

Criança, Comunicação e Consumo: Um ensaio compreensivo sobre o canal de brinquedos Totoykids no YouTube

Children, Communication and Consumption: A comprehensive essay about Totoykids toy channel on YouTube

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Resumo: *Este ensaio tem como tema a criança, a comunicação e o consumo e analisa o canal de brinquedos Totoykids no YouTube, com o objetivo de compreender essa produção sob a ótica dos meios técnicos que a tornam possível, a visão de seus criadores e o lugar social da criança frente a ela. Utilizamos dos pressupostos teóricos da comunicação para o consumo, sendo guiados pela ideia de um conhecimento compreensivo, que, no contexto deste ensaio, com base principalmente na noção de multiperspectivismo, implica o debate sobre distintas redes de forças que atuam sobre o fenômeno, com a consequente renúncia a visões que reduzem o esforço explicativo a um lado só dessa relação. Metodologicamente, ainda, o eixo principal da análise se dá a partir da aplicação da Hermenêutica de Profundidade, como formulada por John B. Thompson. Os resultados corroboram a convicção sobre a complexidade e as diferentes perspectivas sob as quais pode compreensivamente se dar o estudo da criança como sujeito da comunicação.*

Palavras-chave: *comunicação; consumo; infância; compreensão; multiperspectivismo.*

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Abstract: *This essay has the theme of children, communication and consumption and analyzes the toy channel Totoykids on YouTube, with the objective of understanding this production from the perspective of the technical means that make it possible, the vision of its creators and the child's social place in front of it. We use the theoretical assumptions of communication for consumption, being guided by the idea of a comprehensive knowledge, which, based mainly on the notion of multiperspectivism, implies the debate on different networks of forces that act on the phenomenon, with the consequent renouncement of visions that reduce the explanatory effort to only one side of this relationship. Methodologically, the main axis of the analysis is based on the application of Depth Hermeneutics, as formulated by John B. Thompson. The results corroborate the conviction about the complexity and the different perspectives under which the study of the child as a subject of communication can comprehensively take place.*

Keywords: *communication; consumption; childhood; understanding; multiperspectivism.*

An understanding outlook

Toy channels are profiles that produce or share audiovisual contents having toys as their main objects, either to present their characteristics in the act of unwrapping it (*unboxing*), to create stories or in the development of plays through them. A study in the relation children-communication-consumption in this universe, it is possible to suppose that would tend, first and foremost, to reinforce the notion of children as victims of excessive consumption, a terrain more well-mapped in the studies around the subject.

This isn't, however, the point of view or purpose that we take on this essay, as well as, according to the desirable parameters of an understanding thinking, on which we inspire ourselves, it is also not our intention to deny the good reasons there might be to sustain that position. The fair concern with the physical and mental well being of a child, that is found, as a rule, in the base of both one or the other position, just as fertility which can come from understanding talks between both, can be seen as equally legitimate and healthy, in the sense of support and defense of children, but also regarding the legal order and ethics of consumption relations in the society they are living in.

What could be desirable in the universe of concerns of a method of understanding must be, in some way, clear in the development of this text, even if clarifying it in detail wouldn't constitute the focus of our interest right now. Besides, we wouldn't even handle such an important task in a text with a dimension foreseen to it. We can, however, affirm, that putting one and other position in a type of conversation round about a subject represents a good application of the original meaning of the verb *comprehendere*, in the meaning of joining, integrating, or

“embracing”, in the human, cognitive, and spiritual sense of the term, which is found in the basis of understanding.³

The proposition of the genre of essay writing also comprises as a first and important indication towards this understanding outlook, since the essay, by principle, invites more for the dialog and the conversation than we think in the extravagant condition of writing prescriptions, defining, conceptualizing, or, worse, taking on the violent gesture of raising fences and walls where a free spirit considers more appropriate to build bridges and open doors.

The goal in this text, that studies the toy channel TotoyKids, is to think in a somewhat different way this interaction, asking ourselves, without neglecting any side of the problem, what happens when you imagine a kid as subject and not (only) as victim – a “you”, not an “it” (BUBER, 2003) – in summary, the child as people, human, social, legally and culturally built in the world of toy channels, and, for, continuous act, also imagine the responsibilities that could come for the adults, fathers, mothers, teachers, the public power, the school, organizations for the defense of children’s rights, and everybody else.

From the nature of the essay is a constitutive part the idea that the conversation doesn’t even need to begin from a precise and specific point in the path, nor lead to a definitive place – “(...) essays have no closing” (ADORNO, 1986, p. 181) –. To final conclusions. Escaping the notion of right vs. wrong and the game of lose and win, agreeing with principles so important for an understanding epistemology while the uncertainty and the complementarity of the opposites, to think about the research object in a comprehensive manner, we imagine, at first, how ancient Greeks may make, which, in this fight for positions, the virtuous

3 Only as a suggestion to anyone that might be interested, the research group website “Da Compreensão como Método” (www.dacomprendao.com.br) brings a set of texts that live well with the idea of a theoretically and epistemologically understanding thought. Other texts we deem able to inspire a debate on the subject can be found in the annals of the Encontro Nacional da Compós, to which we especially recommend the two first studies, presented to the GT Epistemologia da Comunicação (KÜNSCH, 2009; 2010). Studies of the same author, in partnership with other authors, were presented to the GT *Comunicação e Cultura* in the years 2016 to 2019.

thinking indicates a position close to the middle. If we get there, we will have renounced the bitter taste of the losers or the arrogant fascination of the winners “in the art of being (always) right” (SCHOPENHAUER, 2005). Also, we will have reinforced the position of those who think the world is more well mixed, diverse and fun than it is thought our mere philosophy, based on different types of small and big hatreds and epistemological and theoretical reductionism – or, god forbid, the pure and simple “epistemological fascism”, as denounced by Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2009).

More concerned in including than excluding, in sums more than subtractions, in reticences more than periods, the understanding method seeks to open horizons beyond the growing scientific dogmatization – the idea of only one valid knowledge, the scientific (SANTOS, 2006) –, in a multiperspectivistic manner, both in the framing that it picks and in the theories and methods which, with freedom of spirit, it relates to. The multiperspectivism in communication studies, with roots in Nietzsche, was deepened by Douglas Kellner (2001, p. 129) as a way of studying cultural productions that “uses a wide array of textual and critical strategies to interpret, criticise and deconstruct cultural productions in exam”.

This essay intends to extract a analytical-understanding vitality that deems possible through, especially, the application of the method of Depth-hermeneutics (DH), as suggested by John B. Thompson, in *Ideology and modern culture* (2011). The idea that hermeneutics brings us back to understanding of the whole in relation to the parts and vice-versa, emphasizing, according to Hans-George Gadamer (1997), that whole and part are mechanical illusions, because the part is as determined by the whole than the whole is determined by the parts. DH, as depth of the vision of Martin Heidegger (2012) and Paul Ricoeur (1987), come from the hermeneutics of daily life, in the words of Thompson (2011), and follows a re-interpretative methodology. Thompson proposes then three different moments, after the initial act of the hermeneutics of

daily life to which he names the interpretation of doxa; the social-historic analysis, the formal or discursive analysis and the interpretation/reinterpretation.⁴

The frame about a specific channel – TotoyKids – should temporarily illustrate the main scope of a wider research from which we extract this contribution. As a more relevant result, even though still betraying somehow the “touchy intention” of the essay (ADORNO, 1986, p. 180) one hopes to form the conviction on how it is possible and necessary to think about children as subject of communication – not as individual, but as subject, human, social and political lead character. We also intend, at the same time – even if the focus of the analysis drafted here does not fall over this specific and fundamental point –, help in the understanding on how the speed of media technologies alters children behavior, fragments sociabilities, generates new demands from the kids, creates new meanings for family and affectionate bonds, alters consumption relations and changes the meaning of toys and play.

A comprehensive type of interview (KAUFMAN, 2013; MEDINA, 1986) could be made with the producers of the channel, a couple of Brazilians that lives in Los Angeles, through videochat, using the software Skype. With the artistic names of Totó and Isa, they seemed open to questions and exposed their point of view on the activity of the channel of toys, letting clear from the beginning what, for them, represent the motivations that led them to create the channel: Totó emphasizes his pursuit in the USA for a career in acting and on how he fell for video producing because of his desire to act. The toys, according to their point of view, are acting props for an exercise of art. Other motivations will be shown throughout the following text.

4 We have no fear to affirm that, here, the moments of intervention of method get mixed, at the same time they leave empty spaces where the best to do may be recurring, first, to recur, first, to Thompson himself (2011) or, also, to *Criança, comunicação e consumo: um estudo dos canais de brinquedos no YouTube*, a PhD thesis of one of the authors of this essay (PEREIRA, 2020).

The channel TotoyKids on YouTube

Research conducted by Luciana Corrêa (2015), with the goal of investigating the relation of the children with technology, had as result that, out of the 100 biggest channel from YouTube in Brazil, 36 had children as target audience (0 to 12 years old). In total, there were mapped 110 channels geared specifically towards this audience, which, together, had in that year an audience of over 20 billion views. Aspects of the audience can be seen in Board 1, through the classification by number of access of the website Socialblade (2020). This website uses public access data to different Internet services, including YouTube, for statistic analyses and related services. In a previous study (PEREIRA; OLIVEIRA, 2016) we noticed a growth of these channels among children in the pre-operational age, according the studies of Jean Piaget (1970) from 3 to 6 years old.

As we already know, these are video channels of plays and unboxing of toys, whose content basically consist in developing narratives with toys, or in taking toys out of their boxes presenting their characteristics and components. The Board 1, already referred in the previous paragraph, shows the list of the 10 toy channels that were most accessed in Brazil in 2018 and offers other data, such as the fifth position filled by Totoykids.

Totoykids is a video streaming channel on YouTube whose main focus is the use of toys for production of narratives. Created by André Vaz and Isa Vaal, Totó and Isa, respectively, and inscribed on YouTube in December 2nd, 2014, it has until the moment of this study over 16 million subscriptions and over 7 billion views. The videos have, on average, 5 to 10 minutes of duration, but there are sections that can last over an hour. The creators are located in the city of Los Angeles, California, United States, and their 773 videos are made in Portuguese, with focus on the Brazilian audience. The videos are available on an average of 15 per month, in other words, one video every 2 days. The average is 452 views per subscription, although not every view is made from subscribed

users. The estimates of monthly revenue are between US\$ 28,800 and US\$ 460,800.5

Board 1 – 10 most accessed channels – Brazil – 2020

General Ranking	Ranking of Toy Channels	Name of the channel	Uploads	Subscribed (millions)	Views
1	1st	Maria Clara & JP	449	15.8	5,923,710,345
3	2nd	Luccas Neto	838	28.5	9,054,214,927
16	3rd	Brincando com o Rafael	147	6.43	1,059,104,433
32	4th	Planeta das Gêmeas	586	12.5	3,352,343,341
40	5th	Totoykids	773	16.2	7,318,320,331
42	6th	Slime Videos	398	3.48	937,298,503
44	7th	Crescendo com Luluca	698	7.08	1,552,650,125
45	8th	Kids Fun	990	12.2	3,111,498,938
46	9th	MC Divertida	136	4.36	745,503,521
53	10th	Slime Sam Sapeca	269	3.29	602,753,096

Source: The authors, through the website Socialblade.com. Accessed in: March 7th, 2020.

An illustration is the video published on the channel in which the narrators speak and manipulate toys, in this case a Barbie doll and Peppa Pig. In the video, we see how the toy Burger Mania works. It is a competition in which the two main characters try to make, as quickly as possible, the sandwiches determined by the cards of the game. Whoever makes them more quickly wins, not letting them fall from the plates. The prizes are suitcases with toys, and a candy dispenser. The winner picks as prize the suitcases, opening them one by one. She shows the prizes contained on each suitcase. The lead characters clarify that this is a play with Burger

5 Revenue estimated according to the website SocialBlade, considering the revenue per thousand views from US\$ 0.25 to US\$ 4.00.

Mania and ask their viewers to subscribe to their channel. That is made in a voiceover, and through the speeches of the characters, as follows.

00:04 – Male voiceover: Hello people from Totoykids, today we will make a competition between boys and girls.

00:12 – BARBIE: And this competition is about who can makes more sandwiches.

00:14 – GEORGE: So move, I'm very hungry.

00:17 – PEPPA: So do I.

00:19 – BARBIE: We will start soon, but first, let me show you the prize. The first place can choose between these Shopkins suitcases or this supercool candy.⁶

At the same time of the interview with the channel creators, we observed that Google had created a system called Family Link, in which the parents or caretakers could create and manage a Google account for their children. This feature allows parents or caretakers to monitor the digital steps of the child on YouTube and other websites and apps on the Internet. We emphasize, with that, the possibility of parent mediation in the relationship between the child and the videos, one of the important aspects, among others, of the social construction of a child as subject.

Consumption as hegemonic ambience

Under the simple point of view of how the thing presents itself – aware to what the Greek term *phainomenon* in its origin indicates, which is “something that presents itself” – it is relatively easy to perceive the hegemonic ambience of consumption in the productions of the channel we are studying, due to the exclusive use of toys in the narratives. In addition to that, there is the fact that toy videos arrive as a differential in the scenario of video streaming, linked to the growth of access and demand on behalf of children. Converges in this sense the increase of bandwidth, the reduction of costs of access displays, such as smart phones and smart TVs and tablets. And also the fact that the YouTube

6 Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xJWMjTociS0> Accessed in: June 29th, 2020.

(2020) platform allows a financial return with advertisement payments, called in this business as “monetization”, which contributes for creators to dedicate themselves full-time to create and share content. Totoykids makes, on average, one upload every 2 days.

Another reason that led this couple to make YouTube videos would be the possibility of living anywhere in the world, in a way that the production would be de-territorialized from the “reception”, even though living anywhere in the world in our current consumption context would mean “specific places”, not “anywhere”. It’s like a “greencard utopia” in which the desire to move from Brazil is directed to specific places. We add to that the intention of working from home, trend that Faith Popcorn (1999) called “encapsulation”, and the perception that this way, Totó and Isa, as shown in their interview, could also see their kids grow, without the feeling of distance perceived by parents with long work hours.

This hegemonic ambiance of consumption, now further and more deeply than the ordinary look about the phenomenon allows, and is particularly perceived, among others, in studies like: *The Theory of Leisure Class*, by Thorstein Veblen (1984 [1899]); *The romantic ethic and the spirit of modern consumerism*, by Colin Campbell (2001); *Economy of symbolic goods*, by Pierre Bourdieu (2005); *Consuming Life*, by Zygmunt Bauman (2008); *Consumer Society*, by Jean Baudrillard (1995); *A sociedade do sonho: comunicação, cultura e consumo*, by Everardo Rocha (1995); and *Consumidores e cidadãos: conflitos multiculturais da globalização*, by Néstor García Canclini (1995).

These works, to a certain extent, approach consumer configurations in a (post-modern, for some) society in which social practices are interwoven by consumption. A brief turning of perspective in studies and research about the theme took over time consumption to dislocate the focus from productive process to a different view, that tries to think about it in the field of relationship and meanings inherent to the communicational process. This is a (small) Copernican revolution in the world of consumption studies. Whatever opinion on how to name this

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dislocation, it seems fair to argue, looking through this perspective, that we have here a child that is far from the world of pure servitude or quietude.

Communication, and, consequently toys videos, take on an important role in symbolic constructions related to consumption. Veblen shows how the consumption of utility goods went through, over time, to a conspicuous consumption, similar to the concept of distinction in Bourdieu (especially in BOURDIEU, 2007), and meets the concept of trickle down, or the idea that the layers of less purchase power model their consumption by the layers of bigger purchase power, proposed by Neil McKendrick, John Brewer and J. H. Plumb, in the book *The birth of a consumer society* (1982). The choices of toys in Totoykids videos follow a narrative logic in the moment Totó and Isa choose the product, but they only play a role of consumption per distinction, since their purchase products are different than homemade toys; and that different prices, products and brands are distinguished in meaning.

That differs but does not exclude, what Campbell (2001) proposes, to whom emotion and desire model consumption, which produces self-knowledge and builds a person's identity in their relationship with the product, with the merchandise, close to Daniel Miller's concept, in his work *Acknowledging consumption: a review of new studies* (1995), which sees consumption as our understanding about the world, and close to Baudrillard's concept, which proposes consumption in the formation of social identities through meaning, also classificatory, following Veblen's theory).

Maria Aparecida Baccega, in the introduction to *Comunicação e culturas do consumo* (2008), refines this concept, emphasizing that the consumption does not constitute an isolated action, but it relates, it makes and remakes in social contexts. The consumption process is revealed, in her words, "as a set of behaviors in which the consumer subject retrieves and expands, in his private field, on how he is capable of creating new meanings to cultural changes of society in his surroundings" (BACCEGA, 2008, p. 3). Thus, the choices of products for the

videos are constituted in consumption, and, when they are given new meanings in the video, also affect and are affected by those who consume the video itself. On the other hand, and again, it's important to repeat that the child, regardless of the age, needs to be seen as a subject in these processes, socially located, capable of understanding and create new meanings in their own way – and that has impacts over and with consequences to these same processes.

Through the consumption point of view, the couple knows they are target of criticism in the sense of stimulating (excessive) consumption of toys, mainly by organizations linked to children and teen's rights in their original country, Brazil. Currently, there are new studies on this subject although the theme is still very emerging, lacking depth, as emphasized by Maria Isabel Orofino, in the work *Media and School Mediation* (2005).

The study of children in relation to media takes on different fields, and we see in David Buckingham (2012, p. 93) a look that “refutes the view of meaning as something that the media distributes to passive audiences and says that the audience is active, but works under the conditions that they are not their own choice”. In Brazil, Instituto Alana dedicates itself to the bias that advertisement for kids is abusive, and periodically publishes studies in this sense, such as *Infância & consumo: estudos no campo da comunicação* (VIVARTA, 2009), *Publicidade de alimentos e crianças: regulação no Brasil e no mundo* (HENRIQUES; VIVARTA, 2013), *Autorregulação da publicidade infantil no Brasil e no mundo* (CEREZETTI; HARTUNG, 2018). These works dialog with legal devices such as the Statute of the Child and the Adolescent (BRASIL, 1990) and the National Council of Rights for Children and Teenagers (BRASIL, 1991) and the Convention on Children's Rights, approved by the United Nations (1989), and contribute in their own way to what we call the social construction of the child.

Both the institutional standardization and non-governmental civil organizations, searching for promoting the full right and development of the child and protecting them from a stimulus of advertisement

perceived as negative impact – possible, but not the only one – usually make it under a behaviorist approach. These impacts would be linked to the concept of consumerism and health and violence issues in childhood. It is important to notice – what is important and vital for this essay – that, whatever the social, political and pedagogical orientation may be for the ones instituted as such, these legal orders, as well as the actions and meanings produced by government and non-government entities contribute for the social construction of the child, once they frequent not only the public debate, but also conform concrete actions with focus on children's rights.

We must consider with special attention this political-legal relation when we refer to the second childhood, a time in which the child adapts to the experiences through a playful perspective, of magic and imagination, as we can see in Lev Vygotsky (1997) and in Piaget (1971), absent of socialization of ideas and characterized by egocentrism, once the child is different from the adult logic, thought, and the thinking that kids from other age groups, being centered in themselves. It is important to emphasize that, in the case considered here, the video channels of toys relate to children focusing on narratives exclusively linked to objects in the market. Beyond the analysis of individual nature, that we do not discard, we call attention to this social construct of a child as a social-historic perception, not as an universal and abstract concept, in summary, reductionist.

Even though the creators say they do not advertise, in the sense of propagating or inserting an idea, the mere act of using toys of certain brands, even though they are not sponsored, stimulates advertisement, in other words, the act of making the toy public. Considering that advertisement, public relations, marketing and the diverse competencies related have been modified in the last few years, due to the decline of mass media and the increase of digital media, streaming channels like Tootykids have acquired a fundamental role in the publicization of toys.

The production of meanings

It is clearly noticeable, through the interview, that the producers locate themselves in an ambiance in which the literature of the field has been accustomed to call cyber culture, which, as we have manifested until now, childhood and video streaming channels of toys are two elements that talk to each other and they are mutually produced and reproduced, even though it is very difficult to conclude to which extent both are located in this relation and in which degrees and with which strength each one of these actors operate. It isn't the case of searching for certainties where certainties may not even need to exist, at least not in the sense of closing an argument. What is clear is that the arrival of video streaming channels specific for toys, such as Totoykids, was possible due to the cyber cultural conditions present here.

The communication technologies, the datafication of society – as we see in *Big Data: The Essential Guide to Work, Life and Learning in the Age of Insight* by Viktor Mayer-Schönberger and Kenneth Cukier (2013) – and the confluences with the children's world leads us, also and comprehensively, to a view of a subjective type in relation to algorithms that regulates the search, selection and recommendation of digital content, in the perspective of the bubble-filter, a concept exposed by Eli Pariser in the work *The Invisible Filter* (2011), which exposes the idea that the mechanisms of search, selection and recommendation end up giving back more of the same, once they are directed to themes we already know, share and with which we relate to. The more a kid watches Totoykids, the more the recommendation algorithm acts so that similar videos appear in this kid's profile. We notice in this context how communication, technology and culture are linked.

The video production is affected by all the technology linked to streaming, even though the producer is not aware of that. Under the technological view, we can observe that there is, in fact, new social aspects. Children who watch Totoykids are already born in this context and begin to perceive the world around them in these different and inter-relational ambiances. Child development, mainly in the pre-operational

age, or from 4 to 6 years of age, is very specific, as we have seen in the vast work of Jean Piaget, mainly in *The Origins of Intelligence in Children* (1970) and *Play, Dreams and Imitation in Childhood* (1971).

Still in the interview, the producers reinforce the idea that the child seeks dialog with play and not with consumption, and that they create new meanings in the real world from what they interpret in the virtual world. It's important not to disregard the location and importance of play in human life from its origins, a data of human nature that serious analysis seem to often hide. Moreover, it would be possible, in this point, to ponder about the playful character of what we can call media pedagogization. It is, perhaps, the case we ask ourselves about the role of responsible for the channel in the fulfillment of children's time, which friendly face to offer, in a certain sense, some aid – and again, we would have to argue that the process never represents a one-way street, once also children, learning to play virtually and to consume these products, end up, in different ways, turning into subjects and co-authors of these narrative creations for Youtube – a type of friendly face as well.

Through an ethnographic perspective of communication, we can understand how this perspective of the creators is aligned with symbolic interactionism, seen in *Mind, self and Society*, from George Herbert Mead (1934) and *Symbolic interactionism: perspective and method*, from Herbert Blumer (1969) and interacts with the cultural studies, such as *Culture and Society*, from Raymond Williams (1969), *The Question of Cultural Identity*, from Stuart Hall (2006), and *Media Culture: Cultural Studies, Identity and Politics Between the Modern and the Postmodern*, from Douglas Kellner (2001), for the unveiling of a critical audience.

Still, when we put under these perspectives the view of cultural mediations of communication, from Jesús Martín-Barbero (1997), and the uses and bonuses, such as in *The uses of mass communications*, from Jay Blumer and Elihu Katz (1974), specifically concerning the question of communication for consumption, we can set multiple perspectives

for a critical view of the relationship between communication, technology and childhood in this toy channel.

From the point of view of mediation, the interviewees say that, in the beginning of the channel, the YouTube environment was “colder”, in other words, they could perform actions more freely, with less control from the website and from the people watching these videos. There were, in their words “total freedom, it was cooler”. Over time, however, YouTube was becoming professional, getting more limited, creating internal rules about what can and cannot be promoted in their platform.

There is, in this same sense, as it is easy to suppose, the creation of rules of conduct by many movements, in a more or less organic manner with the market forces, the social forces and the governmental forces, interacting in a way to modify the conscience of limitations at the moment of creating videos, because they are catering for the child audience. For example, Totó and Isa cite the series of the Barbie doll, one their first creations, in which Barbie marries Ken, something that today they wouldn't be able to due to the new YouTube regulations for video producers, according to them⁷.

It is worth mentioning that the economic power of market agents and the political power of associations are also spaces of meaning and inter-pelation that produce hegemonic symbols for consumption and that are in constant dialog with other spaces of children sociabilities.

(Not even close to) Final Considerations on the Theme

As in all social process, communication brings us closer to two forms of seeing product creators like the ones we have been studying: as subjects in the sense of acting and as objects in the sense of being affected – something that, seeing through this mischievous perspective, is condemned by the most elementary thought that oppositions can and must, in general, be seen as complementary.

7 The video, however, is still active, with over 19.5 million access until now, even though the comments were disabled. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jMijuaqHaJU>. Accessed in: March 5th, 2020.

The children as object and one of the sides of this equation, arrives first in the studies and researches about the theme. The children as subject is still a terrain to be explored. This essay, more than putting periods in any small or big framework of this subject, we believe to have raised certain points that can be considered important for the discussion on how a child can be understood as subject in communication.

From the communicational point of view, the channel Totoykids brings new meaning to toys as something natural, “not created”. A toy, in this case, is not the product of an industrial process, thought out and planned for market exchange. It is part of the hegemonic ambiance of consumption, with market brands naming characters that gain a virtual life and interact in narratives, plays and fantasies. The natural side of consumption could generate in a child the feeling of social distinction? “If this is so natural, why I don’t have it?” could be a question to which the child could look for answers outside the virtual environment.

The deterritorialization and the timelessness bring new meanings for the action of playing, once the technological ambiance brings toy and child closer. The repetition, as we saw, in the relation between number of followers and views, linked to the psychological moment in the pre-operational age of a child, brings new meanings to information in a different way each time kids re-watch a video. The child observes different events and learns in a different way every time they access the video.

Even though there is a decrease in mass communication, the system of video streaming, which pays producers per number of views, the systems of selective algorithms and recommendation and the narratives similar to play, tend to generate audience focus, as it is the case in Totoykids. The techno-social conditions had created an ecosystem that is appropriate to this growth of toy channel creators.

The interview with these creators shows parent mediation, perceived in the comments of the videos; school mediation, perceived – in a smaller degree – in children’s comments; mediation of organizations and governments, perceived in the self-regulations of YouTube and Google,

who controls this streaming platform. Social mediations can also be perceived by the creation of the Family Link feature.

We can see, in this case, the feeling creators have of being play buddies of their audience. Play buddies which, however, are not synchronized, in other words, first, creators create plays with a fast pace, volume, timelessness and deterritorialization. Then, children watch and interact with comments, creating new meanings and again interacting with the real world and their toys. They are not literally friends, but they seek, as the creators themselves let clear in the interview, this specific role. In this sense, there is no depletion of the physical experience, but, on the contrary, the virtualization of play increases the importance of the physical experience.

Even without searching for advertising itself, on one hand, the mere fact of publicizing a manufactured toy, within a consumption ambiance, reinforces the meaning of consumption for children. The child grows in this environment and is constantly interacting with it. Consumption is also responsible for the identity meanings and social meanings.

The own act of making videos, as a part of the wider process of different interactions, shows the role of subject of a child, in other words, the one who acts in the communicational process, and not only an object, the one who is affected: the producers, for instance, are concerned with themes linked to childhood, such as bullying in the comments, trying to engage with children in a positive manner. The interviewees ask for opinion, interact, seek to listen to the children and put them as participants of the process, as lead characters of the channel. They understand the micropower of each comment and interaction, and they are discovering their role in this relation, in the parent's pressure for different content, such as the use of the Portuguese language, the religious behavior, the social behavior in plays. The interviewees seek to understand and interpret parents and children comments. In this sense, they have an immediate effect, because comments can be interpreted and the following productions are immediately modified and incorporated. The

least we can say, about the intercrossing of these distinct mediations, is that also in the toy video production, there is no free lunch.

The toy video channel is set as a media of meaning and construction of children social identities. We can understand their role in an evolving society (in the adaptative sense) in a spiral in which people and organizations are mutually asked for exchange of much less utility goods and more meaningful, in which the communication is highlighted in creating and re-creating meaning of the constitutive elements of symbolic exchanges of toys.

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