

# New Age Consumer Behavior

## Week 3: The context of consumption

### SESSION 5

#### Context of digital consumption

#### 6. Consumer Culture

Purpose: understand the importance of digital culture

#### 7. Interpersonal Influence

Purpose: understand consumer persuasion

### SESSION 6

#### Reading discussions

# New Age Consumer Culture

## First view on culture :

Culture consists in

- values (i.e. enduring beliefs ; e.g. the importance of smartphones)
- norms (i.e. informal, usually unspoken rules that govern behavior; e.g. handling smartphone functions).



## Second view on culture:

Culture is seen to be a societal attribute that consists of blueprints for action and interpretation.

Cultural blueprints enable a person to operate in a manner acceptable to other members of the culture.



(cont)

Cultural blueprints are

- Repeated and reinforced
- Ritualized in social activities
- Reaffirmed and renewed through ritual experiences
- Recurring in aesthetic canons



Considering that both of the above views fail to say that which culture is as they say what culture does, culture can be seen to be the particular way of thinking and doing of a social entity this being the individual, organization or any community.

The emphasis here is on

- the differences in culture
- the differences across cultures

Therefore, culture is irreducible to a fixed list of norms, values, goods, patterns, or events.

Ways of thinking and doing involve holding for true different sets of values that include:

- Instrumental values: emphasis on commonly acknowledged beliefs about how people should behave (ethics) – e.g. tech competence is an expected competence
- Terminal values: emphasis on desirable living styles – e.g. it is cool to be techy

(cont)

- Ethnocentric values: emphasis on the place of origin or residence – e.g. sharing information/picks with a social community
- Material values: emphasis on ownership of tangible products – e.g. having the most up-to-date gismo





In addition to values, cultural myths, as coherent descriptions play an important role in the new age culture because they:

- Emphasize interconnectivity – e.g. stories on and over Facebook
- Maintain social order – e.g. there are cool ways to communicate – LOL
- Provide psychological models – e.g. how friends communicate can be a model to be followed

Symbols are cultural symbols in that they are the product of a society that uses it.

They demonstrate status and social belonging.



Cultural rituals consist in behaviors that involve repetition in a relatively fixed sequence : they are the enactment of myths and values.

New age ritual behaviors include:

- Acquaintance – e.g. community roll calls; web navigation
- Construction – e.g. network links; web page
- Intimacy – e.g. communicating secrets; sharing pictures
- Routine – e.g. habits; formalization of rules
- Disconnection – e.g. alienation and incivility

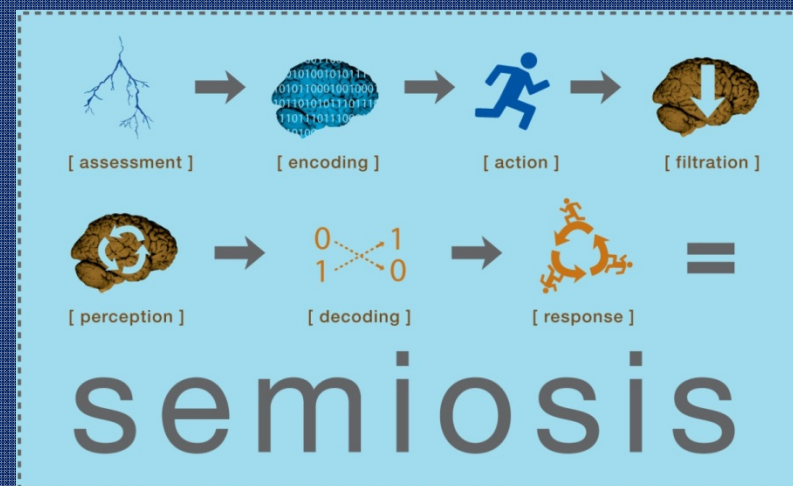
Cultural myths, symbols, and rituals do not exist in a vacuum; they are meaningful because digital and analog consumption are meaningful; they are a meaningful social activity that involves a semiotic exchange, the exchange of meanings.



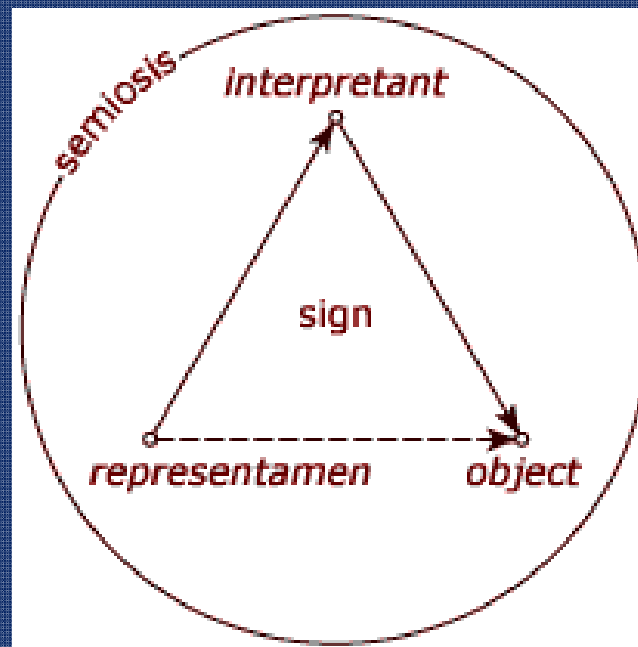
(cont)

The exchange of meanings involves:

- The production of meanings = the encoding of digital and analog products with values and meanings.
- The consumption of meanings = the decoding of values and meanings as carried by consumer products.

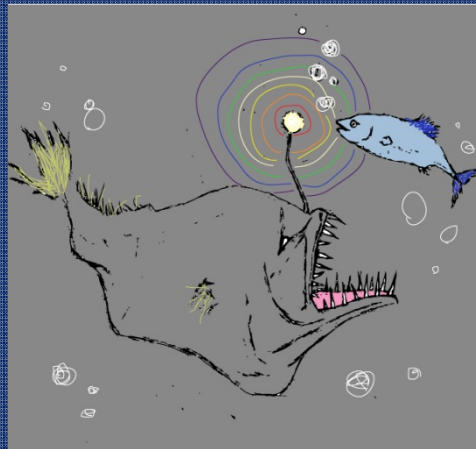


In this exchange, there are activities which articulate (i.e. bring together) both parties to the semiotic exchange (encoders and decoders of meanings) – *interpretants* – relative to consumer products – object – and their representation – representamen .



Such activities are designed with the idea that they contain elements that are able to summon consumers – process of interpellation (Althusser), appellation (Goldman & Papson) or apostrophe (Arnould et al.).

Put otherwise, consumers are drawn by the digital and analog environments because they are constituted in such a manner to present themselves as flawless, perfect, and enduring.



# Interpersonal influence



Interpersonal influence involves the alternation of thinking or behaving as a result of both accidental and volitional symbolic expression – consumer persuasion.

Thus, consumer persuasion is the expression of power that exists in the various forms of interpersonal relations.

It is cultural!



# reading discussions