

Witnessing on TV: “Profissão Repórter” and the staging of staging

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Abstract

The text discusses the televised staging of testimony in the *Profissão Repórter* program, displayed by TV Globo. In the light of the second edition of the program on the closure of Jardim Gramacho landfill in the city of Duque de Caxias (RJ) in 2012, we analyze the testimonial place occupied by reporters and subjects entangled in this narrative. To do so, we start from the propositions of studies known as media witnessing, especially those interested in the textual mediation of testimony. Then we discuss the staging as part of television regime of visibility, highlighting strategies and distinctive characteristic rituals of the object itself. Finally, we examine the staged aspect of the witnessing on television, which is revealed, at the end, governed by the logic of insertion in scene by that filming, and less by the opening of television instance to the *mise en scène* of subjects.

Keywords: Media witnessing. Television. *Profissão Repórter*. Staging. Journalism.

Introduction

Nearly two months after the official closure of the *Jardim Gramacho* sanitary landfill in the city of Duque de Caxias (RJ), in June 2012, the news program *Profissão Reporter* returned to the place to tell the stories of the former garbage collectors. When this landfill, the largest in Latin America, was closed, news crews from several countries vied for the “more newsworthy” characters and testimonies for their narratives. Weeks

later, the media interest in the drama of those people who survived on urban waste had cooled down and only the TV Globo team did a new coverage of that event. One element, however, remained from that first moment of *Profissão Reporter* to the second: the character of Geraldo “Brizola”, “Mr. Brizola”.

The journalist Caco Barcellos, who is in charge of the second story, was advised by a reporter who had participated in the coverage of the landfill closing to find Geraldo Brizola because he was someone who liked “to be in front of the camera”. Mr. Brizola is found apparently by chance, in a street in the *Jardim Gramacho* neighborhood. He had left his house to fetch the popcorn cart he had bought with the compensation money he received for the closing of the landfill. A game begins, in this meeting between the reporter and the former garbage collector, an act in which both of them participate actively. As the interview progresses, while Barcellos and Mr. Brizola walk forward, the interviewee not only confirms the expectation of the team program but also performs an unusual and comical role. Jaunty, Mr. Brizola gradually takes the place of the producer and the witness of the interview, simulating moments of sadness when he spoke of the work at the landfill and joy with the life that he will resume, while Barcellos fights to control the laughter with the performance of that character.

Recent studies on television have increasingly perceived the role assumed by the reporters and anchors in news programs, as well as the narratives they weave about the events (CASA DEI; VENANCIO, 2012; FAUSTO NETO, 2011; FECHINE, 2008; GUTMANN, 2013). As a corollary, anchors and reporters end up taking a central place in the studies focused on the systems of news program visibility. The episode of Mr. Brizola, on the July 24th edition of *Profissão Reporter*, leads us to change slightly the focus of this observation from reporters and presenters, as effective actors narrating the stories, to the subjects inscribed in these narratives, as witnesses. To achieve this goal, we believe it is necessary, methodologically, to nuance the testimonial place of these subjects, as well as to compare this place with the staging features which are typical of language of news programs - and in

particular the text of *Profissão Reporter*, a news program broadcast weekly since 2008 on TV Globo, dedicated to reveal “behind the news, the challenges of the feature story” (DORETTO; COSTA, 2012; FIGUEIREDO, 2012).

As observed in the studies mentioned above, changes of discursive, performative and rhetorical nature are sufficiently evident in the broadcast news such that we can verify that a transformation in the modes of apprehension of these media productions can also be noticed at an epistemological level. On the one hand, the places of bodies and of speaking of announcers and reporters change, becoming more flexible, and they start effectively filling the scenes of events as “actors” (FAUSTO NETO, 2011; GUTMANN, 2013). On the other hand, they come to be seen beyond their mediation role – or, in this case, would it be better to say intermediation? The broadcast news scene, however, is also occupied by other subjects who undoubtedly take on a rhetorical function of authentication of the witnessed reality, but who also put themselves or are put on stage; i.e., they incorporate roles and play the game of broadcast news staging. Therefore, we are interested in examining the witnessing space occupied by reporters and subjects inscribed in this narrative, starting from propositions of epistemological and methodological natures focused on the so-called media witnessing, especially those interested in textual mediations of the testimony. In short, the aim is to analyze how witnessing is staged on television.

Is this an opening to the *mise en scène* of these individuals, on the part of the television programs? Of a televised staging of witnessing? Or even, of a staging of the staging?

Witnessing and testimonial text: mediation, action

Since the last decade, several researchers from the field of communications have been interested in a phenomenon which undoubtedly marked historiographical and literary narratives of the last century, especially those about the Holocaust (or *Shoah*, a term etymologically more suitable than Holocaust, which carries an

unsuitable sacrificial connotation). It refers to witnessing, currently considered not only in the historiographical and legal meanings, but mostly from the communication and media perspectives (ELLIS, 2000; PEETERS, 2001; FROSH; PINCHEVSKI, 2009a; FROSH; PINCHEVSKI, 2009b). In a seminal work, Ellis (2000) argues that, due to audiovisual technologies and live television broadcasts, witnessing became a privileged place to see the world beyond our special circumscription:

[...] to treat the audio-visual as a form of witness is to realize that it offers a distinct, and new, modality of experience. The feeling of witness that comes with audio-visual media is one of separation and powerlessness: the events unfold, like it or not (ELLIS, 2000, p.11).

In a sense, when speaking of our condition of witnesses before the abundance of audiovisuality, Ellis (2000) draws attention mainly to the spectatorship, which becomes correlative to testimoniality. We become witnesses of what is going on before our eyes when we watch TV, go out to a movie or even access the internet. Therefore, as viewers of that edition of *Profissão Reporter*, we would be also witnesses both of Jardim Gramacho landfill closure as well as of the fate of the former garbage collectors such as Mr. Brizola. Witnesses, let it be said, powerless before “events that unfold, like it or not”.

However, two issues to this approach can be raised: first, there is a doubt about the existence of the testimonial relationship in all the relations of spectatorship; second, we can inquire about whether mediated testimoniality itself is only the spectatorship of the contemporary audiovisual. In order to offer a broader spectrum of the media witnessing, Frosh and Pinchevski (2009b) define mediated testimony as a cultural phenomenon relative to both the mediated productions and the modes of interaction between the media and the public:

We can best begin to grasp this new configuration by offering a simple definition: ‘media witnessing’ is the witnessing performed *in, by, and through* the media. It refers simultaneously to the appearance of witnesses in media reports, the possibility of media themselves bearing witness, and

the positioning of media audiences as witnesses to depicted events (Frosh & Pinchevski, 2009). In conflating these three strands, media witnessing not only speaks to the complexity of their interactions (a television news report may depict witnesses to an event, bear witness to that event, and turn viewers into witnesses *all at the same time*), but it also appears as a new problematic in media theory [...]. Media witnessing, we will contend, offers new ways of thinking through some abiding problems of media, communication, and culture (FROSH; PINCHEVSKI, 2009b).

Witnessing, thus, widens its borders, including at least three possibilities: the insertion of witnesses into the mediated narratives, the mediated instances as witnesses and the testimonial place of the audiences. Therefore, the concept offers new, heuristic inroads, opening an arena of issues that range from the moral nature, such as, for example, the intrusion of the suffering of others (TAIT, 2011); from the esthetic nature, relative to the forms of depiction of the subjects who bear witness (CHOULIARAKI, 2006); and also, from the textual and performative nature, regarding textual mediation as a form of staging the witnessing (FROSH, 2009).

Based on this approach, the relation of witnessing found in that edition of *Profissão Reporter* would relate as much to our condition as witnesses of the closure of the Jardim Gramacho landfill and of the consequences faced by the former garbage collectors through the news narrative, as to the place of Mr. Brizola, summoned to give testimony about his experiences *in* that news report. There is still a third dimension, whereby Caco Barcellos himself and the reporter Felipe Bentivegna are witnesses to the closing of the landfill and the misfortune of the former garbage collectors. Apparently, all those testimonial relations occur around a guiding axis, capable of engaging subjects, modeling experiences and organizing interactions: it deals with the mediating activity of the narrative, taken as a testimonial text (FROSH, 2009).

According to Frosh, to bear witness would be “an act performed not by a witness, but by a witnessing text” (2009, p.60). The author argues against an ontologizing perspective according to which the testimony (account) and the witness (subject) would precede completely the texts in which they are

entangled, which would be merely intermediate instances. Thus, Frosh (2009) defines three characteristics that would mark what we are calling media witnessing: the witnessing modal, the textual ecology and the personal and impersonal characteristics of these forms of interaction. The core of this set of features of witnessing texts is summarized as follows according to the author himself:

A witnessing text is one whose structure interacts with the audience, to create not just an imaginative experience regarding the subject of its discourse (what it was like to be caught up in a tsunami, for instance) but also the conjecture that *this* text is a witnessing text, that the event described really happened, and that the text was designed to report it (FROSH, 2009, p.61).

Therefore, the testimonial mode brings us, in the first instance, to the possibility of experiencing in our imagination the events narrated by these texts. To bear witness, however, needs not only to be conceived to be understood as such, but to be corroborated by other texts inscribed in a textual ecology that gathers common traits of the “witnessed world”. In the last instance, Frosh (2009) makes reference to how these witnessing texts address their readers and viewers, whether as particularly concerned individuals or as members of a mass of spectators. The mediator role of these texts appears as a substrate of these formulations, responsible for entangle subjects as witnesses, for gathering evidence and for allowing us to take them as authentic witnessing texts.

Tait criticizes this perspective, that finds in the texts a mediating place and at the same time a founder of testimony: “arguing that bearing witness is an act performed by a witnessing text evacuates the concept of moral resonance by displacing human agency” (2011, p.1224). The ground of this critique is the weight given by the author to the importance of the act of testimony, especially when aimed at the double dimension of the call to responsibility towards others and the transmission of a moral obligation. In other words, the author argues that the action of witnessing, if reduced to a textual dimension, would remove the questions of moral responsibility which are part of all testimony,

whether from the point of view of the one who speaks or from the perspective of the one who listens or watch.

Although we do not believe in the opposition or in the impossibility of coexistence of these two dimensions of witnessing, the textual and the moral, Tait (2011) reminds us that testimony, whether textually mediated or mediated by television, has a pragmatic dimension. Namely, the witnessing presupposes a game in which subjects act and react *in relation*. Regarding the textuality of television, however, it can be established what Leal and Valle (2008, p.5) call “amalgam of times and spaces”, partially submitting the event and its subjects to the enunciative televisual ritual. That is, the presence (and staging) of these witnesses and the actual construction of a witnessing scene necessarily take place from the mediation of the televisual device with its rituals and textual modes.

Scenarios on the television stage

The reporting on the developments, 50 days after the closing of Jardim Gramacho landfill, constantly uses images from the first report, which chronicled the landfill ban. In one of the scenes, where the workers were seen collecting trash during the last days of landfill activity, the image freezes on the figure of Mr. Brizola, whose face is framed in the format of the TV screen. Then, a cut, and the next image shows the reporter Felipe Bentivegna holding a camera to which another camera, linked to the main one, is facing him. He is filming himself while he is filming and speaking to Caco Barcellos.

Figures 1, 2 e 3 – Mr. Brizola, Felipe Bentivegna e Caco Barcellos



SOURCE: *Profissão Repórter*, episode of 24 July, 2012

The dialogue begins with an off-camera voice on the frozen image of Mr. Brizola (FIG. 1) and only afterward does the image return to the team of reporters (FIG. 2 and 3), seen walking in the streets near the Jardim Gramacho landfill:

Bentivegna: – Someone who was seen many times in several areas is Mr. Brizola, which is his nickname.

Barcellos: – Probably a talker who introduced himself to the reporters.

Bentivegna: – He likes to be on-camera, doesn't he ? So he ... His name is Mr. Geraldo. The first conversation I had with him was right there. (The reporter, then, points to a corner where there are just a sidewalk and a roofing tile).

The conversation is interrupted by archive footage from the previous report. Both Bentivegna and Mr. Brizola appear, sitting in the gutter. The reporter asks: “What are you waiting for, today?” The collector replies: “Today? Today I'm just going to work in the filming. I've put on a cap of Brazil, see that?” Mr. Brizola, in a close up, removes his cap and kisses it saying: “I'm going to kiss my country”. The next scene shows both men walking through the landfill. The waste collector took the reporter there to show him the place.

The resourcefulness of Mr. Brizola made him a character par excellence of those reports on the landfill. In the images that follow, the former waste collector is seen going back to the landfill on the day it closed, throwing his old work clothes amidst the tractors covering the last garbage piles, and even climbing up, together with the Mayor of Rio de Janeiro and the Minister of the Environment, onto one of the tractors which are concluding the work.

Does it suffice to say that, in this program, Mr. Brizola assumes the role of a legitimate witness? How is Mr. Brizola's testimony configured by *Profissão Repórter*?

In its famous chronicle on the transformations undergone by television at the end of last century, Eco (1984) has already highlighted staging as a feature of the television broadcasts which are the so-called new television. Instead of treating staging ironically, as a kind of forgery or even falsification of what is being depicted, the author gave important insights on the game, itself,

of this television device. One of the decisive sentences of this chronicle, regarding one of our daily unrealities is: “The event, depicted by television from its start, became the staging” (ECO, 1984, p.194). The most striking example of this approach was the *Royal Wedding* of Prince Rainier of Monaco and Grace Kelly. It was produced to be televised, even the royal horse manure was genetically modified to “harmonize with the soft colors of the women’s clothes”. A first aspect of this televised staging concerns preparation, i.e., the fact of knowing that an event will be filmed implies previous planning – this seems quite commonplace if we think of the levels of planning in current TV broadcasts. A second aspect would be the fact that the presence of a camera influences - and alters – the course of events.

More recent studies, such as those of Fausto Neto (2011) and Gutmann (2013), do not only take televised staging as a precondition, they have also started to consider the subjects of this enunciation as legitimate actors in performance – and no longer as intermediaries whose contribution takes place implicitly, in an attempt to erase all traces of mediation. According to Gutmann,

in televised programs, specific performances are embodied by the speaking subjects, depending on the type of interaction proposed between the instances of production and knowledge of the news; and that, in order to engage the announcers of this process, they must also recognize positions and places of action represented in the texts, even while they are virtual bodies/ performances (GUTMANN, 2013, p.7).

Gutmann makes reference to reporters as actors, subjects of the action that are involved in the scenes of the events and, therefore, can bear witness. Such an approach, although restricted to reporters, turns out corroborating not only the perception of televised staging, as well as the testimonial relation established, be it of the reporter to the events narrated, or of the viewer while announcer summoned by these bodies in the scene. As stated by Fausto Neto (2011, p.18) about what is called *atorização* of the event, these processes “deal with the presentification of the facts according to constructions that involve, in addition to the production of the scene, an ‘appearance in the scene’ by the journalists”.

Although it is possible to have reservations regarding the “novelty” of this role of reporters as actors and characters of those narratives, there is, without doubt, a change of attitude in relation to the disclosure of this engaged presence, so to speak. That is, despite the gestures of removing themselves while mediating the moment, as already discussed by Eco (1984), the reporters, those who speak looking at the camera, always occupied the scene. The difference may be in the way they occupy and act in the scene, reporting to the camera but also talking to each other and filming themselves. They are no longer acting as mere intermediaries between an event and the spectators, but acting and appearing as part of the scene and the event, even acting as witnesses to the event, assuming a certifier role.

Bentivegna’s camera is an example, in this respect. He shoots his own footage and, therefore, the presence of the reporter filming the other reporter. But this modification of the enunciative ritual does not mean, beforehand, a radical transformation of televised strategy. As Gutmann (2013) analyzes in relation to this repositioning of television reporters, in these cases,

the subject of the narrator is not just a reporter, somebody who tells us about something that occurred with third parties, he is also an actor, subject of the action which is included in the reported fact, signaling toward a sort of poetic inversion for the same intended effect: authenticity of accounts (GUTMANN, 2013, p.17).

By becoming a character in the story, and also by exposing the staging, the reporter is not stripped of his place as mediator. This poetic inversion takes place because of the authenticity of the narrative – and of the narrating instance. In this sense, the effect of truth, or the strategy of making people believe what he is making them see, is reinforced by the active presence of those people at the scene of the events. This presence is manifested by the state of being a witness, as Bentivegna does not just act, on that occasion, as someone who was present at the moment of the closure of the landfill and so can testify about what happened previously; he also shows himself in the scene of the event, going

through it again, in person and active (as, again, he is there to film other witnesses).

But what about Mr. Brizola? And those other people brought to testify? What roles do they take on, in the televised staging?

Having analyzed some pieces from *Jornal Nacional* on World Fight Against Aids Day, Leal and Valle (2008) state that the characters are incorporated by the narrative strategies of authentication. The accounts of those people anchor and, at the same time, are strongly anchored by, the main narrative; that is, by the thread of the broadcast news narrative. Thus, such characters “insert more elements into the amalgam of time and space created by the news and compose other levels in the televisual *mise-en-abyme*” (LEAL; VALLE, 2008, p.11). Despite the differences between *Jornal Nacional*, a news program whose language can still be described as strongly conventional, and *Profissão Repórter*, which openly assumes a didactic and, why not, experimental approach, it can be inferred from this analysis that these characters bring other elements to these narratives, either because their accounts are perceived as authentic, or because they occupy that time and space by participating in the game and in the scene.

Who regulates the staging on TV?

Caco Barcellos is holding a laminated newspaper page. He shows it to the camera. In the title, “An emotional goodbye”. In the photo, Mr. Brizola. The reporter, off-camera, describes the scene in which he and the character go back to the house of the latter: “Talking to reporters became routine for the former garbage collector”. In another scene, in a wider frame, Barcellos asks Mr. Brizola: “That’s you there, right?” And the character happily replies: “Yes, that’s me”. A cut takes us to the next scene, in which both are in the middle of a street in the neighborhood, walking side by side. They start a dialogue:

Barcellos: – How is it going to be?

Mr. Brizola: – Well, you’re going to stay there, I’ll greet you with a pleasant good morning and I’ll step in.

Barcellos: Oh, Ok. You want to simulate an introduction. (Mr. Brizola gestures and seats, but the microphone the reporter is holding does not capture the sound.)

Barcellos: Let's go then. Ok. I arrived. One, two, and go.

Mr. Brizola approaches:- A pleasant good morning! Good morning, everybody.

Barcellos: – Good morning. How are you sir? (And both walk side by side)

Mr. Brizola: – I'm well, thank God.

Mr. Brizola puts his hand in his hat, changes into an uneasy expression and begins to 'simulate', while Barcellos tries to control his laughter and looks discreetly at the cameraman. In the next scene, the camera shoots them walking away.

Mr. Brizola: – This is my neighborhood, *Jardim Gramacho*, y'know? (A new cut and, in the next scene, both appear head-on, standing).

Barcellos asks: – Do you like to produce, do you understand about television production?

Mr. Brizola: – Yes, yes, I do. (Cut)

In the next scene, fixed position, from a distance, both of them appear side by side again. Barcellos says: – Ready. One, two and ...

Mr. Brizola: – Action. (And suddenly, a new cut)

The characters (the reporter and the former garbage collector) are side-by-side again in an American shot. Barcellos asks: how is this scene?

Mr. Brizola: – Now the scene, scene ... suffering. (He answers and puts his hands on his forehead, lowering his head, simulating crying). And goes on: – Suffering is that sadness... (Cut).

At the end of this long stretch, Barcellos cannot contain his laughter. And Mr. Brizola keeps acting. The character says that, with the closure of the landfill, he lost the place where he earned the livelihood that supported his family. But, as Barcellos reports, Mr. Brizola was keen to finish the story with a happy ending. And, after another “rehearsal”: one, two ... Mr. Brizola goes on: “So today I'm happy, thank God. Oh, my God! Thank You, Lord!”. All the way until they get to the character's house and Barcellos resumes the thread of the narrative – in case he had lost it.

Musse and Coutinho (2011) undertook cinema studies in an attempt to understand the nuances of what they call “broadcast news *mise en scène*”. Despite the focus on the interview as a journalistic procedure, and not as televised staging from the standpoint of the inclusion of subjects in the scene beyond the competition of voices and speeches, one of the conclusions of

the authors leans towards the instrumentalized role of these subjects. For the authors, “the voice of the common citizen would not be legitimized by the news shows, but it would be used as an instrument able to support, through examples and especially through emotional tones, the speech of the network(s)” (MUSSE; COUTINHO, 2011, p.8).

What happens, however, is that Mr. Brizola not only grants an interview putting in his own words, the story woven by that episode of the program, but he takes part in the staging, *as if* he were in charge. His testimony comes with an engagement towards televised contract, with a previous knowledge of what should be said and how to say it. When asked if he understands about television production, the former garbage collector answers, naively or not: “Yes, yes, I do”. The reporter is still holding the microphone, the cameraman (who no longer appears in his own gesture of filming others) still holds the camera, but Mr. Brizola decides to join the game giving his own witnessing, his own performance.

Mise en scène of oneself? Did the televised ritual give way to that which is filmed?

Musse and Coutinho (2011) are cautious in establishing an analogy between the documentary *mise en scène* explained by J. L. Comolli (2008) and the televised staging because, although suggested by the French author, it is like a counterpoint to the documentaries entries. Still, the cinema theoretician’s proposals provide us with interesting insights to understand the presence of these people on TV, even if later we have some reservations regarding the regulation of this staging. The starting point should be the very idea of *mise-en-scène*. Comolli (2008) draws attention exactly to our present condition of subjects rendered to a kind of becoming-image, to the always imminent possibility of being filmed. The question is: does one respond to filming with fear, or does one play with it?

Everybody’s afraid of that, alright, but this fear is one of those which can be overcome – and that is what I call the ability of those who are filmed to act, to produce the *mise-en-scène* of themselves: to dominate this fear, to play with it – fear that distances us definitively from the original ‘first time’;

that, however, takes us back, all the times that follow, to something of that first innocence, to that initial magic [of being filmed in the innocence of that experience] (COMOLLI, 2008, p.53).

Comolli (2008) refers to documentary experiences in which the proposal was to organize the participation of the subjects less and less. Letting them organize their own interventions; letting them play with being filmed and, thus, capture their *mise-en-scène*. It is also a poetic inversion in which the camera, guided by the watchful eye, would be taken to another level of participation in which it would be guided by the attentive ear. “Making images, yes, which is lived as a form of listen to the words” (COMOLLI, 2008, p.55). In this register, as people take advantage of the length of the filming, of the freedom of the registration and direct themselves, they occupy the scene and manage this occupation.

We can say that something slightly similar - and it is good to stress slightly - occurs in that televised staging of *Profissão Repórter*. With the media impact of the closure of the landfill, Mr. Brizola became a kind of spokesperson of that event, either because of his resourcefulness, or because of his availability, during the last days, to go to the landfill just to “work on the filming”. That episode of the program shows that this person not only knows he has been filmed but seems to know what it means to be filmed. He accepts it and takes part in the game. His testimony comes as a staged witnessing, prepared by the very person who bear witness to appear on TV. What is the scene? “Now the scene, scene ... suffering”, and resumes the performance that he had surely performed for other reporters.

When *Profissão Repórter* showed the image of reporter Felipe Bentivegna doing his own filming, and the announcer Caco Barcellos “directing” the staging, it revealed and kept itself as mediator of that testimony. Mr. Brizola acknowledges, accepts and engages in the character staged by his appearance in the narrative. But, to what extent that is not also a staging of the staging, a conceding gesture that, instead of revealing an opening of televised ritual to the alleged autonomy of the filmed subject, reinforces its predetermined place?

Barcellos' rhetorical question about whether his character understood television production, the consecutive "scene" cuts of Mr. Brizola, the reporter's controlled laughter and the resuming of the thread of that narrative by Barcellos, are significant vestiges of the treatment of the word and the appearance of those subjects in the televised scene. The staging of the character's witnessing does not appear otherwise, unless captured by the ritualized staging of television. In this sense, Mr. Brizola's performance gains our attention because we are not used to the resourcefulness of the characters and also the flexibility of the news scripts to these performances. As Comolli says:

The scarcity of the word and the scarcity of the presence of subjects, I mean, the people, are such that, on television, despite the uninterrupted flood of images and messages, they end up appearing as a luxury or an accident. An anomaly. Everything that happens on television gives them the impression, the ordinary people, that they have no place there, or even worse: they have a previously determined place (COMOLLI, 2008, p.57).

Capturing Mr. Brizola's acting by the television script does not suggest, however, a fading of his testimony. It is a staging exactly because the register of that character, in person and with the unusual gestures and speech, is incorporated into the main story. Mr. Brizola is the former garbage collector who became a media character at the expense of his own drama; which he himself insists on staging and (re)producing. It is a type of this anomaly, this accident, or this luxury, which, nevertheless, is enthroned in the televised rituals and displayed as a way of telling and authenticating the story of the closure of the *Jardim Gramacho* landfill and of how the former garbage collectors dealt with that event.

A question of attitude (closing remarks)

When Comolli (2008) talks about *Those that we filmed*, he argues for a change of attitude about the instance of filming: "a kind of posture of not knowing", of recognition and openness to the "dramaturgy needed" to what these people who are filmed have to say. In *Profissão Repórter*, if we can validate the existence of an

opening to the dramaturgy of the character, then it is not possible to say the same about the attitude of not knowing the instance of filming. The former garbage collector, invited to talk is, from the start, “a talker”, “someone who loves to appear on camera”. As a result, a televisable character, whose place, to a large extent, seems to have been previously determined.

Returning to the terms of Tait (2011), the character called to bear witness in that edition of the program undoubtedly acts, reacts and occupies that scene, but his appearance is necessarily regulated and mediated textually. Despite the effort to control one’s own registration, to act and choose the best gestures and ways to bear witness, the narrative assumes cuts, deletions, compositions, and televised staging strongly interposing its own strategies, absorbing these registrations and making them corroborating elements to the truth of what is enunciated. The script, or the attitude, is still governed by the logic of scene insertion of whoever is being filmed, and perhaps less by total openness to its *mise en scène*.

These findings should not, however, be understood only as a (another) criticism of televised staging. It is, rather, an effort to understand the ways in which subjects and testimonies register themselves and are registered in those broadcast news scenes. Particularly, how such narratives are registered and open themselves or not to these subject’s performance.

Profissão Repórter’s narrative is quite revealing of the ritualized character of televised production and, especially, of journalistic operations, from the choice and approach of the characters to the filmmaking procedures. Ambiguously, the program, in its laboratory proposal to show behind the scenes and “how to make”, ends up revealing one of the dimensions of its own mechanisms and strategies to constitute and entangling witnessing. In doing so, and that is where the ambiguity is, it turning the staging of the reporter and the characters part of another performance, which is scripted, composed and, above all, less apparent: the staging of the staging.

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