

TEACHING INFORMATION LITERACY TO UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS: TOOLS, WORKSHOP, AND ACTIVITY IDEAS

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ABSTRACT

The present paper provides insights into approaches that can be used when delivering teaching about certain types of “information disorder” such as disinformation, malinformation, and misinformation. The findings that are presented here are based on actual experience in teaching subjects such as “Media Ethics”, and “Introduction to Mass Media” to undergraduate students. Hence, the framework that is going to be offered in it is based on the knowledge that has been acquired through the consultation of a certain number of textbooks that were used to design the modules’ content that has been given to the students. Furthermore, setting and designing this content had to obey to the six dimensions of the cognitive process, and these are remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating, and creating.

The framework presented in this paper has at its core the necessity to pursue the common elements agreed upon by different media outlets through answering the five W’s (Who? what? When? Where? Why?), in addition to “how?” as an essential step to avoid the traps of any types of the “information disorder”. The approach offered in this paper endorses as well the necessity to understand the different functions that can be served by the same media text, notably those of information, and interpretation. Moreover, it provides a method for investigating the media content that is offered to the target audience through steps that lead to discovering the values reflected through it, the creative techniques used in it, and so on, in addition to assessing its ethical implications.

Finally, the originality of this paper emanates from the fact that it is the product of actual teaching experience that led to singling out the ideas presented in it as a suitable framework for providing teaching about the “disinformation disorder” based on the students inquiries, performance, and learning difficulties..

KEYWORDS: *Information Disorder, Disinformation, Misinformation, Malinformation, Information Literacy, Media Text, and Critical Thinking*

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INTRODUCTION

Teaching a subject involves usually speaking, a framework that is distinguished by the content that is being taught, and the approach adopted in delivering information about it. This remark applies to all subjects generally speaking, but the question arises as per to knowing in which way teaching, and learning about misinformation, and disinformation is distinct, and whether or not teaching such a subject requires the design of a specific panoply of tools, workshops, and practical activities that reflect its nature?

As a response to this question, the present research paper will offer practice-based evidence involving a framework that ensures the engagement of undergraduate students when dealing with media content, in terms of becoming critical consumers of the latter, who are able to avoid the traps of disinformation, misinformation, and malinformation.

Before proceeding though with an elaboration on how to design such as framework, the need arises to pose clear definitions setting the limits between the three concepts mentioned earlier.

As a start, disinformation, misinformation, and malinformation can all be considered to be part of what has been called the "information disorder". The three of them can be separated from each other by the existence, or non-existence of the intention to cause harm. In matter of fact, both disinformation, and malinformation can be thought of as premeditated acts to mislead and/or deceive. The difference between both of them though lies in the fact that disinformation is built upon relaying fake or inaccurate information, whereas malinformation is associated with the same end-result (misleading and/or deception) but on the basis of genuine information. By contrast, misinformation occurs without the sender of the message, or its source, being aware that he or she is spreading false content (Shu *et al.*, 2020, p. 2).

This definition entails the following when it comes to teaching about disinformation, misinformation, and malinformation: 1) What kind of tools can the target audience, or the general public be equipped with in order to decide whether the information is false, or genuine? 2) How can the critical sense of the receiver of the message be enhanced in order to recognize the implicit coded meanings behind the content that he or she is receiving? Those two questions actually imply that the implications of disinformation/malinformation do not stop at the face-value of whether the information is accurate, and genuine, or not, but encompass the ability of the message's receiver to recognize any underlying attempts for persuasion, or "manipulation" through explicit or implicit cues that are embedded into the information, whether they are textual or visual. Furthermore, the ethical considerations pertaining to this matter will enter into play, as the receiver of the message might be engaged in questions related to whether or not the initiator of the communication has breached any professional codes of ethics, or not, in addition to deciding if the propagation of the message contradicts any ethical expectations that the receiver of the message might be holding, in conformity with his or her cultural upbringing, or not.

The next stages that will be developed in this research paper will reflect these considerations based on actual experience of teaching the subjects of: Media Ethics, Media & Information Literacy, Introduction to Mass Media, and Introduction to Journalism.

TEACHING INFORMATION LITERACY: METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Teaching about areas related to the "disinformation disorder" might need to convey the cognitive process dimensions of remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating, and creating (Anderson *et al.*, 2001, p. 31). Hence each unit in any syllabus providing teaching about disinformation, misinformation, and malinformation needs to reflect the complete cognitive process through a series of key concepts, and activities reflecting these dimensions.

When delivering teaching about the areas mentioned earlier, the instructor would be dealing with concepts, and theories that are available across a wide range of college-level textbooks or academic books. Some of them will have their own set of practical activities, and exercisesⁱ. Considering the number of books that can be used to provide teaching about the areas mentioned earlier, it is inevitable that an instructor finds himself or herself under the need to select the most essential topics to handle based on the duration of the module that he is going to teach, and the target audience (the general

public, college students who are taking the course as part of their field of specialization, college students who are enrolled to take the course as an elective one although it is not part of their major etc.).

This is why the selection of the topics to be covered during the module will largely depend on the discretion of the instructor based on the course's description requirements if the module is provided to college students. Since the learning process will be relying on all or most of the dimensions that are part of the cognitive process as delineated earlier, the instructor could start with the basic questions that will appeal to the students' critical sense as consumers of media content. Conveying the six dimensions of the cognitive process, can present itself as a strategic goal to be pursued by the teacher, at each milestone set for the module in question.

In order to teach students how to identify either disinformation, misinformation, or malinformation, they need to recognize as a start, the difference between news, and interpretation, and understand how the same media text can serve more than one function.

DEFINING NEWS

Answering the question "What is news?" reflects an epistemological pursuance of the foundations of recognizing disinformation, malinformation, and misinformation. This means that it is at the heart of the suggested attempt in this paper to present a framework for providing learning about the "information disorder".

News is defined by two criteria: Accuracy, and being interesting (Spencer, 2009). However, construing the meaning of accuracy will reveal itself as being a problematic endeavour as it will lead to raising the following questions: On whose shoulders falls the task of pursuing the accuracy of information? Shall it be the news propagator, or the news consumer? Would the "news consumer" be "safe" if he or she only limited himself or herself to receiving information from traditional media outlets that are expected to deliver accurate information due to the professional makeshift of the personnel employed in the media institution in question? Would misinformation be curtailed if any other sources of "news" were to be excluded notably those that use social media as a vehicle to propagate information, whether it is genuine or inaccurate?

Determining the accuracy of information might present itself as toil for the general public if it is to be taken into consideration first how media professionals are expected to proceed in order to determine the accuracy of the information. The general public, and contrary to media professionals, do not, generally speaking, have access to newsmakers, and spokespeople. The receivers of media content are not "trained" to evaluate the reliability of a source, through a series of "analytical" tools that can be translated into questions. These comprise for example: How does the person know what he or she is saying? Has his or her reliability been questioned before? (Harrower, 2010, p. 141).

Media professionals serve as gatekeepers ensuring that the raw information that will be translated into news, will respond to the requirement of accuracy. However, their role should not solely rest upon their goodwill or their "subjective" willingness to abide by professional considerations alone, as there needs to be other parties serving as a "Sixth Estate" ensuring that media professionals are faithful to their professional duties, and that the interest of the general public will be served at all times.

The general public cannot play the role of both being the consumer of media content, and the media professional. However, and unfortunately, the intervention of parties concerned with the interest of the general public cannot be apprehended as if it were a process that will never occur without any flaws. This is why it is still of great importance that the so-called "laymen" acquire the skills that enable them to become media literate, and therefore to be part of the "Sixth Estate".

The path toward developing such a literacy, and therefore avoiding the traps of misinformation, disinformation, and malinformation starts with an understanding of the different types of content that are disseminated by the media outlets, and an understanding of the criteria that lead to selecting specific news items as constituents of the main headlines, and the basis on which the hierarchization of news occurs within the same unit of display, be it a page, or a webpage. As the answers to the five W'sⁱⁱ, and "how" (Harrower, 2010, p. 38) guide the students of journalism, and media professionals in structuring the content that is going to be offered to the public, they also need to serve as benchmarks against which the accuracy, and validity of all information pertaining to the same event, will be tested. If the answers to the five W's, and how are similar across different media outlets, it is safe to assume that the consumers of media content have been able to avoid being the victims of misinformation.

The awareness of this particular "reality" from the media content consumers might be followed by several steps in order to critically consume the information that has been agreed upon. However, and before going through these tools, the different functions of a media text need to be established in order to equip the target audience with the how-to-knowledge of separating news/information from interpretation.

THE DIFFERENT FUNCTIONS OF A MEDIA TEXT

A media text does not solely serve the function of information. Consider the following example which is a news story about the Republican Sen. at the time, Ted Cruz:

U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz has told a conservative conference that President Barack Obama is lawless, providing the rightwing rhetoric that makes him so popular in his home stateⁱⁱⁱ.

In the paragraph above, the lead of the news story, the author delivered the information using 15 words (that stop at "is lawless") that answered two out of the 5w's (Who? U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz; "What?" has told a conservative party). The remaining 13 words were dedicated to answering the question "Why?" However, if the nature of the idea conveyed by these 13 words is examined, it would be safe to say that at this particular point, the news story has shifted from delivering facts to building context through interpretation, hence justifying the significance of writing about this piece of news. Discovering that the lead has shifted from information to interpretation, amounts to asking at least three questions: Did Sen. Ted Cruz describe his rhetoric as being a "rightwing" one? Has he purposefully stated that he is delivering yet another speech in his home state to increase his popularity? Or is it that the author of the news story is conveying how he is weighing the facts through what he knows to be the background of Sen. Ted Cruz?

Knowing how to isolate "facts" from interpretation, and generally speaking from the context that constitute the body of a media text, is a foundational skill that will make the reader recognize misinformation, disinformation, and malinformation.

THE FIVE TOOLS OF MEDIA LITERACY

There are several analytical tools that can be used by the general public to deal with news based on a critical sense. The “five tools” serve such a purpose as they lead to dealing with information, commentaries, and generally speaking media messages, based on the following key points (Turow, 2014, pp. 23-25):

1) Authorship; 2) Evaluation of the audience; 3) Determination of the institutional purpose; 4) Analysis of the content; 5) Identification of the creative techniques used in producing, and disseminating the media content.

Both the fourth and fifth steps can be enhanced by incorporating the steps of critical thinking (Campbell *et al.*, 2012, pp. 30-31):

1) Description; 2) Analysis; 3) Interpretation; 4) Evaluation; 5) Engagement.

From previous experience in teaching courses where both media, and information literacy skills were required, the students were led to developing their ability to understand the concepts, and analytical tools that were explained to them through a series of workshops, formative, and summative assessments that were built either around the five stages of media literacy, and the five stages of critical thinking each alone, or a combination of both in different contexts. Students could be instructed, within the same framework, to incorporate their understanding of how meaning is conveyed through visual material, using their ability to recognize the news values conveyed in such a material, to enhance their analytical skills.

The five tools of media literacy offer themselves as a comprehensive framework that is suitable for exploring the intended meanings behind a media text, be it the explicit or implicit ones. Matters revolving around authorship can lead to raising questions concerning the reputability of the author, and the media outlet through which the media content is being disseminated.

The second tool of media literacy, and that is the “target audience”, will be used to discover how the same message will be understood by the target audience, as not all of them might understand the same content in a similar way. This remark is applicable to visual content, not textual one alone. Consider the example of *The Falling Man*, which was taken by AP photographer Richard Drew, at the moment of the collapse of the north tower, of the World Trade Center, in September 11, 2001 (The editors of Time, 2016, p. 156). This photo was part of the material used in the classroom as an application on the usage of theories pertaining to ethical thinking, to assess the decision-making process of media professionals, from an ethical perspective. Students were led to answer several questions regarding this photo, in class discussions. For example, they were asked if the photo can possess non-intended coded meanings that go beyond the immediate, and obvious meaning of documenting a tragedy during the collapse of the north tower of the World Trade Center. One of these meanings revolves around echoing the tragedy of men in current times, where great civilizational progress has been achieved to the detriment of men. Hence, the falling man with his unclear features might be perceived as a symbol of the condition of men in modern times: A tiny entity of life dominated by a background of stone representing the environment we live in. Can the photo of Drew be perceived in this way? Does it harbour such connotations?

Asking such questions will lead to discovering how the target audience might be perceiving the same content similarly, or differently. Other instances of practical activities where students’ questions revolved around a perceived “information disorder” of some sort, include commentaries about controversial imagery such as the photo that Frank Fournier took in 1985 of 13-year-old girl Omayra Sánchez, shortly before her death, after being trapped in the ruins that fell as a result of the eruption of the volcano Nevada del Ruiz^{iv}, or the scene captured in 1993 by Kevin Carter as a vulture

was about to attack a little girl in famine-ravaged Sudan (Taylor, 1998, p.135). In these two examples, an “information disorder” of some sort might have been felt by the audience as demonstrated by a certain number of questions that the students have posed inside of the classroom: Was there no one around Omayra to rescue her? Was she the only survivor? Why didn’t the photographer help her? Was he alone, or part of a crew? Similar questions were associated with the shot taken by Carter: Is the child in the photograph a boy, or a girl? Is he or she an orphan? Was there no one around to help? Why didn’t the photographer try to help him or her?

Questions that are addressed to the target audience, or questions asked by the target audience will lead to fulfilling the aim, and objectives of using the second tool of media literacy, and to revealing any disruptions in the understanding of the receivers due to misconceptions, or insufficient information. In the cases mentioned earlier (*The Falling Man*, and the photos taken by Fournier, and Carter), using the second tool of media literacy will prevent any form of misinformation by eliciting the responses pertaining to areas that remain obscure for the receiver.

Finally, questions related to the tools of the institutional purpose, content analysis, and creative techniques will lead the receivers of the content to deepening their understanding of any meanings lying behind the media content, be it the explicit, or implicit ones. These tools can reveal themselves to be useful, especially when dealing with controversial content as is the case for example of some of the issues published by the French periodical *Charlie Hebdo*, as these were used inside of the classroom.

The issue no. 1207 of *Charlie Hebdo* released in September 9, 2015, after the drowning of the Syrian 3-year-old child, Alan Kurdi is one of the cases that were given to students for analysis, using the five tools of media literacy. Using these tools will lead to providing answers to questions of controversial nature objectively, or as close as it comes to objectivity. Indeed, all the prominent signifiers, or signs in Charles Peirce’s terminology, that could be singled out in this particular case, lead to different interpretants. In Peirce’s terminology, an interpretant is the idea evoked in a person’s mind by the sign (Smith *et al.*, 2005, pp. 228 - 229). Responses elicited from students regarding this particular case revolved mostly around labelling the content in question as being “provocative” to say the least, and perhaps even “xenophobic”.

However, a close examination of the signifiers or signs used in the narrative designed by *Coco* does not necessarily corroborate the above-mentioned interpretation, or opinion (2015). Students were offered three sequences to analyze from the *Charlie Hebdo* issue in question, and they all revolve around dichotomies. The first sequence in these shows a white man, epitomizing Europeans as it seems, sitting on a couch chair, and using the back of a migrant to rest his feet upon, while holding a can in his hand. This pictorial content reveals indeed a contrast between an “overpowering” native, and an “overpowered” migrant who is wearing tattered jeans. However, does this depiction really serve the purpose of putting non-Europeans down, and more precisely, Syrian migrants?

Actually the prominent signifiers in the sequence in question lead to saying that it serves cultural, and maybe political, satire because the element that is representing the Western civilization in it, is not depicted in a flattering way. His potbelly, and the fact that he is sitting on a couch consolidate the latter remark, as if to insinuate that he is a lazy person. The depiction can be perceived as visually echoing the expression “couch potato”; this is practically an idle person who does not practice any kind of physical activity, and spends hours watching TV.

In the same manner, the analysis of the other sequences that are to be found in the *Charlie Hebdo* issue reveals a balanced dichotomy exposing the negative reality on both sides of the story, or so to speak. For example, in one of the sequences, the following sentence can be read (Riss, 2015a): “*Si près du but ... Promo! 2 menus enfant pour le prix d’un*”

("So close from the goal ... Promotion! 2 child menu for the price of one"). This sentence can be perceived as having a sarcastic undertone that is minimizing the dreams of Syrian migrants, who fled their country torn with intestine wars, to seek a better life. However, the analysis of the same sequence, building upon elements such as its compositional structure, and the usage of colour in it, will lead to a different conclusion. Indeed, colours have been only used in the upper half of the sequence, whereas the second half that occupies the bottom is rendered in black, and white, including the water, as if to signify a joyless reality.

Colours have been employed too to depict Ronald the clown, the MacDonald's mascot (Riss, 2015a). At first sight, Ronald seems to be popping out of the billboard in mockery, accentuating the feeling of the insensitivity projected by the media content, towards a tragedy: A child's death. However, and given the interpretants that can be associated with this particular character, the mascot might be seen as a grim symbol of a cruel reality.

This remark can be weighed in light of recent developments concerning the fate of this character as per to its centrality to MacDonald's image branding strategies. In 2016, the giant fast-food chain has officially sent its mascot into retirement after several sightings of "creepy clowns" in the US, and the UK, in what has been called "the clown craze". Clowns can impart a sense of danger, and insecurity, depending on the cultural background of the target audience, and the memories, and interpretants that they might associate with this figure, especially in the light of the experience they had of him or her through media messages, and popular culture. Characters such as Batman's nemesis, the *Joker*, or *Pennywise* from Stephen King's 1986 horror novel *It*, and the TV series by the same title, are part of the latter. To those can be added images, memories, and ideas related to clown killers, such as John Wayne Gacy, an American serial killer, and sex offender from the 1970s (Poole, 2016).

Finally, the sequence drawn by Riss, and that brings into light a comparison between Christians, and non-Christians can be analyzed in the same way (2015b). In one of the cartoons published by *Charlie Hebdo*, the following message can be read: "*La preuve que l'Europe est Chrétienne. Les Chrétiens marchent sur les eaux. Les enfants Musulmans coulent*" ("*The proof that Europe is Christian. Christians walk on water. Muslim children sink*"). This message can be perceived at face value, as being highly provocative, and harbouring some form of religious intolerance. However, its compositional structure, and the colours used in it might lead to thinking otherwise. Again, the page has been divided into two non-equal halves, the upper one in blue, and the second one in black and white. In the second half is drawn the lower body of a character (A teenager? Alan?) as if he is pinned down in shallow waters, in a manner mimicking sceneries from comics, and animated cartoons where the main protagonist is expected to come back safe whatever the dangers he or she is facing might be. However, what is of interest here is how Jesus is drawn in this sequence as his clothes are closer to be a djellabia than to the seamless robe he is supposed to have worn before crucifixion. The ambiguous nature of the sandals he was drawn with (Are these sandals with heel strap, or sandals with no heel strap such as the ones that are part of the traditional outfit of men in some of the Middle Eastern regions?), and the long beard that has been attributed to him make it seem as if the character in the cartoon is drawn with elements representing both Western, and non-Western cultures on the assumption that the real aim from it is to ridicule the logic behind any fanaticism whatever its source might be.

Providing this case as an example highlights the importance of using the five tools of media literacy to understand the coded meanings imparted to media messages, as things do not always seem the way they look. Furthermore, it is one example showing that sometimes it is necessary to incorporate semiotic analysis into the teaching methods used inside of a

classroom to analyse media messages, in any form they might come in, be it a text, or an image, or a photograph, or a video, or a film.

THE FIVE STAGES OF CRITICAL THINKING

Using the five stages of critical thinking, will lead to the same outcome, or can be considered as another form to question the coded meanings that can be found in media messages. The first stage of critical thinking will lead to isolating key concepts, or prominent signifiers in the media messages that are being analyzed. By the way of the chain of these signifiers, the message that is being conveyed through the content in question can be identified, by the target audience; this is the second stage in the process of critical thinking.

It is to be noted here that the instructor can incorporate teaching about how to identify the meaning behind a visual message using knowledge about news values as a benchmark. Through indicators such as the participants shown in the photographs that are being analyzed, the emotions that are depicted, and conveyed through them, serialization, and repetition, comparison, negative elements, references to time, place, and individuals, role attributes, and aesthetic elements, the news values that they convey can be identified^v. These are: Timeliness, proximity, prominence, consonance, negativity, personalization, impact, superlativeness, novelty and aesthetics (Caple, 2013, p. 26).

As an example, the photo available through the link indicated in the endnotes^{vi}, can be construed as emphasizing the prominence news value through the depiction of the author Naguib Mahfouz amidst books, and with a newspaper in his hands.

The third and fourth stages (interpretation and evaluation) can be remodelled in a way to explore the ethical decision-making process behind the production of the content, and its fairness, towards the protagonists who are depicted through it. During these stages, the instructor can lead the students or the audience participating in sessions aiming at spreading awareness concerning the “information disorder”, toward answering the following questions: Is the decision to publicize the content in question ethical or not? Can the packaging, and presentation of the information, be considered fair toward the protagonists who are being depicted in it?

Answering these questions, necessarily revolves around following specific methodological steps that will lead to an examination of the ethical implications associated with the media messages that are being evaluated, through known theories such as the Golden Mean of Aristotle, the Categorical Imperative of Immanuel Kant, the principle of utility of John Mills, and the Veil of Ignorance of John Rawls (Hanson, 2021, pp. 375 - 378). These particular theories were chosen because a certain sufficiency was established through them in terms of the diversity of the analytical tools that were offered to the students to provide their input when it came to analyzing specific media messages.

One of the outcomes that can be achieved through the usage of these particular theories is enabling the students to find an acceptable resolution for brain-racking situations. What if a particular decision taken by a media establishment was ethical in the light of one theory, and unethical from the perspective of another theory?

This situation can often be encountered in workshops where specific case studies are given to students. Let's consider the case of the Seung-Hui Cho's multimedia disk as the *NBC News* channel had taken the decision to broadcast excerpts from it, justifying its decision by the benefit that such an act will fall upon society in terms of knowing what goes inside the mind of a serial killer. Cho eliminated by gunshot thirty-two students and faculty members from Virginia Tech in April 2007 (Hanson, 2021, p. 377). This justification is consistent with the foundations of the Principle of Utility of Mills as an act would be considered as being ethical using the framework derived from Mill's ideas if it benefits the

majority, even though there would be a minority that is going to suffer from a certain loss. However if the Golden Mean of Aristotle were used to assess the situation, then the student can easily dismiss the case at hand as being unethical because no Golden Mean has been achieved, and the act of the channel could be labelled as an excess of some sort.

Some students find it perplexing to reach a conclusion about the study case when the act associated with it can be considered as being ethical according to one theory, and unethical based on another one. This situation might reveal itself to be uncomfortable for them especially when the analysis is part of an assessment that will determine the outcome of the course, in terms of passing or failing it. This is why, students can be told in such particular cases that the grading will depend largely on how they build their case, and defend it through arguments. This is why, a pre-requisite for a successful analysis is required such as introducing the students to the difference between facts, and opinions, subjective, and objective claims (Brooke Noel Moore and Parker, 2012, pp. 5-7).

The fourth stage in those of critical thinking, and by that is meant evaluation, is similar in its essence to that of interpretation as both require that the case be built on conclusions derived from solidly-formulated premises. However, at this particular stage, the aim of the learner would be to decide if the act taken by media professionals, or the producers of media content, is fair or not. This is a stage that poses its own problems, as a certain act can be ethical, but unfair, or unethical but fair towards a certain protagonist. All depends on the theory used to provide a decision as per to whether a certain act is ethical, or not.

Lastly, for the final stage of critical thinking, there needs to be a proposal as per to showing one's engagement when it comes to approving, or disapproving the production, and packaging of certain information for the general public to be informed of. This stage entices the learners to show some form of civic leadership, and interest in matters pertaining to how their *City* is being governed (the *City* is a metaphor employed to represent modern states, and societies). Sending an email to the editor-in-chief, or the editor(s) and author(s) responsible of the content that is being analyzed, or the photographer, or filmmaker who have produced the media messages in question, is a form of engagement. Starting a discussion thread on forums, or via a post on Facebook, or using any available platforms to voice one's opinions are other forms of engagement.

CONCLUSION

The above-mentioned stage is really representative of the essence of what a Sixth Estate needs to be, and do. Of course, how this Sixth Estate can be transformed into a modern day *agora*, and how can the freedom of expression be regulated without violating its essence, and with the aim of preventing any disruptions or violations to other people's rights, in the form of libel, slander, or defamation generally speaking, or any other way, are two different matters that are worthy of analysis by themselves. This remark consolidates the importance of providing teaching about the "information disorder," for all ages, and categories of people, and encouraging the latter to become critical consumers of media content. This scheme entails the necessity to think of ways to make this process as productive as it can be, and in harmony with the society's self-regulation mechanisms, as the freedom to express one's thoughts can lead, if not regulated, to a cacophony of voices, and opinions. Hence, thinking about how to enable people to become media literate cannot be separated from matters related to the exercise of civic leadership. With the constant evolution of the means of information, and communication, the field of information, and media literacy is expected to gain even a greater attention from the scholarly community, given its vitality to a society's harmony, and *modus operandi*.

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- ii The five W's are "Who", "What", "When", "Where", and "Why"(Harrower, 2010, p. 38).
- iii CBSN Dallas-FT. Worth, 2014.
- iv The photo that Fournier took in addition to other imagery documenting the agony of Omayra during the three days when she was paralyzed by the debris that fell after the eruption of the volcano Nevada del Ruiz is available along with other photos in different online platforms such as the website of *La Nacion* ("Omayra Sánchez, la niña que agonizó ...", 2020). It is to be noted that the photo of Fournier does not show the complete reality as Omayra was not alone, and there were attempts to rescue her by the Red Cross, and civil defense to no avail, as her legs were trapped, and the only way to save her would have been by amputating them. At the time, the doctors decided that it would be more humane to let her die as there were no medical equipment that could have been used to ensure that she would have received the proper treatment after performing the operation on her.
- v For a further exploration of how news values can be used to identify the meaning conveyed through photographs, refer to: Caple, 2013, pp. 36-54.
- vi The photo of Naguib Mahfouz available at: <https://amayei.nyc3.digitaloceanspaces.com/2018/09/naguib-mahfouz-1.jpg>.