

Posudek na diplomovou práci Marka Linhartu *Myth in American Advertising after 1945*

Although this thesis represents the first attempt at the Department of Anglophone Literatures and Cultures to trace the development of advertising in the U.S. after WWII, it brings a methodologically stimulating as well as generally useful outline of the history of post-WWII American advertising. The combination, proposed by the author, of Barthes' theory of myth with Debord's notion of "spectacle," Baudrillard's "simulacrum," Maslow's concept of human motivation and McLuhan's views of communication can be said to create a flexible theoretical framework for a cultural historical approach with some general sociological and economic implications. Moreover, this approach successfully links several theoretical approaches, namely semiology, philosophy, psychology and communication theory which testifies to the interdisciplinary nature of the research enhancing its productivity.

The author worked on his topic with a great interest and thoroughness; he merely needed an advice how to combine the above mentioned demanding theoretical approaches. Even in this respect, his work was active and innovative in terms of creating a functioning methodology which helped him to structure his findings into chapters which not only mirror the history of advertising but reveal its internal dynamic both from the axiological and from the semiotic perspective.

I have only a very few critical comments. The first, a general one, is that the interdisciplinary approach would benefit from the use of Foucault's theory of discourse, especially the relationship between "statements" and "visibilities" discussed in Deleuze's analysis of Foucault's later work (*Discipline and Punish*) in his *Foucault*. While the former establish a discourse, the latter are "non-discursive." It would be interesting to trace the interplay of discursivity a non-discursivity in the history of advertising. From the discursive use of specific advertisements which may be said to transform and modernize Victorian representations of family values, one could proceed to "visibilities," especially the simulacra, expressing the unrepresentable, fetishized value, such as the individual freedom. In view of this, the ideology of liberalism can be viewed critically since it no longer operates within the Enlightenment framework of the "Republic of Letters" but on the global market manipulated by "visibilities" like brands, which the author correctly describes as ultimate abstractions of commodities (74). One could also discuss the choice of material (individual advertisements) which quite straightforwardly leads to the formulation of the major theoretical and cultural historical phases of the development. It can be expected that the relations between empirical results and theoretical conclusions are perhaps trickier and therefore the thesis should also bring in the problems of complexity, statistical analysis, etc. This would mainly help the chapter dealing with "positioning" and clarify how models of behaviour and even of subjectivity can be created by marketing strategies.

Despite these minor problems I am confident that the thesis exceeds the average standard of MA dissertations at the department and recommend it to defense. **Doporučuji k obhajobě a navrhuji hodnotit "výborně."**

V Praze, 29. ledna 2013

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vedoucí diplomové práce