

# ТЕОРІЯ І ПРАКТИКА ЖУРНАЛІСТИКИ

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## УСВІДОМЛЕННЯ ТА РОЗУМІННЯ ЗМІСТУ Й ФОРМИ МЕДІАКУЛЬТУРИ В КОНТЕКСТІ МЕДІАОСВІТИ

### AWARENESS AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE CONTENT AND FORMS OF MEDIA CULTURE IN THE CONTEXT OF MEDIA EDUCATION

*Медіакультура та медіаосвіта — це дуже пов'язані між собою поняття, які сформувались майже одночасно та мають багато спільного. Однак досить часто медіакультуру розуміють лише як культуру особистості або культуру використання засобів масової інформації різними групами: школярами, студентами, людьми похилого віку чи медіапрофесіоналами. Таке розуміння медіакультури не зовсім відповідає цілям її вивчення та використання в процесі медіаосвіти, оскільки феномен медіакультури дуже широкий і включає всі процеси комунікаційного циклу, починаючи з предметів інформації, змісту, передачі, аудиторії та ефектів.*

*У статті ми використовуємо загальнонаукові методи аналізу та синтезу, а також критичний аналіз. Зауважимо, що в більшості загальних теорій медіакультура в контексті медіаосвіти розглядається поверхнево. Багато теорій підкреслюють здатність аудиторії протистояти маніпуляціям із ЗМІ, створювати власний контент та самозахист від основної медіакультури. Медіакультура є об'єктом дослідження комунікативних дисциплін, які зосереджуються на процесі передачі культурних символів та знаків, образів та перформансів. Спираючись на методологію представників культурних досліджень, ми стверджуємо, що медіакультура виступає як домінуюче соціокультурне явище нашого часу.*

*Щоб включити медіакультуру до парадигми медіаосвіти, нам слід вивчити історію виникнення та функціонування медіакультури, трансформаційні процеси в суспільстві, перехід до нової постінформаційної ери всіх аспектів життя. У цьому контексті медіаосвіта сьогодні стає не провідником цінностей і норм, а інструментом інтерпретації, множинності реальностей, змін форм сприйняття та знання. А це в свою чергу порушує питання про «політику ідентичності» в сучасній медіакультурі та медіаосвіті. Новий дискурс медіаосвіти фокусується на студентові, його знаннях та культурному досвіді.*

*Мета статті розвинути розуміння ролі медіакультури в медіаосвіті та обґрунтувати твердження, що медіаосвіта сьогодні стає не тільки провідником цінностей і норм, а інструментом інтерпретації, множинності реалій, змін форм сприйняття та знання.*

*У зв'язку з цим виникає питання — на чому ґрунтується вищезгадана «політика ідентичності»: демократичних, релігійних, полікультурних цінностях?*

*Медіаосвіта, інтегрована в медіакультуру, дозволяє розширити компетенції та представництва, вдосконалити та впровадити методи та методологію відповідно до розширення та трансформації медіакультури. Сьогодні медіаосвіта повинна бути переключена з інструменту захисту на розвиток навичок розуміння та участі в медіакультурі. Без обізнаності та розуміння цих важливих питань медіакультури важко уявити успішний розвиток сучасної медіаосвіти та медіаграмотності.*

**Ключові слова:** медіакультура, людина медіакультури, медіаграмотність, постмодерна культура.

Media culture and media education are very related concepts that were formed almost simultaneously and have much in common. However, quite often media culture is understood only as a culture of personality or a culture of using the media by different groups of the people: schoolchildren, students, seniors or media professionals in particular. This understanding of media culture does not quite meet the objectives of its study and use in the process of media education, as the phenomenon of media culture is very broad and includes all processes of the communication cycle, starting with the subjects of information, content, transmission, audience and effects.

In the article we use general scientific methods of analysis and synthesis, as well as critical analysis. Media culture in the context of media education is considered superficially. Many theories emphasise the audience's ability to resist media manipulation, the ability to create their own content, and self-defence against mainstream media culture. Media culture in research is the object of research of communicative disciplines, which focus on the process of transmission of cultural symbols and signs, images and performances. Based on the methodology of representatives of cultural research, we argue that media culture acts as the dominant socio-cultural phenomenon of our time.

To include media culture in the paradigm of media education, we should study the history of the origin and functioning of media culture, transformational processes in society, the transition to a new post-information era of all aspects of life. In this context, media education today is becoming not a conductor of values and norms, but a tool of interpretation, multiplicity of realities, changing forms of perception and knowledge. And this, in turn, raises the question of "identity politics" in modern media culture and media education. The new discourse of media education focuses on the student, his knowledge and cultural experience. The aim of the article is to develop an understanding of the role of media culture in media education and to substantiate the claim that media education today becomes not only a guide of values and norms, but a tool of interpretation, multiplicity of realities, changes in forms of perception and knowledge.

In this regard, the question arises — what is this policy based on — democratic, religious, multicultural values?

Media education integrated into media culture allows to expand competencies and representations, to improve and implement methods and methodology in accordance with the expansion and transformation of media culture. The purpose of media education should be the process of developing skills of understanding and participation in media culture. Without awareness and understanding of these important issues of media culture, it is difficult to imagine the successful development of modern media education and media literacy.

**Keywords:** media culture, man of media culture, media literacy, postmodern culture.

## Introduction

The concept of media culture was formed in the second half of the twentieth century with the development of communication technologies. Currently, media culture, in addition to researchers of the media, is studied by representatives of sociological, philosophical, cultural and philological schools. Despite the great attention to this concept, today there is no universal formulation. Among the many definitions of media culture, we offer the following: Media culture is a metaculture of the information (post-information) society, organized according to the model of mass production for the mass public. It is the main factor of postmodern culture, the culture of images, sounds and pictures transmitted through technical means, creating virtual values and meanings, it is the techno-culture — which connects culture and technology and through information and communication means produces its artifacts and translates content to a mass audience, changing a person's mental attitudes; it is a sensual culture, because forming the needs and tastes, is aimed at enhancing sensual happiness and satisfaction, benefits and comfort.

Accordingly, the scientific interest is to adopt the discourse of media culture by ordinary citizens who are consumers of the media product: in this context, media culture becomes part of media education, expanding its scope by including new media culture practices in its paradigm. The category of media education itself is being reconsidered in connection with the expansion of scientific and practical research in the field of media culture. Its role and functions in the system of general educational transformations and influences are being reconsidered. The postmodern concept of education in the context of participatory culture is an important area of research that takes into account the active role of the audience in the formation of modern media culture. In this aspect, the problem of transmedia, cross-media and convergent technologies in the process of development and appropriation of media culture by consumers becomes relevant. This problem area arises in connection with the new postmodern concept of education and culture, which is more coherent and inclusive in modern conditions. In this article we outline important issues related to the problems of media culture in the process of media education, as the concept

of media culture includes not only artifacts, but also the process of media production, technological tools, narrative practices and identity issues. The scientific novelty of the article is that we first presented media culture in the context of media education not just as an object of influence on the audience or artifact, but as a communicative process related to the problems of production, technology, mediation, and communication connected with identity issues and discursive practices.

### **Methodology**

Media culture is a very complex phenomenon and does not fit into the main socio-cultural theoretical trends and into some latest attempts to describe it.

Most general theories address important aspects media culture one-sided. Those media theories that focused on manipulation and dominance were very popular in the 1960s and partly in the 1970s, and argued that the media was a very powerful force, exercising social control, and imposing a solid dominant ideology on its "victims". Many theories have responded to these models, emphasizing the audience's ability to resist media manipulation, the ability to create their own content, and self-defense against mainstream media culture. Media culture, beginning with the works of Harold Innis and Marshall McLuhan, gradually became the object of research in the disciplines of communication, focusing on the process of transmission of cultural symbols and signs, images and performances. This is especially noticeable in the works of such theorists of mass communication as Denis McQuail [1], Jonathan Bignell [2], Douglas Kellner [3], in which media culture is one of the main factors of socio-communication processes.

For the first time, media culture began to be understood as a general socio-communicative phenomenon, and not just as a separate type of mass media culture in the works of the famous culturologist-communicator Harold Innis [4, p. 6]. He found a natural connection between the development of civilizations and the means of communication: in the rich historical material he showed that the media are closely intertwined with the social and cultural processes of society and significantly influence them. Harold Innis had a great influence on Marshall McLuhan, the famous communicator of the twentieth century. Marshall McLuhan also, combining the concept of culture with its communicative and technical nature, argued that "social life depends more on the nature of the means by which people communicate with each other than on the content of messages" [5,

p. 341]. For example, the method of communication based on book printing facilitated separation, separation of people, individualization and specialization. In the works of representatives of cultural research such as "The Popular Arts" (1964) by Stuart Hall and Paddy Whannel, "Screen Education: Teaching a critical approach to cinema and television (1964) by A. W. Hodgkinson, "Mass Media in the Classroom" (1968) by Brian Firth, media culture is the dominant socio-cultural phenomenon of our time. In particular, for Stuart Hall, culture was not something to be simply valued or studied, but a critical place of social action and intervention, where the power of communication is both established and potentially unregulated. Thus, the methodological basis of the article is the communication theory of Harold Lasswell and Marshall McLuhan, as well as the methodology of cultural research, including critical and semiotic paradigms of studying media culture. The article also uses the works of modern researchers on media education: "What's a Christian to Do with Harry Potter?" by Connie Neal (2001), "The Media Education Manifesto" by David Buskigham (2019), "Theory of Media Literacy: A Cognitive Approach" by W. James Potter (2004).

### **Results of the discussion**

With the development of technology, a new era is coming, where human autonomy ends, man becomes part of global networks. Problems of media culture are often seen as a decrease in the general intellectual level against the background of culture mediatization. For example, D. Lukacs, a well-known American historian, considers our time to be the end of the modern era, the main factor of which was the era of Reason, historical optimism and belief in progress. Many of those features of the modern era, which were leading for almost half a millennium, are coming to an end: European expansion, liberalism, humanism, bourgeois culture, respect for private property, Newtonian conception of the universe and physical reality, the ideal of scientific objectivity, and the age of books. D. Lukach connects the end of the modern era with the development and victory of the principle of democracy. According to him, democracy has become so widespread, so depressing due to its unconditional agreement with the power of popularity, which is often based on the lowest standards. He writes that nowadays there is enough reason to warn that with the disappearance of the modern era, the very word "civilized" may quickly lose its meaning. There are hordes of young people everywhere who do not know this word and its meaning is incomprehensible [6, p. 241]. Such degradation is associated both with political

electoral practices, where competition between candidates becomes a competition in publicity, and with the imposition of certain stereotypes by the media. The simplification of tastes and judgments, the imposition of certain standards, and the successful manipulation made possible by the principles of freedom in a democratic society have led to the disappearance of the last features of aristocracy and elitism. This regression corresponds to many phenomena outside politics. D. Lukach cites as an example the idea of general education and the practice of compulsory education, when in schools from most boys and girls who have spent ten years in school, you cannot expect more than that they can read and write relatively well [6, p. 239]. The paradoxical state of reduction of the general intellectual level against the background of informatization of society, in the conditions of wide access to almost all information sources makes you think about the nature and types not only of the information itself, but also about the methods of obtaining and using it.

The fact that the media raises the level of awareness of the general population is indisputable. At the same time, the growing flow of media messages may not intentionally transform people's energy from active participation to passive knowledge.

The subjects of interaction do not aim to exchange material objects, but to communicate meanings that have an ideal nature. Carriers of meanings are signs, symbols, texts that have an external, sensory form which is comprehended through the ideological process. It is here that we encounter the phenomenon of media culture, or the culture of transmission of meanings, signs, images in human society. In essence, media culture encompasses not only the media, but all phenomena related to the mediation mission in the transmission of information. Therefore, media culture occupies an important place in social communications in various areas. When it comes to media culture, we are often confronted with the related concept of media education, as quite often media culture is understood as a culture of personality or culture of media use by different groups: schoolchildren, youth, students, seniors and media professionals in particular. This understanding of media culture does not quite meet the objectives of its study and use in the process of media education, because the phenomenon of media culture is very broad and includes the whole process of communication cycle, starting with the subjects of information transmission: content, transmission, audience and effects.

To include media culture in the paradigm of media education, one should study the history

of the origin and functioning of media culture, transformational processes in society itself, the transition to a new post-information era of all aspects of life. Thus, media education in the broadest sense is the "appropriation of culture" (Volodymyr Bibler). Media education through the study of media culture contributes to the formation of a picture of the world, helps to develop the skills needed to fully understand the information and create their own media texts. The paradigm shift in the study of media culture occurred in the 60s of the 20th century in the works of representatives of cultural research, who began to use semiotics, structuralism, psychoanalysis in the analysis of media culture, which led to the evolution of media literacy as well.

Since the early 1960s of the 20th century media culture began to be taught in most British universities. And already in the 90s Len Masterman and Michael Morgan outlined a new "representative paradigm" of media education [7, p. 29], which aimed to understand the ways in which the media represent reality, the technologies and ideologies they use. At this time, media culture is becoming the dominant force in politics and social life.

At the same time, questions were raised — by what means does media culture persuade people to change their opinion and themselves in the direction of the dominant social system and political, ideological position and representation? how do "cultural indicators" work? (George Gerbner). He linked this discourse to the concept of media education. In this case, the very concept of media education was to be considered as a certain construct that has certain properties that correspond to the structure of everyday life and historical life experience of the individual.

Media culture as an object of media education begins to pass through various academic studies — through sociology, anthropology, political science, literary studies, and also becomes the subject of consideration in the theories of psychoanalysis, semiotics, Marxism and others. Media education and media literacy are beginning to understand media culture as a phenomenon of a certain episteme, as a discursive practice, as a field of interpretations. Any message is politically, historically, culturally determined and exists in the environment of cultural signs and symbols. Since culture is always constructed, deconstruction becomes another tool of media education. Media literacy is a set of perspectives that we actively use to reveal (expose) ourselves in relation to the media in the process of interpreting the meaning of the messages we are dealing with [8]. This definition applies not only to the mass media,

but also to media culture in general, as a broader phenomenon. If culture is always constructed, then the media is always selective.

Thus, media culture occupies a central place and should be considered in connection with mediation, i.e. how it reaches the audience, through which channels and with what effect. Media culture is both a construct and a subject of framing. Media culture is a mediated culture and this complicates its understanding. The structure of W. J. Potter's book on media literacy is built on the same principle as the formula of mass communication by Harold Lasswell. By the way, "McQuail's Mass Communication Theory" by McQuail is based on the same principle. We use the same structure to understand the media culture, the media culture of the producer, the content, the transmission channel, the audience and the effects.

In this perspective, media literacy lies not so much in the search for fakes and criticism of media texts, but in understanding how the cultural industry works, why post-truth and simulacra have such a force to engage in everyday practice, which technologies in different fields of science are combined around media production and media consumption. And this, in turn, raises the question of the essence of media culture itself, how it is built, how it develops, what technologies are used in the process of its production and consumption.

The new discourse of media education focuses on the student, on his knowledge and cultural experience. Media education has been switched from the tool of protection to the form of preparation for media perception. The goal is to develop understanding and participation in media culture. If the audience in the classical scheme was seen as a receiver and interpreter, now she absorbs all the elements of the communication cycle, being a producer, content producer, involved in interpretation and effects. The audience chooses and creates message channels. Media producers now talk about "emotional capital", "feelings of love", referring to the expectations and participation of the audience, to the grassroots of creativity [9]. The role of media education in the context of media culture is aimed at recognizing and addressing the following issues.

How is the media attractive to people and how does it work, how are ideology and entertainment related? In this context, we note that entertainment is a so-called "soft power" that imperceptibly introduces various ideologies into our daily lives. For example, different types of infotainment, politainment, edutainment perform the ideological function of soft coercion through sounds, pictures, the form of presentation of the material. For example,

polytheism is mostly not politics in the literal sense, this genre is more likely to give pleasure to watching debates like shows. In the process of combining entertainment with information, or entertainment with elements of policy, the essence of the phenomenon may be lost, the problem field, which is important for understanding a particular subject, may be blurred.

It should also be noted that soap operas and TV series, situation comedies, offer enlightenment in the direction of ensuring social harmony and order, as they consolidate and demonstrate the idea of who has power and who does not, who can commit violence, and who will be severely punished for it.

How can we find out what students already know about the media? It is impossible to conduct media education classes if a person does not have an elementary tool for text recognition, narrative, if he does not have any basic knowledge in the field of media. To find out the level of students' knowledge, it is necessary to analyze their competencies, previous courses taught to them, their own experience. Are they familiar with the process of media production? What is the state policy towards the media? What NGOs are involved in the media? How does commodification and consumerism affect media content? How is content selected and framed, etc.?

When researching the question of critical or conceptual understanding, one should pay attention to what students know about the critical research paradigm, what approaches exist in the critical understanding of media culture? These can be Marxism and neo-Marxism, feminist, multicultural studies, discourse analysis and narrative analysis, and so on.

How do they learn to use the media to represent themselves and communicate with others? This question refers to the practical skills of students to create media content through various communication platforms, which in turn requires knowledge of the latest communication technologies, such as video clips, sound overlay, editing, and so on.

How can we assess the reliability of their knowledge? Here we face a big problem of monitoring students' knowledge, mostly in modern conditions — the use of tests. The most effective, in our opinion, is to write an essay on a particular topic and issue, or an oral interview. It is also important to monitor students' practice and analysis of information products they create.

The next important question is how do students relate their own academic discourse to their own consumer media experience? Very often students'

theoretical knowledge is detached from their daily practices. For example, narrative analysis of the media, which helps to reveal the ideology of the text, for the most part remains only academic knowledge. Students should be shown how their knowledge of the analysis of narrative structures can expand their understanding of the text and the context of a media message. Examining the verbal code, in particular, we can point to specific jargon, a syntax that reveals a certain ideology of the text. In the series "To Catch the Kaidash" the characters speak Surzhyk, which emphasizes their social status, and one of the heroines Melashka speaks pure literary language. This is where Todorov's theory of binary oppositions works, when through such an opposition we can see coded symbols — two Ukraines, just as two types of Ukrainians are coded in the images of Lavrin and Karp. Or the use of phraseology that has a symbolic meaning. For example, the phrase "to catch Kaidash" is also deciphered, it means to get upset or think about life.

How can we be sure that media education really works? In the process of applying the tools of media education, a person must increase his critical potential on the one hand, on the other hand, he must in practice change his attitude to the process of media communication. This means that the application of knowledge in the field of media should be superimposed on different practices of both media production and everyday life. What skills do you need to work in the media? What is the process of selection of a particular medium for consumption? What effects do we get and what did we hope to get? What attracts us to a media product?

Is media culture always identical to the values of media education? This complex issue is at the level of discourse, as it involves an understanding of current trends in media culture, the ability to correlate the historical contexts of media with meaningful elements of media production and media artifacts. For example, we consider the understanding of propaganda in a historical, philosophical, and educational context only through discursive practices, as propaganda takes different forms at different times according to cultural, linguistic, technological, ideological, and political aspects.

Today, the questions of what is valuable in media culture and what is not are also relevant, who decides which content is useful, which is harmful, what is high media culture, and what is not? In the conditions of "digital capitalism" and pluralism, universal access to the use and creation of media products, the problem of studying the cultural contexts of the media, the correlation

with different valuable aesthetic categories at different times is really significant. Is it worth presenting our modernity as the one where media technologies provide new opportunities for communication, cultural interaction, the formation of a positive image of everyday life? Do all people have the right to choose, access, alternatives in the web of contents of modern media culture? Or perhaps we understand media culture and the way of life it creates as such that contributes to the preservation of an unjust and repressive social order. These questions also refer to the problem of values. Where do our tastes and preferences come from and what does the term "different values" mean?

In this regard, it is important to emphasize that today in the context of democratization and pluralism of media culture we see a change or destruction of basic values, the collapse of the former institutional structure of culture, a new, shaky style of mass communication, a sudden change in personal patterns of thought leaders.

We can also observe a general difficult situation to self-determination in the cultural and value sphere, as we see the lack of agreement on the main directions of its development between representatives of the political, academic, humanitarian and artistic elites of society. In these conditions, it is very important to take into account the general civilizational tendencies of media culture or its values. The lack of value orientations leads to the expansion of the forms of representation, the erasure of the concept of identity, because modern man is in a new identity policy, which gives the green light to marginal trends. It is also important to focus on inclusion and the concept of equality, to insist on diversity and the consequences of the new identity policy.

As identity becomes more autonomous in terms of assessing cultural phenomena, modern media culture includes more polarized subjects. Thus, media education today is becoming not a conductor of values and norms, but a tool of interpretation, multiplicity of realities, changing forms of perception and knowledge. And this in turn raises the question of "identity politics" in modern media culture and media education.

In this regard, the question arises: is this policy based on democratic, religious, multicultural values? For example, how can you interpret Harry Potter? Is his struggle a struggle against traditional Christian values, as some Christian groups interpret? [10]. How did the fans of this book try to influence the Warner Brothers? What drove them? Young people today have access to "adult

media” and at the same time they have their own media spheres that adults often do not understand. These phenomena are embedded in the so-called participatory media culture, which is fragmented and individualistic. Also, understanding media culture today requires the ability to recognize complex modern forms of “digital capitalism” [11, p. 3]. Digital culture has no hierarchies and social standards, young people grow up in an environment of multiculturalism, heterogeneity, with different concepts of morality and cultural traditions. In this context, it is necessary to rethink the very concept of media culture in the context of media education, involving the study of the full range of media culture as a communicative process from production through product creation to media effects and discursive practices of consumption and appropriation in everyday life.

### Conclusions

The man of media culture, or media man, for the first time in history is in a struggle of images, discourses, myths and performance of media culture, which is a form of highly organized participation or complicity and activity, within which modern man creates his society and identity. Media education integrated into media culture allows to expand competencies and representations, to improve and implement methods and methodology in accordance with the expansion and transformation of media culture. The new discourse of media education should focus on the student, his knowledge and cultural experience. As we noted in the study, today media education should be switched from a tool of protection to a form of preparation for media perception, so the goal of media education should be the process of developing skills of understanding and participation in media culture. Without awareness and understanding of these important issues of media culture, it is difficult to imagine the successful development of modern media education and media literacy. The article asks more questions than the answers to them. But outlining media culture in the context of media education highlights these internal issues that are implicated in the broader discourse of media culture and “digital capitalism”. These issues need to be rethought in the context of new media technologies such as media audience fragmentation, social networking, a change in identity policy — anything and everything that transforms everyday media interaction practices.

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