

A Dialogic Communication Model for Advertising

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ABSTRACT

Taking “A Cybernetic Model for Advertising” proposed by Chris Miles (2007) as its starting point, this paper argues that the principles of dialogic relationships should be applied to the construction of advertising communication models. A dialogic model for advertising looks at self/other relationships within the advertising system through the Bakhtinian perspective of dialogic relationships. Taking into account the time/space factor, a dialogic model provides explanation of how various actors communicate in the advertising system. The paper considers the concept of control and examines how it influences the communication process between different actors. It argues that none of the actors involved in communication can have dominating and permanent control over the message creation process. Furthermore, it shows that in communication, there is no transmission, but only co-creation of the message.

Keyword: Advertising, Communication, Dialogue, Bakhtin, Time/Space, Interactivity

INTRODUCTION

Shannon and Weaver’s traditional communication transmission model has been one of the most influential in communication studies since its introduction in 1948. Transmission model is a linear model at the heart of which lie the principles of control and transmission. Barbara Stern (1994) and Chris Miles (2007) are among the few who have made revolutionary attempts to break through the dominant communication paradigm and the linear management assumptions of mainstream marketing theory.

Shannon’s model was later enhanced by Melvin De Fleur, who added a feedback loop from the receiver back to the sender. The enhanced traditional communication model based on the source, the message, and the recipient has been noticeably expanded by Stern’s (1994), who considers multiple aspects of each element involved in the advertising message production process (see Stern, 1994). Yet, control is significant part of Stern’s model. Here, control implies that through deliberate strategies a sender can deliver a message to and affect a receiver.

The cybernetic model for advertising proposed by Miles significantly expands Stern’s revised communication model and addresses problems in the advertising system by applying second-order cybernetic principles. Cybernetics is a discipline that is related to a goal and taking action

to achieve that goal. In order to know whether or not a goal has been achieved, there needs to be ‘feedback’; the primary concern of cybernetics (Pangaro, 2006). The enhanced linear model does take into consideration the feedback loop. However, Miles’s model (2007) represents an attempt to move away from the control and transmission paradigms but it still contains the same assumptions of feedback.

In developing models common to all systems, early cybernetic researchers understood that their “science of observed systems” cannot be separated from “a science of observing systems”, because it is we who observe (Foerster, 1974). The shift of concern in cybernetics from “observed systems” (physical systems such as thermostats) to “observing systems” (language-oriented systems such as science or social systems) (Foerster, 1981, 1984, 19991, 2003; Maturana and Varela, 1980) includes the observer within the observing system and takes into account that the observer affects the observing system. This shift is known as a transition from “first-order cybernetics” to “second-order cybernetics” (Pangaro, 2006). Therefore, the difference between feedback in Miles’s model which is based on second-order cybernetics and the transmission model becomes apparent. In the transmission model, the sender who is receiving the feedback message is not influencing the content of the message, but only governs the feedback channel. In Miles’s model, the act of observing is not passive and the observer influences

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the observed and therefore, changes the content of the message in the feedback channel.

Miles has depicted dynamic interactive relationships between various actors of the advertising system, introduced the additional actor, the 'agency', and clearly delineated the feedback process. In the advertising system, according to Miles's model, control is disseminated among the participants of advertising communication (which will be explained later in this paper). Although, Miles's model presents an important contribution to our understanding of the communication process, some issues, such as self/other relationships within the advertising communication system; introduction of the 'message in creation' and the 'presented message'; and the essence of control, deserve further elaboration. This study elaborates Miles's model and develops the dialogic model for advertising communication using the Bakhtinian concept of dialogic relationships. The dialogic model completely moves away from the paradigms of control and transmission.

THE CONCEPT OF DIALOGIC RELATIONSHIPS AND ITS APPLICATIONS TO A MODEL FOR ADVERTISING

The concept of dialogic relationships, used by Bakhtin (1994) for literary criticism, has been applied not only to the analysis of literary texts (Holquist, 1994), but also to other fields such as biblical theology (Claassens, 2003; Newsom, 1996), the teaching of science (Kubli, 2005), second language acquisition theory and research (Marchenkova, 2005), intercultural communication (Min, 2001), international relations (Neumann, 2003), computer science (Trausan-Matu, 2006), organisational structure (Hazen, 1993), medical practice (Puustinen, 1999), and mathematics (Zack and Graves, 2001). This study applies the Bakhtinian theory of dialogic relationships to advertising theory by creating a dialogic model for advertising, but first, it provides a brief overview of the Shannon and Weaver model of communication, and then it re-evaluates Miles's model from the standpoint of Bakhtinian concepts. The dialogic model that this study advances may enable one to understand the dynamic relationships between various actors involved in advertising communication, explains the reason of misunderstanding which may occur through their communication, and helps to move away completely from the paradigms of control and transmission.

THE TRADITIONAL MODEL

In 1948, in his paper *A Mathematical Theory of Communication*, Claude Shannon proposed a general communication model. Warren Weaver supplemented the model with a preface and it was published as a book in 1949. This model, which is known as the traditional model, the sender-message-receiver model, and the injection or hypodermic needle model, has had a significant effect upon communication studies as well as marketing communications. In the discussion of human communications, the source and the destination are referred to as the sender and the receiver. The concept of noise indicates that there may also be a degree of distortion in the communication process. Later, a feedback loop from the receiver back to the sender became part of the Shannon model, although, it was added by Melvin De Fleur in his 1966 study *Theories of Mass Communication*.

The traditional model views the sender and the receiver as separate entities. The model reduces human communication to a process of transmission of information between sender and receiver, where control belongs to the sender and the receiver plays a submissive role. The transmission model treats message decoding as a mirror image of encoding, allowing no room for the receiver's interpretation of the message.

The adaptation of the paradigm of control and transmission in marketing discourse manifests itself in understanding marketing communication as something that is done by marketers to consumers where the consumer is viewed as the passive party. Control belongs to marketers, who are transmitting carefully crafted messages to consumers. The paradigms of control and transmission continue to be at the heart of marketing theory while other fields of communication have developed alternative approaches and understandings of the communication process. Yet, some marketing researchers use mainly literary theories such as reader response and deconstruction in the marketing field and problematize many management assumptions, which occupy a central place in mainstream marketing.

One of the first efforts to move away from the linear understanding of the communication process and to build the recursive and dynamic framework for advertising communication has been undertaken by Miles (2007).

THE MILES MODEL

Miles's model is based on principles drawn from the field of cybernetics. In a cybernetic communication model for advertising, Miles (2007) demonstrates that all actors involved in the advertising message creation process are in interactive relationships with each other and are engaged in a mutual creation of communication.

Miles's model includes four actors: the 'agency', the 'sponsor', the 'tested consumer', and the 'actual consumer'. A significant role in the cybernetic model for advertising is devoted to feedback and to how the system can be seen as observing itself. Each actor gives a certain amount of feedback during the advertising message production process.

Miles looks at a model of advertising communication not only as an observed system, but also as an observing system, by including "us" in the communication matrix. Each observer is situated in an interactive relationship with another observer. The existence of one element is determined by the existence of another. In these self/other relationships "the observer distinguishes an element by conferring stability upon it – the stable form being termed the *eigenform* and the process of distinguishing that stability being the *eigenbehaviour*" (Miles, 2007, p. 323). Eigenbehaviour, as explained by Miles, is performed by the observer in order to facilitate the communication process with the observed system. Each actor's perception of the 'other' and of its own 'self' is directed towards finding stability.

In Miles's model, there is no centralised control; it is shared among the 'agency', the 'sponsor', the 'tested consumer', and the 'actual consumer'. Yet, for Miles (2007), the control of the 'consumer' lasts up until the time "the message is still not fully determined" (p. 327) (a point to which I will return later in this paper).

Although Miles's model significantly expands our understanding of communication processes in the advertising system, the Bakhtinian concepts of 'dialogic relationships' and 'unfinalisability' can further elaborate certain aspects of advertising communication. Before describing the dialogic advertising model, the next sections will analyse the aspects of a cybernetic communication model for advertising that can be adjusted according to the Bakhtinian perspective.

Adjusting Miles's Model According to the Bakhtinian Perspective

Stability of the 'Self'/The 'Unfinalised' 'Self'

Miles (2007) states that the systems of the observer and the observed are created simultaneously. For example, "the 'sponsor', in observing (distinguishing) the 'agency' both brings into being the 'agency' and brings into being (distinguishes) itself" (p. 323). This means that each element of advertising communication is in dialogue with other elements, that is, the existence of each element is determined by the existence of other elements. This position in Miles's cybernetic model for advertising communication echoes the Bakhtinian perception of self/other relationships. For Bakhtin (2003), "I am conscious of myself and become myself only while revealing myself for another, through another, and with the help of another" (p. 287). He goes on to argue that "a person exists in the forms I and another" (p. 293), where another is viewed by the 'self' as a finalised entity, in, as Holquist (1994) says, its "consummated wholeness" (p. 28). But if, for Miles, "we are [...] involved in the creation of eigenforms to stabilise our own identities" (p. 326), for Bakhtin (2003), we resist limiting our own 'self'; it is open and 'unfinalised'.

Fixed Eigenforms/The 'Unfinalised' Message

The Miles model suggests that the advertising message is "a frozen summation of eigenforms of the elements in the message production matrix. As relationships evolve (and the environment evolves), the eigenforms in the message remain fixed." (2007, p. 329). Yet, the message or the eigenforms in the message cannot remain fixed. The meaning of any observed system is defined by the observer who occupies a "unique position in existence" (Holquist, 1994, p. 21). When the observers change their position in the time/space matrix and the relationships between various actors evolve, the 'presented message' also changes, as the observer and the observed system are created simultaneously. Thus, the 'presented message' cannot obtain a 'stabilised' form; it is unstable and 'unfinalisable' as it is constantly changing within the time/space matrix as is the observer.

The 'Message in Creation' and the 'Presented Message'/The 'Unfinalised' Message

Miles writes that the 'actual consumer' can be part of the message production matrix only when s/he actively participates in the creation process while the message is not 'fully determined' (p. 327). Yet, consumers are active participants in the message construction process as they display an ability to read, co-create, then "act on polysemic meanings from ads that they view" (Ritson and Elliott, 1995, p. 1036).

The division between the "message in creation" and the "presented message" (p. 320) is problematic because it implies the existence of two separate entities where one entity changes into another. Yet, from the Bakhtinian point of view, change can be seen as a "grotesque matter" (Karimova and Shir Khanbeik, 2010, p.9), where the message is always in the process of 'becoming' as it is constantly changing within the time/ space matrix, and cannot be 'fully determined'. Change, for Bakhtin, is happening all the time, while for Miles, change happens at a particular moment in time and space. Such perception of change enables Miles to differentiate between the "message in creation" and the "presented message". Yet, from the Bakhtinian perspective, such division cannot take place.

A SUMMARY OF THE REVISION OF MILES'S MODEL

My revision of the cybernetic model for advertising communication can be summarised in the arguments briefly presented below.

The 'Unfinalised' Self

For Miles, "we are [...] involved in the creation of eigenforms to stabilise our own identities" (p. 326) as well as the 'other', while for Bakhtin (2003), although we may try to finalise the 'other', we resist limiting our own 'self'; it is open and 'unfinalised'.

The 'Unfinalised' Message

The Miles model presents the advertising message as a frozen collection of eigenforms of the elements in the message production matrix. As relationships and the environment evolve, these eigenforms in the message remain fixed (Miles, 2007, p. 329). Yet, the 'observer' is constantly changing his or her position in the time/space matrix and as does the message because they are created

simultaneously. Thus, the 'presented message' cannot obtain a 'stabilised' form.

• Active Consumers

In Miles's model, for the 'actual consumers' to be a part of the message production matrix they must be active participants in the creation process while the message is not fully determined. This implies that interpreting the message by consumers is treated as an act of consumption rather than production. Yet, consumers are co-producers of the message. Therefore, the 'consumers' are a part of the message production matrix because they not only interpret, but co-create the message.

Change as a "Grotesque Matter"

The division between the "message in creation" and the "presented message" cannot take place because change does not happen at a particular moment in time and space but, for Bakhtin, change is happening at every moment of time. There can be no determined point in time and space when the "message in creation" turns into the "presented message". The 'message' is always changing.

The dialogic model of advertising communication that this study proposes is an attempt to put further remarks upon the cybernetic communication model for advertising developed by Miles and to re-evaluate it from the Bakhtinian standpoint. This re-evaluation has taken the form of focusing on the way in which all elements of the model perceive 'self' and 'other'; on the time/space factor that defines the unique perspective of each element involved in advertising communication; on 'unfinalisability' of the message; and on the principles of the message co-creation.

Next, considering the revised aspects of the cybernetic communication model for advertising, this study attempts to create a dialogic model based on the Bakhtinian theory of dialogic relationships.

A DIALOGIC MODEL

The 'Message'

Dialogic relationships are described by Bakhtin as interaction between various voices, or between various 'consciousnesses'. The word 'consciousness' is used by Bakhtin not in the psychological sense, rather, it underlines the difference between 'body' and 'consciousness' where

body has a beginning and an end while consciousness “can have neither a beginning nor an end” (Bakhtin, 2003, p. 291). It is identical with the “*personality of an individual: everything in a person determined by the words ‘I myself’ or ‘you yourself’, everything in which a person finds himself and senses himself, everything he answers for, everything between birth and death*” (Bakhtin, 2003, p. 292). Although, Bakhtin does not provide a strict definition of the term ‘dialogic relationships’, he highlights a common aspect of the dialogic structure,

Everywhere there is an intersection, consonance, or interruption of rejoinders in the open dialogue by rejoinders in the heroes’ internal dialogues. Everywhere a *specific sum total of ideas, thoughts, and words is passed through several unmerged voices, sounding differently in each* (Bakhtin, 2003, p. 278).

In advertising, too, the message can be a sum of ideas, thoughts, and words that may generate different voices of each actor involved in advertising communication. Therefore, in communication, the message can be perceived as dialogic in its nature.

Interactivity as Co-Existence

‘Self’, for Bakhtin (2003), is determined by the category of ‘other’ and its existence is impossible without it. “I am conscious of myself and become myself only while revealing myself for another, through another, and with the help of another. The most important acts constituting self-consciousness are determined by a relationship toward another consciousness” (Bakhtin, 2003, p. 287). In order for the ‘self’ and the ‘other’ to exist they should exist simultaneously, or, as Holquist (1994) asserts, “self/other is a relation of simultaneity” (p. 19). The existence of the ‘self’ is shared with the ‘other’. In the dialogic model for advertising (Figure 1), each actor is situated in a certain time and space and views the ‘self’ in relation to the ‘other’. They co-create each other simultaneously.

‘Unfinalised’ ‘Self’ and Stabilised ‘Other’

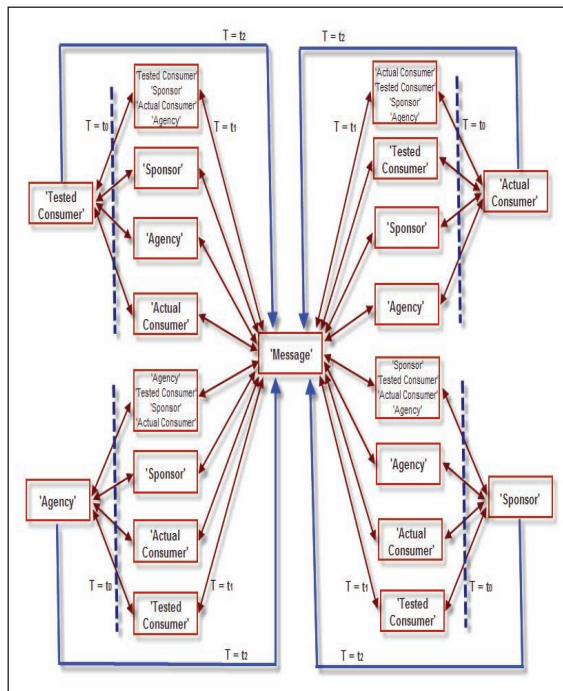
In these self/ other relationships, the ‘other’ is “in the realm of completeness” (Holquist, 1994, p. 26), while the ‘self’ is of an unfinished nature. The time of ‘self’ is constantly open and has no beginning and no end. “Beginnings and ends lie in the objective (an object-like) world for others, but not for the conscious person himself” (Bakhtin, 2003, p. 290).

The dialogic model for advertising shows that each actor involved in advertising communication resists limiting his or her own ‘self’, but looks at the ‘other’ in its “consummated wholeness” (Holquist, 1994, p. 28). For example, the ‘agency’ refuses to enclose its own ‘self’ within the closed boundaries of the ‘agency’, but looks at other actors of the advertising system within fixed clearly determined boundaries. Yet, the ‘agency’ perceives its own ‘self’ through the ‘other’, therefore, its perception of ‘self’ has also the particularities of the ‘sponsor’, the ‘actual consumer’ and the ‘tested consumer’. In Miles’s model, the actors in the advertising system are divided into four categories. However, each actor engaged in the advertising communication process can play various roles within a certain time and space. For instance, the ‘agency’ can view the ‘sponsor’ as the ‘consumer’ of their services. Moreover, as Miles himself notes, the ‘agency’ can perceive other bigger agencies as consumers of their product (p. 318). The ‘agency’ can therefore play different roles (of the ‘sponsor’, the ‘consumer’, the ‘agency’, etc.). Each actor of the advertising system can perform various roles. Thus, it is impossible to delineate clear-cut boundaries between the ‘sponsor’, the ‘actual consumer’, the ‘tested consumer’ or the ‘agency’. One cannot tell where the boundaries of one element finish and where another’s begins. Thus, the division into four actors (the ‘sponsor’, the ‘agency’, the ‘actual consumer’, the ‘tested consumer’) does not exist from the point of view of each entity about its ‘self’. This division exists only from the perspective of each actor about the other entity who tries to impose stability on the ‘other’. This is what makes it possible to discuss these concepts separately.

It is important to understand that there are many dimensions that each actor ascribes to his or her own ‘self’. In the model (Figure 1), each actor is an accumulation of different voices, which participate in the co-creation of the message, but each actor communicates with the finalised form of the ‘other’, which each actor imposes on the ‘other’. The finalised form of the ‘other’ or eigenform of the ‘other’ is shown in the Figure 2 as blurred figures.

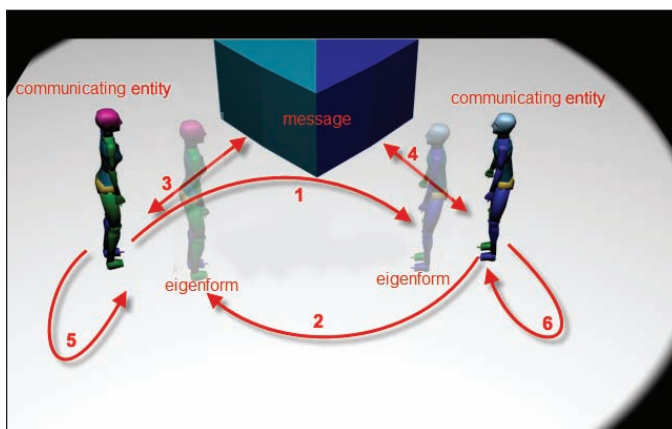
Figure 2 illustrates the process of advertising communication. It shows that the unique position of each communicating entity defines his or her unique perception of the ‘message’. Thus, the ‘message’ can be depicted in the form of an ‘unfinalised’ geometrical figure that consists of an infinite number of sides.

Figure 1: A Dialogic Model for Advertising Communication



The line of perception which represents the unique space and time in which the observer is observing the observed in relation to the time and space of the observed.

Figure 2: The Process of Advertising Communication



Each actor creates the eigenform of the 'other', that is, a stabilised perception of the 'other'. Each actor also has a unique perception of the 'self'. Moreover, this perception of the 'self' differs from the perception of the 'self' by the 'other' and from others' perception of the 'self' in each communicator. Both parties are involved in the creation of the 'message'. The 'message' is created according to how the 'other' is perceived by the communicator (In Figure 2, the blurred figures).

The Unique Perception

The position of one body can be defined only in relation to another body and the nature of this relation is determined by an 'observer' who looks at it from a particular position in time and space. Two entities cannot occupy simultaneously the same place but only different places. Each entity is perceived in a unique way because each 'observer' occupies a unique position in the time/space matrix. On the basis of this argument it follows that not only is the 'self' unique in every observer, but also that the observer's perception of 'self' which differs from the perception of the 'self' by the 'other' and from others' perception of the 'self' in an observer. For example, the 'agency's' perception of itself differs from the understanding of what the 'agency' is by the 'sponsor', 'actual consumer' or any other actor in the advertising communication model in a specific time and space. Also, the perception of the 'self' by the 'agency' changes in time and space. It should be noted that the 'self' is viewed by Bakhtin as "essentially social. Each of us is constituted not as an individual, private, atomic self but as a collective of the many selves we have taken in from birth" (Booth, 1982, p. 51; Hermans, 2001, p. 243; Epstein, 1973, p. 23). As an observer changes his or her position in time and space his or her personality changes. Thus, personality is an accumulation of different voices. Personality is a multiplicity of various voices that occurs as a result of experience of the 'self' by the 'self' and of the 'other' by the 'self' in different times and space.

In the advertising communication model, the message is co-created not only based on the observer's perception of the 'other' but also on the observer's perception of 'self'. The creation of meaning in the advertising message is based on these perceptions. This means that not only does the advertising message change through time and space but also the observer's perception of 'self'. As Holquist (1994) comments, for Bakhtin, "there is one time/space organising perception of the subject by the subject; and there is another time/space that shapes the subject's perceptions of others" (p. 169). Since the 'observer' is situated in a unique position in the time/space matrix, the perception of the observed system as well as the perception of its own 'self' for each actor involved in advertising communication will also be unique (see Figure 1). The importance of the time/space factor finds its diagrammatic representation in the dialogic model where t_0 , t_1 , t_2 demonstrate changes of time and space.

Thus, it becomes clear that an observer sees the ‘self’ and the ‘other’ from a unique position in existence that the ‘agency’, the ‘sponsor’, the ‘actual consumer’, and ‘the tested consumer’ occupy in the time/space matrix. This unique position cannot be shared with the ‘other’. This means that one observer’s understanding of ‘self’ is always different from another observer’s understanding of ‘self’ and vice versa.

‘SITUATIONAL UNDERSTANDING’

The above arguments shed light on the nature of ‘situational understanding’ in advertising communication: the meaning of the ‘message’ intended for the ‘self’ in the ‘sponsor’ by the ‘agency’ is based on how the ‘agency’ understands the ‘self’ in the ‘sponsor’ and it is different from how the ‘sponsor’ understands his or her own ‘self’. This is why the meaning of the ‘message’ intended by the ‘agency’ for the ‘sponsor’ will not be the same as what the ‘agency’ understands (the same logic is applicable for any other actor in the advertising system). Thus, when the ‘message’ is being co-created by two or more communicators misunderstanding may occur between the parties involved in any form of communication, including advertising communication. So, the question arises, “What consequences may occur within ‘situational understanding’?” In order to answer this question one should realise that in the communication process the ‘message’ is a co-creation of different parties involved in communication and one cannot have control over the ‘other’.

Consequences of ‘Situational Understanding’

The dialogic model for advertising enables the movement out of the paradigms of control and transmission. The message is what different observers understand about the message. The message is the accumulation of an infinite number of voices. Thus, the message is ‘unfinalizable’. Even if there was a chance to indicate all the possible voices that are part of the message, the message can never be stabilised and finalises because each observer changes within the space/time matrix, and so does the message.

Once an observer acknowledges that there is no control in communication and the ‘message’ is co-created, the feedback cycle becomes obsolete. Thus, the observer realises that his or her understanding of the ‘message’ is

not the message itself, but the message is the co-creation of all the actors involved in communication. There is no message that is sent or transmitted from the ‘sender’ to the ‘receiver’, or from the observer to the observer. Thus, there is no feedback loop and there is no control – neither centralised (the transmission model), nor de-centralised (the cybernetic model) – over the ‘message’ and the actors involved in the communication process. Therefore, we move away completely from the paradigms of control and transmission.

The following short example of an advertising campaign for Marks and Spencer (M&S) illustrates the transmission model, cybernetic model and dialogic model at work.

Applying a Dialogic Model to Marketing Communications

Marks & Spencer’s *Plan A* Campaign

In January 2007, M&S launched a campaign called *Plan A* with the intention to develop such products and services that “help customers to live more environmentally friendly lives” (see <http://plana.marksandspencer.com/media/pdf/planA-2010.pdf>). The *Plan A* of 2007 and the updates of 2010 and 2014 considered the social and environmental impact of M&S (see <http://planareport.marksandspencer.com/downloads/M&S-PlanA-2014.pdf>) and the 2014 report demonstrates that the company attained positive environmental results. It “improved energy efficiency (25%), cut waste (34%), addressed the sustainability of raw materials, developed healthy product ranges and taken its work on ethical trade to a new level” (Beavis, 2014). M&S also gained economic success: “in 2010/11 alone it delivered £70m in net benefits” (ibid).

THE TRANSMISSION MODEL

According to the transmission model, the advertisements for M&S represent the voice of the brand. Control is concentrated in the hands of M&S as all communication that is not initiated by the company. The consumer is viewed as a passive recipient of the advertising message sent through the media by M&S. The company has to develop a feedback channel to monitor the responses of consumers. Feedback is necessary, so M&S can improve the advertising message to reach its communication goals.

Thus, feedback ensures the effective control that M&S has over consumers.

THE CYBERNETIC MODEL FOR ADVERTISING COMMUNICATION

The cybernetic model for advertising will view ‘tested consumers’, ‘actual consumers’, M&S, and RKCR/Y&R UK (Rainey Kelly Campbell Roalfe/ Young & Rubicam) advertising agency as self-observing systems that all interact with each other. Control is not centralised in the hands of one actor but spread among all actors involved in the message production process. All these actors are involved in the creation of a series of advertisements called *Doing the Right Things*. There is the ‘message in creation’ which is a co-creation of all actors and the ‘presented message’ which is finalised and represents the eigenforms of the actors involved in the message creation process at the time of production of the ‘message in creation’. Therefore, in Miles’s model, the role of the ‘actual consumer’ in the co-creation of the ‘message’ is disregarded and the ‘actual consumer’ is a passive entity in the communication process. Furthermore, the represented eigenforms in the ‘presented message’ are finalised. In the series of advertisements, *Doing the Right Things* is always the right thing to do, according to Miles’s model, and will not change in different times for different viewers.

A DIALOGIC MODEL FOR ADVERTISING COMMUNICATION

According to the dialogic model, ‘tested consumers’, ‘actual consumers’, M&S, and RKCR/ Y&R UK (Rainey Kelly Campbell Roalfe/ Young & Rubicam) are all involved in dialogic relationships. The existence of each actor is defined by the existence of another.

The series of advertisements *Doing the Right Things* is conceived as ‘unfinalised’ as each actor is a co-creator of the ‘message’. The ‘message’ is not transmitted but co-created by all participants involved in advertising communication. In the advertisements *Doing the Right Things*, according to the dialogic model for advertising communication, doing the right things is not always the right thing to do; as consumers co-create the ‘message’, the meaning of “right things” changes from viewer to viewer, and from time to time. The impact of the dimension of time can be evident from the fact that *Plan A* created by M&S in 2007 is different from the one developed in 2014. If in 2007, the essential pillars of *Plan A* were related to climate change, waste, sustainable materials, fair partnership, and health, in 2014, these pillars were built around inspiration, deeper connection with employees, customers, and suppliers, integrity, and innovation.

Table 1: An Advertising Campaign for Marks & Spencer (M&S) Analysed Using Discussed Communication Models

<i>Models</i>	<i>The Transmission Model</i>	<i>The Cybernetic Model for Advertising Communication</i>	<i>A Dialogic Model for Advertising Communication</i>
Control	Control is concentrated in the hands of M&S company	Control is disseminated among tested consumers, actual consumers, RKCR/Y&R UK ad agency, and M&S company	No control
The Actual Consumer	Is a passive recipient of the advertising message	Is a passive entity in the communication process	Is an active entity in the communication process
The Sender	M&S company	All parties involved in the advertising message construction process	No sender
Feedback	M&S does not influence the content of the received message, but only controls the feedback channel. Feedback ensures effective control that M&S has over consumers	M&S influences and changes the content of the received message in the feedback channel	No feedback loop
Transmission	The message is transmitted from the M&S company to consumers	Reference signals are transmitted by all parties involved in the communication process	No transmission, but the co-creation of the message
Message	Remains unchanged through time and space	Remains unchanged through time and space	Changes in time and space

Furthermore, the ‘message’ is a representation of not only the actors involved in the co-creation, but also a representation of each actor’s understanding of all other actors and his/her own ‘self’, as each actor may play different roles in time and space. In time and space, the “right things” and the actors’ understanding of “right things” may change. According to the dialogical model, the notion of “right things” consists of all the notions of “right things” for all actors engaged in the communication process. In this way of using the dialogical model we can see that there is no control in creating the ‘message’ and there is no transmission of the ‘message’. What exists is the co-creation of the ‘message’.

This study does not equip actors involved in marketing communication with rules and/or guidelines as it would contravene Bakhtinian concept of ‘answerability.’ ‘Answerability’ suggests that there are no ready-made answers and ethical rules, no alibi, but people are responsible for choices they make in their lives. Yet, this study brings the “moral attitudes” (Ashman and Winstanley, 2006) or aspects forward for consideration, which can be summarised in the following way:

1. Simultaneous co-creation is central to marketing communication.
2. All actors are ‘active’ participants.
3. The ‘message’ is co-creation.
4. Change is constant.
5. There is no dominant control in marketing communication.

CONCLUSION

The dialogic model for advertising communication that this study has advanced has examined self/other relationships between various ‘actors’ of the advertising system. It has considered several important aspects which have drawn on the Bakhtinian concepts of ‘dialogic relationships’ and ‘unfinalisability’. The perception of the relationships between various actors involved in advertising communication viewed from the Bakhtinian standpoint has some similarities with the cybernetic reading of these relationships. From the Bakhtinian point of view, each ‘observer’ views the ‘other’ as a finalised entity, in its “consummated wholeness” (Holquist, 1994, p. 28). In the same way, according to a cybernetic model for advertising communication, each ‘observer’

“distinguishes an element by conferring stability upon it” (Miles, 2007, p. 323). In Miles’s model, these stable forms, termed eigenforms, remain fixed within the advertising message while relationships between actors engaged in the advertising message construction process evolve as each actor changes. This is why, according to the cybernetic model, after some time, actors cease to recognise the frozen eigenforms fixed within the advertising message that, consequently, leads to a tension between the various parties of the advertising system. However, from the Bakhtinian viewpoint, the tension that may occur between various actors can be reasoned differently. Here, the time/space factor serves as an important tool in explaining the peculiarity of the relationships between various ‘actors’ involved in advertising communication. Each ‘actor’ of the advertising system occupies a unique position in existence that cannot be shared with other ‘actors’. This unique position determines the uniqueness of each actor’s perception. One observer’s understanding of ‘self’ and ‘other’ is always different from other observer’s understanding of ‘self’ and ‘other’. This is why when the ‘message’ is being created by the ‘self’ and the ‘other’, the meaning intended for ‘self’ in me by the ‘other’ is based on his or her own understanding of ‘self’ in me that is different from my understanding of ‘self’ in me. Therefore, the meaning of the ‘message’ intended by the ‘other’ will not be the same as the ‘message’ I create. This is the reason for misunderstanding from a Bakhtinian point of view.

By applying Bakhtinian theories to advertising models, this study arrives at a conclusion that none of the actors involved in communication can have dominating and permanent control over the message creation process. Furthermore, it shows that in communication, there is no transmission of the ‘message’. What exists is a co-creation of the ‘message’ by all the actors engaged in the communication process. Thus, the dialogic model for advertising communication developed in this study completely moves away from the paradigms of control and transmission.

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