Global Men With Local Roots: Representation and Hybridity in Indian Advertising

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ABSTRACT
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ABSTRACT
The contours of Indian men and women, as represented in advertisements, bear the imprint of the colonial experience. Distinctions between the home and the outside world, between men and women, as well as general ideas about national identity have been shaped by colonial encounters and continue to be refined through the experience of globalization. But while the hybridity of colonial subjects subverted relations of power, contemporary forms of hybridity are commensurate with the logic of globalization.

INTRODUCTION
Hybridity, impurity, intermingling…a love-song to our mongrel selves.  
Salman Rushdie (1992)

In this paper, we use Indian advertising and the representation of Indian men in those ads, to explore the question of hybridity. Hybridity, we argue, is portrayed as a positive characteristic of cosmopolitan Indian men at home in the world—at once Indian and Western, modern and traditional. Several scholars already emphasized how globalization intensifies the hybridization of cultures (Ger and Belk 1996; Ritzer 2003). We go beyond this work by analyzing the relationship between hybridity and two moments shaping that hybridity: colonialism and globalization. We argue that while the hybridity of colonial subjects subverted relations of power, contemporary forms of hybridity are commensurate with the logic of globalization.

We start our analysis by placing representations of Indian men within their historical context. We first stress how the colonial experience, shaped and reinforced binaries such as inside/outside and feminine/masculine. Second, we examine how globalization and the liberalization of the Indian economy has shaped representational practices in India, intensifying these dichotomies and the diffusion of hybrid representations. Then we present analyzes of three televised advertisements that are meant to be illustrative, rather than representative of these boundaries and their evolution. The ads for Bajaj and American Express illustrate how Indian advertising was able to harness the power of globalization. Finally, we discuss how hybridity has become one of the key tropes of capitalism.

Hybridity and the Colonial Experience
The ideological power of colonialism resided in its ability to differentiate the colonizer from the colonized in a seemingly stark
binary opposition, and advertisements reflected this principle. Representations of the colonized in advertising reinforced colonial efforts to distinguish the indigenous other as essentially different; dirty, primitive and degenerate (Burke 1996: 93). Over time, however, advertising to non-Europeans encouraged them to embrace modern consumer culture, and combined with the civilizing mission of liberal colonialists to undermine the reality of colonial difference.

More broadly, Western-educated colonial subjects’ adoption of many of the norms and practices of European colonialists in the late 19th and 20th centuries not only threatened the colonizers’ ideology of difference, but also challenged elite colonial subjects’ sense of their own identity. As argued by Partha Chatterjee, Western-educated Indian nationalists responded to this challenge by constructing several homologous dichotomies – world/home, material/spiritual, masculine/feminine and outside/inside – which functioned to draw a line in the sand, juxtaposing an inconquerable Indian “inside/home/spirit” with “the world,” where colonial norms were largely accepted (1993:120-121). This dichotomy allowed them to embrace the vision of modernity and many associated daily practices while preserving a reified core of Indian identity.

As colonial subjects selectively adopted many of the norms and practices of the colonizers, whether through the influence of education or advertising or politics, they often experienced disjunctures between different aspects of their lives. In India, the colonial experience had a profound influence in shaping distinctions between the traditional home and the modern world. As mentioned above, Partha Chatterjee shows that early Indian nationalists discursively constructed several homologous dichotomies - world/home, material/spiritual, masculine/feminine, and outside/inside (1993:120-121), and modern/traditional should be added to this list. The nationalists’ goal was to imitate the material techniques of modern Western civilization while insulating and strengthening the distinctive spiritual essence of Indian culture. This strategy of mimesis and defiance created an Indian “home” and set of “traditional” inner values as a bulwark against the “modern world”, where colonial norms were generally adopted. Writing in 1993, Chatterjee asserts: “the contradictory implications of these two movements in the hegemonic domain of nationalism have been active right through its career and continue to affect the course of postcolonial politics” (ibid.:75). Other theorists trace the key existential characteristics of the postcolonial condition – such as hybridity and in-betweenness - to this particular experience of disjuncture under colonial rule.

Before examining the ways advertising incorporates these cultural boundaries, let’s consider what we mean by postcolonial condition. While the terms independence period or postcolonial period emphasize the historical moment of the break with colonial rule, the term postcolonial condition stresses the ambivalence of the relations between India and its colonial past. This ambivalence finds an important historical precedent in the simultaneous mimesis and defiance of colonial norms by early nationalists, and their quest to be both fully Indian and fully modern. The resulting disjunctures in Indian life have led to the hybridity and in-betweenness of postcolonial experience. Furthermore, while India and other formerly colonized nations emerged as nation-states by contesting colonial power, the construction of their national identities entailed significant appropriations of modern practices, institutions, and media. Even notions of Indian ‘tradition’ held by Indian
nationalists incorporated colonial representations of ‘exotic’ India. As in the case of other popular cultural products, Indian advertising production has been just as likely to draw upon colonial themes of modernity as it has been to contest them (Lipsitz 1990).

We will begin to examine Indian advertising’s incorporation of this ambivalent relationship with colonial rule by considering advertising representations of the “traditional home” so important to Indian nationalists. As Chatterjee notes, this space has a decidedly female character, juxtaposed to the male domain of “the modern world” (Chatterjee 1989, pp. 238-239). However, as Indians embraced new consumer lifestyles, the modern/traditional tension forged in the colonial encounter was reproduced within the household itself. Thus, to bring products into the domestic realm, advertisers draped them in the feminine clothes of tradition. For instance, modern convenience in the form of packaged food products is routinely marketed to middle-class housewives amidst representations of continuity with “Indian tradition”. Religio-ritualistic imagery in advertisements emphasizes this traditional continuity of the home purified of polluting outside influences, and personified by the Indian woman (Rajagopal 1998). The use of Hindu imagery such as gods and goddesses or housewife characters wearing bindis1 and mangalsutras2 endow contemporary domestic commodities with the aura of a Hindu Indian heritage. The challenge for both advertisers and the Indian housewives they target is to incorporate these “modern” products into “traditional” domestic space without altering the essence of that space, minimizing potential disjunctures and creating a stable synthesis. This requires dexterous semiotic work. In a famous advertisement produced by Lintas for the laundry detergent Surf in the late eighties, the housewife character herself embodies a synthesis of the modern and traditional, Indian and Western. The televised advertisement portrayed “a shrewd housewife who ran her household according to the norms of modern efficiency, but at the same time was traditional in that she wore a sari, her hair in a bun and had a tikka3 on her forehead. [The advertising character of] Lalitaji is the quintessentially upper-middle-class urban woman who has successfully blended modern housekeeping with “traditional traits” (Mankekar 1999, p.92).

If the Indian home became a site of postcolonial ambivalence towards the colonial past and Western influence, so did the “world” of the public sphere following independence from Britain in 1947. Advertising reflected the nationalist practice of infusing “modern” institutions, practices, and products with an Indian identity. Jawaharlal Nehru, India’s first Prime Minister and a towering national figure, sought to synthesize Indian and foreign elements in the state-led pursuit of a distinctive “Indian modernity.” Kemper (2001) notes that this project of national economic development and modernization undertaken by postcolonial leaders such as Nehru or Egypt’s Nasser justified the use of advertising in supporting local products to jump-start the growth process. Advertising helped construct the prototype of the patriotic consumer who rejected British and other foreign goods in support of local industry, whether of the hand-spun khadi or large-factory varieties. In 1927, Hamam was

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1 A bindi is a vermilion mark usually appearing on the forehead of married Hindu women, signifying religious affiliation and marital status.

2 A special necklace worn by a married Hindu wife.

3 A tikka is a dot or a line of color worn on the forehead, typically of a Hindu woman. A tikka can be used in a religious context, as a blessing after prayers, in a cultural context, red color signifying marriage, or as a fashion accessory.
already advertising its soap as “Our very own soap” and Golden Tobacco promoted its Panama brand of cigarettes as “the taste of Freedom” (Zaidi 1997). By 1941, in an indication of things to come, Lux signed Leela Chitnis as the first Indian film actress to endorse the product.

After 1947, many Indian brands were born in the spirit of national independence from colonial rule and outside influences, and celebrated India’s modernization project. For example, a brand of butter named Amul was advertised with the corporate slogan “The Taste of India.” Flourishing Indian companies like the industrial conglomerate Tata advertised by emphasizing their Indian engineering and management vision. Air India, with the creation of its Maharajah advertising character, signified Indian hospitality and technological advances. Camlin, an Indian manufacturer of art materials, ran an advertisement in newspapers in 1969 with the line, “India can make it without foreign collaboration. India can sell it without the foreign name” (Doctor and Alikhan 1997). Advertisements like this one were common in a socialist-leaning India that privileged swadeshi [local; of our country] production over imports in government economic policy.

In adapting Western notions of modernity while at the same time contesting colonial history through patriotic themes, Indian advertising production situated itself in a “zone of continuous engagement with the colonial, simultaneously drawing upon and contesting colonial discourses and practices” (Mankekar 1999, p. 48). Nationalist advertising emphasized the formal break with colonial rule, and a new successful synthesis of Indian and Western, modern and traditional, in both the home and the world. But postcolonial theory indicates that new national identities have struggled to fully overcome the enduring legacy of the colonial encounter and the binaries it introduced. Indian practices and identities often remain hybrid creations, informed by both Indian and European genealogies, without fully resolving the disjunctures between them.

For formerly colonized countries, the intensification of contacts with the foreign has strengthened seemingly opposed but in fact intimately connected developments. On the one hand, the desire for ‘Western’ and ‘modern’ lifestyles continues to grow, particularly in the form of social status aspirations. On the other hand, new and deeply felt cultural nationalisms are emerging, perhaps as a backlash against globalization, and perhaps in response to failed socialist regimes. Urban elites and middle-classes, the intended targets of most advertising, occupy the middle-ground, more cosmopolitan and Westernized than their fellow countrymen but also more self-consciously “indigenous”.

The way formerly colonized countries like India portray themselves through the lens of advertising is significantly influenced by distinctions that originated with the colonial experience and the colonial gaze. The reification of tradition and the constant definition of “what it means to be Indian” in contemporary advertising production and reception reveals a politics of representation drawing on the essentialist forms of colonial discourse. For example, campaigns such as the advertisements for KamaSutra condoms ‘rediscover’ tradition and use it as a strategic device to endow modern products with the legitimacy of historical tradition. The following text from a KamaSutra ad also shows how Indian “tradition” can coexist with global references. “Over 3000 years ago, the Egyptians used linen sheaths […] The Beatles and Rock’n Roll and the sexual revolution ignored the condom to the dark
side of the moon. And for years there was an uncomfortable silence. And then came KamaSutra. The condom.” (quoted in Mazzarella 2001, p. 74). The depiction of Indians as sensuous and the resurgence of the Kama Sutra echoes internalized foreign views of India as a “Land of Desire” (Hegel 1956 [1830-1831], p. 142; quoted in Mazzarella 2000, p.190). In its definition and revival of tradition, Indian advertising production often engages in self-orientalisation (Dirlik 1997).

In his seminal text, Edward Said (1978) defines Orientalism as the European representation of Asian societies through essentialized cultural characteristics. Said describes Orientalism as a discourse in the Foucauldian sense: an institutionalized way for Europeans to authoritatively talk about and describe the Orient, legitimizing and enhancing their rule over the colonized - by delegitimating the ability of “exotic” Asians to rule themselves efficiently. But aspects of Orientalism did not disappear with the overthrow of colonial rule in either Europe or, perhaps more surprisingly, with the independence of formerly colonized countries. Many Third World governments continued the colonial ‘museumification’ of their cultural heritage, putting icons of ‘tradition’ on display while steadfastly trying to modernize.

More recently, the intersection of postcoloniality and globalization has fueled this internal Orientalist gaze of postcolonial subjects. As postcolonial nations enter the global arena at more levels than ever before, they must articulate identities not easily objectified, as they compare themselves with other nations in a global multicultural system. One strategy is to represent a mastery of the emerging global marketplace and public sphere, through depictions of “global Indians” and cosmopolitan consumers.

At the same time, the growing interconnection of markets and societies spurs the need to represent the distinctive qualities and traditions of Indians. As a result, postcolonial subjects look at themselves, at the West, and at each other in ways which are strongly influenced by Orientalist notions. In India, this dynamic has a historical genealogy going back to early nationalists’ definition of a traditional Indian sphere in juxtaposition to the colonial world, through the nation-state’s homogenization of internal cultural differences, and into the present era.

Orientalist notions of what it means to be Indian have been domesticated and commodified in advertising to fuel the sales of products by both domestic and multinational companies. As the following section will explore, advertising increasingly valorizes the hybrid position of contemporary postcolonial subjects who balance aspirations for success in the global public sphere with self-orientalizing notions of Indian tradition and uniqueness.

**Bajaj**

Bajaj is an iconic brand of Indian scooters and motorcycles. The brand is also an important brand to follow representations of Indian men, from the patriot consumer of the 1970s and 1980s to the contemporary global Indian man we are interested in analyzing. For the past twenty years, the brand has tried to portray itself as a “son of the soil.” In the 1970s and 1980s, the brand symbolized the Indian pride of creating quality Indian products. The slogan of the company, which it retains even today, is “Hamaara Bajaj”: our Bajaj. It mirrors the Indian government desire for “self-sufficiency”. Even before
independence, the sustained opposition to British imports and the protection of *swadeshi* (indigenous / from our country) industries became a rallying cry for the nationalists. Since 1947, in the spirit of freedom and national independence, many Indian brands such as Bajaj have emphasized Indian engineering skill and management vision (Doctor and Alikhan 1997). From the Indian ads of this period emerges an image of the *patriot Indian man*, a son of the soil rejecting foreign goods in support of local industry. The following ad, released in 1990, mirrors this pride in indigenous products and the country’s resilience in the face of foreign imports.

Bajaj’s landmark campaign, widely remembered across India, depicts men from India’s different religious communities (Sikh; Hindu; Parsi; Muslim) with their families, friends and spouses, riding Bajaj scooters (see appendix 1). The ad opens with a hand releasing a dove against a sunrise low on the horizon. The ad seems to follow citizens of the country through their daily routines, unfolding with the serene morning and its rituals. This is done through a succession of montages: a man meditating on the hills next to his scooter; a Muslim man hosing his scooter down in the morning; a little girl jumping for balloons while her father, on the scooter, smiles against a backdrop of skyscrapers across the sea; a turbaned villager weaving down a green hillside amongst women carrying pots; a Sikh man driving his son around on the scooter, a man takes his son to tennis practice; a Parsi man wiping it clean and then finally a child mounting the scooter. In the background, a rousing and emotional song tells how Bajaj is India’s yesterday, today and tomorrow. It is *Hamaara Bajaj*, our Bajaj.

The ad, in many ways, is created to reinforce the strong association between Bajaj and the Indian nation. In the press ads for the brand, Bajaj used the following slogan, which helps us understand the strategy behind the brand: “This is my earth. The destiny of Bajaj and India are interwoven. Bajaj is India and India is Bajaj. Past and present.” The ad also plays on the secular ideal of different communities co-existing peacefully side-by-side. The slogan *Hamaara Bajaj* also associates Bajaj with a strong collectivist theme: Bajaj is the scooter of the nation and of the Indian family as symbol of the nation. Through this ad and others, Bajaj relied upon and reinforced the image of the scooter as a family vehicle. The Indian man represented in those ads is still the patriot and socialist consumer of the nationalist era.

In a more contemporary example, a new Bajaj ad released in 2002, is still organized as a series of vignettes representing Indian men. In the way it is organized, this new ad refers to the original landmark ad. The ad opens with a young man in jeans cruising down a country road on a big new motorcycle. As he passes a roadside Hindu temple, he tilts his head down in reverence and gives a respectful *pranaam*, or greeting. In another frame, a young hip couple zooms along on a motorcycle. As they pass an older man who smiles at them, the girl slides her hand away from the boy’s waist as a show of respect. In a third frame, a very modern looking woman on a sleek scooter is exuberantly riding in the rain, letting the raindrops drench her. She comes to a stop and notices her *sindoor* – the mark of a devout Hindu wife - dripping across her forehead, and wipes its flow. Finally, in a fourth frame, two macho guys are cruising on a motorbike, and the one in the back is holding a *sitar*, a classical Indian instrument. A jingle in Hindi sings, “We are changing here, this land, this sky.” The jingle continues as the picture shifts to the Bajaj
This “new India” is a postcolonial India embracing globalization, and advertising representations of hybridity abound as “modern” and “traditional”, as “Indian” and “Western” ideas, objects and practices come into articulation. In commercials such as these, hybridity is held up as an idealized attribute of elite, modern Indians, who comfortably move forward with progress without losing their sense of “Indianness” or their feel for “tradition”. Significantly, it is this hybridity itself, not simply the traditional national icons but their combination with modern goods and symbols, which conveys what it means to be Indian in today’s global economy.

This contemporary version of the Hamaara Bajaj campaign is also a new take on Indian men. The secular, patriot Indian man has been replaced by a fundamentally hybrid character, straddling an Indian core of tradition and spirituality as well as the domain of technological modernity. While the new ad borrows many of the original ad’s elements, the differences are significant. The music for the original ad is lyrical and nostalgic; the new ad uses metallic and forceful notes played on a synthesizer. In the original ad, most men are dressed in colorful cotton clothing; in the new ad black leather dominates.

These differences illustrate Bajaj’s repositioning from a manufacturer of scooters to a manufacturer of motorcycles. Since the 1990s, the motorcycle market has been increasing much more rapidly than the sale of scooters. The new imagery helps Bajaj capture part of that market by moving from a territory of socialism, community and secularism to a new land of individualism and technology.

But this evolution also illustrates evolving notions about Indian masculinity. Until liberalization, Indian masculinity was framed in soft contours. The Indian man, as it was represented in advertising was a family man, a secular man and a peaceful man. This representation blends Gandhian notions of Indian men as peaceful, with Nehruvian ideals of socialism and collectivism. In contrast, Indian masculinity is increasingly framed with hard and more aggressive contours. The tone of the new Bajaj song and the black leather illustrate this new dimension. Bajaj’s names for its motorcycles, Eliminator, Pulsar and Avenger reiterate this new and more aggressive image for the Bajaj brand and Indian masculinity. These names and the tone of the ad reiterate the vision of Indian men having the strength to deal with foreign forces; similar to Bajaj’s strength in the face of foreign competitors such as Yamaha and Honda. This representation of Indian men as more assertive and aggressive is also rooted in India’s new geopolitical situation: India now has nuclear capability and the second largest army on the world.

American Express

A TV ad for American Express incorporates hybridity or ‘in-betweeness’ in representing the Indian in the First World. In the ad, a fair young Indian woman, smartly dressed in a blouse and pants, is staying at a hotel in England. Her friend, a young Indian man who presumably lives in England, arrives to show her around the city. They roam the cobblestone streets together, hand in hand, and stumble upon a group of Indians celebrating the Indian festival Holi, covered in color from the powdered dye they are throwing on each other. The group sees them, recognizes them as ‘their own’, and merrily closes in on them. In spite of the man’s protests, he gets daubed in color. The woman
bursts out in laughter, and she succumbs to the festive spirit as well. With their faces smeared with bright colors, they leave the group and approach a hotel. The man gestures at the distinguished-looking, tuxedoed English doorman behind the glass door, who ignores this ‘dirty’ and ‘shoddy’ couple as he pretends to wipe a speck off the gleaming glass door. The woman, exasperated, begins to turn away, when the man waves his American Express card up at the doorman. The doorman’s manner changes immediately, and he opens the door with a smile to usher them inside. The voice over says, “Respected the word over, the American Express Card.” The couple in this ad move between ‘Western’ and ‘Indian’ contexts, contexts which in the age of globalization rub shoulders in unexpected and surprising ways, like Holi celebrations on quaint English streets.

In this ad with slightly racist overtones, orientalist tokens of what it means to be Indian, such as the exotic Holi festival of colors, balance “Western/modern” status markers such as credit cards and global travel. Circumstances that appear thoroughly Westernized tend to be interpreted as having an unseen Indian core. This basic postcolonial claim to hybridity is at least a century old, with a genealogy going back to Indian nationalists’ construction of an inconquerable Indian “inside” and “spirit” in response to colonial rule (Chatterjee 1993:120-121). What is significantly new here is the place of commodities as enabling the passage from one world to the other, the way the American Express enables the cosmopolitan man to enter the world arena, as signified by the hotel in a foreign country.

**DISCUSSION**

Over the last two decades, consumerist and nationalistic ideals have continued to influence one another, though not in the old form of the *patriot consumer* purchasing goods from public-sector or Indian companies. Instead, the Indian economy’s liberalization and globalization and associated trends such as *cosmopolitan consumption* have coincided with countervailing nationalist impulses to preserve Indian identity. As Rajagopal (1994, p. 1659) puts it: “the euphoria over liberalization, the growing assertiveness of its beneficiary classes, and the spread of a consumerist ethos that accompanies these phenomena, created, in fact, new spaces into which communal [Hindu nationalist] discourse inserted itself, to the great advantage of the latter”. The liberalization of the Indian economy, through eroding the state-led socialist-nationalist modernization project, has created more spaces and conditions in which notions of what it means to be Indian are further defined and debated. As we will show in the following pages, many advertisements indicate that Indians aspiring to be “modern” and “global Indians” seek to balance this with a “traditional” and increasingly Hindu Indian identity.

In this ad and others like it, postcolonial in-betweenness and hybridity become personal assets, rather than a reason to be discriminated against. As one critic of postcolonial theory writes, “‘Hybridized’ natives were in the nineteenth century objects of scorn and suspicion among both the colonialists, and the native population, for being a poor copy of one and a degenerate version of the other. In our day, ‘hybridized’ natives have become a valuable commodity for the role they have to play in global economic and cultural transactions” (Dirlik 1997, 171). Further, it is a symbol of American multinational capitalism, American Express, which enables the couple to overcome their momentary colonial status.
as “dirty Indians’” and receive the blessings of formal English hospitality.

A powerful explanation for the celebration of hybridity in these advertisements derives from its positive value for firms in the context of globalization. As Arif Dirlik points out, postcolonial theory itself, rather than the conditions it describes, first emerged and gained currency in the 1990s as the cultural manifestation of global economic initiatives. Thus, “Hybridity and in-betweenness, once liabilities, have become assets that facilitate the transnational operations of global corporations. In the process, a Eurocentric conception of modernity has given way to a multicultural one, enabling the reassertion of Third World cultural formations that were suppressed earlier by Eurocentric ideologies” (Dirlik 1997, 9-10). Hybrid individuals who have the ability and desire to bridge and translate between different cultural worlds have special value. The characters in both the American Express and Bajaj commercials are powerful exemplars of hybrid postcolonial subjects, successful cosmopolitans in touch with their roots, yet not constrained by them from achieving mobility in global networks.

As our study of these ads in postcolonial contexts demonstrates, the task of many advertising campaigns becomes the association of a company’s products with characters who are empowered by globalization to navigate between ‘modernity’ and ‘tradition’ on their own terms, rather than in the service of advancing nationalist identity politics or state development projects. Thus, while the postcolonial experience of hybridity, multiculturalism, and ‘in-between-ness’ may challenge the binary classifications of colonialism, it does not subvert the forces of contemporary capitalism. Rather, these concepts have been adopted by multinational corporations, rich-country governments, and advertising agencies as necessary to succeed and live life fully in today’s global economy.

**CONCLUSION**

In this paper, we outline how advertising production bears the imprint of the cultural boundaries formed during the colonial experience. Distinctions between the home and the outside world, between men and women, as well as general ideas about national identity have been shaped by colonial encounters and continue to be refined through the experience of globalization.

Because advertising and marketing executives persistently negotiate and reproduce these cultural boundaries, understanding how advertising continues to shape these cultural boundaries is key to our understanding of globalization. Through the construction of hybrid characters that move from the vernacular and exotic to the cosmopolitan and Western and back, Indian advertising weaves together Western and indigenous signs in ways that signify the nature of Indian modernity. The ‘modern West’ and ‘Indian traditions’ are almost always referents in the creation of this “alternative form of modernity” (Gaonkar

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4 At least as experienced by upper-middle class Hindus, that is, for if advertising can draw people into the “social imaginary of the nation” (Appadurai and Breckenridge 1991, p.14), it can also act as a discourse of exclusion. While advertising may democratize the imagination (ibid.) by spreading elite and middle class aspirations more broadly, the cosmopolitan tones of much Indian advertising describe a world to Indians of lower social classes that they are socio-economically constrained from entering. For India’s poor majority, as for non-Hindus, Indian advertising may highlight their difference from the prototypical modern Indian.
2001) enabled by the multicultural ethos of contemporary global capitalism.

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**APPENDIX**

1-Television Advertisement for Bajaj (1985)

2-Television Advertisement for Bajaj (2001)

3-Television Advertisement for American Express (2002)
Advertisement for Bajaj (1990)
Advertisement for Bajaj (2001)
A young woman beams up at her escort as he arrives to collect her from her hotel.

He takes her on a tour of England. As they roam the streets together, hand in hand...

...they come across a group of Indians celebrating Holi and smearing color on each other.

The group closes in on them and in spite of his protests, the man is soon daubed in color.

His companion bursts into peals of laughter as he faces her, but she too succumbs to the festive spirit.

Extracting themselves from the gang, they approach a hotel. The man gestures to the liveried guy.
...to let them in. The guard wipes an imaginary speck off the gleaming glass door and pretends not to notice the shoddy couple.

The exasperated woman begins to walk off, just as the man waves his American Express credit card under the guard's nose.

A change comes over him and the door opens immediately to usher them inside.

"Respected the world over. The American Express card." Super: 'American Express. Do more.'