

ABSTRACT

Voices of communication. Hypothesis and considerations about an always topical discipline

by *Lella Mazzoli*

The article shows the vitality and the latest trends of Sociology of communication in empirical researches, theoretical studies and practical implementations “in” and “with” the media. Communication studies deal with the development of research methodologies and with the observation of a system of phenomena in constant evolution, which involves media and their topics, culture and consumption. In the present mediatised and transmedial context, it’s possible to observe profound evolutionary processes that concern cultural industry and its studies, journalism, television and reception, concepts such as public opinion and citizenship. But also issues such as new identity narratives, food, fashion and new forms of communication and consumption. This multiplicity of perspectives distinguish from the beginning the Sociology of Communication Review, which reaches with the present issue its 50th year of existence.

Keywords: Sociology of communication, information, media, research, culture, consumption.

Communication, method and interpretation

by *Paolo Montesperelli*

Communication, method, and interpretation are always tightly related, but the current cultural scene – also thanks to the “society of communication” – makes the interpretative nature of the method more undeniable. This article looks into this cultural horizon in order to briefly illustrate what is changing in the field of social research methodology. The active use of media, the concept of “text”, the investigation on the new media, the convergence of “qualitative” and “quantitative” research, and the relation between method and art are only but a few examples of the topics elicited by communication sciences, which also concern the methodologist.

Keywords: method, communication, interpretation, hermeneutics, social research, cultural horizon.

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Reconsidering the history of communication sciences

by *Mario Morcellini*

The paper analyzes some recent developments regarding communication phenomena and asks for a deep critical rethinking in the field of media studies. The unexpected and surely unforeseen communication development has decisively affected societal norms and behaviors, thus provoking a sort of shock in contemporary societies. Communication scholars have shown a severe lack of preparation towards these social changes. In a wider sense, Sociology as a discipline risks to be marginalized by communication, thus losing her own social reputation.

Keywords: Sociology of communication, media studies, communication effects, socialization, digital technologies, participation.

Transforming Television: How Tv is changing in the Age of Convergence

by *Aldo Grasso* and *Anna Sfondini*

In the last twenty years, the Italian television environment has changed deeply as a result of the digital revolution and the media convergence: the contemporary television is a complex phenomenon encompassing several changes in consumption practices, in textual features and in the industrial strategies of broadcasters. The essay will explore the principal dynamics that characterize the complex relationship between Tv and its audience today: the proliferation of screens and texts, the multiplicity of production and consumption practices, the variety of touchpoints to connect TV content and viewers.

Keywords: convergence TV, expanded TV text, brand, technology and access, extended audience.

Transmedial fields. Between remediation and innovation

by *Gino Frezza*

What are the transmedial fields of communication? The article clarifies some theoretical and historical presuppositions of the today's concept of transmedial field, with particular reference to the cinema, television and digital media. The essay takes in examination some consequences on the plan of the theoretical and historical search on the media, toward a careful understanding of the knots cultural fabrics between remediation and innovation.

Keywords: transmedial, intermedial, remediation, cultural innovation.

Mediatization and Network Society: A Research Agenda

by *Giovanni Boccia Artieri*

The contribution analyses the social change from the point of view of the mediatization approach. The concept of mediatization has to be distinguished from that of mediation, because it

identifies a meta-process of cultural and social transformation such as urbanization, globalization and individualization. This meta-process is influenced – but not determined – by media and it refers to the ability of media to spread their format or to impose specific frame in the lifeworld. On this basis, the article identifies three strands of the debate about mediatization – institutionalist, social constructivist, material – and then identifies the systemic approach as an important corrective to the limits of the three approaches. The systemic approach, using the themes of “synchronization” and “irritation” among the social systems and the “media logics” shows how the mediatization is a complex process that must also include non-media factors and agency of subjects. In summary, the mediatization is a meta-process that can not be reduced to specific techno-communicative devices and therefore has a more abstract generalized valence. But at the same time the mediatization does not incorporate an (average) unitary logic and therefore can only be observed through the specificity of the media practices. Ultimately the mediatization is not proposed as a new paradigm or as a middle-range theory. Rather it is a guiding concept for the empirical exploration of the social transformations that takes into account how it is today intensified media’s saturation of social interaction.

Keywords: mediatization, media studies, media practice, performance.

Where is journalism going?

by *Carlo Sorrentino*

The digital age has been producing a real cultural revolution within the journalistic field. Journalists and editorial organizations have to adapt their working practices to comply with new forms of news coverage, which change our way of accessing and consuming news. At the same time, sources are getting more and more professional in managing news processes. This has deeply influenced both news contents and the containers through which reality is delimited and shaped. Every newsroom must be able to oversee the newsmaking process in three different contexts: the traditional one, the web, and social media; therefore journalists must develop efficient strategies and criteria to manage each of them.

Keywords: journalism, social media, public interest, digital first, hybridization, journalistic professionalism.

The international fiction and the Tv communication

by *Enrico Menduni*

The article is focused on the birth of a new style in TV series in the United States around the end of the Eighties (the so-called “HBO Style”) and discusses their characteristics, narrative plots and features. Furthermore the article depicts the landing of these narrative contents in Italy, facing a backward-looking mediascape with a duopolistic presence of two networks, Rai and Mediaset. New American series greatly contribute to change this blocked system, now challenged

by a multinational conglomerate, Sky. Finally the article depicts the shifts from free-to-air television to pay-per-view and then to video on demand.

Keywords: pay-per-view, video on demand, franchise, TV series, TV broadcast.

Italian studies on the cultural industry

by *Fausto Colombo*

The article summarizes the Italian debate on the concept of cultural industry, since the first translations of the main authors in the field (Horkheimer, Adorno, Benjamin, Morin). The article is articulated in three parts. The first one discusses the way the national debate developed the concept, following the main indications of the authors quoted above. The second part follows the two main theoretical paths in studies on cultural industry in Italian bibliography: the socio-historical studies on the media production and the ethno-social studies on creative industries. The third part proposes some questions about the possible development of the studies in the era of digitalization.

Keywords: cultural industry, Italian studies, media, culture.

Material Culture and New Values: The Case of Ethical Fashion

by *Laura Bovone*

The article explores the phenomenon of ethical fashion from the beginning to nowadays as an example of material culture where the role of new values is particularly visible. Fashion, long-considered the most frivolous/useless/negative way of consumption, is framed by the author through the categories usually employed when explaining the passage from rational productive modernity to the aesthetic consumer culture of postmodernity. Ethical fashion seems to contrast this dichotomous mentality and expects to integrate aesthetic innovation and morals, sustainability and shared welfare, production and consumption. A new Ethical Imagination, supported by advanced digital instruments and the recent sharing economy values, drives toward work/consumption solutions that promise to subvert old hierarchies and alienated relations as well as gender bias.

Keywords: ethical fashion, material culture, values, sharing economy, ethical imagination.

Food and communication

by *Luisa Leonini*

The article discusses the role of food as an instrument of identity and a channel of contact through cultures. This is argued drawing from the food practices of international migrants in the context of the global flows of people and commodities in present day Italy. In this regard, food

plays an essential role in the rebuilding of a familiar context in which migrants can feel temporarily “at home”. At the same time, food is an important form of communication and contact between different cultures and social contexts. In this process of exchange both migrants and hosts, food habits and diets are modified as they incorporate elements and ingredients from each other, making more porous the boundaries of difference.

Keywords: ethnicity, family, food, migration, culture, language.

Media and political communication in Italy

by *Carlo M. Marletti*

The article briefly sketches the development of the studies on media and political communication in Italy, from the parties democracy (or so called First Republic) in which prevails the intra-élite political communication, to the spectacularization of extra-élite and public opinion communication in the berlusconian age, up to transition to a postmodern political communication, of which the pop politics is one of the prominent topics. Particular attention is dedicated to items as electoral campaigning and leadership personalization.

Keywords: party-centered democracy, intra and extra-élite communication, mediatisation, spectacularization, personalization, pop politics.

Cultures and autobiographical narratives

by *Paolo Jedlowski*

The paper discusses the role of autobiographical narratives in everyday storytelling. After explaining definitions and concepts, it underlines how differences do exist in forms and in functions of autobiographical narratives which emerge in different cultures. It focuses on the relevance of the relationship between the storyteller and his/her listener, showing how the tales do result from their cooperation.

Keywords: storytelling, autobiography, everyday life, culture.

Communicating science between media and research

by *Sveva Avveduto*

The paper takes into account the recent developments in the complex relations between science and media in light of the changes introduced by the massive use of the web. The boundaries between disciplines and fields of research blur, as well as the roles of the media practitioners and researchers change and intertwine as connected to the communication of science.

Keywords: science, communication, media, research, networking, journalists.

Smart citizen

by *Mario Ricciardi, Giulia Bertone, Domenico Morreale, Elisabetta Ranieri, Elisa Roscelli, Gabriella Taddeo*

The essay reflects on citizens' proximity mediated by personal and community technologies. Once distinct technologies, now in an unprecedented mix, that creates a space and a time that are parallel and interfering, generated by users themselves. A third channel that goes beyond private communication, a non-public sociability but community-based, characterized by personal and informal exchanges. The essay presents the project *In Media Loci*, which focused on two fields very representatives for Italy: the network of small towns scattered throughout the territory and cultural heritage, investigating the relationship between local communities and the new digital spaces that locative technologies are defining.

Keywords: smart citizen, smart communities; outsiders; locative media; augmented spaces; cultural heritage.

Consumption, communication and status. Italian middle class life styles and strategies of distinction, before and after the economic crisis

by *Roberta Bartoletti*

The article intends to offer a literature review of Italian sociological research on status communication of Italian middle class in the last fifteen years. We focus on a central topic of sociology of consumption, such as middle class distinction and identity strategies, and on a status group who was strongly affected by the recent economic crisis.

The review is structured in two sections. The first section focuses on the middle class consumption strategies before the 2008 economic crisis, the second is aimed to identify the strategies of facing the crisis.

Keywords: consumption, social identity, middle class, distinction, economic crisis.

Public communication: a complex set of paths

by *Franca Faccioli*

The paths of public communication in Italy are interwoven according to many different factors: the reform of public administration, the crisis of trust in institutions, the widespread movements for the defence of collective goods, the central role of mainstream media in public life, the diffusion of digital media, the main role of politics in defining the public sphere, the process of europeanization. A factor which has characterized the development of public communication in Italy is the number of regulations which constantly redefines its boundaries and contents. The paper reconstructs these itineraries in four main phases: the experimentation phase, the institutionalization phase, the performance evaluation phase, the model of collaborative administration. The analysis has been

conducted in relation to the different meanings that concepts of transparency, image, services, participation and active citizenship assume in different phases.

Keywords: transparency, corporate image, organizational communication, participation, collaborative administration.

Meaning playing, visibility and infomediation: the fragmented paths of contemporary communication

by *Pina Lalli*

The article proposes the notion of infomediation as an useful tool for empirical sociological research on the role that new social subjects play today in web communication. After a brief illustration of the contribution of the social sciences for the analysis of the effects and practices of media technologies, especially about the agenda building of the public sphere, the paper describes some examples of the infomediation phenomenon. It assumes from the literature the hypothesis that new technological oligarchic élites are constituting, with strong relationships with other types of élites. Finally, it shows some results and methodological suggestions of a few first empirical researches on the role of Google or Twitter for the newsmaking practices of information.

The origins of Made in Italy Communication

by *Bernardo Valli*

The contribution investigates the origins of Made in Italy communication and promotion. It stresses the importance of the relationship between the complex Italian fashion system and Italian cultural industry: fashion exhibitions, the role of specialized press and magazines, the movie industry and the star system of the Fifties. This history was shaped by important protagonists such as the “legendary” figure of Gianbattista Giorgini, inventor and realizator of the first Italian runway show in 1951 which is considered amongs the specialists the founding event of Italian Fashion. In these origins we meet the most important names of fashion and of the best Italian craftsmanship tradition as well as buyers, entrepreneurs and Italian and foreign journalists. All of these people and professionals together contributed to the definition and the success of Made in Italy.

Keywords: Made in Italy, Fashion, craftsmanship, event, cultural industry, communication.