

Consumer Culture: History, Theory and Research

ZAHRÁDKA, P. (ed.): *Spotřební kultura: Historie, teorie a výzkum. Praha: Academia, 2014. 438 p. ISBN 978-80-244-2858-1.*

Ondřej Roubal

Czech and Slovak academic environment deals with the topic of consumer culture only marginally, which is quite surprising. For the last 30 years, systematic and complex study of consumer culture has been clearly dominated by foreign authors; reports presented by Czech and Slovak researchers are rather rare. If we focus on the research area, in which economists show little or no interest at all, and the critical sociological inquiry may be set in, we cannot find a more complex theory of consumer culture that could be used as a solid foundation for social theories and empirical research of relevant sector disciplines, such as sociology of marketing communication, sociology of advertisement or sociology of labelling, whose more stable and respected academic background is being searched for in our country. I have no doubt that similar sociological approaches will contribute to a deeper understanding of qualitative transformations of the consumer's relation to products and to a more detailed comprehension when constituting symbolic meanings attributed to those products by the consumers. Such a perspective must appeal to developers of marketing strategies and agents of marketing communication practice whose task is to flexibly and adequately respond to changes occurring in an environment of increasing significance of symbolic extent of consumption.

Towards the end of 2014, the book market advertised a monograph edited by sociologist Pavel Zahrádka from Olomouc titled *Consumer Culture: History, Theory and Research*. The publication "revived" discussions about current trends in consumption and markedly contributes to non-economizing views of the market functioning principles and consumers' behaviour. I personally consider the collection of fourteen subject studies representing the backbone of the monograph unequivocal key inputs that lead to assumptions that serious knowledge of principles of consumer culture functioning can only be approached with the sensitivity of sociological imagination and at the same time with the familiarity of trends currently applied in the marketing and communication practice. It is the authors' ability to interlink sociological approaches with the effects of marketing methods influencing social environment that I consider unique and valuable in terms of further development of expert discourses on consumer culture.

The topics and challenges of consumer culture and consumerism are approached by the authors from a completely different perspective than in case of social-critical approaches based on sceptical interlinking of consumer culture and market mechanisms (p. 12). While similar value-normative approaches usually put the consumer culture in the centre of criticism in the context of promoting and applying the principles of economic growth, supporting expansion of superficial consumerism, acceleration of undesirable ethos of hedonism or atmosphere of reckless greediness, Pavel Zahrádka presents studies that reveal alternative images of consumer culture. Without resigning from numerous ethical, environmental and social risks of the consumer culture, the authors rather focus on argumentative efforts to question its "Dionysian" manifestation. They refuse to see consumer culture as "dark magic" which is manipulating and dragging hypnotized consumers chaotically in a disturbing game of market forces, irrationally and unrestrainedly calling for ecstatic stimuli designed by marketing, rationally and calculatedly produced by pragmatic strategies of business companies.

Relevant texts show consumer culture stepping out of the shadow of negative suspicion of the craftily hidden destructive force and putting aside the generally attributed signum diabolicum, in which many social critics try to find apocalyptic scenarios of collapsing society of prosperity. This monograph is particularly

significant because the authors do not consider consumers as objects of manipulation and a product of over-individual force of rationally operating market pressure (p. 317-337). In their interpretation, the consumer is not a controlled puppet hypnotized by an advertisement (p. 211-233; p. 403-404), a passive individual predominantly driven by superficial material motivations and incentives, but a responding actor who actively forms the discursive framework of consumption, capable of free decisions and critical interpretation of his own experience, reflecting it in the views of the surrounding world (p. 365-402). The authors demonstrate how such a consumer is able to assume responsibility for the world around him and at the same time to shape this world through his actions.

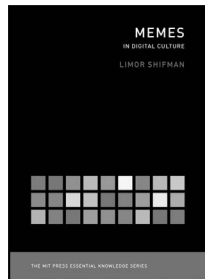
Philosophical-sociological criticism appears to be unbiased here, strictly focusing on the consumer himself, his authentic and subjectively critical experience of consumption, whose constant reflection should become a way of searching for and finding such strategies of actions that shall not deny the consumer model of culture but they shall be gradually anchored in the mode of sustainable life style. This should be eco-friendly, socially-conscious and morally advanced, yet non-ascetically developing a certain hedonistic ethos, however, in a completely different form than the current one. Through self-reflection, the consumer should realize that current methods of "predatory" hedonism are destructive and repressive not only for the surroundings but also for the consumer himself. Naturally, we may ask a question how real the concept of reflective abilities and possibilities of consumers is (p. 365-402). It would certainly be worth following closely the tendencies and conditions of applying (self)reflective methods with different consumer groups, depending on their social status and at the same time identifying the existing restrictions and barriers preventing the development of this consumer ability to reveal many self-destructive (including social, ethical and environmental) features related to hypertrophy of one's own consumer behaviour. Alternative paths of the sustainable life style may not be taken and basically cannot (or do not even want to) be taken voluntarily and equally by every consumer.

With this in mind, the following points should be considered essential: the studies are intertwined, and I do not know to what extent it was done on purpose, with a distinct feature of consumer culture, which is its ambivalent manifestation. The first distinct feature of consumer culture is the fact that the objects of consumption are exposed to more intensive and globally functioning complex of marketing communication. Integrated marketing communication, promoting the impersonal mass market of goods is, however, more often confronted with the individualized consumption and unpredictable autonomous decision-making approach of consumers (p. 211-233). Marketing and business practice of "emancipating policy" collide here, eliminating "diversity" of global distribution of mass offer of universal products with the mode of consumer individualized "policy of life styles", expressed with the self-identity and the desire to become someone else (p. 392). It would be quite interesting to monitor these interactions, where the system of "emancipating policy" gradually but pragmatically adopts marketing practice of the "life policy", where the consumers' strategy of "life policy" is regressively formed by the mainstream "emancipating policy" of the advertisement. It turns out that individualization accents of "life policy" following free and independent manifestations of authentic subjectivity of consumers grow stronger, they are more creative (p. 354), less predictable and often take bizarre forms. "Life policy" becomes an active generator of changes and a more intensive search for authentic self-realization, apparently as a result of unintended effects of marketing communication. It strategically, calculatedly and selectively defines "cool" motives of original manifestations of life styles, composing them into images of commercial statements in order to subsequently transform authentic life styles in a commercial product of mainstream fashion. Those who prefer the active "life policy" actively respond and reject the "cool" life motives mutated by the advertisement, vulgarly interconnected with the commercial goods offer. The consumers' needs of "being one's own man" and the romanticizing search for the authentic "self" (p. 388) in the context of emancipating policy of the global market return to searching for "one's own ways" and initiatives to find an independent and original self-expression. Second, consumer culture forms and confirms the fact which was empirically discovered by American researcher Frederic L. Pryor during economic and social transformation in former DDR and which was described as the effect of hypertrophy of consumer goods selection. It is the accelerating growth of consumer type opportunities and their global marketing

promotion that generate the atmosphere of life of boundless possibilities and culture “over choice”. The world of advertising certainly extends the scope of options of consumer decisions, thus enhancing the impression of consumers’ freedom and autonomy. Simultaneously, however, the unlimited offer of the number of alternatives in each choice makes the consumer uncertain and exposed to subjectively experienced risks connected with these choices and their consequences. The consumer choice develops a sense of responsibility which is interlinked with the fear of failure, feeling of guilt resulting from making bad decisions, disappointment and regret. The case of a former east-German company is used by F. Pryor to empirically demonstrate and explain the paradox of growing prosperity and at the same time stagnant or decreasing feeling of happiness in the society. The question is how the consumers are going to cope with the fact that they are left with the constant choice of a growing offer and with the risks connected with the permanent need for consumer decision.

Publication *Consumer Culture: History, Theory and Research* is a successful work, in many respects; it is original and inspiring. As mentioned by editor Pavel Zahrádka, if the objective of this monograph is to bridge the gap between the academic and application spheres in the field of consumer culture (p. 13), then it is successfully fulfilled. I agree with Pavel Zahrádka that the cooperation between the academic and commercial worlds is possibly provided and both areas are related not on a competitive basis but clearly on a complementary one. We wish for a similar project like the one in Denmark where the academic and commercial spheres have been successfully cooperating for years as a part of Innovation Network for Market, Communication and Consumption platform.

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Memes in Digital Culture

SHIFMAN, L.: Memes in Digital Culture. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2014. 200 p. ISBN 978-0-262-52543-5.

Ali Shehzad Zaidi

Limor Shifman’s *Memes in Digital Culture* contributes significantly to the burgeoning field of internet studies, particularly in its treatment of the political uses of the digital meme. Shifman explains that the term meme was borrowed from the biological concept of genetic replication; and that in 1976, Richard Dawkins first used the term “to describe small units of culture that spread from person to person by copying or imitation” such as melodies, catchphrases, and beliefs (p. 2, 9). With the internet in mind, Shifman updates this definition to mean “(a) a group of digital items sharing common characteristics of content, form, and/or stance; (b) that they were created with an awareness of each other; and (c) they were circulated, imitated, and/or transformed via the Internet by many users” (p. 7). Shifman notes that, through a process of selection and diffusion, memes have become shared social phenomena that can broaden democratic possibilities (p. 18, 144).

Shifman traces the study of memetics, namely the study of the replication and evolution of memes, to the nineties when that field began to draw wide interdisciplinary interest (p. 10). She differentiates the meme, “a living and changing entity,” from viral sensations that, though widely spread, do not necessarily spawn derivatives and imitations (p. 56, 58). What makes memes diffusible, according to Shifman, is the extent to which they are “suited to their sociocultural environment” (p. 9).

In examining the use of political memes as a means of social resistance, Shifman describes how Chinese activists use coded language to undercut censorship, citing the example of the song of the Grass Mud Horse, a name with obscene connotations in Chinese (p. 148). Oblique forms of dissent and resistance are hardly peculiar to the internet age but appear throughout history in totalitarian societies. In Shakespeare’s England, for example, criticism of the monarch might take the form of a double entendre embedded in a panegyric. The meme is especially well suited to convey the subtle and complex ideas contained in political dissent, Shifman points out, because they “constitute shared spheres of cultural knowledge” (p. 173).

Among the several political meme sensations that Shifman discusses is one that arose from an incident in November 2011 in which a police officer, at the University of California in Davis, pepper-sprayed students as they peacefully protested tuition increases. One meme shows the officer, John Pike, at the signing of the Constitution, pepper-spraying that iconic document as the Founding Fathers look on. The meme underscores the erosion of civil liberties underway in the United States.

Another famous meme, emblematic of the Occupy Wall Street movement, represents a ballerina standing poised above Arturo Di Modica’s famous statue of a charging bull. The statue, which embodies the brute power of the market, is located on Broadway next to Bowling Green, New York City’s oldest public park, and has become a popular tourist destination. The ballerina personifies the imagination, grace, humour, irony, and poignancy by means of which art affirms the pre-eminence of human needs over market imperatives. Shifman elaborates on the resonance of the Occupy Wall Street meme “I am the 99 %”:

“This meme’s power stems from the way in which its three memetic dimensions of form, content, and stance re-enforce each other. Its message about the agonies of ordinary Americans is conveyed by average-looking people with serious facial expressions holding similar amateurish-looking signs. This combination of repetition and variation turns the personal to political: Stories about the sick young woman who is unable to afford medication, the single mom who struggles to provide for her son, and the father who cannot send his daughter to college are reframed as particular cases of the same flawed structure. These people’s miseries are not just personal problems; they stem from the systemic economic and political illnesses of their habitat” (p. 134).

Although she deems Occupy Wall Street “a memetic success,” Shifman claims that the movement “failed to dent the status quo, let alone generate the economic and political transformation it advocated” (p. 174). Shifman, however, uses the wrong measure to gauge the movement’s success. Occupy Wall Street connected individual predicaments to systemic causes and helped delegitimize capitalism. The movement may well portend an even larger revolt against corporate globalization.

Shifman describes the meme as a powerful yet often invisible agent of globalization, one that allows individuals to inscribe their voices in hybrid cultures (p. 151, 154). For Shifman, memes are “socially constructed public discourses” that are “reflections of cultural and social collectives, as well as the individual voices constituting them” (p. 8, 171). As the classical Persian poet Jelaluddin Rumi prompts us: “[D]on’t be satisfied with stories, how things / have gone with others. Unfold / your own myth” (p. 40). *Memes in Digital Culture* is an indispensable introduction to the cultural and political expression made possible by the digital meme.

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Media Research. The Most Frequently Used Methods and Techniques

SEDLÁKOVÁ, R.: *Výzkum médií. Nejužívanější metody a techniky. Praha: Grada Publishing, 2014. 539 p. ISBN 978-80-247-3568-9.*

Petra Adamková

To my knowledge, there are only two books, originally written for the Czech and Slovak academia, which are trying to provide guidelines to media research techniques. The first one authored by Trampota and Vojtěchovská was published a few years ago and focused on a number of research techniques which were relevant for both academic and commercial research. The second one is being reviewed in this article. It is clear that media studies in Slovakia and the Czech Republic, having a relatively short history of media research when compared to western countries, are still trying to cover their basics.

Výzkum médií (Media Research) by Renáta Sedláková is a media research guide written from a sociological perspective even though it covers many of the techniques used in other media studies traditions. It is intended for everyone engaged in and with media research, students being just a portion of its expected readership. The book's organization follows chronologically all the logical and necessary steps of research projects: from the original idea through library research, hypothesis formation to research design, including a final chapter dedicated to writing research papers.

Considering the scope of the book which is rather large when compared to the previously mentioned book by Trampota and Vojtěchovská, it will most certainly be welcomed and regarded as the most essential methodology resource for years to come. And it will hold this position for very good reasons: the book provides a quite comprehensive guide to both quantitative and qualitative research methods with numerous examples from the field, additional information and references to other literature on the subject. *Výzkum médií* is a mandatory acquisition for academic libraries and universities dealing with media and communication studies and other related fields of study. Having said that, there are a few shortcomings I'd like to point out. The most important one is stemming from the author's decision to focus on the sociologically based research traditions while excluding others; the author is open about this intention, pointing this out on the book's cover. Consequently, the book fails to mention, for example, the Toronto school which is still quite influential since its basic ideas are present in the efforts to transform literacies to better suit the needs of the contemporary world or the psychoanalytical criticism concerned with fundamental anthropological and deeply rooted needs and wants regarding the use of media and cultural consumption. Consequently, the book will not satisfy all approaches to media study even though it may be entirely satisfactory for most students working on their Bachelor's or Master's degree.

The perceived lack of suitable literature on the subject seems to have led the author to wish to fill the existing void in methodology literature as much as possible. This is apparent in the extensive use of footnotes trying to provide additional information or explanations. In my opinion, however, most readers will find them unnecessary and distracting. On the other hand, I would personally prefer if some of them were embedded within core text. Firstly, because they often provide valuable context (for example, the explanation of varying terminology specific to different disciplines contributing to media research which, in particular, students seem to find problematic to navigate). Secondly, because the text itself could use a little diversion from time to time (I will discuss stylistics a little further in the review).

It appears that the book is written for those already familiar with various media study traditions; those already looking for deeper and more profound instructions when preparing for planned research. The book's structures as well as its stylistics are both tailored to this purpose. Therefore, the discussed research techniques are not aligned according to quantitative vs. qualitative axis, nor are they based on dominant paradigms. They are rather organized to highlight research objects: chapter 6 addresses the audience research; chapter 7 deals

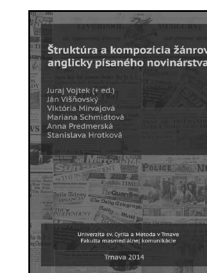
with ethnographic context of media consumption; chapter 8 discusses document analysis – each firstly explaining the quantitative approach and subsequently the qualitative one as well. Chapter 9, divided into two chapters, (first dealing with grounded theory and the other with discourse analysis) is an exception to the rule since both methods are seen as special cases of qualitative methods. The book provides quite a detailed and systematic account of both the preparation process and the most used research techniques along with basic knowledge on statistical tools, examples and practical cases. One might, however, find instances where the text is either unnecessarily verbose (even with a number of explanatory or follow-up footnotes) or unevenly underdeveloped, offering no examples when reader actually might need one (e.g. students keep confusing basic logical procedures – induction, deduction, analysis and synthesis etc. – because they lack practical examples and the academic language seems to be too abstract for them to follow). However, to be fair, most of the time the book offers a lot of valuable insight into research, thanks to which it is far beyond compare with other available resources.

The issue that still remains is the disproportionate attention given to the material, which can most probably be attributed to lack of (or limited) editorial oversight. This is also apparent in the structure of the text. Even though there is nothing to object to in the macrostructure of the book, the chapters themselves often lack more sophisticated structuring and typographic design, making the chapters harder to navigate.

Finally, the last of the remarks is concerned with stylistics. The book is written in very pragmatic and rigorous language devoid of almost all possible stylistic variability. Limited diversity in style and sentence structure is, of course, typical for academic writing that focuses on accuracy and precise description. Objection against the rigidity and conservativeness of the writing style is, perhaps, a matter of personal taste. Let me just say that the most valued, the most comprehensive and the most influential books on media theory and media studies I have come across so far were much “lighter” in style. They used metaphors and tropes, even stories when necessary, and always had their reader in mind which allowed the authors to fill the book with a great amount of information and context without losing any academic integrity. Arthur Asa Berger's methodology guides are an excellent example proving that comprehensiveness can go hand in hand with readability.

In the end, it is clear that most remarks regarding the book are not concerned with its content per se, but with the form and the attempt to make the reading a little easier and smoother, less tedious and less wearisome because it is often the heavy language and unflattering sentence structures that represent a certain detachment of academia from ordinary life which students so often refuse to endure and overcome. Nevertheless, looking for aesthetic value in case of the book which is otherwise excellent and is a very important addition to the Czech and Slovak media studies literature might seem to be rather inadequate. But, if there is a lesson to be learned in media studies history, it is often the well-written books, not the most wexact and academic-like ones that become the most influential.

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The Structure and Composition of Genres of the English-written Journalism

VOJTEK, J. (ed.) et al.: *Štruktúra a kompozícia žánrov anglicky písaného novinárstva. Trnava: FMK UCM, 2014. 300 p. ISBN 978-80-8105-582-9.*

Jana Radošinská

Current development trends related to structural and compositional changes in print journalism (and its genres, forms, creation methods, production processes and professional demands) indicate that theoretical and empirical reflection on this segment of media production – taking into account its rich

history, tradition and essential socio-cultural importance – has to be understood as a complex, long-term and systematic process. The existing interdisciplinary set of knowledge associated with the given issues thus necessarily depends on our understanding of both historical occurrences and contemporary social, cultural, economic and political situation. Although journalism is considered to be the oldest and therefore the most traditional and widely, solidly studied form of mass media communication – it is needless to say that this statement is quite adequate –, we have to point out that related academic discussions, theories and research projects (especially those, which are conducted by international research teams) still have to deal with a lot of theoretical and methodological uncertainties, which result from different socio-cultural conditions, historical circumstances and scientific methods tied to a specific country.

This assumption seems to be true especially in case of genre theories and genres as such, no matter if we talk about journalistic genres, film genres, music genres or other kinds of media production. However, we have to put emphasis on the fact that genres of journalism – as well as their general understanding and practical implementation – appear to be a lot more dependent on specific social conditions and cultural practices that differ from country to country than, for instance, literary genres or music genres. However, regardless of their diverse typologies and categorizations, journalistic genres still function (and they always have) as valuable information sources and “outlines” relevant to processing and publishing news and opinions, while providing recipients of the published content with certain sets of expectations based on their previous experience and changing preferences. These premises not only suggest, but rather claim that studying genre theories established in foreign, culturally different countries is a very challenging and time-consuming process.

The monograph *The Structure and Composition of Genres of the English-written Journalism* published by Faculty of Mass Media Communication, University of SS. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava is one of very few “up-to-date” publications that aim to deepen and re-consider the existing theoretical and empirical knowledge on genres of English-written journalism, which are, given the pragmatic nature of relevant British and North American scholarly literature, essentially different from genre theories used by Slovak scholars and journalists. To be more specific, we have to agree with the authors of the reviewed monograph who point out that Anglo-American theories of journalism either do not use the term “genre” at all or define it vaguely; often as a “kind” or “type” and without any direct connection to journalistic theory as such (p. 262). Another complication identified by the authors states that: “Surprisingly, as another restriction of this literature can be considered the fact that it doesn’t reflect that newspapers in western democracies have long since been typologically differentiated – there are elite, mass and mid-market ones” (p. 294). Aware of the limitations related to almost complete absence of relevant information sources published by Anglo-American theorists, the authors who are working under the supervision of Professor Juraj Vojtek (ed.), a renowned journalism theorist and historian, the author of highly valued publications dealing with topics related to the given issue (e.g. *The Genres of English-written Journalism, Milton’s Areopagitica*), offer a complex reflection on theoretical determination and practical use of genres of the English-written journalism.

As J. Vojtek properly states, modern English language needs to be divided into (at least) two different versions – British and American. Naturally, this “divergence” had to be considered and respected by all authors of the monograph, because the key information sources and theoretical publications, which helped them to reflect the particular matters, were published mostly in North America, while their research material originated from products of British journalism (p. 6). The preface of the publication written by Juraj Vojtek also precisely defines its goals, taking into account the issues processed and reflected by particular authors, namely Juraj Vojtek, Ján Višňovský, Viktória Mirvajová, Marianna Schmidtová, Anna Predmerská and Stanislava Hrotková. In relation with the different aims set by each authors and complex nature of the primary goal of the monograph, the text is split into six chapters. It should be noted that the evident thematic continuity of the individual chapters is also clearly defined (p. 5-10). Even more importantly, thematic and methodological coherence of the chapters is strengthened by the fact that the authors work with the same fifty one issues of British daily newspapers (three different titles, namely *The Guardian* – elite press, *Daily Mail* – mid-market press and *The Sun* – mass press).

The first chapter titled *Theoretical-Historical Outlines of Genres of the English-written Journalism*, written by J. Vojtek, aims to provide the readers with a basic terminology, processed in accordance with source materials that include American and British academic literature, which deals with theoretical and pragmatic aspects of journalism. Considering the above-mentioned lingual (and thus also terminological) ambiguities associated with Anglo-American theory of journalism and its understanding of a “genre” or, more precisely, a “type” or “kind” of journalistic text, the author determines the procedures and approaches applied by American and British theorists and historians through their comparison with history, theory and pragmatic use of knowledge related to Slovak theory and history of journalism.

On the basis of the first chapter, Ján Višňovský offers a complex set of knowledge on so-called “news values” which, although frequently mentioned by other interested authors, are rarely explained in detail or through specific examples, which would take into consideration different production procedures and thematic preferences of specific newspapers in accordance with their basic typology. This approach is clearly stated in the title of the second chapter: *News Values of British Elite, Mid-market and Mass Dailies*. The findings of this part of the monograph, based on quantitative content analysis of “news values” presented by three British newspapers, suggest that these – typologically different – dailies also use different themes and methods of information processing and such particularities influence their choices of “headline themes” placed at the front page of the newspaper.

In the third chapter, V. Mirvajová deals with various aspects related to publishing news in the researched daily newspapers. Working with a “hard news / soft news” dichotomy, which is typical for English-written journalism, the author uses methods of qualitative and quantitative content analysis to identify different structure and composition of British news with emphasis on non-identical typological determination of daily newspapers included in the research sample. The chapter *Structure and Composition of the News Genres (Hard News and Soft News) in The Guardian, Daily Mail and The Sun* therefore offers detailed insight on forms and contents of British news making, paying attention not only to hard news and soft news, but also to so-called (and often overlooked) news feature, whose existence and – more importantly – popularity can be seen as one of the many results of increasing genre hybridization.

In contrast with quite stable and generally applied typology of the English-written news, any systematic reflection on so-called “opinions” or “opinion genres” is a bit problematic. These issues, addressed in the next two chapters, are elaborated by V. Mirvajová and M. Schmidtová (editorials and columns) and A. Predmerská (reviews and critiques or criticisms). The most frequently used opinion genres, editorials and columns, were reflected and analysed in accordance with the above-mentioned typology of British press (elite, mid-market and mass press). The authors’ research into publishing editorials and columns in three different daily newspapers proves that there are significant differences between these types of newspapers and between their editorial teams’ attitude to form, but especially content of these kinds of newspaper articles (different topics, choices of language, not to mention different length of these texts and varying editorial practices with regard to their authorship).

A. Predmerská completes the presented set of knowledge on English-written opinion genres by paying attention to review or critique / criticism. The author’s findings suggest that theoretical outlines of review and critique / criticism mostly correspond with their practical use. The research results indicate that elite press, represented by *The Guardian*, tends to publish reviews on a daily basis and, moreover, at an established place. However, mid-market press, namely *Daily Mail*, publishes only a couple of short reviews as parts of daily TV guide included in all issues, while mass press, specifically *The Sun*, uses reviews only as a kind of accompanying content that completes published information on some “special occasions” (p. 224). Identified differences, as the author remarks, are related to both form and content of the published reviews and critiques / criticisms.

Headlines, as another very important structural and compositional feature of journalistic texts, are reflected in the sixth chapter written by S. Hrotková. The author, pointing out the special “status” of headlines within structure and composition of any journalistic text, regardless of their genre determination, examines

different types of headlines, their functions, aspects and variations. Again, just like other authors in previous chapters, S. Hrotková places emphasis on the specific use and forms of headlines in the context of different typology of the researched daily newspapers, since each one of these dailies is preferred by a different segment of the audiences (readers) and, therefore, the headlines have to be adjusted to their expectations, interests and preferences in order to draw their attention. The author also states that the overall importance of headlines is constantly growing and their graphic design no longer serves only as a secondary function (p. 298).

Referring to the range of presented theoretical knowledge and systematic use of methodological principles respected by all authors, we may conclude that the reviewed monograph is a rare, very complex information source, which is, to a great extent, useful not only for domestic and foreign journalism theorists and historians, but it is also highly valuable for academics and students, who deal with the reflected issues in relation to interdisciplinary essence of media studies. The spectrum of addressed issues is apparent also in case of the number of used bibliographic sources and research materials (pages 268 – 293). A few formal deficiencies (mostly associated with final editing) that may be spotted in the text are, taking into account its high scholarly qualities, quite irrelevant. This conclusion is also based on the fact that, whether we talk about Slovak theory and history of journalism or journalism theories used and developed by scholars from other Central European countries, there is practically no other academic publication that would address these issues in such a complex way (after all, such information sources are practically absent also in the Anglo-American journalism theory).

The extensive work of Juraj Vojtek, Ján Višňovský, Viktória Mirvajová, Marianna Schmidtová, Anna Predmerská and Stanislava Hrotková (300 pages, six information-saturated chapters completed by preface, conclusions and resumé written in English) therefore may be seen as another significant contribution to long-term efforts of academics and PhD. students affiliated with Faculty of Mass Media Communication UCM in Trnava (and of course, with other academic and research institutions interested in these matters) that brings to our attention British and American journalism and media theories and related historical perspectives.

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Exceptional Scientific Event Orchestrated under the Baton of the Faculty of Mass Media Communication

Katarína Ďurková

The number of traditional scientific conferences organised by the Faculty of Mass Media Communication (“Marketing Identity” and “Megatrends and Media”), which, within the past several years, have acquired a very good reputation in international scientific circles, will be increased by an exceptional event, ES-RARC 2015, early this summer. THE EUROPEAN SYMPOSIUM ON RELIGIOUS ART RESTORATION AND CONSERVATION is a travelling conference that has always been organised in prominent church towns. This year, the baton has been picked up by the Faculty of Mass Media Communication, UCM in Trnava from the Italian town of Florence, where the Sixth Symposium took place in 2014.

Sacral monuments are a part of the cultural and religious heritage and their preservation for future generations calls for the interdisciplinary approach. The conference, with its various themes, connects historians, theologians, art, restoration, media and marketing communication experts, as well as other representatives from Church and political, social and cultural communities. From June 4th till June 6th, 2015, Trnava will continue in this tradition and will host the Seventh Symposium. Discussion topics and related themes will be addressed as follows:

A. The socio-spiritual values of religious art

A1 – Artistic and cultural evaluation

A2 – Historical, theological and social perspectives (past and present)

B. Conservation and restoration of religious cultural heritage

B1 – Environmental impact

B2 – Analytical, diagnostic and intervention methodologies

B3 – New materials for conservation and restoration

B4 – Monitoring and scheduled maintenance

C. Sacral sights in light of tourist trade marketing

C1 – Marketing of sacral sights as a universal cultural heritage

C2 – Sacral sights as a new dimension of secular tourism

C3 – Socio-cultural development in region

A very rich programme has been prepared for the conference participants. The conference schedule includes specialised lectures presented by preservationists, restorers and marketing experts. In addition, an impressive sightseeing tour across the oldest free royal town, as well as a gala concert of the Roman-Catholic Sacral Musical Society of M. Schneider-Trnavský that has been active in St. Nicolas Basilica for as long as 185 years are being planned. The venue where the conference will be held is exceptional, too; the event will take place in the Marianum Hall – in the historical building of the Archbishop’s Office in Trnava.

The conference is organised by the Faculty of Mass Media Communication in cooperation with ICVBC – CNR (The Institute for the Conservation and Valorisation of Cultural Heritage – National Council of Research), the Faculty of Orthodox Theology at the University of A. I. Cuza in Iași, Romania, EJST (European Journal of Science and Theology, Romania), “Petru Poni” – the Institute of Macromolecular Chemistry at the Romanian Academy in Iași, Romania, and the Faculty of Chemical Engineering and Environmental Protection at the “Gheorghe Asachi” Technical University of Iași, Romania.

His Excellency Monsignor Ján Orosch (Archbishop of Trnava), JUDr. Peter Bročka, LL.M. (Mayor of Trnava) and Dr. h. c. Ing. Tibor Mikuš, PhD. (Head of the Trnava Self-Governing Region) are the patrons of the conference. The institutions they represent participate, as partners, in the conference preparation – the Office of the Archbishop of Trnava, the City of Trnava and the Trnava Self-Governing Region.

More detailed information regarding the conference and its programme as well as the registration form can be found on the conference website <http://fmc.sk/esrare2015/>. Conference proceedings will be published by the prestigious Italian publishing house Nardini and selected contributions will be published in the European Journal of Science and Theology, which is indexed by the SCOPUS database.

“Explosion of Innovations”: Marketing Identity 2014

Jana Radošinská

Current marketing communication trends tend to develop and change at a very dynamic pace. Consumer behaviour is adapting rapidly to new technologies, production processes, propagation strategies and communication platforms – all business subjects therefore have to be ready for the future in order to maintain and strengthen their market positions. The thematic focus of 11th annual conference Marketing Identity 2014, one of the most traditional and renowned scientific events organised by the Faculty of Mass Media Communication UCM in Trnava, aimed to reflect on one of the most important aspects of contemporary marketing communication – innovation activities. Besides offering the participants such an attractive and the utmost important discussion theme, the Faculty of Mass Media Communication was proud to welcome world-renowned Dutch scholar, economist and politician Jozef M. M. Ritzen who was granted the Honorary Degree of Doctor Honoris Causa.

The conference Marketing Identity (formerly known as New Trends in Marketing) took place on 4th – 5th November 2015 at the Congress Centre of the Slovak Academy of Sciences in the prestigious environment of the Smolenice Castle. The conference, traditionally honoured by distinguished international attendance, welcomed more than 150 active participants affiliated with domestic academic institutions or professional organizations from the fields of marketing communication and innovation management as well as valued guests from several European countries including the Czech Republic, Great Britain, France, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, and Russia. Discussion sessions were divided into six sections: Marketing & Communication Innovations, Digital Innovations, Green Innovations, Media Innovations, Consumer Privacy Innovations, and a special scientific project-oriented session titled “Governance and Adaptation to Innovative Modes of Higher Education”.

Another significant part of the programme, the panel discussion, enabled the attendees to address the issue of acquiring practical skills that are preferred by future employers who are interested in employing newly graduated students. The discussion titled “What Kinds of Practical Skills Are Expected from Marketing Communication Graduates by Their Future Employers?” was moderated by the project manager of Maxman Consultants, Ltd., Ivan Valach. Discussion participants were mostly professionals working in the fields of marketing communication or human resources – Mgr. Ivana Molnárová, executive director – Profesia, Ltd., Róbert Slovák,

creative director – Respect APP, Ltd., Pavol Minár, strategy director – Istropolitana Ogilvy, Ltd., Ing. Martin Porada, managing director – 2create, Ltd., and Mgr. Juraj Kováč, creative leader – This is Locco, Ltd. The Faculty of Mass Media Communication and academic sphere as such were represented by Assoc. Prof. Slavomír Magál.

The second annual Granátt award ceremony, award related to the social responsibility of educational institutions, was organised to acknowledge the best projects elaborated by educational institutions at all levels of education. Dana Petranová, Dean of the Faculty of Mass Media Communication UCM, underlined the need for supporting various educational activities that “would make our society and education better, more beautiful, healthier. Our goal is to inform about such projects and appreciate their creators in order to encourage and motivate them to go on”, the Dean stated.

Building on previous successful international presentation of conference contributions presented during Marketing Identity 2013: Design that Sells (positively evaluated and indexed by Web of Science), the scientific committee of the conference is selecting the highest quality conference papers written in English. These texts are to be published in the conference proceedings that will be submitted to prestigious citation databases Web of Science and SCOPUS for evaluation and possible indexing. Such efforts allow the Faculty of Mass Media Communication UCM in Trnava to continue supporting the international recognition of conference proceedings related to conference Marketing Identity. Other selected texts written in English will be published in the foreign scientific journal European Journal of Science and Theology indexed in the SCOPUS database.

Ivan Stadtrucker

(* 1935)

Ladislav Volko

Ivan Stadtrucker is considered to be a broad-spectrum person. Being a film sound expert (he is a graduate of the Czech Technical University in Prague), he co-produced the sound of *The Sun in a Net*, the legendary film of Czechoslovak New Wave directed by Štefan Uher. He was also in charge of the first electronic music studio in Czechoslovakia, cooperating mainly with Ilja Zeljenka. He is also well-known as a scriptwriter, dramatist, director, writer, audio-visual and mass media theoretician, university professor, organizer and the former Head of Slovak television.

Ivan Stadtrucker is the founder of the Faculty of Mass Media Communication in Trnava (1998) and its first Dean, but also a university professor – first at the Academy of Performing Arts in Bratislava and later at the Academy of Arts in Banská Bystrica, where he was also the Dean. He is a true Renaissance man.

What seems to be missing in his well-rounded personality is a form of graphic art realization. He did not do creative art, but he wrote about it. The central theme of his writings was Andy Warhol – an extraordinary personality of the modern art world, an artist with Slovak roots. Ivan Stadtrucker has been paying constant attention to Warhol since 1990. He made several trips to the USA (1995, 1996, 1999) to visit paramount museums and art galleries and to meet the artist’s closest associates and experts familiar with his artworks. It was Andy’s brother John, who gave him a great deal of first-hand information. This activity resulted in an extensive publication *Warhol, the Other Andy* (2009) that included numerous pictures and reproductions of Andy Warhol’s artworks; in the book, he described not only Andy’s life story but, mainly, his artistic traits and their realization in different art forms. Unlike other analysts of Warhol’s artwork, Ivan Stadtrucker (according to M. Polák) “is intimately familiar with the cultural traditions of Warhol’s parents’ background. It was especially his mother’s influence (with whom he communicated in their native Ruthenian language), that portended not only Warhol’s artistic perception, but also his world reflection”.

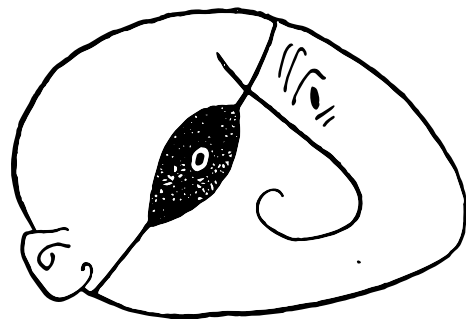
As a scriptwriter, Stadtrucker has authored more than fifty scripts of both feature films and documentary TV films, some of which he has also directed. He entered the world of movies with the script of *Seven Days Every Week* (1964) directed by Eduard Grečner.

In his theoretical works, he carves a clear avant-garde imprint. Together with Július Paštéka, he was one of the founders of Slovak film theory and mediology. His theoretical work *The Beauty of Darkness* (1971) received genuine and well-deserved attention of Slovak, as well as foreign reviewers. In the publication, he analyses primarily the film phenomenon, its contexts and relationship with other forms of art. According to one of the reviewers, Stadtrucker works preferably with the semiotic principle of analysis and technically exact approach to film interpretation. This principle of researching audiovisual art in artistic as well as social contexts is even more profound in his following works: *The Time of Projective Culture* (1983), *Video in Art and Culture* (1983) as well as *Dramaturgy of the Feature Film* (1991) which seems to theoretically summarize his hands-on activities.

His last work, as of now, is a summarizing publication titled *The Theory of Mass Media (Dis)communication*. In 16 chapters and on nearly 470 pages, the author seems to display his skills in the fields of scriptwriting, dramaturgy, and academia. His TV media analysis goes beyond the view of a theoretician; he also deals with the anatomy and physiology of a person in front of a video camera, placing emphasis on the human face with all its changes and also its pretense which results in a so called “TV-event”. He studies TV dialogues and TV chats. Using sociological methods, he examines the act of communication – of a single individual, as well as all TV viewers, or the “TV nation”. The complexity of TV phenomenon perception is extraordinary – and not only in these latitudes. “There is a reason why we have to deal not only with mass media communication but also with dis-communication” (I. Pospíšil), which is a part of a complex communication context.

Another dimension of the author’s creativity is his prose. Stadtrucker, a (supposedly) “dull” theoretician and scenarist, demonstrates his superior literary skills in classically narrated stories, e.g. in the collection of short stories *Blue Amber* (1980) and *The Taste of Apples* (1983) or in the “epistolary” novel *Who Blew Out the Firefly?* (1998), as well as in superbly written collection of novellas *Loves of the Unloved* (2009) and realistic novel *Sablica* (2012). The same applies to his two non-fiction books: a travel book *America Experienced Personally* (1992) and recently published collection of essays *Going through Life* (2014).

From art to science, and back again – this is how we can describe the life and the creative journey of Ivan Stadtrucker. “I was aware it was a risky undertaking, but I took the chance to make my dreams come true anyway”, he said during one of the interviews. This statement is probably still valid, since he has had a lot of vigor in finishing his *The History of Slovak Television*. As is the custom in Slovakia, he needs to find a sponsor. If the book was to be published by a research institute, there would be no problem with its financing. However, since the book is the work of an individual ... to some people it seems to be rather ... unscholarly.



Viktor Kubal (1923 – 1997)

Ladislav Volko

Humorist, caricaturist, actor, creative artist, writer, script writer, animator and a director – there was nobody like him. He was a real Slovak Walt Disney, a great narrator with rakish moustache and kind-hearted look. An “unparalleled example of originality, diligence and professionalism”, as his friend and colleague Rudolf Urc wrote in his monograph. And above all, he was a true human being. He never spoilt any fun. During the film clubs’ seminar in Janko’s Hill he opened, with all pomp and seriousness, my four-year old daughter Baška’s exhibition of child’s drawings. In his drawings he humbly embraced “dailiness”, while in his animated films he liked to challenge the standardized values of this world. In his creative work, he was a master of compression, originality of thought and sharp-wittedness. He was ranked first on several occasions: in 1942 he made the first animated film *Abduction* and then, in 1943, *The Well of Love*. He also made the first feature-length animated film *Jurko, the Highwayman* (1977), a collection of drawings and texts *Your Dita*, which were, week by week, for forty years an integral part of the weekly satirical magazine, *Roháč* (Stag Beetle). A story balancing between horror and parody was presented in another feature-length animated film *The Bloody Lady* (1980). As a director and an animator, he made close to 400 short animated films. Caricature, however, had been his constant companion throughout all his creative life.

“Caricaturist knows that life is too short for him to be able to say all he wants to say. That may be the reason why for his rendering he chooses the simplest possible drawing which is easy to understand and only, when necessary, accompanied by a minimum of words. I would like to draw a caricature with nothing on the paper, and the reader would understand its message anyway. So far, I did not succeed.” His irreproducible art signature, his art compressions, snapshots captured from an unusual angle, his kind caress, followed by a hail of sarcasm and provocation – all of these were parts of his domain. He wrote several books none of which deviates from his value trend. Viktor Kubal will always be easy to identify by his signature drawing, his written word or film imaging. And this will remain true forever.

