

MEDIA PERUSING THE DAILY “DNEVEN TRUD”

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I don't regularly read the “Dneven Trud” newspaper, or any of the major dailies. Nor do I faithfully watch a specific TV channel. Rather, my personal rapport with Bulgarian media is bizarre. My outsider's experience with them bred a similarly detached view of the changes in our media in the process of their assuming their prerogatives as the “fourth power”.

An outlook on the media situation. Bulgarian media is neither more advanced, nor regressive than any other components of public life in the process of democratic reforms in the country. In fact, the media is a product of the social changes, and is therefore dependent on them. A significant feature of a democratic public environment is the existence of freedom for the real and ideal movement of the individual citizen, as well as conditions for the voice of certain small groups, as entities, to be heard. Society isn't just a mass of nomadic individuals, but it also has well defined tiers and zones of alternative behaviour, each thriving on their specific culture. Alas, this is not the case in Bulgaria. In our contemporary society, there are still no coherent public environments, so clearly diversified as to need various forms of information.

Or, if we are to formulate it - both as a state of reality and as a state of awareness - we have to admit that the Bulgarian public reality seems not to have unfolded yet. Featuring a mass of likewise individuals, it resists the establishment of a network of diverse “we”-circles defined by properties extending way beyond the limitations of the individual “I”s. As a result, Bulgarian society often reverts to the market-place type of vocal communication, thus seriously undermining the modern media development.

This is not a passive attitude. The media is capable of both stimulating and stalling social diversification. Periodicals themselves are an evidence of this emerging, if not yet unfolding, diversity. At the backdrop of a rather identical television and radio, a far reaching network of newspapers and magazines is evolving, predominantly generated in the capital city, but also in the country, to meet the growing demand of media coverage of local events. Along with the specialized “Capital” newspaper and a number of high-brow publications, a variety of tabloids aspire - some rather successfully - to deal with quotidian particularities. It is a question whether this variety corresponds to a content of the same volume, and whether the latter, in its turn, mirrors the real vertical and horizontal diversity of our contemporary life. On many points the printed press does not rise up to the variety in public life. The capital city press is - regrettably - too eager to impose a rather monotonous vision of commonness and similitude. Whatever inherent diversities there still may exist in Bulgarian life, they are being either neglected, or regarded with mistrust.

My specific point of view on the media situation and my motivation to concentrate on the “Dneven trud” circulation. It should be kept in mind that my assessment of the Bulgarian media situation is from the detached position of somebody that is not involved in the making of things. This detachment shows in the versification mode that I have chosen to guarantee the authenticity of my arguments with the implication that, resorting to such a discourse, removes its participants from

the situation they are discussing. Therefore, my approach is to step away from what I'm reviewing, to isolate the media from other subjects I'm involved in, and to give my verdict. This detachment through discourse inevitably underestimates the quotidian experience not only of average dailies readers, but my comparable experience, too. For, although I don't normally practice the typical mass consumption of media food, I cannot escape the media environment I abide in. Newspapers are omnipresent: I read parts of them, I am consulted on some materials from them, and I am involved in discussion of media messages.

That's how it came to this assignment. I accepted the challenge, grabbed a pile of old newspapers and immersed myself into reading them, as if to punish myself for my previous negligence. I must have gradually been conditioned to that by my frequent abiding among newspaper readers. In the tram, in a waiting room, or in the park, at least three of each five people reading a newspaper, had "Dneven trud" in their hands. But, there was something else, too. While peeping over pages unfolded in front of other eyes, I was catching mainly titles. Bold printed or banner titles in most newspapers announce mainly crimes and disasters, but in "Dneven trud", is seemed to me, they deal mainly in calamities. And, facing the question of what accounts for the success of this newspaper, I opted for the probability that "Trud" owes its circulation to the skillful coverage of aggression and calamity. But I did not stay with this answer. I decided to see beyond the conspicuous and reach a deeper perspective. It became imperative for me, as I wanted to fathom not only the reason for "Trud"'s success, but also why was I so different from the regular newspaper readers.

It is a simple though hardly arguable statement, that the readers of a newspaper, without knowing or even having seen each other, share the same ideal situation defined by a common concept for the world. More sophisticatedly, this could be called "a common framework for interpreting a shared world". The readers approach the newspaper with this framework of their minds, and expect to retain it. The journalists are aware of that, and not having anything better at hand, perpetuate the same concept with ease. The glaring apocalyptic banners, especially the deafening cannonade of them displayed on the last page of "Trud", give credit to the supposition, that calamity and aggression - even if not self-servingly - are part of the order of the day, both for the journalists and for their readers. I dared not indulge in the explanation that such ideas are the aftermath of hard conditions of life in our country in recent years, as such conditions are dealt with in both the press and the fine arts in welfare contemporary societies around the world, and are not considered a discovery of our age.

Having come to this conclusion, I decided to put it to trial, and, along with it, my presumption about the Bulgarian media. Presuming that both bear the birthmarks of detachment from the average media consumers - the former, because of my deliberate detachment, and the latter resulting from an analytical discourse, - I was tempted to assume a less detached stance and to opt for a more complicated approach - as a reader who both differs from the average readers and journalists, and is almost one of them. Because, I had to admit, that no matter how hard I try to differ from average newspaper readers, by not reading newspapers myself, I inevitably share the apocalyptic world, produced and inhabited by them. We all live in a mutual situation, created and perpetuated by us all, here and now, while at the same time repeating - in the multi-layered life of ours - a model of relations with others, with the immediate environment and with the distant world, that has hardly changed since man exists in the world.

Or, in other words, I set out to put to trial a rather superficial deduction and a point of view about the situation of Bulgarian media through the undeniable act of reading “Daily Trud” newspaper. I wanted to prove the viability of two cold assumptions through a warm one relating to a subject that is instrumental in understanding other subjects and the reader himself, for that matter. This warm assumption is in itself a human situation - of the person aware of his otherness who is considerate enough not to go too far in his detachment and to preserve a slight similarity with those he differs from. The reason being that not only is he not all that different, but wants “to play” with them. Because similarities are not just given, a sine-qua-non, they are also produced. And this must have been one of my motives to get hold of a pile of daily editions of “Trud” and start reading.

Consumer vs. expert reading. And yet, was I reading in the way so many did it every day? My reading through old newspapers wasn’t the modern version of a morning prayer, as Hegel qualified newspaper reading. What was my breach of the phenomenology of regular communication with newspapers? First of all, it was the attitude to each specific day. To start with, the regular newspaper reader looks for bearings, and the newspaper helps him emerge from the confinement of his private existence onto the stage of the more voluminous public one. The very essence of life is the rhythmical sequence of living alone or among relatives and friends, and the going onto the public walk, with the crowds. Publicity has always been associated with crowding - in traditional societies, as well as today. The only difference is that crowding in the contemporary sense happens indirectly, through a media. A newspaper reader, regardless of where he is, can concurrently be present in the potential public environment together with others like him. The process of going public in this sense is entirely personal, as is the choice of the newspaper, or what to read or skip from it.

In the daily going-public, the newspaper is the usual agent of the reader’s adaptation to the big open movable media of the public whole. Movable implies open to changes, therefore marked with the signs of change. The event is its most prominent sign. Events can only be recent happenings. They are important only as far as they are new, and are of significance in the sense of relating to the interests of many people, uniting them in some sort of “us”. It is this “us” that engineers the public mission of the newspaper, constructing the potential public walk. Therefore, the thrill at unfolding the new edition every day. As it is only “today” that exists, with all the separate things here and now which should not be even asked about, unless you ask children, experts and philosophers.

While my reading of “Dneven Trud” is not motivated by the need to mix with the current events of the day. And I doubt that what happened last night, really did. For I can tell a happening from an event, and immediately discern the ratio of sustainability in seemingly simple happenings. This is my bad, non-modern inclination that sharpens my sense of the context and the hidden common denominator. My going through the pile of “Trud” newspapers is expert and illuminated by far-from-conventional connections that I make, analyze and summarize into formulas. The orderly reading thrives on the paradox of accepting the world as a heap of self-evident entities in an environment for acting and feeling, that link the unlinkable, as far as that is necessary or possible.

The differentiation between the orderly and the sporadic reading of a newspaper is, of course, a mere typology. Typology is the main strength of the expert approach to things in the world. It is always inaccurate and even untrue in real terms, being merely a schematic simplified idea of the world that we employ while studying

it. This is the case in our studies, too. Even more so, since the regular reader can sometimes adopt the approach of the expert, just as I don't always read through the context. The point is that by its very nature, the induced expert reading has all the chances to arrive at what my interest is in the case under study - the assumed context of a shared world, a perceptual pattern that appeals to readers and is one of the high probability reasons for the high circulation of a newspaper.

The printed message and the context issue. One of the printed press issues is the undeniable fact that an item cannot be carried separately, without relating it to a certain context and thus constructing the whole it belongs to. It is impossible to neutralize the fundamental reason for the inherent connection between and among things - the fact that the human being, as well as everything in the human environment tend to not being identical to itself. This means that they are open to converging with some otherness, and mainly with the environment they belong to. Which preconditions the ever-lurking added meanings. The killing of an elderly woman entails a sequence of conclusions about life here, or in general, just as an ordinary advertisement for a car for sale wakes all kinds of ideas about possible ways of existence.

This is true for the most neutral announcement of facts. Even the most innocent promotion cannot be safe from an implied quality-of-life message. Or else, it won't achieve its pragmatic goal. In the reader's mind all kinds of external contexts are constructed, conceptual charts, to which the newspaper adds its guiding lines. Like every human activity, the discourse of the printed message is activated on the principle of relating to a definite media or environment. Two unobtrusive announcements placed in close proximity, can complement or contradict each other. A certain text can be interpreted in its title so that it converts it into an entirely different message. All our environment is teeming with various context media for all possible interpretations.

Which does not exclude the possibility to encourage or suppress them. Human speech and its special extension, the printed message, are rich in all kinds of promoting or suppressing interpretations. The journalist's message main concern is to sound objective. There is a rich experience to derive from: avoidance of overstatements or trivia, opposing the conflicting points of view in two features in close proximity, preference to short materials, announcements rather than analyses, pointing out that it is the author commenting, not the newspaper, unbiased style, suggesting true to life reporting and mirroring of everyday life, a neutral language without ornamentation, spoken language, even street-speech. Objectivity guarantees larger readership. The hidden agenda is that everybody will reach for such a newspaper.

And yet, to present a fact out of a context is an unattained goal. The shorter a message, the stronger it is affected by the various comprehension contexts the reader's mind produces. Therefore, the newspaper has its topical guiding map ready. On the outside it is merely a variety of sections but beneath them is a whole array of interpretations, of contextual and sub-contextual statements. The masterminders of each newspaper have a clearly defined position on matters pertaining to the public life. They can either openly defend it in a commentary, or consciously promote it as an understatement. Regardless of how much restraint they might be exercising in the name of objectivity as a guarantee for a wider readership, the journalists cannot resist the urge to show their attitude. Why, there's nothing wrong if it is implied in their reporting.

Two opposing frameworks of the attitude to the context that is inevitable for any publication. The overall image of a newspaper depends on whether its editorial staff hopes to be shaping messages to an autonomous reader expecting to be informed correctly and objectively, without necessarily being exposed to super-contextual knowledge about the world he is living in, or, on the contrary, - is addressing a non-autonomous person expecting a clear-cut unequivocal information. Each newspaper inevitably, if unintentionally, carries a picture of a world, but the framework of the world it helps shape is strongly influenced by the answer in principle to the above partitioning question.

There are two possible final realizations. In the first case the implied idea is of a world with borders that are constantly retreating from the consciousness. The world as a whole is not clearly defined, as it is considered arguable, and is relinquished to the choice of the autonomous readers that are expected to add the missing outlines of life, as a blessing, or a curse, one way or the other. Thus, the world is being shaped as neutral, unfilled in, ready to be reshaped, consisting of small worlds, contexts that have to be grasped regardless of the horizon of a definite super-context. In their turn, the people in this world consider themselves free to relinquish their autonomy to the context of their choice, to identify themselves with various “we” without losing their own “I”. In fact, the dialectics between “I” and “we” is a constant concern of readers and journalists within a concept of a world defined by thoughts, feelings and actions. In case the editorial staff of a newspaper makes the second choice, the picture unfolds of a formally big and open world, with plenty of things and events - a merely quantitative plurality. And the labyrinth of various places in this world will only be a case of oppressive uniformity of one and the same super-context. No specific place, environment or group of people will evade the monstrosity of the super-context abstractly poor in quantities and with the main purpose to ensure unity, consistency and shelter of things and events threatened by dissipation. Thus, by all means clearly defined, ensured as uniform for the uniformed individuals averse to diversities, the world will gradually shrink for lack of interest in feared diversities and details and the constant reminder of the unifying basis.

As many as they are, people won't be conceiving themselves as bearers of varying points of view. The journalist, too, based on this concept of the world, won't believe there might be a reader to interpret things more effectively than himself, but will instead, be convinced that the readers - like helpless children - will be expecting his message to offer them the defence of clear-cut super-knowledge against the dangerous, well closed common world. That is why the main point in this type of message is the announcement of the super-context - this thin membrane holding together the multitude of things and the scattered people. Therefore, the task is not to inform, but to keep people together, informing them about the common things. This explains the traditional approach to explaining such messages - through relating everything to the common and basic, and not to intermediary levels. People, also, fall into naturally existing large categories - men and women, good and bad. But they have always been such, therefore the human development could be considered non-consequential.

The second concept for the world is perhaps at the basis of the world vision of “Dneven trud”. Here naturally the question arises: who is “Trud” addressed to. Aren't those the average people, and isn't the newspaper's success due to its contribution to forming the average person whose vision of the world enjoys the respect and the support of those who make the newspaper for them.

From a world point of view, the newspaper serves rather the category of disqualified and not interconnected individuals, immersed into the greyness of their petty private lives, separated from human environments and equalized before the strong state with their non-participation in its business. Through the eyes of the newspaper, they are just a mass, too far from being a class. Even if they are on their way to becoming so, the newspaper just as soon doesn't view them as a consistent human environment. The latter usually consists of horizontal and vertical diversity. But the ideology of "Dneven trud" doesn't allow for differences between the individual "I"-s and works for maintaining their shared freedom in the framework of their plurality.

The main values supported by this world vision. Which are the attitudes and values that hold this vision together? As is the case in a quotidian environment, the world is something fixed and solid. It is referred to with strong words, but is never questioned. The world is hard to change for the better, and is not susceptible to worsening, either. This is Hesiod's thought from "Deeds and Days" where he states that work is a way to defer deterioration. In the world of amorphousness safeguarded by "Trud" - contrary to the meaning of the title: "work" - good things only *occur* . Coming from the outside, it is not a result of anybody's efforts, except in some professions that are, so to say, a gift. In as much as it exists, all that is good is associated with acquisition and pleasure, while bad means to be deprived of something.

The individual is perceived as a loser and is helpless - both in isolation and in the multiplied into a "we"-mass. The outside world threatens the people-mass, because it doesn't understand it. And yet, the "we" strives towards the otherwise dangerous outside world, as the inner world has no perspective at all. The lack of chances for a positive change does not prevent the individual from constantly thinking of a change in a negative aspect. Life is grasped quantitatively - as a succession of changes to the worse - disasters, sickness, death, human aggression in private life, and a constant assault of the state against the individual, a succession of negative events, affecting many people.

The calamity in the context of the traditional life and in the world vision of "Dneven Trud". Calamities are a standard way to maintain collectivity, an old effective tool for their symbolic construction. A typical manifestation is the ritual sacrifice on festive occasions, as well as the celebration of mythical blood-shedding involving high-ranking people. The main point of traditional festivities and carnivals is to achieve some verticalization of the "we"-concept that the daily routine has horizontalized. Yet, when employed for media purposes, the calamity is just a sign that is generally not upgraded to myths and long stories. The task is not to symbolically unite people in a consistent group, but just to shepherd together the stray and weak "I"s. Theft or homicide, exposed in the press, are interesting only as far as they register the inherent weakness of the human being. They are not used for the purposes of boosting or dignifying humans, nor to symbolize their ideal growth in volume or strength, instead, they merely register the general incapacity to be different.

The images of people and of journalists in this vision of the world. On this platform, the ideal person, constructed by "Dneven trud", takes shape. He is by all means young, and happy that he is not aging, but even if he is, he is bound to behave in an infantile way. If he is deprived of something, he gets into a fit of rage, like a baby. He clings to the mother-state and is often cross with her for taking away or not

giving him something. His ideal speech is the school lingo. He does not believe in the power of language. He uses it only to emphasize real things, under the presumption that things in the world are identical to themselves. In fact, it is not the things and the world that are important, but the judgment of them. Facts and things only exist to confirm the latter.

The embodiment of this ideal person is the journalist, with his unique mission of an intermediary between the amorphous mass of readers and the world entirety. Just as the doctor facing primarily sickness starts to imagine everybody sick, the journalist, too, accepts life from its dark side as a chain of negative events. He is mainly news-hunting. The problem is that the human multitude is only interested in news as far as it bears witness to what's generic and unifying. Hence the paradoxical task to ensure a constant supply of the same stuff, time and again. In this sense, the journalist is not just a victim. Like his readers, he presumes he knows what's substantial and his only assignment is to find proof of it. Therefore, he pursues his goal with no hesitation, shunning long sentences and distracting phrases as non-productive.

While publicity is the main interest of a journalist, it is not the mutual interest in achieving a high and lofty goal, rather the exposure of private lives to the public eye. The only positive view on private existence is the harmless relishing of pastime some place here, or, even better, elsewhere. Vertical differences in this line are unthinkable. Everything high-up or official breeds suspicion. Hence, the basically negative attitude to those of higher rank - politicians, intellectuals and well-off people. They are portrayed either as impostors or as potential victims.

The attitude to the Truth under this world vision. If we are exploring the attitude to the Truth within this vision of the world, we'll soon find out that it is not based on any cross-checking and research within fleeting contexts, nor is there any critical assessment of various allegations, rather a hasty construction of one or another probability. For it counts what people think has happened, not the real event. Printed media, more than any other, employ the ancient method of rhetoric to substitute what's "true" with what's "probable". Just as old public speeches were, contemporary Bulgarian press is a realm for the incomplete rhetoric assumption, the so-called "enthimema".

The pathologic enthimema is preferred, as it permits to reproach somebody for some fault that deserves reproach and has most probably been committed, although it is by far not certain whether it has really been committed or not. For example, even before it is clear what exactly the parliamentarians have decided about using the internal organs of deceased patients, the theme of the unscrupulousness of those in power is being exploited, or even before the exact bearer of the blame for the restrictive list of disabilities preventing students from applying for universities, is singled out, the theme for a state in chaos is launched. Aristotle analyses similar examples in his "Rhetorics".

The black and the yellow column - products of a specific type of attitude to the crowd, that can be called "practicing of indirect central-square publicity". There are considerable similarities with the antique situation, but the difference is significant. Ancient times didn't know the phenomenon of the yellow and the black chronicle. They are typical for the present day underdeveloped public environment which - for lack of experience in the indirect public activity - indulges in a behaviour that can be defined as "indirect central-square publicity". In Ancient times only direct public expression in central squares was practiced, that did not produce messages to people

dispersed and only coming together under certain conditions, while otherwise keeping their separate privacy, as is the case with reading newspapers.

Being real, the gathering of people in Antiquity required elating and intensive verbal discourses that did not cling to the low-grade quotidian exchanges. Faced with the situation of having to engage the attention of a human multitude present, the ancient speakers couldn't but resort to grandiloquence to decorate the usual paralogical enthimemes of rethoric, and to immure them into impinging long and complicated statements. In a similar way, in the Theater of Dionysius in ancient Athens, topmost among public places for delivering of speeches, the potentially "yellow" plots of the new ancient comedy were "bleached" with poetry and co-relative reasoning. Before such plots were presented to the reveling audience around, they had to be separated from the limited and commonplace viewpoint of the individual human being isolated in the diurnal space.

Unlike this, paralogical enthimemes in the present day Bulgarian printed press acquire a "black" or "yellow" colouring, because they address human individuals expecting to be informed in a private way on what is not private, too. The indirect clustering without upgrading to consistent human environment is the pragmatic reason for developing a taste for acutely event-oriented acceptance of things, typical for the black-and-yellow view of the world. Such a view only catches large size events, paradigmatically conspicuous. They are variations mainly of the abrupt change for no particular reason, and are demonstrated in an unwarranted aggression caused by rivalries in the possession or unexpected acquisition of a certain good out of the ordinary.

In its extreme, the black-and-yellow view reject long narratives, since they lack any vertical orientation. While developing discourses reminiscent of romantic plots, they do not lapse into the characteristically romantic vertical value grading, and do not develop the transcendental vision for the great Good in the world. The hastily drawn conclusions, and the imposed suggestions about the common world of the private "I" produces sketches for black novels and fairy tales, without ever achieving fully developed novels or fairy tales.

An attempt to find a projection of such a vision of the world in the content of "Dneven Trud". My reading effort gave birth to the monochrome conviction that the world of "Dneven trud" is bleak, monotonous and oppressive, like a small dilapidated house, and that its editors and contributors gloat at the general decay and the failure of all that is lofty and positive. But this black fury does not sweep through everything in the newspaper. Nor is it the same in all publications of the network that is the newspaper "Trud". "Dneven trud" (the daily) is as black as it is, because it has to assess things that are high up and official. Its reaction is characteristic for somebody that is looking upon the public from the point of view of the extreme privacy. Black is the colour of the panic before things that are public and conceived as ghastly. But it only goes for the framework of the newspaper, at the beginning and at the end that mark its perimeter in the context of the world. While on the inside pages, and especially when truly private things are concerned, the tone brightens up. Therefore, "Noshten trud" (the "nightly") that would be expected to be "blacker" than "Dneven trud" is in fact brightly yellow.

Examples of a yellow vision of the world. This is the style of the positive things in "Dneven trud", for example, the sweetly-yellow interviews of Valentina Petkova in the section "Two People on the Swing" dedicated to love and financial success in the family cradle - an almost unreal world with pitches of fairy tale

elements. The exceptional cases presented are in contrast with the gray daily reality and in some way contradict what the black framework of the newspaper suggests. All the interviewees have gone through difficulties that are happily overcome. Like the married couple Javora Stoilova and Ken Nagaj who lived seven years in a small concrete apartment because of her mother disapproving of their love. Upon her demise they occupy the wonderful apartment in one of the best parts of the city, and toast with champagne in crystal glasses among the huge paintings of the famous father-artist.

A similar life story is the one of Nikolai Bozhinov and his wife Daniela. Having spent nine years of their youth in a narrow apartment during the last years of communism, they now profit from the restitution of a big three storeyed house. The picture shows them in front of a fireplace amidst rich furnishing that becomes an ideal if only because it is unattainable. This is the secret of the 'yellow discourse' - to expose something real that is unattainable for people from the mass. Another approach is involved, too. What seems attainable is a result of efforts and depends on real conditions, but is still an exception - good things happen to chosen people. The fact that the Bozhinov family has invested some effort, has worked hard and has been blessed with relatives good enough to give up their shares in the inherited property, is still not the winning story. For it is about inheriting and not about earning something with hard work. The work involved is not physical, rather brainwork. The Bozhinov family owes its success to the fact that the husband is a businessman, and the wife is a lawyer - the two ideal professions in which money is made with the brain. Not that there aren't representatives of this profession who also steal, but the probability of decent achievement is greater. If the Bozhinovs were doctors or teachers, the suspicion for some wrongdoing would be greater. Thus, their success seems to have somehow happened to them, as if they are not responsible for it.

Such is the case with the other couple. The aim of the "yellow" feature reporter has been to make the case as different from the gray existence of the average newspaper readers as possible. Ken Nagaj is a businessman, but he is primarily Japanese. His otherness is emphasized by the fact that Javora Stoilova feels like a barbarian in the refined native environment of her husband. The reporter, Valentina Petkova, asks him: "Ken, you have grown up in a fairy tale world. What did you find in Javora?" Ken was attracted by real things, but the story reveals that Javora lives outside the real world - she looks like a porcelain statuette, she is a descendent of the poet Javorov, and her father is a renown artist. She doesn't care about material things, and ignores the Volkswagen given as a present, but is happy with a bunch of flowers. The material aspects of life are not sought after, but they are necessarily present. That's how it is in Meander's comedies.

As far as the successful Bozhinov family is concerned, the true-to-life but improbable otherness is achieved with additional information. The talented lawyer wife is also coaching her own aerobics course. But the highpoint of the otherness is the fact that King Simeon has entrusted her with his real estate properties. While the success of the family is their private affair, their happiness is enhanced by the implication that only those closest to the state officials can succeed: the wife working for one of the most reliable state symbols, and the husband - connected to the government. The diplomatic club owned by Mr. Bozhinov, welcomes the powerful of the day. Important decisions for the state are taken there. The existence of so many elements of otherness makes the interviewer ask Mrs. Bozhinova: "Daniela, don't you feel like poor Cinderella waking up as a princess?" regardless of the negative answer, the question refers to the wondrous metamorphosis in the popular fairy tale, and the

journalist knows very well that readers will avidly gulp her story, just because they can't believe that what happened to the Bozhinovs can ever happen to them.

Is there anything good that could happen within the gray reality? Basically, not. "Dneven trud" is not dealing with small-scale achievements, like that of a family making its living on a tiny food store of which there are many in this country. A report of the kind would contradict the black-and-yellow vision of the world, and would not engage the reader's attention, as he expects a confirmation that all changes in life are merely external and do not depend on him. Just as positive "yellow" changes are bound to be inaccessible for the average human being, so as to appeal to him.

If anything good happens, it should be by one foot out of the grey everyday life. Human achievement is claimed possible in higher public walks of life, like art and sports, although there, too, not the work and effort applied is emphasized, rather that the success has *happened*. In the general bleakness nothing but confirmation is being sought of the abstract division of people into good and bad. The newspaper is obsessed with reporting on the deeds of a great number of bad people falling into a very small number of categories - politicians, swindlers and perverts. As an exception, a positive personality would be mentioned, but only in the moral context of somebody that is separating the spiritual values from the material ones.

As is the case in the feature "Margarita" by Zdravka Evtimova (March 29, 1999) with the insinuating subtitle "Morality does not begin tomorrow". It is about a nurse, hard working and good natured. To buy a school graduation ball dress for her daughter she has to sell the young goats that the family badly needs for sustenance. She also knows about the financial constraints of her neighbour, another nurse who buys a goat from her. Margarita refuses to take her money. It is a touching scene, with the trembling hand putting the money left on the table, back into the neighbour's pocket. A simple situation with a clear context. The whiteness of the story and the background of the black statement produce the bleak implication that goodness is a rare occurrence that can only be harboured in people's hearts. The suspicious in this moral good is that it is inevitably linked to taking and giving.

The world of "Little ads". The heart of "Dneven trud" are several pages of "Little ads". At first glance, there is no reason for their being subjected to my analysis, since they are something objective and out of context. The issue is that from a certain point of view the ads are the newspaper itself and all the rest is merely their frame. Therefore, it is important, what their world reveals.

This is the world of merchants and businesspeople who need secretaries, sell computers, teach/learn foreign languages. They go about modern day-cares for children, educational centres, luxury dogs. Money loans, real estate properties, gold are being offered. Lots of simple utilities are also advertised. This motley world of commodities should distract and detach from the overall complicated human existence. It is intended to give freedom for satisfying all kinds of needs in a life on the surface, vain and even deceptive, in which it seems quite simple to change one's identity. This is a modern world, if modern means variety and the chance to express oneself with a plethora of things and stuff. An ill-meaning eye will, of course, discover that this section of "Dneven trud" is not enough diversified. But then, the newspaper publishes what is being paid for and send to it

The paradox is that the other parts serving as a frame to the heart of ads, do not match it at all. An interesting schizoid image takes shape: at one side there is a small bright picture of the advertisements, and on the other - the huge framework of the first and third parts of the newspaper, looking mistrustfully at the multiple

viewpoint to the world in the message of the adds picture, and trying to stifle it with malevolent incantations. That frame presents the world as gray and dull, with few objects, and material things claimed to be but unworthy vanity. This schizoid reality seems to be a principle of the newspaper for the absurd reason that in the imposed black picture of the world, one of the basic pronouncements of "Trud" goes against its own name - labour is a strenuous effort with no effect, and good things only happen, rather than being achieved. None of the publications bearing the name "Labour" (Bulg: "Trud") promotes work.

The mood of the title and the black picture of the world. Half the job in depicting the world in black is performed by the titles in the first and the third part of the newspaper. We can even talk about the mood of the titles in Bulgarian newspapers. As is well known, it was implanted in our media by the old "24 chasa" ("24 Hours") newspaper with a monotonous repetitiveness that its progenitor is hardly to blame for. It is not in my power to assess the contribution of "Trud" newspapers to it, but I can point out the common features.

The content of the title is supposed to send a message of an event - a disaster or an aggression. Formally, it is achieved by inversion: first comes the direct or indirect object that has suffered something. More often first comes the predicate. Thus, the very fact of the happening is emphasized, rather than its possible reason. The implication is that things do not depend on us. Therefore, syntactically the passive voice is preferred with an implied collective subject in the third person. "Former Special Squad Guy Shot At", "Privatization Bid for the Telecommunication Company Holed Up", or "Free Movement for NATO Forces in Serbia Is Being Fixed at Rambouillet".

The task is transparent - to construct a mystic "They" that cannot be held responsible. A collective act entails anonymity and irresponsibility. The human will behind the occurrence is not important, nor is it expected that the readers will embark on activities to ward off similar events in the future. The hidden ideology of this mood is enhanced by the special clause "It is said that...", meaning that the reporter was not present - Bulgarians are not admitted to Rambouillet. While "being fixed" implies something downplayed, suspicious, and not very sound at all.

To play things down is the main concern of this mood. Quite often it is achieved by an infantile amused detachment from what is happening. Just as children glee at the sight of their teacher slipping and falling. This is how titles in that mood on the last page of "Dneven Trud" sound: "Burglar Sweeps an Apartment Down to Bare Walls", "Drunkard Slaughters Neighbour with an Ax", "Hunter Shoots Himself in the Stomach". The merry-go-round tone does not motivate the reader for understanding or sympathy. Thugs, scoundrels, drunkards and rapists, all wrongdoers are separated from the readers. And when they face us, it is not as creatures belonging to the world of normal people, but as others implanted in our world. This tone becomes compulsory, if something positive has to be reported about. Humanitarian aid to refugees in Macedonia, for example, is reported about under titles like: "Members of Parliament Take 'Sanitary Towels to Refugees'" or "Round-up Cigarettes for Kosovo Refugees". The positive element is inevitably downplayed by the basic presumption that help is only extended as an exception.

The infantile merrymaking malediction can only be limited to the title, or can spread out over the whole feature. Thus, in "Position" on the front page of the newspaper, Nikola Kizevski explains politics to the average readers with proverbial phases like "have audience - drink milk, no audience - cup spilt". The more

slanderous, the closer to reality. The main point is to pull down what is high up. Regardless whether politicians or artists are affected. Merrymakingly downgrading is the title "Gay Lorca Fawned Upon Dali" with the curt subtitled political commentary "If You Don't Shoot, You'll Be Shot At", as is the bleak announcement "British Doctors Cut Out a Healthy Breast", motivated by the typical assumption in Bulgarian human environment that "The West is no better than us."

The contextual implication of a page. I was most impressed by the section "Planet" in the April 25, 1999 issue. The impelling bold title "Three People Killed in a Turkish Bath" followed by a more specifying "A Hot Water Boiler Blew up at our South-Eastern Neighbour's" opened a up-beat coverage of an event inhabited by corpses, cops and onlookers. The reader is also being lectured on - in a small frame we are informed that although Turks do have bathrooms in their private apartments, they still visit the public baths where they are being massaged and scrubbed. It is the exotic difference, rather than the similarities that the message relies on to ensure the sense of otherness. The effect that is sought is multilayered. Along with the merrymaking, the feature has a contextual purpose - to downgrade the material carried over from page 1 and commemorating NATO's 50 years. The implication is as clear as anything - the accident in the Turkish town of Isparta is more important, since it is an opportunity to observe real life occurrences. While the NATO reunion in the USA is vain and empty. The article in the immediate proximity entitled "Petar Stoyanov Asks for our Debts to be Absolved" is also overshadowed by a framed report on the measures and the price of the table that high-ranking officials were sitting around during the NATO meeting. If we include into the picture the material "Yeltsin Simulates Ill Health" in the upper part of the page, the implied message is clear - all politicians are scum, they waste our money, look after your daily chores and don't care about anything else. Yet be on the alert: life is hazardous, death is just round the corner. Therefore, have as much fun as you can - your page-maker.

Most of the short reports on disasters and accidents in "Dneven Trud" follow this tone excluding the questioning of reasons and reliance on positive values. Therefore, the task of the reports on calamities is not so much to scare off the reader, as to confirm what the world is like. Paradoxical as it may seem, this task is rather more intellectual.

The war in Yugoslavia as a double-black event. In this approach to the world and the people, covering the war in Yugoslavia must have been a hard nut to crack for the newspaper. The event is not part of the private domain, nor is it incidental, so as to be presented in the usual pounding way, besides, it takes place the next door and can easily affect the individual reader, as well as the big "us", Bulgarians. In a word, this is a long term event, that cannot be presented out of context - reasons and complex commentaries, usually avoided by the newspaper. This time it couldn't but dwell longer on the subject and publish a diversity of materials presenting it from all aspects. At first glance, those are the interviews, reports and commentaries. But a closer look reveals that short adapted materials is from foreign publications, cleansed from any explanatory stuff. Emphasis is placed on smaller concrete disasters within the framework of the big calamity, like airplanes shot down, bombs fallen, destruction and massacres. The less grounded they are, the more impressive.

The picture of the war waged by NATO against Serbia, as presented by "Dneven trud", is subjected to a very simple explanation framework - the war in itself is evil. Evil are the internal wars that Milosevich ignited in what was left from former Yugoslavia, and evil is what the Serbs did to the Albanians in Kosovo, but then they were acting on their own territory. Serbs that are closer to us in blood than the

Albanians, were acting in response to a threat. For it is a threat to a nation, if within its territory a national minority is proliferating so fast. A similar aggression threatens us Bulgarians, too. Yet, what NATO does is even worse. The Alliance attacks, massacres innocent people, does not respect the world order, threatens Bulgaria, too, wants our air space to fire against our neighbours, NATO bombs are landing near Sofia.

The focus of this picture is shaped by the choice of commentators who openly defend this position, even with false statements like the one by Roumen Dimitrov that “all of Europe sides with the Serbs” (March 29, 1999). More effective is the hidden message achieved with choosing and placing the reported facts within a manipulative context. The materials about NATO damages inflicted upon Serbia exceed in number those about the Serbian atrocities in Kosovo. At best, a balance is attempted at in the following way: “At least 1000 are killed and 5000 are injured from the beginning of the war, Belgrade says. Meanwhile 4000 Kossovo Albanians are massacred, Brussels reports.” (April 30 1999)

In a word, what NATO does is war. While Milosevich is not an aggressor, but a victim. Calling him “Slobo”, the journalists present him as a naughty fellow country-man whom we are bound to support. In this line, we are somehow pushed to approve of the implied message in the material ‘Milosevich augurs the end of NATO’. For although we are not exactly opposing our country’s joining NATO, we are still suspicious of it because of old relations and connections that seem to be more important than what happens here and now. The five centuries of Turkish yoke precludes all trust for present-day NATO Turkey. This is the message of the title “Turkey Is Expected to Protect Us against Serbian Attacks” (April 25 1999).

Crucial for creating this picture is the avoidance of commentaries on the possible reasons that have brought about NATO air attacks, and more specifically, the total neglect of human rights violation problem. Even after the war was over, “Dneven Trud” seems to be reluctant to analyze its aftermath. As if the aftermath and the reasons don’t pertain to the war. Thinking of them would stimulate some activity and might even bring about dealing with this war, and maybe with the war in general. Because “Dneven Trud” is interested in the war inasmuch as it mirrors the global evil. It is better that NATO should cut a bad image, so that there won’t be another chance for the irresolute situation in Vietnam to happen on the Balkans.

Following the line of my analysis, the picture of the war according to “Dneven Trud” might seem rather war-loving. Not that journalists would like to protract that very war, but because they think of the war as something unavoidable, with no complicating stages or categories. Therefore, they struggle not so much against the war waged by NATO, but in defense of the presumption that war as such is something unconditional, identical only to itself. Their concern is not civil, but intellectual.

Conclusions on the imperfections of my perusals, and some pieces of advice to the “Trud” newspapers. This effort of mine is not exclusive, but just a possible position allowing for many others. Compiled of many texts, the newspaper itself addresses different types of comprehension. Yet the issue is not exhausted with the right of existence of many ways of reading. The latter should fall into certain relations, so that they could complete and correct each other. But it is only possible, if the individual readings are able to understand their inherent problematics and inconsistencies.

My own reading approach has the great problem that its concern for the eventual improvement of the Bulgarian press is inseparable from the concern of

constructing a higher “I” in myself with the task to upgrade my everyday “myself” in view of the changes in the world around us. The problem is that the higher “I” shaping in myself rather hides than overcomes the helplessness of my little “self” facing the newspaper I have chosen as an object of my awareness that it develops this helplessness, hiding it with the above suggested typological chart simplifying the comprehension.

In this respect I seem to resemble those readers of “Trud” that are avid for hyper-context. For they, too, like me, are more interested in a framework for the world-knowledge, rather than in the world itself. There are some differences, though, of course. The chart of the average readers tends to short single-tone statements and is indiscernible mixed with the familiar world, while my chart is more complicated and is deliberately differentiated from the world itself. The problem is that I am inconsistent in maintaining this differentiation and that I often take the chart for the world, as do the ones I want to be more perfect from. My only advantage seems to be the awareness that all charts and contexts are primarily instruments for knowing, generally non-coinciding with what we know.

In the process of my reading, the concrete messages of “Dneven Trud” seemed to me suppressed by the resounding statements of the unified context of the world. Besides, it seemed to me that those statements are what the average readers are primarily expecting. But is it really so? What makes me insist upon it? It is in fact a presumption with ideological character ensuring my position in power, not only externally, but within myself - of the higher “I” of the chosen typological chart toward the lower diurnal person in myself. But to be fair, I have to admit that the little “I” in myself, just as the devoted reader of “Trud” is drawn by reports on calamities on a deeply existential basis and not merely for concretely social reasons. It is also fair to suppose, that for the average readers of the newspaper, both the purported general message of the newspaper and its catastrophic ingredient are but a frame normally neglected. While the real message is contained in the various reports on so many separate things.

In all fairness I should also suppose that the defacing street language employed by “Trud” can be something conditional, and not necessarily a pronouncement on the world, but just an outside cast harbouring care and consideration. I should not be too certain that the monotonous unification of the printed message as it sticks out into my eyes, does not send to me un-familiar signals for details, just as those with highly developed senses catch the considerable differences between one and another interpretation of the same aria in an opera. Years ago I would wonder at a friend of mine who used to buy all the newspapers in the morning and get deeply immersed in the inexplicable process of carefully reading all reports for one and the same occurrence. The latter were limited in number, but my friend seemed to feel the differences and details remaining hidden to my ear. No wonder he now occupies a high-ranking position in the journalism hierarchy. With all those second thoughts shaped by my low-level relationship with “Dneven Trud” I do not question the here presented high understanding for the situation of the newspaper, just discovering it in a relation to other types of understanding in me and around me. We are internally stratified. Just as stratified and uneven a newspaper is, as well as any other form of human speech.

Needless to say that the above-developed vision of the world is not all the newspaper has to say. At the most, is only a co-efficient preceding the complicated signal broadcast by the newspaper. Which doesn’t mean that it is beyond the risk of the paradox when the multiplicity of facts and events, so vital for the existence of all

press, be swallowed by the frenzy of one or another super-contextual vision of the world. The tendency to super-contexts is imposed indeed to a certain degree by the socially amorphous and insufficiently diversified Bulgarian human environment. But the tendency is also aggravated by the reluctance of the newspaper staff to relate to it in a more complicated way.

Just like the newspaper, this media is not merely something defined and presented, but a choice among many options. The social media is shaped by those who participate in it. In a similar way, it depends on those who write for "Trud", to what degree the general message of the newspaper will take away the ideological initiative of the readers, and will construct a monotonous central-square situation, or will provoke the potential non-amorphousness of the human environment, to rise up as a common effort with the readers from whom the journalists can expect rewarding surprises. I am sure, that very soon the second choice will win over the first.