

Public Abstract

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Title: Participatory Reporting as Method Acting: The Journalism-Theatre Connection

This research presents a little-discussed reporting technique, termed for the purpose of this research "participatory reporting," and uses research from the field of theatre to examine that technique for its potential contribution to journalism. Together with the journalistic technique of participatory reporting, this research applies a theatrical technique, an acting technique termed for the purpose of this research "method acting," as a theory in an attempt to determine whether similarities exist between the two techniques in terms of their effects on their practitioners, as evidenced by their products, and whether those similarities, if they exist, might indicate participatory reporting's contribution to journalism.

As an art form which can be particularly emotional and psychological in nature, theatre was chosen for use in this research largely on the hypothesis that participatory reporting's contribution to journalism might lie precisely in its emotional and psychological effects on journalists. This research considers the feelings, positive or negative, which arise from personal, emotional and psychological involvement to be information as useful as any other gathered during the reporting process.

This research in no way advocates journalists involve themselves in theatre or any other art form. Rather, it encourages journalists simply to pay more attention to the emotional and psychological, not just material and physical, aspects of stories. This research presents participatory reporting as by far not the only way to do journalism but as one among many techniques journalists have at their disposal and a possible contribution to the larger body of journalistic work.