

Handbook of Brand Semiotics

ROSSOLATOS, G. (ed.): *Handbook of Brand Semiotics*. Kassel: Kassel University Press. 457 p. ISBN 978-3737600422.

Pavol Minár

Since semiotics is a highly text-oriented discipline (every semiotician knows the Algirdas Greimas' legendary expression "outside the text, there is no salvation"), the starting point for any semiotic analysis in the area of marketing communication is advertising, or brand communication, which are, from the semiotic point of view, systems of a purely linguistic nature.

So, if the main subjects of semiotics are brands and their advertising, is there any potential or relevancy for semiotics, if this is in an era of the consumers' response analysis (Big Data, neuropsychology and neuro-marketing, or behavioural economics and their outstanding discoveries and insights about 'real' consumers' reactions, and their wants and desires)? Can semiotics bring something valuable to the marketing discussion, if scholarly or practical attention paid to mainstream marketing is – as a matter of fact – focused on getting hard data from 'the consumers' side'?

As shows the impressive (impressive both by the length and by the deeply elaborated contributions) volume *Handbook of Brand Semiotics* by George Rossolatos (ed.), published by Kassel University Press in 2015, semiotics can bring very important and extremely relevant background (but also results) for any marketing scholar or practitioner.

It is because semiotics understands the brands as pieces of communication that are not just economic entities, but the cultural ones as well, since the brands "have migrated from marketing to everyday social life... A wide roster of social phenomena are rooted in brands as signs: communication strategies, production and reception of discourses, inter-subjective dynamics, changes in collective imaginary, identity construction processes, forms of life," as Dario Mangano and Gianfranco Marrone write in their text *Brand Language: Methods and Models of Semiotic Analysis* (p. 46-88) where they analyse the brand discourse in car advertising, values and valorisation in sports brands, and the system of the meaning production (and its ever-changing nature, that is connected to changes in the social and cultural life) in the segment of mineral and sparkling waters.

Mangano and Marrone combine strict and traditional structuralist concepts and their application to the advertising language analysis (advertising language in terms of language-like systems of signs), and generative trajectory of meaning and semiotic square with ideas and concepts of socio-semiotics. And the result is text that is a very nice example of how valuable semiotic analysis can be for the brand communication. Mangano and Marrone succeeded in construction of a very good and useful 'how-to insight manual' for studying common features of advertising communication in any market category and, of course, also in finding and describing individual brand differences at the same time (this is the process of semiotic values distribution and meaning valorisation). Their application of socio-semiotics opens inspiring possibilities for everyone interested in the concept of a socio-cultural dimension of branding and advertising (brands as semiotic, social and economic-cultural systems and clusters of individual and social meanings or values).

F. Xavier Ruiz Collantes and Mercè Oliva in the text *Narrativity Approaches to Branding* (p. 89-150) bring extremely relevant comparison of various kinds of brand narrativity or storytelling perspectives on brand communications. They analyse the storytelling approach that has been developed from within marketing discipline and that places narrative at the forefront of professional applications in brand communications. They compare it with structuralist or structural theories of narration and narrative semiotics. Then they focus

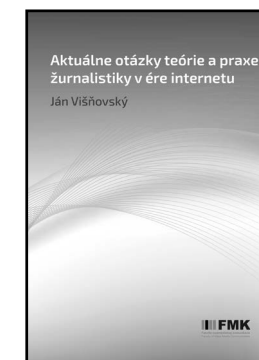
on the archetypal approaches to branding that are based on anthropological perspective and on the Jungian analytical psychology. The last section of their text describes consumers' narratives with regard to their relationships with brands from the point of view of cognitive psychology.

As Ruiz Collantes and Oliva show, the storytelling approach that has been developed from within the marketing discipline and which has been very fashionable and 'must-read' for several years in the marketing practise (Seth Godin, Stephen Denning, Ryan Mathews, Watts Wacker, Klaus Fog, Laurence Vincent, Kent Wertime, Jim Signorelli et al.), despite being focused on stories and their importance for branding and advertising communication, almost completely ignores discoveries of specific narratological theories. Instead, their sources are largely popular screenwriters' manuals (McKee, for example). This is weak and sensitive side of the storytelling approach.

After synchronic analyses of semiotics, anthropology, cognitive psychology and psychoanalysis, and showing their different approaches to brand narrativity, Ruiz Collantes and Mercè Oliva came to the conclusion that "each and every of these theoretical perspectives may aid researchers in understanding different aspects and levels of brand meaning and social signification" (p. 131). They see the different approaches to brand narrativity as being complementary: "For example, cognitive psychology claims that human comprehension, memory and identity are narratively mediated. Therefore, narratively oriented advertisements are, in principle, more effective. Narrative semiotics offers a more accentuated picture of this principle through canonical narrative schemata that can guide branding professionals in the process of creating brand communications. Anthropology establishes links between brands and myths, and, therefore, it points to ways whereby universal myths may be leveraged as models for the creation of brand identity." (p. 131). As the best examples of the brand narratives show, this complementary attitude is very functional for the brands.

Other contributions of the volume *Handbook of Brand Semiotics* brings topics like "transmedia" storytelling, the shift from "consumers" (passive targets of the communication – the brands do communicate to them) to "prosumers" (active, engaged and productive doers of the communication – the brands communicate with them) and number of specific case studies (online branding of the university, the IKEA launch and brand building in Germany, packaging and logo design and so on). *Handbook of Brand Semiotics* is thus very useful and relevant contribution to the field of the semiotic study of brands, branding and advertising.

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Current Issues of the Journalistic Theory and Practice in the Era of the Internet

VIŠŇOVSKÝ, J.: *Aktuálne otázky teórie a praxe žurnalistiky v ére internetu*. Trnava: Faculty of Mass Media Communication, University of SS. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava, 2015. 350 p. ISBN 978-80-8105-742-7.

Lenka Rusňáková

Due to the expansion of the Internet in our society, journalism is approaching a further phase of its development. Online news-making is gradually turning into a new branch of journalism which is by many authors placed in the position of a competitor to the traditional press. The situation in the field of the Internet as well as printed news therefore deserves increased attention and J. Višňovský in his monograph *Aktuálne otázky teórie a praxe žurnalistiky v ére internetu* (in English *Current Issues of the Journalistic Theory and Practice in the Era*

of the Internet) is fully aware of the fact. By considering the issues related to the position of journalism in the 21st century, he is opening up the current problem of the relationship between traditional and online journalism in the context of contemporary journalistic theory and practice. Both phenomena are the subjects of comparison which results in calling attention to the user habits and preferences of the target public. In such a way, the monograph approaches the issues of journalistic theory and practice in the Internet era from a completely new perspective – from the perspective of the recipient and his/her attitude towards both – the press and the Internet. The author is also aspiring to outline the trends of the development of journalism in the future.

From a thematic point of view, the publication is divided into six general parts:

- I. Communication and Multimedia;
- II. Journalism in Contemporary Theoretical Reflections;
- III. Current Issues of the Journalistic Practice on National and Slovak Levels;
- IV. Printed and Online News and the Recipients' Approach;
- V. New Information and Communication Technologies as a Challenge for a Journalist;
- VI. Traditional and Web News: A Perception Study of Printed and Online News.

The division of chapters indicates that theoretical drafts, primarily based on the theory of journalism as well as the theory of mass communication, have been supplemented by an extensive empirical section concentrated on defining specifics of both, the press and online journalism.

In dealing with the discussed issues, the author follows the preceding theoretical discourses and analytical studies published in his previous scholarly articles, i.e. *Newspapers Today: Problems and Perspectives* (2014) or *Univerzálny dizajn ako platforma nových komunikačných technológií a ich uplatnenie v novinárstve* (*Universal Design as a Platform of New Communication Technologies and Their Utilization in Journalism*, 2013), as well as in textbooks like *Problematika štruktúry a kompozície v novinárstve* (*The Issues of Structure and Composition in Journalism*, 2012) and others. In his research and publication activities, the author is focusing on the issues of structure and composition of periodicals as well as on the role journalism plays in the context of information and communication technologies development. In *Current Issues of the Journalistic Theory and Practice in the Era of the Internet* he proceeds with the indicated continuing research while introducing new and so far unanswered questions.

The first part of the book deals with the specifics of journalism in the press and on the Internet. It is common knowledge that mass communication – an integral platform of the 21st century journalism – is a subsystem of social communication. Furthermore, this phenomenon has the capability of rupturing the comprehension of other people's behaviour (the natural way of communication) and its biologically technical perception (the artificial way of communication). The prevailing approach, according to J. Višňovský, is the basic distinguishing feature between mass and social communications (p. 25), given 'the gap' is considerably dependent upon the virtual electronic environment. Despite the above-mentioned facts, the positive impact of electronic media on the nature of our lives is undeniable.

The emerging communication field can be viewed from different angles. In the first chapter of the monograph the author is presenting a "triadic" model of communication (communicator- medium- recipient) which is being applied also in the online journalism milieu. It was exactly the relationship between the editors – technology – and the public that lay the foundations of his attempt to define journalistic communication. However, this public cannot be taken as the recipient of mass communication. For this reason, revision of the traditional perception of the mass communication process becomes inevitable; contrary to the statement that journalism is and always will be an integral part of mass communication. A review of online journalistic work in reference to the open work of the Italian semiotician U. Eco represents an innovative way of how to approach these significant changes.

The era of the Internet, or rather internet journalism has been termed "a new journalism era" by J. Višňovský (p. 48). The difference between the new and the online media is one of the elementary specifics

of the present era since both of them contribute to the convergence of traditional media. Internet journalism has become the main initiator in the formation of blogging and civil journalism (a set of journalistic and non-journalistic statements on the Internet whose authors are not professional journalists). In order to clarify the discussed issues, the author describes how the editing process works, supporting it with an example of the Piano premium payment system which imposes a charge on the content or some of its parts in selected "Internet media". In the process of evaluation, the target public (content perception) as well as the process of the multimedia editor's development (content creation) are emphasised.

The second chapter analyses the history and current status of the theoretical study of journalism. The monograph operates with a certain interdisciplinarity – it deals with news-making and journalism not only from the point of view of journalistic sociology, but also from the point of view of media philosophy, digital theory, through the systemic approach of German theorists M. Ruehl and N. Luhmann, cultural studies, reflexive sociology, etc. By comparing the theory of French sociologist P. Bourdieu with a journalistic work, the author submits evidence of how the theory of the three types of capital in journalism is implemented. The whole process is represented by a specific journalistic system corresponding to the definition of a concept of "social domain". In the follow-up, the domain users are developing their own "habitus" – as a set of distinctive characteristics.

The third chapter is focused on current issues of journalistic practice in Slovakia as well as abroad. These individual aspects of journalism that have influence on the shaping of 21st century journalism are being discussed in detail. By using the example of recent extremist attacks on journalists in the French editorial office of satirical magazine *Charlie Hebdo* as well as the case of the financial group *Penta* that bought out the shares of the daily newspaper *SME*, the author is introducing the problem of free speech and ethical self-control in the press and online media. Economic aspects of journalistic work are considered to be the factors playing a significant role in the field of contemporary journalism. By a percentage appreciation of incomes and the costs of printed and online news, the author submits evidence of their differing financial success rates. Critical reflection on the gained theoretical and practical knowledge is used by the author to consider the changing situation on Slovak as well as international markets. On the grounds of the above-mentioned, he defines individual areas of journalism which are open for further advancement of the press.

The following chapter defines the relationship between traditional and online news-writing with an emphasis on their readers' perception. The increasing pressure on media competence related to working with the computer and the Internet has initiated changes in the editing processes. This resulted, for example, in designing different news versions for individual devices (mobile phones, tablets, etc.).

The most important factor for the existence of a particular newspaper title, however, is not the technology but the reader – the consumer of the products made public in the press. It was the activity of the Internet press recipients, the so-called "digital natives" (p. 131) that helped change newspapers and the Internet into different platforms of publishing information. The form and content have changed which has had a significant impact on the indicators of total number of readers. Referring to the controversial relationship between the Internet and traditional media, J. Višňovský underlines the necessity to re-evaluate older theories as well as the research on attention and perception (p. 137). Transformation of a news principle – from an upside-down pyramid into a trapezium, as well as designing forever new hypertext structures provide, in his opinion, sound evidence of the outdated status of the majority of accessible theoretical and empirical data.

Moreover, the news visualisation trend has contributed to the tabloid and the infotainment character of serious periodicals. In connection with this, the author introduces studies on content of the serious press following the deaths of Elvis Presley and Michael Jackson; he also discusses the rate of turnout, interaction and viewing of the Slovak web pages – (news portals being the subject to the imposition of a charge on content and pages) which are freely accessible by means of social networks.

The fifth part of the monograph deals with new information and communication theories and their utilisation in journalism. "Designing information" and creating applications that would "sell" the compact unit are preceded by demographic and sociological analyses of their users. That way, the web news creation corre-

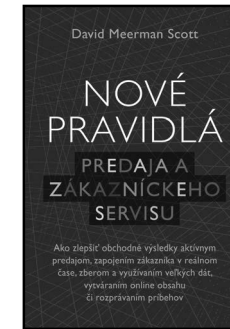
sponds to a relevant cultural dimension. J. Višňovský describes basic principles playing a role in the formation of so-called “universal design”. He views it as an idea of the effective rendering of products and equipment which could be used by as many people as possible (p. 161). However, first come the habits and the rituals of the readers to whom the media have to adjust, especially in the form of different applications and other technical innovations.

The concluding chapter (which takes up more than half of the entire publication) addresses the study of the press and online news perception as viewed by the recipients. By means of the survey questionnaire method, the author tried to record differences between traditional and Internet journalism; he was also trying to detect what type of media is preferred and how frequently it is used. The author was interested in the preferences of the traditional and online news readers. The size of sample was chosen on the basis of certain parameters and a pilot verification that reduced the spectrum of problems and specified the questions was carried out. In the end he came to the conclusion that journalism definitely has a perspective in the future, although it is not clear in what form. Actually, journalism and its forms keep changing; these changes depend on different influences. For that reason it is necessary to implement innovations and innovative processes into the sphere of news-writing and journalism (p. 301). In conclusion, J. Višňovský summarises development trends of the daily periodical press, while referring to the controversial predictions of C. Pereira, the founder of *Telesis Communication Ltd.*

The publication holds your attention due to the author’s objectivity and critical detachment. *Current Issues of the Journalistic Theory and Practice in the Era of the Internet* is based on the knowledge and findings of different theories. The lead position is taken by the theory of journalism and the theory of mass communication, as well as practical information and studies related to the contemporary editing practice in Slovakia and also abroad. With a great amount of data, there is a danger of their bad arrangement, which consequently leads to problems related to their processing and the ensuing interpretation. However, this is not the case of J. Višňovský’s monograph. His book is characterised by a complex interpretation of achieved results and distinguished by the author’s thorough orientation in the issues. With the help of the given procedure, the author achieved a high degree of clarity, and he successfully attained his goal. Due to his elaborate work with special text (void of excessive “manipulation” with specific terminology), the presented theoretical reflection is intended for both, the expert and the general public. Extensive quantitative research on the relationship between traditional and online news (focused on a connection with recipients) has not been implemented yet, which makes this publication even more attractive and innovative. As far as the analytical part of the work is concerned, I appreciate the research sample’s size that allowed for wider generalisation of the obtained findings. In the follow-up, the author compares results of his research with the results of global studies as well as the studies realised in the recent past. In the conclusion, the author performs a synthesis of all achieved findings and proceeds with their interpretation.

J. Višňovský’s publication offers an expert view on the current trends of journalistic theory and practice in the era of the Internet. It does not capture the research problem in all its forms, yet in spite of that it gets to the heart of the selected issues. It introduces new questions, the answers to which may become a part of the future theoretically-practical discourses. This intention corresponds also with the questionnaire content. In addition, the publication induces a rewarding discussion. In the contemporary contexts of recent extremist attacks targeting journalists, or various legal cases and misconduct of journalists, the position of news-writers and publicists is becoming extremely relevant. It seems that the validity of all existing theories has to be revised. For the aforesaid reason, the author is coming up with several recommendations related to further continuous study of the given issues. These recommendations represent the point of departure on our future journey of search and learning.

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The New Rules of Sales and Customer Service

SCOTT, D. M.: Nové pravidlá predaja a zákazníckeho servisu. Bratislava: Eastone Books, 2015. 251 p. ISBN 978-80-8109-270-1.

Alena Kusá

Let me start with a few personal comments. *I belong to a generation of Baby Boomers. I lived through the times when words like marketing, social networks or innovations did not occur in communication and their meaning was not known at all. I am now fortunate to witness the time when “change is given the green light”, the information-communication revolution transformed the global world and people are adapting to it. Differences between marketing and sales are indisputably fading and we all are programmed to the digital era which became irreversible. Therefore each professional publication offered by the Slovak publishing market, presenting the author’s knowledge and experience in such a way that it attracts readers’ attention, makes them have a think about its content and enriches the communication vocabulary, will indisputably be of benefit to all generations living in the 21st century.*

The New Rules of Sales and Customer Service, by David Meerman Scott, offers 10 chapters and over 250 pages of interesting reading. Its readers can find a number of stories, recommendations and arguments of not only the author himself but also by many other experienced and successful entrepreneurs there. Each chapter captivates readers with its content, forcing them in an easy manner to think about it and inspires them to confront ‘the old versus the new’. In chapters 1 through 5, the author critically refers to the practices of the salesmen applied by means of the “push” principles, implying the marketing principles of the given time. In a very genuine way, by means of his stories as well as the stories of other successful people, he is trying to introduce new, modern models of sales and service, new ways of communication with customers, with the emphasis on their demands and claims as well as a particular situational perception and flexible solutions. Using a personal and involving manner, the author illustrates the facts related to sales in the past and present time, functional and defunct sales models, communication and marketing practices, as well as an attitude towards customers, trying to convince the readers that digital communication on social networks performs miracles as far as efficiency of trading is concerned.

The publication also offers a number of facts and instructions for mastering the new rules of sales and service for the more and more demanding customers. It demonstrates that new rules work in businesses where salesmen effectively communicate and listen to their customers. In the process of reading this publication, I could not help but respect the setting of new principles related to business or sales, supported by the info age features – Internetization or customization of customers – which I could compare with the past. For the younger generation readers who are not interested in the issues related to sales and providing services, this publication is revealing in the fact that social networks, content marketing, news-jacking or ‘the human’ approach when communicating with a customer, create opportunities also in sales and marketing. It is natural that individual self-improvement brings new knowledge; it is also true that customers’ training by means of shared information creates a communication revolution in the e-market. The publication also offers (via the Internet) instructions for modern sales technologies and tactics in which psychological and sociological aspects of how to approach the shopping process are emphasised. These methods are mentioned in more detail also in his other publications *The New Rules of Marketing & PR* (2010) and *Newsjacking: How to Inject Your Ideas into a Breaking News Story and Generate Tons of Media Coverage* (2011).

Chapters 7 and 8 view customer service issues from different angles. The author repeatedly emphasises that good service is the secret weapon for increasing revenues. They have to be done on time, with a concrete goal and individual connection with customers. The author gives a number of examples from practice, both good and bad, about confronting satisfied and dissatisfied customers. After reading these chapters, I understand that in Slovakia it will take some time to set the new rules of efficient customer service in trade and business in the way they are presented by the author.

There is no doubt that the most valued contribution of this publication is contained in the last two chapters which are positively stimulating and highly motivating. As far as readers are concerned, it does not matter what their job is, it does not matter if they are salespersons or customers. The publication has the same stimulating effect on everybody. The last two chapters augment a method of changing the way of thinking; they make individuals re-evaluate their behaviour models, think in a different way and do business better. The way of thinking can only be changed gradually, but as time keeps moving, the world is becoming progressively virtual, the Internet's presence is inevitable and communication is more personal. We perceive these viewpoints as an important component of our lives. David Meerman Scott offered this publication to everybody who wants to change stereotypic habits, routine business rules and via the cognitive process keep pace with the Internet age. Thomas Carlyle in one of his quotations said: *"The best effect of every book is the fact that it motivates readers to action."* This is certainly true about D. M. Scott's book.

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Speech Communication

ŠKVARENINOVÁ, O.: *Rečová komunikácia*. Trnava: Faculty of Mass Media Communication, University of SS. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava, 2014. 214 p. ISBN 978-80-8105-632-1.

Dominika Rašová

The trio *Rečová komunikácia* (1995, 2004 and 2014) has successfully played its next concert. It has been developing since 1995 an interesting cabinet story about a man, which is characterised by accuracy and precision in aspect and elaboration. With an emphasis on the nonverbal component it informs systematically about the means of dialogic communication. The second edition of *Rečová komunikácia* differs in some aspects of media communication and in the complex view of communication. In the year 2014 the atmosphere of the publication does not change. It is just more pleasant, although the volume of new findings from current researches is visibly expanded.

Olga Škvareninová offers a complex interdisciplinary view on language communication. In a historical overview she represents critical, groundbreaking, daring, obsolete, progressive as well as revolutionary opinions. The author leads the reader through antic Greece, where the origins of the term "nonverbal communication" can be found. From the era of the 19th century, she accentuates the Ch. Darwin's book *The Expression of Emotion in Man and Animals* (1972) based on the researches of facial expressions. The 20th century offered the author a possibility to be confronted with some of the then opinions. She takes a neutral position on the studies of P. Ekman and W. V. Friesen about the relationships between verbal and nonverbal means of communication. She views them as "the classics in the research of communication" (p. 10). She reminds in

the textbook of the revolutionary statement of P. Watzlawik "it is impossible, not to communicate" that has become timeless within several decades. Moreover, the author does not accept the opinions about the inutility of assigning the terms verbal and nonverbal communication. Naming the publication seems to contradict the nonverbal communication at first sight. However, the title of the book *Rečová komunikácia* (*Speech Communication*) was chosen by the author intentionally to underline the nonverbal means as a semantically important part of the speech communication. It can be said that through this decision O. Škvareninová adapts the time, in which the speech communication often reminds of a floating iceberg, the bigger part of which is situated under the water level. The author points out that in everyday communication nonverbal means can convey more information about the communicant than the verbal means and as means of communication they can not only express the explored reality, but also hide it.

Considering the lasting interest of O. Škvareninová in nonverbal communication and her rich experience in the field of linguistic research, this university textbook accentuates especially the cooperation of verbal and nonverbal means of communication. "The coincidence of verbal and nonverbal means" is understood by the author as "an interplay of meanings of transmitted modalities through different empirical modalities, what cannot be differentiated by the common term communication" (p. 12). This view is appropriate, especially if it is a global view on interpersonal communication. It will be appreciated not only by students and university teachers, but also by the general public hungry for knowledge on the new horizon of their own speech activity.

O. Škvareninová justifies her affinity to the existing theoretical concepts related to the functioning of the nonverbal part of communication and the complementarity of verbal and nonverbal reactions with argumentations that result from own analyses of authentic research materials. The author capitalises in the publication on her long experience of lecturing abroad, leading courses of body language and media trainings. Several years of filming interviews with foreign students, the results of which are integral part of the publication, deserve to be especially highlighted. The researches of O. Škvareninová concentrated in their first phase on verbal and nonverbal description of communication. The next phase was oriented at the international character of nonverbal means and the differences in the body language. The textbook is saturated also with modern studies, thanks to which – considering common base scopes, sophisticated composition, current questions and chosen synergic attitude – it has the power to reach really anyone. These are mainly studies dedicated to the issues of determination of verbal and nonverbal means developing the topic of gender stereotypes in the speech of men and women, in the communication of journalists, the topics of special and temporal distance in mass media communication, about persuasive techniques through nonverbal communication.

The author's presentations of the research tendencies about communication, parts of communication, communicants, communication channel, communication medium, communication code, and communication roles are a good scope before starting a circuit devoted to the language and speech in communication. In this part, the author mentions indirectly the reference of J. Mistrík, who systematised his view on the means of communication in the publication *Vektory komunikácie* (1990). O. Škvareninová does not forget about the internal and external system of communication that is practically inevitable in teaching subjects about language culture. Because of didactic and methodological reasons, she goes through lingual and extralingual signals separately. The reader is enabled to become familiar with interesting facts about vocabulary, to think up the features of particular verbal styles and to discover characteristic features and defects of a spontaneous, unprepared communication. In the chapter devoted to vocal means of speech communication, O. Škvareninová presents own conclusions, which point to the fact that the reservoir of the means of the researched category is wide. Suprasegmental phenomena are extended by application passages. The reader will definitely appreciate the information about what influence the colour of voice can have, and that "a man is capable of uttering the voice up to 60 decibels" (p. 44). It is also interesting to follow the synthesis of researches dealing with the speech rate, especially in terms of gender differences.

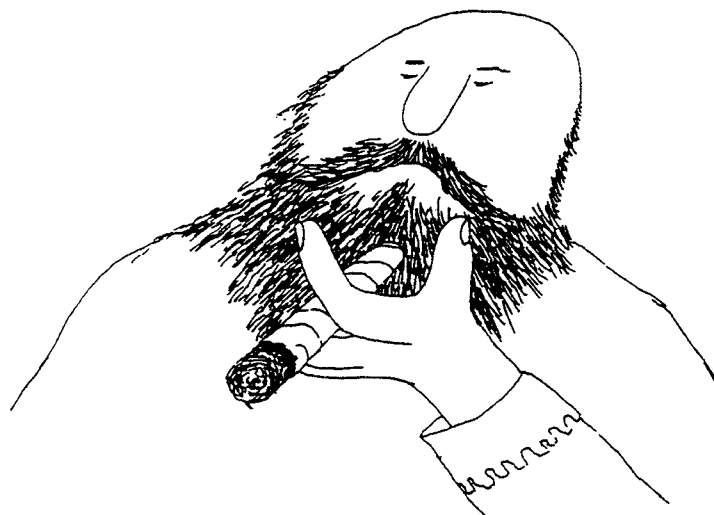
The textbook is attractive because of accompanying photographs taken by real students of the Faculty of Mass Media Communication. A large corpus of the accompanying photographs, which are worked with in the textbook, enables the reader to follow how different communication situations can determine the distance

and space, body position and posture, movements of human body, gestures in speech, body contact, mimics, eye language and overall emotions in speech communication. The percipient himself is encouraged to compare particular nonverbal components and to find the connections and parallels in his life, what was, apparently, the wish of the author. The publication captures clearly and comprehensively the effects of colours in communication, especially the nature of their physiological, psychological and symbolic action. In spite of the fact that there is often a love on first breath, in the part devoted to olfactions we get to know also about the dark sides of odor signals. General interest may, however, be raised by information on the influence of aromas (e.g. of chocolate, lavender, mint, etc.) on human performance.

O. Škvareninová is sufficiently aware of the pressure of extralinguistic circumstances on the speech communication and that affects her interpretation. Hence, she puts into reader's interest the partners in communication as "substantial nonverbal factors of an external communication system" (p. 153). We cannot disagree with the presented opinion that "communication is not a grouping of individuals, but their integrated relationship" (p. 153). In this context, the author raises the question of physical presence and absence of the communication partner and of the knowledge of the language code. The socio-communication conditions, age and generation factors, status of the communicants, cultural background and others influence also the image of the communicant. The necessity of this chapter will definitely be appreciated by the students who want to be in their future careers publicly employed as well as by those who are 'struggling' with their own working environment. It is necessary to consider the author's decision to put a chapter on the complexity of verbal communication at the end of the textbook good and for student, lay and professional public beneficial. The author recalls there the category of context and summarises the verbal and nonverbal responses to situations in life (flirt, arrogance, deceit, nervousness, joy, stress, fear, sympathy, leadership, etc.).

The publication of O. Škvareninová is for the Slovak linguistics and language training all the more significant that so far, even to the turn of the centuries, the topic of speech communication has not been treated so complexly. The textbook is precious not only professionally but also didactically and socially. We cannot be afraid to say that it will become a legend. The more we are pleased that at the end the author asks a question: "In what direction will the research in the field of speech communication develop in the future?" (p. 199). Perhaps right this is the way of opening doors and inviting to discuss the issues of speech communication to which each person needs satisfactory answers.

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“Back to the Future” sci-fi at (KO)Media

Katarína Fichnová

At the end of 2015, in time of traditional annual summarisation of events, we were summing-up at the UKF in Nitra as well. The Department of Mass Media Communication and Advertising in collaboration with the University of Economics in Katowice, and EAMMM in Bratislava organised the 10th jubilee international scientific conference with a distinctive name (KO)Media. While the prefix “ko” traditionally implies variations of topics directly linked to the media: cooperation, coexistence, coeducation; the pun accounts also the terms not incurred by combining the prefix but containing “ko” in the title: collision, correlation, communication, commerce, competence, compatibility, coherence ... In the last ten years of the conference history there have been almost a thousand of professional speakers focused on media and marketing communication, even from the perspective of journalism, cultural studies, sociology, political science and other disciplines. In the first year presented their contributions among others also the well-known scientist in the field of multimedia communication Prof. V. Patráš, or Slovak expert on media education Assoc. Prof. D. Petranová. In the following years the media theorist Prof. A. Ogonowska from the Pedagogical University in Krakow, and Prof. P. Morelli from the University of Metz took part in the conference as participants as well as the members of its Scientific Committee. The main slogan of the conference – Back to the Future – in the spirit of the cult sci-fi trilogy of eighties, meant not only looking back on the historical results of endeavour, but also emphasising a significant shift in related discourses and innovative solutions to the issues that bring ideas for the future of media and marketing communication on scientific grounds.

The organisers and the Scientific Committee of this jubilee year, the members of which are internationally recognised scholars of the leading institutions in the world and in Slovakia (for any mention Prof. Ch. Kaftandjjeva from Sofia University, Prof. J. Gołuchowski from the University of Economics in Katowice, Prof. A. Neulinger of Corvinus University in Budapest, and Prof. D. Pavlů and Assoc. Prof. H. Pravdová of University of SS. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava) in these intentions continue in a rich and inspiring ongoing professional dialogue on topical issues such as the creative industries, eCommerce and digital marketing, current social marketing and its challenges, socialisation and educational aspects of marketing communication, celebrities in marketing communication and socialisation of youth. This wider diapason of topics reflects the current needs of the theory and practice of media and technological and socio-economic context of media communication. Experts and scholars discussed in 5 sections and their contributions aimed to discuss and expand the current state of knowledge in the field of communicology, marketing communication and related disciplines. At this point it is necessary to appreciate the performances of upcoming generation of professionals – young researchers, PhD students, who with their fresh and enthusiastic approach open other ways, possibilities and perspectives for major media and social issues, to give not only a guarantee of continuity, but also the progress of scientific research in this area. Selected papers were published in scientific journals: *Analýza a výskum v marketingovej komunikácii* (Analysis and Research in Marketing Communication) and *Dot.comm – Časopis pre teóriu, výskum a prax mediálnej a marketingovej komunikácie* (Dot.comm – Journal for the Theory, Research and Practice of Media and Marketing Communication); which continually develops the dialogue in addressing issues, encourages further inspiration and also creates a platform of cooperation of experts in the next year of conference.

Umberto Eco (1932 – 2016)

Ladislav Volko

There are not too many intellectuals on this planet who would leave behind such distinctive marks in several social disciplines. Umberto Eco is one of the inspirers in the fields of linguistics, semiotics, medievalistics, aesthetics, but also art theory, philosophy and history. He was an expert in communication and mass culture and last but not least, an excellent publicist and the author of world-wide popular novels. He actively participated in all social actions and affairs. His enormous erudition enabled him to interconnect the knowledge of different scholarly fields. He loved books, but not only because he was a writer. He was a bibliophile and a bookworm at the same time. He converted a one-time hotel in Milan into an apartment with a private library containing thirty thousand items. He was sure that books printed on paper will remain in existence, despite new technologies and other forms of communication between the author and his/her readers. Umberto Eco was trying to answer those questions together with a prominent French scriptwriter Jean Claude Carriere, in a book of talks *N'esperez pas vous débarrasser des livres (We will not get rid of books, 2009)*.

His slim book *Bibliotheca* (1986) will take us into a world with no exit. *"I am of the opinion that a writer should write about the unanticipated. We cannot write what readers need and expect, we have to change them... we have to create the reader whom we want for our story,"* he said last year in the interview for the British daily *The Guardian*, then he added: *"As for me, I am a philosopher, who is writing novels only during the weekends..."* – and he was deadly serious. After all, his theoretical, philosophical and journalistic authorship (non-fiction) is much richer and diversified than his authorship of fiction that made him famous world-wide. Only a few people know that he also wrote books for children.

The Open Work (1962) was his first more significant publication that caused a tempestuous response in Italy, but also abroad. Following the structuralism of literary science, he is calling attention to some parallels between certain tendencies in contemporary art and the procedures of modern scientific branches. At the same time he emphasises that any result of human activity becomes meaningful only in communication with a percipient. Therefore, he recognises the dual approach to the work of art – as a programmed construction that predetermines the only possible set-up of values, and as the "open work" concept which is based on the free activity of an individual in the process of its interpretation. We have to point out here that similar issues were analysed and developed in Slovakia, at approximately the same time, by František Miko and his colleagues when they were dealing with literary communication. It is a pity they had not been in contact with Eco to exchange more information. They could have started a very rewarding dialogue. The following works of Eco expanded on (in today's language) communication and media contexts of different culture levels. His interest in mass culture called attention to the area which has grown into gigantic proportions only recently.

His reflections can inspire even today, which is confirmed by the fact that his book *"The Apocalyptic and the Integrated"* (1964) was translated into Czech and published in 2006. *"I criticise media by means of the media – luckily I can do it,"* he said in the interview for *La Repubblica* in 1980. His attention to this theme has not weakened even when he became famous. In his first, and the best-known work *Name of the Rose* (1980) that he wrote when he was 48, he predestined his literary interest. He used to say that he was writing fiction during the weekends, because he was a university professor and he was busy with science. He utilised his extensive knowledge of history, especially of the Middle Ages, aesthetics and sociology for writing novels, but also for more educational scientific works. Every new work of his aroused interest and was immediately translated into foreign languages – for example *Foucault's Pendulum* (1988), *Baudolino* (2000), or *The Prague Cemetery* (2010), to name just three of them. In his last work *Numero Zero* (2015) he returns to the present-day editorial

office dealing with the problems of free speech. He shocked his readers again, this time by a topic of current importance. Besides being a scientist and a writer, he also played the role of a publicist. He wrote columns, polemics, essays, and he gave his opinions on everyday life, often with vigour. From time to time he published them as separate publications that also found their enthusiasts all over the world. I would like to mention three more publications that made art lovers happy: *History of Beauty* (2004), *On Ugliness* (2007) and *The Book of Legendary Lands* (2013). He was celebrated and appreciated all over the world. Universities were competing with one another only to be able to confer the degree of *doctor honoris causa* on him. The last time I counted, he had 39. In 2013, there was a proposal to confer this significant degree on him at the Charles University in Prague. Unfortunately, the proposal was not approved by its academic council. This was their way of making a mark in the history. The University of SS. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava missed the opportunity and so did the Committee awarding the Nobel Peace Prize which he certainly deserved. This extravagant intellectual and Renaissance man was an extreme perfectionist. *"The present is unstable; we don't even have time to live it. Whatever we do, we do it with the future on our mind,"* he said.



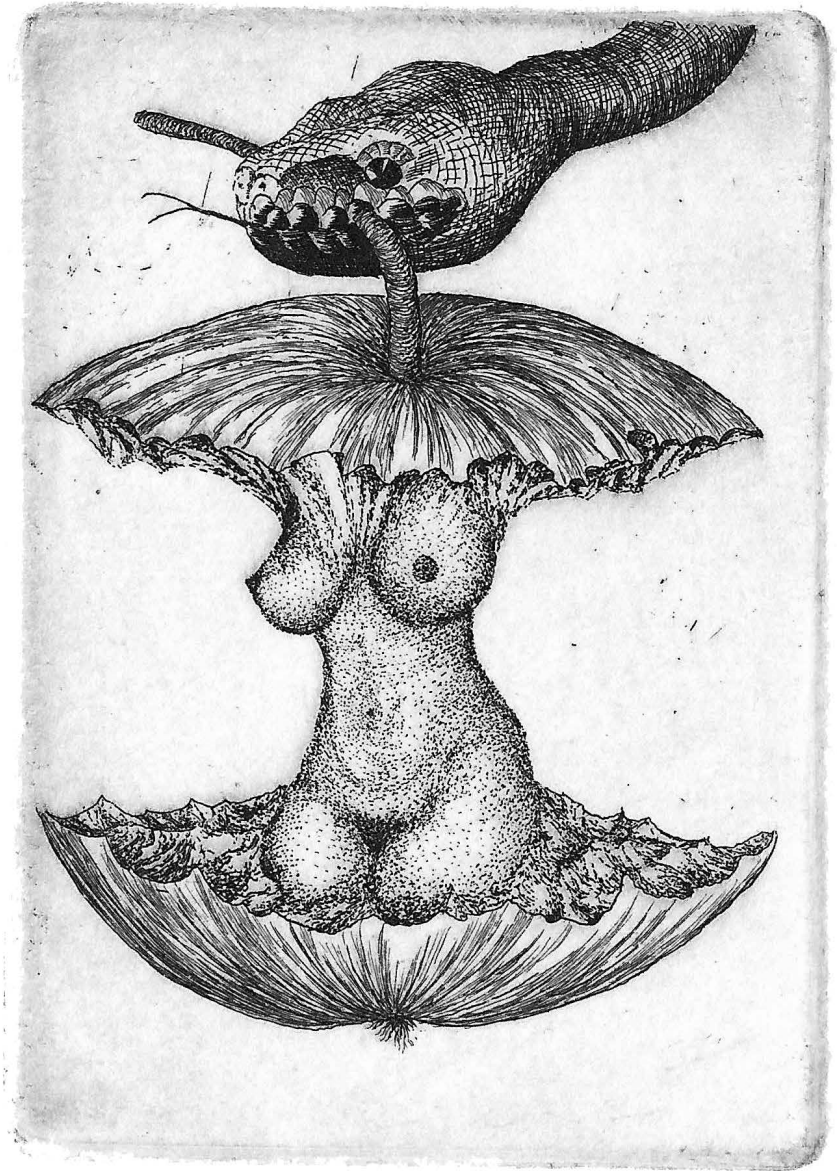
Today Caricaturist

Igor Ševčík (1951 – 2003)

Ladislav Volko

"I am a happy man because I do only what I want to do," he said in one of the interviews. He was an artist, director, animator, caricaturist, photographer, but also a high-ranking public servant, an angler and a cook with a typically rough long beard. He was born into the sign of Aquarius. People born into this sign are under the influence of two different planets. Saturn grants them peace, concentration and persistence, while Uranium bestows on them restlessness, originality and a short temper. They hate when their freedom is restricted, they are full of incredible ideas and they would like to save the world. In this sign of Zodiac the personalities like Jan Werich, Miloš Forman, Milan Lasica, but also Enzo Ferrari, Wolfgang A. Mozart or Roman Rolland were born. According to the Chinese horoscope, he was born into the sign of the Rabbit whose characteristic features are grace and kindness, but also caution and restraint. His fellows here are Albert Einstein, Orson Welles, Andy Warhol, Fidel Castro, but also Josef V. Stalin. In both signs he was accompanied by extraordinary persons. Above all, however, Igor Ševčík had his own way. There was something unbending within him, he always held his ground – as an artist as well as a human being. He defended his case fiercely but if you knew him well you could sense his sensitivity and gentleness. Those beautiful crazy drawings in feature films *Čarbanice* (in English *Scrawls*, 1982), *Tisícročná včela* (in English *Millenium Bee*, 1983) and many others originated in his studio.

He was born in Trenčianske Mitice and lived in Prague for over thirty years. There was a strong 'Janošík' (Slovak Robin Hood) element in his soul as well as traces of Czech Pábitels (characters in one of Bohumil Hrabal's famous books, people who like to bend the reality when telling stories). He was also an incredibly hard-working man. In one of the first years of the Artfilm festival in Trenčianske Teplice (the place where he spent his childhood), after the final film screenings, we were waiting at the railway station for the early morning train. We had a bottle of wine, and being inspired by film stories we recounted not only our past but also the future. Igor had very clear visions of his future: he wanted to create art – in form of drawing, animated film and caricature. We were fantasising about a pub that would have painted walls and the ceiling that would be full of little people which we see when we are under the influence of wine... Persistently following his objective and his artistic work is sound evidence of his achievements. Among them we could mention short animated films like *Siesta* (1977), *Evoluce* (in English *Evolution*, 1981), *Ráno po flámu* (in English *Morning after a Drinking Spree*, 1979), *Lovec* (in English *The Hunter*, 1985) or *Poslední cigareta* (in English *The Last Cigarette*, 1989), but also his book illustrations, scenic designs, a number of comic strips, poster production, graphic art and applied graphics. In all of them you can notice his unmistakable penmanship. From graphic art he moved on to painting and ceramics and from there to decorating the interiors of Prague restaurants and small pubs. One of the last pubs decorated in his irreproducible way, *Palírna – Igor Ševčík*, is located near Staroměstské náměstí (Old Town Square) in Prague. He loved to take pictures, write short stories and exhibit his art work. He wanted people to see his work so that they could react to it. His reaction was then expressed in his next work. The awards pleased him, but he did not attach any particular importance to them. His love of nature is expressed very well in the title of the book that was published after his death: *Hlava plná ryb* (*The Head Full of Fish*, 2006). His fishing passion was also the reason why he made a feature documentary about fishing in Mongolia (1994). He had a guardian angel in the guise of his wife Kateřina. It is to her credit that the work of Igor Ševčík continues to inspire and provoke us. Igor would be 65 this year. Actually, he is 65. He is here, only living in another dimension.



A. E. 7/10
"Jablko"
Igor Ševčík
1984