

## ABSTRACTS

### INAUGURATION OF ACADEMIC YEAR 1992-1993

#### L'AUDIOVISUEL ET LA DÉMOCRATIE

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RÉGIS DEBRAY

The act which opened the Societat's current academic year evolved into a splendid inaugural session offered by the highly acclaimed French researcher and journalist Régis Debray. Debray gave an in-depth analysis of the transformations that the audio-visual scene has undergone in recent years and of the function presently exercised by television, as a major communications medium, in changes in the fields of politics and social behaviour.

The lecture by Debray, formerly foreign affairs advisor to France's President Mitterand from 1981 to 1988 and director of the French Pavilion at Expo'92, invited reflection on the *domesticating* influence of television, as an instrument which increasingly operates as a seductive spectacle, "as a fascinating show which, at the same time, by virtue of the bombardment and the accumulation of information it generates, does nothing but discommunicate and disinform". In this sense, in the view of the French intellectual and writer, what it transmits in the name of news is a series of unique visions of reality rather than an interpretation of the world. "There is a homogenization of discourse instead of a diversity of interpretations", as he critically observed. Indeed, for Debray, the world comes to resemble a video game in which the dominant element is the art of distraction, and in which democracy is diminished in substance and abandons the tutelage of the written media for that of the audiovisual. Throughout his discourse, the French scholar insisted on the fact that "the real world is inclined to disappear", replaced by the world given by television, since "whatever is not shown or said on television, does not exist". In addition, Debray emphasized the hegemony of the concept of *videosphere*, which he regards as being the emission of information more and more by means of the image: an image that is rapid, depoliticized, devoid the naturalness and transmitted instantaneously; "which", he suggested, "is leading us to the point where we are incapable of distinguishing between reality and fiction".

Towards the end of his fluent presentation, Debray made specific reference to the state of political communication nowadays, stressing the subordination of public initiatives to those of the private sector, and the intervention of capital and finance in television, as in the case of the multi-millionaire Ross Perot. He went on to note the disturbing lack of participation, associationism and community initiatives, seeing this as the product of — amongst other causes — the “devitalizing” effect of the mass media today.

## TRIBUTE TO THE MEMORY OF JOAN FUSTER

### MY FRIEND FUSTER

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by RICARD BLASCO I LAGUNA

Ricard Blasco provides us in his article with recollections of his relationship with Joan Fuster. The Valencian scholar begins by situating us in the historical contexts in which he first became aware of the early work of the late Valencian essayist. The author relates in some depth the sensations produced by the epoch, the literary life of the time and the implacable severity of the Franco dictatorship towards any sign of opposition to the regime. Blasco gives a summary of Fuster's first stirrings, especially the pieces published in *Verbo*, to which he devotes particular attention. At the same time, Blasco recalls how he came to know Fuster's character and the tremendous importance during those decades of *El descrèdit de la realitat* and *Nosaltres els valencians*, two of the principal anthologies of the Sueca writer's work. The latter part of the text takes the form of an intimate exploration by Blasco of his subject's personality and his first meetings with Fuster, stressing the markedly Catalan aspect of the writer, the surroundings with which he fell in love, his library, his capacity to influence others, his books, his virtues and his experiences.

## JOAN FUSTER'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO JOURNALISM

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by JOSEP MARIA CASASÚS I GURÍ

The scholar relates Joan Fuster and Josep Pla on the basis of the sustained practice of written journalism over many years, writing news reports and features, articles on current affairs, reviews and criticism and even gossip columns. If Pla tended to keep more to tangible reality, to everyday occurrences, Fuster linked his writing more to a global body of

thought, to a stock of ideas which he set about developing in the course of his scholarly studies. And it is in this regard that Fuster more precisely merits classification as an intellectual. Fuster's extensive journalistic output appeared in a wide range of newspapers and magazines published in Valencia, Barcelona and Madrid, in both Catalan and Castilian. A large part of this body of work is today available for consultation in book form, thus allowing in-depth study without difficulty. In view of all this, it can confidently be claimed that Fuster was the most important Catalan journalist of the second half of the 20th century, comparable only to Josep Pla in the field of prose journalism.

### **III CYCLE OF REPORTS**

#### ***POLIMPSESTS***

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by JOAN FONTCUBERTA I VILLÀ

Joan Fontcuberta offers us here a personal and emotive reflection on the activity that is for him both profession and vocation: photography. He theorizes about the profession, his manner of engaging in it and its way of capturing reality — a mediatized reality. He analyzes photography “within the universe of media” alongside such concepts as creativity, plasticity and veracity (the difficulty of distinguishing deception and falsity). The author studies photography's capacity to play with reality and the other functions it practices. The second section, in explicit contrast to the first, takes the form of an overview of the historical evolution progressing from the first symptoms or experiences up to the current state and practice of the profession, in which Fontcuberta sees the photographer as living in a highly personal world which he or she captures, transforms and is transformed by. The article then returns to the question of fallacy, image and certainty. In the latter part of the article Fontcuberta explains, with historical references, the photographer's mission, the contradictions and the objectives of the photo-picture as a medium producing a series of sensations, and finally gives an account of how his own day-to-day work has evolved; work which, as an artist and creator, he constantly defines in an extremely profound and rigorous discourse.

### **EMOTION IN COMMUNICATION**

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by MIQUEL RODRIGO I ALSINA

The article sets out to question the level of research currently being carried out within the field of communication into the effects of the emotive in the mass media. Rodrigo considers the need to study emotive communication,

and to do so from a multidisciplinary perspective, while at the same time establishing the methodological framework that should be applied in the study of this particular type of communication. The author then goes on to propose a study of the communicators themselves and their emotional situation; the way they relate and experience events. He immediately distinguishes what may be regarded as cognitive and emotive effects from behavioural effects, and individual from collective passions. At the same time he considers the idea of constructing a theory of of communicative passions and defines those elements which would need to be taken into consideration. In seeking to arrive at a theory of the passions he puts forward as a reference the theory developed by the School of Paris concerning the semiotics of the passions and other techniques employed in analyzing the phenomenon. He then goes on to set out the characteristics of the socio-semiotic model which he proposes as the basis for a study of the productive work carried out by the communicators, the discourses produced and the effects generated, and concludes with a reflection on the concept of emotion associated with the various disciplines.

## **SCHOOLS OF JOURNALISM IN EUROPE**

by **FRANCESCA RODRÍGUEZ I LÓPEZ**

The text takes the form of a quantitative analysis of the various centres in which it is possible to study journalism in the different nations of Europe. The author provides a description of the range of studies within the communications field and the educational approach to be found in each country, while at the same time explaining the methods she has employed, the sources she consulted and material collected in the execution of this research. She discusses the gathering of data and goes on to describe the modifications that had to be made in order to arrive at an inventory of conclusions. Finally, after specifying the type of training and the evolution of the course of studies in each country in terms of academic level, and the type of practice engaged in, she details certain noteworthy anomalies and exceptions and gives a final assessment of the level of communication and the studies in this field currently to be found in the continent of Europe.

## MISCELLANY

### LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATIONS MEDIA IN CATALONIA

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by CARLES DUARTE I MONTSERRAT

The writer starts off with an analysis of the presence of the Catalan language in the communications media, and draws the logical comparison with the situation of Castilian. Duarte notes the capacity of the media to determine a model of language, and the real power they have of promoting its dignification or its debasement. He goes on to offer a reflection on the present situation and the historical evolution of Catalan, both in the printed press and in radio and television. One by one he identifies the different moments in the retrenchment and expansion of Catalan, offering an evaluation of the current use and diffusion of the language in the three media mentioned. At the same time he takes the opportunity to call for the immediate creation, as a matter of urgency, of a Catalan News Agency. The author comments on the progressive incorporation of Catalan in radio broadcasting as well as by means of TV3, in addition to sketching out the current state of legislation and the state's contribution to the process of linguistic normalization. The text concludes with a section devoted to the opposition between supporters of a "light" and a "heavy" form of Catalan, situating the two sides in order to redirect the debate towards the pursuit of a model of the language. At the same time he underlines the function of the media and of parliament not only in the revitalization of Catalan as a permanent presence in every stratum of society, but also in the improvement of the quality of the language.

### THE CATALAN CINEMATOGRAPHIC "EXPLICATORS"

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by JOAQUIM ROMAGUERA I RAMIÓ

The article situates us in the early days of cinematographic performances in Catalonia, offering a concise outline of the characteristics of the first film productions, and of those individuals who were the pioneers of Catalan cinema. After profiling the origins of the medium and the activity of its creators in Catalonia, the author essentially centres his study on the figure of the "explicators", individuals who provided a narration of the events shown on the screen; of what the films depicted. In the following paragraphs, the writer refers to the function performed by the people formerly known as "cridaires", who would talk up the film being shown, and the "animators": indispensable complements to the sense of spectacle attaching to the cinematographic event. The second part of the text goes on to offers some reflections on the

public's response to the "explicators" and, moving on into the 20th century, considers the presence in the venues where films were shown of explanatory captions and of instruments which could reproduce sound or scenes from the films. In conclusion, the author offers a final profile of the "explicators" and of the laying of the foundations of the cinematographic art in Catalonia.

## **THE PREHISTORY OF JOURNALISM: FROM MONASTERIES TO NEWSPAPER OFFICES**

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by LLUÍS SOLÀ I DACHS

Lluís Solà studies the first stirrings of pre-journalism and sets out the nature of the phenomenon here. He begins by analyzing the production and the function of the *Annals*, what they contained and where they came from. Schematically, he lays aside the *Annals* to go on to speak about the *Cronicons*, texts with a structure similar to that of the *Annals*, and gives an account of the importance of the *Cròniques*, of the printing press and handbills, of periodicals and *gazettes* and of the daily newspapers. In each case he includes historical notes, discussing the first manifestations of these, with a series of examples, and an outline of their principal functions and contents.

## **JOURNALISM AS SYNCHRONOUS HISTORY**

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by MANUEL FERNÁNDEZ I AREAL

The writer offers a brief introduction to the different classes of journalism, which he distinguishes generically, before devoting a considerable part of his text to a discussion of the basic differences between history and journalism. In order to put these two concepts in context, he sets out to separate in detail the functions of the two terms and the fields they embrace. He reflects on the comments of Eugeni Coseriu, to the effect that journalism is synchronous history, and of Ignacio Ramonet, on the function of television in showing history "in action". Fernández Areal introduces a note of criticism, and of self-criticism, in relation to those journalists who are ignorant of the real nature of the media in which they work, and insists that the concept of information must be reconciled with the concept of truth, of certainty. He accompanies his arguments with quotes to bestow cohesion and legitimacy on his thinking. Thus he goes on to try to differentiate what is news from what is not, analyzing the one and the other and looking at how they are constructed and maintained. The author continues with his use of quoted references, arriving at a complete distinction between the professional whose mission is to

inform, the journalist who searches out reality, and the communicologist. Following on from the distinction between the factual relation of events and opinions formed on the basis of these, the article draws to its close with a call for an entirely truthful press dedicated to the communal good.

## **THE NEW IMPULSE TOWARDS SPECIALIZED JOURNALISM**

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by MONTSERRAT QUESADA I PÉREZ

Montserrat Quesada devotes all her arguments here to evaluating the tremendous significance of specialized journalism, identifying it as a discipline that deserves to be promoted on account of its utility and functions, and made a compulsory subject of study on journalism courses. The author puts forward a range of arguments in justification of her claim; amongst other observations she notes that journalism is becoming progressively more specialized in thematic terms, demonstrating its viability above all on the basis of the new avenues being opened up in a mass society. Quesada observes how present-day society promotes this type of journalism, having arrived step by step at a segmentation of the market, with an audience that is at once wider and more culturally sophisticated. The result is, as the references employed by the writer indicate, that the mass media tend to specialize, enriching their pages with specialist texts. Nevertheless, the article seeks to note the deficiencies of the media as regards practising a genuine specialization, and in her closing pages with writer remarks the need to improve journalistic training and to introduce specialized journalism within the appropriate academic structure; or, what comes to the same thing, to establish an adequate methodology and technical bases on which to develop good specialized journalism.

## **THE CHARACTER AND NATURE OF CULTURE WITH THE EMERGENCE OF THE MASS-COMMUNICATION SOCIETY**

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by JOSEP LLUÍS GÓMEZ I MOMPART

The text which Gómez Mompert offers us here takes the form of an analysis of the evolution towards a mass-communications culture. In the first, conceptual part of the article the author examines this new culture, the ways it can be confronted, and the reasons for the negative connotations that it carries. Pursuing this line, the article takes up the concept of popular culture,

and its relationship with and survival in the face of mass culture, providing in passing a highly stimulating summary of Peter Burke's work on the concepts of «culture» and «popular». Gómez Mompert reflects on the consolidation and hegemony of mass culture, highlighting this observation with the outstanding theoretical contribution made by Roman Gubern and offering possible solutions for the survival of popular culture within mass society, and after introducing further new definitions of the two cultures, he defines the elements and the social agents active in each one, listing the principal functions and the dysfunctions to which the new mass society gives rise. The writer then goes on to demonstrate the advantages that mass communication offers in terms of social cohesion, and calls for the decriminalization of mass culture. In the final part of his text, Gómez Mompert considers the lack of constant ongoing research into mass civilization or culture, while cataloguing the work which, optimist or otherwise, has been carried out in this area to date. At the same time, the author reflects on the development of popular culture within civil society and the different forms in which it can manifest itself, together with the the capacity of the mass media to act as institutions with the power to transform society, its habits and behaviour, and to construct a fabric of new values and traditions.

## **OBJECTS. DESIGN, FUNCTION AND COMMUNICATION**

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by JOAN COSTA I SOLÀ-SEGALÉS

The aim of Joan Costa's study consists initially in identifying what is to be understood by the «design» of the concept of *object*. The author then goes on to detail the physical processes involved in the detection of a given object 'x', discriminating in his subsequent reflections those objects he considers to be most complex and ingenious. He also looks at the industrial designer and the engineer as mediators who intervene in the production of objects, and goes on to establish a classification on the basis of the functions these exercise. In his second section, he continues with his definition of objects and analyzes the way these are perceived, providing a wealth of examples to illustrate his assertions. He differentiates effects of connotations and denotation of the object and the double connotation this generates, analyzing the concepts of beauty, aesthetics, design and fashion in order to understand the reason for greater or lesser receptivity of an object. In the following section Costa explores of utility of the object, its reliability and durability, its quality and, by means of an attached diagram, its semiology (its referent, its signified and its signifier). Finally, he reviews of roles of the purchaser and the seller, and the overall idea of service and design.



**STUDIES IN THE HISTORY OF THE PRESS IN  
CATALONIA (17TH AND 18TH CENTURIES) AN  
APPROXIMATION TO THE 17TH-CENTURY CATALAN  
«PRESS» THROUGH THE «BONSOMS»  
COLLECTION OF PAMPHLETS**

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by JAIME REULA BIESCAS

As his title makes clear, Reula here offers a summary, on the basis of a collection of pamphlets known as «Bonsoms», of the first written expressions in printed form of «relations» and political pamphlets in the continent of Europe and, more specifically, within Catalonia. With regard to the material published in Catalonia, he analyzes the year by year situation of growth or reduction in the numbers of texts produced, which language they appeared in and the nature of their content. Reula finds himself faced with difficulties in the legitimation of his study on account of the presence of sources that are absolutely contradictory of utterly different from one another. Subsequently the author gives us a portrait of the type of publications to be found during the period in question, the journalistic criteria followed and the problems that were met in the consolidation of such projects (illiteracy, etc.). At the same time, Reula introduces some examples of leading publications of the time, such as Jaume Romeu's *Gazeta*, a pioneer which paved the way for many others. Reula then goes on to complement his analysis with a description of the kind of news that was printed, the censorship then in force and the influence exercised by power in mediating information. The article moves on to its penultimate point, to consider the publications produced at the end of the 17th century. Reula first considers *Las Noticias Generales de Europa* (gazettes published under this title), looking at their history, function, readership, contents, diffusion and extension; in second place he offers an outline of the *Gazeta de Barcelona*, describing its format, issues, frequency and discourse and the political function it exercised. In his conclusion the author reflects on the type of press then in existence, its pedagogical and informative approach and the historic and socio-political context it inhabited.

**THE TRANSMISSION OF NEWS IN THE CATALONIA OF  
THE LATE 18TH CENTURY (1789-1799)**

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by JORDI LLIMARGAS I MARSAL

The writer sketches out for us the historical context of the final years of the 18th century as an aid to our analysis, understanding and knowledge of the news then being produced. He accordingly provides a clear reference to the

influence of the French Revolution on the political and civil society of the time. Llimargas directs us to the *Calaix de Sastre* of the baron of Maldà as the principal collection of notes illustrating the customs, habits, debates and, in short, the evolution of the period. On the basis of this inexhaustible source of references, the author relates the everyday situations, the relationships and the important roles played by the different social estates during this historic period, and at the same time he informs us of the journalists who contributed to the flow of communications during this era. Step by step he reveals to us the persons who transmitted the news, who acted as sources of information, the state of the press in Catalonia during these last years of the 18th century, and the part played by the authorities. Finally, the article devotes space to commenting on the significance and the content of the *pamphlets* or handbills or «flyers» and of private letters, together with some points of detail concerning the oral transmission of news (how this took place and the importance it had for the historical evolution of the events with which it dealt). By way of conclusion, Llimargas notes the type of information existing in this period, the lack of modernization of the media employed, the importance of oral transmission and of cultural mediators, in particular the clergy as the most important estate.

## REASONS FOR A BIRTH: THE «DIARIO DE BARCELONA»

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by ANTONI LAGUNA PLATERO, FRANCESC ANDREU MARTINEZ GALLEGO  
AND IMMA RIUS SANCHIS

This extensive study seeks to explain in detail and in depth the motives which led to the appearance of the senior organ of the Catalan press, the *Diari de Barcelona*, in 1792. Taking this as their starting point, the three scholars offers a preliminary analysis in which they reconstruct the antecedence of what was then known as the *Diario de Barcelona*, demonstrating, amongst other things, the relationship between the publication and the territorial area in which it is consumed. Step by step, the authors set out the reasons for the coming into being of the paper subsequently dubbed «El Brusi», and the differences between it and its predecessors in the city. The article draws extensively on quotes from the actual printed media of the time to enrich and provide a context for its arguments, and goes on to describe the character of the embryonic newspaper, together with the whole commercial, economic and entrepreneurial structure which had to be put in place before it could come into being, as well as the steps taken to obtain the licence needed to publish the paper. The fourth section of the article looks more fully into the publication's political significance, the interests created prior to its appearance and the socio-political function it exercised (the positions it took up, its

ideological and philosophical line it followed in its first years, etc.). Another of the areas investigated is the way the paper came to submit to advertising, together with the loyalty of the readership to the daily publication, and the problems the paper faced when it tackled some important event or social or economic development in depth. The final section of the article allows the authors to review the role played by the paper, its conception of journalism and the political and social positions to which it committed itself.