Contemporary media, beyond the Fourth Estate

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Abstract: *The press has been, over the decades, one of the elements that have ensured the smooth functioning of society. Through its purpose, the media has tried and is still trying to be a mirror objectively reflecting reality, impartially presenting it to the public, sanctioning the abuses of the authorities, as well as those of ordinary people from the laws and social norms. And that's why the press received the title of "watch dog" of society and it was also called the "Fourth Power in the State".*

Obviously things can not remain at this level. The public's growing dissatisfaction with the quality of the information transmitted through the classical media, its doubts about the objectivity and impartiality of the journalists forced by the editorial policy of the media institution to relate not the what they saw, but on the contrary depending on the political and economic interests of the leadership of the institution for which they work, has determined the emergence of a new form of journalistic expression.

One that many have rushed to categorize it as civic, but which is actually a citizen's one form of expression: that one that lives in online. 5th Power in the State.

Keyword: new media; the fourth estate, the fifth estate, watchdog

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> ”Fascinated by the temporal brilliance of the news, people overlook the decisive role of the means of communication in the formation of cultures. Attention to what is being transmitted to him, the man is no longer attentive to the influence he exerts on him the way is transmitted”[1]

Press, 4th Power. What it was and what it gets now

Undoubtedly, the press has been, over the decades, one of the elements that have ensured the smooth running of society. Through its purpose, the media has tried and is still trying to be a mirror objectively reflecting reality, presenting it to the receiving audience. And that's why it was given the title of "watch dog"[2] of society and "the fourth power in the state".[3]

If at the beginning the two syntagms fully deserved association with the world of journalists, their value diminished with the ever stronger interferences of the various political groups most of them in editorial activity. They were gradually added to the big trusts, in a continuous struggle to capture as much as possible from the multimillionaire beach of the receiving public. And how could it do if it did not lower the quality of

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[1]   Henri Wald, *Homo significans*, Encyclopaedic Publishing House, Bucharest, 1970, p.49.

[2]   The theory that derives from liberal thinking and identifies itself through the role of the press to relate the actions of the authorities with objectivity, factual and rigorous criticism, the media being seen, theoretically, as a mechanism for the consolidation of responsibility in democratic governance.

[3]   This label has been attributed to the media, says the Scottish historian Thomas Carlyle at the end of the eighteenth century by the English libertarian Edmund Burke during a speech in the plenum of the House of Commons of Great Britain in 1787. The assertion of Burke's categorization of the press as the fourth power in the state, it is found in Carlyle's work, "On Heroes, Hero-worship and the heroic in History",which appeared in 1840, at the Chapman and Hall Publishing House in London. According to Carlyle, Burke would have declared during the debate on the press, that, gradually, it would become a force worthy of consideration, which makes it unchallenged by the ruling classes. (page 194).

the transmitted media product at the expense of satisfying the primary needs of the individual.[1]

This is not exactly favourable to the objectivity of the press.Increasingly, we are witnessing a dissolution of the ideaaround which journalists have been spinning, namely that ofthe presentation of information that is indeed at the serviceof citizens. More often, truly useful information disappearsfrom the agenda of the day with which the media isreporting to the public. For what purpose? Obviously a clear control of the wide masses for the benefit of the shadowfunders.

Media, designed as a network of unidirectional communication channels, in which the transmitter and receiver roles are fixed, unchangeable, have become an easy way of determining certain human behaviors, gradually influencing daily behavior, preoccupations and preferences: from choosing a specific beverage brand to the color of the car, or the color of a party.[2]

About how much the press has changed, about how strong the rift between the media and the public receiver is, a synthesis published by the Gallup Institute, in 2016[3], says it very clearly: if before 2004 it was common that simple citizens, americans in the present case, to show its attachment/trust to the press and the agenda provided by it,currently only a third of the receptors resonate with the idea of the average as the fourth power in the state and, by association, the good "watchdog" of society.

By its means, the media has tried and still trying to be "the mirror" that objectively reflects the reality, presenting it, as it happens, to the the media

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[1]   It is remarkable the perfidious alliance created between these media entities and the big commercial producers is a symbiosis of which they all come out of gain, less the public put in an ingrained hypostasis to consume more and more media with advertising implications, to the detriment of information.

[2]   Norwegian professor Thomas Mathiesen has launched in public space The Synopticon theory, which assumes that the media audience is seduced to watch TV programs by shadowy leaders who take great care to select those who are pursued: people with influence in the spheres of politics, economy and so on. The synoptic is the model that breaks the population of local values and norms, becoming the monolithic approach. (Thomas Mathiesen, "*The Viewer Society by Michel Foucault's Panopticon Revisited*", in Theoretical Criminology: An International Journal 1 (2), Sage Publications, London, 1997, pp. 215-232).

[3]   Art Swift, *Americans' Trust in Mass Media Sinks to New Low,* Gallup Inc., retrieved from https://news.gallup.com/poll/195542/americans-trust-mass-media-sinks-new-low.aspx.

public. And that's why the press got the title "Watchdog" of society and the "fourth power in the state".

Forms of deviation from correct information

Not by chance, sociologists now call the "computerized society" what many years ago did not call the "post-industrial society."[1]

"All the important areas of social life: from politics, economics, services, science, culture, education, education - are strongly marked and conditioned by the information offensive"[2]

Alvin Toffler believes that today and especially in the future, information is clearly prevalent, even though repressive force and money have prevailed throughout history. In recent years "new elites have emerged: corporate leaders, bureaucrats, press moguls. Mass production, mass distribution, mass education and mass communications were accompanied by mass democracy (...) ".[3]

Media really means distribution of information and mass communication. It is not compulsory, however, that media should present the truth. There are cases where the information processed, detached from context, led to different events.

Starting with the expansion of large media trusts and their desire for economic fulfillment, information suffers. Alterations are directly proportional to the volume of handling and the degree of interest of the broadcast group.

Thus, depending on the acquired development, manipulation can be characterized as:

> *1. small manipulation* - when we talk about a process aimed at "minor changes in the social situation, but with comprehensive extensions";
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> *2. medium manipulation* - when it seeks to "induce the feeling of obedience to authority, or the trigger of strong riots";

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[1] Ion Bucheru, *The Television Phenomenon*, Romania Tomorrow Foundation Publishing House, 1997, p.53.

[2] Ibidem

[3] Alvin Toffler, *Power in Motion*, ANTET Publishing House, Filipestii de Tirg, Prahova. 1995, p. 17.

3. *large manipulation* - difficult to notice, as it is applied to individuals at very young age; such a process acting at the level of a given society and influencing the value system of its members.[1]

To avoid unnecessary discussions, due to lack of space and time (but also to leave raw material and other researches), we can say that the press of the 21st century caused an overall change of the image of the press from one of the positives the communicative act in one where the negativist element is omnipresent.[2]

Negative journalism has the following features:

I. it represents a persuasive instrument that wants to be convicted (journalists act according to the rules and principles specific to the environment in which they operate with purely persuasive messages);

II. -disconnects the principle of objective information by applying the factic (the annihilation of the pure informational factor and the design of the public in an artificially created environment, where it can be more easily controlled through enhanced persuasive education);

III. exploits the "debilitated reality" (it has as subsidiary characters the induction of general states of confusion, ambiguity, irrationality);

IV. introduction of the incorrect character and deliberate distortion of the message (as a rule, the economic interest, controlled by the advertising factor, determines the qualitative-positive deviation of the message to satisfy the inner desires of the public, tempted to use information with negative impact);

V. propagates ignorance and aggression (the ignorance starts from the simplicity and debilitation of the solutions

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[1] Bogdan Ficeac, *Handling Techniques*, Nemira Publishing House, Bucharest, 1996, pp. 30-40.

[2] The most dangerous form of journalism with negative influences occurs when manipulators mask the message, giving it a positive tinge and thus attracting a part of the audience that rejects the information of such an invoice from the start. "The negative journalism productions come to us in the way of a positive journalism mined by a language and a cogitation (filth analysis by the mind, n.n.) in favor of negative interests. These interests are trained as a lie, seduction, fiction and myth. "(Stefan Vlăduţescu, *Negative journalistic communication*, Romanian Academy Publishing House, Bucharest, 2006, p. 104).

offered to the proposed problem to the discussion / analysis, the more simplest they are, the more the audience will be more sedated and seized).[1]

On the other hand, in the last decades in Romania, the press has been reduced to the mere toy of some moghuls[2]. Most media institutions that have been built by these moghuls have been hijacked over time. First devalued in precise order, and with the impoverishment of these institutions, they were bought, stripped of morality and put into use by new owners, the largest loser being the citizen and implicitly on a collective scale, the Romanian electorate. A good part of the institutions that did not meet the requirements of the time, either disappeared or reprofiled.

The interests of these new owners have succeeded, in counter-performance, to budge a schism in society. Certain tectonic plates of the political and social sphere have produced an earthquake that has been devastating for Romanian life for 10 years. Lies and constant preconceptions have divided the Romanian society and made it identifying and issuing judgments on the principle of political affiliation.[3]

Using the press as a bullying weapon or for exerting a political pressure, both during and outside the elections, is a common practice, not just in Romania, not in developed European countries that promote certain European principles but in other parts of the world, certainly.

The paid servitude brings misinformation as a direct effect. Thus, the mission of civilization is indirectly threatened, and the history of the media as a tool for informing and connecting people is put in a light that can not bring pride to anyone.

Objective articles, with a careful elaboration of the context, or the use of credible and objective sources are the performance criteria. They are elementary so that the reclassification of journalism as an honorable profession, the initiation and promotion of debates worthy of a great country, civilized acts, respect, the return to what is really important, the

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[1]   Ibidem, pp. 125-130.
[2]   This term identifies the person or persons who actually fund the media industry and who impose discretionary rules on subordinate people.
[3]   The mistrust of the public to whatever means public decision is not the only tragedy for the Romanians, as a nation, and this hostility is certainly destined to disappear categorically with the departure of controversial politicians in the state, the healing process being visible immediately. But the real problem of this schism was the creation of an unjustified fear of the future.

death of rumors, the death of stupidity and lies, or of the false speech, are not issues that should be in the SF field.

Some would say that these are romantic aspects of the journalist profession. But "the decency as a journalist's religion" is the target. This should be the motto. Press institutions have a duty to raise citizens' interest above all. The media must inform the electorate through broadcasts, news, objective reports, without prejudice.

Many communicators have been and are still partakers in perpetuating the reason that a poorly informed public is a docile audience. Their refusal to understand that an uninformed electorate is not an electorate, is symptomatic of human nature and perfectly transposes the idea that an audience with whose trust has been wagered and wherewith the politicians won elections is not an increased audience in a democratic environment, especially If the only subsequent reward is the chance to leave their country, parents or children.

Reinventing modern journalism after the fall of communism has failed. At the moment, we are in a new transition period of journalism that is equivalent to a new chance of remodeling the profession of journalist.[1]

Press, în the 5th power stage, CIVIL JOURNALISM vs. CITIZEN JOURNALISM

> "The social networks have changed everything: how we talk, who we talk to and how fast we do it. The classical 24-hour information cycle is now 24 seconds "(Sophie Brendel, former director of the BBC online service)[2]

It is obvious that things can not remain at this level. The public's growing dissatisfaction with the quality of the information transmitted through the classical media, his doubts about the objectivity and

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[1] There is currently a media elite, a small number of journalists, but a famous minority with years of experience, integrity and devotion to inform. People who withdrew the line in an attempt to bring Romanian journalism back to a high standard.

[2] Ibukun Taiwo, *Citizen Reporters: The Fifth Estate of the Realm,* retrieved from https://techcabal.com/2015/10/09/citizen-reporters-the-fifth-estate-of-the-realm/.

impartiality of the "corporate" journalists, forced by the editorial policy of the media institution to relate not factually but on the contrary, in accordance with interests political and economic, have led to the emergence of a new form of journalistic expression.[1]

One form of expression that many have rushed to catalog as civic[2], but who is actually citizen[3], more than everything.

A crucial factor in the development of this new form of alternative journalism was the extremely rapid technological development of the internet and mobile communication. But this aspect does not interest us in this paper. Rather, we are interested in how this new power becomes more and more important in the context of informational globalization.

For Montesquieu, the father of the concept of "three powers in the state" (the Church, the Political Authority and the simple people), the society has evolved to the fifth hypostasis of the social force. This is the one in which the state authority, in the democratic democratic states , officially installed as a result of electoral processes, has no authority, no leverage on the transmitted messages. Its only possibility to intervene is to counteract some attacks it targets, either through the classical media (with a non-literate, digitally, continuously decreasing audience,). Another posibbility is to sanction the emitters under various pretexts (see Assange case , WikiLeaks etc) or entering into "the online game" (trying to attract "rebels" on its side)[4].

From another perspective, despite the enthusiasm generated by this virtual information explosion and as much as we have militated and encouraged civism in journalism, we must not ignore the dangers that

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[1]   The adherents of the press idea as the fifth power do not take journalists involved in various media outlets into consideration, but only those individuals without a specialist training in the field of the press who transmit undisclosed information to the classical press or sanction the "colleagues' "From the real sphere.

[2]   That form of journalism "made" by classical media "expatriates" (dismissed or who voluntarily left because personal principles no longer coincided with the interests of the employers)

[3]   Citizen journalism is a form of expression for simple, fine and good environmental observers who use technology to convey to others through the virtual environment the problems they face or face , or other information that impressed them (ignored for various reasons of classical media) and which they consider to be important enough to be made known to others.

[4]   We must not ignore the initiatives initiated by the authorities to attract virtual space leaders (bloggers, vloggers, etc.) to present them as favorably as possible, more or less justifiable from the point of view of the content, in the light of the funds allocated to the various projects under the public institutions' logo.

this form of press and its readers face. From misinformation[1], with unwanted effects in the real sphere (the case of unvaccinated people motion promoted by former media stars). to terrorist propaganda, this space of social networks, blogs, etc. is similar to a multilingual and multilingual Tower of Babel in which only the well-informed can survive.

On the other hand, the interactivity provided by the present media connects the public directly with the responsible actors from the representative institutions, without having to know them beforehand, as opposed to the classic formula of the phone calls or letters, where we find the purpose of connection . Here, interactivity also involves taking part in discussions on a random topic for which the interlocutor does not necessarily have training. It is one of the attractions of the modern press with many followers among the consumer audience. Communication of all types calls for respect and equality on the part of the participants. The basic principle is that this process involves people who have something to communicate and want to communicate.[2]

We must recognize: the citizens' actions promoted in the virtual world rarely have any resolution in the real space. At most, blogs, websites, social networks can determine political support actions during campaigns, masses movements, ephemeral as time spans, (Collective case, Diaspora at home, or, more distant in time, Arabic Spring).

Another issue facing this form of journalism, beyond the deontology and fairness of the profession, refers to the language that these amateur journalists use and promotes online, a space unregulated by any authority, as is the case in the classical dimension media. A language that often has nothing in common with the official language (and here we are talking about Romania), with all sorts of grammatical mistakes or spelling errors. Many of the published texts contain offensive messages, from the sphere of slang and jargon, or full of terms far removed from their basic meaning.[3] What is the risk? Gradual deterioration of language

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[1]   Along with misinformation, in the category of forms of media slippage, we find parainformation, over-information, subinformation, or factoid. In other words, a fake news vs. false news.

[2]   George-Lucian Onofrei, *Violence in public space: communication skewers*, AXIS Academic Foundation Publishing House, Iasi, 2015, p.185.

[3]   The journalist and professor Cristian Florin Popescu mentions in one of his works, quoting Uli Windisch, from the University of Geneva, of non-fine language existence. "Non fine languages, - says the author (Uli Windisch, nn) - are the languages

quality and new words, used in online citizenship journalism, which gradually entering the basic vocabulary of the Romanian language.

Why Citizen Online Press as the Fifth Power? Because through this form of expression it, the public can quickly get answers to the dilemmas that dangle it, by resorting strictly to the informational content of interest, and also can debate without any constraints the problems posed by the journalists on debate.

At the same time, although Internet users notice and have the opportunity to read something else, totally different from their own beliefs, they knowingly ignore this, which can give rise to extremist ideas. What can be more eloquent than Facebook's social networking, where the user has the ability to select information that is consistent with his or her aspirations (many of which are traded by non-traditional media, many of them questionable in terms of quality of information transmitted), or asking the friendship of people who think the same.[1]

To see how effective the press is, whether it be the fourth or the fifth among powers, here's what the press freedom in the world looks like in the year 2017. According to Reporters Without Borders, there is a slight improvement in the case of Romania that climbs to the position of the 46 ranking[2], dominated by the countries of the Scandinavian Peninsula. At

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used by anti-societies, such as marginal groups of delinquents, in various types of micro-entities, such as those living in prisons or in ghettos." Cristian Florin Popescu, *Handbook of Journalism I*, Tritonic Publishing House, Bucharest, 2003, p. 68).

[1] Also on social networks, we are, unfortunately, seeing a proliferation of "bullying" attacks on real-space journalists whose messages sent over the Internet are mostly the target of the Internet's irony that does not resonate with the emitters. It is just one of the risks to which media stars are exposed, another is the propagation on other specialized channels (such as Youtube etc) of the movies captured by the blog-vlogosphere leaders, which subsequently become, by rebroadcast, viral like viruses, movies In which journalists in the real space commit linguistic or ethical mistakes.

[2] Reporters Without Borders summarizes the situation of the press in Romania:

"Excessive media politicization, corrupt financing mechanisms, editorial policies subordinated to employers' interests, and infiltration of editorial staff of intelligence agencies - this is the effect of transforming the press into a propaganda tool, particularly visible in electoral years." (https://ultima-ora.ro/raportul-liberatii-presei-in-lume-editia-2017/). The public agenda was dominated by political issues that antagonized the public, the media playing an active role in tensioning the relationship between politicians and citizens. The press institutions loyal to the coalition that won the 2016 elections were not uncomfortable for the governing parties, and even legitimized their actions by promoting themes useful to the political power. "(Details on http://www.activewatch.ro/ com / freeex / publications / release-report-freeex-2017-2018-free-press-in-romania).

the same time, there is a decline in the case of States believed to be Democrats such as the US (with the coming to power of Donald Trump), or the United Kingdom (BREXIT a possible cause), as well as in the former communist states: Poland and Hungary.[1]

Conclusions

It is clear that journalism will undergo a radical transformation in the century we find ourselves, amid the ever-increasing development of technology, the expansion of the virtual environment, and also taking into account the fear of the great democracies of the world, such as the US or the UK, in the face of this phenomenon. Starting with political or terrorist implications, or simple social movements (other than those centered on changing political regimes), the informational world of the 21st century is under the sign of "citizenship" and "civic". Nothing can stop a simple man from conveying in real time his fears, opinions, or information, considered as irrelevant by media giants, but essential to him and others of the same state of mind.

Internet and technology have been the crucible in which this media alternative was born. This new power, only lives in virtual space. In online, these voices, largely ignored by the classical press moguls, have become more and more heard and gaining more and more followers. As there are many leaders in the "civic" area who are trying hard to breathe the real life air, the air of the the classical media.

If the Great Western media trusts, CNN and the BBC are just two names that have launched projects based on this new type of journalism, promote, qualitatively, the problems that "reporters" have faced in everyday life, in Romania, unfortunately, everything remains in a sweet and eternally state of immeasurability. Or if something it moves, here and there, through the non-essential points, everything is made only by the façade, for fun.

This is annoying and is fully sanctioned in the virtual environment, where citizens and citizens, the true founders of the fifth power, present the "non glossed over" facts, without the obscure interests of any party. Here , in online, all slippages made by the "masters" of the media, either

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[1] The full World Press Freedom Report in 2017 can be accessed at this link: https://rsf.org/en/2017-world-press-freedom-index-tipping-point.

through admonitions, some of them unreproductible, or by revealing the lies being debated in the classic media form by compromised journalists, affiliates of political beliefs, or members of groups of interest around the political parties and more.

The problem is that, for now, real space dictates and still catches a certain kind of audience. This aspect is well-known by the financial-political system, whose leaders are trying to win by all sorts of tricks the confidence of small virtual influences.

The issue of journalists and trainers of future journalists, many of them adherents of the digital world and citizenship journalism, who think it is extremely easy to report, often irresponsibly, what you see, what you hear, what you feel.

What kind of people are we preparing for this fifth force in society? How do we form future journalists, followers of citizen journalism, to deal with this informational pack and to come to support "citizens" and "classics" at the same time?

There are a few questions that should be more and more of concern to us who are caught in this system of journalistic education.

We have to admit that the public, especially the one who lives in the virtual medium and from which the "citizens" journalists rise in this new age, holds the control over the information (or at least that's them impression), can create the agenda of the day and with hope that his opinion counts generates and actively participates in debates.

During street demonstrations, the participating audience, but not only, becomes a true TV broadcasting vehicle, highly efficient in terms of coverage of the event and the quality of the audio / video information presented.

As before, it was said that to listen to the radio you do not have to know how to write and read, so now it is said about the new form of journalism that it only requires the science of handing the phone.

How do we train the adherents of "citizenship" and how do we educate them to supervise as effectively as possible the observance of the truth by the classical media, as we have said of certain interests?

I propose a possible solution ...

The idea, or the principle, of digital education, of the consumer of information, circulated in the world wide web, one based on the competent and professional literacy ,is becoming more and more popular. Educational programs, promoted by universities or civil society, are increasingly focusing on educating the young media consummers,

exposed to vulnerability of information bombardment. An education process in the good sense so that the young consumer does not digest any message visualized in the virtual environment, but to check it before relaying it, for not disinforming.

In other contexts, it is necessary for the Internet users, one of them transformed, consciously or accidentally, into virtual mini-leaders, to understand their role in training and educating their pursuers. At the same time, they must be aware that their struggle must be transposed, accountable and systematically, into the real environment, where most of the decisions that affect the daily lives of citizens are actually taken.

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