

**MEDIA LITERACY PROGRAM**  
**PRACTICAL EXERCISE IN CRITICAL AND ANALYTICAL**  
**THINKING TOWARDS MASS MEDIA**

**MEDIA AND IDENTITIES**

**«TOWARD SOCIETY OF INDIVIDUAL»**

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## 1. Executive Summary

- When we are speaking about informing, it is logical to suppose that quality of same media contents makes conditions for degree of trustiness and that public use exactly mediums in which they have most confidence. Meanwhile, the confidence in mass media can be concepted like effect of mediums – themselves, but also like factor that conditioned their effects. Mass media public express big confidence to mediums, about what the most convincing say dates about using of mediums. The confidence in mass media is result of authority of mass media (institutional one).
- The numbers of people, who sincerely respect, support and love the art and artists and wish for fight against values that mass media giving to us were not enough for rehabilitation of community I live in. It will be very difficult to bring back the situation one decennia ago, when the comprehension of culture was on culmination. People are watching and listening that every day and they become monoculturalist who “buried” themselves in their own position and looking for inconstancies and defects of their “enemies”.
- Existing danger includes possibility of disappearing of responsibility (like moral relation) and transcendental relation that makes possible all other relations. Medium has not responsibility for contents (truth and lie have the same value); has not responsibility for community (because it is anonym heap); just has technical responsibility (for success of projected goal). Medium is the instrument of preparing for person. Medium makes instrumentalization. The personality is degraded and put in media cable in which all-important human values are closed.
- Mediums must provide to whole population correct, complete and honest information; must protect the ones who are professional journalists from every kind of pressures and tortures; must provide the best course of information in society, without trying to change someone’s conscience.
- Democratic society gives to everyone the right on opinion. With this social and symbolic status, we can have individual conscience and building of our own interior space where our being can create relations with society, different from totalitarian – ones. This right is inalienable. It permits every opinion and every attitude.

## **2. Introduction**

The problem that I noticed in my community certainly is balefully influence of mass media culture and media communication on development of personal identity that includes creating of collective conscience and opinion and those consequences are losing of identity i.e. instrumentalization of person.

The problem is very hard, expanded and complex and drags many other issues, but I hope that I will, with this work, succeed to transmit message on right way. It is not possible to be concentrated on one thing with theme like this one, because we always have presence of other factors that conditioned or created the appearance I meet. All what is psychological must be in mimicry with social and cultural; so during my work I will pay attention on individual, but also on cultural and on social.

This text represent reaction on huge authority of exterior experience that is given to us in aggressive forms of media authority and strategic – technological manipulation with person, its identity, community and human world generally, treating to put out the personal fire that burns in spiritual space of art, religion and relation toward Other. That space has big importance for saving of human world.

I tried, trough several segments, to pull trough this problem, using theoretical analyze. The main segments of work are:

1. Confidence in media
2. Consequences (social, cultural, psychological)
3. Who we are, who they are?
4. What we can do?
5. What media can do?

## **3. Analysis of the problem**

### **CONFIDENCE IN MEDIA**

Theoretical considerations between relations of public opinion and mass media constant: there are two appearances in interactive relation in which direction of connectivity is primary from mass media to public opinion. The appearance of same mass media is always accompanied with big fears and big expectations, because every medium is mediator, the resource that we can use for good and for bad. The relation between public opinion and mass media was considerate on different levels: from micro (individual – psychological), trough categorical (groups) or local, to macro level (level of society and global society). The fact that using of mass media - immediately or intermediately has influence on public informing naturally led toward opening of issues: which are the mediums that public use and why they use exactly that mediums and not some else; and not just they prefer television, radio or press, but why they use determinate stations and newspapers. Logical answer would be that are mediums in which public has big confidence.

Meanwhile, the confidence in mass media can be concepted like effect of mediums – themselves, but also like factor that conditioned their effects. Mass media public express big confidence to mediums, about what the most convincing say dates about using of mediums. The confidence in

mass media is result of authority of mass media (institutional one). When we are speaking about informing, it is logical to suppose that quality of same media contents makes conditions for degree of trust ness and that public use exactly mediums in which they have most confidence.

Although mass media (in principle) have aspirations that representatively cover the reality, objective reality and mass media reality never were and never can be in conformity. Every communicative process, especially mass - one means selection of information that unwinding during collecting, elaboration and spreading of information. All mass media institutions have constructed standard selections of information from universe of events in final result i.e. in mass media contents. Beside that, all media institutions have and use constructed criteria of interpretation of information. Mass media reality is intentionally construction; it is not different just from objective reality, but from ideas about that reality that can be shaped in conscience of person and social groups. Domination of television, like source of information in which public has most confidence, represents global and consistent trend in other countries; we can registries it today. This relations and trends – confidence in mass media are present and reflected in every community where mediums are developed, no mater of type of political, economical and media system.

Mass media houses have complete freedom to work out some standards, their own. In public, that is presented on way that mass media house respects some determinate rules in order to make stronger the confidence of that public. Than, the application of rules is thing of self-control that is going trough the manager or some mediator who is connected with that mass media house.

#### CONSEQUENCES (SOCIAL, CULTURAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL)

One of balefully influences of mass media certainly is impossibility of living in multinational i.e. multicultural community. They are promoting distrustness and alienation, while people accept that and do not think what that actually means. Mass media are mostly national oriented and every day speaks with language of intolerance and hate to other nations, religions and cultures. In their programs does not exist personality and personal identity, name and surname, something with someone should be determinate and recognized; just exist national, religious and political determination, like only important one. People are watching and listening that every day and they become monoculturalist who “buried” themselves in their own position and looking for inconstancies and defects of their “enemies”. It is just one of factors of not-having personal identity and unknown that identity should be constructed trough dialogue and interaction with others. Without that, it is impossible to establish personal prosperity, self-realization and subjective feelings.

Beside all of this we can find positive sides of media work. The best example for that is media globalization which promote common cultural values (music, films, information...) through many international TV stations and shows (CNN, BBC, MTV...)

Now days, social inequality is reflected in ability or disability to analyze accepted media message and, on that way, to avoid possible consequences. People must give bigger importance to understanding of mechanisms of communication, procedure of argumentation and methods of manipulation. They must understand why they do something, how they create their own opinion and how they make the decisions. Mediums and their manipulative techniques are focused just on that and overturned the mind. If they can see that, than is clear why xenophobia is so dominate and why the door of interculturalisam are not open yet.

Developing of culture in my country is in some other plan because of many things (economic, politic, social situation...) but also because of huge presence of mass media. The comprehension of culture, to work at it and enjoying in it is totally deformed and every day disappears. The power of mass media and "media culture" pressed real and eternal art, imposing wrong one and making multitude idolaters of it. In my community, cultural events (theatre, literature evenings, galleries, museums, alternative cultural performances, classic-music concerts) are not very popular. People rather stay at home, expecting, watching and listening some of many music shows, full of doddiness, without sense and message and, on the other side – impossible to explain how popular they are. The same thing is with Latino-series that make 80% of daily television program. If people decide to go out in the evening, they chose many cafes where they will listen that kind of sounds. They never visit any qualitative cultural event. The saddest thing is the wrong opinion and experience of culture like something that is not necessary, un-useful and boring. Cultural community is in degradation and despite of its aspiration to educate, attract and surprise population, always stays in shadow of mass media that taking "victims" on their side. The all ready mentioned cultural values are discriminated in profit of wrong ones that make the community, full of human robots, which are totally same: same speaking, same thinking, same feeling, even the way of dressing is the same.

The number of people, who sincerely respect, support and love the art and artists and wish for fight against values that mass media giving to us were not enough for rehabilitation of community I live in. It will be very difficult to bring back the situation one decennia ago, when the comprehension of culture was on culmination. It is very bad that young generation let that mass media creating their conscience and way of life and that they want to be like popular persons from TV screens. The reason way all of this is happened is that there are only few NGOs (for example Montenegro Media Institute) that are trying to promote critical thinking (critical approach to every information) and try to educate young people to consume different sources of information (different media). That is one of reasons why personality disappears.

Concerning on my personal opinion and experiences for which I hope that have certain importance, I will try now to present some psychological consequences.

In psychological way, personality becomes full of prejudices and constructions that media reduced and closed with. It does not exist its reflection in the sphere of language, community, history, narration, politics and art; with that, its existence is uncertain. It refuse to have interpersonal monologue which is one of the main factors of identity development. Personality does not want to hear itself. The speech should reflect personality of person who speaks and dialogue – touch of personality, but in this case, it is not possible, because the speech is exposition of some power of speaker who is in some determined role. His speech articulated as presentation of personified strength and his conversation like obligate communication, under those communicators are more closed than opened. Those kinds of "conversation" on psychological plan personify more threat than agreement. Affirmation of individuality existention unwind trough the need that someone else convinces "my conscience". Meanwhile, because of wrong influence, what is happening? Losing of free individuality and becoming of interests that being found in someone else (we are learnt about that by many movies and music we watch and listen every day). Even the potential mono-logical individuality is closed and its windows are open only for stealing because of interest, but not for giving out of interest sphere. It is paradoxical that people are not conscious that conscience exists and that human beings have possibility to understand feeling and opinion. We could not refuse that gift. With no attention convert on that fundament, people are resorted to "sealing" of their personality, made it close and choose easier ways for realizing their moment needs and pleasures. With accumulation of

negative things in themselves, through passive watching and listening, they can have problems even with morality and some kind of psychological problems are very possible.

## WHO WE ARE, WHO THEY ARE?

Mass media are one type of possessed communication that demonstrates the power. Listening is submissively and authoritative speech is direct silencing. Mediums dominate above the language, text and discourse. Our electronic civilization pushes back Gutenberg's epoch more and more, every day. The picture push back and takes the space of written letters and TV shows take the space of book. The world is not written book anymore, but TV show of moving pictures. Mediums, like programmed copies of reality, fascinate conquest the world and rule with it. Mediums become absolute communications that – paradox - stop every communication. This absolutisation of media makes dependence of communication-participants who become passive. Television is coming in home alone, giving information, absorbing our energy, wasting us and stealing our time.

In aim to cut this negative view about the media, I want to point out that media, especially mass media can help people to meet their friends and relatives (For example TV shows "Ce posta per te" and "Everything for love"), they can educate with different series about science, and of course, to be excellent resource for collecting the financial support for poor countries or for individuals that need help....But now back to main topic of my work, which is negative influence of mass media on identity.

Every personality should and must be transformed in massive being. The consequences of this kind of media – shaping are fatal to personal plan, its familiar and social identity, generally. The emitted world often destroys psychosocial tissue and world – experiences changes with world in figure of phantom and matrix. Television escape from "self". In addition, the community disappears, because there is no building of common life. Mediums transform every community in mute public. Therefore, we must not speak anymore or we may not speak anymore i.e. people are not in real world, but they consume information about it. Electronic media are creating one new modern nightmare in the sense of space, time and meaning, where there is no natural experience at all. The speech and conversation between people is push back under the dash of informing which media goal become now. The connection with speaking language is stopped in interest of media language in which does not exist space for dialogue, conversation, answer in action and language is reduced on cold transmitter of information and advertisements that promote someone and something.

That danger includes possibility of disappearing of responsibility (like moral relation) and transcendental relation that makes possible all other relations. Medium has not responsibility for contents (truth and lie have the same value); has not responsibility for community (because it is anonym heap); just has technical responsibility (for success of projected goal). Medium is the instrument of preparing for person. Medium makes instrumentalization. The personality is degraded and put in media cable in which all-important human values are closed.

The knowledge about the world can come from immediate exchange through the dialogue. That exchange cannot be substitute by written or painted message, because there is always a fear of losing of mutuality. Television channels produce more and more sensational shows in order to have more public (no matter of level of program, quality and social degradation). Everything what is sensational, rarely is good. Today, television has colossal power; we can say that it is

potential the most important than everything and it will be continued while people are liable to its abuses. Television has so much power in district of democracy. This power can be reduced with joint engagement of both, media and us, which I present in following two parts of my work.

The responsibility is consequence of our freedom and possibility to create. If person and world are born from freedom and creation, than person must keep possibility for creating before than something that is already created. Like people, we have responsibility because we create the world, especially in time when our power for changing the world becomes bigger than our responsibility. We are not responsible only for ourselves, but for others. Without this kind of responsibility, mass media and modern techniques lead us in country of non-sense and self-destruction, surely.

Have we right for everything we can? Does power give us right to speak without responsibility? This issue show vacuum of responsibility that characterize modern civilization, which neutralize knowledge and power in world like this one. The need for ethics of responsibility is refer to language, especially to mass media language.

#### WHAT WE CAN DO?

How to be in opposition to manipulation that mass media create?

Existence of two important reasons makes stronger our believe that we would get very much – if manipulation would not exist, and if we accept it, we lose very much. First, manipulation is threat for democratic society. Its existence endangers basis of democracy, because there is no freedom of speech in that case. Using of manipulation is important for people who, in democratic society and possibilities for assurance, see only resource for destroying of that society. There is obviously same agreement between methods for abolition of conscience freedom and values, which destroy the freedom. The first ones lead to second ones. Even without desire for strangling of freedom, the noblest opinion is spoiling with accepting of determinate ways of its defense. Justification of goals cannot be excuse for indecency of methods.

Other fact for “running away” from manipulation is that we can keep basis of human dignity. It represents obvious defect of respect and that is something we should care a lot: to be that that we really are.

The manipulation steals from person its essence. The manipulation wants to make toys of persons, damaging their conscience in order to change it with some else which is not similar to it. Fight against the manipulation starts with thinking about serious issues of norm that speech must respect in democratic society. We should have determinate thinking and to be conscious of danger that lurk us from two “coats”. On one side, we must protect ourselves from dangerous cliff of ultra – liberalism (where freedom of speech makes absolute value and not recognize the norm); on the other side, we must do our best that we not accept political correcting in way of new form of censure.

Fight against manipulation and its consequences continue with making perfect human and citizen’s ability of every person to cover manipulation’s statements. The skill of decoding of manipulation is connected with our technique. If we now manipulation’s procedures very good, we can analyze them with “no mercy”. Decoding is not closing; it represents indispensable step in world. Is it possible not to be in touch with manipulation or to try to that energy transmits against manipulation itself? In victory above manipulation is prize for that one who makes himself possibility to feel the freedom again. The joy we can feel is not just satisfaction because of

covering, which our critical mind provide to us, it is not just joy because of knowledge. It is pleasure in our own specific, in feeling that we can live in world that is not just theatre of toys.

Representing of responsibility is ethics of non – accepting the power that manipulation offers to us. Finally, we can have connections where everyone becomes creator of freedom of other. Personal attitude is personal thing. Before everything, it is connected with interior being, our conscience. With other words, naturally, it is not social act. The wish for sharing the attitude with someone else is going deep in social connections and means existing of responsibility in using of expression and assurance – technique. Democratic society gives to everyone the right on opinion. With this social and symbolic status, we can have individual conscience and building of our own interior space where our being can create relations with society, different from totalitarian – ones. This right is inalienable. It permits every opinion and every attitude.

In democratic society, the opinion is important part of our being and it is holy object. Theoretically, we should say everything we want, but on right way. Some public declarations should be forbidden, not because of content, but because of bad impressions, they make on public.

#### WHAT MEDIA CAN DO?

How suppose to be the ethics of some media that takes responsibility for converting to public in order to assure? It could be reduce on one simple but essential rule: the one who aspires to assurance is responsible for way of accepting of his message in public. That way represents moving mechanism for relation that should be connected in that occasion and, before all, it must do everything that other can be free in accepting of offered opinion. Mediums takes responsibility for public-freedom: this rule offers to us possibility for saving our communication from instrumentalization and manipulative relations.

What informing means? It means “to shape” some report with tension to inform someone about it. In the same time, information has content and form, transmission, announcing of that contents. What ethics suppose to mean? It is science whose subject is bringing of judgment, which represents estimate in sense of difference between good and bad. The ethics includes demand for systematization and critic plan and leads toward checking about basis. There are some levels of ethics: description ethics (observing and describing of media), strategic ethnics (debate about regulations of media) and normative ethics (about obligations and rules).

Meanwhile, we can see a lot of critical zones in district of informing ethics and those are: small independence of journalists in relations with authorities; neglects in checking of information; mistakes in recognizing of expression – freedom which belongs to everyone and press freedom which belongs to individuals; representing of information connected with just some ways of reality and wish for more number of listeners; violations drifted to some persons with exploitation of violence, involving in someone’s personal life.

Mediums must provide to whole population correct, complete and honest information; must protect the ones who are professional journalists from every kind of pressures and tortures; must provide the best course of information in society, without trying to change someone’s conscience.



## 4. Conclusion

Everyone for whom personal attitude is source of most important information and programs emitted in interior of being the most watchable, has huge basis of identity that never will become marionette.

Self-actualization i.e. self-realization is certainly big solution of problem that mass media cause. Of course, for that kind of solution never is too late. In the moment when person becomes conscious of very important "self" and what "self" can do for person and whole society, it will be clear how un-useful and balefully is to be "digital".

On the other side, mediums must take responsibility toward public and public opinion; toward sources of information; toward different lobbies-groups (that are more or less powerful); toward country and whole society. In addition, mediums can organize some kind of media education, but in that case, they must change the access to public they have now. There is always big part of society i.e. population that accept mediums like cultural property that should be protected and developed. Meanwhile, mediums must be critiqued by society in order to stop to be creators of collective conscience and instrumentalizers and to become one qualitative, real and honest subject, more different from now.

No one whose conscience is free and open for the most distant horizons can be instrument and slave of "passer-by". Individual freedom, in full sense of word, means clear self-actualization. Moreover, like all of us now: **libertas omnibus rebus favorabilior est!**

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