Classical political theory accorded representation to the citizen through the state. The modern, economic, addendum was that the state promised a minimal standard of living. The postmodern, cultural, guarantee is access to the technologies of communication. In essence, then, the last two hundred years have produced three zones of citizenship, with partially overlapping but nevertheless distinct historicities. These zones of citizenship are the political, covering the right to reside and vote; the economic (the right to work and prosper); and the cultural (the right to know and speak). The first category concerns political rights; the second, material interests; and the third, cultural representation.

This chapter summarizes the impact of these three principal forms of citizenship on journalism, with particular reference to the contemporary United States. At first glance, one might assume that the three terms simply refer to three distinct news beats, respectively the congress or parliament (politics), the stock exchange or board room (economics), and the theatre or cinema (culture). There is a germ of truth in this distinction, but the three categories in fact inflect and overdetermine one another as their relative importance shifts over time. They help to account for the deplorable condition of US journalism today, along with the pressures imposed by new kinds of shareholder and new kinds of technology.

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There are great and positive opportunities for journalism and for reinforcing citizenship. And “we” can’t wait for “them” to come to us. Smart news organisations are engaging audiences and opening themselves up to the conversation our audiences clearly want. Excellent article, Ms Boaden. I guess it does beg the question of how to avoid ‘citizen journalism’ turning into a ‘Guido Fawkes’ of the airwaves. I have a concern that in, rightly, defending editorial decisions against ‘bullying’, while at the same time trying to tell us that the input of ‘citizen journalists’ is vital, that you may get the balance wrong.