

THE FUNCTIONAL FRAME OF ART JOURNALISM

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Abstract

This article reveals the fact that Art journalism is a process that requires the simultaneous aggregation and achievement of some of specific activities, thereby giving society certain functions. They derive, on the one hand, from the specificity of the AJ and, on the other hand, from the general functions of the media: of information, interpretation, socialization, entertainment and, of course, cultural. Due to its specificity, art journalism has generated a series of derivative functions, characteristic only to it, the most relevant ones being: promoting culture, forming culture and promoting cultural dialogue.

Keywords: *art journalism, cultural phenomenon, information function, interpretation function, socialization function, entertainment function, cultural function and the functions specific to art journalism.*

Art journalism, whose object of reflection / approach is culture and art, also performs certain functions. Art journalism is an activity that represents functional alternatives because its products arise as a result of meeting the informational needs of individuals in response to their interests and needs. As a media process, AJ requires the accumulation and simultaneous realization of specific activities, from which there derive the functions that it has in society. Art journalism structures images of and about cultural reality: it suggests significance for different events, outlines perspectives for some processes and phenomena, offers solutions for certain issues, promotes values, and thereby reproduces the field of culture itself. The degree of media product utilization is an index of the functionality of art journalism.

"The media function is a consequence of media activity, which responds to the public's expectations and generates specific activities in form and content. The word "function" is of Latin origin and has multiple meanings, resulting from the specificity of the domain in which it is used" (STEPANOV, 2015). Contemporary studies offer

a wide range of explanations / definitions for the term function. In this work the following were identified and taken into account:

- a contribution that an element brings to satisfying a requirement of the system it belongs to, contributing to its maintenance and development (ZAMFIR & VLĂSCĂNU, 2011).
- a relationship between two or more elements, characterized by a role or purpose (FEREOL, 1998).

AJ as a process requires the aggregation and simultaneous realization of specific activities, thereby achieving certain functions in society. These functions derive, on the one hand, from the specificity of the art of journalism and, on the other hand, from the general functions of the media: information, interpretation, socialization, entertainment and, of course, literacy.

Through the information function, the AJ organizes its action to capitalize on the field of culture, to disseminate culture, to reflect cultural reality, thus providing the public with the necessary information to form knowledge about this sphere of human activity. From this point of view, AJ's goal is to distribute the nucleus of the cultural phenomenon not only to the target audience but also to the non-specialized one and to bring the social individual closer to the flow of cultural-artistic events.

The primary objectives of art journalism in informing society focus on the events that take place in cinematography, drama, dramaturgy, literature, music, plastic arts, etc. Most of the cultural events in the Republic of Moldova are organized either by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research, or by the creative unions and professional organizations in culture, such as the unions of writers, musicians, architects,

film makers, artists etc. A constant and increased interest on behalf of journalism benefit the book issues, creative evenings, charity concerts, festivals such as the Class *Fest-Theater* and Film School Festival, *Chronograph-* the Documentary Film Festival, the International Poetry Festival *Grigore Vieru*, the Festivals: *Maria Biesu*, *Martisor*, *Tamara Ciobanu*, *Maria Dragan*, *Nicolae Sulac*, contest festivals *Invite the Folklore Orchestra*, *Two Twin Hearts*, *Silver Chrysanthemum*, etc.

Through its interpretation function, AJ discusses the cultural reality, offers different points of view on things, explains and analyzes cultural phenomena and trends, thereby contributing to personality modeling, changing its perceptions of basic elements of culture such as philosophy, literature, architecture, painting, etc. From this point of view, the goal of journalism is to cultivate the public through the formation of healthy perceptions, involving values of beauty and aesthetics. The AJ also discusses the existing problems in this area: the efficiency / inefficiency of the administration of the budgets allocated to the field of culture, the diversification of the spectrum of cultural goods produced in the domestic market, the quality and adjustment of the cultural and artistic product on the European market, increasing the efficiency of cultural institutions, international collaborations that could lead to the improvement of the native cultural product, etc. At the same time, the analysis, the interpretations and commentaries of specialized reporters are necessary for the authors of works of art, for example the performer of a show, "because it represents a judgment value, an appreciation of the directorial and acting act. Depending on these considerations, the director and actors can make the touches to improve their artistic performances. In the same way, the opinion of a specialist determines the director to capture the typological meanings of the characters, their psychological competences, as people among the people".

Through its social function, AJ creates cultural ties between different categories and social groups, between different ethnicities and peoples. It offers the public the opportunity to be part of national and universal cultural processes, contributing to the formation of new models of cultural thinking and action. From this

perspective, its purpose is to provide the consumer with behavioral patterns that facilitate human interaction. "Mass media contributes to the achievement of social stability and the maintenance of cultural structures in time" (COMAN, 1999).

The cultural media fosters the connection between the social and the cultural structure, through mass communication, which takes on a socio-cultural transition.

Through the entertainment, culture amuses, relaxes and educates the masses. Entertainment, in addition to its immediate roles, also has the role of educating, some of the entertainment materials displaying obvious educational effects, which bring the entertainment function closer to the cultural function. Sometimes entertainment and art journalism are merging, generating a kind of hybrid, of a fun-cultural nature. As a rule, they wrap the cultural messages in specific forms of entertainment exposition. In a subtle way, they can cultivate society through the headinds *Curiosities*, *All for All*, *Cultural Divertis*, of logic games, crosswords, psychological tests, etc. The entertainment function is "the most important today, especially since it combines extremely efficiently with the other ones. Education is easier to receive when it is hidden under the mask of fun ... "(BLAJKO, 2008). Knowing the influence force of the media, journalists, in very rare cases, offer pure entertainment. Most often, in order to increase the effects of journalistic materials and to increase the performance of the press, they combine entertainment with art journalism.

The cultural information (about books, music, film, theater, exhibitions, etc.) is, however, a useful product and, regardless of the angle of approach or the way in which it is exposed, it can by no means be strictly embedded in entertainment. However, it is not uncommon for cultural information to be included in entertainment, both from the point of view of the subject and from the placement of the periodicals. This is due to the desire of journalists to make cultural information more accessible, more attractive and to facilitate its assimilation. In the rush for exhaustive information, the reader does not even notice the slow transition from hard and routine information to another way of

transmitting information, easier and easier to assimilate, which facilitates the assimilation of values and standards promoted by the press.

The cultural function is the most important and relevant to our study, as it is fundamental in the production of journalism art products. Cultural literacy is one of the fundamental aims of journalism. This is important both for maintaining and expanding the general culture of individuals, as well as for its continuous formation. "The media is meant to confirm, to strengthen, through its permanent and continuous activity, the moral, ethical, aesthetic and cultural values of a society. Putting into circulation general and utilitarian information regarding different socio-cultural criteria and standards, the mass media educates / shapes, guides willingly and unwillingly readers and does it throughout their lives. In most cases, the audience that sustains the effects of this guidance is unaware of the presence, impact and limitations of the influence of the media message, the press thus indirectly influencing the human conduct" (STEPANOV, 2011).

Secondly, the culturalization through journalism involves activities that stimulate civic activism, because it causes individuals to become involved in local and national cultural events and processes, to become active members of different cultural organizations, and ultimately, edifiers of cultural reality from their living environment.

Thirdly, culturalization contributes to humanizing the masses by promoting cultural values. The values practically comprise the entire human existence and ensure the continuity of social life. Humanizing individuals through values is a way of human existence. The acquisition of culture (as a whole of material and spiritual values) is not achieved through natural, biological mechanisms, but through education, learning, that is, the assimilation of values.

Fourthly, it provides individuals with the set of minimum knowledge that is absolutely necessary to form their perceptions, attitudes and actions in relation to the cultural reality at the local, national, or even international level. Social perceptions of certain products in the field of culture are important because they are based on their action, which then depends on the

degree of assimilation of cultural products and their impact and effects in a society, respectively. The people of culture can learn about the perceptions of the public through direct contact (but they are usually not representative) and through indirect contact, that is through the media. Media coverage of public perceptions and reactions is just as important as media coverage of the culture itself as it can influence the cultural actions and can guide the cultural processes in a society.

The examination of the Art Journalism in terms of the influence it exercises on the one hand on its subject of reflection that is, on cultural reality, and, on the other hand, on its public, allows us to identify its functional derivatives. Due to its specificity, art journalism has generated a number of functional derivatives, out of which the most relevant are: the instructive-formative function, the promotion of culture, the formation of culture, and the promotion of cultural dialogue.

The instructive-formative function. Art journalism studies, dynamizes and mediates the artistic and the cultural arena, and by emphasizing the cultural reality, it influences the formation of cultural representations, aesthetic taste and the general culture of each individual in part, and of society as a whole. AJ disseminates information on art and culture while also providing models and algorithms to interpret cultural values of different social categories and culture in a given space and time, helping to educate the population and develop its analytical skills.

The function in question is usually carried out through generalist media with various fields of culture or through programs dedicated to culture, intended for the general public. Specialized press performs this function thanks to analysis concerning the quality of art works, in particular, and of the cultural act in general. This kind of material offers the opportunity to the authors of cultural products to evaluate / appreciate their creation, to relate to universal trends, and to the specialists to take action to correct it. The elements of culture are subordinated to the act of creation in art journalism, which, in its essence, is a formative one. So, the cultural media materials are also formative as they shape the artistic visions and aesthetic tastes of the population, form the habit of regularly consuming cultural

products and even, in a way, to generate dependence on this kind of information. The cultural products of the generalist and the specialized press go through a period of challenges because their media projection claims to be repositioned in the charts of educational materials. All these favors the increase of the formative component of media coverage of cultural reality as it contributes to the extension of the general culture of individuals and to the formation of the skills for selecting the competitive cultural products.

The function for promoting culture. The promotion of culture is one of the base functions of journalism as it has enough potential to promptly and operationally inform an impressive number of individuals about the most important cultural events that will occur in the near future, the opportunity to participate directly and directly in the cultural life of society. By promoting culture, art journalism facilitates mass access to various cultural events while stimulating their consumption. The benefits that the field of culture obtains from the activity of journalism from the perspective of this function are not only moral but also economic nature. The interest of the population in certain cultural events, generated by the media, leads to the increase of the investments made by the individuals in culture, by obtaining tickets for concerts, vernissage, exhibitions, films, performances etc. The function for promoting culture is achieved both through the generalist and the specialized press. In order to promote culture, the generalist press uses special forms of expression, such as film and theater reviews and criticisms, which not only inform and analyze the cultural production, but also stimulate the interest of the general public in certain cultural products, causing them to consume them. The specialized press on the field of culture: literary magazines, weekly newspaper supplements, magazines specialized in art, music, cinema, etc., including their electronic versions, put in circulation products about the quality of artworks, of the cultural act, offering the specialists through this the possibility to focus their attention on certain aspects to expand or temper them.

The function of cultural formation has a pragmatic character and involves activities aimed at

correcting the cultural act, as well as the production of new forms of culture. The analysis and criticisms of cultural products, put into the circuit through journalism, have enough potential and power to orient or reorient the cultural processes, to influence the cultural phenomena and trends, and to impose certain quality standards for the cultural and art products. Influencing the form and content of cultural products, this type of journalism activity contributes to the formation of culture itself.

Throughout its history, art journalism has generated new forms of culture - products that, thanks to their distinct identity, fit perfectly into the field of culture. These, either criticism of art, or the chronicles, either the reviews, are in some ways the act of setting up new cultural products with new aesthetic and artistic values, as both the criticism and the chronicles but also the reviews are cultural products.

The new forms of culture have emerged as a result of the convergence between culture and journalism, generated by the need to adapt traditional forms of culture to the type of media channel through which they are distributed to the masses. An example in this respect is the radio and television theater - formats that differ from the traditional theater in that they obtain a new dimension, determined by the specificity of the transmission channel. Or the cycles of cultural sketches that come to highlight personalities of culture and that differ from the sketch as a journalistic genre through language and content. Also in this context there can be mentioned the cycles of in-depth cultural reportages, reviews, literary criticism or journalistic essays. The element that distinguishes them from the purely journalist genres is the reflections of the author, oriented to the utilitarian dimension of the messages promoted and the fact that they bring in the artistic dimension of the event, phenomenon, process or cultural product. Such materials are a symbiosis of the literary genre with the journalistic genre and usually have a special emotional and educational load. They are new forms of cultural products that arise due to the art of journalism. Sometimes these materials, due to their utilitarian and timeless nature, are re-published in separate collections, or as supplements to the periodical publications in

which they originally appeared, or as brochures or books.

The function of ensuring the dialogue among cultures. The process of globalization and the diachronic expansion of information technologies made possible the circulation of the media product, especially the cultural one, through mass communication, causing a cross between the national culture and the universal one. Through AJ, the universal culture penetrates into the most distant cultural environments, and the national cultures become known to the entire world. This phenomenon offers the modern world, in general, the possibility to interact with other cultures and, in particular, to socially integrate their own socio-cultural values with those of other peoples.

Art journalism is not only a source of producing and providing the necessary subjects for cultural dialogue, it is an active participant in the dialogue of cultures, behaving as a promising force, which, through the ability to bring to the public the mass communication vector, helps people to understand the emotional, intellectual and moral core of a culture. The dialogue of cultures through the mass media is a bridge between different ethnicities and nationalities, as researcher V. Blazhko says, "despite the different conditions regarding the origins of some cultures, the neighborhood relations and the communication between them, centuries old, generated the fact that over time they influenced each other". It can design the matrix of the coexistence of different cultures in a multicultural society, that of communication and tolerance. The lack of tolerance is seen in the absence of what we call assertive communication, when people, instead of striving to understand other cultures, judge, accuse, and give judgment to the cultural values of other peoples.

Experience shows that the dialogue of cultures can only be successful only if the societies are open to communication and when there is a

certain constructive attitude, which requires a tolerant approach to the topics under discussion. The dialogue of cultures, like the social one, must focus on the principle of tolerance - the only one able to ensure its positive evolution. Tolerance, however, is not an innate characteristic of individuals, it is acquired in the same way as any other cultural competence, being a quality not so much of an intrinsic nature, but one that individuals acquire through education, culture and, above all, through training. It is cultivated in the conversations that take place in the family, in the collective, in the community, by educating the way of addressing, of reporting of individuals towards others and, last but not least, through the topics discussed in the media.

CONCLUSIONS

The potential of journalism to influence the masses in terms of their training and culture is very strong. Well-exploited, the media message can civilize the audience, manipulating their behavior and shaping their aesthetic visions. Used in bad faith or neglected, it can intensify the state of deterioration of human conduct, may form wrong visions, promote non-valoric principles and ideals.

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