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MASS MEDIA AND DEMOCRACY

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MÉDIA ET DÉMOCRATIE

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MASS MEDIA AND DEMOCRACY INTRODUCTION FOR THEME EDITION OF THE *REVUE DES SCIENCES POLITIQUES ET RÉLATIONS INTERNATIONALES*

NICO CARPENTIER

This journal edition is one of the outcomes of the collaboration between the Department of Communication Studies of the Catholic University of Brussels (Belgium) and the Institute of Political Sciences and International Relations of the Romanian Academy. Although many people were involved, Henrieta Anisoara Serban, Ion Goian and Nico Carpentier took the responsibility for keeping the collaboration on track.

Support for this project was provided by the Royal Flemish Academy for Science and Arts of Belgium and the Romanian Academy, for which all participants want to express our gratitude. The financial support allowed us to organise a series of seven research visits (where lectures and workshops were combined with editorial meetings), which started in April 2004 and ended in September 2006.

This collaboration brought together an interdisciplinary group of Belgian and Romanian academics, active in media studies, political studies, philosophy, and gender studies. It allowed us to study the role of media in democracy — a research interest clearly shared by all — from a variety of angles, which structurally enriched the analyses that can be found in this journal's edition.

Mass media are the focal points of a variety academic disciplines and fields, which very often look at the processes of mediation, representation, reception but also at for instance ownership structures, from the perspective of their 'own' theories, methodologies, and paradigms. However relevant these endeavours are, they are at the same time necessarily partial. In the Mass Media and Democracy project we wanted to overcome these limitations — at least in part — by setting up an interdisciplinary team to study these processes, allowing for a theoretical and paradigmatic cross-fertilisation.

The Multitude of Democracies

Our focus on mass media and democracy was inspired by a broad approach towards democracy and the political. Reducing the democratic-political to the mere functioning of the political system (or to 'politics') would imply an

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unacceptable impoverishment of the theoretical and empirical domains of mediated culture, targeted by this research project. By choosing for a broad approach that allows locating ideological and representational processes within the social realm, we only strengthen the relevance and reduce the partiality of our analyses. Theoretical support for this broad approach of the democratic-political can be found in Chantal Mouffe's work, and her distinction between politics and the political:

By "the political", I refer to the dimension of antagonism that is inherent in human relations, antagonism that can take many forms and emerge in different types of social relations. "Politics" on the other side, indicates the ensemble of practices, discourses and institutions which seek to establish a certain order and organize human coexistence in conditions that are always potentially conflictual because they are affected by the dimension of "the political". (Mouffe, 2000: 101)

Politics restricts democracy to more centralized and elitist forms of societal decision-making, protected by a legal-procedural articulation of democracy. We choose to cherish a more decentralized version of societal decision-making, where the formal components are complemented by a substantial and/or culturalist interpretation of democracy. When in the first dichotomy , the socio-political is seen as exclusively dominated by manifest and latent conflicts, possibly within the context of hegemonic projects. If the focus is exclusively placed on consensus, it is seen as the main societal organising principle that allows for societal harmony and unity. Here, processes of deliberation and dialogue support a harmonious polis and (if necessary) aim to stabilize the disruptions of this harmony. In the case of the *The prime task of democratic politics is not to eliminate passions, nor to relegate them to the private sphere in order to render rational consensus possible, but to mobilise these passions, and give them a democratic outlet.* (Mouffe, 1994: 109)

The mass media

Apart from the wide range of democratic theories, an evenly wide range of normative theories on the relationship of the media, society and democracy exists. The liberal perspective is well (and approvingly) described in the *Four Theories of the Press* written by Siebert, Peterson and Schramm (1956). Its strong focus on information is complemented by the presence of the watchdog function of the media. Other models focus more on the importance of representation and participation (see Carpentier, 2004, Nordenstreng, 2006).

From these perspectives, media themselves become one of the key players in the democratic game. They are not seen as just passively expressing or reflecting social phenomena, or as sites where discourses merely circulate, but as specific machineries and 'systems of dispersion' (Foucault, 1984: 37–38) that produce, reproduce and transform social phenomena. This shaping and signifying social phenomena also includes the concept of democracy itself, as media constantly provide us with definitions of for instance democracy, participation and representation, normalizing some definitions and discrediting others. Power then

again becomes an important analytical concept; it allows us to understand how the media position themselves as a social center (Couldry, 2002) and include or exclude people from the processes of naming (Melucci, 1996) and framing.

As discursive machineries, these media also remain social systems that are 'populated' by specific categories of actors (namely media professionals) and within capitalist economies, managed and owned by other social actors. Among many other things, these actors control the access to and participation in these discursive machineries. From a democratic perspective, opening up media systems to non-professionals remains a crucial task. Here, we need to distinguish between participation 'in' the media and 'through' the media.

Participation 'in' the media deals with the participation of non-professionals in the production of media output (content-related participation) and in media decision-making (structural participation). These forms of media participation allow citizens to be active in one of the many (micro-)spheres relevant to daily life and to put their right to communicate into practice. Participation 'through' the media deals with the opportunities for extensive participation in public debate and for self-representation in the public spheres, thus, entering the realm of enabling and facilitating macro-participation. Starting from a broadly defined notion of the political, consensus-oriented models of democracy (and participation) emphasize the importance of dialogue and deliberation and focus on collective decision-making based on rational arguments à la Habermas. Other authors (Fraser, 1990; Mouffe, 1994) stress more conflict-oriented approaches. They point to the unavoidability of political differences and struggles and see the media as crucial sites for struggles for hegemony. Both consensus- and conflict-oriented models enable to stress the need for citizens to participate in these processes of dialogue, debate, and deliberation.

The journal's contribution to this debate

In this volume of the Revue des Sciences Politiques et Rélations Internationales, two chapters deal with the concept and the democratic potential of representation. Lorena Păvălan highlights the importance of journalistic representations through her discussion of the work of Mircea Eliade and more specifically through the distinction between the sacral and the profane. Her article allows stressing the unavoidably mythical and ideological nature of media representations, where these media representations have become the object of the struggle(s) to signify. Secondly, Păvălan's text stresses the key role of journalism, which claims to be a sacral system that generates meaning (and truth) for its profane audiences. However sacral these media systems claim to be, they have no direct access to the 'real', and these claims for the sacral suffer from constant cracks and gaps. Arguably, exactly these cracks and gaps open-up the democratic potential of journalism, as a carrier of a plurality of meanings and truths.

Henrieta Anişoara Şerban's article attaches equal importance to the concept of representation. Her analysis of the coverage of the Romanian revolution again

shows the fluidity and the changeability of representational practices. The comparison of the introspective 'press of the dictatorship' and the post-revolutionary press also allows highlighting the embeddedness of mass media within socio-political conjunctures, a point that is often forgotten in traditional communication studies. But most importantly, her article also shows the complexities of representational practices in (new) democracies. What she terms as "noise" rightfully indicates the impossibility to stabilize the instable and to fix the unfixable. From this perspective, the post-revolutionary press is in itself a representation of democracy, through the many voices and noises it now offers.

Nicolae Perpelea brings our attention to the notion of participation, by focusing on political talk shows. By scanning the television landscape, Perpelea's broad picture contains both aspects of participation (participation in the media, and participation through the media). His focus on the public sphere and deliberation explicitly emphasizes the importance of 'television talk' for democracy, as a site where opinions are generated and distributed. But he also points us to the differences in approaches and formats, which not necessarily all serve democracy in the same degree.

Finally, Ana Bazac's chapter takes us one step back, to one of the conditions of possibility for the democratic deployment of the media, namely the limits imposed by the media organization's ownership. If media organizations only serve the economic and political purposes of the happy few, little room for the democratization of the media is left open, and the social system risks becoming clogged up again. Her article shows the depth of the struggles that still need to be waged (all over the world) to protect and strengthen free, responsible and democratic media organizations and media professionals.

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LÉGERS SENTIMENTS SOCIAUX: «BATAILLES» POUR LA RECONNAISSANCE MORALE DANS LES *TALK-SHOWS* POLITIQUES

NICOLAE PERPELEA

A. L'ESPACE PUBLIC *DELIBERATIF*: LA DISCUSSION, L'EMOTION INTERPELLATIVE, LE REGIME D'ENGAGEMENT

En prenant comme corpus d'analyse quelques *talk-shows* politiques de *prime time* de la télévision roumaine, dans cette étude on applique une méthodologie socio-sémiotique pour relever les conditions de possibilité d'une analyse critique de la circularité apparente qui caractérise le *contrat de communication* de la «neo-télévision». Il semble que cette circularité survient si les émotions des téléspectateurs (les sentiments sociaux constituent le noyau des critères de l'*interprétant-citoyen en réception*) forment en même temps l'objet et la base des jugements moraux développés dans les cadres de délibération des problèmes publics animés par les dispositifs télévisuels.

Qu'est-ce qui se passe si les émotions du public effectif ne sont que les traces des *émotions interpellatives* prélevées d'un *destinataire imaginé* (*«citoyens-téléspectateurs» — cible pré-définie par le projet communicationnel mis en œuvre par une instance médiatique*)? Notons en ce sens l'avertissement de B. Williams [1994, p. 315]: «*Aucune conception de la responsabilité publique ne peut correspondre exactement à l'idéal de maturité parce que, entre autres raisons, se tenir pour responsable seulement dans le cas où le public aurait lieu de vous tenir pour responsable n'est pas un signe de maturité*».

Pourquoi donc parler maintenant des émotions? Plus précisément, des émotions individuelles de participation? Les hypothèses interprétatives suggérées par le modèle d'analyse inquiètent principalement par la révélation des situations dans lesquelles ces «émotions standard» sont dans le même temps l'objet et la base d'estimations morales.

Soutenir une émotion de participation à un événement public fait partie de ce processus de constitution du sujet comme individualité participante au monde. Cette procédure a été étrangement mutilée pendant les années de dictature communiste. Ceux qui, pendant des dizaines d'années, ne pouvaient garder les yeux qu'à moitié fermés face à ce qui se passait, ont du préserver avec impuissance un sentiment de *honte publique* qui les a éloignés de la confiance

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de s'accorder des «raisons morales» de participation individuelle. Même si capable de traduire *l'enthousiasme politique des autres* et d'observer certaines émotions collectifs, se donner la responsabilité d'un vrai accord pour participer soi-même avec des émotions morales, nécessite une autre configuration normative de l'espace public. Nous sommes intéresses ici à faire des observations sur ce type d'*accès au respect de soi*, par la participation à un style de délibération qui n'est pas un simple enchâssement de *stratégies de présentation-de-soi* pour éviter d'être exclu d'une communauté politique. On regardera ici comment les talk-shows s'inscrivent dans l'imaginaire comme un modèle public de *l'émotion interpellative* pour arriver à «l'acte pour lequel l'agent est responsable» [Williams, 1994].

Dans ce cas là, on adopte une conception selon laquelle les émotions justifient les croyances axiologiques. C'est-à-dire que les émotions nous permettent d'avoir conscience de certaines valeurs, ou même que les émotions sont des perceptions de valeurs [Elster, 1999; Paperman et Ogien, 1995; Pasquier, 1999; Goodwin, Jasper & Polletta, 2001; Tapollet, 2001].

La recherche présentée ici[1] propose une opérationnalisation, dans un langage socio-sémiotique, du concept de *talk-show* socio-politique. L'idée est de comprendre l'*institution-interprétant* figurée par ce genre télévisuel comme un espace public qui recueille les conditions de négociation d'une structure de visibilité *sui generis:* les normes sociales qui règlent les émotions utiles pour une «action commune».

Du côté de l'*interprétant-citoyen en réception* [Veron,1989; 1994], l'émission est considérée comme un signe *performatif* de la justesse de la délibération collective si son dispositif dynamise des critères et des instruments scéniques nécessaires aux sentiments exprimés par les invités pour être catégorisés comme *dignes d'éloge*.

Du côté des spécialistes en marketing télévisuel, on pourrait dire que le fait qu'une émission de débat résiste en *prime time* est un signal *feedback:* celui-ci atteste l'existence des critères standardisés pour une «grammaire de reconnaissance» par laquelle des collectives de réception peuvent décider si un sentiment a ou n'a pas une valeur morale.

Peut-on espérer qu'une analyse de discours contrastive entre plusieurs dispositifs de débat télévisuel va clarifier la réponse à une des questions capitales qui apparaissent quand on a comme objet d'étude la communication politique dans un régime démocratique et qui se formule ainsi: en quoi consiste la valeur de la *discussion des problèmes* avant la prise des décisions? Pour détailler cette question, il convient plutôt de parler ici de *polyarchie*. Peut-on parler des talk-shows politiques comme d'espaces de délibération spécifiques pour une polyarchie délibérative, c'est-à-dire comme d'un garant d'un certain pluralisme?

L'idée de polyarchie suppose que les citoyens bénéficient d'opportunités de plus en plus diversifiées pour pouvoir exprimer, formuler et faire prendre en compte leurs préférences [Dahl, 1971; Dahl, 1991; Robinson, 1996]. Les critiques [Wood, 1995] de cette représentation *minimaliste* de la démocratie soulignent comment le modèle de R. Dahl s'est écarté de la conception *maximaliste* de la démocratie (dévoilement des rapports de pouvoir; la volonté du peuple et le «bien commun»

sont définies en terme de justice et d'équité sociale). Ce modèle suppose une mise en relation spécifique des systèmes (de pouvoir, lieux de décision, des coordination) ayant les vraies capacités d'«*action unilatérale*». De ce fait, la polyarchie ne prend pas tant en compte les préférences des citoyens eux-mêmes, que les dispositifs permettant de sélectionner les dirigeants, lesquels dirigeants seront responsables du respect des préférences exprimées par les citoyens.

Mais peut-on vraiment dire que ceci est un cas de soit-dit «intensification de la démocratie» par la participation des citoyens-téléspectateurs? Ce concept de «participation», beaucoup plus complexe qu'il n'y paraît, exige une clarification du point de vue sociologique. Nico Carpentier montre les différences qui apparaissent selon que la participation est envisagée du côté de la production ou de la réception. Il construit une typologie basée sur quatre cadres — émancipation, participation, éducation, service public [Grevisse B., Carpentier N., 2004].

De la même manière, on peut essayer d'appliquer un modèle socio-sémiotique des dispositifs télévisuels [Lochard, 1999; Charaudeau, 1997] pour surprendre comment ces nouveaux genres (*talk-shows, reality-shows*) organisent l'émergence de *thèmes* et de «configurations narratives» qui conduisent à la mobilisation de nouvelles «conventions» en ce qui concerne les définitions de ce qui est un problème public, une critique pertinente, etc. Ainsi, nous pouvons essayer d'observer la manière dont sont présentées dans ces dispositifs trois *structures de pertinence* — thématique, interprétative, pragmatique [Quéré, 1990; Cefaï, 1994]. Ainsi, on peut analyser les émissions «de parole» à la télévision comme lieu de *manifestitude* [Perpelea, 2002] de certains cadres de pertinence («trames d'indices de pertinence») qui sont partagés par un jeu de tension entre quatre types d'imaginaires:

1) Un imaginaire de *légitimité institutionnelle* qui pousse à accorder un privilège de la parole à des individus légitimés par un pouvoir de délégation.

2) Un imaginaire de *représentativité socio-politique* qui accrédite les formes de critique sociale qui prennent corps indépendamment de performances langagières des membres des collectivités concernées.

3) Un imaginaire de *vérité rationnelle* qui valorise l'intelligibilité produit par l'engagement des participants dans des activités réflexives, l'intervention de savoir experts, la mobilisation — comme dans la «cité industrielle» [Boltanski, Thévenot, 1991] — des épreuves de réalité techniques (sondages, enquêtes, constitution de panels).

4) Un imaginaire d*'authenticité émotionnelle*. Par un tendance à psychologiser des problématiques sociales et politiques à travers des dispositifs délocalisés qui prélèvent de «misères singulières» [Boltanski, 1996] on privilégie des configurations de «paroles de témoignage» comme des indices de pertinence nécessaires dans la lutte de concurrence entre les définiteurs des problèmes publics.

Par un bricolage entre ces quatre imaginaires on peut constituer un corpus de désignateurs de quatre *thèmes* qui s'incarnent dans les «personnes fictives» qui manifestent des «effets performatifs» par les dispositifs médiatiques: la *Volonté générale* (1+3); la *Société civile* (2+3); les *Personnalités* (1+4); les *Personnes* (2+4).

Exemplifions l'organisation discursive de ces imaginaires dans quelques *talk-shows* politiques. Il s'agit des émissions: «Tucă Show», «La question du jour», «À l'ordre du jour», «Le Parrain», «En parlant avec Adrian Păunescu», «L'heure de la vérité», «100% avec Robert Turcescu», «Bref sur deux», «Pro-Ouest» etc. La plupart de ces débats visent une problématique politique, étant imprégnés d'un *imaginaire de légitimité institutionnelle* (1+3). Les *talk-shows* sont surtout orientés vers la *consécration des personnalités politiques* (1+4) et moins vers la *autoreprésentativité* socio-politique (2+3) ou la *consécration des personnes* (2+4). Nous avons intégré dans l'outil méthodologique conçu par Guy Lochard [1999] une notion définie comme *émotion imaginée*. C'est une espèce d'émotion qui condense les expressions affectives par lesquelles les téléspectateurs obtiennent des informations nouvelles sur les préférences des individus. Notre étude a choisi pour analyse quatre émissions qui appartiennent au genre discursive «débat télévisuel». Le critère de sélection a été l'audience et leur prégnance dans l'*imaginaire moral-politique*.

Un *talk-show* est perçu comme un sort d'espace public «en miniature», mais avec une grande visibilité publique (interpretabilité focalisée, rétention dans la mémoire sociale, etc.). Ces caractéristiques font que le problème de la participation à un débat apparait pour les acteurs sociaux dans le format *perdu ou gagné* de la «théorie des jeux», qui met en évidence le contraste entre la discussion d'une décision avant de la voter et le cas contraire d'une décision votée simplement, sans le bénéfice des discussions. Dans notre cas aussi on peut considérer la question suivante: *quels sont les motifs pour lesquels une entité sociale, un groupe de gens discutent un problème dans un espace public d'une visibilité incontrôlable, au lieu de voter simplement ou de prendre des décisions collectives en suivant des règles qui n'incluent pas la discussion*?

Plus brièvement, prenons un cas ou les participants à un tel débat ne sont pas naïfs, c'est-à-dire ont une identité sociale et médiatique clairement anticipée. Même s'ils sont cyniques, ils ne peuvent pas prétendre de manière logique qu'ils vont mentir systématiquement, et pour cela ils vont au moins prétendre qu'ils ont des arguments/la compétence de la participation à la construction d'un jugement collectif *in all fairness* [Karni, Safra, 2002]. Une traduction roumaine de cette expression anglaise sera plus éclairante: *restons de travers mais jugeons droit*.

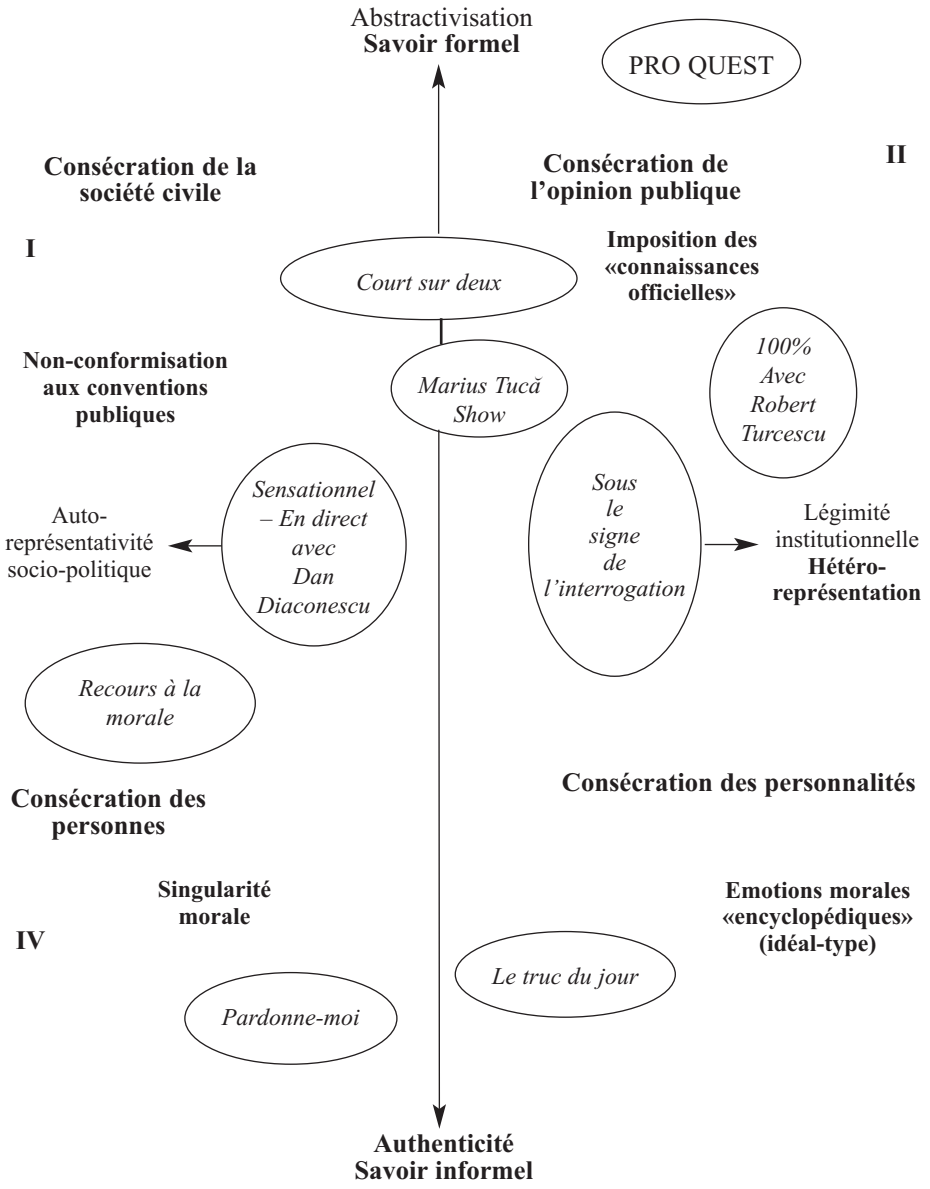
Présentons un set de tels arguments, extraits des études de sociologues et/ou analystes des discours [Amossy, Eggs, 1999; Appel, 1994; Bonnafous, 2001; Elster, Fearon, 1998; Habermas, 2000; Mouchon, 1998]. Leur examination relèvent que pour émettre cette prétention, les participants à un débat doivent admettre explicitement ou tacitement le fait que, s'ils commencent à parler dans le cadre d'une émission télévisée, celle-ci pourrait:

1. forcer le dévoilement de certaines informations privées;
2. renforcer la consistance des points de vue des autres interlocuteurs, donc diminuer l'impact de la rationalité limitée;
3. forcer ou encourager une modalité particulière de justification des prétentions ou demandes, donc contribuer à l'amélioration de l'implantation des décisions;

4. aider à interpréter, aux yeux du groupe représenté, le dernier choix avant la décision, ce qui contribue au renforcement de la légitimité et à la solidarité du groupe;

5. améliorer les qualités morales et intellectuelles des participants;

6. être une procédure formelle, mais absolument nécessaire, de «faire les choses correctement», indépendamment des conséquences de la discussion.



L'une des hypothèses de cette recherche soutient que, dans le cadre d'un *talk-show*, l'encouragement d'un ou de l'autre des arguments ou des compétences discursives énoncées là-haut dépend du dispositif techno-symbolique qui est à la base de la production de l'émission. Pour expliciter cette hypothèse il est utile de préciser une distinction réalisée par J. Cohen (1996) entre discussion et délibération.

La délibération est une forme de la discussion dont l'intention est de changer certaines préférences sur lesquelles les individus s'appuient quand ils décident d'agir. La délibération porte sur un genre particulier de discussion, impliquant attention et sérieux dans le pesement des motivations pour et contre une proposition. La compréhension de la «discussion» ne se fait pas par contraste (c'est-à-dire, elle ne serait pas sérieuse et rationnelle). La délibération est une modalité de la discussion publique qui conduit vers une décision dont la validité se soutient sur des motivations, alors que la *discussion* est un genre plus concret et qui fait recours à un simple jeu de chance de l'information. Je peux dire, par exemple, que «j'ai délibèré en moi-même», mais il est ridicule de dire «j'ai discuté à l'intérieur de moi». Il est fréquent d'entendre chez nos politiciens une expression de genre «J'ai eu, sur ce thème, une discussion avec Monsieur X et nous avons résolu le problème» — comme si nous devons entendre que la production d'un différend venait seulement de l'absence d'une information privée, et qu'en tout cas, ce n'est pas à la portée de tout le monde de connaître plus de détails.

Dans notre analyse nous allons essayer de relever que certains talk-shows privilégient la discussion, d'autres la délibération. Les trois premiers des arguments énoncés sont spécifiques pour la discussion, les suivants pour la délibération. Mais il faut que nous soyons attentifs à la *continuité* entre ces compétences.

Aussi, il faut envisager les effets pervers de ce type d'«éducation» des émotions politiques par les débats télévisuels: en les regardant comme un sort de modèle sociétal, on espère en vain leur diffusion dans les couches profondes de la société. B. Williams nous propose de chercher les traits par lesquels l'on peut distinguer la délibération qui permet d'y voir clair de celle qui serait une *forme sophistiquée de la fuite*.

La théorie morale de B. Williams peut ainsi nous aider à considérer un postulat qui nous dit que dans la société domine une manière de vivre incarnant un idéal sous sa forme minimale et que donc chacun est capable de délibération et d'une maîtrise de soi continue. Observons que nous pouvons substituer ce «chacun» de Williams par «une personne adulte et saine d'esprit». Dans ce cas, on peut se demander cependant si cela revient au même d'avoir une «maîtrise de soi continue» dans un ensemble de personnes qui ne se connaissent pas nécessairement et ne comptent particulièrement les unes pour les autres, que dans une communauté de personnes capables de délibérer ensemble? Pour répondre, Williams identifie trois niveaux de conceptions politiques et sociales[2]. Et nous considérons que l'on peut appliquer ce modèle à l'analyse des émotions imaginées incarnées dans des talk-shows: à conditions de considérer les trois niveaux comme étant *cumulatifs*, et de penser que chaque niveau supérieur demande une application partielle du niveau inférieur. Suivant attentivement l'analyse

qu'on va faire, sera-t-il possible d'émettre l'hypothèse d'une régression partant des arguments 6 et 5 vers l'argument 1, du régime d'estime collective vers le régime du simple contrôle?

Trois régimes d'engagement

1) *Le régime politique du simple contrôle.* Les devoirs moraux étant disparus, la supposition qui produit le vertige imaginaire de ce régime est que la honte n'a pas de valeur morale. Les critères sur lesquels doivent s'appuyer les normes sociales correspondent simplement au constat du type «il fait ceci», «l'autre fait pareil». Tous les comportements sont postulés comme suspectés; mêmes ceux seulement indifférents et/ou ennuyeux sont poussés de recevoir des qualifications binaires — la chose indifférente devienne étonnante, celle ennuyeuse est ridicule. Les dispositifs de ces talk-shows incarnent le désir d'un contrôle public simplist. Par exemple, dans l'émission «*Sensationnel — En direct avec Dan Diaconescu*» la mise en (auto) dérision des invités détruit leur image publique jusqu'à l'état dans lequelle le téléspectateur ressente la rancune à son égard. Le même type de contrôle s'exerce par une *plaisanterie buffoneresque* — dans «Le truc du jour», ou par l'*humour rude* — dans «*Marius Tucă Show*».

Dans ce régime il y a une seule stratégie d'éviter la suspicion de cacher sa honte: se présenter de sa propre initiative devant le juge. Ainsi, montrant qu'on a de la «confiance en soi», le sujet risque même une épreuve presque ordalique — c'est le cas de l'émission «La machine de la vérité» (on utilise un polygraphe) ou «100% avec Robert Turcescu», dans laquelle, après une heure d'enquête qui se réalise policièrement, l'invité se soumet à être valide par le vote — bille blanc/noir — en fonction de la crédibilité de la réponse à une question finale.

2) *Le régime de la reconnaissance*. Ici, l'inquiétude publique qui structure l'imaginaire est réveillée par la *question populaire*: nos représentants, une fois échappés de l'épreuve électorale, sont-ils capables de discerner ce qui est bon/juste? Il s'agit de l'ensemble de «personnes adultes et saines d'esprit» et de «l'opinion publique» qui se préoccupe de «savoir si» le personnel politique a la propension à adapter ses actes aux attentes de la société. Pour montrer qu'ils ont un «esprit sain», les protagonistes invités sur le plateau n'hésitent pas à se soumettre à l'interpellation «grommeleuse» de l'animateur et viennent pour témoigner de leur possible culpabilité. «Un péché avoué est à moitié pardonné» dit-on souvent dans la «culture du pauvre»! L'émission *Marius Tucă Show* semble être un bon exemple de cette sorte d'émotion interpellative.

3) *Le régime d'estime collective.* En quête d'élaboration abstraite d'une situation de justice idéale, les citoyens se préoccupent de savoir si les grandes personnalités ont l'aptitude générale à s'engager dans une réflexion pratique à long terme. Le dispositif, l'animateur et les protagonistes de ces émissions doivent être une incarnation de ce que les citoyens voudraient être idéalement: un compromis entre rationalité, vertu, citoyenneté et individualité. L'émission «*Sous le signe de l'interrogation*» tente, semblerait-il, de se constituer comme un modèle de ce type. Mais finalement, nous pourrions dire qu'elle incarne plutôt l'émotion de la jubilation et de l'adulation de soi.

B. L'ANALYSE SOCIO-SÉMIOTIQUE DES TALK-SHOWS

I. *Sensationnel — En direct avec Dan Diaconescu ou l'acte d'humiliation au lieu de la justice*

Même si le *scénario* est très simple, créé dans le studio, dans ces talk-shows toutes les choses arc-boutent vers un cadre qui signifie une «alter-media» — notons que même le journal TV de cette chaîne s'appelle «*Les vrais nouvelles*». «Oglinda» signifie «Le miroir». D. Diaconescu (D.D.) déclare qu'il a choisi ce nom pour mettre en valeur le principe de son émission: montrer la réalité comme dans un miroir, telle qu'elle est, sans pour autant se montrer lui-même comme un actant de cette réalité. Son principal souci semble être celui de pousser cette «réalité» à faire le plus de «bruit» devant le miroir. Très souvent D.D. prend la parole de cette façon: «Bien, nous allons clore sur ce sujet et faire une pause publicitaire... Mais non, stop, avant cela, je reviens à vous encore une fois, ne pensez-vous pas que nous avons pu laisser échapper un *détail important*...?».

Pour être «pure», l'*interpellation dénonciatrice* se bornera à ne pas faire d'appréciations. Les téléspectateurs interviennent en direct pour «informer»: *Popescu a fait X*, *Georgescu a fait Y*, *Ionescu n'a fait Z*.

D'où vient cette acceptabilité dans l'espace public d'une procédure moralisatrice au sens unique, sans «pair adjacente»? Peut-on parler d'un *spectateur moral* qui ne se compare jamais aux autres et qui même considère une telle comparaison nuisible?

Les invités sont très divers, d'habitude le personnel politique est de deuxième rang: directeurs dans des Ministères, maires des villes; sénateurs qui viennent se justifier de leurs interpellations exceptionnelles dans les séances du Parlement ou se justifier face aux accusations de trafic d'influence; personnel diplomatique babillard; hommes d'affaires sur le point d'être arrêtés; représentants des ONG controversées; «journalistes-sexuels»; personnel de l'administration, de la justice, de l'armée, de la police, des grands clubs sportifs souffrant de «disgrâce»; voleurs notoires; toutes sortes de *victimes de la chasse aux sorcières* — très souvent autoproclamée. Dans le dernier temps ont fait leur apparition même des anciens présidents de la Roumanie.

Comment justifier la présence sur le plateau et la prise de parole de ce genre d'individus? L'animateur passe son temps à rappeler que l'on donne la parole à ces personnes, parce qu'en Roumanie il y a toujours une sorte de *mafia d'establishment* qui entrave les nouvelles formes d'activités[3].

Apparemment les invités parlent au nom d'une nouvelle tendance de la «société civile», ils pensent présenter aux téléspectateurs «la vraie» situation des «institutions» ou le «cas X». En réalité, leur identité est changée: en cachant les *conditions d'énonciation* on leur confère une nouvelle *identité médiatique* — celle de marionnettes qui se donnent en spectacle.

En fin, notons que parmi les invités agrées en *prime time* il y a plutôt des experts marginalisés; abondent les autodidactes, «spécialistes» paramédicaux, astrologues. L'acte de signification se concentre presque exclusivement sur les

caractères des personnages et sur les informations «cachées». Le «jeu» est de plonger une personne ou un fait dans une lumière soupçonnable.

Hypothèses interprétatives

L'émission se veut une sorte d'interface entre ceux qui luttent pour justifier leurs intérêts, leurs normes, leurs valeurs, leurs compromis. Le dispositif semble être spécialement construit pour tourner en dérision toutes ces tendances. Les invités mécontents sont issus d'institutions et d'organisations très diverses, et on ne se pose finalement pas la question de thématiser un problème social ou de résoudre un problème défini comme public.

On voit donc que le fait de situer cette émission dans les cadrans I + II de notre schéma pose des problèmes:

a) Ce jeu «consacre»-t-il vraiment la société civile? Qui a besoin — évidemment hormis l'intérêt d'accroître l'audience — de cette projection dérisoire sur ce qui signifie la «société civile»?

b) Comment le téléspectateur justifie-t-il à lui-même le fait de regarder ce genre d'émission? Quelles sont les normes morales situées dans l'espace de l'opinion publique qui autorisent le fait de regarder?

L'émission propose une *vision de la dérision* sur toutes les conventions, les normes, les actions, les statuts et les rôles sociaux. Le *facteur d'identification* du téléspectateur avec le «délégué» de la mise en scène d'une dérision sociale (l'animateur) correspond aussi à un *désir de vengeance du succès facile* des certains personnages notoires de l'espace public. Comme il n'est pas possible de venger un tel succès, l'acte de la vengeance est «délégué» à l'animateur, mais celui-ci n'a pas non plus l'air de vouloir se salir les mains, et il laisse donc ses invités s'«interpeller» entre eux, c'est à dire sombrer eux-mêmes dans les bas fonds.

Mais il ne faut pas voir ici seulement la projection de la dérision d'un téléspectateur. Dans l'imaginaire incarné dans le dispositif de cette émission, on retrouve également un modèle de citoyen responsable («la personne adulte et saine d'esprit»). C'est celui des personnes soumises à la loi qui n'ont pas nécessairement besoin de se confronter à l'autre, mais plutôt de s'assurer qu'ils *vivent sous un régime juridique* utilisable pour contrôler «ce que les autres ont fait».

II. *Marius Tucă Show — où le Peuple grommelle mais pardonne*

Les sujets sont toujours d'«actualité», ce sont des thèmes qui «font débat», souvent assez «brûlants». C'est un talk-show sans public. Il y a parfois des liaisons téléphoniques en direct avec des appels des téléspectateurs. Les émissions sont faites autour de sujets qui sont nés dans la journée et les invités sont devenus sujets de controverse de par leur notoriété.Un générique dynamique: l'image et microphone type «Larry King». Musique alerte suggérant une émission d'actualité. M. Tucă introduit la thématique de l'émission, en replaçant le contexte et présente les invités. La plupart du temps, il procède à cette présentation avec un visage sérieux, assez sombre. Il arrive qu'il soit plus gai et dans de meilleures

dispositions, mais c'est plutôt rare. Il adopte le plus souvent un air sarcastique qui pourrait nous faire penser à un paysan maussade cédant aux argumentations de l'usurier des graines.

En fin de débat, on tire des conclusions. Mais la discussion peut se prolonger autant que Monsieur Tucă le désire, puisque la direction d'«Antenne 1» ne lui impose pas de limitation de temps. La formule de clôture de l'émission est toujours identique: «*Bonne nuit, bonnes gens*. *Et n'oubliez pas: tenez bon*».

L'identité assumée par le modérateur varie. Il s'identifie comme étant le modérateur (il peut même crier «*je suis le modérateur*»), mais aussi comme un membre du public («*bon, je suis maintenant simplement un homme quelconque ... et dites-moi que puis-je faire dans ces conditions*?») ou parfois il revient à sa profession («*monsieur, je suis journaliste*!»).

Les invites sont personnalités de la vie publique roumaines et étrangères (Le Pen, B. Bardot) ou de personnes qui ont quelque chose à proposer pour résoudre un important problème public. C'est sur ce critère que l'émission se distingue de celle de D. Diaconescu. En effet, les invités de *Tucă Show* semble mieux sélectionnés et appartenir plus à une certaine élite que ceux de D. Diaconescu.

Il est assez rude et souvent étonnant par son manque de politesse: «Sieur...!», «Comme ça!», «Bon, laisse-moi!», «Ordre et discipline!» — s'exclame-t-il pour attirer l'attention d'un invité et l'encourager à finir une phrase. Il arrive souvent qu'il interrompe ses invités avec des blagues mal adressées.

Exemple: Dialogue avec le président de l'Académie Roumaine, Eugen Simion (E.S.):

M.T: En quoi consiste le fait d'être roumain, qu'est-ce qu'un «roumain»?

E.S.: C'est une question difficile, surtout comme ça, ici...

M.T.: Ce n'est pas un problème, on a tout notre temps, jusqu'à 6 heures du matin si vous voulez!

Il peut passer d'une blague à une certaine indisposition en peu de temps. On dit même (l'auteur de ce texte n'a pas vu l'émission!) qu'une fois il a pleuré d'indignation! On ne conteste pas la véracité de cette figure du mépris, mais ça ne nous empêche pas de l'analyser comme une composante de stratégie finale qui contribue à *miner le respect de soi* de ses invites.

Hypothèses interprétatives

Le «sensationnel» de cette talk-show est totalement différent de celui de l'émission de D. Diaconescu qui apparaît comme un «fait en soi». La signification, dans le discours de *Marius Tucă Show*, se constitue à travers le langage des événements (*un fait a un début, un développement et une fin*). Ce discours reconstitue les conditions de possibilité de la transformation d'un *problème social* (ou d'un problème tacite) dans un *problème public*. Le «sensationnel» dépend de cette évolution et de sa réalisation. Ainsi, l'humeur crispée de l'animateur, le fait qu'il grommelle contre les explications («trop raisonnées») des invités ou encore la fréquence de questions du type: «Mais vous, qu'est-ce que vous avez fait pour cela?», suggère au téléspectateur que *les choses auraient pu se passer autrement*.

Heureusement que nous, journalistes, sommes ici pour vous laisser en paix! — ce type de sentence apparaît presque dans chaque émission!

L'émission se déroule autour de la table en «T», autour de laquelle les protagonistes sont positionnés à une distance relativement petite, ce qui accentue le caractère polémique, mais aussi celui de coopération et d'une *intimité obligatoire*, dans cette pièce ronde, symbole de la «boule spéculaire». L'espace spectaculaire, l'espace représenté par le plateau, c'est-à-dire l'espace qui lie les téléspectateurs aux invités est unitaire, continuel et invariable. Le *regard spéculaire* du téléspectateur est invité à commencer par la droite, tandis qu'à gauche de l'écran apparaît le profil de l'animateur. Il occupe une position conversationnelle dominante et, d'un point de vue physique, il donne au téléspectateur l'impression d'être intégré dans la discussion comme *membre ayant une autorité égale* aux autres, même si ces autres sont invités comme professionnels et experts de la situation en débat. Par ce procédé optique, l'œil du spectateur est transformé en «œil spéculateur». Ce qui signifie que le spectateur est entraîné dans un espace où sa réceptivité est activée dans un *dispositif narcissique*.

Par cette enquête spectatorielle, il se prend pour un spectateur hyper-réflexif. Il se voit et il «s'autorise» donc à devenir un auteur et un acteur. Finalement, il devient le spectateur d'un désir d'autorité bon à vendre aux annonceurs.

III. *En parlant avec Adrian Păunescu (Antena 1) — Sous le signe de la question (PROTV) ou du charisme de la personnalité (l'«élite lion») au charisme de la fonction.*

L'émission met bien en valeur la personnalité de son réalisateur, A. Păunescu (A.P). Poète, il animait sous l'ancien régime des spectacles de musique et de poésie de grande dimension. On y chantait ses vers et il accompagnait lui-même la musique en récitant ses poésies, avec sa voix tonnante, qui remplissait les stades et les salles de sport. Évidemment, c'est une personnalité très forte et très controversée. Il est aujourd'hui sénateur.

Qui sont *les protagonistes* de cet espace délibératif? Ce sont des personnalités, des personnes voulant passer pour de grandes personnalités ou des journalistes notoires. Souvent par l'identité médiatique assignée aux invités, A.P. essaie de construire une *identité–résistance* [G. Lochard, 1999] par rapport à quelques membres du grand personnel politique ou culturel liés au régime communiste et dévalorisés et/ou stigmatisés par la presse après la Révolution de 1989.

Les invites principaux jouent la figure d'estime de soi en soulignant leur contribution particulière à la vie sociale, un mode de vie singulier, des aptitudes spécifiques. Rares sont les protagonistes qui osent s'aventurer dans des séquences dialogiques à deux. Ils ne le font que lorsqu'ils sont provoqués et qu'ils y sont contraints par le modérateur. Même quand leur *identité médiatique* est construite sur une *identité sociale* de type hétéro-représentatif, c'est-à-dire qu'ils représentent des grandes institutions sociales (le Parlement, les ministères, les organisations culturelles), ils s'empressent de reconnaître les grands mérites[4] de

A.P. pendant le régime communiste — ce *rôle médiatique* est une condition pour avoir la chance d'être invité une seconde fois.

Tous les composants sont mis en scène pour faire naître le projet d'une *politeia* à laquelle sont consacrées les grandes élites. Voila dans ce sens une courte analyse de la *scénographie.*

Le studio est filmé en cadre large. La caméra fait lentement le tour de l'espace central occupé par un immense ovale, autour duquel se trouvent de nombreux invités. La place centrale est occupée par A.P.

Les mouvements de caméra mettent bien en valeur l'espace ovale-rond, et son essentielle centralité, comme si chaque invité pouvait avoir l'extrême honneur, pour quelques heures de prendre place au sein de la disposition mythique des Chevaliers de la Table Ronde. La caméra participe à la volonté de donner à voir et de faire ressentir l'intégralité de la discussion ainsi que tous les détails. A.P. est fréquemment cadré assis, avec le micro et toujours un de ses immenses livres de poésie à côté de lui, duquel lit de temps en temps. Derrière A.P. se trouve un grand panneau sur lequel est inscrit le titre de l'émission où le nom d'A.P. est bien mis en valeur (blanc sur noir). Les couleurs sont assez sévères, mais élégantes: marron-bois, gris, noir et blanc. Autour du plateau, on distingue d'autres panneaux blancs ou gris sur lesquels sont écrits blanc sur blanc des mots, comme s'ils sortaient seuls de la pierre: *Politique, Voie, Lumière, Liberté, Cité, Feu, Créativité*. A.P: figure grave, figure de la mémoire blessée... *Mémoire — Nation-Présent* — Sobriété, émotion bien préservée, il ne faut rien oublier.

A partir du 1er novembre 2001 A.P. a changé de chaîne de télévision. Il réalise désormais le talk show *Sous le signe de la question* sur PROTV.

Les thématiques les plus fréquemment abordées sont liées à l'intégration de la Roumanie en Europe mais les discussions se contentent souvent (comme dans le cas B) de révéler les grandes traditions européennes de la Roumanie[5].

La grandiloquence est limitée par la nouvelle mise en scène: à la place des panneaux étendards («Feu, ...»), on découvre un studio plus petit avec des murs noirs et de petits écrans bleus type «ordinateur» sur lesquels apparaissent de courts énoncés des sujets mis en discussion. Le public est absent physiquement, mais il apparaît virtuellement: au bout de la table autour de laquelle se rassemblent les invités qui débattent dans l'émission sont disposées des grandes *figurines* verticales en forme de point d'ínterrogation qui forment le *contour de la carte de la Roumanie*.

Hypothèses interprétatives

La signification finale — *le plateau télévisuel comme modèle du travail rationnel des élites pour le Peuple* — est le résultat de quatre moments:

Progressivement, les figurines qui forment le *contour de la carte de la Roumanie* sont occupées par divers invités qui «ont des problèmes» liés aux thèmes de la discussion: inventeurs ou petits hommes d'affaires qui ont des ennuis avec la bureaucratie, des toxicomanes, des gens qui ont perdu leur maison à la suite des lois de la restitution des propriétés, des chômeurs, des malades.

Après «l'entrevue – interrogation» — ressemblant à celle du chef paternaliste communiste — suit un court documentaire: des images témoignant du problème en question, des enquêtes dans la rue, etc.

Les deux moments (l'entrevue – interrogation + l'enquête) viennent comme une préparation de la décision délibérative: sous la direction voluptueuse et autoritaire de l'animateur (sénateur PSD), les invités (en moyenne 8 ou 9 personnalités, experts ou hommes politiques) se mettent au travail. C'est aussi le moment où commence le jeu des caméras: l'angle de vue cadre au niveau des épaules des invités, tout en s'éloignant pour laisser voir le studio qui est très sombre (comme les ombres des innombrables problèmes á résoudre...), avec un espace de travail au milieu qui aurait pour signification: «Attention, nos représentants sont en train de travailler pour des décisions et des lois».

Enfin, il s'ensuit l'apogée du «travail politique»: un reportage fait au bureau sénatorial de A. Păunescu présente des cas dramatiques: chômeurs, gens sans abri, malades qui demandent d'être aidés pour des interventions médicales en occident, représentants des petites villes qui demandent de l'argent et un budget pour pouvoir payer l'eau chaude et le chauffage.

La pulsion identificatrice du téléspectateur visé agit ici à travers un mécanisme d'interaction entre le Soi et les émotions morales. Certains types de personnalité sont plus attirés par le plaisir de se distinguer au centre le l'arène publique, d'autres ont seulement des «opinions originales» et adoptent de rôle de souligner le «*status*» prophétique des premiers. Dans leur modèle sur les «politiques passionnées», Goodwin, Jasper et Polletta (2001) les définissent comme «lanceurs d'alerte» (*whistle blowers*).

On peut observer comment travaillent ici les pulsions de l'imaginaire d*'authenticité moral-émotionnelle*. Il ne s'agit pas d'une simple tendance à psychologiser des problématiques sociales et politiques. Notre analyse doit se concentrer sur les mécanismes d'intrication entre les sentiments affectifs et le sens moral et sur la singularité biographique des acteurs. L'émission fonctionne comme un «dispositif délocalisé» à travers lequel on prélève de «misères singulières» [Boltanski]. Le résultat peut être un transport imaginaire nécessaire à une nouvelle *politique de justesse d'urgence*. La projection télévisuelle de cette politique est soit une simple compassion, soit un don de pitié, soit l'engagement miséricordieux d'un bon samaritain. De tout façon, elle nous re-informe que les caractéristiques heureuse/malheureuse ne sont pas attachées définitivement au dessus des «ensembles sépares» des gens.

C. SENTIMENTS SOCIAUX BIZARRES: HONTE PUBLIQUE SANS SOUFFRANCE MORALE

Ce cadre d'analyse nous a permis une observation spécifique sur les dispositifs de débat télévisuel qui performent une *justesse délibérative,* aidant ceux qui ont des connaissances particulières et une compétence décisionnelle et les amenant à prendre position et à argumenter — c'est-à-dire donner les raisons pour leurs prises de position.

Comme soulignent Moscovici et Doise [1992, p. 9], «ce qui institue le consensus et le rend convaincant n'est pas l'accord mais la participation de ceux qui l'ont conclu». De manière en quelque sorte indirecte, ainsi perçue par son «style de réception collective», ce règne «emo-moral» vise à signifier au «citoyen générique» l'assurance publique qu'il est capable de prendre part au jeu démocratique. Dans la mesure ou ses émotions ne se trompent pas elles mêmes dans une sorte de mauvaise confiance, il se perçoit comme un agent moral capable de poser un jugement autonome et disposé à en rendre raison.

De ce fait, on peut remarquer comme certaines émissions — celles qui se plient sur l'imaginaire politique des couches populaires qui s'exposent au *target* d'audience in *prime time* — ne se structurent pas en dispositifs pour prendre en compte les préférences des citoyens eux-mêmes. Plutôt ont du succès les dispositifs qui exhibent publiquement des critères permettant de sélectionner les dirigeants qui seront responsables du respect des préférences exprimées par les citoyens.

Ainsi nous pourrions nous questionner si les téléspectateurs ne sont pas amènes à traiter la *confiance comme une croyance*: dans la fiabilité d'un certain acteur public, dans la probabilité que celui-ci va faire quelque chose ou qu'il va s'abstenir. Cette chose nous l'avons faite quand nous avons analysé les émissions qui jouent sous les règles du jeu du *régime politique du simple contrôle*. Comme nous avons vu, ses suppositions sont que les devoirs moraux étant disparus, la honte n'a pas de valeur morale et reste comme une ultime solution dans le traitement de la *confiance comme un résidus*: «ce qui reste quand on ne trouve aucune raison décisive de ne pas se fier» [Offe, 1999; Hardin, 1999; Harre, 1999]. Voilà donc une «erreur» dans le célèbre modèle de Boltanski et Thévenot: une cité ou «l'ordre de grandeur» est défini au niveau du «petit». C'est-à-dire, l'imposition d'un nouveau langage éthique *à la carte* pour le marketing politique: la honte sans douleur.

Les règles du jeu du *régime de la reconnaissance* aident les récepteurs à faire un saut dans un état de confiance basée sur des normes standard.

L'honneur et l'admiration sont la «substance» du *régime d'estime collective*. Les téléspectateurs ont déjà l'expérience avec le personnel d'une organisation qui est motivée «*par l'honneur professionnel*». Expérience sûrement aussi rare que les oeufs de paon, mais qui suffit pour assimiler parmi les critères d'inférence une confiance autrement que *standard professionnel* (basée sur les normes). L'honneur que ressent le personnel en accomplissant ses charges d'une manière qui satisfait le client peut ainsi devenir le modèle qui permet le saut avec les yeux fermés vers un autre type de croyance dans «la chose publique».

L'explication de l'apparition de cette «loyauté induite» est basée sur l'argument de l'existence d'un intérêt personnel d'*autostimulation de la sensibilité à la confiance.* C'est-à-dire: il est possible qu'au moins une fois dans la vie on réalise qu'on n'est pas digne de confiance, et pourtant d'agir *comme si* on le serait, et cela parce qu'on cherche l'admiration des autres. À la fin, le fait de nous *exprimer publiquement comme si nous serions dignes de confiance* peut nous rendre

réellement dignes de confiances — dans la mesure dans laquelle ce fait nous motive de chercher à susciter l'apparition de certaines *pulsions d'auto-respect* et de les développer.

Plus brièvement, les nouveaux genres de *talk-shows* offrent la possibilité de manifestation pour un certain type de personnel politique: ceux qui sont motivés d'*agir d'une manière digne de confiance seulement parce qu'ils reconnaissent qu'on leur fait confiance*. Le fait qu'on leur fait confiance devient criant, et donc ils commencent à s'inscrire «au cœur des préoccupations».

NOTES

1. Le texte rédigé ici fait partie d'une étude que j'ai développée dans le cadre de recherche du *Programme CNRS–France*: «*L'identité européenne en question. Espace(s) public(s) européen(s) et dispositifs télévisuels. Approches comparatives des émissions de débat public en Europe*» (2001–2004).
2. Notons qu'on pourrait faire une analyse semblable en suivant le modèle criticiste élabore par Axel Honneth. Il distingue trois types de normes de reconnaissance intersubjective pour une «politique décente» — la bienveillance, le respect et l'estime sociale. Elles sont structurantes pour trois modalités du rapport à soi: la confiance en soi, le respect de soi et l'estime de soi. [M. Canto-Sperber, 1996; H. Pourtois, 2002].
3. Pendant les préparatifs pour lancer la nouvelle chaîne, l'animateur parlait d'une soit dite conspiration de CNA contre «Oglinda» et menaçait de commencer à émettre de Bulgarie. (Il faisait aussi une allusion au fait que pendant le régime de Ceausescu les roumains ont fait des antennes très sophistiquées pour capter les matches de football transmis par la télévision bulgare)
4. Par exemple, on souligne souvent la façon dont il a osé dire à Ceausescu que le Peuple souffrait, que les petits activistes politiques étaient des escrocs ou que les grands inventeurs étaient toujours contraints par rancune, etc.
5. Souvent les invités et surtout ceux qui sont liés au personnel politique du deuxième niveau, essaient de «marquer» les esprits en relevant leur rôle dans l'intégration européenne, tout en critiquant d'autres gens, d'autres partis, d'autres institutions politiques, etc. Comme on ne peut pas dire que l'animateur est un farceur, nous devons reconnaître qu'il essaie une sorte de températion par l'humour et l'ironie — mais par le même geste il tombe dans le piège du faux réalisme.

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EVÉNEMENTS, JOURNALISME, ÉPIPHANIES

LORENA PĂVĂLAN

Ces pages représentent une petite approche de la valeur herméneutique et exploratrice pour le domaine du journalisme de quelques concepts qui jouent un rôle essentiel dans l'œuvre de Mircea Eliade. Aussi, pour illustrer un phénomène contemporain très médiatisé par l'exemple du terrorisme, je ferai usage de quelques affirmations de Jean Baudrillard et d'autres auteurs, consonantes, je le crois, avec celles de Mircea Eliade.

La notion «épiphanie» est empruntée du vocabulaire philosophique de Mircea Eliade (1907–1986), écrivain, philosophe et historien des religions d'origine roumaine, auteur d'une prodigieuse oeuvre, reconnu dans le monde scientifique international par des titres comme: *Traité d'histoire des religions* (1949), *Le mythe de l'éternel retour* (1949), *Images et symboles* (1952), *Le yoga. Immortalité et liberté* (1954), *Forgerons et alchimistes* (1956), *Das Heilige und das Profane* (1957), *Birth and Rebirth* (1958), *Aspects du mythe* (1963), *The Quest* (1969), *Occultism, Witchcraft and Cultural Fashions* (1976), *Histoire des croyances et des idées religieuses I–III* (1976–1983), *Briser le toit de la maison* (1986).

Dans le système de Mircea Eliade, appuie sur le fondement de quelques notions capitales comme: «archétype», «rite», «mythe», «symbole»; «théophanie», «hierophanie»; «christianisme cosmique»; «sacre» et «profane» — l'épiphanie désigne l'apparition fulgurante du sacré dans la vie quotidienne, une présence non-reçue comme telle. Ces apparitions insolites et extraordinaires indiquent la présence «d'autre chose» que le naturel[1]. L'histoire, par exemple, aurait le sens de l'épiphanie d'une condition humaine glorieuse et absolue, selon les analyses présentes par l'auteur dans le livre «Images et symboles»[2]. Donc il y a une continuité entre «l'autre chose» (une histoire «écrite» dans un plan sacre) et l'histoire contemporaine d'une condition humaine déchue (du point de vue de la spiritualité, mais élevée du point de vue des droits terrestres des hommes). L'originalité de l'épiphanie, médiatisant le camouflage du sacre dans le profane plutôt au niveau des grandes catégories de l'être consiste, parmi des autre «propriétés», dans l'abolition dans la durée du temps «épiphanique», de l'apparition de la distinction entre les choses accessibles aux facultés sensorielles et mentales humaines et les choses inaccessibles. C'est un moment capital du parcours de la «reconnaissance» (Paul Ricoeur) par l'interprétation propre à l'origine et à la signification du phénomène. Mircea Eliade accorde beaucoup d'attention

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«artistique» aux épiphanies dans ses romans et nouvelles où les plus importantes choses surviennent dans des moments «épiphaniques» (comme dans «La nuit de saint Jean» ou «Chez Bohémiennes»).

On peut dire, en comparaison avec la hierophanie (qui représente un symbole — signe de la reconnaissance — sacre naturel dans le monde, par exemple le ciel, l'eau, le Soleil, la terre, la végétation) que l'épiphanie représentait un symbole de la culture et de l'histoire. L'épiphanie c'est le signe d'autre chose dans le quotidien humaine le plus banale qui fait l'objet de l'écriture journalistique. La hierophanie se manifeste dans les éléments de l'être et de la nature. Elle est éternelle, elle dépend de la contemplation humaine seulement pour en attribuer des prédicats esthétiques comme le «beau» et le «sublime» ou des catégories de la pensée, comme «causalité», «relation», etc. L'épiphanie est dépendante de la présence humaine, des circonstances, de la contingence, de la proximité, de l'éphémère, bien qu'elle-même médiatise entre le sacre et le profane. Elle este dépendante de la condition de «Dasein», l'existence humaine qui par le langage, par la capacité interprétation des signes de la culture et de l'histoire peut la discerner entre des autres faits passagers. L'épiphanie survient dans le gracieux, dans la grotesque ou dans le ridicule, dans les prédicats esthétiques faibles. La banale que les journaux le défrichent, l'épiphanie journalistique illustre la condition épiphanique par excellence: l'apparition d'une autre chose que le visible dans les faits des hommes, des citoyens. Encore plus, chaque journal peut étaler quelques chose «cachée» dans le quotidien (comme exemple, le titre d'un article de *Formula AS*, no. 705, 2006, «Sauvez les forets roumains !», ou le thème de *Dilema Veche*, no. 134, 2004, «Ancien et nouveau en Bucarest»).

Donc peut être s'agit-il ici de quelque chose gratuite, comme le fait esthétique même. Car l'apparition de l'information journalistique diverse et contradictoire est étroitement liée au phénomène de l'invention du goût à l'âge démocratique (Luc Ferry)[3] et en conséquence les journalistes choisissent les événements (comme les esthéticiens les objets) de n'importe quel domaine de l'existence. Le component journalistique propre aux démocraties a été remarqué par Alain Chartier (soi même un homme de goût) dans son livre «Le citoyen contre les pouvoirs». Au début du XX-eme siècle l'essayiste français envisageait la presse comme l'une des conditions nécessaires de la vie publique vraiment digne d'une humanité composée par des individus qui pensent, en se rapportent aux lecteurs. Mais dans le même temps Alain avertissait que les journaux devraient exercer seulement leur fonction de spectateur et d'arbitre, en renonçant aux autres ambitions[4]. Ce sont des fonctions comme celle d'épater ou celle d'occuper la scène, visible aujourd'hui très souvent en Roumanie dans le phénomène de transformation de la fonction d'information et d'investigation dans une attitude favorable ou non concernant l'évènement ou le fait qui devienne «nouvelle».

Pour parler dans l'esprit de Mircea Eliade, les journaux représentent pour les citoyens (les «profanes») des véhicules par lesquels le pouvoir politique (qui détient les apparences du «sacre») devient intelligible, des véhicules par lesquels l'inconnu (éclatant) ou celui du fait divers deviennent connaissables pour les gens qui ont un intérêt quelconque dans ce sens. Le journaliste serait, dans le

même système de référence, au-delà de spectateur et arbitre, un émissaire, un militant de la transparence. Un médiateur entre une réalité «occulte» et le simple citoyen-lecteur. Le journal même a une fonction de médiatisation entre une réalité sociale, politique, culturel bien que visible, toujours incompréhensible, ce qui fait possible l'analogie avec «l'épiphanie» qui médiatise, par des apparences banales du quotidien entre une essence sacre et le re-connaisseur humain (d'ailleurs, dans le langage, «journal» et «quotidien» ont le même sens). Mircea Eliade même serait journaliste culturel dans sa jeunesse (les années '30) et dans la premier part de son exil français. Ses articles abordent l a primauté du spirituel et du destin culturel, de la dimension métaphysique de l'exil sur le politique.

Dans les journaux reçus comme images pures du quotidien et dans le même temps de l'histoire actuelle, brûlante on peut reconnaître le schème eliadienne du parcours du sacre dans le monde (qui en se manifestent, se cache) par l'intermédiaire de la hierophanie (la manifestation du sacre dans la nature), de la théophanie (la manifestation du sacre par les divinités) et de l'épiphanie. Car n'importe quel objet (naturel ou culturel) peut parler sur l'autre chose par excellence qui est le sacre. Le monde actuel, visible c'est un discours en images sur le monde réel et éternel, invisible. Par l'analogie, l'image, le texte journalistique visible/lisible c'est un discours sur des événements, faits diverses, personnages auquel le citoyen n'a pas accès directement. Donc le rôle et la responsabilité des journaux sont essentielles dans une société démocratique, appuie sur une «culture politique participative», distincte d'une culture politique de type «parochial» ou de type «dépendent» (les termes utiliés par Sidney Verba et Gabriel Almond dans le livre *Political culture and political development*, Princeton, 1965). Car en fonction des images reçues par mass-media le citoyen peut exercer son rôle participatif: cela d'électeur et cela de membre actif de la société civile.

Pour Mircea Eliade c'est l'image comme telle (à savoir, celle qui symbolise quelque chose d'autre qu'elle-même, celle présente qui suggère quelque chose absente), «en tant que faisceau de significations, qui est vraie, et non pas une seule de ses significations ou un seul de ses nombreux plans de référence»[5]. *Loin de diriger l'attention, l'image comme telle offre au lecteur la chance d'interpréter soi-même la réalité auquel elle renvoie.*

Autrement dit, pour le langage journalistique, non le commentaire, mais l'information se révèle comme nécessaire (et suffisante?) pour communiquer «la conte», pour raconter un événement. Quant à son sens caché, le lecteur intelligent, autrement dit le citoyen d'une société fondée sur la connaissance souvent coopère (comme le récepteur de l'œuvre d'art ouverte) avec le journaliste pour dévoiler les causes profondes et les implications plus ou moins graves du fait relaté.

Le sensationnel, s'il est vraiment sensationnel, il n'a pas besoin de commentaire, pour une première instance. Car «traduire une image dans une terminologie concrète, en la réduisant à un seul de ses plans de référence c'est pire que la mutiler, c'est l'anéantir, l'annuler comme instrument de connaissance»[6].

L'appréciation de l'image comme instrument de connaissance (de quelque chose supérieure, suggérant le sacre, dans le dernier instant) permet l'association d'un discours sur l'image journalistique de l'événement comme tel.

Dans le chapitre «Les mythes et mass-media» du livre «Aspects du mythe» Mircea Eliade analyse la «révélation» des recherches recentes sur les structures mythiques des images et comportements imposées aux citoyens par mass-media. En commencent avec les personnages de «comics trips» (une série de dessins qui racontent des aventures sensationnelle publiées par les hebdomadaires américaines) jusqu'à la mythisation des personnalités par le mass media, qui les transforme dans des images exemplaires (diagnostique, je le dirai, valable pour les années '60, parce qu'aujourd'hui mass media est plutôt cynique, obscène, ou ironique dans ce point), le spectateur-citoyen participe au «mystère» et au «drame» et il partage la sensation d'être entraîne dans une action paradigmatique. Encore plus, les mythologies des élites récupèrent le sentiment d'initiation presque disparu dans le monde moderne. Bien que cette «initiation» représente l'impulse d'une mode culturelle imposée par mass-media, par la propagande du nouveauté dans le plan intellectuel et artistique, cette «aristocratie» paradoxale de gauche (une orientation partagée de la plupart des intellectuels) se considère comme appartenant a une «gnose», simultanément spirituelle et laïque, en opposition avec les valeurs officielles et les églises traditionnelles[7].

Pour le citoyen moyen, la lecture des journaux ou la vision d'un télé-journal représente souvent un refuge du quotidien, en soutenant le sentiment de participation à une autre monde, au-delà de sa vie banale, qu'il a l'accès, par les informations que les journaux les livrent à un autre état des choses, qu'il a l'accès à la vérité, à la connaissance des causes et des raisons, au sens des événements et de l'histoire. Qu'au delà du droit de voter, les citoyens ne sont pas ignores, qu'il y a du dialogue entre les citoyens et le pouvoir qui communique ses décision pris avec l'accorde des représentants des citoyens, vis-à-vis de quelles on peut avoir des attitudes contestataires. S'en cultive le sentiment que le pouvoir soit tangible, qu'elle soit mêlée avec la vie des citoyens.

Ce sentiment est soutenu par la «confusion» que les journaux cultive entre les choses vraiment importantes pour la vie humaine et les choses inégaux comme importance et gravite, mais situées du point de vue formel sur le même plan de l'information journalistique. En fait, parmi les nombreux informations, chaque lecteur peut trouver le chose qu'il cherche.

Au-delà des événements majeurs comme l'événement de 11 Septembre du World Trade Center, une sorte du sensationnel par excellence, qui représente pour Jean Baudrillard «un défi symbolique (...) immoral», mais qui «répond à une mondialisation qui est elle-même immorale», autrement dit «au-delà du Bien et du Mal» (*L'esprit du terrorisme*)[8] — il y a des faits apparemment mineurs relatées dans les pages des quotidiens qui traduisent (en trahissant!) des messages importants dérivés de l'histoire actuelle.

Quand un fait de petite importance (comme la vie quotidienne d'un homme d'affaires) détient le monopole de l'information pour quelques jours, ça signifie un échange de paradigme, le commencement d'un nouveau monde, un tremblement valorique. Un monde mort qui sourit dans les images, un excès de présence, des épiphanies en excès.

L'un des phénomènes abordes par la perspective journalistique (au-delà des perspectives politiques, morales, psychologiques, policiers, métaphysiques) et dans le même temps un phénomène qui peut être conçue comme une espèce de l'une des catégories du système de Mircea Eliade, c'est le terrorisme. Le terrorisme, je le croix, c'est l'une des manifestations actuelles de la «terreur de l'histoire». Une apparition. Une méta-épiphanie d'une histoire échouée qui en se manifestant , cache quelque chose grave concernant l'espèce humaine, le sens et peut être le vraiment fin de l'histoire.

Il y a un sens métaphysique du terreur de l'histoire étroitement lié du premier impulse de la pensée philosophique et religieuse: la peur de la morte. En partant de ce point, par nombreuse formations et déformations, se dessinent des autres figures de la terreur, plus ou moins imposantes, plus ou moins dégradées, jusqu'au ridicule (comme la peur de renchérissement des prix).

Comme je l'ai montré dans l'article «La terreur de l'histoire, ou la terreur du politique?» publiée dans «La Revue des Sciences Politiques», no. 1/2005), dans l'acception donnée par Mircea Eliade dans *Le mythe de l'éternel retour*, la terreur de l'histoire signifie les événements historiques vidés de leur signification trans-historique, autrement dit le conditionnement de l'homme par des actions et faits au-delà desquels on ne peut pas entrevoir la volonté divine.

Au contraire, dans une «histoire considérée comme théophanie», les événements historiques qui semblaient absurdes gagnaient une signification religieuse, c'est-à-dire ils apparaissaient comme la manifestation du pouvoir divin.

Mircea Eliade est arrivé à cette conception en faisant une comparaison entre deux types d'humanité, à savoir l'homme des civilisations traditionnelles (l'homme archaïque, qui «avait à l'égard de l'histoire une attitude négative») et l'homme de la civilisation moderne (l'homme historique, «qui se sait et se veut créateur d'histoire»)[9].

Pour un homme appartenant aux cultures traditionnelles (remarque Mircea Eliade en étudiant les mythologies), «vivre» signifie la conformité aux archétypes, c'est-à-dire respecter la «loi» qui est la traduction d'une révélation «des normes de l'existence faite par une divinité ou un être mythique»[10]. Il n'y a pas de «terreur de l'histoire» dans un tel cadre, dans lequel «la souffrance en tant qu'événement, en tant que fait historique»[11] a du sens.

Les catastrophes cosmiques (sécheresse, inondation, tempête, etc.), les invasions (incendies, esclavage, humiliation), les combats et les guerres se retrouvaient dans un prototype, ou dans un ordre dont la valeur indéniable faisait qu'elle ne soit ni gratuite, ni absurdes.

Dans la conception archétypale, par l'acceptation d'une logique extra-humaine, l'homme était libre de recréer l'univers à l'occasion de chaque rituel qui répétait une histoire sacrée.

Maintenant, les inondations, les tempes, les tremblements de terre font le sujet des relations de quotidiennes. Faisceaux des significations religieuse auxquels beaucoup de journalistes accordent les significations d'un spectacle sensationnel, cruel et cynique et duquel les politiciens extraient des sources de capital

électoral, par leur solidarité conjoncturelle et par leur compassion hypocrite. La décomposition de la réalité par des images de la souffrance et la misère, par des détails sensationnels qui surgie le dérisoire de la condition humaine ont premièrement l'intention de maintenir le citoyen «prisonnier» devant la télé ou dépendent d'une «catharsis» réalisée par la lecture du journal.

Dans la perspective historiciste, post hégélienne, la liberté implique l'existence «historique» et alors «la liberté de faire l'histoire en se faisant lui-même»[12] est propre à l'homme moderne. Mais, d'autre part, «la pression de plus en plus puissante de l'histoire contemporaine»[13], «dénuée de signification»[14] est ressentie comme «terreur de l'histoire».

Car la liberté «tend à devenir inaccessible à mesure que cette époque devient plus historique, nous voulons dire plus étrangère a tout modèle trans-historique. D'une manière naturelle, le marxisme et le fascisme, par exemple, doivent aboutir à la constitution de deux types d'existence historique: celle du chef (le seul vraiment libre) et celle des adhérents qui découvrent dans l'existence historique du chef non pas un archétype de leur propre existence, mais le législateur des gestes qui leur sont provisoirement permis»[15].

La solution que propose Mircea Eliade à l'homme moderne pour se défendre contre la terreur de l'histoire est l'acceptation d'«une liberté qui prend sa source et trouve sa garantie et son appui en Dieu»[16]. En polémique contre l'existentialisme de facture marxiste, Mircea Eliade trouve que «toute autre liberté moderne, quelques satisfactions qu'elle puisse procurer à celui qui la possède, est impuissante à justifier l'histoire; ce qui, pour tout homme sincère a l'égard de lui-même, équivaut à la terreur de l'histoire»[17]. On pourrait se demander, avec Mircea Eliade: «Quelle consolation trouverions-nous à savoir que les souffrances de millions d'hommes ont permis la révélation d'une situation limite de la condition humaine, si par delà cette situation limite, il n'y avait que le néant?»[18]. Mais un tel désespoir n'est pas provoqué par «l'existentialisme humaine. Il s'agit plutôt d'une conséquence répétable (non dans l'horizon des archétypes, répétition qui, on le voit, ne peut être dépassée) de la présence humaine «dans un univers historique où la quasi-totalité des êtres humains vit en proie à une terreur continuelle (même si elle n'est pas toujours consciente»[19].

Le sentiment de terreur propre à l'homme actuel est produit non seulement par l'absence du sens des événements historiques, sans aucune justification dans le plan divin, mais par l'inconnu, l'imprévu et l'inexplicable qui se trouvent à leur origine, dans le cas du terrorisme, par exemple.

Qui sont, à vrai dire, les terroristes, qui sont leurs maîtres, quels sont leurs motifs réels d'agir, même s'il y a des attentats revendiqués par des organisations comme Hamas ou Al-Qaeda?

Soit qu'il s'agit du terrorisme arabe (afghan ou irakien), du terrorisme irlandais, espagnol, ou italien, au fondement du terrorisme il y a un problème politique.

En même temps, le «terrorisme» comme notion et comme re-construction journalistique du réel «participe» à la définition «épiphanique» eliadienne de la condition humaine échouée dans une histoire cruelle et absurde.

Pour Jean Baudrillard, par exemple, «le terrorisme, comme les virus, est partout. Il y a une perfusion mondiale du terrorisme, qui est comme l'ombre portée de tout système de domination, prêt partout à se réveiller comme un agent double»[20]. Il est possible pars que la balance du Bien et du Mal propre a l'univers traditionnel est rompue «à partir du moment où il y a extrapolation totale du Bien», «et c'est comme si le Mal reprenait alors une autonomie invisible, se développant désormais d'une façon exponentielle»[21]. Le «bien» et le «mal» comme symboles morales, que les quotidiens les pressentent pour le citoyen-lecteur-spectateur.

Un acte terroriste est (dans la vision de Jean Baudrillard) un «événement symbolique d'envergure mondiale, c'est-à-dire non seulement de diffusion mondiale, mais qui mette en échec la mondialisation elle-même»[22].

Qui seront les victimes du terrorisme dans l'avenir plus ou moins proche? Voila une question qui impose l'analyse d'«une structure formelle qui articule la négation de la réalité commune, la cohérence logique et la réduction de la politique ont la violence»[23].

Mais aussi un thème de recherche digne d'un «laboratoire de la peur». Car le terrorisme est abordé dans bien des perspectives (politiques, juridiques, journalistiques et policières), «mais ses mécanismes, son mode d'action sur le public, ou ses ressorts psychosociologiques, si l'on préfère, restent encore insuffisamment explorés»[24]. Pierre Manoni a appréhendé le terrorisme comme technique de persuasion. En analysant les états émotionnels impliqués dans le terrorisme, autrement dit le passage de la peur à la terreur, Pierre Manoni conçoit le terrorisme comme «névrose expérimentale» et aussi comme «psychose collective»: «Dans les grandes cités modernes où intervient le terrorisme, toutes les conditions favorables au développement d'une psychose collective sont réunies. On y retrouve les principaux éléments qui, d'après Georges Heuyer permettent aux psychoses collectives de naître: 1 – l'idée fausse, 2 – la peur, 3 – les conditions du groupe et du milieu»[25]. C'est pourquoi la victime témoigne d'une attitude caractérisée par «l'inquiétude chronique, l'amoindrissement des facultés d'adaptation et la tendance est s'en remettre à d'autres pour prendre des décisions et organiser les résistances»[26].

Il y a aussi un «effet pervers» du terrorisme, spéculé par les gouvernants, même s'ils sont aussi des victimes du terrorisme: «Les actions terroristes seraient notamment l'occasion, pour les dirigeants politiques, de faire oublier provisoirement les crises, ou du moins d'en amortir l'effet en profitant habilement du bruyant théâtre terroriste qui captive les attentions pour masquer certaines difficultés économiques ou sociales du moment. L'attention de la population étant polarisée par les attentats, elle se trouve, de ce fait, moins sensible aux autres problèmes. Les pouvoirs administratifs peuvent même utiliser les attentats pour donner le change et éviter l'aggravation d'une crise sociale, en déplaçant l'attention du public sur les actes de terrorisme»[27].

Et dans ces cas, plus ou moins conscients, les dirigeants politiques font le jeu des terroristes, comme l'a remarqué Michel Wieviorka: «Le terrorisme est un spectacle (...) et les terroristes l'on bien compris, ils savent que leurs actes seront

amplifiés par les médias, qu'il constitue une offre parfaitement adaptée à la demande, et ont acquis un savoir-faire qui autorise à parler de stratégies médiatiques»[28].

Le terrorisme (un spectacle très médiatisé) joue sur le registre de l'émotion, plus que sur celui de la raison et s'il y a un sens pour les victimes ainsi que pour les spectateurs dans les actes terroristes, il s'agit seulement d'un sens textuel (dans une acception sémiotique très générale selon laquelle le monde entier avec chaque élément composant est un texte).

Les journalistes sont en quête de ce sens (même s'il n'y a aucun sens des événements) et par leurs dénominations différentes des terroristes ou des attentats ils font un mélange entre la fiction et la réalité. Parmi les dénominations du terroriste et de l'attentat il y a des dénominations justificatrices («les humiliés et les offensés», les «résistants», les «combattants») et aussi des dénominations amorales qui brouillent la distinction commune entre bien et mal, consignées par Roselyne Koren. «Les grands seigneurs de l'attentat», «le club des *nec plus ultra* de la terreur en société», «les chefs historiques», les «membres éminents» (des Brigades Rouges), «les intraitables», «les incurables romantiques», «le légendaire Carlos» — semblent, d'après Roselyne Koren, «combler les aspirations épiques d'un auditoire en mal de légendes»[29].

Par les «machines textuelles» les journalistes, tout comme les politiciens jouent «le jeu que l'idéologie terroriste veut lui faire jouer», même si «aucun combat pour la liberté ne justifie qu'on tue aveuglement, *a fortiori*, dans les nations qui jouissent des démocraties parlementaires», même si «le terrorisme n'est pas un langage, ni l'ultime ni le seul recours des causes désespérées, mais le contraire du langage: la barbarie»[30].

Quant aux terroristes, Jean Baudrillard a souligné la paradoxale absence du sens dans leurs actions: «Ces terroristes échangent leur mort contre une place au paradis. Leur acte n'est pas gratuit, donc il n'est pas authentique», car au-delà de leur croyance, «tout cela — la cause, la preuve, la vérité, la récompense, la fin et les moyens — est une forme de calcul typiquement occidental. Même la mort, nous l'évaluons en termes d'intérêt, en termes de rapport qualité-prix. Calcul économique qui est un calcul des pauvres, et qui n'ont même plus le courage d'y mettre le prix»[31].

Calcul économique, calcul psychologique — «le terrorisme l'a parfaitement compris»: il n'arrive à «l'action sur les corps que pour manipuler les esprits»[32] — ou sémiotique, le terrorisme demande, comme solution, une réplique dialogique: «Car faire face au terrorisme, ce n'est pas seulement applaudir aux succès de l'antiterrorisme. C'est aussi être sensible aux problèmes que la barbarie de la terreur et du meurtre vient signifier, et être soucieux de leur apporter un traitement politique fermant la voie à la violence, en ouvrant ou en élargissant celle du dialogue démultiplié et de la négociation, aussi conflictuels soient-ils»[33].

Mircea Eliade avertissait déjà dans les années '60–'70 (par son oeuvre en général, mais spécialement dans l'étude «Un nouvel humanisme») que la compréhension de l'autre serait la seule solution pour garder l'équilibre du monde et pour conquérir la paix: «D'une part, les peuples de l'Asie ont récemment fait

leur rentrée sur la scène de l'histoire et, d'autre part, les peuples dits primitifs se préparent à faire leur apparition à l'horizon de la grande histoire. En ce sens ils cherchent à devenir les sujets actifs de l'histoire au lieu de ses objets passifs, rôle qu'ils ont tenu jusque-là. Mais, si les peuples d'Occident ne sont plus les seuls qui ont fait l'histoire, leurs valeurs spirituelles et culturelles ne vont plus jouir de la place privilégiée (...) Ces valeurs sont maintenant analysées, comparées et jugées par des non-Occidentaux. De leur côté, les Occidentaux sont de plus en plus conduits à étudier, à analyser et à comprendre les spiritualités de l'Asie et du monde archaïque. Ces découvertes et ces contactes doivent se prolonger dans le dialogue. Mais pour être authentique et fertile, ce dialogue ne doit pas se limiter au langage empirique et utilitaire; le vrai dialogue doit porter sur les valeurs centrales de la culture de chaque participant»[34].

Etre citoyen d'un état entraîne au-delà des avantages des droits de l'homme, de droit de participer à la vie politique, de la liberté, de l'égalité, de la tolérance des éléments qui appartiennent au sphère du notion de citoyenneté implique donc, la vertu civique. Dans une société raisonnable, la suprême autorité consisterait dans la raison même; dans l'acceptation du discipline de la raison qui nous obligerait de traiter les semblables comme égaux. Ce principe serait l'une des «explications» du «déclin de l'altérité radicale» (un des notions utilisée par Jean Baudrillard) auquel on assisterait aujourd'hui. Parce que l'idée des rapports avec les autres comme égaux fait possible une idée de citoyenneté sans frontière. Donc le respect universel de la vertu civique de la raison qui implique dans le même temps le respect de l'homme et le respect de l'autorité.

Autrement, nous resterons des spectateurs ou des victimes d'un continuel mouvement de réponse (même dans ses apparences spontanées et arbitraires) d'une terreur organisée avec des moyens capricieux, à une terreur organisée selon toutes les règles de la pensée et de l'ordre technique, celle du politique.

Théoriquement, les sociétés démocratiques garantissent les «conditions de possibilité» pour la transparence des «épiphanies» du terrorisme et de n'importe quelle pouvoir symbolique ou réelle, grâce à l'attention orientée des journalistes envers les événements significatifs, grâce à leur bonne croyance et ont leur talent de communiquer aux citoyens, aux lecteurs un message difficile à décoder dans la multitude des faits quotidiens du monde actuel.

Les actes terroristes, ces évènements appartenant a un scénario destiné à exhiber par des moyens violents comment on peut exercer une pression politique desésperée sur ceux qui à leur tour en exercice une pression politique d'autre nature, suggèrent, en fait, quelque chose objective: la pression que l'exercice de l'histoire sur l'humanité.

Dans ce «spectacle» (notion qui suggère dans la vision de Mircea Eliade le moyen d'être des événements historiques) aux journalistes le reviennent le rôle d'en soutenir la «chronique» pour «la première» auquel ont assistaient, d'avancer des présuppositions concernant l'effet qu'il aura sur les spectateurs, concernant l'importance des faites des coulisses (de l'événement majeur et dans le même temps du fait diverse), de qualifier du point de vue (morale et esthétique — le jeu peut-être vulgaire ou noble, sublime ou absurde) le jeu des acteurs, d'informer

ceux qui étaient absents de l'événement. La métaphore de théâtre comme univers fictionnel de reconstruction d'une portion du temps, comme système de langage c'est très suggestive, on sait, d'après le «theatrum mundi», le monde comme spectacle de l'époque baroque. Pour Mircea Eliade (dans le roman *19 Trandafiri* (*Roses*) le théâtre c'est une méthode politique. C'est-à-dire, en s'adressant au citoyen-spectateur, il véhicule (dans le cadre des régimes totalitaires, spécialement) un message subversive pour les dirigeants politiques. Le postmodernisme mélange les styles culturels.

Le journaliste, dans les sociétés démocratiques (ou post-démocratiques), fait publique ce message pour une population nombreuse et parfois l'en déchiffre, en traduisant l'épiphanie.

NOTES

1. Mircea Eliade, *Tratat de istorie a religiilor* (*Traité d'histoire des religions*), Bucarest, Humanitas, 1992, p. 36.
2. Mircea Eliade, *Images et symboles*, Paris, Gallimard, 1952, p. 45.
3. Luc Ferry, *Homo Aestheticus. L'invention du goût a l'age démocratique*, Editions Grasset et Fasquelle, 1990.
4. Alain (Emile Chartier), *Le citoyen contre les pouvoirs*, Paris, Aux Editions du Saggitaire, 1926, pp. 12–15.
5. Apres Matei Calinescu, *Imagination et sens. Attitudes «esthétiques»,* dans «Les Cahiers de l'herne», dirigé par Constantin Tacou, Edition de l'Herne, 1978, texte traduit de l'anglaise par Marie-France Ionesco, p. 366.
6. *Ibidem*.
7. Mircea Eliade, *Aspecte ale mitului* (*Aspects du mythe*), Bucarest, Univers, 1978, pp. 173–177.
8. Jean Baudrillard, *L'esprit du terrorisme*, Paris, Editions Galilée, 2002, p. 20.
9. Mircea Eliade, *Le mythe de l'éternel retour. Archétypes et répétition*, Paris, Gallimard, 1969, p. 158.
10. *Ibidem*, p. 112.
11. *Ibidem*.
12. *Ibidem*, p. 174.
13. *Ibidem*, p. 159.
14. *Ibidem*, p. 112.
15. *Ibidem*, pp. 175–176.
16. *Ibidem*, p. 180.
17. *Ibidem*.
18. *Ibidem*, p. 179.
19. Jean Baudrillard, *L'esprit du terrorisme*, Paris, Editions Galilée, 2002, p. 17.
20. *Ibidem*, p. 22.
21. *Ibidem*, p. 9.
22. Philippe Raynaud, *Les origines intellectuelles du terrorisme*, cf. François Furet, Antoine Liniers, Philipe Raynaud, *Terrorisme et démocratie*, Pais, Fayard, 1985, p. 40.
23. Pierre Manoni, *Un laboratoire de la peur, terrorisme et média*, Paris, Editions Hommes & Perspectives, 1992, p. 11.
24. *Ibidem*, p. 201.
26. *Ibidem*, p. 213.
27. *Ibidem*, p. 228.
28. Michel Wieviorka, *Face au terrorisme*, Editions Liana Lévi, 1995, p. 86.
29. Roselyne Koren*, Les enjeux éthiques de l'écriture de presse et la mise en mots du terrorisme*, Paris, L'Hartmann, 1996, p. 244.
30. *Ibidem*, p. 258.
31. Jean Baudrillard*, op. cit.*, p. 34.
32. Pierre Manoni, *op. cit.*, p. 219.
33. Michel Wieviorka*, op. cit*., p. 107.
34. Mircea Eliade, *La nostalgie des origines. Méthodologie et histoire des religions*, Paris, Gallimard, 1971.

NOISE *VERSUS* DIALOGUE. INVESTIGATING THE REPRESENTATION DIMENSION IN THE CONTEXT OF THE ROMANIAN MEDIA IN DECEMBER 1989 AND JANUARY 1990*

HENRIETA ȘERBAN

This paper identifies the "turns" in the contents and ideology, in the discourses and debates of the Romanian printed press, *before* and *after 22nd December 1989 — the Romanian revolution*. The methods used in this study are a qualitative content analysis and a comparison between the terms and themes I have followed in the texts of the front page articles in: "Scînteia" (which becomes after 22 December 1989, "Adevărul"), "Informația" (which becomes after 22 December 1989, "Libertatea") and "România Liberă", during 15th December 1989 and 15th February 1990. Thus, I have conducted a comparative approach concerning the presence and frequency of the key words before and after 22nd December 1989. I have investigated the editorials — the body text and the titles — and, generally, the front page of each of the above-mentioned newspapers, for the stated period, and I have considered the photographic material on the front pages, too.

The terms and themes that I have selected as the most frequent, were then classified as either laudative or critical in their attitude, in order to highlight after the fact the balance or the lack of balance between the relatively democratical and the relatively undemocratical discourses[1] 'agitating' the world of the Romanian printed press after 22nd December 1989.

To introduce the reader into the atmosphere I shall start by inviting her to imagine the Romanian flag. Today, it is a tricoloured flag (with red, yellow and blue). Under communism it had in the middle symbols of worker's and peasant's power, yet not the sickle and hammer and not solely the red star, but a landscape surrounded by a crown of wheat spices and, above all that, the red star. This was the Romanian emblem of communism on the tricolour. Then, during the days of the revolution, in December 1989, two hundred years after the French revolution, the peoples have made a hole in the middle of the flag. The flag of the Romanian revolution was thus a tricoloured symbol with a hole in the middle. It had an empty and, we can infer from that, a free spot in the middle. That 'nothingness' was a symbol of freedom, silent, yet the most powerful of all the symbols of the

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noisy Romanian revolution and, as we can notice, a revolutionary symbol as well. It meant the change of a political regime and it was a violent revolutionary symbol at the same time: the old was not reformed, it was not whitewashed, but it was cut out entirely. S. Zizek talks of it as of a sublime image, indeed, in Kantian terms, of the political movements of the last years. He talks about the scene where the revolutionaries wave the revolution flag with the cut off emblem. For him there it was an unprecedented concentration of the open character of a historical situation in its becoming.

Two are the words that have influenced the history of Romania immediately after December 1989: "revolution" and "democracy". These gained the meanings of "liberation" and "freedom" in relation with the events of December 1989 and January 1990, but also in relation with all the following events describing transition in Romania. Associated with the hope to guarantee the rule of law, human rights, private property, European integration — in other words, associated with the hope for a free, dignified and decent life — these words have raised the expectations concerning the immediate future of the Romanian people to such high standards that the slow and difficult progress of the Romanian transition to democracy eventually brought disappointment. Such popular bitterness made it so that "revolution" began to mean, "daydream" and "democracy", "riot".[2]

"Revolution" is neither the unique nor the most important of the words employed by the all encompassing dictatorial speech "hijacked" from its meanings to serve the "Hosanna!" paid to the General Secretary of the one and only communist party. But this word becomes very important in the ideological turn that took place after 22nd December 1989. The analysis shows that "revolution" and "democracy" are the only key words promoted from a circumstantial, and metonimic importance, to an essential importance. We assist at the propulsion of "democracy" as main positive rhetorical key word in the Romanian printed press, as a leading concept of a new political universe of significance. It is the only term used uncritically by the democrats as an entirely positive term and via the same semantic logic, it was used by the nostalgic of the communist regime as entirely negative, yet another word for "disorder" and for the lack of state authority. With wooden tongue, the freedom of speech was transformed into a permission to speak, granted by the Party, and only to talk about a perfection to be considered already attained, and which is on the brink of more achievements to come for the people of "the great leader". This is the political context for the press documents studied.

Before 22nd December 1989, such a metonymic relation was taking place, for instance, between the terms "revolution" and "Nicolae Ceauşescu". Often there were used other terms in such ideological constructions, very high up situated terms in the hierarchy of indoctrination, such as "party" and "people". If the semantic metonymic relationship between two terms like, let's say, "rose" and "love", is acquired through a long period of human communion negotiations that between "revolution" and "Nicolae Ceauşescu" was imposed through indoctrination. In fact, the same relation was established between any other term that could be ideologically exploited and the ever-ideological superlative represented before 22nd December 1989 by the key words "Nicolae Ceauşescu". "Revolution" was

not the most used in this role, abused being, for instance, the words "party" and "people" (that only after 22nd December 1989 shall gain back their semantic dignity within the playful political discourse).

Although in the material available for the analysis the term "revolution" is rarely mentioned — either with the meaning of a militant for the "party and people", or in the context of the often talked off but less perceived technical and scientific revolution — I have considered the absence of frequency relevant for the political situation before December 1989 events. Romania was passing through political and economic crises that did not fit the optimism of the "permanent revolution". Such a situation can be described starting from the printed political discourse as well, given the relation between discourse, thinking and reality present at all modern and contemporary thinkers, from Piaget and Chomsky, to Murray Edelman and John Fiske. Political discourse in the printed press of the period is rigid, poor, formal and ambiguous. Wooden tongue discourse[3] was abolishing both, thought and reality.

From this perspective, the title of the first part of this study is as well suggestive as it is exact: "The Press of Dictatorship, Talking to Itself". This title is a thesis, to be demonstrated interpreting the frequencies of the key terms from the first page of "Scînteia" (abbreviated *S,* which becomes after 22 December 1989, "Adevărul"), "Informația" (abbreviated *I,* which becomes after 22 December 1989,"Libertatea") and "România Liberă" *(RL)*, during 15th December 1989 and 15th February 1990.

The Press of Dictatorship, Talking to Itself

From the two most important texts "The Speech of Comrade Nicolae Ceaușescu at radio and television" (21st December 1989) and "The Presidential Decree concerning the Institution of the State of Necessity over Timiș County" (21st December 1989), the results show obviously the fear of people, felt by the dictatorial family, after the revolutionary events at Timișoara. Initially, all the press was silent about these events and then these two speeches were printed. Beyond the spectacle of the love of the people the dictatorial family was not as smug and optimistic as presented in the journalistic photos of first page during 15–22 December, but was terrified.

In the period 15–22 December 1989, I have studied 16 articles (4 from *Scînteia,* 6 from *Informatia* and 6 from *România Liberă*) and the front-page reports covering almost all first pages about the same propagandistic achievements of the working class. Anything made it to print but the Timișoara events. Iran presidential visit becomes therefore big news, thoroughly covered, to distract attention from the first signs of civil disobedience, already national knowledge in narrow circles.

The content of the texts and even the titles are pretty much the same in all the analyzed newspapers. The text merely repeats the title in various phrasings. All the key words are capitalized propagandistically: the words are only superlatives and either praising ('positive connotations') or incriminating ('negative connotations') people and situations.

Following the hierarchy of the key terms from the titles I have noticed that the total is of 11 key terms all with positive connotation, repeated 23 times. Thus, the key term "Nicolae Ceauşescu" appears most in *RL* newspaper. Its percent is 13% in RL and it is the biggest percent of all "praising", followed by 9%, as well for "Nicolae Ceauşescu" in the titles from *I* and *S* and by other key words such as "Iran", "MAN"[4] and "Congresul al XIV-lea". As well, in *RL* the tendency was to include many more key terms in the titles than in the other newspapers (with 7 more than in *I* and with 9 more than in *S*).

Another interpretative line I have approached was to register all key words from the texts of the articles during 15–22 December 1989, and study their frequencies to identify tendencies and compare the outcomes with those from the study of the titles.

The total is 15 key terms, mentioned 186 times, all with positive connotations. My explanation is that the propagandistic red tape imposed by the party did not permit the employment of too many negative connotation terms, unless it was about some exceptional situation. As I have mentioned earlier, the party considered that it brought the people already in an almost perfect state, in an almost perfect society, and that in this sense the revolution was successful and completed in Romania. The very few negative situations should appear only rarely and only to prove the ability of the party to correct them easily.

Almost all important propagandistic key terms ("Nicolae Ceauşescu" in "MAN" and "Congresul al XIV-lea") are present in *S* newspaper. Propagandistically, the same key words are repeated over and over again for indoctrination purposes. Of course, the biggest frequency is for the term "Nicolae Ceauşescu", that is 31% from the total of 186 positive mentioning much more than 24% registered for the key word "country", double compared to "socialism", four times more than "PCR"[5], six times more than "sovereignty" and 28 times more than "working people". This situation only confirms the fact that the written press in Romania was before 22 December 1989 an instrument for the cult of personality of Nicolae Ceauşescu and *not a medium of society communicating to itself*.

The outcomes corroborated and interpreted show that we have during 15–22 December a printed press servile to the dictatorship, a dictatorship speaking to itself mirroring an ideologically constructed reality to bring hosanna to the dictator and his regime. The printed press was mainly printed for the dictator after his indications and norms; in this sense, it was a sort of monologue.

The Printed Press as a "mirror" of dictatorship[6]

Analyzing the same key words from "The Speech of Comrade Nicolae Ceauşescu at radio and television" (on the 21st December 1989) it appears that the upheavals are assimilated to that in 1968 in Czechoslovakia as if foreign forces invade Romania, as it was the situation with that neighbor country 21 years ago. The most important key words in the order of frequency are: "the country", "the citizens", "PCR", "The Communist Union of Youth", "trade unions", "the retaliating imperialist circles". The terms are caught in an ideological

communication mechanism that is opposing the forces of the regime (such as "the citizens", "PCR", "The Communist Union of Youth", "trade unions"), to the phrase "the retaliating imperialist circles", so the former should save "the country" from the latter. The text sustains as well a metonymic relation where the former enumerated terms send to the 'actual savior', that is, to "comrade Nicolae Ceaușescu". There are 120 positive key terms mentioned in total in the front-page articles of the three newspapers during 15th of December and the 22nd of December. The highest frequency is for the word "country", with a 27.5% from this total (of 120 positive key terms). "The citizens" has a frequency almost as high as the "country", with 25%. My interpretation is that the text of the speech attempts to make the citizens identify with the country and rise to protect it, and the country's leader.

The term "the citizens" is made explicit through other key terms granted with a positive value like "PCR", "The Communist Union of Youth", "trade unions". Interestingly, those have the same frequency and percent of the total terms that of the negative forces, "the retaliating imperialist circles". Therefore I can infer that there is still optimism from the part of the dictator. As threatening these negative forces are portrayed, given the fact that they resort to "some antinational, terrorist actions as to fascist destructions", these negative terms amount only 12.5% as their positive counter-parts. Contradictory, the text of the speech condemns, in a vehement way, events; it would like to convince the readers that are of no consequence. In the same contradictory manner the speech is a vehement appeal to the citizens at the same time insisting against the citizens' panic.

The positive key terms together amount to 80 percent from the total of the key terms, therefore the speech has a general optimistic tone. Using a general ideological mechanism, the speech first threatens and then calms down the masses in order to make the people trust their leader comrade Nicolae Ceaușescu and his party, even more. The speech attempts to mobilize the people and at the same time to make them identify with the party and the leader, trusting that the antinational forces are nothing to fear after all, considering the power of the socialist forces.

The fear of people

"The Presidential Decree concerning the Institution of the State of Necessity over Timiș County" (21st December 1989) *is a premiere in the journalism of dictatorship.* The act is sober. At the manifest level of communication it concerns some local actions to be sanctioned promptly and in an unproblematic manner. At the latent level, indirectly, what is being communicated is that the events have an unprecedented importance. The document shows the panic of the dictatorial power against the people that are setting themselves free.

Analyzing the key words from "The Presidential Decree concerns the Institution of the State of Necessity over Timiș County" (21st December 1989), demonstrates that this sober act is not information on the situation but a

propagandistic makeup of the failure to control absolutely the Romanian society. Behind the preoccupation for "order", for "the common goods of socialist, state or cooperatist property" and for the "laws of the country", latent, there lays the mere fear of the people. There are mentioned 8 main key terms totally, with o frequency of 90. Out of this total, only 30 frequencies are with negative connotations, that is, a third, what is not very much, given the fact that the power still does not want to give the impression that the battle is already lost. Thus, the discourse of the power simply had to show confidence in managing the situation.

The message is that the events in Timiș County are simple incidents for the socialist power and that these can be contained in a quarantined geographical space.

This is the meaning of the excessive interest for the matter of maintaining order, or for protecting "the shining future", explained by the secondary key term "the common goods of socialist, state or cooperatist property", and for the "laws of the country", the Constitution of the Socialist Republic of Romania RSR, the public peace (with a higher percent), or even for the "socialist entities". This hierarchy of main and secondary key terms is, of course, relative; a different researcher could consider some secondary key terms principal, but eventually their logical correlation with the possibility of achieving "the shining future" sustains the interpretation. Mentioning these terms, I interpret that the dictator is covering the fear of the possibility of loosing the local power and, at the beginning, the more distant fear of the potential change of political regime. The printed monologue, the uniqueness of the public perspective on events, this is the main characteristic of the dictatorial press.

Many photos, the same image

The lack of diversity of the photographic material of front page from the newspapers studied is meant to denote a certain sobriety of the socialist democratic press. Yet, behind this sobriety there is the ideological norm of the time that required printing only photos of a young and healthy looking dictator, or have the dictatorial couple or, eventually, that of the adulating crowds.

The photographic material from the period 15–22 December, in the issues analyzed, in *Scînteia, România Liberă, Informația,* there are present the same 3 photos. The total is hence 9 photos in all three newspapers all representing the dictator or the people gathered to support him. All these photos are clear examples of the cult of personality of the dictator.

Half of the photos are with the dictator and half of the dictator with the adulating masses. Qualitatively, I can even interpret that all photos refer to "Nicolae Ceaușescu", given their contents, that is given the fact that the other key terms — (Ceaușescu Nicolae and Elena and poporul) — are in a metonymic relation with the key term "Nicolae Ceaușescu".

The photographic material is proven to be a propagandistic tool promoting the cult of personality of the late dictator as well.

22nd December 1989

22nd December 1989 is a turning point both for the history of the Romanian printing press and for the Romanian history. We have in the newspaper of the 22nd December 1989 at the same time a change in the format as in the content of the newspapers. For instance, starting with 22nd December 1989, the Romanian newspaper *Informația* changes its format, from a small to a large one, almost symbolically for a heavier accent put on information from now on. Its name becomes *Libertatea.* This issue of the 22nd December is a festive one, celebrating the profound changes, capturing their unfolding. The entire front page is like an impressive manifestation of joy and at the same time like a battle slogan for the Romanian society at large.

The same type of transformation takes place with *Scînteia* as well, becoming *Adevărul,* keeping though almost the same large format. The key terms considered were: "freedom", "citizens", "country", "victory", "fight", "Nicolae Ceaușescu-dictator/Elena Ceaușescu-dictator", etc. some key terms typical for the former regime are perpetuated, such as the term "comrades" (in *Adevărul),* key term that immediately has disappeared from the other newspapers studied. Since the semantic core of comrades is still related to that of people it will appear from now on as "people", "common people", "nice people", etc. The names of the dictators will be maintained and demonized. But only the revolutionary press will dare to talk about new terms not-existing previously such as "the dictator (he or she)".

All the articles from all the newspapers printed in 22nd December 1989 are an expression of enthusiasm. Even the fonts used are bold and underlined. The newspapers of 22nd December 1989 may be the most spontaneous from the entire journalistic history of Romania. The most used term is "freedom" (31%, 16 mentioning) and this is also the dominant feeling within the society. There is no propagandistic tentative. Really, within all these newspapers, society communicates with itself about its joy, self-congratulatory, self-encouraging for the possible fights for preserving this freedom. But the key term "fight" has the smallest percent 6%, since the worry in front of possible fights was less powerful than the enthusiasm of victory over dictatorship.

Multiple new realities

The most complex articles were to be found in *Adevărul* newspaper*,* but as a general rule I had to notice that the printed press generally took the effort to cover the events as they were and to announce any national political, social, military urgency that just might need the public attention. A very civic public opinion was born in those days, with a genuine thirst for information that would help anyhow preserve the newly acquired freedom. The ideological content of the articles is left to a second place in comparison with the clear need to communicate on political themes with the others, given the newly acquired freedom of expression. That was the most important pass-time of the period.

Both as a symbol and as an ideological element, "revolution" is capitalized according to the specific content given by the theoretical concept. As a reality, the revolution was stimulating the presence of the political discourse in newspapers and society. The main key terms are for the most part new key terms, thus, besides "country" and "people", are present the terms "revolution", "democracy", "pluralism", "CFSN (The Council of the Front of National Salvation)" and "freedom" (this last term with its negative counter-part "dictatorship").

To better visualize and easier interpret, the key terms with frequencies bigger than 10 can be ordered. At once we can surprise clearly the turn when the "wooden tongue" of dictatorship starts to give way to a more "natural" language (still a political hence ideological language). Thus, sometimes, key terms used mainly with positive values can register also negative or neutral values.

The ideological "turn" is clear. Most important and most frequently used key terms are now "revolution", "democracy" and "freedom", respectively key terms that until 22nd December 1989, either did not appear among the first 10 positive key terms, or did not appear at all. "Socialism", a key term that until 22nd December 1989 came immediately after terms like "Nicolae Ceaușescu" (and "Elena Ceaușescu") and "citizens", as frequency and importance, becomes a negative term on a similar position. "Elena Ceaușescu" does not appear with high frequency in the Romanian "revolutionary" printed press. Occasionally there are appellatives with great incriminatory power (lower frequency, more intensity) such as "the odious", "the savant". "Nicolae Ceaușescu" appears more often, but not only as a person, the entire former dictatorial regime retains the critical attention of the Romanian printed press. "Citizens", remains a positive term, but it reminds more of the dictatorial wooden tongue so it is used less. More often, but not as much as before "people" it is used. Much more important became key terms like "the youth" and "(young) heroes", the latter being maybe the most important key term after "revolution".

Certain *ideological invariants* (key words that appear always in the political discourse and are expected to be present in political language generally) start to enrich their meanings, from now on being less predictable in their positive or negative connotations. Most of the key terms of political discourse are approached now in an almost theoretical manner for the sake of exactitude and objectivity. For instance, "freedom", "people", "democracy", "youth", "public opinion", etc., as the great majority of the positive terms are used in a great variety of contexts and in a very sophisticated manner. The ideological invariants are meant to fit the complexity of the reality of the new regime. If before 22nd December 1989 the ideological elements of the media discourse were reduced to empty shells by the censorship factors, after this date they start to gain meaning according to social negotiation. Before 22nd December 1989 the positive ideological invariants had the unique role to transfer their positive aura over the principal key term, "Nicolae Ceaușescu" and, sometimes, over the key term "Elena Ceaușescu". The role of other positive key terms such as "people", "socialism", "the well-being of the working people", "equity", "order" that used to show up in the political discourse of the communist mass-media was as well

to legitimate terms as "Nicolae Ceaușescu" and "Elena Ceaușescu" as positive terms. After revolution, mass-media attempts to recuperate the accurate meanings of the words, even when they are still terms employed in propagandistic contexts, as closely to the flexibility and complexity of the natural language, as possible. The key terms of the media political discourse start to be more and more numerous, multiplied in various and sophisticated synonyms. Even the key terms that refer to political parties and to political personalities are of course now more numerous. The place occupied once by key terms such as "Nicolae Ceaușescu" and "Elena Ceaușescu", or "socialism", "PCR", and "ODUS" is taken by "historical parties", "PNL", "PNȚ", "FSN", "CPUN", "CFSN", "Iliescu", "Brucan", "Roman", "Coposu", "D. Mazilu", "Doina Cornea", "Radu Câmpeanu", "M. Dinescu", etc. The positive heroes are hence many, more and more varied within the Romanian revolutionary printed press (actors, engineers, professors, men and women etc., are now present on the public scene). The same observation goes for the negative heroes. At the same time the positive heroes do not go unchallenged — many of the positive heroes can be and are controversial, either in the media discourse, or in the private conversations that are becoming political to an unprecedented extent. The revolutionary mass media is becoming dynamic, opinionated, inflammatory, stimulating a critical approach to reality.

The tendency to multiply the key terms in synonyms is to be seen mainly in *Adevărul,* newspaper with the tendency to approach matters more theoretically, more scientifically than *România Liberă* and *Libertatea.* These last two are relaying more on opinions and seem more powerful in forming opinions, too. In the political articles from *Adevărul* newspaper*,* there are some elements of political and economic theory. *Adevărul* newspaper is preoccupied more with ideas, concepts and phenomena, while *România Liberă* and *Libertatea* newspapers have a discourse centered on political personalities. The synonyms encountered in the newspapers studied can be classified on themes interesting for this period of fervent political change. These themes can be followed in the texts of the articles, but their frequency is not so important as a certain "intensity" of the meaning. Thus, the theme of revolution is rapidly replaced by other more pressing themes such as "democracy", "the opening towards the world", or "political, cultural and historical personalities".

Therefore the printed press tried to clarify and also to bring forth for discussion democracy under its multiple aspects. These aspects were recuperated, sophisticated and multiplied in many other key terms, defining at once for the concept, as for the realities of democracy. Such an interest for democracy is obvious in all the newspapers studied. This concept is discussed under various aspects (political, economic, juridical, on both the dimensions of the present and of the future of the nation), as one can notice from the key terms considered above.

Both for the present and for the democratic future of the country, the printed press proves itself these days as one of the state powers and, at the same time, it functions as a key term.

A world of significance and key terms is born, a world with a new discursive political order, along with the rising social and political fledgling democracy.

If within the printed press before the moment of revolution the only foreign key term is Iran, now, after 22 December 1989, a plurality of such key terms emerge, as an expression of the unprecedented opening that is desired and lived during these days in Romania. This fact is possible even more since the country is not insulated anymore, not exclusively oriented towards the East, but it is open towards the entire world. This is the interpretation I give to the multitude of key terms naming various countries and people of the world, invading the Romanian printed press after the revolution. Not the frequency, but the presence of such terms I consider relevant. Within this context one certainly can identify a preoccupation *for* Europe, for the European Union, as a political reality and as a symbol of liberal and democratic freedoms and achievements.

"Europe" is present as a key term explicitly, in most of the articles studied, with a rather high frequency and can also be logically and politically correlated, as well, with some other key terms such as the "West" and the "opening towards the world" each with 5 as a frequency. This frequency is registered also by other important key terms, such as, the "army", or "the printed press and the television". The interpretation is that "Europe", is as important a key term as are the "army" that eventually proved to be "with us", in other words, siding with the revolutionary. It is also as important as "the printed press and the television", that have sustained the revolution from the first moment. Hence, "Europe" is as important as terms with some sort of heroic, revolutionary connotation. And even more, the frequency of the key term "Europe" is higher than that registered by key terms such as "change" or "market economy", already very important for the new times on their own.

Romania is not artificially and propagandistically kept for indoctrination purposes, as either a country in the front of the world's countries, or as a country against some other (capitalist) countries of the world, but it becomes a part of the world.

As for the new relation of the printed press to the personalities, if before revolution the only personalities were Nicolae and Elena Ceauşescu and always at the superlative, after revolution even only the strictly political personalities mentioned are many more. At the same time, the controversies become possible and they are even more stimulated by the enthusiasm of the freedom lived at full intensity by the journalists, politicians and simple citizens. As the political discourse in the printed press becomes by the moment closer to the "natural" Romanian language, in a similar manner the approach of the media toward personalities becomes more natural in the democratic sense that it is to a lesser extent a prescribed relationship. All relationships and discourses are allowed to include an element of dispute and the cult of personality is not compulsory anymore. All articles show a re-arrangement of values. Such aspects are more obvious in newspapers as *România Liberă* and *Libertatea.*

As a general rule, *the personalities and the events associated with socialism, with communism or with what have happened within the Eastern block are blamed and marginalized after 22nd December 1989.*

The democratic renewal of society is legitimated in all the possible areas of interest: politically, socially, economically, as in juridical and in cultural areas. The printed press relates often to personalities of modern and contemporary political thought. There are therefore present, names as Locke, Horkheimer, etc. of course there is also present the name of Mihai Eminescu (1850–1889)[7].

Specific to the newspaper *Adevărul* is the absence of personality names, in the favor of the phenomena, of the events, or of the concepts. Even names such as Ceaușescu Nicolae and Elena, so frequently incriminated in all the other newspapers, here are absent, punished either by silence or by substitutes. Thus the reader encountered substitution appellatives, such as "the dictator", "the tyrant", "comrade Lenuța", etc. The exceptions, the only names of politicians present in this newspaper *(Adevărul*) are Ion Iliescu and Corneliu Coposu. The former was legitimated by his presence at the national television building on the 22nd December thus in all the houses with a television set, in the middle of the 1989 Romanian revolution. The latter was legitimated by the occasion stirred up by the revolution to discuss the relevance of continuity and therefore the legitimacy of the historical parties (liberal and conservatory parties from the period of democracy between the two World Wars) in the political context after revolution. Even in *România Liberă* and in *Libertatea* where the names seem to abound, not the names as such are important, but they are important by their quality to send the reader back thinking about the new big themes of democracy: "democracy in Romania", "democratic freedoms and rights" and "the opening towards the world of Romania".

In the newspaper *Adevărul* there is to be noticed a greater sobriety in presenting the titles and in covering the subjects in comparison to the other two newspapers analyzed. In *Adevărul* there is more of an accent on complex and profound information, hence the sobriety and the greater entropy of the information in the titles and in the body of the articles. The range of the subjects on the front page of *Adevărul* is more varied, to the extent that, sometimes, the social and economic subjects are covered in a more specialized and less journalistic manner and they are replacing political subjects all together. This is also the reason why I have considered less front-page articles from this newspaper.

The newspapers *România Liberă* and *Libertatea,* are, for a change, tabloid newspapers forming the taste for sensational of the public opinion and intended to be very close to the public opinion as well, fact obvious in the huge titles and in the insistence considering the format (frames, etc.), or the multitude of political subjects covered in a typical journalistic manner[8] and the higher number of photos on the front page.

In the titles, of the front-page articles from *România Liberă* and *Libertatea*, the key terms tend to be more black and white, either clearly positive, or clearly negative in their connotations. Of course, the positive key terms are used more often, given the enthusiasm of the times and the general journalistic interest for (democratically) constructive events (and not only for the most urgent or sensational to be brought to public attention). From this perspective the dominant key terms

are “democracy”, “freedom”, “the Council of the Front of National Salvation”, or other, from the same sphere of meaning.

The key terms from the main ideas present in the articles studied can be ultimately gathered under one important theme: “democracy”. There was a general opening of journalistic views and a noticeable appetite in discussing pluralism, the problems of market economy, the role of the institutions, the role of political personalities and the necessity of a new Romanian democratic constitution. The same main theme resulted as well from the study of the key terms in the articles which is a verification of the previous results and of the conclusion that the preoccupation of the printed press after the 22nd December 1989 revolution is to define and ‘frame’ democracy in the picture of daily life.

Even if the *biggest frequency is that of the ideas about democracy and its content* (in all newspapers analyzed), the other ideas mentioned in the articles are still important in underlining the main democratic ideas, even when they do not register a significant frequency. Such ideas I considered here with great attention was that the printed press in this period dared approaching phenomena and events beyond the boundaries of the everyday journalism, subjects therefore only touched and abandoned due to their complexity. Romanian journalism was never before, and never again, more conscientious of its ‘heroic’ informative role. Someone would say that there was a uniformity of ideas due to this constant interest on ‘democracy’ and ‘Europe’. But within such apparent uniformity there was great diversity and a greater difference from the topics before 22nd December 1989. The ideas present in newspapers reflected the interest of the entire society towards these ‘same’ liberal themes approached over and over again. If the newspapers were similar in what concerns this interest for democracy, they were at the same time very dissimilar in the manners of expression since no propagandistic line was imposing the topics and the tone anymore. The newspapers were finally free and they were candidly announcing that on their front pages in the first days after 22nd December 1989.

The censorship and the ideological impositions are replaced by a more vaguely liberal, generally democratic ideological orientation based on the genuine will to democratization of the Romanian society. Therefore, the Romanian printed press becomes an expression of this will.

The Thirst for Normality

“The normality”, so difficult to define, is illustrated in the printed press of those days through the images of a journalism that is not in the quest for political aspects at any cost, avoiding the political sensationalism, the ‘hunt’ of personalities, of the negative or catastrophically aspects. Journalism wants to surprise life, flourishing after revolution, the life of human beings freed from the service of the unique party. The photos show exactly such everyday aspects: bakeries, faces of children, of everyday women or simply of people passing by. For the time being, for the first couple of days after the revolution of 22nd December 1989 everything looks new and important.

After such first wave of journalistic enthusiasm, when journalism turns to political news as such, a second wave of journalistic enthusiasm or naivety manifests itself in the printed press. Journalists tend to embrace the illusion of a 'pure' politics brought about by the revolution and tend to classify the politicians in 'protectors' and 'enemies' of the revolution. The photo-documents reflect all these characteristics of the period. It is as if journalism felt free to say and surprise political discontent as well as the enthusiasm, or free to embrace points of view and have political preferences. In all these aspects I saw a point of ideological "turn"' as well. In a more complex and free political scene, newspapers start to adopt a certain political line, first of all as voices of a fledgling political pluralism and only then and less as 'objective informers'. In conclusion the printed press after revolution did not become objective the entire sudden, but proved very much alive and opinionated, sometimes confused and confusing in its enthusiastic informative gust.

The images were varied both in presentation and in their content and proved the enthusiasm of the political opinion freed from the ideological constraints of the past. România Liberă and *Informația* put more accent than *Adevărul*, a more informative newspaper with a theoretical edge, on the journalistic photography. Having said that, it is to notice that all newspapers, in their specific manner, insisted through photography as through the written text to farther themselves from the ideological past and from the cult of personality of the past. The interest shown through photos was to capture reality, to celebrate the revolutionary heroes, the new democratic political personalities, to identify the new political actors and the new political parties, maintaining some access for the regular, everyday people. This was the reason why most pictures show either 'the heroes' or the 'normal' people' and their 'normality'. Defining 'normality' was accomplished by presenting a multitude of images of a great diversity and at the same time highly emotional. The images were portraying men and women, children and old people, children with their sledges, people at their work, faces of discontented people, manifesting on the streets, political meetings, banners against manipulation.

While the political language of journalism starts to be more similar with a 'natural' Romanian language (a language alive, spoken, oral, not necessarily pretentious, with the exception of newspaper *Adevărul), the images in themselves as content of journalistic photos, celebrated the sacrifice that has made the approaching of 'normality', against its very unsatisfactory relativity, possible and legitimate.*

Conclusions

Although the ideological line of the former political regime used to proclaim and celebrate the dictator as a symbol of a victorious 'continuous revolution', the reality, at least from a political and economic standpoint, proved stagnation, and an apparent stolidity of a society that seemed turned to stone by dictatorship. Within such a context, the printed press of the first period studied, that is from

15th to 22nd of December 1989, is a propaganda instrument at the service of the cult of dictator's personality. As a consequence, the analysis as well proves the use of positive key terms or values predetermined in the newspapers articles as in all types of public communication. Communication in the public space, was highly ritualized and codified by the party ideology, to the extent that it was impossible to communicate anything else than accomplishments in all fields, and in consequence, praises for the party leader and the party. Negative events were either ignored or presented as insignificant exceptions, useful to set an example for increased efficiency in the future. The achievements, said to belong to the people were to be acknowledged as impossible to attain without the party's leader.

Therefore, *all the positive terms are put in the service of legitimating the dictator and his actions. Any term that cannot serve such role, could not be present in the official political language and discourse, hence it would disappear from the discourse of the printed press, as well.*

Table representing the main key terms before and after 22nd December 1989

The main key terms *before* 22nd December 1989	The main key terms *after* 22nd December 1989
The absence of "revolution" as a key term	The revolution
The country	Romania, Democratic Romania
Comrades/Citizens	People, common people, young heroes, citizens
Socialism	Democracy
Czechoslovakia in 1968	The tradition of democracy, historical political parties
Romanian Communist Party (PCR) The Union of the Communist Youth	The Front of National Salvation, the continuators of the historical political parties
The Democratic Organisation of Trade Unions, Trade Unions	*Key term absent* *(There was no preoccupation with the trade unions, yet)*
Antinational actions, Imperialist circles	The enemies of the revolution
The Shining Future	The European future

All newspapers from this period that were analyzed proved to be identical in their rigidity, poor and repetitive vocabulary and pathos invoking patriotism. Not only are the discourses of the newspapers similar, but also sometimes the articles have almost the same manifest content and the photographic material was the

same. Given such minor differences in "broadcasting" similar or identical messages, the dictatorial press was completing its function as the main instrument of indoctrination.

Under such circumstances, the revolution, as a change of political regime was a secret desire of the entire society turned into reality with the despair and enthusiasm of a "now or never" impulse offered by the events in Timișoara (16th, 17th December 1989).

This is the reason why the analysis shows only one latent message in all the texts published in newspapers in the days before the events in Timișoara and Bucharest. Then the analysis highlights a change of tone with the occurrence of revolutionary events as the increasing panic of the party leaders and of the party top rank members.

After 22nd December 1989, the printed press changed the discourse, modulating it, passing from using rigid and artificial media political language towards a more 'natural' media political language. In the first place, the revolutionary media diminished the symbolic distances between those who govern and the governed.

The cult of personality of the former dictator disappeared, replaced by the celebration of the revolution, of the change, of the heroes of change, of the democracy to be. The favorite topic, "building the democratic Romania", was underlined also by the tendency to multiply the key terms in synonyms, with a role in the better understanding and defining of such a democratic future of the country.

To a certain extent, the discourse of the press evolves side by side with the public that it informs. The public and the journalistic discourse are mutually influencing each other, in these first days of free journalism, more than ever. From this perspective we can better understand both the effervescence of dialogue and the uproar that characterized the entire society during the days after 22nd December 1989. While the press attempted at once to define the basic democratic concepts, to form democratic opinions, to investigate truths and backgrounds of high profile personalities of the moment[9], to renew society at several levels, at the same time maintaining as much access as possible. Media discourse started to be a very different entity than the former mirror of an invented reality. But, at the same time, there were no norms, no ethical standards, while everything was left to enthusiasm, to (good) intentions.

I interpret the high frequency of this term ("revolution") and its relative replacement in time by the term 'democracy' in the light of the fact that the printed press needed to clarify the status quo, legitimated by the fact that a revolution took place, that the political regime was changed, at it is everybody's business and duty to accomplish the change completely through democratization.

This was indeed the principal tendency resulting from all the printed media discourses, the orientation of the country towards democracy as its unique future desired by the entire society. A secondary tendency in the printed press though, was to consider democracy more a restoration of the democracy Romanian had between the two World Wars than a work of future construction. Such nostalgia

was part of the ideological rout brought about by the revolution, natural as will to recuperate everything valuable from the past that could serve a tradition as a basis for future developments.

Front-page media discourse remains as well a political discourse after the revolution, only that the way it approaches 'reality' was gaining complexities and critical accents that did not exist before 22nd December 1989. Enthusiasm was the rule and it brought about an abundance of exaggerations, as well. The press tried without success to bring about an ethical change in politics, to indicate and eliminate all the corrupted characters involved with the former regime from top positions. Given the cult of personality of the dictator, many of the top communist activist and of course, the security services employees where practically unknown to the great public and to the young journalists. Hence, the printed press discourse generally presented things as if society and democracy were seriously menaced and saved every day.

The revolution, changing the political system, has also changed the political discourse from its foundations.

The new world is portrayed in the printed media to a certain extent in a more complex manner in comparison with the printed press discourse before 22nd December 1989 and in a more "natural", everyday Romanian language. The core of meanings of the political discourse from the press of the revolution, showed the interest for a multitude of political actors, more sophisticated dichotomies than during times of Ceauşescu.

A "normality" of the discourse of the press was occasioned and started to take shape. It presupposed as well the dialogue between the numerous political actors and citizens, but also "riot", "noise", a lack of "harmony", disorientation expressed as loudly as the many new orientations in ideology. Yet, freedom of expression brings about "noise". While democracy appreciates "order", as an important social and political value, it is made secondary in relation to "freedom" and "equality", as put in the service of the citizen, it is a more important source of "noise". The tension between "freedom" and "equality" gets translated in a lesser harmony of the democratic discourses, at once in the printed press, as in the public sphere, generally. Democratic dialogue consequently emphasizes the plural "noises" of the society. *The press of the Romanian revolution captured both "noises" such as these and also democratic dialogues.*

NOTES

1. The expression "democratic discourse" is for this study more as a benchmark, as a referential, or as an exemplary model that has its inherent limits and simplifications to be found in any theoretical model. As a landmark, the notion is thus very important in describing and assessing how language is developed, used and abused within the democratic discourse. Reality is a complicated mix of discourses of propaganda that, in very diverse ways, either, support and complete each other, or undermine each other, or even confront each other in their competition for the role of the vehicle of power in democracy.
2. "Revolution" and "democracy" are two less used words in the dictatorship printed press. When they do appear their meaning is different from their linguistic meanings and from their meanings in political science, and also from their meanings

in popular culture. Thus, "revolution" meant before 1989 "militancy, the sum of all actions done for the benefit of the party and under its supervision" and a pretext to talk about the superiority of the communist regime, of its continuous evolution, on the basis of the objective and scientific principles that generally rule party activities. This is not a quote from party documents but it recreates the feeling of the wooden tongue used before 22 December 1989 in the printed press as in the entire Romanian public sphere.

3. Françoise Thom best analyzes wooden tongue in the book *Le langue du bois*.
4. Romanian abbreviation for the Great National Assembly.
5. The abbreviation for the Romanian Communist Party.
6. G. Gerbner uses this defining perspective over the printed press in a very well known article from 1954, that influenced the perspective on the democratic press (*apud* J. Fiske, *Introduction in Communication Studies*, London, New York: Routledge, 1990).
7. Mihai Eminescu was a Romanian poet, prose writer and journalist, democratically and patriotically engaged into the Romanian public affairs — the complete national intellectual hero.
8. For instance, all the articles in *România Liberă* and *Libertatea*, answer at the fundamental journalistic questions: who? what?, how?, what is the purpose?, with what means?
9. It was an ethical obsession of the press that has turned itself into a joke to ask the question 'What have you been doing for the last five years?' Point 8 from the "Proclamation from Timişoara" specified precisely that none of the former top communist activists or secret service officers would be allowed to acquire top positions in the new regime. The ridiculous spin was given away by its inefficiency — since it was not supported by political will, namely by a law to actually eliminate all top communist activists from political life, it remained sterile, just a question to be answered always through a half truth or a lie. All the persons questioned used to try to convince the journalist of his (rarely, her) past (often, not existent) dissidence.

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OWNERSHIP AND VALUES
THE LIMITS OF THE DEMOCRATIC MEDIA
AN ANALYSIS OF THE MAIN ROMANIAN WRITTEN MEDIA

ANA BAZAC

Introduction

The starting point of this article is a question, which seems to be more arid than others which unveil scandalous subjects or *arrière-plans*: what is the importance of the ownership of the Romanian media and/or how does the ownership of the media influence the functions of journalistic practices? The frame of the analysis is given by the prescriptive typology of journalistic practices (Carpentier, 2002) i.e. the objectives of mass media as they appear in all the normative theories of the domain.

Confronting this typology with the Romanian mass media, this article arrives to the conclusion that not only the type of ownership is important, but more important are *the power* of the ownership over the media and *the values* that they share. This conclusion is the result of a concrete approach of the most important *written media* in Romania.

Interpreting the problem at the philosophical level, one could better understand the logic of the social system and of the ownership: the integration of a new social reality, as the one of the post-Stalinist Romania, in the ensemble which constitutes the object of the social theory can only develop this one. Ideologies are questioned or they become more viable through the acquisitions resulting from the concrete analysis of new social realities.

The more specific background of the present research is a complex formed by the following assertions: *a.* media are tightly linked to the political regime, *b.* media are one of the pillars of democracy (just because they develop the civil society and the democratic political culture, i.e. the democratic behaviour and the way of thinking), *c.* as democracy itself is a tensioned structure, as media in the frame of democracy have *contradictory* tendencies, *d.* the transition from the state-owned media to a diverse private ownership of media was a necessary condition for the diversification of the political opinions and the adequate representation of the new private interests, *e.* the private ownership in media is motivated by both the reason to use the investment opportunities and to gain power through the special power given by media, *f.* the media ownership cannot

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be the single factor which influence the media outlets but it does at least through the means media have, *g.* the influence of the ownership on the performances of the media is not an one-direction relationship because of the supply and demand which govern media, *h.* media mediate a non-balanced relationship between the ownership of media, the political and the public, and *i.* democracy is the result of these complex relationships and mediations. The theoretical analysis allows to be conscious of these aspects and eventually to help to minimize the features, which force media to have sometimes an ambiguous attitude toward democracy.

Regarding the Romanian media, if the political will to construct democracy and democratic media is *sine qua non*, *the evolution of the democratic media is absolutely significant for the development of democracy itself*. The reference to the most recent analysis about the situation of the television is only a mirror for the account of the main written Romanian media. In other words, among other things there are two opposite types of media: one — with huge audience, the other — with a weak one, just for understanding that there are some common features and problems. Because "the stake" of the written media seems to be weaker than the one of the television — even during the electoral campaigns the influence of the newspapers was relevant only on about 10% of the readers (Gross, 1999: 179) — the situation of the ownership and its influence in this type of media could better lead to the grasping of some aspects about the functioning of the ownership in media. The paper focuses on the *political and social information that the main Romanian written media* offer.

The media ownership and its expression

The thesis of the paper is that the type of the ownership does determine indirectly the realization of the functions of the written Romanian media. *The values* promoted by the media represent the main medium term between ownership and the functions of the media. But these values are also the aim of the ownership: in other words, media reflect — and they have been reflecting from the beginning — the dominant values in Romanian society, inter-related with the change in the ownership relations.

First of all there is a community of shared political-philosophical values among all the owners of mass media. Thus the means and the accents differ rather than anything else. Even if there are mainstream journals whose "traditional" partisanship everyone can grasp, all of them profess the same mainstream values. These values consist in a specific (neo-liberal) understanding of democracy, freedom, welfare and peace as well as in the specific "colour" of this understanding given by the historical conditions of the discontinuity from Stalinism in a country like Romania. These values are those, which frame the mainstream media.

Consequently the type of the ownership is important through *the power of the property*. And this one manifests itself through the track given by the most important media owner/company and followed by the entire media. This is one of the causes why all the mainstream newspapers (and TV broadcasts) reflect a

strong impression of similarity. And this is also a cause for of the attraction of a quite large part of the population for the extremist type of language: especially during the electoral campaigns, even the mainstream politicians were caught sometimes in the trap of some extremist accents and the mainstream journals brought them back to reality. From this standpoint, the democratic journals played and continue to play the role of a handbook of democratic language and behaviour.

The above-mentioned track, i.e. the directions that the respectable mainstream journals had in mind, is realized through the financial support and infrastructure of the most powerful journals, namely through the biggest means to perform supply. For this reason, except the attraction for a special heavy partisanship, the difference is given by the huge advertising — with free supplements, lotteries and awards, and through TV commercials —, the price of the journal and the personality of the journalists. People feel this difference and they buy the journals owned by powerful companies which offer them the most things they can have virtually, namely by reading about them.

Thus the competence and the independence of the journalists, their adequacy to the professional deontology, depend upon the owner's/journal's policy, i.e. the concrete moment in the evolution of the force relationships inside the journalistic world and in the political world. (Journals that want to attract the public would criticise every part of the political life in the same manner. But they cannot do it: for example, as one could observe in Romania, in the first year of a new Power, this one has to be supported rather than criticised.)

The other medium term is represented by the commercial purposes of all the media owners. The aim to raise the profit of the journals leads to the development of the journalistic practices. The functions of the information written media imply more diverse and efficient ways and thus the intelligence to supply the values — through the training of journalists — raises.

Our premise, which will be demonstrated in the paper, is that the best realised functions of the main Romanian information written media do not follow separately, neither from the *commercial purposes* nor from the *ideological interests* of the owners — whoever be these ones — but from the *combination* of these causes (above-mentioned as medium terms between the owners and the functions of the information written media).

State media ownership and private media ownership: two approaches and some problems

One approach belongs to the *public interest theory* — which warns that the private media ownership is not too interested in the public goods and has profit-driven incentives; more interested in "infotainment" than in informing and strengthening the conscious citizenship. The owners can "establish the bounds of the legitimate discourse about public policy in their own terms. And this is much more insidious than the kind of crude censorship practised by the Soviet state, which was obvious to everybody. There is indeed a 'hidden hand', but it is

not the one that, according to Adam Smith, brings about public benefits from competition. Rather it is one that produces the appearance of competition without substance" (Brian Barry, 2005: 235).

The other approach constituted the *public choice theory* — which stressed that the plurality of public opinions is assured by the diversity of the media ownership. In this respect, this theory warned about the concentration of the information provision in the hands of those in power. In this manner, the independence of media means the independence from the politicians and especially from those in power (Peter T. Leeson, 2005).

The main counter-argument against the first theory is the concentration and distortion of the information by the state media ownership as well as its subjugation towards the interests of the political Stalinist bureaucracy rather than to the public interest. But the second theory advances a very narrow connection between the freedom of press and the politicians in power.

Belonging to a monopoly, the state owned media are not only influenced by the dominant values promoted by the state but also by the particular interests of the political elite, which exercises the leadership of the state. But this happens not only in dictatorships but even when there are/seem to exist competing media. Because of this, if there are not and precisely because there are not too many possibilities for the public to control the manners used by media to reflect the society, the diversification of the media ownership seems to counter-act the above-mentioned tendency.

But the private ownership is many times vulnerable. By the same token there are more or less strong relationships between the private media ownership and the state. The agreement of the institutions of the state for the constitution of the private media ownership — as for example in Romania the one of the Competition Council, which prevents the disturbance of the competition on the market — the contracts for the state publicity, the belonging of the state officials and the private owners to the same leader elite and circles of interests are, all of these, forms of the above-mentioned relationships.

For this reason, one could conclude from the monitoring of the Romanian press made by FreeEx (Agenția de Monitorizare a Presei, 2005) that: 1. the media ownership is linked to those in power, at least as long as these ones do not initiate too inimical attitudes to the private ownership as such, 2. in return for the services the state offers to the private media ownership, media were used as electoral weapons by those in power, but 3. at the same time the owners of media intended to maximise their economic power by making the products they sold more attractive and thus by making more profit — i.e. demonstrating a certain political neutrality and ability to criticise those in power when the general atmosphere was strongly critical toward these ones — and 4. the private media ownership showed a more and more subtle capacity to ignore and avoid the requirement to have the same critical attitude toward those in power and those in opposition, whoever all of those were.

If the above-mentioned monitoring of the Romanian press in 2004 (the only available) observed:

a. the decrease of the diversity of the political information and commentaries, especially the critiques toward the Power,

b. the unbalance in the representation of the political (the lion's share of the visibility belonging to the representatives of the Power),

c. and the fact that the representatives of the Power were associated mostly with positive or neutral actions,

d. the following period changed rather the quantitative aspects — because of the monitoring of the National Broadcasting Council — and the seemingly more subtle methods used.

The main written media reflect the *ensemble* of the political products of the TV stations. Obviously, mostly criticised are the former officials, now in opposition. But those in power are criticised too: the main manner being the *periodical passing from the critique of a specific politician during a period of time to another, in the next period.* One could also mention a certain critical focus on the executive — mainly on the prime minister — so as to divert the negative opinion away from the president.

As the agenda of different TV stations is framed by the interest of their audience, so is the agenda of the main newspapers, thus the more diverse information, the more "courageous" the focus on the political scandals and the more attractive the political show. But, because the written media cannot stage shows, they should adequate to the first requires. They do it aiming to keep the already captured readers, to attract new ones and to keep the level of the journal. These aims are realised through specific means: through the emphasize of the information and opinions, the readers are accustomed to, through the investigation of new cases or aspects, through offering more diversified information and standpoints. The journals here observed realise all of these in almost the same proportions and with the same results. They cannot exit the complex frame given by the *values*, the *relationships between the political and the private ownership*, and the *economic purposes*.

If in the survey on 2004 a conclusion was a process of "berlusconisation" of the press — i.e. the development of the press by the owners not for economical purposes but for obtaining influence, for attacking or blackmailing the political or business opponents — this tendency is still present as concerns the local TV stations and newspapers. This means that if in this kind of media one could observe the partisanship which is more transparent, in the main journals the diversification of information and the impression of a living supply and improvement — which is the result of the economic aims of the owners, as well as the perfecting process of the journalists — could better influence the political life and support the different political actors.

Confrontations about the media ownership

The importance of the type of the ownership in media became more obvious since the rapid process of the *media concentration* (*Diversity, Democracy and Access: is Media Concentration a Crisis*?), also known as *media consolidation* or *media convergence*. The concentration debate brought upon opposite opinions.

Some warn that the media concentration, as the more dangerous side of the concentration in economy, has negative influences on democracy. The media monopoly (according to Ben Bagdikian, 2004, in that year there were five corporations which controlled the American media industry, and to Brian Barry, (2005: 235), three-quarters of the press in Britain is controlled by three men) has a direct power to change politics itself through the change of the public opinion, the lack of significant political information and alternatives to choose. This is not an excessive point of view: the *Report on Transnational Media Concentration in Europe* (Peter E. Bruck *et al.*, 2004) was also concerned with the problems generated by the fact that the trans-national media become "too dominant".

The concentration or the trans-national media means the holding of ownership in media companies in different countries, directly or through subsidiaries, joint ventures, share holdings. Even if it is very important for Europe to have strong media companies in order to get through the external competition, the concentration of media could diminish the diversity and lower the ability of media to contribute to the public sphere. It could reduce pluralism and as a result of their pressure the media could become "less local, less controversial, less investigative, less informative". Being concerned with the guarantee of the political freedom, the *Report* recommended the monitoring of the trans-national media and the way the public uses media, a convention to prevent the negative impact that the trans-national media may have on the freedom of expression, pluralism and diversity, support for the public media services as obligatory objective of the members of the EU and the development of self-regulatory mechanisms to safeguard the independence of editors.

The national concentration has the same problems and concerns.

Why are the critiques on the concentration of the media so severe? It is because through the concentration, the values transmitted through mass media become more unilateral, reflecting the interests of the owners and limiting the space of the public debates and choices.

At the same time, these critiques also reflect the standpoint of the small national publishers and broadcasters, and at a more abstract level — that of the principle of the diversified private ownership.

But there are other voices that counter-argue in favour of the concentration of the media ownership. Not only does the competition rise owing to the economic power, which allows the reduction of the cost of some operations through the permanent modernisation of the infrastructure, but also the diverse supply develops and thus a greater variety of needs could be satisfied. Instead of the uniformity accused by the formers there appeared diversified media products. And even if the monopoly does not lead to the lowering of the prices, the permanent technical innovation counter-balances this tendency. Anyway, the media consolidation is a practical issue from the logic of the competition and people have not to oppose "idealised notions" about the history of media (Jonathan A. Knee, 2003).

And even if the most visible aim of the media concentration is commercial, the commercial media are not different from the public service media (Gross, 2004: 197).

The media concentration by foreign companies made practically impossible the control of the state on the media (Gross, *ibidem*: 95), offered the capital which was lacking, and the entering of the banks in the media business, by supporting different political parties and groups, also developed the competition thusly the performances of media (Gross, *ibidem*: 94).

(Two aspects are underlined in the concerns about the media concentration: the one of the minorities which have fewer opportunities to express their positions and the one of the cultural diversity (see CRIS Statement*, UNESCO Convention on Cultural Diversity/*Communiqué CRIS, *UNESCO Convention sur la diversité culturelle.*)

Some aspects of the media concentration in Romania

Whilst in the almost entire period of pluralist media, from 1989 on, the journalists and the media analysers accused the intervention of the central and local representatives of the state; in the autumn of 2004 a new situation appeared. The media concentration debate was known in the Romanian media but the ownership, as such, as well as the concentration did not occupy too much place in the area of subjects. But when the journalists were prevented from criticising the Power — their main raison d'être, as they thought — especially in the electoral year 2004, they have accused the trans-national companies owners of the journals where they worked. There were two cases.

The first — at *Evenimentul Zilei*, where the journalists accused the Ringier group for having tried to weaken the critical tone towards the Social-Democrat Party in power and to transform the newspaper in a tabloid. But the Report about the Freedom of the Press in 2004 (Agenția de Monitorizare a Presei, *Libertatea presei în România, anul 2004*, programul FreeEx) mentioned that "the evolution of the journal after the change of the editorial leadership did not confirm the suspicion about a possible subjugation toward the Social-Democrat Party or about the transformation in a tabloid."

The second was at *România Liberă*, where the journalists advanced the same accusations, but they "did not bring sufficient evidence...despite of the repeated demands on behalf of the organisations which promote the freedom of press" (*ibidem*).

After the change from November-December 2004, these two newspapers showed their support for the new Power without any journalist protests.

The relationships between the journalists and the owners and their attitude toward the media concentration are however marked by their condition (low salaries and a saturated market). At the same time, the media concentration does create a more rigid frame for the independent journalistic exercise: the newspapers are linked to TV stations belonging to the same group and professing the same political orientation. Even if the commercial motives of the media ownership and concentration require a diversification of journalistic practices and a more objective appearance of the information, the concentrated media ownership seems to aim both at getting rapid profits through "tabloidisation" of the

newspapers and the strengthening of power relations as these ones configure at different moments.

The ownership in the Romanian media

If in December 1989 all the media were state properties, soon enough the hunger of entrepreneurship in media manifested itself: 1200 new journals appeared and even if some of them disappeared in the course of time, in 2004 (Manuela Preoteasa, 2004) were about 1500 publications, most of which — weeklies, 200 daily newspapers, and many private radio and TV stations.

From the beginning, media became a source of profit, fact highlighted by the theory of the *condition of the development of media (and theirs functions*). The laws concerning media appeared in the course of this development. From this point of view, one has to mention the Law on Access to Public Information (2001), which obliges government institutions to announce any information of public interest. At the same time, the private ownership in the media was considered the mean to develop the independent media. But until 2003, the law did not sanction the conflict of interests, thus the involvement of dignitaries in the media business. Since the midst of 2003, the law forbids the civil servants to lead any kind of business. Thus the ownership of the media began more important.

The diversification of the Romanian media and media ownership was the process which corresponded to the transition from a totalitarian political regime to the apparition of the democratic struggle for power, thus of the Opposition as sine qua non element of democracy. As everywhere in the post-Stalinist countries, this process took place through dubious takings over of the state media and media infrastructure, but also through investments and creation of new media by the new businessmen and new business structures, which appeared.

Regarding the transparency of the ownership in media, the Romanian law is contradictory: from a point of view, the Competition Law (1996, 2001, 2002) forbids the concentration which prevents from the competition in a specific market, i.e. no one can be the major share holder in a media company, thus one can view the situation of the ownership through the registration in the Commerce Registry; from another point of view, there aren't any sanctions against the violation of the law which forbids the anonymous character of the ownership. Anyway even if the Commerce Registry unveils some owners, many of them are part of jurisdictions, which permit their anonymity.

At the same time, the ownership in the Romanian media is realised through complicate and mediated relationships. What is very important here is the fact that Romanian businessmen own media together with foreign companies created/divided for this purpose, with subsidiaries of these ones, with foreign businessmen, with foreign companies registered in third countries (Radoway Limited Cyprus, Bluelink Comunicazioni SA Switzerland, Ismar International NV, Dutch Antilles Rootland, Trading Cyprus, Mediapro BV Dutch Antilles see Manuela Preoteasa, 2004). For this reason, even if the National Broadcasting

Council decreed that TV stations have to declare their owners (this being however more difficult regarding the newspapers), a constraining decision concerning the obligation of media to declare the *financial sources* has not yet been issued.

Even if this paper focuses on the main written media, it is significant to mention some aspects concerning the ownership of the entire mainstream Romanian mass media.

The public Television, with TV1 and TV2, covers 99% of the population and has, according to an audience survey in 2003, 35% of the TV market.

The first private television is Antena1, owned by the family of the Romanian businessman Voiculescu — which also invests in retail, industry, and agriculture. But the Voiculescu family also has the better-sold daily newspaper *Jurnalul National*, which Antena1 advertises, many radio stations and also inaugurated for over a year Antena 3 TV station, focused only on news and political commentaries.

The second private television is PRO TV, owned by a Romanian businessman, Sârbu with 15%, an American company (Central European Media Enterprises, the centre of which is in Bermuda) with 80% and a company located in Cyprus. In 2002, PRO TV asked the government, and the European Commission recommended, putting off and erasing some of the debts it had. The PRO TV Company have also PRO Cinema and PRO TV International. And even if in October 2004 PRO TV announced that it had paid all its duties to the state, in February 2005 the fiscal authorities levied execution on some goods of PRO company.

The third private television is PrimaTV, owned by another American company and a Romanian businessman who has also American citizenship and who was the subject of scandals linked to the Ministry of Transport.

One cannot forget B1TV — owned by the Păunescu family whose name frequently appeared in the scandals of dubious borrowings and the bankruptcy of a bank — and Realitatea — only for news and owned by a Romanian businessman with an Italian company registered in Switzerland two month before the creation of the Romanian TV broadcasting.

The Micula brothers, owners of a food and drinks commercial empire, own *Realitatea Românească*, a daily with insignificant circulation, as well as Național TV, N24 and Favorit.

The new media group owned by the trade-union from Petrom controls or has shares in many broadcast and print media outlets, including the daily *Ziua*, Prima TV, Realitatea TV, the local daily *Telegraf*, distributed in the Prahova district, and a new TV station called Alpha TV.

According to an analysis made by the economical weekly *Capital* on March 18, 2004, out of 22 local TV stations, all owned by Romanian businessmen, 12 were linked to the Social-Democrat Party in power, 6 to the National Liberal Party, one to a little party, which already disappeared, and the rest by non-affiliated persons.

The private radio marked is owned by Romanian businessmen but also by foreign companies, from which the French Lagardère group, is the most important.

The written media are only private. I.C. Drăgan is the most important owner of the local media, through the media trust Gazeta he has at least 10 weekly journals, from which *Bună ziua, Ardeal* is distributed in 10 districts in Transylvania, one of the historical regions of Romania.

The main (the best sold) central daily newspapers are: *Libertatea* — owned by the Swiss group Ringier —, *Jurnalul Național* — owned by the Voiculescu family —, *Evenimentul Zilei* — owned, from December 2003/April 2004, also by Ringier, which also posses *ProSport,* journals for women, for media and music and the best sold economic weekly, *Capital* —, *Adevărul* and *Gândul* — owned mainly by two Romanian companies of journalists — and *România Liberă* — owned by the eastern division of Westdeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung (WAZ) which held from 2000 to December 2004 72% of the shares, from that moment — only 46%, plus, from December 2004, a Romanian businessman who holds 48%. There are also *Național* — owned by WAZ and a Romanian businessman — and *Ziua* — owned by the trade union from the important national company Petrom. Thus the newspapers live near business circles, which own, most of them, newspapers as well as TV and radio stations.

According to the National Audience Study on February 2004 – October 2005, *Libertatea* and *Jurnalul Național* became the best sold daily newspapers (the latter have had at the time more than 821,000 readers), before *Evenimentul Zilei* (with nearly 658,000 readers). In the same survey, *Adevărul* has 361,300 readers, followed by *România Liberă*, with 250,000, *Ziua* — with 175,000 readers. *Adevărul* was the leader of the written press from 1990 — being the transformed *Scânteia*, the Communist Party's journal, and thus taking over the entire infrastructure of this one — until it's splitting in March 2005. A Romanian-foreign consortium is now the owner of *Adevărul*, while the editors, which abandoned it, founded, mostly with their capital, *Gândul.* The fidelity/loyalty of many former readers for these editors, the quality of *Gândul* and the presence of a famous journalist and of a poet and dissident who both are very well-known as principal attractions in the TV talk-shows did not yet lead to a leader place in the ranks of the journals. But *Adevărul* and *Gândul* together became less read than *Libertatea* and *Jurnalul Național.* If *Libertatea* is an explicit tabloid, *Jurnalul Național* has the claim to be a "daily journal of quality". In fact, it mixes tabloid subjects and manners with information.

According to the last survey, given to the public in January 2006, *Libertatea* dominates the market of daily journals, with about 1 200 000 readers every day, as well as the market of Sunday edition and weak end supplements, while *Jurnalul Național* sells about one million copies every day.

Therefore the better-sold central daily is a tabloid, *Libertatea*, which costs half the price of *România Liberă* and almost half the price of *Adevărul, Jurnalul Național* and *Evenimentul Zilei. Gândul* is cheaper than these ones because it is the newest on the market of central dailies. One could consider as *quantitative* standard *România Liberă* — which page is 58cm/40cm and which has about 48 pages a day. *Libertatea* is half the size of *România Liberă, Jurnalul Național* offers 48cm/32cm a page and about 32 pages a day, *Evenimentul Zilei* —

53cm/36cm and about 24 pages a day, *Adevărul* — 58cm/33cm and 24 pages a day, and *Gândul* — 58cm/37cm and 24 pages a day.

Each of these offer a TV programme supplement every week. *Adevărul* offers a literary and art supplement every week, as does *România Liberă*, while *Gândul* — an educational one. The financial power of *Jurnalul Național* is concretised in the rich supplements it offered in its campaign of attracting readers. It has a supplement every day of the weak: with different topics, rather historical subjects — on Monday, focused on health advices — on Tuesday, gastronomy — on Wednesday, on Thursday — house decoration, on Friday — details about movies and TV stars.

The Voiculescu family also has the widely read daily sport newspaper, *Gazeta Sporturilor* (601,000). This one is a tabloid focused on sport: a significant part of it is formed by different scandals concerning the relationships between sport people, mostly footballers, and between these ones and their love affairs.

There are also press groups: one has to mention Media Pro — owned by Central European Media Enterprises and the Romanian businessman Sârbu — as the biggest investor in the Romanian media, but also the press agency Mediafax — owned by the Voiculescu family — and Rompres — the state owned press agency. Each of them, as well as the other Romanian big businessmen and media investors — as Cristian Burci who owns, alone or in partnership with the trade-union from Petrom, Realitatea TV, Prima TV, many radio stations and written media, or Păunescu brothers or Micula brothers — owns all the sorts of media (as the women's magazines, the men's and adult magazines, youth magazines and auto magazines) and are share holders in broadcast companies and printing houses.

One cannot forget that the most prominent organisation of the Romanian media is the Romanian Press Club, "in fact an employers' association protecting and promoting the economic interests of several central media institutions, and not those of the journalists working there" (Alex Ulmanu, 2004). The organisations which lobby for the rights of journalists and independent quality standards are: Center for Independent Journalism, the Media Monitoring Agency (MMA) (see www.mma.ro) which established the network freee.ex (see www.freeex.org).

The problem of the media ownership in Romania was posed after the organisation South-East European Network for the Professionalization of the Media (SEENPM) (see http://www.seenpm.org), created in 2000, organised a conference with Media Division of the Council of Europe, in 2004, also to recommend policy changes in the field, and Romanian journalists (Manuela Preoteasa, Alex Ulmanu) began research the origins of the media properties. The importance of the ownership, and especially of the media concentration, became obvious after about 15 years when the constitution of the private ownership in media and the games of this process were considered as non-questionable conditions of the freedom of the media. (The impulse came again from the external, more developed environment.)

SEENPM organised in November 2005 the conference about Financial and Indirect Censorship of the Media in South-Eastern Europe, which was held in

Bucharest. The pressure to ensure the transparency of the *allocation of public money advertising* in Romania was one of the experiences which grounded the conference (there is not yet a report about the papers and results of the conference).

The relationships between the state and the biggest newspapers manifested through the advertising contracts. These ones were allocated relying on the covering power of the journals (as *Adevărul*), but also varying on the relationships between the chief editors and different representatives of the state. But the assertion that the government advertising was used to prevent the criticism of media (Ulmanu, 2004) was not much confirmed by the practice: *Adevărul* did not support the Social Democrat Party in power, it unveiled the corruption in this party and it criticised its leaders.

At the same time, the state — i.e. the president — is pressing the media to declare their financial sources: because the media owned by the Voiculescu family has a somehow independent position in front of him, there were some verbal attacks against the press (which continued the position of the former governments against the freedom of media to criticise those in power).

The daily supply of the main written Romanian media

Every one of the above-mentioned newspapers offers many advertising and publicity. Out of 24 pages, *Libertatea* offers about 5 pages Want Ads besides at least about 2 pages advertising, obviously not grouped. *Jurnalul Național* has out of 32 about 2 pages Want Ads plus 2 pages advertising (but not every day). *România Liberă* — out of 32, 12 Want Ads and at least 2 pages advertising. *Evenimentul Zilei* — out of about 22 pages, about 4 pages Want Ads and 2 pages advertising. *Adevărul* — has about 2 pages Want Ads and 2 pages advertising. *Gândul* — has about 1 page Want Ads and 2 pages advertising.

Libertatea, Jurnalul Național and *Evenimentul Zilei* use the biggest pictures — generally the first page is occupied by pictures and advertisements of the choking events described inside the journals — and letters of headlines.

All of these newspapers have many sport pages: *Libertatea* — 5, *România Liberă, Jurnalul Național — 1–4* pages, *Gândul* — 1 or 2 pages.

The proportion of pages focusing on the political information, both internal and foreign, is the following: *Libertatea* — 2 pages, *Jurnalul Național* — 2–4 pages, *România Liberă* — 3 pages, *Evenimentul Zilei* — about 2 pages, *Adevărul* — 4–5 and *Gândul* — 3–4 pages. In all of these newspapers, the foreign events are mentioned on only one page. The selection of events leads to a great proportion of spicy or curious stories, and of natural catastrophes and accidents.

But what are the domains dealt with in the journals? *Libertatea:* first page — flashy sending to the inside, 4 pages — the internal political scandals and some economic information, 1 page about the timetable and supply of different services in Bucharest, 5 pages — sport, 1 — the daily TV programme, 4–5 — Want Ads, and the rest — cancans concerning mostly the TV stars and footballers. *Jurnalul Național* — first page — flashy sending to the inside, calamities and warnings, 2 pages — internal political scandals, sport — 2, 1 — weather forecast,

1 — aspects from Romania, 1 Want Ads, 1 — religion, 1 — literature, 1 — daily programme of all the TV stations, 1 — tests and games, 1 — letters and advices, 1 — high tech, 1 — the astronomical description of the day, 1 — gastronomy, 1 — health, 1 — the birthday of VIPs, 1 — beliefs and folk traditions, 1 — Romanian emigrants, 1 — cinema, 1 — strange things and diverse information, 1 — international politics, 4 — Romanian controversial historical events (from the 1989 revolution, from the interwar period), 1 — success stories. All the pages are richly scattered with pictures and advertising. The messages are suggested in the headlines and there are also commentaries about the internal political scandals or events. *România Liberă* — the same type first page, 1 — internal political information (because this journal is traditionally anti-Social Democrat, the unveiling of the corruption of the former government has an important place; the journal has it's own investigations), 2 — economy, services and information of general interest, 1 — international politics, 1 — commentaries, 1 — culture, 6–12 — Wants Ads, 6 — advertising and publicity for companies, 1 — problems linked to Bucharest, 2 — stars and VIPs, and sometimes 1 — about the recent history. *Evenimentul Zilei* — 1 — internal politics and scandals (or, on 16 January 2006, 3 — about the miners because the former leader Cosma was again put in jail and gave an exclusive interview to this newspaper, 2 — about the internal scandals), 1 — commentaries about these ones, 1 — Europe, 1 external events (as calamities and the possibility that the future American president will be a woman), 1 — recent history, 1 — success stories. *Adevărul* and *Gândul* offer the most political information. As the last three mentioned newspapers, both have their own investigations, but rather these two emphasize not only the political scandal of the day. Both have commentaries, which underline the moral aspects of the scandalous stories. They also have special pages for economic and financial problems, high tech, auto (*Gândul*) and Bucharest (*Adevărul*), weather and TV and holiday, religion (*Adevărul)* and for the topical problems, and do not focus on cancans.

Every journal competes with the others, but the greatest competition is between the different "groups". For example, *Adevărul* competes especially with *Gândul* and vice-versa. After it's splitting, *Adevărul* developed and offers a serious but interesting journal. It names different parts of an issue, as Financial, External, Cultural, Social divisions, has more pages than *Gândul* and thus more articles and information. Even if the political values are common with the ones shared by the owners and staff of *Gândul* — and of the other daily journals analysed here — one can form a more complete image about the world than reading these ones. But the audience of these two newspapers is smaller than that of *Libertatea, Jurnalul Național, România Liberă* and *Evenimentul Zilei.* There are many causes for this fact. One is the far lesser advertising of *Adevărul* and *Gândul* on TV*,* another is that they organised weaker publicity campaigns with prizes, another could be that they have not, excluding here obviously the TV programme, entertainment type supplements, as *Jurnalul Național* — whose attraction compete with the lesser price of *Libertatea* — and another that the image of *Adevărul,* accentuated by the other newspapers, would be the one of a

"neo-communist" journal or the one of the supporters of the social-democrats, especially when these ones were in power. None of these accusations is true, as this will be mentioned further.

As concerns the lesser audience of *România Liberă,* the main cause seems to be not the fact that every journal has Want Ads but that early from 1990 this newspaper began to be the supporter of the explicit right-wing and strongly anti-social-democrats: in that period *Adevărul* has had the biggest audience, not because this one would has been pro but because it was objective. But *Adevărul* criticised enough the social democrats: it contributed in 1996 to the creation of the public opinion favourable to the political change (and some of its social-democrat readers left it for that, from that period began the decrease of its audience) and unveiled the corruption of the social-democrat power in 2003 and 2004. Even today *România Liberă* has the most obvious partisan discourse, whilst the others transmit their messages in a more indirect and subtle manner.

In this respect, one could observe that the causes of the audience intertwine and also one could hazard to suppose that the tabloid *Libertatea* is the best sold newspaper because it offers in exchange for the cheapest price a certain refusal of the politics, at the same time with the mainstream abbreviation of "what is important in the world". It is not the first time one could see that the easy means to evade constitute also a form of revolt.

Leaving philosophy aside, the political information is the same in all these newspapers, only the accents differ. The proportion between the political information and, on the other hand, the huge letters in the titles, the pages with cooking, health advices, astrology, the focus on disasters and accidents, on events of fashion and the life of stars and VIPs — as extensions of supplements — is rather unfavourable in many of these newspapers.

The flashes and flashy information could give to the readers the impression of covering the essential information of the day. But the newspapers also form the taste and openness of the readers: in this case, one should not start the analysis from the demand, but from the supply. The demand was generated by the supply, which created, in many of these journals, the need of simplification and simplicity.

Among other things, the quality of all the above-mentioned newspapers follows from the place of specific political information and the context: for example, if the information about the CIA planes scandal contains a few lines — as suggesting that the problem is not new anymore, everyone knows about it, so it is not quite interesting — but is encircled by big advertisings and not too much information about the international politics, the impulse for people to reflect more (which is one of the normative ends/purposes of the journals) is not too strong. The type of reader, which many of the above-mentioned journals construct, is thus linked to the type of the citizen as such.

The Romanian written media has to confront with the situation of a devastating competition with television as well as the competition with other newspapers.

The analysis has to take in view this situation. The political information given by the journals and their contribution to the democratic education of the readers take place always *after* the same supply and the stronger influence of the television.

At the same time the communication revolution created the means of a better and alternative transfer of information on networks and horizontal levels: a proliferation of new networks, cable outlets, chat-rooms, bloggs, talk radio, Internet sites, and tabloid shows have not only the role to amplify the messages from the dominant media (therefore consonant with the mainstream audiovisual and written media) but also to compensate the shortcomings of these ones.

In any case the newspapers no longer play the role they used to play. But when one analyses their supply one can do it, as the newspapers would be the only sources, and this is just the efficient procedure to better understand media. Thus why is the ownership of the written media so important?

The Romanian daily newspapers observed here have the role *to fix/to repair* the information and the suggestions received by the population the previous evening and night through TV broadcasts: at first sight, the TV broadcasts create the frame for the transfer of information. Furthermore the written media can also transmit new information (investigations, standpoints) *if* they have an independent editorial policy. Even if the audience of the Romanian newspapers is, concerning the political information, weak, the independent editorial policy, linked to the ownership of the journals, does strengthen pluralism and democracy. The ability to choose — obviously not only in the elections — with full knowledge of the case and the desire to participate in a responsible manner to the construction of a democratic and up-to-date Romania are the result of the pluralist atmosphere to which all the media contribute, including the written ones too.

For this reason, the performances of the written media in matters of transparency and diverse and independent standpoints follow from the standards they conform to, and have to be judged depending on the conformity to these standards (or the distance of these ones) as every newspaper would be the only one, thus the only condition of knowledge transfer concerning democracy.

The journalistic practices in the main Romanian written media

Even if the Romanian press developed from the horizon of 2004, when especially because of the political partisanship in the electoral year "one (could) find biased, unprofessional or sensationalist reporting in almost all major newspapers, including leading quality journalism publications..." (Alex Ulmanu, 2004), one can still find a more or less professionally made partisanship.

A. The first function of the democratic media is to offer *critical information* about "any disfunction of the state" (Carpentier, 2002). From this standpoint, the Romanian mainstream written media found a more than rich source: the huge corruption is the ground of almost all the investigations and articles.

In this respect the most numerous media realisations manifested: 1. in electoral years, 2. rather after 2003, when the aim of the integration of Romania in the European Union emphasized the main impediment as being the corrupt, non-

transparent and for this reason not very efficient leadership of Romania, and 3. rather after the political change in November–December 2004.

All of the main newspapers granted most of theirs pages to internal politics with the corruption unveilings and scandals. During the electoral year 2004, the newspapers unveiled the contradictions and corruption of the social-democrat government. *Adevărul* showed also some dubious businesses of those in opposition but it was not supported by the other journals. From the beginning of 2005, the investigations made in *Jurnalul Național, Evenimentul Zilei* and *România Liberă* were focused almost only on the corruption of the former political leaders. In a way *Adevărul* continued to mention and investigate the corruption of those in power now and *Gândul* took over this obligation of a democratic journal but, not having a strong financial force, it was rather sensitive to different impulses from those in power.

Therefore if we have in view the dimensions described by Carpentier as the aspects which are significant for this first function of transmission of information — comprehensible and accessible information, information oriented on social (inter)action, positive, structural, critical information (the control and watchdog function) — we could observe first of all the general comprehensibility of the political information and its very critical character, even if this one focuses on different targets and *selects these ones depending on the relationships between the owners/ editors of a specific journal and the economic and political circles*. The strong critical attitude of the newspapers does generate a coherent (structural) image the readers could sketch out: the context of the particular events and the evolution (the "state of things") are grasped at a high enough level.

But the representations promoted with the critical information show rather the stereotypy, which a media culture yet learning the democratic behaviour carries. We can observe the strong tendency of the written media to be rather the government watchdog than the one of the political as such.

At the same time, the positive news is rather pale. The most part of the pages about the internal politics is occupied by the scandals of the day.

Monitoring the above-mentioned newspapers, without granting an important place to the tabloid *Libertatea*, in December 2005 and January 2006, one could retain:

— the similar selection of the news,

— a proportion of 7 articles (news and commentaries) concerning the corruption and political scandals to 3 articles concerning the (positive or negative) performances of the government,

— the media scandal was focused on the cases linked to the Opposition and to a party which is not the main one, and the journals passed rapidly on the scandals linked to the president,

— the lack of transparent and clear account and analysis of the economic performances of the government; *Adevărul, Gândul* and *Jurnalul Național* are the journals which offered the most information concerning this aspect,

— the largest column space for the corruption scandals and the development of (new) investigations was given by *România Liberă, Adevărul, Jurnalul Național, Gândul,*

— the focusing on different ministers and on the prime-minister in a critical manner instead of estimating the concrete performances of the government and the Power, as a whole,

— the weaker focusing on the president on a critical manner: *Jurnalul Național, Adevărul* and *Gândul* have had the "most" flashes about this,

— the focusing on the main motive of the political struggle between the Power and the Opposition (concerning the pressure of the former to take over the presidency of the heads of the two Chambers of the parliament) involved the absolute partisanship for the Power and generated the neglect of many procedural and substantial problems.

This treatment of the information suggests the ability to control it by the editorial staff of the journals. One must not have an extremely pessimistic image about the democratic openness of the journals. If the assumptions about the functioning of the information provision by the journals are not idealistic, we can observe that the journals do adequate to the fluid political evolution. Furthermore as much as in 2005 the government changed the manner of granting advertising contracts, the financial dependence of the journals on the state decreased significantly. Thus the journals reflect the "civil society" — the newly established market of the specific actors : how extended is this market, is another problem.

But the commercial purposes are the most important: *au fond* if the journals have fewer readers, they are lesser attractive for the private advertising and also for the economic circles. In this case, their prestige and influence decrease. In order to counter-act this situation, the newspapers monitored here chose three alternatives. Each of these represents a journalistic experience, not for the first time enacted: in December 2005 and January 2006, 1. *Jurnalul Național* was the most critical against the present power (and especially against the president), *Gândul* followed in a certain measure the same pattern; 2. *România Liberă* was the most critical toward the former holders of the power and 3. *Adevărul* kept the balance between these positions. This fact led to a commercial victory of *Jurnalul Național:* according to a survey made in January 20–27 by the Group of Social Studies (Grupul de Studii Sociale) at the demand of Multimedia Political Communication, this journal is the most often read, before *Libertatea* and *Adevărul.*

Taking into account the positive description of the actions of those in power, one could observe an inverse proportional contribution to the erosion of the present power. But this erosion is certainly not mainly the result of these journals: they did not campaign against those in power; rather they observed with more accuracy the inconsequence in the political strategy and behaviour.

None of these journals dissociated, in clear and accessible information, the rational and positive improvement of the political management — for example, the measures which separate the technical and managerial functions of the leadership of different institutions, the decisions to constitute the independence of the Justice, and to re-analyse the economic dossiers of privatisation — from the scandals focused on different political personages. One could observe that by

describing largely the corruption scandals one could hide other facts and phenomena, even more important.

At the same time, the features of the information transfer to the public could be observed as Parenti (2001) showed. The suppression by omission, the moving from artful avoidance to frontal assault in order to discredit the story (to "attack and destroy the target"), the labeling (i.e. the prefiguring of the perception by a positive or negative label), the preemptive assumption (i.e. the acceptance as given by the very policy position), the taking over of the labels fabricated by the officialdom, the slighting of the content, the false balancing, rather framing the falsehood, all of them are means to manipulate the political news.

The more common means are, before and after the elections, since the end of 2004, the manipulation of the political identities with their subversive techniques of discrediting the authorities (Alex Mucchielli, 2002: 184) and the Opposition, of painting a negative identity to the political enemy considered by the journal and the interests it represents. From time to time, the newspapers also offered the results of polls, which represent the permanent improvement of the informative function.

Generally the agenda of the media is the agenda of the Power — as it was in the first post-Stalinist decade (as Gross showed, 2004: 214). But the main written media are dissociating in different proportions of this aspect, by offering more diversified political information: *România Liberă, Gândul* — lesser, *Jurnalul Național, Adevărul* and *Evenimentul Zilei* — more. But the agenda of the media does not influence the agenda of the public (as Gross mentioned explicitly, 1999: 182). From this standpoint, media is rather a translator of the political than of the public. Still the premise of the Romanian democracy, to consider the population only as a receiver of inputs from the political elite, is confirmed by the behaviour of the Romanian media.

B. The function of the representation of the communities and the different subgroups has in view the social structure of present Romania. If this function means a "creation of images regarding situations in which citizens organize themselves to rationally and emotionally defend their (collective) interests**,** and develop a series of public activities from within civil society" (Carpentier, 2002), the main newspapers developed two kinds of representation. One is the mentioning of the situation of Romanian workers of the former first industrial revolution: as emigrants and as employees in the already mostly privatized factories. In the two months of monitoring, the problems of emigrants were mentioned, by all the journals, twice each of them: with the occasion of coming home for the Christmas and New Year holidays, and, rather in short, with the returning of many Romanians who have had not the legal documents but received the Ausweiss from the police. Concerning the second aspect, because in these two months there were no strikes, only a two hours warning on behalf of the metro workers, the journals did not do anything but announce this fact. Generally the journals and the media do not focus on the problems of the employees: rather they announce the different work tensions veiling them by both the standpoint of the employers and the 'no comment' on the real reason.

Because the 'ordinary people' are not at all the "active citizens capable of participating in the public debate" (*ibidem*), the journals show examples of success stories — more in *România Liberă, Evenimentul Zilei,* sometimes in *Jurnalul Național and Adevărul* — and of "simple life". This aspect was promoted by *Gândul,* which was the most consequent provider of this journalistic experience, and *Jurnalul Național.*

The representation of the 'ordinary people' is far more reduced than the representation of the political 'elite representatives of established power' (Livingstone and Lunt, 1996, cited by Carpentier). And what is quite/almost absolutely missing is the representation of active persons and concrete subgroups facing the labour market, resolving their essential needs as housing, health and culture, and the involvement in projects of the Romanian civil society (because the 'civil society' itself is reduced to the representatives of the established power). If the information about the concrete problems of different social groups is general, and thus superficial, there are some subgroups which appear from time to time in a stereotypical manner, as more or less exotic exceptions, the permanent scandalous image of the changing scandals of the political elite.

The campaign type practice is rather a mark of the written media we focused on here. The clichés about the rich gipsies and about the delinquency of the others, about the hundred or even thousand people in the religious processions, about the young people who became well-paid professionals or even rich as immigrants in the Western countries, or about the aggressed women and prostitutes, or about homosexuals cover the need of a 'pluriform representation' (Carpentier, 2002) of just these subgroups as well as their "substitute" the representation of larger social groups at work (with the possibilities to fall in vulnerable statute).

The feature of the socially active presence of common people in different organisations of the civil society cannot be found in the written media at all. The model of respectable Romanian citizen given by the written media is the one of the conformist private life based on the supposed and tacit making both ends meet. Media do not encourage the social and political activity of the common people.

Because of the lack of "pluriform representation" of the social groups, the Romanian written media do not support the active participation of citizens in the democratic process.

C. The representation of the political is understood by the Romanian media in its narrow sense, as political regime and proceedings, or 'centralised decision-making' (Carpentier, 2002).

The journals do focus on the aspects offered by the agenda of politicians. Because the main theme is the struggle between those in power and those in opposition, the journals represent it. As it was already mentioned here, the partisanship is for the Power, even if not in an equal way for all the parts of this one. At the same time, all the journals showed and criticised the unanimity of the members of parliament, which voted for themselves privileges, and the decisions of the government concerning the salaries and pensions of the dignitaries.

All of the newspapers described the activity of the Parliament, by mentioning the main discussions, the decisions or the postponement, of the government, the tension between the president (and his party) and the prime-minister and the other main party in the present coalition, as well as the relationships between these parties and the other two which participate to the coalition.

If *Jurnalul Național* and *Gândul,* manifesting a more critical attitude toward the present Power, and *România Liberă,* heavily opposing the former one, represented the conflict approach of politics, *Adevărul* and *Evenimentul Zilei* were more interested in promoting a more neutral and consensus based approach.

All of these newspapers tried to offer theirs own arguments — by the commentaries and the questions highlighted in different ways — to theirs positions. At the same time, they did not penetrate into the structural motives of the shortcomings of the political decision-making.

Rather excluding *Adevărul*, and in a certain measure *Evenimentul Zilei*, the journals professed a quite strong personification, by demonising some politicians — even if the president of the National Broadcasting Council, a jurist, warned against the violation of the objectivity principle — and thus reducing the image of political decision-making to a simple "gold rush" of corrupt politicians.

Jurnalul Național, promoting another journalistic experience, was the only journal, which accepted in its *printed* version a dialogue and the presence of different representatives of the civil society and of parties. The other journals reproduce only the standpoints of theirs own journalists and editors.

With all of theses, the result of the representation of the political in the Romanian media is quite problematic. As it was already mentioned, the political appears in the journals as rather illegitimate leadership, suspect resource allocation and doubtful technical political competence, than institutions and organisations, which allow the realisation of the lesser evil. The representation of the political does not include the participation of all affected by a certain decision-making: neither as representatives of these ones and especially nor as rational arguments of these ones. There are not too many arguments, motives of different leading positions. The journals rather make credible the positions they defend (Maurice Mouillaud, Jean François Tétu, 2003: 163). For this reason, politics is perceived by the majority of the population as a more or less interesting show which one could refuse and which is refused without too many consequences: politics is not the result of transparent debates and participation, thus the contrast between the ordinary people and the leading elite is quite huge.

D. If all the journals have already forums on the online edition, such as *Jurnalul Național* and *România Liberă* — as their specific journalistic experience — did mention and dialogue with the different, even opposite, opinions in the printed edition. If one could say that the readers of the different journals here analysed are coming from the supposed common ideological and specific identity with the newspaper one does agree, from this identity with some journalists who are at the same time famous commentators in the TV talk-shows — therefore the readers manifest their entire openness to the supply of the journals —, these ones

do not respond with much attention to this ability of initiative. In this respect the reading of the newspapers and the dialogue inside the online forum are rather the end, instead of the beginning, of a responsive action.

Therefore the participative function (Carpentier, 2002) consists in a specific way of the two-ways relationship between the journals and the readers. Obviously the standard is here the model of the improvement of the journalism through more intelligent means and dialogue with the readers, and not a simple "utopia of communication as the development of dialogue (Pierre Ansart, 2002: 36).

The journals did not organise meetings with the readers: for this reason neither the agenda of the journals nor the capacity of the readers to construct a rational and responsive citizenship developed from this possible participatory relationship.

Because of this narrow understanding of the information provision, the newspapers have a limited emancipating force. The image of democracy converts in the freedom of critique, but in a certain impotent nihilism: democracy is not valued and the attraction toward a dictatorship type leadership is strong enough. At the same respect, the newspapers do not contribute to the education of the democratic behaviour of the readers: these ones are formed rather as passive receivers of the news the journals give. The present forums in the online editions of the newspapers could easily be means of psychological manifestation of the readers and lesser — a contribution to the agenda and the supply of commentaries and opinions.

Position in front of specific journalistic reform projects

One could make a correspondence with the journalistic reform projects mentioned by Carpentier. Through this procedure one could better understand the level of the main mainstream Romanian newspapers.

None of these have taken over the *peace* journalism. But all of them were very preoccupied by the problems of Romania's *development.* With or without every-day special pages dedicated to the integration in the European Union, every journal showed the backwardness of Romania in front of the European standards, the decisions of the present and former governments, including the campaigns — in all the media — to explain why Romania has to enter in the EU, what this means/what are the consequences, as well as the results of these campaigns. Every journal has had special information about the structure of the EU, the competences of different institutions and the European laws.

All of the newspapers were consequent to develop a democratic discourse and to transfer democratic values. Whilst before the elections at the end of 2004, even if the main pattern of the discourse was democratic and libertarian insisting on the human rights, nevertheless some racist features still existed. Especially since 2005 the care for gender and racial equality, for the inclusion of marginalized minorities manifested through periodical articles concerning concrete aspects regarding women, rroma, persons with disabilities, homosexuals and the young women forced to prostitution.

If the solution oriented approach is not very developed — journalists preferring to paint impressionist pictures (see *Gândul*) — on the other hand the story journalism, in the form of success stories or of 'it's just life' feature reports, is more spread. Through this "new journalism" the newspapers show their openness toward the social problems and substitute the even weak objective information about the aims and consequences of the economic policies on the social structure with particular destinies and subjective feelings. But the problem that this type of journalism develops or the non-democratic feelings of the readers are not yet solved.

A conclusion and at the same time a criterion of the analysis

The television — as the dominant mass medium, i.e. having the biggest influence on the political process as well as on the population — proved to have, including in 2005, many shortcomings of both the public and the private broadcasting. If the Open Society Institute's EU Monitoring and Advocacy Program (EUMAP), in collaboration with the Network Media Program (NMP), in their monitoring of media regulation, policy and independence in 20 European countries showed concerning the situation from Romania that *Financing sources of television stations still non-transparent in Romania* and that "media empires emerge not for commercial purposes, but for political reasons" (Rompres, 28 November 2005), *there are not very clear content distinctions between the public service broadcasting and private broadcasting* (*Television across Europe: Regulation, Policy and Independence*, www.eumap.org/topics/media).

We limit the discussion obviously to the supply of political information. The influence of the government and the politicians was important, but if the private televisions reflect the interest of specific private circles why did the EUMAP report speak about "lowering standards of professionalism among broadcasting journalists", i.e. not only those working in the public TV showing a certain lack of reflection on the consequences of their influence on the public opinion?

The answer tries to connect the premise of the commercial reasons as leading to the raising of the quality of TV supply, the real result, as it is showed by the EUMAP report too, and, on the other hand, the values that media share. The press agencies as the intermediary sources of information can be accused as a today's cause of the state of information offered to the public only from the standpoint of the ownership: the concentration of this one in the field of press agencies could offer a selection of the news which makes more difficult an objective transfer by the media. But the selection is made the second time by these ones, and the focus and the neglecting of information generate *approximately the same representation of things.* Not because it is about the same world, but because of the beliefs, which support the media supply.

These beliefs are linked to a certain one-side interpretation taken over from the present mainstream world political culture. If democracy is surely a 'universalised' and 'universalizable' value, it is also the result of the pressure of modern popular classes and not only of the political intelligence of the political

elites. And this pressure, historical and topical, is also a 'universalised' and 'universalizable' value. But this last fact, as well as the normative aims of those which pressed and press for human rights and a more consistent understanding of these ones, are somehow neglected in the present mainstream political culture. Democracy is rather reduced to the proceedings and is frustrated by the normative (let's say, social) side without which proceedings in themselves cannot be but reduced. Obviously this type of neo-liberal accent corresponds to the needs of the present leading structure and logic of the world, but not only on the theoretical level does one need the conscience of the internal tensions of the present democracy just for developing this one. In other words, without the transmission and internalisation of a formal value but for which one always has to act, one cannot participate to its development.

If democracy is interpreted in this way, it could have a de-structuring effect. The attitude toward democracy does differentiate indeed the mainstream media from the extreme-right journals. But democracy is a kind of absolute value, covering both the empirical side of procedures and the normative side of standards of rights and participation. Democracy is what needs objectivity in the description of procedural side as well as it requires involvement for better underlining the normative aspects of the social organisation. If journalists do not correspond to the standards that democracy demands, the information projects a distorted reality, which could be the basis of an uncontrolled evolution.

If it is not the place to discuss about the basic convictions of the Romanian media, and *from this point of view there are not mainstream and extreme types* — capitalism as the "end of history", the communist type values as being tantamount to Stalinism, and very often fascism=Stalinism=communism — it is however important to understand their ideological evolution. After 1989, from a Stalinist frame, which determined journalists to be false and have a double discourse (one internal, the other — professional), media suddenly took over the neo-liberal beliefs and expression. If in the Western countries the mainstream media conformed, from the 1980s on, to neo-liberalism — but they started in a more pluralistic manner and at all events the metamorphosis left room for alternative *democratic* voices — the post-Stalinist Romanian media became *in corpore* the followers of the new dominant ideology. The mono-coloured premises and messages left their marks upon the supply of media.

This situation has an important influence on the performances of both journalistic experiences and democracy itself. There are simply no left-wing, i.e. democratic but consistent journals — and by no means left-wing TV station — which could criticise the political process from the standpoint of the contradictory character of the system itself as well as showing the contradictions between democracy and the economic-social system for the contribution to the construction of a more democratic society. There were obviously only partisan journals for the social-democrat party or for the explicit right-wing/centre-right-wing.

One could conclude that the main Romanian mainstream newspapers apply the liberal model, the social responsibility model which considers as very important the representations of social groups (see Carpentier, 2002) not being strong enough. The development model and the "new journalism" are also popular.

Because this manner of digging the ideological underground of the behaviour of media would trouble the state of things, and is considered as being suspect, none of the journalists decided to use it.

Therefore the *values that media share are the main causes* of the content they offer to the public. The question is rather implied, a tacit supposition, in the journalistic practice. It is general: as Parenti (2003) showed, "when it comes to addressing the fundamental questions of economic power, corporate dominance... BBC journalists and commentators are as careful as their American counterparts not to venture beyond certain orthodox parameters".

The power to impose the values belongs to the media owners. The *ownership i*s the obviously indirect — through the professional staffs of the newspapers — origin of the decisions concerning not only the *values but also the concrete partisanship of the newspapers in a while.* In this respect, the concrete democratic feelings of the readers are strongly influenced by the owners.

Another cause is the *media concentration*. This one leads to the increase of the power of the owners as the decision-makers regarding the supply of media. If this power aims to the growth of the profit in the media entrepreneurship, at the same time it imposes the frame within which it drives at the profit. The improvement of the media practices takes place within this frame. One could see the intelligence to supply more objective information, which seems to transform the involvement of the journalist in an obsolete attitude. As well as the forums where the spontaneous critique made by the readers, many times non-rational and populist, does not lead to the conscience of the possibility to participate to the democratic process and de-centralised management.

One could not neglect another cause: *the competence of the Romanian journalists*, their education and training was forged only in the frame of the *mainstream* Western journalism. But even for the development of the journalistic standards, they also have to know, through the Western professional literature of the researchers, that the way they construct media is open.

As we saw, the role of the ownership is a central controversial topic in the approaches of the media.

Because the owners are linked to different business circles, media could better grasp the erosion of those in power as well as they could force, through their influence, for stopping or accentuating this erosion (see the observation of Gross, 1999: 180, about the anti-Power/anti-Iliescu regime attitude of the biggest part of the Romanian mass media, their outright partisanship, and the fact that the political climate was receptive to this fact in the 1996 elections). This was also the case of the daily newspapers. But it is not only a question of concrete partisanship: if this one is directed against those in power/different parts of these ones, the commercial purpose is better attained (*Jurnalul Național*).

The main media do confirm and strengthen the already existent political climate, but if one TV station or journal could become the "exception which makes a hit" by advancing a democratic non-conformist attitude, why didn't this one exist? The answer does obviously concern the level of the post-communist

Romanian media but could also not exclude the values shared by all of them: *the confusion and the partisanship are not only the result of the level of professionalisation of media*. The most recent surveys and analyses confirm the Gross's conclusion with some amendments: the partisan journalism and the diversity of opinions serve the relatively consolidated democracy — and not only the "non-democratic democracy" which appeared in the early years of the post-communist Romania — and this service is better achieved with the help of many information, as avalanches of information — than through few information.

The role of the written media is consonant with the one of TV and radio broadcastings. It results from the values shared by the entire media as well as from the common interest to acquiring a larger and larger market. But the issue of their common behaviour is a disillusioned citizen whose cultural consume is mostly based on audiovisual (*Raport CSCDC#01/2005*) and is of low quality. If the written press haven't had much influence on the elections (Gross, 1999: 179), afterwards people did not see the difference between the governments of different political colours, with all the warm support of the quasi-entire media for the new one.

Synthesis

The historical experience of the post-Stalinist Romanian written media could clear some aspects concerning the information performances and the influence of the ownership.

The Romanian businessmen and even the politicians set up media organisations for imposing their influence in politics and society. The central mainstream media is thus the ground of the competition between the Romanian media groups and the foreign media companies. But the press owned by these ones are not more objective and "neutral" than the press owned by the Romanian groups. Not a certain ownership — be this one state, Romanian or foreign — is the only determinant of media manipulation.

The analysis of the main written media from the standpoint of the functions and dimensions of the democratic transfer of information shows that the Romanian owners — businessmen's or editors' companies — and the foreign owners do not lead to different journalistic means and practices. The competition and the modernisation of media generate a rapid rhythm; offer more attractive journals with better-processed information. Concerning the journalistic practices, which correspond to the functions of media, the insignificant difference between the mainstream written media is the consequence of the professional level of the journals' staff and of the journalists and sometimes of the excessive concrete partisanship.

There are no essential differences between the behaviour and content of the main written media of different owners. What is their common feature is the aiming, at the same time, of both the commercial purposes and the *mainstream values*. The support for different political actors is rather the result of

partisanship than of more diverse and profound information and opinion, and it gives rather the impression of media games and shows. The consequences of the political actions of different actors are not questioned in a coherent manner: the consequences on long term simply do not exist in the main written media here observed.

The investigation journalism is subordinated to the objectives of the owners — linked to the economic and political circles: many investigations abruptly finished without the journalists being able to manifest their ability to realise the functions of the democratic media.

If in 2004, the critiques towards the government were weak enough until the impulse of some TV stations and main newspapers which set the pace and constructed the public atmosphere rather opposed to those in power (obviously these last ones were corrupted but still promoted some state interventionist and social policies which seemed to be obsolete to both the mainstream ideology and the takeovers), after December 2004 the press supported in great measure the new Power. Only after about six-months/a year the main written media began to criticise the Power in a different manner. But the tone is rather moderate: the critique is focused on different political actors and translates from one to another, because the electoral year is still far away.

The representation of the political, full of scandals, gives the image that the freedom of the press seems to have been raising. The competition between the main journals seems to enlarge this freedom, but all of them act in the same frame. The responsibility of the owners toward the freedom of the press passes through the constraints of the competition and of the relationships with the economic and political Romanian and foreign circles.

Media owners and managers learned from the post-communist history of media. To the concerns expressed in the SEENPM conference Emerging Newspaper Business and Ethics, hold in October 2005, the response was the increase of the "responsibility of the media owners and managers toward the good quality of their journalistic products" (see the conference on the SEENPM site). For this purpose, even if the problem of the ownership is considered afterwards as being a question concerning the owners — even if a certain transparency is already realised — and the fair competition is the result of the power of the ownership which allows more and more early means to win over the market, as well as the result of the inherently spreading of new media methods, which the owners and managers are trying hard to develop — a more attractive media discourse. This one is more offensive towards the political elite, even if not equally distributed to the competing parts and has a more sincere and more equidistant appearance.

The messages transmitted by the newspapers are certainly not the result of a direct and visible intervention of the owners. Rather there is a self-censorship of the journalists concerning the fundamental values (Parenti, in Doru Pop, 2001: 145–146) and the specific interests of the journal where they work. There is a question of prestige (and survival) of the journalist to fight for the force of the journal to which he or she contributes.

Being actors in a fluent and constraining market, the editors and journalists of the newspapers analysed here are very careful to implement the newest methods and ideas which configure the most attractive, rich, courageous and objective image of the supply of political information.

But how much criticism could the newspapers promote? These ones could criticise as much as they could raise the number of sold copies without upsetting too much *the strongest bearers* of the mainstream values of the moment. The relationships are thus more complicated: sometimes they seem to be a simple opposition against those in power, sometimes — against some parts of these ones.

Anyway we must not forget that media does not give solutions and alternatives to the existing criticised situations: it is simply not the business of media to do this. Media criticises and suggests only indirectly, through critique.

Are the Romanian main written media professionals — "agoraphobic" (Carpentier)? As the Romanian political culture mixes, among other things, the liberal and the democratic ideologies, as the mainstream main written media journalists mix the liberal, elitist, and democratic attitudes. Even if the democratic treatment of the political information is rather elitist and too formalist — i.e. liberal — the journals have to adequate to the changing spirit of the time. From this standpoint, the journalists are on the course of experiencing the tendency to create a participative democracy with the help of their work too. But the owners tend to control "the spirit of the time". How to adequate the information, because the inadequacy "reduces responsibility for the outcomes of choices among adults" (Brian Barry, 2005: 137) is thus a question of tension and process.

The ownership in the Romanian (written) media is not yet transparent enough. Thus media professional organisations and media monitoring organisations have not yet the necessary capacity in relation to the problem of media ownership and concentration. The codes of conduct in the owners/editorial staff relations, the responsibility of the owners/publishers toward the freedom of the media are not yet practical criteria in the development of the written media.

The media concentration as such is an inherent process in the economic relationships. New patterns (limits) for the media concentration could not be created without the Romanian state being accused for prejudicing the free market because of dubious state control, which certainly reduces the freedom of the press. At the same time the media concentration does weaken the independence of the media: journalists have lesser opportunities to exercise their profession according on the professional standards.

From a standpoint, one could say, with Gross (2004: 213), that despite their "super-politisation and partisanship", the main Romanian written media succeed to inform their readers. The more so as the very compelling market and the economical aims of the owners determined a perfecting of the information supply. But it is true that "the border between the objective and the partisan media, as

well as between news and entertainment, erodes" (Gross, *ibidem:* 200). And the rush for awards/prizes given by media for the increasing of the audience could pervert our image about the performances of the information performances main written media.

There are no differences between the influence of the Romanian and the foreign influence of the ownership on the information and the functions of media. All of the owners have the same aims. The financial power of the owners is important but the long-term purposes — the values purposes — allow the owners to receive from the banks the support they need at a certain moment.

If the ownership in the mainstream written media is diverse enough, already one could observe a certain limitation of information; one could only warn that the raising of the concentration in the written media would menace pluralism, with all the improvements of the journalistic experiences. Obviously we speak about the "technical" pluralism, i.e. in the mainstream reflection of the political games and forces, and not about the "metaphysical" one (as Duverger used this term to describe the difference between the political parties and political philosophies pro and against the system).

The training of the journalists and the improvement of journalistic practices and experiences do not necessarily lead to the raising of the journalistic standards: the owners — through the editorial staff — are responsible for these ones.

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"READING ALL ABOUT IT" FRONT PAGE. CELEBRATING 100 YEARS OF THE BRITISH NEWSPAPER 1906–2006

HENRIETA ŞERBAN

As Kelvin Mac Kenzie said it "The front page — the way pictures are used, the words that are chosen, the stories that are selected — reflects the soul and personality of the newspaper and embraces the frenetic minute to minute atmosphere of a newspaper office."

British Library and Newspaper Publishers Association brought together over 200 front pages from the past century, telling the story of the influence that the different national newspapers had on society in time. The main press groups involved by the event were Associated Newspapers (*Daily Mail*, *Mail on Sunday*, *Evening Standard*), Express Newspapers (*Daily Express*, *Sunday Express*, *Daily Star*, *Star on Sunday*), Financial Times (*Financial Times*), Guardian Newspapers (*The Guardian*, *The Observer*), Mirror Group Newspapers (*Daily Mirror*, *Sunday Mirror*, *Sunday People*), News International (*The Sun*, *The Times*, *The Sunday Times*, *News of the World*), Independent News and Media, (*The Independent*, *The Independent on Sunday*), Telegraph Group (*Daily Telegraph*, *The Sunday Telegraph*).

The idea of this exhibition parallels the story of John Frost's hobby of collecting historic front pages when he was aged 10. He started it in the 1930s out of a general passion for knowledge. Aged 19, he collected newspapers with the new incentive to 'Save paper', conquered by the wartime slogan. His collection includes the editions of the coronation and death of every monarch of Britain since the 1630s (Queen Anne), or those presenting all the important moments in Sir Winston Churchill's life, as the events in the history of the aviation from the Wright brothers (1903) to man on the moon (1969), plus German newspapers printed in Normandy, underground newspapers produced by partisans, or the emergency edition of *Lubecker Zeitung* announcing 'Fuhrer gefallen'... Today, the hobby is a business — John Frost Newspapers, a private archive headed by his son Andrew.

All the press groups contributed with their most striking front pages, that were classified into several categories, the radiography of the subjects embraced by the printed press, generally, such as: **"Press, politics and politicians"** (for instance "Prime Minister Maggie!" in *Daily Express* at 4 May 1979, "Lady

Pol. Sc. Int. Rel., **III**, *2*, p. 79–82, Bucharest, 2006.

T-ears" in *Sun* at 23 November 1990, "If Kinnock wins today will the last person to leave Britain please turn out the lights" in *Sun*, 9 April 1992, or "Blair wins by a landslide" in *Daily Telegraph* at 2 May 1997), **"Riot, revolt and terror"** (for example "Monsters-Hyde Park Bombs" in *Daily Mail*, 21 July 1982), **"Shock, crash and horror"** (for instance "Concorde clash-flames of disaster" in *Daily Mail*, 26 July 2000), **"Murder"** (for example, "Dr. Harold Shipman murders" in *Guardian*, at 1 October 2000). Yet, there are many more categories feeding our daily need for information and entertainment: **"War declared"** (for example, "Declaration of war by Great Britain" in *Daily Mirror*, 5 August 1914, "News from Spain" in *News Chronicle* at 1 September 1936 or "Hitler dead" in *News Chronicle* at 2 May 1945), **"Final Frontiers"** (for instance, "How I discovered the South Pole" in *Daily Chronicle* at 9 March 1912, "The Crowning Glory: Everest is climbed" in *News Chronicle* at 2 June 1953 or "The First Footstep" in *Evening Standard* at 21 July 1969), **"Money, money, money"** (for example "Wall Street's Greatest Crash" in *Daily Mail* at 25 October 1929 or "Welcome to Euroland" in *Guardian* at 1 January 1999), **"Tomorrow's world"** (for instance "Scientists clone adult sheep", *Observer*, 23 February 1997), **"The beautiful games"** (for example "Wilkinson wins it", *Sunday Telegraph*, 23 November 2003), **"Happy and glorious..."** (for example "Charles and Camilla wedding" *Sunday Express* 10 April 2005), **"... and idolised"** (for instance "King Elvis dead" in *Sun*, 18 August 1977), and **"Good news"** (for example "Berlin Wall" in *Guardian*, 11 November 1989 or "Golden jubilee" in *Daily Mail* 1 June 2002).

Yes, against the comments of the media analysts, good news seems to make the front page sometimes, too. Indeed, the window of journalistic opportunity for the good news is opened by the fact of the matter that "Everyone likes a party. There is nothing like a good celebration to lift the spirits of a nation, especially if a diet of death, destruction and acts of terrorism have dominated news schedules", as Charles Rae from the *Sun* noticed. (p. 2) But this is the easier task of journalism, more difficult being to report wars such as in Iraq, going "from bad to worse to even worse" (Ed Vulliamy, p. 27) or to mediate civil disorders, watching democracy and human rights, as press is the hope of the rebels to get their message accurately transmitted to the global public, and it remains their hope to be perceived as "brave fighters" and not as "mindless thugs". This is the difference that is captured to the nuance by David Seymour, in his article in the magazine presenting the exhibition. He writes: "Civil disorder is by definition a conflict between the Establishment and those who feel estranged from the ruling class or society. At one extreme it is revolution, which changes things forever, at the other, a night of violence and mayhem with the aftermath little more than looted shops and burnt-out cars. A hundred years ago the suffragettes broke the mould of rebellion in Britain. Women of all classes, not only marched for the right to vote, but took parts in acts of revolt, which shook male-dominated society. It was at the time an unfashionable cause, supported by few newspapers, though the *Daily Mirror* was a notable exception." (p. 26)

Political news shall make the most memorable front pages, I believe. They tend to combine in a very marketable manner the "shock, crash and horror"

category with the "happy and glorious (go slandered)" category and with the "final frontier" category. Bill (Lord) Deeds from the *Daily Telegraph* considers that: "Newspapers should keep political comment separate from political news". He explains that tabloid style political journalism with the tendency to "belittle" politicians is diminishing the importance of politics and journalism at once, because what we have here at stake is "a partnership that is important for democracy." (p. 21) When public respect for the politician decreases, the interest for politics does too and along with this interest, the interest for newspapers as well decreases. So, what should do journalists, since they "work with the client's material", when politicians are simply performing poorly? Just keep things separated: let informative columns be informative and put the critical comment in the comment columns. As for the famous "If Kinnock wins today will the last person to leave Britain please turn out the lights" in *Sun*, 9 April 1992, it is not the first time when a headline managed to sway voters; it also happened to Stanley Baldwin, the Conservative leader, as early as in 1923, when the mighty Press said that his policy is going to "put up the price of bread." (p. 21)

The story of women editors is present in the exhibition as within the pages of the magazine with the same title. Dennis Griffiths, former chairman of the London Press Club presents it as a long line of woman editors, going back almost 300 years. In the recent history, a few decades ago, he names Wendy Henry of the *News of the World* and *The People*, Patsy Chapman, *News of the World*, Eve Pollard, *Sunday Mirror* and *Sunday Express*, Lauri Miles, *Evening News*, Bridget Rowe, *Sunday Mirror*, Janet Street-Porter, *Independent on Sunday*, Rosie Boycott, *Independent* and *Daily Express*, Rebekah Wade, *News of the World* and *Sun*, Tina Weaver, *Sunday Mirror*, Dawn Neesom, *Daily Star*, Veronica Wadley, *Evening Standard* and Sarah Sands at *The Sunday Telegraph*. The authors names also the instances of the managerial positions occupied by women until a few decades ago: Dame Marjorie Scardino, chief executive at Financial Times, Sly Bailey, chief executive at Mirror Group Newspapers and Carolyn MacCall chief executive at Guardian Newspapers.

Mary Howarth, considered the first woman to edit a British national daily was attempting a more democratic approach to writing newspapers with an accent put on providing information by people concerned and not exclusively by professional reporters, which brought about a decrease in the sales that cost her job. As early as 1779, Mrs. Elisabeth Johnson founded Sunday Press in Great Britain, brought out the *Evening Star* and *Grand Weekly Advertiser* and launched *E. Johnson's British Gazette* and *Sunday Monitor* "which contained the latest news, a summary of the week's main events, a religious column on the front page plus advertisements — and was designed to appeal to those who had neither money nor leisure for a daily paper." (p. 18) Around 1897, Mrs. Rachel Beer was editing both *The Observer* and *The Sunday Times* that were rival newspapers, and, occasionally, even wrote for both of them, with equal deft. This article is all the lore important since, interestingly enough, there are no women included among the great "movers" (read owners) and "shakers" (read editors), in spite of the long history of women who successfully ran newspapers,

and only three of the 48 pages of the magazine bear a woman's signature. Also, one could observe that the middle poster chronicle "From the early Morning Post to today's Berliner Guardian" is still so very much "his story".

The exhibition had something for everyone. It had the stories of different journalists, and the stories they've linked their name with, the stories of typical journalistic subjects, of the owners and of their editors, it provided even the addresses of the famous pubs where journalists used to gather (and in some cases still do), or the opportunity to create your own front page selecting the format of a specific famous British newspaper, working against a deadline and having it printed to take home with you. The exhibition also had copies of famous old newspapers from John Frost's collection and, as a surprise, the possibility to listen to some important voices of the past — such as that of Hitler or W. Churchill — reviving the feeling of past times not only by "reading all about it".

BOOK REVIEWS

Mediating Ideology in Text and Image. Ten Critical Studies, edited by Inger Lassen, Jeanne Strunck and Torben Vestergaard, Amsterdam, Philadelphia, John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2006, 254 p.

The book is constituted at the interference of media studies, ideology, discourse analysis and semiotics, combining analyses of text and image in an approach labelled as "critical discourse analysis", a multi-modal analysis.

Critical discourse analysis is presented in this volume as characterized by two main features: first, the emphasis on the interdependence of social, historical and cultural meanings and interpretations (the intertextuality) situating both text production and text comprehension, therefore mediating between discourse and society; and, second, debating different notions of 'ideology' and 'critique' with sensitivity to research traditions and to the inter-play of the different contexts implicated by any discourse. Thus, this method is not just another grammatical and linguistic analysis — it sustains that the context needs to be explicitly considered in the analysis to allow an understanding and an explanation for the impact of the various texts (and images).

The authors of the chapters included in this volume are explicitly aware of the ideological processes that may influence readers' perceptions of the world that are (in)forming their beliefs and attitudes. At the same time, they all acknowledge the different ideological processes that are operating within the accounts of the journalists on their topics they've chosen to write about. There is a sustained attempt to "denaturalize" ideology from the texts and the images encountered.

Within the preface, Inger Lassen outlines the main definitions of ideology in order to offer an idea of the analytical perspective pursued within this book. First, the authors consider Van Dijk definition of ideology as "basis of the social representations shared by the members of a group", by this perception sustaining a socio-cognitive approach. Second, there is Wodak's definition of ideology as "serving the purpose of establishing and maintaining unequal power relations". Third, with Fairclough "ideology is a construction of reality, which contributes to the production, reproduction and transformation of relations of domination. (…) The ideologies embedded in discursive practices are most effective when they become naturalized and achieve the status of the common-sense". (p. 7) Given this perspective on what concerns the notion of "common-sense", critical discourse analysis is close to a social-constructionist view. In this sense it is important to underline that Rancière has suggested that the "principal function of the ideology is to secure bonds between human beings in their social interaction, one determined by the social structure. Texts and images are reproducing value systems making them appear for the general public as "normal" and "common-sense" value systems. The critical discourse analyses that are present in this volume unveil the power struggles and resistances, educating certain sensitivity to attitudes and ideologies, to the discursive appearance and adaptability of the value systems.

The first part of the volume, entitled "Media constructions of meaning: Rhetorical strategies and intersubjective positioning" includes the articles: "Semiosis, ideology and mediation: A dialectical view" by Norman Faircloough, "Evaluative semantics and ideological positioning in journalistic discourse: A new framework for analysis", by P.R.R. White, "Identity and stance taking in news interviews: A case study", by Pentti Haddington, "De-naturalizing ideology: Presupposition and Appraisal in biotechnology press releases", by Inger Lassen and "Understanding public discourse about violence and crime: A challenge for critical discourse analysis at school", by Francesco Caviglia.

Norman Fairclough, from Lancaster University, takes into account two Romanian cases of informative advertising, to observe at once the discursive practices and the discourses of change and 'transition'. Both examples are printed media leaflet advertising that are stating obvious, common-sense rules of behaviour. The author concludes that "In the Romanian case, practices and values which work ideologically to inculcate subjects into the global capitalist economy and thus contribute to an emergent and expansive global hegemony, also work in the pursuit of strategies of distinction, which can be adjudged ideological in the sense that they misrecognize raw relations of economic and financial power in the 'wild capitalism' of contemporary Romania as relations of distinction (e.g. 'we know how to behave in queues, they don't') allow the rationalization of gross differences of wealth and power which have often emerged through aggressive and even corrupt business practices and exploitation in terms of what are widely regarded as inherent (or even genetic) differences between people in intelligence and civilization, and so misrecognize the antagonisms and contradictions of the anarchic emergence of capitalism

in Romania". (p. 33) Norman Fairclough is assessing the historical and case study data to sustain his argument, that the failure of capitalism to improve significantly the lives of the Romanians is ideologically disguised in the discourse about the failure to 'change mentalities'.

Inger Lassen, from the Department of Languages, Culture and Aesthetics, at the University of Aalborg, in her article "De-naturalizing ideology", has studied 10 press releases all of them focusing on vitamin A enriched golden rice. Drawing on data evenly sustaining and opposing genetic modification she notices and emphasizes how all discussants make extensive use of presupposition, thus naturalizing ideological positions within propositions that would appear subjective to a broader, general public. She explains how naturalized ideology can be de-naturalized by following intertextual chains of presupposition and engagement.

The second part of the volume entitled "Resemiotized meaning: Analysing images and ideologies" includes the following chapters "From our plan to my promises: Mutimodal shifts in political advertisements", by Anders Horsbøl, "Icons as ideology: A media construction", by Judith Leah Cross, "Getting attention in the media: interdiscursivity and ideology in advertisements", by Henrik Rahm, "The big picture: The role of the lead image in print feature stories", by Dorothy Economu and "News bulletin captions as ideological indices", by Konstantinos Kostoudis.

Anders Horsbøl, Aalborg University Denmark, investigates the trends in Danish political communication media, using a comparative discourse analysis of central advertisements, comparing 2005 Danish parliamentary election advertisements to 1987 ones. Identifying central features of contemporary political communication in the mass-media — such as the professionalization of political communication, the high costs of production formats, the strategic intention to influence the election decision of the voter in the favour of the advertising person or party, the audience awareness of the one-sideness and persuasive intentions of the advertisement, its situation in a political field, risking commentaries and contestation by political opponents — the paper aims to demonstrate how "a multimodal discourse analysis can enrich the framework of (political) discourse analysis." (p. 150)

Judith Leah Cross, University of Wollongong, shows in "Icons as ideology: A media construction" that readers often do subconsciously interpret the relations among the direction, position and movement of the visual elements — such as gaze, for instance — thus perceiving the two-dimensional, mass-produced images as three-dimensional. She analyses a specific kind of visual text, past and present representational icons of women to exemplify such perceptions. "Photography and new media have achieved a recontextualisation of images and icons." (p. 178)

The author shows in her study of a wide range of representational iconic images, from the past and from the present, that once a woman was "framed" as an icon, either for information purposes — within the political realm, within the religious realm or even within the fashion realm — or for 'entertainment' purposes — that is, for fame, or for fantasy — certain contradictory evaluation would become linked to her representation influencing both her own perception of herself and other's perception of her, too.

The volume succeeds to carry on the ideological leitmotif, showing that the 'traditional' role of media along with the role played by the unaware audiences is central for constituting the ideological success, despite the possibility of raising people awareness by using the new media, where people can more freely create new semantic hierarchies involving in ever new mixtures of 'voices'.

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Anna Munster

Materializing new media. Embodiment in information aesthetics, Hanover and London, University Press of New England, 2006, 238 p.

There are both continuation and tranformation taking place with the intricated relationships between old and new media. The author investigates different aspects of new media technologies in a project that is aesthetically oriented. The purpose of the volume is not to analyze and describe the overall cultural meaning of the digital, but to capture and inquire into certain specific "points of intersection that digital flows have with issues of embodiment". (p. 24)

The book is structured in five chapters, preceded by an introduction and followed by a postscript, all pigmented with various and surprising illustration

sustaining the inquiry. The first chapter is entitled "Sampling ans Folding: The Digital and the Baroque". In this part of the volume Anna Munster takes the reader beyond the enclosed philosophical and aesthetic space of intersection between the Cartesian *cogito* and the reductive cyberfantasy of a flesh-machine fusion. Baroque aesthetics takes the lead in creating a new space for understanding the relations of both connection and difference between bodies, affect and the inhuman spaces of codes with their inherent flows. (p. 9)

In the following chapter the theme is "Natural History and Digital History". Given a theoretical context defined by complementarity, embodiment is actually investigated as a dynamic oscillating bridge engaging along with the human bodies the virtual reality, or, the incorporeality of the digital code.

"Virtuality: Actualizing Bodies, Abstracting Selves" is the title of the third chapter, exploring digital entertainment as a way of explaining the relationship between digitalization and embodiment. The author adopts a critical view over the empoverished perspectives of materiality. With this stand she discusses also the subject of the lack of imagination in what the new media are concerned.

"Interfaciality: From the Friendly Face of Computing to the Allien Terrain of Informatic Bodies" develops a similar critical perspective as in the previous chapter, in the sense that interfaciality becomes central for posthumanism and for the new media art, too. The digital machine is confronted with "faciality" as a social, but also as an aesthetical and technological machine specializing in corporeal engagement and representation through a relation of subordination to the face. (There comes into play a Deleuze and Guattari interpretation of such a particular "cult of personality" and with its role within the Western culture.)

The last and, in my view, the most important chapter of the volume, "Digitality: An Ethico-Aesthetic Paradigm for Information" is calling for a new manner of theoretizing new media, given its challenging approach to the traditional lower signal-to-noise ratio model of communication. The author underlines: "We might superficially surmise that the two vectors emerging from current practices and debate within information aesthetics — the one toward abstraction as a means for engaging intense corporeal experience, the other toward an investigation of biology as materialization of information — seem to offer quite different approaches and opportunities for new media art." (p. 186) The call for a stringent need for a new paradigm for information is brought about by the manifestations of contemporary art. In her "reading" of the contemporary art is the source of Munster's approach. She notices that in the shared concern of the new media art "with the social and cultural specificities of living and breathing informatic bodies and with the process of embodying information also tells us that contemporary art has never been more critically engaged with the formation, regulation and renewal of sense and perception". (p. 186)

Promoting democracy in postconflict societies, edited by Jeroen de Zeeuw, Krishna Kumar, London, Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2006, 333 p.

Democratic development and democracy assistance seem to be the major political concern — and, hopefully, the direction — in many places of the globe, such as Afganistan, East Timor, Liberia, Sudan or Iraq.

The volume's focuss is therefore oriented by certain major areas of investigation, such as: postconflict elections and political party development, human rights assistance and media assistance.

The promotion of responsible journalism through human rights based media development is fundamental to international assistance in democracy promotion.

Christopher Kaymba and Jean-Paul Kimonoyo are explaining, for instance, media assistance to postgenocide Rwanda. Mass media were generally monopolized by Rwanda government until the end of the 80s. In 1987 a first critical and independent journal appeared, "Kanguka", triggering an increased internal opposition. Between 1991 and 1993 more than 60 journals were created along with an atmosphere of confrontational journalism, with journals like "Rwanda for Tomorrow" or "Le Tribun du Peuple", sustaining The Rwandan Patriotic Front, while other journals sustained the other (opposition) political parties. This type of journalism was an expression of the increasing political uncertainty and ethnic polarization. An important role in spreading the genocide of 1994 was played by the extremist Radio Télévision Libre des Mille Collines (RTLM).

The authors notice that all media of the 90s "suffered from a severe lack of professionalism, journalistic ethics and, most important, editorial independence." (p. 215) For all these reasons, public trust in media was damaged. Given this climate, the international assistance had to start with a rehabilitation of trust. The most important action taken consisted in establishing "alternative" media to set standards against Rwanda "hate" media and to inform the refugees and other persons scattered abroad. It also got involved with the training of journalists and with the regulatory media framework.

This article is especially contributing to the general effort of sustaining the democratic journalism through four lessons concerning: 1. the necessity to create sustainable and coordinated strategies based on local needs; 2. the importance of a journalism traning that is focussed on the long term; 3. political

support and legal expertise are crucial for a more liberal media legislation; 4. the role of media assistance is to buid a political climate that holds power accountable and ensures open debate.

The volume is interesting also for the investigation of the problems that appear in the way of democracy assistance. As the editors themselves underline, the readers will easily come to realize that: first of all, many donor organizations do not have a coherent strategy for building democratic institutions and fostering a democratic political culture. Their second observation is that the time horizon for assistance programs often is far too short (mainly when one considers the hardship experienced in these countries). Another important aspect concerns the fact that the prospects for sustainability of certain organizations and activities are left out, in a more general context of asigning inferior importance to building the capacity of a new domestic institution. Yet another important element is brought into discussion by the weak coordination among donors (as shown by the multitude of case studies and by the corroborated findings). The editors are warning in a constructive-critical tone an idea that seems to me the best conlusion for the entire volume: "Finally, the international community is often unwilling to apply strong political pressure, even when such pressure is pivotal in fostering long-term democratic development." (p. 17)

Henrieta Şerban

Myra Macdonald
Exploring Media Discourse, London, Arnold, 2003, 213 p.

The writings of French philosopher Michel Foucault have had great influence in the social sciences. But Foucault did not write about media, argues Macdonald, and so the usefulness of his ideas for media analysis has to be evaluated. In Exploring Media Discourse, she tries to answer the question: What can Foucault's notion of discourse add to the analysis of media?

The book consists of three main parts. Part one looks at the usefulness of the Foucauldian concept of discourse for media analysis theoretically. Part two focuses on two heavily debated shifts within the media, the move from information to entertainment and the publicisation of the private, and questions the binary way in which these shifts have been understood. Part three analyses how the media construct hegemonic discourses and how these constructions relate to wider society through the example of the media's definition of different kinds of 'risk' in contemporary society.

In the first two chapters, Macdonald offers a highly accessible discussion of Michel Foucault's notion of discourse. The clear structured argumentation and the focus on the usefulness and limitations of Foucault's definition of discourse for media analysis make this chapter a highly interesting read for anyone interested in using Foucault in the study of media.

One of the strengths of Macdonald's discussion of 'discourse' is in the way she compares Foucault's ideas to other concepts: representation, the postmodern idea of simulacrum, and ideology. In chapter one she looks at the implications of a Foucauldian definition of discourse with regards to the relation of media to reality. She distinguishes discourse from 'representation' — with its inherent idea that the world of media and the real world outside are separable — stressing the media's role in constructing versions of reality. But she also argues against postmodern claims of media as bearing no relation whatsoever to reality, as these claims depoliticise the process of signification and make evaluation of media content impossible. Macdonald states that Foucault's position on this issue is somewhat ambiguous, but that his theory does place discourse within social practices. Nevertheless, Macdonald critically engages with Foucault's decentring of the subject that makes "poststructuralist thinking appear devoid of political purpose" (p. 22).

In chapter two she further pursues this idea by arguing against Foucault's rejection of ideology. According to Macdonald, 'discourse' sheds light on the way power works, but in itself does not enable the evaluation of media texts. In looking at the relation between media and the social world, she argues for the reappraisal of ideology. Macdonald shares Terry Eagleton's perspective on ideology as "shared ways of thinking that have a specific interest in gaining power" (p. 29) — i.e. both dominant and alternative discourses such as anti—globalisation discourses — and opposes this to John B. Thompson's more restrictive definition that reduces ideology to those ways of thinking that are already dominant. Although this broader definition does seem to be closer to Foucault's focus on the unpredictability of power and the connection between power and resistance to power than more restrictive definitions, it does not become entirely clear if and how discourse in a Foucauldian sense and ideology can be coupled fruitfully without rejecting Foucault's ideas on power. In this regard, and given the aim of the book to show Foucault's usefulness for media analysis, it does seem like a strange choice to turn to Teun Van Dijk (one of the big names in Critical Discourse Analysis, an approach that is quite popular in media studies, specialising in analysis of racist discourse) — who sees power as abuse and uses a much more

narrow definition of discourse — in analysing racist discourse in the media.

In part two, Macdonald analyses the discourse produced by academics (and journalists) on two discursive shifts within media that have been much debated because of their perceived impact upon the role of media in the public sphere: tabloidisation and privatisation. Foucault's influence is apparent in the analysis of discursive change as well as in the focus on academic discourse as an object of analysis. His poststructuralist thinking also becomes clear in the way the author critically engages with the binary terms in which these shifts have been understood and looks at the ideology that is behind the opposition itself. In chapter three, Macdonald tries to go beyond the opposition between entertainment and information. She argues that this distinction is itself ideological — following Enlightenment thinking that privileges ratio over emotion — and that it should be superseded in order to look at the possible positive aspects of personalisation for knowledge forming. The author goes on to illustrate this through a number of examples from British media. Chapter four is far more pessimistic in its account of the effects of the publicisation of the private. Macdonald argues that the increased access of ordinary people to the public space of television has been accompanied by a neutralisation of the potential political effect of the private and that the public exposure of politicians' and celebrities' personal life has not really changed the supremacy of public figures and the public world. However interesting these issues may be in themselves, it is somewhat disappointing that, although Foucault seems to have inspired the arguments in this second part, his discourse theory's usefulness for thinking about these issues gets little explicit attention.

Part three looks at the production of discourses of 'risk' through different media and different genres. From a Foucauldian perspective, 'risk' is treated as a construct. The author looks at three kinds of 'risk' that have become more prominent since the late twentieth century: risks to children, unsafe food and Islam. She shows what these discourses of risk reveal about society: about adulthood; good governance and scientific knowledge; and the West's view of Western civilisation respectively. The power of a Foucauldian concept of discourse becomes clear when the author shows how defining something as 'risk' increases binary thinking and hides from view competing ways of thinking on the kinds of environment adults provide for children, on how to deal with the ecosystem, and on the West's role in fostering movements hostile to modern freedoms

Exploring Media Discourse is an accessible introduction to the use of Foucault in media and cultural studies and to some important debates concerning media and their role in contemporary society. Although the usefulness of Foucault's notion of 'discourse' is not always dealt with explicitly and some liberties with his thinking could have been argued more thoroughly, the author does show how a Foucauldian perspective on discourse can generate analyses that go beyond the confines of specific media and look beyond the evident.

John Downing & Charles Husband
Representing 'Race'. Racisms, ethnicities and media, London / Thousand Oaks, CA / New Delhi: Sage, 2005, 241 p.

The media and their relation to ethnic diversity continue to incite debate both academically and in general society, one needs only to think of the ongoing debates on media coverage of the populist extreme right in many European countries. In Representing 'Race': Racisms, Ethnicities and the Media, John Downing and Charles Husband sketch the state of research on media, 'race' and ethnicity, and develop a number of under-explored directions for future research. Both Downing and Husband have extensive expertise in this area. Their combined research experiences surface throughout the book in the issues that are tackled and in the cases that illustrate them. This long time personal involvement in the topic definitely adds to the quality of the book.

The book is divided into three main parts. Chapter one and two set the conceptual framework regarding 'race', ethnicity and the media, and characterise and evaluate the current state of research into these matters, respectively. Chapters three to five set the agenda for research into a number of neglected issues: the media of the extremist right; the role of media in explosions of 'religious', 'national' and 'tribal' hatred and the differences and similarities these have with 'racial' violence; and indigenous media. Chapter six to eight are devoted to attempts at changing media practices regarding 'race' and ethnicity. In the concluding ninth chapter, Downing and Husband develop a political-theoretical basis for the concerns with ethnic representation and minority media rights voiced in the preceding chapters.

In the opening chapter, the authors deal with 'race' and 'ethnicity' as modes of identity construction. Racism is considered a poisonous and unacceptable ideology and practice, whereas ethnicity is treated as a valued form of group formation. However, in day-to-day reality, ethnicity and racism interact: racism can be disguised through the language of ethnicity and ethnicity is vulnerable to racism. Therefor, Downing and Husband find it important to distinguish between "illegitimate expressions of racist xenophobia and politically acceptable assertions of ethnic pride" (p. 12–13), but they admit that the relation between them remains ambiguous. They also

admit that ethnicity can serve as a means of repressing individual freedoms of members of an ethnic group. Nevertheless, throughout the book, ethnicity is mainly evaluated positively. Although the social constructedness of ethnicity (p. 14) is acknowledged, this social constructionist view of ethnicity sometimes gets a bit snowed under, for example in the discussions of indigenous groups' media rights (chapter 6).

After setting the stage, Downing and Husband turn to media research on racism and ethnicity. So far, they argue, textual research (both quantitative and qualitative) focussing on media content has been dominant. The authors critically evaluate content analysis and the strengths and weaknesses of a number of concepts (image, stereotype, framing, ideology, representation, discourse, and text) in analysing media representations of 'race' and ethnicity. Although quite short and inevitably superficial, the focus on the usefulness of these concepts for research on 'race' and ethnicity in the media make this a valuable discussion. The rest of the chapter looks at less researched perspectives: media organisations and 'race', audience responses to the representation of 'race' and ethnicity in majority and minority ethnic media, and minority ethnic media. Especially the organisational perspective and minority ethnic media are dealt with in more detail throughout the book. So, despite its title, 'Representing 'Race' does not predominantly engage with representation *per se*. Rather, focus is on ways of changing the mainstream media's representation of 'race' and ethnicity that is deemed problematic (chapter 6, 7, 8) and on countering these dominant representations through minority-ethnic media (chapter 5, 9).

Chapter six sets out an agenda for research into media monitoring that could make such monitoring practices more effective as well as reveal the assumptions of the role of media in the public sphere that is behind different forms of media monitoring. The authors also evaluate media industry codes of practice and criticise such efforts for laying all responsibility with individual journalists and not taking into account the structural context in which media content is created. This idea of institutional racism is pursued in the following chapters. Whereas chapter seven is a mainly factual account of attempts at pressurising US television into changing its representation of ethnicity, chapter eight provides a more interesting theoretical discussion of 'communities of practice' as a way of taking into account both the individual and organisational aspects of racism in the media.

Another under-researched topic, the authors argue, is the media of the extreme right. Interestingly, in this chapter the authors, looking at the media of the extreme right and the extreme right's use of the Internet, put into question the dominant optimistic perspective on social movements, cybercommunity and globalisation (although it could be said that the optimism surrounding globalisation has been questioned by many authors already). Also, they argue, extremist right wing media put into question the concept of the public sphere that focuses on rational debate and decision-making and is said to be unable to grasp the "fierce political and cultural emotions capitalized upon and stirred up by the extremist Right" (p. 67). The authors seem to evaluate emotion negatively, as is also the case in chapter 4 on the role of media in violent conflicts (Northern Ireland, Former Yugoslavia, Rwanda). One could argue that the role of emotion in politics need not be valued negatively or limited to extremist views, and that more moderate political beliefs also have an important emotional aspect (see for example Mouffe's work). This is an aspect that remains a bit undertheorised, even in the concluding chapter on the 'multi-ethnic public sphere'.

In concluding, the authors turn to political theory to legitimate their concern with ethnic representation and minority media rights. Central to their notion of a 'multi-ethnic public sphere' is the credo that "if you want to treat me equally be prepared to treat met differently". Here, they draw on Taylor's 'politics of difference' that goes against the universalism of many multicultural policies aimed at treating all people the same, and proposes that equal rights be expressed in particularistic responses that respect and sustain the differences between groups. They pursue this idea in relation to media by drawing on Kymlicka's notion of 'differentiated' or 'multicultural' citizenship that sees an important role for the state in helping groups sustain their difference by giving financial support and legal protection to certain practices associated within particular ethnic or religious groups (p. 206). In the context of media: through supporting a media infrastructure that reflects the ethnic diversity of the society and helps sustain a 'multi-ethnic public sphere'. By subsidising minority media, regulating commercial media, through public service broadcasting policy, education and training of media professionals, etc the state can help create and sustain a 'multi-ethnic public sphere'. The authors then go on to argue that the existence of a variety of semi-autonomous, parallel 'sphericules' (Gitlin) does not necessarily imply an atomised civil society. Here, the chapter could have benefited from a more fundamental discussion of the concept of 'public sphere' and its compatibility with identity politics and the rejection of universalism, especially as the authors do seem to subscribe to the idea of society as containing "fundamental conflicts of interest (p. 204) implying that civil society is "not necessarily a vehicle for harmony" (p. 203).

Nevertheless, this concluding chapter is important as it makes explicit the authors' perspective on multicultural society and presents an interesting view of why the relation of media to 'race' and ethnicity is an important area of research. It provides a strong conclusion to an interesting book. Although sometimes inevitably superficial, the scope of the book, the explicit aim of the authors to critique media failures and help reframe media practice, and the use of many international illustrations make Representing 'Race' an important and lively read for everyone interested in media, 'race' and ethnicity.

Benjamin De Cleen

Citizens or Consumers? What the Media Tell Us about Political Participation, Justin Lewis, Karin Wahl-Jorgensen and Sanna Inthorn Maidenhead: Open University Press, 2005, 158 p.

Researchers at Cardiff University call on the news media to present a more positive, active picture of the public's interest in politics, based on a major study of the way citizens and public opinion are presented by the news media in the UK and the USA. Professor Justin Lewis is Professor of Communication and Deputy Head of the Cardiff School of Journalism, Media and Cultural Studies. He has written widely about media, culture and politics and has also worked for 12 years in the United States at the University of Massachusetts. Dr Karin Wahl-Jorgensen is Senior Lecturer at the Cardiff School of Journalism and worked as a journalist for newspapers and magazines in Denmark and the United States. Dr. Sanna Inthorn is Senior Lecturer at the faculty of Creative and Cultural Industries of the University of Portsmouth, where she explores mediations of national and civic identities. It is clear that they have a valuable background to study the subject of this book.

The authors construct an analysis of how the public is represented in the news to answer the question if the news media encourage or discourage citizens to play an active role in politics. Based on an analysis of more than 4,000 television news items and 2,000 press reports, their study suggests that — although most of us learn about politics and public affairs from the news media — we rarely see or read about examples of an active, engaged citizenry. The substantive political activity undertaken by the public is given little space, whereas vox pops and inferences are the most common references. Journalists do indeed make frequent reference to public opinion, but this is rarely based on any supporting evidence like for instance the mass of polling data available on what people think about issues. Citizens are generally portrayed as apolitical, but in the cases they are allowed to state their opinion, it is mainly as consumers of public services. They are not allowed to offer solutions. This makes the authors conclude that citizens can only react to politics instead of really participating in it. Here we have an example of a democracy controlled by elites, being the political class and the media. The authors believe — and wish — that things could be different.

Citizens or Consumers is a meaningful contribution to an ongoing debate surrounding the social role of the media. The key question of this text is whether the way the media present and represent the public encourages the audience to think and act as spectators of political activity or become participants. The authors believe in this effect of the media, because underlying their book is the basic assumption that the media can construct the world and our view on the world, that the media can shape our identity and perceived social role. If the public is presented as simply reacting, and as such is characterized as being unable to contribute meaningfully to political debate, then this will lead to a sense of powerlessness. But one could also assume that the media only reflect what's going on in society, concluding that the public simply gains the representation it deserves. So we rarely see or read about examples of an active and engaged citizenry, because there are only few active and engaged citizens. Different forms of civic engagement indeed appear to be linked to the possession of what Putnam and Bourdieu have called 'social capital' and those who are engaged tend to be male, middle class, middle aged and white. The potential public that could be motivated to become involved in the decision-making process then is rather confined to a minority, despite efforts to be made by the media.

There are two main schools of thought about the impact of the media on democratic societies. Optimists emphasize the potential of the media to strengthen the institutions of civil society and encourage greater public participation in the democratic process. Here, academics like Livingstone and Lunt stress positive aspects of mediated political activity, where citizens can seek political information or state their views on political issues.

Pessimists however have questioned the virtues of mediated participation and specifically the value of television for democratic governance. I can refer to Robert Putnam's influential study of the decline of civic culture in America, Bowling Alone, in which he cautions that "TV-based politics is to political action as watching ER (popular US hospital drama programme) is to saving someone in distress. Just as one cannot restart a heart with one's remote control, one cannot jump-start citizenship without face-to-face participation. Citizenship is not a spectator sport" (2000: 41).

Clearly, Professor Justin Lewis, Dr. Karin Wahl-Jorgensen and Sanna Inthorn can be placed amongst the optimists with regard to the potential of the media to strengthen the civic society. According to them, the news should be a place that encourages us to think like citizens. This is in contrast to advertising, which bombards us with exhortations to think like consumers. It is because of their optimism that the authors are surprised to find that, despite the abundance of vox pops on television, citizens are so rarely seen expressing a firm view about anything on the news — even if polls tell us they probably have one.

Many European states witnessed in recent years a decline in traditional forms of political participation such as party membership and involvement in political campaigning. Combined with the decrease of the trust in political parties and the recurrent election successes of extreme-right wing parties in certain countries, this has amounted to what has been characterized as a crisis of democracy. *Citizens or*

Consumers contributes to debates around the nature and extent of the crisis of democracy and specifically the role of and potential contribution to be made by the news media in enhancing the quality of civic participation in the democratic process.

Although the authors are optimists, they sure are critical of the media and their constructions. They don't blame journalists for the crisis of democracy, which is probably the result of different political factors. But they do think that the media do little to improve the situation. That's why they made some proposals for journalists. They suggest to shift the focus to more active forms of citizenship representation, to make better use of opinion polls, to give more attention to vox pops (i.e. the voice of the citizen, not the consumer) and to make connections between politics and the daily life of citizens or consumers. We have to glamorize the possibility of public activism.

The suggestions the authors make for journalists to alter their representation practices to invoke citizenship rather than passive consumerism, attributes to the book a valuable and practical meaning. It attends to us that academic social research owes it to itself to give practical recommendations, to help building a society and to strive for a utopia. In this, they follow for instance Nico Carpentier, who in 'Coping with the agoraphobic media professional' gives a typology of journalistic practices that can reinforce democracy and participation of citizens. He wants to provide the broadest answer possible to the following question: how can mainstream media, active within non-fiction, stimulate active citizenship and work in a democracy-supporting way? The researchers at Cardiff University are not unique in what they are doing, but at least, they are doing what they should, and they did it in a noble way.

However, a major problem with the study of TV as a democratic resource however is the comparative lack of rigorous, empirical studies examining on-going public use of participatory programmes. In contrast to the more common focus on the media production sphere, analyses aimed at the reception of these programmes remain extremely rare. Almost nothing is known about the way members of the home audiences perceive these programmes, if and how they use them in their daily lives, how these audience members relate to the media professionals that organize and manage the programmes, how they relate to the ordinary people and politicians that participate in them, how they relate to the representations of politics and the political they offer, if people feel they are important communicative spaces and whether there are tangible outcomes of these programmes. In order to examine the democratic potential of these programmes, data are required on how audiences deal with them. It is undoubtedly very interesting to examine what the media tell us about political participation. But on the other hand, we also have to ask what the public tells us about political participation.

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Eric Louw
The Media and Political Process, London: Sage, 2005, 320 p.

Dr Eric Louw is Director of Communication Programs at the School of Journalism & Communication, University of Queensland. He has previously taught at different universities in Africa and has been a journalist on the Pretoria News. During the 1980s, Louw was involved in the process of establishing South Africa's (anti-apartheid) Alternative Press. He has published widely in the areas of political communication, social change, development communication and the South African media. Being a journalist himself, he knows what he writes about when discussing the symbiotic relationship between spin-doctors and journalists. But the book is about a lot more. It analyses the relationship between the media, journalists, spin-doctors, politicians and political issues.

In *The Media and Political Process*, Eric Louw examines the impact of the media upon Western political systems. In essence, it's a book about the value of a media-ized political process. Media-ized politics refers to the way in which professional communicators now script the performances and appearance of politicians. Contemporary politics in Western democracies is increasingly about using public relations to create 'a public' — i.e. professional 'public builders' now use the mass media to assemble publics out of isolated individuals. The result is that politics has become a secondhand mediated reality for most people because they do not encounter politics in a direct, firsthand manner that involves active participation. Instead, passive mass audiences now encounter mediated politics via the media. Politics in

mass societies is thus increasingly confined to encountering scripted politicians as a set of secondhand (manipulated and distorted) media images.

The key question of the book is whether twentieth-century mass communication has altered the nature of political communication. Public opinion-driven politics is at heart media-ized politics — where the media machine, and the demagogue's arts of manipulating mass media output, have become central to governance. It seems fair to say that media performance has become a core feature of contemporary political processes. But does media-ization necessarily translate into a new political genre, transformed by the workings of the hype-machine? Louw is very convincing and complete in his answer to this question.

The Media and Political Process is organized into three parts. In part 1, 'An Introduction to Political Processes and the Mass Media', the role of the media and journalists in liberal democracies is being discussed. During the second half of the twentieth century, the televisualization of Western politics has significantly altered the political process, the nature of being a politician and the way journalists relate to the political process. A significant amount of the time and energy of politicians and their professional support staff is now focused on impression management and public relations. They try to create a hype to win support for themselves. This practice was a response to the mass enfranchisement of citizens. These masses 'needed' to be steered, communicatively managed and tamed. The complicity of journalists has led to a new form of cynical journalism, away from a Forth Estate watchdog journalism, where journalists now focus on reporting 'the game' of politics.

Part 2, 'Identity, Politics and the Media', examines the role of political identity as a kind of conceptual glue that holds political systems together. The central question here is how political identities are communicatively formed and which role this has played within liberal democracies. Special attention is being paid to Britain and the USA. Political communication is pointed at the creation of a sense of national identity and this is the work of both politicians (and their communication staff) and journalists. But will new media technologies give rise to new kinds of identities, which will in turn alter the political environment? It is argued that the actual impact of new media on politics and identity is likely to be less significant than many have suggested. Ultimately, new media technologies have simply reinforced tendencies already inherent in Western culture.

The third part, 'The Media-ization of Politics', is a collection of six case studies which serves as an illustration of how much the political process has been media-ized: spin-doctoring as an art of public relations, the selling of politicians to voters and the creation of political celebrities, the selling of political belief systems and policies to voters, the selling of war and peace, the use that terrorists make of the media and finally the impact of media on foreign policy. The book ends with a search for answers on questions like: Is hype politics a system in trouble or a system re-inventing itself? And is media-ization bad? You don't get any clear, one-dimensional answers but rather suggestions for future research.

The Media and the Political Process can be read against the same background as *Citizens or Consumers? What the media tell us about political participation.* When Louw asks if the media-ization of politics played any role in encouraging a growing cynicism and disillusionment with political processes in Western democracies, he refers to the crisis of liberal democracy, the declining voter turnouts, the large number of people that are alienated from the mainstream political process and the revival of the extreme-right. To him, media-ized politics has contributed to these phenomena in two ways.

Firstly, journalists felt they became complicit in the process of managing political perceptions. This was contradictory with their watchdog function. They reacted to this with a new genre of political (cynical) journalism, where journalists now focus on reporting the spin-doctored game of politics. But exposing this demagoguery bred cynicism and voter apathy in society. It also fed into a general distrust of politics and the media, contributing to a greater support for Le Pen in France, Heider in Austria, Fortyn in the Netherlands and Dewinter in Belgium.

Secondly, as politics became communicatively managed, advisors steered politicians towards the uncontroversial center of the political spectrum. When most parties are situated in the middle, where they cannot say anything out of fear to lose potential voters, unhappy or dissatisfied citizens have only one side to turn to and that is extreme-right. Louw succeeds to explain these important social and political trends in a very readable, logic and compelling way.

The assumption underlying *The Media and Political Process* is not that the media are a mirror of the real world, but that journalists construct the news and our understanding of the world. This too has it in common with *Citizens or Consumers*. According to Louw, the masses are made passive through socialization, education and media constructions; they are 'distracted' by the media and steered by an agenda-setting process. The construction of news and passive audiences is the reason why he looks at political communication with a skeptical eye and asks us to do the same. He has written a major contribution to debates about empiricism versus constructivism and made his point very clear. Thanks to the way he pays attention to how televisual images are constructed, he shows us how we can 'de-naturalize' them.

So Louw is very critical and skeptical of the media and contemporary journalism, but unlike others, he does not simply condemn the media-ization of politics

He rather looks at it with a very detailed gaze, which makes him able to grasp all the subtleties of the phenomenon. Would there be less demagoguery without the mass media? Like with so many things, media-ized politics has good sides and bad sides. The question is: who is to judge? Maybe we should give the last word to the public?

The Media and Political Process is very useful as a teaching aid. It provides an accessible and comprehensive introduction to political communication. At the beginning of each chapter you will find a general view of what will be argued and at the end a summary of the key concepts you should be familiar with after reading. Louw also makes explicit references to other chapters which develop the same themes from a different perspective. At the end of each chapter he asks questions for further consideration. This will stimulate to become critical of the relationship between media and politics. But it will also be useful for people other than students of media, politics and public relations. It's a book every citizen should read.

Wim Hannot

Henrieta Mitrea Șerban
Limbajul politic în democrație, București, Editura Institutului de Științe Politice și Relații Internaționale, 2006, 133 p.

L'équation individus – langage – discours politique – hiérarchie – pouvoir

Le livre de Henrieta Șerban, paru aux éditions de l'Institut de Science Politique et Relations Internationales de l'Académie Roumaine, en 2006, propose une analyse pointue du langage et du discours politique en démocratie. Dans le contexte éditorial actuel, la parution d'un tel livre est un geste éditorial nécessaire et naturel, car il rend possible la diffusion de détails, idées, informations, nuances, interprétations à la fois utiles et intéressantes. Le livre nous fait nous interroger sur la fonction et le pouvoir du langage et du discours politique, sur son rôle dans l'articulation et la conservation de la hiérarchie sociale. Cette interrogation provocatrice est annoncée dès le début, par la métaphore du dessin de la couverture principale du livre : on peut y voir une montagne, une pyramide formée d'humains qui paraissent s'ordonner hiérarchiquement par le biais du langage qui les relie. À partir de cette image, chacun d'entre nous a la possibilité de se poser des questions et de chercher des réponses sur l'équation entre individus – langage – discours politique – hiérarchie – pouvoir. Autrement dit, ce livre constitue une invitation à réflexion et une bonne base pour un tel exercice.

Dans la Postface du livre, Dumitru Borțun propose aux lecteurs une décodification de la complexe équation présentée ci-dessus: inconsciemment, les individus attendent du langage politique qu'il décrive le monde par le biais de leurs propres préjugés, clichés, stéréotypes, idées reçues, et surtout qu'il verbalise le monde, conformément aux clichés verbaux dominants dans leur groupe socio-culturel (Chombart de Lauwe). Les individus arrivent à considérer de tels clichés verbaux prêtés comme des produits personnels, conformément au mécanisme de la pseudo-pensée (Erich Fromm). Si l'on applique ce mécanisme de pseudo-pensée à la société roumaine post-décembriste, on voit comment la démocratie a été intégrée dans un paradigme culturel incompatible avec la raison et qui l'a transformée en religion. De la sorte, D. Borțun met en évidence que le livre de Henrieta Șerban se trouve parmi les peux ouvrages de spécialité qui soutiennent qu'il faut «laïciser» la démocratie, qu'il faut abandonner l'idéologie de la démocratie, parce que cette idéologie n'est que fausse conscience.

Le syntagme «langage démocratique» n'est pas seulement un point de référence, un référentiel ou un modèle qui a ses limites et simplifications inhérentes à tout modèle théorique. En tant que point de référence, la notion est très importante pour décrire et expliquer comment le langage est développé, utilisé et abusé par le discours démocratique. La réalité est une mixture compliquée de discours de propagande, qui, de diverses manières, se soutiennent et se complètent les uns les autres, ou se minent, se confrontent dans leur compétition pour le rôle de véhicule du pouvoir, dans le régime démocratique.

Cette pluralité de discours politiques est la caractéristique fondamentale de la démocratie; elle prouve et encourage l'existence de la sphère publique en tant qu'espace du débat rationnel (J. Habermas), en tant qu'arène civilisée destinée aux polémiques nécessaires (Olivier Reboul), ou en tant que marché libre des idées (Brian Winston).

La spécificité du langage démocratique peut être définie en analysant les relations entre les différents types de discours politiques qui se manifestent en démocratie, en tant que relation entre ceux-ci et les buts du système démocratique: son maintien, la conservation de la méthode démocratique de gouvernement, par son adaptation conséquente et efficiente aux demandes de différents contextes politiques nationaux et internationaux. Les relations entre l'impressionnante diversité de discours politiques acceptés par le système démocratique, d'une part, et son but final, d'autre part, deviennent plus claires si

l'on mentionne les aspects liés au rôle qu'ils jouent dans la promotion de l'adhésion des peuples aux valeurs ou systèmes de valeurs approuvés par le système de pouvoir démocratique (David Easton), ou utiles dans le soutien de la légitimité de l'élite gouvernante (Almond et Coleman). Le pouvoir et le peuple partagent, en démocratie, dans une mesure significative, un système commun de valeurs qui a un caractère démocratique et qui détermine jusqu'à quel degré la relation entre ceux qui gouvernent et ceux qui sont gouvernés a un caractère démocratique.

Le discours de la démocratie est simple, ouvert aux débats et aux spectacles, et moins violent que le discours totalitariste ou dictatorial. Par contre, sa dimension logique et argumentative est soumise à l'idéologie, comme tous les discours politiques.

En démocratie, le discours qui est dominant, il est celui concernant les droits humains liés aux progrès technologiques et sociaux, en tant que discours de l'égalisation des progrès technologiques et sociaux. Mais la grande variété de discours tolérés en démocratie n'est pas orchestrée en pleine harmonie, d'où le bruit complexe et déconcertant engendré par le discours démocratique, bruit qui est la meilleure musique actuellement, en pleine postmodernité.

Il n'est pas possible de capter en quelques mots la richesse de sens et la complexité des messages transmis par le livre de H. Şerban. En conclusion, ce livre est un ouvrage à consulter, car, par la solide base de documentation scientifique et par la finesse de l'analyse, l'auteur nous a mis à disposition un outil adéquat qui peut nous guider dans la réflexion sur le pouvoir du langage et du discours politique dans un régime démocratique.

Ruxandra Luca

*Reclaiming the Media. Communication Rights and Democratic Media Roles***,** edited by Bart Cammaerts and Nico Carpentier, Intellect, Bristol, 2007, 292 p.

Our Media: Communication, Participation, Democracy

This is an intellectual achievement of ECREA, the European Communication Research and Education Association, meeting most of the ten aims to be attained by the activity of this organisation. It is the result of cooperation between members of the association. Nico Carpentier is also editor of ECREA Series, with François Heinderyckx.

As Bart Cammaerts and Nico Carpentier are explaining in the introduction, people can reclaim media only relying on implemented communication rights and on expanding demmocratic media roles. In the absence of such prerequisites media participation and media democratic practices remain extremely vague.

Answering to the first aim expressed by ECREA, the book gives a perspective over the lively ideas that already exist in communication research, bringing these ideas together in a forum, only given the opportunity provided by this book. The book is organized in four sections. In the first section the aspects concerning the "ecuation" citizenship, public sphere and media are covered by Kari Karppinen, Claudia Padovani, Arjuna Tuzzi, Giorgia Nesti and Margit Bõck. In the next section, the accent is placed on the relationship between participation and media, namely on the agency and identity in citizen participation as in Auli Harju's study, on "fair participation" as in the study signed by Egil G. Skogseth, and on the relationship between representation and inclusion, as in Tamara Witschge's chapter. Journalism media and democracy are put into ecuation in section three. N. Carpentier tackles the subject of agoraphobic media professionals. Hannu Nieminen approaches two faces of governamental communication crisis, namely the disobedient media and the unruly citizens, while Anu Kantola explores the global imaginary of financial journalism. In the last section entitled "Activism and Media", Natalie Fenton suggests that "the social and political dynamics of protest are changing due to the ways in which economic globalization and technological revolution has reconfigured politics, social institutions and identity formation within societies." (p. 225) Arne Hintz interprets the scope, roles and the benefices of a civil society media and the platform of ideas concerning communication governance, as expressed at the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS).

From the very first section democracy is more of an "unknown quantity", to be obtained from the intricated relationships created among citizenship, public sphere and media. Going through the pages of the volume the reader will find out that democracy is a process in strict dependence with the actions, decisions and interests of the people. We find that communication rights and roles are at the core of the democratic process. At the same time, the entire volume highlights the importance of reclaiming media for the people, thus creating the conditions of possibility for social and political change and for democracy as work-in-progress, as a process of development and improvement.

Kari Karppinen gives special attention to the relationship between media pluralism and pluralistic consensus. The autor underlines that "one of the main

ways of coping with the complexities of the current media system has been to hide behind "pluralism" and "diversity" as supposedly neutral values that somehow transcend the problems of responsibility, quality, truth, or rationality." (p. 26) Claudia Padovani, Arjuna Tuzzi, and Georgia Nesti investigate the notion of (e)democracy from the perspective open by European e-democracy discourses. Their investigative pattern relates three dimensions (acceptions) of democracy (procedural, substantial and result) to five aspects selected to evaluate democracy (rule of law; accountability; respects of rights and achievement of freedoms; progressive implementation of greater equality; responsiveness), to the elements composing such aspects and with the basic pre-conditions for the existence of all the democratic elements. (For example, the diffusion of liberal and democratic values, the existence of bureaucratic traditions, and of legislative and economic means are preconditions for the rule of law.) With this first brief presentation of the volume one may notice that it promotes the interests of communication research within and among the Member States of the Council of Europe and the European Union.

Meeting another one of the ECREA's aims, this volume provides support for young researchers' work. Auli Harju, the author of chapter four, "Citizen participation and local public spheres: an agency and identity focussed approached to the Tampere postal services conflict", notices that "when citizens take action, they consider local media extremely important, and so media are actively drawn into the process." (p. 102) His case study is the residents' disagreement with the postal service, where he discovers a discrepancy between the civic activism of the people and the journalists' obliviance in front of the (democratic) significance of mail delivery debate: journalists did not see civic activism, but just an angry crowd, acting irrationally. In a highly mediated society, media has a chance to represent people actively, with their opinions and interests, but this is a chance not often taken. Tamara Witschge authors chapter six, "Representation and inclusion in the online debate: the issue of honor killings". The interesting aspect of this chapter is the accent placed on the relationship between representation and inclusion with attention given to emancipation. The author notices: "Even though some variety of actors (in terms of gender and ethnicity) was given voice, almost no citizens or other non-governmental actors were represented in the newspaper debate." (p. 146)

The volume has three more benefices: it encourages the systematic study on subjects not well developed such as the relationship between media, democracy and social and political change, therefore stimulating academic and intellectual interest in media and communication research and establishing a database of ongoing research.

Henrieta Şerban

FUTURE CONFERENCES

'UNMANAGEABLE INEQUALITIES: GENDER AND POWER IN THE 'CREATIVE INDUSTRIES' FOR THE GENDER, WORK AND ORGANISATION CONFERENCE 2007

Launched in 1994, Gender, Work and Organization was the first journal to provide an arena dedicated to debate and analysis of gender relations, the organisation of gender and the gendering of organisations. The aim of the Gender, Work and Organisation Conference 2007 is to provide 'an international forum for debate and analysis of a variety of issues in relation to gender Studies'. Given the interdisciplinary nature of this area of research we encourage submissions from a range of academic backgrounds.

Some members may be interested in attending or submitting an abstract to this stream. (For more info see these websites for the Gender, Work & Organisation Journal) http://www.keele.ac.uk/research/ppm/research/gwo.htmhttp://www.keele.ac.uk/research/ppm/research/gwo.htm, http://www.blackwellpublishing.com/journal.asp?ref=0968-6673 http://www.blackwellpublishing.com/journal.asp?ref=0968-6673

Sarah Proctor-Thomson (Victoria Management School; Victoria University of Wellington; P.O. Box 600, Wellington, 6140; Aotearoa/New Zealand; Phone:00-64-(0)4-463 9982)

HOLLYWOOD AND THE CULTURE WARS, 1 MARCH 2007, DE MONTFORT UNIVERSITY, U.K.

Call For Papers

Under the leadership of George W. Bush, public opinion in America seems more polarised than it has been in decades. Divisions between liberals and conservatives, secular humanists and religious fundamentalists, red states and blue states, have widened to the point where many Americans now seem to hold fundamentally opposed views of the nation's purpose and identity. This cultural division is by no means new, but it has become a far more visible feature of American life since the inauguration of Bush Jnr, and the terrorist attacks of 9/11. In particular, the political, spiritual and social disputes which make up these so-called 'Culture Wars' have been focused on the media. For those on the right, Hollywood productions invariably exhibit an offensive, even damaging, liberal bias (despite frequent academic claims that Hollywood is innately conservative).

'Hollywood and the Culture Wars' looks specifically at the relationship between the political and spiritual polarisation of popular opinion in American, and the media itself. For secular European scholars the increased power and visibility of the Christian right in America can provoke bafflement and dismay. However, this event seeks to move beyond simplistic assumptions about American exceptionalism, and will take shifts in American attitudes seriously.

Therefore, we invite papers from both established scholars and research students on any aspect of American attitudes and the media, but topics that we are particularly interested in include:

— The representation of politics and religion in mainstream Hollywood productions.

— The emergence of movies and television shows aimed specifically at Christian audiences.

— The influence of lobbying groups on the media.

— Liberal and conservative political activism in Hollywood.

— The rise of right leaning media institutions, such as Fox News and Walden Media.

— Popular and institutional responses to controversial texts (such as The Passion of the Christ, or Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas).

— The ways that disputes over gender, sexuality and identity.

www.dmu.ac.uk/Subjects/Db/

MEDIA & PROPAGANDA CONFERENCE. 20 YEARS OF PROPAGANDA?
Critical Discussions & Evidence on the Ongoing Relevance
of the Herman &Chomsky Propaganda Model
Conference Date/Place: May 15–17, 2007

University of Windsor Communication Studies (Windsor, Canada)
Conference Chair: Dr. Paul D. Boin (pboin@uwindsor.ca)
Conference Website: www.uwindsor.ca/propaganda

The year 2008 will mark the 20th Anniversary of the publishing of the book Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of Mass Communication (Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky, Pantheon, 1988). In this book the authors put forth a model, the Propaganda Model (PM), as a way of understanding the way our mass media system interrelates with our economy, political system, and society in general. Since putting forth their propaganda model there have been both praise and criticism of this model, and there have also been many changes and technological advances in our entire communication and media landscape.

This May 2007 conference and Spring 2008 publication will, though vigorous debate/discussion and fresh insight, make great strides in critically analyzing (revising/updating) the ongoing relevance of the Herman/Chomsky Propaganda Model as a useful model for understanding 21st century media and society.

Confirmed participants and presenters: Noam Chomsky, Edward Herman Sut Jhally, James Curran, Robert McChesney, Janet Wasco, Vincent Mosco, DeeDee Halleck, Robert Hackett, Peter Golding, James Compton, Jim Wittebols, Valerie Scatamburlo-D'Annibile...

Contact: Dr. Paul D. Boin (pboin@uwindsor.ca); www.uwindsor.ca/propaganda

CALL FOR PAPERS 'MEDIA AND IMPERIALISM'
Amsterdam, July 18–21, 2007

Organised by the University of Amsterdam, dept. Media Studies in close cooperation with the International Association for Media and History and Utrecht University Media and Imperialism. Press, Photography, Film, Radio and Television in the Era of Modern Imperialism Aims We are entering a whole new era where the circulation of images is concerned, due to the large-scale digitisation of archives and collections, which has revolutionised existing practices of preservation, retrieval and distribution. We signal therefore an urgent need to rethink the relationship between media and modern imperialism, particularly in light of the complex process of globalisation.

These developments invoke critical discussions between various disciplines, such as media studies, ethnology and history. The conference will focus on the politics of representation and media practices, from the emergence of mass media and modern imperialism in the mid-nineteenth century, to the successive episodes of decolonisation, as well as on more current issues surrounding heritage and ownership of media collections. The conference welcomes papers from disciplines such as history, anthropology, media studies, history of art, visual culture studies, social and political science, literary and cultural studies.

www.media-and-imperialism.com/

"NEW FEMININITIES? POSTFEMINISM AND SEXUAL CITIZENSHIP"
LSE and British Library on January 25 and January 26, 2007

Supported by the Gender Institute, LSE and the Economic and Social Research Council. This is the final event in the ESRC funded series on New Femininities. Confirmed speakers include: Angela McRobbie, Hilary Radner, Ursula Biemann, Jane Arthurs, Valerie Hey, Denise Noble, Christien van den Anker, Helma Lutz, Estella Tincknell, Claire Charles, Giulia Garofalo and Emma Renolds. Plus film screenings from Birds Eye View.

Places are limited to 80 participants, so you are advised to book early. Cost: £45 — to include keynote public lecture by Angela McRobbie, followed by wine reception at LSE on the evening of Thursday, January 25, and lunch, tea and coffee at British Library on Friday, January 26 — plus conference pack and materials.

We have a limited number of ESRC — funded grands to support postgraduate students and those without any institutional funding. This will cover both the conference fee and travel expenses

to attend. A dedicated postgraduate conference will be held at the LSE on the afternoon of Thursday, January 25 — prior to the keynote presentation by Angela McRobbie.

For more information and to book go to http://www.lse.ac.uk/collections/newFemininities/seminarsixfront.htm

FEMINISM AND POPULAR CULTURE
Newcastle, United Kingdom, 29 June 2007 to 1 July 2007

Contact name: Stacy Gillis, Melanie Waters
E-mail: fempopcult_AT_ncl.ac.uk (to e-mail please replace _AT_ with @)
The popular straddles disciplines, drawing together research that might otherwise remain discretely sited. This conference will interrogate how the popular and feminism has been understood, articulated and represented. Deadline 1 December 2006.
Organized by: 20th annual Feminist and Women's Studies Association Conference.

"CARNAL KNOWLEDGE[S]: DESIRE, CONSUMPTION AND THE VISUAL"
March 29, 2007

Images of the body have long been used to sell things, including the body itself, and sexualized representations of the body are ubiquitous in our culture. This one-day symposium seeks to foster discussions of the intersection of the body, desire, and commodification. How do pornographic, or pornographically inspired, images create expectations?

"Carnal Knowledges" will be the fourth annual visual culture symposium at George Mason University and following in the tradition of the preceding symposia will be an interdisciplinary, multimedia inquiry into issues relevant to the theme, and to visual culture in general, from multiple perspectives to include faculty, graduate and undergraduate work. In past years our co-sponsors have included a diverse group of departments and programs at the University, including programs in Cultural Studies, Film and Media Studies and Honors, and the Departments of Art and Visual Technology, English, Art History and History, Sociology and Anthropology, Philosophy, the New Century College, and the Women's Studies Center. For more information, please refer to: http://www.avt.gmu.edu.and http://www.avt.gmu.edu.

Abstracts of no more than 300 words are due January 10, 2007, and should be submitted to elgorman@msn.com. All paper presentations will be no longer than 15 minutes, including accompanying visual images, and each panel will conclude with questions from and dialogue with the audience.

Keynote Speaker: Peter Lehman is Director of the Interdisciplinary Humanities Program at Arizona State University, and teaches film history and theory. His newest book is *Pornography: Film and Culture* from Rutgers University Press. He has also written: *Blake Edwards, Running Scared: Masculinity and the Representation of the Male Body and Thinking about Movies: Introduction to Film Studies*, and edited *Close Viewings: An Anthology of New Film Criticism and Defining Cinema*.

Possible Panel ideas/themes include, but are not limited to:
— Violence and desire
— Images of war and terror
— Desire and Dissection
— DIY: the Internet and "amateur" photography
— Selling with the body: advertising and the pornography aesthetic
— Feminisms and the commodified body
— Erotica: can you draw a line between art and porn?
— Class and sexualized desire

Lynne Constantine (Associate Chair, Art and Visual Technology; Assistant Professor, Art and Visual Technology; Doctoral Candidate, Cultural Studies, George Mason University; lconstan@gmu.edu)

Ellen Gorman (Doctoral Student, Cultural Studies, George Mason University; Lecturer, Georgetown University and Corcoran College of Art and Design; elgorman@msn.com)

Tracy McLoone (Doctoral Candidate, Cultural Studies; Instructor, New Century College and Honors Program; George Mason University; tmcloone@gmu.edu).

PROJECT: "AFFECT, EMBODIMENT, POLITICS"

Project description:

Questions of affect and emotion are obtaining an increasingly prominent role in contemporary cultural studies, in political science and social theory. A variety of quasi-psychological notions ('economies of affect', 'structures of feeling', affective labour') serves to inform critical work on issues such as gender, ethnic and class identity, the tenacity of racist prejudice, and notions of community, identity, social cohesion and political conflict. However, it is ironic that both psychology and political science — disciplines that one might have assumed would be well placed to develop a critical analytic of emotion — have relatively little to offer to these projects: not least because its own theorising has been relatively unsophisticated on the one hand, and fragmented on the other.

Affects and emotions are not always dangerous, nor must they always tend to exceed the bounds of civilisation. Far from simply representing the disruptive force of biologised desire, emotions also suffuse subjectivity with a character indicative of our place within the social relations that support us. They are *social* and *political,* at the same time as they are the carriers of embodied desire and need, but political and psychological theory seem inadequately equipped to recognise this.

The images of the body have a similar history of either neglect or oversimplification. Bodily images have long been used to sell things, such as the body itself, and sexualized representations of the body are "business as usual" in contemporary culture. As a specific commodity, the analysis of the body opens an interesting investigation space between the social and political, on the one hand and the corporeality, on the other. As such, it opens a windows of ooportunity for both feminist studies and communication studies. Can we recuperate the body within sociology and political science?

Freudian theory might be further developed or even overpassed by the perspectives brought about by A. Damasio and S. Zizek. Classical sociology and political science could be developed with new insights from Durkheim, Weber, H. Arendt, P. Bourdieu, A. Lingis, A. Philips, etc.

Social constructionism and the focus on discourse have dominated both psychological and political theorising for much of the last decade, and "Theory & Psychology" has been a primary forum where this work has appeared. As the energy of this trend begins to dissipate, the time is ripe for new directions to emerge. Such an interdisciplinary approach will put in perspective the embodiment, materiality and power; which failed to insulate itself sufficiently against the charge of relativism (McLennan); and it has promoted a view of social relations that, in its negation of the embodied experience of individuals, is ultimately dualist, idealist and only superficially social (J. Cromby). The conjunction of politics and emotion seems to be precisely the kind of substantive focus which would enable such a progression. It is our view that a focus on the conjunction of affect, embodiment and politics demarcates a suitable substantive area to facilitate innovative theorising in the coming years, and hence is an appropriate and timely topic for a special issue.

The project will involve, experience exchange, workshops, sessions of discussing of the papers involved in the project, and as well traveling involving Researchers from the Institute of Poltical Science and International Relations of the Romanian Academy and Professors from the University of Loughborough, UK

Organizing institutions: University of Loughborough, UK and the Institute of Poltical Science and International Relations of the Romanian Academy

Deadlines: 1st of February 2007 for the abstracts

15th of May for the articles

15th of November for the selection of articles

Outcome*: a special issue of* Theory and Psychology *on "Affect, Embodiment and Politics" and* a special collection of articles *suited for the* Journal Institute of Poltical Science and International Relations of the Romanian Academy.

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THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF MEDIA AND CULTURAL POLITICS is a serial publication committed to analyzing the politics of communication(s) and cultural processes. It addresses cultural policies in their local, international and global dimensions, recognizing equally the importance of issues defined by their specific cultural geography and of those that traverse cultures and nations. The journal promotes critical and in-depth engaged research situated at the intersections of various disciplines, such as sociology, politics, cultural studies and media studies. It aims to keep academic analysis in dialogue with the practical world of communications, culture and politics. The journal publishes full peer-reviewed articles, short commentaries, as well as more polemical contributions on media and cultural politics. Book reviews are included, too.

The journal presents contributions from a wide and diverse community of researchers, seeking to generate and promote research from experienced researchers while encouraging those new to this field to make submissions. The general aim is to provide a forum for debate, one arising from findings as well as from theories and methodologies. Thus, a range of research approaches and methodologies sprung. Among the topics that are explored more in this journal are: the cultural politics of minority languages; the racialization of war; Muslim/Islamic/Christian secular relations; grassroots political action in counteracting sexism; African-American politics and culture; cultural domination and resistance in race, ethnicity and gender; violence; agency and identity as forces resisting discrimination; the myth of mediated and technological democracy; the politics of cultural expression and assertion; the politics of space and the geography of globalization; media economies; the political economy of intellectual labor; the commercialization of intellectual labor and intellectual property. Also, topics such as the politics of space in large-scale temporary art exhibitions, gay Olympic culture, pan-African art, the new multiculturalism are welcome.

In volume 2, no. 1, 2006, especially interesting are the class arguments for investigating new media in the article signed by Danny Butt. He considers that class analysis "contains important tools for understanding contemporary socio-economic inequality in the new media environment". The paper places an interesting isuue given the accent on economy as a cultural/informational entity, more responsive to the identity based "new social movements" (e.g. feminism, anti-racism, etc.) than to the view of economy as a base for cultural/ideological superstructure.

From the ample section of commentaries I noticed the question "Do scholars matter?" raised by Des Freedman. He investigates some reason for the declining influence of the academics on the media policy-making process. Operating with key-words like "mass-media, "media policy", "policy making", "academics" and "instrumentalism" the author makes the conclusive point that: "Academics in UK have a long tradition of reflecting on models of media behaviour and governance and yet appear to be increasingly marginalized from contemporary media policy-making." (p. 92)

GLOBAL MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION, vol. 1, no. 1, April, 2005 addresses the globalization of media and communication, aiming to offer a transdisciplinary approach on these subjects. The topics covered include the analysis of communication processes that overflow the boundaries of the nation states. The journal seems to challenge the boundaries of the traditional disciplinary divisions in media and communication, drawing on cultural studies and political economy as well as on discourses about globalization, therefore aiming to become the key forum for articulating debates among contrasting perspectives. An important feature will be an active engagement with often neglected regions and cultures, and giving voice to perspectives rarely provided by existing English-language journals in the area of media and communication as are explaining the editors — Daya K. Thussu, John D.H. Downing, Terhi Rantanen and Yuezhi Zhao — at page 5.

This issue of the journal is the result of the symposium entitled "What is global about global media?". The articles presented are "stories" in what concerns "problematizing the notion of the global". From the titles we mention: "Contradictions of the globalizing moment", by Annabelle Sreberny, "A different scale of difference", by Oliver Boyd-Barrett, "The taming of the shrew: global media in a Chinese perspective", by Aubin Shi, "Up the Amazon without a paddle: developing nations and globalization", by Antonio La Pastina, "What is 'global' about Arab media?", by Tarik Sabry, etc.

THEORY, CULTURE AND SOCIETY, "Problematizing Global Knowledge", special issue, vol. 23, no. 2–3, March–May 2006.

As the journal "Theory, Culture and Society" (TCS) approaches its 25th anniversary in 2007, members of the board and colleagues all over the world have been working on a new ambitious undertaking: the New Encyclopaedia Project. Their special issue entitled "Problematizing Global Knowledge" is a first venture into such encyclopedic explorations which outlines a concern about rethinking knowledge after the impact of globalization and digitization. The issue features over 150 entries and supplements on a range of topics addressed in terms of their relevance to the meanings and uses of knowledge, as to the knowledge formation, and from a wide range of different perspectives and from different parts of the world. The studies investigate the metaconcepts, the metanarratives, the sites and the institutions relevant for conceiving knowledge in the 21st century. The issue is edited by Mike Featherstone, Couze Venn, Ryan Bishop and John Phillips.

THE EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF AMERICAN CULTURE, Intellect Journals, Media & Culture, vol. 25, no. 2 is an academic refereed journal for scholars, academics and students from many disciplines with a common involvement in the interdisciplinary study of America and of the American culture, insisting on a variety of approaches and encompassing the whole evolution of America. The European Journal of American Culture, EJAC, is interested especially in articles considering the ways in which politics, history, literature the visual arts and other areas of the humanities have increasingly engaged with cultural issues. This issue presents articles like "Retelling Salem stories: gender politics and witches in the American culture", by Marion Gibson from the University of Exeter and "A balance that you can hear: deep ecology 'serious listening' and the soundscape recordings of David Dunn", by David Ingram from Brunel University. The first article is interesting for the analysis of an area of gender politics situated in-between American conservatism and American liberals. The article identifies ways in which the empty signifier of the witch was filled with meaning by the writers, dramatists and film-makers in order to secure political positions from anti-clericalism and anti-feminists. The author asks if the image of the witch is inherently repressive or whether it has proved possible to use it in a truly radical way. David Ingram's article is structured around keywords like soundscapes, deep ecology or sound art, thus developing philosophical speculations on the relationship between ecology and music, informed by the systems of philosophy of Gregory Bateson and the avant-garde experimentalism of the composer John cage. "Serious listening" appears to be a way of finding interrelationships among the meanings of what Gregory Bateson called "mind" in the natural world. It is a bleak image portrayed here. The author sustains the view where if one speaks of the environment, it is because it has already ceased to exist because, everywhere the "right" (to nature, to the environment) countersigns the "demise of".

NEW CINEMAS: JOURNAL OF CONTEMPORARY FILM, vol. 4, 2006, is an Intellect journal aiming to challenge the hegemonic value judgement about "cinema" from around the world and to explore approaches pointing to the egalitarian value represented by "cinema", with a focus on what is happening right now in the theory and practice of this particular field. There is a tendency to focus not only on a fuzzy "immediate", but on a more specific issue of "otherness", viewed also as the issue of "marginality". Is not the technicality taking the forestage here, but the substantial ideas. One can obviously notice a main "directive" in the evaluation of the contemporary cinema. What is characteristic for the "World Cinema"? Is there even such a thing? Could it be placed on an equal footing with the "mainstream cinema"? The journal succeeds to create a space where even/mainly marginal voices find ways and means of expression — in this sense it is an ideal-type forum.

TEHNOETHIC ARTS: A JOURNAL OF SPECULATIVE RESEARCH, is as well an Intellect journal, presenting cutting-edge ideas, prospects and practices as they arise from the confluence of consciousness research, art, science and technology. I noticed a special interest for the matters of mind and for the subjects related to the extension of senses through technologies of cognition and perception. This is a document of transdisciplinary research. The papers included demonstrate scientific qualities sustained by innovation in design. The journal undertakes a unique stand, encouraging speculative research both into the realm of art and into that of cognitive science. Esoteric knowledge and arcane cultural practices are intermingled in a fruitful collaboration. The studies welcome the re-evaluations of the older world-views recommendable as a very interesting forum for present-day science.

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