Book reviews

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The Power and the Presence of Rhetoric in Organizational Communication

Øyvind Ihlen, Robert L. Heath, *The Handbook of Organizational Rhetoric and Communication*
(John Wiley & Sons, Inc, New Jersey, 2018)

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The Handbook of Organizational Rhetoric and Communication is edited by Øyvind Ihlen and Robert L. Heath. Øyvind Ihlen is Professor at the Department of Media and Communication at the University of Oslo. Ihlen has edited, written, and co-written ten books, among them *Public Relations and Social Theory* (2009) and *Handbook of Communication and Corporate Social Responsibility* (2011). Robert L. Heath is Professor Emeritus at the School of Communication University of Houston and Academic Consultant in the College of Commerce, Faculty of Management and Marketing at the University of Wollongong in Australia. He edited the *Encyclopedia of Public Relations* (2004) and *The Sage Handbook of Public Relations* (2000).

Every organization which lives in our digitalized and opened world, like a *global village*, is forced, in the good sense of the word, to communicate. The ways in which each organization chooses to speak with its stakeholders decide its success or its disaster. Because communication can be also seen like a discourse, in which the organization tries to persuade or seduce the public, *The Handbook of Organizational Rhetoric and Communication* is a study of the efficacy and the ethical character of the discourse. And because ,,Rhetoric helps us to understand how knowledge is generated and socially constructed through communication" (p. 3), the book is useful for scholars and students, practitioners in communication, all interested in the ways through which a discourse can put forward an organization in the best way: not only to entertain, but also to inform, to persuade and to clarify.

The first part of the book (*Introduction. Organizational Rhetoric*), chapter 1, presents the historical evolution of rhetoric from "The Ancient Art of Rhetoric" to the "New Rhetoric" and the "Organizational Rhetoric". The second part, *Field Overviews Foundations and Macro-Contexts*, starts with the chapter 2, named *Organizational Communication and Organizational Rhetoric I. The Theme of Merger*, written by Charles Conrad and George Cheney. This chapter focuses on the beginnings of organizational rhetoric, through social collectives

and movements, by adding those elements that were not searched before, even if they can be interpreted in the terms of rhetoric.

Chapter 3, written also by Charles Conrad and George Cheney, *Organizational Communication and Organizational Rhetoric II: The theme of Division*, underlines the fact that through discourses is shaped a large variety of interpretations, truths which lead to a way of thinking, a specific way of interaction. In order to clarify the concept of organizational rhetoric, this chapter presents the main results over time. In chapter 4, *Public Relations. Conflict and Concurrence*, Robert L. Heath and Øyvind Ihlen construct an argumentation starting with the core idea that public relations can be associated not only with the marketing, reputation, image and relationship management, but it can be understood like an organizational-centric rhetoric. Specific situation of public relations can be seen like an arena, in a battle where the conflict and the concurrence are important.

Chapter 5, *Marketing Rhetoric and the Rhetoric of Marketing. Manipulation or Mutuality?*, written by Simon Møberg Torp and Lars Pynt Andersen, starts by revealing the first implication of marketing and rhetoric, and after that we find also many other perspectives that need our attention (rhetoric in advertising, for instance). This chapter also details the concept of "marketing rhetoric" and the future implication for organizational rhetoric. Chapter 6, *Rhetorical Analysis in Management and Organizational Research, 2007–2017*, Larry D. Browning and E. Johanna Hartelius, propose new topics of reflection, such as the implication of rhetoric and its power of manipulation that can turn the employees in "tools", the possibility to interpret the world, the competitive organizational world and the rhetoric seen like a fact of *organizational culture* and *social construction*. In Chapter 7, *A Theory of Organization as a Context. For, and as Constituted by, Rhetoric*, John A. A. Sillince and Benjamin D. Golant answer four major questions:, "Why is Rhetoric Used?" ,"Who is using the Rhetoric?", "When the Rhetoric is Used?", "How Rhetoric is Involved in Action?".

The Part III, *Concepts. Foundations Without Which Rhetoric Could Not Occur*, starts with chapter 8, *Identification Connection and Division in Organizational Rhetoric and Communication*, written by Robert L. Heath, George Cheney, and Øyvind Ihlen. They develop the concept of identification and division, bringing to the readers' attention the most important contributions of the main scholars in the field. In chapter 9, *Deploying the Topics*, Greg Leichty clarifies the definition of topics, exploring the historical background that shaped the interest of scholars and underlying the implication of topics in practice. In chapter 10, *The Truth About Ideographs Progress Toward Understanding and Critique*, Josh Boyd explains what ideographs are and their importance nowadays, beyond the utilization in political discourses.

Chapter 11, *Myths that Work Toward a Mythology of Organizations and Organizing*, Graham Sewell, is focused on the idea of myth metaphor in modernity. The author also brings out the fact that organizational form is a

modern myth and the actual researchers have to pay more attention to this matter. If we understand the relations between competitors and the strings that move them, we can find out how "community actually coheres around the myth; how it is modified over time until its foundational metaphor is extended beyond the limits of its interpretive flexibility, to be replaced by another myth" (p. 165).

Chapter 12, *Stasis Theory. An Approach to Clarifying Issues and Developing Responses*, Charles Marsh, defines the stasis theory and depicts its presence in modern crisis communication models. The conclusion of this chapter is that stasis theory is a strategic tool in the process of strategic issues management. In chapter 13, *Corporate Apologia Organizational Rhetoric and Wrongdoing*, Keith M. Hearit analyses those discourses in which organizations need to apologize. In the crisis communication context, apologia becomes relevant again and it is truly necessary to know better the implication of defense. In the next chapter, *Ethos and its Constitutive Role in Organizational Rhetoric*, James S. Baumlin and Peter L. Scisco reveal a new understanding of the *ethos* in an actual speech, one which is not restricted to the use of words like in the ancient rhetoric.

Through chapter 15, *The New Civic Persona. Organizational/Institutional Citizenship Reimagined* (elaborated by Jill J. McMillan, Katy J. Harriger, Christy M. Buchanan, and Stephanie Gusler), we can see the historical transition from the *persona* to the groups and collectivities. This passage from the persona individuality to group individuality is important, because it can explicate the core aspects of the organization lives. Chapter 16, *Rhetorical Figures. The Case of Advertising*, written by Bruce A. Huhmann, analyses some examples of rhetorical figures used in advertising over time. Why is this important? Because, like the author says: "Since advertising is the primary form of commercial persuasion, the focus has primarily been on using rhetorical figures to enhance messages persuasiveness, which is important to both practitioners and academic advertising researchers. Rhetorical figures influence both the necessary precursors for persuasion (attention, processing, and elaboration) and persuasion itself." (p. 237). In chapter 17, S*pades, Shovels, and Backhoes. Unearthing Metaphors in Organizational Rhetoric*, Damion Waymer takes a closer look at the rhetorical figures, with a special focus on the metaphors. In organizational rhetoric, metaphors matter because scholars established that they are pervasive enough and thus it can help us figure the major changes in organizational thinking. In chapter 18, *Synecdoche. Another Ubiquitous and Everyday Trope*, Peter M. Hamilton presents the synecdoche as a key tool, along with other tropes: "The use of synecdoche can therefore indicate what is supported or opposed and the directions in which particularly powerful actors wish to drive organizational strategies and policies." (p. 266).

Part IV, *Processes. Challenges and Strategies*is begins with chapter 19, *Rhetorical Legitimacy Contests. EpiPen and the Pharmaceutical Industry's Rope-A-Dop*, in which Ashli Q. Stokes discusses the problem of legitimacy. For the linkage between legitimacy and organizational rhetoric, the author refers to

"Mylan's Legitimacy Problem". Chapter 20, *Rhetorical Agency. What Enables and Restrains the Power of Speech?*, is written by Elisabeth Hoff-Clausen. After defining the rhetorical agency, this chapter gives us a better understanding of organizational rhetoric because the author proposes a *dialectical* way of framing the concept of agency. In next chapter, *Organizational Rhetoric in Deeply Pluralistic Societies. The Agonistic Alternative*, Scott Davidson suggests that in a struggle/contest (agnostic alternative) the language is one of the most important weapons when organizations fight with their competitors.

Chapter 22, *Understanding the Rhetoric of Dialogue and the Dialogue of Rhetoric* (done by Michael L. Kent and Maureen Taylor), focuses on the principles of dialogue, its nature and its dialectical character and how we can rethink relationships through it. If we admit that dialogue, "contributes to a rhetorical understanding of the human experience", the organizations have to pay attention when to simply have a monologue and when to engage in a dialogue with its stakeholders. In chapter 23, *Persuasion in Organizational Rhetoric Distinguishing between Instrumental and Deliberative Approaches*, Ford Shanahan, Alison E. Vogelaar and Peter Seele depict the persuasion in the organizational context, focusing on the deliberative context and on resilient organizations. The core idea of this chapter can be resumed with a citation: "In the absence of such efforts to employ persuasion in an ethical manner, or at least being cognizant of the possibility of unethical persuasion, businesses risk validating the searing accusation against the Sophists that persuasion simply creates the illusion of truth, and in doing so distorts reality." (p. 340)

Chapter 24, *Strategic Message Design Defined a Call for Focused Organizational Rhetoric and Communication*, (Peter M. Smudde and Jeffrey L. Courtright) begins with an useful definition: "Message design is the purposeful application of language and symbols to create organizational discourse that inspires cooperation between an organization, its stakeholders, and other constituencies. In practical terms, messages are verbal and nonverbal communication acts created by someone with varying degrees of strategic purpose and for someone else (along with an element of self- reflexivity as well)" (p. 345). In order to face a dynamic context, scholars and practitioners have to know how to use the practical part of rhetoric, beyond mere academic use. The purpose of this chapter is to clarify the issues of strategic message design and to offer some practical advice.

In chapter 25, *Visual and Multimodal Rhetoric and Argumentation in Organizations and Organizational Theory*, Jens E. Kjeldsen is concentrated on visual and verbal rhetoric, knowing that the words are never used alone. The aim is to unfold visual rhetoric (through pictures) in organizations. Chapter 26, *Conceptualizing Audience in the Communication Process* (Heidi Hatfield Edwards) refers to the one of the links of the dialogue, the audience, the link that, in the end, has to understand the message and offer an answer. The study of audience is important because, first of all, it is vital for any organization, and secondly, the characteristics of an actual audience are shaped by the digital era.

The last part of this book, Part V, titled *Areas. Contextual Applications and Challenges*, continues with the chapter 27, *Strategic Issues Management Organizations Operating in Rhetorical Arenas* is written by Robert L. Heath. Organizations have to survive on markets where *the policies define the political economies where they operate*. The organization needs a reward to survive, but its actions are always seen by the competitors. It is important, at this point, how an organization acts like a social actor and what feedback it receives.

In chapter 28, *Corporate Social Responsibility and Rhetoric. Conceptualization, Construction, and Negotiation*, Amy O'Connor and Øyvind Ihlen rethink the concept of social responsibility, CSR, in a rhetorical situation underlining the principal strategies that can be used in future research or applications. In chapter 29, *Organizational Rhetoric – Dialogue and Engagement. Explicating the Infrastructural Approach to Risk Communication*, Michael J. Palenchar and Laura L. Lemon tackle the concept of risk, seen also in a rhetorical context: how do we properly use words to co-create meaning and discuss effectively the issues that concern us? Chapter 30, *Rhetoric as the Progenitor. The Creation and Expansion of Crisis Communication* is written by W. Timothy Coombs. Crises existed since the appearance of organizations. A crisis is one of the most defining moments, when any organization has to dialogue with its stakeholders in order to regain lost reputation or avoid a disaster. As the authors says: "Rhetoric's greatest potential for continued enhancement of communication is through the macro level of crisis communication research and the exploration of crisis contestation. Macro level crisis communication research seeks to illuminate the effects of crisis communication on societal outcomes such as regulations and laws. Crisis communication research is dominated by micro level research that improves the practice of crisis communication but ignores the larger societal concerns. Moreover, the various ways crises invite contestation are perfectly suited for rhetorical analysis. Rhetoric was the progenitor of crisis communication and remains a vital guiding light for this emerging and expanding research area." (p. 436). In chapter 31, *Organizing for Advocacy. Activist Organizational Rhetoric*, Michael F. Smith and Denise P. Ferguson are focused on a better understanding of the social movements and activism. In their analysis, they used two trends in the study of activist rhetoric, namely *the impact of social and digital media on activist organization identity* and *the call to measure the impact of activist organizations* (p. 447).

Part VI, *Conclusions. From Origins, to Now, and Beyond*, contains two chapters, 32, *Aristotle, Burke, and Beyond. Impetus for Organizational Rhetoric's Revival* (George Cheney and Charles Conrad) and 33, *New Vistas in Organizational Rhetoric* (Rebecca J. Meisenbach). While in chapter 32 the authors reinterpret Aristotle and Burke (power and language, materiality and realism), in the next one the core idea results from the new form of rhetorical data (ethnography and interviews). The book ends with chapter 34, *Conclusions and Take Away Points*, written by Robert L. Heath and Øyvind Ihlen. The main

assertions from this chapter are: “Organizational rhetoric goes beyond instrumental approaches”, “Organizational rhetoric is constitutive”, “Organizational rhetoric is agentic and political”, “Organizational rhetoric is negotiation, conflict and dialogue” and “(Organizational) rhetoric is foundational” (pp. 494-496).

The Handbook of Organizational Rhetoric and Communication is an excellent study in communication for every scholar, student and practitioner interested in rhetoric and its new forms of manifestation. Because the book is written by so many scholars, from different areas of study, we can find among its pages not only new ways of interpretation, but also a historical route of every concept, with the most important findings over time. It is decisive to be aware that in fields like marketing or advertising, even if we have so many studies about *good marketing* or *good advertising*, we can’t ignore the rhetorical stance. In the end, communication is a pure act of language and rhetoric has made serious progress in examining those particular characteristics of dialogue. Moreover, when the act of communication can save or destroy an organization in a period of crisis, every word spoken or written in front of the others has an immediate and often irreversible effect.

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Politics through the lens of emotion

Hanna Samir Kassab, *The power of emotion in Politics, Philosophy and Ideology*
(Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2016)

Ioana JÎJÎIE

There are various capitalism types across the world and we may ask ourselves why this happens. We may also wonder what the explanation for the diversity of political cultures is across countries. Hanna Samir Kassab is seeking to answer these dilemmas by looking at the way human beings perceive the world through another perspective: by introducing a theory of emotion's role in the politics production.

As we may know, emotions shape ideas. Moreover, emotions and ideas work together in order to create politics. While a sentimental feeling toward a certain way of life determines human action, individual preferences and public opinion, emotions succeed in creating ideas which charge the language that express them with power.

This book wants to answer a central research question: *Why do so many diverse ideologies exists?* At this point, the author formulates an explanation that is fundamentally shaped by one simple notion: emotions influence ideas and create politics. However, the first task that Hanna is referring through her book is to describe the framework of politics as a simple set of ideas that cater to a person's emotion. From this point of view, she discusses the important variables that make up politics, ideas and emotions. Once these variables find one another, political philosophy comes into existence. And, at the very moment when people accept it as truth, then political philosophy becomes a structural force.

The book is divided into two main parts. While part I builds a theoretical framework that seeks to explain the role of emotions in politics, part II applies the framework to a multiplicity of philosophies and ideologies from conception (which means politics) to inception (which refers to philosophy and in the end to the transformation of society, or in order words, ideology).

The purpose of chapter 2 to 5 is to lay out the theoretical framework that underlies this book's main contribution. The theoretical framework has a single purpose: to explain and further understand the development of political ideologies from inception. The second chapter of the book discusses emotion, fear as seen against the background provided by different disciplines: philosophy, ideology and psychoanalysis. As from a philosophical perspective, emotions are an integral part of human mind and behavior functionality.

Aristotel, Aquinas and Hobbes consider emotions to be subjective and reactionary and in each instance emotion builds the logic and political discourse of human kind. Meanwhile, biologists consider that emotions are a product of neural networks in the brain: the primitive cortex, the subcortex and the human-brain. These networks manage and determine the development of attention resources, systematic mobilization, approach and defensive behavior and the formation of conditioned associations, all fundamental to individual survival. Last, but not least, S. Freud considered that the frame of mind of the individual as a given time can influence ideas and actions, creating reality, not only for the subject, but also for the people around them and their environment.

Furthermore, the next chapter brings into discussion the ideational aspect of the individual that is how people think, reason and solve problems. Emotions play an important role in the process of perception in both stages of recognition and interpretation. The state of mind of the individual given perception will mold one's attention and shape action. The author describes the effects of every important emotion on the individual, from anger, sadness and disgust, to fear, anxiety or even joy. Also, in this chapter we can encounter the idea that people make choices based on a ranked order of preferences, calculating the costs and benefits of the actions needed to achieve goals.

Chapter four combines these factors, fear and reason, to analyse the formulation of politics. This chapter is divided into two parts. Firstly, Kassab defines what she means exactly by a structure of politics. In other words, she will explain why politics is at its most elementary level a product of emotions. Secondly, she will present the literature that inspired this work. The final chapter of this book is dedicated to discussing the formulation of political philosophy as a systematic attempt to document politics. Also, we can find explained here the concept of emotivism, introduced by Macintyre, as the doctrine that all evaluative judgements and more specifically, all moral judgements are nothing but expressions of preference, expressions of attitude or feelings insofar as they are moral or evaluative in character.

The second part of this book hopes to show that the suggested framework offers valuable benefits. The author applies it to the following political ideologies: democracy, communism, fascism, zionism/islamism and American non conservatism with a special focus on foreign policy. Each chapter in part II is broken down into subsections that hope to identify the following: the historical context that gave rise to the political ideology, how ideas came out of those fears to create philosophy and how people were convinced that the philosophy was in their next interest, leading to the transformation of society.

In conclusion, the purpose of Kassab's book was to provide an explanation to understand the creation of violent political ideologies looking at emotion. There is an association between negative emotions and violent behavior and the author was set up to establish this association. But the question remains: how do we avoid the formation of violent political ideologies? Are those who experience a high level of security in charge, or the power is within

the insecure individuals? Maybe the state should focus more on those who will be negatively affected or influenced by their decisions in order to secure peace for itself. Because emotions shape ideas which determine actions.

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A story-centric approach in the post-advertising world

Robert McKee and Thomas Gerace, ***Storynomics: story-driven marketing in the post-advertising world***
(Hachette Book Group, New York, 2018)

Anca Georgiana ȘERBAN (căs. MĂDĂRAȘ)

Competition in the business environment is more and more intense, and in order to capture the attention of stakeholders, much more effort and consistency is needed from brand managers. Consumers are bothered with advertisements every step, and to deal with media bombardment, people have developed the ability to skip ads: simply it is contained and derailed part of the landscape and no longer pay attention, no longer processes consciously and, as a result, I often do not remember not even the brand name promoted. Therefore, if advertisements are no longer as effective, how can the marketing and advertising budget allocated annually to promote brands be supported and justified? But why are not some commercials as effective? However, what do some marketing and advertising specialists that make it possible to establish long-lasting relationships with the different target audiences even under harsh conditions?

In *Storynomics*, Robert McKee and Thomas Gerace analyze the changes that have taken place over time in marketing and advertising, he underlines the idea that marketers and advertisers are currently experiencing an unprecedented crisis and propose the saving solution: the story!

Robert McKee is one of the world's most accomplished, respected and acclaimed screenwriters. With over 40 years of writing scripts with success stories for famous films that have been awarded at major festivals but also for companies and brands, Robert McKee is described by *The Washington Post, The New York Times, Los Angeles Time, BBC, CNN,THE GUARDIAN or The Wall Street Journal* as: *"Legendary", "His great insight and knowledge in storytelling is unparalleled", "The Ultimate Master", "The Most Influential Storytelling Theorist from Aristotle", "Universally Acclaimed", "McKeeand the world's best-known and most respected lecturer in Storytelling Arts."*[1]With more than 30 years dedicated to the formation of new generations of specialists, he has prepared over 100,000 writers, novelists, playwrights, poets, documentary

[1]*About McKee*, https://mckeestory.com/about/

producers, producers and executives at international level, students who have in turn obtained hundreds of prizes at the most prestigious profile competitions.

Known as the legendary master of stories or "the Aristotle of our time", Robert McKee supports Story Seminars around the globe in over 40 cities across 6 continents. Robert McKee wrote *Storynomics* along with Thomas Gerace, Skyword CEO, a digital marketing expert with whom he worked for corporations like Samsung, Marriott International, Philips, Microsoft, Nike, IBM or Siemens in adopting a model story-based brand communication(*story-centric approach).*

Storynomics is structured in 3 main parts and has 13 chapters (first part - 2 chapters, second part - 4 chapters, third part - 7 chapters). If the first part is introductory and highlights the story of advertising, on the one hand, and the story of marketing, on the other hand, the last two parts are dedicated to the process of creating a story, that is, the process by which the story of a brand is brought to life (*Storified Branding*).

In the first part of the book, the authors analyse what we call advertising and marketing today. The authors believe that in the case of advertising one can talk about a story of addiction, and in case of marketing about a story of deception. They point out that nowadays, advertisers and marketers face an unprecedented crisis situation that has grown most in the past two years: consumers have reached the point where they are willing to pay to get different software to help them stay away from advertisements (*ad-block*). People are more sceptical than ever and increasingly determined to avoid advertisements that interrupt their activities. How is it possible to block ads? The fact that the Internet is at the top of the list for the consumer's media, all the attention of advertisers and marketers has been focused on the new media, on the Internet. As a result, consumers are constantly bombarded with millions of stimuli, with millions of advertisements. Thus, the desire of individuals to avoid what is bothering them: the commercials (in which they do not believe anymore because they have been too often).

In addition, the more consumers strive to avoid advertising, the more promotional budgets are more wasted because some of those consumers no longer retain the name of the promoted brand. "A study by Infolinks found that "after being asked to recall the last display they saw, only 14% of users could name the company, the brand, or the product, suggesting that brands are wasting millions of dollars in ads that consumers do not remember. And then the news for marketers got even worse. In September 2015, PageFair and Adobe announced that 198 million people were using ad-blocking software on their desktop devices globally. The study found that ad-blocking adoption is growing at 41 percent annually. The study estimated that $ 41.4 billion in advertisements would be blocked worldwide in 2016. A new front had opened in the popular revolt against interruption and emotional manipulation." (McKee and Gerace 2018, 26).

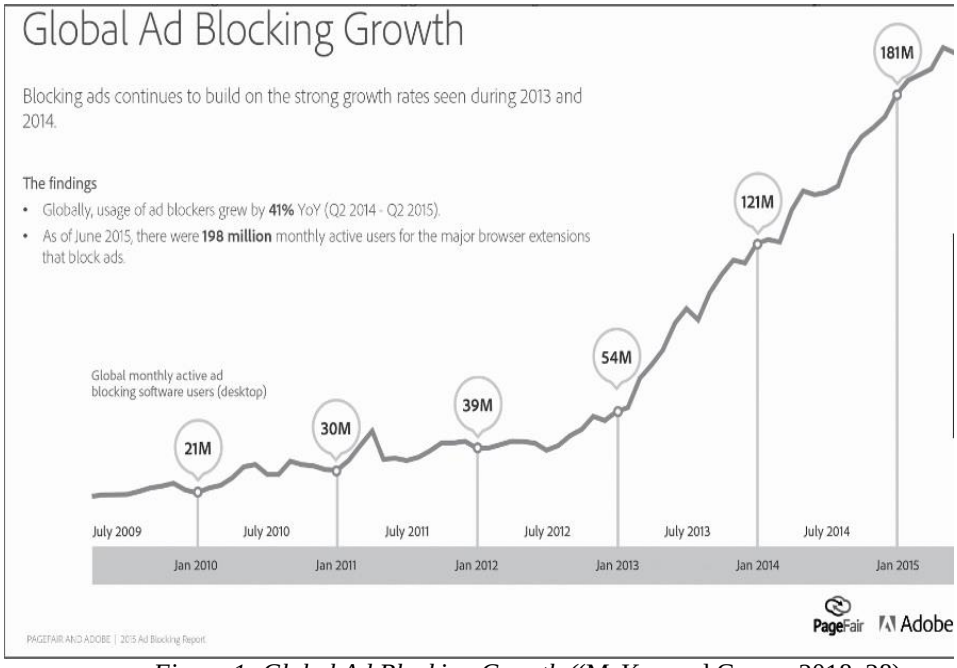

Figure 1: Global Ad Blocking Growth ((McKee and Gerace 2018, 28)

Therefore, in the first two chapters of the book, it is investigated how marketers have actually reached this deadlock, precisely because once the causes of the crisis have been identified, the most effective treatment can be proposed.

In the second part of the book, McKee and Gerace focus on a solution for the exit of marketers from the impasse. In the four chapters of the second part, the essential elements of a story are revealed and analysed, components that from the perspective of the authors are timeless and universally valid in all cultures. It also provides explanations and arguments for how a well-told story can capture attention, generate loyalty from consumers, and can lead customers to act in a certain way. The main argument put forward by authors in designing brand stories makes reference to human nature, to the fact that people have causal thought, narrative thinking. As a result, it would be a natural approach to create a story around the brand and to convey to consumers what you have to tell through a story.

Robert McKee claims that the *difference between data and story is the following: Data compiles facts by quantity and frequency; story reveals the causalities behind and below these facts. Story eliminates irrelevancies, concentrates on dynamic change, and then reshapes the factual subject into a structure that links events into chains of cause and effect, played over time.*

In the final chapters of this part, the components of the story are deepened and precious instructions are given, with specific steps to be followed for those who want to become story makers.

The third part of the book highlights how the recommended solution for the crisis of advertisers and marketers is applied to manage and remedy the problems identified by authors. They provide concrete examples of their day-to-day business with brands and companies who have managed to create a long-lasting relationship with their customers through stories. Also, during the seven chapters in the last part of the book, the authors deal individually with the relationship between:

- Story and marketing specialist
- Story and branding
- Story and advertising
- Story, demand and guidance of a generation
- Story and audience building
- Story and sales
- Story, Effectiveness and Measurement of Results.

You wonder what *Storynomics* means? Certainly the authors wanted it, and as a reward, if you go through the book, Robert McKee and Thomas Gerace reveal the mystery and explain the meaning of the title as well as the way they created it. *Storynomics* is a book written in a language accessible especially to those who work in the business, marketing, advertising or for those who seek to understand in depth their province and persuasive power. Even though some of the topics discussed in the book are dealt with in fewer pages, perhaps in too few compared to the complexity of those concepts, which is the essence of the book - the story - is in-depth comprehensive. *Storynomics* is a story about business stories and successful promotion campaigns.