RESEARCH IN CONSUMER CULTURE THEORY, VOL. 1

Proceedings of the Consumer Culture Theory Conference
Odense 2018

Conference Co-Chairs:
Domen Bajde, University of Southern Denmark
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Proceedings of the Consumer Culture Theory Conference

University of Southern Denmark
Odense, 28 June – 1 July 2018

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Insatiable Appetite: Female Monsters and Inveterate Consumption

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Abstract— This article presents a cultural analysis of main characters in contemporary female-lead television U.S. based shows. It seeks to illustrate popular culture representations of femininity that include consumption as an intrinsic characteristic of the bad woman- the villain whose insatiable appetite to devour power, sexuality, and commodities paves the way to her monstrosity and deviance. The paper looks critically at the portrayals of females as consumers while questioning the ways in which they play a role in the creation and reproduction of the imaginary of women as naturally materialistic, insatiable, and in a way, monsters.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Monsters are those creatures of the margins whose abhorrence derives for their extreme conditions of living, and the danger and threat they represent to society. Monsters have been used as disciplining institutions and associated with sin as part of an unnatural liminal state (Turner). They have served to define who we are in opposition to what we shall not be (Layton 35).

In folklore and popular culture, monstrosity has also been associated with femininity (Caputi). The concept of femininity refers to the attitudes, values, beliefs, and behaviors expected of a woman. Femininity in some cultures has been associated with beauty, motherhood, and consumerism (Arthurs). As Tate comments, femininity is in part defined by the relationship that women establish with their family, their husband, and their children. However, when women deviate from the traditional expectations of femininity, they become monsters that should be contained – female antagonists that need to be disciplined into being good again.

Similar to Stevens and Maclaran's understanding of advertisements as cultural texts that carry beliefs and values embedded in our culture (Zayer et al.), this paper uses Caputi's take on popular culture as a "repository of ancient and contemporary mythic and folkloric images and narratives, personalities, icons, and archetypes" (4). The argument uses cultural analysis through a feminist integrative framework to illuminate the contribution of popular culture in the portrayal, creation, and reproduction of the imaginary of ambitious women as naturally insatiable consumers in need of disciplining. This paper seeks to explore the relationship between consumption and monstrosity while problematizing consumption as an essential characteristic of the femininity.

For this, the paper is divided into five main sections. The first section provides a historic overview of consumption as an innate characteristic of female characters in popular culture. The second section discusses the methodology used to approach the subject. The following sections illustrate how consumption remains intrinsically related to femininity in three characters: Meredith Grey (Grey's Anatomy), Alicia Florrick (The Good Wife), and Olivia Pope (Scandal). These three shows occupied top rankings amongst U.S. based television audiences between 2007 and 2017, and depicted the lives of fictional empowered, professional, and ambitious women. Numerous references from movies and other television characters are mentioned throughout the text for the purposes of comparison, and to illustrate how this biologically deterministic argument (women as naturally materialistic) has remained constant in female characters in past and present female characters.

The paper concludes that even though this women are apparently more in control of their lives than in previous decades, storylines continue to use symbolic mechanisms of control in order for the characters to achieve happiness or be condemned. Contemporary female postfeminist characters continue to demonstrate the characteristics of the monster through consumption where undisciplined desire is capable of turning the heroine into the monster.

II. FEMALE CONSUMERS IN POPULAR CULTURE NARRATIVES

Inveterate consumption has been an essential component of female monstrosity in different mediums. In popular culture women are traditionally associated with consumerism (Stevens

and Maclaran, "The Carnal Feminine: Consuming Representations of Womanhood in a Contemporary Media Text") and sexuality in two main ways. Being beautiful, humble, and having a good heart is the recipe for a good woman. Being beautiful, powerful, and ambitious is the recipe for a bad woman. The good woman is loved, the bad is feared and chastised. Patriarchal definitions of acceptable female consumer practices encourage good womanhood behaviors: beauty, modesty, and service. Bad women take consumption a step further into the realm of the deviant by not fulfilling the passive social role traditionally expected of feminine representations and consumption. Ettenfield for example, comments on the influence of Victor Hugo's The Toilers of the Sea and The Laughing Man in the creation of the imaginary of women as "life-sucking beings" (Ettenfield 79) and "sexualized predators" (Ettenfield 86) through his portrayal of the Octopussy. The Octopussy defies hegemonic gender constructions (Cohen-Vrignaud). Female specters devour the life of their victims (for the most part men) and are the products of intrigues such as infidelity and sexual related behaviors.

According to Creed, feminine monstrosity is not a recent phenomenon and not unique to western cultures. The scholar identified a number of categories for female monsters in the media including the primeval mother (Aliens, 1986) and the woman as a deadly femme castratrice. Feminine monsters are stigmatized others as proposed by Caputi. Empowered female folklore such as witches and mermaids, deviate from the submissiveness of patriarchal standards and provide examples of inveterate consumers. The witch is a homemaker gone rogue, that uses her abilities in the kitchen for evil. Mermaids lure men into the depths of the ocean (Creed; Walker) to later consume them. However, men's desire to consume these creatures is depicted as natural, but not deviant. Men are passive agents in the encounter with mermaids and unable to control themselves in the presence of their beauty. Mermaids are monsters not only because of the heinous act of devouring men, but also because of men's physical impossibility in consummating their sexual desire. In addition, a commonly cited representation of female monstrosity that devours men is the Vagina-Dentata (Caputi; Ettenfield). According to Walker the Vagina-Dentata is "the classic symbol of men's fear of sex, expressing the unconscious belief that a woman may eat or castrate her partner during intercourse" (1034).

In popular media, a more subtle and audience captivating imagery of the female monster appears after World War II. These characters depicted accepted gendered relationships and family life (Douglas). Even as "good women" these characters had special powers and attributes that made them abnormal. In the classic series "I Dreamed of Jeannie" and "Bewitched," for example, Jeannie and Samantha were naïve, beautiful, caring, as well as manipulative and astute to get what they wanted. They were feared and disciplined by their "master" and husband. Their monstrosity resided in their ambiguous selves which had to be controlled.

In the following decades new attributes were given to women in popular culture. The female-monsters of television shows in the 80's and 90's were more autonomous, empowered, and ambitious. They ranged from action heroines (Inness) to materialistic housewives capable of consuming her husband/partner in a myriad of ways along with his resources.

Peggy Bundy antagonized the image of the "good woman" by being vulgar and voluptuous – features similar to Ursula in The Little Mermaid (Cohen-Vrignaud 53; Caputi 321). She embodied a modern version of the witch - the deviant housewife that defied "normal social relations" (Fiske 362) while reinforcing materialism as an innate feminine characteristic. She represented the undomesticated monster.

The idea of a "liberated" female consumer and monster was embodied in characters such as Madonna and her sexual scandals. "Empowerment" came to be associated with "sexual liberation," but only as prescribed by ways that adhere to patriarchal definitions. Such is the case of action heroines whose apparent strength is undermined by their transformation into sexual objects (Brown 68). Monstrosity and deviance was no longer a result of extra-ordinary fantastic elements (genie, witch, powers), but intrinsic to their personality and their performance of womanhood. The stereotypical femme fatale described in the literature portrays a woman that uses her sexuality to get what she wants (sometimes this includes criminal acts) (Deleyto).

Furthermore, the religious depiction of Eve serves to illustrate the binary of the virgin-whore and its association with "goodness" and "badness." Eve's agency in consuming an apple that dooms humanity to sin, is the representation of a woman unable to reject temptation and control her emotions. These characteristics are present in media characters such as Jadis (White Witch of Narnia), Elsa (Disney's Frozen), and Galadriel (Lord of the Rings). These characters are seduced by power – their inability to control their emotions has the potential to turn them into monsters. This characteristic is perhaps rooted in the popular belief that women are emotional beings guided by their instincts and passions in contrast to the rationality of men (Stevens and Maclaran 169). The dichotomy virgin-whore (Caputi) can be defined as the duality of women; seduction and control play a part in defining feminine goodness and badness.

Feminine consumption also represents a binary: a woman has the power to provide infinite love through consumption (better exemplified by intensive mothering ideals), but she is also able to harm if left undisciplined (femme fatale). A woman that consumes for the well-being of her family and others is self-less and altruistic. A woman engaging in "indulgent consumption targeted towards self-gratification" (de Laat and Baumann 183) is seen as monstrous. A good example of this is Disney's softened representation of the Ice Queen with the movie Frozen. Elsa's inability to control her powers turns her into a monster that not only freezes her hometown, but also tries to murder her sister. In the process of letting her monstrosity be free, she turns sexy and secludes herself in a beautiful palace. Elsa is the image of a good woman who is prisoner of her innate monstrosity. Her redemption comes from desperately wanting to discipline who she is, and through the realization that love (a condition associated with femininity) is the remedy. "By publicly deviating from the prescribed norm, she has divested herself of precisely those attributes considered most characteristically feminine and in the process has become somewhat masculine" (Stevens 96).

Methodology

Popular female characters have been depicted in a myriad of ways and outlets, with consumption being one of their defining characteristics and a feature of their potential monstrosity. Monstrosity in female characters is defined by qualities such as

women being sexually active (and in some cases promiscuous), un-married, guided by their emotions, and unable to control their impulses and desires while defying gendered hegemonic constructions. In addition, the female monster exhibits a struggle between the virgin and the whore – the good woman has an inner monster that can only be controlled and redeemed through love.

This paper explores whether inveterate consumption as an intrinsic quality of women continues in more contemporary female-led television U.S. shows, and the role that this characteristic plays in the development of their stories. For this endeavor, the researcher looked at the top ranked 30 U.S television shows from September 2007 to May 2017 and selected only female centered television shows – that is, television shows whose narratives and main character is a woman (not a group of women). The only exception was Law and Order: Special Victims Unit which started out with a male protagonist, but later focused on Olivia Benson as the female lead in latter seasons. The selected shows were: Grey's Anatomy, Samantha Who?, Private Practice, Cold Case, Bones, The Ghost Whisperer, The Good Wife, Body of Proof, Unforgettable, 2 Broke Girls, Once Upon a Time, Scandal, Madam Secretary, How to Get Away with Murder, Mom, Law and Order: Special Victims Unit, and Shades of Blue.

This paper focuses on three main characters. These were selected by counting which shows had appeared more frequently amongst the top five ranks between 2007 and 2017. The paper provides a more in-depth analysis of Grey's Anatomy, The Good Wife, and Scandal while referencing other shows for comparative purposes. A preliminary analysis of the heroines, anti-heroines and antagonists was conducted using a symbolic interactionism approach, which consisted of identifying patterns of behavior and social interactions that distinguished their attitudes and behaviors as deviant. Their personal history was assessed to address the moments in the characters' life where they either became or remained antagonists or deviant in the storyline.

Once this information was collected, the characters were analyzed by labeling the most salient features of female monstrosity into a narrative pathway that characterized and cycled through their storylines. These were consumption, struggle and discipline. Consumption refers to the characters' autonomy in decision making in the various areas of their life – financial, time, occupation (aspirations), and relationships (including sexual life). Struggle encompasses the character's history, her social, physical, and emotional contestations which include the character's inner conflict with the binary virgin-whore. Disciplining alludes to the times in the character's story where her desires or aspirations are curtailed to adapt to normative standards of femininity. For these characters consumption generated a struggle that led to an outcome that either condemned them as monsters or redeemed them through disciplining. Ultimately, the analysis responds to the question: How does the characters' consumption choices (material and symbolic) attest to the characteristics of the monstrous feminine?

III. MATERIAL AND SYMBOLIC CONSUMPTION

A salient characteristic of the highest ranked female led television shows between 2007 and 2017 was the main's character occupation. Fourteen out of seventeen characters

worked as professionals in different fields that included white collar professions, law enforcement, and business ownership. Only three worked in the service industry. Female financial independence makes part of what Arthurs calls "postfeminist, woman-centered drama" (83) and is representative of female-led characters in the last three decades. "The term "postfeminist" […] refer[s] to the savvy woman who no longer needs political commitment, who enjoys feminine consumerist choices, and whose preoccupations are likely to involve romance, career choices, and hair gels" (Mizejewski 122). Characters such as Meredith Grey (Grey's Anatomy), Olivia Pope (Scandal), and Alicia Florrick (The Good Wife) embodied Harris' "can-do girl" characterized by confidence, independence, and success (25).

Contrary to the popular imagery of women in prior decades being submissive and financially dependent on their husbands, the analyzed characters provided for themselves and engaged in both care-related and conspicuous consumption practices. Their lifestyles and bodies exemplified Stevens and Maclaran's "dreamworlds" of "consumer imagination" (Stevens and Maclaran, "Exploring the 'Shopping Imaginary': The Dreamworld of Women' s Magazines" 283) that serve the characters to signify their desires, aspirations, and achievements. Assertive material consumption (defined by aesthetic canons and social institutions) is part of their performativity (Butler) of womanhood and success.

One of the most common stereotypes associated with femininity is the desire to shop. The imaginary that portrays women as having an innate desire to consume and to possess (shopping, new trends, and maxing out credit cards) is widely held and uncritically accepted in modern society. "Indeed, the association of women with consumption, shopping and "retail therapy" has arguably become a kind of feminized "common sense""(Mojola 220). Some female characters in women centered series have infinite wardrobes and hedonistic consumption practices that range from shoes (as the epitome of feminine "unthinking consumption"(Robinson 13))(Parmentier), good wines, human hearts and puppy furs.

Olivia Pope's (Scandal) consumption choices included her taste in wine and designer clothes. As stated by T.C Miller in regards to other female characters, "her body ostensibly demonstrate[s] her agency […] empowerment as women manifest through their clothing, self-branding, and relationship to consumption"(148). Her apartment was impeccable and denotative of a cultivated consumer taste and the economic capital to support it. The character's consumptive choices remained unaltered through the seasons. The material culture that surrounded the character were supportive of her success and played an important role in providing the character the scenery to solidify her status. The confidence of her professional demeanor (specifically how she walked, her choice of words, and her tone) explained her position as a figure of power. The idea of women as consumers is not a new trend. "Feminist reading of Nietsczhe are quick to note the identification of woman with mere appearances, fashion, and ornamental detail" (Russo 6). This association can also be traced back Bleuler's description of women as in "constant pursuit of pleasure" as exposed by Stevens and Maclaran (2012:66).

Meredith Grey (Grey's Anatomy) on the contrary, did not rely on material elements to denote her success. Through the story line, her status as a surgeon was constantly reinforced by

her association with her mother (who was a recognized surgeon), her achievements, and her beauty. Her material wealth came as a given that Meredith took for granted. The storyline evolved without Meredith showing attachment to material objects. She lived in a consumer "dreamworld" where money came as secondary in her life. Once she formalized her relationship with "Dr. McDreamy," moved to a beautiful house, and adopted a baby, her life became reminiscent of the traditional family ideal and the on screen representation of the American Dream. Consumption of material culture and commodities (frequently associated with vanity and arrogance in women), their use as class performance (as important components of symbolic and social capitals (Bourdieu)), and the obsessive pursuit of personal egoistic goals have been notorious attributes of females characters that do not adhere to traditional standards of femininity.

Alicia Florrick's (The Good Wife) story began as the dependent wife of an important political figure. Her looks were denotative of a submissive, patient, good wife that accompanied and forgave her husband's affairs. However, through the development of the story, Alicia used material culture to denote her transformation into a successful lawyer. Her transformation was similar to Elsa's (Frozen) and consisted of turning from a humble, clumsy, dedicated, prudish housewife into an ambitious lawyer capable of unscrupulous actions. Miller mentions that consumption in academic literature and popular culture has often been associated with evil rather than with good. Vanity, its association with sin, and the aesthetics of a consumer culture that supports it is an intrinsic characteristic of feminine monstrosity. Alicia's aesthetic choices in terms of consumer goods denoted more confidence, more power, and more monstrosity. One she became successful she wore more elegant and fringe clothes, seemed more polished in her physical manners, and more unscrupulous in her behavior. Her process required her to become more calculative and less empathic toward others. She became the woman that turns from being a victim to being a perpetrator.

Other characters in US based female led shows in the time period analyzed, shared this characteristic. For example, the Evil Queen's aesthetic preferences in the show Once Upon a Time sharply contrasted the appearance of good Regina (Henry's mother). In the show, there was a clear distinction between good and bad women in terms of consumer choices, with bad women being eccentric and power hungry (Zelena, Cruela DeVil), and good women being gullible and humble (Snow White, Belle). Even though this show is based on traditional folk stories, it continues to embrace consumption as a stereotypical and emblematic characteristic of the bad woman. Consumption aesthetics in the form of arrogance is a symbol of the powerful but evil woman.

Similar to other feminine monsters, these characters were outspoken, attractive, professional, and potentially dangerous women for which sex was an object of desire in itself. Alicia's (The Good Wife) sex life became an important part of the plot, as she went from a timid lover to being unable to control her sexual thoughts in regards to her boss, while using her estranged husband to satisfy her sexual desires. In the process she also made her children secondary to her career. She didn't find love and her story is uncertain at the end of the series. Her audience was left with a transformed no longer "good wife'. On the other hand, Meredith (Grey's Anatomy) was presented as a bitter, beautiful, and very sexually active woman at the beginning of the series, for whom sex was a way of coping with her traumatic childhood. Men were her object of desire. She described herself as "dark and twisty" for her lack of emotional attachments and her ambition to succeed in the medical field. Her story was the tale of a "dark and twisty" woman in the quest for happiness.

Olivia Pope's (Scandal) sexual life comprises episodes of violent sex with Fitz (white male) more than Meredith's (Grey's Anatomy) and Alicia's (The Good Wife). It is important to note the role that intersectional variables play in the construction of the different representations of female-monsters in terms of demographic characteristics (such as race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status) and their role in perpetuating inequalities. Olivia Pope's sexual encounters resemble the Jezebel imaginary pervasive to representations of black femininity that Patricia Hill Collins describes in Black Feminist Though (Collins 81). Even as a black woman in a position of power, Olivia was Fitz' mistress and thus a threat to the white heteronormative family. She was available for his sexual appetite, and unable to control her sexual libido even when she was angry at him. Olivia's sexuality is Fitz' object of desire, and some of their encounters can be thought of as pornographic as understood by Hill Collins. According to the scholar's review of literature on pornographic images she describes how "Black women more often were portrayed as being subjected to aggressive acts and as submitting after initial resistance to a sexual encounter" (Collins 137). Season 2 episode 14 is characteristic of this when Fitz forced Olivia into a server room to engage in violent sex providing another example for Hill Collins' argument.

In addition, while heroines withstand their desire to consume power or success either as a choice or a sacrifice, female monsters succumb to it and take away the power of men (Cohen-Vrignaud) – Owen Hunt's eternal broken heart was due to the ambition of his first wife Christina and later the emotional instability of Amelia Sheppard (Grey's Anatomy), Jake Ballard's and Fitz's hearts are the mercy of Olivia Pope's whims (Scandal), and even the heroine Dr. Temperance Brennan (Bones) has no problem in noting how she has more money than her husband Seeley Booth. The portrayal of powerful and ambitious women as castrators is not new. This image is derived from Freud's Vagina Dentata (Deleyto 33; Ettenfield; Cohen-Vrignaud) where the female literary consumes the male. Her power, her beauty, and hyper-sexuality also leads to the adversity of men. Sexual intercourse is dangerous to men. Sex is power (Machin and Thornborrow; Ettenfield; Cohen-Vrignaud).

Finally, ambition is an important aspect when it comes to speaking about consumption and female monstrosity. Meredith, Alicia, and Olivia's ambition can be thought of as equivalent to appetite. In Scandal for example, Olivia Pope (Scandal) devours the Oval Office. Her hunger for power is revealed and let go through the seasons from what was once a righteous woman wearing the "white hat" to a monster capable of manipulating those closest to her to quench her thirst for power. At the end of season 6, Olivia becomes the head of a military black operations organization called B-613 by tricking the incoming president into signing its reinstatement. "How does it feel to be the most powerful person in the world?" asks Cyrus when he realizes what Olivia had done at the end of Season 6. "Right. It feels

right," she responds. Even though Cyrus had been called a monster throughout the show for its multiple illegal acts, it is him that at the end of the season looked up to Olivia while she stared with confidence at the horizon.

Ambition becomes an important aspect of monstrosity when its goal is to satisfy the desire of the character's main persona or those close to her. Meredith and Alicia sought to become outstanding in their professional fields at the expense of love and motherhood. The desire for power made Alicia estranged from her family and romantic relationships. Meredith was competitive and engaged in a struggle to demonstrate her skills as a doctor not only amongst her peers but also with her partner and her mother.

IV. STRUGGLING BETWEEN THE VIRGIN AND THE WHORE

A second characteristic of the storylines that accompanied these characters was their struggle to balance their career and their personal lives (including finding love). Alicia, Meredith, and Olivia continuously walked the line between being good and being bad through their actions. They demonstrated their good womanhood by portraying life stories that agreed with patriarchal models of family life and feminine values as congruent with their professional careers (Lucia). Meredith saved lives, Alicia and Olivia defended victims and were morally correct until a certain point in the story.

However, their quest for power and success generated an inner conflict between their actions and their consequences. Alicia Florrick (The Good Wife), for example struggled between being a successful lawyer and being a "good mother" to her teenage children. She was conflicted between her values and what she encountered as obstacles in her professional life. She negotiated them in ways that kept her away from love and family. Olivia Pope (Scandal) was constantly battling a dysfunctional family background and her feelings as both the lover and advisor to the President of the United States. In these three cases, the characters were conflicted between being a good or a bad woman (binary virgin-whore). Meredith Grey's (Grey's Anatomy) struggle consisted in negotiating love as a potential danger to her career. For a few seasons she constantly battled between what she envisioned for herself (being a great surgeon) and having a life together with whom she loved. Her mother represented pursuing a career of success at the expense of fulfilling a traditional feminine and family role. Meredith's mother (Ellis Grey in Grey's Anatomy) was illustrative of the monstrous woman and therefore constituted the actual villain in the show. Ellis, was a very ambitious and gifted surgeon unable to retain love. She was presented as a selfish woman, a bad wife and a bad mother whose ambition led her to a life of emptiness. Her convoluted love life drove her to attempt suicide – a scene that was a constant in Meredith's memories of her childhood. Ellis, was portrayed as a bad mother for her indifference and strictness towards a young Meredith. She was disappointed because of Meredith's decision to build a family (a traditional family), which in her view, jeopardized Meredith's professional future.

While some female characters exhibited consumption and struggle as important components of their narratives (such as Megan Hunt (Body of Proof), Regina Mills and Emma Swan (Once Upon a Time), Olivia Benson (Law and Order), and Temperance Brennan (Bones) among others), the characteristics

of consumption and struggle are presented in a distinctive manner in characters that remain good throughout their story. The lack of interest in consumption (including ambition) is seen as a primordial aspect of "good womanhood." Elizabeth McCord (Madame Secretary) provided an important point of comparison to Alicia, Meredith, and Olivia who constantly moved between the virgin and the whore as they struggled to balance their ambitions and being "good women."

Contrary to the professional stories of Alicia, Meredith, and Olivia, Elizabeth McCord (Madame Secretary) did not seek the job as Secretary of State. Elizabeth was a retired agent from the CIA, happily living in a farm with her husband and her three children until the President of the United States convinced her to take the job. She was never interested in money or power. In fact, Elizabeth strongly rejected consumer culture definitions of beauty even though she was beautiful and lived in a consumer dreamworld. In the first episodes of the series she clearly demonstrated dismay toward changing her looks when the chief of staff hired a personal appearance specialist for her in order to improve her appearance (from pantsuits to dresses). Elizabeth was a good woman because even in a position of power, she remained humble about her ambitions, kept an enviable relationship with her husband and her children, was not emotional nor impulsive, worked for the good of humanity, was not driven by her desires, was not interested in material goods, and her sexuality was kept in the privacy of her marriage. She represented the values of a good wife and a good mother. She embodied both physically and symbolically the ideal of the modern traditional family and what a professional "good woman" looks like.

V. DISCIPLINE AS THE OUTCOME FOR REDEMPTION OR CONDEMNATION

For female characters, marriage, children, sorrows, and unexpected life outcomes served to keep monstrosity in check. Redemption and condemnation were present in the narrative plots and a common characteristic of the storylines of female monsters.

Because of her mother and her family history, Meredith (Grey's Anatomy) thought of herself as "dark and twisty" and was referred to by interns at the hospital as the mythical monster "Medusa." It took a few years for Meredith Grey to get redemption from her ambition, her sexual impulses, and her "dark and twisty" self. In this process she fought with her best friend Christina Yang (Christina reproached Meredith for having lost her ambitions for building a family), she got married, had three kids, made good lasting friends, and became an important member of the hospital - in other words, she found love (similar to Elsa in Disney's Frozen). Contrary to her friend Christina and her mother Ellis Grey, Meredith Grey settled in Seattle, became monogamous, and stagnated her medical ambitions (a condition that tormented her in the memories of her mother) to live a happy life in her family's company. Derek's death, symbolized a redemptive moment for Meredith, a point in her life where she was no longer "dark and twisty" nor ambitious. Losing her inveterate consumption of sex and power made her a "good woman." She was redeemed through love and motherhood and engaging in "caring consumption" (de Laat and Baumann). After her husband's death she eventually received a Harper-Avery award. The award seemed to be a reward for her

redemption rather than for her ambition. The contrast between Meredith's story and her mother's (who suffered from Alzheimer's and died without love) is a powerful reminder that happiness is only given to "the good woman" and not to the "dark and twisty" one – the monster.

On the other hand, other characters choose to become "bad" or remain "bad" when their ambition was not disciplined. Similar to folk female monsters, female anti heroines and villains suffer from undisciplined insatiable hunger and engage in inveterate consumption. They are hungry for power, commodities, resources, or even emotions such as revenge. Alicia (The Good Wife) and Olivia (Scandal) personified the outcome of "the bad woman" who succumbed to her ambitions in her quest for power. Alicia's story ended in her being successful and alone, similar to Kalinda Sharma and Diane Lockhart in The Good Wife. Although the seasons analyzed in this paper do not include the final season of Scandal, Olivia's ambition at this point seemed to share that fate. Apparently blinded by power, she became the head of a black operations organizations that she had been trying to end. It is worth noting that during her transformation Olivia had also been rejecting the idea of a traditional family with Fitz. Olivia became the antithesis of what she was originally trying to fight, and in the process she lost the people closest to her. The next season will witness whether everything is part of a plan, and if Olivia finally gets redemption or condemnation.

These characters retained consumption (material or symbolic) as an element in contrast to the values, attitudes, and behaviors expected of "a good woman." Inveterate consumption, an ever present characteristic of the bad woman, is prevalent in their stories and is reinforced in the narratives with loss, lack of interest in romantic love, and/or dysfunctional family history. Even though these professional women were independent and ambitious, they were "good" as long they retained feminine characteristics and disciplined monstrous impulses such as inveterate consumption of power and goods.

Other female characters in the shows analyzed, included examples of redemption and condemnation. After cheating on her husband with his best friend, brilliant surgeon Addison Montgomery (Private Practice – Spin off of Grey's Anatomy), re-started her life far away from Seattle in a smaller medical practice – thus exchanging her ambitions for happiness. Megan Hunt's (Body of Proof) redemption came when a car accident forces her to change careers and work for the good of others. Regina Mills (Once Upon a Time) became the Evil Queen when her lover is murdered by her mother and she is forced to marry Snowhite's father. Her redemption came when she was faced with the possible death of her son and when she fell in love once more. As a mother, Regina found redemption through love, sacrifice, and the abandonment of her material and symbolic consumption practices which included collecting human hearts.

Other examples of condemnation include, Olivia Benson (Law and Order: Special Victims Unit) and Emma Swan (Once Upon a Time). Benson starts out as an officer very empathic to the stories of the victims she assists. Throughout the seasons we see how Benson's ambition started to materialize through abusing her power as a lieutenant. In the fifth season of Once Upon a Time Emma Swan became "The Dark One" seduced by the power of a magical dagger. The struggle between the virgin and the whore is an important part of characters such as Emma

(Once Upon a Time), Alicia (The Good Wife), Olivia Benson (Law and Order: Special Victims Unit), and Olivia Pope (Scandal). Even though they started as heroines, their stories allowed the viewers to see the potential evil in the main heroine – the heroines' desire to consume has the potential to turn them into monsters. "There is a socio-cultural recognition that such animal wants are powerful in women and therefore they must be expected as well as controlled, indulged in as well as ridiculed, stimulated as well as policed" (Stevens and Maclaran, "The Carnal Feminine: Womanhood, Advertising and Consumption" 171).

VI. CONCLUSION

Even though women centered television series from the past fifteen years have aimed to portray women as empowered, independent, and high achieving individuals, these representations still tie "good womanhood" to a traditional family model, beauty, service, sacrifice, and other "virtues" of femininity. Women that do not adhere to these model are disciplined into redemption or condemnation. They are empowered, calculative and/or emotion ridden, with performative consumption being dangerous and intrinsic to their feminine nature. There is a need to interrogate popular culture texts and "see such narratives as reflecting a reiteration of the ancient perception of woman as a lesser mortal than man, constantly at the mercy of her animal instincts and "weak" flesh" (Stevens and Maclaran, "The Carnal Feminine: Womanhood, Advertising and Consumption" 171).

These shows continue to stereotype women as astute emotional beings in a constant quest and struggle for love, with the female monster following an erroneous path to achieve it. Belonging and adhering to patriarchal models of womanhood is the way to achieve happiness. In contrast, consumption and desire of success or power for egoistical purposes is deviant. However, if it is accompanied by a successful (an often unachievable) management of work and traditional family life (where small children disappear from the screen as in the case of Grey's Anatomy), and where women continue to be good mothers, the monster is kept under control.

Consumption of material culture, continues to be used as class performance and as a way to denote vanity, confidence, and freedom. The way in which consumerism is portrayed as an expected and accepted aspect of femininity and feminine freedom needs to be evaluated in light of its relationship with hegemonic gendered constructions. Similar to shows in past decades, some of the analyzed television shows continue to "present female identity as a project to be achieved through consumption" (Markle 55). The female monsters of female centered television shows serve to remind women the need to control their symbolic and material consumption practices (such as ambition and vanity) because they are pivotal for the creation of a monster. Empowerment is good as long as it is kept inside the boundaries of what is feminine. Ironically, it is their consumption habitus (Bourdieu) and their materialism the essence of both their monstrosity and their freedom. Without their consumption practices their monstrosity as femme fatales and/or power hungry harlots could not be fulfilled.

The imaginary of the female monster makes part of our popular culture through the entertainment industry. Female monstrosity has been embodied by female characters in different

television shows and movies: some have been as literal as witches and genies, hypersexual action heroes, housewives, and successful professionals who want and can have it all. Through this analysis it was possible to explore the different venues from which female- monstrosity can be studied, as well as consumption as a taken for granted value (or anti-value) intrinsic to women. To understand contemporary female monstrosity is a key element to understand changes in the traditional definition of femininity and motherhood. After all "female monsters have long inhabited the male imagination, a monitory image of female creativity and a testimony to the misogyny of our literary past" (Gubar 380).

It is important to question the role that these portrayals of deviant femininity play in everyday contemporary imaginaries such as the "gold digger," (consumes her lover's resources) "the ice queen," (consumes power) and "the welfare queen" (consumes public resources) as powerful social constructions operative in the daily life of women of diverse socio demographic backgrounds. Minority, non-traditional family women have been subject to stereotyping under the "welfare queen." The political image of the "welfare queen" is present in public policy rhetoric of anti-poverty state assistance (Rich). Welfare mothers are though of living off the host system and reproducing incessantly creating more dependents in legitimate or illegitimate ways such as "anchor babies" (Rich 15). How this is informed and reinforced by media portrayals is still up for debate.

Noteworthy is the need to understand how these type of female characters are being appropriated by audiences. The fact that these characters are generating high rankings is telling of contemporary social processes that perhaps seek to portray a more realistic image of contemporary femininity, while remaining blind to the underlying inequalities that inform the construction of such characters.

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Reconnecting Consumption Through Creativity: On the Need to Reassemble (the Methods of) Consumer Research

Cristiano Smaniotto

Abstract— This paper argues that CCT research has overlooked the processes that enable our consumption, preventing a deeper understanding of the barriers to sustainable lifestyles. To redress this gap, it argues for further empirical studies concerning the forgotten practices of consumer logistics. A theoretical framework that views these practices as mundane processes of agencing is provided. Drawing on a Deleuzian notion of creativity, it suggests that we should develop methodological solutions that are able to capture the flow of subsequent translations of mundane consumer-objects agencements. It explains how the few existing works in consumer logistics have failed to seize the continuous character of these practices. In response, some considerations are made as indications for future research. The conclusive section reflects on the importance of reconnecting consumption to the things that make it possible.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Global waste production is expected to double by 2025, after a ten-fold increase in the course of last century (Hoornweg, Bhada-Tata, and Kennedy 2013). Yet OECD countries, world waste-leaders, generate already 1.75 million tons of waste per day (Hoornweg, Bhada-Tata, and Kennedy 2013). In the effort to make disposal more sustainable, recycling strategies seem to have their limitations, considering the astonishing 91% of plastic waste ever produced that has never been recycled (Geyer, Jambeck, and Law 2017). Incineration and landfills (after mechanical recycling) represent the most 'eco-friendly' options for the treatment of plastic waste (WRAP 2010), since this material is not biodegradable and it is difficult to recycle (Sorrentino, Gorrasi, and Vittoria 2007).

Nonetheless, plastic production has been growing at a record pace, up from 1.5 million in 1950 to around 322 million tons in 2015 (PlasticsEurope 2015), outpacing almost any other man-made material (Geyer, Jambeck, and Law 2017). Behind this extraordinary growth lies a shift to single-use containers, which makes packaging the biggest market for plastics (Geyer, Jambeck, and Law 2017). Indeed, 20% of the 162.9 kg of packaging waste generated by every person in the EU28 in 2014 was made of plastic (Eurostat 2017). In the US, food and food-related packaging and containers represent almost half of the materials that end up in landfills (EPA 2015).

Unquestionably then, the packages wrapping up most of our purchases have an environmental impact (Ingrao et al. 2015). Food packages in particular, since they are not easily recyclable (Licciardello 2017). Consequently, governments (for example, DEPA 2015; EPA 2015; EU 2015) and many European retailers (Monnot et al. 2015) are trying to reduce packaging waste. Yet one of the unexpected strategies towards the improvement of sustainability is reducing packaging materials (Licciardello 2017).

This means that reducing (packaging) waste is also a matter of rethinking our patterns of consumption. There is a growing concern that consuming less is a necessity for our sustainable development (see De Coverly et al. 2008; Kjellberg 2008). However, research has failed to conceptualize the relationship between consumption and disposition (De Coverly et al. 2008; Mylan, Holmes, and Paddock 2016). Enchanted by the magical quality of the commodities that make us forget their provenance and their destination (Hawkins 2001), we have literally taken out the trash, separating waste from our consumption for the sake of purity (Douglas 2003). The logic of disposability embedded in the serial character of the commodities (Hawkins 2001) has constituted waste as an issue of waste management (De Coverly

et al. 2008; Hawkins 2001), rationalizing the necessity of disposability itself in everyday consumption. Through this (categorical) separation, we overlooked how the goods we consume are translated into waste (Langley, Turner, and Yoxall 2011).

To fill this vacuum, research needs to account for the (misrepresented) full cycle of consumption (Mylan, Holmes, and Paddock 2016) and understand the structures that link it to production (also of waste) (McMeekin and Southerton 2012). Accordingly, this paper is a call for further empirical studies to reconnect consumption to its infrastructure. Following recent development in consumer logistics, a theoretical framework based on the process of agencing (see Cochoy, Trompette, and Araujo 2015) is proposed. Relying on the example of package-free supermarkets, this article suggests how the consumer-container agencement found in these places is constantly reconfigured throughout (the different spaces of) daily life. As mundane shopping is dominated by traditional 'packaged-wrapped' products, the example provided also shows how sustainable forms of consumption entail the creative re-configurations of related consumer logistics practices, while asking how consumers cope with inadequate infrastructures.

Then, the paper moves forward considering the work of existing research in consumer logistics. Despite a formidable contribution that brought to the fore obscured mechanisms of consumption, these studies paradoxically limited themselves to the movement of consumers, yet failed to capture the flowing character of these practices. These limitations are discussed in terms of the methodologies adopted, and questions of ontology and epistemology merge in the discussion. Relating to that, the last section reflects upon the need for creative assemblages of methods in future studies of multi-sited consumer logistics.

In sum, this paper contributes to shape traditional representations of (unsustainable) consumption by shifting the focus to the infrastructural politics that enable the phenomenon. Through advancing knowledge of mundane processes of agencing, it reconnects consumption to its effects and its sources while it provides a better vision of the full cycle of it. Furthermore, it contributes with a definition of consumer logistics within the CCT field and set the path for a promising body of future research, which may help shaping practical transitions towards more sustainable lifestyles.

II. AGENCING CONSUMER LOGISTICS

Package-free supermarkets represent both an opportunity and a challenge: an opportunity to live in a world where less waste is produced; and a challenge for current patterns of everyday practices. In short, these supermarkets sell products (food but also other items) without packaging. Here consumers become responsible also for packaging operations (they come equipped with their own containers) and not only for the 'carrying out of carrying' (Brembeck, Hansson, and Vayre 2016). Mundane shopping in package-free supermarkets is a form of disruption that opens up the politics of everyday life (Shove, Trentmann, and Wilk 2009): it allows the neglected consumer logistic practices (Canu and Cochoy 2012; Hansson 2014) to come to the fore.

Here, consumer logistics is defined as the bundle of practices (Shove, Pantzar, and Watson 2012) that consists of the "handling of goods from the point of acquisition to the point of

consumption or final disposal" (Granzin, Painter, and Valentin 1997). The consumer research literature reveals a dearth of studies in consumer logistics, possibly considered irrelevant to the dynamics of consumption (Hansson 2014), with the notable exception of Cochoy's (2008) account of shopping carts as mediators of consumers' shopping practices. However, the 'mobility turn' in sociology (see Faulconbridge and Hui 2016) seems to have sparked new interest in consumers' (physical) movements from the home to the retail store, and back again. Recently, research has described how the evolution of shopping containers is intertwined with the evolution of consumers' mobility (Hagberg 2016; Hagberg and Normark 2015); how consumption decisions are affected by consumers' cultural consideration and engagement with material aspects of mobility (Hansson 2014; Brembeck, Hansson, and Vayre 2016); how "micro" agencements made of consumer and the things she is handling (e.g., a person and her shopping bag) shape our course of action while walking on the street (Calvignac and Cochoy 2016). However, these studies have focused on consumer logistics happening outside the home and failed to show how these translate into household consumption (and disposal). Instead, it is important for studies of consumption to look at how objects are translated into different practices, while affecting and being affected by them (Geiger, Kjellberg, and Spencer 2012). Looking at the system of practices is important especially whether the aim is to understand the barriers impeding the transitions to more sustainable lifestyles (Shove, Pantzar, and Watson 2012).

Arguably, a case like that of package-free supermarkets fits well the purpose of following the translation of objects through different practices, or the translation of subsequent agencements. According to Callon (2006), an agencement is a configuration of different elements that are adjusted to one another. If we think about the consumer-container agencement found in package-free supermarkets, how is this agencement stabilized despite inadequate infrastructures? Here, infrastructural inadequacy defines the lack of a socio- technical system supportive of the mundane activity of package-free grocery shopping and the associated consumer logistic practices. Indeed, everyday grocery shopping is dominated by traditional supermarkets, where products come wrapped in handy packages. As objects are the infrastructure on which the social world develops (Latour 1992), consumer logistic practices are dominated by specific material configurations. These configurations are not to be found only inside the supermarket (with his artefacts and devices); even means of transportation or kitchen designs support certain agencements rather than other. Consumer logistics practices are then supported by moralized socio-technical regimes (Latour 2005). In simple terms, the infrastructural system enabling (and enabled by) shopping, moving, storing and disposing of goods discriminates against environmentally sustainable practices. Therefore, consumers need to act 'creatively' in order to cope with this infrastructural inadequacy. However, creativity is not prerogative of the consumer (or individual), nor it is a specific moment of creation; in fact, it has to be found in the agencement itself. Following Deleuze ([1987] 2003), creativity is the making of configurations, the continuous re-establishment of human-nonhuman relationships (Carayannis 2013). In other words, it is a process of agencing, through which specific agencements are re-configured and take on agency (Cochoy, Trompette, and

Araujo 2015). Hence, this paper suggests looking at subsequent translation of (mundane) agencements (like consumer-containers) as processes of agencing.

The contributions expected from the application of such a perspective are multi-fold. Here some theoretical advances this research might contribute to: it furthers knowledge on mundane processes of agencing (Calvignac and Cochoy 2016; Cochoy, Trompette, and Araujo 2015); it contributes to research on creativity, conceptualizing the role of devices in the process (Carayannis 2013); it expands the scant field of consumer logistics (Canu and Cochoy 2012; Hansson 2014), bringing to the fore the bridge between shopping and consumption; it shows how (super)markets are translated into mundane practices (Kjellberg 2008); it offers new insight on the role of consumers in market changes (Martin and Schouten 2014); it deepen our understanding of normalization of practices in condition of instability (Phipps and Ozanne 2017).

In addition, applying an agencing perspective on consumer logistics will help recognize the barriers impeding the transitions to more sustainable lifestyles. A more detailed account about alternative modes of provision through the marketplace will give us a clearer picture of the space between production and consumption (McMeekin and Southerton 2012). This greater sensitivity about the interaction between material infrastructure and consumers' lifestyle (Brons and Oosterveer 2017) may translate into more effective strategies to reduce the environmental burdens of consumption (McMeekin and Southerton 2012; Hansson 2014).

III. LIMITATIONS OF PREVIOUS RESEARCH

However, this kind of inquiry into denied operations of everyday consumption poses some methodological challenges worth considering. As said, previous studies haven't offered a full account of consumer logistics, but limited themselves to specific sites (mainly the supermarket or the street). Paradoxically, they aimed at describing mobility from a static position, fragmenting logistics into intermittent operations.

Instead, methodological choices should reflect the continuous flow of movement (Law 2004) that constitutes everyday life. Hagberg (2016) makes it clear that 'agencing is a process in which agency is acquired and sustained by the continuous arranging of the elements of practices, accompanied by continuous adjusting of these elements in relation to other elements of the practices in which they are included' (112). There is no question on whether he talks about spatial continuity or temporal continuity, as any movement in space is also a movement in time (Schatzki 2009). Instead, he indicates that studying agencing means studying continuity. Through an archival study of a Swedish trade magazine, Hagberg accurately portrays the evolution of shopping bags in Sweden through time. Such a method proves useful in accounting for continuity (and so, transformation) of the specific container and associated practices and devices.

However, historical approaches have their limitations. One refers to the mediation of the object (Latour 2005), that is the specific archive analyzed. So, the 'magazine […] does provide a particular perspective' (Hagberg and Normark 2015, 456). Using a methodology akin to Hagberg, Hagberg and Normark (2015) investigate the transformation of 20th century Sweden consumer logistics, at the intersection between changes in retailing and shopping practices. In their own words, the conducted historical analysis provides 'realistic accounts' (456) of how things were done. To put it differently, the data analysed through historical approaches are re-presentations of established categories (Latour 1984), which fail to capture the embodiment of everyday life (Hill, Canniford, and Mol 2014).

As a matter of fact, consumer logistics is also a corporeal movement (Latour and Hermant 1999). In accordance with the principle of ontological symmetry (Latour 2005), this means that while studying consumer logistics we have to 'give an equal voice to technical systems, devices and objects, and to humans, their experiences, memories, sentiments and bodies' (Brembeck, Hansson, and Vayre 2016, 19). To ensure symmetry, Brembeck and colleagues employed a multi-method ethnography, combining interviews, focus groups and diaries filled by informants, with go-along observations (Kusenbach 2003) and visual materials (pictures and videos) of consumers on the move. Whereas the discursive methods confirm the reflexivity attributed to the human condition, visual methods try to compensate for the fallacy of it. Indeed, go-alongs offer the opportunity of observing consumers' engagement with the material environment, while leaving them the chance to reflect on their practices (Hansson 2014; Brembeck, Hansson, and Vayre 2016). Furthermore, videos and photos allow to access information that would otherwise remain unsaid, or even unseen, because of the obvious and overly mundane character of consumer logistics (Brembeck, Hansson, and Vayre 2016; Calvignac and Cochoy 2016; Cochoy 2008; Hagberg and Normark 2015). Thus, multi-method ethnographies are so conceived to balance emic descriptions of everyday life, with the precognitive (Hill, Canniford, and Mol 2014) black-boxed into artefacts (Latour 2005).

Both Brembeck. Hansson and Vayre (2016) and Hansson (2014; except for focus groups and diaries) support their thesis through this multi-method ethnography. However, even though go-alongs and visual materials are employed to overcome the lack of fluidity encountered in the episodic narration of interviews, diaries and focus groups (Brembeck, Hansson, and Vayre 2016), it is arguable that fluidity is far from being achieved in relation to the ecology of consumer logistics. What these studies show is the reliance of a specific practice of consumer logistics, i.e. transportation, to the socio-technical system to which it is ascribed. They do contribute to the conceptualization of consumer mobility as a socio- material practice that is culturally and normative embedded (Hansson 2014). Yet this mobility is confined to the street (and, to some extent, to the store). There is a translation of the agencement consumer-container-thing through a space, but the translation of elements through consecutive agencements is still left to the 'visible unconscious' (Katz 2013). This approach doesn't solve an old concern: "where are the missing masses?" (Latour 1992). Where are the packages (shopping bags aside) that were picked up from the shelf and that will be stored, or perhaps thrown away, once the consumers reach home? The invisible components and 'forgotten spaces' (Birtchnell and Urry 2015; for example: kitchen cupboards) remain out of sight, and out of mind.

It was already Cochoy's (2007) proposal to 'move from a sociology of marketing to a sociology of market-things' (109) and open our eyes to 'market matters' (110). Coherent with the

idea, he accounted for (part of) those 'missing masses': by fixing the focus on the shopping cart, he showed how consumers' calculative cognition is partly black-boxed into such a mundane artefact (Cochoy 2008). Conscious of the fact that the triviality of the object makes it difficult to see what is worth seeing, he relies on a multi-method approach, arguing that 'using all methods without any a priori is the best (and only?) way' (Cochoy 2008, 18). So, he combines a longitudinal participant observation (collecting varied materials, including photographs, field notes, articles and webpages) with a one-year multi-method study, composed of quantitative observations, transcriptions of brief 'live' exchanges between consumers ignoring the researcher's presence in the supermarket, and focus groups. While the latter have already been addressed, the other methods are worth a closer look.

Recording live conversations without interfering allows the consumers to conduct their operations, while grasping accounts that may be relevant for the study. Consumer logistics (besides in-store operations) is also worth investigating through everyday verbal exchanges, since actors' representation of the practice is as important as its materiality (Entwistle and Slater 2013). However, in Cochoy (2008) these conversations are transcribed directly from memory. If that is the case, issues with the (human) mediator have to be considered.

Furthermore, longitudinal participant observations resonate with the complexity of studying everyday life, made up of repetitive and natural(ized) acts: redundancy of data may indeed offer new insight. This idea of capturing what might go unnoticed is fundamental also to the quantitative observations: registered through an 'observiaire' (a mix of the words 'observation' and 'questionnaire': questions about the observed action are asked and registered, rather than questions posed to informants; Cochoy 2008; Cochoy and Calvignac 2016), observations about the agencements (which Cochoy [2008] calls 'clusters') are made comparable and accountable, even in the minutiae of movements that might escape the grand scheme (Bajde 2013) of mundane agencing of consumer logistics.

Calvignac and Cochoy (2016) are aware of the potential of the observiaire, which they use to track the adjustments of vehicular agencies walking down the street in Toulouse. Vehicular agencies are micro-agencements consumer-things (e.g., a person and her bag) that impact the logistics of deambulation (Calvignac and Cochoy 2016). In order to study these assemblages, the authors placed a fixed camera in an apartment over a street of Toulouse city center and filmed the flow of vehicular agencies on a Thursday and Saturday. In this manner, they were able to capture the re-agencing of the elements composing the vehicular agencies in their encounter with the neighbouring material environment. Using the authors own words, the method employed gives 'the means to capture seemingly trivial things that actually determine the contours of our collective life and that guide our logistical decisions' (144).

Consumer logistics would benefit from the application of quantitative observations, especially when paired up with the use of recording technologies, as their methodological symmetry enables to capture much of the 'stuff' of which mundane operations are made up. However, Calvignac and Cochoy are well-aware of the narrow scope of their research and the limitations that come with it. Focusing on the street, from distance, may allow us to appreciate the flow of vehicular

agencies, but it also sections the flow of everyday life. Long distance video-recording is blind to infrastructural considerations other than what is on camera (e.g., urban infrastructure, but also the content of people's bags and so their motives) (Calvignac and Cochoy 2016). Therefore, it represents a problem whether the aim is studying the continuity of agencing processes of consumer logistics.

IV. METHODOLOGICAL AVENUES

With the exception of Cochoy (2008), all the above-considered (reasonably) proclaim themselves studies of consumer logistics. Spurred by the mobility turn in sociology (see Falcounbridge and Hui 2016; Sheller and Urry 2006), they offer an innovative perspective on how our consumption is carried out. They look at consumers' movements from home to the store (and back again) as made possible by the socio-material configuration of the environment. Although offering an extraordinary contribution to the field of consumer research, they nevertheless isolate those movements from the flow of everyday consumption, studying consumer logistics peculiarly as the movement of people and things throughout the urban space (Calvignac and Cochoy 2016). However, if we define consumer logistics as the 'handling of goods from the point of acquisition to the point of consumption or final disposal' (Granzin, Painter, and Valentin 1997), a more complex scenario opens up, which instigates some considerations on the methodological challenges for future research.

First, future research needs to broaden its geographical scope. Unfortunately, none of the previous studies entered informants' homes to investigate the domesticity of consumer logistics, although the importance of domestic practices for sustainability – and the production of waste in particular – has been proven elsewhere (Mylan, Holmes, and Paddock 2016; Metcalfe et al. 2012; Evans 2011; Devaney and Davies 2016). If logistical operations assisting consumption continue beyond the street, why would research stop outside the consumer's door? Multi-sited ethnography (Marcus 1995) may be a methodological alternative to create a more exhaustive account of the agencing process of consumer logistics. In order to capture the continuity of agencing, we need to be able to follow the translation of subsequent agencements. How is the assemblage composed of shopping cart, product packages and consumer subsequently translated into shopping bag-consumer-vehicle, consumer-packages-kitchen furniture (what happened to the bag?), and so forth until the trash bin? In other words, we need to overcome the sited-ness of our research and conceive (consumption) space as a 'set of relations between things' (Lefebrve 1991, 83).

Hence, next question concerns how we look at those relations (and so at those subsequent translations). Inspired by existential phenomenology, CCT research has a long tradition of putting the subject at the centre of its ethnographies (Askegaard and Linnet 2011). Instead, coherent with the ANT principle of ontological symmetry, consumer research should study 'the unfolding and the "growth" of actors through *their* attempts to make other elements dependent upon them' (Bajde 2013, 238, emphasis added). What does that mean in terms of our methodological choices? How can we avoid classical ontologies of agency and ensure that objects are fairly represented in our methods? As seen above, visual methods can help capture what

the researcher might not see, objects included. Videography in particular (Hietanen 2012) offers a promising alternative to track the flow of consumer logistics. Calvignac and Cochoy (2016) claim that a fixed camera over a street ensure a symmetrical representation of human and nonhumans entities. Although their claim is reasonable, we have nonetheless examined how their fixed point of view prevents an account of the continuous flow of everyday consumer logistics. A solution may be adopted, that is following the agencement through its various translations, instead of having a fixed point of view.

As simple as it may sound, future research needs to make further considerations on the matter (the researcher too needs to creatively inter-act with the inadequate infrastructure of research). The question is akin to the one has just been made: how do we avoid favouring the point of view of the subject? After all, it is the story of the silent infrastructure of consumer logistics that awaits to be narrated. Already Cochoy (2010) suggested that studying consumption without studying consumers directly, but through the objects of the market ('market-things'), may grant us a better understanding of the phenomenon itself. In the same fashion, consumer logistics (and so consumer research) may benefit from a close-up focus on its artefacts, in order to understand the socio-material mechanism at play 'for getting the job done' (Molotch and McClain 2008). This would require that we shift our point of view from the subject (and from a space – e.g., the street) to the object. Thus, future research may tell the biography of objects, as narrated by the objects themselves.

However, this thought leads to last and more practical considerations. A first set regards the affordances granted by existing technologies. Does videography provide the necessary tool to render the point of view of the object? For example, the researcher may install a portable camera directly on the artefacts of consumer logistics and follow their movements. Do existing technologies make that possible? How else could we track the flow of movement of the devices enabling consumption? Which kind of data will a different tracker provide us with?

In relation to these concerns, there are also some issues of ethics. The conceptualization of consumer logistics made in this paper entails the involvement of the researcher (or her devices) in consumers' intimate spaces and moments. Especially if we rely on visual methods to ensure ontological symmetry (a camera might follow the object, or be placed inside the consumers' homes), the intrusion may cause privacy disputes. How should research tackle these (and other) issues? Clearly, future studies need to creatively re-configure their methodological assemblages.

V. CONCLUSION

This paper started with the consideration that we need to rethink our patterns of consumption, in order to ensure the sustainability of our planet. In particular, the point was that disposal doesn't happen in a vacuum, but waste is a product of consumption. Previous research has failed to conceptualize this relation (De Coverly et al. 2008; Mylan, Holmes, and Paddock 2016), focusing instead on the separation of the two (Hawkins 2001) and therefore misrepresenting over-consumption (see Kjellberg 2008). In general, CCT research has re- presented consumption as intermittent and episodic, mainly narrowing

down the context to the individual meaning of consumers and their identity projects (Askegaard and Linnet 2011).

To reconnect (the full cycle of) consumption, consumer research needs to look at it as a continuous flow of movement (Law 2004). Hence, I propose that an agencing perspective on consumer logistics (see Calvignac and Cochoy 2016; Hagberg 2016) may help us follow the translation of (super)markets into consumption and account for the continuity of it. This perspective entails that agency is attributed to the agencement and not to a specific component. Objects form part of these agencements as the infrastructure on which the social world develops (Latour 1992). A case like that of package-free supermarkets represents a form of disruption of everyday life as suggested by ethnomethodology (see Garfinkel 1984), where consumers are faced with inadequate infrastructures and have to creatively re-establish the socio-material order of the it. Therefore, research on sustainability should recognize that paths of (un)sustainable consumption depend on the infrastructure on which they are built.

Further ontological considerations on the theories applied in this work lead us to reflect over the methodological choices that future empirical research on consumer logistics should consider. As argued, re-presentations of a phenomenon shape the phenomenon itself (Latour 1984). Hence, future research should address two main concerns related to the re- presentation of consumer logistics. The first relates to the sited-ness of the field: previous studies have conceptualized consumer logistics as the movement of consumers from home to the store, and back again. This led them to narrow their field to the space in-between those two places, namely the street. Instead, consumer logistics is a bundle of practices that extends from inside the store, until the 'point of consumption or final disposal' (Granzin, Painter, and Valentin 1997). Future research needs to re-conceptualize the space of consumer logistics re-presenting the multi-sited character of it, especially acknowledging the importance of domesticity for studies of consumption.

A second related question concerns how we re-present consumer logistics. It is as much a question of which devices we use as how we use them. Videography seems a promising alternative to grasp the most mundane character of consumer logistics. However, other tracking devices may provide us with different kinds of data useful to understand the geographies behind these everyday practices. Furthermore, following the objects themselves and writing a biography from their point of view may offer innovative contributions to the way we have until now re-presented consumption.

In sum, the purpose of this paper was to reconnect consumption to different *things*. For one thing, consumption needs to be reconnected to our responsibility (as researchers and consumers) towards the sustainability of our planet. Yet consumption needs to be reconnected also to those *things* that make it possible. Askegaard and Linnet (2011) asked for reconnecting it to the macro-politics of an institutional perspective. This paper suggests that we should reconnect it also to the politics of the objects that institute mundane governance.

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The Fable of the Passions: Drives and Excess in Consumer Culture

Isleide Fontenelle

Abstract— I present a genealogy of the concept of consumer passions that, from Bernard Mandeville's *The Fable of the Bees* to Freud's concept of drive, enables understanding consumer culture based on the mode of operation of passions/drives. Within the field of consumer studies, I suggest that "drive satisfaction" is a pivotal concept in the understanding of the psychic dimensions related to consumption. I argue that the internal movement of consumer culture eroded its foundations as a space in which to fulfil desires by transforming itself into the culture of capitalism, in order to drain the excess necessary for this system to work through a permanent thrust towards immediate satisfaction of passions/drives. The proposition of release of passions/drives through consumption as the path to a satisfactory life results, today, in problematic excesses, raising dystopian questions regarding consumer culture.

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I. INTRODUCTION

In this essay, I present a genealogy of the concept of consumer passions/drives based on Bernard Mandeville's *The Fable of the Bees* in order to establish continuity between the debate opened by Mandeville and Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic studies on drives and the search for drive satisfaction through consumption. The main objective is to understand consumer culture based on the mode of operation of passions/drives and their current dystopian excesses. I use Foucault's concept of genealogy in the sense of a history of the

present (Foucault, 1991) or of a pragmatically oriented historical interpretation (Dreyfus and Rabinow, 2010). Starting with a diagnosis of the present situation, I will seek to understand, through flashbacks, what was presented as liberating by Mandeville – the liberation of the passions through consumption – and what was ultimately wrought under the rationale of nascent capitalism that structured consumer culture as a culture of excess.

Drive is a concept that characterises the bodily demands upon mental life (Freud, 2014b). This is a borderline concept between the somatic and the psychic that refers to internal, bodily excitation, forcing the psyche to work, that is, to meet the demands and intensities of drives. The target of every drive is its satisfaction, but completely satisfying it removes the subject from the field of desire, taking the subject beyond the principle of pleasure (Freud, 2016) to a place of excess that may be destructive. Critical reflections in the field of consumer studies

about the environmental, social and psychological implications of consumer excesses in today's society have been published (Smith and Raymen, 2017; Raymen and Smith, 2017; Fitchett, 2002), some of which employ a psychoanalytical perspective related to the drive concept (Woodall, 2011; Chatzidakis, 2015; Gabriel and Nixon, 2016; Gabriel, 2015; Bauman, 2001a). In Loose (2015), I found a critical analysis of the use of art by marketing/advertising based on the relationships between consumption, excess and drive. This is a fundamental time diagnosis supporting my argument about the dystopian excesses of consumption due to the thrust towards drive satisfaction, although it does not present the historical relationships between consumption and drives that have led us to this state of affairs – the focus of this essay.

Freudian psychoanalysis played a central role in structuring and justifying consumer culture, particularly in the United States (Zaretsky, 2006; Illouz, 2011; Dufour, 2013). The relationship between psychoanalysis and consumption dates from the early twentieth century, unfolding into different areas: into public relations (Bernays, 1928), into advertising (Oswald, 2010) and into motivational research (Ernest Dichter, 1960), a consumer research strand from which interpretive consumer research originated (Holbrook, 2015; Holbrook and Hirschan, 1982; Tadajewski, 2006). Dichter sought to understand the underlying consumption or consumer motives and became recognised in marketing not only for his contribution to the field of interpretive consumer research (Holbrook, 2015; Fullerton and Stern, 1990; Schwarzkopf and Gries, 2010; Tadajewski, 2006) but also for his application of psychoanalytic theory to advertising

(Sutherland, 2013). Bernays used the psychoanalytic theory regarding the functioning of the group mind (Freud, 2013) to support the notion of increased consumption in public opinion and created a new profession, Public Relations (Ewen, 1996). The partnership between psychoanalysis and consumer studies has a long history (Cluley and Desmond, 2015). However, this relationship has also been critical, through disagreement regarding the market uses of psychoanalytic knowledge to drive an excessive form of consumption (Loose, 2015; Woodall, 2011; Gabriel, 2015; Nixon and Gabriel, 2016; Chatzidakis, 2015; Bauman, 2001).

My proposition of the concept of "drive", to explain the mode of functioning of consumer culture, does not suggest resuming the interpretive approach of consumer research. I propose to mobilise the Freudian concept in the context of a critical analysis of capitalism, indicating how it mobilises passions/drives through consumption to rationalise its infinite accumulation (Žižek, 2008a; Harvey, 2013, 2014; Marx, 2013, 2014). Examining consumer culture as a culture of capitalism presupposes the key role consumption plays in the process of value realisation. Slavoj Žižek uses the notion of parallax to demonstrate "the insurmountable persistence of the parallax gap in the *salto mortale* that a product has to accomplish in order to assert itself as a commodity" (Žižek, 2008a:75, italicised in the original). Although it is created in production, value is only realised in circulation, when the commodity becomes use value for someone and, therefore, can be sold, completing the M-C-M (money-commodity- money) cycle analysed by Marx. Therefore, there is a time gap between value production and its realisation, and bridging this gap is crucial for the process of capitalist expansion because value "is only maintained by growth" (Jappe, 2013:60). This requires that goods be circulated and consumed quickly. This analysis of consumption within the context of the necessary law of accumulation of capital is mostly absent from contemporary analyses of consumption, which ultimately favours the cultural pole, the symbolic character of objects. For Harvey (2014), many of these studies failed to contextualise the topic within the totality of relations considered by Marx because they were conceived with a posture antagonistic to the Marxist interpretation of the logic of capitalism.

I will seek to understand the search for drive satisfaction through consumption, in interaction with the process of value realisation by capitalism, considering how the consumer agency in search of drive satisfaction finds resonance – and is enhanced – by the structural needs of capitalism for value realisation. This relationship forms the convergence between the drive economy and the market economy (Dufour, 2013).

The article is structured as follows: after this introduction, I present *The Fable of the Bees* as a fable of consumer passions, highlighting the historical reasons that led Mandeville to regard consumption as a space par excellence for the satisfaction of human passions. Subsequently, I will discuss how Freud resumed the debate about passions by proposing the term drive and its counterpart, the superego, in the context of a European culture founded on the denial of passions/drives. Then, I address the perspective of consumer culture as a space of drive and market realisation and the internal movement that transformed it into the culture of capitalism and excess, based on certain contemporary authors from the field of consumer studies,

particularly focusing on the role of consumption of cultural assets and their relationship with art and the experience of satisfaction. Lastly, I return to the fable and present some considerations about the contributions of this drive approach to the field of consumer studies. In the context of the themes proposed by the Consumer Culture Theory (CCT) Conference 2018, this article is part of the topic "dystopia", a field mostly overlooked by the CCT, which has privileged the utopian scenario of consumer culture (Maclaran and Brown, 2005; Kozinets, 2002; Dyer, 1977; Jameson, 1979). Understanding dystopia as utopia gone wrong (Gordin et al., 2010), I aim to show how what appeared to be transgressive and liberating in consumption has reached dystopian excess. I will consider dystopia not from the analysis of subcultures regarded as antipodes of consumer culture (Podoshen, Venkatesh and Jin, 2016) but from that of the hegemonic consumer culture, promoter of consumer pleasures.

The Fable of the Bees, by Mandeville, is an important starting point because, if the fable indicates a utopia – the possibility of satisfying passions, pleasures, and private vices that need not be contained because they would become public benefits – the author's comments on his fable in the same historical period indicate a context in which consumer passions would become not only viable but also necessary for the construction of the capitalist modernity. Today, this is no longer the scenario.

II. *THE FABLE OF THE BEES* AS A FABLE OF PASSIONS

The first version of *The Fable of the Bees* was published anonymously in 1705. It was only in 1714 that Bernard Mandeville, a Dutch doctor based in England, assumed authorship. In that year, the author republished his fable together with prose remarks, as well as an important essay, "An Inquiry into the Origin of Moral Virtues", forming the first edition of the *"The Fable of the Bees: or, Private Vices, Public Benefits"* (Mandeville, 1997). In the fable, bees full of passions, understood as vices, create a society of amenities, comforts and pleasures. Troubled, however, by the absence of morality, the bees lament the lack of honesty, to which Jupiter angrily responds by making them virtuous. Honest, the bees began to feel satisfied with what little they had, which led them to restraint and ruin, ultimately having to take refuge in a hollow tree to continue to exist.

The Fable of the Bees may be understood not only as a fable of passions but also as a fable of the wealth derived from trade and consumption (Dufour, 2013, Brito, 2006). The greatness of the *Fable* lies in showing how, through passions, the inextricable relationship between the drive economy and the market economy is revealed, starting in the eighteenth century. Mandeville's objective is to defend the notion that all human actions are based on passions, of which self-love is the main passion. As a physician, Mandeville understood that diseases of the soul are caused by the excessive restraint of passions, an understanding that makes him a psychoanalyst before his time because he analysed the soul and its illnesses by listening to his patients. Robert Dufour (2013) shows how Mandeville anticipated the Freudian studies of hysteria by conjecturing how female illness could be related to the fact that young women are subjected to excessive chastity. Similarly, he also anticipated the Freudian notion of neurotic guilt in the analysis of melancholia

and male hypochondria. Based on the analysis of those consultations, Mandeville wrote a treatise (1730). Thus, we cannot fully understand the message contained in the *Fable* if we disregard the writings of the physician who understood human passions as "animal spirits" that should be released. Mandeville wrote in the eighteenth century, precisely the starting point of the civilising process narrated by Norbert Elias (1990; 1993), that is, the demand for self-control, the containment of passions, present in the moral and behavioural codes of the court, which were subsequently assumed by the bourgeoisie as the ascending class at the end of that century.

Mandeville insisted that passions were uncontrollable; however, being a man of his time, he proposed that liberated passions could ultimately be advantageous for social wellbeing. His main thesis was that liberating vices considered negative from the individual standpoint, such as greed and lust, would be conducive to collective prosperity. Mandeville writes in an affluent England already benefitting from the movement of goods, albeit still surrounded by moral ideas that held no worthy social role for merchants nor a place of honour for consumers and for the pleasures of the senses. The Mandevillian scandal was to defend consumption and luxury as a space for the realisation of human passions long before it became a commonplace, proposing the consumerist man at the historical moment when others sought to create the contained bourgeois (Brito, 2006).

Although shocking for his time, the iconoclastic ideas championed by Mandeville were ultimately debated and assimilated by great thinkers of the time, such as Adam Smith. According to Hirschman (2002), Smith somewhat followed the ideas of the author in his analysis of a specific "vice" or "passion", that is, in defending that self-love can generate wealth and happiness. However, Smith used more neutral language to cushion the impact "of Mandeville's shocking paradox", replacing "passion" and "vice" with milder terms, such as "advantage or interest". The notion of interest, in the eighteenth century, starting appears fully associated with wealth and economic or material privilege. Smith's task was to "establish a powerful economic justification for the untrammelled pursuit of individual self-interest" (Hirschman, 2002:120, italicised in the original).

Although the Mandevillian proposition was not conceived in defence of capitalism, which, in a few decades, would take shape with the industrial revolution, the development of this mode of production would not have been possible without the liberation of passions. But Industrial capitalism, which arose in the post-Mandeville era, was still not consumer capitalism. Although its roots were already growing in the late eighteenth century (Slater, 1997), it would take time to gain the present form, requiring new types of moral liberation. Although the formation of liberalism and of the modern individual from the liberation of passions is fundamental to understanding how consumer culture served as a space of drive satisfaction, it took a long time to reach this point. Consumption, as a means of realising passions, could not yet be accepted in the context of an expanding capitalism that required sacrifices, resignations and postponements of satisfaction, which we will observe in the Freudian analyses.

III. THE FREUDIAN (RE)DISCOVERY OF PASSIONS: THE CONCEPT OF DRIVE AND THE SUPEREGO

Two centuries after Mandeville's writings, another "doctor of souls", this time, the creator of psychoanalysis, returned to the problem of the passions to understand the psychic pathologies of the modern society. In *Civilisation and its Discontents* (2011), originally written in 1929, Sigmund Freud elaborates a type of overview of his understanding of human passions in his time. Discontent results from denying passions, which, in the new Freudian grammar, are termed drives. Defining happiness as the "experience of strong pleasures" (Freud, 2011:19), Freud concluded that the civilised man exchanged some of his happiness for safety.

Freud stating that drives are stronger than interests dictated by reason. He presents drive as a "frontier conception between the psychic and the somatic, like a psychic representative of the internal stimuli coming from the body and reaching the soul, like a measure of the labour demand imposed to the psychic as a consequence of its interconnection with the bodily" (Freud, 2014a:25). This is one of the most important concepts, albeit one of the most complex of Freudian psychoanalysis, because it "operates in an area of indeterminacy, of indistinction between body and psychic apparatus: although its source is always somatic, we only know its psychic representative" (Iannini, 2014:96).

There is an indeterminate number of drives, although Freud highlights two key drives that, after different designations, were defined in his last writing on the subject as the "libido" and the "destructive drive". Although the former seeks to establish connection, the purpose of the latter is to break connections, to destroy them (Freud, 2014b). Drives act by combining with each other or against each other. The act of eating, for example, is a destruction of the object with the purpose of incorporation, and sexual intercourse is an act of aggression with the intention of the most intimate unification. However, when the proportions of drive combinations change, there may be other consequences: sexual aggressiveness, if excessive, takes someone from the condition of lover to that of passionate killer, whereas shyness or impotence may result from a substantial decrease in aggressiveness (Freud, 2014b).

To what is the combination of drives due, and how to imagine a world moved by them? Freud proposes the existence of a psychic instance, the superego, a sort of guardian of drives, as its function is to force them to relinquish their demands for satisfaction. Thus, aggressiveness — something that must be forsaken in the quest to live in society — turns against the subject as the result of the introjection of moral law. The superego is an internal, judging, disciplining instance, functioning beyond external coercion. Whereas the latter causes the subject to submit for fear of punishment, the superego, by imposing self-discipline, is fundamentally related to the fear of loss of love or social rejection. However, an external instance must determine what is good or bad, forcing the individual to follow the path that, through the "feeling itself" (Freud, 2011:70, italicised by me), he could not have followed. Hence, civilisation results from a long process of denying our drives, converting life into something manageable and coped with using techniques to reimplant the principle of reality at all costs (Seligmann-Silva, 2010). With this, Freud presents the long history of human

development into a being of culture and the price we had to pay for it.

In Freud, drives, as a fundamental concept of metapsychology and clinical psychoanalysis, are examined based on how they manifest themselves in each subjective experience, how they inscribe themselves in each body and in each subject. For the purpose of this study, which is to analyse the historical relationship between passions/drives and consumption, drive, as a concept, is valid as long as it is linked to a specific cultural form. Therefore, this relationship should be analysed based on its restrictions by the superego. This was precisely the path that Norbert Elias (1990; 1993) trod when seeking to understand the relationships between drives and culture in the European civilisation process that occurred in the long period between the eleventh and eighteenth centuries, using psychoanalytic concepts such as drives and the superego to demonstrate the cultural determinants of drives and that, although this differs from individual to individual, something is common to them all: they all experience the material world of economic, political, and cultural relations and of rules imposed during a specific period of history that shape our passions/drives.

Freud shows how a trade-off between drives and acculturation was occurring then, at the moment in history when modern industrial society imposed certain cultural requirements. Among the numerous demands modernity imposed on its subjects, the postponement of satisfaction was an inseparable and inescapable behavioural precept of the modern way of being-in-the-world (Bauman, 2001b). Nothing, however, predisposes subjects to the accommodation of such requirements. This should be taught and incorporated as the proper signal of "an active civilisation" (Bauman, 1998:8).

However, it is not easy to deprive a drive of satisfaction. If the denial is not rewarded somehow, psychic disorders are generated (Freud, 2011). Freud believed in certain forms of compensation, such as in the processes of sublimation in the work of the artist or scientist. Freud did not present consumption as a path towards the sublimation of drives, although he did simultaneously note the excess of denial of passions/drives, as a consumer culture was already forming in which his theory was beginning to be used to promote this liberation. Let us turn, therefore, to consumer culture in the making, the space in which drive satisfaction is regulated and deregulated.

IV. THE FORMATION OF CONSUMER CULTURE AS A SPACE OF DRIVE AND MARKET REALISATIONS

Although Slater (1997) states that consumer culture is contemporary with the Modernity established in the eighteenth century, it only begins to take its current shape in the late nineteenth century, precisely when the historical foundations crucial for its current shape as a space of drive and market realisations had already been laid. If words are witnesses which often speak louder than documents (Hobsbawm, 2012), how the terms consumption, consume and consumer have been redefined throughout the formation of consumer culture must be examined. Searching for the etymology of the word "consumer", Raymond Williams (2007) states that the verb "to consume" has been part of the English language since the fourteenth century and that in almost all its first uses it had an unfavourable meaning, such as to destroy, to exhaust, to dilapidate, to deplete. This negative character of the verb persisted at least until the end

of the nineteenth century. The old uses of the word consumer also had the same negative meaning. In the mid-eighteenth century, the word consumer begins to appear in a neutral way in descriptions of bourgeois political economy. This word began to be used in the general and common meaning it has today only in the mid-twentieth century, and this modern origin of the word is American. The rapid positive development of the term "consumer" is attributed by Williams to a new stage of search for planning and control of markets inherent to industrial capitalist production, by "the creation of needs and wants and of *particular ways of satisfying them*" (Williams, 2007:110 – italicised by me).

A whole cultural construction, in which what we now call consumer culture took shape, was necessary to detach the word consumer from its original and negative meaning. For the word consumer to gain its positive connotation in the mid-twentieth century, a long cultural transformation was necessary, which was becoming noticeable in Western capitalist nations at the turn of the twentieth century: the transition from the bourgeois ethos – which was guided by orderly work, compulsive savings, civic responsibility and a rigid morality of self-denial – to a new set of values that sanctioned the right to leisure, compulsive spending, political passivity and an apparently permissive morality of individual realisation. Consumer culture was forming and spreading, therefore, within a network of institutional, religious and psychological changes that created a favourable moral climate and a therapeutic ethos focused on self-realisation in this secular, self-referenced world, based on modern emotional needs (Lears, 1983). Psychoanalysis played a key role in the development of consumer culture by how it influenced the construction of this therapeutic ethos (Zaretsky, 2006; Illouz, 2011; Gabriel, 2015).

Although a favourable moral climate was decisive for consumer culture, it still walked hand in hand with the bourgeois ethos of hard work and the principle of postponement of satisfaction that grounded capitalism in its accumulation phase. However, the capitalism of the early twentieth century had already gone through its second industrial revolution, beginning to produce goods in excess which, based on the logic of its internal functioning, had to be consumed. In this context, marketing knowledge and techniques began to develop in the shaping of a consumer culture geared towards immediate gratification of passions/drives. The development of marketing (Cochoy, 1999; Alderson, 1957), advertising (Osvaldo, 2010), public relations (Bernays, 1928) and research on consumer behaviour (Mason, 1998) set in motion an internal movement of consumer culture that sharply contradicted the principle of postponement of satisfaction as a moral virtue (Bauman, 1999). These techniques and knowledge continued what Sennett (1998) termed response to the factory when referring to the emergence of department stores as spaces for the outflow of industrial output that used techniques to seduce new consumers through store windows and posters that appealed to the consumer imaginarily, albeit intuitively, before the knowledge of behavioural psychology (Scott, 1903; 1920) and of psychoanalysis (Bernays, 1928; Dichter, 1960) became intensely used in the quest for drive satisfaction.

Consumer culture took shape, therefore, in the midst of two plainly antagonistic ethe that coexisted throughout the first half of the twentieth century. In this period, the allure of consumer

culture was only understood as the finish line for those who worked hard, as the voluntarily postponed rewards of satisfaction, and as the certainty that "the more severe the self-restraint, the greater would be, eventually, the opportunity for self-indulgence" (Bauman, 1999:181). Postponing satisfaction kept the worker at the service of the consumer, maintaining the consumer who lives in the producer "fully awake and wide-eyed: do work, since the more you work, the more you will consume" (Bauman, 1999:181).

This scenario begins to change in the second post-war period (Strasser, 1989). The virtuous postponement of satisfaction begins to contradict a consumer culture that promotes an increasingly more excessive right to the immediate enjoyment of objects and hedonic experiences hitherto considered transgressive by bourgeois cultural values. Askegaard (2010) shows, based on his analysis of a subset of lyrics of the rock band The Beach Boys, formed in 1961 in Southern California, how the playful use of material culture, especially the automobile, and the hedonism expressed in the band's lyrics had a revolutionary impact on consumer culture in the 1960s, evoking transgressive themes such as sex and death. Indeed, while cultural transgression precedes the 1960s (Seigel, 1999; White and Stallybrass, 1986), it begins to be absorbed by consumer culture during this period, and with this begins to undermine the bourgeois values that, contradictorily, sustained it as a possible space of drive realisation. Another example is the wave of counter-cultural protests of the late 1960s and early 1970s. Led by a young generation that criticised capitalism while claiming the liberation of passions/drives, these protests were already indicative of a context in which the drive economy and the market economy converged. Not by chance, the counterculture was appropriately used in the revitalisation of advertising (Frank, 1997) and was also associated with the emergence of new marketing research techniques that sought to grasp the new, such as coolhunting (Askegaard, 2010).

The analysis performed by Askegaard (2010) is important for the purpose of this essay for two reasons. On the one hand, it allows us to see how the transgressive becomes increasingly assimilated into the context of consumer culture, from the "logical correspondence between sub- and counter-cultural practices and market value" (Askegaard, 2010:359). On the other hand, it indicates the need to historicise the theoretical constructs of consumer culture, particularly regarding the topic of hedonic consumption and consumption experience. Locating the origins of this phenomenon in the early 1960s, the author questions the contemporary arguments that place this form of consumption in the late twentieth century (e.g., Arnould and Thompson, 2005). Furthermore, I consider that consumption experience is part of the consumer culture because it is shaped by the use of imaginary and symbolic aspects involved in consumption, even of physical goods. The beginnings of this culture, analysed from the establishment of department stores (Pasdermadjian, 1954; Miller, 1981) in the late nineteenth century, show the fundamental importance of the imaginary and symbolic aspects of consumption experience. In this respect, the proposed concept of drive is accurate because the analysis of some contemporary articles about consumption experience (e.g., Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982; Hirschman and Holbrook, 1982; Belk et al. 1989; Belk, Ger and Askegaard, 2003) reveals common elements among these different research studies focused on consumer experiences. This is about understanding what experiences the consumer seeks through consumption, namely, sensorial, aesthetic or hedonic satisfaction. Recent research studies, however, have shown that the search for satisfaction may occur even in forms of consumption aimed at painful experiences (Scott et al., 2017) or that are surrounded by anxiety, aggression, violence and addiction (Smith and Raymen, 2015; Raymen and Smith, 2017; Loose, 2015; Podoshen, Venkatesh and Jin, 2016), raising new questions regarding the notion of extraordinary experiences as pleasurable (Arnould and Price, 1993; Belk and Costa, 1998; Kozinets, 2002) or even regarding ordinary consumer experiences (Carú and Cova, 2003).

From the second half of the twentieth century, the stimulus of pre-existing consumer experiences intensified, associated with both material and immaterial goods. In the midst of a new stage of the development of capitalism, in which much of the production turns to the consumption of cultural goods and experiences, the selfish maxim of the passions/drives imposes itself. This thrust towards excess through consumption has intensified since the last two decades of the twentieth century, particularly incorporating the outcomes of the technological revolution, expanding the sphere of consumption to an accumulation that is no longer primarily of things but of experiences that seek to intensify satisfaction, circulating images and objects that promise limitless satisfaction (Wajcman, 2010). Thus, this consumption is no longer about denying but rather exalting the desire "reduced to enjoyment, primitive and not elaborate, that is, the drive" (Dufour, 2013, 2013:272). This mode indicates a profound transformation in the rationale of the Freudian superego because it is no longer about enforcing standards to be met in order to repress drives, as analysed by Freud, but about the possibility of obeying the infinite space of flexibilisation and choices as something not only desirable but also obligatory.

Based on this time diagnosis, and supported by a Lacanian analysis coupled with a consideration of Freud's theory of drives, Rick Loose (2015) reflects on the relationship between art and psychoanalysis and between art and marketing/advertising from different ethical dimensions. In the first case, art serves to destabilise, going beyond appearances and illusions and, accordingly, helps to address the truth of the unconscious that disturbs the subject of interest to psychoanalysis, whereas in marketing/advertising, art sells and, therefore, seeks the beautiful, the meaningful, the good, the satisfactory and the universal of consumption. In the relationship between art and psychoanalysis, what is at stake is the impossibility of complete satisfaction, whereas marketing/advertising promises that this drive satisfaction is possible and, if "you don't have it yet, keep going and you'll get it" (Loose, 2015:35). This logic operates through addiction, a contemporary response to this quest for drive satisfaction through consumption. Thus, "science and the markets tend to universalise the solutions to the ever problematic drive with disastrous consequences" (Loose, 2015:36), leading to an addictification of our society, as there is nothing satisfying, humanistic or authentic about drives. Although Loose still believes in the power of contemporary art in indicating the impossibility of limitless access to the enjoyment of objects, he is aware of the investment the market has made in the promise

of something more intense than the daily, ordinary pleasure limited by the pleasure principle. The problem, the author argues, is that now advertising and markets "are fighting fire with petrol" (Loose, 2015:35), feeding drives with custom-made objects and seeking to ensure satisfactions beyond pleasure, such as in pain, in vice and in suffering. This is also shown in the analyses of Raymen and Smith (2017) on contemporary gambling and of Smith and Raymen (2017) on shopping with violence. Although those authors do not rely on the Freudian drive literature, they use the analyses of Žižek (2008b) on the mode of functioning of the contemporary superego based on a cultural directive towards an increasingly intense enjoyment of objects. This directive goes hand in hand with the transformation of consumer culture into a culture of capitalism.

V. "I CAN'T GET NO SATISFACTION": FINAL CONSIDERATIONS ON DRIVES AND THEIR IMPOSSIBILITIES

In this essay, I proposed the psychoanalytic concept of drive as a way to contribute to a critical reflection on the excesses of contemporary consumer culture. I also proposed that the field of CCT consider more strongly how consumer culture has become the culture of capitalism. The concept of drive unites drive and the market economy, that is, it considers the role of consumers in the search for drive realisation, while also highlighting how consumer capitalism instigates and intensifies the pursuit of drive satisfaction. However, drive functions under a logic according to which its full satisfaction is impossible, "as it exceeds the very limitations that makes life coherent" (Loose, 2014:37).

Based on Freud, and back to Mandeville, it should now be noted that in contrast to Mandeville's assumptions, private vices that justify the liberation of passions do not seem to be public benefits; on the contrary, they have generated problematic excesses, both from the psychic and from the social and planetary standpoints. Conversely, we should ask ourselves if private vices are also private benefits. After all, the fable states that, although prosperous, the bees were not fully satisfied...Something was missing! Since they had everything, they complained about the virtue they lacked. Thus, although he wrote the fable to defend the liberation of passions, Mandeville suggests, through the dissatisfaction of the bees, that total satisfaction is impossible.

Today, amid the dystopia of consumer excesses, consumer culture hopes to regain its virtuous outlet by constructing "responsible consumption", which apparently recovers most of the moral debate about the virtues of restraint from the Mandeville era. In this new context, it is important for the field of consumer studies to consider the strength of drives, as well as the possible and conceivable spaces of drive liberation beyond consumer capitalism.

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Big Brother and The Cyborg: The Rejection of Google Glass

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Abstract— We address consumption of technology from the perspective of failure, and demonstrate how various metaphors are used to imagine and share the consequences of a new popular technology. While research in consumption of technology have focused on consumer acceptance, we study technology discourses embedded in the Google Glass advertisement "How it Feels [through Google Glass]" on YouTube, because we want to understand how rejection and resistance build in the imagined use of technology. The study extends research on technology consumption by demonstrating the importance of emergent online consumer discourses, and exhibits the relevance for studying imagined consumption.

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VIII. INTRODUCTION

Google announced its head-over-display product, Google Glass, in April 2012 attracting significant media and consumer attention; Time Magazine named it one of the best inventions of the year (Time, 2012), popular tech magazines, such as Wired, published enthusiastic reviews (Baldwin, 2012), and handpicked people invited by Google to test the product, the so-called Google Glass Explorers, gave positive reviews and uploaded videos on YouTube showcasing their exotic user experiences. With lots of fanfare and public interest the following year, Google released its first ad on YouTube in February 2013, depicting (supposedly) real video footage from Glass users performing and participating in activities such as photographing or sky diving. The ad motivated significant consumer interest from the beginning, attracting more than 22,000,000 views and 22,000 comments, and shared no less than 56,000 times, approximately six months after its publication. However, despite quickly becoming a trending new technology, Glass was never launched to the consumer segment, as originally planned by Google. And the ad, along with the thousands of comments, was since removed. In this paper, we demonstrate how metaphors of technology in consumer generated comments can help elucidate why an innovation was rejected. In addition, we discuss the deletion of historical traces in relation to the management of public memory.

IX. IMAGINED CONSUMPTION

There is a significant body of research on consumption of technology research that focuses on acceptance (e.g. Kozinets, 2008; Giesler, 2012; Thompson, 2004). Recent CCT studies concerning technology, focus on experiential and sociocultural dimensions (Arnould & Thompson, 2005), particularly on posthuman representations in advertising texts and consumption practices (Giesler & Venkatesh, 2005; Buchanan-Oliver & Cruz, 2011), ideology and myth (Kozinets, 2008; Thompson, 2004; Chaharbaghi & Willis, 2000), technology discourses (Buchanan-Oliver, Cruz & Schroeder, 2010).

Kozinets (2007) identifies four ideologies in consumer narratives of technology, and analyses how they influence consumers' narration of their relationships with technology. Kozinets argues, that consumers' meaning-making of technology happens in the critical contradiction between social and economic progress and the destruction of nature. This is analogous to Giesler (2012), who proposes that the success of a particular technology lies in the course of image contestations. Critical engagement with technology is thus not equivalent to rejection of a technological innovation, and may be in fact co-responsible for making it salient for consumers. However, these studies focus on mature markets and on products that are possible to acquire. We propose that technology consumption is not dependant on materiality, and that the figurative dimension alone allows for imagined consumption to take place.

To approach this specific type of interrogation, we focus on how consumers use language to participate in discourses of technology consumption, as a way to make sense of possible changes about new technology. Thus, in this study we focus on what a new technology means for consumers, as opposed to what it can practically do.

X. METHOD

We employ discourse and metaphor analysis within a dynamic framework that allows for studying conversations without the existence of actual material consumption. Discourse analysis is a rather general term that encompasses a significant variety of approaches concerned with analysing how language is shaped through semiotic exchanges. In combination, analysing metaphors in technology discourses allows us both study how consumers think about a new technology and the movement of shared imaginations.

Cameron, Maslen, Todd, Maule, Stratton & Stanley (2009) introduces 'dialogism' to account for the influence discourse participants have on each other, and Knudsen (2012), using the similar construct of polysemy, accounts for the reflexive reading of a text. They share a rhetorical-textual approach that aligns with classic symbolic interactionism. While Knudsen (2012) does not specifically address metaphors in her approach, the principal approach to treat both cognitive and discursive dimensions is the same. For Cameron and Deignan (2006), language behaviour is an emergent phenomenon born from the interaction between the agent and the agent's discursive environment. From this view, "the discourse environment is inseparable from the talk", metaphors emerge "from the interaction between the discourse environment and the discourse participants, who draw on their linguistic and cognitive resources for processing ideas and for finding the words to talk about them to their interlocutors" (p. 688). What we wish to emphasize here, is that metaphors are part of complex and evolving discursive systems and highly contextual.

One thousand (1000) comments were harvested with Webometric Analyst (http://lexiurl.wlv.ac.uk), spanning a period of approximately four months after the ad was published on YouTube, between June and October 2013. The time range is randomly generated at the time of data collection, as the software is conditioned by Googles API (application programming interface), which only allows a maximum extraction of 1000 comments and without regard to publication dates. Comments were analysed in an iterative approach, coded topically and thematically, taking metaphors into account, their intertextual references and denotative meanings, as well as broader discourse themes. Comments with little or no content, incomprehensible meaning, or with unrelated messages to our research inquiry were not coded. One thousand and fifteen (1015) emergent codes were initially produced, divided in one hundred and thirty-nine (139) different categories, and finally fifteen (15) unique metaphors. All usernames have been removed for anonymization purposes, in accordance to commonly appropriated ethical standards in internet research. Many comments use a frivolous mix of symbols and capital letters, and can be difficult to read out of the technological context of YouTube.

During the data collection, the ad had been viewed 22.123.537 times, received 94.580 likes and 5.135 dislikes, shared 56.198 times and received over 22 thousand comments, which can be considered a significant online activity. The ad has since been removed by Google, likely due to the cancellation of the final product launch.

XI. DATA AND ANALYSIS

A. Google Glass

Wearable (electronic) technologies already made their entrance with hearing aids around 1933, but the now iconic calculator watches from the 1980'ies epitomize the innovation and convergence of wearable gadgets into the miscellaneous entanglements of what constitutes everyday life. Science-fiction literature had long imagined marvellous advances in human-machine hybrids, as well as culturally and morally decadent ages brought on by technology. In recent years, wearable technology has demonstrated significant market potential through a myriad of self-tracking products, for example fitness trackers, and many were eagerly accepted and adapted by consumers. It is therefore not surprising, that when Google announced its head-over-display product, Google Glass, 4th. April 2012, expectations soared. Google appraised the ethos of co-creation and invited consumers to share their thoughts about what Glass could become. Glass seemed to represent a technological socio-cultural disruptive innovation that promised to augment reality and introduce a frictionless and pervasive experience enabled by ubiquitous computing; a dream long envisioned by technology enthusiasts.

In Google's Glass ad "How it Feels [through Google Glass]" depicts real-life video footage from Glass users performing various activities; they document their experiences by photographing, share content on social media, using Google search, and streaming video recordings live. The ad switches frantically between persons, with several reappearances that—although only sporadic—create small identifiable storylines. The central theme of the ad seems to revolve around documenting and sharing important personal moments. Activities include skydiving, ballet audition, children's birthday party, memorable moments for the people involved. The Glass users express joy and excitement, demonstrating an almost instinctive use of the advertised technology as a natural integration (and extension) in their lives.

B. Youtube as Research Site

YouTube is a well-suited source for studying the negotiation of ad meaning "because it allows both consumers and companies to upload, to circulate, and to comment on ads" (Knudsen, 2012, p. 1)—the open digital milieu invites consumers to engage in polysemic dialogues with a rich topic diversity. However, as a research site, YouTube is also layered in a cacophony of consumer expressions, not only in reference to the sometimes daunting amount of comments and multi-layered meaning constructions.

Networked media sites are complex ecologies characterized by "convergence, globalization, multiphrenic concepts of identity" with "constant shifts in local and global connections"; they are unique contexts that require "equally complex tools for thinking" (Markham & Lindgren, 2012, p. 3). Although groups of connections in online media can be distinguishable as evolutionary consequences of the convergence of communication and technology, it does not naturally presuppose social interaction. Comments on YouTube, can be seen as responses to a technologically constrained and structured organization of random users, an unintentional aggregation of individuals without a predetermined social structure. The

technological constraints on YouTube motivates an irregular and sporadic participation, often consisting of short comments that reflect a purely aesthetic partaking with no significant consideration towards a social collective. We presuppose, that users are neither part of an audience, a public nor a community, but passive spectators up until the moment they engage in shared dialogue.

C. Preliminary Results

Generally, most comments seemed to have been written with haste, often with typos or misspellings, commonly situated within an evaluative discourse but particularly product related, application scenarios, improvement suggestions, and statements of technological excitement. A sizable part of the comments expressed an interest to use Glass to record or watch erotic materials with, distinctively in public spaces, which could point to a young user audience. There was also a large amount of unrelated comments (spam), which were almost exclusively ignored by other users.

A significant amount of user comments concerned aesthetic aspects of the ad, such as enthusiasm or dislike for the music track or the rhetorical ingenuity, demonstrating a wide consumer interest in the marketing text itself (e.g. comparing it with competitor's ads), in addition to the advertised item alone. Intertextual references were vividly applied to convey technological excitement, especially from popular comic and animation series Dragon Ball Z (Toriyama, 1988). Specifically, we identified three main discourses in the data: 1) Technophilia, 2) Surveillance and autonomy, and 3) Slaves to technology (see table 1). Although there were many positive voices in the data, the critical voices were far more pronounced. In general, there were quite strong levels of anxiety and critical reception of technology in the discourses surrounding Google Glass and were quite strong levels of anxiety and critical distancing from the technology and its potential uses. Further, especially. Particularly, the "Big Brother" and "cyborg" metaphors were employed to denote fear or excitement.

Theme 1: Technophilia. Users commonly used Big Brother as a metaphor for issues related to surveillance and social control, and animal metaphors such as sheep to denote cognitive numbness and indifference to commercial surveillance. Most man-machine metaphors were situated in a technophilian discourse, for instance by referencing Neo, the techno-prophet from popular science-fiction movie The Matrix, to denote an admiration of the cyborg-like integration of man into the network, or to popular figures with head-up displays such as Robocop. The comic and TV- animation series Dragon Ball Z was particularly used to denote excitement for new technology. The comment "It's over 9000!" was repeated by many users in different variations and is a well-known internet-meme, and is a reference to a popular scene where the dismayed antagonists in the animated series use their so-called scouters (futuristic visors) to display a surprisingly high power level (combat strength) of the favoured protagonist. The specific sentence, e.g. "ITS OVER 9000!", has become a well-known internet-meme and denotes considerable excitement for a piece of (new) technology. Intertextual variations like "Can it measure power levels?" or "I want a scouter app for this" was also widely applied. Similarly, references to head-up displays, in general, touched upon computer gaming, e.g. "Huds like battlefield 3

:D", and motivated a longer wave of comments, where several users shared their technological excitement, such as "You could turn real life into a video game and have a hud" or "I seriously hope we can start gaming with these kind of devices! :D".

Iron man and related content from Marvel Comics superhero universe, was also a popular technophilian man-machine metaphor. References to the fictional hero behind Iron Man, Tony Stark, or to his supercomputer "Jarvis", e.g. "I go to feel like Tony Stark! YES!" and "everyone will haver their own Jarvis! Hahah", shows a playfull fascination for Google Glass, as a possible (fantastic) catalyst for turning its user into a "superhero".

Theme 2: Surveillance and autonomy. Issues of control and freedom invoked significant negative sentiment. Conspiracy theorists offered thought-provoking statements on how Google covertly pursues a plan to dominate "the world", or that clandestine mythical societies are in fact controlling Google. From the available data, we can only guess whether this was meant as a discursive playfulness in the form of exaggerated and somewhat amusing sarcasm, or if it was a display of authentic Internet wackiness. We can contend, beyond possible rhetorical motivations, that consumers apply conspiracy theory as a source for interrogating technology acceptance, to discuss the wider implications of a new technological innovation, by implying that Google is trying to take over the world, e.g. "Google now trying to achieve world domination" and "All part of Googles plan to dominate the world", and to the popular and infamous conspiracy theory, the "Illuminati" e.g. "can anyone say illuminati?".

In a similar way, transgression of privacy was highlighted by consumers, that critically discussed the problem of standardized and obscure data harvesting, e.g. "Congradulations,Introducing the all new Mobile Survelience Platform. Upload all of your actions while wearing google glass,with or without your permission.". Another user explains with detail, covering both technological and legal constraints, that Google is watching:

"google glass just filed for a patent on measuring eye dilation for advertisement. what is keeping google from measuring eye dilation from any other computer device that you use. What this means is google is allowed to view you at your computer legally. They are allowed to spy on not just what your doing in the computer but now spy on you physically. Google glass may not pan out but this patent will remain. if you ask me google glass was invented just to get this evil law passed."

Users entered a climax of transgression in the form of state control, especially by using the figuration of *Big Brother*, sometimes also mentioning its source, George Orwell's culturally iconic dystopian novel "Nineteen Eighty-Four" (Orwell, 1949). Some of these comments invoked significant sentiment, such as "Fuck you, google! 'We have learned to swim the sea as fish and to fly the air as birds but yet we have not learned to live the world as brothers and sisters.' Martin Luther King. Please read 1984 and then think about Google Glass and all the other SHIT!", or "Not only big brother is watching u outdoors..!!!", and showcases a particular interest in sharing visions of a dangerous future. This was also linked to the NSA, e.g."NSA will be happy ! When people will use Google glass",

which demonstrates how this particular state agency has become part of the Big Brother figuration, e.g. "Not only big brother is watching u outdoors..!!!". The aggregation of *Big Brother* and the NSA, is somewhat expected after the now renowned leak on the extensiveness of American surveillance programs by former intelligence specialist Edward Snowden, just few months before these comments; external events can thus influence the discourse by providing national specifics to an otherwise global user audience on how to interpret the figuration of Big Brother

Theme 3: Slaves to technology. A technophobic theme was evident in comments of how humanity is perverted through technological submission. Especially The Borg (Roddenberry, 1987)—a fictional cyborg race in popular sci-fi TV-series Star Trek that assimilates other species by incorporating them into their collective hive-mind eradicating all individuality—was applied as a metaphor for a dystopian technologized future brought on by Google. Users almost competed for appropriating quotes from the show, e.g. "Google will turn us all into the Borg", or "Google: We are the Borg. Your biological and technological distinctiveness will be added to our own. Resistance is futile.", to match with the current situation. But apart from intertextual playfulness, The Borg was also used to criticise and warn others about the apparent dangers of Google Glass, e.g. "Google Glass suck we are humans not machine now what people do if the glass do everything.   it's my opnine".

For some users, the seamless use of technology portrayed in the ad seemed alien in relation to everyday ordinary life, and evoked a distorted image of the "common" Glass user, such as "gah rich people.. ". For these users, the ad's technological optimism is exposed as a hollow promise; an optimism similar to what Kozinets (2008) calls an "ideology of technology centred around a frivolous inclination to self-gratify by pursuing technologically mediated pleasure and escape". Users readily made fun of the seamless use of Glass in the ad, joking that the presentation did not match real situations, e.g. "0:46 All fun and shit, until the glasses fall down.".

This apprehension echoes a critique of a technologically minded society, in which culture finds authorization, satisfaction, and autonomy in technology (Postman, 1992). The following comment encapsulates not only the critical apprehension to (new) technology, but also a Marxist critique on how false needs and wants are introduced by a commercial ideology, to which one user took quite some to articulate, which demonstrated a high amount of engagement:

"I am a little bit shocked how much you resist the truth about companies like google. Google actually might be the worst most manipulative companies next to apple (recently Microsoft tries to keep up too). Thing is not to have the stuff that accompany you with great life but just to have a great life and do that with minimum resources neccesary! Basically just look at what GG is proposing you: a translator a gps navigation, camera, wiki maybe? Something what you already have and what ..."

Google's attempt to parallel memorable events as exotic experiences evoked a discourse of social exclusion by technology, where the resource-scarce commoner is polarized against the resource-rich elite, indirectly creating a reference to the inherent, and politically unpopular, inequality found in

stratified human societies. The absolute void of discomfort, hazard, or challenge in using Glass in the ad, is a playful naturalization of technology that many users thus interpreted as both naive and farcical. The sarcastic comments attempt to deflate the ad's technophilian discourse through a display of media literacy and marketplace metacognition (Wright, 2002; Knudsen, 2012)—and even though the ad does not hide the (more or less obvious) fantasy, users distilled it as an offensive message.

D. Cyborgs Wear Google Glasses (of course)

Although the technophilian discourse can be characterized by a glorification of technology, as seen in the intertextual references to Dragon Ball Z and superhero Iron man, beyond enthusiasm, the underlying promise is one of salvation; technology is canto endow humans with new powers, or bring about a superior and happier form of life. These comments are inline with the, a technologically deterministic idea that is also found in the ad's ideologynarrative. For technophiles and technophobics alike, the metaphor of the "cyborg", in particular, channels both fears and hopes of imagined change by (new) technology.

The cyborg, a common figuration in popular culture and literature, has motivated utopian narratives of hopeful futures, and provoked dystopian speculations upon the threatened state of free will, future autonomy, and the very integrity or stability of humanity, often portrayed in mass market fiction and film (Muri, 2001). In one popular form, we find the cyborg as an image of a cold and emotionally unresponsive and perverted human; a representation of conflict between the (sacred) human "spirit"—irrational, intelligent, creative, emotional and complex—and the unresponsive, unfeeling, soulless, debilitating amoral machine without autonomy and emotion (Muri, 2001, p.29). It is not so much a fear of the machine replacing man—as it is the case in some popular movie interpretations in e.g. *The Terminator* or *The Matrix*—but rather the replacement of the human spirit or mind through a process of technological convergence or embodiment (Muri, 2001). This particular interpretation was evident in the intertextual references to fictional race The Borg, as a metaphor for a dystopian in which the (natural) human mind has been eradicated or corrupted.

In another popular model, the cyborg represents a higher state of evolution, a superior human with supernatural strength, intelligence, sensor amplification, and advanced information analysis; we find this form represented in Robocop (even though this particular figuration also includes a level of human perversion) and Dragon Ball Z. Most importantly, the cyborg metaphor is concerned with the subject of consciousness in both humans and machines—its origins can be traced to the "very old religious debate about the body and soul" (Muri, 2001, p. 28), an important project during the enlightenment, that problematized the fundamental relation between human and machine. Somewhat amusing, one of the reasons the cyborg metaphor is evoked, is simply because it visually resembles popular representations. Google Glass users simply "looked" like cyborgs, which invoked deep historical and cultural debates over societies relationship to technology.

E. Big Brother is Everywhere (also in Google Glass)

Big Brother, another regularly applied metaphor in the examined discourses, is a favoured metaphor for privacy issues (Solove, 2001). Big Brother is of course famously known as a metaphor for the infringement of individual autonomy through panoptic state surveillance. Solove argues, that the Big Brother metaphor was born in a now partly forgotten paradigm, where privacy problems were conceptualized as the uncovering of peoples hidden lives, invaded by surveillance and by disclosure of concealed information—invasions that consisted of inhibition, self-censorship, embarrassment, and damage to one's reputation (Solove, 2001). Our analysis depicts, to some degree, the reinterpretation and revitalization of Big Brother as a meaningful figuration.

Social media technologies have especially cultivated and normalized the use of surveillance in the last decade. Information is harvested, analysed and marketed with little or no user empowerment. Surveillance technologies that can record or otherwise document its surroundings, such as smartphones or handheld cameras enjoy a common and widespread use. Users track their own whereabouts, monitor their biometric values, calculate their calorie intake etc. and share the information on digital media sites with a global audience. What our data shows, is that the Big Brother metaphor is invoked as a counter discourse to possible surveillance of others with Google Glass. Possible transgressions in privacy and individual autonomy, Glass became a figuration for the fears and hopes of losing the right of privacy.

XII. DISCUSSION

Metaphorical figures, such as the cyborg and Big Brother, are part of a complex symbolic terrain, where technology, politics, economy, and the social intersect. In the cyborg and Big Brother metaphors we see that individuality, morality, and subjectivity are fundamental themes in interrogating a new technology. The Cyborg is used to convey either salvation through the promises inherent in the discourse of technophilia, or damnation via the implied consequence of losing one's identity or autonomy when the human mind is merged with the machine as a communications device (Muri, 2001). Big Brother is correspondingly concentrated on the location and conservation of self-identity (a prevalent configuration of the pervasive concept of consciousness). Fear lies not with disembodiment, but with social control and total domination by the loss of autonomy through corporate surveillance.

Out study demonstrates how consumers respond to a new technology by invoking commonly held metaphors of popular culture. Under such circumstances, a new technology can be imagined and associated with utopian-dystopian cultural opposition, easily dismantling an advertisements self-enthusiasm. Wearable technology, such as Google Glass, seems to be firmly connected to ideologies in each camp, whether it is the technophilian commoner or the transhumanist devotee; or even the critical rationalist. A tension, Google Glass failed to relate to.

XIII. APPENDICES

TABLE I.   METAPHORS OF TECHNOLOGY

Metaphor	Denotation	Theme
Neo	The Matrix (movie)	Technophilia
Robocop	Robocop (movie)	
Tony Stark	Iron Man (comic)	
Jarvis		
Scouter	Dragon Ball Z (comic and television series)	
Power levels		
Over 9000!		
Cyborg	Popular sci-fi figuration	
The Borg	Star Trek (sci-fi television series)	
Big Brother	1984 by George Orwell	Surveillance and autonomy
NSA	State intelligence agency	
Illuminati	Secret society that conspire to control world affairs	
Sheep	Slave / docile / uncritical	Slaves to technology
Cows		
Satan		

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Using Narrative to Support Sustainability Strategies

Melea Press & Eric Arnould

Abstract— In this article, we explore how managers build consensus for sustainability initiatives with employees and immediate stakeholders. We use a narrative lens to explore the rhetoric that managers in firms developing sustainability initiatives use to create legitimacy for their new programs. Examinations of narrative in marketing have largely explored communication between firms and customers. Further, we look at how narrative is used within firms to build consensus for sustainability strategies and suggest that narrative is driving the legitimacy of sustainability programs across industries.

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I. USE OF NARRATIVE IN BUILDING SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES

In this paper, we explore how managers build consensus for sustainability initiatives within an organization, including employees, and immediate stakeholders such as the board, buyers and suppliers. We take a narrative lens to explore the rhetoric that managers in firms developing sustainability initiatives use to create legitimacy for their new programs. Examinations of narrative in marketing have been used largely to explore communication between firms and customers; in this paper, we look at how narrative is used within firms to build consensus for sustainability strategies among the communities these strategies affect.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Holt (2012) argues that new narrative strategies are needed to develop and legitimate a sustainability agenda for business that can garner widespread legitimacy. Cayla and Arnould (2013) have proposed scholars adopt a narrative approach to the analysis of strategic change within firms. However, existing work at the intersection of narrative and sustainability tends to adopt two approaches that fall short in part because they repeat a pattern of unproductive framings of the sustainability challenge and journey. On the one hand there are reformist, even utopian discourses that associate sustainability with alternative market forms that deliver ecological, health, or social benefits (Press and Arnould 2011; Arnould Plastina and Ball 2009). On the other hand, they are frames for firm activities that focus on the discourse of corporate social responsibility based on measures and proofs. Both these narratives tend to be inscribed in the ethical values paradigm (Holt 2012). Inevitably, both narratives also exist in a dystopian form as researchers represent firms as engaging in greenwashing or in various forms of bad faith with regard to sustainability ethical ideals (Press an Arnould 2013; Wright and Nyberg 2017). In this paper, based on interviews with organizational stakeholders, we explore how narrative is used to build sustainability strategies in organizations.

Developing an organizational sustainability strategy is a major undertaking. Previous scholarship focuses either on antecedents or outcomes of sustainability strategies rather than what could be called the process of ontological shifting and legitimacy development within companies that drive sustainability strategies (Philip and Bansal 2013). Missing are analyses of the crafting of sustainability discourse within firms to see how they transcend what Holt (2012) calls the ideological lockdown associated with the ethical value paradigm. We call upon past work on narrative in organizations to help clarify the narrative processes of change in organizations.

We know that organizational sensemaking is a social and linguistic process (Chia, 2000; Maitlis, 2005), where meanings are materialized through language, talk, and things (Cayla and Arnould 2013; Weick, Sutcliffe and Obstfeld, 2005). Organizations plan and enact narratives that are consistent with their values and beliefs (Czarniawska, 1997), providing a window onto these organizations' worldviews or paradigms

(Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991; Pentland, 1999). Narratives are used to create a shared understanding of goals and values (Gioia and Chittipeddi 1991) and influence behavior (Ashforth et al. 2008). Thus, in organizational studies the concept of organizational narrative and the idea of understanding organizational life as "interwoven, structured, and even construed by stories and narratives" is well established (Hartz and Steger, 2010: 768).

Narrative provides stakeholders a vocabulary to communicate about the organization, its goals and values (Dowling 2006; Etzion and Ferraro 2010; Weber, Heinze and DeSoucey 2008). Effective narrative engages stakeholders, helps them make sense of their experiences (Shankar, Elliott, and Goulding, 2001), and builds personal investment with the organization by facilitating the connection between constituents and the values and goals of the organization (Press and Arnould 2011a). In organizational storytelling, persuasive stories induce commitment (Shaw, Brown and Bomily 1998) promote legitimacy (King and Whetten 2008; Etzion and Ferraro 2010; Suddaby and Greenwood 2005), increase organizational reputation (Boyce 1996; Dowling 2006; Vendelø 1998), and help organizational actors understand stakeholder experiences (Cayla and Arnould 2013). Organizational communication is a type of persuasion, which like rhetorical tactics more generally, is a "symbolic means of inducing cooperation" (Burke, 1969: 43; Cayla and Arnould 2013). In this article, we look at the sustainability persona, four mythic binaries that support it, and how these rhetorical devices develop and diffuse sustainability throughout and across organizations.

A myth is foundational story or system of related stories perceived to be age-old. Myth is compelling and "believable;" and seems like it could happen. Myth imposes sense and order on experience and is believed to encode time-proved verities. Further, myths are anonymous, shared, and must be continuously re-appropriated by social groups (Georges 1968; Leach 1967; Stern 1994). In consumer research, the concept of myth shows how marginalized groups can gain cultural legitimacy by connecting to broader myths (Press and Arnould 2011b). Myths apply to everyone in an organization and they help people understand how they can fit in a field (Kozinets 2001; Thompson 2004).The combination of familiarity with the storyline and urgency of intelligibility potentially opens the door for organizational consensus around sustainability. If myth provides the tale, then the persona illustrates desired courses of action reflected in myth.

Jung (1959) took up the idea of persona in analytic psychology to describe how people organize their relationship with society and the how people conform to a recognized or predefined personage to play a social role, a development central to the idea of persona in marketing. Persona has been pursued in a number of research streams: consumer culture theory (McCracken, 1989; Cayla and Arnould 2013), advertising (Stern, 1991, 1994), semiotics (Mick, 1986), branding (Herskovitz & Crystal, 2010), and helps managers build a consistent user- interface by making 'the user' present in the design work (Johansson & Messeter, 2005).

Persona is used to engage an audience and create collective focus (Stern 1993; Delbaere et al. 2011) by operating as a boundary object that organizes commitments and focuses power dynamics (Cayla and Arnould 2013). The rhetorical value of personification has been demonstrated in consumer and organizationally-focused contexts (Stern 1993; Press and Arnould 2014). Persona guides organizational members toward collective action by illustrating the types of attitudes and actions that are preferred within the organization.

We suggest here that within organizations narrative employing myth and persona builds consensus for sustainability goals. Further, we identify similar narratives used by different organizations across industries to build support for their sustainability goals. Thereby we illustrate the emergence of the kind of alternative narrative of sustainability Holt (2012) advocates.

III. METHOD

We selected seven companies across the building supply, consumer products, publishing, big 5 auditing, and finance. The businesses met several sampling criteria. All are attempting to respond to changing consumer expectations around sustainability-sourced products. All these companies deal with sourcing activities in countries with weak institutional frameworks. All these companies are figuring out how to monitor and verify suppliers' environmental and social practices. All seek to develop employees who want to work toward these goals.

We conducted semi-structured interviews with sustainability leaders in each of the seven companies. The fieldwork was conducted in 2010 and involved 31 interviews. To gain a variety of perspectives on sustainability strategies, we interviewed individuals from different organizational levels such as coordinators, category managers, department heads, managing directors, and chief executive officers. In addition, we interviewed individuals from different departments including supply chain, operations, corporate social responsibility, sales, and communication. We recorded and transcribed the interviews. Each lasted between 60 and 120 minutes. We conducted a thematic analysis within companies and across companies.

IV. FINDINGS

We organize our findings around the persona and mythic binaries that emerged from the data. To begin, we discuss how the sustainability persona developed in these organizations. Next we look at four binaries that emerged from our cases. These are *Right Livelihood vs. Lack of Purpose*, *Order vs. Disorder, Life vs. Death*, and *Cost of action vs. Risk of inaction*.

A. The sustainability persona

The persona is passionate. We know organizations use persona to help build shared understanding. In our data, organizations seem to use persona to paint a picture of how individuals can develop and contribute to sustainability initiatives. We found consistent elements of the sustainability persona across our cases. This person is passionate about her work and works tirelessly to further sustainability goals, even sacrificing free time. She is intrinsically motivated, "Yes, so it

is a personal passion. Nobody said to us go and set this group up, so that for me is where the reward comes. It is not a monetary reward, I don't get any more money" (Rog Q). This person does not seek external gain, "we do it for the passion not for the money" (Belinda C) and "I have a personal passion to go the extra mile" (Klaus I). She recognizes others' passion as well: "I think we are all quite passionate."

The sustainability persona takes initiative. For example,

I started recycling stuff from my desk, the story… I came in doing one day's research for the company, at the end of the day there were some papers on the desk, I picked those up, looked for the recycling bin, there wasn't one, so I put it into my bag and took it home, but the next day…they think I am stealing computers because some computers had gone missing. Police are called, I'm taken to the manager's office…I explain that I am recycling and they don't really understand why or what I am doing… several people had noticed police…so they came up to me and said what was going on, and I say well I was trying to recycle some paper, I have been told not to. They say well that is ridiculous, so we started meeting at lunchtime to discuss what we could do to…make the company do better things. (Tucker S)

This person's initiative led directly to others' involvement in looking at how to make the company more sustainable. Fast forward 12 years, the company has become a leader for sustainability in its industry. This origin story is codified in organizational sustainability lore, of critical importance to myth building (Philippe and Bansal 2013).

The sustainability persona is humble and inclusive. She uses logic and passion over authority to invite others to join in their mission:

Someone like [the VP for Operations] for instance he certainly didn't [encourage sustainability in the organization] through authority, he did it because he was passionate and he could describe why you want to do this and why it is the right thing, but…he doesn't come across as a tree hugger, he comes across as someone who is really quite logical and passionate… And he wasn't doing that from a position of authority he was doing it from more of a position of respected specialist (Peter O)

The sustainability persona enacts inclusion through encouraging dialogue (Press and Arnould 2014). Our informants uniformly talked about creating spaces for exchanging information as a platform for efficiency and a way to spread their sustainability work beyond their organization:

[We organized] a supply sustainability workshop… we have actually got bloody big companies with whom we have a commercial relationship so let's actually sit down [and] say well how do you feel about the environment…we didn't have to do it, that is leadership…we want to plug into and understand how we can work together on those sorts of things…. Heath I)

Encouraging dialogue among others in the supply chain or industry, or even with others outside the industry who are struggling with similar issues diffuses and share sustainability goals and improves organizational resilience (Philippe and Bansal 2013). It also shows others in the organization ways to engage with sustainability in a more public way. Further, there is internal organizational dialogue that must take place so that everyone understands what it means to be a legitimate source of information:

I think we do it because we want to engage with our clients, we want to engage with our people, we sell and advise on sustainability services in the marketplace and it is vitally important to us that we practice what we sell…we must do that. (Simon R)

As the persona develops, the values of the persona spread to others in the organization and the behaviors of this idealized persona are normalized: "I think we are all, all my team are engaged in doing this because we have a passion to do it, we don't have something being forced on us and I think the willingness to do it is within ourselves" (Belinda). Others in the same company confirm this normalization process, "using [sustainability guidelines] tends to get driven by the passion of one person, and then pushing it through his team and then selling it into the rest of the company" (Klaus I). Other organizations echo the process, "probably the more [influential people are] the purchasing managers whose day job is all four areas of the balanced scorecard [sustainability reporting tool] but [they] just over-index on the responsible sourcing because of personal passion" (Oscar N). The sustainability persona highlights quiet heroes who work toward sustainability goals. Once codified, others in the organization know this persona and the actions this persona engages in and can mimic this behavior. We will now turn our attention to four mythic binaries that emerged from the data.

B. Right Livelihood vs. Lack of Purpose

Right Livelihood is a traditional Buddhist teaching; it is one of the limbs of the Buddhist Eight-Fold path. The Buddha taught that people should strive to live a long and dignified life using wealth obtained through "rightful" or ethical means (Rahula 2008). The personal conflicts managers experience as they try to navigate organizational needs, which often focus on profit maximization, versus their desire to *do well while doing good*, are a common trope in management literature (e.g. Falck and Heblich 2007; McCormick 1994; Stoeckl and Luedicke 2015). This mythic binary contrasts with purposelessness; that is, engaging in meaningless or even harmful work. Our data show managers struggling to justify how their jobs matter and latching onto sustainability strategies as a way toward right livelihood. Informants talked about sustainability initiatives as a way for employees to feel like they are making a difference: "[working on our sustainability initiative] is just a need in our workforce to do something over and above just driving financial results" (Oscar N), and "[the sustainability work] was done because people were I think passionate about doing the right thing"

(Klaus I). Sustainability initiatives provide an outlet for employees to clarify the role of their company in the world:

When you work for a [large multinational] company…people just…presume you are out there purposively churning up the world's resources and not caring…the fact that

I am involved in making some proper changes and the fact that [we are] actually committed to it at the highest levels as well makes a very big difference. And I can point at some really specific things I have been able to do. (Peter O)

Especially when the industry is ethically challenged, "we want to be a responsible company in an industry that is seen as controversial" (Heath I). Managers' narrative encodes desires to engage in right livelihood, doing work they can be proud of, feel good talking about, and work that makes a positive difference in the world.

C. Order vs. Disorder

It is well known companies struggle to develop policies around sustainability and to find or create sustainability metrics. When it comes to keeping track of results our sustainability managers tend to be methodical and cautious, "…we write our policies afterwards, we do the practice first and then we find a policy to fit" (Belinda C). In this way they make order out of extremely complicated issues and take myriad practices and put them together into a comprehensible policy, for example,

I think that setting a clear goal and saying we are going to achieve x is almost the only way of doing it and stretching yourselves and pushing yourselves and kind of saying that taking things slowly and kind of saying well we will do a little bit here and a little bit there…but also being honest when things don't go right as well. (Klaus I)

Honesty and openness often appear in the dialogue around developing and implementing policies. There seems to be consensus that it is better to be open about what is not known or understood and use dialogue as prescribed by the persona, to achieve workable policies. Vendor dialogue is key to building defendable policy, as the quotation below illustrates.

So the policies really have been born out of particular issues around particular areas that we have uncovered whilst sourcing products and the way that [we] tackle it is if we know about it we can be open about it, we can talk about it. If we don't know about it therefore we can't defend our position and that is when it is difficult. So that is why we encourage all of our vendors to actually tell us if they have got particular issues. (Benjamin C)

Managers need to defend policy to stakeholders, including customers, vendors, suppliers, retailers, and internal customer-facing teams and internal buyers. They seem to develop a multi-faceted defence strategy by engaging methodical steps in developing and implementing new strategy, with information flow and dialogue being foundational.

…we have rules for things…your timber has to [be] compliant with timber policy and that would be a kind of rule that stops you buying non sustainable timber, and now we do a lot of stuff on trying to encourage…good things…when I first came the…people were begrudgingly applying the policies that we had…but that is really changing. (Amanda B)

Amanda points to changes in her organization around the acceptance of policies that favour sustainable products. There is a concern among managers about how to make sure they measure the right things, in a way that is transparent and simplifies a lot of complexity. Some things lend themselves well to clear reporting and concrete outcomes, such as:

…when we do something very specific like we make some packaging thinner or we start using some recycled packaging or we just make a bag smaller that has the same amount of product in, it is absolutely 100% tangible and you can just say we used to buy this many tons and now we buy this many tons. So there is a part of it which is completely measureable. (Peter O)

However, most sustainability issues are more complex. Managers seem unsure that they are measuring what should be catalogued and doing it in the best way; they seem scared that they fail to measure something that has a big impact on their sustainability, or fail to understand what their measures actually mean.

Now recently I have been asked to be the lead for sustainability within the strategic procurement team, [we] meet monthly to look at measurement and reporting around CR and one of my tasks, my main task in that group, is basically to identify ways in which we can extend that measurement and reporting to our supply chain so we can actually understand what our impact is more broadly through the suppliers (Rog Q)

While participating in sustainability initiatives may be a work of passion and a question of right livelihood, our informants indicate aligning with organizational directions, "we followed suit." Pressure to enforce adherence to sustainability policies and goals is in tension with the sustainability persona and theme of right livelihood. However, enforcement brings order to what would devolve into chaos. This quotation illustrates how one policy is enforced:

[The policies are put into action through…] your performance [goals and review]… the individual [purchasing managers] actually in their annual objectives, say they will support these [sustainability] programmes…I am not saying people get directly paid less as a result but if you do miss all of your objectives then you will get a lower rating and as a result…you won't get as much [in your pay review]. (Peter O)

Organizations employ systematic programs and policies to monitor the myriad aspects of sustainability, and ultimately this effort helps organizations know themselves better. The painstaking layers of order companies apply to their

sustainability initiatives contributes to the goal of dialogue and information exchange that the sustainability persona desires. It sheds light on the activity of supply chain partners, and also can shed light on internal desires, trends, values of the focal organization.

D. Life vs. Death

Life/death is a classic theme in myth. Some people articulate the idea that if sustainability is not part of the business strategy then the company or even the world will be destroyed. The organizations we interviewed are clear about what is at stake for them and use this narrative device to communicate the importance of their sustainability missions.

It is one of the foundations; if the foundation isn't solid then it will cause us problems later…in terms of operating as a business in terms of fitting into things like legal frameworks, so compliance to legal frameworks in these kind of areas, it goes beyond reputational risk it is a question again about having a license to operate, can we continue to do what we need to do to satisfy the needs of our shareholders. (Heath I)

The excerpt addresses gaining the legitimacy to operate with stakeholders, which is a different kind of risk than that associated with regulatory compliance. Including sustainability in operating necessities indicates the increasing importance of sustainability strategies. Informants express the belief that if they had not engaged with sustainability, they would have lost business:

When I first joined it was not there, we didn't talk about such things as environmental, it is in the last, I suppose 5, 6 years where we have really gone out there to try and as part of our bid collateral and to win business, we had to sign up to this, and ensure that our third parties, our suppliers were all of those things, environmentally friendly, everything of that nature. (Lewis K)

Some people go beyond the business case of life and death to include environmental issues and real life or death of the planet.

…we now have a plan that covers all of our impacts and is a much more comprehensive plan than we had certainly when I first arrived…as a business are taking it increasingly seriously. And I think honestly that is for two reasons, I think one is… there is increasing belief about the size of this market and the importance that it has for us as a sustainable business, but also because people are really waking up to the climate change challenge and really believing that we have got a responsibility to do the right thing. (Amanda B)

Survival and thriving are also about having good people working in the organization. Especially in industries that carry large reputational risks or have acted with questionable ethics in the past, sustainability strategies help companies keep good talent:

I think this is an area of development and real potential which is how we market our business for people entering into the business because the next generation aren't going to want to work…for a big multinational…we are seeing a much more dynamic workforce coming through that really want to know what…business are behaving in a responsible way. So it becomes also a very critical part for hiring key talent within the organisation…(Gwynneth H)

The life vs. death binary transcends the idea of drumming up good business and goes to the very core of sustaining a dynamic and passionate work environment. The managers in these organizations believe that sustainability strategies make the difference between a company that functions internally and in its supply chains, and one that fails on all fronts.

E. Cost of action vs. risk of inaction

There is an inherent risk narrative surrounding discussions of sustainability, which often takes the form of environmental risk, or reputational risk as we saw above. However, data reveals managers awareness of complicated tradeoffs associated with decision-making around sustainability.

I think because we have always been quite honest about the difficulties, so when we have talked to Greenpeace or to whoever, we have said it is not the perfect system but it is the very best that is available…having those discussions with as many people as possible, so we talk to [everyone], the engagement is very, very wide. (Belinda C)

Action is costly, inaction likely riskier. Managers approach this binary proactively through disclosure with key stakeholder, throwing themselves at the feet of those who can help clarify how they should proceed:

You can't recommend a product as being green and wonderful unless you know everything about the supply chain and everything else because you could say this is a wonderful product but it could be manufactured in sweatshops or something along those lines so that then smacks the whole credibility of that particular product. (Benjamin C)

V. DISCUSSION

Organizations are trying to figure out how to build their sustainability initiatives in- house, as well as in their supply chains and industries (Philippe and Bansal 2013; Ramirez, Gonzalez and Moreira 2014). In our data, we found an emergent persona and a set of mythic binaries developing individually but detectable across organizations, used to communicate values and goals around sustainability initiatives and connect with a variety of organizational actors.

While multiple actors articulate the mythic binaries, the star persona acts as the one who illustrates desired courses of action and innovation, showing others how to engage and perhaps setting new cultural norms in the organization.

Support for sustainability strategies seems to be built internally through the diffusion of persona and the spread of narrative. Myths used to animate the persona are dynamized by the binaries we discussed above. These binaries communicate both a sense of urgency around sustainability, as one side of the binary is clearly preferable to the other, and they help build consensus for the sustainability initiatives.

The persona and the content of the myths are consistent across organizations and industries. This convergence on isomorphic sustainability narrative themes may be because managers have a similar background or mindset, however, it may point to an important driver in diffusing sustainability in business. That is, the sustainability challenge is shared and spread from company to NGO, from company to government, and industry to industry. Indirectly dialogue and information sharing may be producing isomorphic pathways toward sustainability strategies in organizations. As the narrative spreads, it seems to drive consistent behavior across firms in terms of diffused leadership, innovation and communication, and a level of personal engagement and pride in employment.

We find isomorphism (Deephouse 1996) in the persona and the mythic binaries across organizations and points, which may point to the emerging legitimacy of sustainability strategies for action and innovation (Press and Arnould 2011; Weber et al. 2008). Could it be that sustainability strategies have reached a level of structural consistency that is communicated through these myths, across organizations and industries (Deephouse 1996; DiMaggio and Powell 1983)?

Holt argues that one reason we struggle to enact sustainable strategies is the lack of metaphors and narrative to frame sustainability in actionable rather than ethical terms (Holt 2012). In this article, we can see the emergence of a certain kind persona of the caregiver type whose service provides meaningful structure to her environment (Jung 1959), and the development of certain mythic themes that ignite buy-in for sustainability strategies and build legitimacy for this business orientation. Our data suggest mythic narrative is already helping spread the implementation of sustainability strategies within and across organizations. These mythic binaries give us ideas about the kinds of compelling stories that may help move businesses toward more workable sustainability strategies.

Future research might explore how through persuasive narrative, in some industries sustainability discourse is shifting from rationalistic, regulatory legitimacy to narrative-based cultural-cognitive legitimacy and what affect this has on strategic choices (Press et al. 2014). Further, the diffusion of organizational sustainability narratives been scarcely researched, future research could explore how network diffusion models (Green 2004; Baggio and Cooper 2010) help drive and explain the adoption of sustainability narratives.

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