

A Semiotic Paradox: Scientific Language in the Narrative of TV Advertisement-

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Volume 24 Issue 5 (December 2022) Article 7**María Jesús De Prada Vicente,****"A Semiotic Paradox: Scientific Language in the Narrative of TV Advertisement"**<<http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol24/iss5/7>>

Contents of **CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture 24.5 (2022)**<<http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol24/iss5/>>

Abstract: The narrative we find in TV advertisement especially abounds in scientific terms that the viewers hardly understand. The apparently 'scientific' language induces them to believe in the modern myth of science as absolute truth, which inevitably produces alienation from reality. The more such language triumphs, the more alienation they suffer without knowing it. Such is our situation today that reminds us of the time of Nazi in which alienating language was dominant. However, whether the use of scientific language on TV advertisement becomes alienating or not depends on the socio-cultural context of the viewers. For example, in Japan where the tradition gives more power and space to the 'signifiant' than the 'signifié', scientific terms used in advertisement are not necessarily meant to indicate 'truth' but just play the role of fascinating signifiants that stimulate the viewers' dream of paradise, of a wonderland. Those viewers momentarily impersonate 'the modern Westerners', enjoying the participation in a collective dream which gives them much pleasure. If they purchase the advertised product, it is not because they believe its effect is scientifically proved but because it invites them to share the collective dream stimulated by the advertisement. One may say it is a semiotic paradox for the ununderstandable makes sense in their mind.

María Jesús DE PRADA VICENTE

A Semiotic Paradox: Scientific Language in the Narrative of TV Advertisement

-1-

Scientific writings have been forming a part of literature since the beginning of Modern Age, and in recent years, we find beautiful literature created by scientists. One of its examples is the work of Ilya Prigogine, Nobel laureate in chemistry in 1977. With Isabelle Stengers, this Russian-Belgian scientist developed an explanation of the thermodynamic theory on chaos and pendulum movements in such a marvelous manner that we, non-scientists, can catch a sight of the possibility of connection between natural sciences and humanities. (Prigogine and Stengers)

The appearance of such books is a great event for all those who are looking for a bridge between the "Two Cultures" separated from each other for such a long time. Unfamiliar with science, especially with its specific terminology, we surely have difficulties in following the argument developed in those books, but we can still enjoy reading them because of their fascinating stories we usually find only in good novels. Yes, they are of genuine literature because of their stories that shake our heart with all the movements and palpitations. Oral or written, every narrative has its own *raison d'être*: transmission to others of emotions caused by a historical event or a natural phenomenon. Everyone knows that narrative is not a mere collection of data or facts; it has a literary power that works on our emotions. Scientific narrative makes no exception to it. It can move its listeners and readers.

Recent development of cognitive science shows science is made of narratives because it tries to construct stories of natural phenomena. Mark Turner is one of those who assert it, saying that our bodily and emotional reactions to environment necessarily lead to the making of a story of the world (Turner 12-15). This implies not only novelists but also scientists are story makers.

Of course, we need reasoning to make a story. But as Antonio Damasio, a well-known neuroscientist, explains, our rational understanding is only possible when our emotions are fully experienced and known (Damasio 245-252). Our knowledge and thought come then from emotions, and those emotions are intimately connected to the body and the images that our brain constructs as is affirmed by other neuroscientists such as Gerald Edelman or Giulio Tononi (Edelman and Tononi 218).

Now, if our thinking process results from emotions connected to the body and the images the brain creates, there cannot be any intrinsic difference between literary thinking and scientific one. From this, we may say that all of us are potentially poets or scientists or both. Indeed, we make up a cosmos of symbols everyday just like a poet or a scientist. A poet uses one series of symbols, a scientist another, but we all construct our world by symbols.

Some may argue that scientific representations are conceptual while literary ones metaphorical. They appear to be right, but even scientists start from a metaphorical cognition of the universe and translate it afterwards in a conceptual language. It seems undeniable that our cognitive basis is metaphorical as George Lakoff and Mark Johnson pointed out. (Lakoff and Johnson)

2

Modern people have a bad habit of thinking of science and literature as two separate things that have nothing in common. They believe wrongly, without reflection, in the vicious dichotomy of concepts and metaphors, rationality and sensitivity, etc., and often give priority to the rational and the conceptual. This is of course an error, on which abovementioned Damasio says as follows: "When emotion is entirely left out of the reasoning picture, reason turns out to be more flawed than when emotion plays bad tricks on our decisions" (xii).

Now, the idea that science and literature have a basis in common is not new. The interpretations of dreams Sigmund Freud exploited a century ago were based upon such an idea that the internal world of human beings can be analyzed scientifically. His interpretations shows that our making of an emotional narrative is based on vivid images that appear in our dreams. Although some people like Karl Popper consider his theories unscientific (Popper), Freud's attitude toward the unknown and his method of exhaustive analysis show a genuine spirit of science. We can expect future sciences to prove his theories in a positivistic way.

Some may argue that literature is different from science because it does not point at the real whereas science does. The argument is wrong because science does not point at the real more than literature. Let us quote Damasio again. He says we can never know the real by any means: "We do not know, and it is improbable that we will ever know what "absolute" reality is like'... All that you can know for certain

is that they are real to yourself, and that other beings make comparable images. We share our image-based concept of the world with other humans" (97).

The quotation above corresponds to the psychoanalytical view Jacques Lacan held: "The real is the impossible; it exists as impossible" (*Le réel est l'impossible, il existe comme impossible*, 135).

3

As we saw above, it is a mistake to think that scientists use conceptual language whereas literature uses a metaphorical one. Metaphors can be found in scientific discourses as well. Neuroscientists, for example, use the verb "trigger" to explain the transmission of signals from synapses to neurons. Such metaphors can be found even more frequently in the domain of mechanics in which animistic mentality is quite active. Needless to say, animism is a form of metaphorical thinking. The whole system of mechanical physics is based on a vision according to which the world is alive and moving.

Non-scientists often use scientific terms as metaphors without necessarily understanding them. For example, we say "They have good chemistry" to mean "They naturally like each other" without really knowing what chemistry is. Now, the excessive use of such terms in non-scientific context may cause problems. The situation becomes worse when the terms are too specific or too abstract to understand. Floods of incomprehensible neologism easily lead people to collective irrationality. That is what happened to Nazism as Jean Pierre Faye pointed out in his *Langage Meurtrier* (268-278).

Through an exhaustive analysis of the infamous discourse of Adolf Hitler and his company, the French poet concluded that Nazi narrative was full of pseudo-philosophical terms whose meaning was too abstract for people to understand. People who absorb so many incomprehensible words every day will end up trapping themselves in a fanatical ideology propagated through those words. They lose their judgment and reason just because of the incomprehensibility of the language they are forced to absorb.

This leads us to see that if we incessantly absorb a narrative full of scientific terms we do not understand, we can easily be alienated from our self and the world we live in, and develop a collective delusion. Let us remember these words of Damasio: "If the words did not become images, they would not be anything we could know" (135).

4

To become aware of the danger of our epoch full of incomprehensible scientific terms, we only have to see the hypnotizing effect TV advertisements are producing. Many of them are based on a pseudo-scientific narrative that apparently tells a truth. Let us analyze the effect to which people are so familiarized: the effect of the advertisement of a health or beauty product, one of the most typical examples of such narrative full of incomprehensible scientific terms. Needless to say, their main targets are TV viewers anxious about keeping their youth and beauty.

The danger of such advertisement comes from the incomprehensibility of the words employed there. The excessive use of medical and chemical terms incomprehensible to most of the viewers alienate them from the real world. Such narrative is successful especially today when people are used to information full of technical jargons they do not understand. It alienates them from the "image-based sense of community that they could share with other humans, even with some animals" (Damasio 136).

Of course, advertisers who seek to hypnotize TV viewers make the best of it. To sell their products as much and as fast as possible, they make the maximal efforts to manipulate the viewers' emotions. They create fake and alien emotions whose emptiness leads the viewers to buy their products almost automatically.

Every single individual knows, in a way or another, that consumerism cannot give real satisfaction. However, nobody can stop its penetration into the world as if everyone preferred remaining unconscious and alienated. The age of zombies is ready to come; people will enjoy a paradise of fakeness provided by prodigiously insane narratives.

The fact that we are living in such a "paradise" is reflected on a shabby dollar store and a gorgeous luxury brand store built in parallel at every corner of a big city. This commercial phenomenon corresponds to the powerlessness of one's individual self that loses the capacity of judgment and making decisions. Today, we have a manufactured way to make up our apparent self, provided by a mass production system, and we are induced to buy the kit before we become aware of our real self. Given a fake emotion before having the genuine one, we are induced to purchase objects on sale, appreciating nothing but their price.

Put another way, we are living the real lack of communication. This is paradoxical because we hear the word "communication" more than ever. This paradox reminds us of the words of the ancient Chinese

sage Lao Tse (6th century B.C.) who said "When you talk on ethics, it is because we do not have it any more" (Lao Tse 34).

As we saw above, communication is possible only when the community we are living in is based upon an emotional system inherent to a metaphorical language that allows us to share the world with other members. When we capture the emotion contained in each word, we can create an image that helps us understand the contents of a speech, even its rational implications. Such communication is largely absent from today's world. Mass media and its fake narratives have reduced our emotions, leading us to irrational behaviors. Terrorists' violence that terrifies us all is an outcome of this situation; terrorism is a condensation of emotional reduction.

It is ironic to see the development of extraordinary repertory of technologies to facilitate communication when we are just suffering the lack of it. Let us repeat the absence of communication is due to the lack of metaphorical language shared by a community. The problem of TV advertisement in question is right there. Instead of making communication easier, it cuts up each individual from the rest of the world, increasing dis-communication.

5

As Kathy Peiss brilliantly showed in *Hope in a Jar: The Making of America's Beauty Culture* (1998), American women have been pushed to the center of consumerism as if they were queens who could buy anything they wanted. Owing to the *tsunami* of globalization, this has spread all over the world, at least where capitalism is dominant. One may say women today are profitable construct for a new society once again built by men.

We often hear "Feminism is over," but it still remains powerful as another face of male chauvinism. This situation has produced commercially based paradoxes such as the campaign that tries to persuade a woman to have a "wedding with herself." Fake narratives of this kind have a power enough to lead us to alienation, but few seem to be aware of it.

But instead of entering in social or cultural criticism that could be too theoretical, let us examine the details of TV advertisements full of scientific terms to seize the reality of our alienation. The first one to analyze is of an American chemical product that is supposed to keep women's face wrinkleless. On screen appears a close-focused image of a middle-aged actress full of wrinkles, and then comes up her wrinkleless face to show the extraordinary effect of the product applied on her face. Accompanying it is the word "retinoid," a scientific term, appears in pink letters written on the screen. Then appears a man in white who looks like a doctor or a scientist to explain the chemical and mechanical effects the product can produce onto the face. After him, appear some "ordinary" women who have already tried the product, telling their success stories with its use. At the end, we hear an invisible female narrator announcing how little this "therapy" costs, how easy to purchase the product, etc.

The narrative is far from extraordinary. It is easy for any viewer to follow, even too simple for them to feel attracted to the product. Then the advertiser intelligently introduces the scientific term "retinoid" that works most effectively. As the only scientific term on screen, it gives a serious tone, a scientific taste, to the whole story with the help of the male doctor or scientist who appears on screen. With this, science wins, persuading viewers to buy the product.

Needless to say, the whole narrative is based on the mythology of eternal beauty and permanent youth, which is nothing but a delusion. Seeing the advertisement, one cannot but wonder why women have to be eternally young and fresh. Why are women not allowed to have wrinkles on their faces? It is as if women could never have a chance to be charming old human beings like men.

There is another myth that is present on screen: the myth of science. This modern myth gives power to the advertisement, gaining viewers' credit. It reinforces itself by the use of scientific terms such as amino-acid, collagen, hyaluronan, etc. so that TV viewers come to believe it because it presents itself as scientifically based. Needless to say, most people in the world spend more time on watching TV than reading or doing exercises. We cannot imagine how omnipotent and omnipresent the myth becomes.

It is a big irony that science that is to go against all mythology has become an invincible mythology of our time, and the myth exerts a terrific influence upon us just because we do not understand either its theories or terminologies. Except for some privileged people, we are dominated by science of which we know hardly anything.

6

We tend to suppose that the hypnotizing effect of scientific language used in TV advertisements is universally equal. However, there are differences in the effect according to cultures. For example, the effect of scientific terms in American advertisements on American TV viewers is not exactly the same as

the one in Japanese advertisements on Japanese viewers. Although the use of scientific terms exerts an enormous effect in both countries, the nature of the effect is not the same.

In the U.S. and other Western countries, the hypnotizing effect of scientific terms seems to consist in inducing TV viewers to believe in the truth of science and the efficiency of the advertised product. In Japan, in contrast, the effect of scientific language consists in inducing viewers to share a collective emotion and fantasy about a world unknown to them. Although the model of TV advertisements in Japan is mostly American, the nature of the effect differs.

The difference comes from the particularity of Japanese way of importing foreign words into their language; the Japanese do not try to translate a foreign word but to transliterate it and insert it in Japanese syntax. For example, to integrate the English word "elegant" in Japanese, they do not translate it even though there exists a suitable Japanese word for it, but transliterate it as "ereganto" and say for example "Kanojo-wa ereganto desu-ne" which means "She is elegant, isn't she?" By doing this, they believe they conserve the original sound of the English word which makes them feel the atmosphere of an unknown foreign culture.

Let us have another example. To say "Let's make a barrier free community," the Japanese would say "baria furi no komyuniti wo tukuri-mashou." Here, the foreign words "barrier free" and "community" are not translated but transliterated as "baria furi" and "komyuniti". By hearing such words in different contexts, they may come to seize some part of the meaning of the words in the end, but mostly feel they are part of a modern world brought about by the Westerners.

You may say this happens to any language; for example, Japanese word "sushi" in English. Actually, many of Westerners know the word today and use it without necessarily knowing its original meaning. However, I would insist that the use of such foreign words in English is much less frequent than in Japanese, which is affirmed by Yoshiro Ogura, a specialist in translation studies; he asserts that more than 60 percent of the whole Japanese vocabulary are such words imported from Chinese or Western languages (Ogura 19). Japanese way of importing foreign words may well be considered as particular.

Now, this may indicate that the Japanese are accustomed to communicating one another using words whose original meaning they do not necessarily know but they can feel something out of them and share it with others. It also indicates that the Japanese have not lost that mythical mind which tries to deify everything (Sorman 125) including foreign words. According to Claude Lévi-Strauss, the mythical mind tries above all to keep the primary structure from the influence of historical events (Lévi-Strauss 310). Japanese way of importing foreign words can be understood as manifestation of such mentality.

Akira Yanabu, a cultural comparatist, gives an aesthetic explanation to the particularity in Japanese importation of foreign words. He explained it in terms of "cassette effect" by which he meant that foreign words inserted in Japanese syntax function like a jewelry box. Needless to say, a jewelry box is not a jewelry; "cassette" is a box that attracts us because we imagine that there is something precious in it. Yanabu insisted that the Japanese would not translate foreign words into Japanese in order to enjoy their cassette effect working on aesthetic emotion and imagination (Yanabu 123-125). Japan would be then the empire of "signifiants" without "signifiés."

7

We said earlier that the Japanese use many foreign words without understanding their meaning. To this, I have to add that they often come to see the meaning by "feel and use" and this reminds us of the reflection on the meaning of a word Wittgenstein made in his *Philosophical Investigations* (1953). Wittgenstein insisted on examining a "primitive language" to find the answer to the question of the meaning. By a "primitive language," he meant a simple one that a "child uses when it learns to talk" (Wittgenstein, *Philosophical* 4).

There the teaching of language is not "explanation" but "training," which implies the idea that the meaning we usually associate with "explanation" had better be associated to "training," "exercise," "practice." Our philosopher put more importance on the "use" of words than their "contents." Or better to say, he thought it was the use that made the meaning of the words. If he was right, what is happening to Japanese use of language may have nothing surprising, unnatural or abnormal.

Wittgenstein at his first stage of *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (1918) demanded words to correspond to reality. From 2.1 to 2.25 of the book, he insisted that language had to "picture" facts that are composed of "objects." (Wittgenstein, *Tractatus* 8-10) However, in his later works, we cannot find such a view on language. In abovementioned *Philosophical Investigations*, he said for example as follows: "Let us first discuss *this* point of the argument: that a word has no meaning if nothing corresponds to it.—It is important to note that the word "meaning" is being used illicitly if it is used to signify the thing that 'corresponds' to the word. That is to confound the meaning of a name with the bearer of the name" (20).

This is evidently a criticism of his own theory of 35 years before. He declares here that the meaning of a word is not the thing that corresponds to the word, but "its use in the language" (20). If so, the Japanese use of language is quite "normal."

In *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein often referred to "language-games." He said for example: "We can also think of the whole process of using words (...) as one of those games by means of which children learn their native language. I will call these games "language-games" and will sometimes speak of a primitive language as a *language-game*" (5). And what he meant by "language-games" is explained as follows: "Here the term "language-game" is meant to bring into prominence the fact that the speaking of language is part of an activity, or of a form of life" (11). It is clear he did not associate language with "thinking" that is often considered as the supreme act of human beings. To him, using language was just an activity of human life comparable to walking, eating, drinking, etc. (14). The meaning of a word should then be measured in terms of function in the game of language.

This does not mean, however, that each word used in the game can be meaningless. Just to the contrary, the game is playable only when each word has a concrete meaning. Seeing this, we feel obliged to formulate the question about Japanese language in the following manner: "What semiotic function do those meaningless foreign words have for Japanese language-game to be played?"

To find a good answer for it, we had better reexamine the use of scientific terms in the narrative of TV advertisements in Japan. We said those terms produce an enormous effect on Japanese viewers as well as Western viewers, but the effect is not the same. Those terms exert a magical power on the former to stimulate their fantasy of a wonderland whereas they induce the latter to believe in the myth of science and the quality of the advertised product. To an ordinary Japanese viewer, those scientific words sound "Western and modern," making them feel updated as well as "international." On hearing them, they just feel connected to the modern world.

A good explanation for the effect was given by abovementioned Yanabu in terms of "cassette effect". By "cassette," he meant a wonder box that gives the impression of containing something beautiful and precious inside. The effect of such a box consists in inviting people to imagine a beautiful and precious object in there. It fascinates them till they open it, so they prefer not opening it. They know very well that they will lose illusion if they open it like Urashima Taro, the hero of an ancient legend, who lost everything by opening the jewelry box he had brought from the Palace of the Bottom of the Sea (Wakabayashi 1-44).

8

The fact the Japanese are fascinated by incomprehensible Western words could be explained in terms of "impersonation" or "impostor phenomenon" as well (Langford and Clance 495-499). Using words from the West make them feel being "Westerners" at least for a moment. Impersonation is said to happen to an actor or an actress. Acting as somebody else, actors often have the feeling of becoming that somebody else even if for a short time. When the Japanese use foreign words coming from the West, they may feel like such actors or actresses who play the role of a Westerner, or they become themselves the Westerners they imagine even if for a while.

Such phenomenon is not unique to the Japanese, and that is why there is a psychological term "impersonation," but it is important to know that in Japan, it has almost become a "tradition" the origin of which is to be found in the 7th century when the emperor Tenmu ~~adopted Chinese script as their script. It was he who~~ issued a decree that obliged his subordinates to be dressed and behave in a Chinese way. Since then, the Japanese, at least the upper class of society, took the Chinese way as a model, impersonating themselves to the Chinese. The change took place in the latter half of the 19th century when the Japanese took a new model from the West. But it was not a real change because impersonation itself continued. Instead of the Chinese, people began to impersonate the Westerners and this continues still today.

Needless to say, impersonation as a process is propelled by imagination and emotion, and thinking and acting with images and emotions is just human as abovementioned neuroscientist Damasio says: "It is often said that thought is made of much more than just images, that is made also of words and non-image abstract symbols. Surely nobody will deny that thought includes words and arbitrary symbols. But what the statement misses is the fact that both words and arbitrary symbols are based on topographically organized representations and can become images" (106).

To see how the Japanese impersonate the Westerners, let us have a look at the advertisements for health and beauty products on Japanese TV. Among many, I take one made to sell a product supposed to enhance intelligence in aged women.

The advertisement begins with the appearance on screen of a seventy-three year old actress as a witness of the magnificence of the product. She praises the excellent effect of the product saying that

it made her brain younger, providing her a better memory and a higher intelligence. After her speech that sounds honest and sincere, a man appears, playing the role of a doctor who explains the effect in terms of medical science, using such terms as "arakidon acid" "omeka fatty acid" "DHA" "EPA," etc. Those scientific words appear scribed on screen in "kana", phonetic scripts that transmit only the sound of the words, and thus ends the short story.

The point of the story does not consist in any development of the medical effect of the product but just in the unfamiliarity of the sounds of those words scribed in phonetic signs. The sounds and the signs evoke nothing but emotional images of an unknown fascinating world the viewers are longing for. Images that arise such emotion make the whole narrative successful whether the viewers believe it to be true or not.

Here again, we have to remark that such sounds and letters whose meaning remains opaque evoke fascination to non-Japanese viewers as well. However, the fascination that may be evoked in them often leads them to the myth of science as truth whereas the Japanese viewers get fascination that leads them to a dream of wonderland. They feel like dwellers of such a wonderland just at that moment.

To show the magical effect of the advertisement more vividly, I translate here one of the texts of the advertisement without transforming the nature of the original. It goes like this: If you wish to be more intelligent, you just need this sapurimento which includes arakidon-san as well as omega-shibo-san, in which Di Eichi Ei and Yi Pi Ei necessary for the brain activities are included. A common Western viewer may be induced to believe in science at the seemingly scientific words that bear no meaning, but such words could hardly evoke any emotion in their mind. As for the Japanese viewers, it is precisely those strange words that make them feel connected to the advanced modern world unknown to them. If they purchase the product, it is not because they are persuaded of the scientifically proved quality of the advertised product, but because the act of purchasing it seems to assure them the feeling of being connected to the unknown fascinating world of modernity.

9

I argued above that the excessive use of incomprehensible terms necessarily leads to alienation and insanity. Following this, the Japanese who are used to the excessive use of such terms must be alienated from the world as well as from their selves. However, after our examination of the scientific words used in their TV advertisements, we become less sure of it; the Japanese may not be so much alienated as they could be.

To show where they really are, we have a good example of a TV advertisement of a skin cream that is supposed to make older women to look younger by ten years. This cream is called Rasuto Kusshon Fandeishon, "the Last Cushion Foundation" in English, and the name is written on screen with kana, the phonetic script mentioned above. While the viewers see images of different faces of old ladies on screen, an invisible woman's voice makes a tremendously fast enumeration of all the components of the product such as "sato-kibi seibun," "koraagen," "hiaruron san," "seramido wan," "kurorai ekisu," "reri-fu karayerou," "Esu Pi Shi 40," "Pee Ei." All these are written on screen in kana and no one can have a slightest idea of what they really are. In short, we have the impression that it tells nothing, no story.

What is surprising about the advertisement is the last phrase that the same female voice pronounces: "All these magnificent elements that protect you from becoming older must be understood by your *kokoro* (by heart-mind)." After a series of incomprehensible technical terms quickly pronounced, we hear the word "*kokoro*" meaning "heart-mind" that anyone, even a child, understands. The effect is stronger because it is a genuinely vernacular word having nothing to do with foreign languages, less with scientific terms. It remains echoing at the bottom of the viewers' mind.

Imagine that the whole text is translated in English for the English-speaking viewers. The last word "heart-mind" must sound strange and funny to them because it does not fit those scientific terms at all. To the Japanese viewers, the very last word evokes a deep emotion while those scientific terms make a magical effect on them. The difference of the effect is so different.

You may wonder if science can be understood by "heart," rather than by intellect or reasoning. Following Damasio's theory on emotion and reasoning, we can say that it is possible. The Portuguese neuroscientist affirmed that the origin of all intellectual activities of humans is emotion felt by the body and regulated by the brain.

The advertisement I have analyzed shows that despite the excessive use of incomprehensible technical terms, it does not necessarily alienate the viewers because the scientific terms used there do nothing but to give a sauce to the enrichment of the viewers' emotions sharable with others. There is a paradox there, because science and its terminology that are supposed to indicate truth are playing

nothing more than emotional appetizers. So long as it works in that way, the incomprehensibility would not lead to alienation.

By the word "paradox," I mean a situation that looks strange because two ideas or qualities in opposition coexist. Those who think "To be or Not to be" would not be able to tolerate any paradox. There are however peoples who have always lived paradox and have assimilated it, and the Japanese are one of them.

Niels Bohr, one of the Fathers of quantum physics, postulated the simultaneous validity of two incompatible theories of light: waves and particles. In Japan, Kitaro Nishida defined the world as "absolutely contradictory and identical to itself" (Oshima 49-51). To thinkers such as Bohr or Nishida, paradox is a solution to the imprisonment in logic and dialectic way of thinking.

All this does not mean that we overlook the fact that the advertisement we examined just now develops a fake narrative that tries to sell the product at any cost. However, this does not exclude the possibility for the same narrative to provoke a collective emotion by which each one of the TV viewers feels at the center of the world as well as a tiny part of it. This extraordinary way of creating an imaginary world in which the delusion of sharing with the whole world gives people comfort and security at least for a moment. And if they get comfort and security, it is precisely because they are living a semiotic paradox.

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