

The volume has at its centre of investigation diaries and mechanisms of self-creation. The book follows the psychological conflict as told by the personal narratives of Annie Bentoiu, Alice Voinescu, Nina Cassian and Constanța Buzea. It provides an important analysis as its writer manages to select and capitalize the sources. In the first instance, the author establishes the cultural importance of preserving such personal narratives. In the second, she emphasizing the importance of gender studies and more specifically, the feminist approach, who has been insufficiently explored with reference to Romanian culture.

Fătu-Tutoveanu's research is also relevant as she makes an effort in "understanding the untold". From there, she builds her own methodological mechanisms and mind maps to cover a research gap in Romanian historiography because this issue has been fragilely handled by historians, who should have seen the importance of an interdisciplinary approach and cultural fields of research. The book brings up a new perspective into Romanian Communism, that of individuals' self presentation. Studying the types of self embraced by these women, it shows how people make sense of their personal existence during the communist period, and what kind of beliefs shaped them in this regard and how they have healed, psychologically, because the narratives played a key role during their isolation.

Regarding the personal narratives, the volume shows us how this genre became a dominating category among the publishing options but most researchers, especially historians, believe that the introduction of subjectivity makes history more fragile. Hence, the new directions in historiography, such as post-revisionism, show us that subjectivity is not the opposite of objectivity, but they are complementary. Consequently, it would be brave to address topics such as the history of private life, or to appeal to

diaries and oral history in our research.

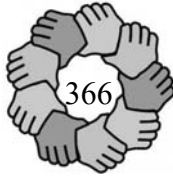
Having said that, I agree with Irina Paperno and Jochen Hellbeck who said that only a combined application of literary and historical tools of analysis can disclose a multidimensional, literary and extra-literary, notion of self in the personal document. Personal narratives were never fully considered a historical source but they are extremely important because among other things, they show us how the metamorphosis of self unfolds.

Marina Trufan



Sandu Frunză,
*Advertising
Constructs
Reality: Religion
and Advertising
in the Consumer
Society,*
București,
Tritonic, 2014

This mainly theoretical volume is a result of the author's interest and expertise – as a scholar and as a Professor at the Department of Communication, Public Relations and Advertising ("Babeș-Bolyai" University, Cluj) – in analysing religious and ethical aspects related to advertising. Using an extensive theoretical apparatus as a basis for the arguments exposed in the volume, Sandu Frunză argues that the complex – and hybrid (due to the mixture of cultural tools, values and functions it reunites) – area of advertising is a significant and rich field for such an interdisciplinary approach, considering it



“the dominant communication force today” (80). As the title anticipates, the volume departs from the idea that “advertising is an instrument to construct reality” (24), using explicitly or implicitly recycled religious patterns and symbols as some of its main tools. Thus, through the use of myth, symbol, ritual, fetish, taboo, or totem, advertising becomes able to “to rebuild the world from a symbolic perspective” (178). As the author argues, advertising can be seen as “the deposit and revealer of the mythological structures of the sacred. Its role is also to disclose various areas of the real, even if this reality is constructed or downright manufactured” (17). The myth narrative structure – which is, we might add, a timeless, meaning-providing model – stands out as the most significant of the religious and symbolical instruments used by contemporary advertising.

Specifically, these narrative models are used in a concentrated version by advertising and, therefore, the reality constructed is that of a microcosm (7), using the logic of the “fragmentary, of the epidemic, of the lack of depth, of entropy” (46). Despite these attributes, the discourse of advertising preserves – or, better still, recycles – the ritualic and initiatory functions of traditional myths, offering the promise of eternity and paradisaic abundance (51), the commodities being invested with the symbolic dimensions also added to the consumerist society, as Frunzã argues. The interesting paradox repeated by the volume is Baudrillard’s assumption that “the consumer society no longer produces myth, this is because *it is itself its own myth*” (164), a self-reflexive consumerist mythology of abundance, of endless consumption. In this context, the author uses the theories of seduction to explain the symbolic communication paraphernalia employed by the consumption-oriented but also reality constructing

advertising discourse. The implicit religious aspects become apparent, the volume argues, in the ritualisation of consumption (41) and commodity fetishism (naturally, the latter with direct reference to Marx’s phrase). An interesting argument is that consumption – both that of images and of goods – contributes to the process of identity construction or production (78). The process involves an “emotional consumption” (in Lipovetsky’s words) as well as a symbolic investiture of the products and brands (“brand idolatry” or fetishism), the consumers buying things “for their symbolic qualities rather than for their usefulness or their superior intrinsic qualities in comparison to similar products present on the market” (78).

Another interesting chapter discusses the taboos and fetishes present in contemporary advertising, the former also introducing the idea of the forbidden in relation to both the law and advertising ethics (in particular with reference to the subliminal messages contained by advertisements or commercials). Concerning the explicit religious aspects to be identified in advertising, the author discusses the examples of the totem-oriented advertising campaign displayed by Adidas (Jeremy Scott’s spring/summer 2013 collection for Adidas Originals inspired by Native American culture) and the totem and myth-oriented advertising campaign to Honda Fireblade CBR 1000RR by Cohn & Jansen Ashley & Holmes advertising agency (Romania). As well as modern brands’ logos, the traditional totem added a symbolic as well as a recognisable dimension to the objects it was drawn on. “In the postmodern world, the logos, and the other personalized emblems that man uses in a secularized way in his organizational communication fulfil a totemic function. ... Used in advertising they become elements of visual identity, functioning as symbolic structures meant to target the consumption and to maintain the production of material



and symbolic goods” (125). Moreover, the ownership of these symbolic commodities/totems “translates a consumerist culture as a continuous desire to possess symbolic goods.” (129) This myth structure – focused on reinterpreted totemism – “functions in advertising as a communicational device” (135).

A final section of the volume changes the focus towards the so-called political advertising (the author explaining his option for this formula rather than for that of political marketing). The volume employs two main perspectives: the idea of symbolically delegating power to the political leader (a form interpreted here as part of a political fetishism complex [80-83]) and the problem of the image as constructed by political advertising (in the logic of brand creation). The latter also includes the issue of public performance, investing this type of discourse with a theatrical dimension (the public image seen as a mask or a *persona*). Additionally, Frunzã argues, “as representative of the aspirations of a community, the politician’s image has a totemic function in public space” (140). This emphasis on the image is part of the contemporary society’s obsession with the image, leading to a sort of image addiction (163) of today’s consumer culture.

The final remarks of the volume discuss the contemporary paradox of “de-mythicization processes doubled by a continuous re-mythicization process” (156) in relation to secularization (of both discourse and of public space). In this context, one of the key questions posed by the volume is: “to what extent elements such as mythical, symbolic, ritualistic, religious that we find present in the advertising rhetoric ... are intentionally introduced by the creators of the respective advertising” products? (153). The significant amount of implicit as well as explicit religious patterns and symbolism present in today’s advertising as well as in

media in general speaks of the strength of such archetypes, acknowledged by the media producers, although in some cases such familiar cultural references might, however, emerge accidentally. Still, if we consider the concentrated advertising products and their “reality construction” aims, we can safely speak of a persistent and productive use of the religious paradigm, Frunzã concluding that “advertising ultimately lodges postmodern man’s religious creativity” (171).

Andrada Fãtu-Tutoveanu



Graphè,
vol. 19,
*Le Livre de
Jonas*,
Université
d’Artois,
2010

Le numéro 19 (2010) de la revue *Graphè*, publication du centre « Textes et cultures » de l’Université d’Artois, est consacré au petit livre vétérotestamentaire de Jonas. Les 13 contributions du numéro s’interrogent sur la composition et les origines du texte, sur le développement, surtout au Moyen Âge, d’une iconographie spécifique du personnage Jonas et sur les avatars modernes du mythe. Le thème central du volume étant la survivance du mythe de Jonas dans la culture occidentale, l’approche des auteurs est notamment narratologique ou historique. Ce qui est le plus remarquable