

INTRODUCTION

# THE JOURNALISM AS A SPACE IN WHICH TO OBSERVE THE WORLD

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The title of the 14<sup>th</sup> SBPjor Meeting in 2016 at South Santa Catarina University in Palhoça, Santa Catarina was **“The journalism research as a space in which to observe the world: silence, censorship and power”**. The goal was to promote and encourage discussion on the relationship between journalism and social diversity, censorship (or self censorship) and the limitations that are imposed on and faced by journalistic organizations, including journalists, in a society marked by exclusion and inequality. The works presented in this meeting deal with the representation of the Other in journalistic discourse and practice as well as the difficulties and challenges in building meaning about the world; the *métier* of journalism. There were also works that highlighted and discussed new communication practices, ones that challenge the traditional model, the mainstream, by using other narratives and new social actors.

The theme of this meeting was a strategic one as we are now living (and have been for a while) in a time of great political and social crisis, not just in Brazil but in the world, marked by a lack of dialogue and tolerance and by major journalistic corporations defending their specific points of view – which are rarely aimed at incorporating ideologies that push the *status quo*. So, opening up

spaces for studies that show how journalism represents and asserts conceptions of truth about what strays from the norm, and the Other that is prevalent in our texts, is fundamental, necessary and urgent. In our complex world that faces difficulties and challenges on all levels – personal, community, society and the world – having open spaces to build meaning about the world is essential, as the 14<sup>th</sup> SBPJor Meeting proposes.

Even though Alterity was not fully explored in our studies (as was the case in previous works), it was touched on in this Meeting to provide the opportunity for a special edition of **BJR** on the theme and works presented there. This edition of **BJR** broadens the proposed discussion and makes it more visible, open to debate. As the title of this edition states, there are works that analyze (content, discourse, semiologic, narrative) how the media builds and strengthens hegemonic meaning of actors and groups marginalized in society or, contrarily, how journalism is capable of changing these representations. There were also works included that discuss the representations of the Other in journalism and in the daily production of news, which included studies on cognitive fields of journalists, censorship and self-censorship, organizational obstacles as well as analyses on the political economy of the media (and journalism) that discuss the ideologies adopted by journalistic corporations to defend their specific points of view about the Other.

The wide range of articles here mirror the complexity of discussion on the theme. This is why the first article presented is “Alterity, Otherness and Journalism: From Phenomenology to Narration of Modes of Existence” by Camila Freitas and Marcia Benetti, which looks at alterity in journalism from the theoretical perspective of phenomenology. Freitas and Benetti presuppose that journalism is an important locus for building on what we know about similarity and difference between people. They also state that raising awareness of social diversity is the role of journalism. In order to develop their thought they look at the concept of *otherness*, in other words, the Other in its entire singularity, tying it to actions of empathy, sympathy and compassion. It is about the need for journalists to recognize and narrate the meeting between the “self” and the “other” through the inherent complexity of this meeting which should be expressed by and in journalistic narratives.

The second text presented here “Journalists and Their Role in Selecting and Building News on Contemporary Transnational

Migrations” by Elaine Javorski and Liliane Brignol, is an empirical study on the content analysis of morning telejournals, followed by interviews and focus groups with journalists from the state of Pará, using the theory of *gatekeeping* to identify what influences a journalist when selecting news stories. The study suggests that there is a large dependency on bureaucratic sources and points to the disconnection between journalists and minorities, and how this defines the way these minorities are portrayed in news stories.

The third text is “The Production of Meanings on the Political Crisis in the *Profissão Repórter* Program” by Kalliandra Quevedo Conrad, Natália Martins Flores and Maria Ivete Trevisan Fossá. This text is about how journalism hides itself, how it is silent. The program *Profissão Repórter* is used to understand the production of meaning on the political crisis in Brazil, based on an analysis of the French discourse. The text identifies the many subjects built by the report, “labour party member” “worker” and “protestor” and reveals not only how these subjects are represented and opposed, but also how certain aspects related to the crisis are silenced by the news report, naturalizing a more complex view of the crisis than what the report intends to show.

The next text “Metacritic Practice: A Configuration of New Journalistic Narratives” by Marta Regina Maia, Rafael Drumond and Caio Rodrigues Aniceto, takes on a different viewpoint, looking at alternative models for financing journalism which are able to circulate narratives that give those subjects a voice who are traditionally kept silent. In other words, the text offers thoughts on new potential within the field. Therefore, media criticism is discussed yet on a metacritical level, studying the project Bridge: Human rights, justice and public safety.

The last text “Privacy as an Alterity Problem Dimension” by Rogério Christofoletti, has a more theoretical approach to the proposal. He strengthens journalism as a space where Alterity can be realized on the level that it relates to the Other who allows journalists to access the world as well as for the Other who directs the work. He looks at this relationship from a public and private point of view, verifying how this relationship appears in dictionaries in the field in order to determine that the theme has not yet received the proper recognition it deserves despite its importance. He points to this absence as a potential to be realized.

In conclusion, we are sure that these texts do not encompass the entire complexity of journalism as a space for observing the world. But it does point to recurring silences occurring in this field and furthers our understanding of journalism as a space for narratives tied to the dialectic situation of revealing/hiding. As far as hiding, these texts hold a dialectic position and point towards the potential of journalism and Alterity, to building empathy for the Other. This is a journalism which is missing yet more and more necessary.

Enjoy!