

Phenoadvertising and genoadvertising: a semiotic reflection on cause advertising

A feno-publicidade e a geno-publicidade: uma reflexão semiótica sobre a publicidade de causa

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Resumo: *Este trabalho configura-se como modesta contribuição às investigações que se dedicam às complexas relações da comunicação publicitária com a esfera política, social, econômica e cultural, materializadas naquilo que se costuma chamar de publicidade de causa. A partir dos conceitos de feno-texto e geno-texto, propostos por Julia Kristeva e ampliados nas suas possibilidades de aplicação por Roland Barthes e Byung-Chul Han, sugerimos um enfrentamento teórico com a hodierna publicidade dita engajada, procurando revelar o que é potência de transformação e o que não passa de artifício mercadológico. Além disso, procuramos oferecer parâmetros comparativos entre o que chamamos aqui de feno-publicidade e geno-publicidade, menos como um meio de classificação do que como instrumento de reflexão.*

Palavras-chave: *publicidade; linguagem publicitária; publicidade de causa; feno-publicidade; geno-publicidade.*

Abstract: *This work can be seen as a modest contribution to investigations dedicated to the complex relationships between advertising communication and the political, social, economic and cultural sphere, materialized in what is commonly called cause advertising. Based on the concepts of phenotext and genotext, proposed by Julia Kristeva and expanded in their application possibilities by Roland Barthes and Byung-Chul Han, we suggest a theoretical confrontation with today's so-called engaged advertising, seeking to reveal what is possibility of transformation and what is nothing more than a marketing artifice. Furthermore, we aim to offer comparative parameters between what we call here phenoadvertising*

and genoadvertising, less as a method of classification than as an instrument for reflection.

Keywords: *advertising; advertising language; cause advertising; fenoadvertising; genoadvertising*

Introduction

This work is an extension of previously published papers on so-called cause advertising (POMPEU, 2021b; SANTAELLA; PEREZ; POMPEU, 2021; POMPEU; PEREZ, 2020) and, at the same time, a partial result of predominantly theoretical recent research on the signifying and language nature of advertising communication, privileging the intertwining of its inherent commercial and market condition with its recent supposed vocation to address political issues and agendas. Hence, the paper takes part in the collective efforts of a group of researchers who, in the growing academic field of advertising studies, seek to assume a critical, reflective, and interpretative perspective on contemporary advertising production.

Regarding the theme of this work, it is essential to note that it is part of an increasingly broad and dense current of researchers dedicated to exploring the complex relationships between advertising communication and the political, social, economic, and cultural instances of contemporary life. In the academic field, this paper is close to the research that links advertising with consumption as a means of discussing its limits and most current dilemmas (PEREZ, 2020; COVALESKI, 2020; COGO; ROCHA; HOFF, 2016; ROCHA; CASAQUI, 2012; BACCEGA, 2008, for example). It is not far, in epistemological and general terms, from publications focused on identity issues or adopting more broadly critical positions (MORENO FERNANDES, 2023; CASADEI, 2022; MOZDZENSKI, 2020; LEITE; BATISTA, 2019; FREIRE, 2018; SALDANHA, 2018; BURROWES, 2014; MACHADO, 2011, among others). Essentially, it is still an attempt to respond to and advance what Ricardo Zagallo Camargo (2007) envisioned when writing about “advertising as a possibility.”

In this article, we are once again dealing with the so-called “cause advertising,” which we can define as any communication action inserted in the advertising ecosystem that, although having more or less evident commercial and marketing objectives, expresses the advertiser’s position or action relative to a given public issue or political agenda (social,

environmental, identity-related, etc.), improving upon a previously proposed definition (SANTAELLA; PEREZ; POMPEU, 2021). Here, we offer a proposal for reflection on that advertising modality characteristic of our time, which mixes private market interests with political and social agendas. We seek not only to participate in the conversations that are already growing on this topic, as seen above, but also to reiterate the importance of language theories – especially semiotics – in these discussions (SANTAELLA, 2020, POMPEU, 2018; CHIACHIRI, 2011; SANTAELLA; NÖTH and 2010; MCLUHAN, 2007; BARBOSA, 2005; VESTERGAARD; SCHRODER, 2004; DEL-GADO, 2003; KERCKHOVE, 2003; VOLLI, 2003; CARVALHO, 2000; MATTELART, 1991, among others).

Julia Kristeva: from biological sciences to language studies

Julia Kristeva is an intellectual in language studies who later embraced psychoanalysis, feminism, and literary studies. Although of Bulgarian origin, she is known for her academic production in the legendary French cultural context of the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s alongside names such as Pierre Bourdieu, Jacques Lacan, Michel Foucault, and Roland Barthes, who I will discuss later. Two of her works serve as the basis for this paper: *Séméiotiké: Recherches Pour une Sémanalyse*, originally published in 1969, and *Revolution in Poetic Language* (1984), first published in French in 1974.

Some decades after the path had been paved for conceptual and terminological exchanges between the areas of biological sciences and human and social sciences – especially concerning communication (MATTELART; MATTELART, 1999, p. 30), Kristeva turned to Sebastian K. Saumjan and P. A. Soboleva, authors of *Le Modèle Génératif Linguistique Fondé sur le Principe des Transformations dans la Langue Russe* from 1963 and *Fondements de la Grammaire Générative de la*

Langue Russe from 1968, who used the expressions “phenotext” and “genotext” for the first time.

Kristeva writes “phéno-texte” and “géno-texte” in French with a hyphen. Translations of her works into English apply “phenotext” and “genotext” without a hyphen. Barthes keeps the hyphen when writing “phéno-chant” and “géno-chant” in French. Translations of his work to languages like Portuguese keep the hyphens in these terms. The Portuguese version of this paper adopted the hyphenated form as was done in the translation of the work of Byung-Chul Han, also cited below, in “feno-camada” and “geno-camada.” I, therefore, propose “pheno-advertising” and “geno-advertising” with a hyphen not as words already integrated into the language that would define something that exists in its own right but as academic concepts that define internal elements incorporated into the phenomenon under study.

Kristeva summarizes the two concepts in her 1969 book:

The genotext/phenotext distinction pushes the discourse that invests against the significant functioning into a constant unfolding that defines two planes in every linguistic statement: the linguistic (the structure), dependent on the sign and susceptible to being described by the mechanism of structural semantics that the thought of the sign supposes, and the significant generation (the germination) that is no longer subjectable to the sign but organizes itself by the application of differences of a numerical nature. (KRISTEVA, 2012, p. 283)

Later, in the chapter Genotext and Phenotext in the 1974 work, Kristeva offers an even more complex view:

In light of the distinction we have made between the semiotic chora and the symbolic, we may now examine the way texts function. What we shall call a genotext will include semiotic processes but also the advent of the symbolic. The former includes drives, their disposition, and their division of the body, plus the ecological and social system surrounding the body, such as objects and pre-Oedipal relations with parents. The latter encompasses the emergence of object and subject, and the constitution of nuclei of meaning involving categories: semantic and categorial fields. (...) We should use the term phenotext to denote the language that serves

to communicate, which linguistics describes in terms of “competence” and “performance.” The phenotext is constantly split and divided irreducible to the semiotic process that operates through the genotext. The phenotext is a structure (which can be generated in the sense of generative grammar); it obeys communication rules and presupposes a subject of enunciation and a recipient. (KRISTEVA, 1984, p. 86)

Here, we must resist simplistic reductionisms that, in this case, would transform an enormous intellectual wealth into an unproductive dualism. Kristeva’s genotext and phenotext do not oppose each other, nor do they cancel each other out. They are perhaps layers or levels of a process of signification captured by the author in its due complexity, passing, of course, through language itself but also articulating with sociopolitical, economic, and subjective issues. However, we need to recognize, albeit with some didactic simplification, that while the phenotext seems to (cor)respond to well-defined linguistic rules (having a relationship with what the author calls “semiotic”) and, therefore, linked to a more objective and schematic conception of communication processes, the genotext reveals its power – not always achieved, almost always limited by contextual forces – of reaching other levels of meaning (close to what the author calls “symbolic”) when expressing and transferring drives.

The genotext is thus the only transfer of drive energies that organizes a space in which the subject is not yet a split unity that will become blurred, giving rise to the symbolic. Instead, the space it organizes is one in which the subject will be generated as such by a process of facilitations and marks within the constraints of the biological and social structure. (KRISTEVA, 1984, p. 86)

We can only understand the author’s thoughts more clearly, summarized in the above quotations, by reading the other chapters of the entire first part of the book, called “The Semiotic and The Symbolic.” In that part, the work allows us to recognize the distinctions between what Kristeva calls semiotic and symbolic and the concepts of heart, enunciation, drive, etc.

In this sense, it is worth mentioning the two books by Julia Kristeva referred to in this paper date from the same historical context in which the field of language studies disputed terminologies and concepts with emphasis on the distinctions between “semiotics” and “semiology.” If we assume that it was only an event of the International Association for Semiotic Studies in 1969 that defined the word “semiotics” as the one that should designate the field of study encompassing all research related to signs, languages, and processes of signification (COELHO NETTO, 2001; NÖTH, 1999), it is not surprising that publications of the time still used the terms and concepts with some degree of indistinction.

In an attempt not to overextend into details beyond the specific purposes of this paper, it is worth highlighting the contribution of Leon Z. Roudiez, author of the introduction to the work, who helps us to shed light on the issue.

Those [threads of the text] woven by drives and in semiotic arrangement constitute what Kristeva defined as a genotext; they actualize in poetic language. Those that arise from social, cultural, syntactic, and other grammatical constraints constitute the phenotext; they ensure communication. (in KRISTEVA, 1984, p. 5)

In any case, Kristeva’s words that best serve the purposes of this article are the following: “The genotext adds volume to the surface of the phenotext. To the communicative function of the phenotext, the genotext opposes the “production of meaning” (2012, p. 283). Precisely, these two concepts of genotext and phenotext allow us to reiterate the need to awaken to a more attentive look at language, at the sign - no longer just at the text - that reaches its other layers of meaning in its power not only to communicate but also to generate senses, meanings.

From Kristeva to Barthes, from Barthes to Han

In an article published in 1971, Roland Barthes, recognized for having inaugurated in 1961 the analysis of ads based on theories of language, makes a “transposition” of Kristeva’s phenotext and genotext to the

universe of music and, more specifically, of singing, coining the terms “pheno-song” and “geno-song”.

It is here in song, then (pending the extension of the distinction to all music), that we first discern the two texts of which Julia Kristeva writes. The pheno-song (if I may be permitted to make this transposition) covers all the phenomena, all the features which derive from the structure of the sung language, from the coded form of the melisma, the idiolect, the composer, the style of interpretation: in short, everything which, in the performance, is at the service of communication, of representation, of expression (...). The geno-song is the volumen of the speaking and singing voice, the space in which the significations germinate “from within the language and in its very materiality (...)”. (BARTHES, 1990, p. 239)

We are not interested in exploring the many discussions that arise from Barthes’ transposition and its most varied questions. Most of them concern singing, music, and musical language – few address the validity of this conceptual instrument (the pheno/geno distinction) as evidence of the multiple and complex possibilities inherent in the processes of signification. Hence, two aspects of Barthes are important to us in this work: first, of course, the chance to freely expand this conceptual instrument of scrutiny of language, allowing us to reach, later, the language of advertising. But also, its contribution to the clarification of the differentiation between these two dimensions of signification.

By stating that geno-song is “a signifying game alien to communication, representation, and expression” (BARTHES, 1990, p. 239), the author shows us that there is something in meaning – in the generation of meaning or semiosis, as one would say in different semiotic currents – that escapes the grammatically established sign, what is factually said or communicated. The word “background” used by the author to designate geno-song is especially interesting as it points to something underneath, behind, beyond that other dimension of language, more visible, predictable, and open to scrutiny. Kristeva and Barthes agree there is a power in geno-text and geno-song that reveals a considerable transformative dimension when located (or pursued) in other languages.

Byung-Chul Han, a South Korean philosopher, brings the conceptualization of language theories to contemporary philosophical discussions. The author understands Barthes' thought as follows:

Barthes distinguishes between two forms of song. "Geno-song" is dominated by the pleasure principle, by the body, by desire, while "pheno-song" is dedicated to communication, to the transmission of meaning. In pheno-song, consonants predominate, working on meaning and significance. Geno-song, on the other hand, uses consonants 'only as a springboard for the admirable vowels.' (HAN, 2022, p. 113)

The excerpt is part of *Non-things: Upheavals in the Lifeworld* (2022), a work in which Han (2022), recognizing the value of this same conceptual instrument, brings the discussion to the present day, identifying the effects of dematerializations caused by digital technologies in contemporary art.

The work of art has two sides, one that is leaning toward representation and the other that is turning away from it. We may call them the pheno-layer and the geno-layer, respectively. Art that is leaning towards discourse, art that moralizes and politicizes, has no genolayer. It has opinions but no desire (HAN, 2022, p. 120)

In yet another gesture of simultaneous simplification and clarification of the distinction we are dealing with here, the author abandons theoretical details and focuses on the imperative of not losing sight of the sensitive layer of seduction, secrecy, silence, and meaning in artistic productions.

Pheno-advertising and geno-advertising

Han's critical words allow us to arrive more confidently at the field of advertising, establishing a relationship of analysis and reflection with this communication modality typical of capitalist societies and with increasing power in the present day. The following excerpt, in which the author, as already mentioned, deals with art in contemporary times, also contains special details for advertising studies.

The problematic about today's art is its inclination to communicate a preconceived opinion, a moral or political conviction; that is, its inclination to communicate information. Conception precedes execution. As a result, art degenerates into illustration. (...) Art allows itself to be put in service of communication. It becomes lopsided; it leans towards information and discourse. It wants to instruct rather than seduce. (HAN, 2022, p. 118)

First, given the traditional discussion about the eventual art status that advertising could have achieved in our times, and if it is possible to apply the reflections arising from the pheno/geno instrument to art, why not also to advertising? As Piratininga tells us in his book *Publicidade: Arte ou Artificio*, “the achievement, in the case of advertising as an artistic manifestation in the service of the market economy, is in directing the consumer, its final user, to completing of the act of consumption” (1994, p. 74) through this same instrument we can think about the other possibilities of meaning that advertising brings with it.

Whether it is art or not, perhaps advertising is only fulfilling in the current consumer society a role that art has already played in the past – different from the one it plays today, even – but undeniably as an expression that

develops or appropriates the techniques that best suit it, intertwines traditional forms of art with those that are characteristic of it, and prepares new conditions of existence for the consumers who receive it and who, through it, have their worldview, expectations, and personal, interpersonal, or group behavior changed (PIRATININGA, 1994, p. 73). Contemporary advertising communication needs to be scrutinized in an academic environment as was done primarily with texts, then with songs, and finally with art. We can only recognize its true abilities to transform behaviors and forge worldviews by understanding its power that goes beyond what is said and communicated. In other words, if we expect something more from advertising than incitement to consumption and incentive to purchase, we can only find this additional power in what we call here geno-advertising, those elements unrelated to advertising technique and the grammar of advertising that, regardless of what is sold or offered, generate meaning, signify, transform.

And, as it has been argued for some time (POMPEU, 2021a, 2021b; GOMES, 2008; BARBOSA, 2005, among others) and in accordance with what many researchers maintain (SANTAELLA, 2007; KERCKHOVE, 2003, among others), we can also understand this dimension as language – advertising language. In other words, it is not simply verbal language or language in the strict and instrumental sense of the word, not just language as a limited set of resources or codes used by certain professionals. Instead, it is language in the broad sense, with all its transformative power derived from its direct relationship with human sensitivity and thought. Or, as Kerckhove argues, it is language as “a system for the articulation of the mind. (...) Language has a close and intimate relationship with our most internal sensitivity and with the content and structure of our minds” (2003, p. 1).

Another important word used by Han is “information.” The author states that contemporary art, especially engaged art, transforms itself into illustration, communication, and information. And here is another interesting parallel to establish, this time with Grant McCracken’s anthropology, when he defends a “signifying model” of advertising in opposition to the predominant “informational model” (2012, p. 174). When he tells us that “the individual is the recipient not only of information but also of meaning” (2012, p. 178), McCracken aligns himself with Han and once again favors an understanding of advertising that transcends its most obvious objectives – necessarily linked to the purchase of this or that –, achieving the type of effect that it most profoundly and sensitively promotes, whether we like it or not. In other words, recognizing the existence of geno-advertising implies accepting that every advertising action will “mean” something, promote meanings, establish standards, and propose worldviews, not only to consumers, in their characteristic individuality, but to citizens, to the subjects of contemporary societies. It is crucial to ensure that this real and obliterated power of advertising is not neglected by researchers, professors, and advertising professionals, at the risk of compromising what the surface of pheno-advertising says with what is unsaid but felt and signified in the deep and distant layers of geno-advertising.

Han also states that this engaged art, like much of today's advertising communication, aims to instruct instead of seducing (the author uses "instead of" suggesting an opposition between the terms). This work cannot say, within its scope, whether seduction is a constitutive intent of the nature of art. However, we can confidently state that there would be no advertising without seduction. Indeed, seduction, the seductive impetus, in a broader sense, is constitutive of the nature of advertising because it is necessarily directed at the other, the public, expecting an attitude of consumption from them. Now, if, like Santaella and Nöth, we take seduction as one of the stages of the three fundamental intents of advertising, between suggestion and persuasion, the issue becomes more complex and even more revealing of the great possibilities that geno-advertising holds.

While suggestion inhabits the uncertainty of the figures of the possible and persuasion walks along the tracks of argument, seduction speaks through corporeality by capturing the receiver in the meshes of desire. While suggestion activates the capacity to feel, and persuasion pleases the thought, seduction captivates the sensitivity of the senses. (SANTAELLA; NÖTH, 2010, p. 95)

In other words, advertising stops working as such if it abandons seduction in favor of instruction, like the art discussed by Han. Advertising remains as such because it cannot fail to be since an advertiser (of any institutional nature) pays an agency (or something of the sort) to prepare it, media (whatever it may be) broadcasts it, and it addresses the public as consumers. However, aiming at other types of articulation with its public of mere information, instruction, and prescription, advertising degenerates in its sensitive, cultural, and artistic power as it fails in its commercial purposes and declared engaged intentions. The negative effects of privileging pheno-advertising over geno-advertising are evident if we conceptually assume that seduction and instruction are circumstantial links between two subjects – in the case of advertising, between a brand and its audience. While seduction functions as a vector of irresistible attraction to the public based on sensitivity, taste, and enchantment

towards advertising itself, towards its sensitive power of transformation, instruction becomes an authoritarian vector that compels the public through guilt, compensation, and, often, self-complacency, towards something absent from advertising itself and that, may not even be part of the reality of the public. That is, advertising fails twice by ceasing to be seductive and becoming prescriptive. Firstly, advertising fails to promote consumption because, without seduction, it does not achieve persuasion. Secondly, since it cannot stop being “just” advertising, it prescribes very little and mobilizes almost nothing.

Still concerning this referentiality of song, art, and, by analogy, advertising, we must consider another aspect. If Barthes speaks of “background” in geno-song, and Han refers to the “far” in geno-layer of art to suggest the origin or residence of additional meaningful power in these linguistic manifestations, we can conclude something in geno-advertising is also alien to it or invisible but responsible for its most urgent meaningful force. Now, is that not precisely the practice that underlies advertising, its indefectible procedural, industrial, and managerial dimension, whether as a marketing communicational expression of a productive institution or as the product of countless processes?

In other words, geno-advertising also involves a link between what is said and done, between what occupies its superficial expressive dimension and the processes that give rise to it. It is not enough for the advertising message to have impregnated the eventual best political aspirations of an institution framed as an advertiser. The subtly intricate web of advertising signs requires articulation in a way that is coherent with the effective practice of that institution. It is not enough for advertising discourse to perfectly combine commercial strategy, linguistic sensitivity, and social conscience; its production process must respect the values, rules, parameters, and principles defended in its content.

More objectively and schematically, we can attribute that to the four dimensions of advertising as a language. (1) The strategic dimension covers everything from the guiding principles of the advertiser and companies involved, such as vision, mission, and values, to definitions of the

target audience, attitude toward audiences, construction of positions, relationship with competitors, etc. (2) The creative dimension links more closely to the development of concepts and ideas, the elaboration of content, arguments, persuasive approaches, and narratives. (3) The executive dimension covers processes such as illustration, photography, production, filming, casting, voice-over, art direction, etc. (4) The media dimension accounts for the multiple dissemination processes currently offered as possibilities for advertising. In other words, it is about recognizing that the transformative power of geno-advertising passes directly through decisions and choices throughout its production processes. There is no doubt that advertising, especially in the contemporary context, plays a decisive and powerful role in building a fairer reality in the design of a less perverse society and proposition of a better world. The challenges are countless, limits exist and require recognition, but the so-called cause advertising would not demand diligent study in the academic environment if there was not the conviction that advertising does indeed play a role in this process. What this paper defends is a point of view on this type of advertising that goes beyond the expressive layer of what is effectively said, of what is in its content, of what constitutes advertising discourse – pheno-advertising, to reach what is embedded in its language, in its sensitive dimension, in that type of sign that, not being prescriptive or argumentative, is infallible in its power to awaken sensations and, thus, contribute to the redesign of imaginaries, the re-configuration of patterns – in short, geno-advertising.

Assuming we can also understand advertising communication from this reflective instrument, I argue the true and effective transformative power of advertising would be in its portion of geno-advertising (that which encapsulates processes in the invisibility of language, carries seductive heterogeneities, forges silent challenges). Differently, most cause campaigns limited to content and discourse are pure pheno-advertising (information, instruction, cynicism, talk, and fallacy).

As paradoxical as it may seem, we can see from the reflections that it matters little if advertising promotes the anti-racist struggle or soap,

women's self-esteem or ice cream, or environmental preservation or disinfectant. A flag or agenda will not work if it does not contain in its sign network and countless production processes the defining meanings of a given worldview committed to values like solidarity, inclusion, and respect. The observation is confirmed if thinking in the opposite direction and retrospectively. It was not by raising flags for racial discrimination or the objectification of women, for example, that advertising became bigoted and sexist. That happened in reverse through language, a language impregnated with discriminatory and exclusionary values, and through processes, all of them supported by decisions and choices expressive of a petty, competitive, and authoritarian worldview.

In this sense, we should also say that advertising becomes irresistibly powerful, convincing, and even transformative when it becomes transparent in its promotional and marketing intentions. Advertising has for decades shaped aesthetic standards by presenting itself as an instrument to incite consumption without pretending to be a political pamphlet, establishing relational parameters, and projecting desirable ways of life, with a power unattainable by any other type of discourse (MENNA BARRETO, 2006, p. 55). Making this essential condition of promoting the capitalist system opaque, without understanding where its powers and limits lie, is to operate on the plane of cynicism, perversity, and naivety.

Reiterating that these are not two types of advertising but rather two portions, two layers, two dimensions that complement each other and coexist in different proportions, the following table offers a proposal for a comparative summary.

Table 1 – Comparison between pheno-advertising and geno-advertising

PHENO-ADVERTISING	GENO-ADVERTISING
Follows the information model	Follows the signification model
Mechanistic conception of advertising, based solely on persuasion.	Semiotic conception of advertising based on suggestion, seduction, and persuasion.
Expresses preconceived opinions (causes and agendas as opportunity/opportunism, based on the consumer-citizen).	Expresses genuine values (causes and agendas essentially related to the advertiser, its public, and society based on the consumer-citizen).
Limits itself to discourse.	Derives from practice.
Deals with the content of political issues (causes as themes or the object of “cause advertising”).	Deals with political issues in its language (cause as an effect of meaning – “post-cause advertising”).
Disguises and conceals the interests of the advertiser.	Combines the interests of the advertiser with social urges.
Makes the processes that generate advertising opaque.	Imbues the generating processes of advertising with the cause.
Submits causes to the rules of the capitalist system.	Defends causes in the spaces opened by the meaning-making power of advertising language.

Source: elaborated by the author

Final considerations

There is still much to explore in general terms regarding an engaged and cause-related type of advertising that is aware of its responsibilities, committed to purposes that transcend its marketing objectives, and specifically to what we call here geno-advertising. Within its limited space, this paper highlights the theoretical genesis of the concept and points to some promising paths both for expanding and deepening the reflections it gives rise to and for its more practical application, for example, in teaching, analyzing, and producing advertising.

Despite what may unfold from this work – which depends on the dynamics of the field of advertising itself, we would like to highlight the importance of theory in contemporary studies of advertising. Far from wanting to rehash the worn-out dispute between theory and

practice, what I want to stress is the validity of research of an eminently theoretical nature – even before the need for empirical investment – to approach and deepen the daily practice of advertising communication as a critical and, consequently, elucidative, clarifying, and emancipatory resource.

This work also sought to be an investigative gesture of approximation towards the reflections proposed by authors recognized as linked to the field of advertising, demonstrating their possibilities of relevance, whether on a more theoretical level, on contemporary conceptions of advertising, or a more practical level, on the dynamics of advertising communication as a professional activity and communication modality.

Ultimately, the theoretical-conceptual proposal presented in this work serves much more as a stimulus for reflection than a technical instrument. It seeks to favor an analytical distinction between two types of advertising. One type tries to pretend to be transparent, hiding its interests and deceiving consumers and scholars with its opacity in the face of its unequivocal commercial and capitalist impulses. Another type, not associated with political engagement or social causes, hides in its invisible sign-semiotic plot the possible seeds of social transformation through language, sensitivity, and the indisputable capacity to articulate in the mind.

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