

# GROTH AND LAMPIÃO: experimental print journalism and the Science of newspapers

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**ABSTRACT** - The current paper is a reflection on the place of the student newspaper in a new Journalism undergraduate course located in a Brazilian countryside region, considering the new curriculum guidelines, in dialogue with Otto Groth's fundamental concepts of the Science of newspapers. In this sense, we try to demonstrate the constant links between theoretical constructs and experimental praxis of Journalism. For that, we analyze the experience of Lampião, an experimental student newspaper at Ufop, during a semester in 2014, considering it under five categories: periodicity, universality, topicality, publicity and experimentation.

**Keywords:** experimental newspaper, topicality, periodicity, universality, publicity.

## GROTH AND LAMPIÃO: experimental print journalism and the Science of newspapers

**RESUMO** - Este artigo reflete sobre o lugar e o papel do jornalismo laboratorial impresso em um curso, ainda jovem, de Jornalismo do interior do país, a partir das Novas Diretrizes Curriculares Nacionais (DCNs) e da importância do veículo no sistema de mídia da cidade onde o jornal-laboratório circula. Para efetuar tal reflexão, dialoga com conceitos fundamentais da chamada "ciência dos jornais" proposta por Otto Groth. Nesse sentido, tenta demonstrar as constantes articulações entre o pensamento teórico acerca do jornalismo e a práxis laboratorial efetivada na disciplina do curso. Partindo de tais premissas, traz relato de experiência da execução do jornal-laboratório Lampião, do curso de Jornalismo da Ufop, durante o segundo semestre de 2014, analisando-o sob cinco categorias, a saber: periodicidade, universalidade, atualidade, publicidade e experimentação. A partir dessa análise é possível perceber as maiores dificuldades e a falta de intimidade dos estudantes de Jornalismo com o produto jornal impresso, bem como as peculiaridades de um jornal protótipo, com periodicidade e atualidade bastante características.

**Palavras-chave:** jornal-laboratório, atualidade, periodicidade, universalidade, publicidade.

## GROTH Y LAMPIÃO:

### el periodismo laboratorial impreso y la ciencia de los periódicos

**RESUMEN** - En este artículo se reflexiona sobre el lugar y el papel del periodismo laboratorial impreso en un curso de Periodismo, todavía joven en el interior del país, en vista de las Directrices Curriculares Nacionales (Nueva DCNs) y la importancia del vehículo en el sistema de medios de comunicación de la ciudad donde circula el periódico de laboratorio. Para hacer esta reflexión, se hace un diálogo con los conceptos fundamentales de la "ciencia de los periódicos", propuesto por Otto Groth. En este sentido, lo intento es de demostrar los vínculos constantes entre la reflexión teórica sobre la práctica del periodismo y de laboratorio realizadas en el transcurso del curso. A partir de estos supuestos, trae informe de experiencia de aplicación de periódico laboratorial, en el curso de Periodismo de Ufop, durante el segundo semestre de 2014, analizándolo en cinco categorías, a saber: la frecuencia, la universalidad, en la actualidad, la publicidad y la experimentación. A partir de este análisis, es posible darse cuenta de las mayores dificultades y la falta de intimidad de los estudiantes de periodismo con el producto diario impreso, así como las peculiaridades de un periódico prototipo con una periodicidad y actualidad muy características.

**Palavras-chave:** jornal-laboratório, atualidade, periodicidade, universalidade, publicidade.

## 1. Preamble

In November 2014, the undergraduate Journalism course at the Universidade Federal de Ouro Preto (Ufop) concluded its curricular changes, conducted since 2012 and guided by the discussions around, among other items, some aspects of the National Curricular Guidelines, published a year before by the National Educational Council, related to the Brazilian Ministry of Education: the decrease of print journalism centrality in the laboratorial teaching; the increment of laboratorial practices since the first semesters of the course; the challenges of implementing a supervised internship in a course situated in a small city in Brazil's countryside (although near Belo Horizonte, the state capital), with a limited communication market; the possibility of curricular flexibility.

We start with one particular aspect in mind in order to reflect about some epistemological and pragmatic transits of the experimental newspaper Lampião in Ufop's Journalism undergraduate course: print journalism's place in the laboratorial journalism teaching. Christa Berger names the current state of journalism as "2.0", in direct reference to the web 2.0, and locates newspapers as a 1.0 version of journalism (2011, p. 278). In this article, therefore, we aim to reflect about this "journalism 1.0", which survives –

thrives – and has a challenge to relocate itself inside the academic thinking, in the curriculum and where it circulates. To undertake this task we draw our attention to the work of Otto Groth about the science of newspapers, specially what concerns the four newspapers' characteristics identified by the author: periodicity, universality, topicality and publicity; besides that, what constitutes the core of what is laboratorial journalism, in our opinion: experimentation.

## **2. Student newspaper, Lampião and Mariana**

In a recent book about the laboratorial print journalism, Tonus and Soster attest that “the laboratorial activity in journalism is in a particularly exuberant moment” (2013, p. 14), due to the growth in undergraduate courses of Communication – and Journalism. A mapping conducted by the authors about the country's journalistic laboratorial products shows that 88% of them are newspapers, proving the importance of laboratory newspaper, legal requirement in undergraduate Journalism courses since the end of the 60's, regulated by the government in 1978. Despite being mandatory and inarguably relevant in journalism learning environment, there is scarce theoretical reflection on the theme (as Tonus and Soster also attest). A consequence of this is that one of the most stable concepts about laboratorial journalism dates back to 1982. The concept was produced during the 7<sup>th</sup> Regional Journalism Meeting on Laboratorial Institutions, collected by Dirceu Lopes:

The newspaper-lab is a vehicle that should be done with a specific set of techniques to a specific audience likewise, based on systematic research in all areas, including the constant experimentation of new forms of language, content and presentation. Eventually, its audience may be internal, provided it has no institutional character. (LOPES, 1989, p. 50)

What is noteworthy in this concept is the experimental nature of this type of publication, which should always be exerted in view of a “real” vehicle with defined target audience, editorial line, graphic design, frequency and circulation. Dirceu Lopes echoes: “As the name says (newspaper-lab), it should serve as an experimental element, either in terms of language, editorial content or even graphic aspect” (1989, p. 51). In this regard, Spannenberg, Barros and Jerônimo converge in the same direction: “The basis of a newspaper-lab is

change” (2013, p. 27). Change that is demanded or encouraged by the experimental nature of the newspaper-lab and enhanced by the fact that, in many cases, each period (semester, year, quarter), new students form the laboratory, and they will take over the editorial duties. José Marques de Melo emphasizes the independent role that this type of vehicle must exercise, anchored only in pedagogical issues and interests of the communities they address. “We should perceive those entities as educational spaces that should be bound to a community to which they are addressed. And as a space of free creation, they should have their own policies” (MELO, 1985 apud LOPES, 1989, p. 55).

The pedagogical aspect highlighted by Marques de Melo reflects in the process of adherence, appropriateness and dialogue between the courses and the new guidelines, a task that has been undertaken since the publication of the document - or before, as in the case of Ufop. It is a journey full of difficulties and even paradoxes. On the one hand, the National Education Council (CNE) indicates that “the newspaper-laboratory, and print journalism in general, integrates with other media the journalistic practice” (GOMES BARBOSA; CARVALHO, 2014, p. 2). In paragraph 6 of Article 4 of the resolution that brings the new guidelines, there are even recommendations that the form is not the backbone or professional reference for future journalists, centered in Journalism 2.0: “VI - the professional horizon is an environment guided by technological convergence, in which print journalism, although retaining its importance in the media set, is not the backbone of the workspace, and does not dictate the references of the profession;” (MEC, 2013, p. 2).

On the other hand, in 2014, the Journalism course at Ufop held a selection for the professor position responsible for “Print Journalism / Newspapers Editorial Organization / Specialized Journalism” (UFOP, 2014, p. 3). The creation of a position for a professor of Print Journalism and Newspaper Editorial Organization reflects greatly the importance of the course’s newspaper-lab, “Lampião”, to the communities to which it is addressed, and dialogues with the media settings of the City (s) where it circulates - Mariana primarily and Ouro Preto.

Regarding the Mariana media, Adriana Bravin and Priscilla Borges pointed out that

informal media still prevail, such as murals, bus stops, bakeries, plazas, churches and poles, used for advertising, sale and exchange of products, real state, dissemination of cultural and political events. You can also “know what’s going on” stopping to hear other people’s conversation in a corner, where people put their affairs in order, as well as off the Sunday Mass and walking by the streets on Sundays. The city has ten weekly newspapers, frankly partial; there are no daily newspapers; only one telephone operator with broadband; two radio stations - one belonging to a significant network connected to the evangelical religious sector and one to the Mariana Archdiocese. In parallel, there are informative platforms organized by religious groups, such as the members of the Catholic community, linked to the 6<sup>th</sup> Brazilian archdiocese; institutional, as the site of UFOP; or even cultural. (BRAVIN; BORGES, 2012, p. 2)

This precise media framework outlined by the authors have been supplemented in recent years by pages on the social network Facebook, which publish and share a mix of local news, utilities, rumors and information disseminated by official bodies, keeping some of the identified characteristics in print media, as little professionalization and strong connection to political groups in the region. In addition, the communicational infrastructure has expanded, with the spread of broadband to city neighborhoods and growing cable TV offer, among other changes. The panorama of print media remains similar, as well as the radio.

In such local communicational context, the student newspaper *Lampião*<sup>1</sup> becomes particularly relevant: with a current circulation of 3.000 copies and distribution in most public places in Mariana (where the Journalism is located) and Ouro Preto (home to the main campus of Ufop). *Lampião* is one of the few independent vehicles in the region, in line with the concern of Marques de Melo. The community shares this perception, according to Bravin and Borges: “*Lampião* succeeded in its first semester of circulation, the city widely accepted it. (...) It gained the community” (2012, p. 3). This image has also been internalized by the students of the course, as they stated when reached the newspaper office. Early in the second half of 2014, this perception became clearly present in the speech of a student. Asked “what are your thoughts regarding *Lampião*”, he replied: “It is the newspaper that says what others do not tell.”

The newspaper-lab mission amplifies this sense of independence and primary commitment to the reader and the community: “(...) It features an editorial line that raises the context beyond the university campus, not serving interests other than those of the community, thus assuming a service commitment to the reader” (LAMPIÃO, 2011b, emphasis added). Some editorials, produced by

different editors in chief who occupied the post in the 17 issues published until 2014, express the same sentiment: “the Journalism proposed here is a journalism where the story told wants to change the world without fear of utopia and dream, both transformed into the catalyzer for social intervention, to build a better place “(LAMPIÃO, 2011a, p. 2).

In an environment where each copy is effective and which participates in the construction of reality, Lampião is an important source of information traffic. Using the data of a survey conducted in 2011 by the newspaper, Bravin and Borges noted the predominance of the print vehicle used as an information instrument in Mariana (2012). Apart from Lampião, the newspaper product remains regionally relevant, and this characteristic should be taken into account in the journalistic learning environment, as it was in the curriculum reform and the option for a professor selection dedicated to this area.

The place of a print newspaper in a Journalism laboratory located in the countryside dialogues directly with the paradigm shift of journalism operated decades ago and especially visible in these first two decades of the twenty-first century. It is necessary to recognize the current system governing journalism, “a contemporary open-system innovation, mainly because the reader has become part of the information flow” (SCHMITT; OLIVEIRA; FIALHO, 2008, p. 11). Indeed, it is this paradigm shift - theoretical, productive - that guides the considerations of DCNs about the place of print newspaper in the contemporary journalism scene. However, it is necessary to think about the different ways - and different times - this paradigm shift occurs in a country with different scenarios such as Brazil, which features media concentration in large cities and, as shown, a scattered and lacking overview of professionalized and independent media in small towns, the case of Mariana. In cities like this, Internet access and network usage are other factors that restrict the emergence of journalism 2.0 and the population’s access to all the possibilities offered by it, such as potentially transforming consumers of information in so-called prosumers.

Moreover, even in the face of an average five-hour daily internet connection and the abundant flow of non-stop information in the digital environment, Brazilians still believe that “newspapers are the most reliable vehicles,” according to the Brazilian Media Research, released by the Presidency of the Republic (BRAZIL, 2014, p. 7) - 58% of Brazilians and 71% of mineiros rely much or always on

those vehicles. In this regard, the BMR has relevant information about the attention paid to newspaper reading: “Even though the frequency and intensity of newspapers and magazines reading are low, it is the media with the highest level of exclusive attention. Among newspaper readers, 50% said they did not do any other activity while consuming it” (BRAZIL, 2014, p. 8).

Still, one cannot ignore the fact that 76% of those interviewed by the BMR do not read newspapers (of those who read, 79% do so only in print - 81% in Minas Gerais) and the reading rates are lower as municipalities get smaller. In a city like Mariana, with about 58,000 inhabitants according to IBGE, one can estimate that 81% of people do not read newspapers, and 5% do so once a week. When citizens open a newspaper, they seek to learn about the city (28%), the recurring theme on the issues already published of *Lampião*. Therefore, to adapt this newspaper-laboratory to the new guidelines does not mean merely to take away the place of centrality in the laboratory production of the course; one must take into account the place that the newspaper occupies in the community and that community's relationship with journalism, with web 2.0 and the newspaper product. We should bear in mind, yet, from this external importance, the learning potential of a newspaper-lab for the students.

### **3. The essence of a newspaper**

Considering this scenario, we are dedicated to investigate *Lampião*'s production process, from the perspective of what Otto Groth called the “science of newspapers.” In the work published in 1965, fully translated into Portuguese for the first time in 2011, the German theorist lists what, for him, would be the key features of a journal - its “constituent qualities” (GROTH 2011, p. 35). Periodicity, universality, topicality and publicity constitute the nature of the newspaper, as characterized by Groth: “Like any uniform, the newspaper is immaterial; it is only understandable through each copy; each number materializes its idea” (p. 147). This immaterial whole has the essential task of mediating between “being and happening” around the world (p. 163), or as he stated later: “mediate the knowledge of all the relevance in all areas of life and culture, society in all its parts” (p 172.) - the more media-oriented the newspaper is, the fastest is its growing intellectual journal power. Mediation is

strongly expressed in the universality and publicity, while periodicity and topicality connect to time and temporality of the newspaper. As so appropriately evoked Carlos Drummond de Andrade in the poem *Mãos Dadas*, to the newspaper “Time is my matter, this time, the men present, this life” (2012, p. 34), or, according to Dalmonte, “the journalistic product should enable readers to participate in a large present, global, able to match their own” (2010, p. 328).

The first of these temporal characteristics is periodicity - according to the author, is a law that affects the material production. It is related to the continuity of publications, which in turn is stipulated by the unity of the vehicle: content requires publication with some frequency. The idea of the whole to which Groth refers arises, continuously and periodically, with the newspaper as a continuous immaterial reality. This is, in fact, the nature of the newspaper, “its most explicit medallion” (2011, p. 149): a defined time lapse leads newspapers to return periodically, accustoming, coercing and urging readers. Repetition helps retaining what disappears, strengthens the weak, and increases the participation and certainty (GROTH, 2011). This schedule is based on the vital needs of the people - for daily news, morning and evening news, for weekly news printed on a newspaper. It even creates a physical-psychological and socio-cultural dependence, the stronger the frequency the higher the dependence. The aspiration of every newspaper, according to Groth, is to match event and publishing - to be instantaneous, which says a lot about the real-time nature of digital journalism.

Each time a newspaper returns, it has the universality claim: to include everyone in the world before it, the world that depends on the newspaper’s reach, since “the journal is based on a relationship between the ‘self and the world’” (p. 170). In addition to the inclusion, the newspaper requires that the subject take position on such a world, helping people to “adapt to it and master it, to maintain links with each other and exchange experiences with them” (p. 171). Groth considers that only when something becomes the world for the individual, he becomes curious about such a world. Importantly, for the author, the newspaper is universal in this perspective:

The newspaper is a mediator of all that is worth knowing about the worlds before all, provided it is ‘universal’, it has to be ‘universal’. The most important in these worlds is the present and especially the momentary present of each one, as long as this is in the first place ‘current’, it has to be in this direction ‘Highly Current’. The newspaper sees its universality necessarily in the perspective of present, its universality form



up and colors itself in the choice, in the design and treatment of current material. The topicality is always sought after and preferred by it, but more than that, it always aspire for its universality. (GROTH 2011, p. 177)

Therein lies the most powerful strength of the product: topicality, since the present is, in general, the most important for individuals. Thus, the newspaper has the task of mediating something current, present, in vogue, new - albeit novelty and topicality are distinct concepts; while news is a subjective concept, topicality is an objective concept of time. What is current is in the present or is related to it, and again the idea of immediacy arises, newspapers desire to reduce the time between event and mediation or publication. Dalmonte, anchored in Franciscato, lies on the novelty, which has proximity to the present, the “genesis of narrative journalism, having in mind the appeal that the ‘new’ has to operate mechanisms by which to break the unknown in the agenda” (2010, p. 329).

Finally, publicity connects to the universality, as it relates to what is in front of everyone, but also to what everyone has access. It is, in other words, the objective characteristic of access to all, and the subjective collectivity of the readers’ community, causing everyone to take notice. It connects to what is considered public interest and the right to information and it is closely related to the circulation of the vehicle, since the circulation of information influences the degree of publicity it has. Groth makes clear, and we can see the inner connection between these characteristics: “From universality and topicality, it becomes clear: periodicity, which is necessarily required for the universality and topicality, but that also determines in the same way, publicity” (p. 178).

In order to think the newspaper-lab and its practice, including the size and constant liaison with the theory, it is necessary an epistemological approach to what is discussed regarding the newspaper. It is an opportunity to reflect and constantly rethink ways of making the activity, anchored in the tradition of thinking about the newspaper as a product and as a research subject - as a science, as Groth says: a science of culture, since, for him, newspapers “are cultural works” (2011, p. 33). Hence the importance of this dialogue and the author’s epistemology of newspapers. Hence the topicality of that dialogue in the productive context and circulation of *Lampião*.

At this junction, we understand that the newspaper-laboratory is a newspaper, with respect to its constituent qualities,

and that it retains certain peculiar characteristics, as demonstrated above. We understand that those peculiarities are encompassed in the idea of experimentation. The experimentation reinforces that this kind of newspaper is not commercial; that it is anchored in laboratory production; it does not follow necessarily and only the current models of journalistic production; that it is not professional; it is a learning space. Thus, we analyze Lampião considering these five categories - topicality, periodicity, universality, publicity and experimentation - to reflect on the processes and results of the products obtained during the second half of 2014 in the news-making, performed mostly by students of the 5th semester at the Ufop Journalism course.

#### 4. Topicality

The need to make current the issues to be addressed in the newspaper is a common difficulty (but not unanimous) already in the assignment meeting at the Lampião newspaper-lab. We can feel this difficulty concretely in the absence of a cliffhanger<sup>2</sup> to justify the importance of the agenda for that edition. Some reporters cannot answer the questions “Why should this subject enter in this newspaper’s edition? What makes it current - more than that, urgent?”.

Some assignments proposed, however, can fully contemplate the eternal present sense of the newspaper - increasingly more preterit in the journalism 2.0, which makes topicality an even greater challenge. In issue 16, the first of the semester, the assignments were on women’s presence in the politics of Mariana (*There is little room for them*), to propose a subject connected to the elections in an intermediate period of the polling date without the risk of getting older; the influence of Master Athayde in the work of contemporary artists of Mariana (*Past that inspires artists*), using the birthday celebrations of the colonial artist to establish a relationship with what is produced today in the fine arts of the city; the agenda on the municipal anti-drug program takes an issue already addressed in the newspaper with the motto of a new project, the issue anticipates (*Magic in the fight against drugs*). The assignments on the process of beatification Don Luciano (*In-house Saint*) and on the project with musical societies of the city (*Music Sunday in the square*) are in an intermediate time: they are not exactly current, because they do not lie objectively in the present (the beatification was only relatively

recent, and the musical project had been occurring for some months).

In this issue, the most explicit link with the present is probably the special report on mining. That was not the subject of the special, which would treat education. Nevertheless, after the assignment meeting, a serious accident with casualties occurred near the area, the largest mining region in Minas Gerais. *Lampião*'s editors team, ultimately responsible for determine the mirror, proposed an extra meeting to assess the appropriateness of using this accident as a trigger to discuss security in mining (*The risks of life in mining*). It was in the proposition of that new assignment that *Lampião* was more present, more topic.

Interestingly, there is no explicit mention of the trigger/ the accident in the piece. The difference between the assignment and the report was clear in some other times: it was difficult to establish the sense of topicality for the reader, making some pieces colder, more encyclopedic and less journalistic (especially with respect to the lead/inverted pyramid structure). This also demonstrates difficulty in establishing the hierarchy of information from what is more present to go back to other times of the event and what surrounds it; instead, some reporters were more comfortable with the diachronic construction, chronological to the text. In some cases, in two issues, the difficulty of topicality referred to the problems in the investigation: the reporter failed to develop the assignment to bring the latest information to the matter.

The next issue, 17, was thematic, related to "future" and "time", subjects amenable to establish relationship with the present. There is, in the newspaper, clearly a division between more current assignments in the first half, and cooler - less current, less present - in the second half (a replica - unconscious? - of "first" and "second" supplement of commercial papers). The tourism assignments (*Tourism requires attention*), airport (*An ouopretano airport*) and traffic (*The traffic is planned*) deal not only with urgent problems to the population, but reported what was latest in those matters.

The special supplement on politics has emerged as a four-page appendage. In the two central pages, an analytical report on the representativeness of the region in the newly elected State Assembly, Chamber of Deputies and Federal Senate (*Lack support of the Legislature*). The opening of the supplement brought the first interview of MG governor elected in October, Fernando Pimentel (*A new horizon for Minas*). In the closing page, the impending release of

the final report of the National Commission of Truth to make present the subject of the dictatorship (*Eleven in defense of the country*) served to tell the story of a Mariana lawyer who participated in a *brizolista* group on the eve of the military coup. On the same page, a story about one shelter to exiled writers in Ouro Preto brought more subtle connection with the oppression - in addition to retreat to the historical revolutionary past of the region (*Between exile and sanctuary*).

The piece on unemployment resulting from the next closing of the Novelis plant in Ouro Preto (*The concern is unemployment*), represented a challenge for being the most current in the newspaper and, at the same time, could not match event and publication due to the newspaper periodicity. Thus, the concern was to discuss the closing without addressing it directly, since it still had not occurred yet. Similarly, assessing these consequences proved impossible due to the further unfolding of the event. The possibility of continuous coverage was also discarded, because the newspaper circulated only twice in six months. A factual agenda, completely topic; current, but due to the peculiar nature of the present in a newspaper-laboratory, proved complex.

## 5. Periodicity

The difficulty of working, in textual construction, the assignment of Novelis closing relates to the frequency of the newspaper-lab. As the vast majority of such newspapers in the country, Lampião is not daily published, but bi-monthly - according to Tonus and Soster (2013), the most common is the six-monthly intervals, followed by monthly and annual. Only one newspaper-laboratory that participated in the research conducted by the authors identified itself as daily; three are classified as bimonthly.

This imperfect return to readers, unusual with respect to the newspaper product, is quite suitable for the learning process involved in an academic laboratory product. The importance of learning the production process is emphasized in Lampião, even more than the final product that is printed and distributed. This leads to the scansion of routines and productive steps that, in a trade journal, can be performed in a day or less. In a professional newsroom, many of them are eventually skipped by the domain that the journalist has or on behalf of deadlines, mostly.

The bimonthly periodicity is opposed to haste and implies a difficulty to deal with the factual. Many assignments proposed become “old” - not topic, not current – in the time between the first staff meeting and the start of circulation. Some refer to dates that occur during the production of the *Lampião*, as Children’s Day, and other one-off events such as the change of responsibility for the maintenance of the electricity network Mariana, which occurred while issue 17 was being produced. This difficulty to fit the elastic newspaper-laboratory topicality leads to the rejection of many assignments by the team of editors during the determining of the issue’s mirror.

The frequency will also affect the relationship between readers and newspaper; in Mariana, above all, and Ouro Preto, *Lampião* already resonates with only two issues each semester, if its return to the hands of the public happened with higher frequency, this relationship of dependence, trust and the creation of *habitus* certainly could settle down with greater strength.

## 6. Universality

Next to periodicity, it is one of the elements that cause the “rejection” of assignments by the editors. In most cases, according to the editorial vision of *Lampião*, what appears in the newspaper should represent the public interest of Mariana and Ouro Preto communities. The pieces published refer to one of the two cities or their districts, sometimes addressing problems common to both cities – as in the special politics edition 17. A common occurrence in assignment meetings is that students confuse what is universal to them - students – and what is universal to the community. The two universes do not coincide, since due to university admission rules, few students are from the region. Most are from other regions of Minas Geraes or the Southeast.

Apart from not being from Mariana nor Ouro Preto, it is common that the notion of belonging to the communities of the two cities is not so internalized in many of them, who circulate in groups of student houses, semester, course, university, finally, more than in the city community. As they are not from the area, many go back “home” on weekends and holidays, making it difficult to create this sense of belonging.

The material reflection of this is a recurring series of assignments that target student audience and reflect their interests, not the public interest. The most consistent examples are story suggestions about student houses (in various different approaches), carpools (very common use among the students to move around between Mariana and Ouro Preto) and Ufop projects in which they participate. In those issues, editors did not approve them. In addition to these suggestions, there is a recurrence of what we classify as private universal - issues relevant to the local community, but entering the discussion agenda because they are familiar to students. These are the case of pieces on rentals and bus fare prices. Although relevant, they were not approved exactly due to the recurrence; they are matters routinely handled by the newspaper, which avoids repeating some issues to explore the diversity of problems and themes that the region offers as assignments.

## 7. Publicity

The idea of publicizing what should emerge in the world around Lampião has manifested itself as the characteristic that students took into account the most in the assignment meetings, and the team of editors when determining the mirror of issues. It is very close to the concept of public interest. Although few assignment proposals are explicitly investigative, students line up with what Lampião proposes in various editions and explained in issue 6: “Our thinking is to clearly address the case, tell stories and, above all, to refine the words . We also seek flashing characters hidden by that Mariana-girl who has no time to look the other way” (LAMPIÃO, 2012, p. 2). Students absorb the notion of “illuminating”, flashing, “bringing up”, problems that are not exploited by other vehicles – what is made explicit in several editorials and implicit in a more detailed analysis of the newspaper’s editorial choices. It is the very identity of Lampião materialized in every issue produced by different groups, and driven by the mission and for what the newspaper-lab believes: to reflect and deepen conflicts, needs and memories of cities.

That is why reporters propose pieces that seek to reveal stories, dramas, problems, but also poetry, besides retrieving memories. The piece on mining expresses this concern as well as the reports on education in issue 16 (*Full-time school: almost there* and

*The challenge is to stay in school*), which problematized the full-time school and truancy in Mariana; the report on postal delivery problems (*Post office: errors generate outrage*) and the lack of ID issuance in Mariana (*Mariana without identity*). In the 17th edition, the problems addressed, such as traffic and tourism, have been exploited by the perspective of future prospects. However, there was also the publicity of regional problems such as the absence of better infrastructure for blood donation and organ procurement (*Donating organs means loving your neighbor*).

The importance of publicizing all the news that deserve to be published connects to the context of local media context presented: Lampião is an independent citizen newspaper (laboratory), it becomes even more important to give visibility to issues of public interest that are not discussed by other vehicles and to claim for appropriate solutions; that, ultimately, intervenes as a mediator in the social reality to which it belongs.

## 8. Experimentation

As we said, experimentation is the key feature of a newspaper that presents itself as a laboratory: it is not enough, as stated Dirceu Lopes, to reproduce reality, we need to create innovations (1989). Thus, it is necessary to focus on the experimental potential developed during the newspaper production process. In the fall of 2014, we perceive experimentation in the special report of the 16th edition. In order to address the risks that mining workers are exposed to, the piece humanized the report with the profile of a professional who has suffered an accident at work. However, the miner feared retaliation, so the newspaper chose to tell the story without revealing his identity, ethically justified practice to protect the source.

The text, however, had the profile structure. The profile conceptually humanizes the story, in addition to revealing the individual, giving him visibility. Sodre and Ferrari make clear the centrality of the character: “profiling means to focus on a person (...) always focusing the protagonist of a story: his own life” (1986, p. 126). In this sense, the name serves as an element capable of conferring subjective authority to that hero or anti-hero, in the terms of the authors. In the words of José Saramago in *The Stone Raft*, “there are two necessary items for things to exist, that men see them and name

them” (SARAMAGO, 1994, p. 50). The profile, to surround a person and give him or her materiality, through the text, is a way to give people (journalistic) existence. Without the name, a profile denies the existence of the subject and at the same time it protects him or her socially. There is no need to install the hit discussion in the execution of a profile in this way, but the relevance is the journalistic experimentation considering ethical and editorial criteria. The argument is in terms of public interest, the humanization of the piece and the constitutional right to protect the source of information, important categories to the laboratorial journalism produced by Lampião.

But the photojournalistic text in issue 16, *The mystery of the ruins*, built as a hybrid between news report and short story, was the choice of a reporter to narrate a story full of gaps, rumors, he-said-she-said and few proven facts or even verifiable in newspaper production deadlines (since it is a story that occurred in the seventeenth century). The beginning is rather conventional in textual structure: “Pigeons flying over what was once a church and today is a cemetery. The scenario of a vampire movie that residents of the Antônio Pereira district see every day (...)”. At the end of the introduction, however, readers enter the story and the journalistic discourse becomes literary narrative: “At the police station, Baiano said he had not killed the child, that this crime he had not committed (...)”.

In the 17th edition, the text that supports the photo shoot is a chronicle, with very few subtle allusions to the photographed characters. Both pieces, free, are outline approaches to literary journalism, using literature techniques such as narration and description, to build a journalistic text (PENA, 2006). The question to be asked concerns precisely to the place to which the two texts belong: hybridity, freedom and the scant amount of information provided put them in journalism threshold.

## 9. Final considerations

Built as a locus that overlap theoretical and practical knowledge, the newspaper-lab space is effective as an accomplishment of all (or at least the most important) steps and production routines for the making of a newspaper edition. At times, the theoretical constructs that support every step and every decision taken in writing may not be so explicit - as explained by teachers - in the face



of urgent deadlines, interviews, images for editing, page diagramming, assignments falling. This does not mean, nor can it involve, the abandonment of theory in running the newspaper-lab<sup>3</sup>. Even if we are referring to much more elastic terms than those found in much of the production of a print newspaper. These terms certainly are due to the times considered pedagogically appropriate for critical learning of routines, beyond the mere execution of them, by future journalists in the processes adopted by a newspaper. What is effective in the newspaper-lab, in Lampião, is the critical and experimental prototype of print journalism.

In this sense, although they are possibly made invisible by the practical demands, theoretical discussions represent a key role in understanding experimentation and helping to improve it. They also allow a diagnosis and provide a reflection on how processes are connected with theory. To put in dialogue the thoughts of Otto Groth with the procedures and the discipline of the products in which the Lampião is performed, what one sees is precisely the inseparable relationship between theoretical thought and what is produced in practical activity.

We can also realize that even though the newspaper is an older product, perennial and traditional to journalism, students/reporters still struggle in adjusting their proposed agendas and, subsequently, their reports to newspaper's fundamental characteristics. This may relate to a lack of familiarity or involvement in the editorial project of the newspaper considered here (Lampião), which is only presented in detail to the students when they reach the course. It may also be an indication of the loss of importance of print newspaper in the range of what people consume as information and consequently in forming the frame of reference of future journalists. We can also assume that the naturalization of the printed product is not enough to grant students with the complete mastery of fundamental characteristics of this product.

Similarly, in many cases, experimentation is shy, and even though the characteristics of print newspaper are not so close to the students, the superficial familiarity with them, with the current models of journalism, provides a less innovative implementation of laboratory products. This may indicate that in addition to an incipient competency regarding fundamental characteristics of print newspaper, students also do not move easily through

experimentalism, offered and required by the journalism laboratory. We can also wonder if students have little critical formation regarding these models, since they are not always able to discuss, in laboratory practice, the ways in which traditional journalism form its constituent qualities in each issue and thus rethink periodicity, topicality, universality and publicity.

Finally, perhaps what appears from the difficulties in dealing with the essence of a newspaper-lab product is a shift in the conception of journalistic time and forms of mediation exerted in the newsmaking post journalism 2.0. Print, still so vital and important - audible - in a small-town community, such as Lampiões' s community, moves in a peculiar present, always at the risk of becoming preterit in the period between the assignment meeting and distribution; it cannot, even if wanted, to be completely current, instantaneous; It is not in its nature to match event and publication. It requires learning and the seizure of a new present, dense and stretched. Mediation also requires a new positioning before the world around the reporters, college students: a world that is not theirs, but to which they belong while studying in Ufop; a world that, if they do not join, they won't be able to see the universality upon which Lampião depends.

\* This paper was translated by Pedro Ivo Rocha de Macedo

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## NOTES

- 1 Produced by students enrolled in the mandatory classes of Print Journalism Laboratory I - Newspaper, offered in the fifth undergraduate period. The classes admit up to 25 students each, who learn together the craft of laboratory journalism, guided by three teachers: text, photography and visual planning, with the contribution of one or two monitors. In the second half of 2014, the group held two editions throughout the semester.
  
- 2 A hierarchical fact imposes some order to the facts of a story, or some kind of pretext that motivates a journalistic piece, especially the factual ones (JORGE, 2005). The trigger is often embodied in the lead and readers perceive it. In addition, daily vehicles often demand it, as recommended by the best writing manuals of the country.
  
- 3 Often, we can perceive the presence of theory in the newspaper-lab, in the classes of content resumption held at the beginning of each issue's production, in the layout, reporting and photography teams.

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