

## **NARCISSISM AND THE NEW FREE MARKET SEGMENT. ABOUT THE NEW NARRATIVE IDENTITIES**

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### **Abstract**

In this article we propose new themes of marketing and communication, themes created by the transformations in the media market. Thus, the new digital world implies not only new types of channels, but new types of expression. Changes as intense and deep can be identified at the level of the recipient of the communication efforts. We propose, through this study, a new type of active, involved recipient that no longer seeks to respond to social patterns but seeks to assert his individuality, identity. The old mental map is now a mirror of the deep self, which is not necessarily social.

**Keywords:** media market, advertising, recipient, narcissism

Narcissism of the digital era, which is increasingly spoken of as an effect of the transition from *one-to-many* type communication to *many-to-many*, is a *hard* form of the ideal of personalizing communication. *The content* of this space creates digital multiforme subjectivity show where media consumption is an exercise in confirmation, not in compliance, affirmation, firstly, and social connection secondly.

We will not address the onto-social resorts of virtual communication spaces. We will, however, approach the empirical observation that this new type of communication is, in fact, a form of self-communication. And here we refer to all the subdomains of communication from advertising to public relations and to journalism, regardless of technical support and transmission channels. We know that self-communication is a pragmatic fulfillment of persuasive advertising speech, for example. The ad text creates and proposes an affective, psychological context, called in the specialized literature, the "mental map".

*"Advertising is not only a flow of economic information in the <<demand-offer>> pattern, but also an important symbolic capital that seeks to infer, convince, create additional needs, or allow the identification process to be carried out with various positively conceived patterns"* (Grădinaru, in Adam, Bonhomme, 2005).

The co-text is the mood, namely a self-projection facilitated by the support object acquired by the processes triggered by the advertising speech. Personalization is the ontological fulfillment of the commercial advertising speech. The imperative of personalization at the reception level corresponds to the abandonment of the objectivity claim by the issuer. You can not be objective yet tailor the message to the needs of the receiver.

We were now seeing that there was a false expectation that the commercial relationship (with its own rules and functional reflections) had in

fact a meta-discursive motivation, a motivation that would ultimately exclude commercial interest. The growing of the recipient's waiting horizon (as we name this stage) brings with it the acceptance of the commercial convention, so of the economic interests, and their assimilation and inclusion in the set of consumerist motivations. We recall the remarks of some very alert scholars of advertising speech:

*"Behind the operation of metamorphosis of the product into a valuable object there is the issue of symbolic capitalization of the object. Between the sale and purchase of the functional product, the advertising discourse operates a semantisation that transforms the simple object (car, vacuum cleaner, washing machine) into a valuable object. It moves from a concrete objective relation (moving, doing homework or washing laundry) to a symbolic relation. The object of consumption is, by definition, that symbolic object that has lost its status as a common noun and tool to receive a status of proprietary brand-security"* (Adam, Bonhomme, 2005).

We continue the series of our own observations and advance the idea that if, in the first instance, we were talking about the exclusivity of the symbolic value, today we can speak of a refunctionalization of the object of advertising speech, so that it is infused with the personal symbolic cargo of the recipient and the object becomes commodity, insofar as it provides this space, the resonance chamber for the subjectivity of the receiver.

### **Subjectivity, the new commercial space**

Thus, if so far advertising has been defined as the "psychosociology of information applied to commercial objectives " (Cathelat, 1992), the discourse pragmatics reorient more and more towards the psychology of the recipient, who becomes an actor with equal powers in the advertising

communication. We know that marketing is oriented in three major directions: recipient analysis, product analysis, channel analysis.

Marketing answers the question "*Who are the buyers and what do they want?*" which takes into account market segmentation, consumer research and marketing research, then to the question "*What products satisfy the buyers' needs and wants?*", and this question generated the marketing mix formula and, finally, the answer to the question "through what ways do shoppers get possession of products able to satisfy their needs and desires?" response means *the overall formula of promotional* (promo mix).

The market, the meeting space between the two actors, also took on seemingly subjective nuances, fluctuating, but balances by the law of the supply and demand. We talk therefore, of thematic markets, markets understood by groups of individuals interested in a particular category of products: detergents, beverages, mobile phones, banking services, travel, cars etc. and the "geographic" market as the coherent and relatively autonomous space in which economic activities are taking place: the Romanian, Greek, Mexican, European and world markets.

To what extent can we speak of a new type of market today, since we are talking about new attributes of the recipient, much more involved in the act of buying? Not just marketing professionals are looking for customers, access routes, and persuasion techniques. They will need not only to propose products, but also to respond to increasingly fragmented, increasingly personalized requests. Because the recipient gave up the passive status of choosing from a series of proposals. Under the pressure of drawing a clearer picture of his own mental map, he asks, combines, modifies, quits. The customer is getting away from the benefits of mass production for the benefits of mass personalization. Brands like Nike have started offering "custom" shoes, one of a kind for each kind of customers, while high end fashion retailers allow their clients to engrave

their initials on each handbag. The message is changed, segmented, personalized.

The marketing labels (market segmentation, public segmentation) are added, we believe, also to this fluctuating but important tone of the more pronounced assertion of individuality and personalization. Common sense, convention, conformism find correspondence in the sense of self, in the need of personal identity, of personalized construction.

The landscape has supported this evolution of the individual perception in the notion of advertising speech. We only mention Angela Goddard's observation, which seized the "*contribution*" of the contexts generated by advertising discourse to the "*construction*" of the individual identity:

"Advertisements are forms of speech that contribute significantly to the way we build our identity. For creatives to work, they have to use the common resources of language in ways in which they can influence our decisions and can have a special significance for us" (Goddard 2002).

Advertising mediation has generated and educated, we say, a commercial behavior. The recipient has discovered the power of the context, the power of the commercial object to support identity narratives. He has learned to decode or create codes to support him in the natural effort of socially recomposing personal identity. Thus, going on the conceptual distinctions made by the same Angela Goddard, I would say that the recipient has gained through advertising the ability to build narratives, to be a writer of his own narrative, that is, to link the text to the marketed object, to the social context, to the needs individual self-communication. For Goddard, "*the writer is the person who actually builds the text; it is the narrator who tells the story in the text - the person who seems to be addressing us and guiding us along the narrative*" (Goddard 2002).

## **Personal Letter, Advertising Statement**

Of course, we do not say that personal discourse substitutes advertising speech, but it certainly competes with it, and advertisers need to adapt to these new realities. Through social media, by combining and crossing the various types of communication channels at its disposal, the consumer has the opportunity to collect information and build their own narratives (identity) independently of *mainstream* advertising. This brings new tools both to the advertiser, which are able to find new ways to promote brands, and to the customers, whom can filter their stream of advertising to relevant content.

The resulting personal and original creation has the meaning of a personal letter, in the same researcher's distinctions: "*Creatives, as well as literary texts, do not address individual readers, such as personal letters.*" (Goddard 2002). Institutional creation, so to speak, program making, with the consciousness of the public expecting a certain action following reception, is not addressed to a single recipient, though by deictics, the writer wants to appear to be targeting a "you" specially, in a unique way.

Individual creation, from internal springs with interior and personal finishes, however, has the impact of a personal letter discovered accidentally. This way, we can explain the huge jump that blogosphere testimonials have made, from personal blogs to quasi-graphic expressions in social media, writing and types of texts that have generated a new type of narrator, the *influencer*.

Equally, we recognize the same finality, self-reflection, personalization in the *social media* territory, a charted territory, and it is already the most recent part of the world, now discovering its resources and availability. *Social media* reveals personalization as a genetic element of this territory. The explicit acceptance / non-acceptance of speeches is not just a reading or a consumer choice, they are considered as distinctive signs of the personality of the

recipient. Thus, first the great virtual world of literature, then the Internet, are now found in infinite fractal fragments of individual representations.

### **Conclusions**

The prevalence of individual reading objectives compared to the convention of dialogue, mid-term meeting, compromise for the sake of communication means, therefore, a profound change in the way the media text is created and expected. Thus, we have reached the age of devitalization of the strong notions that circumscribed the media communication until the 90's at the latest.

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