the producer-
consumer dialectic in this period as industrialization forced
specialization of tasks on workers. Though united in purpose
by industrial bureaucracies and regional economies, workers
were nonetheless distanced from the means of production.

Indeed, industrialism distorts the character of labor by
imposing material relations between people and social
relations between products. That is to say, as producers,
the worker's relations to their own labor is not presented as
a social relation existing between themselves, but as the
social relation between the various products of their labor in the marketplace.

This emphasis on the social relations of products is aided by the development of branded goods. Manufacturers require the use of advertising to distinguish the properties of their brand name goods from others. As noted elsewhere, branded goods were developed by manufacturers to rescue control of pricing and profits from wholesalers. At the furthest extension of its influence, the advertising and marketing of brand name goods is characterized by a marketplace flooded with items whose purpose and benefits could not be ascertained by the shopper's unaided senses and intellect alone. Thus the argument of advertising as necessary consumer information that legitimates its expense and proliferation.

This dramatic transformation and refiguring of social relations between workers and the products of their labor and the distancing of producer and consumer-related activities precedes the development of modern advertising by centuries. But in its later stages, the development of advertising as a tool of market control and as social communication trace parallel contours.

Daniel Pope (1983) characterizes the Gilded Age (1870-1890) as a period of regional production and distribution of products. Advertising agencies operated as as space brokers,
and growth in advertising was mainly due to new products--patent medicines, department stores and a few nationally branded goods.

By the late 1880s, technological advancements and institutional arrangements were in place that assured steady and stable industrial production at levels that exceeded demand. With this flexibility in production, the captains of industry shifted their focus to the problems presented by market conditions and distribution.

During the Progressive Era (1890-1920), the expansion of mass production contributed to the rise of national brands. The concept of mass audience was still undeveloped, with a view as only an undifferentiated group of mass consumers. This period also saw the establishment of the institutional structures of advertising, its relationship with manufacturers, marketers and commercial media. During this formative period, agencies establish communication as the unifying element in the services they offered. Advertising strategies consisted mostly of product-oriented approaches, e.g. name brand identification and product claims. Early formats served mostly as product announcements while later formats were characterized by "salesmanship in print," also known as "reason why" advertising.

To recap, the coming of consumer culture is signaled by 1) a shift from a purely competitive market to a market that
is typified by oligopolistic organizations; 2) growing mass production, centralized production and decentralized distribution; 3) displacement of personal experiences and the interpersonal relationships of the market by relationships that are mediated by mass communication; 4) information no longer supplied by the market itself, but by special interests in the market; and 5) the incorporation of persuasion and other noneconomic information into advertising.

By the 1920s, publishers began to regard their publications not so much as products to be sold to readers, but more as vehicles that organized audiences into clearly identifiable target groups that could be sold to advertisers; the audiences themselves became the products generated by the media industry. These and other changes signal what is considered to be the developed phase of the market (1920-present). This phase is characterized by a move from production for mass consumption to production for consumption in a stratified marketplace, increasingly defined by consumers organized into relatively well-defined subgroups. Changes in material conditions such as rise in real incomes, discretionary spending, and leisure time had resulted in work no longer the being the focus of everyday life. Indeed, life in the 1920s more easily accommodated distraction by material
goods and in leisure activities, i.e. consumable goods and services.

In the early stages of this era of market segmentation, the marketplace begins to address the consumer as individual. This is made possible by an economy that grew by leaps and bounds following World War I and the ushering in of consecutive Republican administrations. As a result, personal income became the most important status indicator. Therefore, the consumer, not the product was the key ingredient in the message. Through advertising, the marketplace itself began to assume the task of instructing individuals how to match their needs and wants with the available stock of goods and consumption styles. When traditional cultures have been weakened and the field of satisfaction filled with an ever-changing variety of unfamiliar mass produced goods, social cues or guidance must be furnished in other ways (Leiss 1986, 56).

For Pope, the institutional aspects of modern advertising came to maturity in the 1920s. That is to say, the function of advertising, the services that agencies offer and the institutional arrangements that maintain advertising's role as a mediator between manufacturers and the media and their publics were all in place.
Strategies of Advertising Content

Advertising is a powerful and privileged discourse, sponsoring the publication of thousands of periodicals distributed to millions of readers. As a primary source, the advertisements reflect symptoms and stages of consumer culture. The content of these advertisements form a discourse about the relations between people and products, each valorizing specific productive and cultural activities, while distancing others. They thrust new products and technologies into various scenes of everyday life. They offer glimpses of the private lives of the upper class. They legitimate new products by juxtaposing them with traditional cultural practices. And they legitimate new practices by placing them within familiar settings. They defamiliarize everyday products and activities to reveal previously unknown or unseen attributes and significance. They bring drama to everyday life and transport average people into extraordinary settings. Through all of this, advertising has a single promise—the promises of transformation. Individual advertisements promise the transformation of individuals and aspects of their lives, but what advertising in general practices is a transformation of meanings through a sleight-of-hand that makes contradictory practices and values appear to be compatible.
R.W. Pollay (1984), who conducted a longitudinal study of national advertising in magazines in this century, found a trend toward selling consumer benefits rather than product attributes. Pollay characterizes this shift from cognitive content to creating favorable attitudes as a shift in advertising from an informational function to a transformational function. The transformational function includes techniques for achieving personal success and social status. In this way, objects no longer serve a utilitarian purpose, they also serve as distinctive markers of prestige, power and social status.

Leiss (1986) describe several broad categories of advertisement strategies employed as codes for his longitudinal study of advertising content. These categories are constructed from insight into the historical evolution of various developments and strategies in advertising design. In all cases they are defined by observable characteristics in advertising content. However, it should be noted that these codes are grounded in broader conceptual strategies and appeals (Leiss 1986, 189-215).

Product information advertisements, like classifieds, can simply announce the availability of a product or service and its price. To go a step further, product information advertisements can also explain the product, its benefits, characteristics and performance. Visually, this category of
advertisements displays the product, the brand name and sometimes the packaging. A major concern of the industry into the early part of this century is making a link between national advertising and product availability in specific retail stores. National advertisements for mass produced goods rarely listed all the stores in which the products were available. Yet, the strategy behind branded goods and national advertising was to create demand for particular products at the retail level. Consumers and retailers alike need to be able to link the announcement of branded products with their availability in local stores. The communication link was achieved with poster-sized full color advertisements placed in store windows. In most cases these posters were reproduction of the national magazine advertisements in a larger format. The visual strategies that served both purposes well were large color illustrations of the product, the brand-name and manufacturer trademark. In any case, product information advertisements made little reference to the user. If were illustrated or mentioned, they were generally used in what might be called a demonstrator role. But that is not to say that these demonstrators had no reference to the real world. Overall, product information advertisements communicated to a largely pragmatic universe of denotative understanding.
In the product image format, the setting of the advertisement provides a symbolic context that imparts connotative meaning to the product beyond its utility. The desired "image" of a product is achieved by the forging of a symbolic relationship between the product and more abstract qualities. Visually these abstract qualities are portrayed by methods of association and juxtaposition. The setting serves as a reference to abstract qualities generally associated with either natural or social settings, e.g. outdoors, home, workplace or historical moment. The product is situated in an environment that is meaningful and significant for reasons other than as a locus of use or production. For example, a natural setting could imply an image of freshness or purity. A social setting could imply acceptability or sophistication. In either case, the setting transfers abstract symbolic qualities to products. In product image advertisements, people appear as part of the setting, sharing it, as it were, with the product. Meaning is generated by the world of people, in which the product is merely a visitor.

The opposite relationship characterizes the personalized format advertisement, in which persons visit the world of products to bask in their aura. That is to say, in a personalized format advertisement, people are explicitly and directly interpreted in their relationship to the world of
the product. In this case, the product does more than visit the world of human interaction, it actively participates as a member of the culture. The strategies involved in creating and understanding this format of advertisements clearly signals a late stage in the development of consumer culture—one in which people and products resonate with its qualities. Pictorially, the worlds of people and products have merged in a visual tableau that both reflects and constitutes aspects of material culture. Initially, consumer culture is presented as homogeneous. Later strategies of market segmentation distinguish among social groups and lifestyles, but products continue to participate with persons in the ritual dance of consumer culture where either partner can take the lead.

Shortly after the turn of the century, practitioners gradually came to believe that their audience's behavior was driven more by irrational rather than rational bases, that human nature was malleable rather than fixed. In later years, rational and irrational views of human nature were merged and modified.

Leiss characterizes the style of advertisements that emerged concomitant with this changing view of human nature as "product symbols." Product symbol advertising did not completely displace product image advertisements. Rather, use of product-oriented advertising was gradually confined to
particular media and types of goods (Leiss 1986, 124). As a result, products were presented less and less on the basis of their utility. Instead, by taking advantage of new technologies in printing photographs and color reproduction, products were placed in settings and environments that could make them resonate with qualities desired by consumers—status, glamor, happiness, health and prosperity. Both new and old products took on the aura of desirability by sharing space with known objects and attitudes associated with status.

A historical study of advertising content throughout this century (Leiss, Kline, and Jhally, 1990) shows profound changes in the use of total display area in advertisements. Measuring display area devoted to product, person, setting and text (Leymore 1975), Leiss et al. found that text has been declining in importance throughout the period. A word count illustrated more precisely (accounting for various type sizes, styles and spacing) a steady and overall decline in the amount of copy. While this marked decrease in text and a corresponding increase in images is not noted as occurring evenly in all advertisements, the increasing visualization of advertising messages cannot be overlooked for what it indicates about changes in industry practices and concepts of representation.
There is no questioning the fact that text was the dominant form of representation in printed media before the turn of the century. The increase in visual representation was most certainly accelerated by the advent of photography and advances in lithography printing. But increased use of images appears to come with the maturing of the commercial press and the ability of modern advertising to bear the cost of the creation and reproduction of more artwork. The earliest magazine advertisements relied heavily on text to inform readers primarily about the product. Indeed, early on, illustrations were rarely used, and as in the case of newspapers, were outlawed.

Advertising placed mostly by local merchants and shop owners may have used a generic symbol or specific trademark to attract attention and to identify the nature of their business or merchandise. Detailed illustrations of specific goods were rare except in the case of branded (national brand) products. In these cases, visual representations of the products helped not only to add credence to the mail order sales pitch, but also aided in product identification and recognition of product packaging in stores. Still, text was the dominant field of representation in advertisements until about 1910, when text comprised, on the average, less than 50 percent of total display area. Despite its dwindling prominence, text continues to be the dominant of the four
fields (product, person, setting and text) of the Leiss study through the 1950s when setting rises to the forefront. But from 1910 on, combined visual representations of product, person and setting comprise a majority of advertising display space. Leiss writes,

Through the 1920s and 1930s we find increasingly frequent examples of ads where the product is not the sole visual focus. In these ads the text often explains the meaning of the illustration. Its metaphoric content, the identity of the characters, and the kind of relationship between the product and the 'abstract' qualities represented in the visual, are stated as well as illustrated (Leiss 1990, 231-2).

The significance of this steady tendency toward the displacement of text in favor of visual images lies in the introduction of representations of persons and social settings, allowing advertisers to associate their products with more "abstract" qualities. And while Leiss explains that the rational tendencies of text "close off any ambiguity that might emerge form the new kinds and qualities of information provided in the illustration" (Leiss 1990, 232), it seems quite possible that text does not always function to narrate or interpret the illustration. Indeed, the juxtaposition of text and images often creates a much desired gap, which readers can fill with their own desires or experiences.

The roles that people play and the forms of their representation in advertisements in the 1920s is even more
curious. Person codes as indicated by the Leiss study include 1) person described as user in text, 2) person referred to in text but not explicitly as user and 3) person shown in visual (Leiss 1990, 233). The occurrence of persons described in the text of advertisements rises sharply from 1910, and peaks in 1920 for both categories (person described as user 58% to 86%, and person referred to but not explicitly described as user 48% to 64%), and then falls off almost as sharply. The rise and fall of persons shown in visuals mirrors that of the textual references, but with one exception. The occurrence of visual representations of people in advertisements doesn't peak until a decade later, in the early 1930s (rising from 58% in 1910, equal to the peak of persons referred to but not explicitly as user at 64% in 1920, and peaking at 80% in the 1930s). According to the Leiss study, the 1920s are clearly a period where visual representations other than products take on an expanding presence in advertisements. Furthermore, this is a period when textual information is being translated into visual messages. As visual representations of people appear in a greater percent of all advertisements, and constitute a larger percent of total display area on an average in individual advertisements, peoples' relations with products becomes an extremely significant indicator of the conditions
of consumer culture and of a major shift in advertising strategies.

**Psychology and Human Nature**

The shift from text to visual elements in national magazine advertising content exhibits a more consistent pattern than shifts from rational to nonrational appeals. In part, this is due to the method of observing and describing the various characteristics. The content of advertising (text versus visual) is measured in quantitatively large samples, which would have the tendency of leveling out what might be short term resurgences of text-oriented advertisements. While studies show that illustrations displaced text in national magazine advertisements, they do not account for the fact that text-oriented advertisements may have been used more effectively in other media forms. By contrast, discussion of the use of rational and nonrational appeals is more qualitative, focusing on the dominant discussion in the trade journals. As always, one has to ask whether the discussion reliably represents the true character of human nature, the state of mind of the industry or actual industry practices. Indeed, the tension between what might appear to be conflicting ideologies among advertising practitioners can also be read as helping to stir growth and competition in the field. Competing approaches could encourage clients of unsuccessful advertising campaigns to
switch agencies or to try another approach rather than drop out of the national advertising market.

This shifting emphasis on rational and irrational publics is the subject of Merle Curti's article, "The Changing Concept of 'Human Nature'" (1967). Using the content of Printer's Ink as a primary source, Curti traces the evolution of the concept of human nature through the published attitudes of advertising executives. He relates his findings historically to the broader changes in social and institutional conditions of the time in question. The rational view was practiced by advocates of "reason why" advertising around the turn of the century. This advertising-as-information model assumed that man's dominant sensibilities were rational and logical. This view, which was put forth by rationalistic psychologists of the time, is presented in Printer's Ink without qualification.

From 1910 to 1930, Curti contends, advertising practitioners came to believe that their audience's behavior was driven more by irrational rather than rational bases, that human nature was malleable rather than fixed. During this period, "Merchandising techniques, techniques to appeal to to various nonrational impulses, now received emphasis" (Curti 1967, 374). In later years Curti writes that the rational and irrational views of human nature were merged and modified.
Focusing mainly on articles in *Printers' Ink*, Curti explores the lively debate among advertising executives on the function of advertising. Curti finds that arguments over the role of advertising to "tell versus sell," that is to say to inform or to manipulate, reveals much about the notions of human nature in the twentieth century.

As Curti notes, there is no valid way to generalize how many advertising practitioners held the dominant views expressed in the trades at any time. Therefore, the comments about human nature are taken at face value.

Curti discerns three gradual shifts in the dominant mode of conceptualizing "human nature." Initially, around the turn of the century, the dominant notion of human nature held that man was a rational creature who was motivated by his own self interest and driven to maximize profits. Because of this, a majority of advertisers viewed the purpose of advertising as information. Furthermore, they held people were more likely to be convinced by dignity and logic than by flippant appeals. Advertisers did not involve themselves in the "nature versus nurture" debate concerning the basis of these rational tendencies. Instead, they used their rational argument to support their claims that dishonest or sensational advertising was resented by customers and served to discredit the emerging advertising profession. "Legitimate advertising," they maintained, "is simply calling
people's attention to a good thing, and describing it" (Curti 1967, 339).

Although those who professed salesmanship-in-print took the rational side in the debate, it is interesting to note that those who practiced salesmanship-in-print thought of advertising as an art, something more than mere presentation of facts.

It is important to note that the rational model was not universally followed. A minority held that advertising's purpose was not to inform, but to also persuade. The rational model was static, assuming that reason always took priority over feeling. As more dynamic models that stressed aspects of evolutionary development and functional adaptation of organisms to their environment came to their awareness, advertisers also shifted their view of human nature.

According to Curti, in 1903, Walter Dill Scott, a professor at Northwestern University, put forth a Jamesean view of psychology which maintained that the process of adaptation was profoundly influenced by a combination of inherited instincts, emotions and habit. Scott suggested that advertisers might apply these concepts to induce consumers to buy particular products. Although Printers' Ink was slow to pick up on the significance and ramifications of Scott's work, the industry as a whole was slowly moving to a dominant view of man as irrational.
Curti notes the beginnings of an upswing in the irrational conception of human nature around 1905-1910, and continuing through 1930. The reversal of what had been the majority and minority views of advertising was gradual, characterized by the notion that advertising was more than the mere presentation of facts. In 1910, J. Walter Thompson, head of one of the largest advertising agencies in America wrote, "General advertising introduces an article, familiarizes people with its qualities, explains its merits and gradually educates the consumer to a desire" (Thompson, 1910).

This shift in the dominant view of human nature took advantage of the notion of the human mind as malleable. Advertising's purpose now was to shape the thoughts of its audience. This represents a shift in the content of advertisements from competition of products to competition of desires. The beauty of particular products was now as important as their utility. The task of advertising, more now than before, was to educate the public to the nonutilitarian aspects of products. This could be achieved through symbolism and by associating products with people and settings that possessed desirable traits and qualities. In most cases, these new associations had to be learned. Advertisers may have claimed that products inherently possessed these ephemeral qualities, but in fact, their job
was to educate the public to appreciate the value of these additional features. Through these new approaches, products accumulated meaning by mingling in the social world.

Curti finds that the depression refocused much of the advertising world's efforts on the utility of products, downplaying aspects of personal comfort. But more importantly, advertising's purpose after 1920 shifted from creating desires to satisfying wants. In essence, the emergence of marketing research revealed that people's tastes change over time, so that marketing success would come from catering to the changes. Previously, advertisers had assumed that people's tastes were static, so market expansion had to come from manipulating people's tastes.

The shift from a rational to a malleable mind was tied to an economic belief that the masses were able to buy the output of an unlimited expansion of goods and services. The mass consumer, unknown but now perceived as manipulable, merely needed to be educated to the ephemeral qualities of products and to their new role in a mass consumer economy.

At the heart of the new approaches to advertising in the Progressive period was the idea that the desires of nonrational man could be manipulated with the benefit of a more stable economy. Fear of crowd mentality prompted calls for improved methods of social control. For the sake of a better society (often as a method for economic stability),
captains of industry imposed tighter controls over workers. Good citizenship became a new focus for educators. And business developed attitudes of social responsibility and self-regulation through clubs and professional organizations—mainly to head off political involvement in their operations. In advertising, practitioners sought appeals that would tie tangible products to intangible needs. The new consumer was taught that buying goods was essential to happiness and prosperity.

Not only did advertising national brands diminish the power of the wholesaler, it also reversed the relationship between the manufacturer and the retailer. Without advertising to promote their branded products, the demand for particular manufactured goods depended on the whim of individual retailers. National advertising created an allegiance between manufacturers and consumers, who could demand that retailers stock specific brands. In this way, the new consumer was enlisted through national advertising to work for the manufacturer. Annual advertising expenditures grew by 100 percent between 1910 and 1920, and increased by 50 percent in the next decade.

At the turn of the century, advertising executives were arguing for more commitment to salesmanship in print or reason-why copy, which stressed product quality and economy. This industry preference for long circuit appeals came just
as psychologists were beginning to unpack the theoretical basis for appeals to the nonrational consumer. Short circuit appeals used association and suggestion in place of protracted fact-based dissertations on product attributes. Long circuit appeals required consumers to weigh the merits of rival products. Reason, some psychologists argued, was an obstacle between desire and action and would actually inhibit purchases. Short-circuit approaches, so called because they bypassed reason faculties, produced quicker and more uniform responses.

The short circuit approaches encouraged association and methods that excited mental imagery. Proponents of association echoed the writings of William James; the mind did not create ideas spontaneously. Rather, as James argued, the process was one of association; the mind introduced ideas by connecting new experiences with previous thought. This insight provides a breakthrough in both understanding and applying symbolism in advertising. New products could be linked with known qualities or events to lend them legitimacy or allow them to resonate with meaning.

Reaching Maturity: Advertising in the 1920s

There is some agreement among sources that as an institution, advertising reached maturity by the 1920s, and that changes that have occurred since then can be attributed to new media technologies (television), a maturing of the
consumer society and a larger market (Lears 1984, Leiss 1986 and Pope 1983). Making too much of this observation could lead one to ignore much of what happened in the rest of the century; specifically, in the use of visual strategies and reproduction technologies. It also ignores the active role that advertising agencies have taken in developing new media and reconceptualizing older forms of mass communication.

Although advertising agencies in the 1920s are not involved in much actual audience research, most print media (newspapers and magazines) are well aware of their audience demographics. Advertising agencies offer services that reveal a more complex mix of marketing concepts, particularly a sensitivity to audience disposition. This results in the development of various appeals to consumer moods and desires based in nonrational motives, rather than on products and their uses.

New technologies allow for more vivid and varied visual presentations in advertisements. Advertisers also tap into social motivations for consumption. Print advertising features tie-ins between products and radio programs sponsored by manufacturers.

By the 1920s the new approaches in advertising, based on the influence of modern psychology and taking advantage of new image reproduction technologies, had achieved acceptance over earlier reportorial styles. Instead of using facts to
appeal to logic, the new advertising methods used symbols to excite impulses and emotions. Advertising was no longer only trying to sell products to customers. That was the job of the retailer. National advertising was, in fact, making over customers into consumers. Michal McMahon writes,

_already in 1920, however, advertising theorists had developed the basis of a science with the capacity to create consumer needs and associate existing needs with intangible desires. Americans could at last purchase cereal which filled young stomachs while making better mothers and mouthwashes which cured halitosis while making better lovers (McMahon 1972, 16-7)._ 

Gillian Dyer characterizes the 1920s as a period when the public learned that it could consume its way out of any trouble or misfortune, real or invented (Dyer 1982, 45-46). Following the war, factories resumed production of consumer goods. Consumer credit helped close the gap between growth in industrial production and individuals' purchasing power. Operating under the newfound assumption that satisfied customers are not as profitable as discontented ones, advertising took up the task of making their audiences more aware of elements of dissatisfaction and insecurity. To counter any criticism of this practice, the advertising industry launched campaigns aimed at advertising advertising. Examples included a young man who appeared in *Life* magazine:

"I begin to see that it's advertising that makes America hum. It gives ginks like me a goal. . . . I guess one reason there is so much success in America is because there is so
much advertising --for things to want--for things to work for" (in Dyer 1982, 46).

Problems and Purposes

This study does not look at advertising's most immediate goal--the effect it has on immediate sales and consumption of goods and services. Rather, it assumes that advertising's effects are more diffuse and long-term. It projects the goals and values that are consistent with and conductive to the consumer economy and socializes us into thinking that we can buy a way of life as well as goods and services (Dyer 1982, 77).

The 1920s are generally seen as a transformational period in modern advertising. During the 1920s (and no doubt before), a large portion of advertising messages shifted from focusing on products in relative isolation from social factors. Instead, advertisements increasingly came to include consumers as an integral part of the social meaning of goods. This move signals a shift away from the presentation of information toward persuasion. That is to say, the cultural function of advertising outwardly became equally important--if not more important--than economic information.

Sociologists have distinguished between forms of advertising that focus on the rational uses of goods based on their utility alone, or what they can do for consumers, and
an irrational use of goods based on what they symbolize, or what they mean to consumers. This is the basis for Raymond Williams' argument that modern consumer culture is not materialistic enough.

It is impossible to look at modern advertising without realizing that the material object being sold is never enough: this indeed is the crucial cultural quality of its modern forms. If we were sensibly materialist, in that part of our living in which we use things, we should find most advertising to be of an insane irrelevance. . . .

It is clear that we have a cultural pattern in which the objects are not enough and must be validated, if only in fantasy, by association with social and personal meanings which in a different cultural pattern might be more directly available (Williams 1980, 185).

The rational information model does little to address advertising's wider social significance, e.g. the importance of symbolism, while most criticism tends to pay little attention to the actual workings of advertising. A more appropriate approach may be to look at advertising as art.

However, as Williams writes, one should note that

The structural similarities between much advertising and much modern art is not simply copying by the advertisers. It is the result of comparable responses to the contemporary human condition, and the only distinction that matters is between the clarification achieved by some art and the displacement normal in bad art and most advertising (Williams 1980, 190).

While semiotic studies of advertisements are rigorous at detecting contradictions within advertisements--Judith Williamson (1985) is the standard-bearer in the field--they are usually ahistorical; locked in the ethnographic present
and unable to account for cultural change. As ephemeral as advertising images may be, they are situated historically, embedded in a web of economic, social and cultural change. They are the product of a collaborative institutional effort that is contradictory in its individual and institutional necessities.

"A main characteristic of our society," according to Raymond Williams, "is a willed coexistence of very new technology and very old social forms. Advertising is the most visible expression of just this combination" (Williams 1980, 191). What is it about our culture that allows these emergent and residual forms to coexist? It is perhaps too simplistic to assume that the dominant system merely coops emergent technologies and practices. What is more appropriate is to recognize that despite the general tendency of all practices to move toward maintaining the needs of the economic system, emergent and residual practices constantly reshape each other through an ongoing process of transformation.

**Looking at the Trades**

Lears describes the contradictory conditions of work in the advertising world as "the drive for personal creativity harnessed to an organizational ethos; the effort to capture reality by creating an ephemeral image-empire" (Lears 1984, 387). Taking this into account, this study considers
advertising as a contradictory and constantly changing domain in which cultural forms struggle for dominance. The use of Modern art in advertising in the 1920s was not without controversy. A systematic review of all editions (1919-1929) of Printers' Ink Monthly, an advertising trade journal, reveals a protracted discussion and debate over the uses of Modern art in advertisements. In the design of the publication itself, Printer's Ink Monthly greatly expands its own use of Modern art, photography and color through the 1920s as a proving ground for new ideas and technologies. It also cites the major influence of European design on American advertisements.

The primary source of this study is the discourse on advertising and art as revealed in the trade press of the 1920s. While this source of material may tend to exaggerate the power and prestige of the advertising profession—indeed, Ewen (1976) has been taken to task for treating the puffery of the industry insiders as proof of some more extreme notions of conspiracy (Schudson 1984, 175; Jensen 1990, 43)—it is a bonafide method for exploring the attitudes of the practitioners. Furthermore, the trades offer a discourse that can be situated historically. As Lears notes, "National advertising was not merely part of a diffuse popular culture; it was created by specific groups with needs and interests
shaped by particular historical circumstances" (Lears 1984, 350).

Lears observes that although there was much discussion of artistic strategies in the trade press, the dilemmas of the visual artist in advertising were virtually ignored. Much of the discourse on photographs and illustrations in advertisements focuses only on aspects of technical quality. Moreover, Lears questions whether strategies discussed in the trades reflect the industry's state of mind, or just represent another attempt to manipulate appearances.

The content of Printers' Ink and Printer's Ink Monthly constitutes a discourse in which advertising practitioners discussed strategies and the development of the field. But mostly the discourse reveals how they talked to each other and to clients. The pages of Printers' Ink and Printer's Ink Monthly are swollen with confidence about the progress and the future of the advertising practice and the profession. It is a confession of the industry's own struggle for legitimation and power in both economic and cultural spheres. For the most part, it is an attempt by the industry to convince readers of its own importance. By focusing on the discourse of the trades, I am clearly exploring the producer aspects of advertising's relationship to larger issues and features of American culture. Indeed, the discourse will reveal how the advertising world collaborated to produce
advertisements, as well as their hopes and expectations for advertising. In this sense it is a discourse on the dominant values of the industry and people in power. But it is only one of many institutional expressions of dominant values that ran concomitantly, e.g. religion, education, literature and the arts.

This study does not intend to pose consumers as innocent victims of advertising. For while advertising during the period in question does shift largely from information about product utility to the social characteristics of goods, it sees consumers as collaborators in this process. Joli Jensen's (1990) discussion of modernity is very insightful concerning matters of media criticism and the failure to conceptualize a public that shares the blame for the failures of modern society and culture.

The purpose of this study is to explore the contours of the advertising discourse on art as revealed in the advertising trade journals of the 1920s. Specifically I want to discuss and analyze the discourse in Printers' Ink and Printers' Ink Monthly. The content of the trades constitutes a social narrative of the advertising world. Like all social narratives, the advertising discourse mobilizes and reproduces assumptions about history, culture, society and technology. These assumptions play a large part in the constitution of real and imagined relations between people,
material conditions and cultural production. My goal is to identify the dominant contours in this discourse, to locate and clarify the fundamental assumptions that operate within the discourse and to reassess the role of advertising (as art) in the 1920s. I also want to explore the relation between the discourse on art within the advertising world and other spheres of cultural production. In doing so, I hope to link the discussion in the trades to a more general discussion of the assumptions about art in America in the 1920s. By exploring the dominant discourse on art in relation to what it implies and what it obscures, I hope to reassess the expectations of art's historical, social and cultural significance in the United States.

However, before moving on to the discussion of Printers' Ink and Printers' Ink Monthly, it is necessary to develop a framework for the analysis of the discourse on advertising art. The methods of inquiry discussed in the next chapter provide a context for looking at art as a social process that can be located within particular social moments and material conditions subject to historical inquiry.
CHAPTER IV
METHODS OF INQUIRY

The methods of inquiry for the analysis of the advertising discourse come largely from sociology, which focuses on aspects of production and the processes embodied therein. By focusing on the process instead of on the individual artists or art works, one can detect elements of control, resistance and accommodation in a field of shifting technologies, materials, forms and practices. As a result, one can see that the conventions that regulate these processes are not inherent, but are located within specific social conditions and are subject to historical inquiry. Indeed the purpose of some conventions is to ensure that persons involved in the production process can be interchangeable without effecting the final work—a condition demanded by the high turnover rate in the advertising world. Such as it is, this approach can reveal a multiplicity of social factors implicated at every stage of artistic production, whether or not the content of the work is directly affected. To develop these concepts and how they relate to the discourse on advertising art, I will discuss the works of three authors, Howard S. Becker (1982), Janet Wolff (1981) and Raymond Williams (1982).
Art Worlds

Howard S. Becker, in his book *Art Worlds* (1982), provides a framework for looking at the work of artists as a network of cooperation. Becker focuses on how work is done. He says he is "more concerned with patterns of cooperation among the people who make the works than with the works themselves or with those conventionally defined as their creators" (Becker 1982, ix). Becker's approach stands in opposition to the dominant tradition in the sociology of art, which takes the artist and the art work, rather than the network of cooperation, as central to the analysis of art as a social phenomenon. But Becker does not argue directly with the traditional approach, although he is critical of it. He recognizes that the two styles of analysis do not necessarily contradict one another, they just ask different questions of the same empirical materials. Becker writes, "It might be reasonable to say what I have done here is not the sociology of art at all, but rather the sociology of occupations applied to artistic work" (Becker 1982, xi).

Becker uses the term 'art world' to denote "the network of people whose cooperative activity, organized via their joint knowledge of conventional means of doing things, produces the kind of art works that art world is noted for" (Becker 1982, x). Becker says his tautological definition mirrors the analysis, which is not so much a sociological
theory as it is a framework to explore and understand how people produce and consume art works. Becker's focus on forms of social organization centers on the notion that networks of cooperation affect the form and content of art work. The art work, then, is reflective of the effort, or pattern of activity, that went into making it. Conventions, or standardized patterns of activity, Becker says, help assure that people can to some extent be interchangeable without affecting the resulting work. Thus, Becker argues, the focus of analysis no longer rests in the artist as "great man" or in the art work itself.

All artistic work, like all human activity, involves the joint activity of a number, often a large number, of people. Through their cooperation, the art work we eventually see or hear comes to be and continues to be. The work always shows signs of that cooperation. The forms of cooperation may be ephemeral, but often become more or less routine, producing patterns of collective activity we can call an art world (Becker 1982, l).

Becker's approach to art as collective activity can be applied to the activities of producing advertisements within the institution of advertising. His approach encompasses the process of producing art work from conceptualization, through execution and distribution. Conceptualization and execution requires training, skills, judgement and knowledge of materials, which are gained by doing, or by participating in an art world. Becker suggests that if distribution of art works is undertaken by someone other than the people who
produce the art, then more time can be given to the actual production of the works. Other similar support activities consist of manufacturing and distributing the materials and equipment that most artistic activities require. Another support activity is performed by the audience which responds to the work. Response may be in the form of appreciation that can help to maintain the art world. Becker also views the activity of creating and maintaining the rationale for continued art work as a support activity. Becker says the rationales typically take the form of a kind of aesthetic argument or philosophical justification. Artists frequently engage in a critical review of their works and their rationales and make revisions.

Most of these things cannot be done on the spur of the moment. They require some training. People must learn the techniques characteristic of the kind of work they are going to do, whether it be the creation of ideas, execution, some one of the many support activities, or appreciation, response, and criticism. Accordingly, someone must carry on the education and training through which such learning occurs (Becker 1982, 5).

Finally, Becker writes, "All of this supposes conditions of civic order such that people engaged in making art can count on a certain stability" (Becker 1982, 5). The interdependence of the art world and the state, Becker says, does not suggest that patterns of collective activity must occur in a prescribed way, lest the social system collapse.
He says social systems that produce art are adaptable, and can allow for change in the nature of their art worlds.

Within a given art world, an interdependence exists among the people who cooperate to produce art work. The artist works at the center of a network of cooperating people, all of whose work is essential to the final outcome. Within this network, Becker says, the artist is the one who is seen as performing the "core activities." Becker defines the core activities as those activities which require special artistic gifts. Furthermore, in discussing the activities of craftsmen (whom Becker says differ from artists in that craftsmen produce useful objects), Becker says these core activities require virtuoso skill. "The object of virtuosity varies from field to field, but always involves an extraordinary control of materials and techniques" (Becker 1982, 275). The distinction of the artist or craftsman possessing virtuoso skill has, no doubt, fed the bias of focusing on the great man approach to art. Becker's "sociology of occupations" approach to the collective network of activities of art worlds implies the need for a "division of labor" among its members. Becker frames the notion of the division of labor between the extremes of one person doing everything and every support activity being done by a separate person. Borrowing from Everett C. Hughes (1971), Becker analyzes the collective activity of art worlds by
looking at the "bundles of tasks" developed traditionally by workers. In Becker's framework, bundles of tasks arise over a period of time and are dependent on the nature of the medium. He says, "The people involved typically regard the division of tasks as quasi-sacred, as 'natural' and inherent in the equipment and the medium" (Becker 1982, 13).

In Becker's approach, bundles of tasks may overlap or be mutually exclusive depending on the conventions of the medium or of the art world. The nature of the collective activity of a given art world, then, depends on the range of activities of its members.

The people with whom he (the artist) cooperates may share in every particular his idea of how their work is to be done. This consensus is likely when everyone involved can perform any of the necessary activities so that, while a division of labor exists, no specialized functional groups develop (Becker 1982, 25).

This notion of shared ideas and abilities is important in the discussion of labor in the advertising world. In view of the high turnover in the advertising world, it is essential that workers are interchangeable. As Becker writes,

People who cooperate to produce a work of art usually do not decide things afresh. Instead, they rely on earlier agreements now become customary, agreements that have become part of the conventional way of doing things in that art. Artistic conventions cover all the decisions that must be made with respect to works produced, even though particular conventions may be revised for a given work (Becker 1982, 29).
According to Becker, conventions dictate the materials to be used. Conventions dictate the abstractions to be used to convey particular ideas or experiences. They dictate the form in which materials and abstractions are combined and suggest the appropriate dimensions of a work. Conventions also regulate the relations between artist and audience, specifying the rights and obligations of both. In essence, conventions make art possible. A body of shared understanding allows members of an art world to cooperate. Audiences can respond to work as art only if they have a shared understanding with the artist of the way materials and abstractions are combined. "The possibility of artistic experience arises from the existence of a body of conventions that artists and audiences can refer to in making sense of the work" (Becker 1982, 30). Conventions also allow for more efficient cooperation within art worlds. Decisions can be made more quickly by referring to a conventional approach, leaving more time to devote to the actual work.

But conventions also place strong constraints on the artist and on the activities of the art world, since they are an integrated part of art worlds. They do not exist in isolation, but in complexly interdependent systems which are embodied in equipment, materials and training. Changing a single component in the system can require changes at many levels, while using new materials which are not customary
might require new relations with support personnel, changes in equipment, or mastering a new technique. It might require a new rationale for work or reaching a consensus on a new approach. Finally, it might require more resources, while at the same time decreasing circulation and acceptability of the art work.

Conventions make collective activity simpler and less costly in time, energy, and other resources; but they do not make unconventional work impossible, only more costly and difficult. Change can and does occur whenever someone devises a way to gather the greater resources required or reconceptualizes the work so it does not require what is not available (Becker 1982, 35).

Though conventions are standardized and sometimes constraining, they are seldom rigid and unchanging. Even when approaches seem prescribed, much is still left to be resolved by negotiation in each case. Conventions dictate the general form and content of a work, allowing the artist to refine the more subtle details of the work.

Becker also sees aesthetics as an important part of the body of conventions by means of which members of art worlds act together (Becker 1982, 131); he sees aesthetics as activity rather than a body of doctrine. Art worlds produce art through collective activity and give them aesthetic value in the same way. In this sense, Becker does not himself make aesthetic judgements. Instead, he treats aesthetic judgements as characteristic phenomena of collective activity. "Sometimes artists themselves formulate the
aesthetic explicitly. More often they create an unformalized aesthetic through workaday choices of materials and forms" (Becker 1982, 132). In this sense, aesthetics are created by the interaction of all involved parties, producing a shared sense of worth for what they collectively produce. Aesthetic values may be formulated explicitly to set the boundaries of art worlds. Becker uses such an approach to distinguish between art and crafts.

Defining craft as the knowledge and skill which produces useful objects and activities implies an aesthetic, standards on which judgements of particular items of work can be based, and an organizational form in which the evaluative standards find their origin and logical justification (Becker 1982, 274).

Becker says the usefulness of craft objects implies the existence of someone, whose purposes define the ends for which the objects or activities will be useful (Becker 1982, 273). This supposes that craft is further defined as work that is done for a client as opposed to art whose end is less functional. Becker says clients or employers recognize that craftsmen have special skills and knowledge, but they recognize that employers have the final word of the work craftsmen produce. Ordinary craftsmen, Becker says, accept usefulness and virtuoso skill as aesthetic standards. A third aesthetic standard, beauty, is also accepted by ordinary craftsmen, but it is more sought out by the artist-
craftsmen, who have more ambitious goals and ideologies (Becker 1982, 276).

The emphasis on beauty is pursued by the artist-craftsman with relative freedom from outside interference with the work. The artist-craftsman accepts the convention of utility in his work, but not to the point of doing work to meet someone else's practical needs. For artist-craftsmen, the function of work is part of its intrinsic character and must be defined by the art world that produces it. Artist-craftsmen usually find new organizational settings which are partially free from the employer-employee relationship constraints characteristic of the ordinary craftsman. Becker suggests artist-craftsmen "feel some kind of kinship with the fine-arts institutions. They see a continuity between what they do and what fine artists do, even though they realize that they have chosen to pursue the ideal of beauty they share with the fine artists in a more limited arena" (Becker 1982, 277).

Artist-craftsmen may further the difference between themselves and ordinary craftsmen by pursuing what Becker calls "academic art." Becker says, "Academicism consists of an increasing concern with how things are done, with the skill the artist or performer exhibits, as opposed to what is done, the ideas and emotions the works embody and express." Furthermore, Becker describes academic art as art which is
"produced in a world in which artists and others shift their concern from expressiveness and creativity to virtuosity" (Becker 1982, 289).

To summarize, according to Becker, art worlds consist of all the people whose activities are necessary to the production and understanding of the characteristic works which that world, and perhaps others as well, define as art. According to Becker's definition, art worlds have no boundaries as there is no end to the interrelationships that can be found between the members of an art world and society. However, specific art worlds can be identified within society as they participate in producing a given piece of art. It is at this level that Becker's framework will be used in this study.

**The Social Production of Art**

In her book, *The Social Production of Art* (1981), Janet Wolff looks at art as a social product that she says has to be seen as historical, situated and produced; a complex construction of a number of real historical factors. Like Howard Becker (*Art Worlds*, 1982), Wolff argues that it is not useful to think of artistic work as essentially different from other kinds of work. Also like Becker, Wolff sees most artistic production as a collective effort involving multiple levels of social cooperation and mediation between conception and reception (Wolff 1981, 4). "Understanding art as
socially produced necessarily involves illuminating some of
the ways in which various forms, genres, styles, etc. come to
have value ascribed to them by certain groups in particular
contexts" (Wolff 1981, 7). The method of historical
materialism offers an approach that might begin to indicate
the ways that categories and divisions are historically
created and sustained.

Wolff challenges the popular notion of artist as
creative genius and/or social outcast. Rather, she says,
this ideology of artistic production is the product of a
particular period and set of social relations. The
nineteenth-century Romantic notion of the artist is grounded
in the rise of individualism and the separation of the artist
from a clearly identifiable social group or class.
Concomitant with this was the decline of the older patronage
systems which where displaced by the dealer-critic system.

Before this period, however, artists and writers
were well integrated into the social structures in
which they worked, painted and writing to
commission from aristocratic patrons, exhibiting in
Academies, and in no sense defining themselves as
outcasts or as opponents of the social order. . . .
Indeed, even as a contemporary type, this view of
the artist is misleading, since it refers only to
one particular type of artist--the struggling,
self-employed painter trying to sell his or her
work through the dealers and galleries. . . . This
is correct in noting the decline of the secure
commission and the reliable patron, but it ignores
new forms of patronage and employment for artists
many of whom are indeed integrated, as artists,
into various branches of capitalist production and
social organisation. In the plastic arts, this
would include graphic artists working in industry,
designers, artist in advertising, community artists, and so on (Wolff 1982, 11-12).

The mistaken notion of artistic activity as a uniquely different kind of work, with a unique transcendent product is based on certain historical developments, and is inappropriately generalized to be the essential nature of art (Wolff 1981, 17). The similarity of art and labor has been lost as labor has been reduced to its alienated form. In the long run, even artistic work comes under the general law of capitalist production, being regraded as merchandise, as many artists work as wage-laborers in media industries and in advertising.

This of course suggests that in earlier times artists were totally free to pursue their own directions without regard to audiences or buyers. Certainly, premarket social structures not only limited some activities, they also made certain activities possible. What is of upmost concern is as an organized market came to influence the dominant social structure under specific historical conditions, in what ways did capitalism come to distort relations of production and organization of work? (Wolff 1981, 25).

Social Institutions

As an overview, any study that looks at the role of social institutions on the production and reception of art needs to discuss the conditions that made the production
possible, and the conditions that determine its subsequent course.

The idea that an artist is the sole creator of a unique work obscures the fact that art continues to be collectively produced. Most of the literature or research shows a curious lack of interest in institutional factors involved in the production of art and the actual processes through which art and its ideology are constructed. Wolff says the works by Raymond Williams and Terry Eagleton reveal the extra-aesthetic demands placed by institutions on the production of art.

Now these developments are extremely important, because they begin to show the real nature of art, and to demystify the ideas of our age which maintain the autonomy and universal quality of works of art. They question what is meant by the 'Great Tradition,' and expose the social and historical processes involved in its construction, as well as the construction of the belief that it is somehow 'above history' and social divisions and prejudices. The hidden meanings of art are laid bare, and the particular interests of specific groups which are implicitly served by those meanings becomes clear. This is in no way to devalue the works as masterpieces of painting, sculpture or writing, but it is to point out what other, extra-aesthetic elements intrude into what purport to be purely aesthetic judgements. The origin and reception of works is thus made more comprehensible by the reference to social divisions and their economic bases (Wolff 1981, 28-9).

It is necessary to study the mediating influences and organizational constraints on cultural producers. Works of art are multiply determined by among other things ideological and institutional interests. However, ideological analysis
is not adequate. It must be supplemented by an understanding of the role of the institution among others that participate in the production of culture. Unlike a great deal of empirical research, I will attempt to locate the specific institutions involved in the production of art in advertising in the wider social context. This will no doubt result in the discussion of what might be called extra-aesthetic or extra-artistic constraints. That is to say, certain aspects of cultural production that do not appear to be related immediately to the making of specific works, but are nonetheless necessary conditions or preconditions. As Becker writes,

"Generally speaking, the necessary activities typically include conceiving the idea for the work, making the necessary physical artifacts, creating a conventional language of expression, training the artistic personnel and the audiences to use the conventional language to create and experience, and providing the necessary mixture of those ingredients for a particular work or performance (Becker 1974, 768)."

Such as it is, this approach can reveal a multiplicity of social factors implicated at every stage of artistic production, whether or not the content of the work is directly affected.

According to Wolff, social institutions affect "who becomes an artist, how they become an artist, how they are able to practise their art, and how they can ensure that their work is produced, performed and made available to a
public" (author's emphasis, Wolff 1981, 40). Moreover, evaluations of work are not purely aesthetic decisions, they are also socially enabled and socially constructed events. Institutions play an important part in creating and enabling artists. Wolff writes:

From about the mid-eighteenth century, however, both painters and writers faced a new situation, offering more freedom as a result of the decline of the system of direct patronage, but at the same time rendering the artist's life more precarious and subject to market relations and economic uncertainties. Increasingly, publishers and booksellers took over from literary patrons as facilitators of the writer; and the patrons of art, as well as the central rôle of the Academy, were displaced by the dealer-critic system in painting. In other words, people and institutions who were in effect mediators took on a more crucial place in the very immediate problem of economic survival for artists. Insofar as artists have become 'institutionally displaced,' working in isolation and depending on the vagaries of the market to make a living, then these mediators are vital agents for them (Wolff 1981, 44).

However, modern forms of patronage do still exist, offering artists an alternative to the more precarious existence of the marketplace. Commissions and salaried employment are offered by funding bodies and media corporations--newspapers, magazines, advertising agencies, and graphic design houses. It should be clear that these funding bodies and employers are no more neutral than any social organization. Indeed, the role of mediators--publishers, critics, gallery owners, museum curators and journal editors--should not be underestimated. The expanding
role of the various mediators coincides, no doubt, with the rise of the bourgeoisie. In Europe, the mediating agencies associated with the dealer-critic system in the arts served to bridge the gap between an expanding surplus of new painters (particularly those seen as marginal in the classical sense of the arts) and the growing new market of buyers (made up mostly of the new wealthy middle class who were eclipsing the aristocracy both in their buying power and in their enthusiasm). Dealers brought new artists and new buyers together, while critics served to legitimate the new works to the new public.

The changing social conditions that accompany this radical transformation are characterized by newly emerging social groups and an outmoded institution of artistic production. Lacking an aristocracy, America was born into these modern conditions of artistic production, although its preconditions are certainly those of Europe. And while America does attempt some indigenous ruptures in the general style and content of work produced in the American art world, the trajectory of most of its contours can be traced to European influences.

However economic aspects of the American art world can be said to function more independent of stylistic influences from Europe or elsewhere. That is to say that the nature and even the existence of the arts may fluctuate with general
economic cycles and political changes that are profoundly insulated from outside influence as a matter of government policy rather than that of fashion. Although the arts in the twentieth century are not as clearly institutionalized as they were in feudal and classical periods of Europe, the dependence of culture on economic conditions makes them vulnerable, to say the least. It should be noted in this case that economic conditions are not independent of social, institutional or technological conditions. It is reductionist to see culture as a mere reflection of economic factors. Culture and the art world have to be seen as both materially and socially situated. A cultural approach to understanding the role of economic determinants on the art world analyzes their influence by studying the control of social institutions.

Art as Ideology

The purpose of a critical sociology of art history is to reveal the ideological nature of art. While this study does explore art as ideology, it is more concerned with the ideological nature of the discourse on art in advertising. Despite the emphasis on the chronological cataloging of art works and their creators, traditional approaches tend to view art as independent of social or historical factors, focusing on the intrinsic development of styles or techniques. These approaches to art as a self-contained phenomena are
themselves ideological. Like art, they are the product of "specific historical practices on the part of identifiable social groups in given conditions, and therefore bear the imprint of the ideas, values and conditions of existence of those groups" (Wolff 1981, 49).

Theories of ideology state that ideas and beliefs are systematically related to actual material conditions. That is to say, ideas are not independent of material conditions, indeed, consciousness arises out of material activity and the relationship between the two is structured and systematic. While multiple and even contradictory ideologies can develop and coexist, this is not generally the case. Sociological inquiry tends to reveal a relatively uniform and homogeneous mode of ideology for a given society in a given historical period. This "dominant ideology" is evidence of a successful claim by the group in power of a partial perspective or world view as universal. In modern society, power is generally determined by economic position based on relationship to the means of production.

A contradiction arises over the relative proximity of different groups to the means of production. Because, while laborers are more directly involved in the material activity of production, it is the ideology of the owners (and others more distant from the material activity), that is dominant. Janet Wolff explains this turnabout of power by reasoning
that it is the owners as part of the ruling group who also control the means of mental production.

The relationship of dominant ideology to material factors has now shifted from the micro-level of producers engaged in practical activity to the macro-level of the actual material interests of a large, economically defined group. The ideology of a society in general is founded on that society's material and economic basis and promulgated (not necessarily consciously, and in no sense conspiratorially) by those groups in a privileged position of power in relation to that basis (Wolff 1981, 53).

Although Stuart Ewen (1976) tends toward conspiratorial implications, the dominant ideology is not monolithic nor totally pervasive. If such were the case, totalitarian and democratic societies alike would still represent the rigid social and economic conditions of the feudal state. Raymond Williams (1980, 1982) elaborates on the ways that alternative ideologies can co-exist with the dominant ideology, characterizing ideologies formed in the past but still active in contemporary cultural processes as residual. The expressions of new groups outside the dominant group are termed emergent. Ideologies that challenge the dominant group are oppositional. The rise and persistence of alternative ideologies is always socially and historically located and subject to inquiry.

Culture and Ideology

Working with very broad definitions of ideology and culture, it is possible to see that ideological forms not
only exist in ideas, values and beliefs, but also are embodied in cultural institutions and in cultural artifacts.

Inasmuch as culture is also produced by people, or groups of people, in specific social and historical situations, like all aspects of 'consciousness' it is affected by material conditions. . . . The cultural producer has his or her own location in the social structure, potentially generating its own ideological form; but at the same time, the forms arising out of the general economic conditions and the mode of production of that society. As always, it is an historical matter to discover the overlap, independence or opposition between these 'ideologies.' In both cases, art is clearly an ideological activity and an ideological product (Wolff 1981, 55).

The matter of art and culture as ideology is more problematic than tension between micro-level and macro-level distinctions in relationships of groups to the means of production. Ideologies cannot be assumed to be uniform, nor can they be related unproblematically to unified and identifiable social classes. While the ideology of the dominant classes permeates that of the dominated classes, conflicting visual ideologies are more usually between layers or sections of the ruling classes (Wolff 1981, 60).

Conditions of Artistic Production

The conditions of artistic production are always socially and historically situated. Indeed, artistic production situates itself between the various ideologies (co-existing and oppositional) and their expression in aesthetic form, which is subject to existing aesthetic
conventions. The conditions of artistic production and the existing aesthetic conventions mediate works of art insofar as they simultaneously make work possible and set limits to its possibilities. As such, the conditions of artistic production and the aesthetic conditions are both constituted and constitutive.

Technological and institutional conditions of the production of art are very important. The existing techniques of artistic production situate and confront the artist. Furthermore, the social relations of artistic production, based on these techniques and institutions, also form the conditions of artistic production.

The level of the aesthetic interposes its own mediations therefore between ideology and its cultural expression. This is not to deny what was argued earlier—that the artist is in some sense the agent of ideology, through whom the views and beliefs of a group find expression. It is to insist, however, that this does not take place in any simple fashion, whereby political, social and other ideas are simply transposed into an aesthetic medium. The actual material conditions of artistic production, technological and institutional, mediate this expression and determine its particular form in the cultural product (Wolff 1981, 63).

The point is that aesthetic codes operate as mediating influences between ideology and particular works of art by interposing themselves as sets of rules and conventions which shape cultural products and which must be used by artists and cultural producers. However, these codes are only material in the sense that they originate in material practices, and
in their concrete appearance in particular works (Wolf 1981, 64-5). Ideology is not expressed in its pure form in the work, the latter acting as a passive carrier. Rather, the work of art itself re-works that ideology in aesthetic form, according to the rules and conventions of contemporary artistic production (Wolff 1981, 65). It is mistaken practice to see aesthetic codes as 'transparent' and therefore assume the relationship of ideology and art as one of exact replication, expression or reflection. However, aesthetic codes and conventions do transform ideology in a certain direction.

The ideology of art is mediated by the aesthetic level in two ways: through the material and social conditions of production of works of art, and through existing aesthetic codes and conventions in which they are constructed. Ideology is not simply reflected in art, not only because it is mediated by the modes of representation in which it is produced. A work of art may have the ideas, images and values that are accepted as those of the dominant ideology as its material, but it actively transforms that material (Wolff 1981, 66).

To summarize, according to Wolff, the structural conditions of artistic practice themselves offer an argument against the traditional notions of authorship. Creativity is situated and is limited and mediated by the conditions of
artistic practice. The ideas, beliefs, attitudes and values expressed in cultural products are ideological in the sense that they are always related in a systematic way to the social and economic structures in which the artist is situated. Art is permeated with ideology, but not reducible to ideology. Ideology is never directly reflected in a painting, but is always mediated by the aesthetic code. Artists do not manufacture the materials with which they work. Therefore they are restrained by the existing rules of form and representation (Wolff 1981, 119-20).

**Sociology of Culture**

In *The Sociology of Culture* (1982), Raymond Williams characterizes the history of the concept of culture as the search for a concept capable of indicating all the relations of the social organization of culture in their complexity. The ways of thinking about culture range from "whole ways of life" to "states of mind" and "works of art." Each of these can be employed to illuminate the study of art in advertising in the 1920s.

As a cultural practice, advertising can be analyzed as an institution. The products of advertising, namely advertisements, and the discourse by advertisers, namely the articles in the trade publications, can be analyzed in terms of the development of arts and forms. Moreover, the relations of these two levels, that is the social
organization of culture, can be analyzed in terms of their relations to means of production and the process of reproduction. Williams' approach to the sociology of culture, then, is to bring together these various levels of analysis in a way that reflects the complexity of their relations without necessarily resolving the contradictions. He does this by enforcing the concept of culture as a realized signifying system. Furthermore, Williams insists that cultural products and practices are

not simply derived from an otherwise constituted social order but are themselves major elements in its constitution. . . It sees culture as a signifying system through which necessarily (though among other means) a social system is communicated, reproduced, experienced and explored (Williams 1982, 12-3).

Williams' broad view of the social organization of culture is characterized by an enlarging of the sphere of superstructure. In the crudest and most deterministic model, all social, cultural and political activities (superstructure) are dependent on the law of base (economic structure of society). In this rather static interpretation of the model, superstructure is a direct reflection of the base, and any change in the nature of the superstructure must be preceded and directly caused by a change in the economic structure of society. Not only are the corresponding changes in base and superstructure symmetrical, the trajectory of the resulting society is essentially uniform. This reductive
version of the 'play of events' leads to several extreme conclusions. It has the potential of radicalizing the disempowered to unite, out of desperation, in the complete overthrow of the capitalist system. Likewise, it can reinforce a fatalistic view that no change is possible without the complete overthrow of the economic system. It is, however, a boon to some extreme positivist versions of society as a generally predictable process.

Williams (1980, 1982) argues for a less deterministic model of base and superstructure, within which, or in relation to which, humans act to make their own history. Emphasizing the human aspects of the productive forces (normally associated with the base), Williams warns against diminishing all human actions to mere functions of signification. According to Williams' concept, signifying systems, "exist not only as institutions and works, and not only as systems, but necessarily as active practices and states of mind" (Williams 1982, 208). While Williams' sociology of culture places its emphasis on signifying systems, it is centrally concerned with manifest cultural practices and production. In essence, Williams calls for a convergence of the separate schools and practices found in general sociology and in cultural history and analysis. Williams' new sociology of culture makes a two-way street of
what were traditionally separate, yet related, modes of sociological inquiry.

For Williams, an alternative approach lies in bringing social theories to bear on the discussion of aesthetic questions. Traditional inquiry into the social conditions of art is divided between two approaches: introduction of social conditions as modifiers of an otherwise relatively constant human process, or construction of general periods of human culture within which certain types of art flourish (Williams 1982, 21). According to Williams, Marxist works have tended to proceed more from relatively a priori concepts than from steady analyses of evidence. The abstraction of contemporary concepts to explain art of other cultures has been applied with arbitrary results, while abstraction of aesthetic instinct isolated from its conditions and from other relationships has suppressed the whole problem of connected but variable practices (Williams 1982, 23).

The study of social material in art works has emphasized content. But, Williams says, much of it is more historical in nature, working from one major sociological formulation or assumption. "The basic facts or structure of a given society and/or period are received or are established by general analysis and their 'reflection' in actual works is more or less directly traced" (Williams 1982, 23-4). Reflection is not an entirely useless metaphor for analyzing social
relations if it can be applied in a less direct manner. Indeed, by situating certain cultural practices at greater relative distances from primary economic activities, one can introduce notions of autonomy into what is still a very operational definition of base and superstructure. Yet, this distancing of certain kinds of cultural activity, e.g. art, philosophy, science and religion, can go a long way in analyzing alternative and even oppositional practices that have the potential for rupturing the dominant system. In the same way, distancing can marginalize certain activities, rendering them benign of social benefit or influence. The notion of distance also accounts for gaps between traditional cultural practices and the demands of the economy and for lags between the introduction of new technologies and specific labor practices.

To extend the analysis of social material in art into the study of social relations requires one to modify the concept of reflection, in which art works directly embody pre-existing social material. Theories of base and superstructure are revealed to be more problematic by focusing on the indirectness of relations between experience and its composition, that is to say, mediation.

Williams says mediation accounts for the necessary process of composition, in a specific medium, like advertising. As a concept it can address the practical
relations between social and artistic forms, but in more common use mediation refers to an indirectness of the relation between experience and its composition. Williams discusses three different ways to interpret this indirect relationship: mediation by projection, mediation by the discovery of an "objective correlative," and mediation as a "function of the fundamental social process of consciousness" (Williams 1982, 24).

Williams discusses the variable relations in which cultural producers have been organized or have organized themselves under the heading, "Institutions and Formations." Specifically, he discusses the relations of artists and patrons. While the social relations affecting artists and their work as cultural producers has changed throughout modern history, it is interesting to note that the corporate professional retains many of the residual forms of social relations of ancient institutions, mainly that of a fully integrated exchange system. With the coming of the modern phase of advertising, which was firmly in place in the 1920s, some artists were effectively or wholly employed within the new corporate structures.

Indeed, Williams sees advertising as highly specific to the phase of the corporate market. In earlier phases of the market society some advertising existed at the margins of other cultural institutions. But, as Williams notes, "From
the period of corporate organization, beginning in the press in the late nineteenth century, it became, in specific ways, a form of cultural production in itself . . . wholly governed by the organized market" (Williams 1982, 53-4). As such, it has led to distinctions between "commercial" art and other "authentic" forms of manifest practice.

Furthermore, as they relate to the means of production, certain cultural practices within the production of advertising art are marked off as "material" or manual by contrast with those considered "cultural" or creative. Such is the case with those involved with writing or illustrating advertisements and those involved in the reproduction and printing or the advertisements. As Williams notes, the former process is seen as cultural production and the latter as merely instrumental (Williams 1982, 115). This is not a case of separate ideologies determining the nature of different tasks, but rather a common ideology distinguishing between the two. There is no doubt that activities in both categories depend on the use or transformation of material objects, and that both share some degree of specialized training.

Works of art themselves are valued by nomination to a generalized category governed by its presumed internal rules. According to Williams, this is the process of identification. Williams notes that sometimes useful objects can be referred
to as works of art, but usually in the sense of "art" as an additional quality. "Meanwhile," he writes, "the category of 'art' is normally and even insistently applied to works which have no other purpose but to be works of art" (Williams 1982, 122). This is hardly an obvious and neutral description. By definition, it implies an autonomous purpose and intention, and therefore is more problematic than is usually acknowledged. The process of categorizing work as "aesthetic" shares the same problematic. Terms like "beauty" and "harmony" do more to delimit dominant categories of art works than they do to aid the understanding or appreciation of specific works.

In response, Williams calls for recognition of the social process of art.

The attempt to distinguish 'art' from other, often closely related, practices is a quite extraordinarily important historical and social process. The attempt to distinguish 'aesthetic' from other kinds of attention and response is, as a historical and social process, perhaps even more important. The attempt to distinguish between good, bad and indifferent work in specific practices is, when made in full seriousness and without the presumption of privileged classes and habits, an indispensable element of the central social process of conscious human production. And when we see these attempts as themselves social processes, we can continue the inquiry, instead of cutting it short (Williams 1982, 126).

As a social process, the organization of art depends on the social perception of art itself. Williams says such perception is always practical and depends on the development
and maintenance of a system of social signals that identify where, when, how and what is to be regarded as art. Williams says there are many integrated signal systems that become fully institutional, e.g. art gallery, theater, concert hall. Moreover, art often includes internal signals that are developed or incorporated within art forms that serve to identify them as such.

According to Williams, a form is inherently reproducible. Culture, at its most general level, is a selection and organization of past and present. This is necessary to provide for a sense of continuity. He writes,

"Signals and conventions are inherently reproductive, or they lose their significance. Language as such, or any language or system of non-verbal communication, exists only to the degree that it is capable of reproduction. A tradition is the process of reproduction in action (Williams 1982, 184)."

In essence reproduction in the case of culture allows for a sense of uniformity and prolongation. The transmission of knowledge through education is a form of cultural reproduction, albeit linked with the reproduction of existing social relations. Moreover, tradition is a process of deliberate continuity, which Williams says "can be shown, by analysis, to be a selection and reselection of those significant received and recovered elements of the past which represent not a necessary but a desired continuity" (Williams 1982, 187). It is important to note that this desire is
defined by existing social relations, and that the reproduction of a cultural practice is in effect inseparable from the reproduction of its determining relations (Williams 1982, 189).

While the reproducible nature of forms (or conventions) and their determining relations may limit what forms are given, they also are the essential factor that makes art possible. This does not imply that change and innovation is not possible. The delineation of a social order requires stable social relations of domination and subordination as well as a system of formal elements which delimit the production and reproduction of cultural forms. But within this there are also significant internal contradictions that can allow for change. According to Williams, "[F]ormal innovation occurs unevenly and over a protracted period. Often there are transitional periods and works in which what may be primarily evident is that the older form is under strain: that there are incompatible or undigested new elements" (Williams 1982, 200).

Williams sees reproduction as an active process in which social orders and cultural orders are actively and continuously made and remade lest they break down. But, he adds, "[U]nless there is also production and innovation, most orders are at risk" (Williams 1982, 201). Such is the case in societies dependent on accumulation of capital for growth.
Thus, in cultural production, the conditions of dominance are usually seen as natural and necessary. In the case of advertising art, they exist in the autonomy of professional and aesthetic values. But this does not mean that the relations between social and cultural change are static. As a way of analyzing these relations in their dynamic forms, Williams distinguishes among residual, dominant and emergent forms.

Residual forms and practices are the residue of some previous social formation which cannot be expressed in terms of the dominant culture, yet they are available and significant. Emergent forms and practices have much in common with innovations, but they differ in that they exist entirely outside of dominant culture. They are new meanings, new values and new practices. According to Williams, residual forms and practices are kept available as an extension of or alternative to dominant contemporary cultural production, while emergent forms and practices are being created continually. The dominant can attempt to absorb both. Residual forms usually operate at some distance from dominant culture, as they have already been defined and discarded. However, dominant culture is very alert to emergent forms as they are not yet a defined part of contemporary culture. Because of this, dominant culture is quick to incorporate emergent forms.
To summarize, according to Williams, these levels of analysis inform not only the discussion of the content of advertisements in the 1920s, but also help to analyze the discourse on advertising in the trade publications. But most important is Williams' extension of the analysis of ideology beyond the level of formal and conscious beliefs to the area of cultural production. Equally important to the direct connection of the dominant ideology to manifest content are the relations and values that the dominant ideology legitimize or normalize, and the process of accommodating alternative or oppositional ideologies and "positioning" works within the possibilities and constraints of the dominant ideology. As Williams writes, "For dominant groups do not always (indeed historically do not often) command the whole signifying system of a people; typically they are dominant within rather than over and above it" (Williams 1982, 218).

The varying directness and distance of cultural practices to the dominant social system is in a state of constant tension and flux. Williams' metaphor of "relative degrees of solution" is helpful in examining the process of the transformation of ideas, practices and forms. As is the case in highly developed societies, Williams writes, "[T]here is a highly complex solution of socially developed primary needs, which are always at one level dominant, and a range of
signifying practices, some of them quite manifest" (211). In certain cultural beliefs, practices and forms the manifestations of political and economic order are quite direct, while in others, they are relatively indirect. In these cases there may still be some direct manifestations, but more commonly they are mediated, that is to say, they are effectively dissolved. Such is the case among various advertisements as cultural products and with advertising in general, relative to other forms of art and information.

The sociology of art and culture provides us with a framework for analyzing distinctions between fine art and commercial art, and between Modernism and other forms of art. It can also reveal the ideological nature of art, since as a process, the organization of art depends on the social perception of art itself. As such, perception depends on the development and maintenance of a system of social signals that identifies where, when, how and what is to be regarded as art. Like the art world, the advertising world actively maintains such a system, which is subject to a combination of aesthetic and extra-aesthetic constraints. The purpose of this study is to bring some of these notions of sociology of art and culture to bear on an analysis of the discourse on advertising art in the 1920s. The next step in this study is to explore the discourse on advertising art as comprised by articles in Printers' Ink and Printers' Ink Monthly.
In the 1920s, Printers' Ink was the recognized spokesman for advertising. Printers' Ink was founded in 1888 by George Presbury Rowell, an advertising agent, and was edited in the 1920s by John Irving Romer. With its slogan, "The Little Schoolmaster of Advertising," Printers' Ink was the leading periodical devoted to the multiple phases of advertising during its first fifty years (Mott 1957). During its early years, Printers' Ink came under attack from Postmaster General Wanamaker for its practice of furnishing copies to all newspapers that did business with Rowell's agency. In return, Rowell received payment in newspaper space, which he sold to his clients. The newspapers also supplied Rowell with the names of its chief advertising patrons, whom Rowell would add to the circulation of Printers' Ink in the form of "block subscriptions." The Postmaster claimed these block subscriptions were not part of the magazine's legitimate circulation, and temporarily suspended its second-class mailing privileges. Printers' Ink overcame the charges and grew to a position of major influence, spawning the development of hundreds of other imitators. The weekly magazine was small in format, measuring only four-and-one-
half by eight inches, but was comprised of nearly 200 pages per number.

A larger format (eight-and-a-half by eleven inches) publication, *Printers' Ink Monthly* premiered in December 1919. Unlike *Printers' Ink*, *Printers' Ink Monthly* was printed on coated stock (also known as glossy paper) to better reproduce illustrations with accuracy and detail. It averaged between 150 to 200 pages monthly. In its design, *Printers' Ink Monthly* greatly expands its own use of photography and color throughout the 1920s as a proving ground for new techniques and new technologies.

It is important to note that the technologies, e.g. halftone processes and color separation, developed independently of the influence of Modern art on graphic design. Technological developments, along with economic prosperity, of the 1920s in America contributed to advertising's increased use of illustration; only a portion of which was influenced by Modern art. It wasn't until August of 1927 that *Printers' Ink Monthly* used a color illustration on its cover. *Printer's Ink Monthly* features articles on how to use the new technologies; discussion of specific advertising campaigns; advertisements for platemakers, lithographers, design studios, etc. In this way, *Printers' Ink Monthly* reflects the use of art in advertising of popular magazines of the time, as well as the
cutting edge of new developments. *Printers' Ink Monthly* reveals both candid and contrived views on experiments with art and advertising in the 1920s.

Like *Printers' Ink*, it also reveals how the advertising industry was talking to and about itself. The two publications shared many of the same writers, however, they appear not to publish any duplicate articles. A systematic review of selected editions of *Printers' Ink Monthly* (December 1919-December 1929), reveals a protracted discussion and debate over the uses of Modern art in advertisements. The discourse on Modernism in *Printers' Ink Monthly* picks up momentum after 1926, and is by far the most prominent topic of *Printers' Ink Monthly* in 1929.

In this chapter, I will trace the discourse on Modernism as it appeared in *Printers' Ink Monthly* during the 1920s. The discourse is based in a nearly-exhaustive collection of all articles related to art, graphic design and Modernism in *Printers' Ink Monthly* during the period. In addition, the discourse is supplemented by a similar search of almost all numbers of *Printers' Ink* from October 1926-December 1929. More than 500 articles from the two publications were collected as primary sources for this dissertation.

One cannot read *Printers' Ink* or *Printers' Ink Monthly* without noticing the work of one of its most prolific writers, W. Livingston Larned. This study alone considers
more than 100 articles with Larned's byline. It is assumed that he also wrote numerous other articles under another byline, "A Commercial Art Manager," for the common writing style and "pet" phrases are unmistakably his. Larned was an advertising man, a writer and an illustrator who broke in with the George Ethridge Company in New York where he rose to the title of Vice President and Art Director in Chief. He later headed his own advertising agency. At one time, he wrote a daily column for the White Plains Daily Reporter. His books include Freedom of the Press, Letters of an Advertising Man to His Son, Magazine Illustration and Illustration in Advertising (1925). His is a very large voice in the discourse on art in advertising which follows.

Overview of the Discourse

In "The Decorative Inspiration in Modern Illustrations," Larned provides an overview of shifting practices in advertising art.

The artist of the olden days was firmly convinced that decoration must, of necessity, be formal and of a definite pattern. Balance was always a prime essential. By repeating a certain motif, over and over again, in the one design, he summed up his achievement. The more modern idea is to abandon his formality and to build decorative themes haphazardly, depending upon eccentricity of layout. They are neither stiff nor arbitrary as to decoration, and there is a touch of the Modernistic in the abandonment of form (Larned 1928a, 133).

Sometimes the artist achieves effects that startle the eye because they are so outlandish. According to Larned,
decorative layouts depend upon novelty of form. "There is no more conflict, no battle with type, with the artist always losing because of pet prejudices and traditions" (Larned 1928a, 134). Each individual part, from type to border, headlines and all the rest, enters into the spirit of a preconceived motif. "Where once advertisers were content to put a picture and some type into the prescribed space, now the artist starts with a grim determination to 'pattern' his space and to give it that initial flash of grace and beauty and balance" (Larned 1928a, 134).

According to Larned, the modern idea is one of complete freedom. The pattern is his first, vital objective. The rest is easy. "The ugliest subject matter can be woven into pleasing illustrations, along with their typography, when both are shrewdly and professionally plotted out" (Larned 1928a, 141). The designer weaves a tapestry of visual interest. He asks only that no hard and fast rules be put down as regards how he shall 'play' with typography and the rendering of the product.

Modernism

The discourse on Modernism is evenly split between articles that appear in *Printers' Ink* and in *Printers' Ink Monthly*. As a topic, Modernism begins to appear with regularity in late 1926. Most of the articles that appear in
Printers' Ink Monthly constitute a debate on Modernism, which I will discuss later in this section.

The general discussion of Modernism notes that Modernistic art is better suited to articles of luxury. What is questionable is whether advertising is leading or following public acceptance of Modernism. An answer in part falls along lines of class and age. As one author writes, it is essential to talk to the new generation in their own terms. Counter to the story-telling school of realism in advertising, Modernism lends atmosphere to advertisements during a time when product illustration and product claims are not enough. Rational-based advertising may be on the wain, but within Printers' Ink and Printers' Ink Monthly, Modernism is employed for and by rational means—it is done for a definite reason. As another author notes, basic human instincts are not changing, but the methods of expressing them are.

General Discourse on Modernism

Hiram Blauvelt says there are two functions of art in advertising.

Either it may actually sell by picture through the faithful portrayal of the product at rest or in use, or through its striking unusualness it may be used to attract the weary eye of the blasé prospect, vaguely suggesting the product and creating enough curiosity and interest in it to lead the reader on, so that he will read the copy (Blauvelt 1925, 65).
Modernistic art is better suited to articles of luxury and products of a more unusual mature. "After all, luxury is for the most part, a bizarre taste, and must be catered to in startling new ways" (Blauvelt 1925, 65). New art forms are being put to work in trade-marks, where their simple and severe technique has startling attention value and can be easily reproduced regardless of printing technique or paper quality. "The modernistic style is particularly effective for small-space use, for it makes up in greater attention value what the advertisement loses through lack of space and expresses its message more tersely and with deadly surety" (Blauvelt 1925, 66). Blauvelt notes that some French advertising gains a great deal of attention from using the Modernistic style, even if at times it is irrelevant to the accompanying text.

Commercial art has let pure art lead the way, for the latter has noting to lose, save perhaps an individual artist's reputation which was never made. Pure art can afford to be daring, but commercial art must tread more carefully until it sees where it can profit from the lessons of pure art without too much risk of loss, and a very probable chance of gain (Blauvelt 1925, 66).

Blauvelt says the trend today is for advertising to use Modernistic forms developed by "pure art" even before they have been accepted by the public.

In America, advertising has been one of the most refreshing stimulants to good taste and artistic appreciation among our peoples within the last ten years, and with the increasing competition of advertisements for attention it seems but a short
time when advertising in its turn will be
developing new modernistic forms which will do
their business of successful selling (Blauvelt
1925, 66).

According to a commercial art manager, strange, weird,
fantastic illustration is now the popular thing with
advertisers (Slide 1). "Atmosphere" never accounted for
more. Advertising is so largely atmospheric, it is natural
for it to seek new forms of self expression. "The time has
passed, apparently, when mere excellence and quality of
drawing is sufficient for the purpose of progressive
advertising" (1926. "Futurism Breaks into Newspaper
Advertising Art." 145). The artist whose style is new,
original, unconventional, can command his own price.
Futurism is no more than a new viewpoint.

Why question the technique, the mental viewpoint,
when we know that America is eager for innovation
in art? The solution is reasonably simple: the
artist distorts everything. The unreal is
substituted for the real. Do the unexpected, if
you would win the American public today (1926.
"Futurism Breaks into Newspaper Advertising Art." 146).

According to the author, Americans are a nation of
faddists, and that this is emphatically true of advertising
art. He says much is to be said in favor of our liberality
in respect to the openness of American advertising art to
foreign styles. In Europe no such liberality of spirit
exists. They retain home ideas. It should be looked upon as
radical and unpatriotic to encourage the stranger with new
ideas and techniques and approaches.
C.B. Larrabee says the first great popular interest in Modern art began with the Paris Industrial Art Exhibit in 1925. While in advertising art, Modernism had been a developing trend for the last ten years, "until comparatively recently it burst out like a contagious rash." He adds, "It played its own part in an educational process, but was not in itself really important until the whole modern movement began to pick up momentum" (Larrabee 1929, 33). Larrabee says Modernism will require more of American designers than past movements. Modernism should be constructive, not decorative, founded on true, logical and organic principles. "Especially, there must be acknowledgment of the fact that the machine, as a tool of the designer, has replaced the craftsman in contemporary production, and has, therefore, tremendously influenced modern design" (Larrabee 1929, 138). One overriding demand of Modern American design will be that of utility. The office may not be so beautiful, but it will be more convenient, more comfortable and better suited to its purpose. Materials will be chosen because of their fitness for the work they are to do, with regard for economical upkeep and sanitation. "Its decorative treatment, then has been dictated by the capabilities of the machine or process by which it is made" (Larrabee 1929, 138).
While advertising has gone over to Futurism, at least temporarily, Larned says there remain some cautions in its use.

Those who seek this type of art have found out one thing quite definitely: it requires a certain technique which is not easily imitated, and there is nothing quite so disappointing as near-futurism; a diluted attempt by an artist who does not think in the right terms (Larned 1927c, 43).

One of the first demands is to startle the eye. Futurism breaks all composition rules. But even those who do not care for Futurism admit that they never overlook such campaigns. Each season the advertiser must look for fresh ways of injecting new atmosphere into campaigns. "It's survival of the fittest and the--oddest." Larned adds, "They are an echo of the hour, of now. Advertising which is most remunerative keys in with this modernism" (Larned 1927c, 44).

Larned notices a growing tendency to create bizarre and European-flavored effects as a protest against the old school.

An advertiser must be liberal to agree to such embellishments, even in an ultra-pronounced age of futurism. Some of the borders mean nothing to the casual eye; they are decoration gone utterly mad. The futurist will reprimand you for this viewpoint and readily prove that they are heavily charged with meaning (Larned 1927d, 186).

Toiletries in this age can be associated with the improbable, the eccentric, the totally different in conception. Packages of all kinds appealing to women are equally in the futuristic spirit (Slide 2). "Whether the
According to Larned, freakish illustrations and unconventional typography are a modern means to an end. "The advertiser is not to be taken to task by conservatives because his displays may appear to overstep the bounds of artistic propriety. It is done with a definite reason" (Larned 1927b, 162). A new atmosphere throughout may be demanded each year. To be unconventional in an age when so much is unconventional becomes a large order. It means a shake-up of all the ingredients of an advertisement—copy, typography, art, composition. "Fine art, beautiful art, sound draftsmanship, are secondary to originality of conception, composition and technique. The novelty is in demand. It is easier to purchase superb drawings than it is to locate a genius in technique and layout" (Larned 1927b, 164).

Abbott Kimball, New York Manager, Lyddon & Hanford Co., discusses some practical ideas for applying the Modern movement to every-day business. He says the post-war spirit took form in The International Exhibition of Modern and Decorative Arts. Paris, style capital of the world, dramatized a new impulse and introduced the world to all the
accessories of living. Almost every civilized country on earth had a part in this display, except the United States.

America was not represented in the French Exhibition for the simple reason that we had nothing to show—unless we could have shipped the American Radiator Building or some of its sister Sky-scrapers across the pond. But our Department of Commerce did suggest that a commission go to France to observe the work of other nations; a commission that included outstanding merchants and advertising men. They went, they saw, and they have been spreading ever since the story of a new style. This geometric, simplified, arresting new beauty (Kimball 1928, 17).

According to Kimball, twentieth century style is proclaimed with the full force of the twentieth century publicity methods. Main Street wants not only smart hats, but smart ice-boxes—style not only in bracelets, but also in plumbing fixtures" (Kimball 1928, 117). The question is not whether to 'go modern' or 'not to go modern,' but how far? According to Kimball, going Modern begins with style research to anticipate the demands of his customers. "Style impulses come too thick and too fast. What style leaders demand today affects what the rest of the world will want tomorrow. For to be too far ahead with a style thought may be even more disastrous than being too far behind" (Kimball 1928, 18-19). Kimball says it is important to be fashionable, not faddish. Can these ideas be made technically practical for mass production and everyday use?

The modern eye with so much to see and so little time to grasp it, passes over the cluttered up advertisement. But he is eventually convinced that
the old generation is already sold. It is the new
generation that matters. And this new crop of
customers, coming up every year, have very little
interest in his grandfather's business. Their sole
concern lies in today—and tomorrow (Kimball 1928,
20).

Modern design emphasizes a feeling for line and
proportion and movement and the omission of superfluous
details. Advertisements must be as modern as the merchandise
they sell.

And so this business is launched on its modern
course. This modern manufacturer has floated his
firm off the sandbar of conservative inertia. Yet
he has steered clear of the reefs of dangerous
extreme. And business can always adopt a course
that is up to date—and even ahead of date—and
still keep both sage and sane. Old Fogeys and
Faddists are only different kinds of fanatics!
(Kimball 1928, 20).

Larned discusses the importance of surrounding modern
advertisements with appropriate pictorial atmosphere. He
says background and borders seem to constitute the major
pitfalls of layout. In some cases they may create an
appropriate atmosphere, but lack any true advertising
relevancy.

Now that futuristic backgrounds and borders are the
vogue, photographers, who often secure even more
effective results than the artist with his original
drawings, have developed numerous novelties whereby
flashes of light and eccentric forms constitute a
logical setting for the product (Larned 1929j,
128).

The "logic" of Modern approaches lies in the use of
contrast. "Contrast is the real answer, and a difference in
the art technique. One acts as a foil for the other. In
numerous campaigns, such borders actually help the main picture and give it poise and artistic placement" (Larned 1929j, 132).

Larned writes, "For such as advertisers have little patience with modern art, its foibles and its eccentricities, there is a happy medium, or rather, a skillful and resourceful blending of the old with the new, retaining, as it were, the best qualities of both" (Larned 1929h, 129). Larned believes that certain products are harmed by outlandish techniques. Jazzed ideas are held at a distance (Slide 3). "When a product, or an important central theme, is handled with fidelity to detail and absolute realism, there seems no objection to allowing the artist to be as modern as he pleases elsewhere in the advertisement" (Larned 1929h, 136).

The Modernism Debate

An active debate on Modernism and its appropriate use in advertising art takes place in Printers' Ink Monthly beginning in September 1927 and continues through December 1929. Authors actively engage each other, responding to articles and accusations. The methods of representation in advertising art sway between literal imitation and artistic expression. On the pragmatic side, Modernism is said to attract attention and to guide the reader's eye through the advertisement and toward the written message. One author
suggests that advertising art in America is not truly Modernistic; it is merely a simplification of representations of natural forms, rather than an attempt to visualize abstract qualities. Finally, it is noted that Modernism has reached maturity when despite challenging formal conventions of art and composition, Modernism has become well groomed.

"Modern art, when it gets too modern, ceases to be art, and becomes--well, if it must be said, comical" (Flagg 1927, 44). Thus, James Montgomery Flagg, a noted illustrator, fires off the first volley in the debate over Modernism in the September 1927 Printers' Ink Monthly. Relating the "grotesquery of today" to the "happily dying Cubist-Futurist disease," Flag attacks some current trends in advertising art manifested mostly in fashion advertising (Flagg 1927, 44). He refers to certain alleged representations of the human form divine as, "damnable nightmares--these dreadful china skeletons--some with necks like giraffes, mouths like murderers and figures like aspirin capsules." Flagg signs off with, "When the Ultra and the Smart preclude the Healthy and the Clean--Good evening!" (Flagg 1927, 119).

Richard J. Walsh, President, The John Day Company, Inc., responds to Flagg in "Must Advertising Go Back to Nature?" (Walsh 1927). Walsh admits that Modernism might be a form of madness, "but isn't it captivating madness?" (Walsh 1927, 48). He suggests the rush to the new styles of illustration
is in answer to the longings of the advertiser for "something different." Walsh questions the ability to achieve exact representation in any art form.

For those who want advertising to go back to nature really do have a general idea of what they mean. That is, they have accepted certain conventions about how hands and faces and buildings ought to look in pictures. A generation brought up on calendar chromos, on dining-room paintings of fish and fruit, and--let us concede--on some acquaintance with the old masters, has made a sort of tacit agreement with the artist as to the sign language in which he shall be permitted to express himself (Walsh 1927, 49).

The methods of representation sway between literal imitation and artistic expression. The forms of acceptable representation depend upon the conventions one accepts. To Walsh, the conventions of the rising generation can only be found through trial and error. "Modern illustration is making the trial. It is also, naturally, making many an error" (Walsh 1927, 49). Walsh takes Flagg to task for reducing the influence of Cubism and Futurism on new styles in advertising art to cause and effect. He says Cubism and Futurism received public attention because they are an expression of a changing attitude toward painting. "Modern advertising art is not the result of Cubist propaganda, but another expression of the same attitude" (Walsh 1927, 49). While their techniques may alter certain verifiable facts, there is a method to the madness of the Modernists. The organized distortion of a one subject may, indeed, lead to
the vivid portrayal of another truth. Walsh says the artist must ask: Does distortion detract from the usefulness of a representation or does it offer some compensating value in other directions?

Sometimes they are merely frivolous, and would not want us to take them too seriously. More often they are sincerely reaching for inner meaning beneath the appearances, trying to express motion or emotion or some other impression which the merely photographic or the academic technique could not catch. And, on the whole, they do succeed in design, even when they fail in profundity (Walsh 1927, 114).

According to Larrabee, in an effort to impress clients with their modernity, some artists are creating advertisements which are utterly incomprehensible. He says that they are so absorbed in creating the new that they have forgotten the old axiom: "The purpose of advertising illustration is to further the selling message--not to obscure it" (Larrabee 1928, 34). Larrabee takes issue with advertisements where illegible type is submerged in a dynamic whirl of illustration. These advertisements, he says, are just as effective upside-down as right side up. "As a selling message it reached the nadir of effectiveness and sagged a little below" (Larrabee 1928, 34). Yet he claims that Modernist art can be used with great effectiveness in advertising illustrations.

One of the chief reasons for the existence of the new art is that its early exponents were trying to break away from what they felt to be the static quality of traditional painting and drawing. They
sought something which would have movement, dynamic force, and which would more nearly express what the artist feels in series of states of consciousness instead of what he sees at one fleeting moment (Larrabee 1928, 34).

Larrabee suggests that artists take advantage of the dynamism and bold forms of Modernism to get attention and direct the eye more purposefully through the advertisement and toward the advertising message therein. In addition, the newness of the technique also marks the product as one of class appeal.

The great value of Modernist art is its freedom from restriction, yet that very freedom imposes certain other restrictions. Any attempt to set up new art forms automatically sets up new rules. This is particularly true when you adapt the art form to advertising where certain definite objectives must always be sought (Larrabee 1928, 163).

J.R. McKinney, Art Director, McLain-Simpers Organization, claims there is a distinct difference between good and bad Modernism being used in advertising layout and illustration. Referring to the bad examples as "scrambled art," he says, "The whole thing jumbled to such an extent that it registered nothing but confusion" (McKinney 1928, 88). According to McKinney, the trouble with most of the attempts at Modernism is that everything is sacrificed to gain attention, regardless whether one can read or understand it. In what he calls the good examples, Modernism results in striking attention value, but without sacrificing the other elements necessary to good advertising. He believes that
Modernism in advertising will play an increasingly important part in the design, packaging and sale of goods. McKinney offers no examples or definitions of good and bad Modernism, rather he relies on a pragmatic approach. Good Modernism, like good advertising will be determined after the fact. "In the long run, the sales curve will tell the true story" (McKinney 1928, 88).

Byron Musser believes that good Modernistic art in advertising is an offshoot of the new schools in fine art that have in their origins a break with the old tradition and a return to the primitive.

The art that remained endeavored to catch the essence or the soul of the subject. They went further than an attempt to represent nature and tried to express abstract ideas by using what they called significant form, to register on canvas their impressions and emotions, to express what the objects meant to the artist, what emotional effect it had upon him (Musser 1928, 40).

According to Musser, good Modernistic art in advertising tries to do the same. The Modernistic illustration does more than attract attention and serve as decoration. It typifies the peculiar qualities of the product, it catches the soul of the product and creates an atmosphere of smartness and luxury. Musser criticizes the schools of fake Modernism, who he says "have taken up the new style without having mastered the draughtsmanship of the older more conventional" (Musser 1928, 41).
Stuart Campbell, Art Director, Ray D. Lillibridge, Inc., says that the advertising art exhibited at the 1928 Art Directors' show was contemporary, not Modernistic. He says it contains the same elements as more conservative advertising art, but they are served up in a different manner. Sophistication is the keynote of the day. This is achieved by eliminating details. "Taking his cue from the caricaturist without necessarily going the limit, the contemporary artist leaves out the non-essentials and subtly emphasizes a feature here and a line there, with the result that his work carries more power" (Campbell 1928, 35). The contemporary artist tries to get his message over more quickly. This calls for simplifying the atmosphere by merely hinting at the background. The "hint instead of the whole" makes for more sophistication (Campbell 1928, 35).

Don Gridley finds that Modernism has taken hold of the imagination of advertisers to a surprising extent, with luxury products for women receiving its greatest impetus. Major advertisers, including General Motors, have turned to Modernism. Although Gridley notices that Modernism becomes more marked in the advertising of General Motors cars as the price goes up. Modernism is influencing not only automobile advertising, but the design of the cars themselves. Food advertising stays close to realism because, Gridley says,
women are more interested in realistic presentations of food than with art technique.

As a rule, the advertiser with the wide distribution of a product that retails for a comparatively small sum is chary of using modernism. . . . Luxury advertising is almost entirely gone modern. It is the rare thing, for instance, to find a perfume advertiser using anything but the new technique and it is among these advertisers that some of the most flagrant abuses of modernism occur (Gridley 1928b, 130).

According to Gridley, mail-order advertisers shy away from the new school, and you won't find many Modernistic children in current advertising.

It should seem that modernism has brought a new freedom to advertising illustration which has been highly beneficial. Even if modernism itself fails—and there is no reason why it should fail abjectly—advertising is better for its introduction. Anything which teaches a lesson of freedom and liberation is good (Gridley 1928b, 133).

Brian Rowe responds to Don Gridley's article, "A Statistical Glass Applied to Modernism," by claiming that there is no Modern art in American advertising. And while he agrees that Byron Musser presented a very adequate definition of Modernism in his article, Rowe finds that Musser's discussion of advertising art missed the point of his own definition.

'Express abstract ideas.' There you have the creed of the true modern, who has ceased entirely to be interested in the transcription of nature in any realistic way to his canvas or his paper, and is essaying the creation of significant form, quite unrelated to nature. He is trying to put emotions onto paper. He objects to being a camera; he
essays to be an interpreter. If he feels impelled at any time to record an object on his canvas, he records not its shape, but its meaning, the emotions which it conveys to him, as he sees them in terms of shapes and lines and composition (Rowe 1929, 48).

Rowe contends that what Gridley and Musser have labeled as Modernistic in their discussions is by their own description merely the simplification of representations of natural forms. Simplification is the dominant characteristic and technique of schools loosely called Modern. "All these movements express a revolt against slavish realism. But they are just a difference of idiom, not a different language. They are all concerned with the description of the physical, not of the abstract" (Rowe 1929, 134). Furthermore, Rowe doubts whether Modern art can truly be enlisted by advertising to aid the cause of a selling message. "As soon as you start showing the product, in any shape or form, you are at once barring the door to modernism. Modernism is not concerned with making portraits of physical things; it deals with the abstract" (Rowe 1929, 48).

In another article, McKinney says the relationship between art and layout is so close in Modern advertising that it is impractical to separate them. McKinney is of the opinion that Modernism in advertising art has finally matured; justifying all the mistakes that had to take place in its early phases. "[S]o sweeping have been the changes that only occasionally do we find in present-day advertising
a trace of the modern art as it first appeared—experiments in geometry or dynamics instead of advertisements primarily intended to sell something" (McKinney 1929, 38). McKinney credits the supporters of Modernism for challenging the formal rules of layout, but still resulting in an orderly arrangement of elements. "Modern advertising art now stands forth clean-cut, well-mannered, and well-groomed." But despite this, it is difficult to determine whether McKinney intends to praise Modernism or to bury it when he adds, "Above all else, it has acquired the aristocratic mien" (McKinney 1929, 39). He also credits individual artists who have spawned distinct schools of illustrating styles. "[W]e have made tremendous strides forward in modernism, due to the individuality of a few leading artists and to the greater tolerance and the greater degree of acceptability that we have acquired" (McKinney 1929, 100).

Walter Smith, Art Director, J. Walter Thompson Co., has the final word on Modern art in the December 1929 Printers' Ink Monthly. "We have gone about as far as is possible in the literal translation of ideas in our advertising art, and we are now developing those principles which have, until recently, been left to the painters and sculptors" (Smith 1929, 45, 126). Smith says that the emotional quality of painting should have its place in advertising, and he suggests that life-like representation be left to the camera.
However, he does not see much of a place for purely abstract design in advertising.

Many will use the stuff merely because it's the latest thing and they wouldn't be thought old-fashioned . . . the substance of art is always the same and must be given form before it becomes art; it is only the difference in the choice of method that one period differs from another. Let us accept this new form, for it is of our generation (Smith 1929, 126).

**Art Directors' Exhibit**

A series of articles in *Printers' Ink Monthly* about the annual exhibit by the Art Directors Club of New York provides an excellent overview of the status of art in advertising in the 1920s; its relationship with the art world and the influence and incorporation of Modernism. The annual exhibits, which were held with regularity starting with the third show in 1924, provide the industry with a forum for discussing the progress of advertising art. The articles draw attention to issues regarding the difference between advertising art and "pure" or "ordinary" art. Advertising appears to place two unique demands on the artist. The artist must see his work as part of a "greater whole," and the artist must paint for reproduction on paper rather than for the canvas. With this in mind, it is interesting to take note of discussion about standardization of technical processes and cooperation among the artist, printer and engraver. The influence of Modernism on advertising art,
while present throughout the decade, makes its push for legitimacy between 1926 and 1928. Aspects of Modernism seem to be incorporated most often for decorative purposes, displacing representation as the theme of most illustration, while realism is relegated to the camera. However, the camera, in turn, strongly influences illustration, calling attention to design aspects of perspective and arrangement, in which familiar objects can be seen afresh.

The discourse on advertising art is dominated by articles written by art directors and commercial art managers. It is illuminating then, to look at the Art Directors Annual Exhibit and the articles about the show for insight into the distinctions between advertising art and fine art and between the advertising world and other art worlds. In staging their annual show in the fashion of a gallery exhibit, the Art Directors Club signals that advertising should be considered as fine art. As C.B. Larrabee noted, "The result was an exhibition of beautiful pictures, not of advertising art" (Larrabee 1924, 27). This was the case because art was exhibited in its original form, rather than as a component part of the finished advertisement. "Unlike the academician, the advertising artist finds his finished picture merely a point of departure. In a sense he is not painting on canvas at all, but on paper, for it is the reproduction and what the
reproduction does by which his work must be judged" (Larrabee 1924, 27).

By the third annual exhibit in 1924, the "false comparison" of advertising art to "ordinary art" is eschewed by the display of both original works and a proof of the advertisement in which it was a part. In this manner of presentation, the work is couched in its commercial context. Yet Larrabee is compelled to make some comments regarding the "pure art" side of the exhibition. "There is no doubt that better work is being done; not only is there better work, but more of it" (Larrabee 1924, 28).

The influence of Impressionism, Cubism and other Modernistic movements has led some advertisers to break away from the traditional subject matter and experiment with new techniques in color and representation. Moreover, the influence of Modernism has caused a split in the advertising world--the "ideal" painter whose works, influenced by Modernism are decorative, and the illustrator who fulfills advertising's need for pictures that tell a story. Good art does not necessarily result in successful advertising. The illustrator can fail because of poor choice of subject matter, while the Modernist may fail because he did not understand what advertising demanded of his talents. Finally, Larrabee comments that the decorative artists are beginning to comprehend their place in advertising.
Once they thought decoration an end to itself, so that a great many of the decorative designs detracted from rather than added to the advertisements in which they were used. Today such work blends nicely with the advertising message and becomes a co-operating part of the whole advertisement (Larrabee 1924, 30).

Still wary of Modernism, authors advise that decorative art cannot be an end to itself. If Modernistic art does not tell a story, it should at least avoid detracting from the rest of the advertisement. "Pure art," says Larrabee, "must be subordinated to the point of view of art that sells" (Larrabee 1925, 30).

Larrabee claims that advertising art is in itself a distinct and separate branch of art. "Advertising art is first of all commercial. Try to make it anything else is to waste the advertiser's money by putting brakes on his advertising" (Larrabee 1925, 30). Decorative designs must take a back seat to the advertising message.

Advertising illustration must be essentially the teller of a sales story, or, if purely decorative, it must be the background of such a story. . . . . [T]he advertiser uses the pictures to get attention by the human interest story it tells and then endeavors to transfer the attention to the copy (Larrabee 1925, 30).

According to Larrabee, this does not mean that advertising art cannot have a high aesthetic value. "As a matter of fact many an advertising illustration shows more real inspiration, more real vitality than a great deal of the so-called 'pure art' of the modern artist" (Larrabee 1925, 30). Larrabee attempts to distinguish between "pure art" and
advertising art. The problems of composition for the pure artist are governed by the shape of the frame, while the advertising artist in many cases is building the frame itself. "This means that the advertising artist is often forced to discard entirely most rules of composition. He is working around copy and must think of his picture in relation to the copy and the place his copy will occupy in the completed advertisement" (Larrabee 1925, 30).

Owing to more rigid standards, the fifth annual Exhibition of the Art Directors Club was smaller than other recent shows--only 315 entries were hung. Yet, Don Gridley noted that, "For the first time the pictures shown demonstrated more or less conclusively that the advertising illustrator is turning more and more to modern art forms for his inspiration" (Gridley 1926, 27). While the work is less than exotic, he says it tends to be moving away from the "photographic type of picture."

Don Gridley claims that advertising art is "purely an accessory art. Whereas most other forms of painting or drawing have as their purpose the creation of aesthetic enjoyment, advertising art must create this enjoyment and carry it one step farther: it must also aid the selling process" (Gridley 1927, 29). Gridley claims, "The 'ideal' painter works for direct effect alone, the advertising artist must work also for indirect effects" (Gridley 1927, 29).
While advertising art does embody aesthetic conventions of the art world, its commercial purpose puts more significance on the response to work rather than on its intentions.

Thomas Erwin writes, "Advertising men in the year 1914 were in complete accord with the public conviction that the illustrator's job, like the painter's, was to copy nature as meticulously and as pretty as possible" (Erwin 1928, 37). According to Erwin, Director of Service, Frank Seaman, Inc., advertising men that still cling to this idea must have been shocked by the seventh annual Art Directors Exhibition. "The current exhibition unmistakably foreshadows the early passing of the conventional realistic illustration from American advertising" (Erwin 1928, 37). Fewer than a dozen examples from the realistic school of illustration appear in the 1928 exhibition of 260 entries, as there is an increasing tendency to turn to photography where realism is needed.

Whereas the work of the older school was concerned with the delineation of facts, and the more or less sentimental rendition of literary ideas, the work of the new men is concerned with presenting ideas through design means. The new work is lighter in character, more witty, more subtle, more ingenious in conception, and it is evident that there has been less of sweat and blood and more of spontaneity in the making of it (Erwin 1928, 37).

Photography has also turned atmospheric. Gone are both the hard-boiled photograph and the fuzzy "artistic" photograph. The new photography reveals clean, crisp images with endless subtleties of texture, ingenious arrangements
and surprising perspectives. "To make vivid—to present to the reader familiar objects in such a manner that he sees them afresh—as though for the very first time—that is one of the accomplishments of the best of the moderns whether of the camera or the brush" (Erwin 1928, 37). Erwin doubts whether any of the pictures on view in the exhibition would have been approved in any American agency just five years ago. The prevailing question is: Will it last, or will it pass?

We shall miss those sweet advertising mothers and children--those upstanding and ever reliable chemists clutching their test tubes--those stalwart and beautiful salesmen--but we'll just have to get along as best we can without them--for in every art class from Boston to San Diego the youngsters are busily cramming up on Cézanne and Picasso (Erwin 1928, 143).

According to Peirce Johnson, Art Director, The Ralph H. Jones Company, and Chairman, Exhibition Committee, Art Directors Club of New York, the work by America's most sought-after designers is characterized by sincerity, combined with Modernism. He says the original purpose of the Art Directors Exhibit was to present a record of accomplishment in the field of commercial art and to encourage the use of better design. Johnson claims, "It is fair to assume that the influence of these Annual Exhibitions has been felt in the improvement of public taste noticeable in the years during which these exhibitions have been given" (Johnson 1929, 33). Furthermore, Johnson says the public,
"sees in these designs and pictures a reflection of American life itself, its mood and its tempo, its prevailing characteristics" (Johnson 1929, 33).

Johnson claims that advertising art has trailed the pioneers in painting by ten to twenty-five years. He notes that the use of sharp angles and distortion are on the wane in advertising art. "There are few vestiges of cubism in the 1929 show and those that appear are amusing bits used intelligently as design and not as illustration" (Johnson 1929, 33).

Cooperation within the Advertising World

The most prominent discussion of cooperation between artists and others in the advertising world focuses on artists and art work conforming to the demands of the printing and reproduction processes. As part of the discourse on the annual Art Directors Exhibition in 1924, C. B. Larrabee notes that the display of both original art works and proofs of the advertisements in which they were a part draws attention to the work of art directors, engravers, printers, publishers and advertisers in the field (Larrabee 1924, 27). Furthermore he calls for an accepted scale of color standardization and more cooperation between artists and engravers to work out common discrepancies between original and reproduced works. In reviewing the 1926 show, Don Gridley notes the move to working with smaller original
art works. This indicates that artistic practices are conforming to encourage better reproduction. It is easier for a color engraver to work from an original that is no more than twice as large as required in the finished advertisement (Gridley 1926, 27).

In an article titled, "It Pays to Show Proofs to Artists" (1920. Printers' Ink Monthly January: 26) the author claims it has been difficult for advertisers to interest American illustrators of note to work in commercial art because of problems that arise from the unpredictable printing quality of reproductions. As the artists say, "We can never be sure what will happen to our originals, and we do not care to have our signatures appear on unworthy reproductions" ("It Pays to Show Proofs to Artists" 1920, 26). The answer may lie in submitting the engraver's proof to the illustrator for his approval. According to the author, France has passed a law that gives the commercial artist redress for poor reproductions. But in 1929, Peirce Johnson writes that commercial artists have been influenced both by the techniques of the Modern school, and by their thinking. As a result he claims, "Artists in the fine arts have had long-standing prejudice against commercial art removed, and have entered this field" (Johnson 1929, 33).

Larned claims that rush is the cause of many current failures. He suggests that layout and the reproduction
process take precedence over art work. "It is easier to rush the original drawing than to rush its reproduction on metal. The composition of the entire display is of far greater significance than the originality of art technique" (Larned 1929a, 44).

Illustration

The great majority of the articles on illustration appear in Printers' Ink during the later years of the 1920s. More than half of the articles are penned by W. Livingston Larned, and another handful of articles are attributed to a commercial art manager (believed to be Larned). Earlier articles cast illustration as a foil for the text. The traditional purpose of illustration, other than to show the product or packaging, was to guide the reader's eye to the text, which would tie up the advertising message with a logical and dignified argument. In this sense, illustration is legitimated by the copy. Another traditional practice was to contract separately for art, usually in the form of a beautiful painting or drawing, which would be dropped in to the advertising space with headlines, nameplate and copy. The modern practice is to coordinate these activities so that all elements would harmonize in style and proportion.

Modern illustration makes old-style realism, burdened with details look crude and colorless by comparison. The Modernist's version works well with an age of unusual
architecture. Even illustrations of the story-telling variety come under attack in Printers' Ink Monthly for their wandering too far from nature. One author suggests, "The trouble with much advertising art is that it is badly in need of a Nature Bath" (Giles 1919, 11). The practice of artists studying the work of their predecessors instead of nature itself has resulted in illustrations of the human figure becoming highly conventionalized patterns. Larned calls for more character delineation noting that the idealization of characters has reduced art to some uninspired patterns and accepted visualizations of class. In this case they are compared to factory-produced goods turned out in job lots (Larned 1920c, 59, 60).

Modernistic techniques allow for vision at break-neck speed. As one artist put it, "work that consumed days in order that the finished result may look as though it has been accomplished in fifteen minutes" (Kittredge 1921b, 27). Of interest to advertisers is the manner in which the poster can more quickly and surely present the idea behind a product.

The task of the poster is to visually imply the spirit of a product or a service when it cannot show that product or service itself. It has to attract the eye and make a memorable impact on behalf of the product or service. The discoveries of Cubism gave the poster artist, previously bogged down in realistically expressed pictures of people and
things, a new means of attracting attention with simple
dramatic forms of great intensity. The speed of travel
developed in the 1920s prevents the casual observer from
noticing the somewhat amorphous shapes and soft shadowings of
the realistic easel-type paintings. For speed of visual
communication in a hurrying world the dramatic simplification
suggested by Cubism provided the stimulus towards a new kind
of poster expression

Advertising illustrations must tell their stories at a
glance. It can be an error to be too literal and matter-of-fact. Contrasting approaches exist, one literal translation
of the headline or the text, the other more personal,
referring to the spirit of the copy. It takes courage to
censor and the artist is quite prone to congest a
composition. Modern illustrations attracts the eye by the
virtue of their extreme simplicity. But one author finds the
results less than shocking. "They rest the eyes, for there
is less work to do visually and concentration is easier"

For Larned, a constant topic is artistic freedom. He
writes, "Do not tie the hands of the artist who illustrates
the campaign by asking him to be literal" (Larned 1926b,
152). The resulting effects can be fresh, compelling and
sensational (Slide 4). But even in the most Modernistic
advertisement, featuring the bizarre illustration, one needs
to make the irrelevant relevant. In most cases these sensational drawings are "legitimatized" by copy. "If they reach out for your consideration along rather irrational lines, they at least take root in the advertiser's message to his public" ("Eye-Jolters--That's What advertising Art Needs" 1926, 179).

Even in the Jazz Age there is a call for traditional still life representation. John Harrington writes, "National food advertisers, in the last decade, have done more to promote still-life painting in this country than has the staid National Academy of Design." He adds, "Nowadays, artists who can give the magic touch to likenesses of fried perch or pork and beans command prices worthy of their remarkable skill" (Harrington 1927, 54).

According to Larned, woodcuts are appropriate for historic episode or ancient parallel (Slide 5). "For a new generation had all but grown up unaware that there was such a thing as wood engraving. To this generation the pictures were fascinating and wholly 'new' as an advertising technique" (Larned 1929k, 125). But the illustration must not be too interesting in itself, or the advertising message will be a total loss.

In some fields there are arguments for dumping text completely in favor of illustration. Such is the case with perfume advertising. C.L. Marcus writes, "We felt that no
perfume could be sold by a logical argument but that an appeal to the emotions of vanity, beauty and the desire to attract other people would be effective" (Marcus 1928, 140).

According to Larned, there are plenty of story-telling possibilities in diagrammatic illustrations which definitely visualize an argument (Slide 6). Such illustrations stage a reason-why argument, but they do so by illustrating ideas instead of products. Resistance by some clients to Modernism is justified, depending on the nature of their business. "Men in the mood to consider the efficiency measures are not particularly susceptible to art tricks and fantastic backgrounds" ("Picturing the Product Dramatically" 1928, 129). Space is too expensive to devote to flippant approaches. To select an art technique merely because it is "something different" is to go but half the distance to true efficiency (Larned 1928b, 168).

Is it ethical to manufacture the impression of speed? Of course it is, writes Larned. "The camera has its limitations. When a photograph actually pictures great speed, the detail is absent to an important extent. Some of the negatives disclose a distorted object, weirdly proportioned and with no interesting form whatsoever." Larned adds, "There are laws of science which mere man may not change to fit his advertising whim. The eye and the imagination, working in unison, seem to demand exaggerated
illustration to convey a vivid impression" (Larned 1929c, 140). The advertiser asks that his product appear in facsimile, plus speed. On other occasions the camera is so literal that this sensation of velocity is not in evidence. This has brought about a manufactured pictorial symbol of speed, expressed in various ways, all interesting. "Motion can be given to any object, even those which are not commonly supposed to possess inherent movement, by art expedients. The blurred effect is simplified and boiled down to a few deft lines trailing from the object. Speed can thus be given to the most commonplace objects" (Larned 1929c, 140). Speed is a symbol, a species of picture-language understood by all and therefore particularly useful. Some pictured objects are always identified with speed and flight, and their use will inevitably help along the pictorial suggestion of it. This is true of arrows, of birds in flight, of comets, meteors and shooting stars. Via the camera, speed may not be suggested in company with great detail. Detail in motion spins itself out into elongated wisps. "If you wish both detail and speed, then realism must be sacrificed. Liberties must be taken" (Larned 1929c, 145).

According to Aesop Glim, illustration has an idea to put across. "This idea must point directly or indirectly to the desirability of possessing the product or service you are selling. The illustration must put its idea across quickly.
And in a technique as simple and understandable as possible" (Glim 1929, 49). But the illustration must not be too interesting in itself, or it will be a total loss. It is only a means to an end. It is never an end in itself. "The signature gives the picture an interest and an importance it should not have. A known artist might help establish the authenticity of a product through his or her own reputation. But you can never go wrong if you omit the artist's signature" (Glim 1929, 49). The illustration should never be purely an ornament. "Don't buy pictures just to show the public what good taste you have--or in the hopes of raising their aesthetic standards. It would be better to give the money to a museum" (Glim 1929, 49, 50).

Drama, romance and decoration are put to work where you least expect them--industrial advertising. The discourse on industrial illustration is pulled out of the general discussion of illustration because it offers an opportunity to focus on a field that was particularly receptive to the new techniques of Modernism (Slide 7). In industrial illustration, decoration is not viewed as a distraction, but rather as a technique for projecting individuality on to the presentation of either mass produced goods or the anonymous corporation that produces them. People are incorporated into the industrial setting as an accessory; to pepper the sales story with human interest. The architecture and engineering
fields are particularly receptive to Modernistic influences. In this context, Modern art is not seen as frivolous, but as a strategy for conveying the impression of innovation and forward-looking product development for consumers and investors alike.

According to W.R. Heath (1926), a large number of industrial periodical campaigns have swung widely from their former restraint to the ultra-modern in both art and typography. Futuristic devices, e.g. flat planes of color and shafts of light, represent a look into the future. Therefore it was natural that architectural and building periodicals would find their readers receptive to Modernistic approaches. According to Heath, shooting rays across and illustration or dividing up its composition into strange angular contours does not constitute Futurism. The best Futuristic subjects are as methodically and as scientifically designed as any original canvas of the old schools.

Larned claims that selecting an art technique merely because it is "something different" is to go but half the distance to true efficiency. "A campaign should 'dress becomingly' and as befits its story and field of operation" (Larned 1928b, 168). First impressions, Larned says, are highly important. "An advertisement can easily 'look' its part, reflecting the product through all of its many details" (Larned 1928b, 171). A conservative firm has difficulties
using Futuristic art--too radical, too frivolous. But a young and aggressive company is different.

The advertising must and should convey the impression that here is a radical departure from all that has gone before. The product itself belongs to innovations and to tomorrow. Modern art is therefore a significant and desirable atmospheric asset. The technique was used with a logical reason, which should always be the case (Larned 1928b, 171).

**Photography**

Although articles on photography from *Printers' Ink* out number those from *Printers' Ink Monthly* by more than two to one, the subject was of equal concern to both publications. What is more significant is that there is a large gap in the discourse on photography, as no articles used in this study appeared between 1921-1926. Reference to a "new school" of photography appears very early in the decade. The discourse contrasts the mechanical and artistic processes of photography, giving little attention to non-aesthetic concerns in the discussion of Modernistic photographic conventions. Counter to claims that all photographs are alike, photography is promoted for its ability to yield the conviction of realism while also individualizing subjects.

The discourse on photography focuses on the camera's ability to transform the inartistic subject, and its growing legitimacy and public acceptance. The innovations in photography come largely from emergent practices in the art
world. The most successful work is said to be done under conditions where artists depart radically from past conventions. The new approach is to seek definiteness rather than detail. The camera artist's method involves developing a scientific plan for the use of light and shadows to aestheticize the commonplace. The details are absorbed in the task of creating the effect of the whole, and do not exist for themselves.

Larned discusses the rivalry between camera and the canvas, noting that the photographer has begun to put imagination and individuality into his subjects.

Not more than a dozen years ago, commercial photographs were approximately the same in quality. They were stiff, stilted, lighted in a conventional manner, and clumsily composed. But the new type of photographer . . . is as much an artist, at heart, as his brother of the pen and brush (Larned 1920b, 57).

In addition, Larned says the public is coming to have confidence in photographs. Citing several recent advertising campaigns that use photographs in an artistic manner, Larned says, "We are ready to admit that the campaign is not commercialized or cheapened by the process" (Larned 1920b, 58). Experience with lighting has given the photographer the freedom of the painter, leading Larned to comment, "They do paint with their cameras!" (Larned 1920b, 64).

Douglas McMurtrie writes of Modern photography, "It show an intelligent disregard for tradition merely as tradition.
It seeks its own ends and discards all that is not functional to these ends" (McMurtrie 1929, 91).

Due in part to the advent of aerial photography, new perspectives can add interest to everyday subjects, e.g. landscapes, architecture and mass produced goods. Perspective plays a leading role in Modernist approaches to illustration, composition and photography, in which the conventional product is made unconventional by means of a new point of view.

Larned addresses the problem of how advertisers have used the perspective of the camera to show more than one or two planes of an object in a single illustration. "There is a certain down-ward angle at which the camera may be placed whereby three and sometimes four surface planes are brought into the picture" (Larned 1927a, 40). The result is a novel and unaccustomed point of view. The greatest attribute of the perspective is its power to see with several sets of eyes, whereas more conventional poses and perspectives often permit no more than one plane at a time (Slide 8). "Under the new order of things--by a strange twist of perspective--the floor rises to the dignity of the 'background'--the setting" (Larned 1927a, 40)

Uncharacteristic illustrations of a still-life character that present their subject material along unexpected lines is the subject of "Showing the Product from New Angles" (1927).
"In search for unconventional subjects for illustrations, the advertiser should not overlook the possibilities connected with the product itself" ("Showing the Product from New Angles" 1927, 155). New perspectives reveal features heretofore concealed. "Modern illustrators, including the camera specialist, are searching for the startlingly different point of view. Strange and unexpected angles are arrived at which very often assist in featuring elements which have not been brought into the picture before by the old, unimaginative method" ("Showing the Product from New Angles" 1927, 161).

Larned says unusual effects are secured by breaking away from the everyday eye-level arrangement. Forced perspective and the unusual viewpoint is used to bring a product or its use into the forefront of attention. "The majority of photographs are based on a conventional human angle and as seen through ordinary eyes. The average person seldom has an opportunity to 'see things' save through prosaic eyes" (Larned 1929b, 57).

Such unusual visual approaches to a scene or an object almost always result in an attractive, vigorously strong type of illustration, and serve the additional purpose of bringing the product into the immediate foreground. They are not the visual range of one person in a thousand, however, and this doubtless accounts for their singular ability to interest the eye (Larned 1929b, 57).

Pictures based on the laws of such perspective are "comfortably away from the conventional." Perspective used
for auto chassis, tires, silverware, toilet articles
eliminate excess atmosphere and backgrounds.

Atmosphere is a good idea, but it should not be allowed to run away with more vital essentials of an advertising picture. It is expedient to sell atmosphere, but it is more important to sell the product merely in relation to the background. A bottle of perfume and a jewel case may suggest luxury and quality to a far greater extent than an entire dressing table, a chair and some of the wall decoration (Larned 1929b, 60, 64).

Discussion of forced perspective are included in technical books. More advertisers and photographers are breaking away from the prosaic eye-level viewpoint in their compositions. We are being regaled with bird's-eye views and worm's-eye views of pianos and percale.

Very often it is possible to photograph or draw a product from an unusual angle without distorting it in any way. Usually, however, the distortion which is the natural result of forced perspective is the thing that is most desired. It gives a modernistic appearance to an advertisement (Larned 1929b, 64).

It was not until a dozen years ago that perspective began to play a really important part in advertising illustration. "An air-conscious generation has come to accept the look-down view as the most natural thing in the world" (Larned 1929f, 105). The camera has opened up a rich new mine of compositions. Modernistic art gave genuine value to abnormal perspectives—and approval of unconventional camera angles.
Layout

Experimentation with layout composition and the rise of the "visualizer," or layout artist, are two notable changes that accompany the transformation of the design process and the actual appearance of advertisements in the 1920s. As I have discussed elsewhere, perspective and the arrangement of design elements are the fundamental techniques that can be modified to achieve Modernistic effects. Indeed, layout has matured from sausage making to the fine art of composition. The discourse on layout is dominated by articles that appeared mostly in Printers' Ink in the late 1920s, concomitant with growing acceptance of Modernism in advertising design. As is the case with other topics in this study, there is a noticeable gap in the discourse between the years 1920-1925.

The discourse on layout ranges from early discussions of composition based on nature, to later articles that note the arbitrariness of arrangements. Several articles on backgrounds are also included in this section. The new school of decorative design has developed to respond to the grim necessity of incorporating individualism into the presentation of mass produced goods. Taking into account the characteristics of headlines, text, illustration and photographs, an author notes that visual elements are no longer dealt with separately, but in relation to a whole.
Subjects that are not picturesque can be embellished with decorative atmospheric layouts. Individuality and personality are bestowed on products by their surroundings. A dignified setting can be more significant than prosaic arguments. Under the "new regime," perfect balance is not longer a requisite for advertising layout. Modernism is claimed to have simplified the task of composition by allowing the layout artist to neglect details that lend themselves to accurate representation in favor of shapes and forms that favor the creation of a pleasant atmosphere.

However, even the new regime demands that the setting should be rationally linked with the product. But given that, the other considerations are mostly aesthetic. This supports the findings of Leiss Kline and Jhally (1986, 1990), who found during the 1920s, a pronounced tendency away from the use of text and illustrations of products in favor of design space given over to the setting for products and people.

W.H. Keeney believes the "visualizer" or layout man is coming to play an important part in the design of advertisements. The trick of catching attention is often the peculiar arrangement of the illustrations. The goal is to dominate, in mixed company, over competing advertisements. Ethical considerations are given to censoring advertisements with overwhelming areas of solid blacks, because it is felt
that campaigns employing these liberally were too dominating when indulged too freely. "Running counter to the majority rule in layout makes for individuality. Any peculiar shape or mortise system of lines or picture-flow, which opposes the commonplace on the newspaper page is quite likely to supply the mysterious missing ingredient so sought after" (Keeney 1926, 27).

According to Larned, a new school of decorative design has arrived in which, "all the customary traditions and sequences of arrangement are daringly defied" (Larned 1926a, 38). The spirit of the new campaigns is purely decorative. Realism is a secondary consideration. These purely decorative advertisements are a method apart, subtly giving the decorative quality to an advertisement and at the same time keeping it practical from a selling standpoint. Visual elements are no longer dealt with separately, but in relation to a whole. Subjects that are not picturesque are embellished with decorative atmospheric layouts. The campaigns that have successfully experimented with decorative forms are those which most stand to benefit from this glorification.

A visit to the oculist prompts H.B. Bellis to explain why visual design elements arranged at unusual angles attract attention. "On the printed page, the eye is accustomed to the horizontal plane and the vertical plane. Anything which
bisects, runs across or counter to either or both of these planes immediately attracts attention of the eye as something unusual" (Bellis, H.B. 1926, 24). Bellis claims that such unusual arrangements strike a much deeper and quicker impression upon the eye and the visual memory than anything on the horizontal or in the vertical. This is in part because the muscles of the eye react by trying to straighten things up. Bellis adds, "Of course the good feature is that we do not feel we have been tricked into reading the advertisement, and so attention is not gained at the expense of good will" (Bellis, H.B. 1926, 97).

According to Don Gridley, Modernistic approaches to layout share much in common with the Modern arts, in which the perspective of the artist is more significant than his technical skill.

If the first arrangement doesn't look well the layout man merely makes another arrangement until he finally arrives at the proper grouping of his units. With him certain principles have become instinctive so that his experiment is rather a choice of the best from among the good from among the good and bad (Gridley 1928a, 74).

This inside out approach to design allows the principles that govern the use of shapes in layout to be discovered, rather than to be laid down in hard-and-fast rules. The purpose of the composition is to "spring an optical surprise." Shift the parts about, shuffle them up into odd and unexpected combinations. One must try out many schemes
and sketch out many different arrangements, until the strikingly unusual is discovered. It is customary for artists to "play" with lines, angles, circles, unconventional forms, discarding many in order to attain a "one best."

"Modernistic art has simplified their task. There is so much more freedom than in former days. The 'sky is the limit' today as regards composition" (Larned 1929e, 120).

A highly original drawing or a photograph depend upon the composition for their full measure of display strength (Slide 9).

Not all advertisements start with a given plan of layout. Separate parts are sometimes planned out and then assembled. An illustration is delivered by an artist and the composition put together at the last moment, its character determined by the shape of that illustration itself. This, of course, makes for very ordinary advertisements as a rule, and certainly it is a handicap to the person who does visualize the campaign in terms of quite definite composition ideas and set rules (Larned 1929e, 112).

It is so important today to arrive at extraordinarily vital and distinctive layouts, that this round-about method has few friends among those who take composition seriously. The advertisement should start with a sketchy floor-plan which arbitrarily defines the text composition, the form which the illustration is to take and the disposition of such incidentals as the headline, the name plate, trademark and minor vignette themes. To do this, the visualizer or artist must have the text in advance and should know something of
the character of the pictorial prerequisites. But to supply him with a beautiful, finished painting and to insist that it be run exactly as is means retarding his personal initiative.

Composition is the soul of the modern magazine or newspaper advertisement display. It supplies that strong individuality without which everything else suffers. It is the ceaseless lure to the eye and to the imagination (Larned 1929e, 117).

Gone are the fixed rules of composition. The visualizer has shown that, unfettered, the monotony of layout, once decidedly common to advertising, need not exist. Each and every campaign may boast an unmistakable character of its own, due more to composition than to originality of type or art technique. "The variety, the unexpected versatility evidenced in modern advertising layout is one of the most precious assets of our generation" (Larned 1929e, 117).

There was a time when this seeking after movement in a layout was arbitrarily confined to the illustration itself. Now the composition of the entire advertisement takes up a liberal share of this difficult burden. A picture may be commonplace and inactive, but this deficiency is made up for by the cleverness of a spirited arrangement of type and illustration.

Larned says artists build layouts in which form supplies display strength and novelty. As a result, pictures must conform to the entire layout ensemble. "The technique of a drawing or the modernistic daring of a photograph are less
significant today than the manner of their presentation in skilfully staged compositions" (Larned 1929d, 128).

Compositions are made compelling through the sheer force of unconventional physical shapes. "Now the drab theme when shrewdly worked into a modern layout seems quite as efficient as the series in which an artist has had inspirational subjects at his beck and call" (Larned 1929d, 128). We have passed the stage when the technique of an illustration must be considered first.

The picture, under this new régime, should conform to a prescribed layout pattern, of which it is a logical and a necessary part. It should not be an independent factor, operating alone, as in former days when the plan was to segregate it at the top of the space, and to fit type and other factors into the remaining space as best the artist could (Larned 1929d, 128, 132).

When the advertisement is being plotted out, the artist is likely to have a half dozen or more photostats of his illustration. The artist may cut them into various shapes in the experimental stages of sketching the best possible composition. It is necessary to have these replicas of the picture in order to judge accurately tone value in relation to typography. "These form-cut illustrations encourage simplicity. They are useful censors of the irrelevant unnecessary" (Larned 1929d, 132). There is an economy of picture with a consequent elimination of cluttering detail. "It is the layout that must rule, the illustration working sympathetically with it" (Larned 1929d, 132).
The 1920s witness the rise of the layout artist. Authors agree that layout must come first, and other elements must conform to internal demands of the advertisement. The plastic art of the layout man demands it. Type must be elastic too, along with the illustration (Larned 1929d, 136). Modernism, though rarely mentioned in the discourse on layout, has influenced the practice largely; providing the reconception of design elements as elastic, rather than static.

Layout has much in common with the most practical of the fine arts; architecture. Comparisons of advertising layout to architecture are numerous. Advertisements need to be planned in the same manner that an architect plans a building. Referring to their origins in architectural designs, one author notes that decorative motifs were never mixed. The restrictions of architectural practice applies also to advertising design (Marshall 1920, 13).

Elizabeth Emmett writes, "We think what a wise man said about good taste in architectural art applies equally well to advertisements: 'It is permissible to ornament construction, but never to construct ornaments'" (Emmett 1926, 148). The aesthetic demands of advertising art and architecture are similar. "The architecture of this age expresses itself in masses which can be grasped and comprehended as we rush by,
in automobiles, in limited trains, in airships" (McMurtrie 1929, 90).

Indeed, while other arts lagged behind in the rush to Modernism, American architecture led the way in developing an American form of Modernistic expression. As W.R. Heath writes, "The new American architecture, deriving itself in form and structure from the needs and exigencies of its time, finds itself on the threshold of an epoch which has lost its fear of color. The architect rightly appraises this social change as bringing to his art an emancipation and a challenge" (Heath 1928, 39).

Use of Massed Black

During the 1920s the discourse on the use of massed areas of black included ethical considerations regarding censorship of advertisements with overwhelming areas of solid blacks, because it is felt that campaigns employing these liberally were too dominating when indulged too freely. The advertising industry advised self restraint for the practical reason that the printing of large areas of black was uneven and often unpredictable. The debate is made more lively by the advent of Modernistic approaches whose stark simplicity and use of bold forms require the startling use of larger areas of black (Slide 10).

"The modern idea is to achieve supremacy and visual leadership by far more legitimate and subtle means; by the
idea of the picture and its technique and individuality, or by cleverness of the composition" (Heath 1926, 28). However, Modernism disrupts the efforts to censor large areas of black, turning the debate from practical matters to aesthetic matters. "Now that the futuristic style of illustration has become popular with advertisers, black again legitimizes its appearance" (Heath 1926, 29).

Elimination of shading and detail can produce strikingly novel effects despite complaints that massed areas of black are the last resort for the unimaginative artist. Leonard Peake argues, "There should be a legitimate reason for the use of smashing blacks, entirely aside from the selfish desire to kill off everything else on the same or facing page" (Peake 1927, 42).

**Typography and Headlines**

The discourse on typography appears mostly in *Printers' Ink Monthly*, owning to the fact that half of the articles are by Gilbert Farrar, who did not write for *Printers' Ink*. Other authors stress the importance of typography in articles discussed under other topic headings, thus noting the significance of planning and coordination in the industry. The most important issue in typography seems to be legibility or readability. The discourse begins with concerns with simplicity and restraint in the use of typography, juxtaposed with demands for individuality and novelty. Only a single
article appears in 1919 and in 1920. All other articles appear after 1927 when Modernism is a more prominent issue. Articles on casting off type, spacing type and type classification aid the advertising executive who in the 1920s is required to have some knowledge of design fundamentals to be a more effective businessman. Most of the typefaces mentioned were originally cut centuries ago. However, over the passing years, type designers have recut faces based on the originals, retaining the original names. Many of the discussions are prompted by the production of new typefaces and newer versions of old typefaces by major type foundries.

The discourse on typography in Printers' Ink from late 1927-1929, swings from discussion of using type to introduce originality to the contrast offered by well groomed presentation. Advertisements by the Typographers of America sell the importance of the "first impressions" created by type and the fair business practices of their members. By the end of the 1920s, typography, when fully coordinated with other aspects of the layout, can be expressed in painterly fashion, serving both pictorial interest and direct communication with illustrative features. The preconception that the typographic composition ought to be an unobtrusive support for verbal content was now superseded by the idea that type could itself act upon an audience.
Early on in *Printers' Ink Monthly*, typography that attracts attention to itself is referred to as a "typographic stunt." As such it defies the traditional approach, which urges classical restraint. As one author writes, "Typography should transmit words as a copper wire transmits current: the conductivity should be high; its resistance low" (Sherbow 1919, 18). Eliminating non-essentials is defended by statements like, "After all, the purpose of advertisements is to sell rather than to delight the senses or stimulate the intelligence" (Kittredge 1921a, 34).

But there are arguments for expanding the boundaries of acceptable forms of type. In regard to hand lettering, Larned writes, "Properly conceived and executed it is as legitimate as type" (Larned 1920a, 16). By 1927, Larned claims that typography has achieved freedom from every known precedent. Discussions of Bodoni type first appear in that same year. Bodoni became extremely popular in the late twenties because its sharply contrasting features, bold stems and hairline serifs, worked well with the strong blacks and whites of the Modernistic approach. Originating in the 1770s, Bodoni was rarely used for text in the intervening years. In its day, Bodoni was conceived as an attempt to break away entirely from the old tradition and to create a new face based on the technique of the steel engraver—sharp, clean and precise—as opposed to the free flowing and
graceful serifs of the old style. Likewise, the bold and geometric features found in Gothic types (also known as sans serif types) are promoted for their ability to "harmonize" with Modernistic styles of illustration. But the freshness of Bodoni quickly grows tiresome, leading Larned to suggest that new type faces can also gather attention if they are used the very moment they make their appearance and before they become hackneyed from over-use.

But the attitude toward these Modern type faces is not unanimous. In what is clearly a sales plug for the Caslon Foundry in London, one author claims to regret the dark cloud of Bodoni Bold, Cooper Black and other faces that has given typography a "swift kick in the slats." He calls for a typographic Renaissance in the United States fueled by the importation of the true Caslon typeface. "What face can match it for beauty and legibility?" (Gandy 1929, 151).

In 1929, Larned writes, "Never in the history of advertising have typography and illustration so sympathetically combined to produce a desired result, a more rational cohesion of form" (Larned 1929i, 149). The elasticity of modernized typography allows the visualizer to broaden out and make more complete and interesting his composition schemes (Slide 11). Gilbert P. Farrar concurs, noting that type is part of the picture, and that interest is a matter of freedom instead of frills (Farrar 1929, 45).
Despite the complete freedom acquired by typographers under the new regime, designers are advised to hold down type sizes and styles to the absolute minimum.

Farrar distances advertising design from that of fine book printing. "Just remember, when you are building an advertisement that you are not building a book—you are working with type in a medium that should not be governed by what has been done in books, or even in the past in advertisements" (Farrar 1929, 173). According to Farrar, inconsistency of elements is responsible for many of the poor advertisements that started out to be modern. He claims that all of the elements of any whole object must be related and consistent to produce a pleasing effect.

The new regime of advertising also plays fast and loose with headline display (Slide 12). "There is no longer any excuse for commonplace headlines, handled with passive display value" (Larned 1929g, 122). Illustration and reading matter are said to flow together uninterruptedly in a living stream. Hand-written headlines, formed as a combination of animated words, imply motion and tell a story without text. From a design point of view, they enter into the fabric of both the picture and the text. Working with distinctly different styles of elements, the modern practice is to gather scattered bits and fragments together, working them into a harmonious pattern of reader interest. The demands of
Modern composition do not fall only on the illustrator and the layout man, writers must create sentences that are packed with picture possibilities.

Freedom from past restrictions from both inside and outside the advertising world does not mean that modern design is an unfettered practice. References to "harmonious patterns" and "pleasing effects" implies that the conventions are merely shifting to accommodate new innovations.

**Borders, Nameplates and Trade Marks**

The discourse on borders, nameplates and trade marks contains numerous references to the fine printed books of the Renaissance. Residual aspects of traditional fine printing are incorporated into advertising to dress up products and to raise the tone of the advertisement. Incorporating residual elements imitated from Renaissance book design differ greatly from the practice of reviving old type faces. The introduction of new typefaces based on their centuries-old namesakes, was a commercial venture taken on by type foundries, rather than a movement by artists within the advertising world. Therefore, the advertising world was not incorporating a residual practice in its use of these typefaces; it was merely adopting a form that had already been coopted by another art world.

The expansion of advertising and its movement way from reason-why to emphasis on setting and atmosphere required the
use of forms from the past and the present. "The sharp competition today in advertising requires the aid of past achievements as well as the most strenuous efforts of modern wit and experience" (MacMahon 1927,40). In this sense, residual approaches lend dignity and individuality to products, services and corporations. But they were not so widely used as advertisers were seeking to appeal to the new middle class.

Summary

The influences of Modernism on advertising art are characterized by movement away from strict literalism and detailed representation and a tendency toward association and atmosphere. Under the new regime, perfect balance is no longer a requisite for advertising layout. Running counter to the majority rule in layout makes for individuality. Modernism is claimed to have simplified the task of composition by allowing the layout artist to neglect details that lend themselves to accurate representation in favor of shapes and forms that favor the creation of a pleasant atmosphere. At the center of the new school of advertising design is the "visualizer" or layout man. The trick of catching attention is often the peculiar arrangement of the illustrations. The practical goal is to dominate, in mixed company, over competing advertisements.
The key to the new Modernistic techniques is contrast, but with pleasing effects. Action and speed, the mottos of Modernism, are better illustrated if liberties are taken with reality. The visual nature of actual products and literal representation are handicaps to the modern illustrator. Use of allegories, symbols and news tie-ins allow the illustrator to transgress the mere material nature of mass produced goods. The Modern school of advertising art emphasizes the unexpected subject and the indirect approach. However, as the discourse reveals, the new approaches are guided by a strong current of rational strategies, and strict conventions for the application of Modernistic techniques.

It is clear that the 1925 Paris Exposition signaled a turning point in the use of Modernism. Despite America's lack of involvement in the show, popular interest in Modernism surged forward and never looked back as a result of publicity from the event. But while the Paris show may have spawned an explosion of Modernistic innovation and imitation, some foresaw its decline as early as 1929, when W. Livingston Larned penned what appears to be a eulogy for Modernism.

Modernistic art had its high hour of universal acclaim and is now giving way to other forms, slowly but surely. The daring thing was done, traditions smashed to smithereens, and hide-bound conventions tottered from their ancient thrones. These ideals which he has given us, after a brave battle, will always make their presence felt in years to come. But advertising is ready for a new coat and a changed pictorial regime and pace (Larned 19291, 52).
It is important to note that innovation is a constant process within the advertising world and in the discourse on advertising art as witnessed in the trade publications. In some respects, focusing on Modernism as a theme distorts the general enthusiasm with which all innovation was heralded in the advertising world. There is little doubt that Modernism came to advertising from without. But, for the most part, the advertising world merely adopted Modernistic forms which were already incorporated into the dominant practice of the art world. Indeed, the orderly approach to Modernism in the advertising world does not indicate a mature attitude toward the restless and unruly nature of earlier avant-garde experiments. Rather, Modernistic practices themselves had become more disciplined by the late 1920s. What Modernism gave to advertising and the graphic arts was a new appreciation of controlled space. While the Modernistic approaches challenged traditional conventions of design, most notably formal symmetry and representational illustration, they introduced a new inner logic that governed the relations of visual elements and their arrangement. No longer were the conventions of art and design seen as imposed from without. Rather, the Modernistic approach was to compose from within. While the discourse on advertising art reveals the relations between art and advertising, it does not address the relations between art, advertising and American culture in
the 1920s. These relations are explored in the final chapter of this study.
CHAPTER VI
CONCLUSION

It is clear from the discourse on advertising art that, for the most part, the advertising world adapted Modernistic forms that were already predigested by the art world. The discourse on advertising art addresses the manner in which the advertising world came to define and appropriate art in the 1920s. But two questions remain. The first is analytical: How did advertising as an institution serve to incorporate Modernistic and avant-garde forms of expression into American culture? The second is theoretical: Specifically, how does advertising manage to transform the meaning of avant-garde works of art from a site of ideological struggle to the affirmation of the dominant social system? I will address these questions by exploring the relations of art, advertising and culture in the context of the commercial sphere in the 1920s.

Art and the Commercial Sphere

The discourse on advertising art focuses mainly on art, techniques and strategies rather than on specific artists. This emphasis on art work and how it is done features discussion and reproductions of specific advertisements, but
with no mention of the artists or advertising agencies responsible for the work. The discussions are void of criticism of specific advertisements and campaigns. Criticism is engaged at a very general level, focusing on abstract concepts of advertising art and design processes. Only on one occasion did I encounter direct criticism of a campaign, in which case the reference was obtuse and the name of the client was heavily veiled.

Cooperation and Conformity

The names of specific artists received mention only in articles on the Harvard Advertising Awards, which began in 1924, and very late in the debate on Modernism two authors engaged in a bit of name dropping. Like the industry practice of anonymity within advertisements, the trades do not shine their light on individual or group authorship of advertising's creative endeavors. As discussed in Chapter II, the debate over the practice of writers or artists signing their work usually falls on the side of anonymity. However, it should be noted that there were artists who did sign their works, Norman Rockwell to name one, and still there were others whose work was well known and easily recognizable.

In this sense, the discourse on advertising art in Printers' Ink and Printers' Ink Monthly is not inappropriately distorted by a critical analysis framed by
theories of the sociology of art as discussed in Chapter III. Although the advertising world tends to focus its attention on the advertisements themselves, they share with critical sociology their down playing of the role of authorship. While it is not a dominant theme in the discourse, the necessity for cooperation within the advertising world is assumed. "Advertising art is team work," writes Ashley Havinden (Havinden 1956, 17). And the nature of advertising art requires that artists subordinate the content and the technique, as well as themselves to the demands of the client, the audience and the institution.

The anonymity of those involved in the production of advertising, while a necessity of the corporate order, also accommodates the interchangeability of people within that process, often without affecting the resulting work. Disruption and turnover within the advertising world was not necessarily visible from the outside. Indeed, one author notes that one third of those employed in advertising change their address each year. By focusing on the advertisements and the techniques instead of the persons responsible for specific work, the trade publications played an active part in creating and maintaining a sense of continuity in the advertising world.

Unlike the art world, the advertising world rarely viewed the individual artist as being at the center of the
collaborative process of advertising production. Rather, the 1920s seem to be the decade of the art director or commercial art manager. While the discourse on advertising art emphasized the need for virtuoso skill in illustration, photography, layout and various support activities, the articles were mostly written by art directors. The intended audience was other art directors and clients who, from the art director's perspective, could benefit from a lesson in art technique or strategy. In this context, the purpose of the discourse on advertising art can be seen as actively mediating aesthetic values and legitimating professional practices within the advertising world.

In the most general terms, the discourse on advertising art consisted of a kind of show and tell, praising particular advertisements and campaigns, while limiting its criticism to what it viewed as either outdated practices or misguided applications of design principles. The purpose of the unspecified nature of the criticism was twofold. First, as a practice it did not conflict with the spirit of boosterism in the trade publications. Secondly, it acted as a foil for advertising executives, who could appropriate the unspecific criticisms as the basis for pitching new approaches to a client. It is important to remember that Printers' Ink's practice of issuing block subscriptions meant that their audience was not only the advertising industry and its
clients, but almost all publications and their chief advertising sponsors. The purpose of *Printers' Ink* and *Printers' Ink Monthly* was to preach the progressive creed of advertising; promoting advertising successes, paying witness to the benefits of more and better advertising and justifying the continued use of advertising.

At the simplest level, the articles that were used in this study comprise a body of shared understanding that allowed members of the advertising world of the 1920s to cooperate. As a discourse, the articles mark the boundaries and contours of the ideas and practices that shaped advertising art during the period. While the discourse is clearly mediated by the interests of the industry, it does include some relatively undigested fragments that are more expressive than the majority of the articles which are of a conforming nature.

The discourse embodies the conventions that are necessary for artists, advertising practitioners and their clients to make sense of advertising art. In essence the conventions make advertising art possible, giving rise to artistic experience within the advertising world. Conventions regulate the relations between artists, the advertising world and their audience. Conventions dictate the materials used, the abstractions used to convey particular ideas and experiences and the form in which
materials and abstractions are combined. Conventions not only make work possible by actively reshaping traditional approaches to respond to contemporary needs, they also place strong constraints on the artist and the activities of the advertising world. As an integrated part of art worlds and, in this case, the advertising world, conventions are complex interdependent systems embodied in equipment, materials and training. It is clear that in the 1920s, the conventions that regulate art activities in the advertising world are under strain from all sides, new technologies, new materials, new forms of expression and new demands to respond to changing social and economic conditions.

Innovation and experimentation is an ongoing process within art worlds. Shifts in conventions arise in the unformalized practices of the workaday choices of materials and forms. Indeed, conventions, which more readily dictate the general form and content of work, allow artists to spend more time experimenting and refining the more subtle details of their work. The subtlety of some of the arguments over aesthetic codes and practices, although deeply significant to artists and part of their everyday experience, may appear from a distance to be merely academic.

The discourse in the trade publications is inherently distanced from the everyday practice of other art worlds and other quarters of the advertising world. Because of this,
the discussion of conventions and aesthetic values is more explicit than is the actual practice within the art worlds. Authors tend to address the formalized conventions in a manner that delimits the nature of forms and practices. In essence the discourse of the trade publications is constituted and constitutive of the dominant cultural practices and aesthetic values in the advertising world. While largely appealing to more traditional values and practices, this discourse reproduces conventions that also allow for more efficient cooperation within the advertising world. Many of the articles take a cookbook approach to advertising; offering recipes for advertising design, suggesting appropriate treatment for particular subjects and discussing the proper portions of various visual elements.

The discourse on advertising art in the trade publications reveals an interest in the issues and activities of art worlds beyond the advertising world that is probably out of proportion with the actual day-to-day practice. In essence it serves as a bridge, linking the advertising world to the larger art world. One purpose of this extended discussion is to forge some kind of professional relations with the great world of "Art." But in doing so, it also mediates the incorporation of new forms that arise outside of the advertising world. This is necessitated by the difference in the purpose of advertising art and in its
relation to commerce. Advertising art lacks the autonomous purpose delegated to fine art. Advertising art exists in service to commerce, while fine art has no purpose other than to be art. Indeed, the constraining nature of the discourse on advertising art can be attributed to the demands of the employer-employee relationship. This is because work done for a client assumes someone other than the artist defines the ends of the work. The mediation of art within the advertising world requires the creation and maintenance of rationales for advertising art. This study of articles in the trade publications reveals that although the discourse on advertising art is largely about art and art techniques, the evaluation of work is not based on purely aesthetic decisions. For the most part, extra-aesthetic elements influence what appear to be aesthetic judgements.

Ideology and Identifications

Janet Wolff (1981) describes the system that came to displace patronage and mediate the relations between artistic production and the organized market as the dealer-critic system. Under this system, dealers brought new artists and new buyers together, while critics served to legitimate the new works to the new public. Advertising has much in common with this system of mediation, in that it brings buyers and sellers together, while the trade publications serve to
legitimate advertising to the public and to the advertising industry.

Despite its interest and aspirations to the status of fine art, advertising takes an active role in creating and sustaining categories and divisions that distinguish between advertising art and other kinds of art. Indeed, the trade publications include overt discussions of the extra-aesthetic demands placed by the advertising institution and its clients on the production of advertising art. While advertisers deliberately appeal to the status of high art and the avant-garde in the advertisements, they do so with the full understanding that their purpose is not to promote art, but to sell products. The advertisements themselves blur (or at least make no effort to clarify) distinctions between the production and aesthetic value of advertising art and fine art, masquerading as if they, too, were somehow autonomous and transcendent.

Advertising's appropriation of Modernism for its aesthetic value rather than for its ideological function, reveals that art is not a passive carrier of ideology. In fact, art re-works ideology in aesthetic form according to the conventions of the production of advertising art. As such, the conventions of the advertising world do not merely replicate or reflect the same relations of the art world. Aesthetic codes and conventions in both the art world and the
advertising world can transform ideology in a certain direction. What is most significant to this study is that advertising appears to be capable of turning the ideology of Modernism on its head. These conditions seem to affirm that while art is permeated with ideology, it is not reducible to ideology (Wolff 1981, 119-20).

As this study points out, the distinctions between authentic and commercial forms of art are subject to historical inquiry. Works of art are (de)valued by nomination to categories governed by the internal rules of specific art worlds. The advertising world, regulated by its relations to the social systems congruent to commerce, has demands that are both similar and contrary to those of other art worlds. As a social process, the organization and identification of art depends on the social perception of art itself. As a practical matter the social perception of art depends on the development and maintenance of a system of social signals that identify where, when, how and what is to be regarded as art and who is to be regarded as an artist. In the most obvious case it distinguishes between artistic activities and support activities in the production of advertising art. In a more complex case it distinguishes between real Modernism and fake Modernism.

The progressive ideology is necessary to the maintenance of the institution of advertising. As a form of cultural
production, advertising reproduces dominant social relations, selecting and reselecting elements that represent a desired continuity (Williams, 1982, 187). Although the process appears to be natural, it is for the most part artificial, serving to create and sustain the conditions of domination.

The most significant cultural dimension of the mass media is the role it plays in the production and circulation of symbolic forms beyond the act of face-to-face communication. The scale on which technical means have quantitatively increased the production, reproduction and circulation of symbolic forms has rendered them qualitatively different. The production and transmission of these symbolic forms is mediated by the technical and institutional apparatuses of the media industries, at the center of which is modern advertising. To understand the nature of these symbolic forms, we must examine them in a historical context that explores the social conditions within which they were produced, transmitted and received—that is to say, the social and cultural contexts within which symbolic forms are employed and deployed—and to what extent and in what contexts do the meanings mobilized by these symbolic forms tend to serve to establish and sustain relations of domination (Thompson 1990, 1-11).

The truth is that advertising is not seen as a significant arena where cultural forms struggle for
dominance. As witnessed in the discourse on advertising art in the 1920s, shifts in cultural forms occur unevenly and over protracted periods. Older forms are always under strain from the inside by innovation and from the outside by emergent forms and practices. The struggle for dominance is paramount to those in power, but in advertising art, the manifestations of political and economic order are relatively indirect. In this way, art serves to mediate the direct relations between advertising and the institutions of domination, dissolving such manifestations in a solution that appeals largely to our aesthetic sensibilities.

Advertising and Aesthetic Values

Both the general practices of advertising art and the incorporation of Modernism in the 1920s tend to support Raymond Williams' argument that as a symptom of modernity, advertising does not indicate that we are overly materialistic. Rather, advertising points to the fact that we are not materialistic enough. The accumulation of goods, for whatever reason, is not enough. We need to believe that the goods are overflowing with meaning and that they embody magical transformative powers. Borrowing from the spiritual aspects of ritualized art, advertisers endow mass produced goods with the aura of authenticity, which is largely missing in modern society. In advertising, as in art, individuals
can find an "authentic" expression that allows them to transcend whatever is repressive in their lives.

There is little doubt that most advertising puts aspects of production at a distance. As advertising content moves from economic information to the realm of persuasion and symbolic associations, the relationship of advertising to the market becomes virtually dissolved. What is manifest in modern advertising then, is not the relation between products and the mode of production, nor is it the relation between advertising and the political and economic order. What is manifest in modern advertising is an aesthetic code, a symbolic system of dominant yet interchangeable signs and values that gives meaning to products and significance to a culture of consumption.

Advertising is necessary to trade-up public taste and ideas. Left to itself the trend for higher standards progresses slowly. Advertising can accelerate the movement. The purpose of advertising upscale merchandise is not necessarily to sell the featured product, but rather it is advertising's method of trading up. Pictures of a deluxe bathroom by Standard plumbing fixtures, "creates a new conception of what a bathroom can be and to the degree that it spreads this new consciousness of bathroom beauty it builds an increased demand for better bathrooms" (Edwards 1924, 22). Illustrations which glorify the product are used
to cast the desired halo of respect around the merchandise, and copy and layout combine to add to the general effect. "Advertising has been instrumental in lifting a product to a higher class; it has literally 'brought it into society'" (Edwards 1924, 23).

The relations between products and the symbols and values with which they are associated in advertising are artificial. They do not represent a natural process of acquired significance. Rather they represent a desired relationship between the world of products and meanings projected upon them by manufacturers, retailers and the advertising world. Advertising as a text functions to naturalize those artificial relations for the purpose of market control. This is the basis of Stuart Ewen's argument that advertising educates us to turn a blind eye to the real causes of modern discontent (Ewen 1976).

Within the advertising discourse, one finds protracted effort and debate over the defining, incorporating and dismissing of "worthy" and "unworthy" forms of artistic decoration. Indeed, aesthetic codes and criteria are constantly reconstructed to keep up with the demand for new forms to illuminate commodities and lend originality and individuality to mass produced goods. Traditionally, great art has been viewed as a privileged form of expression, a product of a "separate, transcendent, ennobling, and
enriching sphere—somehow separate and distinct from 'life'" (Jensen 1990, 108-9). Indeed, within the advertising discourse one can find references to advertising's responsibility for raising the taste and aesthetic appreciation in the arts.

In a 1920 article, W. Livingston Larned claims that America stands in need of considerably more appreciation of the arts, which have been in decline for fifty years. The answer lies in advertising, which is schooling all classes in art appreciation.

We rather suspect that, in the rush of soaps and automobiles, washing powder and spark plugs, the average man does not know to the extent the arts are advertised nowadays. . . . We may yet see advertising educate America in Old World respect for art and beautiful things—the unusual things—the things that have a tendency to feed imagination (Larned 1920d, 13).

Larned inserts democratic values into the discussion which claims that persons of moderate income have been benefited by advertising. "The suggestion is put forward that these artworks are not necessarily for the rich alone; it's simply a matter of waiting and saving" (Larned 1920d, 13). What is significantly blurred is the distinction between unique art and commodified art forms.

As such, advertising is claimed to be sophisticating the proletariat with the arts of the rich (Vredenburgh 1929, 26, 28).
The fact that the American people of today are quality minded--and beauty minded--is due more to national advertising than to any other single cause. . . . [G]reat literary talent, psychological knowledge and artistic skill have been enlisted in the service of improving the tastes of the American public (Rogers 1929, 33).

As an ideological process, the advertising world not only debates the worthiness of particular art forms, it also projects images of what is worthy and what is not. Moreover, as a form of cultivation, advertising educates the public in what is necessary to become worthy in consumer culture. The purpose of this study was to explore the manner in which worth was ascribed to various traditional and Modernistic art forms--to reveal the process by which aesthetic codes and values are a historically located in specific social conditions and interactions, rather than the representation of a higher "natural" law. That is to say, within the advertising world the discourse on art is ideologically positioned in ways that are congruent with capitalism. The discourse in Printers' Ink and Printers' Ink Monthly serves to legitimate the aesthetic values and practices within the advertising world.

Modernism and the Public

What is questionable is whether advertising in the 1920s was leading or following public acceptance of Modernism. An answer in part falls along lines of class and age. As one author writes, it is essential to talk to the new generation
in its own terms. Another author notes, basic human instincts are not changing, but the methods of expressing them are. According to Milton Towne there is a higher standard of appreciation of artistic things in America.

Are the manufacturers responsible for this, and are they endeavoring to bring up the standard of taste by introducing an esthetic, sophisticated note in their advertising? Or are the art directors of advertising agencies unconsciously molding advertising art nearer to their hearts' desires? (Towne 1926, 129).

Towne claims that art is no longer an esoteric subject. "The thing to remember is that the public at large has been 'let in on it'" (Towne 1926, 129). However Brian Rowe disagrees, "America is too close in time to material things to admit the growth of that body of purely intellectual habit of mind which is essential to the common understanding of modern art" (Rowe 1929, 49). Furthermore, Rowe adds, "Representation of the abstract in significant form is the language of the very cultured few" (Rowe 1929, 48).

According to Hiram Blauvelt, advertising has been one of the most refreshing stimulants to good taste and artistic appreciation among Americans. "It may easily be that commercial art will have a great share in accustoming our eyes to newer and more modern forms of art, and that leads us to accept them" (Blauvelt 1925, 66). Indeed, Blauvelt sees a time when advertising art will lead and influence pure art throughout the world.
Larned, however, is constant in his insistence that the impetus for Modernism in advertising art stems from the public's craving. "Life is ever too short, in advertising and in selling, to 'educate the public.' Certain trends must be recognized, sympathized with and followed" (Larned 1927c, 43). The modern advertiser cannot sit on the fence when it comes to Modernism. As Larned writes, "Advertisers are literally compelled to face a specific issue. What will please one class will affront the other, inevitably" (Larned 1927c, 43). The verdict, he finds, is in favor of the young, because they constitute the buying power of the nation. "The old line crowd is of secondary consideration. It will continue to buy what it has always bought and for the same old reasons" (Larned 1927c, 43). Another author writes, "What the advertiser likes and recommends and prefers has nothing to do with it. He must submerge all this to popular fancy" (1926. "Futurism Breaks into Newspaper Advertising Art." 149).

Indeed, the 1920s advertising world may have neither led nor followed public acceptance of Modernism; they may have merely gotten out of the way of Modernism as it rushed in to fill a need. In Europe, Modernism may have claimed the status of "high" art by the 1920s, but in America, Modernism had entered the arena of mass culture largely through the aid of the popular press; newspapers, magazines and
advertisements. As late as 1929, C.B. Larrabee claims that outside of architecture, Modernism in America was not at all American, but French, German and English. He claims that Modernism is still a fad in America, because it is not really indigenous to the permanent mentality of Americans, who are psychologically quite different from Europeans. Americans have not embraced Modern design as something permanent. "We have as yet no modern style, only tendencies toward such a style, and we have no indications as to its ultimate development, but we have the principles of development which have held true in other epochs" (Larrabee 1929, 35).

Although Modernism was welcomed within American mass culture, it was not a product of the culture itself. It filtered down to the public from above; fabricated by the artists and business men in the advertising world in service to commerce. As indicated by the advertising discourse of the 1920s, Modernism in advertising came with a built-in reaction. It was formulated to attract attention, but to do so with pleasing results. While the advertising discourse reveals that aesthetic codes and values were actively created and maintained by the advertising world--that is to say they were not inherent, but ascribed--they nonetheless reproduced specific hierarchies of status. The advertising world went to great trouble to project a high brow image of advertising art by staging awards and exhibitions to celebrate its
artistic achievements, but for the most part, advertising art lacked any standards besides popularity.

Much of the criticism of advertising art assumes that art and commerce are incompatible. It assumes that art is somehow corrupted by commerce. But these criticisms are based on the assumption that art is inherently redemptive, and that this possibility and potential of art is diminished by commercialization. Indeed, this is the case of most media criticism. The problem is that commercialization is assumed to be corruptive without the benefit of much analysis of the process or how it operates.

As is the case in the discourse on advertising art, advertising's expressed goals and achievements reflect desired outcomes and relations rather than real ones. The discourse on advertising art reveals that the advertising world actively engages in the imitation of the forms and in the appropriation of the rhetoric of the art world. But it evaluates the artistic merits of a design based on the sales curve. In essence, it walks the walk and talks the talk, but lacks commitment to any values or practices that are not in the best interest of commerce. Like any form of art, advertising art is transformative, but the direction of the transformation is inherently toward sustaining the dominant relations of market society. Advertising art is not without a stake in truth; it is true to the values and conditions of
consumer culture. Thus it can be called the official art of
consumer culture.

The view of advertising as art has been fostered by the
collection and display of advertising in the same museums as
painting and sculpture. One thinks of the major exhibit,
*High & Low: Modern Art and Popular Culture*, organized by the
Museum of Modern Art in 1991. In many ways, this and other
discussions seem calculated to obscure the differences
between art and advertising. The crucial distinction is
that, under modern conditions, art objects are usually
conceived and made by, or under the direction of, one person.
This is not the case with advertising, which shares more with
the manufactured goods it promotes. The primary purpose of
advertising is to promote sales and make a profit for the
manufacturer. Therefore, advertising does not serve to give
expression to the creativity and imagination of the designers
or illustrators. According to Adrian Forty (1986), calling
advertising art implies that graphic designers and
illustrators play the principal role in the production of the
products they visualize in advertisements. Industry
references to advertising as art are self flattering,
appealing to the vanity of its practitioners, bringing them
into a professional relationship with the great world of
"Art."

On the one hand, design is determined by ideas and
material conditions over which designers have no
control, yet, on the other hand, designs are the result of designers exercising their creative autonomy and originality. To put the paradox in the most extreme terms, how can designers be said to be in command of what they do, but at the same time merely be the agents of ideology, with no more power to determine the outcome of their work that the ant or worker bee? (Forty 1986, 242).

Forty says the same apparent paradox occurs in all manifestations of culture: any painting, film, book or building contains ideas about the nature of the world, ideas which exist in other minds apart from that of the artist, author or designer, but which are mediated through his or her ability to conceive a form or means of representation. Forty writes,

No design works unless it embodies ideas that are held in common by the people for whom the object is intended. To represent design purely as the creative acts of individuals, enhances the importance of designers, but ultimately only degrades design by severing it from its part in the workings of society (Forty 1986, 245).

Only by exploring this process and by shifting attention away from the notion of authorship can we properly comprehend what design is: a representation of the ideas and beliefs through which we assimilate and adjust to the material world.

Graphic Design in America

Advertising design has been the most visible of the graphic arts. The practice of the modern designer has its origins in Industrialism, which separated conceptual and visual planning from the process of manufacturing. The gradual shift from production to consumption in the early
part of the twentieth century stimulated the development of the commercial art profession concomitant with the growth and professionalization of the advertising industry. The origins of the practice of commercial art (or graphic design) are ever receding, but as a modern profession it came out of the back room, or print shops, of newspapers and magazines. As a practice, and then a profession, it developed to serve the needs of generating and maintaining essential advertising revenues for commercial publications. Its recognition as a profession came largely during the 1920s as it moved out of the print shop and into the studio. According to Mildred Friedman, "While the printer had used typography in a perfunctory way to convey a message directly, the designer sought more complex relationships among text, typography and image, creating evermore expressive means of communication" (Friedman 1989, 9).

The elasticity of forms combined with the modern mechanical notions of interchangeability of parts (a quality appropriate to the Machine Age), allowed design to be seen as mechanical; manipulable and convenient. Modernist experiments and forms were thus simplified and adapted to meet the demands of mass reproduction and formulas for commercial success.

Most important, the designer was now seen as responsible for the visual concept of a piece, as the author of strategies that had an elastic
relationship to the literal meanings conveyed by the text (Wild 1989, 155).

The growing bureaucracy of the advertising agencies was in part an attempt to mirror the structure of the corporations they served.

Influenced largely by the 1925 Paris International Exposition and later by the emigration of European designers, graphic design in America reflected American fascination with European styles, namely Art Deco (the name came from the title of the Paris show: Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes), which was a conservative rendition of a plurality of European styles. According to Ellen Lupton and J. Abbott Miller, "The term aptly describes the way elements of avant-garde art--Futurism, Expressionism, Cubism and Constructivism--were used to inflect a mass, commercial style with an appealing, uncontroversial, modernity" (Lupton and Miller 1989, 43).

In America, popular awareness and growing acceptance of Modernistic styles was cultivated by publicity and news reports about the Paris exposition. According to Lupton and Miller, "In graphic design and illustration it did not constitute a singular aesthetic but was rather a loose set of ideas and motifs, ranging from reductive geometry, elongated torsos, and a mannered angularity, to the repetition and regularity associated with the machine" (Lupton and Miller 1989, 43). While American interest in European fashion
clearly predates the 1920s, the Paris Exposition served to bring the styles to the attention of a wider public.

The American government had been invited to exhibit in Paris, but Secretary of Commerce Herbert Hoover declined the invitation, sending a committee of manufacturing and trade groups to observe. In its report the committee stated that Americans were living "artistically largely on warmed-over dishes" and called on them to "initiate a parallel effort of our own upon lines calculated to appeal to the American consumer" (Lupton and Miller 1989, 44).

Lupton and Miller attribute the eclectic quality of Modernism in American design to the very fact that it was filtered to American audiences through the transient media of fashion and interior design magazines. More specifically, they claim that European Modernism was deployed "as a range of stylistic options, without the weighty dogmas that characterized the various 'isms' of the avant-garde" (Lupton and Miller 1989, 45).

According to Lorraine Wild (1989), the link between present-day graphic design and its Modernist antecedents is so close that it is largely unquestioned. The contemporary definition of graphic design as a conceptual activity was largely shaped by the artists and designers of the European avant-garde, who, in the years just before and after World War I, challenged traditional notions of cultural and
artistic production. But when Modernism was finally integrated into common design practices in America, both its aesthetic and conceptual bases were significantly altered. The incorporation of Modernism into American graphic design can be characterized by the transference of the visual aesthetic—as opposed to the ideological framework. According to Wild, "European avant-garde art was typically explained to Americans in terms of its aesthetics; the complex ideology that propelled most of it was omitted" (Wild 1989, 159).

According to Raymond Williams, European Modernism proposed a new kind of art for a new society.

The avant-garde, aggressive from the beginning, saw itself as the breakthrough to the future: its members were not the bearers of a progress already repetitiously defined, but the militants of a creativity which would revive and liberate humanity (Williams 1988, 3).

Though the movement was made up of many individuals and groups, who were often isolated, their varying practices shared an emphasis on creativity, the rejection of tradition and an anti-bourgeois ideology. According to Williams, "bourgeois," in all its rich range of meanings and ambiguities, is key to the many movements which claimed to be its opposite. "Hostile or indifferent or merely vulgar, the bourgeois was the mass which the creative artist must either ignore and circumvent, or now increasingly shock, deride and attack" (Williams 1988, 5).
But despite their anti-bourgeois ideology, certain techniques were incorporated into the conventions of commercial art. Indeed, the discourse on advertising art shares with Modernism the rhetoric of endless innovation. But according to Williams, "instead of revolt there is the planned trading of spectacle, itself significantly mobile and, at least on the surface, deliberately disorientating" (Williams 1988, 14). Williams reminds us that despite their anti-bourgeois ideology, the politics of the avant-garde could go either way.

The new art could find its place either in a new social order or in a culturally transformed but otherwise persistent and recuperated old order. All that was quite certain, from the first stirrings of modernism through to the most extreme forms of the avant-garde, was that nothing could stay quite as it was: that the internal pressures and the intolerable contradictions would force radical changes of some kind (Williams 1988, 15).

Although Modernism was incorporated in various American magazines and advertisements in the 1920s, American Modernism came into its own in the 1930s with the emigration of European designers who fled their homelands for political reasons and the lure of the American market. Indeed, before the wave of European emigration in the 1930s, there was little connection between the appearance of Modernist tendencies in advertising and any identifiable American avant-garde practice. "When truly modern graphic design did start surfacing, by the mid-to-late 1930s, its strongest
expressions were to be found in the work of European émigrés who had arrived in America during that decade" (Wild 1989, 161).

According to Ashley Havinden (1956), by the early 1930s, the zest for dynamic expression for its own sake gradually gave way to a more ordered approach as the principles of rationalism and functionalism were increasingly understood.

When these principles had been thoroughly digested we began to see simple direct statements in pictures and type--their outward form arising out of the inner requirements of their parts, as in modern architecture, where the external asymmetric appearance is the result of the interior planing (Havinden 1956, 14).

The Modern point of view is to design inside out, as opposed to the traditional, which is a tendency to impose a pre-conceived solution to a problem by designing from the outside in. The asymmetric appearance of the new typography in advertising was typical of this new approach to design.

Such advertisements were devoid of nostalgic decorative association from the past. Photographic snapshots and bold sans serif letters were used in preference to drawings and old face display types. The emphasis was on efficient statement; since their symbols were contemporary, they demanded no derivative culture in order to be understood (Havinden 1956, 14).

As such, the incorporation of Modernism in advertising art served to initiate the public into the terms of modernity, while cutting it off from history and nature. As Carey observes, "Advertising, as an oligopolistic structure of knowledge, generates continuous change and obsolescence,
in which time is destroyed and the right to tradition is lost" (Carey 1989b, 169). Advertisements show the public how to fit into a ready-made industrial society. In this sense, advertising is the language of transformation—a language which resolves the contradictions brought on by industrial capitalism, provides for the demands for a richer life, but does not question the domination of the productive processes by corporate monopolies. Indeed, Arnold Hauser writes, "The social tendencies art serves can scarcely ever be seen unconcealed and unsublimated—that is of the essence of the ideological mode of expression, which, if it is to achieve its aims, cannot afford to call a child by its proper name" (Hauser 1958, 22-3).

As the "official art" of consumer culture advertising presents a naturalized picture of social conditions. The reification of the social relations of domination in bourgeois society—the thing that goes-without-saying—is possible in advertising art because as a commodity, the form and content of a art can only have a political tendency. As Walter Benjamin writes in his essay, "The Author As Producer," "Rather than ask, 'What is the attitude of a work to the relations of production of its time?' I should like to ask, 'What is its position in them?"' (Benjamin 1986, 222).

As such, Benjamin moves the focus of art's role and function from reception to that of production. As a process of
production, art has a political immediacy. The autonomy of aesthetics and the institution of art can be ruptured by revolutionary form and content only if art can also demonstrate the process of its own political practice. Indeed, this study of the discourse on advertising art reveals that the advertising world mediates all forms of political and personal expression. The political nature of the anti-bourgeois avant-garde art and the manifest relations of advertising and the economic order are both effectively dissolved in a solution that appeals to our aesthetic sensibilities rather than to our political sensibilities. In essence, advertising puts our relations to the means of production at a distance, while privileging our relations to an artificial economy of symbols.

Future Research

This study represents part of a larger body of research that I had assumed would be part of my dissertation. In addition to the discussion of the discourse on advertising art, I have also collected primary sources consisting of almost 1000 examples of advertisements from the 1920s, and another 500-600 articles from the popular press on art, advertising and the social conditions of the period. Indeed, one of the most difficult aspects of pulling together this project was editing out elements that were originally conceived and written as context for a much larger project,
one that would encompass a much broader cultural history of art, advertising and society in America during the 1920s.

Perhaps because of this, some parts of this study seem to wander a bit from the narrow focus of the primary data, or seem to invite speculation on broader social and cultural aspects that are not supported by the discourse on art in the trade publications. What is clear is that the discussion of advertising, art and Modernism in both the advertising trade publications and in the popular press increase in number toward the later part of the decade. This would indicate that the 1930s would be a fruitful focus for further study. Further analysis of the discourse on advertising art in the 1920s and other periods could also make more out of the visual content of the trade publications. In most cases, the reproduction of advertisements (with captions) that accompanied the articles were superfluous ornamentation. However, a more rigorous analysis is necessary. Finally, the other writings of W. Livingston Larned provide the possibility of further insight into the author, his writings, the industry and its practices during the period.

It is interesting that Raymond Williams and James Carey first published significant articles on advertising and culture in 1960 (Williams 1980, 170-95; Carey 1989, 11-26). Yet, since that time, only a few writers have followed their lead. By taking advertising as a major form of modern social
communication, we may find that we can understand our society and culture in new ways.
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