

For-consumption images of the automotive industry: the world of work through the lens of advertising communication¹

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Abstract

This paper analyzes advertising communication strategies of the automotive industry in the early 21st century, mainly from the standpoint of the representations of its productive processes and meanings of consumption. The theoretical framework discusses McLuhan's theory on cultural aspects of automobiles, production trends and new roles to be assumed by consumers, in the transformations promoted by modern marketing. The theoretical-methodological approach of the French line of Discourse Analysis was adopted in the reflection on the *corpus*.

Key words

Communication and Consumption. Communication and Work. Advertising. Automobile brands. Marshall McLuhan.

1 Introduction

In his reflections on advertising in the book, *Understanding Media*, McLuhan alerted that someday historians and archeologists would discover that commercials were the richest and most faithful reflections that a society could conceive of to depict its sectors of activity. This paper investigates how advertising language enables an analysis of the updating of mythologies around automobiles in the 21st century, where multinational car companies conceive their communications at the intersection between global and local aspects. Using selected automobile campaigns in this study, we highlight strategies for representing the world of work, as a means of creating ties with the daily lives of consumers, with experiences in their labor practice and in overcoming through the oneiric-playful universe supported by advertising. Inclusion of the public's experience

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is a trend cited by McLuhan in the context in which he analyzed media production, and has been confirmed and expanded on over time, even more so when one considers the internet as a support for including consumers in collaborative processes related to products, services and communication development that will form the media aesthetics of the merchandise.

Advertising, as social lenses the mediate our outlook on life, for relations between subjects, between subjects and objects, continuously returning back to the world of work. Productive systems, workers, the origins of merchandise, are fertile ground for advertising creativity, which develops ludic, oneiric, comical and poetic versions of product preparation processes, according to the symbolic universe of their brands. This paper turns its focus back to automotive industry communication strategies, to analyze the meanings of this translation of the productive and work sphere to serve strategies of persuasion and seduction by global brands. According to John Berger (1974), advertising is “the process of manufacturing fascination”. Our interest regarding the topic is based on the question: how does advertising recover, translate, involve magic and imagination a sphere as complex as that of the world of work, to the point where it is transformed into a slogan for consumption of merchandise?

With the division of labor and mercantilization of workers in the context of modern capitalism, this sphere of human activity, according to Marx, has produced a distancing between product and producer. Therefore work, which is potentially a form of realization of the highest human capacities, production of subjectivity and identity, through application of labor management methods such as Taylorism or Fordism, makes “labor estranged” (MARX, 2004), as was well-demonstrated in Charles Chaplin’s film *Modern Times* (1936). Contemporarily, intensified work, competition, worker performance-related pressures and demands have caused a series of negative consequences to modern man. Even though work may also express desires and dreams of a number of subjects, there is a “heavy” aura around human professional activity. Considering this context, the function of translation, of rereading advertising language, gains greater relevance to understanding symbolic processes involving consumption in our society. Consumption-promoting communication, in this case advertising language, is used by automobile manufacturers, the birthplace of the production lines conceived by Henry Ford, and transformed into a means of seduction and awakening of desires.

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2 The global village and editing of the world by advertising

In advertising, corporate media processes have a language that organizes things of the world, editing it according to the presence of the advertiser and meanings associated thereto. Thus, *imagined communities* (ANDERSON, 2005) are formed, which, different from the sense of nation studied by Anderson, are formed by identifications through communities of taste and practices of consumption. Consumers of goods produced by multinational corporations are aligned, through communication strategies, to lifestyles that are directly connected with the “spirit” of the advertised merchandise.

Automobiles are among the primary consumption goods that possess this characteristic of corresponding to global production and communication strategies. We can understand McLuhan’s thoughts on automobiles both regarding its insertion in culture by means of consumption that translates as an extension of man with its own characteristics, and regarding the transformations in the productive chain the author predicted for the near future. Here we will discuss these two aspects that make the automobile one of the most recurrent consumption goods in MacLuhan’s work.

In his book, *Understanding Media*, McLuhan (1995, p. 254) likened the automobile to a piece of clothing, a human extension that

represented a “hood, a protective and aggressive shell of the urban and suburban man”. There is a conception that technology extends senses and the reach of human actions as organizing the author’s view on the vehicle and its relation to subjects, especially those who live in cities. Thus, the automobile would be a form of mediation of man and things of the world and with one another, a mediator that promotes a different interaction with space. If media, as thought of by McLuhan, has transformation of man’s perception as a characteristic, the medium itself that massages our senses and stimulates new feelings, the automobile may likewise be considered a mediation of human experience.

In addition to a feeling of protection, spaces and organization of cities is remodeled due to the use of cars; the projection of man in the urban context is, in the end, the establishment of new parameters for relations between subject, time and space. Here we make an approximation between McLuhan’s reflections to issues that permeate Walter Benjamin’s (1991) theory regarding Universal Expositions, to passages and technical reproducibility of art (specifically cinematographic art), and the visual culture that established itself in the 19th century and that then produces new human sensibilities through manners of seeing the world. McLuhan expands the dimension of the transformation of human beings through the advent of information technologies; in his opinion, human experience will result in new mental structures

in environments constantly affected by the use of these technologies. The being immersed in the global village and stimulated by McLuhan's media will produce additional characteristics for the new feeling discussed by Benjamin.

The second aspect refers to the production site that, to McLuhan (1995, p. 251), would be ready to undergo a great revolution, marked by production of "unique, tailored objects at the same price and speed as those produced in series". As a theoretical context, there is the author's consideration that consumer society was heading towards an era in which the consumer would be called upon to participate in production processes, as a co-producer. On this point, McLuhan's prediction was correct regarding flexibilization of productive chains and systems, intensified in the 21st century, as well as regarding the imagination, which has become an era where consumption is central and the consumer is rhetorically constructed as the controlling force that will decisively influence processes ranging from production to consumption.

As defined by Appadurai (1999) in his rereading of Marx' concept of merchandise fetish, both a production as well as a consumption fetish exist. The former will construct an aura that disconnects the product from its productive sphere and launches it on the mythic plane, where value distances itself from use and gains new levels of exchange value through the

symbolic layers placed on the merchandise.

Consumption fetish, on the other hand, is the process through which the consumer is fed by the imagination that he or she is in control, when actually he or she is limited to a range of choices that the productive sphere has made available. We understand that digital networks enable subjects to prepare their content production with greater freedom than in the past, and in this situation where spaces open for collaborative systems, older structures stand alongside those broader interactive and increased flexibilization processes. The consumer is still maintained as part of the planned chain of production, even in more complex collaborative networks, fed through communication. This place of the consumer is the imaginary starting point of everything, the "raison d'être" of the organizations. The rhetoric of satisfying desires and wishes of consumers cloaks ambitions for profit and expansion of capital.

Regarding this reasoning, McLuhan discusses the world of work that, decisively impacted by progressive automation and new modes of linking subjects to production, is disseminated across remunerated and non-remunerated activities alike. Roles played alternate between producer identified with a corporation and with a specific production system; professional mediators whose function is to establish communication connections with users, suppliers, and a range of publics (from added services to merchandise to roles as "cool hunters" and behavior

consultants on groups, communities, tribes, especially regarding types of youth culture); and even consumers, who take on the condition of co-producers - prosumers - inserted into the productive processes as collaborators. This variety of possibilities in understanding relations between producers and consumers, including the alternating, intersecting and overlapping of roles, is an issue highlighted by McLuhan in his reading of consumer society which established itself from progressive use of information technology and understanding of categories of time and space, resulting from convergences that currently are consolidating around digital media.

3 Advertising, consumption and work according to McLuhan

In his perspective on modern advertising, McLuhan highlights the sense of symbolic consumption that transcends the merchandise. The manner in which products are inserted in complex systems of meanings, which approximate them to human affections and place their functions on a lower plane, is partly fruit of the scenarios in which advertising frames whatever is being promoted. This is why the progressive replacement of products for advertising spoken of by McLuhan (2005), rather than being taken in a literal sense, should be interpreted from the idea that advertising consumption gains a certain autonomy in the contemporary media scene; values, lifestyle, stimuli to action by advertising establishes a dialogue with the

consumer, regardless of any act of purchase. The effects sought by advertising are amplified and the function of merchandise becomes a trigger for states of spirit, mobilizer of affections, of links between subjects. An example of this discussion is the classic “Priceless” MasterCard campaign, where the moment that is priceless is the effect of a re-signification of acts that take place through products on which they do not necessarily depend. The human dimension of consumption, seen by advertising, is supported by a language that is itself merchandise.

McLuhan (2005, p. 180) goes beyond this logic by affirming that “this type of new environment we have available, an environment of electrically programmed information, converts the entire planet into a teaching machine, a teaching machine made by man”. The author points to the idea of cooperated production that will produce new senses of community: in this man-made environment, the media consumer feeds back into the system with its own understanding, its presence, and its learning. The man-made world is supported by this communion of everyday knowledge and practices, around technologies and goods that transform human feelings and are themselves transformed continuously, sometimes even replaced by new technological devices. Within such an environment, the consumer is established based on a logic of a double linkage: there is simultaneously both a private and tribal sense, collective in the awareness of inclusion developed by this man.

Baudrillard (2006) developed similar thinking through the concept of collective presumption, which presumes each act of consumption: the good consumed in the private sphere also brings with it meanings of symbolic association to a group, a tribe, to sharing of tastes and lifestyles identified with the merchandise. Baudrillard, however, considers there are well-defined roles in relation to the spheres of consumption and production. McLuhan identified that, by inserting the public as co-producer, there is a transformation from a passive consumer to the function of the workforce. McLuhan's conception of the world of work incorporates the trend that employment would be replaced by links to roles and projects that, in the end, would be an inseparable junction of work activity and leisure: to defend his hypothesis, McLuhan (2005, p. 183) used the image of the artist, who "is never working. He's doing what he loves to do. He is having fun and enjoying his leisure full time, especially when he works more intensely".

This atmosphere of artistic work, displaced to the contemporary scenario, would be based on a culture produced around the leisure industry and media, as discussed by Morin (2006); the author develops his line of thought through a re-dimensioning of the diagnosis of the Frankfurt School's critical theory on impacts of the culture industry on society. Therefore, Morin defends that the social imagination fed by this mass culture will stimulate the subjects to seek objectives and dreams that are not predetermined by

social and economic structures; the complexity of the combination of day-to-day fiction and reality produces subjects that are molded homogeneously, yet who are particular in their form of consumption and appropriating the stimuli from the culture industry. Within this framework of relations between work and leisure, real and imaginary, we identify the consumer who assumes the role of producer and understand his activity as ludic, as something related to pleasure, to the field of his or her personal interests. We will return to this discussion when analyzing the case of the cooperative production project of the Fiat Mio, a model of the "car of the future" where the primary platform was the internet in the communication process through which productive dialogue was established.

In brief: the role of co-producer becomes a communication strategy, a form of planning the consumer's place as part of the conception of the thing made for the consumer. Advertising language will assign new meanings to these production and consumption centers in intersection, reversibility and overlap, as we shall analyze later through commercials and merchandise advertising strategies of the car industry.

4 Regarding the methodology applied to the corpus

The analytical lens we apply to automobile advertising is based on the French line of Discourse Analysis (DA). Worldviews, values,

ideological views that sustain the world edited by advertising language are within the perspective of the DA methodology. Focusing on the materiality of language supports the manner in which we understand cultural texts and their relation to their social context. The zeitgeist passes through the products derived from it; in the case of advertising, we can see the tensions between discourses that characterize the sociocultural scenario which provide meaning to said communication. Shifting of senses, assumptions and subliminal understanding are intertextual and interdiscursive relations and elements based on the nature of language as dialogue, as defined by Mikhail Bakhtin (1999). To this author, all discourse establishes a dialogue with other dialogues that preceded it, as they are structured based on previous sayings in culture and use them as pre-built elements to mobilize social memory and sustain a common repertoire with their audience; dialogue with contemporary discourses is perceived in the plot of language, as subjects that assume linguistic production are also active consumers of discourses that permeate the social context of which they are part, as well as its intermediaries. Connections with future discourses are established based on the condition that the messages seek to anticipate responses, predict future actions, strive to be appropriate to their consumers and therefore transform the other, producing affections conducive to their project of speech.

Thus, the study of discursive ethos, with French researcher Dominique Maingueneau as one of its foremost proponents, provides support to an analysis based on looking at the intermediation projected by the communication analyzed, even if isolated from its process, which implies reception and in the new statements resulting therefrom – an ongoing process, not limited to a certain time and space determined and disseminated by social plot. An advertising message projects the image of the statement-maker in character traits and corporality; that is, it causes an image to emerge of the subject of the statement, who adopts a tone, a psychological profile, a body, which is perceived through forms of expression. This image produced by discourse is also based on affections, emotions invested in language that influence the manner in which the other is established in the communication; in other words, the intermediary is projected by the message directed to it. This is in agreement to the ideas of André Gorz (2005), when he defended that productive systems include what the author called production of consumers. Communication is part of the productive process and goes beyond it, by mediating the relation with subjects, stimulated as consumers of a project of speech that includes its future action (whether joining the symbolic universe of a brand, an ideology or acquisition of merchandise).

Based on this framework we locate communication strategies as an inseparable aesthetic layer of automobile merchandise, as

it is from advertising that the consumer will have subsidies to locate the product within a dynamic system of values present in society, and him/herself in relation to market offerings. The elements of design present in the materiality of the automobile may suggest characteristics such as “joviality”, “adventure”, “elegance” and others, but it is the discursive positioning of the advertising of the merchandise that will extend the reach of the sensorial suggestion of design to form more complex systems of ideas. We will then begin discussing these elements based on automobile industry communications with the specific aspect of an explicit reference to the productive processes themselves, as a metalinguistic strategy that will translate automobile production into the logic of consumption. Roland Barthes (1987) stated that through “the myth of a speech”, with advertising language, we can reflect on the myth-o-logic that attributes meanings to automobiles in modern times.

5 An analysis of car industry advertising in the 21st century

As cited above, the selection of advertising messages for this study is based on a common characteristic: the presence of representations of productive automotive processes and the world of work that involves it. With no pretense of being a quantitative approach, we selected commercials that allowed a perception of a broad spectrum of communication strategies, which correspond to

categories identified through previously collected material - made of automobile advertisement pieces broadcast in the first decade of the 21st century. The three categories that the selected commercials fit into for this study are based on the character of the interaction proposed by the communication, through the forms of meaning of the roles of producer and consumer. This categorization is based on questions raised by McLuhan, discussed previously. Below we present each of the categories and films associated to them, in their specificities and aspects in common.

a) Production in function of a particular consumption

We identified films that present translations of automotive production with well-delimited roles between the spheres of production and consumer as a characteristic of this category, where production emphasizes tastes, desires, very particular satisfaction, as discussed by Baudrillard (2006), when he analyzed the commercial for the Airborne sofa chair in his book *O sistema dos objetos*. Thus production is recreated as a show, as entertainment. We see this in the film *Cake* (United Kingdom, 2007) (Figure 1), for the launching of the new Fabia, a car model of the Skoda brand.

The automobile factory is recreated in the allegory of a cake factory, where workers produce a cake and large volumes of fillings. Everything is made with hand-crafted detail;

Figure 1 Image from the “Cake” commercial (UK, 2009)



Source: SKODA AUTO, 2007.

human presence supersedes machinery and automation. The pace is set by an old song, an intertextual mark: the song is *My favorite things* (Rodgers and Hammerstein), the original soundtrack of the movie, *The Sound Of Music*, directed by Robert Wise, 1965). The sweet voice of actress Julie Andrews, framed with the sound of the orchestra, provides a light and delicate tone to the commercial, she sings about her favorite things, including nature, animals and foods, creating an ode to happiness derived from day-to-day experiences and a positive look at mundane details as an antidote to sadness. In the midst of the base made of cake material, sweet icing as the body and headlights made of jelly, chocolate as oil and other delicacies that are being transformed into an automobile, you

see the meaning of the slogan that closes the commercial: “The new Fabia. Full of lovely stuff. / Skoda. Manufacturer of happy drivers”.

The commercial has associations with the imagination from *The fantastic chocolate factory*, literary work that has inspired two movie versions, the most recent directed by Tim Burton (2005). Production transcends the function of the automobile to reach the effects: it thereby assumes the role of producing “happy drivers”, in the representation of a system that establishes the consumer as the center of a process aiming at its happiness, to satisfying its wishes. Pleasure and tastes from childhood associated with sweets are connoted in relation to the automobile. The smooth tone of the commercial brings a sense

of delicate and feminine corporality, which leads the imagination to the care in production associated to handcrafted items, unconditional love of children in the character of Julie Andrews in *The Sound of Music*. The consumer is derived of these affections, established as a subject to have his/her desires satiated, to agree to this system that focuses on the consumer as if a child nestling in the arms of its mother. The corporation becomes human and consumption of the automobile is synonymous with pleasure.

The Toyota commercial called *Made with a human touch* (Denmark, 2008), is identified with this category by translating production to a show of seduction, in editing images guided by the soundtrack, the song *Heart of glass* (1978) by the band Blondie. The seductive tone of the female vocals of Debbie Harry, together with the dance beat of the music provide the rhythm of the work, in simultaneous production processes of different models of the car brand, alternating the images. The environment has a futuristic aesthetic, in varied combinations of the brand's colors – white, red and black. Productive moments that construct the involving nature of the Toyota brand: beautiful women in tight clothing, dancing sensually while they paint the body of an automobile; workers in synchronized movements in front of an assembly line; a race track where circular maneuvers of an automobile are presented in slow motion; the acrobatic jump of a man, launching himself from a platform to test air bags placed on the ground. At the high

point of the commercial, there is a moment in which, by the touch of a button, hundreds of red butterflies completely cover the body of a Prius model placed in space.

In the Toyota commercial, the “human touch” combines the sense of hand-crafted to serial production made by almost automated human beings, the ethos one derives from this communication has a seductive tone, which allies technological traits to the human touch. The allegory of production seeks to translate the effects of consumption; therefore it dons the aesthetic of the show, of fashion, the plasticity of acrobatic sport, domesticated nature - elements in convergence that are unified around a concept, which highlights human presence. Production again points to the senses of the consumer and establishes him/her as beneficiary of the system on the individual plane.

b) Production in function of collective consumption and social causes

The characteristic element of this category is the meaning of roles of production and consumption as part of a broader social process; if possible, we find specific attributes of the producer and consumer initially, both are identified in the collaborative process of constructing an ideal scenario, of a collective issue, a social cause, a utopia of consumption. The advertisement constructs theses regarding the world of today and of tomorrow, assuming

Figure 2 Image from the commercial on the launch of the Fiat 500 in Brazil (2009)



Source: FIAT 500..., 2009.

shared functions, in roles that should be assumed for the collective well-being.

To represent this category, we chose a commercial produced for the launch of the Fiat 500 on the Brazilian market in 2009 (Figure 2). The old model of the Fiat brand (the first version was from the 1950s, an economy car important within the scenario of Italian reconstruction after World War II), is read anew with the current model in 2007, modernizing its lines and adding technologically-advanced components. The commercial in question is an entirely animated production, with a futuristic scenario where automation is the primary characteristic. The soundtrack is a version of the song “Ob-La-Di, Ob-La-Da”, originally launched by the Beatles in the classic *White Album* (1968). The tone is happy, fun, with human warmth, making reading

of the world dominated by technology complex. The image of the car emerges in the midst of two giant hands from heaven, as a ball of light, and could be associated to a divine work. Initially landing in the midst of a desert, the Fiat 500 arrives in the idealized urban space surrounded by futuristic technology. On construction sites of the highway, mechanical daisies equipped with cameras watch over the passing automobile. The verbal discourse of the narrator denotes a sense of the future as a scenario dreamed-of at this present time: *“This is the new time. A time in which we will all feel freer, breathe easier”*.

The automobile is supplied by a fuel pump attached to a mechanical arm - only a drop is put in the tank, connoting hyperbolically the consumption economy of the Fiat 500. The narration synchronized with this image

semanticizes it as a small gesture with a grandiose significance: *“A time in which we shall not only share dreams, but also the planet on which we live, the space in which we circulate, the travels we embark on”*. A spaceship lifts off; the automobile maneuvers as it passes giant robots that walk along the road, until it goes through a tunnel full of colorful geometric shapes: *“The time in which you command technology, not technology you”*. In a type of futuristic car wash, the Fiat 500 is prepared by machines and monsters fully covered by furs, which, like the mechanical arms, are at the service of production, with the following text accompanying the scene: *“This time unites us and makes us more similar, yet at the same time, differentiates us and makes each of us unique, special”*. Upon returning to the road, we only see automobiles of the advertised model, which stop at a light in front of a crosswalk, as robots cross, who, in their movements and proportion, are similar to an adult followed by a group of children, when the campaign slogan enters: *“Fiat 500. The car of our time”*.

What time is highlighted in this commercial? A time when automobile production has the connotation of the manufacture of a new world. A future transported to the present, where technology serves to free us, yet simultaneously it promotes standardization of goods and actions, automation of production, disappearance of the worker. Time in which the utopia of a better world is translated into small gestures of consumption, such as fuel economy. Time dreamed around

harmony between production and consumption, in roles currently delimited, then overlapping in the plan for constructing an idealized scenario. The community imagined by the advertisement is supported by the utopian ethos, of technological and humanist spirit corporality - the latter associated to the imagination of a sharing of ideas between producers and consumers. Nothing more paradoxical, if we consider that, in the end, the passenger car is a particularized solution to the collective problem of transportation in large metropolises around the world. Counterpointing the trend cited by McLuhan regarding the fate of the automobile, which would be replaced by other technologies, the advertisement recreates it and launches it in the future, in a world that dissolves utopias to be consumed in a comfortable and easy manner here and now.

c) Production in cooperation with the consumer

The third category is closely correlated to marketing trends cited by McLuhan: incorporation of the consumer in the automotive production process - this is the slogan of the Fiat Mio project (Figure 3). The principle of the activity is to develop the Fiat Concept Car III (FCC-III), for which a website was created <http://www.fiatmio.cc/> – a virtual platform through which consumers' opinions are expressed on what should be the car of the future. The process was conducted throughout 2010 and resulted in the production of a prototype presented at the

Figure 3 Image of the Fiat Mio Project (2010)



Source: FIAT, 2009.

São Paulo Auto Show in October the same year. The slogan of the commercial broadcast on TV spoke of the website, and gave a tone of initiative: *“Fiat invites you to create a car. A car you can call your own”*. We will highlight the most relevant communication aspects of the Fiat Mio project, since it is characterized by an advertising strategy that goes beyond the traditional advertising format. The consumer is immersed in the role of co-producer as a developer of ideas: the numbers presented by Fiat are grandiose in this respect. The project began in a Brazilian-based plant of the Italian car manufacturer with 17,000 people registering at the website, from 160 countries, providing 10,666 ideas sent by April 11, 2011 (data from website). The consumer is classified by his/her performance, measured by the number of ideas shared and comments made on the interventions, in a scoring system designed by the project coordinator.

One of the most interesting aspects of this communication strategy is that the productive system, defined as shared, is revealed in its meanings through the voices of the Fiat workers, in the *making ofs* that accompany the process and post them on the website and on *YouTube*. A total of 16 backstage production films were made from February 2010 to January 2011, in which the main characters are the designers, engineers and other Fiat workers involved in the Mio project. Their talks state that the users' ideas were the starting point, but that they were also responsible for interpreting what they “liked the most” or considered feasible or even interpreting “what was behind” the opinions of the consumers. The co-producers only appeared in two films: when the prototype was unveiled at the São Paulo Auto Show; and in the film that recorded the visit of some of the collaborators to the plant and to a dinner offered by the manufacturer in

recognition for services rendered. We thus have a reality show of the production that constructs a mythicized image of producers at Fiat, symbolically committed to their heroic mission: translating the aspirations, opinions and “needs” of consumers in technical trouble into a future project. The happiness derived from the work activity is expressed by the smiling faces, the talks full of enthusiasm, emotion and motivation.

Incorporating the consumer as co-producer is seen as a trend: the non-remunerated work is *vampirized* by productive processes, which in turn gains an air of legitimacy by being based on opinions and approval of consumers, who, in the more advanced stages, are invited to make choices among options delimited by production. The flexible ethos of Fiat, built on the voices of producers and consumers in a form of dialogue, in the *making ofs* shows itself as a reality show of its own work, its humble-yet-heroic nature, capable of hearing, reacting and producing fascination for subjects who dream of the future, brokered by corporate strategies.

6 Final considerations

In his discussions on advertising and on the automobile, Marshall McLuhan pointed out the sense of an extension of the human being involving consumption and its rhetoric. We approached a third vector to these topics, also present in the questions put forth by the author: the world of work and trends of the productive

sector. By analyzing advertising discourse, we have understood elements that form the imagination fed by the automotive industry in the 21st century. We have sought to identify the mythological aspects that attribute meanings to the spheres of production and consumption, through categorization defined by a prior reading of the corpus selected for the study, and by examples from each category in the analysis of four distinct strategies. We have come to levels of interaction between producers and consumers, projected by communication with delimited roles as well as zones of intersection.

Production is framed by the logic of consumption being represented as a show; particularized approaches of attention to desires and “needs”, and constructions around collective and utopian ideas, are distinct forms of linking the consumer as part of the productive system. Future projects and immediate experiences combine to win over audiences, according to the symbolic universe of the brands. The strategy of incorporating the consumer as producer reaches its highest level in the Fiat Mio project, which presents interesting innovations that point towards a future of corporate culture, and also reveals the forms of alienation of the workforce through proposals of seduction, ludic aspects, small rewards and new meanings attributed to longstanding market practices, such as research with consumers elevated to the status of collaborative production.

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Imagens da indústria automotiva para consumo: o mundo do trabalho na ótica da comunicação publicitária

Resumo

Este artigo analisa as estratégias da comunicação publicitária da indústria de automóveis no início do século XXI, tendo como eixos principais as representações de seus processos produtivos e os significados do consumo. O quadro teórico discute as teorias de McLuhan sobre os aspectos culturais do automóvel, as tendências da produção e os novos papéis a serem assumidos pelo consumidor, nas transformações promovidas pelo marketing moderno. A abordagem teórico-metodológica da Análise do Discurso de linha francesa foi adotada na reflexão sobre o *corpus*.

Palavras-chave

Comunicação e consumo. Comunicação e trabalho. Publicidade. Marcas de automóveis. Marshall McLuhan.

Imágenes de la industria automotriz para el consumo: el mundo laboral a través del lente de la comunicación publicitaria

Resumen

Este artículo analiza las estrategias de la comunicación publicitaria de la industria de automóviles a principios de siglo XXI, teniendo como ejes principales las representaciones de sus procesos de producción y los significados del consumo. La discusión teórica trata de las tesis de McLuhan sobre los aspectos culturales de los automóviles, las tendencias de la producción y los nuevos roles que debe asumir el consumidor, en los cambios promovidos por el marketing moderno. El enfoque teórico y metodológico del análisis del discurso de la línea francesa se adoptó en el pensamiento sobre el *corpus*.

Palabras Clave

Comunicación y consumo. Comunicación y trabajo. Publicidad. Marcas de automóviles. Marshall McLuhan.

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