

**"BABEȘ-BOLYAI" UNIVERSITY
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**THE DEFINITION AND REINVENTATION OF INDIVIDUAL
IDENTITY IN POSTMODERN SOCIETY**

THE SUMMARY OF DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

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Key-words: defining individual identity; reinventing, updating, reshaping individual identity through consumption; postmodern identity; social face-to-face interactions carried out in the concrete here and now present; the social *We-relationships*; to compare; mutual orientation of both partners towards each other; the access to one's own subjectivity and to the subjectivity of the other; reflection, interpretation and finding of the subjective significance of the other's action; rational process of interaction with oneself; the significant others; become self-aware; the self as an object and the self as a process; the internalization of the position of the other as an autonomous, independent and equal part in importance to its own position; the dialogue between *I* and *Me/Thou* as parts of the self; role and influence of the advertising image in the process of renewing one's own self; successful identity models proposed by advertising media; the opportunities for self-innovation through consumption; immediate happiness and pleasure, distinction and social prestige promised by consumer objects; freedom of choice of the suitable identity model; type of informed consumer.

The topic of my paper focuses on the status of the individual and his/her identity within the context of contemporary communicational experiences (here we are referring to face to face interactions, both at the level of the community and at a familial and institutional level; to the individual's interior interaction with his/her own self, and to interactions mediated by digital technology). The purpose of my paper is to analyze the process through which the postmodern individual defines and reinvents his/her own identity. The analysis starts from the theory about the individual's status inside the community, in the view of the French philosopher Jean-Luc Nancy (analyzed within the first chapter), philosopher Alfred Schütz's theory of intersubjectivity (analyzed within the second chapter), Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann's theory of intersubjectivity (analyzed within the third chapter), George Herbert Mead's theory of social action and interaction, as well as his theory of the self, going up to theories of consumerism, media culture, an postmodern society as an informational society (analyzed within the sixth chapter, using especially Baudrillard and Lipovetski's theories about consumerism, Douglas Kellner's theory about media culture, Nicholas Carr and Don Tapscott's theories about digital media, as well as Bard Soderqvist's theory of netocracy).

The two directing theses of my approach are:

a) The postmodern individual defines his/her own identity and becomes aware of himself/herself as part of face-to-face social interactions with others significant/important to him/her, as a result of interiorizing their positions within his/her own self, and triggering the process of interior interaction between his/her position and the others' interiorized positions;

b) The postmodern individual constantly reinvents, renews or updates his/her identity by consuming, that is as a result of identifying himself/herself with one of the successful identity models provided by publicity media, after interiorizing that position (interiorizing the set of visions, perspectives, social behaviors and attitudes, lifestyle, and system of values, norms, principles, promoted by these characters), and after buying the object which the model promotes. This is not any kind of object, but one which promises immediate access to happiness, pleasure, and social distinction.

The objectives I have wanted to achieve, as part of my research, are:

1. The self is no longer considered a solitary and self-sufficient entity, but it is a social entity, whose existence is possible and guaranteed only as part of society. It depends upon the existence of peers and upon frequent mutual face-to-face interactions with them, which take place in the concrete present, here and now.

The individual as a member of a certain community is defined as a singular being, unique and different from the others (everyone has their own views, perspectives, life conceptions, and subjective experiences. There cannot exist unique individuals, but only similar in some respects). He/She is aware of his/her own existence every moment and lives together with his/her peers. He/She commonly co-exists together with the others and permanently interacts with them, sharing with them at the same time the same space and daily reality (the supreme inseparable reality, a given, which cannot be doubted under any circumstance).

2. The self is socially constructed and develops completely only in relation to peers, as part of the processes of face-to-face social interaction, happening in a certain social context.

After analyzing the theory on community, in the view of Jean-Luc Nancy, Schutz's theory of intersubjectivity, Berger and Luckmann's theory of intersubjectivity, George Herbert Mead's theory of the self, and Hermans Hubert's theory of dialogic self, I have come to the conclusion that the individual develops his/her own self efficiently and completely, in a certain period of his/her life and just in certain types of social face-to-face interactions, with certain individuals, and which

involve a certain way of relating of the partners in dialogue, both one to the other, and one at the other's action.

a) These types of interactions, in which the individual defines his/her own identity as efficiently and completely as he/she can, contain elements found in face-to-face interactions in Nancy's theory, in dialogic *We* relationships in Schutz's theory, face-to-face interactions in the concrete present here and now in Berger and Luckmann's theory, and in symbolic interactions in Mead's theory. Firstly, these interactions involve that both partners in the dialog admit and accept each other as subjects, as unique and different individualities, who, despite having their own way of thinking, their own perspectives and views upon life, both co-exist at the same type in the same space and benefit from the same rights and freedoms (as has been observed in the dialogic *We* relationship in Schutz's theory on intersubjectivity). The difference in views, perspectives, and thought is perceived by both partners in dialog not as a communicational barrier, but as a positive aspect, which enriches each other's knowledge, which helps them develop, and enlarge their own knowledge. Secondly, face-to-face interactions involve (as we have seen in Nancy's theory) that each singular finite being expose its singularity (subjectivity, specificity, the characteristics through which it differs from its peers) on the outside, one in front of the other (this process is named comparing), and to share it with each other through bilateral comprehensive dialog. Exposing one's own subjectivity in front of the other partner in dialogue involves that both individuals involved in that interaction be intentionally oriented one towards the other (the concept of reciprocity of orientation is distinctive of the *We* relationship in Schutz's theory). The fact that individuals are oriented towards each other means that they are open towards each other (they are interested in knowing each other, they are interested in being part of that interaction taking place around that subject, they are paying attention to what each of them is transmitting verbally and non-verbally, and, implicitly, to what each transmits to the other), that they respect each other (respecting the right to speak and the freedom of each of them to freely express their own opinions and views, whether they like them or not), that they give each other credit and unconditional trust. Because both individuals externally expose their singularity and are oriented towards each other, they are granted access both to each other's subjectivity, and to their own subjectivity (view only sketched in Nancy's theory, but developed in Schutz's theory of intersubjectivity and in Berger and Luckmann's theory). Access to the other's subjectivity and to one's own subjectivity allows individuals to know each other better, and implicitly to know themselves better. In addition, face-

to-face interactions, in which individuals best define their identity are those in which both partners in dialog (as rational beings) answer the other's actions or gestures, not automatically or instinctively, but as a result of internal reflection, of interpreting and finding the subjective significance of the other's action (aspects found in dialogic *We* relationships in Schutz's theory and in symbolic interactions in Mead's theory).

b) The individual defines his/her identity and becomes aware of himself/herself as a result of face-to-face interactions with "the first significant others" (corresponding to the first phase of the individual's socializing, found in Berger and Luckmann's theory, and in first phase of game, corresponding to the process of defining one's own identity, found in Mead's theory) and as a result of interacting with significant others, as members of the social group the individual is part of (corresponding to the second phase of the socializing process, found in Berger and Luckmann's theory, and corresponding to the second phase of game, from the process of defining one's own identity, found in Mead's theory). The knowledge gained during both interactions, as well as the perspective of the "first significant others" and of the significant others on their own self, expressed during face-to-face interaction, influences the way in which the individual perceives himself and defines his identity.

c) The individual becomes aware of himself/herself and completely defines his/her identity, only when reaching maturity (during the second phase of the individual's socializing), when:

- The individual becomes a member of a certain social group, as part of which he/she fulfils a certain social role, gains a certain language and certain specialized knowledge, interacts and collaborates with other members to complete a conscientious, common and organized professional activity, identifies and interiorizes both the institutional reality valid at the level of that particular organizational social group and the position (the perspectives, attitude, and social behavior) of all the individuals involved in that activity (the generalized position of the other or the collective voice of the social group as a whole), in order to model his/her individual action as part of the group social action and in order to define identity as a member of that particular organizational social group.

- The individual develops his/her critical and reflexive thinking and becomes capable of turning to himself/herself and self-analyzing, of interpreting, directing, and criticizing his/her own behavior and actions. In other words, the individual becomes aware of himself/herself, he/she has access to his/her own self, and completely defines his/her identity, the moment when he/she

becomes capable of relating to his/her own self as to an object. Relating to his/her own self as to an object involves for the individual to be capable of disregarding his/her own subjectivity and looking from the outside, that is from the other's perspective. In order to look at himself/herself from the outside, the individual must interiorize the other's position (perspectives, views, attitudes, and behavior), manifested directly during face-to-face interaction, within his/her own self and must provide it with its own autonomous, independent voice, of equal importance to his/her own position. During the interior dialog between the two positions (his/her own position and the other's internalized position), the individual must reflect upon them, analyze them, put them in relation or report, so as to finally reach an accord, from which to define his self-image.

3. Due to the way in which the process of interacting with one's own self takes place, the individual self can be defined as a multivocal social self, made up of multiple vocal positions, individual or collective, similar or different, but autonomous, independent, and equal one compared to the other, to which the self has access at the same time, which is permanently in a dialogic process of negotiating ones with the others, with the purpose of reaching an accord, so as for the individual to find the optimum solution to a problem or social situation with which he is confronted, so as to enrich his own general and specialized knowledge base and to model his self-image. Because the individual self interiorizes the other's position as an autonomous and equal part to one's own position, it can be said that the individual is open towards the others and towards new perspectives and views, which can be identical or not with his/her own view. Since the self has the ability to move freely and intentionally from one position to another, it is said to be a relational self, flexible, found in a permanent positioning, repositioning, and counterpositioning process, according to the changes which occur in the social situation it finds itself. Given the self's capacity to constantly interiorize new different positions of significant others, to give them their own autonomous voice, equal to his/her own voice, and especially due to the self's ability to move freely, intentionally, and according to his/her own will, from one position to another, it can be said that the self is oriented towards innovation and liable to change.

4. The individual's capacity to renew and improve constantly by interiorizing new positions belonging to the others within his/her own self, proves that the postmodern identity is no longer a stable, self-evident identity, socially pre-established (as was the case in archaic societies, where the individual had a single fixed identity, which was automatically established before birth or marriage, depending upon the social status and social class of the family he/she was part of), but

it becomes flexible and it is found in a permanent process of change, update, remodeling or redefining, according to the individual's liking and according to the logic of consumerism.

5. The individual reinvents himself/herself, he/she continually transforms, as a result of identifying with the character (famous or not, but radiant and perfect) from commercials (promoted as a model or identity ideal for success, as a behavioral emblem, with a desirable social attitude and a trendy fashion style), by interiorizing the position of this model (by identifying with certain views, perspectives, behaviors and social attitudes, promoted by these characters), and after consuming the promoted object, which is not any object, but one which promises immediate access to happiness, pleasure, and social distinction.

In order to identify the way in which the postmodern individual defines and reinvents his/her identity, and in order to accomplish each of the afore mentioned objectives, I have used as a starting point Jean-Luc Nancy's theory on the postmodern community, with the purpose of highlighting the status of the individual as a member of a given community, what his/her existence inside the community involves, what is the role and the importance of face-to-face interactions amongst them, what these interactions involve and what values and principles they are based on. Within this theory, the postmodern community is defined as a community of compared finitude, a community of alterity, a *We* community. This community is made up of the totality of singular, finite unique beings, different between each other, who live together, co-exist, and permanently interact. The existence of singular beings is possible, receives meaning, and is guaranteed only within the community. It depends upon the existence of others and on present, mutual, and constant face-to-face interactions with them (this view is a starting point when elaborating the theories of Schutz, Berger and Luckmann, Mead and Hermans Hubert). In Nancy's view, interactions with peers involve that singular finite creatures compare, meaning they expose their singularity and finitude (subjectivity, specificity, their own characteristics through which they distinguish themselves from each other) to the outside world (one in front of the other) and share it with each other through bilateral comprehensive dialogue. The role of face-to-face interactions is to make the community in which they live more dynamic, to open their access to each other, and to help them understand each other better. Bilateral dialogue is based on the mutual respect which must exist between singular beings, on open communication, and mutual trust.

The values and principles resting at the basis of face-to-face interactions, as well as what these interactions involve (exposing singularity to the outside world and sharing it through

dialogue) can be found as part of *We* interactions in Schutz's theory (analyzed in chapter two), as part of interactions in the concrete here and now present in Berger and Luckmann's theory (analyzed in chapter three), and in symbolic interactions or symbolically focused interactions (analyzed in chapter four). The face-to-face interaction from Nancy's view is further developed and completed in these subsequent theories.

In the second chapter, I have analyzed the theory of intersubjectivity, in Alfred Schutz's view. I have started from his analysis of day to day life as an intersubjective world, centered on social interactions and inter-relational activities, full of significance amongst the members of the community, happening in the present. According to Schutz's theory, there are two big types of interactive relations: *We* relations, between individuals who are significant for each other, and *Others* relations, between individuals who are merely contemporary to each other.

We relationships are characteristic of face-to-face interactions and they are the only dialogic relations where there is a reciprocal and intentional orientation of both dialogue partners towards each other. Reciprocal orientation makes possible the exposure to the outside of every individual's singularity and the sharing of this singularity with peers, as part of face-to-face dialogue (discussed in the first chapter). In *We* relationships, both individuals recognize each other as partners in dialogue, as subjects, who have their own way of thought, their own perspectives and views on life. The fact that they are oriented towards each other means that both individuals give each other unconditional trust and are open towards each other, that is they are interested in knowing each other, they are interested in being part of that interaction, they are interested in finding out how the other thinks and how he/she approaches a given issue, and they are attentive and responsible regarding their own actions.

In *We* relationships, the interaction between individuals is not based on each participant's automatic reaction to an exterior stimulus (to what the other transmits), but the response comes from interior reflection, from interpreting and unraveling the subjective significance of the action and of the other's verbal and non-verbal behavior. In order to unveil the subjective significance of the other's action, the individual will analyze the verbal and non-verbal behavior, manifested by the other participant during face-to-face interaction (the analysis of corporal indicators), he/she will identify and he/she will try to understand both the purpose, reasons, circumstances, and significant events from his/her past, which have led him/her to do a certain action at a certain time, and he/she will try to see things from the other's perspective (he/she will imaginarily put himself

in the other's shoes and will imagine that he/she will do that action in that social situation, being determined by the same purposes, reasons, and circumstances). The unraveling of the subjective significance of the other's action opens the individual's way to the other's subjectivity, helps him/her know the other better, to clarify the potential ambiguities which he/she has regarding the other, to understand the actions and the message the other wants to transmit, and to be able to anticipate the other's actions and reactions to his/her own actions. In addition to the access to the other's subjectivity, *We* face-to-face interactions open the individual's access to his/her own subjectivity. Access is mediated by interior reflection on his/her own person, part of which the individual takes into consideration both his/her own opinion, and the information the other has transmitted verbally and non-verbally, during the face-to-face interaction.

Others relationships are the relationships we have with our contemporaries, with whom we share the same time, but not the same space, because we no longer interact with them presently face-to-face. The knowledge and experience about one's contemporary is no longer a direct one (as it was in *We* relationships), but it is an indirect one, derived from one's own experiences with him/her, gained through the previous *We* relationship, and through deductive actions in which one categorizes his/her contemporary together with people who have certain specific traits.

Schutz's view on access to the other's subjectivity and to one's own subjectivity, as a benefit of dialogic interactive face-to-face *We* relationships, can be found in Berger and Luckmann's theory, which I have analyzed in the third chapter. However, in their case, the theory is further detailed, improved, and completed. Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann analyze communicational face-to-face situations from the concrete here and now present, emphasizing that these are the only types of human interactions in which both partners speak and think at the same time. In this way, each participant gets open access to the other's subjectivity and to his/her own subjectivity. The access to the other's subjectivity is mediated by the analysis of corporal indicators, immediately observed while interacting with the other, and by the existence of objectively accessible objects, which the other uses during face-to-face interaction, whose significance is socially recognized. The accuracy of corporal indicators is not guaranteed by anything, because the individual can interpret the symptoms he observes in the other correctly or incorrectly, and the other can be honest or not in what he/she transmits verbally and behaviorally. Even if the dialogue partner intentionally transmits a wrong message to the individual, or if the individual wrongly interprets the other's

reactions and attitude during face-to-face interaction, he/she will still have access to the other's subjectivity, but this subjectivity will not be the real one.

In what the access to one's own subjectivity is concerned, Berger and Luckmann's theory mentions that this is a direct, immediate, and continuous one only in face-to-face interactions. This is because, by verbally expressing in front of the other, one's own view and perspectives about the subject of the conversation, one hears himself/herself speak and this helps one better understand and know himself/herself, it helps one clarify his opinions and potential uncertainties about the information transmitted to the other. This clarification helps one formulate his/her ideas more clearly and make himself/herself better understood by others.

Compared to Nancy and Schutz's theories, Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann's theory takes a step forward, and shows how knowledge gained through face-to-face interaction with "first significant others" and with significant others as members of the social group the individual is part of, influences the way in which he/she perceives himself/herself and defines, not only his/her self-image, but his/her views upon life and upon others. Interactions with the "first significant others" represent the first phase in the individual's socializing process. This stage takes place in childhood and during it, the individual fully becomes a member of the community, gaining general knowledge about the social world in which he/she lives, together with a set of rules, principles, and fundamental values which govern life in society. The social world interiorized during this first phase (lessons, values, principles and the view on the self, on the world, on the others, and on the manner of solving different daily issues) is characterized by a strong emotional factor and is perceived as the only objective social reality, unchangeable and undoubtable. Since during this phase the child is not aware of himself/herself, he/she forms his/her self-image and recognizes himself/herself depending upon how those around him perceive him/her, depending upon his/her image in their eyes, that is as a result of naturally, accurately, and automatically interiorizing the subjective perspective of the "first significant others", verbally expressed during frequent face-to-face interactions with them.

During the second phase, the individual is a member of certain social organizational groups, inside which he/she fulfills a certain social role, he/she interacts and collaborates with the other members, as part of common professional activities. As a member of a certain organization, the individual must identify with and interiorize each organization's institutional reality (the set of values, principles, norms, moral and conduct rules, stipulated in the code of ethics and professional

deontology, which each member must apply accordingly when completing his/her professional tasks).

Chapter four is aimed at analyzing George Herbert Mead's theory of the self, starting from the analysis of the two types of face-to-face interactions: non-symbolical interactions (the individual's response to the other's action is instinctual, immediate, automatic, not realized) and symbolical interactions, or interactions oriented towards significant symbols. *We* interactions from Schutz's theory, analyzed in the second chapter, can be found under a more details and complete form as symbolic interactions in Mead's theory. Individuals' capacity to take on each other's role, that is their ability to see the other's actions from his/her point of view, and to offer a response to it after reflecting, interpreting, and unveiling the subjective significance of the other's action and of his/her verbal or non-verbal behavior represents one of the most important characteristics of symbolic interaction.

As we have seen in the preceding chapter, in Berger and Luckmann's theory, in Mead's theory too the knowledge gained through face-to-face interactions with "first significant others" and with significant others as members of the individual's social group, together with their perspective upon the self, play a important role in the way in which the individual perceives himself and defines his/her identity. The two phasers of the socializing process from Berger and Luckmann's theory can be found in Mead's theory too, as phases which the individual has to go through, in order to develop and define his/her self-image and, implicitly, in order to become aware of himself/herself. In each phase, the process through which the individual interiorizes the other's perspective, expressed during face-to-face interactions, and by relating to which he/she defines his/her self-image, is emphasized. The first socializing phase from Berger and Luckmann's theory corresponds to the play phase in Mead's theory. As part of his/her play activity, the child interiorizes, through the self-stimulation of vocal gestures, the roles and positions (attitude, behavior, views, and perspectives) of the "first significant others", which they have manifested in a given face-to-face interaction, which has occurred in a given social context. The real interaction is placed in a imaginary interaction, occurring during a play activity, in which the child no longer assumes his/her role as a child, but assumes the role and the position of a parent and answers his/her own vocal stimulation, as the parent usually answers him/her. This means that both the parent and the child (playing the parent's role) give the same significance to the same stimulus. However, one must not forget that in this phase, this assuming of the role is automatic and

instinctual, the child not yet having his/her critical and reflexive thinking developed. Because the child's critical thinking is not yet developed, his/her play does not consider real issues, there are no rules or limitations of individual behavior (the child decides when, how, and how much time he plays a certain role, the game being a temporary situation, completely controlled by him). The child's actions are impulsive and are not based upon an interior reflection, or upon determining the significance of the parent's action, or upon anticipating and analyzing potential consequences. As part of the game phase, as has also been observed in Berger and Luckmann's theory, the child does not have a completely developed or well defined self, he/she relates to himself/herself according to how the "first significant others" perceive him/her.

The second phase of socializing from Berger and Luckmann's theory can be found in Mead's theory too, as the game phase. Just like in the second socializing phase from Berger and Luckmann's theory, the game phase too takes into consideration the existence of a social organized, aware, common activity, in which there are multiple real participants, who are part of a given social organizational group and, by virtue of their status as members of that organization, must all interiorize the institutional reality existing in that organization. While in Berger and Luckmann's theory the emphasis lays more on the importance of interiorizing the institutional reality, stipulated through the provisions of the code of ethic and professional deontology specific to each organization, Mead's theory takes a step further and focuses on the process through which the individual models his/her actions and the behavior he/she adopts during a cooperative activity with the other members, according to the values, moral principles and rules of conduct mentioned in that deontological code and according to the actions and behavior of the other individuals involved in that activity. The modelling, adaptation, and continuous readaptation of individual actions to the actions of the others takes place as part of the individual's interaction with his/her own self, that is as part of the interaction between the two components of the self: *I* and *Me*. In order to model his/her own actions according to the actions of others, the individual takes into consideration and interiorizes within himself/herself (as part of *Me*) both the stipulations of the deontological code and all the actions and social behavior of all the members involved in that social activity. As a result of interiorization, the individual unifies, connects, and organizes in a conscious manner the others' perspectives and attitudes into a whole of social attitudes called the generalized other. The individual then reflect upon them, analyzes them, critically and objectively interprets them, and relates them to his/her own perspectives, views, and beliefs (which are part of the *I* component

of the self). The *Me* component is the rational and conscious component of the individual self, which verifies, controls, and directs *I*, so as *I* doesn't act impulsively, but judges the action he is about to perform, analyzes the repercussions, and models the action according to prescriptions of the deontological code. As a result of the interior reflection, mediated by the dialogue between *I* and *Me*, the individual will attribute a significance to the other's action and behavior and then, according to that significance, he/she will anticipate the others' future actions and will chose his/her own way of acting, in order to respond to the others' actions.

In opposition to Berger and Luckmann's theory, Mead's theory emphasizes the fact that, although there are two phases which the individual goes through in order to define his/her own self, it is only during the second phase that the individual becomes fully aware of himself/herself and his/her self becomes fully defined, mature, coherent, and stable. The individual becomes aware of himself/herself only when reaching maturity, only as a member of a social organizational group, and only when he/she develops critical and reflexive thinking and the ability to self-analyze, to interpret, direct, criticize, and correct his/her own behavior and actions, as part of an interior dialogue with himself/herself, in which the position of the significant others, manifested during face-to-face interaction, is interiorized and becomes a landmark in defining and modeling one's self-image.

In the fifth chapter of this paper, I have analyzed Hermans Herbert's theory of the dialogic self, starting from defining the self as a socially constructed entity (as a result of face-to-face interactions with other peers, as has been observed in Mead's theory and in Berger and Luckmann's theory), which extends to the outside, that is towards other peers, who are significant for the individual, and who populate the individual self, as a result of interiorizing their position. The process of the individual's interaction with his/her own self, through which the individual forms his/her self-image, but also the answer which he/she provides to the other, presented in Mead's theory, can be found in Hermans' theory too. However, in Hermans' theory this is analyzed in a more detailed and more structured manner. According to how the self develops and according to what each of its phases of development involve, Hermans highlights the main characteristics of the dialogic self, the dialogic relations which must exist between the interior voices and the ways in which the individual can renew his/her self. Unlike in Mead's theory, the other's interiorized position (who can be the other as a concrete individual or as a collective voice of the community) does not become a *Me* position, but becomes an autonomous *Thou* position or an *Other I* (it

becomes a position of an extended self). This is because this position will be internalized as an autonomous position, equal and independent with the individual's own position, which has its own voice, its own autonomous perspective upon the world, its own wishes, views, which can be identical or not with those of the individual in case, and which the individual can accept or not, as a result of interior analysis. By interiorizing the other's position, the self becomes a multivocal self, made up of two different vocal positions (one's own position or perspective and the other's interiorized position or perspective), which are present at the same time in one's own self, to which the self has simultaneous access and about which it can have a bigger view. The individual analyzes, reflects upon these positions, puts them in relation to each other, and oscillates between them, meaning it moves freely and intentionally from one to the other, according to its own will (the self is not static or individualistic, it is a relational self, found in a process of positioning, repositioning, and counterpositioning, according to the social situation it is confronted with). While the self jumps from one position to the other, it voices those positions, it connects one with the other, allowing them to converse with each other. During the dialog exchange, each voice is in turn a dominant voice and a latent or inactive voice (temporarily suspended, but present, attentive to what is being presented and ready to take the word). The alternation in dominance of the self's different interior voices makes the dialogic exchange between them possible. It makes it possible for the voices to understand each other, to understand what each of them communicates to the other, and, eventually to reach a consensus, so as for the individual to find the optimum solution to a problem or to a social situation he is confronted with, to enrich his own general and specialized knowledge, and to define his self-image in the most objective manner.

The individual renews, improves, and reinvents his/her self through the constant interiorization of new vocal individual or collective positions, by re-actualizing or bringing back to light already interiorized positions existing in the self, but which have remained suspended or inactive for along time, or by recombining existing interior positions (resulting in the formation of a new position within the self). Amongst the new positions which the individual can interiorize within his/her self, and which help him/her innovate himself/herself, reinvent himself/herself, enlarge his/her repertoire of positions, are the positions of the promoter models, intensely promoted in commercial media. The influence of these identity models is only sketched by Hermans. However, it will be further developed in the following chapter.

Starting from the self's ability to constantly renew itself by interiorizing new and different positions, and from its capacity to constantly move freely and intentionally from one position to another, in the sixth chapter, I wished to depict that the postmodern identity is no longer a given, it is no longer stable and socially predefined (as it used to be in archaic societies, tackled in Berger and Lyuckmann's theory of efficient socializing), but it has become flexible and in a permanent process of changing, updating, remodeling or redefining, according to the individual's own will and according to the logic of consumerism. In other words, I wanted to present the role and the influence of the commercial image, within the process of renewing of the individual self, which is the message transmitted to the public, and how the individual reinvents, updates or renews his identity by consuming (as a result of identifying with the mediatized promoter model as an identity success model or ideal, after wishing to be like him, after interiorizing his position, and after buying the object of consumption promoted by him). Through my analysis, I wanted to highlight the positive aspects of mediatic influence on modeling and remodeling individual identity, not alluding to the possibility of a potential alienation of the individual from his/her self. For this reason, my analysis supports the idea that the postmodern individual does not find himself/herself in a crisis of identity, nor does he/she suffer from anxiety, because he/she has the possibility and the freedom to chose from a large range of identity models, presented by mass-media through publicity images, the model with which he/she identifies best and he/she can replace this model at any time. In other words, the individual can reinvent himself/herself any time and as many times (due to the great degree of freedom to play with his/her own identity, to model it according to his/her own preferences), he/she can juggle easily with identities, he/she can jump from one identity to another and he/she can present himself/herself as he/she wishes in front of the others, being able to have multiple and shifting temporary identities. As a result, within the postmodern society, one cannot speak of the disappearing of individual activity, but of a permanent updating, reconstructing, restructuring or redefining process. Postmodern identity has a tight connection with defining a personal style, with the image one presents in society, with the physical aspect and fashion, and it is centered around spare time as time allocated to the consumption of goods and services, with the purpose of reinventing one's self-image and later presenting it in front of the others for validation.

I have analyzed the message and influence which publicity media has on the way in which the postmodern individual reinvents his/her identity, not just theoretically, by referencing certain

theories of consumerism and media culture, but also practically, by studying publicity campaigns aimed at promoting Marlboro cigarettes to men and Virginia Slims cigarettes to women, but also those promoting Madonna. From the theoretical and practical analysis, I have noticed that products are always associated with real characters, who are celebrities most of the times (association meant to guarantee the efficiency, value, and the quality of the product), radiant and perfect, having certain socially desirable traits (beauty, youth, sensuality, with idea of harmonious supple bodies, health, virility, femininity, self-esteem, well-being, and social emancipation), with a certain bohemian lifestyle, centered on consumption, with a certain perspective upon the surrounding world, with whom individuals are invited to identify, in order to trigger the act of consuming and in order to return to themselves, with the purpose of remodeling, renewing, and improving their own self.

The individual is encouraged to buy only products which are in trend, which are well-known brand products, which are desired by a large range of individuals, and which promise the access to pleasure and happiness. At this point, I have emphasized that, even though these products are not useful nor necessary for improving daily life, their value and significance is legitimated by the trust the individual has in the utility of those given products to reach his goal, meaning by his/her belief that that product can give him/her value, can help him/her distinguish himself/herself from others and stand out. For this reason, I have emphasized the fact that buying these types of objects cannot be considered a useless or irrational expenditure, but it is useful for fulfilling the specific purpose of each individual. Body care products and services also belong to the category of objects promising the individual happiness and social distinction, which the individual is urged to use, both to highlight himself/herself and to obtain certain satisfactions (to be younger, more beautiful, to erase the signs of old age, to be in shape), which will help him/her stand out, distinguish himself/herself amongst others, and, at the same time, obtain a certain social status. Beauty and success are interrelated, because being successful is equivalent to being beautiful, that is being slim, slender, harmonious, in shape, taken care of and according to fashion trends.

Even if consumption objects did not offer the individual the absolute happiness they promise, we cannot deny the fact that they offer real pleasure and satisfaction, although it is a temporary one (as long as the individual uses that certain product and service), which is always renewed by the appearance of new, more performant products, which the individuals can immediately buy. For the individual to be able to chose from the wide range of products intensely

promoted by media those which cause him/her pleasure and immediate happiness, promising him/her social distinction, and especially for him/her to be able to select that successful identity model and those products which suit him/her and which help him/her reinvent and showcase his/her identity in front of the others, he/she must be an informed consumer. To be an informed consumer does not only mean to be up to date with any product, with any novelty which appears on the market, it doesn't mean to consume any information, to consider it relevant and true from the start, and to reproduce it as faithfully as possible when sharing it with peers, but it means to be aware of the information presented to you, to pay attention to it, to filter it before believing it, to critically analyzing it, to structure it into relevant and irrelevant information from his/her point of view, following that the relevant information be transformed in long term knowledge, accessible any time.

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https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Virginia_Slims

Pentru analiza reclamelor publicitare destinate brandului de țigări Virginia Slims, am folosit și următoarele materiale de pe Youtube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vXUbkIkwn2Y>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RiIJQr3YEeI>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gs4r7X258ew>

Pentru analiza reclamelor publicitare destinate brandului de țigări Marlboro, am folosit și următorul material de pe Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vAK97pTijJ0>