



FACULTADE DE FILOLOXÍA

Mestrado Universitario en Estudos Ingleses Avanzados e as súas
Aplicacións

Content Marketing As Ideology: A Critical Discourse Analysis Approach

MALGORZATA CHMIELEWSKA

Titor: BEGOÑA CRESPO GARCÍA

Vº E PRACE

2016

TABLE OF CONTENTS

0.	ABSTRACT.....	1
1.	INTRODUCTION	2
2.	THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	4
2.1.	IDEOLOGY AND ITS SOCIAL FUNCTION	4
2.2.	DISCOURSE AND COGNITION	6
2.3.	MANIPULATION OF SOCIAL COGNITION.....	8
2.4.	DISCOURSE AND POWER	9
2.5.	FORMS OF DISCURSIVE POWER.....	11
3.	CONTENT MARKETING AS IDEOLOGY	14
3.1.	GROUP SCHEMA	14
3.2.	INTRODUCTION TO CONTENT MARKETING	15
3.3.	THE PERSUASIVE FORCE OF CONTENT MARKETING DISCOURSE	20
3.4.	MARKETING HEROES.....	22
3.5.	MARKETING DINOSAURS	25
3.6.	CONTENT MARKETING AS A REFLECTION OF COGNITIVE CAPITALISM.....	29
4.	CONTENT MARKETING ON THE WEB.....	32
4.1.	IKEA AS A CULTURAL CAPITAL OF SWEDEN.....	32
4.2.	IKEA IS YOUR HOME	36
4.3.	IKEA AS A THOUGHT LEADER.....	39
4.4.	IKEA AND THE PROMISE OF IDEAL HOME	39
4.5.	THE IDEA OF PERFECT HOME	40
4.6.	STORY TELLING AS MARKETING NARRATIVE.....	44
4.7.	APPLE AND STORYTELLING	46
4.8.	APPLE AND EDUCATION	47
4.9.	APPLE AND IDEAL LESSON	48
5.	CONCLUSIONS	53
6.	WORKS CITED	57

0. ABSTRACT

This master's thesis provides an approach to content marketing and its application to the online context. To define principal beliefs of the content marketing strategy, it has been approached as an ideology, understood as a belief system. Its ideological framework has been analyzed from the perspective of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), in compliance with Teun van Dijk's sociocognitive theory. This content analysis has been conducted so as to define group schemata of content marketers, their core beliefs, the common ground they share with modern capitalists and marketers in general, as well as main differences between their approach and "traditional" forms of marketing. Moreover, the thesis attempts to identify the presence of content marketing ideology on corporate webpages such as Ikea's and Apple's.

It has been suggested that the content of the abovementioned websites reflects content marketing ideology. Due to the scope of this master's thesis, the examined content has been narrowed down to a few subsections of the two sites dedicated to English speakers. First, the work examines marketing strategies used to promote Ikea as a great contributor to the development of modern Swedish society and as a perfect model of one's home. Second, the Apple's microsite devoted to teachers has been analyzed to demonstrate how the brand employs content marketing philosophy to promote its image as a perfect model of innovation, creativity and individualism.

Key Words: content marketing, ideological discourse, mental models, cognition, corporate dinosaur, marketing hero

1. INTRODUCTION

“Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is a type of discourse analytical research that (...) studies the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, [and] reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context” (“Critical Discourse Analysis”, van Dijk 352). This form of analysis has enabled linguists to provide insightful remarks on different means used by dominant groups to foster their powerful position as well as institutionalize and legitimize their social actions. CDA has been applied to analyze ideological content of a variety of belief systems that reveal social inequalities (e.g. sexist or racist talk), depict implicit content of political propaganda or attempt to classify main characteristics of institutional discourse as a whole. Despite the vast number of academic publications devoted to the free market economy and modern culture of consumerism (e.g. Fairclough 2001; Corrigan 1998; Abercrombie 1994; Boutang 2011), there is little academic involvement in critical analysis of current marketing discourse.

Whereas there are numerous studies on advertising (e.g. Williamson 2002; Simpson and Mayr 2010), there has been little recognition of a change in the course of marketing ideology. Nevertheless, business discourse has been recently influenced by new forms of communication models which assume that traditional promotional genres such as advertising have proved to be inefficient to retain loyal customers. In today’s world of rapid growth of new technologies and the omnipresence of online channels to promote one’s brand, marketers feel obliged to seek new solutions to capture the attention of consumers. Due to the increase of online marketing and new means for brand promoting, rather than focus on advertising, this master’s thesis proposes to approach new forms of marketing from a CDA’s perspective.

The objective of this master’s thesis is to analyze the core ideological component of one of the current forms of promotional discourse, namely content marketing (CM). The work has

been divided into following sections: after the introduction comes the second section which is devoted to the theoretical framework based on the ideological discourse; section three provides the key characteristics of content marketing as a kind of ideological discourse. In the fourth section CM has been analyzed in relation to the content of Ikea and Apple's websites; in the last section some final remarks are offered.

The theoretical framework introduces the reader into the CDA's sociocognitive approach and elaborates on such issues as ideological discourse, social cognition, mental models, mind control or group schemata. The section approaches ideology as a form of belief system, which is formulated in order to provide group definition, its core values, attitudes and preferable behavior. In addition, an ideological discourse has been presented as a tool used by specific groups to persuade dominated groups to accept the ideology as their own and in compliance with their own interests and previously held values and beliefs. This section argues that the consent of the dominated group can occur once their mental models of certain events, relationships, etc. are manipulated or modified by a specific ideological discourse.

In *Content Marketing as Ideology* (section 3), the core components have been defined according to the previous theoretical notions. This section attempts to determine CM principal values by comparing them with more general forms of marketing discourse. In addition, it provides specific examples of argumentative force that CM employs to establish its dominant position on the global market.

It is in section four (*Content Marketing on the Web*) that I will exemplify how the selected ideology may be traced in the online context. Hence, this section provides the content analysis of a few elements of marketing discourse that appear on the webpages of two leading brands in their sectors: Ikea and Apple. The analysis illustrates specific ideological elements as a part of both textual and visual types of content. It is then followed by the work's concluding part.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The principal objective of critical approaches to discourse is to “regard language not as something ‘neutral’ or ‘transparent’, but instead focus on the social and ideological functions of language in producing, reproducing or changing social structures, relations and identities” (Simpson and Mayr 50). Nevertheless, in order to analyze the role language plays in the reproduction of discourse, it is necessary to define the main characteristics of ideology, its forms of argumentation and the possible influence that ideological discourse may exert on our personal and social cognition.

2.1. IDEOLOGY AND ITS SOCIAL FUNCTION

Before we approach content marketing as an ideological discourse, it is crucial to define ideology itself. Following Teun van Dijk, we consider it as “the basis of the social representations shared by members of a group” (*Ideology* 8). Furthermore, ideologies can be seen as “political or social systems of ideas, values or prescriptions of groups or other collectivities, and have the function of organizing or legitimizing the actions of the group” (Dijk, *Discourse and Power* 3). In order to distinguish one ideology from another we need to be able to define its system of thought and beliefs, approved and shared by different members of a specific ideological group. Van Dijk frequently refers to ideological systems as *social representations* or *social beliefs*, since they constitute the ground for in-group identification and mutual understanding.

In addition, he contrasts social beliefs that are characteristic for political, religious or other similar groups with cognitive frameworks shared by epistemological communities. According to van Dijk, groups share ideologies, whereas communities share *cultural properties*, such as language, religion, customs, etc. (*Society Discourse* 40). To illustrate this phenomenon, we may think of the difference between *freedom* and *freedom of the market*; rewrite whereas first

term refers to socio-cultural values: “*factual beliefs* based on socially acknowledged truth criteria”, the latter alludes to capitalist ideology (van Dijk, *Ideology* 13). It is a truism to say ideologies frequently adopt sociocultural values and transform their meanings for the purpose of a specific ideological background. As in the case of the term discussed above, community members may share a positive evaluation of *freedom*, but it does not mean they will accept the ideology of a *free market* as equally fruitful.

Finally, it is crucial to highlight the relativist nature of van Dijk’s perception of ideology. Undoubtedly, certain belief systems can influence what specific groups or communities accept as true or false and are responsible for one’s understanding of the world (van Dijk, *Ideology*). Yet, I do not agree with those thinkers who associate ideology with what Eagleton defines as “illusion, distortion and mystification” (*Ideology Introduction* 3), as if “Ours [were] the Truth, Theirs [were] the Ideology” (van Dijk, *Ideology* 3). Once such approach is rejected, it is important to note this work does not position ideology as pejorative per se; rather, it argues any system of values, norms and beliefs shared by specific groups can be called ideological. Consequently, I will adopt van Dijk’s definition of ideology as a system of beliefs, rather than a system of *wrong* and *false* ideas. This work itself can be considered as yet another form of ideological discourse, for it focuses on key characteristics of chosen forms of ideological discourse, albeit leaving the moral evaluation of described practices to the reader.

By no means, however, does it claim ideologies are merely reflections of social belief systems. On the contrary, I argue that the relativist nature of ideology complies with Norman Fairclough’s insightful remarks on ideological discourse. It is true the linguist’s theory presents certain discrepancies with the approach already adopted in this work; namely, he does not agree to treat ideology “as a form of social cement, which is inseparable from society

itself” (*Critical Discourse* 82). Rather, he argues the main objective of ideology is to reinforce power control of the dominant group or to struggle with prevalent ideologies to win the leading position (1995, 2001). It is important to note this thesis follows van Dijk’s understanding of power not as “the power of a person, but rather as that of a social position and as being organized as a constituent part of the power of an organization” (*Ideology* 12).

Although van Dijk insists ideology does play an important role in social self-defining, he seems to agree with Fairclough on its influence of protecting group interests.

[I]deologies serve not only to coordinate social practices within the group, but also (if not primarily) to coordinate social interaction with members of other groups. That is, ideologies serve to `define` groups and their position within complex societal structures in relation to other groups. It is this prevalent overall self-definition or social identity that is acquired and shared by group members in order to protect the interests of the groups as a whole (Fairclough, *Language Power* 26).

Not only do ideologies help to provide self-definitions to their believers, but ideologically crafted identities are also developed so that the interests of one group could prevail over solidarity and equality. There is no doubt both van Dijk and Fairclough recognize this, rather depressive, human tendency to seek power control, social domination and private benefits at somebody’s expense. Whereas Fairclough does not accept the social function of ideologies due to its tendency to divide and categorize people into *Us* and *Others*, van Dijk depicts the double nature of ideology as an in-group cement and out-group divider.

2.2. DISCOURSE AND COGNITION

Both van Dijk and Fairclough, however, regard discourse as a social practice which plays a crucial role in implementation of ideologies (Fairclough 1995, 2001; van Dijk 1997, 1998, 2008, 2009). In addition, they also admit certain cognitive conditions must take place so that humans can form part in any type of discourse, including the ideological one. Above all, “[n]o

human interaction is possible without a knowledge component that regulates presuppositions, implicitness, speech acts, etc.” (van Dijk, *Society Discourse* 47). It is arguable whether we shall understand *a knowledge component* as a common ground shared by members of ideological groups or as a system of values and beliefs shared by an epistemological community. Presumably, we might choose the first or the latter approach according to a specific communicative context. The scope of this master’s thesis does not a more complex discussion upon the relationship between knowledge and ideology (for further discussion see van Dijk, *Discourse and Knowledge*). However, in compliance with the abovementioned notion of *knowledge component*, we shall assume the higher the common *knowledge* between participants of social interactions, the bigger the possibility of mutual understanding. This common cognitive background is a key to produce and reproduce any type of ideological discourse. According to van Dijk, in order to exercise social power, “A must know about B’s desires, wishes, plans and beliefs, and B must know about A’s wishes, wants, preferences, intentions” (*Discourse Power* 4).

Cognitive resources are important for both production and interpretation of a discourse. During interaction we associate the utterance with what we already have stored in our long-term memory (LM henceforth), namely, with specific prototypes, built upon properties of objects and people, the sequence of events, etc. (Fairclough, *Language Power* 30-1). As a consequence, both listeners and readers actively contribute to the comprehension model of their ongoing interaction (Tomlin, et.al, *Discourse Semantics* 64-70). For instance,

[t]he mental representations derived from reading a text are not simply copies of the text or its meaning, but the result of strategic processes of construction or sense-making which may use elements of the text, elements of what language users know about the context, and elements of beliefs they already had before they started to communicate (van Dijk, “Study Discourse” 18).

These pre-elements are embedded into the communication context and are activated by communicators at the time of interaction; for example, during a talk, speakers combine their already stored information with the new one, producing a dynamic model representation of the ongoing discourse.

To analyze the ideological force of discourse, we need to bear in mind these models are partially personal and unique for each individual, so that each discourse is interpreted in a slightly different way, according to our personal experience and episodic memory (van Dijk 1997, 2008, 2009). “It is this (subjective) representation, these mental models of specific events, this knowledge, these attitudes and ideologies that finally influence people’s discourse and other social practices” (van Dijk, *Discourse Power* 16). At the same time, however, our production and interpretation of a discourse is to a large extent determined by our societal cognitive forces (van Dijk 1997, 2008, 2009; Fairclough 2001). Therefore, to provide complex critical analysis of an ideological discourse there is a need to recognize the existence of the so-called “discourse-cognition-society-triangle”, in which all the elements are interdependent and equally significant (van Dijk, *Discourse Power* 16).

2.3. MANIPULATION OF SOCIAL COGNITION

The manipulation of social cognition often refers to the manipulation of mental models stored in our long-term-memory (LM models). These models are based on socially determined systems of values, beliefs and, we may add, convictions about what should be considered as a factual knowledge that is “always true” regardless any subjective point of view. “With other members of their group, community or culture, social actors share norms, values and rules of communication, as well as *social representations* such as knowledge and opinions” (van Dijk, *Study Discourse* 17).

Yet, van Dijk argues that the main goal of manipulative discourse is to shape social representations, for socially normalized systems of values and beliefs have a direct influence on our behaviour and system of thinking (2008, 2009).

Whereas manipulation may concretely affect the formation or change of unique personal mental models, the general goals of manipulative discourse are the control of the shared social representations of groups of people because these social beliefs in turn control what people do and say in many situations and over a relatively long period (van Dijk, *Discourse Power* 222-3).

As a result, in order to approach critically the ideological component of any discourse, we should be able to determine to which social beliefs the given discourse refers to. It is important to note it is usually not an easy task, for these social representations tend to be expressed implicitly rather than explicitly.

2.4. DISCOURSE AND POWER

It is this implicit content that often decides about the ideological nature of a discourse. Fairclough argues “ideologies are generally implicit assumptions” and are mainly based on presupposition¹ and implied meaning (*Critical Discourse* 6). He also believes the implicit content reflects the hidden work of ideological forces, as those who have social control aimed at convincing a dominated group that their belief system is not ideological but natural and commonsensical (1995, 2001).

Ideology is most effective when its workings are least visible. (...) And invisibility is achieved when ideologies are brought to discourse not as explicit elements of the text, but as the background assumptions (...) Texts do not typically spout ideology. They so

¹ “Social beliefs may be assumed by group members to be *known* to most of the other group members. In discourse this means that social beliefs may be *presupposed* by the speaker, and need not be explicitly asserted as new information (van Dijk, *Ideology* 30-1).

position the interpreter through their cues that she brings ideologies to the interpretation of texts (Fairclough, *Language Power* 71).

In Fairclough's terms, an ideological discourse occurs when it functions to sustain social inequality, mostly achieved by the naturalization of practices that operate in the interests of dominant groups (*Language Power* 27). In other words, the reproduction of dominance and inequality is achieved with the manipulation of the social understanding of common sense.

Teun van Dijk also highlights the importance of common sense in the formation of socially shared beliefs. He provides a link between cultural beliefs and common sense, since they both form part of socially shared and culturally learned basis for in-group interaction.

Common sense is (...) more or less what we try to conceptualize with the term 'cultural beliefs', that is, the knowledge and opinions as well as the evaluation criteria that are common to all or most members of a culture. Like common sense, these cultural beliefs are also used as the basics for specific group beliefs, and also function as the general base of presupposed beliefs in all accounts, explanations and arguments (*Ideology* 19).

More importantly, however, socially shared knowledge enables us to activate pre-constructed schemata and prototypes of events, situations, etc. (van Dijk 2009, 2001). In other words, the more socio-cultural knowledge we share, the more implicit our talk may be (van Dijk, *Society Discourse* 102).

Nevertheless, it is arguable to what extent specific ideological discourses are implicit. It is true both Fairclough and van Dijk admit the ideological function of common sense and inferred meaning, yet we should remember about their distinctive approaches to ideology per se. As it has already been mentioned, Fairclough sees ideological talk mainly (if not only) as a tool for dominance and power. In contrast, van Dijk agrees that "[t]he exercise and maintenance of social power presupposes an ideological framework, [yet he understands this

framework as] socially shared, interest-related fundamental cognitions of a group and its members” (*Discourse Power* 30).

Once we accept van Dijk’ approach, we need to admit ideological discourse may play a function suggested by Fairclough, but it can also be used as a form of solidarity or resistance towards the oppressive forms of other ideologies.

The fact that many ideological groups organize various forms of ‘consciousness raising’ or ‘awareness training’ suggests that such forms of ideological explication may be an important organizational feature of ideological groups, especially for dominated groups or social movements (...) Finally, we need to realize that more-or-less explicit knowledge of ideological beliefs of group members who positively identify with a group usually implies positive acceptance of such beliefs (van Dijk, *Ideology* 99-100).

This suggests there may be a substantial number of ideologies where the explicit knowledge of their belief system would not imply its rejection. Rather than approaching ideologies as totally implicit, I propose to approach ideological discourse as a powerful combination of explicit and implicit content, still bearing in mind its role in serving in-group interests.

2.5. FORMS OF DISCURSIVE POWER

In compliance with van Dijk’s socio-cognitive approach, this work pays special attention to the persuasive forms of discursive power. It is crucial to note the notion of power is here understood as a *symbolic power*, as a “control of the mind of the public”, that is a “control of what the public wants and does” (van Dijk, *Discourse Power* 2). This type of power usually excludes coercion as a form of implementation of desired norms and values; instead, public compliance is achieved by rhetorical means such as repetition and argumentation (van Dijk 2008).

From the perspective of cognitive science, repetition is a useful technique when we want to store certain knowledge in our long-term memory. As far as discursive process is concerned, LM models are often activated automatically so that the scarce cognitive sources can be used for other purposes (van Dijk 2009). One of the aims of ideological discourse is to reinforce preferred mental models in such a way that their owners can activate them automatically and unconsciously to comprehend the given discourse according to the intentions of its producers.

The more mechanical the functioning of an ideological assumption in the construction of coherent interpretations, the less likely it is to become a focus of conscious awareness, and hence the more secure its ideological status (Fairclough, *Language Power* 71).

One of the most significant characteristics of modern ideological discourse is the use of persuasive power (van Dijk 1997; Fairclough 2001). Instead of imposing orders and threats, contemporary societies prefer to utilize argumentation and sustain its social power by consent rather than violence. This practice is often referred to as control of the mind, for it is exercised throughout “more subtle and indirect forms of text and talk [in order to] shape [other people’s] minds in such a way that they will act as we want out of their own free will” (van Dijk, *Discourse Power* 19). The main objective of such form of persuasion is to convince the target group to think and act in accordance with the interests of the powerful group “as if they were totally without constraints, and consistent with their own wants and interests” (van Dijk, *Discourse Power* 19). If this aim is achieved, we may talk about successful manipulation and dominant position of specific ideological discourse. Consequently, “[a] state of affairs which is a social and historical creation may be treated as a natural event or as the inevitable outcome of natural characteristics” (Thompson 66).

Bearing in mind our previous comments upon common sense, we may observe a close link between Fairclough and van Dijk’s interpretation of the *natural* role of dominant discourse.

What is socially accepted as *natural*, commonsensical or obvious do not require further reinforcement among the group members and can be used as a powerful argument in the game of imposing new beliefs, norms and actions. It is important to note that the need for social content in the process of accepting a given discourse as its “own” means that those who are being manipulated to accept a given belief system cannot see it in conflict with their already held values. In van Dijk’s terms, “mind control is only possible under very specific conditions, for example (...) when the preferred attitudes, intentions and actions are not obviously inconsistent with the interests of those who are thus manipulated” (*Discourse Power* 20). In the following sections of this work we shall see how the righteousness of consumer culture and neocapitalism are taken for granted by content marketers who utilize these ideologies to produce their own ideological discourse.

3. CONTENT MARKETING AS IDEOLOGY

The following section employs the abovementioned theoretical concept in order to approach content marketing as an ideological discourse. First, it introduces the reader with van Dijk's notion of group schema, which serves as a model of group-definition. According to this model, we shall define fundamental goals, attitudes and beliefs that constitute CM ideology. In order to position itself as a dominant marketing discourse, CM utilizes persuasive techniques, among which we may find the use of metaphors. As we shall see in the final parts of this section, content marketers attempt to conceptualize themselves as heroes as opposed to those who are in favour of traditional marketing and whom they define as dinosaurs.

3.1. GROUP SCHEMA

Following van Dijk's thesis that ideologies provide group definitions, this work applies his concept of group schemata for the analysis of content marketing discourse. Each group schema includes "mental counterparts of the social categories (...) to describe such group identity: membership, activities, aims, values, position and resources (van Dijk, *Discourse Interaction* 29)". These subcategories constitute the core of group self-identity as well as the cognitive base needed for social differentiation from other groups. The abovementioned counterparts are necessary for one's legitimization and systematization of values, beliefs and behaviour. In addition, one's definition of social self is based on both similarities to in-group members and differences to out-group persons. "As soon as individual members no longer share the basic ideological principles of their group, they no longer identify with the group, and may leave it or become a dissident" (van Dijk, *Discourse Interaction* 30).

In our context, the group schema is understood as the essence of ideological principles that have been created by the founders and popular evangelists of content marketing. I have selected the latest works published by the founder of Content Marketing Institute (CMI), Joe

Pulizzi and by a few other authors from his circle. These authors have contributed immensely to the development of CM discourse; therefore, they may be considered one of the crucial creators of CM ideology. Since the main objective of CM is to establish and promote a new belief system to the wider group of marketers, the group schema we are about to sketch refers to content marketers. As we shall see in the following sections, the group schema represents in-group identity in terms of a set of goals, societal roles, values, beliefs and relations with other social groups.

3.2. INTRODUCTION TO CONTENT MARKETING

Although CMI was launched in 2007, the term *Content Marketing* became well known among marketers in 2013 (Pulizzi 4). Since then, when seeking online resources upon marketing trends, the majority of marketers have been looking for *content marketing* (Pulizzi 4). The term was coined by one of the CMI founders, who defines it as

the marketing and business process for creating and distributing valuable and compelling content to attract, acquire, and engage a clearly defined and understood target audience-with the objective of driving profitable customer action (Pulizzi 5).

As it can be observed, CM's principal aim is not different from the goals established by marketing discourse in general. In one of the coursebooks written for students of Economics, we find that marketing is defined as “[t]he process by which companies create value for customers and build strong customer relationships to capture value from customers in return” (Kotler et al. 664).

There is no doubt Pulizzi's “profitable customer action” is two-fold as well. From the perspective of the marketer, it is supposed to “attract and retain customers (...) and change or enhance a consumer behavior” (Pulizzi 5). From the perspective of the consumer, however, “[c]ontent marketing is about delivering the content [they are] seeking” (Pulizzi 5). In other

words, content marketing shares the ideological basis with “general” marketing discourse in a sense that “individuals and organizations obtain what they need and want through creating and exchanging value with others” (Kotler et al. 5). As we can see, the attitude towards the main goal of both types of discourse determines the common ground shared by the group of marketers as a whole. As we shall notice in subsequent sections, this common knowledge is frequently used in order to convince those marketers who do not belong to the CM group about the righteousness of the proposed ideology.

The second element that CM inherits from general marketing discourse is the idea of target audience. It is a truism to say marketing ideology could not exist without the idea of consumers. Although there are some discrepancies in the way the target audience is defined by CM and marketing in general, both approaches agree that in order to build a desirable relationship with potential customers it is essential to learn about their needs. Both forms of marketing discourse apply the theoretical framework from the field of Consumer Behaviour in order to distinguish between two main types of consumer needs: hedonic and informational (Pulizzi 2014; Shimp 2003).

Product consumption from the hedonic perspective results from the anticipation of having fun, fulfilling fantasies, or having pleasurable feelings. Comparatively, product choice behavior (...) is based on thoughtful evaluation that the chosen alternative will be more functional and provide better results than will alternatives (Shimp 106).

By taking such view, CM discourse suggests the content created by marketers must either inform or entertain. Whereas the purpose of entertaining lies in reaching the emotional side of the target audience, the act of informing aims at making the group members “smarter and more knowledgeable” (Pulizzi and Barrett 81).

Apart from the distinction between the two types of consumer's needs, CM adapts from more general marketing ideology the understanding of target audience as "[a] set of buyers sharing common needs or characteristics that the company decides to serve" (Kotler et al. 667). In the context of CM discourse, the target audience should be created on the basis of similar forms of needs for being amused and/or according to the types of information they seek. Again, both forms of marketing approach assume marketers must first know well their target audience, so that they can find best forms of promotional actions to attract the attention of their desirable customers. There is no doubt CM marketers are expected to follow the general marketing principle that "[s]uccessful salespersons (...) orient the dominant approach to the consumer's specific personality and needs" (Shimp 107). Sharing the same goal as marketers as a whole, CM marketers distinguish themselves not by setting new marketing aims but by proposing a new way of achieving them.

What distinguishes CM from "traditional" marketing is its evaluation of *content* as the means for satisfying target audience's needs. In the context of online marketing, CM defines content as

a broad term that refers to anything created and uploaded to a website: the words, images, tools and other things that reside there. All of the pages of your website, then, are content: the home page, the about Us page, the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) page, the product information pages, and so on (Handley, and Chapman 6).

Furthermore, *content* also embodies all the additional types of materials the company creates for the interests of their target audience, such as videos, blogs, podcasts, photographs, etc., that can be found outside the company's website, for example on Tweeter, Facebook, LinkedIn, etc. It is important to note CM is not restricted to online marketing; on the contrary, its founders suggest many ways in which this strategy can be implemented offline (Scott

2015). Curiously enough, the substantial amount of literature devoted to content strategy instructs the reader on how to apply its principles online (e.g. Pulizzi 2014; Scott 2015).

So far, it is tentative to assume the main novelty of CM approach lies in its understanding of content as the equivalent of the corporate promotional entity. Still though, CM strategy can be just seen as a more specialized implementation of a broader marketing discourse, for its attitude towards content can be described in terms of Consumer-oriented marketing rather than a totally new approach to the field. According to Kotler et al., consumer-oriented marketing is “[a] principle of sustainable marketing that holds a company should view and organize its marketing activities from the consumer’s point of view” (660). According to CM discourse, the content can be called valuable if it is considered as such not by the company who has created it but by the company’s target audience.

In other terms, the corporate success is impossible without a shift in thinking about the company-customer-product triangle. Pulizzi suggests that what really impedes institutions achieve more profits and retain customers is their traditional focus on the product they want to sell. CMI founder argues company’s benefits should stop being the primary concern of their marketing strategies. In his introduction to “Epic Content Marketing”, he suggests he holds a magic formula, a secret he wants to share with all marketers they need to accept before they proceed with the rest of the book.

Your customers don’t care about you, your products, or your services. They care about themselves. Before you go any further in this book, you have to accept this truth as the first step. Most of us feel we have something wonderful and revolutionary to offer people. We really don’t... at least not anything more than customers can probably find elsewhere (xvi).

Perhaps the most striking part of the quote is that all companies offer, if not identical, then very similar products, so that the company’s true value can no longer be estimated on the

basis of its products. In Pulizzi's view, a customer is not someone who purchases our goods because they consider their value as higher in comparison to the value of similar products offered by our competitors. Pulizzi's ideal consumer becomes keen on and loyal to a specific brand not for the sake of bought commodities but due to the intangible value of corporate *content*. The content is not simply a collection of corporate information promoting its products; a valuable content in the eyes of CM marketers puts its producers more as noble experts and friendly advisors than selfish sellers whose main interest is to exchange less for more to gain maximum profit.

This is why Pulizzi admits the main action of content marketing is "to focus more on our customers and less on our products" (xvii). Obviously though the "traditional" understanding of marketing goals (sell more and retain loyal customers) remains the same. Therefore, Pulizzi's statement "to sell more, we need to be marketing our products and services less" (xvi), might be interpreted in the following way: to sell more, we need to impress our target audience. Why should we impress them? Because once we enable them to interact with our content in a truly engaging way, they will buy from us without conscious awareness of our principal aim of gaining profit. Obviously, it is hard to imagine a customer who does not understand the core aim of the existence of a company, for to make a purchase we all need to know the script of buying and selling, e.g. how to make online transaction, how to pay with bank transfer, or how to buy milk in a supermarket². To belong to the group of consumers, we need to share basic cognitive resources on how buying and selling work, but it is for the sake

² Script is here understood in sociocognitive terms; "to account for the knowledge people have about the stereotypical events of their culture, such as celebrating a birthday, an initiation ritual, going to the supermarket, or participating in a university class (...). As the script-metaphor suggests, such knowledge is represented in terms of a setting, time, location and a sequence of events and actions and the typical or optional actors that participate in them" (van Dijk, *Ideology* 58).

of seller's benefits when our mental model of seller-buyer relationship becomes significantly transformed.

It is of the interest of companies that customers make their buying transactions more automatically and, hence, less consciously. The reason behind it can be found in Alex Muchielli's book on the use of persuasive techniques (2002), in which he argues that the factual relation between buyer and seller is based on distrust and power imbalance in favour of the seller's interest. If we approach this phenomenon through van Dijk's sociocognitive theory, we may assume that Muchielli provides an interpretation of a mental model of customer-company relationship which is socially shared. This socially sanctioned distrust towards sellers provokes marketers to manipulate our social cognition so that we are more eager to consider our preferred brands as friends whose activities are in accordance with our personal interests.

Once we forget, or at least stop paying attention to the company's principal goals, we may apply our cognitive resources to focus on the preferred content of ongoing marketing discourse. Behind Pulizzi's slogan of "selling more by promoting less" stands the need to make the potential purchaser "forget" that he/she is a buyer and I am a seller. Therefore, we may risk the assumption that the main objective of content marketing is the manipulation of social understanding of the buyer-seller relationship throughout the argumentative power of corporate "valuable content." Once our mental model of sellers and selling companies is open to modification, we may become more willing to accept a given brand as our preferable source of information and entertainment.

3.3. THE PERSUASIVE FORCE OF CONTENT MARKETING DISCOURSE

According to content marketing discourse, the valuable content does not refer to the information about the company and its products, but it should satisfy the audience

informational needs. The process of establishing successful relationships with potential customers is two-fold. First, marketers need to collect data about its target audience's needs and mindset; second, they are expected to use this knowledge to create a content that would prove the company is both aware of and willing to satisfy these specific needs. In David Scott's words,

[o]nce you understand the audience very well, then (and only then) you should set out to satisfy their informational needs by focusing on your buyer's problems and creating and delivering content accordingly. Website content too often simply describes what an organization or a product does from an egotistical perspective. While information about your organization and products is certainly valuable on the inner pages of your site, what visitors really want is content that first describes the issues and problems they face and then provides details on how to solve those problems (46).

Although both Scott and Pulizzi admit the importance of both entertaining and informing, the reader of their publications may have a feeling that, apart from the word *content*, the second, most common, omnipresent term is *informational needs*. Whereas it might be intriguing to confirm it empirically, by establishing the number of times each term is mentioned in the books, I believe it is this reader's subjective, intuitive impression on the constant repetition of the abovementioned phrase that needs our special attention. As it has been mentioned above in section 2, van Dijk considers repetitions as an example of persuasive discourse. In our context, *informational needs* become a slogan that the reader is exposed to frequently enough to store it in his/her long-term memory and link it directly with their subjective models of consumer.

Obviously, the persuasive force of content marketing discourse does not limit to the repetition of key phrases and memorable slogans. Due to the scope of this work, it is far beyond our capability to provide a detailed analysis of a whole set of different forms of argumentation

used by CM founders to spread their ideology among marketers. The following examples have been selected in order to show the implementation of metaphors as a rhetorical means for legitimization of CM strategy and for self-definition of content marketers in opposition to the rest of marketers.

Before we proceed with the analysis of specific examples, it is important to emphasize that metaphors are commonly used as a means for human understanding of the surrounding world (Lakoff and Johnson 1980). From the cognitive perspective,

[the] fundamental form of human understanding is a metaphoric process; the mind grasps an unfamiliar idea only by comparison to or in terms of something already known. Thus the metaphoric language in a text presents a particular view of reality by structuring the understanding of one idea in terms of something previously understood” (Gill and Whedbee 173).

In the context of analyzed literature, the metaphoric language is needed in order to convince the target reader (marketers) that content marketing is far more “better” than “traditional” marketing. Since the suggested philosophy towards promotion and selling is considered to be non-dominant among professional marketers, the authors build their metaphors on the concepts they expect their target audience are familiar with. So as to assure the preferred interpretation of their discourse, they employ two concepts that are perfectly known to the vast majority of epistemic communities worldwide: a hero and a dinosaur.

3.4. MARKETING HEROES

In an attempt to convince his target reader about the righteousness of CM strategies, Pulizzi evokes to the heroic behaviour of Neo, the main character of *The Matrix* (1999). The protagonist is described as worth admiring for his “ability to defeat the ‘enemy’, the Agents inside the Matrix, because he is not governed by the same rules as they are” (34). Neo’s main attributes are assigned to his ability to “be stronger and do things that the enemy cannot do,

which is why, in the end, Neo wins” (34). According to Pulizzi, the hero “wins” not because he “has discovered some new powers [but because] he begins to believe in himself”. His ability to “believe” makes him open his eyes to the factual nature of the system in which humanity is trapped. “As the result of Neo's intervention, there is a ‘system failure’ in the Matrix. At the same time, Neo addresses people still caught in it as the Savior who will teach them how to liberate themselves from the constraints of the Matrix” (Zizek n.p.).

Like Neo who brings liberty to the humankind trapped in the Matrix system, Pulizzi promises success to the marketers blind to the inefficiency of their selling strategies. More importantly, CMI founder attempts to convince his readers that they can taste the glory of heroic Neo by following his path. In order to become heroes of their marketing departments, marketers must also discover “the truth”.

You need to do the same. Thus begins your story. For you to make epic content marketing work for you, you first need to understand the truth—that regardless of any barriers you ‘think’ are in the way, it is possible for you and your brand to become the go-to informational resource for you customers and prospects (Pulizzi 34).

The truth new Neos must understand echoes the myth of the word where everything is possible and depends on our attitudes. Pulizzi’s army of Neos is strong in their conviction that they need to reject the Matrix of traditional marketing and create “epic content” to become a leading authority among their target customers. There is no doubt the member of content marketing group may in a way feel even more heroic if the content they create deserves to be referred to as epic, that is, “of heroic or impressive proportions” (Pulizzi xvi). In short, by using the metaphor of *The Matrix’s* hero, those who accept new rules should feel admirable and powerful providers of knowledge they dominate and can spread among their desired audience.

There is no doubt the association between a hero and a marketer implies that the professional activities of the latter can be understood in terms of a mission. “Content marketing is a strategy focused on the creation of a valuable experience. It is humans being helpful to each other, sharing valuable pieces of information that enrich the community” (Pulizzi 5). Content marketers are persuaded to accept their new role of information providers in order to help people lead better lives. Yet, this solidarity with other human beings does not stay in conflict with the financial interests of a business. On the contrary, CM recognizes a direct link between happiness and a growing consumption (for further discussion on consumption see section 4.7).

CM ideology does not necessarily differentiate between its idealistic and material objectives but combines them together as a company social duty. After all, “[g]oals to keep customers longer, happier, and/or spending more are the most noble content marketing objectives” (Pulizzi 292). In fact, it is this altruistic mission to provide customer-center content that marketers must focus on in order to achieve the leading position on the market. Only if a company delivers an “epic content”, can they expect the loyalty of their target audience. It is then better for marketers to modify their subjective representations of marketing goals. Pulizzi calls for action by applying to his audience’s imagination and asking rhetorically: “What if your goal was not to first sell products and services but to impact your readers with amazing information that changes their lives and careers?” (121).

To certain extent, we may then risk the assumption content marketing discourse implies that to become new Neos companies must put consumer happiness before their interests. At the same time, however their mission of satisfying target audience implies “everything that you communicate with your customers has a purpose, [so that it is essential to know the answer to the question:] What do you want them to do?” (Pulizzi and Barrett 27). There is no doubt the

in-group knowledge upon the principal aim of marketing as a tool for financial success is here expected to be activated by the target reader. The obviousness of seeking material profits through promotional discourse prove to be so deeply rooted in our social representation of business activities that there is no need to mention it explicitly. As long as CM founders approach the material nature of marketing as commonsensical, they can guide their audience to focus on the preferred meaning of their discourse; namely, to the reason why their approach is better than any other one.

3.5. MARKETING DINOSAURS

So far we have discussed the use of a metaphor of “hero” so as to convince the marketers that once they join Pulizzi’s group they will become like *The Matrix’s* main protagonist. As a result, we may suggest that content marketers are encouraged to associate their profession with heroism and social duty. Nevertheless, this positive self-definition of a group is juxtaposed to the negative identification of those marketers who do not want content marketing mindset to “become part of [their] corporate DNA” (Pulizzi and Barrett 27). According to van Dijk, “to legitimate group action (...) a group needs to show that its basic principles are just, and possibly that those of the other groups are wrong” (*Ideology* 260). In order to convince the reader about the righteousness of the proposed approach, CM propagators compare the followers of more traditional marketing discourse to *marketing dinosaurs* (Pulizzi and Barrett 246).

Apart from its literal meaning, *dinosaur* serves as a pejorative description of objects and ideas that are old-fashioned and no longer useful for the current reality. According to Oxford Online Dictionary, a dinosaur is “a person or a thing that is outdated or has become obsolete because of failure to adapt to changing circumstances” (n.p.). Intriguingly, one of the examples of this term use that Oxford provides refers to old-fashioned business leaders: “He

is like a Tyrannosaurus Rex, leading a herd of corporate dinosaurs over the cliff and bellowing as he goes” (n.p.). Presumably, the abovementioned Tyrannosaurus Rex stands for a boss whose fearful employees listen to as a mindless herd, and whose obsolete ideas lead the company to the bankruptcy. As it can be inferred from the term definition and its use in a given context, *a corporate dinosaur* is labelled old-fashioned for his/her blindness to the changes which have made traditional ways of doing business ridiculous. The consequences of being a dinosaur are explicit: or you accept new rules or you become out of the business world.

The same kind of threat is presupposed in Pulizzi and Barrett’s concept of *marketing dinosaur*. In their concluding chapter entitled *Marketing Survival*, they first confess the common ground they share with all the marketers who have been reading their publication, that is, their previous experience of traditional ways of promoting companies: “When you began reading this book, you were probably skeptical about the content marketing revolution. Frankly, not that long ago we were pretty much traditional marketers ourselves” (245). Nevertheless, the fruits that content marketing mindset brings to its believers are so immense that the authors have rejected the obsolete belief system and taken the challenge of spreading the truth about marketing efficiency for the benefits of marketers, corporations and consumers. Although they do not refer to themselves as Neos, we may certainly link their self-definition of “unapologetic content marketing evangelists” as yet another representation of CM as a heroic mission towards the improvement of humankind.

In addition, CM founders are quick to observe “the revolution” is not a matter of fashion that will soon vanish; on the contrary, their belief system is so effective that it should be considered a natural way of doing business. This naturalization of CM strategy is presupposed by the argument that it “is the one strategy that will pay dividends both for customer and for

the companies themselves; [therefore] [s]mart marketers around the globe are using [CM] concepts to create customer-focused, innovative organizations” (245). In other terms, those marketers who reject to accept the revolution caused by content marketing are considered the group outsiders and become distinguished from content marketers as not “smart” enough to do business. The threat of lacking business intelligence and flexibility serves to persuade the marketers to join a new group.

In sociocognitive terms, the abovementioned argumentation is the manifestation of symbolic power as it manipulates the reader’s mental model of marketing practice. In van Dijk’s terms, control

applies (...) to the minds of those who are being controlled, that is, their knowledge, opinions, attitudes and ideologies (...) Those who control discourse may indirectly control the minds of people. And since people’s actions are controlled by their minds (...), mind control also means indirect action control (*Ideology* 9).

In our context, those who create CM discourse are the ones who hold control over the production of a new discourse and the development of CM belief system. More importantly, they employ their discursive power to persuade the group of marketers that their mental model of marketing norms and values are no longer valid in the modern world. Undoubtedly, the persuasive force of CM discourse is based on the implicit threat: if you do not join us, your company will go bankrupt. In other words, it is in the interests of all marketers and businesses to accept the ideology hidden behind the name of CM strategy. According to van Dijk, once such argumentation is approved by the reader, there is no further need for manipulation; the target group “will tend to believe and act in accordance with these – manipulated – social cognitions anyway, because they have accepted them as their own” (*Ideology* 226).

Once the reader has conceptualized the opposition between obsolete traditional marketing and effective revolutionary content marketing, Pulizzi and Barrett imply the reader is smart enough not to be willing to follow the wrong set of ideas. At the very end of their book, they link their subjective model of current times with socially shared knowledge upon “the fate of the dinosaurs” (246). Although the reason for the animals’ extinction is unknown, marketers accept CM as their own belief system so as to avoid the same destiny.

We don’t know what caused the dinosaurs’ demise eons [sic] ago. But when it comes to the fate of marketing dinosaurs in the twenty-first century, we know for sure what will kill them off: the failure to develop and deploy successful content marketing strategies in the face of a game-changing metamorphosis in the business environment” (246).

Their concluding paragraph includes a clear call for action, similar to the ones we frequently experience as the audience of advertising campaigns: “Don’t be a marketing dinosaur. Start implementing your content marketing strategy today”, and they even finish the whole concept by repeating Nike’s advertising slogan: “As they say over at Nike, “Just do it” (246).” Ironically, they persuade the marketers to concentrate less on selling campaigns and product promotion by employing an example of traditional marketing discourse. Presumably, this example has been chosen to imply that even the most globally known brands remain examples to follow, since their marketing strategies are more and more consistent with the CM belief system.

Although the metaphor of hero has not been originally used in the direct opposition to the metaphor of dinosaur, it is tentative to assume that the juxtaposition hero-dinosaur is an argumentative force for positive self-definition of content marketers and a negative evaluation of traditional marketers. This characteristic helps us to determine the ideological nature of CM discourse, which otherwise might be considered mainly as a more specific form of

customer-center marketing strategy. Albeit the common goals of gaining profit and retaining loyal customers, CM marketers are eager to distance themselves from other marketers due to their presupposed capacity to satisfy consumers' appetites for pleasure and personal development. CM marketers seem to agree with Aldridge that "[t]he free market [rewards] people who are enterprising, energetic and adaptable" (57). Yet, in order to survive and achieve commercial success on the market, the brand is required to accept CM ideology as the only right strategy.

3.6. CONTENT MARKETING AS A REFLECTION OF COGNITIVE CAPITALISM

Although CM marketers like promoting the revolutionary nature of their approach, their proposed set of beliefs reflects a globally spread version of contemporary capitalism. As Fairclough argues, an "[a]nalysis of implicit content can provide valuable insights into what is taken as given, as common sense" (*Critical Discourse* 6). Once we provide such analysis of CM discourse we shall attempt to determine implicit assumptions CM ideology has inherited from "politics of material culture" (Hilton and Daunton 12). Such politics are defined as "the general movements and abstract ideologies which have tried to shape the meaning of consumption and unite all consumers within a common project" (12); therefore, their main function is to manipulate social cognition so as to reinforce the preferred model of a consumer.

Some scholars have already argued modern understanding of consumer flourished from liberal and neoliberal approaches to the state economy (e.g. Corrigan 1998; Abercrombie 1994). One of the key characteristics of such ideologies is their representation of a consumer "as a rational-utility-maximizing individual" (Hilton and Daunton 12). This idea of the rational consumer has already been mentioned as a part of consumer behaviour science, and it has already been assumed content marketing eagerly adopts the notion of a rational consumer

(see section “Introduction to Content Marketing”). Following this approach, we may understand consumerism “as the empowering of consuming individuals through the general provision of commodity information to enable informed purchasing” (Hilton and Dauton 12).

How does it refer to the mission held by content marketers? In Pulizzi’s terms, *epic content* needs to be created so that the company may become a “thought leader” on their chosen market. “The goal (...) is to use content to elevate the brand into one that’s trusted by the consumer, which therefore generates a differentiated approach to solving its problem, or simply put, whatever is getting in the way of your buyer’s purchase decision” (72). Therefore, it implies the consumer’s buying decision depends on his/her cognitive model of the specific brand. The more positive perception of the company, the more probable it will lead him/her to rationalize the future purchase as beneficiary to his/her private needs. Due to the nature of capitalist market, the abundancy of production and the great number of companies competing for the same customer with nearly similar product offer, the action of buying may result from one’s satisfaction of those needs that have more cognitive value.

As far as cognitive needs are concerned, CM strategy flourishes from the modern ideology of knowledge. In his insightful work on cognitive mechanism of contemporary capitalism, Boutang highlights the existence of

learning economies [that] involve capturing and retaining a maximum number of users in network that provide their subscribers with positive externalities, in other words with free services or goods in exchange for loyalty to norms or technical standards that constitute a guarantee for future sales of products or services. If the economy is becoming increasingly flexible (...), it is because the central core of values rests now in immaterialities (33).

In the case of CM strategy, the loyalty should be understood in terms of a loyal and active customer who is expected to be aware of his/her personal needs. The guarantee of the future

sales cannot be provided if the customer does not communicate with the seller or is reluctant to “teach” the company what expectations must they meet in order to win his/her loyalty to the brand. As it has been already mentioned, the main value has been shifted to the intangible value of satisfying consumer’s needs. The CM mission to satisfy those needs derives from “the growing role of the immaterial and of services related to the production of that immaterial, [which] is one of the most distinctive features of cognitive capitalism” (Boutang 50). On the one hand, the CM belief system centers around knowledge as the basic source of value; on the other, it encourages the consumer to constantly focus on their quest for happiness, for it is this promise of better life, better job, better knowledge, or better experience, etc. that should keep the consumer daydreaming about the company’s commodities.

In order to pamper their customers, entrepreneurs must first conceptualize the schema of the consumer as a whole and second they build a schema of their niche consumer. Therefore, it is a duty of an individual to explicitly express their tastes, interests; moreover, it is of paramount importance for the business sector to know what elements of their strategies help the customer to feel satisfaction and pleasure. “What is (then) required of consumers (...) is that they should know what their preferences are, and whether they have been satisfied by a particular purchase” (Keat 29). Once entrepreneurs share such knowledge, they can employ business strategies which should help them compete on the market, minimizing the cost and maximizing their profit. The free market economy can function as long as consumers fulfill their social duty of consumerists, hedonists and individuals, whose “lives are organized around fantasies and daydreams about consuming, [whose prime interest lay] in pleasure, [and whose ego drive them to pursue] their own ends” (Abercrombie 44).

4. CONTENT MARKETING ON THE WEB

We might wonder To what extent content marketing has dominated marketing discourse in general. Due to the scope of this master's thesis we are of course not able to provide a systematic analysis of corporate behavior on today's market. Instead, this section narrows down the issue to the question whether some globally known and successful brands have incorporated CM discourse as a part of their marketing strategy. I believe this is the case of Ikea and Apple brands; rather than promoting their goods by commercials and traditional online advertising, they attempt to retain loyal customers with the use of "valuable" content.

4.1. IKEA AS A CULTURAL CAPITAL OF SWEDEN

In today's world of markets flooded with manufacturers producing all kinds of commodities, Ikea is one of these brands which eagerly employ innovative marketing strategies to keep their dominating position. As we shall see from the examples above, Ikea's business actions are consistent with CM policy; rather than advertise its products, it concentrates on the human experience of life, "penetrating into domains previously untouched by commercialism" (Mc Elhinny 22). In *Critical Discourse Analysis*, Fairclough claims promotional genres of discourse have dominated even those areas that were previously untouched by the hand of commercialization. As a result, mass media, organizational, and public discourse in general have been equipped with the instrumental role; "discourse [became] a vehicle for 'selling' goods, services, organizations, ideas or people" (138). In Fairclough's terms, we might think of cultural institutions as dominated by promotional discourse, so that we might suspect further changes in their social functioning. For instance, the belief system shared by content marketers enables them to manipulate the meaning of such institutions by blending the idea of culture with marketing ideology.

This mixture can be illustrated on the example of Ikea, which currently attempts to promote its brand image within the walls of its own museum. As we can read on IKEAmuseum.com, the museum is about to open on June, 30, 2016, in Älmhult, Sweden. The mission behind this new project explicitly demonstrates Ikea's care for customers, whose loyalty is gratified by this unique exhibition of corporate history. "Here, we will be sharing everything that makes Ikea what it is today, and what it may be tomorrow: the ideas and the driving forces, the people and the furniture, the mistakes and the lessons learned". Not only does the company want to boost about its bright side, but it also promises to reveal its darker past. We usually expect to hear the story about one's mistakes and hard lesson from our close friends, teachers, family members or idols or any person whose actions we would like to follow to achieve our dreams. As a result, we might assume Ikea attempts to establish a close, friendly bond with the potential visitor, but it also implies its position as a thought leader. Although at the time when this work has been written, the museum has not yet been opened, it is worth observing how the online content of the museum webpage "enhances [the] company's personality" (Handley and Chapman 18).

Potential buyers of Ikea's goods are encouraged to approach the brand differently; rather than thinking of its commercial side, they are prone to see Ikea's cultural capital. The socially shared concept of museum is in its inherent form free of commercial goals, for it is characteristic of its noble aim to provide society with specific knowledge that is often related with group identity and social history. Depending on the type of museum, we may then consider it as a provider of historical and sociocultural knowledge that has shaped the identity of specific groups, such as Ancient civilizations, ethnic communities, artists, etc. In other words, the socially shared knowledge upon the role of museum is far from our conceptualization of corporations. It is true many contemporary museums have been

commercialized in a sense that they offer souvenirs, coffee and snacks in their shops and restaurants. Whereas the Ikea museum has a shop and a restaurant too, its main marketing action focuses on its installations, in other terms, on these elements that are not for sell.

Not only does Ikea open the museum to persuade its cultural contribution to Swedish community, but it also attributes the museum with the meaning of home. “For 70 years, people have welcomed Ikea into their homes. Now it’s our turn to welcome you to ours” (“Welcome Home” n.p.). As we may observe, once Ikea’s museum has been conceptualized as Ikea’s home, the fact of opening it to public becomes more intimate and more personal than opening a museum to visitors. Here, the argument of reciprocity strongly works on the reader’s imagination, motivating him/her to remain loyal to Ikea. There is no doubt one can feel significant when their loyalty has been appreciated. In addition, the intimate, human relation between Ikea and prospects humanizes the corporation, as if it were an average human being, who can be invited to one’s home and then shows friendly intentions by welcoming the former host to his/her own living place.

There is no doubt, however, the prospective visitor is encouraged to associate Ikea with Swedish cultural heritage and to conceptualize Ikea’s founder as the man who improved lives of Swedish citizens. Among various activities, the museum offers to see the installation devoted to *Our Roots* (“Exhibitions n.p.”). It is of no surprise this exhibition is devoted to the origins of the company; what is curious is the way the theme is displayed on the company’s website. Under the event title, the company provides a two-paragraph introduction to what the prospect visitor should expect to learn from the exhibition. Nevertheless, the corporate name is not mentioned, for the Ikea origins are associated with the missionary vision of its founder, whose exceptional personality changed the course of social history in 19th-century Sweden. Rather than mentioning the brand name frequently, the page’s content plays with our

understanding of home as our native land so as to foster our positive attitude toward the company by making us feel a part of Ikea's family. "If we identify with *our*" places, such as our home, [...] or country, such identification is often associated with positive evaluations and feelings" (van Dijk, *Society Discourse* 54).

As it can be observed, the introduction to the Ikea origins resembles the emotive opening to the biography, to the story of one man whose heroism lays at the fundamentals of the company's development. The first paragraph introduces us to "[t]he young Ingvar Kamprad [who] wanted to sell furniture and accessories that were well-designed, worked well and were affordable" ("Exhibitions" n.p.). Next, we are prone to conceptualize the young man with high spirit and altruistic dreams: "What inspired him? Where did his desire to create a better everyday life for the many people come from?" ("Exhibitions" n.p.). Although we are not given a direct answer, we are persuaded his motivation flourished from the conditions of "everyday life in 19th century Småland, [where] Ingvar Kamprad [spent his] childhood" ("Exhibitions" n.p.). Since we are invited to see the exhibition to learn about Kamprad's 19th - century Sweden "and the 20th century transformation of Swedish society", we are to infer Kamprad's "new vision of home led the way" to a great social change ("Exhibitions" n.p.). The final sentence of the second paragraph summarizes the main theme of the exhibition: "Our Roots explores the society, living conditions and spirit that prevailed in the Sweden that fostered a young boy's emerging business" ("Exhibitions" n.p.). This concluding phrase reaffirms our previous understanding of Ingvar Kamprad's role in the construction of Swedish social history, but it also links childhood dreaming with heroism and business activity.

The atmosphere of a museum as a physical entity is transferred to the website, for instance by the image of the document of permission handed to "the young boy", so that he could open

his first shop. The document reminds us of many similar ones we may find in any museum; more importantly, however, we usually take it for granted that if such papers are exposed to the public, they are of paramount importance. Like Ingvar's high spirit led him to dream about improving living conditions of his community, the presented document opened the door for his dreams to come true. The date when he was allowed to start his company was not simply a date significant for the history of Ikea. It was a starting point for the historical revolution in the social history of modern Sweden, so it is of great importance to the whole Swedish community.

To what extent would it be beneficiary for Ikea to be associated with fulfilling one's dreams and aspirational needs? How many loyal customers it may attract by linking its name with social revolution and heroism of a daydreamer? It is beyond our knowledge whether Ikea's marketers have read *Epic Content Marketing*, but there is no doubt the attributes given to Ingvar Kamprad put him in the line with heroic Neo. They are both "distinguished by extraordinary valour [and] noble deeds" ("Hero" 245) for the development of mankind. The Ikea's founder was of a high spirit, for like Neo he was able to seek the truth; in this case, the truth about his company's possibility to improve living conditions of Swedish population. His success reflects the altruistic policy of Ikea, which puts the satisfaction of customers as the principal reason for existence. It seems Ikea's philosophy agrees with CM paramount objective to know "what keeps [the customers] up at night, [and] [h]ow [Ikea will] help them in their daily lives" (Handley and Chapman 15).

4.2. IKEA IS YOUR HOME

To certain extent, we might assume that the Ikea parental figure becomes a father of the whole modern Swedish society. If Ingvar Kamprad can be at least partly perceived as the leader of Swedish social transformation, he may be also accepted to be a symbolic father of modern

Swedish community, especially those who enjoy revolutionary living standards propagated by Ikea. Yet, we need to remember about the global scale of Ikea's business operations, hence, we may assume the concept of Ikea idealized founder should appeal to the broader audience than the Swedish society. On the other hand, given the fact that the museum is located in Sweden, it is presupposed that the main target audience should be native inhabitants of this country. Presumably, after being exposed to the content of *Our Roots*, a Swedish citizen is preferred to feel strong admiration and even affection toward a symbolic father. This positive emotional bond between online readers and the company's human face might encourage them to conceptualize the museum sightseeing with a sentimental journey to their own roots. Once prospects associate Ingvar Kamprad with the father of the modern Swedish community, it is only natural that they will conceptualize Ikea's founder as their symbolic father and accept Ikea's home as their home.

Therefore, there is no coincidence Ikea's intro to the museum microsite reinforces the link between Ikea, home and the consumer ("Welcome Home" n.p.). This nearly forty-second video shows us around various installments of the museum, from the building façade, through the floors flooded with flower and plants and interior designs, to the exhibitions of objects of everyday use. At some point, we can also see two ladies smiling and posing to the photo, presumably the representatives of friendly and smiling Ikea personnel. When watching the video, one might get an impression that what is being showed are not the rooms of museum, but the parts of Ikea actual shop. More importantly, we are exposed to the slogan *Welcome Home* from the beginning to the very end of the video. Whereas it may sometimes be difficult to decipher little nuances that suggest the presented spot is not a shop, *Welcome Home* is written in white big font and located at the center of the intro. Such visualization of the slogan makes it omnipresent and impossible to ignore while watching the material, for it is placed

exactly in front of our eyes. There is no sound accompanying the video, so that all our cognitive resources can be used to decipher the visual message on the screen.

It is important to note the persuasive role that such forms of communication as images and videos play in the formation of the brand image. Due to the specific nature of online communication, companies are provided with “simultaneous access to the use of a number of multimodal technologies, images, sounds, animations, films, which can be easily combined and utilized together” (Garzone 20). Together with written forms of communication, they form interpretative cues, so that the online reader may conceptualize the given brand in an expected way. In the case of Ikea’s persuasive communication, both written and visual components encourage the website reader to link Ikea with his/her understanding of the domestic and familiar sphere.

The museum is visualized in such a way that it is hard not to associate Ikea with one’s subjective model of home. On the explicit level, we may argue Ikea links the presented spot as its home for both physical and metaphorical reasons. First, the building plays an important “historical” role, for it was used as the first shop of the brand; second, it is Ikea symbolic home due to the building’s new function of a museum. Nevertheless, on the implicit level, Ikea desires to represent the symbolic home of its customer, so that the *Welcome Home* does not necessarily refer to the corporate origins but to the prospect’s subjective model of home. As we remember from the theoretical part, such models are stored in long-term memory and are based both on social cognition and personal experience. Once the target reader adds Ikea to his/her prototype of home as a physical building and as a unique, personal place of oneself, we may talk about successful manipulation of the LT model for the interests of the corporation. Since such manipulation of one’s perception has been achieved through one’s own interpretation of the promotional material, we can treat Ikea’s museum campaign as a

strategy to control one's mind. It is by consent that the website visitors may now associate certain part of their self-identity with Ikea brand.

4.3. IKEA AS A THOUGHT LEADER

If we analyze the content of other company's webpages, we may observe how the corporation employs the CM strategy to promote a certain lifestyle and reinforces its myth of thought, leader and altruist. Sharing Pulizzi's belief successful marketing should not center upon the company and its product, Ikea introduces the section named *Ideas* to satisfy the informational needs of its target audience. If Ikea's customers infer the preferred meaning of the online material, they should by all means decorate their houses with goods offered by the brand. The following examples have been taken from the American version of *Ideas*, nevertheless it is important to note that a similar section appears in the majority of local sites of the brand. The following subsection shall focus on the mission statement which is introduced to all the English-speaking consumers who click on *Ideas* section and provides content analysis of one chosen example.

4.4. IKEA AND THE PROMISE OF IDEAL HOME

The opening paragraph of *Ideas* webpage explicitly manifests the company's deep interest in the customers' needs. On the one hand, this brief introduction serves to inform the reader about the goals of the microsite, on the other, it reinforces the model of Ikea as a perfect home. It is crucial to note that the first statement of this note rejects to fix one universal meaning of ideal home: "We don't believe in perfect homes" ("Ideas" n.p.), since perfect home is a construct that needs to be defined "as a perfect reflection of the people who live inside" ("Ideas" n.p.). Hence, it is not Ikea but the customer who has the absolute power in defining the meaning of perfect home, since it can be ideal only if "everything looks the way you want it to, works the way you need it to, and just generally makes you feel good –

without costing a fortune” (“Ideas” n.p.). The paragraph concludes with Ikea’s promise to fulfill its mission in providing the customers with all they need to make their home a perfect reflection of their selves: “That's why we've filled this section with tons of different home ideas, from home decoration ideas to organizing tips to inspiration for making your home more green. So that you'll have all you need to create a space that you love calling home” (“Ideas” n.p.).

As we can observe, Ikea encourages the reader to decorate their home in such a way that it is true to their concept of self-identity. According to Abercrombie, contemporary consumption is a struggle between producers and buyers since both groups want to decide on the meaning of commodities. “Producers try to commodify meaning, that is try to make symbols and symbols into things which can be sold and bought. Consumers, on the other hand, try to give their own, new, meanings to the commodities and services they buy” (51). The reader of *Idea’s* statement might feel encouraged by the furniture manufacturer to take the absolute control over the creation of meaning when it comes to Ikea’s products. This is how the brand gives us an illusion of power, since it is our role to associate certain commodities in our preferred way. On the one hand, we might assume that Ikea once again proves the center-position of the consumer and its altruistic goal of helping us to create our perfect home. On the other, it is crystal clear, *Ideas* content may prone us to conceptualize Ikea as our perfect home. In other words, the company may let us play with the meaning of its stock offer, but this inspirational, creative game should also lead us to construct the preferred image of the brand.

4.5. THE IDEA OF PERFECT HOME

Out of vast number of different subpages of *Ideas*, I have selected to analyze the content of *A Family Homestead with Deep Roots* so as to demonstrate how it employs CM discourse to sell

the Ikea brand as a thought leader. (“Family Homestead” n.p.). If we ignore the fact that it appears on the corporate website, we might have a feeling that what we are reading is a form of short article with elements of interview and testimonials. The “article” begins with the statement that “[e]scaping to the country is a dream many of us share” (“Family Homestead” n.p.). Therefore, it provides the reader with a hint that he/she is about to read upon spending peaceful time on the countryside. In addition, it is inferred the reader might be interested in the “article” if they share a common dream of living outside the city.

More importantly, however, we are introduced to Helena, who “bought an old wooden house close to the place where she grew up” (“Family Homestead” n.p.). The beauty and peacefulness of her surroundings can be inferred from the subsequent combination of lady and narrator’s comment: “Moving back made sense to her and when we made our escape to the country to hang out in her hillside home, we understood why. My family has lived here for 14 generations,” she says. “There’s something nourishing about this place – our roots here are dug deep” (“Family Homestead” n.p.). After reading this introductory paragraph, one may nearly forget he/she is reading the corporate website, for Ikea’s products have not yet been mentioned. The narrative voice of the given fragment distances himself/herself from the corporate language; on the contrary, it suggests being one of at least two people who decided to visit Helena’s home. Presumably, *we* refers to the photographer and designer who are mentioned in the *Made By* section at the end of the whole text. In the rest of the “article”, however, the narrator describes the events mainly from the perspective of Helena, so that the main focus is shifted on her experience of living in the house.

Instead of reading about Ikea’s products and their superb quality and functionality, we learn a personal account of an average lady, who explains how she has decorated and furnished her house so that she can feel it is her perfect place in the world. Intriguingly, Ikea is mentioned

only once, when the narrator describes the lady's kitchen design. "Helena planned her IKEA kitchen to complement the traditional character of the house, but with modern functions" ("Family Homestead" n.p.). Nevertheless, there is no corporate advertising arguing about Ikea's uniqueness. On the contrary, the brand name disappears already in the next sentence, in which Helena explains how her project was inspired by restaurant kitchens: "Most of the storage is below waist-level, so you get a good overview of the space and I chose drawers instead of cabinets because they're easier for finding things" ("Family Homestead" n.p.). Although the introduction of Ikea kitchen might provoke in the reader a sense of disappointment that the story will now be brutally stopped by company advertising, our consciousness is immediately pampered by the practical hint given by Helena. Presumably, the preferred reading of this paragraph occurs in a subconscious level; the fact of Ikea's sudden appearing and disappearing from Helena's story might provoke our brain to activate our association Ikea-home-perfect solution without us being much aware of it.

Indeed, it is difficult to constantly interpret Helena's story as Ikea's promotional content for the lack of terms we commonly associate with purchasing. Instead, we learn a number of practical tips of interior design, for example how to make "a cozy upstairs sanctuary with a few comfy chairs, a rug and some throws; [how to mix] old and new storage and display solutions to create a personal walk-in wardrobe; [or how to] "celebrate the beauty of imperfection [and m]ake a feature of worn, vintage items" ("Family Homestead" n.p.). It is beyond the scope of this work to list all the examples, but it is worth noticing they apply to reader's individual taste and need for creativity. Helena is presented as a woman with great creative abilities; after all, it is she who gives us all these inspirations on how to make our spots cozy, functional and personal. "Helena has worked hard to renovate the mountainside

house of her childhood dreams, without losing any of its original charm” (“Family Homestead” n.p.).

It is crucial to observe the woman’s uniqueness is related to her cognitive resources; apart from that, she could be seen as an average prototype of a middle-aged woman. On the one hand, her on-like-celebrity persona helps the reader to connect with her on the emotional level, so that her example might look more real than a similar story told by a celebrity. On the other hand, her “normalness” is juxtaposed to her personal quest for trying original solutions for her household, so that her image might provoke in us admiration and respect.

Certainly, positive emotions towards Helena are fostered by the combination of her photograph with the section *Helena’s Home Truths*. The lady is posing to the picture with a big friendly smile and a curious look on her face; she wears little make up and a casual dress. In other terms, her image suggests Helena is an average, friendly, warm and intelligent lady; someone the potential reader might feel like being friends with. Below the picture, we can read Helena’s “truth”, which reveal some intimate details from her life. For instance, we learn she lives with her little son, Viggo, works as a cook, photographer and restaurateur and is obsessed with light. Moreover, she shares with the reader her emotive image of her home, “which is located high on a mountain above a lake, so it feels like we’re on top of the world” (“Family Homestead” n.p.). She openly talks about her passion for cooking. Food is “everything” to Helena and her family, and she admits she “love[s] the creative cycle of nourishing your body to stay healthy and strong” (“Family Homestead” n.p.). Finally, Helena shares with us her dream of being a nomad. If she had a chance to live another life, she would like to spend it on a boat [to] sail the Atlantic like [she] did in [her] twenties. Still, she is quick to add she is immensely happy with her current home because “this felt like the right place to settle.”

In further sections of the text, Helena's personal details are mixed with her suggestions on how she has decorated her home. As a result, after the reading is complete, we might collect enough knowledge to conceptualize Helena as a loving mother and daughter, who is both attached to her family roots and seeking a bit of modern taste. More importantly, we might feel inspired by her personal experience to start our own journey of creating the home of our dreams. If Helena could do it, everybody can; all you need is to focus on your personal needs, taste, and lifestyle. Most preferably, your need for self-expression would lead you to browse Ikea online catalogue; if you are not ready yet, you can keep seeking other inspirational ideas the brand has collected for you. "In many communities, the activity of problem-solving through collaborative narration is emblematic of friendship, collegiality, or family membership" (Ochs 199). In the analyzed text, Helena's positive experience has been transmitted to the readers so that they can associate perfect home with pleasure and perfect home with Ikea. Again, this association is not explicitly suggested, for it is the reader who is supposed to find the preferred interpretation. Certainly, if we reach such interpretation ourselves, our acceptance of its logic is more probable than if we are imposed to believe in Ikea as "a perfect home provider" by overt advertising.

4.6. STORY TELLING AS MARKETING NARRATIVE

As it has already been mentioned in section 3, content marketing prefers a customer-center form of marketing to enhance the positive image of one's brand. Among this approach, however, we may find different forms of discourse that are used by marketers. In order to distinguish its techniques from conventional advertising, the founders of CM discourse suggest the use of narrative that no longer boost the product but show how certain goods have enhanced life of specific "real" person who made the right decision to trust the company and buy its commodities. This technique is frequently referred to as "telling a story", which serves

as a proof of the company's excellence in helping its "customers to do their jobs better, improves their lives, or makes them smarter, wittier, (...) cooler, and more enlightened" (Handley and Chapman 17).

It is important to note CM does not understand the concept of story in iterative terms but as a "real" set of accounts that show how the brand helps a particular consumer to live a better life, achieve his/her dream goals or solve most important daily issues. As Handley and Chapman explain, "[b]y story, we don't mean *fable* or *fairy tale*, despite the hero analogy. Rather, we mean a *true* story about how your company's products or services have solved a problem for a customer, eased its troubles, or met its gaping maw of a need" (184). Therefore, a story understood in CM terms is a form of *case study* intended to connect with the target audience on an emotional level for pragmatic reasons. "The keys are to tell a story (...) with one simple imperative in mind. It helps to think of them less as *case studies*, which sounds clinical and detached and bloodless, and more like *customer success stories*, which sounds human and connected" (Handley and Chapman 183-184).

Handley and Chapman's conceptualization of "hero" which resembles Pulizzi's model of marketing Neos. Whereas Pulizzi reveals his secret on how to achieve corporate goals by seeking "the truth", the authors of *Content Rules* gift their readers with yet another magic formula for successful marketing. "The simple secret is this: all you really need is to tell a good story that allows your organization to embrace the role of the cape wearing superhero" (184). The recipe for "a good story" requires the presentation of the brand and/or its chosen product through the eyes of someone who has already implemented it to their lifestyle, work routine, leisure time, etc. This technique increases the possibilities for CM storytelling to foster consumers' minds to conceptualize the given product with their personal needs and dreams of success.

Like Pulizzi's Neos, Handley and Chapman's superheroes are the companies who are able to persuade the target audience that they produce their commodities not for financial profit but for the benefits of their consumers. Only if they shift the focus of their marketing discourse from their material goals to our individual needs, they can position themselves in the minds of many as their thought leader and, subsequently, as their favorite provider of goods and services. The policy of becoming a marketing hero is briefly summarized below:

Focus your case study on a company or client your products or services have helped, ad cast yourself as the hero. That happy and satisfied customer gives a relatable, tangible example of how your products and services live in the world, allowing [your audience] to imagine themselves in the happy customer's shoes, similarly enjoying the benefits of whatever it is that you sell. In the meantime, you are the superhero who swoops in to offer the solution to a thorny pickle, threatening adversary, or annoying hitch and who, ultimately, saves the day, winning love, admiration and business" (Handley and Chapman 184).

"Stories are not so much descriptions of facts as they are construals of happenings" (Ochs 193). In the case of CM discourse, *customer success stories* are told to foster the preferred model of the company in the audience LT models. In order to persuade prospects on the company's goals are more heroic than materialistic, the experience of a happy customer serves as the main argument of the brand altruistic side.

4.7. APPLE AND STORYTELLING

After taking a close look on marketing discourse of globally known furniture manufacturer, this thesis proposes to analyze the implementation of storytelling by the Apple company. The selected material has been retrieved from the subsection *Apple and Education* which forms part of the company's website. Unlike in the case of Ikea, the analyzed webpages are not provided under any specific, local domain and are provided for the English-speaking community regardless of one's nationality. Due to the scope of this work, only one example

has been selected for further analysis; yet, it is highly suggested that the model of analysis adopted for one narrative might be employed to observe similar characteristics in all the rest of Apple case studies. Finally, it is essential to remember that the following material has been approached from the perspective of CM discourse rather than as a story understood in literary terms. Hence, the main focus has been given to the promotional role of the content and possible ways it can influence the audience mental representation of the brand.

4.8. APPLE AND EDUCATION

The following section of this work analyzes the content of the Apple's webpage entitled *Piecing Together Tudor History. A Classroom Renaissance* ("Piecing Tudor" n.p.). As it can be observed, the title sets the narrative in the context of teaching an important element of English history, and plays with a double meaning of the historical referent. On the first level, *Renaissance* refers to the epoch which is crucial for the development of Tudor dynasty, therefore the title can be understood as an introduction of the topic the narrative is about to deal with. On the second level, *A Classroom Renaissance* does not simply refer to the history class, but to the lesson that proves to be revolutionary, unique and different from typical learning methods. Presumably, the reader might also conceptualize the word *piecing* with PC+ ing, so that they can bear in mind the role of computerization in today's world of teachers.

It is essential to realize that the material on history lesson forms part of the Apple section *Inspiration for Teachers* ("Inspiration" n.p.). Therefore, the content of these webpages is dedicated to teachers and all sorts of educators in order to provide "ideas to help [them] before, during and after class" ("Inspiration" n.p.). To foster a direct link between support and the brand, the microsite promises "tips, lesson materials, stories, and other resources to help you get the most out of your Apple products and bring fresh ideas to your classroom"

(“Inspiration” n.p.). The above quote only demonstrates the customer’s position as yearning to constantly discover new forms of activities in order to avoid the risk of being a dull and tedious teacher whose “popularity” among his/her learners is far from perfect. We shall now proceed with the content analysis of the Tudor history lesson so as to demonstrate how teachers are persuaded to become Apple loyal customers.

4.9. APPLE AND IDEAL LESSON

Piecing Together Tudor History. A Classroom Renaissance is Sophie Post, who teaches Tudor history at *Falkner House School*, in London. The combination of visual (images and video) with written material gives the impression the story is not a fictional boasting about Apple’s perfect product; on the contrary, the setting provides us with real names, an authentic educational institution, and the images of the school building. Due to such representation, the audience is encouraged to enjoy the message behind the material without associating it with any form of advertising material. Unlike commercials, Sophie Post’s story promises to demonstrate a practical implementation of iPad and some Apple applications to meet our professional goal of excellent teachers. As a result, we are fostered to interpret the given content on the conscious level in a direct link to our personal needs and professional ambitions; nevertheless, the main objective is to manipulate our LT representation of our teaching model.

Since it is the educational sector this material is devoted to, it is intriguing to analyze Sophie’s story in relation to taken-for-granted social representation of perfect teaching. First, it is based on the premise traditional education is boring and the conflict teachers may often feel when it comes to distinguish between these elements of tradition that are worth reserving and those which should be replaced with a modern approach. At first, we are introduced to the positive

image of *Falkner House*: young girls wear blue uniform with white long-knee socks, sings cheerfully about their academy and are described as learners of “great determination” (“Piecing Tudor” 00:13). Nevertheless, their great aspirations and individual talents must be carefully guided by their teachers, whose insightful eyes managed to resolve their problems. “We try to keep the great elements of tradition that we feel help the children, but some years ago, we were still teaching the same way as the Victorians taught” (“Piecing Tudor” 00:36). There is no doubt, for a modern teacher “standing in front of the class, pointing at the whiteboard and telling the children information (...) is not the best way to teach” (“Piecing Tudor” 00:46). Although Sophie refers to Victorian times, it is a truism to say her description of conducting a class is recognizable worldwide.

In order to infer the preferred meaning of Sophie’s story, the target audience should also share her approach to the vocation of a teacher. After setting the problem (traditional teaching methods), the lady specifies the moment that revolutionized academy’s life. There is little surprise the solution was brought by the Apple company: “Suddenly, we had this platform and ecosystem where we could distribute resources, where we could do everything that we needed and we could deliver it all with the iPad” (“Piecing Tudor” 00:57). Albeit the realistic impression, Sophie emphasizes the change was instant and unexpected; she also attributes this moment of “enlightenment” with a nostalgic feeling of romantic past. By combining the effect of surprise with past tense forms, she highlights the happy end of all her problems that came out all of a sudden when the Apple tools became primary teaching resources for Sophie and her colleagues.

Once the academy replaced the traditional board with Apple tools, Sophie could finally achieve her dream of an excellent teacher. In the following part of the video, she explains how iPad brought enthusiasm and creativity both to her and to the learners. Thanks to Apple,

Sophie could now combine the resources anyway she likes and create her own material (“Piecing Tudor” 01:44). Rather than following a traditional method of teaching from already prepared printed textbooks, Sophie has been provided by Apple with tools that help her to prepare her lesson.

Her personal benefits are two-fold: on the one hand, she can have better control on what she is about to teach, so that she can also prepare the material according to specific needs and interests of her class; on the other hand, she can fulfill her aspiration to be a creative teacher. Presumably, the target audience might find the infinite number of interpretations of Sophie’s story. Yet, they are strongly encouraged to believe their own lessons will become thought-provoking once they join the group of teachers who use the Apple goods. To be like Sophie means to be a wonderful teacher but to act like Sophie means to rely on iPad. “That’s the joy of using iPad cause you have the agency to create your own content; you can combine all of these things in so many different ways to create your perfect lesson” (“Piecing Tudor” 01:56). Obviously, the principal benefits of using iPad are consistent with the educational mission of a teacher; after all, “perfect lesson” has the objective of inspiring each individual to learn the material with his/her immense engagement.

The amazing side of Sophie as an educator is reflected in the behavior of her pupils. “Now, with the iPad, we have this interactive timeline, where the children can follow the events very clearly. Instead of me telling them what is happening, they are looking at it and say ‘Áh, I can see what’s going to happen’, so effectively they’re leading the lesson instead of me” (“Piecing Tudor” 01:35). In other terms, Sophie’s teaching model is based on the belief in pleasure and learning-independence one has to manifest to absorb a required lesson. By no means can a class be taught in a traditional form, with a teacher leading role; instead, she must become more as a guide and an inspirer on the students’ path to learn effectively and on their own

way. One might assume the implicit threat of Sophie's inspirational example; if you do not share her attitude, you may end up as a tedious teacher whose students are reluctant to listen to.

As if to foster the presupposed threat, the audience is exposed to the ongoing excitement of Sophie and her children. First, the teacher's face reveals great passion for her job; her eyes widens up especially at these moments when she interacts with the class or is looking at her iPad. Second, Sophie's students are far from being indifferent to the taught class. On the contrary to the socially shared image of children reluctant to concentrate on studying, we are presented to the group of smiling girls who either listen to Sophie or work together on the required tasks. Throughout the whole story, the girls are smiling, showing great interest and prove to be excited by each stage of the class work. It might be a hard task to seek a teacher who would not wish to have a similar group of students: engaged, attentive, curious to learn new things and always happy to do literally everything they are told to. It is made explicit that the revolution brought by Apple resources have helped Sophie to become a perfect teacher, perform a perfect lesson and create a perfect class. It is implicit similar results are at the reach of any teacher's hand once she/he starts using iPad.

The above piece of narrative is based on a problem-solving paradigm to foster a positive image of the Apple brand. "It provides [the customers and prospects]" with a cognitive model with which to organize information, and to both define and attempt to solve concrete problems of performance, production and goal achievement" (Burns and Carson 287). Yet, there is no possibility the solution-seeker could be found with no success and immense level of satisfaction at the end of the day. It is this lack of failure once the Apple goods are consumed which makes the brand the perfect remedy for all sorts of issues. Although Sophie's account does not seem to talk about Apple but about her brilliant application of the

corporate tools, it is the brand that is supposed to remain in our long-term memory as the best representation of innovation, creativity and personal development. “[The m]ental analysis of [Sophie’s narrative]” may interact with the activation and contextual adaptation of general knowledge and opinions from memory” (van Dijk, “Study Discourse” 18). The preferred comprehension of this story may then occur if educators associate their group-shared vocation for teaching with the successful story of an exemplary member of their professional group (Sophie), which finally should lead them to store the image of Apple as their preferred brand in their long-term memory.

5. CONCLUSIONS

This master's thesis has proposed to approach content marketing as an example of ideological discourse. In compliance with van Dijk's concept of group schemata, we have focused on content marketers as a group that may be compared and differentiated from other groups of marketers on the basis of their belief system. First, certain similarities with customer-center marketing discourse have been signaled: both approaches consider satisfying customer's needs to be a fundamental reason for the existence of any form of corporate business. Second, the belief upon the corporate mission to provide the customer with cognitive resources to enhance their everyday life may be the result of the current form of the free market economy and the spread of cognitive capitalism. The center position of a customer as a seeker of personal development forms the basis of the socially shared concept of a modern consumer and is frequently exploited by content marketing discourse.

The focus on consumer's needs is then shared among marketers regardless of their more specific approaches within customer-related discourse. Therefore, we may assume this idea functions as a core value used by content marketers in order to persuade other marketers to join their group. In order to convince the out-group marketers, CM founders apply to the model of modern consumer as a common communication ground that is shared between them and out-group marketers. Nevertheless, to prove the righteousness of their strategy, they need to show in an explicit manner why their ideology is better from any other marketing strategy. Their discourse is manifested as a revelation of the truth, which is based on the "fact" that neither companies nor their commodities are in the interest of the consumers. CM marketers employ the concept of consumer's hedonism to persuade their target audience (marketers) that to retain loyal consumers, corporations need to abandon traditional forms of promotion and reject overt advertising.

CM marketers attempt to establish their philosophy as a dominant discourse of contemporary marketing. In order to achieve their aims, they use persuasive discourse and provide arguments, so that their target audience could accept their ideology as most beneficial for their interests and, therefore, as their own. In other terms, CM discourse aims at establishing its hegemony by consent. Nevertheless, their argumentation is also based on threat; although the target audience is not directly commanded to oblige CM rules, it presupposes the lack of alternative to CM approach. Once we observe CM discourse from sociocognitive perspective, we may observe not only how it alludes to marketers' common ground, but we may also provide critical analysis of their argumentation of a group identity.

In order to foster the benefits marketers should have from joining the CM group, CM discourse exploits the notion of tradition. Since the free market economy and cognitive capitalism enforce the model of constant human development, it is in the companies' best interest to be as flexible and innovative as possible. For that reason, the effective, hence desirable nature of novelty is contradicted with unproductive, hence the undesirable face of traditional form of marketing. In order to survive in the jungle of immense competition, the Darwin's law must be respected and the leading position is restricted only to those who are predators (Dirven, Wolf and Polzenhagen 1125). Since this metaphor of survival is rather presupposed in CM literature, its founders reshape its content and juxtapose the extinction of a dinosaur with the success of a hero.

According to CM, it is of interest for all marketers and corporations to stop using traditional advertising; otherwise, their fate is a complete failure on the market. What they must do instead is to follow their human instincts and seek the truth about their goals and desires, so that they can indeed center on satisfying the needs of their consumers. Their business activity is then equipped with nonmaterial, altruistic and heroic mission to provide cognitive resources

for those whom they know they might help in achieving their personal goals. As we can see, the CM persuasive discourse approaches marketers from a similar perspective as marketers are supposed to approach their consumers. By creating the metaphor of a corporate hero, CM founders apply to their target audience's aspirational needs to become better, unique and creative. As a result, we may think of CM ideology as a reflection of modern consumer society that is based on implicit forms of corporate promotion and explicit manners of promoting an individual. In order to pamper consumer's ego, modern businesses are encouraged to use authentic promotional material that is based on real human experience and which functions as a problem-solving source.

The example of Ikea's marketing discourse has been provided to show its analogy to CM ideology. The company's website lacks most traditional forms of advertising and attempts to reach the hearts and minds of their target audience with the use of apparently non-promotional content. Nevertheless, Ikea's webpages attempt to foster the positive image of the brand by manipulating one's subjective representation of home. First, its persuasive force is based on the conviction that one of the basic human dreams is to possess a perfect home. Second, it assumes that each human being may have their own understanding of such perfection, nevertheless social cognition presupposes one's attachment to our roots and family bonds. In addition, the ideal home should also extend one's self, for modern consumers must constantly seek to please their needs, and they need to imagine themselves in the position of independent creators.

The customer's need for self-realization and ongoing improvement has been clearly depicted by the Apple marketing strategies. The worldwide-known manufacturer of technological goods employs the CM approach to promote itself by the implicit association between one's personal success and their commodities. This thesis has observed the manner in which the

CM narrative known as *customer success story* has been used to foster the link between the use of iPads and successful teaching. As in the case of CM literature, the protagonist of the chosen story imposes a threat on teachers who are reluctant to reject traditional means of conducting a lesson. Instead, educators are expected to constantly seek new inspirations to revolutionize their classroom, and provide their students with cognitive resources that will enable them to acquire a new material by means of independent, enjoyable and creative learning. Whereas Ikea attempts to promote its goods by applying to one's ideal model of home, Apple aims at selling their products by alluding to one's ideal model of self, which is based on creativity, innovation and individualism.

6. WORKS CITED

Abercrombie, Nicholas. "Authority and Consumer Society." *The Authority of the Consumer*. Ed. Russel Keat, Nigel Whiteley, and Nicholas Abercrombie. London: Routledge, 1994. 43-57. Print.

Aldridge, Alan. *Consumption*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2003. Print.

Boutang, Moulier. *Cognitive Capitalism*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2011. Print.

Burns, Tom. R., and Marcus Carson. "Social Order and Disorder. Institutions, Policy Paradigms and Discourses: An Interdisciplinary Approach." *A New Agenda in (Critical) Discourse Analysis*. Ed. Ruth Wodak, and Paul Chilton. Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2005. 283-309. Print.

Corrigan, Peter. *The Sociology of Consumption*. London: Sage, 1998. Print.

Daunton, Martin, and Matthew Hilton. "Material Politics: An Introduction." *The Politics of Consumption*. Ed. Martin Daunton, and Matthew Hilton. Oxford: Berg, 2001. 1-32. Print.

"Dinosaur." *Oxford Dictionaries*. Oxford UP. Web. 1 July 2016.

Dirven, René, Frank Polzenhagen, and Hans-Georg Wolf. "Cognitive Linguistics, Ideology, and Critical Discourse Analysis." *The Oxford Handbook of Cognitive Linguistics*. Ed. Dirk Geeraerts, and Hubert Cuyckens. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2007. 1222-1240. Print.

"Exhibitions." *Ikea*. Web. 5 July 2016.

Eagleton, Terry. *Ideology. An Introduction*. London, New York: Verso, 1991. Print.

"A Family Homestead with Deep Roots." *Ikea*. 1 March 2016. Web. 25 May 2016.

- Fairclough, Norman. *Critical Discourse Analysis*. London: Longman, 1995. Print.
- . *Language and Power*. London: Longman, 2001. Print.
- Garzone, Guliana. "Genres, Multimodality and the World Wide Web: Theoretical Issues." *Multimodality in Corporate Communication: Web Genres and Discursive Identity*. Ed. G. Garzone, G. Poncini, and P. Catenaccio. Milan: Franco Angeli, 2007. 15-30. Print.
- Gill, Ann, and Karen Whedbee. "Rhetoric." *Discourse as Structure and Process*. Ed. Teun, A. van Dijk. London: Sage, 1997. 157-184. Print.
- Gillin, P., Foreword. *Get Content. Get Customers*. By Joe Pulizzi, and Newt Barrett. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2009. xiii-xvi. Print.
- Handley, Ann, and C.C.Chapman. *Content Rules*. Hoboken: Wiley, 2012. Print.
- "Hero." *The Oxford English Dictionary*. Ed. James A. H. Murray, et al. Vol. 5. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978. 245-246. Print.
- Hilton, Matthew, and Martin Dauton. "Material Politics: An Introduction." *The Politics of Consumption*. Ed. Martin Daunton, and Matthew Hilton. London and New York: Berg, 2001. 1-32. Print.
- "Ideas." *Ikea*. Web. 25 May 2016.
- "Inspiration for Teachers." *Apple*. Web 19 May 2016.
- Keat, Russell. "Scepticism, Authority and the Market." *The Authority of the Consumer*. Ed. R. Keat, N. Whiteley, and N. Abercrombie. London: Routledge, 1994. 23-42. Print.
- Kotler, Philip, et al. *Principles of Marketing*. Harlow: Pearson, 2013. Print.

Lakoff, George, and Mark Johnson. *Metaphors We Live By*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980. Print.

Mc Elhinny, Bonnie. "Language, Gender and Economies in Global Transitions: Provocative and Provoking Questions About How Gender Is Articulated." *Words, Worlds and Material Girls. Language. Gender. Globalisation*. Ed. Bonnie Mc Elhinny. Berlin, New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 2007. 1-40. Print.

Muchielli, Alex. *El Arte de Influir. Análisis de las Técnicas de Manipulación*. Madrid: Cátedra, 2002. Print.

Ochs, Elinor. "Narrative." *Discourse as Structure and Process*. Ed. Teun, A. van Dijk. London: Sage, 1997. 185-207. Print.

"Piecing Together Tudor History. A Classroom Renaissance." *Apple*. Web 19 May 2016.

Pulizzi, Joe, and Newt Barrett. *Get Content. Get Customers*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2009. Print.

Pulizzi, Joe. *Epic Content Marketing*. New York: McGraw-Hill Education, 2014. Print.

Scott, D., Meerman. *The New Rules of Marketing & PR*. Hoboken: Wiley, 2015. Print.

Shimp, Terence. *Advertising, Promotion, and Supplemental Aspects of Integrated Marketing Communications*. Mason: Thomson, 2003. Print.

Simpson, Paul and Andrea Mayr. *Language and Power*. London, New York: Routledge, 2010. Print.

Thompson, John, B. *Ideology and Modern Culture*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990. Print.

Tomlin, Russell, et.al. "Discourse Semantics." *Discourse as Structure and Process*. Ed. Teun van Dijk London: Sage, 1997. 63-111. Print.

van Dijk, Teun. "Critical Discourse Analysis." *Hanbook of Discourse Analysis*. Ed. Deborah Tannen, D. Schiffrin, and H. Hamilton. Oxford: Blackwell, 2001. 352-371. Print.

---. "Discourse as Interaction in Society." *Discourse as Social Interaction*. Ed. Teun A. Van Dijk. London: Sage, 1997. 1-37. Print.

---. "Society And Discourse." Cambridge, New York: Cambridge UP, 2009. Print.

---. "The Study of Discourse." *Discourse as Structure and Process*. Ed. Teun, A. van Dijk. Lodon: Sage, 1997. 1-34. Print.

---. *Discourse & Power*. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008. Print.

---. "Discourse and Knowledge". *European University of St. Petersburg*. YouTube. 25 April 2013. Web. 12 Jan 2016.

---. *Ideology. A Multidisciplinary Approach*. London: Sage, 1998. Print.

"Welcome Home." *Ikea*. Web. 5 July 2016.

Williamson, Judith. *Decoding Advertising. Ideology and Meaning in Advertising*. London: Marion Boyars, 2002.

Zizek, Slavoj. "Ideology Reloaded." *In These Times. Lacan*. 6 June 2003. Web. 30 May 2016.