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JOURNALISM, BETWEEN AN AVANT-GARDE PROFESSION AND A PROFESSION IN CRISIS

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Abstract

In this article we analyze the professional status of the journalist, in the context of more and more frequent problems. We have touched all the important moments in the history of the profession and faced two ideological ideologies: the avagard and the crisis. Our findings show that, despite so many changes in substance in journalistic logistics, the essence of journalism has remained the same, because journalism is not just a channel, an informational support, it is a science, a set of procedures to collect, process and distribute information. Journalism is at the forefront of knowledge, not in the ariergard. It informs, not educates. It captures all the technological changes and assimilates them, to become more powerful, more efficient.

Keywords: Journalism, education, information, crisis, avant-garde, acceptability

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INTRODUCERE

Perhaps journalism has never crossed such a stormy area as it did after the economic crisis of 2008. The retrospective shows that journalism has always faced profound changes. Journalism has always been the profession of open, sheltered spaces open to the deepest mutations. Journalism is at the forefront of the mentalities of society. This has no way of not structurally marking it.

INFLUENȚĂ SAU EDUCARE

Through novelty and addressability, through this right of preemption on information, journalism was (and is still) an extremely powerful source of influence and social change. We could even say that this is another undisclosed feature among researchers. This influencing function can compete with the educational function. It is already a canonical observation that journalism is attributed the function of education in society.

We consider it a quite optimistic view, far removed from the targets and possibilities of current journalism. It has also departed from the deeper sense of the term "*education*".

How realistic is the claim that journalism should educate its audience? Is the journalist an educator? Does he have the necessary general skills, the time and resources to do what is called education?

Perhaps the only point on which journalism could have such a profound impact is democratic education - education of freedom of expression, education of pluralism of opinions, in the sense of exercising the acceptance of the other's opinion and the tolerance of the other.

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How can journalism educate as long as the act of communication can be temporarily or permanently suspended at any time? How can a journalist educate as long as the act of education involves certain skills and abilities that teachers must have? The audience's expectations of journalism are too high in this regard. The fact that it increases knowledge can be a sufficient function for journalism. We no longer trully met such belief in the mission, or, better said, in the role of the press. Hegel once remarked that society is modernizing when it changes its point of reference and authority from religion to something more current, more in line with the evolution of social norms.

In this direction, we have interpreted and present here the impact that Alain De Botton recognizes for reading journalistic material, "*news*," he says. Alain de Botton believes that "*we suspend our lives*" when we look to see, to find out "*what's in the news*". The philosopher believes that this is the journalistic stake, in a way: letting journalists tell us what is important and what is not, what happened, and how it happened.

In this professional monopoly, the "*science*" of the press would tell us what is important to us and what to think about. But de Botton goes further, considering that from this monopoly that "news takes over the role of the teacher" (de Botton, p. 12).

For these reasons, it is an ideal news agency, because „*the challenge is to transcend the current dichotomy between centers that offer quality but impotent instruction, on one hand, and those who deliver sensationalism that is relieved of responsibility, on the other*" (de Botton, p. 33). Ignorance and indolence would keep us in the informational pivot, which is a constant conflict. (Charaudeau).

In our opinion, the journalist is neither a teacher, a mentor, nor an educator. Journalists do not have the necessary training, the necessary material resources and the necessary time.

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In response to this need for the public to find an alternative source of evolutionary ideas, journalism can rely on its power of influence through novelty, notoriety, the authority of its sources. Journalism can influence the direction of a society, but it can not be relied upon to educate the public. In fact, we can say that all ideological mutations at the level of society are largely due to journalism by propagating the novelty, by supporting one or the other, by collecting information from one direction or the other. Journalism is the one that has made and and continues to make links between types of societies, mentalites, always others and others, new and provocative.

JOURNALIST OR WRITER

Because of the continual search of the new that we must go through, crisis is somewhat a structural part of journalism. In retrospect, we see how journalism first suffered a crisis of fictional discourse, a crisis still unresolved in some areas of the world. In Romania, for example, the artistic talent, the ability to write in a certain way, imitating almost the rhetorical discoveries of literature, remains a significant asset for employment and for career development. Powerful careers are developed not necessarily through the information discovered, but depending on the way that information is transmitted (at the level of discursive structures) and commented.

Coming from the rank of writers, from the harsh world of artistic creation, the journalist has had to face his own demons, his own frustrations, in the passage from that personal world, the world you discover and build on your own, to the existing world, the real world, which must be discovered and explored.

Not once, the interpretative skewers are more colorful (perhaps even more grotesque, certainly further away from the truth) this more clear, prozaic

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world, caught in the struggle for survival, for existence, not for aesthetic pleasure.

We have described what we call the first existential crisis of journalism, the crisis of it's birth.

JOURNALISM IS WHAT WE ACCEPT

We continue with the crisis in the social accreditation of this profession. By its specificity, journalism is a profession that seeks to bring to light things that wish to remain in the dark. Jacques Derrida talked about „*le droit au secret*", the right to privacy, to privacy, to hiding. This right, however, falls into the place of the relativistic debates regarding of the territory that other two dictums which are not yet fully dispensed with, "*the public space*" and the "*private space*". From this research, in this struggle for the preservation, respectively the unvailing of secrets, this profession of revelation and indiscretion is born.

This bias is accepted almost as a rule, when we refer to the bias of *life as an open book*, which seeks to place the subjects of journalists in the open field of absolute readability, a field on which the public is called through the promise of meaning and systematization.

The conflict between our right to secret and the claim of the other to be as open as a book sets the professional principles and expectations of the public from journalists as a permanent, impossible-to-reach target, bringing upon a constant crisis.

Nosblessures (Hélène Cixous) vs. vos*blessures* are the open limits of the conflict of interpretation on what journalism is and what it should do, but they also give us a measure of what we can accept as objectivity.

Objectivity begins where our private space ends. Journalism transmits information that some people do not want to say, and somtimes others do not

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want to hear. It is in the human nature to seek and accept only those things we he want to listen to and ignore, refuse to listen, to things that bother us, even when we are talking in the name of truth and objectivity. Hard throughs are tough to hear. Certainly, the claim of truth and objectivity (or at least honesty) is required in this profession. But how important is it to the public?

If we look at the audience figures of the different channels that declare or not their partisanship, we see that not many people expect an objective truth, but that almost everyone expects a certain confirmation of their own beliefs and expectations, a confirmation they await spoken or written to them in a certain way, bringing journalism somehow closer to the seduction techniques of the show, and further away from what we would call the morgue of *hard* journalism as it would be understood normally.

As long as it does not say what the audience expects it to say, journalism can not be accepted. This immanent narcissism instantly transforms to Procust's irreconcilable riddle.

Between pressures for a sober ritual of information and aesthetic expectations, journalism often loses control of what it is - the profession of accurate information of the public. In fact, this crisis has not yet found a satisfactory, usable answer.

CHANGE THE VOICE, NOT THE AGENDA

Another crisis (equally structural to the one above) is given by technological evolution. Journalistic information had to face the promises of radio, television, the Internet, and social media. Every time, we asked about the resilience of the essence of journalism, but also about it's role and purpose. What does journalism mean when you can hear the king in your living room? Is

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journalism anything but a simple channel? It turned out that not every channel, not every journalist, could bring the same king into the public living room.

The shock of the television picture again questioned the false issue of role of journalism. What role could journalism have as long as the public itself can see the perspiration of a presidential candidate, or can hear and see directly an ongoing event or another? It was then (re)discovered that what the public had the impression that it could see by itself was, in fact, shown to it. The selection of journalistic information is not just a summary presented at fixed hours, it means the selection of information, gestures, states, quotes that are worth showing to the public.

Bringing us to seemingly contemporary, current crisis. Today, the role and purpose of journalism in the context of social media is debated. What's the point of paid information in the context in which anyone can collect any information they want and need online, for free? Anyone in the public can find information and write it on their personal page, publishing it by through his own strength and the will of the internet and social networks. This activity has also been given a name: *citizen journalism* - and many people, many researchers have once again announced the disappearance of the journalist profession.

However, we noticed during this brief presentation that in the middle of each crisis, there was the journalist who decided what to include on the public attention agenda. Every individual has to face not only individual, personal limits, but also those of the human nature. If it does not follow a set of procedures for approving information, if it does not go through a professional selection process, the personal publication of a text can not pass the status of a personal impression.

In moments of maximum interest, of maximum tension, those who are called to approve and verify information are all journalists.

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CONCLUSIONS

Journalism has to face the problems that a profession so dependent on novelty, of change, has to face. Any change means disconnection, renunciation, reconfiguration.

The essence of journalism is not to educate or simply to collate information, but to identify a direction in the unexplored space of tomorrow. An avant-garde profession by excellence, journalism does not offer canons, but ways of walking.

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