



Evolution of Media Culture in the Context of McLuhan's Typology: History, Reality, Prospects

Kirillova NB*

Federal State Autonomous Educational Institution of Higher Professional Education, Lenina Prospect, Office, Ekaterinburg, Russia

*Corresponding author: Kirillova NB, Federal State Autonomous Educational Institution of Higher Professional Education, 51 Lenina Prospect, Office 41B, Ekaterinburg, 620083, Russia, Tel: 8-800-100-50-44; E-mail: kirillovanatallyaborisovna@mail.ru

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Abstract

The article aims to study the theoretical aspects of the communicative system's development dynamics in the context of H. M. McLuhan's historical typology. Adopting the theoretical and comparative analysis methods, the author shows that media, or communicative, culture has evolved significantly over the years. On the basis of McLuhan's cultural typology, the author conducts a thorough analysis of the historical periods reflecting the evolution process of media culture (the pre-writing era, the millennium of phonetic writing, the "Gutenberg Galaxy", the "Marconi Galaxy") and provides a theoretical generalization thereof. The article is brought to conclusion with an analysis of the information era that can be defined, taking into consideration the latest priorities, as the "Internet Galaxy". Information and communication technologies along with the modern media (computer channels, the Web, mobile communications, D-Cinema, television, photography, multimedia, etc.) have created a global media environment, in which various civilizations and cultures co-exist. Moreover, at the turn of Millennium, people live in two worlds at the same time: in the real world and in virtual reality. Cyberspace has become a popular living environment and a new communication medium for the humankind. Thus, the author recapitulates the conceptual foundations of the media systems' evolution, going from basic means of communication typical of primitive cultures to the global information space where the dialogue and polylogue of cultures and their interaction are thought to be perspective ways of communication between civilizations.

Keywords: Communicative culture; McLuhan; Media; Media culture; Global media space; Internet; Virtual reality; Informational civilization; Dialogue and polylogue of cultures; Screen culture

Introduction

The pertinence of the research topic stems from the growing role of media culture and information and communication technologies perceived as factors influencing society and the individual psychology, politics, economics and the state management system. This poses new challenges to media studies. A great number of researchers – historians, cultural studies scholars, sociologists, philosophers – have made attempts to create a theoretical conception that would expose the evolution of the media culture development as a "system of information and communication means that mankind has elaborated in the course of its cultural and historical development" and as a dialectic unity of traditions and innovations in its dynamics [1]. However, the comprehensive study of media (lat. medium, i.e., means, mediator), or medialogy, has not yet occupied the place it deserves within the humanities, for the lack of new research methods [2].

According to the philosopher M. Mamardashvili, "every generation produces culture anew... In case a generation performs an act... which pushes history forward, everything that existed before is equally pushed forward. We determine, on this basis, to what kind of history we belong, what we are maintaining, what we inherit, because this specific act determines continuity" [3].

A key feature of media, or communicative, culture is that "it includes the 'communication' between the new era and the old one, the preservation and development of the whole... society perceived a social whole" [4].

In keeping with the typology exposed by H. M. McLuhan, - (this year, the world community celebrates the 95th anniversary of the birth of this well-known sociologist and medialogist), - it is possible to distinguish the following periods in the history of the media: 1) the pre-writing era in Barbaric societies; 2) the era of the alphabet and phonetical writing; 3) the "Gutenberg Galaxy" and the development of print culture; 4) the "Marconi Galaxy" and the formation and evolution of electronic culture. At the turn of the 21st century, the

“Internet Galaxy” has become a key technology of the information era [5].

McLuhan’s cultural typology is based on the statement, according to which “the kind of a society is determined, to a large extent, by the kind of communication that dominates this society, and the human perception is determined by the speed with which information is transmitted” [6].

This research study results in providing a theoretical foundation for the evolution dynamics of media, or communicative, culture in different historical periods.

Methodology

Our methods of studying the evolution processes of media culture in world history involved such important aspects as continuity and breaches in the civilizational and cultural dynamics, peculiarities of transition periods, patterns and specifics in history, etc. When analyzing these issues, we also gave special attention to the interdisciplinary nature of our research based on synergetics, one of the cornerstones of the modern scientific perception of the world. The emergence of the synergetic approach is directly related to the discoveries made by two natural scientists, I. Prigogine, a Belgian scientist and Nobel laureate, and the German laser physicist H. Haken who, in 1970, gave the name “synergetics” (gr. synergeia, i.e. joint, coordinated actions) to a new interdisciplinary field of study. Prigogine’s theory, developed in his “Order out of Chaos”, provides a methodological basis and analysis tools for studying the theoretical foundations of the evolution of media culture within McLuhan’s typology, without which this paper would not have been possible [7].

Akhiezer also made a valuable contribution to the development of the synergetic approach in the historical and cultural research studies by linking cultural anthropology with history and sociology. Last but not least, Y. Lotman examined the three levels of influence (conceptual, category and methodological) that synergetics had on the development of the humanities and, in line with I. Prigogine, emphasized the “explosive” nature of cultural evolution, which provided the title for one of his last works [8].

Results

Pre-writing in Barbaric societies

It should be noted that this is the longest period in human history, given that the first creatures of the Homo family appeared about 4 million years ago and Homo sapiens began to evolve about 100,000 years ago.

Syncretism (gr. syncretis, i.e., connection), in other words, undifferentiation of forms is the main distinctive feature of primitive culture. Absence of writing is another important feature of this time period, resulting in slow paces of information accumulation and of cultural and social evolution.

Work served as the major information channel of culture at the early stages of primitive society when verbal

communication was limited. The transmission of meaning relating to work operations was dealt with in non-verbal form, without the use of words. Demonstration and imitation (“aping”) were the main means of communication and information transmission.

Rituals were non-verbal “texts” of primitive culture. Along with the sign language, drums, cave paintings, ritual actions, transmitted from generation to generation, they served as traditions, and their knowledge defined the level of culture of a society. The evolution of language and speech led to the emergence of a new communication channel, that is, oral verbal communication which has a positive impact on thinking capacities and the development of individual self-consciousness. “A myth (gr. word, speech, legend) lies at the foundation of primitive culture; myth-making is a way of understanding the surrounding world.” Present in all spheres of life of primitive people, myth became a unique “communicative system and a way of being in peace with the world” [9].

Having emerged as a fundamental cultural category in primitive society, myths helped mankind to adapt to the surrounding world and to start regarding nature as part of everyday life.

The era of the alphabet and phonetic writing

Mesopotamian cuneiform script and Egyptian hieroglyphs that were in use until the end of the 4th millennium BCE, are some of the well-known pre-alphabetic writing systems.

The first alphabet appeared in 2000 BCE. Although based on Egyptian hieroglyphs, it was intended for use by Hebrews working in Egypt.

A new variety of writing appeared in Ancient Greece in early 1st millennium BCE. The Greeks found signs to represent vowels and modified existing signs that represented consonants making them suitable for the Greek language. The system of the Ancient Greek alphabet was later adopted as a basis for Latin and Slavic (Cyrillic and Glagolitic) alphabets [10].

The emergence of the alphabet and writing is related to the period of development of ancient culture which retained its highly mythologized form throughout its existence. Moreover, it assimilated and elaborated disparate tribal myths, merging them into one religious and mythological system. In 8th -7th centuries BCE, Homer’s poems, “The Iliad” and “The Odyssey”, and Hesiod’s “Theogony” and “Works and Days” gave Greek mythology its final shape, providing a foundation for ancient world perception in general.

Ancient Greek philosophy and art also emerged from mythology and made use of its imagery, despite the fact that philosophical thinking, unlike mythological one, tries to explain reality by means of rational, logical reasoning and by drawing upon abstract notions.

Famous Greek philosophers (Thales of Miletus, Heraclites and Herodotus, Democritus and Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, etc.) supported their ideas with facts and logic, not with myths. For example, Socrates emphasized the role of knowledge, the study of human soul and moral education.

Teachings of Plato and Aristotle, seen as the apex of Greek philosophy, brought together ancient representations of the world, society and mankind, along with those of truth, goodness and beauty [1].

Ancient Greek art, closely related to mythology, occupies a place apart in culture. Architecture, sculpture, (Myron, Phidias, Polykleitos, Praxiteles), lyric poetry (Anacreon, Sappho), drama (Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Aristophanes), theatre develop independently from each other.

Roman culture borrowed many ideas and traditions from Greek culture, and Roman mythology was heavily influenced by Greek mythology: Olympic gods were present in it, but some of them acquired Roman names. Philosophy eclectically combined teaching principles of various Greek thinkers. Scepticism and stoicism (Seneca, Marc Aurelius) became increasingly widespread.

The art of rhetoric (Gaius Gracchus, Cicero, Julius Caesar), narrative literature (Apuleius, Lucian, Petronius), poetry (Catullus, Vergil, Horace, Ovid), history (Livy, Flavius Josephus, Tacitus, Plutarch), mechanics (Archimedes) and natural sciences (Pliny the Elder) achieved a high level of development in Ancient Rome. Major cultural innovations of Roman Antiquity were directly related to the development of politics and law.

No discussion of Roman culture would be complete without mentioning media/communication culture. Caesar, the founder of the Roman Empire, general and orator, is also considered to be the founder of a sort of daily newspaper. It was not a newspaper in the accepted sense of the word. Historians may present it as such, but it is but one of the attempts to modernize ancient notions. Caesar tried to make public minutes of the discussions and decisions of the Roman Senate ("Acta senatus"). Inscriptions were made on a board, covered with white plaster, and displayed to the public; this reminded modern posters. Scribes would also make copies of these Acta and send them to distant territories. After some time, the original was deposited in the archives [11].

Medieval European culture emerged from the ruins of the Roman Empire. Riots, wars, degeneracy and economic dislocation accompanied the decline of the Roman Empire. The future of the European culture depended on the outcome of the struggle between three major forces: the aging Greco-Roman cultural traditions; the Barbarian spirit, represented by various peoples living in Roman provinces or invading the Roman empire from outside; the third, and the most significant, force was Christianity.

Originating in Judaism, Christianity was based on the traditions established outside the Greco-Roman world. Teachings of Jesus Christ brought new humanistic values to society. Christianity's power base was not only in the unity of faith, but also in the organizational unity of the Church and in its property. These factors allowed Christianity to hold a dominant position in the European culture, overcoming both Greco-Roman polytheism and Barbarian paganism.

The Church gradually spread its influence over all facets of society. Church rules governed people's daily routine, liturgical calendar determined when feast days were to be observed, church ceremonies accompanied every important event in human life: birth, marriage, death. Human morals were based on the Christian notions of "virtue" and "sin". Legal codes prescribed penalties for "crimes against faith". Religion often determined domestic and foreign policies of European states.

Philosophy and science were also strictly controlled. Quoting the Bible continued to be the most reliable source of knowledge. Literacy was rare in the medieval society, and even kings did not always know how to read and let alone to write. Educated people came, as a rule, from the clergy, a sort of spiritual intelligentzia.

Religion also underpinned the education system. Schools were found mainly at monasteries. The 12th century saw the emergence of the first universities in Bologna, Oxford, Paris, among others, where students could study Theology, but also Law and Medicine. All classes were taught in Latin, and mastery of the Latin language was synonymous with literacy. Books were written by hand and cost a lot.

Troubadour songs, profane lyric poetry, chivalric romances ("The song of Roland", "The Nibelungenlied", "Tristan and Isolde", etc.) were popular with the secular nobility that respected not only religious rituals, but also the chivalric code. The educated clergy was engaged in theological research, philosophy and history.

Print culture («The Gutenberg Galaxy»)

The printing era started in the Renaissance and lasted for five centuries (15th – 19th centuries).

The Renaissance phenomenon (14th-16th centuries) lies in the fact that the classical heritage served as a weapon against church laws and interdictions. Here, we agree with McLuhan who maintains that "this was a grandiose cultural revolution that lasted two centuries and a half and ended with the emergence of a new kind of world perception and a new kind of culture" [6].

The new world perception considered man, not God, at the centre of the universe and the measure of all things. This world perception is known as humanism.

Renaissance emerged and manifested itself most obviously in Italy. The Proto-Renaissance period, regarded as the forerunner of the Renaissance and traced back to the first half of the 14th century, saw Dante's "Divine Comedy", Petrarch's sonnets, Boccaccio's "Decameron", full of popular humour and free-thinking, Giotto's paintings featuring realistic and expressive human figures.

The new cultures flourished during the 15th century. Schools of painters proliferated in Venice, Milan, Rome and other Italian cities; the educated youth started interest groups where they debated the ideas of classical philosophy, moral problems, current issues of social life. Artists studied anatomy, the proportions of the human body and the linear perspective. The 15th century (the Quattrocento) produced a great number

of prominent sculptors (Donatello, Verrocchio), architects (Brunelleschi, Alberti), painters (Botticelli, Bellini, Masaccio, Mantegna) and, of course, the great Leonardo da Vinci. The period from the end of the 15th century to the mid-16th century is perceived as the Golden Age of Italian art, represented mostly by Raphael and Michelangelo. The Late Renaissance saw Titian, Veronese, Caravaggio and other remarkable painters. During this time, the ideals of the Renaissance spread to the rest of Europe and influenced artists in the Netherlands (Jan van Eyck, Hieronymus Bosch, Pieter Bruegel the Elder, etc.), Germany (Durer, Hans Holbein the Younger), Spain (El Greco), among others.

The Late Renaissance is characterized by a rapid development of literature (Cervantes, Rabelais) and the scenic art, best represented by the great playwrights, such as Lope de Vega, Calderon, Tirso de Molina in Spain and William Shakespeare in England.

The works of great thinkers, such as Thomas More in England, Bodin, Montaigne and Rabelais in France, Machiavelli in Italy, Erasmus of Rotterdam in Holland develop the new ideas of Renaissance philosophy.

It is worth mentioning, however, that this rapid development of science, literature and drama would have been impossible without the introduction of printing to Europe by Johannes Gutenberg (1399-1468). Thus, "the "interface" of the Renaissance was the meeting of medieval pluralism and modern homogeneity and mechanism – a formula for blitz and metamorphosis" [6].

The fact that the invention of the printing press which used mobile printing letters is closely related to early technologies of the phonetic alphabet kindled researchers' interest in studying the preceding time periods. "With Gutenberg Europe enters the technological phase of progress, when change itself becomes the archetypal norm of social life" [6].

The modern period, from the 17th century to the late 19th century, is a span of historic events, during which the culture of Western European countries developed to the point of distinguishing Europe from the rest of the world.

The Age of Reason, or the Enlightenment, (1689-1789) is central to the printing era.

The representatives of the Enlightenment stood for the equality of rights for all people, the Church's non-interference into secular life of society, the inviolability of property, the humanization of criminal justice, the promotion of science and technology, the freedom of the press, etc. Faith in the power of mind was at the basis of all the innovative ideas that emerged in the Age of Reason.

The torchbearers of Enlightenment literature and philosophy were Voltaire, J.-J. Rousseau, Ch. Montesquieu, D. Diderot in France, J. Locke in England, G. E. Lessing, J. V. von Goethe, F. Schiller in Germany, T. Payne, B. Franklin, T. Jefferson in the United States, M. Lomonosov, N. Novikov, A. Radischev, A. Sumarokov in Russia.

The Industrial Revolution in England (1689) and the French Revolution (1789) proved that scientific and cultural ideas were the driving force of social development. The Enlightenment also produced a new kind of people, the intellectuals, men of science and culture, who came from different social backgrounds, but mostly from the tiers état.

Another important class, the bourgeoisie, emerged during the Enlightenment. Its role in the intellectual history of Europe was twofold: on one hand, the bourgeoisie promoted culture by patronizing energetic and enterprising people of all social backgrounds, on the other hand, the bourgeoisie, being the money-lending class, forced its own utilitarian objectives and ideals on society. This resulted in the emergence of a new culture, the mass culture, often called "vile", vulgar", "bourgeois". Thus, three types of culture came to dominate during the Modern Period: the high, or elite, culture, created by the nobility; popular culture (the folklore); and the mass culture, formed by the new emerging class, the bourgeoisie, at a time of major social transformations [1].

Multinationalism and multilingualism are also typical features of culture during the Modern Period. Medieval Latin's hold was broken by the growing importance of local languages, which enriched the European culture with popular traditions and heritage and, at the same time, made achievements of learned culture accessible to peoples of Europe. This period saw the rise of national cultures, featuring the painters Rubens, Rembrandt, Velazquez, Poussin, the playwrights Corneille, Racine, Moliere, the composer Gluck, the founder of the new pedagogics John Amos Comenius, to mention just a few. The work of these men of genius of the 17th century is national, but, at the same time, it is part of Europe's cultural heritage, as a whole. National art and literatures emerged in European countries, reflecting two major artistic styles of the European art of the period, the baroque and the classicism. "Contact and interaction of cultures are regarded as some of the crucial factors behind cultural progress" [1].

As far as "mass culture" is concerned, including the print media (journals, magazines), it should be noted that, no matter how much its importance can be questioned, it was the print media that helped put into life the main ideas of the Enlightenment, contributing to social transformations and shaping the new worldview.

In relation to this, it is worth mentioning the example of Russia that "opened up a window onto Europe" in the 17th and 18th centuries, following the reforms of Peter the Great. The first newspaper in Russia, "Vedomosti, was printed in 1702, the total number of copies being 2,500. Thus, transition from manuscript to print lasted in Russia almost one century and a half (the first Russian printed book was produced in Ivan Fyodorov' printing shop in 1564). This said, during the reign of Peter the Great, official information spread to the masses, taking priority over popular information and folklore.

Cultural history has shown that the aim of the first printed publications in Russia was to solve specific political tasks. Peter I felt it necessary to inform certain audiences in Russia and at European courts about the success of his reforms and military

victories; it is not mere chance that, by 1703, "Vedomosti" had a circulation of four thousand [12].

The edition of "Vedomosti" gradually became a project of state significance. In 1728, ownership of the paper was transferred to the Imperial Academy of Sciences, which renamed it "Sankt-Peterburgskie Vedomosti" (Saint Petersburg News); the newspaper changed its name again only in 1917.

In Russia, as distinct from Western European countries, the state held a total monopoly on the press. It was not until the reign of Elizaveta Petrovna that A. Sumarokov, a Russian poet, playwright and social activist, started to publish "Trudolubivaya Pchela" (Hard-working Bee), the first independent monthly magazine in Russia. Following "Pchela", other independent magazines appeared in Russia in the 1760s and 1770s.

The Empress Catherine II, who eagerly supported the ideals of the French Enlightenment, took an active part in the development of the Russian printed culture. She promoted the magazine "Vsyakaya vsyachina" (This and That, 1769-1770), where she published her own writings; it was on her advice that the Academy of Sciences started to publish "Sobesednik lyubiteley rossiyskoy slovesnosti" (A Companion to Lovers of Russian Literature), aiming to fight against protest groups in society. N. Novikov, one of the major representatives of the Russian Enlightenment, publisher, editor and political writer, is also known as a fierce fighter against autocracy in the late 18th century. Having rented the printing house of the Moscow University, he managed to increase the circulation of the university newspaper, "Moskovskie Vedomosti" (Moscow News), to four thousand. Novikov created a real publishing company that served 16 cities and produced, from 1779 to 1792, about 900 books, aimed to educate his compatriots, and a number of magazines, the most notable of which were "Truten" (Drone), "Zhivopisets" (Painter) and "Koshelek" (Wallet).

N. Novikov and A. Radishev, the author of the "Journey from St. Petersburg to Moscow", had tragic lives, but their contribution to the development of print culture in Russia that defended human rights and dignity is undeniable. Equally important to the Russian Enlightenment were the playwrights A. Sumarokov and D. Fonvizin and the fabulist I. Krylov, who criticized autocracy and appealed to conscience and justice in their literary creations.

The reign of Alexander I, characterized by liberalization of social life, saw a considerable growth in number of periodical literature. From 1801 to 1811 alone, 60 new magazines and 9 newspapers were published; periodicals on specific topics (science, technology, administration, economy) started to come out; numerous were publications on music, theatre, pedagogy, literary criticism and even women's magazines [12].

This means that the audience was segmented according to readers' specific interests.

By the end of the 19th century, many print structures in Europe and Russia were essentially profit-oriented. The yellow press flourished, print editions grew in number. In the second

half of the 19th century, media culture was developing in the context of the industrialization of society directly related to urbanization, technical revolution, growth of industry [2].

Philosophy is an integral part of the Gutenberg era. I. Kant is considered to be the founder of classical German philosophy that had a dominant influence on European philosophy in the 19th century. J. G. Fichte and W. F. Hegel, the founder of the dialectic theory, are some of its prominent representatives. Hegel's works had a considerable impact on the development of philosophical thinking and culture. Hegel's ideas were reflected in historical materialism, first articulated by K. Marx and F. Engels, the founders of the theory of class struggle in society, whose works provide an in-depth analysis of capitalism and define the perspectives of social, scientific and technic progress.

Several more schools of thought appeared in the 19th century in opposition to Hegelian idealistic philosophy and Marxism, in particular, positivism (A. Comte) and philosophy of life (F. Nietzsche, O. Spengler).

In the 19th century literature, Romanticism was replaced by Realism with its own perceptions of the world, society and mankind. "Realism was understood in a broad sense as truth of life, conveyed through specific means of art" [2]. Stendhal, H. de Balzac, G. Flaubert in France, Ch. Dickens, M. Twain in England, A. Pushkin, N. Gogol, L. Tolstoy, F. Dostoyevsky, A. Chekhov, among others, were some of the most prominent representatives of literary realism.

The late 19th century and the early 20th century are characterized by new cultural phenomena that went down in history as "modern", that is, everything that is new in art; this gave rise to such notions as "modernism" and "modernisation", which exercised a notable influence on the development of world culture in the 20th century. According to J. Habermas, "modernisation is understood as a phenomenon of civilizational scope that goes back to the Middle Ages with its hegemonic Christian doctrine pretending to total domination; and to the "modernistic" Age of Reason with its idea of a prolific union of science, morals and art in search of logical life organization and of happiness for all" [13].

The end of the 19th century is marked, both in Europe and Russia, by the growing importance of newspapers. Print media became very diversified: the elite and the middle class read "The Times", "New Freie Press", "Journal des Debats", Figaro; the masses preferred yellow press. "Russkoe Slovo" (Russian Word) and "Novoe Vremya" (New Times) became known as "news factory" in Russia.

Big titles, page design, combination of text and photography and, especially, advertising were major, if not revolutionary, visual innovations in newspapers. In the 1890s, mass printing reached a circulation of more than a million copies, which radically changed the media environment; most importantly, it created a new kind of the reading public [1].

Photography, being a new type of media culture and a new means of communication, helped transform and update print culture.

L. G. Daguerre, who found, in 1839, a way of producing pictures that would not disappear, is known as the inventor of photography. Photography did not, however, crop up suddenly out of nowhere: it was preceded by engravings, wood block printing, clichés and painting.

Be it as it may, the era of Gutenberg came to an end, because, as McLuhan points out, “the age of photography, more than any other period, has become the age of gestures, mimic, dancing... Photography brought about a revolution in traditional arts. A painter was no longer able to depict the world that everyone was constantly taking pictures of”; as a result, he moved away to the world of abstraction and modernist fancy [6].

Thus, photography, having appeared during the period of print culture, contributed a lot to its modernisation and highlighted its status during the period of electronic culture.

Formation and development of electronic culture. The “Marconi Galaxy”

The beginning of the 20th century ushered in a whole new era in the history of media culture: the technical revolution set an unmatched pace of development of new means of mass communication. As already mentioned above, the mark point of this development is photography, the theory of which appeared, together with the theory of cinematography, as early as the 20th century. L. Delluc, W. Benjamin and other researchers studied photography and its relation to cinematography. In his book “Photogenie”, L. Delluc argued that the aesthetical importance of the photographic image lied in its ability to render transitory material life and life in general in an effective way [14].

One of the founders of the Frankfurt school of philosophy and sociology, W. Benjamin perceived photography as “a revolutionary means of reproducing reality” that emerged together with socialist ideas [15]. Photography played a twofold role in the world art history. On one hand, photographic reproduction devaluated all traditional aesthetic values related to fine arts, on the other hand, it served to “renew mankind” by changing social functions of art. Benjamin maintains that “modern art functions no longer within a ‘ritual’, but within ‘politics’ [15].

The era of electricity came about in the late 19th century, bringing new sources of communication and, thus, making it possible for mankind to perceive the world as one whole. Let us take for instance telegraphy, invented in 1844 by Samuel Morse. The telegraph turned letters into electrical signals, being, thus, a forerunner of the telephone and the phonograph. In McLuhan’s view, means of communication, based on electricity, instantly and uninterruptedly create a total field of interacting events, in which all people take part [16]. The telegraph, the telephone and photography have not only become means of communication, but also forms of social interaction. “Electricity, just like the brain, makes it possible to contact all forms of being at the same time. It is by coincidence that electricity is visual and aural; first of all, it is a tactile medium” [16].

It is impossible to imagine the technological progress during the industrial age without such phenomena of social culture as cinematography, invented in 1895 by Lumiere brothers as a kind of “technical amusement”, and radio. The latter provided a basis for the “Marconi Galaxy”, Marconi being the founder of radiotelegraphy and the first promoter of radio as a means of communication. In 1897, Guglielmo Marconi patented his device for wireless telegraphy and founded the Marconi Company. In 1901, Marconi was the first to realize wireless transmission across the Atlantic. He was awarded the Nobel prize in 1909.

The invention of radio and cinema led to profound transformations in drama and poetry, representing high culture, in print culture and advertising. It is also important to keep in mind the ability of mainstream and popular media, such as radio and cinema, to “retribalize” mankind, instantly reversing individualism into collectivism, Fascist or Marxist, to level individuality, transforming society into the “masses”, the “crowd”. This is particularly well illustrated by all sorts of contradictions that marked the 20th century, leading, in particular, to two world wars.

McLuhan was the first to question the role of the new media culture and to try to explain the human indifference to social effects of those radical forces: “The phonetic alphabet and the printed word that exploded the closed tribal world into the open society of fragmented functions and specialist knowledge and action have never been studied in their role as a “magic transformer”. The antithetic electric power of instant information that reverses social explosion into implosion, private enterprise into organized man, and expanding empires into common markets, has gone unnoticed... It goes without saying that the universal ignoring of the psychic action of technology bespeaks some... essential numbing of consciousness” [16].

Screen Culture Priorities. “The Internet Galaxy”

Screen (audiovisual) culture has become one of the phenomena of the 20th and 21st centuries, exerting an important influence on social and cultural processes.

The invention of cinematography and, a few years earlier, of cartoon animation (1885), their rapid spread in the first half of the 20th century, the emergence of television, video, personal computers, multimedia, the Internet, actual experiences in putting on sound-and-light shows, the implementation of the latest audiovisual technologies in all spheres of life and culture, - all of this is part of screen, or audiovisual, culture. At its, origin. Cinematography contributed to the appearance, in the 20th century, of such artistic masterpieces as films directed by D. Griffiths, D. Vertov, S. Eisenstein, A. Dovzhenko, Ch. Chaplin, M. Antonioni, B. Bertolucci, F. Fellini, A. Kurosawa, F. Truffaut, A. Rene, A. Tarkovski, M. Forman, among others.

In the last thirty years, audiovisual communication has seriously challenged the printed word, screen productions having either replaced traditional arts or become new means of their promotion.

Interacting with complex and contradictory social processes, the screen has played a decisive role in the democratisation of culture and the emergence of its new media forms. As a result, the socio-cultural situation in the world and the media environment has undergone major transformations: global environments have been added to local ones.

The development of audiovisual communication and screen arts raises a complex issue, as it combines technical factors (the development of new screen technologies) and socio-cultural factors that are closely interrelated leading to unpredictable consequences.

According to K. Razlogov, the notion of "screen culture" is multidimensional: "The screen (including the computer screen) borrows audiovisual possibilities from cinematography, transforms them and, thus, serves as a material medium of the new kind of culture in all of its manifestations, be it informational, artistic or scientific".

Theoretically speaking, screen culture correlates typologically to written culture and, at the same time, is the result of its evolution.

McLuhan died in 1980. He was not to see that the beginning of the 21st century was marked by a dramatic leap in the development of global information and communication technologies that have had a huge impact on society and culture, leading to the making of a global media environment (or, as McLuhan predicted, "the global village"), that is, the global information network.

As a matter of fact, we are here talking about a new informational civilisation related to the profound and unprecedented influence of the modern "information industry" practically on all spheres of social and intellectual life.

As the American writer and futurist Alvin Toffler asserts, information has become a major productive resource of the post-industrial society, and productive activities are dominated by its further processing: "The modern system of power is no longer based on physical strength, wealth or violence. Its password is intellect, knowledge" [17]. When predicting the singularities of the future world, he regarded social modifications as a direct consequence of technical progress, including the ideology of globalisation: "Globalisation or, at least, supra-nationalism is a natural manifestation of the modern way of conducting business that has to function regardless of state boundaries" [17].

The Spanish sociologist Manuel Castells also maintains that the global media environment, made possible by the invention of the Internet and computer networks, allows us to understand that we live in the age of a specific culture, which is "virtual, since it is built essentially on virtual communicative processes controlled by electronics. We live in a culture of not virtual reality, but real virtuality because our virtuality – meaning the internet networks – are a fundamental part of our reality" [5].

Castells, thus, defined the comprehensive media cultural space at the turn of the century, outlining its growth prospects in the 21st century.

Discussion

Our analysis of the evolution of media culture in the context of McLuhan's typology discovered that this prominent medialogist not only laid the foundations for the history of informational civilisation, but also determined the prospects for the advancement of humanity. It is not by coincidence that A. Toffler draws on McLuhan's ideas and analyses new challenges and global problems of mankind at the turn of the 21st century in his books "Future Shock" (1970), "The Third Wave" (1980), "Powershift: Knowledge, Wealth and Violence at the Edge of the 21st Century" (1990). As for the German philosopher and media theorist Norbert Bolz, he highlights that "media is one of the central issues of our time. However, media theory is very young" [18]. This is the reason, in his view, why "the history of mass media is no antique curiosity... Data storage is media's major achievement. Talking about digits, that is, digital media, we should note that all media processes can be computer-based" [18].

Another German researcher and sociologist, Niklas Luhmann, perceived the mass media as "the only reality that transcends everyday life". This means that "the system of mass media is a set of recursive, self-referential programmes of communication, in other words, it produces a continuous self-description of the world around which modern society can orientate itself." [19]. The researcher believes that it is for this reason that a theory of society which can explain everything, including the system of mass media communications, is required more than simply a theory of mass media evolution and globalization [19].

Another discussion topic is related not only to history, but also to the specific nature of media/communicative culture. Its structure is known to include "the culture of information production, transmission and reception; also, media culture can indicate the level of personality development, able to "read", analyze and evaluate media texts, to be creative in terms of media culture, to acquire new knowledge by means of culture, etc." [1].

In relation to this, the perception of the Internet culture as "a means of free global communication" is worthy of mentioning [5]. Castells asserts that the Internet culture is, above all, the culture of its creators and users. "The Internet culture, he maintains, is characterized by a four-layer structure: the techno-meritocratic culture, the hacker culture, the virtual communitarian culture, and the entrepreneurial culture. Together they contribute to an ideology of freedom that is widespread in the Internet world. However, this ideology is not the founding culture because it does not interact directly with the development of the technological system: freedom has many uses" [5]. This requires not only knowledge, but also a sense of responsibility of the Internet community and of every individual who is aware of his or her duties and responsible for everything that is happening around

us and that is reflected in the Internet. In other words, “our society is able to control and manage the modern process of technological creation” [5]. For the time being, we all witness media wars and other excesses that take place on the Internet.

The development of media management, a social media policy and a legal framework in relation to online society and journalism is one of the possible solutions to the above-mentioned issues; “digital government” in the informational era and prospects for media education as a key factor in forming an individual’s media culture have a major role to play in this respect.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it is important to highlight that various issues in the history and theory of media arts are not limited to the analysis of the evolution of media culture in the context of McLuhan’s typology. However, the significance of McLuhan’s works resides in his having laid the foundations of a new discipline, medialogy; its structure and the set of categories used are still forming today, as shown in this paper.

In this relation, the author of the present study deems it possible to carry on the research of the theoretical aspects of medialogy, being the synthetic science of the 21st century.

The subject of medialogy includes the issues of the formation and evolution of media culture in the historical perspective, its anthropology, genesis, language, semiotic system and social functioning, its effects on the modernisation processes taking place in society and in the world. The object of medialogy includes the principles of the moral regulation of various aspects of life stemming from the technological progress, the problems of media reality, the formation of a media policy, the evolution of socio-cultural and political systems, the new mythology, reforms, media wars, processes of personal socialization, etc.

One of the fundamental aims of medialogy consists in studying the diversity and interaction of various cultures in the global media space, seen from ethnical and artistic perspectives.

The author of this paper has already analyzed, in a study on medialogy, the main disciplines that are part of media studies [2].

According to the author, the following disciplines constitute the structure of this new field of study: history of media, media culture, media semiotics, media philosophy, media politics, media management, media pedagogics. Of special interest to researchers and specialists are media art (techno art, Internet art) and media criticism. Taking into consideration the all-encompassing influence of the media on society, media ethics and media psychoanalysis play an important role in forming individual lifestyles and moral values.

Researchers have yet to prove that medialogy is not a dogma, but a dynamic, developing field of study, presenting

steadily growing opportunities thanks to the technological progress and the processes taking place in the society and culture of the world around us.

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