

Media and Communication

Media and Communication

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Introduction

The worldview we carry and nurture within ourselves is created and developed in relation to the media impacting us, i.e. to our faculty of making a critical analysis of how the media impact us. The common shallow and pseudo-political understanding of the media leads to instrumentalizing the means of 'information' and those for whom they are intended. The media today have a deeper, stronger and more important role than their function as a means of information, education and entertainment.

The medium also represents light that enables us to see, as well as a dancing and ritualistic movement of the body; the medium is also an oral word that has kept and developed tradition throughout the millennia. Any drawing, graphics, symbol, note, electronic or digital record – all of this mediating between the two phenomena of existence – represents a medium. A philosophical approach to the media is the most comprehensive analysis of the important mediation through which we become what we are.

A time will come when the concern relating to what is published, where it is published and in what form, will become more important than the political, social and cultural institutions making political decisions on the means of mediating media. The protection of the media environment will become more important than protecting the environment itself. When we learn how to clean the trash from media systems shaping us, the consequences of global Earth pollution will also be reduced. Cleaning the system of mediation is the task awaiting its Herculese. They will appear equipped with philosophical conclusions on the importance, impacts and ways of resistance and change.

There is a certain beauty in the analogy between the creation of man and creation of literacy. To put it simply, holy books claim man is made from dust (clay). First systematic records in the medium of letters were inscribed in clay.

The clay of the spiritual and the human was shaped in the metaphorical sense by the clay of inlaid signs. The human civilization surged precisely when records in clay developed. It is our task to ensure that systems of media mediation do not return the human civilization to dust. The symbol of the phoenix would probably not be of any help to us then.

We consist of everything that we can say through our symbols to the world that is outside of us. Our world is the external, made internal through symbols/ the media. We are at the same time the melody and harmony of music, a painter's brush stroke on the canvas, a sculptor's cut; we are the shape of the spaces in which we live, work and play; we are the word, sentence, song, mask, role... We are a genetically programmed board for inscribing signs to reprogram us. In essence the human being is a creature of the media.

There is not many information on social media which we might consider important or as having any significant impact on our lives, in the same way that the manner and the very existence of social media has impacted us. We were introduced to this world by Marshall McLuhan's proclamation that "The medium is the message". Today we can make a step further and say: The philosophy of media is the message brought by the view which understands the influences shaping us.

Are editors of tv programmes for commercial tv networks well versed in media literacy? The question seems to be rhetorical because in a way it is supposed they are. But if you try and make an effort to watch some of the so-called reality shows, you may realize that inappropriate and rude speech enters your home as well as the inappropriate behaviour by non-actors who play the reality game. The question is then no longer rhetorical. It needs to be supplemented with this awareness: the critical analysis of the philosophy of media is necessary for media literacy.

Hate speech is one of the symptoms of the disease suffered by any modern society or the human civilization in general. Spaces for the communication between unprepared citizens unaware of the media are introduced without any prior analysis. Every sign, word, sentence, body movement and to a larger extent, text, book, play, tv programme or movie – make up a snowball which always ends up creating a smaller or larger avalanche. We should welcome our symptoms as they turn our attention to the disease. We should treat causes. The basic cause is the media which like a medieval city, allows trash to be put out on the streets. We are now more advanced and so we have changed the process: the trash is not thrown out in the streets but into our own homes.

The gates of human spirituality today are no longer guarded by powerful corporations, politicians, or religious hierarchies. Their influence is important, but without the modern mass-media, it would merely illustrate the number of their true followers (and there are not many of those). However, every day

the mass-media bring content into our lives which we discuss, think about, dream about, which simply become important content of our lives. These, our lives, as noted by media theorists, are handed over to corporations interested only in profit. In this they are (sometimes unconsciously) assisted by religious and political hierarchies. Things must change. Globally and essentially.

Anyone who has tried to decorate their courtyard with flowers, trees, a bench here and there – subconsciously moved towards an idea of something (heavenly) beautiful where one would wish to live. In the evenings (and in the daytime at rerun times) when we subject our soul to the content of our film and information programmes – robberies, murders, fraud, manipulation, the avoidance of legal systems, tortures, street gangs, football fans, nationalist violence, arrogance of legally untouchable ‘golden youth’ – we unconsciously agree to a life turned into a political, social and cultural horror. In order to stop living in this horror we need to stop the media in their subservient mission. For starters we need to become aware this is happening.



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Is truth obsolete?

Key words truth, deception, interest, efficiency, post-factual

Abstract In our postmodernist times of growing populism, the value of truth (if understood at the very least as taking facts into account) has been seriously called into question and the media represents one of the factors contributing to this process. The persuasiveness with which other people's opinion is presented as one's own is the only thing that has become important, and the only valued criterion is efficiency. The difference between truth and deception is therefore erased, as well as the difference between the just and unjust, between the sensible and nonsensical. A dramatic question is revealed within this framework: does humanity have any resources at its disposal to fight the barbarization towards which the obsolescence of truth is leading us?

Zastarjelost istine?

Ključne riječi istina, obmana, interes, učinkovitost, postfaktičko

Sažetak Zahvaljujući i medijima, u našim je postmodernističkim vremenima napredujućega populizma vrijednost istine (razumjela se ona makar i kao uvažavanje činjenica) ozbiljno dovedena u pitanje. Važna je uvjerljivost kojom se tuđi interesi prikazuju kao vlastiti, a jedini kriterij koji se poštuje jest efikasnost. Stoga nestaje razlika između istine i obmane, pravednoga i nepravednoga, smislenoga i besmislenoga. U tom se sklopu javlja dramatično pitanje: ima li čovječanstvo na raspolaganju ikakva sredstva kojima će se suzbiti barbarizacija u koju nas zastarjelost istine vodi?

One commonly hears today that we are living in *post-truth* times. The Oxford Dictionary defines this term as denoting circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief¹. The term was apparently first used by a Serbian American dramatist Steve Tesich in 1992 in reference to the Watergate scandal and on the occasion of its twentieth anniversary. The first systematic usage of the term (in the phrase *post-truth era*) is noted in 2004 when the American publicist and researcher Ralph Keyes published the book *The Post-Truth Era*². Other known synonyms for *post-truth* are *post-fact* and *post-factual* (it appears this term was coined in 1999 by the American communicologist Carl Bybee)³ and this is the coinage most often used in defining the phenomenon this term relates to in the German language, gaining its definite form after Brexit and the American presidential election in 2016, often used in the phrase *post-factual times* (Postfaktische Zeiten)⁴. Post-factual times are marked by the primacy of alternative facts, founded on emotions and personal beliefs, as opposed to previous times when facts were taken into account based on empirical and/or experimentally determined facts, i.e. scientific facts.

Disregarding the surprise at realizing that up until recently we have been living in a world of scientifically established facts (without being aware of this fact it seems), we must turn our attention towards truth being identified with (scientific) facts which is a constant in these definitions. The basic meaning of the term fact as provided by the Oxford Dictionary is 'a thing that is known or proved to be true'⁵. Identifying truth

1 Comp. <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/post-truth>, accessed 20 December 2017. A similar definition is offered by Cambridge: relating to a situation in which people are more likely to accept an argument based on their emotions and beliefs, rather than one based on facts (comp. <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/post-truth>, accessed 21 December 2017).

2 Comp. Ralph Keyes, *The Post-Truth Era: Dishonesty and Deception in Contemporary Life*, St. Martin's Press, New York 2004. One should also mention the work by the French political scientist Dominique Moisi, *The Geopolitics of Emotion*, especially since it contains exhaustive and convincing arguments supporting the idea that the Internet and social networks play a key role in spreading *post-truth* (comp. Dominique Moisi, *La géopolitique de l'émotion*, Flammarion, Paris 2009).

3 The definition of *post-factual* found in the *Cambridge Dictionary* is the same as the definition of *post-truth* given in the same dictionary (comp. <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/post-factual>, accessed 21 December 2017).

4 Comp. e.g. http://www.deutschlandfunk.de/meinung-statt-tatsachen-wahrheit-in-postfaktischen-zeiten.1148.de.html?dram:article_id=388227, accessed 21 December 2017.

5 <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/fact>, accessed 21 December 2017.

6 Comp. Richard Rorty (ed.), *The Linguistic Turn: Recent Essays in Philosophical Method*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago/London 1967.

7 Comp. 'Fact', in: Ted Honderich (ed.), *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2005.

8 Comp. e.g. John F. Haught, *Making Sense of Evolution: Darwin, God, and the Drama of Life*, Westminster John Knox Press, Louisville 2010.

9 Comp. e.g. Deborah E. Lipstadt, *Betrifft: Leugnen des Holocaust*, Rio Verlag, Zürich 1993; Stephen E. Atkins, *Holocaust Denial as an International Movement*, Praeger, Westport 2009; Lucy Dawidowicz, *What is The Use of Jewish History*, Schocken Books, New York 1992.

10 Comp. the review of denying the Srebrenica genocide at: <https://srebrenicagenocide.wordpress.com/tag/revisionism/>, accessed 18 December 2017. The book by Milivoj Ivanišević, *Srebrenica 1995 - in search of truth* (Hrišćanska misao, Belgrade 2007) may be used as a good example of the denial of the genocide, falling completely within

as fact ignores the difference introduced by Leibniz on the distinction between truths of fact (*vérités de fait*) and truths of reason (*vérités de raison*) but also for example, warnings by certain representatives of the linguistic turn such as the one that the language used is marked by certain previous judgments, and this language determines what can and what cannot be considered a fact⁶. If we take into account that the concept of fact is most often defined and used within the framework of reductionist scientific-positivist epistemology models⁷, it is highly problematic to define truth as fact.

All of this however fails to justify efforts at legitimizing *alternative facts* as being equally valid as scientifically based facts (or even as more powerful than the fruits of positivist reductionism). Examples such as the attempt to replace school lectures on evolution with *alternative truth* based on mindless creationism⁸ or the numerous attempts at historical revisionism (sometimes including the denial of the Holocaust⁹, or closer to home, the denial of the Srebrenica genocide even though it has been proven in court)¹⁰ all point to the harmfulness of direct impacts such legitimizations bring. If we take into account these and similar examples, it becomes clear how – despite the problematic approach of equating truth with facts (problematic as it can be radicalized by giving absolute value to certain chosen facts) – relativizing the value of justified or credible facts and erasing the difference between such facts and arbitrary *alternative facts*, muddles any analysis, and produces an atmosphere of intellectual darkness with no room for any sensible criteria of truthfulness. Truth is then reduced to what we believe or want to believe, to what is useful to us (or others have convinced us of its existing or possible usefulness) and to something saving us from harm (or, more likely, something others have convinced us might or should prevent harm).

Here it is important to take into account a particularly important point. Saying or spreading arbitrary claims, including (consciously or unconsciously) inventing obviously untenable supposed facts (or: inventing lies masquerading as truth), is as old as humanity itself. The instrumental use of these is old as well, going back to the sophists, followed by religious and political propaganda¹¹ and developing into the systematic scientifically based and obviously manipulative practices of the 20th century. This includes marketing on the one hand and political

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the epistemology and ethics of *post-truth* followers and supporters of *alternative facts*. Epistemological and ethical parallels to these types of denial can be found in various Croatian pseudohistorians denying the real character (or even existence) of the Jasenovac concentration camp.

¹¹ Although some authors claim that propaganda developed and was used in ancient times (comp. e.g. Loïc Borgies, *Le conflit propagandiste entre Octavien et Marc Antoine. De l'usage politique de la uituperatio entre 44 et 30 a. C. n.*, Latomus, Bruxelles 2016), it appears that the term *propaganda* (meaning: advertising, dissemination) begins to be used in 1622 when Pope Gregory xv ordered the organization of the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith as part of Counter-Reformation efforts by the Catholic Church (comp. Joseph Metzler, ed., *Sacrae Congregationis de Propaganda Fide memoria rerum. 350 anni a servizio delle missioni. 1622–1972*. vol. 1: 1622–1700, Herder, Roma/Freiburg 1971.); the term is used in a secular context only after the French revolution.

propaganda on the other, starting with the paradigmatic example of Goebbels propaganda¹². The basic difference between the instrumental use of fabrications or lies in premodern times and the modern forms of manipulation relates to the type of media disseminating fabrications and the systematic and scientific foundation of manipulation technologies.

The medium of old (premodern) manipulation came down merely to living word and its spreading through rumours. After Gutenberg, the manipulation medium (and it is no coincidence that the invention of the printing press coincides with the beginnings of the modern world) includes books as well (which of course does not mean that the appearance of printed books primarily served manipulation) and with the spread of literacy, newspapers as well as similar printed material such as brochures, pamphlets, leaflets etc. Goebbels (just as his contemporaries, the founders of marketing) uses new media, radio and film; it has been justly said that humanity can count itself lucky he did not also have television at his disposal. The media available for manipulation today are more diverse, advanced, omnipresent and therefore of course, much more effective than media of the early 20th century.

The scientific basis of modern propaganda can first be related to Freud's nephew Edward Louis Bernays who is considered to be the father of *public relations* and one of the original spin doctors. His book *Crystallizing Public Opinion* published in 1923 is marked by the use of discoveries in the field of mass psychology (Gustave Le Bon and others) and Freud's discoveries on how the unconscious may be used for shaping a systematic influence on public opinion so that masses may be controlled and guided without them being aware of the fact, on the basis of knowing the mechanisms and motives at play in forming mass opinion¹³. It is indicative that the first chapter of his seminal work *Propaganda* (first published in 1928)¹⁴ bears the title 'Organizing chaos'. Bernays himself believed that conscious and intelligent manipulation of organized habits and attitudes of the masses represents an important element in a democratic society: 'Those who manipulate this unseen mechanism of society constitute an invisible government which is the true ruling power of our country'¹⁵. This of course makes us wonder what type of democracy can be based on organized and systematic manipulation – and this question further gains importance

12 Comp. Roy Church/ Andrew Godley (ed.), *The Emergence of Modern Marketing*, Frank Cass, London 2003 and Stuart Ewen, *PR! A Social History of Spin*, Basic Books, New York 1996. For Nazi propaganda (and its consequences) comp. Gerald Diesener/Rainer Gries (ed.), *Propaganda in Deutschland. Zur Geschichte der politischen Massenbeeinflussung im 20. Jahrhundert*, Primus, Darmstadt 1996.

13 Comp. Edward L. Bernays, *Crystallizing Public Opinion*, Kessinger, New York 2004.

14 Comp. Edward L. Bernays, *Propaganda*, Ig Publishing, Brooklyn 2005.

15 Ibid, p. 9. The answer to the question on the type of democracy Bernays advocates is given by the author himself, noting that it is inseparable from capitalist profit, a necessary precondition for the structure of 'our country' (comp. *ibid*, pp 57, 61).

if we take into account that Bernays's *Propaganda* provided the key inspiration for Goebbels and his shaping of the anti-Semitic campaign, to be then further used as a model for Nazi propaganda in general¹⁶. Bernays will later write in his autobiography that Goebbels's use of his propaganda technology was a misuse, claiming that any human agency may be used for social purposes but also misused for anti-social purposes¹⁷.

Cynics might note that, if we follow Bernays's judgments, the use of scientific methods of the propaganda technology for the purposes of increasing the demand for certain goods (e.g. the highly successful campaign for the American Tobacco corporation, designed by Bernays, which was aimed at popularizing Lucky Strike cigarettes, especially among women) might be seen as something socially beneficial, while the use of the same methods and technologies for preparing a genocide as an anti-social misuse. If we follow this logic, it appears that the use of subconscious mechanisms with the aim of producing and increasing the need for buying and spending certain products without consumers being aware of this or consciously deciding to do so – is acceptable and desirable, while the use of that same mechanisms for spreading antisemitism – is unacceptable and undesirable! In short, profit gained from selling unnecessary goods which have been made necessary through specially designed campaigns should be seen as socially desirable, but campaigns based on the same technologies which spread hatred and prepare for the extermination of certain social groups are to be considered undesirable.

There is however one difference between the Bernays methodology of market propaganda and the way Goebbels used this technology. The first type of propaganda does not use – at least not directly – untruths, lies or invented facts, while Nazi propaganda is marked by false facts based on prejudice and xenophobia. In effect, this type of propaganda proves to be the prototype of making truth relative and senseless, which comes to the forefront in *post-truth* times. If for example we look at the *facts* which are invoked and used as a starting point by anti-Semitic propaganda, there are some interesting correspondences. National socialist propaganda uses the idea of a Germanic or Nordic race as a scientifically proven fact and this pseudoscientific statement is used as a basis for the *fact* of this

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16 The propaganda model developed by Goebbels was also used in Stalinist/neo-Stalinist *Agitprop*. However, it would appear that the level to which Bernays's scientific and technological innovations were used did not guarantee the desired efficiency. The inefficiency of propaganda developed in the German Democratic Republic may be used as an example here. Comp. Henning Schluß (ed.), *Indoktrination als Code in der SED-Diktatur – Indoktrination und Erziehung*, vs Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, Wiesbaden 2007.

17 Comp. Larry Tye, *The Father of Spin. Edward L. Bernays and the Birth of Public Relations*, Crown, New York, p. 111.

race being superior to racial groups of lower worth where one large group includes Semites¹⁸. This is followed by *facts* pointing to the conclusion that 'Jews are dangerous, parasites that use us', 'Jews are vengeful and dangerous', furthermore they are 'intelligent, powerful and have more influence than it is their due', etc.¹⁹. Such claims can be compared to those circulating today – also supposedly founded on facts – according to which 'all refugees from Muslim countries are potential terrorists', or within the local framework: 'there were no crimes in Jasenovac against opponents to the Independent State of Croatia'²⁰.

Not all *alternative facts* circulating today are necessarily as vicious as the old Goebbels and new racist or neo-Nazi claims and attitudes, and practically they often are not. The technology of producing desirable beliefs is much more subtle and sophisticated. As Ralph Keyes puts it, once upon a time we had truth and lies, while today we have truth, lies and claims which may be untrue, but we consider them to be too benign to call them false. We are economical with truth, we alleviate it and beautify it, *deception* becomes a *spin*²¹ and all of this is achieved also by being constantly presented with the same public persons in the media (particularly new media) due to specially designed PR campaigns, and their personalities alone have a larger influence on the public than any facts might have²².

The criterion of truthfulness valid in this production of desirable attitudes has lost any connection to the ability to differ between truth and deceit, between the just and unjust, or even between the sensical and nonsensical. The only thing taken into account is the efficiency with which desirable attitudes and beliefs are produced. These are desirable of course from the point of view of individuals realizing interest and encouraging or financing the production of *post-truth* based on accepting *alternative facts* or on losing the ability to differentiate between those and valid facts. The criteria at first seem to be – plausibility, strength and frequency of successful deception, but in an important sense the criterion of this production of *post-truth* is hidden in the interests of the client. If we wish to understand the logic behind this production, we must understand the logic of interests at its basis, whether these interests are related to power or profit, or perhaps, which is closest to the real state of affairs, to their organic unity.

18 Comp. <http://www.bpb.de/politik/extremismus/antisemitismus/37986/argumente-gegen-rechte-vorurteile?p=15>, accessed 15 December 2017.

19 Comp. https://www.amadeu-antonio-stiftung.de/w/files/pdfs/ich_habe_nichts_2.pdf, accessed 24 December 2017. Interestingly, this text lists *facts* (actually, prejudices) which form the foundation for the contemporary antisemitism of the radical right wing party in Germany, but these ideas are taken over from the original national-socialist propaganda (which conceptually mostly leans on arguments offered by social-Darwinist texts of the 19th century). Comp. Robert Bannister, *Social Darwinism, Science and Myth in Anglo-American Social Thought*, Temple University Press, Philadelphia 1979.

20 Comp. a systematic critical analysis of this area of *alternative truths* in: Slavko and Ivo Goldstein, *Jasenovac: tragedy, mythomania, truth*, Fraktura, Zaprešić 2016.

21 Interestingly, the definition of the word *spin* in the context of PR overturning of truth can be found in the Merriam-Webster dictionary only as the seventh meaning of this verb (the last one!), and is defined as 'to present (information) with a particular spin', comp. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/spin>, accessed 28 December 2017).

22 Comp. R. Keyes, *Propaganda*, especially pp. 127-128

In this way truth becomes obsolete, just as much earlier, as indicated by the famous German thinker Günther Anders, the concept of man became obsolete²³. An important effect of this process of truth becoming obsolete is the disappearance of a critically aware public. This is achieved through the frequency of openly lying, which then proves truth is helpless, as Marina Weisband, a German writer of Ukrainian origin, excellently put it in 2017: 'If I tell you the sky is green, my goal is not to convince you the sky actually is green, but to keep repeating this claim until I exhaust your resources of resisting so that you may say, 'Alright, that is your opinion. I believe the sky is blue. There is no possibility to objectively determine the colour of the sky'... And this works'²⁴.

The disappearance of a critically aware public, which can certainly be seen as a process of infantilizing public opinion and the return of mankind into a state of adolescence (and we must also ask whether an infantile mankind can reach any state other than the one of barbarity?)²⁵ faces us with a range of questions that are certainly not simple (and at the very least they are burdensome). One dramatic question comes to the forefront: Does mankind have any resources at its disposal to fight the highly probable barbarization to which the obsolescence of truth is leading us?

Unfortunately there is no simple solution, and neither can we find a shortcut or a set of magical keys! However, does this mean we should just resign ourselves to this state of affairs? If the answer to this question is negative, then it seems we must strive at safekeeping and renewing the

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23 Comp. Günther Anders, *Die Antiquiertheit des Menschen*. Vol. I: *Über die Seele im Zeitalter der zweiten industriellen Revolution*, Verlag C. H. Beck, München 2002. Just to be clear, this term is not undisputed (comp. Lino Veljak, 'The Ontologization of the Gender Differentiation as an Abstract Antithesis to Classical Metaphysics', *Filozofska istraživanja*, 4/2005, pp. 771.- 780.), but proclaiming it something obsolete due to its fatal, manifold degenerative consequences may undoubtedly be compared to the loss of difference between empirical/experimental facts and *alternative facts* characteristic of the *post-truth* era, which is marked by the obsolescence of truth.

25 A cynic might say: Sure, we also have perspectives of returning to a barbaric state! Barbarity here is of course not the era written about by authors such as Morgan and Engels, it is the profiling of modernity and/or future which have been critically examined among others by Rosa Luxemburg and Hannah Arendt (comp. Rosa Luxemburg, *Die Krise der Sozialdemokratie*, in: *Politische Schriften* II, Europäische Verlagsanstalt, Frankfurt/M. 1966, pp. 47-133 and Sandra K. Hinchman, 'Common Sense & Political Barbarism in the Theory of Hannah Arendt', *Polity*, 2/1984, pp. 317-339).

24 Marina Weisband, 'Keine Macht der Lüge', *Die Zeit*, 28. 1. 2017, quoted in: <http://www.zeit.de/2017/05/alternative-fakten-luegen-donald-trump-regierung-methode>, accessed 21 June 2017.

critically aware public. And the only way leading towards this is through insisting on the necessary differences: the difference between deception and claims that may be seen as valid, the difference between that which is justified and that which is not, between the just and unjust, emphatically, the difference between good and evil, followed by the power of differentiating between the beautiful and the horrendous. This effort may

prove meaningful as it would provide insights into the logic producing the philosophical mess apparent in the process of truth becoming obsolete. These insights may – and must – find their media representation in order to gain currency in emancipatory practice.

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The Media In-between Corporate and Messianic Cultural Politics

Key words media, communication mind, cultural policy

Abstract Jürgen Habermas reminds us that the communication mind exists in its two forms... As an emancipatory communication mind, then it realizes the repair of the world and consciousness. But he can also exist as a form of his depravity, as, it fixes the world and consciousness. But he can also exist as a form of his depravity, as, therefore, a perverted communication mind that enslaves and destroys the world and consciousness. Frequent mediatization with the help of media spectacle in the area of culture, ethics, aesthetics and religion increases this distorted dimension of the communication mind of our time.

Mediji između korporativne i mesijanske kulturene politike

Ključne riječi mediji, komunikacijski um, kulturna politika

Sažetak Jürgen Habermas podsjeća nas kako komunikacijski um egzistira u svoje dvije forme, dva oblika. Kao emancipatorski komunikacijski um i tad ostvaruje popravku svijeta i svijesti. No, on može egzistirati i kao forma svoje izopačenosti, kao dakle, pervertirani komunikacijski um koji porobljava i unižava svijet i svijest. Učestala medijatzacija uz pomoć medijskog spektakla u prostoru kulture, etike, estetike te religije uvećava ovu izopačenu dimenziju komunikacijskog uma našega doba.

The communicative mind in its second-level dimension – the dimension of its own perversity

People can be divided into four groups:

The learned man who knows that he knows,

This is the man you follow;

The man who does not know and knows that he does not know,

Be wary of that one;

The one who knows but does not know that he knows,

This one is sleeping, wake him up;

The man who does not know and does not know that he does not know,

He is powerless, have pity on him.

(From the archives of the University of Timbuktu, the first known university in the world, founded in West Africa in the 10th century. At the time of founding the University of Bologna, the University of Timbuktu had 25,000 students)¹

In an interview for a Bosnian magazine² he gave during his stay in Sarajevo, the American philosopher RICHARD RORTY shared some obvious, though not so widely known facts on the relationship between religion and politics in contemporary U.S. politics, stressing that, '...religion has become very important (in politics) in the last 25 years, not due to Catholics, but rather, evangelical Protestants, mostly from Southern and Southwestern states. They have managed to garner great influence in the Republican Party, which is something new. This was not the case before.'

¹ According to the monograph Timbuctu by Mehmed Karahodžić, Bemust, Sarajevo, 2008.

² The magazine in question is 'Godišnjak' published by the Bosniak cultural society from Sarajevo, which ran an interview with this American philosopher in 2005 when he visited Sarajevo. It was titled 'The imperial power of the U.S will be taken over by China'.

In time evangelicals achieved more significant penetration in American politics than the Catholics or the Catholic Church throughout previous decades in any American administration or political party. We can conclude with some certainty that the President BUSH administration is influenced by evangelicals, namely the subgroup in which an important role belongs to the *San Antonio evangelical church community* whose religious and political ideas as well as extensive penetration in the public sphere, and especially their mediatization³, all require a re/valorization of their practical impacts at the social and everyday politics level in today's politics, especially foreign affairs. At a simplified level, one can identify in society the *mediatized religious right-wing party* or the rise of *religious nationalism*⁴, as this phenomenon might be renamed at the sociological level, and concur with Rorty's view that it is comprised of a 'cynical, unscrupulous group of people who do not have anything in common with Christianity', because this is precisely what these people are like – cynical towards religion and unscrupulous towards power, government and money; as we shall partly prove by research presented in this text.

A short history of the media evangelical dimension

In her book 'America – Religions and Religion', CATHERINE L. ALBANESE from the University of California (Santa Barbara) notes that already in 1948 an association of 'Neo-Evangelicalism' was founded (by HAROLD JOHN OCKENGA) and gained its

³ Modern societies, those with a developed civil identity, are highly prone to a MEDIATIZATION of their important types of content, of everything that is socially relevant in any way. A special place here is reserved for television as a medium. Some authors are prepared to discuss the development of a so-called SCREEN IDEOLOGY, which promotes in a similar way both profane and holy topics, almost as a daily 'Edelman spectacle' and the classical statement by Habermas again gains significance, that in this case THE COMMUNICATIVE MIND is most often confirmed in its second-level dimension – the dimension of its own perversity. This type of mediatization, without being overly dramatic, can be said to promote and affirm that which is social, and not cultural, precisely in the sphere of culture and faith, of culture and religion, where the cultural should be above the social but is not. This is why it is possible to give so much attention to electronic media as the media of the future, the types of media which are happy to promote violence and corporeality (the similar situation is true in Bosnia and Herzegovina) without a minimum of ethical revalorization, creative symbolism or historical symbolism...

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⁴ In our region the concept of religious nationalism was most systematically defined by Dino Abazović in his book 'For the nation and for God', published by 'Magistrat', Editio Civitas, Sarajevo in 2006. He insists on the difference between faith and religious nationalism since faith and belief in the original sense are impossible to be evaluated in sociological categories as they belong to the sphere of the individual, while religion and religious terms connote a collective, social aspect of this phenomenon.

social role and popularity specifically through the Fuller Theological Seminary (Albanese; 1004: 419). The expansion of this association grew in the 1970s when it encouraged the increasing search for foundations and modern fundamentalism, and when the return to *biblical roots* as a philosophy and *praxis* spread somewhat quickly within the evangelical community.

A significant role in this process is reserved for *archetypal narratives* on the return to ancient Christian foundations, a return to a holy historical tradition belonging to the past, in order to be prepared for welcoming the events of the *Last Days*, such as the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, the reign of the Antichrist, the battle of Armageddon and the grand victory over Satan... The increased interest in these tales, which comprise the core of *millennial predictions*, appearing within 1980s and 1990s Protestantism, can (also) be illustrated by the sales figures of a cult book dealing with these matters, 'The Late Great Planet Earth' by H. LINDSEY, of which 28 million copies were sold in early 1990s alone.

Generally speaking, the rational use of the communicative mind, later known as neo-communicative rationality, was quite prone to follow in the steps of the neo-religious fundamentalist awakening in U.S. media space. For example, 'Newsweek' magazine proclaimed the year 1976 as 'the Year of the Evangelical', and a similar proclamation was made by 'Time' magazine in the years that followed.

The media also followed the rise of evangelical fundamentalism in the 1990s, but the primacy was taken by *electronic media*. Several popular TV networks, such as FOX TV, supplanted newspapers and magazines. In discussions and dialogues with leading religious and non-religious representatives (Catholic, liberal, Protestant...), evangelicals demonstrated their superiority through television as the strongest medium, and proved to be appropriately avant-garde in their interpretation of extremely conservative and fundamentalist views we already mentioned. The main premise of their interpretation consists of explaining the authority of the Bible and biblical instructions in all the changes of modern society. Their modernized neo-biblical narrative made them so superior in the public and media arena that even presidents started proclaiming themselves as evangelicals.

The *emphatic use of tv discourse* took primacy here as the discourse of the majority, a discourse of relaxing and simplifying the holiest and most difficult themes for human existence and the future of humanity, a discourse that *charms at first sight*. The great responsibility betrayed by the leading media communicative evangelical community cannot be extenuated, since it neglected the *ecumenical dimension of its attractive narratives*, and developed its strength and suggestiveness precisely on the idea of the final victory and final defeat of one group over the other within the so-called *polemical plain* which had to come to the forefront and will continue to do so.

As public spaces for polemics and debates, the media did not invite three competent and widely known representatives (of Jewish, Christian and Muslim faith) to interpret and argue among themselves, even though they would be the ones with the technical ease to achieve this. With their method of ignoring, dividing, stigmatizing, excluding and promoting xenophobia, the media have developed the communicative civil mind in their (media) two-level dimension, *the dimension of their perversity*. (Habermas)

Particular strength is further gained from influences of the so-called *electronic church*, which continues to shape the identity, message and style of evangelical-fundamentalist practice in a modern manner, through new technologies. The electronic church already possesses the infrastructure to ease the conquer of the scene for a politics delineated in the new *Christian right*. The projected goal is to create an impression or image of an idealized past, celebrating the Bible as the final authority, completely infallible and therefore desirable, important and necessary *in its renovating role during the last days*, especially for millennial events and prophecies.

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The Judeo-Christian cultural media-theological symbiosis

In this sense it is interesting to observe the new symbiosis of Judeo-Christian tradition and Judeo-Christian fundamentalism at the level of pure theology, which some American authors see in the following way: 'U.S. evangelical theology takes a unique view of the role of the Jewish people in the modern world. On the one hand, evangelicals share the widespread Christian view that Christians represent the new and true children of Israel, inheritors of God's promises to the ancient Hebrews. Yet unlike many other Christians, evangelicals also believe that the Jewish people have a continuing role in God's plan. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, close study of biblical prophecies convinced evangelical scholars and believers that the Jews would return to the Holy Land before the triumphant return of Christ.'⁵ In his interpretation of the convergence between Jews and evangelicals in the modern U.S., the quoted author believes that the number of Jews rejecting Christianity as a religion is decreasing, but *in the tumultuous years before Jesus' return*, described by all great religious traditions – Muslim, Christian and Jewish, a significant number of Jews will continue to reject Christianity and for this they are not judged. Modern evangelicals differ from MARTIN LUTHER, in that they do not expect Jews to convert to the *true faith* once they are exposed to it. Luther's (dis)trust towards the Jews in a way led him to a kind of antisemitism, which is not the case with modern evangelicals.

Evangelicals also believe that the continuing existence of the Jewish people is in fact a strong proof for two things: 1) the existence of God and 2) God's power throughout history. (Mead; 2006: 28) They often quote the famous line from 'The Book of Genesis' (12:3), where God says to Abraham: 'I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.'⁶

The fact that Jewish people survived all the persecutions and sufferings in the past and returned to their ancient home is proof that God is real, that the Bible is inspired and that the Christian religion is true. Many evangelicals believe that the promise of Genesis still stands and that the God of Abraham

5 See the whole text by Walter Russell Mead in the magazine *Foreign Affairs*, on the topic of religion, titled 'God's Country' (pp. 24-32), *Religion & Foreign Policy*, October 2006.

6 Croatian edition: Počeci izabranog naroda, 1. Povijest Abrahamova, Postanak, Biblija, Stari i Novi zavjet, Kršćanska sadašnjost, Zagreb, 2001.

will metaphorically – *bless the United States if the United States blesses Israel*. At the same time, they see in the weakness, defeats, and poverty of the Arab world ample evidence that God curses those who curse Israel. (Mead; 2006:31)

Criticism of Israel, the United States and their joint unprincipled politics towards the whole Middle East region, does not modify the previously stated evangelical position. This even strengthens their conviction that the world hates Israel because the 'fallen man' naturally hates God and his 'chosen people'. In accepting and supporting Israel, evangelicals feel that they are standing by God – and that is why they are ready to commit acts against the whole of humanity, claims Mead. He notes:

JOHN HAGEE – an influential evangelical pastor of an 18,000-member evangelical church in San Antonio, Texas, and author of many *New York Times* bestsellers – writes that if Iran moves to attack, Americans must be prepared 'to stop this evil enemy in its tracks'.

God's policy toward the Jewish people', Hagee writes 'is found in Genesis' (12:3), and he goes on to quote the passage we already mentioned, about blessings and curses. 'America is at the crossroads!' Hagee warns, 'Will we believe and obey the Word of God concerning Israel, or will we continue to equivocate and sympathize with Israel's enemies?'

The return of the Jews to the 'Holy Land', their extraordinary victories over larger Arab armies, and even the rising tide of hatred that threatens Jews in Israel and abroad, strengthen not only the evangelical commitment to Israel but also the position of evangelical religion in American public and political life. The story of modern Jewry reads like a book in the Bible. The Holocaust is reminiscent of the genocidal efforts of Pharaoh in the book of Exodus and of Haman in the Book of Esther. The subsequent establishment of a Jewish state reminds one of many similar victories and deliverances of the Jews in the Hebrew Scriptures. The extraordinary events of modern Jewish history are held up by evangelicals as proof that God exists and acts in history. Add to this the psychological consequences of nuclear weapons, and many evangelicals begin to feel that they are living in a world like the world of the Bible. This centers U.S. foreign policy on defending the country

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against the threat of mass terrorism involving, potentially, weapons of apocalyptic horror wielded by anti-Christian fanatics waging a religious war motivated by hatred of Israel, and this only reinforces the claims of evangelical religion... (Walter Russel Mead; 2004: 24.-32.)

What is the purpose of grand (media) mythic narratives?

Who needs these *grand narratives* on the world of today and of the future, and why? Is it possible to launch great *political tectonic shifts* without such narratives? Is it possible to *throw the common everyday man into the abyss of the apocalypse* and suffering if there are no such religiously-based 'holy narratives'? Who actually manipulates the 'holy and unholy truths'? Who manipulates *the holy through the profane* and *the profane through the holy*? In whose interest? Is this interest specific? What is its price? How much money can be gained through such a narrative? The cynics at the top of the Republican Party for example are already making huge amounts of money.

Even the use of *the atomic bomb* in this century therefore seems logical and justified in advance, which completely eschews reason, sense, any reasonable politics or government whose members possess basic discernment (*casus belli*). All holy and profane words have been operationalized, even God's name itself. In this narrative, God – the anthropologized, politicized God – becomes usable, interchangeable and nationalized, corporatized, republicanized, evangelicalized, ideologized, *brandized* up to a most bizarre level unimaginable during the times of the mighty Pharaoh or Haman.

In this concept of 'God's Country', *God is more than a game and less than a toy*, a bizarre wager for superficial ears and frenzied holders of power and authority, a corny word and sacrilege which can only be possible in this 21st, *simulacrized*⁷ century so the phrase 'God's Country' might suppose an 'Anti-God state of affairs', completely monstrous, blasphemous, unnatural and impossible, hyper-Satanized, Dajjal-like⁸ in its form and content; a state of affairs that will stop at absolutely nothing – not even the use of the atomic bomb which would be justified by

7 Simulacrum is a term by which the late 20th century French philosopher and communicologist Jacques Baudrillard defines all forms of the real world entering the world of *fictum*, replacements, virtualization and otherworldliness – the other side of the screen, pseudovision, pseudothings and a pseudoworld.

8 According to Islamic terminology on 'ahir-zeman', a kind of equivalent to the Judeo-Christian vision of the 'Last Days', the strongest role in perverting God's law and God's world shall belong and belongs to Dajjal, who more than Sheitan and more than the Antichrist, denotes the final perversion of the ordered world and world of nature, before the second coming of Isa on Earth and the Final Destruction of the Earth, humanity and civilization.

'holy interpretations' that nothing better or wiser is possible at a particular moment... This is the core of the huge, tremendous cynicism of, among others, a few evangelicals the philosopher Rorty mentions.

Although liberalism usefully teaches us that any interpretation is possible, including the meta-Judeo-evangelical one – with a highly vulgar positioning within contexts, recognizing *eternal truths* in actual *specific people*, functions, political decisions, orders and prohibitions – it is useful to examine this one. Within the variety of neo-fascist and traditional fascist ideas and narratives, these types of narratives represent the newest phenomena with which we as a human community enter the increasingly uncertain years of the early 21st century, and which true pacifists and peacemakers such as myself never thought they would encounter. At least not so soon after the genocidal events in Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as Rwanda, Chechnya and Somalia.

It is clear that this text examines two *overlapping phenomena*, which at first seem to be similar and may 'seduce' even a good researcher to go in the wrong, unscientific direction. Our research focuses on the *corporate* and the *messianic* U.S. narrative. A significant portion of individuals on both sides are the same people and the same interest groups. 'The mental fuel' for both are millennial biblical (and generally, religious) narratives and their 'timely' implementation, use and misuse in the future, for the future and towards the future. While the first, corporate one can be very easily recognized, identified and researched (and it also absorbs different media projects in this process, which is of my particular interest), the other, messianic one is almost impossible to be recognized, objectivized and rationally defined, which in fact is not our goal. Especially not a goal justified in the media sense.

All three religious narratives (Christian, Jewish, Muslim) on millennial events are more or less the same and have always existed in religious and theological circles as a strong foundation for individuals and groups, as part of dogmatics, catechesis, religious teachings, *aqidah* studies and general theology, thus one might say nothing new has happened in this sense. What is new, is mainly the MEDIA USE OF THESE NARRATIVES in the modern moment of existence, which then enters current events in politics, foreign affairs and global political

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developments. And this is true to the level that electronic media, television, film and *online* media are faster and more effective in the time and space sense than traditional media such as books, newspapers and magazines.

The U.S. environment therefore provides the most suitable ground for analysing this media phenomenon. The media most directly encourage large masses, *publicus*, to believe the messianic aspect of contemporary and current politics, as if this politics has itself been written on the pages of a neo-Bible, a bible for every era and every specific decision, action, statement... Money and profit are gained by the political structure or current administration under this double umbrella opened up by the media. It could even be said that corporate power currently overpowers the messianic kind, since corporate power – although it develops out of messianic power – uses actual *media power* in order to fabricate and strengthen *imperial politics* of both corporate and messianic power. The media are merely levers here, although very powerful and useful ones⁹. Corporate power is completely ready to ‘turn the world upside down’, comfortable and at ease in collecting money for its *final victory*. This victory may be completely sacrilegious, profane, monetized, but is necessary as a minimal preparation for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ (Isa) on Earth. Authors of this ‘project’ are very busy and in a hurry because as soon as they prepare the Earth and Earthlings for this event – the sooner it will happen.

A good mediatization of these events, narratives or millennial assumptions might prove very useful. Only in the sense that the media would be widely open and non-discriminatory towards everyone who has something to say and show about this.

It is necessary for the so-called media mind or, more specifically, the communicative mind, to be confirmed in its originality – as an equal opportunity for everyone, a polilogue or dialogue. As a competent platform that invites and hosts all interested parties, where all parties may share their views and interpretation. Regardless of whether they are powerful or powerless. A sort of communication ecumenism is needed when discussing large subjects: the future of the world and religious narratives on this topic.

⁹ How much money has been invested in the last few years in order to create spectacular projects, especially in the film industry fabricating messianic narratives as side products, for example the movie ‘Armageddon’, ‘The Da Vinci Code’, ‘Lord of the Rings’ (parts 1, 2 and 3), films like the ‘Matrix’, ‘The Passion of Christ’, ‘What the Bleep Do We Know’ etc. or purely informative, documentary and similar projects for the media and the general public which pays for all of this and finances it, searching anew similar and more exciting narratives based on the messianic kind.

At the moment it seems there exists a limited number of competent speakers but too much money a stake and overly ambitious intentions of those who see themselves as eternally privileged because hey, time and history exist only because of them. In this sense, the *monologist interpretations* start looking like the biblical scene of the fight between David and Goliath or the Qur'an story on the fight between Talut and Jalut, the eternal narratives according to which the one who has *cunning* – wins. And everyone should have the same chances, otherwise what is the use of having the faith?

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The Philosophy of Media: Violence as Entertainment?

Key words violence, entertainment, media, film, philosophy of media

Abstract This text uses the philosophy of media approach in order to examine the relation between the phenomena of violence and entertainment in our times of ruling media culture. We first examine whether violence can even be defined as such if it is merely represented in the media; after concluding this process always constitutes a violence that has been transformed through the media and continues to change into something else entirely, we examine the purpose of the mass instances of violence in modern media. In this context we particularly highlight the relation between violence and entertainment in cinema and the video game industry. If we examine why the entertainment industry so often uses violence in media content and whether violence is entertaining in itself, the answer is negative. Violence is not and in itself cannot be entertaining. However, being a media product, it is highly profitable. This is why the entertainment world today is overflowing with violent content.

Filozofija medija: je li nasilje zabavno?

Ključne riječi nasilje, zabava, mediji, film, filozofija medija

Sažetak U tekstu se iz ugla filozofije medija preispituje odnos fenomena nasilja i zabave u doba vladavine medijske kulture. Najprije se istražuje može li se nasilje uopće definirati kao nasilje kada je riječ o njegovom prikazivanju u medijima; nakon iznesenog zaključka da je u takvim slučajevima uvijek riječ o medijski transformiranom nasilju koje prelazi u nešto drugo, istražuje se svrha masovnog pojavljivanja nasilja u današnjim medijima. U ovom kontekstu ispitivanja, posebno se skreće pažnja na odnos nasilja i zabave koji susrećemo na području kinematografije i industrije videoigara. Na postavljeno pitanje zbog čega industrija zabave koristi nasilje u mnogobrojnim medijskim sadržajima, te je li nasilje samo po sebi zabavno, odgovor je negativan. Nasilje po sebi nije niti može biti zabavno; ono je, međutim, kao medijski proizvod, visokoprotabilno. Otuda je svijet zabave danas preplavljen nasilničkim sadržajima.

To my mother Mimica and my father Puro

The relationship between violence and entertainment is significantly transformed in this era marked by the rule of the media¹. Considered within the context of how it occurs and develops in light of expanding media culture, modern violence is produced through technological means and is communicated through the media. Today it actually gains the form of a media communication founded on technique and technology. At first mediated in relation to the passive mass-media public (readers, listeners, viewers), violence increasingly takes on characteristics of entertainment in this era of Internet and commercial videogames. The entertainment industry machinery which incorporates the world of violence in its commercial projects, opens up the issue of how violence is treated in new ways in our times; to put it succinctly, through its everyday practice it provokes the crucial question: is media violence hurtful and does it hurt or is it entertaining² just like any other content of the entertainment business.

The newly established relation between violence and entertainment sheds new light both on the term of violence and of entertainment in our times. We ask ourselves how violence, which has traditionally been viewed as a social phenomenon, comes to be transformed into something else, i.e. into a mediated violence? Also, to what extent is violence in modern media recognizable, identified as such and effective to some extent (objectified) – in the media themselves and in life? Finally, what does the presence of violence in the media actually mean? In what ways does violence manifest in the media and what purposes does it serve? How is it generated and what are the consequences at the level of media and the level of real life? What kind of relationship does violence actually establish with the entertainment world?

All these questions imply the assumption that violence can be defined as a term and that it is relatively simple, i.e. possible to research how it functions as a phenomenon at the level of media. In research practice however, there are various different interpretations regarding violence. Recently the concept has been defined mainly in relation to contemporary cultural differences – in terms of media differences as well – and it is very difficult to articulate a general term which might

1 Theory texts on modern media increasingly incorporate a critical approach, i.e. problematize the relation between violence and entertainment which has been established within the media industry today. Whether shown explicitly or implicitly in the media, violence today is often seen as entertaining. Many texts in print media, on blogs etc. also illustrate the apparent expansion of the relationship between violence and entertainment in the media today. This relationship is treated as a media 'big bang theory' and is described for example in the following words: 'The top-rated show on cable tv is rife with shootings, stabbings, machete attacks and more shootings. The top drama at the box office fills theaters with the noise of automatic weapons fire. The top-selling video game in the country gives players the choice to kill or merely wound their quarry.' See: 'Living With Death', The New York Times, webpage: <http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2013/03/03/arts/critics-on-violence-in-media.html>, accessed: 21 December 2017.

2 Comp. Elizabeth Thoman, 'Media Violence: What if we Changed the Question?', webpage: <http://www.medialit.org/reading-room/media-violence-what-if-we-changed-question>, accessed: 21 December 2017.

incorporate completely different violent phenomena – whether these appear in a certain social (cultural) community, or are manifested within the scope of so-called media culture; or both, which is most often the case.

Moreover, attempts by the World Health Organization (WHO, Geneva) to define violence as a term did not manage to go much deeper, i.e. to move away from efforts to delineate violence in its main characteristics. Although violent behaviour is still commonly and widely discussed within the scope of this organization, as well as the work of similar organizations, the concept of violence is still quite undefined, 'diffuse', or to put it more accurately, defined mainly from a subjective point of view³.

In other words, descriptions of violence vary between different cultural contexts, and in relation to the overall value system manifested and advanced in a particular culture. Analyzed in the framework of a global media culture, the apparent subjectivity in the conception of violent behaviour can best be illustrated by reality show programmes, popular in the media across the planet. What is (morally) acceptable in some countries, remains unimaginable, criticized and prohibited in others, whether in terms of reactions by the public or certain authorities – national or religious organizations and institutions etc. Violence is not only a term that is complex in itself, but also reveals its complexity in relation to the culture/cultures it comes from and towards which it is aimed – as is the case in media influence.

Since there is no general consensus on the precise definition of violence in the social community as such – rather, the search for a definition can be examined from the point of view of cultural relativism – violence cannot be determined as a media phenomenon in the theoretical nor the practical sense. This is especially the case in the so-called 'entertainment media'⁴ commonly identified as television, videogames, Internet and recorded music. In addition to concluding media violence is indefinable, one should also take into account the theoretical interpretations indicating the possibility that common instances of media violence in the entertainment industry framework do not represent violence in the real sense but a constituent element of the so-called entertainment industry, that is – of entertainment itself.

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³ 'One reason why violence has largely been ignored as a public health issue is the lack of a clear definition of the problem. Violence is an extremely diffuse and complex phenomenon. Defining it is not an exact science but a matter of judgement. Notions of what is acceptable and unacceptable in terms of behaviour, and what constitutes harm, are culturally influenced and constantly under review as values and social norms evolve'. See the World report on violence and health, at the World Health Organization webpage: http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/world_report/en/summary_en.pdf, accessed: 13 December 2017.

⁴ Entertainment media or entertainment culture has been traditionally said to incorporate television and film; lately the music and video industry have been included here, as well as the expanding domain of videogames.

Further difficulties in interpreting the relationship between violence and entertainment may also be identified in the fact that contemporary media theorists and critics of the so-called mass society offer no definite attitude towards entertainment mediated in the media industry. Some theorists, such as Mendelsohn⁵ for example, note that the stance taken by the interpreter/critic towards entertainment is mainly wrong and that media surely cannot broadcast only serious content; entertainment should in fact be used to pull the public attention away from 'boring' subjects such as politics, education, religion etc. Mendelsohn further suggests the idea that the critics' relation to the entertainment world as a whole is elitist and paternalistic, i.e. modern critiques of the entertainment industry are not only redundant, but are also dependant on class. However, a lot has changed in the field of media industry since the period in which Mendelsohn wrote (1966) and the phenomenon of violence has in the meantime become the main resource and instigator of how this industry works, in addition to sexuality.

Before the entertainment industry recognized violence as a suitable source of exploitation, separate from news media which reported on violence or directly mediated aggression (wars, terrorism etc.), a great amount of violence presented in the media was justified by the idea of pure 'mirroring' of real aggression in the world of media. One chapter of the text 'Media Violence and the American Public Scientific Facts Versus Media Misinformation'⁶ for example, discusses the fact that accusations pointed at the entertainment industry as a whole (which as we know represents a strong industry in America) are not justified since violence in the media apparently only reflects an amount of aggression that is already present in social reality⁷. In practice this means that representations of violent content in the media are preceded by real violence and through the mirroring effect, this is directly transferred into the realm of media production which therefore is not exclusively responsible for its creation. Still, this article notes however discretely, the coinciding of the explosion of violence in American society with the expansion of aggression seeping into the content of programmes in modern media (generally meaning television, and partly film and videogames)⁸.

5 Comp. Stanley J. Baran, Dennis K. Davis, Mass Communication Theory: Foundations, Ferment and Future (Fifth Edition), Wadsworth, Cengage Learning, Boston, USA, 2009, p. 170.

6 Brad J. Bushman and Craig A. Anderson, 'Media Violence and the American Public Scientific Facts Versus Media Misinformation', webpage: <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/7804/e0fae6b638660407e25f7b4a1a4c43440daa.pdf>, accessed 20 December 2017.

7 See the separate chapter of the previously mentioned text: 'Does the level of violence in the reel world mirror the level of violence in the real world?' The sentence introducing the discussion reads: 'The entertainment industry often claims that violent media simply reflect the violence that already exists in society.' Ibid.

8 See: *ibid.*

However, it remains unclear how the explosion of violent content in the media came to be a very significant (and also highly profitable) part of the entertainment industry. It appears that this appropriation of aggressive content from the domains of social reality, taken over by the world of spectacle and fabricated entertainment, can be adequately illustrated by the newly coined word: *infotainment*, which combines two previously unrelated terms – the concept of information and of entertainment, thus making a unique media phenomenon for modern times. It is our opinion that if information is made somewhat 'soft', in order to be entertaining and easily digested by its consumers, this opens up a way of incorporating destructive and violent content into the domain of entertainment communicated by the media.

One prejudice which is difficult or impossible to face by most research done on the relationship between media and violence, is the idea that media violence exists and negatively impacts consumers of violent content – children and adolescents in particular – and even perpetuates new forms of violence in the actual social environment. Another assumption that has not been critically examined exists in opposition to the common-sense idea at the basis of most research on violence in the media of mass and new communications, and it basically negates all the things previously discussed. This is the idea that the topic of violence in the media is actually a myth and in the scope of media culture influence there is little or no basis for the existence and impact of violence on media consumers and users of media content⁹.

One of the crucial arguments supporting the idea that criticizing violence in the media actually represents a kind of theoretical construct with a mythological foundation, relates to the comparison with the art world, i.e. its history (analogous to the history of the media). As we know, the history of traditional arts (by which we mainly mean painting, partly literature, but also all other forms of art) is filled with violent scenes, where violence is presented with the aim of achieving or exciting an aesthetic experience. By the same token, we might conclude that as a medium, film also functions in the same way. Finally, we can ask whether violent content in the media, represented as having an aesthetic (art) justification, needs to be treated as violent, or whether it is actually art.

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⁹ See David Trend, *The myth of media violence: A critical introduction*, Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2007.

The similar case is definitely true for entertainment content although its 'justification' is not related to the potential aesthetic experience of the audience, public or users, but to something crucially different which will be further discussed in this text. Now we must stress our view that both criticizing violence in the media and problematizing these critiques, is based on assumptions which are themselves based on general assessments and evaluations. In order to comprehend the complexity of this problem, we must call upon media literacy¹⁰/ the philosophy of media, which, in our opinion, may significantly contribute to understanding the overall influence of media culture on its consumers or users of any media content, including content characterised as aggressive.

There is no question that the whole media industry is based on making profit. In order to secure and raise financial gain, this industry exploits a few clichés which mainly come down to these: showing instances of violence and sexuality. It is evident that these phenomena attract a great deal of media attention and play a vital role in entertaining a variety of target groups in the audience. This posits the question – what kind of content (form, format) is entertaining today and to what extent is violence presented in the media profitable, assuming we know what violence is and how it manifests in the domain of communication media?

First it becomes obvious that media violence is different from violence that has not been mediated. It is precisely this difference that contributes to additional confusion in interpretation. Certain theorists in fact understand violence in the media as the presence of explicitly violent scenes, transposed onto the film or television screen or into the domain of interactive videogames, while others believe that whole genres or screening formats by their nature form an adequate background for mediating violent content. The scope of different interpretations includes pointing to aggressive content in animated and horror films, in sport events, and the especially notorious, reality show programs. Genre mixtures can also manifest similar patterns of using violence in the function of attracting the attention of the public. In addition to 'specialized' genres and formats, violence often appears in other types of media representations – it is often part of news shows, and

¹⁰ 'If asked whether you believe you are affected by media violence, how would you respond? According to media scholar W. James Potter, on average 88% of adults polled on this question don't believe they are; however, many people do believe others are affected. The persistence of this response to the question is called the —third person effect (The 11 Myths of Media Violence, p. 31). Granted, most of us don't commit violent acts following the 6 o'clock news, but does that mean we are not affected in less severe ways? We discuss the significance of four primary effects of media violence in the following pages. Much of the research and public commentary about the effects of media violence treat viewers of violent media as passive recipients who simply register negative effects. As we argue in our review of media violence research, the life lessons which audiences – including children – take away from violent media content are always the result of a complex process of dynamic interaction between audience and media text'. See webpage: <http://www.medialit.org/sites/default/files/connections/media%20violence.pdf>, accessed: 14 December 2017.

sometimes we see it in documentary segments, tv shows and different fiction structures. Violence is in fact present in most media content, including accompanying ads. We can therefore rightly conclude that media today is overflowing with violence to such an extent that we hardly even notice it anymore.

If however, violence is constantly present in the media in all its various forms, we may ask ourselves whether this is entertaining and does it perhaps represent the essence of the modern entertainment world. This first entails concluding that violence represented in the media – disregarding news shows and scenes from battlefields or terrorist attacks – is fiction. When the presence of violence in the media is criticized, this is pointed at violence in films and videogames, or to some extent, reality show programs, quiz shows with extreme content, etc. One should therefore ask, is fictitious violence actual violence, and if so, to what extent is this true? In addition to this dilemma, the discussion on violence in the media today should also include the issue of whether fictitious violence provokes, inspires, and in a certain way generates violence in reality.

Research on the reception of violent media content neither verifies nor denies the previous statement. If this relation is to be successfully researched and confirmed empirically, it would point to implications violence has on child and adolescent audiences, regardless of whether they are passive participants in scenes of violence or act as co-creators of these, as is the case in videogames. Arguments often used on the dangers of fictitious violence are based on the analogy with the art world (which has already been discussed) and following the familiar ideas stated in Plato's Republic. According to Plato's positions that certain art forms corrupt the soul and have a harmful effect on its education and development, it can be said that this is also true for content showing fictitious violence in entertainment media.

However, this brings us to the possibility of formulating a different argument. It would of course go in the opposite direction and have the following meaning: fictitious violence as a precondition, i.e. accepted convention in the media industry and the entertainment world, has the ability to desensitize¹¹. Further developing this idea, fictitious or simulated (virtual) violence loses its intensity and significance in reality through

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¹¹ Comp. Talking Philosophy, The Philosophy Magazine Blog, 'Video Games, Movies & Violence', webpage: <http://blog.talkingphilosophy.com/?p=6587>, accessed: 16 December 2017.

its being played out and 'liberated' in the media domain. In this sense fictitious violence manifests a sort of pedagogic, i.e. educational potential, in contrast to usual views and expectations, contrary to Plato's conclusion.

But if we see these opposing views in the abstract sense, and search for the 'justification' for the high occurrence of fictitious violence in media only in its entertainment potential, the interpretation framework is significantly changed. Modern and new media only rarely show violence in itself, i.e. without a specific reason. If the representation of fictitious violence in the media has a purpose outside itself, one should research the basis of mediating violent content in various modern media. The idea here is to explain which element makes violence entertaining. It would at first appear that violence is not and cannot be entertaining, since it opposes basic ethical and sometimes political standards of social practice.

If seen from the viewpoint of game theory however, representations of violence for the purposes of providing entertainment are relatively acceptable and pacified in the context of that group of games which according to the old classification by Roger Caillois belong to *agon* – competitive games. *Agon* was first related to spectacular scenes realized in sports (often also in film or on television: for example, the genre of fighting, kung fu or martial arts movies, and live or recorded broadcasts of fights on cable tv), while in the era of videogames expansion¹² the focus of media attention is (again) removed to the war games domain. In this research context it is important to examine the relation between the entertainment industry and competitive games, encouraging the expansion of violent content of an entertaining character penetrating the domain of media culture.

One article on the website 'Only a Game' further develops the classifying of this entertainment. Modern video and computer games which basically represent a playing field for fighting and war, are further structurally divided into those where virtual fights are led according to different principles: one versus one, one versus many or many versus many (strategy games)¹³. All these subgroups of games even though not appearing so *prima facie*, are games which use the fictitious media arena to promote values such as social Darwinism, expansionism and finally – capitalism, favouring the principles

12 The text 'The Challenge of Agon', on the newly established relation between games and fictitious violence, posits a similar view: 'So central to the modern videogames industry is agon (competition) that many people consider 'game' to be almost synonymous with the notion of competitive play. We play to win, the presumption states, and this indeed describes a great many of our modern videogames. I hope that, by having looked at alea, mimicry, and ilinx before agon, I do not need to put forward the counter-argument (that there can be more to games than agon) and can instead focus on exploring the myriad complexities that this category of play entails.' See webpage: http://onlyagame.typepad.com/only_a_game/2006/03/the_challenge_o.html, accessed: 17 December 2017.

13 'It is worth noting that contests of agon present themselves in certain distinct forms which are worth identifying briefly, if only to provide a wider foundation. Firstly, there are games of ONE VERSUS ONE agon, such as a fighting game. Such games are the most intensely agonistic form, and most recognisably fit Caillois' description of agon. Then, there are ONE VERSUS MANY games, such as the FPS which (squad variants notwithstanding) place a lone player in contest versus many opponents. Still, the underlying assumption is that the challenge has been

of competitiveness, literally in all areas of human activity. In our view, violence and destruction here come second to the values of capitalism which are masked within. These media-generated attractions promote the spirit of capitalism, both on the level of individually and collectively defined social values. The free (uncensored) video and computer games market additionally strengthens this statement. To put it simply, the entertainment industry prefers *agon* to other games, since competitive games are the most convenient form for the capitalist spirit of our times and at the same time encourage it to stabilize and be strengthened.

The question remains, in what ways does violence become entertaining? On the one hand, violence has come to be related directly or indirectly with the subject of sexuality, since representations of sexuality in mass media today – for orientation purposes and in the context of the American market – comprise over 80% of all programming content, while the percentage in the video sphere equals 60%¹⁴. It seems that violence and sexuality, which are often combined and cannot be separated, i.e. represent a synthesized phenomenon mediated through the global cultural and entertainment industry, become the type of content perfect for the systematic exploitation carried out by the media industry. Although the instrumentalization of sexuality today is most common in the media domain, the phenomenon of violence, whether related to sexuality or mediated by itself, also becomes an important impulse of the media industry. In order to become an even more important resource for mass exploitation, systematic mediation is necessary, which puts violence in direct relation to entertainment.

balanced fairly (although pragmatically, few games are so well tweaked for this to emerge). Finally, MANY VERSUS MANY games, such as strategy games when whole armies fight, which are akin to team-based sports which offer *agon* between equally matched sides. These distinctions, while notable, do not fundamentally alter the nature of agonistic play, although they may alter the appeal. Fighting games, FPS games and strategy games imply different audiences, with an affinity for challenge in the forms of fast reaction control skills, pathfinding & aiming or thoughtful complexity respectively being key distinctions', *ibid.*

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14 Furthermore, data available on the Internet, which, as we have already mentioned, mainly relate to the media market in the US, discuss the predominating representations of sexual content within the mass media and video games to such an extent that certain researchers see them as 'sexual media'. However, since certain professional associations refute this position on American mainstream media and the entertainment industry as a whole, we shall not insist on other conclusions from these sources, since we are not certain of the reliability of such data. We however take the view that high percentages and the market motivation at the basis of such indicators should certainly be closely examined. Comp. with text on the webpage: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/283055317_Sexuality_and_entertainment_media, accessed: 18 December 2017.

In other words, it would appear that violence is not entertaining in itself (except perhaps to psychopaths and sociopaths) and for it to become attractive and exciting in the media, it needs to be described as entertaining. In this way, something that is especially negative in the social sense, i.e. the occurrence of violence and destruction, gains a positive connotation in the world of capitalism. This is especially true for the target group comprised of sensitive individuals – children and adolescents. To make things worse, this is not always pure entertainment, and often has artistic pretensions, which makes its artificiality additionally influence the promotion of the capitalist regime as a free, democratic, highly aestheticized ‘the best of all possible worlds’.

Some authors refer to the idea of a ‘programmed violence’¹⁵ in modern media, which is also an assumption to be closely examined. It is our view that violence in the media is not ‘programmed’ by the elites in power – as one might think at first – rather it is the product of real changes on the market. In other words, if it appears that in addition to sex and violence, mass public and ‘grand players’ are also attracted to other types of content, the media market will open up a space for different types of content right away (if it is flexible, and it most often is). In other words, it does not seem that ideology and politics have a decisive significance for creating media policies today, separate from economic interests.

We shall illustrate this with a bizarre example taken from the recent American cultural context. This is the phenomenon of *trash* and the movie ‘The Room’ (2003). This work has been named by film critics as artistically being one of the worst movies of all time. Although a very expensive project, the film was deemed extremely poor in the aesthetic sense, but was incredibly well received by the public in search of entertainment. At first distributed in small cinemas, for audiences which were not highly educated, ‘The Room’ quickly became a cult film. Although it does not contain violent content, the audience response today remains frenetic, with members of the audience reciting dialogue aloud during screenings, and throwing spoons at the screen, since these have in some strange way become significant for this film. Owing to the great popularity of ‘The Room’, a film about the making of this film dealing with the phenomenon was later produced (‘The Disaster Artist’, 2017),

¹⁵ See: Sissela Bok, *Violence as Public Entertainment*, Higher Education, USA, 1988.

based on the literary biography of the main actor, director and producer¹⁶. All of this points to the fact that the focus of the media industry is not on actual content (such as sexuality, violence etc.), but rather on entertainment, which is achieved through whatever means.

On the other hand, some products of the entertainment industry use scenes of violence (or aggression combined with sexuality) not with the purpose of purely spectacularizing brutality and gaining profit, but under the pretence of aestheticizing it or using it in order to criticize social relations – often both approaches are present. Sometimes these works are considered to be ‘the worst’ or ‘most morbid’¹⁷ as in the previously mentioned case, representing exceptions in the industrialized entertainment world. Authors such as Peckinpah, Cronenberg, Tarantino and others, use scenes of violence within the frameworks of the entertainment industry in order to, apparently paradoxically, criticize by film means the violent culture which their movies primarily reference.

These films are described in terms of ‘shock aesthetics’, and like for example ‘A Serbian Film’ (2010) are censored or shown at screenings for small, selected audiences, mostly late at night. Scenes of violence shown in this particular movie which belongs to the horror genre, go beyond the conceptualization of violence as standardized entertainment; the screenwriter, director and actors describe the film as being the most open and direct critique of society. The relation towards violence and sexuality in the film is a matter of a consciously chosen poetics and is not aimed at entertainment or attracting the attention of cinema goers by cheap means. Therefore, Vukmir, one of the main characters in ‘A Serbian Film’, autopoetically describes the intentions of the whole authorial team behind the movie, when he, as a ‘director’, instructs a porn actor with the following words: ‘Your purpose is to position the woman, your rhythm is to exhaust her, your talent is to humiliate her and when you have humiliated her to the level of dog shit in order to get her, and for her to get your love, this is art. It is our great misfortune that we are living in a country where there is no art. If there is no life, there is no art’.

In review of all that has been said, we may conclude that there are some exceptions within the framework of the entertainment industry, relating to the obsessive thematization of

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16 In 2003, a true contender for the greatest bad movie of all time premiered in Los Angeles. That movie was *THE ROOM*, directed by Tommy Wiseau, a man with a thick Eastern European accent who insists he's from New Orleans on the rare occasions he's willing to talk about his life. He's also the man who wrote, produced, and starred in the masterpiece of awfulness. The making of *The Room* is a story that's almost as bizarre as the movie itself, but it's one that inspired James Franco to immortalize the film in his new movie *The Disaster Artist*, based on the book of the same name by Wiseau's friend and *THE ROOM* costar Greg Sestero. Webpage: <https://www.popsugar.com/entertainment/Room-Movie-True-Story-44309756>, accessed: 19 December 2017.

17 For an example, see article ‘The most morbid and worst film in the world – ‘A Serbian Film’’. Webpage: <https://dnevnik.hr/showbuzz/omg/najmorbidniji-film-na-svijetu-je-srpski-film---423306.html>, accessed: 24 December 2017.

violence in the media, and these confirm the rule that violence is *always* an *already* planned element in the corpus of media influence and most often serves entertainment and profit, while it is only occasionally the case that violence functions as a way of emancipating awareness within the industry, through art or a direct critique of society. The calculation regarding the use of violence in the media is absolutely clear: despite being morally disputable and regardless of the principle of political correctness and general social and public interests, or artistic and cultural values, violence is, alongside sexuality, definitely the most profitable asset of modern media industry. Most often it is also the most nonsensical one. However, its financial benefits hidden behind the veil of entertainment will have much larger consequences for society and culture, not even in the sense of further perpetuating violence, which is most often mentioned, analyzed and written about, but in the context of the modern man's/woman's search for meaning in an almost completely senseless modern media horizon of existence.

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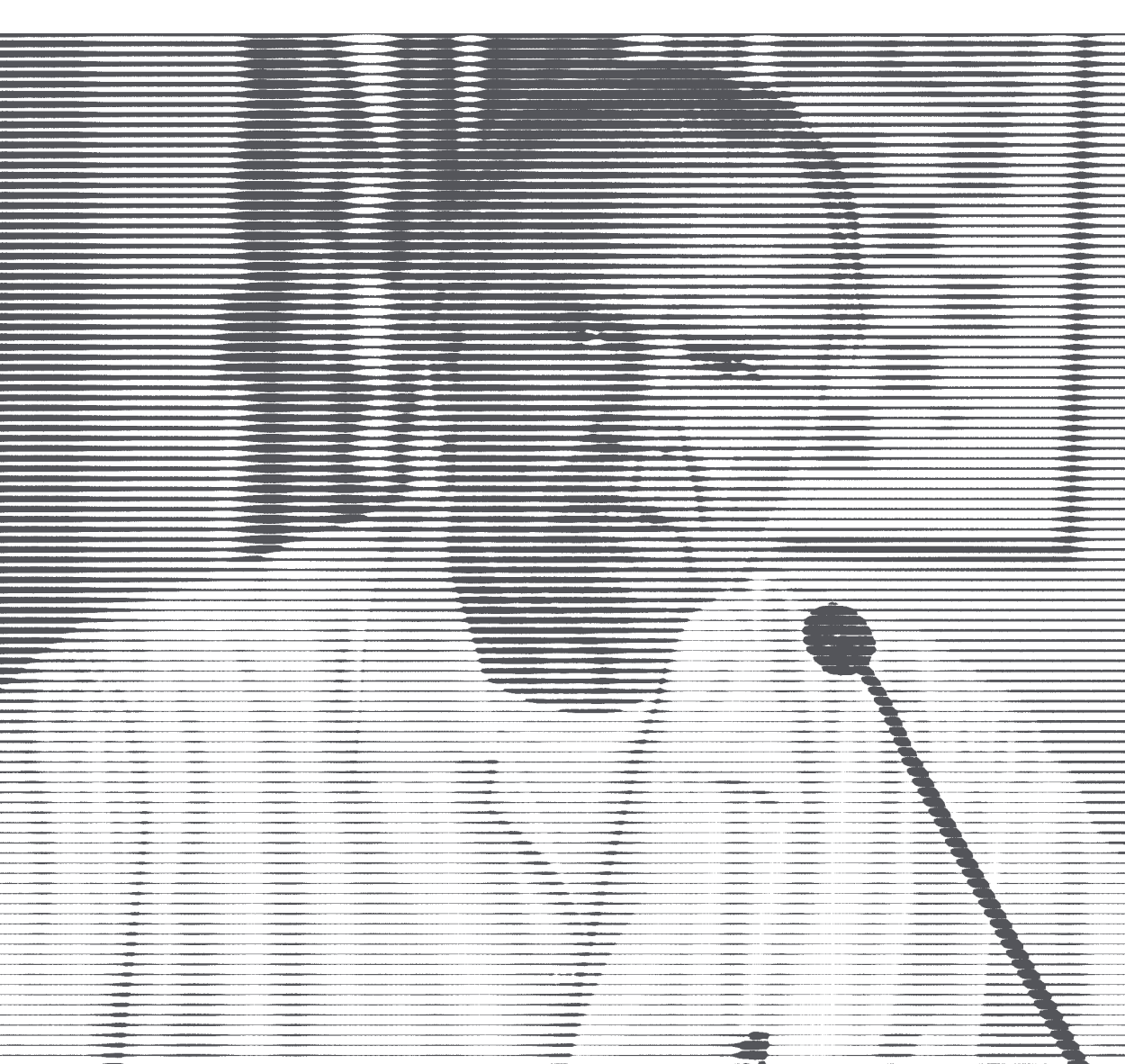
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'Literary' Analysis of State (Media) Terrorism in Orwell's 1984

Key words Orwell, totalitarianism, terrorism, Big Brother, media, fear, love

Abstract We are constantly starting new wars in our search for peace. In a battle, we hope for peace that will allow us to prepare for the final war. We produce more and more weapons. There are already so many arms that they cannot be fathomed by human thought. Due to declaring the war on terrorism, with any deviation from Big Brother's opinion considered as terrorism, the war has become a means for bringing opinions into uniformity. Since the whole peoples have to follow this opinion, it has been dubbed democracy. The war on terror has become the war for political conformism that bears the name of democracy. But unlike Athenian democracy, in which women and slaves could not participate, nearly no one participates in it today. Democracy is a logo on bombers, drones, corporate platforms and bottles of diluted sugar sold all over the planet.

Književna analiza državnog (medijskog) terorizma u Orwellovom romanu 1984.

Ključne riječi Orwel, totalitarizam, terorizam, Veliki Brat, mediji, strah, ljubav

Sažetak U potrazi za mirom ulazimo stalno u nove ratove. Ratujemo nadajući se miru u kojemu ćemo se moći potpuno pripremiti za konačni rat. Proizvodimo sve više oružja. Već ga ima toliko da ne stane u ljudsku misao. Proglašenjem rata protiv terorizma, a terorizmom svega što nije u skladu s mišljenjem Velikoga Brata – rat je postao sredstvo provedbe uniformiranja mišljenja. Budući da cijeli narodi trebaju slijediti to mišljenje ono se uvidavno nazvalo demokracijom. Borba protiv terorizma postala je tako borbom za jednoulje koje se naziva demokracijom. No za razliku od atenske kada u njoj nisu sudjelovale žene i robovi, danas u njoj ne sudjeluje gotovo nitko. Demokracija je logotip na bombarderima, dronovima, korporacijskim platformama, na bočicama razrijeđenog šećera koje se prodaju na cijelom planetu.

We have not read many books we claim to have read. We mention their titles, the names of their authors, the symbolism they employ. We turn them into symbols whose meaning we do not fully understand. We diminish the depth, beauty and power of those books' messages and reduce them to words, syntagms and phrases that are forced on the ignorant as if in a broken telephone game or through a viral effect. This makes life easier for the ignorant, who remain unaware that the essence of the problem emphasised in a book is still omnipresent.

Orwell's *1984* is one of such books, a book that 'everybody has read'. Nevertheless, it gradually fell into oblivion after the calendar year 1984. This was perhaps an understandable consequence of the strategy (referred to in the novel) involving the obliteration of historical facts, the changing of documents and the rule that only the most recent records of facts should be relevant. *'Everything – to cite Orwell – faded away into a shadow-world in which, finally, even the date of the year had become uncertain.'*¹

However, we did not take the novel *1984* as seriously as we should have.² This is why I believe that we must analyse that year, which is now behind us, so that we can understand what is happening to us. To put it more precisely, our 1984 is more terrible and ominous than we could have imagined.

What is happening to us?

The world order of fear has been established. A world power has declared war on the world under the guise of fight against terrorism. Imperialism and neo-colonialism have entered their final phase, openly advocating inequalities and imposing force as the only means of dialogue. The election of the American president is the election of a world imperator whose morning digestion affects the balance of war and peace in a small country somewhere in the world. The high-ranking Party officer O'Brien proclaims in *1984*: *'Obedience is not enough. Unless he is suffering, how can you be sure that he is obeying your will and not his own? Power is in inflicting pain and humiliation...A world of fear and treachery and torment, a world of trampling and being trampled upon, a world which will grow not less but more merciless as it refines itself'*³

1 Orwell, George, 1984, published in the Croatian translation by Alfa, Zagreb, 2008. The original quotation is retrieved from 1984, Everyman's Library, Germany, 1992, p. 44.

2 In order to understand this great novel, we have to read Orwell's other works, such as *Why I Write and Other Essays, Animal Farm, Down and Out in Paris and London and Homage to Catalonia*. If we do not read them, we could fall into a trap of characterising Orwell as a stern critic only of Soviet-type totalitarianism. We should keep in mind that he is a critic of every form of totalitarianism and that his criticism, rather than being political, stems from his own life experience.

3 Orwell, George, 1984, published in the Croatian translation by Alfa, Zagreb, 2008. The original quotation is retrieved from 1984, Everyman's Library, Germany, 1992, p. 279.

We are trying to love Big Brother. He has become more powerful and more terrifying. And more flexible. His faces change, but each wears a fake smile and pretends to be serious. Rather than revealing its true nature, Big Brother's face follows the photographer's instructions.⁴

Love towards Big Brother had been prepared for a long time. It was born together with the illusion that something that is commonly owned, or that should and could be commonly owned, belongs only to me. The limitations of my private property have become my own limitations. The system that promised me the inviolability of my property was my prison. The walls of that prison were the seductive and manipulative mass media.⁵

After having been tortured, the hero from 1984 realises that he has to try to love Big Brother in order to be able to kill him and free himself from his misery. We also have to love Big Brother. The industry of politics that backs him up has enabled us to change his appearance giving us the dramaturgy and the illusion of choice. We more or less truly believe that we love a certain personality of the industry of politics. We love one big brother because he represents a stereotype of male attractiveness; another because of his rebellious gaze and still another because of his composed gaze that does not even reach us. During the recent decades, Big Brother has also been given a female form. Male proles are especially happy with that: if they are not or have not been listening, they now at least have something to watch. Besides, it is easier to love the female Big Brother. This, somehow, makes death sweeter.

Every death is the acknowledgment of an imbalance in the organism, nothing but the final corporal acknowledgment of surrender. Death gives meaning to our efforts to bring a little bit of light into our sombre lives, and the only light that is available to us is the artificial light of a leader, a homeland, a party, a nation. We no longer have Anaxagoras' strength to point our finger up towards the sky at the mention of our homeland.

In order to dissuade any occasional criticism of Big Brother, the industry of politics has manipulated the truth and in the macrocosm of politics created the microcosm

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4 For more information about this relation see: Alić, Sead, *Istina iz fotografskog stroja (Truth from the Camera)*, Kultura No. 132, *Suvremeni žurnalizam, - trendovi, dileme, izazovi*, ISSN 0023-5164, published by Zavod za proučavanje kulturnog razvitka, Belgrade, 2011 (pp. 249-269).

5 For more information on mass media as an open prison see: Alić, Sead, *MASMEĐIII, zatvor bez zidova (Mass Media, a Prison without Walls)* ISBN:978-953-56314-2-2, Centar za filozofiju medija, Zagreb, 2010.

of a show programme in which proles watch other proles twenty-four hours a day. The programme has been named Big Brother, after its godfather. The stratagem of the industry of politics is based on the proven facts that the best place for a thief to hide is a legal clause, that laws are adopted by those trying to protect themselves and that the biggest secret is the one declared as a well-known but unaccepted truth.

The programme programs a programme used for programming a program within people. We unconsciously accept value systems brought to us by the dictatorship of repetition. Politics is openly laughing at us, *the small fish*, in our faces, forcing us to form our own statements about our weaknesses.

While proles are watching other proles, the industry of politics is inserting cameras and microphones into our laptops, tv sets, cell-phones and other devices uses by proles to incriminate themselves in front of the councils authorised for wiretapping and observing proles. The year 1984 has been surpassed. Nowadays proles rush to companies selling telescreens so that they could buy devices for wiretapping and observing themselves. In return they can watch recycled media garbage, X-rated movies and they can see Big Brother's transformations. The industry of politics has employed the best experts to construct microphones and cameras that record even when they are turned off. That makes it easier for proles to turn themselves in. The process is automatic.

Every reference to science in the world where science is threatened and endangered has to be critically examined. Are we creating stupid authority figures, authoritative personalities, or are we thinking? Are we thinking openly and are we ready to face failure, or are we just repeating a designated mantra? The science of proles has to be serious, dull, empty and postmodern. Every request for change is punished. The army, the police, the corrupt judiciary, reporters scared for their lives, intellectuals in the society of containers, excommunication from life, acquaintances and friends looking away – take your pick.

Big Brother expresses his closeness by being distant. To be distant means to let the others release their love and start craving the object of their affection. Big Brother no longer flies over the heads of his followers in a helicopter. His powerful eye watches from divine satellite heights. Omnipresent, but

invisible, this eye has all the required divine attributes. Proles have to interpret this fact correctly, and the only correct interpretation is that Big Brother is closer to each of us than our own breath.

They say that God is dead. For one king to live another must die. For the power of the satellite eye to gain its full force the Eye of God must be obliterated. Zeus' lightning bolts have become more efficient and precise now that Zeus is long gone.

If someone needs to be eliminated, but in a way that everyone can witness it so that Big Brother's fearlessness, precision, efficiency and divine vengefulness can be demonstrated, a small agile drone with destructive explosives is sent to kill rebels, but also to punish all those who let themselves be in the presence of a person they should have guessed will eventually fall victim to Zeus' anger.

Nowadays we produce weapons that decide by themselves who they are going to kill. True professionals. First they kill, then they question...

The Thought Police has also completed its weapon arsenal. Instead of examining people's thoughts it has developed a profession that can form their opinions. Thought prevention is exercised in the same way as health prevention. Self-reporting, self-recording and devices that broadcast and record at the same time – that is, record even when they are turned off – are extremely helpful in that process of cultivating positive thoughts. The ecological times have shown that it is possible to cultivate a thought perfectly loyal to Big Brother, which needs to be controlled only occasionally and routinely (only to verify if it is still functioning).

Belief in the political thought gave rise to belief in the mathematical organisation of thoughts, which in turn gave rise to belief in the technical and technological definition and organisation of thoughts. A technically organised world no longer needs thoughts. We have reached the bottom and we now have to question what the medium with which we intended to conquer the world has turned into. For the purpose of the technical takeover of the world we have created a monstrous system of imprisoned thinking. The self-confident media of logic, grammar, words and thoughts have become the means of our mental and political hara-kiris.

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The immaculate thought is cultivated with the help of new speech. In order to attain purity new speech has named itself Newspeak. Newspeak is studied by language doctors, specialists in detecting the symptoms of the old speech, known as Oldspeak. The progress made in relation to the vision of 1984 also stems from the fact that every new Big Brother introduces its own Newspeak. This creates a social dynamics and allows for the detection of deviations in approaches to language (which only reflect deviations at higher levels). In addition, Newspeak renders thinking impossible because nobody thinks in a language he has to intensely think about while speaking it. It is easier not to think.

The language of thinking has given way to the language of adaptation.

We are constantly starting new wars in our search for peace. In a battle, we hope for peace that will allow us to prepare for the final war. We produce more and more weapons. There are already so many arms that they cannot be fathomed by human thought. Due to declaring the war on terrorism and slapping the label of terrorism on anything not in line with Big Brother's opinions, the war has become a means for bringing opinions into uniformity. Since all peoples have to follow these opinions, they have been dubbed democracy. The war on terror has become the war for political conformism that bears the name of democracy. But unlike Athenian democracy, in which women and slaves could not participate, nearly no one participates in it today. Democracy is a logo on bombers, drones, corporate platforms and bottles of diluted sugar sold all over the planet.

This is why big leaders, Big Brother's main collaborators, have their photographs increasingly more often taken with machine guns, in military uniforms, with soldiers, in army tents and during military drills. They are getting their peoples accustomed to preparations for new wars in the times of peace.

In order for those photographs to be widely disseminated, we need a military-minded, obedient and robotic journalism. It has to be precisely guided. Authors are killer drone-robots, controlled from afar.

The media adore the photographs of big leaders with weapons. They always seem to find themselves in a place where big leaders are hugging or caressing a machine gun or long cannon

barrel. They especially appreciate women as big leaders. The eroticism of a cannon barrel and a woman with a machine gun boosts the morale of the people condemned to suicide. Published day after day, such photos create among people an expectation of war, absolution and catharsis that will bring a blood-soaked end to the drama perpetuated by the warmongering mass media.

Newspeak has narrowed down the meaning of the word *freedom*. Nowadays we cannot understand this word without the explanatory attributes. For example, the well-known syntagm 'the freedom of the market' signifies more than freedom itself. It implies efforts to sell sugar water in the parts of the world and to the nations without a tradition of drinking it. It also signifies the freedom of advertising sugar water with the help of a global screen. Finally, it signifies the freedom of employing cheap labour force from third-world countries to mix water and sugar and create the favourite drink of people all around the world. The drink is, of course, partly poisonous, but Big Brother has to prevent overpopulation, people have to die of something eventually. Those who drink sugar water will not have to resort to suicide. Dead as they are, they will end their existence by drinking Big Brother's neo-colonial poison.

In fact, we made a wrong turn a long time ago when we failed to realise that a thought could be a trap. Like media intermediation, which, having developed from *eidos*, geometric regularity, leads to regularity without man – the thought is today overcome by the futility of its own efforts. Everything is ruled by appearance – appearances governs our lives.

Big Brother has created big leaders after his own image by osmosis. Every big leader has special buildings and institutions where his images are multiplied and disseminated to the non-existing public. The images are published, but there is almost no one to write critically about them. The minority that is bold enough to do so is an 'expatriate' minority in its own country. Such citizens, as a rule, gradually give up, move away or change their opinions. Those who change their opinions generally become self-proclaimed experts and, based on their merits, reach the highest ranks of the Thought Police.

The world is bombarded by the little stories of postmodern tadpoles.

Different degrees of slavery have been labelled freedom of choice. Everyone can choose whether to watch or listen to lies propagated by the truth-declaring means of public communication. If you do not like a voice professing a lie under the guise of truth you can change the channel and choose a more soothing voice or a prettier face. Garbage is no longer thrown away, but it is recycled into television programme. Everybody is in it, because the production of a programme in which those who want to watch themselves participate is the cheapest option. It is also in every respect the closest to the idea of participating in the idea of the big leader's programme.

The fact that there is no difference between the behaviour of the North Korean and the American leader only proves that there is actually no difference between North Korean parades and American democratic election parades.

Knowledge creates enemies. A state that wants to manipulate a docile mass will declare itself the state of knowledge. Those who fall for that will make many enemies. Especially among people who know that ignorance is power and that they have been chosen for the highest positions only because they did not let themselves be deceived by the ideological lie. There is no point in having in the ruling classes those who are susceptible to being deceived by the ideology of those same classes. Those who cannot comprehend the fundamental essence of hypocrisy in the times after the year 1984.

Liberation can only be attained by recognition. Nowadays, hypocrisy is the fate of intellectuals. We are so civil, scientifically oriented, methodical and meticulous in maintaining the illusion that this is who we really are.

The science industry has discovered the copy/paste method, which is usually only used by experienced members at the top. This method allows them to gain more knowledge while remaining ignorant. Since ignorance is power, they retain their positions of power. Using the copy/paste method.

Academic octopuses have developed hierarchies in which only the adherents of the copy/paste method can persevere. The others do not understand this method. The scientific copy/paste method.⁶

The answer to the question what science is used to be: a method. The contemporary knowledge industry has realised that the designation of science as a method is only the

6 For more information about the copy/paste method see: Alić, Sead, *Copy/paste kultura, od Mehaničke mlade do copy/paste culture (Copy/Paste Culture: from the Mechanical Bride to Copy/Paste Culture)*, Filozofska istraživanja No. 109, 2007, pp. 63-74.

mystification of something that only seemingly guarantees objectivity and results. In addition, due to the insistence on a method, many scientific studies only explained the method applied, no matter what the subject was, with their findings stating that it was scientific. Nobody remembered what had actually been researched. The science industry went a step further. If the method has made all research meaningless, then there is no need for research at all. All results are known anyway, and every piece of research is initiated in order to prove a thesis. The Thought Police was for years searching for a scientific paper that would prove that it did not prove its initial thesis. Finally, a decision was made: from that moment on, the results of previous research were to be plagiarized. This gave an advantage to those who were closer to the top of the hierarchy. They got their stomachs full and put on black togas and golden chains. They looked like Herzegovinian tradesmen and Arab students, but they did not care.

One of the theses put forward during the Enlightenment with the aim to differentiate between basing a society on religion and potentially basing it on reason was supported by the argument that religion was a product of fear. The philosophers of the Enlightenment saw fear of Hell, fear of sin, fear of immoral acts, of adultery, murder and all the retributions of an angry God as a means to tame the mass that was being governed. The ecclesiastical hierarchy had, and still has, the strongest argument on its side – Big God could punish all the believers according to its instructions.

Orwell's Ministry of Love learned from the philosophers of the Enlightenment, which is why its love is enlightened. It provides fear that those philosophers wrote about and warned about. Even if the objective is not the same, the means is. Fear has been reactivated and it performs its cohesive function. However, the place previously held by religion is now occupied by love. The hierarchy of priests in their strange silk robes has been replaced by the hierarchy of the Ministry of Love. Religion is no longer transcendental – instead of Big God, we are now afraid of big leaders and Big Brother. Big Brother is invisible. Therefore, love is shown to the party, on Earth, the party being Big Brother's earthly body: *'The Party seeks power – speaks Orwell through his character O'Brien – entirely for its own sake. We are not interested in the good of others; we*

are interested solely in power. Not wealth or luxury or long life or happiness: only power, pure power...We are different from all the oligarchies of the past, in that we know what we are doing. All the others, even those who resembled ourselves, were cowards and hypocrites. The German Nazis and the Russian Communists came very close to us in their methods, but they never had the courage to recognize their own motives...We are not like that. We know that no one ever seizes power with the intention of relinquishing it. Power is not a means, it is an end. One does not establish a dictatorship in order to safeguard a revolution; one makes the revolution in order to establish the dictatorship. The object of persecution is persecution. The object of torture is torture. The object of power is power.⁷

By living in fear we in fact indirectly feel love. Love towards Big Brother cannot be expressed in any other way but through fear. Fear is the most realistic, the safest and the most complete affirmation of a person's trust in Big Brother. Feelings are fleeting, no love is eternal, but fear can accompany man from birth until death.

Building on this line of thought in an ironic discourse, we could add: throughout history, people have been doing many inappropriate things in the name of love. The Trojan War was started because of love; love was the reason why the Greek philosophy was adopted by homosexuals. Did Romeo really have to destroy Juliet, and only on account of love? Abelard was cruelly punished because he dared to love Heloise. Big leaders free us from our need for love and from stupid actions we undertake in the name of love. Fear is a sufficient guarantee for big leaders that their followers will refrain from foolish acts.

The philosophical fear of misunderstanding technology and the fact that the human quality in media intermediation is no longer questioned have resulted in a hypocritical love towards lifelines in the form of armchairs modelled after the back-sides of people who wish to present themselves as thinking individuals.

It was a long time ago when Marx voiced his desire for heavenly problems to descend to Earth and for earthly relations not to rise to the heavens. This has now come true. Big Brother, as a supreme authority, is a man who does not aspire to divine attributes. He does not proclaim earthly problems to be heavenly, nor does he make people believe in the transcendental. With his feet firmly on Earth, drawing his strength from fear

7 Orwell, George, 1984, published in the Croatian translation by Alfa, Zagreb, 2008. The original quotation is retrieved from Orwell, George, 1984, Everyman's Library, Germany, 1992, pp. 275-276.

produced by his Thought Police, Big Brother is safe. Love is a thing of the past, it existed in the times when an individual was at the mercy of social movements, when people lived in an illusion of peace, thinking that the freedom of choice entails love.

Socialist five-year plans have been replaced by western ones. States have become corporations. Their main concern is not justice or the well-being of their citizens, but their corporate year-end balance sheets: desire for profit of the biggest thieves is presented under the guise of national pride. The whole nation wearing the same football jersey symbolises our unity in lie. We all love that lie because it shows us that lie can win too...

Big Brother is broadcasted by the contemporary media and modern media churches, which make sure that his ideas reach all parts of the world and every living soul on Earth. His masses are the rituals of hate that were at first aimed at Goldstein, his arch-enemy, and later developed into an exquisitely dramatized news reel. This is all framed by the syntagm 'informational programme', which makes it clear to all participants that they first have to attend informational interviews. The purpose of those interviews is to assess how afraid they are. The level of fear defines their ability to worship earthly values instead of transcendental ones.

The mass media broadcast the catharsis of hate.

Two Minutes Hate have spread through our bodies and extended into five to ten minutes per hour. Special hate channels transmit the so-called news for twenty-four hours a day. In case you run out of hate you can simply turn on Big Brother xxxL channel (on your watch, for example) and obtain all the content necessary for further functioning.

Throughout history, philosophy has been playing hide and seek with its own idea of god. God has been conceived as the unmoved mover, as the thought of thought, as a substance, as nature... The philosophical god is described in such abstract terms, it is so vague, camouflaged, concealed and referred to by many different, almost unrecognisable names, that it is no wonder that some historical individuals have adopted those definitions. Man decided to become God and has succeeded in becoming one only in the age of mass media releases. What are stone slabs and the script compared to satellite devices and mass media communication? What are monotheist religions compared to single-party systems? What are transcendental

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gods compared to our own domestic, familiar, warm, dressed-up, photo shopped and smiling – human gods?

Big Brother's state is pure anarchy. It advocates fight against the cruelty of every law, even the one on which states as 'dungeons for the people' are based on. Big Brother, a visionary, has introduced into our lives a society that does not need any laws. In an anarchistic turn of phrase, nothing is illegal. Citizens can do what they please because they know they will be rewarded for that by the Ministry of Love, Ministry of Truth or some other institution that makes sure that we constantly think about and feel fear and that it remains deeply ingrained in our souls.

Loopholes can exist in law, but not in fear. There is no lack of proof that laws can be easily circumvented. Fear is the only real law, a law that makes any other law unnecessary and compels people to follow Big Brother out of pure love. Chips in our bodies, drones above our heads, cameras, microphones and entertainment industry devices strongly remind us of the universal value of a sincere and deep love.

Is philosophical prose the world's Trojan Horse? Is man's original sin actually an escape into an exoteric, technical and empty knowledge, which gives birth to an exoteric, technical and empty man? How much have we lost by trying to escape the mythical, the poetic and the religious (in their esoteric sense)?

The book *1984* drew attention to the role of *agents provocateurs* and their soon to be achieved significance. O'Brien's character is only roughly outlined compared with masterfully created officers with double and even triple personalities. The age of hypocrisy will turn man into a highly professional actor, capable of playing a believer in an idea, a convert, a conspirator, a rebel in disguise, an idealist hiding behind the commonplace phrases of a party, etc. The age of hypocrisy has become the age of trading information about people and their opinions, political orientations, intentions... The advocates of certain orientations are selling their souls in the streets, under the tables, in party members' offices, anywhere. Left and right no longer mean anything, at least as concerns material profit and jobs to be gained by crossing from one side of the street to the other. Nationalists are infiltrating themselves into the political

left, while the ones on the left are becoming devout nationalists, but in reality, what they both have in common is only their readiness to showcase their talent as actors.

After having explored the continents, the sky and the universe, we have to conquer history.

Fighting for a better past is a strategic interest of the hierarchy that knows it has no future. As long as history continues to be changed, the existence of that hierarchy is ensured. An unambiguous and firmly defined history would open possibilities for heretic thoughts and comparisons. Therefore, year after year, all countries ruled by political hierarchies devote more coverage in proles' programmes to changing the past or to fighting against those who have been changing it. The fact that those are one and the same people, one and the same parties (possibly with different names) means nothing. The dialectics of change initiated by the top is in action. The changes coming from the top have a dialectic and historical purpose.

Proles of all countries – you deserve better philosophers!

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Geopolitics of Numerical Space and the Rule of Algorithms

Key words numerical, the media, geopolitics, cables, attention, economy, totalitarianism, disruption

Abstract The numerical media can simulate all the details of other media by accumulating all the previous classical media functions (television, typewriter, etc.) and acting in this direction they captured so far unprecedented spaces of representation and expression. Due to such capacity for digital programming through modular structures of all the previous functions of the classical mass media, the numerical media succeed through the network reconfiguration and cultural transcoding in presenting a retrospective picture of the world and culture in the history of mankind. Inter-connectivity between the numerical media and internet networks implies a planetary virtual network that some compare with 'the world's collective cortex'. However, given the increasing density and complexity, the numerical media have become more hermetical and more complex in their deep functioning. The gradual autonomy and emancipation of its creators and operators

Geopolitika numeričkog prostora i vladavina algoritama

Ključne riječi numerički, mediji, geopolitika, kablovi, pažnja, ekonomija, totalitarizam, poremećaj

Sažetak Numerički mediji mogu simulirati sve detalje drugih medija, kumulirajući sve prethodne klasične medijske funkcije (televizija, pisani stroj, itd.), i tom smjeru osvajaju do sada nedostižive prostore reprezentacije i izražaja. Takav kapacitet numeričkih medija za digitalno programiranje kroz modularne strukture, svih prethodnih funkcija klasičnih mas-medija uspijevaju putem mrežne rekonfiguracije i kulturalnog transkodiranja, predočiti retrospektivnu sliku svijeta i kulture u povijesti čovječanstva. Inter-konektivnost između numeričkih medija i internetskih mreža predstavlja planetarnu virtualnu mrežu koji neki uspoređuju sa 'svjetskim kolektivnim korteksom'. Međutim, s obzirom na rastuću gustoću i kompleksnost, numerički mediji postaju sve hermetičniji i složeniji u njihovom dubokom funkcioniranju. Postupna autonomizacija i emancipacija od svojih kreatora i operatora, otvara proces u kojem se nastaje zagonetna umjetna inteligencija kao uvod u novu

opens the process of creating a mysterious artificial intelligence as an introduction to the new reign of algorithms. It is an introduction to the new virtual geopolitics of cyberspace where the strategies of conquest and the monopoly over information become the rival space of power between official government actors and other asymmetric actors.

vladavinu algoritama. Riječ je o uvodu u novu virtualnu geopolitiku cyber-prostora u kojem su strategije osvajanja i monopola nad informacijama postali suparnički prostor igre moći između službenih državnih aktera i drugih asimetričnih aktera.

By definition, digital geopolitics studies the cumulative and deep impact of information networks and new telecommunications on international relations and behaviour of the corporate sector and the individual. Modern digitalisation of the society is the result of a long process of successive technoscientific and economic revolutions. The first industrial revolution started in the 18th century with the invention of the steam engine and the transition from hand production methods to machines replacing humans. The second industrial revolution in the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century was marked by the use of different energy products and many scientific and technological inventions such as oil and electricity. The third industrial revolution of the present day is marked by computerisation and the use of information-communication systems often for the purpose of automation of work production and other processes. The fourth, numerical revolution, is characterised by networking instigated by the emergence of the internet, the network of networks, networking broad areas such as robotics, big data analysis and artificial intelligence. In that context, any contemplation of numerical geopolitics should be done by looking into the Structure of Scientific Revolutions, the most important work by the American physicist, philosopher and historian Thomas Samuel Kuhn (1922 – 1996)¹. Kuhn introduced a completely new understanding of scientific development – the history of science, which, according to him, is not only about the accumulation of knowledge but about a line of paradigm shifts, ‘takes on the world’ which define research traditions of individual scientific communities.

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¹ Kuhn, Thomas Samuel, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1962.

Main components of the global cyberspace

Cyberspace is a semantic contraction of the words cybernetics and space. It is a new virtual space deriving from the interconnection between different information and telecommunication networks. However, despite its being a result of different superimposed layers, the *hard-layer* (material layer) and the *soft layer* (artificial intelligence), it is often forgotten that that space has a layer composed of a group of internauts and internet

users interacting through social network platforms. The interaction between these three layers reflects the vastness and strategic significance of the digitalised world. Namely, despite the myth of de-materialisation of the numerical economy and cyberspace network, one should always bear in mind the fact that on a global level submarine cables make up and provide for 99% of intercontinental telecommunications and account for USD 10 000 billion of day-to-day financial web-based operations. The hard layer of the cyberspace means the infrastructure and materials needed for the delivery and storage of information and internet functioning. The soft layer (artificial intelligence) of the cyberspace consists of a group of control and command protocols and information applications needed for the functioning of networks 'supra networks', exploitation systems (Windows, Linux, etc.), the semantic layer (cognitive) of the cyberspace as a group of users interacting through interfaces, networks, etc.

Material component of numerical geopolitics: submarine cable networks

Numerical routes have become a global issue. Land routes helped the Roman Empire to achieve supremacy. Sea routes were the backbone of the British Empire in the 18th and 19th centuries. Digital routes have a growing geopolitical significance, particularly because of strategic control over telecommunication internet routes and because of the military and security aspects of the potential risk of cyberterrorism and cyberattacks. The historical role of the telegraph cables of the 19th century as predecessors of numerical cables is evolving towards a gradual development and intertwining of a mega network of numerical submarine cables. The United States of America plays a dominant role in international numerical networks. Almost all transatlantic and particularly transpacific cables converge in the United States. With the exception of Canada and Brazil, almost all American countries of the Southern hemisphere indirectly depend on the United States for numerical cables and it is therefore not surprising that geopolitologists² speak of the survival of the Monroe doctrine in

² Carrie, Hugo, *Géopolitique des câbles sous-marins, illustration d'une mondialisation causée et causante*, 8 January 2018.

the area of numerical dependence. China, Japan and Singapore have the broadest node networks for transpacific communications. Australia is home to Oceania's digital network. Africa and the Middle East 'depend' on India, Egypt, Spain and France for the transfer of digital data through submarine cables. In Europe, Great Britain is the key point for digital flows to the United States. Worth noting is Russia's small role in this geography of submarine cables, however, the country is an important digital land bridge, connecting Europe and Asia. There are currently no geopolitical tensions over the control of submarine cables and, with the exception of Europe and Asia, most major intercontinental routes are used in less than one third of their capacity (of which three quarters through the internet). It should be noted that in the case of conflict, some countries may find it easier than others to isolate its numerical opponent. The location of numerical cables and their transit significance are an issue of geopolitical power since they digitally supply users in a number of countries on the global level. Numerical cables are not a sufficient indicator of digital power although their routes often follow strategic maritime, land or energy routes. In addition to submarine numerical cables, worth noting is the geopolitical significance of satellite telecommunication capabilities and DNS locations, and the major role played by the United States in these areas.

The numerical space nevertheless depends on network cables, which are open to security threats, pose large geo-strategic and economic challenges and security risks and threats and raise strategic issues associated with these actual pipelines of the digital economy. It is clear therefore that the paradigm of the virtualisation of the global and internet space notwithstanding, the internet does rely after all on material components in the form of submarine and land infrastructure. Information society requires the infrastructure, servers, computers, mobile phones, satellites, and particularly cables as key numerical arteries. Each year, TeleGeography, an American telecommunications market research firm, issues a new world map of submarine cables. In 2018, there were 428 submarine cables, of total length of over 1.1 million kilometres. As an actual material basis for the internet, submarine cables have become the main problem of information globalisation.

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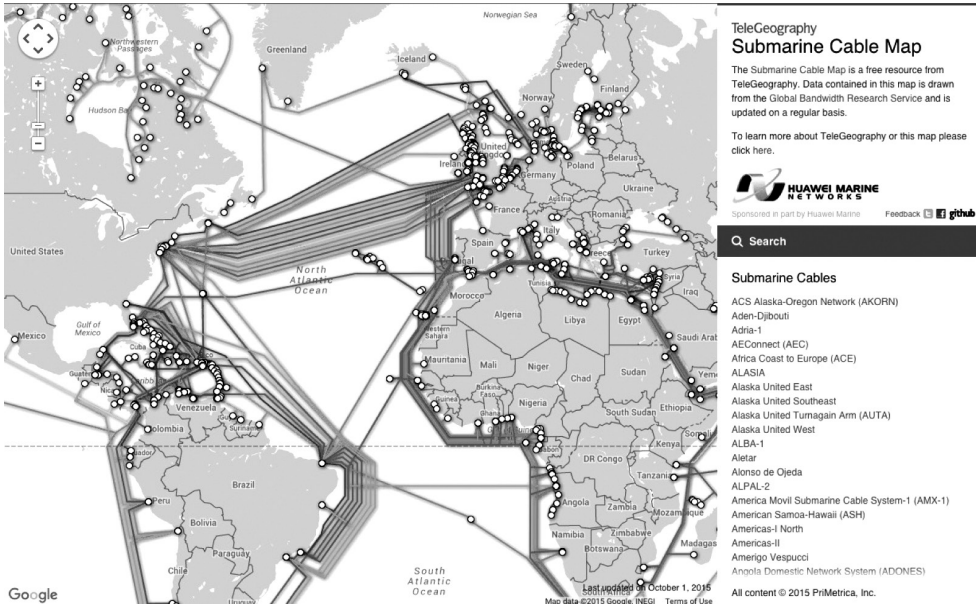


Figure: submarine cables
Source: Submarine Cable Map, TeleGeography, <https://www.submarinecablemap.com/>

The phenomenon of the numerical world should be viewed from three complementary and explicative aspects³: from a geohistorical aspect, fast development of communication networks in the past century: access to the globalisation of information has increased considerably owing to cross-ocean numerical networks; from a geoeconomic aspect: to identify economic and financial issues, particularly through a form of fierce competition as well as the necessary alliances between countries and operators; and from a geopolitical and security strategic aspect: relating to the vulnerability of the submarine cable system raising the issue of security risk, supervision and information cyberwarfare.

Submarine cables represent a geopolitical and security 'critical infrastructure'⁴ in every sense of the word. There is the issue of their fragility in a hostile sea environment (seabed instability, shark bites, etc.). They are at the mercy of ships' anchors, fishing nets, copper thieves, as was the case in Vietnam in 2007 where over 50 km of cable was stolen by fishermen. Damages to cables may paralyse communication for months. For instance, the restoration of the SeaMewE 4 cable from Annaba in April 2017 following a damage caused by bad weather led to

3 Louchet, André, Observation, télécommunications et océans, in *La planète océane*, Armand Colin, 2014.

4 Galand, Jean-Pierre, *Critique de la notion d'infrastructure critique*, Flux n°81, 2010.

a virtual disruption of internet access and a temporary loss of 90% of Algeria's international connection capacity. The cables are usually buried beneath the seafloor to prevent them from being caught by ship anchors or fishing nets. However, some parts remain exposed and vulnerable particularly at landing points which are at risk of cyberattacks. Landing points may become the main targets of terrorist attacks. A large part of the geoeconomic functioning of countries and their economies is based on these cable flows, mostly commonly routed all-by-sea. Such web numerical highways are of strategic importance to countries and as such are subject to special oversight. The protection of submarine networks and cables are the key problem of cybersecurity. In an article published in the journal *Hérodote* in 2016, Camille Morel⁵ showed multiple vulnerabilities of the global cable system and noted the absence of the legal status of 'cable theft' at open sea. Thefts, cutting of submarine cables and piracy all require better security and protection. But this does not solve the delicate issue of the power of supervision or even interference by major numerical actors (digital giants, government or international agencies, criminal networks ...) and their attempt to take over the data concentrated in this large information pipeline.

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5 Morel, Camille, *Menace sous les mers: les vulnérabilités du système câblé mondial*, N° spécial *Mers et océans*, Revue *Hérodote*, 2016.

New numerical Leviathan

For centuries, technological and scientific advancement has made it possible for the Western civilisation to persistently push the boundaries. The discovery of nanotechnology and numerical revolution are not immune to totalitarian urges and projects. For instance, in parallel with scientific and pharmaceutical research concerning the extension of human life and transhumanist utopia, large corporations of the Silicon Valley are already thinking of eternity not as an ethical or existential issue but as a technological problem that has to be solved. On behalf of the Google Group, the futurist Ray Kurzweil conceives products and services for the future. He is known for his notion that immortality is near since we are entering into a new era in which machine intelligence and human intelligence merge, and people will become half-robot-half-humans, constantly connected to the internet. Our mind and spirit should

be stocked on the web in the form of numerical data, such as a Word datafile or on a USB flash drive. This advancement is supposed to become a reality in 2045. In that regard, in this transhumanist view, the essayist Evgeny Morozov already sees a new form of modern totalitarianism which he terms 'technological solutionism'.

Proto-totalitarianism or historical totalitarianism of the 20th century required a lot of human and material resources for the functioning, containing and controlling of the society. In addition to physical force and repression, it was necessary to devise and apply means of extortion, active and passive coercion by means of propaganda and cultural hegemony. Such totalitarianism was presented as a historical necessity in the name of the common collective good and as the only valid system able to prevent chaos and the destruction of the corpus of the society. In *Mass Psychology of Fascism*, Wilhelm Reich explores socio-psychological mechanisms of extortion behind the consent of the crowd which enable the 'production of totalitarianism'. The time of analogue production of totalitarianism based on crowd consent (acceptance of a totalitarian system based on a vertical control) is historically exhausted today. Other means of soft coercion and manipulation which are far more powerful and efficient for a total control of the society are based on numerical technologies. There is a principle that each social space in democracy represents a point of negotiation, discussion, contestation, exchange of ideas and polemics between different individuals and social groups confirming or negating the common will or consent to a political option or official politics. The system of political representation should apply in principle that which has been promised during the election campaign, align activity with a bigger or smaller consent or opposition. Within a totalitarian system based on numerical technologies, all the mentioned aspects of negotiation and exchange within a social space disappear as they are of no use and not necessary, and are excluded in favour of a new totalitarian numerical and virtual agreement reflecting a virtual illusion of preservation of democratic discussion and agreement. Numerical senders and servers simulate a democratic discussion focused on the obligation of efficacy and then prescribe laws with or without consent of the majority of the representatives. In that regard, in such a system the corpus

of society has been introduced in the context of simulation of contestation or consent through the use of numerical information technology (social networks such as Facebook, Twitter). This is a dematerialised society which maintains the illusion-simulation and the possible 'subversion', simulation which also enables the control of mind and will, by regulating urges and wishes and affecting emotional charge.

The original organisational system of control in 'modern totalitarianism' depended on the pivotal element that underwent constant improvement, adaptation and testing and that was based on the model of Bentham's prototype of panopticon of circular control. However, in today's 21st century, the emergence of artificial intelligence in the form of specialised 'smart' algorithms, based on the 'deep neural network learning', 'data mining' undermines the traditional system of control evolving from the circular, round form into an algorithm network, transversal and asymmetric form. The absolute observance of the norms and rules lies at the heart of totalitarianism. Since artificial intelligence is in essence a collection of rules used within an algorithm, the totalitarian performativity of such new system players is obvious. The system is upgraded constantly, with more efficient rules being adopted each year which necessarily limit the space of individual freedom, always in the name of general well-being and security. One could say that algorithms of artificial intelligence are invisible watchdogs of contemporary society. We all know they are all around us and that we are watched by them all the time, selected through statistics on our profiles, behaviour, movements, but despite this awareness of totalitarian control, we passively submit to some sort of voluntary slavery. The Bentham's principle of a total panopticon space is possible today exactly owing to artificial intelligence and numerical technologies. It is an 'algo political totalitarianism', which represents a simulation of an open prison on a state level, automating repression of the 'breaches of rules' and imposing self-censorship. Constant growth ideology is closely linked to security control. With growing modernisation, the world becomes more dangerous as it generates an increasing number of risks of various nature. Modernisation and growing sophistication of the means of security develop in parallel with a rising sense of insecurity. The emergence of a

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techno-totalitarian society in the name of obligation of higher security for all might turn against its own architects and threaten the future of mankind.

The Angamben's thesis of *homo sacer* in modern society can be supported by numerical technology which dissects and profiles each individual in relation to his/her cognitive and social abilities, and exchange of such information between different high-tech Silicon Valley startups and different intelligence or para-intelligence state services are powerful means of control, far bigger and stronger than former totalitarian systems of the 20th century. In the name of 'struggle against terrorist nihilism', the legitimisation discourse is accompanied by the strengthening and expansion of the consumer society on a global level, which promotes 'voluntary slavery' and such 'soft totalitarianism' is perceived as a factor of peace and stability. However, behind the imperative of security there hides a strategy of submission and neutralisation of citizens who are to exist only in the form of passive and loyal consumers. The exchange and proliferation of information data captured and recuperated by GAFA (Google, Apple, Facebook, Amazon) and other networks, such as NATU (Netflix, Airbnb, Tesla and Uber), may jeopardise the functioning of democracies as they pave the way to misuse and manipulation. We are on the verge of the real 'algorithmic government' that would replace a traditional state and the society as an apotheosis of a 'total project'.

Virtualisation of the world and the process of derealisation

In his work *Histoire de l'utopie planétaire: de la cité à la société globale*, Armand Mattelart⁶ explains that the idea of a great utopia of a united world of brothers based on universal values lies at the core of development of the Western world. Such an idea is also in the centre of a debate on a modern revolution of the information society, termed by some researches 'the third industrial revolution'. This managerial discourse has become dominant in modern society. The whole discourse on globalisation, its ornamental version with the internet, provides a structure for a technicist and mercantile vision of the old utopia of

6 Mattelart, Armand, *Histoire de l'utopie planétaire, de la cité prophétique à la société globale*, Paris, La Découverte. Poche, 2000.

the human community, which is based on a progressivist and global conception of the world and life. Various models and projects of global integration derive from this discourse. For some, such as the geographer Elisée Reclus, they should rely on social solidarity networks and for others on the necessity of interconnection of national markets subjected to a new division of labour and agreements on common security. Mattelart argues that the starting utopia which reflects the general will to achieve a better world, based on the respect of diversity, illustrated by the ideal of a 'cosmopolis'⁷, is recuperated and integrated in a globalisation discourse distancing itself from cultural relativism. Media colonisation and virtualisation of the 'polis' by managerial prophecy, which delegitimises organised participants of public and political life, have gradually achieved a transition from a 'cosmopolis' to a 'technopolis'. The 'technopolis' glorifies and boosts media-managerial and mercantile society, striving to monopolise and appropriate the whole of history, free of any in-depth dimension and memory. In this society of technological achievement, the phenomena of virtual telepresence, which form a type of common global teleexistence and provide a technical basis for virtual reality, erase all visible borders, distances, markers and the very idea of relief in the name of artificial fixing of the present and the real instant that no one is a master of. According to Paul Virilio, the ancient 'cosmopolis' gives way to 'omnipolis', an autonomised, globalised, financial and stock exchange system, which exceeds the geopolitical telluric arrangement and continental extensibility in the name of the rule of planetary metropolitics as a system of interactive global telecommunications, extending across virtual networks of a new dematerialised 'telecontinent'. From the urbanisation of the actual space of the national geography to the urbanisation of the actual time of international telecommunications, the 'space-world' of geopolitics is gradually giving strategic priority to the 'time-world' of chronological proximity without delay and antipode. In his book *La mondialisation de la culture*, Jean-Pierre Warnier proposes a synthesis of the phenomenon of the globalisation of culture. His approach implies an analysis of the repercussions of the global culture, particularly Northern American and European, on local cultures. According to Warnier, the process of globalisation is a symbol of general depersonalisation and denationalisation used by

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⁷ Vujić, Jure, *Fragmenti geopolitičke misli*, ITC, Zagreb, 2004.

globalisation to evacuate and marginalise social participants in favour of large financial and economic multinational units. Towards the end of the 1950s, Ronald Barthes, analysing the mythology of his time, labelled the bourgeois as an 'anonymous society', the label used to describe the 'world business class' of today. In this context, 'technopolis' as an ideology is characteristic to that process of deculturalisation. In the previous century, colonisation was the product of a progressive vision of the world and history. In the 20th century, a new form of neo-colonialism takes the form of a global organisation of the market attempting to integrate by force peripheral countries and generalise the standards of mercantile metropolis economy.

Beyond doubt, the new ideological trend of the global 'technopolis' striving, in different geopolitical environments, to propel technological, political, military security and sociological changes in the whole world and particularly in the new peripheral countries, requires from these same countries maximum adjustment capacity and imperative of cooperation. Such sudden revolutionary changes cause, to use the physical terminology, a certain 'stochastic noise', a concept derived from the theory of activity of stochastic resonance in physical and neurobiological systems. In the processes of change, which shape the new reality in an environment such as the macrosystem (which contains subsystems), survival factors are developed, from sensors to symbiosis. The keys to survival in a too fast evolutionary dynamics of the system lie in sensory sensitivity and sufficient flexibility. However, it is clear that the process of globalisation and communication of kinetic changes, in the subsystems such as economic systems, states, cultural and interest groups, gives rise to the phenomena of internal noise, which is caused by perpetual shifts in value systems and sociocultural trends on a micro level. Amid fast technological and communication changes on a global level, the development of devices ill-suited to the new conditions or the late identification of signals pose a threat to a successful system adjustment. However, a weak below-detection threshold signal may be increased by means of an optimum level of stochastic noise, which means that modern techno-communication and information trends of development and changes are concealed by the phenomenon of 'stochastic noise', through manipulation of signals by external and internal noise in 'unadapted

and more conservative' systems. Between ethnocentrism and hyperglobalism, Warnier suggests a third path of pragmatic nature, based on the idea that the Western culture is not automatically and magically accepted. Export culture is subject to a form of recontextualisation, which is based on three facts: uniformisation and globalisation are not unilateral phenomena; the pessimism of the theoreticians of the 'centre' excludes from the analysis the phenomena characteristic of peripheral cultures and does not take into account the capacity for creation, innovation and imagination of the diverse subjects of the peripheral countries; the standardisation of mass production and consumer goods does not cause automatically a standardisation in thinking and social practices. Warnier argues that consumption has become the place of cultural production and he uses his thesis of recontextualisation to criticise the approaches by Benjamin Barber, Samuel Huntington and Ramonet. In an original contemporary analysis of the modern society, Christian Marazzi states how modern society experiences the 'linguistic turn' of the economy because, according to him, the entry of communication and language into the sphere of production presents the transformation of the period, the 'paradigm shift' and 'transformation crisis', the transition from Fordism to post-Fordism, the transition from a system of mass production and consumption to the system of non-material production and flexible distribution (*flux tendus*). In his analyses of the birth of 'cognitive labourers'; Marazzi points to a class of producers no longer 'commanded,' using Adam Smith's terminology, by machines external to live labour, but rather by technologies that are increasingly mental, symbolic, and communicative. In this cognitive context, a new fixed capital is born, becomes dominant and takes the form of a rigid disc, artificial intelligence that executes social programming. Gilbert Larochelle termed this phenomenon 'technocratic imagination', which also touches upon the topics analysed by Viviane Forrester⁸ and examined in studies on exclusion by the sociologist Bourdieu. In a modern social context with a repeating controlling discourse, characterised by the active role played by cybernetics, which manipulates 'symbols, data, language, words' and communication elements, a new 'immaterial society' emerges, bringing about the naturalisation and domestication of social relations. As Lucien Sfeza suggests in his

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⁸ Forrester, Viviane, *L'horreur économique*, Fayard, 1996.

work *La communication*, modern society is obsessed with the idea of communication at the moment when this society does not know anymore how to communicate with itself and when its values and cohesion are contested and symbols exhausted. The centrifugal society with no regulation in which communication attempts to connect specialised analyses and messages from the outmost 'partitioned' circles. This phenomenon of 'partitioning', the divide between the idea of communication and a fragmented society in its functioning and its symbolic function lies at the heart of Habermas' concept of the 'refeudalization' of public space. Habermas' diagnosis of the modern society rests on actuality, proving that modern society is based on wrong communication, which is influenced by perverted effects of power and profit as agents of fragmentation and destruction of symbolic links. Indeed, one of the most important scientific and research challenges of the global world are the questions of the source and nature of information and communication, its messages and metamessages and the virtual and speed dimension of the human being who in the future will not even intervene in the process of production of information and communication.

The word 'virtual' derives from the Medieval Latin idiom 'virtualis', deriving from 'virtus', power, might. In scholastics, that which is virtual is that which exists in its power but not act. The virtual strives towards actualisation without ultimately achieving effective and formal concretisation. The virtual is not opposed to the real, but to the actual: virtuality and actuality are two different manners of existence. In *Différence et Répétition*, Gilles Deleuze presents a necessary distinction between the possible and the virtual. The 'possible' is already constituted as the latent and phantom 'real' and will be achieved without any changes in its determination and nature. The only thing missing is existence. Opposed to the 'possible', which is statically constituted, the virtual is a problematic complex, a node of tendencies and powers which follow a situation, an event, an object, and which requires the process of resolution and actualisation. Virtualisation may be defined as a movement opposite to actualisation, which implies a transition from the actual to the virtual, an 'elevation of power' of an entity. Virtualisation is not a process of derealisation, but a mutation of identity, a displacement of the ontological centre of gravity

of an object. To virtualise an entity presupposes the discovery of a general question mark relating to that entity. In his book 'Atlas'⁹, Michel Serres provides a good illustration of the theme of virtual, viewed as an 'outside-of-there (*hors-là*)'. Imagination, memory, knowledge and faith are the vectors of virtualisation, which detach us and make us leave the 'there' before the process of informatisation and numerical networks takes place. Virtualisation is transformed into an ontological exodus, which, in contrast with Heidegger's '*Dasein*', does not belong to a specific place or a specific location. Virtualisation invents a nomadic culture, not by returning to the Paleolithic era or ancient civilisations, but by enabling the emergence of social interactive relations reconfiguring with a minimum inertia. When a person, a collectivity, an act or a piece of information are virtualised, they are placed 'outside-of-there' and become deterritorialised, detached from the usual physical, geographic space and chronological time. Synchronisation replaces spatial unity, while interconnections substitute for temporal unity. The process of virtualisation is also facilitated by acceleration in modern communication and physical mobility. Virtualisation is not limited to acceleration of the known communication processes or the alienation of time and space as expounded by Paul Virilio¹⁰; it invents new qualitative speed, the mutant categories of time and space. In parallel with the phenomenon of deterritorialisation, virtualisation is marked by a transition from inside to outside and from outside to inside. The effect termed '*Moebius effect*' relates to different areas: private-public, subjective-objective, map-territory, etc.

Today, the general process of virtualisation through digitalisation covers the world of information and communication, but also the world of the body, the economy and the collective frameworks of sensibility and exercise of intelligence. Virtualisation affects different social groupings: virtual communities, virtual companies, virtual states and virtual democracies. The question is: should we be afraid of general derealisation? A form of universal disappearance, as suggested by Jean Baudrillard? Is the modern global world under threat from a cultural apocalypse or implosion of space-time, as forecasted by Paul Virilio? Pierre Lévy¹¹ answers with a different non-catastrophic hypothesis: that a continuation of hominisation is expressed through the ongoing cultural changes in the 21st

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9 Serres, Michel, *Atlas*, Julliard, Paris, 1994.

10 Virilio, Paul, *L'horizon négatif, la conduite intérieure*, Galilée, Paris, 1984.

11 Lévy, Pierre, *Les Technologies de l'intelligence, L'avenir de la pensée à l'ère informatique*, La découverte, Paris, 1990. Lévy, Pierre, *L'intelligence collective, Pour une anthropologie du cyberspace*, La découverte, Paris, 1994.

century. This means that virtualisation, in its philosophical, anthropological (relationship of the process of hominisation and virtualisation) and socio-political aspects constitutes the essence of various ongoing mutations. In this sense, virtualisation is neither good nor bad nor neutral because it presents itself as the movement of heterogenesis of the human being.

Numerical disruption

Disruption denotes a disturbance in a market where positions have already been established through innovation and new strategies. This phenomenon has been theoretically developed by Clayton M. Christensen and Jean-Marie Dru¹². Disruptive innovation means 'the process of developing new products or services to substitute existing technologies and gain a competitive advantage'. Namely, a disruptive product or service is directed towards the market they were earlier unable to satisfy (new market disruption) or represents a simpler, cheaper or more economical alternative to existing products (cheaper disruption). In practice, we can see how numerous markets have already been shaken by new companies offering new, surprising products or services or having innovative business models, or aggressive market strategies. Well-known new companies, such as Tesla, Uber, Airbnb, SnappCar, Nextdoor, Waze, Spotify, Picnic, HelloFresh, Zalando, Booking.com, Virgin and Amazon have all made a disruption in their respective markets. However, disruption disturbs subtle mechanisms, the allies of socialisation and conviviality, of the joint life. Namely, the proliferation of technology in the name of ongoing progress causes the loss of markers, which Sedlmayr¹³ calls the 'loss of the centre'. Disruption, etymologically derived from Latin *disrumpere* (to break into pieces), used in the jargon of new high-tech numerical companies that stress 'disruptive innovation', which is an innovation of interruption because it disturbs acquired positions, in a way represents a short circuit in the current rules of the game. In addition to the economic and technological dimension, the phenomenon of disruption also deeply affects the collective and individual perception of the world, the so-called social representation and the construction of social reality. For the economist Bertrand Stiegler,

12 Alaphilippe, Laurent, and Nora, Dominique, *Le concept de 'Disruption' expliqué par son créateur* [archive], at *nouvelobs.com*, 24 January 2016 (reference 20 January 2018).

13 Sedlmayr, Hans, *Gubljenje središta: likovne umjetnosti 19. i 20. stoljeća kao simptom i simbol vremena*, published in the Croatian translation by Verbum, Split, 2001, from *Verlust der Mitte, Die bildende Kunst des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts als Symptom und Symbol der Zeit*.

disruption, an ongoing, accelerated innovation, represents a form of 'soft barbarism', which interrupts long and subtle processes of socialisation¹⁴.

The disruption phenomenon, in the manner of Kuhn's scientific revolutions, introduces in an accelerated pace innovations that impose a change of paradigm in the society, collective and individual psychology, in the very perception of social reality. Namely, from Google through Uber, disruption destabilises our private and public spheres of life. Stiegler quotes Michel Foucault¹⁵ when he stresses that this is a case of 'collective madness'. This process and the escape towards the new and innovative have been going on for centuries, and what characterises the current temporality epoch is what Maurice Blanchot calls the *non-epoch*, the very epochal absence marked by the proliferation of 'impersonal anonymous forces'¹⁶. The distinctive thing about the epoch are collective inheritance and shared common experiences, for instance, modernity, the counterculture of the 1960s, etc. Current projections of the future are predominantly negative: climate changes, the disappearance of the humankind, terrorism, war ... What happens in disruption is what Nietzsche calls the realisation of nihilism and the 'destruction of all values'. The new disruptive economy is predatory and it is based on the elimination of singularity through performativity and hyperproductivity. The ongoing contemporary numerical revolution is eminently a disruptive phenomenon. Disruption opposes civilisation. As a phenomenon, the term 'disruption' originated in 1993 with the reticular phenomenon of the 'network numerical structuring' of generalised connectivity. Specifically, through the reticulation of algorithms we have witnessed an unprecedented acceleration of innovations. In this sense, reticular technology systematically disturbs what in the long run contributes to the creation and maintenance of civilisation. In this sense, disruption, due to the imposition of speedy technological innovations causes a permanent destabilisation of society. These innovations are ongoing and vary in form, but all lead to the generalised automation and robotisation of jobs and society. It is a case of multi-layered innovations: artificial intelligence, virtual reality, drones, blockchains, robots and internet objects (IoT), chatbots, Blockchain system (decentralised and transparent register of

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14 Stiegler, Bernard, L'accélération de l'innovation court-circuite tout ce qui contribue à l'élaboration de la civilisation, at liberation. fr, 1 July 2016 (reference 20 January 2018).

15 Foucault, Michel, *Folie et diraison: Histoire de la folie a l'dge classique*, Paris, 1961.

16 <http://maisouvaleweb.fr/disruption-extension-du-domaine-de-linnovation/>.

all transactions and exchanges), 3D printing, etc. The numerical revolution and the disruption phenomenon mark an important moment of technological interruption, which also causes an epistemological break, which interrupts what philosophers call *épokhè*: interruption, a suspension of everything that occurred under known, common modus. The technological *épokhè* generates another *épokhè*, related to mental structures, art, science, politics, law and all this creates the matrices of the new age of the epoch. However, in accordance with Kuhn's scheme of scientific revolution, the technological jumps of the breakdown, in principle, grow increasingly stronger and occur at increasingly closer intervals. With numerical reticulation we live in a dispositive in which change is a permanent category, in which nothing is stable any longer and, in this sense, the human being cannot follow and feed on such innovation so, in a way, it is faced with a process of disintegration (due to inability to 'digest', synthesize and elaborate knowledge and experience).

The market of attention and capitalism of sublimation

Given the everyday presence and additive effect of numerical machines and actors such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Snapchat, Viber, Google, Amazon and Apple, the numerical virtual universe became the perfect mega machine to capture and channel individual and collective attention. The numerical media can simulate all the details of other media by accumulating all the previous classical media functions (television, typewriter, etc.) and, in this sense, have captured unprecedented space of representation and expression, but they also become a powerful tool for captivating and directing real time user attention. Namely, the labyrinth of social networks resembles everyday technological viruses that search us out, re-direct and attract attention in oftentimes cacophonous and synchronic order. Our attention is most times coerced and directed towards watching the offered pseudo-communicational, playful and consumeristic demands, all packed in a relational, interactive and so-called 'creative language'. This is the issue of the new economy of

attention already presented by sociologist Gabriel Tarde at the beginning of the 20th century, which created a lack of attention. Indeed, the overproduction of the market requires advertising forms that may 'halt and direct attention, repair it on the offered item'. Of course, this phenomenon is not new and advertising strategies and marketing try to attract the consumer's attention to this or that product. However, the novelty today is that with the explosion of Internet applications and smartphones attention has become a rare commodity, a resource, a new currency that may be capitalised and stored. Deliberating economy in the sense of this new 'economy of attention' means reducing attention to measurable economic problems. The everyday flood of information and inputs available on mobile and internet devices, most often without any selection of depth and meaning, commonly exceeds both users' cognitive and sensory capabilities, which leads to the bulimic consumption of visual content and information in the digital world where the line between attention and distraction, concentration and dispersion, disappears. This is a phenomenon of 'blind attention', which fits within media and numerical strategies of escapism and disinformation. The issue of the new 'economy of attention' opens up the key question of the new 'anthropology of attention', since the manipulation and orientation of human attention disrupt long-term anthropologic constants based on the diachronic understanding of time-space, respect of private internal spheres, personal integrity and the need for recognition within a society. The impact of this economy would also be catastrophic for culture, education and cognitive capabilities of new generations given that the capability of concentration and transfer of knowledge are significantly reduced and redirected. For the futurist Ray Kurzweil¹⁷, immortality is at close reach because we are entering the period when 'technology and human intelligence will merge'. We lack free will and control of our attention and will soon become half-human and half-machines that constantly connect to the internet with our minds soon emitting digital data online. All this will allegedly be possible by 2045, according to the prophecies of transhumanism. We are witness to what the philosopher Eric Sadin calls the 'world siliconization'¹⁸, stressing the anthropological and political effect of what he calls the 'algorithmic governance

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17 <https://futurism.com/kurzweil-claims-that-the-singularity-will-happen-by-2045>

18 <http://lab.cccb.org/en/world-siliconization/>

of life' or 'digital soft totalitarianism', which ultimately strives to deprive us of our attention, our independent judgement and to direct the course of our lives. The economy of attention that fits into this 'new industry of life' would be the latest 'avatar' of technological liberalism.

New theogony: disruption technology, chaos or cosmos-oikos?

The invention of robotics and accelerated automatization of jobs, as well as constant digital innovations, are accompanied by a sort of soft-totalitarian official discourse of '*technolog-os*', which in addition to the glorification of the emancipatory strength of 'new technologies' promotes the social imperative of adapting and transforming, without having in mind how much actually such adaptation de-socialises and destabilises human communities. Therefore, it is necessary to view the numerical phenomenon within a framework of a wider critical interpretation of J. Ellul, who places technological innovations within technological progress and wider modernity, in which progress instead of emancipation becomes alienation. Such new technology illustrates well the words of Norbert Wiener, the father of cyber science, who, in his work *Cybernetics and Society* stresses that 'a revolution is under way, which will enable machines not only to replace human muscles but possibly replace the human brain', alluding precisely to new digital innovations within the framework of the ongoing numerical revolution and the development of artificial intelligence. We may say that from the start of industrial capitalism in 1870 in Great Britain and the joining of the steam engine (invented by James Watt) and entrepreneurship (Matthew Boulton realised and commercialised Watt's inventions by introducing manufacturing engineering and machine tools) innovation turned into the new paradigm of permanent innovation in the service of constant progress. Later, Joseph Schumpeter would theorise about the characteristics of economic change. Innovation marks modern society, but also the change of the role and purpose of innovation in society, economy and technology. Namely,

there are innovations without inventions, as well as inventions that do not create innovation. Innovations, in principle, try to socialise technological inventions that arise from scientific discoveries. However, this social dimension of innovation has been completely disregarded today because innovations, from the beginning of Fordism to libidinal capitalist economy and Edward Bernays' marketing (who differentiated needs from wants in Freudian terms), have been directed exclusively to serve consumerism and profit by manipulating and sublimating consumers' wants. In this context, constant disruptive innovation, especially in the area of numerical economy, has become the exclusive means of conquering the market and since the objects of lust and want are endless, we come to the civilisational and ontological question of the direction and purpose of such new disruptive 'technogony'. The words of Norbert Wiener well illustrate this new technogony. The father of cyber science, in his work *Cybernetics and Society* stresses that a revolution is underway that will enable machines not only to replace human muscles but open up the possibility of replacing the human brain, alluding precisely to new digital innovations within the framework of numerical revolution and the development of artificial intelligence.

Namely, let us remember Hannah Arendt when she stressed that a person should feel integrated in a 'common world', which structures the universe in order to be able to mature gracefully and peacefully. Hesiod's poem *Theogony*¹⁹ from the Greek mythology describes the creation, genesis of the world, but also a close connection with the gods, interpreting the fragility of the cosmologic unity and balance when Zeus conquers the Titans by preserving this balance and justice. Disruptive technogony may be giving birth to a new chaotic world, which interrupts this continuum and the subtle balance between the world understood as a common house (*Oikos*) and people because all values are reduced to their trade value. The same process of perversion is shown by Ovid in *Metamorphoses*²⁰, which shows human essence, how a man from the state of innocence can reach full decay and corruption. Is this not the start of nihilism? Is the numerical disruption as a means of divergence from cosmos as a common world precisely the main leverage in the desacralisation of the age of the Titans,

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¹⁹ *Theogony*, a Hesiod's poem, is the oldest source of Greek mythology. The poem is a mythological synthesis discussing the origin of the world and genealogy of gods. It tries to affirm Zeus, who by winning against the Titans becomes the almighty protector of justice.

²⁰ *Metamorphoses* by Publius Ovidius Naso is a mythical poem describing myths of metamorphoses of both humans and gods into plants, animals or other. The poem also describes the origin of the world and the metamorphoses into four ages: Golden, Silver, Bronze and Iron.

as mentioned by Ernst Junger? Disruption crates nihilism in the fullest Nietzschean sense of the word: 'destruction of all values' through the omnipresence and prevalence of a predatory economy, based on the elimination of singularity through calculation. Even animals have a sense of understanding the world, as proven by biologist Jakob von Uexküll in his work *Mondes animaux et monde humain*, and this capacity to think and understand the world is in the core of the Heideggerian notion of 'Dasein' is what gives birth to the world (*Umwelt*), and for the first time ever the human kind is faced precisely with the absence of this understanding and the possibility of constituting the world as cosmos.

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**Geopolitics
of Numerical
Space and
the Rule of
Algorithms**
—
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Electronic Media and Critical Thinking

Key words printed media, electronic media, critical thinking, images, liberal capitalism, technology, market

Abstract The development of civilization is in a specific way indivisible from the development of media as a means of communication through technology. This development has always depended on previous achievements as well as on societal relations and newly created human needs. After print, which helped create parliamentary democracy, civil society and the free individual, electronic media have completely occupied the realm of communication in developed societies. To understand its nature, we have to understand the context in which this phenomenon has occurred and developed. This is highly developed liberal capitalism, which, by the power of its 'invisible hand', regulates relations between human beings, turning them into addicts, primarily dependent on visual media, but also on all other constant, immediately available stimuli.

Elektronički mediji i kritičko mišljenje

Ključne riječi tiskani medij, elektronički medij, kritičko mišljenje, slika, liberalni kapitalizam, tehnologija, tržište

Sažetak Razvoj zapadne civilizacije na poseban način u sebi sadrži i razvoj medija kao tehnološki posredovane komunikacije. Razvoj je uvijek ovisio kako o prethodnim dostignućima tako i o društvenim odnosima i novostvorenim ljudskim potrebama. Nakon tiska koji je pomogao stvoriti parlamentarnu demokraciju, građansko društvo i slobodnog pojedinca, elektronički je medij u cijelosti zauzeo komunikacijski prostor u razvijenim društvima. No, njegovu prirodu ne možemo razumjeti ako ne razumijemo kontekst u kojem se pojavljuje i razvija. To je visokorazvijeni liberalni kapitalizam koji 'nevidljivom rukom' regulira odnose među ljudima pretvarajući ih ovisnike o, prije svega slikovnim, ali i ostalim trajnim, trenutačno dostupnim podražajima.

The importance of the technology-based media had been noted a long time ago in human history. Already at the time of the Roman Empire, thanks to script and, primarily, papyrus, societal relations were regulated by written laws, even in the outermost provinces. A wide range of laws, comprising the legal system, was created in place of a rudimentary, custom-based oral tradition. The terms and categories derived from that system still constitute the basis of legally regulated relations both in Europe and in societies based on the European spirit, notably those in North America.

However, the use of the media reached its full revolutionary potential at the time of the Reformation and the invention of the Gutenberg printing press. Asa Briggs and Peter Burke correctly note that the Gutenberg printing press not only enabled Martin Luther to realise his ideas, but that it also saved his life.¹ Luther's ideas came to life in pamphlets, brochures and other printed matter so that his execution in the manner of that of Jan Hus would have been pointless, and probably counterproductive. The Reformation movement thus flourished, giving rise to Protestantism and the development of the German language, into which Luther translated the Bible. This development set a precondition for the creation of the German nation and the evolution of education, debates and literacy. Moreover, the phenomenon today referred to as public opinion started to emerge due to local referendums by which the people opted for either the Protestant or the Catholic Church.

Changes at the time of the Reformation, no matter how big or revolutionary they were (especially in the context of the period), nevertheless took place in the spiritual realm of religion, or dogma. In fact, literacy and education made possible the reading and understanding of religious texts, notably the Bible. The knowledge held by priests was not relevant anymore, the priest (even the Pope) no longer acted as an intermediary in the communication with God. Relevant arguments could be found in the Bible, so the Catholic Church no longer interfered by means of discussion, polemics or pamphlets, the favourite media form of the Protestants, but used images instead. Image versus text, emotions versus arguments. A brilliant defence against the strong arguments

¹ Asa Briggs, Peter Burke, *A Social History of Media*, Polity Press, Cambridge, UK 2005, p. 63.

of the adversary. We know that educated Catholic priests read Aristotle and understood the relations between the values of ethos, logos and, in particular, pathos in polemics².

Epochal changes that motivated man to abandon dogma and start relying on reason and science took place later, during the time of the Enlightenment. The main medium of the French Encyclopedists was print. However, at that point print did not annul the old dogma, compromised by secular thinking, in order to establish a new one. In fact, the philosophers of the Enlightenment annulled dogma itself and its source, religion. Encyclopaedias, which started to be printed in that period, were the first books whose content was based exclusively on scientific knowledge. For the first time in history, man, relying on reason, relies on himself and, according to Kant, grows out of his self-imposed immaturity. The Copernican Revolution would have been impossible without print³. Man made his first independent step during the Enlightenment. But that first step, invisibly linked to the distant past, began dismantling the old structures of religion, dogma, customs and tradition. The Age of Reason, still supported by common sense, started to emerge with the help of the media, creating conditions for the industrial revolution and the establishment of civic national states. Daily newspapers with high circulation were printed in Europe and North America already at the end of the 18th century. At the time of gaining independence, the United States of America had around two and a half million inhabitants, and the brochure *Common Sense* by Thomas Paine was sold in more than one hundred thousand copies!

Everything that was taking place during the Reformation as a part of the religious conflict now took the form of a conflict of man with his own past. However, at the time public opinion was not created through the conflict of two interpretations of religion, but through the conflict between the unchangeable past and a promising future. Isaac Newton changed the perception of nature – a stone that is thrown does not fall on the ground because it has to go back to its destined place, but due to gravitation. The discovery of the laws of nature made it possible for man to use them for his own benefit. Galvani's bizarre accusations with which he

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² The current relevance of Aristotle's *Rhetoric* is supported by the findings of the extensive studies of persuasive communications, known as the Yale Studies. For more information see: Michael Kunczik, Astrid Zipfel, *Uvod u znanost o medijima i komunikologiju (Introduction to the Science of Publicism and Communications)*, Zaklada Friedrich Ebert, Zagreb, 2006, pp. 161-171.

³ For the importance of print as a medium at the time of the Enlightenment and as a basis for the forthcoming industrial revolution see: A. Briggs, P. Burke, *A Social History of Media*, p. 79 and onwards.

aimed to discredit Volta, relying on religion and the divine origin of the world (and slightly threatening him), constitute one of the last scientific polemics that comprised the subject of religion (even though religion was irrelevant to the polemic itself).

The industrial and scientific revolutions took place at the same time as the creation of parliamentary democracy. Without a technologically perfected medium, print, none of these phenomena would have been possible. This is referenced by Francis Balle, who considers the merchant class and the media to be the main forces which deprived the then privileged class of their power and privileges, primarily in the area of knowledge⁴. The media disseminated information to everyone and enabled discussions, polemics and argumentation. They created a new image of the world, based on knowledge, and made it easily available. In short, it was the media that created public opinion. Thanks to the media, we can define the common good and we can choose the best among us to defend it. The conditions were created for parliamentary democracy. The fate of liberal democracy is closely connected to the fate of the media.

4 Francis Balle, *Moć medija (The Power of Media)*, Clio, Belgrade, 1997., p. 11 and 12.

This is where the praise of the media ends, but a critical discussion on the subject continues. Balle thinks that in the second phase the media betrayed the ideals for which they had fought. He wonders whether the media succumbed to the market and started to destroy the very thing they had built – the democratic order based on the respect of values, public opinion and minorities. According to Balle, too much information kills information⁵. A situation in which all ideas are equal and readily available in the media creates a vast abundance of information where a banal, almost meaningless piece of information consumes a relevant one. Due to the desire to please the public, which is the main characteristic of the contemporary media, the banal piece of information is highlighted at the expense of the relevant one. Balle's final thesis evidently reflects our own age, the age that we live in: the age of the electronic media.

5 Ibid., p. 13, pp. 47-62.

This short historical introduction, which is just an outline of the development of the media in the Western civilisation, was necessary to place the media in general and the electronic media in particular in the context of human society. It is important to note that the media, as an invention, a technology,

developed when there was a need for them and formed in a way that could satisfy that need. For instance, the famous disc from Crete, which is about 4 000 years old, contains characters of a script that never came to life because at that time there was no need to permanently record ideas and information.⁶ The electronic media reached their full potential in the very places where they were created, in the developed countries of the Western civilisation, where they also became the first real media of mass communication.

The electronic media, as the mass media, if we focus on their meaning in our everyday life, represent the abandonment of what Marshall McLuhan calls a *typographic culture*,⁷ a culture of text. The culture of text is based on reading and thinking, the activities that require memorising what is read and moving on towards the new, a new sentence, a new thought, memorising it and moving on again. In the typographic culture, critical thinking is not necessary, but the typographic culture is its precondition. Instead of by the text, ideas or rational content, the electronic media is dominated by images. Visual communication is back, for the first time since the Catholic Counter-Reformation, but this time it is a dominant, all-encompassing form of communication, easily accessible to all.

During the Counter-Reformation, but also as a part of tradition, especially in art, the image was a representation of reality, whether it represented nature, such as a landscape, for example, a portrait, or Jesus on the Cross. Every time it depicts a reality that we experience directly or create in our mind, believing it exists. It contains strong emotional values, which are the stronger the more we are familiar with the culture to which the image belongs. When we understand the context in which the image appears, we can understand the image itself, such as the Last Supper. If we are not familiar with the culture we will not be able to experience the image, or it will leave us indifferent. But another person familiar with the context of the image will be strongly emotionally affected. When we observe an image we project on it what we already know, and we understand it and experience it depending on the extent of our (previously acquired) knowledge. In other words, an image cannot tell us what we do not already know, as Sartre already established.

And what can be said about the image in the context of the electronic media? This is an important question because, as

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6 For more information about inventions and the development and reception of the technology and the media, see the brilliant book by Jared Diamond, *Guns, Germs and Steel*, W. W. Norton & Comp. New York, London, 1999, pp. 239-264.

7 Marshall McLuhan, *Razumijevanje medija (Understanding Media)*, Golden Marketing – Tehnička knjiga, Zagreb, 2008, the chapter *Medium is the Message*, pp. 13-24.

previously mentioned, the electronic media made reflexion, text and the typographic culture succumb to the image. Like in the previous periods of human history, in order to be able to understand the value of the image today one has to understand the contemporary context in which it appears, and not only the context of the media.

This newly created social context started developing in the sixties, the age of radio, television, daily press and various magazines. In the second half of the twentieth century McLuhan writes about the global embrace (of the media, of course), Guy Debord about the society of the spectacle and Baudrillard about simulacra. Most philosophers are critical towards the future, recognising that the media are crucial for the understanding of the new culture. However, they do not offer a deeper understanding of the media culture and often merely describe the media and their influence (often detrimental) on the fundamental human values. However, some developments in the area of economy can shed more light on the present.

The first phenomenon is the expansion of capital into areas in which it did not function well before, the areas of culture, politics and criticism (for example, the aforementioned Francis Balle points out parallel, separate movements towards the free market on the one hand and liberal democracy on the other). Capital was certainly always present in those areas, but never fully. In the area of politics capital was a prompter, not the main actor, in the area of culture it created its own space, the space of mass culture, and it feared criticism and put up a rather weak defence against it. The poem *Howl* by Allen Ginsberg ended up in court, John Lennon for years resisted covert actions of the American secret service and the fear of communism resulted in cultural purges. In the West, the sixties were the years of conflict addressed by the police; sub-cultural movements were an unexpected novelty (because they were not based on programmes but on feelings) that nobody could recognize or understand. The emergence of terrorism in Europe in the seventies caused confusion. A large percentage of German citizens supported terrorists' views and many even offered them a refuge from the police. The public opinion was divided, but so were the media, in line with the real division in the society.

Just a quick glance at our time helps us see the difference. Capital is no longer a prompter, it has become the main actor, a billionaire with no experience in politics has become the president. The criticism of the inhumane society based on profit and capital is an ever-present subject in movies, series and books that become bestsellers and generate huge profit for publishers. The interpretations of the social phenomena barely differ from each other, the things that should be judged are judged unanimously along with an overblown political correctness, which regulates how and what we should think. If we cannot change the world in reality, we can change it in people's minds – it is the former political left that took over that pitiful and degrading role. The fundamental achievements of our civilisation, the legal system, the freedom of speech, the control and creation of state institutions, the participation in the main affairs of general interest, the definition of the general interest etc., all of that, in a way that not even Adam Smith could have imagined, has been taken over by an 'invisible hand' in order to facilitate our everyday life and allow us to enjoy the spectacle. The production and distribution of shoes and corn are indeed ancient and nowadays ineffective and irrelevant tasks of the self-regulating market.

The other phenomenon is even more interesting. It is called financial capital. It refers to money and securities stored in banks, insurance companies and similar institutions. Economists from previous periods were familiar with this form of capital too, only that they called it fictitious capital. Probably because it is fictitious⁸. In other words, capital is a process and it proves itself as capital only in movement, investment, production and sales of goods or services. Nothing has changed in that aspect so far. In his work *Capital in the Twenty-First Century* Thomas Piketty cites an example of a central bank that has lent fresh capital to failed banks⁹. The problem is, explains Piketty, that this is far from a solution. That money will remain fictitious until it is turned into capital by investing in (profitable) production, in other words, when it starts moving. Only then can the economy of a country improve, depending on the profitability of the investment and other factors. Banks are nothing but storages of fictitious capital which realises its potential value by investment and movement. However, today

8 Karl Marx, *Kapital III (Capital, Volume III)*, Zagreb, 1948, p. 357.

9 Thomas Piketty, *Kapital u 21. stoljeću (Capital in the Twenty-First Century)*, Profil, Zagreb, 2014, p. 649. and onwards.

capital regards itself as goods. These cannibalistic phenomena are called derivatives and they involve betting, gambling with diverse value packages consisting of fictitious capital according to the principle of the Ponzi scheme¹⁰. Derivatives do generate short-term profit, but every child that has played the 'chain of luck' game could probably say something about their long-term effects. Are these phenomena related to the media?

The overproduction of shoes, cars, cell phones and medicines, as well as electronics and media content, is a consequence of market saturation, which poses a serious threat to capital. This is why capital turns to areas where it was not present before and creates new needs in the most bizarre ways. There is no difference between the latest iPhone model and the one four generations ago, except for the placement of some button and the width of the black line framing the image. Older technologically advanced computers and cell phones cannot be updated with new software and so the users are forced to buy the same, but newer devices. From a rational point of view, production becomes meaningless and an end in itself. The Danes export cookies to America, the Americans export cookies to Denmark. Tankers filled with oil transport the precious cookies in both directions. An economist has once asked: 'Why don't they exchange recipes?'. The speed of capital turnover used to be measured by the mathematical dimension of time, the faster the better. Nowadays the situation is reversed, time is measured by the speed of capital turnover. Time is what is measured by the interval between the current and the new iPhone, the current and the new application, the current and the new season of a tv show, a new model of Nike trainers, a new car model..

Market saturation and incredibly fast changes, occurring primarily due to scientific and technological advances in all kinds of consumer products, and in media products in particular, have twofold consequences – first, they provide constant and intense sensations that fulfil the everyday life of individuals, and second, they create such a complex image of the world that we are made to feel inadequate to participate in it except as passive observers and users. The mechanical age is a thing of the past. Even the simplest peasant could plant a potato, shoe a horse or pick a plum. In short, he governed his own life,

¹⁰ The amount of money that the lender or the winning gambler makes does multiply by lending and usury (and even by gambling) without the intermediation of production. However, no society, not even a capitalistic one, is functioning or can function on the basis of such a type of 'production'.

even though he was not free, being tied to the land and limited by religious and traditional rules. It should be kept in mind that if we, as individuals, such as we are, went back to the past, our knowledge would be of no use to him. We are consumers of contemporary technological achievements, but not their creators. We do not know how to create electricity, how to make a cell phone, how to produce a petrol engine or an antibiotic. We only know how to use them.

The need for constant and ever-changing external stimuli has become dominant. The members of the Frankfurt School, the above-mentioned Guy Debord and Baudrillard, talked about that need, but only in relation to the old media, namely television, print and film. But it is the newest media, the smartphone created by Steve Jobs, that made McLuhan's thesis about the extension of our senses a reality. The smartphone was the first to allow for numerous, constant, ever-present external stimuli. Images, videos, texts ... all the time and in real time. How old fashioned it sounds when we think of television broadcast, even with hundreds of channels, of having to wait for the news, a movie or a tv show, having to sit in the room with a tv set, having to wait for twenty-four hours for the next cycle of news or seven days for the new episode of a tv show, having to go to the video store to find a new movie...and being able to only dream of uploading photos or videos showing our pets!

The fact that the image is a dominant form of media content is not a coincidence at all. Emotions and the speed of perception are crucial communication criteria. Cognition and reflection are demanding activities, carrying a lower emotional value, and they last too long. The image, unlike the thought, already contains an opinion, an idea and an intellectual value. Wittgenstein's concept of the picture¹¹, which is different from reality, facts and opinions, is reduced to one thing, to the image in the literal sense of the word. The image becomes a reality, a fact and an opinion. The logic of the image, which is the basis for establishing the truth, is also, according to Wittgenstein, a part of the image. However, today in the interaction of an individual with an image no questioning, thinking or reasoning takes place. The image has become a natural, self-explanatory environment that we react to by accepting it or rejecting it. Just as an animal expects to live in a natural environment

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¹¹ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, Veselin Masleša – Svjetlost, Sarajevo, 1978 (especially pp. 35-39). Since nowadays the picture theory has been assimilated by many different theories, Wittgenstein is often cited with different degrees of understanding. What is interesting for us here is his (tentatively speaking) cognitive theory and the breakdown of reality – fact – image – opinion – truth, not for the purpose of discussing it or agreeing with it, but for the purpose of establishing to what extent the image, in the current dominant perception of the world, has been vulgarly reduced to a self-evident pleasure.

and chooses what suits its needs, so does the man of the new media choose what he wants and discards what does not suit him. He does not question the origin of the technological environment and its meaning because he is satisfied with what that environment can offer him and feels completely fulfilled by it. The image of my media is the image of my world, the image of me. Never before has a medium been able to produce a one-dimensional and easily reachable, but exciting 'truth' in such a fast, versatile and efficient way.

At the age of television, in the sixties, faced with the evident emergence of the electronic media, Friedrich Dürrenmatt wrote his famous play 'The Physicists'. The domain of thinking is still extant, the themes are responsibility and science, man is in a new, unknown, technological space, which causes anxiety and insecurity. The possibilities are open because self-reflection still exists, the awareness of man as a subject, although lost, in the world he has built. The curtain that closes at the end of the play closed on an epoch in which the power of thought was considered an important human strength. Fictional heroes created by, for example, Michel Houellebecq, Jonathan Franzen, Elisabeth Strout and Karl Ove Knausgård, live in anxiety as in a self-evident space. Anxiety is not thematised as just one of several possible spaces; it is not even considered a subject. Dürrenmatt's questioning would today be anachronistic and it would sound grotesque.

Thinking in general, thinking as such, is a precondition for critical thinking. The latter differs from the former only by the fact that it understands the whole and places a social phenomenon, an art work, a political fact, etc. in a historical context in which it appears as a subject. The context of our civilisation is always a historical consequence of the activity of our ancestors. Régis Debray divides the domain of human communication into communication, specific to both people and animals, and transmission, communication through history, specific only to people¹². Transmission is a condition of human progress and enables man to exist as a historical being. I would add that the understanding of transmission, not only as communication but as a meaningful movement, as human history, is a task of critical thinking.

12 Régis Debray, *Uvod u mediologiju (Introduction to Mediology)*, Clio, Belgrade, 2000, available in summary at: <https://www.monde-diplomatique.fr/1999/08/DEBRAY/3178>.

Banking deregulation, the aggressive expansion of capital into the areas of politics, culture and decision-making on the common good, the emergence of the electronic media in their final form (additional technological innovations are less important because they are used to finalise what has mainly been completed), the creation of financial capital as an incessantly ticking time bomb with an invisible dial, these are all the phenomena that take place at the same time as the opening of doors to liberal capitalism, as conceived by Milton Friedman¹³. Friedman's idea is not the most deplorable one in the history of mankind, but it is definitely the most deplorable idea that took over the world, with the exception of extreme situations when psychopaths seized power. Natural resources are wasted in the name of their protection, freedom equals arbitrariness, entrepreneurial freedom is a guarantee of freedom in general, the surplus of value does not exist because human labour is complex, the problem of market intermediation and alienation is not discussed at all... The beginning of thinking in the minds of Milton Friedman and his followers Margaret Thatcher¹⁴ and Ronald Reagan marks the end of thinking in general. While approximately fifty years ago the invisible hand was only taking crumbs from the table of human liberty, it has now obviously grabbed the whole cake.

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¹³ Milton Friedman, *Kapitalizam i sloboda* (*Capitalism and Freedom*), Globus nakladni zavod, Školska knjiga, Zagreb, 1992.

¹⁴ The extent to which current liberalism bases its power on the strength of capital liberated from the yoke of criticism, rather than on its theoretical value, is shown by the fact that the main liberalistic opinions were criticized, with great success, a hundred and fifty years ago. For example, Margaret Thatcher is remembered by her statement (which forms the basis of liberal philosophy): 'There is no such thing as society: there are individual men and women, and there are families'. Here is what Marx responded to Thatcher about one hundred and fifty years before she made that statement: '(It is) the same as if someone said: From the point of view of society there are neither slaves nor citizens, they are all human beings. On the contrary, they are slaves and citizens outside the society. Being a slave and being a citizen are socially determined categories.', Karl Marx, *Temelji slobode* (*The Foundations of Freedom*), Naprijed, Zagreb, 1974, p. 89).

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Interpreting Chromatic Codes through the Ages and in Different Modern Social Contexts

Key words message, cod, sign, colour, chromatic, interpretation, communication

Abstract Colours are crucial to what we may call 'the visualization of identity.' There are numerous scientific disciplines that address the issue of colours. Chromatics as a discipline (focusing on the role of colours in communication) is of recent origin. It is the social context that makes colour important, gives it a social definition and meaning, creates codes and values. Messages that we receive contain different codes, which can be dominant (we accept them by default), subject to negotiation (we accept them partially) and oppositional (we reject them). If we change colours in a message (a flag, car, or sports jersey), our intention is to change the message as well. Misunderstanding arises when the two sides in communication understand a single sign or message differently (the so-called 'noise in communication' according to Schram). Conflicts are mostly caused by differences in the interpretation of facts.

Interpretacija kromatskih kodova kroz historiju i u različitim modernim kontekstima

Ključne riječi poruka, kod, znak, boja, kromatika, interpretacija, komunikacija

Sažetak Boje su presudne kod onoga što možemo nazvati 'vizualizacijom identiteta'. Brojne su naučne discipline koje se (između ostalog) bave i bojama. Kromatika kao disciplina /posvećena bojama u komunikaciji/ je novijeg datuma. Društveni kontekst čini boju značajnom, daje joj socijalnu definiciju, smisao; stvara kodove i vrijednosti. Poruke koje stižu do nas sadrže različite kodove, a oni mogu biti dominantni (prihvatamo ih po defaultu), pregovarački (prihvatamo ih djelimično) i opozicionalni (odbijamo ih). Ako u jednoj poruci mijenjamo boju (zastava, automobil, dres), mi želimo promijeniti i poruku. Nesporazumi nastaju kada dvije strane u komunikaciji različito shvataju jedan znak, poruku (tzv. 'šumovi u komunikaciji' po Schramu). Do konflikta nas najčešće mogu dovesti razlike u interpretaciji činjenica.

Introduction

'In matters of colours, there can be no dispute' (*De gustibus et coloribus non est disputandum*) – following this old Latin saying, we shall not quarrel about tastes. As for the colours, however, we shall discuss, converse, explore, connect...

Chromatics, as a discipline of communicology dealing with colours, is of a recent date. Colours are symbols with a broad field of meanings and connotations, although they can also be mere signs. In the ancient times of human civilization, colour underwent metaphorization as a sign: the sign was transformed into a symbol, which deepened the symbolic distance between the sign and the signified (Radojković and Đorđević, 2005:144). Colours have an (ir)rational impact upon us.

'There is a symbolic level in the meaning of colours, a level that does not relate to the visually recognizable characteristics of an object, but to the abstract domain of meaning. This level includes interpreting colour by referring to a class of abstract concepts' (Trandafilović, 2006: 79). According to Van Leeuwen (2012:7), 'colours are bundles of distinctive traits and complexes charged with metaphorical meaning'.

Colours through the ages

Understanding colour as a symbol is only possible when the meaning is rendered abstract on a higher level of cognition and connotation. Colours can be explained based on the experience we gained in our childhood, later in life, or by learning in special ways. It is important that we see colours and treat them in the way we have learned. We see colours, but we classify them into categories according to the rules of our social group, our culture. When someone asks us what the words 'red', 'green', or 'blue' mean, we indicate things of that particular colour. Colours are carriers of different meanings and characteristics not only in religious, but also in cultural contexts and concepts. It is the cultural specificity that embodies the meaning of a colour: red, for example, is a provoking colour in some civilizations; in the West, it signifies danger, fire, but also Saint Valentine's, the day of lovers. According to the Hebrew

tradition, the name Adam means red (and vivid). In the West, it is undesirable to wear red at funerals, while in South Africa it is a colour of sorrow. Khidr (also known as 'the Green') is one of the most important figures in the Quran and a companion of Musa's.

The importance of colours in Islam is also evident from Surah 30:22 on the Byzantines (ar-Rum):

Arabic original: **وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ خَلْقُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلَافُ أَلْسِنَتِكُمْ وَأَلْوَانِكُمْ ۚ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّلْعَالَمِينَ**

(‘And of His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the diversity of your language and your colours. Indeed in that are the signs for those of knowledge.’)

Colours have always occupied an important place in the psychology of *homo sapiens*, which is evident from the painted walls of the caves in which our ancestors lived. Red and black were already then two principles that directly referred to two important concepts – life and death. These were the two basic dyes used in that period, according to the anthropologist Howard Sun in his book *Secrets of Color*, where he recalls how the Neanderthal man marked the graves of his family members in colours (Sun, 1995:100).

In ancient Egypt, the symbolism of colours further evolved. This chromatic sensitivity spread from the East to Greece and Rome. The ancient Greeks were keenly interested in the problems of light and colour, and thus it was in this period that the aesthetics of colours evolved, with the first theories dealing with the problem of colour gamut. Early Greek drawings on vases typically had two white lines on a black background. Somewhat later, red appeared as the third colour, and then ochre yellow. These four colours were used in painting and were, according to Empedocles, the primary colours of nature.¹

The absence of individual colours in the life of ancient Greece and Rome was partly related to the scientific ideas that prevailed at that time. There were, namely, three competing concepts. According to Pythagoras, our perception of colours, that is, the possibility of seeing colours, was due to the rays that the eye emitted and that searched for a coloured object; for Epicure, it was the bodies themselves that sent the rays to

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¹ The archetypal number four is not only the basis of Empedocles' theory of colours, but also of his fundamental theory of the four elements – fire, water, air, and earth – to which it referred. The theory of the four elements actually dominated the natural sciences, especially alchemy, until the beginning of the modern era.

the eye; and the third concept was that of Plato, which would prevail in the 3rd and 4th centuries – the perception of colour was due to an encounter between the rays coming from the eye and those emitted by the perceived object. This concept implies that, when the eye is not directed at the coloured object, the colour of that object does not exist (each object is colourless until we look at it).

In the period between the 9th and 12th centuries, it was generally not known that colour was part of the light beam; instead, it was believed that it was tied to matter, and since colour belonged to matter, it was to be removed from the Church. One of the most important questions posed by Michel Pastoreau is how the research on colour has evolved and whether that which we call perception is something natural (that is, whether the eye of our ancestors was different as an organ from our eye), or perception is cultural in its character. In his research, the author has contradicted many of his predecessors and opted for the latter hypothesis, namely that the position of colour in a society is defined by culture rather than biology. Colour is the *organigramme* of all social life: it articulates space and time, coordinates knowledge, and creates systems out of it (Pastoreau, 1987:64). It is therefore very important to note that, when analysing colours, everything depends on the social circumstances. It is impossible to analyse colours outside of the cultural, historical, and spatial context. Even within the same culture, there can be different interpretations of one and the same colour, largely because we enter the communication process as individuals, although at the same time we retain all the characteristics of all groups we have ever belonged to.

Thinking about colours also raises questions – how is it possible that people used to paint the rainbow only in four colours in the past, or the sea on maps in green rather than blue? Why is green the favourite colour of the Irish Catholics while the Catholics in Bosnia reject it? Is the issue of colour not also a linguistic problem, since some languages only have three or four words for colours, while modern English has as many as eleven terms for the so-called simple colours?

Colours often behave like codes and it is not always easy to identify, isolate, or define them. We do not pay attention to them or take them as something important, something

that 'makes a difference.' Colour, however, also communicates directly. 'Words must be translated into images in our mind. These images must be assembled, organized, and categorized so as to give meaning to the words.' (Trandaflović, 2006:77).

Interpreting and reading chromatic codes (colours)

Interpretation depends on our historical prejudices (Gadamer speaks about the fusion of horizons). In a drop of water, we can see a pearl or just a drop of water if we want to – as a Buddhist saying goes. But what we really see – that is a question with more than one answer. 'Grass is not green, it only seems green,' as Korzybski would say. The question is not just 'how do we see something,' but also whether we really see 'what we see.' The world is an *illusion*, it has no real existence – that is what is meant by the power of imagination (*khayal*), as Ibn Arabi once wrote.²

Signs in the process of interpretation generate other signs, and thus interpretation is an open and dynamic process with the potential of an 'endless multiplication of meaning,' as Sonja Briski Uzelac has written (<http://www.zarez.hr/clanci/hermeneutika-ikonickog-i-verbalnog-znaka>). 'Red is not red in itself. It is blood, revolution, suffering, and murder – depending on the interpretation. This colour has become significant for individuals, for nations, perhaps for the entire humanity in an inexplicable and unpredictable manner' (Gheerbrant and Chevalier, 1987:XI-XII).

What is, in fact, interpretation? In the traditional sense, interpretation is often understood as deciphering (clarification), revealing the meaning of something that was previously concealed (and colour is concealment). The meaning was already given, it is only to be discovered. The new concept of interpretation follows Nietzsche: There are no facts per se, only our interpretations of the facts (interpretationalism and perspectivism). (Lavić, 2014:110)

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² 'The world is an illusion: it has no real existence. And this is what is meant by 'imagination' (*khayal*). For you just imagine that it (i.e., the world) is an autonomous reality quite different from and independent of the absolute Reality, while in truth it is nothing of the sort... Know that you yourself are an imagination. And everything that you perceive and say to yourself, 'this is not me,' is also an imagination. So that the whole world of existence is imagination within imagination.' Cited after: Toshihiko Izutsu, 'Dream and Reality,' in: *Sufism and Taoism: A Comparative Study of Key Philosophical Concepts* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 1983), 7.

We do not have any access to the world that is not subject to interpretation, be it in knowledge or in action, or anywhere else. The world is primarily constructed and structured through our human needs, abilities, and opportunities – and this relates both to our organic capacities and to the conceptual possibilities of linguistic representation. The world is understandable only insofar as it is built, structured, and formed by our own, human-made interpretational schemes, those that are found within us. Everything that we can comprehend and present as cognitive and active beings depends on interpretation (Lavić, 2014:111).

According to Professor Hasnija Murtagić Tuna, H. Heleren has listed dozens of possible interpretations, and this can lead us to the idea that science itself has come to a dead end (<http://www.bosnjaci.rs/tekst/178/o-lingvistickiminterpretacije.html>).

The term 'interpretation' covers a wide field of meanings, all of which can be reduced to decoding a text, a symbol, or behaviour in order to determine their significance. In a restrictive sense, under the name of hermeneutics, it was in the focus of research in the philosophy of Heidegger and Gadamer (Treccani, 2009:1113). The concept of interpretation is also found in Aristotle – *De interpretatione* (Gr. Περὶ ἑρμηνείας) is the Latin name of one of his treatises collected in the *Organon* on how to formulate the definition of affirmation as 'a claim that ascribes something to something' (*De interpretatione*, VI, 17 a 25-6).

From the 1930s, Wittgenstein radically opposed formal and strictly denotational approaches to the theory of meaning, inaugurating the type of research in which the concept of interpretation played a determining role (Philosophical Research, Post, 1953). Referring to the theory of signs, as opposed to the theory of representation, a sign model was postulated that indicated that the image did not have a meaning in itself, without an 'audience' ready to interpret it. Goldmann has observed that the same or similar facts could have completely opposite or different meanings in different contexts, and that their study was valid only if included in the dynamic whole of the social and historical events that they were part of (Goldmann, 1962:22). In one social context, the red colour will be understood as a symbol of communism, in another it will be perceived as one of the basic colours in the Croatian flag, and so on.

Uspensky has asked how we look at something, that is, how we see it from the outside, how it is seen 'from within,' and how to reconcile the two. He speaks of merging the inner and outer points of view (Uspensky 1973). This merging can be displayed on several levels:

1. The ideological plane (we see red and it conveys the idea of the revolution);
2. The psychological plane (red as a colour that stands for passion, energy, aggression);
3. The level of spatial and temporal perspective (red in historical Croatia and red during the presidency of Jadranka Kosor, who often spoke of 'red danger'); and
4. The phraseological context (red like blood, red like a lobster).

Aristotle saw a certain coincidence, and even parallels between colours and flavours. According to him, in fact, colours were produced by mixing white and black, just as flavours were produced by mixing sweet and bitter (Aristotle, 1981:14). Gombrich has criticized John Ruskin's theory of the innocent eye (the theory of direct perception). He (Gombrich) claims that there is no innocent eye that sees an object as it is; instead, what we see depends on the previous knowledge of the observer and the established system of classification. An individual is prepared in advance as to how he or she should understand the codes, signs, and background of the story to be interpreted. Visual perception can be interpreted only by means of impulses reaching the retina in accordance with the previous knowledge, memory, and expectations. Gombrich has observed that 'The conclusion process is an extremely important element of perception. What we perceive is always conditioned by norms, habits, knowledge, convictions, and feelings' (Kudiš, 1990:9).

What connects Gombrich, Gaudman, and Bryson is the opinion that every seeing is preceded by a notion of the things we see. All three authors (with slight deviations) speak of how visual perception depends on the expectations, the mental orientation of the observer, his or her experience, and the knowledge of the world in which they live (<http://www.prelom.kolektiv.org/pdf/>). All that causes visual pleasure to the viewer becomes an open space of transformation and interchange of meanings between the visual object and the viewer (Bryson, 1983:12).

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For centuries, we have *known* how to think and watch, paint, believe, and respect, and we never stop to think how and to what extent we are defined therein by our technique of creating closed circles of self-justifying our own beliefs – as Sead Alić has argued, referring to McLuhan (Alić, 2009:110).

We are returning here to the assertion that colours are – ideas. With ideas, and therefore also with colours, we create our beliefs and seek to justify them. We do this in various ways: by closing the circle and then colouring it in red, blue, white, or green – the way it suits us in a particular context. Each colour individually is rather complex and peculiar in its own symbolism. Wittgenstein wrote about the logic of colours from a philosophical standpoint, not mentioning the non-verbal communication of the speakers. He nevertheless intuitively acknowledged it, although his intention was not to encourage thinking about colours as a mode of non-verbal communication. It is believed that the human eye can perceive about 160 different shades in the colour spectrum. However, some colour analysts claim that there are over 12000 different tones. 'If we move to the field of computer sciences, we will find out that there are 16 million tones on a colour screen. Of course, these are merely degrees, slight hues of tones and intensities of the primary colours. Nevertheless, each of these colours can have a different effect on the individual – emotional and mental' (Šarenac, 2001:16). It is, therefore, indisputable that colour has an influence on humans – the question is only to what extent, which colour, and how strong the reaction is (whether it is strong enough to make an individual react in the communication process or not).

When it comes to colours, the transfer of information takes place even faster than by means of complex images, because colours can be noticed 'from the corner of our eye' and make us sub-consciously change our mode of communication in the process, without even knowing that we have seen it. 'This colour has become significant for individuals, for nations, perhaps for the entire humanity in an inexplicable and unpredictable manner' (Gheerbrant and Chevalier, 1987:XI-XII).

Denotation refers to the iconic level, while connotation is related to the so-called 'plastic' level. The connotation value of red, for example, depends on the cultural context and situations. A European will perceive THAT red as a SIGN of danger, a Chinese as a sign of 'lucky fate.' Today, there is an increasing opinion that language and image have an equal importance in understanding meaning. Both of these codes can actually or potentially function by themselves (individually). It is not uncommon to see a perfume advertisement in which one does not hear a single word (language is missing), yet we understand the message.

Ancient Croatian or Slavic words for colour were *mast* ('grease') (cf. *masnica* for a bruise, or the phrase *premazan svim mastima* – 'smeared with all sorts of grease' for being particularly cunning) and *kvat* (in modern Russian *cvet*) (Gluhak, 1993:139). Modern Croatian uses the Turkish word *boya*, while the Italian word *colore* comes from Latin *colorem*, related to the verb *celare*, 'hide'. Thus, colour is something that covers or hides (Zingarelli, 2000:400; Kapović, 2009:163; Devoto, 1968:88). The German word for colour is *Farbe*, which comes from the medieval German *varwe*, or the Old German *farwa*, which is associated with the meaning 'sprinkled, stained' (Duden, 2007:552).

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The physics of colour

In 1611, Dominis noticed that a sequence of colours appeared when light passed through a prism at a sharper angle: red, green, and blue, which preceded Newton's discovery. Refraction of light had already been observed by Cleomedes around 40 BC, but it was only Willebrord Snellius around 1621 who established the law of fracture. Robert Hooke also dealt with this phenomenon, and the true founder of the wave theory is Christiaan Huygens: According to the wave theory, the speed of light in water is smaller than in the air. The corpuscular theory claimed the opposite. Newton wavered for a long time between the two theories and eventually opted for the

corpuscular one (Supek, 2004:89). When Newton observed colourless sunlight shining through a crystalline prism, it split into red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and violet rays, from which he concluded that sunlight was a mixture of rainbow colours.³ Newton's colour spectrum brought various changes: in the colour system, red was no longer situated halfway between black and white, green was finally understood as a shade of blue and yellow, warm and cold colours were distinguished, and so on (Brusatin; 2013:13). Goethe believed that Newton was wrong. Besides Goethe, there was a whole group of scientists who held that the colour phenomenon must imply and involve some emotional and philosophical components, and that one could not explain colour and light solely through mechanistic theories, as Newton did. In this whole story about colours, our organism, that is, our apparatus of vision, plays a very important role, in cooperation with the luminous stimulations coming from outside – as Goethe claimed. He conducted a series of experiments with coloured shadows and proved that our eye was intensely involved in the reconstruction of the colour sensation (a red square will result in one shade if the background below it is blue, and in a slightly different tone if it is, for example, orange).

³ Newton's treatise on 'Optics', published in 1704, was a very important moment in the history of understanding colours. The experiment with the *camera obscura* and passing the light through a crystalline prism dates, in fact, from 1666, with the first decomposition of light into seven colours. Newton decided on a scale of seven main colours and a number of gradations inside them. White light, he explained, was a mixture of something that he called *corpusculum* (Luzatto, Pompas, 2001:44).

A new colour order

As Giovanni Piana has argued, colour speaks and we must try to understand what it is telling us (Piana, 1996:35). Colour is a sign, colour is a symbol, colour is a signal (Trstenjak, 1978:151). The language of colour is configured as a particularly symbolic speech, a product of suggestions that do not arise from rational observation alone (Pedirota, 1996:31). The ancient Egyptians denoted the term 'colour' and 'being' with the same term (*iwen*). For this ancient people, the word 'colour' signified people, beings, or characters (<http://www.ledonline.it/leitmotiv/Allegati/leitmotiv010114.pdf>). In order to supply a deity with additional power and emphasize its mystery, that deity was said to be of some strange, indeterminate colour (Lurker, 1990:93).

There is not even a consensus on how many primary colours there are. Berlin and Kay are of the opinion that each language knows a certain number of names for colours, and this number ranges from two to eleven (Lyons, 2003:211). If a language knows less than these eleven terms, then one can call it a lexical restriction, which is nevertheless precisely defined (Berlin, Kay, 1997:21-56).

One of the world's most famous paintings, *The Arnolfini Wedding* by Jan van Eyck, is an illustrative example of how, from a temporal distance, a single colour can be interpreted in several ways and how we can never be absolutely sure about the accuracy of interpretation. *The Arnolfini Wedding* is generally believed to show an actual wedding, with the girl being a genuine bride, since in the old times brides wore dresses in green gowns. For this painting, the artist used the rather expensive malachite pigment. Michel Pastoureau has offered several possible answers to the question why the girl in the picture is wearing green:

1. The girl comes from a lower social layer, that is, she is certainly not a noblewoman. In Italy before the 17th century, the colour of the middle estate – merchants, craftsmen, peasants – was green. She may have belonged to a wealthy merchant family, but certainly not to a noble one.
2. The girl is still unmarried. Perhaps she is about to get married and that is why she is dressed in green.
3. The woman in the picture is actually an elderly prostitute. This solution is possible, but not highly probable, since she seems like a younger person. But in Germany and Italy elderly prostitutes wore green in the 14th and 15th centuries.
4. The girl is called Elizabeth. Quite possible, as Pastoreau claims. Saint Elizabeth was almost always depicted wearing a green dress, so it is possible that this garment was associated with someone called Elizabeth.
5. The girl comes from a noble family with blue and green colours in its coat of arms, and she is depicted wearing green in order to associate her with that family. At that time, noble girls often wore garments that resembled the coat of arms of their families in terms of colour.

6. The painting shows a scene happening early in May. In the 14th and 15th centuries, girls wore green at the beginning of spring, especially on May 1.
7. The girl is pregnant. In medieval Europe, women who could not get pregnant often wore green, which 'guaranteed' the fulfilment of their greatest dream. Saint Margaret was proclaimed a saint protector of pregnant women and a green dress became a preferred object.

The colour spectrum that is 'in effect' today runs in this order: purple, indigo, blue, green, yellow, orange, and red. In the old colour system, which was in use during the Middle Ages, this order looked like this: white, yellow, orange, red, green, blue, purple, and black. Everything depends on the social circumstances. It is impossible to analyse colours outside the cultural and temporal/spatial context. The feudal era caused profound mutations in the chromatic systems, causing the breakdown of the old system based on white, black, and red, thanks to the introduction of new colours such as purple, green, and especially blue. The medieval period can be divided into two chromatic periods. The first was before the mid-12th century, when blue was still absent from ceremonial garments, as it was in some way reserved for working uniforms (at that time, blue was still considered a shade of black). At the turn of the 13th century, there was a Blue Revolution.

'Royal blue' is a colour traditionally associated with Charlemagne. However, the first king who wore a blue cloak was Philip II Augustus and thus he was the first 'blue' king (at least in Western Europe, because we have no reliable facts about other parts of the world). During the latter part of his rule (after returning from the Crusades), he developed a particular predilection for blue vestments, and that is when the term 'royal blue' became current (Pastoreau – lectures at Louvre, November 15, 2012). In the collective imagination of that era, blue was the colour of heaven and thus wearing blue meant 'bringing some heaven down to the earth.' Red, which had previously been the dominant colour, thus obtained a significant rival. The plant called 'dyer's woad' or 'glastum' (*Isatis tinctoria*) was henceforth used to produce blue dye. The entire French land of Provence was planted with this plant. Soon,

the skies would finally become blue in paintings. Blue was also associated with concepts such as noble, heavenly, divine, and thus God's light was henceforth also depicted as blue; the Virgin was blue and His Majesty the King of France was also dressed in blue.

The new (colourist) social agreements established that water (the sea) was actually blue, which was confirmed only in the 17th century. Previously, the sea was painted green in geographic maps. Since forests were also green, one had to distinguish somehow between the sea and the mountains, and the decision was made that the sea would be painted blue. Also, the development of heraldry contributed significantly to the diffusion of blue across Europe, and thus it became the preferred colour of the 17th century. Its greatest popularity, however, started with the Jeans as a sign of liberalism in 1968.

Research done after World War II in Europe, the USA, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand has shown that, when it comes to colours, blue is number one on the list of preferences (for nearly 50% of Westerners, it is their favourite colour), followed by green, white, and red. It is interesting to note that these studies show that tastes change somewhere at the age of eight. Participants who are younger than eight prefer red, followed by yellow and white. Those older than eight prefer mostly cold colours, same as the adults. The situation changes if we move from the West to the East or the South: in South America, for example in Brazil (as well as in Spain, which is a European exception), red is the first on the list, followed by blue. The favourite colour of the Japanese is white, followed by black and yellow (Pastoreau 1987:9-12).

Just as there are favourite colours, so there are (unfortunately) undesirable ones. Green is disliked by the Protestants in Glasgow as well as by Croats in the western part of Mostar. For someone blue may be associated with the 'Vlachs', red with Communism, and so on.

We seem to be heading for a period of 'social colour blindness,' which is already present in cities such as Belfast and Glasgow, and some of the symptoms of this 'syndrome' are noticeable also in Mostar. This 'chromophobia' appears as a cultural disorder expressed as animosity toward individual colours.

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Conclusion

It should be noted that signs produce various meanings, not just one per sign (the polyvalence of sign and message). The function of a sign is to transfer ideas to us through a message (a red flag calls for the revolution, white for surrender, etc.). A red carnation may be a sign (for example, when attached to a door) informing us that the entry is free. A red carnation attached to the collar means something else – it is a symbol of the revolution. Colours often behave as codes, and it is not always easy to decipher, isolate, or define them. Man is not only a rational being, but also an irrational one; and this fact allows for his behaviour to be affected not only by rational but also by irrational means (even more effectively with the latter). It can be manipulated in different ways, including through colour.

We belong to different races, i.e. colours: white, black, yellow, red. All our reality is painted, even the political one – some vote for the Red, others for the Green or the Blue; the Black and the White seem rather vague.

Rorty has written that the way out is in nihilism. The 'extremists' will say that our solution is in absolute colour blindness. Do we have to give up the beauty of colour richness only because some colours disturb us – are black, white, and grey, the colours of Protestant reformism, the only coloristic remedy for our illness? It seems that there is a long way before us if we want to reach the right hermeneutical dimension – an empathic, personal, and conscious acceptance of others, with a complete understanding and developed tolerance of difference as a benefit, rather than a disadvantage, as it now seems to be.

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**Interpreting
Chromatic
Codes through
the Ages and
in Different
Modern Social
Contexts**

—
Dario Terzić



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Quo Vadis Digitalis Homine? Digital Philosophy and the Universe

Key words antropo-digital philosophy, Descartes, human nature, mind, computer, internet, digital body, eternal data, humanism

Abstract To think about the metaphysics of our digital era – who are we? where do we come from? but, first of all, where are we going? – we have to notice that the majority of people, instead of interacting with the boring surroundings, is deeply focused on a never-ending and nervous human-machine interaction, which has become a universal human trait. Unluckily, the discussion here will be about an anthropology of the homo digitalis, that is, about the possibilities/dangers of the undefined boundaries between the online and the offline life that unavoidably changes the same vision of the world, which finds in Descartes (ratio), and not in Bacon (experientia), its predecessor.

Quo vadis digitalis homine? Digitalna filozofija i svemir

Ključne riječi antropo-digitalna filozofija, Descartes, ljudska priroda, um, računalo, internet, digitalno tijelo, viječni podaci, humanizam

Sažetak Da bi razložno razmišljali o metafizici naše digitalne ere - tko smo mi? odakle dolazimo? ali prije svega: kamo idemo? – treba primijetiti da većina ljudi umjesto interakcije s dosadnom okolinom, udubljuje se u neprestanoj i nervoznoj interakciji čovjek-stroj, što je postala univerzalna osobina čovječanstva. Radi se naime o antropologiji 'homo digitalisa' o kojoj će se ovdje raspravljati, tj o mogućnostima / opasnostima sve neodređenijih granica između online i offline života što neumoljivo mijenja i samu viziju svijeta, koja u Descartesa (ratio) a ne u Bacona (experientia) ima svoj presedan. O tim mogućnostima / opasnostima bit će ovdje riječ.

According to digital philosophy, we are all (digitally) programmed.¹ Our life evolves according to the mathematical project of four nitrogenous bases [adenine (A), guanine (G), and the pyrimidine derivatives cytosine (C) and thymine (T)], which make up the genetic data contained in 23 chromosomal pairs constituting the DNA molecule.

It should be pointed out that the main difference between the analogue and digital worlds is in their representation of reality. The analogue world is a world of information with a sequence of continuous values, while the digital vision of reality uses 'discrete', i.e. separate and different values.

Figuratively speaking, it is the difference between the second indication in a (normal) clock and the passing of seconds in the computer clock. This means that the digital philosophical school claims that, as a DNA script, the whole reality can be defined by means of discrete and integral numbers, as is well presented in Edward Fredkin's thought,² conceived as the '*atomic theory carried to a logical extreme*' (see www.digitalphilosophy.org): '*This means that, theoretically, any quantity can be represented exactly by an integer. Further, DP implies that nature harbors no infinities, infinitesimals, continuities, or locally determined random variables.*' Thus, digital philosophy understands the universe as a huge computer, entirely based on and composed of numbers; where matter and energy are secondary and complex manifestations in which dynamic processes appear in the form of transitions from one numerical state to another. As for the atoms, same as in the case of DNA, this theory is interesting and understandable.

However, if digital philosophy thus configured is applied to physics, it can never function by claiming that time and space are composed of integers, because this is clearly contradictory. If all of this were true, the history of the world would evolve like a game of chess, where every move is 'discrete' and produces a different state – in contrast, for example, to a soccer match, where the ball is in constant movement and each shift in its trajectory might produce a new world.

It should be noted that there are certain correlations between this challenging ontology and the *M-Theory*,³ a version of string theory proposed by physicist Edward Witten. This is all interesting material for the science, philosophy, and art of the future.

¹ The word 'digital' comes from Latin *digitus* (finger), and is synonymous to 'counting' (by fingers).

² He is one of the founders of this approach, together with Konrad Zuse, Stephen Wolfram, Gregory Chaitin, Seth Lloyd, and others.

³ For additional information, see: http://www.soulsofdistortion.nl/croatian/sODA_chapter2.html

This leads us to an interesting premise: *Computo ergo sum* / I compute, therefore I am; which leads us to think about the metaphysics of our digital era – who are we? Where do we come from? But above all: where are we going? It is sufficient to note that most of our contemporaries, especially young people, tend to be mentally-digitally connected to their touch-screens instead of engaging in a living, direct, subjective, physical interaction with their grey, boring, and alienating environment. Even though a recent phenomenon, this continuous and nervous interaction between man and machine has become a universal feature of humanity.

It is, namely, about the anthropology of *homo digitalis*. The new type of man. If one starts from the fact that the fundamental nature of reality and existence, science and knowledge, mind and reason is constantly changing and transforming, one sees that the boundaries between our online and offline lives are becoming increasingly blurred, which means that our perception and vision of the world, i.e. our philosophy of life, is relentlessly changing as well.

In the everyday life of our new millennium, we are involved in continuous computations by means of micro-processors: posts on Facebook, Amazon recommendations, Google searches, Minecraft games, and so on. Thus we can rightly paraphrase the famous Cartesian syllogism 'Cogito, ergo sum' as '*Computo, ergo sum*'. More precisely: I tweet, so I exist. After all, it is also evidence that the communication technologies continually redefine the multi-secularized speculations about the fundamental nature of human existence.⁴ The consequence is that an increasing number of data available to man ruthlessly perverts and inverts all previous knowledge. Historical studies, for example, are constantly transformed due to an increasing number of data, not to mention geography, which is increasingly under a direct influence of communication. It becomes more and more evident that while knowledge distribution and accumulation enhance and expand knowledge, globalization reduces the number of spoken languages. In this constant and unstoppable transformation of the reality, mathematical logic and mathematics are more than ever an integral part of the space-time fabric that surrounds and encompasses us. The question is to what

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4 The Italian philosopher Luciano Floridi has argued in his book *The Fourth Revolution* (Oxford University Press (UK) 2014) that this is the fourth shift in thinking about human existence. According to him, our first discovery was that we were not standing immobile in the centre of the universe (the Copernicus revolution). Then we realized that we were not special or different from the rest of the animal world (the Darwinist revolution); and that we were not completely transparent to ourselves (the Freudian revolution). Now the technologies make us realize that we are not separate agents, but informational organisms that share with others a global environment basically comprised of information (the infosphere). Floridi calls it 'the Turing revolution' after Alan Turing, the founder of computer sciences. Therefore, according to the Italian philosopher, our worldview is about to change radically in the near future. Namely, this fourth 'revolution' creates the need for a new philosophy, the philosophy of information, because we are only at the beginning of the Turing revolution.

extent, if there is any measure, will it extend to the future? And what will be the role of man, as we perceive him today, in all this?

In order to realize somehow the seriousness of the problem – in terms of the reality we are facing – we should know that, according to the Cisco Systems estimates,⁵ there were as many hardware devices in 2008 connected to the Internet as there are people on our planet. And today there are more than 25 billion, with around 50 billion expected by the end of this decade, in 2020. That means: seven times more than the world's population. Even though, unfortunately, only a third of it currently has access to the Internet.

5 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cisco_Systems

In the so-called '*Internet of Things*,' which is in the process of being implemented – today millions of thermostats, dozens of millions of light bulbs, hundreds of millions of cameras are integrated in the Internet system – more and more electronic devices will communicate with the reality: recognizing it (by way of sensors), acting upon it (by way of wireless communication), and possibly modifying it (by way of actuators). In fact, we live in the time of infosphere sublimation.

But the final blow to the traditional understanding of the world comes from two new hybrid technologies. The aim of the first is to enhance the perception of the reality by combining biological sensory inputs, such as hearing and vision, with digital information.⁶

6 Google Glass is only the first and rather clumsy attempt in this direction.

The second is artificial intelligence, which uses different types of hardware and software increasingly successfully to replicate every trait attributed to human intelligence, from learning onwards. Although for now, but only for now, the most obvious and for many insurmountable difference between the so-called 'biological intelligence' and the so-called 'artificial intelligence' is consciousness.

Interestingly, even today, although everyone knows that the artefacts of modern technology lack consciousness, many well-known scientists such as Stephen Hawkins, entrepreneurs such as Elon Musk, and philanthropists such as Bill Gates believe that further development of artificial intelligence poses a threat to humanity, because the machines⁷ might become powerful and intelligent enough to reach a state in which they

7 Resembling some future Transformers or Terminators.

will develop some kind of independent consciousness and decide to subject humans or that humans were unnecessary. This fear is manifest regardless of the fact that most scientists, including experts in artificial intelligence, exclude this possibility, at least for now and in the near future. But 'for now' does not mean 'never'. The doubt remains and it will surely become the central philosophical dilemma of the third millennium. And it will address questions such as: what is real life, if it does not differ from the artificial one? Is there some cyber-ethics independent of software? Is there some sort of digital free will?

The crisis is not new. Back in 1979, modern philosophy displayed a growing sense of insecurity in Richard Rorty's book *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*. This made the philosophy of science move away from its traditional rhetoric, based on the fundamental ability of predicting events, to consciously accept uncertainty.⁸

As we are rapidly entering the zone of information (the infosphere), marked by the uncertain boundary between the analogue and digital worlds, contemporary pragmatic philosophy must further adjust its course by adopting an approach to ethics capable of incorporating both the natural world and the artificial one of man-built devices, characterized by growing intelligence.

Although in front of (our own) touchscreen we feel secure concerning our existence, in the form of *computo ergo sum*, this does not mean that many of the ancient dilemmas have not remained (fatally) open. Needless to say, in the meantime we have also added some completely new queries and uncertainties. From 'online psychology' to the 'digital divide'. From attacks on privacy to attacks on the freedom of expression in the WikiLeaks style. From robotic tutors to cyberwars.

It is true that we have answered many questions with the help of technology. However, this has opened (several) additional Pandora's boxes of questions in return, more than ever before.

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⁸ In some ways, this transition can be explained by the transition from a rigid Newtonian mechanics that dominated the gravitation of celestial bodies to quantum mechanics that – completely non-deterministic – governs the world of subatomic particles. 'God does not play dice,' was a famous commentary by Albert Einstein regarding the unexpected and uncertain. Today we know that the greatest physicist in history was wrong. God does play dice: in the subatomic world, electrons in fact follow the principle of uncertainty pronounced by his colleague Werner Heisenberg. But there is not just physics. Seismologists, climatologists, and even biologists and pathologists must face such uncertainty, to the extent that the old idea of knowledge as a faithful mirror of nature has itself been challenged.

We are our minds

(‘Except our own thoughts, there is nothing absolutely in our power.’ R. Descartes)

It is interesting to note, within this worldview, that these topics suggest that the vision of human nature in digital culture has essentially all the traits of the traditional Cartesian perspective, although it was initially rejected by the philosophers and criticized by the anthropologists. I am referring to the vision that ‘we are our minds.’ No more, no less!

Namely, in digital culture, the fundamental feature of man is the mind. This means that our body, our sex, race, age, ethnicity, and nationality are ‘absolutely’ irrelevant when it comes to defining what we really are in cyberspace. Because our identity, in the form of qualities that we identify with, can easily be changed by simply changing several text lines.

Namely, in cyberspace one exists in a purely bodiless state (one might traditionally say: in an inhuman state). We are information, modelled words and ideas. In this sense, one of the advocates and defenders of ‘digital freedom’, artist John Perry Barlow,⁹ has rightly argued that, in the quiet world of cyberspace, all conversations are digital rather than spoken. In order to join them, we do not need the body; and the space of action becomes a place consisting of words alone. Barlow describes cybernetic space as the new headquarters of the mind, in which there is no room for weary bodies.

A renowned women rights activist, Elizabeth Reid,¹⁰ believes that in the dimension of computer-mediated conversation (CMC), the body becomes an entity of relative significance. Freed from the physical entity, which is perceived as a limitation, man fully enters the domain of symbols, unlimited by any physical means.

Likewise, Hans Moravec,¹¹ an artificial intelligence expert, believes that the future of humanity is digital. He imagines a future where it will be possible to free the mind from any aggravating and limiting biological substrate, because the mind will be transplanted layer by layer into the computer. Moravec suggests that personal identity could be preserved in this process, because the essence of a person, his or her self-identity, consists of the models of processes that can be preserved and saved. This body is obsolete because it will not be functional in

9 John Perry Barlow (1947-2018) was an American poet, essayist, activist, and the former author of The Grateful Dead songs. He is also known as a defender of digital freedom and a co-founder and vice-president of the Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF Board of Directors). From May 1998, he was a Fellow at the Berkman Klein Center for Internet & Society at the Harvard University. The Time magazine has proclaimed him ‘one of the 10 superintelligent rock musicians.’ His most famous work as an activist is *A Cyberspace Independence Declaration*, published in February 1996 in response to the us *Telecommunications Act*.

10 Elizabeth Anne Reid is an Australian expert in development, a distinguished feminist and academician. She has made a significant contribution to both national and international public service. She has founded, established, and cooperated with a number of pioneering and specialized UN institutions, governmental agencies, and non-governmental organizations.

11 Howard Rheingold is an American literary critic, sociologist, and essayist specialized in the cultural, social, and political implications of the new media. He has introduced the notion of virtual community, in which he sees an instrument for the affirmation of

the times we are heading towards. It has become superfluous to our existence and appears as the background glamour of human essence. It is viewed as a source of failure, disgust, and constraints, and must therefore be overcome in order to turn humans into pure minds.¹²

Many contemporary researchers who identify themselves with this worldview look at the body as a prison from which we must break free and turn into bodiless consciousness. Freed from these physical limitations, our minds can freely wander through the ethereal spheres of electronic space: humans can only reach perfection by shaking off the limitations of our DNA, which can be done by developing such nanotechnology that will 'enter' the human body and mould it according to one's personal intentions, giving us freedom to transcend the boundaries of our personal DNA.

Beyond social and physical differences

In the digital dimension thus envisioned, the highly praised slogan '*vive la difference*' loses its *raison d'être*. In this future world of cyberspace, where life is digital and we exist only as information, sex, type/race, and ethnicity are irrelevant categories that no longer have their 'traditional' meaning. Information is free from any individual identity; it has no sex/gender or race/type and is not distributed according to an accent that would geographically determine a person.

Thus, in Croatia one would not be marked as Slavonian or Istrian. Internet communication reinforces the conviction that the mind is all that matters: ideas and words, not the person to whom they belong. The major factor of levelling and equality is based on the fact that online nobody can reliably determine the age, race, skin colour, hair colour, body shape, voice, or any other physical trait of another person. So it is only ideas that matter. In cyberspace, age, race, and gender are mere 'noise' disturbing the flow of pure information. To really enter the cyberspace, they must be rejected: all individual specificities must be abandoned in search for a pure communion of minds. In this sense, the Internet technology allows us to ignore the differences and focus on ideas, which everyone can do.

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decentralized democracy, since the links of public life tend to disintegrate in networks. This has led him to suggest a global virtual community without warning about the dangers and losses it might bring.

¹² The influence of Christian rejection of the sinful human nature in its corporeality is quite evident, even striking.

From a fluid society to flexible and obedient individuals

The digital allows for the already intrinsic flexibility, pliability, and plasticity of human nature and the 'self' to be brought to the extreme. In the trans-humanistic Estropica philosophy, we find ourselves in an age in which finally anything can be done. Modern technology has given us such powers that we are not only able to manipulate the external reality, the physical world, but we can also manipulate ourselves. We can become everything we want. In the culture of information, the human being becomes a plug-and-play of various possible entities; composed of different parts that can be updated by simply clicking the mouse or by inserting a new line of code. This may soon lead us to perform all our activities, to live and work in cybernetic space, where our ideas will no longer depend on a single and unchangeable body.

The body will therefore be fully flexible and variable depending on the situation, since some organs might work better in some situations, while others may be preferable in other conditions of possible lives. And all that according to our desire and will. This ability to radically and convincingly change one's appearance-body is bound to produce a profound psychological effect on our personality, since we will question only what we want to be; and nothing else.¹³ Eventually, it should be pointed out that Eric Gullichsen,¹⁴ an expert in cyberspace, even imagines a future in which our demand for new identities will become an integral part of human life.

¹³ After Rheingold, *Virtual Reality*.

¹⁴ Eric Gullichsen, 'Metodi cibernetici per raggiungere l'immortalità (vita artificiale 'in silicio)'; in: Timothy Leary, *Caos e Cibercultura* (Milan: Libri Urra, 1995), 40.

Networking the world in order to rule it

But that's not all. Namely, through the network we will be able to rule the world. In this way, the web (network) will become our new home.

To man as a thinking being, digital culture gives the feeling of home, a kind of cosmos in which to experience and even control one's own life. The computer offers a world of order and logic by building a world that is fully rational. Because, as a formal mechanism, it works according to the principles of

logic, creating a world whose building blocks are the logical algorithms of the program that we feed into them. And which operate, at least that is what we believe, according to strictly defined rules, because they are micro-worlds that can be completely deciphered as programs.

So, instead of the chaotic and hard-to-understand world that we consider as real for now, the computer offers a (picture of the) world of order, which is more logical, rational, and transparent.

This means that instead of the real world, in which we often lose our direction and sense, the computer serves as a better and more optimistic replacement. In the form of a pre-programmed, intact, and orderly diagram line of our life course, as a new image of a well-ordered and computable nature. This means that in the near future flowcharts, programs, and microchips will be part of the new cosmology. For the homeless of this (still) real and fragile world, images of the web crossing the world, the Internet surrounding the planet, will comfort all human beings at the metaphysical level, assuring us that we also, each one of us, have the ability to rule the world and keep it in our hands.

Back to the 17th century

All these issues of digital philosophy reveal that the dominant image of human nature in the 21st century is very similar to that of the 17th century. Especially when it comes to the superiority of mind over body, the efforts to achieve the transcendental state of pure mind, liberated from the prison of the body; the disparagement of sex and gender, race and ethnicity as accidental and worthless qualities; and the desire for an untouched nature within a mathematically ordered universe.

This vision of reality is incredibly similar to that of the traditional Cartesian and Christian thought. The irony is in the fact that most philosophical movements during the last century tried to eradicate all traces of Cartesian thought, and yet it is at the heart of computer culture in a modern form of Cartesianism. However, the limitations of this vision of human nature are obvious.

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It is certainly not true that the vision of human nature is entirely contained in computer culture, which suggests that our bodies, our sex, race, and countless other factors are irrelevant. In this theory, the body is perceived as a limitation, subject to disease and corruption. The central role is given to the rational nature, ignoring many other human traits, such as the significance of the biological nature of man: the fact that human beings belong to particular social and cultural environments, as aspects of human nature that do not belong to computer culture. This means that while thinking about the essence of philosophy, including the education of mankind, it is necessary to develop the awareness or conviction that the philosophers have the responsibility to focus their attention and their critical abilities on the issue of human nature in the modern world. And that means human nature in its totality. The modern man, as a thinking/feeling social being, must not allow this apparent void, a result of insufficient consideration of these issues, to enable technology to keep philosophically discrediting the entire human nature in favour of the digital one. Our modern politics is also responsible for this situation, since it entrusts our future to technology rather than the social system and turns man into a mere technician, seeing him as a means to realize technological potential rather than the goal in himself (in his human totality).

Therefore, today more than ever, the renewal of philosophical anthropology and the related anthropological issues is quite vital. These questions have intrigued the human mind since ancient times: 'What am I as a human being?' and/or 'What is my place in the universe?' Questions that are today, at the beginning of the new millennium, which is certainly digital, more urgent than ever. They also include Shakespeare's *to be or not to be*, and Kierkegaard's *aut-aut*. Is it for us to decide whether the dice has already been thrown and we are only a consequence of that?

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The Scientific- Technical and Media-related Future of Man and the World

Key words science and technology, future, media, artificial intelligence, cybernetics

Abstract The scientific-technological future often implies hardly conceivable social-philosophical consequences. The range of media-related changes in the very near future, which will significantly change the current mediation of man and the world, is difficult to predict, but they are inevitable. The technological and biological reality of the upcoming era cannot be viewed as separated from all the sociological, psychological, and media aspects of the society and the individual. What will these irreversible consequences in the networked reality of the media and humans imply in bioethical terms? How should we already now think of man, the human community, and the emerging, globalized world? We are approaching a great 'tipping point' in which human life and the possible coexistence of artificial and natural intelligence will be tested and one can only speculate on the

Znanstveno- tehnička i medijska budućnost čovjeka i svijeta

Ključne riječi znanost i tehnologija, budućnost, mediji, umjetna inteligencija, kibernetika

Sažetak Znanstveno-tehnološka budućnost donosi često i teško zamislive socijalno-filozofske posljedice. Okvire medijskih promjena u vrlo bliskoj budućnosti koji će bitno promijeniti i sadašnje medijsko posredovanje čovjeka i svijeta teško je predviđati, ali je to neizbježno. Tehnološku i biološku stvarnost nadolazećeg doba ne možemo promatrati izdvojenu prema svim sociološkim, psihološkim ili medijskim aspektima društva i pojedinca. Kakve će biti te nepovratne posljedice u umreženoj stvarnosti medija i ljudi u bioetičkom smislu? Kako već sada promišljati čovjeka, ljudsku zajednicu i globalizirani svijet koji se pojavljuje? Bližimo se velikoj 'točki preokreta' u kojoj će se preispitivati što je ljudski život i moguća koegzistencija umjetne i prirodne inteligencije i kakva će

media picture of such a reality. Will we look for new frameworks for the Heideggerian age of the Image of the World, return to the premises of Wiener's cybernetics, or perhaps reaffirm some of the traditional premises?

biti medijska slika takve stvarnosti. Hoćemo li tražiti nove okvire heideggerovskog doba Slike svijeta, vratiti se postavkama kibernetike Wienera, možda i reafirmirati neke tradicionalne postavke.

Introduction

The future is already here – it's just not very evenly distributed.
— **William Gibson**, author of the novel *Neuromancer* and the term *cyberspace*

The good news is that it is not impossible to foster a human revolution capable of changing our present course. The bad news is that we are running out of time.
— **Aurelio Peccei**, president of the Club of Rome, **1983**

The task of modern philosophy is to think in terms of the scientific-technical era. However, the present often imposes debates in which more attention is paid to thoughts and arguments on what has already happened or how to interpret what has already passed through several levels of history and 'structured' thoughts about the past. The circumstances we are facing in the 'post-truth society'¹ urge us to re-examine mostly the past of science, technology, and the media. And it is rather with the intention of changing it as an *image* (the *image* of reality instead of the reality itself), due to certain interests and global-local goals, than to engage in actual scientific-professional research and philosophical thinking on the essence of time. When it comes to thinking about the future in the present, the habit of constantly comparing the causes and consequences of past phenomena and the course of history on the one hand, and what we expect in the future on the other, is of little help. Forecasts on the future as we imagine it today remain at the level of a logical mind game while we measure and analyse the said causes and consequences, and we rarely use predictions that contain unusual interactions between future changes.

Before exploring the essence of these future changes, the scientific-technical sphere, the media environment, and the social and/or geopolitical phenomena, we must ask how these future changes might begin and how they are influenced by individual 'breakthroughs' or leaps from one level of understanding and interpretation of the world to another. These are already well-elaborated scenarios or rational warnings about the ultimate unification of human and technical. A step further is the idea that the future will bring radical, essential

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¹ The age of post-truth, subsequent truth, or actually non-truth enhances the problems of the contemporary society, the position of science, and especially the media environment, because instead of revealing half-truths and lies, it 'proves' that the truth itself is no longer important! Public opinion and the public, which apparently decide on what is to happen, are increasingly guided by emotions, personal beliefs, and manipulations, rather than objective facts. The new coin terms such as 'alternative facts' are actually an oxymoron of the 'wooden iron' type because they imply that facts do not, after all, have to be (true) facts... all this has a profound effect on the spheres we are talking about here.

changes in the perception of humanity and the human species, in compounds and permeations that will result in one or more new species. The robotic way of life, cyborg worldviews, and artificial intelligence that may lose its designation of 'artificial' might become 'normal' phenomena in science and everyday life. Already now the term of normality has less and less to do with the traditional attitudes and settings, although science and the media have already tried to enforce the hypotheses about the so-called Y, X, or Z generations, net-generations, and the like.

In all this, discussions about the future almost always include the inevitable reflection on the notion of *change*, by which all initial achievements in predicting the future are determined: whether it will be gradual and easy, an evolutionary process, or sudden, accelerated, and unpredictable, a revolutionary leap to another level of our perception of existence. Therefore, it is necessary to ask questions such as those seen on the Edge website,² very well formulated by John Brockman, the publisher and editor of Edge: 'Some of the fundamental questions posed are: Where did the universe come from? Where did life come from? Where did the mind come from? Emerging out of the third culture are a new natural philosophy, new ways of understanding physical systems, new ways of thinking that call into question many of our basic assumptions of who we are, of what it means to be human.'³ With all these possible discussions and efforts in which not only scientists and technologists, but also and inevitably humanists and bioethicists, should understand and interpret the latest and most important movements and trends that are about to come or have already started, the point is here to 'halt' and become aware that a growing number of questions might, in fact, obstruct the essential considerations on the future. Can this heap of questions and dilemmas be reduced to simpler and deeper reflections that will lead an increasing part of mankind to think and act on the principles of intersubjective ethics, while at the same time facilitating the rapid development of science and technology in the service of mankind?

Thinkers and scientists, philosophers and technologists try to describe the future as a time that will open up new perspectives and human opportunities. The very path to the future, outlined by the memory of past experiences and the sense of the present reality, should be such, at least because of the

2 Edge (www.edge.org) actually affirms questions posed by the new community of intellectuals and thinkers who, with their works and comments present ideas that go a 'step further' from traditional thinking and concern the deeper meaning of life and science, trying to define 'who and what we are.' Their theoretical contribution expands the limits of thinking in the areas such as evolutionary biology, genetics, neurophysiology, computing, psychology, and so on.

3 Brockman, John (ed.), *This Will Change Everything: Ideas that Will Shape the Future* (Harper Collins e-books, 2009), preface.

generations whose present this future will be. John Brockman is of the opinion that by creating new technologies and using new solutions for our current scientific-technical problems we are already shaping and creatively designing the fundamental future principles of the human mind and corporality. This level of heading towards the future must also include confidence in the humanity of action, because merely abandoning ourselves to *progress and hunger for energy*⁴ has often led to less than human results. 'Nobody ever voted for printing. Nobody ever voted for electricity. Nobody ever voted for radio, the telephone, the automobile, the airplane, television (...) space travel, massively parallel computing, nuclear power, the personal computer, the Internet, e-mail, cell phones, the Web, Google, cloning, sequencing the entire human genome. We are moving towards a redefinition of life, to the edge of creating life itself.'⁵ If we avoid lowering ourselves to the interest levels of political power, which largely see the future as fulfilling certain 'visions' and prosperity for certain 'chosen' groups, it is necessary when entering new time systems to encourage ethical thinking (without the stated voting on inventions and discoveries) according to a consensus on the basic frameworks of values and moral action. Changes that are in progress and those that are about to come may for the most have irreversible consequences for the scientific, social, psychological, bioethical, and philosophical notion of the social community and individuality, the human species, and the worlds inside and outside of the human being.

The future is among us

A philosopher among physicists and a physicist among philosophers, Michio Kaku, seeks to answer questions about what will happen over the next hundred years, or what the world will be like in the middle or end of that period. Kaku has argued that the key to understanding the future is to understand the fundamental laws of nature⁶ and their application in inventions and discoveries, machines, processes and relations that will be established in the future. His desire is to fill a certain void in the previous attempts to predict the future world of science, in which, according to him, the scientists did not have enough say. Kaku has warned: 'Of course, it is impossible to

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4 As George Sorell emphasized in his criticisms of infatuation with social progress in the 19th and 20th centuries, these words practically did not exist before the modern era, when they were (ab)used to describe something 'normal, desirable and inevitable.'

5 Brockman, J. (ed.), *This Will Change Everything*, preface.

6 Kaku has indicated two passions that have inspired him in life: the desire to understand all physical laws of the universe and the desire to look into the future. As for the first wish, he would like to see this understanding within a coherent (unique) theory, and research has led him to the insight that these two passions are actually complementary...

predict the future with complete accuracy. The best one can do, I feel, is to tap into the minds of the scientists at the cutting edge of research, who are doing the yeoman's work of inventing the future. They are the ones who are creating the devices, inventions, and therapies that will revolutionize civilization.⁷ He is interested in the 'stories' of scientists at the source of the latest discoveries, their way of thinking, and the frameworks in which they creatively analyse paths towards the future, as well as the consequences that will follow if their predictions begin to come true.

Predictions, especially those in the long run, are not reliable – as confirmed by the example when, back in 1893, as part of the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, 74 prominent personalities answered the question of how they saw the world and life in a hundred years. Their predictions that there would be transatlantic commercial airships in 1993 now seem a bit ridiculous, as everyone thought they would be – balloons.⁸ Today, far more important and deeper questions are raised, among other things about the possible changes in the essential characteristics of human life and human nature, all the way to the almost inevitable coexistence of natural and artificial intelligence. 'Dreams' as well as realistic predictions about the scientific-technical future have also tended to rely on reflections on a sort of 'tipping point'⁹ or point of sudden change, in which the future history will 'spin' to finally gain acceleration and also take directions that no one expected. Certain inventions, discoveries, or unpredictable events direct the historical and social lines towards a future that we have hardly imagined or have not supposed in this form at all. The point is that, if we try to understand the real and potential possibility of change, 'to appreciate the power of epidemics, we have to abandon this expectation about proportionality. We need to prepare ourselves for the possibility that sometimes big changes follow from small events, and that sometimes these changes can happen very quickly.'¹⁰

Precisely in these failed predictions lies the possibility of making more accurate forecasts of the future, which would ultimately help both experts and lay people determine the general local, regional, national, and global trends, as well as their personal and individual roles in the upcoming changes.

7 Kaku, M., *Physics of the Future: How Science Will Shape Human Destiny and Our Daily Lives by the Year 2100* (Penguin UK, e-book, 2011), introduction.

8 Thus, Senator John. J. Ingalls said that it would be 'as common for the citizen to call for his dirigible balloon as it now is for his buggy or his boots.' Kaku, M., *Physics of the Future*.

9 Malcolm Gladwell has observed certain social trends and orientations, and their dynamics, through the prism of 'epidemics', geometric progressions in which 'viruses' (individual social phenomena and/or possibilities of change) are doubled and multiplied until they turn into something previously unpredictable. It is difficult to understand this 'redesigned' phenomenon, as its final effect and consequences surpass the proportions of its initial cause by far.

10 Gladwell, M., *The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference* (Boston, New York, and London: Little, Brown and Co., 2000), 11.

The scientists themselves, regardless of their knowledge and openness, scientific caution, and the desire to be as objective as possible, cannot avoid major oscillations in the temporal pinpointing of such changes. For example, when it comes to artificial intelligence, Vernor Vinge stated in 1993 that 'within thirty years, we will have the technological means to create superhuman intelligence. Shortly after, the human era will be ended... I'll be surprised if this event occurs before 2005 or after 2030.' Douglas Hofstadter voiced a contrary prognosis, saying: 'I'd be very surprised if anything remotely like this happened in the next 100 years to 200 years.' One of the founding figures in the history of artificial intelligence, Marvin Minsky of MIT, was more cautious and refused to predict the precise date of birth of the superior AI: he believed in it, but shied away from being the oracle.¹¹ After all, the question of 'superiority' is a complex question – it is the question of what it means for artificial intelligence to assume and exceed human intelligence. Usually one refers to 'conscious machines', but what does it really mean? These are the essential issues of our time.

As for the blending of humans and machines, cyborgs and artificial intelligence that creates its own algorithms, and other, more perfect machines, or quantum and bio computers that will surpass the number of brain neurons and their synapses, part of the public and professional circles seems unwilling even to start the discussion. "To be present on the Web is ipso facto to be archived on the Web."¹² Man becomes himself an object of changes with an ever-lesser impact on their character. However, it is not excluded that the current system and the characteristics of social networks 'like a prison without walls'¹³ – despite all their potential abuses, the creation of superficial thinking, and the fact that they divert attention from the relevant issues – will also lead to communication advantages, because owing to the rapid and leaping progress of networking, information will be exchanged in the interest of the public and democracy. Masses of individuals throughout the global system, although it is not certain that this will happen as a mega-change by 2050, will be embedded in advanced systems of international participation and uniform life. Despite this gain for mankind, there is a warning that science and technology might be the subject of change, rather than man.

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¹¹ Cited from: Kaku, M., *Physics of the Future*.

¹² Levinson, P., *Digital McLuhan: A Guide to the Information Millennium* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), 155.

¹³ Alić, S., *Masmediji, zatvor bez zidova* (Zagreb: Centar za filozofiju medija i mediološka istraživanja, 2012).

According to Martin Giles, *The Economist's* US technology correspondent, we are heading for a 'growth of cloud computing, which involves storing large amounts of information on servers that can be accessed almost anywhere and via many different kinds of device. As further innovations drive down the cost of this computer power, they will make it even easier and cheaper to tap into social media on the move. Coupled with advances in areas such as artificial intelligence, this will help produce a kind of social super-cloud by 2050 that automatically serves up the most relevant information and contacts from a person's social networks.'¹⁴ When speaking about the media and networking the future, Ray Kurzweil examined 'the time it took for various new technologies to become mass media – defined as reaching a quarter of the American population, which was typically the lead market. By this measure, it took the telephone 35 years after it was introduced in 1876. Radio and television needed increasingly less time (30 and 25 years, respectively, I.G.). But once silicon took over, adoption sped up dramatically. By the time the web was born in 1991 it took a mere seven years to reach a quarter of the American population.'¹⁵ Kurzweil also predicted that sometime by 2045 computers would reach the level of human intelligence; many consider it as impossible, but one must take into account that owing to exponential growth there will be exceptionally significant shifts in this sphere of 'coexistence' of people and artificial intelligence. 'Since our new electric technology is not an extension of our bodies but of our central nervous systems, we now see all technology, including language, as a means of processing experience, a means of storing and speeding information. And in such a situation, all technology can plausibly be regarded as weapons.'¹⁶

14 Franklin, D. and Andrews, J., ed. *Megachange: The World in 2050* (The Economist, e-book, 2012), 115.

15 Kenneth Cukier, 'The Web of Knowledge,' in: Franklin, D. and Andrews, J., ed. *Megachange*, 403.

16 McLuhan, M., *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (Cambridge, MA and London: The MIT Press, 1994), 344.

The divine status of technology and digital DNA

*'We look at the present through a rearview mirror.
We march backwards into the future.'*
— (McLuhan & Fiore, 1967)¹⁷

For McLuhan, the rear-view mirror becomes 'a fundamental operating principle for the evolution of media and its effects (...) Thus, McLuhan's notion of older media becoming content for newer media, and therein becoming more visible to the point of being mistaken for the newer media, is but a rendition of the rear-view mirror, and its redirection of our gaze ahead to the just-passed. So too is his observation that we fall in love with ourselves when we look into our reflections in our media, and become blind to their real effects, for we are the media's proximate creators.'¹⁸ Levinson states that, according to McLuhan, 'we hypnotize ourselves via our media ('Narcissus Narcosis'),' which means that 'we are its products or effects rather than vice versa.'¹⁹ The Narcissus myth wants to show us that by uncritically accepting technology we are thrown into the role of Narcissus, the state of stupor and narcosis: 'The youth Narcissus mistook his own reflection in the water for another person. This extension of himself by mirror numbed his perceptions' (McLuhan, 1964), with the consequence that he drowned.²⁰ Are we really so numbed today that we cannot grasp the ultimate effects and consequences of the media and technology?

In his study 'Human Replay: A Theory of the Evolution of Media,' Levinson has set up a general theory that can help with predicting the future of communication: 'Media evolve in a Darwinian manner, with human beings acting not only as their inventors (obviously) but their selectors (i.e., the selecting environment, in Darwinian terms). We make our selections on the basis of two criteria: (a) we want media to extend our communications beyond the biological boundaries of naked seeing and hearing (this only restates McLuhan's view of media as 'extensions' across time and space – a view which he in turn had constructively adopted and expanded from Harold Innis);

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¹⁷ Levinson, P., *Digital McLuhan*, 173.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 174-175.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 183.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 98.

(b) we want media to recapture elements of that biological communication which early artificial extensions may have lost – we want, in other words, our hearth of natural communication even as we exceed it in our extensions.²¹

21 *Ibid.*, 52.

Levinson argues that ‘discarnate man coincides with the godlike attribute of being everywhere at once,²² while Carpenter associates the idea of an omnipresent centre with discarnate man, as ‘God is a Being whose center is everywhere, whose borders are nowhere.²³ Already Sigmund Freud noticed that when we don our technologies, we ‘become a kind of prosthetic God.²⁴ Levinson explains that ‘Freud had in mind much more than just electronic media, noting that boats, aircraft, eyeglasses, and photographs – as well as telephones and writing – all conspire to make us ‘truly magnificent,’ if not particularly happy or well-adjusted to this God-like stature.²⁵ However, ‘each of these technologies was much more – the telephone breached the privacy of our home, the automobile empowered countries which had oil, radio became a nationwide simultaneous mass medium – and since none of these consequences were picked up in the initial retro-labels, those rear-view mirrors distracted us from crucial developments.²⁶ Thus, ‘the overall evolution of media can be seen as an attempt, first, to fulfill the yearnings of imagination by inventing media that extend communication beyond the biological boundaries of hearing and seeing (...) and, second, to recapture elements of the natural world lost in the initial extension (...) From this vantage point, the entire evolution of media can be seen as remedial.²⁷ In other words: ‘Any invention or technology is an extension or self-amputation of our physical bodies, and such extension also demands new ratios or new equilibriums among the other organs and extensions of the body.²⁸ The question is: ‘But will this increase in art a la McLuhan – this shift in many older technologies from our unthinking use to our critical appreciation of them – result in a net improvement of society?’²⁹ Neil Postman has argued that ‘we ought to ask ourselves, of a new technology, what problems does it solve or seek to address for us?’³⁰

22 *Ibid.*, 57.

23 *Ibid.*, 82.

24 *Ibid.*, 60.

25 *Ibidem.*

26 *Ibid.*, 15-16.

27 *Ibid.*, 179.

28 McLuhan, M., *Understanding Media*, 45.

29 Levinson, P., *Digital McLuhan*, 14.

30 *Ibid.*, 180.

31 An interesting extrapolation is that on electrification, which was initially carried out for one purpose, the bulb, but afterwards supplied power to various devices, including the personal computer. Thus, sensory networks, artificial intelligence, and the huge amount of information will also eventually be used for phenomena and things that are now hardly conceivable.

One of the main scientists’ warnings is that we cannot predict the future use of this abundance of information and emerging technologies,³¹ but we must create them as the qualitative rather than quantitative foundations for our future.

'Technology rarely evolves in a way that people think it will (...) our processing and storage technology is nothing compared with nature itself. The DNA in roughly 60 trillion cells of every person about equals the information stored in all our computer gadgets (...) And the computational power of all the world's computers combined in 2010, measured in processing instructions, amounted only to what the brain can process about every five minutes, in terms of the maximum number of nerve impulses.'³²

Perhaps it is comforting to imagine that such an 'inevitable' future will not come 'too soon', unless the human species destroys itself and the Planet. But it is certain that we are already approaching, with mathematical or geometric progression, a future that we will 'share' with a more intelligent and more or less destructive species. Our 'robot creations will gradually rise up the evolutionary tree. Today, they are as smart as cockroaches. In the future, they will be as smart as mice, rabbits, dogs and cats, monkeys, and then they will rival humans.'³³ Probably it will take decades or a century, but overcoming human intelligence nevertheless seems to be just a matter of time, regardless of our anthropocentric habits or our wounded human ego. Far more important, given the inevitability of the future (r)evolutions, are considerations of the 'actual' nature of man and humanity, and the need of finding one or more solutions for what follows, which Bernard Cazes presented in an extremely stratified and almost futuristic manner back in the mid-1980s: 'Whether one sets on to speculate or to paint, the human mind obviously does not operate erratically: it draws on a limited number of figures: purposeful evolutionism, breaks in progress, decadence (...) We will note that after 1945, the desire to observe that hidden face of time which is the future gradually captures all sorts of authorities...'³⁴

Recalling that one of the symbols of Prometheus, that courageous and daring representative of the human race – whose name, by the way, means '*the-predicting-one*' – Cazes has reduced thinking about the future on images or branches. The first is in the *intention* to paint and draw the future, and largely related to satisfying the need for spiritual food through novels, journalistic and technical texts, and discussions about the future. The second branch is related to the *idea of change*: the story of the future is actually one about change, about confronting

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³² Franklin, D. and Andrews, J., ed. *Megachange*, 405.

³³ Kaku, M., *Physics of the Future*.

³⁴ Cazes, Bernard, *Histoire des futurs. Les figures de l'avenir de saint Augustin au XXI^e siècle* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2008), 11.

changes based on common sense. The third image refers to the content of the future, in which one must participate and develop in accordance with the desire to progress in the society and the world. After a complex elaboration and clarification of historical and technological pathways and the development of human thinking, behaviour and attitudes, Cazes addresses his contemporaneity with the conclusion that 'behind the modern forms of attention directed at the future, whether they are called pro-spective, possible future or *future research*, one can discern a more or less clearly expressed belief that humanity is heading towards a radical transformation.'³⁵

35 Ibid., 466. Cazes also quotes Emmanuel Bern's lucid ideas from 1972: 'I do not think that I am predicting anything when I say: the world will change, since it can not continue to be the way it is,' as well as Gaston Berger's statement: 'Nothing has happened since the Neolithic, finally something is happening again in the history of mankind.'

The end of biological consciousness

For the ancient Greeks, memory was Mnemosyne, mother of the Muses. Today, 'not only memory has lost its divinity; it's well on its way to losing its humanness. Mnemosyne has become a machine.'³⁶ Our brains turn into 'simple signal-processing units, quickly shepherding information into consciousness and then back out again.'³⁷ Futurologist Ray Kurzweil has argued that 'although we can't yet build a brain like HAL'S (...) we can describe right now how we could do it' in that we are 'ascertain the architecture of interneuronal connections (and) design simulated neural nets that will operate in a similar fashion.'³⁸ The difference between biological memory and computer memory is that biological memory is alive. 'The process of long-term memory creation in the human brain (...) is one of the incredible processes which is so clearly different than 'artificial brains' like those in a computer. While an artificial brain absorbs information and immediately saves it in its memory, the human brain continues to process information long after it is received, and the quality of memory depends on how the information is processed.'³⁹

36 Carr, N., *The Shallows: What the Internet Is Doing to Our Brains* (New York and London: W.W. Norton & Co., 2010), 387.

37 Ibid., 260.

38 Ibid., 375.

39 Ibid., 406-407.

In his book *Computer Power and Human Reason*, Weizenbaum has argued: 'To understand the effects of a computer (...) you had to see the machine in the context of mankind's past intellectual technologies, the long succession of tools that, like the map and the clock, transformed nature and altered 'man's perception of reality'. Such technologies become part of 'the very stuff out of which man builds his world.'⁴⁰

40 Ibid., 436.

Merzenich is of the opinion that the Network causes changes in the brain: 'The current explosion of digital technology not only is changing the way we live and communicate but is rapidly and profoundly altering our brains (...) stimulates brain cell alteration and neurotransmitter release, gradually strengthening new neural pathways in our brains while weakening old ones.'⁴¹ Will the machines be able to think? 'In order for the old memory to make sense in the current brain, the memory has to be updated. Biological memory is in a perpetual state of renewal. The memory stored in a computer, by contrast, takes the form of distinct and static bits; you can move the bits from one storage drive to another...'⁴²

Somewhere during the transition to the new millennium, Ken Wilber, an intriguing, creative, and sophisticated researcher of the development of human consciousness, historical movements, evolutionary flows, and revolutionary leaps, wrote his *Brief History of Everything*, in which he examined all the possible paths that the human society might take with regard to the level of consciousness, goals, and actions. Providing a clearer picture of the complexity of relations in social groups, among the individuals and the authorities, Wilber has demystified and disclosed the paths towards human behaviours, ways of thinking, and quests for the truth. It is, therefore, good to draw out of this extensive work some of the characteristics of the society that he wants to see, in which the future will be, in fact, a corrective of history, an orientation point for the present, and the creator of all possible abilities and worldviews. Starting from the rich and varied human culture and art, technologies and scientific discoveries and researches, Wilber wanted to create a map much like that of the human genome project, 'except that this would be a type of human Consciousness and Culture Project: the mapping of all those cultural capacities that humans everywhere have access to. This would give us a rather extraordinary map of human potentials, a great map of human possibilities. And it would further help us to recognize any of those potentials that we – that you and I – might not yet be fulfilling. It would be a map of our own higher stages of growth and a map of our own greater opportunities.'⁴³

One of the greatest contributions to researching the current 'transition' from the present into an uncertain and unforeseeable future, along with Kaku's dissection of science and

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⁴¹ Ibid., 262.

⁴² Ibid., 407-408.

⁴³ Wilber, K., *A Brief History of Everything* (2nd ed. Boston: Shambhala, 2007), xx.

technology, has been the approach of Yuval Noah Harari. In his studies, especially the book *Homo deus*, he has looked at the *new human agenda*, a more optimistic view of the world and its chances for development, based on experience from the past and history. Every scientific or technological problem has its own solution, which will be found out sooner or later, Harari says. He is of the opinion that even the social problems of inequality or poverty, violence and cultural hegemony can be solved in an adequate manner if we join forces. In his book, he has given three important temporal determinants of *Homo sapiens*: when he conquered the world, when he gave meaning to the world, and when he lost the control.

Harari's exceptional ability to find the essence in relation to the present and the future is formulated first of all in identifying three essential, interconnected processes in which he sees both the continuation of the present and the indications of the future – firstly, the fact that modern science has adopted a comprehensive dogma according to which organisms are algorithms and life is data processing. Secondly, intelligence has separated itself from consciousness, and thirdly, the non-conscious but highly intelligent algorithms might soon know us better than we know ourselves. But, equally important are the questions that Harari asks on the basis of the above, which are crucial for all further reflections and philosophy of the future – '(1) Are organisms really just algorithms, and is life really just data processing? (2) What's more valuable – intelligence or consciousness? (3) What will happen to society, politics and daily life when non-conscious but highly intelligent algorithms know us better than we know ourselves?'⁴⁴

44 Harari, Yuval Noah, *Homo Deus: A Brief History of Tomorrow* (HarperCollins, e-book, 2016), 807.

Challenges of the scientific future

*If you want to know your past, look at your present conditions.
If you want to know your future, look into your present actions.*

— Buddhist saying⁴⁵

*We should all be concerned about the future because
we will have to spend the rest of our lives there.*

— Charles Kettering⁴⁶

45 Watson, R., *Future Files: The 5 Trends that Will Shape the Next 50 Years* (London: Nicholas Brealey, 2008), 17.

46 Ibid., 241.

We shall now present some of the actual examples of the possible scientific future of mankind and the world:

1. **FUSION OF MAN AND TECHNOLOGY** – ‘By the year 2050 there will be two highly intelligent species on Earth: traditional, genetically pure humans and technologically aided hybrid humans. The latter will be ‘people’ who have been genetically manipulated by the insertion of DNA segments to prevent certain diseases or to create particular emotions or personality traits. They will also have been robotically and computer enhanced to improve strength, sight, vision or intelligence.’⁴⁷ It is known that ‘DNA is discarnate insofar as it is not itself a physical body – its relation to physical bodies is on this level no different than the relation of a computer program to the tasks it makes the computer perform. Yet just as software cannot do anything outside of an appropriate hardware environment, so too is DNA powerless, meaningless without raw living material to shape into organisms.’⁴⁸
2. **SELF-MEDICATION** – In the future, people will be more focused on themselves, they will ‘in isolation bubbles and won’t trust doctors, hospitals or pharmaceutical companies, so self-diagnosis and self-medication will become commonplace. In 2050 smart software packages will be available to identify what’s wrong with us and websites like Genes Reunited will offer genetic histories enabling us to anticipate hereditary diseases and defects. We will also be able to hire or purchase robotic surgeons to perform operations in our own home or office.’⁴⁹
3. **TECHNOFOOD – FOOD OF THE FUTURE** – Nanotechnology will allow us to ‘change the properties of an individual product at will, so you will be able to increase the vitamin E content of an orange-juice drink after you’ve bought it.’⁵⁰ In addition, it will be used to ‘store certain ingredients or additives inside food products to be called up at will.’⁵¹ By firing a command off your cell phone, we will be able to ‘change the color of your soft drink or dial up the spice level of your ready-to-eat curry.’⁵² People will also use foods to induce a specific kind of mood or get rid of unwanted memories.

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47 *Ibid.*, 22.

48 Levinson, P., *Digital McLuhan*, 62.

49 Watson, R., *Future Files*, 35.

50 *Ibid.*, 173.

51 *Ibidem.*

52 *Ibidem.*

4. **AUTONOMOUS CARS OF THE FUTURE** – In addition to moving autonomously, cars will emit important data – if your car regularly detects an abnormal heartbeat, it will send the information wirelessly to your doctor. They will also ‘become mobile technology platforms linking data to other services such as healthcare.’⁵³ In the future, we will also see ‘mood-sensitive vehicles that adjust their behavior according to the mood of the driver or occupants.’⁵⁴ (...) For example, if traffic conditions deteriorate (or you receive a phone call that makes you anxious or stressful) the vehicle will compensate with relaxing dashboard instrumentation, anti-stress lighting and chillout sounds.⁵⁵

53 *Ibid.*, 145.
54 *Ibidem.*
55 *Ibid.*, 149.
 5. **LIFE-CACHING – MEMORIZING LIFE** – Scientists have predicted that ‘in a few years’ time you will be able to personalize your doll’s face (to your own choice or, more likely, to resemble a celebrity), communicate with your doll by telephone or email, have real conversations and experience your entire life history through the eyes, ears (and nose) of your doll. The latter will be achieved by the doll and linked devices preserving your emails, phone calls and other images and information.⁵⁶ The doll will become ‘a digital storage device with the capacity to document your entire life. The so-called life-caching industry is already worth us\$2.5 billion annually. This will in turn give rise to a debate about the ethics of information, involving questions such as who owns such data, whether or not it can be sold or traded and what happens to the information once the ‘owner’ dies.’⁵⁷

56 *Ibid.*, 24.
57 *Ibidem.*
 6. **THE RISE OF MACHINES** – It is assumed that by 2030 computers will become more intelligent than humans, and ‘humankind will be faced with something of a dilemma. If machines are more intelligent than their makers, what’s to stop them taking over?’⁵⁸ Futurologist Ian Pearson argues that ‘by the half-century mark, it should be possible to download the contents of a human brain into a computer. If the human mind is then aware of what has happened this would be a form of immortality and the start of the human race splitting into two halves: the natural and the enhanced.’⁵⁹ Ray Kurzweil, however, believes that ‘intelligence will expand in a limitless, exponential manner once we achieve
- 58 *Ibid.*, 41-42.
59 *Ibid.*, 42.

a certain level of advancement in genetics, nanotechnology and robotics and the integration of that technology with human biology.⁶⁰

7. **ROBOTIC MISTRESSES** – Already now ‘Gorgeous Amanda’ can recognize voices, identify objects, and show emotions. ‘Real Dolls’ are silicone sex puppets whose future is in the artificial intelligence they are planning to incorporate in them, so that the doll can arouse her owner also mentally, not only physically. Matt McMullen, the creator of Real Dolls, believes that ‘not every person on the planet will be associated with robots and artificial intelligence. I think that it attracts a specific type of people for one reason or another. Whether this is a matter of personal choice or not, they are in a state of mind where their bond with a robot or with artificial intelligence is more appealing than a relationship with a human being. I don’t think suddenly everyone will break up their connections with others and devote themselves to robots.’⁶¹ In Japan, more than two thousand ultrarealistic sex dolls are sold annually, which concerns the experts as the birth rate is decreasing.⁶² Masayuki Ozaki has found his luck in life with an ultrarealistic silicone doll Mayu although he lives with his wife and daughter, as he says that love between him and his wife has long disappeared.⁶³
8. Future technological achievements will supposedly include ‘airborne networks that allow airliners to fly without pilots (...) silicon photonics (using silicon chips to emit light to speed up data processing); quantum wires (using carbon nanotube wires to carry electricity); biomechatronics (mixing robotics with nervous systems to create new artificial limbs) (...) bacterial factories; metabolomics (a new medical-diagnosis tool using metabolic data) (...) smart mirrors (that show what we might look like next year) (...) space ladders, holographic displays and storage, home-use DNA stamps (to identify what’s really ours) (...) a fully sensory internet (all five senses delivered over the web) (...) robotic pest control (...) neuronic whips (a weapon that stimulates the nerve endings to cause extreme discomfort) (...) mindwipes (...) stress-control clothing (...) sleep surrogates and self-repairing roads.’⁶⁴

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60 Ibid., 43.

61 M.Ra (2016), ‘Lutke za seks i više od toga: U plastične ljubavnice stiže umjetna inteligencija’ [Sex dolls and more than that: Plastic mistresses will be supplied with Artificial Intelligence], Index.hr, <https://www.index.hr/magazin/clanak/lutke-za-seks-i-vise-od-toga-u-plasticne-ljubavnice-stize-umjetna-inteligencija/927407.aspx> (last accessed on November 13, 2018).

62 Kuček, Tomislav (2017), ‘Bolja je od prave žene, uvijek je tu za mene i želim biti s njom zauvijek’ [She’s better than a real woman, she’s always there for me and I want to stay with her forever], 100posto.hr, <https://100posto.hr/zivot/bolja-je-od-prave-zene-uvijek-je-tu-za-mene-i-zelim-biti-s-njom-zauvijek> (last accessed on November 13, 2018).

63 Ibidem.

64 Watson, R., *Future Files*, 54–55.

Conclusion

According to Weizenbaum, 'What makes us most human (...) is what is least computable about us – the connections between our mind and our body, the experiences that shape our memory and our thinking, our capacity for emotion and empathy.'⁶⁵ But today, we are transforming man into a computer, a device that increasingly becomes 'a logical ending of our technological momentum; what would remove the tension that we feel between the real and the artificial... But this tension is our last completely human trait...'⁶⁶ Weizenbaum is of the opinion that 'the great danger we face as we become more intimately involved with our computers (...) is that we'll begin to lose our humanness, to sacrifice the very qualities that separate us from machines.'⁶⁷ Will the 'enhanced people regard others as lesser beings and subdue or destroy them?'⁶⁸ According to Weizenbaum, 'the only way to avoid that fate (...) is to have the self-awareness and the courage to refuse to delegate to computers the most human of our mental activities and intellectual pursuits, particularly 'tasks that demand wisdom.'⁶⁹

Leon Kass, an ethicist from the University of Chicago, says that 'these technologies put the scientists and physicians in the 'roles of divine creators, judges, and saviors.'⁷⁰ This role has brought us into a situation where we are 'confronted with the possibility of disappearing even as individuals.'⁷¹ We believe that it is a happy circumstance for man that what makes us human cannot be placed in a technical device or in artificial intelligence.

In the world of technological future, populated by enhanced cyborgs, avatars, and autonomous robots (the possibility of thinking – I.G.), 'moral decisions will no longer exist – what will remain is the strategic decisions (of the masters of transhuman evolution – I.G.). If we want to stop this technology, we must do it immediately, before it starts. That decision will have to be political... We have to feel deep in ourselves why this time we should tell Prometheus: 'No, thank you.'⁷²

65 Carr, N., *The Shallows*, 438.

66 McKibben, Dosta, *Genetički inženjering i kraj ljudske prirode*. Planetopija, Zagreb, 2006., str. 71.

67 Carr, N., *The Shallows*, 438.

68 Dosta, *Genetički inženjering i kraj ljudske prirode.*, str. 51.

69 Carr, N., *The Shallows*, 438.

70 Dosta, *Genetički inženjering i kraj ljudske prirode.*, str. 58.

71 Ibid., 61.

72 Ibid., 49.

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Digital Media Environments and their Implications: Instagram

Key words digital media, digital media environments, social networks, internet, Instagram

Abstract At the beginning of the 21st century, we find ourselves at the threshold of a new level in the development of digital media. Digital media environments are going beyond the scope of fixed and isolated social environments to become more and more integrated in the everyday lives of individuals up to the point at which it is difficult to distinguish between being connected to the internet and living in the real world. Social networks contribute to this phenomenon since they represent a digital environment within which we are becoming increasingly immersed at the global level. The focus of this text is Instagram as a network whose functioning is organized around the visual element. The aim of this paper is to consider the implications of digital environments by using Instagram as an example within the framework of the theoretical and conceptual framework of digital media environments.

Digitalna medijska okruženja i njihove implikacije: Instagram

Ključne riječi digitalni mediji, digitalna medijska okruženja, društvene mreže, internet, Instagram

Sažetak Na početku 21. stoljeća nalazimo se na pragu nove razine razvoja digitalnih medija. Digitalna medijska okruženja izlaze iz fiksni izolirani društvenih djelokruga i sve se više integriraju u svakodnevnicu pojedinca do razine na kojoj postaje teško razlučiti granicu između spojenosti na internet i stvarnog svijeta. Tome doprinose i društvene mreže kao podvrsta digitalnih okruženja u koju smo sve više uronjeni na globalnoj razini. U prvom planu ovog rada je Instagram kao mreža čije je funkcioniranje organizirano oko vizualnog. Namjera je rada promisliti implikacije digitalnih okruženja na primjeru Instagrama u okvirima teorijskog konceptualnog okvira digitalnih medijskih okruženja.

The current postmodern era is an era of omnipresent digital media. These media are examined in different theoretical conceptualizations and in different ways, but the focus of this text will deliberately be on the theoretical concept of digital environments. We thus focus on the difference between the modern context of digital media at the beginning of the 21st century and the period in which mass media reigned, which includes the early era of the internet. Contrary to previous periods of media development, modern digital media environments have become omnipresent owing to the new information and communications technology (ICT). They are the result of certain technological characteristics of the new era in internet development – high-speed internet service provided by broadband connections and the possibility of accessing the internet on mobile devices so that a fixed point of access is no longer required. This new era in internet development also introduces a different software architecture which functions on the principles of Web 2.0. Web 2.0 principles involve a software architecture organized on the principles of a participative platform, where content is created by the users themselves and the architecture improves with the increasing number of users creating and modifying content from various sources, consequently creating the ‘network effect’.¹ Taking all of this into account, these digital media no longer have to be consumed separate from other social activities, they create media environments that are increasingly integrated into the everyday life of a modern individual. Furthermore, the last couple of years saw the development of ICT and the so-called ‘internet of things’; devices are connected through a network, not only to the internet, but also among each other, thus creating a digital infrastructure for the collection of data or managing devices through sensors, enabling the transmission and processing data or providing suggestions based on these. This development additionally integrates devices connected to the internet into the everyday social activities of the individual at the spatial level as well. This media configuration significantly changes the ways in which digital media mediate experience. Modern digital media environments silently function in the background of social reality in a way that is becoming less and less visible and social reality is becoming increasingly dependent

¹ Tim O’Reilly, ‘What is Web 2.0: Design Patterns and Business Models for the Next Generation of Software’, *International Journal of Digital Economics* 65/2007, p. 17.

² Jan Van Dijk, *The Network Society*, The SAGE Publications, Thousand Oaks 2012, p. 20.

³ Henry Jenkins, *Convergence culture: Where old and new media collide*, New York University Press, New York 2008, p. 16.

on their functioning. This level of digital media integration within social life therefore requires a new theoretical and conceptual framework for analysing media.

The beginnings of this society are examined through different concepts by different theorists. One of these for example is Jenkins's concept of convergence, in the sense of new media depending on mass, data and telecommunication technologies². This type of society is characterized by new media being more intertwined in such a way that media content becomes a process unobstructedly flowing through them and it is possible to access the same content through different media.³ Jan Van Dijk calls this a 'network society'; a society whose functioning increasingly relies on the infrastructure of social and media networks and these networks become primary forms of organization at all levels.⁴ Manuel Castells's concept of a 'network society' posits that networks are becoming the main units of organization and key activities are organized through ICT creating a 'a space of flows'; the material support of time-sharing social practices, functioning through flows.⁵ Scott Lash talks about the 'omnipresence of social life being mediated through the media'.⁶ The scope of digitally mediated social activities really is pervasive today, which is also confirmed by statistical indicators. Eurostat data for the EU region on digital habits in 2017 show that 84% of individuals at EU-28 level aged between 16 and 74 used the internet, of which 72% on a daily basis.⁷ In Croatia a percentage of 67% individuals aged between 16 and 74 used the internet in 2017, of which 58% on a daily basis.⁸ A total of 65% EU-28 users used the internet on mobile phones or other mobile devices far from work or home, while in Croatia this percentage was 51%.⁹ The data is similar at the global level. According to a global research conducted by PEW in 39 countries, 72% of people owned a smartphone in the period 2017-2018 within 17 countries PEW considers to be developed economies, and 86-87% of people used smartphones or the internet at least occasionally.¹⁰ At the same time in 19 countries PEW sees as developing economies or countries, 64% of people used the internet or owned smartphones in the period 2017-2018 (an increase compared to 42% in 2013) and 42% individuals owned a smartphone (an increase compared to 24% in 2013).¹¹ Furthermore, according to indicators measured through the

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4 J. Van Dijk, *The Network Society*, p. 20.

5 Manuel Castells, *The Rise of the Network Society*, Wiley-Blackwell, New Jersey 2011.

6 Scott Lash, 'Power after Hegemony: Cultural studies in Mutation', *Theory culture & society* 24 (3/2007), p. 70.

7 Eurostat, 'Digital economy and society statistics – households and individuals', https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Digital_economy_and_society_statistics_-_households_and_individuals, accessed 10 October 2018.

8 Ibid.

9 Ibid.

10 PewGlobal, 'Social Media Use Continues to Rise in Developing Countries but Plateaus Across Developed Ones', <http://www.pewglobal.org/2018/06/19/social-media-use-continues-to-rise-in-developing-countries-but-plateaus-across-developed-ones/>, accessed 10 October 2018.

11 Ibid.

DESI Index, there was a high percentage of economic activities online in 2017 at EU level; 68% of EU population bought goods or services online, 61% used e-banking services and 21% used apps for booking accommodation from other individuals online.¹² According to data from the Croatian Bureau of Statistics in 2017, 50% of internet users used e-banking services, and 37% used the internet for selling products and services.¹³ Using the internet for information and communication is also widely spread; in Croatia 91% internet users mostly use it for reading newspapers and magazines, 88% for finding information on products and services, 72% use electronic mail, and 70% participate in social networks.¹⁴ According to data provided by the DESI Index in 2017, a total of 66% of the population used e-government services in 2017, and 22% used healthcare services through the internet.¹⁵ Although Croatia lags behind the EU-28 average in some types of internet usage, statistical indicators for EU-28 and Croatia confirm theoretical conceptualizations on the increased dependence of society on networks supported by ICT technologies, which is also true at the global level. Digital channels are becoming more integrated in social reality, in the context of staying informed, as well as participating in social and economic activities or realizing civil rights.

We may therefore conclude that modern digital environments require a new level of theoretical conceptualization. Living in the early era of internet when it was used in the privacy of one's own home through a modem, certainly constitutes a different experience than consuming media content on a mobile phone while standing in line at a bank. The concept of digital environments highlights the individual phenomenological dimension of experience for the user and how network infrastructures are integrated in the everyday level of user experience. Modern media digital platforms are intertwined with our everyday social experience to such a degree that, at the phenomenological level of such an existence, it is difficult to determine the point at which being connected to the internet is separate from the experience of not being connected. Digital media are no longer just media, in the sense of isolated technological devices for the use of which it is necessary to remove oneself from one's social life. On the contrary, when technology is separated from the physical location of use, which is the case in accessing the internet on mobile devices or connecting

12 Digital Economy and Society Index Report 2018, 'Use of Internet Services', file:///C:/Users/user/Downloads/3DESIreportUseofInternetServicespdf%20(2).pdf, accessed 20 October 2018.

13 Croatian Bureau of Statistics, 'Usage of information and communication technologies (ICT) in households and by individuals, 2017', https://www.dzs.hr/Hrv_Eng/publication/2017/02-03-02_01_2017.htm, accessed 20 October 2018.

14 Ibid.

15 Digital Economy and Society Index Report 2018, 'Use of Internet Services', file:///C:/Users/user/Downloads/3DESIreportUseofInternetServicespdf%20(2).pdf, accessed 20 October 2018.

the urban infrastructure to the internet, digital media become integrated within social functioning to such a degree that they literally become – environments. It is precisely the fact they are not dependent on an actual physical location, but can exist within the social infrastructure, that gives them characteristics of an environment. And since at the macro-level they have become increasingly integrated in the social structure, they become more necessary at the micro-level in order to participate in social activities, which introduces a new level of integration in the everyday life of the modern individual. Since an increasing number of social subsystems depend on digital technologies, which are entwined with complex local and global infrastructures, cultures, societies and environments, a lack of participation in them does not represent only a technological problem, but also the problem of social inclusion¹⁶. In societies whose functioning largely depends on digital technologies, a lack of participation in digital environments is translated into social exclusion. For example, today social networks are increasingly used for job searching and employment, there are e-services for participating in realizing civil rights or settling civic duties, economic activities such as buying, selling or booking accommodation are also increasingly made online, as shown by previously mentioned statistical indicators. We can assume that for generations growing up in such environments, this type of using technology will be so common, they will be unable to even imagine different ways of functioning, but also that living in these media environments will have implications for the development of the human mind, to an extent that is difficult to fully ascertain at this moment.

In this text we shall look more closely at social networks as an example of such digital environments.

Social networks can be defined as digital environments in which content is completely or partially created by its users through using the technological platform enabling communication with other users. Social networks are part of pervasive social digital environments for which we can claim to have encouraged the spread of these networks, given the frequency of their usage. According to data by the Croatian Bureau of Statistics for early 2017, social networks were the most common purposes of internet usage in Croatia (71%).¹⁷ According to Eurostat data, the percentage at EU level is 67%.¹⁸ Research

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16 Massimo Ragnedda, 'Reducing and preventing digital discrimination: Digital inclusion strategies in Europe', in Massimo Ragnedda, Bruce Mutsaviro (ed.), *Digital inclusion: An international comparative analysis*. Lexington books, Langham, Boulder, New York, London 2018, p. 6.

17 The Croatian Bureau of Statistics, 'Usage of information and communication technologies (ICT) in households and by individuals, 2017', https://www.dzs.hr/Hrv_Eng/publication/2017/02-03-02_01_2017.htm, accessed 15 September 2018.

18 Eurostat, 'Individuals-internet activities' <http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/submitViewTableAction.do> accessed 15 September 2018.

by PEW determined a rising trend of using social networks at the global level, and data from 2017 shows that two thirds or more of the adult population in developed countries use social networks; this includes data for the U.S. (69%), Australia (69%), Canada (68%), Sweden (67%), United Kingdom (60%), France (53%), Germany (40%), Israel (68%) and South Korea (69%)¹⁹. However, countries considered to be developing economies also have a high rate of social network usage among the adult population and these percentages continue to grow, in countries such as Vietnam (53%), the Philippines (49%), Jordan (75%), Lebanon (72%), Argentina (65%), Chile (78%), Nigeria (42%), Ghana (39%) and Kenya (39%).²⁰ These statistical indicators imply an increasing level of integration of social networks within the everyday life of the modern individual. In analyzing this phenomenon in 2011, sociologist Sherry Turkle noted how in modern society, the individual is constantly connected to a mobile device and to his/her social contacts towards which the mobile device serves as a portal.²¹ In this way modern individuals actually never leave their home emotionally, which is seen in the phenomenon of constant connectedness.²² She examines the implications of such a situation for the modern self which finds it usual to be distant from the place it physically occupies, at the same time experiencing a virtual and almost physical simultaneity of the place it is does not occupy, concluding that the new standard of the modern self is the state of being 'connected and absent'²³. We might actually say that the state of constant connectedness through mobile phones and social networks is normalized, especially in the context of young generations growing up in these digital environments. This text aims to determine some implications for a life in such an environment.

Determinants and implications of digital environments on the example of Instagram

It is clear that modern digital environments increasingly focus on visual content. A new social network in which the visual principle is at the basis of its functioning appeared in

19 Pewglobal, 'Social Media Use Continues to Rise in Developing Countries but Plateaus Across Developed Ones', <http://www.pewglobal.org/2018/06/19/social-media-use-continues-to-rise-in-developing-countries-but-plateaus-across-developed-ones/#table>, accessed 20 October 2018.

20 Ibid.

21 Sherry Turkle, *Alone Together: Why We Expect More from Technology and Less from Each Other*, Basic Books, New York 2011, p. 229.

22 Ibid., p. 222.

23 Ibid., p. 229.

2010 on the wave of broadband internet connection combined with smartphones with better cameras. User activities on the Instagram social network are completely organized around the visual element. Posting photos on user profiles is at the centre of this networks' functioning, and they are posted by the users themselves. Users can 'follow' other people's profiles, meaning they determine on their profiles how they will view posts by other users. After the user posts a photograph, it becomes instantly visible to all other owners of profiles following a particular profile, and to a lesser extent to those who do not follow it. It should be noted that the functioning of Instagram is mainly organized around interactions between different profile owners on the topic of posting photos. Each posted photograph offers other users with the possibility to comment or 'like' the photo – a social practice through which users show one another they appreciate the photos posted. But textual elements come second on Instagram and we can say that social interaction on that social network is based on posting photographs. Ever since this social network appeared, its popularity has been rising quickly, especially among younger age groups. It is indicative that the number of Instagram users reached one billion in June 2018.²⁴ Statistics on internet usage from the U.S. show that 71% of young people aged 18-24 use Instagram, of which 60% visit it on a daily basis, and 51% use it several times a day.²⁵ Statistical indicators show that younger generations, i.e. generations growing up in pervasively digital environments, use this social network the most. What are the implications of being immersed in these digital environments?

In examining this phenomenon we should turn to predictions made by the philosopher Paul Valery as early as 1928, when he noted that in the future artworks will achieve a sort of omnipresence in a way that it will be possible to invoke them at a place where someone is using some kind of device; *Just as water, gas, and electricity are brought into our houses from far off to satisfy our needs in response to a minimal effort, so we shall be supplied with visual or auditory images, which will appear and disappear at a simple movement of the hand, hardly more than a sign. And just as we are used to, if not entrapped by, various types of energies flowing into our homes, we shall consider it perfectly normal to receive ultrafast variations or oscillations collected by our organs.*²⁶ If we read Valery in the context of Instagram which

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24 Statista, 'Number of monthly active Instagram users from January 2013 to June 2018', <https://www.statista.com/statistics/253577/number-of-monthly-active-instagram-users/>, accessed 10 September 2018

25 Pewinternet, 'Social media use in 2018', <http://www.pewinternet.org/2018/03/01/social-media-use-in-2018/>, accessed 10 September 2018.

26 Benjamin Walter, 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', <https://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/philosophy/works/ge/benjamin.htm>, accessed 20 September 2018.

is available on mobile phones, his prediction is literally delineated – the photographs which often are artworks, are available to users with a simple hand gesture on the screen of their mobile phone, disappearing just as easily. It is also absolutely impossible to examine the implications of the developing new media environments without taking into account the theories of Marshall McLuhan who stated in 1970s that medium is a message since it changes the speed, manner and scope of human actions and relationships²⁷. That is to say, technology is not neutral – its design changes the principles of social functioning to a high degree. Other theorists later offered similar theories. Neil Postman notes in the 1990s that the use of technology is somewhat limited by its own design²⁸. At the same time, users also adapt technology to their own needs using it in certain ways²⁹. For example, the social phenomenon of ‘influencers’ (from the word ‘influential’ implying popularity) represents an unintended result of using social networks created by the users themselves. Influencers are individuals who have the power to influence social trends through social networks, mainly Instagram and Facebook. They have a large number of so-called ‘followers’ on social networks, i.e. other users of this app who follow their Instagram profiles. Due to the large number of followers of each influencer, his/her profile represents a potential platform for communicating towards a great number of other users. The position of an influencer has therefore developed into a new social status in the last couple of years. We might even call it a profession, since influencers make money through their posts, by integrating products into images thus becoming a communication channel for advertising products. Economy reacts fast to technological innovations it deems effective and companies were quick to incorporate these new social practices into their business. According to Eurostat data for 2017, a high percentage of companies in EU-28 use social networks, and this percentage has significantly increased compared to 2013³⁰. In 2017, a percentage of 45% companies used at least one social network, of which 84% used it to develop their brand and advertise products. These percentages show an increase of 17% compared to 2013 and have increased more than the use of any other type of social media, such as blogs³¹. Up to 40% companies used social media in order to

27 Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding media: The extensions of man*, London and New York, McGraw-Hill 1964, p. 10.

28 Neil Postman, *Technopoly: The Surrender of Culture to Technology*, Vintage Books, New York 1993, p. 7.

29 Robert Kraut i Malcom Brynin. Social Studies of Domestic Information and Communication Technologies’ in Robert Kraut, Malcom Brynin and Sara Kielser, ed., *Computers, phone and the internet: Domesticating information technology*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2006, p. 8.

30 Eurostat, ‘Enterprises using social networks in 2017 and in 2013’, [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=File:Enterprises_using_social_networks,_2017_and_2013_\(%25_of_enterprises\).png](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=File:Enterprises_using_social_networks,_2017_and_2013_(%25_of_enterprises).png), accessed 20 October 2018.

31 Ibid.

32 Eurostat, ‘Social media – statistics on the use by enterprises’, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Social_media_-_statistics_on_the_use_by_enterprises, accessed 20 October 2018.

develop their brand or advertise their products³². Managing an Instagram profile has become a new profession in recent years, and advertising through social networks and the use of social networks for marketing purposes is developing into a common social practice. Social practices of collecting and analysing data users leave behind when using social networks have also developed, and this data is then used for predicting future user behaviour and upcoming economic trends. These are some of the economic implications in the development of the digital environments of social networks. We might ask whether predictions of user behaviour based on their behaviour within digital environments shall become an everyday social practice in the future and will it perhaps spread outside the scope of social networks?

I shall also review some cognitive implications of spending a large amount of time in digital environments oriented towards the visual element. If we take into account the frequency of spending time in these digital environments, what consequences might this have on the development of the human brain? The neuroplasticity of the human brain makes it highly likely that the brain will also adapt to the new types of modern digital environments³³. Recent research do point to changes in the functioning of the human brain in relation to being exposed to digital networks in the last twenty years, and this includes changes in the way we read in the sense of more time being spent on searching and 'scanning', i.e. going through the text quickly, looking for key words, nonlinear reading and more selective reading with less time being spent on deep and concentrated reading as well as a reduced ability for continued concentration³⁴, lack of focus on the abstract and increased focus on the concrete³⁵. However the relation between the frequency of using digital media environments and an increased cognitive ability to do several activities at the same time ('multitasking') has also been determined³⁶. On the other hand, psychological research shows that informal learning environments consisting of television, videogames and the internet, create students with lower cognitive skills levels – they strengthen the visual-spatial intelligence and weaken the high-level cognitive processes; abstract words, awareness, reflection, inductive reasoning in problem-solving, critical thinking and imagination,

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33 Susan Greenfield, *Mind Change: How digital technologies are leaving their mark on our brains*, Random House, New York 2015, p. 22.

34 Ziming Liu, 'Reading behavior in the digital environment: Changes in reading behavior over the past ten years', *Journal of Documentation* 61 (6/2005), p. 705.

35 Geof Kauffman i Mary Flanagan, 'High-Low Split: Divergent Cognitive Construal Levels Triggered by Digital and Non-digital Platforms', ACM Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems 2016 <https://www.medicaldaily.com/reading-screen-versus-print-abstract-concrete-385257>, accessed 5 September 2018.

36 Reem Alzahabi i Mark W. Becker, 'The association between media multitasking, task-switching, and dual-task performance', *Journal of Experimental Psychology Human Perception & Performance* 39(5), str. 1485-1495.

while listening to the radio and reading nurture imagination and the development of higher cognitive skills³⁷. Taking all of this into account as well as the visual and spatial character of digital environments, the question is whether continued activity in digital environments with fast-changing visual stimuli and a lack of deep content shall become the new norm for the mind of the future? Will the brain of the future be better in visual-spatial orientation and less prone to abstract and critical thinking? Abstract thinking is necessary in order to add characteristics to objects and think about them on a more complex level, separate from the objects themselves. We must ask ourselves whether the reduced capability of this type of thinking will result in reduced implications for the capacity of analysing more complex ideas as well as the agency of the human subject.

According to a research by the Royal Institute of Mental Health in the UK, on a sample of more than 1400 young people aged between 14 and 24, there are some other problematic implications in using Instagram. Based on the consequences it has on the health and wellbeing of young people, Instagram has been ranked as the social network with the highest level of negative consequences for mental health compared to all other social networks³⁸. Young people graded their health and wellbeing in relation to the use of each social network with marks ranging from -2 to +2, after which the average mark was calculated for every network – Instagram was the last, i.e. the fifth on this list. Factors deemed relatively more positive in relation to Instagram were: self-expression (expressing one's own feelings, thoughts, ideas), self-identity (the ability to define who a person is), emotional support (empathy and compassion by families and communities), community building (feeling like a part of a community of like-minded people). But what is problematic is the increased number of negative factors with higher values in relation to Instagram; sleep (the quality and quantity of sleep), body image (how a person feels in relation to one's own body), the so-called 'fear of missing out' or FOMO – the feeling that a person must remain connected to the internet because otherwise he/she worries things are happening without him/her, bullying (threatening or violent behaviour towards someone), anxiety (the feelings of worry, nervousness or discomfort).³⁹ The concluding report from this research therefore provides strong recommendations for public policies, among which

37 Patricia Greenfield, 'Technology and informal education: what is taught and what is learned', *Science* 323 (5910/2009), pp. 69-71.

38 Royal Institute of Mental Health, 'Status of Mind: social media and young people's mental health and wellbeing', <https://www.rsmh.org.uk/uploads/assets/uploaded/62be270a-a55f-4719-ad668c2ec7a74c2a.pdf>, accessed 13 September 2018, p. 18.

39 *Ibid.*, p. 23.

significant ones in the context of using Instagram include the recommendation to integrate warnings on the excessive use of the network in case of a longer period of usage, the recommendation on marking photographs which have been digitally manipulated, and the recommendation to identify users who might have mental health issues and discretely point them to potential sources of psychological support.⁴⁰ This is the only currently available research carried out on a larger sample in relation to Instagram and points to some problematic implications of using this social network as well as recommendations aiming to reduce negative implications.

And what are the implications of such digital social environments in the sense of social relations? Results of a qualitative research I carried out in 2014 as part of my doctoral thesis, among 50 young people in Croatia aged between 20 and 30, examining types of modern digital technologies usage, have shown that digital channels are highly integrated in the lives of young adults in Croatia in relation to friendships and the way they use them for being constantly connected to friends that are geographically not far away and for easing the friendships where there is less physical contact due to unfavourable structural circumstances such as moving to another country or less possibilities of spending time together due to different obligations.⁴¹ Subjects stressed the possibility of shared online activities as an aid in maintaining friendships but added the inadequacy of these types of relationships without at least some physical interaction.⁴² However, in relation to digital media being integrated in their lives, it seemed indicative that they considered digital channels as a key way for arranging and maintaining relationships in case of short- and long-term physical separation.⁴³ We should highlight that at the time this research was conducted, Instagram was still not as popular in Croatia as it is today, and in their responses subjects mainly focused on Facebook in relation to social networks. These results however provide us with a clearer context in relation to Instagram usage.⁴⁴ Research by Elisa Serafinelli in 2017 shows that sharing photographs on Instagram enables users to feel as if they are part of other people's experiences and in this way contributes to maintaining relationships through the social practice of 'telling stories' on someone's experience.⁴⁵ Instagram is a social network that functions beyond the practice of merely sharing

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40 Ibid., p. 24.

41 Iva Paska, *Nove oblike razmerij in njihove posledice: prijateljstvo med mladimi v pozni moderni*. Fakulteta za družbene vede Ljubljana 2014, p. 205.

42 Ibid., p. 205.

43 Ibid., pp. 211-212.

44 Elisa Serafinelli, *Digital Life on Instagram: New Social Communication of Photography*, Emerald Publishing Limited, Bingley 2017, p. 83.

45 Ibid., p. 83.

photographs since the practice of photograph sharing can also create social ties, social interactions and multimodal communication.⁴⁶ But to what a degree, at which levels and what types of relationships does Instagram create?

46 Ibid., p. 52.

Research by Serafinelli has shown that most of her subjects who use Instagram see it as an unusual social network that shapes social relations mainly through visual communication as opposed to other verbally-centric networks⁴⁷, which supports the theoretical premise of this paper. Users see Instagram as a social network gathering users around similar interests which represents a basis for advancing online interaction.⁴⁸ However in this research subjects also highlighted that Instagram usage needs to be complemented by physical interaction.⁴⁹ In other words, subjects do not see Instagram as a means enough in itself for maintaining relationships, they believe it is possible to maintain relationships through it when combined with physical 'face to face' interactions. The Serafinelli research further shows that subjects report reduced possibilities for communication on Instagram (since this app has a reduced possibility for sending messages), the superficial type of communication focusing on photographs and they see communication as mainly focused on shared interests.⁵⁰ Instagram is therefore seen as less efficient in maintaining relationships than Facebook and is viewed as potentially useful only for forming relationships, but combined with other social networks. Even in this case communication started on Instagram often moves to other social networks, most commonly Facebook or a 'face to face' interaction in the physical world.⁵¹ The previously mentioned research by the Royal Institute of Mental Health, where the factor of actual relations (maintaining relationships with friends) was given a relatively low value is also similar to these results.⁵² Based on these findings we might wonder whether Instagram perhaps has a different function which does not necessarily relate to forming or maintaining relationships, but to sociability.

47 E. Serafinelli, 'Analysis of Photo Sharing and Visual Social Relationships. Instagram as Case Study', p. 8.

48 Ibid., p. 10.

49 Ibid., p. 22.

50 Ibid., p. 14.

51 Ibid., p. 30.

52 Royal Institute of Mental Health, 'Status of Mind: social media and young people's mental health and wellbeing', accessed 13 September 2018., p. 23.

It is clear that posting photographs on Instagram has implications related to the social status of the individual. Posting a photograph on Instagram rarely functions as merely mediating information, it often communicates the social status of the individual. This communication is implicit, with two distinct levels. The first level is communicated through the content

of the photograph – the location or material surroundings, clothes representing a certain status symbol thus reflecting the social status of the individual. However there is another implicit level of communication; the amount of social interaction beneath the posted photograph in the world of visual digital social environments also implies or transforms into a status position. For example, the number of followers on the influencers' pages is seen as an indicator of their social status, and they are considered to be socially influential due to the communicative reach toward a great number of individuals. These social practices promote the phenomenon of normalizing social status based on the amount of information a person is capable of attracting within digital environments. What does this phenomenon imply?

It primarily points to a social reality in which influence on social networks is transformed into economic and consequently other types of social influence and shows the strength of the pervasive digital media environments currently developing in the real world. Furthermore, if the number of social interactions on social networks has come to reflect social status, then an increase of social interactions may come to represent the goal of social actors, with the purpose of improving social status. Self-representation on social networks requires strategic behaviour with the purpose of attracting interactions by other users and consequently increasing one's own reputation.⁵³ In other words, self-representation on social networks necessarily includes the strategic creation of communication to the level that it becomes a necessary skill. Van Dijk and Van Deursen call this strategic creation of communication 'impression management' and believe this type of behaviour requires certain skills.⁵⁴ Skills they define as necessary are the skills of attracting attention online and the skills of developing one's profile.⁵⁵ The development of new professions can also be analyzed through the same prism of strategic self-representation. Just like influencers, these professions did not exist in the previous period of internet development, such as digital marketing strategists. This profession is the realization of strategic behaviour on social networks; the task of a digital strategist is to develop a strategy of social network posts in order to popularize a certain company or product. We can therefore conclude that the politics of self-representation

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53 Khadija Coxon, 'Attention, Emotion and Desire in the Age of Social Media', in C.G. Prado (ed.), *Social media and your brain: Web-based communication is changing how we think and express ourselves*. Prado (ed.), Praeger, Santa Barbara, Denver, 2016, p. 41.

54 Alexander Van Deursen and Jan Van Dijk, *Digital skills: Unlocking the Information Society*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan 2014, p. 34.

55 Ibid., p. 34/35.

in modern digital environments really becomes not only a socially desirable and necessary skill but even a profession. We can only ask ourselves whether such frames of functioning within a media environment provide for any type of reflexion.

At the beginning of the 20th century, Walter Benjamin wrote about the inescapable loss of uniqueness of an individual work of art in the process of its mechanical reproduction combined with the opening up of new possibilities of its use⁵⁶. The questions Benjamin poses for the era of mechanical reproduction are still relevant: 'How can we think about subjectivity in the era of digital reproduction? What does it mean to examine oneself after we have been absorbed by inauthentic and politicized images?'.⁵⁷ These questions gain a new dimension in the era of pervasive digital environments which arrange interaction around visual elements. This is no longer a matter of what it means to think of oneself but *whether we are even capable of self-reflection and do we perceive that we are being absorbed by inauthentic images of digital environments such as Instagram?* In other words, is there even a separate space within these modern digital environments and the human immersion in their pervasiveness, necessary for the development of reflexivity? This is followed by the issue of representation in relation to reality. Scenes in photographs posted on Instagram are mostly set up with great care. The photographs are also often beautified through configurations offered by the application itself. We might even say that self-representation on Instagram is becoming a normalized mode of communication – setting up a scene before shooting a photograph for Instagram is becoming a common social practice. We might claim, in the manner of sociologist Erving Goffman, who developed the idea of a social 'background' i.e. the difference between the 'foreground' of a social performance and the backstage in which the social actor prepares for a social performance⁵⁸, that the setting up of the background is normalized and is becoming the usual social practice in social networks that are organized around the visual element. This then posits the question on the discrepancy between self-presentation and reality as well as the normalization of this self-presentation and the potential negative consequences resulting from this. The following questions are also posed: How much space do we even have for reflexivity

56 Benjamin Walter, 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', accessed 20 September 2018.

57 Ibid.

58 Erving, Goffman, *The presentation of self in everyday life*, Penguin books, London, New York 1990, pp. 13-18

in the pervasive digital media environment which tends to use self-presentation as a necessary precondition for action, i.e. a skill needed for social inclusion? How much space is left for critical evaluation in digital media environments where self-presentation is the norm?

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In conclusion

The purpose of this paper was to review some of the implications present in modern digital media environments now emerging. In order to establish the theoretical framework for digital media environments as part of which we examined Instagram, some determinants of these environments have been established. The most important feature is that digital media environments are increasingly present in everyday lives of individuals and are characterized by a high level of integration in the everyday social tissue which brings a different phenomenological experience than the experience of living in previous periods of media development. This experience is characterized by being immersed in media content throughout the day, to the level that tends to overflow into visual and spatial environments in which it has become increasingly difficult to ascertain the border between being connected to the internet and physical reality.

I examined some of the possible implications of such digital environments by using the example of Instagram. Economic implications are mostly present in the speed of integrating these environments in the field of economics and then in the creation of new professions embodying this politics of representation which becomes a precondition for participation in such environments. At the level of social relations, implications are reflected in structuring relationships through social networks; sharing activities organized around photographs is becoming a new social practice that structures relationships. However, the functioning of Instagram is difficult at the level of more intimate communication due to technical characteristics of reduced possibilities for communication through messages and therefore we can conclude that its function is focused more on communicating social status. Transforming

the amount of interactions in digital social environments into social status in the real world as well represents another implication which further blurs the limits between virtual and physical reality. Also there is the normalization of a politics of self-representation to the level of its being turned into an increasingly necessary skill so that the individual might achieve certain aspects of social inclusion. We can assume that in such a social context, the capacity for critical reflection on digital environments is reduced. Young generations who mostly use such digital environments are the most vulnerable group in this context. We cannot disregard the negative cognitive implications, primarily those pointing to reduced capacities of higher cognitive processes such as abstract and critical thinking.

What position are we to take on these implications? How can we reduce their negative impact, when the increasing immersion in the omnipresent digital environments is unstoppable? One of the options in these times of overpowering visibility in the context of pervasive digital environments should be stressed over and over again – the role of social and humanistic sciences. Starting from Badiou's idea that philosophy should start from a point outside the system it problematizes if it aims to provide the foundation to the modern world⁵⁹, we can state a similar case for humanities and social sciences. In their epistemological position which is (not necessarily) quantitative and positivist, they hold the possibility of maintaining a certain level of objectivity (or should we say subjectivity?) in relation to the increasing quantification and rationalization of a society in which implications of digital environments are normalized. It is precisely this distance that allows primarily the awareness and then the critical examination of the immersion within digital environments regardless of this phenomenon becoming increasingly unobserved. On the other hand in the context of increased integration of digital environments in everyday life, it is legitimate to ask how far can education in the social sciences and humanities reach. One of the implications of digital media transforming into environments is that human beings grow up while being immersed in them. At the same time this also means that the encounter with digital environments within the everyday framework happens before these individuals reach the education system which should

59 Alain Badiou, *Metaphysics of Real Happiness*, Kulturтреger, Zagreb 2016, pp. 35-36.

provide them with the tools for critical thinking upon these, and we might expect this to result in a lack of critical separation necessary for the analysis of digital environments outside the reference framework they establish. We should therefore conclude that education on the usage of digital environments, including the critical reflection on these, should be incorporated in an early phase of the education system. Also, the possibilities of incorporating a critical approach to usage should be considered within the digital environments themselves. This requires the participation of social structures with the means of regulating digital environments or education on these as well as the development of appropriate public policies. Modern times represent only the beginning in the development of digital environments, which is unstoppable in the direction of their pervasiveness. We should therefore think about necessary interventions in their development and/or ways of their being used. The life of future generations within these environments depends on the foundations established today.

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The Westernization and Colonization of the African Mind through the Media

Key words media imperialism, electronic colonialism theory, racism, mind westernization, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

Abstract This paper analyses the phenomenon of colonization of the mind which appears in Africa after the end of the colonization system. Westernization, leaving one's own cultural patterns and taking over Western models of behaviour are caused among other things by the influx of western media and their violent propaganda. Through analysing the novel *Americanah* (2013) by the Nigerian author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, this paper shows how media imperialism and electronic colonialism displace African cultural identities and illustrates through characters of the novel how consumers of such content become a mass that is easy to manipulate once they lose a coherent identity. The paper reveals the level to which the media have influenced the fetishization of western values, white-washing cultures and finally the loss of pre-colonial values.

Pozapadnjivanje i kolonizacija afričkog uma posredstvom medija

Ključne riječi medijski imperijalizam, teorija elektroničke kolonizacije, rasizam, pozapadnjivanje uma, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

Sažetak Rad problematizira fenomen kolonizacije uma koji je na području Afrike uslijedio završetkom kolonizatorskog sustava. Pozapadnjivanje te napuštanje vlastitih kulturnih obrazaca i preuzimanje zapadnih modela ponašanja uvjetovano je, među ostalim, prodorom zapadnih medija i njihovom nasilnom propagandom. U radu će se analizom romana *Americanah* (2013) nigerijske autorice Chimamande Ngozi Adichie prikazati kako medijski imperijalizam i elektronički kolonijalizam izmještaju afričke kulturne identitete te će se na primjeru likova iz romana prikazati kako konzumeri takvih sadržaja gubitkom koherentnog identiteta postaju lakomanipulirajuća masa. U radu će se ponuditi odgovor na pitanje o tome koliko su mediji utjecali na fetišizaciju zapadnih vrijednosti, izbjeljivanje kulture te naposljetku gubitak pretkolonijalnih vrijednosti.

Introduction

A new type of Western domination has been introduced in African countries after the end of colonization: the colonization of the mind. The theoretical part of this paper aims to show how this constitutes a neocolonial intention by the West, opening up the question on the ways this process is carried out. In addition to the institutionalized implementation of western cultural imperatives in the everyday lives of indigenous cultures, there also exists a westernization of media content i.e. media imperialism characterized by copying content from global media sources. The theoretical part of the text will focus on defining terms and showing the interdependence between the colonization of the mind and media imperialism, while the second part will examine electronic colonialism theory in the novel *Americanah* by the Nigerian author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie in order to explain how media imperialism, i.e. the transfer of western cultural patterns onto the African context through the media, displaces cultural identities of domicile nations and leads to a westernization of the African mind. Given this novel deals with the problem of media violence against African immigrants in the Western world, we shall analyse how media discourses intensely marked by centralist western imperatives influence the self-perception of the African subject. The novel has a pronounced role in recording and presenting the obscure outcomes of the returnee's attempt to reintegrate in the African world. The paper will relate this process to media imperialism in Nigeria.

A theoretical approach to the term colonization of the mind

In order to analyze elements of colonization through the media as presented in the novel *Americanah*, the issue of the *colonized mind* needs to be approached from a theoretical point of view. This term does not have many detailed theoretical explanations and is often used with the assumption its meaning is clear. Although a unified definition of the term has not been established, we shall present some authors who deal with

the phenomenon of domination over someone's cultural space, and our aim is to be precise in delineating the semantic scope of the term. Using this term with the assumption its meaning is clear must be related to a high level of semantic transparency. This phenomenon follows European invasions of the African continent¹, and relates to the westernization of social and cultural patterns of a particular nation. The first colonization exploits the land and the human body, while the later colonization of the mind uses western mechanisms to influence people's worldviews, their desires and ideas about themselves as individuals and as members of their communities.

Although he does not offer a precise definition of the colonized mind, in his books *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952) and *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961), Frantz Fanon uses a perfect knowledge of the human psyche to diagnose the issue of white men dominating over black men. In a diachronic review of how the Western episteme has dominated non-Western cultures, Fanon concludes:

When we consider the efforts made to carry out the cultural estrangement so characteristic of the colonial epoch, we realize that nothing has been left to chance and that the total result looked for by colonial domination was indeed to convince the natives that colonialism came to lighten their darkness. The effect consciously sought by colonialism was to drive into the natives' heads the idea that if the settlers were to leave, they would at once fall back into barbarism, degradation, and bestiality. On the unconscious plane, colonialism therefore did not seek to be considered by the native as a gentle, loving mother who protects her child from a hostile environment, but rather as a mother who unceasingly restrains her fundamentally perverse offspring from managing to commit suicide and from giving free rein to its evil instincts. The colonial mother protects her child from itself, from its ego, and from its physiology, its biology, and its own unhappiness which is its very essence (Fanon 1968: 124).

Fanon's teachings imply that domination over land and body is not the final goal of colonial repression: it is the control of consciousness, i.e. as we have already said, the intention to see oneself in western frames of reference. A mind seduced in this way will not oppose the neocolonialism systematically

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¹ This paper will focus on the problem of colonizing the Eastern mind, but we can assume that the same tools may be used for analysing the patterns of the colonization of the mind in any other non-Western area.

destroying the economy of African countries and will be susceptible to colonial domination for decades after the end of colonialism. We shall explain different forms this submissiveness takes in analyzing one particular novel. We believe that the development of the prolonged colonialism, i.e. the colonization of the African mind, develops on two levels. The first one relates to the westernization of the education system in Africa, and the second to the westernization of media content. Before we show how these levels correspond and before we explain how culture is transformed through these influences, we need to offer a precise definition of the term.

The term itself is a sort of antonym to the term of decolonization of the mind, mentioned in the title of the book by the Kenyan author Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o². What we aim to determine as the *colonization of the mind* in this work, Thiong'o calls *the domination of the mental universe of the colonised* noting that economic and political control which the West sees as imperatives in the neocolonial system, cannot be effective without a mental domination which is achieved through controlling *the tools of self-definition a certain culture uses in relation to other cultures* (Thiong'o 1986: 16). By using the metaphor on the transition of psychological violence from the battlefield to the classroom (Ibid., p. 9) Thiong'o concludes that the infiltration of colonialism in the African school system is the cornerstone of a westernized collective mentality. The desired result of colonizing the school system and media is the production and establishment of a Western culture in a non-Western area which is particularly visible in the western types of accepted knowledge, as prescribed through curricula³. This results in a paradox of a non-Western man producing western beliefs in areas outside the West. Colonial schools in Africa base their teaching content around facts on Europe or North America, completely disregarding or construing African pre-colonial past. Fanon concludes this is the best indicator of the colonizer's wish to *impose its rule upon the present and the future of a dominated country* (Fanon 1968: 24). The education system is therefore the cornerstone in construing the theory on, as postcolonial critics call it, pre-colonial barbarity, precisely because revitalizing it may entail the affirmation of indigenous resistance. Paulo Freire concludes that an oppressed society allows such mind

² The book titled *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature*, influenced by Fanon, was published in 1986.

³ Numerous literary works question and undermine the imposing of western values instead of taking account of African needs in the education system. For example the novel *God's Bits of Wood* (1960) by the Senegalese author Ousmane Sembène deals with education in Senegal which sees facts on Europe as more important than facts on Africa so that students are better acquainted with the geography of France than Senegal. The protagonist of the novel, N'Deye Touti reads only European writers because she believes *there is nothing she can learn from African authors* (Sembène 1970: 58) which is also a product of imposed French literary education that values exclusively European literary history. Thiong'o himself will follow this theoretical position in the novel *Weep Not, Child* (1964) by positing the idea that the implementation of European education into African education results in the *colonization of the mind*.

domination due to an internalized image of freedom being a gift and not a product of indigenous fighting which is why one should be grateful for it (see Freire 2000: 47)

Fanon, Thiong'o and Freire imply that the domination over the mental space of the oppressed is determined by western culture entering institutions, in this case through dominating the African education system. According to these authors, the colonization of the mind is the final result of European domination manifested through the westernization of non-Western models of behaviour, that is, black people aiming to imitate white culture. We mentioned earlier how the development of such an outcome of prolonged colonization is determined by two levels, the first one being mediated through education and the second one through media content. In both cases this means the transfer of white models of cultural social dealings to the African context.

Since the intention of this text is to point to the obscurity of media spaces and explain the workings of discourse influenced by western imperatives in a non-Western context, one should keep in mind that the precondition of manipulating media content is a reading public educated in a way to accept these types of content. The westernization of African education and the adjustment of teaching content to western needs precedes and is an important precondition of African media westernization. Education is therefore the first step in the process of colonizing African worldviews since without its implementation the non-Western subject would provide resistance and would not agree to being a reading, listening and viewing public of colonized media. In this analogy these types of content in tv and written media are interpreted through mechanisms of strengthening western knowledge the African subject gained in education. In this sense the media do not represent a lesser tool in the prolonged process of colonization. Without the pervasiveness of the media, the individual would no longer be immersed in imposed western facts after getting a degree and there would still be a possibility of escaping the colonizing domination. By consuming western media content transposed into the African context, the colonized subject tries to adjust its self to western needs and thus remains a hostage to the colonizer.

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Electronic colonialism as a powerful tool in the process of colonizing the mind

We already offered arguments on how the westernized forms of media content can be interpreted in third world countries as a powerful tool of neocolonial strivings for the transformation of the African society so now we shall offer a theoretical basis for these ideas.

In early 1980s, Thomas L. McPhail writes on media-transferred colonialism in his book *Electronic Colonialism: The Future of International Broadcasting and Communication* (1981), and in *Global Communication: Theories, Stakeholders, and Trends* (2002) he lists four⁴ types of colonialism, naming the last one *electronic colonialism*. McPhail defines it as a social phenomenon beginning in the 1950s⁵ involving the dependence of poor countries of the post-industrial society on the necessity of importing *communication hardware* and foreign production programmes, when a whole set of western habits, patterns of behaviour and socialization processes are also taken over. McPhail uses the term *electronic colonialism theory*⁶ to define this approach to a repeated colonization through the media and its inevitable influence on transforming non-Western cultures (see McPhail 2006: 19).

McPhail is not alone in this theory. Oliver Boyd-Barrett mentions the term of media imperialism seeing it as information addiction and owners of the media and media processes in poor countries being susceptible to the pressure exerted by western, rich empires. As two basic characteristics of media imperialism, the author lists the unidirectional character of the media influence and of this cultural invasion, as well as the imbalance in owning capital between the colonizing country and the one in which the colonized medium exists. According to Boyd-Barrett, this is a direct consequence of the global media market monopolization (see Boyd-Barrett 1977: 122, 123).

Ejaz and Ahmad note that global sources⁷ achieve more credibility compared to local media sources in less developed countries, and the reason for this is the economic profitability of media organizations in developing countries. The availability of global media information in all countries across the world

4 Military colonialism, Christian colonialism, mercantile colonialism and electronic colonialism.

5 If we take into account that most countries in Africa gained their independence in the 1950s and 1960s, it is clear that one type of colonialism has merely been switched for a different type, in McPhail's words, by electronic colonialism.

6 Electronic colonialism theory.

7 BBC or CNN for example.

leads to the copying of their content and reporters are led only by simplicity and profit, not caring how such an affirmation of western set of attitudes and values impacts domicile cultural identities. Ejaz and Ahmad see these actions as deepening the chasm of inequality between countries and the ones whose information is transferred become powerful rulers of the information era we live in (see Ejaz, Ahmad 2011: 135).

Since the novel we shall now analyze deals with consuming media content of non-Western Others in the U.S and on the other hand, with media imperialism and the transfer of western cultural patterns onto the African subcontext, it is necessary to correlate all these theoretical postulates. We shall now examine electronic colonialism theory in the novel *Americanah* and show how this affects the transformation of the self of African subjects in the western region as well as the increased collective unhappiness on the African continent.

Changes to African subjects through the media in the novel Americanah

The theory of the novel *Americanah* rests on all these theoretical grounds and offers a so-called low angle view. This is a postmodern novel of heterodiegetic narrative and structurally divided into eight parts examining and questioning the motive of a returnee. On one level the narrative world is determined by questioning the position of the non-Western Other in American society and on the other level, by positioning the returnee in Nigerian reality. The protagonist Ifemelu goes to college in the U.S. and returns to her country after thirteen years. The author plays with the narrative present dealing with Ifemelu's last days abroad and a narrative past told in an almost flashback fashion. In these analepses the narrator gives a portrait of the transformation to Ifemelu's self, that is, describes the path of her westernization. Akingbe and Adeniyi explain how this narrative examines the problem of racism and ethnocentrism in the U.S. and the UK⁸ with the intention of starting a *well-intentioned* cultural dialogue in America's racialized society. The authors add that the realization of the transcultural objective, which the author aims to set as the

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⁸ In addition to the interplay between the narrative past and present, there are two narrative strands in the novel. The first one deals with Ifemelu's departure for America, and the second one follows her high-school sweetheart Obinze and his social mobility. Before getting rich he travels to the United Kingdom, a society which similar to the U.S., also struggles with issues of racism, stereotypization and cultural divide. The basic plot deals with Ifemelu's and Obinze's relationship, but this is not the focus of the present paper.

dominant requirement of the novel, is continually prevented in multiple ways through factors such as racism, racial segregation and stereotypical portraying of non-westerners (see Akingbe, Adeniyi 2017: 43).

In analyzing the role of social networks in the novel, Fouad Mami notes that Adichie references the novel *Americana*⁹ (1971) by Don DeLillo¹⁰ in her title, a novel dealing with insoluble issues and negative consequences of media influence on the society. Mami concludes that playing with the lexeme of DeLillo's title has a two-fold role. Firstly, the choice of title refers to the colloquial Lagos expression for an American returnee and on the other hand, using it Adichie suggests the positioning of the media influence in the migration process. In Mami's view, her attitude towards the media is not as pessimistic as DeLillo's, which is seen in presenting possible positive relations between the media and immigrants (see Mami 2017: 171). The optimistic view on media narratives mentioned by Mami involves recording the possibility of using some media for raising awareness on the issue of racism with the outcome of representing the inner perspective of the black objectified collective. After repeatedly consuming types of media content which open up spaces for the emergence of racism and xenophobia, the protagonist launches her own media space of resistance – a blog on racial issues – but first we must explain the westernization process in African immigrants and their changed self-perception encouraged by the media and by being immersed in the white world.

In coming to North America, Ifemelu witnesses the final step in the process of changes to African subjects. First she meets her high-school friend Ginka and suspects she suffers from anorexia. Ginka's fascination with the West and the ideal of the white female body leaves visible marks on her black body; she uses creams to whiten her skin, and painful concoctions to straighten her hair. She subjects herself to various methods with the goal of being equated with a white woman. The whitening process is not reserved only for the outer plane, there is also the wish to whiten her cultural level. By reading internet portals every day, Ginka fetishizes western culture and aims to incorporate it in her own universe of knowledge and behaviour by modifying and rooting out her African cultural identity: (...) *Ginka came to America with a youthful adaptability*

9 The titles of the novels are not the same, Adichie modifies DeLillo's title by adding the letter h (*Americanah*).

10 Grgas explains that this novel focuses on the positioning of electronic media within the American society and DeLillo presents *consciousness contaminated by a surge of American visual cultural icons*, through which he analyses the *irreversible loss of one way of life exchanged for entering the era of predominant imagery* (Grgas 2000: 97). *Americana* is not the only novel by DeLillo dealing with such issues. A great number of his novels such as *White Noise*, *Libra*, *End Zone*, problematize obscure influences of media representations on today's society and criticize experience that is mediated through the media.

and lightness, cultural determinants became a part of her so that now she went bowling and knew what was going on in the life of Tobey Maguire (...) (Adichie 2015: 129). By using the example of Ginka, the author crosses the western and non-Western ideal of female beauty, aiming to deconstruct the aesthetic imperative imposed by the media. So Ginka tells Ifemelu that she started losing weight soon after coming to the continent and came to the *edge of anorexia* because being thin is desirable here, which is not the case in Nigeria (Ibid., p. 128). She is a stereotypical consumer of women's magazines, falling victim to imposed aesthetical beauty imperatives, based of course, on western standards. Any type of nonconforming to these imperatives is framed and marked as a kind of otherness, which we will analyse further later on.

The next westernized subject Ifemelu comes into contact with is the character of Aunty Uju in whose home she plans to live. In the context of the novel she functions as a metonym of those emigrants who see the original culture as a burden and a signifier of their difference, the cause of their exclusion from dominant systems. Western culture therefore has advantage over the culture of their own people and, as we saw in the example of Ginka, they adjust their bodies to western standards. As a metonym for this set of attitudes, Aunty Uju tries to completely erase traces of the culture she left behind, filling up the new empty spaces with social imperatives of the West. Here we should also mention that Uju adjusts her own name to the English language: *Aunty Uju's phone rang. 'Yes, Uju speaking.' She pronounced it like yu-ju. 'That's how you pronounce your name now?' asked Ifemelu afterwards. 'That's how they pronounce it.' Ifemelu grit her teeth and struggled not to say: 'Sure, but that is not your name.'* (Adichie 2015: 115). The symbolism in exchanging the African name for an invented American variant is related to her idiolect which gives almost an ironic edge to this type of behaviour.

Uju forbids Ifemelu to talk with her son Dike in the Igbo language, hoping that using English will contribute to his better assimilation in the society. Her idiolect contains a high level of tv commercials and popular media content. In accordance with this, the identity of Aunty Uju is mediated through language, and her self is expressed in the way she composes sentences. This does not only involve using English instead of

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Igbo; the media articulated idiolect suggests a self immersed in the world of advertising and brands. In other words the language reflected as a set of media phrases becomes proof of American discourses and brands at work at the subconscious level. In this sense we interpret Uju as a parodied embodiment of popular American culture which is based on postulates of consumerism which in its turn aims to seduce the minds of potential future consumers. The characters store up these consumerist information not only by watching tv and reading internet ads, but through their own immersion in the everyday lives of cities swarming with signifiers¹¹ whose billboards they soak up both at the conscious and subconscious level thus becoming incorporated in the consumerist grind.

In following the development of these characters which starts with the change in self-perception and ends with a westernized cultural assimilation of the body and the self, we return to Fanon. He defines the black man as a social being in two dimensions which can be applied to most migrating African subjects in the novel; the first one involves its position among other black men, and the second one its position in white society. Fanon concludes that the white environment will significantly change behaviour as well through transforming its self-perception, as we have shown in previous examples (see Fanon 2008: 8). This is a sort of wish to mimic social interactions which the black man nurtures in order to become a part of the dominant white society.

In this sense the author uses the character of Uju's son Dike in an almost mythic and didactic mode. We already mentioned his mother forbids him to speak in the Igbo language and tries to eradicate all traces of African culture. Since he is unable to realize the desired cultural identity, Dike tries and fails to commit suicide. This suggests in a Fanon manner that suppressing the African self cannot result in a positive outcome and Dike's refusal to transform and Americanize his self can be seen through a common motive of postcolonial critique – a palimpsest. In her wish for positive integration in American society, his mother tries to separate him from the culture he wishes to be a part of, but his African self acts in the background and resists such cultural inversion. After his rehabilitation, Dike travels to Nigeria, succeeds in achieving an absolute consensus with society – impossible to achieve in the

¹¹ In the context of a postmodern megalopolis which according to Fredric Jameson is crowded with information and thus becomes an economic centre (see Jameson 1991: 98).

U.S. – and experiences a coherent identity which also could not be achieved if the subject is displaced from the culture he/she relates to. In the sense of genres, the way we follow the character of Dike makes this a Bildungsroman. In such an analysis Ifemelu would be the typical helper without whom the unification between subject and culture would be impossible.

Medialization of private spheres and the articulation of media imperialism in the novel

The novel deals with the power of electronic media in the sense of restructuring not only public, but also private spheres. Descriptions of most American households include spaces symbolizing this infiltration in the everyday life of the middle class. These are for example rooms for playing videogames and descriptions of interiors with the tv in an almost elevated position making it the centre of American family life. In his analysis of the changes in American society brought on by television and electronic media, Grgas writes: *The effect of American tv programming exemplifies the frightening increase of stimuli flooding the human consciousness at the end of the twentieth century. In the field of cultural production transferred through the media, the subject is faced with a 'semiotic saturation of signs'* (Grgas 2000: 96).

Since television imagery changes the consciousness of the subject, interpersonal relationships are also influenced by these changes. Grgas quotes James B. T. Witchell in listing data confirming the idea of American culture medialization: *Up to fifty million of people watch this 'device' every night. The experience of watching has become the social and intellectual glue holding us together, our basic community* (ibid 95). The novel *Americanah* repeatedly deals with the consequences of American tv programming mentioned by Grgas, in showing how relationships within a community are modified according to requirements of the new culture. One example of restructuring private spheres and adjusting social relations to electronic media becomes obvious when Uju brings her partner¹² to meet Dike and Ifemelu. The novel mocks the displaced forms of such social situations

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12 Just as previously mentioned female characters, Uju's partner uses creams for skin whitening. Through this motive, Adichie aims to highlight how imposed aesthetic imperatives of the West are not related to gender, i.e. not only women fall victim to them.

and as soon as he arrives, a group of people that have just met start watching tv. Before resigning themselves to tv images the group almost does not have anything to talk about. It is the tv content that offers the protagonists with topics for debates and conversations and thus creates in Grgas's words, *characters trapped in electronic imagery* (ibid 97). Through the African family copying patterns of American medialized culture, addiction to electronic media is parodied as well as their infiltration in the structure of human relationships, which is true both for Americans and immigrants who accept new cultural values in their wish to be assimilated.

Baudrillard states that *reality has taken over the hyperreality of codes and simulations. We are now led by the simulation principle instead of the old principle of reality. Purposes have disappeared, we are birthed by models* (Baudrillard, 2001: 51). Characters in the novel *Americanah* become consumers of these simulations and direct participants of a postmodern world ruled by hyperreality. Various examples in the novel confirm this thesis but we can highlight in particular Ifemelu's fear from leaving the house as a product of being informed on crime in American streets. Uju remains centred in reality in terms of awareness that the everyday is susceptible to various media interpretations: *If you keep watching television you'll start believing this is constantly happening. Do you know how much crime there is in Nigeria? It's just that they don't report about it back home like they do here* (Adichie 2015: 119). This mocks American social paranoia and media content that offers fertile grounds for developing groundless fears. This also opens one of the key issues of this paper, the difference, or the sameness of content in Nigerian and American media. As we stated in the theoretical introduction to this paper, media companies completely take over content from global media companies due to economic profitability. Since the media in Africa copies other content, violence in foreign countries is reported on more often than violence in their own land. The African subject therefore creates an illusion of safety in Africa due to the consummation of reality construed in such a way, and sees the West as an area of robbery and violence. This is just one example of how media imperialism influences media consumers to shape their experience of Africa in relation to the West.

In dissecting tv and written media, the novel posits the idea on how various forms of western media content open up spaces which can easily be filled with xenophobia and stereotypes on black men which then lead to the development of racism. Western media seem to contain signifiers of the African world reduced to safari, starving children or *beautiful*¹³ white women helping Africans in need. In this sense the image of objective African reality is never fully transmitted and an image with no actual basis in reality is created in the mind of the consumer of such content, in Baudrillard's terms, hyperreality which interprets the African man as an Other who needs to be helped by the Western world. We can read one of Said's definitions of orientalism from this, i.e. an orientalism as a way of thinking based on the epistemological and ontological difference between the East and West (see Said, 1999: 25). Such a media metonymic view of culture, more precisely, relating Africa with poverty and weakness in the minds of media consumers, has very obscure consequences both on black and on white people. These negative reflections and the feeling of guilt felt by the whites towards the blacks are shown in the novel through the character of Kimberly, a woman in whose family Ifemelu works as a *babysitter*. She feels an unnecessary need to treat Ifemelu with guilty conscience for something she did not do, and in her excessive care not to hurt Ifemelu's racial feelings, repeatedly apologizes for her own or someone else's behaviour towards the protagonist. The reason for this is the already mentioned media-construed hyperreality positioning Africans at the margins of society, shaping an image of a helpless subject requiring a special mode of behaviour.

The novel also questions how the media become a sort of eschatology of redemption, that is, how the media aim to heal the feeling of guilt alongside creating a collective amnesia of the history of slavery. One example is the part in the novel where students watch the series *Roots* in class and the word nigger is censored. One of the female students, whose views Ifemelu supports, says that the censorship of such words will not help in eradicating racism in America: *If the word was used in this form, then it should be shown in that way* (Adichie 2015: 142) Moderating reality in tv and written media leads to the impossibility to see the full picture which creates the illusion

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13 In this part of the novel Ifemelu discusses a newspaper article on an American celebrity helping starving children in Ethiopia with Kimberly and Laura. Revolted by such media constructs, Ifemelu ironically comments on her thinness: *And she is just as thin as the children that surround her, but she is thin by her own choice and they do not have the right to choose* (Adichie 2015: 167). This criticizes charity work as well, by questioning whether people do good in order to support those in need in Africa or whether this is merely the wish to achieve a certain type of prestige brought on by such activities in society: *There was a certain luxury in doing charity work with which she could not identify* (Adichie 2015: 174).

of racism being eradicated from American society and makes it impossible for the white majority to relate to those who were subjected to such xenophobia.

Ifemelu's colonization of the mind and metatextuality as a counter-narrative and media space for resistance

The violent mechanisms of media influence we mentioned earlier result in accepting western cultural imperatives and reshaping Ifemelu's self. Guarracino categorizes the novel as immigrant fiction so the balancing of the protagonist between two cultures is the expected outcome (see Guarracino 2015: 8). We should note that Ifemelu negatively perceives previously mentioned changes of cultural identity and at first decisively keeps the postulates of African culture, but faced with an extremely violent media apparatus and American discourses, she soon herself becomes a consumer of American culture. Existing in a new social context leads to being subjugated to imposed western aesthetic imperatives which Ifemelu frowned upon, when she analyzed Ginku's and Uju's transformation. The process of transformation in her cultural identity begins by copying television presenters' accents¹⁴ with the aim of suppressing her own idiolect by imitating Afro-Americans. As one of the most representative units of culture, language is the first thing to be replaced in the process of displacing cultural identity, i.e. in shaping a sort of transculturalism of the individual. Ifemelu is unhappy with American everyday life and fears violence and robbery in the streets, as a result of consuming media representations as if they were real, so during her first months in the U.S. she barely leaves her apartment. Adichie offers an overview of TV content opening up spaces for Ifemelu's desires and fetishizations of western models of behaviour:

She watched the same series she watched in Nigeria. The Fresh Prince of Bel Air and A Different World and she discovered new ones she did not know before, Friends and the Simpsons,

14 Here we highlight an interesting quote showing how Ifemelu's learning, of both language and culture, is a conscious process, i.e. a certain goal she wishes to achieve: *And her accent was convincing. She perfected it by carefully listening to friends and TV presenters silencing their T's, softly rolling their R's, starting their sentences with 'so' and smoothly sliding that constant response 'oh really' over their lips, but her pronunciation was too controlled, a matter of conscious decision* (Adichie 2015: 178).

but she loved the commercials best. She longed for the life they showed, a life filled with happiness with a sparkling solution for all problems, through shampoos, cars and ready-made food, and this in her mind became the true America (...)

(Adichie 2015: 118).

In spending her days wandering through the media imagery, the protagonist tries to implement the content of commercials in her everyday life. Thus she is introduced to the American culture of overeating and consciously becomes its consumer, trying to satisfy her emotional hunger for food unavailable in Africa. The same media impose the western aesthetic imperative of beauty and a gap is created between desiring such constructs and the consequences of the overeating culture. We might see a two-fold decentralization of the subject created through the media here; firstly, its decentralization is manifested in the impossibility to coexist in two cultures. Due to her insight in her own colonization of the mind, the protagonist is aware of the half-Americanization which cannot be reconciled with the dominant African identity which leads to her feeling lost i.e. decentralized. Secondly, succumbing to opposing forms of media content results in excess weight as a product of being fascinated by excessive food intake on the one hand and on the other hand in the fetishization of thinness which is a result of reading fashion magazines.

Browsing through these magazines, the protagonist defines the aesthetic imperative of the female body imposed by them:

And so, three black women in perhaps two thousand magazines and all of them are either mixed race or it is not obvious they are black so they might be Indian or Puerto Rican or something like that. None of them is dark. None of them looks like me, and this means these magazines won't advise me on the makeup I should use. Look, this article tells you to pinch your cheeks until they blush and it is expected that all readers have cheeks that blush once you pinch them. This article talks about different hair products for 'everyone' – and 'everyone' here means blondes, brunettes and redheads. I don't belong to any of these categories (Adichie 2015: 299).

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Texts such as these produce what Spivak terms epistemological violence, i.e. a kind of *diverse project of constructing a colonial subject as an Other*, with the *simultaneous and asymmetrical obliteration of all traces of the Other*, and what is happening here is actually the *simultaneous and asymmetrical obliteration of the trace of this Other in its precarious Subjectivity* (Spivak, 2013). The burden of otherness in this context is carried by Ifemelu, but here the personal suggests the collective traumatic impulse created through this type of exclusion from the media space. The author dissects content of women's fashion magazines and tries to dismantle the construct of the aesthetic imperative for female beauty so that Ifemelu's reading of exclusive, almost racist texts, represents an end to the passive acceptance of xenophobic content. Ifemelu is no longer a passive subject and is raised to the level of an active agent who starts her own blog on racial issues to warn about the obscurity of giving space to such content in the media.

Parts of the blog are inserted in the narrative tissue of the novel and function as independent metatexts questioning the general media racism. The divergence from the realist style, i.e. metatextual forms, highlight the already mentioned optimistic view in relation to the media. The author does not see the media exclusively as producers of otherness and xenophobia, she sees in them the possibility for empowering the voices of those who have been silenced or discriminated. The success¹⁵ of the blog and the collective of discriminated women created in the comment section below the posts, indicate a positive attitude towards the availability of publishing one's own content on webpages and we see the blog as a counter narrative to the previously listed types of content and a sort of media space for resistance.

¹⁵ In writing her blog, Ifemelu gains a great number of followers which brings her a high income. Here we must note that this blog may be an example of postmodern irony. Although Ifemelu aims to dismantle aesthetic constructs, her blog is funded, among other things, through advertisements showing white *long-necked* models (Adichie 2015: 306). In this sense Ifemelu is aware that her actions are wrong and contradictory, but keeps on with them.

Media imperialism and the westernization of the Lagos society

Already at the beginning of the novel we can see the media imperialism in Nigeria. The author profiles a range of characters not interested in Nigerian art. Ifemelu for example does not know anything about Nigerian films because the local tv program mainly offers Americanized content (Ibid., 19, 20). We perceive two stages in the process of colonization of the mind which we have explained in the theoretical part. Once they finish their formal education in colonial schools, the protagonists seek Americanized media content and so the westernization of the individual's mind is continued through his consummation of western-centric media.

In addition to economic profitability of media imperialism which we have already mentioned, the reason for this westernization of tv and newspaper content are also returnees such as Ifemelu. Her return to Lagos represents the height of analyzing the obscurity of the colonization of the African mind and she is reluctant to admit she herself experiences Lagos as an attack which means she has become an Americanah. In this context Fanon's ideas are realized on how the subject returning from abroad must be radically changed (see Fanon 2008: 13). Returnees have high positions, better work conditions and benefits in relation to those who have not gained an education abroad. Years spent in Europe and America have westernized their taste and they use their positions of power to consciously or unconsciously promote ideas of the West. We can find proof for such ideas in Ifemelu's journalist work for the *Zoe* magazine which serves as an excellent example of how media imperialism reigns in African written media. This magazine, due to a westernized taste of the journalists, and cost-effectiveness, produces articles equivalent to those in the West.

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The paradox and gap created through such an electronic colonization is manifested in absurdities such as the recommendation by the editor for a Sunday broccoli soup, which is impossible to find on Nigerian markets or writing about clothes most Nigerians cannot afford (Ibid., p. 421). Ifemelu opposes such copying of content from American tabloids and warns of social problems caused by imposing western imperatives in the economic and political environment unfavourable for their realization. In this sense an analogy is created between advertising and prostitution postulating the idea that young women sell their bodies in order to afford what is offered by the media or become *slaves* to rich men for the same reason (Ibid., str. 424). In other words, cultural patterns of Americanized behaviour are removed to an unattainable African subcontext turning the majority population into a mass that fetishizes everything coming from the West. Due to this unachievable consumerism, there is a collective sense of dissatisfaction in Lagos, stemming from the consummation of westernized or colonized media content. Adichie uses an excellent syntagm to name the side-effects of the newly formed social functioning: *addiction culture* (Ibid., str. 424). This does not only mean being addicted to money the African subject needs to acquire in order to buy advertised products under international prices, but being addicted to seeing oneself through western mechanisms, i.e. the total dependence on the West. This is therefore a colonialism mediated through the media which will, unlike the colonialist exploiting human bodies and land, exploit the human mind and thus create a new slavery dynamic of functioning.

Conclusion

Through analysing the novel *Americanah*, we have attempted to show the correlation and issue of the African subject and media on two levels. The first one deals with the African immigrant in the U.S. and his reception of those types of media content which open up the spaces for exclusion and xenophobia consequently leading to racism. We analyzed subjective constructs of media representations through the perspective of the protagonist. In this we aimed to show how the metonymization of the African continent in the sense of

representing an incomplete picture of objective reality, makes the African immigrant feel like a marginalized and helpless Other in relation to the white man who has been elevated to the level of a humanitarian through media tools, i.e. someone who helps the black man by having the obligation to treat him with compassion and pity. The novel offers a sharp critique of women's magazines and the way they have imposed western aesthetic imperatives. The author negates their content by showing the consequences of insecurity and decentralization such texts may have on the self-perception of non-Western girls and women. As a result of all of this, the novel deals with the westernization of cultural identities of non-Western immigrants and the perception of the African self as the cause for the exclusion from dominant systems, as we have shown in the analysis of suppressing originally adopted cultural patterns in some characters of the novel.

On another level we talked about media imperialism in Nigerian media which is evident in the novel when the protagonist returns to Lagos. Media imperialism, as the newest form of colonialism, results in a decentralized subject torn between a self-reception determined by the West mediated through the media and the objective reality which cannot be framed within such media constructs. We noted several times how the displacement of western cultural patterns to a context which does not offer the possibility of their realization results in a state of general unfulfillment for the consumer of colonized magazines. We attempted to offer various examples of how cultural identities are displaced, how one's self is suppressed and how bodies or cultures are whitened as a result of consuming media which impose strict, models of appearance, thinking and behaviour defined by Western tastes.

The blog written by the protagonist and her journalist work is offered as an opposing narrative to these media practices, and through these the author appeals to a media accepting the heterogeneity of races and cultures and the necessity to adapt content to the needs and possibilities of its consumers. We interpret the metatextual style, i.e. parts of Ifemelu's blog in the narrative tissue of the novel, as a sort of media space for opposing the objectification and construing of the African continent and its population as read, seen and heard in some media.

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