Conceptual Analysis of Communication –The Concept of Mass is overcome

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Abstract

*This is a theoretical essay regarding the relevance of the concept of mass used in the context of Communication studies. Different aspects are considered: the recognition of the importance of the media in the formation of identities, behaviors and sociability. The media institutions have a specific rationality here called **referential identity**, which is able to potentially comprise other rationalities concerning spheres of knowledge, but also performing other operations of strategic nature, derived from the presence of elements of daily circularity of private life and of historical time. Its referential dynamic is selective, partial, transitory, risky, ephemeral, but at the same time, reflective and identity. Therefore, the concept of mass is completely overcome. From a scientific point of view, in analytical terms, the concept of mass is completely inoperable and it is an opaque wall that hides fundamental attributes of the public of media messages and prevents the understanding of complex interactive processes that occur between them. The concept of mass ignores the singularity, the ability of action and the unique thoughts of each individual, the specificity of their existential trajectories and social networks, cultural and political movements, and the needs and interventions that they undergo.*

Keywords: Mass, Communication, Media, Individual, Reflexivity, Identity

Introduction

This is a theoretical essay regarding the relevance of the concept of mass used in the context of Communication studies. There is the recognition of the centrality and importance of the media in the formation of identities, behaviors and sociability; the dynamics experienced in public space promoted by the media and in the relations between different cultural practices; the exercise conditions of a discursive plurality; the dimension of the practice and concept of interactivity; the thematic and practical amplification of the concept of citizenship; the institutional relationship of communication with the spheres of the civil society and the State; the overcoming of the notion of mediation by the notion of single agency; the location of communicative discourse within cultural spheres dispossessed of much visibility; the exploration of terms that the condition of citizenship is outlined, maintained, and able to condition the dynamic of its own culture. The media institutions have a specific rationality hereby called of **identity-referential**, that is able to potentially comprise other rationales concerning different areas of knowledge (art, science, politics and their aesthetic and expressive, technical and instrumental, and argumentative rationality), but also performing other operations of strategic nature, deriving from the presence of elements of everyday circularity related to private interests of capitalism. The unique performance and rationality of media institutions are selective, partial, transitory, risky, ephemeral, but at the same time, reflexive and identity strengthener.

The Concept of Mass is Overcome

Therefore, the concept of mass is completely overcome. It should have been overcome shortly after it was invented. It was created in the early decades of the twentieth century in order to qualify a society composed of anonymous, atomized, uneducated, lost, and astonished individuals. In the very first research of Lass well regarding the intentions of vote of Americans, it was discovered that they voted influenced by countless variables and, therefore, they were not a homogeneous mass without identity or faceless. In the United States, there was a pragmatic and positivist use of the concept, also associated with the notion of large-scale production of messages and cultural goods. One single theoretical matrix denominated a mass society, with one mass culture disseminated by the mass media. In essence, the concept of mass reflects the character of regimentation essentially pragmatic, prevailing in the United States since the victory of the Northerners in the civil war.

According to William James, "the knower is not simply a mirror floating with the foothold anywhere, and passively reflecting an order that he comes upon and finds simply existing. The knower is an actor, and co-efficient of the truth ...Mental interests, hypotheses, postulates, so far they are bases for human action—action which to a great extent transforms the world— help to make the truth which they declare. In other words, there belongs to mind, from its birth upward, a spontaneity, a vote. It is in the game". (MENAND, 2001, 222)[1] They have shaped a society focused on the capitalist productivism, and the perspective regarding individuals was that they were anonymous parts available to the development of a country focused on the economic expansionism. The growth of cities and populations of urban centers demanded an increasing concern about how to involve these populations that invaded the academy and the State, in the sense of finding mechanisms able to avoid disruptions on the capitalist production system and on the traditional bipartisan policy. The Parson an functionalism was the most striking example in response to that concern. It was important to correct the dysfunctions of the functional subsystems connected to the machine in order that the social system could operate undisturbed.

It was spread on the American academy that mass culture was something positive, as it offered the universal access to culture, that was previously restricted to an elite. This culture should be disseminated by educational centers to a population of very low training. The mass media were not the disseminator of this culture, but the instrument to serve as a safety valve to offer some rest and recreation for individuals exhausted after 8 to 10 hours of work per day. The programming types did not disseminate culture that was restricted to the elite, but popular programs, comedies, news, dramas and advertising. The media acted as the State, industry and entertainment culture spokesperson, fulfilling the purpose of relieving individuals of tensions of exhaustive working hours and, at the same time, receiving their obedience, approval and pride to belong to the American nation. The perspective of the concept of mass nullifies the individual singularity, the capacity of the individual realize new interventions in the social process and denies the power of creative participations. Such things are a brutal contradiction if considered that the historical events, as the Declaration of Independence of the United States of America, of July 4, 1776, which established the right to "life, liberty and pursuit of happiness", inaugurated the era of revolutions[2] and inspired Republican movements in Europe, such as the French Revolution in 1789.[3]The United States was the cradle of the concept of freedom of speech, democracy, civil rights and of the modern concept of citizenship. Contradictorily, it was also the birthplace of the concept of mass society and mass media. It was the creator of a messaging system deprived of cultural value to large audiences, without attending the needs and interests of different ethnicities, nationalities, communities, sectors and social groups that composed the North American society.

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[1]According to toMenand, "what changes in American life made pragmatism seem to some people the right philosophical utensils for a few decades after 1898? Though the immediate outcome of the Pullman boycott was disastrous for labor, Dewey and Jane Addams had been right when they predicted that the episode would eventually be seen to mark the obsolescence of nineteenth-century economic arrangements. The year James introduced pragmatism was also the year the American economy began to move away from an individualist ideal of unrestrained competition and toward a bureaucratic ideal of management and regulation.(…) The state began assuming a role in economic affairs". (MENAND,2001, 226) He highlights that "Dewey was no friend of industrial capitalism, but he was not under the illusion that it was about to go away. His strategy was to promote, in every area of life, including industrial life, democracy, which he interpreted as the practice of "associated living"—cooperation with others on a basis of tolerance and equality"(MENAND,2001,228)

[2]According to H. Arendt, " The modern concept of revolution, inextricably bound up with the notion that the course of history suddenly begins anew, that an entirely new story, a story never known or told before, is about to unfold, was unknown prior to the two great revolutions at the end of the eighteenth century. Before they were engaged in what then turned out to be a revolution, none of the *The Meaning of Revolution* actors had the slightest premonition of what the plot of thenew drama was going to be. However, once the revolutions hadbegun to run their course, and long before those who were involvedin them could know whether their enterprise would endin victory or disaster, the novelty of the story and the innermostmeaning of its plot became manifest to actors and spectators alike. and its thinkers the model of a parliamentary monarchy, with the presence of representatives of the society defending its interests to the State. "(Arendt, 1990,28-29)

[3]One must consider the British civil wars between 1640 and 1649 and the great influence over all Europe and its thinkersto define the model of a parliamentary monarchy, with the presence of representatives of the society defending its interests to the State.

In Western Europe, the concept of mass was used by the Frankfurt School, in studies of critical theory, with a pejorative and negative connotation, as evidenced by the writings of Adorno and Horkheimer in the classic *Dialectic of Enlightenment*[4], where they denounced the fact that individuals no longer had the ability to use reason, they were bestialized, they became a cog in the wheel of capitalist industrialism, therefore they were nothing more than an amorphous mass of human beings unable to think and act according to their own judgment on the facts of reality. They were confined by the industrial system and the capitalist ideology. They became prisoners of instrumental reason and mentally mutilated. However, the use of mass concept in Europe dates back to a time before the nineteenth century, with the growth of cities in several European trading regions. As from the sixteenth century, the cities were placed near the courts - an advantageous position for trade and military defense –and they were already very populous, between 100,000 and 250,000 inhabitants.[5]As a city population was formed, opposed to an established aristocracy, it was created the pejorative perspective of naming this emerging population as mass, which appears frequently in literature and newspaper reports since then. It is clear that economically dominant castes and learned aristocratics rejected poor illiterate people, who came and were expelled from the rural areas, in search of better conditions of life and work. Nevertheless, highly relevant thinkers, such as Bernard Shaw and Bertrand Russell, among others, in the same period, focused their concerns on the new emerging industrial society from other perspectives, according to which an active perspective regarding the participations of individuals prevailed, as, for example, the Fabians in England – an intellectual society of great importance, founded in 1884, with the goal of reconstructing the British society, based on a competitive and democratic system to ensure the social welfare and happiness. The economic and political foundations formed over the years the state of welfare and the Workers Party, with socialist aspirations, that lead to the victory in 1945, with the election of 394 members to the House of Commons and his Prime Minister, Clement Attle. Its economic and political influence continues in the foundations of the legislative of the British State. It also influenced the formation of the independent colonies States. (FREMANTLE, 1960)

The Mass does not Exist

The fact is that, from a scientific point of view, in analytical terms, the concept of mass is completely inoperable and it is an opaque wall that hides fundamental attributes of the public of media messages and prevents the understanding of complex interactive processes that occur between them. The argument that it is a large-scale diffusion does not justify the use of the term because the concept of mass ignores the process of reception, which is quite complex and differentiated. In addition, it is extremely naive, inept, arrogant and disrespectful, to appoint individuals as mass. It is important to note that arguing that it is a matter of large-scale production does not imply that the media products are equally assimilated, it does not clarify neither how they are absorbed and incorporated by individuals nor the impact on their lifestyles. The concept of mass does not allow any form of empirical analysis about the process of reception of media products, simply because it is not possible to eliminate, in an empirical form, the 'mass'. There are no scientific criteria able to limit the attributes, characteristics, space and time of the mass concept. It is, in fact, an ideological concept of common sense, without any scientific basis.

The concept of mass ignores the singularity, the ability of action and unique thoughts of individuals, the specificity of their existential trajectories and social networks, cultural and political movements, and their experiences. It is a mistake to subsume or to assume a supposed centrality of the media in shaping the sense of reality of individuals. As said Raymond Williams, the mass are the others but me. The thoughtless use of the concept of mass media agrees with the perspective of seeing society as a mass society, with the theoretical constructs to which they belong and go back to time. Nowadays, it is no longer permissible to work with these categories, as extremely relevant events occurred during the twentieth century and have occurred in this twenty-first century that increasingly reveal the importance of specific negotiation of groups and sectors, of individuals who have changed the network of social relations and social systems. The Second World War had a major impact on the progressive illusion of technology. In the 1960s, the most significant cultural and political movement was seen. It revolutionized the imposed old models of behavior and thoughts about family, sexuality, gender difference, ethnicity, education, politics, human and civil rights.

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[4]Especially, the essay "The Cultural Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception." (Horkheimer, Adorno, 2002, 63-93)
[5]According to Mumford, "London had 250,000 inhabitants, Naples, 240,000, Milan, more than 200,000, Palermo and Rome, 100,000, Lisbon, home of a large monarchy, more than 100,000 inhabitants, similarly, Seville, Antwerp and Amsterdam; while Paris in 1594, had 180,000 ". (MUMFORD: 1973 386)

It caused huge changes in the fundamental structures of society.[6] It is embarrassing to note that Adorno watched the cultural revolution of the 1960s and refused to participate, interpreting it as a savage movement. Meanwhile, Raymond William embraced it and took it to Cambridge; he debated pop culture, the culture of media, to the horror of his peers. The struggle for rights of equality for blacks and whites in the US was another relevant movement, as well as the labor movements of trade unions throughout the West, forcing the capitalist system to have more flexibility about rules of work and rewards to workers. These and other movements were fueled by individuals able to think critically the society in which they lived, able to mobilize and to interfere in the social process, leading to changes in the structures of social systems, cultural, social, political and economic. They were not anonymous, isolated, atomized, uneducated, lost and stunned individuals, neither an amorphous mass. They changed the whole way of thinking and acting of society and they created conditions for individuals to increasingly impose themselves in their social environment.

With the development of new communication technologies, starting with cable television, the way for growing a discursive plurality was opened. Specialized channels in a variety of issues, diverse life experiences of other regions of the country and the world, perspectives on the history, culture, art, world conflicts, ways of existence and thoughts that were never seen before led to a profound process of dispossession and relativization of the experience, creating new identity processes that began to cross national borders, classes, genders, ages, locations, ethnicities, and others. The increasingly expressive presence of the individual seen after the notions of deterritorialization and interactivity, is an important element in the formation of the contemporary identities, notions of individual and citizenship. The experience of individuals from different regions of the world has become a subject of media interest, explored in documentaries, reality shows and many kind of programs, creating an endless variety of productions regarding the diversity, otherness and difference. The private life of the individual hitherto anonymous became an object of public interest and it created a process of strengthening new identities generated in this emerging cultural environment. The division between fiction and reality became diffuse. Most part of the programming of many television channels are based on real experiences of individuals and they are an endless source, as each individual is unique and such uniqueness feeds curiosity about otherness, about a different life.

In this context, the anonymous individual participates in the identity media process in the same level of scientific authorities and the artistic and political celebrities. Something beyond the classical notion of deterritorialization occurs, more than virtual contact, Something beyond the classical notion of deterritorialization occurs, and it is more than virtual contact. The individual participates in such things and interacts with them in his daily life. It results in a more complex form of self construction, in which the results do not necessarily imply a cultural hybridization. Also, it unveils environments, scenarios and experiences of contemporary cultural patterns related to the way the receptors experience them. This reveals a number of new variables in order to understand the formative force of such standards, as these variables participate in the negotiations of meaning and transformation of these standards.

Individuals are extremely complex and unique, and therefore not likely to be understood in terms of mass or generically. Neither the fact that two million Internet users access an online video clip leads to the conclusion that they constitute a mass, nor the fact that three billion individuals followed the news about the World Trade Center attack, in New York, allows to call them a mass. It is just a meeting of a large number of individuals around an event. They should be understood paradigmatically through persistent relations that they establish between them and a group and the relations that these occasional links establish between them. The anonymous and unknown individual exposes him or herself increasingly in public in the most different ways, such as the particular way of interacting with the world, or ways of forming values and finding solutions to deal with social life.

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[6]According to Eric Hobsbawm, "the cultural revolution of the end of the twentieth century can thus be better understood as the triumph of the individual over society, or rather,the break ofthe threads which in the past had woven human beings into social textures. For these textures that consisted not only in the relations between human beings and their forms of organization, but also in general models of these relations and the expected standards of behavior of people with each other; their roles were prescribed, although not always written. Hence the insecurity often traumatic when old behavior conventions were torn down or lost their reason; or the misunderstanding between those who felt such loss and those who were too young to have known anything but the anomic society. "(HOBSBAWM 1994, 328)

Anonymous and unknown individuals become increasingly more concerned with the public sphere in the most different manners, such as the particular ways of interacting with the world, or ways of forming values and finding solutions to life in society. The new technologies have freely on the uniqueness of individuals to create new products and new virtual communication platforms. The major perspective of the US mass communication research uses the concept of mass in a contradictory way. In a recent book by Richard Harris and Fred Sanborn, there is a definition of mass communication that asks "what makes mass communication 'mass'?" And the authors reply, First, the audience is large and anonymous, and often very heterogeneous.(Wright, 1986) Groups of individuals can be targeted, but only with limited precision". (HARRIS, SANBORN, 2014)Now, if the audience is heterogeneous and difficult to define, this implies a high degree of complexity, therefore it is not only mass society. This would be enough to not use the concept of mass. However, the authors bring up other attributes, now anchored in the magnitude of far-reaching communication structures, by stating: "communication sources are institutional and organizational (Wright,1986). Some, such television networks (...) or the conglomerates that own such businesses are among the largest and richest private corporations. Third, and perhaps most importantly, the basic economic function of most media in most nations is to attract and hold as large an audience as possible for theadvertisers (…) The size of the audience in turn determine the content."(HARRIS, SANBORN, 2014) It is impossible to deny the transnational scale achieved by large communication systems, but this does not imply that the reception of their products should be homogeneous or should have impacts that surpass other dimensions of everyday experience of individuals. Another definition more simplistic and clarifying of the use of the concept of mass comes from the authors Roger Wimmer and Joseph Dominick when they say "What are the mass media? The term *mass media* refers to *any form of communication that simultaneously reaches a large number of people, including but not limited to radio, TV, newspapers, magazines, billboards, films, recordings, books, and the Internet.*" (WIMMER, DOMINICK,2011,15)

Denis McQuail defends the mass media saying that "whatever changes are under way there is no doubting the continuing significance of mass media in contemporary society, in the spheres of politics, culture, everyday social life and economics. In respect of politics, the mass media provide an arena of debate and a set of channels for making policies, candidates, relevant facts and ideas more widely known as well as providing politicians, interest groups and agents of government with a means of publicity and influence. In the realm of culture, the mass media are for most people the main channel of cultural representation and expression, and the primary source of images of social reality and materials for forming and maintaining social identity. Everyday social life is strongly patterned by the routines of media use and infused by its contents through the way leisure time is spent, lifestyles are influenced, conversation is given its topics and models of behavior are offered for all contingencies." (McQUAIL:2010,12) First, there is no conceptual rigor at the use of the term mass communication as, the author uses, with the same meaning, the terms mass media, mass media institutional, media, old media, institutional communication, as if they were equivalent, but they are not. This lack of conceptual rigor is symptomatic of the absence of a more solid theoretical and sociological basis that should justify the concept of mass. There is always the same perspective of the one-way flow of messages that shape individuals and determine their behavior and way of thinking, in other words, the theory of hypodermic needle did not die yet.

It is correct to mention that the wide range media and also the regional media, especially the Internet, are important reference sources for individuals to shape opinions and make decisions. The media is relevant for citizenship. However, the spectrum of variables that influence it overcomes the media. Individuals have a network of private relationships (family, friends, peers for particular activities) and public (work, companies, associations, communities, etc.), in addition, they have to deal daily with overcoming real problems related to finances, health, work, study, family relationships, moral, and others, problems that challenge them to reflect and make themselves as subjects and problems for themselves all the time. These problems are always challenging them to reflect and to position themselves as individuals. In addition, they live in a risk society that emerged from the side effects and threats cumulatively produced by the industrial society. It forges a "reflexive modernization" throughout society - where it faces threats not absorbed by industrialism and the classical model of industrial society, whose progress icons are capital, technology and the market – becomes reflexive itself.[7]

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[7]According to Beck, "'reflexive modernization' means self-confrontation with the effects of risk society that cannot be processed and assimilated in the industrial system" (Beck, Giddens, LASH, 1994 16)

(BECK, GIDDENS, LASH, 1994) In this reflexive process individuals develop critical skills, natural and new action, resulting from its successes and failures, of relations that they establish with the social network that they belong and the media influence they suffer. There is a huge gap between the concrete life of individuals, their real experiences and the stereotyped models presented by the media. As well defined by McQuail, "the symbolic content or message of mass communication is typically 'manufactured' in standardized ways (mass production) and is reused and repeated in identical forms. Its flow is overwhelmingly one-directional". (McQUAIL, 2010,52) In the real world, in real life, individuals deal with problems that are far beyond the thematic universe fantasized by the media and they have developed the full ability to identify the difference between these two universes, the media and the real life. The thesis of "huge influence" of "mass" media on individuals is completely wrong, it is even worse with the coming into play of the Internet and its increasing presence as a means for dialogue and interactivity, as an alternative source of information that the "mass" media does not show. The patterns and models created by the media no longer have the impact of the past. The creativity of thousands of new producers of information and trends in the network are gaining greater visibility and increasing the number of producers of ideas. As stated by McQuail, "while not directly supporting mass communication, the many new possibilities for private 'media-making' (camcorders, PCs, printers, cameras, mobile phones, etc.) have expanded the world of the media and forged bridges between public and private communication and between the spheres of professional and amateur. Finally, the new kinds of 'quasimedia', including computer games and virtual reality devices, overlap with the Media in their culture and in the satisfactions of use ". (McQUAIL,2010,40)New Media, the new communication technologies, break the flow of unidirectional far-reaching media and open the way for the voice of the people, for its proactive presence in society through interactivity, sociability, the contact with other individuals, communities and social, cultural and political groups with opinion-forming powers and relevant social action, inter subjectivity, where individuals are able to reveal their views of the reality, autonomy and independence of media systems in order to spread their intellectual and cultural productions. Moreover, new media offers entertainment for individuals according to elements selected and created by them, regardless traditional media.

McQuail recognizes that "the term 'mass communication' came into use in the late 1930s, but its essential features were already well known and have not really changed since, even if the media themselves have in some ways become less massive". Then, he paradoxically states that "the most obvious feature of the mass media is that they are designed to reach the *many*. Potential audiences are viewed as large aggregates of more or less anonymous consumers, and the relationship between sender and receiver is affected accordingly." (McQUAIL,2010,52) How to think a theory of mass communication that simultaneously recognizes the diversity of the audience and, at the same time, keeps the perspective of a potential audience seen as "large aggregates of more or less anonymous consumers"? This is a contradiction. In fact, the very notion of audience is correlated to mass concept. While the author acknowledges that the public has become less massive, he still insists on the perspective of the audience as a large aggregate of anonymous consumers. However, they are more than consumers. In addition, there is no media product that can be created without calculating well the target audience, there is no idea of a generalized dissemination, as the products are made for the specific public groups, and the same is true to advertisement. Even with the public profiles defined, the reception is different, because each individual has a unique life trajectory and incorporates in a unique way the messages received. In fact, mass communication research has never detached its interest from those of the State, the market and the huge communicative corporations. At the end what matters is how regiment and discipline human behavior and mind.

The study of the effects of mass communication in research tradition is related to the concept of audience in reference to the message receivers. According to the definition of McQuail "the audiences for mass media are much more diverse, in terms of content available and the social behavior involved. There is no element of public assembly. The audience remains in a state of continuous existence, rather than reforming occasionally for specific performances. The mass-media audience attracts a supply of content to keep it satisfied instead of reforming in response to some periodic performance of interest."(McQUAIL,2010,328)In general terms, the concept of audience does not differ from the concept of mass. However, in practical terms, researches recognize the social diversity and it focus the goals on measuring tastes, opinions, uses and gratifications, behaviors, motivations, new needs, thought control, and others. Methodologically, studies (generally with manipulative interests) on the effects and impacts of mass media, based on stimuli models and answers, do not consider the social network of individuals and have short-range results, in general available to the industry and social and political interest groups.

In the context of the social sciences, there is a certain diversity of methodological trends, but unfortunately the prevailing view consists on the use of the concept of mass, audience, and seeing individuals as receptacles of external stimuli. The methodological problem of research in mass communication lies in the fact that the goal is always, ultimately, to find answers, products, messages that can be interesting to wide-ranging audiences. It is a method available to large media corporations, but not to individuals, and in the opposite direction to the contemporary cultural identity process. With the advent of new technologies and the formation of new social networks, there is a growing trend to pulverization, immense diversity of cultural niches, and a factor that transcends barriers of nationality, ethnicity, gender and class, among others. The way individuals relate to culture and politics is no longer a simple system of consumption, it is a valuable process with symbolic meaning. Individuals embody these singular values and authenticate differences; they are formed of commitments and identity ties that may be more or less durable, convertible and capable of integration with other values. The important thing is that identity relations and continuous reciprocity between individuals prevail; and the media cultural goods play a secondary role. It is the relational value that prevails on the exchange value.

Understanding the contemporary cultural process and the role of the media should be an inductive movement, which should begin with the recognition of the complexity of the contemporary cultural process and the complexity of each individual. The understanding of contemporary communicative practice, either of the products created by communication systems or the reception modes and legitimacy of their representations of reality, starts with the perspective of inter subjectivity established by the members of a group in order to allow the introduction and development of real, emotional, physical and spiritual relations. Such relations develop in the world of everyday life and lead to reciprocal identities exchanges, values sharing, unification of wills, concrete actions in common that generate a collective subjectivity with collective intentionality. The result of our action in common is an achievement that we have attained together, in a cooperative and intentional way. However, what is conceived generically as mass configures itself increasingly as a broad spectrum of propositions about the contemporary experience, from the individual privacy until the functioning of social institutions. It is closely associated with new semantic and explanatory fields, in which notions, such as reflexivity, otherness, difference, identity, hegemony, risk, ontological security, consumer and community, tend to explain more clearly the proposal and dynamics of these productions.

Haber as associates the emergence of a "*temporal consciousness*" that opposes modern and old and inaugurates a historical process of the conception of life, and its horizon is a future that cannot be predicted.[8]Essentially, reason defines modernity in the present and in an uncertain future. It is the support for the exercise of criticism and for the foundation of a humanity that seeks self-comprehension, creating the rules. This movement led to the differentiation of spheres of knowledge - science, morality and art - and it is within it that one can find the foundations for the institutionalization of communication structures. The exercise of criticism, the subjective judgment of facts and opinions, the self-update demanded by the movement of the historical process are required of the public that forms the communicative public space. If the principle of subjectivity is at the heart of modernity, it is also present in the communications institutionalization as a mechanism that compels individuals to seek in themselves critical resources for their autonomy and self-determination. The media institutions assume this process of critical intervention about the world, starting by the subjectivity that might stay autonomous when facing "a world of life that loses in a disturbing way its traits, transparency and loyalty." (HABERMAS, 2001, 172) The communicative speech evokes criticism and the subjective judgment on background elements that occur in uninterrupted and unpredictable transformations. The media institutions are, therefore, modernity's own creations, anchored in the public use of reason.

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[8]According to Habermas, "the story is then experienced as a comprehensive process of generating problems - and time, as a scarce resource for the control of these problems that are postponed." (Habermas 2001, 169)

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