Post-mediality versus Global-mediality.
About Media and Community Media

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Abstract. The concept of the media has been redefined many times, the medial interpretation of postmediality is only a critique of existing media-approaches and actuality. The concept of media is hardly going to disappear, its use has become increasingly popular, and the range of interpretation has become wider, the Media Studies brings together more and more sciences; it is not a limit science, but a cumulative science.

In W. J.T. Mitchell's approach, the media is more than a medium, the media is a relation, there is no pure media, and all media are mixed. Breaking down the idea of the mixed media, we could make parallels/contrasts between the concept of totalmediality and the concept of postmediality. Postmediality sees a way in the passing by overtaking of the concept of media (Manovich) in esthetics, visual theory, art theory, media theory, but perhaps most of all the media concept should be sought as it is, just a different type of media use which has become commonplace in the digital-galaxy. Totalmediality is trying to point out the use of new media, and beyond this to the open media borders, overlappings, while the media is not just carrier material but also form.

The study treats totalmediality as theoretical possibility for overcoming postmediality in Mitchell's interpretation of media and emphasizing the dominance of visuality in the community media.

Keywords: media, postmedia, totalmedia, social media, community media, image, image theory

Introduction

My concept of media is as St. Augustine's (Augustinus, 2000: 25) concept of time: if not asked, I know, if asked, I do not know. The concept of media occupies a prominent place in everyday usage, not only as a technical term, but also as a very convenient collective noun which denominates anything that is in some kind of connection with the electronic media, TV, Video, computer, often specifically used for the electronically transmitted information, a digital message or a digital image. We have long forgotten the basic meaning of media, which simply means mediation, mediating regardless of the how of the mediator and the medium.

The difference between the terms media and medium can cause confusion: referring to media, we think of some technical, mostly mass media phenomenon or electronic media, while we relate the term medium to the intermediary subject,[1] all this with a sense of Wittgensteinian language games, as a result of meaning-fossils ossified in language use.[2]

Media – as bottle

The postmediality sees the concept of media as outdated, useless and obsolete in esthetics, visual theory, art theory, media theory, but perhaps most of all the media concept should be sought as it is, just a different type of media use which has become commonplace in the digital-galaxy. If we consider media as purely information vehicle, it is inevitable to think according to Umberto Eco's (1987) linear model, where the transmitter, receiver and message are the cornerstones of the mediation. This is a very straightforward task-action line, it requires any element of the flowchart for axiomatic reasons only. However, if we take into account any media – and there is no use to limit it to arts in order to see it – the receiver always takes or does not take the message in a hypothetical, aleatory, random and very undeterminable way.

McLuhan (1964) considered media as the extension of the human body and spirit. We can see that the media is always a replacement, a supplement, aid, which is useful and used for reaching a special goal, resulting even in joy, catharsis, but also in manipulation and vulnerability. It seems that it would be more fortunate if we did not differentiate between the receiver and transmitter, but simply refer to users and focus on the how of media usage, instead of the identity of the transmitter

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[1] The term *medium* is usually used to describe a person who has some kind of intermediary role, the general meaning of the word is related to spirituality, angels, spirits, mediators.
[2] In fact, we are talking about the same term: the Latin medium in the singular and the English media in the plural version have gained different meanings in Hungarian.

and the receiver or the infiltrated noise, as we can never talk about a perfect receiver, a perfect transmitter or a perfectly delivered message.

The media is just like a message in a bottle, most of the time one has to take into account the time difference, a book is also information in a bottle, written 120 years ago. At this point it is important to talk about the intermediate processes of mediatisation as well, since the book was published just two years ago, the content has not changed, the media format is the same, as the text remained, but it appeared in an altered medial environment since we are not reading the writer's manuscript, but a processed, different material, a printed book. The intermediate mediatisation, media/medium exchange, cannot be considered a negative phenomenon, as the content of the text remained; the text has not been damaged; only the traveler has been altered.

Certainly, the reader's attitude changes, but this is only a frame problem, like lighting or temperature in the reader's room; let us not pursue the line with the reader's wool socks through his/her biologist diploma, recalling his/her upbringing, education and the multitude of childhood experiences.

Media co-exist, not specifically in the context of multimediality, but as each others' aids, building, forming each other, not merely co-existing but generating, creating, complementing, becoming part of each other. When we see a theatrical performance, we usually meet a complex including the written text as well as the transmission, actualization of a dramatic work. We get into indirect contact with the written text together with the acting, the living, spoken word, the directorial frame, the background. We cannot see the initial medial presence, but it is reflected in several different media: the actor, the theater, objects, the set, costumes, music and human voice.

The media acts as a bottle that stores the message, the lucky users who encounter it, have access to the stored content.

The medial environment of films

The film is like a large cauldron, everything that is seen[3] can somehow be transferred to film, made into a film. Most media have a visual component, so they can obviously be displayed as film in film surroundings: the written text, the spoken word, the painting, the photograph, the happening, the theatrical performance, the performance, video art, and even the film itself may be subject of the film, so we are dealing with an exponential medium. Self-reflexive,[4] theoretical, visual creations, the meta-images like to use this opportunity, this process of exponentiation. When I consider the film as media, I do not think of a

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[3] And similarly, everything that cannot be seen can also be made into a film.
[4] Films by Greenaway, Godard, Fellini

roll of film, the digital vehicle, the binary system, which helps it reach me or the facility of satellite technology which provides the basis of television broadcasting; I consider the film as media primarily because it provides a cinematic spectacle, regardless of whether it has been shot within real circumstances, found-footage film or through computer manipulation of the image, regardless of watching it at the movie theatre, on VCR, TV or computer, the movie-experience as sight and visual appearance remains the same, the material vehicle, which allows the film experience, is only the framework. At this point, the term media should definitely be differentiated from that of the technical vehicle, because a photo is a photo regardless of the fact that it is hanging on the wall, I see it in the newspaper or on the screen of a digital camera. The written text is a written text as a medium, even when I read the book, see it on an electronic board or read it as a subtitle.

In fact, there are two levels of media: media as technical capability, framework (in the case of films: computer, movie screen, movie equipment, video equipment, TV, TV transmitter, palm, advertising space, mobile phone, etc.) and the displaying form of the carried message, that is, the movie, photograph, text and sound.
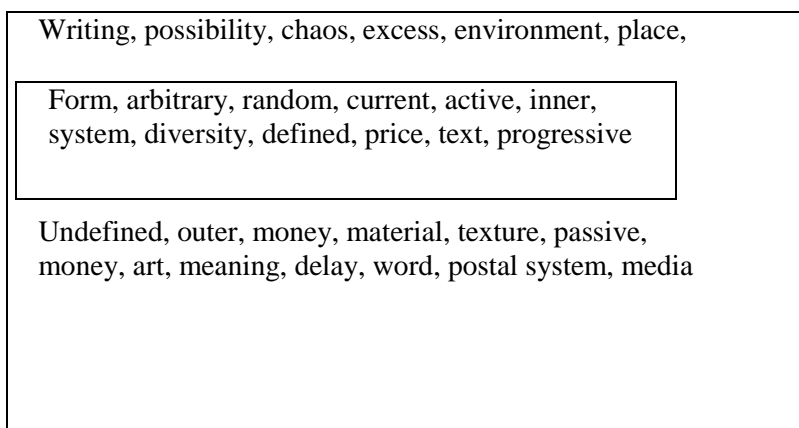
McLuhan (1994) regarded the message itself as media. Perhaps it is needless to separate the media and the technical vehicle from each other, because if we approach the problem from the side of perception, they are inseparable, as movies, pictures, artwork, text can only be achieved through technical background (be it computers, books or graffiti). The media as a formal condition bears the product created, produced, cultivated by someone, this is both material and formal in nature.

The media/medium as relationship

W. J. T. Mitchell, in his book entitled *What Do Pictures Want*? *The Lives and Loves of Images* (2004) developed a specific model, possibility of media definition. Mitchell explores solely the relationship between image objects and media, and formulates the fundamental thesis, as follows: "Each image object manifests itself merely through a kind of medium – in colour, stone, words or numbers" (p. 167) In this case it is not of primary importance what it is that can be considered an image, but how an image exists. It is clear that an image has to take shape to some extent: it has to become visible, audible, thinkable, and perceivable to the world. At this point I am only dealing with the mediality of the materialized image; I do not discuss the problem of mental image.[5]

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[5] Mitchell - who among other things - analyzes ontological status and manifestations of the image, points out the difference between the concepts of image and picture (a differentiation simplified in English language use by the presence of these two separate terms and he builds his theory on this slight difference between the two terms) and discusses the mental and material image.
Mitchell calls this duality of image-picture as a kind of Platonism, more precisely a perverted Platonism, as the two terms can be traced back to the relationship of idea and realia.

In Mitchell's interpretation media is relation: "The media is always »in between«, a »mediator«, a space, a path or a stone, which connects two different things..." (p. 168). As opposed to Umberto Eco's (1987) linear model (sender/emitter-noise-transmitter-signal-channel-signal-receiver-message-receiver), Mitchell undertakes a concentric media interpretation, which I reproduce here.

Writing, possibility, chaos, excess, environment, place,

Form, arbitrary, random, current, active, inner,
system, diversity, defined, price, text, progressive

Undefined, outer, money, material, texture, passive,
money, art, meaning, delay, word, postal system, media

Mitchell's (2008a) Luhman-diagram builds on Luhman's relationship of system-environment and form-media. The receiver is absent from Mitchell's non-linear model, it is not a targeted model, but it determines the relationship between media and form as a set of conditions, a rising possibility.

The form is the inner content, the media is the vehicle, the genre is defined by the form, and mediality is displayed through a variety of projections. It is not about the message anymore, but rather about presence, ready-made product which is not a specific postal package, a product with a forwarding address; it is an independent, open condition, not a personal, non-individual-oriented, but available, accessible.

In Mitchell's context media appears as landscape, locations, as available for everybody. This kind of metaphorical identification is not unusual in Mitchell's creation of concepts, since he considers images to be entities similar to organisms, to living beings. The argumentation is authentic, as the life of pictures (not their setup or structure) corresponds to the scheme based on which living beings are called living beings. More specifically, the images are not living beings, but they behave like them, we relate to them as we do to living beings, their use, their story is the same sequence of events known from wildlife.

Mitchell attaches an interesting question to the problem of mediality in general; he raises attention to the fact that the problem of mediality of media theory should be discussed: what kind of media and tools should theory use and in which media should it manifest itself? In the late 1970s, Gábor Bódy (Peternák, 1996) formulated the question whether film theory should also be a film or not. These are

thought-provoking questions, a self-reflexive media theory problem, which is one of the unexplored areas of the given science.

Mixed media

Mitchell (2008) formulates, defines the concept of media in ten points. 1) Media are modern inventions which have existed since human thinking; 2) Rebellion against new media is as old as Methuselah himself; 3) Media is system and environment at the same time; 4) There is always something outside the media; 5) All media are mixed media; 6) Spirit, understanding, consciousness, thinking are all media; 7) Images are the leading media; 8) Images live in media, as organisms do in habitats; 9) Media do not have well-defined places or available addresses; 10) We turn to the media, and similarly, media turn to us.

I have neither the possibility nor do I intend to analyze in detail the media term formulated in the above ten points within the framework of this paper, nevertheless, I try to focus on two statements: on one hand, I intend to confirm the thesis that every media is mixed media; on the other hand I will try to think further the statement that images are leading media.

Indeed, no media can be considered pure media. The word itself is mixed media; it is both verbal and visual at the same time: we read it, we see it as letters, in written form, we visually identify it, and then we get close to the content, to the uttered word. This is the simplest, most banal example, but in fact each medium carries on or in itself other media or is in very close relationship with others. A press photo, the title of the photo, the environment of the exhibition, the lighting of a theatrical productions, a poem from an audiobook, the space of a performance, the structure of a film, all of these assume co-existing media.

If we narrow down the concept of mixed media, we get to the art theory problem of repetition. It often occurs that various media migrate, immigrate to other media, not necessarily as parasites, but establishing possible coexisting life forms. Think of the picture poem, the collage, the simple illustration, the typeface, or even the oldest form, the calligram.

In the case of travelling media let us concentrate solely on image/visual media and examine how they co-exist and transplant.

It is not unusual that photos, paintings or other images are displayed in a film, a photo may picture a painting or the photo itself can be the frame, the latter is often used to illustrate press products or studies, visual theory, film essays, technical books. Let us narrow the phenomenon of image transplantation further down and concentrate on films. The film is suitable to include, to record, to show within moving image frames any other media of visual (and not only) length. The picture-within-the-picture (whether or not we are talking about two frames or the pictures melt into each other, in the latter case the guest image, the immigrant-

image acts as a moving picture, it has no privileged place in the actual sight, it is added to the other frames, this is called linear editing. If the frame is displayed in the frame, we are dealing with double editing: one linear and one vertical, that is deep editing) it always breaks the usual film sequence, even if it is an extraneous film clip that is included, though in this case we are talking about similar media.

The picture-within-the-picture always rearranges the focal point of the host image; more precisely, it expropriates it, as in this case we pay attention to the picture-within-the-picture, especially if it is highlighted in a specific frame. The included picture and thus the sequence will be privileged as compared to the details of the rest of the images and sequences. At the same time, the internal content is reorganized, it emerges, and it regresses in order to give place to the newcomer. (It is a kind of blessed state, pregnancy/expectancy, the duality of giving up and enriching manifests itself in every recipient film image.) Of course, the incoming picture is also in regression, it adapts and fits into the film image as a foreign element; it gradually overtakes the properties of the film image without completely losing its medial nature and real content. In the case of exponential images we are actually talking about a double transformation: both images, both media are modified and a particular media complex[6] is formed.

If we see a photo on the film sequence, we can perceive it only in the rhythm and movement of the film image, here the photo loses it properties in order to become a still image and to allow us to set its perceptual contact time, it loses its unique character as well, since it contextualizes, it appears in the environment of the film. The photo is only indicatively what it used to be, it is no longer its real self, but a migration product, which has evolved into a moving image, its time has been redefined by the new topos of which it became a part of.

In Kurosawa's film entitled *Dreams* (1990) we encounter a media composition of special effects: in a dream scene we see Van Gogh's paintings full screen size, in moving image quality. We identify the image, especially as these are famous paintings, but despite its display as moving image, it cannot lose its textural nature, the painting reclassifies as moving image is remediated several times, it takes a new medial shape, as in a few seconds later, the film sequence does not show the record of a still image, but rather the Van Gogh picture behaving as background for a moving film character, that is, the landscape fixed into painting is revitalized: the painter walks through the landscape, the painting. The director makes use of, and confirms the great possibility of global mediality. Derek Jarman uses a similar camouflaged media change in his movie entitled *Caravaggio* (1986) in which the viewer can hardly distinguish between film images made of paintings

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[6] Some examples of films illustrate the characteristics of coexisting, intertwining media: Zoltán Huszárik: *Szindbád* (*1971*), Very Chytilova: *Sedmikrasky* (1966), Woody Allen: *Play it again* (1972)*, Sam*, Jean-Luc Godard: *Á bout de Souffle* (1959), and so on.

and tableau vivant, as the structure and content of the living images is exactly the same as the structure of Caravaggio's paintings.

The concept of multimedia is very frequently used in cases when multiple media are juxtaposed. However, we should see that this concept assumes a serial connection, the parallel of media-existence. Most of the time, or rather without exception, media in contact with each other are not independent of each other, they do not pass each other without coming into contact.

Therefore, I find it more appropriate to use the terms total media or global mediality. In my interpretation, global mediality is the phenomenon when two or more media come into contact with each other and in this relationship they begin to develop each other and themselves, they adapt, they reorganize, they create a special mixed, complex media form. And, as according to Mitchell, there are no clear, but only mixed media, then global mediality would be the life form of mixed media, because they merge, they melt into each other thus creating the medium, or rather media, because there are only media communities.

Images as organisms – media as habitats

It can be added to the definition of media that media is not clearly – as Mitchell (2008) points out – of material nature, but of dual nature, like the light, it has a wave and particle nature at the same time, the particle nature refers to the material nature, the waves or the mental nature show the ways of manifestation, this can be called genre, more specifically or by way of illustration: the material aspect of a given media may be represented by a computer, a DVD player, a DVD and the genre that is visualized through the computer and the other tools, would be the film itself, which is concept, directing, theatrical work, colour, shape, etc., all together, but no longer as material presence, but seen as an entity modified, transformed into film.

Media – in Mitchell's approach – are not only material by nature, but they include technology and tradition simultaneously. The media is more than message and more than materialism, more than the image and its vehicle. According to Mitchell every image needs a place to live, to exist and this is ensured by the media Reference.

It is not a good idea if we pay attention only to the material nature of the media, as media is only a possibility that makes it possible for a message to be sent, the media is potentiality for the appearance of the message, because without it, it is simply an unattainable idea, thought, feeling, concept, which exists inside us and for ourselves, the existence-for-the-other framework is provided by the media.

McLuhan's (1967) famous thesis is: The content of a media is always another media. There are no clear media (Mitchell, 2008) and it increasingly becomes clear that media co-exist. The images are regarded as organisms/living beings – as

understood by Mitchell, not based on their structure, but based on their usage, life events (they are born, used, thrown away, privileged, banned and then they disappear, they die, they are destroyed).

How do images resemble organisms? Are they born? Do they die? Can they be killed?

Anyway, images have their own lives, in the sense in which they take part in everyday life, their users' lives, their private, intimate lives are shaped by usage, while they can migrate from one culture to another or become victims of iconoclasm, they can be destroyed, their usage, presence may be prohibited.

Therefore, wherever images are, they need living space. Mitchell (2008) believes that the media are capable of providing space for the images. Similarly to living beings, the images can migrate from one media world to another, as a verbal picture can experience rebirth through a painting or a photograph, a medium can move into another one. In Mitchell's view the media is ecosystem, a living world, a living space.

The design of media as message vehicle and the image as a form with message content, is increasingly called into question, since they hardly behave as visual media, as a clearly outlined vehicle that can exist anywhere, to anyone, at anytime with the same content, they are just present.

The images – as Mitchell (2008) put it – do not want anything, they do not say anything, they just are. The message is content attached to the images, it is not their own, it is not an internal component.

Media, multimedia, intermedia, hypermedia, trans-media, post-media, global media (total-media)

If we consider as our starting point Mitchell's (2005) media interpretation, according to which there are no clear, only mixed media, it is completely clear that such concepts as multimedia, intermedia, hypermedia actually refer to the same content of media in general, namely that media co-exist, we never experience them in singularity.

Before unfolding the problem of multimediality, intermediality, further investigation should be focused on two similar concepts. On the one hand, I would like to concentrate on the concept of intramedia, which is primarily used to describe phenomena within a given media, in many cases having a self-reflexive nature. Another level of intramediality is rarely mentioned, namely, that media can overslide and in these cases we are not only talking about intermediality, but also about intramediality.[7] In many cases, transmediality is used to describe the

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[7] Taking into account their etymological background, intermediality is media existing next to each other, quite specifically, images and texts co-existing in a magazine, but if there is a picture taken of

phenomena of media change, as the novel adapted into film or the composition entitled "Pictures of an Exhibition".[8] The term transmediality, just like the term intramediality, is suitable to denominate the processes of media migration. Today's most discussed issue among media analysts is the problem of post-mediality raised by Lev Manovich.

A photo is still a photo even if it appears in a film, only the perception changes; it acts like a moving image, but does not become one. Media forms have the potential to migrate into other media forms, the film could be read as a comic book as well, the audiobook is a very good example for this kind of media migration phenomenon. Media transplant, transport, transposition, moreover, translate, the message becomes, of course, substantially changed, or moreover it may lose its original centre of gravity. Pictorial/visual repetition, image quotes, reproductions, collages are very good examples of media migration and coexistence.

When Manovich (2001) refers to new media, he assumes a media mutation, more precisely, he does not consider media as media in its traditional sense. But what is traditional media? Based on Mitchell's response, we can state that there are no old and new media, only media, which exist in their diversity and abundance and must comply with only one criterion: to be mediators. Thus we can question Manovich's statement that the new media are no longer regarded as media: "The new forms (assemblage, happening, installation, performance, action art, conceptual art, process art, intermedia, time-based works) are no longer media in the traditional sense, the constant addition of new technological forms to the old typology resulted in a new mutation of the concept"

The various forms of media are significantly different in terms of appearance and the mode of mediation, but each serves the same purpose, to convey something, they act as storage and means of delivery or displays. The usage and the internal regularities of the media do not alter the belonging of media to its general category. Manovich proves this with an interesting example: the possibility of digitalization – or more precisely the fact that mould/imprint of any media can be displayed on a web page, that is, I may encounter photos, photos made of photos, photos made of paintings or films made of photos – may lead to the disappearance of differences between media.

At this point, I turn back to the questions discussed in the first part of this paper, namely the definition of the media concept and the diversity of media. Let us start from the simple thesis that there is a great variety of media, these more or less co-exist, as demonstrated previously. The co-existence implies that certain media migrate into a different medium, thus ceasing to be the functions of given

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the text of the magazine, that is intramediality, as one media has incorporated another one, we are talking about being inside a medium.

[8] Mussorgsky's piano cycle entitled "Pictures of an Exhibition," composed based on Viktor Hartmann's posthumous exhibition.

material designs, that is to say, a photo is no longer present due to the photo paper, but mostly in a digital environment, but apart from this the photo can be recognized and considered to be a photo.

According to Manovich (2001) "On the material level, the shift to digital representation and the common modification/editing tools which can be applied to most media (copy, paste, morph, interpolate, filter, composite, etc.) and which substitute traditional distinct artistic tools erased the differences between photography and painting (in the realm of still image) and between film and animation (in the realm of a moving image)".

Manovich's unilateral argumentation implies that he approaches today's culture, media usage in an extreme way, from the user's perspective and it is also not clear whether the software should have more legitimacy or the concept of media should be changed for the concept of software. The concept of software is strongly linked to computer data storage and processing, and this can hardly be said about culture medial environment in general, because if we approach the problem of media from the user's perspective, it can be immediately seen that there hardly exists any general rule which would define or regulate usage, even if the vehicle is nothing more than a website, where ready-made schemes are waiting for the user, however, the visitor may want to make use of several possible variations of combinatorics and his/her liberty is not limited by the ready-made instructions either.

According to Manovich (2001) "The traditional concept of a media emphasizes the physical properties of a particular material and its representational capacities (i.e., the relationship between the sign and the referent.) As traditional aesthetics in general, this concept encourages us to think about the author's intentions, the content and the form of an artwork – rather than the user. In contrast with this, if we perceive culture, media, and unique cultural products as software, it will help us ensure focus on operations (called commands in programs) offered to the user. The focus is, therefore, shifted to the user's abilities and behaviour."

It is also important to discuss that the problem of aesthetics, that is, the investigation of beauty in its traditional sense, has been reclassified and intertwined with a number of other sciences, but it cannot be ruled out completely, moreover, without it the other sciences would also be more narrow-minded. The replacement of media by software would lock out none other but the user of its alleged scheme, system, since the software is based on automatisms. The media is actually a created condition, which will fill its role when it comes into contact with its user, if it comes into contact again with the human dimension. The media was always used at least twice, once when uploaded with content, and when turning towards the media and its content out of curiosity.

Therefore – as Manovich (2001) notes "instead of the term media, we could use the term software when discussing past media, i.e. what kind of informational operations does a certain media place at the user's disposal".

Global Media (Total-Media) versus Post-Media

According to the principle of postmediality we live in an age where the media as a concept is not suitable to describe different cultural processes and what we have called media has now changed to such an extent, that we need to change the way of thinking about it and related concept use.

However, it seems that media and software indicate completely different contents, not only in the meaning of the concept, but in the public mind and in targeted literature as well. Excluding the concept of media would be such a loss as depriving ourselves of the concepts introduced by Greek philosophers, because they were not born in the digital era and thus are not admissible in an environment where there are many new phenomena and physical conditions around us. The differences between media do not disappear, even if they come across each other in a collective basin, such as a digital photo or a community site or an advertising space on the Internet.

Painting, photography had not ceased with the emergence of television, nor did the printed press with the emergence of electronic media and audiobooks. It is natural, that the appearance of every new element involves some kind of lethargic, ominous fear that predicts the disappearance of an existing one and it is concerned about the exchange of places. In these cases, a complex process begins, media do not actually change places, they do not exclude side-by-side existence or the possibility of existence within each other, and it is certainly not a primary consequence that the new media destroy the existing, old ones, but what rather happens is that the older media become part of the new media, as these usually have a more comprehensive, overall character.

The age of media is not over, on the contrary: the growing, multiplying media result in a colourful and complex media system, where the relations between different media become more varied, newer, unprecedented configurations are created and the co-existence of special shapes and forms appear. The concept of postmediality proves to be a decadent and destructive term, because it questions the legitimacy of the media in an era when the newest media coexist with older one.

In the light of the latest media phenomena, when social, community media seem to be one of the leading phenomena, the most appropriate term is global media, because media are more and more intertwined, crucibles appear in which the imprints of previous media are present as references. In the case of global media the materiality of media is transformed, it appears as part of another medium, but as form, as having vehicle quality and a specific option of expression, it preserves all of its characteristics (in most cases due to its imagery). It is important to note here that any media that have a substance-material dimension as well, (and all media have a material dimension as well), that is to say, they have a

visual dimension as well, they can be treated as images, the process of summarizing can be realized specifically as a result of and through imagery.

To give a concrete example: the text, the visual imprint of the spoken word on a web page appears as an image, which due to its internal structure becomes readable, but we can also consider the pages of a book as a visual manifestation, because first we have to see it all, in order to be able to read later on.

Social media, consumer media – interactivity, directed communication

Social media is also consumer media. The interpretation of the concept that the development of social media, that is, consumer media is formed by and thus is in the hand of the user, is very polarized, extreme and unsubstantiated, because in every case of interactive media there is someone on the other side, who starts the game, the process, the interaction, there is someone who steps in, who sets up the rules of the game, who allows and denies when necessary, but within this framework there is a fairly large open area, which is open for the user within certain limits. (I deal with user freedom in the next section giving detailed analysis of specific examples.)

It can be clearly stated that besides the fact that social media are interactive by nature, they are also directed. In most cases, this kind of management passes unnoticed. Interactivity can be regarded as a particular form of manipulation, which allows for the outside participant of the interaction not to even suspect being victim of manipulation, since s/he is convinced that s/he can exit the interactive game at any time and interfere with the course and evolution of the game, moreover s/he is convinced that s/he her/himself is an integral and creative part of the rules according to which s/he is playing. It is important to note here that the creators of social and consumer media ensure that the complete freedom of the user and his/her right to interfere is emphasized as a fundamental rule, or as they often put it: the consumer site was created exclusively for the consumer and s/he is allowed to transform it in any way s/he wants it. There is no need to prove that polarization is obvious, since the bi-directionality of the game gives the first rule, there is a creator of consumer media and there is a user. First of all, consumer media, just like the set of questions at an interview, offer a grid, but in this case it is not about a simple text, speech, thoughts, but a complex media set which, as summarizing media, has access to most media and sums them up, a process that can be done easily with the help of the Internet, as we are dealing with global media, where, even if tangentially, all media can be squeezed in, if not otherwise, as visual imprints. (For example, the imprint of a theatrical performance, the imprint of the daily press, the imprint of our favourite magazine, the visual projection of a sculpture exhibition and so on). Many of the websites are still

passive, this means that most of them are only data vehicles, they mainly contain image and text material, some include audio material.

The vast majority of websites are descriptive by nature, but there is a tendency toward interactivity, forums, Internet groupings, virtual communities.

Blog, Facebook, Chat – Virtual contact search – virtual relationships, virtual communities

In the following I shall focus on the use of the Internet, as the use and formation of global media. Depending on the limitations of personal freedom, Internet activity and usage can be divided into three groups. The first category includes the websites, where the individual is given the greatest possible freedom; the maximum area is allocated to personal manifestation, self-expression, and creativity. These are individual websites or blogs edited by the user (in this case it should be taken into account that there is a form, a framework set by the blog service, but there is often a possibility for the blogger or webpage creator to start with a relatively clean sheet). It is especially important that the individual shows something of him/herself and as a result of this showcase phenomenon, if there is interest, s/he develops relationships with the help of creations, thoughts and images. It is common that a blog remains only an attempt of becoming a blog because the external readers are former acquaintances, neglected or broken friendships, relationships.

Another very powerful virtual group creator or re-creator is the category of websites which serve the purpose of searching for acquaintances, this category is what McLuhan (1968) called a virtual village (see global village). The Facebook is one of the most prominent examples of this category, it is the largest in terms of the number of users, some analysts even call this community, social media, it has been also referred to as the world's third largest country, as in 2010 it reached half a billion users. In the case of Facebook, the user's freedom is more limited than in the case of blogs or websites, but the number of contacts it creates is far greater. Facebook has created a large virtual community, which can be developed based on a previous set of relations, communities, as the authenticity of the friend status plays a substantial role, except for fan clubs within Facebook. When filling in one's profile, there is limited editorial freedom, it is rather a grid that can be filled, edited, modified according to trends. (Facebook and similar friend-based pages can also be used for creating masks, using an alias or a different name, host images and texts[9] in order to create a custom page. All friend-based sites carry within

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[9] I use the term *host image* based on Péter Esterházy's term *host text* (vendégszöveg), which refers to a text taken over from a different author without referring to the origin of the text or the author.

themselves the dramaturgy of hiding, where next to playfulness there is minimal responsibility regarding information, texts, and images made public.)

Virtual communities are formed using Facebook, each individual decides on his/her own whether to become a member with the possibility of ending this membership at any time. In any case, virtual communities differ substantially from the traditional communities where mobility and feasibility are minimized, while responsibility and participation are maximized. Facebook requires only partial participation, access and communication is granted in and out, passive observer status is also available with a minimum vulnerability to expose some information, but in this case, immunity is almost at maximum, because there is no control surface on Facebook to check the validity of data given, for instance, thus a fictitious person can log on as well.

Hidden subject – a virtual carnival

Many people suspect that behind these community sites, virtual villages there is strong political background, monitoring information, which has led several people to reject, leave the system, and move from the village.

This village[10] governed by these special rules resembles Béla Hamvas's (1985) Carnival, where everybody can select the costume and the role, communication is interrupted, often unilateral, but not impossible, there are no constantly communicating communities, they comment on the comments randomly, therefore short texts, dialogues are created that remind the reader of Örkény's style. The subject is actually hidden in the sense that the user fully controls his/her reactions, situations and appearance. The costume is the information set that the user shares with the community, and this is only part of the real, even if the published information, text, images are regarded as documents, because the process of selection results in a distortion, which directs, regulates self-presentation, this being reinforced by the possibility that their truth and reality value is not checked, therefore, within the limited freedom – I am thinking of the fact that structural forms, sizes, quantities, the origin and selection of information are entirely left to the user. Hence the costume character of profile making: there is a possibility to wear a costume and change it whenever necessary. Most people do not make use of this option to its fullest, they are quite honest, but there is a kind of hiding in honesty as well, because you show the best and the most beautiful part of yourself (*most* is, by the way, what some people chose to use, though small in

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[10] The choice of the term village is more relevant because its proximity is obvious, any member can be reached at any time, you can knock at anybody's door at any time, that is to say, you can check his/her profile – in this case it has to be taken into account that there is minimal security, that you can lock your door from strangers, that there is data that cannot be shared.

number: the most mysterious, the most terrifying, the most disgusting and so on). It is definitely a self-publicity which can be positive or negative.

These virtual villages have special, fragile and highly variable structures, their functioning is determined most of all by pseudo-intimacy and quasi-honesty and their communication is also very specific. The social/community forum, such as Facebook, can hardly put all of its members into motion on a communicative level at the same time, therefore smaller chat platforms are formed, which can function with up to 25-30 participants at a time, but on average there are 5-10 comments. The group of the readers, viewers is much larger, those who do not comment, just observe. These atom-like mini forums create in many cases, compact mini-communities, as it can be observed that responses, posts, comments are given by more or less the same members.

It can hardly be called a dialogue; it is more like a set, a pile of comments that start upon aphorismatic observations, questions which then generate ironical posts, comments without having an exact line of communication.

Mysterious dating

In the development of relationships, romantic relationships, mystery, hiding, secretly finding each other has always had a significant role. The secret lover, the secret love of Romeo and Juliet, is by no means chosen only as a result of the prohibition of the Capulets and Montagues, this path is chosen out of their free will. The modern forms of dating include dating ads. With the emergence of the press, this possibility has also emerged and we still encounter this type of ads.

Searching for a partner on the Internet can be done through a multitude of online dating sites, chat portals. User freedom is the most limited, as the user is not allowed to interfere with the operating system, development, user quality of the chat; s/he is allowed only to communicate, to participate in group discussions. Let us call these community portals flirt-theatres. In the coining of this term *flirt* is being stressed, as these sites are only partly used for serious intentions, the principle of playing without responsibility (with real life character, not Lara Croft...) is applied, – a game that may lead to addiction. It is an opportunity to interact without assuming responsibility, without assuming the risk of being yourself and without consequences. Being a player of this game on a daily basis requires serious effort for some of the players/users to exit the game.

The concept of theatre is important because the chat is best suited to dress up in a wide variety of characters, to hide behind the strangest products of your fantasy while remaining real in hiding and encountering countless forms of hidden characters in costumes.

This kind of community forum communication is such a significant part of the 21st century existence that it has become part of literature, arts, film and several

other media as well. Daniel Glattauer's novel entitled *Good Against North Wind* (*Gut gegen Nordwind*) and its sequel (*Alle Sieben Wellen*) are interesting examples, which relate the development of a relationship on the Internet, based on reviving chat-situations, making use of this late-modern form of hiding maintained by two lonely people (Tillmann, 1996).   It is an interesting phenomenon in connection with Glattauer's novel, that just like at the time of Balzac's novels, the reading public interfered with the evolution of the novel, demanded some sort of happy ending, more specifically it provoked a second novel for the protagonists to meet as a completion of the first novel. It is perhaps important to note that everyone who is a player of the flirt-theatre game secretly hopes, even if subconsciously, for encountering *the one*, though rationally is aware of the fact that s/he has minimum chances for this to happen, as statistics reveal the fact that out of all users only 2-3 percent find long-term partners and develop relationships.

The point in theatre is that anybody can become an actor, anybody can play his/her imaginary role without having to step on a stage, without having to be him/herself in front of a multitude of viewers, without having to fight a gladiator's fight or appearing in the arena. In this mysterious game s/he can experience an exponential form of freedom, nonetheless few people think of themselves in the role of the spectator that also has to be present, and how much s/he is exposed to others' plays. While s/he does not want to show his/her real face, his/her character, others act the same way, therefore they can hardly find honest relationships. However, in a psychological respect, these forums are quite capable of proving maximum sincerity, as strangers, without responsibility, without consequences, can share any problems, which result in the flirt-theatre having therapeutic nature as well, as users discuss their problems, and even though they do not reach a clear solution, this will help in processing the events, the pain, problems and facilitate the search for possible solutions.

Media jams. Images as leading media on the Web

The most powerful feature of social media is that a variety of media meet, therefore it can be considered a multimedial, intermedial phenomenon, but it is often called hypermedia as well. The concept of multimediality seems most appropriate in the case of social media, as the majority of web pages compress multiple media, and at the same time we encounter intermediality on almost every Internet site, as one media covers the other. Hypermediality (the equivalent of hypertext) could actually be a common denominator of multimediality and intermediality, but neither of them can be considered the common denominator of websites, they can be used as characteristics, as features. Media jam is clearly noticeable on all Internet sites, as picture, audio, text and all of their subcategories

are displayed – almost without exception – and they melt into each other, they intertwine.

The complexity of media jams puts the user in a difficult situation, because every time s/he encounters an Internet platform, s/he has to set up a hierarchy: on which component should s/he focus first and in what order is to be set up between the sub-elements.

Needless to prove, it is everyday experience that images gain priority. At first, unwittingly, we concentrate on the visual components of an Internet site or social media, and only then begin a rational, controlled, conscious user attitude, in order to start selecting from the options (i.e., reading the text on the page or listening to the audio material that is available on the page).

The dominance of images is obvious. But from where and how do images obtain superiority over other media? According to Mitchell (2008a), images are leading media. This is axiomatic meaning, without looking for the answer to why.

We could assume, in the case of a complex, global medial product that we turn to images because we understand them better, we can read and comprehend them at first sight. The question remains regarding the origin of image dominance; because we can hardly state that we can read or comprehend images; however their attraction that influences our recipient attitude is inescapable. Gottfried Boehm (2001) used the term *the power of images* in order to outline the visual strength, energy through which images fascinate us, attract us, and exercise their power on us.

One of the controversial and open questions of image theory is how images are able to affect, to influence, how the visual field of attraction develops and how it affects us. It is not our intention here to discuss this problem in detail or to find answers to this; we rather analyze the role of the dominance of images, in social, community media. If you open a website, you first take a look at the images. On Facebook we might not even read where they live, what they do, we go for the family album in order to peek into their lives, an Internet imprint of their world and only after doing so do we take some time to focus on the reading.

If we accept image dominance as an axiom, it also becomes clear why is it that in the case of Facebook for instance, images are so important: users confirm their existence on the community forum first and foremost through pictures, moreover, most communication attempts start out as comments attached to images, pictures, these eventually grow into texts on the border of monologues and dialogues in the form of mostly short sentences, phrases or in the best case extended sentences or very short flow of thoughts.

Imagery has a significant role in editing websites, as the dominant media is the first to come into contact with the user. Website editors, bloggers or Facebook profile editors suspect, feel, know how important the used images are, therefore they select them carefully, while letting a specific form of manipulation work in the background. This kind of manipulation is not necessarily negative, but is rather

present in the sense of forming, shaping, transformation and its didactic strength lies in the fact that a photo, an image, a video material can create trends on the long run whether in the good sense of the word or having negative connotations. The lack of imagery in the case of the chat is quite strange, more specifically, in the case of the chat we meet a primary level of text, which is later completed with other media, including visual content as well. But let us discuss chat as text-oriented phenomenon, where hiding is of main importance, where image dominance is deliberately eschewed, as if put between brackets and put aside for later, only as a reserve option. This is also interesting, because it is a unique phenomenon of virtual community sites, images do no dominate – simply by being absent – but imagination is far more powerful, since it is only the presence of words, conversations that make up an internal image of the partner. In this case games, playing, imagination and the wide sphere of possibilities comes to the front, as the concreteness of the image would deprive – though virtually and on the level of imagination – the users of the best of the possible partners. Although user freedom in editing the webpage and self-portrayal is minimal in the case of chat forums, the freedom offered by *maybe* and *perhaps* in the sphere of thought and verbal expression is greater.

Message – without recipient, a message to everybody, a message to nobody (Online touch)

In the case of the chat, the most common form of communication is bi-directional. In the case of all other media, including websites, news, sites, there is a clear feature: there is no specified recipient, and there is an undetermined, probable, possible, anticipated user group who is expected to attend, without having a precisely defined or quantified target audience. In the case of social, community sites, the recipient is always self-appointed, random, casual user. Sending a message in this form assumes the existence of an entirely new communication system, which does not follow Umberto Eco's semiotic scheme and does not use the simple sender-message-receiver scheme, since we are dealing with a much more complex message, often without a receiver, these are Internet messages in a bottle. When these messages are created, there is no need to put the blame on the lack of marketing or the lack of users, it is rather availability and content that exclude certain users, moreover, the subject may be excluding or delimiting. We do not deal with the form of Internet messages in bottles or with the case of personalized advertising when the message is directed to specific recipients, what we deal with, instead, are those contents as messages, information that are accessible to anyone. These messages can actually speak to none and to everyone, there is no personal connection between emitter and receiver, in fact there is no connection between sender and receiver, and this is why we cannot talk about

sender or receiver at all. In fact, we encounter this phenomenon on advertising pages (self-publicity), on informational sites, on entertainment pages (games) or on community pages.

If we take into account Mitchell's Luhmann diagram, which does not posit media in a linear system but as a circular model, we get a new interpretation of the concepts of message and receiver and emitter,[11] they can even be left out of the system.

Mitchell does not use the concept of emitter and receiver, he builds the concentric system on the relationship of form and media (medium – if the transmitter is a person) and media is present as an opportunity for the manifestation of form, without assuming targeted use, it is at hand, available to anyone. Of course, most of the media have a targeted audience, but this audience is fictitious, it is present on the level of planning, preparation, as an idealized, ideal option, it helps in editing, in production and creation, but does not generate, create the audience itself, this is formed in a rather aleatory way, under the influence of a number of unforeseen factors. The media is actually that sphere of possibility sector, which, from the user's perspective, is unlimited, available to everyone. Community media usually have one condition: the user should sign up as member of the system, thus getting him/her involved and gaining access to his/her basic data, and thus personalized communication in the form of emails or advertising can begin.[12]

Let us keep in mind the existing, wandering message that finds its target somewhere, somehow, at someone. The message without a recipient has a very interesting form, it is mostly used by travel agencies, the postcard without a recipient, which appears in your mailbox. At first, the you (the unnamed recipient) are glad that someone has been thinking about you, but you soon realize that it is an advertisement, the text is created in a very personalized manner, but it is actually the advertisement of a travel agency formulated nicely and in an attractive manner, but it is not especially for you, it is for everybody and nobody.

The message that most social networking sites carry are intended for both the personal and impersonal user, but not just for him/her. The message somehow manages to reach its destination without address and recipient, it comes to me in such a way that I choose it by a simple gesture, I make the Internet connection available, I give power supply to my computer, I open the Internet site and as a self-serving

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[11] This is not about the invalidity of Eco's model, but the existence of another possible model which is more and more perceivable in the case of newly emerging media forms. Eco's model is still functional in the case of emails, personal communication or traditional postal correspondence.

[12] The strategy of advertising pop-up windows on the Internet is quite interesting: it works in a personalized way. Who has not experienced seeing in one or another corner of your mail account the advertisement of the online store or site where yesterday you bought something or wanted to buy something, but nonetheless spent some time on that site, you opened it, you showed interest and the next day you meet again.

postman I let the online touch get to me, which I get by letting the mechanism operate that can touch anybody in the less physical sense of the word. This can be understood as one form of vulnerability, or as a form of social expression of automatisms or it can be viewed as a particular form of personal freedom.

The question still remains open: why do we need social networking sites and what kind of deep human needs made them emerge? Are we really so lonely in Heidegger's sense of alienation or are we just making use of the possibilities given by technology?

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