

# The Brazilian Journalism and the mediations of the production of *O segredo da pirâmide*\*

## *O jornalismo no Brasil e as mediações da produção de O segredo da pirâmide*

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### ABSTRACT

The objective is to contextualize the book *O segredo da pirâmide: para uma teoria marxista do jornalismo* [The secret of the pyramid: for a Marxist theory of journalism], by the Brazilian theoretician Adelmo Genro Filho, facing the questions of Brazilian journalism in the 1980s. As an analysis device, we performed a detailed reading of four texts edited in August 5, 1984, in the section “Folhetim”, of the newspaper *Folha de S. Paulo*, and of the first seven paragraphs of the book. Among the main themes presented are the need for specific training for the profession, the role and shortcomings of communication schools for the training of journalists, the division of value and power within newsrooms, and the lack of dialogue theories with practice of journalists.

**Keywords:** *O segredo da pirâmide*, *Folha de S. Paulo*, Brazilian journalism, academy

### RESUMO

O objetivo é contextualizar o livro *O segredo da pirâmide: para uma teoria marxista do jornalismo*, de Adelmo Genro Filho, diante das questões do jornalismo brasileiro nos anos 1980. Como dispositivo de análise, é realizada uma leitura de quatro textos da edição de 5 de agosto de 1984 do caderno “Folhetim”, da *Folha de S. Paulo* e dos primeiros sete parágrafos do livro. Entre os principais temas apresentados estão a necessidade de formação específica para o exercício da profissão, o papel e as insuficiências das escolas de comunicação para a formação de jornalistas, a divisão de valor e de poder no interior das redações e a falta de interlocução das teorias com a prática dos jornalistas.

**Palavras-chave:** *O segredo da pirâmide*, *Folha de S. Paulo*, jornalismo brasileiro, academia

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A

TO RECONSTRUCT THE context of the making of a book such as *O segredo da pirâmide para uma teoria marxista do jornalismo* [The secret of the pyramid: for a Marxist theory of journalism] (Genro Filho, 1987a) requires some caution that we intend to point out. Analysis of texts, documents, books, and interviews that shift the meaning of texts often occurs in the production of studies of and on journalism. Those readings carry the statement of important authors from one time to another and from one place to another without the proper knowledge of the conditions of productions and application of concepts. They mistake what the author expresses with what the interlocutors have made of the work. They usually translate statements made in one context, with its particular consequences, to different realities, different contexts, within different theoretical frameworks that mischaracterize the text. A situation that demands the acknowledgement of the author's teleological positing about certain claims. Still, to which community was he speaking, what effects did he expect with the discourse and to what extent did he dialogued with the linguistic, cultural, economic, and political context of his time.

We have made such an indication because of the risk we took in the analysis carried out throughout this study, which is precisely making *O segredo da pirâmide* bigger than its goals. In this case there are two methodological considerations. Accuracy is required to verify what Genro Filho claims in *O segredo da pirâmide* in the context of his time and the means at his disposal. And to expose the issues present in journalism at the time, not necessarily expressed in the book and that insert some of his proposals in the mediations that compose the singularity of the case. This article exposes some elements of this set of mediations, realizing reasonable reading keys for the propositions in the book and helping us to understand part of the environment of its construction. We are trying to delineate elements of the national context of journalism in the 1980s in dialogue with the propositions of the book. We consider the action of the subject as result of a conscious teleological positioning through the causality of totality, but that does not hold the consequences of its propositions in the web of such causalities (Lukács, 2012).

*O segredo da pirâmide*, published in 1987, advocates that journalism is a form of knowledge crystallized as unique. It also proposes that journalism has the need of a specific theory that meets practical needs. The book becomes a type of theoretical guide for a group of Brazilian researchers, in particular those linked to the journalism program at the Federal University of Santa Catarina. In opposition, it is underexplored in the journalism programs in the Rio-São Paulo area, what partially motivates the dialogue proposed here.

To introduce the methodological keys with which we have studied the book, we will present an analysis of four texts of the issue of August 5, 1984, of the section “Folhetim”, of the newspaper *Folha de S. Paulo*. Subsequently, we will make some considerations about the first seven paragraphs of *O segredo da pirâmide*, inferring comparisons and locating some of the author’s political positions laid out specifically for journalists and journalism professors.

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In the issue of August 5, 1984, the section “Folhetim” of the newspaper *Folha de S. Paulo*<sup>1</sup> presented four articles on the relationship between academia and journalism. The first is a political statement by Otávio Frias Filho<sup>2</sup>, managing editor of the newspaper, to defend the marketing undertaken by the newspaper and establishing a conception of journalism and a practice for the news. In the second, Carlos Eduardo Lins da Silva, who had just finished his PhD in journalism at the School of Communications and Arts (ECA) of the University of São Paulo (USP) and was then newly hired by *Folha*, reflects on the practice and theory of journalism. The third article deals with Karl Kraus’s visceral hatred for the press and for journalists, in a text written by *Folha*’s journalist Matinas Suzuki Jr. Lastly, Caio Túlio Costa, newsroom secretary of the newspaper, highlights the journalists’ reverse hatred for intellectuals, giving some details of what he considered problematic in the training of journalists.

The headlines of the section differ from the articles’ titles. The cover of the section reveals some of the agents’ perspectives and the editorial policy of the company. *As várias faces do marketing* [The several faces of marketing], by Otávio Frias Filho; *A teoria na prática é outra* [The theory in practice is another], by Carlos Eduardo Lins da Silva; *O intelectual contra o jornalismo* [The intellectual against journalism], by Matinas Suzuki Jr; *O intelectual contra o jornalista* [The intellectual against the journalist], by Caio Túlio Costa. The four articles reveal broader aspects of the political and intellectual debates present in Brazilian journalism in the 1980s. Themes such as the role of journalism and journalists with the impending end of the military dictatorship; the position of leftist journalists towards the left, more specifically towards socialism and communism; the role of intellectuals in journalism; the situation of the programs of Social Communication/Journalism in the training of future journalists; the mandatory requirement of a degree in journalism; union action and organization of workers/journalists. The four headlines in the cover of the section offered, however, a portrait that editorially makes more sense than what was in fact written in the articles.

1. *Folha de São Paulo* had begun, weeks before this “Folhetim” edition, a major political, technical and editorial reform. The second major reform in less than 10 years (the previous was carried out by Claudio Abramo from 1974 to 1977), the so-called Projeto Folha [Folha Project] from 1984 has introduced the influent *Folha’s Style Guide*, has modified text news format and the process of investigating and checking the information and has also redistributed the positions and hierarchy among journalists. Described in detail by Carlos Eduardo Lins da Silva (1988) in the book *Mil dias: os bastidores da revolução de um grande jornal* [A thousand days: behind the scenes of the revolution of a major newspaper], this reform has had a great impact throughout the Brazilian printed journalism.

2. Otávio Frias Filho assumed the newsroom direction in May, 1984.



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With the title *Vampiros de papel* [Paper vampires], Frias Filho (1984: 3) advocates that the proposal of a newspaper is closely linked to what he defines as the “ideological structure of the news (any news) and objective solidarity between the press and the public”. This structure of the news, according to Frias Filho, is based upon the relation of contrasts established by stereotypes. For him, the sensationalist principle “*the girl and the gun*” structurally underlies the contradictions of journalism, answering, in short, to what the reader wants.

Put in face of the unpublished, journalism resorts to analogy to confine it within made ideas, to fix it in language clichés that allow its fast fraying. Nothing of this happens because newspapers or journalists are this way, but it is so, because such is the structure of the news. Even though journalism is an ideological technique, and as every technique it has an internal logic that goes beyond ideologies and imposes itself on them. (Ibid.: 4)

The first important definition in the text is the identification of the concept of news to a made idea, framed within a stereotype. Without the conceptual complexity found in Walter Lippmann (2008) when explaining the formation of “images in our heads”, Frias Filho points out characteristics similar to Lippmann and widely disseminated in the United States because of the practices of big newspapers owners, such as Willian Randolph Hearst and Joseph Pulitzer (Park, 2008: 46-50). Frias Filho also defines news as an ideological technique that, as such, possesses an internal logic that surpasses ideologies and imposes itself to them. Journalism, in such conception, is not only an ideology; it goes beyond ideology towards technique.

The findings of Frias Filho are also similar (notwithstanding its simplification and ideological positioning) to Roland Barthes’s critical considerations in his *Structure of Fait-Divers* (2007) or even to the chapters that Edgar Morin (1997) uses to describe and criticize mass culture. Textually, he uses Karl Kraus’s arguments; obviously, with the signs changed. As expressed by Suzuki Jr.<sup>3</sup> (1984: 6) with Walter Benjamin’s words, Kraus situates the characteristics of developed high in journalism. Journalism and its structure are the result of the debasement of any possibility of enlightenment. A situation resulting, according to Frias Filho’s characterization of a public immersed in the somnambulism suggested by journalism and journalists, in the paper vampires. “The vampire: only deceives those that manifest the desire of being deceived”. Frias Filho claims that it is not ideology, it is marketing, the answer to the desire of the public. “Find a need and fill it”<sup>4</sup> (Frias Filho, 1984: 3). Qualitatively, this statement gets new guise with Kraus’s statement (apud Suzuki, 1984: 4):

3. At the time that the article was published, Matinas Suzuki Júnior was the director of the Rio de Janeiro branch office of *Folha*.

4. American commercial adage quoted by Frias Filho.

“The mission of the press is to disseminate the spirit and, at the same time, to destroy all the capacity of assimilation”. Karl Kraus’s perspective and Frias’s cynicism equip theoretical explanations about journalism, mainly those inspired by the theoreticians of the Frankfurt School.

The accusations that *Folha* and news are merchandise and reduced to the ideology of the capital are recurrently made by Brazilian intellectuals. In the Social Science and Communication programs in Brazil, there is strong criticism of the role of media companies in the economic and political structure in the country, marked by authoritarianism and inequality. The development of the communication industry in the country has accelerated in the 1940s, with the radio and in the following decade with the television, and receives an increase with the telecommunication policy sponsored by the owners of the media, which was regulated by Law no. 4,117/1962 and implemented by several laws and decrees made by the civil-military dictatorship that ruled the country from 1964 to 1984.

*Folha de S.Paulo*, nowadays the commercial newspaper with the highest circulation in Brazil, has, in the transition period at the end of the dictatorship (specially 1984) up to the first direct election for president (1989), the singular moment of its journalistic and commercial history (from 1982 to 1989). Frias’s group – that bought the newspaper in 1962 – did not have a very clear ideological position. Marcondes Filho (2009: 258) explains that *Folha*, as a newspaper read by the middle class, has oscillated its positions from left to right. It supported the coup d’état together with *Estado de S. Paulo*, *Jornal do Brasil*, and *Tribuna da Imprensa*. During the censorship period, the newspaper did nothing to protest (different from its competitors, such as *Estado de S. Paulo*, *Jornal da Tarde*, and *Veja*). However, with the political opening, the newspaper began to hire journalists coming from the alternative press and to give expression to a middle class politically asphyxiated up to then. The decisive action was the taking of a cautious but constant position in defense of the *Diretas* [the direct elections for president] (Marcondes Filho, 2009; Dines, 1986).

That situation, according to Marcondes Filho, has meant much more a marketing strategy than necessarily a political positioning of intervention in the structural changes of the political forces in the country. *Folha* mixed liberal and leftist currents of thought with the editorial proposition advocating the *Diretas*, but *Folha*’s success was not the result of only that. The group has initiated, in 1984, what is considered one of the main projects of reformulation in Brazilian journalism: the *Projeto Folha* [Folha Project]. The strong defense of objectivity, professionalization of its newsroom, implantation of production routines centered in the news, the increasing of its branch offices and its

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5. To illustrate the relations established by *Folha* between its political position and the reforms undertaken, see the article *Precisamos atacar os problemas* [We need to attack the problem] (Precisamos..., 1984).

6. Caio Túlio Costa has become known, in the 1980s, for being appointed by *Folha* as ombudsman (the reader's advocate), the first experience of such a kind in Latin America, an experience the author reports in the book *O relógio de Pascal* [Pascal's clock] (Costa, 1991). In some articles published in *Folha* from 1984 to 1987, he, then secretary of the newsroom, made interviews and wrote articles to criticize the obligation of diploma in journalism, what he considered crippling to the freedom of the press and a market reserve policy undertaken by the Federação Nacional dos Jornalistas (FENAJ) [National Federation of Journalists] and trade unions linked to it.

correspondents, and the production uniformity hardened by its general style guide put the newspaper at the vanguard in the production in the country<sup>5</sup>. To the critics, that was the exacerbation of the American model of journalism, with the proletarianization of the work of journalists, valorization of news-pill, reduction of the investment in long articles, and the reduction of the space for creativity through the text (Moretzsohn, 2001; Gentilli, 2003). To the privileged agents of such a model, among them Carlos Eduardo Lins da Silva and Caio Túlio Costa, it was the American way with virtues and shortcomings, mainly the political virtue of the continuous search for objectivity and impartiality through news that technically reproduced such a political-editorial call. It is a project of commercial success and that has editorially consolidated itself through its style guide, with rigor and rigidity that has standardized, controlled, and limited the text capability for much of the newsroom, especially the journalists that were at the bottom of the hierarchy.

That portrait of the newspaper of the Frias family approximates the readings of the paradoxical positions of Frias Filho and intellectuals who advocate thesis similar to those of Karl Kraus (among them, Ciro Marcondes Filho, professor at USP). The news is *marketing*, a product for sale, a stereotype packaged for consumption and consumed by avid readers. It is the capital of news in its cynicism. Marcondes Filho (1986) sees in the conceptualization of the news itself a marketing technique, in the headlines, the amalgam of merchandise. In the supposed objectivity disguised as headlines and sensationalism, the appeal to consumption and the death of politics. A newspaper with a market ideology. Therefore, neuter for Frias, stupid for Kraus, irrational for Marcondes Filho. The newspaper's owner and the intellectuals.

We shall return to the 1984 "Folhetim". In *A ingênua disputa* [The naïve dispute], Caio Túlio Costa<sup>6</sup> identifies the increased hatred of journalists towards intellectuals. The genesis of this, for him, is at the university and in what he calls "naïve syndicalism". In this moment other agents appear: the journalists, the professors of journalism and the unionists/journalists. This hatred, for Costa, happens because the intellectuals remain immersed at the universities and do not have the ability to synthesize in a short space and time their ideas, relegating journalism a debasement of thinking. The problem of journalists before the intellectuals conceals a "deeper" problem, in his vision: the restrictions of work for the journalist graduated in Social Communication. To him, we need to question if a specific education is really necessary and if those programs achieve the goal of training capable journalists. According to Costa, the journalists' unions were more concerned with market protection than with the quality of what was produced in the newsrooms and thought in the programs.

According to the Law Decree 972 of 1969, which regulated the profession at that time and which served as parameter to the actions of the Federação Nacional dos Jornalistas (FENAJ)<sup>7</sup> [National Federation of Journalists], *scholars* could only participate in a newspaper through the mediation of the journalistic text (reportage, interview etc.). “One who has not a graduation in medicine, it is argued, is forbid to practice medicine, according to the law. [...] But is journalism a science or a technique?”. Costa continues his exposition, by offering an accurate portrait to his critique:

This is the question: the education of the journalist is precarious. In college, the student is introduced into everything: philosophy, sociology, history, Portuguese, rural communication, semiotics, statistics... Nothing is deepened. Then there are the specializing disciplines. Year by year the universities turn out more than three thousand technicians in generalities. Eighty percent of the graduates do not even know how to write. Poor those who do not take care of themselves. In the daily battle with the news they are beaten by the facts. They can hardly mediate upon the material produced. Hence the talk, common among scholars, that journalists only work with their wrist forward. They write fast, that’s it. They do not think. (Costa, 1984: 8)

For Costa, the problem was in the training of professionals, with no mention by him of the working conditions offered by the companies. He ends the text claiming that the improvement in Brazilian journalism passes through the “review of the way how the university sees the formation of the journalist” and the “pressing need that the category has of struggling for a solid formation” (Ibid.: 8). It is necessary to contextualize and to exam the role of some of those ideas in the editorial policy of *Folha*. Before 1984, Paulo Francis, in an article published in the section “Ilustrada”<sup>8</sup>, on October 6<sup>th</sup>, 1983, praised in his column Frias Filho’s position against the obligation of a diploma in journalism. However, approximately two years after the publishing of the article “Folhetim”, the newspaper began a stronger campaign to end the mandatory obligation of a diploma in journalism. On February 12<sup>th</sup>, 1986, an article by Márcio Chaer discloses Mauro Santayanna’s position – a member of the commission for drawing up the constitutional draft (to the Constitution which was enacted in 1988) – that the commission discussed the end of the requirement of diploma for the exercise of intellectual activities (which included journalism). In the following day, *Folha* published *The end of required is well received*. On February 20<sup>th</sup>, 1986, Caio Túlio Costa carried out a one-page news story and with a call on the first page of the newspaper, *Journalists review the law of*

7. FENAJ was created in 1946, but has gained more strength and representativeness from mid 1970s, engaging in projects for the democratization of communication, in defense of the professionalization of journalists (which includes the defense of mandatory training in Journalism) and for the freedom of expression (Sá, 1999).

8. Cultural section of *Folha de S. Paulo* newspaper.



*the diploma*. In the news story, businesspersons and journalists manifest themselves against the requirement (among them: Fernando Mitre, Paulo Markum, Cláudio Abramo, and Paulo Francis). Barbosa Lima Sobrinho, José Marques de Melo (at that time professor at ECA-USP), and FENAJ (its president, Audálio Dantas, was mentioned but not interviewed) were in favor of maintaining the diploma mandatory. Costa even highlights the ambiguous position of the directors of the journalists' trade unions in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. On the same page of that 1986 edition, Carlos Eduardo Lins da Silva signs a brief article in which he advocates changes in the law, but does not explicitly say that he is against (or in favor of) the requirement for the diploma. After Costa's new story, there were many others throughout 1986, all of them emphasizing the need to put an end to the obligation of the diploma.

There is another fact worth mentioning before we go any further in the examination of the 1984 "Folhetim". In 1979, journalists in São Paulo stopped during six days in a historical strike for journalism. According to Roxo da Silva's research (2004; 2007) and the assessment of journalists such as Abramo (1997) and Dines (2003), the strike has brought many negative consequences for journalists. Declared illegal by Tribunal Regional do Trabalho [Regional Labor Court] and without an agreement with the employers, journalists on strike were summarily dismissed from major newspapers, several journalists linked to the *new unionism* were dismissed. As explained by Roxo, influenced by the new unionism that developed in the São Paulo ABC, many journalists sought inspiration in the struggle of steelworkers to face the employers. After the strike, the newspapers in São Paulo, especially *Folha*, conducted a campaign against the obligation of diploma, identifying in the graduated journalists those who tended towards the left in the newsrooms (Roxo da Silva, 2007).

In addition to the campaign against the obligation of diploma, *Folha*, in particular Frias Filho, has led the process of *juvenilization* of the newsrooms. As asserts Albuquerque (2010), the dismissal of left-wing journalists and activists journalists from the newspapers that took place in the beginning of the dictatorship had in the juvenilization of the newsrooms and in the reforms carried out by the newspapers in the beginning of 1980s its continuations and exacerbation. Young directors, such as Frias Filho, conquered more editorial power and ideological control over more young newsrooms, with a more technical than political rationality of looking at journalism (Ribeiro, 1994: 67). Clashes within *Folha de S. Paulo* for the acceptance from the part of journalists of the impositions of *Projeto Folha* and the direction of Frias Filho had led, between May 1984 and February 1987, to the dismissal of 474 journalists in a newsroom of 360 – in average, one dismissal per 2,1 days (Lins da Silva, 1988:



157; Ribeiro, 1994: 65). The claim of the company was that the journalists did not fit in the proposed project and that the dismissal of journalists with a more political training and stance was necessary (mainly those coming from PT and linked to the *new unionism*) (Frias Filho, 2003).

Therefore, it is in the beginning of *Projeto Folha* that “Folhetim” was written. Returning to the analysis of the 1984 “Folhetim”, it still lacks a text to complete the exposition. Editorially, Carlos Eduardo Lins da Silva’s article is not the last. It is literally, as exposed in its title, *No meio do caminho* [In the middle of the way], at page 5, after Frias Filho’s article and before Suzuki Jr’s and Costa’s articles. However, it is here, at the end, because it brings together a set of questions relevant to our endeavor. Starting with the author’s own trajectory. There are substantive differences in Lins da Silva’s political positioning in relation to journalism in texts such as *Ideologia e poder no ensino de comunicação* [Ideology and power in the teaching of communication] (edited together with José Marques de Melo and Anamaria Fadul in 1979), *Beyond the Botanical Garden: a study on the hearing of Rede Globo’s Jornal Nacional among workers* (his doctoral dissertation in 1983, published as a book in 1985), in the 1984 “Folhetim” and in his professorship thesis at ECA-USP, published as a book in 1988, *Mil dias: os bastidores de uma revolução de um grande jornal* [A thousand days: behind the scenes of the revolution of a major newspaper] and in *Adiantado da Hora: a influência americana sobre o jornalismo brasileiro* [Early time: the American influence on Brazilian journalism] (1990). That situation is explained by the displacement of an eminently academic career (Ph.D. at ECA-USP) to a journalistic career at *Folha de S. Paulo* (starting in 1984). Carlos Eduardo Lins da Silva was one of those responsible for the *Projeto Folha*, which began in 1984 and was consolidated throughout the following years. The longer he stayed within the company, the more Lins da Silva tended towards the political positions of the Frias group. However, it is important to note that the author does not go to *Folha* to take an intellectual position, such as Tarso de Castro, Claudio Abramo, or Paulo Francis. On the contrary, he was going to help to establish one of the most rigid and formal system of industrial production of the news in Brazil: character limit, classical lead, constant search for objectivity, style guide. An academic to organize the newspaper and positioning the intellectuals – a movement already made in other historical moments by Pompeu de Souza and Danton Jobim.

The article *No meio do caminho* [In the middle of the way] expresses a singular position that the subject occupied in those mediations. Lins da Silva initiates the text explaining that on the first of March of that year he defended his thesis. Two weeks later, he was a reporter at *Folha*. Less than five months



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later, he had already written that article. Under this new condition, Lins da Silva claims to have the “opportunity to observe the old dilemma between theory and practice from a new perspective” (1984: 5). The meteoric rise of the newly-doctor in the positions of trust at *Folha* was reported by Lins da Silva (2005) himself in the preface of the new edition of *Mil dias* [Thousand days]. Lins da Silva began as a general reporter at *Agências Folha*. In four months, he became the editor of the section “Cidades” and then newsroom secretary, together with Caio Túlio Costa.

After explaining the space he occupies in the discourse, Lins da Silva goes on to describe the journalism schools. He locates in that space two categories of professors: “the lawyers of the primacy of the practice and the advocates of the hegemony of theory” (1984: 5). He said that he has always been among the former, those who usually get to teaching after practicing the profession. He indicates that there is a polarity between these professionals. The theorists who despise the practical for seeing them merely as craftspersons of the words, to whom any theoretical contribution would disturb the “newsroom ways”. And it is “with debauchery that journalism professionals refer to their colleagues who have never been before the drama of closing an issue” (loc. cit.).

After putting that problem, Lins da Silva returns to deal with his situation, indicating the difficulties and advantages of spending seven years in the academy and then returning to a newsroom. “But at least we learn an important lesson: theory and practice are different, but not opposite. Only when the relationship between the two is founded upon false premises it seems that there is polarization between them” (loc. cit.).

Based on this statement, the journalist expresses these false premises. “Practice with no theoretical components gives place to a network of prejudice, stereotyped truths and superstitions that take the place of the theory and prevent changes in the practice itself”. He states that “journalists of the old school (not in relation to age, but professional attitude)” are conservative because they keep this “anti-intellectual attitude” (loc. cit.). In turn, theory does not contribute to journalism, argues Lins da Silva, for it closes itself inside its revolutionary discourse and “idealistic elucubrations”, keeping things the way they are. “What remains to be realized is that practice is the foundation and purpose of theory. In journalism or in any branch of human activity. It is theory that determines the progress of knowledge, places challenges to be overcome through the development of the theory” (loc. cit.).

The definition of the priority of the practice continues, by explaining that scientific knowledge only advances as a result of the “practice that men have established with the world and their creations (loc. cit.). To the author, it is not

by chance that knowledge about journalism and the demand of the activity of the academy have only begun after the complexification of the communication economic activities of the country that comes with the development of the press, the radio, and the TV.

A situation that does not mean, in the journalist point of view, that theory comes always after practice. Theory must “come before and influence the development of practice and at the same time answers to its demands. *The ideal anticipation of what we want is only effective through theory, exactly because it does not exist yet.* Practice without theory, without abstraction, would result in a simple repetition of passed technique” (loc. cit., emphasis added). We stress the challenge cast to theorists of journalism in the text, since the project of professional practice, and consequently, the products of its practice, pass necessarily through the exercise of the theory.

Thus, the true theorists of journalism must not only meet the demands of the practice. They must not only seek to solve the problems that obstruct the actual process. They must also formulate alternative models and new techniques and conceptions that do not exist yet to improve what exists. Practice always has its own rationality. But it does not reveal by itself. One must understand it through theoretical elements to be able to unveil it. And, after that rationality become visible, it is possible to imagine the novelties that will transform it and try to implement them. (loc. cit.)

It is important to write down very well that conception of the task of theorists and of theory. Lins da Silva continues his text describing the need of unity between theory and practice in the exercise of practice itself. In his view, as well as scientists from hard sciences need laboratories, schools of journalism also need those spaces. Without the possibility of disposing of these spaces, the schools are still subjected to the disputes if the two currents of professors exposed in the beginning of the text, which in the end, struggle to “obtain the same effect: the immobility both of the theory and of the practice of journalism” (loc. cit.). He closes the text advocating that the “divorce of theory and practice must exist in the schools. [...] Realistic newspaper laboratories, constant dialogue between companies and universities, exchange of experience between professionals and professors” (loc. cit.).

Carlos Eduardo Lins da Silva’s text does not symbolize only the idiosyncrasy of the journalist-scholar. The article indicates the division of forces within the schools of journalism, the values attributed by the professors to their colleagues, the journalists, to the journalistic products and to the exercise of



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the journalist intellectual itself. Similarly, the text introduces the challenge of a theory to be constructed to the theorists of journalism. It is not enough to criticize the practice, to turn away from it or to accuse the opposite side of technicism. It would be the role of the theory a complex assignment, that only those who were really worried with journalism would undertake the task.

The four texts are illustrative of the numerous mediations that ought to be exposed. The newspaper owner, the intellectual, the journalist, the union leader, and the academic journalist are the real characters in this story. As a canvas, the expressed content does not serve only to represent what is there. It brings in it more complex mediations that dialogue with Brazilian historical, cultural, economic, and political enclaves, in particular, of Brazilian journalism, reframing them.

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The preface of the book *O segredo da pirâmide: para uma teoria marxista do jornalismo* [The secret of the pyramid: for a Marxist theory of journalism] (Genro Filho, 1987a: 13-15) is the result of an adaptation of the summary of the dissertation (Genro Filho, 1987b). The first six chapters of the book were written exclusively for the publication. From the seventh paragraph onwards, the preface of the book is a copy of the summary of the dissertation. There is a small change in the opening of the seventh paragraph of the book and the first dissertation<sup>9</sup>. Thus, the book has a different beginning than that of the dissertation, a fact which deserves attention because of each publication recipients: social scientists, for the dissertation, and journalists in general, for the book.

The book begins indicating that “There is a great discrepancy between the journalistic activity and the theorizations being made around it” (Ibid.: 13). The first sentence of the book warns about the issue in which the book takes part and that will be debated throughout the text, that is, that the theorizations about journalism do not answer to the challenge of transposing the distance between theory and practice, between what is done in the academy and what happens in the journalistic practice. The entirety of the text in the preface that is not in the summary examines that finding. “This detachment occurs in such a degree that has even generated false and absurd controversies opposing theoretical and practical people” (loc. cit.). And here it is, another dichotomy that somehow turn the concepts of theory and practice subjects (theoretical and practical people) (loc. cit.).

In the sequence, it is enunciated the first event on journalism which materializes the discussion: a campaign against the mandatory requirement of an academic degree for exercising journalism. The campaign against the diploma

9. In the seventh paragraph of the book, “It is an essay that claims to provide a theory of journalism” (Genro Filho, 1987a: 14); in the summary, “This work intends to offer elements for a theory of journalism” (Genro Filho, 1987b: 9).

is framed, according to the author, by the conception of “false and absurd polemics”, denoting that this position is shared by “pragmatists”, being possible to note “up to what point [...] their contempt for theory gets” (loc. cit.). The pragmatists, in Genro Filho’s view, “believe that the simplicity of journalistic techniques exempts a specific theoretical approach and specialized training” (loc. cit.). By the construction of the section, Genro Filho’s position is the opposite from that of those he calls “pragmatists”. We have showed that the campaign mentioned by Genro Filho is perpetrated by the Brazilian press (more specifically in São Paulo and with greater force by the *Folha de S. Paulo*) from 1985-6 onwards, with debates about the deregulation of intellectual occupations in the academy and in the page of the newspapers. We have showed that the claim against the mandatory requirement for a university degree in Social Communication/Journalism to work as a journalist also comes from many theorists.

Another peculiarity to be considered is that he does not textually define here a specialized “Journalism” training. However, it becomes evident the defense of specialized training for journalists, which at the time meant the program of Social Communication with qualification in Journalism. The campaign against the mandatory requirement of the diploma was against the Law-Decree # 972/1969 that required in Article 4<sup>th</sup>, Paragraph 5<sup>th</sup>, the degree in Social Communication for the exercise of activity (Brasil, 1969). But, in fact, for Genro Filho, could it mean other form of specialized training? The sentence states “against the mandatory requirement of academic degree for the exercise of journalism” (Genro Filho, 1987a: 13). That is, even if the author argued that it was not in Journalism (what does not seem probable) or even in Social Communication, it had to be an academic, university degree. The specialized degree remains without specification, but immediately afterwards the specific theory is named theory of journalism. In another aspect, the academic training is directly linked to the theoretical activity, since, in the opposition between theorists and pragmatists, the latter do without academic degree. This is an issue that is connected with many events during the production of the dissertation and, particularly after it, since in documents in the field, the theory of journalism set by Genro Filho put together the claim of specific degree in Social Communication/Journalism (FENAJ, 1997).

After criticizing the “pragmatists”, Genro Filho (1987a: 13) turns to the “theorists”. These “have not done much to construct a two-way bridge between theory and practice.” From the critique to the theorists, he goes to the “academic theorizations” that swing between “the obviousness of the manuals” (that “only deals operatively with the technique”) and “the purely ideological critique of journalism as a manipulation instrument” (loc. cit.). Therefore,



there is here another dichotomy. To recapitulate: the dichotomy opposing theory and practice; associated with this, a second one opposing theoretical and practical people. Among the theorists, another dichotomy, there are those who perform theorizations about the operability of the technique and those who criticize journalism as a way of manipulation. Therefore, it is possible to perceive three types of operators in journalism listed by Genro Filho: a) the pragmatists – who go without the theory and the specific training; b) *the theorists of the operability of the technique* – who may even advocate the theory and the specific training, but keep their explanation at the level of description of the journalistic making; c) *the theorists critical of ideology* – those who could even advocate the theory and the training, but they characterize journalism as an ideology and a way of manipulation<sup>10</sup>.

10. These attributions are important for us to compare it with the complex framework of relationship and interests in the interior of the Social Communication/ Journalism programs in relation to the mandatory requirement of a specific degree to the exercise of journalism, as described by Roxo da Silva (2007: 163-177).

Genro Filho continues the exposition by entering into the discussion of a hypothetical type, a professional at a deadlock when it seeks to reflect on the political and social significance of their practice. The deadlock happens because the professional does not find explanations in any of the available theorizations: either to study a theme they have already mastered (the case of the theorizations of the type *b*) or has contact with theoretical approaches “that despise the critical contradictions and potentialities of journalism, with which he comes across in the practice” (the case of the theorizations of the type *c*).

The situation that the professional faces, in the frictional construction relevant to the plot engendered by Genro Filho, reveals that the “the wrong polarization between “theoretical” and “practical” corresponds, in the background, to a real incommunicability between the existing theorizations and the richness of the practice” (loc. cit). Here are some movements of argumentation and theorizing that should be highlighted. The “polarization becomes an expression” of something else, something more fundamental, of the incapacity of theory to “rationally express” the practice. Note that such *practice* is no longer only that of the first dichotomy (of theory and practice), but the real practice, in its potential, in its virtues. In this respect, there is a qualitative nature of this practice, since it does not become the practice of pragmatists, which results from the view that denies the theory. The theory and practice polarity (first dichotomy) becomes the expression of a “dialogue not between the deaf, but the mute: one cannot talk to the other” (Ibid.: 14). Here, it becomes relevant to follow the quotation to define the action of the real practice, of the professional who wishes to understand their action: “The practice, for its natural limitations, never solved the theory. It only insists, through its evidence and contradictions, that it must be heard. But it can only be expressed rationally through the theory” (loc. cit.). Here, Genro Filho exposes the limitation of

practice, the need for explanation that comes from it and, as a consequence, rejects the position of *pragmatists*.

The use of images in the whole section becomes relevant. First, we must consider the image that there is an abyss between theory and practice. The transposition of such abyss does not symbolize a jump over it, but to go down to the foundation and from the recognition of this abyss to reconstruct the foundation of the relationship between the theory and the practice of journalism. It is, for the author, the ability of “going deep down the abyss as a theoretical exercise” (Genro Filho, 1987c). That image is used by Genro Filho (1980) in an article entitled *Introdução à crítica ao dogmatismo* [Introduction to the critique of dogmatism] and the movement is that of *refoundation* of theory and practice in the political mobilization. The first dichotomy is superficial, it is the apparent expression, when there is the need of going deep, of going to the concrete, from appearance to the essence – another methodological movement dear to Marxism. The second image is a pun with the saying in Portuguese *diálogo de surdos* [dialogue between the deaf] – in which no one wants to hear what the other has to say. The problem, for him, is of “dialogue of mutes”, for one wants to hear (the professional or the refounded practice), but there is nothing to be heard, since theory does not know how to answer.

Thus, based on these images, Adelmo Genro Filho asserts that the theory has greater responsibility, for “it is mute in relation to the evidences and contradictions of the practice” (Genro Filho, 1987a: 14). It is the role of theory “to elucidate and to direct the practice in a critical and revolutionary sense” (loc. cit.). Hence, here is the task of a theory and therefore a journalism theory to Genro Filho. This phrase, *to elucidate and to direct* the practice, refers to a double aspect: the act of reflecting on this practice, in such a way to reflect with this practice and to change it and make it able to change.

In this preparation, this *staging* of theory and practice, based on real situations (the struggle of sectors of journalism for the end of the compulsory diploma), of the classical dispute between theory and practice, of the demarcation of the shortcomings of theorizing, and the establishment of a hypothetical type of professional, he offers his theory. A theory that, after a page of mischaracterization of much of what is analytically produced about journalism until the moment (based on his arguments), has, on principle, to solve that incommunicability. For that purpose, he offers the readers the main goal of the book.

The main objective of this work is to propose, surely with limitations, a theoretical approach able to rationally grasp both the miseries and the practical greatness, which is its objective and criterion. It is the attempt to initiate a dialogue, bearing



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in mind that the full responsibility for the initiative and for the fecundity or not of its concepts belongs to the theory (Genro Filho, 1987a: 14).

It is worth repeating: that section was written only for the book, not passing through the Social Sciences academic scrutiny. It is written for his colleagues of the academy and for the professionals. In addition to the author's recognition or not – since he does not clarify it in no text or report –, the book circumscribes a set of discourses and practices materialized in disputes about training in the profession, about who are the journalists and about what should journalism be. It discusses and repositions the subjects of the academy and of the profession, giving new meaning to the role of the academy by introducing the importance of the theory. As we can see, dialogues with the main demands and considerations present in the Carlos Lins da Silva's text. Directly, it deals with issues that cross the profession and that are crystallized in that 1984 “Folhetim”, even if we had not found any document proving the reading of “Folhetim” by Genro Filho<sup>11</sup>.

On the periphery of the Brazilian journalistic, political, and cultural relations, Genro Filho positioned himself against the production of the *center* as an *outsider* – concepts presented under other thematic interest in Casanova's book (2002). We consider, hypothetically, that Genro Filho defends some positions that have configured *a posteriori* another circuit of understanding what journalism is and what is the academic organization for this segment. The criticism was mainly directed to what was produced in the editorial center of Brazilian journalism, São Paulo, especially the theories produced by the main school of journalism in the country, at that time, the Social Communication program with qualification in journalism at ECA-USP. We noted, for example, that texts of Brazilian scholars criticized by Genro Filho in *O segredo da pirâmide* [The secret of the pyramid] come mainly from ECA: from José Marques de Melo, Cremilda Medina, and Ciro Marcondes Filho. This already offers evidence of the national academic references that framed the discussion of the theory proposed<sup>12</sup>.

*O segredo da pirâmide* [The Secret of the pyramid] gathers a set of problems that permeate the journalist's activity, the teaching of journalism, the union activity in journalism and the journalistic companies. It deals with a broader context that includes issues that enable to discern aspects of the identity formation of professionals and professional characteristics in that context. We can emphasize as the main themes of that moment – and which are present in journalism and teaching in journalism until today – the mandatory requirement for the diploma to the exercise of the profession; the role and shortcom-

11. In his master degree project, written in 1985, Meditsch (2012: 26-27) refer to three of the four articles from the 1984 “Folhetim” to formulate the problem of his research, which has dealt with the teaching of journalism in Brazil based upon a case study of the Social Communication/Journalism program at UFSC. Meditsch's work does not quote Frias Filho's article, making a dichotomy between the position of a scholar (Karl Kraus) and that of a journalist (Caio Túlio Costa). Later, he adds Carlos Eduardo Lins da Silva's critical commentary. Meditsch's approach (2012: 27) recovers the section of Lins da Silva's text that the practice cannot explain itself by itself, needing the theory for that. In an interview, Meditsch stated that he did not discuss with Genro Filho the mentioned “Folhetim” and that he does not know if Genro Filho had a contact with it or not.

12. At the moment Genro Filho published *O segredo* [The secret], there were five graduation programs in Communication in Brazil, at USP, Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, Pontifícia Universidade Católica de São Paulo, Universidade Metodista de São Paulo, and Universidade de Brasília, being that USP held the production of most of the thesis, dissertations, and books on journalism (Pontes, 2009).



ings of the schools of Social Communication for the training of journalists; the lack of dialogue between the critique on journalism made on the academy by scholars and what journalists did in practice; and the value and power divisions inside the newsrooms among journalists. ■

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