

Curiosity as A Journalistic Tool in Feature Story Production

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Abstract

As opposed to a traditional ideal of journalists as unemotional and removed, this research explores how feature journalists' self-concepts openly include their own subjectivity in the form of curiosity. In feature story reporting, curiosity is not just acceptable but perhaps necessary. Curiosity — the emotion, experience, or desire to learn about something not immediately useful — informs how feature journalists come up with story ideas, interview sources, and put a piece together. This research draws on an analysis of feature story texts and 20 semi-structured interviews with current feature journalists. These journalists engage their own subjectivity in the form of curiosity in a highly routinized and directed way while reporting. Curiosity is not just an experience but a reporting tool. The desire to know more information, to dig past the surface level, and, perhaps most significantly, ask probing questions of themselves and of their sources is the very essence of a feature story. Feature reporting's exploratory nature demands a certain journalistic disposition, posture, and engagement. Analyzing curiosity's role in this production process offers a more in-depth understanding of journalism's complexity.

Keywords: curiosity, emotions, feature stories, journalism, media production