

## **STORYTELLING AND CINEMATIC STRATEGIES IN ADVERTISING SPOTS**

**Adina MOCANU**

Adhuc - Center for Research Theory, Gender and Sexuality, Barcelona, Spain

### **Abstract**

Advertising is the narrative and visual formula to persuade a person to buy a product. The idea of promoting a product is related to a context and a story about it. Therefore, audiovisual tools are used also to achieve this. What matters is not only the story, but also the visual effects that are used to tell that story. Therefore, in this article we will explore which are the ingredients to create a story in order to promote a product, and we will highlight narrative and cinematic strategies. We start from the idea that an advertisement in addition to bringing information about a product, provokes our feelings. To illustrate this statement, we will explore the commercials created by Leandro Raposo, creative director of the advertising company The Cyranos McCann, of course in collaboration with other advertisers. Regarding communication, we are aware that the presentation of a creative strategy does not involve a single person, it involves a team of people, but we consider it appropriate to follow the

trajectory of this creative artist in relation to the changes and transformations in his creation and the collaborations with other creative writers.

Keywords: storytelling, cinematic strategies, advertising spot, creative writing

### **Introduction. Theoretical background- what storytelling?**

Raúl Eguiz highlights that there is not a technique or a successful model for an advertising spot and what is really important is the “force of ideas” (Eguiz, 2015: 7). In addition, Eguiz considers that data is also used to guide the creative artist, as a source of inspiration (2015: 7). Therefore, it is important to take into account the two elements: the content of the message and the audience to which it is addressed. Gerardo Karbaum Padilla (2016) believes that advertising spots should distribute topics of common interest to people and focus on emotion that they produce. This is why storytelling is a useful resource that makes it easy to use humor and satire but also how to explore emotion in order to sell. This is why the attention should be on authenticity, sensory and relevancy.

In this sense as Roland Barthes (1966) argued that stories have the ability to give the people a series of meanings, which shows value to the narrative. This produces an explanation depending on the interlocutor, to whom it is addressed, which shows a sense of empathy and identification. In general, the public needs a story to get closer to what is being told. The need and vulnerability are two elements that represent the storytelling’s background.

When a story is told, with a complete narrative structure, that keeps alive the curiosity and maintains the interest of the target audience, the story should try to convince the public to be part of the action. In order to achieve

that, the formulas are very important, especially the usage of myths that work both the rational and emotional parts the audience through plausibility and future projections. In this sense, using sentences that remain in memory and can be remembered are the key of a good story.

To achieve this goal, the story is structured in five acts or parts: an exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and a dénouement or final outcome. In this sense, it is important to highlight the figure of the hero as Campbell and Moyers employs it: "When a person becomes a model for other people's lives, he has moved into the sphere of being mythologized" (Campbell & Moyers, 1988: 15). And also an interesting element is the moral that is used to strengthen the connection created in the story between characters, product and the public. In conclusion, Beata Zatwarnicka-Madura and Robert Nowacki explain: "Interactions between the characters of a story build its attractiveness in the eyes of recipients. The story itself is the basic way to convey its own perspective and perceived values. It enables the transfer of complex emotions thanks to its structure" (2018:695).

### **Advertising spot and its structure. Between storytelling and cinematic features**

At the beginning of this article we mentioned that our analysis will focus on the commercials created by Leandro Raposo in collaboration with other creative writers. These spots that we will analyze in detail energize the narrative space, but also visually, combine the three communication functions: poetic, phatic and conative in a playful, ironic, dramatic and full of humor style. All the stories in these spots are emotional and they create empathy and identification, which draw attention to the advertising product.

## Spots to Sedal shampoo<sup>1</sup>

The advertising campaign for the promotion of Sedal shampoo had different titles, launched in 2008, in Argentina, shows a relation between generations of women and it puts in evidence different themes of everyday life that can inspire women in terms of confidence through their hair. These spots were created by Leandro Raposo, Pablo Sticker, Santiago Lucero and Pablo Colonnese and directed by Veronica Bruno. The cinematic representation shows the female intimacy often foreground and emphasizes the women singularity dealing with quotidian elements (during their jobs, in the family relations, with friends). These spots underline the idea of relationships and closeness between women through the symbolic features of their hair: strength, seduction, sexuality, virility and fertility.

## Friendship and humor in the Campofrio spot *Cómicos*<sup>2</sup>

In 2011, Campofrio, a brand for meat products, appears in the spotlight through his commercial. The commercial is made by the MacCann agency and directed by Alex de la Iglesia. This video features a series of Spanish comedians such as: Los Morancos, Gomaespuma, Fofito, las hermanas Hurtado, Anabel Alonso, Pepe Carabias, Forges, Bigote Arrocet, Tony Antonio, Mago More. They meet in a cemetery to commemorate the death of one of the most

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<sup>1</sup> There are some of them available on YouTube: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K699evotuNE&feature=emb\\_title](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K699evotuNE&feature=emb_title), [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LsS2drxD0ug&feature=emb\\_title](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LsS2drxD0ug&feature=emb_title)

<sup>2</sup> The videoclip appears on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yRhaYdYAE0o>

famous Spanish comedians, Miguel Gila. After a series of emotional moments, sprinkled with jokes that refer to the figure of this comedian, they are gathered around a table full of Campofrio products. There are images in which friendship and solidarity are the ingredients of a story that reaches the viewer's sensitivity.

In terms of communication strategy, the intention was to go beyond the codes commonly used for these types of products, to achieve an emotional connection, and thus succeed in strengthening the brand's connection with the consumer. In addition, the campaign appears around Christmas. The way in which Alex de la Iglesia directs the story is a mixture between black humor (because the whole plot happens in a cemetery) and kindness and celebration of the friendship. This is achieved through close-ups, medium shots and the visual space.

### *Madrid Metro* advertising campaign<sup>3</sup>

Another advertisement with a powerful story is about the subway. It was created by Leandro Raposo, Pablo Colonnese and Pablo Stricker. This combination of humor and sensitivity is the strategy used in the Madrid subway commercial.

It tells the story of a citizen of a Philippines who was in Madrid and he came back home fascinated by the architecture and museums of the capital and he wanted to construct the same buildings like in Madrid in his own town. Another icon of Madrid is the subway. This is the story of a traveler who leaves in a journey and brings something back with him. The moral of the story

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<sup>3</sup> The video for this campaign can be access here:[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IlqRMhU\\_xgQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IlqRMhU_xgQ)

emphasis the friendship between people from different parts of the world and the connection between them through objects. Thus, the public transport connects people from everywhere, the subway means community and relation. The spot was directed by the artist Fran Torres and he highlights a visual perspective on portraying humorous and sensitive characters.

*Bankinter*. A bank's promotional spot<sup>4</sup>

This ad appears in 2020, realized by the Sioux meet Cyranos and the creative team consisted of Leandro Raposo, David Fernandez, Nani Albeniz, Michel Morem. In this ad, the characters are ordinary people who work every day during the pandemic crisis.

The spot focuses on portraits of everyday characters, with the peculiarity that they are not actors, but real people. The faces of these people are the protagonists of the banknotes that are displayed on the spot, a symbol that remains again as an element that serves as a link with other stories, in order to remember the victims of the pandemic situation. All the persons are the heroes of the story, the story of the real lives.

As for the music, Bankinter and his creative agency, Sioux meet Cyranos, repeat the collaboration with the singer ELE, who performs a song with an energetic tone and a message of optimism. The song is called "Volverá esos momentos", and the lyrics are written by Leandro Raposo. This ad is impressive and colorful because it suggests a collective gathering that helps to see the light in difficult times. In this sense, taking into account, that

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<sup>4</sup>Bankinter promotional spot: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fBXWTXHmWnk>,  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SXxMlcQiXdc>

the subject of the story is related to the money, this might lead to the connection that creates money along the years. It is kind of an universal language with all the subliminal implication. This is a story of showing gratitude to the working class people and their daily efforts to do their jobs. The audiovisual director was Dedo Ciego and some of the videos were produced with motion-control-led macro lens in order to show the texture of the banknotes. They represented the visual universe of banknotes from all parts of the world and this way of picturing the world is very ingenious made by showing the details to tell the stories.

## **Conclusions**

In all these advertising campaigns the emphasis is on the closeness between the public and the product being promoted through an emotional story and an emotional connection. The commercials produced by the team coordinated by Leandro Raposo highlight humanity, cohesion, solidarity between people. In all these examples, it is not a single hero, a character who saves a community, a formula that is used in most of the advertising campaigns, there are heroes, the community is the main character, through gestures of friendship and human relationships. This can be the strategy for an impressive story, closer to the public.

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