

Sensuality and Erotism: Advertisement Strategies for Perfumes Consumption

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Abstract

The publicity discourse is far away from the intuitive and conjectural character that is usually assigned it by the common sense. Its efficiency ought to the emulation, capacity to take the target-publics to recognize or project themselves in advertisement when it identify their own moral, religious, cultural, economical, physical or even sexual attitudes. These last, the sexual attitudes compose an especially efficacious argumentative repertoire, principally in areas like the cosmetic and perfumery, where the other valuation is a motivation for the consumer. The perfumes advertisement let us clearly see how the expressions of sensual or sexual behavior take consumer to recognize itself and develop a previous consumption motivation towards products which best represent its own behavior.

Keywords: advertising: psychology: segmentation: sex

RESUMO

O discurso publicitário está longe do caráter intuitivo e conjectural comumente lhe atribuído pelo senso comum. Sua eficiência deve-se à emulação, capacidade de levar o público-alvo a se reconhecer e/ou projetar nos anúncios ao identificar suas próprias atitudes morais, religiosas, culturais, econômicas, físicas ou mesmo sexuais. Estas últimas compõem um repertório argumentativo particularmente eficaz, sobretudo em nichos como a cosmética e a perfumaria, nos quais a apreciação vinda do *outro* é uma motivação para o consumidor. Os anúncios de perfumes nos permitem observar claramente como a expressão do comportamento sensual/sexual faz com que o consumidor se reconheça e desenvolva a pré-disposição ao consumo do produto que melhor representa seu próprio comportamento.

Palavras-chave: publicidade: psicologia: segmentação: sexo

RESUMEM

El discurso publicitario está muy lejos de el carácter intuitivo y especulativo que se asigna Por lo general, por el sentido común. Su eficacia era necesario que a la emulación, la capacidad para llevar el proyecto de objetivos públicos o reconocerse a sí mismos en el anuncio identifican su propio cuando morales, religiosas, economía cultural, económica, física o incluso de las actitudes sexuales. Última tesis, las actitudes sexuales se compone repertorio argumentativo año especialmente eficaces, principalmente en áreas como la cosmética y la perfumería, donde el otro es una motivación para la valoración de los consumidores. El anuncio de perfumes vamos a ver cómo claramente las expresiones de sensual o al consumidor a tomar el comportamiento sexual y reconocerse a sí mismo de desarrollo del consumo anterior más motivados hacia el cual los productos de representar a su propio comportamiento.

Palabras clave: publicidad: la psicología: la segmentación: el sexo

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There are people who criticize advertisement about its sensual appealing use. In several places an apparent Puritanism comes up everytime a brand uses sexual aspects to sell its products and services. The occidental man often tolerates nudity, sensuality and even pornography, and all these things are accepted when their use is exclusively hedonistic. However, when these same aspects are applied as a persuasive discourse, disapprovals are quite frequent, especially in Brazil, knew as the country of Carnival and sexual plurality. Common sense explains gruffly the advertisement use of sexual appeals considering it as moral weakness, incompetence or even lack of creativity. Nevertheless, this strategy still shows itself very effective to warrant brands positioning and their products selling. Nothing contradictory in these facts, the point is that like all ways of communication, advertisement discourse must be understandable, trusty and acceptable for its receptors. This discourse adjustment towards persuasion objectives was well expresses by the French essayist Joseph Joubert³: “*We can convince other people with our reasons, but we only persuade them with theirs own*”. Therefore, communication value is not measured trough possible rejections from no chosen publics, but trough its success towards its target publics who show propitious attitudes to sexual approach provided that it represents their own behavior, emphasizing what is usual to them, not the opposite.

To help our comprehension about communication and marketing disciplines, some contributions come from psychology subjective field. Looking for the identity of this “consumer being” may have strong meanings in consumption society bringing intangible values to clients and to the market.

According to Skinner (1967:17), the biggest authority in behavior science (or behavior psychology) organism behaviors are result from conditioning, experiences that create habits, guiding organism in a specific way. So knew as *Stimulus and Answer Conditioning* it is understandable as an association of two or more stimulus resulting in a commutative meaning.

Advertisement function is building an integration between products or services and values or aspects considered motivators by the target public, turning these products motivators too trough these attributed values and aspects (SKINNER, 1967:17).

This proposal reaffirms that physiological reinforcements like feeding, thermos adjustment or sexual act possibilities not only settle their place in organism behavior faster than intellectual or social reinforcements, but so they are harder to be rejected later once conditioning is already accomplished, the reason for that is they are connected to biological needs hard to be neglected, therefore, the only possible opposed influences are variation or fullness of privation conditions.⁴ Tânia Hoff exposes a compatible opinion:

Erotic is achieved in body level - first reality of all human creature – it makes allusion of sexual, although not being the sex itself. These both aspects, bodily and sexual, attract interest from general publics, exceeding someway questions related to social or economical differences

(HOFF, 2002:73).

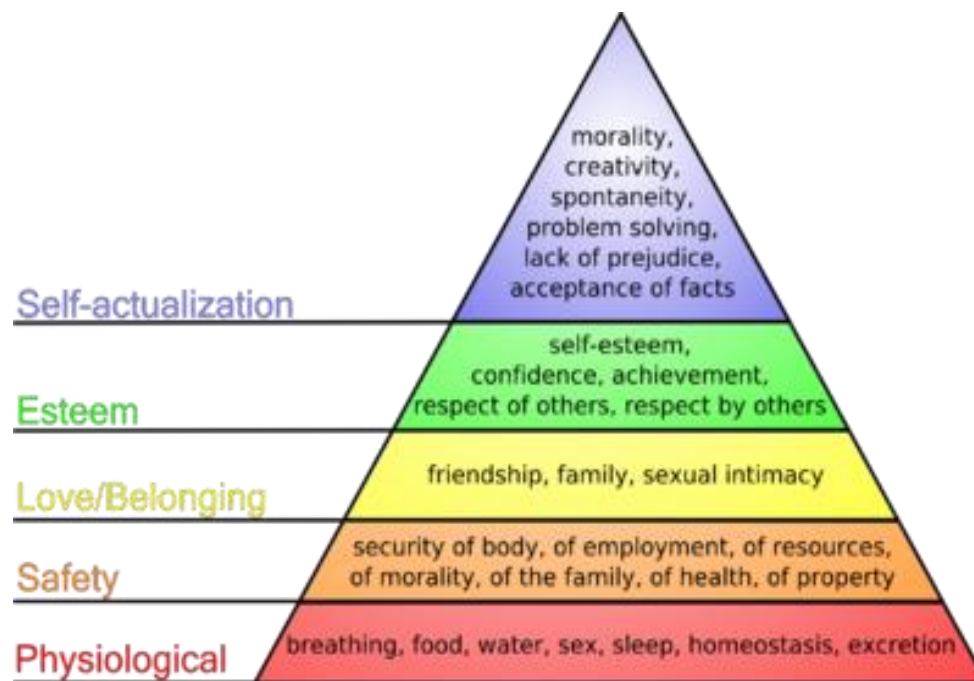
Besides that, approving and endorsing sensual/sexual behavior in its target-public advertisement not only associates it with sexual activity naturally motivator, but so it characterizes a social recompense trough demonstrated behavior acceptance and approval, provided that consumer has its attitudes positively endorsed trough acceptance, approval and encouragement from the *other*, advertisement discourse itself. “A behavior reinforced by another people measurement will differ from a behavior reinforced by mechanical ambience”.⁵

Maslow, founder of humanist psychology classifies human need into Five levels in his system knew as Maslow’s Paradigm or Maslow’s Pyramid:

³ Joseph Joubert (May, 7th 1754 – May 4th 1824) was a French moralist and essayist, most remembered because of its “*Pensées*” posthumous published.

⁴ SKINNER, about: Teoria e ciência do comportamento humano, 1967, p.88.

⁵ Ibidem, p. 172.



Picture 1 –Maslow’s Pyramid

This American psychologist explains that physiological and security needs are the most basic needs comprehended by our cognition, and when neglected they destabilize the complete pyramid turning impossible to attend higher needs once a health psyche could not focus on affective or self-esteem needs at while feeding, dwelling or another basic need is not attended (MASLOW, 1975:354). Sex as a basic need is among these factors harder to be neglected by conscience, furthermore, it is the only need found in more than one level, that’s why it can be understood with more than just one aspect: as a physical act it is included in physiological needs field, in a sphere of hedonism and pleasure desire; as an expression of closeness, connection and approval symbol it is found too among social/affective needs; considering the fact society recognize and attribute value to sexually successful people, sexual activity may serve as a way to conquest social projection or recognition from reference groups, this is what places sex among self esteem needs, because of all connotative values of ascendance and superiority which sex is incorporated with. This self affirmation purpose added to functional aspect is comprehended in same way by the psychologist, philosopher, sociologist and engineer Abraham Moles (1975) in his book *Kitsch Psychology*⁶ – the art of happiness, to Moles men have six ways to relate with objects: acquisition, destruction, transformation, utilitarianism, hedonism and kitsch. This last, kitsch phenomenon consists of subject values addition to utilitarian functions of objects and behaviors. According to Maslow, this attribution purpose would be the self affirmation usually observed in middle class. Art, communications, sports, family relationships, leisure, work, everything becomes incorporated with subject character, having more than one single function and objective:

We consider kitsch psychology as a dimension about objects and their relations with human being, the objects are connected to traditional functions and become a statute of connotative values (...). The Kitsch is opposed to simplicity, it embellishes common life making it appear like a strange complication, a complex game, prove of advanced civilizations. Therefore, Kitsch is a social function added to the previously meaning function whose purpose is not a support anymore, but a pretext”.

(MOLES, 1975:25).

Based on the structure proposed by Maslow and all sex perception variations, it is possible comprehend that inside sensuality/sexuality expressions there are multiple stimulus to attend needs in their diverse levels.

⁶ Kitsch phenomenon (term from the Germany verb *verkitschen*, remake, create new things using what is old) it consists on new values, concepts and ideas attribution over acts, objects and behaviors already existents.

Sensual/sexual appeals compose a highly efficient way of stimulation when compared with other kinds of appeals, however, to allow sexual insinuation motivates not only its receptor sexual interest, but mainly the advertised products consumption this kind of insinuation must be adequate according target public preferences and characteristics to obtain its identification or projection. Landowsky (1997:20-25), affirms publicity has an inherent cosmetic character, because when it demonstrates a model excited by the product the intention is taking receptors to see themselves into demonstrated situations and desire same pattern. This is the emulation process, in other words, an identification or projection with an attitude or behavior. Landowsky reinforces that advertisement uses sexual and sensual expressions with previously intention to communicate what it cannot expressed trough sensations. Once videos, magazines pages, newspapers and other medias cannot offer physical or tangible attributes to *aesthesia*, the sensorial perception, our feeling capacity, these attributes are translated as intangible and subjective aspects trough *synesthesia* to a similar meaning close what *aesthesia* would receive.

Trough this synesthetic function strategy advertisement turns its discourse understandable using the most comprehensible ways of pleasure for its target public, as describes Tânia Hoff:

Erotic is universal, it gives sense to the product, humanity to the economical. Trough an economical perspective, erotic represents an appeal, a persuasive procedure with great rhetoric because of its bodily language universality and materiality.

(HOFF, 2002: 72)

Sexual appeals are used to sell a big variety of products and services, including those not associated with sexual behavior, even though these last in a smaller frequency. 21th Century advertisement includes promotions of gas, cleaning products, light and air-conditioning systems, cars, remedies and several other examples of sexual association and all these examples reinforce the concept “sex sells”. However, the biggest sex appeals expression in modern advertisement is found in products and services directly connected to sensorial perception, the five basic senses: vision, audition, tact, smell and palate. Considering the fact sexual behavior is intrinsically related to our basic senses more than to intellectual values or logical reasoning, its association with products and services which attend sensorial pleasure (like perfumes, fashion and cosmetics) its more intelligible and acceptable (LANDOWSKY, 1997: 23-24).

“If publicity has this such big need of images about romances (and why not to say about butts too) and in opposite way it cares so little about physical descriptions of its products materiality this is because the consumption it promotes has as main motivation this basic desire (and its fantasies) not the functional order need”.

(LANDOWSKY, 1997: 22)

To Jung psychology the symbolism present in dreams, arts, myths and religions can express the individual's private aspect which escape from its conscience or are even denied.⁷ Trough these symbolism man reintegrates himself to his personal characteristics previously denied satisfying his own subjectivity.⁸ Symbols are bounded human being private experiences, therefore, they are identity expressions susceptible of persuasive use. Jung⁹ detected the existence of universal symbolism patterns capable to communicate same values to individuals or communities in far distant places and times because symbols are originate is their creator experiences, something that can happen in similar ways even in different places and times with very small variations will originate similar symbolism models and they are called archetypes. As publicity has an intrinsic symbolic character, its discourse uses archetypes so receptors may have a deeper identification with their own values and concepts, whatever they are assumed or repressed. Trough the emphases of these models consumption acquires capacity to integrate an individual with conduct patterns which will satisfy its own subjectivity and identity in moral, cultural or sexual character. Sexual fetishes are archetypes of postures and conducts approved by specific groups therefore they constitute a class of behavior patterns used by advertisement taking target public to identify itself.

Santaella (2008: 60) says publicity makes itself intelligible translating its proposals to receptors comprehension using signs participants of their repertory.

⁷ JUNG about O homem e seus símbolos, 2002:64.

⁸ Ibidem, p.27.

⁹ Ibidem, p.67.

The author considers Peirce signs classification: icon – association of common properties; index – cause and effect relations between sign and object; and symbol – conventional and arbitrary associations with no real physic connection with its object (SANTAELLA, 2008: 11-20). This same standard will be used to the following advertisements analysis.

Cinéma – Yves Saint-Laurent



Fig. 2 – Advertisement of Perfume *Cinéma* – Yves Saint-Laurent

Cinéma marketing communication is directed to the woman who sees herself as a valuable award, unreachable to most part of men and obtainable only for those real worthy (maybe neither them). The product name already sets its relation with visual activity, with exhibitionism and it indicates the target public particularity to desire contemplation which lauds its self esteem. *Cinéma* woman exposes herself to visual contemplation, what does not means any surrender or reciprocity, quite the opposite, this character personifies the concept of female omnipotence, the power of seduction which keeps men under control, classic men fear of woman impossible to be conquered. Examples of this archetype are found in diverse forms trough culture history: the persuasive goddess Aphrodite, irresistible to all men and gods and capable to cause a war just to prove she was the most beautiful being in Universe; Bible's villain Delilah who used beauty and sex to defeat Samson; all aristocrats who manipulated men or disposed of them becoming themselves their kingdoms controllers like Cleopatra, Nefertiti, Maria of Medici and Queen Elizabeth I; musical characters as the "*coqueta y risueña mujer*" from the tango *Por una cabeza*. Obtaining its positioning trough the female superiority archetype, Yves Saint-Laurent conquers its target-public trough its identification with these attitudes, in other words, the woman who approves (through experience or observation) using beauty, womanliness and demonstration of superiority to keep men under control. Because of this behavior women are reinforced for their self esteem and sexuality strengthening resultant of approval she receives.

In advertisement above, besides being the image center *Cinéma* woman is too the only character under light in contrast with men around her in darkness. With her legs turned left and her eyes looking to the right woman's positioning is same than the bottle's position, the only object but woman which reflects some light. This ambivalence between model and product fits perfectly on Peirce icons description (SANTAELLA, 2008: 12). An iconic association through which product receives the model qualities. The five men wearing smoking around her receive light from *Cinéma* woman, she is the only who can illuminate them. The only man who touches her is that one crouched, submissive, humble, so she allows him to touch her thigh while the others only contemplate her lustfully.

Axe



Fig. 4 –Axe advertisement placed on men restroom plaques



Fig. 5 –Axe advertisement placed on men restroom doors.



Fig.6 – Axe Advertisement

Despite the fact Axe brand offers several different fragrances, all its brand advertisement bring one cohesive sense of meaning: an explicit idea that Axe smells can irresistibly attract women, setting man free from all approach, convincement or seduction efforts. In these circumstances, Axe man is quite the opposite of classic seductive conqueror, he adopts a position of submission and passivity while woman owns the active and dominator character. This roles inversion gives man a condition of comfort and security because it spares him of shameful possibilities to be disclaimed and rejected. Once woman desires and search him with no shyness man has nothing to worry about neither reason to feel insecure, so his safety needs are attended and satisfied. Sexually confident and shameless women had always been in men imagination: In literature the most knew examples, even though in an implicit way are King Arthur of Camelot and Samson controlled by Delilah in Bible. Masculine fetish of domination by women own the form of the Police woman, the nurse, the school teacher, the beautiful boss and so many other representations in pornography industry; Brazilian Media gives space to personages like Tiazinha,

The Enchantress, The Ninja and others; Axe promise is becoming its consumer a target for women approval, an object for desire. Instead of resist him, women would follow, attack and use him at while man could passively enjoy everything girls stimulated by his smell would do.

In sex proposed by Axe, man is the passive person and woman performs all efforts and activities to seduce and delight him.¹⁰

Ange ou Demon – Givenchy

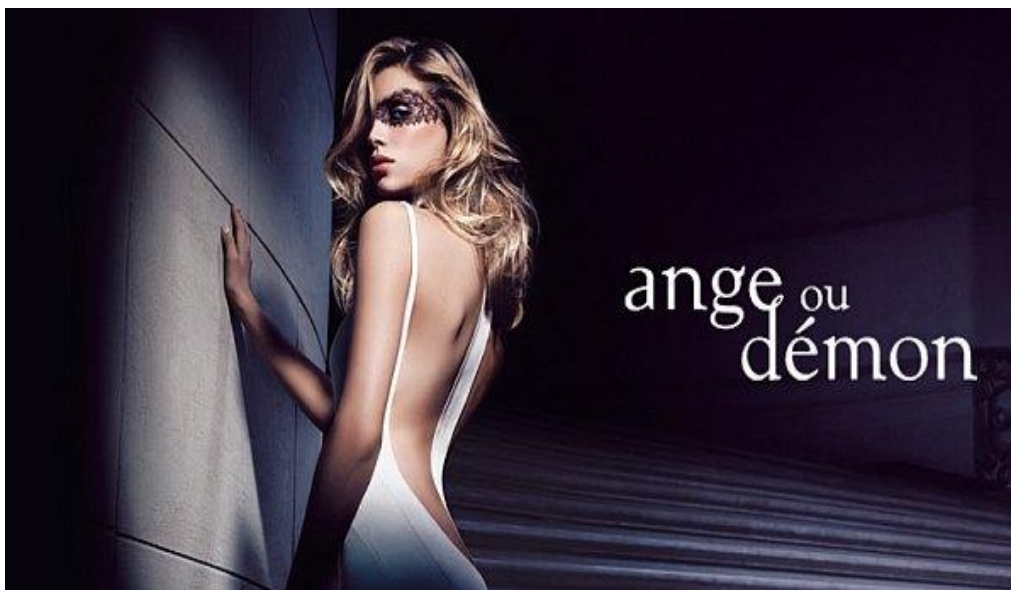


Fig. 7 – Announcement of Ange ou démon – Givenchy

The duplicity and ambiguity character is not only in the name of the perfume Angel or Demon. It flags all marketing communication about this product for a target capable of hiding or revealing its sexuality as convenient. *Ange ou Demon* women have an ability to take turns between the Angel and the demon inside themselves, demonstrating a trusty image to the world and another only knew by herself or those she chooses to show.



Fig. 8 – The actress Uma Thurman in a scene from commercial movie “Ange ou demon – Le secret”

¹⁰ In the Best-seller *Why men Love bitches* the journalist Sherry Argov exposes men preference for secure and confident women who demonstrate their wishes and preferences in sexual aspect.

Opposed what happens to men the sexuality affirmation by women can result them censure and reproach. The confident woman secure about her sexuality is passable of discrimination, so she may presents an image opposed to her real sexual behavior revealing herself only under secure circumstances. Of course personality disguise isn't restricted only to sexual aspects, but it happens with any characteristic which may result in the *other* disapproval. Since Middle Age woman needed preserve herself virgin to get married at while men didn't suffer this imposition, female virgin was a permutation object; In the movie "Mermaid Chronicles Part 1" Carla Gugino performs an ex-prostitute who hides her past from her husband, the character feels shamed and apologizes when her husband lauds her enthusiasm in bed; In the movie Cruel Intentions Sarah Michelle Gellar performs the student Kathryn Merteuil, against her wished she hides her sexual disposal while her step-brother Sebastian can swagger about his conquests, in one scene the character complains for her step-brother she needs acting like virgin to be considered a lady. Recognizing the alternation behavior between sexuality hiding and revelation the campaign demonstrates opposite attitudes integration trough chromatic contrasts: Black and white, light and shadow, what consist in an iconic expression of synesthesia.

The campaign video shows a masks party, the principal model is the only blond woman, the only wearing white and with light eyes acquiring an angelic character in contrast with the other models with their dark clothes, dark eyes and dark hairs. The light is focused on Angel model and it follows her walking. She finds a man and takes her own mask off showing a black mask under the first, revealing too she has something in common with all "demons" there. She kisses this man and goes up the stairs, an index sign function demonstrating he should follow her. In campaign "Ange ou demon – Le secret" that advertises another variation from this perfume, the actress Uma Thurman confronts her other face in the mirror discovering her dark evil side. She looks around as a sign of concerning and takes her finger to her lips, a very knew sign of secret. But at the end she smiles accepting her dark demoniac side.

Final Consideration

Advertisement represents in modern consumption society an efficient mass communication way, it started becoming more important in industrial revolution, same starting point from several social changes which designed a society marked by consumption. We searched with this work to demonstrate how sensuality and eroticism uses consist in a superiorly efficient motivation in advertisement discourse. We studied sexual insinuation impact as motivation and its capacity to stimulate its target public needs and desires. It was treated here how necessary is adjusting erotic discourse towards target particular preferences to result in emulation, the process responsible for consumption predisposal and sensual/sexual thematic better applicability towards products whose purpose its sensorial pleasure, like perfumes are.

Advertisement seduction has solid bases in the emotional line followed by the agencies copywriters and art directors whose purpose is enchanting and delighting their receptors. It is possible to perceive verb-visual language – and its resources – trough indispensable elements inherent advertisement discourse and its seduction web, these resources turn possible publicity main purpose: persuasion. The announcements images analysis confirm this affirmation and allows some considerations: *Cinéma - Yves Saint-Laurent*: it has a positioning connected to exhibitionism and exposition to the other admiration. Observed attitude in several examples trough history and culture, when confidants women, secure about their beauty and sexuality controlled their ambience manipulating men desires; *Axe* – although there are several fragrances offered by this brand, all their advertisings bring a cohesive sense of meaning: with no shyness and no inhibition women own sexual initiative, allowing man may enjoy female harassment without flirting or taking risks to be rejected. Man becomes the passive person in this relation; *Ange ou Demon – Givenchi*: this campaign demonstrates a disguising behavior usually necessary for women to avoid disapproval and their sexuality revelation only under secure circumstances, what means, free of censure and reproach. Sensuality and eroticism, when applied with standard and planning become strategies which warrant emulator process and target public identification with advertised brands and products.

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Webgraphy

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