

EDITORIAL

COMMUNICATION AND CONTEMPORARY CULTURAL ISSUES

Dear Reader,

Babel (2006) Iñárritu's film shows conflicts' cultural and geopolitical addressed by many Latin America's Cultural Studies scholars (Néstor García Canclini, Jesús Martín-Barbero, Jorge A. González, Guillermo Orozco Gómez, Luiz Beltrão) for decades in books and lectures: the noisy communicational dimension of cultural globalization and its perverse consequences for historically marginalized groups.

The film portrays the trajectories of people from three distinct continents (America, Africa, and Asia), which are connected by a specific episode: an accident involving an American tourist couple due to a shotgun shot during a tourist excursion in a mountainous region of Morocco, North Africa. This episode becomes the starting point for a complex plot that connects the tourist couple to other, more distinct social contexts, featuring: a nanny Mexican woman of couple's children who experiences an epic saga crossing the border between the United States and Mexico; two young Moroccan brothers who live in a rural area and accidentally shoot the tourist couple; and a Japanese businessman, owner of the weapon, who has a relationship of little communication with his deaf daughter. Between one story and another, issues of class and gender, multiculturalism, asymmetrical intercultural relations, sociocultural prejudices and exclusions of the migrant population, identities and otherness, and intercultural communication are discussed, not coincidentally confronting the most diverse visions of a globalized world. Almost ten years after the release

of Babel, the conflicts experienced by the main characters have intensified on a larger scale, with the growth of anti-immigration policies, measures, and laws, wars, and genocidal/ethnocidal practices in various parts of the world, rekindling the biblical myth surrounding the word “babel”.

In the biblical narrative, the word “Babel” appears in the book of Genesis and refers to the construction of a tower with the lofty goal of reaching heaven. However, during construction, a major communication problem arises when people begin to speak other languages. This is a great metaphor for the history of the modern project of Western Civilization and its crisis, considering how the construction of the tower represents the main pillars that underpin cultural globalization, and its interruption highlights disjunctions (Appadurai, 2001), ruptures, discontinuities (Jameson, 1997), setbacks, and incommunicability.

Paraphrasing a classic by sociologist Néstor García Canclini, we can consider that contemporary versions of the Towers of Babel involve not only the distinction between the “Different, the Unequals, and the Disconnected” (“Diferentes, Desiguais e Desconectados”) in this unfinished construction, but also the extent to which communication and its processes (whether sociotechnical or not) need to be interpreted as a key piece in problematizing many issues in this puzzle, where everything begins to be re-dimensioned (relationships, interactions, information, expectations, desires, anxieties, fears, uncertainties). This, in other words, implies understanding the inputs and outputs in the face of many contemporary pitfalls, in their (dis)communicative semantics.

Traps that distance us, making us strangers to ourselves, while simultaneously bringing us closer as decipherers and researchers of “Communication and Contemporary Cultural Issues” – the theme of this issue of the “Journal of Communication, Culture, and Society” (RCCS). The Dossier features eleven articles organized into two axes: one more specific and the other more comprehensive, written by authors from various parts of Brazil and the world. They present research findings focused on the analysis of eminently media-related processes and phenomena, in their direct or indirect interface with themes,

problematizations, and scopes in the field of Culture, as well as related fields that seek to reflect on different framings of these contemporary cultural traps. The entry into this contemporary labyrinth discusses the critical moment experienced by immigrants facing the anti-immigration policies of the Donald Trump administration in the United States. The article "Opinion Journalism and Migration Processes: The Construction of the Imaginary World about Immigrants in the Columns of the Folha de S. Paulo newspaper" is written by Professor Eduardo Ritter of the Federal University of Pelotas (UFPel) in Rio Grande do Sul. One of the objectives of the research is to analyze and reflect on Folha de S. Paulo opinion coverage of the implications of the Trump administration's anti-immigration policies on public perception of immigrants in Brazil.

The researcher Josuel Mariano Da Silva Hebenbrock, who currently resides in Germany, affiliated with the Institute of African Studies at the Federal University of Pernambuco (UFPE), writes a critical analysis of the images communicated in two European newspapers: "Der Spiegel" and "Stern". In the study entitled "International Photojournalism and the Israel/Hamas Asymmetric War: Analyses of Still Images from Der Spiegel and Stern Magazines", Hebenbrock reflects how "photographic images, together with the social practice of the photojournalist, can induce domination of the recipient and, consequently, the maintenance of the domination carried out by a ruling class".

The article "Narratives of Non-Journalists in Piauí Magazine: Otherness as an Informative and Humanizing Link", written by researchers Iuri Barbosa Gomes and Thayna Vieira Pereira, from the State University of Mato Grosso (Unemat), presents research on journalism as a constructor of reality and highlights how "the practice of otherness in Journalism is essential for journalists to see the world from different perspectives."

Observing the world from Angola, Musseque-Guetão, from the perspective of musical communication, or rather, "kuduro", is the theme of the article "Kuduro: from youth representation to the strategy of political manipulation in Angola", written by Angolan researchers Justino Jorge José, Sousa da Silva

Sobrinho, and Makosa Tomás David, under the guidance of Professor Octávio Bengui José Hinda, of the Graduate Program of the International Cooperation Group of Brazilian Universities (GCUB). The authors believe that the message of discontent communicated through “kuduro” lyrics is used by the MPLA political party at rallies as a marketing strategy to attract the public. However, this communication content is not analyzed for the development of public policies aimed at improving the quality of life of Angolan citizens. Musical communication is also analyzed in the article “The Sertão as a Concept for Creation and Its Festivals as a Creative State”, written by Professor Diego Ramon da Silva Costa of the State University of Mato Grosso do Sul (UEMS). The empirical analysis examines popular Brazilian festivals, both caipira and sertanejo, such as Folia de Reis, Festa do Divino, and Treição. This immersion in the reality of the sertão proposes rethinking the sertão not only as a place where water is scarce, but also as an opportunity to experience culture, art, and solidarity. Orality, the practice of transmitting knowledge and culture through speech, song, and other spoken forms, remains a vital part of cultural preservation and identity. This is also the theme of the article “Kongo Proverbs and African Oral Tradition among the Basolongo”, by Angolan researcher António Pedro Fernandes Maria, from the Graduate Program in History at the State University of Maranhão (UEMA). The study reflects on the importance of proverbs in the daily lives of the Kongo people, conveying moral values and providing guidance in solving contemporary problems. In contemporary times, cultural communication, particularly in the form of folk art and ancestral knowledge, is shaped by the interaction between oral traditions and modern communication technologies.

The technologies that enable the digitalization of artistic practices, especially in music, are the subject of the article “From Fingers to Data: Considerations on the Digitalization of Contemporary Music Making”, by researcher Vinícius Rangel Souto of SENAC University Center, São Paulo. The author discusses how digital tools reconfigure cultural and economic paradigms by replacing traditional instruments and processes in the field of music. Technology has indeed transformed the way people communicate and interact, potentially

impacting listening and understanding. While it has made communication faster and more accessible, there are concerns about the quality and depth of interactions. The shift to digital communication can lead to shorter attention spans, a reliance on technology for communication, a potential reduction in face-to-face interactions, and misinterpretations of discourses communicated in cyberspace, such as irony, a figure of speech that can go unnoticed in online video communication. This is the theme of the article “Irony in Parody and the Social Force of Postmodernity: Conflicts between Bloggers, Fernanda Bande, and Sonia Abrão”, by researcher Pedro Klein Garcia of the Federal University of Mato Grosso do Sul (UFMS). The author questions the use of the figure of speech irony, based on an analysis of the discursive conflict between actors in the media cyberspace, to explore the evolution of the concept of postmodernity in the contemporary academic environment.

Thífani Postali Jacinto of the University of Sorocaba (Uniso) wrote the article “Folk Communication and Resistance: A Study on the Location and Facades of Umbanda Temples in Sorocaba”, which analyzes the location and visual communication of the facades of Umbanda temples in Sorocaba, in the interior of São Paulo.

The communication initiatives developed by young people from Mato Grosso are the subject of the article “Promoting Education for Citizenship: Experience of Winning the UNICEF Seal (2017-2020 Edition) in the Municipality of Nova Brasilândia, Mato Grosso”, written by researchers Nilton Arlindo da Silva Filho Mazochin and Ivonete Gomes de Souza Ventura. The article highlights the collective efforts of young people in developing communication projects to create public policies, encourage the construction of sports and leisure spaces, and soon, an inclusive, pluralistic, and supportive education.

Environmental education through webjournalism is the subject of the article “Environmental Journalism: The Podcast ABC of the Pantanal”, written by researchers Iago de Mattos Lima and Eveline Teixeira Baptistella, from the State University of Mato Grosso (Unemat). “The narrative, guided by a regional

soundtrack and documentary structure, assumes the commitment of active listening, contributing to the democratization of knowledge and the strengthening of territorial identity.”

The articles in this Dossier discuss the power of communication as a tool with immense potential for “homeostasis sociocultural” (Cunha, 2020; Damásio, 2015) in the contemporary world. Issues ranging from the symbolic representation of images, independent public policy actions, ironic misinformation, and digital representation are intertwined on social media platforms, revealing a public discourse fragmented by the algorithms of dominant hegemonic networks. Linguistic shifts and nonverbal digital expressions (such as memes and emojis) reshape the nature of understanding the meaning of culture, while simultaneously fueling echo chambers and polarization. For all these reasons, it is essential to encourage, maintain, and continue publishing academic research on Communication and Culture, based on the interdisciplinary perspective of Applied Social Sciences. These dynamic strategies and processes must be analyzed not only to decode emerging patterns but also to promote more equitable and ethical communication ecosystems in an increasingly pluralistic world.

Enjoy your reading!

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