

**Virpi Blom**

## **The propositions of Jeans-adds**

Blue jeans are a commodity that is used internationally to express a variety of ideas: freedom to be yourself, independence from the social boundaries, activity, physicality, sexuality, informality and much more. How is it possible that an object, a massproduct, can be considered as the satisfier of personal needs and an expression of individual's values?

All these different qualities - even contradictory ones - are superimposed on Levi's jeans through advertising. The semiotic process that transforms the meaning of an advert into a content of the product is analyzed by Judith Williamson.

By differentiation, Levi's jeans signify youth, leisure, masculinity and romance because they are not design jeans, feminine, or an outfit shown in everyday situations, work or domestic interiors. In commercials, Levi's jeans become signified, and then a signifier of the freedom, genuineness, originality and quality attached to the advert. The ads implicate that the jeans can produce courage, independence or rebelliousness. Finally, the product is given an exchange value as a means of gaining things or feelings otherwise unachievable. Polysemic interpretations are the key to the effectiveness of the Levi's commercials. The only definition the jeans are submitted to is: they are a Generator of a Significant Change.

translation by author

**Juhana Stedt**

## **The Logical Interpretant of TV-commercials**

I'm trying to look at TV-commercials from a semiotic point of view. My goal is to show that this approach opens up some fundamental differ-

ences between audiovisions.

I start by sorting out few existing classification methods (genre, good/bad, moral/immoral, politically correct/incorret, etc) and after that I go on to philosophy and categories. Categories or classes are most general mental ideas, by which we can classify every object of experience and imagination.

Charles S. Peirce thought that Kant's project (to rely on logic in order to find the universal categories) was on a right track; only the realization went awry. Peirce subsequently managed to establish three fundamental logical categories; Firstness, Secondness and Thirdness. Firstness is the category that contains all possible and unactualized things and it is best described in terms of quality and feeling. Secondness is the category of real existence, and in this category existing things interact. Causality and existence dominate in the realm of Secondness. Thirdness is the category of convention and habit. In this category a third thing connects two other things, and the connection is always some kind of agreement.

Grounded on these three categories, Peirce manages to distinguish three different kinds of signs: icons, indices and symbols. An icon stands for its object by some isomorphism between the sign and the object (similarity), an index is a sign that is caused by its object and a symbol is a sign that is agreed to represent its object.

I'm arguing that audiovisual commercials are complex signs that are composed of icons, indices and symbols. Because representation is fundamentally in the category of Thirdness, it follows that all commercials are in some respect symbolical. But there are differences in the saturation: some commercials are more symbolical than others and in some commercials the indexical or iconical element is foregrounded.

This taxonomy is in direct relation with the concept of "meaning". The audiovisual sign produces meaning by causing an interpreting thought in the mind of the spectator. These "interpretants" can be emotional, energetic, or logical. Emotional interpretant is the feeling caused by the sign that the sign is understood correctly. This interpretant is a necessary condition for the further effect, energetic interpretant, to take place, but very often the effect remains on the first level. Energetic interpretant can be physical (for example tears or a

smile) or it can be a mental effort. Third interpretant is called a logical interpretant and it always has to do with the real habits of the interpreter. A logical interpretant modifies persons tendencies toward action.

Artistic productions like avant-garde films or experimental videos usually produce the first kind of interpretation. Action-films and "wheels of fortune" shows etc. produce energetic interpretations ("suspense" or "nausea" that you can really feel) and commercials (try to) produce a logical interpretation in the spectators. In other words they try to change the habits of the spectators. From this pragmatic and semiotic point of view, there is no real difference between a commercial that tells you to drink two bottles of vodka daily and a commercial that tries to make you stop drinking.

translation by author

**Visa Heinonen - Minna Lammi - Esko Varho**

## **Advertising vs. Education in Finnish Short films.**

The present article discusses the relationship between advertising and educational content in Finnish short films in the course of decades. At the turn of the century Finland was the promised land of various educational groups which could be seen in the increasing number of temperance, labour, co-op etc. organizations. At the same time advertising in the modern sense began to take shape, but it was not until in the 1920s that this activity got organized and the first advertising agencies were founded.

The obvious efficiency of film as an educational tool was relatively soon realized also in Finland in the early years of the 20th century. The Co-operative Movement (both "progressive" OTK and "politically neutral" SOK) especially was quite early commencing even their own film production. Glamourizing of factories and display of manufacturing processes were conspicuous features in these films, but also drama sequences were made use of at an early stage. The Tax Deduction Law of 1933 had an enormous impact on the increase of Finnish short film production. The act was in effect with slight modifications until 1964, and during this period the

majority of shorts were precisely these tax deduction films.

Between the wars the difference between educational and advertising films was not very clear and regulations were loose. A prominent share of tax deduction films were commissioned by commercial companies, and they usually contained an ample display of identified manufacturers and their products.

In war-time the Finnish short production was controlled by government officials. Even those openly propagandistic films whose target audience were the home-front encouraged saving, using substitute products and participating in bees and fund-raising efforts.

In the 1950s, shortage of raw stock material having receded, an unforeseen amount of shorts were made in Finland. The role and explicitness of advertising in these films was a central subject of debate all through the decade. Also the production of advertising films proper burst into huge increase in the 1950s. Their production was now concentrated in specialized agencies which soon started to produce ads also for television.

Translation by Veijo Hietala

### **Susanna Sirén-Valanta**

#### **The Role of Advertising in the Nationalization Process in Finland between the Wars**

The paper deals with the role of advertising in periodicals as part of the nationalization of Finland. The essay demonstrates how ads published in Suomen Kuvalehti magazine during the early decades of independence were used, besides promoting products and services, also as a means of constructing an image of Finnishness. With the help of case-studies the present paper aims at showing what the Finnishness of the ads was like, which stereotypes and ideal images of Finnishness the ads made use of and from where were the signs and meanings of nationality derived.

The essay discusses e.g. the image of values as well as physical and mental characteristics of the Finns in advertising. By recurrently referring to the exceptional success of the Finns in

beauty and sports contests, the stereotype of the strong and handsome Finn of the first class racial quality was reinforced. The ideal types of the Finnish male and female were conspicuously adjusted to the traditional role models, for the ideal male was exclusively strong while the female was beautiful. Occasionally, the Finn was depicted with characteristics derived from the national epic Kalevala, which signified "authenticity and originality". As a rule the ads referred to those features and values (e.g. "sisu" or guts, purity, diligence) with which Finnishness was customarily equipped since the 19th century.

Translation by Veijo Hietala

### **Kalevi Piha**

#### **Industrial Enterprise and the Introduction of TV to Finland**

The present paper deals with commercial propaganda by using the introduction of TV to Finland in the middle of 1950s as a case-study. When a firm importing TV equipment wanted to start with sales in Finland, it was decided to arouse a need for TV first. A propaganda campaign was launched to prepare the attitudinal ground for TV. It was carried out in the following way: A private TV programme was shown through circuit television in various cities, and also articles on television were published in newspapers and periodicals. The result was that a mass of demands for TV was made in the press, from editorials to letters to editors.

Regular and organized TV broadcasting started in Finland in 1957 after Yleisradio (The Finnish Broadcasting Corporation) having decided to order TV broadcasting equipment from the above-mentioned import company.

Translation by author

### **Pirjo Vuokko**

#### **Soap is My Hero, Dirt is My Enemy.**

#### **- The Functions of Drama in Advertising.**

The modes of argumentation can be divided into four categories according to their explicitness. Direct argumentation and demonstration are obviously the most explicit modes. Narrative and dramatic modes of advertising represent more implicit argumentation. The present paper discusses the last category, the functions of drama in advertising.

A typical drama advert includes a plot and a character/characters but no narrator. The end result of the plot is usually easily predictable. The advertised product or company is the hero of the plot; for instance, a detergent rescues us from stains. The dramatic suspense is actually created through other means, like insights, language, camera-angles and various special effects. Besides human the characters may be animated figures or, still more commonly nowadays, animals.

The strongest asset of the dramatic advert is the fact that the meaning-making of the ad is the task of the recipient. In this case the ad does not look like one which lowers resistance. Drama helps in producing feelings both towards the ad and the advertised - either directly or by classical conditioning. The dramatic mode may, however, cause also problems by being too absorbing: the advertised product or company may be ignored by the audience. To be successful a drama ad should give a prominent role to the advertised product. The developing of the plot should not fascinate to the extent that the commercial objectives are neglected. In addition, drama should be conceivable inside the frame of reference of the audience. Besides attracting attention it is important that the ad somehow touches the target group.

Translation by Veijo Hietala