

**Divna Vuksanović**

Faculty of Dramatic Arts in Belgrade  
Belgrade, Serbia  
vuksanovic.divna@gmail.com

# Philosophy in the Time of Media and Technological- information Madness

## **Abstract**

*From the point of view of the philosophy of the media, the text problematises the possibility and practice of thinking (self-awareness) in the time of media domination and the rule of technological-information 'madness'. Also, in the background of the presentation plan, the article touches on the critique of the so-called media-based capitalism; it confronts the concept of 'madness' that we encounter under the veil of activity of the rational (instrumental) mind and modern media on the one hand and the thinking subject, his theoretical and practical possibilities, on the other. All this is demonstrated on the example of the (mis)use of artificial intelligence in modern media, which most often acts on social networks through two phenomena: the 'epistemic bubble' and the 'echo chamber'. Based on the performed analyses, it is shown that the philosophy of the media, as an interdisciplinary oriented, theoretical critique of the media and mediated reality, has the opportunity and obligation to position itself towards technical inventions such as artificial intelligence used in the media, thus contributing to self-awareness and practice, both of the own discipline and of the social community in which the philosophy of the media critically participates.*

**Key words:** *philosophy of the media, artificial intelligence, social media, madness, capitalism.*

*'Anyway, so nobody wanted to read about capitalism.'*

Shoshana Zuboff

Each period, directly or indirectly, re-examines its own 'philosophy', and it would be desirable for its philosophy to reciprocate, provide a problem and critical review of the relevant topics of the contemporary period. The philosophy of the media, as a discipline which in essence examines the relation between philosophy and the media, is increasingly moving towards the focus of attention because of the fact that our period is to a great extent intermediated by technology, that is, mediated. As a result, some philosophers dare to claim that we live in a media-supported capitalism, or even more radically, in a media-based capitalism.<sup>128</sup> Regardless of whether we interpret philosophy through the prism of dialogue and dialectics, monadology and geometrics or as a mirrored and reversed world, it becomes clear to most interpreters that philosophy today navigates the meanders of media culture, which, as it seems, significantly influences the direction of its further development. Even if philosophy as such does not know anything or worries too little about it, there is the philosophy of the media to open the door wide to possible discussions in the domain of this issue. In addition, as the philosophy of the media, as everything else, cannot develop abstractly, in a vacuum, it needs to follow the developmental flows of science and technology, which, given that they are the core of contemporary mediatisation, have a significant impact on huge social transformations that we witness today. In other words, philosophy of the media is the area of thought that needs to communicate to us the so-called 'news from the unconscious' as is usually colloquially put in these parts. In case of the media, it needs to be the self-awareness of the philosophy, the road sign that reveals the direction of the development of philosophy in the today's time; in this task it is surely not the only one, but it is important for the survival and relevance of philosophy in our time.

What is the environment of today's philosophy? It is, namely, claimed that we live in the era of the so-called post-truth, both in the media and in social communities<sup>129</sup>, which have, as it seems, sprung from 'grand narrations' (Lyotard), to which we also count the truth. We need not be especially

128 Let us be reminded, in this context, of theoretical efforts by Frederic Jameson to adapt the traditional Marxist postulates to the spirit of new times, although the author himself failed to show much interest in thematising the problem of the media. In the introductory chapter of the article *Marxism as Criticism*, which tackles Jameson's contribution to contemporary critical theories of society, his (Jameson's) special role in the adaptation of traditional Marxist theories to the challenges of new times is underlined, underscoring the possibility of applying criticism (the so-called dialectical criticism is always, as Jameson claims in his paper *Marxism and Form*, holistic and totalistic) to the media-based capitalism in the post-industrial era of social and economic development. See Vuksanović, Divna: *Medijske egzistencije: Postindividualizam i imaginacija [Media existencies: Postindividualism and imagination]*, in: *Zbornik radova Fakulteta dramskih umetnosti br. 8, 9 [Collection of works by the Faculty of Dramatic Arts, No. 8 and 9]*, Institut za pozorište, film, radio i televiziju Fakulteta dramskih umetnosti u Beogradu [*Institute for theatre, film, radio and television of the Faculty of Dramatic Arts in Belgrade*], Beograd, 2005, p. 376.

129 Social communities that are characterised by the state of post-truth are, in short, described as follows: 'Society appears to be experiencing a moment when truth, norms, rules and traditions cannot be relied on as the currency on which to base decisions for the future. The consequences of the post-truth society are as palpable as a sense of helplessness, ambivalence and nihilism. Datafication, mass surveillance, technology platform capitalism and the failures of participation appear to be as much to blame as an increasing reliance on emotions to construct meaning.' From the article: 'What is the Post-truth Society?' at: <https://connectedlearning.edu.mt/challenges-of-the-post-truth-society/> accessed on 11 January 2022.

reminded of the fact that philosophy was, so to speak, always connected to the subject of truth, however it might be interpreted. Nevertheless, since the appearance of post-modern thinkers to date, the truth in philosophy has become a different matter; not only has it been dethroned and then relativised, but it has been pushed far to the background by other interests, connected predominantly to language and its derivatives. In this sense, we may ask how language is possible without truth and answer right away – it is already there, present, both in the media and in the domain of initial reality, that is, in the era of the rule of post-truth, of hi-tech capitalism and artificial intelligence (AI). In the contemporary era, influenced by capitalism and new technologies, human beings are modified, social communities are modified, so why would not the truth be modified: human beings use genetically modified vital organs from animals<sup>130</sup> or are even kiborgized, social communities have been sinking into despair, virtualisation and endless simulation chains, while the media promote manipulation as the ruling mode of communication, fake news, trolling, IT and cultural wars, echo chambers, etc. If the truth has thus far been an important stronghold for re-examining and establishing the relation to reality (media, social, ontological, etc.) its suspension removes the criterion for establishing what is real and what is an illusion ('aesthetic illusion'), which, in addition to other difficulties, leads to the problem of non-differentiation of the important from the unimportant, of the real from the illusory, the truth from a lie, etc. Such non-differentiations are very much like the delusions of a psychotic, since they have to do with beliefs that, in principle, do not generate facts, that is, the truth. This goes both for the so-called global media space as for individual social communities, as well as the citizens that participate in them.

Under these circumstances, the question is what happens to consciousness in the era that negates truthfulness as the relevant element of judgement. The answer needs, as it seems, to be sought in the old attempts of the IBM (short for: International Business Machines) to replace the consciousness of human origin with the collective consciousness of computer technologies. The evidence for this is to be found, for example, in the participation of this company in the World's Fair in New York in 1964. It was then that the Fair was opened to the public, its exhibition halls counting millions of visitors from around the globe in the next two years. In the words of Richard Barbrook: 'Every section of the American elite was represented at the exposition: the federal government, US state governments, large corporations, financial institutions, industry lobbies and religious groups.'<sup>131</sup> In a sentence, the exhibition was visited by almost all significant representatives of the social elite that shapes the (class) consciousness from above, that is, from the position of power, parallelly with manufacturing relations.

<sup>130</sup> See, for example, the most recent article *In a First, Man Receives a Heart From a Genetically Altered Pig*, in: *The New York Times*, 10 January 2022, at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/01/10/health/heart-transplant-pig-bennett.html?smtyp=cur&smid=fb-nytimes&fbclid=IwAR0WEJ8pZg6KF3K-1XcPJdrg75oSX86FB6XzehMRM4Z7pK2-Mae47KYiA9M>, accessed: 11 January 2022.

<sup>131</sup> Barbrook, Richard: 'The New York Prophecies: The Imaginary Future of Artificial Intelligence', pdf.

At this important event, in global terms, the IBM presented itself with a special construction supervised by the Finnish architect Eero Saarinen.<sup>132</sup> The strategy for the exhibition and at the same time IBM's business strategy had already then concentrated not so much on the sale of hardware but on anticipating the future of artificial intelligence: 'Rather than aiming to produce ever greater numbers of more efficient machines at cheaper prices, the corporation was focused on steadily increasing the capabilities of its computers to preserve its near-monopoly over the military and corporate market. Instead of room-sized machines shrinking down into desktops, laptops and, eventually, mobile phones, IBM was convinced that computers would always be large and bulky mainframes. The corporation fervently believed that – if this path of technological progress was extrapolated – artificial intelligence must surely result.'<sup>133</sup> In addition, at the exhibition in question, the IBM promoted something else, which, as the ideology of the future, ran through the filters of lack of understanding – the unification of (class) consciousness, its synthetisation into one, in the domain of artificial intelligence.

On this Barbrook said the following: 'At the 1964 World's Fair, the corporation's pavilion emphasised the utopian possibilities of computing. Yet, despite its best efforts, IBM couldn't entirely avoid the ambiguity inherent within the imaginary future of artificial intelligence. This fetishised ideology could only appeal to all sections of American society if computers fulfilled the deepest desires of both sides within the workplace. Therefore, in the exhibits at its pavilion, IBM promoted a single vision of the imaginary future, which combined two incompatible interpretations of artificial intelligence. On the one hand, workers were told that all their needs would be satisfied by sentient robots: servants who never tired, complained or questioned orders. On the other hand, capitalists were promised that their factories and offices would be run by thinking machines: producers who never slacked off, expressed opinions or went on strike'.<sup>134</sup> So exploitation would be preserved in the foundations of 'material' production, while class consciousness would be (Hegel-like) dissolved in one – the area of artificial intelligence. Barbrook's point was rendered in the same tone: 'If only at the level of ideology, IBM had reconciled the social divisions of 1960s America. In the imaginary future, workers would no longer need to work, and employers would no longer need employees. The sci-fi fantasy of artificial intelligence had successfully distracted people from questioning the impact of

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132 Seizing the opportunity to stand out offered by the fair, the IBM's bosses ordered a pavilion that would eclipse all others. Eero Saarinen, a renowned Finnish architect, oversaw the construction of the magnificent building, a white egg-shaped theatre, covered in embossed corporate logo pattern that was suspended high in the air with 45 metal rust-coloured trees. Beneath this memorable attractions there were interactive exhibitions glorifying IBM's contribution to the computer industry (...) As for the theatre itself, Charles and Ray Eames, the couple that epitomised the American modernistic design, designed the main attraction of the IBM pavilion: the Information Machine. After taking their seats in the People Wall with 500 seats, the audience would be lifted into the egg-shaped building. Once inside, the narrator would announce 'a magnificent multimedia show on the machines being exhibited at the IBM's pavilion being the predecessors of the conscious machines of the future'. Ibid.

133 Ibid.

134 Ibid.

computing within the workplace. After visiting IBM's pavilion at the 1964 World's Fair, it was all too easy to believe that everyone would win when the machines acquired consciousness ...'<sup>135</sup>

So what kind of consciousness are we talking about here? Can machines – in our case the media – be aware? First, let us be reminded of the fact that the notion of consciousness was until not so long ago reserved for human beings and their characteristics/potentials/powers, as well as for God, history, nature ... In recent times, that some theorists define by using the term 'posthumanism' or 'transhumanism' the notion of consciousness/intellect/ratio, and even sentiment is increasingly more often, as earlier said, associated with machines. However, judging by the origin of this so-called consciousness it may be concluded that it is, ultimately, the sprout of human ratio that strives to fight for status and autonomy from other iterations of consciousness we mentioned. The question 'floating' above consciousness defined in this way, which is in fact, humanoid in its origin, that is, secondary and derived, although has elements that qualify it as candidate among other types of consciousness, is a Kant's question in its essence. This means that it is practically impossible to designate something as consciousness unless it is not based on self-awareness, which must be able to follow each action (that consciousness performs). Does in this sense, the 'consciousness' of machines, that is, the media, have control over its action or is it in the hands of man, that is, of the capital? At best, the consciousness of machines (the media) is talked about in the sense of their recognition of internal and external environment, and if it is the case that computers, machines and the media are able to differentiate their environment, such consciousness is identified as 'being aware'. Although it is not a consciousness whose origin is biological, but artificial, under certain conditions, some researchers think, such machine behaviour may be characterised as (self)awareness.

Still, the issue of recognisability of (self)awareness of machines, that is of a 'sign' (Kristof Koch)<sup>136</sup> continues to be raised, that shows that systems at hand are not only intelligent but aware, that is, self-aware. In the context of such quest for solutions, contemporary IT experts are trying to establish criteria for testing machines that could bear the name 'conscious machines'. This gave rise to the idea of developing a 'system of procedures' to examine the characteristics of machines, primarily in order to examine their consciousness. It is interesting, however, that these procedures, as measures for assessment have taken into consideration also the 'body', that is, the anatomy of machines, as well as their communicability and self-recognition in the mirror, empathy, ability to lie.<sup>137</sup> This, in practice, means that they have recognised not only the body as the moment of consciousness

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<sup>135</sup> Ibid.

<sup>136</sup> Musser, George: *Consciousness creep*, AEON, 25 February 2016, at: <https://aeon.co/essays/could-machines-have-become-self-aware-without-our-knowing-it>, accessed: 13 January 2022.

<sup>137</sup> 'The most systematic effort to piece all the tests together is "ConsScale", a rating procedure developed in 2008 by the Spanish AI researcher Raúl Arrabales Moreno and his colleagues. You fill in a checklist, beginning with anatomical features, on the assumption that human-like consciousness arises only in systems with the right components. Does the system have a body? Memory? Attentional control? Then you look for behaviours and communicativeness: Can it recognise itself in a mirror? Can it empathise? Can it lie?', Ibid.

and vice-versa but what is more important – the relationship and interconnectedness between the consciousness and the body. This would, in an unusual way, at least when it comes to the media, mean that McLuhan's premonition that the medium (i.e. media structure/technology/configuration) is the message, has been realised. Moreover, now the consciousness or self-consciousness would be deprived of the body, in the organic sense of the word, and the 'relationship' between the body and the consciousness would resemble more a disconnection than to a connection. As a result, we would say that the case here is not of some autonomous consciousness of machines that think autonomously, learn and create content but of some non-physical and special, artificial creation that operates in the service of technological (media-based) capitalism. Seemingly autonomous, this consciousness is only an instrument of operation of other consciousnesses but without self-awareness, simply put – pure fiction or algorithm.

On the other hand, while IT experts and non-critically oriented post- and transhumanists favour evidence of the consciousness and self-awareness of machines, all human actions on the internet and other networks come down to facts (data). The entire media space became a place for the production, exchange and consumption of facts for the purpose of capital accumulation and profit making.<sup>138</sup> Simply put, humans are recognised by the consciousness of artificial intelligence, that operates in the media, only as data, and that act of recognition is interpreted precisely as evidence of intelligent behaviour towards one's surroundings – a symbol of machines. In other words, the algorithms of artificial intelligence are abruptly becoming self-aware, while the intelligent behaviour of people on different networks is interpreted as pure fact and not consciousness or self-consciousness; which is monitored and at the same time sold on the market for data.

This monitoring includes being monitored by machines in the literal sense of the word, by using advanced, so-called eye-tracking technologies that tracks the direction in which a person is looking, as well as the time during which a person's eyes are fixed at each segment of a computer monitor, which enables interest mapping; this is later used for forecasting, sale and exploitation of collected information. Last year, artificial intelligence was used for the first time to differentiate among emotional expressions on the faces of media consumers, which was predominantly applied in the educational system, i.e. during the so-called online classes.<sup>139</sup> Furthermore, it has been claimed that these technologies, synthesised into one are also increasingly used in following activities: "The importance of this technology should not surprise us because the movement of a person's eye can divulge exactly where their attention is directed, as well as how they feel. Many science and business disciplines use this technology

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138 Compare interview by Kavenna, Joanna and Zuboff, Shoshana: *Surveillance capitalism is an assault on human autonomy*, The Guardian, Friday 4 Oct 2019, at: <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2019/oct/04/shoshana-zuboff-surveillance-capitalism-assault-human-autonomy-digital-privacy>, accessed: 14 January 2022.

139 See Murgia, Madhumita: *Emotion recognition: Can AI detect human feelings from a face?*, Financial Times, 12 May 2021, at: <https://www.ft.com/content/c0b03d1d-f72f-48a8-b342-b4a926109452>, accessed: 15 January 2022.

today, from cognitive research and sociology to the automotive industry.<sup>140</sup> This means that like in many activities controlled by the media, in Hegel's terms, a slave – master relationship has been activated here, with people, increasingly becoming slaves to machines (which is currently the highest range of their consciousness), by being exploited as optical, emotional or any other data.

In the segment of the media, the time of Covid-19, has, for instance, shown that a large number of former truth-seekers in the media, that is, journalists, is replaceable, and that their activities, can allegedly, partly be carried out by artificial intelligence. This goes primarily for collecting and selecting data relevant for daily news or analysis. Software activities, that should substitute the work of journalists in mainstream media (MSM) and on interne portals, or upgrade it by providing fast translation services, photo authenticity verification, etc., have been used by the individual media, as for instance the Canadian Press, to strengthen their business policy during the pandemic and aid timely provision of information. Although it has been claimed, despite the fact that during the pandemic Microsoft alone has laid off a large number of journalists, that the role of artificial intelligence in the contemporary media is not to push out humanoid journalism<sup>141</sup>, we are witnesses of the transformation of this profession into something else – instead of the quest for truth, journalism, is increasingly transforming into PR arrangements, fact checking, etc., which opens up room for a widespread implementation of artificial intelligence at the service of implementing new business policies of media companies. The case here is that events are reduced to so-called facts, with the concept of truth being neglected in the interest of successful operation. So, when the future of journalism is at stake, Francesco Marconi thinks that it is turning into some kind of information science, and is, in this sense, closer to mathematical truth than knowledge belonging to area of social and humanistic sciences.<sup>142</sup>

From a common-sense point of view, the claim that the philosophy of the media, in addition to new communication technology also has to deal with madness sounds as nonsense. However, if the media as intelligent machines borrow our bodies and at the same time watch us, analyse us, communicate us, meet our wishes and needs, it is worth asking if the world of machines has gone mad or we have. In fact, many media platforms, especially in the era of the pandemic, became self-centred, that is focused on medical data on their users (data-centric platforms), which has been justified by saying that smart technologies take care of our health, both public and individual. In other words, these platforms are presented in the public as instances that create our future values, taking care of the health ecosystem, which, although non-physical, in the organic sense of the word, qualifies them

140 *Eye-tracking technology aiding navigation and other applications [Tehnologija praćenja očiju koja pomaže navigaciji i drugim aplikacijama]*, at: <https://hrv.sciences-world.com/eye-tracking-technology-assist-navigation-42190>, accessed: 15 January 2022.

141 Cf. Marconi, Francesco: *Artificial Intelligence and the Future of Journalism*, Columbia University Press, New York, 2020.

142 'Journalism is going through a process of 'mathematisation' and will eventually evolve into 'Information Science.' Marconi, Francesco: *How to interview algorithms without code?*, 22 September 2021, at: <https://fpmarconi.medium.com/>, accessed: 15 January 2022.

as intelligent and (self)aware. However, precisely these platforms are recognised by IT experts as physical in their origin ('human body is the biggest data platform'),<sup>143</sup> in the sense of human data that constitute them and constantly maintain them. And despite, allegedly, good intentions, Shoshana Zuboff, when speaking of the context of events, feels that, on the whole, this is a case of the unhealthy side of capitalism.<sup>144</sup> Not to mention that, in our opinion, capitalism, which promotes social inequality and injustice is a disease as such and that there are no reforms that could heal it in its essence, except deep-rooted and systemic, global changes, all of the above-said can be a reason to examine the technologically-supported madness of capitalism, which, among other things is reflected in monitoring and exploiting users, which in the case of social media, fall into one.

Here we will thus examine this media component (the moment of 'madness') linking it no less than to the influence of artificial intelligence on the area of media activity. Although, *prima facie*, it seems that thematising the penetration of artificial intelligence into the area of media interactions and social relationships is a dystopian discourse with no special link to philosophy, this should, nevertheless, be the topic of the philosophy of the media because it tackles those areas of examination that pose a real challenge in today's time. When it comes to madness, the question raised is what exactly it refers to, viewed in the context of the current relations between philosophy on one side and the media on the other. Traditionally speaking, technics and technology have been treated as neutral in value relative to their use in the context of social relations. How then could it happen that artificial intelligence in the media may be treated as a form of technically generated madness that has become characteristic for contemporary times?

Maybe it is, really, too early to say that artificial intelligence used in the media is to blame for certain types of depersonalisation and derealisation of social media users, which may be characterised as losing the ground beneath one's feet or to a certain degree, instrumentalisation and loss of one's mind. In the history of the media, as consumers have been falling more and more under their influence, it has been noticed that the so-called cognitive dissonance has arisen, i.e. an irreconcilable difference between reality itself and its perception through intermediation of the media. This speaks once again in favour of the fact that technology itself, unless misused is not to be held responsible for the existing 'media madness', but that this is rather an issue of a broader system in which the most different possible forms of madness are harnessed into capitalist manufacturing and social relations.

143 See the article by Pamela Spence on life sciences companies participating in the so-called platforms of care. Pamela Spence: *When the human body is the biggest data platform, who will capture value?*, 6 August 2020, at: [https://www.ey.com/en\\_gl/digital/when-the-human-body-is-the-biggest-data-platform-who-will-capturevalue](https://www.ey.com/en_gl/digital/when-the-human-body-is-the-biggest-data-platform-who-will-capturevalue), accessed: 14 January 2022.

144 '[In surveillance capitalism], there's nothing that they're doing that reflects what populations really want. Yeah, we want the search, but we're resigned to it because we have no choice. Give me a real choice. Let me revert back to my baseline values, where I don't have to put all this energy into hiding. That's what we really want.

I don't use the word ontology in this book because I don't want to just turn readers off with something that they can't understand, but I write about the ontology: it's supply and demand. And, supply and demand are supposed to be linked. But, right now, we have this kind of shadow falling between them. We're begrudgingly participating because they've got us trapped. This is not how it's supposed to be. This is not healthy capitalism in my view.' Möllers, Norma, Murakami Wood, David and Lyon, David: *Surveillance Capitalism: An Interview with Shoshana Zuboff*, March 2019, pdf.

First of all, it should be stressed that artificial intelligence as applied in the media, operating on the basis of the law of likelihood, represents, generally speaking, an occurrence intended to partially or fully replace human intelligence in the media, from the aspect of opinion, action and decision-making. The wide spectrum of its possible uses, ranging from creating agency news, announcing different TV shows, assisting in the selection and placement of appropriate media content, etc., all the way to abuse for the purpose of oversight (spying), blackmail and other forms of manipulation that are especially characteristic for the operating domain of the so-called social networks and the media, indicates that the activities of artificial intelligence have become widespread in the field of the contemporary media.

With regard to this, a simple question arises – how does artificial intelligence operate in the contemporary media? Up until recently, that is until the beginning of its more frequent use in the media, there was a belief that media content was created by journalists, artists and creative individuals and that decisions on its placement (broadcasting) was left to editors and that consumers noticed and experienced such content as a special type of answer to reality. The use of artificial intelligence in the segment of the so-called social media has changed things significantly – because, as users watch the media, now the media are able to watch, analyse, create content and learn from the users. The media perform such activities through intermediation of the so-called intelligent agents.<sup>145</sup> In reality, without our knowledge and consent, intelligent agents supervise and ‘steal’ our activities, cheating us into thinking that such ‘scanning’ is the so-called new normality to which we should get used to.

In addition to observing us and learning from our experiences, the new ‘generation’ media agents are programmed to be able to produce adequate media content and, as already mentioned, make autonomous decisions. In this way, artificial intelligence, with the help of agents, becomes not only the data ‘miner’ (collector) and selector, but also their creator, as an autonomous decision-maker. The latter certainly does not only have to do with technical decisions, it also implies the activity of decision-making in the ethical domain – be it an issue having to do with everyday life or with placed media content. In this way, among other things, human beings treated as facts, become a resource for exploitation, as is potentially, also the self-awareness of machines.

In our view, those are systemic changes in contemporary media that are not only technical in character, but these are main tendencies moving toward substituting all human behaviour with artificial behaviour. Of course, the media are not an exception, and the possibility of reaching moral decisions by artificial intelligence not only an issue of concessions in judgment but also in generating profit. For example, a database connected with ethical ‘training’, paves up the road to systems of artificial intelligence being trained for managing human values. So, for instance, the

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<sup>145</sup> In addition to the term ‘intelligent agents’, the following terminology variants are used – ‘rational agents’, ‘software agents’, ‘conductors’, ‘knowledge robots’ ‘software robots’, etc. For more detail see the short article ‘Šta je agent, a šta inteligentni agent?’ [What is an agent and what is an intelligent agent?] at: [https://razno.sveznadar.info/4\\_AI/Agenti/01-agenti.htm](https://razno.sveznadar.info/4_AI/Agenti/01-agenti.htm), accessed: 10 January 2022.

text under the name *Ethical AI Matches Human Judgements in 90 per cent of Moral Dilemmas*, stresses the importance of such challenges for machines, especially computer programmes, because in the future not only can they help people reach the appropriate decisions, but for some individuals this can become ‘a life or death issue’.<sup>146</sup> In short, rational agents, which at the same time may become agents for the majority of moral issues related to human existence, in certain situations may autonomously decide on key moral issues for human lives with potential margin of error of some 10 percent. It has also been envisaged that such programmes be put into mass use and be used for commercial purposes.

So, if artificial intelligence or its agents may be characterised as those artificially generated entities (in the media) that produce content or reach autonomous decisions in relation to received goals, it is clear that the future of the so-called new media may, to a great extent, be determined by their systemic use. Further, as for the issue of madness, we may sense that supervising media intelligence, with its sensors, likelihoods and assessment not only may cause uneasiness resembling paranoia, but that one is right to ask what is real and what artificially manufactured and what kind of rationality gathers our data, creates certain content for us and values, and finally, forms our behaviour both in the media and outside the media. In addition to the fact that ‘spending’ excessive time in the world of the media, as it is claimed, potentially leads to addiction and/or increases depression, delegating the functions of our thinking, creation, judgement to artificial entities in the media we risk ‘succumbing’ not only to the so-called digital dementia<sup>147</sup>, attention disorders or amnesia (which are here not diagnoses in the strict sense of the word, but allusions to the danger of the transformation of the human brain and neuron connections under the influence of the overall digitalisation from the 1980’s onward, especially when so-called digital natives are concerned (Prensky, *digital Natives*)), which are widely discussed among contemporary neuroscientists, psychiatrists and media psychologist, when the use of digital technologies is concerned such as smartphones, tablets, video games etc., but also to the relative or full alienation from reality and to inability to recognise the difference between the media and reality, which is enabled by the VR (*virtual reality*) technology (the example is the new network Meta, developed from Facebook) or artificial intelligence used in the media.

Madness, as already known, is not a static but a dynamic category. Disease too is not only a matter of individual existence but of the collective as well, but also of historical contextualisation. A sick society whatever we might consider under this syntagm, and the roadmap are Fromm’s

146 See: *Ethical AI Matches Human Judgements in 90 per cent of Moral Dilemmas*, at: <https://www.discovermagazine.com/technology/ethical-ai-matches-human-judgements-in-90-per-cent-of-moral-dilemmas>, accessed: 10. 01. 2022.

147 The notion of digital dementia (*Digitale Demenz*) was introduced by Manfred Spitzer in 2012. In addition to the book by the same name, notable articles in different journals, Spitzer held public lectures on this topic on different occasions. See, for example, the lecture: ‘*Digitale Demenz*’ im Zeitalter neuer Medien (‘Digital dementia’ in the age of new media), Louisenlund, 29 November 2014, at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E5EKy0x55L4>, accessed: 10 January 2022.

teachings on a sane society<sup>148</sup>, by definition also determines sick individuals. However, madness and mental disorders of today are not only the thing of social norms but also of the influence of the media and artificial intelligence on the sphere of social life and individual lives of today's people. In the context of deliberating the so-called media existences of which we wrote earlier, supplemented by the operations of artificial intelligence in the media, we can today speak of the deterritorialization of madness, which no longer 'attacks' either the individual or a particular society, or individual media, but all layers of human reality together, and analogous to the deterritorialization of the reality itself, that is, of its transfer, partially or in full, to the media reality.

In this reality, as already known, not only are there 'ordinary' media wars, but these deterritorialized wars also include artificial intelligence. The competition created in relation to the use of new information technologies in the media, such as AI but for commercial purposes (market wars) has gradually been transferred to media wars of greater intensity, which is primarily enabled by artificial intelligence. Some interpretations put AI in the centre of global wars in the media<sup>149</sup>, since some states continuously strive to incorporate best quality AI technology in the media for the purpose of generating added value and not just that. The financing of the development and the use of artificial intelligence in the media is also connected with military research and development of new communication technologies<sup>150</sup> that media follow, as consciousness of their own environment.

Further, as the feature of artificial intelligence used in the media or in general is, increasingly, its emancipation from people and independent decision-making and content creation, the question has arisen who and in what way directs its operation, and can it be directed at all, and of course, manipulated, which seems to be the *dictum* of the near future. In other words, this question requires researchers to seriously and thoroughly deal with the prevention of information wars that would be waged among artificial intelligences.

To understand what is happening in our environment, i.e. to take the necessary view, it is necessary to previously understand the basics of artificial intelligence in the media. In this sense, one of the tasks of philosophy of the media is to monitor the development of the contemporary media ambience and detect the exceptionally fast changes in it and then react to them in a problem-solving and critical manner. With this in mind, we will here explain two standard examples of how artificial intelligence operates in the social media, which show that some technical knowledge is required to recognise, and then possibly, put into question its, thus far, insufficiently examined and legally unregulated operation.

148 Fromm, Erich: *Zdravo društvo [The Sane Society]*, Naprijed, Nolit, Zagreb, Beograd, 1986.

149 Chawla, Vishal: *How The Mainstream Media Covers Artificial Intelligence (AI)*, 3 April 2020, at: <https://analyticsindiamag.com/how-the-mainstream-media-covers-artificial-intelligence/>, accessed: 16 January 2022.

150 Cf. Ibid.

The examples that are, let us say, listed in the latest theoretic works on the use of artificial intelligence in digital media and primarily on social networks such as Facebook, have to do with the new epistemic climate in which two phenomena arise: the epistemic bubble and the echo chamber.<sup>151</sup> This newly created ambient for digital interactions is interpreted through the prism of one completely conflict epistemology, which is a result not only of the failure of truth in the media but also of its replacement with the cacophony of different interpretations of reality in which science, politics, technology and citizens, that is, social media users participate equally, in global terms. This latest crisis of epistemology is characterised by new terminology that describes them. Disinformation dissemination in the media is mostly blamed on fake news, scepticism towards the scientific *episteme* became the main tool of 'post-truth politics', while the widening of political divisions is, allegedly, a consequence of unruly echo chambers, and all this arose in the context of the spread of the so-called infodemic.

An epistemic bubble is a media and social structure in which other relevant information have been left out from communication because of the operation of artificial intelligence, mostly accidentally. Such information sequencing by AI, viewed in the context of contemporary media, is a result of the use of artificial intelligence to individualise search results based on social groups to which the consumer of the media content belongs. Such selectivity increases the degree of likelihood that the relevant information will be extracted from search result, unless it is already known within the group. Therefore, the epistemic bubble, it is claimed, is an unstable structure that can easily burst when new information become available to users. Although the relevance of media content in practice does not coincide with what it is true, epistemic bubbles demonstrate the lack of what is important for communication exchange within a certain group, and this means that they remove us further from the truth that, actually, constitutes each *episteme*.

Echo-chamber is also a cognitive structure related to the activity of artificial intelligence within one social group gathered in a digital media space. In contrast to the epistemic bubble, in this social structure relevant information is actively excluded and discredited. Namely, members communicating in an echo-chamber most often share an extreme distrust of outside sources of information, while at the same time, mostly do not doubt the information coming from the group. In comparison with the epistemic bubble, here it is oftentimes the case that the very confrontation of participants in the group with facts and evidence is not sufficient to remove prejudice and disinformation and to dismantle the entire structure, in contrast it may lead to the opposite result – greater group homogeneity or cohesion.

Further, artificial intelligence used for the purpose of media content manufacturers in many ways simplifies the realisation of the communication strategy in an echo-chamber. In reality, the membership of an echo-chamber is often filled with AI agents (bot) trained to mimic human

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151 Nguyen, Christopher Ba Thi: *Echo Chambers and Epistemic Bubbles, Episteme*, Cambridge University Press, vol. 17, no. 2, June 2020, pp. 141-161.

group members, thus increasing the apparent number of like-minded persons, which enables the strengthening of mutual trust of the members of the echo-chamber. The task of AI bots is to copy social media posts, provide support through Like/Dislike/Subscribe mechanisms and simplify and vulgarise group conversation, with an aim to avoid active debate. In relation to human agents in the same role, artificial bots do not have constraints (customary, legal, ethic, religious). In addition, the number of available AI agents is potentially limitless. However, if there is something good that can arise from this, it is the revision of the *episteme* as static, and a return to the dialectic and truth that is not of a mathematic or scientific, but in the strict sense of the word, philosophic nature.

Having all this in mind, as well as the general trends in the development of capitalism, and thus connected – science and (media) technology, one of the more important tasks of the philosophy of the media would be to monitor the development and mixing (intermediation) of these tendencies; to understand them and set up a problem-solving and critical relationship with them. This, in reality, means that philosophy of the media should become – as in old times<sup>152</sup> – some sort of previous reflection or problem introduction<sup>153</sup> of the contemporary science, which, obviously, has no interest, potential or knowledge for comprehensive revision and self-reflection. This also means that today's science, mostly in cahoots with big money, non-critically following post- and transhumanism, as well as similar theoretic methods, in principle gives up self-reflection, carries out, mostly uncritically, tasks for political elites, the military and pharmaceutical industry, i.e. highly-profitable activities. Therefore, it seems that contemporary science in association with technology manifests madness, lack of restraint and insatiability of the appetite of the capital agenda, which it serves unconditionally, with partial or full lack of self-awareness.

Similarly, although not openly, as is the case with natural sciences, the same is true for most theoretic discourses in the field of social and humanistic sciences, and partly in narrower fields of, let us say communicology and different media theories. This, however, does not mean that the philosophy of the media takes the view of anti-science, advocating the return to mythical opinions, which has, also, become one of the leading trends of our time. To the contrary, by reflecting its subject, the world of the media, its history, status and role, activity and the relationship to itself and to reality and the public, consumers, users, owners, manufacturing structure, technology and finally, artificial intelligence as it is used in the contemporary media, the philosophy of the media speaks about itself, its dilemmas, problems and inadequacies it strives to overcome, worrying as much about its

<sup>152</sup> 'In order to research a science or scientific knowledge, every scientist previously needs to know what human knowledge is, what is its nature, what is its social function and its relationship with the social and manufacturing practice. The answers to these questions is provided by philosophy and different directions of philosophy give different answers to these questions. Therefore, each philosopher of science is forced to rely on certain philosophic views. Bearing in mind the development of contemporary science it is clear that each researcher may take as the subject of its research only one of its moments and therefore his or her deliberation is always partial; since philosophers of science belong to different philosophic orientation it is clear that they also have different views of science and this leads to insight into the existence of different methodological concepts.' *Uzelac, Milan: Istorija filozofije II: Istorija filozofije od Dekarta do Eugena Finka [The history of philosophy II: The history of philosophy from Descartes to Eugen Fink]*, Vršac, 2003, p. 460.

<sup>153</sup> Cf. Reichenbach, Hans: *Rađanje naučne filozofije [The Rise of Scientific Philosophy]*, Nolit, Beograd, 1964.

subject as about its own self-awareness, which makes it, we would say, considerably different from contemporary science, thus confirming its philosophical fundament.

In addition to its principal problem and critical orientation, the philosophy of the media is also a philosophical subdiscipline that has been opening up towards interdisciplinarity in order to include into its subjects of research reflection from those areas of knowledge that are not, at the first glance, related to it. This does not mean that the philosophy of the media is not critical in advocating media/or IT literacy or taking over finished, already prepared subjects of research that are then only scientifically 'processed' as pure scholastics, as is usually done in scientific institutes or institutions of high education, but it turns to skills and knowledge of robotics, virtual and extended reality, as well as artificial intelligence in order to better get to know the domain of its criticism. Although it is not necessary for the philosophy of the media to integrate knowledge from the realm of contemporary science (AI) and communication technologies, nor desirable for it to promote the values of profit and the ruling capitalistic paradigm, in order to be able to imminently criticise, the philosophy of the media needs to be interested in the media world around itself, that is, the media practice that arises in the real environment. And since the context of its research is also made up of the social-economic reality intermediated by technology, the philosophy of the media, immersing itself analytically in this context, abstracts from it, one, however possibly incoherent, but whole realisation, not only about what it realises but also about itself, thus opening up the path to both its own and comprehensive emancipation.

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# Filozofija u vremenu medija i tehnološko-informatičkog ludila

## Sažetak

Saopštenje iz ugla filozofije medija problematizuje mogućnost i praksu mišljenja (samosvest) u vremenu dominacije medija i vladavine tehničko-informatičkog "ludila". Takođe, u pozadinskom planu izlaganja, saopštenje se dotiče kritike tzv. medijski zasnovanog kapitalizma; suočavaju se koncept "ludila" koji susrećemo pod maskom aktivnosti racionalnog (instrumentalnog) uma i savremenih medija na jednoj strani, i poimanje mislećeg subjekta, njegove teorijsko-praktičke mogućnosti, na drugoj strani. Sve ovo demonstrira se na primeru (zlo)upotrebe veštačke inteligencije u savremenim medijima, koja na društvenim mrežama najčešće deluje posredstvom dva fenomena: "epistemičkog mehura" i "eho komore". Na osnovu izvedenih analiza, pokazuje se da filozofija medija, zasnovana kao interdisciplinarno orjentisana teorijska kritika medija i medijatizovane stvarnosti, ima priliku i obavezu da se problemski odredi prema tehničkim izumima kao što je veštačka inteligencija upotrebljena u medijima, čime doprinosi samovesti i praksi, kako vlastite discipline, tako i društvene zajednice u kojoj kritički participira.

**Ključne riječi:** filozofija medija, veštačka inteligencija, društveni mediji, ludilo, kapitalizam.



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