

Dialogism in Advertising Persuasion / *Dialogia na persuasão* “publicitária”

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ABSTRACT

This article analyzes two advertisements from the same brand, but produced in different local media: France and Brazil. It aims to pursue the interrelation and nexus needed between the verbal, visual and extraverbal dimensions to produce and understand the effects of persuasive sense. Concepts from ancient and modern Rhetoric, as well as dialogic discourse analysis notions and categories, inspired in the works of Bakhtin and the Circle, are the article's theoretical-methodological basis. In the chosen advertisements, we observe the tense way they reflect and refract reality and how this is expressed in concrete utterances, constructed according to genre coercions. By analyzing the produced meaning effects, we especially highlight the presence of persuasion in different dialogic relationships allowed by the texts, audience importance in effect construction of text persuasive meaning, and proximity between advertisement and epideictic genre in ancient rhetoric. Persuasive dialogic relationships express broad and different spheres of human activity, in connection with the organization of social life, space and time; in fact, they are not aimed at product purchase, but at access to a way of life, which is linked to ideological values of privilege.

KEYWORDS: Rhetoric; the Bakhtin Circle; Speech genres; Advertisement; Values

RESUMO

Este artigo analisa duas publicidades da mesma marca, produzidas em mídias locais diferentes: França e Brasil. Seu objetivo é a busca da inter-relação e do nexo necessários entre o verbal, o visual e o extraverbal na produção e compreensão dos efeitos de sentido persuasivos. Como fundamentação teórico-metodológica são utilizados conceitos da antiga e da nova Retórica, aliados a noções e categorias advindas da análise dialógica do discurso, de inspiração na obra de Bakhtin e do Círculo. Nas publicidades selecionadas, observamos o modo como refletem e refratam a realidade de forma tensa e como isso se expressa nos enunciados concretos, a partir das coerções do gênero. Na análise dos efeitos de sentidos neles produzidos, destacamos, especialmente, a presença da persuasão nas diferentes relações dialógicas que os textos permitem, a importância do auditório na construção dos efeitos de sentido persuasivos dos textos e a proximidade do gênero com o gênero epideítico da antiga retórica. A construção persuasiva expressa-se nas relações dialógicas entre amplas e diferentes esferas da atividade humana, em conexão com a organização da vida social, o espaço e o tempo, e dirige-se não propriamente à aquisição de um produto, mas à adesão a um modo de vida próprio, ligado aos valores ideológicos do privilégio.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Retórica; Círculo de Bakhtin; Gênero do discurso; Publicidade; Valores

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The man who has managed to blend profit with delight wins everyone's approbation, for he gives his reader pleasure at the same time as he instructs him.

Horace

Form should be a convincing evaluation of the content.

V. N. Voloshinov

Introduction

Ancient rhetoric divided discourse into deliberative, legal and epideictic dimensions, each one with its objective, its basic argument and audience. All of them presupposed an evaluation: Deliberative discourse dealt with what was useful or damaging to the city's interests; legal discourse was concerned with what was fair or unfair in citizens' accusation or defense; and epideictic discourse praised or censored men and their deeds, evaluating them as good or bad, beautiful or ugly.

It is well-known that these three genres are active in contemporary society. Even the epideictic discourse, used in Ancient times to praise heroes, memorable deeds and war actions, is still very much in use, for instance, in discourses delivered in Brazilian city, state and federal chambers whenever a citizen is honored, receives an award or takes up office, etc. Nevertheless, it is not only on these occasions that we are in touch with epideictic discourse. We can state that this kind of discourse is used in advertising to the extent that the latter has the purpose of praising the properties of a specific product, even if the ultimate aim of advertising discourse is to create a mood for the consumer to buy the product because he or she has been persuaded about its virtues.

In fact, Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1969), in their famous *The New Rhetoric: A Treatise on Argumentation*, clarify fundamental functions of epideictic discourse: These discourses deal with *values* – “the speaker tries to establish a sense of communion around particular values recognized by the audience” (p.56). In the authors' words, “the argumentation in epideictic discourse sets out to increase the intensity of adherence to certain values, which might not be contested when considered on their own but may nevertheless not prevail against other values that might come into conflict with them” (p.51). Thus, they claim that epideictic discourse is really close to educational discourse, which is founded on socially shared values (cf. p.48-55).

Regardless of classifying advertising discourse according to classical rhetoric, we can undoubtedly observe its social, cultural and historical insertion, while pertaining to “relatively stable” genres, reflecting specific conditions and aims, which are related to the sphere of human activity in which they manifest themselves, presenting composition, thematic content and their own style (BAKHTIN, 1986a, p.60-61). These brief references to genres – from yesterday and today, in reality, introduces the two theoretical frameworks, on which this article is based, whose aim is to show how persuasion is built on advertising utterances of a product, presented similarly in Brazil and in France, as well as the importance of the interlocutor in the constituency of these same advertising campaigns.

The use of Aristotelian rhetoric – “the faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion” (ARISTOTLE, *Rhetoric*, 1356a) – and its contemporary interpretations is quite common in the area of communication (advertising), being applied in discourse production not only in its verbal aspects, but also in the visual ones, since we all know the important role that images play in advertising. In this article, images will also be useful in the analysis and understanding of how the chosen advertising discourse persuades the consumer. However, undoubtedly, joining rhetoric and notions of what has been named *dialogic discourse analysis*, inspired by the works of Mikhail Bakhtin and the Circle, will help us understand these advertisements more profoundly. From the works of Bakhtin, we initially highlight two aspects: Its fundamental notion – *dialogism*, intrinsic in every discourse, and the theoretical-methodological basis for analysis (VOLOŠINOV, 1973, p.95-96; BAKHTIN, 1999, p.181-204).

In our analysis, we were able to verify the *dialogues* that constitute sense effects, in active responsive understandings loaded with values of two advertisements from the same brand - *Louis Vuitton*, produced in France and in Brazil. The dialogues between the different ideological spheres are responsible for the effects of *persuasive* sense, in the discourse production mode, circulation and reception. Thus, the objectives of our analysis will be to recognize the nexus and the interrelation needed between the verbal, visual and extraverbal of concrete utterances; to identify and highlight the dialogic relationships produced discursively between broad and different ideological spheres, in connection with the organization of social life, time and space, to understand the

advertisement text; and to highlight the role of the receptor / reader in the production, reception and circulation of the advertisement text. After a brief presentation of the theoretical contribution and generic coercions of advertisement discourse, an analysis will be presented. Finally, our closing remarks aim to highlight the relevant social aspects that enable us to understand advertisement discourse.

Verbal-visuality, Bakhtinian Thoughts and Rhetoric

In this section, we introduce our theoretical framework, first justifying the reasons why we consider discourse theory, found in the works of Bakhtin and the Circle, suitable for the analysis of verbal-visuality in the advertising utterances selected, besides clarifying the theoretical-methodological basis of what is known as *dialogic discourse analysis*. *Dialogic* because it is based upon the notion of *dialogism* – dialogue in a broad sense, taking into account that every discourse always responds to something, either by refuting, agreeing, anticipating possible responses from the other speaker, seeking support, or even by answering to oneself in inner deliberation, etc. – one of the most important forms of verbal interaction (verbal interaction, “the actual reality of language-speech” (VOLOŠINOV, 1973, p.94-95)). It is a well-known and accepted notion in language studies, although not always with the consequences that derive from its insertion in Bakhtinian theory as a whole.

In fact, we know that the works of the Circle, which, in the beginning, seemed more prone to literary studies according to scholars, are widely understood today as the creators of notions and concepts for language analysis – actually, to language, broadly speaking, in every mode of expression. This is very clear, for example, when Mikhail Bakhtin, in dealing with Dostoyevsky’s poetry, writes a chapter on Dostoyevskian discourse and proposes to analyze it through a theory that would be named “metalinguistics”: It would be superior to Linguistics in the sense that it would include the extralinguistic component, dealing with language in its “concrete and living” reality, but including it. He then announces that he will deal with dialogic relationships which, “although belonging to the realm of the *word*, do not belong to the realm of its purely linguistic study” (BAKHTIN, 1999, p.182; emphasis in original). They are “extralinguistic. But at the same time they must not be separated from the realm of

discourse, that is, from language as a concrete integral phenomenon” (p.182; emphasis in original). Later on, in the chapter, he states that these relationships “are also possible among different intelligent phenomena, provided that these phenomena are expressed in some *semiotic* material. Dialogic relationships are possible, for example, among images belonging to different art forms. But such relationships already exceed the limits of metalinguistics” (1999, p.184-185; emphasis in original).

Let us look at the term “semiotic material” and, at the same time, go back to another work of the Circle, *Marxism and Philosophy of Language (MPL)* [1929], with disputed signature by Bakhtin/Voloshinov. There we learn that the reality of a word – *ideological* phenomenon par excellence (1973, p.13) – is its sign function, and that *ideological signs* reflect and refract reality. Moreover, each ideological sphere has its own way to reflect and refract reality (p.10), and this is due to the semiotic characteristic of signs, “that places all ideological phenomena under the same general definition” (p.11). Hence, dialogic relationships that occur between phenomena expressed in any semiotic material can occur between words and images of different spheres of ideological creativity. In fact, “all manifestations of ideological creativity – all other nonverbal signs – are bathed by, suspended in, and cannot be entirely segregated or divorced from the element of speech” (1973, p.15).

In fact, *dialogue between discourses* from different modalities – verbal, visual and verbal-visual, is also present, in a broad sense, in other texts from the Circle. In *The Problem of the Text in Linguistics, Philology, and the Human Sciences: An Experiment in Philosophical Analysis* (1986b, p.103), we can find the definition of “text in the broad sense – as any coherent complex of signs” (p.103), which are ideological, we add, based on the teachings from *Marxism and Philosophy of Language* (1973, p.09-15).¹ Bakhtin adds that “the study of art (the study of music, the theory and history of fine arts) deals with texts (works of art). Thoughts about thoughts, experiences of experiences, words about words, and texts about texts” (1986b, p.103). The same reference to composition of utterances by words and images is also found in *Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity*, written by Mikhail Bakhtin between 1924 and 1927² and

¹ Cf. Brait, 2012, p.9-29; Faraco, 2009, p.45-97.

² In the English translation, it is mentioned that the probable period during which this essay was written is from 1920 to 1923. Cf. still Brait, 2009, p.10; Sobral, 2009, p.169-170.

Bakhtiniana, São Paulo, 9 (1): 157-176, Jan./Jul. 2014.

published in 1979.³ Dealing with “The Spatial Whole of the Hero and His World in Verbal Art: The Theory of Horizon and Environment,” Bakhtin states that

the aesthetic object is many-sided and *concrete* nevertheless – as many-sided and concrete as that cognitive-ethical reality (the “lived” or experienced world) which is justified and consummated in it artistically. This world, moreover – the world consummated in the aesthetic object - achieves the highest degree of concreteness and many-sidedness in *verbal* creation (it is least concrete and many-sided in music). (...) The aesthetic object itself, however – the object imaged through the words – consists not of words alone, of course, even if it includes a great deal that is purely verbal. And this *object of aesthetic vision* has an artistically valid *inner spatial form* which is imaged through the words of a given work (whereas in painting it is imaged through colors, and in drawing – through lines, and, once again, it does not follow that the aesthetic object consists here of nothing but lines or colors; the whole point is that a concrete object is to be produced out of such lines and colors) (1990, p.93-94; emphasis in original).

Furthermore, we highlight that, in this article, we will seek dialogic relationships in concrete utterances, which, within the realm of expression, articulate words and images. Concerning *dialogic relationships*, it is important to emphasize that they occur between positions. In Bakhtin’s words on this matter:

(...) logical and semantically referential relationships, in order to become dialogic, must be embodied, that is, they must enter another sphere of existence: They must become *discourse*, that is, an utterance, and receive an *author*, that is, a creator of the given utterance whose position it expresses (1999, p.184; emphasis in original).

So far, we have dealt with spheres of human activity or ideological spheres. In the advertisements in question, the dialogic relationships occur not only between text and images, but also between different fields of activities. Sphere or field of human activity, depending on the translation, is among the key concepts formulated by the members of the Bakhtin Circle; in the group’s work, it also appears as *sphere of discursive communication*, or of *ideological creativity*, or of *language use*, or simply of

³ In Brazil, it is included in *Estética da criação verbal*, translated by Paulo Bezerra; in the previous translation, by Maria Ermantina Galvão G. Pereira, the essay’s title was *O autor e o herói*.

*ideology*⁴ (cf. GRILLO, 2008, p.134). Ideology, according to VOLOŠINOV (2010, p.533), expresses itself not only in verbal material, because “by ideology we have in mind the whole totality of the *reflexions and refractions in the human brain* of social and natural reality, as it is expressed and fixed by man in word, drawing, diagram or other form of *sign*” (emphasis in original).⁵ Thus, even if each of the spheres has its own way of facing reality, the meaning of concrete utterances occurs from the dialogue between them, as we will see later on, in the different modalities in which they express themselves:

understanding is a response to a sign with signs. And this chain of ideological creativity and understanding, moving from sign to sign and then to a new sign, is perfectly consistent and continuous: from one link of semiotic nature (hence, also of a material nature), we proceed uninterruptedly to another link of exactly the same nature (VOLOŠINOV, 1973, p.11).

Therefore, as seen previously, the dialogic discourse theory will enable us to understand verbal-visuality in advertising texts more profoundly, since these advertisements were considered concrete utterances, in which pictures and texts build the meaning effects of discourses and are observed as a unique graphic project, “to be analyzed within the specificities of the expression plan and of the sphere in which it circulates, produced by a subject that signs and mobilizes historical, social and cultural discourses, constituting the utterance while building itself” (BRAIT, 2009, p.56).⁶

Actually, the works of the Bakhtin Circle do not ascribe themselves as a methodological-analytical and theoretical framework.⁷ Nevertheless, as mentioned in

⁴ “Ideology” is related to the spheres of non-material culture (FARACO, 2009, p.47), according to the examples frequently seen when this term is used in Bakhtin’s works: “studies of scientific knowledge, literature, religion, ethics, and so forth...” (VOLOŠINOV, 1973, p.9).

⁵ French translation: *Par ideologie, nous comprenons tout l'ensemble de reflets et de réfractions dans le cerveau humain de la réalité sociale et naturelle, exprimé et fixé par lui sous forme verbale, de dessin, croquis ou toute autre forme sémiotique.*

⁶ In the original: “analisável dentro das especificidades do plano da expressão e da esfera em que circula, produzido por um sujeito que assina e mobiliza discursos históricos, sociais e culturais, constituindo o enunciado ao mesmo tempo em que se constrói” (BRAIT, 2009, p.56).

⁷ Cf. Brait, 2008d, p.29: “Bakhtinian contributions for a dialogic discourse theory/analysis, without setting up a closed and linearly organized proposal, in fact consist in a body of concepts, notions and categories that specify the dialogic approach towards the discursive corpus, methodology and researcher. The importance of a dialogic perspective is given by the analysis of discursive specificities that constitute situations in which language and certain activities interpenetrate and inter-define themselves, and of the researcher’s ethical commitment to the object which, within this perspective, is a historical subject” (c.f. also Brait, 2006).

the introduction, two excerpts, in particular, clarify how we should understand and analyze a text: Firstly, the famous⁸ “pages 95-96” in *Marxism and Philosophy of Language* (1973), and secondly, the initial pages of the chapter which has already been mentioned from *Problems of Dostoyevsky’s Poetics*, The discourse in Dostoyevsky (1999, p.181-204) about Metalinguistics, with his “few preliminary remarks on methodology.” Having these remarks in mind, the dialogue with the *corpus* will guide our work, in the same way as it directs several analyses – methodologically exemplary – done by the Circle’s authors in their different works. We will follow the analysis method proposed there: We will observe firstly the selected verbal-visual concrete utterances, having in mind the “verbal interaction in connection with their concrete conditions,” and then, their relationship with the genre to which they belong - “the genres of speech performance in human behavior and ideological creativity as determined by verbal interaction,” as well as to the interlocutor at whom they are aimed and the theme with which they deal. Finally, we will focus on “the examination of language forms,” especially those that are responsible for identifying values and visions of a world in conflict, the appreciated and evaluative intonations (VOLOŠINOV, 1973, p.95-6).

To join Bakhtinian concepts to those taken from ancient and/or new rhetoric may seem strange to some, considering the several negative evaluations regarding the latter in the work of Bakhtin and the Circle. However, several works have found that such links are either possible or productive⁹ as they help us understand the way persuasion is built, especially by means of concepts such as *appreciative intonation*, *dialogism*, *double-voicedness* and *authoritarian word*, which produces hegemonic discourses. Actually, we have observed that Bakhtin’s concept of dialogue redirects the rhetoric activity of persuasion towards a wider scale of goals and objectives, highlighting that they are always situated in relation to other utterances, whose meaning is only inferred in context and the hearer/reader understanding is always active – it is the active responsive understanding, which is not released from values, either in response or in its own evaluative understanding.

Regarding rhetoric, the Aristotelian definition, transcribed previously, is one of the concepts that we will take into consideration, beside genre classification in Ancient

⁸ Translator’s note: “famous” among Bakhtinian Brazilian scholars.

⁹ BIALOSTOSKY, D. (2004a; 2004 b); ZAPPEN, 2004; PISTORI, 2013; among others.

times. At the same time, we will refer to the work of Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, who, in their *Treaty*, describe new rhetoric as “the discursive techniques allowing us to induce or to increase the mind’s adherence to the theses presented for its assent” (1969, p.4), and that contribute to the understanding of discursive technique used in advertising.

Advertising Discourse

Before analyzing the selected advertisements, it is important to understand the generic coercions of advertising discourse, as we have to observe our *corpus* in relation to the genre to which they belong (VOLOŠINOV, 1973, p.95-96). In this sense, Gomes (2001, p.111-121) clarifies that, publicity and propaganda are often confounded in the field of communication, or even seen as synonyms; this happens exclusively in Brazil. The distinction between both terms is based on a subjective interpretation, as it can be observed by looking up both entries in Aurélio’s Dictionary.¹⁰ According to Gomes, it is essential to understand them as distinct techniques, even though this can be questioned: The author states that, nowadays, publicity and propaganda do not act in isolation, and people who do publicity or propaganda are known as “advertising professionals” and belong to a greater context called “marketing.”

There are striking differences between the communication objectives of propaganda and those of publicity, both vividly related to the industrial revolution. We can state that advertising exists since the moment someone tries to convince another person to buy a product (or service), even if it is hand-crafted. However, its use becomes widespread with mass production, which yields excess output and the consequent need to sell these products, through reinforcement or the creation of new consumer habits. It is in the 19th century that advertising activity acquired its present

¹⁰ Cf. *New Dictionary of the Portuguese Language*, by Aurélio Buarque de Holanda Ferreira: *Propaganda*: 1. The act of spreading principles, ideas, knowledge or theories. 2. Society that vulgarizes certain doctrines. 3. Publicity; *Publicity*: 1. Quality of what is public [...]. 2. Feature of what is done in public [...]. 3. The art of exerting a psychological action upon the audience with commercial or political aims; propaganda [...]. 4. Poster, ad, text, etc., with advertising purposes [...]. In the original: “*Propaganda*: 1. Propagação de princípios, ideias, conhecimentos ou teorias. 2. Sociedade vulgarizadora de certas doutrinas. 3. Publicidade; *Publicidade*: 1. Qualidade do que é público [...]. 2. Caráter do que é feito em público [...]. 3. A arte de exercer uma ação psicológica sobre o público com fins comerciais ou políticos; propaganda [...]. 4. Cartaz, anúncio, texto, etc., com caráter publicitário [...].” *Bakhtiniana*, São Paulo, 9 (1): 157-176, Jan./Jul. 2014.

characteristics, circulating in the media in general, firstly in newspapers and magazines. Briefly, we can state that in advertising there is a product/service being offered massively through a campaign that is broadcast in a means of communication, with a defined sponsor. Thus, advertising comprises three elements that identify and differentiate it from other concepts: Informative capacity, persuasive strength, and commercial feature.

Differently from advertising, propaganda derives originally from the need to spread Catholic faith by *Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide*, in the 13th century; it then built up its strength as a response to the spreading of the Reform, since the 17th century. It aims to promote an idea or doctrine (religious, political, philosophical...), by means of “controlling the information flow, public opinion direction and manipulation – not necessarily in the negative sense – of behavior and, mainly, conduct models” (GOMES, 2001, p.117).¹¹ Contrary to advertising, there is no need to identify the sponsor, and it can be seen in any kind of text, disguised as information. Its three identifying and differentiating elements – informative capacity, persuasive strength and ideological feature – can be analyzed. As we can see, it is the ideological feature that distinguishes it from publicity. Considering the alluded confusion concerning these two concepts in Brazil, this distinction is particularly important in the following analysis.

Focusing on Advertisements

Louis Vuitton’s advertising campaign, from which we have selected an example in Portuguese and one in French for our analysis, was named *Journey Campaign*, a costly enterprise, composed of text and image. A global bidding process was carried out to choose the advertising agency for the campaign and, nowadays, Ogilvy & Mather Paris is responsible for this account. *Journey* became famous for depicting celebrities in relaxing moments; Pelé, Bono Vox, Mikhail Gorbachev, Francis Ford Coppola and Sofia Coppola have already posed for the campaign, and Angelina Jolie did the same last year. The series is presented in 60 countries. In the pieces we have analyzed, the American photographer Annie Leibowitz, known for her intimate portraits of

¹¹ In the original: “controle do fluxo de informação, direção da opinião pública e manipulação - não necessariamente negativa - de condutas e, sobretudo, de modelos de conduta” (GOMES, 2001, p.117).

celebrities, was responsible for the campaign photography. In 2009, Annie was awarded the *Royal Photographic Society's Centenary Medal and Honorary Fellowship (HonFRPS)*, in recognition for her significant contribution to the art of photography.

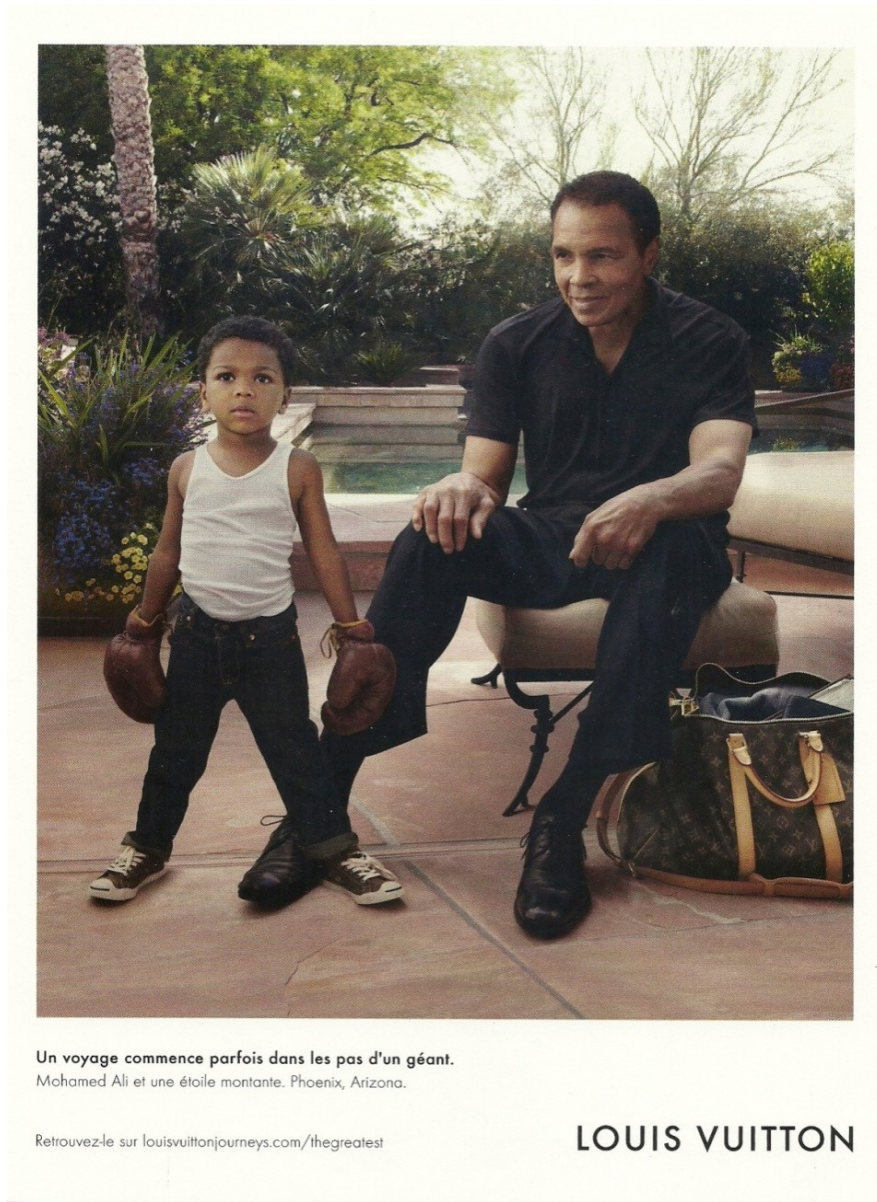


Figure 1

Let us start by describing the picture, the same in all the countries in which the campaign was run, although the sayings are different, as we will observe in the advertisements in Brazil and in France.

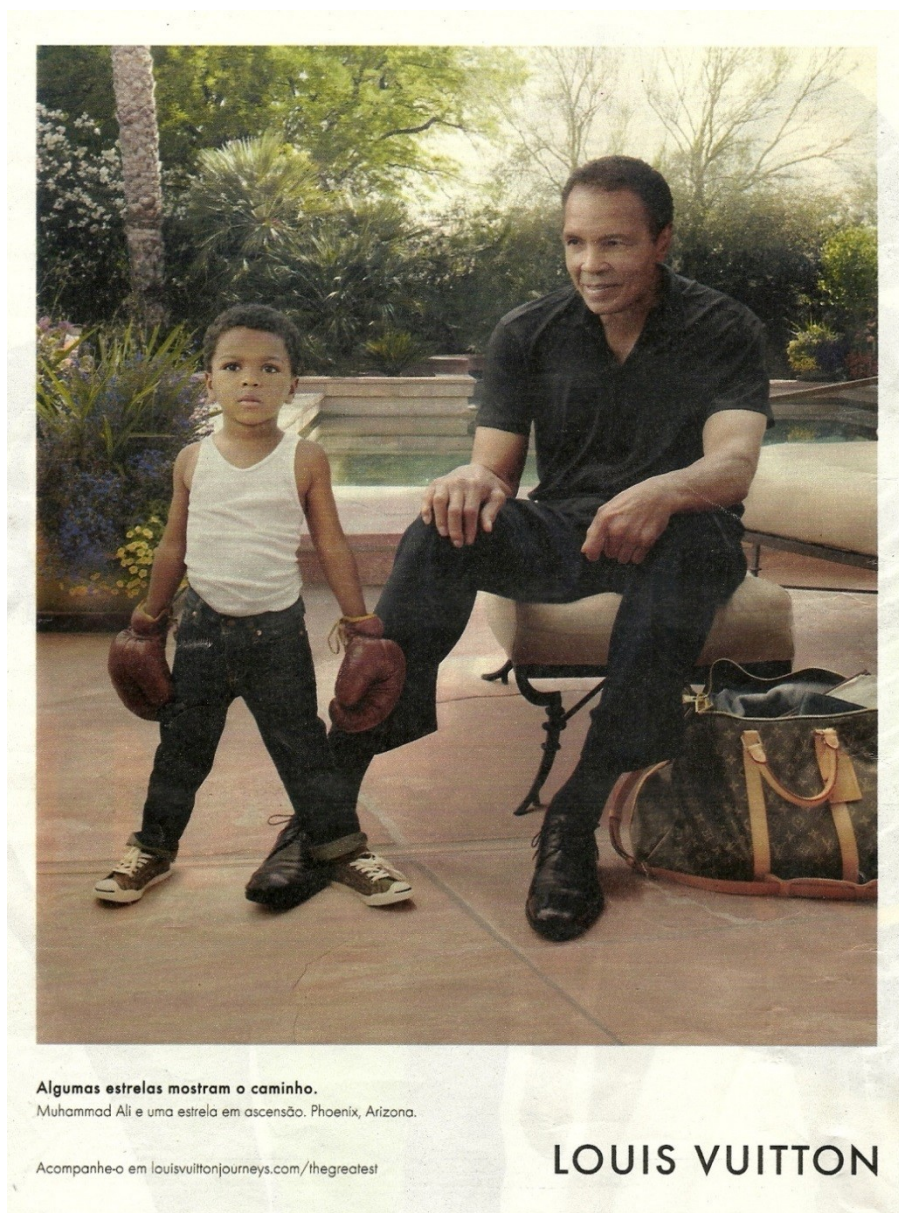


Figure 2

The colors are sober and cover a short solar spectrum: Shades of brown, black and green prevail. Black is seen in the characters' clothes: The adult wears only black, while the child, black and white. In the back, we can see green in the water, in the vegetation, and some flowers/colors to the left: Violet, pink, yellow, and white. The place is informed below – Phoenix, Arizona, and a short investigation tells us that it is the external part of the wrestler's house. Even the sky, in the back, does not render more color to the campaign. Indeed, shades of brown and beige are the brand shades that

prevail in the company's website.¹² The characters' look is the strong feature of the picture: Ali is looking forward, beyond his grandson, who is looking towards the future, with resolve and courage.

The product, also in shades of brown, beige and black – to the right, above the brand name, but in the same direction, is not the first focus of the reader. It seems to be there almost forgotten, but it is reclaimed by the term *voyage/trip* in French and *caminho/path* in Portuguese. The brand name – Louis Vuitton, shown in the bottom right corner, reappears in the same picture through the characters' feet positioning: Their feet are crossing each other and end up forming a V, a letter that is preceded by the letter L formed by the boy's upright posture. The difference is in the sayings in both languages:

*A journey sometimes begins in the footsteps of a giant.
Muhammad Ali and a rising star. Phoenix, Arizona.
Find him at <http://www.louisvuittonjourneys.com/thegreatest/>*
Fig.1¹³

*Some stars show the path.
Muhammad Ali and a rising star. Phoenix, Arizona.
Follow him at <http://www.louisvuittonjourneys.com/thegreatest/>*
Fig.2¹⁴

Let us search for the unique meaning of advertising – this set of verbal-visual images and text – connected to the intention it was created for, and related to the spatial and socio-historical context in which it circulates, a meaning that is revealed in relationship with other unique texts, called *dialogic relationships* by the Circle. Actually, various ideological spheres are dialogically involved, considering the inexhaustibility of the producer's and reader's consciousness.

In the first place, the advertising sphere: There is a product being offered massively by means of an advertising campaign in different means of communication, with a defined sponsor, Louis Vuitton. The information about the product, however, is

¹² <http://www.louisvuitton.com/front/#/dispatch>

¹³ In the original: *Un voyage commence parfois dans les pas d'un géant. Muhammad Ali et une étoile montante. Phoenix, Arizona. Retrouvez-le sur <http://www.louisvuittonjourneys.com/thegreatest/>*

¹⁴ In the original: *Algumas estrelas mostram o caminho. Muhammad Ali e uma estrela em ascensão. Phoenix, Arizona. Acompanhe-o em <http://www.louisvuittonjourneys.com/thegreatest/>*
Bakhtiniana, São Paulo, 9 (1): 157-176, Jan./Jul. 2014.

not explicitly stated since it is only shown in the picture, which makes it interesting to observe where the persuasive strength comes from for the addressee to consume it.

We are dealing with a traditional brand – the first suitcases and handbags were hand-crafted in 1854 in Paris – well-known and recognized by the quality of its luxury products. Its founder, Louis Vuitton, was born in 1821 and died in 1892. Nowadays, although it is still a family business, it belongs to a great entrepreneur group, associated with other luxury brands that compete among themselves.

This aspect of family tradition - the company that passes from father to son, can also be seen in the advertisements, in a dialogue with the ideological sphere of daily life, of lived experience, evaluative of all others: The grandfather and the grandson are there in a private environment, sharing, first of all, their admiration for *boxing*, the sport in which the eldest was successful. Regarding the product offered – a traveling bag – and the brand, on the company's website we can find that its “mission is to make trips a personal and unique experience,” which takes us to another ideological sphere, tourism. The travel spirit mentioned in the site, the bag to its right and the sayings *A journey sometimes begins in the footsteps of a giant* in French, and *Some stars show the path* in Portuguese highlight this dialogue, also seen in the campaign's own identification – *journey* (trip). As we can observe, all spheres are evoked under a very positive axiological point of view.

The journalistic sphere is given by the media that circulates the advertisements, which is always displayed full page, in wide-circulation media, with different audiences in mind, but always referring to the segments aimed at, such as *Le Monde*, *Veja*, *Caras*, airline company magazines (*Air France*)... i.e., we know that the consumer aimed at values the family and luxury; he or she likes to travel and consumes differentiated media, targeted to socially privileged sectors.

We can easily recognize the dialogue with the sports and political spheres, interlocked in the pieces of advertisement. The American boxer star Muhammad Ali-Haj, born Cassius Marcellus Clay Jr. (in Louisville, on January 17th, 1942), is worldwide known not only on account of his boxing style, but also for his political views: He was the first sportsman to join marketing and political activism, refusing to fight in the Vietnam War, for example, fighting against racism and lending his name to humanitarian causes, such as the recent propaganda for victims of the earthquake that

destroyed Haiti. The way he promoted his fights is incomparable even nowadays, according to several media outlets that were consulted, since he was able to create rivalries and enemies through humor and intelligence. In 1999, Ali was elected “The Sportsman of the Century” by the American magazine *Sports Illustrated*. His conversion to Islam was also an important and widely disclosed fact in his life, which relates the dialogue of image and sayings to political (political-ideological) and spiritual/religious/mythical spheres.

Actually, it is not only the character’s conversion to Islam that evokes the dialogue with the religious sphere (Islam, Christianity, Tao...), but the saying in both advertisements. In the French version (Fig.1), the sayings *A journey sometimes begins in the footsteps of a giant* dialogues with the book *Tao Te Ching* or *Dào Dé Jing*. *Tao*, literally translating it, means *path*, although not a physical and spiritual path only: “it is identified with the *absolute* which, divided, generated the opposite/complementary *yin* and *yang*, from which all the ten thousand things that exist in the Universe were created.”¹⁵ It is in this work that we find the statement *A journey always starts with the first step*, explicitly evoked in the advertisements. And, in this sense, it is important to mention the cultural diversity in France/Europe nowadays, in which Christianity no longer represents the predominant religion, a circumstance that has changed more recently since the migratory waves to this part of the world. Changing *toujours/always* from the original to *parfois/sometimes* justifies the giant’s step: A journey always starts with the first step, but sometimes with the step of a giant.

In the advertisement in Portuguese, the dialogue is with Christianity itself: The statement *Some stars show the way* evokes the Star of David which showed the shepherds and magi the path to Bethlehem to find Jesus. We are able to verify, on this account, that different messages are aimed at different publics: From a more homogeneous universe in religious terms – in which there is a clear predominance of Christian religions in their several branches (and even syncretism), the star of Bethlehem is evoked to a more secular society concerned with cultural diversity, in which Taoism sayings are evoked.

Furthermore, we have to mention the dialogue with the fashion sphere, and we will mention aesthetics first – the importance given to quality photography, to art

¹⁵ <http://pt.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tao> Access on: 21 June, 2013.
Bakhtiniana, São Paulo, 9 (1): 157-176, Jan./Jul. 2014.

(artistic sphere of activity...), taken by an internationally renowned professional and secondly, the colors chosen that call our attention due to their sobriety. There is no unanimity in the interpretation of the sense that colors transmit, but if we consider common sense, fashion, “psychology” and “astrology” and even art sites,¹⁶ we can find several widely accepted interpretations for the sense of colors, even recognizing, in these means of dissemination, a great scientific inaccuracy.¹⁷ In the academic environment, though, the general consensus is that human beings are psychologically influenced by colors in several ways, depending on the tone, hue, saturation or brightness. Knowledge of the effects and human responses due to exposure to colors is an extremely useful tool for designers, as well as architects, publicists, journalists, photographers, artists, set designers and for all professionals who use images and artwork to express or communicate ideas.

In general terms, the brown color, which predominates in these advertisements, is associated with land and stability. It is a color related to growing roots and the creation of solid foundations for the future. It is believed that a person who likes to wear brown is extremely dedicated and committed to his or her work, family and friends. Brown denotes organization and stability, especially in the responsibilities of daily life. Still according to fashion sites,¹⁸ “monochromatic looks always deliver a message of elegance and seem more classical; colorful looks are more informal and more creative!!” “Black and white has always been and will always be a classic combination.”¹⁹ Black is linked to mystery and phantasy and is seen nowadays as a sophisticated color related to luxury. It also means dignity. Yet, beige is a color that denotes serenity and passivity; it is related to melancholy, and it is classic. Thus, we can see that all the meanings attributed to these colors are in accordance with the brand’s values of exclusiveness found in the site – originality, *avant-garde* spirit, quality, and passion. Even the green color, used in the image, reminds us of the environment and

¹⁶ Common sense and *doxa* justify this search for the senses commonly attributed to colors on Internet sites. Regarding this topic, c.f. Barros (2012, p.81-107), in an article that deals with “colors of language”, taking into account “semiotics in the natural world” and also by googling “several sites, news, blogs about the senses of colors, from the perspective not only of Psychology, but also of Astrology, chromotherapy and others” (p.85 and next).

¹⁷ <http://www.tci.art.br/cor/publicidade.htm> Access on: 21 June, 2013.

¹⁸ <http://oficinadeestilo.com.br/blog/tag/coordenacao-de-cores/> Access on: 21 June/2013.

¹⁹ In the original: “looks monocromáticos sempre comunicam mensagem de elegância e parecem mais clássicos, looks coloridos são mais informais e mais criativos!” “Preto e branco é coordenação atestadamente clássica, desde sempre e para sempre”.

echoes values related to preservation, also embraced in the site: The 5 R's: *Renouveler/renew* (natural light in the studios, solar energy generation...), *recycler/recycle* (water and materials), *réduire/reduce* (the use of packaging – 70 tons), *revoir/revise* (our transport habits), *réparer/repair* (natural biodiversity) and philanthropy.

In dialogic relationships, as we have already seen, words and images point to objects, but they also point to other discourses. In these advertisements, by pointing to another semantically influenced discourse, there is mutual confirmation of discourses from different spheres. The sayings, related to spiritualism, - all linked to the same isotopy: *Journey*, trip, path, star, guide, ascent – reinforce the image of well-being and success, which is then linked to the brand. We can, thus, realize that in advertising the discourse is necessarily monologic: There are voices that dialogue, but the author dominates them, giving the final word. In this case, not only the product but also the idea/value that is being “sold” point to only one direction, with the same purpose, in a relationship of agreement.²⁰ In the sayings, mainly, the fusion of the author’s discourse and that of the other discourse occurs – Taoism or Christianity discourse (allied to the discourse of success – the rising star), form a *stylization*: The different discourses evoked are doubly oriented in advertising, but all of them aim at the same goal: “Stylization presupposes style: that is, it presupposes that the sum total of stylistic devices that it reproduces did at one time possess a direct and unmediated intentionality and expressed an ultimate semantic authority” (BAKHTIN, 1999, p.189). The advertising discourse orientation takes the evoked discourses, mainly those related to professional and religious ascent, “as a whole and, without changing its meaning or tone, subordinates it to its own tasks. It does not invest it with another referential meaning” (BAKHTIN, 1999, p.188). Thus, if a journey starts in the steps of a giant – Muhammad Ali, or a star shows the path – the same fighter – it is his steps that we will

²⁰ Another article by Bakhtin, which has already been mentioned here, can indicate how publicity is different from an aesthetic event as the author’s and character’s consciousnesses coincide: “An aesthetic event can take place only when there are two participants present; it presupposes two noncoinciding consciousnesses. When the hero and the author coincide or when they find themselves standing either next to one another in the face of a value they share or against one another as antagonists, the aesthetic event ends and an *ethical* event begins (polemical tract, manifesto, speech of accusation or of praise and gratitude, invective, confession as a self-accounting, etc.). When there is no hero at all, not even in a potential form, then we have to do with an event that is *cognitive* (treatise, article, lecture). And, finally, when the other consciousness is the encompassing consciousness of God, a *religious* event takes place (prayer, worship, ritual)” (1990, p.22; emphasis in original). Publicity acts as a pamphlet.

follow in our trip/life/path; we will act just like him in our fight for personal and financial success. However, as the image depicts, this success involves tenderness towards the youngest, towards family members, who, on the other hand, trust the future he portrays and also fight, wearing gloves. The fighter's authority – image of success, an experienced person, shown in the text, is transferred to the brand. There is something else. If we take Bakhtin's teachings, "authoritative discourse may organize around itself great masses of other types of discourses (which interpret it, praise it, apply it in various ways), but the authoritative discourse itself does not merge with these" (2008, p.343), we can see that persuasive strength of advertising derives from all these elements.

Final Remarks

The nexus and needed inter-relationship between the verbal, visual and extraverbal of concrete utterances that were analyzed depict the role of broad and different spheres of human activity, which, in connection with the organization of social life, space and time, enable us to understand an advertising text. Thus, different ideological spheres contribute to build the text's effect of persuasive sense. Needless to say, not every reader will identify all these different dialogic relationships produced discursively, but they are there, in "the inexhaustibility of the second consciousness, that is, consciousness of the person who understands and responds" (BAKHTIN, 1986c, p.135), even if only revealing themselves in one situation and in the sequence of texts. They are there, in these advertisements, pointing out and highlighting values of luxury, privilege, exclusiveness, individual success... Actually, this verbal-visual text targets a reader who is inserted (and successful) in our neoliberal market society, regardless whether in France, Brazil, or any other place – preferably, a reader who bets on the strength of merit, family, and market.

Finally, more than advertising a brand, this discourse makes *propaganda* of a privileged way of life: Exclusive, unique, successful in life and in business, which passes from one generation to another. Success is an individual exclusive conquest, which can be passed from father to son. It is based on the trust that someone else places on you, and in your own trust and fearlessness towards life – the boy's perspective. It is a battle in which the fittest win and can consume the product... In the image, moreover,

the bag functions as an ideological sign, a symbol of this lifestyle, such as bread and wine, sickle and hammer, exemplified by Voloshinov in the first chapter of *MPL*.

Persuasively, the product – the travel bag, is a detail not only in the picture; in fact, it is shown as a consequence of a lifestyle, whose narrativity appears in the picture – the fight for success. It works as a pragmatic argument, according to Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, “which evaluates an act or an event in terms of its favourable or unfavourable of its consequences” (1969, p.266). In this case, the bag is not shown as an aim – people search success to have/increase the possibility of consuming luxury products (the “simple” search for material goods is not well regarded by *doxa*, common sense...), but as a consequence for having chosen and for being successful in this path, shown/sold by the authorities present in the advertising/propaganda: Muhammad Ali and Louis Vuitton.

As a discourse belonging to an epideictic genre, from ancient rhetoric, the campaign *Journey* creates a communion around neoliberal market values, those shared by the readers/addressees of the elite media in which this advertising/propaganda circulates. It also “educates” the reader/consumer...

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