

ARTICLES
ARTÍCULOS

JOURNALISM, SOCIAL NETWORKS AND GLOBAL OCCUPATION MOVEMENTS:

a systemic crisis in the contemporary semiosphere

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Brasileira de Pesquisadores em Jornalismo

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ABSTRACT - This article ponders the tension created in journalism by the emergence of social networks in the processes of the social construction of reality. The focuses are the events kindled by the *Indignados* movement in Spain in 2012, during the “25S” protests, which called for a new constituent assembly. Waite Alberto Casillas stole the scene by facing police truculence, and that had a great repercussion in the networks, attracting the attention of international journalism. There are two points of view which, when compared, lead to a possible synthesis about this moment of crisis: 1) the way journalism presents the events; 2) the possibilities and implications offered by the networks to the more ample dynamics of journalism. C. S. Peirce’s concept of semiosis is the basis of the reflective effort, along with a systemic view inspired by the Semiotics of Culture – especially as in Yuri Lotman. It is postulated that in the contemporary semiosphere, in which complex processes of semiosis set off by events from the chaotic reality are unfolded, journalism has to review its practices, under pain of losing the legitimacy it has acquired throughout history as a mediator of a certain kind of knowledge.

Keywords: Journalism. Cyberevent. Social networks. Crisis. Social reality.

JORNALISMO, REDES SOCIAIS E MOVIMENTOS DE OCUPAÇÃO GLOBAL: crise sistêmica na semiosfera contemporânea

RESUMO - O artigo reflete sobre tensões geradas ao jornalismo com a emergência das redes sociais nos processos de construção social da realidade. O foco são acontecimentos suscitados pelo movimento *Indignados*, na Espanha, em 2012, durante o protesto “25S”, cuja demanda era uma nova assembleia constituinte. O garçom Alberto Casillas roubou a cena ao enfrentar a truculência policial, produzindo intensa repercussão nas redes e chamando a atenção do jornalismo. São dois os principais pontos de vista que, cotejados, levam a uma síntese possível acerca desse momento de crise: 1) a forma como o jornalismo representa os acontecimentos; 2) as possibilidades e implicações proporcionadas pelas redes nas dinâmicas mais amplas do jornalismo. O esforço reflexivo tem como base o conceito de semiose, de C. S. Peirce, e uma visão sistêmica inspirada na Semiótica da Cultura – especialmente em Yuri Lotman. Postula-se que, na semiosfera contemporânea em que se desenrolam complexos processos de semiose disparados por acontecimentos da ordem da realidade caótica, o jornalismo seja tensionado a rever suas práticas, sob o risco de perder a legitimidade que alcançou ao longo da história como mediador que produz certo tipo de conhecimento.

Palavras-chave: Jornalismo. Ciberacontecimento. Redes sociais. Crise. Realidade social.

PERIODISMO, REDES SOCIALES Y MOVIMIENTOS DE OCUPACIÓN GLOBAL: crisis sistémica en la semiosfera contemporánea

RESUMEN - El artículo reflexiona sobre las tensiones que la aparición de las redes sociales en los procesos de construcción social de la realidad ha generado en el periodismo. El estudio se centra en los acontecimientos suscitados por el movimiento de los Indignados en España en 2012, durante la protesta del 25S, cuya demanda fue una nueva asamblea constituyente. El camarero Alberto Casillas se convirtió en el protagonista al enfrentarse a la brutalidad policial, lo cual tuvo una importante repercusión en las redes y despertó el interés del periodismo. Dos son dos los principales puntos de vista que, contrastados, conducen a una posible síntesis acerca de este momento de crisis: 1) la forma en que el periodismo representa los acontecimientos; 2) las implicaciones y posibilidades que ofrecen las redes en las dinámicas más amplias del periodismo. El esfuerzo de reflexión se basa en el concepto de semiosis de C. S. Peirce y en una visión sistémica inspirada en la Semiótica de la Cultura —especialmente la de Yuri Lotman—. Se postula que en la semiosfera contemporánea, donde se desarrollan los complejos procesos de semiosis desencadenados por acontecimientos del orden de la realidad caótica, el periodismo se ve presionado a rever sus prácticas, ante el riesgo de perder la legitimidad lograda a lo largo de la historia como mediador que produce un cierto tipo de conocimiento sobre la realidad.

Palabras clave: Periodismo. Ciberacontecimiento. Redes sociales. Crisis. Realidad social.

INTRODUCTION: THE JOURNALISM IN SEMIOTICS

This article briefly presents the theoretical framework that brings together semiotics and the study of journalism, especially in the perspectives of two of semiotics' main authors: C.S. Peirce and Yuri Lotman. At the same time, it ponders the production of events in contemporary journalistic practices. A movement of synthesis is intended when comparing empirical data from these two perspectives, which communicate through the concept of semiosis.

Journalistic practices are seen here as a process of signification of the world – in Peircean thinking, semiosis. This way, it configures itself as an exercise of production of signs representing events that become objects in a journalistic narrative. It mobilizes that theory which, among others, supports the thesis that journalism is a specific kind of knowledge (MEDITSCH, 1997) which intervenes in the social construction of reality (BERGER E LUCKMANN, 1983).

Srouf (1978) establishes four premises for obtaining knowledge: the concrete existence of the world that is independent from what is known about it; the real determinations about the world which constitute the internal structure of its phenomena and its logic; the possibility of cognitive appropriation of these determinations in order to control, predict and intervene; and the process of knowledge, from this logic,

converting itself into production – a process that behaves as a practice of appropriation and transformation of the world. Lúcia Santaella (1996) perceives in these premises something that is at the nucleus of Peirce's pragmatic postulates and which characterize semiosis: the ways conscience and knowledge act and transform this cognitive operation with the world into signs has effects even in the field of action.

Admitting these conjectures implies understanding which logics guide journalism as a specific genre of discourse (BENETTI, 2008), or even as a language – which, in Lotman's words (1978, p. 35) is “every system of communication which uses signs ordained in a particular way.”

In the contemporary semiosphere, new communication technologies and, above all, social networks, are constituted as spaces in which complex processes of semiosis happen and have been generating tension, in different levels, in conventional journalistic practices, and it ends by potentially producing border zones where languages interact. In this scenario, journalism is believed to be going through a moment of systemic crisis.

We bring to light, as an example of this crisis, the events caused by the “25S” protest, promoted by the *Indignados* movement in Spain in September of 2012, around the Spanish congress, and the report run by the newspaper *El País*. Waiter Alberto Casillas, from Madrid, stole the scene when he faced police truculence in suffocating the protest, causing intense repercussion in social networks and, consequently, catching the attention of journalism.

1 SEMIOSIS AT THE CENTER OF COMMUNICATION BETWEEN PEIRCE AND LOTMAN

Thinking the processes of signification of the world in a Semiotics of Culture perspective is an epistemological gesture which, while overcoming the anthropocentric view in the relationship between *nature*, *culture* and *society*, nevertheless reintroduces the human subject connected to other levels of complexity (which is how the performance of journalism as an interpretant of sign is perceived)¹. Culture is conceived in a systemic interplay in which languages interact and act in the social construction of reality. Culture, in this perspective, is that which organizes structurally the world that surrounds human beings and makes them capable of being conscious of themselves (LOTMAN, 2000).

Lotman and Uspenskii (1981) pointed out that only by means of scientific abstraction could language be delineated as a phenomenon in itself. When functioning in reality, it is incorporated in a more general system, culture, and along with the latter, constitutes a more complex totality. The authors introduced the systemic perspective into the understanding of the process in the sense that, for them, the fundamental part of culture consists of organizing structurally the world that surrounds mankind. "Culture is a structurality generator: it creates a sociosphere around men which, just like the biosphere, makes life possible; not organic, of course, but of relations." (LOTMAN AND UNSPENSKII, 1981, p. 39)

This thinking already contained the concept of semiosphere that would later be defined by Lotman (1996); that is, the space in which all semiosis is processed and metabolized – the space where culture itself is constituted – a space that is not homogeneous, but filled with tensions, configurations and conflicts (HENN, 2011a).

Semiosis links Semiotics of Culture and C.S. Peirce's General Theory of Signs. Semiosis is understood to be a process of signification of the world; of exchange, of interaction between languages. It is the process that allows the organization of the world through language, and it is an important concept, for both Lotman and Peirce.

Peirce (2002) dedicated himself precisely to understanding how the processes of production of meaning and reality, which are inapprehensible to men by any means other than language, take place. This effort resulted in the triadic explanation that phenomena happen in conscience as quality (firstness), relation (secondness) and representation (thirdness). The sign, broadly speaking, is the mediator between reality and man. There is an object in reality where an interpretant of a sign that will represent it acts, and that sign will be an object over and over again, starting other processes of semiosis.

Culture, in Lotman, is at the same time fruit and seed of semiosis. It is fruit when constituted by the processes of semiosis that produce *cultural texts*, and, that way, materiality; and it is seed when it works as the basis for the establishment of processes of semiosis, providing maps of meaning from which phenomena may leave firstness, go through secondness and arrive, in signs already arranged as texts, at thirdness.

This organization can be thought of as having a systemic nature. Lotman and Uspenskii (1981) formulate an idea that implies this nature, which would rule the conception of semiosphere: the growth of culture, structured in mechanisms that oscillate between

dynamism and stability, positioned humanity in an advantageous way in relation to other animal populations circumscribed to a stable volume of information. However, there is an entropic and dissipative *processuality* (according to Prigogine, 1996)²: culture eats resources with the same avidity as the productive mechanism, and at the same time it destroys the environment that surrounds it. According to them, it is not necessarily men's real demands that dictate the speed of this behavior, but what is really at stake is the internal logic of the accelerated exchange of the internal mechanisms in operation.

The structurality of the semiosphere has a chaotic component endowed with the same dynamics as the so-called complex systems. For Lotman (1999), the world of semiosis is not fatally closed in itself, but forms a complex and heterogeneous structure that interplays continually with the space that is external to itself. In doing so, it accentuates the chaoticity of the external, dissipating its organization. This relationship of the system with the world that exists beyond will be the relationship of the dynamic with the static, of the homogeneous and the heterogeneous (HENN, 2010). From this perspective, the text transforms itself into a semiotic space inside which languages interact, interfere and organize themselves hierarchically.

It is a space with high contents of complexity that articulates itself in a relation between the static and the dynamic. There are movements close to the static which are gradual, slow, of almost imperceptible changes. Others, however, closer to the dynamic, are unpredictable and of an explosive character. All the explosive dynamic processes happen in a complex dialogue with the stabilization mechanisms, an aspect that avoids the idea of extinction. One of the foundations of the semiosphere is its heterogeneity (LOTMAN, 1999).

Semiotic systems give proof, by clashing in the semiosphere, of this capacity for survival and transformation, and of transforming themselves into others, like Proteo, but remaining the same; so it is convenient to use caution when talking about the complete disappearance of anything in space (LOTMAN, 1999, p. 159-160).

Journalism, a great protagonist in semiospheric production (and subject to the oscillations predicted in the dynamics of the system), is what sparks the dialogue between the two authors of this work. Firstly, in Peirce, the process of production of the news, or of the journalistic narratives, is understood as a semiosis: the semiosis of the news (HENN, 1996; OLIVEIRA, 2012a). When representing the events in the form of news, the journalist is constantly producing signs: the event

is the object; the journalist – not as subject, but as an affected mind – acts as an interpretant; and the news item represents the object in its condition of sign. From that, a logical scheme is conceived, and it has, in its interior: *object/event – interpretant/journalist – sign/news item*. This scheme mobilizes a more ample process that involves the event (object), a journalistic narrative (built from the interpretative activity of journalism) and its repercussion/resonance/scheduling (interpretative activity in conflict with journalism).

When the systemic comprehension of these processes gains evidence, Lotman is evoked. Journalism as a system of production of meaning has two founding systemic implications: 1) intervention in the social construction of reality; and 2) deriving from the first, interaction with other systems of production of meaning that permeate the semiosphere. What semiosis is established in the middle of these relations? This reflection intends to find clues for this answer.

2 JOURNALISM AS A MODELING SYSTEM

From the point of view of the Semiotics of Culture, all languages are modeling systems. This means that languages, when functioning in reality, find themselves inside a general system, understood as culture in that the action is essentially one of modeling: the structural organization of a symbolic world. This organization has a hypercomplex character and is subject to several vulnerabilities. The codifications instituted by journalistic language, whose logics are currently in conflict, are expressions of this modeling process (HENN, 2011; OLIVEIRA, 2012b).

The idea of modeling echoes the field of cybernetics in the sense that it is the model that suggests abstraction as a tool capable of reproducing objects artificially: from observation, through the apprehension of functioning, to control. It is that which in cybernetics is expressed in the concept of program (MACHADO, 2003) and which Lotman and Unspenskii (1981) understand to be a program of behavior that intervenes in culture as an *inverted program*: the program looks to the future from the point of view of the person who elaborates it; culture looks to the past from the point of view of realization of behavior. In language, this process reveals itself in semiosis that perpetuates itself and produces *cultural codes*: “sources of gestation of hereditary-memory, as understood by Lotman, which take charge of formatting the semiotic systems of culture (MACHADO, 2003, p. 30).

As a modeling system, the framings journalism applies to the objects of reality tend to perpetuate themselves, a phenomenon that suggests the configuration of collective memories as processes previously framed in the structuring of these programs (HENN, 2008).

There is an important exception: modeling systems can only be comprehended in a dialogical relationship with one or more systems. That is why, when pondering on journalism, it is necessary to think of its relations with the other systems that compose the semiosphere. The cultural texts that can be researched are derived from these interactions. They are configured as the materiality of the research; they demand “maps of meaning”, as Stuart Hall proposed (et. al, 1993, p. 226): “All of us want to maintain the same perspective about events (...) what unites us, as a society and culture (...) surpasses (...) what divides and differentiates us in groups or classes.”

The contemporary consensus is that neoliberalism is the dominant ideology that organizes social relations. Hall considers other types of manifestations. However, when he states that “the consensual side superposes itself”, he legitimates the interpretation that there is, in the semiosphere, a system of signification with signs of strongly ideological character, with which journalism interacts; as a system as well.

Legisigns, is how Peirce (2002) called signs that, in relation to themselves, had the strength of a law, and in the perspective presented here, they can be thought of as categories that guide the production of meaning in the world. Journalistically constituted events, even when established in zones of iconic and indicial indeterminations, are strongly attached to conventions that are historically and culturally instituted (HENN, 2010).

The production of news is a complex semiosis that suffers interventions from many orders. It starts with the story delivered to the reporter and goes through consecrated stages: the writing of the text; the editor’s refinement; the occasional review by the editor in chief... All in the direction of decoding the language of the communication vehicle, following the guidelines of editorial lines or writing manuals. Therefore, journalistic practices can also be understood as legisigns in the sense that there is a decoding expressed in the criteria of noticeability, value of the news, codes of ethics, professional cultures, and other normalizations that regulate the processes, in various levels.

If legisigns that represent conservative values that maintain the neoliberal consensus are predominant in the semiosphere, professional writers follow this rule. According to Manoff and Schudson (1986), journalistic practices end up being guided by the appearance

that reality takes in the processes of signification of the world; and then come the conventions, the routine, which shape the journalist's perception and the way he represents the events.

The result of an ethnographic exercise carried out by Oliveira (2012c) for the research he conducted in newspapers from the south of Brazil while obtaining his Masters degree was the elaboration of four categories of legisigns that incur on the semiosis of news. The first category was "Neoliberalism as a semiotic environment", and it concerns the values that maintain the neoliberal consensus. The second category brings the legisigns "Journalism as a system of production of meaning", based on the conventions of the field. "Newspapers as communication companies" are the legisigns that concern the organization of each newspaper and, lastly, "Journalists as sign operators", those that relate to the education of professionals, their common ground (PEIRCE, 2002).

The four categories constitute cultural codes that determine the functioning of journalism as a modeling system³. It is based on this structure that the editorial professionals signify the world, through the semiosis that the events start. It results in cultural texts produced by journalists being categorized as *communicative function* as defined by Lotman (1978): the one that brings the smallest number of new meanings; it is redundant when compared to the *creative function* and the *mnemonic function*.

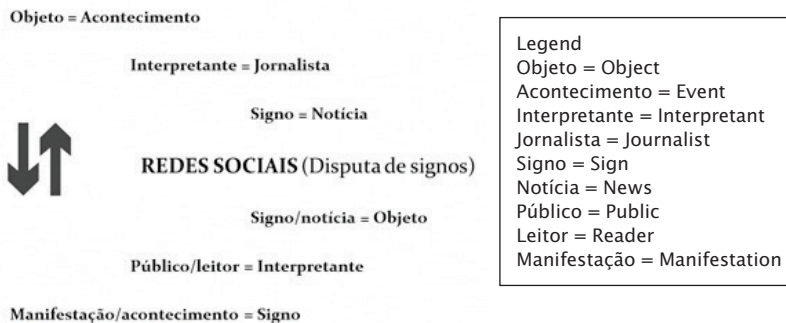
3 SYSTEMIC CRISIS: CONFLICTS IN THE CONTEMPORARY SEMIOSPHERE

In the contemporary semiosphere, where journalism participates as a system (HENN, 2002), new agents are interacting, leading to what is being called a systemic crisis journalism is going through. Systemic because it affects important parameters, such as autonomy and identity and could result in transformations that, even if dominated by centripetal forces that act on the maintenance of certain controls, would alter the identity of journalism as a professional and academic field (HENN, 2011b).

Pondering the prism of contemporaneity leads to the conclusion that although the protagonist role of journalism remains strong and conventional vehicles still retain the assurance of public stories, other systems are beginning to dispute this condition. In this context, social networks have constantly conflicted with journalistic practices at different levels. Whereas in journalism the events are signified through se-

miosis guided by the legisigns that compose it, in social networks other semiosis happens, configuring a *dispute of signs* over reality. Figure 1 tries to exemplify this explanation:

Figure 1 Schema representing what is postulated to be the circuit of process signification of events in the network



Based on this, the meanings given to events by journalism compete with those circulating in social networks, with the intervention of different subjects that operate different semiosis. Thus, it is understood that there is a need for a dialectic movement of revision of practices, which may impose on editorial professionals the task of showing more of the events. This is where the concept of cyber-event appears, and it refers to the emergence of journalistic events that contain, in their constitution, the sharing nature of social networks (HENN; HÖEHR, 2012).

The event affects people at some level and at the same time causes a discontinuity (QUERÉ, 2005). Sodr  (2009) talks about "acontecimentalidade" (event + mentality), which is connected to a relational complex between materiality, symbolic dimension, and the affectivity of the subjects that in fact lived the event. A big part of these events is often talked about in social networks, which gives them a degree of importance. Local media also allow a more organic approach to the events that can be uncovered in different ways, with other possible sources.

This group of connections forms a semiospheric environment constitutive of this new modality of events (and it is not homogeneous, since it can reveal social situations of great density, but also some that are absolutely superfluous) and tends to problematize the traditional influx of journalistic narrative

production. The public existence of the event has, in journalism, its preferential *locus* of legitimacy and potential focus for its affectation and reverberation. It is a semiosis whose influx has prevailed, until now, due to a certain linearity of the transformation of the semiotic object (event) into a sign (journalistic narrative), with production of interpretants (repercussion, affectation, scheduling). This logic has been shaken over and over again by the processes of online communication, and it has gained interesting textures with the consolidation of social networks (HENN, 2011b; HENN E HÖEHR, 2012).

Figure 2 Front page the section created to cover the events of “25S” on the website of the newspaper *El País*.



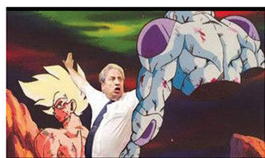
In the case about to be described, there are many manifestations of this movement. On September 25, 2012, thousands of people took to the streets of Madrid, in Spain, during the “25S”, a protest organized by the *Indignados*, one of the groups that adhered to movements around the world, supporting the demands of the minorities, better wealth distribution, and alternate models of social organization, especially in Europe and in the United States⁴; their main claim is real – or direct – democracy. This time they were also calling for a new constituent assembly; they occupied a square in front of the Spanish Congress.

Figure 3 Memes that circulated on the network in allusion to the action of Alberto Casillas

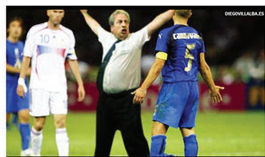
En una imagen dedicada a los espertos en arte, Alberto Casillas protagoniza el cuadro "Los fusilamientos del 2 de mayo" de Goya.



La imagen de Casillas diuidendo una pelea entre el súper saajim Goku y el malvado Freezer, forma parte de los "memes" que están circulando en internet.



También es posible ver a Casillas separando la pelea ocurrida entre Zinedine Zidane y Fabio Cannavaro, luego que el francés se prepara un cabezazo al italiano Marco Materazzi en la final del Mundial de Alemania 2006.



Here is the event: a protest of the *Indignados* group that mobilized society for a new constituent assembly, in the hopes of overcoming what the protesters understand to be a gap in the current constitution of the country; one of the reasons for the social inequality and for the lack of public policies to help those most in need.

The index of notability that defines the status of the journalistically constituted event (BENETTI, 2010), with the legisigns that determine it, are contemplated. The proof is that Spain's biggest newspaper, *El País*, publishes a special section for the protests on its website; that is, for its representation as object of the signs/news (Figure 2)⁵. Furthermore, one of the signs/news published on September 25 is entitled "Quem rodeia quem" ("Who encircles whom")⁶, in allusion to the Congress, that was encircled by the protesters; an attempt at explaining what the movement is, its origins, and who is part of it. Although the text tackles the climate of tension caused by the more radical protests, it omits many acts of violence by the police.

The first hours of the next day bring this news among all the others published by the newspaper "Protesto de 25S termina com carga, 64 feridos e 35 presos" ("25S Protest ends with a toll of 64 hurt and 35 arrested")⁷; the text talks about the actions of the police, who tried to prevent the protesters from invading the Congress and, as the title

implies, measures the consequences. So far, however, the signification of the event does not leave space for denouncing violence. On the contrary: the actions of the police are legitimated by the discourse chosen.

Parallel to the coverage of *El País*, protesters and bystanders accounts start to appear in social networks, especially *Facebook* and *Twitter*. The peak is the upload of a video on Youtube showing the waiter Alberto Casillas – his identification was possible only later, after the phenomenon has called the attention of journalists – defending the protesters that were taking refuge in the establishment where he worked and blocking the entrance of the police⁸. This happened on the day following the protests, September 26.

The video, as a sign representing the action of the waiter as object, starts a semiosis that leads to the production of many *memes* shared on the social networks (Figure 3). The profile on Twitter that shows Casillas as its user (twitter.com/PorterodelPrado) immediately has a significant number of followers and a quick search on Facebook shows many pages dedicated to him⁹.

At the end of September 26, *El País* published an interview with the waiter under the title “Eu sou do PP, mas a polícia foi excessiva” (“I belong to the People’s Party, but the police were too violent”)¹⁰. Alberto Casillas admits to being affiliated to the conservative Partido Popular (PP – People’s Party) that currently holds power in the Spanish government, but that does not prevent him from thinking critically about the police’s violent actions, and that is why he decided to intervene in defense of the protesters. It is the first time that police brutality is signified as part of the event “25S”.

Journalism is affected by social networks in the interaction between systems, which points to one of the border zones established in the contemporary semiosphere. It is exactly in these borders of the system, areas of permeability and translations, that Lotman (1999) perceived the possibility of crises, some of an explosive nature, that might unleash significant changes in the productive and semiotic character of the environment.

It is from this contact between systems that new meanings for the event “25S” emerge, beyond those that has been reported initially by the journalists exercising their communicative function. The texts derived from this interaction hold, potentially, the generative function that Lotman (1978) talked about. Also, the interaction between these two distinct texts, the one from journalists and the one from the social networks, is only possible because of the action of the mnemonic function, which makes them communicate when conserving the language codes, but signifying the events ahead. Memory, however, is not just as what looks back to the past, it also looks forward to the future, allowing new settings for the combination of codes.

4 PERSPECTIVES FOR THE STUDY OF JOURNALISM

The truculence with which the protests were stopped was cynically perceived as ordinary or banal, in the words of Benetti (2010); it did not rise to the condition of a journalistic event. This happened because of the legisigns that orient the production of meaning in journalism, which try to maintain the order above all the other implications of the protest promoted by the group *Indignados*.

The first signs/news that represented “25S” as an object talk about, at most, the number of people hurt because of police actions. Only after a movement of mass signification in the social networks, denouncing the violent acts, with Casillas as a character, did the excesses become signified as objects of new signs/news, in what seems to be the expression of the dispute of signs.

To Gumersindo Lafuente, director of the Spanish newspaper El País:

The internet put journalism and journalists in a new place, more exposed, more complicated and more committed. This place is full of opportunities, but it also has new obligations. We went from an oligopoly to an almost complete disintermediation, and nowadays we are indispensable in the relationship among powers, and we also have the people demanding that we do our jobs every minute (LAFUENTE, 2011)¹¹.

The opinion of the journalist is proof of the way editorial professionals perceive the incidence of the social networks in their jobs. It corroborates the theory that there is a systemic crisis, generated by the networks, that creates conflicts in the conventional journalistic practices and demands a moment of reflection from journalism.

With the intention of stimulating this reflection, semiotics is proposed as one of the places from which it can start. That is especially true of using Semiotics of Culture as a perspective; a systemic vision is highlighted, trying to handle the evaluation of the interactions that are unleashed in the semiosphere from the signification of events. As defended by Machado (2003, p. 27): “The idea that a culture is the result of the combination of systems of signs, each with its own decoding, is the prerogative of the semiotics of culture approach, which defined itself, that way, as a “*semiotics of system*”¹².

Faced with these parameters, the researcher who wishes to study events for a semiotic analysis must consider the logics that underpin the semiosis triggered by systems of production of meaning.

Peirce (1974, p. 23) puts it this way:

Let us understand, then, that what we have to do, as students of phenomenology, is simply to try to open our mind's eye, to look at the phenomenon and say what are the characteristics which are never missing from it, be this phenomenon something that our external experience forces upon us, that is, the most savage of all dreams or the most abstract and general scientific conclusion.

It is important to explain that conflicts in journalism as a system are not new. Since the advent of cultural studies, when *reception* first ceases its supporting role in the processes of signification of the world, problems of this order have been considered. With the emergence of the social networks, however, always understood as systems, these conflicts have been intensified. More than that: it is possible, from the materiality of the texts produced on the borders of the contemporary semiosphere, for the consequences to be analyzed (SALLES, 2011; HENN, 2011). This has been the effort made in this article. As was claimed by Christa Berger (2010, p. 24-25), it is necessary to deepen the communication between practice and knowledge of journalism, providing dialogues with less dissonance between knowing and doing “in the hopes that journalism may, when informing about reality, contribute to the enlightenment of the world”.

In accordance with Christa Berger, the idea that remains is that this moment of crisis is fertile for producing debates about what contributions journalism can make to a project of emancipation of society. By producing knowledge and giving individuals *knowledge about themselves* – flirting lightly with Foucault's hermeneutics of the subject (2006) –, a communicative rationality, journalism would make them capable of exercising a *communicative action* that aims at the greater good that Habermas (2003) talked about. Furthermore, it is necessary to do it in the light of the ideal of poliedric talent, which Lotman (1999), referencing Machado (2003, p. 23) describes as: “(...) an intelligence which has a creative capability that sees no limit, that can make connections where many see only sharing, and see problems where common sense sees only truth”.

Lastly, it is not too much to call attention to the open character of a systemic proposal for the study of journalism – or any phenomenon in the human sciences. The semiosis of objects does not end with the conclusions at the end of an analysis. According to Regiane Nakagawa (2012, verbal communication)¹³, the researcher will learn as much as possible in a certain moment and specific context, on the border of contact with the object. The challenge lies in making inferences that will contribute effectively to its comprehension.

NOTES

- 1 If language occurs in scales that are beyond the processes of social interaction, that is, that span the bio, the cosmos, the semion there is no way of closing culture in the socius. Understanding the interaction between nature and culture is, indeed, the big problem for the Russian semiotics of culture approach. (MACHADO, 2003, p. 25).
- 2 They are self-organizing and self-healing processes unleashed for an irreversible time, as stated by Prigonini (HENN, 2011a).
- 3 To learn more about the four categories of legisigns, see: Oliveira (2012c).
- 4 In the United States, the most famous event of global occupation was: Occupy Wall Street.
- 5 See: http://politica.elpais.com/tag/manifestacion_25_septiembre_2012/a/. Consulted on: January 4, 2013.
- 6 Original post available at: http://politica.elpais.com/politica/2012/09/25/actualidad/1348599210_154793.html. Consulted on: January 4, 2013.
- 7 Original post available at: http://politica.elpais.com/politica/2012/09/25/actualidad/1348574519_035448.html. Consulted on: January 4, 2013.
- 8 Video available at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=pZkMSREGETs#. Consulted on: January 4th, 2013.
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- 12 Highlighted according to the original.
- 13 Note taken during a class taught by Dr. Regiane Miranda de Oliveira Nakagawa, on November 27, 2012, during the seminar on Semiotics of Culture promoted by the PPGCOM – UFRGS.

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RECEIVED ON: 28/09/2013 | APPROVED ON: 12/02/2014