

RETHINKING JOURNALISM NOWADAYS WITH IMAGES AND WORDS

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The growing process of the “mediatization” of society, the advent of the computer and the emerging culture of participation have provoked significant changes in the practice of journalism, but this practice is not undergoing its first nor its last great crisis or transformation in the XXI century. The disappearance of a more precise frontier between Journalism and Press Advisor activity, the market-inspired fusion of news, entertainment and advertising, the domination of information no longer just by family groups but by large media conglomerates, the immediacy and instantaneity of the news and the accelerated flow of images do not always collaborate toward the formation of some critical awareness of a specific historical reality. At the same time, new ways of construction of the news by different social actors generate possibilities for mobilization of public opinion and construction of political movements along lines which are not known or were not previously controlled, influencing the contents of newspapers, magazines and television newscasts, although the audiences’ greater participation does not always contribute to a higher quality of journalistic practice based on diversity. In any event, the news agenda is no longer the only way of accounting for reality and the credibility and social influence of information is no longer only attributed to the news. The discursive genres are now increasingly mingled; texts can be hybrid and transmitted by different supports, defying the exclusive link of journalistic reports with the translation of reality, that is, the comprehension of journalism as an exclusive place of reference of reality. It seems that people no longer have the same need for the press as before, because many other channels of information are available. But they need professional and reliable information about events that deserve to be known when they help to comprehend and to improve the society in which we live. If Journalism and journalists have lost their “aura” of exclusive historians of the truth of the present, they do not fail to offer a form of basic knowledge of Brazil and the

World, constituting a possibility of resistance to only a single line of thought, and reaffirming the need for establishing more decentralized and democratic societies, even though their ways of representing the social day-to-day life, or better still, of choosing and constituting criteria of newsworthiness in the construction of their reports are not always transparent or visible. In the last 200 years, various changes in the exercise of the profession are associated with technological innovations. And curiously, important movements in the history of journalism were born in different crises, such as investigative journalism, hinge journalism, new journalism and civic journalism, starting mainly in the United States but with reflections in the types of coverage in the entire world. At these same times, Journalism research was also reinvented. It is obvious that the discipline is different and only exists based on professional practice, and requires a distancing on the part of the researchers which would justify its transformation into a field of research. However, in view of the reconfigurations of journalistic mediations, it is an increasingly necessary practice because it permits observation of the profession with a critical view and the construction of some concepts and perspectives which can contribute to qualifying Journalism and the studies being developed. Today it constitutes an expanding field in different countries on different continents. And its maturing nowadays implies precisely in facing the challenge to advance, encountering equilibrium between dialogues with other fields of knowledge by means of a multidisciplinary approach to the subject of study and the effort to achieve a specific theoretical-methodological construction, which would give identity and density to Journalism itself as a scientific field. It is precisely the search for these reference points in Journalism studies that would account for its singularity and would be capable of contributing to its greater comprehension as a cultural phenomenon, which is the topic of the article in this edition by Martin Löffelholz and Liane Rothenberger. And the need for more diverse approaches to the occurrences in the production routines and autonomy of the press professionals is also an important issue, studied by Cristiane Brum Bernardes on discussing the relations between journalists and the sources of the legislative media maintained by the Brazilian Chamber of Deputies - *TV Câmara*.

We comprehend that we are not really experiencing a draining of journalistic practices and of research in this field of knowledge; on the contrary, we verify that the roles of the media and of journalism are increasingly more relevant in the meaning and comprehension of the world molded by words and images. These constructions of meaning are

questioned by many researchers who contribute to a broader perception of these processes in their research works, regardless of the supports and the languages utilized in the treatment of journalistic information. It is not by chance that we devote this Dossier to the complex relations between Journalism and Image, in an attempt to collaborate in the breaking down of certain myths such as those which attribute exclusively to images, and not to words, the power to homogenize discourses or to produce the narrative of the world, contributing to more critical and sensitive readings of the current forms of writing about day-to-day social life.

A relevant and still very little disseminated specialty in Journalism studies in our academic area is Photojournalism, approached in a provocative way by three separate contributions to this addition. Atilio Avancini proposes a reflection on the meanings of photographs in narrative journalism, questioning the importance of the photographic image in view of the conceptual fragility of the digital photograph as a document and information. Daniel Thierry discusses the specificity of local press photography by means of an analysis of this practice and of the professional status of the authors of these representations. And Angie Biondi analyzes the visibility of suffering and of the subject revealed in press photography, based on a study of images of wars, attacks and diseases. These and many other images achieve in certain moments a significant centrality in the media field, constituting not only proof and evidence of the facts, but also the event itself. And the article by Maria Cleidejane Esperidião allows us to better comprehend how the global news ecosystem and the international news agencies work in worldwide telejournalism. However, there are images which soon disappear from the journalistic agenda, and others which remain circulating in various devices, even in non-news ones. This process of mediatization of images and the circulation of their meaning effects is the subject of Ana Paula Rosa's article. The questioning of the relations between visual elements and principles of journalistic editing undergoing the effects of technological changes provide the basis for the analysis by Ana Gruszynski and Bruna Amaral of the graphic reformulations undergone by the newspaper *Zero Hora* (ZH) from 1990 to 2010. The authors show that the significant alteration of the layouts can be associated with the increasing amount of information available and with the intensive use of graphic resources and images in the graphic area, which often compromises the hierarchy of what is reported. And the amount of information does not signify quality of content. Knowing how to select and perform a critical reading of information has perhaps never

been as essential as it is nowadays. For this reason, the development of Journalism research is also associated with teaching and the results obtained in the research can be applied in perfecting the latter. Without any doubt, it is important to offer future professionals skills and interests in order to comprehend what is happening on the computer and TV screens and off them, and to construct news which would create some awareness of the historical reality of the world, its challenges and contradictions. But for this students also need to have the opportunity to learn to construct more contextualized and inventive reporting in the teaching and research laboratories and in the disciplines which integrate theoretical and practical experiences in the professional training process, regardless of the supports and the languages utilized. The article by Mayra Rodrigues Gomes and Rosana Soares presents a pedagogical project in hypermedia, bringing together images and words to exploit the convergence, propitiating connectivity and stimulating creativity in learning processes, a topic which has also stood out in the research of digital journalism. For these studies, the contributions systematized and organized by Marcos Palácios and Othon Jambeiro in the book “Brazilian perspectives in digital environments: communication policies, e-government and digital journalism”, reviewed here by Leonardo Menezes, are relevant.

Indeed, in a world mediated by digital technologies, media images frequently constitute the very experience of reality, but can also function as differentiated interpretations of events, revealing that the word is not the only source of truth. This does not mean assuming images as a reflection of reality or rejecting them as imitations and false representations, but being able to recognize that the meanings of the news result in ways of saying and of intervening in social life and surely in the way in which we learn to read the meanings of images. We hope that this edition could inspire interpretations of journalistic reports in other directions.