

EVERYDAY LIFE ADVERTISED: A STUDY OF OUTDOOR ADVERTISING IN TEZPUR, INDIA

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Advertisements are rich ethnographic texts. In segmenting markets, ad-makers articulate everyday life of communities/groups targeted in advertisements. Despite being a subject of scholarly interest for long, everyday life still remains a problematic terrain. What comprises everyday life and who creates and nourishes it are the main arguments that are in debate. As it is the site where the dominant and marginal cultural practices are negotiated, it is difficult to draw a line of separation between the two in everyday life. Contemporary advertising provides a good example of this by producing an everyday aesthetic where the everyday life itself is articulated in advertising. The current study, by analysing the outdoor advertisements that appeared over a period of two years (January, 2012– January 2014) in a small town area in North-East India, argues that advertisements create a new aesthetic in everyday life that blurs the line between consumerism and practices of everyday life. The materials analysed are a sample of 208 billboard advertisements. Methods of textual reading are applied in deciphering the meanings of the advertisements and analysing the ways of articulation of everyday life in advertising. The results show that the advertisements are a main source of everyday aesthetic where the dominant culture and subordinate culture encounter. Global consumer culture has been quick to capitalize on the localized articulation of everyday life. Hence, it can be theoretically argued that the aesthetics of everyday life is by and large a product of advertising than a “pure” subordinate practice.