



**Title:** Interdiscursive Readings in Cultural Consumer Research

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The cultural consumption research landscape of the 21st century is marked by an increasing cross-disciplinary fermentation. At the same time, cultural theory and analysis have been marked by successive 'inter-' turns, most notably with regard to the Big Four: multimodality (or intermodality), interdiscursivity, transmediality (or intermediality), and intertextuality. This book offers an outline of interdiscursivity as an integrative platform for accommodating these notions. To this end, a call for a return to Foucault is issued via a critical engagement with the so-called practice-turn. This re-turn does not seek to reconstitute venerably Foucauldianism, but to theorize 'inters-' as vanishing points that challenge the integrity of discrete cultural orders in non-convergent manners. The propounded interdiscursivity approach is offered as a reading strategy that permeates the contemporary cultural consumption phenomena that are scrutinized in this book, against a pan-consumptivist framework. By drawing on qualitative and mixed methods research designs, facilitated by CAQDAS software, the empirical studies that are hosted here span a vivid array of topics that are directly relevant to both traditional and new media researchers, such as the consumption of ideologies in Web 2.0 social movements, the ability of micro-celebrities to act as cultural game-changers, the post-loyalty abjective consumption ethos. The theoretically novel approaches on offer are coupled with methodological innovations in areas such as user-generated content, artists' branding, and experiential consumption.

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## Chapter 1

### **Inter-everything: resuming the discursive turn in cultural consumer research**

#### **Abstract**

This chapter sets the introductory stage for the entire book by putting forward an integrative approach to interdiscursivity whereby the successive ‘inter’ turns are viewed as modes-of-interdiscursivity. To this end, a call for a return to Foucault is issued, not in order to venerably reconstitute archeological epistemology in a dogmatic fashion, but with a view to eschewing the dogmatizing effect of the naively realist assumptions that buttress the so-called ‘practice-turn’. As extensively argued, this turn had already been taken by Foucault. The evoked re-turn is historically situated in a terrain where praxiologists are increasingly challenging Foucault’s discursivity in favor of a paradigmatic shift that views the sociocultural domain as a nexus of self-subsistent social practices where meaning has been reduced to a fuzzy ‘element’ of practices. However, approaching cultural consumer phenomena, analyzing, interpreting them, but also, on the reverse, facilitating culturally informed marketing planning entails effectively dimensionalizing the cultural context that shelters consumption practices. In a sense, this perspectival take on interdiscursivity resembles the deconstructionist program of philosophizing at the limits of a tradition as repetition of master-signifiers and master-signifieds by pointing to the fissures in an arhi-text that threaten it with irreparable dissemination (aporias, tropes, contrived oppositions and exemplarities, axiomatic sublimations). However, this approach to interdiscursivity does not assume as its main field of application seminal texts in a philosophical tradition that have inseminated a plethora of texts, cultural practices and genres. Its orientation is not arhi-textual, but ultra-mundane, whence stems the need for engaging critically with the praxiological turn. Second, its focus does not revolve around the discernment of regularities that may account en masse for social order, as assumed by praxiologists, but around vanishing points as random guerilla-like rhizomatic intrusions, both commonalities and discrepancies in the seemingly neatly woven edifice of social practices. It is by dint of such random intrusions that the cultural, only thinly conceived as system and far from being organized as an arborescent structure, continues to operate as the force that animates repetitive, mechanistic patterns as encountered in monolithic, automated social practices, as well as why a turn away from the cultural is untenable.

# *Consuming experiences, practices and spectacles*

## **Chapter 2**

### **Taking the ‘multimodal turn’ in interpreting consumption experiences**

#### **Abstract**

This chapter addresses the potential contributions of sociosemiotically informed multimodal analysis to framing and systematically interpreting experiential consumption phenomena. By dint of tried and tested sociosemiotic methods, cultural consumer researchers may benefit considerably from the modal segmentation of cultural practices, with a view to yielding stratified accounts of experiences in terms of discursive configurations comprising metafunctions, modes and semiotic resources. The adoption of a multimodal approach in cultural consumer research allows for comparisons across studies, of seamlessness and of maximal integration along different analytical/interpretive levels, thus constituting a potentially indispensable device for modeling consumption experiences.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Mapping cultural consumer engagement in user-generated advertising**

#### **Abstract**

User-generated advertising (UGA) has been blossoming over the past few years as marketers are actively seeking to tighten bonds with consumers through engagement methods. Despite the rampant availability of listening technologies and the ever more nuanced mining of social media through Big Data applications, our understanding of the implications and the potential of UGA from a digital humanities point of view remains limited. This study ventures into mapping the interdiscursive cultural terrain of UGA with a view to furnishing a systematic account of how it affords to flesh out co-creatively a brand vision. To this end, a sociosemiotic approach is adopted that dimensionalizes the cultural resources employed in UGA as a nested structure that combines macrocultural aspects of cultural order/type with microcultural ones, such as genre and concrete cultural representations. The conceptual model is exemplified by recourse to a UGA corpus from the 10<sup>th</sup> and final wave of Doritos’ Crash the Super Bowl promotion, undergirded by a mixed methods research design that features a grounded theoretical procedure, facilitated by quantitative analyses.

## Chapter 4

### **Consuming thanghood: dancing to brand image with Miley Cyrus**

#### **Abstract**

This chapter scrutinizes how Miley Cyrus's brand values are projected through the multimodal semiotic structure of the live performance of the song "Do my thang" (from the *Bangerz* album [2013]). It is shown how a brand image is enscripted in Cyrus's spectacle as 'script within script' in various modes (other than the verbal and sonic ones that are defining of the recorded song), as well as in the interaction among modes, with an emphasis on the dance mode (as composite mode made up of the kinesic and haptic ones). A sociosemiotic conceptual framework is adopted in conjunction with an interpretive videographic method of analysis, facilitated by the multimodal qualitative discourse analytic software atlas.ti. Attending to structural couplings between signs and modes in the context of bespoke artists' brand languages constitutes a priority for managing an artist as brand, and, concomitantly, for safeguarding relevance for a fandom. A multimodal reading grid is offered to this end. Furthermore, it is shown how Cyrus construes an imaginary, neo-burlesque brand space of hyperdifferentiation, narcissistic play and polymorphous sexuality that she and her dancing crew project onto an evoked audience. This is the first study that theorizes the live show spectacle as the manifest discourse whereupon brand image and brand values are edified, with an emphasis on the dance mode, over and above the verbal/ visual modes that prevail in the advertising/branding literatures.

### ***Consuming oneself and others***

## Chapter 5

### **Consuming the limit: Furious Pete and the re-evaluation of all values**

#### **Abstract**

Micro-celebrities have been proliferating alongside the increasing importance of social media as avenues for self branding in a participatory cultural predicament. This chapter adopts a storytelling approach for canvassing how the brand identity of Furious Pete, a competitive speed-eating icon, is shaped coherently through the micro-narratives that populate his vlogs. By drawing on the social positioning perspective on storytelling that emphasizes how a persona, others and culture at large are discursively produced through situated positionings,

enhanced by psychoanalytic insights (cf. De Fina, 2015, p.382), it is shown how this micro-celebrity may constitute a game-changer with regard to entrenched consumptive mores. This is achieved by adopting a narrative strategy of re-evaluation of all cultural values according to the ethos of speed-eating or, as tagged here, ‘limeating’ as ‘consuming (to) the limit’, and by delivering consumptive desire to an unbound orality whereby differentially valorized gastronomic offerings are annihilated in the face of cannibalistic drives.

## **Chapter 6**

### **Consuming antinatalism in social media**

#### **Abstract**

Antinatalism, a relatively recent moral philosophical perspective and ideology that avows ‘it is better not to have ever existed’, has spawned a new social movement with an active presence in social media. This study draws on the discourse historical approach (DHA) to critical discourse analysis for offering a firm understanding as to how the collective identity of the Facebook antinatalist NSM is formed. By focusing narrowly on how this ideology is consumed in the situated interaction among the NSM’s members it is shown that collective identity is a dynamic schema, rather than a uniform construct, enshrouding a plethora of micro-interactions. Individuals constantly negotiate its meaning in context, as they seek to streamline interdiscursively the antinatalist system of ideas with their lifeworld through a web of interlocking schemata, discursive and rhetorical strategies. Finally, antinatalism is identified as a peculiar case of post-modern metanarrative and conceptually elaborated as a new type of ‘metametanarrative’.

### ***Consuming the Impossible***

## **Chapter 7**

### **Consuming the Beauty Ideal:**

#### **A critical argumentation approach to skin-care advertising**

#### **Abstract**

This chapter introduces critical argumentation theory and analysis to cultural consumer research with a view to affording a cultural understanding of advertising discourse. Although rhetorical figures and rhetorical appeals have been amply scrutinized in the marketing discipline, argumentation schemes remain as yet untapped as regards their potential for

offering nuanced insights about advertising claims by attending to the multiple layers of ad texts' argumentative structuration. In order to illustrate the areas of contribution of critical argumentation, a corpus of print ads from the anti-ageing product category is drawn upon. The analysis unearths layers of argumentation by attending to latent statements, hidden premises and logical fallacies. The implications for critical marketing and for policy-making are highlighted amidst an external marketing environment where anti-ageing claims are attracting heavy criticism.

## **Chapter 8**

### **Consumed by the Real: on abjective consumption and its freaky vicissitudes**

#### **Abstract**

In this chapter the concept of abjection is extended to cultural consumer research by offering a conceptual framework of abjective consumption that rests on three pillars, namely irrationality, meaninglessness, dissolution of selfhood. By critically reflecting on Kristeva's psychoanalytic insights, it is argued that abjective consumption constitutes more than a peculiar case of uncontrollable desire, far removed from an affirmative quest for (sub)alternative cultural identities. The existentially affirmative phenomenon of abjective consumption and its cultural ramifications are interpreted by pursuing a psychoanalytically informed discursive route. Its modus operandi is illustrated by drawing on a corpus of 50 documentary episodes from the TV series "My Strange Addiction" and "Freaky Eaters." The findings from this analysis point to different, simultaneously operative discursive complexes (e.g. moralizing, medical), none of which is commensurate to abjective consumption.