

# THE PARADIGM OF ANTIGONE AND GACEL SAYAH:

An approach to historical and  
contemporary Ethical/moral  
dilemmas of Journalism

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**ABSTRACT** This work intends to locate and to explore the complexities of some classical moral dilemmas in human history considering two paradigms as references: Antigone's, created by Sophocles; and Gacel Sayah's, created by Vázquez-Figueroa. The work situates both historical and contemporary dilemmas of journalism and points out examples furnished by professionals in activity and academic experts. At the same time, it relates immediate conflicts to particularities of journalistic activity – from the historical perspective of consolidation of values to the present scenario of professional journalism in both Cyberspace and the Information Society (in which ethics, techniques and aesthetics try to structure the perspective of moral convergence in order to support the activity and its social credibility and legitimacy).

**Key-words:** Ethics; ethical paradigms; journalism; profession.

## INTRODUCTION

The inner pain of living with guilt, dealing with dishonor and sorrow, and having a moral obligation to others – even if this obligation is mainly social and cultural – has inspired many thinkers such as philosophers and writers. The pain is better understood when we consider a dense analysis of ethics. An analysis that includes concepts such as singularity and universality – both of them notions that can be developed or expressed through plays, novels and short stories situating the behavior of cultures in certain places and times.

Again, obeying a cultural rule that was morally determined can be an unavoidable task – even if it may cost you your life and you are fully aware of that. It happens because rules are determined by a “divine” world – even when it is not an actual world of gods – and they are the result of a moral pact with life itself; a life that is unbearable when it is not imbued with certain principles.

Perhaps with that in mind, Bárbara Freitag gave the book she wrote

about historical and moral dilemmas the name of *Antigone's Itinerary* (1992) referring to the Greek tragedy by Sophocles (1995) written in the 5th century B.C.

In *Oedipus at Colonus*, written by Sophocles (1993), Polynices says to Antigone: "I beg you, my dear sister, if these curses come true and you have returned to Thebes by then, please do not let my corpse be dishonoured but please, do bury it in a tomb with all due rites."<sup>1</sup>

That topic also appears in another of Sophocles' works that explores the moral pact made by Antigone (which is also the name of the play). Antigone ignores the orders of Creon – who said that those who fought him or fought Thebas deserved no descent burial – and decides to honor her word and to bury Polynices. She is punished with death. Antigone is buried alive with some food that would last for only a few days. However, she chooses suicide. She hangs herself with the lace of her robes.

Many different approaches to Antigone's tragedy can be made, but it is undeniable that Antigone's commitment to Polynices is one of the main aspects of the play. The conflict between Antigone and Creon can be compared to a conflict between individual and society.

According to Bárbara Freitag (1992: 19),

If the dilemma of morality was sophisticated and fully expressed by Greek tragedies, Sophocles' *Antigone* is undoubtedly one of its best examples. In this particular play, the moral conflict plays a role itself, incarnating many characters such as Antigone and Creon – each of them representing perfect opposites.<sup>2</sup>

According to Freitag, Antigone appeals to the rules of *oikos* (the gods), and acts according to her conscience and against the *polis* (the men).

According to her, the audience understands that:

[...] there is a hierarchy between the law of men and the law of gods. Those who cannot see the distance between them will do only evil things. Antigone ignores the law of men because of her lack of knowledge. She is punished with death. Although she knew the consequences of her transgression, she continued faithful to her beliefs. Nevertheless, she was not aware that her action would bring death upon Eurydice and Haemon – both innocent people – and violate the law of gods.

Indeed, the consequences of Antigone's moral action affect other characters. For example, Haemon, Antigone's fiancé and Creon's son, commits suicide. Eurydice, Creon's wife, cannot stand the loss of her son and kills herself. Creon regrets his actions, but it is too late. He tries

to rescue Antigone from her grave, but she too took her own life. Fate cannot be changed – the moira is settled.

### **Moral and Culture**

Moral and cultural commitments often go together. The particular judgment of a single phenomenon often causes singular actions that are certain to lead to public condemnation followed by physical and moral punishment. The Qur'an and the Bible may as well be interpreted according to a particular view of the world determined by culture that can lead to intolerant and evil acts. These particular systems of rules consider themselves the guardians of a universal principle. The principle can only exist if we consider that all particular judgments can agree on something. For example, it is only possible to talk about universal principles of judgment if all the moral conceptions could point in the same direction as if linked by some kind of universal thought. Perhaps that is the only basis for the idea of a universal principle and of a future that differs from the present and the past.

Somehow, men always project the future while holding on to meanings that were created by no one but themselves. There is no crystallized time, or endless time; but there are times not redefined, and times that move as if driven by a pair of opposites – it does not matter whether they are based on cultural, social or individual levels. In this connection, Antigone's transgression has two meanings: the first one refers to the significance of socially-determined moral principles and to disobedience as a lawful human right; the second one refers to the contestation of legal determinations that forces the law to be reviewed (since the code is no longer capable of predicting all possible behaviors). The current acts determine the future. They can lead to a world of moral dilemmas that generate the need for ethical and practical decisions.

Bárbara Freitag had that in mind when she said that Antigone, being mortal, could be wrong, and that Creon, who acted based on human law, could also be wrong. She also says that the gods wanted Creon to improve his actions, and that is why they let him survive. It is true that mythology must be understood as the result of observation. But it is also true that it can become an important paradigm that exemplifies the symbolic world – one that influences the truth and returns as a symbol, presuming the existence of a *second human nature* that is based on culture, values, ethics and professional ethics.

Returning to Freitag (1992: 22-23): "after acting like an immoral tyrant, Creon is touched by error and sorrow. He becomes an ethical

leader capable of considering both his own interests and the Thebans' interests".

This is how Sophocles impels the audience to think about the world and act differently. The moral conflict is also a concern of the audience and it turns the judgment into a much more complex and painful thing. Sophocles wants the future to be far from the past and the present. Moral questions are dilemmas linked to the past, but they can be disconnected from it. For this to happen, the present must be reviewed in order to lead to a future that is not defined, but that is projected by human minds.

Antigone's drama keeps echoing even now. Today, there are many events that could be compared to Antigone's tragedy – the cultural scenario in which it takes place does not matter. Daily journalism, that can efficiently and quickly mediate the instant, exposes the truth of the conflicts. It may seem hard to understand some individual actions, but the motives of history and cultures are only seen from the viewpoint of the individual man. Moral dilemmas are also expressed by professional activity. Perhaps that is why the idea of "profession" relates to the religious expression "to profess".

### ***Tuareg, codes of honor, moral conflicts and tragedy***

Moral conflict is also the subject of contemporary novels such as *Tuareg* (1987), written by Alberto Vázquez-Figueroa.

Gacel Sayah was a *Tuareg* that lived with his family in the Sahara. He gave shelter to two men without asking who they were or what they did. He housed them like the tradition recommends, and kept them away from any disturbance. At least, he tried. The army broke into his house killing one man and taking the other prisoner. Before that, a soldier asked Gacel to let them in. His answer was: "Hospitality is holy to us. This law is much older than Qur'an (1987: 23)". The soldier replied that he was the law itself. The *Tuareg* then said: "Tradition is one thousand years old. You are only fifty. Leave my guests alone" (1987: 23). Gacel was ignored.

Vázquez-Figueroa recounts the devoted search of Gacel Sayah for amends. He tried to retrieve his honor although he knew that meant facing death. The *Tuareg* kept in mind the words of old Kalthoum, a woman who said he would not die in the desert. That was his only fear – to die away from his homeland, his people and his culture. Away from the unlimited land of the Sahara that had no flag and no conquerors. Nevertheless, it was impossible to live with the moral violation suffered by him and his people.

The search for redemption made Gacel Sayah, *The Hunter*, lose

everything. Respected for his courage, Sayah devoted his life to hunt those who had killed or kidnapped his guests. He overcame all obstacles, one by one, and rescued Abdul-el-Kebir – who was a presidential candidate although Sayah had no idea of that – killing many soldiers in his way. He kidnapped a governor and threatened the Commander-in-Chief. He even went through the “empty land” of Tikdabra (from where nobody had ever returned), fooling and killing his chasers and hunting down the President himself. The President kidnapped Sayah’s family to force a trade for Abdul. Wounded by a policeman in the streets of the city after helping Abdul to leave the country, Gacel hid in an old building. He never knew about the fall of the President and how Abdul had managed to take his place (helped by both international and national groups). When he recovered consciousness he saw a crowd saluting the President who was passing through the streets inside a car. He pulled out his gun and shot the man, not knowing that the president was Abdul, after all. Sayah was shot to death after killing Abdul. He had just killed the man that made him risk his entire life for a millenary code of honor.

According to Tarso Genro, who used to be the mayor of Porto Alegre and is now Minister of Justice (1990: 153):

The higher ethics of Sayad – that become clear at the end of his journey – are tragic. The social structure that generates these ethics can only survive in a desert, or in a distant asphyxiating site. It does not matter how superior those ethics are. They still cannot penetrate the skin of a society that is mainly based on competition, repression and safety.

According to Genro:

It is good to know that great novels are still written, and that literature is tired of the shallow modern times and still can discover the greatness of men. The main conflicts that connect past and future to the arts can also place themselves in the present in order to affirm the beauty of justice.

The two dilemmas represented by Antigone and Gacel Sayah point out the greatness and the tragedy of actions and their consequences. Above all, they remain as references for the daily conflicts of people, especially of journalists whose work depends on a slippery present.

### **An approach to moral dilemmas of journalism**

Literature, Philosophy, and other subjects have studied moral problems that have always been part of our lives. Antigone and Gacel Sayah represent a historical paradigm of individual and social tragedy. Today, if

we open the domestic section of a newspaper – any newspaper in any country – we will find moral conflicts expressed by the actions reported there. And not only the domestic section, but also the international, social, business and political sections as well. They all show the dimension of the daily events and how they define the social structures in the course of consequences that can be either good or bad. Journalism deals with both events and interpretations that occur in very short time intervals and that force us to deal with various views of morality.

Although we cannot assure a different fate for mankind, it is possible to repair a disordered present. The sole idea of repair is an affirmation that moral conflict and tragedies are part of life and history. This idea is part of a greater wisdom that states that human actions (exposed by literature, philosophies and journalism) are precisely humanlike, and must be discussed by humans and solved by them.

Therefore, the conflicts of human actions have always existed in every single manifestation of each activity, including what we would come to know as the *professions* (that resulted from the division of social labor). The devotion to work and to society eventually puts men in a difficult position to manage moral conflicts. That is why mankind has to review every activity and relationship. People need to think carefully about the complexity of the world and events. Nevertheless, for this to happen, there is a need to place professional activities in the world scenario.

### **Moral dilemmas of journalism: two paradigmatic examples**

Fourteen years ago, the Gutenberg Institute and the Institute of Advanced Studies of the University of São Paulo promoted an event called *Ethics and Press: the truth and the challenges*. The meeting was supported by the McCormick Foundation – established by the Chicago Tribune – and the World Institute of Ethics, in Washington. Forty professionals – journalists, researchers and professors – were invited to debate ethical questions of journalism and examine four actual cases that would be later disclosed to the public. There are two particular subjects that cause the journalists deep moral conflicts. Although there are controversies, the fact is that we give our opinions about daily moral decisions – because that is part of our job, after all – and we do not have much time to consider these opinions that will end up on newspaper pages, in magazines, on television, radio or the internet.

### **The decision of publishing: gains and losses**

The following case<sup>3</sup> was debated at the meeting:

A journalist hears about a case involving children between 8 and 12 years old who were working more than ten hours a day and making 50 reais per month (around 25 dollars). There were times when a child's mother asked for the job herself – the money is enough, after all, to buy vegetables, meat, and some other food. Brazil had, at the time, the worst income distribution in the world, and many people worked without pay or illegally – like those children.

Must a journalist always tell the truth? The children's employer said it would do no good since he would lose his business and the kids would end up with no money at all. On the other hand, the journalist knows that even if the business were closed down there would be hundreds of other companies continuing this form of slavery.

If the story is published the journalist may be harming those families that actually need the money to survive. If it is not published, the journalist is approving a society that does not respect its own laws. The journalist would also be ignoring the code of ethics that says that any fact of public interest should be disclosed to society. In this way, the government would be able to investigate and punish those who abused the life and the labor of both adults and children.

In this case, the journalist may feel bad about disclosing the fact, but if he thinks about different possibilities of knowledge and decision he will see that his work is actually helping society to solve problems and to plan a better future.

That is why the journalist must consider that following the code of ethics of his profession means seeking the end of such crimes – in this case, slavery – and affirming his desire for a different society where these problems would not exist. So, publishing is choosing life, or the most universal principle: justice. Nevertheless, it does not mean the dilemmas will cease.

Just like Antigone, the journalist must make a choice. Antigone could have accepted the order from Creon – that represents here the “general interest”, or the law. She chose to follow her conscience and her ideal of justice – she buried her brother as she had promised.

In this case, the journalist chooses – and it is a moral choice – to go in a direction that is socially desirable, even if it is contrary to someone's immediate interests. If the journalist does not make the fact public, he will be practicing anti-journalism and hiding information about social tragedies and their consequences – exploitation of children, slave labor, etc. He has a social obligation – even if those children do not live to see a better world.

### **The openness of society and its sources and the openness of journalism**

Another question debated at the event was about undercover journalism. The following case was disclosed:

A journalist does not know how to drive properly, but he enrolls at a driving school – he tells them his real name, but not his real job. He gets a license in a few days. The journalist knows that the driving school is giving licenses to everyone without even teaching them how to drive. The school is being helped by employees of the government traffic department. He needs to prove that by getting a license himself – that would confirm the corrupt practices of the school.

The city where the investigation takes place has the highest rate of car accidents. Today, 50 thousand Brazilians die every year in car crashes. Certainly this has a lot to do with bad infrastructures of the cities, stress, unreadable road signs, drugs and alcohol abuse, speeding, etc. But we cannot ignore the driving schools' and traffic departments' corruption.

The previous case is an example of undercover journalism – it happens every day when journalists need to get into hospitals, jails, drug zones, etc. The journalists say, and I think it makes sense, that truth cannot be fully “accessed” when people identify one as a journalist. In many cases the institutions are too unethical – they hide what should be public, alter data, lie about facts, and hide information of deep relevance. The same institutions claim that journalists are unethical because, in order to discover the truth, they hide their true intentions.

There are many examples of journalists that pretended to be someone else to make public some information and to protect their own lives. It is the case of those people that investigate drug dealing and sensationalist journalism. Günther Wallraff (a German journalist), for example, wrote a book about his experience. He changed his appearance and his identity so that he could work and investigate the *Bild* newspaper and prove its illegal practices (Wallraff, 1990). He also worked for a big company in order to prove the abuse of Turkish workers' rights, among other investigations (Wallraff, 1979). The risk the journalists are taking can be confirmed by the work of Wallraff and many others – foreigners or Brazilians – and their practices may be interpreted as legally questionable or morally legitimate.

Nevertheless, the journalist's choice depends on the danger of the situation. The illegal driver's license case, for example – the first attempt to disclose the truth should have been based on interviews and official documents. Sometimes, the lack of professionalism or the need

for a quick report keeps the journalist from researching properly before deciding to go undercover.

It is impossible to deny journalism's contribution to revealing the truth about torture at psychiatric hospitals, traffic in human organs, etc. In these cases journalists had no other option but to work undercover – otherwise, the truth would never be disclosed. The journalist, risking his/her life, did what he/she had to do.

### **Cyberjournalism in the new scenario and its moral dilemmas**

Journalism has many moral dilemmas that are related to the processes of professional freedom, to conscientious choices, to historical circumstances and to the activity itself. The construction of moral values in journalism is closely connected to the evolution of the profession (Karam, 1997). Since the Roman *Acta Diurna* and Johannes Gutenberg's printing press a lot has changed – not overlooking the contribution of the industrial society that supported the national States up to the consolidation of public representation systems (supported by institutions), the 20th century's business journalism, and the cyberjournalism's new scenario (Sousa, 2008). Today, there are more ethical dilemmas and they are much more complex – but there is very little time to think about them.

But what is this cyberjournalism scenario? Pavlik (2005) reminds us that new technologies allow us to research, write and edit information very quickly – and he says this transformation is only the beginning. Today, it is possible to get information using different means and platforms. Nevertheless, he does not forget to reinforce the elements of journalism, including its ethical principles that must be respected, such as credibility and truth. He says that there are five emergent dimensions of cyberjournalism: 1) the rising number of communication forms; 2) hypermedia; 3) audience participation; 4) dynamic content; 5) the possibility for personalization (2005: 25). Considering that digital inclusion is growing faster and faster – supported clearly by governmental initiatives and market demand – Pavlik calls the new scenario “an electronic republic of the 21<sup>st</sup> century” in which cyberjournalism will become crucial to journalism in general (2005: 211).

There are different political, economic and ideological perspectives and tones, but there is also agreement regarding the potentiality of the new technologies when it comes to improving social democracy and the people's participation in decisions – at least in an ideal new scenario. If the scenario comes to life, the homogeneous media interests would be threatened by the infinite new sources of information that could question

the versions disseminated by the traditional media, or by the large media. There would be space for new works, professions and services. Certainly, there can be a civic journalism if the government, the State, and other segments invest in the idea.

Nevertheless, there is one question that remains unsolved: will there be fulltime journalists in the new scenario? Will there be other professionals as well as doctors, professors, researchers, farmers, plumbers, etc.? Or perhaps the information will get mixed up and it will be virtually impossible to distinguish good journalism. Perhaps things are going to be different. The ethical heritage of language, text structure, work procedures and verification; the value of credibility, truth and legitimacy may not disappear, after all. They may just reinforce the idea of professional and academic journalism.

Another question is whether there will global media disclosing controversial information that stimulates different commentaries and ideas; different opinions and new debates that are not controlled by social or cultural groups. The experience would be great, but other experiences would be necessary. The Public TV project, for example, or a public communication system supported by the government but not controlled by it. The Public TV would be managed by citizens and by non-governmental institutions. It certainly would not be an easy task to please so many groups. There would be many political and personal disputes. But the main point is that the present amount of daily information and the vertiginous social rhythm require the existence of several means of communicating information.

The Colombian journalist Javier Restrepo has taught classes with many journalists from Latin America. He discusses actual ethical dilemmas, alternatives and challenges, and the repercussion of new technologies. But there is agreement about one thing: the universal and essential ethics of journalism are based on social responsibility, commitment to the truth and independence (2004: 35).

Restrepo is reasonable when he says that ethics are not essentially legal – ethics are personal and are guided by one's conscience. However, he agrees that journalistic ethics are objective, not merely abstract – they must establish the bounds of professional activity. Here, techniques and ethics converge, and journalistic deontology emerges. The professional procedures become the final product supported by all previous elements.

The responsibility is even greater if the journalistic profession intends to continue as such. Journalistic procedures may be followed by non-journalists, but it will seem harder for them. Non-journalists will

find it difficult to write as frequently as journalists. Will those people who work with medicine, sociology, sales, farming, music, etc. care about journalistic criteria? And if they do, what will be the quality, the credibility and the relevance of their production? One thing is to practice journalism every day, paying attention to theory, ethics and techniques; another thing is to publish columns and write about one's area of knowledge, and in this case, non-journalists can do great work expressing their opinions. On the other hand, journalists are not just expressing an opinion. They must care about the consequences of their writing and must have professional criteria.

Journalistic criteria are determined by politics, economics, ideology and the market. Does this mean that journalism and its principles have no reason for existence? Or are they still meaningful in our information society, even if we consider the technological convergence? Journalism may as well be reaffirming its distinctive traits. The conditions for a complete democratization of communication are all present. Why then has it not happened? What should the State, the journalists and social organizations do in order to implement the democratic project? Or is information not that important to citizens after all? Or perhaps journalism and its principles are not so important.

We all know that even the large media corporations are being criticized for the mistrustful way they have been dealing with sources and reporting facts. There are more journalistic websites appearing every minute. And not only websites – new magazines and papers are appearing too. On radio, on television and online – there is new information every single moment. It is becoming more evident that the large corporations are trying to evade the accusations of dishonest reporting. The fact is that there is something completely new emerging: independent websites focused on criticizing the large media; small sites investigating the reports and questioning their veracity.

The information society and the technological facilities are putting pressure on the monopoly of large corporations. Still, there must be large media in order for a social network capable of disseminating the news to exist. And furthermore: there are no media or large media capable of reporting all the facts, consequences and versions, so it is only natural that there is a demand for new platforms, new approaches and new subjects. There is a need for segmentation and diversification of sources.

The concern about ethics increases in contemporary society – a society that recognizes rights and values of freedom as part of a lawful configuration of modern times – as moral values and actions seem to

decrease creating xenophobia; political and religious intolerance; sexual and ethnic discrimination; violence; crime; etc. Many researchers are determined to understand these questions, and many among them realize that the role played by media and journalism is part of the present ethical dilemmas.

We must bear in mind that besides journalism's resistance to ethical-deontological codes – there are those who think that the codes are useless and that they should be handling information differently (they think the codes are not really applicable if we consider the other forces involved) and those who think that the codes are even more important now because they have become a reference for professionals and for society.

Hugo Aznar (2005: 55) stands for a reinforcement of the ethical commitment:

As long as there are social problems we all must be committed to eliminating them, and that includes the media and their workers. Journalists must find once more their lost ideal of social improvement. The ideal is not political or ideological, it is ethical. And here, the ethics are not just ethics of society – they are ethics of communication.

Aznar analyzes the different ethics and codes that must become references for journalists. Although the codes may be seen as useless or inapplicable (and some people are promoting the idea of a type of journalism with no ethics at all), many professionals agree that there are procedures which are precisely a moral exercise; that there is a practical configuration that is the result of reflections and historical experiences; that there is a practical and non-epistemological knowledge; that a moral theory exists because the professional activity requires social responsibility which is part of journalism itself. All of that makes journalism – as an activity that is trying to socially consolidate its ontological, ethical and technical codes – keep on struggling to implement the principles underlying the democratic revolutions. These revolutions made possible the right to freedom of speech; the right to know the truth properly and to know one's civil rights

Aznar (2005:43) understands there are historical, social and economic reasons for the existence of professional codes and values – and now, technological reasons as well (the advent of the Internet, for example):

The spread of what may be seen as minor advances (like video-cameras, databases, new instruments for recording, new techniques

for handling image and sound) has had a great impact on the media. It promotes discussion of some old questions about ethics and journalism – veracity, intimacy, boundaries, etc. The commitment is just the same as usual, but there are new circumstances that force different ethical debates in order to make clear the criteria for a proper use of new technologies.

Aznar is saying that journalism has always posed questions about its own responsibility for subjects, facts and versions that emerge worldwide. This scenario requires more and more qualified people to handle such complex facts. It requires not only proper university training – which is already good – but also constant specialization in order to make one capable of dealing with such different fields. The journalistic way of approaching and dealing with life requires full responsibility and fulltime dedication to the activity.

There probably is a connection between professional practices and the representation of the world by means of language. The journalistic techniques for arriving at the right words are essentially part of its moral foundations.

The connection between theory and ethics occurs during the technical procedures – it happens when the work is planned and the narrative is efficient, guided by many methodological elements, investigative techniques, text structure and editing procedures. The technique is renewed in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and reaffirms the journalistic principles derived from theory and ethics throughout history and from operational consequences of the journalistic profession – which is required by the new scenario.

According to Fontcuberta (2006: 52):

Considering the connection between education and transmission of knowledge, a new concept emerges: knowledge management. But what does it mean – to manage knowledge? In the first place, it means knowing how to access information, select it, structure it and use it objectively. It means doing the same work that a journalist does – or should do – and as well as he does.

Nevertheless, the criteria and particularity of journalistic information are both moral and technical. It may be hard for “civic journalists” – as Fontcuberta calls them – to be available and committed fulltime. Again, the interests of the civic journalist – non-professional – may be individual interests, although not necessarily selfish. They are, after all, spontaneous researchers – they can be sources of information or free critics. The notion of professionalism and the “labels” such as *credibility*, *legitimacy* and

*social need* are also part of the daily professional practices that require specific knowledge. Certainly, what we know as “professional journalism” is far from being as outstanding and accurate as we might think.

But the author seems right to think that:

[...] one of the greatest responsibilities of journalism should be to show to the public the information needed to improve the knowledge of society and to offer new options for its development (2006: 53).

In the information society – or society of information and knowledge – journalistic work continues to follow the same criteria. It is a much more important thing to do now that we see the emergence of information segmentation. With so much information, so many facts and versions and infinite fields of knowledge, the criteria extend to journalistic work in both large and small media and in any platforms that may cover topics ranging from genetic issues to dog races. The fact is that daily news has become much more accessible in this scenario.

Considering the generation of knowledge and facts (that circulate in a community from libraries to journalistic platforms), we see that it has its own pace and rhythm. This pulse includes specific and immediate interests and needs – internationally and locally; it requires distinction of knowledge, facts and sources; it requires the ability to edit, interview and write; it requires the ability to make the information attractive, believable and legitimate and to “translate” hermetic fields correctly – which may culminate in a distinctive professional field. It should confirm that *legitimacy* and *credibility* are central values to journalism and are supported by representative/delegated values that are nothing more than the civil rights of democratic societies.

The paradigm of Antigone and Gacel Sayah reappears every time when difficult and unpredictable moral decisions must be made. That is precisely why it is a paradigm. The decisions often conceal the delicate frontier separating success and tragedy. That is why paradigms are references to the debate about particularities of moral action that, when it comes to journalism, refer to many subjects, cases, procedures and decisions in different technological platforms that will result in instant research, edition and verification. That is why the debate about ethics – particularly journalistic ethics – is unavoidable (to the dislike of contemporary societies) once we realize the moral dilemmas of today’s journalism. There is nothing older than Antigone and Gacel Sayah; there is nothing fresher than Antigone and Gacel Sayah.

## | NOTES

- 1 Sophocles. *Oedipus at Colonus*. In: *Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Aristophanes. Greek Theatre*. São Paulo, Paumape, 1993, p. 115. It was the last conversation between Polynices and Antigone – who was leading her father Oedipus who blinded himself and ran to Colonus after murdering his own father and marrying his mother by accident. He had four children with his mother: Polynices, Eteocles, Antigone and Ismene. Polynices and Eteocles died fighting Creon.
- 2 All the quotations in this paper were freely translated from their originals.
- 3 The subject proposed here is based on real journalistic reports that were morally questioned by several professionals. The related cases are familiar to journalists too.

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