Introduction

The aim of this research is to analyse the appropriation of advertisement as a generic site for contests of nationalisms in post-1992 India. Two contesting ideological representations of nationalisms, namely ‘secular’ nationalism and ‘communal’ nationalism based on the idea of the rightwing Hindutva, form the basis of discussion in this dissertation. The present study looks into the paradoxical ways in which the idea of nationalism in India adjusts itself to the concept of globalization in contemporary times even as it continues to adhere to the colonial agenda of casting Indianness and identities into the framework of a western concept of ‘nation’ and ‘nationality’ initiated during the period of the Raj. Advertisements seem to recycle the stereotypes as well as the contestations regarding the western colonial framing of the Indian ‘nation’ as a homogeneous category.

Advertisements comprise a genre of aesthetic texts. Laden with elements of popular culture, they have the potential to function as cultural and ideological apparatus (Althusser, 1992). This dissertation explores the ideas related to the ‘received’ definition and nature of the Indian nation as represented through advertisements in the Indian media in the post-1992 period and studies the politics of representation in relation to the Indian nation in keeping with the ongoing debates on nationalism(s) in India. I use the theoretical concept of affordances in the multimodal social semiotic approach for structural analysis of advertisements to explore the latent meaning underlying advertisements as cultural texts. ‘Multimodal affordances’ refer to the ‘enabling’ properties of a ‘mode’ that create its ‘meaning potential’ (Van
Leeuwen 2005). ‘Modes’ are resources for meaning-making in communication as well as in representation processes. ‘Meaning potentials’ or ‘affordances’ of a mode largely depend on its materiality. (Kress, 2003: 79) For example ‘speech’ is a ‘mode’ that makes use of human sounds as its material while the materiality of the mode of ‘writing’ is graphic substance. The medium through which the mode of writing is realised is the ‘page.’ According to Kress (2004) ‘[m]odes and media exist in culturally and historically shaped ‘constellations’. Different modes have different affordances. Multimodal affordances latent in the material expression of advertisements are what enable them to be used as the site for ideological contests mentioned above.

In terms of period, the present research explores advertisements published after 6 December, 1992 and, till 2007. The year 1992 was a milestone in the Indian history in terms of the debate over the nature of the Indian nation with regard to communalism. This particular year was very important both politically and culturally for India in the sense that it witnessed the culmination of the ideological agenda and cultural pogrom of Hindu rightwing organisations consolidated under the Sangh combineii. They actively asserted the ‘communal’ nature of Indian identity and nationhood exemplified in the demolition of the Babri Mosque on 6 December, 1992. Communal violence erupted across the country in a ripple effect of the demolition of the Babri Masjid. The communal component of the discourse on the Indian nation, latent ever since its initiation, became patent in this period. The Bharatiya Janata Partyiii (The BJP) which was the political reincarnate of the Jan Sangh and the political wing of the Rastriya Swayam Sevak Sangh, won two seats in the parliamentary election held in 1984. This temporary success of the
Sangh combine rejuvenated the Hindu right wing organisations to actively revive the religious component in the debate over the nature of the Indian nation. The Sangh combine gathered its much-needed political momentum through the *Ramjanmabhumi* issue that claimed the site of the Babri Masjid as the birthplace of Lord Rama. It appropriated Rama as an incarnation of Lord Vishnu, and thereby decreed that the *Ramjanmabhoomi* be considered as the most sacred site for Hindus. Claiming a particular place as the ‘unique bearer of a singular essence’ is considered by Despande (2000:190) as part of the ‘spatial strategy’ of the right wing Hindutva argument. Sustained organisational programmes, heavily loaded with the Hindutva argument such as *Yatras* (journeys/pilgrimage), *karseva* (offering of labour for the holy cause), *Yajna* (fire ritual) in the late 80s and 90s, gained for the Sangh combine huge political mileage in India. Such programmes seemed to have enhanced personal stakes in both active and passive participants in terms of organisational movements and the process of nation formation by the Sangh combine. Such was the impact of Hindutva India that the Sangh combine experienced a steady organisational growth across the country in the next two decades. This growth culminated in the formation of the Central Government by the National Democratic Alliance, a joint front of parties with similar right wing ideological prerogatives. Electoral victories indicated that the combine was successful in receiving the public mandate, despite its essentialisation of the Indian nation as a ‘Hindu’ nation.

The debate over the nature of the Indian nation, which has been going on since the time of its initiation in the period of India’s freedom movements, was revisited with renewed vigour in this period. Expectedly, media forms such as
newspaper stories, post-editorial columns, films, teleserials and advertisements also entered the fray, and were seen to be partaking in the debate on behalf of different stakeholders duplicating arguments regarding it.

Though advertising began as a paid form of presentation or public announcement made by an individual or an organization to notify or to promote the sale of products or services over a period of time, it showed a remarkable shift from its original generic form. Through the passage of time advertisements, subsequently, assumed the shape of cultural documents. As cultural vehicles they had functions similar to those of aesthetic texts in given socio-cultural contexts (Sen, 1997). Such texts play an important role in the cultural politics of a society by virtue of their ideological underpinnings despite the fact that they appear, externally, to be texts consisting of ‘objective information’. That a number of advertisements duplicate the same theme/argument as cultural texts bears testimony to their common ideological agenda as well as frameworks. Though ephemeral as a form of discourse, advertisements nevertheless reflected the political caveat going on at this particular juncture in India. This very representative quality makes the field of advertisements a rich ground for the analysis of cultural politics from the post-1992 period onwards.

The chief objective of advertisements is to convey commercial messages. However, the ulterior aim of such texts is to win the allegiance of the audience to the brand without making the addressees aware of the latent agenda of persuasion and subliminal cultural arguments. Advertisements thus adopt various technical and aesthetic strategies, which are directed at binding their
addressees culturally to the text. In making themselves attractively acceptable to a large number of audiences, advertisements accelerate the processes of acculturation of their respective target audiences. Though thematically united, advertisements for the same product designed for different local contexts make use of a variety of local cultural resources and iconography, practices and beliefs. As a consequence, contemporary advertisements use established cultural materials and norms, namely literary forms, representational stereotypes, artistic masterpieces and traditional aesthetic tokens that give them a gloss of cultural texts. Finally, these cultural elements confer upon texts an entertaining quality.

To fulfil the obvious commercial function, advertisements are spaced into the hours of popular entertainment. In fact, advertisements are configured as compulsory components of the mass media in which discontinuity is factored in the transmission of a programme to make slots for them. (Chanda, 2000: 41) As a continuum to forms of entertainment and as fillers of the compulsorily imposed pause during entertainment, advertisements are intended to reach a wider audience (Ibid). By virtue of their inherent characteristics of fortification through repeated telecast/print appearances, advertisements seem to have a greater psychologically reinforcing impact because as entertainment, they do not sell products/services only but also campaigns for an ideology as well (Sen 1997). Advertisements as a genre can, thus, also be seen as a writing of history in short-lived slide-shows.

This study focuses on select advertisements from magazines such as Anandalok, Sananda and Desh published in Bangla from Kolkata, Frontline,
Femina and Stardust, published in English from Mumbai. The target readers for these magazines are the urban Indian elite. However, film magazines such as Anandalok and Stardust are also read by people beyond the urban elite, while the readership of Sananda and Femina is to a great extent restricted to women belonging to the urban elite and the readership for Fronline and Desh comprise more or less male readers of the urban elite as well as middle class and upper-middle class.

Advertisements elicit compulsive watching/reading of their campaigns. For example, if an individual decides to watch particular TV programme(s), the person is compelled to watch advertisements slotted therein, even if the TV is muted. Print advertisements, too, appear as a kind of break in the process of reading, though they allow the reader greater autonomy than the audiovisual advertisements; the reader may chose not to read the advertisement. Readers of Print advertisements ‘notice’ an advertisement if it is striking and out of the way. For example, Cine Blitz published a series of print advertisements for Tuff Shoes in 1995 in which Milind Soman and Madhu Sapre posed nude. This created a lot of controversy in India. There were series of agitations in Mumbai including burning of several copies Cine Blitz by the women’s wing of the Shiv Sena. The advertisement had drawn a lot of public attention beyond its target audience as a result of this controversy. Nevertheless, the case of audiovisual advertisements, so far as the volitional participation from audiences is concerned, appears more hegemonic. As a media configuration advertisement seems to have control the very act of viewing by being placed during the hours of entertainment.
I look at selected audio-visual advertisements telecast on Indian Television networks such as *Star, Sony Entertainment Television* (SET), the Zee Network including Zee TV Bangla, in addition to selected print advertisements from magazines mentioned above. I analyse Hindi and English audiovisual advertisements telecast across various TV channels run by the above networks. The target audience of these channels varies ranging from the urban middle class audiences to those based in the rural India. For example the oldest of India’s private television networks, Zee Telefilms Limited launched in October 1992, claims to have ‘created strong brand equity and is the largest media franchise serving the South Asian diaspora’ with ‘a reach of more than 120 countries and access to more than 500 million viewers globally’⁴. Zee TV Bangla launched on 15th September 1999 as Alpha TV ‘seeks to identify and meet the entertainment needs of the Bengali community across the globe’ through an array of programmes comprising the ‘most popular daily soaps and mega reality shows in the prime band’⁵.

Star India Private Limited boasts of reaching ‘168 million people every week across India’ through ‘32 channels in eight languages’⁶. Launched in 1995, SET claims to reach ‘more than 42 million households in India’ ‘through an impressive lineup of programs ranging from the light-hearted to the supernatural, exploring various genres complimented by an explosive mix of glamorous events and Bollywood blockbusters’⁷. The enormous bulk of viewership claimed in each of the company’s official documents gives someone an idea of the influence that these channels may have on their audience. Consequently the influence of advertisements slotted for telecast on between entertainment hours of these channels also becomes colossal.
Interestingly, the time of political strengthening of the Sangh combine coincides with the launch of private entertainment television channels in India as a direct bearing of the open market policy of the central Government following the mandates of Globalisation. For example, the first of India’s private television networks, i.e. Zee Telefilms Limited was launched just two months before the demolition of the Babri Masjid. The Star India Private Limited and SET soon follow suit initiating the media boom in the Indian context.

One may pose a question regarding this unintended convergence of moments for the rise of the right wing politics of Hindutva and the media boom in India. The late 80s and early 90s saw the proliferation of religious mega serials telecast on the Doordarshan. The massive success of religious serials such as Ramanand Sagar’s *Ramayan* and *Uttar Ramayan*, B.R. Chopra’s *Mahabharat*, *Vishwamitra* and *Vishnupuran* help create the ‘field of communication’ for the Hindutva (Deshpande 1995). Since ‘seeing is believing,’ watching these epical events made their audiences experience the epical grandeur. As a consequence the reverential distance between ancient texts and their viewer reduced paving the way for enhancement of personal stakes in claiming the ownership of these epics as part of one’s cultural heritage. Characters of these two Indian epics became household names for a large section of Indians. The Indian politics of Hindutva began to get ground to launch its ideology incidentally as a result utilising the cultural familiarity of a huge section of the masses regarding the Hindu glorious past. Such teleserials not only created an essentially Hindu knowledge base among the
masses but also structured norms of Hindu stereotypes to be used in later mega serials of the of the late 90s and the first decade of the new century.

The enormous success of these serials encouraged makers of family dramas for the Indian television to use Ramayanik and Mahabharatik motifs with regard to narrative structure, characterisation and value systems duplicating Hindutva reconstruction of gender, identity and nation. For example, television soap operas such as *Kahani Ghar Ghar ki*, *Kyun ki Saas bhi Kabhi Bahu thi* telecast on Star Plus; *CID, Kkusum... Ek Aam Ladki Ki Kahani* telecast on Sony Entertainment Television; and *Reth, Astitva...Ek Prem Kahani, Koshish* telecast on Zee TV represent the ‘Hindu’ context of the family as their backdrop using Ramayanik and Mahabharatik motifs to construct their narrative contract such as joint families, righteous perfect man, temporary exile of the virtuous ones as a token of filial duty, kinship rivalry as well as affiliation, uncomplaining virtuous and loyal wives, conspiring stepmothers who were once attached to the stepson, patronising yet helpless father figures, deserted sons brought up in another family disowning his own mother in adulthood.. The narrative structure of almost all of them seems to be taken partially either from the Hindu mythology and legends or from beliefs regarding the Hindu ways of life. Even a crime thriller such as *CID* privileges the Hindu section of the nation in its choice of characters; the CID team consists of ACP Pradyuman, Senior Inspector Abhijeet, Senior Inspector Daya, Inspector Fredricks, Sub-Inspector Vivek, Sub-Inspector Kajal and Forensic experts Dr. Salunkhe, and Dr. Tarika. Though Inspector Fredricks represents the Indian minority in the serial, he performs the role of the comic relief in the narrative and is the most inefficient in the group. Thus
these programmes create representational stereotypes of the Hindu identity and place it as the ‘default’ Indian identity. Such a boom in Indian media also creates scope for Hindu right wing politics to spread its ideology and agenda pertaining to the ‘Hindu’ nature of the nation subtly through different entertainment programmes including daily soap operas.

_Doordarshan_ (DD) as the official media under government control, however, continues to retain its constitutionally determined ‘secular’ nature. An apparent contrast in representational forms between programmes telecast on Doordarshan and the ones telecast on the popular entertainment channels appears evident. Such contrasts in representation confirm the appropriation of the media as a site for ideological contests of different Indian political groups. On the other side of this tendency to promote the essentialised Hindu identity as the sole representation of Indianness, there stands Doordarshan with an array of mixed programmes representing the multicultural nature of the nation. One may argue that programmes such as _Kabhi Saas Kabhi Bahu_ or _Panaah_ or even _Chanakya_ also depend on the ‘Hindu’ context for their backdrop. However, programmes telecast on DD such as mentioned above seem to consciously avoid the tendency of essentialising the nation in terms of typically ‘Hindu’ homogeneous entity, by incorporating programmes that address national issues such as empowerment of women (eg Udaan), female foeticide (eg. Panaah), Kashmir issue (eg. Gul, Gulshan, Gulfam), Indian literary heritage (eg. _Chanakya_ based on _Mudra Rakshasa_ by Vishakhadutta or _Mirza Ghalib_ made by Gulzar).
For this research I select advertisements that are telecast on Indian television channels such as Star Plus, Sony, Zee TV and Zee TV Bangla in the prime time between 7:30 and 10:30 pm. The selected advertisements were slotted during the commercial breaks of the prime time mega teleserials such as *Kahani Ghar Ghar Ki, Kyun ki Saas bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi, Kasauti Zindegi ki* telecast on Star Plus, *Kkusum* telecast on Sony TV, *Astitva, ek Premkahani* telecast on Zee TV, and *Bou Katha Kau* of Star Jalsha and *Janmabhumi* telecast on DD Bangla. The same advertisements are telecast across different channels and some dubbing is done for Bangla language channels. The target viewerships of different programmes are different though encrypted cultural messages hidden beneath the surface level argument may be similarly perceived by audiences beyond the perceived target category.

The decodification of encrypted messages can only be done in the premises of shared cultural knowledge already foregrounded directly through the Hindu religious teleserials of the late 80s and 90s and indirectly through the Ramayanik and Mahabharatik motifs used in the mega serials thus telecast reinforcing the Hindutva reconstructions of Indian masculinity, femininity, cultural other and the nation. The Hindutva knowledge base created by programmes of the Indian small screen industries is reinforced by the print media. The shift in representation matrix in print media advertisements was not remained unaffected during this time. The tokens of culture, nuances of narrative design, idioms of Hindutva, puranic references and established symbols of Hinduism started being used heavily in the design of print advertisements duplicating the same agenda.
Extensive use of *Hinglish* as the language of several advertisements may be taken as a strategy of the advertiser to create the appearance of pan-Indian texts – thus eradicating possibilities of ‘balkanization’ as a result of the growth of regional language media. The escalation of media and advertisements as a controlling force behind the growth of media is what makes the latter a ‘material force’ for the reinforcement and spread of communal ideals structuring the idea of the ‘Indian’ nationhood in the contemporary times.

Latent policies regarding the representation of the Indianness and the definition of the Indian nation seem to duplicate the content and contest in the discourse on the ongoing debate over the nature of the Indian nation. Since advertisements are important components of the contemporary popular media in India, they contribute significantly to the debate regarding the ‘real’ and the ‘target’ identity of the ‘imagined community’ called the Indian nation. The formulation regarding the nature and definition of ‘nation’ by Anderson (1983) provides ground for this research on the concept of the ‘nation’ in general. Findings of scholars such as Chandra (1990), Chatterjee (1986, 1989, 1999), Nandy (1988, 1989, 1994) and Ray (2003) provide the necessary theoretical insights for investigating various aspects of the Indian nation.

Selected advertisements from the above-mentioned sources are analyzed in different chapters of this dissertation to explore the following issues. This study attempts

1. to note changes in advertising images of nation and Indianness.
2. to explore the relationship between the ideology of nationalisms and varieties of Indianness represented in the advertisements.
3. to study the politics of representation that projects the essentialised Hindu identity as the archetype of the Indian national identity
4. to survey the position of the cultural ‘other’ within the representation matrix of advertisement and other popular media texts.

Study of advertisements of this kind is essentially comparative in nature for the following reasons. Firstly, advertisements create their meaning through a combination and juxtaposition of semiotic fields drawn from a variety of sources. Secondly they appropriate a range of cultural resources and their affordances to create their own meaning-potential to legitimise their ideological premises. Since India is a multilingual and multicultural country any research of social discourse bordering on literary and cultural study is bound to be overlapping in nature. As Dev (1989) observes ‘…in the case of India, the study of literature should involve the notion of the interliterary process and a dialectical view of literary interaction’. He ascertains that though this diversity in languages and literatures is not reflected in either the general social discourse or in literary scholarship, the perspective of India as a nation of multilingual, multicultural reality and literatures is ubiquitous. Advertisements for its unique tendency of intermingling cultures apparently do involve, to a great extent, the ‘notion of interliterary processes along with a notion of intercultural process particularly in the present context of globalisation.

The issue of acculturation in advertisements becomes even more pertinent for this form to survive in the context of an open market economy of globalisation. Advertisements as cultural documents no longer convey exclusive commercial messages alone. Affordances of various modes used in the design of
advertisements, endowed with unique social and cultural constellations, help to create an ideological argument. In their new role, advertisements carry culturally and ideologically loaded messages to innumerable viewers ranging from different classes of resident Indians to diasporic Indians living in different countries of the world. While adjusting themselves in terms of political and ideological trends of the State, advertisements, in a subtle but steady way, simultaneously function as cultural apparatus. A close look into the contemporary Indian advertisements would help us see how they are actualizing the ideology of globalization, homogenization and the issues of nationalism vis à vis identity as a necessary by-product in line with the agenda of the State.

That advertisement also maintains parity with other cultural forms/texts of media is another interesting point that is noted and explored in this dissertation. Popular characters from daily soap operas, often overlapping across telecasts from various channels and popular movies, figure prominently as the generic consumer in various advertisements. This very aspect ties advertisements with other media texts in ‘an interliterary process’ under the hegemony of ‘mainstream’ culture trying to establish the particular projection to be essentially ‘Indian’ in a broad sense.

Advertisements proclaim their creative and even determining role in the ‘progress’ of the new mass consumer capitalist modernity. In their emphasis on the simplicity of the message, the ‘system’ of planning a campaign and setting a ‘target’ market, advertisements deliberately set out to ‘create consumers’ rather than ‘inform customers.’ Nevertheless, the importance of
understanding human psychology as well as the ‘science’ and ‘art’ of creating an eye-catching image and persuasive copy still remains central to structuring of advertisements... An investigation into the *popularis voluntas* strongly implies that successful advertisers cannot rely on the direct or indirect ties of 'patronage' but must win the moral support of the anonymous mass of consumers as their patrons. All such developments are couched in the rhetoric of ‘progress’ in the texts.

Business and cultural history are intertwined by the use of the tokens of culture in advertisements. Here components of culture as well as history are appropriated in advertisements in order to give such texts the appearance of cultural texts apart from being just commercial texts promoting business. The cultural tokens in advertisements are used as signifiers of the particular culture under projection to extend their semiotic field onto the brand name for which they are used. The manufacturers of such texts legitimise the 'compromise' between morality and commercial materialism by using images of the minute mundane details and the abundant personal wealth of the owner to root business in a wider ‘national’ culture. These advertisements take little account of the consumer, serving only to make informed customers aware of a product and trademark. However, they do reflect the need of the manufacturer to justify the purpose of the industry.

I attempt to study this pattern of interweaving the narrative between business and culture to understand the tendency of intermingling heterogeneous fields as part of process of the writing of history through advertisements. This study also tries to provide a detailed analysis of selected advertisements in support
of the argument formed thereof. Here one needs to keep in mind the inseparability of business and cultural history. This is because the values and ideals of countless ‘business people’ shaped the particular direction of consumerism with a strongly felt subliminal ideological agenda, which seems to be mediated by equally well-observed economic, sociological, technological and organisational realities.

The current research also attempts to explore how advertisements of particular products modify themes cross linguistically and cross culturally. As a part of the ongoing process of globalization, advertisements appropriate themes across culture as well as within culture by forming sub-cultures.

Ray (2011) points out that the three ‘M’s, namely *Mandak*, *Mandir* and *Market*, have significantly influenced the contemporary debate over the nature of the Indian nation that was rejuvenated in the 80s and continues into the present time. A certain degree of neutralisation of the *Mandir* issue for the last few years can be noticed due to the weakening of power of the BJP and the Sangh combine as a consequence of public rejection of the explicitly militant Hindu stance in defining the Indian nation. The *Mandal* issue with respect to the Indian nation still seems to have some impact, as is exhibited through the rise of the *Dalit* groups, political parties and leadership in the pan Indian context. However, the most predominant and fierce of all the three appears to be the third ‘M’, i.e. Market, in terms of its direct bearing on the open market and globalisation. The prerogative of the global market is to turn the overall orientation from the ‘community’ to ‘individual’ to increase the number of ‘potential consumers’ to fit into its economic agenda in which
issues such as ‘nationality’ hardly matter. Nevertheless, it becomes necessary for the same to partake in the discourse of Indian nationalism only to establish itself as cultural insider. Consequently, a process of essentialisation with regard to the Indian identity can be seen at work in juxtaposition with the global [mostly western] ideas. Traditional myths, legends and beliefs regarding ‘Indianness’ are used as points of reference to foreground an ‘Indian’ identity that is more global than local. This trend may be noticed in the representational matrix in advertisements of multinational companies. Chapter 4 of this dissertation has a detailed discussion of this issue.

Advertisement as a genre is a tapestry-like entity, in which threads of cultures intertwine and intersect. The subliminal goal, however, remains hidden under an apparently naïve assumption that the national culture, as the sum total of unique social practices of local subcultures, can sustain itself in the context of globalisation. There is no visible power that tendentiously forces marginalised subcultures to be subsumed in the predominant culture. Yet, the national culture is marked by a strong tendency towards homogenisation: the agenda of cultural homogenisation lies in the practice of seeking and confirming an individual’s identity as the member of that group labelled as ‘nation’ or the greater ‘we’ as opposed to the group of the ‘others.’ National culture, that tries to subsume marginalised cultures within the mainstream culture, makes no such apparent effort to maintain the ‘specificity’ of the marginalised cultures. It becomes imperative for the national culture to subsume the marginalised culture completely for its appearance as a unified whole. Consequently the specificity of local cultures is lost.
In terms of the agenda of homogenisation, there is a contradictory force operative at the global level. One tendency of Global homogenisation is to subsume the local as well as national cultures into a ‘universalised’ global identity. Yet, global capitalism, driven by the logic of an international and multicultural market, also privileges tokenism in which differences of nation and ethnicity often reduced to food, dress, music or ritual. Thus on the one hand we have the internally homogenising forces of the nation, on the other is the contrary pull of ‘universalisation’ and ‘multiculturalism’ that constitutes the central paradox of globalisation.

Such tendencies are more often founded on supposed relation of sponsorship between the mainstream nationalist culture and the culture of globalisation on one hand and between the nationalist culture and diverse marginalised subcultures on the other. It is to be noted that instances of cultural homogenisation happen not only to specific ‘ethnic’ culture but also to other non-mainstream social groups as well. Both the processes of cultural homogenisation, discussed above, exist simultaneously. For example, the catchline ‘*desh ka namak khaya*’ (translation: have eaten the salt of the country) in the advertisement of *Tata Salt* is uttered by a person of Muslim descent in the advertisement. This may appear as suggestive of the fact that the desire for the ‘benign conciliation’ is and has been mutual. Noble allies are particularly prized not for their desire of inclusivity into the mainstream (the target networks of clients) but for the lustre they shed on the representative ‘exclusive otherised’ individuals in such texts.
In the above-mentioned advertisement, the Muslim taxi-driver returns the purse left by a Hindu woman who hired his taxi. As a reward for his honesty, the benevolent patron offers him a tip which the representative ‘other’ refuses by saying ‘desh ka namak khaya.’ This refusal of a materialistic reward and declaration of patriotic affiliation to the nation thereby allows the peripheral member to the inner circle of the ‘mainstream’ or the nation. Patriotism, on one hand, is projected to bind the cultural ‘other’ with the representatives of the mainstream in the text. On the other hand, the agents or representatives of the ‘majority’ (here the Hindu lady) whose activities are most suggestive of patronage tend to be of paramount importance in terms of creating the condition for inclusion of the peripheral members into the mainstream.

However, all the dominant personal political and cultural relationships shown in advertisements cannot be plausibly explained under the concept of patronage, which entails asymmetry between the parties and a connection of some duration; rather, the situation presented here is one of a relatively loaded environment of political and cultural deal-making between the subject and the ‘other.’ The intention is clear – the text designs the ‘other’ to fit into the thematic motif of the text so well that the ‘other’ turns out to be an advocate of the argument of the ‘mainstream,’ exhibiting feelings of natural extension of it, i.e. the natural extension of the socially powerful group.

Mention must be made here regarding the first appearance of this advertisement – the advertisement appeared on television after the Godhra incident and the Gujarat genocide in 2002.

The selection of words is to be noted here – the representative ‘other’ is using a standardized form of Hindi. The language/dialect/accent is related to
ethnographical displacement or ‘deterritorialized locations.’ It penetrates the structure of the text from narrative, visual style, characters, to plot, and cultural references etc. For example, the reference to ‘accepting salt’ from someone binds the receiver into a bond of gratitude with the giver. In fact, the campaign seems to be designed keeping this cultural reference in mind. The Vice President of Tata Chemicals, Mr. Kapil Mehan (2002), mentions in the press release, ‘[a]lthough advertising for the salt category in India has traditionally focused on detailing the functional properties of the various brands, Tata Salt, as the category leader, is best equipped to take on the broader and more fundamental emotional aspects associated with salt’\textsuperscript{xvi}. The markers are visible all over the text, interfering in the comprehension and interpretation of the advertisement. In India language, religion, attire along with accessories and cuisine are predominant components to mark off the ‘otherness.’ Depriving one of his/her own language/dialect, religious identity as marker of one’s culture leads not only to homogenise the marginalised identity according to the norms of the predominant culture but also to contextual displacement and expulsion of the cultural other within the national culture.

The visual approach of this advertisement seems to match what Naficy (2001) observes in similar representational context of diasporic films that

‘simultaneously exhibits spontaneity and anxious formality; [it is] less driven by action than by words and emotions; [it has an] uneven pacing, incompleteness, etc’ where cultural dislocation is treated in a similar way. (Naficy, 2001: 374)
Under the visual style of the text, some other components like setting, other characters, motivated props, lighting scheme and framing style needs to be taken into consideration to understand the construction of what Naficy (2001) calls the ‘third optique.’ It is a category which explains the location of a person within a country, in another country, where there is a border issue, a real physical border that has to be crossed. Apart from being dangerous, it is a space that is ambiguous, ambivalent and chaotic. The texts that portray this aspect are ‘hybridized and experimental.’ Their characters are ‘shifters.’ The first person, i.e. the ‘I’ becomes a ‘you’ and vice versa depending upon the context of utterance and physical displacement and subsequent replacement. Consequently the ‘other’ becomes a character crossing socio-political boundaries of overlapping space to encroach upon the space of the ‘mainstream’ in order to be included into the group. Such characters are portrayed as ‘split, double, crossed, and hybridized’ in their identity (Naficy, 2001). Here in the advertisement, the ‘other’ is included into the group of ‘we’ by virtue of his patriotic declaration ‘desh ka namak khaya’ through which a representative allegiance as a member of the group of other to the ‘mainstream’ is ensured.

The idea of multicultarlism and cultural pluralism is under constant scrutiny in the post 9/11 world in general and in the post-Godhra India in particular. There appear to be multiple cultures, vying with each other and closing ranks, each confident of its truth and justification. The advertisement could have elicited mixed responses from the mixed audience comprising different categories of Indians participating in the ongoing cultural debate as to whether or not India should adopt a one-language one-religion policy as proclaimed by
the Sangh combine or stick to its soft brand of underlying religiosity and line of
tolerance.

A combination of language and visual images facilitates the process of
meaning making of particular messages in advertisements. Advertisements
use elements from different genres. Genre-mixing and genre-embedding in
advertisements make them a very complex network of intertexts. The
argumentation of advertisements is carried out through a combination of
visual mode and the mode of spoken and written language. The work of Kress
and Van Leeuwen (1996, 2005) on the multimodal semiotic theory of visual
representation will be used for the analysis of advertisements for this research.
According to them ‘images (and this includes the layout of the page) carry the
argument.’ (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1996: 38) Following Halliday (1977),
Kress and van Leeuwen (1996, 2005) identify the ideational, the textual and
the interpersonal metafunctions of a semiotic mode. The first of these
essentially describes the representative function. In the case of visual images,
Kress and van Leeuwen distinguish narrative and conceptual ideational
modes. Images can either tell a story or put forth an analysis, and/or both.
Kress and van Leeuwen identify each of these functions with characteristic
modes of pictorial presentation. The details of the theoretical framework for
analysis of the visual design of the selected advertisements are given in this
chapter.

Advertising experts proclaimed their creative and even determining role in the
‘progress’ of the new mass consumer capitalist modernity. Emphasising the
simplicity of the message, the ‘system’ of planning an advertising campaign,
the targeting of a market, the importance of understanding human psychology and the ‘science’ and ‘art’ of creating an eye-catching image and persuasive copy, the texts of advertisements deliberately set out to ‘create consumers’ rather than ‘inform customers’. All such developments are couched in the rhetoric of ‘progress’ in their texts.

The interface of commercial and cultural history is animated through the use of the cultural tokens that launch the commercial logic of advertisements. Here the cultural references are appropriated in advertisements to give the latter an additional gloss of a cultural text, superimposed on the business/commercial texts. The cultural tokens in advertisements are used as signifiers to extend their semiotic field onto the brand name for which they are used. The manufacturers of such texts legitimise the ‘compromise’ between cultural/societal morality and commercial materialism by using images of the mundane details of an individual’s day to day life and abundant personal as well as cultural wealth of the owner to root business in a wider culture. Advertisements, meant only to make informed customers aware of a product and trademark, take little account of the consumer. However, they also reflect the need of the manufacturer to justify the purpose of industry. In doing this they utilise typical traditional cultural references to demonstrate the ‘progress’ they brought to the nation in times of globalisation.

Trying to understand the pattern of intermingling of heterogeneous fields of epistemology in forming a historiography, I look into the pattern of the interwoven motifs of business and culture. An attempt is made to provide a detailed analysis of the advertisements in support of my argument to be
formed thereof. The inseparability of business and cultural history is considered while forming the argument for this research, as the values and ideals of countless ‘business people’ shape particular directions of consumerism that is marked by a strongly felt subliminal ideological agenda mediated by equally well-observed economic, sociological, technological and organisational realities. I try to find out how advertisements of particular products modify themes cross linguistically and cross culturally.

**Theoretical framework for Textual Analysis**

Advertisements as popular texts make sense through a complex semiotic system that weaves together language, visual and embedded cultural conventions. Advertisements are constructed in likeness with other verbal and visual artforms such as narratives, picture compositions etc making use of folklore myths to name a few. Like most popular or mass cultural forms advertisements seem to be ephemeral in nature. However, unlike most popular cultural forms that have representational functions and value, advertisements have formidable ideological implications along with representational function which, though appear to convey commercial message, carry forward something graver by virtue of regular, recurring and reiterative appearance. It is through their regular, recurring and reiterative appearance that advertisements create argumentational sustainability through appropriation of the popular aesthetic. Another striking point of difference between other popular culture forms and advertisements is in terms of participation. For example, while consumption of and participation in other popular cultural forms by the target audience is volitional, the consumption of advertising texts is imposed.
The classification and categorization of creative activities as 'high' and 'popular' (vis a vis 'low') art is part of the province of aesthetics. Aesthetics is defined as 'a branch of philosophy dealing with the nature of beauty, art and taste, and with the creation and appreciation of beauty' and 'as a particular theory or conception of beauty and art'\textsuperscript{xvii}. Nevertherless, 'art' according to Althusser (1971) makes us see, perceive and feel something that alludes to reality. (Althusser, 1971: 174) This likeness or allusion of art to reality is known as 'simulation' in modern theory of art and literature. The emergence of a new reality through 'simulation' is an essential output of art (Baudrillard 1981). Simulation is a necessary condition to create the literariness of a text.

Classical aesthetic theories emphasize the formal aspect of art. Any form of 'art' seems to be an outcome of a balanced combination of two basic components, viz. 'mimesis' and 'techne' within the Aristotelian theory of art. While 'mimesis' refers to the imaginative side in terms of artistic creations 'techne' points to the artistic skill. It is 'mimesis' that brings art and life close together through a rigorous selection and the subsequent representation of those selected items. The coherence that emerges out of the representation of probable events unifies a work of art and reality into a harmonious whole. In advertisements both imagination and skill are compiled to shape the popular aesthetic of the text.

It is to be noted here that while Aristotle considers 'techne' or skill as an essential aspect of art, Longinus reduces its importance to the level of mere supporting role in fostering of natural talent (trans. Prickard 1906). Longinus is the first person to include addressees in his theory of art. The word
'sublime,' as used by Longinus, means both the poet's state of mind 
(megalopsychia) and its irresistible effect on the reader. Eternity or 
permanence is the mark of art for him. According to him, something is 
beautiful and sublime if 'it pleases all people at all times' (Trans. Prickard 
1906). In terms of the parameter of permanence, advertisements certainly do 
not fall under the category of 'art.' However, in its power of sustainability 
through serial representation advertisements do have the potential to 'please' 
people. It is this function of 'pleasing' people while either imprinting an 
ideological argument among the masses or conforming to one already 
existing that advertisements become explorable texts for intensive 
investigation.

It needs to be mentioned here that in classical aesthetic theories, art is 
considered to be a lofty and sacrosanct entity. There has been no place for 
social, political or a cultural context in the theory of art until the late nineteenth 
century. With the advent of Marxism in the late nineteenth century, these 
contexts came to be included in the theory of art. Marxist theoreticians like 
Althusser, Adorno, Mukarovsky, Jameson, Eagleton and Bennet have 
approached aesthetics from a 'socio-economic' point of view.

Critics like Mukarovsky and Jameson attach a lot of importance to the pre-
dominance of society in the formation of art. They argue that aesthetic 
qualities do not reside in the artistic object but the way the object is embedded 
in social context. According to Mukarovsky 'the aesthetic function manifests 
itself only under certain conditions, i.e. in a certain social context'13. The 
aesthetic function is an ever shifting boundary and not a water tight
compartment. An aesthetic object obtains its substance, like a parasite, from other sources of socio-cultural importance as well.

Adorno defines 'art' as a produce of the great 'culture industry' established and mobilized by the capitalist power group to spread the ideology of the power. In such a system, beauty is a matter of culture bound conception emanating from the pattern of imposed values and structures. These imposed values and structures stand contrary to the 'autonomy' of art. An artistic or literary text derives its meaning, function and appeal from social, political and cultural contexts. Without these grounds art becomes rootless and shallow. Advertisements as modern popular aesthetic forms depend on these contexts for their meaning. Since these texts are to be considered with reference to other cultural texts of a society, a systematic theoretical framework is needed to analyse them while unfolding the core message of texts. Social semiotic theory proposed and developed by Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen (1996) is to provide framework for textual analysis of advertisements for this dissertation.

**Presentation, representation and identity in mass media**

Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) identify each of functions mentioned above with characteristic modes of visual presentation. The narrative line follows the vectors of the images. Vectors refer to directionality of movements establishing relationship among characters and their forthcoming actions. The conceptual analysis is emphasised by the diagrammatic presentation of the final section of the advertisement, when the realistic detailed is abstracted away. At the level of the *textual* metafunction, Kress and Van Leeuwen
concentrate on the meaning of compositional elements of the image. They argue that in Western cultures with a left to right writing mode, the page has been divided. They summarise their analysis with a diagram (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1996: 208) slightly simplified here.

The left hand side of the page tends to be the given, the top the ideal. The movement across the screen and the positioning of various elements and characters carries meaning in the ad.

Within the *interpersonal* metafunction, Kress and van Leeuwen discuss the ways in which a viewer is positioned relative to the image. In the above advertisement, the members of the audience are positioned as onlookers, almost like voyeurs, but not alone in their formal approval or disapproval. As part of the audience the viewers tend to reflecting back the narrative and the conceptual analysis and also get consumed in the argument as a participant with/without their conscious consent. The story thus becomes a story of the viewers’ own transformation from the consumer to the participant. The advertisement is an example of what Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) call
‘demand pictures,’ i.e. images which call on the viewer to act. Contemporary advertisements compel the audience into action by concealing their strategies by way of creating series of ‘demand pictures’ as part of their textual design. Though the explicit agenda of any advertisements is to persuade the viewer to buy by visual argument, the practical implication is far deeply connected to ongoing cultural, ideological and social practices. This could be called the visual argumentation. The Kress and van Leeuwen analysis gives us a clue as to how we might analyse the visual argumentation of advertisements. To claim that visual advertisements, on television or in magazines, are best analysed as instances of argumentation, is to make a claim about the way that advertisements function.

Argumentation is essentially dialogic (Bakhtin 1984), and hence should ideally be based on verbal contests but in case of advertisements it is both verbal and representational contests. However it does not indicate that analogical forms of argumentation cannot exist in visual mode – particularly when the conventions surrounding the meaning of visual images of a certain type mean that the images are read/decoded and/or interpreted as arguments. Advertisements can be sited as important examples of visual argumentation particularly because they are considered to be persuasive texts.

Advertising is the discourse type of cultural text of the modern age: a genre drawing on the metaphysical anxiety, ideological anguish, socio-political turmoil and the cultural sophistication of its target audience. As cultural texts advertisements are set in the backdrop of social contexts that assumes
viewers to untangle the complex reasoning of texts combining a series of premises and consequently be persuaded towards the brand.

Du Gay et al (1997) perceive the meaning-making process as an ongoing, non-linear, five-way dialogue. The 'circuit of culture', as they call it, is 'a theoretical model based on the articulation of a number of distinct processes whose interaction can and does lead to variable and contingent outcomes.' (du Gay 1997a: 3) The five cultural processes identified by them are representation, identity, regulation, production, and consumption. As explained by du Gay (1997), a combination of these five processes facilitates a 'cultural study' of a particular object' (p. 4). The present research makes reference to these five processes together, to undertake a comparative cultural study of contemporary Indian advertisements. By examining how its ideological/political and cultural meanings have arisen, the research ventures to reveal some of the workings of culture, though the main aim is to trace and explain the complexity, instability and contradictory status of advertisements as a cultural construct and a site for contest of ideologies pertaining to Indian nationalisms.

Du Gay (1997a) observes that 'any analysis of a cultural text or artefact must pass [through the circuit of culture] if it is to be adequately studied' (du Gay, 1997a: 3), implying that neglecting any one of the five key processes in the analysis of the text renders inadequacy to the study. Previous studies have tended to focus on reception, or on textual features (Das 1993, Sen 1997), whereas the present research aims at a multiperspectival cultural study of advertisements to examine five distinct cultural processes. The primary
assumption of this research is that the meanings produced within the circuit of culture are all potentially of equal importance and contributing crucially to the ideological contest for which advertisements act as the site.

The research aim is to how, where, when, why, and by whom social and cultural meanings are generated, decoded and interpreted. According to the ‘conventional’ or ‘traditional’ view, the source of meaning is primarily located at the level of production/text and the signifier/signified relationship is arbitrary and fixed. This view assumes that meaning is inherent and fixed, the process of communication is non-interactive as well as non-dynamic and the consumers/readers are passive receivers of pre-assigned meaning produced elsewhere. The position of the entire social semiotic approach and the present study is that meaning is made as a dynamic process motivated by the readers’ interest including social, cultural and ideological background and definitely not arbitrary or predetermined. However there can be a directed ‘reading path’ (= reading leading to the desired/target meaning) (Kress 2003).

Diametrically opposed to the ‘traditional’ view are (1) the ‘pleasures of consumption’ perspective, represented by critics such as Lain Chambers and John Fiske, which also sees the processes of production and consumption as disconnected and (2) the ‘social semiotic approach’ represented by Gunther Kress and Theo Van Leeuwen who considers the ‘process of meaning-making’ as a highly interactive process with an enhanced role of readers/viewers.

The five cultural processes are all inextricably tied up with each other. This aspect of the model is known as articulation. Du Gay(1997a) describes
‘articulation’ as the process of connecting disparate elements together to form a temporary unity. An ‘articulation’ is thus the form of connection that can impose unity between two or more disjunct, different or distinct elements, under certain conditions. It is an association that is not ‘given’, ‘determined’, or ‘absolute’ and ‘essential’ for all time; rather it is an association the conditions of existence or emergence of which need to be located in the contingencies of circumstance or immediate context. (du Gay, 1997a: 3)

Stuart Hall (1997) expresses his own understanding of the term ‘culture’ in Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices, in which he writes that culture ‘is not so much a set of things – novels and paintings or TV programmes and cartoons – as a process, a set of practices.’ (Hall, 1997: 2) However ‘production of culture’ in the present thesis refers to the production of texts or ‘cultural software’ (such as films, TV serials, news, literary texts and advertisements) and material products or ‘cultural hardware’ (such as the actual consumer products such as coca cola, salt, instant coffee) i.e. of cultural ‘things,’ rather than to the production of a set of practices. What connects these ‘things’ and ‘practices’, however, what makes them cultural. It is the context in which they convey a specific cultural meaning. Thus, ‘cultural contests’ are struggles over meanings and signifying practices along with predominance of ideological space. The contest determines a distinctive way of producing and circulating meaning within specific culture.

Identity is the process or set of practices that strives to establish the notion of the self in terms of the other by way of assigning either sameness or difference. Gilroy (1997) points out ‘that the formation of every ‘we’ must
exclude a ‘they’, that identities depend on the marking of [sameness and] difference.’ (Gilroy, 1997: 302) Quoting Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who pointed out that the construction of a unified common identity, has been an important political and social process, rather than a natural phenomenon, Gilroy (1997) concludes:

Work must be done, institutions built, customs and usages devised, to produce that particularity and the feelings of identity and exclusiveness which bind people together, though these are so often experienced as though they were either natural and spontaneous or the products of an automatic tradition. (Gilroy, 1997: 303)

Advertisements appear to play a special role in this process. First, through textual representations of identities they produce and circulate, challenge or confirm, established norms. The privileged position of advertisements within the mass media strengthens this ideologically driven role. This prominence and privileged position within the premises of mass media makes it a particularly influential source of formation of identity or subjecthood. Secondly, advertisements like other cultural products have identity value. Expressing opinions about them is an important cultural practice in the enduring process of identity formation.

There are two approaches to the issues of identity and difference: essentialist and non-essentialist approaches to identity. Kathryn Woodward (1997) explains that the debate at some points is articulated as a tension between biological and social constructionist approaches, and at others it takes the form of a dispute between a view of identity as fixed and trans-historical, on the one hand, and as fluid and contingent, on the other. (Woodward, 1997: 4)
The essentialist/naturalist, on one hand, view seems to consider inequalities not as socially constructed, contingent and reversible, but as a consequence of determining power of the biological body. The non-essentialist view, on the other hand, refers to identities based on socially construction and historical contingency.

Identity is a cultural process rather than a fixed given. Race too is a socially constructed category. There is no biologically determined link between race and social inequality. Nevertheless, at the same time it implies that all other collective identities, such as gender, age, physical ability, first-language, sexuality, region, religion, occupation and so forth are in some way significantly different, irrespective of context. Identities are constructed through cultural processes. Here, it is important to remember that individuals are active agents who are capable, to varying degrees, of negotiating their sense of self or subjectivity.

Du Gay (1997c) explains in Production of Culture/Cultures of Production that the 'production of culture' does not only refer to the production of the products traditionally associated with the culture industry, such as literature, music and film, but also to any goods that 'are deliberately inscribed with particular meanings and associations as they are produced and circulated.' which nowadays includes 'seemingly banal products – from instant coffee to bank accounts.' (Du Gay, 1997c: 5).

Noticeable similarities exist in the processes of representation and identity on several accounts. The shift in focus from identity to representation simply
involves a switch from self-making to sense-making, or from the creation and assertion of identities to the production and circulation of meanings of identities; that is, from the identities of people to the socio-cultural profile or identity of consumer products such as a bottle of coca cola or a packet of salt or a particular make of the television.

In case of advertisements, the meaning does not arise from the product itself, but from the ways it has been represented through a combination of linguistic and visual modes in advertisements. In fact ‘[a]dvertising is the cultural language which speaks on behalf of the product. Advertising makes commodities speak.’ (du Gay, 1997: 25) In Foucault’s (1972, 1982) terms, advertising is a discourse which produces knowledge about the product by constructing a ‘regime of truth’. Within this discourse, one is able to read off the encoded ‘privileged’ or ‘foregrounded’ meanings of each advertisement. Nevertheless, it is important to remember that the discourse of advertising tries to construct and manipulate (already established) meanings in specific socio-cultural contexts. A greater potential to act as the ideological state apparatus lies strongly with advertisements due to their innate capacity to create the ‘regime of truth’ while other fictional media texts fail to do so.

There is a parallel between the creation and assertion of identities and the production and circulation of meanings in advertisements. The women are depicted in the advertisements as ‘girls’, and their membership of the ‘Hindu’ community by and large indexed in their attire as well as appearance in the advertisement granting them membership to the ‘nation’. These meanings seem to be subtly touched upon or even explicitly found in other texts of
similar nature. The communal identities, like the product itself, are given meaning through the powerful (communal/ gender-biased) discourse of advertising.

It is also necessary to examine the discursive formations which have produced advertisements as the cultural construct, and study how power has been exercised in attempts to construct meanings at specific moments in history encashing upon popular myths in relation to conceptualizing ‘Indian national identity’ excluding those who do not conform to this conceptualization.

The term regulation refers to a number of issues including the notion of control and authority. Cultural regulation refers to the control or adjustment of meaning, or any sort of cultural policy or politics aimed at controlling/manipulating and constructing meaning. Regulation can also refer to the process of making things appear regular or natural, thus linking it to the establishment of norms. (Thomson, 1997: 3) Culture as an ‘apparatus’ (Althusser, 1992) structures the way people think, feel and act in institutions, i.e. potentially regulates meaning and status of membership for the individual through which social life is to be ordered and governed.

Expressing identity through consumption suggests that there is a performative side to this cultural process. The meanings which have been attached to material objects such as consumer products through production practices such as design are made are available for consumers to use in the process of consumption. The objects are displayed while they send messages out to anyone who might be interested in the act of consumption. The consumption
of cultural software or texts can similarly be performative. The ‘certain thing’ in this dissertation is the representation of nationalism(s) in Indian context through advertisements as cultural texts. The discourse which has produced some argument and knowledge about it are explored to substantiate the claims regarding this process. Each discourse seems to create its own ‘regime of truth’, and its own defining moments.

A combination of language and visual facilitates the process of meaning making of particular messages in advertisements. Advertisements use elements from different genres. Genre-mixing and genre-embedding in advertisements make them a very complex network of intertexts. The argumentation of advertisements is carried out through a combination of visual mode and the mode of spoken and written language. The work of Kress and Van Leeuwen, a systematic semiotic theory of visual representation, drawing on a Hallidayan analysis and applying it to visual images will be used for the analysis of advertisements for my research. According to them ‘images (and this includes the layout of the page) carry the argument.’ (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996: 38) Following Halliday (1977), Kress and van Leeuwen (1996, 2005) identify the ideational, the textual and the interpersonal metafunctions of a semiotic mode. The first of these essentially describes the representative function. In the case of visual images, Kress and van Leeuwen distinguish narrative and conceptual ideational modes. Images can either tell a story or put forth an analysis, and/or both.

For example, in most advertisements - there are both a narrative, i.e. a story-line and a conceptual analysis. The story is generally a transformation story.
For example in a version of audiovisual advertisement of Coca Cola where two village girls come to buy two small bottles of Coca Cola worth rupees five each and the shopkeeper tries to take a higher price than the retail price; a man comes to their rescue. Being able to pay the right price as a result of intervention of the rescuing man, the girls appreciate the man’s worth and go to the extent of expressing it also. The rescuing man may also be taken as the representative of patronising patriarchy who comes in rescue the ‘damsels in distress.’ The narrative action transforms the rustic village girls into ones who not only appreciate intelligence and ‘bravery’, but are able to express their appreciation of the man who comes to help at a time when they were about to be cheated on an assumption of their rustic naiveness by the shopkeeper selling coca cola. Interestingly the subtle reference to the gullible Indian femininity unaware of the norms of the outer world of materialism is obvious here. However, there is an analytical or conceptual function in the text. The young women, shopkeeper and man are revealed as not just the superficial images, but as characters with interior dimensions and a thorough knowledge of ‘Indian’ tradition, Indian (Hindu) mythology (e.g. the man refers to Pandavas), and a subtle reference to Hindu ethics as well. The text subsumes knowledge of the Indian (Hindu) mythology as the default tradition. Anyone lacking in the referential knowledge is excluded from the text’s scope for meaning–making. These internal dimensions grants them the membership of the ‘imagined community’ called ‘Indian.’

The Coca Cola advertisement mentioned above can be analysed in terms of the meanings embedded at the level of design and production, which are modified by the creation of new meanings as the product is represented.
through the advertisement in the Indian media. In turn, the meanings produced through representation connect with, and help constitute, the meaningful identities of the consumers/viewers as participants. Although intended specifically to describe how present-day, technology driven contemporary culture works, social semiotic approach can also offer a useful model for exploring the ways in which a classical text, such as Ramayana, Mahabharata and Puranas acquire social and cultural meaning. The notion of interaction can be extended beyond considerations of the writing and reading processes, acknowledging the roles and practices of representation, identity formation and cultural regulations. Furthermore, it offers a systematic way of exploring why some meanings have become associated with Ramayana, Mahabharata or Gita as representative Hindu texts, rather than others. The framework also provides us a clue as to why some interpretations have acquired dominant, normative or naturalized shape and are accepted virtually unchallenged, while some others are being fiercely contested.

**Multimodal concepts**

**Affordance**

Multimodal theory deals with a discussion on the concept of affordances in relation to modes as semiotic resources, spatial design and framing for representation and communication. The term ‘affordance’ has been first used by perceptual psychologist Gibson (1979) to indicate the potential uses of a given object. (cited in Van Leeuwen, 2005: 4) In multimodal theory ‘affordances’ refer to those enabling properties that create the ‘meaning potential’ (Van Leeuwen 2005) of a mode as a resource for meaning-making. Kress (2000, 2003) argues that affordances of modes depend on their
material aspects. The affordances owing to materiality enable modes to play significant representational and communicational role in construction of messages and design of texts. These intrinsic enabling properties of modes are not static or fixed categories but are subject to modification in keeping up with changes in the media of communication and information exchange (Kress 2003). For example space-based modes such as image, sculpture and other three dimensional forms due to their materiality affords possibilities of meaning making through spatial distribution of simultaneously present elements. In such cases the relationship between elements in space serves as the resource for meaning. However, for time-based modes, such as speech, music and written texts, it is ‘the temporal ordering’ of elements (Kress 2003) that functions as the meaning-making resource. The affordances of various modes lead to preferred textual/generic forms in multimodal design. (Kress and Mavers, 2005: 174) The affordances inherent in the materiality of each mode shape the potential for representational and communicational action by their users’ making a contemporary text interactive and bidirectional in essence. (Kress, 2003: 5) Each mode present in a text compels the readers into making specific commitments about meaning for their varied affordances (Ibid).

The distinct affordances of modes lead to their functional specialisation either by culture specific repeated uses over time or through use by individual sign-makers and/or designers driven by particular interest (Kress 2003: 46 ; Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2001: 64) Interest, in multimodal theory refers to subjective stance of individual sign-maker creating their unique ‘representational resources’ driven by social, cultural and ideological
background and concerns. *Functional specialisation* refers to the inherent attributes of specific modes making them suitable to be used in a text to convey specific meaning and to provide the reader with resources in their meaning-making process of a generic text. *Functional load* is that functional responsibility/weight that a mode is expected to carry leading to its *functional specialisation*. For example the *functional load* in Indian advertisements before 1975 (in 1975 Indian Television began its journey) used to be predominantly on written language; the layout of page used to determine the placement of image, if any, in the body of advertisements. However, the *functional load* had been gradually shifted to the mode of image after audio-visual advertisements were popularised in post-1975 India and also as a consequence of the development of digital media and technology. The visual mode (as on the TV or computer screen) due to its affordances started influencing the layout of the mode of writing in the design of contemporary advertisements (see Annex I).

A study of affordances becomes crucial as multiple affordances of different modes have ideological impact in redefining the concepts of agency, authorship and authority in the process of construction of knowledge and in representation as well as communication in contemporary ‘new media’ texts (Kress 2003). Kress (2003) identifies a shift in the new media texts from (1) the mode of writing to the modes of image, music and sound, (2) the medium of the page to that of the screen, (3) meaning received through the logic of time to meaning made through a combination of logic of time and space. He shows how the modal shift intensified by globalization, ideologies of post-industrial world (in which information itself is not only a resource but also a
commodity) has far reaching consequences for power-relation, socio-political issues, economics, culture, and epistemology.

**Affordances of Mode**

Modes are the resources for representation and communication. There are different modes serving as resources for communication including mode of writing, speech, images, music. Each mode is characterised by different affordances or ‘meaning potential’ and by itself ‘is a partial bearer of meaning only.’ (Kress and Mavers, 2005: 172) Kress and Mavers (2005) argue that ‘the different material make-up and differing cultural histories’ of each mode is the source of their varying affordances. (Kress and Mavers, 2005: 172) For example, the mode of moving image has a different affordance than the mode of still images for their different *functional load*.

Modes as resources of representation in communication are used as tools for constructing position/stance, subjectivity, directed meaning and/or reading path in a text. Hence the selection of modes in design of a text is an issue with serious ideological implication. The affordances of modes and the role of ideology in their selection for representation in specific texts (particularly those produced for the mass media including advertisements) appears to result in their being used as *apparatus* (Althusser, 1977) rather than simple resources of meaning for the *Culture Industry* (Adorno, 1979). A detailed discussion on how the process of selection of modes to construct messages is driven fundamentally by socio-cultural and ideological concerns will be undertaken in the subsequent chapters of this dissertation.
Each mode carries within it the repertoire of past cultural conventions and values marked by ‘regularities of organisation.’ (Kress, 2003:45) This association of past cultural conventions and values makes them ‘intertextual’ and ‘dialogic’ in their very essence. However, semiotic resources are not limited to modes alone. In fact semiotic resources are ‘actions and artefacts’ used for communication. (Van Leeuwen, 2005: 3) The affordances of semiotic resources are drawn from their ‘theoretical semiotic potential constituted by all their past uses…’ and is dependent on the social contexts governing the appropriateness of use and interest of the users. (Van Leeuwen, 2005: 4) Van Leeuwen connects the concept of ‘semiotic potential’ to that of affordance.

Each mode in multimodal ensembles is governed by distinct logic resulting in different affordances. The logic of time and linearity governs the organisation of writing whereas the logic of space and simultaneity governs the organisation of image. (Kress, 2003: 1-2) For example in speech or writing one statement has to precede the one and follow the other.

Sentences/utterances are written/constructed in respect of what is said before and in partial expectation of the forthcoming response in communication. Nonetheless, the mode of image can have several elements present simultaneously though the placement of each element within the visual design determines the mutual relationship of each element present in the mode. The simultaneity of existence offers resources for meaning-making in space-based modes whereas linear/temporal succession of elements constitutes resources
of meaning in time-based modes. (Kress 2003: 45) Simultaneity and linearity of temporal succession are the materiality of space-based and time-based modes respectively.

On the basis of the above discussion a workable definition of mode could be formulated as follows: Mode is the materially realized, socially fashioned, culturally motivated and ideologically determined apparatus for representation and communication of messages through a text.

The presupposition of supremacy of mode of speech and writing as the sole vehicle of human communication and storable knowledge ignoring completely the role of other modes such as image, music, sound, gesture and position / movement and their varied affordances in the process of meaning-making necessitates the emergence of Multimodal theory of social semiotics. This theory accounts for different modes including image, sound, music, writing and different affordances that make them functionally apt to be used in specific communicational context rather than for exclusive use of the mode of writing as the sole resource for textual meaning (Hodge & Kress, 1988, Kress and Van Leeuwen 1996, Kress 2003, Kress and Mavers 2005).

The proposed model of Social Semiotics differs significantly from the one suggested by Saussure. Hodge & Kress (1988) refute the Saussurean definition of sign on grounds of (1) arbitrariness in form (signifier) and meaning (signified) relationship imposed by specific social conventions, (2) partial attention to study of ‘signifier’ relegating the ‘study of material sign to a discipline outside linguistics’ and (3) affirmation of the ‘social’ over the

Kress (2003) observes that the traditional approach presupposes (1) the meaning of a text disseminated through written language is limited due to an ‘arbitrary’ relation between form and meaning, (2) a marginal receptive role of the reader without much provision for interactivity or autonomy (Kress 2003). The social semiotic approach considers meaning emerging out of a dynamic negotiation between the text and the reader as meaning maker motivated by interest including social, ideological and cultural position. The meaning of a text is ‘spread across several modes.’ (Kress, 2003: 35) The co-presence of different modes in a text is not merely to replicate what is expressed through the ‘language-mode’ text but to enhance and endorse the polysemy (Fiske, 1986, to mean possibilities of multiple meanings that a text offers to its readers/audience) and polyvalence (Condit, 1989, to mean shared understanding of conventions on which the meanings of a text depend and disagreement about valuation of those conventions) of the text. Thus the possibilities of multiple meaning inherent in the text and the condition of shared convention and individual disagreement of valuation of those conventions justifies the process of negotiation by individual readers that Kress (2003) proposes.
Affordances of Spatial design

‘Design as choice in context’ refers to a compositional device taking into consideration the purpose and aim of communication, audience, available resources, their affordances and the interest of the design-maker (Kress 2004). The process of design includes both the processes of making texts and the act of reading (Ibid). As part of the design process the maker makes a few choices in conditions mentioned above. For example, the process of design of an academic essay will entail its author to make decisions about the selection of modes (either exclusively the mode of writing or a combination of modes of writing and images, as in the present dissertation), styles of representation, framing and layout including selection of font – type and, size, margin, text alignment, and arrangement of headings/subheadings. Choices that a writer makes in this case are determined by the logic of time. The choices that a design-maker makes for a text to be disseminated through the audio-visual media or through computer screen are predominantly based on the logic of space. The stakes for the medium of printed materials are different from the stakes of the medium of screen. These stakes has an important influence on the ‘choice of context.’

Salience (i.e. prominence or ‘the degree to which an element draws attention to itself’ – (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1990: 225)) ‘of object-entities in spatial relation in the visually represented world’ are different than the salience of ‘events/actions in temporal relations’ (Kress 2004). Kress (2004) exemplifies this by showing how a child in her writing about the visit to the British Museum uses spatially organised mode to express her recollected visual encounter and temporally organised mode to express her actional experience. This
illustrates how affordances of different modes enable the design maker to make an apt choice of contexts for representation and communication in particular situation.

An awareness of affordances of different modes and the facilities of media on part of the design-maker ensures construction of a reading path for its audience/reader by successful exploitation of affordances as resources of meaning. Reading path is the direction for reading towards meaning-making. The affordances of modes provide the resources for creating this reading path by making use of the ‘logic of space and spatial display.’ (Kress 2003) He further suggests that the reading path can be manoeuvred through salience of elements in the spatial design.

Framing refers to disconnection, isolation and/or segregation of elements in a visual composition through multiple devices such as boundaries, frame lines, empty space between objects, and discontinuity of colour. (Van Leeuwen, 2005: 7) Framing enables elements or groups of elements in a design to be ‘disconnected, marked off from each other, or connected, joined together.’ (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996:214) The significance of the framing is that (1) it indicates the isolation or connectedness of different elements in a visual composition, (2) unfolds the degree of exclusion or inclusion of these elements within the text, (3) increases or decreases the salience of elements to create a reading path.

Space and spatial positioning of elements in an image are resources for meaning making in visual mode and are culture specific. For example
positioning of an element at the bottom of the framed space in western culture indicates something to be ‘grounded on this earth’ or ‘real’ and placing the same thing at the top of the space indicates just the opposite. (Kress, 2003: 69) However, this might not be true in some cultures where the directionality of reading goes from right to left. Following is the quadrant of affordances of image in western tradition moving clockwise from the bottom-left to mean given/real, given/ideal, new/ideal and new/real.

![Quadrant of meaning potential in 'Western' images](Taken from Kress, 2003: 70)

The above figure may serve as an additional readymade framework for meaning making of a spatial design primarily in the western context and to some extent in some non-western context (as globalisation induces an internalisation of the western norms in construction of texts in these contexts to some extent). However, this quadrant, if put to use rigidly, will not be able to account for all spatial designs available and may bound one with the restrictions of arbitrariness that the multimodal approach aims to contest. I shall analyse selected advertisements using the framework outlined above to get to the core of their meaning and process through which the intended meaning is created.
This dissertation is organized in five chapters including this introductory chapter. Chapter One deals with a review of earlier research on Indian nationalisms in a pre-1992 period as a reference point for the present research and a critical reading into the post-1992 situation. It includes a discussion on the nature of Indian nationalisms as is observed to have emerged with a new vigour in this period and its interface with the continuing discourse on Indian nationalisms. This chapter would also include a discussion of contemporary discourse on Indian nationalisms and a critique of the same.

In Chapter Two I analyse advertisements collected from Hindi, Bangla and English print and audiovisual media to explore the processes of construction of the Indian woman subjecthood. A detailed analysis, done in this chapter, helps me to explore the process of construction of the position of the Indian woman as the essence as well as the protector of the ‘sacred spirituality’ of ‘home’ in conformity with the spatial strategy of the right wing Hindutva.

Chapter Three is devoted to analyses of advertisements exploring the politics of representation of the cultural ‘other’ and the agenda of homogenisation at the global as well as at the national level. It also includes a discussion on the representational matrix and negotiation of identity politics of the Hindu nationalist ideology as well as propaganda in relation to questions regarding the ‘nature’ of the nation and its interface with globalization.
I discuss in Chapter Four the process of construction of Indian masculinity projecting three kinds of Indian male subjecthood, namely ‘emancipated, composite masculinity,’ ‘complex global sexualised masculinity’ and enlightened universal masculinity (Rajan, 2006: 1103), as predominant motifs of representation. The ‘universal’ global identity is posed as a complementary position for the other two. Advertisements use these three projections of Indian masculinity as part of their Hindu nationalist strategy to establish hegemonic patriarchy. For example, all the three categories extensively use projected images of Indian men are empowered by access to global/national capital and are endowed with privileges of participation in the global/national/local politics. They represent the upper-classes or the upper-middle classes of the society. As a result of their access and privileges they are placed in the position to control the norms of the society, thereby comprising the hegemonic patriarchy.

Chapter Five carries the conclusion of this research.