

The characteristics of newspapers as cultural power: reinterpretations of journalism theory proposed by Otto Groth

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Abstract

Journalism, as a cultural product resulting from social needs, is the subject of systematic and complex exposition by Otto Groth. The purpose of this text is to analyze the links that the author establishes between the characteristics of journalism and culture, understanding the newspaper as a specialized materialization of senses present in society. In reviewing texts that study Groth's work, we identify the absence of reflections on the neo-Kantian framework that structures the author's propositions. In this occasion, we present a conceptual analysis of journalistic science as a science of the spirit, to later explore the newspaper's characteristics: periodicity, actuality, universality and publicity.

Keywords: Otto Groth. Epistemology. Journalism. Culture. Newspaper's characteristics.

Introduction

Over his more-than-50-year career, Otto Groth has developed a vast number of works explaining the history and nature of journalism. His major work is titled "*The Unknown Cultural Power: Fundamentals of the Science of Newspapers*", composed of seven volumes (one unfinished) and more than 2000 pages, published between 1961 and 1966.

Perhaps the greatest limitation to Groth's set of texts is the fact they have never been published in English or French. Groth's ideas were discussed in Spanish through a synthetic analysis by Faus Belau (1966), a text which has been studied in Brazil since the 1970s and, in particular, a text by Bueno (1972) realized at the University of São Paulo - one that has circulated among Brazilian journalism scholars. The increased dissemination and study of

Groth's texts in Brazil started in 2007 with the translation of "*The task of scientific research on culture*", the first chapter in the work titled "*The Unknown Cultural Power*", a collection of works organized by Professors Christa Berger and Beatriz Marocco. The production of articles and reflections about Groth in Brazil increased due to an increase in the number of graduate courses in journalism and in specific lines of research in Communication Programs. This was consolidated with the translation of three chapters of "*The Unknown Cultural Power*" in 2011.

This text is limited to the restricted access to Groth's work, so our reference is based on Portuguese translations of the author's texts, including interpretations in Portuguese and Spanish. Even so, we believe our task is a valid one as we are conducting a theoretical analysis. We examine the connections the author establishes with the characteristics of journalism and the culture of a particular community, understanding the newspaper as a specialized representation of meanings present in society. It is within this aspect which we explore the characteristics of newspapers: periodicity, actuality, universality and publicity; using Groth's proposal in the Neo-Kantian theoretical/philosophical framework as a hypothesis.

Understanding the epistemological scope

When analyzing interpretations of Groth's text in Brazil, in particular, the main characteristics of the journalistic science he proposes, three main forms of understanding are identified. The first ones are more empirical studies, in which the concepts of periodicity, universality, actuality and publicity are presented in order to understand how they may apply to journalistic products (from the past or the present), especially those made from new digital technologies.

The second set of texts has a critical nature, understanding both conceptions and lexicon understood by the author as "positivist", "mechanical", or "limiting" as it pertains to the diversity in which journalism is manifested. The critical texts show that Groth's proposition is limited to the understanding of printed newspapers, in the same way that characteristics are classified and applied to journalistic products in the first form of understanding mentioned here. The lexicon that Groth uses and his affirmation of the existence of a "Science of the Newspapers" are cataloged as positivist since he works with concepts like essence, norms, method, contemplation and objective which, according to some of these texts, do not comply with the narrativity, subjectivity, creativity, limitations, partiality and diversity of the many forms of journalism.

The third set of characteristics is a departure from the first two interpretations. They are analyses that highlight the Weberian structure of Groth's thinking¹, emphasizing the fact that Weber was Groth's professor, that he is the author who is cited the most in his chapter

1 Although many critics of Weber's work consider him a positivist, we consider it an error to limit the concepts of Comte and Durkheim to those of Weber.

“*The task of scientific research on culture*”, referring to concepts such as causality, ideal type, and meaning, and by the very way in which Groth constructs the newspapers’ science object – similar to what Weber does for social sciences (OLIVEIRA, 2014). We understand this last set of analyses on Groth’s text as closer to his theoretical philosophical framework. However, we do not identify explorations within them about the connections between the structuring concepts of science proposed by Groth and the characteristics of journalistic science. What we find with Groth is a proposal with Weberian influences, one that must therefore be understood as belonging to the Neo-Kantian tradition of formulating the Sciences of the Spirit or of the Sciences of Culture. It should be noted that Weber is also one of the authors who discusses the Kantian theses for Human Sciences (Neo-Kantian). Although Groth uses Weberian concepts and conceptual / methodological structure, we recognize that, epistemologically, there are peculiarities in their meaning that need clarification.

For example, Rüdiger (2017) asserts that Groth does not work operatively with the concept of social action to explain journalistic science. Rüdiger (2017) also argues, albeit mildly, that Groth’s thinking is similar to Cassirer’s theory of symbolic forms, particularly regarding his explanations of the cultural sciences. Even though the influence Cassirer’s hypothesis has on Groth is important towards understanding his proposition for journalistic science in general, and towards understanding the specific characteristics of newspaper, he is only mentioned once in a passage describing the method in “*Task of the Scientific Research on the Culture*”, a text that Rüdiger (2017) himself analyzed.

When we study the excerpt which Groth describes journalistic science as a science of the spirit or culture, he is making a reference to Dilthey. Dilthey (1949; 1968) argues that the sciences of the spirit must be understood separately from the natural or physical sciences. This distinction is made through the object and the method. In differentiating sciences of the spirit and natural sciences through the object, Dilthey argues that they are interested in moral facts, “in which the object presents itself from the interior, as an experience of an original living set” (REIS, 2003, p. 102 – Our translation). It is an intimate structure of life, of psychology, which presents itself as a unit with a systematicity that shows itself externally (perceptions, images, sensations). This structure is constituted as a unit by resisting externalities, and producing distinctions, identifications, associations and separations of itself. That is to say, the object defines itself and constitutes a unity once becoming autonomous, “It is this world of the objective spirit which has nourished me from an early age” (DILTHEY, 1968, p. 262 – Our translation). According to the Reis (2003)’ systematization, the third differentiation of the object lies not in the aegis of the law of causality as defended by the natural sciences, but in the understanding of the purpose (telos) that directs psychological action. In this respect, the moral or the spiritual are inner processes associated with a purpose (DILTHEY, 1968; REIS, 2003). Dilthey argues that society, as an exterior human world, arises from transferring the individual’s psychological life to other individuals, understanding that the set of moral facts differs from nature by its great organization in teleological systems dominated by desire. This is not to say that he deals with “teleological metaphysics,” but that

the object of the sciences of the spirit is objectified life, the individual and collective mental process objectified.

As for the method, Dilthey (1968) defends the different forms of “contemplation” of the world of life as the main source for its definition as a science. In the sciences of the spirit, researchers “understand” inner processes in their outer manifestation, for this outer manifestation is an aspect of interiority. This is different from the natural sciences which explain outer laws without contemplating the structure and manifestation of meaning. This distinction between understanding and explaining can be seen in all the Neo-Kantian authors from Dilthey’s proposition, albeit with differences of understanding, but with similar terms and issues – we see this in Rickert, Wildeband, Weber, and in a group of social science and historical scholars from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (PONTES, 2009).

A second aspect of the method is Dilthey’s individualistic proposition – which is based on understanding the meaning of individual actions and not on a philosophy of history which a suprahistorical metaphysical entity would determine individual actions – both in the Hegelian idealist sense and Comte’s idea of evolution (REIS, 2003). “It is within the sets of concrete social interaction that the question of meaning should be addressed” (REIS, 2003, p. 134 – Our translation).

The object of the sciences of the spirit is the “objectification of life”. Dilthey (1968) describes the objectification of life as the “objective spirit”. Unlike Hegel, who defines the objective spirit as a stage of development of the universal (speculative, metaphysical) spirit, Dilthey (1968, p. 262 – Our translation) sees the objective spirit as referring to the reality of life, “[...] to customs, to rights, to the state, to religion, to art, to sciences and to philosophy [...]”. There is a hierarchy of understanding, ranging from the most indeterminate (humanity in general) to the more determined (restricted, individual actions). For Dilthey, it is this methodological framework of determined actions that helps us “understand” manifestations of the spirit from more indeterminate and complex manifestations. In addition, individual actions result from the objective spirit, and understanding the structure of the complex individual requires understanding this objective spirit. Which brings us to Groth (2011, p. 33 – Our translation).

Newspapers and magazines are works of culture. Culture is understood here as the set of human intellectual creations that continually grow and change. Thus, the Science of Newspapers is the science of cultural works; it is a “science of culture”. It is the interdependence in which the immaterial world meets and differentiates itself from the causality of nature by the fact that this interdependence leads to *values* and *purposes* according to the structure of the mind. In fact, not occasionally, not here and there, but it is precisely in the structure of the intellect to generate values and to realize ends in their reciprocal influence on the basis of understanding.

Groth (2011, p. 32 – Our translation) understands that “all human thinking and action is *final*, it occurs in order to *fulfill the needs of established purposes*”. Groth (2011, p. 33 – Our translation) continues, “cultural work has, as the realization of a meaning, a ‘sensory reality’; it is therefore teleologically directed towards humans, towards subjects. Its structure is subjective / objective as a whole and in its parts”. He seeks to recognize journalism as an autonomous science by recognizing the specificity of its object and method. And he does so in order to recognize a “specific internal uniformity”, a cultural meaning that specializes and determines the manifestation of empirical objects that he alludes to.

If we start from the external similarities of objects in the first provisional syntheses, this teleological connection is not determinative, but is a sign of the whole of the meaning, of the similarity of the purposes to which the objects serve, and of the internal uniformity determined by this similarity. If we want a cultural science of newspapers and magazines, then we must first seek this specific internal uniformity to then formulate our problems and concepts, and not research the historical political content or the “literary” formations of newspapers and magazines. These objectives are already sought out by other sciences, and can or should be, and the results to be obtained only of secondary interest to the Science of Newspapers [...]. But what is “essential” for the Science of Newspapers, or the important reason, is exclusively the “idea”, the “essence”, the “nature” of the works - the similarity of its meaning, its essential sides, its constant qualities, the “characteristics” and structure of this unit – and what is connected to it. It is within the essential that its own object and method lay, it substantiates its system. The investigation of the essential generates the science of culture called “Science of the Newspapers” (GROTH, 2011, p. 34-35 – Our translation).

Thus, the task of journalistic science is to recognize the meaning and the purpose of the work, its interiority – as Dilthey points out: “*The appearance, or the technical product, plays no part in defining concepts and delimiting the object*” (GROTH, 2011, p. 36 – Our translation, emphasis added). In this respect, the criticism around Groth, that his theory is valid only for printed newspapers, lacks foundation and shows an unfamiliarity of his conceptual matrix. “Thus, the essence of the newspaper remains the same, indifferent to the materialization in which it manifests, whether on printed paper, letters on the wall, or words on the radio” (GROTH, 2011, p. 36 – Our translation).

The connection to Dilthey’s conception of the sciences of the spirit helps to understand the structure of Groth’s reasoning. However, Groth also distances himself from Dilthey, mainly when it comes to designing the research method in the sciences of culture. This is where the author seeks to advance the Diltheyan division of the sciences of the spirit and natural sciences. Saying there is a foundation of object and method in the sciences of culture

in the face of the natural sciences, and then seeking points of connection between them, is very common among Neo-Kantian authors. Like Weber, Groth states that the method of the sciences of culture is to understand, but the researcher must work with causalities. If, as Hartmann affirms, we are subjects with meaning that mobilize causalities to fulfill a purpose, not knowing the causes directly interferes in achieving the purpose (LUKÁCS, 2012; GROTH, 2011). Therefore, for Groth, Journalistic Science must understand the causalities that are external and pertinent to it in order to understand the regularities of meaning.

All this aside, more than just showing Dilthey's influence on Groth, it demonstrates that the development of journalistic science he proposed takes place within the Neo-Kantian framework. This is clearly manifested in several passages, such as those in which he establishes the classifications of sciences based on Wildeband, Rickert, or Husserl. We recognize that it is only on this basis that we are able to analyze the characteristics of newspapers and reshape the interpretation of Groth's proposition.

Characteristics of newspapers

The characteristics of newspapers are some of the most widespread concepts of the work "*The cultural power of the unknown*". We understand, according to previously outlined reasoning, that characteristics can only be understood as they relate to the interiority of the work, to the meaning. Groth explains that characteristics are not the meaning; they are parts of it, a decomposition of all that is systematized and objectified in life, but if isolated, they lose their reason for being in the meaning.

Groth bases these characteristics on Weber's concept of the ideal type. The ideal type is a category Weber constructed to allow one to approach reality and rationally recognize elements that at first are disconnected, but recurrent. Thus, they are constructs not present in reality in the way they are described because they "exaggerate" aspects, they offer idealizations or entirety that allow him to establish contrasts with the observed practical reality.

The four characteristics are periodicity, universality, actuality and publicity. They are not justifiable elements of newspaper products, but of the purposes of society and history. Groth proposes an inversion of reasoning because the characteristics are not a catalogue for classifying the reality of newspapers or their products, but for serving to understand purposes of the community for which the newspaper is a product or crystallization of. The characteristics of newspapers are responses to social needs, and as responses they need to be understood because paper, byte, image, and sound are not journalism, they are mediums that only acquire journalistic meaning when manifested within the purposes which the newspaper (independent of the media) is inserted. These purposes of culture, of objectified spirit, are historic and vary from region to region.

Journalism tends to respond to each location according to the resources and needs of its community. This means that periodicity, universality, actuality and publicity are analytical

categories of ideal type that help to understand the journalistic characteristics of a given community or society which take shape in products (newspaper, radio, television news). This is why Groth defines newspapers as “cultural works”. “But the numbers of a printed newspaper, the successive broadcasts of radio or television news are not part of newspapers as a newspaper, only emanations or materializations of its ideal reality” (FIDALGO, 2004, p. 3 – Our translation).

Groth argues that periodicity is the most immediate characteristic of newspapers as it establishes the shape of the public rhythm materialized in the systematic production of information. Universality and actuality are characteristics that crystallize in the content of newspapers. Publicity is the result of the product’s connection with the community. From these considerations, we turn to the characteristics and the aspects they offer towards Groth’s understanding of journalism.

Periodicity

The first characteristic for studying newspapers is periodicity. “What primarily characterizes the newspaper is its periodic appearance” (FIDALGO, 2004, p. 3 – Our translation). This category is focused on its form, without observing the content that the newspaper produces. The personality of a newspaper is established by the continuity of its periodic published material. Periods have a space and time relationship. Periods have a relationship with the trajectory, “[...] the distance it circulates or travels, in other words, it is a cycle, a journey [...]” (GROTH, 2011, p. 150 – Our translation).

Periodic feedback is a quality every newspaper should have. Periodicity is a relation with the subject, with the culture; it is linked to the needs and predicts regularity (GROTH, 2011). “The measure of periodicity, the spaces of time, and the time of day in which newspaper numbers are published are determined by the needs of the people” (GROTH, 2011, p. 150-151 – Our translation). The frequency of the newspaper is established through the modern subject, which became punctual under the pressure of capitalist competition. The technological implementation of life in society reshapes the newspaper’s production process. “Newspaper periods only became constant when the technique and organization made it so the news could be securely and regularly received, when the printing technique allowed for rapid reproduction, and the mail and the train also provided immediate propagation” (GROTH, 2011, p. 161 – Our translation).

When dealing with technical possibilities and regular reception, the author points to publicity as one of the pillars that holds up periodicity. In order to be periodical, a newspaper needs to circulate regularly to its readers. Fidalgo (2004) points to periodicity as a relation between fact (event) and its publicity, amplifying the meaning of this characteristic beyond print. “What is more important for journalistic periodicity is simultaneity and not regularity” (FIDALGO, 2004, p. 4 – Our translation). This is because the very production of events (systematic or unexpected) demarcates and interferes in the rhythm of the public.

“The measure of periods in reality varies according to the people that produce them, to their natural and socio-cultural conditions” (GROTH, 2011, p. 161 – Our translation).

Groth (2011) explains that newspapers initially concerned themselves with responding immediately to a given community’s interest for information and with publicizing specific events. Newspapers and their organization and systematicity, then, begin to interfere publicly, as a product of political intent which shapes opinions that circulate periodically. Lastly, newspapers become systematic and begin to respond to the genre, to the public meaning, with institutionality and universality, conforming to more culture-integrated periods.

In formulating his concept, Groth (2011) calls the newspaper a complete idea, formed by an immaterial reality that never becomes visible. For example, it materializes in numbers or copies. In terms of publishing copies, he presents one of the requirements of periodicity: providing published material in each space of time, according to the reality in which it is inserted. “Only materialized copies can be somewhat detectable by the senses” (GROTH, 2011, p. 147 – Our translation). However, as we previously mentioned, newspapers are immaterial and unique, and at the same time it is this unity that results in continuity. “They (newspapers) are understood only by number and copy, by the actions taken for their production, and by the organizations generated for it, and so on” (GROTH, 2011, p. 147 – Our translation). By selecting the subjects that compose a copy, Groth exposes the need to understand universality and points out that actuality is placed inside periodicity. In view of the fact that in order to maximize a possible “effect of meaning” in the context in which they are inserted, newspapers need to become public – this relates to the publicity characteristic - circulate with regularity – a condition of publicity.

Universality

The existence of newspapers, consequently, is determined by universality and its issues are observed in the content of newspapers. To formulate the concept of universality, Groth (2011) goes back to the debate on the science of culture to show that human beings are inserted into an objective world. The sharing of the physical and social world of human beings, interacting with the world, formulating opinions and positions occurs in many ways. “However, no one absorbs everything in the world with the same feeling and the same interest, with the same participation and the same sharing” (GROTH, 2011, p. 168 – Our translation). The universal must come from a range of possible topics in order for a newspaper to cover them (FIDALGO, 2004, p. 9).

When speaking of Groth’s universality, Fidalgo (2004, p. 5 – Our translation) explains that: “It is not the world itself, but the world as man confronts it, as it determines man and how man himself determines it”. The objective world, therefore, is a relational concept. The concept of universality is associated with objective (unattainable) reality - an ideal type.

The need to be situated in time and space, inserted into the social world and culture means newspapers are a result of the connection between human beings and the social world.

Therefore, in order to situate modern man, newspapers must be universal. “Newspapers equip modern man with everything he needs to find himself and assert himself in the complicated gear of today’s modern society” (GROTH, 2011, p. 218 – Our translation). Universality corresponds to the socializing side of community and has a threefold relation: “I and the others”, “I and the nature” and “I and the world” (FAUS BELAU, 1966 – Our translation). Phenomenologically speaking, connections are established in each individual for each relationship. It is the newspapers duty to recognize the essential connections that help shape communities and that community’s relations with the human race. This is what newspapers are expected to do, to provide the necessary insights for strengthening and creating bonds with the community for which it reports.

In characterizing universality as an ideal type, Groth is not saying there are no challenges in providing quality newspaper. He reinforces that there are difficulties in presenting content based on the culture which the newspaper belongs to. “The passions and selfishness, the lies and incitements of newspapers are reflections of the collective mindset and powers that dominate it” (GROTH, 2011, p. 221 – Our translation).

Newspapers, therefore, represent everything that makes up the readers’ world: often holding on to wrong facts and leaving gaps, not always immediately and consequently, often doubting and hesitating, being prevented by external matters or by contradicting itself, observing at a later stage, attentive and driven by some special occasion, by some pressure, by a current motive but, nevertheless, always subject to the law of universality and following its rules.

Observing the content of newspapers, Groth emphasizes that in order for newspapers to be relevant to the community in which they are inserted, they need to deal with issues on a broader level. The universal nature of newspapers lies precisely in their capacity to meet the needs of readers both in time and space. Lastly, it is important to understand that each characteristic makes sense when it is associated with the others. “The editor’s and the journalist’s mindset must be aimed at universality for periodicity, for the present and for publicity” (GROTH, 2011, p. 217 – Our translation).

Actuality

The debate about the value of actuality in journalism lies within the ideal types materialized by Groth (2011). It is a that quality newspapers have, a concept of time, of content, and expresses an amount of time. For Groth, actuality is connected with the immediate present.

This characteristic has a double meaning: actuality can be understood as what actually happened, the real or actual event; yet it can also can be understood to mean “in this

moment”, popular, active in the present. For Groth, the Science of Newspapers analyzes the second meaning, the “present-day act” of mediation as the newspapers’ duty.

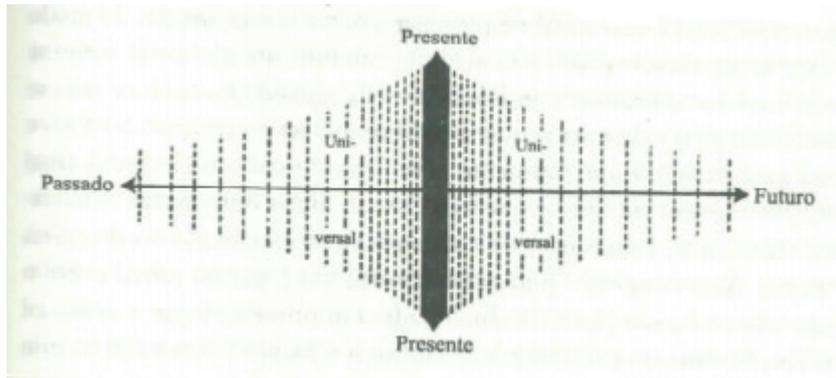
Although their definitions are related, Groth makes sure to not confuse actuality with newness. “The connection between both meanings or group of meanings, is produced by the fact that the present manifests itself as the only, the proper, real” (GROTH, 2011, p. 223 – Our translation). Newness is also an element of the present, but it is not the only one.

Newness, on the other hand, is not exactly a temporal concept, but only means that the subject did not know about it. Everything that the subject did not know and comes to know is new. It is, therefore, a relationship of quality between the cognizant subject and the known object (FIDALGO, 2004, p. 7 – Our translation).

The present works with the possibilities of raising awareness of the present, past and future. The temporality of the present may be shorter or longer. It is about recognizing that the subject already knows the past, however, it is the present which is presented by the newspaper. “Reviewing the past and predicting the future depend on experiencing the present. This is what newspapers must report on” (FIDALGO, 2004, p. 7 – Our translation). There is an observable emphasis in the present on understanding what actuality is. By placing readers’ decision making in time and space, newspapers depend on actuality to ensure their social existence. “The reason for the present lies in what is necessary in people’s lives, the teleological nature of their psyche, and the constant need for instant information about their respective worlds, all of which also led to the invention of the newspaper” (GROTH, 2011, p. 236 – Our translation).

In this respect, Groth (2011) relates the newspaper’s actuality to simultaneity, the shortest distance between fact and mediation of the fact. The time that elapses between the occurrence of the fact and its publication should be as close to zero as possible. The concept of actuality can also relate speed with revelation. “Being a temporal relation, actuality has a quantitative dimension, which is the space of time between the moment of occurrence and the moment of publication” (FIDALGO, 2004, p. 7 – Our translation).

Groth also shows that actuality is guided by the cultural characteristics in which the newspaper is inserted. The conditions which make content actual are determined by its dependence on universality in relation to the present, with the past and the future. The present can be expanded from the needs and its connection with the interest of the subjects. “News is only current to us –even though it can inform us of the latest happenings and be quite new to us - if it falls into the circle of our general brief interests” (GROTH, 2011, p. 244 – Our translation). Figure 1, made by Groth, offers a synthesis of how actuality is varied and its dependence on universality. We can also observe that the periodicity can increase or decrease the simultaneity in the newspaper, thereby maintaining the relational nature of the characteristics manifested by Groth.

Figure 1 – Actuality in relation to Universality²

Source: Groth (2011).

Publicity

The fourth and last of Groth's characteristics (2011) refers to the form of newspapers, as well as periodicity. Publicity refers to the dissemination, or the circulation of a particular newspaper, making it accessible, making it public. Publicity is also connected with universality. "There is a direct correspondence between these two newspaper tendencies, to be universal and to be directed towards all" (FIDALGO, 2004, p. 9 – Our translation). A newspaper's accessibility is what characterizes its publicity. There is a direct relationship between reaching the largest possible audience and their universality because certain topics restrict the interest and circulation of a newspaper.

Just as in the concept of actuality, Groth (2011, p. 265 – Our translation) highlights the double character of the meaning of publicity. "[...] it is both propagation and knowledge of the issue (current publicity) and general accessibility (potential publicity) [...]". The act of propagating can also be interpreted as distributing printed material and circulation models. Once again, we would like to emphasize that the concept of publicity has a close relationship with the circulation of ideas that drive a newspaper, through the range of meaning and the social need of journalism and meeting this need.

At first, the debate around becoming public was connected to liberalism, against the absolutist state (GROTH, 2011). When defending the public as a value to newspapers, Groth establishes a relation with the liberal state and defends liberal newspapers and the need to advertise in order to maintain the journalistic company. On the other hand, editors and writers should be concerned with the newspaper's publicity characteristic, the link that that newspaper has with its public, and not reduce or suppress accessibility because of advertisers' interests.

² *Passado* (Past); *Presente* (present); *Futuro* (future).

Editors and newsrooms have to reserve certain contributions to sections of texts as advertisements and choose their collaborators in the name of public interest, and especially, never question the editor's right to refuse ads that contradict the basic political, economic, religious and moral stance of his newspaper (GROTH, 2011, p. 269 – Our translation).

Like other characteristics of the newspaper, publicity is also linked to the historical time in which the newspaper is inserted, so how it is understood will also change. “The threshold of publicity is not something that stays the same historically speaking, the journalistic space changes under temporal-spatial conditions” (GROTH, 2011, p. 279 – Our translation). This requires the understanding that cultural issues exert influence on how the newspaper will relate to its audience, and what it will do to reach out to its audience.

To determine the extent to which a newspaper circulates, one must recognize the degree of universality. Groth (2011) acknowledges the existence of at least three types of newspaper with specific characteristics of publicity based on his experience with the German press: national political newspaper, state political newspaper, and local newspaper. He points out that the existence of a structure containing these characteristics in “large states with fully developed media will be formed as clearly as possible in the liberal states” (GROTH, 2011, p. 295 – Our translation).

On the other hand, the concept of actuality is related to that of publicity in terms of the input and output of content in a journalistic company.

The fundamental *meaning of publicity* is nothing more than the fact that it is the door through which the immaterial assets of newspapers are sent and received, through which all sections of the company's production maintain a connection with the outside world, from the editor's and newsroom offices to the engine rooms and packaging rooms (GROTH, 2011, p.313 – Our translation, emphasis added).

The relationship with this outside world is also connected to the need to observe the newspaper as a company with readers and advertisers. Groth reveals some concerns he has about the layout, the advertisements, and each copy's form of circulation when determining how a newspaper is inserted in a certain place or culture. Lastly, understanding publicity, the act of reaching the reader, as an axis reinforces and reshapes the other characteristics of the newspaper because it reaffirms the need to see them as closely related in order to describe what the newspaper is and the meaning that it sends out.

Considerations

In this paper we seek to reinforce the Neo-Kantian theoretical connection with the theory proposed by Otto Groth. By understanding the sciences of the spirit, we are able to understand the limitations he makes on journalism as a cultural product, and also of the journalistic science in which specializes. By analyzing the connections that Groth establishes between the characteristics of journalism and culture, we are able to present newspapers as specialized materializations of meanings present in society. That is, Groth dissects the layers that connect newspapers with society and with the individual. We present the characteristics of newspapers within the following scope: periodicity, actuality, universality and publicity.

When describing the characteristics of newspapers, Groth acknowledges that the boundaries between characteristics are less clear, depending on the culture it is inserted into. “As in all cultural works, the boundaries between the forms described here are fluid” (GROTH, 2011, p. 304 – Our translation). Each axis described may suffer interference from the reality and context in which the newspaper is produced. That is, Groth does not limit the concept of newspapers to just geographical and historical contexts, even if they present characteristics pertinent to the construction of journalistic science.

When establishing the newspaper as a product of culture, Groth does not restrict his analysis to the materialization of newspapers. In addition, he maintains that the elements that materialize in newspapers result from the community and the time in which they are inserted. He consolidates, therefore, a vision of newspapers as products of socially constructed meanings that change over time, but not individualized to the point of not being able to show regularities. Groth treats the essence of journalism as a prominently subjectivist and cultural project. The characteristics of newspapers cannot, therefore, serve as a mechanical catalogue without considering the webs that connect journalism with its public.

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