A STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS OF TELEVISION ADVERTISING

THESIS

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By

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This structural analysis examined fourteen television commercials using a method developed by Claude Levi-Strauss. The commercials were divided into two product groups, restaurant and cleaning products advertising, which made up the "myths" to be analyzed. Binary oppositions in each myth were identified and, according to the methodology, charted to reveal new relationships, and ultimately the hidden messages in the advertising. This study confirmed that television advertising does function in our society much the same as myth does in the primitive societies studied by Levi-Strauss. It offers answers to problems and upholds the existing order of things in that society, and it may function on more than one level to convey its messages.
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CHAPTER I

THE STONE

Introduction

Is it like the sculpture lurking in the stone, waiting, to be released by interface, by the shock of encounter with some other word or instrument?1

Marshall McLuhan

Persuasion is an often used term, yet it is a process that is understood by few. The ability to persuade is generally acknowledged as "influence" that results from an understanding of deep human beliefs, values, and attitudes. In an attempt to explain how these persuasive anchors (hidden much like the sculpture in the stone) may be used to influence, change, or move people, theories like those of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and Festinger's Cognitive Dissonance Theory were developed. These theories and others failed, however, to explain the deeper, inherent structures from which the anchors emanate. Using a structuralist methodology that relies upon identification of relationships like that of the instrument to the stone, this thesis investigates how one of modern society's most pervasive forms of persuasive communication, television advertising, works in those structures to effect its messages.
Advertising very blatantly admits that its intent is that of persuasion. "It is concerned with the use of symbols to effect the exchange of values," British Structuralist Varda Leymore wrote. "As such, it is the focal point of the two most important communication processes in any society--the exchange of signs and the exchange of money, goods and services." Advertising was chosen for study (as opposed to campaign speaking, or film, or literature, for example) because it is, in Leymore's words, "a communication system par excellence." And, as a communication system, it functions in much the same manner as myth. Anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss defined the purpose of myth as that of providing a logical model capable of overcoming contradictions. Myth and advertising both present potential conflicts and then scan the available answers to the problem before providing the answer, or answers, that best fit the prevailing modes of behavior, the accepted beliefs, attitudes and values of that particular society. Television advertising may, on the surface, appear to be "hard sell" persuasion, encouraging a change of habit or tastes, but, in reality, it is conservative and tends to reinforce the status quo. Whether offering new products to try, or encouraging use of old ones, advertising couches its persuasive appeals in terms of group norms and uses familiar themes and easily recognizable symbols.
Advertising acts like myth to reduce anxiety. It re-states the basic problems of humanity and then offers a solution to them. To be socially acceptable, for example, a consumer need only use a particular toothpaste or deodorant. To be protected from catastrophe, he need only purchase the right brand of insurance or smoke detectors. For financial stability, attendance at a certain trade school or monthly deposits in a local savings and loan association will keep the consumer secure. To the human problems like social acceptance, security, and stability, advertising offers simple answers. "And," Leymore added, "the more anxious, confused and uncertain, and bewildered a society becomes, the stronger will be the role played by advertising."6

The similarities between television advertising and myth determined the choice of a structuralist methodology for this study. The specific approach used is that of Claude Lévi-Strauss, an anthropologist who studied myth among pre-literate tribes in South America. Other structuralists, like Eco and Metz, have worked in the area of film and television, but did not deal specifically with myth. Their emphasis on visuals, however, influenced the decision to examine the audio-visual aspect of the commercials as well as the dialogue of the advertising.
A structural analysis of television advertising was selected as a topic partially because there seemed to be little published work in this particular area, and because there were indications that the advertising industry itself was trying to encourage advertising research to expand beyond its traditional emphasis on economic data and mathematical abstractions. A former president of the American Association for Public Opinion Research, Leo Bogart, urged the industry not to lose sight of what he termed "human truths." He encouraged the enlistment of cultural critics, historians, and psychiatrists to study advertising influence on the public's conscious aspirations and unconscious motives. "We should be probing the symbolism evoked by the modes and scenes depicted in advertising to see what impact they have had on the national character." As our most pervasive reading, listening, and viewing matter, he claimed, advertising and its characteristic way of illustrating and talking about things has created a new world of myth designed to reach millions of Americans.

Purpose

The intent of this thesis is to do a structuralist analysis of selected contemporary American television advertising in order to determine if advertising, like
myth, reveals the structures of the unconscious mind as defined by Claude Lévi-Strauss, and to determine if it reveals a system of relationships by which mankind learns to cope with reality. While looking at "what" is meant by the advertising, this thesis also examines through its methodology the "how" of advertising, that is, how this communication system works.

Survey of the Literature

In surveying the literature about the use of structural analysis in television advertising, the following indexes were consulted: Dissertation Abstracts, Television and Human Behavior: A Guide to the Pertinent Scientific Literature, Theatre/Drama and Speech Index, Bibliographic Annual of Speech Communication, and Speech Monographs.

The indexes consulted revealed little study done in the area of structural analysis of mass media. The Dissertation Abstracts did indicate that a rhetorical critic, James Hoban, Jr., had used the structuralist concepts to analyze myth in public address. He examined the anthropological, sociological, psychological, and philosophical theories of myth with specific reference to the acceptance speech and inaugural address of Richard M. Nixon. These speeches, Hoban said in his dissertation, "The Structure of Myth in Rhetorical Criticism," were part
of the initiation ritual of an American leader. Another structuralist study, "Ambiguity: A Structuralist Approach to Meaning and Form in the Visual Arts," by William Tucker, investigated the need for methods of art criticism that would take into account the sometimes paradoxical aspects of art. Tucker suggested that structuralism as defined by Roland Barthes might supply the art critic with a semiotic system to examine "meaning" and ambiguity in the visual arts. Calvin Pryluck studied the "sign system" and applied it to motion pictures and television in order to understand the system of image communication. Other dissertations working within the realm of structuralism included "An Analysis of the Four Silent Films of Sergei Mikhailovich Eisenstein," by John Kupier, Jr., and "Understanding Film as a Process of Change: A Metalanguage for the Study of Film," by Christian Koch.

In studying Hollywood film genre, Thomas Schatz extended the concepts proposed by Ernst Cassirer, Claude Lévi-Strauss, and others, defining myth according to its function as a formalized conceptual structure which celebrates collective attitudes and values, thereby projecting an idealized cultural self-image. "Hollywood Film Genre as Ritual: A Theoretical and Methodological Inquiry" attempted to construct a general "grammar" of those speech patterns manifested in Hollywood film genres.
Three books offered a "sampler" of structuralist works using the variations of method in applications to the numerous human social phenomena embraced by structuralism: anthropology, sociology, political science, economics, psychology, literature, history, linguistics, and the fine arts. Terrence Hawkes' book Structuralism and Semiotics provides a good, basic definition of the movement, particularly with regard to the fields of linguistics, anthropology, and literature. This book also includes an excellent bibliography. Introduction to Structuralism, by Michael Lane, includes introductory remarks for the rank beginner in structuralism, as well as a section for the more advanced student. Lane's anthology includes excerpts from works by the better known scholars of structuralism. These excerpts cover a wider variety of subject topics than covered by Hawkes. Finally, The Languages of Criticism and the Sciences of Man: The Structuralist Controversy, edited by Richard Macksey and Eugenio Donato, is a collection of papers and discussions compiled from the proceedings of an international symposium of the same title. It does not offer much in the way of explanatory remarks and therefore would be more suited to an advanced study of structuralism. Although there is
some overlap in selection of authors in this collection
and in the Lane anthology, it does emphasize the versa-
tility and universality of the method.\textsuperscript{17}

Structuralist literature in four areas, linguistics, anthropolo-
gy, literature, and film, provides insight to the development of structuralist thought and the possibili-
ties of its application to television advertising analysis. Each of the four fields tends to be regarded almost synonymously with that field's outstanding structuralist proponent. For example, in linguistics Ferdinand de Saussure is often identified as the founding father of the method as we generally understand it today. His book \textit{Cours de linguistique générale} (Course in General Linguis-
tics) provides innovative vision of language as a collective institution, and an equally innovative way of studying it.\textsuperscript{18} The book, reconstructed from Saussure's lecture notes, identifies the subject matter of linguistics as "all manifestations of human speech" and directs the scope of linguistics to determine the forces that are permanently and universally at work in all language, and to deduce the general laws to which all specific historical phenomena can be reduced. Identifying language as a system of signs, Saussure defined the study of signs as semiology.\textsuperscript{19} These linguistic signs pertaining to the dual aspects of concept
and sound-image (signified and signifier) he characterized as a system of signs that express ideas.

The best known proponent of the structuralist method in anthropology, Claude Lévi-Strauss, indicated in Le Cru et le cuit (The Raw and the Cooked) that structuralist thought seeks its structures not on the surface, at the level of the observed, but below or behind empirical reality.20 Lévi-Strauss felt that there is in man an innate, genetically transmitted, and determined mechanism that acts as a structuring force. Lévi-Strauss's Structural Anthropology sets out one of the better known aspects of the Lévi-Strauss method of determining relationships by setting up "binary oppositions."21 Other Lévi-Strauss works that support and define his particular approach to structuralism are Tristes Tropiques22 and The Savage Mind.23

The Lévi-Strauss method of analysis has been the topic of several books. The most notable include From Symbolism to Structuralism,24 by James A. Boon, The Domestication of the Savage Mind, by Jack Goody, Claude Lévi-Strauss,26 by Edmund Leach, and Claude Lévi-Strauss, An Introduction,27 by Octavio Paz.

In the field of literature, Roland Barthes also defined himself as a structuralist in "The Structuralist Activity." Structural man, Barthes said, takes the real, decomposes it,
then recomposes it, and in that recomposing something new occurs. More of Barthes' structuralist definitions were found in *Image-Music-Text* and *Mythologies*. Other structuralists of significance in the literary field include Roman Jakobson, author of *Main Trends in the Science of Language*; A.J. Greimas, "Elements of a Narrative Grammar;" Vladimir Propp, "The Morphology of the Folktale;" and Michael McGuire, "Mythic Rhetoric in *Mein Kampf*.

More recently, the structuralist method has been applied to the analysis of film. One of the best known works in this area is *Film Language: A Semiology of the Cinema*, by Christian Metz. Echoing the work of Saussure, Metz said that a structural analysis of film would be concerned with the structure of both the images and sounds, the form of the signifier, and that of emotions and ideas, the form of the signified.

The Lévi-Strauss approach has produced articles like "Myth, Meaning, and Message in *Triumph of the Will*," and "Structural Analysis of Myth in *Annie Hall*," both by Victoria O'Donnell. *Annie Hall* was also the subject of a structural study done by Thomas Schatz, "*Annie Hall* and the Issue of Modernism."

Schatz also did a structural study involving more than just one film in "The Structural Influence: New Direction
in Film Genre Study." Will Wright also studied "genre" films in his book \textit{Six Guns and Society: A Structural Study of the Western}. Horizons West, by Jim Kitses, and \textit{The Sixgun Mystique}, by John Cawalti, were also structuralist genre studies.

Structuralists have naturally seemed to move from film into television, but have been slow in making the transition. \textit{Reading Television}, written in 1978, lends itself to a discussion of semiotics in that medium. \textit{Hidden Myth}, by Varda Langholz Leymore, applies the Lévi-Strauss method of analysing structure to British television advertising. "No society exists without some form of myth," she wrote, "and a society which is based on the economy of mass production and mass consumption will evolve its own myth in the form of the commercial." Since structuralism is embraced by so many fields and involves such variety of interpretation, a number of materials were consulted to reinforce and clarify some of the basic structuralist concepts. Some of these works included \textit{The Structural Revolution}, by Jean-Marie Benoist; "What is Structuralism?", by Peter Caws; "The Analysis of Structure," by Umberto Eco; "The Elite and the Conspiracy," by Donald G. MacRae; \textit{The Concept of}
Structuralism: A Critical Analysis, 50 by Phillip Pettit; "Interview" 51 by Claude Lévi-Strauss; and The Quest for Mind, by Howard Gardner. 52

Film studies using structuralism reflected the variations on the structuralist theme, and exposed a controversy in the film industry over the validity of structuralism. The uses of structuralism in the film were extolled in works like The Language and Technique of the Film, 53 by Gianfranco Bettetini; "Christian Metz and the Semiology of the Cinema," 54 by Alfred Guzetti; "Linguistics, Structuralism and Semiology," 55 by John G. Hanhardt and Charles Harpole; and "Methodological Propositions for the Analysis of Film," 56 by Christian Metz. Critical works reviewed were "The English Cine-Structuralists" 57 and "Shall We Deport Lévi-Strauss?" 58 both by Charles V. Eckert; and "Critique of Cine-Structuralism," 59 by Brian Henderson.

Background information and definitions of myth, modern and ancient, were found in "Myth and Society" in The Hero with a Thousand Faces, 60 by Joseph Campbell; "The Mythology of Television," 61 by Maury Green; "Mythology and the Criticism of Broadcasting," in Beyond the Wasteland: The Criticism of Broadcasting, 62 by Robert R. Smith; and "Problems in the Semiotic Study of Mythology," in Soviet Semiotics, 63 by D. M. Segal.
For background information on advertising, sources such as the "Proceedings of the Annual Conference of the American Academy of Advertising,"64 edited by Gordon E. Miracle, and George Gallup's article "How Advertising Works"65 were reviewed. Three sources were philosophical-sociological studies: "Where Does Advertising Go From Here?"66 by Leo Bogart, The Image,67 by Daniel J. Boorstin, and Advertising and Society,68 edited by Yale Brozen. Two British advertising studies were examined: Hidden Myth,69 by Varda L. Leymore, and a linguistic study entitled English in Advertising,70 by Geoffrey N. Leech.

MacRae; Television: The Critical View\textsuperscript{,80} by Horace Newcomb; "Which Way Reality?\textsuperscript{,81} by Caryl Rivers; Communications\textsuperscript{82} and Culture and Society,\textsuperscript{83} both by Raymond Williams; and Television and Human Behavior,\textsuperscript{84} by George Comstock, Steven Chaffee, Nathan Katzman, Maxwell McCombs, and Donald Roberts, were also reviewed.

The available literature on the various aspects of this thesis indicated that there was sufficient resource material to successfully complete a study of this nature.

Procedure

The television advertising examined was a random selection of restaurant and cleaning product commercials videotaped during March 1980. Each product type has been represented by seven commercials. The first group includes Red Lobster, Captain D's, Sonic Drive-In, McDonald's, Church's Fried Chicken, Wendy's Hamburgers, and Dairy Queen "fast food" restaurants. The second group consists of advertising for Pine-Sol, SOS Pads, Ty-D-Bol, Dynamo, Ajax, and Tide (two). These product groups were studied for visual presentation as well as dialogue. The individual advertisements were randomly ordered to form each myth. Each myth was then examined for binary oppositions and then the oppositions were charted diachronically and synchronically as indicated by the methodology.
Method

The charting of binary oppositions to form a grid that can be read to determine underlying meaning is characteristic of the Lévi-Strauss structural analysis. Lévi-Strauss likened the method to studying a musical score to determine its repetition of units, harmony, progression, and discord. Lévi-Strauss determined the common feature of the structural relations of the elements and then placed them in columns while keeping the chronology of the myth running across in rows. In this manner, he reorganized myth according to motifs and themes rather than time. He said, "Were we to tell the myth we would disregard the columns and read the rows from left to right and from top to bottom. But if we want to understand the myth, then we will have to disregard one half of the diachronic dimension (top to bottom) and read from left to right, column after column, each one being considered as a unit."

These binary oppositions express social reality, Lévi-Strauss said, and once charted and reduced will reveal certain cultural truths. In determining the binary structures and showing how their relationships are capable of transformation by relating the opposing terms to another term or set of terms which share a single trait, a reductive process is developed which reveals the term
or terms of mediation which permit an opposition to be dissolved or transcended. In this process is found a mediation of contradictions into resolutions of conflict. For example, Lévi-Strauss studied three Salish myths that alone appeared meaningless. When these myths were broken into oppositions like water, moving or stagnant, or from earth or sky; women created from food or producing it themselves; raw or cooked food; women available or opposed to marriage; and then placed upon a grid they revealed sociological, economical, and cosmological systems. These systems worked to establish correspondences between the distribution of fish in the water network, the markets where goods were exchanged, and their periodicity in time and during the fishing season. It also established the rules for exogamy, for, as Lévi-Strauss observed, the women were exchanged like foodstuffs between groups.88

The methodology was tempered somewhat by the Leymore study of advertising. For example, Leymore discovered, apparently by trial and error, that a true advertising system did not consist of all the advertisements of one brand, but required input from competitive brands of the same product type. Lévi-Strauss set the example for this determination by examining all known versions of one
particular myth. What Leymore has done here is to establish the product type, rather than the brand, as the "myth."

"All societies, modern and ancient, literate and illiterate, yield, once the key is found, the essential underlying unit of symbolic function of the mind," Leymore wrote. As Lévi-Strauss suggested, Leymore also found that the contents of a myth may vary from society to society, but the forms and ability to think remain the same.

The specifics of the structural method will be explained in more detail in Chapter II.

Using the system of charting binary opposition, this thesis seeks to uncover the structures of the human mind and determine what messages may be "lurking" in American television advertising. It attempts to determine the relationships like that of the stone to an instrument (chisel/typewriter) or word (formless/ordered) and release the sculpture within.

Design

This thesis consists of four chapters. Chapter I has given an introduction to the subject, statement of purpose, survey of the literature, procedure for the study, and a brief description of the method used to analyze the
advertising. Chapter II includes an explanation of the
development of structuralist thought and of the Lévi-
Strauss method of analysis. Chapter III includes the
actual analysis of two product fields, and Chapter IV
contains the summary and conclusion of the study. Appendix
I provides dialogue scripts from the advertisements and
Appendix II is a structuralist glossary.
Notes


3Leymore, p. viii.


5Leymore, p. x.

6Leymore, p. x.


8Bogart, p. 9.


11Calvin Pryluck, "Sources of Meaning in Motion Pictures and Television," Diss. The University of Iowa, 1973.


Saussure, p. 16.


Lévi-Strauss, see fn. 4.


44 Leymore. See fn. 1.

45 Leymore, p. 156.


Robert R. Smith, "Mythology and the Criticism of Broadcasting," *Beyond the Wasteland: The Criticism of


66 Bogart, see fn. 7.


69 Leymore, see fn. 1.


71 M. C. Emery and T. C. Smythe, eds. Readings in Mass Communications (Dubuque, Iowa: W. C. Brown, 1974).


73 John Carden, "Reality and Television: An Interview with Dr. Edmund Carpenter," Television Quarterly, 10, No. 1 (Fall 1972), 42-46.


82 Raymond Williams, *Communications* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1966).


86 Lévi-Strauss, *The Raw*, p. 3.
88 Lévi-Strauss, "Interview," pp. 48-49.
89 Leymore, P. ix.
CHAPTER II

WAITING TO BE RELEASED

Structuralism has been described as an intellectual movement, a method, and an activity. It has been said that to be human is to be a structuralist.¹ If we are, in fact, all structuralists, then perhaps a more complete definition of the term and a survey of the early roots of the movement would facilitate an understanding of the breadth and depth of structuralism and how it enables us to deal with reality.

"Structuralism," "structuralist," "structure" all seem to come from our daily use of language. We tend to define it in terms of building, framing, or solidarity. In Webster New World Dictionary there is another reference that defines structure as the "arrangement or interrelation of all the parts of a whole."² Relation or relationship is the key to understanding structuralism.

The earliest roots of the movement were in linguistics and anthropology. From there is spread to a variety of fields and across many disciplines. Basically, in all these areas of study, the most distinctive feature of the structuralist method is in its emphasis on wholes, or totalities. That is, that an object, concept, or word,
does not have meaning by itself, but rather gets its meaning from its relationship with other things. It is fundamentally a way of thinking about a world predominantly concerned with perception and description.3

In 1725 Giambattista Vico proposed a new science that he defined as a "science of the human society."4 In his book, The New Science, he maintained that primitive man was not childishly ignorant and barbaric, but was instead instinctively and characteristically poetic in his response to the world. Man, he claimed, possessed an inherent "poetic wisdom: (sapienza poetica) which informed his responses to his environment and cast them into the form of a "metaphysics" of metaphor, symbol and myth.5 For example, he felt that this poetic nature revealed that the apparently fanciful accounts of creation and the foundation of social institutions in early society were not primitive responses to reality, but were serious cognitive ways of coping with reality.

Vico's physics of man revealed that men have created themselves and thus become characteristically "makers," or according to the Greeks, "poets." The new science became a study of this making or poeticizing process. But, not only did the poet create societies, Vico wrote, these in the end created him; i. e., humanity is a consequence,
an effect, a product of institution building. As man has constructed the myths, social institutions, and virtually the whole world as he perceives it, he also constructs himself. The making process involves the continual creation of recognizable and repeated forms which can now be termed a process of structuring.6

Structuralist Jean Piaget took the concept one step further and argued that structure could be observed in an arrangement of entities which embodies these fundamental ideas: the idea of wholeness, the idea of transformation, and the idea of self-regulation. Wholeness refers to the sense of internal coherence in which the constituent parts conform to a set of intrinsic laws which determine the nature of that concept. These constituent parts then have no genuinely independent existence outside the structure in the same form that they have within it. Transformational procedures insure that the structure is not static, but has laws which act to make it not only a structure, but structuring. For example, language, a basic human structure, is capable of transforming various fundamental sentences into a wide variety of new utterances while retaining these within its own particular structure. The structure is, lastly, self-regulating in the sense that it makes no appeals beyond itself in order to validate its transformational procedures. Again, language does not
construct its formations of words by reference to the patterns of reality, but on the basis of its own internal and self-sufficient rules. The word "dog" exists, and functions within the structure of the English language, without reference to any particular four-legged, barking creature's real existence. The word's behavior derives from its inherent structural status as a noun rather than its referent's actual status as an animal. Structures are characteristically closed in this way.7

As said before, structuralism is fundamentally a way of thinking about the world which is predominantly concerned with the perception and description of structures. The "new" perception involves the realization that, despite appearances to the contrary, the world does not consist of independently existing objects, whose concrete features can be perceived clearly and individually, and whose nature can be classified accordingly. In fact; every perceiver's method of perceiving can be shown to contain an inherent bias which affects what is perceived to a significant degree. A wholly objective perception of individual entities is therefore not possible: Any observer is bound to create something of what he observes. Therefore, the relationship between observer and observed achieves a kind of primacy. It becomes the only thing that
can be observed. It becomes the basis of reality itself. Hence, the true nature of things may be said to lie not in things themselves, but in the relationships which we construct, and then perceive between them.  

This concept, that the world is made up of relationships rather than things, constitutes the first principle of that way of thinking which is called "structuralist." At its simplest, it claims that the nature of every element in any given situation has no significance by itself, and in fact is determined by its relationship to all the other elements involved in that situation. In short, the full significance of any entity or experience cannot be perceived unless and until it is integrated into the structure of which it forms a part. Ultimately, structuralist thinking seeks the permanent structures into which individual human acts, perception and stances fit, and from which they derive their final nature.

This search for the structure of the mind itself has been carried on by structuralists in the fields of anthropology, sociology, political science, economics, psychology, literature, history, linguistics, and the fine arts.

The specific structuralist methodology used in this thesis was developed by an anthropologist who applied Vico's concepts of "poetic wisdom" to the study of the
myth-making wisdom of primitive South American tribes. Using linguistically-based methods, Claude Lévi-Strauss developed a system of charting and analyzing the relationships of the myths. Language is the distinctive feature that distinguishes man from the animals and is the phenomenon whereby all forms of social life are established and perpetuated. "Myth," Lévi-Strauss wrote, "is language: to be known myth has to be told; it is a part of human speech."

At first glance a myth may appear to be full of contradiction. For example, it may appear that anything can happen. There may not be apparent logic or continuity to the story, and any characteristic may be attributed to any subject. Although the content of a specific myth may be contingent upon a specific culture, Lévi-Strauss, using his method of structural analysis, discovered that on a deeper level myths of widely different regions do closely resemble each other.

Lévi-Strauss proposed that meaning lies not in the isolated elements of the myth that vary from culture to culture, but rather in the relationship of the various elements in the story to one another. In determining these relationships and analyzing their resulting structures Lévi-Strauss was able to understand the reasons for the universal similarities in myth. He felt
that such analysis indicated that there is in man an 
"innate, genetically transmitted and determined mechanism 
that acts as a structuring force."\(^{13}\)

In his work, Lévi-Strauss found that language in 
myth revealed specific properties which were only identified 
above the ordinary linguistic level. That is, these 
properties exhibit more complex features than those found 
in linguistic expression.\(^{14}\) To account for these more 
complex features and the problems of revertible (synchronic) 
and non-revertible (diachronic) time in myth, Lévi-Strauss 
hypothesized that "the true constituent units of a myth 
are not the isolated relations, but bundles of such rela-
tions and it is only as bundles that these relations can 
be put to use and combined so as to produce a meaning."\(^{15}\)

For example, he cites an orchestra score, where, after 
trying to decipher staffs one after another, from the 
upper down to the lower, a non-music reading person may 
ultimately notice that the same patterns were reminiscent 
of previous ones. One might treat similar patterns as one 
complex pattern rather than attempting to simply read them 
in succession. In the creations of this "harmony," it 
becomes evident that to be meaningful, the score has to be 
read diachronically along one axis, page after page, and 
from left to right, as well as read synchronically along
the other axis with all the notes written vertically making up one gross constituent unit, or a "bundle" of relations.¹⁶

To illustrate this orchestral example Lévi-Strauss decoded a "score" of the Oedipus Myth. The myth, treated as a unilinear series, was then reestablished in its correct disposition. That is, if confronted with a sequence of 1, 2, 4, 7, 8, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 1, 4, 5, 7, 8, we would attempt to classify all the one's together, all the two's, all the three's, and so on until a charted information is seen thus:

\[
\begin{array}{ccc}
1 & 2 & 4 \\
2 & 3 & 4 \\
1 & 4 & 5 \\
\end{array}
\]

Performing this same type of operation on the Oedipus myth, he established through a trial-and-error process certain gross constituent units that relied on principles he said defined the basis for any kind of structural analysis. These units he defined as economy of explanation, unity of solution, and ability to reconstruct the whole from a fragment, as well as further stages from previous ones.¹⁷
After determining the units on a sentence level, his final arrangement of the myth looked like this:

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<th>I</th>
<th>II</th>
<th>III</th>
<th>IV</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kadmos seeks his sister</td>
<td>The Spartoi kill each other</td>
<td>Kadmos Kills the dragon</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Europa Ravished by Zeus</td>
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<tr>
<th>Labdacos (Laios' father)</th>
<th>= lame (?)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Laios (Oedipus' father)</td>
<td>= left sided (?)</td>
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<td>Oedipus kills the Sphinx</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Oedipus married his mother Jocasta</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Eteocles kills his brother Polynices</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Oedipus = swollen-foot (?)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Antigone buries her brother Polynices despite prohibition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

The four vertical columns contained, he said, several relations belonging to the same bundle. To be able to "tell" the myth, however, these columns would be disregarded
and would be read from left to right as a page in a book is normally read, working from the top to the bottom.

But, Lévi-Strauss said, to "understand" the myth one half of the diachronic dimension (top to bottom) must be disregarded and the myth read from left to right, column after column, each one being considered as a unit.

His analysis of the common feature of each column revealed that the events in the first column had something to do with blood relations which were "overemphasized" or subject to more intimate treatment than they should be. Whereas the first column expressed an overrating of blood relations, the second column expressed an inverted version: underrating of blood relations. The third column referred to the slaying of monsters. In the fourth column, utilizing the connotation of the surnames in Oedipus' father's line, Lévi-Strauss found the common feature to be a reference to difficulties to walk and behave in a straight manner.

The first two columns expressed an easily recognizable relationship, that of blood relations, but the relationship of the last two columns was somewhat more obscure. Lévi-Strauss identified the common feature of the third column as the denial of the autochthonous origin of man.¹⁹

What is seen is that column four is to column three as one is to column two. Lévi-Strauss summarized: "The inability to connect two kinds of relationships is overcome
(or rather replaced) by the positive statement that contradictory relationships are identical inasmuch as they are both self-contradictory in a similar way."

This provisional formulation of the structure of mythical thought allows a new perspective of the Oedipus myth. The myth deals with the inability of culture, which believes that mankind is autochthonous, to find satisfactory transition between this theory and the knowledge that humans are born from the union of man and woman. The Oedipus myth does not solve this dilemma, but replaces it with the questions: Born from one or from two? Born from different or same? This type of correlation illustrates that the overrating of blood relations is to the underrating of blood relations as is the attempt to deny autochthony is to the attempt to succeed in it. Lévi-Strauss concluded, "Although experience contradicts theory, social life verifies the cosmology by its similarity of structure. Hence cosmology is true." 

This method of interpreting myth also eliminates problems of dealing with the "true" versions of the Oedipus myth, which included incidents like Jocasta killing herself and Oedipus piercing his own eyes. These elements, Lévi-Strauss noted, also fit into the matrix under "autodestruction" (column three) and "crippledness" (column four). "We
define the myth as consisting of all its versions," he said. There is no one true version of the myth, but all of the versions belong to the myth.

Lévi-Strauss' method of analysis, developed from structuralist concepts, provided new insights into anthropological research. The mythic relationships and their structure were, he felt, "more intelligible than the stories each (myth) told." While philosophic or scientific thought reasons by combining and opposing concepts, he found that mythical thought proceeds by means of images from a tangible world. Instead of formulating these relationships in the abstract, myth sets one element against the other, like sky and earth, man and woman, fresh and rotten, light and dark, or raw and cooked.

In an historical society, mythic thought functions in much the same manner as in the primitive tribes Lévi-Strauss studied. Lévi-Strauss himself cited a field study in a village in Northern Burgundy, and he suggested that research he extended to include areas like art, fashion, eating habits, conversation, creativity and evolution. "Due to their relative independence, these narrowly defined areas can bring into view, like an enlarging mirror, some significant and profound aspects of our culture," he said.

This chapter has been concerned with explaining the development and applications of structuralist methods. It
has examined in more detail the structuralist methodology used by Claude Lévi-Strauss in the analysis of the myth of primitive tribes. Using his example of the analysis of the Oedipus myth to locate and chart binary oppositions, the next chapter will examine the structures of the American cultural mind. Selected television commercials will provide the "myth" to be analyzed. The purpose of the analysis will be to uncover the deep meaning hidden in those structures, waiting to be released, from our "stone."
Notes

1Hawkes, p. 15.


3Hawkes, p. 17.

4Hawkes, p. 11.

5Hawkes, p. 12.


7Hawkes, p. 16.

8Hawkes, p. 17.

9Hawkes, p. 18.

10Lane, p. 13.

11Hawkes, p. 33.

12Lévi-Strauss, S. A., p. 84.

13Lane, p. 15.

14Lévi-Strauss, S. A., p. 86.

15Lévi-Strauss, S. A., p. 87.


17Lévi-Strauss, S. A., p. 86.


19Lévi-Strauss, S. A., p. 91. Authochthonous refers to anything native to a place, indigenous, aboriginal. In mythology, it is a universal characteristic of men when
born from the earth to lack ability to walk or to do so with grace. Lévi-Strauss listed several tribes whose mythological chthonian beings were lame with bleeding or sore feet, or limped forward, or tripped sideways.

24Lévi-Strauss, "Interview," p. 49.
CHAPTER III

THE ENCOUNTER

American television provides an excellent "mirror" to bring into focus significant cultural information about the persuasive aspects of advertising. The public use of television has evolved into a national habit and advertisers have made millions. The total hours spent by Americans each year watching television are incalculable. Advertisers produce thousands of commercials annually to pay for this "habit." The public use of and reliance on television are enormous and indicates the medium's power and influence.1

While television has become a most familiar and casual activity, it still provides fuel for serious study and analysis. Lévi-Strauss has suggested that "understanding consists in reducing one type of reality to another."2 Television does, British Researchers Fiske and Hartley found, reduce cultural experience to another, no less valid, form of reality.3

This thesis has focused only on advertising in television because work in this area seems to be limited. Only one structuralist, Varda L. Leymore, has examined advertising in a similar manner. Her book, Hidden Myth, was a four-year study of British dynamic and static advertising.4
Her study confirmed that advertising functions like myth as a resolver of potential conflicts. It was found to reinforce accepted modes of behavior by examining all the alternative solutions and then proving that the predominating answer was, for that society, in given circumstances, the best one. Advertising works as a conservative force, she said, not concerned with revolutionizing the existing order of things, but with preserving it.\(^5\)

Advertising and myth are anxiety-reducing mechanisms which re-state, on a deep level, the basic dilemmas of the human condition and then offer a solution to them. They both obey the same laws of composition and are structured in the same manner. In other words, Leymore wrote, the process of coding and decoding is identical. Advertising and myth also share some common themes. The most significant aspect of their comparison is that both obey the same laws of construction and the same rules of order and classification. Dynamic advertising has a diachronic as well as a synchronic aspect and each is repetitive and may be illustrated by many variations.\(^6\)

Although advertising structure is simpler than that of myth and lacks some of the detail of myth, it nonetheless functions as a form of myth. "It mediates between the abstract and the concrete, as well as between social values,
cultural symbols and ordinary everyday consumption behavior . . . it is a communication process and an intersection of at least two major types of communication: that of signs and that of values," Leymore wrote. "In other words, it uses the dialogue of signs to effect the exchange of values." 7

Leymore also found that advertising, like myth, has two levels: a surface manifestation, and a hidden level which underlies the familiar surface representations and endows it with meaning. The second message is not immediately apparent and may not be decodable from a single viewing. In order to view the underlying structure, the advertising must be worked into a system. This total system may divulge a message that differs from that of each isolated advertisement.

To illustrate this system and the deep structure and meaning, this thesis analyzed fourteen American television advertisements. Each product type (seven commercials each) was first broken down into minimal constituent units (considering dialogue as well as image). This procedure is much like the method used to identify phonemes, mythemes, etc. After breaking down the syntagmatic chain into units, the units were then grouped into paradigmatic classes, that is, elements which belong to the same class by virtue of a function they share.
Although it was previously noted that a myth study should take into account all known versions, it was necessary for reasons of time and space to limit the product myths to seven versions. Lévi-Strauss argued with his critics that an exhaustive inventory of myths was not necessary before beginning to analyze them. "The total body of myth belonging to a community is comparable to its speech." he said. "Unless the population dies out physically or morally, this totality is never complete." 8

To break the myth into units, the system of locating binary oppositions was used. The oppositions are relationships observed at the level of empirical reality and do not constitute the structure, but are evidence and product of the structure. Though the structure of an activity is not what is seen, it can only be derived and identified from what is seen. 9 In the structuralist sense binary oppositions indicate two mutually exhaustive categories. "Oppositions" are not used in the logician's sense of "true or false." For example, a structural anthropologist would list binary opposites into categories like married and not married. Lévi-Strauss's work The Raw and the Cooked used oppositions like fire/water, sun/moon, ant-eater/jaguar. 10 They are shown to be complementary, exhaustive, and mutually exclusive categories within specific
contexts. These binary structures may then set up new relationships that are capable of transformation by relating the opposing terms to another term or set of terms that share a single trait. "This transformation," according to Leymore, "involves the way in which signs or symbols are translated into real life action—the communication process through which advertising (the use of symbols) comes to influence the exchange of values (money, goods and service.)" Any purchasing behavior induced by advertising serves to illustrate communication effectiveness. Of course the consumer market is affected by other factors and purchasing behavior cannot be entirely attributed to advertising.

The reduction of these oppositions to other terms reveals the term or terms of mediation that allows this final opposition to be dissolved or transcended. This mediation generates the transformation of contradiction into resolutions. When the similarity between the oppositions is located, the result is meaning.

The first category examined was the fast food restaurant advertising on television. Restaurant patronization itself is an opposition to eating at home. The data for this analysis were collected and charted like the earlier Lévi-Strauss example of the Oedipus myth, and revealed the
first-level reconstruction. This level consists of the very superficial, obvious oppositions in the myth. (It may be noted at this point that the diachronic line of the myth is dropped. It is necessary only in the accumulation and charting of the data.) Many oppositions were found, but the major ones involved in unraveling the myth included the following:

First-Level Reconstruction

old
"classic" giveaway glasses
"old fashioned hamburgers"
antique store setting
durable
glasses
work
bowling for hospitalized kids
build Ronald McDonald house
for parents of sick children
construction workers,
business man, nurse
hungry (needs)
empty glass
customer rubs hands together in anticipation of chicken dinner

new
modern restaurant
plastic, chrome environment
giving away "new" glasses
disposable
serving utensils of plastic and paper
reward
win trip to Disney World
have fun bowling
enjoy lunch at Church's
satisfied
glass filled with coins, plants, ice cream
employee nods assent and allows customer to take tray with dinner on it
(hungry, (needs), continued)

"It's time for a Dude"
(sandwich)
dark outside shot of
restaurant
searching for seafood

(satisfied, continued)

family sits down to meal at
Dairy Queen
light inside shot of
restaurant and food
"Red Lobster can satisfy
the seafood lover in
you."

free

glass to keep
free Disney glasses
bowl for free

pay

with purchase of Pepsi
with purchase of drink
raise money for charity
project
patronizing Wendy's
for coming into restaurant

fantasy

talking suit of armor
Ronald McDonald Clown
Mickey Mouse cartoon poster
Disney cartoon glasses

reality

real actor
real children
children with bicycle
filled with soft drink

small

collect one glass
small children
children
small price
little seafood place

large

collect all of the glasses
pre-teen and teenagers
adults
large pieces of chicken
complete dinner

female

employee
"Peppers" at Wendy's
nurse
Mom

male

customer at counter
customer at table
business man, construction
workers
Dad

These oppositions were mediated by the restaurant
itself, the place where the impossible became possible.
The old became part of the new as "classic," durable
glasses were offered from the modern restaurant serving
food on disposable utensils. The restaurant offered reward and satisfaction for hard-working, hungry customers. Only at the restaurant could customers get something free by purchasing something else. Fantasy shared space with reality as clowns and suits of armor talked with real people. Size or sex was no problem in this special place where all sizes of children mingled with adults, and a "small" price could buy something large and satisfying. The sex roles portrayed in these advertisements indicated that this was not a speciality "club" for only one sex. The roles were, however, rather stereotypical with the men as construction workers, business men, or cowboys, while the women are employees, waitresses, "Peppers" (cheerleader types), nurses and "Moms."

These opposition set up new relationships and revealed a second level of mythic reconstruction.

Second-Level Reconstruction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>past</th>
<th>present</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;old fashioned hamburgers&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Dude&quot; sandwich (citified)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>antique store</td>
<td>Drive-In restaurant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;classic&quot; glasses</td>
<td>disposable plastic and paper utensils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;collectibles&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Start your collection today.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;countrified&quot; (home cooking)</td>
<td>Dairy Queen for the &quot;Good Times&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Can Mom be a cowboy too?&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;You Betcha!&quot; (Now she's a customer)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(traditionally she'd be the cook)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
imagination
clowns, cartoons
fabulous free prize

comfort and service in restaurant

actuality
family dining rather mundane experience
restaurant dining is more expensive than preparing food at home
production line service provides no room for individual preferences and hot (red) colors and plastic seats are not conducive to leisurely dining

lack
empty glass
no durable good families with children in hospital have no place to stay nearby snack (junk) food losers

fulfillment
variety of items fill the glass
glasses to keep bowling with McDonald's fulfills need for home away from home
complete, satisfying meal "Wendy's wants you to be a winner."
"Mom" joins whole family in "sharing" time at DQ "Let us satisfy that sea-food lover in you."

This reconstruction tells the audience that traditional values are not changing, but are part of the modern American life style. Things presented as old, durable, and classic may be traditionally considered as more valuable, but this myth tells us that those values are upheld in the paper, plastic, and chrome surrounding of the new restaurants. Concern that only a time-consuming, lovingly prepared meal can be nutritious is replaced by the realization that the
sometimes hectic pace of modern social life does not often allow for someone to watch a simmering pot all day. The myth transforms this concept and shows that "fast" food service is a necessity to meet modern nutritional needs (as well as psychological needs). The restaurant myth reinforces the value of family togetherness and replaces the dinner table at home with the red plastic booth. The conflict over paying more for restaurant food is resolved with the enticement of entertainment and free prizes. The myth fulfills the desire to be a "winner," share time with friends and family, eat well, and accumulate tangibles (glasses). The mediator for this level of reconstruction is tradition. What the myth tells us is that there really is no difference in old and new, but that the new restaurants are really only a continuation of the traditional values.

The advertising is designed to transform these "old, classic" values into modern terms (symbols). The Dairy Queen sign, the friendly smile of the waitress, the golden fried food, should convey to the audience warmth, stability, togetherness, and fulfillment.

A third-level reconstruction reveals only one important opposition.
Third-Level Reconstruction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>isolation</th>
<th>unity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>one glass</td>
<td>collection of glasses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>single male customer</td>
<td>joined by &quot;cheering&quot; females</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>little girl</td>
<td>group of children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>single patron</td>
<td>win a trip for two or four</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mom</td>
<td>family reunited at restaurant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This third level finds that the ultimate transformation, that of the restaurant as only a place to eat into a gathering place, illustrated by the final oppositions, isolation/unity. Trips for two or four people, emphasis on families, racially mixed workers and children, male and female actors all point to the fact that although life styles may change, the sanctity of the family, the need to belong to a group (I'm a Pepper!), can be furthered and strengthened by dining in a restaurant. It is a family dining place, and though it replaces home dining, it does not disturb the group. In fact, it may encourage grouping out of isolation. The concept of "going out" becomes the mediator. Just as we "go out" to celebrate, so does this concept allow us to overcome the oppositions of isolation and unity. At times we have need for and we experience both isolation and unity, but this fast food restaurant myth tends to encourage staying together while away from home.
The second myth examined for this thesis was that of
advertised cleaning products. The major surface oppositions
identified were the following:

First-Level Reconstruction

**superior**

Dynamo works better
Tide cleans better
Tide beats cleaner
Pine Sol cuts grease better
SOS cleans more and faster

**inferior**

powders are weaker
friend's detergent doesn't
  clean as well
other cleaners don't work
  as well
leading detergent doesn't
  "Nothing else cleans like
  it."
sponge
greasy food stains

**victory**

Tide "beats other brand"

Pine Sol kills germs,
  leaves scent
Ty-D-Bol is tough on . . .
Ajax powers out . . .
"No contest" for Tide

**defeat**

Pam's powder doesn't clean
  as well
germs, odors forced out

stains, odors
greasy food stains
other cleansers can't
  compete

**in**

Dynamo rubbed in
liquid poured in
dirty clothes placed in
  washing machine
pan rinsed in water
Ajax poured in
Tide placed in shopping
cart
ground in mud

**out**

stain cleaned out
grease comes out
come out clean

comes out clean
dirt scrubbed out
taken out (swiped) by clerk
dirt washed out
clean

clean clothes
scent of pines
detergent
Tide cleans
best detergent
clean pans

dishwashing liquid
Tide can clean

natural

grease
animals
soil
natural pine smell
smell of outdoors
shot of forest

greasy
fresh as outdoors

common

dirty clothes
expensive powders
powders

"Any leading brand"
"everyone else"

blue color
women without Ajax

ordinary smell (or none)
everyday laundry

dirty

children get clothes dirty
odors
chicken grease
muddy dirt
American soil
"burnt on, stuck on, splattered on messes"

 greasy dishes
ground in dirt

artificial

blue liquid product
barnyard
detergent
disinfectant "fresh" smell
Ty-D-Bol pine scent
artificial blue, green
colors of product to
simulate water and
forest
grease-free
"pine scent, green Ty-D-Bol"

unique

"It's amazing." (Dynamo)
Dynamo costs less
liquid cleaner performs two
functions, grease
remover and detergent
Pine Sol cleans grease and
kills germs
SOS, two million pads used
each day
new green color
woman pictured with shield
(power)
"smells fantastic"
"Nice surprise" with new
Tide

Again the product appeared to supply the mediator for
these first-level oppositions. Through the cleansing
action of these products less effective cleaners are shown
up and replaced by more effective, superior products; greasy stains and odors are overcome by the "power" of the product; dirty pans, clothes are placed in solution and come out clean; the normal, natural smells and abundance of dirt become uniquely disinfected, fresh, and clean.

New relationships identified among the oppositions revealed a second-level of reconstruction.

Second-Level Reconstruction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>war</th>
<th>peace</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pine Sol &quot;kills&quot; germs</td>
<td>&quot;We'll get along just fine&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;No contest for Tide&quot;</td>
<td>Pam switches to winning product</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>detergents cut, kill and power out all dirt</td>
<td>woman threatens to kill husband for getting dirty, but Dynamo cleans clothes, saves him and restores peace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cleansers prove &quot;power&quot;</td>
<td>users pledge loyalty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>condemnation</td>
<td>salvation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>odors, muddy clothes not socially acceptable (I could have killed him)</td>
<td>baptismal dunking of pans and clothing to cleanse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ground-in dirt</td>
<td>grease remover</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>burnt on, stuck on splattered-on messes</td>
<td>&quot;feeling of cleaning power&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ordinary</td>
<td>exceptional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adequate cleaner is not good enough</td>
<td>product performance is &quot;amazing&quot; and does more than one job</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;everybody else&quot;--products cleans unsatisfactorily, but don't smell as nice</td>
<td>one-of-a-kind product out cleans others and has new scent and color</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The second-level reconstruction for cleansing products reinforces a number of American values in near-Biblical form. Use of the product and its warlike attack on enemy dirt and grime produce peace in the family and ties of loyalty to friends as well as to the product. Use of the product further mediates and successfully transforms dirty clothes and household items into clean, presentable items that permit their owners to be considered clean physically and mentally ("feeling of cleaning power"). The use of the product also indicates a dissatisfaction with imperfect or flawed cleansers and initiates a desire for perfection.

This myth ultimately tells of a conflict between good and evil:

Third-Level Reconstruction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>good</th>
<th>evil</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>cleanliness is next to godliness</td>
<td>dirt, stains and odor not only offend the heavens but social America as well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>clean, white clothing</td>
<td>clothing soiled with dark spots</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Once reduced to a common denominator, the cleaning myth says quite simply that clean is good and dirt is bad, or evil. It even uses the symbolism of light and dark to emphasize this message. A clean dish or a clean bathroom is pictured as white. The mess on the dirty pans is
burned on; grease, mildew, and muddy dirt are all portrayed as dark, offending evil. These final oppositions of good/evil may not be changed or erased, but become tolerable through the knowledge that the cleansers are continuing the battle for cleanliness to triumph.

Now the encounter has been made and the sculpture appears less like stone than like clay. Instead of being chiseled, it has been developed more by rearranging the available clay.

The two myths examined by the Lévi-Strauss method of structural analysis have revealed a deep structure that has aided in determining the true meaning of the myths. Before the "rearranging" began, the commercials seemed to present a strong message even at the surface. It seemed that the restaurant advertising message emphasizing convenience and fast service would permeate the deep structure, but it didn't. The cleaning commercials were expected to have some sort of "hygienic" message, but didn't.

Many oppositions were observed but not utilized in determining the mythic meanings for the two product types. Those noted but not used may still play a part in a later analysis of these advertisement groups. This should not, however, hamper the validity of this analysis. First of all, Lévi-Strauss argued that an exhaustive inventory is not necessary since "experience proves that a linguist can
work out the grammar of a given language from a remarkably small number of sentences."\(^1\)

Secondly, he noted that technically there is a methodological problem with the study of myth. It cannot be carried out according to Cartesian principles of breaking down the difficulty into as many parts as necessary for finding the solution.

"There is no real end to mythological analysis," he wrote. "Themes can be split up \textit{ad infinitum}. Just when you think they have disentangled and separated them, you realize that they are knitting together again in response to the operation of unexpected affinities."\(^2\)

This "knitting together" of themes was particularly evident in the cleaning products advertising. The dialogue and emphasis were so similar in all seven commercials that as soon as two sets of oppositions were located, they seemed to melt into one. In some cases only a fine line seemed to separate these determinations.

Each of the product myths' final messages revealed Leymore's claim that advertising functions as a conservative force reinforcing the existing order of things. These deep messages reflect, for one, the basic belief in family togetherness and group stability. The advertising for restaurants acknowledges the anxieties of the audience and assures them that, in spite of the changing social scene, basic beliefs, attitudes, and values will prevail. The
analysis examined the surface oppositions which were mediated by the restaurant itself, and then transformed those oppositions into a second-level reconstruction. The second-level oppositions found mediation in tradition, which allowed the traditional ideas about the sanctity of the home to be transferred to the restaurant environment where the family still meets as a group to fulfill nutritional and psychological needs. The last level of reconstruction revealed a concern for the need to belong, to be accepted as a member, as opposed to being left in isolation. Through the mediating effect of 'going out' this opposition is transcended.

The second analysis, that of cleaning product advertising, revealed a deep structure with a more mystical message. The first level surface oppositions were mediated through the cleaning action of the products. The second level showed the oppositions mediated by the use of the product. Ultimately, the last-level reconstruction revealed the deep message of the myth to be expressing a concern for the triumph of good over evil. The products' promise of continued battle allowed these last oppositions to be transcended. Instead of the anticipated "clean is healthy" message, the myth's structure pointed to a deeper human concern about the forces of good and evil.
The encounter with "some other word or instrument" has set up relationships that allow the structuralist to bring the slated structures to light and then to determine the meaning of the myth.

The sculpture is finished now, but as Lévi-Strauss suggested, there is really no end to this type of analysis. So, like the artist who is never satisfied with his work, it may be remolded again some day. The substance is there and remains the same; only patient working with it will reveal more depth, more detail, more understanding of how advertising works within the structures of the mind.
Notes


2John Fiske and John Hartley, p. 70.

3John Fiske and John Hartley, p. 67.

4Leymore, see fn. 1.

5Leymore, p. x.

6Leymore, p. 154.

7Leymore, p. 155.


9Lane, p. 15.

10Lévi-Strauss, see fn. 20.

11Leymore, p. 18.


13Lévi-Strauss, The Raw, p. 5.
CHAPTER IV

THE SCULPTURE

This thesis was undertaken to establish that television advertising, like myth, yields the deeper structures of the unconscious when examined with structuralist methodology.

Chapter I defined this project as a persuasion study endeavoring to locate these inherent structures and, subsequently, to reveal the "anchors" that comprise the basis for persuasive appeal. The methodology used to elucidate these structures was a form of analysis developed by the French anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss, which identifies and then charts binary oppositions in a variety of relationships, in different layers, to reveal a hidden, or deep message. A survey of the literature revealed that structural analysis has been used in a variety of fields, but rarely in the analysis of advertising. The survey indicated that there was sufficient information to support research for the proposed study and to provide a base of information about the methodology itself, advertising, and the medium of television. The procedure for the thesis involved videotaping fourteen television advertisements, broken into two product groups (myths). The advertisements were examined for audio and visual clues, which were
charted by binary oppositions into diachronic and synchronic dimensions. The format of the thesis consists of four chapters and two appendices.

Chapter II outlined the development of structuralist thought, and focused on the specific adaptation of these concepts to myth. Using the example of an orchestra score, Lévi-Strauss "scored" the Oedipus myth and thereby provided the model for myth analysis.

Chapter III used the Lévi-Strauss methodology to examine a segment of American television advertising. What this analysis revealed was that advertising does carry more than one message. Its superficial messages to urge consumption of new products or to reinforce loyalty to old ones can be worked into structures that reveal mythic qualities and social concern. For example, the restaurant advertising revealed at a surface level oppositions like old/new, durable/disposable, work/reward, hungry/satisfied, free/pay, fantasy/reality, small/large, female/male, which were mediated by the restaurant itself and its image as a place where the impossible becomes possible. The second-level reconstruction revealed oppositions like past/present, imagination/actuality, lack/fulfillment. The second-level mediation is fulfilled by tradition; that is, the new restaurants are only a continuation of traditional values like nutritional needs, plus psychological needs, fostered
around a family dining table. The third-level reconstruction finally reveals the opposition of isolation/unity. The real concern in this advertising message is the social need for belonging. Through the mediating effect of 'going out' to dinner this opposition is also transcended. In order to belong, in order to promote the concept of family, the consumer may choose to leave the isolation of his room, office, or home and find companionship at his local gathering place, a restaurant.

The cleaning products myth began revealing oppositions like superior/inferior, victory/defeat, in/out, clean/dirty, natural/artificial, common/unique. Through the cleansing action of the advertised products these oppositions were transcended. These oppositions were then arranged into new relationships like war/peace, salvation/condemnation, and ordinary/exceptional, forming a second-level reconstruction for the cleaning product. The use of the product mediated this set of oppositions. The third reconstruction boiled down to a conflict between good/evil. Thus reduced, the message of the cleaning products is revealed to express a concern for the triumph of good over evil, and the products' pledge of continued battle against the evil allows this opposition to be transcended.

In both product groups the contradictions, or oppositions, are overcome and allowed to exist through the
advertising and the products. The mediations of such contradictions have been shown to be accomplished through conservative, socially accepted, culturally bound means.

This thesis began with a discussion of persuasion and the intent of investigating advertising as one of its forms. Understanding persuasion lies in understanding deep beliefs, attitudes, and values. It also lies in understanding the mind of man and how it functions to help mankind cope with the realities of his world. Mind is communication. It is a communication between man and himself, between man and his environment, and between man and man. Mind is "feeling and knowing. Knowing comes from the barrier of consciousness and mingle with the other contents of the deeper parts of the mind, is reflected back again like sound from the ocean floor where it breaks consciousness and modifies knowing once again."1

This study did find that advertising does operate on more than one level. On the surface it may appear optimistic, loud, and idealistic, but it does convey a valid message. On the deeper level the various parts of a single advertisement act as pieces of a jigsaw puzzle, all belonging to the same pattern, but having no meaning until put into proper relationships to reveal the whole picture.

The analysis, like the sculpture, is now finished. Through analysis of this type the advertising industry may
be able to identify why a type of commercial is successful or not successful, by uncovering the hidden messages.

Leymore suggested that someday it may be possible to start with a deep social concern and work upward to create the advertisement.

In its completed form this these reveals this message: understanding 'how' a communication works is tantamount to understand 'what' the communication means.
Notes

APPENDIX I

Captain D's

Walk in to Captain D's these days and you'll experience a classic. The classic Pepsi-Cola glass. One is yours to keep when you order any meal and a 69¢ Pepsi from Captain D's. It's not just a cola glass, it's also a milkshake glass, parfait glass, plant glass, pencil glass, an anything glass. But best of all it's also a classic Pepsi glass. Collect one, collect all you want at participating Captain D's.

(Music: Captain D's, a great little seafood place.)

Sonic Drive-In

If you're into collectibles like I am, you'll want to drop by Sonic Drive-In Restaurants and start your collection of Walt Disney glasses. There's Mickey, Goofy, Donald and Minnie. The glasses are free with the purchase of a Pepsi. So drop by any participating Sonic Restaurant today and start your collection of Mickey Mouse glasses today. And tell 'em Tom sent you.

Suit of armour replies: Tom who?

(Music: Sonic good times.)

McDonald's

Ronald McDonald (clown): You can have a ball and make other kids happy too.

Girl: Kids bowling for kids. It's a fun way you can bowl for free when you help raise money for Variety Club's Children's Charity. And you'll help build a Ronald McDonald House. That's a home away from home for families whose kids are in the hospital. You can win prizes too, even a trip for four to Disneyworld, too. Ask your participating bowling center for details.

Ronald McDonald: And you can be a kid bowling for kids.
Church's Chicken

(Music: Chicken lovers choose Church's fried chicken.)

Female employee: A lot goes into the making of a Church's dinner pack. Two large pieces of our tender, crispy fried chicken. Plus a fresh dinner roll. Hold on there's more--creamy cold slaw. Golden french fries. Ah! And a spicy jalapeno. If you're good and hungry, choose Church's dinner pack. It's a complete meal at a price that's easy to swallow.

(Music: Chicken lovers choose Church's fried chicken.)

Wendy's Hamburgers

Announcer: Wendy's old fashioned hamburgers wants you to win something special. Like a seven day expense paid trip for two to any Wendy's in the world. For the vacation of your life, or one of seventy special Magnavox prizes, just register at Wendy's this month during Wendy's Dr. Pepper Sweepstakes and enjoy a free Dr. Pepper. Bon Voyage. Enter Wendy's Dr. Pepper Sweepstakes today.

Dairy Queen

(Music: You'll remember being good, and good things you'll be sharing.)

Man: "Bout time for a Dude, Cowboy.

(Music: Like Texas Country food at Dairy Queen. Drop on in for the Dude. It's Texas tasting good. The Dude's chicken fried, so countrified. Drop in for the Dude.)

Child: Dad, can Mom be a cowboy too?

Man: You Betcha!

(Music: Drop on in for the Dude. Dairy Queen for the good times.)

Red Lobster

Announcer: Come on in to Red Lobster,
(Music: Come on in and let us satisfy that seafood lover in you. We'll give you all you're looking for in everything we do. The flavor and aroma, the cracking of the shell. When you come into Red Lobster every bite will tell. Everything we do is for the seafood lover in you. Red Lobster for the seafood lover in you.)

Tide

Woman: Stop, Hey, that stock boy swiped my Tide!

Man: I asked Dave to. We've got a new detergent.

Woman: Hey, Ralph, when it comes to my big problem...

Man: What's that?

Woman: Muddy, ground in dirt, Tide cleans better than other detergents.

Man: Look three pair of pants, equally soiled with ground in muddy dirt.

Woman: My Tide can get those clean.

Man: We'll wash one in your Tide.

Woman: No contest!

Man: These in the leading liquid.

Woman: Good luck.

Man: And these in this new detergent.

Woman: We'll see. (pause) See, my Tide beat this liquid.

Man: And this new detergent, very good.

Woman: In fact, as good as my Tide.

Man: Take a sniff.

Woman: Nice and clean smelling, really fresh. O.K., cleans terrific, smells fantastic. What is it?
Man: It's new, fresher smelling Tide.

Woman: What a nice surprize.

Announcer: Now Tide adds new freshness to a really clean wash.

Pine Sol

Maid: Now I don't wash windows or defrost refrigerators. I use Pine Sol and only Pine Sol. Brought my own this time, but you'll have to stock up. See this grease. Concentrated Pine Sol cuts through grease better than any leading cleaner. Pine Sol cleaner disinfectant cleans household germs, their odors and leaves a fresh clean scent. Pine Sol cleans grease better, kills germs and leaves a fresh scent. Any questions?

Woman: Would you like to use my Pine Sol?

Maid: We'll get along fine.

SOS

Announcer: Who cleans more pots and pans than anyone else? Who else but SOS? Because nothing cleans burnt on, stuck on, splattered on messes faster or easier than super grease cutting SOS. No wonder people use more than two million SOS pads every day. We deserve every dirty pan we get.

Ty-D-Bol

Announcer: Nothing smells better than the great outdoors. That's why Ty-D-Bol went to the forest to bring you Ty-D-Bol Green with the green, fresh scent of pine. Ty-D-Bol cleans and deodorizes automatically with Borax so its really tough on odors and stains. First from Ty-D-Bol. Clean, pine scent green, as fresh as all outdoors. Ty-D-Bol in blue and now pine scented green. Ty-D-Bol.

Dynamo

Man: Do women know what works better than powders?
Woman: I do. My husband got some chicken grease on his pants and I really could have killed him. But instead, I took a quarter cup of Dynamo, rubbed some on the stains and poured the rest in. And when the clothes came out, the grease stains were gone. Dynamo is less expensive to use for my whole wash because it's a great detergent and grease remover in one. It's really amazing!

(Music: The little blue jug is Dynamo.)

Announcer: Recommended by people who used to use powders.

Ajax

(Music: With Ajax I've got that feeling of cleaning power.)

Woman: Ajax liquid dishwashing gold. From first greasy dish to last, Ajax gets my dishes so grease free that they squeak. Ajax gives my sponge the power of a scrub brush to power out the toughest greasy food stains fast. Get that feeling of cleaning power.

Tide

Announcer: Can you write a Tide commercial?

Woman: This is my friend Pam. Our boys love feeding the animals on our neighbors' farm. And I'm going to show Pam how Tide cleans that muddy dirt better than her powder.

Pam: I've used that powder for a long time.

Woman: Look they've really ground in that muddy dirt. Now we'll take this dirty sock and put it in John's pocket to mark his jeans and wash them with Tide. We'll take Matt's jeans and wash them in your powder.

Pam: I can still see mud on these jeans. These are cleaner, bet they're mine.

Woman: No, these are the Tide pants.
Pam: And even the sock is clean. Maybe I better switch.

Woman: I'm very loyal to Tide.

Announcer: Women trust Tide. It's the best detergent on American soil.
APPENDIX II

(Note: The structural methodology does use a specific vocabulary, but it is not a standardized vocabulary. The double spaced items are composite definitions derived mainly from the Levi-Strauss methodology and the single spaced items are quoted directly from the University Film Association Glossary.)

1. Binary Operation (Oppositions) -- a basically structuralist activity in which analysis is carried out by observing pairs of related opposites. The classic example is the observation of the binary relationship of nature and culture done by Levi-Strauss within "primitive" myths. Usually the qualities which make up each of the binary poles are observed and listed. A binary structure in a Western film could be observed, for example, as an intermixing of "themes" of nature and of culture in which the cowboy hero's roughhewn character, his easy understanding of animals, and his simplistic justice-by-the-gun would be labeled "nature" and the female school teacher's refined manners would be labeled "culture." The most immediate origin of binary analysis is in linguistics.1

2. Code -- The rules or forms which can be observed to allow a message to be understood, to signify. "Codes" are the observations of semioticians and have no physical existence. Codes have three qualities: 1) coherences or specificity, 2) homogeneity or levels of generality, and 3) systematicity or divisability into sub-codes. Codes transcend individual films, but individual films contain sub-codes that demonstrate specific instances or occurrences of the larger code.2

3. Diachronic -- The observation of linguistic or other sign relationships as they exist over time or history. This term stands in opposition to "synchronic."3
4. Diegesis -- a term used by Metz, Todorov and others, invented by Etienne Souriau, "diegesis" refers to the ongoing "story" of a narrative film regardless of how much of the narrative is actually shown on screen. That is, the diegesis of a ten-minute argument between a boy and a girl is the continuous series of events, but the film rendition of that argument may only last two minutes. Film and diegetic time usually differ. The diegesis is, this, in the fictional world, the narrative flow as it would exist in profilmic space and time.4

5. Deep structure -- Mediating structures. Levi-Strauss uses structure to refer to "deep structure." He suggested that groups develop structural means of resolving conflicts, inconsistencies and ambiguities that arise between different elements of the surface structure. Expressed in the form of binary oppositions. The "deep structure" is usually referred to as an unconscious activity of the human mind.

6. Laws of Transformation -- Law like regularities that can be observed, or derived from observation, by which one particular structural configuration changes into another.

7. Meaning -- what is meant; what is intended to be or in fact is, signified, indicated, referred to, or understood. Signification is applied especially to the meaning conventionally understood by a sign, symbol, character, as, the signification of the ace of spades in fortune telling.

8. Mediate -- The process of carrying or conveying and, of necessity, changing a message in the act of signification. All messages communicated, according to semiology, are mediated by the signifying medium (as well as by other elements, such as noise, perhaps), and thus immediate signification
is an impossibility. This concept of mediation means that signification is not the result of perception itself, but rather is the product of a matrix of codes (or "sign values") which perception yields to a receiver.5

9. Paradigm, paradigmatic -- "Paradigm" refers to all the potential but absent possible relationships of any given statement. Thus, a paradigm of a single statement ("Gene has left town") would be all of the other ways of saying the same thing but in different words and word order ("Out of town Gene went"); "Gene has gone out of town," and so on) that were not used in the given statement.6

10. Semiotics -- "1) The study of significations via codes or systems in texts. 2) The general science of signs, of systems of signification."7

11. Signs -- A link between images and concepts. In this union is brought about the use of images and concepts as the signifying and signified, respectively.

12. Signification -- "The process by which messages are conveyed to a receiver or spectator. Signification is the operation of the signifier/signified relationship. Messages "make signification" only systematically and within a code in a text."8

13. Signified -- "Signified is roughly equivalent to "that which is meant" or "that which is signed." The observation of a signified is a way of labeling a signifier."9

14. Signifier -- Signifier is that part of a linguistic relationship in which meaning can be made to reside by observing a signified which relates to the signifier. The signifier "means" or "conveys" the signified. Anything which is observed to "make meaning" or signify is a signifier.10
15. Structuralism -- A means whereby social reality may be expressed as binary oppositions, each element, whether it be an event in a myth, an item of behavior or the naming and classification of natural phenomena, being given its value in society by its relative position in a matrix of oppositions, their mediations, and resolutions.
16. Structure -- The mutual relations of the constituents, parts or elements of a whole, as determining its peculiar nature or character: The coexistence in a whole of distinct parts having a definite manner of arrangement.
17. Symbol -- "As used by C. S. Peirce, a relationship between two things in which the signification is not by intrinsic relation but rather by convention. The heart drawn on a valentine is connected only by convention, by symbol, to love."11
18. Synchronic -- The observation of linguistic or other sign relationships as they exist at any one instant (at any one selected moment). Deals with the complex of events existing in a limited time period and ignoring historical antecedents. In structural analysis the main concern is with synchronic as opposed to diachronic structures, i. e., its focus is upon relations across a moment in time rather than through time.
19. Syntagmatic -- A syntagma is a relational unit (a sign) of an existing or actual relationship in a "statement" or message (as opposed to a paradigmatie relationship). Thus, Metz's "grande syntagmatique" is a schematization of important actual relationships among units of relations (signs, or perhaps, codes) in the specific semiological system, films.

20. Text -- A matrix of codes (or of messages) which the semiotologist maintains must be read as a whole. A single film (a single "system" is usually the basic text; however, a semiotic/auteur study of many films by one director may consider all of those films as a single text. Likewise, single sequences from films can be considered texts. A text is "read" by observing its codes and their interoperations.
NOTES

1 John Mercer, University Film Association Glossary of Terms, Timothy J. Lyons, ed., No. 2 (Summer 1978) 11.

2 Mercer, p. 19.
4 Mercer, p. 27.
5 Mercer, p. 53.
6 Mercer, p. 60.
7 Mercer, p. 72.
8 Mercer, p. 74.
9 Mercer, p. 74.
10 Mercer, p. 74.
11 Mercer, p. 82.
12 Mercer, p. 82.
13 Mercer, p. 84.
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