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## Chapter Ten

### **Tá Siad ag Teacht: Guinness as a Signifier of Irish Cultural Transformation**

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That Guinness is a synecdoche of Ireland is almost, at this stage, a cultural given. This commodity has taken on a fetishistic association with Ireland, an association that is enunciated by the desire of tourists to have a pint of Guinness as a testament to having arrived in Ireland. In all tourist shops, practically every item of consumption can be found with a Guinness brand on it, from drinking glasses and alcohol-related products to all forms of clothing – including underwear. Indeed, Guinness has operated as a synecdoche in a further dimension as in most pubs in Ireland, if one asks the barperson for ‘a pint’, the default beverage will be a Guinness.

However, this chapter will look at a more macrocosmic index of Guinness, as by tracing a number of advertisements, I hope to demonstrate that Guinness as a commodity has followed, paralleled and at times anticipated, socio-cultural trends in contemporary Irish society. This may seem a large claim to make for what is, after all, a brand of beer, but a brief discussion of how cultural codes develop and change will provide the theoretical framework for an exploration of Guinness advertisements as published by the company themselves, in a special celebration of seventy-five years of advertising, published in 2004 (*Guinness Calender*). This adequation between the product and a sense of Irishness is not accidental, as an example from the Guinness will demonstrate. The March 2004 image is of a close-up of the logo on a pint glass of Guinness. This logo is a golden harp, an image that is also associated

with Ireland and Irish nationalism in particular, so the adequation is clear at an iconic level. This is further foregrounded by the text of the advertisement: 'Natural Anthem' (*Guinness Calendar March 2004*). Here the visual and verbal texts conflate to fuse in the mind of the consumer a 'natural' adequation between the product and the nation, and it is all done at a level of abstraction that is clever, especially given the sea changes that have occurred in both the product and the nation in the last 75 years.

Guinness was founded in 1759, and the stout was initially a local beer, due to distribution problems. Now the company is owned by Diageo and is a world brand with a huge distribution network. Ireland as a country has changed phenomenally over the past years, in the wake of economic boom and the Celtic Tiger. From being a country with a predominantly manufacturing base, we have now developed into a service and consumer economy, which has leaped from the premodern to the postmodern without that long period of *embourgeoisement* that is typical of most western European democracies. Gone are the days when Irish labourers emigrated to London to help rebuild that city; now Irish property companies like Sherry-Fitzgerald are buying large tracts of London property. Irish investors including Aidan Brooks, Derek Quinlan and Alanis Limited have spent around €250 million on property on Bond Street since 2000. Gone are the days when Irish soccer fans saved their wages for the annual pilgrimage to Old Trafford or Parkhead; now Irish businessmen like J. P. McManus and Dermot Desmond have bought, and sold, shares in Manchester United and Glasgow Celtic. Gone are the days when Eamon deValera's vision was of comely maidens dancing at the crossroads; now the comely maidens dance on the stages of world capitals in shows like *Riverdance* or *Feet of Flames*.

In short, Ireland has changed rapidly and we have become a western consumer culture with all that is entailed therein. The sense of subjectivity of the contemporary Irish person probably has far more in common with our contemporaries in Western Europe and America than it has with past generations of Irish people, as the influence of mass media – television, radio, film, the internet and mobile and miniaturised personal communication technology – is pervasive across the developed world, and this can be demonstrated in the marketing processes of Guinness. This seemingly 'Irish' product is in fact globally based and marketed and the image it

portrays has a parallax effect in terms of contemporary Irish subjectivity. In terms of contemporary culture, advertising is one of the most carefully researched ways of appealing to an individual's subjective desires and in this chapter; the different advertisements for Guinness over 75 years will be examined precisely in terms of how this is achieved. Given that consumption has become a defining characteristic of who we now are, advertising has become a crucial signifier in the whole area of subjectivity, and the work of Louis Althusser can be deployed to aid our understanding of this.

For Althusser, society achieves its aims of perpetuating the subjective identities, which it desires through ideology. He defines ideology as the way in which society constructs subjectivity, and this is done through what he termed RSAs (Repressive State Apparatuses such as the police and the army and censorship) and ISAs (Ideological State Apparatuses such as education and the media). In contemporary culture, large corporations also achieve the same aim by constructing subjects who are motivated to consume their products. For Althusser, success when individuals voluntarily set out to become what society wishes them to be. The process of interpellation begins with 'hailing', a calling to participate in a form of ideology (Althusser 1998, 302).

Hailing is ubiquitous, and almost entirely irresistible and is at the centre of any ideological system. It attempts to make another individual recognize and accept a form of ideology. Through hailing, ideology 'acts or functions in such a way that it recruits subjects among individuals' (Althusser 1998, 301). Individuals are born into ideology, but hailing recruits subjects of particular ideologies. Subjects do not realize their subjection, and are only free in that subjection is freely accepted. Althusser states that an institution or individual hails another individual much as the 'common everyday police (or other) hailing: 'Hey, you there!'' (Althusser 1998, 301). A successful hailing occurs if the individual 'recognizes that the hail was really addressed to him, and that it was really him who was hailed' (Althusser 1969, 41). This recognition, for example may be the acceptance of a particular social practice or label, such as an advocate of Christian religious ideology terming himself a Christian. If a hailing is successful, an individual becomes a 'subject' of a particular ideology, and, hence, is 'interpellated' interpellation being a successful hailing (Althusser 1998, 303). Althusser succinctly

states this process in his central thesis: 'Ideology interpellates individuals as subjects' (Althusser 1998, 299). Thus the individual sees him or herself as successful through the eyes of society.

If we transpose this into contemporary culture, multi-national corporations also attempt to interpellate subjects, but in this case the dictum could be restated as – 'corporate ideology interpellates individuals as consuming subjects' – and the mode of hailing used to this end is advertising. By hailing a subject and by getting the subject to recognise that his or her sense of self is in some way enhanced by the consumption of this product, advertising becomes the ultimate ISA of capitalist society. In this context, the first point to make is that advertisements are cultural signifiers that are specifically ideologically charged. In terms of their efficacy, they operate within the context of what Roland Barthes termed a cultural code:

it is the code of knowledge, or rather of human knowledges, of public opinions, of culture as it is transmitted by the book, by education, and in a more general and diffuse form, by the whole of sociality. (Barthes 1981, 155)

These signifiers, be they oral, visual or verbal, must operate within a given social code otherwise they will be unintelligible to the consumer. Thus to be successful, advertisements must both participate fully in, and at the same time, anticipate the development of, cultural codes if they are to market their chosen product to best effect. Of course, it is something of a moot point when such cuspal shifts take place – and these are definitely contextually based. For example, the notion of the mobile phone, so very much taken for granted now, would not have become so popular without the Walkman, which preceded it, and the same is true of many products, such as the MP3 player, the iPod.

In fact, in a Lacanian context, all subjectivity is defined in terms of what is called the Symbolic order, and this order is the structural matrix through which our grasp of the word is shaped and enunciated. For Lacan, the Symbolic order is what actually constitutes our subjectivity 'man speaks, then, but it is because the symbol has made him man' (Lacan 1977a, 72). It is the matrix of culture and the locus through which individual desire is expressed: 'the moment in which the desire becomes human is also that in which the

child is born into language' (Lacan 1977a, 103). The social world of linguistic communication, intersubjective relations, knowledge of ideological conventions, and the acceptance of the law are all connected with the acquisition of language. Once a child enters into language and accepts the rules and dictates of society, it is able to deal with others. The symbolic, then, is made up of those laws and restrictions that control both desire and the rules of communication, which are perpetuated through societal and cultural hegemonic modes. The symbolic, through language, is 'the pact which links... subjects together in one action. The human action *par excellence* is originally founded on the existence of the world of the symbol, namely on laws and contracts' (Lacan 1991, 230).

Currently our culture and subjectivity are very much consumer-driven, and commodities have become huge part of contemporary subjectivity. It can be said that capitalist society and consumer culture are the ideal expressions of the desire that Freud and Lacan see as central to the human subject. The rush to embrace capitalism by former communist countries in Eastern Europe, and to a more gradual extent as evidenced in China would seem to bear this out. To buy a product, one must be persuaded that it will be of value, and once one has gone beyond the basic categories of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, the requirement to purchase something that is beyond food and safety becomes problematic (Maslow 1943, 370-396). It is here that advertising as genre becomes significant as its role is to persuade the consumer that a particular product will not just satisfy a basic human need, but instead will make the consumer happy and fulfilled. Here we enter the mode of commodity fetishism and at a more basic level, we encounter the notion of desire.

Within capitalist societies people find their material life organized through the consumption of commodities. They trade their labour-power for a special commodity, money, and use that commodity to claim various other commodities produced by other people, and have no direct human contact or conscious agreements to provide for one another. Their productions, and by extension their relationships, take on a property form, meet and exchange in a marketplace, and return in property form. However, this is a very reductive definition of this term as these commodities in turn, become invested with a lot of the qualities of social relationships, for example, people advertising to their cars by name, and imbuing inanimate

objects with projected personalities. The work of social relations seems to be conducted by commodities amongst themselves, out in the marketplace. 'The Market' appears to decide who should do what for whom. Social relationships are confused with their medium, the commodity. The commodity seems to be imbued with human powers, becoming a condensation of those powers. Social relations between people are experienced mainly in the form of the commodities they see extracted from them as producers, and those returned to them as consumers. Both are private experiences, of person to commodity, and of material self-interest, and both are initiated by desire.

As a consequence of commodity fetishism, the basic political issues involved in social relationships are obscured. Commodity fetishism ensures that neither side is fully conscious of the political positions they occupy. While the term is originally Marxist, in the work of , the word 'fetish' is used with a different resonance, which led to new interpretations of commodity fetishism, as types of sexually charged relationships between a person and a manufactured object. This is especially true of the world of advertising where sex is used as the marketing tool in order to encourage the purchase of commodities.

Georg Lukács based *History and Class Consciousness* on Marx's notion, developing his own notion of commodity. Lukács' work was a significant influence on later philosophers such as Debord developed a notion of the spectacle that ran directly parallel to Marx's notion of the commodity; for Debord the spectacle made relations among people seem like relations among images (and vice versa) (Debord 1995). Jean Baudrillard is especially interested in the cultural mystique added to objects by , which encourages to purchase them as aids to the construction of their personal . In *For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign*, Baudrillard develops his quadripartite notion of the sign that, like Debord's notion of spectacle, runs alongside Marx's view of commodity.

For Baudrillard, the functional value of an object is its instrumental purpose, so a pint of Guinness satisfies thirst as well as satisfying a desire for a form of stimulant. This is very close to the Marxian notion of use-value. The next stage for him is the exchange value of the commodity, which is its economic value. A pint of Guinness is worth €3.50. The next phase is the symbolic exchange value of an object, which is its arbitrarily assigned value in terms of an agreed value in terms of another subject. So in this schema,

a pint of Guinness represents leisure activity or a form of reward in leisure time, it is also a symbol of a particularly Irish form of leisure and pleasure activity. So asking someone to go for a pint is a form of social exchange and of valuing another subject in terms of wanting to spend leisure time with him or her. The final aspect, of Baudrillard's topology of the commodity is the sign exchange value, which represents the value of an object in a system of objects. Here the sense of care in pouring the pint of Guinness, as adverted to in a number of Guinness advertisements, represents the pint as almost a social artefact (Baudrillard 1981, 123). Thus a pint of Guinness has sign exchange value in terms of other pints of beer, which do not require a waiting time in order to be ready to drink. The pouring ritual of Guinness is itself interesting in terms of fetishising the commodity. Two thirds of the glass is filled with the stout, which surges until it 'settles' into the classic black body and white head. When this is done, the remainder of the glass is filled and then there is a further wait until the pint is fully settled. This bestows on the consumer the value of being someone who appreciates the almost fetishistic quality of a special product, and this is clear from the advertisements.

In 1994, the 'Anticipation' campaign featured Joe McKinney who, while waiting for the pint to 'settle' engages in a series of contortions to music, with the caption that: 'there's no time like Guinness time' (*Guinness Calendar*, June 2004). Here the stress is on the intrinsic value of the product that is worth waiting for. A similar focus on the length of time it takes for the product to achieve readiness for consumption is to be found in the 2004 campaign. Here the image is of a pint glass, viewed from below, as the pint surges, the focus again is on waiting for it to settle and the caption cleverly inverts a cliché: 'the storm before the calm' and the lettering is coloured in a manner to match the brown froth of the surging liquid. The sub-caption, in white, reads 'pure magic' (*Guinness Calendar*, February 2004).

What is most interesting here is the increasing scale of value of an object in terms of relational as opposed to useful qualities. Hence the value of a commodity derives less from what it does or is, as opposed to how it makes the consumer feel about him or her self. It is yet another sign in the semiotic realm in which we have our being. By being the kind of consumer who is willing to wait for his chosen object of consumption to achieve a state of perfection, the advertisement is hailing the consumer as a subject who has taste and judgement. The distinction between use

value and exchange value is less stable than Marxists would allow, and here the work of Jacques Derrida is of interest.

He sees use-value and exchange value are not clearly separated but 'haunted', by culture and by each other. Derrida takes this as a classic example, which has very general application, and reasserts his plea for 'hauntology' rather than the usually carefully separated and compartmentalised ontology. Exchange value haunts use-value, for example, by expressing repetition, exchange ability, and the loss of singularity (Derrida 1994, 161). Use-value haunts exchange value, because exchange is only possible if the commodity might be useful for others. In *Specters of Marx*, Jacques Derrida discusses what he terms *hauntology*, in answer to his question: '[w]hat is a ghost?' (Derrida 1994, 10). In this book, he discusses the spectrality of many areas of meaning, seeing ghostly hauntings as traces of possible meanings. One might compare his *hauntology* to the paradigmatic chains that hover over (haunt) the linearity of the syntagmatic chain. But Derrida makes one important distinction, in that he sees spectrality and time as closely connected. He makes the point, speaking both of the ghost in *Hamlet*, and the ghost that haunts Marx's *Communist Manifesto* (where the first noun is 'specter'), that: '[a]t bottom, the specter is the future, it is always to come, it presents itself only as that which could come or come back' (Derrida 1994, 39). In this sense, use value and exchange value are temporally connected: we buy a product to fill a future need – as I purchase a pint of Guinness, it is with a view to drinking it after its being bought, and as such we purchase products in terms of satisfying a future desire, a desire as both Baudrillard and Derrida suggest, that is predicated on a better, more sated us in the future. It is also with a view to being the subject who is valued because of his or her choices of product. The product, through the advertisement, hails the subject and causes him or her to want to purchase Guinness.

Thus the first advertisement, in 1929, seems to focus on its use-value or functional value. The quality of the ingredients is foregrounded 'going right back to the Barley seed that will enable the farmers to grow the Barley that makes the most suitable malt to make the best Stout' (*Guinness Calendar*, 1929). The capitalisation of the key words 'barley' and 'stout' suggests the importance of the ingredient to the constitution of the product. This foregrounding of the connection through capitalisation is an example of



linguistic over-determination that stresses the poetic function of language. Similarly, one can read the also capitalised sub headings of the advertisement in similar terms, as these in turn foreground the quality-function of the product:

ITS GREAT PURITY

ITS HEALTH-GIVING VALUE

ITS NOURISHING PROPERTIES (*Guinness Calendar*, 1929)

The stress is on the naturalness of the product – ‘naturally matured’; ‘no artificial colour is added’; it enriches the blood’; it is ‘one of the most nourishing beverages, richer in carbo-hydrates than a glass of milk’, and the ultimate form of authority, that of medical doctors is invoked in order to substantiate these claims: ‘doctors affirm that Guinness is a valuable restorative after Influenza and other weakening illnesses. Guinness is a valuable natural aid in cases of insomnia’ (*Guinness Calendar*, 1929).

Here it is the function of the product as an enhancement of one’s physical well being that is stressed. Its use-value is that of a quasi-medicine and the presumption is that the consumer is ill before he or she drinks Guinness and the product will make him or her feel better. Already, however, there is an appeal beyond the simple use-value or functional value. At a core level this is an alcoholic drink, which is consumed for the purpose of relaxation and enjoying the effects of alcohol. Its use-value, in crude terms, is a form of narcotic escape, but this is never stressed. Instead. What it does is to make the consumer feel better about him or her self: it hails the subject as a healthier subject due to the consumption of Guinness.

If we move forward in time 6 years later, a development in approach is clear. In this advertisement, a zookeeper in uniform is chasing a sea lion who is balancing a pint of Guinness on its nose, and the only words used in the advertisement are found in the four-word caption; ‘My Goodness, MY GUINNESS [*capitalisation original*]’ (*Guinness Calendar*, June 2004). Here the product has achieved a magical transformation – the sea-lion has moved away from its normal diet in order to enjoy a pint of Guinness, and is being chased by a harassed-looking zoo-keeper. Here the transformative power of the product is clear, as is the notion of Guinness as an object of desire, as it is ambiguous as to whether the

zookeeper is chasing the sea lion or the pint of Guinness. There is a surreal and cartoonish air to the image, as if Guinness has a magical effect on all with whom it comes into contact – it is seen as transformative. It is almost as if the product is attempting to create an aura in the sense used by Walter Benjamin

According to Benjamin, even a perfect reproduction of a work of art is lacking in time and space - its 'unique existence at the place where it happens to be' (Benjamin 1969, 229). This sense of history or duration that builds the character of a work of art cannot be transmitted to the mechanical reproduction. This, by definition, means it cannot apply to a proliferation of like-things because they are not each unique in time and space, but duplicates of each other. He goes on to argue, 'that which withers in the age of mechanical reproduction is the aura of the work of art' (Benjamin 1969, 221). Benjamin's aura is, then, a presence or atmosphere attached to a thing that is one of a kind (unique in time and space) and cannot be reproduced mechanically. This is possibly why Guinness is always defined in the singular as opposed to the plural, with the stress being on the perfect quality of each individual pint, and the focus on the amount of time each pint takes to achieve readiness for consumption.

Here use-value fuses with symbolic exchange value, as the product becomes an object of desire. The sense of the chase after the object is an index of desire and according to psychoanalytic theory desire is one of the most potent and constitutive aspects of our humanity. This quality has been seen as a structuring agent of humanity and a brief exploration of the history of desire will contextualise our discussion of how Guinness has become such an iconic signifier of different types of Irishness. Jacques Lacan, developing the work of Freud, undercut the notion of rationality as the dominant factor in our humanity and instead began to examine language as an index of the unconscious processes of the mind. He also coined the phrase that the 'unconscious is structured like a language' (Lacan 1977b, 20), which brought the study of structures to the fore in continental thought. For Lacan, the unconscious and language could no longer be seen as givens, or as natural; instead, they were structures that required investigation. In this model, language, no matter what the mode of enunciation, was shot through with metaphors, metonymies and complex codifications that often masked, as opposed to revealed, the real self. Taking the structuralist ideas of the word as divided into

signifier and signified, he stressed the lack of correlation between the two, adding that meaning is always fraught with slippage, lack of clarity and play. His recasting of the Cartesian '*cogito ergo sum*' ('I think therefore I am') into '*desidero ergo sum*' ('I desire therefore I am') has led to a revision of the primacy of reason in the human sciences. A more recent version reinforces this consumer-driven subjectivity of which we have been speaking in its wry reinscription of the *Cogito*; '*Tesco ergo sum*'. He also suggested that selfhood was a complex construct in which the self took on reflections and refractions from the societal context in which it was placed.

His notion of the 'mirror stage' stressed the imaginary and fictive nature of the ideal-self, which he saw as predicated on a desire for an unattainable ideal that could never be actualised. In the mirror stage, what Lacan terms the ideal-ego is formed, which he sees as premised on the desire for a future synthesis, it is the 'transformation that takes place in the subject when he assumes an image'. As the subject anticipates the imagined and imaginary future wholeness, which will never arrive, and which is announced in the future perfect tense: 'the subject becomes at each stage what he was before and announces himself – he will have been – only in the future perfect tense' (Lacan 1977a, 306).

Given that desire is that of the other, and that it is always the desire for something else, then as soon as one desired signifier is reached, it is no longer the object of desire and the metonymic movement along the chain is repeated. Thus, for Lacan: 'desire is a metonymy' [*italics original*] (Lacan 1977a, 175). The idea of desire as impossible to fulfil is captured mimetically by the fact that the sea lion can never drink the pint of Guinness as it is balanced on its nose and it is running, nor can the zookeeper either catch the sea lion or drink the Guinness. At a structural level, the impossibility of fulfilling desire is further explored in the advertisement which won the Grand Prix Ad of the Century in 1999, called 'The Island' (*Guinness Calendar*, April 2004). This advertisement appeared on Irish television in 1977, and portrayed three men from one of the islands that dot the west coast of Ireland rowing a currach (a small rowing boat) with a keg of Guinness perched in the stern of the boat. Meanwhile on the island itself, the customers in the pub are awaiting their arrival. The advertisement is a series of cuts from the active rowing to the passive waiting, and all is done in silence. Finally, one of the islanders sees the currach on the horizon and calls in Irish 'Tá siad ag teacht' ('they are coming'). When the Guinness arrives on the island there is huge excitement,

and when the keg is finished, the rowers set off again, thereby enacting the impossibility of any real fulfilment of desire. Here again we have moved from the actuality of consumption of a product, which will enhance the physical well being of the body, to an object of desire. What is set up is a process of desire as the Guinness is brought, consumed and through its consumption the chain of desire is set up again and the process continues. Of course, advertising, like desire, is predicated on the future – the consumption of one pint of Guinness leads on to the other. In symbolic terms, Guinness is the object that leads to a relationship between the island and the mainland, and given that in Irish iconography, the west of Ireland is always seen as the more authentic and *echt*-Irish part of the country, then Guinness is being associated with traditional, male, patriarchal, and rural consumer culture. As Irish culture changed, this pattern would also change and a more cosmopolitan aspect of Guinness would be set out.

Desire, says Lacan, is located in language and in objects outside of ourselves. Speaking of the moment at which the mirror stage comes to an end, Lacan says, ‘[i]t is this moment that decisively tips the whole of human knowledge into mediatisation through the desire of the other...’ (Lacan 1977a, 6). This enables Lacan to propose that: ‘[t]he symbol manifests itself first of all as the murder of the thing, and this death constitutes in the subject the eternalisation of desire’ (Lacan 1977a, 114). What is crucial here is that the capture, or consumption, of the ‘thing’ in no way sates or stops desire and the progression of Guinness advertisements underlines this fact. The first toucan poster appeared in 1955; in this advert two military pilots, looking stereotypically British with handlebar moustaches are looking up at five toucans, flying in military formation, each with two pints of Guinness balanced on their beaks ((*Guinness Calendar*, October 2004). The toucans have stolen the pints of Guinness and the airmen are horrified – once again, no-one is actually drinking the Guinness, the toucans are carrying off the drink, in a manner paralleling the sea-lion and the airmen are chasing but in vain. Here the object of desire is once again metonymically in motion without any sense of closure.

Clearly, in terms of the advertising of Guinness, as an index of consumer culture, the line between use and exchange values is blurred. People’s relation to consumption has hierarchical status value in a system of *symbolic*

*exchange*, which is a ‘social institution that determines behaviour before even being considered in the consciousness of the social actors’ (Baudrillard 1981, 31). In terms of the mechanisms of desire, Lacan states that the subject’s ego is that ‘which is reflected of his form in his objects’ (Lacan 1977a, 194), and it is this identification of the subject with the product as an index of his or her ego that is the key to the development of these advertisements in consumer culture. In this system, consumption determines one’s social status, as Baudrillard notes ‘through objects, each individual and group searches out his-her place in an order, all the while trying to jostle this order according to a personal trajectory’ (Baudrillard 1981, 38). In this sense there is no point in positing the existence of an ‘empirical object’ (Baudrillard 1981, 63), because the object only has meaning as a signifying relation, and in this context Derrida has some interesting points to make.

In terms of the difference between use-value and exchange value, Derrida, citing Marx, describes how Marx spoke about a piece of wood being made into a table: ‘the wood remains wooden when it is made into a table: it is then “an ordinary, sensuous thing [*ein ordindäres, sinnliches Ding*]” ’ (Derrida 1994, 150). Here the table remains wood even after the wood has been transformed. However, once the table enters the marketplace and becomes a commodity, things change radically:

It is quite different when it becomes a commodity, when the curtain goes up on the market and the table plays actor and character at the same time, when the commodity-table, says Marx, comes on stage (*auftritt*), begins to walk around and to put itself forward as a market value. *Coup de theatre*: the ordinary, sensuous thing is transfigured (*verwandelt sich*), it becomes someone, it assumes a figure. This woody and headstrong denseness is metamorphosed into a supernatural thing, a *sensuous non-sensuous* thing, sensuous but non-sensuous, sensuously supersensible (*verwandelt er sich in ein sinnlich übersinnliches Ding*). The ghostly schema now appears indispensable. (Derrida 1994, 150)

His view is that use-value is haunted by exchange value as the aura of the commodity hails the subject as it serves as an identificatory agent through which the subject recognises him or herself in terms of these consumable products. The notion of the commodity as a figure is close to what

we have been describing in terms of the Guinness advertisements hailing the consumer. It is as if the product is looking at the consumer.

It is as if the commodity is like an actor and:

Marx must have recourse to theatrical language and must describe the apparition of the commodity as a stage entrance (*auftritt*). And he must describe the table become commodity as a table that turns, to be sure, during a spiritualist séance, but also as a ghostly silhouette, the figuration of an actor or a dancer. Theo-anthropological figure of indeterminate sex (*Tisch*, table, is a masculine noun), the table has feet, the table has a head, its body comes alive, it erects its whole self like an institution, it stands up and addresses itself to others, first of all to other commodities, its fellow beings in phantomality, it faces them or opposes them, For the spectre is social. (Derrida 1994, 151)

It is as if the commodity is looking at the consumer and here we enter another area of significance in terms of desire, namely the power of the gaze, or as Lacan termed it, the scopic drive. For Lacan, the notion of looking is inseparable from that of being looked at, and indeed, his seminal construction of the dawning of the ego in the Mirror Stage is a process shot through with the scopic drive.

For Lacan, the child, as it reaches the stage of ‘situational apperception’, begins to experience, through play, the ‘relation between the movements assumed in the [mirror] image and the reflected environment’ (Lacan 1977a, 1). This captation by the image has profound effects on the development of the ego. For Lacan:

This jubilant assumption of his specular image...situates the agency of the ego, before its social determination, in a fictional direction, which will always remain irreducible for the individual alone, or rather, which will only rejoin the ‘coming-into-being’ (*le devenir*) of the subject asymptotically, whatever the success of the dialectical synthesis by which he must resolve as *I* his discordance with his own reality. (Lacan 1977a, 2)

In other words, as the I looks in the mirror, it is being looked at in turn by its image, and for Lacan this is a process that remains with us all our

lives, and one which, if we combine the theoretical apperceptions of Althusser, Baudrillard, Derrida and Lacan, allows us to create a theory of consumer advertising wherein the products are designed, in commodity form, to look back at us and reflect value into ourselves through our consumption of these objects. It is a circular structure that has been, as we have noted, captured in the ongoing return journeys by the currach from the mainland to the island, carrying kegs of Guinness to a pub where desire can never be sated and no sooner is the keg empty then the journey begins again. Interestingly the caption is in the future tense, the tense of desire, as the keg 'is coming', and it always will be. The value of the rowers is reflected in their ability to enact the signifying chain of desire over and over again.

The part of culture that provides this reflected value is called 'the other' by Lacan: 'the Other is, therefore, the locus in which is constituted the I who speaks to him who hears (Lacan 1977a, 141). As an increasingly visual culture, the power of the image in terms of the subject is ever on the increase. And this is reflected in some of the more contemporary Guinness advertisements

The contemporary symbolic order in Ireland is very different from that of 75 years ago. In gender terms, Guinness used to be seen as primarily a drink aimed at male consumers. However now, Guinness is drunk by an increasing number of women, and the single advertisement in the calendar featuring a woman is an interesting example of how the female subject is hailed by advertising. This picture, aimed at women's magazines in 1974, is of a slim and attractive young woman, who is deeply tanned, wearing a white bikini and standing in silhouette in front of a sea and sky background. Her face is not visible but her long dark hair is and in her right hand, she is holding a half-pint glass of Guinness, which is about one third full. The caption for the advertisement, which runs across the page at point in the picture that is level with the glass, is: 'WHO SAID: "men seldom make passes at girls with glasses"?' (*Guinness Calendar*, August 2004). Here the traditional symbolic order position of woman would seem to be undercut. This woman is free and unrestricted, there is no man at hand in a sexual or paternalistic role – the vast expanse of beach, sea and sky are hers to enjoy as if by right, and she is enjoying the solitude of the scene, with her glass of Guinness. It would seem that this image is embracing the ideological position of the woman's movement, and also stressing that Guinness, traditionally seen as a 'man's drink', and indeed,

for a time as an older man's drink, is now also the preserve of women. She is part of a changed symbolic order where women can be hailed by a product that is traditionally male. It also seems to say that a woman with a glass of Guinness will be attractive to a male gaze.

However the advertisement is also aimed at the other 50% of consumers, as the old saying that is mirrored, in an altered fashion, by the caption, is actually: 'men seldom make passes at girls who wear glasses'. Generally, glasses were seen as being not very sexy, and it was common practice for women not to wear them. They connote an intellectual quality, and the symbolic order of the past deemed that woman's place was in the home, and she should not be over-intelligent as this could be threatening to men. In the caption, the pun is on the glass that the woman has, as it is a Guinness glass, and she herself, iconically, mirrors the colour scheme of Guinness in a metonymic way – she embodies the dark and white colour scheme and the running image of the sea in all of these advertisements (it figures in six of the twelve pictures, as well as one of the other two television advertisements) connects her with the drink. So as well as suggesting that woman who drink Guinness are sophisticated and self-actualising, she is also attractive to a male gaze and at a connotative level is almost an embodiment of the sensual appeal that Guinness is given in many of the advertisements.

The contrast with the previous month is telling. This image is the Surfer advertisement from 1999 (*Guinness Calendar*, July 2004). This also features the sea, but it is a sea transformed. In the previous image, the woman is on the edge of a becalmed sea; in this image three men are in extremely active poses as they surf huge waves. They appear in a triangle, and behind them both emerging out of the waves and constructed by the waves, are four beautiful white horses following the surfers. The contrast couldn't be more emblematic – the male figures are mastering the sea, both actual and mythological, as the Celtic god of the sea was Manannan Mac Lir, and he rode the horses of the sea. The metaphor of waiting for the perfect wave and waiting for the pouring of the pint is also to be found as the frothing of the Guinness is compared in metaphor to the frothing of the waves of the sea.

Aesthetically, the image of the combined waves, horses of the sea and the surfers is stunning, both real and surreal, taking the imagery of animals that ran through the Guinness advertisements in the 50s and 60s



– the toucan, the sea-lion and the kangaroo to new visual levels. To be hailed by this image is to be hailed by very strong images of strength, power and mobility, as well as fantasy and there is a cosmopolitan touch to these two advertisements that hail subjects that are not traditionally Irish – both the woman and the surfers are no longer traditionally Irish, or at least are not pictures in Irish settings. They may well signify the Irish as new Europeans, enjoying different cultures. Here the image that is scopically captating the consumer is one of sophistication and power – it is an image which is aesthetically pleasing and where the connection with the product is metaphoric as opposed to metonymic. The surging of the waves and the horses which appear out of the waves suggest the surging of the pint but the connection is left implicit as opposed to explicit. Instead metaphorical images of power, naturalness, beauty and relaxation are metaphorically connected with Guinness as a product, and by extension, with the subjects who are intelligent enough to consume them.

In an increasingly technologically-driven economy, where intelligence as opposed to strength is the new currency, more recent Guinness advertisements have appealed to this tenet of subjectivity, as they hail an intelligent consumer whose intelligence is underscored by his or her choice of a superior product, whose appeal is to just such a discerning consumer.

The final advertisements to be discussed are the television advertisement featuring the Mick Christopher soundtrack where the protagonist moves from a very realistic image-pattern in Ireland, to the Cliffs of Moher where, as the realism turns magic, he swims to New York, where he enters an Irish bar and, dripping wet, confronts another man and says; ‘sorry’. There is an intense few seconds of silence and then, with Guinness as the peace offering, calm and friendship return. It is a clever advertisement as it reprises the island image of the earlier campaign but now instead of that almost premodern journey across a small channel to bring Guinness to the inhabitants of that island, we see a surreal journey from Ireland to America in order to cement an intersubjective relationship. Here the product the subjectivity that is interpellated is a postmodern one, a subjectivity that imaginatively connects Ireland with America and one in which Guinness is no longer domain-specific but very much a part of the world-wide consumer community. This interpellated subject is a person who has no fear of travel or of other cultures and one who is at ease at home or

abroad – it might well be the '*figurante*' that Derrida speaks of as the commodity Guinness itself could be seen in this light: originating from Ireland but now a citizen of the world.

In a follow-on advertisement redolent of postmodern irony, there is a parody of this advertisement in 2005 when a young man, bringing cans of draught Guinness to a party walks through puddles of water, trails mud across the carpet and, on being looked at quizzically by the calm owner of the house, as the muddy footprints trail across the carpet, he says, without any of the intensity of the previous advertisement: 'sorry' and everyone laughs. Here the interpellation is at a cerebral and intellectual level. The assumption of the advertisement is that the audience has seen the previous advertisement so there is an intertextual presumption that the postmodern humour of parody and pastiche will be a shared moment of enjoyment and Guinness is now seen as the provider of that intertextual sense of knowledge and cultural *nous* – we have come a long way from the island and yet perhaps not because the notion of desire is still prevalent and the appeal to core aspects of subjectivity is still as strong as ever.

So we have come full circle here, as Guinness is now hailing postmodern, intelligent, cosmopolitan subjects through the aura its product creates. As a synecdoche of Irishness, that image of the harp in 'natural Anthem' has turned out to be a polysemic one. The commodity here is protean, suggesting that it has paralleled all the changes of the Irish economy and psyche over the past 75 years. To quote Derrida again, this is part of the spectral power of the commodity: 'it changes places, one no longer knows exactly where it is, it turns, it invades the stage with its moves, there is a step there [*il y a là un pas*] and its allure belongs only to this mutant' (Derrida 1994, 151). Just as Ireland has changed out of all recognition over the past 75 years, so too has Guinness advertising: they have each kept pace with each other and in terms of subjectivity, the postmodern Irish man or woman, drinking a pint of Guinness in a pub in Ireland, Europe or America, is precisely the subject of consumer culture that is being interpellated by Guinness: the harp on the glass and the harp of the nation are transformed.

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