

Twitter, Journalism and Affective Labour

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ae looked at the time. It was six o'clock. She had plenty of time to improve, there and then, so she embarked on a flurry of activity, sending four zings and thirty-two comments and eighty-eight smiles. In an hour, her PartiRank rose to 7,288. Breaking 7,000 was more difficult, but by eight o'clock, after joining and posting in eleven discussion groups, sending another twelve zings, one of them rated in the top 5,000 globally for that hour, and signing up for sixty-seven more feeds, she'd done it. She was at 6,872, and turned to her Inner –circle social feed. She was a few hundred posts behind, and she made her way through, replying to seventy or so messages, RSVPing to eleven events on campus, singing nine petitions, and providing comments and constructive criticisms on four products currently in beta. By 10:16 her rank was 5,342.

The Circle, 2013: 190

In the scene above, taken from *The Circle*, Dave Eggers' novel about a fictional new media corporation, the protagonist, Mae, who has an entry level job in customer service, is reprimanded by her manager because although her service and customer feedback is excellent, her degree of engagement and participation in 'the community' (comprised of co-workers and customers) is low. Contrite and ashamed, Mae addresses this immediately. This situation, albeit fictional, demonstrates a key dynamic: social activities, once thought private leisure activities, have now become a central, necessary and integral component of modern jobs, including journalism.

Pour citer cet article

Référence électronique

Eugenia Siapera, Ioanna Iliadi, « Twitter, Journalism and Affective Labour. », *Sur le journalisme, About journalism, Sobre jornalismo* [En ligne], Vol 4, n°1 - 2015, mis en ligne le 15 mars 2015.

URL: <http://surlejournalisme.com/rev>

Egger's description captures the rise of new forms of labour associated with informational and/or cognitive capitalism (Castells, 2000; Boutang, 2012). Theorists explain that in these new forms of labour, workers mobilize their broader frameworks of knowledge and know-how, including social values, affects, and social relationships, to produce and add value to products and in doing so fundamentally alter the process of labour itself, the actual products and their valorization, while also their own subjectivity and autonomy as persons is shaped by the whole process (Lazzarato, 1996; Berardi, 2009). While affective labour has been central in theorizations of shifts in capitalism, it has received scant attention in the field of journalism and cultural production. Yet journalism plays a crucial part of informational capitalism in constructing and disseminating information and opinion, and it forms an integral component of the field of cultural production. This article seeks to address this lack of attention, focusing specifically on online or digital journalism, and examining the degree of affective or social labour undertaken by journalists and their views and positions towards this relatively new addition to journalistic practices. The article begins with a discussion of the concept of affective labour as it has appeared in the broader literature on sociology and political theory. It then looks at works that have discussed this kind of labour with respect to the media more specifically, before examining the repertoires emerging from journalists' own talk on the topic.

AFFECTIVE LABOUR AND INFORMATIONAL CAPITALISM

Informational capitalism refers to the phase of capitalism that increasingly relies on information in order to produce, grow, and add value to its products. Castells (2000) argues that informationalism as a mode of development and capitalism as a mode of production have come together as an outcome of "the process of capitalist restructuring undertaken since the 1980s, so that the new techno-economic system can be adequately characterized as informational capitalism" (p. 18). Castells' argument is that informationalism has replaced industrialism as a form of development, increasingly relying on the generation, distribution and application of new knowledge. Moreover, informational capitalism is no longer limited to nation-states but operates globally, and relies on transnational networks for the production, circulation and consumption of its products. Information in informational capitalism is taken to refer to "processes of cognition, communication, and cooperation" (Fuchs, 2010: 180). It is precisely these elements that have attracted attention in the sociology of labour, as they indicate the rise of new kinds of work, different to those associated with industrial capitalism.

These are primarily immaterial forms of labour in the sense that they do not produce material ar-

tifacts, but rather ideas, ways of thinking, symbols, communication, cooperation and so on, which can then become attached to or add value to material artefacts. In formal terms, Lazzarato (1996: 133) defines immaterial labour as the production of the informational and cultural content of the commodity. For Lazzarato, therefore, immaterial labour has two components: an informational one, which, in this context refers to the actual skills and knowledge necessary to perform in these kinds of jobs; and a cultural one, which refers to "activities not normally recognized as 'work'" (ibid.: 133) but which are involved in creating cultural standards, consumer tastes, fashion and public opinion. Immaterial labour represents an ambiguous shift in capitalism, because on the one hand it affords more autonomy and creativity but on the other it is subjugated by management as part of the struggles between capital and labour.

These forms of labour are often characterized by an affective dimension, which involves the production of collective subjectivities or sociality (Hardt, 1999). Specifically, Hardt (1999) understands affective labour as the dimension of immaterial labour which refers to human contact and interaction as part of labour. Affective labour produces immaterial products – "a feeling of ease, well-being, satisfaction, excitement, passion – even a sense of connectedness" (Hardt, 1999: 96); ultimately it produces "social networks, forms of community, biopower" (op. cit.). For Hardt, affective labour is an inextricable part of the service industry, and is found in all those jobs in which workers need to have contact with other people. Because of the emphasis on communication, Hardt observes that in affective labour, "the instrumental action of economic production has merged with the communicative action of human relations" (ibid.: 96), resulting in the enrichment of production with the complexity of human relations and interaction. Affective labour is in the end producing collective subjectivities and sociality, although these are still produced within a capitalist context of exploitation. Society is clearly dependent on this kind of affective labour, through for example, the paradigmatic affective labour undertaken by women in the domestic sphere, through which life is reproduced. Mothering as affective labour however produces life in its social not only biological dimension, through the production and reproduction of affects. It is here that Hardt locates the biopolitical power of affective labour: since it produces and reproduces affects and through them subjectivities and ultimately society, it can be seen as a biopower from below, complementing or struggling against the biopower of the state in producing and controlling life. Given its productive force and its operation beyond the control of corporations and government, it is clear that this kind of

labour entails great potential because of its constitutive and generative force.

An additional important dimension of affective labour concerns the question of valorization. In Marxist accounts of labour, value emerges from the time invested in producing a commodity. This time, materialized in the commodity, is then appropriated by the capital for profit. But in affective labour, value does not emerge directly out of 'stolen time': the ability to engage emotions, to inspire or move others, are not related to time in any direct way. Moreover, affective labour cannot be abstracted and reduced to individuals as it occurs in a social manner between people; this social element, central to affective labour (and also to other forms of immaterial labour), adds value but cannot be subsumed in concrete calculations of time spent. Negri and Hardt (1999) posed this issue as a question of ignoring the value of affects in labour and in affective labour, both in the traditional sense of ignoring the female labour in the domestic sphere and in the post-Fordist sense of ignoring the affective labour that attaches value to commodities in the form of marketing and advertising. Because this value is not taken into account, it operates in a space that is neither inside nor outside the capitalist relations: it feeds into, and is subsumed by, them whilst being ignored. This is precisely why and how affective labour (and labour power more broadly) can become autonomous and self-valorized. Self-valorization in this context refers to the ways in which commodities and messages (by media or advertizers) acquire value by being inserted in affective and communicative webs, spun by labour (Arvidsson and Colleoni, 2012).

JOURNALISM, LABOUR AND EMOTIONS

Journalism, and other creative work, is involved in the production and management of affects insofar as they involve human contact and elicit some kind of reaction among their readers/audiences. However, when journalism is examined as labour or work, emphasis is placed primarily on the material conditions of journalistic production which have changed since the advent of the Internet. In his work, Mark Deuze (2007) has examined the changing practices of media work as co-creation within a dynamic and unstable media environment, documenting the increasing precariousness of media and journalistic work, and showing the ways in which professional identities and norms have evolved. In other ethnographic work, the various authors in Paterson and Domingo (2009 and 2011) traced the ways in which new technologies and the increased migration of news and media in the online domain have altered the news production process and consequently the work undertaken by journalists. In a similar, albeit more critical, vein, Ornerbring (2010) discusses jour-

nalistic labour from a labour process perspective, concluding that technologies have had a significant and not necessarily positive impact on how journalistic labour is undertaken. Parallel to this scholarship, researchers have sought to examine and explain the rise and challenges posed by a more participatory media production process. For example, Paulussen and Ugille (2008) and Paulussen, Geens and Vanderbrande (2011) explored the organizational challenges and constraints to collaboration and participation of audiences and users in the production of news. Others, such as Hermida and Thurman (2008), showed how journalistic cultures and professional norms lead to struggles in accepting an expanded and more participatory notion of journalism, which would include citizens and user-generated contents. Despite the many contributions of this body of work, none of its strands has examined in any detail the extent to which online media technologies intensify and foreground an affective component that has to do with the construction and management of social networks and the broader implications this may have for the practices and valorization of journalism. Moreover, where it considers identities (e.g. Deuze, 2008), this body of work primarily refers to either professional norms as internalized by journalists and/or to personality characteristics. Focusing on the affective labour of journalism as producing new kinds of journalistic subjectivities might offer considerable insights into shifts in journalistic practices and their socio-political potential. This productive element of labour, in addition, points to the need to move on from discussions of journalism and the extent of its professionalization, towards a more nuanced understanding of journalistic labour as producing both journalists and their publics/communities, and acquiring significance and validity precisely because of this relationship. However, the notion of affective labour is not without its problems.

In the broader field of cultural (re)production, affective labour has been examined by Hesmondalgh and Baker (2008), who looked at a media production company. Theirs is a critical perspective, which finds that affective labour lacks analytical value when it is applied to the culture industries, because this kind of labour has always been immaterial and involved in the production and distribution of affects. Moreover, Hesmondalgh and Baker are very critical of the positive spin given to affective labour by Hardt and Negri, and especially their view that the communicative and collaborative elements of affective labour may lead to a kind of 'spontaneous communism' (Hardt and Negri, 2000: 294 in Hesmondalgh and Baker 2008: 99). For Hesmondalgh and Baker, the power asymmetries involved in media production make the more optimistic elements of affective/immaterial labour theories appear misplaced. Their work has shown

how power exercised in a classic hierarchical and often authoritarian manner in television production companies creates added pressures when combined with the need for affective and cooperative labour, occasionally erupting in open hostility and animosity. Moreover, in the context of precarious labour, networks of (former) colleagues are crucial factors in finding further work, thereby contributing to the suppression of frustration and anger in order to safeguard one's reputation. These producers cannot afford to fall out with any of their colleagues or be seen as argumentative or difficult. Hesmondalgh and Baker therefore suggest a more sociologically informed perspective such as Hochschild's (2003 [1983]) notion of emotional labour, which includes ideas of exploitation, commercialization and alienation.

Hochschild's study looked at students and bill collectors but her main material came from flight attendants. She found that flight attendants were required to elicit cooperation through the strategic management of their emotions. It is precisely this management of emotions that makes this emotional (as opposed to affective) labour. At the same time, by performing this kind of job, one becomes the very person they are performing to be. In other words, emotional labour can be thought of as performative and constitutive of its very subject: flight attendants become the sociable and always smiling persons they are expected to be in the context of their work, and bill collectors become the distrustful and angry persons they must be in the performance of their job. Hochschild's research is valuable in showing how the emotional parts of labour are caught up in hierarchical and exploitative situations, and also ultimately how they lead to a kind of alienation. While she is quick to recognize that emotions are inevitably 'managed' and subjected to rules in both work and non-work situations, her point is that emotional labour involves a kind of reversal, taking emotions from the private sphere into the sphere of work, "where they are processed, standardized, and subjected to hierarchical control" (2003[1983]: 153).

This kind of critical interrogation seems to be missing in accounts of shifts towards a more collaborative and reciprocal kind of journalism. In more and more journalistic handbooks and textbooks, 'building community' is part of the material to be learned. For example, in their recent textbook, Hill and Lashmar (2014), among a series of technical skills, such as "Writing for the Web" (p. 47), or "Recording Digital Audio" (p. 93), include "Building Online Communities" (p. 141) and 'Encouraging Users to Share News Content" (p. 154). But do these kinds of skills belong to the same order? In more sophisticated theoretical accounts such as the recent contribution by Lewis, Holton and Coddington (2013) on reciprocal journal-

ism, there is an explicit recognition of journalists as 'community-builders' who are involved in setting up various kinds of reciprocal relations with audiences, but no critical consideration of the implications of this. Furthermore, they propose that the extent and degree of reciprocity may be a useful means of gauging the benefits accrued for journalists and audiences, including the deepening of "collective trust, social capital and overall connectedness" (p. 230). However, this aspect of journalistic labour must be studied and its potential and value for journalism more closely understood, while also its ambiguity made clear. It is proposed here that the notion of affective labour may provide the conceptual framework to do so, provided that it is made analytically clearer.

Following Hochschild's work on emotional labour, we propose an understanding of the emotional labour of journalists as pertaining to managing their emotions vis-à-vis their stories and sources in the context of waged labour. This has, to a large extent, been a fixture of journalism in its classical print and broadcast forms. However, we would like to argue that informational or cognitive capitalism, especially as manifested in technologically-supported social networks, adds a new affective dimension to journalism, which emerges precisely from such networks. This includes the emotional part referred to above, but is not limited to it. On social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter, journalistic labour includes not only writing stories but also creating and managing networks of readers. As job insecurity and precarity increases, the creation and management of networks of readers, followers, sources, friends, and colleagues is becoming an integral and important part of journalistic work, as evidenced by its increasing prominence in textbooks on journalism. Thus, the notion of affective labour vis-à-vis journalism should be widened to include more elements than those of the more limited emotional labour, while also, taking into account Hesmondalgh and Baker's critique, it must incorporate a more critical understanding of the potentials and limitations involved. The remaining of the paper is focusing on the main elements of affective labour as they emerge from journalists' talk about this aspect of their work.

AFFECTIVE LABOUR IN JOURNALISTIC TALK

The main research questions address the extent to which journalists are cognizant of the affective element of their labour, the repertoires they have developed in order to explain the affective part of their job. The paper is focusing on the Greek social media sphere, and especially Twitter, which, as more and

more journalists are laid off, is expanding and acquiring an added significance for Greek journalism.

Method

The empirical part consists of a series of in depth interviews with 10 journalists with a network of between 10,000-20,000 followers on Twitter¹. Table 1 provides more specific details. We focused on journalists who have emerged from Twitter with no links to mainstream media, because we wanted to make sure that they did not inherit a community or a network of readers/followers but built one from scratch. All of our respondents describe themselves as journalists and their Twitter feed as journalistic. Three are regular contributors to alternative, non-mainstream online media, and the remaining seven are freelancers, who also run their own journalistic blog. They all have a significant presence on the Twitter, as evidenced by the number of their tweets, ranging from 20,000 to 340,000, and a significant reputation among journalists. It is worth noting that they all belong politically to the left. Thus, in this initial exploration we have tried to exclude the role of employers and inherited networks, and have tried to examine a relatively homogenous group of journalists on Twitter, who share similar political beliefs and to an extent beliefs about journalism and journalistic practice. They were initially contacted via their Twitter feeds. Eight of the interviews were conducted in person in Athens by one of the authors (Iliadi), and the remaining two by the other author via Skype. The interviews lasted from about 45 minutes to an hour and a half.

Table 1: *Details of interviewees.*

Name	Gender	Following/ Followers (June 2014)	Tweets (June 2014)	Joined Twitter
@Planet	M	932/13,400	340,000	2007
@Geros	M	2,802/9840	61,000	2011
@Ross	M	10,600/16,300	50,800	2010
@Goatee	M	2,633/10,700	31,000	2011
@Heleni	F	1,600/12,500	22,000	2010
@Bolidis	M	700/10,100	20,000	2008
@VaSou	F	453/12,300	23,000	2009
@Bear	M	3,600/13,000	70,800	2007
@Uni- verse	M	1,100/10,700	76,000	2010
@Cosmic	M	2,200/9,600	74,000	2009

The material collected is discussed on the basis of the main themes that emerged from our discussions. These are referred to as repertoires because they include a range of subtopics or themes revolving around a central notion. The three main repertoires here include the repertoire of organic relations, the repertoire of time, and the repertoire of responsibility and care. These are related and mutually dependent in the sense that without one, the other cannot exist. Thus, the organic relations repertoire and the investment of the self, would not be possible without the temporal repertoire and the investment of time; none of these would have been possible without the investment of care.

THE ORGANIC RELATIONS REPERTOIRE: INVESTING THE SELF

The organic relations repertoire centres on the idea that communities and networks on Twitter emerge organically and not as a result of any strategic planning. This makes them appear authentic and the journalist positioned as part of these organic communities rather than a kind of puppet-master figure pulling strings from above. It has been very important for our respondents to point to the contingencies involved in forming networks, the accidental encounters that lead subsequently to closer bonds, shared ideas and exchanges on Twitter. The organic repertoire is significant in showing that, for our respondents at least, Twitter-based communities and networks cannot be forced but have to emerge organically, from the bottom up and on the basis of the journalists' 'true' involvement or involvement of their 'authentic' self, even if some of them are using pseudonyms or avatars. In short, the organic repertoire points to the need to be true or real rather than strategic or manipulative. From an affective labour point of view, it points to the clear requirement that the self be truly and authentically involved in this kind of journalism, and that therefore the production of the self that emerges from this process is an organic and not an instrumental self, it is 'real' and not an act that you put on and off. But here lies the most important ambiguity: for if one's true self is invested in this process and practice that also belongs to the domain of work, then it is clear that this kind of journalism is no longer only trading in news but also in selves. The discussion here will unfold through an examination of the ways in which communities and networks were built, the criteria of who to follow, the kinds of followers our respondents have and their interactions.

More specifically, one of the main questions we discussed with the journalists in our sample

concerned the circumstances under which they started their network on Twitter. All insisted that their first encounter with Twitter was exploratory and that they didn't have a clear goal or strategy for the medium and for the building of community. Most came to Twitter because they were curious about it. It is significant that all our respondents initially approached Twitter for other purposes and with a different understanding of the medium that they eventually acquired. For instance, some thought of it as a social medium, i.e. as a form of networking or connecting to their friends, or as an extension of their Facebook accounts or blogs (e.g. @Planet, @Geros) and not at all as a medium for journalism. This narrative of an initially 'amateurish' approach was used by the respondents in order to ground and justify their organic relationship to Twitter. More specifically, what began as an amateurish use of Twitter, acquired eventually a significant journalistic character. This came as a result, firstly, of historical events, such as the riots of December 2008 in Athens, and secondly, as a result of more and more journalists congregating on Twitter. From this point of view, our respondents were caught up in historical events and felt they had to participate in them, through reporting what they were witnessing either first hand, in the riots in Athens, or through their Twitter feeds in the case of the Tunisian and Egyptian revolts. As more and more journalists began using Twitter, our respondents found themselves using it more and more as a journalistic medium but without having planned to do so.

Their networks and communities, understood as a loose set of followers and an 'inner circle' of closer friends respectively, include readers, sources and colleagues, although these roles can vary: a reader may turn into a source and a colleague may also be a reader. While our respondents have not followed a specific and overall strategy in terms of who to follow, they clearly stated that those they follow fall roughly in the following categories: firstly, those who 'have something to say'; secondly, those with whom they share interests, thirdly, those whom they know (and like/appreciate) outside Twitter; a final category includes those followed for their opposing views. All these show the extent of 'real self' involvement: all our respondents follow accounts that they feel add something, without really being able to clearly define this. Different respondents added different elements. For example, @Ross does not follow accounts that do not 'touch' him, that are impolite and unkind, that show fanaticism or prejudice. @Planet seeks to follow 'notable' accounts of persons with whom he shares a common ethics revolving around human rights, democracy and open source software. @Heleni follows ac-

counts that offer information on topics that interest her but who also add something, a comment or an opinion that moves her or 'speaks' to her. Ideological affinity and shared values are the relevant criteria here; for example, both @Planet and @Ross comment on the left wing leanings of those they follow, but also on their common concern for matters such as police violence, the environment, and unemployment. There is also a clear awareness of the dangers of creating a 'filter bubble' or an 'echo chamber' receiving and sharing only information and opinions similar to theirs, hence they follow some oppositional accounts – oppositional here determined by our respondents' own political positions and beliefs.

When talking about their followers, our respondents showed a good deal of awareness of the broad categories of their followers, which they had garnered through monitoring their own accounts often through third party applications, such as unfollowers.me or justunfollow.com. Respondents typically look at who is following and who unfollows them, and this curiosity, especially for the unfollowers, is shared by all. None of our respondents, however, is prepared to change anything merely to have or gain more followers. Remaining true to their selves and to their beliefs is important to all. @Ross wonders why would someone unfollow him, but he would not alter anything in his practices in order to gain more followers. Similarly, @Bolidis says that he attributes most of his unfollowers to ideological disagreements and is not especially bothered by this. This approach is also shared by @Heleni and @Goatee whose unfollowers do not bother them as they do not really get in the way of what they do on Twitter. @Geros, who has the most confrontational approach to followers and political Twitter accounts, considers unfollowers and especially 'blockers', those who have blocked him, evidence that his journalism is working: "I am never rude, I merely confront them with what they have claimed, and they just cannot deal with their own inconsistencies, hence they block me". @Geros's confrontational approach contrasts sharply with that of @Ross, whose approach is moderate and non-confrontational; if he receives angry or confrontational tweets he just doesn't respond or engage. These reactions show the extent to which different selves are involved in the process, and what is more important is consistency of the approach and authenticity in the actions and reactions. Followers are therefore gained through chance encounters with, and appreciation of, our journalists' tweets and not through a carefully planned strategy oriented towards gaining more and more followers. The relationship is solidified through an appreciation of the journalists' overall stance and demeanour on Twitter, and further progresses through interactions.

The authentic self is also involved in interactions with others. Replies and mentions must organically emerge out of genuine interest in, and appreciation of, others, rather than gratuitously, just for their own sake. Reciprocity then is seen as meaningful only in a context where there is dialogue or a genuine exchange. This dialogue, in turn, takes place on the basis of specific rules and criteria imposed by different journalists and which again reflect their personalities and idiosyncratic approaches to Twitter communities and networks. For example, @Planet, who is also a self-confessed geek, will reply to questions on technological issues but only if he perceives that the person asking is also making an effort. He is clear that he does not like laziness, and he will not offer answers that can be found through Googling or reviewing one's Twitter feed. Others, such as @Goatee, reply to all genuine questions, regardless of who poses them. In general, they tend to follow the flow and spirit of the interaction, so that if their interlocutor is appreciative and thankful, they return the same; as @Goatee put it, 'my tactic is, if I get something I give something back, even if it is only a thank you'. In contrast, @Ross feels awkward when the exchange becomes more personal: for example, the 'follow Friday' practice, which began as part of a third party website to manage and promote recommendations. This is a practice whereby a Twitter user recommends certain people to be followed, but @Ross finds it awkward and forced, remarking that "it is not part of my philosophy to tell others who to follow". For @Heleni or @Planet, however, it is merely a practice of recognition of others. None of our respondents has set techniques, such as sending direct messages of thanks to those who follow them or mentioning new followers with thanks. All these point to a reciprocal relationship, determined by the journalist themselves and the rules and criteria they consider acceptable for an interaction, and which is part of a broader organic relationship they seek to build with their followers and those they follow on Twitter. The key here is the organic element of the interactions, and the emerging rules as outcomes of the journalists' personalities or selves rather than as strategies for attaining more followers.

The organic repertoire constitutes an important part of the affective labour of journalists because it makes clear the involvement of the self in the process of producing journalism on Twitter. While making public their personality was perhaps expected by columnists or op-ed writers, it was by no means a necessary requirement for rank and file journalists or beat reporters. Crucially, our respondents, unlike Hochschild's flight attendants, are not told how to manage or change their personality in order to fit with the job; rather they make the 'job' fit their personalities, and their personalities emerge out of

these relationships and interactions. They follow who they genuinely like or are interested in, and expect their followers to do the same. In this manner, they do not modify or suppress aspects of their selves or their beliefs in order to be more likeable². They appear uncompromising in this and we find it is significant that there was no departure from this among our respondents. It is here that we locate the potential of this element of affective labour: the active involvement of the self brings numerous rewards, satisfactions and pleasures to our respondents. Most claimed that they have formed close personal relationships and even friendships through Twitter: as @Ross put it, "I met people not accounts, I was fascinated by their ideas and articulate positions"; and @Planet, "the reward is to understand them as personalities and then include them in the conversation"; @Goatee "friendships emerged out of working together on something or the need to rally together". This reflects the elements of the kind of 'spontaneous communism' that Hardt and Negri (2000) were talking about, and are indeed considered as unequivocally positive by our respondents. The ambiguity however lies in the shift from trading in news to trading in selves. In other words, while journalism in the era of print/broadcast depended primarily on the skills and legwork of the journalist, now more and more journalism hinges on the personality and elements of the self that one is willing to apply to the job. Our respondents' involvement of their selves is rewarded by genuine social contact but to the extent that this is part of relations of production/consumption, it is subsumed by these, and the self is removed from its immediate context of social relations and placed in the context of the market. The saving grace, and perhaps the reason that our respondents were so unequivocally positive, is that they are not wage labourers but freelancers and, in the current point in time, they are not pressured to put a price on, or make their selves more marketable. But the moment that the self enters into the market it inevitably becomes a commodity, whether it is immediately apprehended as such or not³.

THE TEMPORAL REPERTOIRE: INVESTING TIME

This repertoire refers to the investment of time on the community and network elements on Twitter, as an add-on to the time spent producing, reporting and curating the news. The time repertoire is significant in that it points to the requirement that time is spent on the networks, and that networks and communities cannot grow without this investment of time. The recognition of the time that goes into the labour for the community or the network signals a shift and a blurring between the classical Marxist conception of valorizing a commodity on the basis

of time spent in producing it, and a different kind of valorization, which emerges out of time spent on the networks and communities as such. This blurring or 'productive' and 'unproductive' or better 'reproductive' work, which is necessary to maintain the communities and networks created, shows the complexity involved in valorizing new forms of networked journalism, offering a glimpse of what Hardt and Negri (2000) have called the immeasurability of affective labour. For them, the potential of this time invested to constitute new forms of being and community is of great political importance. However, there is also a clear ambiguity: the time invested in the network is assumed and expected but not clearly stated, acknowledged and compensated for. In the opening quote by Eggers (2013), Mae found herself chastised because she hadn't invested time on the network: it is clear that this time was expected of her over and above her actual working time. This is 'personal' time but at the service of work. The investment and involvement of time has three dimensions: a reflexive; a synchronic; and a diachronic one. The following discussion will look at each in more detail, showing their ambiguous potentials.

The reflexive dimension of time invested refers to the time spent on monitoring one's account. This self-monitoring was undertaken by all our respondents, using different platforms. Some used Twitter's 'interactions', others used third party applications, such as Hootsuite, but for all this was a task undertaken daily. The purpose of the time allocated to this task includes finding out who followed and unfollowed the account, and occasionally who these people are; but also to see who has shared or retweeted their tweets, as well as who has 'favourited' them. Monitoring retweets is crucial because, as @Bolidis put it, they are a form of feedback: they tell you if you are heard and if you had any impact. Equally important is to see responses, comments, and questions posed as a response to specific tweets. This monitoring exercise is crucial in understanding one's position in the network and community, receiving feedback and being able to respond and reciprocate. Reflexive time invested is therefore a necessary precursor to the remaining two dimensions of time.

The synchronic time investment refers to the time spent responding to questions, reciprocating mentions, retweeting, commenting upon, or favouriting tweets by the network. Again, this is a kind of activity undertaken by all our respondents, although to a variable degree and with a varied intensity. For example, @Planet, while admitting that he is engaged in responding, reciprocating, and favouriting, he is only doing this when there are no breaking news or when he is not involved in covering something. @Ross is spending progressively less time,

but @Geros is emphasizing this component as he is almost constantly involved in exchanges, often confrontational, with other accounts. @Heleni spends time directly answering to questions as they come in, or reciprocating favourites. The synchronic time investment is crucial in maintaining the network and its dynamism; without this time spent there is no dynamic, two-way communication but rather a hierarchical uni-directional flow, resembling broadcasting.

The diachronic dimension refers to the accumulated time spent on the network/community elements. This accumulated time is directly linked to depth, trust and more closely knit relationships. In some instances, the diachronic dimension may be linked to turning a loose network of followers into a community sharing common bonds. In fact, most respondents spoke a closer or 'inner circle' of followers/followed accounts, which was seen as the outcome of this diachronic time investment. Replying or commenting on tweets time and again, retweeting or favouriting contents over time contributes, firstly, to knowing one another better and secondly, to the formation of closer bonds. @Planet argues that he gets to know his followers through their choice of which tweets to retweet; so then he knows that X is more interested in human rights violations and Y in open source issues. Accomplishing this requires a sustained investment of time, and bonds emerge through this kind of investment of time over time. If Twitter journalism involves the building and sustenance of communities it is precisely because of this diachronic time investment: 'it takes time', as @Heleni puts it.

While in this context we made a distinction between three temporal dimensions, it must be pointed out that this is an analytical separation and that in practice time spent on Twitter is not understood as comprising discrete elements. None of our respondents could tell us exactly how much time they spent on the network/community aspects as opposed to the actual journalistic production or curation. They couldn't even tell if it is equal or more –time spent on the network/community, whether reflexive, synchronic or diachronic, is necessary for, and inseparable from, time spent on the production of journalism but much as the domestic labour of women, it goes unacknowledged and undervalued (c.f. Fortunati, 2007). And, just like domestic labour, this kind of time spent is adding value to Twitter's journalism: if it were not for this time involvement, journalism on Twitter would be no different than broadcast and print. The added value and potential is clear: bonds, trust, and community are all the direct outcome of this time invested reflexively, monitoring and examining feedback; synchronically, by responding, sharing and reciprocating; and diachronically, by engaging

with other accounts over time. While there is great value in forming communities and great political and social potential in creating, sustaining and mobilizing them, the time element involves a clear tension. Extra time is required for this engagement both in the context of everyday and cumulatively, but while there is the expectation and requirement for this, there is no compensation for, or acknowledgement of, the excess involved. To use Marxist terminology, the valorization of Twitter journalism includes not only the time spent on the actual production of journalism but also the time spent on the network elements. This labour, although necessary, is not explicitly measured or included in the value calculations: in this respect, it is pure surplus. In the case of our respondents who are freelancers, it is accumulated in the form of social capital, which can potentially be redeemed at a later stage. But the 'economization' of this time, long considered as immeasurable or outside the economic domain (Hardt and Negri, 2000: 401 ff.) is another source of ambiguity: this time is no longer part of any gift economy but an investment to be redeemed at some other future point even if this is not explicitly acknowledged or recognized by the journalists themselves.

THE REPERTOIRE OF RESPONSIBILITY AND CARE

The final repertoire concerns the investment of care and affection, and in some ways this is the result of the investment of the self and time in the network and community elements of journalism. The key elements here concern care for, and responsibility towards others and this repertoire shows the importance of taking care of the network/community, which in turn, as with the previous two repertoires and investments adds value to journalism on Twitter. While offering help and caring for others is *bonum in se*, it can also have an important political role, as theorized by Hardt and Negri (2009) in their discussion of love. The cross-fertilization of journalism with an ethics of care entails a great potential, as it forms strong bonds and mutual recognition, but this affective investment is ambiguous because it may be corrupted; this corruption, according to Hardt and Negri (2009) can take two forms: love of the same, and love as becoming the same. Another source of ambiguity involved in the care of, and solidarity towards, others comes from the dependencies and asymmetries necessarily involved (Karagiannis, 2007). In the case of our respondents, the present repertoire took primarily two forms: care as exchange, and responsibility to others.

In the context of their work on Twitter, our respondents encountered requests for help from others or they themselves requested the help of others.

They found these requests and offers of help, the process of exchanging care, as it were, an important element of their work. All of them had received several kinds of requests for help, ranging from the personal to the political. Personal requests vary and, in the crisis-ridden Greece, include asking for work, or even for money or food (@Ross). All respondents had received requests for help with information, clarification on issues, and have always responded positively. For example, @Ross has been asked for, and offered ideas, or sources of information, and even actual data and photographs. @Planet is often asked for help in technical matters but also in more political terms, he is asked to retweet, translate and advocate for issues. Similarly, our respondents have asked others for help, including information, further clarifications on issues or persons, and occasionally as a form of crowdsourcing (e.g. @Goatee, @Planet) to sift through information or lists and so on. They have also called for action, for instance to participate in petitions or protests. This exchange of help which extends and covers the personal, the social and the political, is mutual and reciprocal between the journalist and their network: @Goatee refers to a common pooling of resources, @Planet to a relationship of mutual concern, care and trust, @Bolidisto a reciprocity in the exchanges. Of central importance for our respondents is the notion of equality and the idea that they are peers or at least on an equal footing with the other accounts in their network: as @Ross put it, "you must realize that you are not the centre but one element, equivalent to others, in this microcosm on Twitter".

Responsibility arises in part as an outcome of this emphasis on equality and reciprocity. @Goatee clearly states that "when I receive help, I feel a kind of debt that I need to repay. I should also oblige". Responsibility therefore in part refers to the obligation to reciprocate (Karagiannis, 2004). On the other hand, responsibility takes the form of a one-sided set of obligations towards the network: while for different journalists this may take different forms, it is nevertheless present for all. For example, @Ross holds that Twitter journalists have a direct responsibility towards their networks/followers to be truthful, not sycophants or libellous, not to agitate but to present facts and information. @Heleni feels that she has a responsibility to those who are weaker than her, to help and support them in any way that she can. @Planet translates his responsibilities into practices: his primary concern is for the safety of witnesses, especially those participating in protests. Regardless of who their followers are, and what they do or request, this is a one-sided feeling of responsibility flowing from journalists towards their network. You cannot be frivolous or flippant: although you can be ironic

(@Goatee) and you can occasionally even “troll” some accounts (@Geros, @Goatee), this is in the service of your network, and in order to make a point clearer or to reveal to your network a lie or expose misinformation (@Geros).

The repertoire of responsibility and the investment of care speak directly to the ethics of journalism: the set of values that underpin and validate its practices. As such, it feeds into the context or social environment within which journalism operates and outside (if that were possible) which journalism has no meaning or value. In other words, journalism can only properly operate in an environment where it is distinguished and distinguishable from other forms of writing. Historically, this led to the rise of journalism ethics as a set of (variable) practices negotiated between journalists and their publics, but which helped establish both journalism and its value for society (Ward, 2004). This kind of *acquis* is also negotiated in the case of Twitter journalists in the current context, and it involves the mobilization of a notion of responsibility towards one’s followers/networks, that broadly speaking refers to a promise to act consistently in certain ways. The second part of this emerging ethics is the exchange of care, and this is also negotiated between the two parts. Both responsibility and the exchange of care are the outcome of affective labour, in the sense that they do not emerge out of acts of journalism per se (gathering and reporting information), but constitute the outcome of a separate kind of work on and with the network/community.

While the mutuality, reciprocity and negotiated elements of this repertoire are overwhelmingly positive for journalism, there is ambiguity and tension here as well. The main one stems from the ambiguity of the affects that underpin the notion of caring for others. To the extent that these affects centre on love, we must look more closely at this. Hardt and Negri’s (2009) theorizations of love are important here in showing its ambiguous dynamic. Love is understood as an economic power insofar as it is involved “in the production of affective networks, schemes of cooperation, and social subjectivities” (Hardt and Negri, 2009: 180) and as such it produces the common, the domain of life that is shared, that “refuses to be privatized or enclosed and remains constantly open to all” (p. 181). To have love in the service of journalism unleashes a great productive force and shows its involvement precisely in the creation of the common, in common with others – the emphasis on mutuality, sharing and reciprocity, the care, help and solidarity extended to others all point to this great potential. However, as Hardt and Negri point out, love can be corrupted: this corruption comes from the perversions of love found in identitarian

love, and love as unification. It is the former that is of more relevance here. Identitarian love refers to love of those more proximate, and it is exclusionary, associated with racism and nationalism. In our respondents this may be seen as a tendency to follow and be followed by those with similar ideological and political beliefs; although it was explicitly refuted, this kind of homophily is characteristic of networks (McPherson, Smith-Lovin, and Cook, 2001).

A second source of ambiguity here comes from the notion of solidarity to, and care for, others. To the extent that solidarity rests on the exchange of care, we must take on board its conceptual ambiguities. While our respondents are insisting on the equality of the relationships involved, the very concept of solidarity rests on the existence of inequality, as one part asks or needs it and the other offers it. Karagiannis (2007) has shown how the premise of solidarity is the existence of inequality, because to be solidary only makes sense if there is a need to create social bonds between and within certain social groups or categories: class solidarity, for example, makes sense only if there are dominant and subordinate classes. The solidarity of the poor, much discussed by Hardt and Negri, can only make sense in a world dominated by the rich. The existence of inequality or an asymmetry in solidarity is also found in the ethics of responsibility in a clearer manner: @Goatee explicitly felt the need to reciprocate in order to ‘pay the debt’ of help received, while @Planet refused requests for help that he considered trivial, because he felt that those who ask for this help are not doing their part. In the case of the one-sided responsibility towards one’s network, which we read as the crystallization of a previously negotiated agreement between journalists and readers, the inequality is more structural. This inequality found in solidarity and responsibility is a source of tension and ambiguity, evidenced in the explicit references to building a relationship among peers and equals all the while repeating and inadvertently reinforcing unequal patterns of relations. In short, when there is reciprocity involved, it creates an asymmetry, insofar and as long it requires and imposes an obligation to return the favour (c.f. Mauss, 2000 [1950]), while the one-sided responsibility structurally creates an asymmetry between the two parts.

CONCLUSIONS

This article sought to theorize journalists’ professional sociability through the lens of affective labour. This allows a more in depth and thorough understanding of the difference of this kind of work from what is typically understood as journalistic work. At the same time, the lens of affective labour allows for

a better understanding of the potential and pitfalls of this aspect of online journalism that is rising in importance. The article identified three main elements of affective labour, as narrated by a set of ten informants: according to them, affective labour requires the investment of one's 'authentic' self, the investment of personal time, and the investment of care. While in theoretical discussions there is a tendency towards polarization, with theorists such as Hardt and Negri on the one hand, and Hesmondalgh and Baker on the other, viewing affective labour in very positive and very negative terms respectively, in this article we found that for journalism at least, it is ambiguous.

These findings are suggestive of a shifting dynamic in journalistic practices and the ways in which these are theorized. While for the most part, studies have reflected on practices that are associated with the core elements of journalism, namely objectivity and balance, the affective dimension of journalism complicates matters. For instance, in Tuchman's (1972) seminal work, objectivity was seen as a strategic ritual with the dual aim to deflect criticism and convince readers of the credibility of the information. But on Twitter, credibility hinges on authenticity: the investment of the self requires that this self is or appears to be authentic, not 'objective' or 'detached' from what they tweet about. Rather than detachment, the affective labour of journalism points to attachment. All this implies that in theoretically understanding the changes in journalism, it is necessary to complicate discussions of journalistic work which typically focus on strategies to achieve objectivity, credibility, trust and so forth, which seem to separate persons and identities from their work, towards an understanding of journalistic labour as productive: it produces subjectivities, not only or primarily professional identities (Deuze, 2005; 2008), but whole selves.

We locate the potential role of the affective labour of journalism in its biopolitical productivity. This is more precisely located in the production of journalistic selves and identities underpinned by the investment of time and care, and the associated rise of an ethics of responsibility. The development of an organic relationship with their networks, the emergence of stronger bonds between core groups that then become communities, the extension of care and help to members of these communities but also to the looser network, are all evidence of the importance of this biopolitical productivity and point to the construction of a new and potentially more radical socio-political role for journalism that moves much further than the classic liberal conception of provision of information to rational decision makers. However, this potential is ambiguous insofar as these elements contain unresolved tensions and ambiguities.

In terms of future research, it is important to find the impact that waged labour has upon the affective labour of journalists. While the current sample consisted of mainly freelance journalists who choose to be on Twitter, it is more and more the case that journalists have to perform this work as part of their formal duties. How might this impact on the radical potential of affective labour? Recent research, such as Lewis et al. (2014) work on reciprocal journalism, suggests that the affective elements of journalism can only be positive, enhancing trust and community, but the direct subsumption of such elements under waged labour points to, at least, an ambiguous relationship. Further research needs to clarify this matter further, and show the conditions under which the biopower involved in journalistic affective labour can be unleashed.

NOTES

¹ In the context of the Greek Twitter, this number of followers belongs to the low to middle range. Looking at the users of Twitter in Greece, the top ranking accounts are by pop singers, entertainers/media personalities and celebrity broadcast journalists, such as Nikos Chatziniolaou (193,000 followers). The top ranking account is by SakisRouvas, a singer, who has about 258,000 followers. Accounts run by mainstream media have about 60,000 followers (e.g. @Kathimerini_gr with 61,000 followers). Source: trending.gr, March 2014.

² Some accepted that there were instances where they modified their tweets, but this was in order to prevent misunderstandings, to be more easily understood, and to convey information more directly or to out their points across more forcefully. For example, @Goatee remarks that he would not use the term

'cop' when reporting on police violence because this would be deemed prejudicial by some who would then doubt the information imparted. @Ross said that he tries to avoid very emotional language in his tweets because he finds it polarizes people.

³ To an extent, this insistence on authenticity and genuine sociality can be read as an implicit critique of those who are not authentic and who are faking favourites, replies and (re) tweets for the sake of follows and mentions. This is likely what is happening under the pressure of the market, and the possibility to capitalize on the number of follows and favourites, but it was not the case with our respondents and no-one explicitly referred to anyone else in a critical manner, so this has to remain an implied criticism.

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En • The rise of the network aspects of journalism in the context of social media such as Twitter, and the increased importance accorded to community building and maintenance as well as to reciprocity, point to the need to take into account the affective part of journalistic labour. This refers to these aspects of journalistic work that are linked to the creation of networks and communities, to interactions with readers and the forming of bonds between journalists and their readers. An analysis of the affective labour of journalists on Twitter, we argue, is necessary in order to understand the potential and ambiguities of this part of their labour. Based on a set of in-depth interviews with Twitter journalists, this article found three main repertoires of affective labour: the organic relations repertoire, which points to the increasing importance of authenticity as a means of establishing credibility on Twitter; the temporal repertoire; and the repertoire of responsibility. The importance of the affective labour of journalism is found in its biopolitical productivity. The development of an organic relationship with followers, the emergence of stronger bonds between core groups that then become communities, the extension of care and help to the network, are all evidence of the importance of this biopolitical productivity and point to the construction of a new and potentially more radical sociopolitical role for journalism. However, this potential is ambiguous insofar as these elements contain unresolved tensions and ambiguities. These include the trade in selves and the associated commodification; the re-formulation of time, especially its diachronic dimension, as accumulation of social capital; the role of reciprocity and responsibility in reproducing inequalities; and care as care for only those deemed deserving. These ambiguities severely undermine and limit the potentials of affective labour, pointing to the need to develop a purposeful political project for unleashing the power involved in this aspect of journalism.

Keywords: affective labour, journalism, biopolitics, Twitter, networks, community building.

Fr • La hausse des aspects *en réseau* du journalisme dans le contexte des médias sociaux tels que Twitter, et de l'importance accrue accordée à la construction et à l'entretien d'une communauté ainsi qu'à la réciprocité, souligne la nécessité de prendre en compte la partie affective du travail journalistique. Cette notion fait référence aux aspects du travail journalistique liés à la création de réseaux et communautés, à l'interaction avec les lecteurs et à la formation de liaisons entre les journalistes et ceux-ci. Nous soutenons qu'une analyse du travail affectif des journalistes sur Twitter est nécessaire pour comprendre le potentiel et les ambiguïtés de cette partie de leur travail. Basé sur un ensemble d'entretiens avec des journalistes utilisant Twitter, cet article a trouvé trois principaux répertoires de travail affectif : le répertoire des relations organiques, qui souligne l'importance croissante de l'authenticité comme moyen d'établir une certaine crédibilité sur Twitter ; le répertoire temporel ; et le répertoire de la responsabilité. L'importance du travail affectif du journalisme se trouve dans sa productivité biopolitique. Le développement d'une relation organique avec les *followers*, l'émergence de liens plus forts entre les *groupes noyaux* qui deviennent alors des communautés, l'extension des soins et de l'aide au réseau, sont autant de preuves de l'importance de cette productivité biopolitique et montrent la construction d'un rôle sociopolitique nouveau et potentiellement plus radical pour le journalisme. Cependant, ce potentiel est ambigu dans la mesure où ces éléments contiennent des tensions et des ambiguïtés non résolues. Il s'agit notamment des échanges de *soi*, et la marchandisation associée ; de la reformulation du temps, en particulier sa dimension diachronique, comme accumulation de capital social ; le rôle de la réciprocité et de la responsabilité dans la reproduction des inégalités, et les soins comme soins uniquement pour ceux qui sont considérés comme méritants. Ces ambiguïtés limitent et compromettent gravement le potentiel du travail affectif, soulignant la nécessité de développer un projet politique délibéré pour libérer la puissance impliquée dans cet aspect du journalisme.

Mots-clés : travail affectif, journalisme, biopolitique, Twitter, réseaux, construction communautaire.

Pt. O aumento de aspectos *em rede* do jornalismo no contexto das mídias sociais, como o Twitter, e a crescente importância atribuída à construção e ao estabelecimento de uma comunidade e também da reciprocidade, implicam na necessidade de se levar em conta a parte afetiva do trabalho jornalístico. Esta noção faz referência aos aspectos do trabalho jornalístico ligados à criação de redes e de comunidades, à interação com os leitores e à formação de laços ente os jornalistas e os leitores. Defendemos aqui a necessidade de uma análise sobre o trabalho afetivo dos jornalistas no Twitter para compreender o potencial e as ambiguidades dessa dimensão do trabalho dessas pessoas. Baseado em um conjunto de entrevistas com jornalistas usuários do Twitter, este artigo constatou três repertórios principais do trabalho afetivo: o repertório das relações orgânicas, que destaca a crescente importância da autenticidade como uma forma de estabelecer uma certa credibilidade no Twitter; o repertório temporal; e o repertório da responsabilidade. A importância do trabalho afetivo no jornalismo se explica pela sua produtividade biopolítica. O desenvolvimento de uma relação orgânica com os seus *seguidores*, a emergência de laços mais fortes entre os *grupos nodais* que se tornam, dessa forma, comunidades, a extensão dos cuidados e da assistência na rede, são igualmente provas da importância dessa produtividade biopolítica e mostram a construção de um novo papel sociopolítico e que é potencialmente mais radical para o jornalismo. Contudo, esse potencial é ambíguo na medida em que esses elementos contêm tensões e ambiguidades não resolvidas. Trata-se, sobretudo, de trocas de si, e da mercantilização associada a esse processo, da reformulação do tempo, particularmente em sua dimensão diacrônica, bem como da acumulação de capital social, do papel da reciprocidade e da responsabilidade na reprodução das desigualdades, e dos cuidados direcionados apenas àqueles considerados merecedores. Tais ambiguidades limitam e comprometem gravemente o potencial do trabalho afetivo, destacando a necessidade de se desenvolver um projeto político deliberado com o objetivo de liberar o potencial implícito a esse aspecto do jornalismo.

Palavras-chave: trabalho afetivo, jornalismo, biopolítica, Twitter, redes, construção comunitária.

