

CREATING CULTURE THROUGH MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION

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COMMUNICATIONS VOLUME 24

CREATING CULTURE THROUGH MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION

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SENIOR MEDIA HISTORY EDITOR: HELOISA PAIT

Heloisa Pait investigates the challenges posed by the introduction of new means of communication for democratic life, with emphasis on the personal dilemmas

individuals encounter when presented with unknown sociabilities. In her doctoral dissertation at the New School for Social Research, she investigated the personal challenges television soap opera writers and viewers faced in trying to make mass communication a meaningful activity. She has written on the reception of international news, on media use by Brazilian youth, and on the disruptive role of the internet in the Brazilian political environment. With her students, she investigates conceptions of memory and media use, the role of media in notions of secrecy in international relations, and the nature of public protests in Brazilian cities. Dealing with a broad range of subjects, her recurrent issue is the efforts individuals make to engage in communication with others, an activity always disrupted and reconstructed – revealed – by every material transformation of media. Heloisa Pait, a Fulbright alumna and member of the advisory board of Open Knowledge Brazil, actively participates in Brazilian public life. Her fiction work has appeared in American and Brazilian publications.

SENIOR DIGITAL CULTURE EDITOR: MASSIMO RAGNEDDA

Massimo Ragnedda (PhD) is a senior lecturer in Mass Communication at Northumbria University, Newcastle, UK where he conducts research on the digital divide and social media. He is the co-vice chair of the Digital Divide Working Group (IAMCR) and the co-convenor of NINSO (Northumbria Internet and Society Research Group). He has authored 12 books with his publications appearing in numerous peer-reviewed journals, and book chapters in English, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, and Russian texts. His books include: *Digital Capital. A Bourdieusian Perspective on the Digital Divide* (with Maria Laura Ruiu), Emerald Publishing, 2020; *Digital Inclusion. An International Comparative Analysis* (co-edited with Bruce Mutsavairo), Lexington Books, 2018; *Theorizing the Digital Divide* (co-edited with G. Muschert), Routledge, 2017; *The Third Digital Divide: A Weberian Approach to Digital Inequalities*, Routledge, 2017; and *The Digital Divide: The Internet and Social Inequality in International Perspective* (co-edited with G. Muschert), Routledge, 2013.

SENIOR CRIME AND MEDIA EDITOR: JULIE B. WIEST

Julie B. Wiest, as a sociologist of culture and media, applies mainly symbolic interactionist and social constructivist perspectives to studies in three primary areas: (1) the sociocultural context of violence, (2) mass media effects, and (3) the relationship between new media technologies and social change. She received her PhD in Sociology from the University of Tennessee and MA in Journalism and Mass Communication from the University of Georgia. Before academia, she worked as a print and online journalist for nearly a decade.

**SENIOR TECH ETHICS EDITOR:
KATIA MOLES**

Katia Moles was trained as a social ethicist at the Graduate Theological Union and UC Berkeley where her work examined the policy implications of culturally embedded framings of sexuality and reproduction within larger ethical and religious traditions. Currently, she is a social ethicist of technology in the School of Engineering at Santa Clara University where her research speaks to the intersection of inequalities and digital media, particularly issues of inclusion that impact traditionally underrepresented groups. *The Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* awarded her the “New Scholar Award” for her article “A Culture of Flourishing: A Feminist Ethical Framework for Incorporating Child Sexual Abuse Prevention in Catholic Institutions.” UC Berkeley, Santa Clara University, Dominican University, Graduate Theological Union, and Florida International University have also recognized her work in justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion that animates her research and teaching.

**SENIOR SOCIAL MEDIA EDITOR:
APRYL A. WILLIAMS**

Apryl A. Williams received her PhD in Sociology from Texas A&M University in 2017 with a designated focus in race, media, and culture. Currently, she is Assistant Professor at Susquehanna University and a fellow at the Berkman Klein Center for Internet & Society at Harvard University. Her research follows two broad streams of inquiry: cultural studies of race, gender, and community in digital spaces and mobile phone and digital technology use in developing countries. She theorizes digital media as it converges with issues concerning race/ethnicity, gender, and communal identity. In addition to my domestic research agenda, she conducts research on socio-political conflict, mobile phone use, and digital inequality in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Her work can be found in several peer reviewed outlets including *Social Sciences*, the *International Journal of Communication*, and *Information, Communication & Society*. Her other academic interests include intersectionality, social theory, postmodernism, technology, and embodiment.

ABOUT THE SERIES CO-EDITORS

SERIES CO-EDITOR: LAURA ROBINSON

Laura Robinson is Professor in the Department of Sociology at Santa Clara University and Faculty Associate at the Harvard Berkman Klein Center for Internet & Society. After earning her PhD from the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), where she held a Mellon Fellowship in Latin American Studies, her other affiliations include the UC Berkeley Institute for the Study of Societal Issues, the Cornell University Department of Sociology, Department of Sociology at Trinity College Dublin, USC Annenberg Center, and the École Normale Supérieure. Her service positions include Series Co-Editor of Emerald Studies in Media & Communications and Palgrave Studies in Digital Inequalities, North American Coordinator of the Brazil–US Colloquium on Communication Research, Organizing Committee Member of the Media Sociology Symposium, Steering Committee Member of the Digital Sociology Thematic Group of the International Sociological Association, and CITAMS Section Chair 2014–2015. Her research has earned awards from CITASA, AOIR, and NCA IICD for her work on digital inequalities and digital sociology in Brazil, France, and the United States.

SERIES CO-EDITOR: SHELIA R. COTTEN

Shelia R. Cotten is Associate Vice President for Research Development at Clemson University. She has served as the chair of CITAMS and has previously held appointments at the University of Alabama at Birmingham and the University of Maryland, Baltimore County. After earning her PhD from North Carolina State University in Raleigh, she was a postgraduate fellow at the Boston University School of Public Health. Her work has been funded by The National Science Foundation and the National Institute on Aging. Her work addresses key social problems with sociological tools related to technology access, use, and impacts/outcomes. She has published on a number of topics including the XO laptop program in Birmingham and the use of ICT resources to improve older Americans' quality of life. The body of her work was recognized by the CITASA Award for Public Sociology in 2013 and the CITAMS Career Achievement Award in 2016.

SERIES CO-EDITOR: JEREMY SCHULZ

Jeremy Schulz is a researcher at the Institute for the Study of Societal Issues at the University of California, Berkeley. His current research focuses on digital inequality and work and wealth among economic elites. He has also done research and published in several other areas, including digital sociology, sociological theory, qualitative research methods, work and family, and consumption. His article, “Zoning the Evening,” is published in *Qualitative Sociology* and received the Shils-Coleman Award from the ASA Theory Section; other publications include “Talk of Work,” published in *Theory and Society*, and “Shifting Grounds and Evolving Battlegrounds,” published in the *American Journal of Cultural Sociology*. Since earning his PhD at UC Berkeley, he has held an NSF-funded postdoctoral fellowship at Cornell University.

CHIEF RESEARCH OFFICER: NOAH MCCLAIN

Noah McClain is Assistant Professor of Sociology. His PhD (NYU) research examined dilemmas associated with security efforts in the New York Subway system, as they manifest in the work of subway employees, in organizational processes, and in light of the arcane technology of a century-old underground railroad with millions of daily passengers. The project encapsulates his central interests: the impact of technology on society, life in cities, work practices, formal organizational contexts, and human interaction with material and technical instruments. Through these themes, his past and ongoing research also examines technology in daily life, social inequality, everyday life in prison and out, the ways that rules are used in organizations, and transactional systems of shared or free goods. He has served as a post-doctoral research fellow and faculty member of the Bard Prison Initiative, and a visiting scholar at the Institute for Public Knowledge at New York University.

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CHAPTER 1

MEDIATED CULTURE AND ETHICAL TECH: PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

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Drawing together international themes and contributors, this volume of *Emerald Studies in Media and Communications* is entitled *Creating Culture Through Media and Communication*. As with its companion volume *Geo Spaces of Communication Research*, this work highlights the synergies between different research methods, theories, disciplinary frameworks, and case locales. This rich collection thereby explores these foci from a diversity of perspectives that also complement the volume's larger mission to deepen our knowledge of communication research spaces. The research allows us to probe the relationships between media, ethics, and culture in the past, present, and future through scholarship that addresses interrelated themes across three sections: Section 1: Media Cultures, Section 2: Media Culture in Everyday Life, and Section 3: Tech Ethics Futures. As these foci indicate, the collection of chapters showcases the myriad ways that media is embedded in everyday life as a dominant force creating culture at the micro, meso, and macro levels. This is particularly true of digital media that are increasingly ubiquitous and embedded in all life facets such that we close the volume with special attention on ethics in our shared tech futures.

Creating Culture Through Media and Communication
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The volume opens with the Section: Media Cultures. This initial contribution applies Peircean semiotics to parse the meanings of journalistic texts written by Luiz Carlos Merten, a well-known Brazilian film critic who worked for the newspaper *O Estado de S. Paulo*. This chapter is entitled “Brazilian Cinema Tributes as Journalistic Feature Stories” and is written by Gilmar Adolfo Hermes. Through a close reading of Merten’s journalistic pieces on films and documentaries such as *Todos os Paulos do Mundo*, the chapter establishes how:

Merten produced, above all, an interpretant which highlights the new generation’s acknowledgement of a group of artists which have marked the history of Brazilian cinema in the second half of the 20th century, an era he has largely experienced. Merten celebrates the life of an actor and that of many other actors who participated in his path, and also poses a question, an interpreter, regarding the new challenges that Brazilian society and its cinema must face from now on.

Utilizing semiotic concepts such as the sinsign and legisign, the chapter delves into the complex ways in which Merten’s journalistic pieces feature accounts of both the particulars relating to the films and documentaries under review and also feature appeals to general conclusions about Brazilian cinema and filmmaking. As Hermes argues, “... the critic builds a public identity through the dialogue established from the film and the contact with the director through the interview. In the background, there is also the reader of the newspaper for whom the critic seeks to offer a perspective on the cinematographic product.” In this way, the chapter unveils the “kind of agency the author produces through his journalistic activity” and, at the same time, the “public identity” the cultural journalist creates through his writing.

The next chapter in this volume continues the interpretive inquiry into art and culture but focuses on music rather than journalism and text. In their chapter, “An Analysis of Milton’s Voice in *Missa dos Quilombos*: ‘Raça’ in the Music of Milton Nascimento,” John R. Baldwin and Phil Chidester probe the rich and varied musical oeuvre of Milton Nascimento, one of the foremost Brazilian artists during the 1960s, 1970s, and into the early 1980s. Based on a careful historiographic reading and interpretative reading of Milton’s oeuvre, the two authors argue that Nascimento’s songs charted a complex engagement with themes of race and racial politics in Brazil during this tumultuous period:

And what does that effort say about Milton Nascimento himself through the genosong of *Missa dos Quilombos* (1982) ... Milton has found a way to transcend a traditionally gendered vocal style of the lungs with an “extraordinary feminine coloratura” (Perrone, 1993) of his throat with a soaring, penetrating “head voice” that has defined his career in every way. In parallel, Milton’s story also embodies other forms of transcendence by offering a glimpse of identities that seamlessly unite complex experiences.

As they contend, Nascimento’s carefully crafted work *Missa dos Quilombos* conveys the complexities of cultural politics around race and racial identity in the face of a challenging political environment in the country. At the same time, they point to the transcendent character of Milton’s artistry: “a melding of earth and sky, of aspirations and diurnal realities, rooted in the church but not of the church, irrepressibly proud but not fatalistic.”

This volume continues to focus on media cultures from an interpretative and phenomenological perspective in the next chapter, entitled “Memes, Dynamics, and Image Paths” by Renata Lohmann and Ana Tais Martins Portanova Barros. This chapter takes up the general phenomenon of memes “located at the intersection of communication, memetics, and the study of the imaginary.” Analyzing the various functions, dynamics, and characteristics of memes and meme-like imagery in a world where the sheer volume of images confronting digitally connected individuals beggars the imagination, they write:

Considering memes as a significant aspect of this communicational imaginary, we seek to understand the dynamics and path of memes in the midst of this plethora of images. From the concept of iconophagy, we deal with the exacerbated multiplication of the images and the path of memes starting from a marginalized environment until it is integrated into social roles and a rational level of thought.

The authors avail themselves of innovative theoretical frameworks drawing on the work of Baitello Jr, Durand, and others who elaborate on the notion of the uncontrollable image which consumes the world of experience. As they write, the very ubiquity of images affords them power over their creators: “ubiquitous images, in which the excessive becomes the norm and everyday routine, occupying all spaces. Instead of the images feeding us the inner world, it is our inner world that will feed them. Today it is the images that devour us, and all that we do not decipher devours us.” As they conclude, memes and memetic imagery depend on the ease with which they can be diffused, reproduced, and even transformed into cultural detritus. At the same time, memetic imagery relies on a set of social practices, such as trolling, to gain a foothold and allow for the circulation and constant recycling of such imagery.

In the volume’s second section, *Media Culture in Everyday Life*, we begin with a meta-analysis of social scientific research which focuses on the intersection of tourism and communication in the United States and Brazil. This study, entitled “Communication and Tourism Research in Brazil and the United States (2000–2019)” is authored by Clóvis Reis and Yanet María Reimondo Barrios. It employs meta-analytic and bibliometric analysis to better understand the “trends and patterns” in research on the extant research dealing with the various ways in which communication impinges on tourism and the tourist industry in both countries.

The focus of this chapter was to analyze the evolution of communication and tourism research in Brazil and the United States over the last two decades ... this chapter provides clues about the present and future of communication and tourism research in Brazil and the United States. From an academic perspective, the study produced a theoretical corpus of the state of the art on the subject. From a marketing perspective, the survey reinforces the communication centrality for destination positioning in the global tourism market.

The meta-analysis shows that, while the US-based academic literature is narrowly focused on communication research aimed at the tourist industry, namely research on marketing, branding, and consumer motivation studies, the Brazil-based research maintains a broader focus. Brazilian studies more often center on the experiences of tourists, the cultural construction of tourist destinations,

and the interactions between tourists and non-tourists. Moreover, Brazilian research embraces a range of qualitative approaches largely absent from more statistically oriented US-based studies. Case studies dominated in both United States and Brazilian studies, however, pointing to an important point of convergence between the research literature from the two countries and fertile ground for future analysis: “the implications of sustainability as a guiding strategy in the tourism sector and the communication’s role in this process ... comparative study between Brazil and the United States that expands the understanding of the impact and influence of social networks on the destination choice process would be interesting.”

The next chapter in this section chronicles the daily activities of university students attending master’s level courses at a private higher educational institution in the city of Araraquara located in the interior of the state of São Paulo in Brazil. Entitled “The School of Life, University Students, and Mobile Devices in Teaching and Research,” the study is authored by Eduarda F. Monteiro and Vera Valdemarin. The inquiry mobilizes primary data on the academic and non-academic activities of marketing and advertising students in order to show the complex ways in which digital devices and online resources are incorporated into the everyday routines of these university students. The study draws its findings from an original survey instrument which covers students’ online engagements as they relate to academics, entertainment, and online consumption. The findings reveal that students deploy a mix of physical notebooks, smartphones, and laptop computers to enhance “understanding [of] how ‘culture’ may be studied via varied strands of interpretative lines of inquiry, each configured by different methods and ways of reflection.” As the authors write: “... digital technology becomes even more present as a means of academic activity and, as a result, amplifies the impacts of digital culture on contemporary university culture.” Smartphones were considered more multifunctional than other devices, as they were used for all types of communications and content access. The behaviors elucidated in the study reveal a complex pattern whereby students weave together digital and non-digital forms of academic practice such as note-taking. Social media platforms were used during the pandemic with other online resources in order to complete school assignments. As the authors note, the constant use of the same digital resources for academic and non-academic purposes precipitated the erasure of boundaries from these realms of activity, also contributing to the “blurring” of social relationships and “temporal periods” such as the workweek and the weekend to build the “concept of culture, digital culture, and scholarly culture” as they relate to “the development of communication methods and their impacts on university educational environments.”

The next chapter is entitled “Video Games, Diversity and Gender: Audience Impact, Academic Studies, and Parallels between Brazil and the United States” by Beatriz Blanco, Julia Stateri, and Lucas Goulart. Offering a detailed history of the video gaming industry and the development of the video gaming consumer in both the United States and Brazil during the last forty years, this chapter brings together an examination of gender inequality, the gaming industry, and cultural implications. The chapter chronicles the development of the video game market

and consumers in both countries after the diffusion of video gaming technology in the 1980s. While the US led the way in terms of video game development, Brazil was not far behind. As the authors note: “The targeting of specific audiences by the video game market combined with existing prejudices...in the field of technology, has had an extremely negative impact on the professional development of women in this industry.” Even today, in Brazil, as in the United States and other countries, the market for video games has continued to promote bias against female producers and players. After providing a brief but incisive overview of different gaming markets and their intended audiences, they reveal the gendered nature of advertising campaigns that privileged men as the audience or preferred consumer of choice. The authors draw linkages between this and larger issues of exclusion that have led to activism:

In recent decades, we increasingly see discussions in the academic and media environments on the historical role of women and other representations of traditionally underrepresented groups thanks to the emergence of movements created to fight for women’s rights, as well as to strengthen the presence of women in professional environments.

The authors argue that these issues require an intersectional lens to address the complex dynamics at play and to understand how forces of social inclusion and market interests are often at loggerheads with the market and other interests: “... social networks affiliated with the industry, public figures, and companies fail to create a more inclusive industry space for fear of losing consumers.” From this pivotal gendering of the audience, the authors reveal a domino effect of negative consequences from discriminatory stereotypes to threats of violence toward women gamers, specialist academics, and activists. Looking ahead, there is still much work to be done to create “a safer and more welcoming environment for traditionally underrepresented groups.”

Next, we turn to the study of journalism in a chapter entitled “The Shift to a Reader-Centric Strategy: How Brazilian News Outlets Are Attempting to Improve Relationships with Readers and Increase Revenues” by Giuliander Carpes and Lívia Vieira. This chapter is based on primary data collected from four of the most prominent news outlets in Brazil: the newspaper *O Estado de S. Paulo*, the regional online news outlet *GaúchaZH*, the explanatory journalism initiative *Nexo*, and the investigative agency *Pública*. The study is motivated by the observation that legacy media companies must compete in an ever more crowded space for the attention of potential readers. Data were collected through interviews with executives, as well as close studies of the online interfaces associated with these outlets and media coverage of them. All of these four outlets claimed to put the reader at the center of their business strategies, guiding both their print and online formats: “We found that the classical ideology of journalism is definitely the most explored value proposition by them as well as the outdated combination of quality, exclusivity, and price, while transparency and innovation are also motivations mentioned as important.” As the research shows, all of the outlets regarded audience participation as only a tool to enhance readership and the subscription base, rather than a means of enhancing the quality of the journalism:

Participation in the form of co-production is generally limited as well. Even though the legacy media cases analyzed in this research made recent changes aiming at centering their efforts on the readers, we observed that it happened more in the marketing front than in the adoption of routines focused on including their contributions on the workflow of the publications. We believe it means the relationships with readers are still often seen by publishers as a tactic for converting to digital subscriptions or memberships rather than an opportunity to leverage audience interest and expertise to make a better news product.

Even where digital interfaces were concerned, customer relationships were considered solely as a means of “tracking readers’ digital behavior” rather than gaining an understanding of what readers wanted and needed from news providers.

The final section of the volume takes us to Tech Ethics Futures beginning with “COVID-19 and the Traumatized Self: Through the Digital Looking Glass” by Laura Robinson, Jeremy Schulz, Katia Moles, and Julie B. Wiest. The authors engage with classic Symbolic Interactionist theories of the selfing process: “From Cooley’s original ‘looking glass self’ to Wellman’s ‘hyperconnected’ individualist self, social theories of identity work and production of the self have a long, interdisciplinary history.” The authors put these theories of selfing processes in dialogue with “the COVID-19 pandemic to make fresh connections between pandemic-induced trauma to the self and digital resources.” Within this encadrement, the authors introduce the concept of the “traumatized self” as a product of the pandemic, digital inequality, and digital hyper-connectivity. As the authors argue:

In this way the digital trauma paradox is implicit in the selfing process: traumatized identity projects are the result of diametrically opposed challenges: overexposure to digital resources and scarcity of digital resources. Both may result in what we dub the traumatized self. This trauma assumes two forms, depending on whether the person is digitally connected or not.

Building on previous work on the digitally traumatized self, they state:

While the digitally hyperconnected may suffer from a highly mediated form of trauma brought about by overexposure to traumatizing digital content, the digitally excluded suffer from more immediate trauma to the self brought about in part by their inability to conduct their lives through digital mediation channels. Therefore, it makes sense to say that, during this unprecedented time, the traumatized self has become *digitally differentiated*. Such trauma may continue to compound “post-pandemic,” as the new normal of an even more digitized society continues to exacerbate digital divides.

In this way, the authors shed light on the complex ways that digital media use has profound ethical implications for the self and selfing process that will continue to warrant future attention.

The section concludes with an investigation of an emergent phenomenon: news production through artificial intelligence (AI). This chapter, entitled “Journalistic Ethics in the Face of News Produced by Artificial Intelligence,” is written by Maria José Baldessar and Regina Zandomênicó. The chapter examines the codes of ethics promulgated in both the United States and Brazil in order to govern journalistic practice and how these codes deal with the potential of AI-produced journalism. As the authors point out, potential problems with AI-produced news content are very much on the minds of those concerned with ethics in journalism, particularly as AI-produced news stories have already caused problems.

As the authors tell us, we must revisit how AI poses ethical dilemmas that may be fundamentally different than previous challenges:

The use of artificial intelligence in news production, a relatively recent reality in communication, has started a new discussion regarding journalism ethics. In the 21st century's second decade, journalism faces new challenges. Prior to AI, journalists' criteria for reporting determined the facts that should gain notoriety. Currently, the barriers between news producers and consumers have been broken down by the public's performance on social networks.

These concerns necessitate ongoing reflection and dialogue for news industry professionals in contrast to prior eras: "Between the 17th century, when the first newspapers appeared, until the current use of automated writing, journalists have experienced 400 years of leadership as the responsible professional for news writing." The question raised by AI is to what extent human journalists retain responsibility for news content which is inaccurate or offensive if that content has been generated by automated systems. The consensus in both the United States and Brazil at present seems to be that news-producing algorithms and their creators cannot be held responsible for inaccurate or misleading news content, but rather editors and journalists themselves need to assume responsibility for errors and mistakes as they would with any human-produced news content. As the chapter states: "The communication company, in the figure of the editor, should be responsible for the ethical decision when automated content is published." The authors make a number of insightful connections, all of which speak to the growing need for all of us to increase our awareness of how AI raises a host of ethical questions:

Ferrigato (2015) states that if someone feels harmed by news articles written by artificial intelligence, we will have a legal and ethical problem of having a victim without a criminal [...] The academy signals the relevance by including the discussion of ethics related to artificial intelligence in program contents of undergraduate and graduate courses. It is now up to ethicists, journalists, and other professionals to discuss what impacts AI will have on news writing, acts of authorship, and creation that were previously only possible in the human domain.

The authors call for new forms of leadership and thoughtfully grapple with these emergent ethical issues across disciplines and industry specialists.

In conclusion, the contributions by authors to this volume bring together a vibrant collaboration of global voices addressing the media and communications challenges of our time. Case studies of media across time and space show the diverse ways that cultural media production has ripple effects throughout larger society in the ways that we understand mundane media activities as integral parts of meaning-making in our lived cultures. Specifically, the panorama of research in this volume highlights how both analog and digital media interact with non-mediated life realms to produce culture at the micro, meso, and macro levels. In making these connections, we are invited to ask ourselves important questions about how digitalization is shaping our everyday lives, how the ethics of tech is needed now more than ever with the sea change occasioned by AI, as well as our collective need to continually consider the ethical implications of media and technology from historical, contemporary, and future perspectives.