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Introduction

This volume of the journal *Miscellanea Anthropologica et Sociologica*, entitled *Media, Discourse and Power. Critical Perspective in the Analysis of Media Messages* includes articles that address important and current issues. The authors' attention is focused on issues of gender relations, the COVID-19 pandemic, strategies of resistance to cultural hegemony, as well as the anxiety (and often collective fear) associated with the dislocation and unpredictability of the world at the beginning of the third decade of the 21st century.

Nowadays, the media, and particularly the mass media, are seen, on the one hand, as a mirror walking through the world and, on the other hand, are claimed to define more and more what that world actually is (Baudrillard 2005). We can observe a similar, but not entirely identical dialectic in the case of media discourses, which can reflect socio-cultural reality, but also shape and modify it (Fairclough, Wodak 1997; Reisigl 2017).

Media discourses, understood broadly as non-accidental, structured communicative events embedded in contexts, are nowadays studied with different theoretical and methodological assumptions. Critical approaches to media messages within the framework of critical theory (Adorno, Horkheimer 1994; Horkheimer 1987; Szacki 2007) aim to uncover inconsistencies, contradictions and paradoxes in the internal structures of discourse, to detect the persuasive or manipulative character of the discursive practices. Media discourses, which are often vehicles of ideologies and hegemonic cultural patterns based on inequitable power relations, can contribute through the use of masking strategies to the consolidation of hegemony and the social status quo (Fiske 1987; Reisigl, Wodak 2016). However, every hegemony breeds resistance (Gramsci 1951), which is why in the media, we

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can find manifestations of the discursive struggle for meanings (Foucault 1998), as well as new – though nowadays increasingly having some mercantile dimension – counter-hegemonic blocks of ideas, values, patterns of behaviour.

Contemporary media messages are often the area of social conflict, as they show traces of ideological struggles for domination and hegemony. Regarding the discourse, power is realised not only through spoken or written language, but also through the non-verbal codes appearing in different media genres and formats. In discourses, power is legitimised or delegitimised, but power relations also constrain and regulate media discourses through various types of control procedures (Foucault 2002; Reisigl, Wodak 2016).

The volume opens with Krzysztof Arcimowicz's article *Hybrid Masculinity and Power. Critical Discourse Analysis of the Neoseries "Money Heist"*. Author analyses the verbal and non-verbal discursive strategies employed by the creators of one of the most popular TV neoseries of the recent years, which has become a global socio-cultural phenomenon. The results of the analysis conducted using the perspectives of Critical Studies of Men and Masculinities (CSMM) and Critical Discourse Studies (CDS) lead to the conclusion that discursive elements from both the hegemonic masculinity and the non-hegemonic versions of masculinity are used in the creation of the protagonist and the majority of the heroes of the *Money Heist*. However, these hybrid images in many cases do not serve at all to deconstruct the patriarchal status quo, but rather to conceal the patriarchal power.

In the article *City Bombed with Yarn: Knitting Graffiti as an Ambivalent Practice of Resistance to Cultural Hegemony*, Ewa Kępa describes the phenomenon of the creation of yarn graffiti, which takes many forms and is appearing with increasing frequency in urban spaces around the world. The author emphasises the role of new media in the development of interest in knitting. The knitted and crocheted elements appearing in the urban landscape are only seemingly silly and irrational: they are not only a multicoloured aesthetic touch, but also the driver and manifestation of socio-cultural change. The creative activities undertaken by the 'city knitters' embody multiple meanings. Kępa analyses the phenomenon of 'yarn bombing' primarily as a resistance strategy, a form of street art that turns knitting eyelet after eyelet, a cultural practice traditionally associated with femininity, into a series of handcrafted micro-political, discursive gestures.

Klaudia Bączyk-Lesiuk and Sylwia Polcyn in their text *Activity of Facebook Users on Official Profiles of Ministries of Education in Poland and Ukraine in the Context of the School Year 2021/2022* compare the activity of internet users in the era of the COVID-19 pandemic in the two selected countries. The authors of this article carried out quantitative and qualitative analyses of the comments and reactions of internet users posted under posts published on the Facebook profiles of the ministries of education. Analysis of the collected material leads to the conclusion

that the number of comments with positive and neutral overtones was higher on the Polish Ministry website than on the analogue Ukrainian website, but that the vast majority of reactions among users of both the Ukrainian and the Polish Ministry profiles were negative, thus demonstrating discouragement among citizens towards the government's actions and the introduction of new legal regulations, which do not always bring the desired results.

The present volume closes with an article by Karolina Wierel entitled *The End, Power and the Media: Catastrophic Imagination in Film Discourse. Analysis of the Phenomenon on the Example of Adam McKay's "Don't Look Up"*. Author focuses on the analysis of the film work, but these considerations are a pretext for a more in-depth and broader analysis of the collective imagination and the mental condition of the recipients of popular culture in these uncertain and not very optimistic times. In her reflections, Wierel makes use of various theoretical concepts and notions from the field of contemporary critical humanities, such as the perspective of the ecological turn or the notion of the apocalypse of reality. By means of an analysis of discourses focused on relevant social issues, such as the relationship between media and power, global warming and ecology, as well as anthropocentrism, the author identifies non-fiction sources of *Don't Look Up*.

We hope that this volume can provide inspiration and/or a starting point for a broader, more structured reflection on the relationship between media, discourse and power in the contemporary world.

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