THE MYTH AS A STRATEGY FOR ECOLOGICAL ADVERTISING

MITUL CA STRATEGIE ÎN PUBLICITATEA ECOLOGICĂ

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Levi-Strauss argued that the creation of myths is not an activity specific only to primitive people, but characterizes all cultures, both primitive and modern [5]. He sees a culture's myths as variations on a limited number of basic themes, built on nature versus culture oppositions. Levi-Strauss states that myths are messages from our ancestors about humanity and our relationship with nature that help us make sense of the world in which we live. Advertising was broadly studied in their works, they stated that it is seen as a suitable territory for examining visual codes in terms of the relationship between rhetoric and ideology. "In this sense, a rhetorical map of advertising will help to determine, without any possible confusion, the extent to which the author (the advertising agent), who is under the illusion that he is inventing new expressive formulas, renders the signs in his language." [4]. Eco says that everything depends on the semiologist who will expose the illusions created by advertising. Many advertisements are made presenting the mythic foundation as a value. It is not about copying traditional myths, but about certain symbolic clues, which refer to original meanings. In the past, mythical heroes represented true moral profiles that the common man regarded as his ideal in life, sources of personality shaping, his self-image being strongly influenced. Advertising uses this image transfer to the consumer who buys a product because he associates it with a significant figure. In his work "Mythologies", Barthes [2] gives "myth" the definition of a type of discourse, but he specifies that it is not any type of discourse, because language needs certain conditions to become a myth. Starting from this idea, the purpose of the article is to bring to light the way myth is used as a strategy in ecological advertising. We aim to analyze the visual and verbal elements in green products billboards, describe how verbal and visual elements create meaning. If until now the image was considered an accessory of the text, in recent years, the language message has been summarized in a single phrase or even a slogan. In his work, "The Rhetoric of the Image", Roland Barthes observes that any advertising image contains two types of messages": 1. The linguistic message – consisting of the verbal text, which can be explored from both a connotative and a denotative point of view (all the words from the advertisement); 2. The iconic message: which corresponds to the visual referents and populates the image space, and which can be coded (the connotations: given by the wider sign system of society) and non-coded (the denotations) [1].

The advertising text is complex, multimodal, where the text and the image complete each other. Lately, we can observe a noticeable reduction of the text. The myth of the ads are created to manipulate the consummers' mind, saying that the product is green and safe for the environment. The so-called green revolutions are the results of the collective realization of the ecological importance. Here we're going to look at the laundry detergent ad, that creates a positive impact on the family. Source: https://realitatea.md/dual-power-produse-ecologice-de-curățare-pentru-orice-casa/

In this ad, the linguistic message is represented by the phrase "Create a safe environment for your children", located in the lower left part of the print. Typographically, that text is written in Calibri 48 font. The black color of the text denotes seriousness, which inspires confidence. In the left part, at the top, we find the logo and the certified quality stamp of the company. Despite the fact that, some time ago, Barthes was against the text attached to an image, stating about it that "it is a parasite, made to connote the image" [3], in the current advertising print we can state the opposite, the text is very important, and if it were missing, we would understand a completely different thing. The phrase used in this print fulfills the function of a relay, it comes to complete the expressive deficiencies of the image, to explain the action of the mother and daughter and to simplify the interpretation of the print.

The iconic message provides the uncoded (denotative) message, tautologically it records the reference elements, the characteristics of the presented object. The visual message is made up of uncoded or denotative iconic signs, but also plastic signs, such as colors, shapes, compositions and lights. At this level, there is no transformation between the signifier and the signified. We need a minimal perceptual and cultural experience in order to decode, a minimal intelligence to recognize an object. According to R. Barthes, the photographic image represents the zero degree of intelligibility, an infrasemantic and a meaningful level. The iconic signs identified in the ad are: the container, two people dressed in white and beige clothes, the logo and the company's certification stamp, which reinforces the linguistic ecological message. The word "greenlife", written in green under the company's emblem, comes to remind us of nature, the love and the need to preserve and protect it. It is attached to the company's trademark to emphasize its intention and belief regarding its attitude towards the environment. As for the plastic signs that we can identify on the panel, we can say that the predominant color is white, having the connotation of tranquility, cleanliness and purity. Green is associated with nature, namely the plants that are the main source of humanity's existence. The accreditation stamp, certification of the ecological product is directed toward center, red in color, which attracts our attention and instills confidence in the given product. The level of denotation is, however, important as it supports a second level, that of connotation, i.e. the coded iconic message (connotations). The connotative level refers to the code and the impregnation with socio-cultural meanings. The frame in which the ad is photographed is bright, the light being present especially in the middle part of the print. In the image, the woman and the little girl are smiling widely expressing good mood, psychologically

influencing the consumer, sugsesting that using this product we will probably feel the same happiness. Emotion is represented at the highest level. These connotators compose, according to R. Barthes, the set of rhetoric of the image, while the set of connoted meanings recompose certain ideological fields of contemporaneity. There will be a double ratio and a visible inequality between the two levels. The level of denotation is a basic, constitutive level, serving as a support for that of socio-cultural meanings.

The rhetoric of the image and the rhetoric of the text together reinforce the persuasive power of the ad. Punctuation is used to create the necessary impression. The exclamatory statement, having an imperative power, urges consumers to a better life for the future. The future is expressed by “your children”, which shows us that the target audience is parents or grandparents who should take care of what kind of environment they leave to the next generation. The image being, however, more complex than the linguistic message, the words have a fundamental function of anchoring the reading of the image and controlling the reproduction of the meaning, in opposition to the freedom of the meanings of the image. This is because the morality and ideology of society is based on the textual level.

We can conclude that the elements used in the ad lead to the combination of harmony and its diversity. The denotative level in combination with the connotative level have a special role in the construction of the meaning. Symbolic paradigms, which are born through connotation, are “updated” only with the help of denotative phrases. Furthermore, the denotative succeeds in producing the sensation of the real, an important connotative semantic artifice. It is important to mention the persuasive psychological impact that the ecological advertising myth has on the individual, family and society. These myths create modern myths by which society is governed. Their subsequent research can serve as the study of a reinvented anthropology, or called, more recently, „ecological media”, which allows people to become aware of the influence of new technologies on their lives, and to allow them to choose the environment in which they want to live. Even the sales of eco products are related to the degree to which a commercial company uses modern myths, then becoming a brand-myth.

References:

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