

## **Press Critics Are the Fifth Estate: Media Watchdogs in America (Democracy and the News)**

Arthur S. Hayes



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Robust, uninhibited, provocative, and even scurrilous criticism of corporate media by the Fifth Estate?composed of private citizens and watchdog and partisan groups of all stripes?is vital to the functioning of the American democratic process. Hayes reviews the historical development of press criticism since the 1880s in each of ten categories: muckrakers, journalism reviews, columnists and authors, television press critics, press councils, advocacy groups, scholars, ombudsmen, bloggers, and satirists. The author provides nine case studies of recent press criticism campaigns that have, though widely vilified as uncivil or marginalized as kooky, contributed significantly to checking the pretensions of corporate media to an unwholesome monopoly on journalistic truth.

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