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Review of the study from Assoc. Prof. Dr. Sabahudin Hadzialic

MEDIA LITERACY AND MEDIA ETHICS, THE ONLY WAY OUT

With a look at the past century, we can undoubtedly claim that the prevailing thoughts of that era, or the dominant social theories of the time that are behind us, have not infrequently focused on the reflection of the diverse and complex phenomena of mass communication media. From the perspective of the overall history of the media, the initial benevolent understanding of the media as objective and value-neutral interpreters of reality, the so-called pre-theoretical period, very quickly gave way to an approach that indicated serious theoretical reflection on various aspects of media existence in the social environment. In the meantime, numerous theory schools and a whole host of theorists have offered us innumerable interpretations and signposts to better understand the media and the impact they produce. Thanks to numerous theoretical and research developments, many media phenomena, including the media corpus as a whole, have become closer and more accessible to our understanding. But despite the undoubted progress that has been made in this field, we are inclined to believe that the media world is still full of unknowns and that it will remain its determinant forever.

If for no other reason, it is certainly due to the technological conditionality of the media - which makes it difficult to determine the development flows and the limits of change or progress. The claim that "knowing what the future holds, it means that we are not looking far enough" (Tim Berners Li, inventor of the hypertext), just comes from the media context and suggests our inability to understand the role and position of communications media in the future. In other words, the biggest trouble about this issue lies in the illusion of its simplicity, behind which lies the incredible complexity that references as well on complex media technologies as well on politics, economics, psychology ... and many other aspects that have been enveloped by media practice. That is why in today's world, and we believe it will be the determinant of the future, in a way as Baudrillard said, "there is nothing outside the media".

Deeply aware of these circumstances, Professor Hadzialic, in his extensive study of **MEDIA LITERACY AND MEDIA ETHICS, THE ONLY WAY OUT**, without pleading towards final solutions, points to two key directions in which efforts must be made unconditionally and what we need to do when it comes to ours facing with the media future.

The first, and possibly the main corridor of engagement, which the author advocates is the continuous strengthening of social capacities in the field of media literacy. It would seem that there is nothing new and special about this and that it is just another in a series of reminders of the importance of this topic in our efforts to eliminate or minimize the consequences of various forms of media abuse. However, in his study Professor Hadzialic makes a step

towards identifying the main problems that make today's media literacy contentious and insufficient, and what and how changes should be made in this field.

Being literate used to mean being able to express your thoughts and feelings through graphic signs or letters. Today, the concept of literacy is significantly expanded and has a completely different meaning from the one it had in the times that followed. In modern times, this term refers not to traditional but primarily to media literacy. For a reason, because in terms of mass, traditional, that is, spoken and written communication, have long ago given primacy to the new media. Regardless of the massed user domain, given the technological and specific expressive characteristics of new age media, it is more than obvious that the use, knowledge and understanding of media content is coupled with skills and knowledge that are inherently expert. Therefore, media content created in a technologically and technologically complex process is usually not accessible to a full understanding and correct interpretation of the intended masses. This gives space and opens opportunities for various misuse and manipulative use of the media, or, at best, makes the communication process insufficient and burdened with noise and interference.

Since, from a user perspective, the process of acquiring expert knowledge in the field of heterogeneous mass media is very complicated and extremely uncertain, then what does Professor Hadzialic propose to us in his considerations as a more reliable solution? His thinking is moving in a rather interesting direction, which, while respecting the basic rules of communication processes, primarily pleads for the *more responsible behavior* of those who are the main actors of media processes, ie, media employees. This will say that if the reception of any media content implies inevitable interaction or *reciprocity* in the trinity of *media-content-user*, then accepting and adopting media content presupposes only one condition, simply called - *trust*. Only by gaining trust, which is a guarantee of the reliability of media employees, does the precondition for acceptance of media content by those for whom it is intended to be realized.

This approach builds its immediate reliance on another, no less important, aspect of current and future media practice that the author draws our attention to. Namely, he is heartily committed to affirming the ethical conduct of all those who in any way participate in media activities. So, between the two ends of the communication channel, sending and receiving of the message, it is necessary to find ways to use media that will repose on one *moral standpoint*. Of course, ethics does not only draw attention only in connection to the media. These are absolute and universal categories. Only work and practices that are adapted to a particular set of rules can be considered desirable and socially useful, that is, they are based on moral and then legal norms. However, while society is interested in moral and legal behavior in all areas of social life, it seems that this issue is nowhere near as complex as in the media sector. So, apart from the need to ensure the possibility of free and smooth implementation of the communication process, which is the essence of media activity, another process that needs to be strengthened in the future development of the media involves an ethical framework, that is, *responsibility* in communication, which would ultimately ensure the prevention of media abuse.

In the end, it should be noted that Professor Hadzialic's study was prepared in an interestingly structured form, as a series of 40 interconnected essays that collectively provide valuable reflection on a number of key issues that are vital to our understanding of the media and the nature of the impact they have in the social environment .

I heartily and cordially recommend the MEDIA LITERACY AND MEDIA ETHICS, THE ONLY WAY OUT study for public publication