

The Canadian Culture, Rhetoric, and Magazine Advertising: Analysis of Persuasive Devices in Maclean's

Mahmoud Eid*

Department of Communication, University of Ottawa, Canada

Abstract

How the media reflect culture, and particularly how mass media advertising content represents culture, is an important concern in the era of globalization and transnational communication. Rhetoric is one of the powerful tools that have been widely used in communication practices around the world. This paper looks at the Canadian culture as an example of a culture reflected in the advertising content of magazines, in the context of rationalizing a modern style of communication power. The term "We Canadians", as an example of a powerful communication mechanism, is examined here. Advertisements from Maclean's, the most popular magazine in Canada, during November and December of 2009 and January of 2010 are rhetorically analyzed. The paper investigates how Maclean's advertisements try to persuade readers to purchase products or services; i.e., how copywriters and artists use language and images in creating magazine advertisements that they believe will sell. One of the main ways that advertising influences is through allusions to universality, i.e., the term "We Canadians" ascribes to one unified notion of culture. The specific techniques to achieve this universalized view are rhetorical devices. The paper explores the rhetorical persuasive devices used in advertisements to investigate the influence of Canadian culture in the advertising process. Explored rhetorical persuasive devices are metaphoric language; metonymic language; verbal appeals; the herd mentality; keeping up with the Joneses; imitation of stars and celebrities; reward yourself; stimulate fantasy; oppositions; and images and visual phenomena.

Keywords: Advertising; Canada; Communication; Culture; Maclean's; Magazine; Persuasion; Persuasive devices; Rhetoric; Rhetorical analysis

Introduction

Culture has been studied at a basic level in the social sciences as a representation of the people's way of life, shared values, and means of expression—whether those people are representatives of a social group, community, nation, or a group of regional nations. Culture, as a way of life, includes ideas, attitudes, languages, practices, institutions, and structures of power, while as a wide range of cultural practices it includes artistic forms, canons, architecture, mass-produced commodities, to name a few. Culture allows people to produce and exchange particular meanings among themselves.

Advertising is "part and parcel of a highly industrialized, market-oriented society" [1:45]. It plays a key persuasive role in a variety of mass media platforms as part of the culture industry and in the creation of groups who share similar cultural meanings among themselves around goods, services, and ideas [2]. When it comes to persuasive communication forms, and most significantly advertising, where the intent is mainly influencing peoples' actions and attitudes, rhetoric becomes a very powerful strategy.

This paper looks at Canadian culture as an example of a culture reflected in the advertising content of magazines, within the context of rationalizing a modern style of communication power. Canadian culture can be seen as the Canadians' way of life, shared values, and means of expression. Canadians have successfully attempted to assert Canadian cultural sovereignty and protect their Canadianization policy regarding mass media content. Multiculturalism is also a national policy that has been represented and experienced in Canada. Looking at the rhetorical or persuasive devices used in advertisements helps to determine the role or influence of Canadian culture in the advertising process. Advertising is able to impact and influence through allusions

to unity—for example, the term "We Canadians" ascribes to one unified notion of culture. The specific techniques to achieve this universalized view are rhetorical devices.

Culture, Magazine Advertising, and Rhetoric

Culture is understood *both* as a way of life—encompassing ideas, attitudes, languages, practices, institutions, and structures of power—and a whole range of cultural practices: artistic forms, texts, canons, architecture, mass-produced commodities, and so forth.

[3:51]

Culture encompasses the great classical works of literature, philosophy, art, painting, architecture, and music, among others, of a particular cultural epoch. In recent years, the term culture has been used in the social sciences more as a term "to refer to whatever is distinctive about the way of life of a people, community, nation, or social group" [4:2]. From this viewpoint, culture encompasses the shared values and means of expression that are most distinctive of a particular group or community. It is the set of practices that groups identify themselves with and it is the means by which members of a group or society produce and exchange particular cultural meanings among themselves and, broadly speaking, their communities and nations.

*Corresponding author: Mahmoud Eid, Department of Communication, University of Ottawa, Canada, Tel: 1-613-562-5800; Fax: 1-613-562-5240; E-mail: meid@uottawa.ca

Received November 27, 2011; Accepted January 25, 2012; Published January 27, 2012

Citation: Eid M (2012) The Canadian Culture, Rhetoric, and Magazine Advertising: Analysis of Persuasive Devices in Maclean's. J Mass Communicat Journalism 2:108. doi:10.4172/2165-7912.1000108

Copyright: © 2012 Eid M. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.

Specifically, shared meaning among members of a group or society is a determining factor in defining a culture. Meaning is what allows individuals, groups, and societies to develop identities in relation to other social groups and communities. Shared meaning develops differences and inclusive/exclusive limits in the sense that cultural meanings are, in most instances, boundaries, rules, norms, and conventions that determine and govern the social life of a group of people. It organizes their existence via these various inclusive and exclusive social conventions. Moreover, shared meaning is a basis that binds people culturally; it is produced, exchanged, and developed every time a particular group member communicates and engages in social practices.

Notwithstanding, one of the most important areas in which shared meaning is sustained and produced is within and through language. Language is the most important catalysis in reproducing, exchanging, and sustaining cultural shared meaning. It is through the language that groups and societies establish common assumptions and meanings about themselves and others. Language uses linguistic codes both to unify and establish boundaries among groups or communities.

Canadian culture is not an exemption. Canadians communicate through language in order to reproduce, exchange, and sustain cultural shared meaning. David Taras [5] argues that while Canadians "are exposed to large doses of American culture, Canadian culture is flourishing, and Canadian nationalism is at high tide" (17). The mass media, while being sources of threat to any culture if its members are exposed to more external than domestic cultural content, remain instrumental tools in fostering domestic culture.

The magazine is an influential medium to protect and promote cultures, given their nature. Canadian magazines play a key role in protecting and promoting Canadian culture [6-14].

The magazine exists to inform, entertain, and influence its readers editorially and put before them advertising messages of national or regional scope. . . . Magazines never appear more frequently than once a week; thus they have more time to dig into issues and situations than the daily newspaper, and consequently they have a better opportunity to bring events into focus and interpret their meaning.

[15:238]

A key tool for magazines to protect and promote culture is advertising [16,17]. It is Needless to mention that "[a]s part of the culture industry, advertising constitutes an apparatus for *reframing meanings* in order to add value to products" [18:5]. Magazines "were the first major competitors with newspapers for advertising, and they remain a significant part of the advertizing marketplace today" [19:101]. The magazine is a unique publishing outlet for advertisers to create shared meanings among cultural groups with regard to products and services. It is the goal of advertising and mass media to create cultural groups that are both loyal to certain products and share similar cultural meanings among themselves.

Humans are exposed to a deluge of advertising, which can be found in homes, on trains, on planes, in shopping malls, in dental offices, in libraries, on television, on radio, in newspapers, in magazines, and so on. Advertising is a powerful force of mass communication that has a unifying effect. A main objective of this communication method is to develop a social group or culture around a product or set of ideas and information. Advertising communicates ideas and information in order to mobilize public support and develop a secure market base of

individuals, who will in turn act in accordance with the ideas found in these messages. The Advertising falls on a continuum between direct communicative persuasion, where rhetorical strategies are more overt and expressed in language, and indirect communicative persuasion, in which rhetorical strategies are more hidden and predominantly expressed through actions and images.

Rhetoric is one of the most powerful tools that have been widely used in communication practices on a global scale. Indeed, it is a subject matter that has fascinated humans for centuries. For instance, Aristotle (384-322 BC) was arguably the western world's first great rhetorician, and since then countless studies have been devoted to the examination of persuasive communication and rhetoric. Rhetoric is best defined as "the art or discipline that deals with the use of discourse, either spoken or written, to inform or persuade or move an audience, whether that audience is made up of a single person or a group of persons" [20:13]. First emerging with Aristotle as a subject of study, rhetoric has gained wide acceptance and use in modern societies, from advertising to political debates and so on. It is in this regard that rhetoric is more or less the strategies, manoeuvres, and the tactics one uses when engaging in persuasive communication, with the intent of influencing others towards a particular position. Further, rhetoric "is conventionally defined as the study of persuasion"; Aristotle defined it as "the faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion" [21:67]. Persuasive communication is established through language, whether verbal or visual. "Rhetoric is the technique of using speech and writing to maximize impact and aid memorability" [22:184]. Thus, at its core, rhetoric is persuasive communication that encompasses all the techniques humans use to influence the actions and attitudes of others.

One of the central and most powerful words used in rhetoric is "we", or specifically "we/us/our", in the sense that these words establish unity and a feeling of inclusiveness within a common majority within the readers. "We", as a fundamental word used in rhetoric, increasingly becomes a primary tool to establish, rationalize, and legitimize modern power and unification in the milieu of diversity and multiplicity. It is in this regard that such a keyword as "we" is a primary tool of modern power and unification. However, in an epoch where we are increasingly aware and subject to diversity, multiplicity, and difference, the use of such a word is more prevalent as a tool to establish, rationalize, and legitimize power. As a result, it is the social construction of a "we" that is the key factor in reproducing and sustaining power. Despite the fact that most of us have come to accept diversity in our lives, invocations to such phrases as "we the people" are an excellent persuasive method in establishing and sustaining both the idea of a generality and that of power. This axiom "we the people" serves well both as a mechanism of marginalization and legitimacy, and as a vital platform for the justification of any action. It is always through its invocation that politics begins and ends. "We/Us/Our" evokes a unified common sense that creates a barrier between a majority and minority.

This term is a functional basis of advertising in the sense that it is through advertising that a "we" is seemingly developed via the notion of the stereotype. In this regard, strategic dichotomization is always that of a "we" versus a "them". It determines the normal and the abnormal, the acceptable and the unacceptable, and the majority and the minority. The invocation of the term "we" implies the practice of stereotyping, which functions through the exclusion or expulsion of everything that does not fit in; everything that does not conform to the

characteristics of the particular “we”. In this regard, the use of “we” is the context of stereotypes; it encompasses the idea of a generalization in contrast to that of specificity and individualization. For Stuart Hall, stereotyping

sets up a symbolic frontier between the ‘normal’ and the ‘deviant’, the ‘normal’ and the ‘pathological’, the ‘acceptable’ and the ‘unacceptable’, what ‘belongs’ and what does not or is ‘Other’, between ‘insiders’ and ‘outsiders’, Us and Them. It facilitates the ‘binding’ or bonding together of all of Us who are ‘normal’ into one ‘imagined community’; and it sends into symbolic exile all of Them – ‘the Others’ – who are in some way different – ‘beyond the pale’.

[23:258]

Consequently, it is first through social creation of an imagined “we” that sediments a certain majority, i.e. a certain major stereotypical group, that has the adverse effect of excluding all those who do not coincide with this majority. Subsequently, invocations of “we” or the functional development of a “we” through advertising completely forgoes differences while silencing all diversity in the face of this overwhelming, stereotypical common majority represented through signs, symbols, practices, and a common way of life. It is in this regard that “we” is a loaded term with many implications that stretch far beyond a particular contextual usage. Its implications, however, are always that of reasserting a common set of ideas and/or stereotypes, while marginalizing those sets of ideas and differences that do not conform to its parameters.

Rhetorical Devices in Persuasive Advertising

Rhetorical analysis is a close examination of the verbal techniques used in the text— persuasive techniques, in the case of advertising. Although complicated, rhetorical analysis is a useful and interesting way to study the advertising content of mass media. Among the various forms of mass media, the magazine is a good source of advertisements that are both verbally clever and visually interesting, providing rich material for an analysis of the ways images and other visual materials are used to support the verbal message. Rhetorical devices have been used in persuasive advertising, particularly in magazine advertising [24-27]. These devices include: *metaphors and metonymies* [28-38], *keeping up with the Joneses* [39-41], *imitation of stars and celebrities* [42-44], and *models’ gender* [45-50].

Arthur Asa Berger [21] has identified most of the rhetorical devices used in persuasion, which remain valid in modern magazine advertisements. Berger discusses 14 rhetorical devices: *metaphoric language; metonymic language; verbal appeals; sexuality; fears and anxieties; the herd mentality; desire for approval; keeping up with the Joneses; imitation of stars and celebrities; reward yourself; stimulate fantasy; slogans and jingles; oppositions; and images and visual phenomena*.

Metaphoric language communicates through analogy. Metaphoric language consists of two forms: a *metaphor*, in which the analogy is direct, and a *simile*, in which the analogy is indirect. Metonymic language communicates by association. There are two forms: a *metonym*, which is a general association, and a *synecdoche*, which is a part that stands for the whole, or vice versa. Advertisements are full of metaphoric and metonymic devices—analogies and associations.

Verbal appeals include: *solving a problem; expert advice; and comparisons*. Advertisements often pose a problem, which they also offer to solve. In some cases, the copywriters create pseudo-problems or magnify trivial ones, or strive to play upon anxieties people have. Copywriters play upon our desire for reassurance by offering “experts” to give us advice. In making comparisons, there is a direct appeal to logic and rationality. Two products or services are compared, often in a variety of ways, to show that one is superior to another. Advertisers also use sexuality in a number of different ways for a variety of purposes. The human desire for sexual relationships is commonly exploited through the display of attractive women and men often complemented by suggestive language and indicators. Such advertisements harness the powers of our unconscious sexual desires and are designed to be sexually stimulating or arousing. Finally, the fears and anxieties rhetorical devices are distinct from each other; anxiety is vague and does not have a specific object, while fear is considered increasingly concrete and specific [21].

Socially, people tend to take comfort in being with others who are similar to them in one way or another. Thus, it can be possible to successfully convince people to invest in a service or product by suggesting that others are also doing so. This technique can be effective, as it draws upon the herd mentality found in many people, who find safety in numbers. Advertisements that take advantage of our desire for the approval of others attempt to convince us that purchasing something will merit the approval of those who are members of the elite. Most people seek the approval of others, and purchasing the right product is posited as a means of obtaining this approval. Conspicuous display is a powerful force in human behaviour; keeping up with the Joneses is a term used to describe the behaviour of individuals who purchase products in order to demonstrate their success. Advertisers prey upon the assumption that people strive to demonstrate their ability to compete and succeed. Celebrity endorsement is another effective persuasion technique that allows people to demonstrate their status or ability to be seen or understood as associated with the elite. People identify with celebrities, heroes, and heroines at different stages of their lives and to varying degrees. Advertisers use this process of identification, which can be a very powerful persuasive device. Although the lives of ordinary people are seemingly less exciting and glamorous than those of celebrities, regular individuals are able to consume many of the same products used by famous people. In purchasing a product said to be used by a person of stardom, individuals are able to attain a form of symbolic identification with celebrities and their lifestyles. Another persuasive device in advertising works to convince people to reward themselves through the consumption of materialistic items or specific services that can enhance one’s life. A slogan such as “You deserve it” may be employed to communicate that one should indulge in payment for their efforts, hard work, or diligence. This technique pushes for immediate gratification and pleasure, often failing to regard factors and variables that may devalue the reason for consumption. Related to this method of persuasion is the use of fantasy to sell a product. In this, advertisements employ language that tends to be poetic and dreamy and is meant to generate fantasies and creative mental illustrations, often erotic in nature. This fantasy is generated by the use of many verbal techniques associated with poetry: alliteration, repetition, rhyme, and highly metaphoric language. Perfume advertisements are excellent examples of using fantasy to sell a product, as these ads commonly employ hallucinogenic imagery and utopian lexicon laced with a mirage of imagination unrestricted by reality. [21]

Jingles are catchy melodies that are designed to become embedded in our minds. They usually have a strong beat and clever use of language. Slogans are phrases that describe a product or the corporation that manufactures it, and commonly become identified with the product or corporation—as a kind of verbalized logo. The slogan is repeated in advertisements, often using a particular typeface or image to facilitate brand recognition. Sometimes the slogan is part of a jingle, which can further facilitate recognition. Also oppositions are stated or implied in the language of advertisements. Concepts are based on oppositions; that is why many of the appeals that have been dealt with can be seen as one side of a set of paired opposites (e.g., anxiety and security, rejection and acceptance, lack and satisfaction, individual and herd mentality, loneliness and popularity). Images and visual phenomena include: *balance*; *spatiality*; *typefaces*; *colour*; *camera shots and angles*; and *models*. Balance refers to the physical arrangement of elements in the advertisement. There are two kinds of balance in advertisements: *axial or formal balance*, in which the visual elements are balanced on either side of an imaginary vertical or horizontal line through the centre of the advertisement; and *dynamic or informal balance*, in which the visual elements are not arranged in a formal or balanced manner. Generally speaking, we associate formal balance, which has a static quality about it, with sophistication, elegance, and understatement. Informal balance is commonly found in advertisements, which tends to be visually exciting and stimulating. Spatiality refers to the amount of white or empty space in an advertisement. White space is often equated with sophistication and elite taste. Consider the difference, for example, between a newspaper advertisement for a supermarket, in which there is no white space, and a magazine advertisement for perfume or an expensive watch, which may be full of white space. Typefaces suggest various things; each font can express a unique personality. Thin, elegant typefaces generate a distinct aura, whereas thick, heavy typefaces visually communicate a different idea or attitude. A seemingly endless selection of varying typefaces exists in many shapes and sizes. When examining typefaces, it is important to consider the product, its potential market, the lifestyle and taste of people in this market, and the appropriateness of the typefaces used. Colours and shades are another pivotal element of advertisements, and thus are selected with great precision and care for significant reasons. Colours have the ability to communicate various elements of a product, service, idea, and brand through the expression of various characteristics. That is, when the colouration is bright or subdued, it suggests sophistication and restraint or passion and raw energy; these are the intentions of advertisers to stylize the product or service in a certain way. Photographic images in the advertisement involve various kinds of camera shots. The viewpoint of looking, whether it is looking up or down on some scenarios, or using a close-up or an extreme long shot, are particular choices that are made in order to create meanings and communicate a desired perception. Finally, there are a number of things to consider concerning the appearance of human beings, animals, and other aspects of advertisements: gender; facial expression; body language; lifestyle proponents; relationships implied. [21]

Rhetorical Analysis of Maclean's Advertisements

Drawing on Berger's [21] conceptualization of rhetorical devices used in persuasive magazine advertising, this paper utilizes rhetorical analysis on advertisements from Maclean's, one of the most popular magazines in Canada [51]. The selected timeframe is the peak season

of advertising [52], when shopping for products (e.g., presents, food, drinks) and using services (e.g., mail, travel, car rental) reach a very high level due to major holidays (e.g., Christmas, New Year), and competitive prices (e.g., Boxing Day). During the months of November and December of 2009 and January of 2010, Maclean's published 11 weekly issues. The selected advertisements for analysis have been only those which have images and texts that use rhetoric to reflect clearly on Canadian culture, identity, and mainstream symbols and practices. In total, 38 advertisements by 34 advertisers, which appeared 57 times in all 11 issues, have been selected, out of the 307 advertisements published in these issues, based on the identified criteria of relevance. Some advertisements have appeared up to 5 times, with an average of 1.5 times within the selected sample. The researcher is the sole coder; hence inter-coder reliability testing is not required. Nonetheless, and given the qualitative nature of this research design, reliability is maintained through the consistency of recording observations [53]. The paper investigates how Maclean's advertisements used rhetorical devices reflecting on Canadian culture to communicate with its audience. Overall, the findings highlight the use of a wide range of rhetorical devices used in Maclean's advertisements: *metaphoric language*; *metonymic language*; *verbal appeals*; *the herd mentality*; *keeping up with the Joneses*; *imitation of stars and celebrities*; *reward yourself*; *stimulate fantasy*; *oppositions*; and *images and visual phenomena*.

Metaphoric language

Metaphors are the common denominators of advertising Metaphors work by transferring the feelings, emotions and images from one set of objects, such as things that go fast (trains and weapons), and adding them to, for instance, fast food chains, Pizza Express and Chicken Bazooka.

[22:144-145]

A frequent advertisement placed in Maclean's that used strong metaphors was a Gillette Fusion Power razor advertisement (December 7, 2009, January 18, 2010 & January 25, 2010). The bottom half of a hockey player is shown, seemingly stopping on the ice as fog and ice scrapings mar the image. The caption reads: "Does sharpness make a difference? There's a reason it's called having an edge". The hockey metaphor is expanded upon by the sub-caption: "A sharp blade. It's just as important in shaving". This advertisement is attempting to liken the benefits of a sharp hockey skate blade to a shaving razor.

A two-page advertisement for the Phillips Sonicare toothbrush (December 14, 2009) also used one object to represent another. Accompanying the tagline "simplicity is the latest evolution in oral care" are five individual hands. Similar to the well-known theory of evolution chart, the first hand displays a finger, the next two are sticks, the fourth is an average toothbrush, and the fifth is the electric toothbrush product. The implied message here is the evolution of oral care through technological innovations; a similar progression to other steps society has made through technological innovation.

The University of Western Ontario asks the question, "Who says people need wings to fly?" (December 28, 2009). Accompanying a silhouette of a dancer, the text reads:

Like all painters and dancers, Western Fine Arts graduate Simona Atzori expresses her passion for life through art. But unlike most of our graduates, she was born without arms. Simona made what she calls the best decision of her life when she chose to study at Western. Since then, her career as an artist and motivational speaker has soared onto the world stage.

In this advertisement, the concept of flight is used as a metaphor for academic and professional success. This is furthered by the likening of wings to arms. The advertisement puts forth the impression that an education at the University of Western Ontario is similar to having wings; and thus, the tools to succeed.

Metonymic language

An advertisement for the Cadillac SRX (December 14, 2009) makes use of a metonym. It calls the advertised vehicle, "the Cadillac of crossovers". While this is a case of a company attempting to make its name synonymous with high quality goods, it could be argued that this was already the case. In a similarly straightforward manner, Telus (December 14, 2009) makes use of metonyms in one of its advertisements. In an eight-page display, the telephone company uses both language and imagery to make its network size appear large. This is done by text such as "Get big time coverage" and large images of hippopotamuses.

In another University of Western Ontario advertisement (December 14, 2009 & January 25, 2010), two metonyms are used. With the main caption: "Who says all is fair in love and war?" the image features a scale holding a teddy bear on one side and a grenade with gun shells on the other. The sub-caption reads: "Western's Faculty of Law is giving voice to the most vulnerable victims of war through its international law internship program." In this instance, a teddy bear is used to represent innocence, with the ammunition representing war.

Several metonyms representing Canada were used for a contest sponsored by Scotiabank and Flip Video (January 25, 2010). The audience is encouraged to "Show your colours". The two-page spread features several photos of people wearing red and white, wearing clothes with maple leaves, and playing hockey. In this example, the maple leaf and the colour scheme are used to represent Canada. Furthermore, the choice of language has important implications. The word colour is being used almost interchangeably with pride and citizenship. An advertisement for CanFund (January 18, 2010) also makes use of a maple leaf to present some degree of patriotism, as it attempts to solicit funds from the audience to support Canadian Olympic athletes.

In a Rogers Television advertisement (November 30, 2009), 12 photos are shown in a tile format, each showing a different area of a house with the same yellow Post-It note on it: "30 Rock 9:30". The text reads "Or there's Rogers on Demand... missed your favourite show, catch up on the hottest primetime shows, free, with Rogers on Demand". The metonym here is that these small pieces of yellow paper are used to represent reminders. Rogers Television is presenting itself as the alternative to the common way some people remember things.

Verbal appeals

In Maclean's advertisements, *verbal appeals* as a rhetorical device has been used through the sub devices *solving a problem* and *expert advice*. Kraft Foods' "Living Well with Diabetes" campaign has a full-page advertisement that offers "your solution to living well with diabetes" (November 30, 2009). The implication here is the suggestion that those currently living with diabetes are not living with it well, and that they need Kraft's advice and products to improve their lives. A problem is created, and then solved by Kraft's campaign initiative. Similarly, American Express lists all of the frustrating aspects of traveling (December 14, 2009), including "getting tickets, getting reservations and getting on board". Once this problem is established, the credit card company makes the offer to the audience: "Let us do the legwork to help you get in". Here, the advertisement offers assistance

after identifying the tedious tasks associated with air travel. As well, Chartered Accountants (CA) has two similar advertisements with the same underlying message. The first appears as a fictitious advertisement for a magic "Business Decision Ring" (December 14, 2009), and the second presents three tarot cards, each with the labels secure, integrated and holdings, as if these cards could help make financial decisions (January 4, 2010). The sub-caption in each of the advertisements reads: "Would it be nice if decisions were so easy? Until then, look to a CA for the talent and integrity to make the right ones".

In several advertisements for "In Conversation with Maclean's" the concept of expert advice is presented through the usage of certain journalists' names and photographs. A partnership between the magazine and the Canadian Public Affairs Channel (CPAC), the advertisements are for a number of roundtable discussions related to Canadian politics. The November 23, 2009 advertisement features the headline, "Afghanistan: Noble fight or lost cause?" The advertisements in the December 7, 14, and 28, 2009, and January 18 and 25, 2010 issues have the headline "The West is In: Now What?" Each of these questions relate to complex matters facing Canadian politics. In all articles, the sub-caption reads, "Join the conversation as Andrew Coyne and Paul Wells square off in a spirited round-table discussion with some of the country's most prominent political figures". This approach is attempting to position the magazine (and partnering television channel) as a credible, expert source for public affairs information. It is also presenting the events as the audiences' link to the upper echelons of Canadian political power. Similarly, CPAC Primetime Politics runs an advertisement (November 30, 2009) that attempts to present itself as an expert. In large, bold letters, the caption "Political Authority" dominates the left half of the page. On the right, the host of the program, Peter van Dusen, is standing with his arms crossed. The advertisement attempts to portray its expert status, not only through the use of text, but also through its overall visual theme. The use of the blank space, as well as the darker background, gives the advertisement a sense of dominance.

In Royal Bank of Canada (RBC) advertisements (December 28, 2009 & January 4, 2010), the bank takes a direct approach in asserting its perceived expert status. The text reads: "An RBC advisor can show you how to put more retirement income in your pocket". Along the same vein, CanadianVirtualU.ca has an advertisement (January 4, 2010) that invites prospective students to "Use our connections to advance your career". In each of these advertisements, the company has directly presented its perceived benefit as something that would be an asset to the audience in pursuing their goals. Tag Heuer Watches also attempts to present itself as an expert in its field (January 4, 2010). An evolution of watches is shown, each from the years 1860, 1916, 1969, and 2010. The caption reads: "Pioneering Swiss watch making for 150 years". The connotation here is that since this particular company has been trusted to make watches for so long, they should be trusted above all other competitors.

Two more advertisements utilizing this persuasion device did so by emphasizing their status as Canadian organizations. Firstly, an advertisement for Magazines Canada (November 9, 2009) uses a logo that looks like a seal of authenticity with the words "Genuine Canadian Magazine". The connotation here is that perhaps magazines produced in Canada (as opposed to elsewhere) should be considered more trustworthy than others. By creating a seal of authenticity, there is a feeling that it is done because there are concerns of imitation by non-Canadians. In its advertisement, debit purchase organization Interac makes the claim: "For 25 years, proudly Canadian - now

that's something to celebrate" (November 16, 2009). It also utilizes a maple leaf in the advertisement, which is seen to represent Canadian organizations. This is another example of an organization flouting its status as Canadian in order to appear more credible to the audience.

The herd mentality

A Subaru Outback advertisement utilizes some aspects of the Herd Mentality rhetorical device (November 9, 2009). Subaru presented a weekend adventure theme in this advertisement. The spot listed a number of different winter activities that consumers would be able to engage in if they were to purchase the vehicle. One such activity was snowshoeing, which is presented with the text "snowshoes are 'go' shoes... this winter, get into snowshoeing – it's one of the coolest ways to discover nature's woodland wonders". The implications for this statement are two-fold. First, by stating that there is something fashionable about the activity of snowshoeing, the advertisement implies that this is something the audience should desire as well. Secondly, the advertisement is presenting a number of outdoor winter activities as something that should be desirable for the audience to aspire to. It could be argued that such activities are seen as emblematic of Canada. If *everyone else is doing it*, as the advertisement implies, then snowshoeing means *being* Canadian, another example was an advertisement promoting the website LocalsKnow.ca (November 23, 2009 & January 4, 2010). The advertisement features a large image of a winter scene. More specifically, it is a fairly unidentified forested park with a bridge covered in snow. The text reads: "Where is this?" The sub-caption: "Discover the Canada you don't know for less". The interpreted objective of the advertisement is to promote Canadian tourism to Canadians. By presenting the audience with a riddle, it becomes inherent that Canadians *should* know where the photograph was taken. Of course, *locals* must know all about it, leaving the audience with a feeling of being left out and the desire to be included.

Keeping up with the Joneses

In a family-focused advertisement, the "Rink at the Brink" (November 23, 2009), the purpose was to invite the audience to visit Niagara Falls, Ontario to skate near Niagara Falls. Running alongside a photograph of a man holding up a young child, helping the child skate, is the text: "Enjoy the quintessential Canadian wintertime experience". Similar to the Subaru advertisement mentioned earlier, there are two overarching points to be made here. Firstly, the family experience is presented as something that the audience should aspire to. Presented in the advertisement is the notion that enjoying winter activities together drives family togetherness. Furthermore, the use of the word "quintessential" suggests that the activity of ice-skating is something that defines the Canadian experience. Further, a Tudor watch advertisement (November 4, 2009; December 14, 2009 & January 4, 2010) features the product with the text: "Designed for performance and Engineered for elegance". The second sentence in the copy is the most important to this particular rhetorical device. The notion of elegance implies aspects of prestige. Tudor is playing on the desires of the public to be perceived as high-class or successful. The selling point presented in the advertisement here is not frugality or inexpensiveness; it is of a quality product that the audience is expected to pay a premium for.

Imitation of stars and celebrities

In a Centennial College advertisement (November 16, 2009), a teenage boy with long, messy hair is pictured. The caption reads: "Einstein didn't own a hairbrush either. Be great. Start here". The clear

message here is that prospective students of the college have a lot of potential to accomplish great things after graduation. Admittedly, this is rather weak example of a star or celebrity being used to sell a product (by conventional standards), however; this advertisement does draw upon the connotations of Einstein's character to promote the college. A more direct example of this persuasion device being used is in a Citizen Watches advertisement (December 14, 2009). National Football League (NFL) quarterback Eli Manning is pictured in the top third of the page. The text reads: "Unstoppable. Eli Manning is. So is this Citizen Eco-Drive. Fuelled by light, it never needs a battery. It's unstoppable, just like the people who wear it". The direct statement here is that if the audience purchases this watch, they too will become as powerful as a NFL player. The closest other example was a CHFI 98.1 radio station advertisement (November 2, 2009 & December 7, 2009) that featured photos of Madonna, Beyoncé, and Elton John. However, these celebrities were not presented in a manner that invited the audience to imitate them in any way.

Reward yourself

The University of Northern British Columbia raises the question, "What's your passion?" (November 16, 2009). It provides examples such as having a passion for the environment, discovery, or learning. The advertisement is drawing a parallel between pursuing postsecondary studies at the university and engaging in specific topics that students feel passionate about. In reality, a university education may be some of those things, but earning a degree also involves a large amount of hard work that is disregarded here. In another postsecondary education advertisement, McMaster University portrays an education at its institution as an investment in a brighter future (January 4, 2010). The university invites prospective students to "Invest in yourself!" The sub-caption expands upon this notion by saying: "Even if you already have a degree, a small investment in your education can bring big returns you'll enjoy for the rest of your career". As an investment, a university education is presented as something that will pay off in the long run. As well, Mercedes-Benz advertisements (December 28, 2009 & January 4, 2010) imply that its four-wheel drive technology will have benefits for the driver's self-esteem. The caption reads: "4MATIC puts a sticky layer of confidence between you and the road". This text could be referring to feeling safe and secure while driving; however, the word confidence may also imply some sort of additional reward for the consumer.

Stimulate fantasy

An advertisement for *Education en langue française en Ontario* (November 16, 2009) presents a degree of fantasy. Part of the text makes the claim that "[French Language Education] is the promise of true bilingualism, success and a world of opportunities". The accompanying photograph is a split-screen image, with a child stretching from one frame (a classroom) into a second frame (a workplace). The image is meant to suggest that bilingualism will allow children to succeed in their career endeavours. With its very spirited language, this advertisement is stimulating a fantasy of career prospects for students who enrol in French language education. Further analysis of this advertisement raises the point that English-French bilingualism is seen as a characteristic of the Canadian identity. Understanding this, the advertisement is also promoting the notion that being bilingual means being Canadian. Also, Rogers Wireless includes an advertisement (November 30, 2009) that uses a degree of fantasy to promote its products. The main caption, "Rock the Web, Ultimate web phones on Canada's most reliable network" is presented in a large, bold, block sans-serif font. Accompanying this is a teenage, blonde, female model

standing with her cell phone in her hand raised above her head. Emitted from the cell phone is a beam of light that runs down her body as if it were magical. The model is standing in a very triumphant, almost dominant, manner. The fantasy here is that the product provides you with some form of power.

Oppositions

The use of indirect opposition came in several Ally Financial advertisements. These advertisements imply opposition by contrasting its services with some common frustrations of dealing with financial organizations. Each advertisement features a large statement at the top, such as "We make money with you, not off you" (December 7, 2009) and "Is not saying something a lie?" (November 9, 2009). The sub-caption seeks to distinguish the organization from its competition by claiming "It's your money, not ours. That's why we offer interest rates that are consistently among the best, never hid behind fine print, and give you 24/7 access to a real human. Why? Because it's just the right thing to do". While Ally does not directly attack its competitors, it presents them in a negative light through contrast. In a similar manner, Canadian Financial Accountants (CFA) warns "never promise more than can be accomplished" (January 18, 2010). It puts forward the argument that:

A financial advisor who is a CFA chart holder is uniquely qualified to manage clients' interests in a marketplace too eager for quick solutions. In the end, it is the ability to bring integrity to the process and make disciplined decisions, not unrealistic promises that leads to successful outcomes.

In this example, CFA refers to its competition as "the marketplace" and attempts to present the organization as more in-touch with clients' needs.

Images and visual phenomena

In Maclean's advertisements, images and visual phenomena as a rhetorical device has been used through the sub devices camera shots and angles and models. Some of the strongest examples of using particular camera shots as a persuasion device had to do with wide-frame photographs depicting the Canadian wilderness. The first example came from a Via Rail advertisement (November 23, 2009). The caption invited the audience to "Experience Canada by train". Several photographs depicted the Canadian Rocky Mountains and the east coast shorelines. Also, Subaru Outback features two similar advertisements, each promising that the sport utility vehicle will "take you to the most remote places". The November 23, 2009 advertisement utilizes a picturesque wide-angle shot of the vehicle beside a lake, with a mountain in the background, while the December 7, 2009 advertisement uses an image of the vehicle on a rugged mountain terrain. The common theme between these two advertisements is the notion that being able to escape into the wilderness is something that should be desirable to the audience.

A Bank of Montreal advertisement (November 23, 2009 & December 7, 2009) placed a great degree of emphasis on its models to persuade the audience. The focus of the advertisement is on a happy man and woman, embracing while walking on a beach. The caption reads: "How do I turn almost there into now I'm there?" The tagline "Collect and redeem faster" is also shown, implying that the Bank of Montreal would be able to help customers close the gap between where they are and where they want to be more quickly. The implied relationship between the male and female models is one of romance, while their appearance is slightly blurred, potentially in an effort to

appeal to a wider audience. Similarly, the Investor Education Fund uses a scenario (November 23, 2009) that pictures a middle-aged man and woman, seated closely together, on a laptop computer at a kitchen counter. The scene appears to be akin to the traditional "kitchen table financial discussion" scenario used in many advertisements. The caption reads: "online investing: rewards, patience and discipline". Here, the models are used to demonstrate a common situation in many households, in an effort to connect with the target audience: parents of young children who are trying to save for their son or daughter's future education.

Conclusion

Maclean's has used rhetorical devices intensively in its advertisements to reflect on the Canadian culture when constructing meanings of specific goods and services to its audiences. Within the context of reflecting on the Canadian culture, this study explores that although a wide range of major rhetorical devices are widespread in Maclean's advertisements, some main rhetorical devices (e.g., *sexuality; fears and anxieties; desire for approval; and slogans and jingles*) and sub rhetorical devices within main rhetorical devices (*comparisons within verbal appeals and balance, spatiality, typefaces, and colour within images and visual phenomena*) have not been used. However, regardless of specific rhetorical devices, there were a few strong points of the concept of "We Canadians" that were communicated in many of the analyzed advertisements.

The portrait painted by the Maclean's advertisements during the selected timeframe revealed Canadians with a number of key characteristics. Through its postsecondary education advertisements, being Canadian is portrayed as being optimistic. Colleges and universities are highlighted as opportunities for the audience to generate a more successful future. In its banking and financial institution advertisements, Canada is identified as a place more in-tune with the needs of the audience. Institutions present themselves as more caring and compassionate than traditionally expected. Through its public affairs and politics advertisements, Canada is presented as a place where the audience has a chance to participate in a national dialogue about the country's future.

The concept of outdoors adventuring was a prevalent theme in a number of examples. This includes scenes of wilderness and rocky terrain with overarching themes of adventurousness and escape. These were often presented in a manner that implied that the action of outdoor escape was something that the audience should aspire to. Canada being a northern country, this common representation of winter scenes could be seen as a metaphor for the ideal Canadian experience. In order to enjoy one's life, as many of these advertisements suggest, one must escape from urban life like a true Canadian. As well, and more directly, the use of maple leaves and Canadian identifiers was prevalent. Maple leaves were often used to show the "Canadianness" of a particular organization. This was also done through words, by identifying the company as Canadian. Here, the fact that an organization was Canadian was used to present it as more credible or trustworthy. This implies to the audience that Canadian organizations should be preferred over foreign companies.

Advertisements of Maclean's have reflected on the Canadian culture, as a way of life that includes individual practices and institutional values, in order to produce and exchange particular meanings of goods and services. The shared communicated meanings were sustained and produced through persuasive communication; specifically, powerful rhetorical devices: *metaphoric language; metonymic language; verbal*

appeals; the herd mentality; keeping up with the Joneses; imitation of stars and celebrities; reward yourself; stimulate fantasy; oppositions; and images and visual phenomena.

References

1. Leiss W, Kline S, Jhally S (1997) Social communication in advertising: Persons, products and images of well-being. Routledge, New York.
2. Smith K (2006) Rhetorical figures and the translation of advertising headlines. *Language and Literature* 15: 159-182.
3. Lindlof TR (1995) Qualitative communication research methods. Sage Publications, London.
4. Hall S (1997) Introduction. In S Hall (ed.), *Representation: Cultural representations and signifying practices*. Sage Publications, London 1-13.
5. Taras D (2003) The new world of communications in Canada. In D Taras, F Pannekoek, and M Bakardjieva (eds.), *How Canadians communicate*. University of Calgary Press, Alberta 9-23.
6. Acheson K, Maule C (2001) No bite, no bark: The mystery of magazine policy. *American Review of Canadian Studies* 31: 467-481.
7. Armstrong S (2000) Magazines, cultural policy and globalization: The forced retreat of the state? *Canadian Public Policy* 26: 369-385.
8. Bielay G, Herold ES (1995) Popular magazines as a source of sexual information for university women. *The Canadian Journal of Human Sexuality* 4: 247-262.
9. Davies I (1995) Theory and creativity in English Canada: Magazines, the state and cultural movement. *Journal of Canadian Studies* 30: 5-19.
10. Jarvis SS, Thompson WW (1995) Making sure your Canadian advertisement does not sink your sale. *Journal of Consumer Marketing* 12: 40-46.
11. Polonijo A, Carpiano R (2008) Representations of cosmetic surgery and emotional health in women's magazines in Canada. *Women's Health Issues* 19: 463-470.
12. Roy SC (2008) 'Taking charge of your health': Discourses of responsibility in English-Canadian women's magazines. *Sociology of Health and Illness* 30: 463-477.
13. Szeman I (2000) The rhetoric of culture: Some notes on magazines, Canadian culture and globalization. *Journal of Canadian studies* 35: 212-230.
14. Valentine J (1997) Global sport and Canadian content: The Sports Illustrated Canada controversy. *Journal of Sport and Social Issues* 21: 239-259.
15. Agee WK, Ault PH, Emery E (1979) *Introduction to mass communications*. Harper & Row Publishers, New York.
16. James EL, Bergh BGV (1990) An information content comparison of magazine ads across a response continuum from direct response to institutional advertising. *Journal of Advertising* 19: 23-29.
17. Privera LC, Kean LG (2008) Obesity and health: A textual analysis of consumption product advertisements in African American and general readership magazines. *Women and Language* 31: 52-61.
18. Glodman R (1992) *Reading ads socially*. Routledge, New York.
19. Leiss W, Kline S, Jhally S, Botterill J (2005) *Social communication in advertising: Consumption in the mediated marketplace*. Routledge, New York.
20. Root RL (1987) *The rhetorics of popular culture: Advertising, advocacy, and entertainment*. Greenwood Press, New York.
21. Berger AA (1991) *Media research techniques*. Sage Publications, Newbury Park.
22. Brierley S (2002) *The advertising handbook*. Routledge, London.
23. Hall S (1997) The spectacle of the 'Other'. In S Hall (ed.), *Representation: Cultural representations and signifying practices*. Sage Publications, London 223-290.
24. Bloch L-R, Lemish D (2008) Persuasion through insult: The 'f' word in Israeli media. *Media, Culture & Society* 30: 239-256.
25. Crook J (2004) On covert communication in advertising. *Journal of Pragmatics* 36: 715-738.
26. Lindenmeier J (2008) Promoting volunteerism: Effects of self-efficacy, advertisement-induced emotional arousal perceived costs of volunteering, and message framing. *Voluntas* 19: 43-65.
27. van Mulken M (2003) Analyzing rhetorical devices in print advertisements. *Document Design* 4: 114-128.
28. Gee S (2009) Mediating sport, myth, and masculinity: The National Hockey League's "Inside the Warrior" advertising campaign. *Sociology of Sport Journal* 26: 578-598.
29. Jeong S-H (2008) Visual metaphor in advertising: Is the persuasive effect attributable to visual argumentation or metaphorical rhetoric? *Journal of Marketing Communications* 14: 59-73.
30. McQuarrie EF, Mick DG (2009) A laboratory study of the effects of verbal rhetoric versus repetition when consumers are not directed to process advertising. *Journal of Consumer Research* 28: 287-312.
31. Morgan SE, Reichert T (1999) The message is in the metaphor: Assessing the comprehension of metaphors in advertisements. *Journal of Advertising* 28: 1-12.
32. Nelson MR, Hitchon JC (1995) Theory of synesthesia applied to persuasion in print advertising headlines. *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly* 72: 346-360.
33. Phillips BJ, McQuarrie EF (2009) Impact of advertising metaphor on consumer belief. *Journal of Advertising* 38: 49-61.
34. Phillips BJ, McQuarrie EF (2002) The development, change, and transformation of rhetorical style in magazine advertisements 1954-1999. *Journal of Advertising*, 31:1-13.
35. Pierce RS, Chiappe DL (2009) The roles of aptness, conventionality, and working memory in the production of metaphors and similes. *Metaphor and Symbol* 24:1-19.
36. Pseekos AC, Lyndon WJ (2009) The use of metaphor to address gender and sexual orientation stereotypes in counseling: A feminist perspective. *Women and Therapy* 32: 393-405.
37. Seargent P (2009) Metaphors of possession in the conceptualization of language. *Language and Communication* 29: 383-393.
38. Velasco-Sacristan M (2010) Metonymic grounding of ideological metaphors: Evidence from advertising gender metaphors. *Journal of Pragmatics* 42: 64-96.
39. Croson R, Handy F, Shang J (2009) Keeping up with the Joneses: The relationship of perceived descriptive social norms, social information, and charitable giving. *Nonprofit Management and Leadership* 19: 467-489.
40. Lin C-H, Tsai C-C (2006) Comparisons and advertising: The route from comparisons to effective advertising. *Journal of Business and Psychology* 21: 23-44.
41. McFadden DL, Train KE (1996) Consumers' evaluation of new products: Learning from self and others. *Journal of Political Economy* 104: 683-703.
42. Amos C, Holmes G, Stratton D (2008) Exploring the relationship between celebrity endorser effects and advertising effectiveness. *International Journal of Advertising* 27: 209-234.
43. Pease A, Brewer PR (2008) The Oprah factor: The effects of a celebrity endorsement in a presidential primary campaign. *The International Journal of Press and Politics* 13: 386-400.
44. Soar M (2001) Engines and acolytes of consumption: Black male bodies, advertising and the laws of thermodynamics. *Body and Society* 7: 37-55.
45. Frith K, Shaw P, Cheng H (2005) The construction of beauty: A cross-cultural analysis of women's magazine advertising. *Journal of Communication* 55: 56-70.
46. Johansson P (1999) Consuming the other: The fetish of the western woman in Chinese advertising and popular culture. *Postcolonial Studies* 2: 377-388.
47. Lazar MM (2006) Discover The power of femininity! Analyzing global "power femininity" in local advertising. *Feminist Media Studies* 6: 505-517.
48. Peirce K (2001) What if the Energizer bunny were female? Importance of gender in perceptions of advertising spokes-character effectiveness. *Sex Roles* 45: 845-858.
49. Zawisza M, Cinnirella M, Zawadzka AM (2006) Non-traditional male gender portrayal as a persuasion tool in advertising. *Social Influence* 1: 288-300.

50. Zhou N, Chen MYT (1997) A content analysis of men and women in Canadian consumer magazine advertising: Today's portrayal, yesterday's image? *J Bus Ethics* 16: 485-495.
51. Vipond R (2004) The civil rights movement comes to Winnipeg: American influence on "rights talk" in Canada, 1968-1971. In SL Newman (ed.), *Constitutional politics in Canada and the United States*. State University of New York Press, Albany, NY 89-107.
52. Gray D, Gray D (2000) *The complete Canadian small business guide*. McGraw-Hill Ryerson, Whitby, ON
53. Eid M (2011) Introduction to communication research. In M Eid (ed.), *Research methods in communication*. Pearson, Boston, MA 3-14.