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Between the accelerator and the brake: the car driver in the discourse of Advertising*

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Abstract

This paper aims to identify the recurrent elements in the discourse of Advertising in the composition of the imagery on road traffic, highlighting the car driver as the preferential addressee, in both commercial and social campaigns. With the theoretical and methodological support of the French Discourse Analysis, it compares several advertisements aired from 1990. The meaning-effects are evidenced to the extent that it turns into a questionable choice of the approach and the very Advertising as instrument for change in behavior, in a country where the car, more than an object of desire of individuals, is an object of desire of the State. At the end, some perspectives on road traffic safety are presented.

Keywords: Advertising. Social Issue Advertising. Road Traffic. Discourse Analysis. Imaginary.

Introduction

Advertising has been one of the tools used in joint efforts to combat road traffic violence. It is questioned, however, if it has succeeded in that attempt, especially when it confronts other contradictory Advertising appeals.

Advertisers and Advertising agents employ several techniques in campaigns for traffic safety. The model comes from commercial advertising or from the ancient propaganda of ideas. Nonetheless, even among the public service announcements, the advertisements about traffic issues are rather different: instead of having an appeal as a support, they mostly present a “counter-appeal”.

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There is nothing to buy, nothing to adopt, nothing to do; there is what not to do: not to speed, not to drink and drive, not to use cell phones, not to pass red lights, not to cross a solid yellow line. These behaviors are present in the statistics of the leading causes of tragedies, evidencing the human factor – in particular the conduct of the car driver – as preponderant in the traffic issues. In sum, the recommendation is “not to live dangerously”. The most widely used strategy of the campaigns shows what can happen if the person insists on living dangerously.

Pinsky and Pavarino Filho (2007) point out that the severity of collisions and consequential damages are multiplied with the increasing of speed, although there may be other variables involved. Speed control itself is already a powerful ally for the traffic safety.

There is something that supports the insistence on risky behavior; in this case, high speed. This is a time when the more rapid, the better. More than a reason, it is an emotion. It belongs to the symbolic realm and has been associated with the automobile since its beginnings: it conjures the feeling of freedom, control and power (FRASCARA, 2009, p.25). It endows with greatness the most insecure of egos, which explains why Advertising finds a breeding ground in young minds (MARIN; QUEIROZ, 2000, p.14).

It is necessary to discover if fighting against it is or is not productive, or even prejudicial. This is the question that Michel Pêcheux (1979, p.82), the founder of the Discourse Analysis, asks about Advertising¹: if it works so well for them, why wouldn't it work for us?

In the first section, this paper seeks to identify what is “good for them” (car culture) and what has been used “by us” (traffic safety). The *corpus* consists of several advertisements presented since 1990, focused on the car driver. Then, the meaning-effects that emerge from this dispute are analyzed. In the third section, it evaluates Advertising as an instrument for change in attitudes and, finally, it presents two perspectives on traffic safety: the concrete and the symbolic. The French Discourse Analysis gives the theoretical and methodological bases for the study.

Commercial Advertising of cars and Social Issue Advertising for traffic safety: them and us

The power of Advertising (including commercial Advertising and social issue Advertising) comes from the contract it establishes with its target audience (MENEQUIN,

¹ Pêcheux uses the term “propaganda”. It could be understood as a kind of communication that promotes a particular idea or way of thinking, which may or not be false; nonetheless, the present paper preferred to use “advertising”, in order to avoid the pejorative common sense about the word “propaganda”.

2009, p.104). The main clause is the expectation of achievement. That is, the addressee follows the advertisement by believing in the promise that she/he will be able to reproduce in her/his life what happened in the Advertising scenery. This “realization” transcends the “real”, reaching the symbolic dimension. It goes far beyond the concrete benefit that a given product offers, to be assumed as the way the subject “feels” when she/he acquires or uses it.

The real and the symbolic are inseparable. Without the perception of the concrete aspect, the symbolic is changed, and the opposite effect may occur, as in the case of an unrealized promise. At the same time, the symbolic also creates realities.

What are the promises of the commercial Advertising of cars? How are they related to “the way of living dangerously”? The regularity in the advertisements can be summarized in the promotion of the conquest (MENEGUIN, 2009, p.49-60):

- of the self (as someone respectable, admirable, skillful and fearless);
- of the object (car);
- of time (speed)
- of space (GPS, good roads, empty cities, lone car);
- of the group;
- of sex;
- of the consumer good (car insurance).

As Pêcheux states (1969, p.77), “the discursive process has no actual beginning”. A discourse always refers to another one, as a “direct or indirect answer to it, and it ‘orchestrates’ its major terms or overturn its arguments”. The social issue campaigns for traffic safety are answers to cars sales ads. And vice-versa, indefinitely.

Below, the left columns of the Figures 1 to 4 contain the adjectives that concern the car drivers and are recurrent in commercial advertisements – “Them”. The right columns bring the counterpoint of those adjectives, as presented by the social issue Advertising for road traffic safety – “Us”.

The selection of the *corpus* was guided by the representativeness of the advertisements in each discursive formation. In most cases, the exemplified ads did not have the same scheduling neither the places of media divulgation. The analysis is not directed by their interpretation as isolated elements, but by the way they produce meaning-effects as symbolic objects in order to have access to the discursive process of which they are a part, according to Orlandi (1996, p. 60-64).

Figure 1 – Speed versus containment





Them	Us
<p>Fast</p> <p>The tennis player Guga can return a long ball, running with his Peugeot².</p> 	<p>Reprehensible</p> <p>Children reprimand their parents, for instance, when they exceed the speed limit or use the cell phone while driving. (<i>Parada – Pacto Nacional pela Redução de Acidentes – National Pact for Accident Reduction</i>).</p> 

Figure 2 – Highlight versus execration

Them	Us
<p>Center of attention</p> <p>Speed is not exclusive to videos. It is also evoked in the print ads, such as in this one of the Cruze: “Have you ever seen someone stand out by being like everyone else?”</p> 	<p>Execrable</p> <p>Road panels produced by the very Advertising companies (<i>Grupo de Empresas Exibidoras de Mídia Exterior – Group of Exhibitor Companies of Exterior Media</i>) satirize the behavior of reckless drivers: “Is your father speeding on the road? Scold him”.</p> 

² The route reproduces the streets of a city, even if the video shows the subtitles “scenes in a controlled environment”. *Conselho Nacional de Autorregulamentação Publicitária - Conar* (Brazilian Code of Advertising Self-Regulation) received a denunciation of “example of dangerous driving” related to this ad, but rejected the complaint..

Figure 3 – Victory versus limitation










Them	Us
<p>Winner</p> <p>For the launch of the Fusion, Ford promoted a race between the Formula 1 drivers Piquet and Mansell.</p>   <p>Invincible</p> <p>The volleyball coach Bernardinho, holder of many Olympic medals for his teams, drives his Hilux up to the top of a mountain.</p>    	<p>Limited</p> <p>The campaign by the City Hall of Brusque shows the collision between a car and a motorcycle, with a wheelchair in the foreground: “For those who like speed it is difficult to adapt to 6 Km/h.”</p> 



Figure 4 – Dominion versus death

Them	Us
<p>Lord of Time</p> <p>In a reference to the movie “Back to the future”, the Delorian goes to a future date and returns as the Mitsubishi Lancer. Its speed is so high that the tires leave fire traces on asphalt.</p> 	<p>Dead</p> <p>Campaign by Communication companies: “Who overtakes illegally arrives faster. At the cemetery”.</p> 

The illegal overtaking was classified as speeding. After all, there is no need to pass another vehicle if there is no haste.

Other adjectives are not related to high speed, although they are frequent in the social issue Advertising for traffic safety. Figure 5 shows the behavior of who drives in a selfish way.




Figure 5 – Impudence versus repugnance

Them	Us
<p>Slack</p> <p>The Duster is associated with MMA fighters, as a symbol of tenacity. The ad leaves room for a joke: the fighters raise the car, irregularly parked, to correct its position.</p> 	<p>Animal</p> <p>In 1997, the City Hall of Curitiba ran ads in which people turned into animals: the turkey that double parked, the rat that passed the red light, the tapir that blocked an intersection.</p> 

Some condemnable behaviors pointed out by the traffic safety campaigns (Figure 6) do not find specific counterparts in the car Advertising. For instance, incentives to the non-use of seatbelt or to the alcohol/driving combination were not found in any of the commercial Advertising pieces that compose the *corpus*³.

³ The alcohol/driving combination, however, is present in the succession of ads of the same commercial break or on magazine pages. In his book “*Cultura de Segurança no Trânsito*” (Culture of Safety in Traffic), J. Corrêa quotes Cilene Potrich, Master in Education: For each seven minutes on TV, we have three, for minutes of intercalary advertisements; beer/automobile, beer/automobile.. [...] It is insane (POTRICH *apud* CORRÊA, 2013, p.35).

Figure 6 – Condemnation and suffering

Us	
<p>Execrable</p> <p>“Drunk-driving? You will be beautiful with a flower wreath”</p>	
<p>Assassin</p> <p>Video by the Mexican organization “<i>Convivencia sin violencia</i>” (Living together without violence). A group of youths leave a bar. After the passengers enter, the driver shoots at each one, as a metaphor for drunk-n-driving: “Killing your friends is killing your friends”.</p>	
<p>Relative or friend of a victim</p> <p>The son of the singer Leonardo fell asleep while driving and overturned his car. The singer gives a testimony in the video by <i>Parada</i>.</p>	

The replies

The commercial ads (on the right) counter the criticism (on the left), trying to neutralize them with rational arguments or even by disqualifying them, with disdain and provocation (Figures 7 to 10).

Figure 7 – Fragility versus safety



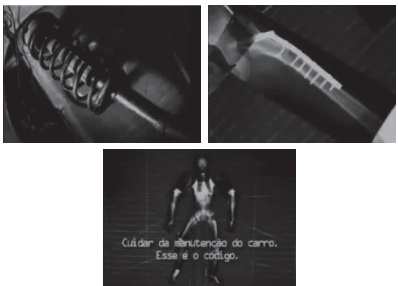



Us	Them
<p>Fragile</p> <p>Campaign by Road Safe Hawke’s Bay, in New Zealand, shows the result of the collision between sport cars of famous brands.</p> 	<p>Safe</p> <p>The video presents an exhaustive repetition of tests with the Nissan March: from children jumping on the backseat³ to air bag shots, demonstrating that the car is reliable.</p> 

Figure 8 – Fragility versus safety

Us	Them
<p>Fragile</p> <p>The video of the campaign “That’s the code” recommends the driver do the maintenance, otherwise irreversible consequences may occur.</p> 	<p>Safe</p> <p>A man “leafs through” a version of <i>Quatro Rodas</i> Magazine for Ipad. The movement of his finger makes the car of an ad hit the tablet frame. But this is no longer a problem for those who have Bradesco Insurance.</p> 



⁴ In a real driving situation, the children could not be jumping; they would be sit on car seats and wearing seatbelts.

Figure 9 – Fragility versus safety

Us	Them
<p>Fragile</p> <p>“Learning to walk. This is natural only on the first time. Don’t let a traffic accident make you relearn.” Campaign of the National Week for Traffic in 2013.</p> 	<p>Safe</p> <p>The more striking example is the video of the Ka Sport⁵. Ele traz todos os elementos tradicionais de um “racha”. Ao final, o Ka freia diante de um precipício, mas o Dragster não. A morte é banalizada, como em um videogame ou desenho animado.</p> 


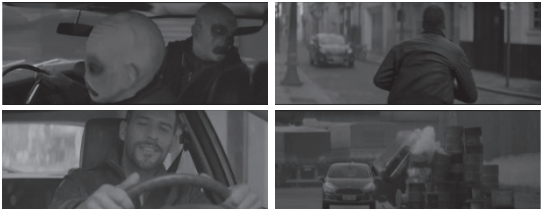
⁵ It is possible to observe the intent of associating speed even to a car that is not the topline of the automaker.

Figure 10 – Threat versus provocation

Us	Them
<p>Criminal The driver with the bottle is shown behind bars. Ad by <i>Parada</i>.</p> 	<p>Teaser Advertisement by Citroen Xsara: after being approached by a police officer because of his high speed, the driver disdains and says that he was riding even faster than which the officer registered.⁶</p> 

In other moments, speed is shown as a needed and desirable quality for the well-being of society, in contrast to social issue Advertising, which attributes only negative aspects to haste (Figure 11).

Figure 11 – Damage versus necessity

Us	Them
<p>Harmful “Haste always takes suffering in the ride.”</p> 	<p>Necessary A man, driving a Fiesta, chases two criminals. Suddenly, he overtakes them, causing the rollover of their vehicle. The police officer comes and arrests the two transgressors.</p> 

⁶ Conar forbade the exhibition of this ad on TV. Despite that, it is available on YouTube and open for user comments. The permanency of videos on the internet is essential to comprehend the current reality, because it goes far beyond the traditional period of advertising media – and even the decisions of Conar..

Positive reinforcement

The relationship between “Us” and “Them” is not always a clash. Figures 12 to 14 show several ads by automakers. All drivers act in a way that deserves the adjectives given by Advertising: they wear seatbelts (even in the back seat), drive at a speed that suits the conditions, stop before crosswalks, respect cyclists. One of them even refers to the “designated driver”⁷.

Figure 12 – Respectability

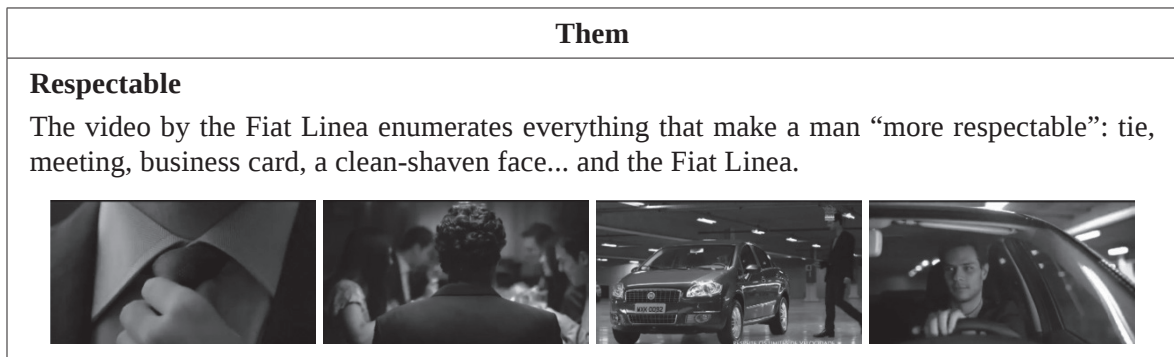
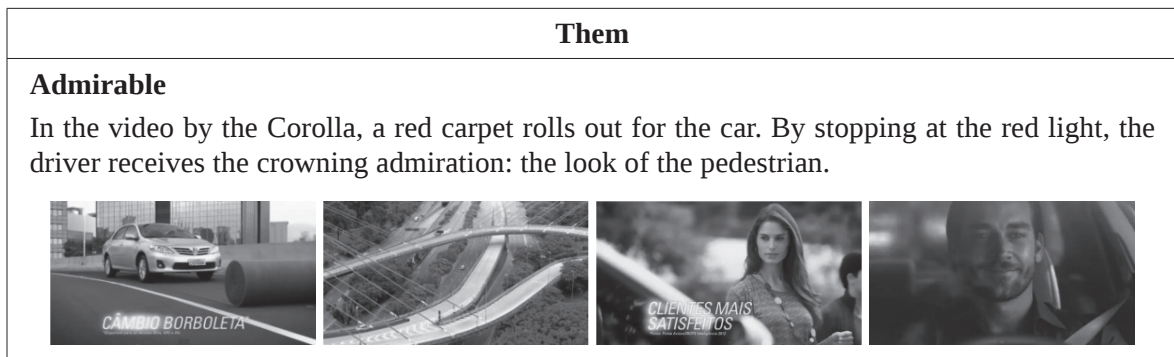


Figure 13 – Admiration



⁷ The term “designated driver” refers to the selection of a person who remains sober as the responsible driver of a vehicle whilst others have been allowed to drink alcoholic beverages. The concept, a promotional action in bars and restaurants, was developed in Scandinavia, and then was introduced in Canada and in the United States, in 1980s. In Brazil, it was introduced in 2000 as one of the efforts of *Programa de Redução de Acidentes nas Estradas – PARE* (Program to Reduce Road Accidents), by the Transportation Ministry.

The driver of the HB20 awaits the cyclists' crossing, which is enough for all of them to start following him.



Figure 14 – Sociability

Them

Sociable

In the ad of the Agile, the driver, during and after the party, only drinks water.







Samuel Rosa and Pitty on vocals, Tony Bellotto on guitar, Marcelo Bonfá on drums e PJ on bass. They all go in the Etios to a big show.



The ads with the adjective “Sociable” are examples of “carpooling”, motivating the solidarity between friends.

The advertisements in the left column in Figure 15 do not sell cars. Supported only by the brands, they sing along to the tune of the campaigns for traffic safety, in the right column.

Figure 15 – Kindness, attention and awareness

Them	Us
<p>Ads by Fiat.</p> <p>Kind “There are enough angry faces on the road. Drive friendly”.</p>  <p>Aware “You either see the letter or the girl. Don’t text while driving”.</p> 	<p>Conscious In the video by the Government of Pernambuco, a highway patrol officer is inside the car praising everybody who is wearing seatbelts.</p>  <p>“Cool driver is conscious driver. Respect the speed limits, the traffic signaling and only overtake to the left”.</p> 

Discourse analysis: Meaning-effects

It is interesting to observe, at educative campaigns, the view that the advertisers of cars are “adversaries”, “enemies”. They forget that brands “belong” to their consumers (TROIANO, 2003, p.10):

Brands are entities that have virtual existence. They occupy a space in the consumers' lives, give meaning to their choices and are treated, by them, like people in their lives. They create identities for their users. And approximate the consumer to his/her ideal self.

For Keller (1993 *apud* TROIANO, 2003), the brand equity can explain the difference in sales among identical products of distinct brands.

The brand concept, allied to the expectation of realization, modifies the meaning of an advertisement. An ad for traffic safety changes when the government's signature, for instance, is replaced by the brand of a shock absorber company. The brand comes as a quick solution, unlike the message from the government, which preaches permanent conduct.

Social issue Advertising cannot supplant the connection between consumer and brand. First, due to the differences of imageries (Chart 1): with whom the addressee tends to identify?

Chart 1 – Comparison of adjectives – Them and Us

Them	Us
<p>In marketing, the brand gives, to the addressee, access to a fantastic world: YOU CAN BE LIKE THIS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fast • Center of attention • Winner • Invincible • Lord of time • Slack • Secure • Teaser • Necessary • Respectable • Admirable • Sociable 	<p>Most of the time, social issue campaigns for traffic safety generalize and label the viewer – you ARE like this; see what will happen to you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reprehensible • Execrable • Limited • Dead • Animal • Assassin • Relative or friend of a victim • Fragile • Criminal • Harmful

Second, social issue ads focus on the consequences, not the causes. They do not focus on what precedes the behavior adopted by the individual.

Lastly, counter-appeal seeks to deconstruct a reality, but there is nothing to replace it.

Another aspect that neutralizes the discourse of the social issue Advertising for traffic safety is the unrealized promise: this is the case of the driver who violates the laws, act in a risky way and, in the end, there is no punishment, no collision, no death.

When the images are compared (Figure 16), the “unsafety” is entirely and paradoxically on the right (“Us”):

Figure 16 – With whom does the audience identify?



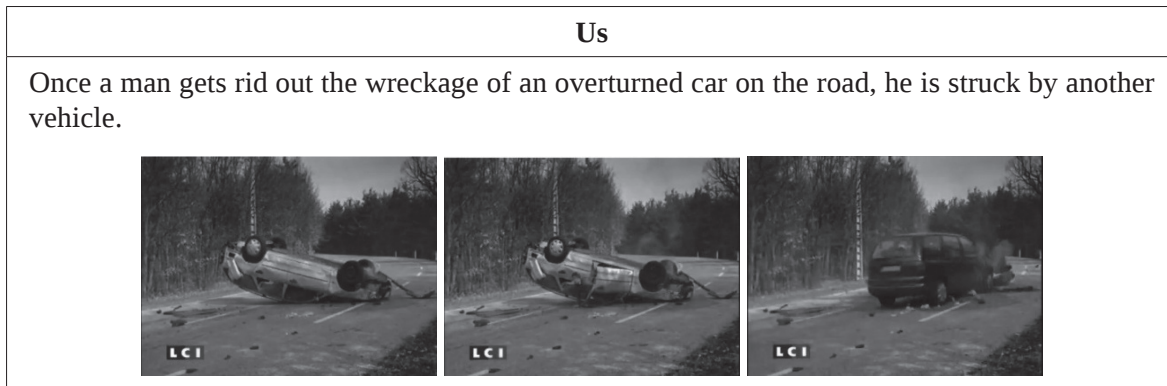
Going further in the paradox, those images can raise contrary attitudes and encourage risk.

It is important to underline that promises of living dangerously are not exclusive to car advertisers. The Advertising and the entertainment industries, as a whole, reinforce the stereotype of the risk, mainly directed to young people.

While the marketing of vehicles works with the triad of freedom / control / power, Advertising for traffic safety insists on another triad: fear / guilt / desire for revenge.

This is not only in Brazil. Figure 17 shows a video exhibited in France.

Figure 17 – *The deserved death*



Unless there is identification from the audience, this kind of discourse generates projection: the guilty is always the other. The other is a reprehensible, execrable, an assassin, animal, and deserves to die, as in the French ad. The negative campaign, without backing, ends up creating a “bellicose” predisposition in each person that enters the transit.

In all meaning-effects analyzed, the most remarkable is the maintenance of an imagery of violence in traffic, under the argument of convincing people by shock. Nevertheless, a real offender is not the target audience. One who commits a traffic crime and is not impressed by it, will hardly be impressed by Advertising.

It is worth mentioning, also, the disparity of the discourses in Advertising. The Government is one of the leading advertisers of traffic safety campaigns. When it submits the concept, “be the change in traffic”, it transfers to the individual the responsibility for the security of all (Figure 18).

Figure 18 – *“Be the change in traffic”*



For Pavarino Filho (2009, p.377),

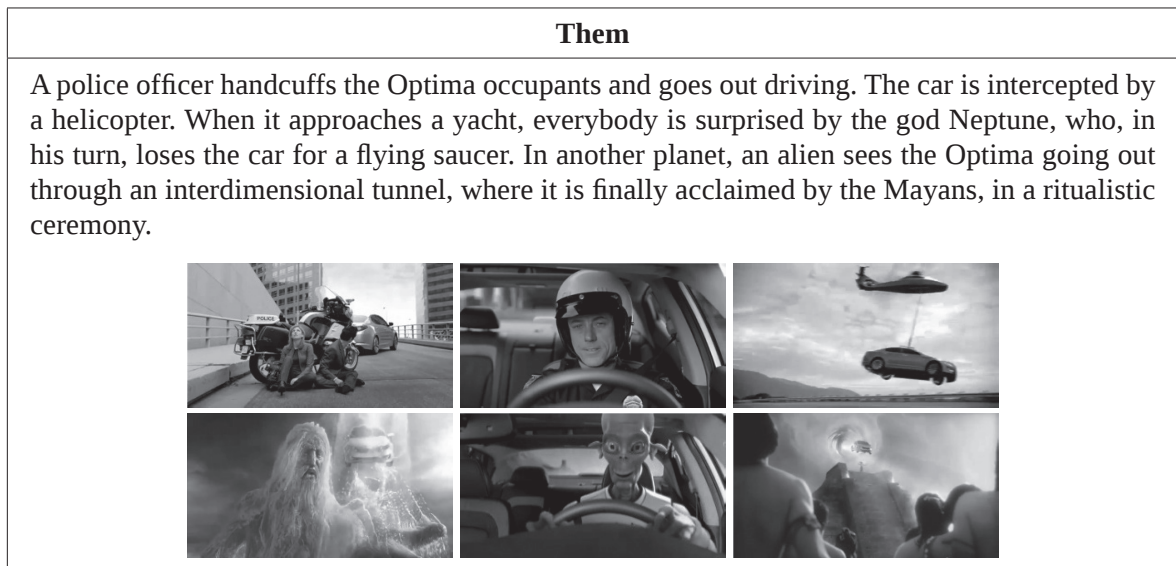
[...] most of the time, traffic education assumes that the recklessness of individuals is the biggest cause of the problems on roads and, from this, reduces educational practice to the dissemination of rules, warnings and slogans, in approaches that seek, basically, to protect people from themselves, adapting their conduct to the existent infrastructure for motorized transit.

There is no collectiveness without individual actions, and the raising of awareness is essential. However, by targeting the individual, the State disclaims its own responsibilities, which include exclusive attributions in the political realm, in the very police power and also in the offer of truly collective options, as public transportation.

In Brazil, the government has always seen the automobile as leverage for progress. Oil has strategic value in economic policy; it is the main feedstock for vehicle fuels and the paving of roads, for the sake of the automobile culture. The encouragement of the production and the consumption of new cars, with tax exemption, aim to secure the jobs in assembly plants and boost the aggregate demand. With this formula, the car is not only an object of desire of the individual, but also becomes an object of desire of the State.

The interest in the car above all else can be exemplified in the video of the Kia Optima, aired in the United States⁸ (Figure 19).

Figure 19 – Universal object of desire



⁸ The United States is the birthplace of the automobile culture, but now tries alternatives by investing in bike lanes and public transportation. “It is the opposite way of the US policies in the 1940s and 1950s, which stimulated the use of vehicles, from the creation of the highway system to the concentration of jobs in districts that were only reached by car”. Moreover, among young people under 18, 40% do not have driver license, which may be considered as the abandonment of car (LORES, 2013).

Individual responsibility cannot be taken as an isolated and independent factor. A person alone cannot make the necessary changes in traffic. Furthermore, this same person has the behavior conditioned by the situation, before each context. As is said by Hartmut Gunther, professor in Urban and Traffic Psychology at the University of Brasilia, the awareness of civility and the perspective of punishment when there is violation of the rules are essential. “It is curious that the same Brazilian who violates the rules in Brazil also behaves pretty well when he/she is abroad” (VIOLÊNCIA..., 2013, p.4-5). Thus, once more, the Advertising argument is countered by the lack of counterpart in reality.

How about Advertising?

Often, the programs for traffic safety lean on Advertising, hoping that the change starts from the audience. This choice brings problems, in part because the Advertising industry demands high investments. At the same time, the measurement of the results is very difficult: how is it possible to know how many accidents did not happen? (MENEGUIN, 2009, p.23). The biggest problem, however, resides in the Advertising itself, as a tool.

Taking as a reference a study on Communication by the government of Australia, Robyn Penman (*apud* FRASCARA, 2009, p.49) enumerates three dominant themes that are not conducive to citizenship:

- The growing tendency to treat citizens as consumers in an information market place;
- The reliance on social science ‘experts’ to monitor and mediate in the ‘market place’;
- And the use of Communication as a simple selling tool.

For Michel Pêcheux (1979, p.92), the relation between “Us” and “Them” is not symmetric. He also considers the strategic counter-identification with the “adversary” a mistake. The main error is considering people liable to manipulation.

Taken at the dream of the action by distance (in the sake of the pedagogy of truth or the Advertising by the fact), the ideology of manipulation fails in discerning what circulates between everyone and no one, between each one and the others, between “the-powers-that-be”, the representatives, and the “irresponsible”.

Manipulation is always manipulation, even if under the purpose of a supposed “good”. It is subjection. Orlandi (2012, p.130-131) confirms: “ideas can’t be instrumented [...] given the ideological cost”. There’s no way to wait for engagement from someone who is being manipulated.

Perspectives

By the way of thinking of traffic safety, two perspectives are presented: the concrete and the symbolic.

Concrete perspective

The symbolic effectiveness is on the proof of what is being announced. Regarding the actions for safe traffic, it can be achieved in the following ways.

- *Information*: the message is built with rational arguments, comparisons, options and precise and simple actions (for instance, the use of seatbelts or car seats).
- *Responsible repression*: the typified crime deserves reply, in overseeing and punishing actions. The feeling of impunity, anchored in the impunity itself, is devastating for society.
- *Investment on the collectiveness*: the focus is amplified, from the individual behavior to the collective factors.

Pavarino Filho (2009, p.380) defends the pursuit of objective conditions that can transcend “the interpersonal behavioral dimension, to center at wider spheres of social relations, permeated by political, economic and cultural components that determine reality”, causing the healthy option to be the easiest one.

In the case of Brazil, the investment in alternatives to the automobile, such as bike lanes and public transportation, can help to extinguish once and for all the idea that drivers are privileged, and the rest are second-class citizens.

The theorists of Social Marketing admit that there are limitations in its reach and the success of a social action can and must include “technological innovations, scientific discoveries, economic pressures, laws, improved infrastructures, changes in corporate business practices, new school policies and curriculum, public education, and the media” (KOTLER; LEE, 2011, p.23).

In contrast, the nonrealization of expectations in traffic can cause the *sterilization of the discourse of the automobile commercial advertising*: before traffic jams, high gasoline prices, the lack of parking lots and others, what is promised in the car ads is no longer verified in practice, demanding more sustainable options for the transit.

Without concrete support, the symbolic dimension cannot subsist.

Symbolic perspective

The symbolic can be converted into reality from the moment it establishes an effective contract with the audience. Three possibilities are highlighted:

- *Communication*: the public interest Communication experiences a reinvention: when it stops rivalling the commercial Advertising or even trying to reproduce it; when creates its own approach and language, divorced from the business model; and when it goes far beyond Advertising efforts, becoming a mean of social engagement. According to Frascara (2009, p.29), “using the language of the audience is not enough; the audience has to speak”:

Mass media techniques usually render the audience passive. [...] The passive viewer is the communicational counterpart of the passive citizen. Without an active viewer, there cannot be an active citizen; and there cannot be active understanding of responsibilities and rights [...].

The author completes:

Communication comes to exist on the basis of intention. Thus, without both parties being intentionally connected, there is no hope for change-generating communication (1996, p.33).

- *Positive reinforcement*: the inclusion and reinforcement of desirable aspects, with incentives for correct behavior, contribute to detaching the imagery of traffic and violence. Plonka (2010) argues that the social issue campaigns focus only on one side, that is, the extinction of the inappropriate behavior. According to her, the positive reinforcement of the correct behavior is as necessary as the former, or even more needed.

We need urgently to show and value the other side of behavior in traffic. Getting away from the stereotypes. Breaking the identification of traffic with adverse situations. Behavior in traffic goes far beyond warning signs...

This imbalance leads to the verification that the people who act with good sense and follow the rules become “invisible” somehow. Returning to Advertising, it is important to know if the promise that “those who drive correctly are happier” occurs in practice. Nowadays, in Brazil, there is no evidence that those who respect the traffic laws have any advantage over those who do not (and they are also not punished, which is even worse). Commercial Advertising invites the spectators to access a world of facilities, where they passively let some other (in this case, the brand) solve all problems. In the effective message for the redefinition of use of the car, the ideal behavior is coveted as a situation that the audience wants to mirror. It is a valid substitute, as powerful as the feelings of comfort, freedom, control, pleasure, self-confidence, prestige, stimulation, entertaining, and self-worth that the car ads offer (FRASCARA, 2009, p.30).

- *Social engagement:* from Communication, it goes to the positive reinforcement for the attitude. Thus, people can contribute actively for their own development (FRASCARA, 2009, p.30), because it becomes interesting for them. Thereby, the clash between “Them” and “Us” will no longer make sense, as well as the attempt to convince the “audience” to do whatever it is. It is time for the irruption of other meanings and other subjects, sociohistorical and symbolic interlocutors who are affected by the signification processes at the same time that affect them.

We have to learn other forms of sociability, new ways of thinking about ourselves collectively, not reacting by fear, but claiming practicable conditions of sociability, mobilizing institutions, media, configuring programs that meet the social needs. We need to have present our conditions as symbolical beings, who mean in society and history, and not to give up on them (ORLANDI, 2012, p.212).

Conclusion

Achieving road traffic safety is more than making social issue Advertising focused on the behavior change of the car driver. When it is reduced to this, the ideological cost appears, by assuming that people must be treated as cattle. It causes an imbalance in the

relation between the interlocutors of the discourse: the addresser who dominates “the truth” and the addressee who needs to be “disciplined”.

This mismatch is even more worrying when the main addresser of the social issue campaigns is the State, which sees the car as a solution for the development of the country and simultaneously gets rid of its political responsibilities by relying on Advertising and blaming the drivers. As Michel Pêcheux (1979, p.92) wrote, it is the “politics of the performative”, when “stating means making”.

Contradictorily, this Language of State (1979, p.86) threatens with fear, guilt and desire for revenge, but has the same triad of privileges that the car advertisements promise to consumers: freedom, control and power (in that case, it includes police power).

Accelerator or brake, fantasy or violence: manipulation. Both commercial advertisements and social issue campaigns show only one side of reality and omit the others. The “good” does not justify manipulation. Moreover, the attempt to manipulate is not the answer for the traffic issues. Exposing the materiality and the contradictions of them is necessary for the resignification of that context and of the subjects themselves as active social and symbolic beings.

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Videos (Accessed in September, 2013)

Agile – garrafa d’água

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oXCW5sn1cdE>

Bradesco Seguros – tablet

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KHR3LIO_4zM

Campanha francesa

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-7XhUB97bFo>

Citroen Xsara – burlador

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IslaKo8dS9w>

Convivencia sin violência (México) – Matar amigos

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B0zC2Gm7Kyo>

Corolla – tapete vermelho

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hzbkIDeL2Ck>

Duster – MMA

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bdLrFAL18f4>

Etios – show

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OiZhZtAuMhA>

Fiat Linea – respeitável

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_hYyUueApk4

Fiesta – Perseguição

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=da3xenBhCA8>

Ford Fusion – gran prix

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Becu6GpkQc>

Governo de Pernambuco – cinto

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h-z4O0JoD4w>

Governo Federal – manutenção

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RWoDS7V7UPU>

Governo Federal – Parada – crianças

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WCl5ZRe-zsE>

Governo Federal – Parada – Leonardo

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9-cdL3-YyBM>

Hb20 – ciclistas

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KfkQg2VPFpg>

Hilux – Bernardino

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gZ46IgMLSY4&list=UUWtgghWvwXU-XLmHT0Uep_g

Ka x Dragster

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tuj97Gz3jqc&list=UUWtgghWvwXU-XLmHT0Uep_g

Kia Optima – Maias

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bM92OTKzUUI>

Mitsubishi Lancer – De volta para o futuro

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c-QEf7ASJRk&list=UUWtgghWvwXU-XLmHT0Uep_g

Nissan March – testes

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J-6PA_HptrQ

Peugeot – Guga

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wO_t0nRiCtg

Prefeitura de Curitiba – anta

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GP-QqN5CUsM>

Prefeitura de Curitiba – Perua

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IMDLC44V-1A>

Prefeitura de Curitiba – rato

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qEzCQJPhJv0>

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