

# THE PARADIGMATIC CHANGE IN THE MEDIA-MEDIATED COMMUNICATION AFTER THE ONSET OF ONLINE MEDIA TECHNOLOGIES

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## ABSTRACT:

The study provides an overview of the basic characteristics of media-mediated communication in three historical stages – the printing age, the broadcasting age, and the current online media technology age. The rupture (discontinuity) between offline and online media-mediated communication established qualitatively new entities and relationships in society in which a wide variety of technologies are in common use – in the field of subject and its normative regulation as well as in the field of cognitive habits and skills of the individual and society as a whole. The consequences are evident in both the technological (cognitive) and technical (habitual) processes of human action, and they can be observed and examined in the field of ontology as well as epistemology and axiology. Thus, the aim of the study is to describe this peculiar environment following media logic in the development of media technologies.

## KEY WORDS:

emotionality, instrumental rationality, media-mediated communication, media technology, offline media, online media, paradigmatic change

## 1 Introduction

We live in an era of revolutionary change. The new coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2 or COVID-19) is testing our globalisation efforts in all areas of humanities and social sciences. It is a time of paradoxes. Revolutions in the world of the West have only seemingly receded. Public health protection processes are encroaching upon boundaries of civil rights and freedoms across the planet. We realise that something very important is happening around us, but understanding this is not always easy. More than ever before, we are aware of the importance of information, and more than ever before, it is media-mediated information.<sup>1</sup> It is not just



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<sup>1</sup> For more information, see: DEUZE, M.: The Role of Media and Mass Communication Theory in the Global Pandemic. In *Communication Today*, 2020, Vol. 11, No. 2, p. 4-16.

about content issues; it is mainly about the technologies that provide us with this content. So, how do media technologies determine human cognitive habits and skills? This study shall try to answer this very question.

The text is divided into three parts. The first one briefly recapitulates the nature of media-mediated communication in the press era, i.e., in the world of written word of printed periodicals. The works of Marshall McLuhan<sup>2</sup> and Neil Postman<sup>3</sup> became the theoretical basis. The second part focuses on changes in the cognitive habits and skills of people that have occurred in the era of technology of so-called electronic, i.e., broadcasting media (radio, television, cable television, satellite, CD-ROMs, and DVD). The key concept here is “mediatisation”, as defined by Kent Asp<sup>4</sup> and the author of the theory of “mediatisation”, Stig Hjarvard.<sup>5</sup> It should be noted that academia from the Anglo-American language environment prefers the term “mediation” in this context.<sup>6</sup> Finally, the third section points to the revolutionary changes that introduced the field of getting to know the world through so-called online media, i.e., the Internet (Web 1.0), social media (Web 2.0), and the semantic media (Web 3.0). A special place here is occupied by the departure from the Enlightenment heritage of rationality in media-mediated communication. Online media technologies have brought emotions to the media-mediated world of the individual and society as a whole, as shown by the research and analyses by Karin Wahl-Jorgensen<sup>7</sup> as well as by my own research in this field.<sup>8</sup> Methodologically, this study is a media-philosophical reflection. The aim is therefore not to give a full explanation or a single interpretation, but rather to provide impetus for further reflection, analysis and research.

## 2 Printing Technology – The Era of the Printed Word

Joseph C. Pitt, the American pragmatist, philosopher of science and technology, defines technology as “*humanity at work*” which must also include human “*deliberate and purposeful use of tools*”.<sup>9</sup> Drawing on this concept, the study deals with media technology from the perspective of media-mediated communication, as media-mediated communication seems to meet the criteria of Pitt’s definition. Philosophical reflections on such communication can be found even in the works of Plato. In the dialogue between Socrates and Phaedrus, a sentimental young man without a philosophical education, Plato pays attention to the peculiarities of oral communication in particular. Nevertheless, in the final part, he turns his thoughts towards technologically mediated (written) communication and its specifics:

Socrates: “*I cannot help feeling, Phaedrus, that writing is unfortunately like painting; for the creations of the painter have the attitude of life, and yet if you ask them a question, they preserve a solemn silence. And the same may be said of speeches. You would imagine that they had intelligence, but if you want to know anything and put a question to one of them, the speaker always gives one unvarying answer. And when they have been once written down, they are tumbled about anywhere among those who may or may not understand them, and know not to whom they should reply, to whom not: and, if they are maltreated or abused, they have no parent to protect them; and they cannot protect or defend themselves.*”<sup>10</sup>

2 See: MCLUHAN, M.: *Understanding Media. The Extensions of Man*. Cambridge, London : MIT Press, 1994.

3 See also: POSTMAN, N.: *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business*. London : Penguin Books, 1985.

4 See, for example: ASP, K.: *Måktiga massmedier: Studier i politisk opinionsbildning*. Stockholm : Förlaget Akademiliteratur AB, 1986.

5 Compare to: HJARVARD, S.: *The Mediatization of Culture and Society*. New York : Routledge, 2013.

6 Compare to: COULDRY, N.: Mediatization or Mediation? Alternative Understanding of the Emergent Space of Digital Storytelling. In *New Media & Society*, 2008, Vol. 10, No. 3, p. 373-391; ALTHEIDE, D. L.: Toward a Theory of Mediation. In ANDERSON, J. A. (ed.): *Communication Yearbook 11*. New York : Routledge, 1988, p. 194-223; CORNER, J.: Mediated Persona and Political Culture. In CORNER, J., PELS, D. (eds.): *Media and the Restyling of Politics*. London : Sage, 2003, p. 67-84.

7 See: WAHL-JORGENSEN, K.: *Emotions, Media and Politics*. Cambridge, Medford : Polity Press, 2019.

8 See also: SÁMELOVÁ, A.: Online Self-Conspiracy as a Challenge of Online-Mediated Communication for Social Change. In *Communication Today*, 2019, Vol. 10, No. 2, p. 4-15.

9 See: PITT, J. C.: *Thinking about Technology: Foundations of the Philosophy of Technology*. New York : Seven Bridges Press, 2000, p. 11.

10 PLATO: *Phaedrus*. [online]. [2021-06-06]. Available at: <<http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/phaedrus.html>>.

Plato’s observation is not directly related to the subject of this study, but foreshadows that recorded information in any form – assemblages of knotted strings, signs hammered into stone, carved into wood, engraved in rough leather, written by any instrument on any form of fabric, glass, ceramics or paper, or printed in newspapers – has brought a special dimension to communication in human society, significantly different from the spoken word and with completely different demands on the habits and skills of the individual, although its influence on the formation of the subject of man and society as a whole was manifested more significantly by Guttenberg’s printing press and the advent of modern media of mass communication – periodicals. These were the times when literacy spread even among ordinary, less-educated people. Thus began the era of the press in modern human history. One of the founders of the science of mass communication, the American media theorist Neil Postman, called it the culture of the “*typographic mind*” or the “*Age of Exposition*”.<sup>11</sup>

It was the skill and habit of reading the press that strengthened the Enlightenment ideal of man as an autonomous and rational being. However, to read newspapers or magazines, one needed to routinely master reading comprehension. Reading comprehension is therefore a human competence to be attributed to the era of the press. However, this understanding of the written word in periodicals was, so to speak, arranged in time and space. Printed newspapers were published with a clearly defined time schedule (daily, weekly, monthly), had a precisely determined number of pages, clearly arranged sections, clearly identified authors who presented their thoughts on contemporary events in more or less formalised stories and in a specific context. In addition, the printed texts and images had a material form, as if they embodied the reality they were writing about, and preserved it ‘for eternity’. All these things allowed the reader to create a distance – to critically consider the content in terms of their social, cultural, religious, economic or ideological experience and beliefs. This means that the era of the printed word presupposed the relatively stable identity of its reader, a subject anchored in reason, and thus in rational reasoning and logical argumentation, whether the reader himself was aware of it or not.<sup>12</sup>

The term “critical thinking”, however, cannot be understood in its current definition dating back to the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The typographic mind of man looked at texts and images published in the press with great respect, believing that only the knowledge of wise, esteemed authors is published in newspapers. Thus, the rational consideration of the content did not involve a reflection on the sources and their credibility.<sup>13</sup> Appropriate seriousness was also attached to newspaper advertising. Until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it was understood from the ground up as a serious and rational activity, and therefore its creators focused on the reader’s judgment, not on their passions. An important element of the reader’s habit was the Postman exposition, i.e., the reader’s long-term exposure to a specific opinion or attitude. The press was exclusively partisan at that time, not only in a political but also in a thematic sense. This means that a particular periodical sided with specific ideas while deliberately and purposefully ignoring the others.

“*Exposition is a mode of thought, a method of learning, and a means of expression. Almost all of the characteristics we associate with mature discourse were amplified by typography, which has the strongest possible bias toward exposition: a sophisticated ability to think conceptually; deductively and sequentially; a high valuation of reason and order; an abhorrence of contradiction; a large capacity for detachment and objectivity; and a tolerance for delayed response.*”<sup>14</sup>

The habit of reading the press gradually became so obvious among people that Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel described the practice of printing consumption as routine, although not banal: “*Reading the morning newspaper is the realist’s morning prayer. One orients one’s attitude toward the world either by God or by what the world is. The former gives as much security as the latter, in that one knows how one stands.*”<sup>15</sup> In Hegel’s times, as Neil Postman writes, reading contained “*a sacred element*”, because reading “*occurred*

11 POSTMAN, N.: *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business*. London : Penguin Books, 1985, p. 49-63.

12 Remark by author: See also chapter No. 2 “Media as Epistemology” in: POSTMAN, N.: *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business*. London : Penguin Books, 1985, p. 16-29.

13 Remark by author: See, in particular, chapter No. 4 “The Typographic Mind” in: POSTMAN, N.: *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business*. London : Penguin Books, 1985, p. 44-63.

14 POSTMAN, N.: *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business*. London : Penguin Books, 1985, p. 63.

15 HEGEL, G. W. F.: *Miscellaneous Writings of G. W. F. Hegel*. Evanston : Northwestern University Press, 2002, p. 247.

as a daily or weekly ritual invested with special meaning”, and it was done “seriously, intensely, and with steadfast purpose”.<sup>16</sup> Postman even referred to the media as epistemology showing that “definitions of truth are derived, at least in part, from the character of the media of communication through which information is conveyed”.<sup>17</sup>

“We might say that a technology is to a medium as the brain is to the mind. Like the brain, a technology is a physical apparatus. Like the mind, a medium is a use to which a physical apparatus is put. A technology becomes a medium as it employs a particular symbolic code, as it finds its place in a particular social setting, as it insinuates itself into economic and political contexts. A technology, in other words, is merely a machine. A medium is the social and intellectual environment a machine creates. Of course, like the brain itself, every technology has an inherent bias. It has within its physical form a predisposition toward being used in certain ways and not others. Only those who know nothing of the history of technology believe that a technology is entirely neutral.”<sup>18</sup>

Another of the founders of the science of mass communication, the Canadian philosopher and media theorist Marshall McLuhan, referred to this phenomenon through the statement that the medium is the message: “This is merely to say that the personal and social consequences of any medium – that is, of any extension of ourselves – result from the new scale that is introduced into our affairs by each extension of ourselves, or by any new technology. (...) The restructuring of human work and association was shaped by the technique of fragmentation that is the essence of machine technology.”<sup>19</sup>

In his explanation, McLuhan went even further – the medium *dictates* the message – because it is the medium that can shape and control how people think, associate, and act. In turn, those things dictate what message is finally communicated. He understood the media as translators: “technologies are ways of translating one kind of knowledge into another”.<sup>20</sup> In the context of the printed word era, this means that the invention of printing and praxis of reading newspapers encouraged people to think linearly (both in time and space) and to arrange their perceptions of the world in forms that belong to the visual order of the printed page of static words and images. To sum it up, printing technology established the era of the press with its periodicals that provided their audience of typographic minds with almost oral stories – debates full of “arguments and counter-arguments, statements and counter-statements, critiques of relevant texts and careful analysis of the opponent’s sentences”.<sup>21</sup> Although newspapers, especially the penny press, always used expressive words and images, precisely because they were partisan, technology of print “put forward a definition of intelligence that gave priority to the objective, rational use of the mind and at the same time encouraged forms of public discourse with serious, logically ordered content”.<sup>22</sup> Nevertheless, the 20<sup>th</sup> century brought telegraphy and electricity to the media-mediated communication. It introduced so-called broadcasting media that set completely different requirements for habits and skills of media consumers. The “Age of Show Business” or the culture of the “Peek-a-Boo World” had begun.<sup>23</sup> Let us look at it in more details.

### 3 Broadcasting Technology – The Era of “Mediatiation” of Society

The era of broadcasting started with the invention of electricity and telegraphy. The telegraph transmitted, and thus conveyed, information so quickly that its natural consequence was an excess of information. But this information had to be concise, i.e., context-less. News agencies were set up in order to offer ever-emerging information from no one to no one. The authorship belonged to the agency; the author of the text

16 POSTMAN, N.: *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business*. London : Penguin Books, 1985, p. 51.  
 17 POSTMAN, N.: *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business*. London : Penguin Books, 1985, p. 17.  
 18 POSTMAN, N.: *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business*. London : Penguin Books, 1985, p. 84.  
 19 MCLUHAN, M.: *Understanding Media. The Extensions of Man*. Cambridge, London : MIT Press, 1994, p. 7-8.  
 20 MCLUHAN, M.: *Understanding Media. The Extensions of Man*. Cambridge, London : MIT Press, 1994, p. 56.  
 21 POSTMAN, N.: *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business*. London : Penguin Books, 1985, p. 57.  
 22 POSTMAN, N.: *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business*. London : Penguin Books, 1985, p. 51.  
 23 POSTMAN, N.: *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business*. London : Penguin Books, 1985, p. 64.

himself became only its anonymous finder and distributor: “(...) the telegraph made a three-pronged attack on typography’s definition of discourse, introducing on a large-scale irrelevance, impotence, and incoherence. These demons of discourse were aroused by the fact that telegraphy gave a form of legitimacy to the idea of context-free information; that is, to the idea that the value of information need not be tied to any function it might serve in social and political decision-making and action, but may attach merely to its novelty, interest, and curiosity. The telegraph made information into a commodity, a ‘thing’ that could be bought and sold irrespective of its uses or meaning.”<sup>24</sup>

Almost simultaneously introduced radio broadcasting also required a different kind of consumer – listener – as well as a different kind of author – informant. The reader, as a critic of contextual information, became a listener of fragments that fit into limited airtime. At the beginning of the radio broadcast, it was calculated by minutes a week, not for today’s well known 24/7 (twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week). The former typographic author as authority became a well-briefed host in broadcasting. Rather than personal wisdom and relevant education in a particular field, they needed to be well-briefed. Whilst the telegraph and radio heralded an era of little context in media-mediated communication, the advent of television technology started a fusion of media-mediated information with entertainment, as on TV, everything, including news, must be entertaining. People – viewers – learned to explore the world through context-less entertainment. And the authors of the media messages also changed: “Our priests and presidents, our surgeons and lawyers, our educators and news-casters need worry less about satisfying the demands of their discipline than the demands of good showmanship.”<sup>25</sup> In order to appear on television, one had to master its means of communication, verbal as well as nonverbal, as television transformed society into “one vast arena for show business”.<sup>26</sup> The original role of the mass media – to inform, educate, cultivate, and also to entertain – did not change, but the technique for achieving this did. Television has combined context-free information with entertainment into a single unit – infotainment. A typical bridging phrase from radio and television news “Now ... This”<sup>27</sup> became a kind of central motto for this general getting to know the world.

Evidence and implications of this infotainment lifestyle can be found in the analyses of many famous contemporary media theorists on both sides of the Atlantic. Marshall McLuhan stated that TV “affected the totality of our lives, personal and social and political”,<sup>28</sup> Neil Postman called television the “command center of the new epistemology”.<sup>29</sup> Scandinavian thinkers, however, researched this intensive and gradual adaptation of individuals and society as a whole to the so-called media logic, especially to television logic, as a peculiar social phenomenon. The Swedish political scientist and professor of journalism Kent Asp named this phenomenon “medialisering”/“mediatisation” in 1986; the Danish media theorist Stig Hjarvard developed a comprehensive theory of “mediatisation” of culture and society in 2013: “The term ‘media logic’ is used to recognise that the media have particular *modus operandi* and characteristics (specificities of media) that come to influence other institutions and culture and society in general, as they become dependent on the resources that the media both control and make available to them.”<sup>30</sup>

“Mediatiation” itself is defined as the “process whereby culture and society to an increasing degree become dependent on the media and their logic”,<sup>31</sup> i.e., private as well as public life is perceived, portrayed, and judged as if through the eyes and ears of the media. This process is simultaneously characterised by a “duality in that the media have acquired the status of a semi-independent institution in society at the same time as they become integrated into the very fabric of social life”.<sup>32</sup> “Mediatiation” thus only entered the life of Western society in the last decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, i.e., at the turn of the offline and online era. It was a time of blending electricity-based technologies with information-based technologies. It was a time

24 POSTMAN, N.: *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business*. London : Penguin Books, 1985, p. 65.  
 25 POSTMAN, N.: *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business*. London : Penguin Books, 1985, p. 98.  
 26 POSTMAN, N.: *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business*. London : Penguin Books, 1985, p. 98.  
 27 POSTMAN, N.: *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business*. London : Penguin Books, 1985, p. 105.  
 28 MCLUHAN, M.: *Understanding Media. The Extensions of Man*. Cambridge, London : MIT Press, 1994, p. 317.  
 29 POSTMAN, N.: *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business*. London : Penguin Books, 1985, p. 78.  
 30 HJARVARD, S.: *The Mediatization of Culture and Society*. New York : Routledge, 2013, p. 17.  
 31 HJARVARD, S.: *The Mediatization of Culture and Society*. New York : Routledge, 2013, p. 153.  
 32 HJARVARD, S.: *The Mediatization of Culture and Society*. New York : Routledge, 2013, p. 153.

when people suddenly became “nomadic gatherers of knowledge, nomadic as never before, informed as never before, free from fragmentary specialism as never before – but also involved in the total social process as never before; since with electricity we extend our central nervous system globally, instantly interrelating every human experience”.<sup>33</sup>

Although radio and television attack the passions of their audience, they still have to act within a bias of their technological type, i.e., in terms of rational, fact-based editorial responsibility of the broadcaster as a media institution controlled by media professionals. The 21<sup>st</sup> century media, however, are governed by a different logic. The logic of a kind of information-publication self-service and self-entertainment of the public.<sup>34</sup> The age of radio and TV infotainment was displaced by the age of information, “the automation age”.<sup>35</sup> The online era had begun: “Automation is information and it not only ends jobs in the world of work, it ends subjects in the world of learning. It does not end the world of learning. (...) It ends the old dichotomies between culture and technology, between art and commerce, and between work and leisure. Whereas in the mechanical age of fragmentation leisure had been the absence of work, or mere idleness, the reverse is true in the electric age. As the age of information demands the simultaneous use of all our faculties, we discover that we are most at leisure when we are most intensely involved, very much as with the artists in all ages.”<sup>36</sup>

Thus, while the traditional media (the press, radio, TV, satellite, etc.) of the offline era shaped the subject of a more or less rational, autonomous individual of modernity, the online media of the information age forms a multiplied subject, scattered in time and space, decentralised in terms of sources of knowledge, incoherent in terms of value frameworks, a subject of many identities.

## 4 Online Technology – The Era of Emotions, Alogism, Faith and Intuition

The rupture (discontinuity) between offline and online media-mediated communication established qualitatively new entities and relationships in society in which a wide variety of technologies are in common use – in the field of subject and its normative regulation as well as in the field of cognitive habits and skills of the individual and society as a whole. The consequences are evident in both the technological (cognitive) and technical (habitual) processes of human action, and they can be observed and examined in the field of ontology as well as epistemology and axiology. Thus, this section of the study clarifies the peculiar environment of online communication. This environment is technological, but at the same time it is full of content and content-based personalised data. Since its inception, it has been considered an instrument for strengthening humanism, democracy, intercultural understanding in the form of omnipresent users’ freedom of expression. Nevertheless, like any product of progress in the sense of the instrumental rationality of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it is marked by scientism. The Dutch theoretician of art history and philosophy Henderik Roelof Rookmaaker characteristically stated: “Scientism is still the way man hopes to make a better world. It is, and will be, a technocratic world, as technocracy, which includes man, too, is at its heart. Man is no longer a human being who buys things: no, he is a consumer. He has become a little wheel in the big machine, a unit in social statistics, an electronic oscillation in the computer.”<sup>37</sup>

Rookmaaker seems to be right, but the human situation has gone even further in the era of online technology. Man is no longer just a consumer, but also a prosumer – a person who consumes and simultaneously produces a product – through embedded and downloaded media content. From the cognitive and technical points of view, it is important to distinguish between technologies of the Internet (the websites, blogs and vlogs

of Web 1.0), social media (the social networks of Web 2.0), and the semantic media (the platforms of Web 3.0), because each of them functions differently: each of them requires different effort on the user’s part, evokes different expectations, and causes different consequences. The Internet (Web 1.0) has abolished the privilege of elites to publish media content and taught ordinary people to explore the world through self-presentation of individuals as well as of institutions, i.e., without the risk of manipulation by professional editorial staff.<sup>38</sup> The characteristic cognitive requirement of self-information and self-entertainment on websites, blogs or vlogs, is only the ability and skill to find and download the object of one’s information and entertainment.<sup>39</sup>

On the other hand, social media (Web 2.0) set up a more active agenda – self-publishing and, along with it, a cognitive demand to acquire the ability to create and upload one’s own content (texts, sounds, images). The intricate cross-publishing of original content, slightly modified content or seriously distorted (even false) content by media laity for self-information and self-entertainment has resulted in a situation where truth has often ceased to be a criterion for media content. A more substantial criterion for ‘proper’ content expected by ordinary people seems to be affirmation of sameness through the ‘like button’ or denial of otherness through the ‘hate button’.<sup>40</sup>

Finally, the platforms of the semantic media (Web 3.0) allow not only self-presentation or self-affirmation, but also self-shaping. Nevertheless, they require immersion – a jump into the online information-publishing self-service of connected users. The immersion means a routine active media consumption as well as media production, so that search engines and software get as much feedback as possible about one’s current needs, opinions, attitudes, beliefs, wishes, rejections, etc., both material and spiritual. The reward is the opportunity for free self-shaping, even if in a personalised information ‘bubble’. Such self-shaping is a cognitive-social paradox of online communication. On the one hand, it requires relatively high technological abilities and skills of users, but on the other, it captures them in a strict community enclosure where their cognition is exposed rather to the banal emotional challenges of emoticons and emoji, than to rational inquiry into the truthfulness and correctness of the published information. Not precisely fun instead of knowledge, but achieving knowledge through infotainment and entertainment with the appropriate societal consequences.<sup>41</sup>

People voluntarily, often unwittingly, transmit their private information (seemingly harmless personal texts, sounds, images or consumer orders) to databases. Their subjects become transparent and aggregators of these databases acquire valuable business goods. Foucault’s Panopticism, Mathiesen’s Synopticism, and Bauman’s “do-it-yourself surveillance” have reached a level of super-panoptic/super-synoptic (even omni-optic) surveillance and DIY (online) identity through infinite media-mediated communication, and current social order is gradually changing its instrumental-rational nature. Surveillance technologies have filled both private and public spaces, but people seem satisfied and happy because they are having fun.

Western civilisation has long regarded emotions as the enemy of rational public discourse. Emotions belonged to privacy, rationality to the public. The very media kept emotions at bay. Today, however, the world’s most important news medium is not a traditional publisher or broadcaster, but *Facebook*. And there, in the online environment, the spaces for privacy and for public, for emotions and for rationality are merged – even rational online information is processed on pure emotions. The established societal conventions do not play an important role in the online space. The authenticity of emotions overtakes the mannerism of rationality. Karin Wahl-Jorgensen, a professor of journalism, media and communications at Cardiff University (UK), conducted

33 MCLUHAN, M.: *Understanding Media. The Extensions of Man*. Cambridge, London : MIT Press, 1994, p. 358.

34 See also: GÁLIKOVÁ TOLNAIOVÁ, S.: Media and Truth in the Perspective of the Practice and Life Form of the Modern “Homo Medialis”. In *Communication Today*, 2019, Vol. 10, No. 1, p. 4-19.

35 MCLUHAN, M.: *Understanding Media. The Extensions of Man*. Cambridge, London : MIT Press, 1994, p. 346.

36 MCLUHAN, M.: *Understanding Media. The Extensions of Man*. Cambridge, London : MIT Press, 1994, p. 347-347.

37 ROOKMAAKER, H. R.: *Modern Art and the Death of a Culture*. London : Inter-Varsity Press, 1970, p. 48.

38 Remark by author: Although most Web 1.0 – Web 3.0 content is not published by media professionals, the influence of online media has significantly changed their editorial practice and routine in terms of both content and form. See, for example: VIŠŇOVSKÝ, J., RADOŠINSKÁ, J.: Online Journalism: Current Trends and Challenges. In PEŇA ACUÑA, B. (ed.): *The Evolution of Media Communication*. Rijeka : InTech, 2017, p. 3-22. [online]. [2021-06-06]. Available at: <<https://www.intechopen.com/books/the-evolution-of-media-communication/online-journalism-current-trends-and-challenges>>; HACEK, J.: *Otvorené zdroje a dáta pre novinárov na Slovensku*. Bratislava : Comenius University, 2020, p. 17-45.

39 See also: SÁMELOVÁ, A.: Nové médiá a zmena kognitívnych návykov a zručností ich publika. In *Otázky žurnalistiky*, 2021, Vol. 64, No. 1-2, p. 31-41.

40 Remark by author: In addition, a case study by media linguist Mária Stanková suggests that in an online communication environment, serious information is gradually pushed to the margins by marketing content (often hidden) based on the same like/hate measure of quality. See: STANKOVÁ, M.: Fenomén literárnej kritiky v 21. storočí. In SÁMELOVÁ, A., STANKOVÁ, M., HACEK, J. (eds.): *Fenomén 2019: Súčasná profesionálna žurnalistika a jej reflexie*. Bratislava : Comenius University, 2019, p. 64-75.

41 Remark by author: I discussed these user-related features of the Web 1.0 – Web 3.0 previously. Compare to: SÁMELOVÁ, A.: Online Self-Conspiracy as a Challenge of Online-Mediated Communication for Social Change. In *Communication Today*, 2019, Vol. 10, No. 2, p. 7-8.

an extensive research into emotions in public life, including the media, and she maintains that the “centrality of emotion in directing the architecture of Facebook shows a paradigm shift in thinking about public debate as it takes place through social media”.<sup>42</sup> She pointed out that the online media does not keep emotions at bay, they even directly support them, search for them, centre them on the most visible and audible zone of the message (status, blog, vlog, picture, meme, etc.) and spread them throughout the networks all over the world, without any societal responsibility to the traditional media rationality. Public as well as private life is almost entirely mediated (“mediatised” in Asp’s and Hjarvard’s terminology).

Wahl-Jorgensen examined the interdependence of the content and form of the media message (what and how to express) and the location of this expression (where it is expressed) and she concluded that the very architecture of social media is emotional. “It considers the case of Facebook’s reactions emoji, which exemplifies the ways in which the emotional architecture of social media contributes to the shaping of public debate.”<sup>43</sup> The results of this investigation highlight “the commodification and marketization of public emotion (...) In particular, the privileging of pro-social positive emotion has coincided with the colonization of the public sphere by corporate interests”.<sup>44</sup> Wahl Jorgensen, however, states that corporations are “more interested in targeting and tailoring content to interested consumers than in creating the conditions for a diverse public debate”.<sup>45</sup> The demand for non-emotional media content seems to be abolished by the very information-and-publication self-service and self-entertainment of the former media consumer (audience) who has become the online prosumer (author, producer and consumer in one). The rational arguments of the traditional media have been replaced by emojis and emoticons and they express not only human emotions, but also their ideas and values.

To sum it up, let me outline a brief definition of the prosumer of the online media – online man – in terms of three traditional philosophical approaches: ontology, epistemology, and axiology. Ontologically, he is an endemic of his species *homo sapiens* with the designation *homo onlinensis*.<sup>46</sup> I suggested the adjective *onlinensis* in accordance with the principles of adjective formation in Latin, in which the suffix *-ensis* is used to indicate the country, place of origin or occurrence of a given noun. This means that this type of rational being comes from online space and occurs exclusively in online space. By leaving the online world, an online man becomes an offline person in the traditional offline world. In the offline environment, he (epistemologically) continues to be subject of the Enlightenment heritage of rationalism with logic and reasoned argumentation as the basis for finding and affirming the truth. And axiologically, he is a subject of the traditional value frameworks and societal norms of modern normative regulation. In the online world, however, he rejects logic and replaces it with faith and intuition measured, and thus also validated, by likes and hates. He replaces rational arguments with emoticons and emojis. In the diversity of cultural stimuli and influences in the broadest sense, he composes his unique self from ‘proper’ fragments, which he operatively changes according to the emotionally assigned likes and hates of his online community.

## 5 Conclusion

This study shows that particular media technology determines the nature and manifestations of the individual and of society as a whole. At the same time, it clarifies how ever-newer new media in the historical context changed the demands for habits and skills in media consumption, and these influenced human cognition. Finally, comparing habitus of individuals shaped by the offline and online media, the study points out the degree of deepening “mediatisation” of society in the online era.

42 WAHL-JORGENSEN, K.: *Emotions, Media and Politics*. Cambridge, Medford : Polity Press, 2019, p. 165.

43 WAHL-JORGENSEN, K.: *Emotions, Media and Politics*. Cambridge, Medford : Polity Press, 2019, p. 147.

44 WAHL-JORGENSEN, K.: *Emotions, Media and Politics*. Cambridge, Medford : Polity Press, 2019, p. 165.

45 WAHL-JORGENSEN, K.: *Emotions, Media and Politics*. Cambridge, Medford : Polity Press, 2019, p. 165.

46 See also: SÁMĚLOVÁ, A.: Online člověk ako nový evolučný typ homo onlinensis. In KVETANOVÁ, Z., GRACA, M. (eds.): *Megatrendy a médiá 2020: On the Edge*. Trnava : FMK UCM, 2020, p. 81-90.

The first modern media technology – printing – shaped the typographic mind of man. Newspapers relied on his rationality and judgement based on the socio-cultural knowledge and value context which surrounded him. Media content was based on arguments and counter-arguments of a coherent story in a specific context. The invention of electricity and telegraphy established a new type of media – broadcasting – and along with it, context-free information. Not only in terms of its content, but also in terms of its significance and use in everyday life, there came an excess of information. Television then brought a specific way of presenting information through entertainment – infotainment. The age of show business began, during which people – viewers – increasingly adapted to media logic. This phenomenon was called the “mediatisation” of culture and society. Finally, the information age has brought online media into people’s lives, and with them a departure from the traditional rationality of modernity based on logic, verified and verifiable facts, and reasoned argumentation. The former consumer of the media (audience) turned into a prosumer (author, producer and consumer of media in one) and filled the public arena with emotionality. He replaced logic with faith and intuition, the justification of which is measured by likes and hates; he replaced reasoned arguments with emoticons and emojis. His subject is self-shaped into a unique self through the fragments and incoherent stimuli coming from various cultures and value communities.

The American writer Lewis Henry Lapham has compiled a series of antonyms that aptly point out the difference between a typographic man from the times of the first modern media and the contemporary online man of the information age: “*citizen – nomad; build – wander; experience – innocence; authority – power; happiness – pleasure, literature – journalism; heterosexual – polymorphous; civilization – barbarism; will – wish; truth as passion – passion as truth; peace – war; achievement – celebrity; science – magic; doubt – certainty; drama – pornography; history – legend; argument – violence; wife – whore; art – dream; agriculture – banditry; politics – prophecy.*”<sup>47</sup>

It turns out that the environment of online media-mediated communication shows truly peculiar features and is fundamentally different compared to the communication mediated by traditional (offline) media. Technological or cognitive demands on user habits and skills are also significantly different. They are based on emotions rather than rationality. This study’s central argument, then, is that if the science of mass media communication wants to maintain a critical reflection on media-mediated communication in a society in which a wide variety of technologies are in common use, it should overcome instrumental rationality and rethink the vital role of emotion in human life.

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47 Remark by author: Introduction to: MCLUHAN, M.: *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*. Cambridge : MIT Press, 1994, p. xxii.

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