

Folklore in Mass Media: National Garb, Places of Identity and Fairies in (Post)communist Advertising

Simona Klaus

There are many ways in which folklore elements, motifs and events appear in the mass media. I will try to put forward some examples in Slovenian advertising and analyse the elements of folklore used. The advertisements in question have been made between the 1970's and the end of the 20th century and for better understanding of the broader social situation in those various times, the political situation is also mentioned.

The aim of the article is to show the variety in using the folklore motifs in Slovenian advertising through a longer period of time. The advertisements in a way reflect the social climate in which they were made and the folklore motifs are also used to express a particular agenda. It has to be pointed out that the connections between folklore motifs, advertisements and political agendas are made from the subjective viewpoint of the author.

Slovenia, as an ex-Yugoslav republic, developed through most of the 20th century under a communist regime. Communism in Yugoslavia, which was relatively anti-Western, was able to spread its propaganda, the sense of brotherhood and unity through control and censorship of the mass media. Until the 80s, advertisements and the folklore elements which appear in them represented the Yugoslav union. Slovenia separated from Yugoslavia and became independent in 1991. The same strategy was used, but this time the goal was to strengthen the newborn country's identity.

Swift technological development and the rise of the mass media in the last decade have influenced human society and the way of life. Humankind was able to adapt to the new media and use them to reach its goals; political propaganda, advertising or transmission of myths and legends. It is well known in the contemporary field of ethnology and anthropology that elements of folklore appear in the mass media, although they are often transformed and used in numerous different ways. In this article we will take a look at advertising and four examples of ads in which various folklore elements can be identified. Since Slovenian independence welcomed the arrival of the global processes or "westernization" of Slovenian society, one of the results was that advertising of foreign traditions and folklore elements appeared in local mass media.

In my thesis, I argue that the changes of the post-communist era can be seen through the use of folklore elements (such as folk songs, national garb, folk beliefs, sayings, legends etc.) in commercials. Four examples of Slovenian television advertisements, each with its own type of folklore elements used, will be analyzed in this paper in order to illustrate the social and political situation in the 1980s, 1990s and at the end of the 20th Century.

About advertising and its functions

We can say that sooner or later every new medium is “affected” by advertising. An advertisement (or shorter - ad) promotes services and products in various ways and spaces. Ads exist in many forms; oral, printed or digital and appear in newspapers, on television or radio, in games, on the internet, posters etc. Advertising has developed together with the development of various mass media and has undergone many changes since the 1980s, when numerous styles, concepts and patterns of advertising began to appear (Goldman 1992: 4). It has become inseparable from our everyday lives and reality. Renée Dickason argues that “*advertising has become a fully emancipated partner in the audiovisual media and has come to be an accepted part of the spectacle offered by television*” (2000: 1, 159). Today we can observe advertising in its full strength and colourfulness. Defining the various roles of advertising in the modern world can help us to understand capitalist societies in the past and today. This article sees certain ads firstly as a means of selling products and secondly as promoters of ideological agendas. This second function is often not planned and it appears after the public sees it and defines it in this way. The examples analysed here can be divided into two parts; three advertisements (*Radenska*, *Bono cookies and Dobre vile*) were made for companies and are part of their internal marketing process, the fourth example (*Slovenia, my homeland*) is special because it was made as a part of tourism promotion and was a part of a broader spectrum of activities through a longer period of time¹. With mixing the third aspect, folklore motifs and elements, things become even more complex. I’m aware of the problematic stance when claiming that folklore elements used in advertisements promote ideological values in societies. The analysis of forums and blogs and newspaper articles has made it clear that the public sometimes construct different meanings, and I will argue that this happened in the case of the examples mentioned below.

Advertising has become a very diverse (and costly) part of our everyday reality. It comes directly to the consumer and it has “*a capacity to induce belief*” (Book, Cary, Tannenbaum 1995: 107-108). Advertising is a part of the larger process of mass marketing which includes design, packaging, and retail display. Through it, as carried through the mass media, the imaging process reaches the consumer, publicly and privately. The idea of “consumer need³” has its roots in the needs of individuals, which appear under certain circumstances (they can be learned). The “need” has its social and spiritual role in society (Ule 1996: 14-17). Products have symbolic meaning, which defines a number of different needs, desires and values (Wernick 1991: 33, 34). And this symbolic part is in my opinion the area where secondary meanings of the ads formulate. Even though goods are knitted into our social lives through advertising, sometimes the outcome of the ad campaign has unexpected consequences in the society as one of the examples below will demonstrate. The ads in question were aired on television, which is incorporated in our everyday life to such a degree that it is complicated to recognize what kind of impact on society the mass media do have and vice versa. The television is a specific medium which both reflects and

¹ First ideas about tourism promotion were expressed in the early 1980’s, the ad was recorded in 1986 and aired in 1987, but the promotion went on under various other slogans (Prepadnik 2008).

² The saying *Seeing is believing* seems to be very in place at this point.

³ The advertisement’s logic conceals this by inverting the relation between subject and object, depicting commoditized relations as real (or desirable and attainable) (Goldman 1992: 35-36).

interprets society and influences it. This article will try to show its (sometimes not completely controlled) power of persuasion and of promoting certain values, ideology and ideas to audiences through a longer period of time.

Is an ad a mirror of society and can it be a medium for ideological influence?

An advertisement can be both at the same time, a mirror of society and a medium for ideological influence. It will be shown below that the social circumstances are reflected in an ad and are also often used in the script to make the ad more familiar to the public. The claim that ads are mirrors of society opens a lot of new questions about relationships between making and creating advertisements and a certain cultural background. Whoever wants to create a successful advertisement has to be aware of the fact that the audience is much segmented. Television holds its power in the ability to address a huge population at the same time. In the contemporary advertising industry this fragmentation means that TV (and all other) ads must be written to address these various segments (Book, Cary, Tannenbaum 1995: 107). Advertising companies define their focus groups through research before the making of an ad. People forming different audiences are defined by their age, sex, interests, hobbies, beliefs, education, religion etc. Audience reaction to advertisement is a crucial point for an ad to be successful or unsuccessful. One way of understanding the mirror concept is to look from the global perspective. Companies that aim to advertise their products or services globally, have to adapt the marketing strategy to the specific location or country. Marieke de Mooji stated that all manifestations of culture, at different levels, are reflected in advertising. As a result, effective global advertising reflects culture, is a mirror of culture (de Mooji 1998: 38). Effective advertising uses the symbolization of products to simply deliver back to people the culture and values that are their own (Wernick 1991: 42).

On the other hand, advertising agencies face problems when integrating aspects of culture into their ads. Language for example is the reflection of culture, and words expressing people's values cannot be easily translated (de Mooji 1998: 61). It is often not possible to use the same advertisement in different countries. There are some difficulties with the translation of the *Dobre vile* ad because there is a play on words in Slovene which is hard to explain in English⁴. Even the ads that are made in the way which allows for translation, sometimes don't appear to be as good as they should. Music is another problematic aspect of culture used in advertising. "*A people's music is inseparable from their lives, and songs represent an important part of their identity*" (de Mooji 1998: 59). There will be an interesting example of this aspect below.

The connections between advertising and ideologies are indeed complex. Advertising draws deeply from the predispositions, hopes, and concerns of its audiences, but it reformulates them visually to suit its own purposes, not always reflecting meaning but rather reconstituting it. Ideologies which exist as systems of belief in all world cultures, build their credibility mostly with the help of images. "*Images are an important means through which ideologies are produced and onto which ideologies are projected*" (Sturken and Cartwright 2001: 21). And as a consequence, advertisements can be a suitable means for the transmission of ideological agendas. There are several ideologies that exist in a society

⁴ In Slovene, the word *vile* means both fairies or hayfork but it is not the same in English.

at the same time and there are constant fights for hegemony⁵ between them. Ideologies mainly exist collectively; they strengthen individuals' sense of belonging to society and promote the ruling class agendas. It is interesting to note that especially film and television are media in which we see reinforced ideological constructions (Sturken in Cartwright 2001: 21-22).

Folklore and the mass media

Throughout the 20th century folklorists had a strict definition of what their field of research is supposed to be. In times when anthropologists discovered and studied »primitive« peoples all over the world, folklorists tried to save traditional dances, songs and events, poems and myths, the heritage of previous generations of their homelands. Studies of illiterate rural people, usually peasants, and their oral traditions kept folklorists busy until the late 1970s. The mass media were well established by then and folklorists saw a great threat in them. Folklore elements and old traditions were vanishing in front of their eyes, as the mass media spread in the everyday life of people, and societies and cultures changed very rapidly. It was impossible for folklore to maintain its existence without field of study and as a matter of necessity; great changes had to be made (see Dundes 1980, Bendix 1997: 10).

Folklorists had to redefine their area and objects of study. Alan Dundes refused the definition of folk as illiterate rural peasants and instead said that "the term folk can refer to any group of people whatsoever who share at least one common factor" (1980: 6-7). There is an important concept in folkloristics that had defined its field of study from the beginning – authenticity. Regina Bendix showed in her book *In search of authenticity: the formation of folklore studies* that in the past the authenticity was the main criterion for defining the object in folkloristics (1997: 5). The search for authenticity among scholars led them to unspoiled rural inhabitants and to their past rituals. Bendix is against the further use of the concept of authenticity in folkloristics (1997: 7-10). With that put aside, and also the redefinition of folk and the theory of variability of folklore elements, folkloristics was saved from decline and new areas of research were opened. If folklore elements existed in multiple forms and places, their transmission wasn't only oral, but also written and visual. Printed and visual media were soon recognised as places of traditional and/or folklore elements. Of course, the changes didn't happen overnight and a few major researches had to be published in order for mass media to be fully recognised as a field of folklore studies (see Sullenberger 1974, Dundes and Pagter 1975, Dégh 1994). It soon became clear that the mass media contribute to the existence and development of folklore. Now, not only can we study variations of folklore in various mass media, we can also see the rise of new folklore forms⁶ as a consequence of their existence in the mass media (Dundes 1980).

Slovenian folkloristics was facing the same problem; defining the field of study anew, and looked upon and followed – although in a somewhat slower fashion – the international folklorist community and its struggle to define folkloristics in the changed world of mass media and the information society. The development of visual anthropology promoted new research methods in other fields of study, including folkloristics. Not only did

⁵ Antonio Gramsci introduced the concepts of hegemony and counter hegemony in the 1930s (see Sturken in Cartwright 2001: 53-54).

⁶ Alan Dundes writes about computer folklore and folklore about computers (1980: 17).

the visual recording of songs, dances and rituals blossom, but the appearance of folklore motifs in the mass media ceased to be seen only in a negative way, i.e. as folklorism.

Many forms of folklore elements appear in various mass media⁷, from myth, legend and fairytale to costumes, songs and dances. At this point, we should ask ourselves, why are folklore elements used in the mass media at all? It is not easy to find an answer, but a lot of scholars have stated that the key to the use of folklore in such ways lies in its effect on people. For those who recognise folklore elements, they feel familiar with it and they have an “aura of credibility”. Another thesis sees folklore as the field of an irrational, fictional and dream world (Sullenberger 1974: 56). And where better to use this irrationality than in television advertising? Heroes defeating/cleaning stains from clothes, guys getting girls because of an irresistible after shave/love potion, elves, fairies and gold fish granting wishes etc. We can often hear about the magical effects that certain products have. Tom E. Sullenberger made a case study of advertising in the USA and found many interesting parallels between figures in commercials (for example Green Giant, Mr. Clean, White knight of Ajax) and various myths and folk beliefs in different places of the world (1974). Twenty years later, Linda Dégh wrote about *American folklore and the mass media* in the early 1990's and analysed folklore genres from many different aspects. She talks about variants and the folklorization process, Märchen and legends in advertising, career choices of women etc. and constantly intertwines folklore with the mass media (1994). Her work is of great importance for folklore studies, since it discusses many issues and phenomena we encounter when doing research on folklore elements in the mass media today.

There has so far been little attention focused on new types of folklore or on the old ones used in different contexts in Slovene folkloristics. Some observations were made upon how folklore events are presented in the mass media (see Ülen 2008), and Monika Kropelj (2008) has written about folk narrative in the time of the electronic media, but this area of study remains less popular among scholars than do other topics.

In my research thesis, and later one of my articles (2007), I analysed the image of vampires from the times of oral folk narrative to computer technology, and it became clear that folklore is a fluent process, in which motives are not bound to a certain location, but travel through various media and change constantly. This paper will try to present some elements of folklore and their usage in the mass media on Slovenian television from the 1970s until the late 1990s, from being part of communist Yugoslavia until becoming an independent democratic republic. The view point will not be focused upon one particular motif, instead, one of the central points of our attention will be focused on the ideological messages in advertisements, their meaning and impact (if any) on the broader society.

Folklore in advertisements promoting unity – Radenska ad

Before I present the selected television advertisements with folklore elements, let me briefly explain the political and social situation of the time period in which the ads were created. It is important to be acquainted with the time background of the mentioned ads, to understand their relevance and the function of folklore elements that were used.

Political and social situation in Yugoslavia (→1980)

⁷ Newspapers, Radio, Television, Internet, Games etc.

After the end of the Second World War, Yugoslavia, as an ally of the Soviet Union, raised the Iron curtain in order to isolate itself from neighbouring Italy and Austria. In 1948 a huge quarrel took place between the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, the consequence of which was an economic and military embargo on Yugoslavia by the Soviet Union. In this way Yugoslavia was forced to open up toward the West in order to get help, but in the 1950s it started to define itself as the Non-Aligned Movement with some other world countries. The communist party, secret police and army had all the political power in the country, and all liberal movements and parties were destroyed and prohibited.

The mass media were under strict control of the communist party and the program was strictly ideological. Communist propaganda existed at every corner and was a part of the individual's life from his/her birth, in school, work, home, hobbies, sports etc. Slogans filled the daily papers, radio and television, slogans of brotherhood and equality of all the six Yugoslav republics. Advertisements were also highly influenced by communist control but there were also some attempts at rebellion. In the case of posters, Cvetka Požar and others (2000) in their work *Vsi na volitve! (Everyone go vote!)* write about a poster for a governmental event that featured a rebellious idea that even the communist censorship commission failed to notice and even rewarded the authors. Later, when the poster was displayed and the »secret« message revealed, a huge affair arose and some people in the censorship commission lost their jobs.

The following example can be seen as being made according to the standards of the communist regime. The Slovenian company Radenska made an advertisement in the late 1970s for their main product, mineral water. The lyric⁸ of the song which stretches over the whole advertisement is about the mineral water and its characteristics. The song is sung by various people, inhabitants of all nations and nationalities (including Albanian), some in their costumes, and others in ordinary clothes. Some on their mountain tours or at work, some at home. There is also a wedding scene. What is interesting about this advertisement is the fact that when the scene changes from one republic to another, people change with it and the language of the song adapts to it (see footnote 13). The last comment says: *Everything changes, Radenska stays the same.*



Figure 1 and 2: Advertisement for mineral water Radenska Tri srca (1970's)

⁸ Крепи, združuje in osvežuje (Slovenian)/ Radenska nas spaja (Croatian)/ Haj krijepi duuuuuuuuu (Bosnian)/ Furtom osvežava (Autonomous province of Vojvodina)/ Бре ова Раденска с цели свет нас спаја (Serbian)/ Të vjet na që na për shkon, Radenska që na bashkon (Albanian)/ Krijepi dušu osviježava (Montenegrin)/ Раденска спојува (Macedonian). (Strengthens, unites and refreshes/ Radenska connects us/ Strengthens the soul/ Refreshes/ This Radenska unites all of us/.../Strengthens the soul refreshes/ Radenska with love).

This advertisement contains ideological features together with folklore elements on several levels. The leading idea is the brotherhood and equality of all nations, and even ethnic groups within Yugoslav borders. The most obvious is the song which is sung in various languages and in the typical local melos. In addition to the song, the scene changes and shows peoples of various ethnic groups. Some of them are wearing traditional garb⁹, which is one of the folklore elements. Besides the language and melody (again a folklore element) of the song and the appearance of people who appear in the ad, the scene also helps the viewer to recognise the chosen (ethnic/national) region.

It is hard to analyse the impact of the advertisement on the addressed society but we can assume they were some positive reactions to it. Many generations remember this commercial and describe it as legendary or very memorable. Even younger generations recognize it, mostly because it appears on various internet sites¹⁰, blogs and forums. If we look at those sites, we can see numerous positive opinions, thoughts, personal memories and nostalgic comments. It is usually ranked very high. This alone creates the notion of a very successful advertisement (see footnote 15).

Advertisement becomes part of folklore – Slovenia, my homeland ad

This advertisement was aired in times when any nationalistic references were most unwelcome. A period of severe economic and political crisis began for Yugoslavia after the death of its great leader Josip Broz Tito in the year 1980. Leading politicians tried to hide the seriousness of the crisis from people and promoted the ideas of unity and brotherhood. Throughout the 1980s the crisis was getting deeper and the political situation tenser, but specially in the late 80s and early 90s, things became critical. The idea of independency became stronger and stronger in several Yugoslav republics. Slovenia, as the most industrially successful republic in Yugoslavia, had strong tendencies to become a post-industrial society and to become equal to other developed European countries. It was said by some other Yugoslav republics that Slovenia was being egoistic in the economical sense, West-oriented, promoting consumerism and modernity¹¹. In communist and socialist ideology, there was no room for consumerism and all “the bad things” that capitalism brought. This was not the first nor the only notion of fear of capitalism in Europe, for it is also known in academic discourse (see Goldman 1992: 8, Cronin 2004: 3).

Slovenia, my homeland is an ad created to promote tourism in Slovenia and it was only one part of a broader project¹². But it has strong (unintended) nationalistic references (Kuhelj Krajanović and Šmuc 2007: 65). I've chosen this advertisement as it is an example of how an advertisement itself becomes folklore. There are not as many references to folklore and those few that appear have less importance than those seen in the previous advertisement.

⁹ Bosnia, Montenegro and Macedonia.

¹⁰ To name just a few internet sites: Youtube: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=anB_1_malmM, online lexicon: <http://www.leksikon-yu-mitologije.net/read.php?id=2012>, Mojvideo: <http://www.mojvideo.com/video-cult-reklama-radenska/6422ed667171af28e896>, RTV Slovenia: <http://www.rtvslvo.si/mojvideo/avdiovideo/stare-reklame-radenska-v-jugoslaviji/1428/>.

¹¹ A more detailed text about the Yugoslav political and social situation can be found online: www.hervardi.com.

¹² The project began in the early 1980's and included various slogans, ads, participation calls, posters etc. (see Prepadnik 2008).

The first scene in the ad shows hills and forest and the melody begins. A man is walking down the road and carrying a ladder; he's coming towards camera, but then turns right and stops in front of a blank yellow board. The viewer can easily recognise the landscape behind him as the Logarska Valley (northern Slovenia). The images that follow show scenes from everyday life; horses in Lipica, then the camera returns to the man, who is drawing something on the yellow board. Images of a gardener, woman painting on a “*majolka*” vase, mountaineer, two men building a fence and then the man again. Some scenes from the coast are next, not showing the sea or architecture but a sailor, people working in a restaurant and in a hotel appear. Also some men come towards camera, wearing t-shirts with the written slogan *Slovenija, my homeland*. As the camera shows the man again, we already see parts of words he had written or drawn on the yellow board and they are from different languages. At the same time the song begins. The lyrics¹³ were regarded by many, especially by the Yugoslav leadership of that time, as being very nationalistic. The scenes that follow picture an early morning and people preparing to start their working day. The traditional dish *potica*¹⁴ or *šarkelj* appears. Just before the viewer takes a look at the yellow board again, another place of identity appears. It is one of the most popular tourist attractions, lake Bled. We see in the next part of the ad that the man wrote Slovenia at the bottom of the board. He steps aside, takes the ladder and is admiring his work. The camera slowly distances the view and when the man is already leaving, the whole yellow board appears in front of us with the word *Welcome* in seven foreign languages. But what is the most important, the languages don't derive from other Yugoslav republics, they are languages from other European countries (German, English, French, Italian, Hungarian (twice) and Slovenian at the bottom). The scene finishes with the man walking back along the same path on which he came before.



Figure 3: *Slovenija, my homeland* ad (1986)

¹³ Moja dežela, to je njena lepota/ moja dežela, mi smo njeni ljudje/Lepota dežele je sloves njen/ Njeni ljudje smo njeno ime/ Ponosno ime. (My land, this is its beauty/ My land, we are its people/ The beauty of the land is her reputation/ Her people are her name/ Proud name.)

¹⁴ Potica is a traditional Slovenian festive cake. It is a thinly rolled gourmet sweet bread dough with a moist walnut filing (fillings can vary).

The reactions of the politicians were furious (Prepadnik 2008: 76-80). The ad was aired when Slovenia was still part of Yugoslavia, which was facing severe economical and national conditions. Several republics saw their way out of crisis in becoming independent, or at least with Yugoslavia becoming less centralised, but others, especially Serbia, didn't support that. The interesting thing about the ad was that the agency which created it planned to make the same kind of ad for all Yugoslav republics. But nobody listened to them and their proposal for promoting tourism. The content was labelled as nationalistic and it wasn't wanted in any form, since the Yugoslav communist party wanted to maintain the common state.

The reaction of Slovenian people on the other hand was completely the opposite. When they saw the political reaction, they became aware of the ad's content and found it inspiring. The ad strengthened Slovenians as a nation, and – as it was said earlier – the advertisement became part of Slovenian folklore (identity) itself (see Prepadnik 2008: 89–90). The slogan “Slovenia, my homeland” was present throughout the process of independence in the early 1990s. This advertisement, sponsored by the Tourist Association of Slovenia, was a part of the first national brand¹⁵. The prime goal was higher awareness of the importance of tourism for our country, beautiful and kind. The ideological idea of the Slovenian nation appeared as a sort of by product. The advertisement was a great success and people today still remember it, often with nostalgic feelings. Even the younger generation is able to recognize the ad and hum the melody. It is often written that we will never be able to produce an ad so successful and that today's national tourist campaigns are only a pale reflection of the ad “Slovenia, my homeland” (Kuhelj Kraljevič, Šmuc 2007).

The ad itself shows the openness of Slovenia toward the West and toward capitalist society. This shows most obviously in the greetings written on the yellow board, which no longer represent Yugoslav nations but at that time not very respected other European countries.

“Westernization” of Slovenian advertising space

After 1991, Slovenian society began to change rapidly. A consumer society developed instead of a socialist one, where everything belonged to everyone. In the new order, society fragmented itself to those who could buy and those who couldn't. A vast number of new shopping centres opened every year and spending became the biggest national sport. Globally known brands overflowed the local market. As a result of such circumstances the advertising industry flourished. But let me present the political situation before going any further.

Republic of Slovenia (1991→)

Slovenia and neighbouring Croatia became independent at the beginning of the 1990s, together with the fall of the Iron Curtain and the end of the Soviet Union, which caused war to erupt in the Balkans. The Yugoslav army attacked both countries and in Slovenia the war lasted only 10 days. Unfortunately it lasted much longer in Croatia and other countries. The end of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia with the independence of several Republics was the end of the communist era.

¹⁵ See www.zdruzenje-manager.si

The Democratic Republic of Slovenia opened up to other European countries and developed into a strong economic and capitalist state. From the political point of view it became a democratic state with left- and right-wing political parties. Liberalization took place at all levels of social life. Independent television stations appeared, new magazines and daily newspapers, non-governmental organizations arose, huge shopping centres opened, etc. It became part of NATO and the European Union in year 2004 and accepted the Euro as the common monetary currency in the year 2007.

Advertisements and the appearance of global and local folklore elements

The above mentioned changes in society can also be tracked with the help of advertising. It too was liberalized and there was a flood of new advertising agencies. Global companies often use the same ads in different countries and the advertising industry helps them find time and place and translations into the local language. With the global flows of goods and the formation of a consumer society, foreign advertisements appeared on Slovenian television. Especially in the programs of new television stations that financed themselves from selling advertising space and time¹⁶. Advertisements like the Ariel ad with the Sleeping beauty motif were among the many featuring folklore elements from other parts of the world. I will not analyse this particular ad, since it serves only as an example.



Figure 4 and 5: Advertisement for Bono cookies featuring Slovenian folk music (2004).

¹⁶ For instance television station called POP TV.

Much more interesting are ads created by Slovenian advertising agencies¹⁷, which seek inspiration in local folklore elements, such as beliefs, sayings, traditional music etc. One advertisement promotes Bono cookies and the climax of the ad is the Slovenian popular folk music. For the young hitch-hiking man who is listening rap music, it is not an option to drive with a middle-aged man listening to Slovenian popular music¹⁸. He clearly refuses the offered ride, that is until he notices Bono cookies and sits in the car anyway. The last scene shows both men eating cookies and enjoying the music.

There is no conversation between the two men, music and gestures lead the viewer through the happening. The first song, rap, is modern and “cool” for young people to listen to. The young man is enjoying its rhythm although it’s obviously very hot. When the older driver stops his car and the young man lowers his headphones as he tries to get into the car, he’s unpleasantly surprised when he hears folk music and sees the old man enjoying it in the same way he enjoyed his just moments before. There is no politics involved or political ideology, only two generations which meet in a small car on a hot sunny day. So different from each other, and yet so similar. The object of desire, Bono cookies, connects the two worlds and the advertisement ends with a “happily ever after” ending.

The last commercial is another “legendary” Slovenian ad. It was made for the National Lottery in the late 1990s and it’s known among Slovenians as the “Good Fairies” ad. It is rather difficult to translate it, because of the several proverbs and wordplays in the Slovenian language that appear in the ad. The title itself is play on the words which appear at the beginning of the ad. In the Slovenian language, the word for a hayfork is the same as for a good fairy. The first is used in the plural form and the second in the singular. Three men appear in the ad, one also playing his mom. The farmer, named Polde, wishes he had a good hayfork = good fairy, and two men dressed in women clothes appear in front of him. One is a bit deaf. They say they’re good fairies and what does he want. He doesn’t believe them and asks why there’s no third one. They reply that they come in a pair now, it’s cheaper this way. They tell him not to complicate things and offer him three wishes. They want him to hurry because he’s not the only one. When the farmer thinks what to wish, his mom appears in the sky. She says: “*Be cautious now Polde, this is your opportunity, remember what I used to tell you*”. He replies: “*Yes momma, first the barn then the cow*”. This is a Slovenian proverb meaning one should first build oneself a home/house, then marry and have a family. One fairy repeats to the deaf one the saying again, and the deaf fairy repeats it again as he/she conjures up the barn and the cow. The farmer seems pleased. The deaf fairy says: “*Here, with no taxes, you have one more wish.*” This time the farmer thinks for a long time; the fairies seem nervous and restless, there is thunder approaching. The farmer wishes for meat and maize porridge (*polenta*) for the rest of his life. The fairies don’t hear him because of the thunder and think he said he wanted monthly rent, which was Lottery’s grand prize that year. The words meat (*meso*) and maize porridge (*polenta*) are pronounced very similarly as monthly rent in Slovene. Mom comments from the sky: “*exactly*”. Even the good fairies think it’s a smart idea. They give him a lottery ticket, tell him to watch POP TV and have fun. They wish him good luck and walk into the distance where they disappear. The commentator explains in the third person that monthly rent

¹⁷ Some of the biggest advertising agencies are Luna/TBWA, Formitas, Tovarna vizij Studio marketing, Pristop etc.

¹⁸ Brothers Avsenik Ansamble: Večer na Robleku. The song has been highly popular among people for a few decades, and we can say for sure that it has become part of Slovenian folklore.

for the rest of one's life is the grand prize. The last words belong to the farmer who says: "Damn I'm lucky and all I wanted was a good hayfork/good fairies".



Figure 6: *Dobre vile* ad (2000)

This last example illustrates folklore elements used in advertising in a funny way. The setting itself, a farmer digging in manure, has deeper connotations. Slovenians were said one Slovenian poet to be a nation of farmhands/farmers, and this is often mentioned in the media or in politics. It is meant as a criticism of the society that allows its exploitation and humiliation by others.

The most obvious folklore elements are the belief in fairies granting three wishes and the proverb. What makes the situation funny is the fact that the proverb is used literally and the whole thing materializes in front of the viewer's eyes. The whole ad is designed in a humorous way with only men playing the male and female characters, farmer's mother in the sky, alluding that she's dead and in the farmer's head or memory. Although the fairies grant wishes, they mention real life, costs and taxes. There is a mystical tone in the ad, and the viewer is drawn into a half-real half-unreal world where wishes can come true. The reification of wishes awakes the trust in viewers and makes them want to win the lottery prize, thus buying the lottery ticket. The ad is full of sonic effects in the background, creating the right atmosphere. This ad is one of the most popular and successful ads in the history of the independent republic of Slovenia. It is interesting that people today don't know who won the prize, but they all recognize the commercial.

Conclusion

Communication technologies are a constant part of our everyday lives. Folklore intertwines with the mass media and appears in new variations with new meanings. It is used and transformed by the mass media, television advertising, according to the needs of the specific media sometimes even as a tool of (political) ideology. Advertising sells things, and folklore in advertisements serves to achieve this goal, but sometimes it causes unexpected reactions and gains different meaning in the eyes of the public. Both folklore and advertising are fluid processes in constant movement, so they coexist and change together with the development of societies.

I have tried to illustrate through different advertisement examples that advertising is a reflection of society and at the same time serves as a place of creating new meanings. Folklore elements, the focus of this article, are used and appropriated by advertisements to create a sense of closeness between viewers. The sense of familiarity and closeness achieved by usage of folklore motifs creates faster identification between the consumer and the product or service. Folklore has mythical connotations, it awakens special part of one's unconsciousness which results in our doing the wanted consumer action – the purchase; or in the case of the “Slovenia, my homeland” ad campaign – national feeling and identity.

The first advertisement analysed (*Radenska*) has a very strong ideological component and it reflects the desired social unity and brotherhood in times of the communist regime in Yugoslavia. Folklore elements such as local dress and melos, combined with a song in different languages and carefully chosen scenes, show us how the world is supposed to be. The product itself, mineral water, is in a way pushed aside. It is incorporated in the happening in most of scenes on one hand, but on the other it's completely absent in others. The viewer sees the final product at the end of the advertisement. We can see one of the consequences of the ad today in the positive opinions of Slovene and foreign (Croatian, Albanian etc.) bloggers and visitors of forums.

The second advertisement (*Slovenia, my homeland*) was aired in crucial times for Slovenia and helped to build Slovenian national identity. It is an example of an advertisement that itself became a part of Slovenian folklore. It shows places of Slovenian identity, like Logarska valley and Bled, and the way of life. Younger generations are able to recognise the ad, even though it was aired in the 1980s. It is often referred to as legendary and unique.

The last examples show the innovative use of folklore elements by Slovenian advertising agencies. After Slovenia became independent, global currents of capitalism brought foreign folklore elements into advertising. That is why it seems even more important to present the work of Slovenian advertising agencies within the flood of foreign ads and folklore elements in them.

The third and fourth examples are ads created after Slovenian independence. The first one, the Bono cookies ad, was made for a huge company that produces bread, frozen products and various sweets and pastry. The ad itself wasn't aired much, but it is interesting because it sets an example of how Slovenian folk music (alongside modern, foreign rap music) can be depicted in an ad in a positive way.

The last example, the *Dobre vile* ad¹⁹, is one of the most recognisable advertisements among Slovenians, since it is often loaded onto various forums and blogs, often accompanied by a positive and cheering mood of those who write the comments. The beauty of the ad is in the way it brings to life some of the most unconscious feelings of Slovenian people. Throughout history, a feeling of being nothing more than a (not so bright) farm worker with no possessions was ever-present among Slovenian people (together with the sense of smallness). The plot mixes the belief in fairies (past) with the proverbs and sayings (present) and the result of the verbal misunderstanding in a happy prosperous future. The advertisement has not been aired anymore for a decade, but you can still hear people saying lines from the ad²⁰ in different contexts. The humour and the common sense of the text and visual presentation made it possible for the ad to stay in the heads of people until today.

¹⁹ This advertisement was the main reason I decided for this article.

²⁰ For example: „Smart choice Polde, smart choice“ (Slo.: pametno Polde, pametno).

In my point of view, the above mentioned advertisements are an example good enough to conclude that the folklore motifs used in advertisements have a broader impact on the society they are made in. Sometimes they gain extra unexpected meanings that expand over their limits of being a way of persuasion for people to buy a product or service. Their meaning connects tightly with the social (and political) climate if the ad is made in a certain likable way. This thesis is based only upon four examples, and these are not sufficient grounds to make general assumptions about the role of advertisements in contemporary societies. The aim is only to show some fertile areas of folkloristic research that are too often overlooked.

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- Bono ad, Compas design, ordered by: Žito d.d., 08.2004, online access: <http://www.kompas-design.si/ustvarjamo/zito-bono-piskoti-1279/?akc=1279>
- Športna Loterija Slovenije "Dobre vile" ad, Luna\TBWA, ordered by: Športna Loterija Slovenije, 2000, online access: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rc2y8vraPvo&feature=Playlist&p=6A5248A1D38A7583&playnext_from=PL&playnext=1&index=42

Some examples of pages with comments about advertisements

<http://www.youtube.com/user/FromSloveniawithlove>,
<http://twitter.com/FeelsLOVEnia>,
<http://www.facebook.com/mojaSlovenija>,
<http://www.mojnet.com/video-radenska-tri-srca/f0dc2f54732c1d37e09f>,
http://www.genspot.com/Video/ShowVideo.aspx?video_id=273775,
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DGWZlAsKguA>,
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rc2y8vraPvo>,
<http://hr.netlog.com/go/explore/videos/vidoid=sl-239214>, 6.5.2010

Folklor v množičnih medijih: narodna noša, krajevne znamenitosti in vile v (post)komunističnem oglaševanju

Simona Klaus

S pregledom slovenskih množičnih medijev oziroma štirih oglasov, v katerih so uporabljeni folklorni motivi, skozi časovno obdobje tridesetih let, bom skušala analizirati povezave med folklornimi motivi, oglasi in političnimi vsebinami.

Omenjeni oglasi na neki način odsevajo družbeno in politično situacijo, v kateri so nastali. Zgodnji oglas podjetja Radenska d.d. iz časa Socialistične federativne republike Jugoslavije s prikazom različnih etničnih skupin v narodnih nošah promovira strpnost in povezanost med različnimi narodi v skupni državi. Kasnejša akcija Gospodarske zbornice Slovenije za promocijo turizma pa ima zelo močno noto, ki je pri Slovencih nehote promovirala domoljubje in večala željo po neodvisnosti. Po osamosvojitvi Slovenije leta 1991 se v dveh oglasih podjetja Žito d.d. in Športne loterije Slovenija pojavljajo narodnozabavna glasba in pregovori ter besedne igre, ki ne delujejo več narodno zavedno, temveč dajejo vtis domačnosti. V širšem kontekstu je štirim oglasom skupno, da se jih ljudje spominjajo z nostalgичnimi občutki in jih večkrat imenujejo za najboljše, legendarne in neponovljive, kar kaže, da so omenjeni oglasi imeli veliko bolj daljnosežne posledice, kot pa so navadno predvidene za televizijski oglas.