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THE SPECIFICS OF MEDIA PERSONALITIES' MYTH DESIGN

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Abstract

Nowadays, there observed an intensive development of high technologies, which changes the quality of life, the optics of the worldview and the algorithms of people's actions. Today, there emerge new techniques for designing, producing, and replicating information that is being processed, including the use of the Photoshop multi-functional image editor. Myth design, by means of which media personalities position themselves on social platforms, which can be regarded as self-admiration and becomes the cultural capital of the individual, is considered one of the information construction methods. Producing stories by means of myth design, media personalities not only demonstrate their lifestyle, but also participate in advertising, shaping the tastes and values of the mass consciousness. Focus on the selfish needs of a person who is striving for wealth, fame and success, sufficiency of scarce information, which contains fantasy elements, presented vividly and figuratively in the form of photos and videos are the most commonly used techniques of myth design. At the same time, this information can be constantly updated, diversified, which is achieved by changing the image/environment and advertising new products/services. Personal myths of media personalities' life, which play the role of advertising texts, create an aura of trust and friendly intimacy with people. Participation in advertising campaigns emphasizes the neo-narcissism of the media personalities and gives power over the mass consciousness. Advertising myths shift the spotlight of attention to selfishness and life's pleasures, material well-being and comfort, nurturing neo-narcissism in those who perceive it.

1. Introduction

The modern world is dynamic and changeable, complex and unpredictable. Describing it, Lipovetsky (2012) noted that we live "in the era of the boom in consumption and the apotheosis of media, advertising and mass entertainment, the era of show business stars, music hits and Internet resources" p. 179). An increasing number of cultural and anthropological practices of mastering objective reality and being are associated with the world of digital technologies. Their intensive development not only changes the world, but also, penetrating into people's lives, contributes to transformations in their worldview, thinking, and algorithms of behavior patterns (Dudnik, 2020; Mironov, 2019; Pertsev, 2018; Savchuk, 2018; Shakirova & Listvina, 2018). Thanks to digital technologies, everyday life is being reorganized and new types of communication are emerging.

2. Problem Statement

Today, in the social sphere, we observe an active modification of the techniques of designing, producing and replicating information through which communication is carried out. Technical devices make it possible to give information an aesthetic and spectacular appearance with the use of effects embedded in new media programs. They help to present texts in an imaginative, emotional and meaningful way, blocking critical thinking associated with understanding what is read/heard/seen. It is the ability to design texts and images in social networks (on Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, in particular), self-positioning there, the process of gaining and maintaining popularity depends on. Nowadays, social platforms are a source of information and communication that are superficial and shallow. Here, communication focuses on the principle of being noticed. It is no coincidence that media personalities actively use the resources of social networks to raise their popularity ratings and get richer.

3. Research Questions

The question arises: what contributes to the formation of a media personality's popularity rating in social networks? The search for the answer leads us to the phenomenon of myth design.

4. Purpose of the Study

This circumstance substantiates the choice of myth design, the techniques of which media personalities resort to when communicating on social platforms, as the research object. The problem of myth design was actively developed by A. V. Ulyanovsky, who regarded it as a phenomenon by means of which modern mythology is created, manifesting itself in different segments of social life and supporting public opinion (Ulyanovsky, 2011; Ulyanovsky, 2015; Ulyanovsky, 2017a; Ulyanovsky, 2017b; Ulyanovsky et al., 2020; Ulyanovsky et al., 2016). Today, more and more researchers are involved in this research area, considering it in the modern culture space (Rodicheva & Suhanova, 2019), artistic discourse (Smagina, 2016), territorial branding (Komin, 2016), PR discourse (Kazieva, 2016), media (Saveljeva, 2017; Strelnik, 2018), advertising communication (Medvedeva, 2020), creative technologies (Novikova, 2019). The novelty of our work lies in the interpretation of myth design as an effective way for media

personalities to create self-promotion and maintain a personal image on social platforms asserting their narcissism and power over the mass consciousness.

5.   Research Methods

Analytical and phenomenological research methods proved to be effective for understanding the specifics of myth design and identifying the attractiveness of information constructed by media personalities that intensively affects the mass consciousness.

6.   Findings

Myth design turns out to be one of the most powerful means of forming and presenting information in social networking websites. Today, it can be considered as a way to position a media personality in social networks. According to Ulyanovsky (2011), myth design is "a type of socio-cultural technology characterized by the use of special system procedures for constructing the communicative quality and the communicative subject field of a product/service and special attention to maintaining the trust of target audiences" (p.154-155). Expanding this definition, we shall note that myth design as a technology helps to represent a person by building a communicative discourse around it.

Myth design contributes to the creation of relevant/important/sensational information. With its help, modern social/personal myths are produced and replicated as "contextually conditionally true and axiologically (in terms of values and their norms) confidential statements" (Ulyanovsky, 2011, p. 5). The myth accommodates any content, adapts plastically to the trends of time and turns out to be a product of technology. Mythical imagery and emotionality, simplicity of the plot contribute to the long-term impact on the mass consciousness. Myth design techniques also include the principles of subsidiarity and sufficiency, focus on the needs of subjects living in the myth and balancing between indignation, setting small targets and stealth of big success, steadily impulse nature of the impact and the rejection of the project goals commensurate with the good of all, sensitivity to social costs. All of them obey the law of necessary diversity, helping to transmit multi-level information.

The production of myths by means of myth design has become a non-burdensome pastime based on veiled personal needs and social order. The myth is constructed situationally, based on trends/novelties/moods. It is recorded in (fantasy) photos/videos, where the media personality asserts its own uniqueness. The appeal of a media design lies in the aesthetic modelability of its visual (image) and verbal (myth) components (Strizoe & Khrapova, 2018). At the same time, the seductive image of a media personality is the result of exhausting training and diets, cosmetic procedures and plastic surgery, make-up and correct angles of the camera, which have been processed using the Photoshop multi-functional image editor. With its help, the desired effects are created, adjusting the image of the media personality to the modern standard. Media people, turning themselves into an idol and creating a halo of (self)-admiration, make beauty the shock force of seduction. Mythic narratives are created for the image, covering the reality of events and often telling about the non-existent. Creating myths, the person has no limits, following current and fashionable topics. The texts of the myth emphasize the existential needs of the individual, the acquisition of value meanings, the wonder of transformations, inflated self-esteem and happiness. Often,

myths use "shocking novelty, entertainment, deviation or even departure from generally recognized norms, emotional explosion" (Lipovetsky, 2012, p.136). This is facilitated by a special rhetoric – static (photo placement), semi-dynamic (replication of a series of photos) and dynamic (attachment of a video) (Ulyanovsky, 2011). Due to the above mentioned factors, interest in the media personality is maintained.

Myth design allows a media personality to theatrically demonstrate a lifestyle/image/body, hide melancholy/pessimistic mood/psychological discomfort, and promote oneself. All attention in myths is focused on the construction of the festival of illusions and changeable images (Lipovetsky, 2012). In this ongoing masquerade, there are endless updates, which are fantastic by nature. Pages of media personalities on social platforms are a fact of hyperactive presence (Lipovetsky, 2012) in the non-existent. Nevertheless, by means of myth design, the (partial) unreality of an image / event is translated into the mode of reality, blurring the boundaries between reality and fantasy. The social platforms of media personalities are transformed into a simulated spectacle of their own Self, displayed to Others and seducing them. The image of a media personality constructed with the help of myth design becomes a kind of standard that the mass consciousness begins to focus on.

The contours of the consumerism culture become visible in episodes created by myths. Photos/video images and narratives on the pages of media people contain non-intrusive advertising. Through it, media personalities promote their names and new products, receiving economic rewards and the pleasure of self-promotion. When advertising a new product (service/thing/place), the media personality focuses on the excellent quality and positive feelings attributed to the purchased products, their usefulness and functionality. Advertising texts intertwined with arguments about the life of a media personality create the illusion of trustworthy attitude to the mass audience, but this appeal is impersonal. The media personality informs about a (possible) event that happened to her / him, putting an advertising message in the speech. This story is simple and clear: the star shows the proximity of their problems/needs to each person, which is based on the effect of reflection. The speech itself is frank, with the use of something unexpected, causing ostentatious surprise/inspiration/delight of the media personality. A calm and relaxed atmosphere, impeccable image and lifestyle "blunt the ability to reason and sober judgment" (Lipovetsky, 2012, p. 231) in the mass consciousness. These media design techniques help to build communication on social platforms. The code of such communication is based on psychologism, openness and naturalness, which have the goal of planned and impulsive influence. The rejection of project goals that are commensurate to the good of all, leads to the focus on the self-admiration of the individual, setting small (selfish) goals that will lead to greater (personal) success. Emotionality and sensitivity to the need for quality of life veil the economic component of the new product/service, which eventually reduce indignation to zero.

Hidden advertising of the media personality helps to attract the attention of the mass consciousness, seducing it through invisible "clever tricks of artificiality" (Lipovetsky, 2012, p. 218). The mass consciousness is shown an idealized mediocrity, represented in luxurious interiors and among refined things. The emphasis on the uniqueness and quality of the purchased goods/services, and the emotionality in describing the consequences of possession gives promise of improving life. The constructed myths contain many simulacra that introduce illusions into the mass consciousness. For example, the meaning of life is associated with a lifestyle characterized by financial well-being and success; efficiency is replaced by the happiness of possession; advertised recreation and entertainment function as an escape from reality.

Myth leads to a change of values and qualitative distortions of information; meanwhile, the media personality that constructs myths demonstrates neo-narcissism and power.

Neo-narcissism manifests itself in an aestheticized individualism and sensitivity, intimate subjectivity and a thirst for life. Following modern attitudes, Narcissus "works on his image, adapts to new trends" (Lipovetsky, 2012, p. 143), makes a revision of ideas, setting himself up only for the relevance of the current moment. Participation in advertising gives the media personality unlimited power over the mass consciousness. The media personality gets the opportunity to hold people's attention, shape their tastes and desires, gently advising and teaching with a friendly simulation. Having the status of a successful personality, the media personality structures the needs of the mass consciousness according to fashionable images, thereby creating the illusion of familiarizing with the modern lifestyle.

The mass consciousness, attacked by myths, perceives "illusion not just as a reliable representation of reality, but as reality itself" (Ulyanovsky, 2011, p. 84). In the imaginary communication in social networks between the media personality and the mass consciousness, there are violations of the communication process. Unlike the media personality who constructs the myth pragmatically, the mass consciousness is "characterized by ignorance of the Creator's knowledge" (Ulyanovsky, 2011, p. 84). This circumstance leads to the inability of intelligent selection in the skill to reconstruct the real picture of the event, contributing only to emotional perception and the desire to imitate. Thanks to the myth design, the mass consciousness forms a short-term illusory opinion and confidence in it as in the knowledge. However, the knowledge obtained is short-term: it is quickly forgotten, changed or rejected without regret. As a result, modern man's knowledge is superficial, leading to a constant change of values and priorities. Media personalities play quite a significant role in this situation, provoking the desire to imitate them and promoting themselves socially in this way. There are many reasons that stimulate the need to imitate: for example, the desire for an imaginary identification with a media personality, the impact of manipulative strategies of myth design, and the desire for myth making that hides an unsightly reality. The mass consciousness consumes myths as a spectacle that is missing in life. The reality created by means of myth design with its "glorification of appearance", "insignificance of meaning, creative thinking in the service of superficial impressions" literally devours the mass consciousness and absorbs the depth of content" (Lipovetsky, 2012, p. 219), turning life into a deception.

7. Conclusion

Social platforms create many opportunities for media personalities, contributing to their popularity, increasing cultural capital, and maintaining popularity ratings. Applying media design techniques, the media personality creates the desired message, presenting it vividly, figuratively and emotionally. Myth design represents the media personality in a specially constructed reality, where the border between fictional and real is blurred. However, thanks to this, a profitable mythized image and a text referring to it are born, demonstrating the success, happiness and wealth of the individual. As a rule, myths created by media personalities function as advertising, attracting the attention of the mass consciousness and programming it for consumption. Participation in promotions enriches the media personality, asserting its neo-narcissism and giving a sense of power over the mass consciousness. The media personality's materials in social networks have open access, allowing the mass consciousness to join them. The images and patterns

of (self-) advertising set by media personalities seduce the mass consciousness, forcing it to copy and imitate them. Mass consciousness, constantly spending time on social platforms, loses the skill of communication. It turns into an imitation, becoming wordless, fractional, intermittent, illogical, which destroys cognitive abilities and disintegrates social ties. Knowing the tricks of the media personalities and the tactics of myth design makes it possible to diagnose and block manipulative advertising attacks.

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