

"Love me, love me not: Biotechnology and Contemporaneity" - Thresholds in art and science communication

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The existence of stigmatized and paradoxical visions of science - expressed through the propagation of clichés, commonplaces and hyperbolic and standardized images – it is both cause and symptom of an institutional crisis: the crises of science. It lacks an identity that integrates its diverse representations and flexes its rules. Science is under transformation, in between the Modern and Post-Modern ages. Divided, therefore, between an imprisoning dualist past, a rigid and dogmatic way to produce knowledge, and a future, already under course, which can free it from its inexorable pretensions to achieve absolute truth. Sitting at the edge in between these two scientific moments, today's biotechnology is something to come.

General Goals

"Love me, love me not", is an artistic installation created by students from Unicamp's Post Graduation Program on Science Journalism, and its objective is to critically discuss scientific contradiction, media discourse involving science and the future of our society, all facing new challenges brought by contemporaneity. We propose to discuss biotech through art, enlarging the scope for debating, moving it away from the technical arena and from the representations constructed by the media. Therefore, we want to expose the conflicts faced by science, to question the role of scientific activity, its products and its producers; and show it through stereotyped visions of science. We also wish to criticize science through

interactive and ludic ways, showing that significant information can be effectively communicated using unconventional and non-academic supports. Science and particularly biotechnology cannot be exclusively discussed inside technical arenas. It should and must be discussed by everybody, through different means and forms of knowledge like art. Specific Goals

- Big Brother: It aims on revealing the conflict generated by stereotyped and dualist visions of biotechnology in media's discourse, assuming that the news commonly reproduces prejudices and polarized representation of science and ends up associating it to the odd and fantastic.
- Hidden messages It allows visitors to engage in a sensorial experience to understand the

"biotech's hidden discourses", as well as to realise themselves as part of this knowledge building process.

- Black boxes It plays with the idea that science lives inside hermetic, closed and mysterious black boxes, filled by indecipherable and incomprehensible contents. Like the boxes used to store critical and secure information in airplanes, they hold precious knowledge, ideas, methods and truths that could only be accessed and understood by a community of chosen and prepared people - the scientists.

- Self-portrait It shows scientists' own vision of themselves through the usage of photography.
- Science or fiction It critiques a stigmatized view of science commonly present to the

general public – an either magical or miraculous science, an omnipotent power, constantly admired or feared. It also criticises media's tendency to overemphasize bizarre, fantastic and extraordinary aspects when covering science.

Methods

The installation will take place at Image and Sound Museum (MIS-Campinas) in December/2007 and will be evaluated by general public with tools developed to gathering both general perception on science and biotechnology - using multiple options questionnaire - and issues on a non-alphabetical communication experience - using a perception response method.

Results and Conclusions

"Love me, love me not" still a open process at the moment. We spect to find out possibilities on science communication involving art and it's specificities.

Single sources: the use of the press release in medical science and health news reporting in Canadian newspapers and television newscasts.

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Background: press releases provide packaged content and sources for journalists reporting on medical science and health stories. Public relations practitioners target the media through press releases presented in a style that replicates news yet advances the interests of their clients. Journalists are trained in journalism school to research and interview multiple sources to properly weigh the story. Current conditions in major newsrooms in Canada and the United States are generally perceived to be challenging for reporters who are expected to do more work with fewer resources as a result of staff cutbacks, mergers and other cost saving measures.

Objective: to evaluate if specialist reporters are less likely to rely on single sources from press releases as a basis for their newspaper and television stories.

Study design/methods:

Content analysis of seven major mainstream newspapers and three full length national television newscasts over a two week period from March 1 through 14, 2008, plus an e-survey of specialist medical reporters working in these media.

This was a two part pilot study.

Part 1 was a content analysis of 7 print news sources (The Globe and Mail, Toronto Star, National

Post, Halifax Chronicle Herald, Vancouver Province, The Winnipeg Free Press, The Gazette) and 3 television news sources (CTV National News, CBC The National, Global National) chosen to be represent a balance of national and local mainstream news outlets, ranging from two national papers to four mid-sized dailies. During the period March 1-14, 2008. This was done using both hard copies of newspaper available in the library and in two instances, the newspapers' websites. Newscasts were recorded in their entirety for the Carleton School of Journalism. Weekend newscasts were not included. The health and medical stories were analyzed for several different categories such as the reporting source, the type of item, the placement, and number of sources included in the story and entered into a database. These were coded by a research assistant who as trained at the Carleton Survey Centre.

Part 2 consisted of a voluntary electronic survey sent to 20 editors and health and medical science specialist reporters from a variety of the same newspapers and television networks whose content was analyzed . The journalists were selected for their media profiles or bylines. These surveys were originally sent February 14, 2008 and were completed over the course of February, March, and April. The survey contained fifteen questions including six related to the use of press releases and four about sources. These were sent out by e-mail, filled in by reporters or editors and faxed back to the researchers.

Results: The news items completed by the health and medical science specialist reporters appear to be more thoroughly researched. Their work included a higher percentage of multiple source data that corresponds with the survey answers stating that they use press releases mainly to aid their own research and not as primary source material.

Conclusion:

In Canadian mainstream newspapers and television newscasts, specialist reporters quote more sources (actors) for their stories than non specialist reporters and rely less on individual press releases when disseminating medical science news.