

## New Media – Trends and Challenges

DRULĂ, G.: *New Media – Trends and Challenges*. Bucharest: Tritonic, 2014. 262 p. ISBN 978-606-8571-85-0.

Romina Surugiu

“New Media – Trends and Challenges” by Dr. Georgeta Drulă, Professor of New Media, Multimedia and Journalism at University of Bucharest, focuses on a theme of maximum importance for the scientific community worldwide – on new media and its/their rise and development in the contemporary society. The subject is new and fluid; therefore it poses numerous difficulties for the social sciences researchers, both from a theoretical perspective and from a perspective of practice. From this point of view, this book, well written and well documented, is a very important tool for academics and students within the field of communication studies.

The first chapter, **Theorizing New Media**, presents the scientific theories developed by researchers in the new media field: *network theory*, *computer-mediated communication theory*, *information theory*, *activation theory of information exposure*, *communication goal theory* as well as *diffusion of innovation theory*, *contextual design theory*, *minimalism theory*, and *participatory media theory*. These theories are very well explained – by exploiting new and updated sources of information on new media and its role in the globalised society, such as academic journals: *New Media & Society Journal*, *Media, Culture & Society*, *Sociology Compass*, *Journalism*, etc. The chapter also analyses four factors that characterise the scientific approach of new media: *engagement*, *organizational innovation and adoption*, *mobility*, and *content computerization*. “New media”, the author explains, “provides a significant insight into the enormous changes occurring in the world of communication media. New media is not just a concept; it is about adoption, forecasting, implementation and user research in media.” (p. 96-97). One issue of reflection for the author is the role of innovation in journalism, which challenges the existing values, mentalities and practices. The author mentions “computer assisted journalism”, “computational journalism”, “data-driven journalism” and “data journalism”, focused either on algorithmic processes or on open data available on the Web.

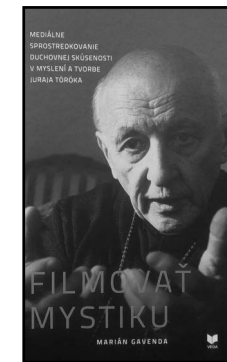
In the second chapter **Media Convergence in New Media Studies**, the author argues that convergence should be studied both at the macro and micro level. The macro level refers to the economic and technological aspects and to the infrastructure of computer networks; the micro level to the journalistic content. “Media convergence refers to both the content and the technological support; both to the media market and to the media production.” (p. 116). The author explains that the technological convergence takes into consideration the unification of several media channels through technologies such as the Internet or mobile devices. At its turn, “content convergence is assimilated with multimedia content and provides many new forms of cross-media products such as visual and digital stories, news sites, online television, online radio, or the combination of videogames, movies or television” (p. 116). The author explains that the multiple forms of convergence are used as ways of attracting the audience and ensuring the interactivity; and, also, that the development of convergent media products is practically endless.

The third chapter, **Users’ Participation for the Media Production**, examines the issue of participation and collaboration in online media production. The author examines three directions of research: the relation between user generated content (UGC) and professional media content, the different types of UGC platforms and the consequences of users’ participation on media products and production. The author explains that “the evolution of new media technologies makes it a necessity to understand different patterns of participation, and socio-cultural and economic implementation of the participation term” (p. 207). The potential of users as creators should be very well understood by companies involved in media production.

The last chapter, **Mobile Media, Mobile News**, presents new media as a result of implementation of new technologies (the mobile technology). The author analyses the technical aspects related to the use of mobile technology and also its effects on the production of journalistic content. The author argues that the journalistic content must be reconfigured to adapt to mobile devices, according to users’ needs.

The author concludes that the content production should take into consideration two major conditions: a technological one (imposed by the mobile devices and their technical characteristics), and a social one (the needs, the expectations and the practices of users). The technological determinism is the challenge of new media.

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## To Film Mysticism. Communication of Spiritual Experience in the Life and Work of Juraj Török

GAVENTA, M.: *Filmovať mystiku. Komunikácia duchovnej skúsenosti v živote a tvorbe Juraja Töröka*. Bratislava: Veda, 2016. 247 p. ISBN 978-80-224-1508-8.

Sabína Gáliková Tolnaiová

The topic of Marián Gavenda’s monograph titled *Filmovať mystiku. Komunikácia duchovnej skúsenosti v živote a tvorbe Juraja Töröka* (*To Film Mysticism. Communication of Spiritual Experience in the Life and Work of Juraj Török*) is extremely relevant, necessary and important since it reveals the meaning of life and transcendence and, even more importantly, re-invents the spiritual life through life of a priest, film director, screenwriter and globe-trotter Juraj Török in the period when materialism and consumerism rule people’s lives. The fact that there is a shift in contemporary culture from conceptual to visual one adds to the topicality of the matter; the author reflects on this and offers a linkage between visual culture and spirituality.

The goal of the monograph, as the author explains on page 18, is to “study communication of spiritual experience through media”. In the case of J. Török, the media that are used and talked about predominantly are film and television. To understand communication of spiritual or mystical experience presents, at the same time, a timeless challenge for media communication studies. On the one hand, we have spiritual experience that exceeds the usual manifestations of life including our language; on the other hand, we have limited means of mediated communication – such as speech, writing, but also film and television. The author realises this problem very well and in his work turns to a positive attitude that he manifests through K. Vrána’s words: “Humans can speak a language that is not from this world” ... “a word is capable of absorbing God’s Word into its very own scope and pattern” (p. 216). As the author states, one condition must be met for media-based communication of spiritual experience to happen – at least partial spiritual experience of both the communicator and the recipient. Spiritual experience is *conditio sine qua non* for communicating spirituality. Further it is the effect of the Holy Spirit, the capability of mutual listening and sharing, but also the artistic style used to spread the message, for example in the form of a film. We can agree with this, because if we rejected the fact that spiritual experience can be communicated, then we would also suppress something essential, something that constitutes the human existence – sharing (communicating) all stages of existence. Majster Eckhart once

said that if he could not speak about his mystical experience, he would talk about it to his walking stick.<sup>1</sup> This is the reason why we can understand Wittgenstein's claim "Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent"<sup>2</sup> as irrational. Following the theoretical preparation and under certain conditions, I take the author's concluding argument that favours spiritual experience as very convincing.

The second area that was scrutinised, though it was not an explicit goal of the work, deals with linking visual culture and spirituality. The author tries to shift the contemporary visual culture, which is ruled by consumerism, to the spiritual level. It should happen on the imaginary line: image – beauty – spirituality. In this context, the author refers to the iconographic practice in Eastern Spirituality which claims that through admiring the beautiful, images can help us transcend profane dimension and thus reach the sacral and spiritual level. Citing J. Török, the author explains: "Image influences a man much more than any other communication form ... beauty fills images with vitality ... the beauty of the nature is the place where divine Sophie, Goddess of Wisdom, originates" (p. 202-203). According to the author, such practice, if being spread, could positively affect the whole generation that is already living in a visual culture.

I can see a positive asset of the monograph in introducing a relatively unknown priest and film director Juraj Török. His sermons, interviews and clerical moral claims, which the author found in archives or obtained via direct interviews, are valuable. Especially valuable are then Török's ideas of spiritual life, of a way of its implementation – these ideas are influenced by his knowledge of other cultures and religions. Marián Gavenda's monograph thus definitely is a great contribution to Slovak literature in the field of theology, spirituality and media communication of spiritual experience.

I would recommend the author to incorporate in his further analysis also authors such as P. Ricoeur, R. Alleau, V. Borecký and others who used a philosophical (or religionist and psychological) approach to study religious symbolism and distinguished quite strictly between symbols and signs. According to these authors, a sign can be approached rationally while a symbol is polysemous and not quite rational. Paul Ricoeur understands a symbol as "any semantic structure in which the meaning is direct, primary, literal and which is linked to another meaning, indirect, secondary, devolved, which can only be understood through the first meaning".<sup>3</sup> Ricoeur further explains that we can only understand a symbol when we are open to it and wait until we are addressed by it. This corresponds with the author's approach because for understanding a symbol, spiritual experience is required. Similarly, R. Alleau notices that a symbol is partially recognisable, partially unrecognisable, and even that transfer from a sign to a symbol requires initiation, which is bound to illustrating death.<sup>4</sup>

When analysing visual culture, I would also advise the author to make a step towards semiotics, especially semiotics of images, where the greatest authors are, for example, R. Barthes, G. Sonesson, U. Eco, but also others. Though the author's goal is related to spiritualisation of the image, the primary secular understanding of images is controlled by the rules of semiotics. Only then can we contemplate the image, feel its beauty and enter the sphere of spirituality.

Considering the form, the language used in the work is cultivated, consistent, and takes gradually more and more intense forms, offering thus a wonderful experience of reading and especially thinking about ideas that develop further and further.

The monograph *Filmovať mystiku. Komunikácia duchovnej skúsenosti v živote a tvorbe Juraja Töröka* by Marián Gavenda is a great contribution to the specialised literature in the field of theology and media communicating spirituality; therefore I recommend it to everyone who is interested in the given topic.

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ALLEAU, R.: *O povaze symbolu. Úvod do obecné symboliky*. Praha : Malvern, 2008.  
BORECKÝ, V.: *Porozumění symbolu*. Praha : Triton, 2003.

1 SUDBRACK, J.: *Mystika*. Kostelní Vydří : Karmelitánské nakladatelství, 1995, p. 15.

2 WITTGENSTEIN, L.: *Tractatus logico-philosophicus*. Praha : Oikoymenth, 1993, p. 169.

3 BORECKÝ, V.: *Porozumění symbolu*. Praha : Triton, 2003, p. 25.

4 See also: ALLEAU, R.: *O povaze symbolu. Úvod do obecné symboliky*. Praha : Malvern, 2008.

SUDBRACK, J.: *Mystika*. Kostelní Vydří : Karmelitánské nakladatelství, 1995.  
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## New Scholarly Reflections on Slovak Media Law: Media System of the Slovak Republic in the Light of Law by Jaroslav Chovanec

CHOVANEC, J.: *Mediálny systém Slovenskej republiky vo svetle práva (Základné otázky mediálneho práva SR)*. Bratislava : Procom, 2015. 206 p. ISBN 978-80-85717-31-0.

Magdaléna Ungerová

In 2015, Dr. h. c. Prof. JUDr. Jaroslav Chovanec, CSc., a member of the Department of Law and Humanities at the Faculty of Mass Media Communication at the University of SS Cyril and Methodius in Trnava, published his latest monograph titled **Media System of the Slovak Republic in the Light of Law (Fundamental Issues of Slovak Media Law)**. The publication was approved by the Editorial Board and Scientific Council of the Faculty of Mass Media Communication together with the Editorial Board and Scientific Council of the University of SS. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava. The range of the discussed issues proves that the monograph in question is primarily meant to broaden the existing body of knowledge on Slovak media law and revise some of the older concepts. However, it can be also used as a lecturing material at the Faculty of Mass Media Communication UCM (mainly to study the academic subject "Media Law") as well as at other faculties where Media Law in the Slovak Republic is lectured. Its content is also addressed to journalists working both in the print and electronic media and finally it may appeal to public servants working in state administration and other local administrative units, together with the general public. From the viewpoint of structure, the monograph consists of introduction, ten chapters and conclusion (here called **Instead of Conclusion**).

The first chapter characterises basic terminology related to the topic. The author points out activities taken by the media and journalists within mass media communication in relation to the public sphere in Slovakia. Simultaneously, he also exposes their unfair practices, including violation of human and civil rights and freedoms. He places emphasis on the critical observance of Mass Media Law and Ethical Code of Journalists. In conclusion of the chapter, the author states that despite certain deficiencies which appear in media activities, Mass Media Law regulates in a sufficient way the system of media in Slovakia and provides on the one hand adequate space for successful and democratic operation of the media, together with the protection of human and civil rights and freedoms of our citizens and the protection of their privacy and personality; on the other hand it also grants enough space for the protection and independence of the media and journalists.

Second chapter is divided into two parts. The first one deals with the establishment of the media and their development in Czechoslovakia and Slovakia until November 1989 and the second one describes the so-called 'Velvet Revolution' and the transformation of the media into the 'dual media system'. In the first part the author analyses the emergence of media, including Czechoslovak Radio and its founding on 18<sup>th</sup> May 1923. The author also points out that in 1939, with the establishment of the Slovak State, both the Czechoslovak Republic and the Czechoslovak Radio ceased to exist, while the radio company Slovak Radio was established in Slovakia. The author mentions that the outburst of the Slovak National Uprising led to the establishment of a free transmitter in Banská Bystrica on 30<sup>th</sup> August 1944, which was later destroyed by the German occupy-

ing forces. The attention should be drawn to the fact that after the communist 'Victorious February of 1948', the integration of the Slovak Radio and the Czech Radio into Czechoslovak Radio took place on 28<sup>th</sup> April 1948 and it was nationalised, i.e. now owned by the state. However, the Slovak Radio gained an autonomous status, whereas the Czech Radio operated in this way until the establishment of the Czechoslovak Federation on 1<sup>st</sup> January 1969. Due to the establishment of the Czechoslovak Federation, the Slovak Radio and the Czech Radio began to operate relatively independently, under the supervision of the Czechoslovak Radio, until the 'Velvet Revolution' in November 1989. In this context it is worth mentioning that after the occupation of the Czechoslovak Republic by the 'Warsaw Pact' troops in August 1968, the so-called normalisation in the society in 1969 and 1970 started, negatively affecting activities of the Czechoslovak Radio which actually became an ideological tool until the 'Velvet Revolution' in November 1989 changed the given state of matters.

The first section of the second chapter also analyses the emergence and development of the Czechoslovak Television and the Slovak Television. The Czechoslovak Television was constituted as a separate entity on 1<sup>st</sup> October 1959. The position of the Czechoslovak Television was regulated by the Law No. 18/1964 Coll. The internal structure of the Czechoslovak Television was regulated by its Statute. Since 1969 there existed the Slovak Television as a separate organisational unit of the Czechoslovak Television, ruled by the director, who was also the deputy of the central director of the Czechoslovak Television. In May 1973 the Czechoslovak Television started regular broadcasting in colour on the second programme and at the end of the year also on the first programme. In the years 1969-1970 there started the process of 'normalisation' both in the Czechoslovak and Slovak Television, as a result of the invasion of the armies of the 'Warsaw Pact' in August 1968, when many editors and media professionals were forced to leave, suffering from the violation of their work, civil rights and liberties. The Czechoslovak Television and the Slovak Television operated in this way until the 'Velvet Revolution' in November 1989. The establishment of the independent Slovak Republic (on 1<sup>st</sup> January 1993) led to the origins of the independent public broadcasting service – the Slovak Television. In this period its position was regulated by the Law of the National Council No. 254/1991 Coll. on Slovak Television that was later amended by the Law No. 482/1992 Coll. and Law No. 166/1993 Coll.

The author also evaluates the 'Velvet Revolution' and the transformation of the media into 'a dual system' in Slovakia after 'November 1989' and its consequences on the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, which lost its leading position. In this context he states that under pressure of democratic civil and political powers execution of major changes in political, state and economic lives of the citizens of the Czech and Slovak Federative Republic occurred. Simultaneously, he points out the fact that it came to the change of the state and its ideological direction, which started to be built on new principles, thus on the principles of political and economic pluralism. It also meant that executed changes led to creation of a pluralist democratic system, together with the creation of market economy while respecting social and ecological aspects. It also sparked off re-elaborating of the overall legal system in the state. The 'Velvet Revolution' fulfilled all assumptions and conditions for transformation of the media into 'a dual media system', consisting of public service media (established by law) and commercial (private) media, i.e. broadcasting regulated by licenses. Newly created legislation changed the status of the citizens and their fundamental human and civil rights and freedoms (including political rights such as freedom of expression and right to free access to information, together with the ban on censorship). The author pays special attention to the Law No. 308/2000 Coll. on Broadcasting and Retransmission and Amendment of the Law No. 195/2000 Coll. on Telecommunications and also to the Law No. 532/2010 Coll. on Radio and Television of Slovakia, which united two existing legal entities, namely the Slovak Radio and the Slovak Television into one subject. The author further points out new functioning of public-service media, which results from the quoted Law No. 532/2010 Coll. In conclusion of the chapter the author states that despite existing deficiencies and shortcomings in operation and funding of media system in the Slovak Republic, this system is vital and eligible to improve its activities and functioning while building democratic society and a legally consistent state in Slovakia.

Third chapter involves assessment of contemporary legal regulations of media system in Slovakia, in which the legislator – the National Council of the Slovak Republic – regulates the origin, status, scope of powers and activities of public-service media and commercial media and their control bodies. The author points

out the positives and critically evaluates the negatives existing namely in legal regulations and in functioning and operation of media system in Slovakia. At the same time, he emphasises the necessity of implementing complexity and competencies in social-political practice of media. With special accent, he poses a requirement to use the state language, i.e. the Slovak language correctly in the whole media system in Slovakia, namely due to the current lack of linguistic culture that manifests itself in various media products. He also critically focuses on the incompetence of all previous Slovak governments for not to be able to prepare and make the National Council of the Slovak Republic pass a new and democratic Press Law until 9<sup>th</sup> April 2008 when this legal document was finally approved while replacing the old one, which had been in power since 1966 in amended versions. In the chapter he also points out the fact that what is not presented in media, does not exist in the minds of citizens. In conclusion of the chapter he states that despite several deficiencies in the valid legal regulations of the media system in Slovakia, it is absolutely necessary to respect the existing laws. In this context he emphasises the importance of improving legal regulations of the media system as media are creators of public opinion, holders and promoters of culture, thus co-creators of cultural and national identities of the Slovak nation and all minorities living in Slovakia. Apart from the above-mentioned cases, the media system in Slovakia is vital and functioning, able to fulfil educational, cultural, entertaining and especially informational roles in relation to our citizens.

Fourth chapter evaluates assumptions and conditions of the origin of the new Press Law and also the process of its approving in the National Council of the Slovak Republic. The author points out the structure and content of institutes such as the right to response, rights to protection of information sources, right to correction and right to additional notice. He places emphasis on the fact that the new Press Law is based on the principles and philosophy of existing press laws in several membership countries of the EU and is fully compatible with them. He also argues that the new Press Law has a positive impact on media system in Slovakia, not only from the viewpoint of protection of human and civil rights and freedoms, but also regarding the principles and values of a legally consistent state and further development of democracy in the Slovak Republic as such. There is also underlined the fact that the new Press Law has been successfully implemented in social-political and legal practices and it has created suitable conditions for operation of media and work of journalists in Slovakia.

Fifth chapter critically analyses contemporary state of the politics, implementation and functioning of the print and electronic public-service and commercial media in socio-political practice of Slovakia. The author employs adequate criticism in order to react to the existence of some legislative insufficiencies related to (mostly digital) media and media communication as such. He demands legal regulations of mass media communication and the Internet, while underlining that mass media communication is an important factor in building civil society and a democratic, legally consistent state in Slovakia.

Sixth chapter involves an assessment of constitutional and legal regulations of these political, social and legal institutes as significant phenomena of democracy. Special emphasis is put on their implementation in constitutional and socio-political practice. However, these institutes (freedom of expression, free access to information and protection of privacy) are examined not only from the constitutional and socio-political viewpoints, but also from the point of view of their implementation in media.

Seventh chapter characterises the position and scope of powers of the Technical Committee at the Council for Broadcasting and Retransmission, the Slovak Television Council, the Press Council and the Slovak Advertising Standards Council. The author analyses these bodies of media control and regulation from the viewpoint of their status, scope of activity and tasks, as well as their structure and incumbent period. At the same time, he defines and explains some of the basic terms closely connected to the above-mentioned topics. He also specifies the broadcasters, editors and press agencies that are subjects to the authorisation of media control bodies in Slovakia and their competency to carry out this control. The author claims that legal regulation of media control bodies is applied in social and legal practices and enables them to implement their tasks and aims, defining them as independent and unbiased bodies following on the one side service to the public – the citizens, and on the other side protection of journalists and thus it creates optimal conditions for implementation and development of mutual communication between the media and the general public.

Eighth chapter includes evaluation of democracy and its characteristic features and forms (direct: referendum, plebiscite, meetings of citizens belonging to a certain community, electoral vote, elections, initiative of citizens; indirect: representative forms) and its implementation under valid constitutional law rules in practice. The author also mentions participation of citizens in the state power and in administration of public affairs, while emphasising the role and importance of political parties and criticising corruption, clientelism, the lack of political and legal cultures and other weaknesses of democracy. The tasks of media are fulfilled in the process of implementation of democracy; media are supposed to defend the right of citizens to be informed and thus function as ‘watch dogs’ of democracy. In this context, the author mentions negative phenomena such as mediocracy and information manipulation. He also points out that we live in the times of ongoing globalisation and global financial and economic crisis, which is accompanied by moral and ethical decadence that is further negatively reflected in our understanding of human rights, freedoms and democracy in general and in the functioning of the legally consistent state – the Slovak Republic.

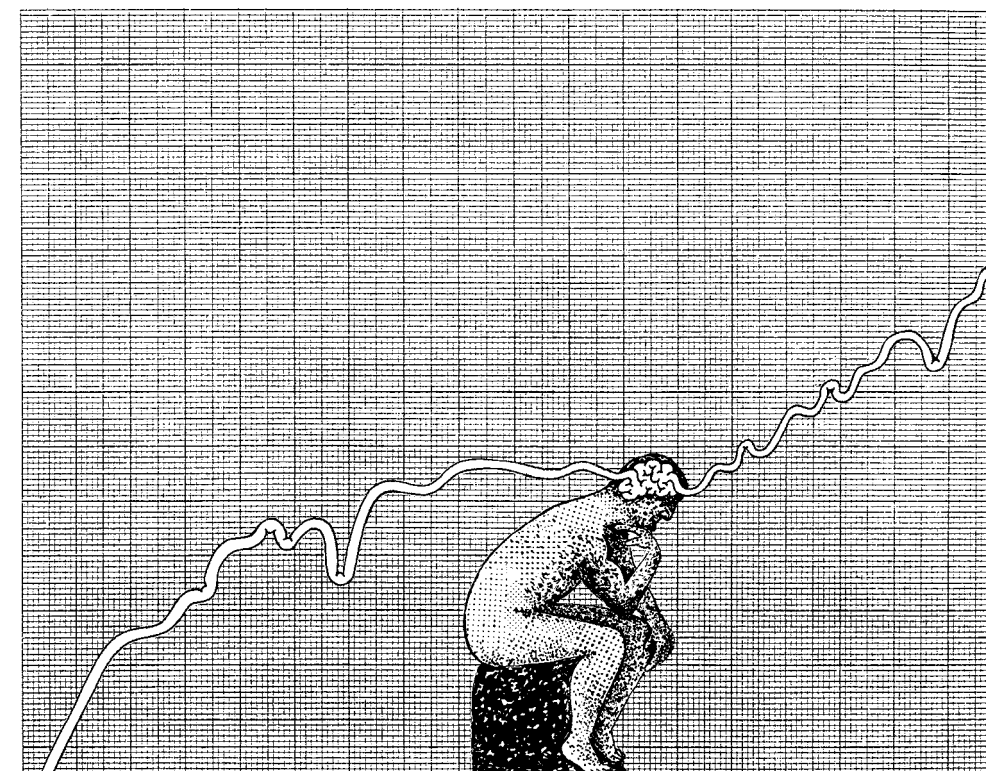
Ninth chapter analyses fundamental theoretical and practical issues of media responsibility from philosophical and legal viewpoints. It is based on the outcomes of the ‘Velvet Revolution’ in 1989 that created necessary preconditions for the fall of the communist government together with the transformation of the Slovak society, including the transformation of the media system. The author also points out that after the establishment of the independent Slovak Republic (1<sup>st</sup> January 1993) a new media (dual) system and media space were built, in which an important emphasis is put on their development on the basis of new, democratic principles and on responsibility of media for their activities. The author also uses available foreign and domestic bibliography and legal regulations, i.e. the laws passed by the Slovak National Council, which deal with the media system in Slovakia and also determine responsibility of media. In conclusion of the chapter the author states that responsibility of media for their activities helps to accomplish all functions of the media system, together with developing a democratic civil society and a legally consistent state in the Slovak Republic.

Tenth chapter characterises the concept of a legally consistent state, its democratic principles in the light of the valid Constitution of the Slovak Republic and their implementations in practice. The core of the elaborated topic consists of the analysis and assessment of interaction between media and law, together with the implementation of media communication. Here, the author points out that media and media communication significantly influence the social life, culture, coexistence of individuals – citizens and politicians, while emphasising that every state power needs to address the key issue of free access of citizens to information, together with implementation of freedom of expression and right to privacy. These cardinal issues must also be solved in the Slovak Republic by legal regulations at a high level, in the spirit of our legal system, together with the intentions of international documents passed by the European Union. This task is further redoubled in the digital society, thus in the conditions of new media, media technologies and the Internet. Both media and political parties in Slovakia often disseminate the so-called impersonal and important news by social networks, whereas they reduce critical thinking and understanding of information, which brings considerable risks for the development of civil society and democratic legally consistent state. Furthermore, the author points out that in the times of financial and economic crisis, together with the crisis of values and morals, media often help to radicalise disciplinary function of the state policy and law. In order to avoid these risks in the society, the interaction between law and media should play a positive role, together with high standard of legal regulations established by the state administration. In conclusion of the chapter the author stresses out the fact that only high standard of legal regulations of media and media communication can significantly help in the cultivation and education to conscious and correct legal awareness of our citizens, including politicians, media entrepreneurs, journalists and other media professionals.

As stated in the closing chapter the author summarises the issues addressed in individual chapters while proposing several recommendations to improve the functioning of media and protection of citi-

zens together with journalists. Besides, the author discusses three publications relevant to the elaborated monograph: **Essentials of Mass Media Law** (textbook), **Freedom of Expression and Freedom after Expression and Legal Protection of Personality**.

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# Juraj Vojtek

(1936 - 2016)

Ján Višňovský

10<sup>th</sup> August 2016 was goodbyes and gave our last league, university Professor, and historian Dr. h. c. Prof. had passed away unexpectedly – his persona and scholarly for good reasons – very well – also in Czech academic circles. years of his active pedagogical the Department of Journalism nius University in Bratislava or Communication, University Trnava – Juraj Vojtek’s calm even thousands of university and specialists in professional nication. Besides dedicating the sphere of university educa-



the rainy day we said our last respects to our long-time col-translator, journalism theorist PhDr. Juraj Vojtek, CSc., who edly on 6<sup>th</sup> August 2016. Juraj accomplishments are – and known; not only in Slovak, but Throughout more than 50 and research work – whether at at the Faculty of Arts, Come-at the Faculty of Mass Media of SS. Cyril and Methodius in voice educated hundreds, students, future graduates journalism and media commu-his life to decades-long work in tion, Professor Vojtek also left

a significant mark on development of Slovak theory of journalism and used his knowledge of Anglo-Saxon culture and English language skills to allow several generations of Slovak readers to experience many works by world-famous English and American fiction writers and novelists.

Juraj Vojtek’s professional career at the Department of Journalism (the Faculty of Arts, Comenius University in Bratislava) ended in 2002, in the year when he reached the age of 65 years. However, he decided not to leave the sphere of university education he was so familiar with – in January 2003 Professor Vojtek offered his extensive set of knowledge and hard-to-match professional experience to the Faculty of Mass Media Communication at University of SS. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava. He quickly became one of the most popular professors – not only among his colleagues, but also in student circles. The annual student surveys performed by the Faculty of Mass Media Communication, which aimed to measure both quality and popularity of university professors and lecturers, clearly indicated that students of the faculty saw Juraj Vojtek as one of the most professional, fair and educated professors. For example, in 2010 he became the top expert in his area of expertise and the professor with the fairest methods of evaluating students. A year later, he earned the title of “the lecturer who is most dedicated to his work”. Professor Vojtek was also awarded two academic medals – a silver medal by Comenius University in Bratislava (1999) and a gold medal by University of SS. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava (2007). Moreover, on 21<sup>st</sup> February 2012, during celebratory meeting of the Scientific Committee of the University of SS. Cyril and Methodius, he was awarded the honourable degree of Doctor honoris causa (Dr. h. c.).

Juraj Vojtek’s theoretical, research and pedagogical profile refers to two different areas of interest. Firstly, he specialised in history of journalism (mostly English and American) and – at the same time – put extra emphasis on emergence and development of modern journalistic structures. Secondly, he was interested in theory and practice of editing, aiming to better understand structure and composition of journalistic texts. It is also necessary to point out that Professor Vojtek enriched both of the above-mentioned fields of study by his (in many ways) pioneer and ground-breaking publications that went far beyond the borders of Slovak scholarly

sphere. For instance, the second edition of internationally recognised publication titled *Who’s Who in Mass Communication* (1990) states, under number 1605, name ‘Juraj Vojtek’.

Love of literature had been outlining and accompanying Professor Vojtek’s career and private interests for decades, literally throughout his whole life. However, this strong passion for the written word never transformed into writing fiction; he became a well-known translator of classical as well as modern English and American literature, e.g. of the literary works by E. Albee, L. Carroll, D. Defoe, L. Ferlinghetti, H. Fielding, E. Hemingway, M. Leimbach, J. London, H. Melville, J. Milton, G. Orwell, W. Saroyan, J. Steinbeck, W. M. Thackeray and V. Woolf. In 1982 he was awarded the Ján Hollý Award (the best translation of the year) for his excellent interpretation of H. Fielding’s *The History of Tom Jones, a Foundling*, which had been published by *Tatran* in 1980. Moreover, he was also a renowned cultural and literary critic – he wrote critiques on 131 literary works of art of English and American provenience – many of them were later published in Slovak translations. J. Vojtek used to work as an editor, too – he edited various digests and collections of works by classical English and American novelists (*Tatran*’s highly appreciated special edition *The Golden Fund of World Literature*). He often wrote reviews and critiques on latest titles of English and American literature which were published in the nation-wide daily press and literary journals.

Juraj Vojtek’s extensive work in translation was not left unnoticed also beyond Slovak borders. In October 2015 Professor Vojtek visited Grolier Club in New York, USA where he was presented a prestigious award by Lewis Carroll Society of North America for outstanding Slovak translations of Lewis Carroll’s books *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking Glass and What Alice Founded There*. The Slovak editions of these masterpieces of English literature, exquisitely illustrated by Dušan Kállay and co-translated by Viera Vojtková, were published repeatedly by *Slovart*. By the way, the mentioned literary works by world-famous English man of letters Lewis Carroll (1832 – 1898) have been translated into more than 170 languages. During the interview published in *Communication Today* earlier this year, in relation with the above-mentioned award ceremony, Professor Vojtek discussed the remarkable success and positive reception of two of his best known translations by saying: “... I would emphasise that our translation, as we were two, of Carroll’s ‘Alices’ is more than 40 years old. In a way it is more than old enough. On the one hand, when taken objectively, it is not a very positive fact, as according to me, every generation should have its own translation of this masterpiece of English as well as world literature. Of course, another fact is that in such a small country as ours, more over which is fully commercialised in culture, it is almost unthinkable. For any publishing house it is cheaper to re-publish the old translation than to issue a new one. On the other hand, from our point of view, I mean the translators, it is very flattering as it implies that our work was not the worst one. Of course, we should not forget that the popularity of the book in Slovakia is to a great degree the merit of Dušan Kállay’s illustrations. It seems to me that this fact was one of the reasons why our translation was appreciated in agreement with the premise that if the illustrations are good, the translation cannot be the poor one.”<sup>1</sup> These humble, thoughtful words – more than anything else – outline his focused, deeply analytical mind and modesty.

Professor Vojtek’s eternal departure left Slovak journalism, academic circles, media studies and the sphere of Slovak artistic translation without one of their greatest personas – however, the legacy of his undoubtable life-long contribution to development of the given fields of study and professional practice persists to inspire us. May his soul, the soul of a dedicated and renowned scholar, professional journalist and connoisseur of English-written journalism and literature, rest in peace.

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<sup>1</sup> Some Notes on the Translation as an Interpretative Art and Communication as well. Interview with Juraj Vojtek. In *Communication Today*, 2016, Vol. 7, No. 1, p. 120.

# Faculty of Mass Media Communication's Lecturers and Student Awarded by the Literary Fund

Jana Radošínská

Lecturing at universities, standing in front of hundreds of future professionals. Writing papers, theoretical studies, journal articles, research reports. Attending and organising conferences and seminars. Seeing new generations of academics emerge and 'grow' both personally and professionally. Publishing own conference proceedings and scientific journals, aiming to cross the borders of domestic academic sphere, to contribute to internationally recognised publications and discussions. A number of other activities that set the processes of university education in motion and shape not only the small worlds that are academic circles in a specific city or country, but also the ways we see complex issues, our predictions on the future and new possibilities of international scientific cooperation. Life of an academic and a researcher is anything but dull and one-dimensional. Any prizes or awards, which draw the public attention to outstanding achievements in the field of science and technology, may not be the primary goal academics and lecturers pursue, but being awarded by a prestigious scientific institution certainly results in a strong feeling of satisfaction; the satisfaction of a job well done.

It is thus our great pleasure to announce that recent scholarly achievements of our colleagues, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ján Višňovský, PhD. and Dr. Martin Solík, PhD. were recognised by the Slovak Literary Fund. Ján Višňovský's latest monograph *Aktuálne otázky teórie a praxe žurnalistiky v ére internetu [Current Issues of Theory and Practice of Journalism in the Internet Era]* was awarded in the category of scientific and expert publication of the year 2015 in the field of social sciences, while Martin Solík was awarded for achieving exceptional score in the category of triennial scientific response (as his publications were most cited and referred to during the three-year period of years 2013 – 2016 in the field of social sciences). Both laureates received their prizes on 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2016 in the Zichy Palace in Bratislava.

Ján Višňovský's scholarly and research activities aim to discuss and critically re-evaluate the issues of journalism in the context of digital media, mostly the Internet. His other academic interests include the theoretical and historical aspects of journalism and television in English-speaking countries (The Great Britain and The United States of America). The awarded monograph was published by the Faculty of Mass Media Communication in 2015 and reacts to specific features and characteristics of online journalism, comparing it with the traditional journalistic practice. The author draws his attention to readers of the 'traditional' newspapers and online news and analyses their motivations to read news as well as their evaluations of strengths and weaknesses of various forms of journalistic content. Ján Višňovský commented on this scholarly accomplishment by saying: "My motivation to engage in academic discourse on journalism and digital media is based on the fact that the current situation needs to be addressed by an adequate theoretical reflection; we have to keep looking for answers to the essential questions related to journalism as a creative and professional activity in order to better understand its functions and forms, in which journalists present the mediated information. The press has expanded its borders; these new frontiers now involve the Internet, tablets, laptops and 'intelligent' mobile phones, which influences the ways of producing and presenting the news content. Today's journalism is based on multi-media and interactivity and my ambition is to know more about previously unseen journalistic phenomena, to share this knowledge with university students of media studies, marketing communication, journalism and similar fields of study. However, as my publication is not only aimed to media studies undergraduates, but also devoted to the development of knowledge on journalism that may appeal to the interests of wider academic circles as well as to the general public, I am glad to contribute to deeper understanding of the patterns and current developments of the media practice in this area of expertise."

Martin Solík, the other laureate of the Slovak Literary Fund, is primarily interested in the questions of cultural and social minorities in terms of their media reflection and re-presentation. His areas of interests also include the issues of social recognition on a global scale, which is a topic that Slovak academics discuss quite rarely. The author's works point out that, on the one hand, we are being confronted with frightening news on acts of international terrorism, and, on the other hand, the mainstream media keep ignoring the problems of global famine and poverty in the so-called developing countries of the third world; these countries experience violent outbursts on a daily basis. Another problem Martin Solík is interested in is the issue of media ownership and its concentration – the media market may be global, but the most significant media conglomerates or rather their headquarters are situated in North America, Europe, Australia, Japan, or in Russia, China and Qatar. His publications critically point out the selectiveness related to processing information and the problematic verification of this information's objectiveness. It is therefore not surprising that he also discusses the problem of conspiracy media. The outstanding score of scientific response to his own works is, according to Martin Solík, a result of various related circumstances: "Since I am interested in topics that have not been widely established in Slovak academic circles, but have been discussed thoroughly and in detail in the Czech Republic, lately I have been able to publish some of my most significant works through cooperation with my Czech colleagues. I would like to mention, for example, my theoretical study in the prestigious Czech academic journal *Filosofický časopis [The Philosophical Journal]*, my editorship of the collective monograph titled *Rozpory a alternativity globálneho kapitalizmu [Contradictions and Alternatives of the Global Capitalism]*, and the chance to contribute to Marek Hrubec's book of interviews on the necessary societal change titled *Odjistená spoločnosť [Unlocked Society]*. It is precisely this opportunity to contribute to such marginalised topics that drives me forward, as I know that 'there are not many of us'."

Speaking for both laureates, Martin Solík also states that Ján Višňovský's success and his own award would not be achievable without the support and encouraging provided by the management of the Faculty of Mass Media Communication. As the Editor-In-Chief of Communication Today, he claims that the whole process of scientific inquiry at the Faculty – whether related to the possibility of successfully following individual academic interests and own career paths, or to the team work – creates a highly inspirational, friendly environment: "We are able to successfully present our journal Communication Today via quite untraditional communication channels. It seems that Friedrich Nietzsche's famous words that a man, who follows his own path, often meets no one walking towards him, because that's the way it is, do not apply to us. I have been thinking about this a lot lately; I would say that the Faculty of Mass Media Communication is my academic home and Communication Today is the room, where my scholarly soul resides. Working in this environment, with these people, is highly inspiring. It is great that our work was recognised as outstanding even in the eyes of the members of the Literary Fund that is a highly respected scientific authority. However, our students and their reactions provide us with even more motivation to further develop the discussion spaces we have created. I like having my opinions confronted with remarks and observations of my students."

As the title of the article suggests, Ján Višňovský and Martin Solík are not the only representatives of the Faculty of Mass Media Communication who received a prestigious award presented by the Slovak Literary Fund. Zuzana Múkerová, who currently works on her Master's degree in media studies, was also awarded – thanks to her exceptional contribution to the last year's Student Scientific, Scholarly and Artistic Conference. This contribution was based on her Bachelor's thesis titled *Photography as a Path of Communication*, supervised by Marek Šimončík, PhD. Even though the topic may seem to be formulated quite conventionally, it hides weeks and months of hard work and results in the photographic project named *A Hole in the Hedge*. This project reflects its author's highly inspiring motto: "One country, two worlds, thousands of stories." Its aim was to photographically portray ways of life of two different groups of people – people who live in the village of Lošonec in the Western Slovakia and people living in the Eastern Slovakia, specifically in the village of Kalná Roztoka. Zuzana Múkerová sees her success as a huge surprise: "It was quite a surprise. I felt a certain satisfaction that usually follows when someone else recognises your intrinsically fulfilling work as exceptional. 'A Hole in the Hedge' was my way of using a lot of effort, time and determination to create something more out of a topic that seems to be absolutely ordinary. My aim was to prove that photography truly is a path of communication that is able to spread its messages among the general public. It always involves varying kinds of emotions, attitudes or opinions."

# Authenticating Celebrity in the Contemporary World

Peter Mikuláš

On 28<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup> June 2016, 3<sup>rd</sup> biannual International Celebrity Studies Conference took place at the University of Amsterdam. The subtitle of the conference was “Authenticating Celebrity”. The conference was organised by the Humanities Faculty of the University of Amsterdam and sponsored by Routledge Publishing, which publishes the leading journal in the field of scientific reflection on the celebrity phenomenon titled *Celebrity Studies Journal*.

The conference was attended by over 200 experts from 27 countries around the world; most of them were from the UK, USA and Australia. Central and Eastern European countries were represented by only two participants and their contributions. Such intellectual distribution documents the emphasis put on the celebrity studies on a global scale, mostly within the Anglo-Saxon scientific tradition. Among the most important participants and/ or keynote speakers of the conference may be included Su Holmes, Joke Hermes, David Giles, Alice Marwick and Mark Wheeler, all of them being the authors of influential monographs related to the various aspects of media and celebrity culture.

Presentations reflected a broad range of knowledge associated with various scientific disciplines that generated new ways of thinking and understanding celebrity: from film, television, literary, digital media and theatre studies through to psychology, sociology, politics and business studies. The attending scholars tried to find answers on questions like:

What makes a celebrity authentic?

What is a role of authenticity in our appreciation of stars?

What do authenticity, sincerity and realness mean in celebrity culture?

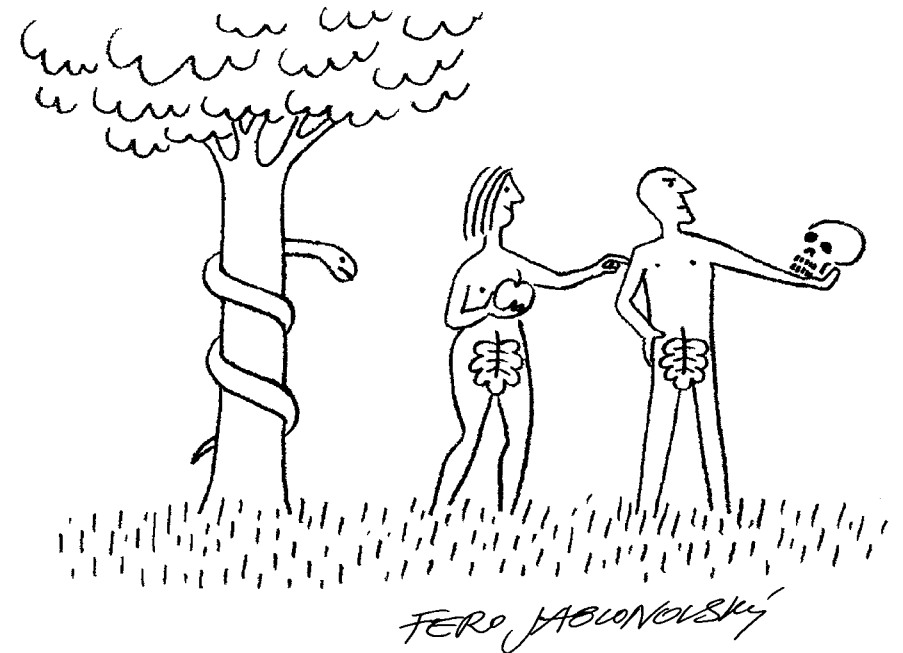
How do such notions relate to the mediatisation, strategic manipulation and commodification that are part of celebrity culture?

The contributions of the participants apparently showed that the cult of celebrity ‘leaks through’ many spheres of contemporary culture. The theme of the conference fully reflected on the fact that the concept of celebrity is currently going through considerable changes whose common denominator is digital technology, i.e. blogs, social media and other communication platforms. These help fame seekers to become celebrities, but often support and/or encourage ‘accidental creation’ of celebrities. These facts were pointed out by the very first keynote speaker Jo Littler who argued that there is a wide spectrum of ‘anti-celebritism’; starting with ‘accidental celebrities’, through the ‘bored-of-celebrity’, to the ‘non-engaged’ and ‘celebrity-refusnik’.

It is noteworthy that up to three sections addressed the issue of Celebrity Politics. After long-term separation of the world of celebrities (as the area of show business) and the world of politics (as a realm of seriousness and responsibility), we came to the phase of reinforced interest of scholars in the ‘celebrity status’ of politics that leads to many global consequences, e.g. to success of Donald Trump’s eccentric presidential campaign in the US. Much of the presenters’ attention was also focused on ‘micro-celebrities’ or celebrities emerging from the digital media. This fact demonstrates the interest of scholars in the emergence of new forms of celebrity status, which are, in comparison with traditional celebrity models, surprising and unpredictable in many ways. Along with ‘mainstream’ topics on celebrity studies, there were also bizarre ones presented at the conference, especially within “Celebrity Motherhood” and “Celebrity Children” panels. Current scholarly reactions to the death of music legend David Bowie were included in the panel titled “The (Aca)Fandom of David Bowie”.

The three-day range of the conference allowed the attending scholars to generate an adequate dialogue that is essential for any responsible reflection on authenticating celebrity in the contemporary culture. The organisers had created a proceedings compiled from abstracts, which helped the participants to better navigate through the rich programme. The best papers presented at the conference will be published in a special issue of *Celebrity Studies Journal* that is indexed in the Scopus database.

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# Fero Jablonovský

## \*1956

Ladislav Volko

He was born in the town called Modra; however, he made his first steps – rather courageous – in a picturesque village called Častá. It is said to be the region of wine, bold and talented people. The Fates attributed him with a book, a pen and black ink. Thus, since his early childhood he has been drawing something on the paper. He was hardly 14 years old, when he plucked up courage and sent his caricatures into the magazine Ježek and the editors – after a long and deep thought – published two of them. The purposeful path of a young man was thus decided – he graduated at the Secondary Industrial School of Graphics in Prague. This historical, cultural and artistic centre must have left a deep sign in his sensitive soul. There, he gobbled down arts, got to know people, visited incubator of caricatures – newsroom of the magazine *Dikobraz*. As he mentions, although they never published any of his works, immediate contacts, long-lasting debates and the atmosphere left an indelible mark in the young man. He was full of enthusiasm when he returned to Slovakia in order to devote to books as a typographer, creative and technical editor, as well as illustrator and author. He has perceived caricature as a love for the whole life: allegedly he has drawn approximately 35 thousand of drawings, while using 563 bottles of black ink. His works have been presented in more than 20 individual exhibitions both in Slovakia and abroad. Kornel Földvári called him a “Precocious Child of the Slovak caricature” – not only because he entered the magazines in his underage, but maybe due to the fact that he often looked at the world through his “Lennon glasses” hotly and purely; just like a child. The diapason of his work goes from ecology, through architecture to a thoughtful philosophy of a contemporary over the contemporary. We laugh with his works, but the laughter is somewhat Gogol’s ‘laughter through the tears’. His little figures accompany us in the world of absurdities, which we have to live in. They try to balance and often even to cross the abyss, ready to tear down anxiously the whole wall behind them, onto which they managed to jump. Similarly as their author tries to be a foreman of several crafts – regardless of how, always connected with the book – they also deliver superhuman performance. If there was no ink at disposal, he caught the biro, currently the computer and wrote books, mostly dealing with caricature or its environment, together with arranging exhibitions at home and abroad. The times have changed, but human daftness is endless and exactly this is a field for caricature; therefore it is not popular at the pages of newspapers, magazines or on the Internet, as the daftness is not disappearing – rather the opposite is true. That’s just it... Let’s get to work. “I find myself to be a lucky man,” he said in one interview. If only there were more so lucky caricaturists in the world in order to hold a mirror up to us. Not rarely as a shock therapy.

