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## INSIDE THE MODERN RITUALS: A SOCIAL HISTORY OF ADVERTISING

*We have already shown how consumerism has established itself as a set of modern rituals (Vincenzo, 2014). With the beginning of the twentieth century, the consumer goods were at the center of the symbolic representations that have filled the anomic void of society, the emptiness of symbols and rituals. As time passed, however, advertising has saturated modern imagination. The resulting consumer's alienation has led to a shift from the consumption of material goods to the entertainment industry, to the "free time" consumption. We want to show how the anomie-saturation-alienation cycle is one of the fundamental characteristics of the order of a ritual society. In a society like ours, based on consumerism, the cycle concerned the advertising communication in particular. This was reiterated in the digital world, with commercial use of big data coming from the web. Relations between rituals, theater and entertainment world receive special attention. This text is a concise presentation of a broader research project on the social rituals and the social history of advertising, realized in partnership with Fausto Lupetti.*

Advertising has characterized the twentieth century communication, with profound effects on the structure of modern societies. It not merely "inform" about new products of consumption, but it has traced the outlines of a new types of man and woman, different than those of the preceding centuries, from romantic ones as well as those rationalists. Advertising has in fact provided a number of social models in which people can identify, with considerable consequences on human relationships. The same modern vitalism - a mythology of life for its own sake become the dominant philosophy in the late twentieth century - is essentially a product of advertising. In parallel, the advertising has contributed to the complete redefinition of the territory, through the construction of an "objects system", which affects the human (Baudrillard, 1968). Even in the XXI century, the digital communication does not put into question the predominant role of advertising. Through the apparent "sociality" of the form, the advertising ways are penetrated deeply in the collective and inside interpersonal relationships. The present study, synthesis and presentation of a wider research to be published, will show how these socio-anthropological changes would not have been possible without a prior symbolic manipulation and the corresponding establishment of an order of ritual actions. This order has essentially outlined through a series of modern myths spread by advertising and linked to a new control strategy of the bodies.

The definition of modern advertising started in the United States. The reasons for such a geographical and national placement are manifold: the technological and demographic development, the vastness of the territories, the ruthlessness of the industrial culture of the New World, the lack of regulatory and cultural constraints, and not least the link between capitalism and religion already



identified by Max Weber. Already in the late nineteenth century advertising had invaded the shop counters, PO boxes, the walls of the city, the barns of the countryside, and even the rocks of Niagara Falls (Taylor and Chang, 1995). American advertising found wide-open spaces in which to develop his philosophy, its models and verify their incisiveness. At the same time, modes and media content were reworked. The very titles of the newspapers strongly resented of the *headlines* style. The language of the advertising slogans from the era of Phineas Taylor Barnum (1810-1891) transformed the way of presenting the news in spectacular events (Applegate, 2012: 45 ff.). According to McLuhan, the 1850s America had already learned to use human interest stories as advertising (McLuhan, 1953).

From the beginning the American turnover of advertising can not be compared to that of other developed countries. Although it is not easy finding reliable data for the nineteenth century, in the early twentieth century the gap is already unbridgeable: in 1907 the US annual advertising budget was \$ 850 million, compared to USD 57.9 million (12 million pounds) invested in Britain (Bakker, 2014). In relation to population, this implied a *per capita* expenditure of almost \$ 10 in America, compared to \$ 1.45 in the UK. Only at the end of the twentieth century, coinciding with the gradual saturation of the advertising market, the gap will tend to thin: in 1998 the US will spend more than 206 billion dollars in advertising compared to 31 billion in the UK, with an annual *per capita* expenditure respectively of \$ 746.2 in America and \$ 529 in Britain (McCann-Erickson/Gov.uk data processing).

Modern advertising was created to communicate the characteristics and prices of new commercial products, but soon realized that they have a very different social effectiveness. The causes of the social transformations of the nineteenth century are well known. The complete upheaval of traditional life operated on a cultural level by the Enlightenment, and the material from the Second Industrial Revolution, had canceled an entire symbolic universe. The old man's social representations were gone and the new were slow to establish itself. The professionals of the new form of communication quickly realized they were facing a man in an identity crisis, struggling with the difficult life of the metropolis, devoid of values and symbolic references. And they understood that the publicity - and consumerism of which it was the standard bearer - could be a response, indeed, the "solution" to the crisis of the metropolitan man. The advertising, ultimately, could overcome the lack of significant symbols and their rituals.

From our perspective, symbols represent the connotative aspect of language and images, the ability to synthetically represent different orders of reality, to manifest the depth of reality and its ability to transcend the purely material aspect of concepts and things. Many natural elements might be symbolic, rather it is fair to say that the whole natural order is susceptible of a symbolic meaning, of an universal perspective: for example the natural complexity of the medieval symbolism, of the "bestiary" of Christ, etc. The natural value of symbols is linked to that culture so that myths, theologies, the stories - even modern ones - primarily provide narratives useful to understand the symbols and their implementation. Advertisers have soon realized that their repertoire of synecdoche, substitutions, combinations and combinations of images, sounds and words was able to hit at various levels the imagination of the consumer, was able to express symbolic contents. The symbol-



ic void that other countries have tried to fill with the symbols of nationalism and totalitarianism, in America was mostly filled by the consumer symbols, as objects of worship.

From symbols to rituals. Scholars like Ernest Cassirer have emphasized that man's nature is symbolic, is ritual (Cassirer 1944). And for Mary Douglas the symbolic form is the way in which thought organizes knowledge, since from the social point of view, man is essentially a "ritual animal".

It is not too much to say that ritual is more to society than words are to thought (Douglas, 1966: 63).

In real life, symbols are not abstract entities, but they are turned into actions through rituals, and so rituals are essentially performance-related to symbolic contents. Every society has developed ritual sequences to address and prevent crisis situations. Already Turner noted the close relationship between ritual and theater. In this sense, comedies and tragedies have a ritual purpose to highlight vices and virtues of the various societies, proposing the reinstatement of social types or groups responsible for conflicts, or by ruling their irreparable estrangement and eventual punishment (Turner 1982).

The same repetitive form of rituals is related to the nature of the symbol, its multiple levels: every ritual cycle, in fact, expresses a plane of existence. The ritual repetition allows the progressive identification between symbol and practitioner. In the "rosary" - both Hindu ritual instrument, as Buddhist, Christian or Muslim - each grain represents and expresses a whole world. The wire unit and the multiplicity of beads or knots mark a symbolism that is found in religion and art both Eastern and Western (Coomaraswamy, 1944). We have already shown how the fortune of consumerism has been to express themselves through actions and ritual places, transforming the purchase in a large social representation with multiple meanings, although very reified (Vincenzo, 2014). Advertising has played a key role in accompanying these new consumption performance with symbols, narratives and patterns of ritual actions.

Social crises are also in connection with the problems of symbolic and ritual sphere. Durkheim was the first to grasp the link between anomie and "suicidal currents", noting that the high suicide rates in the developed countries were a clear sign of the modern discomfort (Durkheim, 1897). The novel of the nineteenth century and especially the drama of the time, like that of Ibsen, are clear evidence of the growing importance of suicide in the Western imagination.

The absence of rituals plunges man and society in an anomic "hell". The "anomie" is primarily a lack of standards and values. Rules and symbols are closely related, because the norm itself is a symbol, or rather narrative with symbolic content, the explication of general patterns of behavior. Norms are not abstract concepts, in fact, but are reflected in concrete actions, in a more or less dense life of symbolic references and ritual acts. Even today in the legal lexicon the process that comes from a law violation is referred to as "ritual", and exactly corresponds to a rite of restoring order. Judaism - Durkheim knew it - the 613 *mitzvot* are commandments that clearly indicate actions and omissions rituals. Anomic is therefore the condition of a man who is living in an absence symbolic rules and in a ritual void.



The anomic man is lost and depressed, prone to looking for new rituals balances, new symbolic reference points. The new professionals of advertising took a few decades to acquire the full awareness of the implications of such a condition. The first worked like managers and buyers of advertising space, but soon they developed a modern “sacred” art of the word, the headline, the advertising slogan, thanks to a new profession: the copywriter. The purpose of the first advertising was “convincing” and was linked to the hucksters in the streets, the Medicine Show pitches in which they were advertised concoctions from the therapeutic capacity roughly miraculous (defined pompously, patent medicine, on the English model).

The new advertising jargon was used as incantatory formula, as promise of health, safety and well-being. The industry churning out new products - medicines, soaps, cigarettes - who conquered soon respectability, occupying massively pages of magazines and the most significant urban spaces. Between 1850 and 1860 it would have been put into circulation 33,000 patent products, while only 6,000 had been distributed in the previous decade (data *Emergence of Advertising in America, 1850-1920* - Duke Libraries). From 1885, typographic patterns for gray print allowed the use of the photographs on the printed media, providing advertising of the symbolic and seductive possibilities of images.

The first marketing model developed from Elias St. Elmo Lewis (1872-1948), a Philadelphia advertiser, was synthesized by the acronym AIDA: Attention, Interest, Desire, Action. Advertising soon realized that the interest could be driven, as well as desire. Advertisers put into practice a strategy that could be defined as “healers”. The modern man’s fears could be instigated and amplified, as well as the prospect of a “healing”, thanks to the commercial products. In this perspective, the “comforting” function of consumerism appeared easy and effective, and triggered a real “therapeutic consumption” (Lears, 1994). After ointments “miracle” would come *Listerine*, an alcohol-based mouthwash put on the market since 1881, which at the beginning of the twentieth century would begin to ensure the recovery from a newly established disease: halitosis. Thanks to *Listerine*, women could have been cured bad breath and they finally found a husband, while men would no longer lost their jobs.

Consumerism is stated precisely as refined strategy of control bodies. A control that began inside - medicines, cigarettes - and that developed outwards towards the physical aspect and the surrounding objects: soaps, detergents and household appliances. The complex strategies of power put in place by European countries during the nineteenth century were thus in a short time exceeded. The strict disciplinary regimes of the barracks, factories, schools, it was to replace a healing rituals control, purification of the body and relationship with others. Military discipline and school was replaced by a consumer mythology on the body and of the body. In the words of Foucault, Control-Repression was replaced by Control-Stimulus: “Naked ... but be thin, handsome and tanned” (Foucault, 1977: 139).

The American advertising also officially received the endorsement of President Calvin Coolidge, who recognized their contribution to the development (speech to the American Association of Advertising Agencies, 27 October 1926, Washington). According Coolidge advertising favored the emergence of new needs, to meet which the Americans would be driven to produce more and more,



thus starting a virtuous circle (or “vicious”). The new requirements were to be “cured” by the patent medicine, to be purified from a host of products for personal hygiene that promised liberation from the infamous B.O. (Smell of the Body). It was also used religious symbolism: the woman who did not use the vacuum cleaner Hoover was a “martyr of lost causes”. Introducing new symbolic objects and related practices of ritual action, within a few decades the advertisement came to foster a lifestyle that can bridge the gap “anomic” of American society. A universe of meaning invested the entire territory. The objects in it held a central function. Since the thirties, with the supermarket, and the fifties, with the shopping center, other areas became available to the collective practice of consumerism, directing consumer bodies in consumerism fences. Meanwhile the radio before, and television. then, they provided new immaterial space for the representation of objects of consumption and of behavior associated with them.

Through the media it also initiated a new dramatization of society. The bourgeois theater, the epic or folk theater, were gradually replaced by the consumer comedy, soap opera, created to dispose souls to the domestic practices of purification of the house. The new mythologies staged by the comedy “advertising” dictated the time and the performance of new ways of social behavior, the new discipline of bodies. For the first time, evil, sin, desire and also love were used to stimulate bodies and minds to the fulfillment of a new ritual order: consumerism.

In this sense, the supermarket was the first “consumer temple”, a place in which objects could receive attention and adoration, showing all their magic and incantatory power (Vincenzo, 2014). This is how, together with the overwhelming development of places of consumption, matured in professional circles and intellectuals also the awareness of the symbolic value of the objects and ritual behaviors. Horace Miner, an anthropologist who has also taught in Africa and South America, wrote in 1956 an article devoted to “Body Ritual among the Nacirema” (*American* inverse word), where US daily life was seen through the lens of anthropology tribal. For the first time, albeit ironically, it was reflected on the marble sanctuary of modern houses - the bathroom - which took place in the complicated rituals of purification that invested the private parts of the body, mouth, face and hair. Miner described in the same terms that the rituals were carried out at the houses - the hairdresser, in hospitals, psychoanalyst - as well as the many celebrations that always had as a central reference in the body. After observing that “there are ritual fasts to make fat people thin and ceremonial feasts to make thin people fat” (Miner, 1956: 507), he concluded:

Our review of the ritual life of the Nacirema has certainly shown them to be a magic-ridden people. It is hard to understand how they have managed to exist so long under the burdens which they have imposed upon themselves. But even such exotic customs as these take on real meaning when they are viewed with the insight provided by Malinowski when he wrote: “Looking from far and above, from our high places of safety in the developed civilization, it is easy to see all the crudity and irrelevance of magic. But without its power and guidance early man could not have mastered his practical difficulties as he has done, nor could man have advanced to the higher stages of civilization” (Malinowski, 1948: 70).



After publishing *The Mechanical Bride* (1951), in 1953 Marshall McLuhan wrote for the Catholic journal *The Commonweal* a little-known article in the emblematic title: *The age of advertising: ads are a form of magic came to dominate a new civilization*. Ten years later, the Highway Beautification Act (1965) would have prohibited the advertising boards at a distance of 200 meters from the motorway network, helping to make it less intrusive advertising presence at least outside urban areas. But the magic-ritual role of advertising would not have come unless, indeed. One of the more detailed sociological analysis of advertising communication, coordinated by William Leiss, a Canadian scholar as McLuhan, used a quadripartite evolution advertising segmentation. The first phase of the *reason why* admitted to purchasing the product would soon be overcome to move to the aid suggestion *white magic* of the Product, to which would be added the *black magic* of Human testimonial, up to the real *Totemism*, with which the objects of worship became magical emblems of entire social groups (Leiss, 2005; Vincenzo, 2014: 132 ff.).

But the commercial materialism had a degrading effect on the symbolic value of the objects. The symbolic contents were increasingly reified, more and more “flat”, the effect of advertising was always more “short.” The increasing stimulation of the bodies and invasion of the territory involved symbolic saturation and the risk of decreased efficacy of the communication. Even the model of mass consumerism - the subject of the best-selling novel *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit* by Sloan Wilson (1955) - showed its limits. The advertisement had invaded all the physical spaces. At the end of the fifties it was entered in the first phase of advertising saturation. To keep alive the modern symbolism was needed a “re-enchantment”. A creative revolution he helped to renew interest in advertising, guiding consumers towards a more complex universe of desires and objects. Bill Bernbach, perhaps the greatest of the twentieth century advertising, institutionalized creative tandem of the art director and copywriter. He also initiated a revision of the symbolic content, and spread much the set of images and concepts to be attached to business objects. The new advertising campaigns emphasized the aesthetics of the little things, the ethics of the companies who were second in their markets, and above all the irony, also applied to two “untouchable” status symbols like cars and the female body.

The reversal of the “totemic” fundamentals of consumerism practiced by the “creative revolution” had a meaning similar to the carnival rituals in traditional cultures. In the latter it was practiced the ritual inversion of the traditional symbols in order to channel the aversion towards the same and dissolve it. The carnival was operating the symbolic death and resurrection of the order of things. Creative advertising would practice the reversal of the symbols of consumerism - *Think Small, We are only #2 so We try harder* - to entertain and cheer the consumer and renew the language of advertising.

Even the obsessive use of the laugh track in radio and television broadcasts can be seen in a similar prospect of exhaustion and symbolic renewal. Many of the early radio and television broadcasts were live, and also recording the reactions of the public. Following the laughter would be recorded separately. During the fifties, however, he made an impromptu use, as long as the CBS television network in 1965 started a specific experiment. The pilot episode of the comedy *Hogan's Heroes* (1965-1972) was presented in some places with the addition of canned laughter, in other not.



The series narrated the everyday life of a group of prisoners (French, American and English) in a Nazi camp during World War II. The attitude was deeply ironic: the German camp commander was a stupid and inept man, and the prisoners came and went from the field, making a mockery of the Nazis. The purpose of the transfer was to soften the horrors of war, and in some way to vent the anti-war sentiment of Americans. The vision of the play with the laughter was a success. Since then the CBS widely used the laugh track in its broadcasts. *Hogan's Heroes* success would inspire similar creations, such as *M\*A\*S\*H*, the Robert Altman film of 1970, and who would follow the eponymous television series of great success, lasting from 1972 to 1983. The contagious laughter of TV programs became one of the ways to prepare the vision of commercial breaks.

The American advertising creative revolution revived advertising itself, its symbolic communication capabilities and its penetration. and refined society. Consequently it made it possible to produce longer-lasting effects on lifestyles. Meanwhile the media depended more and more completely by advertising. To the point that the structure of many forms of mass entertainment absorbed the mentality and needs of advertising and commercial world that it expressed. If a TV program is to make audience means it is because it must reach the widest target advertising and targeted, taking it away from the competition.

In the late sixties, advertising was a mature tool that could operate throughout the world and in any field. It was not concerned with more than just the sale of mere objects. In 1964 even the Spanish dictator Francisco Franco asked the McCann Erickson agency to take care of its image in the United States. The publicity had settled permanently in the political arena and also took care of social and cultural promotion. It financed not only the media, but also schools and universities. He had not only helped to replace the Keynesian theories from economic landscape, but had become a tool of support for neo-liberal theories in every political and social spheres. He was able to provide a symbolic representation of the life and routine ritual of mass man, as he could afford to reach the most demanding and sophisticated niche consumers. The exaggerated individualism (even when cloaked altruism), the exaltation of life an end in itself, the worship of money as the key to any success flowed into the philosophy of "vitalism" and became the basis of a modern Epicurean, of an American way of life regarded as the most advanced form of civilization. It was noted that vitalism is the expression and character of modern communication (Perniola, 2004). Behind the exaltation of the freedom of life he is also concealed the neoliberal idea of "liberation" from all state constraints was the premise of "globalization".

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exaggerated individualism (although it is cloaked in altruism), the exaltation of life as an end in itself, the worship of money as the key to any success, all these flowed into the philosophy of “vitalism”. A philosophy of “freedom of life” that became the basis of a modern Epicureanism, of an *American way of life* regarded as the most advanced form of civilization. It was noted that vitalism is the expression and character of modern communication (Perniola, 2004). Behind the exaltation of the freedom of life, vitalism also concealed the neoliberal idea of “liberation” from all state constraints: it was the premise of “globalization”.

After the seventies, advertising expenses increased exponentially in the United States, rising from 48.7 billion dollars in 1979 to 124.7 in 1989. From the eighties onwards, the advertising would fully globalized and multinational corporations would always invested more even in different countries of the world. A parable similar to the development of American advertising also occurred in other developed countries, although only after the war. So it was possible to assert also great advertising outside the United States, like Jacques Séguéla in France, Armando Testa and Emanuele Pirella in Italy, Charles and Maurice Saatchi in England.

During the eighties began the trend that was to lead even at the end of the advertising agency progressive, “classical” dissolving within large communications groups, in which finance was integrated with global communication. Control groups become global, not just American, but also British, French, Japanese. And the big conglomerates were themselves huge buyers of advertising space on a global scale, capable of generating financial flows and social and political conditions just operating from one country to another. Martin Sorrel, former financial director of Saatchi & Saatchi, WPP acquired in 1985, which absorbed many US agencies such as the historic J. Walter Thompson. The following year the Omnicom Group was born from the merger of US historical agencies like BBDO, DDB and the Needham Harper. In 1996 the French group Publicis acquired the American agency Leo Burnett, and in 2000 even the English agency Saatchi & Saatchi. In turn, the majority shareholder of Publicis was the Japanese group Dentsu, which in 2006 absorbed the English Aegis.

The symbolic dimension and consumerism ritual was no longer a secret, as well as the mythological function of advertising. With the advent of postmodernism was gained, in fact, even greater consideration towards the symbolic representations and forms of expression, overcoming the limitations of a purely rationalist mentality. Cultural sensitivity went hand in hand with the organization of communication. Advertising and the consumer world offered to contemporary man a large symbolic repertoire: a man could choose to bind to a symbolism connected to the profession or to his social role, or even travel to more or less “alternative venues”, inspired by the world of film, music, sport or art. He could even do all of these things together. The offer of symbolic goods had much enlarged, and the entertainment industry tended to colonize and monopolize the free time. The continuing trend was the integration between consumerism and other ritual practices. Shopping malls became playgrounds for children and even places of worship. When the church did not move in a shopping center - as it was the case in Italy - the mall moved in the churches, as in many US megachurches.



Overcome anomie, however, increased on the contrary the risk of saturation and progressive reification of symbols and rituals. In the long run even the irony and the negative approach of Bernbach were no longer effect. The advertisement had occupied all the representational space, generating saturation and alienation. Step by step, it had gradually moved from a anomic world in an alienated world in which man by dint of being involved in exhausting “role play” in the end he felt “alien”.

The concept of alienation is intimately linked to that of anomie. It seemed an obsolete term, but recently has recovered scientific dignity thanks to the German scholar Rahel Jaeggi, who referred to it as the impossibility of identifying significantly with things and people around us (Jaeggi, 2005). From the point of view of “ritual order” - research project in which we are devoting intense - if anomie is connected to a vacuum, the alienation is linked to an abnormal ritual density, saturation and estrangement. In this sense the alienation can be caused by excessive ritualism, as often happens in the world of work - in Japan the term *karoshi* means death from overwork - and, indeed, in the world of consumer representations. In the most general sense the alienation is caused by all those situations in which it is realized a lack of consistency between the symbols and rituals “outside”, and the system of “internal” values of the people, as happens in prisons, where extreme ritualization and the rigid time schedule is “forced” and alienating for prisoners.

The alienated man is lazy, distracted, always looking for something different on which to dump their attention, on which imbuing life, desires, dreams. He is a man devoted to change, social transformation, even violent if you do not find ways out of the small “fence” where he feels to live. He may feel momentarily happy on a personal level, but he will never be totally balanced if he do not feel attuned, at least in part, to the symbolic order and the society rituals.

Advertising has contributed decisively to saturate the human imagination with symbols and rituals of consumption. During the twentieth century, advertising has developed myths and narratives that accompanied the modern man from a state to an alienated anomic condition. If at first the man has taken refuge from the desert ritual of metropolitan life in consumer rituals, the excess of consumerism has generated a form of aversion. But the latter was addressed by the same advertising towards new symbolic systems and “lifestyles.” Caught between anomie and alienation, the twentieth century man has become a “nomadic ritual”, constantly in search of new territories symbolic in which to settle.

Since the eighties there has been the increasing segmentation and fragmentation of the consumer market, the continuous formation of niches that address the lifestyles of new consumer groups. The opportunity of market niches has been seized upon by manufacturers, who have completely revised the production cycles. Motorola, in those years, reduced production time from five hours to twenty minutes and shortened the processing times of an order from one month to one and a half. Soon it would arrive at a new kind of community, the “community of interest” (Rifkin, 2000). The progressive “totemification” and consumers tribalisation were signals of the new social alienation and of the escape towards new collective rituals (Maffesoli, 2000).

Once totally saturated the physical space and ether, the new capitalism had to invent something even more radical, a new space, a new way of communicating: the digital world. At the end of



the century we have seen the progressive integration between advertising and other industries, especially computer technology and entertainment industry, but also contemporary art and literature. Creativity and innovation have moved away from “classical” advertising to pour in the new “spaces”, whose languages were increasingly structured on the advertising model.

The big communications companies had to intercept the tastes of an alienated consumer who was trying to escape the reification of the material world and migrated more and more willingly into the digital world. The new tribes had to be chased and “captured.” It was necessary to probe deeply their daily lives to find spaces in which to place the new symbolic contents, the new products. In 2007, BBDO (which is part of Omnicom Group) realized *Ritual Masters*, an investigation into the daily rituals in the global world. This was the largest research ever carried out by the agency, with more than 6,000 questionnaires distributed in 28 countries and over 2,500 hours of documented behaviors and interpreted thanks to teams of psychologists, sociologists and nutritionists. Eventually the BBDO identified five key rituals of modern man - from when we wake up to when we go to bed at night - and the ways to be able to graft new consumer behaviors. The final report distinguish correctly between rituals and habits, and regarded the latter as automatic actions without symbolic significance. *Ritual Masters* identified the chains of ritual actions and their index of consistency in the various countries. It also highlighted how consumer items were fundamental elements of many ritual actions. The brands that they wanted to survive they had to settle in what were defined as *Fortress Rituals*, while those who remained outside or perished, or had to find gaps to be able to enter (BBDO, 2007).

In the XXI century it was stated a new model of man, more instinctive than reflective, accustomed to receiving stimuli that last a few seconds and to spend more time with television and commercial endorsements characters rather than in interpersonal relationships. They are men who live in cyberspace and are accustomed to hyper-real events and consider themselves players rather than workers. They are less interested in owning material goods and more likely to live exciting and fun experiences. These new men:

They think the world as a stage and at life as a series of theatrical performances (Rifkin, 2000: 250).

In 2013 Omnicom Group Inc. and Publicis announced their merger, which would create the first worldwide advertising group, worth \$ 35 billion. The group would be able to counter the development of new major players in the digital world, Google and Facebook. In May 2014, the project ran aground. And Google and Facebook were left with no real rivals.

In the digital age the customization of advertising has reached previously unimaginable levels. Millions, billions of users type search paths or posting their favorite images. In doing so spontaneously they poured into the databases of search engines and social networks a huge amount of socially relevant data. All information is indicative of ideas, tastes, preferences, attitudes, behaviors. Currently, there are 3.2 billion web visitors, almost half the world’s population. Every minute users put more than 4 million likes on Facebook (they were only 1.8 in 2013). Google makes every day about 5 billion searches with which people express their strategies of thought, their professionalism



and their curiosity. The company's most used Web search engine in 2012 has put online a site - <https://www.google.com/about/datacenters/gallery/index.html#/> - where you can see the images of eight data centers in which they store search information. Have modern facilities and gigantic, more than 10,000 square meters each, with huge storage capacity, difficult even to conceive, and an artificial intelligence that can challenge and keep in awe the human.

The data are simply not stored, but are immediately used for advertising. The moment where internet users show their preference, the information is sold to companies that can realize display campaigns through banners that appear on web pages and can be purchased in bulk through platforms of Real Time Bidding. Google and Facebook are now major advertising agencies. They, like the first agencies, operate primarily for the sale and brokerage of advertising space. The canonical forms of advertising tend to dissolve in the new digital spaces and break up into a myriad of variants, each one suited to a specific target. The same network users are the ones who provide the basis of these variants. The language of the network, in fact, matches the advertising, with the union of slogans and images. For dialogue on social, users need to develop their thoughts and their actions according to the techniques of advertising.

The advertising is thus presented as the tip of the iceberg of a complete redefinition of power relations. A power in the hands of a few private. Member States do not seem to have noticed, in fact, that what was developing before their eyes is a new civilization, a new hierarchy system. And they are made to be caught unprepared. The internal regulation of the states, established by democratic processes, has been replaced by self-market adjustments, which actually correspond to the symbolic manipulations of that small group of companies that monitor the web data. The new capitalism, in fact, is characterized by a new hierarchy of gatekeepers and symbolic manipulators (Reich, 1992).

The self-regulating mechanisms (the market to decide the host of driver or quality) are more effective than laws, then you might as well get rid of them. "When we built really be able to self-correct systems", assures the well-known investor Fred Wilson of venture capital, "we will not need regulatory mechanisms." To do this just to saturate the society of feedback mechanisms, ie qualitative assessments provided continuously by market players: the views and comments of the users. The digitization of everyday life combined greed produced by financialization portends the transformation of the whole genome as the bedroom in a productive asset (Evgeny Morozov, *Le Monde Diplomatique*, 08/30/2014).

In 2016 in America investment in digital advertising has got to be for the first time equal to that of television advertising. Someone spoke at length about the "death of advertising", but instead the advertisement itself was only changing the skin. The way we communicate via the web, the interrelation on social media, the whole digital culture - and thus the world of politics or economics - are now marked by the language of advertising and its philosophy. The very recent American elections are believed, rightly or wrongly, that they have been conditioned by social networks.

The "advertising thought" increasingly takes possession of the network, determines its technological and cultural developments, and involves a new type of social action. Along with the omnipresent logic of the algorithms, we are witnessing today the reaffirmation of a rationalism which



was thought defeated and the advent of artificial intelligence biopolitics (and who controls it). The fortune of a group like Amazon - the largest seller of net with over 73 billion turnover in 2015 - is not only based on the logistics capacity sell books online and other products and distribute them in the territory. The research information that users enter in the system are able to define consumer preferences so that Amazon can “learn” the next book that you will read or the next appliance that will buy. The “tips” for purchases are not just advertising, but the embodiment of desires and consumer fantasies, processed and made available by the system of search algorithms, made available by its “artificial intelligence.”

As to the origins of modern advertising, the new consumption cycle started from the inside of the body - thoughts, desires, research - and then developed outside through the stories told by selfies, by post and the like. The next step will be to fill the space of cyber objects: the so-called “Internet of Things” (IoT). Thanks to a declining cost of digital sensors, we can have jams that “speak” with our refrigerators to report the level of consumption, and indicate the need for new supply, giving at the same time companies with valuable information in real time on our daily consumption, on our food supply, our regular suppliers. At the same time become increasingly fashionable new digital watches - sophisticated heart rate monitors - that are capable of transmitting to the companies together to pulsations also consumer emotions, maybe just when are pinpointed within a particular store in which are exposed the latest collections of objects offered for sale. It is estimated that in 2020 there will be about 25 billion objects connected to the network, except for PCs, smartphones, etc. (De Angelis, Acabbi 2016).

To cope with the increasing saturation of cyberspace, the digital capitalism will try to further broaden the frontiers of experience, and looked forward to developing new forms of participation and gamification. Always in 2016 it was founded the Global Virtual Reality Association (GVRA), an association to promote the development of virtual reality built by giants like Google, Facebook, HTC, Acer Starbreeze, Samsung and Sony. The aim is to take possession of a new market that seems sufficient in 2026 at least 36 billiards of sales volume.

We thus entered the last of the five daily rituals identified by Ritual Masters of BBDO: looking up (looking ahead). However, a future without history is likely to be a sad story. So we can afford a look forward.

Marx had already recognized as the alienation was one of the great engines of social change. He had considered the alienation only under the ownership of the means of production. Today a greater consideration of the order ritual allows to consider it in the wider horizon of symbolic practices of the society. The alienation brings with it a feeling of revolt, is intimately revolutionary, and still creates a separation between man and society, which can also be very stimulating from an intellectual. Many artists and intellectuals can be placed within the more general social type alienated.

If we consider the symbolic progression of a society as a great Game of the Goose, the alienated human research may be forward, towards new balances symbolic, but also backwards, retracing “boxes” that you thought outdated and forgotten. In the age of digital photography, the “tribes” of LOMOGRAPHY rediscovers analog photography based on the effects of an old Soviet machine. Or, while you download thousands of hours of music from iTunes, an increasingly large



group of loyal collectors vinyl LPs and uses pins and heads of old turntable. With the progress of the digital world, the audience of TV erodes but does not implode. This apparent “turning back” in reality is of fundamental importance in understanding and elaboration of symbolic elements of a culture.

The cultural industry has understood this very well: a global musical show as the MDNA Tour (2012), ninth tour of the icon pop singer Madonna, was completely focused on the combination of symbolic elements. The show opened with Tibetan monks who played the *dungchen* horn, while a huge censer waved on stage. The large screen in the background projected the image of a Gothic cathedral that was alternated with Baroque iconographic images, celestial and infernal. Madonna appeared as a bride dressed in black, in front of a *prie-dieu*, holding a Kalashnikov machine gun. And it's just a few details of the first minutes of the show.

The immense Goose Game which will be played in the future, more people will feel alienated and will choose to leave the timeline forward or backward. Not all can always be intercepted by the capitalist system of large corporations. It is now increasingly clear that this is an exclusive club that brings in only a small number of global players. In a world where the wealth will be increasingly in the hands of 1% of the population, many people will have the opportunity to understand that you can live, and better, by ex-consumerist. Many entrepreneurs excluded from the global club will understand they can not compete in terms of quantity, but in quality, stimulating the development of a “social economy”. Many young advertisers - excluded from a standardized system that is increasingly dependent on artificial intelligence - could be the standard-bearers of a movement that re-articulated and rediscovers old and new value systems, putting in short-circuit the hegemony of the corporations. Many artists and intellectuals, rather than seek recognition among the architects of an increasingly alienated world, will begin to understand that the Game of the Goose can be redefined, as well as understanding of the individual boxes and rules for “time warp”:

What the intellectual can do is give analysis tools, and this is essentially the role of the historian. It is in fact to have a thick of this perception, of long duration, which allows to identify where the fragility of lines, where the strong points, what are related to the powers - on the basis of an organization which now has more than hundred and fifty ‘ years - where they are implanted. In other words make a topographic and geological survey of the battle. This is the role of the intellectual (Foucault, 1977: 144).

The Internet will continue to be a terrific way to acquire knowledge and to exchange ideas. With the knowledge of being “observed.” But maybe the total control of bodies and minds is not yet realized. And we hope we can make it ever.



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