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Writing for the Media

Newspapers, magazines, television, radio and even the internet are forms of the media. Communicating news and information to the general public in different ways are the common factors to these various forms of media. All these medias communicate not to any particular individual but to anyone who reads, watches, or hears them. As they are communicating a large number of mass, they have some deep social responsibility. It is the task of media to not just report, but to comment, to criticise, and above all inform the public about what is really going on. Ian Hargreaves remarks: "Journalism matters not just to journalists, but to everyone: good journalism provides the information and opinion upon which successful democratic societies depend. Corrupt that and you corrupt everything. But, equally, let journalism ossify, or be economically undermined, and politics and public life will suffer." It is the creative writer who reflects throughout his influential writing the responsibility towards society.

The media can be broadly divided into three types, based on the method of transmission:

- 1) Print Media
- 2) Broadcast media
- 3) New Media

Each of the three types of media presents different challenges and opportunities for the writer.

Print Media

Printed media, as distinguished from broadcast or electronically transmitted communications, includes all newspapers, newsletters, booklets, pamphlets, magazines, and other printed publications, especially those that sell advertising space as a means of raising revenue. Print Media is one of the oldest and basic forms of mass communication. Print Media include basic reportage/ 'hard news',



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Feature writing, interviews, book/ film reviews, travel writing, editorials, and personal columns. All of these varieties of writing, within the Print Media, present different challenges as well as greatest scope for creative writers.

Broadcast Media

Broadcasting can be defined as instant dissemination of information through wireless means to public at large. The broadcast media has traditionally included the radio and television. The styles of writings in this media are quite same as Print Media, but there are some differences also. Interviews, reviews, reportage which are presented in TV or in Radio broadcasting differs from the corresponding style in the print media. The writing for these formats is essentially in the form of scripts, which are either read out or enacted. The scripts are to be prepared according to the programmes which are to be broadcasted. The efficiency of the creative writer and the enactment of the presenter designate the quality of the programme. Only in few cases like interview or documentary, the process of script writing does not valued primarily. In such cases the media has to broadcast what actually spoken by the speaker in the time of interview. The rules that govern writing for Radio and Television are not the same as for Print. For example, Print media publish an interview in print format while broadcast media share the fact in audio-visual mode.

Radio broadcasting is a one-way sound broadcasting service, transmitted over radio waves from a transmitter to receiving antenna and intended to reach a wide audience. Audio broadcasting also can be done via cable FM, local wire networks. Here the verbal element is very important. The kind of programme available here are news, entertainment-based shows like music, radio-plays, story reading, educational programmes, interviews, verbal advertising etc. So, the important thing about radio broadcasting that the script must not seem to be written or read but must appear to be; at the same time the style must not be too loose or casual. For the entertainment -based shows become comparatively

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relaxed and somewhat informal, but the scripts are written very carefully to convey the feeling; and for the case of radio play, it involves greater creativity.

TV is the most widely used telecommunication medium for transmitting and receiving moving images that are either monochromic (black and white) or color, usually accompanied by sound. So, most of what applies to Radio holds true for television too. Visual medium of television adds a lot of creativity and technicality of script writer. Writing for serials and documentaries will be in the form of scripts or screenplays that create a huge opportunities for the creative writers. Most of the scripts here are written in a concise manner, especially when reporting news. Advertising on Television is also script-based.

New Media

New media is a catch-all term for all forms of electronic media that have appeared or will appear since the original mainly text-and-static picture forms of online communication. New media usually includes the Internet or the Worldwide Web. The Web offers every opportunity for writing that is present in any other medium. It is open to all forms of writing, including fiction, poetry, drama, creative non-fiction, news, interviews, and advertising. And all of this can exist not only in written form but also in audio or the audio-visual format. The web is emerging as a useful resource for newspersons as well as a tool for dissemination of news. Virtually all the major newspapers, magazines, journals and media channels have a presence on the Internet. The attraction to a large number of readers is not just because it is a new medium, but because it includes all types of readership and revolutionary internet speed at which it has spread across the world.

Writing for the Web requires the same skills as writing for the Print Media, but also requires the additional skill of attracting potential readers to the page. Brevity is important, because not many readers will be willing to scroll down a

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long page to read all that you have written. The Internet offers the greatest amount of liberty to the writer in terms of what can be written but everything should be catchy to the readers. Apart from the sites which supply news and analysis, there are a variety of sites which publish creative work. The format and technology that are used by the different types of media demand a lot of flexibility and adaptability on the part of the creative writer.

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