

Full Length Paper

Spiritual Talks

Saba Gamze Oral, Maltepe University, Communication Sciences,
Marmara Eğitim Köyü, 34857 Maltepe, Istanbul, Turkey
saba.gamze.oral@gmail.com +905322569569

Accepted 22 July 2011

This study examined New Age practices and the people who adopt spiritual perspective to life and life styles as a growing trend. It reviewed the relevant literature on the possible reasons why such a group is emerging and on the growth of spiritual talk in daily communication, analyzing how this new life style is communicated to the target audience in the cyber space. Although, the *New Age perspective* with its mystical perceptions has usually been examined by researchers through interdisciplinary analyses that generally draw from psychology, sociology, and theology, it is in this paper, investigated within the framework of marketing practices; in view of the impact of the New Age concept on individuals. The overall attempt is to understand the influence of the New Age trends in the media focusing on a TV commercial case based on the consequential significance of language and words.

Keywords: Neo-Spiritualism; Spiritual Society; Spiritual Network; New Age Perspective; Personal Development; Marketing of New Age Trends; Spiritual Wording.

INTRODUCTION

Spirituality, Positive Energy, Quantum Thinking, Enlightenment, Cosmic Awareness, Reiki, Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP), Life Coaching etc. are some of the new concepts, which have penetrated our language, culture and lives; but when and how did they become part of our usual concepts?

Various views assert that such changes in different societies started with globalization. It cannot be ignored that change emerges as a result of the interaction of cultures in this time period when borders are being eliminated. In terms of their emotions, needs, consumption, identity, and existence, the individuals of the 20th century influenced mainly by world wars and multiplying new mass media communication tools; were very different from the individuals of the 21st century in which conventional wars are replaced with economic wars and competition, and the media is at its golden age. The social structures, time, and the life conditions in which we live today force the individuals to reconstruct their identities. Some individuals adapt to these enforcements and take a place for themselves in the flow of life, whereas others seek guides to help them to hang onto life. In this respect, religion has traditionally been the first guide that human kind has resorted to; however, the complex structure of the 21st century has triggered a search for new religions too.

THE ANXIETY SOCIETY

In the millennium that followed 20th century in which science has gained prominence in finding answers to many unknowns, humankind's search for new faiths should not be discussed only within the context of globalization. Renowned historian Eric Hobsbawm's contention that "*the hunger for searching the unknown grows as science achieves more visible victories,*" (2008:

714) is important in this respect. Within the context of the science/anti-science dilemma, science fiction, a product of the Anglo-Saxon culture, has increased the affinity of these cultures, which just came out of a war, to the unknown. Stories and experiences relating to Unidentified Flying Objects (UFO) can get ahead of scientific realities. The historian defines this situation as a "*rejection of the claims and rules of science*". This can induce suspicion concerning the practices of science and, consequently, anxiety. Is not the people's search for methods that rely on alternative medicine, despite the latest developments in medical technology, an indication of this anxiety?

Rapid development of technology, reconstruction of capitalism, and transparency of borders have all led societies to defend their values, as a reaction against the decrease in the differences between cultures across the world. This reaction leads individuals to have a growing need for safety.

In our age that is governed by speed, the individuals' continuous struggle with change leads to their experiencing emotional depressions. Moral turmoil and continuous change in values spurs a willingness of societies to *spiritual stance*. Futurist, Patrick Dixon (2007) forecasts that this situation would bring segregation in the future:

Segregation should be expected in world religions between fundamentalists who are stuck in the roots of traditional teachings –for example the Bible or the Koran– and those who think that they have almost divine authorization to interpret these teachings as they see fit to draw their own roadmaps of spiritual journeys. (Dixon, 2007: 373)

In this context, we can say that social segregation would fuel social anxieties. In his ontological approach, Soren Kierkegaard (2009) connects anxiety and freedom to his concept of possibility. In his own words, "*the person trained by anxiety is actually trained by possibility; nevertheless, this person is trained with respect to her own infinity.*" (Kierkegaard, 2009:156)

Giddens (2010) reinterprets Kierkegaard's joint use of anxiety with freedom and examines it within the context of existentialist questions:

When he analyses anxiety as 'a struggle to exist against the possibility of nonexistence' –or natural fear– he directly points at this problem. For an individual human being, 'existing' means being aware of her existence. (...) 'The struggle to exist against the possibility of nonexistence' is a perennial duty of an individual and it necessitates not only accepting the 'reality,' but also creating ontological reference points as a complement to 'taking place' in various environments in daily life. Existence, in its meaning that Kierkegaard uses, is a form of 'being-in-the-world.' All people try to find an answer to the problem of existence as they 'do' daily life and they provide this answer on the basis of the nature of the activities that they engage in. (Giddens, 2010: 69)

In today's world where individuals hide their own identities in virtual environments, could the anxieties behind hiding identities, from Kierkegaard's perspective, be aimed at making freedom possible? Human beings have been questioning the reasons for their existence since the beginnings of history. These questionings create the dilemma of simultaneously hiding the anxiety and setting it free. Giddens (2010: 70-78), classified problems of existence with the

world and human life, other people's existence, and *individual identity*, that is linguistically speaking "me/social me/you".

Man who questions existence would also question death. The reality of death that science could not yet explain has been the main source of fears and anxieties of individuals. It is at this point that religion opens the door for freedom of the spirit.

Manuel Castells states that religion is part of human nature:

Taking sanctuary and seeking consolation in religion is an aspect of the societies and, assuming such a concept exists, of human nature. Fear of death necessitates belief in God, irrespective of how God is manifested. Just so that people can continue living. We can further say that except for us, God is homeless. (Castells, 2008: 20)

BEYOND THE MODERN WORLD

Should we consider the fact that concepts like *Positive thinking*, *Sending positive messages to the Universe*, *Acquiring awareness, 2012 – Beginning of a New Age*, and *Quantum leap* appear on the shelves of bookstores as perceptual selectivity, or should we associate this with the marketing slogans targeting our subconscious?

It is now considered an ordinary reality for the urban man to resort to post-modern means of search, as traditional religious practices cannot provide answers to his questions about his existence and other questions that pertain to himself as an individual. This trend that accelerated at the end of the 20th century is increasingly occupying a more prominent position in the language of the man of the millennium. We can assume that the concept that has been entrenched in the language is a reflection of culture.

Examining the proliferation of neo-spiritualist culture with respect to marketing practices, along with the existence of the individual, her anxieties and fears, and psychological and sociological factors, might help us have a broader view of the puzzle. In this respect, we can claim that culture is an object of consumption. For example, when we define one aspect of the concept of popular culture (Oktay, 2002: 16) as "*reflection of cultural norms and traditions in the form of new formulas*," we also describe popular culture as "*a product targeting the consumer*."

Proliferation of the *New Age* culture is not caused only by people's problems with themselves. The increase in the number of books, and training classes and seminars on personal development as well as life coaching considered as a profession are elements that make up culture.

The rapid increase in the number of web pages about spirituality in Turkey, for instance, indicates that the number of people who are interested in these topics is increasing.

SPIRITUAL MAN, SPIRITUAL NETWORK

One of the most interesting changes happening in the 21st century can be observed in the

neighborhood bookshops: In addition to the normal topics such as new releases, history, psychology, philosophy, literature, or the *theater*, one can also see an ever growing category titled *personal development*. According to Newsweek Turkey (03.21.2010) and Vizyon, an educational online news portal (07.01.2009), the size of the personal development market that is composed of books, DVDs, training programs, and seminars has reached 10 billion USD. Rhonda Byrne's book "The Secret," which was translated to 20 languages and was published in Turkey in 2007 has sold over 2 million copies in the USA and Canada and the DVD of the book sold over 1.5 million copies. According to news line that appeared in Milliyet newspaper on May 15, 2007 the book sold over 125 thousand copies in the four weeks following its launch in Turkey. It is reported in the same article that such books achieved an aggregate sales figure of 500 million Turkish Lira's in 2007, constituting almost half of the revenues of the Turkish publishing sector. According to the statistical information provided by the publisher of the book, 75 percent of the readers of personal development books are women, with over 60 percent of all readers belonging to the segment of the society with a high socio-economic level, denoted as A+ customer (Ozkartal, 2007).

It would be beneficial to transcribe two perspectives, from the fields of theology and sociology, as to why the said book sold this much in Turkey. Prof. Dr. Ali Kose, who teaches the Psychology of Religion at the Marmara University Divinity School claims that:

Most people reading this type of books are distant to religion or those who did not get what they expected from religious practices, thus seeking means to cater to their spiritual needs (...) These books provide some kind of a concept of 'alternative religion' (...) In reality, existence of a metaphysical world is not the issue; people just want to feel its existence.

Prof. Dr. Nilufer Narli in her sociological analysis, defines this notion of reading as *neo-fatalism*:

The source of its power is people's willingness to explain the events happening in their lives with the concept of fate, rather than explaining them with cause-effect relationships, psychological factors, or the social-political situations that they are in (...) People's understanding of the cosmos, both in the world and in Turkey, has long been shaped by positivism; but since science cannot answer some questions that people have today, they tend towards spiritualism.

Based on the aforementioned opinions and data, we can presume that personal development books like "The Secret" are preferred by a group of people in modern society who questions traditional beliefs and social norms. However, when considering the migration from small towns to big cities, the interaction of people from different levels of education as well as their socio-economical background we begin to see a common base for a culture that is instrumental to the rising trends of alternative beliefs.

The Spiritual Society

The industrial and technological revolution that increased in pace during the Cold War brought along with it societal change, especially in the USA and the European countries.

In this period when peasantry receded with increased urbanization, women are incorporated into the workforce more, and mass migration sped up, people's consciousness of wealth started to increase. Baby boomers, the most important population movement which is a result of this consciousness that impacted the whole world, led to change in the social and cultural fabric of Western societies and many other societies that are inspired by them. With increasing extramarital sexual relations and giving birth, living singly after leaving the family at a relatively young age, and the standing up of those who wanted to live their sexuality against established societal norms, have led to the individual and individuality gaining importance in the second half of the 20th century. Investigator, writer and psychologist Jean Twenge argues that unlike their predecessors' focusing on concepts of morality, chastity, and duty, Baby Boomers are a generation that focuses on agreement and individual satisfaction. The author indicates that the reason Richard Bach's *The Seagull*, which presented the ideal of "*the pursuit of the meaning of life and a better living*," became a best-seller in 1970 has to do with Americans' notion that "Life has to focus on the needs of the individual." (Twenge, 2009) The fact that *The Seagull* was well received worldwide and has become a best seller in many countries can also be associated with the impact of the American way and perspective of life on the individuals in other countries. The reason behind *The Secret's* achieving the same level of success in the 21st century that *The Seagull* previously had can be analysed from a number of perspectives to see whether it was the Baby Boomer's and the "Me Nations", as Twenge calls them, search for an answer to the question of "what is it that you *really* want?" Or the blockage that individualization leads to.

Egocentric Individuals who passionately focus on themselves and who do not need external approval cannot always manage the events occurring irrespective of their expectations, and this can lead to these individuals' being anxious and worrisome. We see that psychological discomforts such as panic attack or depression have been on the rise recently. There is plenty of research data that show an increase in discomfort associated with anxiety especially in young people. For example, the incidence of panic attack cases in USA in 1995 is twice what it was in 1980 (Twenge, 2009: 149). In a study carried out with 879 high school students in Eskisehir, which is considered to be a student city in Turkey, 30.7% of the students were found to be prone to depression (Unsal and Ayranci, 2008). The number of anti-depressants use in Turkey was 6 million 816 thousand 200 boxes in 1995, whereas this figure increased to 34 million 158 thousand 82 boxes in 2010 (both figures including prescriptions given by doctors who are not psychiatry specialists) (Bat, 2011: 63).

We can say that the admiration of "Self" that arose in the American culture has eventually evolved towards narcissism. Advertisements, which are among the most important factors that transformed the television generation of Baby Boomers into a consumption society, might have paved the way leading to narcissism by saying that the individual is special and deserves the best. The internet generation who took over from the television generation is now using such social networks as blogs, myspace, formspring, facebook, and twitter, encouraging narcissism today. Twenge says that although the internet plays an important role in the society, "*it allows the imaginary principle to outshine the reality principle, making it easier for us to be whoever we would like to be, and this alternative identity (persona) is often times better, cooler, or more attractive than us.*" He continues, "*In addition to the site structure that facilitates narcissistic self identification, users' ways of using them slowly pulls the self identification norms to within the boundaries of narcissism.*" (Twenge and Campbell, 2010: 164).

According to Sennett, narcissism is actually the direct opposite of the passion for identity: *“The narcissist is not open to experiences; she is open to the experience. In that single experience, she chases a representation or reflection of herself. She devalues every special relationship or moment, since she would never get a satisfactory answer to the question of who she is”* (Sennett, 2010: 416).

Lasch associates narcissism with weakening of the patriarchal family structure and the *“specialist culture”* that replaces it. *“These new specialists are an indispensable part of the therapy culture of narcissism. There is a ‘new patriarchal’ form in which specialists of every kind are trying to meet the needs of the laymen”* (Lasch, 1979 cited in Giddens, 2010: 219).

According to Twenge, personal development books claim that self-admiration and love have therapeutic effects. In this context, the author criticizes *The Secret*:

If we just believe in ourselves, continues this advice, anything is possible. The best-selling book of 2007, The Secret, promises that you can obtain whatever you desire (particularly material things) just by visualizing them (apparently, neither of us, as writers of this book, really want to win the MegaMillions lottery prize, since we have not visualized it) (Twenge and Campbell, 2010: 39).

If we assume that there is little difference in marketing a trend and turning a product into a trend, we can think that followers of a trend would consume similar products. Proliferation of a New Age spirit can be made possible by creating a population of people that follows the spiritual trend and fulfilling the needs of this population. The cyber environment, in addition to personal development books, serves as an important source for the formation and development of a New Age spirituality. Although the internet budgets of the brands marketed in Turkey are far less than those of their Western counterparts (Ozer, 2010: 83), many firms and individuals engaged in spiritual activities can be observed venturing into creating content without being too concerned about the number of clicks they would receive. Most of these web sites promise spiritual values to their visitors, for a price. As is known, materialism and spiritualism are two very different concepts. There is a clear contradiction here, but we should not be surprised, as materialism can be perceived as spiritualism by way of donations in traditional religion.

We know that a society that is open to personal development and spiritual beliefs adopts the language of *New Age* spiritualism. We can thus say that web sites catering to this language are in fact engaging in some kind of marketing their products by giving spiritual messages as propaganda.

The Spiritual Network

It is possible that the population that focuses on personal development and *New Age* spiritualism develops a new way of life beneath the culture of the society, which it is part of. At the same time, it could also be possible to say that this way of life can develop a concept of consumption in line with its own dynamics, beneath the mainstream consumption culture. In this context, Featherstone’s claim that ways of life have turned into life projects in the post-modern world supports this supposition:

71 Journal Academic Marketing Mysticism Online

The new heroes of the consumption culture turn way of life into a life project, rather than adopting a new way of life after serious consideration or through traditional or habitual mechanisms. They express their individuality and their search for style through the products, clothes, practices, experiences, outlooks, and bodily characteristics that they combine within the framework of this way of life (...) this interest into individualization of a certain way of life and stylish self-consciousness is not observed among the young or the rich only. The pervasiveness of consumption culture suggests that we have the opportunity to develop and express ourselves, regardless of our age or class origins. (Featherstone, 2005: 145).

In the 21st century, the languages of various societies and cultures are blended in together due to global factors with words that are used by the global media and iconic sayings that social networks have developed, thus adopting new words. In this context, one observes the followers of the *New Age* spirituality expressing themselves using a common language, which has achieved universal significance.

Language, which is a social and cultural phenomenon, is a message in which concepts make up arrangements, an arrangement of indicators (Inceoglu and Comak, 2009):

(...) Language is the most important means of communications in socialization of human beings. Thus, this means of communication forms an arrangement of indicators of concepts. This arrangement can be considered on the same platform with writing, symbols, bodily movements, various marks, manual alphabet, military signals, action symbols, and social behaviour indicators. In this context, language takes the position of an arrangement of concepts among these arrangements and is presented as corresponding to all objects that are the elements here. Hence, while language is considered as corresponding to an object it connects a concept with an auditory symbol. The 'arrangement,' or 'meaning' beyond that, occurs with the combination of this 'concept' and the 'auditory symbol' shown (...)

In order to examine how the *New Age* trend is expressed on the internet and how publicity events in line with this trend call out to its followers, a Google search is performed using the keywords "spirituality" and "spiritual person." A list of the first 10 web pages that the search provided is created. Let's take a look at how the term *spirituality* is depicted and which adjectives are used along with it:

The language of emotions takes a person to the depths of her spiritual dimensions. The scream of emotions that echo in the depths of the dark regions of the soul can only be heard through emotions. The connection of deep questions, deep linkages, deep pains, deep genius with the whole can be found through emotions. All that connects to the One is the code that is deciphered by the emotions.

This is the real spirituality. Spirituality is not being perfect, being a superior human being who is invulnerable; it is not a life in which some intellectual, emotional, sexual, behavioural restrictions are presented as spirituality, or having certain feelings is considered to be sinning. Spirituality is giving yourself and others the permission of falling and then standing up. It is the journey to reach the deep understanding that we

are connected to all other human beings, animals, plants, and the universe...

(Accessed at

<http://www.insanevren.tr.gg/&%23304%3B%C7&%23304%3BM&%23304%3BZDEK&%23304%3B-G-Ue-C-Ue-NANLAMI.htm?PHPSESSID=6469fbeb52b8c135bcf4709804ad4ef2> on February 21, 2011.)

Spirituality is expressed as a “*deep understanding*.” This understanding posits the prerequisite of “*establishing a connection*.” “*Emotions need to establish connection with the whole*” is indicated at the depths of this understanding and linkage. We understand that a “*journey of feeling*” needs to be experienced to establish this connection.

Spiritualism is a strong principle. Spiritualism should not be confused with religion. Spiritualism, that is the psychic, is your one-to-one internal relationship with your own Creator Source. Since religion has become an incorporated entity, dogma and obedience have gained predominance over individual discovery. Societies are conditioned towards meaningless routines based on fear, all in the name of God. For example, Buda’s main goal is not to indoctrinate with dogmas and rules, but helping the people remember their sanctity. Religions really need to be updated and changed to add value to the modern world. All locations of worship and holy places should be able to become laboratories of consciousness formed by individuals who devoted themselves to gain power. Thus, individuals can have the goal of becoming enlightened themselves, instead of studying the enlightened of the past days.

‘You are not human beings having spiritual experiences; you are spirits having humane experiences’. You are spiritual beings, manifestations of the Creator Source and Power; that is your identity. The greatest sin is to question your sanctity. The spirit is always the being that opens to a greater expression and the reason you are here now is to expand and grow as a spiritual being. A situation that mediocre individuals frequently come across is to come to the realization that they are living with a wrong definition and focal point regarding who they are and what the world actually is.

(Accessed at <http://www.dostsite.org/public/page.aspx?id=592> on February 21, 2011.)

The first striking element in this text is it’s highlighting that spiritualism should not be confused with religion. It can be said that this is aimed at the straightforward meaning of the word spiritualism. On the other hand, we can also observe that traditional religion is questioned and a new religion philosophy is formulated with spiritualism.

The identity of the individual is described as a spirit, rather than a human being. Spiritual awareness is presented as the most important factor in understanding spiritualism.

Ahmet Akinci, considers the structure of the spirit to having five different levels (*Power of Life or Animal Spirit, Outer or Lower Spirit, Inner or Upper Spirit, Living Spirit, and One or Unique Spirit*), the levels of spirit are associated with either the *Creation*, or *Tree of Life* levels. In the esoteric teaching, Macro cosmos represents the physical and spiritual universe that we exist in, and the Micro cosmos represents the human being, that is the spiritual and bodily human. “*And I believe the following esoteric saying stresses the unity of these two strikingly: Every*

73 Journal Academic Marketing Mysticism Online

human being is a miniature universe” (Akinci, 2008: 149).

As we approach the end of this special age, all Spiritual rules and laws that have emerged and are applicable to human beings will have a new system. A broader cycle of creation is being developed and those of you who collectively strive to obtain the unified consciousness will be selected as co-creators of the future. Our Divine Mission, being one Ray of the Godly Light, broadens the God consciousness. Your goal is to draw from the Core of the Creation and activating it through the thoughts that come from your Sacred Heart and Sacred Mind to become a master of manifestation by shaping the God Matter into forms of infinite variety. Thus, you will be a real extension of our Father/Mother God (...) as you enter the middle-level brain activity of your mind, you start the process of becoming a spiritual/human Being and your feeling nature arises to subsume your heart and throat chakras. While your spirit pokes you toward awareness, a gradual process of awakening starts and your journey of rising starts. A candidate en route needs to pass the astral plane and gain control of her lower nature (the lower three chakras) of her emotional/astral body. This opens the gate to the fine frequencies of cosmic reality through your Higher Consciousness, your guides, your teachers, and your angel aides. Focused observation skills and harmlessness in thought, speech, and action are important characteristics of a Master of the self. Before you can become a transmitter of Light within darkness, you need to clear your mind from contaminated, negative, and self-defeating thoughts. (Accessed at <http://www.ronnastar.com/turkishJun10.html> on February 26, 2011.) (Accessed at <http://www.ronnastar.com/turkishJun10.html> on February 26, 2011.)

In this quotation, the *Spiritual* and/or *Spiritual Man* is defined as a *Soul* and the change of this *Soul's consciousness* leads to the process of its becoming a *Being*, through opening of the *road to awareness*, entering the *process of awakening*.

These three quotations give us clues about the similarities between the languages of the societies that focus on spirituality. It should be indicated that this society has, in addition to proliferating the New Age spirituality, has created a consumer mass that has a different view of the world than the ordinary, according to the marketing discipline. Below, we will examine not how and when the spirituality trend emerged, but how individuals and institutions in the virtual world market it as a service.

Table 1

Today's world encircles the people with its complexity and dizzying pace of life. Our nerves are as tense as they could be. We create images behind which we hide against the perceptual bombardment and our concern that we will not be able to keep up with the pace of time. We put up walls with bricks that are as thick as we are vulnerable. The walls increase in height. People get alienated to themselves... We increasingly become less efficient, lose the love, and get consumed.

School of Life gains importance in this process. The goal for the person is not be alienated to herself anymore. It is her returning to her core; her learning her inner world, the language of her emotions, and her realizing and learning the conditionings that she has submitted to until then. The person's –as she gets to herself– reconciling and achieving consistency in her thoughts, emotions, and behaviours. When the person stops taking her power from something that she is not and from the roles that she plays, when she merges with her nature as one, when her outer self reflects her inner self, she starts to use skills that she had not used until then in her life. She becomes more powerful, more flexible, and a more efficient individual, becoming free.

The relationships she establishes stop being hurtful dependencies. She starts to rely on love and selectivity. Although the turmoil of her daily life may not change, her reaction to it changes. External conditions lose their abrasive effect to a large extent. Through the state of peace that she has achieved, the individual who actualises herself now knows where she would find the calm safe haven in the middle of the storm.

People graduate from the university after going to school for about twenty years to eventually have a good job, as well as going through plenty of special courses to succeed in various exams. Occupational satisfaction, however, only makes up fifteen percent of the sense of fulfilment from live one can achieve. Eighty five percent of the sense of fulfilment comes from physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual health, as well as courage for and pleasure of living life to the full extent. Each life partner whom we love and who loves us, warm friendships, developing social relationships, hobbies, a perception of quality entertainment, aesthetics, art are the essence of a serene and fulfilled life.

School of Life is a 32-day training program aimed at not fifteen, but one hundred percent of our lives.

Think about how much time and money you have spent on unhappiness, diseases, health problems, pain that you have undergone, addictions like shopping, alcohol, and food, as well as all that you have purchased to make you happy.

Attending the School of Life is an investment that you will “profit” from throughout your life. We only have one. And life is very short. Spare 32 days to win yourself back. Spare 32 days to live your live with consciousness and pleasure.

Note: You can start the School of Life package program with any module except for the first two modules. To be able to attend the Face Yourself and From Shades to Illumination modules, you have to have attended either Communication/Relations or Self Respect modules. Should you prefer, you can attend the other training programs individually, separate from the package.

Warning: The activities, workshops, seminars, or consultancy services organized by Exceptional Training and Consultancy are only aimed at informing you, uncovering your potential, helping you become an individual who is more helpful to yourself and to those around you in your personal development journey. In sum, they are aimed at increasing the quality of your life. No activity, workshop, seminar, or consultancy service is aimed at diagnosing and disease or treating it.

(Accessed at <http://www.kuraldisi.com/workshop/yasam-okulu/> on March 7, 2011.)

75 Journal Academic Marketing Mysticism Online

Questioning existence in the 21st century focuses more on individuality, under the influence of New Age trends. While science and medicine is progressing rapidly in the century that we are living in, as Hobsbawm (2008) foresaw, people's concerns and anxieties are increasing and the search for the unknown, rather than the known, is rising. We define the age that we are in with terms such as the Age of Knowledge, Age of Information, Global Age, but in fact we are refraining from calling it the Age of Anxiety since anxiety is on the rise. Nevertheless, many services offered as part of global trade to offset anxieties constitute a significant market value, beyond putting off our fears. If we are concerned that we can have an accident with our car we can have it insured, or we can insure ourselves against health problem, or have earthquake insurance if we are living in a region having the danger of earthquake. What then can we do against life's being hard on us, or even *beating us up*, at times? Is it not a consumer need in the simplistic sense of the word? Even though the size of the market of people who try to understand existence, the Creator, or life by focusing on irrationalities – instead of adopting traditional frameworks– is not measured, we can say that it is growing significantly and that it is even segmented.

In the text quoted above, a 32-day journey is offered to people who would like to question life through different ways or, using the spiritual term, who are *aware* of it that promises to provide the essence and consciousness of life. According to the marketing discipline, we can say that this *journey* is a product, and the *essence* and *consciousness* are in this meaning. Stated differently, spirituality is a process, and we cannot go through this process without the journey. The word *journey* represents the necessity of a spiritual life style, and the words *essence* and *consciousness* represent the values that we can achieve. Now, let's apply this analysis to the perspective that states that the material is important: Let's remember the TV advertisement titled *Tibet* produced by Marcel advertising agency for the automobile Lancia Delta of the firm Lancia (Fiat) in June of 2008 (Accessed at <http://www.advertolog.com/lancia/adverts/richard-gere-long-version-45-tibet-12042555> on March 7, 2011).

As is known, Richard Gere is among the prominent actors in Hollywood. He is known to have embraced the Buddhist teaching. Let's summarize the Lancia Delta advert: Richard Gere walking on a street where we suppose the gate of the Kodak Theatre is in Hollywood Boulevard in Los Angeles. He passes through the point on the Hollywood Walk of Fame, where his handprints are imprinted on the sidewalk, and gets in his car, a Lancia Delta. The background music that impresses the viewer is Ennio Morricone's *Verso Est*. The journey starts and we leave behind the Hollywood hills. This is a journey at night and Lancia Delta's headlights are the only source of light piercing the darkness of the night. As the sun rises slowly in the horizon, we see snowy mountains and local people living on the mountain. We realize the red flags.

It is now morning and we arrive at the place where Tibetan monks live. Richard Gere gets off his car and walks to the little Buddhist who is about to leave his handprints on the fresh snow. He kneels beside the boy and they both leave their handprints on the snow. When they lift their hands, we see that the little Buddhist boy's left hand has left a handprint with six fingers. According to the Buddhist teaching, the number six represents the six worlds of Buddhist existence (Accessed at http://www.buddhanet.net/e-learning/intro_bud.htm, http://tibetanlama.com/buddhism/The_Six_Realm.asp on March 9, 2011). In the 35th second

of the advert, Richard Gere and the little Buddhist first look at their handprints and then smile at each other. At the end of the advert, Lancia Delta's slogan is given: "*The power to be different*".

As can be seen, the *New Age* spirituality can appear in promotions that have a highly materialistic goal, in other words selling a product. Moreover, we can also make the claim that this advert advertises the Tibetan and Buddhist teachings.

We can connect some indicators of the advertising film to the words that appear in the text above. Such that, the journey that Richard Gere starts is actually a journey to the *inner self*. *Awareness* is hidden in the symbols that we come across as we travel to Tibetan mountain peaks and as the night turns into day (shepherd and yak –Tibetan cattle–, red flags). At the peak of the mountain are Tibetan monks waiting. The handprints left in stone in a materialistic world are replaced by handprints left on snow. The handprint on snow will naturally not last, but the *essence* and *awareness* that the *soul* experiences at the end of this journey would last indefinitely.

CONCLUSION

According to Twenge, *New Age* spiritualistic speeches are more of a characteristic of the Explosionist who were trained in 1950s and 60s. The researcher/writer indicates that "*focusing on the self*" belongs to that generation and individualism arose later. Twenge supports Daniel Yankelovich's view that rules of that day were new for that generation and she stresses that Yankelovich's description "members of the Explosion Generation are people circling in darkness, in search of something" is "a source for the abstract concepts that he uses when he talks about himself." Twenge also gives examples of the use of abstract terms in two interviews with famous individuals:

When Kim Basinger, a movie star born in 1953, was asked about what she would do the rest of her life, she replied 'I will observe what direction the rest of my journey will take.' The Duchess of York, Sarah Ferguson, who was born in 1959, replied to the same question as follows: 'My stay in the United States which lasted only a few months led to the new Sarah, that is my real alter ego, blossom and grow.' Not all Explosionists talk like this, but a high enough number of them do such that this figure of speech can be used as a marker to identify which generation they are from. (Twenge, 2009: 69).

In addition to Twenge's psychological and sociological comment, we should also ask the question: what could be smarter than using celebrities to promote the *New Age* trend?

We can observe the expansion of new spirituality trends that Oswald Spengler describes as "*second devoutness*" (Evola, 1996: 13) through the increasing number of personal development training programs and the increasing variety of books on this topic that appear on booksellers' shelves in Turkey, parallel to the same trends the world over.

We can claim that urban life and the pressure that this life exerts on the individual and the consequential anxiety are the forces that trigger this new trend.

We can also summarize that these new trends that can be called neo-spiritualism have a common discourse: they all exhibit a focus on the individual and an ideal of solving the existential problems of individuals through this focus and only by themselves. Some trends practice this through therapy whereas others promise providing the individual with supernatural powers, commonly defined as *cosmic*.

We can be certain that the *New Age* trend that arose “*with the hope to reclaim the spiritual field that has been destroyed by materialistic and rational understanding*” (Kose, 2011: 19), and the life coaches who popped up with the *mission* of creating the ideal individual of this trend would eventually create a fierce competitive environment in the *positive* universe that their respective groups are trying to create. In this context, we can also state that discourses that are equivalent to marketing slogans would proliferate among the *New Age* spirituality discourses.

REFERENCES

Akıncı, A. (2008). *Ezoterik Öğretiler*. 1st ed. Istanbul: Dharma Yayınları.

<http://www.ilknokta.com/urun/83197/Ezoterik-Ogretiler.html> VIEW ITEM

Bat, N. (2011). Depresyon. *National Geographic Türkiye*. 3.

<http://www.nationalgeographic.com.tr/ngm/1103/konu.aspx?Konu=2> VIEW ITEM

Castells, M. (2008). *Enformasyon Çağı: Ekonomi, Toplum ve Kültür: Kimliğin Gücü*. 2nd ed. Istanbul: Istanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları.

[http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:cBjCm2a_3csJ:www.acilkitap.com/kultur/enformasyon-cagi-ekonomi-toplum-ve-kultur-2-kimligin-gucu.htm+Castells,+M.+\(2008\).+Enformasyon+%C3%87a%C4%9F%C4%B1:+Ekonomi,+Toplum+ve+K%C3%BClt%C3%BCr:+Kimli%C4%9Fin+G%C3%BCc%C3%BC.&cd=4&hl=en&ct=clnk&source=www.google.com](http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:cBjCm2a_3csJ:www.acilkitap.com/kultur/enformasyon-cagi-ekonomi-toplum-ve-kultur-2-kimligin-gucu.htm+Castells,+M.+(2008).+Enformasyon+%C3%87a%C4%9F%C4%B1:+Ekonomi,+Toplum+ve+K%C3%BClt%C3%BCr:+Kimli%C4%9Fin+G%C3%BCc%C3%BC.&cd=4&hl=en&ct=clnk&source=www.google.com) VIEW ITEM

Dixon, P. (2007). *En Etkin 500 Trend*. Istanbul: Neden Kitap Yayıncılık.

http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:_qT9rck3yxwJ:www.karaodalar.com/%3Fp%3D1197+Dixon,+P.+En+Etkin+500+Trend.&cd=1&hl=en&ct=clnk&source=www.google.com VIEW ITEM

Evola, J. E. (1996). *Çağdaş Ruhçuluğun Maske ve Yüzleri*. Istanbul: İnsan yayınları.

<http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:GBclrfkmZCEJ:www.kitapyurdu.com/kitap/default.asp%3Fid%3D7937+%C3%87a%C4%9Fda%C5%9F+Ruh%C3%A7ulu%C4%9Fun+Maske+ve+Y%C3%BCzleri&cd=1&hl=en&ct=clnk&source=www.google.com> VIEW ITEM

Featherstone, M. (2005). *Postmodernizm ve Tüketim Kültürü*. 2nd ed. Istanbul: Ayrıntı Yayınları.

[http://docs.google.com/viewer?a=v&q=cache:QGyDrJWzhsoJ:globalmediajournaltr.yeditepe.edu.tr/makaleler/GMJ%25202010%2520G%25C3%25BCz/pdf/T%25C3%25BCketim%2520Va s%25C4%25B1tas%25C4%25B1yla%2520Olu%25C5%259Fturulan%2520Postmodern%252 0Kimlikler%2520AY%25C5%259EE%2520B%25C4%25B0NAY.pdf+Featherstone,+M.+transl ated+by+K%3%BC%3%A7%3%BCk,+M+\(2005\).+Postmodernizm+ve+T%3%BCketim +K%3%BCIt%3%BCr%3%BC.+Istanbul:+Ayr%4%B1nt%4%B1+Yay%4%B1nlar% C4%B1.&hl=en&pid=bl&srcid=ADGEESjTenq5xC4fSviicFivnRNc7g0DT41KfsWHOWEx0rDRY s6l6mkQq1ab5KaeCu_CEOrciVhmCdK9D9X70q6m0y4c3av_mpHSh0emsByNrsWPNfuoS W5ZNAOIW4L1Oh6cU7Kfut1&sig=AHIEtbRwLf56EwMZ79mTXi-9dfF7orscUg](http://docs.google.com/viewer?a=v&q=cache:QGyDrJWzhsoJ:globalmediajournaltr.yeditepe.edu.tr/makaleler/GMJ%25202010%2520G%25C3%25BCz/pdf/T%25C3%25BCketim%2520Va s%25C4%25B1tas%25C4%25B1yla%2520Olu%25C5%259Fturulan%2520Postmodern%252 0Kimlikler%2520AY%25C5%259EE%2520B%25C4%25B0NAY.pdf+Featherstone,+M.+transl ated+by+K%3%BC%3%A7%3%BCk,+M+(2005).+Postmodernizm+ve+T%3%BCketim +K%3%BCIt%3%BCr%3%BC.+Istanbul:+Ayr%4%B1nt%4%B1+Yay%4%B1nlar% C4%B1.&hl=en&pid=bl&srcid=ADGEESjTenq5xC4fSviicFivnRNc7g0DT41KfsWHOWEx0rDRY s6l6mkQq1ab5KaeCu_CEOrciVhmCdK9D9X70q6m0y4c3av_mpHSh0emsByNrsWPNfuoS W5ZNAOIW4L1Oh6cU7Kfut1&sig=AHIEtbRwLf56EwMZ79mTXi-9dfF7orscUg) VIEW ITEM

Giddens, A. (2010). *Modernite, Bireysel-Kimlik: Geç Modern Çağda Benlik ve Toplum*. 1st ed. Ankara: Say Yayınları. <http://iys.inonu.edu.tr/webpanel/dosyalar/988/file/kultur.pdf> VIEW ITEM

Hobsbawn, E. (2008). *Kısa 20. Yüzyıl: 1914-1991 Aşırılıklar Çağı*. 4th ed. Istanbul: Everest Yayınları. <http://www.idifix.com/kitap/kisa-20-yuzyil-1914-1991-asiriliklar-caqi-eric-j-hobsbawm/tanim.asp?sid=RKRHV8BU125YVSF8NL6Z> VIEW ITEM

http://tibetanlama.com/buddhism/The_Six_Realm.asp Last accessed 9th March 2011. VIEW ITEM

<http://www.advertolog.com/lancia/adverts/richard-gere-long-version-45-tibet-12042555/> . Last accessed 7th March 2011. VIEW ITEM

http://www.buddhanet.net/e-learning/intro_bud.htm. Last accessed 9th March 2011. VIEW ITEM

http://www.egitimvizyon.net/haber.php?haber_id=715 Last accessed 14th January 2011. VIEW ITEM

<http://www.insanevren.tr.gg> Last accessed 14th January 2011. VIEW ITEM

İnceoğlu G. Y. and Çomak, A. N. (2009). *Teun A. Van Dijk. In: - Metin Çözümlemeleri*. 1st ed. Istanbul: Ayrıntı Yayınları. <http://www.yasemininceoglu.com/calismalarim.php> VIEW ITEM

Kierkegaard, S. (2009). *Kaygı Kavramı*. 4th ed. Istanbul: T. İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları. http://scholar.google.com/scholar?q=Kayg%C4%B1+Kavram%C4%B1&hl=en&btnG=Search&as_sdt=1%2C5&as_sdt=on GS SEARCH

Köse, A. (2011). *Milenyum Tarikatları: Batı'da Yeni Dini Akımlar*. Istanbul: Timaş Yayınları. [http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:EIzokddT8DEJ:ilahiyyat.marmara.edu.tr/sayfa/3825/akademik/gecici1+K%C3%B6se,+A.+\(2011\).+Milenyum+Tarikatlar%C4%B1:+Bat%C4%B1%E2%80%99da+Yeni+Dini+Ak%C4%B1mlar.+Istanbul:+Tima%C5%9F+Yay%C4%B1nlar%C4%B1&cd=1&hl=en&ct=clnk&source=www.google.com](http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:EIzokddT8DEJ:ilahiyyat.marmara.edu.tr/sayfa/3825/akademik/gecici1+K%C3%B6se,+A.+(2011).+Milenyum+Tarikatlar%C4%B1:+Bat%C4%B1%E2%80%99da+Yeni+Dini+Ak%C4%B1mlar.+Istanbul:+Tima%C5%9F+Yay%C4%B1nlar%C4%B1&cd=1&hl=en&ct=clnk&source=www.google.com) GS SEARCH

Oktay, A. (2002). *Türkiye'de Popüler Kültür*. 5th ed. Istanbul: Everest yayınları.
[http://docs.google.com/viewer?a=v&q=cache:e4L48SZlpGsJ:ilf.baskent.edu.tr/downloads/dcd-rct.docx+Oktay,+A.+\(2002\).+T%C3%BCrkiye'de+Pop%C3%BCler+K%C3%BClt%C3%BCr.+5th+ed.+Istanbul:+Everest+yay%C4%B1nlar%C4%B1&hl=en&pid=bl&srcid=ADGEEsGd1cqmmGwck780L8y3se4B5MFbE5YTUdN0zPeAtznmjkbfdL3h9AFAfHOE3q0WgcUVVSE0loFToABylZ3u80FJj3iy-AAQ5hk1xOZBFjWICHqH20ynWGrnNoTI1wtRxgOzcV&sig=AHIEtbRCfLRhSj74rBSnQv_XpnMgxfgUWw](http://docs.google.com/viewer?a=v&q=cache:e4L48SZlpGsJ:ilf.baskent.edu.tr/downloads/dcd-rct.docx+Oktay,+A.+(2002).+T%C3%BCrkiye'de+Pop%C3%BCler+K%C3%BClt%C3%BCr.+5th+ed.+Istanbul:+Everest+yay%C4%B1nlar%C4%B1&hl=en&pid=bl&srcid=ADGEEsGd1cqmmGwck780L8y3se4B5MFbE5YTUdN0zPeAtznmjkbfdL3h9AFAfHOE3q0WgcUVVSE0loFToABylZ3u80FJj3iy-AAQ5hk1xOZBFjWICHqH20ynWGrnNoTI1wtRxgOzcV&sig=AHIEtbRCfLRhSj74rBSnQv_XpnMgxfgUWw) VIEW ITEM

Özer, E. (2011). 2010'da içerik: Musluktan Sadece Tıss Sesi Geliyor. *Digital Age*. 2, p3-34. Istanbul: Kapital Medya Hizmetleri A. S.
[http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:rr1E5Vo5GbkJ:www.digitalage.com.tr/Haber/digital-age-ozel-almanak-sayisi-cikti/b7a4d44e-677f-4120-b483-0dff78859e3.aspx+%C3%96zer,+E.+\(2011\).+2010%E2%80%99da+i%C3%A7erik:+Musluktan+Sadece+T%C4%B1ss+Sesi+Geliyor.+Digital+Age.&cd=1&hl=en&ct=clnk&source=www.google.com](http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:rr1E5Vo5GbkJ:www.digitalage.com.tr/Haber/digital-age-ozel-almanak-sayisi-cikti/b7a4d44e-677f-4120-b483-0dff78859e3.aspx+%C3%96zer,+E.+(2011).+2010%E2%80%99da+i%C3%A7erik:+Musluktan+Sadece+T%C4%B1ss+Sesi+Geliyor.+Digital+Age.&cd=1&hl=en&ct=clnk&source=www.google.com) VIEW ITEM

Özkartal, M. Z. (2007). *Neo-kadercinin Başucu Kitapları*. Available:
<http://www.milliyet.com.tr/2007/05/15/kitap/akit.html>. Last accessed 14th January 2010. VIEW ITEM

Sennett, R. (2010). *Kamusal İnsanın Çöküşü*. 3rd ed. Istanbul: Ayrıntı Yayınları.
[http://docs.google.com/viewer?a=v&q=cache:sqlbV45CpQcJ:m.friendfeed-media.com/f0a591b98a1a3bec620d6892ea190f0a9a44ee0f+Sennett,+R.+\(2010\).+Kamusal+%C4%B0nsan%C4%B1n+%C3%87%C3%B6k%C3%BC%C5%9F%C3%BC.+3rd+ed.+Istanbul:+Ayr%C4%B1nt%C4%B1+Yay%C4%B1nlar%C4%B1&hl=en&pid=bl&srcid=ADGEESiSv1bqoMavCMP0pgZcl3YZ-hEDatOcZskzIEa19jJzOk7g1bDVUTjirQTfYpsvQcFzGv-fwXvXkdpMzDBg5LbcTYup0puycQS924FftJDMedbhNiYbWdfQENWIN84owmqPz2yN&sig=AHIEtbQQ09XFRjvMgjTAFTjMgac1Dn8hjw](http://docs.google.com/viewer?a=v&q=cache:sqlbV45CpQcJ:m.friendfeed-media.com/f0a591b98a1a3bec620d6892ea190f0a9a44ee0f+Sennett,+R.+(2010).+Kamusal+%C4%B0nsan%C4%B1n+%C3%87%C3%B6k%C3%BC%C5%9F%C3%BC.+3rd+ed.+Istanbul:+Ayr%C4%B1nt%C4%B1+Yay%C4%B1nlar%C4%B1&hl=en&pid=bl&srcid=ADGEESiSv1bqoMavCMP0pgZcl3YZ-hEDatOcZskzIEa19jJzOk7g1bDVUTjirQTfYpsvQcFzGv-fwXvXkdpMzDBg5LbcTYup0puycQS924FftJDMedbhNiYbWdfQENWIN84owmqPz2yN&sig=AHIEtbQQ09XFRjvMgjTAFTjMgac1Dn8hjw) VIEW ITEM

Twenge, J. M. (2009). *Ben Nesli: Bugünün Gençleri Niçin Bu Kadar Özgüvenli ve İddialı Fakat Bir O Kadar da Depresif ve Kaygılı?*. 1st ed. Istanbul: Kaknüs Yayınları.
[http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:c4MxlV1ddAJ:twenge.socialpsychology.org/+Twenge,+J.+M.+\(2009\)&cd=5&hl=en&ct=clnk&source=www.google.com](http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:c4MxlV1ddAJ:twenge.socialpsychology.org/+Twenge,+J.+M.+(2009)&cd=5&hl=en&ct=clnk&source=www.google.com) VIEW ITEM

Twenge, J. M. and Campbell, W. K. (2010). *Asrın Vebasısı Narsisizm İleti*. 1st ed. Istanbul: Kaknüs Yayınları.
[http://books.google.com/books?id=CGu96TeAZo0C&pg=PA2048&lpg=PA2048&dq=Twenge,+J.+M.+\(2009\)&source=bl&ots=eeTjaWX--B&sig=9m2xX7hHGTphnqJ-0eZor3VIm60&hl=en&ei=w6FOTt_wGMOK4gTNqbHEBw&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=10&ved=0CF0Q6AEwCQ#v=onepage&q=Twenge%2C%20J.%20M.%20\(2009\)&f=false](http://books.google.com/books?id=CGu96TeAZo0C&pg=PA2048&lpg=PA2048&dq=Twenge,+J.+M.+(2009)&source=bl&ots=eeTjaWX--B&sig=9m2xX7hHGTphnqJ-0eZor3VIm60&hl=en&ei=w6FOTt_wGMOK4gTNqbHEBw&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=10&ved=0CF0Q6AEwCQ#v=onepage&q=Twenge%2C%20J.%20M.%20(2009)&f=false) GS SEARCH

Ünsal, A. and Ayrancı, Ü. (2008). Prevalence of Students With Symptoms of Depression Among High School Students in a District of Western Turkey: An Epidemiological Study. *Journal of School Health*. 78 (5). <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1746-1561.2008.00302.x/full> [GS SEARCH](#)

www.newsweekturkiye.com/haberler/.../Pozitif-dusunce-mafyasi. Last accessed 14th January 2011. [VIEW ITEM](#)