The paradigm of Antigone and Gacel Sayah: an approach to historical and contemporary ethical/moral dilemmas of journalism

Prof. Dr. Francisco José Castilhos Karam
Santa Catarina University (UFSC), Brasil

Abstract

The present work intends to locate and to complexify some classical moral dilemmas in human history considering two paradigms as references: Antigone’s, created by Sophocles; and Gacel Sayah’s, created by Vázquez-Figueroa. This work situates both historical and contemporary dilemmas of journalism and locates examples brought by professionals in activity and academic experts. At the same time, it relates immediate conflicts to particularities of the journalistic activity – from the historical perspective of consolidation of values to the present scenario of professional journalism in both Ciberspace and Information Society (in which ethics, techniques and aesthetics try to structure the perspective of moral convergence in order to support the activity and its social credibility and legitimacy).

Keywords

Ethics; ethical paradigms; journalism; profession

The inner pain of living with guilt, dealing with dishonor and sorrow, and having moral obligation to others – even if this obligation is mainly social and cultural – has inspired many thinkers such as philosophers and writers. The pain is better understood when we consider a dense analysis of ethics. An analysis that includes concepts such as singularity and universality – both of them notions that can be developed or expressed through plays, novels and short stories situating the behavior of cultures in certain places and times.

Again, obeying a cultural rule that was morally determined can be an unavoidable task – even if it may costs you your life and you are fully aware of that. It
happens because rules are determined by a “divine” world – even when it is not an actual world of gods – and they are the result of a moral pact with life itself; a life that is unbearable when is not surrounded by certain principles.

Perhaps with that in mind, Bárbara Freitag gave the book she wrote about historical and moral dilemmas the name of Antigone’s Itinerary (1992) referring to the Greek tragedy by Sophocles (1995) written in 5th century B.C.

In Oedipus at Colonus, written by Sophocles (1993), Polynices says to Antigone: “I beg you, my dear sister, if these curses come true and you have returned to Thebes by then, please do not let my corpse be dishonoured but please, do bury it, in a tomb with all its due rites.”¹

That topic also appears in another of Sophocles’ works that explores the moral pact made by Antigone (which is also the name of the play). Antigone ignores the orders of Creon – who said that the ones that fought him or fought Thebas deservered no descent burial – and decides to honor her word and to bury Polynicies. She is punished with death. Antigone is buried alive with some food that would last for only a few days. Yet, she chooses suicide. She hangs herself with the lace of her robes.

Many different approaches of Antigone’s tragedy can be done, but it is undeniable that Antigone’s commitment to Polynices is one of the main aspects of the play. The conflict between Antigone and Creon can be compared to a conflict between individual and society.

According to Bárbara Freitag (1992: 19),

If the dilemma of morality was sophisticated and fully expressed by Greek tragedies, the Sophocles’ Antigone is, undoubtedly, one of its best examples. In this particular play, the moral conflict plays a role itself, incarnating many characters such as Antigone and Creon – each of them representing perfect opposites.²

According to Freitag, Antigone appeals to the rules of oikos (the gods), and acts according to her consciousness and against the polis (the men).

According to her, the audience understands that:

¹ Sophocles. Oedipus at Colonus. In: Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Aristophanes. Greek Theatre. São Paulo, Paupame, 1993, p. 115. It was the last conversation between Polynices and Antigone – who was conducting her father Oedipus who blinded himself and ran to Colone after murdering his own father and marrying his mother by accident. He had four children with his mother: Polynices, Eteocles, Antigone and Ismene. Polynices and Eteocles died fighting Creon.

² All the quotations in this paper were freely translated from their originals.
[…] there is a hierarchy between the law of men and the law of gods. Those who cannot see the distance between them will do only evil. Antigone ignores the law of men because of her lack of knowledge. She is punished with death. Although she knew the consequences of her transgression, she continued faithful to her beliefs. Nevertheless, she was not aware that her action would bring death upon Eurydice and Haemon – both innocent people – and violate the law of gods.

Indeed, the consequences of Antigone’s moral action affect other characters. For example, Haemon, Antigone’s fiancé and Creon’s son, commits suicide. Eurydice, Creon’s wife, cannot stand the loss of her son and kills herself. Creon regrets his actions, but it is too late. He tries to rescue Antigone from her grave, but she too took her own life. Fate cannot be changed – the moira is settled.

Moral and Culture

Moral and cultural commitment are often together. The particular judgment of a single phenomenon often causes singular actions that are certain to lead to public condemnation followed by physical and moral punishment. The Qur’an and the Bible may as well be interpreted according to a particular view of the world determined by culture that can lead to intolerant and evil acts. These particular systems of rules consider themselves guardians of a universal principle. The principle can only exist if we consider that all particular judgments can agree on something. For example, it is only possible to talk about universal principles of judgment if all the moral conceptions could point at the same direction as if linked by some kind of universal thought. Perhaps that is the only base that supports the idea of a universal principle and of a future that differs from present and past times.

Somehow, mankind always project the future while holding on to meanings that were created by no one but themselves. There is no crystallized time, or endless time; but there are times not redefined, and times that move as if driven by a pair of opposites – it does not matter if based on cultural, social or individual levels. Considering that, Antigone’s transgression has two meanings: the first one refers to the significance of socially determined moral principles and to disobedience as a lawful human right; the second one refers to the contestation of legal determinations that forces the law to be reviewed (once the code is no longer capable of predicting all possible behaviors). The current acts determine the future. They can lead to a world of moral dilemmas that generate the need for ethical and practical decisions.
Bárbara Freitag had that in mind when she said that Antigone, being mortal, could be wrong, and that Creon, that acted based on human law, could also be wrong. She also says that the gods wanted Creon to improve his actions, and that is why they had let him live. It is true that mythology must be understood as result of observation. But it is also true that it can become an important paradigm that exemplifies the symbolic world – one that acts upon the truth and returns as symbol, presuming the existence of a second human nature that is based on culture, values, ethics and professional ethics.

Back to Freitag (1992: 22-23): “after acting like an immoral tyrant, Creon is touched by error and sorrow. He becomes an ethical leader capable of considering both his own interests and Thebans’ interests”.

This is how Sophocles impels the audience to think about the world and act differently. The moral conflict is also a concern of the audience and it turns the judgment into a much more complex and painful thing. Sophocles wants the future to be far from past and present times. Moral questions are dilemmas linked to the past, but they can be disconnected from it. For this to happen, the present must be reviewed in order to lead to a future that is not defined, but that is projected by human minds.

Antigone’s drama keeps echoing even now. Today, there are many events that could be compared to Antigone’s – it does not matter the cultural scenario where it takes place. The daily journalism, that can efficiently and quickly mediate the instant, exposes the truth of the conflicts. It may seem hard to understand some individual actions, but the motives of history and cultures are only seen through the individual man. Moral dilemmas are too expressed by the professional activity. Perhaps that is why the idea of “profession” relates to the religious expression “to profess”.

**Tuareg, codes of honor, moral conflicts and tragedy**

Moral conflict is also the subject of contemporary novels such as *Tuareg* (1987), written by Alberto Vázquez-Figueroa.

Gacel Sayah is a Tuareg that lives with his family in Sahara. He gives shelter to two men without asking who they were or what they did. He housed them like the tradition recommends, and kept them away from any disturbance. At least, he tried. The Army broke into his house killing one man and taking the other. Before that, a soldier asked Gacel to let them in. His answer was: “Hospitality is holy to us. This law is much older than Qur’an (1987: 23)”. The soldier replied that he was the law itself. The Tuareg
then said: “Tradition is one thousand years old. You are only fifty. Leave my guests alone” (1987: 23). Gacel was ignored.

Vázquez-Figueroa tells the devoted search of Gacel Sayah for amends. He tried to retrieve his honor although he knew that meant to face death. The Tuareg held on to the words of old Kalthoum, a woman who said he would not die in the desert. That was his only fear – to die away from his homeland, his people and culture. Away from the unlimited land of Sahara that had no flag and no conquerors. Nevertheless, it was impossible to live with the moral violation suffered by him and his people.

The search for redemption made Gacel Sayah, *The Hunter*, loses everything. Respected by his courage, Sayah dedicates his life to hunt those who killed or kidnapped his guests. He overcome all obstacles, one by one, and rescues Abdul-el-Kebir – who was a presidential candidate although Sayah had no idea of that – killing many soldiers in his way. He kidnaps a governor, and threatens the Commander-in-Chief. He even goes through the “empty land” of Tikdabra (from where nobody had ever returned), killing and fooling his chasers and hunting the President himself. The president kidnaps Sayah’s family to force a trade for Abdul. Injured by a policeman in the streets of the city after helping Abdul to leave the country, Gacel hides in an old building. He never knew about the fall of the President and how Abdul managed to take his place (helped by both international and national groups). When he recovers consciousness he sees a crowd saluting the President that passes the streets inside a car. He pulls out his gun and shoots the man, not knowing the president is Abdul, after all. Sayah is shot to death after killing Abdul. He had just killed the man that made him risk his entire life for a millenary code of honor.

According to Tarso Genro, who used to be the mayor of Porto Alegre and is a Minister by now (1990: 153):

The higher ethics of Sayad – that become clear at the end of his journey – are tragic. The social structure that generates these ethics can only survive in a desert, or in a distant asphyxiating site. It does not matter how superior those ethics are. They still cannot penetrate the skin of a society that is mainly based on competition, repression and safety.

According to Genro:

It is good to know that great novels are still written, and that literature is tired of the shallow modern times and still can find the greatness of men. The main conflicts that
connect past and future to the arts can also place themselves in the present in order to affirm the beauty of justice.

The two dilemmas represented by Antigone and Gacel Sayah point the greatness and the tragedy of acts and consequences. Above all, they remain as references to the daily conflicts of people, especially journalists whose work depends on a slippery present.

An approach to moral dilemmas of journalism

Literature, Philosophy, and other subjects have studied moral problems that have always been part of our lives. Antigone and Gacel Sayah represent a historic paradigm of individual and social tragedy. Today, if we open up the domestic section of a newspaper – any newspaper in any country – we will find moral conflicts expressed by the actions reported there. And not only the domestic section – international, social, business or politics section as well. They all show the dimension of the daily facts and how they define the social structures in the course of consequences that can be either good or bad. Journalism deals with both facts and interpretations that occurs in very short instants and that obligates us to deal with various views of morality.

Although we cannot assure a different fate to humankind, it is possible to repair a disordered present. The single idea of reparation is a statement that moral conflict and tragedies are part of life and history. This idea is part of a greater knowledge that states that human actions (exposed by literature, philosophies and journalism) are precisely humanlike, and must be discussed by humans and solved by them.

Therefore, the conflicts of human actions have always existed in every single manifestation of each activity, including what we would come to know as the professions (that resulted from the division of social work). The devotion to work and to society eventually puts men in a difficult place to manage moral conflicts. That is why mankind have to review every activity and relationship. People need to think carefully about the complexity of the world and facts. Nevertheless, for this to happen, there is a need to locate the professional activities in the world scenario.

Moral dilemmas of journalism: two paradigmatic examples

Fourteen years ago, the Gutenberg Institute and the Institute of Advanced Studies of the University of São Paulo promoted an event called Ethics and Press: the
truth and the challenges. The meeting was supported by the McCormick Foundation – founded by the Chicago Tribune – and the World Institute of Ethics, from Washington. Forty professionals – journalists, researchers and professors – were invited to debate ethical questions of journalism and examine four actual cases that would be later exposed to public. There are two particular subjects that cause the journalists deep moral conflicts. Although there are controversies, the fact is that we give our opinions about daily moral decisions – because that is part of our job, after all – and we do not have much time to consider these opinions that will end up on newspaper pages, magazines, television, radio or on the internet.

The decision of publishing: gains and losses

The following case was debated at the meeting:

A journalist hears about a case involving children – their ages between 8 and 12 – working more than ten hours a day and making 50 reais per month (25 dollars). There were times when the child’s mother asked for the job herself – the money is enough, after all, to buy vegetables, meat, and some other food. Brazil had, at the time, the worst income distribution in the world, and many people worked without being paid or illegally – like those children.

A journalist must always tell the truth? The children’s employer said it would do no good once he would lose his business and the kids would end up with no money at all. At the other hand, the journalist knows that even if the business got closed down there would be hundreds of other companies continuing the slavery.

If the story gets published the journalist may be harming those families that actually need the money to survive. If it does not get published, the journalist is approving a society that does not respect its own laws. The journalist would also be ignoring the code of ethics that says that any fact of public interest should be exposed to society. This way, the government would be able to investigate and punish those who violated the life and the labor of both grownups and children.

In this case, the journalist may feel bad about exposing the fact, but if he thinks about different possibilities of knowledge and decision he will see that his work is actually helping society to solve problems and to plan a better future.

---

3 The subject proposed here is based on real journalistic reports that were morally questioned by several professionals. The related cases are familiar to journalists too.
That is why the journalist must consider that following the code of ethics of his profession is to purchase the end of such events – in this case, slavery – and to affirm his desire for a different society where these problems will not exist. So, publishing is choosing life, or, the most universal principle: justice. Nevertheless, it does not mean the dilemmas will cease.

Just like Antigone, the journalist must make a choice. Antigone could have accepted the order from Creon – that represents here the “general interest”, or the law. She chose to follow her consciousness and her ideal of justice – she buried her brother as she promised.

In this case, the journalist chooses – and it is a moral choice – to stand for a direction that is socially desirable, even if it hurts someone’s immediate interests. If the journalist does not make the fact public he will be practicing anti-journalism and hiding information about social tragedies and their consequences – violation of childhood, slavery work, etc. He has a social obligation – even if those children do not live to see a better world.

**The openness of society and its sources and the openness of journalism**

Another question debated at the event was about undercover journalism. The following case was exposed:

A journalist does not know how to drive properly, but he registers for driving school – he tells them his real name, but not his real job. He gets a license in a few days. The journalist knows that the driving school is giving licenses to anyone without even teaching them how to drive. The school is being helped by employees of the governmental driving department. He needs to prove that by getting a license himself – that would confirm the corrupt practices of the school.

The city where the investigation took place had the highest rate of car accidents. Today, 50 thousand Brazilians die every year in car crashes. Certainly it has a lot to do with bad structures of the cities, the stress, unreadable road signs, drugs and alcohol abuse, speeding abuse, etc. But we cannot ignore the driving schools and police departments’ corruption.

The previous case is an example of undercover journalism – it happens every day when journalists need to get into hospitals, jails, drug zones, etc. The journalists say, and I think it makes sense, that truth cannot be fully “accessed” when people identify one as a journalist. So, the institutions are too unethical – they hide what should
be public, alter data, lie about facts, and hide information of deep relevance. The same institutions claim that journalists are unethical because, in order to find the truth, they hide their true intentions.

There are many examples of journalists that pretended to be someone else to make public some information and to protect their own lives. It is the case of those people that investigate drug dealing and sensationalist journalism. Günther Wallraff (a German journalist), for example, wrote a book about his experience. He changed his appearance and his identity so he could work and investigate the Bild newspaper and prove its illegal practices (Wallraff, 1990). He also worked for a big company in order to prove the abuse of Turkish workers rights, among other investigations (Wallraff, 1979). The risk the journalists are taking can be confirmed by the work of Wallraf and many others – foreigners or Brazilians – and their practices may be interpreted as legally questionable or moral legitimate.

Nevertheless, the journalist’s choice depends on the danger of the situation. The illegal licenses’ case, for example – the first attempt to expose the truth should have been based on interviews and official documents. Sometimes, the lack of professionalism or the need for a quick report keeps the journalist from researching properly before deciding to go undercover.

It is impossible to deny the journalism contribution to reveal the truth about tortures at psychiatric hospitals, human organ traffic, etc. In these cases journalists had no other option but to work undercover – otherwise, the truth would never be exposed. The journalist, risking his/her life, did what he/she had to do.

**Ciberjournalism in the new scenario and its moral dilemmas**

Journalism has many moral dilemmas that are related to the processes of professional freedom, conscientious choices, historical circumstances and to the activity itself. The construction of moral values in journalism is deeply connected to the evolution of the profession (Karam, 1997). Since the roman *Acta Diurna* and Johannes Gutenberg’s *press* a lot have changed – not forgetting to mention the contribution of the industrial society that supported the national Estates until the consolidation of public representation systems (supported by institutions), the 20th century’s business journalism, and the ciberjournalism’s new scenario (Sousa, 2008). Today, there are more ethical dilemmas and they are much more complex – but there is very little time to think about them.
But what is this ciberjournalism scenario? Pavlik (2005) reminds us that new technologies allow us to research, write and edit information very quickly – and he says this transformation is only the beginning. Today, it is possible to get information from different means and platforms. Nevertheless, he does not forget to reinforce the elements of journalism, including its ethical principles that must be respected such as credibility and truth. He says that that are five emergent dimensions of ciberjournalism: 1) the rising number of communication modalities; 2) the hypermedia; 3) the audience participation; 4) the dynamic content; 5) the possibility for personalization (2005: 25).

Considering that digital inclusion is getting faster – supported, clearly, by governmental initiatives and the market demand – Pavlik calls the new scenario “an electronic republic of the 21st century” in which ciberjournalism will become crucial to journalism in general (2005: 211).

There are different political, economical and ideological perspectives and tones, but there is also agreement about the potentiality of the new technologies when it comes to improving the social democracy and the people’s participation on decisions – at least in an ideal new scenario. If the scenario comes to life, the homogenate media interests would be threatened by the infinite new sources of information that could question the versions spread by the traditional media, or the great media. There would be a new space for new works, professions and services. Certainly, there can be a civil journalism if the government, the Estate, and other segments invest in the idea.

Nevertheless, there is one question that remains unsolved: will there be fulltime journalists in the new scenario? Will be there other professionals other than doctors, professors, researchers, farmers, plumbers, etc? Or perhaps the information will get mixed and it will be virtually impossible to distinguish good journalism? Perhaps things are going to be different. The ethical heritage of language, text structure, work procedures and verification; the value of credibility, truth and legitimacy may not disappear, after all. They may just reinforce the idea of a professional and academic journalism.

Another question is: will there be global Medias exposing controversial information that stimulates different commentaries and ideas; different opinions and new debates that are not controlled by social or cultural groups? The experience would be great, but other experiences would be necessary. The Public TV project, for example, or a public communication system supported by the government but not controlled by it. The Public TV would be managed by civilians and by non-governmental institutions.
certainly would not be an easy task to please so many groups. There would be many political and personal disputes. But the main point is that the present amount of daily information and the vertiginous social rhythm demand the existence of several means of information.

The Colombian journalist Javier Restrepo has ministered classes to many journalists from Latin America. He discusses actual ethical dilemmas, alternatives and challenges, and the repercussion of new technologies. But there is agreement about one thing: the universal and essential ethics of journalism are based on social responsibility, commitment with the truth and independence (2004: 35).

Restrepo is reasonable when he says that ethics are not essentially legal – ethics are personal and are guided by one’s consciousness. Although, he agrees that journalistic ethics are objective, not merely abstract – they must establish the bounds of professional activity. Here, the techniques and the ethics converge, and journalistic deontology emerges. The professional procedures become the final product supported by all previous elements.

The responsibility is even greater if the journalistic profession intends to continue as so. The journalistic procedures may be respected by non-journalists, but it will seem harder for them. Non-journalists will find it difficult to write as frequently as journalists. Those people who work with medicine, sociology, sales, farming, music, etc. will care for journalistic criteria? And if they do, what will be the quality, the credibility and the relevance of this production? One thing is to practice journalism every day, paying attention to theory, ethics and techniques; another thing is to have columns and write about one’s area of knowledge, and in this case, non-journalists can do a great work expressing their opinions. On the other side, journalists are not expressing just an opinion. They must care about the consequences of their writing and must have professional criteria.

The journalistic criteria are determined by politics, economy, ideology and market. So, does it mean that the journalism and its principles have no reason to be? Or are they still meaningful in our information society, even if we consider the technological convergence? Journalism may as well be reaffirming its distinctive traces. The conditions to a complete democratization of communication are all given. Why, then, it has not happened? What the Estate, the journalists and social organizations should do in order to implement the democratic project? Or information is not that
important to citizens after all? Or perhaps journalism and its principles are not so important?

We all know that even the great media corporations are being criticized for the mistrustful way they have been dealing with sources and reporting facts. There are more journalistic websites appearing every minute. And not only websites – new magazines and papers are appearing too. On radio, on television and online – there are new information every single moment. It is becoming more evident that the great corporations are trying to escape the accusations of dishonest reporting. The fact is that there is something completely new emerging: independent websites focused on criticizing the great media; small sites investigating the reports and questioning their veracity.

The information society and the technological facilities are pressuring the monopoly of great corporations. Still, there must be great Medias in order to exist a social net capable of spreading the news. And more: there are no medias or great media capable of reporting all the facts, consequences and versions, so, it is only natural the demand for new platforms, new approaches and new subjects. There is a need for segmentation and diversification of sources.

The concern about ethics increases in contemporary society – a society that recognizes rights and values of freedom as part of a lawful configuration of modern times – as moral values and actions seem to decrease creating xenophobia; political and religious intolerance; sexual and ethnical discrimination; violence; criminality; etc. Many researchers are determined to understand these questions, and many among them realize that the role played by media and journalism is part of the present ethical dilemmas.

We must have in mind that besides the journalism’s resistance to the ethic-deontological codes – there are those who think that the code is useless and that they should be handling information differently (they think the code is not really applicable if we consider the other forces involved) and those who think the code is even more important now because it has become a reference to professionals and to society.

Hugo Aznar (2005: 55) stands for a reinforcement of the ethical commitment:
As long as there are social problems we all must be committed to eliminate them, and that include the media and its workers. The journalists must find once more their lost ideal of social improvement. The ideal is not political or ideological, it is ethical. And here, the ethics are not just ethics of society – they are ethics of communication.

Aznar analyses the different ethics and codes that must become references to journalists. Although the codes may be seen as useless or inapplicable (and some people are spreading the idea of a journalism with no ethics at all) many professionals agree that there are procedures which are precisely a moral exercise; that there is a practical configuration that is the result of reflections and historical experiences; that there is a practical and non-epistemological knowledge; that a moral theory exists because the professional activity requires social responsibility which is part of journalism itself. All of that make journalism – as an activity that is trying to socially consolidate its ontological, ethical and technical code – keeps on struggling to find the principles that enabled the democratic revolutions. These revolutions made possible the right of freedom of speech; the right to know the truth properly, and to know one’s civil rights.

Aznar (2005:43) understands there are historical, social and economical reasons to the existence of professional codes and values – and now, technological reasons as well (the advent of the internet, for example):

The spread of what may be seen as minor advances (like video-cameras, databases, new instruments for recording, new techniques to handle image and sound) had a great impact on the media. It brings to discussion some old questions about ethics and journalism – veracity, intimacy, boundaries, etc. The commitment is just the same as usually, but there are new circumstances that force different ethical debates in order to make clear the criteria to a rightful use of new technologies.

Aznar is saying that journalism has always made questions about its own responsibility for subjects, facts and versions that emerge worldwide. This scenario requires more and more qualified people to handle such complex facts. It requires not only a proper graduation – which is already good – but constant specialization in order to make one capable of dealing with such different fields. The journalistic way of approaching – and dealing with life itself – demands full responsibility and fulltime dedication to the activity.
There probably is a connection between the professional practices and the representation of the world through language. The journalistic techniques to arrange the right words are essentially part of its moral foundations.

The connection between theory and ethic occurs during the technical procedures – it happens when the work is planned and the narrative is efficient, guided by many methodological elements, investigative techniques, text structure, and edition procedures. The technique is renewed in 21st century, and reaffirms the journalistic principles resulted from theory and ethics through history and by operational consequences of journalistic profession – which is demanded by the new scenario.

According to Fontcuberta (2006: 52):

Considering the connection between education and transmission of knowledge a new concept emerges: the knowledge management. But what it means – to manage the knowledge? At first, it means to know how to access information, select it, structure it and use it objectively. It means to do the same work that a journalist does – or should do – and as well as he.

Nevertheless, the criteria and particularity of journalistic information are both moral and technical. It may be hard to “civil journalists” – as Fontcuberta calls them – to be available and committed at fulltime. Again, the interests of the civil journalist – non-professional – may be individual interests, although not necessarily selfish. They are, after all, spontaneous researchers – they can be sources for information or free critics. The notion of professionalism and the “labels” such as credibility, legitimacy, social need are too part of the daily professional practices that demands specific knowledge. Certainly, what we know as “professional journalism” is far from being as great and accurate as we could think.

But the author seems right to think that:

[…] one of the greatest responsibilities of journalism should be to show to the public the information needed to improve the knowledge of society and to offer new options to its own development (2006: 53).

In the information society – or society of information and knowledge – the journalistic work continues to follow the same criteria. It is a much more important thing to do now that we see the emergence of informative segmentation. With so much information, facts and versions and infinite fields of knowledge the criteria extend to
journalistic work in both great and smaller medias and in any platforms that may cover from genetic issues to dog races. The fact is that daily news has become much more accessible in this scenario.

Considering the making of knowledge and facts (that circulate in a community from libraries to journalistic platforms) we see that it has its own pace and rhythm. This pulse includes specific and immediate interests and needs – internationally and locally; it demands distinction of knowledge, facts and sources; it demands the ability to edit, interview and write; it demands the ability to make the information attractive, believable and legitimate and to “translate” hermetic fields correctly – which may culminate in a distinctive professional field. It could confirm that legitimacy and credibility are central values to journalism and are supported by representative/delegative values that are nothing more than civil rights of democratic societies.

The paradigm of Antigone and Gacel Sayah reappears every time trough difficult and unpredictable moral decisions that must be made. That is precisely why it is a paradigm. The decisions often hide the delicate frontier separating success and tragedy. That is why paradigms are references to the debate about particularities of moral action that, when it comes to journalism, are referring to many subjects, cases, procedures and decisions in different technological platforms that will result in instant research, edition and verification. That is why the debate about ethics – particularly the journalistic ones – is unavoidable (to the dislike of contemporary societies) once we realize the moral dilemmas of today’s journalism. There is nothing older than Antigone and Gacel Sayah; there is nothing fresher than Antigone and Gacel Sayah.

Bibliography


SÓFOCLES; ÉSQUILO. *Rei Édipo; Antígona, Prometeu Acorrentado* (King Oedipous; Antigone; Prometheus Bound) . Tradução de J. B. Mello e Sousa. Rio de Janeiro: Ediouro, 1995.


---

Francisco José Castilhos Karam is a professor in the Department of Journalism at the Santa Catarina University (UFSC, Florianópolis). He is also a doctor in Communication and Semiotics (PUC, São Paulo). Karam is the author of two books: *Jornalismo, Ética e Liberdade* (Journalism, Ethics and Freedom) and *A Ética Jornalística e o Interesse Público* (Journalistic Ethics and Public Interests) both published by Summus Editorial (São Paulo).