

ESSAY

Integrating a Normative Culture of Justice in Contemporary Mass Communication

Robert A. Montaña

University of Santo Tomas

ABSTRACT

Way back in 2004, Destileria Limtuaco released a billboard advertisement that portrayed a picture of their *Napoleon Quince* brandy with the tagline “Nakatikim ka na ba ng kinse anos?” (Have you ever tasted a 15-year old?). The double meaning it exposed, the other exploitative as it is, not only raised myriads of protest and dissent, it also led to the resolution of the Supreme Court (G.R. No. 164242) upholding the power of the Advertising Board of the Philippines to require clearance and impose sanctions on advertisements in accord with its code of ethics. While, legally, this issue already rests as *res judicata* inasmuch as the aforementioned case is the latest jurisprudence governing such board, the media as the fourth estate not only yields power politically, it subtly ventures into the moral realm, albeit subservient to the latter. In this perspective, this paper argues that as mass communication functions as a determinant of the nation’s symbolic heritage, it will simply be relegated to mere informative and persuasive media unless such be systemically integrated with culture imbued with normative justice. Conceptually, I would discuss the functions and dysfunctions of mass communication as a medium; the subtle utilization of such medium in ideological dissemination; the nature and variations in the understanding and applications of normative justice; and the *caveats* and possible avenues for the enculturation of normative justice in contemporary mass communication.

Keywords: *normative culture, mass communication, justice, culture industry, media ethics.*

Integrating a Normative Culture

Establishing a Normative Culture in Mass Media

The term “normative” is generally attributed to two things: first, it is understood in reference to any ideal or standard through which acts or customs are rendered as right or wrong; and second, it may refer to these customs themselves, making these stand out as observable and scientific phenomena by anthropology. As applied to justice, however, the first sense is applied. Viewed from this perspective, normativity becomes a characteristic of numerous concepts in various fields, yet such is rarely applied to culture; for the stability of the concept of norm collides with the variability of the dynamism found in culture. Thus, in the example provided in the abstract, we could surmise that the Code of Ethics of the Advertising Board of the Philippines was violated in the light of its general principle which states that “[a]dvertising has a social, economic, and cultural responsibility to the community and the advertiser's interest should take into account community interest.” The mandate for cultural responsibility, hence, is the subject matter of this paper, and I would argue that such responsibility requires the integration of normative justice.

Henry McDonald (1986, 1) opines that, like a man learning a new language acquires it in reference to his own, so too does the understanding of new culture is made possible by a “moving reference point” that gives sense and meaning to it – a normative perspective that transcends his personal preferences and standpoints. This, for McDonald, creates a pedagogical environment that goes beyond the analytic method, or in his words, non-empiric and non-theoretic, crediting Ludwig Wittgenstein for explaining that the meaning of words is not grounded on empirical objects but on contextualized norms. Hence, McDonald’s “dada” commercial (where a father offered fries to his daughter to win a look-alike contest with the mother) and one of Jollibee’s “I love you Sabado” (rewarding high grades with a visit to its outlet) were criticized as being against some cultural values that Filipinos traditionally hold, despite the seemingly harmless portrayal of innocence. On the other hand, McDonald’s “handog” (a touching tribute to parents) contains estimable cultural content in the same way as Jollibee’s “date” (where a dying father passes on to his son the responsibility to take care of the mother) esteems the perennial value of family love, spurring widespread admiration and acceptance. In these examples, it is apparent that the congruence of media content with the prevailing culture functions as a determinant of its overall value. For reasons such as these, and others, Denis McQuail (1985, 93) has observed that, aside from the fact that there are greater exchanges between the humanistic and scientific approaches to the field of mass communication, greater ground has been covered by cultural studies in this arena.

Robert A. Montaña

Integrating normative justice or establishing value-standards in mass communication establishes the field beyond mere transfer of information; actually, this linguistic interchange becomes a “para-social interaction” or, as corrected by scholars and noted by Mary Talbot (2007, 86), “social para-interaction” whereby the target audience feels that the exchange is personal despite the medium being mass-based. Being quasi-personal, it would be easier to pass on value paradigms as well. One of the characteristics of popular influencers and vloggers in YouTube, for instance, is their ability to connect to their audience, providing expressions as if they are speaking with their friends even though they are merely facing a camera while recording. Hence, despite the magnitude of audience reach, amounting to millions of views for some videos, such exchanges bear the resemblance of simple and direct phatic interactions between and among virtual friends and acquaintances. It would not be surprising then for the website *Social Blade* to include in its top ten YouTubers in the Philippines personalities alongside news and public-affairs services. Such personalities may not even be objective at all, as Talbot has argued that the notion of synthetic personalities in broadcast media has contributed significantly to media discourse despite possible tendencies towards confusion.

While these phenomena overcome obstacles to global unifications of hearts and minds, dangers lurk as to content that cater to the dark side of the human psyche. Following the words of George Gerbner (1958, 85), “content is the coin of communication exchange” - the positivistic content of which could be understood empirically through the critical lens of social science. Such perspective has led into his notion of cultivation in terms of research and theory, where one’s *weltanschauung* is molded by the holistic visual and audio media he or she is constantly exposed with. The fears initiated by urban legends such as the “Momo Challenge” could, like the Phoenix, rise to objective reality with all the dangers it poses to children.

These various viewpoints created correspond to mass communication as ritualistic as observed by James Carey (2009, 33), directed primarily towards the preservation of society in time rather than the mere handling out of disparate data. Based on this perspective, communication becomes a tool for societal development rather than as a mere avenue for entertainment. As a result, some scholars have advocated the utilization of functionalism in researches in mass communication, among them Joseph Klapper (1963, 516), for the reason that this methodology integrates consequences among sub-groups, including context in the analysis of descriptions – something which may not necessarily apply to holistic targets especially if these are heterogenous.

Integrating a Normative Culture

This further stems from the idea that the powers of mass communication *per se*, or in some cases, its ability to influence may actually be exaggerated as opined by Nugent Wedding (1975, 8). Functionalism, inasmuch as it analyzes from this viewpoint, has become one of the popular theories utilized to explain mass communication data, with Charles Wright as one of its more influential proponents as noted by Carl Patrick Burrowes (1993, 90).

In Wright's (1960, 610) master inventory chart – organizing hypothetical and inductively-established effects of mass communication – he interestingly included culture as transmitted content, functioning at the same time as a systemic recipient. In his partial functional inventory for mass communication, he noted that surveillance could aid cultural content and growth, while at the same time can permit cultural invasion; that correlation (such as editorial selection) could maintain cultural consensus, yet could weaken critical faculties leading to a dysfunctional impediment of cultural growth; that cultural standardization could reduce the influence of sub-cultures; and that entertainment could weaken aesthetics. The epistemological interplay between the *a priori* (from cause to effect) and *a posteriori* (from effect to cause) methods of reasoning as utilized by mass media could thus be applied to the latter's relation to culture both as a means that effectuate (whereby mass media is treated as a cause) and as a recipient (when such is considered as an effect) that is modified in a way that is either functional or dysfunctional. The media fiasco surrounding the Manila Hostage Crisis in 2010 is one example of such dysfunctional coverages, not only exposing the incompetency of the Manila Police in handling the negotiations and effectuating the assault, but also initiating a policy review by leading Philippine networks as to how they should report such situations without giving away the strategic advantages of policemen. On the sub-structural level, the corruption portrayed in the country's law-enforcement sub-culture is not only embarrassing, it may indirectly negatively infringe on other sub-cultures that are generally orthodox.

Yet corruption or meaningful change could only be attributable to mass communication within the context of Klapper's *Reinforcement Theory* understood through the phenomenistic method, where the media functions merely to amplify and augment the beliefs and convictions already present in subject, unless it advertently or quite intentionally introduces a novel element not already implanted by immediate influences provided by family, education, religious beliefs, among others. He (1957-1958, 470) further argues that if the interplay between culture and media could be interpreted in this light, then it can be characteristically circular where confluence occurs in both directions.

Robert A. Montaña

While there are criticisms that these immediate influences are no longer universally controlling in contemporary times, the fact that interest groups still exist, and that they interact globally through mass communication, media echo chambers are still being created, functioning as cultural redoubts with gatekeepers setting the parameters of information dissemination. We could surmise that the brink of hope extended by Klapper ought then to be extended towards the purification of content for these sub-groups inasmuch as this phenomenon may lead not only to the proliferation of extreme right and left political motivations, it may, at worst, lead to unabated terrorism.

Herbert Menzel (1971, 406) terms this interchange as “quasi-mass communication” since it stands between mass communication and individual exchange. Thus, any research involving such fusion ought to focus on the research gaps needed in between extreme forms of communication. Further, some may argue that extreme examples do not really present the entire array of reality’s kaleidoscope, so these fears may be likened to the mere chasing of shadows. In the middle of these, however, we could find issues that may not necessarily be alarming, yet these ought to be given due consideration – such as dumbing down mass media content - and when such reaches the level of glocality, it becomes appalling, nonetheless. This dumbing down is a natural consequence of the attempt of mass communication to be pleasing to as many audiences as possible, leading Frank Render (1965, 189) to aptly describe it as dealing “with the lowest level of comprehension,” or as Louis Wirth (1948, 10) characterizes it, an “appeal to... the least common denominator, to what is believed will interest the greatest number, if not everybody.” Given this, it would thus not be surprising that quasi-communication might turn out to be the solution to this dumbing phenomenon by establishing specialized channels that would cater to people having the same depth, such as monitored chat groups by philosophers or literary enthusiasts, cushioning the impact of intellectual loneliness. These speech communities create their own syntactical and semantic codes and establish their channels; and through these communicative modes, a unique culture is formed within each ethnographical circle.

One direct effect of the dumbing down of mass communication and quasi-communicative specializations is the filtering of media content. Social media anxiety, for instance, emanates from the notion that users normally post only the best instances of their day-to-day experiences, setting up the impression of perfect, successful lives – stimulating envy, or at worst, depression to those who are predisposed towards it. Yet, filtering has a multifaceted effect on the overall nature of mass media. In a study by Rudiger Schmitt-Beck (2003, 258), where the filter hypothesis was utilized to analyze the interplay between mass

Integrating a Normative Culture

communication and personal communication in voter preferences in selected countries in Europe and the United States, he concluded that while mass media is pervasive enough to alter decisions, personal communication indirectly moderates these leanings. While this finding can lend support to the *bullet theory* in mass media, it nonetheless also reinforces the notion that there are two actual steps in such a process, intermediated by opinion leaders or, in contemporary understanding, influencers.

Filtering, however, does not happen in vacuity. Factors that serve as occasions and those that function as causes create systemic structures that determine the directives on how content is presented in mass communication. Technological availabilities and costings limit the egalitarian objective towards universal access and control to this content. Charles Siepmann (2005, 59) explains that, in accord with the profit motive, media corporations subordinate public interest, stating that the unacceptable consequences of this practice calls for a return to the “good manners of communication” that has been the standard of cultural development. With controllers and recipients following various interests, activism has proliferated through quasi-mass communication channels where serious advocacies such as viral videos on corruption to light trending videos espousing different challenges had become a normal sight in social media, balancing opinions on various political and economic polarities, spiraling towards a form of simplistic entropy on the global scale as communicative barriers are taken down. Technological inventions that precede these communication forms are normally accepted as other household items as indicated by some diffusion studies such as the one undertaken by Melvin de Fleur (1966, 326), and thus we could surmise that there may not be major hindrances in the universal availability of these channels.

In this sorry scheme, the contemporary mind is thus flooded with disparate information that paradoxically leads to relativism, or worse, solipsism. The ontogenesis of the informative paradigm, corrupted by fake news, yellow journalism, and gossip, leads to the perversion of truth itself, spurring some to radically shift to digital minimalism by setting aside all technological influences in their daily living. In other words, the confusing effects of information overload has created the Neo-Luddite who attempts to reverse the adverse effects of technology in their lives. Hanno Hardt (1972, 182) avers that the tendency of mass communication to cater to contemporary demands actually hinders man in understanding his environment, making it difficult for him to provide solutions to his predicament, confining him to the “ambiguous world of chatter and curiosity.” There are still some responsible citizens, according to Raymond Wittcoff (1955, 325), who

Robert A. Montaña

would attempt to understand beyond information by relying on books inasmuch as these are able to conceptualize holistically. Having uttered this decades ago, such position is reaffirmed by some Australian schools who still prefer the printed over digital formats whenever deep comprehension of content is needed. In these contemporary times, however, I opine that it is no longer an issue of whether the analog is superior to the digital or vice-versa; we should, on the other hand, transcend the issue by understanding the strengths of each. Being able to digitally access myriads of books in one's smartphone is convenient, yet the health concerns associated with digital gadgets and equipment make their utilization feasible only when the difference is not significant. These reactions and counter-reactions to novel advancements prod communication research to interrelate these channels based on usage to content and target as variations transcend simple approaches.

These subtle rebellions do not always deal with dichotomies on technologies. Jeremy Potter (1976, 353) asserts that the battlefields can extend to the political milieu governing questions as to who ought to be the mass communicator; on whether impartiality could offer variety and zest to the industry; and as to whether the ideals of free speech in the face of myriads of responses clamoring for attention on the mass scale, among others. No less than President Rodrigo Duterte of the Philippines has charged the giant network ABS-CBN of such partiality, throwing doubt on whether all corporate media entities are really adhering to the idea of removing bias and discrimination on the selection of what goes on air. Whether the president is justified on this or not, it remains paradoxical that all complaints and apologetic responses, even on the network itself, would have to pass through its own approval processes. On the other side of the horizon is Congress, having the power to renew media franchises, it creates a power structure that can beneficially establish check and balance or detrimentally serve corporate or political interests against competitors that disregard weighted and proportionate truth. While we have seen honest attempts to development Public Service Broadcasting (PSB) integrations to corporate mass communication, as can be seen in the United Kingdom, globalization and marketing concerns have stimulated adaptation measures in its attempt to stay relevant in the digital sphere as observed by Paula Chakravarty and Katherine Sarikakis (2006, 106-107). The same thing is happening in the Philippines where government television networks suffer the same thrust towards irrelevance unless they hurdle the distrust emanating from the perception that they project mere propaganda, rather than air real public service.

Integrating a Normative Culture

These subtle introductions go beyond mere conceptual boosterisms; they go as far as integrating fusions of ideology into the minds of their target audience. It is for this reason that John Thompson (1988, 379-380) argues that mass communication ought to be a central concern for those engaged in the social sciences, functioning as an “ideological apparatus” and establishing a “culture industry” that promotes acquiescence rather than independent thinking. Yet the question arises as to how ideologies that take the form of imperatives could be subtly hidden in media language. We could surmise that these surreptitious integrations could come amidst “phrastic” (common grammatical mood) innocence yet creating a fusion with their desired paradigms of thought in terms of their “neustic” (grammatical mood indicator) imperatives, utilizing the terminology of R.M. Hare (1952, 18). Even revolutionaries such as Louis Althusser (2014, 160) were well aware of such puissance when he argued that ideological struggles through the mass media take place “very far in advance” of open political struggles.

There are, however, other dangers other than political and social manipulations; subtly inherent are tendencies toward violence, misguided sexual paradigms, and indolence – attitudes that dilapidate societal harmony much more than ideology. The role of communication is crucial in these developments inasmuch as it serves as a catalyst towards different directions, foremost of which is information that clarifies societal relations. It is from this perspective that Mitra Das (1981, 130) warned that “[c]ollective ignorance acts as an insurance against overthrow or challenge of a system no matter how unjust it [can] be.” On the other side of the coin, while communication veers its recipients away from such collective ignorance, conceptually injurious information to vulnerable groups can surreptitiously integrate itself even in entertainment media. This can happen especially through technologies that the young could easily manipulate. Alison Bashford and Carolyn Strange (2004, 96) explored the influence of the medical expert Norman Haire who published weekly columns on sex education in the Australian magazine *Woman* while simultaneously discussing such matters on radio. He noted that even though his written content is more sexually explicit compared to what he says on radio, censors during his time focused on the latter, corroborating Marshall McLuhan’s notion that the medium, rather than raw content, is the message. From this perspective, McLuhan (1964, 24) described the birth of the movies as “the moment that translated us beyond mechanism into the world of growth and organic interrelation.” Yet, this birth which McLuhan saw was just the passive aspect of media; there is presently a gradation of scope that proportionately establishes levels of interactions, blurring the lines between what can be considered as the mass, quasi-mass, and individual parameters of such media. The intrusion of violent content in media, for

Robert A. Montaña

instance, remains as a serious concern, and such magnifies into horrendous levels if the medium becomes a causal agent that produces a cultural propensity towards it. Herbert Hyman (1973-1974, 538) warns that in studies such as these, numbers do not really matter since social disorder can occur even if only a few persons (or children specifically) end up being violent due to social media, among others. Otto Larsen (1966, 37) notes that in scenarios of violence, critics play an important role inasmuch as they express discontent and play an intermediary role between the public and those in control of media. Despite these academic warnings of the past, violence and unrestrained sexuality continue to hound parents who wish to purify the content their children have access to, and for this reason, some applications such as *YouTube Kids* were programmed to cater to this moral demand. Without these seemingly futile attempts, the moral callousness produced by such media bombardment would inflict an irrevocable cultural damage to society at large. The findings of Bashford and Strange also indicated that the kind of media utilized could establish the reach, with some channels such as radio being more efficient than print. The enculturation of justice naturally adjusts to this, inasmuch as mass intent ends up being more apparent in more efficient modes. However, the speed through and in which this can happen depends on the existing modes of moral consciousness that are already in place.

The notion that mass communication is ritualistic; that it could be utilized as a dysfunctional medium; that research has established the confluence of media and culture; that such confluence occurs in different relational levels; that researches on mass communication ought to go beyond content towards the nature of medium itself; and that the advancement of technologies have magnified its ability to influence both positively and negatively in ideology and in entertainment, all call for the integration of normative justice towards societal balance without, at the same time, infringing on communicative rights already recognized and established.

Integrating a Culture of Normative Justice in Media as Message

This article opines that by delving into the traditional meaning of justice, the nuances in contemporary meanings could be set aside, exposing a basic commonality. While novel parlance would associate justice as the end of a procedural and due process, such a concept was initially established primarily as a virtue. Justice as a virtue has long been taught as a means by which societal balance could be effectuated, being aptly defined by the Angelic Doctor, St. Thomas Aquinas in the *Summa Theologiae* (IIaIIae. 58. 1c) as “the perpetual and constant will to render to each one his right.” Yet, the influence of market forces on mass

Integrating a Normative Culture

communication and media has raised the issue and the question as to whether content which is beneficial to human behavior is both financially and sustainably feasible. Edward Brawley and Emilia Martinez-Brawley (1999, 82) have appealed to concerned individuals and professional organizations to counter with social justice teachings the almost unending portrayal of crime, violence, and other sensational events. This poses a pedagogical hindrance especially in establishing a tipping point that would tilt towards such virtue amid competition with content that appeal to the baser instincts of man – the latter being more palatable to the common masses. It is from this perspective that Kurt Lang (1989, 404) has observed the three dimensions that led to the decline of classical education vis-à-vis practical learning – the strengthening of civilization's scientific base, democratization leading to the lack of recognition of hierarchies, and the global homogenization of economic conditions. With this paradigm shift, communication arts followed suit and modified content in accord with such quantitative and practical detours.

Despite this shift, however, Warren Breed (1958, 110) noted that certain values are nonetheless protected by media inasmuch as respect for it as an institution are affected by how they manage such concerns; hence, patriotism, justice, and even individual liberty are rarely infringed for various secular reasons. While this is admirable from one perspective, the lack of cultural or moral bases would make these actions contingently dependent on favorable circumstances since they do not directly emanate from convictions that are more stable. Thus, the challenge remains as to how to establish some form of epistemic stability in integrating such culture of normative justice in mass communication without compromising the forces already at work in such a field.

Based on the preceding considerations, I opine the following: first, that issues on justice involve and are similarly effectuated both through mass and quasi-mass communication, with blurred demarcation lines for both; second, that for justice to be enculturated into mainstream thinking, it would not be enough to rely on commodified market forces which normally form the basis of decisions for corporate media; and third, going beyond McLuhan when he (1964, 20) argued that “the ‘message’ of any medium or technology is the change of scale or pace or pattern that it introduces into human affairs,” it would not be proper to solely consider the medium in its technological sense as the sole efficient cause of normative justice as enculturated; yet, it nonetheless functions as an essential component for the universalization of a collectivized notion of individual commitments to uphold the virtue of justice.

The interplay between the real and the rational mean to put balance in the exercise of justice – as taught by Aristotle and the

Robert A. Montaña

Scholastics – expose the effect of epistemic paradigms as these interpret facts that need to be determined rationally; and it can be observed that the influence of the medium in how media content is processed follows the same pattern. Hence, a parallelism could be seen in the fact-interpretation and in the content-delivery paradigms of exegesis and media exposure, respectively. The proliferation, for instance, of viral videos on street misdemeanors in Facebook reflect the power of participatory commentaries that condemn these acts; or even the extensive use by President Trump of Twitter preempts mass media in exposing any upcoming political policy of his administration. Yet the issues here go beyond content; rather, they manifest paradigm changes in social relations caused by social media – something originally intended to connect closed groups of families and friends. In other words, the scope of these links could expand to the extent that they rival or may, in the future, replace mass communication, or may simply relegate the latter to entertainment media. The ability to effectuate social change through movements a few decades ago was attributed solely to mass communication by Das, yet technological changes in contemporary times have provided the same potency to the quasi-mass communication medium, and thus expositions of unjust acts and their subsequent condemnations happen through the latter. This scenario stresses the need for peoples to create novel fronts since the protection of such media is tantamount to protection of their freedoms of expressions, especially in ensuring equitable social relations.

This is specifically applicable to issues governing substantive justice. In perspectives that are generally divisive, however, such as those of distributive justice, the differences in social classes could fuel conceptual redoubts that may dangerously lead to conflicts. Yet it should be remembered that the power of quasi-mass technology emanates from its reactionary character against the one-sided impositions of mass media itself. In this light, Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno (2002, 95) succinctly describe that “[t]echnical rationality today is the rationality of domination. It is the compulsive character of a society alienated from itself.” They exposed the limitations of independence through the dominations of self, labor, and nature. If they would have seen how the culture industry has morphed in contemporary times, they would have surmised that the myths created by the capitalist instrumental reason had grown worse in terms of commodification. With the emphasis of marketability, concepts such as fairness and equitable distributions are difficult to integrate, relegating these to reactionary elements in quasi-mass communications that are not necessarily directed towards national interest. In the light of the latter, these economic categories may be sidelined as the opportunity of cost of freedom of expression against such dominations. Good intent in terms of government and non-government

Integrating a Normative Culture

elements would thus constitute the essential balance to counteract such a sorry scheme. With enough moral and political will, these elements could slowly reframe the parameters of the culture industry to the extent that the catalysts for just thinking could accompany future media endeavors. Thus, we could side with Rolando Gripaldo (2012, 59) when he argued that even though philosophy emanates from and is embedded in culture, it can be dis-embedded so that it would be able to reflectively criticize and, consequently, refine it.

The social relations mediated by quasi-mass communication could expand to social and political movements, as could be seen through the revolutionary endeavors of *Situationist International*, even with the lack of technological advances available today. The critique of mass communication and on how images have become the focal point of society through which its consciousness is unified is summed up in Guy Debord's (2014, 2) description: "The spectacle is not a collection of images; it is a social relation between people that is mediated by images." We may construe this interconnection as a development of McLuhan's notion of *medium as the message* inasmuch as Debord avoids the sidestepping of content in favor of mere media technology to the extent that a relation independent of such communication exists. Yet, the latter nonetheless establishes the effect of such images in the development of mass consciousness especially in terms of commodification of the culture industry. Since individual and even social relations are within the domain of justice, it is thus crucial that the process through which the enculturation of any unified consciousness that adheres to this virtue must be interpreted in terms of how it functions as a medium, especially in notions of justice that inherently includes communication as a part of its comprehension.

One such instance is the modification offered by the methodological cognitivist Jurgen Habermas (1990, 67) to the *Categorical Imperative* of Immanuel Kant (2001, 160), leading up to its final form as: "[r]ather than ascribing as valid to all others any maxim that I can will to be a universal law, I must submit my maxim to all others for purposes of discursively testing its claim to universality." Seen in this perspective, the processes proposed by *discourse ethics* requires the intervention of such mass or at least quasi-mass communication for it to be effective and applicable in real terms. The same thing can be said with the applications of the Rawlsian *reflective equilibrium* – arrived at only through mutual adjustments by concerned rational parties as regards the application of general and particular contentions, leading up the formulation of the principles of justice. This is a political and moral adaptation to the pluralistic nature of contemporary society which aims

Robert A. Montaña

to establish and apply justice in its interrelations. Yet, dialogical interactions are ideals that cannot be simply situated in the vacuum of ideology; rather, they require the intervention of technology, subject to the latter's biases and influences. Hence, maxims covering moral principles governing justice might end up compromising its content if McLuhan's contention that the medium transforms into content itself, leading us to surmise that enculturing justice must take place *in it*, rather than *through it*.

This paper nonetheless posits that the substantive foundation of social relations and communicative processes still lies in the commitment of the individual to acquire the normative principles of justice after its metaethical issues have been resolved, in the same manner as communicative ethics is necessarily grounded on paradigms of virtue. Thus, we see in the same social media, mass commentaries, broadcast news, and live interviews, disagreements, debates, and the delivery of subtle tones of justice paradigms for every political, economic, and social exposition. In this perspective, the media ends up being a mode through which personal opinions are exposed, and by which such opinions are concurrently molded. This inter-reaction ends up establishing some form of reflective equilibrium that grounds the culture of justice in any geographical area.

The role of traditional cultures cannot be undermined in any theory of communication inasmuch as Debord's spectacle differs from country to country despite the homogeneity of technologies available for mass or quasi-mass interactions. Without going through the extremes of solipsism, any enculturation of justice begins with reflective action whereby individuals freely choose the path of justice as a virtue inherent in their moral fiber.

Further steps towards the universalization of this commitment, while avoiding spurious manifestations of virtue, must be taken as the natural effect of these collective individual decisions. It is in this process where the culture industry must be defied within the parameters of law, whenever such do not function in a manner contributory to the endeavors of justice. The popularity of the Tulfo programs - where arrogance is berated, and conflicts are resolved through dialogue - expose snippets of these attempts toward societal balance and moral responsibility. On the other hand, the unfortunate exposition of the almost unending news coverage of extra-judicial killings had desensitized the citizenry to the point that the expected shock-and-awe was replaced by monotony and sopor. Such acquiescence would never happen if mass communication is imbued with normative justice inasmuch as the latter

Integrating a Normative Culture

functions as a foundational paradigm that determines how media is ideally benchmarked.

With man's apparent attraction towards sensationalism and the inordinate satisfaction of his concupiscence, including his propensity to imitate, the mass media seems to be a battleground for just and unjust actions. The rational constraint needed to habitually refer to moral principles for one's decisions would only secondarily depend on the images provided by technology inasmuch as one could always go against the movement of the mob whether the impressions of the latter were truthfully or deceptively delivered. A society composed of individuals committed to normative justice would naturally filter its mass and quasi-mass communication, and the development of its technology would aid the elevation of such dedication towards enculturation. Even in the presence of commodification, media corporations would adjust to the natural state of its consumers and eventually would similarly adapt to their paradigms of thought. With this presupposition, it could be reiterated that the notion of normative justice as engrained in a person's psyche, by itself, is much larger than any communicative process; yet, it is in and through such process that this virtue is universalized and encultured in the national

References

- Althusser, Louis. 2014. *On the Reproduction of Capitalism: Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses*. London: Verso.
- Bashford, Alison, and Carolyn Strange. 2004. "Public Pedagogy: Sex Education and Mass Communication in the Mid-Twentieth Century." *Journal of the History of Sexuality* (University of Texas Press) 13 (1): 71-99.
- Brawley, Edward, and Emilia Martinez-Brawley. 1999. "Promoting Social Justice in Partnership with the Mass Media." *The Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare* 26 (2): 63-86.
- Breed, Warren. 1958. "Mass Communication and Socio-Cultural Integration." *Social Forces* (Oxford University Press) 37 (2): 109-116.
- Burrowes, Carl Patrick. 1993. "The Functionalist Tradition and Communication Theory (paper presented at the Annual Meeting

Robert A. Montaña

- of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication)."
- Carey, James. 2009. *Communication as Culture Essays*. New York, USA: Routledge.
- Chakravarthy, Paula, and Katherine Sarikakis. 2006. *Media Policy and Globalization*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Das, Mitra. 1981. "Social Movements, Social Change, and Mass Communication." *International Review of Modern Sociology* (International Journals) 11 (1/2): 127-143.
- Debord, Guy. 2014. *The Society of the Spectacle*. Translated by Ken Knabb. Bureau of Public Secrets.
- Fleur, Melvin de. 1966. "Mass Communication and Social Change." *Social Forces* (Oxford University Press) 44 (3): 314-326.
- Gerbner, George. 1958. "On Content Analysis and Critical Research in Mass Communication." *Audio Visual Communication Review* (Springer) 6 (2): 85-108.
- Gripaldo, Rolando. 2012. "Philosophy in Culture: Embedded and Disembedded." *Philosophia* (Ample Printing Press) 41 (1): 59-65.
- Habermas, Jurgen. 1990. *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action*. Translated by Christian Lenhardt and Shierry Weber Nicholsen. Massachusetts: MIT Press.
- Hardt, Hanno. 1972. "The Dilemma of Mass Communication: An Existential Point of View." *Philosophy and Rhetoric* (Penn State University Press) 5 (3): 175-187.
- Hare, R.M. 1952. *The Language of Morals*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Horkheimer, Max, and Theodor Adorno. 2002. *Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments*. Edited by Gunzelin Schmid Noerr. Translated by Edmund Jephcott. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press.

Integrating a Normative Culture

- Hyman, Herbert. 1973-1974. "Mass Communication and Socialization." *The Public Opinion Quarterly* (Oxford University Press) 37 (4): 524-540.
- Kant, Immanuel. 2001. *Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysics of Morals (1785) in Basic Writings of Kant*. Edited by Allen Wood. New York: Modern Library.
- Klapper, Joseph. 1963. "Mass Communication Research: An Old Road Resurveyed." *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 27 (4): 515-527.
- Klapper, Joseph. 1957-1958. "What We Know About the Effects of Mass Communication: The Brink of Hope." *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 21 (4): 453-474.
- Lang, Kurt. 1989. "Mass Communication and Our Relation to the Present and Past." *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* (Springer) 2 (3): 404-413.
- Larsen, Otto. 1966. "Controversies about the Mass Communication of Violence." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* (Sage Publications Inc, in association with the American Academy of Political and Social Science) 364 (Patterns of Violence): 37-49.
- McDonald, Henry. 1986. *The Normative Basis of Culture: A Philosophical Inquiry*. Louisiana, USA: Louisiana State University Press.
- McLuhan, Marshall. 1964. *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- McQuail, Denis. 1985. "Sociology of Mass Communication." *Annual Review of Sociology* (Annual Reviews) 11: 93-111.
- Menzel, Herbert. 1971. "Quasi-Mass Communication: A Neglected Area." *The Public Opinion Quarterly* (Oxford University Press) 35 (3): 406-409.
- Potter, Jeremy. 1976. "Problems in Mass Communication." *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts* (Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce) 124 (5239): 350-366.

Robert A. Montaña

- Render, Frank. 1965. "Some Viewpoints Concerning the Impact of the New Mass Communication Media on our Culture." *CLA Journal* (College Language Association) 9 (2): 182-190.
- Schmitt-Beck, Rudiger. 2003. "Mass Communication, Personal Communication, and Vote Choice: The Filter Hypothesis of Media Influence in Comparative Perspective." *British Journal of Political Science* (Cambridge University Press) 33 (2): 233-259.
- Siepmann, Charles. 2005. "Mass Media and Communication." *Educational Technology* (Educational Technology Publications, Inc.) 45 (4): 58-59.
- Talbot, Mary. 2007. *Media Discourse: Representation and Interaction*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Thompson, John. 1988. "Mass Communication and Modern Culture: Contribution to a Critical Theory of Ideology." *Sociology* (Sage Publications, Ltd.) 22 (3): 359-383.
- Wedding, Nugent. 1975. "Advertising as a Method of Mass Communication of Ideas and Information." *Journal of Advertising* (Taylor and Francis, Limited) 4 (3): 6-10.
- Wirth, Louis. 1948. "Consensus and Mass Communication." *American Sociological Review* (American Sociological Association) 13 (1): 1-15.
- Wittcoff, Raymond. 1955. "Developments in Mass Communication." *The Library Quarterly: Information, Community, Policy* (The University of Chicago Press) 25 (4): 319-325.
- Wright, Charles. 1960. "Functional Analysis and Mass Communication." *The Public Opinion Quarterly* (Oxford University Press) 24 (4): 605-620.



About the Author

Robert Montaña is a professor of philosophy at the Department of Philosophy of the University of Santo Tomas. He is also a fellow of the Research Center for Culture, Arts and Humanities.